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**“ȚIGANIADA” by Ion Budai-Deleanu
in the Form of a Lyrical pseudo-Chronicle
*Summary***

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Keywords

Ion Budai-Deleanu, Privileges, Defamation, Phanar, Fashion, *Țiganiada*, (National) Banner, Muse, Song, True, *historical truth*, Pond, Egypt, Anagram, Story, Pseudo-Chronicle, *Food Supply*, *Party*, Kidnapping, Nomad, Exile, Banishment, Censorship, Hiding, Wandering, Itineration, Horea's Popular Uprising, Gypsy Community, Faith, Spell-Works, Onomastic Symbolism

Summary

and The Synthesis of the Main Parts of the Thesis

Being considerate an absolutely unavoidable approach to Budai-Deleanu's masterpiece, insofar as it constitutes the foundation of its interpretation, the historical, social, cultural, political, religious and ethnic *reality* of the eighteenth century accounts for the complexity of the work, the functioning of which, as a product of national culture, offers a literary and an artistic or aesthetic vision over the *message of this reality*. What is, therefore, the *message* of this "creation" named *Țiganiada*? What does it want to immortalize: a glorious past or a hollow present? Is *Țiganiada* just a "garrulous" joke, or the expression of a painful reality? Is a literary and historical analysis of the context of this work or an effective presentation of the history and philosophy of that time, together with their crushing avatars as sciences of man, sufficient for the purpose of indicating whether the "insufficiency of language" comes from the author's exaggerated modesty or from a real incapacity of language to express *truth*? These are some of the questions we try to answer from the very beginning. Also at the beginning, we intend *to determine* rigorously the historiographical landmarks designed to "shed light upon" our working hypothesis, that is, to sketch the chronicle of a changing world situated at the beginning of the modern times and to validate the aspect of ... lyrical pseudo-chronicle of the work we study here, an aspect which would facilitate a better understanding of the spirit and philosophy of that time, insofar as the work of Budai-Deleanu reflects them, hoping in the meantime not to limit the complexity of his work.

In order to construct the general image of Ion Budai-Deleanu's (1760-1820) work, we first need to compare the ideals of his times with the accomplishments and failures of that century. The fact that Budai-Deleanu knew very well the *reality* to which we refer can be seen in the report he wrote in 1803, entitled "Short Observations about Bucovina", a report he composed after another report written by his former colleague at the chancellery of the Aulic Council of War, Vasile Balș, both of which being addressed to emperor Joseph II. Of course, the message of *Țiganiada* would not be exhausted by a mechanical listing of historical events, juxtaposed to the text of the "Songs", or by the diverse and explicit references the author himself makes.

One cannot understand the poem *in parallel* to the epoch in which it was created, but only by *integrating* it into its historical context, and without separating it at all from the atmosphere of those troublesome times. We should not forget that this particular *reality* of the eighteenth century was also shared by Descartes (1596-1650), Locke (1632-1704), Newton (1643-1727), Shaftesbury (1671-1713), Berkeley (1685-1753), Wolff (1679-1754), Hume (1711-1776), Rousseau (1712-1778), A. G. Baumgarten (1714-1762), Condillac (1715-1780), d'Holbach (1723-1789), Kant (1724-1804), Klopstock (1724-1803), Lessing (1729-1781), Goethe (1749-1832), Klinger (1752-1831), Schiller (1759-1805), Hegel (1770-1831), Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), etc.

In the first chapter, entitled „Short Bio-Bibliographical Incursion”, we mention in the form of some preliminary aspects the historical, social, and cultural events that took place on both the national and the international arenas: the popular turmoil, the uprising, preoccupations with establishing the grammatical norms of the Romanian language, the „etymolomania” of the Latinist camp, etc. We show here that every social gesture, attitude and character can be easily discovered in the *reality* of the thinker from Cigmău, self-exiled in the heart of Galicia. Budai-Deleanu's encounter with the Romanian reality from 1800 brings to the fore of history and reality a *world* with all its empirical and spiritual certificates, which comedy, humor and irony would save.

