Research Article

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"The Uprising" Novel Map. Real and Imaginary Space in Liviu Rebreanu's Vision

Abstract: The literary works represent a genuine source for researching and understanding the geographical space. Most of the time, this space is perceived and figured in various ways by the different authors referring to it. When available, the best way to study these mental representations is by using maps created by the authors themselves. This article concentrates on Liviu Rebreanu's novel "*The Uprising*" and on the map which helped him to better depict the plot and the characters. The cartographical representation was created by Liviu Rebreanu and was published together with other drafts from the author's personal archive. The paper analyzes the map using cartographical, historical and literary sources with the aim of understanding how the author reshaped the real space to better suit his literary imagination. In the end, the study explains how these kind of maps could be interpreted using a geocritical approach.

Keywords: cartography, literature, geocritics, geographical space, Liviu Rebreanu

Introduction

The relations between literature and geography have attracted the attention of many researches in the last decade. The most important issues are dedicated to the concepts of literary geography and literary cartography. In his attempt to offer a theoretical framework for the literary geography, Michel Collot (2014) identifies three distinct, but complementary levels for the study of the spatial dimension in the literary works. The first is entitled *géographie de la littérature* and it studies the spatial context in which the literary works have been produced. The second is called *géocritique* and it focuses on the representations of the space in literary works, while the third is called *géopoétique* and concentrates on the relations between the space and the literary genres.

On the other hand, the idea of the *"Literary Atlas of Europe"* contributes to the creation of a bridge between literature and the geographical space with the help of GIS (Geographical Information System) (Reuschel, Piatti, and Hurni, 2013). In this project the authors have developed a method to map the different spatial data encountered in a given text. A similar study uses GIS to map qualitative data extracted from literary works, associating the emotions and the feelings described with the geographical space (Cooper and Gregory, 2011).

In Romania, Andreea Răsuceanu (2013) uses the concepts of narrative space and literary geography to examine the writings of Mircea Eliade from a spatial perspective. She considers that the job of a literary geographer is to compare the real landscape, which corresponds to an objective geography, with the imagined landscape seen as a transfigured landscape rather than an invented one.

This paper draws on the concepts of geocritics and analyses the map created by Liviu Rebreanu for his novel *"The Uprising"*. These types of studies are less encountered because most of the authors do not publish, or do not even create, a map together with a novel. Examples of such maps which became famous are given by J.R.R. Tolkien with the map from *"The Hobbit"* and by Robert Louis Stevenson with the representation of the *"Treasure Island"*. The scientific literature concerning these cartographical representations is even sparser, although "imaginary maps have provided the basis for whole novels" (Muehrcke and Muehrcke, 1974, p. 317).

Therefore, this study concentrates on the map created by Liviu Rebreanu and tries to decrypt the way in which the author has reshaped the real space in order to create a literary space to match his needs. Finally, the paper analysis the cartographical document from a geocritical perspective in order to better perceive the relations between the real and the imaginary places.

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Methodology

In order to understand how the map was created, the research started with the study of the original document together with the other notes from the author's personal archive. It soon became clear that many answers are offered by the activity underwent by Liviu Rebreanu before writing the novel. The main sources used to document the period before and during the time when he wrote *"The Uprising"* were the books of literary criticism, the author's personal diary and several interviews and conferences which were published after his death.

The cartographical analysis was conducted using historical maps such as the Austrian Map from 1910 and the Army Shooting Plans from the first half of the 20th century. For a better understanding of Rebreanu's choice concerning the toponymy, The Geographical Dictionary of the Argeș County was taken into account. The final interpretation of the map is made by using geocritical concepts, which have the aim of unveiling how the space is transformed in a literary work and why these kind of maps should be studied by geographers.

Liviu Rebreanu and the Peasants' Revolt of 1907

The Romanian writer Liviu Rebreanu was born in 1885 in Transylvania, which at that time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1909 he arrives in Bucharest and works for several newspapers before starting to publish short novels and plays (Dugneanu, 1987). His first novel, *"Ion"*, was published in 1920. The book describes the realities of the Transylvanian village and the importance of land possession as a marker of social status. Beside this, Liviu Rebreanu depicts the harsh relations between the Romanians and the Austro-Hungarian authorities.

While in Transylvania the peasants and the intellectuals were oppressed by the Austro-Hungarian administration, on the other side of the Carpathians, in the Romanian Kingdom, there were fierce discussions around the "agrarian question" (*chestiunea agrară* into Romanian). Although an agrarian reform took place in 1864, at the beginning of the 20th century the proprieties above 100 hectares still covered 48% of the arable land (Șerban and Dorondel, 2014). The growing dissatisfactions of the peasants, which represented more than 80% of the country's total population, led to a general revolt in 1907. The misery of the peasants was caused by the lack of property rights upon the lands and the presence of Jewish and Greek administrators contracted by the landlords.

