

A EUROPEAN EXPONENT OF THE ROMANIAN SCHOOL  
OF SOCIOLOGY: PAUL H. STAHL

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ABSTRACT

The present study is part of the category of studies dedicated to the profile of a representative personality within the prestigious Romanian School of Sociology, Paul H. Stahl. Such an approach uses the method of classifying the work and individuals in the class of the tutelary spirits of this School, led by D. Gusti and H. H. Stahl, founders of the Bucharest School of Sociology. The study first establishes the ideatic profile of the School, then presents the methodological innovations and the stages of evolution of this School that were preserved throughout the interwar period until its prohibition with the establishment of the communist regime. In the second part, the study establishes defining elements of the paradigm created by Paul H. Stahl in a comparative research of Southeast Europe. This is the guiding paradigm that distinguishes Paul H. Stahl within that first sociological school of value and international recognition, the Bucharest Sociological School. One of Paul H. Stahl's innovations refers to the studies of supra-village communities. This type of research is part of the ethnosociology that Paul H. Stahl refounded in his comparative ethnosociological research on the peoples of Southeast Europe. Another aspect of the methodological innovations concerns the use of the statistical method in determining the trends and regularities identifiable in the construction techniques of churches. During the Parisian period, his ethnosociological studies will be carried out over a vast area: "starting from the Pyrenees and passing through the Balkan and Romanian space, up to the Caucasus" (Șișeștean, 2000). Under the same paradigmatic framework we find his research dedicated to the historical ethnosociology of mentalities with references to social practices of hierarchization, to vendetta acts specific to the Southeast European area. The third field of studies in the same paradigmatic family that he founded is the one dedicated to the ethnosociology of housing (through which the direction of cultural ecology studies was somehow initiated). The studies through which he will announce the new direction are those dedicated to the Romanian peasant house. Paul Stahl's method replaces the static approach (pertaining to a static typology) with the study of the evolution of building plans and, in general, of the habitat, thus establishing a series of areas covering the entire Romanian territory. The same principle will be resumed, later, in the analysis of family forms (which he calls "domestic groups"), which he classifies not only according to formal-static criteria, extremely used in sociology, but according to an evolutionary principle (he presents this new sociological approach to families in various studies).

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### CHRONOLOGY OF THE GUSTI-STAHL SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY. THE SURVIVORS<sup>1</sup>

In 1948, “the last group of students of D. Gusti and H. H. Stahl” graduated in sociology, while “in the autumn of that same year, sociology was banned”<sup>2</sup>. D. Gusti’s sociological school was born with the full completion of the national state, on the threshold of the Great Union, in Iași, through the joint participation of two great exponents of the social sciences: a historian, Vasile Pârvan, and an economist, Virgil Madgearu. The school, whose “date of birth” was the same as that of the unified national state, was suppressed at the same time with the annihilation of the national signification of the Romanian state in 1948, as a first consequence of the installation of the Soviet occupation and domination regime.

Peasant spirituality (both in the Christian sense and as a guardian of the nation) was the most unyielding mirror of this occupation regime. The mirroring function of peasant consciousness was still alive in certain schools of thought, such as the Gustian School. The communist regime wanted to ruin and completely destroy it. Everything was targeted: customs, large segments of the population, that ethos that keeps life on the brink of spiritual elevation, works, schools, institutions, social memory, in a word, the collective identity. “We were brought together by common concerns and thoughts”, notes Paul H. Stahl, “about the tragic fate of the country, and we both went into hiding so as not to be deported by the Russians”<sup>3</sup>.

The ethos of the school experienced a resurgence in 1953, through the attempt by some of the last series of students of the School – P. H. Stahl, Florea Stănculescu and Adrian Gheorghiu – to publish a 16-volume series on peasant architecture: “it would have been, P. H. Stahl tells us, the most complete presentation of European peasant architecture. Stahl, it would have been the most complete presentation of European peasant architecture. However, after five volumes, we were stopped by the ‘central committee’, which considered that the volumes contained ‘too many huts and too many crosses’”<sup>4</sup>. Prominent representatives of the Gusti School, such as Mircea Vulcănescu, the great martyr, as well as A. Golopenția and Traian Herseni, had been thrown into prison. Other exponents of the School were banned or, like P. H. Stahl, pushed into a hopeless exile. All of this was aimed at annihilating a sociological school of global visibility. If we take

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<sup>1</sup> The first five pages of this study include parts of the article, revised and expanded, published in *Revista Română de Sociologie*, no. 1–2, 2005 (Dimitrie Gusti commemorative issue), containing strictly factual information, chronology and details of the methods used in field research by members of the School.

<sup>2</sup> P. H. Stahl, *Oameni și sate de pe Valea Moldovei*, Paideia, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

as a reference point the beginning of the monographic campaigns with the Goicea Mare monographic survey from 1925, then we can estimate the lifespan of this great school of sociology at 23 years. At that time, most of the school's students were between 25 and 40 years old. If we measure the longevity of a school by the age of its members, we can say that the school would have naturally survived in its entirety at least until the 1980s. Despite all the adversities of the times, the Gusti School did not die then, in the 1950s, but survived through its European-renowned successors such as Paul H. Stahl and through late post-war revivals that took it beyond the threshold of the two generations of founders and successors in the broader context of the comparative study of European societies.

