

Before becoming the centripetal contemporary process, European integration was a personal, centrifugal undertaking in the emerging Romanian state. 19th century Romanian intellectuals would occasionally travel across the European continent and write accounts representing Europe as a model of civilization and culture to be integrated in their own land. Dinicu Golescu is such a traveller who not only produces what can be considered the first Romanian travelogue, but is also inspired by his European journeys to bring about change back home. Attempts such as his would gradually coagulate into a national reconfiguration project. This paper offers a close reading of Golescu's travelogue, analyzing how Europe is represented by this Romanian traveler and to what purpose, with a view to illustrating the dynamics of European integration through travel (and) writing.

Key words: Europe, Romania, integration, travel writing, Dinicu Golescu

I. Introduction: the first Romanian travelogue

Early travelogues by Romanian authors are plenty and well known in Romania, but they are little studied as such for their literary and/or cultural quality. The corpus of Romanian travel writing begins in the 17th century with the account by Nicolae Milescu "Spatarul" (the Chancellor) of his journey to China (*Dictionarul literaturii române* 1979:570). The Moldavian Nicolae Milescu, also known as the Snub-Nosed following a punishment meant to deprive him of regnal ambitions, undertook the voyage between 1675 and 1678 in his capacity as a Russian ambassador to Beijing. As a result of this diplomatic mission, Milescu produced a monographic *Description of China*, as well as a travel journal and report; both circulated in Russian manuscript and Greek translation, and the travel journal was later published in St. Petersburg as *Travels through Siberia to the Chinese borders* (1882); Milescu's is the first travel account written by a Romanian, albeit only translated and published in the Romanian language in 1888 by G. Sion. Unlike the fantastic tales of his more famous European predecessor Marco Polo, whom he is certain to have read (Pacurariu 2008:15), Milescu's account provides a picturesque, yet scholarly description of the Chinese land, society and politics that borders cultural anthropology. Milescu also travelled extensively in Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire but left no account of such journeys.

In the late 17th – early 18th century, a Wallachian scholar and high official, Constantin Cantacuzino "Stolnicul" (the High Steward) wrote down the first known diary (titled in Romanian: *Caiet de insemnari*) drafted by a Romanian author in his mother tongue, recording his voyage to the Middle East, as well as to Southern, Western and Central Europe (Calinescu 1981:32). The diary remained unknown until uncovered by the Romanian historical personality

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Nicolae Iorga, who authenticated and published it next to Cantacuzino's fundamental work of national history, *Istoria Țării Rumânești dintru început*, in 1901 (Iorga 1969). The 18th century also featured an anonymous travel journal entitled *The agricultural journey of the Romanian boyar Romani through various parts of Europe*, published around 1775-78 in German translation at Nurnberg; the unverifiable account of a generic Romanian boyar tells of commercial pursuits and erratic itineraries and its picaresque character is worth studying elsewhere.

In the 19th century, another Wallachian scholar and high official, Dinicu (Constantin) Golescu, travels extensively through Europe, writes a report of his journey entitled *Account of My Travels* (Romanian: *Însemnare a călătoriei mele (...) făcută în anul 1824, 1825, 1826*) and has it immediately published in Buda in 1826. This is considered the first travel journal in Romanian literature (Piru 1994:34). Although the accounts by Milescu and Cantacuzino could contend for the same title, *Account of My Travels* is the first travel journal printed in Romanian. Actually, Golescu declares in his travel account that he had started to write down his observations in Romanian, but changed to Greek for lack of words, though embarrassed by the impression this could produce on his fellow travelers, who were all writing in their national languages. Nevertheless, the text is then translated and printed in Romanian, with transitional Cyrillic characters, in a declared intention to use and improve the language as an instrument for the betterment of his people.

In fact, Dinicu Golescu's *Account of My Travels* is not just the first printed Romanian travel account; it is also a representative travelogue in terms of the production and the reception, as well as the conventions of (Romanian) travel writing. Golescu's account may not have produced an immediate literary or societal impact, as it seems to have been little read in the 19th century (Angheliescu 1990:x1). However, following the publication of a second edition prepared by Nerva Hodos in 1910, the book became commonplace reading. In terms of critical recognition, 20th century Romanian scholars agree on its value not so much as literature but as a testimony and a symbol of 19th century Romania, both as it was and as it wished to become. In brief, Golescu's account of his European travels was consistently considered an expression of the national critical spirit (Cornea 1972:220) and of the crisis of consciousness of Romanian culture upon encountering the civilization of the West (Zub 1986:77); scholars even spoke of a "Dinicu Golescu complex" or a "European complex" (Schifirnet 2007:14) in this respect. "The transfiguration of this boyar symbolizes our whole revival" (Calinescu 1988:91) is the final judgment passed by the canonical critic G. Calinescu on the representativeness of Dinicu Golescu's travel account.

