

HENRI H. STAHL'S CONCEPTION OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY AND THE BUCHAREST SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY

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Abstract:

The Romanian school of sociology founded by Dimitrie Gusti was a favorable medium for elaborating theoretic ideas. The school became a cradle for at least two prominent theoreticians (Henri H. Stahl and Traian Herseni) whose conceptions are worth of attention not only from sociologists but for the theoretically minded historians, too. We should keep in our mind that according to the methodological attitudes of the Bucharest school field researches were highly encouraged. It means that any generalizations, theoretic suggestions or entire conceptions produced by the followers of Gusti were solidly based on empirical data. Stahl started to elaborate his conception of tributalism in the 1960s. Coincidentally, at this period the international discussion about the so-called Asiatic mode of production revived so the Stahl's theoretic ideas were well-timed. Stahl was not the only Romanian scholar who got involved in the discussion, but his conception was more original: according to him, tributalism should be treated as something different from Oriental despotism although there were some obvious similarities between the two. Despite the fact that the majority of Romanian historian community ignored the Stahl's innovative conception, there were some attempts in Romania as well as abroad to elaborate (Daniel Chirot) or at least to popularize (Miron Constantinescu, Constantin Daniel) his ideas.

Rezumat:

Școala românească de sociologie fondată de Dimitrie Gusti a avut consecințe majore și diverse nu numai asupra mediului academic, dar și asupra vieții sociale și politice din România, mai ales în perioada interbelică. Întrucât în acest articol mă voi referi în mod deosebit asupra aspectelor vizând mediul academic, pot menționa că din acest punct de vedere consecințele au fost chiar pe termen mai lung. Din acest punct de vedere, școala bucureșteană de sociologie poate fi tratată

ca un mediu favorabil pentru formularea și elaborarea perspectivelor teoretice. Aceasta a devenit leagănul formării a cel puțin doi teoreticieni proeminenți (Henri H. Stahl, Traian Herseni) ale căror concepții sunt demne nu numai de atenția sociologilor, dar și de a istoricilor cu aplecare către teorie. Trebuie să ne reamintim că potrivit aplecărilor metodologice ale școlii bucureștene, cercetările de teren erau puternic încurajate. Aceasta presupune că toate generalizările, sugestiile teoretice și concepțiile realizate de urmașii lui Gusti sunt bine susținute de date empirice. Această afirmație se încadrează foarte bine în concepția teoretică a lui Stahl. Sociologul român a început să-și elaboreze concepția sa asupra tributalismului în anii '60. Este tocmai perioada în care dezbateră internațională cu privire la așa-numitul mod asiatic de producție renăștea, așa încât ideile teoretice ale lui Stahl au fost binevenite. Stahl nu a fost singurul care s-a implicat în aceste dezbateri, acestuia adăugându-i-se cel puțin Ion Banu, Iosif Natansohn și Natalia Simion. Principalul avantaj al contribuției lui Stahl a fost mai multă originalitate: potrivit acestuia, tributalismul al trebui tratat ca fiind diferit față de despotismul oriental, deși au existat anumite similarități între acestea. În ciuda faptului că majoritatea comunității românești de istorici a ignorat concepția inovatoare a lui Stahl, au existat câteva încercări atât în România, cât și în străinătate de a elabora (Daniel Chirot) sau cel puțin de a populariza (Miron Constantinescu, Constantin Daniel) ideile sale.

Keywords: Romanian school of sociology, Dimitrie Gusti, H.H. Stahl, tributalism

The Romanian school of sociology founded by Dimitrie Gusti had various and considerable consequences not only for academic but also for the interwar social and political life of Romania. Because within the limits of the current paper I'm going to focus especially on the academic aspects, I can add that from this point of view the consequences were even more long-termed. First of all, as the American sociologist Bogdan Denitch (1929-) has once written, this school created in Romania „a well-developed prewar tradition of rural sociology of the French school“¹. The second important moment is that scholars which belonged to the Bucharest school of sociology were concentrated on research of village communities from the various points of view (social conditions, social activities etc.)². The result of those interdisciplinary researches was the publication of a series of monographs. Such a methodological strategy enabled to accumulate wide

¹ B. Denitch, „Sociology in Eastern Europe: Trends and Perspectives“, *Slavic Review* 30, no. 2 (1971): 329.

² More at Z. Rostás, „The Bucharest School of Sociology“, *Est Central Europe* 27, no. 2 (2000).

basis of empirical data concerning social reality of Romanian rural life in the present and the past³.

