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THE PROBLEM OF TEXTBOOKS AS ONE OF CONCERNS OF BANAT INTELLECTUALS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Abstract: In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Arad was an important cultural centre where a number of teachers who implemented the principles of modern pedagogy worked. Bishops John Mețianu and John Pap have encouraged the publication of textbooks. Teachers Joseph Moldovan, John Roman, Peter Vancu, Julius Julius Grofșoreanu Vuia supported the national character of pedagogy in their work. The printing-office of the Eparchy in Arad published thousands of textbooks that have been used in schools in the eparchy of Arad. The work of teachers in Romanian villages contributed to the development of national awareness despite the measures of Hungarization taken by the authorities.

Keywords: Bishop, textbooks, teachers, schools, intellectuals, pedagogues, authorities, Arad, Banat.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Arad became an important cultural and political centre for the Romanians in Transylvania because of the existence of institutions like, e.g. Orthodox Diocese or Pedagogical-theological institute where important and acknowledged figures worked. Intellectuals like John Mețianu, Basil Mangra, Roman Ciorogariu, Peter Pipos, Vasile Goldis considered that school was the most important factor for the preservation of national awareness. Through their work Arad intellectuals have contributed to development of national awareness in villages in Romania and they have prepared the society to act and unite in 1 December 1918. Due to the politics of Hungarian authorities, school received a national-religious character and Romanian intellectuals have taken steps that have supported the development of Romanian education and that school and church became "national institutions" for Romanian people.

In order to support development and modernization of Romanian education bishops supported the publication of modern textbooks designed according to modern didactic and pedagogical principles. In 1877, the bishop Ioan Mețianu and the school referent Djordje Popa determined the conditions of a competition for writing textbooks. The competition was open to all teachers and priests to apply and the textbooks written by those who won the contest will be published and used in schools in the territory of Eparchy of Arad. In the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century the field of education in Romania was thriving. Modern pedagogical principles were brought to Arad by Peter Pipos, an acknowledged Transylvanian pedagogue who studied

in the Empire, where he adopted the most progressive pedagogic ideas of Rein and adjusted them to the needs and requirements of the Romanian society; his work supported the national character of pedagogy. At the end of the nineteenth century Arad was recognized as an important educational centre with a vivid activity of teachers - authors of textbooks. Those most important among these scholars were the following: Ioan Tuducescu from Lipova, Petru Vanku from Mederat, Ioan Roman and Romulus Roman from Seitin, Iuliu Grofşoreanu from Galsa or Josif Moldovan from Arad. These intellectuals were the authors of major textbooks that were used in the villages of the diocese of Arad until the end of Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

According to the decision made by the synod in April 1890 a committee was formed to censor "elementary textbooks."¹ The committee consisted of institute professors Trajan Putnik, Trajan Contea, Petru Pupos and teachers Petru Popovic, Nikolae Stef and Emerik Andreescu . Its task was to validate all books used in public schools and write reports on their quality.

The pedagogue from Arad, Petru Pupos, is the author of a whole series of reviews of textbooks written by teachers and professors in the diocese of Arad. In 1905 he wrote a peer-review of a primer, i.e. spelling book, written by Julia Vuja, the supporter of modernization of pedagogy. In this review Pupos emphasized "the primer written by Juliu Vuja can be considered a fully successful way of processing and teaching methodology of reading and writing for primary schools."² Pupos held that the most contemporary pedagogic and didactic ideas were used in the primer, having in mind that the author is well acquainted with the ideas offered by Gabel; furthermore, in the beginning the letters were "not written but drawn", since this is the most appropriate way for children memorize them. Like Fraubel, the teacher from Arad puts emphasis on student movement, expressing the standpoint that a student needs to move even when he learns. After the presentation of the review, the Consistory approved the use of the primer written by Iulija Vuja. In 1897 Pupos wrote another peer-review of Iulija Vuja's *Illustrated primer* and he stated that it is significant for learning the orthography of Romanian language, but that "the preparatory exercises are not complete and they do not follow the natural teaching methodology sequence"³; he also recommended that the author should supplement the textbook with graphical exercises. Following comments made by Pupos, the textbook was improved, printed and adopted by the Consistory. In regard to the textbook written by Ioan Roman *Book for reading and writing Hungarian language*, Pinos considered that it can be recommended for use in public schools. In his peer-review written on March 15th 1900 of the textbook of arithmetic for students in preparatory schools (the so called preparandia), written by Teodor Contea, Pupos expressed the standpoint that "the manual is one of the most complex textbooks ever written, but it seems rather difficult reading for students attending preparatory schools"⁴

¹ The National Archive – Department of Arad County *Inspectorate School Fund*, Iosif Moldovan "M 38/38"

² E.O.R.A., 66 -IV 1895.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Ibid*.

