

Muslim Women's Representations in Romanian Transylvanian Culture of the Nineteenth Century*

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Introduction

STUDIES ON fiction and the mechanisms of formation of national images have revealed that “in each Another (autre) there is The Other (autrui)—somebody who is not me, who is different from me.”¹ Compared with the representatives of the male gender, the woman is also a symbol of otherness, a perfect “Other.” In societies dominated by male values, the woman has long been marginalised. Either assimilated to Eve and therefore to the original sin, or to the Virgin and thus symbolizing the immaculate being, purity of soul, the woman was regarded either with contempt or with admiration, she awoke either fear or, on the contrary, attraction, she was either demonized or deified.² It is enough to think of the Middle Ages and of the variety of representations that circulated at that time: from the image of the woman as a weak creature, vicious by its very nature, inclined to gossip and all sorts of witchcraft, to the image of a pure creature because of her virginity, or the image of the ideal woman in romances, worshiped precisely for her inaccessibility.

The Pre-Islamic and Islamic Arabic society evinces some characteristics that led to the emergence of some clichés and stereotypes widely spread in Europe during the 17th–19th centuries. Such projections originated from the striking differences between the two civilizations or cultural areas: on the one hand the Muslims, followers of a monotheistic religion acknowledging the existence of Allah, an entity superior to man, yet denying the divine character of Jesus, placing Jesus alongside Muhammad among the great prophets, conservative and organized in a tribal society which, if not merely oppressed by the power of a despot, was resembling that of

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the Old Testament times, polygamous and with obvious affinities towards sensuality, a fact proved by the existence of large harems that gathered legitimate wives and favourite mistresses. And, on the other hand, as a fundamentally opposed point, the Europeans, most of them Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant Christians admitting the existence of the Holy Trinity embodied by God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit, which explains the roots of a personal anthropology and soteriology in which individuality gains a more and more significant place, being organised into modern States in which the rule of law, human rights and the separation of powers within the State became, until the early 20th century, political and societal models, with societies heavily influenced by scientific, industrial and economic progress; and, last but not least, monogamous.

The differences outlined above, but also other considerations related either to the characteristics of the ages in which they have been issued—we take the example of the 19th century and the feminist movement that included several European and North American countries—or to the level of expectation of each observer or to his/her own development, to his/her beliefs and the ideas that have marked his/her existence, have given rise to a series of reactions in the countries of the Old Continent. Muslim women were either admired for the comfort they were enjoying behind the walls of great harems or for their sincere desire to give birth to a large number of children, or they were pitied for their servile status—they were often merely reduced to erotic objects, having the only mission to satisfy their masters' fantasy; or, last but not least, they were criticized for their makeup, frivolous nature and displaying sexuality.³

The present study analyses the images of Muslim women as they were reflected in the Transylvanian Romanian culture of the past centuries. The syntagma Transylvanian Romanian culture means in this case the great variety of printed publications that, starting with the 19th century, had an important role in keeping the inhabitants of the province informed and thus implicitly played a role in the formation of images of "Otherness," i.e. of foreign, different spaces. Such publications were periodical journals, schoolbooks, encyclopedias, booklets and religious writings, such as the history written by Samuel Micu. Under a structural point of view, considerations upon the evolution of the status of women in the Arabic world and upon the changes that took place after Prophet Muhammad's birth, were supplemented by some case studies: some instances of Muslim women and some images of the Harem.

I. The Pre-Islamic Arabic societies and the emergence of Islam

IT IS known that in the Arabic societies before Muhammad, femininity was considered a cause of pain and suffering. That is why some female infants were buried alive immediately after birth. This habit is deemed to have as cause the limited resources in the desert and the many wars that made so many victims

among males. Once the labour force that used to ensure the subsistence of the fair sex decreased, it was deemed necessary “to redress the balance.”⁴ This practice also came to the attention of Transylvanian journalists, yet the causes invoked had more to do with obeying some moral principles rather than with economic factors or with the necessity of maintaining a numerical balance between the two genders. Often categorized either as a “badhabit”—Samuil Micu, *Istoria Bisericească* (1789)—or a really barbaric practice,⁵ this was justified by the fear of parents that somehow their daughters could bring “shame or bad fame about the honour and nobility of their families.”⁶

