

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION  
"1 DECEMBRIE 1918" UNIVERSITY OF ALBA IULIA  
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY  
PH.D. SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY

## **SUMMARY OF THE Ph.D. THESIS**

# **CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE POETICS OF THE POLICE FICTION GENRE – A NEGLECTED LITERARY GENRE**

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**Alba Iulia  
2019**

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Keywords: police novel, literature, paraliterature, screening, translation analysis, crime, guilty, punishment, poison, weapon, drowning, hanging, private detective, amateur detective, government detective, confidant, deduction, reasoning, apologists, denigrators.

## Synthesis of the Main Ideas

The present paper, entitled *Contributions to the Poetics of the Police Genre - a Neglected Literary Genre*, is intended to be a first attempt to synthesize the evolution of the police novel from both the foreign and Romanian literature, in a branch of criticism poor in such analyses.

The theme of the paper is represented by the history of important detective writings from the Anglo-Saxon, French and local areas, and the objectives I have proposed for myself or focused on: structuring the most important detective figures in foreign literature, quantitative analysis of the police novel translated in Romania, the reflection in the cinema of the police novel, the destiny of the detective writings in the Romanian space, the analysis of the occurrence in the domestic space of the literary productions of the genre, but also the identification of the critical works that approach this genre.

From a methodological point of view, we have used in our critical approach elements of literary history, literary theory, comparative studies, imaginary theory, psychoanalytic and thematic criticism.

The novelty elements that I have brought through this paper concern the analysis of the emblematic characters of the police literature in the context of very little studied works, the quantitative analysis of the police novel translated in Romania between 1831-2000, but also the quantification of the number of screenings of the foreign and domestic police novel.

This Ph.D. thesis is structured in four chapters, with the related subchapters, introduction, conclusions, bibliography and annexes.

The first chapter of our paper, *General Viewpoints on the Police Literary genre*, is organized into four sub-chapters: I.1. *Short History of Detective Writings*, divided in I.1.1. Foreign Literature Area and I.1.2. Romanian Literature Area; I.2. *Rules of the Police Novel*, I.3. *Taxonomies and Definitions*, and I.4. *Films Based on the Police Novel*, divided in I.4.1. *Films Based on Famous Police Novels Belonging to Foreign Literature* and I.4.2. *Films Based on Police Novels in Romanian Literature*.

In this first chapter we tried to raise the issues related to the belonging of the police genre to literature, because these inconveniences of framing the police novel arose from the inability to

accurately delimit the literature from paraliterature. The literary critics dedicated to the police genre have constantly tried to justify the quality of these works, and when the virulent criticisms appeared, the clarifying elements brought aesthetic, ideological and sociological aspects to the foreground, as is the case with the position adopted by Bertolt Brecht, stating: "It is true that a feature of the police novel is that it presents more or less constant variations of the genre at the aesthetic level. This is one of the signs by which we recognize a cultivated branch of literature"<sup>1</sup>.

Also in support of the statutory of the police novel in the field of literature, the literary critic Ion Vlad, who points out by his statement, argues: "It may be time to say that the police literature has produced a huge universal library of studies, volumes and research; numerous dictionaries of authors and works; exclusive libraries dedicated to scholarly tomes and an amazing exhibition of interpretations represent a phenomenon not only symptomatic, but also a definitive legitimization of the genre, because - a reality valid for all types of literary works - a superior and a minor literature represent the general show of the territories of fiction. literary, regardless of the genre created"<sup>2</sup>, the importance of this literary genre, proportionally related to the number of studies dedicated, and which represents the interest of the exegetes, but also of the readers for the detective prose.

Over time, the police novel was related to the adventure and the psychological one, an aspect that was clarified by the French critic Paul Morand, who distinguished them by the fact that the first of these is, ultimately, a mathematical problem, and: " its role is not to probe the darkness of the soul, but to act puppets through an impeccable clockwork mechanism"<sup>3</sup>.

