

LITERARY TRANSLATION ON THE STAVE OF HISTORY. THE SCROLLS OF JAPANESE LITERATURE TRANSLATIONS IN ROMANIAN (1900-2000)

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Abstract By exploiting a bio-bibliographical team research, this article is an analytical study of literary history centered on translations of Japanese literature into the Romanian language. A history of Japanese literary translations from the Romanian space in the 20th century, which signals editorial appearances considered "cultural act" through a commentary of literary interpretation, the study archives translations published in volumes and periodicals, based on three categories of genre: prose, poetry, dramaturgy. Trying an angle of perception of translation from a historical-cultural perspective, the study also highlights the political and diplomatic "ambience" of the time, the generating cultural and sociolinguistic context that favored or prevented the emergence of translations of Japanese literature on the Romanian market, in order to understand the depths and the complexity of the phenomenon. As a page of literary history, this investigation (with four complementary annexes), which combines a panoramic view with one focused on Japanese literary translations, can also be read as a retrospective of a centennial of Romanian-Japanese

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cultural diplomacy, as a vehicle of sense and aesthetic value from one language to another, as a way of access to another culture, legitimizing a possible chance of synchronization with universality.

Keywords Translation, Literary History, Japanese Prose, Japanese Poetry, Japanese Dramaturgy, the 20th century.

*Things which simply pass by:
a sailboat; the years of a person's life;
spring, summer, autumn, and winter.*

Sei Shonagon (966-1016),
The Pillow Book

Defined as a cultural exchange, translation is the “mediation” between the plurality of cultures and the unity of humanity. Theoretically impossible, practically possible, the practice of translation has always been recognised as a complex effort that, by traversing the linguistic-spatial borders, leads to the meeting of not only two languages, but also of two cultures and it is essential to the spiritual progress of man.

The Romanian literature, from the first decades of its history, understood the significance of translations for its evolution,¹ as proven by the richness of the terms that denominate the intermediation between two languages: from *a tălmăci* (to construe) and *a tâlcui* (to interpret correctly), or the polisemantic verbs *a da* (to give), *a izvedi* (to unveil), *a întoarce* (to turn), *a prepune* (to add), *a preface* (to transform), *a primeni* (to change), *a scoate* (to extract), the Romanian language adopted the neologisms *a traduce* (to translate), *a transpune* (to transpose) or the more scholarly *a transla* (to translate). It is thus not surprising that, throughout the years, there have been numerous translations in Romanian, from the oldest Egyptian and Indian texts, to the most current successes, with various literary, cultural and spiritual consequences. It is as if the Romanian literature and, implicitly, the Romanian culture, have always felt the need to be revised and completed, not only by taking an interest in the past and present of the world literature, but also by “assuming” its values, through translation. Permanently connected to the “state” of world literature, it was, therefore, natural for the Romanian literary market to desire a meeting with the Japanese literature, which would only take place during the first years of the 20th century.²

¹ See Camelia Petrescu, *Traducerea – între teorie și realizare poetică* [Translation – between theory and poetic achievement] (Timișoara: Editura Excelsior, 2000), 11.

² The names of the Japanese writers were written in the article in accordance with their spelling on the covers of the Romanian translations (generally, name-surname, until the 70s,

In 1905, *Gazeta Transilvaniei* [The Transylvanian Gazette] (no. 101, p. 1, translator Paula G.) published the (mediated) translation *Credincioșii ronini* [The ronin believers], signed by Tamenaga Shunsui (1790-1843). As a prose writer of the late Edo period (1600-1868), a historical period of great economic and social bloom, also known as the Tokugawa period, from the name of the Shogun dynasty that led the country at that time, while the emperor remained only a formal sovereign, Tamenaga Shunsui, through his literary activity, is considered to be the founder of the modern Japanese novel³. The most important text of the Japanese writer, albeit not the most popular, is the historical novel entitled *Seishi jitsuden iroha bunko* (The Official History and True Tales), a version of the famous revenge of the 47 ronin,⁴ based on both imaginary aspects and on actual facts. At its core is the *chūshingura*,⁵ the theme of the 47 samurai who were left without a master, and who, for two years, carefully planned how to avenge him and to take the head of the guilty to the master's grave, after which they would commit the *seppuku* ritual suicide; Tamenaga Shunsui kept the intrigue unaltered, but he moved the narrative scene from the 18th century to the 14th century and he changed the names of the characters under the pressure of the shogun censorship.

This novel, albeit a mediocre one from the viewpoint of its literary value, was published in Romanian under the title *Credincioșii ronini*, and it would appear to be the first Romanian translation of a Japanese literary text, which raises several interesting questions regarding not only the choice motivation, but also the possible (direct and indirect) connections with the political, social and cultural context of its publication. A short browse through the publications of that time, in search for possible explanatory suggestions, revealed a theatre review entitled *Teatrul Liric. – Trupa japoneză Sada Yacco [Sada Yoko] și Kawakami* [Lyrical theatre. – The Sada Yoko Japanese troop and Kawakami], in the newspaper *Universul* (no. 51, p.2), from 22 February 1902, which notes the representations of the *Sada Yoko* theatre troop from Japan at the Lyrical Theatre in Bucharest, which had also been attended by the

and surname-name afterwards). In Annexes, the Japanese names follow the Japanese model (name-surname), with macrons.

³ See Shigeto Tsuru & Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan. An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995), 1521.

⁴ *Rōnin* = samurai with no master.

⁵ *Chūshingura* is, in fact, the title of a famous Japanese play written by Takeda Izumo (1691-1756) and his collaborators for the *bunraku* puppet theatre and its first representation was in Osaka, in 1748. As a scenic transposition of the real history that took place in the 18th century, the heroism of the *rōnin* avengers in the name of the honour promoted by the code of the samurai quickly became legend; shortly after, the theme was taken up both by the kabuki theatre and by literary prose, as well as, later on, by cinematography; the term *iroha* comes from the *kana* Japanese syllabary that comprises 47 signs, a number equal to that of the samurai that carried out the vendetta.

Romanian Royal Family.⁶ Furthermore, in 1904, as obvious references to the history of the present, when the Russian-Japanese War (1904-1905) was underway on the scene of the international military operations, the following books were published: Angelescu Petre, *Considerațiuni asupra situației din Extremul Orient* [Considerations on the situation in the Far East] (Tipografia Clemența, București), Gheorghe Buzoianu, *În jurul războiului din Extremul Orient. Note geografice* [On the war in the Far East] (Librăria Socecu & Co), Nicolae Iorga, *Războiul din Extremul Orient* [The War in the Far East] (Librăria Socecu & Co, București), Ion Jitianu, *Conflictul ruso-japonez* [The Russian-Japanese conflict] (Tipografia Clemența, București). Nicolae Iorga's volume is actually the first monograph on Japan, drawing the Romanian reader's attention to the "Greater East Asia" and, together with the other aforementioned publications, would appear to anticipate the unofficial visit to Romania made by the Japanese general Nogi Maresuke, the hero of the Russian-Japanese war at Port-Arthur, which took place between 5/17-9/21 July 1911.⁷

In that historical, political, diplomatic and cultural context, the translation *Credincioșii ronini*⁸ [The ronin believers], published by *Gazeta Transilvaniei* [The Transylvanian Gazette] on the front page, thus drew the Romanian reader's attention not only to the destiny of the Asano clan from Ako, a piece of the history of the Japanese feudal era, but especially to the Japanese warrior code, or bushidō, (bushi = 'warrior', dō = 'path'), the honour code of the samurai, with principles originating from Shintoism, the animist attitude based on the love of nature, from the Confucianism which promoted the five moral connections between the government and the subjects, the master and the servant, the father and the child, the man and the woman, the older brother and the younger brother, and from the Buddhist belief regarding the fatalism of human existence that calls for meditation and contemplation.

Another translation of Japanese prose into Romanian (mediated by the French language) would appear the following decade, when the magazine *Românul* published, in 1915, in the form of a serial,⁹ the novel *Până la moarte* [To the death], authored by Tokutomi Kenjiro (1868-1927), translated by Robescu P., together with the mention that it was "the first Romanian translation of a Japanese text". As a novelist and essayist, a descendant of a family of ronin, Tokutomi Kenjiro debuted with the novel *The Cuckoo*, published as a serial between 1898-1899; its main theme was the emancipation of women from under the authority of the family traditions in

⁶ On that occasion, Queen Elisabeth offered the playwright Sada Yoko a painted egg and a silver medal.

⁷ See Ion Scumpieru, *133 de ani de relații România-Japonia* [133 years of Romanian-Japanese relations] (Bucharest: Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2013), 751-756.

⁸ Tamenaga Shunsui's novel was republished in Romanian in 2009, under the title *Moartea samurailor ronini* [The death of the ronin samurai] (Herald, translated by Gabriela Badea).