It is also important to emphasize that the Bucharest school of sociology was not only that institution which encouraged field researches, but it also became a favorable medium within which new theoretic ideas were formulated and elaborated. We can state without any hesitation that this school was a cradle for at least two prominent theoreticians (Henri H. Stahl, Traian Herseni) whose conceptions are worth of attention not only for pure sociologists but at least for theoretically minded historians, too. Keeping in our mind that field researches were highly encouraged, it is natural that in this case we deal not with speculative theoreticians but with those whose theoretic suggestions or entire conceptions are produced by generalizing numerous empirical data. This statement is especially applicable toward the theories of Stahl, whose role in this respect is the main topic of my paper.

Henri H. Stahl was one of the most prominent collaborators of Dimitrie Gusti and he participated actively in the vast interdisciplinary enterprise of creating monographs dedicated to Romanian villages⁴. Soon after the Second World War, he had already begun to elaborate generalizations⁵, but his work was interrupted by political reasons.

We should not forget that Stahl was a Marxist sociologist and so was his theory of historical sociology. That means that in order to estimate his theoretic contribution adequately, we should put it in an adequate theoretic context of main trends in Marxist historical sociology of a certain period. Stahl seriously started to clarify his theoretic ideas in the 1960s, when sociology in Romania has just revived as an academic subject. In late 1950s and first half of the 1960s the famous Romanian historical sociologist published a fundamental monograph in three volumes in which he represented the basic social structures of Romanian rural society in the most exhaustive way⁶.

³ More at A. Vosyliūtė, "Kaimo žmonės: problemos ir lūkesčiai", *Ekonomika ir vadyba: aktualijos ir perspektyvos* 11, No. 2 (2008), 258-259.

⁴ H. H. Stahl, dirigée par. *Nerej, un village d'une région archaïque* (Bucurest, 1939).

⁵ Stahl, *Sociologia satului devălmaș românesc* (Bucurști, 1946).

⁶ Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești*, vol. 1-3 (București, 1958-1965). In 1969, an abridgement of Stahl's work was published in French: *Les anciennes communautés villageoises roumaines; asservissement et pénétration capitaliste* (Bucurest, Paris, 1969). In 1980, an American sociologist Daniel Chirot (with his wife) translated this abridgement into English: *Traditional Romanian village communities: the transition from the communal to the capitalist mode of production* (Cambridge, 1980a).

I would like to remind readers that exactly in late 1950s a new wave (the so called second round⁷) of discussion about the ambiguous Marx's concept of the *Asiatic mode of production* was revived. In 1957 Karl August Wittfogel (1896–1988) published his widely famed and much criticized book „Oriental despotism“⁸. In the same year, a historian from Eastern Germany Elisabeth Charlotte Welskopf (1901–1979) published a book about social relations in the Ancient East and Greek-Romanian world.⁹ Additionally, the Russian non-orthodox Marxist theoretician Yuriy Semionov (1929–) published an article in which he criticized the official Marxist-Leninist unilinear schema of socioeconomic formations.¹⁰ The texts mentioned above and the subsequent ones provoked a vivid discussions for many years in the European communist countries and the USSR as well as among Western Marxist historians and anthropologists. Some Romanian scholars also got actively involved into the discussion (besides Stahl himself, I can enumerate at least three more: Ion Banu, Iosif Natansohn, Natalia Simion¹¹) and attitudes as well as ideas of some of them were known far beyond Romanian border¹². In this context, I should state that the contribution of „national margins“ of the USSR to this international academic Marxist issue was very modest. Actually, there were no simultaneous texts of Lithuanian historians considering the subject at all. Only in the 1980s the first very cautious and indirect attempt to deal with

⁷ „The first round“ took place in 1920s – 1930s. For more information look: A. M. Bailey and J. L. Llobera, eds. *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics* (London, Boston, 1981), J. Bratkiewicz, *Teoria przedkapitałistycznej formacji społecznej w kulturach orientalnych: interpretacja badań i polemik* (Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk, 1989), 134-171, Ю. И. Семёнов, *Политарный («азиатский») способ производства: Сущность и место в истории человечества и России* (Москва, 2008), 330-332, В. Н. Никифоров, *Восток и всемирная история* (Москва, 1975), 171-181.

⁸ K. A. Wittfogel, *Oriental despotism; a comparative study of total power* (Yale University Press, 1957).

