

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF LETTERS
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY
STUDIES

DOCTORAL THESIS

**The Making of the Motherland in the
Romanian Nineteenth-Century Travel
Writings**

ABSTRACT

Doctoral supervisor:

Prof. univ. dr. Bican Ioana

Doctoral student:

Sabou Lavinia Teodora

2022

Contents

0. Introduction 4**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
1. Discourses of the Nation 11**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.1. Ethnotype and cultural community..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.1.1. National character and ethnotype **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.1.2. Cultural community and political community... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.2. National Identity and Nationalist Imagination **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.3. Romanian Principalities and Western Romantic Nationalism **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
2. Places of National Memory. Elements of literary geography..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1. The Patriotic Life of Space. Geographical spaces and literary places of the nationalist imaginary **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.2. Traveling Home and Traveling Abroad. The role of travel writings in the formation of a European cultural identity **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
3. The Making of the Motherland. Symbolic configurations of “heaven on earth” .. 129**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.1. Locuri de extaz patriotic. *Obiecte spațio-temporale*. Trasee privilegiate..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.1.1. The Neamț Mountains **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.1.2. The Olt Valley..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.1.3. Danube River161**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.1.4. The Patriarchal Dacia **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.2. Themes and motives of the patriotic in the history of the place.. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.2.1. Places of the glorious past. The monument, the hero..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 3.2.2. Places of defence. Fortresses and monasteries, mountains and forests..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

3.2.3. Places of danger. The enemy, the thief, the boyard, the Eastern Europe barbarian	204	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.4. Places of resistance. Romanian village and folkloric realm.		Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3. Geography of the place in the paradigm of romantic ideology: sight and vision..		Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3.1. A look at Romanian places in the key of exoticism ..		Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3.2. A look at Romanian places in the key of pitoresque .		Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. Conclusion		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix	240	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix I: Paintings and illustrations.....		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix II: Maps.....		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Anexa III: Photos.....		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Bibliography		Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Primary sources</i>		Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Secondary sources</i>	262	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Electronic sources</i>	275	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Lexicographic sources</i>		Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Visual and cartographic sources</i>		Error! Bookmark not defined.

Key words: pasoptism, nationalism, literary geography, imagology, travel literature, memorial prose, imaginary of the homeland, spatio-temporal objects, places / figures of memory / in memory, literary cartography.

Summary

Through their movement, mapped in travel literature, the Pasoptists create an imaginary space – the homeland, starting from a real space, enriching it with the subjective and ideological-nationalist significance of the patriotic. The projected world, that of the homeland, is constituted as an Edenic universe that arouses patriotic ecstasy. This world reveals the way in which the national landscape reflects the perspectives of the subject and, equally, the cultural prejudices that shape his gaze. The overall perspective on the places of the Romanian Principalities indicates not an ordinary view of the places, a view that maps the space at a geographical level, but the vision of the ideology of nationalist romanticism, articulated in the outlines of the national landscape. The privileged routes of the Pasoptists, mapped by their travel writings, but also the commonplaces of their public discourse illustrate some repetitive projections that articulate important representations of the homeland as “heaven on earth”, isolated in our research as literary tropes subjected to imagological and geocritical analysis or even geopoetics. Outlining the stances of the homeland, the tropes of representation that our analysis has revealed are the motherland, the motherland-beloved (*fiancée* or wife), the motherland as a Romanian peasant woman, the *Dochia*-motherland, the homeland as a historical hearth and shield of faith, the homeland-landscape and the homeland-folk.

The first chapter of the thesis, *Discourses of the Nation*, opens the theoretical framework, recording meanings of the idea of nation and elements of the semantic field that it involves, selected according to their relevance to the social and political (but also historical and literary) context of this research topic. I also opted for the theoretical presentation of concepts and tools compatible with the interpretive perspectives from which I started, following, equally, the reading of the historical, cultural and ideological context, both European and Romanian, in which Pasoptist writers compose their texts, fundamentally contributing to the building of the Romanian culture, but also to the construction of very forceful identity representations. In this respect, I have seen that the discourses of all nations resort to representations established through a principle of exclusive comparison, found in ethnotypes, in the image of national character and identity, integrated into a very long-lasting collective nationalist imaginary.