⁹ Numbers 3, 4, 8, 24, 30, 36, 42, 54, 68, 183.

the feudal era.¹⁰ The volume quickly gave the debutant the consecration within the scene of the Japanese literature and it is very likely that the enormous success of the novel at the moment of its publication explains its translation in Romanian, although its title was very far from the original.¹¹

However, perhaps the choice of translating Tokutomi Kenjiro in Romanian was influenced/determined, among other things, by the visit to Romania of the Japanese author himself who, after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, travelled not only to Iasnaia Polianaia, where he met Tolstoi¹², but also to Bucharest, at the time of the *Homage exhibition on the 40 year anniversary of King Carol's reign*. In his *Travel Journal*, published after he returned to Tokyo, Tokutomi Kenjiro made a short, favourable presentation of Romania and had nothing but words of praise for Queen Carmen Silva,¹³ whom he had heard of from his older brother Tokutomi Soho (1863-1957). A literary critic, historian and essayist, Tokutomi Soho had been a press correspondent during the Sino-Japanese war, in 1894¹⁴; after the hostilities ended, he set off on a European tour and reached Romania in 1896,¹⁵ where he met King Carol I and the prime minister Dimitrie A. Sturza.¹⁶ Tokutomi Kenjiro's novel was republished as a book at the Editura Librăriei SOCEC & Co., Societate Anonimă [publishing house] in 1921, under the title *Între moarte și iubire* [Between death and love] and its cover also included its original title *Hototogisu*; it was translated from French by Botez-Rareș George Emil.

The interwar period contained relatively few Japanese literary translations: in 1922 (?), the series *Scriitorii celebri* [Famous writers] (year I, no.18, Editura Steinberg, Bucharest), directed by Liviu Rebreanu, also published the volume *Nuvele japoneze*¹⁷ [Japanese short stories], a collection of short stories for which the

¹⁰ See Tsuru & Reischauer, 1582; Octavian Simu, *Dicționar de literatură japoneză* [Dictionary of Japanese literature] (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1994), 296.

¹¹ The original title is *Hototogisu (Cucul)* [The Cuckoo]. A mysterious bird whose song is often heard but it is never seen – the cuckoo (*hototogisu*) is, in the Japanese mentality, the messenger of summer and, implicitly, of the middle age of man, an age considered to be ambiguous par excellence.

¹² Simu, 296.

¹³ See Scumpieru, 541.

¹⁴ See Tsuru & Reischauer, 1583.

¹⁵ See Scumpieru, 539-540.

¹⁶ Tokutomi Soho was also received by Queen Elisabeth of Romania, who invited him to a play and a piano recital made by the host herself.

¹⁷ The volume debuts with *Fata din lună* [The girl from the moon] (*Kaguyahime*), the shortened version of the first Japanese story, under the original title *Taketori monogatari* (*Povestea tăietorului de bambus*) [The tale of the bamboo cutter], written at the end of the 9th century and attributed to Minamoto no Shitagō (911-983), a name spelled in the Romanian translation as Minamoto no Yun. According to the mentions on the first page, it continues with stories from the collection *Povestirile bătrânului* [The old man's stories] (*Vulpile*

translator was unnamed; in 1926, the novel *Eterna iubire Masako* [Masako, eternal love], authored by Yamata Kiku (1897-1975), was published at the Editura Artistică „Victoria” [publishing house], translated by George B. Rareș, who had also published Tokutomi Kenjiro a few years earlier.

Although Prince Carol II had made an official visit to Japan in 1920, followed, one year later, by the (re)opening of the Romanian Legation in Tokyo¹⁸ and by the opening of the Japanese Legation in Bucharest, in 1922, almost two more decades passed before another Romanian translation of a Japanese text appeared - *Livada Bujorilor* [The peonies orchard] (its original title was *Botan no kyaku*). Authored by Nagai Kafu (1879-1959), it was translated by George Sbârcea and published in the magazine *Tribuna* (III, 680, 2 and 5a), in 1943. Nagai Kafu, the most decadent and most elegant writer of all the modern Japanese writers¹⁹, together with Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) and Mori Ogai (1862-1922), is considered to be one of the founders of the modern Japanese literature, at the turn of the century²⁰. Nagai Kafu would draw the attention of the Romanian public again only half a century later, with two famous novels: *O poveste neobișnuită la răsărit de fluviu* [A strange tale from the east of the river] (2011, Casa Cărții de Știință, translated from Japanese by Rodica Frențiu) and *Povestea unei geisha* [A Geisha's tale] (2012, Humanitas, translated from Japanese by Anca Focșeneanu).

In the context of World War II, which divided the world into two warring sides, Romania severs all diplomatic relations with Japan on 31 October 1944 for fifteen years, which could convincingly justify a new period of absence (with a few exceptions) of Japanese literary translations in the Romanian culture. Despite the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries, several translations of prose were published, a selection that was obviously influenced by the communist climate of that time, a political orientation that came to influence the mechanisms of the Romanian society on all its levels. Thus, unsurprisingly, translations from Tokunaga

fermecate [The enchanted foxes], *Dorințele* [The desires], *Flăcăul și gheșa* [The young man and the geisha], *Sfatul unchiului* [The uncle's advice]), authored by Kyau Kakuzai [a name we did not manage to identify], a name later spelled in the corpus of the volume as Kyau Hacuzai.

¹⁸ With the consent of the Japanese government, the Romanian authorities had opened the Romanian Legation in 1917, with Nicolae Xenopol as a minister. However, unfortunately, the Romanian diplomat died several months after he was appointed and, since he had been the only member of the legation, the diplomatic office was closed.

¹⁹ See J. Thomas Rimer, *A reader's guide to Japanese Literature* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1991), 118.

²⁰ If, after studying in Europe, Natsume Soseki familiarised the Japanese readers with the English literature and Mori Ogai with the German literature, it is now Nagai Kafu's turn to introduce the French literature to the Japanese intellectual and cultural market by popularising the names of Verlaine, Baudelaire, Zola and Maupassant.

Sunao²¹ (1899-1958) were now published, a Japanese writer who embraced the socialist ideology and who, after the war, became a member of the Japanese Communist Party.²² Tokunaga Sunao, one of the founders of the *Association for a new Japanese literature* (*Shin nihon bungakukai*), debuted with the series novel *Taiyō no nai machi* [The neighbourhood/street without sun], in 1929, which describes, from the viewpoint of an eye witness, the strike commenced by the typographers of the company Kyodo. In Romanian, the novel was published in 1948, a translation mediated by German, made by Emil Fulda, under the title *Strada fără soare* [The street without sun] (the State Publishing House). However, it also had the subtitle *Un roman muncitoresc japonez* [A Japanese working-class novel], between parentheses, as an (imposed?) paratextual addition meant to explain the novel's intrigue and to somewhat warn the reader about the planetary area in which the working class became the protagonist of literature. Between 1952-1954, Tokunaga Sunao published in serial form, in the magazine *Akahata* (The red flag), the official printed media of the Japanese Communist Party, the novel *Shizuka naru yamayama* (Quiet mountains), in which he described the oppression of the working class during the post-war occupation and the workers' struggle against exploitation. The connections between the JCP and the RCP began in 1952, with a rich correspondence between the two (that also included collections of reprinted issues of the party magazine *Akahata*),²³ which could motivate the publication, during the same year as the Japanese edition (1954), of Tokunaga Sunao's novel *În munții liniștiți* [Quiet mountains], at the state publishing house, translated from Russian by M. Goltz and L. Soare.

The Japanese prose translations in Romanian that would follow were (somewhat naturally), for ten years, translations exclusively from Russian of certain volumes with historical or proletcultist contents, authored by contemporary Japanese writers, members of the JCP: Takakura Teru (1891-1986), *Cîntecul porcului* [*povestire*] [The pig's song. Short story] (1956, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, translated by Gheorghe Voropanov and Jacques Costin), Takakura Teru, *Apele Hakonei: Roman istoric* [The waters of Hakone: historical novel] (1956, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, translated by Tatiana Malița and Rose Hefter), Seiji Shimota (1913-2003), *Insula Okinawa* [The Okinawa island] (1961, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated by Ion Timuș and Pericle Martinescu) and Takakura Teru, *Lupul* [The wolf] (1962, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated by E. Naum and N. Andronescu).

²¹ In Romanian, the name of the Japanese writer appears as Tokunaga Naoshi in the translation from 1948 and as Tokunaga Sunao in the one from 1954.

²² See Tsuru & Reischauer, 1582 and Simu, 295.

²³ See Scumpieru, 595.

