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În memoria lui Paul H. Stahl (1925–2025)

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INTRODUCTION

IRINA STAHL*

The current issue of the *Revista Română de Sociologie* (Journal of Romanian Sociology) is dedicated to Paul H. Stahl (May 4, 1925 – September 16, 2008), Romanian sociologist of French and German descent, who fled to France in the late 1960s, to escape communist censorship and persecutions and became a significant reference in the field of European Ethnology.

This volume completes the series of memorial issues dedicated to the former members of the Romanian school of sociology. Two previous issues published by the same journal have been dedicated to Dimitrie Gusti, founder of what is known as the Sociological School of Bucharest (1–2/2005) and to Henri H. Stahl, one of the school's most prominent members (3–4/2001)¹. The latter, edited by Paul H. Stahl in memory of his father, contains an edifying introductory study, describing the fate of the Romanian sociology before and after World War II. Written from his own personal experience, and with a detachment that only the passing of time can bring, the text summarises the evolution of the discipline, with a special focus on the dramatic impact brought by the communist ban, in 1948.

Paul H. Stahl was part of the last generation of sociologists trained after World War II. Unable to continue his social studies, he took refuge in ethnology and art history studies, with a particular interest in comparative studies with the neighbouring Southeast European regions. In many ways, as Ilie Bădescu argues in his article, he was a continuator of the school's principles. However, bringing in a comparative – at first South-Eastern and later, European – perspective, he was also an innovator, taking these principles one step further, as Lucian Dumitrescu claims.

After experiencing the extreme ideological control of the 1950s and the 1960s, Stahl strongly opposed any kind of imposition on his scientific production. As I show in my study, his quest for academic freedom continued in France, where it materialized in the publication of his two collections: *Études et Documents*

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¹ The two memorial issues are available at: https://www.revistadesociologie.ro/sites/default/files/rrs_nr.1-2_2005.pdf; https://www.revistadesociologie.ro/sites/default/files/rrs_nr._3-4_2001.pdf (last accessed 24.11.2025)

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Balkaniques et Méditerranéennes et Sociétés Européennes. Both allowed him to publish what and who he wanted (from unknown or forgotten authors, to authors writing in less known or “exotic” languages), with the only criteria, the one of the scientific relevance, in mind.

One of the very few PhD supervisors in Paris specializing in traditional South-East European societies, Paul H. Stahl contributed to the formation of several generations of anthropologists who later actively contributed to the development of the discipline in their native countries. Stahl’s contribution to the creation of Greek anthropology is described by Evangelos Karamanes.

Cătălina Vătăşescu, in her investigation, reveals the extent of Stahl’s knowledge in Albanian studies, a research path that certainly justifies more extensive investigations.

The testimonial section includes two texts by Stahl’s former students in Paris: Galina Kabakova and Sokol Kondi. Their contributions bring to our attention the best of human qualities evident in Stahl, thus completing the image of the great scholar.

The volume ends with two book reviews authored by Helena Marinescu and Mircea Păduraru. The first book reviewed is a recent volume reuniting several of Stahl’s studies on social structures in South-East Europe, edited by myself, Stelu Şerban and Andrei Timotin, while the second is a book written by Anamaria Iuga, based on the rich fieldwork completed in Maramureş, just the type of text that Paul Stahl would have promoted in his collections.

Anchored in the Romanian sociological tradition, but well-tuned to the Western scientific knowledge (especially the French tradition) and informed of the South-East European scholarly production, Stahl created a unique oeuvre. Grounded in genuine fieldwork materials and completed by historical and linguistic sources, it is difficult to be placed in a particular scientific landscape or discipline. The major themes he investigates (social structures, blood as a social construct, the social and cultural dimensions of the skull etc.) and the methodology through which he approaches them are original and innovating. His inherent ability to avoid any contamination by political or other ideologies, a very timely topic today, provide an excellent lesson on how to cultivate a healthy sense of intuition through fieldwork experience. Stahl’s life in itself is an enduring example of how academic integrity can be preserved, the living proof that any obstacle can be overcome through academic honesty, moral strength and determination.

Paul H. Stahl’s contributions to the field of social sciences and humanities comprise many aspects yet to be investigated. His books are still to be reedited and translated, and many of his articles are yet to be regrouped in thematic collections. The main goal of this memorial issue is to bring Stahl’s substantial works to the attention of established and emerging scholars and to open new pathways for future studies.

A EUROPEAN EXPONENT OF THE ROMANIAN SCHOOL
OF SOCIOLOGY: PAUL H. STAHL

ILIE BĂDESCU*

ABSTRACT

The present study is part of the category of studies dedicated to the profile of a representative personality within the prestigious Romanian School of Sociology, Paul H. Stahl. Such an approach uses the method of classifying the work and individuals in the class of the tutelary spirits of this School, led by D. Gusti and H. H. Stahl, founders of the Bucharest School of Sociology. The study first establishes the ideatic profile of the School, then presents the methodological innovations and the stages of evolution of this School that were preserved throughout the interwar period until its prohibition with the establishment of the communist regime. In the second part, the study establishes defining elements of the paradigm created by Paul H. Stahl in a comparative research of Southeast Europe. This is the guiding paradigm that distinguishes Paul H. Stahl within that first sociological school of value and international recognition, the Bucharest Sociological School. One of Paul H. Stahl's innovations refers to the studies of supra-village communities. This type of research is part of the ethnosociology that Paul H. Stahl refounded in his comparative ethnosociological research on the peoples of Southeast Europe. Another aspect of the methodological innovations concerns the use of the statistical method in determining the trends and regularities identifiable in the construction techniques of churches. During the Parisian period, his ethnosociological studies will be carried out over a vast area: "starting from the Pyrenees and passing through the Balkan and Romanian space, up to the Caucasus" (Șișeștean, 2000). Under the same paradigmatic framework we find his research dedicated to the historical ethnosociology of mentalities with references to social practices of hierarchization, to vendetta acts specific to the Southeast European area. The third field of studies in the same paradigmatic family that he founded is the one dedicated to the ethnosociology of housing (through which the direction of cultural ecology studies was somehow initiated). The studies through which he will announce the new direction are those dedicated to the Romanian peasant house. Paul Stahl's method replaces the static approach (pertaining to a static typology) with the study of the evolution of building plans and, in general, of the habitat, thus establishing a series of areas covering the entire Romanian territory. The same principle will be resumed, later, in the analysis of family forms (which he calls "domestic groups"), which he classifies not only according to formal-static criteria, extremely used in sociology, but according to an evolutionary principle (he presents this new sociological approach to families in various studies).

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE GUSTI-STAHL SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY. THE SURVIVORS¹

In 1948, “the last group of students of D. Gusti and H. H. Stahl” graduated in sociology, while “in the autumn of that same year, sociology was banned”². D. Gusti’s sociological school was born with the full completion of the national state, on the threshold of the Great Union, in Iași, through the joint participation of two great exponents of the social sciences: a historian, Vasile Pârvan, and an economist, Virgil Madgearu. The school, whose “date of birth” was the same as that of the unified national state, was suppressed at the same time with the annihilation of the national signification of the Romanian state in 1948, as a first consequence of the installation of the Soviet occupation and domination regime.

Peasant spirituality (both in the Christian sense and as a guardian of the nation) was the most unyielding mirror of this occupation regime. The mirroring function of peasant consciousness was still alive in certain schools of thought, such as the Gustian School. The communist regime wanted to ruin and completely destroy it. Everything was targeted: customs, large segments of the population, that ethos that keeps life on the brink of spiritual elevation, works, schools, institutions, social memory, in a word, the collective identity. “We were brought together by common concerns and thoughts”, notes Paul H. Stahl, “about the tragic fate of the country, and we both went into hiding so as not to be deported by the Russians”³.

The ethos of the school experienced a resurgence in 1953, through the attempt by some of the last series of students of the School – P. H. Stahl, Florea Stănculescu and Adrian Gheorghiu – to publish a 16-volume series on peasant architecture: “it would have been, P. H. Stahl tells us, the most complete presentation of European peasant architecture. Stahl, it would have been the most complete presentation of European peasant architecture. However, after five volumes, we were stopped by the ‘central committee’, which considered that the volumes contained ‘too many huts and too many crosses’”⁴. Prominent representatives of the Gusti School, such as Mircea Vulcănescu, the great martyr, as well as A. Golopenția and Traian Herseni, had been thrown into prison. Other exponents of the School were banned or, like P. H. Stahl, pushed into a hopeless exile. All of this was aimed at annihilating a sociological school of global visibility. If we take

¹ The first five pages of this study include parts of the article, revised and expanded, published in *Revista Română de Sociologie*, no. 1–2, 2005 (Dimitrie Gusti commemorative issue), containing strictly factual information, chronology and details of the methods used in field research by members of the School.

² P. H. Stahl, *Oameni și sate de pe Valea Moldovei*, Paideia, 2004, p. 7.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

as a reference point the beginning of the monographic campaigns with the Goicea Mare monographic survey from 1925, then we can estimate the lifespan of this great school of sociology at 23 years. At that time, most of the school's students were between 25 and 40 years old. If we measure the longevity of a school by the age of its members, we can say that the school would have naturally survived in its entirety at least until the 1980s. Despite all the adversities of the times, the Gusti School did not die then, in the 1950s, but survived through its European-renowned successors such as Paul H. Stahl and through late post-war revivals that took it beyond the threshold of the two generations of founders and successors in the broader context of the comparative study of European societies.

THE NOVELTY OF THE BUCHAREST SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY

Now that we are evaluating the activity of one of the largest scientific schools in Romania, with a lifespan of 30 years if we count from the moment the Association for Science and Social Reform was founded (1918) to the date of the official suppression of sociological education (1948), we must ask ourselves what makes this extraordinary movement of scientific spirit to be defined as a school, and one that was christened in Bucharest, or even more rigorously in Goicea Mare, Nereju, Drăguș, Șanț etc.? In a lecture first delivered in France and then, between 1946 and 1947, at several universities in the United States, at Chicago, Harvard, Wisconsin, and Yale, entitled "An Approach to the Study of Social Reality", Gusti sought to characterise the sociological school in Bucharest through the following defining elements: **1.** (comprised of) monographic sociologists; **2.** to investigate social reality as a reality composed of social frameworks and manifestations; **3.** to accept the principle of the primacy of social units ("society as such is nowhere to be found; it appears in the form of well-defined societies – social units – families, villages, towns, regions, states, nations")⁵; **4.** adopting an appropriate method of accessing knowledge of social units as such, as units, which is the monographic method; **5.** admitting that the agent of knowledge is not the isolated individual, the armchair intellectual, but the multidisciplinary team, and that the place of research is not the library but the field study; **6.** the study of social reality must be continued through socio-cultural work in cultural centres, houses of culture and peasant schools; **7.** the goal of all research endeavor is to establish a sociology of the nation. As an illustration of the accomplishments reached by the monographic teams on this axis, Gusti presents American students with statistics on the research carried out up until that moment: 626 villages, towns and regions, the organisation of 5 000 cultural centres and over 500 rural schools. The purpose of the research, Gusti emphasises, is to encompass the whole: "all the villages, towns, and regions of the country", which will ultimately lead to a sociology of the nation. **8.** Finally,

⁵ D. Gusti, *Opere*, vol. III, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970, p. 431 (eds. O. Bădina and O. Neamțu).

another defining element of the school is the Social Service Law, passed in 1939, which was enforced for one year. **9.** A new generation of university students, “prepared for constructive work, in accordance with a flexible plan based on the direct study of social reality and the introduction of compulsory social service for all higher education graduates”, as the most formidable school of national energy; **10.** Important elements of the Gusti school are, finally, the central and regional social institutes (that of Moldova, of Transylvania, of Banat-Crișana and so on); “The Archive for Science and Social Reform as a type of publication with a permanent section: The Monographic Archive”; **11.** The village museum as an “effective method of comparing village vs city”, (...) gathering houses from 30 Romanian villages, representative of all regions of the country⁶; **12.** The model village or the new village like the one that has been built by teams in Dioști, Romanați County; 12 The sociological film. To all these we should add those that Gusti did not mention: the social atlas, the social encyclopaedia, the ethnomusicology and the comparative ethnosociology which is also owed to Paul H. Stahl.

THE PERMANENCE OF A PARADIGM

We can draw a few conclusions regarding the paradigm of this extraordinary school. The first remark is that the School experience a refounding through its most representative successor, Paul H. Stahl, who innovated the original paradigm, adding a new paradigmatic direction, that of comparative ethnosociology studies applied upon the entire South-Eastern Europe. Thanks to Stahl’s two university courses, a new generation of researchers was formed who can testify to the strength of the Gusti School, which was usually simplistically understood as a school of village monographs. However, this is not what makes the School original, especially since the monographic method is linked to the prestige of another school of sociology, the School of F. Le Play, which was remembered precisely as the first European “monographic school”. The originality of the Gusti School’s paradigm lies in something else entirely: it is the first school of sociology to have created a methodology for the comparative-progressive research of *social units*, from the family and village as *social units*, to *supra-village communities* and from these to *national societies* and *international units* – consisting of groups of nations such as the League of Nations, or those attested by Paul H. Stahl’s Balkan ethnosociology, from which one can make the leap to the science of that social unit called humanity.

The method is that of *progressive sociological integrism*, and the procedures used to integrate these *dissecta members* that are the disparate knowledge about social units are: *the monograph of social units*, *the method of regional studies*, *the social and ethnopolitical encyclopaedia*, *the sociological film*, *the sociological*

⁶ *Ibidem.*

exhibition (i.e. organised according to a sociological concept), *the sociological museum* such as the “Village Museum” and, culminating, the comparative ethnosociology of South-Eastern Europe and the legal anthropology of traditional European societies, a paradigm illustrated by courses with approximately the same titles taught for 20 years at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

These methods give brilliance and attestation to what we believe could be called the paradigm of sociological integrism which also gives this extraordinary school its originality on a global scale. The paradigm proves its durability through its followers.

CHRONOLOGY OF METHODS. SOCIOLOGICAL FILM, SOCIOLOGICAL MUSEUM, SOCIOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS, COMPARATIVE ETHNOSOCIOLOGY

For a clearer understanding of the energy of this school, we will provide a brief chronology of the research methodology used by the royally-patronized teams. The display of the methods is no less impressive than that of the theories. Let's start with the sociological film. This was used very early on among the methods of the teams, which shows the exceptional energy and inventiveness of this school. If the monographic campaigns began in 1925, the first sociological film was made in Drăguș in 1929, in Cornova in 1931, and in Șanț in 1936. While the first two were silent, the one in Șanț already had a soundtrack with music from C-tin Brăiloiu's ethnomusicology collection. In 1936, another film was made for the Village Museum; in 1937 a film was made by Stahl and Brăiloiu, while and in 1939 a film was made based on a script by Golopenția, not to mention the ones made in Rudăria and Prigor⁷. As early as 1934, Gusti had presented his project for a “filmed Romanian sociology” and a “sociological museum of Romania”.

The sociological museum is also a technique that has been used since 1928, with the first “museum from Fundul Moldovei”. At the same time, Mac Constantinescu and H. H. Stahl organised the first public sociological museum in the Sociology Seminar hall, with materials from Nereju, Putna, and Fundu Moldovei (the exhibits would also be used at the International Exhibition in Barcelona). The “Drăguș room” (*odaia drăgușană*) was set up in the Seminar hall with items from the village of Drăguș⁸. In 1936, the Village Museum was created, and in 1937 and 1939, exhibitions were held in Paris and New York, with the Romanian pavilions based in their entirety on the concept of the Gusti School. A mention should be made of the aerial photography method used in Drăguș in 1929 and in Cornova in 1931⁹.

⁷ See the notes of O. Neamțu and O. Bădina, in D. Gusti, *Opere*, vol. I, Editura Academiei, 1968, p. 534.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

The monographs followed roughly this sequence: 1925 in Goicea Mare, 1926 in Rușețu, 1927 in Nereju, 1928 in Fundu Moldovei. The 1934–1938 period was the culmination of the monographic campaigns by the student teams. Among the authors of the Nereju monograph, we find, alongside the old monographers, those recruited from among the students, Fl. Florescu, G. Serafim, Ion Filip, etc. In 1926, Ion Setlacec developed the industrial monographs project, so that between 1925 and 1953, Gusti's attention would also be directed towards cities, inaugurating a new direction in sociology, *the theory of social problems*. Here are just a few illustrative titles: Veturia Manuilă: "Pauperism and the family crisis in a marginal neighbourhood of Bucharest", Ștefan Popescu, "The street sweepers of the capital", Victor Tufescu: "A city in decline: Botoșani" etc¹⁰. It is clear that all research of this kind focuses on a social problem that is central to a village, neighbourhood, region, city, segment of the population etc.

THE PROJECT FOR A "SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DICTIONARY OF ROMANIA"

What are the most important moments and specific features of this school of sociology? First, we will note that the Gustian school of sociology had a multi-axial structure. The central axis of the school was **rural studies**, but the school had as its students M. Vulcănescu, both a Christian philosopher and rural sociologist; A. Golopenția and Sabin Manuilă, the founders of Romanian ethnopolitics; Ion Ionică and Tr. Herseni, rural sociologists but also great anthropologists, linked to paleoethnography, regional ontology and the method of structural analysis ("progressive comparativism", as Ion Ionică called it); C-tin Brăiloiu, the founder of ethnomusicology, which H. Garfinkel announced as his own invention some 40 years later. And the examples could go on. Gusti distinguished himself through studies dedicated to peace and war, international relations (he is among the most representative exponents of this new science), and through H. H. Stahl and Paul H. Stahl, a new comparativism is inaugurated, through which the studies of the ethnosociology of "Southeast Europe", of the third Europe, researched as such by N. Iorga, but also by Marija Gimbutas, will be reborn.

However, the main focus of the school is on rural studies, which are organised into several stages and branches:

- The stage of village monographs, which began in 1924 in Goicea Mare and faded around 1938, without disappearing entirely from the school's concerns;

¹⁰ Regarding the data on the stages of the School's activities see *Ibidem*.

- The stage of regional monographs, which began in the middle of the third decade, around 1938–1940, diversifying only to culminate in the research of Prof. H. H. Stahl, who left us his monumental work on the “devălmaș” (communal) communities and, at the same time, the monographic volumes “60 de sate” (60 villages), the fruit of field studies by royally-patronized students team, as evidence of an extraordinary offensive of rural knowledge and an energy almost unmatched in European sociology;
- The stage of the Social Service Law, which unfortunately had a very short life;
- The “Encyclopaedic” stage of the school, already subordinated to the project of an integrated science of the nation, intended to prepare the transition to a comparative science of nations, within a Social Institute of Nations, which Gusti had designed together with the American McIver alongside the League of Nations, an original contribution to the science of international relations;
- The stage of major international exhibitions, of the Village Museum and of the sociological film;
- Finally, we can mention the school’s resurgence in the 16–volume project on peasant architecture in 1953, thanks to the project launched by Paul H. Stahl;
- The last stage of the School is one of unexpected growth, as the seed of the school will now sprout into several branches:
 - The first branch is entirely linked to the name of Prof. Paul H. Stahl, who will inaugurate the paradigm of *Balkan research*, followed by one of his students, Prof. Gh. Șișeșteanu, whose studies focus on the north-western part of the country and the Northern Carpathians, in a comprehensive approach that combines Prof. Paul H. Stahl’s method with A. Golopenția’s method of ethnopolitical studies;
 - At the same time, it is worth noting the branch formed by the efforts of Professors Vasile Caramelia and Ion Chelcea. A group of rural anthropologists formed around Prof. V. Caramelia, led by Prof. Gh. Geană and other remarkable young researchers who would reconnect Romanian research to famous American traditions and paradigms, as in the case of the project to create an axiological atlas of Romania.

What we wanted to reveal in this first part of the presentation was a significant aspect, namely that the continuity and energy of this science owe much to the survivors of the Gusti School, H. H. Stahl, T. Herseni, V. Caramelia, Paul H. Stahl, exemplary personalities who, through their just as exemplary discretion, illustrate the tragedy of a history and the strength of a culture, the history and culture of the Romanian people.

**P. H. STAHL AND THE STUDY OF SUPRA-VILLAGE COMMUNITIES
THE FUNDU MOLDOVEI RESEARCH**

To illustrate the hypothesis of the School's continuity around its survivors, I will refer to a phenomenon of recurrence in rural studies and, I would say, of a great love for the Romanian village, a phenomenon that began in 1928 with the field survey at Fundul Moldovei, only to return to the spotlight in 2004 with a memorable book by Prof. Paul H. Stahl, *Oameni și sate...* (People and Villages...)¹¹.

In 1928, Gusti initiated the monographic survey in Fundu Moldovei. This created an exceptional opportunity to learn about the village. The documents published by Stefanelli on the Old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc (Ocolul Câmpulungului Moldovenesc), were supplemented by documents collected in the field, so that the memory of the documents now mirror the living social memory, foreshadowing one of the aspects of Gusti's paradigm: the belief that the structures of a people can be understood, with their whole history, through current research.

The method was given the name of *social archaeology* by H. H. Stahl, who codified it. For linguistic and culturological purposes, it was also used by Hașdeu, through his questionnaires, and even by Densușianu, however strong the response to the latter's conclusions may have been. The articles in Hașdeu's *Etimologicum* are true monographic studies applied to structures and institutions, starting from the memory **of the word** within its **area** of circulation. S. Mehedinți will work in the same way in his ethnopolitics, applied onto the entire Romanian space.

The studies from Fundu Moldovei reveal a curious type of village, the so-called "scattered villages", with "houses built far apart" and with "a centre that has not yet been formed". Here lies the great surprise, the great discovery of one of Gusti's latest students. The core of a village community, we learn from these revisited studies, is not the "centre of the village" but the "neighbourhood". The monographic studies rediscovered and validated, in a different way, the theory of the American C. H. Cooley, who identified in the primary group of *the neighbourhood* the second *matrix*, alongside the family, of the genesis of the self. The studies dedicated to the village community in the Old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc touch upon one of the highly significant issues that H. H. Stahl studied in depth, that of the "supra-village communities of free peasants", as Paul H. Stahl calls them. The issue is also highly topical in the context of the current reform and the various regionalisation projects, all of which excel in ignoring any tradition of rural history in this matter. "The Old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc is one of the three peasant 'republics' mentioned by Cantemir; another was Țara Vrancei, which also benefited from the publication of a collection of documents. Both are interesting and unique in terms of understanding Romanian social life, because both deal with the problems of *supra-village communities* of free peasants"¹².

¹¹ P. H. Stahl, *Oameni și sate de pe Valea Moldovei*, Paideia, 2004.

¹² P. H. Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Supra-village communities are not a strictly Romanian phenomenon. Paul Stahl has conducted comparative research on supra-village communities on the European continent¹³. The phenomenon is extremely topical in the context of the relaunch of regionalisation projects in Romania, because “supra-village communities” of various names (peasant republics in Cantemir, valley associations in Iorga’s writings, “countries” in the living tradition of the people, supra-village communities in the terminology of P. H. Stahl, communal communities (“sate devălmașe”) in H. H. Stahl etc.) were not ignored by the Austrian Empire, which used them in the logistics of its border regiments. Wealth communities were also born on such a basis. Why should today’s reformers ignore them?! The cause of the desire to ignore them would certainly be ignorance itself, and the effect would undoubtedly be harmful. Let us insist further on the distinctive features of the paradigm inaugurated by Paul H. Stahl. The first guiding contribution concerns the redefinition of traditionalism, as his student Gheorghe Șișeștean remarks. “In a Romanian culture still dominated by the philosophical and cultural paradigms of the interwar period, in which traditionalism was equivalent to peasant rurality, Paul H. Stahl proposes a sociological vision of traditionalism, which is in fact a classicism at the level of habitat experiences, and thus characterised by the repetitiveness and exemplarity of concrete experience, whether peasant, boyar or even urban. In this sense, traditionalism is a dynamic form of classicism, of the existence of guiding ideas, in the permanent construction and reconstruction of the habitat, whether urban or rural”¹⁴. Stahl’s original idea is that habitat models are rooted in the same collective mentality, which sheds new light on housing archetypes. The foundation of this paradigm, which crystallised definitively during the period of comparative studies on Balkan traditionalism, can be identified in the research begun in 1952, together with Paul Petrescu, on peasant architecture, as well as in the monograph on the Jiu Valley, co-authored with him.

**“THEY WERE MAINLY (CONSCIOUS?)
AGENTS OF THE POWER THAT HAD OCCUPIED OUR COUNTRY”**

In 1952, Paul H. Stahl began his research in the Bistrița Valley, on which topic we shall present below a rather extensive memoir, representative for the devastating war waged by the Bolshevik occupation regime against Romanian sociology and ethnosociology. Stahl himself was the target of this operation of suppressing the School in all its components: its founding members, its continuators, its theoretical core, its logistics, its methodology, its research and action tools, and, last but not least, the memory and continuity or the tradition aspect of the School. Here is an excerpt from the sociological memoirs of the great Romanian ethnosociologist Paul H. Stahl:

¹³ P. H. Stahl, “«Pays» et communautés de vallée: Exemples roumains et européens”, in *Revue roumaine d’histoire*, tome XXXVII, 3–4, București, 1998, pp. 151–172.

¹⁴ [Gh. Șișeștean], *Enciclopedia valorilor reprimite*, vol. I, 2000, p. 657.