To explain to his readers how the birth of a girl was perceived in the Muslim society, Iosif Vulcan's magazine reproduced a few verses from the Holy Book, Quran: “. . . If somebody is informed about the birth of a baby-girl, his face becomes sad, and he becomes very angry. He hides himself from his relatives, (being ashamed) because of the fatal news,” and he starts thinking “whether to let her live in spite of all the same, or to bury her alive.”⁷ The magazine *Albina Carpaților* also described how such practices were carried out. In an article that was partially taken from “*Revue des deux mondes*,” the magazine evoked in several examples the cruelty of Arab men. The mentioned article showed that, when making the fatal decision “the father ordered the mother to perfume the baby-girl and to dress her beautifully, then he took the baby-girl, casting her, head downwards, into a previously prepared pit and covering the poor baby-girl with lots of earth.” In addition to the above mentioned facts, the publication also quoted a few Arabic proverbs, popular moral lessons arising from a long life experience. Two of them are worth mentioning: “Sending a woman to kingdom come is a blessing” and “The best son-in-law is the grave.”⁸

Besides this, the mother was judged function of her newborn's gender. For example, a woman that—in addition to several other defects—“has one girl at her breast, another girl in her lap and next to her she keeps another girl,” i.e. “she is always giving birth only to girls” is deemed to be the embodiment of evil, of the cursed. To the contrary, the “good” woman was deemed to be the woman giving birth to boys only, as the Transylvanian publication shows.⁹

After the emergence of Islam, the status of women has known some improvements, and part of such practices and concepts have disappeared. New advantages acquired by women included the right to personal property, the right to inheritance and the limitation of the father's authority in the family.¹⁰ At the same time, the Islamic law has limited the number of legitimate wives to four and has imposed certain conditions to be met by the polygamous Muslim, such as that of ensuring equal treatment to all wives.

The newly acquired rights determined the Transylvanian journalists to consider the status of married Muslim women to be “the best defended”¹¹ among all polygamous peoples. Speaking of dowry—a mandatory condition for marriage in Islam—*Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* points out that the husband, instead of benefiting from the wife's dowry, had the obligation to pay it himself.¹² She also

received a part of her father's estate.¹³ Therefore, as the same publication stressed, both husband and father are “. . . indebted in order to ensure the future of the girl who gets married. . .” and all this “without any of them having the right to have control over her.”¹⁴

Indeed, after Muhammad and the emergence of Islam, the status of women has improved. The importance attached to the woman as mother or wife was also highlighted by the Prophet. It seems that he would have urged people to take care of their mothers and wives. At the same time, Muslim sources point out that Muhammad treated with the highest consideration the women who came into his life at various moments.¹⁵ The situation has changed, however, after his death. The new conditions created in the Islamic world have brought some changes in the status of women and family in general. Some authors consider this fact to be a consequence of the new status enjoyed by the institution of the legal cohabitation and by the institution of slavery through conquests. The number of female slaves increases, and the great harems of caliphs and of important people brings together concubines of various ethnic origins. The value of a slave is increased by her beauty, but also by her good manners, her poetic gifts, her talent as a singer and dancer. Yet the most expensive were, however, those slaves who, in addition to all these gifts, were also literate. The fight between the wife and such a slave woman was never an equal fight and that is why the institution of legal cohabitation is considered to have contributed to the devaluation of the wife within the married couple.¹⁶ It was the concubine who ended up as favourite, thus being rewarded for her slave status. The publication *Familia* warned of the danger represented by female slaves. The magazine considered slaves as the most powerful rivals of the wife and, in order support this point of view, the magazine mentioned as an example the mother of the sultan of Morocco at that time (1903), who “by her charms . . . brought the sultan's crown to her descendants.”¹⁷

II. Hypostases of the Muslim woman

The woman as wife

ACCORDING TO the Muslim law, marriage is a civil law contract, in principle concluded between the future husband and the legal guardian of his future wife. According to the contract, the husband commits himself to pay an amount of money to his wife—the “dowry.” It has to be a substantial dowry, not a symbolic one, that shall entirely belong to the woman and that does not require the payment of any dowry by the wife. Moreover, in case of divorce, the goods acquired as dowry remained entirely the property of the woman,¹⁸ as a kind of compensation for “the suffering that has been brought upon her.”¹⁹

Although from a financial perspective the publications describe the situation of married women in favourable terms, there are other, much more significant reasons

that make journalists consider their status as pitiful. First of all, it would be their inferior position, their total obedience to the husband as their rightful master. Regardless of their family background and thus regardless of their social condition, women in Islam are perceived as slaves, captives, creatures deprived of all rights, who live under their husbands' despotic domination.

