

LUCIAN BLAGA AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE ROMANIAN SOUL

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Abstract: *The general ideas of Blaga’s cultural theory are rigorously presented in his book “Horizon and Style” (1936) and then developed in a comprehensive research, extended to the entire Romanian culture, in his masterpiece “The Mioritic Space” that made him famous as a philosopher. The focus is on identifying the variables of force representing the structure of the local stylistic matrix. He approaches issues such as the Romanian’s emotional attachment to his homeland (“horizon nostalgia”), the sense of destiny, made up of everlasting climbs and descents, the category of “sophianic”, the religious vision of the descending transcendent, ornaments, love for jewels and for the picturesque and other aspects considered secondary.*

Keywords: *metaphysical system, cultural method, formative aspiration, polemic, modeling influence*

1. INTRODUCTION

A rigorous analysis of the concept of “stylistic matrix” should not neglect the evolution of *style* in Blaga’s writings, a study strictly dedicated to this issue being published by young Blaga in 1924 – *The Philosophy of Style* in which several issues are highlighted, concerning certain defining features of cultural and artistic styles (*the aesthetic condition, empathy, formative aspiration*). During historical time, as a result of boosting social relations and increasing interest in abstraction, they acquired growing importance so that more and more types of human events became engaged in their scope, thus moving towards a complex of stylistic possibilities, which signifies the large vision of a dome under which a cultural style or another asserts itself, a phenomenon to be noticed not only in art, but also in metaphysics, religion, science and even social organization.

First of all we shall notice the way in which the intuitions of young Blaga as a journalist, become more and more clear, gradually turning into a carefully elaborate philosophy: the *stylistic matrix*, well structured and developed in his *Horizon and Style*. He argues that his theory differs from Nietzsche’s cultural styles marked by antinomy attributes (*the Apollonian and the Dionysian*) and from other conceptual manifestations of the stylistic area, such as those specific to *phenomenology* (involving conscious intentionality and a dull descriptivism) or *morphology* (where he notes the presence of certain unconscious factors). However, he declines preference for the *morphological method*, in order to lay the

foundations of a new philosophical discipline, drawn from the psychology of the unconscious: the *abysmal noology*! In this respect, the Romanian thinker also denies Freud’s theory concerning human unconscious, which he considers as being a mere vacant ground of consciousness and a means to discharge chaotic contents through a so-called process of sublimation. The philosopher considers that the issue of the unconscious is one that deeply marks human consciousness, its manifestation being as significant as the energy factor of physical phenomena and that, therefore, the elements, vectors and psychological processes will acquire increasing importance in modern research in psychology, psychoanalysis and parapsychology. Setting the origins of the concern for the unconscious in German Romanticism and mentioning Shelling and Goethe, Blaga notes a particular enrichment of the image of unconscious in Jung’s philosophy, though the “archetypes” of the Swiss psychologist and psychoanalyst do not convince him because even if they are present in the human unconscious as primitive, ancestral remains, their source is *animality*, while the origin of human stylistic factors is *historicity* and, in this capacity, these factors often intervene and, through cultural creations, they are able to structurally modify a certain stylistic field. The philosopher assigns unconscious a peculiar characteristic, which he calls *personance*, a factor that continuously endows consciousness with penumbra, anxieties and obscurities, having the significant role of transmitting reflexes from the unconscious to consciousness, which is, after all, the philosophical definition of the process of

awareness. The phrase has already made history in aesthetics and literary criticism.

2. THE STYLISTIC MATRIX

As for the structure of the stylistic matrix categories, Blaga rebukes certain representatives of the morphology of culture – Riegl, Frobenius and Spengler; in spite of his criticism however, he is interested and inspires himself from Riegl's and Frobenius' theories of cultural differences within the African historical and ethnographical area, in terms of *spatial sense*. He then seeks to crystallize the idea in the philosophy of Spengler, who is trying to unravel the different spatial symbols of various cultures; thus, he attributes to *ancient culture* – the infinite space, the symbols of the body and the Apollonian element, to western culture – Nietzsche's Dionysian characteristic on which the "Faustian" one is superposed, the spatial specificity being that of a three-dimensional infinite, other cultures having their characterizing symbols (the *Arabic culture* – the narrow space of the vaulted cave, the *Egyptian culture* – the labyrinthine path, the *Chinese culture* – life in the open, the *Russian culture* – the boundless steppes etc.). Each one of these cultures has a soul of its own and, according to Spengler's theory, they evolve in "morphologist" stages, similar to biological beings.