“(…) Petrescu was already on the field, I arrived a few days later. I climbed as close to the mountain as possible, then slowly descended by bicycle to the village of Ceahlău, where the host I knew was living. I slept for one night on a table in a town hall, the second one in the house of a ‘chiabur’; in those years and until after 1960, those sent to do research in the villages slept in the houses of the chiaburi. In the middle of the night, a few ‘thugs’ came, dragged the rich man out into the yard and started punching and kicking him, while his family came out of the house, screaming. Then they ‘lifted’ him up and took him who knows where, certainly not to a good place. Awake, I sat in the dark, my heart pounding; I had never seen such violence since the beatings by the legionaries. I wondered if it would be my turn next to have the superiority of communist thinking explained to me. In the morning, the women told me that their husband and father had been taken away because he did not want to join the collective¹⁵. Events of the same nature terrified me repeatedly, in other places, more often in northern Moldova (...)”.

“(…) I set off downhill; as I approached my host’s house, I wondered what the fearsome Haiduc, the guard dog, would say. I heard him barking from afar, but before he saw me, he began to yelp with joy, recognising me after two years. Petrescu told me that he had recognised him too. My host was kind; I stayed there for a few days, then set off again alone, riding my bicycle downhill. I slept at the monastery in Bistrița; when I went outside to photograph a church, I was arrested by some vigilant agents who were lurking everywhere; they put me in a miserable, dirty little room with a filthy bed, took my shoelaces and my belt. Left alone, I did not know what would happen next, and I remembered that Calistrat Hogaș had suffered the same fate. They put me in a car, along with my bicycle, took me to the security headquarters in Bacău and made me stand in the middle of a windowless room; in front of me, three men were sitting at a table covered with a red cloth.

‘Who sent you? Tell us what you did in the Bistrița Valley. Who do you work for? Why won’t you tell the truth?’

I was still standing and couldn’t go to the toilet. I told them that I wasn’t alone, that there were also researchers from other institutes there at the same time; I mentioned the Russian name of a colleague.

‘What do you have against the Soviets?’

All these agents were not only the foot soldiers of a dictatorial regime, they were above all the (conscious?) agents of the power that had occupied our country.

In the morning, the regional security chief arrived.

‘Who sent you?’

‘The Academy.’

‘Check it out.’

They called and confirmed that this was indeed the case.

‘Let him go.’

¹⁵ Agricultural production cooperative.

I went outside; as I was leaving, taking my bicycle, one of the people who had questioned me said to me: ‘Don’t do it again.’ To this day, I still can’t find peace because I don’t know what he meant by ‘don’t do it again’ and I’m afraid I’ll do it again. I fled straight to Bucharest, but I had gathered enough material to write a study (...)”¹⁶.

This was the situation at that stage in the history of a great scientific school. The protagonist was the young researcher Paul H. Stahl, descended from an illustrious lineage in Romanian spiritual history: his grandfather had been Nicolae Iorga’s stenographer, H. H. Stahl was co-founder of the great sociological school in Bucharest, a world-renowned personality, Paul Stahl, creator of a scientific paradigm, and no less a world-renowned personality.

The research in the Bistrița Valley was followed by others. Of particular interest is the programme of studies dedicated to glazed ceramics in Transylvania, with the aim of dispelling a misconception about a craft and thus the risk of establishing a false tradition. Here are the restorative memoirs of the then young researcher, accompanied by the same tireless Paul Petrescu:

“(…) The article on glazed ceramics in Transylvania was written at the urging of George Oprescu; he had visited the Ethnographic Museum in Cluj and there, one of the curators had told him that the glazed ceramics were all non-Romanian because Romanians were not allowed to use glaze. ‘Is that so? Go and see for yourselves how things stand.’ We set off together (with Paul Petrescu), it was May; we started in northern Transylvania. The beautiful weather made our journey between villages easier; in the mornings, we saw the unbridled madness of the larks in springtime; they fly straight up towards the sun, singing without interruption, then fall like bullets and remain motionless. Legend tells us why: the lark was a girl in love with the sun, who was turned into a bird by the sun’s mother. Arriving at Târgu Lăpuș on a Sunday afternoon, we were stopped by a well-drunk militiaman who asked for our identity cards. However, a militiaman, even a drunk one, is still a militiaman; the stupid guy in a uniform, with a gun in his pocket, is the living image of authority. He took them, read them carefully and told us that there was something suspicious about them.

‘What exactly?’

‘Why are you both called Paul?’

That was the second unanswered question asked by the trusted ‘authorities’, a question that still keeps me awake at night. They confiscate our ID cards; in the morning, a representative from Baia Mare arrives at the local security office; sober and polite, he lets us go. They had to guard a mountain that no longer exists; the Soviets had stripped it off because it contained uranium. We continued on our way, finding Romanian glazed pottery everywhere; in Hațeg we even found the chest of a Romanian guild of potters, even though Oprescu had been told that Romanians did not have such thing as guilds. We

¹⁶ Apud [Gh. Șișeștean], *Enciclopedia valorilor reprimare*, vol. I, 2000, pp. 660–662.

published the materials we had gathered, including a photograph of the guild's lid.

Almost everywhere, in addition to the obsession with espionage, the population was informed that capitalist enemies were launching paratroopers; when we entered a house or arrived in a village, the first question was, 'Are you paratroopers?' We replied that we were not, as if we would have admitted it if we had been".

"(...) I. D. Ștefănescu; his whole life professor in France, having been called back to the country during the war to help the Romanian university, had come and could not leave. I was fortunate to always have people of the highest calibre around me; I. D. Ștefănescu was one of them; Petrescu and I both valued and loved him. We are grateful for everything we learned from him; we would meet at Barbu Slătineanu's house once a week until he was arrested. Corina Niculescu and Elena Secoșan would also come, and sometimes other former students of the professor. After Slătineanu's arrest for imaginary crimes, together with another group of intellectuals (such as Șerban Cioculescu and Vladimir Streinu), we met several times at my home. At a time when real lessons had become rare, Ștefănescu's words were like living water; after what we had learned in sociology, they were the most thorough lessons we had ever received.

In Maramureș (where we went together several times, then separately), we travelled from Salva to Vișeu, clandestinely, on the platform of a freight car. While waiting for the train to leave, we sat on the bank of the nearby river, listening to the music coming from the station loudspeaker: a German recording of Brahms' Fourth Symphony. Every time I hear it, I remember the journey to Vișeu. A freight car next to ours had a cabin; as the train started moving, we saw the door open; someone waved us over so we wouldn't be seen on the open platform. It was Șrul Edelstein, the son of a former rabbi from Vișeu; he sheltered us in his house overnight, he was friendly and curious to know what we were doing. Travelling by train the next day, between two villages in Maramureș, we saw two militiamen getting on: 'ID cards!' One of them saw the cameras. We knew that for the authorities, a camera was a tool of espionage. He ordered us, 'Get off and come with me.' We got off, frozen with fear, and in Vișeu, surprise: instead of the police station, he took us to his home and showed us a wild rabbit he had caught the day before. 'Take a photo of my child with the rabbit.' As a joke, it was one of the most unexpected and stupid; he gave us food, it's true, but we would have preferred to go hungry than to go through the fear of being arrested.

Our wives were waiting for us at home, knowing about our repeated adventures with the police; we called them whenever we could to reassure them. Despite all the difficulties, the joy of discovering unknown things and exploring the terrain never left us. Sometimes, when I got tired, I was satisfied with what we had found, but Petrescu always wanted to go to the end of the village, for who knows what sensational things we would find. Much of what

we gathered in those years, information and photographs, is waiting to be known, and we will bring it to light someday. Fifty years have passed since then, an eternity, but it seems like yesterday (...)¹⁷

The monograph of the life of a European scholar such as Paul H. Stahl follows in the tradition of Gustian autosociology. Studying this type of writing is a task for those who want to use the methodology of the well-known life stories.

PAUL H. STAHL'S PARADIGM OF COMPARATIVE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPEAN ETHNOSOCIOLOGY

I will now present a brief outline of the defining ideas for what I consider to be the paradigm of comparative ethnosociological studies of South-Eastern Europe. In the first phase of applied sociology studies, Paul H. Stahl tested his methodology of representative studies that was complementary to the monographic approach. The regime's guillotine put a stop to this line of research, so the young sociologist turned to ethnographic studies, which eventually led to the launch of his own paradigm of ethnosociology. Between 1955 and 1969, the seeds of this new fruit were sown, allowing him, as soon as he arrived in Paris, to take the lead in two major fields: ethnosociology and legal anthropology. Should there be no risk for the term to sound off-putting, I would propose a combination between ethnology and Moreno's term *socionomy*: the sociology of norms, of social normativity, as understood by Jacob Moreno. I would therefore conclude that the field launched by Paul Stahl is that of *ethno-socionomy*, without fear that this compound term would lack substance. Obviously, to avoid the risk of the new term seeming unappealing, I will nevertheless use the established term of ethnosociology. Ethno-socionomy would be the field of research into the normative function of ethnic consciousness in shaping social acts and therefore collective behaviours. This type of research is part of ethnosociology, which was re-established by Paul H. Stahl in his comparative ethnosociological research on the peoples of South-Eastern Europe. Another aspect of methodological innovation concerns the use of statistical methods in determining identifiable trends and regularities in church building techniques¹⁸. During his time in Paris, his ethnosociological studies covered a vast area: "from the Pyrénées to the Caucasus, passing through the Balkans and through Romania. A special place was given to analyses of social organisation in old Eastern Europe. They will be materialised in two important books: *Ethnologie de l'Europe du Sud-Est*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton, 1975 and *Household, village and village confederation in Southeastern Europe*, Columbia University Press, New

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 662–664.

¹⁸ [Gh. Sișeștean], *op. cit.*, p. 669.

York, 1986”¹⁹. Under the same paradigmatic framework, we also find his research dedicated to the historical ethnosociology of mentalities, with references to social practices of hierarchisation and acts of vendetta specific to the South-Eastern European area (see *Histoire de la décapitation*, Paris, Presse Universitaire de France, 1986). The third field of studies in the same paradigmatic family that he founded is the one dedicated to the ethnosociology of housing (which in a way initiated the direction of cultural ecology studies). The author did not abandon the fields he had studied prior to his Parisian period, which had an applied sociological character, such as those focused on the relationship between the social environment and tuberculosis or the relationship between the social environment and schooling. The studies through which he announced the new direction are those dedicated to the Romanian peasant house. “Professor Paul H. Stahl replaces the old static typologies linked mainly to German, Austrian and Hungarian schools with a principle that follows the phenomenon in motion. Thus, houses in a given region are no longer analysed in terms of one or two ‘types’ of plans, but in terms of the evolution of building plans and, in general, of the habitat, thus establishing a series of zones covering the entire Romanian territory”²⁰. The same principle will be revisited later in the analysis of family forms (which he calls ‘domestic groups’), which he classifies not only according to formal-static criteria, widely used in sociology, but also according to an evolutionary principle (he presents this new sociological approach to the family in various studies, of which I would mention a few: *Groupe domestique, maison, maisnie. Le cas roumain*, Lisbon, 1974, *The Domestic Group in Traditional Balkan Societies*, 1978, *La ‘maisnie’ (gospodăria) du paysan roumain*, Freiburg, 1978, *Y se casaron y tuvieron muchos hijos. La perennidad de la casa familiar*, Madrid, 1987, *La regione tribale albanese*, Messina, 1989, *Dimora e composizione del gruppo domestico*, 1996 and, above all, his important book, published in Messina in 1993, entitled *Terra, società, miti nei Balcani*)²¹. Courses and studies on revenge, consanguinity, kinship alliances, food etc., are completed by his famous works such as: *Il sangue e la terra*, Milan, 1978, *Sociétés traditionnelles balkaniques. Contributions à l’étude des structures sociales, Études et Documents Balkaniques...*, 1979, *La Méditerranée. Propriété et structure sociale*, Edisud, 1997. “The areas of social life where the notion of blood intervenes are numerous. These include: kinship, religion, sacrifice, food, vendetta, property”²².

¹⁹ P. H. Stahl, *Ethnologie de l’Europe du Sud-Est*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton, 1975 and *Household, village and village confederation in Southeastern Europe*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986. Apud [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, p. 669.

²⁰ [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, pp. 672–673.

²¹ [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, p. 673.

²² P. H. Stahl, “Consangvinitatea fictivă. Exemple româneşti şi balcanice”. *Silvania*, no. 2, Zalău, 1997, apud [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, p. 675.

I only mentioned P. H. Stahl's studies on supra-village communities to highlight the importance of the methodological hypothesis regarding the rule of 'primacy of social units' in sociological studies.

The most disturbing thing in the rural studies of all monographers is the placement of their area of interest *at the crossroads between the state and the peasants*. Rural studies and monographers have been a real lever for the state, and rural documents, from those of Stefanelli to those compiled through the monographic survey of Fundu Moldovei, bear witness to the increasing burden of the state and history on the shoulders of the peasants. This evolution did not bring new freedoms to the peasants, but new burdens, servitudes, obligations for which they received nothing in return, attesting to Eminescu's famous theory of compensation: "the peasant is taken in a thousand ways and given nothing in exchange" (quoted from memory). Research and documents on this issue, from the Stefanelli documents to the documents of the 1928 monographic survey, reveal something disturbing: the state and the state administration are replacing the supra-village communities, which were in the hands of the peasants, taking over, one after another, the functions of the old village communities (*obști sătești*), so that the communist era found the peasantry largely subjugated. What is even more serious is that even after 1989, no significant attempt was made to restore a structure of great importance for the balance of the state. The danger is that we will end up in a situation where the government rewards the very peasants who sell their land at bargain prices, leading to the future disaster of the nation state itself. The data we have shows that the value of the land is much higher than what is offered to the peasant on the market, and the truth cannot be restored in the absence of a supra-territorial community, even if it is only a representative one.

The merit of the Gustians, illustrating the aristocratic nature of this school, is attested both by the nobility of their souls, open to the anonymous world of peasants, and by the originality of the paradigm they created. We will conclude by referring to some features of the Gustian paradigm in world sociology.

That is the guiding paradigm of the first sociological school of international value and recognition, the Bucharest School of Sociology, as some call it, or the Gusti School or the Gusti–Stahl School, as others of us call it. Whatever its name, it is a priceless legacy, one of the most valuable assets of the Romanian people, which we have a duty to preserve, but above all to enhance. The country is the most relevant framework for the research carried out by the members of the School.

The country is a unit made up of regions, which are themselves territorial units based on villages. Anyone who messes with one part affects the whole structure, which has been built up over thousands of years into this three-layered, harmonious territorial configuration. Therefore, any administrative-territorial reform is wise if it takes into account this millennial configuration. This model of triple-layered settlement called country is the essential lever of the population

ecodynamics of a people. In the new era of universal history, this role as a sustaining factor and therefore as a strategic lever of population ecodynamics has been seriously affected. One of the difficult tasks of sociology as a science of human communities is therefore precisely to explain *the ecodynamics of populations* as an aspect of *social morphology*. This explanatory approach begins by studying the dynamic unit formed by the smallest population group, i.e. the family, and its environment of variation, which is precisely the genealogical structure (the family or lineage) together with the village community system, and returns to this dual unit (the family and its environment of variation: genealogical and cohabitation) with all the conclusions of the static and dynamic analysis. Why can neither the family nor the kinship group ensure the perpetuation of a community? Because the laws of the matrimonial circuit (the circulation of women) can only be respected if there are several kinship groups within the same human group, otherwise they cannot. That is why it is extremely important to know the structural dynamics of a kinship system with all its clans or genealogical branches. The number of genealogical groups, their volume and generational structure are decisive elements in the study of the ecodynamics of a population. The population reproduces not only numerically, i.e. through the variation in the number of individuals from one generation to another (the biological dynamics of a population), but also structurally, i.e. through the variation in the number of families, genealogical groups (with their demographic indexing) from one generation to another. Methodologically, we can frame this analysis in what could be called population econometrics or, quite simply, eco-ethnology. The biological and genealogical reproduction of a population is the axis of a *people's ecogeny*, i.e. its perpetuation as a type of community and *population ecosystem*. Of course, the transition from *village ecosystems* to *ethnic ecosystems* called peoples is a somewhat mysterious matter. If we remain strictly within the historical and/or sociological framework, it will be almost impossible to understand the emergence of those *collective identities* known by their *ethnonym* and called *peoples*. The question of the emergence of peoples is shrouded in mystery. Our hypothesis is that the answer to this question cannot bypass the analysis of the village, but even this does not exhaust the question. The village perpetuated the enduring unity of ethnic identity, that is, that collective identity of varying dimensions that we call peoples, but how to explain its wider territorial scope, called country, remains a mystery. “In the study ‘La consanguinité fictive. Quelques exemples balkaniques’ (Fictitious Consanguinity: Some Balkan Examples), published in *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno*, 14, Milan, 1985²³ (also published in English in *Études et Documents Balkaniques...*,

²³ P. H. Stahl, “La consanguinité fictive. Quelques exemples balkaniques”, appeared in *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno*, 14, Milano, 1985, and also in English in *Études et Documents Balkaniques...*, 13, 1987 and in Romanian, in *Silvania*, no. 2, Zalău, 1997, pp. 17–28.

13, 1987, and in Romanian in *Silvania*, no. 2, Zalău, 1997), analyses the relationship between the idea of consanguinity and the organisation of property. The analysis of this relationship allows us to grasp “the typical way in which a real biological element becomes biological fiction and ends up as a legal act”²⁴. Paul H. Stahl is not only the name of a great personality but also the name of a European scientific paradigm, which he created and gave the permanence of such a creation of supra-personal value.

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²⁴ [Gh. Șișeșteanu], *op. cit.*, p. 530.

ÉTUDES ET DOCUMENTS BALKANIQUES ET MÉDITERRANÉENS,
COLLECTION EDITED BY PAUL H. STAHL

IRINA STAHL*

ABSTRACT

The article proposes an in-depth examination of the two collections published by Paul H. Stahl in Paris: *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (1979–2009, 32 vol., EDBM) and *Sociétés Européennes* (1986–2008, 38 vol., SE), with particular attention given to the first. While in the EDBM Stahl mainly published the studies of his students in Paris and his own works, and only publish texts in French and other foreign languages, SE also included works written in Romanian, by former members of the Romanian sociological school, including his father, or his uncle, and other colleagues. The reasons behind their publication, their content, appearance, and contribution to European sociology and ethnography are analyzed here.

The discussion of Stahl's approach to conducting academic research and his priority pursuit of academic freedom and integrity provides the necessary context for understanding these two collections. The motivation behind them are Stahl's personal experiences with ideological censorship in communist Romania and, later, with editorial constraints in France. His declared goal was to publish studies of forgotten or unknown authors that would otherwise not have been accessible, despite their scientific value.

In time, Stahl's collections, especially the EDBM, have turned into scientific journals. They have become valued publications, listed and sought after by many academic and scientific communities, many libraries requesting copies to include them in their catalogs. This article addresses only a small part of the valuable contributions made to European sociology and ethnography by Paul H. Stahl.

Keywords: Paul H. Stahl, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens*, *Sociétés Européennes*, European Ethnology, South-East European Ethnology.

In autumn 2008, my late husband had planned to publish the 32nd volume of his collection, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (Balkan and Mediterranean Studies and Documents). Sadly, he passed away before accomplishing this task. The texts for the volume, which he had previously selected, were waiting in a folder, on his computer. Knowing how much this publication meant to him,

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early the next year I finished editing it, printed it and sent it to the long list of libraries around the world that had the journal in their collections. In my introduction at the time, I had made an overview of the collection and the reasons behind its publication (Stahl I., 2009). This information seems once again to be relevant, since the collection has recently been digitised by the Institutul Național al Patrimoniului (National Heritage Institute, INP), in Bucharest¹.

Building upon what I wrote in 2008, I begin this article with a brief description of Paul H. Stahl's professional path, focusing on the difficulties encountered as a young sociologist in the first two decades of the communist regime in Romania, which weighed heavily on his later decision to initiate his collections in Paris. His academic career outside of Romania is also mentioned. Even though I reflect on both collections, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (EDBM) and *Sociétés Européennes* (SE), my focus here is on the first, in particular on the way it reveals his work and personality. The choice of writing in English is deliberate, in order to make the information accessible to a wider audience, outside the French-speaking world, where he is already well known. This article aims to open up new pathways into the study of European Ethnology and the history of the discipline. Today, when we celebrate the centennial of his birth, Paul H. Stahl has become a part of the history of the discipline which he has himself contributed to shaping.

BEING A SOCIOLOGIST IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA

Born in a family of French and German descent, Paul H. Stahl was immersed in the social sciences since his early childhood². His grandfather Henri was an historian, while his father, also named Henri³, became a renowned sociologist. Coincidentally, he was born a few days after the end of the first monographic campaign initiated by Professor Dimitrie Gusti, the leader of what today is known as the Sociological School of Bucharest. As a child, Paul accompanied his father on fieldtrips and he grew up surrounded by the best specialists at that time. These encounters marked his young spirit, laying out his professional path.

¹ On the INP site *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* is available at: <https://biblioteca-digitala.ro/?pub=6673-etudes-et-documents-balkaniques-et-mediterraneen>. The *Études Roumaines et Aroumaines* (series issued out of the second collection, *Sociétés Européennes*) is available at: <https://biblioteca-digitala.ro/?pub=6672-etudes-roumaines-et-aroumaines-studii-romanesti-si-aromanesti> (last accessed 25.11.2025). Both collections are also available on the site of the Institute of South-East European Studies, in Bucharest, at: <https://www.acadsudest.ro/ro/colectii> (last accessed 25.11.2025).

² A great deal of the biographical information is drawn from a manuscript autobiography written by Paul H. Stahl (Stahl Family Archive), and published in Romanian by Ghe. Șișeștean (2009), as well from the personal recollection of the numerous conversations had with Paul H. Stahl, by the author herself.

³ Sharing the same name as his father, Henri Stahl the sociologist added his father's initial, H, to his name in order to avoid any confusion. He signed his papers Henri H. Stahl. In the same manner, when he started publishing, Paul Stahl added the initial H to his name, signing Paul H. Stahl, or sometimes even Paul Henri Stahl. In France he will be known as Paul-Henri Stahl.

Part of the last generation of sociologists trained after World War II by Dimitrie Gusti and H. H. Stahl, Paul H. Stahl graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy (with a major in Sociology), in 1948. Interested by the innovations in sociological research, he wrote his bachelor's essay on the "representative statistical method" and how it could improve the monographic approach, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the country, as envisioned by Gusti. This study provided him with the opportunity to travel to France on a scholarship offered by Jacques Stoetzel. Sadly, the newly instated political regime did not grant him permission to leave the country, and soon after his graduation, sociology itself was banned. Difficult times followed. Sociology was excluded from the university curriculum and the institutions that were conducting sociological research (starting with the *Institutul Social Român*, Romanian Social Institute) were shut down one after another. The members of the sociological school lost their positions, were marginalized, and some even died in prison. Gusti himself was removed from the Romanian Academy and all other public positions he held. His house, together with his precious library, were confiscated and he was left at the mercy of his former students and friends for support. He did not live for much longer and ultimately died, in 1955.

After graduation, Paul Stahl worked with the Ministry of Education in Bucharest, at the Centre for Psycho-Medical-Pedagogical Research (Stahl, 1997a, p. 2). Focused on diagnosing social problems, the studies carried out by the centre soon became problematic for the Party, which was more interested in promoting the image of a perfect communist society than improving people's lives. After conducting interdisciplinary research on tuberculosis, the centre was denounced in the main propaganda newspaper, *Scântea*, and shut down (Scântea, 1953, p. 3). Its archive, with all the collected data, were to be destroyed. Stahl saved his research papers *in extremis*, breaking into the centre at night, through an open window. He published them 50 years later (Stahl, 2002).

During communism, many intellectuals were marginalized. Some were forced to take on precarious positions only to make a living. Stahl was lucky. Not long after the closure of his centre, he was asked to join the newly founded folk art section, at the Institute of Art History, led by George Oprescu. Well-connected and recently elected a member of the Romanian Academy, Oprescu was maintaining good relations with the communist authorities. This allowed him to welcome several former students and collaborators of Dimitrie Gusti in his institution. Stahl worked there between 1953 and 1963, as a scientific researcher. True to his sociological background, he chose to study folk architecture and folk art, domains which allowed him to remain in contact with the social life and conduct fieldwork. He was not the only one who made this choice. In fact, ethnology became the adoptive discipline for many Romanian sociologists, deprived in 1948 of their own disciplinary field. This brought an infusion of new methodological approaches to ethnology. Applying the sociological, interdisciplinary approach to the study of

folk architecture, Stahl improved the existing classification of houses, which identified a single type for each region. Instead, he followed the evolution of houses over time (using statistics when available), and the influences they underwent, pinpointing new innovating theories (see Stahl, 1958). During this period, Stahl conducted many fieldtrips. Together with his lifelong friend, Paul Petrescu, he travelled all over the country, taking pictures, making drawing, talking to people, and taking the pulse of the various communities he visited. He drew on these fieldwork materials the rest of his life, and they represented the foundation of his later, comparative European studies.