Familia, for instance, analysing the status of the aristocratic woman, finds that she merely represents "a precious commodity," a "toy unable to express her own will." The husband has absolute power over her and protects her from any external touch.²⁰ *Foia Poporului* also pointed out the "rather humiliating" position of Islamic women and the fact that they were forbidden to come into contact with someone else than the "lord of the house."²¹ Ultimately, there are publications that also point out the luxurious life of the Muslim woman, yet they end up comparing her with "a poor bird in a golden cage."²²

The same impression is presented in the stories told by some travelers who have spent several days in Constantinople. "Victor Ardeleanu" ("Victor the Transylvanian"), as he called himself, visited the capital of the Ottoman Empire in 1890. The fact that women were inferior to men immediately drew his attention. Not only is the woman the property of her "master-husband," but also she is devalued to the rank of "the first of his domestic animals,"²³ he confidently said. Nowhere in public were men accompanied by their wives and "it is said that they do not meet each other even when eating."²⁴ Equality was also prohibited even in relation to God. Women are allowed to praise Allah, but not under the same roof with men, he added.²⁵ The founder of the *Familia* magazine, Iosif Vulcan, also visited Constantinople eight years later. In his stories, the author provides detailed information about the city—geographical position, occupations and habits of its inhabitants etc.. He also mentions some aspects regarding the claustration of Muslim women in public places. It seemed interesting to him that, despite the clothing that covered up everything, including their face, both in streetways and on ships, women enjoyed a special place, where they could not be seen and especially where they could not be disturbed by any presence of the opposite sex.²⁶

The aberrant differences between the members of the two genders in Islam are also the object of some materials published in *Gazeta de Transilvania*. Discussing upon the punishment of men for committing a murder, this publication based in the city of Braşov mentioned the example of a man who killed three women and who—on the Sultan's suggestion—was punished with just five truncheon blows. Yet punishment of another character was much more "difficult." The man had killed five women and since he could not be punished with 8.33 truncheon blows according to the same algorithm, the man was sent . . . to kill one more woman! Such a solution was able to solve the problem, and the murderer thus received the integral punishment, namely 10 truncheon blows.²⁷ Although this story satirically criticises the mores of Muslim society, the facts are described in a truthful manner, journalists leaving the impression that such facts had truly happened.

There are also other reasons for which the status of Muslim women was presented in Transylvanian fiction in a manner that was not at all flattering. One of such reasons would be the easiness with which men can divorce them simply because they no longer like them.²⁸ Although according to Islamic law the number of wives was limited to four, many Muslim men used to repudiate their wives in order to be able to exceed this number. *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* points out that there were men who had changed about 20-30 women within 10 years; other men, however, even with a relatively small fortune “have every month a new wife.”²⁹ This habit is not uncommon among sultans either, as it is pointed out by *Gazeta de Duminecă*,³⁰ whereas *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* and *Telegraful Român* also provide examples in this sense. Thus, the former publication mentions the example of Mehmed Ali who, in 1838, had far more than 500 women,³¹ while the latter publication provides the example of Murad V, whose harem had around 1,200 women in 1876.³²

Ultimately, the image of the Muslim woman as a slave, as a creature deprived of all rights and therefore totally unhappy is completed by some published materials describing in detail the dressing “canons.” The veil occupies a prominent place above everything. Transylvanians regarded it as a symbol of humiliation, of obedience and clausturation of women. There are several hypotheses about the time and circumstances under which the veil appeared. The Quran speaks of the necessity that women cover their hair, their body and even their face, if their occupation does not prevent them from doing so.³³ Romanian publications in Transylvania, however, assign the imposition of the veil to the Prophet Muhammad, given his exacerbated jealousy.³⁴ A magazine pointed out that this piece of clothing, the veil, did nothing more than demean woman’s “social position”, to hide her beauty and to deprive her of “freely breathing the air.”³⁵

The woman as mother

ONE OF the fundamental duties of women in Islam is to bear children. A sterile woman was always threatened with repudiation. In general, in Islamic countries there is a fairly high number of children per couple, because a large family is regarded to be a real blessing. As a publication based in the city of Brașov points out, to have as many children as possible is “the pride and comfort of people in Eastern countries.”³⁶ It is only motherhood that ensures a respectable social status of the woman, and her husband talks about her as “the mother of my children.”³⁷