Pipos considered that Contea's textbook can be accepted as a textbook for preparatory schools, but it can also be recommended to teachers as "private reading". In his letter dated March 9/22nd 1909 Piper wrote that the textbook *Catechetical* by I. Barbu and the textbook *Catechetical preparations* by P. Bizerea were "complex works arranged according to the most recent teaching methodology principles and according to the curriculum." Therefore he recommended them to be used in lecturing religion in public schools.

The issue of school textbooks was a present in circular letters sent by the archbishops of Arad to priests and teachers. In the letter Ioan Mecianu sent to all inspectors the textbooks for public schools for the academic 1894/95 year are listed. Among the textbooks used in the Eparchy of Arad there are those whose authors are teachers from Arad, like, for example, *Biblical history* and the textbook *Universal History* by Geoargiu Popa *Little Primer*, *Romanian Language*, *Hungarian history*, *Natural history* by Ioan Tuducescu, as well as *Elements of State Constitution* and *Hungarian language*, written by Vasile Goldis.

According to the circular letter from June 1905 the bishop Ioan I. Pap asked teachers to use in schools not only textbooks published with the approval of the Episcopal committee, but also other textbooks and he asked for a list of textbooks used in the schools of Arad Eparchy. There are numerous textbooks among them written by the authors from Arad, like, for example, Ioan Tuducescu, or the primer written by Juliju Gofsoreanu, approved by the Consistory in 1904, a primer and a reader by Josif Moldovanu, approved by the Consistory in the same year. In regard to the textbooks used for learning Hungarian language, these written and compiled by Ioan Roman were used: *First Reader for Learning Hungarian language* and *Second reader in Hungarian language*, manuals published by Mako and approved in 1898 by the Consistory. Among textbooks for learning Hungarian language there are those written by Vasile Goldis when he was a professor at Brasov and they were approved by the Ministry of Faith and Education.

In the letter sent in February 22nd 1880 by the bishop Ioan Mețianu to the school inspector Ioan Popovich it was stated that the school referent Geoargiu Popa would print the second edition of his textbooks *Universal History* and *History of Romanians and Hungarian* written for public schools according to new school curriculum. The bishop asked school inspector Ioan Popovic to inform him how many copies were needed in its inspectorate, while the inspector is also responsible and should make sure that the textbooks are used. In the introduction to his textbook G. Popa defined history – he considered history was "those events and facts written by our predecessors". He also stated that "he calls the history witnessing about all countries and nations general" and also mentioned national history. The pedagogue from Arad also made it clear that his textbook is one of the textbooks in general history for public schools. In the first lessons in his textbook G. Popa mentioned the cultures of ancient India, China, Phoenicia and Greece as great cultures. Special place in the textbook belonged to the Roman Empire since the author insisted on the Roman emperors. Writing about Trajan, he described his conquest of Dacia and then referred to "the destiny of our predecessors after the death of Trajan". The author also dealt with significant figures from European history, like Ferdinand I, Karlo V, Maria Teresa, Josif II. Special chapter was dedicated to the social movements in the end of the

18th century. The author insisted on French revolution and the events which had occurred in the north of America, but he also mentioned “the revolution of Horia”. In the lessons dealing with modern history, he outlined the rule of A. I. Kuza, as well as Karol I, considering that his ascend to the throne was “a national holiday”.