The first sub-section, *Ethnotype and cultural community*, circumscribes, on the one hand, the theorizing and periodization of national character (in *1.1.1. National character and ethnotype*) and its metabolizations into stereotypes and ethnotypes, in the structure of national representations. On the other hand, it involves the presentation of meanings of the nation and of national movements (in *1.1.2. Cultural community and political community*), perceived as “imagined communities”, political (the type of civic nation, established on the principle of popular sovereignty and citizen French state tradition), or cultural (the type of cultural nation, historical, organic entity, which generates a legitimate identity through the community of language, ethnicity, origin, rooted in the German vein of the romantic vision of the people as a living organism, materialization of universality). The ethnotype, instrumentalized by the French school, from an essentialist ethnopsychology perspective on the ethnic, as a collective identity (Guy Michaud), is articulated, within the Aachen School, as an imagological tool that structures the stereotypical formulations of national images and especially images about the difference between peoples. In this regard, Joep Leerssen defines ethnotypes as “commonplaces and stereotypes of how we identify, look at, and characterize others as opposed to ourselves”. On the one hand, these ethnotypical representations are politically instrumentalized in the ideology of nationalism, legitimizing membership in a political community. But ethnotypes reflect, in particular, the cultural outlines of a community; accordingly, the stakes in the imagological analysis of national representations involve, basically, the investigation of the cultural community and ethnotypes that shape the national images in question, and not of the nation and national identity, in a broad and, paradoxically, reductive sense.

The second subchapter, *National Identity and Nationalist Imagination*, discusses meanings of belonging, social identity and national identity. This section illustrates that, although established means of expressing national identity – ethnicity, language, common geo-political space, can be detached from the set of representations of a national community, more than these means, national identity defines its expression in ways of construction of perceptions, self-images (diachronic identity), heteroimages (synchronic identity) and, in essence, of all representations of the cultural memory of the community. If any social identity outlines a way of belonging to a community and transliterates it into the social imaginary, then the national identity illustrates all the more an imaginative space, projected by community discourses, submitted to an imaginary nationalist identity. In its various semantic basins, ethnotypes bring identities into question, but without validating or challenging them, but only by tracing their representations.

The last section of the first chapter, *Romanian Principalities and Western Romantic Nationalism*, addresses the cultural and historical context of the first half of the 19th century in Moldavia and Wallachia: the revolutionary movement of 1848 and its strategic importance for the unification of 1859, the contribution of intellectuals to the building of the modern Romanian society, the configuration of the romantic national program, in order to claim the political autonomy and state self-determination, specific for the entire south-eastern European space. The main nuclei, in the imaginary of the homeland, follow the programmatic directions of the “*Introduction to Dacia literară*”, the national landscape, the folklore and the history, three repositories of the authenticity of the national character. In this sense, I formulated the central intention of the research, to follow the way in which the construction of the national / local landscape and its geography are determined by a militant aesthetic, established in rural areas and folk traditions, national history, national character. The literary representations of the Romanian places, dominated by images of heroism, legitimize the feeling of patriotic dignity, irrigated by the Edenic space of the homeland, imagined in the form of motherland, the motherland-beloved (fiancée or wife), the motherland as a Romanian peasant woman, the Dochia-motherland, the homeland as a historical hearth and shield of faith, the homeland-landscape, the homeland-folk, through interactions, at the level of the imaginary, of the constellations specific to the national landscape, history, folklore. An ideological reflection of nature, the national landscape is a cultural construct, a nationalist reading of the geographical space, in which the place is articulated as a turning point of the national character.