In subchapter I.1.1. *Foreign Literature Area*, I showed the thread of the evolution of the detective prose in the foreign literature. The reference point in establishing a chronology of the police novel is considered the year 1747, of Zadig's appearance, Voltaire's character from Zadig or *Destiny*, followed by Honoré de Balzac's novel, *A Dark Affair*, of which the French critic Roger Caillois states that: " it marks the turn in question; one observes well the decomposition that this diabolic innovation spreads in morals - the invisible police – and the perfume of strange, the world full of mistrust and insecurity that it brings about"<sup>4</sup>. In 1865, Emile Gaboriau publishes *The Lerouge Affair*, and in 1887 one of the most beloved detectives, Arthur Conan Doyle's character, Sherlock Holmes, is born in London in the novel *A Study in Scarlet*. Conan Doyle's predecessor is considered to be Wilkie Collins, along with whom Dickens wrote, known for his

<sup>1</sup> Bertolt Brecht *apud* Marc Lits, *Le roman policier: introduction à la théorie et à l'histoire d'un genre littéraire*, Liege, Edition du Cefal, 1993, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Ion Vlad, *The Horizons of Reading*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House, 2007, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Morand, *apud* Roger Caillois, *Imaginary Approaches*, translated from French by Nicolae Baltă, Bucharest, Nemira Publishing House, 2001, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> Roger Caillois, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

1868 novel, *The Stone of the Moon*, which brings to the reader the first detective as a literary actor in British literature. Doyle confesses, later that by admiring Poe, he created the most famous detective, Sherlok Holmes, inspired by his writings. Not even Gaboriau and his Dupin passes without putting their mark on Doyle: "Gaboriau has conquered me by the elegant way he adjusted his plot pieces, and Dupin, Poe's detective master, has been my favorite hero since childhood"<sup>5</sup>.

It can be said about the British school police novel that it had, through Edgar Allan Poe, a common denominator with the American school, because of the language, so that each later develop their own literary path, all the more so as the British one manages to break free from the influence of the French one, and important names begin to prevail: JS Flectcher, Jefferson Farjeon, Agatha Christie, C.K. Kitchin, A.A. Milne, Mignon Eberharh, Quentin Patrick, Edgar Wallace, J.H. Chase etc.

The police novel of the American school will be noticed by a special personality, exaggerated by violence and harsh language, an aspect also pointed out by the Romanian critic Paul Ștefănescu, who mentions: "under the pretext of nature (sic!), The American police novel summarizes the brutal story in which instincts, violence, aggressive impulses are speculated. All these secondary features shadow the subject and the action of detection, exacerbating and tracking the sadistic effects, of the purest pathology. The abnormal is presented as something common"<sup>6</sup>. The writers highlighted by the resumption of classical forms and imposition on the American continent are: Dorothy Sayers, Melville Davisson Post, Raymond Chandler, Leslie Charteris, William Faulkner, Samuel Deshiell Hammet, Dannay Frederico, Manfred B. Lee etc.

About the French school police novel we can say that its emergence date is recorded in 1907, when the two novels, Gaston Leroux, *Mystery of the Yellow Room* and Maurice Leblanc, *Arsène Lupine, gentleman-cambrioleur*, appear. In time, Emile Gaboriau and Georges Simenon will be highlighted as defining elements for this type of novel in the French space, whose novels: "show violence in an aesthetic and justice form, appealing to the intimate springs of the reader's soul that confer nobility and not decomposition and perversion"<sup>7</sup>. In time they will be joined by the writers: Pierre Very, Stanislas A. Steeman, Ives Dartois, Noel Vindry, Claude Aveline, Pierre Nord, Frederic Dard, Charles Exbrayat, Sébastien Japrisot, the last three, considered the fathers of the suspense novel.

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<sup>5</sup> Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, apud Horia Matei, *Literature and Fascination of Adventure*, Bucharest, Albatros Publishing House, 1986, p. 254.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Ștefănescu, *Famous Murder Affairs*, Bucharest, All Publishing House, 1995, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 42.