These tenants were looking to obtain higher profits for themselves by impoverishing even more the peasants. The revolt started in Flămânzi, a village in the northern part of Moldavia, and in just one month it spread, reaching the western Wallachia. Throughout the country, several tenants were killed and a lot of manors belonging to the landlords were destroyed by arson. The revolt was severely repressed by the army, causing lots of causalities. The official number of victims is unknown, but sources estimated between 3000 and 11000 deaths (Rosetti, 1907).

In 1907 Liviu Rebreanu was serving in the army, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, at Gyula. While the revolt was taking place in the Romanian Kingdom, he made personal notes regarding the events (Dugneanu, 1987). After his arrival in Bucharest, in 1909, he planned to write a short play to recount the tragic events, but in 1920 he decided to publish a novel entitled *"The Uprising"* (Popescu-Sireteanu, 1985).

While in his first novel he depicted the Transylvanian peasant, he acknowledged that the rural life from Moldavia and Wallachia was far more difficult for him to understand. Due to the lack of financial resources, he researched only the documents and the newspaper articles from the Library of the Romanian Academy. At that time, Liviu Rebreanu had never seen a tenant or a landlord's manor, fact which proved a serious setback for him. As the time went on, he had the chance of travelling and meeting various types of people who took part at the revolt from 1907, including peasants, tenants and landlords (P. F. Rebreanu and Gheran, 1984)[1].

His wife, Fanny Rebreanu[2], remembered that in the month of May, she and her husband made a trip in Vlașca, Teleorman and Argeș counties to discuss with the peasants about the sufferings endured during the revolt (Popescu-Sireteanu, 1985). We have identified this as the moment when the author decides where to place the plot of his novel. Although his wife does not mention the year of the journey, we believe that it took place in the spring of 1926, just before Liviu Rebreanu wrote the first 150 pages of the book. In 1930, Liviu Rebreanu bought a residence at Valea Mare, near Pitești[3]. In the summer of 1931, after a break of almost four years, he restarted to work at the novel. He made slight changes at the first 150 pages

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1 Liviu Rebreanu recounted the way in which he wrote *"The Uprising"* at a conference held in 1943 at the Romanian Athenaeum. His address was republished several times together with other documents from his archive. In this paper we have used the book edited by Puia Florica Rebreanu and Niculae Gheran in 1984.
2 Officially, her name was Ștefana Rebreanu.
3 Pitești is the county seat of Argeș County. The plot of the novel takes place in the south-eastern part of the county.

written before and finished the book in December 1932 (L. Rebreanu, 1975).

The map of the novel

The trip made, most probably, in the spring of 1926 not only helped Liviu Rebreanu to fix the plot from a spatial point of view, but also gave birth to what was going to be the map of the novel. Liviu Rebreanu acknowledged the fact that he created a cartographical representation especially for his novel, in which he mapped some villages from the southern part of the Argeș County. He stated that most of the settlements exists in reality but their position on the map was adapted to better suit his needs. In the same time, the villages invented by him are the ones where the main action takes place. Liviu Rebreanu described his map as being in colours, with lots of villages and hamlets and the distances between them. Alongside these, he also placed on the map the estates mentioned in the novel, their surface and the name of their landowners (P. F. Rebreanu and Gheran, 1984).

The author never made an official version of the map in order to publish it together with the novel. For him, it remained only a personal source of inspiration which helped him to better place the characters and to follow the plot from a geographical perspective. The original document lies today at the Library of the Romanian Academy[4] in Bucharest together with the other manuscripts belonging to Liviu Rebreanu[5] (Figure 1).

Characteristics of the map

Liviu Rebreanu drew his imagined space on a piece of paper which is 22 centimetres long and 17 centimetres wide. Analysed in a scientifically manner, the drawing is just a sketch or a croquis due to the fact that the author did not assigned it a scale. Fortunately, Liviu Rebreanu mentioned the distances between the most important villages and hamlets. Using this information and the general dimension of the piece of paper we were able to deduce an approximate scale of 1:100 000 for the map.