Entering the field of art studies, Stahl had the opportunity to learn from some of the best specialists in the field. He became the informal student of Ion D. Ștefănescu, art historian and Byzantinologist, professor at the prestigious university René Descartes in Paris (Sorbonne), before the war (where he took over the chair of his former professor, Charles Diehl after he retired), but who was now destitute and homeless. He was also an informal student of Barbu Slătineanu, art collector and one of the best specialists in folk ceramics, who was later imprisoned by the communists and killed, in 1959.

A new opportunity opened up in 1963, when Mihai Berza invited Stahl to become the head of the ethnology, folklore, and art history section of the newly established Institute for South-East European Studies. The institute was in fact re-establishing two research institutions shut down by the communist regime in 1947⁴, reuniting many of their former collaborators who continued their general objectives and interdisciplinary approach. There, Stahl was able to expand his previous interests in folk architecture and folk art, and add some more explicit social issues. In 1969, he defended his PhD with the dissertation, *The evolution of the Romanian peasant house (end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century)*, under the supervision of George Oprescu⁵. In his studies on folk architecture and folk art (ceramics, rugs, icons) the principles of the Sociological School of Bucharest are noticeable: the importance of fieldwork materials, considered the only solid base for any good research; an interdisciplinary approach to any research topic; the special connection between sociology and history, between current social reality

⁴ One of the two institutions was the Institute of South-East European Studies, founded in 1914 by the famous historian Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940). The second was the Institute for Balkan Studies and Research, established in 1937 by another historian, Victor Papacostea (1900–1962). Both, Iorga and Papacostea, had their lives cut short under tragical circumstances: Iorga was brutally murdered by the Iron Guard, while Papacostea died shortly after being released from prison, where he served for eight years, in particularly difficult circumstances.

⁵ In original, *Dezvoltarea casei țărănești din România (la sfârșitul secolului al 19-lea și începutul secolului al 20-lea)*. According to the minutes, signed by the members of the committee, the public defence took place on the 17th of September 1968, at the Institute of History of Art. The five members of the committee were: Academician Ion Jalea (president), Academician George Oprescu (doctoral supervisor), Professor Mihai Pop, Dr. Corneliu Irimie and Dr. Vasile Caramelia (members) (*Proces verbal*, Stahl Family Archive).

and its historical evolution. To these principles, which are part of the school's common heritage, he later added a constant concern to situate the Romanian society within the larger, South-East and further, European context.

During the 1950s and the 1960s, Stahl published extensively. However, he was constantly confronted with censorship. According to his own testimonies, nine volumes he authored (alone or in collaboration) as well as several of his articles, were banned before printing⁶. Other volumes were withdrawn from bookstores and pulped, following the incrimination of his co-authors⁷. His travels abroad were limited, and he was often not granted permission to leave the country in order to attend scientific events outside the Soviet-dominated areas. These, as well as other personal reasons led him to finally leave Romania. By this time, he had already established himself as an academic scholar of note.

FROM ROMANIAN SOCIOLOGY TO EUROPEAN ETHNOLOGY

Paul H. Stahl left Romania in 1969, on a temporary visa for Athens, where he attended a conference. At the end of his stay, instead of returning back home, he took a flight to Paris, where he applied for political asylum. He left behind his family, friends and colleagues, his books, photos and familiar objects. It was not a decision he took lightly, but with great consideration for his potential and desire for academic freedom.

Carrying good recommendations, substantial academic accomplishments and a name whose fame preceded him, it did not take long for him to find a position in the Academia. Within the same year, he was appointed *directeur d'études* (research director) at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris, EHESS). There, he first proposed a course entitled "Sociology of South-East Europe", but at the suggestion of Fernand Braudel, the head of the school, he changed it to "Ethnology of South-East Europe", a much more acceptable title for his approach, in France⁸. Later, in 1980, he introduced a second course entitled "Legal Anthropology of Europe", pioneering a new field of research at the EHESS. At the same time, he began teaching at René Descartes University (Sorbonne), where he started with the same course, "Ethnology of South-East Europe", only to establish a new chair, "Sociology and Ethnology of Europe", in 1981 – a novelty for France at that time. In parallel with his teaching, he was also involved in research activities. In 1970, he joined the

⁶ "Too many shacks and crosses in your publications", was one of the criticisms brought forward by the censors. Another reproach was "describing glass icons [from Transylvania] much too nicely, citing only one soviet author and mentioning the Western influence in Transylvania" (Stahl, 1997a, p. 3).

⁷ This is the case of Barbu Slătineanu (Stahl, 1997a, p. 3).

⁸ Combining history and sociology, his course referred to the relations between peasant culture on the one hand and that of the boyars and royal families on the other hand, in 18th–20th centuries South-East Europe.

team of researchers led by Claude Levy-Strauss, at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale (Social Anthropology Laboratory, National Centre of Scientific Research, CNRS). There, he continued to carry out fieldwork in Europe with a particular focus on South-East European countries.

During the same period, he developed strong relations with Italy and the Italian academic environment. He taught and lectured in several Italian universities (such as La Sapienza University in Rome, University of Macerata) and he published extensively. In collaboration with sociologists from the University of Trento, he collected and published three volumes of *statutes*, a set of rules governing the functioning of village communities in the region, covering the period from the 13th to the 19th centuries (see his introductory study, Stahl, 1991a). Together with Massimo Guidetti, he also published a substantial collection of 19th century texts in three volumes written by prominent representatives of the emerging social sciences and humanities. These works were dedicated to the European family, village, and valley communities (Guidetti & Stahl, 1977; Guidetti & Stahl, 1978; Stahl & Guidetti, 1979). In the same spirit, it was Stahl's intention to publish a collection on the French communities, but unfortunately, this is a project he was unable to complete. Together with Dario Benetti, he published a complex monographic study of a valley in the Italian Alps, combining genuine fieldwork with historical written sources (Benetti & Stahl, 1995).

In 1986, Stahl published two major books, both written in a comparative perspective. The first, entitled *Histoire de la décapitation* (History of decapitation), was a historical and social anthropology of the skull, dealing with the social meaning of the skull and decapitation throughout the former Ottoman Empire (Stahl, 1986a). Having experienced communist censorship in Romania, Stahl faced a new challenge in France: the editorial industry. He had several disappointing experiences with French publishers, one of which occurred when the title of his monographic study on decapitation was changed by the editor. In his auto-biography, Stahl noted: "The original title of the work, *Anthropologie historique et sociale du crâne* (Historical and Social Anthropology of the Skull), was more faithful to the content, but the publisher decided otherwise" (Stahl Family Archive). In his view, there was no difference between ideological censorship and editorial censorship, as both interfered with academic freedom.

The second book, *Household, Village and Village Confederation in South-Eastern Europe*, was dealing with social structures of traditional societies throughout South-East Europe, a topic that Stahl will continue to refine and develop throughout his career (Stahl, 1986b; also see Stahl, 2024). The English edition was followed by Italian (Stahl, 1993) and Romanian editions (Stahl, 2000), the latter being the most elaborated.

On the same topic of social structures, Stahl later co-authored, together with his students, the volume *Name and Social Structure* (Stahl, 1998). Published in the *East European Monographs* collection, Columbia University Press (the same as for *Household, Village and Village Confederation...*), the book dealt with names and

their connection to identity and social structures. In his synthetic study at the end of the volume, Stahl classified and compared the various societies in South-Eastern Europe, bringing in examples from Western Europe and other parts of the world.

In 1999, Stahl retired from the EHESS, but remained an active member of the Social Anthropology Laboratory. That same year, he returned to Bucharest to organize the 8th congress of the International Association of South-East European Studies (AIESEE). After the congress, and in particularly difficult institutional circumstances, he accepted the role of Director of the Institute of the South-East European Studies in Bucharest. He held this position, initially meant as temporary, until 2007. At the AIESEE he also took charge of the journals *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* (tomes XXXVII–XLV, 1999–2007, 8 volumes) and *Sud-Estul și Contextul European. Buletin* (The South-East and the European context. Bulletin, Bucarest, vols. IX B–XII, 1998–2007, 4 volumes).

THE PAUL H. STAHL COLLECTIONS

Paul H. Stahl published two collections in Paris. The first one, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (1979–2009), appeared in 32 volumes and was registered at the National Library of France under ISSN 1269–1720. A few years after starting his first collection, Stahl initiated a second collection, *Sociétés Européennes*, which appeared between 1986 and 2008, in 38 volumes, but did not have an ISSN number.

Both collections consisted initially of individual studies. While in the EDBM Stahl mainly published the studies of his students in Paris and his own work (see Annex), in SE he also included studies written by former members of the Romanian sociological school, including his father, by his uncle⁹ and by other colleagues from Romania. Some of the individual studies were later reprinted as books; others have not. As in his last few years he was rushing against time to publish the books he had in mind, SE also represented a guarantee for Stahl that his projects were to survive. “Everything that you do not write down, disappears once you’re gone”, he used to say, citing his father (oral communication, the 2000s). While some of the studies in the SE were republished, others were only passed down to us thanks to the collection Paul H. Stahl has edited. Among them are five volumes reuniting Stahl’s early articles, published before 1970, as well as some memoiristic pages that recount episodes from his work and from his numerous fieldwork expeditions in the countryside¹⁰.

⁹ Gaston Boeueve (or Șerban Voinea, the pseudonym under which he is known in Romania) was an attorney, diplomat and publicist, an important leader of the socio-democratic movement after World War I.

¹⁰ SE vol. 15(14a), 1997, issue I: *Articles 1957–1963*, 216 p.; SE vol. 16(15a), 1997, issue II: *Articles signed with Paul Petrescu 1955–1966*, 1st part, 145 p. and 2nd part, 136 p.; SE vol. 17 (17a), 1998, issue III: *Articole. Articles. Beitrage 1964–1965*, 146 p.; SE vol. 18 (18a), 1998, issue IV: *Articole. Articles. Beitrage 1965–1970*, 137 p.

Over time, both collections also included volumes with multiple studies or articles (Fr. *recueil*), increasingly taking on the appearance of a journal. Eventually, the EDBM became exclusively a journal type of publication, while the SE continued to alternate the individual studies with multiple studies. Within the SE, the volumes with multiple articles were published under the name of *Études Roumaines et Aroumaines* (ERA). Published between 1990 and 2006, ERA appeared in 10 volumes, reuniting articles written in Romanian, French and only exceptionally, in English. This new series was preceded by a bilingual volume of studies entitled *Les Roumains Orientaux. Români din Răsărit* (SE vol. 7, 1990, 158 p.).

Paul H. Stahl was proud of his collections, and for good cause. They relied entirely on his voluntary work and were published and put into circulation at his own expense¹¹. Over time, they had become appreciated publications, listed and sought after by many academic and scientific communities, to the point that libraries were asking to include them in their catalogues.

From the outset, their founder and editor took care of everything. In addition to writing his own studies, he corrected the texts, occasionally translated them into French, printed, stapled and cut the volume and finally sent them out by post. It was a painstaking work that he carried out regularly and calmly, with precise movements, refined over the years.

With a print run of one hundred copies for the EDBM, and considerably less for the *Sociétés Européennes*, the publications, at first glance, give the impression of a workbook. The form was not perfect, admitted its editor, but in his eyes, the content was prevailing. The modest form conceals in fact valuable studies and unpublished field data, which the connoisseurs appreciate: “The volumes are not under copyright and are not for sale; they are gracefully offered for free. As the print run is limited, they will go to libraries and research institutes so that as many people as possible can benefit from them. The result of voluntary work, their form is far from perfect. Moreover, sometimes they are simply collections of field materials” (EDBM, vol. 1, [*Foreword*] n.p.).

ÉTUDES ET DOCUMENTS BALKANIQUES ET MÉDITERRANÉENS

Paul H. Stahl started editing his first collection, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens*, in 1979. By that time, he was a well-established academic and the years of financial hardship and accommodation were behind him. His courses at EHESS and the l’Université René Descartes (Sorbonne) attracted many students interested in conducting fieldwork in Central and South-East Europe, many of which were natives to the region. For a long time, Stahl was one

¹¹ In the foreword to EDBM vol. 6, Stahl thanks the Centre de Sociologie Rurale (Centre of Rural Sociology), in Paris, and its director, Placide Rambeau, for “facilitating the multiplication of the manuscripts” (1983, n.p.).

of the very few (if not the only) PhD supervisors in Paris in the field of South-East European anthropology and ethnology. In the early days of the anthropology at home, he encouraged his students to carry out fieldwork in their home countries, taking advantage of their particular cultural insight and the knowledge of the local language. He insisted on the importance of genuine fieldwork data, and often cited the work of his students (published or non-published manuscripts) in his own publications – and this, at a time when the Hirsch index was not yet invented. According to Stahl, all theory and new discoveries in the social sciences stem from the study of social realities, not from the reinterpretation of other authors' theories. A well-conducted field investigation, he considered, confers originality to a study while, at the same time, providing valuable sources for further studies and comparisons. New theories and discoveries necessarily challenge established theory and frequently meet resistance in acceptance. Such resistance may manifest itself in ideological or political censorship.

Breaking free from any kind of censorship and imposition was the main reason behind the EDBM collection. In the foreword to the collection, Stahl began by mentioning Dimitrie Gusti and his prophetic words, said after the war, in 1944, when he resumed his sociology class at the university: "Sociology is the first science to be banned by dictatorship". To this, Stahl added, "The banning of social sciences is in fact one of the most striking signs of a dictatorship" (EDBM vol. 1, *Preface de la collection*, n.p.). As an example, he mentioned his own experience and his nine censored volumes. Behind the written words one can feel his barely retained anger:

"When I myself began to write, I saw nine of my volumes banned or sent to the pulping mill in just a few years, not counting the studies that I censored myself, knowing full well that they would not be published. Their fault? They were written in collaboration with an author who had committed the imprudence of dying in prison; they dwelled on archaic aspects that should not have existed in an ideal regime; they did not quote the gospels of the fathers of the State Science; they did not comply with the principles of the only true science, the official one, which, of course, varies from one country to another and from one moment to another.

And, why not say it, because they contradicted the opinions of an editor or the prevailing commonplaces in a society. It is surprising to see that anyone who picks up the red pencil of the censor, who sits in an editor's chair, suddenly becomes more knowledgeable than all the authors he will have to deal with" (EDBM vol. 1, *Preface de la collection*, n.p.).

Stahl was not afraid of stating his intentions and he did that in clear terms: "Avoiding the distorting filter of politicians or editors and publishing works which, despite their interest, have no chance of being published, are the main aims of this collection" (EDBM vol. 1, *Preface de la collection*, n.p.). Among the contributions

are studies by young beginners, former students, or virtually unknown collaborators who without his assistance might never have been published or entered the scientific world. For Paul Henri Stahl, his profession of faith was undoubtedly that of teaching. He surrounded himself with young people, supported them, and gently “pushed” them in the right direction always encouraging them. Always available to them, he took pleasure in seeing them grow and develop as scholars.

Mentioning Gusti at the very beginning of his new series has also a deeper meaning. In doing so, Paul H. Stahl situated his actions in the continuation of the ones taken by his former mentor. In fact, he personally told me he wanted his collection to be as close in shape as possible to *Sociologie românească* (Romanian Sociology), the journal initiated by Dimitrie Gusti in 1936 and banned by the communists in 1946. Reinforcing his affiliation to the Romanian scientific tradition, Stahl dedicated the first volume of *Sociétés Européennes*, his second collection, to the same Sociological School of Bucharest (SE vol. 1, 1986, 37 p.)

After publishing several volumes of the EDBM, Stahl went back and reinforced the purpose of his collection, in firmer terms. I give the full citation below, as it describes so clearly Stahl’s attitude towards censorship, publishing and academic integrity. His observations are still relevant today:

“As in the case of the previous volumes in the collection, the following texts have been written in part by researchers who are already well-known and highly experienced. They have also been written by novice researchers, as the collection has a dual purpose: to provide insight into a European region, but also to promote the research of young researchers. Many dissertations and doctoral theses are of real interest but are ignored because they have not been published. They often contain unpublished data found in the observation of social life or the study of archives. Theories, although necessary, quickly become outdated, while good descriptions of original facts remain interesting for a long time. Simple collections dating back only a few decades become valuable witnesses, as social life is disappearing at an ever-increasing rate. While Western societies have written documents that can sometimes replace direct, field observations, written archives are rare or non-existent for many countries in Eastern Europe. It is therefore necessary to collect as quickly as possible what survives from the past; the effort in this direction is real, but compared to what needs to be done, it is largely insufficient.

Some topics cannot be published either for financial reasons – ‘it doesn’t sell’ – or because they are not in fashion. As strange as it may seem, fashion is just as much of a concern for researchers as it is in the evolution of clothing fashion. Important works written a century ago are forgotten, as are names that are no longer in fashion, but that nothing has replaced. I often read books or journals where everyone cites the same authors, as if they were working in a closed circle, in an exclusive club; if you want to be taken seriously, you have to cite this or that name in fashion, which you don’t need and which no one will remember a few years later. (...)

Many people believe that if you do not know the authors they know, you do not have a true culture. I believe that one is cultured not by reading this or that author, but by reading good authors, whether or not they are fashionable, and whether or not they are written in an internationally used language. (...) We suffocate if the state imposes official theories on us; we are also embarrassed by fashionable trends. Being forced to cite an author because the state or fashion demands it seems unacceptable to me, just as unacceptable as ignoring someone because they are no longer in fashion. (...)

As soon as a study includes unpublished data and demonstrates a good knowledge of the subject, it should be published, even if it is signed by an unknown author. I have been criticised on several occasions for the opinions of the authors who have published in this collection. But as it is my rule never to interfere with writings as long as they are of interest, everyone is free to say what they please. I do not believe that this modest publication will solve problems of such magnitude. But perhaps, just a bit, a tiny bit, new names, forgotten authors and works, or those written in an exotic and unknown language (to those who do not speak it) will come into circulation. Only material conditions prevent me from doing more". (vol. 13, 1987, [Foreword], n.p.)

The first five volumes of the collection are each dedicated to a single, extended study. Paul H. Stahl opened the series with *Sociétés traditionnelles balkaniques. Contribution à l'étude des structures sociales* [Traditional Balkan societies. Contribution to the study of social structures], a text that was later developed fully in one of his most prominent publications, *Triburi și sate din Sud-Estul Europei* [Tribes and villages from South-Eastern Europe] (2000)¹². This first volume has a symbolic value: it is the foundation on which the entire collection is built. In fact, the entire EDBM collection relies entirely on Paul H. Stahl's name and reputation as a scholar. However, because it is his private enterprise, it also reflects *his* attitude towards academic value.

Four studies by Stahl's doctoral students are following: vol. 2 (1980) Françoise Saulnier, *Anoya, un village de montagne crétois* [Anoya, a Cretan mountain village]; vol. 3 (1981) Danielle Musset, *Le mariage à Moïșeni (Roumanie)* [Marriage in Moïșeni, Romania]; vol. 4 (1982) Daniele Masson, *Les femmes de Breb (Maramureș, Roumanie)* [The women of Breb, in Maramureș region, Romania]; and vol. 5 (1982) Assimina Stavrou, *Tissus valaques du Pinde* [Wallachian fabrics from the Pindus Mountains]. Each of the four studies is preceded by a brief forward by Paul H. Stahl, who introduced the study and highlights its originality.

Three additional individual studies are published in vol. 8 (1985): Leonardo Piasere *Mare Roma. Catégories humaines et structure sociale. Une contribution à l'ethnologie tsigane* [Mare Roma. Human categories and social structure. A contribution

¹² The Romanian version of this book, which is the most complete, was preceded by an English version: *Household, Village and Village Confederation in South-Eastern Europe* (1986), and an Italian version: *Terra società miti nei Balcani* (1993).

to Gypsy ethnology]; vol. 9 (1985) Zacharoula Tourali *Le costume traditionnel du Dodécanèse. Les îles de Kassos et de Tilos* [The traditional costume of the Dodecanese. The islands of Kassos and Tilos]; and vol. 11 (1986) Alain Bouras *Quand l'arbre devient bois. Techniques et croyances des paysans roumains* [When trees become wood. Techniques and beliefs of Romanian peasants].

In the 12th volume of the collection (1987), Stahl published another of his own studies, *Maisons et attenances des paysans roumains de Margina Sibiului (Transylvanie)* [Houses and outbuildings of Romanian peasants in Margina Sibiului (Transylvania)], in both French and Romanian versions. Out of loyalty to his lifelong friend, with whom he had carried out the fieldwork with, he added the name of Paul Petrescu on the cover. In 2005, he published an improved version, in Romanian, under his name alone (Stahl, 2005).

The 6th volume of the EDBM marks an important shift for the collection. The first volumes were published under the title *Études et Documents Balkaniques*, addressing mainly the regions and countries of South-East Europe: Romania, former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, and Turkey. However, starting with the 6th volume, published in 1983, the geographic area covered by the collection is broadened, and the words *et Méditerranéens* are added to the title. This corresponds in fact with the gradual expansion of Stahl's own research interests, noticeable in the titles of his courses¹³ and publications¹⁴. The volume is also the first one to include

¹³ Paul H. Stahl's courses at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales:
 1969–1970: Introduction à l'ethnologie de l'Europe du sud-est.
 1971–1972: Les villages traditionnels: 1) les structures sociales.
 1972–1973: Les villages traditionnels: 2) l'élevage et 3) l'habitat.
 1973–1974: Les villages traditionnels: 4) la vie magique et religieuse.
 1974–1975: La vendetta; Fêtes paysannes et cérémonies seigneuriales (1).
 1975–1976: Fêtes paysannes et cérémonies seigneuriales (2).
 1976–1977: Eléments païens et hérétiques dans le folklore balkanique.
 1977–1980: Introduction à l'ethnologie de la romanité orientale.
 1980–1982: Structures sociales archaïques et systèmes de propriété (parallèles balkaniques et méditerranéens).
 1982–1983: Le sang; anthropologie sociale balkanique et européenne.
 1983–1984: Orthodoxie et société en Europe Orientale.
 1984–1985: Architecture paysanne européenne; maisons et églises.
 1985–1988: a. Introduction à l'ethnologie de l'Europe du sud-est;
 b. La vengeance (Balkans, Caucase, Italie, Corse, Écosse).
 1988–1989: a. « Un si long voyage »; études sur la mort en Europe
 b. Histoire de la propriété primitive en Europe (1)
 1989–1990: a. Le mariage dans les sociétés européennes;
 b. Histoire de la propriété primitive en Europe (2).
 1990–1991: a. Introduction à l'étude de la romanité orientale; les Roumains et les Aroumains;
 b. Histoire de la propriété primitive en Europe (3).
 1991–1992: a. Anthropologie de l'espace;
 b. Les recueils de droit coutumier européen.
 1992–1993: a. Corps humain et structures sociales; exemples européens;

multiple studies or articles (becoming a *recueil*, a collection of texts in French). The same format is followed in volumes 7 (1984) and 10 (1986), and all other volumes from the 13th (1987) onwards. Actually, from volume 16 onwards, the title *Recueil* is simply omitted, a clear sign that the collection had become a journal.

This new format allowed Stahl to publish more than one author at the same time. In addition to the work of his students and his own studies, he could include other texts that he considered pertinent and valuable for the field. Most are written in French; few are in English and Italian. As the title of the collection indicates, the texts are regrouped in a studies section and a notes or documents section. Stahl clarifies: “this collection takes pride in publishing both researches that have reached their final stage as well as simple fieldnote reports” (EDBM vol. 6, 1983, [Foreword], n.p.). Along well-established academics and colleagues, some still living in communist Romania, there are texts written by Stahl’s students in Paris, many of whom were native to countries under dictatorship. Some never made it into the Academia, others became important names in anthropology.

Another novelty brought by the new format is the inclusion of a review section (*compte-rendus*), sometimes of impressive dimensions – volume 10, for instance, publishes as much as 41 reviews. This section contains reviews of: monographs, journal issues (in which case Stahl often mentions only the articles he finds interesting), articles, and even centres (for instance Centro Culturale “Don Minzoni” from Sondrio, Italy, presented in EDBM vol. 17, p. 72). While most of the reviews are signed by Paul H. Stahl himself (in his own name or under pseudonym), there are also reviews signed by his students, or by others, colleagues and friends. This section in itself shows the extent of Stahl’s interests and his vast readings, even in less spoken languages, such as Albanian, Greek, Russian, Czech or Serbo-Croatian. In fact, when he is reviewing books written in these languages, he makes sure to mention the existence of summaries in wider spoken languages, such as English and French.

Besides promoting authors and texts that he considered significant for the field, EDBM provided Stahl with a much-needed freedom of academic expression. The collection became a platform from which he denounced academic injustices and socio-political absurdities. Here and there, inserted in the volumes are polemic

b. Les structures pré-étatiques européennes.

1993–1994: Orthodoxes, catholiques et musulmans en Europe Orientale.

1994–1995: L’Europe; les structures du temps.

1995–1996: L’Europe; le matériel et l’immatériel.

1996–1997: La « cité antique » et ses survivances européennes.

Courses at the Université René Descartes (Sorbonne):

1970–1981: Introduction à l’ethnologie de l’Europe du sud-est.

1981–1993: Introduction à la sociologie et à l’ethnologie de l’Europe.

The list of Paul H. Stahl’s courses, in Romanian translation, are also mentioned in Șișeștean, 2009, pp. 4–7.

