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Anda-Lucia Spânu

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Sibiu

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Luigi Mayer, a European painter-traveller at the end of the Eighteenth Century

Anda-Lucia Spânu

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Abstract

Luigi Mayer was one of the artists which ventured to the Orient in the last part of the 18th century. A pre-Orientalist watercolour painter and drawer, he is known as the author of views made while working for the British ambassador at Constantinople. He paid attention to architectural elements, local occupations, clothes and details about inhabitants and the places he went through. In his pictures one can find information about political, economic, social, cultural and religious life of locals.

Luigi Mayer, un artista viaggiatore europeo della fine del Settecento

Luigi Mayer fu uno degli artisti che si avventurarono in Oriente negli ultima parte del XVIII secolo. Pittore e disegnatore di acquerelli pre-orientalisti, è noto come autore di viste fatte mentre si lavora per il ambasciatore britannico a Costantinopoli. Prestò attenzione all'architettura mestieri locali, vestiti e dettagli degli abitanti e dei luoghi che attraversava. Nelle sue immagini si possono trovare informazioni sulla vita politica, economica, sociale, culturale e religiosa dei locali.

Keywords: Luigi Mayer, vedute, collections, everyday life.

Luigi Mayer, vedute, collezioni, vita quotidiana.

Anda-Lucia Spânu is historian with background in archaeology, MA in protection and conservation of heritage and PhD (2007) in history of culture, doing research at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Sibiu from 2000. She is specialized in urban history and has a special interest in town & city views.

Author: andaluciaspanu@yahoo.com

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1 | Introduction

Many nations travelled, but the Grand Tour is associated with aristocratic British travellers of the eighteenth century. Was a journey of several years, for educational purposes and self-improvement, sometimes fulfilling cultural functions as travellers bought works of art or helped spread new tastes and cultural interests, but was also a travel for pleasure. The classic tour was to Paris, through France and then Italy, usually as far as Rome, sometimes, as far as Naples. On their way back the tourists usually crossed Germany and the Low Countries [Black 2004, 84; Constantine 2013, 499-501].

The French Revolutionary War led to a major break in tourism that was exacerbated when French armies overran Italy in 1796-1798. Thereafter tourism did not resume until after the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815 [Black 2004, 85].

As a meeting point between East and West, the Levant has been the traditional place of the exchange of goods between the two economies. In the eighteenth century, few gentlemen, discouraged by war instead of the classic Grand Tour, travelled further East; it was the beginning of the era of travelling for knowledge into Levant. Napoleon interest in the Middle East determined the Europeans to realize the importance of the area and soon the British followed the French there [Edgar 2013, 714-716].

One very interesting artist was part of both types of journeys: Luigi Mayer. He travelled with Grand Tourists on their way on the classical route, and accompanied others in different regions that were part of the Ottoman Empire at that time.

2 | Luigi Mayer (1750/1755–1803)

Only few details are known about the artists' life. Taking into account his name, Luigi was probably from a family of German origin but born in Italy, possible in Naples [*Select Literary Information* 1805, 313; Duggan 2018, 91], but most likely in Rome, considering that he often signed 'Romano'. Anyway, he lived many years in Rome, where it is assumed that he was student of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). A watercolour painter and drawer, the artist gained recognition by winning the drawing award of Académie de St-Luc [*Impressions from Afar* 2011]. Mayer worked for Ferdinand the IVth, King of Naples and the Two Sicilies (1751-1825), for whom he painted views of Sicily [*Abebooks*], was a draughtsman for Ignazio Paterno Castello (1719-1786), Prince of Biscari, a wealthy antiquarian and the most learned man in Sicily, and was employed by Gabriele Lancillotto Castelli (1727-1792), Prince of Torremuzza to work, as painter of the perspectives, together with the architect Carlo Chenchi, on the drafting of the necessary protection measures – part of the *Plans of antiquities* in Sicily [Tantillo 2010, 12; Taylor 2013, 159, 165-166].