If the imagological investigation makes visible the ways of action in the process of stereotyping nature and the lines of force of ethnotypes, questioning the motivations and preferences for certain places and landscapes, literary geography maps the story of the place and its stratigraphy. In order to detect the ideological, aesthetic, mythical, cultural perspectives that articulate the place and the national landscape, in the travel literature of the Pasoptists, I formulated the necessary methodological steps in the analysis of the nationalist imaginary: spatio-temporal objects, designating ways in which history is transposed into space, through layers resulting in the intersection of perspectives (perceptions on the referent related to a spatial representation), but also through several parallel temporalities, which give the presentification of the past. Then, I considered that the themes and motives that build the history of the place, settled in the layers of spatio-temporal objects, can be seen as “places of memory” (in the sense of Pierre Nora), “figures of memory” (in the sense of Jan Assmann) and “places in memory” (according to Hans Belting). In addition to their presence in the mental landscape of the cultural community, these places feed the imaginary of the homeland, through an inherent transfer of representations, between the imagined and the referential place. If the places of memory (*lieux du memoire*) designate not so much a static tradition, but the laboratory in which memory works, the figures of memory metabolize the links between the updated past and its cultural memory (organized in celebratory institutions), illustrating a meaningful ability of reconstruction. This dynamic trend of reformulation generates a more and more pronounced blurring of the permanent character in the representation of a place, the result being formulated by Hans Belting as a substitution of places with their images – places in memory are traces of fragmented places, signs of a palimpsest, in which overlapped spatio-temporal images no longer match the geographical reference. As such, places become relevant through their own representations, and not through their concrete reality.

In the second chapter, *Places of National Memory. Elements of literary geography*, I emphasized the connection between the spatial representations of the journey and the patriotic feeling that animates and invest them with a national memory. Filtered by the subjectivity of the authorial voice, the geographical spaces passed through become, through fiction, multi-layered literary places, products of a set of various memorial processes, which render self-representations, impressions, prejudices and intentions of the traveller. They take into account both cultural predetermination and the subjective and aesthetic memory of each individual writer. The literary tropes of the homeland are recounted in the first subchapter, *The Patriotic Life of Space. Geographical spaces and literary places of the nationalist imaginary*, some of

them also found in the artistic register, analysed from the perspective of the relationship between creative subjectivity, animated by patriotism, and the ways of representing places that cultivate national memory, are the motherland-beloved (fiancée or wife), motherland as a Romanian peasant woman, Dochia-motherland, motherland as a widow of husband and sons, to Alecu Russo, or mother as a sister / girlfriend - Eugenia and Elena Negri, to Balcescu, Alecsandri, C. Negri, Bolintineanu, represented by the Pasoptists as maternal figures *par excellence*. The aesthetic representation of the nation in anthropomorphic stances illustrates the force of expression of the national values symbolized by the Romanian peasant, but also by the devotion and beauty specific to the feminine hypostasis of the homeland. Other representations of the Romanian nation redeem the male pendant of the homeland, in evocations of heroic places and times: homeland as a historical hearth (lost or alienated heritage) and shield of faith.

I also noticed that the homeland is exemplified through the same mental maps not only in the structure of representation of places visited on the Romanian realm, but also in the configuration of space as otherness, in the notes about travelling abroad. The second subchapter, *Traveling Home and Traveling Abroad. The role of travel writings in the formation of a European cultural identity*, follows the reflections of the foreigner places in the landscape of the homeland and the ways in which the ethnotypes of foreigners contribute, by contrast, to the definition of the Romanian national character, to the outline of identity spaces and a generous heritage of self-images and heteroimages, inserted in the layers of the represented places, in landscapes, places of mirroring, micro-medallions, in places and figures of memory. I noticed that the experience of exile, in particular, reveals the lines of an inner homeland that infiltrates all impressions on the landscape of the foreign country, conditioning it to resemble the homeland. The revelation of the homeland in the travels of the Pasoptists can be seen on the map of the places crossed from the country abroad, and the rediscovery of some true patriotic meanings of the Romanian space takes place only when it moves away from the local territory. The cartographic imagination thus follows a circular movement, between home and the western or eastern foreignness, which, through the subjective internalization of the heteroimages, transposes the traveller back to the lost paradise of the homeland. Through the literary cartography, constituted on the principle of interdependence between the spatial representation and the narrative act, I isolated, in the analytical approach, some representative tropes in the literary configuration of the foreign space as a reflection of the native land, i.e. the trope of the homeland-landscape (found at Kogălniceanu, Alecsandri, C. Negri, D. Ralet, Bolintineanu, I. Codru-Drăgușanu), of the complex of anonymity and inferiority of Romanians

in the European space (present in the writings of Ghica, Alecsandri, Bolintineanu), of the Romanian peasant and the foreign traveller to the Principality. I followed, in the speech of the Pasoptist travels abroad, the configuration and recurrence of the first two mentioned tropes, dedicating a larger space of analysis to the Romanian peasant and to the foreign traveller in the Principality, in the third chapter of the thesis.