A Muslim man does not differentiate between his children, namely between those of his legitimate wife and those of any slave. And, as pointed out by the same publication of the city of Brașov, the children’s colour has no significance either, because all children are treated equally.³⁸ Moreover, if a slave gives birth to a boy, the child may be recognized by his father, and the slave receives the status of “mother of a boy,” which means she can no longer be sold, and she is automatically freed upon

her master's death.³⁹ It should be noted that the preference for boys is manifest in Islam, especially in case of the firstborn child.⁴⁰

Yet the fact that attracted the Transylvanians' admiration was the Muslim women's sincere desire to become mothers. According to *Foaię pentru minte*. . . , since the "oldest centuries up to this day," having as many children as possible has not been their obligation, but their "ardent desire."⁴¹ The author of these lines takes this opportunity to make moralizing comments upon those "wretched European women" who "are afraid of or hate giving birth to and raise babies."⁴²

The adulterous woman

SEXUALITY EXERCISED only within the frame of legitimate marriage is sanctified in Islam—at least in case of women. Sexual relations outside marriage are severely condemned. This hypothesis is supported by some published materials. For instance, *Foaię pentru minte*. . . , speaking of adultery, insists upon the fact that in Islam any deviation of women from marital ethics is punishable by death. A very ugly death, the author emphasizes, not "by sword or ax," but by lapidation.⁴³ The punishment was, however, different from case to case. *Amicul Familiei* presents another way of punishing adultery, in Morocco. The woman accused of committing such a crime is stripped off her clothes, then tied to the tail of a horse and the horse driven over her lover's body, the latter, on his part, having been restrained by some officials charged with public order. Yet this is not the only punishment applicable to the adulterous woman. Meanwhile she is lashed by two other representatives of the opposite sex.⁴⁴ The same idea of severe punishments for deviation from the rules of marital cohabitation is transmitted to the reader by an Arabic story, this time published in *Gazeta de Duminecã*. Namely, an Arab man whose wife had an extramarital affair, decided to seek the advice of the wisest old man in Arabia. At the end of the story, following the latter's advice, the husband kills his wife.⁴⁵

ULTIMATELY, IT should be noted that such representations were not singular in that period.

Although not in great number, there are stories presenting the situation of women inside large harems as favourable. This belief relies on an alleged serenity and spiritual contentment of Muslim women, who were regarded as well guarded "treasures", hidden from the noise and from all the problems of mundane life. *Albina Carpașilor* published the stories of a female traveler who, although she admits that seen from the outside the institution of the harem "is somewhat humiliating," after a visit inside such a place, she has a totally different opinion. "Inside the harem there is a totally different image, a very special one. This serenity, this peace of soul, this guarding of the woman as if she were a precious jewel must have its unquestionable advantages," she confidently says.⁴⁶ The words of the journalist reproducing the above mentioned descriptions seem very interesting. He exposes the subjectivity of the Europeans and, at the same time, he expresses his confidence that in the future

such non-objective descriptions shall be given up — “there shall come a time, and it is not very far, when, after visiting such mysterious nests, the Western culture shall banish even the last influences of ignorance and prejudices!”⁴⁷

III. Images of the harem

ALTHOUGH NOT a characteristic of the Muslim society, having been used in the Oriental society since antiquity, the institution of the harem is often associated with Islam. The term harem is derived from the Arabic words *haram*, *harām*, or *harīm* which means something “forbidden,” “sacred,” “untouchable.”

The Turkish harem came into being along with the founding of the Ottoman Empire and until the fifteenth century, most harem women were Turkish. Starting with the second half of the mentioned century, most of harem women came from various parts of the world. They were in general women kidnapped from conquered countries and peoples, or women received as a gift from countries faraway. First of all, harem slaves used to undergo a medical examination, followed by a period of training. More specifically, the young women learned Turkish, aristocratic manners, dance and music. The most beautiful of them were reserved for the sultan, while the others were used for domestic works.⁴⁸

