

Inter- multi-trans and cross-disciplinary research: what lies ahead of the research in Modern Greek studies on Romanian soil (and at large)?

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The present article sets itself the aim of scrutinising research methods with the aim of evaluating Modern Greek studies in Romania with a view to developing a perspective on their future directions.

Research at large¹ has been based on the assumption that such studies needed to be specific and had to delimitate their objects. The more positive the identification of the object, the delimitation of the competence and the definition of the research method, the more a discipline was deemed able to evolve as a science proper. The need for communication among different types of discourses has ultimately led to an interdisciplinary research which pays respects to disciplinary research but makes use of several different methods, namely multi and trans-disciplinary research.

Multi-disciplinary Research

Multi-disciplinary² research consists of a dialogue between more than two disciplines and the analysis of an object from many points of view, encompassing various methods of research. Cross-disciplinary research³ does not resort to a quantitative accumulation of methods and perspectives but suggests a new method as a result of the combination of a series of disciplinary methods. The cross-disciplinary approach does not question the essence of subject-focused research but simply affirms and

¹ See Floarea Varban, "Filologia – cercetare interdisciplinară", *Limba Română*: 416–430.

² Which could be also called cross-disciplinary (See R. Fagin, I. Y. Halpern, Y. Moses M. Y. Vardi Reasoning about knowledge, The MIT Press, 1995.

³ Basarab Nicolescu, *La transdisciplinarité Manifeste*, Monaco, 1996 and its Romanian translation, Iasi, Polirom 1999.

legitimises it. To date cross disciplinary research has not been sufficiently clarified from a theoretical point of view and is often interpreted as interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary research.

The main difference between cross-disciplinary research and trans-disciplinary research is the completely different perspective taken on object and topic. Trans-disciplinary research starts from the object and focuses on its essence. It is the only kind of research which transcends the disciplinary framework and the only approach which succeeds in escalating structuralism. The trans-disciplinary approach suggests a qualitative leap on the vertical axis. Inter- multi- and cross- disciplinary approaches may be considered necessary premises yet they are not sufficient for trans-disciplinary research. This paper is neither a summary nor a synthesis of these kinds of research but rather a critical appraisal of the researched object. Is this kind of research really necessary and is it possible?

Trans-disciplinary Research

Trans-disciplinary research is possible as it does not mean ignoring disciplinary research but stands in fact for a better knowledge of more than one subject. Trans-disciplinary research does not necessarily need an exhaustive knowledge of subject research. It can be carried out either individually or collectively. When carried out individually relies on specialized expertise. Trans-disciplinary research implies a critical approach to subject research and aims at attenuating formalism in excess, the rigidity of definitions and rendering objectivity absolute. Any discipline according to the main theoretician of transdisciplinarity⁴ can be animated by the transdisciplinary attitude.

With these definitions in mind, a few cases taken from the contributions on Modern Greek Studies and related research in this field, to date, in Romania, may help illustrate the complexities.

Modern Greek Studies as a field of scholarly knowledge in Romania

The need for Modern Greek Studies was felt in Romania in the second half of the 19th century when the national state was consolidating diverse areas. Modern Greek Studies flourished as a subject proper with Demostene Russo (1869–1938) and with a following generation best represented by Russo's nephew and niece, namely Nestor Camariano and Ariadna Camariano-Cioran.

Demostene Russo the founding father of systematic studies such as Modern Greek studies, opted for a mainly interdisciplinary research in this domain.

⁴ The whole discussion is indebted to Basarab Nicolescu *Op. cit* (Romanian translation), pp. 5, 9, 48, 52, 172.

To substantiate this assertion, Russo was mainly a Byzantine scholar but tackled many topics of Greek Romanian relationships in articles which paved the way either to their elucidation or to future research. The rules he exposed in his book entitled *Critica textelor și tehnica edițiilor* (The critique of the text and the technique of the editor)⁵ are valid to this day. He saw them as a method which was not an aim in itself but a good pathway to worthwhile scholarly productions.