In the historical context of *Țiganiada*, therefore, we do not find things and facts external to the historical *reality* of the writer from Cigmău. Its pretext of novelty and originality – „a new taste for Romanian poetry” – has its text exclusively in literature, in a form in which, Budai-Deleanu tells us, „gypsies would easily recognize their forefathers”. Therefore, in this study we attempt to identify within the content of *Țiganiada* only those „rhythms poured into attitudes” of the Poet (that of Aristotle) that “imitate *characters, passions, deeds* (s.n.)” and the allegorical mask which the poet puts on the face of feudal society, leaving aside the rococo style of the age, the human typology being here impossible to distinguish from the particularities of the time. In a century of translations, the original work of *Țiganiada* seems, in the first place, to translate the feelings of a suppressed nation (“laughter mixed with crying”), their desire to escape from the tomb of ignorance and servitude, the illusion of freedom, with their thoughts towards the greatness of the past and their eyes towards the European revolutionary reforms of the time.

In the “Preliminary Aspects”, we also describe the specific “terms” Budai-Deleanu uses in his *Țiganiada*: Romanian, nation, ancestry, unity, banner, tyranny, justice, liberation/freedom, love, honor, virtue, dream, faith, cowardice, hypocrisy, etc. All of these are paradigms

brought before the eyes of the reader, every single one of them having its own epical background, the working hypothesis being generated by the epical complexity of Budai-Deleanu's work, by his encyclopedic erudition and by his fabulous capacity of allegorically dressing the situations. We shall mention in passing only his allusions, the influences and the enormous number of works (over three hundred studies and interpretations of *Țiganiada*, which are well-known and interdependent) that specialists consider to have been sources of inspiration for the revolutionary from Cigmău, since they do not constitute a part of the construction we offer here.

In "Bio-bibliography of Ion Budai-Deleanu", we bring to the fore the main events and things relevant to the life of this writer from the District of Hunedoara; it is a chronology designed to familiarize the reader with the life and works of Budai-Deleanu and to bring the reader somehow closer to the interpretative perspective we propose in this study, that of a pseudo-chronicle. In paragraph I.2., "Contextual Aspects", we begin to present and define the specific terms we use in this work: privileges ("oxcarts with the harvest", "customs and favors", which are expressions of social injustice), which, in the context of the *reality* about which we decided to speak, relate both to the social role of every individual and to the social and political interaction taking place at the administrative and governmental levels; national consciousness; unity, which is here just an "*organized*" *formula of retreat* from danger, because that which keeps the "gypsies" of Budai-Deleanu together is obligation and fear, the existence of "food" and a false feeling of freedom; the idea of "fatherland"; and the *actuality* of Budai-Deleanu's world. Other special terms we use in this work are: the **defamation** of the Romanian race, against which all the writers of the Transylvanian School will take a stand, trying to stimulate the national pride, so that Romanians would show their discontent with the status of tolerated nation, with injustices and humiliations, thus legitimizing the revolutionary act, fighting the falseness, the lies, and the fables of the so-called royal chroniclers, like the "well-known Engel", Sulțer, and Cărolus Erder (Budai-Deleanu criticizes the hostility with which C. Erder received the *Supplex* in the notes he wrote on the sides of the document, in 1791); **the Phanariot epoch** ("[...] right now here [...] we do not have princes from among us, but foreigners" or "Foreigners prey upon your income/ And sell it as merchandise in their stores"). We see here that, for Budai-Deleanu's characters, the "political" problems seems to be one of personal pride, since they take personally every social and political situation, beginning with the political and social regime and ending with the all-redemptive faith; the **fashion** of the time, the Enlightenment and freemasonry (the masonic initiation of Budai-Deleanu could have taken place in 1783, after his return to Vienna, in the aftermath of his

conflict with Ioan Bob); parody and pamphlet; there was also fashionable for the rich to learn French and to renounce the faith of their forefathers, as a prelude to wellbeing; *Romanianmania*. Explicit and everywhere, one could see adulation, lack of dignity in the community, bagging, cadging, and kowtow to others to gain their favor, betrayal and the never-ending gossip¹. As we said before, these things were the main cause of defaming the Romanians of those times, but also the sources of inspiration for the writers. Budai-Deleanu denounced these things beginning already with the first version of the epic. Fashionable were also the humanists of the Renaissance: Dante, Cervantes, Tasso, Vico, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, etc., their works being the favored readings at that time. Fashionable were also *discussions about gypsies*, at Vienna (Aloys Blumauer) and Berlin (A. Humboldt).