#### THE NOVELTY OF THE BUCHAREST SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY

Now that we are evaluating the activity of one of the largest scientific schools in Romania, with a lifespan of 30 years if we count from the moment the Association for Science and Social Reform was founded (1918) to the date of the official suppression of sociological education (1948), we must ask ourselves what makes this extraordinary movement of scientific spirit to be defined as a school, and one that was christened in Bucharest, or even more rigorously in Goicea Mare, Nereju, Drăguș, Șanț etc.? In a lecture first delivered in France and then, between 1946 and 1947, at several universities in the United States, at Chicago, Harvard, Wisconsin, and Yale, entitled "An Approach to the Study of Social Reality", Gusti sought to characterise the sociological school in Bucharest through the following defining elements: **1.** (comprised of) monographic sociologists; **2.** to investigate social reality as a reality composed of social frameworks and manifestations; **3.** to accept the principle of the primacy of social units ("society as such is nowhere to be found; it appears in the form of well-defined societies – social units – families, villages, towns, regions, states, nations")<sup>5</sup>; **4.** adopting an appropriate method of accessing knowledge of social units as such, as units, which is the monographic method; **5.** admitting that the agent of knowledge is not the isolated individual, the armchair intellectual, but the multidisciplinary team, and that the place of research is not the library but the field study; **6.** the study of social reality must be continued through socio-cultural work in cultural centres, houses of culture and peasant schools; **7.** the goal of all research endeavor is to establish a sociology of the nation. As an illustration of the accomplishments reached by the monographic teams on this axis, Gusti presents American students with statistics on the research carried out up until that moment: 626 villages, towns and regions, the organisation of 5 000 cultural centres and over 500 rural schools. The purpose of the research, Gusti emphasises, is to encompass the whole: "all the villages, towns, and regions of the country", which will ultimately lead to a sociology of the nation. **8.** Finally,

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<sup>5</sup> D. Gusti, *Opere*, vol. III, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970, p. 431 (eds. O. Bădina and O. Neamțu).

another defining element of the school is the Social Service Law, passed in 1939, which was enforced for one year. **9.** A new generation of university students, “prepared for constructive work, in accordance with a flexible plan based on the direct study of social reality and the introduction of compulsory social service for all higher education graduates”, as the most formidable school of national energy; **10.** Important elements of the Gusti school are, finally, the central and regional social institutes (that of Moldova, of Transylvania, of Banat-Crișana and so on); “The Archive for Science and Social Reform as a type of publication with a permanent section: The Monographic Archive”; **11.** The village museum as an “effective method of comparing village vs city”, (...) gathering houses from 30 Romanian villages, representative of all regions of the country<sup>6</sup>; **12.** The model village or the new village like the one that has been built by teams in Dioști, Romanați County; 12 The sociological film. To all these we should add those that Gusti did not mention: the social atlas, the social encyclopaedia, the ethnomusicology and the comparative ethnosociology which is also owed to Paul H. Stahl.

#### THE PERMANENCE OF A PARADIGM

We can draw a few conclusions regarding the paradigm of this extraordinary school. The first remark is that the School experience a refounding through its most representative successor, Paul H. Stahl, who innovated the original paradigm, adding a new paradigmatic direction, that of comparative ethnosociology studies applied upon the entire South-Eastern Europe. Thanks to Stahl’s two university courses, a new generation of researchers was formed who can testify to the strength of the Gusti School, which was usually simplistically understood as a school of village monographs. However, this is not what makes the School original, especially since the monographic method is linked to the prestige of another school of sociology, the School of F. Le Play, which was remembered precisely as the first European “monographic school”. The originality of the Gusti School’s paradigm lies in something else entirely: it is the first school of sociology to have created a methodology for the comparative-progressive research of *social units*, from the family and village as *social units*, to *supra-village communities* and from these to *national societies* and *international units* – consisting of groups of nations such as the League of Nations, or those attested by Paul H. Stahl’s Balkan ethnosociology, from which one can make the leap to the science of that social unit called humanity.

The method is that of *progressive sociological integrism*, and the procedures used to integrate these *dissecta members* that are the disparate knowledge about social units are: *the monograph of social units*, *the method of regional studies*, *the social and ethnopolitical encyclopaedia*, *the sociological film*, *the sociological*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem.*

*exhibition* (i.e. organised according to a sociological concept), *the sociological museum* such as the “Village Museum” and, culminating, the comparative ethnosociology of South-Eastern Europe and the legal anthropology of traditional European societies, a paradigm illustrated by courses with approximately the same titles taught for 20 years at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

These methods give brilliance and attestation to what we believe could be called the paradigm of sociological integrism which also gives this extraordinary school its originality on a global scale. The paradigm proves its durability through its followers.