Grace a Russo, the main historical chronicles involving or dedicated solely to the Romanian Principalities, were written in Greek and were widely known. For example, Russo used said chronicles to develop a series of university lectures, between 1919–1920. Additional chronicles included the Life of Saint Niphon,⁶ the chronographs of Dorotheus of Monembasia⁷ and Cigalas;⁸ the History of Wallachia by Metrophanos Gregoras⁹ of Moldavia and by Kyparissas,¹⁰ the History of the Ghica family.

In addition, Russo was the one who threw the final light on the Greek ballads inspired by the Romanian prince, Michael the Brave.¹¹ His articles, dedicated to this particular subject, opened the path for further trans-disciplinary research. He researched Romanian folklore and literature at large to uncover that Michael the Brave was not much admired by his compatriots who produced, in fact, nothing in the literary field related to him. This, in stark contrast to the Greeks who saw the man as a possible saviour of Christianity and made him the hero of several ballads. The first such ballad was by one of his fellow warriors who survived him and was imprisoned in the town of Bistritsa¹² in Transylvania, where he wrote the poem. The man was called Stavrinos and his poem¹³ was first published in Venice in 1638 and was re-printed another two centuries later. Tellingly, in a comparative logic which by itself would require an inter-disciplinary approach, Stavrinos bemoaned Michael the Brave who had died a heroic and unjust death like Alexander the Great, Belisarios, Solomon and Samson, before him. The second author to make Michael into a hero was Palamed,¹⁴ a Greek interpreter for the Duke who ruled Ostrov, a small town on the Danube border.

Nestor Camariano's (1906–1986) contributions were extremely consistent but ranged mainly within an inter-disciplinary span. He specialised in monographs of a

⁵ See *Studii istorice Greco-române*, Bucharest, 1939:543–637.

⁶ Ibid., 19–34.

⁷ Ibid., 68–86.

⁸ Ibid., 87–91.

⁹ Ibid., 411–460.

¹⁰ Ibid., 465–485.

¹¹ See “Faima lui Mihai Viteazul în străinătate”, în *Op. cit.*, Tomul I, 103–156.

¹² The verses from which we infer these read: Εκεί μέσα εις την Ερδελιάν, στης Πίστρησας το κάστρον... (apud D. Russo, op. cit., 117).

¹³ Called Ανδραγαθίες του ευσεβεστάτου και ανδρειοτάτου Μιχαήλ Βοεβόδα.

¹⁴ His rhymed chronicle was called Ιστορία περιέχουσα πάσας τας πράξεις και ανδραγαθίας και πολέμους του εκλαμπροτάτου Μιχαήλ Βοεβόδα, αυθέντη Ουγγροβλαχίας, Τρανσυλβανίας, Μολδοβίας, έως την ημέραν της τελευτής αυτού, παρά Γεωργίου του Παλαμήδη ... 1607...

larger or lesser length and threw much light on Rigas Fereos' life¹⁵ on Romanian soil, as well as the life and works of Athanasios Hristopoulos, a doctor and lawyer who had made significant contributions to literature.¹⁶

Ariadna Camariano Cioran (1906–1993) brought together, in a fundamental work, the documents concerning the local princely academies.¹⁷ Thus hundreds of handbooks and individual manuscripts that had been scattered around were reunified to make up a monograph which gave a very precise idea of literary life in two academic institutions; an impressive history that spanned a century and a half. However, the conception of the monograph remained inter-disciplinary. Due to this factor and to the depleted state of research references on Byzantine education, there was technically speaking, little reference to Byzantine or European realities which might have provided information on the type of education that was dispensed in this period.

Another contribution by Cioran dealt with diplomatic relations with the Porte based on a study of the reports of the agents of prince Constantine Mavrocordatos.¹⁸ Yet another monograph by the same author traced the intellectuals from Epirus who lived in the Romanian Principalities.¹⁹ The rest of Camariano Cioran contributions consisted of a series of articles, amounting to 800 pages,²⁰ that seemed to leave almost no topic aside. Cioran considered most of the translations from Greek into Romanian (starting with the Byzantine Poricologos and possibly ending with Catherine the Great's Regulations) and also included studies of such major areas as *The Mirrors of the Prince* literature (also known as the Byzantine *paraineses*).

