



BUDDHIST CANTOS FROM BUCHAREST III. YEAR 1912: ION PILLAT AND T. S. ELIOT [ASIA IN EUROPE IV]

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This contribution in three parts analyses for the first time Ion Pillat's Buddhist poetry of his debut volume (*Visări budiste* [Buddhist Reveries] from *Visări păgâne* [Pagan Reveries] (Bucharest: «Minerva» – Institut de Arte Grafice și Editură, 1912) compared against plausible European and Asian religious and literary sources, contexts, and significance, in order to palliate the callous non-sense of some literary critics and the cultural prejudice inflicted by some scholars of religion. The five poems – *A Buddhist Prayer* (a title subsequently changed to *A Prayer to the Buddha*), *Samsara* [saṃsāra], *Towards Nirvana*, *Karman* and *A Hymn of Worship* – are illustrative of the wider topics and literary moves of an 'Asian Renaissance', and highlight the Buddhist legacy of Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852), a professor of the Collège de France who would become the founding father of modern Buddhist Studies worldwide and whose Magna Carta of Buddhist Studies would also have a Romanian echo, from Odobescu (who moreover frequented his classes) to Eminescu (who authored more and better Buddhist cantos) or Georgian (the first to critically edit Sanskrit texts) to young Pillat, a schoolboy, then student in Paris since 1905, to become the first translator into Romanian of another pupil of Sanskrit India in Paris and Harvard in the 1910–1914, T. S. Eliot.

Keywords: Ion Pillat, Asia in Europe, Buddhist writings in Pāli and Sanskrit, European literature, karman, saṃsāra, Romanian literature, T. S. Eliot.



V. Year 1912: European, Indian, Buddhist & Global!

As we have seen, Ion Pillat's *Buddhist Reveries* of 1912 read and rephrased Buddhist narratives and imaginaire from Eugène Burnouf's 1844 masterful *Introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien*. In reading translated Buddhist texts, he was by no means alone: precisely not alone as a careful reader and *aficionado* of Indic religious

world among Romanian writers. Even the very year 1912 was eventful in this respect, as some gleaning from an interconnected, global intellectual history may show.

During the very same years, Lucian Blaga's secondary education in Șaguna High School of Brașov (1906–1914) and then in the Theological Institute of Sibiu opted at times for what he remembered as the "Buddhist catechism", "the Rigvedic hymns translated by Max

Müller” and “the whole history of religions”². More open to tasters of Asian archaic cultures, Margarita Miller-Verghy discussed in 1911 samples of Romanian figurative folklore of *croix gammées* outwardly identified with Indic *svastika* – “semm priincios” (‘a propitious sign’)³ – well before occult influences in Nazi Germany disfigured it into a horrendous symbol. Another Romanian-born of Pillat’s generation, writer, translator and journalist Eugen[iu] Boureanu[il] (1885-1971) will even travel to colonial India and ‘Ceylon’ right in 1911 (but his Romanian journey memoir only appeared in 1969, where he makes use of the Greek name Taprobana⁴).

Gandhi’s foundational manifesto *Hind Swaraj* (‘Indian self-rule’) only dates from 1909 (more precisely was written between 13th and 22nd of November while on board on S.S. Kildonen Castle from England to South Africa, filling 275 pages of the ship’s stationary). In August 1912, one of his readers, a 23 years old barrister-at-law in the footsteps of his famed Allahabad father Motilal, JawaharLal Nehru came back to India after a university period in Cambridge and London, and immediately joined Gandhi’s Indian civil rights movement, to become after decades of most intense tussles with the British Raj the first Prime Minister of independent India. Nehru’s homecoming crosses one of the most forceful colonial ventures of the Brits in South Asia. Just published in 1912, Vincent A. Smith’s *Oxford History of India* was moreover titled *From the Earliest Times to the End of 1911*, to clearly underlie the new colonial epoch of King George V as Emperor of India, as still testified today by the colonial architecture of Mumbai. In 1912 started the construction of Luytens’ New Delhi, and nowadays Connaught Place bears ample testimony of the century past.

In 1912 started the correspondence of two former residents of Śrī Laṅkā, Thomas William Rhys Davids (1843-1922) and Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), a meeting which will have repercussions in prominent districts of Buddhist Studies, from the transference of British Pali Studies to the United States to the study of the Buddha’s *Vita*. On 15 April 1912, as a scholar-traveller in Asia since 1890, Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969) benefited even from an audience with the 13th Dalai Lama Tupten Gyatso (then in the British administered hill station of Kalimpong, a Tibetan ‘Avignon’), one of the famous occurrences of her travels and stays in Sikkim⁵ and afterwards in Tibet. A vivid description of her “Auprès du Dalai-Lama” was published in *Mercure de France* in October 1912⁶, and the Tibetan Buddhist world was subsequently depicted in many popular interwar books, some known or translated, back then or only after 1989, into Romanian too. From an even more esotericist background, George Gurdjieff’s career started in 1912. Indians themselves came closer to the Danubian sphere in 1912, when an All India Red Crescent Medical Mission, consisting of Muslim physicians, joined the medical presence of the Ottomans during the newly started

Balkan Wars. Furthermore, the mission crossed the Mediterranean from Egyptian Alexandria to Ottoman Istanbul by a *Romanian* ship⁷. As expected, yet never searched for by Pillat’s exegesis, the Indic embroidery of his personal 1912 belongs to a rather eventful canvas of worldwide history of Asia in Europe. Most notably, during the same 1912 (in fact from 1911 to 1914), T. S. Eliot (1888-1965⁸) studied Sanskrit with Charles Rockwell Lanman⁹ and Patañjali’s *Yogasūtra* with James Houghton Woods at Harvard: Sanskrit and Pali travelled into *The Waste Land* (1922), the foundational poem Pillat will be the first to translate into Romanian, in 1933.