¹⁴ See Paul H. Stahl’s bibliography in Șișeștean 2009, pp. 21–35.

texts and satires, which he often signs with the pseudonym Florea Bulcu. The choice of name is not coincidental. Accused of having a non-Romanian name (sometimes German, other times Jewish, depending on the historical moment) and therefore not being trustworthy as a *Romanian* specialist, Stahl choose to voice his opinions under a plain and unmistakably Romanian name. A closer analysis of Stahl's critical writings would be of great interest, shedding a new light on his otherwise publicly retained personality. However, for now, I will only mention a few notable examples.

When in 1983, a vicious campaign was launched against Henri H. Stahl in the communist press after the publication of *Eseuri critice* [Critical essays] (Stahl H.H., 1983)¹⁵, Paul H. Stahl published a parody entitled "Sainte Mioritza et son espace" [The Saint Mioritza¹⁶ and its space] (EDBM vol. 6, 1983, pp. 167–172), followed by an absurd dialogue, "Le voyage folklorique" [The folkloric voyage] (EDBM vol. 6, 1983, pp. 172–174), in which he plays with the subtleties of both French and Romanian languages to show the illusionary quest of the "pure Romanian". The two texts are followed by a conclusive text: "Nous avons le même sang" [We share the same blood] (EDBM vol. 6, 1983, pp. 175–176). In it, Stahl, who developed an entire anthropological theory of blood as a social construct (Stahl, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991b, 1997b, 2003), warned the scientists about the trap of promoting illusory theories defending the idea of one nation – one blood: "Do we want to be like the vast majority and believe in touching things, that cradle our lives? Or do we want to accept the truth as scientists, even if it is unpleasant? We have to choose" (EDBM vol. 6, 1983, p. 176).

Once again, Stahl stood in the defence of his father in 1998, when he published a review of a critical review to Henri H. Stahl's posthumous book, *Probleme confuze în istoria socială a României* [Confusing Issues in the Social History of Romania] (Stahl H. H., 1992) (EDBM vol. 25, pp. 89–91).

Shortly after the fall of communism and of what is known as the Romanian Revolution, Paul H. Stahl published a new volume of the EDBM. In the opening, he brings forward the lesson of another revolution, the French Revolution, which had happened 200 years previously. He starts with the vivid description of the Jacobins given by Hippolyte Taine (1899) in *Les origines de la France contemporaines*, and continues with a text of harsh criticism of "idealistic utopias", in which he draws his own, pertinent conclusions (EDBM vol. 15, 1990, n.p.).

¹⁵ The book republishes older polemic texts written in the 1930s against Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) and Lucian Blaga (1895–1961), both appropriated by communist propaganda and integrated into the national discourse. *Eseuri critice* was Henri H. Stahl's last published book, as after its release he was banned from publication. *Probleme confuze în istoria socială a României* was published after his death, in 1991.

¹⁶ *Miorița* is an old Romanian pastoral ballad, considered to be one of the cornerstones of Romanian folklore.

For a keen eye, the review section offers many other hidden clues. For instance, when his friend Paul Petrescu finally succeeds in fleeing Romania, in Spring of 1989, Paul H. Stahl marks the moment discretely, signing the review of Lucia Apolzan's book, *Carpații, tezaur de istorie* [The Carpathian Mountains, treasure trove of history], "by Paul Petrescu, Montclair, 7 may 1989" (EDBM vol. 14, 1989, p. 183). In the following volume, the review of Valer Butură's book, *Străvechi mărturii de civilizație românească* [Ancient evidence of Romanian civilization] is signed "by Paul Petrescu, Stockbridge, Mass. 28 sept. 1989" (vol. 15, 1990, p. 186).

After his book, *Histoire de la décapitation* (1986), is published under a different title, and the topic aroused the discontent of some who saw in it an offense brought to a nation, race, or religion, Stahl wrote a fictional interview, signed under pseudonym¹⁷, in order to answer all the criticisms which were brought to him. In it, he highlight the distinction between the moral judgement and the scientific rationale. When "asked" to mention a few of the qualities of his volume, Stahl synthetised his scientific view of the phenomenon, mentioning "to have demonstrated that decapitation is not simply barbaric, but one of the central themes of social life in the past, and a way of resolving not only individual cases, but also a method of governing a large empire, namely the Ottoman Empire" (EDBM, vol. 14, p. 183).

CONCLUSIONS: A QUEST FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Paul H. Stahl's two collections, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* and *Sociétés Européennes* stemmed from his unparalleled quest for academic freedom and uncensored scientific integrity. Through them, Stahl wanted to be able to make his own choices, to have the liberty to deal with the topics *he* considered relevant, in the way *he* considered best. The collections also provided him with a space in which he could speak up freely against ideological, political or scientific injustice. They allowed him to promote who and what *he* considered worth publishing, be them forgotten writers of past centuries or young academics who had never been published before. Quietly, resiliently and persistently, Stahl forged a single-man-resistance to any kind of imposition or censorship.

Paul H. Stahl was a unique personality. As an academic having experienced both dictatorship and democracy during his long career, he had a particular insight over his research topics in South-East European societies. Today, in the "fake news" era, his ability to separate the "good" information from ideology and propaganda is inspirational.

¹⁷ The name he has chosen, Youssouf Wildtalk, is not meningless: the first name is Turkish, in reference to the Ottoman Empire he writes about, while the second name refers to his openness to dialogue.

The EDBM collection provides many interesting insights into its editor. His choice of texts, his introductions and forewords, the books/journals/article/centres he was choosing to review, all reveal important information on his scientific knowledge and approaches, on his professional convictions, as well as on his political and, more general, his world views. Rather discreet and quiet in public, in the EDBM we discover him as a vivid and caustic spirit; teaching, defending, warning.

This article is far from exhausting all the aspects embedded in the EDBM collection. It has in fact merely scratched the surface. Its intention is only to draw attention to this collection, which is a prodigious source of information for an intellectual biography of Paul H. Stahl, one of the great specialists in European Ethnology of our times.

Abbreviations:

- CNRS – Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (National Centre for Scientific Research).
 EDBM – *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (Balkan and Mediterranean Studies and Documents).
 EHESS – École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences).
 ERA – *Études Roumaines et Aroumaines* (Romanian and Aroumanian Studies).
 INP – Institutul Național al Patrimoniului (National Heritage Institute).
 SE – *Sociétés Européennes* (European Societies).

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¹⁸ The collection has some errors in the volume numeration. The number inside the brackets is the one printed on the volume and the number outside is the corrected number of the volume.

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PAUL-HENRI STAHL ET LES ÉTUDES GRECQUES : TERRAINS, THÈMES, HÉRITAGES

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ABSTRACT

PAUL-HENRI STAHL AND THE GREEK STUDIES:
TERRAINS, THEMES, LEGACIES

This article explores the multifaceted relationship between Paul-Henri Stahl and Greece, through his teachings, publications, and intellectual influence. As a professor at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), in Paris, Stahl trained many Greek researchers and contributed to the development of ethnology and social anthropology in Greece. His journal, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens*, featured numerous contributions by Greek students and collaborators on topics related to Greek social structures, rituals, and kinship systems. The article analyzes Stahl's writings on Greece and provides a table of works by Greek collaborators published in his journal. Stahl's legacy in Greek anthropology remains vivid and influential.

Keywords: Paul-Henri Stahl, Greek ethnology and social anthropology, Balkans, social structures, the journal *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens*.

I. CONVERGENCES THEMATIQUES ET AFFINITES METHODOLOGIQUES

La relation entre Paul-Henri Stahl et les études grecques s'inscrit dans une continuité intellectuelle où la Grèce est abordée tant comme un cas singulier, mais aussi, dans certains cas, comme un terrain privilégié d'expression de structures sociales balkaniques (Stahl, 1974, pp. 1–9). Stahl avait une très bonne connaissance du milieu académique grec en matière de la science du folklore (Laographie) et entretenait, selon tous les témoignages que j'ai pu recueillir, de contacts réguliers avec les principaux acteurs scientifiques en Grèce, notamment ceux de la Société

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Hellénique de Laographie (fondée en 1909)¹. Déjà en 1972 dans la revue *L'Homme*, Stahl présente une série de recensions d'ouvrages ethnographiques, y compris sur l'artisanat traditionnel grec (*Greek Handicraft booklet*), publiée en 1969 par la Banque Nationale de Grèce, illustrant son intérêt pour les continuités matérielles et symboliques dans les cultures méditerranéennes (Stahl, 1972).

Dès ses premières recherches, Stahl a mis l'accent sur les communautés villageoises, les formes d'auto-organisation et les mécanismes de cohésion lignagère dans les sociétés traditionnelles des Balkans, ce qui le rapprochait naturellement des problématiques présentes dans le monde rural grec. La parenté patrilinéaire, les règles de résidence virilocale, les formes de solidarité communautaire, l'organisation symbolique de l'espace, ainsi que les rites liés au cycle de vie (naissance, mariage, mort) sont au cœur de cette convergence (Stahl, 1986). *Household, Village and Village Confederation in Southeastern Europe* est un de ses livres les plus importants, dans lequel il développe ses analyses comparatives sur la parenté, la structure familiale, la signification symbolique du nom et le rôle de la maison en tant qu'unité sociale et économique fondamentale, à partir d'exemples tirés de la Roumanie, des Balkans et notamment de la Grèce (voir aussi Stahl, 1991).

Méthodologiquement, comme il est bien connu, Stahl combinait une approche structurale avec une attention particulière aux pratiques sociales concrètes. Cette orientation a profondément marqué ses étudiants grecs, qui ont appliqué et adapté ces cadres théoriques à leurs propres terrains. Loin d'imposer un modèle unique, Stahl favorisait une lecture inductive des réalités sociales, attentive aux variantes locales mais guidée par des principes d'organisation récurrents : systèmes de filiation, droit coutumier, organisation communautaire et domaniale, etc. Ces affinités méthodologiques ont rendu ses travaux particulièrement influents auprès des jeunes anthropologues, ethnologues et sociologues grecs des années 1980 et début 1990, qui souvent venaient des études universitaires de la Faculté de Lettres ayant suivi des cours de laographie, dans un moment où l'anthropologie cherchait à se constituer de manière autonome face à la tradition folkloriste et la laographie était dans une phase de transformation assez profonde en ce qui concerne ses objets et ses méthodes (Alexakis, 2001, Polymerou-Kamilaki et Karamanes, 2014, Karamanes, 2019).

Par ailleurs, Stahl se distinguait par une vision comparative fondée sur des logiques de régularité sociale, au-delà des appartenances nationales ou ethniques. Il considérait la Grèce comme une composante vivante du système balkanique traditionnel, tout en reconnaissant sa singularité historique et culturelle. Cette posture d'équilibre a permis à ses travaux d'éviter à la fois les pièges du particularisme exotisant et les simplifications d'un comparatisme aveugle.

¹ Je souhaite exprimer ma reconnaissance à mes collègues du Centre de Recherches du Folklore Hellénique de l'Académie d'Athènes, Mme Andromachi Economou et Mme Zoi Margari, pour les précieuses informations qu'elles ont bien voulu me communiquer au sujet de leurs expériences au sein du séminaire de Paul-Henri Stahl à l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, à Paris.

L'œuvre de Stahl était aussi lu en Grèce depuis très tôt, bien avant qu'il soit établi comme personnage scientifique de référence pour les étudiants Grecs en ethnologie à Paris. A titre d'exemple je vais citer son volume collectif fondamental, regroupant des textes d'orientation comparative sur les sociétés d'Europe du Sud-Est – *Ethnologie de l'Europe du Sud-Est: Textes & documents* (Stahl, 1974). Cet ouvrage considéré comme un jalon important pour l'élaboration d'une ethnologie balkanique transversale qui continue d'être citée comme référence méthodologique dans les recherches sur les « aires culturelles » reçoit l'attention et la critique – assez sévère je dois remarquer – de Grigoris Gizelis, sociologue éminent, chercheur de l'Académie d'Athènes (Gizelis, 1975). Bien que Stahl mentionne dans l'introduction les différences et les points communs entre les sociétés balkaniques, Gizelis critique son approche fragmentaire, regrettant l'absence d'une progression historique unifiée tout au long de la période ottomane. Il souligne que l'arrière-plan culturel des auteurs des récits (leur origine nationale et sociale) a influencé leur perception : le prisme du préjugé ethno-centré est omniprésent, pouvant biaiser la compréhension du lecteur moderne². Enfin, chose essentielle, il nuance que, malgré ses limites, le livre de Stahl offre une valeur incontestée : il centralise des témoignages rares et fragiles, désormais difficiles d'accès, et les rend disponibles pour la recherche contemporaine sur les dynamiques sociales balkaniques et grecques.

II. LES TERRAINS GRECS : ETUDIANTS, THESES ET RESEAUX

Paul-Henri Stahl a été nommé en 1970 Directeur d'études à l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), où il enseignait sous l'intitulé « Ethnologie de l'Europe du Sud-Est », fonction qu'il assurait également à l'Université René Descartes (Sorbonne). Toutefois, c'est à l'EHESS qu'il a concentré son activité principale, accueillant un très grand nombre d'étudiants grecs au niveau doctoral. Durant les années 1970 et 1980, il était pratiquement le seul professeur à Paris compétent et habilité à encadrer des recherches anthropologiques

² Pour Gizelis, comme pour Stahl, la période qui s'étend depuis la chute de Constantinople jusqu'à l'émergence des États-nations au XIX^e siècle est essentielle pour comprendre l'histoire des peuples balkaniques. Dans ce contexte, les récits et impressions des voyageurs occidentaux – religieux, diplomates, marchands ou militaires, souvent de formation universitaire – constituent des sources précieuses : ils offrent des observations de première main sur les communautés balkaniques, y compris grecques. Or, il remarque que la collection de Stahl n'a pas épuisé les témoignages existants et nécessaires pour tracer la vie sociale des différents peuples de Balkans. Ces récits sont rares et souvent difficiles à trouver (comme le note Stahl lui-même), ce qui rend leur utilisation limitée dans une analyse cohérente de longue durée. La sélection présente ces documents en quatre chapitres distincts : **1.** Description des Aroumaines (Valaques), **2.** Données ethnographiques sur les Monténégrins, **3.** Vie sociale des Slaves balkanique, **4.** Rôle des femmes dans le contexte des sociétés balkaniques, notamment à travers les rituels du mariage. Gizelis juge donc que l'anthologie aurait gagné en force analytique si elle avait présenté des éléments bio-bibliographiques des voyageurs, leur contexte d'origine et leurs intentions, ainsi que des cartes régionales afin d'aider à la localisation des lieux décrits.

sur la Grèce, à un moment où ces disciplines restaient marginales dans les institutions grecques, particulièrement sous la dictature militaire (1967–1974).

Le retour à la démocratie en 1974 et la création de nouveaux départements d'anthropologie dans les années 1980 ont favorisé une explosion des études anthropologiques en Grèce (Toundassakis, dans Dorondel et Şerban, 2005, pp. 163–200). Stahl a joué un rôle crucial dans la formation d'un réseau de chercheurs grecs francophones, en leur offrant un encadrement académique solide et un espace de dialogue libre dans ses séminaires, considérés comme incontournables. Dans un contexte où l'ethnologie et l'anthropologie sociale se constituait en Grèce comme discipline académique autonome, plusieurs étudiants ont trouvé auprès de Stahl un cadre intellectuel propice à l'analyse des transformations du monde rural grec, de la parenté et des pratiques coutumières.

Comme l'a noté Irina Stahl, l'enseignement était pour lui une véritable profession de foi (Stahl I., 2009 ; Stahl I., Şerban et Timotin, dans Stahl P. H., 2024, pp. 7–10). Il avait une sensibilité particulière, issue de sa propre histoire marquée par la dictature en Roumanie, qui le rendait très réceptif aux jeunes chercheurs venus de pays en crise, en quête de liberté intellectuelle. Les étudiants grecs, marqués par l'histoire récente de la guerre civile et du régime des colonels, trouvaient dans ses séminaires un espace accueillant, bienveillant et critique. Il ne faudrait pas croire que les étudiants grecs se limitaient aux séminaires de Stahl, bien qu'il fût souvent le seul spécialiste des Balkans disponible. Grâce au programme de séminaires très riche de l'EHESS, d'autres professeurs, chercheurs et enseignants en ethnologie, comme Maurice Godelier, François Sigaut, Françoise Zonabend, Nicole Belmont, en sociologie, comme Stathis Damianakos, et puis en ce qui concerne les études grecques et balkaniques, comme le géographe Michel Sivignon et les ethnologues Jean-François Gossiaux et Marie-Élisabeth Handman (Handman, 1980, 1983, 1987), ainsi que plusieurs autres complétaient ce paysage intellectuel parisien très riche. À ne pas oublier la présence d'historiens Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou et André Guillou, dont les travaux sur l'histoire byzantine et post-byzantine ont nourri la réflexion des étudiants en anthropologie, en particulier ceux intéressés par l'articulation entre histoire sociale et les traditions locales et à un certain degré les travaux de l'Institut Néo-hellénique de la Sorbonne. D'autres enseignants historiens, linguistes, anthropologues et sociologues, assuraient de cours également à la Sorbonne, à l'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), à Nanterre ou à Paris VIII, mais ils ne seront pas abordés ici, car ils dépassent le cadre de cette étude. De mon expérience personnelle – ayant moi-même préparé ma thèse sous la direction de Marie-Élisabeth Handman entre 1994–1998 – je peux témoigner que les séminaires de Stahl étaient un lieu de convergence pour les jeunes chercheurs, grecs notamment, qui trouvaient là un climat de confiance et d'émulation scientifique.

III. UNE REVUE COMME ESPACE D'ÉCHANGE SCIENTIFIQUE

Comme il est bien connu, pour contourner les obstacles politiques et académiques, Stahl fonda à Paris sa propre revue *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (EDBM), avec l'objectif explicite de « éviter le filtre déformant de politiciens ou de rédacteurs » et publier des travaux qui, bien que dignes d'intérêt, n'auraient aucune chance d'être publiés autrement, surtout de jeunes chercheurs (Stahl I., 2009, p. 5). Il y accueillit des contributions de jeunes chercheurs grecs, parfois presque inconnus, leur offrant ainsi une première visibilité dans le monde scientifique. EDBM a joué un rôle majeur dans la constitution d'un espace de publication ouvert aux jeunes chercheurs grecs. De 1980 à 2008, EDBM a accueilli presque 40 articles signés par des ethnologues, anthropologues et sociologues grecs formés à l'EHESS ou proches du réseau de Stahl, ainsi que de travaux des chercheurs principalement français qui travaillaient sur la Grèce. Cette revue, multilingue et à diffusion internationale, a permis de valoriser des terrains inédits, des approches comparatives et des problématiques innovantes et originales dans le champ scientifique grec de l'époque.

Une bonne manière d'approcher ces échanges entre Stahl et le monde grec, au-delà de ses propres publications sur la Grèce, est d'examiner les articles publiés dans la revue EDBM. J'ai eu moi-même l'occasion d'en faire l'analyse, notamment à l'occasion de cours donnés à l'Université de Bucarest à l'invitation d'Irina Stahl. Une annexe à cet article présente un tableau (I) analytique des contributions grecques dans les numéros 2 à 39 (1980–2008) d'EDBM, mettant en lumière les auteurs, les titres, les dates de publication et les thématiques traitées. Un deuxième tableau (II) présente les comptes rendus des livres présentés qui se réfèrent à la Grèce. La lecture de ces tableaux montre que les contributions grecques publiées dans EDBM couvrent une diversité de sujets : structures lignagères et domaniales, funérailles, rites d'exclusion, gestion du foncier, économie morale, migration, organisation domestique et autres. On y trouve des études empiriques approfondies, combinant rigueur ethnographique et cadre théorique inspiré des travaux de Stahl. Par exemple, les articles d'E. Alexakis sur les systèmes et les groupes de parenté et la transmission du patrimoine, ceux de I. Toundassaki sur la parenté et la transmission de biens à Andros (voir aussi Toundassaki, 1995), A. Economou sur la gestion foncière en Attique (voir aussi Oeconomou, 1991) et G. Nicolakakis sur la litanie à Lassithi (Crète), illustrent bien cette fécondité scientifique.

EDBM a aussi servi de plateforme pour une réflexion critique sur la modernisation, la persistance des structures communautaires, ou encore l'impact de l'économie sur les formes symboliques de la culture. En ce sens, elle a contribué à établir une passerelle durable entre l'anthropologie balkanique et l'anthropologie grecque, en dehors des cadres académiques nationaux traditionnels.

IV. PRESENCE GRECQUE DANS L'ŒUVRE DE PAUL-HENRI STAHL

Les recherches de Paul-Henri Stahl sur la Grèce ne se limitèrent pas à l'encadrement de travaux d'autrui : il a lui-même produit plusieurs textes consacrés à des sujets helléniques ou intégrant des références substantielles à la réalité grecque. Ces écrits abordent notamment les structures lignagères dans les îles, les systèmes communautaires en Épire, ou encore l'impact de la propriété collective dans les régions montagneuses. Dans ses articles publiés dans EDBM et dans d'autres volumes collectifs, Stahl mobilise des exemples grecs pour illustrer les invariants sociaux balkaniques – mais il souligne aussi les spécificités liées à l'histoire ottomane, à l'orthodoxie, ou aux structures familiales propres à la Grèce (Stahl, 1986 ; Stahl, 1998).

En 1986 paraît aux États-Unis son livre *Household, Village and Village Confederation in South-Eastern Europe* – publié aussi en italien à Messine et en roumain à Bucarest. Alors que d'autres disciplines (langue, histoire, art, religion) avaient déjà envisagé l'ensemble sud-est européen, son livre fut le premier à aborder les structures sociales de cette région. Il faut lire dans le même esprit son ouvrage collectif *Name and Social Structure* (Boulder, 1998), co-signé avec ses doctorants, qui analyse le rôle du nom dans l'organisation sociale. Là encore, c'est un travail comparatif d'envergure, qui réunit les données balkaniques et celles de l'Europe occidentale.

Parmi ses publications les plus significatives, on peut citer les analyses et références étendues dans ses études sur la fonction sociale des noms dans les îles et le Magne (Péloponnèse), la famille et les relations de parenté dans le Magne, la condition des femmes, la maisonnée et l'organisation des communes aux îles et en Grèce continentale, les pratiques agraires et pastorales en Crète et dans le Pinde, le droit coutumier etc. Il recourt à des matériaux ethnographiques provenant de recherches sur le terrain de ses étudiants mais aussi de ses propres voyages et séjours, ainsi que de sources secondaires de la bibliographie ethnographique rigoureusement sélectionnées. Il discute ainsi les travaux d'anthropologues grecs ou étrangers, tout en proposant des hypothèses générales sur l'articulation entre filiation, espace, et pouvoir symbolique. Dans ses travaux des années 1990, on observe un intérêt renouvelé pour les mécanismes de transmission intergénérationnelle, les conflits de succession, et les réformes agraires – autant de thématiques traversant la société grecque moderne.

Cette présence grecque dans l'œuvre de Stahl n'est donc ni marginale ni anecdotique. Elle s'inscrit dans une logique comparative nourrie par l'expérience de terrain et par le dialogue constant avec les chercheurs grecs. Elle constitue une composante essentielle de son apport à l'anthropologie balkanique et méditerranéenne.

V. HERITAGES ET PROLONGEMENTS

L'influence de Paul-Henri Stahl dépasse largement le cadre de son activité d'enseignement et de ses publications. En rédigeant ces quelques pages à l'occasion de la présentation du volume *Structures sociales en Europe du Sud-Est*, j'ai la certitude de n'avoir fait qu'effleurer la surface d'un vaste ensemble encore à explorer.

En effet des témoignages de son enseignement surgissent des plusieurs directions et pourraient faire l'objet d'un travail critique et systématique bien plus élargi ou d'un ouvrage collectif de témoignages. À titre d'exemple je cite un témoignage repéré dans un texte sociologique de 1985 qui critique une recherche sur le terrain sur les élèves Roma d'un quartier défavorisé d'Athènes : « En ce qui concerne le contenu de la 'diagnose sociale', je souhaiterais évoquer un incident que nous a raconté le professeur Paul-Henri Stahl lors d'un de ses cours à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études en France. Dans un test de perception réalisé auprès d'enfants roumains et roms, ces derniers avaient échoué à établir une échelle de classification géométrique à partir de cubes, cylindres, cônes, etc. L'enseignant proposa alors de laisser les enfants libres de classer les objets selon leur propre perception. Les jeunes Roms se mirent à porter les boîtes à leur oreille, à frapper chaque surface et à écouter les sons produits. Ils réussirent ainsi à construire leur propre système de classement, fondé sur des critères sonores, révélant une autre manière, alternative, de percevoir et de structurer le monde des objets »³. Cette référence nous laisse supposer que l'éventail des influences exercées par Paul-Henri Stahl reste encore largement à explorer.