Showing that the morphology of culture no longer considers space in terms of Kantian reason, though it still places it in consciousness, Blaga draws attention to the role of space as a variable enhancer of sensitivity in various cultures. At this point, he comes with his own contribution, noting the existence, in *categorical doublets*, of a spatial horizon of conscious sensitivity and a spatial horizon of the unconscious, distinct from each other. However, he maintains, if there is a spatial horizon of the unconscious, there necessarily has to be a time horizon of the unconscious. In his particular, metaphorical manner, Blaga gives these manifestations of the unconscious suggestive names; thus, the present is *time-river*, the past – *time-cascade*, the future – *time-fountain*, all of them to be found, in different nuances, in each human individual and community. But – a very important fact, actually – it is the variability of these categorical doublets of conscious sensitivity and of the unconscious that constitutes the key determinants of different cultures. These factors do not act alone. A passionate of theoretical constructions, Blaga cannot ignore the reaction of

human spirit, through which space and time are invested with values; it's what he calls *axiological accent*, which can be *affirmative* (recognition of values) and *negative* (rejection of non-values). It is also at this point that the philosopher describes a most meaningful category of the unconscious – *attitude towards destiny* - by the way of which the cultural soul can opt for one of the three fundamental possibilities: *anabasic* (expansion, forwardness, specifically European), *catabasic* (tamelessness and self-reclusion, specifically Indian and Egyptian) and *neutral* (standing in place, specifically Ethiopian). Finally, the last category of force of the stylistic matrix, directly related to man's need to embody forms, is the *formative aspiration* or the tendency to structure the image of things into a formal variation, according to a cultural horizon or another, an epoch or another, an individual or another, the philosopher noting the preference for certain dichotomous manifestations that are "working" deep in the unconscious, such as: *the standardized category* (ancient Greek culture, Plato's philosophy, the architecture with Euclidian geometric shapes etc.), *the individualizing category* (to be found in the mythology of Germanic peoples, the Protestant religion, Leibniz's monadological metaphysics etc.) and *the phenomenal category* (present in the Egyptian art, the Byzantine metaphysics etc.) All these categories plus a number of secondary factors, whose influence should not be neglected though, together make up a stylistic matrix. Its composition is heterogeneous and its elements are relatively autonomous, acting in a quite distinct and highly variable manner, in space and time.

All this was but a theoretical foundation for Blaga's efforts in defining the Romanian soul. That is why his *mioritic space* amazes us, firstly by the philosopher's audacious attempt to offer – from a not too comfortable angle - *an original stylistic description of the Romanian culture*, and his ingenious way to highlight the operational concepts of the stylistic matrix through a "practical" demonstration. It is clear that Blaga's epistemology of the stylistic matrix does not overlap the mioritic categories, which makes us ask ourselves: *are they really that untypical?*

3. THE ROMANIAN SOUL AND THE MIORITIC SPACE

Although the mioritic space takes us in a rather enchanting realm, shedding a heavenly light, we have to admit that some ideas coagulate and often

prove their functional validity. *The wavy mioritic plain*, the infinite succession of hill and valley, also present in our ballads and melancholy songs, in the individual and collective unconsciousness, would be the first of the abysmal categories of the Romanian soul. To this is added the sense of destiny which, in Blaga's terminology would be represented by an advance, in an anabasic direction, but having certain specificity: the eternal climb and descent, obstinately keeping in the depths of the unconscious, the wavy scenery of the plain and the valley. Influenced by the place of its origin, the individual and the collective unconscious of the Romanian comes to turn the landscape into an obsessive *horizon nostalgia*, which then manifests its entire load of tenderness wherever Romanians may be in the world. This mysterious communion of the Romanian with his homeland and his ancestors that are sleeping their eternal sleep underneath that land has totemic significance, especially in the mioritic individual's mental association of death and wedding bliss, reflected in the lyrics of Miorita ballad, and highly exciting by their complex feeling of the "fatum." (Blaga, 1994a:25).