VI. Down the Ganges, up the Arges: impetus and constraint in Pillat vs. Eliot.

To be sure, if Ion Pillat is still read nowadays, this is not for his Buddhist words, metaphors, readings and influences. On the contrary. While inspecting quasi all of his works, including the diaries, letters and reminiscences of his descendants¹⁰, one may really be astounded by the lack of similar references to Buddhism, India and Asia. If there are still some, they are however not similar to *Buddhist reveries* in terms of mass, precision and poise. What have really happened to such a fine reader of the finest Indic thinkers and Asian scholars? Reveries aside, his upcoming Buddhist eclipse may prove of even greater concern than his erstwhile Buddhist fervour.

Outlining his early years, Pillat assumed his poetry “a fost deviată din matca ei natural printr’o transplantare bruscă și un aport străin” (“was deviated from its natural bed by a sudden transplant and a foreign contribution”). This is certainly a rearward (Sk. *pratiloman*) appreciation, which is more artificial and rather risky. Under the sway of ostensibly such *retractationes* would his own son, writer and literary critic Dinu Pillat (1921-1975) considers “[t]ânărul poet publică de timpuriu, cu ambalare juvenilă, fără discernământ autocritic. Trece de-a dreptul la culegere în volum, cu *Visări păgâne* în 1912”¹¹. Later on, both father and son, it seems, conserve little interest in or esteem for Asian scholars. A long lost novel by Dinu Pillat, *Așteptând ceasul de apoi*¹², would include a despised ‘Orientalist’ who resembles, or this only is an automatic reminiscence, Herr Doktor Peter Kien, the Sinologist and central character of Elias Canetti’s *Die Blendung* (1935). Yet in his love letters of 1944-1945 to Nelli (Cornelia, his future wife), Dinu Pillat himself ventured some Indic images of note¹³.

Some have insisted on his more modern and *urbanite* element¹⁴, to be then contrasted with the ‘pagan’ one. Others supposed he became more Romanian, as if there was (or more lethally: is) a clandestine Bucharest inaptitude for looking towards both Asia and Europe. I doubt it (and always did). Eliade doubted it robustly in the 1930s, reframing for generations to come the



Romanian bold rhetoric of ‘the Occident’ and ‘the Orient’ meeting and fusion in various forms, effects and strata of Romanian oral, written and material culture – mostly in vain. After all, one should first come to such meetings, locate oneself into such confluence, progress a bit besides inconsistent rhetorical devices – and practice it. Writing in Romanian on Buddhist tropes and Indic topics, young Pillat did in point of fact practice it as plausible poetry and thus got hold of a decent feat. Up the river Argeș (*Pe Argeș în sus* [1923]) should not be seen as a better or lesser direction than down the Ganges, or rather Ganga (*Gaṅgā*) as *The Waste Land* wisely knows (verse 396) – except perhaps the fact that the county of Argeș is not quite similar to early Magadha, ancient Palestine or the sacred geography of Pausanias.

I mentioned up to now nothing from Pillat’s constraints. Or, only a hint at them: the number and variety of dedications. Always consequential, literarily or otherwise, this miniature genre was uncared for at times, although it does in this case capture another sort of harmonic of the poet’s voice. In young Pillat’s circumstances, it hides in plain sight his *parentèle*. To the individual dedications of the poems printed in 1912 corresponds the dedication of the whole *Părinților mei* ‘To my parents’. As his education, all his first years as poet and writer (*cum editor*) depended exclusively on family’s resources. Yet there are many other dedicatees, from his (literary) kin and friends mostly (“prienilor mei” from the cycle *Năzuinți*), the social circle being homogenous: Elisa Brătianu (43), his brother Nicolae (47) and his sister Pia (117), Horia Furtună (57, also adding a *motto* from him, 125), Sabina Cantacuzino (77), Eugeniu Speranția (83), Ion Niculescu-Dorobanț (115), Nicolae-Emil Lahovary (137), Ion Lugoșianu (145), without forgetting “the twins Gheorghe and Alexandru Cr.[e]țeanu, b. 1895” (94), the pair (placing some in awe) “To M. Eminescu. – In Memoriam” (123) as well as “To Alexandru Macedonski” (147), or even – for the whole opening cycle – Prince Charles (“A.S.R. Prințului Carol”, 19). In his definitive edition (1944) and then in the critical edition by his daughter-in-law (1983), these fifteen dedications are excised. I would thus see such copious dedications in a slim first volume as young Pillat’s literary reimbursement for his vocation which has first provoked a *scandal* for his whole family, according to Dinu Pillat (“*scandalizarea întregii familii*”). As rather often writing may only start after family scandals, Pillat had options – as his verses may attest. A twofold outrage, one may suppose: the discovery he might become a poet, and the discovery of the poetry – ‘pagan’, tortuous, irreverent – he may write, nothing quite fitting for the other right honourable members of Brătianu–Pillat family. *All* his dedications from *Pagan Reveries* are everything except *pagan*. On the contrary: they are high bourgeoisie signals towards his cultural environment, completely urban. His early protests – some quite strong: “even Jesus” is once seen as “surfeited by the salvation

