

ENCYCLOPAEDIC ELEMENTS IN TEODOR CORBEA'S DICTIONARY

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The development of 17th and 18th century Romanian culture oscillated between two cultural models: the traditional one, that is, the Byzantine-Slavonic model and the Western European cultural model, itself in a process of profound changes.

The repetition of some established structures was prevalent in the Byzantine-Slavonic model, while the West was in search for stable, classical forms in this period. Anthology was the main form of systematising knowledge in the first model, whereas encyclopaedia prevailed in the Western model. Therefore we must assume the appearance of the first encyclopaedic lexicographic works in Eastern Europe were the most obvious sign of the adaptation of the Western cultural model.

It is supposed that the first Romanian encyclopaedic dictionaries appeared in the middle of the 19th century as a consequence of the tendency towards modernisation of our culture. Alexandru Gavra's work, modelled on a German *Conversationslexicon* was followed only at the end of the 19th century by Diaconovici's *Enciclopedia romana*. These assertions are valid if we take into account only printed works; lexicography in the form of manuscripts precedes these works. Slavic-Romanian "lexicons" contain, for example, many biblical names with their Romanian equivalents. Mihail Halici the father's *Anonimus caransebesiensis* contains many geographical names from the Caransebes zone (hence its name as well), etc.

However, Teodor Corbea's *Latin-Romanian Dictionary*¹ is the first work with an obvious encyclopaedic nature. It was edited at Father Mitrofan's² expense and it has as its source the second edition of the *Latin-Hungarian Dictionary* written by the Hungarian Renaissance scholar, Szenczi Molnár Albert. The source was followed selectively: Corbea ignored some of the entries and added personal interpretations to others. The selection of entries is also significant: it gives a clue to what Corbea considered important in the Romanian text.

¹ It is held in the Romanian manuscript collections of the Romanian Academy Library, Cluj branch.

² Mitrofan was the Bishop of Buzău between 1691-1702. The dates of his bishopry are relevant to the dating of Corbea's work.

Compiling his work according to the concepts of Medieval and Renaissance lexicography, based on the dictionaries of Calepinus and Frisius, Szenczi Molnár Albert conceived his dictionary as an instrument of lexical equalisation as well as a source of information. His dictionary had therefore both a linguistic and an encyclopaedic character. Corbea also compiled his dictionary both as an instrument of equalising the Romanian vocabulary with the Latin one and a source of encyclopaedic information.

In the corpus of Corbea's dictionary there are many entries in which the encyclopaedic part is prevalent as compared to the linguistic one³:

Xanthii, g.m.pl. peoples in *Lydia*

Xanthippus, g.m. a wise *Lakedaimonian* warrior

Xanthius, g.m. a strong *Boetian* man

Xantho, g.f. sea goddess

Xanthos, g.m. a precious stone from *India*

Xanthus, g.m. big river in the *Troas* region; **item:** a historian from *Lydia*; **item:** a poet; **item:** a big horse of *Hector*

Xeni, g.m.pl. Roman bath

Xeniae, g.f.pl. idem

Xeniolum, g.n. small present given for guests

Xenium, g.n. present given for the guest

Xenius, g.m. Jupiter's Greek name

Xenocles, g.m. a great *Adramutisian* orator

Xenocrates, g.m. a philosopher from *Haltedonia* who was *Plato's* disciple

Xenodochium, g.n. house which receives guests

Xenon, g.m. *Sitian* painter, *Neoclis'* disciple

Corbea's knowledge (similar to that of Szenczi Molnár) was Medieval and from the beginning of the Renaissance: the world was considered to be formed of three continents; Europe, Asia and Africa (**Aphrica, g.f.** the third part of this land; **Asia, g.f.** one of the three parts of this world, etc.)

