

LUCIAN DRIMBA, ABOUT IOSIF VULCAN'S TRAVEL NOTES



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Abstract: Lucian Drimba, a well-known historian and literary critic, as a result of his research on the Transylvanian cultural phenomenon in the second half of the 19th century and on the beginnings of the Romanian theatre, remains a reliable voice for studying Iosif Vulcan's works. Besides poetry, prose, drama and letters, his travel notes, which fall into the category of memorialist writings, are rendered by L. Drimba in his two volumes: Travel notes (I), 1994 and Travel notes (II) Correspondence, 2002. Even though they have little artistic value, the travel notes are appreciated for their informative and educational value, as Lucian Drimba emphasizes I. Vulcan's intention to share, with his readers, information that is relevant for general knowledge and, mostly, for the revival of patriotic feelings. Lucian Drimba's research, as an account of I. Vulcan's activity in a scientific manner, puts the multitude of cultural aspects in order and provides a solid ground for understanding the importance of his actions, in the specific Transylvanian context of the second half of the 19th Century.

Key words: notes, travel, literary historian, research, culture

Known as a historian and literary critic, due to his research on the Transylvanian cultural phenomenon in the second half of the 19th Century and on the beginnings of the Romanian theatre, Lucian Drimba remains a reliable voice for studying Iosif Vulcan's works. His four volumes edition (*Poetry, Prose, Drama*, 1987, *Published works*, 1989, *Travel notes (I)*, 1994, *Travel notes (II) Correspondence*, 2002), *Eminescu in the "Familia" Magazine* (1974), as well as the *Iosif Vulcan* (1974) monograph, make up a unifying, precise image, unique to this day, due to its complex

presentation form, of the impressive activity and work of the Transylvanian tribune, a representative personality of the cultural life in the second half of the 19th century. Besides poetry, prose, drama and letters, his travel notes, which fall into the category of memorialist writings, are rendered by L. Drimba in his two volumes: *Travel notes* (I), 1994 and *Travel notes* (II) Correspondence, a volume issued posthumously, in 2002. These anthologies of I. Vulcan's memorialist writings, issued in the Restitutio series, which "publish, in scientific editions, those Romanian literature writers who, without representing fundamental values, are worth knowing for their contribution to the development of our culture"¹, are praised by Lucian Drimba for their documentary value.

The judicious selection of the texts, as well as their specific successive order, shows an unstated, yet noticeable intention, throughout the body of documentary notes, to add new portraying tones or to emphasize those already pictured in the vast biography dedicated to the scholar I. Vulcan. They lead to profound and admirable connexions with the information on his life and activity, detailed in his monography research from 1974, as well as with his entire work. The travel notes bring to attention the pertinent remarks and conclusions made by the historian and literary critic Lucian Drimba with regard to the documentary value of these writings with memorialist character: expressiveness, their level of artistic achievement, the language, the way in which I. Vulcan understood and contemplated the world.

The two volumes of travel notes compile a unitary image and present an overall vision, actual and correctly elaborated, on I. Vulcan's role in the Transylvanian cultural context. Thus, these selections presented by Lucian Drimba make up an anthological image of the Romanian society at the end of the 19th Century.

The place of these texts in the context of Iosif Vulcan's work, the estimation of their documentary and instructive, educational value, as well as their contribution in picturing aspects of social life, are rendered both in Iosif Vulcan monography, 1974, and in the scientific work entitled *I. Vulcan's travel notes*, 1970, published in the annals of the University of Oradea. This research begins with the presentation of the complex activity carried on by

¹ Lucian Drimba, *Iosif Vulcan, Travel notes*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1994, book cover