Cornelia Papacostea Danielopolu (1927–1998) was part of a further generation and her research was, from its inception, multi-disciplinary as all the local data, both Greek and Romanian, formed an important part of the Western European perspective. Danielopolu side stepped the unearthing of untouched manuscripts and instead, re-organized much of the material brought to light by the former generations. Thanks to her a scholarly compilation of the contents, Greek literature written on Romanian soil, emerged to stay.²¹

¹⁵ See Georgeta Filitti (ed.) *Românii despre Rigas* (the Romanians on Rigas), Nestor Camariano, Cîteva considerații cu privire la revoluționarul Rigas Veletinlis 225–255, Quelques precisions au sujet de a traduction du drame l'Olympiade de Metastasio, faite par Rhigas Veletinlis: 257–264, Rhigas Veletinlis. Complètement et corrections concernant sa vie et son activité: 275–375.

¹⁶ Nestor Camariano, *Athanasios Christopoulos sa vie, son œuvre littéraire et ses rapports avec la culture roumaine*, Salonica, 1981.

¹⁷ In her book *Les académies princières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs*, Salonica, 1974.

¹⁸ Ariadna Camariano Cioran, *Reprezentanta diplomatica a Moldovei la Constantinopol* (30 august 1741 — decembrie 1742) *Rapoartele inedite ale agentilor lui Constantin Mavrocordat*, Bucharest, 1985.

¹⁹ *Contributions a l'histoire des relations greco-roumaines. L'Epire et les Pays Roumains*, Ioannina, 1980.

²⁰ Recently published in a collection called *Relatii romano-elene*, Bucharest, 2008.

²¹ Cornelia Papacostea Danielopolu, *Literatura în limba greacă din Principatele Române* (1774–1830), Bucharest, 1982.

In the vein of the tradition that explored research in local libraries,²² Papacostea Danielopolu searched for more obscure documents and drew on their content to reconstitute the intellectual life of the 18th and 19th century.²³ This was a time consuming task given that the research data had been many times dispersed due to the six devastating wars that had been waged in the region during the 18th century.

Similar trans-disciplinary research bore fruit many decades after when Andrei Pip-pidi produced a comprehensive article²⁴ that dealt with the central theme of death; this time in the life of yet another Romanian prince, Constantine Brancoveanu, beheaded in Constantinople in 1714. Pippidi explored a large range of literary genres that began with Theophylaktos Simocata's *Byzantine history*; he traced the origin of a possible theme of death in Byzantium. He further examined the life and works of Brancoveanu and the outcomes were impressive: Pippidi found writings dedicated to Brancoveanu that were of European origin as well as Romanian or Greek. They encompassed three different affiliations: the witnesses of the foreign diplomats, the Western literary echoes, the Greek chronicles and the tragedy *Domna* and the Romanian chronicles and ballads.

Cross Disciplinary Research and the Attrition Approach

Revisiting the entire field of Modern Greek studies in Romania one gets an impression that most of the main issues were dealt with and that the essentials were covered. For example, in search of cross disciplinary research of value, a contribution on astronomy stands as a significant example: a paper read at a conference on astronomy, that referred to the work of Rigas.²⁵

It remains, now, for posterity to consider a focus on the possibilities for future studies and associated methods. One sound principle that might guide a future pathway might be the adoption of the resume approach used for historical matters used by young researchers:²⁶ this approach creates a "resume" for every generation.

The main incentive for considering strategic approaches is found in the veritable piles (documents are measured in cubic metres and there are hundreds of them) of anonymous manuscripts. Their contents²⁷ range from medicine, to trade, philosophy,

²² As were N. Iorga's contributions on the Mavrocordos library in Bucharest namely *Pilda bunilor domni din trecut*, *Analele Academiei Romane*, vol. XXXVII, Bucharest, 1914:77–120.

²³ See her *biblioteca din Moldova la inceputul secolului al XIX-lea*, *Biblioteca de la Stinca*, *Studii si cercetari de bibliologie*, V, Bucharest, 1963:215–220.

²⁴ Namely *La mort à Constantinople: héritage byzantin ou naissance d'une légende* in *Etudes Byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. V, Bucharest, 2006:471–496.

