

## Adult Education in the European and Romanian Literature of the 18th Century

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**Abstract.** The scientific knowledge in the field of adult education, the understanding of peculiarities that differentiate it from other social aspects, involves the identification of the conditions that foreshadowed its occurrence. The paper analyses the specific aspects of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century adult education, integrating the concepts and practices identified in Romanian literature into the wide cultural European context. The purpose of the study consists of the record and systematization of adult education elements, identified in the Romanian and European literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. To justify the necessity of the study, several aspects are considered: on the one hand, exploitation possibilities are mentioned, on the other hand, the evidence of the contributions recorded in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century regarding the issues of the adult education imposes a re-thinking and a re-consideration of the domain's subject-related fundamentals. Referring to the exploitation possibilities, there is considered that the development of a general approach of the adult education elements represents the starting point in designing a particular bibliography, no matter how refined and applicative the theme is. Considering the<sup>1</sup> subject-related approach, there is expressed that this step eliminates the fragmentary treatment of the knowledge in the adult education area in Romania, following the diachronic perspective and favouring, through the call of European and Romanian pedagogy works, the result of an integrative qualitative and quantitative image, of the adult education in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The paper is based on *qualitative, ascertaining research, the data gathering method is historical research, through the documentary analysis technique*. The research rests on the analysis of declarative sentences in the educational literature, as the source for decoding the peculiarities of adult education is/is conferred in relation to two dimensions: epistemology (reflections, concepts) and practice (institutional values). The work provides an overview of the adult education literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, in Romania and Europe, the relation to the written works and authority, thus creating the premises for both the determination of the identity of the adult education subject and the development and validation of the new knowledge.

**Keywords:** Adult education, Romanian literature, European literature, the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

### 1. Introduction

The theoretical fundamentals of the adult education in Romania are the result of a progressive process, of a set of ideas and concepts, structured on a timeframe. The tradition and the authority form a source of knowledge providing the grounds for the validation of the new acquisitions, for development, innovation, while generating contradictions and antinomies through loss of contextualization.

To justify the necessity of this study, we have in view several issues: on the one hand, we have to mention the exploitation opportunities; on the other hand, emphasizing the contributions over the time to the adult education field requires a rethinking and reconsideration of the basis of this field, as a study subject. With regard to the exploitation opportunities, we consider that the creation of a general bibliography is a starting point to a specific bibliography, regardless the complexity of the topic. From the viewpoint of a disciplinary approach, we like to eliminate the fragmented treatment of Romanian knowledge with regard to adult education in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and follow an evolutional and historical perspective, facilitating thus the

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achievement of an integral, quantitative and qualitative aspect of this field, by referring to the Romanian pedagogic works integrated into the wide cultural European context.

## 2. Adult education in the European literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Unlike the Renaissance humanism promoting, through René Descartes' rationalism and the empiricism of Francis Bacon and John Locke, the unrestricted belief in the laws of nature and the universal order as well as the belief in the reasoning and innovating capacity of an individual, the *Enlightenment* represents the expression of the trust in progress, in the science capacity to give pertinent answers to contemporary issues. The fight against superstitions and intolerance by supporting the idea of mass education, the unlimited trust in the power of education and the role played by the state in the educational process become major elements of the enlightened reasoning of the bourgeois society. The strengthening of national educational systems, by disseminating knowledge through teaching in the mother tongue, is the consequence of the responsibility undertaken by the State in respect to dissemination of culture amongst people.

When comparing the educational institutions of the Enlightenment with the humanistic ones, Stanciu (1977) stated: „if the feudal school was a *caste school*, meaning that only the feudal nobles had access to higher education institutions, according to the law, the bourgeois school was for the *classes*, enabling free access to all individuals, to all types of education, provided they could afford the school costs” (p. 171).