En Grèce, plusieurs de ses anciens étudiants ou collaborateurs à son revue EDBM sont devenus à leur tour des figures importantes dans l'institutionnalisation de l'ethnologie et l'anthropologie sociale. Ils ont introduit ses méthodes dans l'enseignement universitaire, encadré de nouveaux travaux de terrain et contribué à faire reconnaître la discipline dans les milieux académiques et de recherche. Certains d'entre eux ont également assumé des fonctions dans des centres de recherche nationaux, des revues scientifiques ou des départements universitaires, prolongeant ainsi leur œuvre dans des directions nouvelles en suivant les évolutions scientifiques internationales. Par exemple, le Centre de Recherches du Folklore Hellénique de l'Académie d'Athènes a compté dès les années 1970 des chercheurs qui collaboraient régulièrement avec lui (E. Alexakis, voir Alexakis, 2010 et Annexes I et II) ou, bien plus tard, issus de son séminaire (A. Oikonomou, Z. Margari, voir les Annexes). Plusieurs de ces anciens doctorants ont ensuite poursuivi des carrières académiques aux universités de Thessalonique, de Crète, à l'Université Panteion (Athènes) en perpétuant et adaptant les apports de Stahl à de nouveaux contextes

³ S. Tsili (1985). « Με αφορμή μια έρευνα με τίτλο "Κοινωνικά χαρακτηριστικά των Τσιγγάνων της περιοχής Άνω Λιοσίων Αττικής" » (À propos d'une enquête intitulée *Caractéristiques sociales des Tsiganes du quartier d'Ano Liosia en Attique*). *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 59: 139–144, DOI: 10.12681/grsr.490

disciplinaires et parfois même changeant de chemin suivant les évolutions de la science et du temps (Dorondel et Şerban, 2005)⁴.

L'héritage de Stahl est également théorique. Sa manière d'articuler structures sociales, formes juridiques coutumières et organisation symbolique a permis d'élargir les cadres d'analyse disponibles pour l'étude des sociétés des régions helléniques. Son approche comparative, enracinée dans une ethnographie rigoureuse, continue d'inspirer les chercheurs qui s'intéressent aux continuités culturelles dans les Balkans et en Méditerranée orientale. En outre, son insistance sur la complémentarité entre observation de terrain, analyse historique et attention aux discours indigènes constitue un modèle encore pertinent dans le contexte des débats anthropologiques contemporains.

Maintenant quelques mots sur l'impact de son œuvre publiée, telle qu'elle fut reçue et discutée en Grèce. Nous avons déjà souligné que les travaux de Paul-Henri Stahl, qu'ils concernent la Grèce ou d'autres aires culturelles d'Europe du Sud-Est, ont été largement lus, commentés et influents dans les milieux anthropologiques grecs. Sa réflexion sur la notion même d'aires culturelles et sur les unités sociales qui deviennent objets de recherche – la communauté, la maison, le village – reste essentielle. Le texte qui ouvre une recueille récemment publiée (Stahl, 2024), « L'Europe du Sud-Est. Aires culturelles et facteurs structurants (XIX^e et XX^e siècles) » (paru pour la première fois en 2005), en témoigne : il s'agit d'une tentative originale de dépasser la simple monographie villageoise pour aborder des thèmes plus larges et complexes comme les systèmes de parenté, les réseaux d'échange, les valeurs partagées ou encore la structuration des régions à forte identité symbolique, ces « pays » à géographie culturelle discrète et « cachée ».

Même pour les communautés villageoises, son approche reste heuristique. Son article classique sur « l'organisation magique du territoire villageois roumain » (Stahl, 1973) pourrait, sans presque rien changer, s'appliquer à un village grec. Il rejoint ainsi les préoccupations de nombreux laographes et anthropologues grecs concernant l'organisation de l'espace dans les sociétés rurales traditionnelles.

Les relations de parenté, envisagées comme système structurant de la société, ou encore la manière dont les individus se structurent eux-mêmes dans ces cadres sociaux, constituent chez Stahl des outils pour comprendre les dynamiques sociales archaïques, souvent adaptables aux exigences de la modernité.

Son œuvre est aussi le fruit d'une quête de liberté. Ayant vécu la dictature et la censure, qui détruisit neuf de ses manuscrits (sans compter ceux qu'il

⁴ Voir les contributions grecques au volume collectif : I. Toundassakis, « De l'anthropologie de la Grèce à l'anthropologie en Grèce : l'émergence du discours anthropologique grec », p. 163–200 et E. P. Alexakis, « "Vitore" ou l'esprit de la maison. La construction symbolique de la famille et de la parenté chez les Arvanites d'Attique (Grèce) », p. 369–397. Ces deux articles sont accompagnés d'une bibliographie particulièrement riche et détaillée, offrant un excellent point de départ pour approfondir ces thématiques.

s'auto-censura pour les rendre publiables), il n'a cessé de soutenir les jeunes chercheurs. Il les encourageait discrètement mais efficacement, se montrait disponible, et tirait une grande satisfaction à les voir prendre leur envol.

Sa revue, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens*, ouverte aux terrains de toute l'Europe du Sud-Est (Roumanie, Yougoslavie, Bulgarie, Albanie, Grèce, Turquie, etc.), a accueilli des matériaux de terrain inédits, variés, et précieux. Stahl considérait que toute découverte sociologique devait partir du terrain, et non de la simple interprétation des théories d'autrui. Un terrain bien mené offrait originalité à son auteur et données comparables pour les autres.

Pour l'ethnologie grecque, l'apport de Paul-Henri Stahl demeure inestimable (Alexakis, 2010). Son œuvre continue de susciter des relectures et des prolongements, tant en Grèce qu'aux autres pays de l'Europe du Sud-Est, ce qui témoigne de la vitalité durable de ses travaux.

ANNEXE I

Publications de thème grec dans la revue *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéennes*, livres et articles (1980–2009)

N°	Année / Tome	Auteur / autrice	Titre	Type	Pages	Remarques
1	1980 (no. 2)	Françoise Saulnier	<i>Anoya, un village de montagne crétois</i>	Livre	192 p.	Crète, monographie
2	1982 (no. 5)	Assimina Stavrou	<i>Tissus valaques du Pinde</i>	Livre	185 p.	Textile, pastoralisme
3	1983 (no. 6)	Ekaterini Chalkea	La fête dans les villages de Zagori	Article	1–8	Épire, coutumes
4	1983 (no. 6)	F. Saulnier-Thiercelin	Le cycle de vie à Anoya (Crète)	Article	81–108	Crète, rites
5	1983 (no. 6)	Eleni Tsenoglou	Les études de Mikhail G. Mikhailidis-Nouaros sur le droit coutumier de Karpathos	Article	138–154	Droit, coutume
6	1983 (no. 6)	Anna Triandaphyllou	Observations sur la vie et l'économie du village de Kalarrytes	Article	153–166	Épire, économie
7	1984 (no. 7)	Emmanuel Douroudakis	Églises et chapelles de Chora Sfakion (Crète)	Article	38–49	Architecture religieuse
8	1984 (no. 7)	Dimitri Goussios	L'installation des populations exogènes à Pharsala	Article	104–111	Migrations internes et saisonnières, pastoralisme
9	1985 (no. 9)	Zacharoula Tourali	<i>Le costume traditionnel du Dodécannèse</i>	Livre	185 p.	Kassos, Tilos, vêtements
10	1986 (no. 10)	A. Oikonomou	La récolte de la résine dans l'Attique	Article	58–61	Forêt, Attique
11	1986 (no. 10)	A. Stieglitz-Goffre	L'inauguration de la discothèque à Kimolos	Article	107–122	Modernité
12	1986 (no. 10)	E. Plexoussaki	Incantations crétoises	Article	127–128	Magie, Crète
13	1987 (no. 13)	E. Alexakis	La contre-dot en Grèce	Article	3–6	Mariage, biens
14	1987 (no. 13)	M. Kanatsouli	Maisons des notables à Siatista	Article	31–3	Architecture, Macédoine
15	1987 (no. 13)	I. Toundassakis	Transmission des biens à Vourkoti (Andros)	Article	67–68	Parenté
16	1987 (no. 13)	M. Vellioti	Parrainage, adoption et fraternisation dans un village Arvanite, Péloponnèse	Article	69–76	Parenté spirituelle
17	1987 (no. 13)	C. Zarkias	Fraternité ecclésiastique à Skyros	Textes	77–81	Institutions religieuses
18	1989 (no. 14)	I. Toundassakis	Distiques d'Andros	Textes	162–163	Poésie populaire

N°	Année / Tome	Auteur / autrice	Titre	Type	Pages	Remarques
19	1989 (no. 14)	C. Zarkias	«Thesis» de la fraternité d’Ai Mina	Textes	167–168	Rites fraternels
20	1989 (no. 14)	G. Zoïa	Vie d’une Saracatsane	Textes	169–180	Pastoralisme
21	1990 (no. 15)	D. Loukatos	Le deuil et la solidarité des parents en Grèce	Article	72–76	Rites funéraires
22	1990 (no. 15)	I. Sideris	Fêtes de «gynécocratie» en Macédoine, Grèce	Article	113–118	Genre, fêtes
23	1990 (no. 15)	F. Tsbiridou	Le temps d’une vie	Article	135–143	Biographie sociale
24	1990 (no. 15)	C. Zarkias	Parenté et habitat à Skyros	Article	144–162	Espace social
25	1992 (no. 16)	E. Alexakis	L’épouse secondaire ou la stratégie du patrilignage	Article	4–20	Parenté, lignage
26	1992 (no. 16)	G. Nikolakakis	La litanie dans le Lassithi (Crète)	Article	42–47	Religion populaire
27	1993 (no. 17)	Z. Margari	L’arbre sacré de Lesbos	Article	31–34	Culte local
28	1993 (no. 17)	I. Toundassakis	Veuvage et remariage à Andros	Article	57–61	Statuts féminins
29	1998 (no. 20)	Z. Margari	Coutumes du Nouvel An à Neo Monastiri (Thessalie)	Article	41–46	Rituels calendaires
30	1998 (no. 21)	E. Alexakis	Le sang et l’huile. Parenté naturelle et spirituelle chez les Arvanites	Article	3–14	Arvanites, lignage
31	1998 (no. 21)	Z. Gosma-Kazazakis	Vie et travail des veuves en Attique du nord-est	Article	45–54	Genre, modernité
32	2001 (no. 23)	E. Alexakis	From Folklore and Ethnography to Ethnology	Article	5–9	Méthodologie
33	2001 (no. 24)	A. Demosthenous	Peaceful coexistence among Cypriot communities	Article	3–15	Chypre, conflits
34	2002 (no. 25)	E. Alexakis	«Vitore» ou l’esprit de la maison chez les Arvanites	Article	5–23	Symbolisme domestique
35	2003 (no. 26)	P. Christara	Fêtes, danses et chansons traditionnelles à Ierissos (Chalcidique)	Article	5–14	Fêtes, musique et culture locale
36	2009 (no. 32)	A. Demosthenous-Pashalidou	Statut socio-juridique de la femme musulmane en Grèce du Nord	Article	33–42	Genre, minorités
37	2009 (no. 32)	P. Christara	Les chanteurs traditionnels de Ierissos (Chalcidique)	Article	51–99	Musique traditionnelle

ANNEXE II

Comptes rendus d'ouvrages grecs dans la revue *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéennes* (nos. 7–20, 1984–1998)

Année	Volume	Auteur / autrice de l'ouvrage	Titre de l'ouvrage	Auteur / autrice du compte rendu
1984	no. 7	Dimitrios S. Loukatos	<i>Ta Kalokairina</i>	Andromaque Oekonomou
1984	no. 7	Dimitrios S. Loukatos	<i>Ta Fthinoporina</i>	Fotini Tsibiridou
1984	no. 7	N. K. Moutsopoulos	<i>Travaux pratiques. Maison paysanne...</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1984	no. 7	N. K. Moutsopoulos	<i>I architektoniki mas klironomia / Notre heritage architectural...</i>	Theologi Pénélope
1984	no. 7	Popi Zora	<i>Embroideries and Jewelry of Greek National Costumes</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1986	no. 10	E. P. Alexakis	<i>I exagora tis nifis</i>	Irène Toundassakis
1986	no. 10	Marie-Elisabeth Handman	<i>La violence et la ruse</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1986	no. 10	D. Loukatos	<i>Simpliromatika tou chimona ke tis anixis</i>	Andromaque Oekonomou
1986	no. 10	D. Loukopoulos	<i>Ta gheorghika tis Roumelis</i>	Andromaque Oekonomou
1986	no. 10	Stelios Papadopoulos	<i>I chalkotechnia ston elliniko choro</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1987	no. 13	E. P. Alexakis	<i>Ta geni kai i oikogeneia stin paradosiaki koinonia tis Manis</i>	Irène Toundassakis
1987	no. 13	L. Gounaropoulou, M. B. Hatzopoulos	<i>Les milliaires de la Vie Egnatienne</i>	P. Ş. Năsturel
1987	no. 13	T. Ioannou-Yannaras	<i>Ellinikes klostines sintheseis. Dantelles</i>	Glykeria Mélidou-Kephala
1987	no. 13	Charis Kataki	<i>I tris taftotites tis ellinikis oikogenias</i>	Photini Tsibiridou
1987	no. 13	N. K. Moutsopoulos	<i>To vizantino kastro tis Zichnas</i>	P. Ş. Năsturel
1987	no. 13	Eustache P. Sorocos	<i>La morphologie sociale du Pirée...</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1989	no. 14	Pavlos Hidioglou	<i>Ethnologikoi problimatismoï...</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1989	no. 14	N. K. Moutsopoulos	<i>I arhitektoniki proexohi "to sahnisi"</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1990	no. 15	Eleft. P. Alexakis	<i>I simaia sto gamo</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1993	no. 17	Samuel Baud-Bovy	<i>Chansons aroumounes de Thessalie</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1993	no. 17	Lambros Liavas	<i>Catalogue du fonds Samuel Baud-Bovy</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1993	no. 17	Yanis Saitas	<i>Greek Traditional Architecture</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1993	no. 17	Alkis Raftis	<i>The World of Greek Dance</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1993	no. 17	N. Moutsopoulos, G. Dimitrokalis	<i>I Elliniki imiselinos (« Le croissant grec »)</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl
1998	no. 20	Kornilia Zarkia	<i>Preindustrial Tanning in Greece</i>	Paul-Henri Stahl

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LA SOCIÉTÉ TRADITIONNELLE ALBANAISE
DANS L'OEUVRE DE PAUL H. STAHL

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ABSTRACT

THE TRADITIONAL ALBANIAN SOCIETY
IN THE WORK OF PAUL H. STAHL

Since 1979, when the journal *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* was founded, Paul H. Stahl has shown a growing interest in the study of traditional Albanian society. Drawing on an extremely rich body of documentation from 19th and 20th centuries authors, supplemented by studies by contemporary Albanian researchers (which he summarizes in reviews, making them available to the scientific community in the research and teaching institutions to which he sends his journal), he paints a convincing and comprehensive picture of the main characteristics of traditional Albanian society: the structure and organization of the domestic group, forms of property and inheritance, the division of labor, kinship ties and solidarity, the place of spiritual manifestations, and customary law. His studies, constructed with rigor and freedom of investigation, remain indispensable not only because of the information they contain, but also because of his unique method of interpretation, based in particular on a multitude of comparative observations with the rest of Southeast Europe and, more broadly, Europe.

Keywords: Paul H. Stahl, traditional Albanian society, principles of ethnographic research, comparative method in the study of societies in southeastern Europe.

L'ouvrage récemment publié, qui rassemble une série d'études de Paul H. Stahl sur les structures sociales en Europe du Sud-Est (Stahl, 2024), offre une excellente occasion de mettre en lumière sa contribution essentielle à la connaissance, non seulement de la région dans son ensemble, mais de chacune des régions qui la composent. Dans son approche intégrative, Stahl étudie la région albanaise avec

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autant de rigueur que les autres régions d'Europe du Sud-Est, mêlant les outils de la géographie humaine à ceux de l'histoire sociale¹.

Le rythme de l'évolution historique des Albanais, avec ses spécificités régionales, est un facteur que Paul H. Stahl, particulièrement intéressé par l'anthropologie juridique et historique, a constamment gardé à l'esprit. La comparaison avec d'autres populations d'Europe du Sud-Est et avec des exemples choisis du reste de l'Europe est utile non seulement pour décrire adéquatement le fonctionnement de la société albanaise traditionnelle, mais aussi pour comprendre les caractéristiques des étapes passées de l'histoire de l'Europe occidentale elle-même. Pour la recherche anthropologique sur les Albanais, ce recueil d'études intervient au bon moment où l'intérêt pour l'étude de leur droit coutumier concernant l'organisation sociale, les relations de parenté et la propriété a considérablement augmenté. L'observation de Stahl selon laquelle les passages du *Kanun* qui semblent se contredire, s'annuler ou s'opposer peuvent s'expliquer par des périodes différentes est d'une grande aide (2000, p. 39–40). Les différences entre les régions albanaises proviennent des stades d'évolution différents ou sont dues aux pressions externes diverses (2000, p. 58).

Dans ce qui suit, je vais essayer d'argumenter, dans la mesure où ma formation de linguiste, et non celle de sociologue ou d'historien, pourquoi il est nécessaire de prendre en compte, bien plus que ce qui se passe, l'érudition, l'ingéniosité des questions et la perspective diachronique avec lesquelles P. H. Stahl décrit avec cohérence les facteurs, les schémas et les tendances spécifiques de l'action et de l'évolution de la société albanaise traditionnelle. Il convient ici de rappeler la conviction de Stahl :

« Il apparaît de plus en plus clairement aujourd'hui qu'il est impossible de connaître une population isolément des autres. Il est également évident que la population d'un État ne constitue pas un bloc unitaire et homogène ; ainsi, au-delà des frontières, on peut trouver de nombreuses similitudes entre des populations linguistiquement différentes et appartenant à des États différents (...). Les méthodes utilisées pour éviter de cloisonner une perspective locale sont variées ; la plus courante semble être celle qui, en décrivant un groupe unique, cherche à intégrer les aspects étudiés dans un ensemble plus vaste (...) ».
(Stahl, 2000, p. 5–6)².

¹ Comme il le souligne, Stahl suit les méthodes d'Ami Boué, N. Iorga et Jovan Cvijić (2000, p. 8–9). Il s'intéresse à l'histoire, à la sociologie, au droit, à l'économie et à la géographie humaine.

² „În zilele noastre e din ce în ce mai evident că nu poți cunoaște o populație izolând-o de celelalte. Este evident, de asemenea, că populația unui stat nu constituie un bloc unitar, omogen ; astfel, de-a lungul frontierelor, poți găsi atâtea asemănări între populații diferite lingvistic și aparținând unor state diferite (...)”.

„Metodele folosite pentru evitarea claustrării unei perspective locale sunt variate ; cea mai comună pare a fi aceea care, descriind un singur grup, caută să integreze aspectele studiate într-un ansamblu mai larg (...)” (Stahl, 2000, p. 5–6). Pour la manière dont Stahl comprenait l'étude des sociétés traditionnelles, parmi lesquelles il accordait une place bien définie aux Albanais, d'une grande utilité voir Stahl, 1989c.

P. H. Stahl nous fait connaître l'importance des transitions entre les réalités de la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle et les premières décennies de l'État albanais moderne et les années entre les deux guerres, des longues années du régime communiste aux décennies complexes après 1990. Une série d'études et de chapitres dans ses livres abordent spécifiquement les coutumes juridiques des Albanais, avec une attention particulière à la zone nord, mais les Albanais sont présents, aux côtés des Slaves du Sud, des Grecs et des Roumains (avec les deux branches, du nord et du sud du Danube) dans toutes les descriptions du Sud-Est en tant que tel³.

Il est absolument nécessaire de souligner l'importance accordée dans son ouvrage *Triburi și sate din Sud-Estul Europei* [Tribus et villages du Sud-Est de l'Europe]⁴ aux liens entre les gens. Le chapitre avec lequel Stahl enrichit la version roumaine, destiné spécifiquement à comparer les populations du Sud-Est après avoir présentées chacune d'elles, se base sur l'enrichissement substantiel des informations les concernant, y compris sur les Albanais. Il met ici en lumière – outre les liens de consanguinité et autres formes de parenté, ainsi que les liens dus aux intérêts économiques et à la solidarité avant la justice – la cohérence donnée par l'élément spirituel, lié à la magie et à la religion (Stahl, 2000, p. 161). Il en déduit le principe selon lequel la structure sociale se projette dans la structure spirituelle. Il décrit – de manière systématique et détaillée, à partir d'une riche bibliographie, principalement albanaise – la région du nord de l'Albanie, à laquelle il ajoute fréquemment des informations sur les régions du sud du pays et de plaine (2000, pp. 162–164) : coutumes issues de la vénération de la divinité protectrice du foyer et de la tribu, aspects liés aux changements induits par l'imbrication d'anciennes unités sociales avec de nouvelles, et parallèles probables avec des célébrations similaires en Italie. D'autre part, des croyances païennes, préservées aux côtés d'éléments chrétiens, sont mentionnées. Stahl souligne que la propriété appartient à un lignage dans son intégralité, appartient à ses morts, aux vivants et à leurs futurs descendants. La richesse des informations et la méthode de recherche

³ Bien que limitée, la bibliographie de cet article en peut être consultée. Voir notamment les chapitres sur les Albanais dans les deux volumes, Stahl, 1986 et Stahl, 2000. Un fait, probablement non dénué d'intérêt, est que la version roumaine du livre, contrairement à la version anglaise, commence par le chapitre sur les Albanais. Nous ne trouvons aucun commentaire de l'auteur sur ce choix, mais l'explication réside peut-être dans le fait qu'ils comptent parmi les plus anciens des Balkans et représentent un stade plus ancien encore aujourd'hui.

La version roumaine, au titre plus explicite et détaillé, est enrichie d'une bibliographie mise à jour et, comme on peut le constater, d'un ordre des chapitres différent.

⁴ La version roumaine de ce livre, la plus complète, a été précédé par une version anglaise : *Household, Village and Village Confederation in South-Eastern Europe* (1986), Boulder, CO: East European Monographs et une version italienne : *Terra società miti nei Balcani* (1993), Messina : Rubbettino Editore. Voir aussi la note ci-dessus où nous montrons la place différente réservée au chapitre sur les Albanais dans les versions roumaine et anglaise.

conservent toute leur actualité, plaçant la réalité albanaise au même niveau que le reste de l'Europe du Sud-Est⁵.

Une place importante est accordée à la comparaison entre l'histoire des réalités du nord de l'Albanie et celle d'une autre organisation tribale, celle de la société traditionnelle monténégrine (Stahl, 1998, p. 53). L'analyse de la fonction et du caractère du code coutumier albanais, parallèlement à celui du code monténégrin, est très intéressante. L'une des différences réside dans le fait que les coutumes monténégrines ont été introduites dans un code élaboré par Baltazar Bogišić pour réglementer le fonctionnement de l'État monténégrin dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle, tandis que les coutumes albanaises ont été collectées par Shtjefën Gjeçovi comme matériel ethnographique (Stahl, 2007).

Grâce à une recherche assidue et systématique de données de terrain collectées par lui-même, mais aussi par des auteurs albanais, Stahl se révèle parfaitement informé de l'histoire de la recherche sur la société traditionnelle et la culture populaire albanaise sous tous leurs aspects et de tous les résultats obtenus par les ethnographes, ethnologues et folkloristes albanais contemporains. La publication *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* (EDBM), qu'il a fondée en 1979 et qu'il a animée pendant trente ans à Paris, a également le grand mérite de proposer de nombreux comptes rendus d'ouvrages et de revues albanais (parus en langues albanaise et étrangères), afin de les faire connaître aux milieux scientifiques occidentaux. Les volumes de EDBM ont été « offerts gracieusement, de préférence aux institutions de recherche et d'enseignement ». De fait, ils ont également été conçus comme des « recueils de matériaux de terrain » (EDBM 1, 1979 : *Préface*), ce qui devait assurer une bonne diffusion et une bonne connaissance des études des auteurs albanais aussi. Stahl lit systématiquement et présente leur contenu – accompagné d'observations qui mettent en évidence le travail soutenu et de qualité des auteurs lus – *Etnografia shqiptare, Ethnographie albanaise, Monumentet*,

⁵ Bien connues et utilisées, mais rarement citées comme elles le devraient (à notre avis), les études de Stahl ont offert une perspective nécessaire et intégratrice sur la société albanaise traditionnelle. L'ouvrage coordonné par Karl Kaser en 2012, dont le titre paraphrase celui de la version anglaise de l'ouvrage de Stahl, ne mentionne étonnamment que l'analyse concernant les Roumains, jamais celle concernant les Albanais, dont il ne s'écarte pourtant pas, si l'on peut dire. On peut également s'arrêter sur la manière dont est traité, dans le même ouvrage, le phénomène du lévirat et de la polygamie chez les Albanais. Les auteurs, Gruber et Pichler, simplifient excessivement les faits et ne prennent pas en compte l'analyse par laquelle Stahl éclaire la mentalité des montagnards albanais concernant les liens de sang et de parenté (voir aussi Stahl, 1990, p. 120, 122 ; Stahl, 2003). Dans le même passage, cependant, les deux auteurs ne font référence à l'ouvrage de Stahl qu'en relation avec l'importance de la naissance des garçons et parce qu'il a, avec d'autres auteurs, souligné la position privilégiée des hommes par rapport aux femmes dans la société albanaise traditionnelle. Il ne faut pas oublier qu'un cours entier de Stahl a été consacré au « Sang, anthropologie sociale balkanique et européenne » (en 1982). De même, chez Nebi Bardhoshi (2012, p. 70), auteur d'une étude sur la propriété dans le *Kanun de Lekë Dukagjini*, on trouve une seule mention, non substantielle, de l'analyse détaillée de Stahl (1986) sur la division des biens non fonciers. La description tout aussi détaillée de Stahl sur la division des terres au sein d'un groupe familial, en revanche, n'est absolument pas rappelée.