Given the political ease known by the Romanian society in the mid-60s, the prose translations' market welcomed the great names of the Japanese literature, mediated by Russian, English, French and German: Shimazaki Toson (1872-1943), *Legământul călcat* [The broken oath] (1966, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated from Russian by Ion Caraion and Vladimir Vasiliev), Kobo Abe (1924-1993), *Femeia nisipurilor* [The woman in the dunes] (1968, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated from English by Magdalena Levandovski-Popa),²⁴ Ryunosuke Akutagawa (1892-1927), *Rashomon* (1968, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated from French by Ion Caraion), Yasushi Inoue (1907-1991), *Pușca de vânătoare* [The hunting rifle] (1969, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated from German by Lia Pardău and Platon Pardău), *Doamna Murasaki* [Lady Murasaki] (978-1014), *Genji* (1969, Editura pentru literatura universală, translated from English by Henriette Yvonne Stahl). The latter novel, its original title being *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji), written around the year 1008 and considered by the Japanese literary history to be a classic ever since the time of its publication, became part of the world literature through the translation from English (in six volumes) made by Arthur Waley, published between 1921-1933 and it came to be considered by the literary criticism as "the oldest roman-fleuve of the world literature."²⁵ The aforementioned English version also represented the foundation for the shortened version in Romanian (283 pages), the translation made by Henriette Yvonne Stahl. As a cultural act, the Romanian translation, even in its shortened form and mediated by English, facilitated the meeting between the readers, in their own cultural space, and a timeless literary masterpiece. However, its shortcomings had to be addressed and it would take more than half a century for the Romanian literary market to be able to offer its readers, in 2017, a translation of the Japanese novel (900 pages) directly from its original language (Murasaki Shikibu, *Povestea lui Genji*, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru, Iași: Polirom, 2017).

In 1968, the writer Yasunari Kawabata (1899-1972) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, which (re)drew the attention of the world to the Japanese language, literature and culture. Thus, in 1970, the first Romanian translation from Yasunari Kawabata was published, the novel *Kyoto sau tinerii îndrăgostiți din străvechiul oraș imperial* [Kyoto or the lovers from the old imperial capital] (Univers, translated from German by Vasile Spoială), followed, in 1973, by the novel *Stol de păsări albe* [A could of white birds]; *Vuietul muntelui* [The sound of the mountain]

²⁴ The translation of the novel *Femeia nisipurilor* [The woman in the dunes] by Kobo Abe was remade from Japanese in 2007 (Univers, translated by Emil Eugen Pop).

²⁵ Midori Sano, "Le Pont des songes: Du „Dit du Genji” a aujourd’hui. Préface”, in Murasaki-shikibu, *Le Dit du Genji. Genji monogatari*, traduit du japonais par René Sieffert, illustré par la peinture traditionnelle japonaise du XIIe au XVIIe siècle, Direction scientifique de l’iconographie et commentaires des oeuvres de Estelle Leggeri-Bauer (Paris: La petite collection/ Diane de Selliers, 2008), 21.

(Minerva, translated from French by Pericle Martinescu). The same writer also authored the first translation from the original to Romanian, in 1974: *Țara zăpezilor* [Snow country] (Univers, translated from Japanese by Stanca Cionca). As a seeker for the expression of the inexpressible, by combining the linguistic simplicity with literary ambiguity, Yasunari Kawabata explored an area of the modern Japanese prose in an original and apparently unequalled manner. In an attempt to rediscover the traditional sentiment of beauty through narrative fiction, Yasunari Kawabata was always in search of an unreal world of purity and beauty, in his desire to find the perfect expression for what Japanese aesthetics calls *mono no aware*, or *the beauty of simple and ephemeral things* (lit. 'the sadness of things'). Yasunari Kawabata will come to be the most translated Japanese writer in Romanian, competing only with Haruki Murakami (1949~) during the last two decades of this century.

The official state visit of the Romanian president Nicolae Ceaușescu, together with his wife, in Japan, between 4-9 April 1975, as a result of the official invitation issued by the Japanese prime minister Sato Eisaku in 1970, was considered by the Japanese officials to be "a historical event" and by the Romanian officials, an "event of historical significance"²⁶, thus auguring an auspicious future friendship between the two countries. On a diplomatic level, it materialised into the official visit to Romania, between 7-10 October 1979, of Akihito, the Crown Prince of Japan²⁷, together with Princess Michiko, as a representative of Emperor Hirohito. On a cultural level, the friendship was reflected by the unprecedented momentum gained by the publication of numerous works in which the primary subject or the object of interest was Japan. Thus, the literary translations published in the 70s and 80s continued to familiarise the Romanian reader with the great names of the classic, modern and contemporary Japanese prose: Yukio Mishima²⁸ (1925-1970), *Tumultul valurilor* [The sound of waves] (1975, Univers, translated from French by Ana Maria Năvodaru), Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), *Motanul are cuvântul* [I am a cat] (1975, Univers, translated from English by Mihai Matei), Sei Shonagon (966-1025), *Însemnări de căpătâi* [The pillow book] (1977, Univers, translated from Japanese by Stanca Cionca), Yukio Mishima, *După banchet* [After the banquet] (1977, Univers, translated from Japanese by Stanca Cionca), Kenzaburo Oe (1935~), *Strigătul surd* [The silent cry], in *România Literară* (1977, no. 47, translated by Gabriela Gheorghiu), Osamu Dazai (1909-1948), *Amurg* [The setting sun] (1982, Univers, translated from English by Angela Hondru), Natsume Soseki, *Călătoria* [The journey]; *Șovăiala* [Reluctance] (1983, Univers, translated from English by Mirela Șaim), Ueda Akinari (1734-1809), *Închipuirile lunii și ale ploii* [Tales of moonlight and

²⁶ See Scumpieru, 407-428.

²⁷ The crown prince Akihito became the emperor of Japan in 1989.

²⁸ Yukio Mishima already appeared in a Romanian translation with *Tărâmul durerii* [The land of pain], in 1971, in *România literară* (no. 15, translated by Narcis Zărnescu).

rain] (1984, Univers, translated from English by Mirela Şaim), Yasunari Kawabata, *Frumoasele adormite* [The house of the sleeping beauties], in *Tribuna* (1984, no. 8, translated by Olimpiu Nuşfelean), Yukio Mishima, *Templul de aur* [The golden temple] (1985, Univers, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru), Natsume Soseki, *Zbuciumul inimii* [Kokoro] (1985, Univers, translated from Japanese by Elena Suzuki and Doina Ciurea), Junichiro Tanizaki (1886-1965), *Floare de cireş* [Cherry blossom] (fragments from the novel *Surorile Makioka* [The Makioka sisters]), in *Luceafărul* (1986, no. 52, translated by Valentin Negoită), Natsume Soseki, *Botchan* (1988, Univers, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru).

In the 70s, the education system with instruction in Japanese was also consolidated in Romania, on the bases established in the second half of the previous decade by a course on Japanese language and civilisation held by the nipologist Ioan Timuş, between 1966-1969, at the Universitatea Populară "Ioan I. Dalles" People's University. Ioan Timuş (1890-1969), one of the first Romanians who had learned the Japanese language in Japan, was already well known among the Romanian interwar public as a nipologist, through the publication of several volumes capitalising on a Japanese holiday that had taken place between 1917-1922. He debuted in 1924 with his travel journal *Japonia. Viaţa şi obiceiurile* [Japan. Life and customs], a publication with a commendatory preface written by Nicolae Iorga, who warmly recommended the "photograph" of the fabulous kingdom of the Rising Sun, through the impressions of a traveller who had made notes based on an "experienced" subject²⁹. The next year, the aforementioned volume was followed by *Japonia. Artă, femeia şi viaţa socială* [Japan. Art, women and the social life], both of which were republished in 1942 in a revised and expanded edition entitled *Japonia de ieri şi de azi* [Japan, yesterday and today], for which he was awarded *Marele premiu Năsturel* [The Nasturel Grand Prize] by the Romanian Academy. In 1938, Ioan Timuş published the novel *Ogio-san (Domnişoarele)* [The young ladies], in two editions, and a collection of Japanese fairy tales, after he had translated, in 1934, the Japanese drama *Bushido (Calea războinicului)* [The way of the warrior]. Last, but not least, in 1940, Ioan Timuş, alongside Gheorghe Băgulescu³⁰ (1890-1963), was among

²⁹ See Ioan Timuş, *Ogio-san (Domnişoare)*, ed. Doina Curticăpeanu (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1984), Preface.

³⁰ The name of Gheorghe Băgulescu was not unknown in the society of that time. Although it was less associated with the field of literature and more with that of the military and diplomatic career, Gheorghe Băgulescu was, at the time of the publication of the studies on the "characters" of the Japanese civilisation, in the Far East, sent by the Romanian government, in 1940, as a plenipotentiary minister in Japan, China and Manchukuo, where he remained until 1943. In fact, the Romanian general was visiting the Japanese archipelago for the second time, after a first diplomatic mission that took place between 1935-1939, when he worked as a naval and aeronautical military attaché of Romania to Japan. He gloriously completed his first Japanese mission and he returned home full of impressive honours, among

the laureates (out of the 500 contenders) of the international contest of studies on the Japanese society, organised by *Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai* (The Society for International Cultural Relations) of Tokyo, on the occasion of Japan's celebration, with great pomp, of the anniversary of 26 centuries from the foundation of the empire. Independent from one another, the two Romanians had chosen, from the three proposed themes, the subject *Caracterele esențiale ale civilizației japoneze* [The essential characters of the Japanese civilisation], and the winning essays were to be published by the Japanese-Romanian Association, in 1942, in the volume *The Characters of the Japanese Civilisation*.