The next subchapter, I.1.2. *The Romanian Literature Area* had the difficult mission of ordering the space of the Romanian literature, from which the critic not only lacks completely, or deals only with foreign authors, but is also denigrating with the police novel. In Romania, the debut of the police novel is not long awaited, in 1884 Panait Macri publishes *The Poisonous in Giurgiu* or *Beautiful Alexandrina*, and in 1885 *The Murder in the Sun Street* or *The Assassination of Mary Popovici*, a novel he calls criminals. Before Panait Macri, in the middle of the 19th century influenced by the *Mysteries of Paris*-1843, of Eugène Sue and the *Mysteries of London*-1844, by Paul Féval, Ioan Bujoreanu publishes *The Mysteries in Bucharest* (1862), George Baronzi, *The Mysteries of Bucharest* (1862-1864) and Constantin D. Aricescu, *The Mysteries of Marriage* (1861-1886) that cannot be called police novels, they only present aspects that will later be found in Romanian police novels. Much later, towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Panait Macri will also publish *The Mysteries of Bucharest* (1907-1908). Grigore Haralamb Grandea (1843-1897) will publish, in a brochure, inspired by Sue's novel, *The Mysteries of the Romanians* (1879). In his study of 2015, *Police Novel*, he lists a series of novels that appeared in the second half of the 19th century, such as: *The Convicted*, 1868-Emanoil Arghiropol, *Murder in Calea Moșilor*, 1887-Teochar Alexei, *Poisoner in Giurgiu* or *Beautiful Alexandrina*, 1884-Panait Macri, *From a Prosecutor's Memoirs*, 1888-N. Rădulescu-Niger, *Venice's Dramas or the Revenge Dagger*, 1889-Alexandru I. Alexandrescu, calling them: "a sub-mediocrity literature"<sup>8</sup> and „vain copies of goods imported from France”<sup>9</sup>, a point of view that must be emphasized, especially since the period is that of literary essays, so these productions do not meet the arguments necessary for the statues as police novels.

During the interwar period we have few attempts to conceive a police novel, the most significant being Victor Eftimiu's, *The Starred Kimonou* (1932), then another novel from this period that can be read in the police key is that of Liviu Rebreanu, *Both* (1940), followed by Petre Bellu with the novel *Defense Has the Word* (1941), but also *Baltagul* (1930) by Mihail Sadoveanu and the *Mechanical Ballet* (1931) by Cezar Petrescu, and before them, also during the interwar period, Mateiu Caragiale presents in the short story *Remember* (1924) the adventure of an enigmatic Sir Aubrey de Vere, who ends tragically, but unlike the classic police novel, the culprit is not identified. The series of stories by Mateiu Caragiale, must also be mentioned here an unfinished novel, *Under the seal of the mystery*, in which the enigmas presented by the policeman Conu Rache cannot find their solution.

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<sup>8</sup> Mihai Iovănel, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

Further on I presented the construction rules of a police novel (I.2. *The Rules of a Police Novel*), both those formulated by Van Dine, Tzvetan Todorov, but also Frnacoise Fosca, followed by the classification and definitions of this type of novel (I.3. *Taxonomies and Definitions*).

A first element of originality is present in the last subchapter of chapter I, I.4. *The Reflection in Cinema of the Police Novel*. We set out to quantify the number of screenings of the police novels according to the notoriety of the characters, both from the foreign and Romanian literature, given the year of their appearance, the director and the way the actors interpret the main characters.

The second chapter of our work, *Quantitative Analysis of the Police Novel Translated in Romania between 1831-2000*, is based on the study of the Romanian literary critic and historian Mircea Popa, *The Quantitative Analysis of the Novel Published by the Transylvanian Press Between 1838-1918*, appeared in the 1980 volume, *Tectonics of Literary Genres*, and is divided into four subchapters, as follows: II.1. *The General Hypostasis of the Translations of the Police Novel in the Period 1831-1990*, II.2. *The Decades Evolution of the Police Novel Translated in Romania Between 1831-1990*, II.3. *Statistical Analysis of the First Ten Foreign Authors of Police Novels, Translated into Romania, According to the Number of Editions, Between 1831-1990* and II.4. *The Evolution of the Police Novel Translated in Romania Between 1990-2000*.