Culture populaire albanaise, Kultura popullore, volumes d'actes de colloques nationaux sur des thèmes d'ethnographie, de folklore, d'architecture populaire, de costume populaire, etc.

Les comptes rendus contiennent des observations subtiles : par exemple, Stahl attire l'attention sur les proverbes à caractère juridique qui reflètent les règles de vie de la population où ils ont été recueillis (EDBM 14, 1989, p. 198). Il n'insiste pas et ne revient pas ailleurs (à notre connaissance) sur cette notion importante. Comme on le sait, de nombreux paragraphes du code coutumier recueilli par Gjeçovi sont résumés par une phrase placée au début et qui a le caractère d'un proverbe, d'une maxime recueillie comme telle. On trouve, dans un autre compte rendu du même numéro de la publication, la déclaration suivante : « L'Albanie est une riche mine pour la connaissance de nombreux aspects de la vie traditionnelle (...) » (EDBM 14, 1989, p. 199).

L'examen de la collection témoigne des efforts constants de Stahl pour mieux comprendre le groupe domestique albanais, son organisation sociale reflétée dans la structure (avec des variations locales) de l'espace habité, son évolution d'une époque à l'autre, les différences entre le nord et le sud, la montagne et la plaine, et la répartition du travail et des activités au sein du groupe domestique (EDBM 1, 1979, pp. 134–137). Mentionnons, par exemple, l'explication de la présence systématique de la chambre d'amis, dictée par l'importance de l'hospitalité chez les Albanais, ou de l'existence de maisons fortifiées, dictée par le besoin de défense dans une région où règne la loi de la vengeance. Il est intéressant de noter la tentative – à laquelle Stahl ne revient pas, à notre connaissance – de trouver une explication historique aux différences de forme du groupe domestique entre les Roumains et les Grecs d'une part et les Albanais et les Slaves d'autre part. On avance avec prudence des hypothèses qui conduisent à la situation de la zone sud-est européenne dans l'antiquité et pendant la période des premiers contacts avec les Slaves ; dans la bibliographie on trouve des références à B. P. Hașdeu et I. I. Russu (EDBM 1, 1979, p. 142).

La source constante est toujours le code de lois non écrites, rassemblé, ordonné et publié pour la première fois en série dans une revue de Shtjefën Gjeçovi, à partir de 1912–1913 (que Stahl utilise dans la traduction italienne de 1941), les recueils des rapports que les prêtres catholiques envoient au Vatican au XIX^e siècle, publiés par Giuseppe Valentini, des études, ainsi que ses propres observations sur les Albanais de Macédoine et ceux du nord de l'Albanie. On y trouve également de fréquentes références à von Hahn, Pouqueville, Degrand, Durham, Hasluck, Nopcsa, Cozzi, Coon, Hecquard et autres voyageurs du XIX^e et XX^e siècles.

Aussi, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens* devient, grâce à l'activité de Paul Stahl comme critique, la publication la plus riche et la plus informée qui suit les travaux de nombreux auteurs albanais. Les comptes rendus, toujours précises et riches d'informations, mettent en valeur la capacité scientifique

et l'expérience dans l'étude des traditions albanaises, ce qui représente une vraie garantie de profit scientifique pour le futur lecteur⁶. À propos de sa propre étude concernant la région tribale des Albanais, Stahl affirme qu'« aux publications et informations anciennes j'ajoute les résultats des études récentes publiées par les chercheurs albanais, qui enrichissent de manière substantielle le domaine » (1998, p. 53)⁷. Nous citons quelques ethnographes et historiens albanais : Andromaqi Gjergji, Naum Guxho, Androkli Kostallari, Koço Nova, Spiro Shkurti, Stavro Skendi, Alfred Uçi, Rrok Zojzi, Eqrem Çabej, Abaz Dojaka, Ramazan Shpati, Pirro Thomo, A. Bisha, Ali Muka, Haxhihasani, Mark Tirta, Mark Krasniqi et bien d'autres.

Dans son effort pour avoir accès à tout ce qui paraissait en Albanie et à Prishtina, Stahl était également au courant de la nouvelle édition du code des coutumes juridiques albanaises de Gjeçovi, parue à Tirana en 1989. De la partie qui représente le manuscrit de Gjeçovi pour la première fois publié, il fait place, dans EDBM no. 28 (2004, pp. 53–86) à la traduction française de Sokol Kondi d'un long fragment sur le rite funéraire (voir aussi Stahl, 2024, p. 344, note 2).

Après avoir pris la direction de l'Institut des Études Sud-Est Européennes, de Bucarest, en 1999, Paul H. Stahl continue de publier des études d'auteurs albanais dans la *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* et dans *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéennes*⁸.

Pour conclure, nous attirons l'attention sur les préoccupations linguistiques de Paul Stahl. En étudiant les questions liées à l'anthroponymie et à la toponymie dans une série d'ouvrages, Stahl démontre son intérêt pour le rapprochement entre les disciplines. Il explique, par des incursions dans l'histoire de la langue française, le terme *maisnie* qu'il a choisi et utilisé systématiquement pour désigner le groupe domestique (Stahl, 2024, pp. 153, 191 ; voir aussi Irina Stahl, 2010). Il rassemble les termes spécifiques aux normes juridiques non écrites et à l'organisation sociale,

⁶ Cette attention portée à des auteurs peu ou pas connus, notamment ceux d'Albanie, mais qui méritent d'être lus pour leur travail de collecte et d'interprétation d'un matériel ethnographique très riche, répond aussi à sa conception selon laquelle la science ne doit pas obéir à la mode : « Si curieux que cela paraisse, la mode est tout aussi présente dans les préoccupations des chercheurs que dans l'évolution des modes vestimentaires. On oublie des choses importantes écrites il y a un siècle ; on oublie des noms que ne sont plus à la mode, mais qui rien n'a remplacé » (EDBM 13, 1987 : *Introduction*).

⁷ La preuve de l'appréciation confiante du travail des ethnographes et des ethnologues albanais sont les mots suivants à la fin d'un compte rendu : « L'interdiction de la religion en 1967 mettait en danger les monuments religieux du pays. Le sort de la liste des monuments religieux érigée à ce moment mérite d'être connue ; de 214 monuments du culte protégés, les autorités prévoient de conserver seulement 20, mais l'opposition résolue des collaborateurs de l'institut des monuments historiques a fait qu'on n'a exclu de la liste que 74 monuments (34 % du total) sauvant ainsi les autres. Connaissant bon nombre des travaux et des chercheurs albanais dans le domaine de l'architecture, je peux affirmer que ce sont leurs efforts qui ont permis non seulement de sauver un grand nombre de monuments, mais aussi de les restaurer. Les mérites de l'auteur du présent livre sont à cet égard évidents » (Stahl, 1998, p. 90).

⁸ Voir la Bibliographie.

accompagnés d'observations jugées intéressantes par les ethnolinguistes aussi (Mihail, 2001). Il attire l'attention, par exemple, sur le fait qu'en albanais, aucun terme ne permet de différencier l'habitation de l'unité sociale. En roumain, comme le montre Stahl, on trouve la paire *casă – gospodărie*, ce qui signifie que le nom de l'unité sociale ne manque pas ; une étude potentiellement intéressante devrait envisager une comparaison entre la situation en albanais et celle en roumain.

Il faut noter, parmi les termes qui ont attiré l'attention de Stahl : *shejti* [*shenjt*] 'saint de la maison ; patron de la maison, divinité protectrice' (2000, p. 163) ; *shpija e fortë* (= maison forte), *derë e madhe* (= grande porte) pour désigner le grand groupe domestique (Stahl, 1998, p. 53) ; *zoti i shtëpisë* 'maître de maison', *plak* 'vieil homme', *babzot, tatzot* (= père maître) 'maître de maison' (1998, p. 56) ; *vllazni, fis, bajrak* (1998, p. 73) ; *zjarr* (= feu), *tym* (= fumée) 'maison, habitation' (2000, p. 27) ; *kambë* (= pied) 'génération' (2000, p. 27) ; *shtylla e konakut* (= pilier de la maison), nom pour le fils, *tepricë* (= ce qui est superflu), nom pour la fille (2000, p. 36) ; *lisi i gjakut* (= arbre de sang), parenté du côté masculin, du côté paternel, *lisi i tamlit* (= arbre à lait), parenté du côté féminin, du côté maternel (2000, p. 36) ; *gjini*, parenté du côté féminin, *bark* (= ventre), *kushri* (= cousin), parent en général (2000, pp. 44, 48, 49) ; *mali* (= la montagne), nom pour une unité administrative traditionnelle (2000, p. 49) ; *kuvend* 'assemblée' (2000, p. 51), *poronik* 'garant' (2000, p. 58).

La vision de Paul H. Stahl explique – de manière exhaustive et claire, toujours bien distincte – les caractéristiques de la vie sociale traditionnelle en Europe du Sud-Est. Elle prend en compte à la fois ce qui constitue l'unité et ce qui représente les spécificités régionales et locales. En abordant les facteurs de civilisation qui, au cours de l'histoire, ont assuré une certaine unité (les Grecs anciens et leurs relations avec les Illyro-Thraces – comme il les appelle –, l'Empire Romain, l'Empire Byzantin, l'Empire Ottoman) et en considérant, dans une perspective intégrative, les contacts entre les populations de la région (par exemple, aux frontières entre les idiomes, dans les zones montagneuses, etc.), Stahl accorde une importance égale à chaque groupe ethnique, y compris aux Albanais.

Les traditions des Albanais sont étudiées de manière systématique, jusqu'au moindre détail. Son œuvre constitue une riche synthèse, fruit de ses propres observations et de la lecture d'un grand nombre d'auteurs du XIX^e et de la première moitié du XX^e siècle (notamment des voyageurs ou des spécialistes ayant parcouru les régions habitées par les Albanais). Stahl sait également exploiter constamment et sans aucune discrimination les résultats de la science albanaise, qui s'est particulièrement distinguée dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle et les premières années du XXI^e siècle. À jour avec les publications albanaises (en langue albanaise et en langues étrangères), Stahl s'attache, en même temps, à faire connaître les travaux des ethnographes et ethnologues albanais aux cercles universitaires occidentaux. Ses travaux portent sur la structure de la famille traditionnelle,

la consanguinité et les types de parenté dans la mentalité traditionnelle, l'habitat et le logement, l'organisation de la *maisnie* (avec le terme qu'il a introduit), le fonctionnement de la communauté à tous les niveaux, la propriété (familiale et commune) et sa transmission de génération en génération, le travail et sa répartition, ainsi que la spiritualité traditionnelle (croyances anciennes, christianisme, islamisme).

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PAUL HENRI STAHL AND THE UNUSUAL LEGACY OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF BUCHAREST. THE COMPARATIVE METHOD AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL STRUCTURES

LUCIAN DUMITRESCU*

ABSTRACT

By employing an agent-structure ontology specific to critical realism, the article poses two research questions related to the interdisciplinary activity of Paul Henri Stahl, on the centenary of his birth. First, is it possible to examine an author's work in a sociological vein and what kind of sociological research does one carry out by exploring how an author taps into a particular structural opportunity? The second research question is directly related to Paul Henri Stahl and seeks to understand whether he can be deemed both a successor of the Sociological School of Bucharest and an innovator relative to the sociological tradition of the Gusti School. To answer the aforementioned questions, the article resorts to critical realism as a methodological choice and explores how Paul H. Stahl evolved into a master of interdisciplinary research under the influence of micro- and mezo-structural influences wielded by his father, Henri H. Stahl, and the Sociological School of Bucharest. The article also pays heed to Paul Henri Stahl's agency in dealing and innovating with respect to such influences.

Keywords: Paul Henri Stahl, sociology of intellectuals, critical realism, Henri H. Stahl, the Sociological School of Bucharest.

INTRODUCTION

In this special issue dedicated to Professor Paul Henri Stahl, I am exploring a small part of his work by starting from two premises. The first premise is that of “good science”, which is based not so much on axiological neutrality as on the intellectual honesty (Porpora and Morgan, 2020) of the researcher. This aspect compels me to state my research concerns from the outset. Historical sociology and the comparative method, coupled with the agent-structure ontology of critical

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realism, will allow me to project only a partial¹ image on the work of Professor Paul H. Stahl. It is therefore likely that, setting out on the road with these research interests, some of Professor Paul Stahl's ethnographic and anthropological approaches, that are of central importance to his work, will remain untackled. The second premise that this text is built on is that of exploratory research. Typically, one resorts to exploratory research when the researcher has insufficient information either on the object of inquiry or on the context in which the research is to be carried out (Blaikie and Priest, 2019, p. 81). What make my research exploratory are the aforementioned cognitive biases, as well as some lingering vagueness about the tradition of the Sociological School of Bucharest, through which I read some of the scholarly writings that inform this text. Last but not least, I deem this text to be the result of an exploratory research in relation to my attempt to highlight an unusual legacy of the Bucharest Sociological School, namely an epistemic package with which Paul H. Stahl came into contact during his formative years as a researcher in Romania, and which he clearly enriched improved once he arrived in France in 1969. This epistemic package which comprises the comparative view on social sciences, that had been employed by some prominent members of the Sociological School of Bucharest (as this text will show), and the theory of social structures.

Based on the abovementioned aspects, the text posits two research questions. The first one, which is meta-theoretical and general in nature, seeks an analytical solution for the exploration of a particular author. More precisely, could one claim to do sociology simply by investigating an author? If the previous question is answered in the affirmative, another question naturally arises: what kind of sociology one does we do by exploring the work of an author? The second research question directly concerns Professor Paul Henri Stahl, about whom Gheorghe Şişeştean said that "(he) belongs to the last generation of sociologists of the Bucharest Sociological School" (Şişeştean, 2009, p. 3). What has Professor Paul Henri Stahl borrowed from the legacy of the Sociological School of Bucharest? Three research practices: "permanent contact with grassroots reality, collaboration with all the social sciences and a special place of sociology's links with history" (Şişeştean, 2009, p. 4).

But is that all? Gheorghe Şişeştean's perspective is precise, but this text aims to show that Paul Henri Stahl is not only a continuator of the Sociological School of Bucharest. He is also an innovator in relation to the middle-structural influences of this School and the micro-structural influences of his father, Professor Henri H. Stahl. The text thus attempts to demonstrate that the comparative method and the sociology of social structures are epistemic practices through which Paul Henri Stahl could be deemed both a continuator and an innovator of the Bucharest

¹ After all, the aim of social science research is to provide as complex a picture as possible of the phenomenon or process under investigation, the premise being that social research is a sophisticated common sense (Myrdal, 1969).

Sociological School. Specifically, what this text seeks to demonstrate is that Paul H. Stahl gets familiar with the comparative perspective and the sociology of social structures, which were relatively marginal epistemic approaches within the School, especially the latter being more in line with the “Henri H. Stahl doctrine” than with the “Gusti doctrine”, and takes them to a higher level in his own research. For this reason, I believe that Paul Henri Stahl is one of the authors to whom young researchers could turn to, in order to get a grasp on the Sociological School of Bucharest’s legacy, that is almost extinct nowadays.

Regarding the first research question, I will try to offer a quick answer. The intellectual field approach, that is connected – usually through subordination – with the political and economic field in a particular institutional context (Guga, 2015), the author viewed as a function-author (Foucault, 2004) to which a discourse or several discourses are subordinated, as well as the biographical approach (Bosomitu, 2014) – are, all, vantage points that have already been employed in Romania in the scholarly field of sociology of intellectuals. In contrast to the above, one of the less refined approaches that can be put into practice more easily by younger researchers belongs to Wright Mills, who delves into the opportunity structure available to an author which occurs at the intersection between history and biography, that is, at the intersection between historical structures and the character of the individual (Mills, 2000, p. 9). Closely related to the approach I use in these texts is Bob Jessop’s (2007) *strategic-relational view*, according to which the institutional-organizational structures that constrain the individual’s aspirations, choices and actions are not absolute, but relative (Dumitrescu, 2024). In other words, the individual endowed with the capacity of strategizing, choosing and acting can modify his or her institutional environment through one’s activity – to the extent of one’s own resources, including here one’s ambition. The approach I am taking here is a post-positivist one, inspired by critical realism and based on the agent-structure ontology. According to this approach, the purpose of sociology is to explore the individual’s effort of restructuring his or her own structure of opportunity. More specifically, agency aims at modifying the structural constraints of the institutional environment in which the individual operates, a process that post-positivist sociology explains through a historical narrative that highlights the mechanisms of institutional constraint (Parker, 2000). Arguably, this approach has nothing to do with expectations that the personality under investigation will live up to the moral standard imposed from the outside, by the investigator (Bosomitu, 2014). In other words, the researcher explores the strategy through which the investigated personality taps into a structure of opportunity structure that is provided by an institutional setting which simultaneously coerces and empowers the individual. The peculiarity of this type of post-positivist sociology resides in the ontological depth that it projects onto the social world, an approach that runs counter to the one-dimensional ontologies that tend to be prevalent in low to medium capacity states, institutional contexts, where social sciences are hardly reflexive and usually

status quo-oriented. In the case of a personality such as Professor Paul Henri Stahl, the ontological vision of critical realism underlines especially the middle and micro constraints (Porpora, 1987), namely those constraints or influences derived from the sociological practice of the School of Bucharest or from Professor Henri H. Stahl. Why are we nominating only these constraints? The answer would be, because this text, as the result of an exploratory research, is limited in scope. And also because these two influences have shaped Paul Henri Stahl as a master of social research before he left for France in 1969. Connected to that, here is what we learn from Henri H. Stahl about the monographic campaign in Șanț, Năsăud County, that took place between 1935 and 1936: “A scout camp was also set up there, under the direction of Goia, in which I also included my 10-year-old son Paul, whom I had taken as a small child on various field trips, such as the one in Drăguș, with Brăiloiu, when Paul made his first contact with a profession in which he would become a master, long after that” (H. Stahl, 1981, pp. 335–336).

What this text does not explore are the macro-structural constraints of a neo-colonial state (Chiroț, 2002), that is, Romania as a satellite of the Soviet Union, which, from 1948 onwards, banned sociology as a science, out of universities, and also the mezo- and macro-structural constraints of a France in which Paul Henri Stahl, after 1969, becomes a master of interdisciplinary social research.

FROM THE COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BUCHAREST SOCIOLOGICAL SCHOOL TO THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

What this section sets out to demonstrate is that the comparative view of social research, perfected by Paul H. Stahl, especially after his departure to France in 1969, constitutes a micro- and meso-structural influence exerted on him by both his father, Henri H. Stahl, and the Bucharest Sociological School. My point is that the notable aspect of Professor Paul Stahl’s research activity is that he was not simply influenced by the Romanian epistemic influences, with an emphasis on the comparative view in this case. Paul Stahl also innovated in relation to this scientific grammar that he learned in the epistemic community of the Sociological School of Bucharest, perfecting it in his own scientific endeavor. Exploring Paul Stahl’s capacity for innovation in relation to the resources and, simultaneously, the constraints of an epistemic community such as the interwar Romanian School constitutes a sociological approach specific to the sociology of intellectuals. It studies the strategy of intellectuals (seen as agents) to partially shape or even fundamentally change the opportunities, limitations and vulnerabilities of an epistemic community (seen as the structure). The heir of the Bucharest Sociological School is not the one who “serves” Dimitrie Gusti, an approach that has nothing to do with reflexive sociology, an idea I once heard, to my utter surprise. Despite his personal ego, Gusti did not want his disciples to “obey” his sociological vision. The heir of the Bucharest Sociological School is rather the one who, by drawing on reflexive

thinking, understands and simultaneously innovates in relation to the tradition of this school, given that innovation is still possible in the institutional space of the contemporary Romanian sociology. In my view, Paul H. Stahl was a reflexive continuator of the tradition of the School.

The “tradition” of the Sociological School of Bucharest seems to be encapsulated today in a discourse full of clichés, in relation to which claiming that the comparative vision is part of the School’s heritage and, moreover, that it has also influenced Paul Stahl, could amount to heresy. It is not the place here to discuss at length the clichéd narrative about the legacy of the School, and therefore I will limit myself to mentioning just some of the main clichés. The first and also the main one equates the Gusti School with the monographic method. This cliché is tantamount to reducing the internal diversity of the School, camouflaging *soft* (epistemic) and *hard* (political and ontological) dissent under the guise of a seamless epistemic community, and simplifying the process through which the School moves from fundamental research for political-cultural action to a political-cultural action pursued at the expense of fundamental research (Guga, 2015, p. 23). Undeniably, the monographic method constitutes the intellectual hallmark of the Sociological School of Bucharest, along with the theory of sociological parallelism. Yet the monographic period constitutes only one stage or form in the development process of social research in Romania, as Dimitrie Gusti imagined it. The first of these forms was the Romanian Social Institute, which dominated Romanian culture through its manifestations in the first decade after 1918 (Vulcănescu, 2005, p. 1042). While the Faculty of Social Sciences, an unrealized project, would have been the third stage in the development of social research in Romania. It is therefore erroneous to exclude the Romanian Social Institute from the Sociological School of Bucharest’s legacy, of which the monographic method represented just the second stage of development. Another major cliché related to the Gusti School is that of projecting onto it an ahistorical national ontology, under the influence of Lucian Blaga and Mircea Eliade (Guga, 2015, p. 78), while the sociology of the nation carried out by Gusti was in fact focused on the nation-state as a historical structure, i.e., an institutional process unfolding in time and space. This sociology of the nation aimed both to build a modern, inclusive nation and to connect public policy decisions with the needs of the peasantry, which represented over 80% of the population of Greater Romania and was treated more as an object and less as a subject of politics. In close connection with the ahistorical and metaphysical national ontology projected onto the Gusti School by some contemporary exegetes, an ontology with which the School’s scientific research had no connection, a third cliché emerges, namely that of methodological nationalism, on the basis of which the state, nation and society are fused one into the other, while the internal factors of development and modernization are seen as being completely isolated from the regional and international ones (Pradella, 2014). Overlooking the connection between local structures and the regional one may have significant effects on the

accuracy of sociological explanation, especially in the case of low to medium capacity states that have emerged in the outskirts of empires. The institutional development of these states is influenced even today mostly by external rather than internal factors. In sum, based on the aforementioned clichés, the emergence of a comparative approach within the Sociological School of Bucharest seems to be highly unlikely.

In 1993, Professor Paul Henri Stahl was elected honorary member of the Romanian Academy. His speech for his reception into the Academy, entitled *Muntenia – The Land of Mountains*, is based on a comparative analysis of the medieval European state formations that emerged in the mountainous area. The analysis was focused on the emergence of the state in Muntenia, at the foot of the Southern Carpathians, with its power being projected on both the Transylvanian and the mountain slopes (Șișeștean, 2009, p. 5). From Gheorghe Șișeștean, author of the most comprehensive article I have read so far on Paul Stahl's bibliography, we learn that his concern for the comparative approach has developed even further once he arrived in France, in 1969. "The richness of French libraries" (Șișeștean, 2009, p. 14) is the reason why Paul Stahl started using more frequently the comparative method. Can Paul Stahl be considered a comparativist? In my view, the answer is affirmative, for several reasons. The first two are certain, while the third one relies on personal speculation. In *Tribes and Villages in Southeast Europe* (published at Paideia Publishing House in 2000), Prof. Stahl exemplifies how is the comparative method used in ethnological and sociological research. The second argument that support my earlier statement that Paul Stahl can be deemed a comparativist researcher refers to his rejection of methodological nationalism, which, by isolating the internal factors from the external ones, in exploring and explaining different social processes and institutions, lowers the quality of explanation. In this sense, in the introduction to *Tribes and Villages in South-East Europe*, Paul Stahl quotes Nicolae Iorga, who believed that national prejudice, by putting the preferred community before all others, "helps" you to understand nothing (P. Stahl, 2000, p. 10). In Paul Stahl's view, those "scientific researches" that support national prejudice are of no scientific value. "An absurd competition pits scientists here and abroad against each other: before the cannons start firing, the clash takes place through arguments drawn from the social sciences, and the situation can only get worse when research is oriented in the direction of national and governmental biases" (P. Stahl, 2000, p. 5). There is no such thing as the absolute objectivity, continues Paul Stahl. But we can get closer to it by using appropriate methods. Among these, the comparative research. "Nowadays it is increasingly obvious that you cannot know one population by isolating it from the others" (P. Stahl, 2000, pp. 5–6). Last but not least, the reason why I consider Paul Stahl as a comparativist researcher is his inductive approach to social research. This is not to say understood that Paul Stahl would have had an anti-theoretical attitude. On the contrary, he was preoccupied with "theoretical openings" (Șișeștean, 2009, p. 16), which is not surprising, considering the influence of Henri

H. Stahl, who could not stand “the use, in sociology, of notions to which you have not given a precise content” (Rostás, 2000, p. 10). Paul Stahl was also favouring conceptual precision. The family, for instance, is an imprecise concept, as long as it can include not only the domestic group of a household, but also people outside the household. As a result, the domestic group appears as a more appropriate concept for people living in the same household. “These people live together, work together, own the same property, keep the same religious holy days, without ruling out the possibility that they might be related”. The nuclear family represents the domestic group at a certain stage of social evolution, a thing that will escape our grasp should we study families only in terms of the number of people comprising it and fail to take into consideration the practices mentioned above. The sociologist, and more broadly, the researcher in social sciences, begins to engage with the object of knowledge through concepts. Depending on the clarity of these concepts, the researcher’s access to the object of knowledge is more or less precise. For Paul H. Stahl, however, it was imperative to start from facts and not from theories (Șișeștean, 2009, p. 14). This inductive approach works well when it comes to comparative research, despite the prejudice according to which comparative research is useful only for testing theories. This prejudice states that the comparative method can be used only in a deductive approach. But comparative research can also be used inductively, that is, to help compare institutional contexts in order to construct concepts or theories (Simmons and Smith, 2021). Therefore, I believe that the inductive predilection of Paul H. Stahl, a predilection documented by Gheorghe Șișeștean, can be exploited in a comparative approach to science, through the type of field research that aims at constructing or improving concepts. This personal speculation on my part may constitute another argument for Paul Stahl’s profile as a comparativist researcher.