⁹ E. C. Welskopf, *Die Produktionsverhältnisse in Alten Orient und in der griechisch-römischen Antike. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag* (Berlin, 1957).

¹⁰ Ю. И. Семёнов, „К вопросу о первой форме классового общества (в порядке дискуссии)“, *Учёные записки Красноярского государственного педагогического института* 3, вып. 1 (1957).

¹¹ I. Banu, „Asupra formațiunii sociale „asiatice“, *Revista de filozofie* 13, № 2-3 (1966): 213-229, 319-335, Banu, „Asupra formațiunii sociale tributare („asiatice“)“, in *Sensuri universale și diferențe specifice în filozofia Orientului Antic*, ed. I. Banu (București, 1967), vol. 1, 15-36; I. Natansohn and N. Simion, „Despre existența așa-numitului „mod de producție asiatic“, *Revista de filozofie* 13, № 2-3 (1966): 228-238.

¹² For example, the famous Arabian-French Marxist scholar and ideologist Samir Amin criticized Ion Banu's conception of Asiatic mode of production (tributarism). S. Amin, *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis* (New York, London, 1980), 68-69.

the issue occurred¹³ and only in the late 1980s and in the 1990s the idea was considered and advocated in a series of articles written by two Lithuanian historians: Alfredas Bumblauskas (1956–) and Edvardas Gudavičius (1929–)¹⁴. Concerning the Moldavian contribution to the issue of the Asiatic mode of production it was quite late and modest either but, on the other hand, very original. In the 1970s the prominent Moldavian medieval historian Pavel Sovetov (1927–1991) created the conception of the „typological row of feudalism“ as a response to the idea of the Asiatic mode of production which he rejected¹⁵. Despite the fact that officially Sovetov declared his hostility toward the conception of the Asiatic mode of production¹⁶, the alternative conception which he proposed in general was very akin to the previous one.

Keeping in our minds all this international context we can return to Stahl's theoretic conceptions. At first, having enormous quantity of empirical data about Romanian village communities at his disposal the Romanian historical sociologist introduced a theoretic approach which

¹³ E. Gudavičius, „Europos ikifeodalinė visuomenė (tarybinė istoriografijos duomenys)“, *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademijos darbai*. A serija, 85, t. 4 (1983): 82-90.

¹⁴ A. Bumblauskas, „Kur buvo Lietuva feodalizmo epochoje?“, in *Europa 1988: Lietuvos persitavarkymo sąjūdžio almanachas* (Vilnius, 1989), 153-172; E. Gudavičius, „Visuomenės formacijos“, *Lietuvos žinios* 1 (1991); Gudavičius, „Lietuvos kelias į pasaulio istoriją“, *Lietuvos istorijos studijos* 2 (1994): 94-100; Gudavičius, „Pastumtos kortų kaladės“ dėsnis“, *Lietuvos istorijos studijos* 4 (1997): 35-43.

¹⁵ П. В. Советов, „Общее и особенное в типологии феодализма на Руси и в Дунайских княжествах (проблема «государственного феодализма» и его роли в период генезиса, развития и разложения феодальной формации)“, *Известия академии наук Молдавской ССР*. Серия общественных наук 2 (1986): 51-57, 3 (1986): 42-49; Советов, „Общее и особенное в развитии феодализма в Молдавии в сравнение с Россией и другими странами Европы и Азии (проблема «государственного феодализма», государственной собственности и эксплуатации)“, В *Общее и особенное в развитии феодализма в России и Молдавии. Проблемы государственной собственности и государственной эксплуатации (ранний и развитой феодализм): чтения, посвященные памяти академика Л. В. Черепнина. Тезисы докладов и сообщений*, Кишинев, 5-7 апреля 1989 (Москва, 1988), 76-91; Советов, „Типологические пути развитого феодализма и турецкое завоевание Юго-Восточной Европы (к вопросу о типологических сдвигах в Молдавии)“, В *Юго-Восточная Европа в эпоху феодализма. Резюме докладов Кишинёвского симпозиума 1973 г.* (Кишинёв, 1973), 84-93; Советов, „Типологические аспекты молдавского феодализма (в период турецкого ига и в проектах вступлении в подданство России, Польши и Австрии)“, В *Карпато-Дунайские земли в средние века* (Кишинёв, 1975), 125-197; Советов, „Общее и особенное в развитии форм молдавского феодализма (какова была в XVI – начале XVIII в. основная тенденция развития податного иммунитета)“, В *Молдавский феодализм. Общее и особенное (история и культура)* (Кишинёв, 1991), 149-212.