When Luigi Mayer was employed by Sir Robert Ainslie, British ambassador at Constantinople from 1776-1794, to depict views on their travels, it is not clear. Some sources suggest that the artists worked for the Prince of Biscari up to his death, in 1786 [Taylor 2013, 166; Llewellyn 2015], other consider that the ambassador Robert Ainslie hired Luigi Mayer probably for the whole period of his diplomatic mandate [*Impressions from Afar* 2011; Vingopoulou 2].

The ambassador paid an annual stipend of 50 guineas and financed Mayer's journeys so that the artist would draw and depict sights in the Ottoman Empire and in particular the antiquities. But all the artist's works remained the property of his patron, as was customary in such situations [Vingopoulou 2; Taylor 2013, 166; Llewellyn 2015].

In Constantinople, Mayer married Clara Barthold, presumably with Swiss descend, daughter of a dragoman in the British Embassy [*Impressions from Afar* 2011; *Clara & Luigi Mayer* 2014] or, from other sources, a Greek of Bulgarian origin [*Select Literary Information* 1805, 313].

By the topics of Mayer's views that have been or rather, are known, he travelled not only in Italy, but across the Mediterranean coast, in Cyprus, Anatolia, Palestine, Caramania, Rhodes, Caria, Lycia, Samos, Corinth, Turkey, Syria, Bulgaria, Romania, and Egypt and executed hundreds of compositions reflecting ancient cities and genre scenes [*Clara & Luigi Mayer* 2014; Vingopoulou 2]. For the time being, in this article, I will refer exclusively to his views realized on the spot in today's territory of Romania.

3 | Sir Robert Ainslie (1730-1812)

Robert Ainslie was born into a family of seven children (four girls and three boys) of the nobleman George Ainslie and lady Jane, born Anstruther, Robert being the youngest son. His brothers were Knight Sir Phillip Ainslie and the infantry general George Ainslie [Grant 1885-1900]. Robert Ainslie was mentioned for the first time in the London Gazette on the nineteenth of September 1775 [London Gazette 1775, nr. 11598], about his appointment as his Majesty the king ambassador at the Ottoman Porte, in place of John Murray, who had died. On this occasion he also obtained the title of Knight. He will hold the position of British ambassador in Constantinople from 2nd of October 1776 until 22nd of June 1794 [Cernovodeanu 1994, 129]. Ainslie's two principal objectives were to further British trading interests, represented by the Levant Company, who paid his salary, and to maintain peace in the region [*Abebooks*]. It was said of him, that he was Sultan Abdul Hamid I favourite and best companion [*Biographical Dictionary* 1842, 568-569].



G. Mayer del.

Veduta di una parte della Città di Bucaresti presa alle sponde del Fiume
N° 53

Fig. 1: Veduta di una parte della Città di Bucaresti presso alle sponde del Fiume.



D. Mayer del.

Balli di Ragione Salanda aperto nella Città di Bucaresti in Salachia

N° 57.



D. Mayer del.

Adetti del Olleggi Hontis nella Salachia presso della fontana sull'Inferno

N° 58.

Fig. 2: *Ballo di Ragazze Valacche osservato nella Città di Bucuresti in Valakia.*

Fig. 3: *Veduta del Villaggio Floresti nella Valachia presa dalla fontana sull'Ingresso.*

From 8 September 1796 Robert Ainslie received a life pension and on the 13th of October, he became baronet, title that will be inherited by his nephew Robert Sharp Ainslie, son of general Ainslie, because his only son died on the 20th of December 1796 of violent fever. Between 1796 and 1802 was member of the Parliament (representing Milborne Port, Somerset). Sir Robert Ainslie died aged 83, at Bath, on the 21st of July 1812 [Cernovodeanu 2001, 1221]. During the period he was ambassador, Robert Ainslie dedicated himself to research and collecting. Known for his passion for Antiquity, numismatics, natural history, and the lifestyle of the East, the ambassador created an important collection with the Ottoman and Byzantine works, accumulating also an impressive number of coins from Eastern Europe, Asia Minor and Northern Africa [Cernovodeanu 2001, 1221; Clara & Luigi Mayer 2014].