Contemporary scholars such as Mircea Angheliescu and Alex Drace-Francis have started to approach Golescu's work from a more ideologically-nuanced perspective. Nevertheless, as the historical and geographical accuracy of Golescu's account is being challenged (Angheliescu 1990) and questions of his motive and purpose are being asked (Drace-Francis 2008), Golescu's work continues to be looked at as if a mere document of personal or political, individual or collective pursuits. This article proposes a more literary approach to Golescu's *Account of My Travels* and undertakes to read it within the genre of travel writing. The broader point of the article is that a travelogue should be read neither as fact, nor as fiction – a distinction that travel writing eludes – but rather according to its own conventions of textualizing experience. Golescu's travelogue translates an empirical journey into a literary account, re-presenting his itinerary through European geography as an initiation into "European" values. Thus Golescu accounts not just of, but also for his travels by providing them with a meaning and a purpose.

Consequently, this article will focus on the meaning and purpose afforded by Dinicu Golescu to his European travels.

II. Of the importance of travel books

Golescu's *Account of My Travels* begins with an authentication and justification typical for travel writing. The title page serves an authenticating function that is usually assigned in travelogues to a written confirmation by a third party. The title specifically introduces the text as a travel account with a clear time and space reference, fully assumed by the empirical author "Constantin Radovici of Golesti." The text is further authenticated by the editor as a "Reife Beschreibung von Konft. Goleſi," with the publisher, place and date of publication duly mentioned. Such certifying details of empirical places, dates and people serve to enforce the veracity of the travelogue.

Subsequently, in a ten-line epigraph, Golescu introduces his account as a description focused on cities, villages and roads, as well as on the differences between peoples, crops, water(way)s and transport. The travel writer positions himself as a witness, judge and recorder of "the good": "Any good habit or deed that I saw, I wrote down for the use of my Nation."² "Nation" is an enlightened notion of European extraction and a daring touch here given Golescu's historical background, as his homeland Wallachia was merely a tributary province of the Ottoman Empire, ruled by princes predominantly appointed from the Greek elite of Istanbul. The good witnessed will be compared to "the evil customs pursued in our Homeland," the author adds. The Romanian word "Patria" that he uses and unusually capitalizes means the place of origin of a person or idea, the territory inhabited by a people, or a people's milieu. Unlike in "Nation," political connotations are subdued, personal ones are enhanced. It is the term "Homeland" rather than "Nation" that occurs throughout the travelogue and is defined in relation to Europe.

The travelogue is further justified by an address "To the Reader," which begins as follows: "Just as one who goes about other people's houses is free to see and think of his own, so I took the liberty, all during the travels accounted in this booklet, to think not of my home, but of my Homeland, for who thinks not of it does it no good and could either have no home or leave it behind." (Golescu 1910:1) Following this declaration of allegiance to the Homeland, Golescu emphasizes what he calls "a natural desire grown in man to acquire any good thing seen in others and to force himself, without taking it by force, to earn it if he lacks it or to mend it if he has it wrong" as the general human reason why "at every step and with every sight I could not help turning my mind's eyes onto my Homeland." (Golescu 1910:1) That should suffice to explain why "these sights, and the thoughts arisen in my soul by their encounter, I decided to share in print with my desirous countrymen," but a further reason is added, namely "shame": "in the libraries I saw, one can load a cartful of books covering journeys made by Europeans not only through India and China (the first travel journal by a Romanian, Milescu, is bound to the exotic alterity of the Far East as well, my note), but also to other lands and islands, more remote and less know, as well as to the nearest of countries," whereas "no such type of book has been seen with us, not even by those who could write many a better one." (Golescu 1910:1-2)

² Whereas no full translation into English of Dinicu Golescu's *Account of My Travels* has been published, the translations in this article are my own unless otherwise specified and refer to the 1910 edition of Golescu's work prepared by Nerva Hodos.