The problem of *time horizon* is but vaguely approached by Blaga. He claims that the mioritic soul had stubbornly boycotted history for centuries and led an unhistorical, organic existence. The philosopher calls it "boycott of history". Any plus or any minus in describing this way of life is meant to nuance Blaga's theory, and even to deform it. At this point we can give as an example of nuance, Emil Cioran's nihilistic view of fate, under the influence of Nietzsche's philosophy. Cioran criticizes the platitude of the common individual, dominated by "inexorable fatality" and "herd mentality" (Cioran, 1993:7). However, Romanian philosophy had seen concepts about local soul that are similar to Blaga's: that of Mircea Vulcanescu, preoccupied to describe Romanian destiny as a "sum of its temptations", which are nothing more than the "latencies" of the past or his way of living, biological and spiritual (Vulcanescu, 1991:15). C. Radulescu Motru (1996:39) views destiny from a different perspective, emphasizing "the fertile energies" of a nation, which, by their intervention, may restrain or remove the pessimistic, irrational, brutal and demonic manifestations of life (never seen as uniform geometric movements), interfering and thus correcting (on the go) the future of a human community.

Blaga clearly demonstrated that the Romanian had always cherished and even worshiped his

mioritic spatial horizon and he often preferred to withdraw from history, that is "to boycott" it. Therefore it is not difficult for us to note *the positive axiological accent placed on the spatial background*, and *the negative accent placed on the temporal one*, which explains the Romanian individual's "unhistorical", organic type of existence. In Blaga's view, the organic is a new category of Romanian spirituality, visible in the style and the configuration of houses, the metric of folk poetry and, especially, in the manifestations of Orthodox Christian spirituality.

In a comparative analysis of Christian spiritualities (Catholic, Evangelical and Orthodox), the philosopher insists on their bipolar character, as their orientation is towards both transcendence and transience, each with its peculiar characteristics, highlighting that differences are rather stylistic than conceptual. Thus, as far as Catholics are concerned, transcendence remains inaccessible, while the categories of transience are marked by Church, looked upon as "the Kingdom of God on Earth". Protestants have the same vision of transcendence, the accent being placed on the categories of individual freedom, while with Orthodox believers, bipolarity is given by the continuous oscillation of the spirit between inaccessible transcendence and the temporal categories of the organic, as if "seen" through the lenses of morphologists' eyeglasses. The examples given by Blaga are many, because at this point he glimpses a wide *ledge*, which is open to the whole Balkan and Eastern Orthodox spirituality. The three religious types are differentiated from each other by a whole series of factors such as: conception of the Church, conceptions of nation, differences due to forms of dialects, culture, missionary activity, proselytizing and concepts of salvation, human types and the ways the three denominations perform their rituals.

However, in Blaga's philosophy, the *transcendent which descends* stands for the second pole of Christian spirituality, according to which differences of vision are due to a stylistic category, belonging, this time, to the religious architecture of Sophia Hagia in Constantinople; this is how the most important category of orthodoxy is announced – the "sophianic" orientation which, by recalling Greek philosophy (Sophia = wisdom), gained the larger meaning of "divine wisdom", having an intermediary role between God and the world (according to Dionysius the Areopagite, Florenski and Bulgakov). In *Miorita* the "sophianic" element

transfigures nature, which becomes “church” and the mioritic death turns into a sacramental act with “the bride of the world”. In order to support his ideas, the philosopher resorts to visions discovered in local mythology, including: “the transparent earth”, “Christological wheat”, “the neighboring heaven” etc., mentioning, however, that they had been taken over from other peoples, during history. (Blaga, 1994a:99-101).

Blaga maintains that *the formative aspiration* of the Romanian soul had long declined preference for geometric and phenomenal elements, to be noticed in folk art ornaments (costumes, tools, wooden gates and porches, pottery etc.), all decorated with elements specific to other European and Balkan peoples as well. But the local stylistic matrix would not be complete if it missed love for beauty and picturesque setting. The skirt, the shawl, the hat, the shepherd’s coat, the breastplate, the shirt, the magic beliefs (in order to be beautiful, women should bathe in water from which the rainbow had drunk, spilled peas are looked upon as Virgin Mary’s tears, burnt woods “take revenge” and lay their former leaves on the windowpane, Abel appears at night with his broken head suspended over a barrel etc.), the spirit of proverbs – all are expressions of picturesque elements, originating from the depths of a rich metaphysical substrate ; Romanian folk poetry, with its load of nostalgia - neither too heavy nor too light – in its various situations – ranging from love for the beloved person, to the expression of sadness and ugliness, in melancholy songs (doinas) and mourning laments – is fed from the same mysterious substance, contributing undoubtedly, to stylistic nuances. Yet, this tendency to give all active determinants a certain touch of “deafness” is another feature of the Romanian soul, namely: *discretion*.