of the world” (“De mântuirea lumii Isus chiar e sătul”, *Țîmur Lenk, Firdusi sau Galileanul?*, here 14) – were entirely tamed. Even more: one decade later only, these protests were abhorred and reversed. His own integrity was surely excellent, but his autonomy was rather poor indeed, even inexistent at times. After all, he was born in, evolved into and belonged to the higher class of Eastern European families, those Romanian ones involved in mostly of the current affairs of many a sort – political, cultural, and economical. His work evolved towards the integration in these circles, networks, and perceptions into his own more mature biography. He was after all a member of his family, defined by his family, limited by his family.

Signs of what I would call a cultural stagnation or contraction were seen in most leading intellectuals who, after successfully crossing the era of World War I and the nascence of modern, Greater Romania, preferred to safeguard their horizons and enjoy the benefits of such top settlement (think of Iorga), the guts of explorations or advancements and the more risky and rewarding breakthroughs shifting to the younger generation of avant-garde, surrealist writers or of the group of impending public intellectuals, some of them intellectuals proper, of *Criterion*. Was it really different for literary colleagues of Pillat also born in 1889–1892, as were say Martha Bibescu, Cezar Petrescu, Adrian Maniu, Ion Marin Sadoveanu, or Perpessicius, his co-author in 1925⁵? That early age – Pillat was 14 to 23 years old while *sur Paris* – gave Pillat a first-class gist of contemporaneous French, Western and global culture, a sense which could only have been garrotted while moving back to Romania. No more *Pagan* and no more *Buddhist* reveries: no more *reveries* actually (except it goes without saying those projecting an archaic Romanian past), as Pillat started to administer himself beyond literature and eventually grew to be a long-standing and successful, albeit discreet member of the Parliament for the quasi hereditary Liberal Party as well as a distinguished representative of the Kingdom of Romania to international bodies as the newly founded PEN and the League of Nations. He had to deal with his family estates from Bucharest, Florica, Miorcani as well as the newly bought one in Romanian Balcic.

Such qualification is not necessarily mine: I only improve on Steinhardt’s consideration of Pillat, who according to his friend “s-a numărat printre cuminții, înstăriții și împăcații cu stihile și așezările acestei lumi”⁶. Right from the start, French schooling included – he became an *élève* of the prominent Henri IV high school in Paris, where he was the single non-French of his class –, a rather oversized kin promised him to a splendid national career. Brătianu and Pillat families have had enormously influential connections across cream of the crop writers, scholars and dignitaries in the still young Kingdom of Romania and abroad. If Pillat dedicated a poem to Furtună in 1912, Horia Furtună dedicated a poem

not only to Ion Pillat in 1912, but another one (*Sārmanul Yōrick*) to Ion I. C. Brătianu in 1915 as well.

Another reason of his stern estrangement from any *Visāri budiste* would be a neighbouring cultural trait and threat: a furtive “buddomania” [*sic!*] strongly loathed and abhorred by vigilant Christian Orthodox would-be theologians, followed all along the interwar years by extremists fascist and other semi-literate fauna. To Pillat’s “sudden transplant and foreign contribution” of 1932 almost directly replied Ioan Vască (1892-1946) in 1934, at that time the rector of the Orthodox Theological Academy in Cluj, a professor who studied in Cernăuți during Vasile Găină’s last years: “in the countries of Christian and civilized Europe, Buddhism remains an exotic plant, cultivated by amateurs eager of innovations and sensations” (“buddhizmul în țările Europei creștine și civilizate [...] rămâne plantă exotică, cultivată de amatori dornici de inovațiuni și senzații”¹⁷), these “innovations and sensations” looking then like the Christian Orthodox theological equivalent of reveries. In 1937, in an article on “The Knowledge of M. Eliade”, a more remote ricochet of the ethnologist and fascist legionary Ernest Bernea (1905-1990) rebuked the Indologist as if from Pillat’s own ideological camp: “De unde să desprindem noi un sens și un stil românesc în lume? Din cărțile specialiștilor străini asupra culturilor asiatice sau din istoria și tainele pământului și sufletului nostru național?... A disprețui locul și a voi să faci dintr-odată știință universală e o cale greșită”¹⁸. In 1939, the future author of a manual for History of religions Emilian Vasilescu retrieved Dr Găină’s book on *Buddhism and Christianity* and read it more apologetically and aggressively than all others¹⁹. Pillat’s friend and close collaborator, the ‘classical’²⁰ philologist N.I. Herescu, a close friend to Eliade too, proudly underlined his capacity as editor of *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* during September-December 1940 and January 1941, that is to say, during the Fascist Legionary State of Romania, when he published there some new sonnets²¹ by Pillat (then in *Împlinire*).

Many others had no Sanskrit, Pali or Buddhist instruction of any kind, albeit their reading looked genuinely similar: “Certainly before the Ajanta Caves were painted [...] naked ascetics had put what they believed an ancient wisdom into short aphorisms for their pupils to get by heart and put into practice. I come in my turn, no grammarian, but a man engaged in that endless research into life, death, God, that is every man’s revery. I want to hear the talk of those naked men”: without much difficulty, this could have been Pillat in 1912 on early Buddhist poetry, yet this is William Butler Yeats on the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, in 1937²².