In Transylvania there was no abundance of news exclusively dedicated to Oriental harems. There are, however, references to this institution in almost all published materials presenting the characteristics of Islam and of the Muslim marital life. In most cases, the “seraglio,” i.e. the space dwelled by wives (*kadin*), is associated with the image of women’s prisons; having a harem is a characteristic of wealthy husbands, especially sultans or high dignitaries of sultans. The seraglio is an isolated space, surrounded by thick walls, and it is well defended against curious eyes. It is an area where each odalisque is waiting for the time of fulfilling her earthly mission: the visit of her master and having procreative sex with him with the aim of giving birth to his descendants. Women access to major works of world culture or any kind of contact meant to enlighten their spirit, is prohibited. The special attention given to their physical appearance seems to be the only form of freedom that women can enjoy without hindrance. In a study intended to analyze the antithesis between the habits of Oriental people and those of Occidental people, George Barițiu expresses his belief that the harem in Oriental countries is a form of luxury that corresponds to those spaces in Western countries that are known as “libraries,” “reading rooms,” “public meetings” or, in order to emphasize even more women’s humiliating position, “stables full of horses.” “Just like many Western men have a library or a stable full of horses, Asian rich men have 50 or 100 beautiful women,” Barițiu states in the above mentioned study. At the same time, he insists upon some characteristics of harem women that are incompatible with the spirit of men of the Old Continent: their

lack of culture “in the European sense” and their exaggerated interest for “stimulating the sensual development of their body.”⁴⁹

The fascination produced by the stories of the *Arabian Nights* or *One thousand and one nights* that were translated in Transylvania in the second half of the 18th century,⁵⁰ made some authors to depict scenes within Turkish harems. More than one decade after the republication of the translation made by Gherasim Gorjan in Sibiu,⁵¹ in 1868, the front page of *Familia* magazine presented the dwelling place of Muslim wives in Constantinople. The article presented a picture of a Turkish woman and started with some descriptions about her dimension and positioning, yet finally the stress was laid upon the peculiarities of the life of Turkish women: exorbitant luxury correlated with a certain lack of hygiene of odalisques, their excessive use of makeup and their boredom.⁵² Three decades later, in 1898, the same magazine published new information by Iosif Vulcan, who had just had a stay in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Together with other personalities of the Romanian political scene such as Ioan Brătianu or T. G. Djuvara, Vulcan visited some of the sultans' former residence places in Constantinople being deeply impressed by their magnificence. He wrote about the treasury palace: “a true Oriental wonder. Grandiosity, luxury and splendour of all centuries are reflected here. All jewelry the sultans had, all jewelry they bought, robbed or received as tribute, as a sign of submission, everything is piled up before us. You stay stunned, not knowing where to look first and what to admire most: sumptuousness or artistic talent.”⁵³ After a tour of the most important buildings of the representatives of the Crescent, the members of the Romanian official delegation were curious about the space once dedicated to Turkish women (*kadin*). And since they had no opportunity to admire them directly, they gave free rein to their imagination: “The fantastic pieces of furniture just remind you of the merry life spent here. Nearby, in a spacious hall, there is a pool; it used to be the women's bath. . . A lot of funny scenes might have occurred in this pool. Numerous sweet moans might have been heard in this place. . . Our awakened phantasy makes us see the bayaderes dancing and the odalysques singing . . .”⁵⁴ Such reports on site were then completed by the publication's editors with an image depicting the pleasures of the life in the seraglio, a woman lying on a sofa, half naked, caressing her pet, a bird. Some other details inform the reader about the limits of such moments of spiritual relaxation: namely women used to be deprived of all rights, surrounded by loneliness, they would live a monotonous life, and, according to the author, all this could have only negative consequences: “they soon wither and pass away.”⁵⁵

Instead of conclusions

MORE THAN a century ago, Romanian fiction depicted the Muslim woman, like nowadays, as an exotic creature impressing everyone with her unusual, often strange habits and clothing. Cultural differences between the two populations, Romanian Transylvanians on the one hand, and the adepts of Islam, be they Turks, Arabs, Moors etc. on the other hand, have created a varied corpus of clichés and stereotypes. Most of them place the Muslim woman in the position of a victim of a society dominated exclusively by male values — a woman deprived of all rights, isolated from the world, whose only mission is to satisfy her husband’s carnal desires and to give birth to his descendants. Of course, this position, generally speaking, is not different from that of the main European one in the 18th and 19th century. What individualizes the Romanian case is the paradox that arises from the correlation of this image with the analysis of the Romanian woman’s status in Transylvania, who also used to be an inferior creature that always obeyed the “family head” and was constantly dedicated to domestic activities. It is enough to remember the statements of the Austrian traveler Johann Lehmann, who considered that Romanians within the Carpathian mountains treat their women “as if they did not belong to the human race,”⁵⁶ or those of his predecessor, Francesco Grisellini, who asserted that Romanian women are denied the right to dine with their husbands and, when they do, they eat standing, being always busy with domestic works.⁵⁷ There are, therefore, two extremely different societies, yet having in common their traditionalist attitude with regard to the relationship between the two genders.