Regarding the structure of the mioritic space, we can make certain comparisons with significant elements and events, recorded over the centuries in our cultural history, ethnography and folklore. Thus, in terms of “wavy” representation, it is not too difficult to seize it in Dimitrie Cantemir’s writings (the phenomenon of “increase” and “decrease”) and in Vasile Conta’s works as well, as an argued theory of “universal waving”, in which waves have a cyclic evolution, with three crucial moments: the “ascending curve”, the “climax” and the “descending curve”. We also note Conta’s concept of the “influence of the environment” on the “spontaneous generation” of species, as well as the solution he suggests to revive “superior organic

beings” - crossing and migration; the more closer the merged races are to the culminating points of their waves, the more vital the effects. Leaving behind the heavy burden of traditions means not only biological, but also spiritual progress. As for Vasile Parvan, he believes that historical rhythm is spiritual rhythm as well, and rhythmic waves can be “closed”, “static” (in point of art, science and philosophy) and “open” (when they refer to social, political and religious fields). He also maintains that it is not “cosmic fatalism” that marked the destiny of the Romanian peasant, but the pagan-Christian morality according to which evil and injustice will not remain unpunished, so that he can wait for the Last Judgment, with “philosophical resignation” (Pârvan, 1981:381).

“The cultural method”, which Blaga had planned to use (ever since the preface of his doctoral thesis, *Culture and Knowledge*, held in Vienna, in 1920) as a possibility for achieving a “comprehensive synthesis” is, in fact, an attempt to philosophically investigate our ethnographic “depths” (Blaga, 1990 265). Published in some interwar magazines (Gandirea, Banatul, Cuvantul, Lamura, Darul vremii etc.), the considerations of the (then) young philosopher about the “metaphysical depths of the Romanian soul” (often troubled by what he calls “the revolt of our non-Latin substance”), about the baroque art in Banat, about the Romanian ballads, melancholy songs, proverbs and carols, communication and interference of cultures, beyond geographical and political boundaries (“equivalence of cultures”), spatial symbols – are not just newspaper articles, but profound deep investigations, subsequently developed and included in his argumentative theory of the psychological potential of the local stylistic matrix.

The major level of Romanian culture, represented by the writings of personalities who worked for the spiritual benefit of the nation, is mentioned by Blaga in a series of studies published in “Patria”, “Cultura”, “Vremea” etc. The philosopher’s interest is captivated by the personality of Dimitrie Cantemir – “a Leibniz or our own”, the acts of culture of the Transylvanian Latinist School, I. H. Radulescu – “father of our literature”, the poet D. Bolintineanu, the Metropolitan bishop Andrei Saguna, the folklore tours of Russo and Alecsandri, Eminescu’s poetry, born of romantic nostalgia but having its sources in our original substance, the historian Dimitrie Onciu - a “forerunner” of Brancusi, the mythical Aurel Vlaicu, Enescu’s musical art, Caragiale’s

dramatic works, Spiru Haret's pedagogical reforms, Sadoveanu's novels and stories.

The comprehensive relationship between the minor (ethnographic) culture and the major (monumental) culture is another issue that stirred our interest. Some of Blaga's ideas must necessarily be referred to, for they highly personalize his philosophy. Thus, he rejects the *dimensional criterion* in distinguishing between the two types of culture and suggests a *qualitative-structural* criterion. He also strongly contradicts Spengler, who considers culture as being an organism and claims that differences in level are due precisely to its ages: childhood corresponds to minor culture whereas mature age corresponds to major culture. Blaga also criticizes Arnold Gehlen's biologic conception which reduces culture to a "process of making up for man's failure to adapt", pointing out that culture is much more than that; culture is our very ontological condition, responding to man's continuous need for revealing mysteries through acts of creation (Blaga, 1976:142).

The theory of adoptive ages of culture applies to larger human communities, peoples included, the philosopher expressing his full admiration for our popular culture, for our ancestral village – a permanent reservoir of spirituality, claiming that childhood and the village are in perfect symbiosis and that would be the optimal "age" for opening a broad perspective in mythology and metaphysics.

Although he clearly maintains that he does not "embroider literature", the philosopher's description of the relationship between childhood and the village-idea, through describing his own metaphysical memories, is not convincing, despite his undeniable epic talent. Blaga's emotional plea is highly criticized by sociologist Henri H. Stahl who maintains that Blaga's approach of the issue is totally wrong. As far as we are concerned, we believe that Blaga's description is marked by the naïve and pure experiences of childhood as well as by lyrical impulses, viewed by both the metaphysician child and the metaphysician poet. Concerning Blaga's village-idea, which counts itself in the center of the world, living in cosmic horizons and extending in myth and mystery, both heavenly and "virginal" and expressing "the magic of a collective soul" (Blaga, 1994b:19) we agree with the philosopher: it was at the antipode of the pragmatic North American communities, where churches resembled a kind of "economic enterprise", religious services being paid at the entrance, like the cinema ticket. (However, if we

take into consideration the pragmatic guidelines of our church in recent years, the situation has totally changed).