The question is whether Paul Stahl identified himself as a comparativist? Yes, he did, but a modest one. In his book *How the Land of Vrancea Faded Away*, Paul Stahl points to three factors that explain the dismantling of the joint traditional property in the region being researched. These are: the servitude processes that free villages’ peasants went through, the 1923 Constitution and, in general, the modern legislation of Greater Romania, which contrasted with its archaic local institutions, and, last but not least, the deforestation of Vrancea through extensive logging in the inter-war period, without any concern for the social and environmental effects of such actions. Paul Stahl points out that such destructuring of the archaic institutions that has happened in Vrancea Country in interwar Romania had also happened in other European countries. “These (such cases – our note, L. D.) are not clear enough for me to make a comparison here, one which would require identifying the circumstances that allowed these communities to survive” (P. Stahl, 2002, p. 80). Paul Stahl also portrays himself as a modest comparativist in *Tribes and Villages in South-Eastern Europe*: “My uneven knowledge of the Balkan regions does not allow me to undertake a satisfactory comparative presentation in all respects” (P. Stahl, 2000, p. 12). Anyone reading *Tribes and Villages in South-*

Eastern Europe will note that Paul Stahl undertakes a comparative study of several traditional social structures belonging to Albanians, South Slavs, Greeks and Romanians. There are two fundamental questions that the researcher using the comparative method, whatever the field of research, need to answer to. First, what is it that are we comparing? Second, to what purpose are we making the comparison. Regarding the first question, Paul H Stahl compares traditional social structures with a focus on the household: the domestic group, its hierarchy, property, women and their roles etc. Relative to the second question, the comparison is mainly concerned with the transformations that the domestic group has undergone in contact with modernity in the communities under investigation. Notably, when carrying out his comparative research, Paul H. Stahl uses the theories and empirical data of the Bucharest Sociological School which, according to Gheorghe Şişeştean, “paradoxically, are less used in current sociological circles in Romania” (Şişeştean, 2009, p. 18).

It is worth noting Professor Gheorghe Şişeştean’s remark that, once he arrived in France, in 1969, Paul Stahl became more interested in the comparative method. Not having sufficient data at my disposal, it is difficult for me to say how interested Paul Stahl was in comparative approaches prior to that. But what I intend to show in the following is that not only Henri H. Stahl and Dimitrie Gusti but even Anton Golopenţia, the most important epistemic dissident of the Sociological School of Bucharest, concerned themselves with a comparative perspective. My contention is that Paul Stahl had come into contact with this comparative epistemic package during his training as a social scientist in Romania. Of course, the transformation of the comparative perspective used by the inter-war Romanian sociologists – and which today is a *rara avis* in the field of Romanian social sciences – into the comparative method that Paul Stahl had resorted to, in order to carry out research in different countries of South-Eastern Europe is his undeniable merit. Henri H. Stahl was concerned with historical sociology, i.e. with the evolution and transformation of social structures over a long period of time, and he also showed an interest in comparative research, although this was not a defining feature of his interwar writings. However, as early as the interwar period, Henri H. Stahl argued for the importance of long-term historical and anthropological data in the investigation of traditional social structures. Subsequently, the diachronic comparison of different types of economic and political organization became increasingly manifest in his historical sociology. He has also argued for the need of a comparative approach in examining “the mechanisms of the processes of transformation of social structures from one type of social-economic organization to another” (H. Stahl, 1972, p. 190). In a posthumously published work (1992), Henri H. Stahl includes a six-page section entitled *Rules of the Comparative Method* in which, on the one hand, he addresses the central question of the comparative method, namely “what is it we are comparing?” and, on the other hand, he discusses the importance of comparison for understanding social processes. “On the contrary, it is the ‘long-lasting’ phenomena that are suited to systematically made comparisons, ‘morphologies’ and ‘social

processes' can only be understood within a comparative perspective" (H. Stahl, 1992, p. 84). Notably, in Henri H. Stahl's view, one that is still valid today, comparative sociology does not employ comparison on singular events, but rather long-term structures and processes.

Arguably, Dimitrie Gusti was not a comparativist of the stature of Paul Stahl. Gusti acquired his comparative epistemic training in Germany as a student. Specifically, Gusti studied international law and foreign policy in Berlin with Professor Franz von Liszt. And, importantly, he was a contributor to the *Review for the Science of Comparative Law and Social Economics* (Vulcănescu, 2005, p. 943). But the representative of the Bucharest Sociological School who had a more developed comparative view of social research was Anton Golopenția. Through his idea – and practice – of partial monographs, which did not investigate the totality of the social problems of a village, but only those that were important for the whole of interwar Romania (H. Stahl, 1981, p. 361), Golopenția became an apostate and a rebel in Gusti's eyes. Still, the village typologies built upon the data provided by the partial monographs could have been used in order to produce a comparative explanation. But what matters for this discussion is Golopenția's sociological framework he insisted on studying Romania's social history issues at the regional level, at the scale of South-Eastern Europe, in contrast to the predominantly localist vision of the Sociological School of Bucharest. Moreover, in his geopolitical writings, Golopenția placed emphasize on the need for regional research, which would include states from the same political environment as Romania, going so far as to openly assert the need for comparative sociology. "The processes which transform the structure of a group of fellow countrymen from abroad or of a foreign state can be established by comparing their structure in two sufficiently distant moments of their existence" (Conea *et al.*, 1940, p. 114). Golopenția directly suggests the need for diachronic comparisons of the social structures of the states from the same political environment such as of interwar Romania through a sociological perspective that would emphasized the importance of the long duration of institutional development, in contrast to the "Gusti doctrine", which was more concerned with recent history. The conclusion I am drawing is that a regionally-inspired comparative perspective, focused on South-Eastern Europe, but not necessarily a comparative method, was already embraced by salient representatives of the Sociological School of Bucharest.

SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL STRUCTURES

This second section of the text brings into discussion the epistemic inheritance that Paul H. Stahl owes to Henri H. Stahl, rather than to the Bucharest School of Sociology, namely the sociology and ethnology of traditional social structures (that Paul H. Stahl explores comparatively in several countries of South-Eastern Europe). There are two reasons that lead me to argue that Paul H. Stahl's interest in traditional social structures comes from Henri H. Stahl rather than from the Gusti

School. First, it is his interest in historical sociology and in exploring the change and continuity of social structures over long periods of time. The “Gusti Doctrine” (H. Stahl, 1981, p. 60) concerned itself mainly with field research and was rather focused on the present. The historical framework of the Gustian “law” of sociological parallelism paid heed to the investigation of recent history and its impact on the phenomenon being studied. In contrast, the “Henri H. Stahl doctrine” of social research took into consideration long-term of social structures, whose evolution from past to present was the main concern of Henri H. Stahl’s historical sociology, that emphasized the ‘path dependence’ of contemporary institutions on traditional social structures. This distinctive perspective of research, that entails the extensive use of historical and anthropological data, led to the emergence of “social archaeology”. Its interdisciplinarity was to be used not only in researching the present, in line with the “Gusti doctrine”, but also in exploring the past. Secondly, this social archaeology was practiced by Henri H. Stahl mainly in his own field research. Due to the fact that Henri H. Stahl’s historical sociology used in the exploration of social structures drew on Marxism, it was completely ignored by ex-communist sociologists in the 1990s, who also abandoned the agrarian issue question after Henri H. Stahl’s death (Guga, 2015, p. 29). However, although it was not one of the dominant lines of research, the sociology of traditional social structures could not have been completely ignored by the Sociological School of Bucharest. After all, the villages investigated by the monographic teams, during the 1920s and 1930s, were riddled with traditional social structures. Moreover, one should not forget that it was Henri H. Stahl’s interest in traditional social structures, such as the joint traditional property that have brought the monographic teams to the Vrancea Country, to Nereju. So even if the exploration of traditional social structures via historical and anthropological data was not of central concern within Gusti School, it is clear that such issues were not completely overlooked. My point, however, is that the “social archaeology” of Henri H. Stahl, with its openness to anthropology and long-term history, accounts more convincingly for Paul H. Stahl’s fascination with traditional social structures than the marginal concerns that the Sociological School of Bucharest might have had in this direction.

Equipped with the “H. H. Stahl doctrine”, which combines history and social anthropology, Professor Paul H. Stahl has explored comparatively the traditional social structures in different countries of South-Eastern Europe. A narrow perspective on social structures would equate them with institutions. The more sophisticated perspective exposes two directions in exploring social structures. The first one derives from Durkheim’s sociology and defines social structure as the social relations between social facts. This leads to a view of structure as the statistical regularities between them, simultaneously eliminating individuals from sociological research. The second one, which draws on Marx, refers to the complex of social relations between individuals, and places emphasis on the agency, meaning the individual’s capacity to modify, through his/her will and action, these social structures (Porpora, 1987). According to critical realism – the meta-theory that

underpins my approach here –, social structure refers to “systems of human relations between social positions” (Porpora and Morgan, 2020). The definition is dry and reveals little beyond the Marxist influence. In reality, the definition shows that, ontologically, social power is embedded into the social structure more than in discourses and behaviors. More precisely, the differences in social power, experienced by each individual in both traditional and modern societies, derive from the differences in social relations relative to the particular social positions. Neither the issue of power, nor the concern to precisely define the traditional social structure appears in *Tribes and Villages in South-East Europe*. However, Paul H. Stahl directly captures the social structure, i.e. the power relations, in which women were involved in traditional Albanian, Greek and South Slavic societies. In Albania, a woman was not forced to bring a dowry into marriage. The man, on the other hand, had to amass a thousand piasters before he could hope to find a wife. Young men who were not wealthy enough, i.e. those who could not raise this amount of money, had very little chance of getting married. So traditional power relations could also work against them. The practice of bride buying was a social fact in Albanian villages. But despite this, it was not at all clear to whom the bride belonged after marriage. Paul Stahl describes the institution of the levirate, whereby the purchased woman remained in the household as an heirloom in the event of the husband’s death, being taken into the possession of the deceased’s next of kin or other members of the household (P. Stahl, 2000, p. 29). Tradition commodified women and did not allow them to remarry or return to their birth family without the permission of the family of the late husband. Should the woman remarry or return to her birth family without permission from her husband’s family, the institution of *vendetta* was activated, which could lead to the murder of rivals. The woman's predicament in the traditional family could only be improved if she bore male children. If she gave birth to girls or in the case of infertility, which in traditional societies was considered exclusively her fault, the woman could return to her family. But not before returning half of the price paid for her initial purchase as a bride or by handing over another woman of the same family (Paul H. Stahl, 2000, p. 33). In Greece, the system of social relations between women and the traditional household was not much different from the one in Albania. The woman belonged to the lineage of origin, bride-buying was practiced, as was the obligation to have as many sons as possible. Sterility was attributed exclusively to the woman. In case of divorce, the children remained in the husband’s family, as his property, and if the divorced woman wanted to remarry, she needed the former husband family’s consent. Note that in 1907, 49% of men in the Messa Mani region were literate, in contrast to 5,47% of women (P. Stahl, 2000, p. 94). Among the South Slavs, with reference to the tribal societies of Montenegro, the minority status of women in traditional societies seems to be most pronounced among all Slavic societies. Here, women are cast almost in the role of slaves to their husbands, women’s labor is harder than men’s, and women are

obliged to give birth to many sons who “provide for the old age and the perpetuation of the household, have someone to pass on property to, and finally, are supported in the hard life beyond the grave” (P. Stahl, 2000, p. 73). Remarkably, Paul H. Stahl managed to capture the mirroring of social structure in the religious structure of the traditional societies he investigated.

But beyond the relatively static perspective on the social structures in the *Tribes and Villages of South-Eastern Europe*, Paul Stahl also proposes a dynamic view of these. In this sense, the reader who might be interested in the institutional metamorphoses generated by the penetration of capitalism in the villages of interwar Romania should read the book *How the Country of Vrancea Faded Away*. The work contains an analysis of the political practices events in Nereju, which were not included in the three-volume monograph of Nereju published in French in 1938. According to Paul Henri Stahl, the reason why the political manifestations were not included in the monograph is due to Emanoil Bucuța’s desire not to “tarnish the legendary aura of the Land of Vrancea” (P. Stahl, 2002, p. 8), a piece of information that Paul Stahl had gathered from Zoltan Rostas. Those who read *How the Land of Vrancea Faded Away* will discover that the research included in the volume could not only tarnish “the legendary aura of the Land of Vrancea”, but also the legendary aura of interwar democracy, with the consequence of damaging the image of the elites of the time on an international level. Therefore, beyond its ethnographic component, *How the Land of Vrancea Faded Away* is above all a work of political sociology, which explores the quality of local interwar political institutions. With data gathered through field research (interviews and observation), the book reveals the precariousness of the political institutions of Greater Romania, which is hardly surprising for a neo-colonial state (Chirot, 2002) that emerged – and reproduced itself – on the outskirts of empires.

The paper also examines the impact of comprador capitalism on traditional social structures, with an emphasis on the process of dismantling the traditional joint property. Henri H. Stahl was a well-known observer of the way in which representatives of the interwar Romanian state, such as Tache Ionescu and Alexandru Marghiloman, together with representatives of the village bourgeoisie, acted as agents of Austrian logging firms (H. Stahl, 1981, p. 64). Important here are Paul Stahl’s comments on the mismatch between the practices of the interwar Romanian state and the traditional structures of the villages of Vrancea. “The inappropriateness of the institutions imposed on local life by the state is striking: the elimination of old forms of administration based on tradition, appropriate to this region, resulting from local life and a long evolution, can only sadden, but also provoke indignation. The use of their positions in the administration in their self-interest goes hand in hand with their continuous shifting in political opinions; they are accompanied by a total disregard for political doctrines. Political life manifests itself as a phenomenon artificially superimposed on a society unrelated to it” (P. Stahl, 2002, p. 13). In short, the political manifestations in Nereju were a form without substance, just like the interwar Romanian democracy appears to us now. These

political manifestations were studied indirectly, from the perspective of the quality of the institutions in *How the Country of Vrancea Faded*, in contrast to the predominant contemporary procedural-legal discourse or the one which differentiates between interwar democracy and communist totalitarianism. Paul Stahl does not speak here of form without substance, but of “blind imitation”, this being one end of the continuum on which attitudes in a peripheral state in relation with the Western world can be placed, at the other end being total rejection of those (Roberts, 1969, p. 147). Notably, Paul H. Stahl argues that what accounts for “blind imitation” is a process of rapid social change, with its radical effects on institutions. “The aftermath of such sudden changes has caused great suffering, impoverishment of the country, and a shaking of its moral values. Even if stemming from the best of intentions, blind imitation and copying, often without adjustment, the laws and rules of life that suit other countries, and other forms of social life, inevitably leads to suffering and backwardness. A change of this magnitude can only be useful if informed on the fundamental research of social realities and with respect to the differences between Romanian regions” (P. Stahl, 2002, p. 80).

Paul Stahl paid interest to the transformation of the traditional structure of joint traditional property under the impact of comprador capitalism, and noticed that *the dissolution of joint ownership in Vrancea Country was carried out abusively, as the common lands, once used collectively, were gradually taken over by the more powerful members of the community, as well as by Austrian logging companies*. The latter were buying up the rights off the local people, changing the common ownership of the forests and thus replacing the natural, limited, survival-oriented exploitation of the forest by the peasant household with the capitalistic, unlimited, profit-oriented exploitation of the forestry company. The effect produced by the change in the logic of forest exploitation in the Vrancea Country is emphasized by Paul Stahl before his departure to France: “Traveling through the region in the 1960s, I was struck by the desolate, almost bare hills, with mud flowing downhill, the result of the savage deforestation that had been ravaging the land for more than a century. This careless deforestation of entire mountains was repeated in the 1940s and 1950s by the SovRoms: for its airways, it was said that the SovRoms got the airplanes, airports and pilots from Romania, while the air came from the USSR (a phrase used in the 1960s)” (P. Stahl, 2002, p. 17). Three types of external interventions, spread over a long period, i.e. at least a generation, have fundamentally changed the institution of joint traditional property in the Vrancea Country. These, according to Paul Stahl, were the transformation of free peasants into serfs, the intervention of the interwar Romanian state after the adoption of the 1923 Constitution and, last but not least, the abusive and fraudulent penetration by forestry companies, supported by legislative changes adopted by the interwar Romanian state.

I conclude this section by mentioning another traditional social institution. This is the institution of the chief of the Vrancea Country, who held the *uric*, that is, the inscriptions attesting the rights of the locals over the forests and lands of

the Vrancea Country, which had been issued by Stephen the Great himself. Unsurprisingly, the locals would not explain the decline of the Vrancea Country as a result of the transformation of the joint traditional property under the action of the external factors mentioned above. According to the popular explanation, the decline of this land was due to the fact that the Vrancea *uric* had been lost by Popa Taftă, leaving in its place only “copies of no strength” (H. Stahl, 1999, p. 166).

CONCLUSION

As this is an exploratory research, the details of which I have offered in the introduction along with my own research biases, exploring a part of Paul Stahl's work from the perspective of micro- and mezo-structural conditioning leads me to only one partial conclusion. On the one hand, the influence on Paul Henri Stahl's research of the epistemic package he acquired in Romania both from his father, Henri H. Stahl, and from the Sociological School of Bucharest is quite evident. On the other hand, the earlier pages have found evidence that Paul Henri Stahl is not only a continuator of the sociological tradition of the Sociological School of Bucharest. He is at the same time an innovator in the remit of comparative method and the sociology of social structures.

My research leaves the most important part of Paul Henri Stahl's work unexplored. Also, I have not investigated at all the impact of macro structures, those specific to a neo-colonial state such as Romania, which abolished sociology in 1948. How Paul Henri Stahl has coped with the institutional vulnerabilities of such a state, both before his departure to France in 1969 and after his return to the country, may represent a new line of research. On the need to reinvent oneself as a sociologist in the 1950s in Communist Romania, on the challenges of finding a job that allowed one to do field research during those harsh years, as well as on the challenges of fieldwork in the 1950s and 1960s, we find partial data in Gheorghe Şişeştean's article. But these data do not exhaust such a research direction. Also, how the research environment in capitalist France was structured by Paul Henri Stahl's research vision, as well as what has survived in that institutional environment from the tradition of the Sociological School of Bucharest, constitute another research direction, which, in my opinion, could lead to new approaches specific to the sociology of intellectuals, as a subfield of political sociology.

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PAUL-HENRI STAHL, MON DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE

GALINA KABAKOVA*

ABSTRACT

PAUL HENRI STAHL, MY DOCTORAL DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR

The article summarises the personal experience of the author who, arriving in Paris in 1990, enrolled in a second doctorate at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), as she soon realized her first doctorate, earned in Moscow, will not allow her to pursue an academic career in France. With great warmth and gratitude, the author describes the personality of her new doctoral supervisor, Paul Henri Stahl, showing the decisive impact he has had on her professional development.

Keywords: Paul H. Stahl, South-Eastern European Ethnology, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS).

Le 1^{er} septembre 1990, je suis arrivée à Paris pour ne jamais le quitter. L'année précédente, j'étais venue en touriste assister au vernissage de l'exposition de mon père à la Galerie de France, et j'avais fait la connaissance de Paul-Henri Stahl. Cette même année, j'avais soutenu ma thèse de doctorat en ethnolinguistique à l'Institut d'Études Slaves et Balkaniques de Moscou, sous la direction de l'académicien Nikita Tolstoï. Mais en France, je me rendis vite compte que ce diplôme ne m'ouvrirait pas les portes de l'université.

Je racontai alors à Paul-Henri que ma thèse portait sur le calendrier roumain et que je nourrissais depuis longtemps un autre projet : étudier la perception du corps féminin en Polésie, au sud de la Biélorussie et au nord de l'Ukraine. Il m'accepta aussitôt en doctorat, cette fois en anthropologie sociale. Ainsi s'ouvrit pour moi un monde nouveau : une discipline inédite, de nouvelles approches, une autre manière d'écrire.

Je découvris d'abord ses cours sur les structures familiales dans les Balkans et au-delà, sur l'habitat, l'espace social et géographique. Les séminaires réunissaient

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des doctorants venus d'horizons variés : études de l'oralité, anthropologie culturelle. La diversité des terrains, des sujets et des méthodes était vertigineuse – et admirablement orchestrée par Paul-Henri. Mon propre terrain, décentré par rapport à l'univers balkanique, n'a jamais posé le moindre problème ; mes présentations furent toujours accueillies avec chaleur et curiosité.

Le séminaire de Paul-Henri attirait bien au-delà des doctorants inscrits : d'autres chercheurs, parfois venus de disciplines éloignées de l'ethnologie, y participaient comme intervenants ou auditeurs. Reconnu par la communauté scientifique française, Paul-Henri était respecté de tous et se sentait investi d'une mission essentielle : développer les études balkaniques – et plus largement sud-est européennes – en France.

L'une de ses grandes réalisations fut la direction de plusieurs dizaines de mémoires et thèses en près de trente ans d'enseignement à l'EHESS. Mais il créa aussi un autre centre de gravité intellectuel : la série *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéennes*. Entre 1979 et 2009, il réalisa, seul, trente-deux fascicules de cette publication périodique. Sans financement public, il en assura à la fois l'édition et la diffusion. Quiconque s'est déjà confronté à l'édition mesure la difficulté d'une telle entreprise.

Cette revue réunit les contributions de chercheurs jeunes et confirmés, issus de nombreux pays. Le champ d'étude s'élargit progressivement et, à partir du sixième volume, le titre initial, *Études et Documents Balkaniques, intégra et Méditerranéens*. Paul-Henri m'y invita à publier : je lui dois ma toute première parution en France (et en français), en 1990, consacrée à l'enfant naturel dans les traditions d'Europe de l'Est. J'y publiai ensuite un autre article et un compte rendu. Cette expérience fut pour moi une véritable initiation à la recherche française : même si j'avais déjà publié en russe, j'ai dû réinventer ma manière d'écrire.

La lecture des travaux de Paul-Henri m'a profondément marquée. En découvrant son livre, *Histoire de la décapitation* (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1986), qu'il m'offrit généreusement, j'ai compris qu'un ouvrage universitaire pouvait se lire comme un roman d'aventures. Depuis, j'ai toujours tenté d'écrire dans cet esprit.

J'ai eu, dans ma vie académique, deux chances rares. Dès la licence, j'avais trouvé un directeur de mémoire, puis de thèse, qui devint presque un parrain : Nikita Ilitch Tolstoï. Ses étudiants et ses doctorants formaient une tribu soudée autour de leur maître. En arrivant en France, j'ai rencontré un autre guide, Paul-Henri Stahl. Réserve, il ne montrait jamais ses émotions, et nos relations n'étaient pas aussi cordiales qu'avec la famille Tolstoï. Pourtant, dès le début, j'ai senti que je pouvais compter sur lui, et la vie me donna raison.

Il me fallut presque sept ans pour achever ma thèse. Une fois terminée, je proposai comme rapporteuse une collègue que je connaissais bien et que je considérais comme une amie. Quelle erreur de jugement ! Elle ne fit que feuilleter l'introduction et rendit un avis défavorable. J'étais dévastée. En lisant le pré-rapport,

Paul-Henri comprit aussitôt que cette collègue n'avait ni saisi la méthode ni la problématique de mon travail.

Je ne sais comment un autre aurait réagi à sa place, mais lui prit une décision surprenante : il accepta de participer au colloque qu'elle organisait à Montpellier, où elle enseignait l'anthropologie. Sur place, il prit le temps de la rencontrer, de discuter de ma thèse et de la convaincre de la lire attentivement. Cette rencontre fut décisive : la rapporteuse finit par faire son travail, et l'avis définitif fut bienveillant.

La soutenance se déroula sans accroc, et la thèse, publiée sous le titre *Anthropologie du corps féminin dans le monde slave* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2000), m'ouvrit les portes de la Sorbonne. Je sais aujourd'hui que le rôle de Paul-Henri fut essentiel, et je lui en serai toujours reconnaissante.

REMEMBERING PROFESSOR PAUL HENRI STAHL

SOKOL KONDI*

ABSTRACT

The article evokes the personality of Professor Paul H. Stahl and the atmosphere of his classes at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris in the early 1990s, through the lens of the author's personal experience.

Keywords: Paul H. Stahl, South-Eastern European Ethnology, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS).