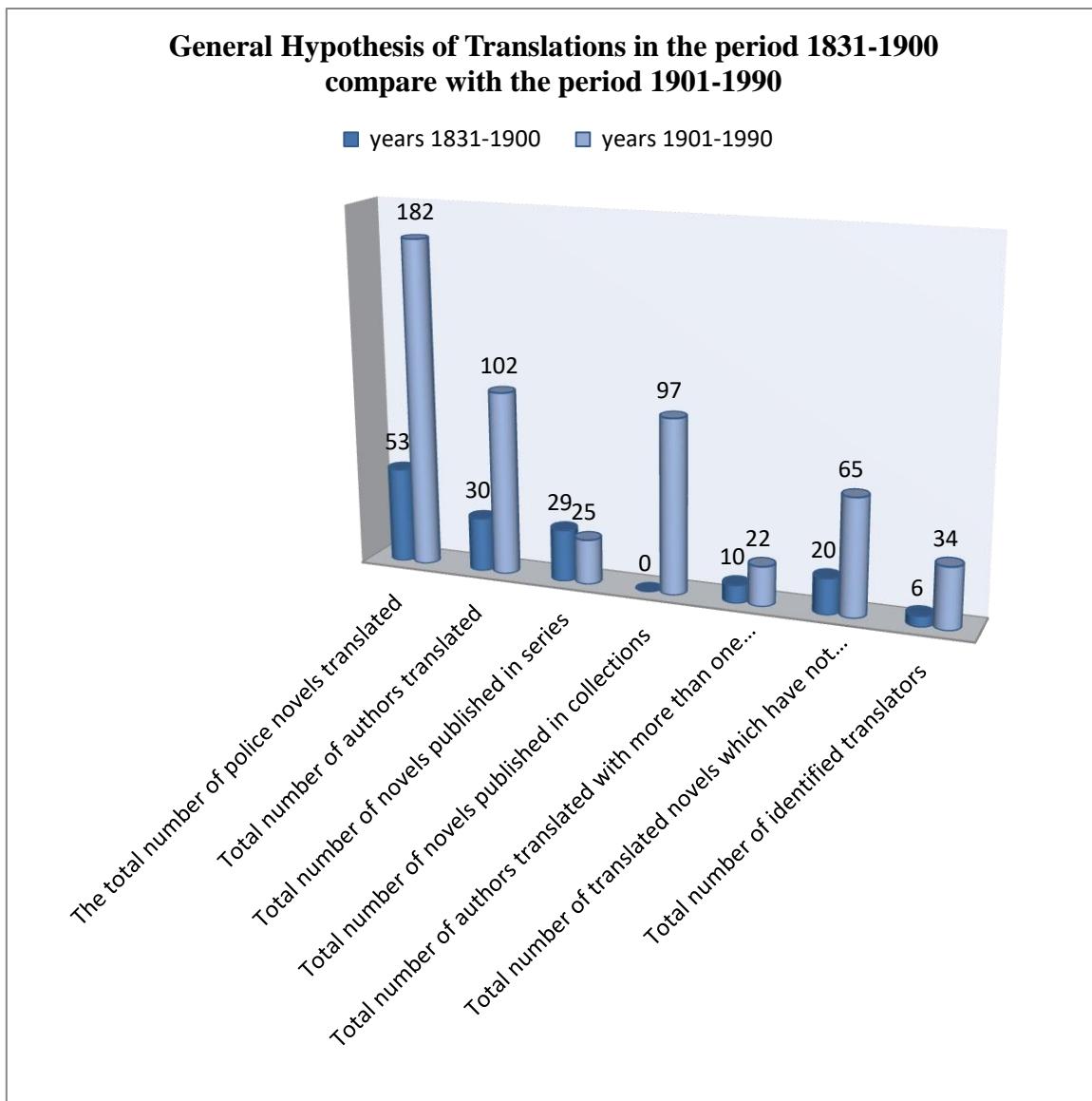
This part of the paper represents the second element of novelty that we bring, because we managed to identify and quantify the evolution of police novels translated by decades, the evolution of titles translated according to literature and the ranking of the first authors according to the number of translations based on the data provided by the *Chronological Dictionary of the Novel Translated in Romania from Origins to 1989*, the Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca branch, the Institute of Linguistics and Literary History "Sextil Pușcariu" (2005), *The Chronological Dictionary of the Translated Novel In Romania 1990-2000*, Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca branch, the Institute of Linguistics and Literary History "Sextil Pușcariu" (2017), *The Modern Romanian Bibliography (1831-1918)*, the volumes I-IV<sup>10</sup>, *The Repertoire of the Romanian, French, Italian and Spanish Translators (18th and 19th centuries). Studies in the History of Translation (I)* and *The Repertoire of Romanian Translations from French, Italian and Spanish (18th and 19th centuries). Studies in the History of Translation (II)*, collective volumes published at the Western University Publishing House in Timișoara, in 2006.

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<sup>10</sup> Retrospective National Bibliography <https://biblacad.ro/bnr/brm.php> [accessed on March 6 2019].