#### CHRONOLOGY OF METHODS. SOCIOLOGICAL FILM, SOCIOLOGICAL MUSEUM, SOCIOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS, COMPARATIVE ETHNOSOCIOLOGY

For a clearer understanding of the energy of this school, we will provide a brief chronology of the research methodology used by the royally-patronized teams. The display of the methods is no less impressive than that of the theories. Let's start with the sociological film. This was used very early on among the methods of the teams, which shows the exceptional energy and inventiveness of this school. If the monographic campaigns began in 1925, the first sociological film was made in Drăguș in 1929, in Cornova in 1931, and in Șanț in 1936. While the first two were silent, the one in Șanț already had a soundtrack with music from C-tin Brăiloiu's ethnomusicology collection. In 1936, another film was made for the Village Museum; in 1937 a film was made by Stahl and Brăiloiu, while and in 1939 a film was made based on a script by Golopenția, not to mention the ones made in Rudăria and Prigor<sup>7</sup>. As early as 1934, Gusti had presented his project for a “filmed Romanian sociology” and a “sociological museum of Romania”.

The sociological museum is also a technique that has been used since 1928, with the first “museum from Fundul Moldovei”. At the same time, Mac Constantinescu and H. H. Stahl organised the first public sociological museum in the Sociology Seminar hall, with materials from Nereju, Putna, and Fundu Moldovei (the exhibits would also be used at the International Exhibition in Barcelona). The “Drăguș room” (*odaia drăgușană*) was set up in the Seminar hall with items from the village of Drăguș<sup>8</sup>. In 1936, the Village Museum was created, and in 1937 and 1939, exhibitions were held in Paris and New York, with the Romanian pavilions based in their entirety on the concept of the Gusti School. A mention should be made of the aerial photography method used in Drăguș in 1929 and in Cornova in 1931<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> See the notes of O. Neamțu and O. Bădina, in D. Gusti, *Opere*, vol. I, Editura Academiei, 1968, p. 534.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

The monographs followed roughly this sequence: 1925 in Goicea Mare, 1926 in Rușețu, 1927 in Nereju, 1928 in Fundu Moldovei. The 1934–1938 period was the culmination of the monographic campaigns by the student teams. Among the authors of the Nereju monograph, we find, alongside the old monographers, those recruited from among the students, Fl. Florescu, G. Serafim, Ion Filip, etc. In 1926, Ion Setlacec developed the industrial monographs project, so that between 1925 and 1953, Gusti's attention would also be directed towards cities, inaugurating a new direction in sociology, *the theory of social problems*. Here are just a few illustrative titles: Veturia Manuilă: "Pauperism and the family crisis in a marginal neighbourhood of Bucharest", Ștefan Popescu, "The street sweepers of the capital", Victor Tufescu: "A city in decline: Botoșani" etc<sup>10</sup>. It is clear that all research of this kind focuses on a social problem that is central to a village, neighbourhood, region, city, segment of the population etc.

#### THE PROJECT FOR A "SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DICTIONARY OF ROMANIA"

What are the most important moments and specific features of this school of sociology? First, we will note that the Gustian school of sociology had a multi-axial structure. The central axis of the school was **rural studies**, but the school had as its students M. Vulcănescu, both a Christian philosopher and rural sociologist; A. Golopenția and Sabin Manuilă, the founders of Romanian ethnopolitics; Ion Ionică and Tr. Herseni, rural sociologists but also great anthropologists, linked to paleoethnography, regional ontology and the method of structural analysis ("progressive comparativism", as Ion Ionică called it); C-tin Brăiloiu, the founder of ethnomusicology, which H. Garfinkel announced as his own invention some 40 years later. And the examples could go on. Gusti distinguished himself through studies dedicated to peace and war, international relations (he is among the most representative exponents of this new science), and through H. H. Stahl and Paul H. Stahl, a new comparativism is inaugurated, through which the studies of the ethnosociology of "Southeast Europe", of the third Europe, researched as such by N. Iorga, but also by Marija Gimbutas, will be reborn.

However, the main focus of the school is on rural studies, which are organised into several stages and branches:

- The stage of village monographs, which began in 1924 in Goicea Mare and faded around 1938, without disappearing entirely from the school's concerns;

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<sup>10</sup> Regarding the data on the stages of the School's activities see *Ibidem*.