The described geographic space belongs to the Ancient period: **Acra, ae, g.f.** village near the fishpond in *Moetia*; **Abacena, ae, g.foem.** town in *Silitia*; again: name of a town in *Mediaba* [!] **Abae, orum, g.f.pl. num.** town of the *Fot* region; **Abala, g.f.** town of the *Traglodanians* not far from the Red Sea; **Abdera, g.f.** town in *Trachia* near the sea where *Democritus* was born. However, Corbea's information taken from Hungarian sources refers sometimes to 17th century Europe: **Noriberga, g.m.** large town in *Germany* famous for its beautiful buildings, richness, merchants and craftsmen. This town surpasses all other towns

³ The text written in Latin letters has been transcribed in bold letters, even if it appears in Romanian words

*in Europe and Germany and competes with the French Venice [!]; it is in the middle of Germany and of whole Europe; **Argentina, g.f. et Argentoratum** strong town in Germany near the Rhenus river in the region of Alsatia. There is a high tower and embellished church, like no other tower or church in Europe. There is a renowned academy as well; clever people study there, I (Albertus Molnarus), who wrote this book, lived there for three years as a child.*

Regarding the chronological limits of the information contained by the dictionary, we could say that Corbea's dictionary which is dedicated mainly to the Ancient period, also contains knowledge about personalities of Medieval or even Renaissance Europe:

Beatrix, g.f. a Roman woman; also, the wife of King Matthias; **biserus vel bisextus** Matthias' leap, that is, the leap day in every fourth year; Moreover, the dictionary mentions Venerable Bede (**Beda, g.m.** he was a teacher of the Holy Script in England) and Orlando di Lasso (**Lasus, g.m.** the first to write about music).

Prevalent is however the information about the ancient world. One can find placenames from Greece (**Alabastrus, g.f.** river of Eolisia in Asia Minor; **Anticragus, g.m.** mount of Litia; **Athenae, g.f.pl.** the town of Athens in Greece; **Attica, g.f.** region of Greece where Athens is; **Corinth, g.m.** Greek town in Arcadia; there is also minor Greek-Latin toponymy: **Cleone, g.f.pl.** town not far from Corinth; **Cenchreae, g.f.** shore for ships at Corinth, etc.), Italy (**Abellinum** town of Campania; **Acerae, orum,** Italian town in Umbria; **Aciris, g.m.** river in that part of Italy which was called Great Greece; **Acis, is, et -idis, g.m.** river in Siliitia which comes out of Mount Etna as an arrow), Persia (**Adarupolis, g.f.** town in Persia; **Chalame, g.f.** town in Persia now called Etoisiphos), India (**Abisari, alias Bissari** region of India; **Acestius, g.m.** river in India near which Alexander the Great built the town of Bucefala; **Bersabe, g.f.** town in India; **Cajenas, g.m.** river in India, etc.), Sarmatia (**Cimmerii, g.m.pl.** seeds from Asia between the fishpond in Moetia and the Euxinus Sea; **Bycus, g.m.** river of Sarmatia in Europe; **Anariacae, vel -ci** seeds near the Caspic Sea; **Agarum, g.n.** mount of Sarmatia), Egypt (**Abotis, g.f.** town of Egypt; **Acrolochias** mount in Egypt; **Aegyptus, g.f.** the country of Egypt; **biblos, g.m.** tree in Egypt on the bark of which they wrote, and made boats of its wood).

Corbea's attempt to equalise ancient placenames with the geographic reality of his time is interesting: (**Acronius, Acronius Lacus** the town Constantia, the plate through which the Rhenus river flows; **Adrama** river of the Hssie in Germany; **Aenus, g.m.** river in Germany; **Abnuba** mount in Germany where the Danube rises; **Daci, g.m.pl.** Romanians, but **Dacia, g.f.** the country of Dacia; **Hadrianopolis, g.f.** town in Bulgaria; **Macedonia, g.f.** large, renowned region in Europe between Tracia, Epirus and Dalmatia, the Turks conquered it and call it Albany).

The cultural universe is due to the reading and knowing of famous texts of ancient literature: **Iliada** (the *Iliad*) and **Odisea** (*Odyssey*) imply a considerable number of names (**Dardanus**, g.m. son of Jupiter and Electra, Troy was named after him; **Diomedes**, g.m. King of Etolia and in the Trojan war famous captain of Greeks or Hellenes; **Epeus**, g.m. the name of him who made that big wooden horse at Troy; **Helena**, g.f. Tindarus' daughter, Menelau's woman, Troy was lost for her beauty; **Ithaca**, g.f. islet on the Ionian Sea where Ulysses reigned, etc.) The same holds good for the **Eneida** (the *Eneid*) (**Egesta**, g.f. Sicilian town built by Eneas, **Lavinia**, g.f. daughter of the king of Latins, Eneas' woman; **Numicius**, g.m. river in Italy where the dead body of Eneas had been found and Dido's sister Anna killed herself) and Greek tragedies (**Oedipus**, *odis vel -pi* son of King Laius from Theba who unravelled the story of the sphynx, therefore he is called Oedipus, revealer of all dark questions; **Pylades**, g.m. Orestes' faithful lover and friend; **Medea**, g.f. daughter of King Oeta of the Colchisians, Iason's woman; **Antigone**, g.f. daughter of King Oedipus of Theba, etc.)