This layered motivation is followed by an expression of authorial humility, not infrequent with (travel) texts written before the professionalization of writing: aware of his “little science and sufferance of learning,” the travel writer declares he “would have never ventured to pick up the pen” (2) lest his urge to share the sights seen had not been stronger: “But how could I, having eyes, see not, seeing, consider not, considering, compare not, and comparing, discern not the good and wish to exhibit it to my fellow countrymen?” (Golescu 1910:2)

A developmental view of history as the passing down and enhancement of knowledge is then summarily expressed: “First the good was learnt by people one from another, then by peoples one from the other, as we can see in the histories that it is by travelling to Egypt that the Greeks extracted the lights of the sciences and many of the trades, which to the Romans they passed on manifold” (Golescu 1910:2) and serves to further justify Golescu’s own pursuit: “And the latter poured them all over the enlightened Europe, which multiplies them day by day and made them a hundred times more plentiful and brings blessing to its peoples by communicating the good collected during the journeys made by the people, in one another’s countries, and by publishing them in books.” (Golescu 1910:2) The first Romanian travelogue thereby becomes, argued Drace-Francis, “both a borrowing from Europe and a continuation of an identifiable preexisting cultural tradition.” (Drace-Francis 2009:57) In fact, Golescu calls upon both classical European and contemporary Wallachian models, the examples of the past and the heritage for the future, to support his argument linking travel, literature and civilization.

Foreign travel, written communication and national development are placed in a cause-effect relationship and, more specifically, travel books are considered to be an instrument of public good. That, in fact, is the higher purpose of travel books that justifies Golescu’s literary undertaking: they are vehicles of civilization. A comparative observation follows on the abundance of such books in Europe and its consequences: “There is no streak of land, however inconsiderable, no country, no city, not one village, which is unknown to any European; it is enough to know how to read.” (Golescu 1910:2) Comparison, as announced from the epigraph and initiated with the topic of books, will become the formal and substantial pattern of Golescu’s travelogue. The travel writer’s praise of European sights is permanently matched by his condemnation of Wallachian mores; however displeasing at points to Romanian readers, this constant criticism of the Homeland comes from a personal sensibility and has a political purpose. Moving swiftly from the first personal singular to the first person plural, the author consequently calls to collective awakening: “It is time to awaken, like good hosts who, when stepping out of their home, gather in for themselves and their households; so shall we gather the good, some from reading good and useful books, some from travelling, some from meeting and uniting with people of enlightened breeding, share it with our kinsmen and plant it on our land to bear fruit and multiply.” (Golescu 1910:3) As scholars have shown (Drace-Francis 2008:65), this call to action was of immediate political meaning; although Golescu dutifully mentions the propitious context of indigenous rule, he belonged, in fact, to an opposition who was growing impatient of the state of affairs – and his impatience surfaces in pathetic exclamations throughout the text. However, the travelogue defers the expression of a specific political message and frames it in cultural terms. The final motivation offered for this call to beneficial reading, writing, travelling and encounters is “so we earn from our offspring the gratitude received by our elders of old who found either by themselves or took from others some good and passed it down to us” (Golescu 1910:3) and the address to the reader ends in an warning against the failure to continue the predecessors’ work: “the higher their praise, the deeper our guilt, their offspring in blood but not in deeds.” (Golescu 1910:4)

The object of Golescu's travel observations is invariably called "the good"; it is always "the good" that he notes down for his people, but this good is neither an abstract notion, nor a moral principle, and not in the least a religious concept. Parenthetically, the travel writer is not at all religious-minded; he expresses harsh disapproval of self-interested religious institutions and only admires those working for the good of society; he solely appreciates the immanent values of modern civilization, and his appeals to positive action only refer to the final judgment of future generations. It is only at the end of the travelogue that he invokes a higher power, to a miraculous purpose: "May the merciful Lord turn His healing gaze upon these people, turning wicked hearts into merciful ones, money-hungry ones into generous ones and those overcome by bad habits to righteous ones." (Golescu 1910:72-3, translation by Drace-Francis) The good observed by Golescu is a social notion, the result of good government, and its methods and principles will be extracted from the prosaic details of infrastructure, agriculture and trade.

III. The art of Eutopia

Account of My Travels conscientiously follows Golescu's geographical itinerary through Transylvania, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. In verifying the accuracy of the account, scholars have noticed that some of the details of the journey were rearranged and some of the motives may have been left untold (Anghelescu 1990). External accuracy, however, is not the chief concern when it comes to travelogues. The genre is bound by out-reference, that is, the verifiable reference to empirical people, places and events, consequently, the development of a travelogue is rather mimetic; at the same time, however, a travelogue requires a balanced amount of in-reference to achieve coherence and cohesion as a text featuring an authorial voice, style and intention; moreover, a travelogue will usually refer to itself in terms of genre, value and purpose as a book or work of literature. In balancing out-reference, in-reference and self-reference, *Account of My Travels* is a full-fledged travelogue; it transcends the mere report of empirical travel into aesthetic value and societal message.