Perhaps this would be the boldest difference: closely studying with brilliant American scholars of Sanskrit, Pali and Buddhism like Lanman and Woods versus listening rather anonymously to Paris lectures on ‘colonial geography’. ‘Closely’ is perhaps apt: a Delhiite professor

searched for more and she discovered the Sanskrit references Lanman had given to student Eliot²³, the very ones everyone has encountered since this pedagogic occurrence of benchmark Indology entered the 1922 foundational poem of Anglo-American, then worldwide literature. One may even savour a glimpse of the poet’s intimate laboratory: Sanskritist Lanman’s handwritten note with the thunderous triple Upaniṣadic *DA* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (5.1)²⁴. Already in 1919, in an essay on “The Preacher as Artist” from *The Athenaeum*, Eliot went well beyond literary models in defending and illustrating powerful sermons: “The method – the analogy, and the repetition – is the same as that once used by a greater master of the sermon than either Donne or Andrewes or Latimer: it is the method of the Fire-Sermon preached by the Buddha”, i.e. the *Ādittapariyāya-sutta* from the *Samyutta-nikāya* “The Connected Discourses” (35.28, with corresponding Buddhist infracanonical quotations), which in 1922 is incorporated into Eliot’s own ‘Fire Sermon’. Later on, Eliot placed even specific Buddhist Sarvāstivāda hints, as in *Four Quartets* (“Time present and time past | Are both perhaps present in time future, | And time future contained in time past”²⁵).

Pour boucler la boucle, I should add *The Dial*, where the poem appeared for the first time in October 1922, was not only the American literary review for which T. S. Eliot served as London correspondent during *The Waste Land* period, but also the first American publication ever which, through Emerson and Thoreau, translated Buddhist texts and specifically from the French of Eugène Burnouf’s translations, who had become during his lifetime a less than anxious influence for the Transcendentalists²⁶, and thus signalled the first coming of Buddhism to America (as he posthumously also did for Romanian letters), beyond doubt a global event whose first epoch is considered today to end right with year 1912²⁷.

Reading Dinu and Cornelia Pillat as well as their daughter Monica Pillat, one may find a good deal of valuable material on the literary, cultural and family history of the Pillats – but nothing more on Buddhism, India, Asia. Was it too early for someone like Ion Pillat to start versifying elements of a comparative history of religions? Was it too late for a Romanian poet affiliated rather speedily afterwards to the traditionalist letters to come back to these universal stimuli, in order to do it so at least once in his more than three decades long future career? How exactly was, or better, is, modern literature apt to represent anew the enduring expressions of archaic religious universes? Irrespective of the vitality of such questions and the Asiatic responsiveness of cultural agents at one moment or another, it is instructive to ponder how such *first* and then *only* meetings, readings, and responses the European or more generally ‘Western’ authors prepared have several distinct traits, regardless of the age, context, and culture of the author.

Two substantiations come from both the year of



Pillat's debut and from today. A probing confirmation for the 19 years old Ion Pillat comes from the 89 years old Harold Bloom. The late Harold Bloom (1930-2019) worked during the last month of his life to the sketch of a new book tentatively titled *Immortality, Resurrection, Redemption: A Study in Speculation*. This unfinished project would have included, according to his young friend and would-be editor²⁸, a full landscape of literary and human inquiry, loosely envisioned and without really referring to religion, as one may guess from the sole available prospectus ("I do not intend a history of the theological development of these ideas, though I will resort to accounts of theological developments through the ages that play crucial parts in this story. | My prime interest is in our common human nature"). Indeed, like Pillat's outline of topics in 1912, the 2019 proposed table of contents by Bloom looks like a good introduction to comparative religion towards the end of the 19th century. They both missed their whole literary life – except such episodes: before the more mature *œuvre* or as its very afterword – the newest newness of archaic Asia. They are comparable precisely in this point (perhaps the only point of genuine comparison) because their flirtation with literatures beyond their reach typically merged fascination, inconclusiveness, and scarcity.

Yet in 1912/1932, without possibly knowing it, Pillat tacitly met the arduous efforts of promoting Asian cultures, religions and thought by a guild of French Asian scholars who would have been on Pillat's earlier reading lists, first and foremost Sylvain Lévi²⁹:

"[...] nous devons convenir que l'humanisme planétaire de demain ne pourra rester limité à nos valeurs méditerranéennes. Peu avant la dernière guerre, la Société Asiatique de Paris – vénérable aïeule dont l'acte de baptême remonte à 1822 – avait émis le vœu que quelques pages (oh! nous étions modestes, une dizaine de pages en tout) fussent consacrées dans nos manuels scolaires aux notions orientalistes les plus élémentaires sur, par exemple, la charité bouddhique, la métaphysique hindoue, le paysage chinois d'époque Song.

Les signataires de cet audacieux manifeste s'appelaient Sylvain Lévi³⁰, Paul Pelliot, Henri Maspero, Alfred Foucher³¹. Vous avouerez-je que nous ne pûmes obtenir satisfaction? Il aurait paraît-il fallu, pour nous faire place, supprimer une partie des listes ministérielles de la Monarchie de juillet, voire quelques noms de rois mérovingiens!"³²

It really looks like to grand Grousset retorted some local Iorgas.