The personality of Alexander the Great fascinated the world of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (**Alexander** the great king Alexander of Macedonia; **Acestius**, g.m. river in India where Alexander the Great built the town of Bucefala; **Alexandria**, g.f. name of three towns built by Alexander the Great; **Alexandropolis**, g.f. town of the Parthusians built by Alexander; **Bairon**, g.m. a historian who wrote about Alexander the Great; **Bersane**, g.f. a widower from Damascus whom Alexander loved much), but the ancient knowledge is rivalled by that taken over from the famous popular book *Alexandria*, therefore Bucephalus is called Ducipal (**Bucephalus**, g.m. Ducipal, the horse of Alexander the Great).

Besides these details Teodor Corbea's *Latin-Romanian Dictionary* contains extremely important information about the ancient world and culture. Without differentiating between Hellenistic and Latin culture (we must not forget that ancient Greek texts were known through their Latin translations for a long time) the dictionary defines a great number of personalities of Greek-Latin culture. Minor philosophers, such as **Archelaus**, g.m. name of a philosopher from Athens and of other great men; **Aristo**, g.m. philosopher from Coia; **Critolaus**, g.m. great philosopher from Athens; **Xenophanes**, g.m. philosopher from Celaphonia; **item**: a poet from Lesbos who wrote poems; **Anaxarchus**, g.m. a wise man from Abdera who followed the teachings of Democritos; **Anaximander**, g.m. husband of the wise Thales; **Aristippus**, g.m. a wise man from Tirenia, Socrates' disciple; **Aristoxenus**, g.m. wise man from Tarentum, Aristotle's disciple; but also **Aristoteles**, g.m. Aristotle, a very wise man, head of teachers; **Heraclitus**, g.m. a permanently complaining philosopher; the mocking Democritus also had this contradictory habit; **Socrates**, g.m. a famous philosopher in Athens; **Pythagoras**, g.m. a philosopher who learnt much in the town Samos of the region called Magna

Grecia in Italy, he knew complete silence well; Plato, g.m. a great philosopher in Athens, etc. are mentioned in Corbea's dictionary.

Famous books of philosophy are also defined (**Metaphysica, g.n.pl.** *Aristotle's books in which he teaches about things concerning the nature of man; Meteora Aristotelis Aristotle's book in which he speaks about elevated things; physica, g.n.pl.* *Aristotle's books about human nature, but also cultural placenames: Lyceium, g.n. a place in Athens where Aristotle's school was; Academia a small place where Plato learned; again: a big school; as well as several notions of philosophy (ethica, orum, g.n.pl. part of philosophy which teaches habits and customs; dialectica, g.f. teaching of the right way of dispute; logica, g.f. looking straight at each thing in order to tell the wise teaching or way of learning which separates bad from good or true from sly or knowledge of causality).*

The number of writers mentioned by Corbea is amazing. He speaks about numerous Greek-Latin poets (**Aegemon, g.m. a Greek poet; Aeschirion, g.m. writer of poems from Metilen; Alcaeus, g.m. a lyric poet; Archilochum, g.m. a poet from the Parusian isles, who wrote the first iambic verses; Bavius, g.m. an uneducated poet, who envied Virgil; Callias, g.m. name of a poet and a great captain; Callimachus, g.m. name of a poet and wise man; Calvus, g.m. name of a poet from older times; Canius, g.n. a poet, friend of Martial; Xenorobus, g.m. a comic poet; Creophilus, g.m. a poet from Samus; Corinna, g.m. a poet; Cornificius, g.m. name of a poet; Cratinus name of a poet from older times)** but also Homer (**Homerus, g.m. name of a famous and wise Greek poet**), Horace (**Horatius, g.m. a lyric and satirical poet**); Vergil, etc.