Throughout the years, for the teaching of the course of Japanese language and civilisation at the People's University, Ion Timuș was joined by the first Japanese students that came to study in Bucharest, some of the Japanese diplomats that were present in Romania at that time and the graduates of the course, the latter of whom had thus become the first generation of translators of Japanese literature from the *source-language* (in the 70s and in the years to come). Similarly, the freedom brought by the revolution in 1989, when the curricular options proposed by the Romanian universities diversified, being enriched with the Japanese language and literature major, offered the students/graduates of this major opportunity to continue their studies at Japanese universities through the scholarships offered by the Japanese state, would prepare the following generations of professional Japanese language translators who would become true figures in the literary translation market during the first decades of the 21st century.

The 90s completed the landscape of the Japanese prose translations with other titles of the writers who were already known to the Romanian public and even new names came forth: Kobo Abe, *Chip străin. Harta arsă* [The face of another. The ruined map] (1990, Univers, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru), Shusaku Endo (1923-1996), *Admirabilul nebun* [Wonderful fool], in *Haiku. Revista de interferențe culturale româno-japoneze* [Haiku. The magazine of Romanian-Japanese

which we must mention the conferral, by the Japanese emperor in 1939, at the proposal of the Mister of Foreign Affairs (*Gaimusho*), of the Imperial Order of the Sacred Treasure as commander or his appointment as a member of the Chuo Gishikai National Academy in Tokyo, the only foreigner who, at that time, ever received such appreciation from the highest level of the Japanese scientific forum. Moreover, he also brought an impressive collection of Japanese and Chinese artefacts – he thus organised at the Romanian Athenaeum an exhibition of 261 items, strongly animated by the desire to create a museum of Oriental art in the Herăstrău park in Bucharest, following the model of the Katsura summer villa of the Japanese emperors (v. Epure 2002, 160). [Gheorghe Băgulescu donated to the Romanian state, on that occasion, 726 paintings, bronze, stone and marble sculptures from the pre-Christian era, ceramics, china, gilded lacquers, gold, silver and bronze coins from the earliest epochs, 12 large Japanese screens, 18 mid-sized screens, 2.017 original engravings, all of which now represent the main part of the Japanese section of the National Art Museum from Bucharest].

cultural interferences] (1/1990, p. 7; 1(4)/ 1991, p. 4; no. 5-6/1992, new series (2), year III, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru),³¹ Kobo Abe, *Omul-cutie* [The box man] (frag.), in *România literară* (1990, XXIII, 39, p. 21, translated by Popescu Clara), Takeo Arishima (1878-1923), *Yoko* (1992, Arania, translated by Alla Verbețchi; source-language unknown), Yoichi Nakagawa (1897-1994), *Regina nopții în rai* [A moonflower in heaven] (1992, Demiurg, translated from French by Ion Brad), Eiji Yoshikawa (1892-1962), *Musashi* (4 volumes) (1994, Nemira, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru), Shotaro Ikenami (1923-1990), *Maestrul asasin: crimele din orașul Shogunului* [Master Assassin: Tales of Murder from the Shogun's City] (1994, Nemira, translated from English by Delia Ivănescu), Shusaku Endo, *Groapa* [Silence] (frag.), in *Steaua* (1994, no. 708, pp. 59-61, translated from English by Marius Jucan), Kawabata Yasunari, *Frumoasele adormite* [The House of the sleeping beauties] (frag.), in *Minerva*, (1994, V, 39-40, 11, translated by Olimpiu Nușfelean), Nambara Minoru (1930-2013), *Pădurea de la începutul lumii. Scrisori dintr-un pelerinaj* [The forest at the beginning of the world. Letters from a pilgrimage] (1995, Clusium, translated from Japanese by Elsa Lüder and Paul Miron), Hatsuko Naito (1921-2011), *Zeii tunetului* [Thunder gods] (1995, Nemira, translated from English by Iulia Arsintescu), Kunio Tsuji (1925-1999), *Il signore* (1995, Nemira, translated from English by Rodica Ștefan), Harada Yasuko (1928-2009), *Cântecul toamnei* [The song of autumn], in *Luceafărul* (1995, no. 16, translated by Marilena Chiriac), Yasunari Kawabata, *Umbrela* [The umbrella], in *România literară* (1995, no. 44, 8-14, translated from Japanese by George T. Șipoș), Mori Ogai (1862-1922), *Incidentul de la Sakai* [The Sakai incident] (1996, Fundația Culturală Română, translated by Vivia Săndulescu; source-language unknown), Kenzaburo Oe, *O problemă personală* [A personal matter] (frag.), in *Literatorul* (1997, no. 35-36, translated from Japanese by Ana Laura Cocora), Kenzaburo Oe, *O problemă personală* [A personal matter] (frag.), in *Luceafărul* (1998, (new series) 31, 20-22, translated from Japanese by Ana Laura Cocora), Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, *Pânza de păianjen* [The spider's thread], in *România literară* (1998, no. 48, translated from Japanese by George T. Șipoș), Yasushi Inoue, *Lupul Albastru: povestea lui Genghis-Han* [The Blue Wolf: A Novel of the Life of Chinggis Khan] (1999, Humanitas, translated by Brîndușa Prelipceanu), Banana Yoshimoto (1964~), *Kitchen*, in *Luceafărul* (1999, no. 11, translated by Claudia Golea).

We must also note that certain translations published twenty or thirty years earlier were also re-edited: in 1994, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, *Rashomon* (Marathon, translated from French by Ion Caraion) was re-edited; in 1995, the publishing house "Grai și suflet – Cultura națională" published in a single volume Yasunari Kawabata, *Țara zăpezilor. Kyoto sau tinerii îndrăgostiți din străvechiul oraș imperial* [Snow country. Kyoto or the lovers from the old imperial capital], using the same

³¹ The translation was reused in volume form, in 2004: Shusaku Endo, *Un idiot minunat* [Wonderful fool] (Polirom, translated from Japanese and footnotes by Angela Hondru).

translations from 1970 (*Kyoto sau tinerii îndrăgostiți din străvechiul oraș imperial* [Kyoto or the lovers from the old imperial capital], translated from German by Vasile Spoială) and from 1974 (*Țara zăpezilor* [Snow country], translated from Japanese by Stanca Cionca).

In 2000, the re-editions offered by the Humanitas publishing house were given priority: Yasunari Kawabata, *Frumusețe și întristare* [Beauty and sadness] (Humanitas, translated from French by Sorin Mărculescu); Yasunari Kawabata, *O mie de cocori* [Thousand cranes] (Humanitas, translated from French by Pericle Martinescu), this time using a title that bore more fidelity to the original, the translation *Stol de păsări albe* from 1973; Yasunari Kawabata, *Vuietul muntelui* [The sound of the mountain] (Humanitas, translated from French by Pericle Martinescu), reusing the edition from 1973; Yasushi Inoue, *Pușca de vânătoare* [The hunting rifle] (Humanitas, translated from German by Lia Pardău and Platon Pardău), a new edition of the version from 1969; Yukio Mishima, *Templul de aur* [The golden temple] (Humanitas, translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru), reusing the edition from 1985, and Yukio Mishima, *După banchet* [After the banquet] (Humanitas, translated from Japanese by Stanca Cionca), reusing the edition from 1977.

After penetrating the western space in the final decades of the 19th century, the far-eastern poetry also reached the Romanian space through translations, especially through those in French. Understood at first as a simple aesthetic delight, the Japanese poems became, in time, the model of a new form of expression, which led to the publication of the first anthology of Japanese poetry³² in 1937, when Traian Chelariu published, in the Collection *Junimea literară*, under the title *Suflet nipon, traduceri din poezia niponă* [The Japanese soul. Translations of Japanese poetry], Romanian translations of *tanka* and *haikus*, poems in which, according to the translator in the preface of the plaque, "(...) the pure and profoundly sentimental taste of the Japanese lover of verse vibrates, a verse with a noble foundation and perfectly crystallised in shape."³³

The Japanese poetry, endowed with a "delicate reluctance", expresses only an infinitesimal part and only suggests the rest. It stands out in a famous anthology, *Manyōshū* (*Antologia cu zece mii de file*) [The anthology of a thousand pages], published at the end of the 8th century and, among five thousand poems, it also contains the poetic form of *chōka*, or *the long poem*, borrowed from the Chinese literary tradition. *Manyōshū* is followed by the publication of 21 other imperial anthologies, compiled throughout five centuries (10th-14th), the first of which being *Kokinshū* (*Culegere din trecut și de azi*) [Collection from today and from the days of

³² In 1913, A. V. Cazimir published translations of Japanese poetry in *Convorbiri literare* (XLVII): Lady Horikawa, *Flori de mătrăgună/ Tanka* [Mandrake blossoms / Tanka].

