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## BOOK REVIEWS

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ANTONIO GUARDAVAGLIA

***La Dacia Ripense e la Dacia  
Mediterranea nella Descrizione  
delle Misie, Dacie e Illirico (1698)***  
**di Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli**

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**A**NTONIO GUARDAVAGLIA is a professor in Padua, Italy. After graduating from the University of Padua, interested in Romanian language and literature, he enrolled at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, where he finished his doctoral studies in Humanistic Sciences, in the field of History, with a dissertation defended in 2018, under the coordination of Professor Ioan-Aurel Pop, president of the Romanian Academy. The present book is his doctoral dissertation, published in 2020, less than two years after the public defense.

Antonio Guardavaglia's work is visually impressive, at first. From this point of view, the book's cover is not chromatically complex, featuring Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli's portrait, so the reader's attention focuses on the historical character Marsigli and on his work, which the author has scientifically analyzed.

From a structural perspective, Antonio Guardavaglia's book includes three chapters of unequal length, while the number of subchapters grows exponentially. The three chapters are framed by an Introduction and a Conclusion. The Introduction (pp. 1–4) presents the author's reasons for his scientific approach to the historical

character of Count Luigi Marsigli. The author tells us that Marsigli was a nobleman from Bologna who asserted himself in various fields of life, in culture, in the sciences and in his military career. His writings are valuable for the European historiography, in general, but mainly for the Romanian and Hungarian historiographies, in particular.

As such, the first chapter—"Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (1658–1730): cenni biografici" (Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, 1658–1730: Biographical elements)—contains historical biographical information on the character. Of the three chapters, the first one (pp. 5–53) is the shortest from a structural perspective, containing three subchapters. The first one describes the intellectual development of the young Marsigli from Bologna (his birthplace), travelling through various Italian towns from the Papal State and not only, down to the fascinating Constantinople, with all of Marsigli's stages of training being placed into a military context. We can find here information and interesting political details about the European international context from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The second subchapter describes the rise, glory and collapse of Marsigli's military career. The third subchapter includes biographical information from the second part of Marsigli's life.

The book's second chapter—"Tra Bologna, Roma e Vienna: Marsigli e il suo tempo. Aspetti generali" (Between Bologna, Rome and Vienna: Marsigli and his time: General aspects)—is somewhat

longer than the previous one, with five subchapters (pp. 57–162). As the chapter's title suggests, the author approaches in general the main so-called geographical, but also cultural milestones that the intellectual nobleman Luigi Marsigli reached in his scientific path. The first subchapter shows the scientific and cultural context of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. The second subchapter presents the general aspects and political context during Emperor Leopold I's absolute reign over the Holy Roman Empire. Vienna was the epicenter of European political forces, which also drew in intellectuals and noblemen because it was the best place to find success in most social areas. Related to the mirage of Vienna's Imperial Court, in the third subchapter the author evokes the tumultuous political past of the Viennese Court, also describing the political factions. The fourth subchapter concerns the Latin expression *restitutor Imperii*, a concept belonging to Raimondo Montecuccoli, a successful Italian officer at the Imperial Court in Vienna, a character who considerably influenced Marsigli; such influence was later on put into practice after the latter also arrived in Vienna. This section of the book also includes the description of the political situation of Transylvania, in the context of the clashes between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. The last subchapter of chapter II, the fifth one, includes data on Marsigli's activity in Vienna. While at the Viennese Imperial Court, Marsigli was no longer just an officer in the service of the Habsburg Empire, but also a diplomat, a good negotiator, and a political observer. Such qualities helped Marsigli not only on the battlefield, but also in science, according to Antonio Guardavaglia. Marsigli had become so close to the emperor in Vienna

that he was sent to set the new frontiers of the Habsburg Empire and those of the Ottoman Empire, after the Peace Treaty of Karlowitz (1699). Prior to these events, he took part in the defense of Vienna against the Ottoman attacks of 1683 and was taken prisoner by the Turks. Therefore, he had experienced several social stages—the nobleman became a slave, was then released and returned to the high society.

Going back to the abovementioned scientific aspect, as a representative of the Habsburg Empire, he travelled to the newly reacquired Austrian territories, and so he arrived in Hungary, which had been returned to the Austrians by the Ottomans, and also in Transylvania. A good observer, with scientific flair, he wrote in detail about the social and cultural features of the peoples he encountered, as well as about geographical and other aspects. As such, Marsigli's paper entitled *Descrittione delle Misie, Dacie e Illirico* (1698) comes to be the pillar of Antonio Guardavaglia's research.

Going from the general to the particular, we arrive at the last chapter of the volume, chapter III—"La Transilvania tra il XVI e il XVII secolo: tratti principali: Marsigli e la *Dacia Mediterranea*" (Transylvania between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries: Political aspects: Marsigli and Mediterranean Dacia). It is the longest chapter, with seven subchapters—two more compared to the previous one.

In the first part of his book, Antonio Guardavaglia researched the historical character of Marsigli, drawing on biographical and social cultural information. In the second part, the author focused on the study of Transylvania within Marsigli's work.