Ion Pillat will be among the members of the *Societatea Scriitorilor Români* who offered a banquet to Rabindranath Tagore while in Bucharest, at Athénée Palace, on 21 November 1926³³. The context is, again, telling: the Nobel laureate of 1913 would generate a mass enthusiasm rarely seen for a(ny) writer in Romania

and the large written record of the visit³⁴ attests the pros and cons of an Asian Renaissance as perceived in easternmost Europe. Only such popular credit invited a translation from the best contemporary Indologists: thus appeared the single pages by Sylvain Lévi in Romanian³⁵. Perceiving the huge amount of greeters, one may also remember I am afraid one of Tagore's self-characterizations: "I am by nature unsocial – human intimacy is almost unbearable to me".

Later on, while being an envoy of the Kingdom of Romania to the League of Nations' yearly meetings in Geneva, Ion Pillat took an active part in the works of the Commission of Intellectual Cooperation, suggested the setting up of a series of books representative for every culture globally and thus had the occasion to mention, in September 1935, "la *Collection des œuvres japonaises* proposée par le professeur Anesaki". In 1926, such projects of *cooperatie intelectuală* within a pan-European Institute for Intellectual Cooperation were discussed in Vienna³⁶, where Pillat met the president of the congress, Hugo von Hofmannsthal – to give a hint of his wider connections. Of his hidden connections with Eliot and again with Burnouf too: Mahasaru Anesaki (1873-1949), founding father of history of religions studies in Japan, was invited professor at the University of Harvard in 1913-1915 and introduced postgraduate T. S. Eliot to the doctrines of Mahāyāna through the reading of the *Saddharmaṇḍarīka-sūtra*, widely known as the *Lotus Sūtra*, gloriously introduced to the Western world by Eugène Burnouf.

In spite of a query which, in things Romanian, would unendingly gravitate around the rhyme Eminescu decided on for *Buddha* in *Luceafărul*³⁷, for the reasons here presented, I think it is now safe to include very young Ion Pillat among the contributors, be they too minor or too confined, to the debate on the Asian, Indic or Buddhist Renaissance and the perspective of unified humanities. Even as a poet: Indologists and Buddhist scholars alike forget much too often that Raymond Schwab himself was a French poet and a writer before turning into the author of the first, exceptionally enthusiast history of the Asian Renaissance. We are entitled, if not required to reimburse such poets and writers, at least by a specific form of *antidoron*, for all their bequests of perceptiveness³⁸.

Bangkok & Ayutthaya, November 25/62 B.E.

Notes:

1. Plan, dedication, and parts I & II of *Buddhist Cantos from Bucharest* (“Ion Pillat’s *Visări budiste* (1912) as «readings from Burnouf»” and “Ion Pillat’s Indic Poetry of Transmigration” [*Asia in Europe* II-III]) in *Transilvania* n.s. 47 [151], no. 11-12 (2019): 1-10 and 48 [152], no. 1 (2020): 1-10.
2. “Dacă bunăoară catehismul budist mă vrăjise cândva, când eram prin clasa a IV-a a Liceului Șaguna, acum aceeași aplecare, multiplicându-și volumul, îmbrățișa, în conul său de lumină, întreaga istorie a religiilor și filosofia religiei ca atare. De la biblioteca Brukenthal din Sibiu îmi procuram diferite cărți, ce răspundeau nesațului meu, începând cu imnurile rigvedice, în traducerea lui Max Müller, și sfârșind cu istoria dogmelor lui [Adolf von] Harnack”, in Lucian Blaga, *Hronicul și cântecul vârstelor* [1945-1946/1965], ediție îngrijită de Dorli Blaga (București: Humanitas, 2012).
3. “În India, chiar numele ei de *svastika*, analog cu vorbele ei grecești *ev esti*, însemnează: *este bine*; este considerată ca un talisman, și se găsește pomenită în acest sens și în *Rāmāyana*. De la cele mai vechi inscripții budh[h]lice în care figurează, tradiția s’a urmat neîntreruptă până astăzi, când Indienii o desenează încă presărând făină pe pragul casei lor, în zile de sărbătoare, ca semn priincios”, Margarita Miller-Verghy, *Motifs anciens de décorations roumaines*, Bucarest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl & I. St. Rasidescu, 1911 [repr. București: Socec, 1927], ediție de I.[oan] Oprișan, traducere de Ioana Busuioc (Bucharest: Vestala, 2007).
4. His travels started in Italy, as he became a PhD of the University of Bologna, and included as different regions as Norway, Iceland or Algeria, see Eugen[iu] Boureanu[ul], *De la Thule la Tăprobana* (București: Editura Științifică, 1969).
5. Much more in Samuel Thévoz, “On the Threshold of the ‘Land of Marvels’: Alexandra David-Neel in Sikkim and the Making of Global Buddhism”, *Journal of Transcultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2016): 149-186 (here 167-168).
6. Alexandra David[-Néel], “Auprès du Dalai-Lama”, *Mercure de France*, tome XCIX, no. 367 (1 October 1912): 466-476 (relating several meetings).
7. See Syed Tanvir Wasti, “The Indian Red Crescent Mission to the Balkan Wars”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 3 (2009): 393-406 (396 on the Romanian ship).
8. Plenty of exegesis was published on Indic Eliot in the last three decades, his being one of the most astounding cases of an Asian Renaissance in worldwide literature. See especially Jeffrey M. Perl, Andrew P. Tuck, “The Hidden Advantage of Tradition: On the Significance of T. S. Eliot’s Indic Studies”, *Philosophy East & West* 35, no. 2 (1985): 116-131; Cleo McNelly Kearns, *T. S. Eliot and Indic Traditions: A Study in Poetry and Belief* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987, reissued with new material, New Delhi: Samveda Press, 2003), on which Harold Bloom (see also *infra*) wrote: “a fresh reading of *The Waste Land* which seems to me both more comprehensive and more cognitively acute than any before it”; the remarkable work of Manju Jain, *T. S. Eliot and American Philosophy: The Harvard Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); the 2006 *Cambridge Companion* was already replaced by Jason Harding, ed., *New Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). I discussed Eliot, Eliade and the *Yogasūtra* (from what is now better known as the *Pātañjalayogasāstra*) edited by Woods (1914) in “Eliade’s *Yoga* Now: Neither Immortality, Nor Freedom”, unpublished lecture, Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi, 8 October 2007). See now David Gordon White, *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography*, Lives of great religious books (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), here viii: Eliot “became fascinated with the *Yoga Sutra* and incorporated its teachings into his psychology of reading and writing as well as, perhaps, into the opening verses of his 1922 masterwork”, and 193-194, on Eliot and Yeats.
9. Not Lanham, as writes twice John Xiros Cooper, *The Cambridge Introduction to T. S. Eliot* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 28 and 127.
10. Cornelia Pillat and then Monica Pillat did a remarkable work editing the Pillat family archives across three generations, the more recent volumes being an apposite introduction to Romanian culture during the last century.
11. Dinu Pillat, *Itinerarii istorico-literare*, ediție de George Muntean (Bucharest: Minerva, 1978), 11, also *Mozaic istorico-literar. Secolul XX*, ediție îngrijită de Monica Pillat și George Ardeleanu (București: Humanitas, 2013) (both mentioning one ‘Bournouf’).
12. Dinu Pillat, *Așteptând ceasul de apoi*, ediție îngrijită de Monica Pillat, prefață de Gabriel Liiceanu (București: Humanitas, 2010): “Deși de vreo cincizeci și ceva de ani, deci de o vârstă cu Sebastian Răutu, Grigore Holban arăta mai degrabă dintr-o generație cu tatăl acestuia. Chel, fără culoare, cu guler înalt, de modă veche, umbând îmbrăcat numai în haină neagră și pantaloni vârgați, își făcuse studiile universitare la Paris, unde se specializase în istoria antică a Orientului. După Primul Război Mondial, tatăl său, membru al Academiei și fruntaș cu prestigiu al fostului partid conservator, sfârșise prin a determina cercurile în drept să înființeze un post de conferențiar la Secția de istorie a Facultății de Litere din București. Dar cariera de profesor universitar a lui Grigore Holban nu ținuse mult timp, datorită faptului că nu se găsea nimeni amator să audieze cursurile unei specialități lipsite de orice interes contingent. După suprimarea conferinței, efectuată sub pretextul unor economii bugetare, se retrăsese pentru totdeauna la moșie, luându-și cu el și întreaga bibliotecă. De atunci trăia acolo ca un hureuz, preocupat numai de studiile sale. Uneori, Sebastian Răutu și ceilalți profesori se pomeneau cu câte o broșură subțire, extrasul unui articol publicat de Grigore Holban în revistele de specialitate din străinătate” (60). From a contemptible dialogue one finds he is working “[l]a ceva extrem de interesant. Din păcate, nu am la îndemână toată bibliografia necesară. Am comandat la Londra ce îmi mai lipsește, dar nu am primit încă nimic. Studiul meu se intitulează *Influența școlii filozofice reformate a lui Mo-Ișeu*