Describing the long almost timeless, unhistorical coexistence of our ancestors in the wild nature, in isolated settlements on side-valleys of mountains and rivers, the philosopher notes that it was in this very way of understanding nature that the pre-Romanian stylistic matrix was conceived. But, boycotting history, Romanians boycotted themselves, their whole existence falling into the categories of the organic, which only allow the assertion of minor cultural events. The temporary occupation of the geographical space of ancient Imperial Dacia (after Aurelianus' withdrawal) by some barbarian tribes, the failure to consolidate the Romanian principalities and the invasions of migratory peoples (Hungarians, Pechenegs and Cumans) and many other adverse circumstances of history caused the local people (though well structured from an ethnic point of view and living in brotherhood with the geographical environment) to fix in their own unconsciousness a horizon that was marked by a sense of destiny and contained a strange mixture of passivity and fatality. The threat of Mongolian invasion and the positive influence of Teutonic Knights' military organization made it possible during the period of foundation of Romanian feudal states, made it possible for the native stylistic matrix to burst into a renaissance local efflorescence - a moment of culture that saw the appearance of the architectural style of churches in northern Moldavia, the evolution of language, particularly through the studies carried out in the royal chancelleries, while medieval poems and popular songs were always present in the daily life of the natives. But, unfortunately, the chance to participate in history was missed once more, and our aspiration towards synchronization broke under the threat of Turkish expansion and the religious reform in Transylvania, where the population of many a village, refusing to accept "forms without substance" withdrew in an unhistorical life, feeding themselves, for centuries, from the sources of the anonymous substance, from which, at times, splendid cultural creations emerged.

Dwelling on his theory of adoptive ages, Blaga tries to convince us of its validity, the stylistic matrix being considered as the origin of both minor and major culture, *the transition* (not the jump) from minor to major culture being achieved by people's ceasing, at one moment, to create in terms of the structures of childhood, but through

adopting the “order of spiritual attitudes and real ages”. Comparing the two types of culture, Blaga notes the virtuosity of the minor culture, but also its improvisational aspects (each individual in the village is a householder, artisan and architect, poet and singer, concomitantly), so that it is only in rare circumstances that this type of culture impresses by its scope and products; its temporal vision seems to be suspended in time and space while the spatial vision is only apparently restrained to the horizon of the village-idea because, at a closer look, both of them go beyond mythological boundaries. On the other hand, the spatial-temporal horizons of minor culture do not exceed the limits of individual’s biological life. In contrast, major culture, created by the structures of mature age, urges the individual towards a unique specialization, yet he can opt for a “creative front”, thus acting together with many other individuals that have the same cultural or scientific vocation. Both the spatial and the time horizon of major culture creators go far beyond the city-fortress horizon and the limits of ordinary life of an individual, which may always announce new historic facts.

Blaga holds that a value differentiation between the two types of culture cannot be made without carefully examining the qualities and weaknesses of each; so he declines preference for minor culture that keeps man in close contact with nature, does not “alienate him from the laws of nature” and may vegetate in the collective unconscious for thousands and thousands of years, while major culture, born of the spontaneous desire to overcome space and time, is more exposed to degradation and catastrophes.

The decisive argument of the philosopher is that a major culture requires a “foundation” that cannot be other than the stylistic matrix of popular culture. The fact that a major culture does not repeat a minor culture, but sublimates it, turns it into a monumental one, thanks to the creative thesaurus lurking into the unconscious – is again one of Blaga’s rather sophisticated ways to explain the...unexplainable (Blaga, 1972:276).

Approaching the problem of our spiritual loans, often made indiscriminately, Blaga correctly appreciates that we should not neglect the formative influence of French culture (to be noted in the writings of Grigore Alexandrescu, D. Bolintineanu, Vasile Alecsandri, Al. Macedonski) and the catalytic influence of German culture (as in the works of Gheorghe Lazar, Mihail Kogalniceanu, Titu Maiorescu, Mihai Eminescu,

George Cosbuc and others), highlighting the important role of German culture in the creation of highly original works such as those of Eminescu, where the philosopher detects a number of basic elements of the Romanian stylistic matrix (the spatial-temporal horizons, love for the picturesque landscape, the male ideal of the outlaw and the young prince etc.).