The cartographical representation was drawn using a black pen and three coloured pencils. A black pencil was used to depict the settlements with their names, the roads,

Figure 1. Black and white copy of the map created by Liviu Rebreanu and published in 1975 (L. Rebreanu, 1975, p. 661)

the railways and the measured distances and surfaces. The rivers with their names and the leased estates are coloured in blue. The red was used to mark the borders of the most important estates and to crosshatch the surface of every domain in order to easily distinguish its extent. With the same colour, the author indicated the names of the landlords which are leading characters in his novel, alongside the names of their domains. The black pen was used to make several annotations regarding the owners of some estates or their previous statute.

The toponymy

The map drawn by Liviu Rebreanu is remarkable for the impressive number of toponyms displayed. No more than 30 place names were used by the author to better locate the stage of the plot. We took a closer look at each toponym from the point of view of its location in the real space and we have divided them into three categories. Our approach was done with the help of other cartographical representations from that time. Therefore, we used the maps from the Third Military Mapping Survey of Austro-Hungary (Figure 2) and the Army Shooting Plans (*Planurile Directoare de Tragere*) (Figure 3) in order to analyse the

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4 B.A.R., Arhiva Liviu Rebreanu. I Mss. 1 g, f. 18.

5 Unfortunately the Library of the Romanian Academy does not have the right to authorize the publication of the map. We were able to consult the original document, but in this paper we have used a black and white copy of the map which was published in 1975 together with other documents from the author's archive.

location at different scales.

The largest category, which includes 23 toponyms, comprises the place names which exist in reality and which are correctly represented on the map. Out of these 23, only the village of Teleasca proved difficult to identify because today, it is part of the city of Costeşti (Lahovari, 1888). Another category contains the toponyms which are real, but their position on the map is different than the one from reality. Only three place names were attributed to this category: Babaroaga, Vaideii and Bârlogu.

The last four toponyms, Amara, Lespezi, Ruginoasa and Gliganu-Nou, were invented by Liviu Rebreanu. Although they exist in Romania, none of them is to be found in Argeş County (with the exception of Gliganu-

Nou which probably replaced the real Gliganu de Jos). The other three imagined toponyms relate to a negative or unpleased thing. Amara, where the residence of the landlord was located has the meaning of bitter, Lespezi could have the meaning of gravestones and Ruginoasa can be translated with rust. All the invented toponyms, together with the ones whose location was changed were used by Liviu Rebreanu to accommodate the most important events from his novel, where tragic incidents took place.

The natural features

Alongside numerous villages, Liviu Rebreanu also used two rivers to mark off the space where the most important events are taking place. The two water courses named Teleorman and Valea Câinelui are the only natural features drawn by Liviu Rebreanu. Both of them are running through the southern part of Argeş County but, at a closer look, only the river of Teleorman is placed correctly on the map. This conclusion was drawn following the course of the river and the name of the adjacent villages. On the other hand, Valea Câinelui is just a small creek in reality, which flows several kilometres westward of Teleorman. If it was for the author to draw a real map, eastward of Teleorman, he should have placed the river of Dâmbovnic, in a different drainage basin. A sketch from the author's personal archive indicates that initially, he thought of using other small creeks from the
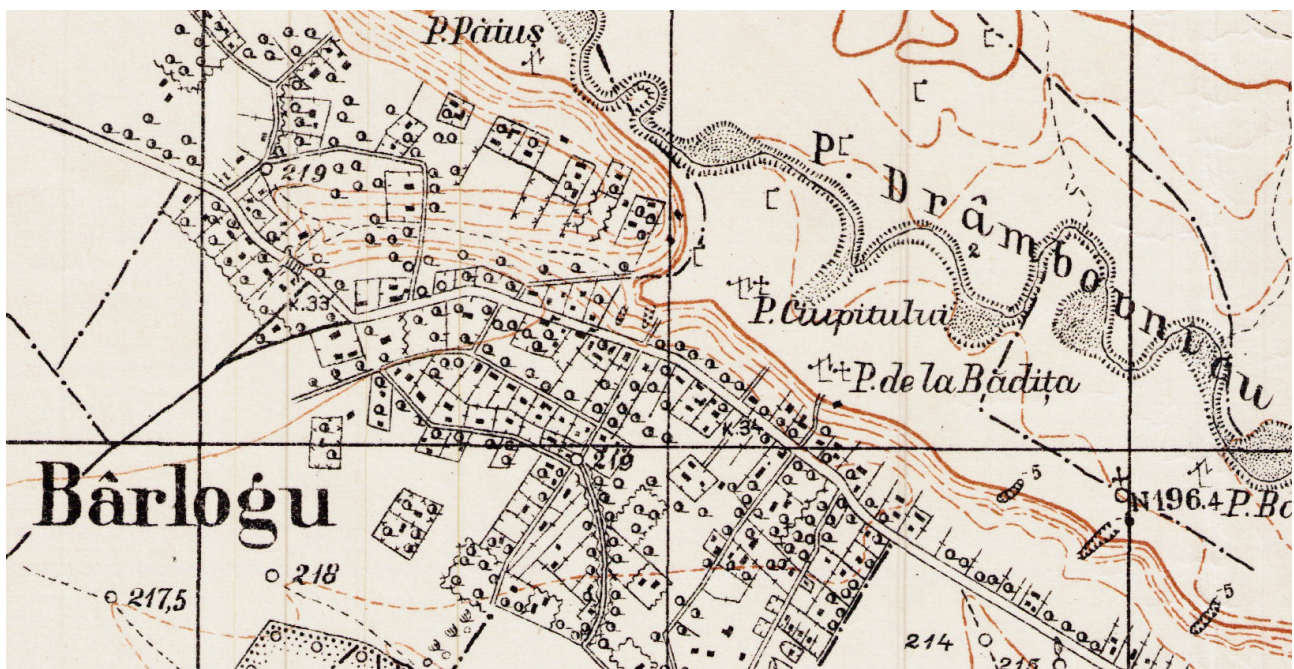