²⁵ E. Theodossiou, Th. Manimanis, N. Vassilios, M. Dimitrijević, E. Danezi, *Rigas Velestinlis and Astronomy in his "Anthology of Physics" in Exploring the solar system and the universe*, AIP Conference Proceedings, Volume 1043, (2008): 74–75.

²⁶ As is for instance Tudor Dinu and his contribution *A little known poem by George the Aetolian about Lady Chiajna* in *Etudes Byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. V, Bucharest, 2006:459–470.

²⁷ Actually described in catalogues (namely C. Litzica, *Catalogul manuscrisurilor grecesti de la Biblioteca*

political science. In terms of method, trans-disciplinary could be supplemented with cross disciplinary strategies to encourage even more flexibility and rigour.

Could a set of principles arise from such acutely felt problems? One consideration might be the principle of attribution. The attribution studies approach, has been used successfully, in other fields, in the last two and a half millennia²⁸ and it is very much enhanced by computer-based work. Attribution studies include the very useful forensic methods that permit the identification of the hand/hands responsible for a manuscript. One recent contribution proved very successful using attribution. This was in relation to a monograph dedicated to the manuscripts of Nicholas the Spatharios, a learned Romanian who lived in the 17th century and was “an Encyclopaedia man *avant la lettre*”.²⁹ Educated in the academy of the Greek patriarchate in Constantinople, the Romanian spent time in his motherland and also in Sweden, Russia and China (he actually took a trip to that place and left a travelogue which was to make a glorious career). He wrote in Romanian (which at some point he rendered in the Greek alphabet), Greek, Latin, Russian. His contributions were either original³⁰ or based on translations either from Greek into Romanian or into Russian. His manuscripts are now scattered among twenty six libraries in eight different countries.

This monograph can be considered a landmark in this kind of trans-disciplinary approach in which attribution work was involved, to compensate for the range of geographic areas. Such work must needs be done by a team involving a specialist in graphology or an author specialising in language and writing research.

Let us consider the ensuing illustrations.³¹ They give an idea of the same hand evident in two or more different alphabets. A complete approach to the matter should encompass the “concordance” of at least four such alphabets (for example, Latin, Turkish and Arabic characters).

Annex 3 reproduces three samples from Rigas’ handwriting³² in three different alphabets. It is the task of future research to put such data together and consider, where possible, the enlargement of the mentioned author’s canon. Such a process has already begun, in part, with a team including myself, and before me, with Antea

Academiei Romane, Bucharest, 1909, Nestor Camariano, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecesti de la Biblioteca Academiei Romane*, tomul II, Bucharest 1939 and Mihai Caratasu, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecesti din biblioteca Academiei Romane*, Volumul III, Bucharest, 2005) and archives notes but when anonymous and undated in an tentative manner.

²⁸ In Harold Love’s opinion (See *Attributing authorship*, Cambridge, 2002:1) “the tradition of these studies reaches back as far as the great library of Alexandria and embraces the formation of the Jewish and Christian biblical canons”.

²⁹ See Zamfira Mihail, *Nicolae le Spathaire Milesco a travers ses manuscrits*, Bucharest, 2009:8.

³⁰ As is *Enchiridion sive Stella Orientalis Occidentali splendens, id est sensus Ecclesiae Orientalis, scilicet Graece, de Transsubstantione Corporis Domini, aliisque controversiis*.

³¹ Taken from Zamfira Mihail *op. cit.*: 153 and are annexes 1 and 2.

³² The first two of which are quoted in Georgeta Filitti (ed.) *op. cit.* Nestor Camariano, *Cîteva considerații cu privire la revoluționarul Rigas Velestinlis 225–255* while the third is reproduced in Rigas, *Opere inedite*, (Lia Brad Chisacof ed.), Bucharest, 1998:239.