- The stage of regional monographs, which began in the middle of the third decade, around 1938–1940, diversifying only to culminate in the research of Prof. H. H. Stahl, who left us his monumental work on the “devălmaș” (communal) communities and, at the same time, the monographic volumes “60 de sate” (60 villages), the fruit of field studies by royally-patronized students team, as evidence of an extraordinary offensive of rural knowledge and an energy almost unmatched in European sociology;
- The stage of the Social Service Law, which unfortunately had a very short life;
- The “Encyclopaedic” stage of the school, already subordinated to the project of an integrated science of the nation, intended to prepare the transition to a comparative science of nations, within a Social Institute of Nations, which Gusti had designed together with the American McIver alongside the League of Nations, an original contribution to the science of international relations;
- The stage of major international exhibitions, of the Village Museum and of the sociological film;
- Finally, we can mention the school’s resurgence in the 16–volume project on peasant architecture in 1953, thanks to the project launched by Paul H. Stahl;
- The last stage of the School is one of unexpected growth, as the seed of the school will now sprout into several branches:
  - The first branch is entirely linked to the name of Prof. Paul H. Stahl, who will inaugurate the paradigm of *Balkan research*, followed by one of his students, Prof. Gh. Șișeșteanu, whose studies focus on the north-western part of the country and the Northern Carpathians, in a comprehensive approach that combines Prof. Paul H. Stahl’s method with A. Golopenția’s method of ethnopolitical studies;
  - At the same time, it is worth noting the branch formed by the efforts of Professors Vasile Caramelia and Ion Chelcea. A group of rural anthropologists formed around Prof. V. Caramelia, led by Prof. Gh. Geană and other remarkable young researchers who would reconnect Romanian research to famous American traditions and paradigms, as in the case of the project to create an axiological atlas of Romania.

What we wanted to reveal in this first part of the presentation was a significant aspect, namely that the continuity and energy of this science owe much to the survivors of the Gusti School, H. H. Stahl, T. Herseni, V. Caramelia, Paul H. Stahl, exemplary personalities who, through their just as exemplary discretion, illustrate the tragedy of a history and the strength of a culture, the history and culture of the Romanian people.

**P. H. STAHL AND THE STUDY OF SUPRA-VILLAGE COMMUNITIES  
THE FUNDU MOLDOVEI RESEARCH**

To illustrate the hypothesis of the School's continuity around its survivors, I will refer to a phenomenon of recurrence in rural studies and, I would say, of a great love for the Romanian village, a phenomenon that began in 1928 with the field survey at Fundul Moldovei, only to return to the spotlight in 2004 with a memorable book by Prof. Paul H. Stahl, *Oameni și sate...* (People and Villages...)<sup>11</sup>.

In 1928, Gusti initiated the monographic survey in Fundu Moldovei. This created an exceptional opportunity to learn about the village. The documents published by Stefanelli on the Old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc (Ocolul Câmpulungului Moldovenesc), were supplemented by documents collected in the field, so that the memory of the documents now mirror the living social memory, foreshadowing one of the aspects of Gusti's paradigm: the belief that the structures of a people can be understood, with their whole history, through current research.

The method was given the name of *social archaeology* by H. H. Stahl, who codified it. For linguistic and culturological purposes, it was also used by Hașdeu, through his questionnaires, and even by Densușianu, however strong the response to the latter's conclusions may have been. The articles in Hașdeu's *Etimologicum* are true monographic studies applied to structures and institutions, starting from the memory **of the word** within its **area** of circulation. S. Mehedinți will work in the same way in his ethnopolitics, applied onto the entire Romanian space.

The studies from Fundu Moldovei reveal a curious type of village, the so-called "scattered villages", with "houses built far apart" and with "a centre that has not yet been formed". Here lies the great surprise, the great discovery of one of Gusti's latest students. The core of a village community, we learn from these revisited studies, is not the "centre of the village" but the "neighbourhood". The monographic studies rediscovered and validated, in a different way, the theory of the American C. H. Cooley, who identified in the primary group of *the neighbourhood* the second *matrix*, alongside the family, of the genesis of the self. The studies dedicated to the village community in the Old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc touch upon one of the highly significant issues that H. H. Stahl studied in depth, that of the "supra-village communities of free peasants", as Paul H. Stahl calls them. The issue is also highly topical in the context of the current reform and the various regionalisation projects, all of which excel in ignoring any tradition of rural history in this matter. "The Old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc is one of the three peasant 'republics' mentioned by Cantemir; another was Țara Vrancei, which also benefited from the publication of a collection of documents. Both are interesting and unique in terms of understanding Romanian social life, because both deal with the problems of *supra-village communities* of free peasants"<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> P. H. Stahl, *Oameni și sate de pe Valea Moldovei*, Paideia, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> P. H. Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

*Supra-village communities* are not a strictly Romanian phenomenon. Paul Stahl has conducted comparative research on supra-village communities on the European continent<sup>13</sup>. The phenomenon is extremely topical in the context of the relaunch of regionalisation projects in Romania, because “supra-village communities” of various names (peasant republics in Cantemir, valley associations in Iorga’s writings, “countries” in the living tradition of the people, supra-village communities in the terminology of P. H. Stahl, communal communities (“sate devălmașe”) in H. H. Stahl etc.) were not ignored by the Austrian Empire, which used them in the logistics of its border regiments. Wealth communities were also born on such a basis. Why should today’s reformers ignore them?! The cause of the desire to ignore them would certainly be ignorance itself, and the effect would undoubtedly be harmful. Let us insist further on the distinctive features of the paradigm inaugurated by Paul H. Stahl. The first guiding contribution concerns the redefinition of traditionalism, as his student Gheorghe Șișeștean remarks. “In a Romanian culture still dominated by the philosophical and cultural paradigms of the interwar period, in which traditionalism was equivalent to peasant rurality, Paul H. Stahl proposes a sociological vision of traditionalism, which is in fact a classicism at the level of habitat experiences, and thus characterised by the repetitiveness and exemplarity of concrete experience, whether peasant, boyar or even urban. In this sense, traditionalism is a dynamic form of classicism, of the existence of guiding ideas, in the permanent construction and reconstruction of the habitat, whether urban or rural”<sup>14</sup>. Stahl’s original idea is that habitat models are rooted in the same collective mentality, which sheds new light on housing archetypes. The foundation of this paradigm, which crystallised definitively during the period of comparative studies on Balkan traditionalism, can be identified in the research begun in 1952, together with Paul Petrescu, on peasant architecture, as well as in the monograph on the Jiu Valley, co-authored with him.