*Jean Jacques Rousseau, Claude Adrien Helvétius, Denis Diderot, Andrew Bell, John Lancaster* promote the idea of public enlightenment through education, proposing relevant education systems by practice. *Jean Jacques Rousseau* (1712 – 1778), a supporter of instruction adjusted to „the nature of each individual”, considers the education as „the most useful art, the one that educates the individual”. The major interests of Rousseau are the individual and the culture (*Discourse on the Arts and Sciences, 1750*), the perfect society (*The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right, 1762*), the theory of education (*Émile: or, on Education, 1762*). Rousseau's contribution to the adult education consists in proposing the idea that the development of an individual, „a natural being, with a definite place in the sequence of things”, follows the laws of nature, thus imposing the approach of education by stages, with their corresponding educational aspects and needs. Therefore, Rousseau considers that up to the age of 2, the physical education takes place, between 2 and 12 years old, the sensitivity organs are being developed and educated, between 12 and 15 years, the intellectual education, the notions of moral education being assimilated after 15 years old. According to Rousseau, there *are no major differences between the child and the adult*, the childhood is the „sleep of rationality”, „the non grown-up”, comparative with adulthood. Stanciu Stoian (1966) states that, when using the term of individual, with the meaning of adult, Rousseau „digs a gap between the two ages”, i.e. childhood and adulthood. According to Stoian, Rousseau's theory that the „child is not an individual yet”, is „abusive”, and the lack of opportunity of the education's intervention in order to accelerate the evolution from the child stage to that of “human” through adulthood has lost its sustainability nowadays. *The education for work*, the grounds of moral education, is a dimension of Rousseau's concept, intensively enhanced in the field of adult education. At the age of 15, Emil should know a trade because „one hour of work will teach him more than he could learn in a day of explanations”. After the age of 15, when he is sufficiently educated to resist the temptations of the society, the young man gets in contact with the city life, to learn about the good and the evil, the premises of the *moral education*. The different approaches of education, with the particular aspects for men and women and distinct purposes in adulthood, intensively used in the Renaissance humanism, can also be seen in Rousseau's work, to whom the purpose of men's education is to form an „active individual, with an independent reasoning and his own religion”, while women should conform to the man's will, the education being necessary to become „faithful wives and reliable mothers” (Rousseau, 1979, p. 3). Rousseau's contribution to the establishment of the distinct status of adult education by promotion of distinct learning patterns between the two age groups has empirically foreshadowed the developmental psychology researches conducted by Albert Mansbridge and Edward Thorndike, after less than two centuries distance. Beyond these dimensions, Rousseau's concept of education is focused on the *child* and his education by nature.

Claude Adrien Helvétius (1751 – 1771) in *Treatise on Man: His Intellectual Faculties and his Education*, proposes the first analysis of education from the social viewpoint. The particular features of a nation confer the national status of education, and the enlightenment of masses is the spiritual evolution of societies. Helvétius considers the human evolution as the exclusive product of the environment conditions, this concept being taken and developed in Romania, by Petru Maior and Titu Maiorescu, at the beginning of the next Century.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, *Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838)* and *Andrew Bell (1753-1832)* established the grounds for the *monitorial system (mutual education)* aimed at spreading culture among masses in an accelerated manner, as a finality of the Enlightenment education. Inspired by the educational practice of old Indians, the system developed by Lancaster and Bell allows only one teacher to expose a large amount of knowledge to several people. The system developed by Bell and Lancaster, considered both cheap and efficient, enabled the opening of the first *monitorial schools*, in England, in 1792, resulting in an extended literacy among population, knowledge dissemination, and low costs that also enabled the extension of this education in the Romanian countries.

### **3. Reflections and practices of adult education in the Romanian literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the European concept of spreading education among masses was taken over and intensively enhanced in the Romanian Principalities. The activity of the scholars from the most significant education institution of the time, i.e. the *Royal Academy of Iași (Academia Domnească din Iași)* and the *Royal Academy of Bucharest (Academia Domnească din București)*, is relevant to the penetration of the Enlightenment ideas in the Romanian Principality.

