

Sociology of translation explained. An in-depth Study of the Cultural and Literary Relations of Romania and China during 1948-1965

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Abstract

According to the sociological theory of literature, constraints on the creation and share of cultural works can be placed between two extremes: one with a high level of politicization and the other with a high level of commercialization (Sapiro, 2003). The overall objective of the present research is to follow the principles of Sociology of Translation to closely map and analyse the publishing activity of Romania concerning China and Chinese literature during the two stages of Romanian Communism – 1948-1965 and 1965-1989. This paper proposes, thus, an extended approach to literature, to its cultural, political and economic reception. In achieving the proposed objectives, the research expands far beyond the literary text itself, to its macro context, analysing, through quantitative research methods, a statistical database created based on two phases - the first part containing literary and non-fictional works that address and discuss issues related to China; the second part includes literary translations of Chinese literature into Romanian, either by direct translation or by an intermediate language. Throughout this paper we will map not only the number of works, but also the topics approached by writers along the two periods of the political life of Romania.

Keywords: *sociology of translation, socio-cultural reception, socio-political constraints, publishing, Chinese literature, bilateral relations, intercultural understanding, international relations.*

1. The sociology of translations

The sociology of literary translation and reception, as developed by Pierre Bourdieu, is in contradiction both with the interpretive approach of the text and with the economic analysis of international exchanges. The interpretive approach is born from a hermeneutic movement that aims to have access to the meaning and uniqueness of the text. The economic approach, less common in translation studies, removes the uniqueness and singularity of the text and the author, and assimilates translations into a wider category of goods, identifying them as products

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for sale, distributed and consumed according to national and international market demand. The recent sociological approach (Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007) separates these two limited and opposite analyses, and includes in the research spectrum a whole set of social relations in which translations are produced and distributed. Overcoming the inter-textual issue, focused on the relationship between the original text and the translation, we will focus on the specific sociological questions on the interest and functions of translation, on the agents and institutions included, on the space in which they are located, but also on the political and economic constraints that surround them.

The sociological perspective of literature reception broadens the area of research proposed by Jauss (1982). Contrary to hermeneutic and Marxist theories, Jauss promoted an anti-positivist literary history based on a notion of reception conceived as a history of the effects produced by literary works. His key concept is the Horizon of Expectations borrowed from Edmund Husserl, Karl Mannheim and Karl Popper (Sapiro, 2016), developed following a diachronic analysis of the readings of some works, and consisting of the reader's knowledge of genres and poetry, of works produced in the same historical and literary context, about the opposition between literary style and everyday language, imaginary world and everyday reality (Jauss, 1978). The Horizon of Expectations is, therefore, the set of reference categories that make it possible to understand a work at a certain historical moment. The meaning of the text, although inscribed in the text, is reborn with each reading, thus revealing its meanings and value. If for Jauss the reader is abstract, erudite, with a hermeneutic attitude to the text, from a sociological perspective, the reader is a real character, and the research object is composed of material and intellectual aspects of creating and disseminating the literary text, as well as the selection procedure, division by categories and evaluation - literary criticism, awards in literature, institutional consecration, sales etc. - through which the literary work is ranked. The recent approach of the sociology of reception is interested in the functions of translations in their context of production and reception, in the target culture. The analysis of the relationship between the production and the reception context supports the historical study of cultural transfers, which investigates the role of agents / mediators, be they institutions or individuals, in these exchanges, and their influence on political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries.

“Constraints on the creation and distribution of cultural goods and on international exchanges of literature can be located between two extremes: one with a high level of politicization and the other with a high level of commercialization” (Sapiro, 2003). Thus, in countries where the economic environment is subordinated to politics and cultural institutions are governed by state instruments, the production and distribution of cultural goods is heavily politicized. On the other hand, cultural exchanges are governed by the logic of the market, where cultural goods are seen, first and foremost, as commercial products that must obey the laws of profit; and where journalism is dominated by large companies that impose the criterion of profitability and marketing activity to the detriment of cultural and literary logic. Between these two extremes, we find various configurations in which the importance of political and economic factors varies depending on the needs of culture, the national market and the level of involvement of culture for ideological purposes. However, for the present moment, the trend is towards economic influences on the translation process, export agencies, as named by Heilbron (2007) - official cultural institutions, diplomatic corps, translation institutes, cultural attachés etc., ceding some of the power to import agents - translators, literary agents, publishers, reviewers etc.