¹⁶ Советов 1988, 78-80.

could explain the peculiarities of Romania's pre-capitalist society¹⁷ in more adequate way than the orthodox unilinear Marxist schema which prevailed in Romanian historiography of that time (the 1960s). Stahl consistently criticized the prevailing trend of Romanian historiography and rejected the interpretation of Romanian pre-capitalist society as feudal¹⁸. In the 1970s – early 1980s Stahl further elaborated and universalized his conception of tributalism¹⁹.

The Romanian scholar has distinguished five „classic“ formations (primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, socialist)²⁰. Additionally, Stahl tends to differentiate one more: oriental despotism²¹. The Romanian sociologist categorically opposed the unilinear approach to social development. He also criticized the determinist approach to social evolution, i.e. the statement that every society moves by the only possible way toward capitalism²². According to Stahl, the fact that feudalism is located chronologically exactly before capitalism does not mean in itself that feudalism is pre-capitalist, i.e. that it evolves inevitably toward capitalism²³. In Stahl's opinion this course occurred only in some regions of the world (Western Europe) and under specific circumstances which are external in respect of feudalism (industrial revolution, colonial policy, primary accumulation of capital)²⁴. Therefore, he supports the view that alternative ways of social evolution exist²⁵. According to Stahl, if one wants to interpret social history adequately from the point of view of historical materialism, one should research every case as thoroughly as possible and separate technological processes from relations of production (modes of exploitation)²⁶.

¹⁷ H. H. Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești*. Vol. 3: *Procesul de aservire feudală a satelor devălmașe* (București, 1965), 7-26; Stahl 1969 (see also the English translation of Stahl's work: Stahl 1980a, 12-33, 211-220).

¹⁸ H. H. Stahl, *Controverse de istorie socială românească* (București, 1969), 62-123.

¹⁹ H. H. Stahl, „Comentarii la problema „orînduirii tributale românești“, *Viitorul social* 6, № 4 (1977): 702-710; Stahl, „Analiza sociologică a orînduirii „tributale“ românești“, *Viitorul social* 7, № 3 (1978): 534-541; Stahl, *Teorii și ipoteze privind sociologia orînduirii tributale* (București, 1980b); Stahl, „Note pentru o sociologie a feudalismului românesc“, *Viitorul social. Revistă de sociologie și științe politice* 10, no. 4 (1981): 699-706.

²⁰ Stahl 1980b, 26.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 191.

²² *Ibid.*, 52-56.

²³ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 56-58.

²⁶ H. H. Stahl, *Probleme confuze în istoria socială a României* (București, 1992), 58.

Stahl states that mode of production should not be confused with socio-economic formation. The Romanian scholar underlines that there are three social phenomena which should not be merged: mode of production (*mod de producție*), mode of production's exploitation (*mod de exploatare a producției*) and type of formation (*tip de orânduire*)²⁷. In case of capitalism, mode of production and mode of exploitation are intermingled in an indistinguishable way, but in other cases they are separate phenomena²⁸. For example, according to Stahl, in case of tributalism „tributal mode of production“ does not exist (the communal mode of production prevails instead²⁹) – there is only a „tributal mode of exploitation“³⁰. The Romanian scholar also argues that even several modes of production coexist within the same formation but one of them is dominant³¹. The mode of exploitation of the dominating mode of production determines the type of formation. In some cases, the prevailing mode of production remains the same despite the fact that modes of exploitation change³².

Stahl is also inclined to emphasize the importance of mode of exploitation from another point of view. He insists that to explain the rotation of formations only by a shift of corresponding modes of production means a vulgarization of materialistic approach to historical development. He gives an example of such an interpretation. Since the base of peasant's exploitation is their bounding to ground, tithe and corvée some historians treat the societies in which the enumerated phenomena exist as feudal. The Romanian scholar produces a counterargument stating that these forms of exploitation can also be found in ancient Roman and in late Byzantine societies (i.e. so called *colonatus*) but, according to Stahl, one does not treat these societies as feudal. In case of the genuine feudalism, in Stahl's opinion, the forms of peasant's exploitation already mentioned coexist with a ruling class which is consolidated in a shape of feudal ladder based on seignior-vassal relations. These feudal lords have their own economic base which should be differentiated from the mode of production. According to Stahl, it is this structure which constitutes the mode of exploitation in case of feudalism. This is a social aspect of formation which should be treated as an element of superstructure³³.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 59-60, 173.