- asupra jurisdicției imperiale din epoca dinastiei Han” (61).
13. See their *Biruința unei iubiri. Pagini de corespondență*, ediție îngrijită de Monica Pillat, cuvânt înainte de H.-R. Patapievici (București: Humanitas, 2008).
 14. As did Ovidiu Papadima, *Ion Pillat* (București: Editura Albatros, 1974), 97: “Pillat rămâne totuși omul modern, integrat culturii cetățene a epocii lui”.
 15. The exception being for sure Nae Ionescu, and to rapidly compensate it on a larger scale, Walter Benjamin.
 16. *Op. cit.*, 1984, 38 | 2010, 271.
 17. I.[oan] Vască, “Hristos și Buddha (Foileton) [IV]”, *Renașterea. Organ național-bisericesc săptămânal* [Cluj] An XII, nr. 19 (13 mai 1934): 2. His four-part essay reacted to the republication of Goilav’s translation of Arnold, the theological gap registered there being at least half a century: see the rebuke of William Cleaver Wilkinson, *Edwin Arnold as Poetizer and as Paganizer. Containing an Examination of the “The Light of Asia” for its Literature and for its Buddhism*, New York-London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885 and, for the French debate, my review of J. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *Du Bouddhisme* (Laval: Editions Bénélos, 2002), in *Bulletin d’Études Indiennes* 22-23 (2004-2005) [2007]: 653-655.
 18. Ernest Bernea, “Știința lui M. Eliade”, *Rânduiala*, An II, nr. 9-10 (1937): 389.
 19. See Emilian Vasilescu, “Dr. Vasile Găină, apărător al credinței”, *Sfarmă-piatră*, An V, nr. 151 (Duminică 5 februarie 1939): 3. On the left page, as this magazine was unashamedly legionary, is printed an article reporting in awe the last speech of Hitler (“Discursul d-lui Hitler”, by Pan. M. Vizirescu).
 20. ‘Classical’ – for only Greek and Latin – was and remains deprecating: it represents the Eurocentric and colonial *time*-forte, the very Greenwich of scholarship in the Humanities, compared against a weaker, *space*-defined, alternative and ancillary ‘Oriental/Asian Antiquity’, albeit the Asian scholars contributed enough to the discovery and general acknowledgement of a single, united, continuous Asia-Europe Antiquity precisely as it was *lived* by the Old World. Its history remains to be written. See Eugen Ciurtin, “Antichitate (*Istoria religiilor* II)” [Antiquity (*History of religions* II)], *Ideii în dialog*, An IV, nr. 1 (40) (ianuarie 2008): 51, “A Nobel for the Pali Text Society? T.W. Rhys Davids Writes to the Nobel Commission of the Swedish Academy”, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 32 (2015): 195-212, as well as the perspective and monographic equipment of Constantin Georgian’s *OAI*, Part I-III, 2017-2019.
 21. N.I. Herescu, “Poetul Ion Pillat”, *Universul literar*, An LII, Nr. 15 (Duminică 30 mai 1943): 1 and 5 (here 1): “din care eu i-am publicat întâi pe cele mai frumoase în *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* pe vremea când o conduceam (Sept. și Dec. 1940, Ian. 1941)”, a formula preserved in “Prefață” [“Foreword”] to Ion Pillat, *Asfodela* (București: Edițiile «Ausonia», 1943), here 7.
 22. Discussed by David G. White, *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography*, Lives of great religious books (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 192-193.
 23. Manju Jain, *T. S. Eliot and American Philosophy: The Harvard Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. 103-111.
 24. The Buddhist term for thunderous phenomena would rather be *dundubhi*, assonance conserved.
 25. I thank Professor Peter Skilling (Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok) for kindly confirming me this (1/02/2020).
 26. Since Henry David Thoreau, “The Preaching of Buddha [Translated from Eugène Burnouf 1843 by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody]”, *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion* 4, no. 3 (1843-1844): 391-401.
 27. I follow Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
 28. Lucas Zwirner, “Harold Bloom’s Immortality”, *The Paris Review* blog (16 October 2019). Zwirner misnames, from the summary he offers, ‘Islamic tradition’ instead of the explicitly named ‘Indic Redemption’:
<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/10/16/harold-blooms-immortality/>
 29. Precisely in this context, very readable remains Sylvain Lévi’s short book *L’Inde et le monde* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1925), incidentally known to Eliade before moving to India.
 30. For French scholarship on Sylvain Lévi published this century in Bucharest, see Anne Vergati, “Histoire des études indiennes: Sylvain Lévi et l’idée d’humanisme”, *Studia Asiatica* 1 (2000): 25-35 and Roland Lardinois, “La création de l’Institut de Civilisation Indienne par Sylvain Lévi en 1927”, in E. Ciurtin, ed., *Du corps humain, au carrefour de plusieurs savoirs en Inde. Mélanges offerts à Arion Roșu par ses collègues și ses amis à l’occasion de son 80^e anniversaire* [The Human Body, at the Crossroads of Multiple Indian Ways of Knowing. Papers Presented to Arion Roșu by his Colleagues and Friends on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday], *Studia Asiatica* 4-5 (2003-2004) (Bucarest-Paris: Centre d’Histoire des Religions | Éditions De Boccard, 2004): 737-748. On the more general climate of French Asian studies, see Roland Lardinois, *L’invention de l’Inde: Entre ésotérisme et science* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2007), translated as *Scholars and Prophets: Sociology of India from France in the 19th-20th centuries* (London-New York: Routledge, 2017).
 31. On Lévi, Alfred Foucher and Paul Pelliot, see my review article of Lyne Bansat-Boudon, Roland Lardinois, eds., Isabelle Ratié (contrib.), *Sylvain Lévi (1863-1935): Études indiennes, histoire sociale* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), in *Bulletin d’Études Indiennes* 28-29 (2010-2011): 408-418, and my critical edition of Mircea Eliade’s *Yoga. Eseu asupra originilor misticii indiene*, monografie introductivă, traducere din limba franceză, note, *addenda*, *corrigenda*, bibliografii, glosar, planșe și indici, Studii și documente de istorie a religiilor vol. 1 (Bucharest: Institute for the History of Religions, 2016), 47, 55-60, 75-76, 104, 436 and 471.