Then, in chapter III, Guardavaglia focuses on the region of Transylvania. Be-

fore the first subchapter, there is a short one-and-a-half-page introduction on the political situation of Transylvania before 1541. The first subchapter (pp. 167–176) describes the international political context of Transylvania for a century and a half, during the Ottoman sovereignty (1541–1699). The second subchapter (pp. 177–188) follows the historical path of the Principality of Transylvania in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the author shows that the region located between the Carpathian Mountains, as well as Partium, Wallachia, and Moldavia, were at the crossroads of the political interests of two great powers of the time, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire. Unlike the first two subchapters, the third one (pp. 189–198) reflects on Transylvania's political situation, at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the military occupation of Transylvania began. He describes the historical stages of the transfer of authority over the region from the Ottomans to the Austrians. In brief, he describes how international relations evolved at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the implications they had for Transylvania. The fourth subchapter (pp. 199–217) follows Marsigli's path of 1687, a year after the Christian armies retook the city of Buda, through the territories newly conquered by the Austrians from the Ottomans. Marsigli travels to Hungary, Slavonia, and then to Transylvania. In the fifth subchapter (pp. 219–221), the author shows how, before Marsigli found Transylvania or "Mediterranean Dacia," the region had been studied and described by another renowned intellectual, the Jesuit Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), an important diplomat of the Roman Curia. Antonio Guardavaglia indicates that Possevino had written an ample work, di-

vided into five books, with a total of 57 chapters, about the region between the Carpathians, *Transylvania* (1584). The author's interpretations of Possevino's and Marsigli's descriptions of Transylvania are interesting. The sixth subchapter (pp. 223–275) includes the most relevant information about Transylvania, with descriptions of natural formations, of civilian and military settlements. The author writes that the difference between Possevino's and Marsigli's accounts is obviously to the latter's advantage. Marsigli intends for his work to be a much more complex approach than Possevino's, a century before. Antonio Guardavaglia places the terms *Dacia Ripense*, *Mediterranea* and *Transalpina*, used by Marsigli in his descriptions, in their historical context. Antonio Guardavaglia's analysis shows that, while visiting Transylvania, Marsigli had a better understanding of local realities; not the same can be said of the extra-Carpathian Romanian territories. Thus, we arrive at the last subchapter, the seventh, presenting the information on *Dacia Transalpina*—Wallachia and Moldavia—in Marsigli's work.

At the end of the volume, in the section called "Documentary Addendum," there are photocopied fragments from Marsigli's work, bearing his handwriting, with visible deletions and corrections made by him. The work also presents the name of localities around the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania, but also descriptions of the region, of the populations living here; it features military maps, geographical notes, as well as elements that are useful not only to historians, but also to geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, etc. The descriptions are completed with various drawings of Transylvania's inhabitants:

Catholic vicars, Franciscan monks, Calvinist pastors and students, men and women from the area of Ciuc (Csík), Saxon pastors and students, Saxon men and women from various areas of Transylvania.

In conclusion, Antonio Guardavaglia's volume is a complex work, a monograph whose merit is to have introduced within the international scientific circuit the history of Transylvania, as seen through the eyes of Luigi Marsigli, the scholar from Bologna. The volume also opens up new paths for research in various scientific areas, such as history, geography, sociology etc.



ROBERT-MARIUS MIHALACHE

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**Sir Gawain and the Grene Knyght/  
Sir Gawain și Cavalerul cel Verde**

Translated with a foreword and notes  
by MIRCEA M. TOMUȘ  
Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleană, 2021

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**H**AD I not been a Shakespeare person, I would have turned into a medievalist after reading the translation in the mirror (Middle English into Romanian) of the medieval manuscript *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knyght*, so neatly elaborated by Mircea M. Tomuș. Twenty-first century Romanian readers might find it difficult to relate to a text that was probably composed at the end of the fourteenth century, with a manuscript dating from the fifteenth. Nor could they relate directly to an Anglo-Saxon culture whose parameters would baffle even the native English readers, as they would need a translation into Modern English. Yet here we are; Romanian culture witnesses a version of an Anglo-Saxon manuscript redacted along the lines of the

“dialogic process”—according to Susan Bassnett<sup>1</sup>—initiated by the cultural turn in translation studies. This Romanian version is based on “the domestic inscription of the foreign” (according to Lawrence Venuti)<sup>2</sup> and it is marked by heterogeneity and hybridity, so as to suit the modern Romanian reader. When looking at the Middle English text (on the verso page), the reader is suddenly taken aback by the unintelligibility of it all—even for the specialist in English studies. We are relatively accustomed with Chaucer's language, which developed into Shakespeare's language, but this text (written in the Cheshire dialect) is radically different. However, when passing on to the Romanian version (on the recto page), things become more familiar. The language of the translation is not the abstruse medieval chronicler's idiom, but a soft and intelligent archaic version of Romanian, which brings to mind the inspired fairy-tales.

The great strength of this book lies in Mircea M. Tomuș's thorough research into the chivalry romance and the understanding of the actual circumstances in which they worked at the time of composition, as well as how they may work for the modern Romanian reader. The Preface judiciously mentions the translation techniques used to better render the Anglo-Saxon poetic creation, from the principle of alliteration (p. 8) to the number of accented and non-accented syllables in Anglo-Saxon verse forms (p. 9), homophony, play-upon-words, as well as the end-rhyme principle (p. 9), characteristic to Romance-language poetry. The translation dutifully renders the long stanzas (in which the main accented words alliterate), followed by a quatrain of short lines (which alliterate within each verse); this is the poem's