³³ See Traian Chelariu, *Suflet nipon, traduceri din poezia niponă* [Japanese Soul. Translations of Japanese poetry] (Cernăuți: Colecția Junimea literară, 1937), 5.

old]; it was compiled at the request of emperor Daigo (885-930) and it recognises the poetic form of *tanka* or *waka* (traditionally, they are not necessarily synonymous, but they are thus used today), characterised by a number of 31 syllables, displayed in the 5-7-5-7-7 structure. By acknowledging the idea that the source of poetry is the human soul, the poetry from Yamato (the archaic name of Japan) is constructed of three essential elements: emotion, which is the source of the poem, the poem itself (which comes into being from this emotion) and an exterior event that caused the emotion³⁴ – a triple emotion transmitted to the reader through a particular state of sadness, tenderness and dreaming. In time, the Japanese poetry evolved in the form of *renga*, a chained poem in the construction of which different authors participate – with a satirical or comical version of *renga*, also known as *haikai no renga* or simply as *haikai*. The first hemistich from a succession of *haikai no renga* is called *hokku*, or the *beginning verse* – it has the privilege of establishing the theme, of choosing the season and of setting the tone for the following verses. It then became common practice for the *hokku*, named *haiku* by the poetic genius Masaoka Shiki (1866-1902), to be composed independently from the rest of the poem. Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) was the one who contributed to the creation and recognition, in the Edo period (1600-1868) of the *hokku* as a literary genre, offering it an unprecedented shine.

Al. T. Stamatiad, the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Literatorul*, also translated Japanese poetry into Romanian and, as a translator, he managed to impose Japanese poetry through the anthology *Din cântecele curtezanelor japoneze* [The songs of the Japanese courtesans] (1942, Vremea)³⁵, followed by the volume *Eşarfe de mătase. Antologie japoneză* [Silk scarves. Japanese anthology], published in 1943 at the Editura Contemporană publishing house, which received an award from the Romanian Academy that same year. In the preface, the translator felt the need to explain to the Romanian reader several aspects (at a formal level and with respect to the contents), regarding the “lyrical miracle” he thus presented: “In three verses, containing 17 syllables, the poet outlined a landscape, emphasised a picturesque detail or an emotion and he would sometimes mirror his own soul. This short poem of three verses is called a *hai-kai*. A phrase often unfinished, which the dream or the reader’s thoughts would continue and complete. Its charm is given especially by this ever so subtle and ever so intimate collaboration.”³⁶

³⁴ See Makoto Ueda, *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, Center for Japanese Studies (Michigan: The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1991), 3.

³⁵ Al. T. Stamatiad had already published translations of Japanese poetry: *Pasteluri japoneze* [Japanese pastels] (1930, *Convorbiri literare*, LXIII), *Peisagii sentimentale (suită de haiku)* [Sentimental landscapes. A suit of haikus] (1936, *Adevărul*).

³⁶ Al.T. Stamatiad, *Eşarfe de mătase. Antologie japoneză* [Silk scarves. Japanese anthology] (Bucharest: Editura Contemporană, 1943), 122.

After three decades of silence, the 70s and 80s would finally enrich the Japanese poetry anthologies with new publications, through the translations from intermediary languages. In 1970, *Din lirica japoneză* [Japanese poetry] is published by the Univers publishing house (translated by Ion Acsan, Dan Constantinescu, Ioanichie Olteanu, Virgil Teodorescu, Vasile Zamfir, Violeta Zamfirescu); in 1973, the Albatros publishing house offers, in an exceptional graphic form, the bibliophile edition *Haiku. Lirica niponă (Secolul XVI-XX)* [*Haiku. Japanese poetry (16th-20th centuries)*] (Foreword, translation and notes by Dan Constantinescu) in five volumes, containing the *haikus* of 74 Japanese poets; in 1981, exploiting the previous publications, a large collection is published under the title *Tanka - Haiku. Antologie de poezie clasică japoneză* [Tanka – *Haiku*. An anthology of Japanese classical poetry] at the Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică publishing house (translated by Dan Constantinescu). The aforementioned anthologies would represent the basis of a large-scale anthology, published in 1995, entitled *Țara cireșilor în floare. Poezia Japoniei* [The land of blooming cherry trees. The poetry of Japan], at the Editura “Grai și suflet- cultura națională” publishing house (an anthology by Ion Acsan, foreword by Vasile Nicolescu, translated (from French, English, German) by Ion Acsan, Dan Constantinescu, Ioanichie Olteanu, Virgil Teodorescu and Vasile Zamfir), a well-balanced anthology that compiles all of the Japanese poetic genres, from folkloric verses to the “newer style”, European poetry, from the ancient, classical, medieval poetry to the contemporary poetry, traversing the entire history of the genre. In 1984, the “scholarly” anthologies of Japanese classical poetry are completed by an anthology of exclusively contemporary poetry: *Poezie japoneză contemporană* [Contemporary Japanese poetry] (Dacia, translated from Japanese by Emil-Eugen Pop), which exploits the Japanese anthologies published between 1969-1979. The volume presents to the Romanian public over 20 Dada Japanese poets, intellectualist imagists, surrealists, who detached from the canons of classical poetry and whose poetry abolishes the “lexical segregation” characteristic to the fixed forms of the classical prosody, thus exploring the unfathomable depths of the Japanese language.

The following decade completed the anthologies of Japanese poetry with plaques – verse translations from contemporary poets, such as Takashi Arima (1931~), *Umbra lui Ulise: poeme* [The shadow of Ulysses: poems] (1997, Mesagerul, translated by Ion Cristofor), Sono Uchida (1924~), *Pe ruinele Romei* [On the ruins of Rome] (1994, *Haiku*, translated from Japanese by Ștefan Benea and Florin Vasiliu) or the classics, like Matsuo Basho (1644-1694): Matsuo Basho, *Pinul din Karasaki* [The pine tree from Karasaki] (1993, *Haiku*, translation and foreword by Florin Vasiliu); Matsuo Basho, *Lună și floare de prun* [The moon and the plum blossom] (1997,

Junimea, translated by Nicolae Ionel).³⁷ Although all of the previous anthologies contained translations from Matsuo Basho, the publication of certain volumes that displayed on their covers the name of the one considered to be the founder of this lyrical genre must have drawn the attention of the Romanian public towards the *haijin* travelling troubadour (the *haiku* poet) who, in agreement with Shakespeare, - for whom poetry was the revelation of the world that was hidden, invisible to the logical and rational thinking -, considered that only a very short poem could focus on a momentary impression, thus freezing the moment: “you must capture in words the light in which you saw something, before the image is erased from your mind.”³⁸ The magazine *Secolul 20* (no. 11-12) published, in 1998, an issue exclusively dedicated to Japan – among others, it published translations of contemporary poetry authored by Saki Erinu (1932-2018), translated by Flavius Florea and the poets Tozaburo Ono (1903-1996), Baku Yamanoguchi (1903-1963), Tamiki Hara (1905-1951), Etsuro Sakamoto (1906-1969), Yukio Haruyama (1902-1994), Bocho Yamamura (1884-1924), translated from Japanese by Emil-Eugen Pop.

The publication of the translations of Japanese poetry will have surely sensitised the poetry loving Romanian reader and the lesson of delicate artistic sensibility offered by the Japanese lyrical world to the Romanian poets, particularly the *haiku* model, became somewhat visible in their personal creations, from Alexandru Macedonski and Ion Pillat, to Lucian Blaga, Marin Sorescu and Nichita Stănescu, who felt an attraction to the orientation proposed by the Japanese poetic form: lyrical focus and a tendency manifested towards the concise. The Romanian poets, through the “scholarly interest” for the *haiku*, were undoubtedly part of the worldwide movement caused by this poetic form, and, in Japan, an annual contest of *haiku* in the languages of the world took place. We believe that the dalliance of the inflectional languages (Romanian, English etc.) on a poetic form proposed by an agglutinative language (Japanese) is part of the postmodern coordinate of the contemporary times, tempted by new ways of thinking and feeling, an oscillation between entertainment and virtuosity, not necessarily originating in a simple curiosity for an imitation exercise, but a liberating one, a desire to explore new poetic horizons through language, in a unique intertextual game.

The year 2000 marks a true editorial event in the panorama of Japanese lyrical translations in Romanian, through the publication of Fujiwara Teika, a classic of Japanese poetry, in the anthology *O sută de poeți de la Muntele Ogura* [One hundred poets from Mount Ogura] (2000, Editura Eminescu, translated by Iulia

³⁷ Nicolae Ionel also published a translation from Matsuo Basho, Yosa Buson, Kobayashi Issa, under the title *Haiku* (the year of publication is not mentioned, Iași: Tehnopress).