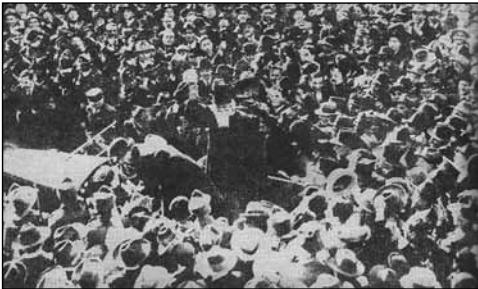
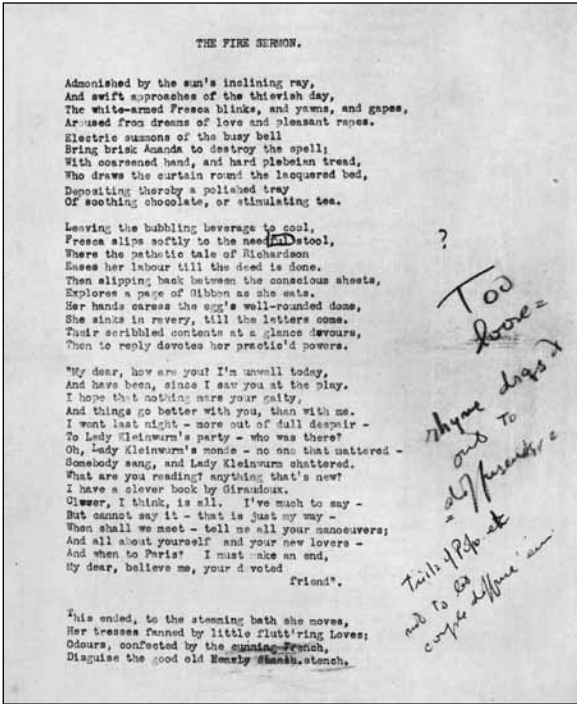
32. René Grousset, "L'humanisme classique et le monde moderne [Conférence du 31 août 1949]", in *Pour un nouvel humanisme. Textes des conférences et des entretiens organisés par les Rencontres Internationales de Genève*, Histoire et société d'aujourd'hui (Neuchâtel: Les Éditions de la Baconnière, tome IV, 1949), 31.
33. Pillat is left aside by Claudia Cleja-Gîrbea, "Rabindranath Tagore la București", *București – materiale de istorie și muzeografie* 6 (1968): 333-337.
34. Nuanced Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, "Tagore", *Sburătorul*, An VI, nr. 6 (decembrie 1926): 83-84, who criticized India's social reality of castes, compared 'mysticism' in India and Europe (more "restless"), don't mention the recent visit to Bucharest, but ends adding "Europe will conserve the remembrance of Asia sending her most wonderful prince" ("Europa va păstra amintirea că Asia i-a trimis cel mai minunat prinț al ei").
35. See Sylvain Lévi, "Rabindranath Tagore la Santiniketan. Impresii", *Universul literar*, An XLII, nr. 49 (5 decembrie 1926): 8-9.
36. See Carmen Brăgaru, "Ion Pillat și Liga Națiunilor", *Ex Ponto* 10, no. 3 (36) (2012): 95-101 and the third part of her *Ion Pillat: european în țara sa, român în Europa* (București: Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2013).
37. Ms. 2275B, f. 62 (Version B), in M. Eminescu, *Opere* II.406 Perpessicius. But see Petru Creția, *Testamentul unui eminescolog*, (București: Humanitas, 1998, repr. București: Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2015), 122: "Și dacă vrei să fii un sfânt, / Să știi ce-i chinul, truda, / Îți dau un petec de pământ, / Ca să te cheme Buddha".
38. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine. I have first read this cycle of poetry while invited as professor by the Faculty of Letters of the University in Bucharest, for a class on 'Major themes in Romanian literature' (February-May 2019). I am thankful to Dr Cosmin Ciotloș for the privilege of our weekly discussions on lesser (known) Romanian writers and their global habitat. Since August 2019 in Thailand, I much benefited from the expert assistance and kindness of Ajahn Pagorn Singsuriya (Head of the Department of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University). As for the new series 'Asia in Europe', which offers newer configurations of my on-going enquiry since 1997 (some dozen items available at <https://ihr-acad.academia.edu/EugenCiurtin>), it started with a first overview of Asian ingredients in Mircea Cărtărescu's *œuvre* ("«Historians, including historians of religions, would have already needed to understand something»: Cărtărescu in Asia", forthcoming 2020a), shall continue with other instalments (perhaps an "Asiatic Eminescu" is most in want), and will with any luck comprise not *divertimenti* or 'pastimes' (as in poor Pillat), but comparative analysis of historical, literary, musical, and religious material in the cultural dynamics of Europe and Asia, mostly from uncharted (or alas faultily chartered) territory.

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VII. T. S. Eliot's Buddhist Fire Sermon (and "Know diligent Reader | That on each Occasion | Ezra performed the Caesarean Operation") from The Waste Land: a facsimile and transcript of the original drafts, including the annotations of Ezra Pound, edited by Valerie Eliot, London: Faber & Faber, 1971. f. xvi. © Estate of T. S. Eliot and reprinted by permission of Faber & Faber Ltd. © 2015 by Mary de Rachewiltz and the Estate of Omar S. Pound. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp., available at <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/manuscript-of-t-s-eliot-the-waste-land-with-ezra-pounds-annotations> (retrieved on 19 November 2019).

VIII. Bucharest, 22 November 1926, all other vehicles rerouted: before Ion Pillat will meet him at the reception at Athénée Palace, thousands of Romanians greet Rabindranath Tagore on Calea Victoriei, at the end of his European tour.