Translation is, after all, indeed an entity in the equation of power relations between countries, beyond any other political considerations. For a nation, the translation of its literature is immediately a symbol of its international recognition. This is the reasoning behind which more and more states are allocating generous funding for the export of its literary goods.

2. Research Methodology

Judged against this theoretical framework, we pursued a research on the literary relations between Romania and China and the Romanian reader's interest in Chinese culture. To achieve a clear and accurate image, we conducted a quantitative research of all works, published during 1948 - 2018, regardless of literary genre, which debated topics related to China. Quantitative research proves to be vital in mapping Sino-Romanian relations, both from a literary, cultural, but also political, diplomatic and economic point of view, helping to highlight and emphasize the evolution of the reader's interest, but also of the Romanian authorities for China, in distinct periods of Romania's political life. In this regard, in order to build

the database, analysed all the volumes from 1948 to 2018 whose subject and theme are focused on various aspects of Chinese culture and civilization.

The main objective of the research was to build a rich and reliable statistical database which serves for the present analysis of the evolution of Sino-Romanian relations, but also as well as for future references of other research. Without claiming to be an exhaustive database, an analysis was carried out using several sources of information, as, although each source itself proves to be very useful for this study, it is not reliable and comprehensive enough to perform a more accurate analysis of the translation market of Chinese literature in Romania, so that for the present study we used several complementary sources to re-verify and complete the information.

To create the statistical database, two stages were followed - the first part containing literary and non-fiction works that address and debate issues related to China, whether we consider Chinese language, culture, civilization, philosophy, or Chinese economy and politics; the second part consists of literary translations from Chinese into Romanian, either through direct translation or through an intermediate language. The selection criteria were Romanian, as the language of presentation and publication in the period 1948-2018. The same criteria were applied in all sources of information and the same keywords, in Romanian language, were used to generate records, namely: China, chineză (Chinese), traducere chineză (Chinese translation), literatură chineză (Chinese literature), sinology (Sinology), chinezesc (Chinese), Confucius.

- ROLINEST Catalog (Romanian Library Network Science & Technology) - which is, according to the creators, an efficient tool for searching and retrieving simultaneously the existing bibliographic information in 14 universities and research libraries in Romania and 16 Romanian libraries: National Library of Romania, Library of Romanian Academy in Bucharest, Library of the Romanian Academy in Iasi, Central University Library Carol I Bucharest, Central University Library Carol I Bucharest - Romania Catalog, Central University Library Eugen Todoran Timisoara, Central University Library Lucian Blaga Cluj - Napoca, Central University Library Mihai Eminescu Iasi, Library of Horia Hulubei National Institute of Nuclear Physics, Bucharest Polytechnic University Library, Timișoara Polytechnic University Library, Gheorghe Asachi Technical University Library Iași, Stefan cel Mare University Library Suceava, Library of Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Library of the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Bucharest Metropolitan Library, Digital Library of Bucharest, National Digital Library (rolinest.edu.ro).

- “The RoLiNeST catalog is based on MetaLib, an application of ExLibris, which shares distributed databases on servers connected to the Internet via RoEduNet. Within this system, libraries update and maintain their own catalogs locally and the information is found by the user in the shared virtual catalog RoLiNeST” (rolinest.edu.ro) shows the initiators of this portal of major importance for the literary research in Romania.

- The second source of information was the online catalog of the National Library - alephnew.bibnat.ro

- Another source for completing and verifying the mapping of the evolution of literature dedicated to China in the period 1948 to 2018 was the UNESCO Index Translationum database - www.unesco.org/xtrans.

- The two dictionaries published by Sextil Pușcariu Institute: The Chronological Dictionary of the Novel Translated in Romania from Origins to 1989, Romanian Academy Publishing House (2005) and the Chronological Dictionary of the Novel Translated in Romania 1990-2000, Romanian Academy Publishing House (2017) were also invaluable and reliable resources for the sociological and quantitative study of Chinese literature translated into Romanian.

- Last but not least, specialized blogs and online articles have been a way to cross-check primary research sources.