Frantzis³³ and Ilia Hatzipanagiotis-Sangmeister.³⁴ The process has focussed on some rare Phanariot poems, recurrent in anthologies of the end of the 18th century and with a piece of literature that would mark the beginning of short prose in the Balkans.³⁵

Let me illustrate the “handwriting principle” through a personal contribution. In my former research on the Greek literature of the Romanian Principalities³⁶ I encountered an anonymous comedy called *Κωμωδία νέα της Βλαχίας*. The comedy was quite well written, with much of its referentiality related to Greek antiquity and scientific medicine which was challenged by a newly discovered method of magnetism. My guess was that one of the doctors who was part of the personae of the play was the concealed author (in view of the degree of humour and its educative inferences). The personae could thus be Silvester Fillitis, a Contantinakis (three real doctors by this name were active in Bucharest where the comedy is set), Anastasios (Fillitis) Christaris, Reider and Arsakis (a man who afterwards was to become prime-minister of Romania and who founded a school for girls bearing his name, the Arsakeion, in Greece).

In another example that maps together two samples (annexes 4³⁷ and 5) one surmises that the manuscripts have been written by the same hand and that the author of the first one is known. Through this study of the hand writing and the deductions I made, I “reopened the file” of the comedy’s author. Revisiting my former guess³⁸ from a different point of view, the idea that the author was a doctor could still be supported except that he was not a practitioner but simply one who had gone through medical training and was thus able to comment on medical life. The literary talent was obvious and the knowledge of Greek antiquity was a fact. All these points converged, as do the two handwriting samples, and unveiled Athanasios Christopoulos. Christopoulos lived between 1771–1847 and the date I established for the comedy was somewhere between 1809 (when the Wallachian government appointed a commission for the revision of the diplomas of those who practised medicine) and 1819 when some of the doctors referred to were asked to set up regulations for the pharmacies. Christopoulos’s tragedy *Achilleas in Schiros* dated from 1804³⁹ while his book of poems⁴⁰ dated from 1811 so a comedy written either in 1809 or a decade later could very well have been his.

How could cross disciplinary research be incorporated in my particular field of research? In my view it would mean starting strictly from a particular discipline

³³ Andeia Frantzis Μισμαγιά. *Ανθολόγιο φαναριώτικης ποίησης κατά την έκδοση Ζήση Δαούτης* (Misma-ya. An Anthology of Phanariot poetry following the edition of Zisis Daoutis 1818), Athens, 1993:34–35.

³⁴ Ilia Chatzipanagiotis-Sangmeister, “Το σχολείο των ντελικάτων εραστών” και το “Ερωτος αποτελέσματα” in *Ελληνικά*, volume 23/2001, Salonica, 2001:143–165.

³⁵ Lia Brad Chisacof, “Closed doors performances of dancing poetry in Wallachia at the end of the 18th century”, *Revue des études Sud-est européennes*, vol. 45, n. 1–4 (2007):207–219.

³⁶ Lia Brad Chisacof, *Antologie de literatură greacă din Principatele Române*, Bucharest, 2003.

³⁷ Taken from Nestor Camariano, *Athanasios Christopoulos*.

³⁸ Lia Brad Chisacof, *Op. cit.*: XXVIII.

³⁹ See Nestor Camariano, *Athanasios Christopoulos...*: 131–156 and 183.

⁴⁰ Called *Αυρικά* and published in Venice.

(medicine, folklore, trade history) and using the contents of even unedited documents to fuel case studies. The task would involve working in groups of specialists as there are very scarce instances of people trained in medicine and medical history who could cope with the difficulties of reading an 18th cent. multi-lingual manuscript.

Were we to consider the medical manuscripts kept in the library of the Romanian Academy⁴¹ what I imagine would happen would involve the formation of a group of researchers trying to evaluate the following: the remedies prescribed, the efficiency of the plants involved, and their origin and accessibility in the 18th century. Last but not least the research group would look at these treatises as part of the European medicine of that time and seek to trace any local contributions.

There are many manuscripts with folkloric contents ranging from weather forecasts, superstitions linked to various natural phenomena, to magical texts. They all, in their turn, await proper research. The weather forecasts would be tackled from the viewpoint of meteorology, while magic would be considered in the light of the immense progress made in the field. Trade should be seen in terms of the contemporary to us, with equivalent values provided for the money or weights and of course, the right description of the context.