The important role of schools in the Romanian society was confirmed by the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century most intellectuals were also authors of textbooks, giving contribution to development of pedagogy in Romania in the period when Hungarian authorities were taking more and more measures in order to make local population adopt Hungarian language and culture, in the process of the so called Hungarization. There were numerous textbooks in Romanian schools in the territory of Arad Eparchy in the beginning of 20th century, like, for example, it was the case with the school inspectorate in Belinac in 1905. *Church history* was used for classes of religion, the textbook written by Petru Barbua, a professor who taught in preparandia in Caransebeş. The textbook was approved by the Consistory of Arad, Caransebeş and Oradea in 1902, and it was one of the most widely used textbooks. *Biblical History* could also be used at religion classes the textbook written by Ioan Velovan, a Cransebeş priest. The textbook was approved by the Consistory of Karansebeş. For students to learn the secrets of writing and reading primers were used written by the teachers from Arad, Josif Moldovan and Juliu Grofşorean. They were approved by Arad Consistory in 1904. Several textbooks were used in Romanian language classes and those most important among them are the textbook written by Ioan Tuducescu published in 1894 and approved by the consistory and used since 1904, or *The Reader* written by Ioan Popa Reteganu from Brasow, approved by the Ministry to be used in schools in Romania, as well as *The Reader and grammar* compiled by Eneja Hodos from Caransebes, approved by the consistories in Arad and Caransebeş and used in many schools in Banat. Two textbooks were used for teaching Hungarian written by the author from Arad, Ioan Roman, *First Reader for Learning Hungarian language* and *Second reader for learning Hungarian language*, published by Mako and approved by the Consistory of Arad in 1898. In 1904 Consistory of Arad approved the use of Hungarian textbook for Hungarian language teaching, written by Julia Grofşorean and Josif Moldovan. In geography classes in schools in Belinc inspectorate the textbook written by Vasile Goldis was used, printed in Braşov and approved by the Consistory in 1900, for use in all schools in Transylvania. Variety of books were used for history classes, like, for example, *The History of the Fatherland* and *General World History* written by Vasile Goldis, as well as those published in Brasov and those textbooks with the same titles whose author was Ioan Tuducescu. For natural science classes a manual written by Julie Vuia *Practical education in natural sciences* which was used in schools in the territory of Arad diocese since 1904. In other schools the textbook written by Ioan Tuducescu was used. The textbook *Elements of Physics* was used for physics classes written by Ioan Darius from Brasov. Arad Consistory approved it, but at the same time it was recommended that textbook written by Josif Balan from Caransebeş should not be used in schools. Two textbooks were used for economics classes, one written by Ioan Tuducescu – *Introduction to Economics* and another written by George Maior – *Practical course in economics*. There are other textbooks listed in the report on the textbooks used in the inspectorate of Lipova, like, for example the one written by Ioan Vancu *Intuitive exercises*, the textbook written by Ioan Tuducescu *Arithmetic*, *The History of Arad County* by Damaskin Medrea or *Practical Course in*

Constitution written by Julia Vuia. Apart from maps, charts, globes and other teaching means were used in schools.

The teacher Ioan Tuducescu from Lipova was the author of numerous textbooks. In 1876 he published a *Roman history for public schools*. In the introductory part of the textbook he addresses students and teachers in the following way: "Children, I have written this book for you to learn and get to know the magnificent and great origin of the Romanian people, to see how great and strong our predecessors were, and how small and weak we are today. If you, however, are able to grasp the events well, you will understand and be convinced that nothing else but misunderstandings had weakened the power of Romanian people. So, children, try and learn according to the examples of your predecessors and get used to live together in peace since your youngest age, a life full of understanding and brotherly love, since this is the only way to have sweet and happy future". From the very beginning the author of the textbook underlines the Latin origin of Romanians and writes about the emperor Trajan he considers the greatest ruler and he also states that "there neither was nor will ever be an emperor so great and a hero so brave like Trajan used to be".⁵ The textbook also contains lessons dealing with the Romanians on the other side of Carpathians, like, for example, Stefan the Great, Mihailo the Brave, who was also called the "greatest husband" of Romanian nations. The events which occurred in the 19th century are also mentioned, like the revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu and the union of the provinces, and in the lesson 29 the history of Bukovina is outlined. The textbook also contains statistical data referring to inhabitants of Banat, Crişana, Transylvania, Bukovina in order to prove that Romanians are the majority nation despite the measures taken by the authorities in Budapest. In the last part of the textbook patriotic songs are published. The publishing of the textbook written by Ioan Tuducescu caused discontent of the minister of faith in Budapest, who demanded the textbook to be withdrawn from use. At the meeting of the Consistory of Arad, the request of the minister was accepted and a circular letter was sent to all school inspectors informing them that the textbook is withdrawn from schools, and the royal court in Timișoara prosecuted Tuducescu. It is also stated in the claim against him that the priests and teachers who used the textbook risked to be suspended, giving the example of the teacher Blajiu Codreanu from Sântmiclăușul who had also been prosecuted for using the textbook.