Thus, through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which allows the editing and analysis of a wide range of data, a database was created on a series of variables, through which the mapping was aimed, not only the number of works, but also of the subjects and themes approached during four distinct periods in the political life of Romania: 1948 - 1965, during the Regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej; 1965-1989 - which corresponds to the Regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu; 1989 - 2007 - the beginning of the democratic government, until Romania's accession to NATO, in 2004 and to the European Union, in 2007; and 2007-2018 - which corresponds to the current period of Romania's recent history, marked by a strong pro-European and Western direction.

3. Mapping the Romanian publication activity concerning China during 1948 – 1965

The current article will present the results related to the first researched period – 1948-1965, corresponding to the socialist Romania, during which the creation and distribution of cultural goods and of

international exchanges of literature experienced a high level of politicization.

The analysis follows the principles of the reception theory, a protein and pluriform theory, which changes its influences and valences, being open to the construction of new ramifications in fields, often related but, more and more frequently, different, such as economics, politics and international relations. The reception theory will help us follow the development of Sino-Romanian relations on social, economic, political but, above all, cultural and literary, from the perspective of receiving literature dedicated to China in the Romanian cultural space profoundly influenced by communist propaganda.

According to the statistical data collected for the period 1948 - 2018, figure 1 shows a fluctuating trend of literature dedicated to Chinese culture, economy and literary works in Romania. In a total number of 501 works included in the database created, the maximum annual number was reached in the last year, in 2018, i.e. 24 works published throughout the year.

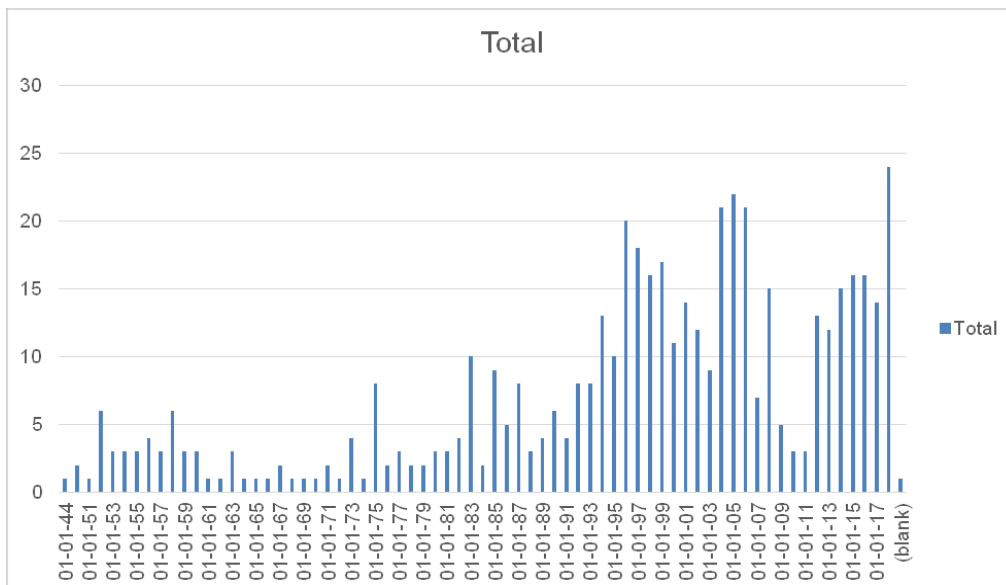


Figure 1. Quantitative representation of published works dedicated to China during 1948 - 2018