*Iosif Moesiodax*, one of the teachers of the Royal Academy of Iași, contributed to the orientation of education towards the sciences of the Modern Age. In the *Treaty on Child Education or Pedagogy (Tratat despre educația copiilor sau Pedagogia)*, Moesiodax sets two dimensions of the paideutics: moral education and instruction. Taking over the ideas of Erasmus and Locke, Moesiodax considers that the main cause of „misfortunes on the Earth” is „the disregard of the youth education” (Moesiodax, p. 23). The significant role of training the teachers, aspect developed in a whole chapter of the *Treaty on Child Education or Pedagogy*, is one of the relevant contributions of Moesiodax to the development of adult education in Romania. For the achievement of one of the most relevant and comprehensive approaches of the teacher’s influence on education, Moesiodax recommends to the parents to select the teacher „based on the nature and age of the young people”; the teacher should „posses skilfulness”, being able to provide a model of „virtue and resistance”. The encyclopaedic knowledge of the teacher is the „main virtue”, because his role is not to teach the young people about „the Greek grammar and philosophy, but also about mathematics, physics, law, politics, geography so necessary for the daily activities” (Moesiodax, p. 72). A good knowledge of the child is the base for „the education of good habits”, and „the total freedom in learning” is a pre-requisite for the achievement of moral goals. Another issue approached by Moesiodax for the first time in the Romanian adult educational literature is the importance given to the “teaching tact” of the educator, when learning “the love for education” (Moesiodax, p. 73). The focus on the training dimension of education, and the emphasis of the training process detrimental of the knowledge amount are characteristics of the education concept promoted by Moesiodax. He contributes to the development of the Romanian education system from the encyclopaedic, informative type, specific to the scholastic approach and writings of Romanian scholars to the social education, accessible to the wide audience.

Beyond the influence of Royal Academies of Iași and Bucharest in the dissemination of European enlightenment ideas, the Romanian literature of 18<sup>th</sup> Century is characterized by the diversification of religious printed materials, on the one hand, through the publication of widely read *psalm books, gospels, homilies*, and by the *production of the first school manuals, the elementary readers*. The laic elements are increasingly present in the religious literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1746, the text of a *gospel*, printed in Râmnic, in addition to the religious lessons, emphasizes the scope of family education as “winning an immortal name” and “doing good”, “because the community use and good belong to God, and the immortal

name can be achieved during the life of man in this world and also after it. And this is why we have the testimonials of the old men facts, because they are gone, but their names and histories are kept in thousands of books until today” (Bianu; Hodoș, p. 109).

*The Didactics (Didahiile)*, edited by the metropolitan bishop, Antim Ivireanul, between 1709 and 1716, is a set of ecclesiastic writings, embodied in speeches and utterances during the church services in Bucharest and Târgoviște. In a time when religious texts are becoming more laic, Antim proposes speeches inspired by the Holy Bible, supported by laic elements, taken from the usual life of the contemporary people, in order to provide a wider access to religious speech. The church and the priest, through his speech, are the way to educate the adults in Christian spirit. We quote a fragment of *The Didactics*, where some meanings can be deciphered with the support of religious elements using the laic ones: “when we leave the Church, we should not leave empty, but we should follow the example of the hedgehog in the vineyard, who firstly gluts with grapes and after that it shakes the grape vine, it rolls on the grapes to carry them back to its babies” (Ivireanul, p. 18). Having the knowledge is not relevant without the possibility to disseminate and multiply it. Literacy becomes a mean of creation and materialization of knowledge.

Increasingly more texts of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century are designed to make the clergy responsible with the dissemination of knowledge among the people. We retrieve this idea in *The Book of the Eight Tones – Octoechos (Octoih)*, published in Râmnic, 1750: “like the eye in the human body lightening and seeing all the parts of the body and like the sun with its rays, according to God’s order, the earth provides light and heat to all those growing on it, and the people who deserve the divinity are entitled to the gifts of God, in their kingdom, to also use them for those they lead” (Bianu, Hodoș, p. 186). The comparison with events from the nature and the contextualization of knowledge by using issues from the usual life continues to be the most important method of making religious content more accessible.

In the same religious texts from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century we identify the idea according to which an early education is persistent, as it can be used throughout the entire life. These are the *lifelong learning ideas* identified in the religious literature of the Romanian area. The book becomes an “implantation” in *A Gathering of Multiple Lessons (Adunare de multe învățături)*, a religious textbook published in Iași, 1757, under the supervision of Iacov, the metropolitan bishop of Moldova: “like the mother bee who trades and prepares what’s the best in flowers for the bees in the summer, and guards everything in the winter, for the better times to come, this is how we prepared this food for the soul (sweeter than the honeycomb), whose good lessons you should carry inside your hearts, you should believe in, in order to *enlighten you* for another time of your life” (*Ibidem*, p. 105). The same idea, of the persistence of education, is also identified in the text of a *Homily* published in Râmnic, 1748: “we can know that the way in which man and all the beasts are taught when they are young is planting the skills for the whole life, and not only the human beings and animals are prone to this, but also the trees are the same: they will have up to the end the fruits they have from the beginning. This is the same for the pot with aroma oils: when it breaks, its remainings keep the smell” (*Ibidem*, p. 122).

