

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE MEMORY OF ROMANIAN POETRY

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Abstract: Starting from the observation of the canonical periodisation of Romanian literature into *antebellum*, *interbellum*, and *postbellum*, this study aims for a critical recovery of the taboo segment, on *bellum* poetry, with a focus on Romanian poetry inspired by the First World War among war veteran writers. The goal is to prove that the careful analysis of Romanian war poetry can reveal not only the profile of a minor genre that is meant to record the seismic clash between man and history, but actually trace the path of a major search for language that is capable of expressing the magnitude of such a clash.

Keywords: First World War, Romanian poetry, Memory, Combatants, Stances, Irony

If the most traumatic events, as proven by research studies in Neurology, make for the most deep-seated memories, intensively stretching the human brain's capacity to encode,¹ then literature and by extension poetry, as the representation of the individual affective memory included in the patrimony of a people's cultural memory, could never avoid the thematisation of the experience of World War I in the context of Romanian culture, as is the case for several cultural areas. It would have been nearly impossible for the Great War, as it has been known in Francophone and Anglo-Saxon areas, or the War for the Nation's Reunion in the case of Romania, to irrigate with its unforeseen violence the imagination of poets who lived through it as combatants or civilians.

Although it has not been the topic of major recovery studies until now, Romanian poetry that has been inspired by The First World War impresses through the sheer number of poets who have given it voice. From professional combatant writers to professional civilian writers, from amateur combatant writers to amateur civilian writers, the variety in the authors' stances give life to the Romanian war poetry of the 20th century, bringing together poets (Octavian Goga, George Topârceanu, Adrian Maniu, Ion Vinea, Ion Pillat, Vasile Voiculescu,

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¹ See Rémy Cazals, Frédéric Rousseau, *14-18, le cri d'une génération* (Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 2003), 48.