In the light of the statements presented above, a lot of questions may arise about the Transylvanians’ negative opinion regarding the status of women in Islam. What made people at that time take a critical position in relation to the issue in question? To what extent was this influenced by the general representations identified by almost all European nations? Some answers can be reached through the appeal to collective memory—i.e. by means of examining Europe’s attitudes towards Muslims, the historical relations between the Romanian Principates and the Ottoman Empire—as well as by investigating the echoes of feminist movements in publications of that period. First, the progress of feminist women—their access to education and their employment in positions and occupations that not long ago used to be denied to them—and its echoes in Romanian publications have caused that the information on Muslim women and on their place in the Oriental harems be incompatible with the spirit of the age. “Victory of the skirts,” “The first woman lawyer,” “Women as physicians” or “Women’s university in America” are headlines often found in the columns of periodicals and, even though they did not find an unanimous approval among the intellectuals at that time, such headlines managed to impose a new perception of women. On the other hand, there is perhaps also an ethnocentric attitude of Romanians towards some populations that were outside the European cultural

norms and at the same time also outside of their own system of values. In fact, the 19th century was the century of nationalism, in which each nation defined its identity by opposition to the otherness, i.e. to everything outside that nation. The Muslim presence was an expression of a different view of the world, that was in contrast with the Transylvanian cultural horizon. Ultimately, there is one last hypothesis that assumes the idea that such an unfavourable image of the Muslim woman represents merely a preservation of the medieval negative image of the Turks, yet in a slightly attenuated form. These “enemies of Christianity,” these “demons,” these “blood-thirsty barbarians,” as the Turks were often called, were no longer a serious threat to the borders of the Old Continent. The danger was moved inside the Turks’ own families, where the males were depicted as characterised by “tyranny,” “despotism” and “cruelty,” combined with a certain amount of “sensuality.” This would be, therefore, an adaptation of old clichés to the specific conditions of a new age. Since the immediate military, political, religious and cultural danger decreased, the interest of the public moved on the internal conditions of the Islamic culture, conditions that made possible the Muslim expansion, as well as the Muslims’ bellicose, malicious attitude towards other cultures.



Notes

1. Jean Baudrillard; Marc Guillaume, *Figuri ale alterității* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2002), 6.
2. Lucian Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), 133–134. At the same time, for the popular image of Transylvanian femininity, see Sorin Mitu, “Popular images of femininity in Transylvanian sources from the beginning of the 19th century,” *Transylvanian Review*, vol. X, no. 3, (2001): 23–27.
3. An important role in shaping such representation was played, for example, by the translations of the famous series *One Thousand and One Nights* or *The Arabian Nights*, as it was known to the English in the 18th century, by the writings on Oriental topics that “flooded” the European stores and, last but not least, by the works of artists fascinated by Eastern harems or seraglios. On the other hand, in the 19th century, the opening of the Suez Canal helped increasing the number of travelers, and the invention of the photo camera contributed to the enlargement of the horizon of European knowledge. Stores, for example, came to sell postcards with images of exotic lands, while French street vendors offered for sale postcards depicting nude women of the Orient. See Frederick Quinn, *The Sum of All Heresies. The Image of Islam in Western Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 55–124; Mohja Kahf, *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman. From Termagant to Odalisque* (University of Texas Press, 2002), 111–116.
4. Nadia Anghelescu, *Introducere în Islam* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), 103.
5. Samuil Micu, *Istoria bisericească* (Bistrița: Sfânta Mănăstire, 1993).
6. *Familia*, no. 5, 31 January/12 February 1882, 54.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Albina Carpaților*, no. 5, September 15, 1877, 53.