Insisting upon some of Blaga’s considerations, in an attempt to enlighten ourselves, we come to ask some questions: does there exist an ethnical soul? And, if any, what would it look like in point of structure? The investigations of the researcher in his attempt to answer these questions perforce focus on clarifying how this soul appeared and developed along history, considering it from the viewpoint of a favorite profession of ancient Romanian community: sheep breeding and its undeniable influences on ethnic psychology. However, let’s not forget that sheep breeding was closely related with the phenomenon of transhumance, which meant a millennial swinging, of dozens of generations of shepherds, with their flocks, between the Carpathians and the Black Sea, a fact that could not remain without consequences in shaping our ethnic soul. The writings of folklorists, literary critics and historians, sociologists, historians and philosophers such as Ovid Densusseanu, Petru Cancel, Anonymus, Nicolae Iorga, C. Radulescu Motru, Mircea Eliade, D. Draghicescu, Marin Stefanescu etc. give convincing explanations about different aspects of this complex issue. However, the prevailing preference of Romanians for sheep breeding, the Latin influence and the persistence of pagan, ancestral elements in their physical and spiritual universe, the Orthodox idea, seen as “cosmic Christianity”, aspiration towards a spiritual harmony – are just a few of these features that can be “extracted” easily from these “investigations”, well defined in *The Mioritic Space*.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In a further phase of research, specialists should clearly establish the way *mioritism* manifested itself in our cultural history (as much as it is!), i.e. the way in which the burdensome secular and religious vestments of Slavic and Oriental spirituality (“Balkanism”, “Phanariotism”, “Turkism”) as well as the beneficial influences of Catholicism (coming from the Vatican but also from Hungarian-Polish direction) acted as instruments of suppression or revival of local

energies. The pride we take in our noble Latin lineage and the falsity of Robert Roestler's immigration theory, propagated at that epoch, in support of the dominant political interests of the Habsburg Empire and its satellites, caused the Romanian consciousness and culture in the 19th century to strongly assert the Latinist orientation (especially in Transylvania) and, complementary to it, the Thracian orientation - both in the service of our millennial autochthony in the space of origin. Folklore and history (sometimes fabulous, as in Nicolae Densușeanu's massive *Prehistoric Dacia*) are defining reasons for these orientations that combine Pelasgic nostalgia and patriarchal conservatism, ending with open revolt against civilizing assault, promoted by *samanatorism*, which deplores the giving up of old customs, habits and traditions.

The cultural and philosophical reverberations of *Miorita* popular ballad – in which not only Blaga, but many researchers in different fields (men of letters, folklorists, sociologists and philosophers) noted the shepherd's facing death with serenity and his acceptance of fate with stunning resignation – could certify, with no doubt, that the philosopher's insights were auspicious and, indeed, in the content of popular poetic creations, specific characteristics of the collective soul can sometimes be discovered. The numerous variants of the ballad, its presence in all Romania territories and abroad, especially in the Balkan peninsula and the Pannonian steppe, its lyrical profoundness, the pre-Christian pagan elements that can be detected in its epic and, above all, the perfection of the "archetype" in Alecsandri's version, fully validates Blaga's theory about the adoptive ages of culture, in the sense that, by acting in terms of mature age adoptive structures, the Romanian people produced a monumental cultural creation. Yet, the shadow of a question still remains at this point: what if things were not like that at all? What if the ballad was "polished" by master Alecsandri? He published the ballad in 1850 in "Bucovina" magazine (but it had been collected ever since 1842, apparently by Alecu Russo, during his exile in Soveja) and, ever since, the ballad has been approached by numerous

authors, which might encourage us to consider, with patience and interest, some of the most exciting interpretations, of which we mention particularly those of Adrian Fochi, Ovid Densușeanu, Jules Michelet, Mircea Eliade, Duiliu Zamfirescu, Lecca Morariu, Barbu Stefanescu Delavrancea, Mihail Sadoveanu, Liviu Rebreanu, D. Caracostea, Henri H. Stahl etc.

Finally, we should ask ourselves whether Blaga's mioritic space could be related (in point of meaning and spiritual energy) with the totemic symbols of ancient populations, since it clearly reveals a wonderful sight, sanctified by the bones of the ancestors, a space where those who are gone beyond "the customs of heaven" are still by the side of the living ones, in the horizon of the "holy realm", to support and protect them against harm.

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