The third chapter, *The Making of the Motherland. Symbolic configurations of "heaven on earth"*, encompasses most of the readings and interpretations that our research proposes in the investigation of the symbolic constructions in action in the representation of the homeland as a primordial Eden. The first subchapter, *Places of Patriotic Ecstasy. Spatio-temporal objects. Privileged routes*, refines four geographical areas of the country, which present, at a discursive level, a density of spatial representations, found in most Pasoptist writers. I noticed that their privileged routes materialize in a visual form, on narrative maps, through spatio-temporal objects, which articulate the memory of places, building their national identity through elements of landscape, history or folklore. If the Olt, the Danube, the patriarchal Dacia are constituted as independent spatio-temporal objects, the Neamț Mountains circumscribe an entire area outlined by such objects: Peak of Ceahlău, Bistrița River, Neamț Citadel, The Linden Rock and the Cliff of Raven. In a first stage, the spatio-temporal objects are concretized from a geocentric analysis perspective, being spatial forms inscribed in a concrete spatial register, geographically located, anchored in a temporality susceptible to be materialized. Then, the spatio-temporal objects, articulated in the movement drawn by the travellers' itineraries, illustrate an egocentric perspective, visible in the personal, subjective, but also culturally mediated connection between the traveller and the visited place. This connection involves mediators such as the geographical position, the history of the place, the traditions and customs of the people met on the road, elements that outline the strains of an overall mental representation in the inner homeland of the Pasoptists, namely "landscape-thinking". Reified as a spatial consciousness, this form of thinking maps the patriotic feeling (in authentic "psychogeographies", mental landscapes and individual "landscape affections"), in the literary maps corresponding to places with a distinct memory, preserved in the historical-geographical layers of spatio-temporal objects. The result of this mapping lies in a "lexic of extent", in which the homeland of the Pasoptists appears in a metaphorical hypostasis of paradise.

Ceahlău Massif or Pionul, from the Neamț Mountains, reveals a mythical, folkloric substratum, invested with ethnotypical structures of a national identity mirrored in traditions and customs. "Doina to which the mountain reacts" suggests the presence of an archaic space, accessible

only through the inception of the alpine climb, with the support of the local (“plăieșul” or “the shepherd”, in Asachi, Russo, Alecsandri), the “landscape man” that ensures an authentic immersion in the native folk space. The Bistrița River contributes, in its turn, to the articulation of the same mythical, folkloric space, filtered in the representations of the homeland-landscape, of the motherland as a Romanian peasant woman, of the Dochia-motherland; on the other hand, I allocated a more appropriate space for analysis to the spatio-temporal objects located at the Cliff of Raven and the Linden Rock, but also at the Neamț Citadel, in the second section of the third chapter, in the discussion about the dangerous and defensive places of the homeland. The Olt Valley designates the spatio-temporal object with the highest historical density, in the Pasoptist literary representations. As we could see in Gr. Alexandrescu’s memorial and in Bolliac’s travel notes from 1858 and 1869, Olt is rich in historical “souvenirs”, encountered in archaeological sites, in fortresses and monasteries, as a result of multi-layered overlaps, of picturesque, historical, religious landscapes, both natural and cultural. The second largest river in Europe, the Danube illustrates, in the representations of the Pasoptists, the deeply indigenous spatio-temporal object, invested with a strong identity content, by virtue of its defensive role for the geo-political space of the Romanian countries. Border between the threatening foreign land and the native land (to be protected, to be preserved), the Danube is a stronghold of national identity, a defining line for the Romanian countries (known at the time as the Danubian Principalities), an important artery in the Pasoptist representations of the homeland. Allegorically hypostasized as an old and faithful strategist in the history of the battles between the Romanians and their invaders, the Danube is an “old” character in Russo, Asachi, Bolliac and Bolintineanu, but also an “indirect narrator” of the “deeds of the great” – the Daco-Roman wars, the construction of Trajan's bridge, the struggles with the migrating peoples, with the Turks, but also the beginning of the exile of the Pasoptist intellectuals. At the same time, the Danube illustrates “an act of landscape in formation – the horizon”, in Cezar Bolliac’s poetry, *A Morning on Caraiman*, but also in Gheorghe Tattarescu’s painting, *Romania’s Awakening*; the representation of the river as a materialization of the horizon, through a geopoetic analysis, reveals identity stakes and ethnic self-images. On the one hand, both the Olt or the Danube and the Neamț Mountains designate landforms with a real geographical reference, places that offer a prolific geocentric perspective; on the other hand, patriarchal Dacia, having only a historical and deeply mythical referent, illustrates an egocentric perspective on the place, rendered in mystical tones. The extinct geography of ancient Dacia receives in the social imaginary of the Romanian cultural community the status of an identity archetype; hypostasis of the romantic myth of the lost paradise, symbolic representation of the unification of the three great