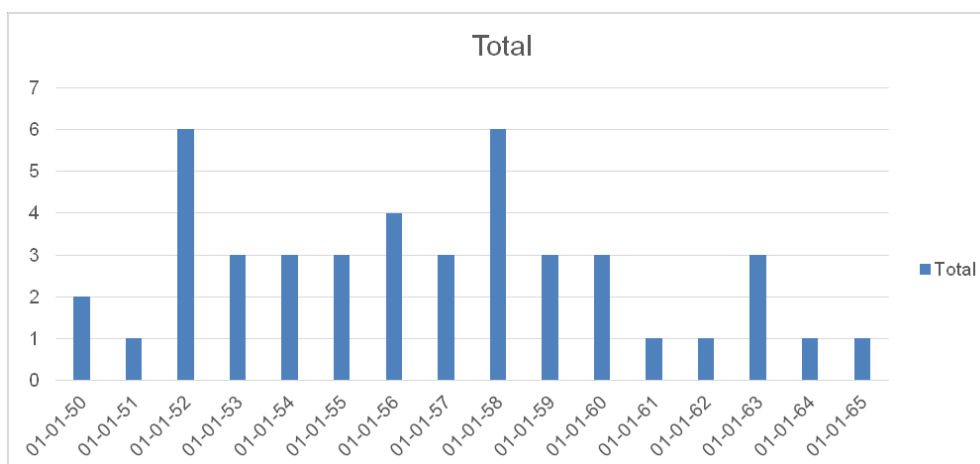


Figure 2. Quantitative representation of works dedicated to China during 1948 - 1965

During Socialist Romania, there were only 44 works (from the researched category) published, a maximum of 6 works / year, in 1952 and 1958, respectively. The very low number of publications is influenced, in our opinion, by the difficult political and financial situation through which Romania, but also China were passing. Literature and translation are understood, in this research, as social practices, being integrated in the specific cultural context from which they are born, and in this sense we will follow several dimensions. The database included both Romanian works whose subject and theme is represented by one of the areas of interest of Chinese culture and life, as well as Romanian translations of Chinese literature. Therefore, both categories represent a transfer between societies and nations, both alike, initially implying the existence of international relations of mutual exchange. At a more specific level of cultural exchange, through books, a distinction must be made between political, economic and cultural dynamics.

The first official international relations between Romania and China were marked by the 1880 correspondence between Carol I - King of Romania and Guang Xu - Emperor of China, during which, through a favourable and supportive response, China recognized the Romanian state as an independent state (Buzatu, 2005). Historians point out the idea that, although official Romanian-Chinese ties were established late, taking into account universal history, they did not appear in ignorance and undocumented. Starting with the 16th century, the first works dedicated to

China were published in Romania, by the great Romanian chroniclers of the time - Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin, Ion Neculce, the scholars Costea from Brasov, Amfilohie from Hotin (Buzatu, 2005) - whose works also included valuable and completely new information about Asian and Chinese geography, history and civilization, in particular.

In the 17th century, in 1675, the agile diplomat, Nicolae Milescu Spătaru (1636-1708) arrived in China, through his long travels in the Old World. Accompanied by a crowd of fighters and high servants of the Russian Tsar, Peter I, they reach the Emperor of China, Kang Xi (1654 - 1722), who receives Milescu with great honor, and who, 12 years later, as a result and of Milescu's visit, concludes a treaty with the Russian Empire, this being, in fact, the first treaty of China with a European power (Ciobanu, 2006). This expedition brings the first documented entries on the field about the "Kingdom in the center of the world" (May 20, 1676), through the three works written by him as a result of the trip, and as a duty of service, handed over with his return to Moscow - Journal of travel to China, Description of China, The Secret Report - which aroused the political, but also scientific and academic interest of the whole of Europe, circulating in numerous copies considered as the main source of knowledge, with a vital impact on Europe's information on China. Although written in Slavonic and Russian, they were the first sources of information on China for the Romanian Land, being an important landmark in Romanian literature.

Ion Buzatu (2005) highlights the moment of October 5, 1949, the end of the Second World War, as a turning point in the official political relations between Romania and China, through the official recognition given by Romania to the new People's Republic of China, through letters between the Foreign Ministers Ana Pauker and Zhou Enlai and the establishment of permanent ambassadors in both states, in Bucharest on August 11, 1950 and in Beijing on March 10, 1950 (Buzatu, 2005, p. 102). Romania thus becomes the third country to recognize PRC, a political gesture that has a huge impact on the Sino-Romanian political, diplomatic relationship, and which marked the beginning of the traditional friendship between the two states. Thus, in March 1950, the Romanian government sent Mr. Teodor Rudenco as the first Ambassador to Beijing, and the Chinese government sent, in August 1950, Mr. Wang Youping, as the first Chinese Ambassador to Bucharest (Stancu, „Evantaiul celor 10.000 de gânduri”, vol. III, 2009). The resumption of diplomatic relations is immediately followed by

economic and cultural cooperation relations. From the point of view of cultural and literary relations, figure 1 indicates a maximum of 6 works (1952) published less than 3 years after October 1949, whose theme varies between history, politics and Chinese literature, 66% of which are translations into Romanian, the rest being works by Romanian authors. In the next 5 years the trend is constant, the number of works decreases compared to 1952, but remaining higher than before the events of 1949.