Section I.3, “Why *Țiganiada*?” demonstrates using historical and social arguments that “gypsies”, in the epic, stand for “Romanians”, their national identity being denied, sunk into the mud of slavery, the image of which in the poem is the “stinky pond”. Goleman’s discourse, from the first song of the *Țiganiada*: “*White gypsies*. I do not know what to say about this *epitheton alba*, **which one cannot apply to the gypsies, since they are naturally black. This way of talking I heard also from our peasants** (s.n.), when they tell stories about the gypsies and despise them. Of course, it is from there that our poets borrowed this thing and this is why I believe that this *epitheton* must be taken ironically” becomes identical with the explanation of V. Alecsandri from the *Introduction to the Writings of Constantin Negruzzi*, where he states that gypsies represent “the frightening spectacle of **black slavery, just as the Romanian peasants represent the white bondage!** (s.n.)”. Therefore, without a doubt, the “gypsies” of Budai-Deleanu represent these “vagrant” plebeians, just as over the “white gypsies” we shall superimpose, in this study, the Romanian serfs.

In section I.4., “The (National) Banner, we complete the image of the *reality* that forms the object of this study: Budai-Deleanu’s “gypsies” do not have a *national flag*, the symbol of statehood, a situation that points at the absence of national consciousness. In this context, the author insists in describing, in his ironic style, every flag of every battalion going to war.

The section entitled “Between *writing* and *orality* again” adds to our study some other relevant aspects, concerning the ways of talking and thinking specific to those times. One of them is the **muse**. Thus, Budai-Deleanu speaks about de muse who drags him back toward “the white gypsies”, a muse that appears to be an image of the poet’s consciousness, which

¹ Ion Budai-Deleanu, *Țiganiada*, VII, 15, p. 218; and note 4, on page 218, signed M. P.: “[...] the way women usually are, who sometimes would gladly burst open rather than keep to themselves what they know about others”.

cannot be indifferent toward the *reality* of his world. The other is **song**. For Hegel also, a song is a disposition of honesty, the poet being able to express openly and without any impediment his feelings and experiences, to communicate “all that happens to him”, but also to suggest “what boils hidden and closed in his soul”). *Song* is present in all the important moments of life. Pain and joy reside side by side in song, in this foliage of consciousness and sensibility. There is no wedding or celebration without song (the songs of Parpangel from the “beautiful court / About deceptive adventures”; *Epithalamion*), no love (“This is how you sing of love”). Song is the happiest expression of man, building the space of freedom and the illusion of wellbeing (for his soul) even for the most oppressed among men. Proof of this is the fact that the Romania peasant does not *cry*; he *mourns*

The second chapter, “All of these are true”, opens the gate of *historical truth*. A systematic approach of the social context and the historical and political factors and influences that constitute the background of *Țiganiada* represents a necessity for the interpretation of the epic. Among the influences, one can count that of his native place (he claimed a title of nobility for Cigmău) and that of his family (Greco-catholic priests). There was also his desire to educate himself in the spirit of the ideological movements of the Enlightenment. In Vienna, he attends the courses of J. Sonnenfels, a thinker interested in the social contract theory, who believed that “one cannot implement this theory when a community passes from the stage of anarchy to that of social freedom, because people are not yet ready to arrive at a general consensus”. There was also the influence of the School of Blaj, where one could study the ancient thinkers in particular. Through the gate of truth Budai-Deleanu opens, one can also see the wickedness of human nature, for which desires, lusts and greed represent everything; things for the sake of which man is ready to deceive, to oppress his neighbor, and even to kill. In this chapter, we show that “the little toy” represents *a strategic modality to present several social and political aspects* particularly serious and grave, whereas the comic aspect of this “first fruit of effort” is a burlesque version of a court of justice for all those institutions, situations and social groups, like the clergy and the feudal nobility.