Golescu's account is a typical travelogue in terms of structure as well. Following the paratextual justifications, the text proper is divided into sections of varying length each providing a cross-cut description of a given place, interspersed with sections entitled "Special Address" containing the more general thoughts arisen by the traveler's observations. The "Table of the contents of my travels in the years 1824, 1825, 1826" at the end illustrates the careful structure of the travelogue and the natural flow of the special addresses growing out of the places and, especially, institutions observed, mainly in Austria and Italy. Hence the travelogue results to have a bi-dimensional composition: on the one hand, the travel pattern imposes a linear development and the travel writer carefully registers his geographical itinerary; this provides the horizontal coordinate that coherently forms the textual infrastructure; on the other hand, multiple points on this horizontal coordinate are projected on a vertical coordinate of further observations and analysis which provides the cohesive disposition of the travelogue.

The travel report begins with Brasov, where Golescu was an exile as an opposition boyar (Drace-Francis 2009:64). The city of Brasov was under Austrian rule at the time, but the Romanian name is duly mentioned and even the German name is transcribed phonetically using the Romanian letter "ș". Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Brasov are consistently othered into the third person, though no explicit mention is made of their European-ness. Golescu describes the town's administrative system and the poor agricultural quality of the land, which is compensated by the industriousness of the Saxon people. "In brief, a stranger, only by what he can see upon

entering their villages, will know their industry and that they have laws for the wellbeing of the Nation.” (Golescu 1910:6) He observes house architecture, clothing as status-marker: “a bare-footed Saxon is something no one will be able to see” (Golescu 1910:6), the organization of community life with a focus on social and moral education in school and church, the crops, and finishes with the distances to near settlements. “If I were to describe all the good designs of the town of Brasov, (...) I would have needed much time and paper, all the more so as I have to write of many other towns,” apologizes the travel writer (Golescu 1910:7). The descriptions of the other traveled places in Transylvania are equally unpromising: they begin with “This, too,...” and end with the distances to near localities, abound in nouns to the point of enumeration, and qualify the sights as “large”, “small”, “various” or, frequently, “beautiful.” In the small town of Fagaras, the traveler notes the large bridge; in Avric he describes a garden whose beauty, though with much expense and labour achieved, had somewhat decreased; Sibiu is praised for the library and collections exhibited in the house of the Baron of Brukental. Golescu focuses predominantly on urban human settlements and applies the same descriptive pattern everywhere: location, size, government, town planning, occupations and distance to the next stop. This sets the premises for a barren description of human geography, save for Golescu’s descriptive method soon moves beyond immediate observation; already emerging in the first pages, comparison, both among the foreign towns observed, and to the Homeland, forms the bridge from observation to an increasingly in-depth analysis; the purpose of this analysis is to extract from the diversity of places those common features of organization and government that can lead to the wellbeing and happiness of man. Theory is excerpted out of practice: “In this town as well they take all sorts of good care for good organisation, leisure, adornment, and the facilitation of learning and to all the effects that lead man to happiness.” (Golescu 1910:9) Golescu’s journey into European civilisation is an occasion to learn and communicate the path to social good.

After passing Buda, where the travel writer’s attention is caught by the astronomical observatory, the bridge across the Danube offering mighty sights and revenues, and the appearance of social peace and understanding, Golescu witnesses the coronation of the “Empress of Emperor Francis II of Austria”, which impresses him not so much by the wealth of the ceremony, but by the good humour and wishes of the people. This sight, which he deems hard to imagine in his Homeland, prompts the following general judgment: “It is a petty and unfulfilling achievement, lacking in honour and unworthy of praise, for a mere man to rule many a lands solely by tyrannical power and to the destruction of the folk.” (Golescu 1910:20-1) The coronation ceremony is only described in those details that emphasize the great happiness of the empress for being shown so much respect and love by the people, as well as the people’s respect and love for its rulers, in contrast to the abominable state of the people in Wallachia.