The ambassador and the sinologist, Romulus Budura, described the beginnings of the Romanian-Chinese relations as:

"A beginning that will disregard the distance between the two countries, the absence of any contacts, exchanges, large and significant cooperation from an economic, political, cultural, etc. point of view, as well as the lack of adequate means - institutional, material and human communication between the two nations. A beginning that prevailed, however, in those international circumstances, the fact that there were no disputes between Romania and China, that both nations had suffered from the domination of foreign powers and that both regimes aimed to build a better world in cooperation and mutual aid. A beginning enlivened by a comprehensive systemic conception of relations between states" (Dacoromania Alba, no. 26, 2006, dacoromania-alba.ro/nr26/relatii_romano_chineze.htm).

The "red" period of the 1950s is marked by the strengthening of friendship and mutual support between the two states. The year 1957 marks, at the level of foreign policy, the moment when Romania proves its friendship for the Chinese state, in the context of differences of Soviet-Chinese opinions, giant powers fighting for supremacy in the communist bloc, supporting a pacifist and mediating policy. After 1957, however, the divergences between the two countries are accentuated against the background of the increase of China's economic and military power. The divergences take various forms, from the atomic bomb, to the financial lending by the Soviets of India, a state uncomfortable to China, or of a political nature, by the dismissal by the Chinese authorities of the supporters of the Moscow regime (Florin Mihai, historia.ro). Probably, in response to the lending to India, China is financing Albania, whose relations with the USSR had deteriorated to the point of rupture in 1961 with \$ 13 million (*idem*).

The beginning of Sino-Romanian diplomatic exchanges is also marked by cultural, artistic and academic exchanges, through which

Romanian writers, men of culture, students visit China and vice versa; a point of major importance is the almost simultaneously opening in 1956 of the Romanian and Chinese language study departments in the prestigious universities of Beijing (Beijing University of Foreign Studies -in the over 60 years, the Romanian language department had 18 promotions with over 250 graduates of Romanian language and literature) and Bucharest (University of Bucharest). Most of their graduates became specialists who made possible the mutual knowledge and promotion of bilateral relations, through their diplomatic, literary or journalistic activity, which according to our statistical data will have an upward trend from this period.

Based on the background of the ever closer relations between Bucharest and Beijing, there was also a new peak of literary relations, when in 1958 the maximum number of works per year from 1950 to 1965 were published, similar to the year 1952, which marks the initiated friendship between the two states. The vast majority of them are works of Chinese literature, poems and novels, but there are also some political writings about Chinese culture and civilization. 1958 is also the year when Corneliu Bărbulescu's translation of Nicolae Milescu-Spătaru's work, *Description of China*, was published.

The year 1960 marked, moreover, the clear expression of the controversies between the USSR and China, which were delivered, by chance, or not, in Bucharest, during the reunion of over 60 communist parties. The meeting, chaired by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, turned into the first major public dispute between the two, leading to the schism of relations between the authorities in Moscow and Beijing, respectively N.S. Khrushchev and Mao Zedong. "It is unpleasant that the first hit to the unity of the communist movement happened in Bucharest. Historically, this is the first hit", Gheorghiu-Dej declared in 1964 (Florin Mihai, *historia.ro*). In this dispute, the countries present to the meeting each took the side of one of the opponents, on the Chinese side were the Asian communist countries, along with Albania and Yugoslavia, and on the other side were the Eastern and Central European states, except Albania and Yugoslavia, Romania positioning itself neutral, which disturbed the Soviet authorities, and delighted Beijing. In the same year, military relations also degenerated, leading to incidents on the Soviet-Chinese border.

Furthermore, in the 1960s, Romania played the role of mediator between China and the USA in the context of the Vietnam War, which had several contributions and diplomatic interventions in the relationship

between the two powers, Romania being the country that had sufficiently close and good relations with both. Another public demonstration of Romania's support for China was given at the UN General Assembly (1960), when Romania requested the recognition of China's right to be admitted to the UN (Buzatu, 2005, p.106).

