

**Iuliu A. Zanne, *The Proverbs of the Romanians from Romania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Hungary, Istria and Macedonia: Proverbs, Sayings, Stories, True Words, Similarities, Idiocies and Similarities*, edited by Roxana Vieru, prefaced by Ioan Milică, 3 vols., 2874 pp., ISBN 9789731165950**

At the end of 2019, a new edition of a monumental work in the true sense of the word finally saw the light of day: *The Proverbs of the Romanians from Romania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Hungary, Istria and Macedonia: Proverbs, Sayings, Stories, True Words, Similarities, Idiocies and Similarities*, edited by Roxana Vieru and prefaced by Ioan Milică (Vasiliana '98 Publishing House, Iași).

The significance of this large-scale scientific and cultural act can only be understood by a reference to a more-than-troubled genesis and history of previous editorial incarnations, which is also compressed by the preface in the first two sequences (*A Model Collection* and *A National Monument*, respectively) of his substantial escort text. The princeps edition, published in a period extending from 1895 to 1912, was compiled by Iuliu A. Zanne, an emblematic figure of the Romanian culture from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, nowadays reverently remembered only by the elite researchers from the field of folklore or philology. Born in 1855 in the Turkish city of Brusa (while the family was in exile), Iuliu A. Zanne studied in Paris, first at the Louis-le-Grand High School, then at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. Subsequent to his obtainment of an engineer degree in 1880 and his return to the country, he was employed with the Railroad, Urban Infrastructure, Bridge and Road Service in the City Hall. In his paternal line, however, the enthusiastic railroad engineer inherited not only the technical skills (his father, Alexandru Zanne, also a renowned engineer, contributed to the realization, of the first water sewer in Bucharest in 1844), but also solid literary passions and light advertising energies. So, parallel with his advantageous engineering career, he dedicated himself to a project, which, in the eyes of some contemporaries (e.g., Dimitrie. R. Rosetti), would at least pass as “interesting.” Established as an essential cultural fact in the philological consciousness of the descendants, this project consisted of the gathering and publication of the “winged words” used in all the historical regions inhabited by Romanians.

Inspired, of course, by the working principles and techniques capitalized by Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu in the incomparable treasure called *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae* (1887–98), the grandiose project initiated by Iuliu A. Zanne 211

implied a very complex and difficult work. According to Ioan Milică's preface to the volume, the collection and inventory of the great repertoire of linguistic and literary facts implied a research of a significant number of written references, from the literary works and folklore anthologies to the dictionaries and encyclopedias, works in linguistics and philology, newspapers and magazines, etc., as well as the development of a network of correspondents willing to answer to the questions about a distribution and significance of certain sayings known to the people. Through this interweaving of cult and popular element in accordance with the encyclopedic recipe fructified by Bogdan P. Hașdeu, it has resulted in a compositional model thanks to which the proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic constructions are cataloged following the most well-known form, in the variants that circulate at a given time in certain region or in certain communities inhabited by the Romanians, as well as in the similarities and differences resulting from the inclusion of idiomatic samples in a comparative framework. Published between a period extending from 1895 to 1912, the imposing collection contains a total of proverbs and sayings that, together with the variants, exceeds 40,000 of them! As demonstrated in the opening of the first volume of the princeps edition, it was classified according to a network of key notions, grouped in fields such as physical nature, animals, man and his organs, physical life, social life, history, beliefs, popular superstitions and customs, intellectual and moral life of Romanians, bookish maxims and parables, idiomatic expressions and phrases and riddles (see Iuliu A. Zanne, *Proverbele românilor*, vol. 1, Socec Publishing House, București, 1895, pp. 44-45).

This impressive encyclopedia was appreciated not only for its undoubted philological interest, but also for its obvious socio- and ethnocultural stakes. In 1907, the princeps edition was followed by a popular edition, published by the Socec Publishing House, and despite the aroused enthusiasm, it has not been accessible to the general public for a long time. It is of a philological notoriety, however, that, at the same time, it was intensively and sometimes illicitly exploited as a priority or even as a sole source of documentation in the compilation of collections and anthologies of Romanian proverbs, which have, for various reasons (i.e., from strictly editorial to the markedly ideological), appeared in the interwar and especially in the postwar period. The anastatic edition of the ten-volume series, which was published between 2003 and 2004 by the Scara Publishing House a century after the original one, did not have a better fate. Therefore, we can consider that the reviewed volume, edited with meticulous-

ness, skill, and exemplary linguistic devotion by Roxana Vieru, is the only edition that fills the reception gap, and consequently has a chance to rehabilitate, together with a cultural founder, an opera of the greatest philological significance and decisive macro-identity vector.

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