³² *Ibid.*, 173-174.

³³ *Ibid.*, 62.

In addition to the six „fundamental“ formations³⁴ that have been mentioned before, the Romanian scholar distinguishes one more which he names as tributal (orînduirea tributală). Stahl treats it as a variant of oriental despotism³⁵. The latter differs from tributalism, first, by the functions of state. In case of oriental despotism, state interferes more into the life of direct producers by organizing large-scale public works (building and maintaining the irrigation system etc). On the other hand, communities of direct producers in both cases are exploited by raising a tribute³⁶. This characteristic is common to both subtypes of the formation. Nevertheless, in case of tributalism the communities of direct producers are considerably less controlled by state (ruler). This is the main difference between oriental despotism and tributalism.

The Romanian sociologist also produced a wider definition of tributal mode of exploitation in his main theoretical work. These are its main characteristics according to him:

1. Ruling class appropriates surplus product from villages possessing property in common (satele devălmașe) in a centralized way;
2. Appropriation of the surplus product takes the form of tribute since quantity of extracted product and terms are fixed in advance and extracted products go directly to ruler's treasury at first;
3. Rights of ruling class are entirely fiscal and exploitation is purely parasitic because exploiters do not intervene into the process of production at all³⁷.

According to my analysis of Karl Marx's texts, there are two important points when one attempts to define the type of social structure of any society from the Marxist point of view:

1. The aspect of exploitation of mode of production is manifested as a direct relation between owners of production conditions and direct producers;
2. Relation of subjugation and domination (mode of exploitation) is manifested as property relation which in its turn should be understood as socioeconomic power (which permits to realize one's title toward any property)³⁸.

Let me consider now to what degree Stahl's definition of tributal mode of exploitation is acceptable and sufficient from the Marxist point of view.

³⁴ I.e. primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, socialist and oriental despotic/Asiatic.

³⁵ Stahl 1980b, 191.

³⁶ Ibid., 156-160.

³⁷ Stahl 1980b, 192.

³⁸ N. Babinskas, "Concept of tributalism: a comparative analysis of S. Amin, J. Haldon and H.H.Stahl's approaches", *Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice și Nordice* 1 (2009): 77-80.

We should keep in mind the conclusions drawn after reconstructing Marx's conception of mode of production (which includes mode of exploitation as an essential element of it)³⁹. First, I can make out the relation between exploitative subject and productive/obligatory unit from Stahl's definition. Second, I will consider the relation between means of production and a direct producer: the relation is not direct but mediated by community. Third, a ruling class consists of ruler's agents entirely; their social power is determined by status. Thus, according to my classification of modes of production⁴⁰, one can find all necessary characteristics of mode of production in Stahl's definition of tributal mode of exploitation.

Now let's proceed to the critique of some points of Stahl's conception. It is the concept of formation (orînduire) which is the most important one in Stahl's works. As it was already mentioned above, it includes both mode of production (mod de producție) as technical processes of production (what I tend to name productive/obligatory unit⁴¹) and mode of exploitation, i.e. mode of surplus product extraction, as well as some social structures which, according the Romanian sociologist, are no less important when one wants to identify a type of formation (for example, feudal hierarchy based on seignior-vassal relations in case of feudalism⁴²). The latter are elements of superstructure⁴³. Mode of exploitation, according to Stahl, determines a type of formation since mode of production is able to endure for a long time without any changes, meanwhile modes of exploitation change. According to Stahl, there are, first, technical processes which include the concept mode of production (also labor organization since Stahl talks about mode of production of villages possessing common property [sat devălmaș], i.e. productive/obligatory unit). An American historian and Marxist theoretician of British origin John Haldon considers such a

³⁹ See *Ibid.*, 77-80.

⁴⁰ Here is my classification of pre-capitalist mode of production:

1. Owner of land is a ruler/state and productive/obligatory unit is a community of Asiatic/Slavonic type;
2. Owner of land is a ruler/state and productive/obligatory unit is an individual household of direct producer;
3. Owners of land are private and productive/obligatory unit is a community of Asiatic/Slavonic type;
4. Owners of land are private and productive/obligatory unit is an individual household of direct producer (see *Ibid.*, 80).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴² The approach to feudalism as an hierarchic structure based on seignior-vassal relations was criticized very convincingly by British medievalist Susan Reynolds, see *Fiefs and Vassals: the Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴³ About importance of this element look: see Stahl 1992, 62.

definition of mode of production as misleading. I tend to agree with Haldon. It is a so-called fetishizing of organizational forms. The conception of mode of production of this kind includes only a productive unit and excludes any wider set of relations of production⁴⁴. As already mentioned before, Stahl treats mode of exploitation as the most important element of *formation* that determines the type of formation. Conversely, Haldon considers mode of exploitation as the most important element of *mode of production* which determines the type of mode of production. The latter conception of mode of production (as my analysis of Marx's concept of mode of production has shown⁴⁵) is more similar to the conception of Marxism founder.