Figure 2. *Austrian Map (1910). Scale: 1:200 000*

Figure 3. *Army Shooting Plans (1952). Scale: 1:20 000*

area, named Valea Burdea and Valea Plescarea, around the river of Teleorman[6].

Therefore, from a geographical point of view, all the action of the novel is located on the interfluve which separates Teleorman and Dâmbovnic rivers. On the official historical maps it is called Câmpul Găvana, and today it is part of Găvanu-Burdea Plain. The forest is another natural feature which is mentioned only in the text, but it is not drawn on the map. Nowadays, that part of the plain still conserves a forested area, but Liviu Rebreanu evokes in the novel the clearance from the 19th century[7].

The estates and their landowners

On the map designed by Liviu Rebreanu one can easily distinguish a group of seven estates which belong to the main characters of the novel and another six proprieties in the possession of other persons. For the first group of estates, the author offers information with respect to their landowners, their tenants (where it is the case) and their surfaces. For the domains which surround the central group, only the name of the owner is offered. Even in the novel, the author uses these estates only to better describe the surroundings of the place where the action is set.

None of the characters whose name appear on the map exist in reality with the sole exception of the family named Perticari. Although placed by Liviu Rebreanu on the map in the village of Orodelu, this family owned a property at Izvoru de Sus, a few kilometres to the south (Lahovari, 1888).

Understanding Liviu Rebreanu's imaginary space

The map created by Liviu Rebreanu for his novel, *"The Uprising"*, depicts a part of the real geographical space, alongside elements invented or partially modified by its author. The real challenge is to understand and to motivate the choices made by Liviu Rebreanu. Although this task cannot be entirely achieved, various documents testify a part of his intentions. First of all, the Peasant's Revolt of 1907 was a historical event which took place in the entire Romanian Kingdom. Liviu Rebreanu's intention was to write a novel not a history book, so he needed to

envisage his plot by concentrating the diverse information in a limited space. Therefore, a literary map created by an author has to contain the essence of a certain thing (Muehrcke and Muehrcke, 1974). A proof for this essence lies even in his choice not to represent all the real villages from the selected region.

Secondly, we know that Liviu Rebreanu undertook several journeys to better document his novel. It is probably the southern part of Argeş County that left the biggest impression on his mind. In the moment when he started to draw the map, he used what John K. Wright (1947) calls geographical imagination, seen "as a way of envisioning the world, experiencing and reshaping it" (Daniels, 2011, p. 182). Consequently, the landscape depicted by Liviu Rebreanu is a complex image which borrows the features of a visited place and various particularities connected to the culture and the imagination of the writer (Răsuceanu, 2013).

On the other hand, the most important testimony for understanding this literary map is the opinion of the writer itself. In a series of interviews from the interwar period, which were republished in 1975, Liviu Rebreanu offered vague clues regarding his choices. In 1931 he stated that each and every material which becomes a work of art suffers changes imposed by the author (L. Rebreanu, 1975). Four years later, in 1935, he spoke about a landlord who had criticised him because he wrote that the village of Rociu can be seen from Izvoru. Liviu Rebreanu found the remark funny and stated that the villages from *"The Uprising"* are real but "their description cannot be [...] geographically measured"[8] (P. F. Rebreanu and Gheran, 1984, p. 493). The mystery is deepened by adding that the real elements are only a pretext for him before being transformed in a novel. Concerning his characters, Liviu Rebreanu declared that there is no real person to be portrayed in his work. For the ones who believed they were sketched there, he added that they were the victims of an illusion (L. Rebreanu, 1975).