³⁸ Bashō, in Shūichi Katō, *Istoria literaturii japoneze (De la origini până în prezent)* [The history of Japanese literature (from its origins to today)], volume II, translated from Japanese by Kazuko Diaconu and Paul Diaconu, with an interview with the author for his Romanian readers and a Preface by Nicolae Manolescu (Bucharest: Editura Nipponica, 1998), 446.

Waniek). A poet, literary critic, essayist and prose writer, Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) was member of a family of famous poets from the so-called "House of the masters of poetry". To the collections of personal poems, the treatises on the poetic composition or the compilations made by imperial order, we must add the elaboration of the famous anthology of classical poetry entitled *Ogura hyakunin isshū* (*O sută de poeți de la Muntele Ogura*), in 1235.³⁹ The anthology contains 100 poets from different historical periods that cover seven centuries. Fujiwara no Teika also included a few personal poems and, although the selections are unequal in value, the volume was highly successful throughout the centuries and, for a long time, it was considered by the Japanese literary history to be the poetic canon.

The Romanian translations from the 20th century dedicated to Japanese dramaturgy are few and they are all focused on the eighth decade, remaining unique occurrences in the field to the present day. In 1980, Chikamatsu Monzaemon was translated into Romanian from Japanese by Angela Hondru, in *Poeme dramatice* [Dramatic poems], at the Univers publishing house. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725), the most important Japanese playwright, considered to be the Shakespeare of Japan, an erudite in Japanese literature, in the Chinese classical authors and in the sacred Buddhist texts, wrote plays for the puppet theatre (*jōruri*) and for the *kabuki* theatre.⁴⁰ The masterpieces translated into Romanian: *Îndrăgostiții de la Sonezaki* [The Love Suicides at Sonezaki], *Yosaku din Tamba* [The Night Song of Yosaku from Tamba], *Mesagerul iadului* [The Courier for Hell], *Bătălia de la Coxinga* [The Battles of Coxinga], *Gonza Lăncierul* [Gonza the Lancer], *Îndrăgostiții de la Amijima* [The Love Suicides at Amijima], can be divided into two categories: plays with historical inspiration (*jidaïmono*) and plays inspired from real life, from the social habits of the epoch (*sewamono*). They show an exceptional talent that managed to masterly express the drama of the human soul, in its inner conflict between *giri* (social duty) and *ninjō* (human feelings). Two years later, in 1982, the Univers publishing house published Motokiyo Zeami with a volume entitled *Nō (teatru)* [theatre] (translation, foreword and footnotes by Stanca Cionca). An actor, playwright for the *nō* theatre and theoretician, Motokiyo Zeami (1363-1443) led the art of the *nō* theatre to the perfection it bears today through the theoretical and practical scaffolding.⁴¹ The Japanese playwright is present in the Romanian market through several plays: *Pinii creșcuți laolaltă* [Pine trees grown together], *Kiyotsune, Veșmîntul de pene* [The feather mantle], *Puntea din Iuntri* [The bridge of barges], *În câmp la Adachi* [In the fields of Adachi], through which the reader can become familiarised with the Japanese aesthetic concept of *yūgenbi*, or the mysterious beauty, which was an important cultural gesture. Furthermore, as if to complete a *nō* play on the stage... of

³⁹ See Tsuru & Reischauer, 422.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 185.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1771.

Romanian translations, in 1988, the anthology of Japanese comical literature *Evantaiul cu noroc* [The lucky fan] (Univers, translated by Stanca Cionca) was published. *Kyōgen*, which appeared in the 14th century, originating from the *nō* theatre, is a dramatic genre with a satirical nature⁴² – in the intermissions of a representation, it was obligatory that a *kyōgen* play be put to stage. While in the *nō* theatre form the emphasis falls on dance and music, on the esoteric, immaterial beauty of the actions and the characters, in *kyōgen* the emphasis falls on the dialogue and the mimed gestures, in a satirical, ironic, comical tone with a highly realistic touch. In this comedy, for instance, a folded fan, used by the actors, symbolises any object, and its skilful manipulation can make the audience laugh.

Undoubtedly, in order to be able to enter another, “foreign” culture, it must stop being... foreign; through translation, it must find a name and a place within the language of the host-culture.⁴³ When it comes to languages that are geographically distant and when an inevitable hiatus occurs between the two cultures, the world of *in between*, namely *in between* cultures, *in between* languages, makes the translation be not only the path towards a singular shore, from one foreign and far-away country to another, but also a dynamic process that implies adaptations on the go and a constant reorientation towards partners from cultures that try ceaselessly to diminish the distance separating them.

The Romanian 20th century, filled with contradictions, unrest and extreme experiences, generously hosted the Japanese literature translations, inasmuch as the political, diplomatic, social and cultural conditions allowed. The history of Romanian literature could compile an honourable list of the Japanese literary translations into Romanian, covering the classical period, as well as the modern and contemporary periods of the Japanese literary history. Although, in the beginning, the act of translation was carried out from intermediary languages, the occurrence, during the last quarter of the century, of the translations made directly from the source-language (Japanese), created the favourable conditions for preparing the activity of the professional translations, which marked the debut of the 21st century. Thus, if, during the last century, some of the Japanese prose texts occurred in a fragmentary manner, in periodicals at first, they were republished in the contemporary century in volumes: the fragment-translation of the novel *A personal matter* by Kenzaburo Oe (1997, *Literatorul* no. 35-36; 1998, *Luceafărul* [new series] 31, 20-22, translated from Japanese by Ana Laura Cocora) was fully published at the Rao international publishing house, under the title *O experiență personală* [A personal matter] (translated from Japanese by Roman Pașca); the fragment-translation of the novel *The Silent Cry* of the same author, initially published in 1977 in *România literară* (no.

⁴² See Tsuru & Reischauer, 853.

⁴³ See I. M. Lotman, *Cultură și explozie* [Culture and explosion], transl. by George Ghețu and Justina Bandal, preface by Livia Cotorcea (Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2004), 175.

47), was published in a volume in 2011 at the Rao international publishing house, under the title *Strigăt înăbușit* [The silent cry] (translated from Japanese by Roman Pașca); Yasunari Kawabata with the fragment-translation of the novel *The house of the sleeping beauties*, from *Tribuna* (no. 8, 1984) (translated by Olimpiu Nușfelean), was published in full at the Humanitas publishing house in 2006 (translated by Anca Focșeneanu); Kobo Abe, with the fragment from *The Box Man* (frag.), initially published in 1990 in *România literară* (XXIII, 39, p. 21, translated by Popescu Clara), was published in a volume in 2007, under the title *Bărbatul-cutie* [The box man] (translated from Japanese by Angela Hondru) at the Editura pentru literatură universală; Banana Yoshimoto (1964~), published initially in 1999 with a fragment from the novel *Kitchen* in *Luceafărul* (no. 11, translated by Claudia Golea), was published as an editorial volume at the Humanitas publishing house in 2004 (translated from Japanese by Irina Holca). The other fragment-type translation, the one from Junichiro Tanizaki⁴⁴, *The Cherry Blossom* (fragments from the novel “The Makioka Sisters”), published in 1986 in *Luceafărul* (no. 52, translated by Valentin Negoită) is still the only Romanian translation of the masterpiece *Sasame yuki / Light snow* (1942-48)⁴⁵, which still awaits its translator.

Moreover, in a natural continuity, the writers already presented to the Romanian public during the previous century were rediscovered by the contemporary readers through another prose genre. If Mori Ogai, for instance, appeared in 1996 with the historical novel *The Sakai Incident*, the Japanese writer is brought to the Romanian public again with fictional prose: *Gâsca sălbatică* [The wild goose] (2008, Humanitas, translated from Japanese and footnotes by Rodica Frențiu), *Dansatoarea* [The dancing girl] (2009, Humanitas, translated from Japanese and footnotes by Rodica Frențiu), *Vita sexualis* (2009, Nemira, translated from Japanese by Irina Holca) and *Tânărul* [Youth and other stories] (2015, Eikon/ Școala Ardeleană, translated from Japanese and footnotes by Rodica Frențiu). Other Japanese writers were published with new texts: Ryunosuke Akutagawa, who initially appeared in 1968 with the volume *Rashomon*, republished with the same translation in 1994, reappeared in the bookstores in 2010 with the volume *Viața unui prost* [The life of a stupid man] (Curtea veche, translated by George T. Șipoș), and in 2019 with new titles, comprised in the volume *Paravanul iad și alte povestiri* [Hell screen and other stories] (Humanitas, translated by Raluca Nicolae) – this translation from Japanese to Romanian is, for now, the latest editorial occurrence in the field.