In 1883 Ioan Tuducescu published the textbook titled *Illustrated Primer for Primary Schools*, consisting of two parts and used in the first and the second primary school grades. In its first part, the primer dealt with writing small letters, and the second part was actually a reader.⁶ The primer was very successful so that its second edition was published, and until 1891 there were 6 editions of the same textbook which was printed in 18,000 copies.⁷

⁵ I. Tuducescu, *Istoria Românilor pentru școalele populare române*, Arad 1876, 7.

⁶ Onisifor Ghibu *Din istoria literaturii didactice românești*, volume II, borrowed from the Annals of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1916, p 47

⁷ *Ibid*, p.48

Ioan Tuduceșcu wrote a Romanian language textbook for primary schools which was also published in several editions. In the preface of the 1881 edition it was pointed out that the textbook was compiled according to the principles “adopted by the Romanian Academy”. Tuduceșcu informs teachers about the “rules of Romanian orthography officially adopted by the Romanian academy in 1880 and 1881”; the textbook also includes a supplement part representing an evidence of increasingly stronger connections between Transylvania and Romania and the existence of links close relations between the intellectuals from Arad and Bucharest. Ioan Tuduceșcu is also the author of the textbook under the title *History of Hungary*, emphasizing in the preface that he wrote it for those students who could understand it and make useful conclusions according to reading. He underlines the importance of history “that teaches us to be eager and get familiar with the facts and thoughts of great people and the important events our predecessors had experienced and which are worth to remember.” Hungarian kings are also mentioned in the book, and the most significant place among them belongs to Iancu Corvin de Hunedoara. The author highlights the Romanian origin of the prince, listing properties of Corvin family in Transylvania.

Textbooks written by the teachers from Arad in the late nineteenth century were used for several decades, and in the mentioned period several editions of these textbooks were published. The list of textbooks made in 1936 shows that among those used in the last five years in the school in Sâmbăteni there are those published in the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The textbooks *General Agronomy* for the fifth grade and *Cattle Breeding* for the seventh grade written by Iuliu Vuia were used, as well as an agronomy textbook written by Ioan Tuduceșcu.

Among important textbooks authors the prominent place belonged to Iulian Vuia, who wrote them starting from the latest and most contemporary principles of pedagogy. He wrote several primers. The most significant one was the *Primer for the first primary school grade* written according to the method of live sounds introduced by I. Gabel, whose first edition was published in Arad in 1905 where it was well received. By 1913 the manual was reprinted for seven times. The consistory of Arad approved the use of the new in December 22nd 1906, according to the peer-review written by the pedagogue Petru Pipos. The primer was used in numerous schools in Transylvania and Banat. Teachers from Brad thought that “outstanding results” can be reached according to the use of the new primer. Vuia was also the author of a number of readers published in the first decade of the twentieth century diocesan printing house in Arad. *The Reader for the fifth and sixth grade of primary school* was published in 1912, the textbook compiled according to the new curriculum. In the peer-review published in the journal *Romanul* issued in Arad in September 19th 1912, importance of readers was emphasized and it was stated that they could be considered “gospels of confessional schools”. The author insisted on certain famous personalities of Romanian culture, emphasizing traditions and legends of Romanian people and highlighting the cultural unity of the Romanians.

In his primers Iuliu Vuia dedicated a lot of attention to important figures of Romanian culture, like, for example, Anton Pan, Mihai Eminescu, Dimitrije Bolintineanu, Vasile Aleksandri, George Coșbuc or Dimitrie Țichindeal. The teacher from Babat was the author of grammar textbook for public schools. In 1906 the following textbooks were published

in Arad: *Practical Course in Romanian language; Etymology, Syntax, Stylistics, Spelling and Literature for grades III-VI*. Until 1913 the textbooks had 9 issues and the last one dating back in 1913 was compiled according to the requirements imposed by the new curriculum.