The end of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime is marked by the "April Declaration" (April 1964), a manifesto of independence and national sovereignty, of distance from the "older brother" of the USSR; a gesture highly appreciated and even encouraged by China, which a few months later (September 29 - October 8, 1964), welcomes with great pomp the large-scale visit of the Romanian delegation, occasioned by the anniversary of P.R of China. The purpose of the visit was, among other things, to mediate or even "prevent" the split: "I believe that we must take on this mission, to make every effort. We cannot say, we will succeed, we will not succeed, we have to do our duty. It is very dangerous to reconcile with the existing situation, to let things unfold when two fraternal parties so big, so strong, two big socialist countries, so strongly face each other", Gheorghiu-Dej declared to the members of the delegation before departure (Oral History Archive - Radio Romania. Interview conducted by Mariana Conovici, 1999).

After 1958, although the political and diplomatic relations between Gheorghiu-Dej and the Chinese authorities strengthened, the publishing activity regarding China decreased, in the next 7 years, until 1965, being published, according to the database resulting from the quantitative research, only 13 works, all from the sphere of translated Chinese literature. There are several explanations for this phenomenon in the sociological theory of literature and translation, which is closely related to politics. First of all, it should be mentioned that the number of translations or publications did not reflect the market demand, did not reflect the desire of the Romanian reader, because they were not dictated by readers, but by states of influence, politics and regulations of the authorities.

According to figure 3, the categories of works that reflected on China were very low, with only a small selection of works in the fields of sinology, in general, Chinese literature, especially novels, Chinese politics, Chinese culture, civilization and history and one of Chinese philosophy.

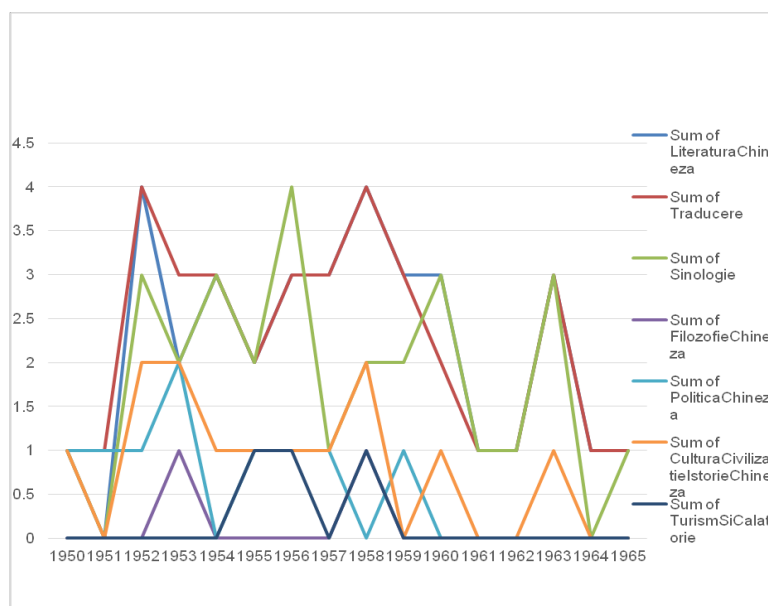


Figure 3. Categories of works present in Romanian and their evolution during 1948 - 1965

Regarding the broadest category of translated literature, there can be seen a predominance for the Chinese novel, a fact not at all different from the trends of the time, the period when, according to Ioana Macrea Toma, during the Romanian socialist period, there was a huge imbalance between the translation of novels and poetry, with a ratio of 10 to 100/150 titles annually from translated novels, and only 10 -30 titles of translated poetry (Macrea Toma, 2009, p. 169).

Considering the broader category of Asian literary works, which did not exceed 50 translations (Chronological Dictionary of the Novel Translated in Romania from the Origins to 1989, 2005), we acknowledge, however, that Chinese literature occupies more than half of them (34), the rest being supplemented by the Japanese novels by approved authors or part of the Japanese Communist Party. This selection of exotic literature which followed, on the one hand, the requirement of communist translations, of “global” coverage, of international approach, although reduced in quantity, was a subject of pride for the Writers' Union of the People's Republic of Romania, who at the First Congress (June 18-23, 1956) tried hard to prove the international dimension of the Romanian translation process (Baghiu, 2016, p. 17).