⁴⁴ Junichiro Tanizaki would, for the first time, appear in a volume with the novel: *O pisică, un bărbat și două femei* [A cat, a man and two women] (2006, Nemira, translated by Roman Pașca).

⁴⁵ The original title of this novel is *Sasame yuki / Zăpadă liniștită* [Light snow] (1942-48), but the English translation was published under the title *The Makioka Sisters* (1957), and, for the French translation, *Quatre sœurs* (1964).

An opening towards the harmonious integrity of the linguistic-spiritual sphere of the other, the act of translation, particularly the act of literary translation, creates the contact between foreign cultures through a transfer in the direction of the target-culture and language. With inevitable losses, in the end, literary translation surpasses the linguistic frame for an extra-linguistic, encyclopaedic and cultural frame, so that, although “to translate” means to say *approximately* the same thing⁴⁶, this gesture becomes a ground-breaking one through the desire to subject the target-culture and language to a new experience. In other words, literary translation aims to import and to naturalise the contents of the source-text by simulating, as much as possible, the original form of execution of the respective contents⁴⁷ and, by linguistically and culturally enriching the target-language, it paves the way for the reader to access a meeting with otherness.

In this age of globalisation, on the one hand, and of identity exacerbation, of stigmatisation and difference on the other hand, the meeting between cultural meridians, among other things, means that literary translations pave the way towards a society that is much more concerned with the future, creating opportunities for reciprocal understanding and marking new values by supporting the acts of culture.

⁴⁶ See Umberto Eco, *A spune cam același lucru. Experiențe de traducere* [Saying almost the same thing. Experiences in translation], transl. by Laszlo Alexandru (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2008), 367.

⁴⁷ See George Steiner, *După Babel. Aspecte ale limbii și traducerii* [After Babel. Aspects of language and translation] (Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1983), 406.

Annex 1

The List of the Japanese Literary Translations (1900-2000)

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
1921	Tokutomi Kenjiro	Între moarte și iubire [Between death and love]	Botez-Rareș George Emil	Editura Librăriei SOCEC & Co., Societate Anonimă
1922	-	Nuvele japoneze [Japanese short stories]	-	Editura Steinberg
1926	Yamata Kiku	Eterna iubire Masako [Masako, eternal love]	Botez-Rareș George Emil	Editura Artistică "Victoria"
1943	-	Eșarfe de mătase: antologie japoneză [Silk scarves: Japanese anthology]	Stamatiad Al. T.	Editura Contemporană
1948	Tokunaga Naoshi	Strada fără soare (Un roman muncitoresc japonez) [The street without sun (a Japanese working-class novel)]	Fulda Emil	Editura de Stat
1954	Tocunaga Sunao	În munții liniștiti [Quiet mountains]	M. Goltz, L. Soare	Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă
1956	Takakura Teru	Cîntecul porcului: [povestire] [The pig's song: short story]	Voropanov Gheorghe Costin Jacques	Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă
1956	Takakura Teru	Apele Hakonei: Roman istoric [The waters of Hakonei: Historic novel]	Malița Tatiana, Heftor Rose	Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
1961	Shimota Seiji	Insula Okinawa [The island of Okinawa]	Timuș Ion, Martinescu Pericle	Editura pentru literatură universală
1962	Takakura Teru	Lupul [The wolf]	E. Naum, N. Andronescu	Editura pentru literatură universală
1966	Shimazaki Toson	Legământul călcat [The broken oath]	Caraion Ion, Vasiliev Vladimir	Editura pentru literatură universală
1968	Abe Kobo	Femeia nisipurilor [The woman in the dunes]	Levandovski- Popa Magdalena	Editura pentru literatură universală
1968	Akutagawa Ryunosuke	Rashomon	Caraion Ion	Editura pentru literatură universală
1969	Inoue Yasushi	Pușca de vânătoare [The hunting rifle]	Pardău Lia, Pardău Platon	Editura pentru literatură universală
1969	(Doamna) Murasaki	Genji	Stahl Henriette Ivonne	Editura pentru literatură universală
1970	Kawabata Yasunari	Kyoto sau tinerii îndrăgostiți din străvechiul oraș imperial [Kyoto or the lovers from the old imperial capital]	Spoială Vasile	Univers
1970		Din lirica japoneză [Japanese poetry]	Acsan Ion, Constantinescu Dan, Olteanu Ioanichie, Teodorescu Virgil, Vasile Zamfir, Zamfirescu Violeta	Univers

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
1973	Kawabata Yasunari	Stol de păsări albe; Vuietul muntelui [A could of white birds; The sound of the mountain]	Martinescu Pericle	Minerva
1974	Kawabata Yasunari	Țara zăpezilor [Snow country]	Cionca Stanca	Univers
1974	-	<i>Haiku</i> . Lirica niponă (Secolul XVI-XX) [Haiky. Japanese poetry (the 16 th -20 th centuries)]	Dan Constantinescu	Albatros
1975	Mishima Yukio	Tumultul valurilor [The sound of waves]	Năvodaru Ana Maria	Univers
1975	Natsume Soseki	Motanul are cuvântul [I am a cat]	Matei Mihai	Univers
1977	Sei Shonagon	Însemnări de căpătâi [The pillow book]	Cionca Stanca	Univers
1979	Mishima Yukio	După banchet [After the banquet]	Cionca Stanca	Univers
1980	Chikamatsu Monzaemon	Poeme dramatice (Îndrăgostiții de la Sonezaki; Yosaku din Tamba; Mesagerul iadului; Bătălia de la Coxinga; Gonza Lăncierul; Îndrăgostiții de la Amijima) [Dramatic poems (The Love Suicides at Sonezaki, The Night Song of Yosaku from	Hondru Angela	Univers

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
		Tamba, The Courier for Hell, Gonza the Lancer, The Love Suicides at Amijima]		
1981	-	Tanka- <i>Haiku</i> : antologie de poezie clasică japoneză. [An anthology of classical Japanese poetry]	Acsan Ion, Constantinescu Dan	Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică
1982	Dazai Osamu	Amurg [The setting sun]	Hondru Angela	Univers
1982	Motokiyo Zeami	<i>Nō</i> (teatru) [Theatre]	Cionca Stanca	Univers
1983	Natsume Soseki	Călătoria; Șovăiala [The journey; Reluctance]	Șaim Mirela	Univers
1984	Ueda Akinari	Închipuirile lunii și ale ploii [Tales of moonlight and rain]	Șaim Mirela	Univers
1984	-	Poezie japoneză contemporană [Contemporary Japanese poetry]	Pop Emil-Eugen	Dacia
1985	Mishima Yukio	Templul de aur [The golden temple]	Hondru Angela	Univers
1985	Natsume Soseki	Zbuciumul Inimii [Kokoro]	Suzuki Elena, Ciurea Doina	Univers
1988	Natsume Soseki	Botchan	Hondru Angela	Univers

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
1988	-	Evantaiul cu noroc. Antologie de literatură comică japoneză [The lucky fan: an anthology of Japanese comical literature]	Cionca Stanca	Univers
1990	Abe Kobo	Chip străin. Harta arsă [The face of another. The ruined map]	Hondru Angela	Univers
1992	Arishima Takeo	Yoko	Verbețchi Alla	Arania
1992	Nakagawa Yoichi	Regina nopții în rai [A moonflower in heaven]	Brad Ion	Demiurg
1993	Basho Matsuo	Pinul din Karasaki (poezii de Basho Matsuo) [The pine tree from Karasaki (poems by Basho Marsuo)]	Vasiliu Florin	<i>Haiku</i>
1994	Yoshikawa Eiji	Musashi (4 volumes)	Hondru Angela	Nemira
1994	Akutagawa Ryunosuke	Rashomon	Caraion Ion	Marathon
1994	Ikenami Shotaro	Maestrul asasin: crimele din orașul Shogunului [Master assassin: Tales of Murder from the Shogun's City]	Ivănescu Delia	Nemira
1994	Uchida Sono	Pe ruinele Romei [On the ruins of Rome]	Benea Ștefan Vasiliu Florin	<i>Haiku</i>
1995	Nambara Minoru	Pădurea de la începutul lumii. Scrisori dintr-un	Lüder Elsa, Miron Paul	Clusium