Romanian provinces in one state, central image of the ideology of Dacism, patriarchal Dacia circumscribes the primordial Edenic landscape, hypostasized both on the Geto-Dacian seam (at Alecu Russo, C. Bolliac, D. Bolintineanu), as well as the Daco-Roman one (of *Dacia felix*, at N. Bălcescu), articulating a mystical historical vision, based on the myths of descent and origin from Romanian culture. In this discussion, I emphasized how the Romanian ethnotype is built, in Pasoptist writings, on the ethnotypical structure of the Dacian, observing along the analytical path that the representation of the Dacians is built as “image”, a cluster of counter-images that account for cultural or ideological influences. Also, worth noting is the manner in which the configuration of “heaven on earth” in the mythical past of Dacia, but also in the most recent, inscribed in the other spatio-temporal objects, takes place in the mirror with the prospect of a “golden” future of the homeland, materialized as a fulfilment of political ideals. All these outlines whose content lies in perceiving the spatio-temporal objects as layers of history and geography, past and present, memory and identity, articulate the hypostasis of what we have defined as homeland-landscape, a representation that acquires significant discursive dimensions in the writings of the Pasoptists.

The second section of the chapter, *Themes and motives of the patriotic in the history of the place*, addresses the thematic elements of the homeland-folk, using them as figures of cultural memory, which render either the glorious past (materially and immaterially hoarded through the cult of monuments and heroes), or the historical tradition inscribed in the strategic places of defence (cities and monasteries, mountains and forests), but also in dangerous places, instilled either by the siege of the enemy, the robber, the boyar (constructed by heteroimages), or by the stagnation of the local barbarian (underlined by self-images). I considered it appropriate that the places represented through the descriptive lens of local traditions and customs be symbolically connoted as bastions of resistance, in the context in which the Romanian village, represented by the Pasoptists as an exponent of folklore and timeless Edenic universe, is considered an authentic repository of the national character and identity, of the popular culture, in which resides the resilience force of the Romanian nation in the face of external adversities. In this regard, I was able to map four significant places of the national landscape, which articulate the representation of the motherland: the places of the glorious past, the places of defence, the dangerous places and the places of resistance. In the analysis of these symbolic *topoi* (the past, the defensive space, the offensive or resilient space), I noticed that they illustrate, in some respects, an obvious connection with the historical and geographical

referent, encouraging, at the same time, fictional, imaginative connections from the legendary field.