Finally, to complete the list of the important words from this study, we have to mention the **pond**, which shows up repeatedly and in many situations in the poem, **Egypt** (which decipher the light of consciousness, in Hegel), and the anagram (coincidentally or not, in 1784, the inhabitants of the Apuseni Mountains took *conspiratorial names*, in order to avoid being caught by the repressive imperial forces, using for this purpose the anagram of their real names).

In section II.5, “A New Historical Background”, we present the commentaries and the notes existing in the text of the poem, with all their references: fragments from the history of the nation, taken with his pen from the writings of Herodot, Miron Costin, Grigore Ureche, Lucius Dalmata, Dmitrie Cantemir, Leunclavius, Telmer, etc.

In the third chapter, “About the Story of *Țiganiada*”, we attempt to demonstrate that this epic poem, beyond its burlesque title as heroic-comical writing, is first of all a **story**, as the author himself names it; a story that has a “historical background”. A proof that this is a story comes also from the character Idiotiseanu, when he summarizes the entire action of *Țiganiada* in eight lines, in an explanatory note, a stanza with an end of amazing actuality: “O green leaf of rye/ The gypsies took up arms;/ But quarreling among themselves/ Abandoned the king and everybody else/ And went away to foreign countries/ As each one saw fit.”

In chapter four, “Why a lyrical pseudo-chronicle?”, we brings back before the eyes of the interpreter the “chronicle” nature of this writing, following upon the brief textual verification of this desinence, in the speaking nature of *Țiganiada*. We discover here that the whole “allegory” (caricature) relies on historical facts; all over the content of the epic, we discover similarities, references and even fragments of reality (be it daily or historical), an aspect that justifies our thesis. The characters – partly hilarious, partly fantastical – are like letters, the allegorical nature of the text being, without a doubt, an inherent attribute of this interpretation, even though a secondary one. The neutrality of the allegorical style leaves room for the unfolding of the plot. Thus, Budai-Deleanu places the narrator in Egypt, in the world of symbols, as we have already seen. However, he cannot detach from the places, the events and the people of his native country, the same way memories cannot detach from experiences. His longing for the native places, which he had to leave forcefully, will follow him for the rest of his life. The proof is the fact that, in 1819, Budai-Deleanu asked the aulic chancellery of Transylvania to assign him the rank of nobleman, with the title *Ion Budai of Cigmău*, a request that was granted a little while before his death, in 24 of august 1820.

In this chapter, we underline passages in the text describing his meeting with Petru Maior, la Sasregen (Reghin), now outside the classroom in Blaj in which both of them used to be students. Petru Maior leaved Blaj in 1784 for Reghin, where he resided until 30th of January 1809, when he left for Buda; the passages referring to his contribution to *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, during the social unrest of 1790, document completed in 1791; his address to his own people, even though “poetry gossips and tells us jokes”; and also the authenticity of the events one finds in the epic about the reign of Vlad Țepeș (1456-1462), about the betrayal of the king and his assassination, about the allusions to Radu the Fair (“Song XII”), etc.,

following the *Turkish-Byzantine History* by Ducas. Thus, besides his references to Homer, Virgil, Milton, Tassoni, Casti, Klopstock, Ariosto, and Tasso (as the character Erudițian says, “The enchanted forest borrowed our poetry from Tasso, with few differences, whereas the court was taken from Ariosto”), who were “sources” for Ion Budai-Deleanu, the reading of the work shows the author’s predilection toward the real and historical fact, which he extracts from his context, with his characteristic playfulness, and attaches it with ease to his lyrical discourse.