**“THEY WERE MAINLY (CONSCIOUS?)  
AGENTS OF THE POWER THAT HAD OCCUPIED OUR COUNTRY”**

In 1952, Paul H. Stahl began his research in the Bistrița Valley, on which topic we shall present below a rather extensive memoir, representative for the devastating war waged by the Bolshevik occupation regime against Romanian sociology and ethnosociology. Stahl himself was the target of this operation of suppressing the School in all its components: its founding members, its continuators, its theoretical core, its logistics, its methodology, its research and action tools, and, last but not least, the memory and continuity or the tradition aspect of the School. Here is an excerpt from the sociological memoirs of the great Romanian ethnosociologist Paul H. Stahl:

<sup>13</sup> P. H. Stahl, “«Pays» et communautés de vallée: Exemples roumains et européens”, in *Revue roumaine d’histoire*, tome XXXVII, 3–4, București, 1998, pp. 151–172.

<sup>14</sup> [Gh. Șișeștean], *Enciclopedia valorilor reprimare*, vol. I, 2000, p. 657.

“(…) Petrescu was already on the field, I arrived a few days later. I climbed as close to the mountain as possible, then slowly descended by bicycle to the village of Ceahlău, where the host I knew was living. I slept for one night on a table in a town hall, the second one in the house of a ‘chiabur’; in those years and until after 1960, those sent to do research in the villages slept in the houses of the chiaburi. In the middle of the night, a few ‘thugs’ came, dragged the rich man out into the yard and started punching and kicking him, while his family came out of the house, screaming. Then they ‘lifted’ him up and took him who knows where, certainly not to a good place. Awake, I sat in the dark, my heart pounding; I had never seen such violence since the beatings by the legionaries. I wondered if it would be my turn next to have the superiority of communist thinking explained to me. In the morning, the women told me that their husband and father had been taken away because he did not want to join the collective<sup>15</sup>. Events of the same nature terrified me repeatedly, in other places, more often in northern Moldova (...)”.

“(…) I set off downhill; as I approached my host’s house, I wondered what the fearsome Haiduc, the guard dog, would say. I heard him barking from afar, but before he saw me, he began to yelp with joy, recognising me after two years. Petrescu told me that he had recognised him too. My host was kind; I stayed there for a few days, then set off again alone, riding my bicycle downhill. I slept at the monastery in Bistrița; when I went outside to photograph a church, I was arrested by some vigilant agents who were lurking everywhere; they put me in a miserable, dirty little room with a filthy bed, took my shoelaces and my belt. Left alone, I did not know what would happen next, and I remembered that Calistrat Hogaș had suffered the same fate. They put me in a car, along with my bicycle, took me to the security headquarters in Bacău and made me stand in the middle of a windowless room; in front of me, three men were sitting at a table covered with a red cloth.

‘Who sent you? Tell us what you did in the Bistrița Valley. Who do you work for? Why won’t you tell the truth?’

I was still standing and couldn’t go to the toilet. I told them that I wasn’t alone, that there were also researchers from other institutes there at the same time; I mentioned the Russian name of a colleague.

‘What do you have against the Soviets?’

All these agents were not only the foot soldiers of a dictatorial regime, they were above all the (conscious?) agents of the power that had occupied our country.

In the morning, the regional security chief arrived.

‘Who sent you?’

‘The Academy.’

‘Check it out.’

They called and confirmed that this was indeed the case.

‘Let him go.’

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<sup>15</sup> Agricultural production cooperative.

I went outside; as I was leaving, taking my bicycle, one of the people who had questioned me said to me: 'Don't do it again.' To this day, I still can't find peace because I don't know what he meant by 'don't do it again' and I'm afraid I'll do it again. I fled straight to Bucharest, but I had gathered enough material to write a study (...)"<sup>16</sup>.

This was the situation at that stage in the history of a great scientific school. The protagonist was the young researcher Paul H. Stahl, descended from an illustrious lineage in Romanian spiritual history: his grandfather had been Nicolae Iorga's stenographer, H. H. Stahl was co-founder of the great sociological school in Bucharest, a world-renowned personality, Paul Stahl, creator of a scientific paradigm, and no less a world-renowned personality.