It is probably this exclusive selection of positive images and the resulting idealized considerations on European government that have caused critics to consider that of the details of a factual journey through Europe Golescu only retains those elements necessary to make up a utopian pattern and to subsequently describe *Account of My Travels* as a “social utopia” (Angelescu 1990) or a “Eurotopia” (Drace-Francis 2009). However, a utopia is essentially a “civitas imaginalis” (Antohei 1999), a non-place inhabited by an imagined society. In terms of genre, utopias may strategically mimic the conventions of travel writing, as does, for instance, Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), but their out-reference is necessarily absent, whereas travel writing is bound to its reference to empirical people, places and events. In Golescu’s account, the historical coronation is an example of out-reference that is idealized in the text to a pragmatic purpose. *Account of My Travels* is an idiosyncratic interpretation of an existing society, not a

utopia (Greek *οὐ* “not” and *τόπος* “place”, i.e. “no place”); it could rather be called a “Eutopia” in the Greek sense of the word *εὖ* “good” and *τόπος* “place”, i.e. “good place” since it is “the good” of Europe that interests Golescu.

Picking up on a previous idea, Golescu suggests that following the good example of Europe should begin with translation to make up for the lack of books and deficiencies of the language and therefore proposes the establishment of a society of educated people who would translate, write and teach. In fact, Golescu started a school for the children of both noblemen and commoners on his estate and supported the publication in 1829 of the first Romanian journal, “*Curierul romanesc*”. It appears that his *ars poetica* is also his *ars civica* and vice versa. His travelogue is a result of civic concern: “These good deeds of the rulers and sons of nobility, seeking to direct the people to happiness and with all means embellish all towns and villages, as well as the roads, and the happiness and leisure that even the simplest of men can enjoy, forced me to dare describe the good things I have seen” (Golescu 1910:70) and is a source of civic action: “to call my fellow kinsmen to the society as I have seen, which takes pains to remove the bad and embrace the good, and to the translation of books.” (Golescu 1910:70) The travelogue is a medium for translating, writing and teaching Eutopian values so that they could be integrated into the Homeland.

IV. Conclusion: the (M)otherland

In Golescu’s travelogue, the Homeland is consistently defined by negative comparison to Europe. The polarisation seems clear-cut: the travel writer finds “the good” in Europe and contrasts it to the bad customs in his own land. Homeland thus appears as a negative space: substantially, it is only characterised by its faults; formally, it is not even the travelogue’s point of departure, because the traveler starts his journey not from home, but from Transylvania, under foreign rule at the time. The Homeland, therefore, has no material presence in the travelogue as if, as Drace-Francis put it, “another element of Wallachia’s frequently attested inferiority were its failure to coagulate into a real place.” (Drace-Francis 2009:62) Then, the Homeland appears to be the site of the Other, a non-space.

Yet the Homeland is always in the background of the journey, ever the term of comparison and contrast to the sights of Europe. Its presence is palimpsestic: the traveler is writing an account of Europe over it, but the story of the Homeland reads through and eventually appropriates the travel account to its own purposes. It may not be the travelogue’s place of origin, but it is certainly its end. Though seldom, Golescu does refer to his Homeland geographically with the exonym of Wallachia or politically as the Principality of Wallachia and only once as “*tara Romaneasca*” (Golescu 1910:2); however, the broader autonym “Romanian” is rather frequently employed in the travelogue in the context of language, books, and people (though the latter are Austrian soldiers) but not in the context of place. Due to this sparse out-reference, the Homeland remains an abstract concept; it is a duly capitalized Idea.

To offer substance to this Idea, two definitions of the Homeland are provided in the travelogue. The first definition is the travel writer’s own and makes use of affective imagery. The exile Golescu defines the Homeland as “a land (...) no one wants to leave” and continues with a moving metaphor: “this land is a mother who loves all her children and makes no distinction among them except only inasmuch they wish to distinguish themselves.” (Golescu 1910:70) The principle of filial equality is further emphasized: “She feeds them and offers them her milk with the same joy it is received. She is a mother who desires to be among her children,

of which some may be richer, some less so, but wishes none to be poor, be they big or small, nor wants any to be oppressed by adversity.” (Golescu 1910:70) Next, however, the travel writer calls upon others to define the Homeland and intertextually asks: “In which corner of the earth is that Homeland and where are its dwellers?” (Golescu 1910:72), a question he attributes to “father Cone,” whom Angheliescu assumes to be the German educationalist J.H. Campe (Angheliescu 1990:xxiv), but Drace-Francis identifies as the poet Carl Theodor Körner (Drace-Francis 2009:61). The question fails to receive a positive answer because, when asked to the citizens of Wallachia, “the man of the people burst into tears; the boyar judge knitted his eyebrows and kept a dark silence; the soldier cursed me; the courtesan whistled at me; and the government tax farmer asked me ‘this word Homeland is it a kind of rent, or what?’” (Golescu 1910:72, translation by Drace-Francis) The social typologies dramatically called upon do not have a positive rapport with or understanding of the Homeland, so the Homeland appears as a socially void notion. To fill that void, Golescu subsequently calls upon classical Greek, Spartan, and Roman examples of one’s loving duty to one’s country with a view to reframing the Homeland in terms of family relations of both love and duty.