I have also drawn attention to the fact that our intervention is not relieved by the danger of the inaccuracy of the figures presented by other studies, but I considered this analysis appropriate because it is based on data provided by authorized institutions.

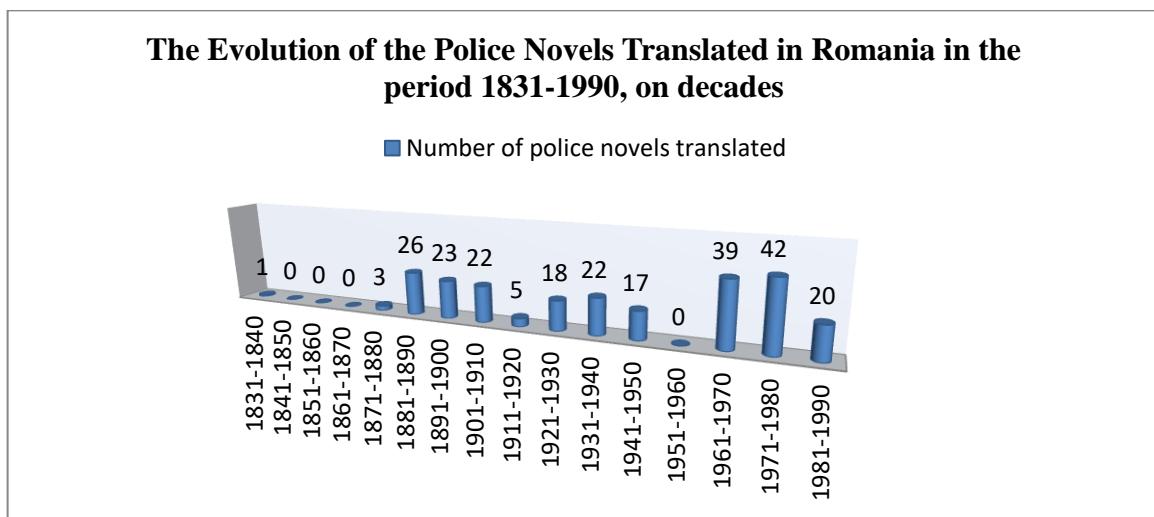
- In the first subchapter of this part, we have analysed the general situation of the translations of the police novel in Romania, between 1831-1990, leaving the following statistical data:
- for the period 1831-1900: 53 translated police novels, 30 translated writers, 29 novels appeared in pamphlets, 10 foreign authors of police novels translated with more than one opera, 20 novels that did not appear in pamphlets, 6 identified translators;
- or the period 1901-1990: 184 translated police novels, 103 translated writers, 25 novels published in brochures, 97 novels published in collections, 23 foreign authors of police novels translated with more than one opera, 67 novels that 34 translators identified have not appeared in the brochure.



From the graphical and comparative analysis of the two periods we were able to deduce the following findings:

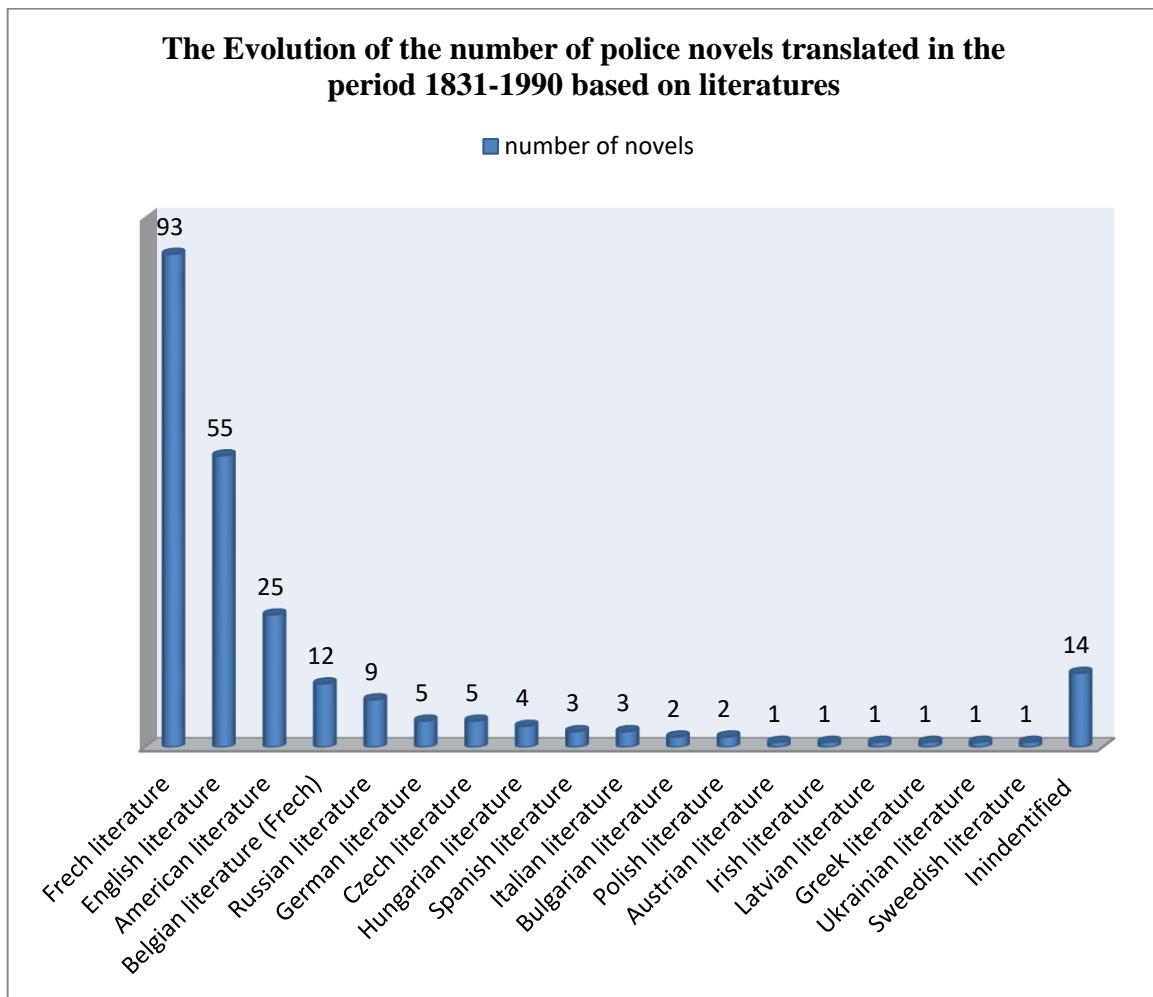
- the translations from the two selection periods, 1831-1900 and 1901-1990, show a significant increase in the second period of translations of the police novels,
- starting with 1831 and by 1900 we have registered a number of 53 translated novels, of which 29 were published in pamphlets and reported to 30 writers,
- the period 1901-1990 brings an almost quadruple increase in the quantity of translations of genre writings, 182 novels, fewer published in pamphlets, only 25, but 102 writers translated,
- only from the third decade of the twentieth century do we find collections dedicated to the police novel, of which the most appreciated and richest quantity in publications remains the Enigma (the collection of the Universe Publishing House, from Bucharest, published from 1969 and until 1992 no less than 75 years. police novels translated from English, French, German, Russian, Belgian, Italian, Polish, American, Spanish, Hungarian, Czech, Swedish, and Ukrainian literature).
- comparatively, for the two mentioned periods, the number of writers translated with more than one novel is noticeable doubled in the second, during the period 1831-1900 are identified with 10 more authors of translated police novels.

The second subchapter, II.2. *The Decades Evolution of the Police Novel Translated in Romania between 1831-1990*, presents for each decade of the mentioned period the authors and the police novels translated in Romania, under the following synthesis: 1831-1840: 1 novel, 1841-1850: 0, 1851-1860 : 0, 1861-1870: 0, 1871-1880: 3 novels, 1881-1890: 26 novels, 1891-1900: 23 novels, 1901-1910: 22 novels, 1911-1920: 5 novels, 1921-1930 : 18 novels, 1931-1940: 22 novels, 1941-1950: 17 novels, 1951-1960: 0, 1961-1970: 39 novels, 1971-1980: 42 novels, 1981-1990: 20 novels. This results in a total of 238 novels:

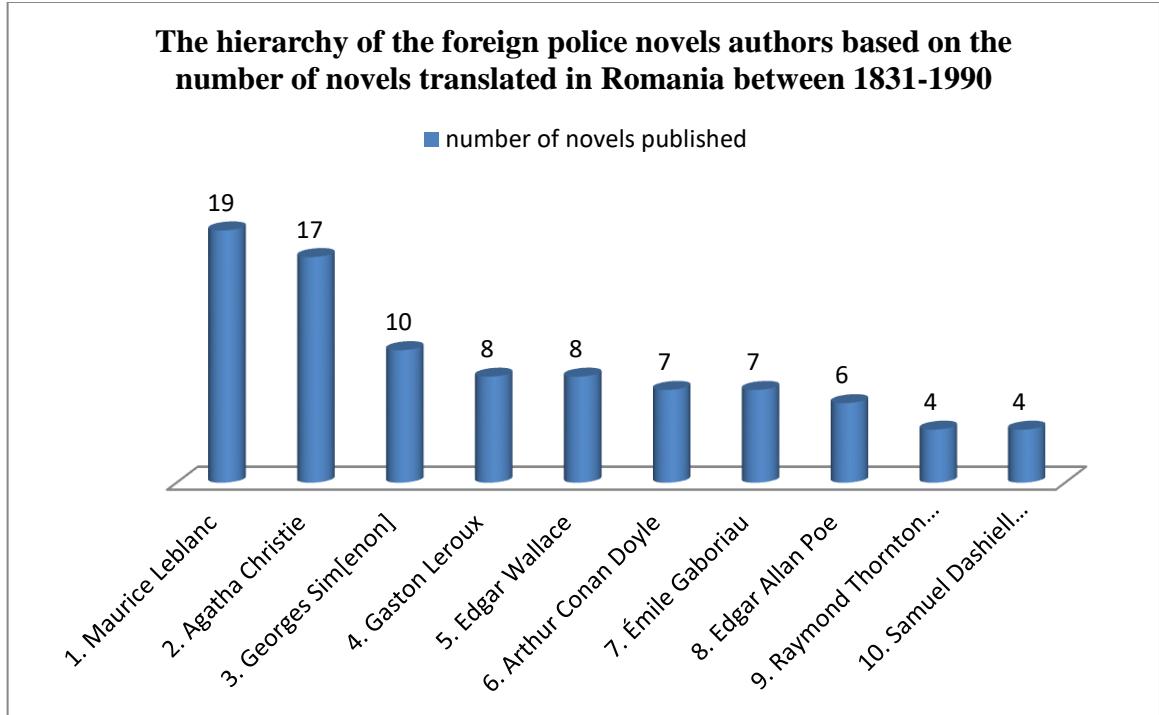


Following the curve of translations of police novels from 1831-1900 it can be seen that the maximum is reached in the second half of the twentieth century, decade 8, with 42 novels, and the periods when we could not document the appearance of translated police novels are in the century. XIX, decades 5, 6 and 7, 20th century, decade 6. A very small number of translated police novels can be seen in the 4th and 8th centuries of the 19th and 2nd centuries of the 20th century.

From this presentation for decades of the translated police novel, we managed to present the evolution of translations according to the literature of origin. The following graph shows the quantity of police novels translated from French literature, a number almost double compared to English literature, 93, of which 43 published between 1831-1900, the rest between 1901 and 1990. The success enjoyed The translations from French, especially in the second half of the 19th century, are due, among other things, to the cultural influence that France had on Romania, as a result of the economic and political relations between the two countries. The translations from English literature, 55 in number, of which 54 appeared in the period 1901-1990, are not negligible. This aspect is largely due to the translations of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie's novels.



For the third subchapter, II.3. *Statistical Analysis of the First Ten Foreign Authors of Police Novels, Translated into Romania, according to the Number of Editions, between 1831-1990*, we focused on the number of titles translated from each author, resulting in the following hierarchy:



It can be seen that the first place in the hierarchy of the most translated authors of police novels, during the analysed period, is occupied by the writer Maurice Leblanc, seconded by Agatha Christie and Georges Simenon, but in the last subchapter, II.4. *The Evolution of the Police Novel Translated in Romania between 1990-2000*, we have shown that after 1990, Agatha Christie outperformed him, with 54 translated titles. Also, I pointed out the importance of the publishers that emerged in the post-December period in promoting foreign writers of police novels, Tritonic, led by Bogdan Hrib and Crime Scene Press, by Alexandru Arion.