As a consequence, we cannot completely understand and motivate Liviu Rebreanu's choices. Although a large number of sources and testimonies were researched, the author did not reveal the mechanisms that guided him when he designed the map. We were able to discover the moment when he created the map and the region that inspired him, but the other information regarding the toponymy and the selection of villages and rivers remains open to suppositions.

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6 B.A.R., Arhiva Liviu Rebreanu. I Mss. 1 g, f. 20.

7 The Romanian Plain suffered intense deforestation after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) which granted the liberty of trade on the Danube River (Mihăilescu, 1924). From then on, the boyars extended their estates limiting the property rights of the peasants.

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8 «*Descrierea lor nu poate fi [...] cronometrată geografic*». Translation from Romanian into English by Th. Cepraga.

A geocritical approach of the map

The study and the interpretation of literary maps must take into account the differences between the real geography and the imaginative geography of a certain place. The geocritical approach is the most suitable method to analyse the imagined space represented in a literary work (Collot, 2014). Bertrand Westphal (2007) argues that a literary text does not make a reference to the real world but to an experience of the real. Therefore, Liviu Rebreanu's map could be considered the result of his own experience of the real world. The document is highly relevant because it synthesizes the relation between the writer and the observed space. From the infinite number of images and information offered by a certain place from the real world, the writer selects only the ones relevant for him and orders them in a logic that has nothing to do with the real geography or history (Collot, 2014).

The resulted map, which served Liviu Rebreanu as an inspirational tool for his novel, is a subjective representation of the real world which can hardly be deciphered without the testimony of the author. His choices with respect to the toponymy and the natural features represent a mixture between what he saw and what he read about the depicted space. Considering all the information available and the way in which the map is designed, it is probably the result of Liviu Rebreanu's memories from the trip made in order to document his book.

The literary space obeys more to the literary laws that to the reality (Bayard, 2012). The literature redescribes the real world seen from the subjective eye of the writer (Westphal, 2007). The difficulties encountered while trying to explain the choices made by Rebreanu reside in the subjective character of the map. It could be considered as the representation of the author's perception of the space. The writer's cartographical imagination transforms the names, the location and even the topography in order to match his needs for the novel (Reuschel & Hurni, 2011).

We consider that the analysis of literary maps, such as the one made by Liviu Rebreanu, could offer a completely new perspective about a certain space. The subjective point of view of the author, in this case, serves as a different lens through which the space could be perceived. The interaction between the real world and its literary representation makes necessary and fruitful the dialogue between geography and literature. The disciplines which study the real could have a better understanding of it if they research its associated literature (Westphal, 2007).

Conclusions

The relation between geography and literature has been studied by both philologists and geographers, offering many works of literary geography and projects of literary cartography. Various theoretical concepts regarding literary geography have been proposed but the central idea of this subject remains the study of the representations of the space in literary works. We have drawn attention upon the maps created by the authors for their novels, a type of study which can be considered as being part of the field of geocritics. In this paper, we have analysed the map designed by Liviu Rebreanu for his novel, *"The Uprising"*. The document was never destined to be published together with the literary work and it remained in the personal archive of the writer at the Library of the Romanian Academy. It was published in 1975 alongside other documents belonging to Liviu Rebreanu. Our main purpose was to understand how Liviu Rebreanu represented the real world on his map and how he adapted it to better suit his needs for the novel.

After a brief research of Rebreanu's activity and interests from his youth, we put together the testimony of his wife, his journal and other historical maps to better figure out how his cartographical representation was created. We assume that it was designed after the journey made in 1926, in the Romanian Plain, to gather information for his novel from the peasants. The distances placed on the map allowed as also to measure an approximate scale for it. All the elements drawn on the map were discussed in turn. We tried to understand what was the meaning of the invented toponyms, how he envisaged the physical geography of that place and what information he added with respect to the estates and their landlords. Some interviews of Liviu Rebreanu in which he briefly explained his choices were cited. Even though the author did not offer many details about how he created the map, we were able to offer an interpretation of it by assembling all the information available at this stage. Finally the paper argues that the literary maps, such as the one made by Liviu Rebreanu, should be analysed using a geocritical approach for a better understanding of the representation. The relation between geography and literature should take more serious into consideration the literary maps in order to offer new perspectives about specific spaces.

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