In *Places of the glorious past*, I pursued the ways in which the evocation of the past and the emphasis on local traditions project an enchanting space, a paradisiacal age metaphorized by Alecu Russo as a “cradle” of childhood. The values of the patriarchal past outline the “heaven on earth” in the midst of the people, and its evocation outlines the cultural memory of the community, mapped in “landscape thinking”, with the help of memory figures: historical remains (ruins, fortresses, archaeological objects), monuments (such as Trajan's Column), emblems of the hero (the princely exponents Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave, Alexander the Good and Mircea the Elder, the patriarchal figures of Decebalus and Trajan, the more recent personalities of Tudor Vladimirescu and Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the legendary outlaws, known or anonymous). The section about the *Places of defence* investigates the discursive configuration of the protective image of nature, especially of the mountain, through the narrative cartography of some alpine bastions: fortresses, monasteries, forests. In *Places of danger*, I analysed two famous representations of the landscape of the Pasoptist homeland (the Linden Rock and the Cliff of Raven), investigating, equally, the spatial metabolizing of the relationship between place / landscape and hostile alterities. In this sense, the dangerous places, at the level of the patriotic imaginary, are also those dominated by the authority of the enemy (of the Turkish invaders, Tartars, Polish or Russians), of the robber (seen as a fallen brigand, dishonest thief or opportunistic exiled), of the unjust boyar, exponent of the Phanariot period, opponent of progressive ideas, of the barbarian savage (hypostasized as a peasant, infirm, monk, hermit). In *Places of Resistance*, I considered that the folkloric peculiarities inscribed in the local landscape of the homeland are elements of identity, self-representation and representation of otherness, meant to give resistance to the nation, by preserving and hoarding the culture of the people, present in the rural universe. Especially at Alecu Russo, in the notes from *Memories*, the village world outlines the shapes of an Edenic, peremptory universe. The local traditions and customs articulate the timeless character of the nation, constituting themselves as testimonies of the antiquity and longevity of the people. Within the framework of this representation, I was able to identify semantic registers corresponding to both the homeland-landscape and the homeland-people, integrated both in the construction of the literary trope of the Romanian peasant and in the affective geography of the rural environment. Analysing the habit of Pasoptists to “rewrite” the landscape in ideological terms, but also in line with their own sensitivity, I noticed that the literary maps that chart the landscapes

integrated in this subchapter – places of the past, places of defence, of danger and resistance, show the same basic coordinate: the people. As such, I chose to look at the representations of the places in this section as articulations of the homeland-people, a literary trope used especially in representations of the revolutionary patriotism.

The third section of the last chapter, *Geography of the place in the paradigm of romantic ideology: sight and vision*, is not designed as a simple exposition of some famous aesthetic categories in the paradigm of romantic ideology and the whole European culture between the XVI-XIX centuries (namely exoticism and picturesque) in connection with the symbolic geography of the Pasoptist homeland, but stands for valuable analytical reflections on the two sensory gestures so relevant to the edification of a national culture, i.e. sight and vision. If on the one hand, in the representation of the homeland-landscape, the view of the Pasoptists on Romanian places sometimes corresponds with a view framed by the stereotypical convention of the picturesque, on the other hand, in the representation of the homeland, the gaze of the Pasoptists builds the vision of a (self-) exoticization designed to nurture a process of self-knowledge influenced by both Western and Southeast European cultural *topoi*.

Following this analytical journey, I could conclude that the process of crystallization of Romanian culture, in the Pasoptist period, finds significant imaginative resources in articulating the places of the homeland as landscape elements that symbolically shape “heaven on earth”, through layouts of national landscape, history and of folklore. They irrigate the layers of memory, in the Edenic representation of the Romanian places; at the same time, they can be perceived as compact agglomerations of the semantic basin specific to the Pasoptist period. As I have shown, both places of memory (according to Pierre Nora and Jan Assmann) and places in memory (according to Hans Belting) articulate spatio-temporal objects, whose stratified, dynamic, nested character supports the interactions between the dimension real, geographical, and the imaginative one, projected by virtue of myths and legends of ethnic identity, based on which the community learns to perceive itself as a nation – a community of people who share the same national consciousness, metabolized by the belief that the whole community claims to a common culture, hence the equity of perceiving the nation especially as a cultural community.

At a first reading, the meanings of the homeland delimited in our research (the motherland, the motherland-beloved, fiancée or wife, the motherland as a Romanian peasant woman, the Dochia-motherland, the homeland as a historical hearth and shield of faith, the homeland-

landscape and the homeland-folk) create the illusion of a thematic approach on aspects of the representation of Romanian places. Relying, however, on the theoretical compatibility that both imagology and literary geography show towards the structuring, through efficient tools, of a collective imaginary, we configured these meanings, in our analysis, as variations of the core of representation. They articulate the imaginary of the homeland both from the egocentric perspective of imagology and from the geocentric perspective of literary geography. In essence, the “montage” status of travel literature, which requires an “open” critical approach, which is able to perceive texts as not having an object and, even less, a unitary meaning, but as being understood in a series of contexts and relationships”, was the one that inspired us to capitalize on the plasticity of literary and artistic language (and its capacity for metaphorization) in outlining these meanings that reveal a particular dimension of our research – sometimes incongruous, but innovative, however, in its kind.