Some adult education elements are also identified in *Guide to Honesty (Ducere de mână către cinste)*, text published in 1777, with its chapters representing the basis of youth education, as representatives of the family: *For Good Habits, or For Justice, or For the Honesty of Man, in His Thoughts, Facts and Behaviour; For the One Who Marries a Woman and For an Honourable and Fair Appearance; For Housekeeping and For a Good Host*.

Beyond the dominant style in the religious texts from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the first teaching books are published, with the purpose of guiding the literacy. Bârsănescu considers this period as an “important moment in the history of Romanian teaching books” (Bârsănescu, p. 33) and Stanciu describes the 18<sup>th</sup> Century as a “Century of elementary readers” (Stanciu, p. 207). The first Romanian elementary reader is published in Blaj, under the title *ABC or an Alphavit to the Use and Benefit of Normal Schools and Romanian People (ABC sau Alphavit pentru folosul și pricopseala școalelor celor normalicești și a neamului românesc)*. In 1756, Dimitrie Eustatievici, a teacher of the Șcheii Brasovului School, publishes the first grammar in Romanian, in manuscript, and in 1780 is published the first Romanian grammar printed with Latin characters, *Elementa linguae daco-romanae sive valachicae*, under the supervision of Gheorghe Șincai.

In the Contents, the author states that “books are praised and have to be praised not by their shape or matter, but by the knowledge they comprise”.

In 1785, in Wien, *The Book for the Teachers (Carte trebuincioasă pentru dascăli)* is published, both in Romanian and in German. The name of the author remains unknown. This book develops the concept of teachers' education, proposed by Iosif Moesiodax several decades before, and it is the first manual for teachers. Its contents reveal for the first time, in the Romanian literature, the term of *teacher* as a synonym of the *parish clerk*. The publication of this manual opens the series of education actions of the teachers, in order to spread the knowledge to the masses. As “guidelines for teachers when training the youth”, in order to “prevent the leading to be made by poorly educated people, without knowledge and tempted, without the slightest idea of the mission”, the manual aims at educating “useful and hardworking people, school teachers who may teach wise and working Christians, good citizens, good workers, honest husbands, humble vassals and obedient servants, or, in simple words, good people” (Bianu, Hodoș, p. 166). The work is divided in two sections and an annex. The first section shapes the moral portrait of the teacher, with “the fortune of soul and its means”, the second part “shall provide a guide on how to teach, in all the study subjects”, and the annex “shows how to keep the school in good order”. *The Lesson (Lecțiune)*, by Toader Școleru, published in Iași, 1789, belongs to the same category. The book educates the teachers to learn the Moldovian and Russian language signs, together with *Developed and Commented Gospels (Desvoltatele și tâlcuitele Evanghelii)*, published in Sibiu, 1790. This work develops the teaching methods used by teachers when teaching the Gospels: “no one can reach the end of this book by an empty reading of these lessons or reading them by heart”.

The extensive approach of these issues is the proof that in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the Romanian principalities shared the same ideas on education with those circulated in the European countries. If a hundred years ago the privilege of literacy – generally sacred – belonged to the clergy and to those educated in monastic schools, the trend of dissemination of culture among the people, characterises education from the Romanian principalities during the Enlightenment.

#### **4. Conclusions:**

The context influences and marks the educational thinking, but it also determines and influences the practice, due to its mobilizing role, by proposing norms and determining instructions. Even if the educational works included in the hereby research may be considered as early preoccupations in the field of adult teaching, they were not edited with this purpose. This field had not yet been developed in Romania, and the works that facilitated the specific approach had not been published at the time. Under the previously shown conditions, a work recording and organizing the Romanian writings, on major research fields and themes, would represent an act of brave recovery in favour of the condition of the adult education field in Romania.

#### **5. Acknowledgements:**

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