9. *Familia*, no. 5, January 31/ February 12, 1882, 54.
10. Nadia Anghelescu, 103.
11. *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură*, no. 25, July 19, 1844, 198.
12. Ibid.
13. Id., no. 2, January 19, 1840, 13.
14. Id., no. 25, July 19, 1844, 198.
15. Nadia Anghelescu, 105-106.
16. Id., 106-107.
17. *Familia*, no. 28, July 13/26, 1903, 330.
18. Actually, this only happens in case of marriage consummation or in case of the husband's death before marriage consummation. See N. Anghelescu, 100.
19. *Familia*, no. 28, July 13/26, 1903, 330.
20. Id., no. 14, April 6/19, 1903, 161.
21. *Foaia Poporului*, no. 4, January 18/30, 1898, 41.
22. *Familia*, no. 14, April 6/19, 1903, 162.
23. *Unirea*, no. 33, August 15, 1891, 258.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Iosif Vulcan, "La Constantinopol," *Familia*, no. 46, November 15/27, 1898, 544-547.
27. *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 11, September 27/ October 9, 1898, 6.
28. *Familia*, no. 28, July 13/26, 1903, 330; *Foaie pentru minte*. . . , no. 2, January 19, 1840, 12-13.
29. Id., no. 25, July 19, 1844, 198.
30. *Gazeta de Duminecă*, no. 5, February 12, 1905, 4.
31. *Foaie pentru minte*, no. 18, October 29, 1838, 144.
32. *Telegraful român*, no. 42, May 27/June 9, 1876, 164.
33. N. Anghelescu, 108-109.
34. *Familia*, no. 14, April 6/18, 1875, 159; *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 78, April 7, 1911, 1.
35. *Familia*, no. 14, April 6/18, 1875, 159.
36. *Foaie pentru minte*, no. 25, July 19, 1844, 199-200.
37. N. Anghelescu, 108.
38. *Foaie pentru minte*, no. 2, January 19, 1840, 12-13.
39. N. Anghelescu, 101-102.
40. *Familia*, no. 28, July 13/26, 1903, 330.
41. *Foaie pentru minte*, no. 25, July 19, 1844, 200.
42. Ibid.
43. Id., 198.
44. *Amicul Familiei*, no. 1, January 1, 1890, 18.
45. *Gazeta de Duminecă*, no. 13, March 27, 1904, 2.
46. *Albina Carpaților*, no. 30, 1878, 354.
47. Id., 355.
48. Mehmet Ali Ekrem, *Civilizația turcă* (Bucharest: Sport-Turism, 1981), 234-235.
49. George Bariț, "Resaritenii și apusenii (Antitese)" II, *Familia*, no. 15, May 25/ June 6, 1866, 175.
50. *Dicționarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900* (Bucharest, 1979), 423.

51. Starting with the 19th century, the first editions of the famous collections, the one made by Gerasim Gorjan in Sibiu, and the one made by Ioan Barac in Brasov were published. The first one consists of 4 volumes and was published between 1835 and 1839. The second one was printed in 8 volumes between 1836 and 1840. Both were republished, the first one in 1857, and the latter in 1898. See Ovidiu Drimba, *Istoria culturii și civilizației*, vol. IV (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 1998), 23.
52. "Din serai și haremu," *Familia*, no. 2, January 15/27, 1868, 13–14.
53. Iosif Vulcan, "Palatele sultanilor," *Id.*, no. 47, November 22/ December 4, 1898, 556.
54. *Id.*, 558.
55. "Distracție în harem," *Id.*, 557, 563.
56. As mentioned by Mihaela Grancea, *Trecutul de astăzi* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009), 72.
57. *Id.*, 71.

Abstract

Muslim Women's Representations in Romanian Transylvanian Culture of the Nineteenth Century

In the 19th century Transylvanian publications an exotic presence captures the eye of the Romanian reader: the Muslim woman. Her charm, her discreet and mysterious appearance have given rise to many clichés and stereotypes. Most of them, however, place her as a victim in a society dominated by masculine values. The married woman, deprived of freedom and often mistaken for a slave, the woman as mother as the only status that ensures her the respect of her husband and the adulterous woman who pays with her life for the sin she committed, are situations which, together with representations of the oriental harems, depict the general image of Muslim women that remains in the collective mentality of Transylvanian Romanians. The present study is not only a descriptive analysis of this image, but also an attempt to clarify the aspects that have created such an image.

Keynotes

Islam, muslim woman, social representations, Romanian culture, Transylvania.