Having already at its disposal the main elements of *Țiganiada* as a lyrical pseudo-chronicle, the fifth chapter brings about further additions to the content (the “gallant” world that the youth – debauched, coward, lazy, idle, boastful, and unlearned – seems to carry in the opposite direction from the ideals of the poet, even though only courage, manhood, and bravery could break the chain of the nation’s slavery) and new terms: **kidnapping** (as that of Hilda by the Hettel, or that of Gudruna, by Hartmut, etc.), **lack of unity** (without unity, there is no battle to fight, and slavery cannot be broken), **food supply** (lack of education and the precarious level of life), and **party** (in *Țiganiada*, every triumph or so-called victory becomes the prelude to a memorable party), the lack of patriotism specific to nomads, for whom the life of the individual, even subjected to privations, is more important than the destiny of the community; the *gypsy community* as a sign of tribalism (even to war, gypsies go together with their wives and children, as a community, as if they are about to wander); **faith** (not a healing faith, but a way of adjusting to a hostile environment, devoid of the idea of salvation. Once their collective faith disappears, solidarity vanishes too. The fight at the end of the *Țiganiada* is eloquent in this sense), and **charms**.

As a completion to the content of the above terms, the absence of the patriotic feeling eliminates the meaning of all struggle for “defense”, “flight” and “submission” being means of escaping for the individual members of the group. This is another reference to the theme of humiliation. Bowing down is instinctual, Pavlovian, and it does not come from fear, as from the centuries in which the “gypsies” have been slaves to the Turks, Austrians or Hungarians. This also explains their desire to establish a state, fighting to earn the status of free men and masters of their own destiny. On the other hand, the nomad does not know the laws of the city, but the agreements of the group, using shamelessly personal egoism and wellbeing. It is the image of man evoked by A. Russo, following Hobbes and Rousseau; that of a man who “used to live without a master and to walk proudly, without bowing his head to another man.”

In the same chapter, we complete the image of the social and political “movements” we have seen so far in the *Țiganiada*: nomadism, flying, exile, censorship, wondering, moving

about. Exile, in this period, was the usual and quiet solution for the conflicts of the privileged. At the same time, emigration was a constant aspect of the times, the gravity of which even Emperor Joseph II realized, when he visited Transylvania, in 1773. The purpose of the edict of tolerance (8 November, 1781) was to stop the emigration of the persecuted orthodox Romanians. In 1837, exile would continue to be “in vogue” as an instrument for defeating the opposition. Later on, after the appearance of books, one added to the list of such means censorship. Negruzzi, for instance, was exiled to his country estate because of his article “On the ruins and ruining of Moldavia”, which appeared in *Albina românească*.

La last chapter of the work, “Horea’s Popular Uprising and *Țiganiada*”, returns to the reality of the social “movements” *Țiganiada* presents. Following the imperial edict from 31 January 1784, which stipulated the enlistment of everybody for the completion of the border regiments (“There were from the entire country/ Gypsies gathered big and small/ Abandoning their wandering life/ And adopting a new way of life/ To cease going from one country to another/ Insulted by everyone”). Peasants left for Alba-Iulia (“The gypsy camp can be seen/ Gathered between Alba and Flămânda”), being motivated by the news that all serfs who enlist would be freed from servitude to their lords and from serfdom (“From now on also they would be/ Respected men like all the others”) and that would receive “some land” (“Because king Vlad gave them land/ And he gave it with such an agreement”). Another expectation of the serfs going to enlist was to banish the nobleman, to divide their land among themselves and to destroy the oppressing class. The discourses contained in “Song I” of the *Țiganiada* mention all these things, which suggests that Budai-Deleanu knew first hand all those events and all the turmoil, particularly since he was at the time of the events in Blaj. The similarity with the “march of the army” in *Țiganiada* is obvious also as a version of pseudo-chronicle, which is the interpretative perspective we propose, a thing that needs to be also emphasized.

Of a fertile complexity and a substantiality that raises it among the masterpieces of the Romanian literature, *Țiganiada* presents a discourse that carries the reader from the origins of language to the origins of slavery, from ballads and popular songs to the dialogues of ancient philosophy, from the smoking censor of the Phanariots to the dream of the French Revolution, from the chronicles of the XVII century to the dreams of certain “lonely wanderers”, offering an encyclopedic mixture worthy of the most complex creations of its time.