As for the Homeland’s term of comparison, Europe, the text features no fewer than 21 occurrences of the words “Europe” and “European”. From the onset, Golescu defines the itinerary of his journey as European; although he travels through distinct countries the political and social milieu of which he accurately registers, he continuously presents them as part and parcel of Europe. The first reference to the European ethnonym appears in the address “To the Reader,” when Golescu remembers the libraries full of books describing journeys made by Europeans; “enlightened Europe”, he notes, is full of such books “as of other things.” (Golescu 1910:2) Europe, therefore, provides the societal, as well as the literary example for Golescu’s travelogue. Actually, Golescu’s carefully designed travelogue does not seem to have an identifiable model, but it must be based on the many literary examples encountered by the traveler and on the practical example of his fellow travelers. References to the other things European include: the comprehensive geographical knowledge of Europeans (2), the many travel books written by Europeans (2), as well as the books on Romanian history that can only be found in Europe (2), the youth who completed their studies in enlightened Europe (3), the rightful government of European rulers (41), the modesty of European fashion (43), the fair pay and recognition of one’s work in Europe (62), the duty to serve one’s country in Europe (65), the hope of “reaching the state of the other nations of Europe” (65), Venice as a past centre of all Europe (82), the modest dress of men of Europe (94), the fair political judgment of European rulers (105), the merit-based system of official ranks in Europe (105), a professor famous in all Europe (121), the emperors of Europe (127), European languages (130), European lands (142), etc. The enumeration above shows that “Europe” and “European” appear mainly in the related contexts of education, politics and society, in exclusively positive terms; moreover, their usage produces the impression that, for the travel writer, Europe is a unitary geographical and political entity characterized by good government and social happiness.

Drace-Francis was tempted to conclude that Golescu’s Europe “is not so much a place as a series of abstracted ideas.” (Drace-Francis 2009:61) However, Europe is very much a place in the travelogue, shaped by its geography and inhabitants; its towns and villages are described by Golescu in conscientious detail, including size, population, and distances. Europe has a clear and rather borderless topography for Golescu, but it is not just a geographical notion and it is not even the main focus of the travelogue. The concept of Europe is never defined in the travelogue perhaps because it comes as a datum, unlike the idea of Homeland. Europe simply functions here

as a metonymy of civilization, the ubiquitous markers of which are carefully observed during travel and communicated through the travelogue in order to be integrated in the Homeland and imbue it with “the good.”

Nevertheless, the positive-negative polarisation of Europe and Homeland is occasionally subverted by the text. First, the odd reference to civilized Europe as “the other nations of Europe” (Golescu 1910:65) upsets the pattern and duplicates the notion of Europe, making it include its apparent opposite. Europe therefore means not just the exemplary lands of Golescu’s journey, but also his Homeland, as well as the less fortunate “Turkish Europe” (Golescu 1910:77). Second, Golescu’s own position as a traveler is ambiguous: an exile Wallachian, he is an outsider to both the Homeland and the traveled Europe; he is a Europeanized Wallachian and an Oriental European. The Europe he represents is a set of sights selected, interpreted and conveyed as an illustration of social good. His mobility affords him distance, but his travelogue is nevertheless emotionally charged and politically involved. The travelogue itself, with all its unflinching opposition of the good in Europe vs. the bad at home translates Golescu’s European journey into a literary initiation into the ways of social good to be integrated in the Homeland and is therefore designed to eventually transgress the Europe/Homeland opposition. In this sense the travel writer concludes his account: “I rejoice in the hope that the time need come when my Homeland, I do not say in few years, will maybe not resemble exactly those great towns that I saw but will at least make the first step that brings peoples to happiness, which is the one and only step of Union to the benefit of the people, as I have said many a time.” (Golescu 1910:148) Is Golescu referring to the union of government and opposition or is he advancing a broader political project? In any case, the equation of travel, writing and civilization is affirmed from the travelogue’s beginning to end, in Eutopian faith.

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