The research in the Bistrița Valley was followed by others. Of particular interest is the programme of studies dedicated to glazed ceramics in Transylvania, with the aim of dispelling a misconception about a craft and thus the risk of establishing a false tradition. Here are the restorative memoirs of the then young researcher, accompanied by the same tireless Paul Petrescu:

"(...) The article on glazed ceramics in Transylvania was written at the urging of George Oprescu; he had visited the Ethnographic Museum in Cluj and there, one of the curators had told him that the glazed ceramics were all non-Romanian because Romanians were not allowed to use glaze. 'Is that so? Go and see for yourselves how things stand.' We set off together (with Paul Petrescu), it was May; we started in northern Transylvania. The beautiful weather made our journey between villages easier; in the mornings, we saw the unbridled madness of the larks in springtime; they fly straight up towards the sun, singing without interruption, then fall like bullets and remain motionless. Legend tells us why: the lark was a girl in love with the sun, who was turned into a bird by the sun's mother. Arriving at Târgu Lăpuș on a Sunday afternoon, we were stopped by a well-drunk militiaman who asked for our identity cards. However, a militiaman, even a drunk one, is still a militiaman; the stupid guy in a uniform, with a gun in his pocket, is the living image of authority. He took them, read them carefully and told us that there was something suspicious about them.

'What exactly?'

'Why are you both called Paul?'

That was the second unanswered question asked by the trusted 'authorities', a question that still keeps me awake at night. They confiscate our ID cards; in the morning, a representative from Baia Mare arrives at the local security office; sober and polite, he lets us go. They had to guard a mountain that no longer exists; the Soviets had stripped it off because it contained uranium. We continued on our way, finding Romanian glazed pottery everywhere; in Hațeg we even found the chest of a Romanian guild of potters, even though Oprescu had been told that Romanians did not have such thing as guilds. We

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<sup>16</sup> Apud [Gh. Șișeștean], *Enciclopedia valorilor reprimare*, vol. I, 2000, pp. 660–662.

published the materials we had gathered, including a photograph of the guild's lid.

Almost everywhere, in addition to the obsession with espionage, the population was informed that capitalist enemies were launching paratroopers; when we entered a house or arrived in a village, the first question was, 'Are you paratroopers?' We replied that we were not, as if we would have admitted it if we had been".

"(...) I. D. Ștefănescu; his whole life professor in France, having been called back to the country during the war to help the Romanian university, had come and could not leave. I was fortunate to always have people of the highest calibre around me; I. D. Ștefănescu was one of them; Petrescu and I both valued and loved him. We are grateful for everything we learned from him; we would meet at Barbu Slătineanu's house once a week until he was arrested. Corina Niculescu and Elena Secoșan would also come, and sometimes other former students of the professor. After Slătineanu's arrest for imaginary crimes, together with another group of intellectuals (such as Șerban Cioculescu and Vladimir Streinu), we met several times at my home. At a time when real lessons had become rare, Ștefănescu's words were like living water; after what we had learned in sociology, they were the most thorough lessons we had ever received.

In Maramureș (where we went together several times, then separately), we travelled from Salva to Vișeu, clandestinely, on the platform of a freight car. While waiting for the train to leave, we sat on the bank of the nearby river, listening to the music coming from the station loudspeaker: a German recording of Brahms' Fourth Symphony. Every time I hear it, I remember the journey to Vișeu. A freight car next to ours had a cabin; as the train started moving, we saw the door open; someone waved us over so we wouldn't be seen on the open platform. It was Șrul Edelstein, the son of a former rabbi from Vișeu; he sheltered us in his house overnight, he was friendly and curious to know what we were doing. Travelling by train the next day, between two villages in Maramureș, we saw two militiamen getting on: 'ID cards!' One of them saw the cameras. We knew that for the authorities, a camera was a tool of espionage. He ordered us, 'Get off and come with me.' We got off, frozen with fear, and in Vișeu, surprise: instead of the police station, he took us to his home and showed us a wild rabbit he had caught the day before. 'Take a photo of my child with the rabbit.' As a joke, it was one of the most unexpected and stupid; he gave us food, it's true, but we would have preferred to go hungry than to go through the fear of being arrested.

Our wives were waiting for us at home, knowing about our repeated adventures with the police; we called them whenever we could to reassure them. Despite all the difficulties, the joy of discovering unknown things and exploring the terrain never left us. Sometimes, when I got tired, I was satisfied with what we had found, but Petrescu always wanted to go to the end of the village, for who knows what sensational things we would find. Much of what

we gathered in those years, information and photographs, is waiting to be known, and we will bring it to light someday. Fifty years have passed since then, an eternity, but it seems like yesterday (...)<sup>17</sup>

The monograph of the life of a European scholar such as Paul H. Stahl follows in the tradition of Gustian autosociology. Studying this type of writing is a task for those who want to use the methodology of the well-known life stories.