Referring to the total number of translations from the Gheorghiu-Dej period, Chinese literature was an exotic literature, the monopoly being

held by Russian, Soviet literature. Between 1950 and 1965, more than 500 Soviet novels were translated, and since 1956 there has been a substantial decline in translations of Soviet literature, from 40 titles in 1956 to less than 30 in 1958 (Baghiu, 2016, p. 11). An impressive number of translations and an ideal reception guaranteed, both by laudatory reviews and by appreciations occasioned by various more or less political gatherings. What is noteworthy, however, is that even literature titles, whose numbers reached colossal heights, had an obvious decline due to the political differences mentioned above, between the authorities in Bucharest and those of the USSR, but certainly also because of the open conflicts with China, on whose side Romania seemed to be migrating more and more.

Other factors of the low number of Chinese literature in Socialist Romania are the closure of China and its lack of interest in the transfer of literature with the outside world, but also its financial and social problems. Chinese literature present in Romania is largely due to China's dissemination programs and grants, which financially support the publishers and encourage translation through various projects – a lack of interest of China for transfer of literature translates automatically in a lack of number of books on China published in Romania.

Analysing briefly the variety of domains in which works about China were published between 1948 and 1965 and the next three periods until 2018 we can observe that the evolution of certain genres was directly related to the political regime, international influences or the economic situation of both countries.

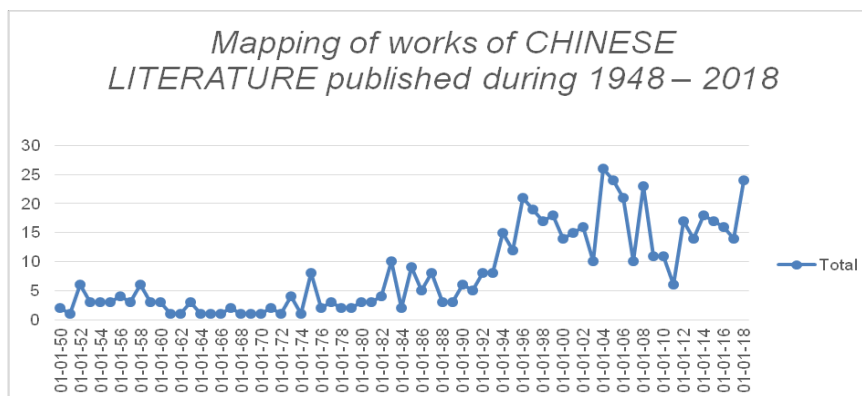


Figure 4. Mapping of works of CHINESE LITERATURE published during 1948 – 2018

For example, Chinese literary works, unlike the other categories, enjoyed an important place on the Romanian publishing scene throughout

the entire period analysed, with a much faster evolution, after the end of the communist regime, followed by a decrease, along with the entire book industry, during the recession of 2008-2011, and an upward trend in 2018. In addition, volumes from the category of Chinese culture, civilization and history had one of the most constant evolutions in Romanian publishing life, similar to literary works, which, again, reached new values, after the liberalization of the book market and publishing activity, with small regressions influenced by the country's economic situations.