Through his primers and readers Iuliu Vuia introduced the idea of national character of pedagogy in practice and supported development of practical teaching, since he was the author of important books on agriculture and economics. In 1904 in Brasov he published *The Practical Natural History Teaching for Public schools* which was by 1911 reprinted for three times. In the preface to the 1911 textbook the author starts from pedagogical ideas of Luben and Jung and attributes importance of knowing about resources: “being familiar with the products of nature is of great importance, having in mind that the better and more accurately we know them, the better we can use them for our own benefit”. His recommendation to teachers when teaching natural history contents was to start with the elements their students are familiar with in order to gradually get to unknown elements. The textbook was used in Transylvania and Banat and was approved by the Ministry. According to the Regulation No. 2384 of July 6 1904 the textbook was approved by the Consistory in Arad and in March 1906 by the Consistory of Caransebes. In 1906 *The Practical Course in National Economy for Primary Schools* was published in Arad. It was intended for students of fifth and sixth grade and offered knowledge in agriculture, horticulture, fruit growing, viticulture, as well as basic notions of beekeeping and cattle breeding. According to his textbooks in agronomy and economy Vuia exercised powerful influence on the changes in mentality of Romanian people living in villages, having in mind that from the very young age students had the opportunity to acquire basic agriculture notions which could be subsequently applied in practice. An observation can be made that in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century agricultural schools started to develop and there was an increased number of students, children of wealthy farmers who attended these schools.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century a number of teachers from Arad became important teachers and pedagogues, supported by the professors who used to work in Preparatoria in Arad. This is the period when the teachers Josif Moldovan, Petru Vancu, Iuliu Grofşorean, Nicholai Stefu and Nikolae Boskaj started their pedagogical activity. They published many textbooks. According to the initiative of Josif Moldovan the teachers from Arad published *A primer – first reader* In 1897. This book was used in numerous schools and in the period of 10 years in had 7 issues, each of them in not less than 10000 copies.⁸ The textbook was acknowledged in Bucharest, as well, where in one review it was presented as “superior in regard to both its contents and graphic design, when compared to other former textbooks”.⁹ As a consequence of their success in 1897 teachers from Arad published a whole range of school textbooks for Romanian language teaching. However, they used to face numerous problems which were the consequence of the measures taken by the authorities in Budapest. The sixth edition of the *Second reader for public school students* was conditioned by deletion of certain patriotic poems and songs, while in the case of the textbooks for the fourth, fifth

⁸ Dan Roman, *Oameni de seamă ai Aradului*, EdVasile Goldiş University Press, Arad 2011, 86.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.97

and sixth grade, the authorities demanded “supplementation by the contents regarding geography, constitution and history of Hungary.”¹⁰ In 1910 the reader for the third grade was banned because it did not contain the poem *My Country* as it had been requested by authorities in Budapest in 1908.

At the end of the nineteenth century, due to the politics of Budapest, schools and church became the most important Romanian institutions in the empire. Arad became an important cultural and political centre where a number of professors and teachers were active, searching for solutions of the problems Romanian schools were facing, having in mind the consequences of a difficult conditions teaching in Romanian language was going through after the measures of hungarization introduced by the authorities. In these conditions the pedagogues in Arad were investing a lot of efforts in development of education in Romanian language and development of Romanian national awareness in villages in Romania. Numerous intellectuals had great influence on preservation of national awareness preparing Romanian society for the unification with the mother country.

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¹⁰ Onisifor Ghibu *Teaching of Romanian literary history*, Ed Teaching and Pedagogică Bucharest, p 229.

Biographical note

Maria Aleksandra Pantea was born in 1982 in Arad. She graduated history from the University de West in Timisoara in 2004, and she attended master studies at the University “Vasile Goldis” in Arad where she defended her thesis titled “The History of Transylvania in Middle-European Context” in 2006. She has been a doctor student at the University in Oradea, under the mentorship of Prof Dr Ioan Godea. She is an author of one monograph book and a number of studies published in books of collected articles and journals in Romania and Serbia, in the field of cultural history and history of education. She has participated in many conferences and projects.