Concluding Comment

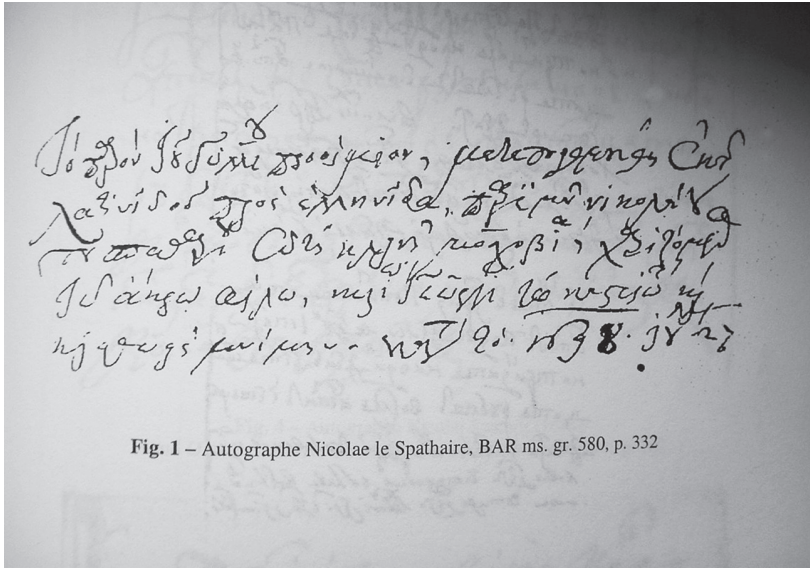
To conclude, my point is that in any globalised research and its particular circumstances such as Modern Greek studies in Romania, the methods should be addressed correspondingly.

Looking at the former contributions in the field without which the new ones could not exist, it seems in my opinion that trans-disciplinary approaches should be favoured with a special stress on attribution studies and that cross disciplinary research could further present the data in a new, valuable light.

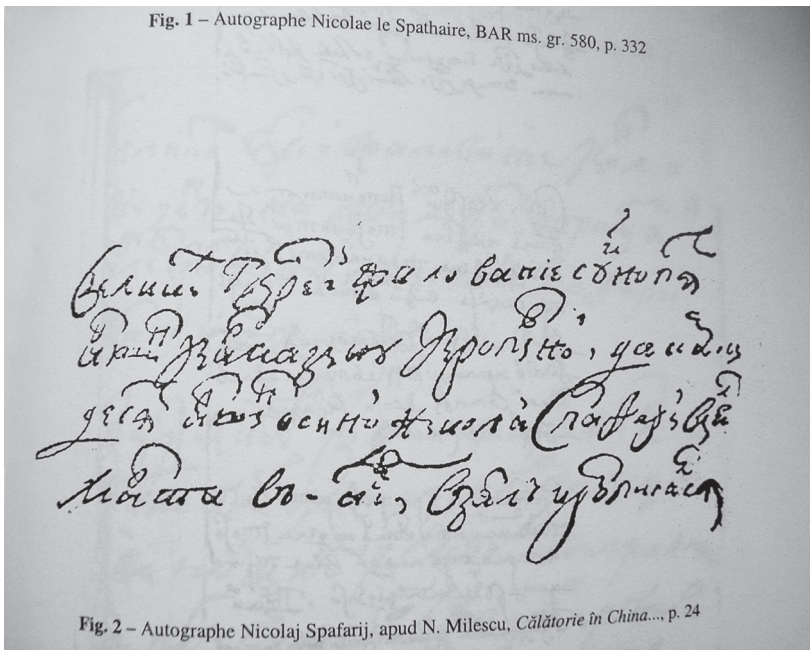
⁴¹ See G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor românești de la Biblioteca Academiei Române*, Bucharest, 1983–1995, all 5 volumes.

Annexes

Annex 1



Annex 2



[illegible]

Archived at Flinders University: dspace.flinders.edu.au

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Annex 5

I. Evs
 Iavvynōns
 Aēs
 Eρmēs
 Θηροφάγαι Αἰὼν
 Αἰανός
 Αλκωνος
 Iακουράης
 Τηλεβοστος, Κανολαντινάων, Αρκαλαῖος, Παιλ
 ναιγοισοὶ Εξαγέδαοι Παροργιστοφοὶ Βουρ
 Μαυρίστιας

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