#### **PAUL H. STAHL'S PARADIGM OF COMPARATIVE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPEAN ETHNOSOCIOLOGY**

I will now present a brief outline of the defining ideas for what I consider to be the paradigm of comparative ethnosociological studies of South-Eastern Europe. In the first phase of applied sociology studies, Paul H. Stahl tested his methodology of representative studies that was complementary to the monographic approach. The regime's guillotine put a stop to this line of research, so the young sociologist turned to ethnographic studies, which eventually led to the launch of his own paradigm of ethnosociology. Between 1955 and 1969, the seeds of this new fruit were sown, allowing him, as soon as he arrived in Paris, to take the lead in two major fields: ethnosociology and legal anthropology. Should there be no risk for the term to sound off-putting, I would propose a combination between ethnology and Moreno's term *socionomy*: the sociology of norms, of social normativity, as understood by Jacob Moreno. I would therefore conclude that the field launched by Paul Stahl is that of *ethno-socionomy*, without fear that this compound term would lack substance. Obviously, to avoid the risk of the new term seeming unappealing, I will nevertheless use the established term of ethnosociology. Ethno-socionomy would be the field of research into the normative function of ethnic consciousness in shaping social acts and therefore collective behaviours. This type of research is part of ethnosociology, which was re-established by Paul H. Stahl in his comparative ethnosociological research on the peoples of South-Eastern Europe. Another aspect of methodological innovation concerns the use of statistical methods in determining identifiable trends and regularities in church building techniques<sup>18</sup>. During his time in Paris, his ethnosociological studies covered a vast area: "from the Pyrénées to the Caucasus, passing through the Balkans and through Romania. A special place was given to analyses of social organisation in old Eastern Europe. They will be materialised in two important books: *Ethnologie de l'Europe du Sud-Est*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton, 1975 and *Household, village and village confederation in Southeastern Europe*, Columbia University Press, New

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 662–664.

<sup>18</sup> [Gh. Sișeștean], *op. cit.*, p. 669.

York, 1986”<sup>19</sup>. Under the same paradigmatic framework, we also find his research dedicated to the historical ethnosociology of mentalities, with references to social practices of hierarchisation and acts of vendetta specific to the South-Eastern European area (see *Histoire de la décapitation*, Paris, Presse Universitaire de France, 1986). The third field of studies in the same paradigmatic family that he founded is the one dedicated to the ethnosociology of housing (which in a way initiated the direction of cultural ecology studies). The author did not abandon the fields he had studied prior to his Parisian period, which had an applied sociological character, such as those focused on the relationship between the social environment and tuberculosis or the relationship between the social environment and schooling. The studies through which he announced the new direction are those dedicated to the Romanian peasant house. “Professor Paul H. Stahl replaces the old static typologies linked mainly to German, Austrian and Hungarian schools with a principle that follows the phenomenon in motion. Thus, houses in a given region are no longer analysed in terms of one or two ‘types’ of plans, but in terms of the evolution of building plans and, in general, of the habitat, thus establishing a series of zones covering the entire Romanian territory”<sup>20</sup>. The same principle will be revisited later in the analysis of family forms (which he calls ‘domestic groups’), which he classifies not only according to formal-static criteria, widely used in sociology, but also according to an evolutionary principle (he presents this new sociological approach to the family in various studies, of which I would mention a few: *Groupe domestique, maison, maisnie. Le cas roumain*, Lisbon, 1974, *The Domestic Group in Traditional Balkan Societies*, 1978, *La ‘maisnie’ (gospodăria) du paysan roumain*, Freiburg, 1978, *Y se casaron y tuvieron muchos hijos. La perennidad de la casa familiar*, Madrid, 1987, *La regione tribale albanese*, Messina, 1989, *Dimora e composizione del gruppo domestico*, 1996 and, above all, his important book, published in Messina in 1993, entitled *Terra, società, miti nei Balcani*)<sup>21</sup>. Courses and studies on revenge, consanguinity, kinship alliances, food etc., are completed by his famous works such as: *Il sangue e la terra*, Milan, 1978, *Sociétés traditionnelles balkaniques. Contributions à l’étude des structures sociales, Études et Documents Balkaniques...*, 1979, *La Méditerranée. Propriété et structure sociale*, Edisud, 1997. “The areas of social life where the notion of blood intervenes are numerous. These include: kinship, religion, sacrifice, food, vendetta, property”<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> P. H. Stahl, *Ethnologie de l’Europe du Sud-Est*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton, 1975 and *Household, village and village confederation in Southeastern Europe*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986. Apud [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, p. 669.

<sup>20</sup> [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, pp. 672–673.

<sup>21</sup> [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, p. 673.

<sup>22</sup> P. H. Stahl, “Consangvinitatea fictivă. Exemple româneşti şi balcanice”. *Silvania*, no. 2, Zalău, 1997, apud [Gh. Şişeştean], *op. cit.*, p. 675.

I only mentioned P. H. Stahl's studies on supra-village communities to highlight the importance of the methodological hypothesis regarding the rule of 'primacy of social units' in sociological studies.