Despite the fact that the majority of Romanian historians ignored the innovative conception of Stahl, nevertheless there were some attempts in Romania as well as abroad to elaborate (Daniel Chirot) or at least to popularize (Miron Constantinescu⁴⁶, Constantin Daniel⁴⁷, Liviu Ștefănescu⁴⁸) his ideas. No doubt, the most interesting case is the book of American sociologist Daniel Chirot (1942-) published in the 1970s in which he made the original attempt to reinterpret social history of Valahia in the period 1250–1914⁴⁹. In his work, Chirot combined both Marxist methodologies (the theory of modes of production and world-system approach). His typology of early Valahia's social structure (the communal-trading political economy) was based on the Stahl's interpretation of social reality of Romanian ancestors⁵⁰. The importance and relevance of Chirot's text has been emphasized by the translator of his book into Romanian, Victor Rizescu⁵¹.

Nevertheless, the Romanian historians persisted to ignore the conception of American sociologist almost in the same way as they did

⁴⁴ J. Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production* (London, New York, 1993), 53.

⁴⁵ See Babinskas, 77-80.

⁴⁶ M. Constantinescu, "Despre formațiunea social-economic tributual" *Probleme economice* 4 (1973): 51-68; Constantinescu, "Modul de producție tributual și orînduirea tributual", *Probleme economice* 11 (1972): 28-44; Constantinescu, *Schița unei teorii marxiste a formațiunii social-economice tributale* (București, 1974).

⁴⁷ C. Daniel, "Modul de producție tributual în Sumer" in Daniel, *Civilizația sumeriană* (București, 1983), 56-66.

⁴⁸ L. Ștefănescu, "Modul de producție feudal pe p mîntul românesc. Esența și aparențe", *Hierarh* 5 (1983): 279-296.

⁴⁹ D. Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: the Creation of a Balkan colony* (New York, 1976).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-35.

⁵¹ V. Rizescu, "Postfață", in D. Chirot, *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică. Fomarea unei colonii balcanice* (București, 2002), 287-308.

with Stahl's. Only some economic historians which propagate Wallerstein/Braudel's approach to history dealt with Chirot's work and kept in their minds his views on early Valahian history⁵². This must be welcomed as an important trend in the contemporary Romanian historiography. Nevertheless, in my opinion, a combination of the two Marxist methodologies as proposed by Chirot is a more perspective way of reinterpretation. On the other hand, without any serious discussions about the pre-capitalist modes of production in medieval Valahia or Moldova one cannot treat the classic Marxist approach as being exhausted.

In conclusion, Stahl's conception of tributalism is an original and valuable contribution to the Marxist theory of history and a productive attempt to interpret the specific case of solitary society in a non-dogmatic way. It is vexatious and regrettable that any serious discussion about Stahl's conception of tributalism never took place in the Romanian historiography. It is even sadder and annoying that Chirot's (who treated H. H. Stahl as his teacher) conception was in general ignored in Romanian historiography either. Such an inertia and conservatism made a serious obstacle for Romanian historiography to revive from the Marxist theoretic and conceptual point of view.

No doubt, a wider discussion about Stahl's and Chirot's conceptions would have contributed to a reconsideration of the interpretations of the structure of pre-capitalist Romanians societies in more adequate and less dogmatized or clichéd way.

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⁵² F. Bonciu and B. Murgescu, "The World-Approach and Romanian Economic History", *Revue Roumaine d'histoire* 29, № 3-4 (1990): 275-289; *Ibid.*, "Considerații asupra abordării mondiale a proceselor istorico-economice", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A. D. Xenopol* 30 (1993): 523-547; B. Murgescu, *Istorie românească – istorie universală (600-1800)*. Ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită (București, 1999), 42-49, B. Murgescu and F. Nițu, "Lumea românească în economia europeană până la 1859", in *Procesul de integrare a României în economia europeană Dimensiuni istorice și contemporane*, ed. Maria Mureșan (București, 2008), 17-47.

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