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
		pelerinaj [The forest at the beginning of the world. Letters from a pilgrimage]		
1995	Kawabata Yasunari	Țara zăpezilor. Kyoto sau Tinerii îndrăgostiți din străvechiul oraș imperial [Snow country. Kyoto or the lovers from the old imperial capital]	Cionca Stanca, Spoială Vasile	Grai și Suflet - Cultura Națională
1995	Naito Hatsuho	Zei tunetului [Thunder gods]	Arsintescu Iulia	Nemira
1995	Tsuji Kunio	Il signore	Ștefan Rodica	Nemira
1995	-	Țara cireșilor în floare. Poezia Japoniei. [The land of blooming cherry trees. The poetry of Japan]	Acsan Ion, Constantinescu Dan, Olteanu Ioanichie	Grai și Suflet - Cultura Națională
1996	Mori Ogai	Incidentul de la Sakai [The Sakai incident]	Săndulescu Vivia	Fundația Culturală Română
1997	Arima Takashi	Umbra lui Ulise: poeme [The shadow of Ulysses: poems]	Cristofor Ion	Mesagerul
1997	Basho Matsuo	Lună și floare de prun [The moon and the plum blossom]	Ionel Nicolae	Junimea
1999	Yasushi Inoue	Lupul Albastru: povestea lui Genghis-Han [The blue wolf: A Novel of the Life of Chinggis Khan]	Prelipceanu Brîndușa	Humanitas

Year	Author	Title	Translator	Publishing House
2000	Yasushi Inoue	Pușca de vânătoare [The hunting rifle]	Pardău Lia, Pardău Platon	Humanitas
2000	Kawabata Yasunari	Frumusețe și înrădăcitare [Beauty and sadness]	Mărculescu Sorin	Humanitas
2000	Kawabata Yasunari	O mie de cocori [Thousand cranes]	Martinescu Pericle	Humanitas
2000	Kawabata Yasunari	Vuietul muntelui [The sound of the mountain]	Martinescu Pericle	Humanitas
2000	Mishima Yukio	După banchet [After the banquet]	Cionca Stanca	Humanitas
2000	Mishima Yukio	Templul de aur [The golden temple]	Hondru Angela	Humanitas
2000	Fujiwara Teika	100 de poeți de la muntele Ogura: antologie de poezie veche [One hundred poets from Mount Ogura: an anthology of old poetry]	Waniek Adriana Iulia	Eminescu

* The annex only contains the volumes and anthologies of Japanese poetry published by publishing houses (with the exception of the magazine *Secolul 20* [The 20th century], which published in issue no. 11-12 translations from a groupage of contemporary poets).

Annex 2

Index of Japanese authors translated in Romanian (1900-2000)

- ABE, Kōbō [1924-1993] (1968, 1990)
 AKUTAGAWA, Ryūnosuke [1892-1927] (1968, 1994, 1998)
 ARIMA, Takashi [1931~] (1997)
 ARISHIMA, Takeo [1878-1923] (1992)
 BAKU, Yamanoguchi [1903-1963] (1998)
 BASHŌ, Matsuo [1644-1694] (1993, 1997)
 CHIKAMATSU, Monzaemon [1653-1725] (1980)
 DAZAI, Osamu [1909-1948] (1982)
 DESHIMARU, Taisen [1914-1982] (1993)
 ENDŌ, Shūsaku [1923-1996] (1990, 1991, 1992, 1994)
 FUJIWARA, Teika [1162-1241] (2000)
 HARADA, Yasuko [1928-2009] (1995)
 HARUYAMA, Yukio [1902-1994] (1998)
 IKENAMI, Shōtarō [1923-1990] (1994)
 KAWABATA, Yasunari [1899-1972] (1970, 1973, 1974, 1984, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000)
 MIBU no Tadamine [860-920] (1919)
 MISHIMA, Yukio [1925-1970] (1971, 1975, 1979, 1985, 1998, 2000)
 MIYAMOTO, Musashi [1584-1645] (1995)
 MORI, Ōgai [1862-1922] (1996)
 NAGAI, Kafū [1879-1959] (1943)
 NAITŌ, Hatsuho [1921-2011] (1955)
 NAKAGAWA Yoichi [1897-1994] (1992)
 NAMBARA, Minoru [1930-2013] (1995)
 NATSUME, Sōseki [1867-1916] (1975, 1983, 1985, 1988)
 ŌE, Kenzaburō [1935~] (1977, 1997)
 SAKI, Erinu [1932-2018] (1998)
 SAKAMOTO, Etsuro [1906-1969] (1998)
 SEI, Shōnagon [966-1025] (1977)
 SHIKIBU, Murasaki [978-1014] (1969)
 SHIMAZAKI, Tōson [1872-1943] (1966)
 SHIMOTA, Seiji [1913-2003] (1961)
 TAKAKURA, Teru [1891-1986] (1956, 1962)
 TAKASHI, Arima [1931~] (1997)
 TAMENAGA, Shunsui [1790- 1843] (1905)
 TAMIKI, Hara [1905-1951] (1998)
 TANIZAKI, Jun'ichirō [1886-1965] (1986, 1971, 1992)
 TOCUNAGA, Sunao/ TOKUNAGA, Naoshi [1899-1958] (1948, 1954)
 TOKUTOMI, Kenjirō [1868-1927] (1915, 1921)
 TŌZABURŌ, Ono [1903-1996] (1998)
 TSUJI, Kunio [1925-1999] (1995)
 UCHIDA, Sono [1924~] (1994)
 UEDA, Akinari [1734-1809] (1984)
 YAMATA, Kiku [1897-1975] (1926)
 YAMAMURA, Bochō [1884-1924] (1998)
 YASUSHI, Inoue [1907-1991] (1969, 1998, 1999, 2000)
 YOSHIKAWA, Eiji [1892-1962] (1994)
 YOSHIMOTO, Banana [1964~] (1999)
 ZEAMI, Motokiyo [1363-1443] (1982)

Annex 3

Index of translators (1900-2000)

Accsan Ion [1932-2013]
 Andronescu N. [?]
 Arsintescu Iulia [?]
 Benea Ștefan [?]
 Botez-Rareș George Emil [1877-1935]
 Brad Ion [1929-2019]
 Caraion Ion [1923-1986]
 Chelariu Traian [1906-1966]
 Chiriac Marilena [?]
 Cionca Stanca [1947~]
 Ciurea Doina [1938-1999]
 Cocora Ana Laura [1975~]
 Constantinescu Dan [1921-1997?]
 Constantinescu-Delabaia I. [?]
 Costin Jacques [1895-1971]
 Cristofor Ion [1952~]
 Florea Flavius [?]
 Fulda Emil [?]
 Gheorghiu Gabriela [1949~]
 Golea Claudia [?]
 Goltz M. [?]
 Hefter Rose [?]
 Hondru Angela [1944~]
 Ionel Nicolae [1944~]
 Ivănescu Delia [?]
 Levandosvski-Popa Magdalena [?]
 Lüder Elsa [?]
 Malița Tatiana [1926-2016]
 Martinescu Pericle [1911-2005]
 Matei Mihai [?]
 Mărculescu Sorin [1936~]
 Miron Paul [?]
 Naum E. [?]
 Năvodaru Ana Maria [1949~2017]
 Negoită Valentin [?]
 Nușfelean Olimpiu [1949~]
 Olteanu Ioanichie [1923-1997]
 Pardău Lia [?]
 Pardău Platon [1934~]
 Paula G. [?]
 Pop Emil-Eugen [?]
 Prelipceanu Brîndușa [1949-2002]
 Robescu P. [?]
 Săndulescu Viviva [?]
 Sbârcea George [1914-2005]
 Soare L. [?]
 Spoială Vasile [1935-1993]
 Stahl Henriette Ivonne [1900-1984]
 Stamatiad Al. T. [1885-1956]
 Suzuki Elena [?]
 Șaim Mirela [?]
 Șipoș George T. [1975~]
 Ștefan Rodica [?]
 Teodorescu Virgil [1909-1987]
 Timuș Ion [1890-1969]
 Vasiliev Vladimir [?]
 Vasiliu Florin [1929-2001]
 Verbețchi Alla [?]
 Voropanov Gheorghe [?]
 Waniek Adriana Iulia [1959~]
 Zamfir Vasile [?-1994?]
 Zamfirescu Violeta [1920-2006]
 Zărnescu Narcis [1948~]
 Zorileanu M. [?]

Annex 4

Index of publishing houses (1900-2000)

Albatros	Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică
Arania	Editura Tehnică
Axis Mundi	Editura Eminescu
Clusium	Fundația Culturală Română
Dacia	Garell Publishing House
Demiurg	<i>Haiku</i>
Editura Artistică "Victoria"	Humanitas
Editura Contemporană	Institutul de arte grafice Flacăra
Editura de Stat	Junimea
Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă	Logos Star
Editura Fundației Culturale Române	Marathon
Editura „Grai și Suflet - Cultura națională"	Mesagerul
Editura Librăriei SOCEC & Co.,	Minerva
Societate Anonimă	Nemira
Editura pentru literatură universală	Polirom
Editura Steinberg	Teora
	Univers
	Zamolxis

Index of periodicals

Colecția Junimea Literară
 Contemporanul
 Gazeta Transilvaniei
 Haiku, Revista de interferențe culturale româno- japoneze
 Literatorul
 Luceafărul
 Minerva
 Românul
 România literară
 Secolul 20
 Steaua
 Tribuna
 Vremea

Translated from Romanian by Anca Chiorean