The most disturbing thing in the rural studies of all monographers is the placement of their area of interest *at the crossroads between the state and the peasants*. Rural studies and monographers have been a real lever for the state, and rural documents, from those of Stefanelli to those compiled through the monographic survey of Fundu Moldovei, bear witness to the increasing burden of the state and history on the shoulders of the peasants. This evolution did not bring new freedoms to the peasants, but new burdens, servitudes, obligations for which they received nothing in return, attesting to Eminescu's famous theory of compensation: "the peasant is taken in a thousand ways and given nothing in exchange" (quoted from memory). Research and documents on this issue, from the Stefanelli documents to the documents of the 1928 monographic survey, reveal something disturbing: the state and the state administration are replacing the supra-village communities, which were in the hands of the peasants, taking over, one after another, the functions of the old village communities (*obști sătești*), so that the communist era found the peasantry largely subjugated. What is even more serious is that even after 1989, no significant attempt was made to restore a structure of great importance for the balance of the state. The danger is that we will end up in a situation where the government rewards the very peasants who sell their land at bargain prices, leading to the future disaster of the nation state itself. The data we have shows that the value of the land is much higher than what is offered to the peasant on the market, and the truth cannot be restored in the absence of a supra-territorial community, even if it is only a representative one.

The merit of the Gustians, illustrating the aristocratic nature of this school, is attested both by the nobility of their souls, open to the anonymous world of peasants, and by the originality of the paradigm they created. We will conclude by referring to some features of the Gustian paradigm in world sociology.

That is the guiding paradigm of the first sociological school of international value and recognition, the Bucharest School of Sociology, as some call it, or the Gusti School or the Gusti–Stahl School, as others of us call it. Whatever its name, it is a priceless legacy, one of the most valuable assets of the Romanian people, which we have a duty to preserve, but above all to enhance. The country is the most relevant framework for the research carried out by the members of the School.

The country is a unit made up of regions, which are themselves territorial units based on villages. Anyone who messes with one part affects the whole structure, which has been built up over thousands of years into this three-layered, harmonious territorial configuration. Therefore, any administrative-territorial reform is wise if it takes into account this millennial configuration. This model of triple-layered settlement called country is the essential lever of the population

ecodynamics of a people. In the new era of universal history, this role as a sustaining factor and therefore as a strategic lever of population ecodynamics has been seriously affected. One of the difficult tasks of sociology as a science of human communities is therefore precisely to explain *the ecodynamics of populations* as an aspect of *social morphology*. This explanatory approach begins by studying the dynamic unit formed by the smallest population group, i.e. the family, and its environment of variation, which is precisely the genealogical structure (the family or lineage) together with the village community system, and returns to this dual unit (the family and its environment of variation: genealogical and cohabitation) with all the conclusions of the static and dynamic analysis. Why can neither the family nor the kinship group ensure the perpetuation of a community? Because the laws of the matrimonial circuit (the circulation of women) can only be respected if there are several kinship groups within the same human group, otherwise they cannot. That is why it is extremely important to know the structural dynamics of a kinship system with all its clans or genealogical branches. The number of genealogical groups, their volume and generational structure are decisive elements in the study of the ecodynamics of a population. The population reproduces not only numerically, i.e. through the variation in the number of individuals from one generation to another (the biological dynamics of a population), but also structurally, i.e. through the variation in the number of families, genealogical groups (with their demographic indexing) from one generation to another. Methodologically, we can frame this analysis in what could be called population econometrics or, quite simply, eco-ethnology. The biological and genealogical reproduction of a population is the axis of a *people's ecogeny*, i.e. its perpetuation as a type of community and *population ecosystem*. Of course, the transition from *village ecosystems* to *ethnic ecosystems* called peoples is a somewhat mysterious matter. If we remain strictly within the historical and/or sociological framework, it will be almost impossible to understand the emergence of those *collective identities* known by their *ethnonym* and called *peoples*. The question of the emergence of peoples is shrouded in mystery. Our hypothesis is that the answer to this question cannot bypass the analysis of the village, but even this does not exhaust the question. The village perpetuated the enduring unity of ethnic identity, that is, that collective identity of varying dimensions that we call peoples, but how to explain its wider territorial scope, called country, remains a mystery. "In the study 'La consanguinité fictive. Quelques exemples balkaniques' (Fictitious Consanguinity: Some Balkan Examples), published in *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno*, 14, Milan, 1985<sup>23</sup> (also published in English in *Études et Documents Balkaniques...*,

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<sup>23</sup> P. H. Stahl, "La consanguinité fictive. Quelques exemples balkaniques", appeared in *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno*, 14, Milano, 1985, and also in English in *Études et Documents Balkaniques...*, 13, 1987 and in Romanian, in *Silvania*, no. 2, Zalău, 1997, pp. 17–28.

13, 1987, and in Romanian in *Silvania*, no. 2, Zalău, 1997), analyses the relationship between the idea of consanguinity and the organisation of property. The analysis of this relationship allows us to grasp “the typical way in which a real biological element becomes biological fiction and ends up as a legal act”<sup>24</sup>. Paul H. Stahl is not only the name of a great personality but also the name of a European scientific paradigm, which he created and gave the permanence of such a creation of supra-personal value.

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<sup>24</sup> [Gh. Șișeșteanu], *op. cit.*, p. 530.