Many historians are mentioned, such as Titus Livius (**Livius, g.m. a famous historian who wrote well about happenings**), Tacitus (**Tacitus, g.m. great orator of Emperor Hadrian, whose nickname was Cornelius**); Herod (**Herodotus, g.m. a Greek historian**), Cleoxen (**Cleoxenus, g.m. historian writing about Persians' deeds**), etc.

Corbea attaches proper attention to Aesop who was known in ancient Romanian culture (**Aesopus, g.m. he was a historian, phryx philosophus, he wrote many stories in Phrygian; he was a hunch-back and had a wise head**).

Special attention is paid to tragedy-writers (**Accius, g.m. a renowned wise writer of tragedies; Aeschylus a poet who wrote tragedies; Alcimenes, g.m. a poet from Megaria, writer of tragedies; Cleophon, g.m. poet from Athens, tragedy-writer**). The other two great Greek tragedy-writers, Sophocles and Euripides are also mentioned in the dictionary. More interesting is the presence of characters of ancient Greek tragedy as entries of the dictionary: **Danae, g.f. daughter of King Acrisie; Danaides, g.m. daughters of Danaus; Danaus, g.m. king of the Arghiusans who had fifty daughters**. We also find the names of obscure comedy-

writers (**Amipeas, g.m.** a poet from Athens, writer of comedies; **Afranius, g.m.** a writer of Latin comedies; **Anaxandrides, g.m.** a Greek comic writer; **Archedicus, g.m.** name of a wise comedy-writer; **Chaeremon, g.m.** a wise comedy-writer; **Damoxenus, g.m.** a comedy-writer in Athens), and also Aristophanes (**Aristophanes, g.m.** a wise comedian from the isle of Rhodos, coming from the town of Lindus). Even more interesting is the presence of a real culture of theatre: **comicus, g.m.** inventor of comedies; **comicus, a, um** of comedy or comic; **commoedia, g.f.** comedy, a play in which all the ways and habits of this world are mirrored; **comoedice** in a comic manner; **comoedus, g.m.** comedy actors.)

The cultural horizon of Teodor Corbea is enlarged by physicians (**Aesculapius, Apollo's sons who embettered the craft of doctors**; **Albatenius, g.m.** a wise doctor who lived long ago), mathematicians (**Archimedes, g.m.** a famous, wise land-measurer), geographers, orators (**Alcinus, g.m.** a famous orator in Greece), naturalists (**Aristomachus, g.m.** a sage who wrote a book about bees and keeping bees), musicians (**Clinias, g.m.** a sage, follower of Pythagoras, musician), astronomers (**Berosus, g.m.** a sage from Chaldea who knew much about the movement of stars; **Cleostratus, g.m.** a sage who lived long ago and enriched the knowledge about the heavens) etc.

The presence of certain apparently minor names taken from Ovid complete our image of Corbea's literary culture: **Battus, g.m.** name of a shepherd at Ovid; **Baucis, g.f.** a poor woman, ad **Ovidium**, etc.); Horace, Virgil, etc. Moreover, we can find in Corbea's dictionary, headings dedicated to certain poetic and legendary names of persons or places (**Atlas, antis, g.m.** a high mountain in Mauritania; writers consider it a huge giant who holds the earth on his shoulders; **Averna, g.n.pl.** a pond in Campania considered as the gate of hell by poets) or even quoting some lexical forms specific to certain authors (**abusus, a, id est utendo consumtus, a Plaut.**; **apella** without skin (circumcised), Jew; **Horat. credat judaeus apella**; **assero, is, ui ...** ; as though I would do a thing and this would be (erased: long ago) determined by me; **asserui me fugique cateme (Ovidius)**; **expeculati a Plauto dicuntur qui peculio sunt exhausti**, etc.)

Teodor Corbea's dictionary is the most extensive lexicographic work in ancient Romanian culture. It has more than 37.000 Latin entries and more than 200.000 Romanian words. Taking into account that approximately one fourth of these entries have an encyclopaedic character as they define names of persons or places but also notions, we can consider it as the first Romanian encyclopaedic dictionary. The cultural horizon mirrored in this lexicographic work entitles us to consider Corbea one of the most important personalities of Romanian culture at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the next, comparable with the High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino or Dimitrie Cantemir.