I met Professor Paul Henri Stahl at a defining moment of my life, in September 1991, when I went to France to pursue my Master studies (in French, *Diplôme d'Études Approfondies – DEA*) in Ethnology/Anthropology, on a French Government scholarship. An unexpected, but rather fortunate decision of the scholarship committee led me to École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, where Professor Stahl was assigned as my supervisor, or *Directeur d'Études*. Coming out of Albania in the early days of post-communist era and being only at my second trip abroad, I knew very little at the time about EHESS and Professor Stahl and the horizons they would open to me. As I entered his office at the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale*, 52 rue du Cardinal Lemoine, with curiosity, timidity and unease, a touch of the world I grew up in welcomed me. Surrounded by books, the Professor greeted me smiling and serene. He offered me a chair close to him and immediately started to question me about my family name and origins. Not before long, I realised he knew more about my country than I did, and that through his knowledge, he had created for me a piece of home away from home. Little did I know back then, of the key role my *Directeur d'Études* would have in shaping my educational and professional leap into the future, while steadily laying the bricks of my academic and intellectual foundation.

Professor Stahl was a researcher of complex systems, which he observed with the loupe of an ethnographer. His courses of *Ethnologie de l'Europe du Sud-Est*

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and *Ethnologie des sociétés paysannes* helped me adopt a very different perspective on the realities of my origin and opened up windows to a world which looked distant and familiar at the same time. The foundational concept of *la maisnie*, as he crafted it, not only was the primary cell in the structure of societies, but also the entry point to understand how they developed and the dynamics of their evolution. Equally important, it established an element of comparison between them, transcending singularities, and implying a message of openness and unity through diversity. Having grown up in a country closed to the outside world, and nourished in the spirit of its particularity, attending Professor Stahl's classes equalled tearing down the walls of my initial worldview. His erudite knowledge of the Balkans and Eastern Europe made me realise the limitations of my world and provided a system and tools to my desire to explore.

Surrounded by Greek, Romanian, Serbian, Italian, and French students, the day-by-day at the EHESS was an experience of great consequence for me. My colleagues profoundly marked my understandings and expanded my horizons with their life stories, their knowledge and their friendship. Zoe, Philippou, George, Christina, Carmen, and Ana were an important part of my broader education in Paris. Philippou's dance group was an excellent immersion in a cultural pool similar to the one I grew up in; conversations with Zoe, George and Christina further pushed my intellectual boundaries. It was not a coincidence that we all were brought together by Professor Stahl, who taught and guided us.

The topic of my DEA thesis (*Le rituel de la mort parmi les habitants de la région du Dukagjin, en Albanie du Nord*) and the preparatory process were closely steered by Professor Stahl. His advice to focus on a death ritual performed by men in the Catholic communities of Northern Albania, heavily suppressed during the communist era, opened up an unfamiliar path to me. The literature and the field work proved to be quite revelatory in understanding my own country and its place in the wider Balkan space. Equally unforgettable were his tips on how to use the participant observation method and what to look for in my interviews. One day, over coffee somewhere in Paris, he explained patiently how to make the most of my new camera, which I had just bought on his advice, and the kind of lenses that would increase the quality of my photos. I went to the field with many questions to explore and a list of names from his personal network, in my country.

Shortly after my graduation, I came to understand that I had been living in a comfortable bubble during the DEA year. "We always have problems with you Albanians!" the contact person from the fellowship services told me, the moment I sat in front of her. My plans to continue the Doctorate were shattered by unrelated events back home. The new "democratic" government, which had come to power in March 1992, in a gesture reminiscent of the past, had asked the French government to discontinue the fellowships of all then Albanian students, and to replace them with other candidates, selected by the new political establishment. Few people in my entourage those days understood the peculiarities of post-communist transition like Professor Stahl. His support for a grant from the

EHESS ensured that I pursued another year of my Doctorate studies, which I had to complement, while working part time. Then the politics hit again, this time from inside of France: the arrival of Charles Pasqua as Minister of Interior Affairs made it very difficult for foreign students to find additional jobs. With no means to sustain myself financially, I had to leave France.

My studies and work took me to the USA, but despite the distance, Professor Stahl continued to play a key role in my choices, advising me on the steps to follow and sharing news from my *alma mater*. The academic foundations that he and EHESS laid were a solid ground for my further studies in New York, whilst the theoretical framework, research methods and fieldwork were invaluable well beyond the academia. Later on, as I decided to pursue a different professional path, working for the United Nations in post-conflict countries of Southeast Asia, the Balkans, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, I found my studies particularly useful to understand the local societies and their internal dynamics. Often, I caught myself using the ethnographer's loupe of Professor Stahl to explore the components of *la maisnie*, how birth, marriage and death regulate social relations, what shapes conflict and potential courses a society might take. This kept me grounded and humble, qualities that I always valued in Professor Stahl.

In retrospect, as I look back to the fateful year of 1991 when I left Albania to continue my studies in France, there could not have been a better place to study than EHESS, like it could not have been a better *Directeur d'études* than Professor Stahl. As the decision was not mine to boast about, I always appreciate the fortuity of that moment. At the meeting point between a post-communist Eastern Europe and the West, EHESS was a liminality space and Professor Stahl a honourable guide who enabled the rite of passage for those who aspired to make the transition. And he did it with wisdom, humility and a smile, true to his conviction that societies always find ways to get along.

PAUL H. STAHL, *Social Structures in South-East Europe*. Volume edited by Irina Stahl, Stelu Șerban and Andrei Timotin, Istros Publishing House of the “Carol I” Museum of Brăila, 2025.

Paul Henri Stahl (1925–2008), Romanian and European ethnologist, sociologist, and academic, was a prominent specialist in rural sociology, ethno-sociology and the study of traditional societies across Europe. Son of eminent Professor Henri H. Stahl, one of the most remarkable representatives of the Bucharest School of Sociology founded by Dimitrie Gusti, Paul H. Stahl graduated in Philosophy, with a specialization in Sociology, at the end of World War Two, in 1948. Soon after, sociology was banned in Romania by the newly instated communist regime. The members of the interwar School of Sociology were marginalized, destituted, arrested and investigated; few met an untimely death. In order to survive, they accepted insignificant positions in schools, research centers, or museums, where they carried out jobs remotely, or at all related to sociology. Paul H. Stahl started out working within the Ministry of Education, at the Center for Psycho-Medical-Pedagogical Research (1949–1952), where he was part of interdisciplinary teams investigating the conditions of the educational system. After isolating several medical problems, the center was abruptly shut down. Stahl found a new position within the Romanian Academy. He was at first as a researcher at the Institute of Art History (1953–1962) and later, at the Institute for South-East European Studies (1963–1968). In the 50s and the 60s, several of his works were stopped from being published and suppressed by the political censorship. Under these conditions, after earning his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Bucharest (1968), Paul H. Stahl defected the country and went to Paris. From 1969 onwards, he taught Southeast European Ethnology at the University René Descartes (Sorbonne). He became Director of Studies (*Directeur d'études*) at the prestigious École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS Paris), and, from 1970, he joined the Social Anthropology Laboratory, within the National Centre of Scientific Research. During his career, Paul H. Stahl worked with leading European historians, anthropologists and sociologists, among which Fernand Braudel and Claude Lévi-Strauss. In recognition of his contribution, the French Republic awarded him with the prestigious *Palmes académiques*, in 1986. Following the 1989 political change in Romania, Paul H. Stahl was elected Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy (1993), and was later appointed Director of the Institute for South-East European Studies (1999–2008).

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Paul H. Stahl academic legacy covers a large area of themes regarding Romanian, South-European and European social and spiritual life. His studies explore folk art and folk architecture, village structure and household organization, situating the Romanian ethnology within a broader, European framework. Among his most significant publications ought to be mentioned: *Arhitectura Populară Românească* (Romanian Folk Architecture, five co-authored volumes dedicated to different geographical regions, 1956–1959), *Planurile caselor românești țărănești. Die Grundrisse der Rumänischen Bauernhäuser (Blueprints of Romanian Peasant Households, 1958)*, *Arta populară în R.P.R. Ceramica* (Folk Art in the Popular Republic of Romania. The ceramics, co-authored with Barbu Slătineanu and Paul Petrescu, 1958), *Folk Art* (three co-authored volumes dedicated to various geographical regions of Romania, 1963–1969), *Folclorul și arta populară românească* (Folklore and Romanian Folk Art, 1968), *Civilizația vechilor sate românești* (Civilization of Ancient Romanian Villages, with Henri H. Stahl, 1968), *Ethnologie de l'Europe du Sud-Est* (1975), *Il sangue e la terra. Comunità di villaggio e comunità familiari nell'Europa del '800* (with Massimo Guidetti, Milan, 1977), *Un'Italia sconosciuta. Comunità di villaggio e comunità familiari dell'Europa del '800* (with Massimo Guidetti, 1978) *Le radici dell'Europa. Il dibattito ottocentesco su comunità di villaggio e familiari* (with Massimo Guidetti, 1979), *Sociétés traditionnelles balkaniques. Contribution à l'étude des structures sociales* (Paris, 1979), *La Méditerranée. Propriété et structures sociales. XIX^e et XX^e siècles* (Paris, 1979), *Histoire de la décapitation* (Paris, 1986), *Household, Village and Village Confederation in Southeastern Europe* (New York, 1986; Italian version – Messina, 1993; Romanian version – Bucharest, 2000), *Le radici di una valle alpina. Antropologia storica e sociale della Val Tartano* (Sondrio, 1995), *La Méditerranée. Propriété et structures sociales, XIX^e et XX^e siècles* (Paris, 1979), *Name and Social Structure. Examples from Southeast Europe* (editor, Boulder – New York, 1998), *Familia și școala. București 1949–1952. Contribuții la sociologia educației* (The Family and The School. Bucharest 1949–1952. Contributions to the sociology of education, 2001), *Oameni și case de pe Valea Moldovei* (People and Houses of Moldova Valley, 2004), *Case și acareturi din Mărginimea Sibiului, 1953–1958* (Houses and Outbuildings of Mărginimea neighborhood in Sibiu 1953–1958, 2005). Beside his own work, he also published several manuscripts belonging to his father and uncle.

The volume we are reviewing, *Social Structures in South-East Europe*, reunites more than twenty articles written by Paul Henri Stahl, in a volume edited by Irina Stahl (scientific researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy), Stelu Șerban, and Andrei Timotin (scientific researchers at the Institute of South-East European Studies). The consistent volume is a long due *restitutio* to the academic community, highlighting Paul H. Stahl's perspective on the complex domain of *cultural areas*. The articles, published between the 1970s and the 2000s in prestigious international publications, as well as in leading Romanian and French academic journals, witness and reflect upon Stahl's sustained engagement with the comparative study of village structures, kinship systems, customary law,

religious practices, and territorial organization in Southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean. His work constantly returns to the idea of “cultural areas” (*aires culturelles*), understood as historically shaped configurations of social structures, practices, and symbolic systems. In an interdisciplinary approach, combining ethnological field research, historical anthropology, and sociological analysis, Stahl contributes with a distinctive method that connects Romanian ethnology with the larger, European debate in anthropology and history. These writings represent both a theoretical legacy for the study of traditional societies and a bridge between Gusti’s interwar School of Sociology and contemporary European social sciences perspectives.

Reunited under the overarching concept of “social structures”, the volume organizes Paul H. Stahl’s selected articles into five sections, grouped around interrelated themes and sub-themes: archaic and pre-modern state formations, old village communities, the relationship between the rural architectures – houses, church – and the social group, biological and symbolic kinship, identity and naming: *Pays de montagne, pays de vallées; Communautés villageoises; Maisons et églises; Parenté biologique, parenté symbolique; Noms personnels, noms fictifs.*

Introduced in cultural anthropology since the early 1900s, and initially referring to extra-European societies (Northern and Latin America, Asia, Northern Africa), the research field of “cultural areas” opened the way to comparative studies. Cultural areas are defined as a “*group of regions or countries without a common political-administrative framework, but where similar social problems arising from a common history deserve a unique treatment or at least comparative studies, the tools of which are a documentation center capable of ‘cobbling together’ very disparate information*” (Bataillon, 1999). Although working within this comparative framework, Paul H. Stahl’s approach is rooted in the Bucharest School of Sociology founded by Dimitrie Gusti and continued by Henri H. Stahl. In this tradition, villages are seen as belonging to larger cultural and historical areas, which are expressed not only in spiritual attitudes and folklore (songs, costumes, rituals), but also in everyday structures of life: settlement patterns, architecture, kinship and inheritance systems, economic practices, legal customs, and symbolic-ritual frameworks. For Paul H. Stahl, cultural areas are historical-structural zones, where land, kinship, architecture, law, and ritual interact to create relatively stable cultural systems. In the broader landscape of the social sciences, the concept of “cultural areas” emerges at the intersection of several intellectual traditions: beyond the old opposition civilized / non-civilized societies, or the identity / alterity constructions shaped by the rise of 19th century national consciousness (Pathier, 2017, pp. 183–196), it represents above all an epistemological construction, a framework for developing interconnected and interdisciplinary approaches in the social and human sciences. In defining cultural areas, Paul H. Stahl emphasizes that geography alone is never sufficient to explain social configurations. Instead, he stresses on the interplay between history, neighborhood, and shared social life as the structuring forces of a region. In « *L’Europe du Sud-Est. Aires culturelles et*

facteurs structurants (XIX^e et XX^e siècles) », the opening article of the reviewed volume, the author explains:

“My approach attempts to identify the European regions that have most often attracted the attention of scientists in order to identify the defining elements of each. (...) All social phenomena occur somewhere in nature and can therefore be referred to by naming the place where they occur. (...) At first glance, the geographical element alone seems to be decisive; in fact, it is a natural element that provides the framework for a certain form of social life. (...)”

The study of South-East Europe has led not only to comparative presentations but also to the establishment of numerous research institutes dedicated to the study of the region (...). Geographical and ethnic factors, which are particularly varied, cannot provide arguments to explain the common aspects of the entire region.

The decisive factor, which is mentioned in the explanation of the situations analyzed for this cultural area, is shared history, proximity, and shared social life” (Stahl, 2024, pp. 15–18, translated by the author A. H. M.).

The studies collected in the reviewed volume cover a wide thematic range, reflecting Paul H. Stahl’s comparative approach to village structures, kinship, religion, and symbolic systems in Southeastern Europe and beyond. Among the most significant are: « L’évolution historique de la communauté villageoise. Quelques repères européens » (originally published in *Sociétés européennes. Études roumaines et aroumaines*, 1990 (1)), « “Pays” et communautés des vallées. Exemples roumains et européens (originally published in *Revue roumaine d’histoire*, 37(3–4), 1998), « Deux communautés villageoises en Europe du Sud-Est (originally published in R. Cresswell (Ed.), *Éléments d’ethnologie*, vol. I, 1975), « L’organisation magique du territoire villageois Roumain » (originally published in *L’Homme. Revue française d’anthropologie*, 13(3), 1973), « Soi-même et les autres. Quelques exemples balkaniques » (originally published in *L’identité. Séminaire interdisciplinaire dirigé par Claude-Levi-Strauss, professeur au Collège de France, 1974–1975*, Paris, 1977), « Le nom des princes roumains (originally published in *Revue d’études roumaines*, no 17–18, 1993). Some articles are selected from the prestigious journal edited and published by Stahl himself, *Études et Documents Balkaniques et Méditerranéens*: « *Muntenia, le pays de la montagne* » (no. 18, 1995), « Les règles de vie des anciennes communautés villageoises européennes » (no. 16, 1992), « L’église et la maison. Les rituels de construction parallèles » (no. 30, 2006), « Les églises en bois de la Valachie. La table des ancêtres » (no. 7, 1984), « Les Albanais, la région tribale » (no. 20, 1998), « Les anciens codes de Monténégro. Coutume orale et coutume écrite » (no. 31, 2007), « Les sept lignages. Structures sociales archaïques et modèles numériques » (no. 22, 2000). From the articles published in *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, the coordinators of this volume, Irina Stahl, Stelu Șerban and Andrei Timotin, collected some important syntheses: « L’Europe du Sud-Est. Aires culturelles et facteurs structurants (XIX^e et XX^e siècles) » (no. 43,

2005), « L'installation des fidèles dans l'église. Exemples sud-est européens » (no. 31 (1–2), 1993), « Les errements de la parenté » (no. 41, 2003).

Paul H. Stahl is concerned with the continuity of the social structures inherited from the past, the domestic group, the neighborhood, the property, the authority of the elders; the interplay between oral and written religious traditions; as well as the political-territorial formations, such as the Romanian « *Muntenia*, le pays de la montagne » (*id.*, 44). The studies explore tribal communities, brotherhood (*phratricie*) and the household (*maisnie*) as social units (*id.*, pp. 80–81). The tribal confederation, as opposed to the modern State is described:

“Tribal life is better preserved in the absence of a powerful state, as a tribe is itself a state, even if it is smaller in size compared to modern states, and even if it is organized according to customs passed down orally. Between the independence of a tribe and the desire of a state to regulate the lives of its subjects, there are conflicts of interest that often lead to armed oppositions and are difficult to resolve through compromise. These conflicts have developed even within the framework of modern Balkan states” (Stahl, 2024, 101, translated by the author, A. H. M.).

In his study « “Pays” et communautés de vallée. Exemples roumains et européens », Paul H. Stahl recalls the methods developed by Henri H. Stahl, under the formula of “social archeology” (*archéologie sociale*). This approach makes it possible to trace the remnants of ancient social formations beyond written sources, by reconstructing them through the study of customary practices, material culture, etc. For example:

“Vrancea, located between mountains at the curve of the Carpathians, preserves the memory of an ancient tribal structure, especially an eponymous legend; the entire country is said to descend from an “old Vrâncioaia” who had seven sons. There are many Romanian eponymous legends, each linked to the origin of a single village, but Vrancea is unique in this respect, because its legend concerns a confederation of villages” (Stahl, 2024, p. 114, translated by the author, A. H. M.).

The section « *Maisons et églises* » provides examples from communities such as the Albanians, Southern Slaves, Slovaks, Caucasians, Romanians, and French, highlighting how domestic and religious architecture reflects social organization, kinship structures, and symbolic practices across diverse cultural contexts:

“We are thus faced with an impressive series of common elements in the organization of the houses of the extended European domestic groups. Within this group, we can distinguish the cases of societies based on a tribal structure which, as warrior societies, build and inhabit towers. The materials I present here are only a first attempt at a synthesis on a European level, but the data concerning other countries are also interesting and rich” (Stahl, 2024, p. 263, translated by the author, A. H. M.).

The article « *Églises en bois de Valachie. La table des ancêtres* » opens with the statement: “the dead must be cared for because they have needs similar to those of the living”, emphasizing the continuity between the living and the ancestral world. Stahl interprets the material and ritual arrangements within wooden churches – notably the placement of the “ancestors’ table” as tangible expressions of social memory, kinship obligations, and the symbolic structuring of community life. Through this lens, architecture and ritual become mediators between the sacred and the social, revealing enduring patterns of cultural and spiritual organization in rural Valachian society (also see Stahl, 1983, pp. 87–106). Thus:

“(…) the custom of eating with the dead, which is practiced by almost all populations of South-East Europe, is also evident elsewhere in the construction of tables and even shelters for these tables. They sometimes take forms related to the local social structure. The wooden churches of Serbia are most reminiscent of those of Wallachia and Little Wallachia; but the social structure there is different. While in Wallachia the social unit that stands out is the village, giving rise to a single table, in Serbia the lineages were more important. This probably explains why, in some places, each lineage has its own small hut built near the church” (Stahl, 2024, 319, translated by the author, A. H. M.).

Through his thorough researches, grounded in extensive archival documentation, field observation, and comparative analysis, Paul H. Stahl has built a bridge between the Romanian sociology and ethnography and the Balkan and Mediterranean studies, situating Romania and Romanian studies within the broader European scholarly context. His work not only preserved and extended the traditions of the Bucharest School of Sociology (1925–1948), but also introduced comparative, interdisciplinary approaches that connected local ethnography with regional and European historical patterns. By emphasizing the continuity of social structures, the interplay of kinship, ritual, architecture, and territorial organization, Stahl provided a methodological and conceptual framework that continues to influence contemporary research in sociology, ethnology, and historical sociology and anthropology.

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Angelica Helena Marinescu

ANAMARIA IUGA, *Țesând povești. Istorii de viață în camera bună maramureșeană* [Weaving Stories. Life Stories in the Good Room of Maramureș], Iași, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Press, 2025.

The Bucharest-based researcher offers a fascinating study on the life of traditional fabrics in Maramureș region (Romania), especially those that, by tradition, are kept in the “good room” (*camera bună*). Conceiving her work in line with the anthropology of objects (Arjun Appadurai, Janet Hoskins, Alfred Gell, Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall etc.), the author prefers to see the material she studies not as inert things, but rather as “subjects”, artifacts that – in relation to their owners – develop a life of their own, accumulate memory, compel their owners to actualise certain behaviors, modify the space in which they are displayed; in short, they behave in relation to humans as if they were beings. Taking this theoretical standpoint, the author’s attention constantly shifts from issues of morphology and symbolism, popular aesthetics or production techniques to the “biography” and function of these objects and, in general, to the way in which the destinies of traditional fabrics and people intertwine. It should also be noted that the work represents a profound and well-documented foray into the universe of female sensibility of Maramureș, as the universe of fabrics is essentially feminine.

The book begins with a series of theoretical considerations that question the notions of heritage, tradition, cultural memory, personal and community identity, with interesting contributions of its own in the direction of object theory (“autobiographical”, “biographical” and “a-biographical”), in an exciting dialogue with a wealth of recent and contemporary theoretical literature, both Western and local. Anamaria Iuga then circumscribes the space that constituted the centre of her fieldwork (the room with *rudă*), so that the reader can subsequently be immersed in the world of research that the author undertook in Maramureș between 2001 and 2011 in four villages: Botiza, Dragomirești, Ieud and Săliște de Sus.

Iuga’s approach is conveyed through narratives articulated around Maramureș textiles. In the author’s reading, life stories constitute a dimension of the object to the same extent that the object itself, thanks to the privileged relationship it has with its owner, stands out as a structural constituent of the latter. The existential matter of the narratives varies, ranging from bright and peaceful parts to tragic or dramatic scenes. Through them, we take note not only of the tensions between generations, between men and women, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, parents and children, but also of an entire universe of thought and sensitivity that becomes analysable. In this sense, the author’s Maussian paraphrase, according to which the room with *rudă* is a “total social fact”, is fully justified. However, these narratives also reveal a lucid optimism professed by the people of Maramureș who, while living in the midst of postmodernity and experiencing globalization, understand how to continue to cultivate such elements of traditional, local culture.

For although it is almost invariably a question of patrimonialized traditions or reinvented traditions, the relationship of the people of Maramureș with traditional textiles is imbued with exceptional emotional and identity values, which explains the great sacrifices they are willing to make in order to create, preserve or take the items with them whenever they leave their home region. For, as clichéd as it may sound, the proximity of these objects provides them with an existential anchor, that helps them navigate through the difficulties of life.

The last chapter of the book (before the conclusions and a very useful glossary), “The Carpet Library”, is an informative insight into the universe of communities built around Maramureș churches. The author shows how the local tradition requires that at a certain ritual-ceremonial moment (the funeral), people ought to bring a carpet to the church. Over time, the churches have become the keepers of impressive collections of traditional carpets. The multitude of pieces, their age and variety of patterns make these spaces a veritable *Eldorado* of Maramureș textiles. At the same time, these small communities, where the function and beauty of traditional fabrics are celebrated with pomp, are also an important source of energy and enthusiasm that nourishes and amplifies the reflex of sincere heritage preservation.

On another note, the work contains many splendid photographs taken by the author herself, during her 10 years of fieldwork research in Maramureș. The visual / photographic dimension that accompanies the text is essential: it truly expresses what cannot be conveyed in words (for instance, the beauty of the traditional fabrics of Maramureș), but it is also of cardinal importance for the coherence of the argumentation: the photographs complement the reasoning, support or develop the hypothesis expressed within the text, or tacitly add new facets to the author’s point of view. Therefore, without necessarily being an essay on visual anthropology or an “album”, the work of Iuga contains a little bit of both registers.

I want to emphasise the fact that *Weaving Stories. Life Stories in the Good Room of Maramureș* has nothing to do with the dull studies of material culture, nor with the nationalist, triumphalist or orthodoxist outbursts that have been expressed, especially recently, in connection with the field of traditional textiles in Romania. The work also prudently and lucidly distances itself from the conceptual fictions of “purity” or “authenticity”, embracing and honestly exploring cultural facts in their dynamic evolution.

The book is written in a clear and rigorous style, sometimes with an interesting lyrical added tone. This tone, which is sometimes enabled in the work, is welcomed: it adds expressivity to the approach and, above all, it facilitates the access of the reader to the sensitive dimension of the topic. However, this tone also emphasises something else: although the researcher cultivates the participatory observation in the field, fully immersion in the atmosphere, life, fears and hopes

of people of the Maramureș region, there is a discreetly militant side hidden within the text, which allows us to visualise another methodological positioning. The author cultivates not only classic participant observation, but also “objectified participation” (Natalie Wigg-Stevenson), the latter referring to the lucid and assumed intervention of the researcher in the field, convinced of the moral and positive value of their own intervention in the ecosystem under study.

Mircea Păduraru

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