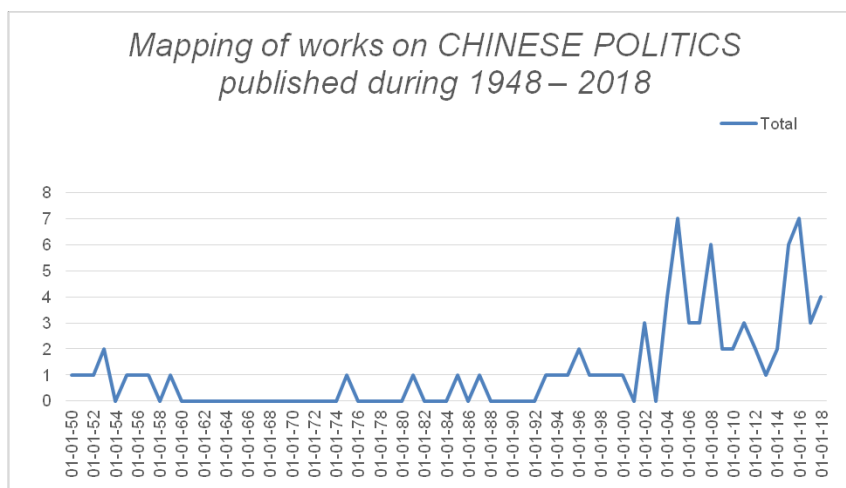


Figure 5. Mapping of works on CHINESE POLITICS published during 1948 – 2018

In terms of works dedicated to the political system, although present since the beginning, from 1950, they experienced an increase between the 90s and 2000s. During the communist period only a few titles of Chinese leaders or translated works about the Chinese communist political system were published: *Cu privire la practică* (Mao Zedong, 1951), *Înainte spre victorii și mai mărețe: raportul prezentat la cea de-a patra sesiune a Comitetului Național* (Ciu En Lai, 1953), *Opinia publică românească și mișcare revoluționară din China la sfârșitul secolului al XIX lea* (Lu Xiangan, 1981), *Lumea Chineză* (Jacques Gernet, Serban Stati, Romulus Ioan Budura, 1985), *Opere alese* (Deng Xiaoping, Lupeanu C si M, 1987). The democratic period brings a greater number of works on Chinese politics, but which debates Chinese diplomacy, the country's governance, or China's international relations with Romania, not works carefully selected by the Communist Party to dictate and propagate to the large public the precise political directions intended for Romania.

On the other hand, we found no works on Chinese linguistics published during the socialist-communist Romania, only five volumes being published later, during Ceausescu's regime. Unfortunately, the following periods did not show a major evolution either, but the trend was a continuous one, of 1-2 works, without major interruptions. One of the explanations for the lack of published books on Chinese language until 1975, is that Chinese language studies, launched in Romania in 1956, formed Romanian sinologists, who, two decades later, began to publishing their own works in which they revealed the manner in which a Romanian-speaking learner can understand Chinese linguistics.

Another explicit phenomenon occurs in the case of works of Chinese philosophy, which in the socialist and communist period were almost non-existent, but which, immediately after the Revolution, since 1990 began to have a steady and significant growth, reaching a peak in 1996. The lack of Chinese philosophical works in the pre-revolution period is not at all out of the ordinary, as communist ideology persecuted even Romanian philosophers, thus having no openness to Chinese, Confucian or Taoist philosophy. In addition, the Chinese themselves of that time (1919-1976), under Mao's leadership, waged serious campaigns of denigration and prohibition, calling Confucius a "regressive and feudal pedant" (tribuneindia.com, 2017). In this way, the Romanian leaders - Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceausescu - had no reason to accept the publication of Chinese philosophers blamed even by the people they belonged to.

In terms of two of the variables of the analysis - works translated and Chinese literature, we notice an almost overlapping intersection between the two, suggesting that the vast majority of works of Chinese literature are translated works, with only a small proportion being literary, sinology studies of Romanian authors. The evolution of translations of Chinese literature followed the course of political and diplomatic relations between Romania and China, and later changed its sphere of influence to the economic one during the last period of 2007-2018. During this period, the law of book market dictated the number of translated works, the trend of literary genres but also of authors, proving, once again, that translation, located at the border between cultures, is exposed to a combination of connotations, contextualization and factors of influence such as power, domination, national interests and agents.

Conclusions

This quantitative research provides some answers to the question concerning the global circulation of books and the role of sociological theory in the study of literature and especially translations, proving that in the cultural exchange between China and Romania diplomatic, political and economic relations between the two countries played a defining role, especially during the communist regime.

The study was designed to research the functions of literature and translation in the context of its reception and distribution in the target culture. We focused on specific sociological questions, on the interest and functions of translation, the agents and institutions involved, the space in which it is located, but also on political and economic constraints, surrounding them. The literary relations between Romania and China were proven to have been much influenced by the international exchange between the states, publishing activity and translation, specifically are social acts, the result of the interpretation given by social agents in different spatial and temporal contexts.

It is important to note the difference in the mediation of translation in the rapport between the same countries, but found in different stages of their development. In the segments of time included in the research, we remark a Romania between two influences, with different historical regimes in which the importance of political and economic factors varies depending on the needs of culture, the national market and the level of involvement of culture in ideological purposes. Among all these influences, especially in the democratic period, there is still a large proportion of works whose publication was motivated by the pedagogical and cultural function, the ability to inform about the culture and civilization of a country.

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