The next chapter, the third, III. *Personalities of the Police Novel from Foreign Literature*, it was designed in such a way as to capture the evolution of the characters in the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie and Georges Simenon.

Edgar Allan Poe's writings are important because for the first time in the universal literature we find a method and a way of conceiving the police novel, the critic Francois Fosca even deduces from the three novels appeared six rules of construction of the police novel, also stating that Poe did not he was aware that he also discovered the rules of a police investigation: "although these are two issues that are, however, excluded from each other"<sup>11</sup>, and Auguste

<sup>11</sup> Francois Fosca, apud Daniela Zeca, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

Dupin's character becomes the archetype of the amateur detective, despite an extremely short activity, through the three investigations undertaken in the novels: the *Murder in the Rue Morgue* (1841), *Mystery of Mary Roget* (1842-1843) and *The Purloined Letter* (1845).

The last chapter of the paper, IV. *Trends in the Romanian Police Literature*, approaches a phenomenon bypassed especially by the Romanian literary critics, the literature of this kind in the domestic space. We started in our approach from the writings of Panait Macri (IV.1. *The Precursors of the Romanian Police Novel*), trying to show, beyond the fantastic digressions that he does, the role he had first as a translator and then as a writer in a first stage of the evolution of the Romanian police novel. In this sense, I analysed the criminal novel, *The Murder from the Sun Street or the Assassins of Maria Roget*, which was based on a real fact, happened in 1885 in Bucharest, but also novel *The Mysterious Crime in Calea Mogoșoaiei* (1904).

Another novel submitted to our analysis was that of Liviu Rebreanu, *Both* (1940), chosen because it is regarded as the first Romanian police novel. I passed the topic of this novel through the filter of the rules of designing a police novel, distinguishing the aspects that particularize it. In subchapter IV.2. *Highlights in the Development of the Romanian Police Novel during the Communist Regime* we analysed the literary activity of other writers, such as: Theodor Constantin, Haralamb Zincă, Horia Tecuceanu, Leonida Neamțu, Constantin Chiriță, Petre Sălcudeanu, Rodica Ojog-Brașoveanu and George Arion. In IV.3. *The New Wave of Police Novels of the post-December Period* we approached the writer Bogdan Hrib, but we also managed to present a list of the latest appearances on the Romanian police book market.

The conclusions of our study were that no matter which side the reader of a police novel is, the apologists or the denigrators, the aspect of its mathematical problem, which, together with the narration, makes this novel an unravelling enigma, and the reasoning Logically it is the basis of all the deductions that the heroes of the police novels apply to identify the perpetrator of a crime.

Another conclusion relates to the types of detectives we identified in the analysis of the novels in our study. Thus, we reached the following types of detectives:

1. the detective character inspired by reality: Vidoq,
2. amateur detective character: Melania Lupu, Miss Marple, August Dupin,
3. the private detective character: Hercule Poirot, Sherlock Holmes, Sam Spade, Phillip Marlowe,
4. the detective character in the service of the State: Major Minerva Tutovan, Major Panait, Captain Lucian, Commissioner Jules Maigret, Lecoq.

About the characters we studied we can conclude: Knight August Dupin gathers all the indications of a crime, does not make assumptions and especially, does not guess, he is the deduction of his creator, Poe, but also of his thinking, Sherlock Holmes is the figure of the detective declared , absolutely, aware of the superiority of his intelligence, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple are two emblematic characters of the police literature and the gentle detective of Georges Simenon, Jules Maigret evokes the human, sensitive side of the detective.

The bibliography was written in such a way as to include the reference works for the authors studied, the specialized literature in both Romanian and English and French, dictionaries, articles, specialized studies, but also resources consulted online.

The appendices, the last part of our work contain a copy of the original facsimile of Edgar Allan Poe's short story, *The Murders in The Rue Morgue*, the crime scene in the short story of Edgar Allan Poe *The Murders in The Rue Morgue*, the cover of the first edition, in 1843, of the short story *The Murder in the Rue Morgue*, by EA Poe, the cover of the magazine "*The Ladies' Companion*", where between 1842-1843 Edgar Allan Poe's short story, *Mystery of Mary Roget*, is published in series, 1853 illustration for Edgar Allan Poe's novel, *Mystery of Mary Roget* and excerpts from the original manuscript of Panait Macri's novel, *The Murder from Sun Street or Maria Popovici's Assassins*, published in 1885.

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