The archaeologist and numismatist Domenico Sestini (1750-1832)¹, was the one who made, organized and published Ainslie's collection of coins, first time in 1789, in three volumes, in four volumes in the second edition of 1790, to which a fifth one was added, in the 1794 edition [Taylor 2013, 159-164; Gorini 2017, 18-20].

Ainslie seemed to be happy with his new life in Constantinople and, unlike some of his predecessors, he adapted himself to the everyday life of the Turks. In his home, garden and at his table, he adopted the life style and manners of the rich Muslims, in short, he lived a Turkish life, and this fact delighted the natives so much, that he became one of the most popular Christians of the time [Barnard 2007, 2]. His home was also the meeting point for the European travellers, whether on the Oriental Grand Tour or not, generously hosted as they passed through Constantinople [Taylor 2013, 159].

The ambassador also accumulated a large collection of the paintings, commissioned to artist Luigi Mayer [Clara & Luigi Mayer 2014]. It was not a singular case at that time. It can even be said that the ambassador had competition.

Comte Marie Gabriel Florent Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier (1752-1817) a French nobleman, traveller and diplomat, was born in Paris. Highly educated, Choiseul-Gouffier was elected in 1784 a member of the Académie Française. The same year was appointed Ambassador of France to the Sublime Porte by Louis XVI. Passionate about Antiquity, he brought French draughtsman and watercolourist Louis-François Cassas to Constantinople during his term, until 1792, when he was called home² [Vingopoulou 1].

Cassas journeyed a lot, depicting the places he visited. The nearly 300 compositions he produced, which include Constantinople views, as well as ancient cities and monuments, were published as engravings in Choiseul-Gouffier's books *Voyage en Syrie, de la Phœnicie, de la Palaestine, et la Basse Aegypte* and *Voyage-Pittoresque de la Grèce* [Vingopoulou 1; Ambassador's Painters 2015].

4 | Travel Literature

Directly related to the desire to travel, book illustration evolved at the end of the eighteenth century and so did the travel diaries and (hi)stories. On the Grand Tour artists were "tourists" of choice or for money, immortalising what they saw after they had experiencing the journey, thus offering an image of the exterior world to those who were not able or willing to travel. Travel literature was one of the richest in information genres in early modern Europe. The public was thwart and travel literature was the second bestselling genre, after history [Carhart 2004, 68]. By 1800 travel writing become so popular in Britain that some printers have specialized in this type of books. At the same time, travel illustration has also developed [Fordham]. As a result of all his intellectual preoccupations, or perhaps as proof of them, Robert Ainslie

¹ Born in Florence and ecclesiastical educated, Domenico Sestini worked as antiquarian and librarian for the Prince of Biscari, in Catania. Here, besides his interests in botany and natural history, became passionate about numismatics. He travelled in the Ottoman Empire, and published his botanical and historical observations before and after his collaboration with the British ambassador [Taylor 2013, 159-164; Gorini 2017, 18-20].

² Given the political changes, Choiseul-Gouffier preferred the exile to Russia, where he was named Director of the Academy of Arts and Imperial Public Library of Russia. He returned in France in 1802, after the start of the First Empire.

published several books rich illustrated with engravings after drawings made under his patronage, after returning home to England. These are:

– *Views in Egypt: from the Original Drawings in the Possession of Sir Robert Ainslie, taken during his Embassy to Constantinople by Luigi Mayer.* Engraved by and under the Direction of Thomas Milton. With Historical Observations, and Incidental Illustrations of the Manners and Customs of the Natives of that Country. London: Thomas Bensley, Bolt-court, Fleet-street for R. Bowyer, Historic Gallery, Pall-Mall, 1801.

– *Views in the Ottoman Empire, Chiefly in Caramania, a Part of Asia Minor hitherto unexplored. With some Curious Selections from the Islands of Rhodes and Cyprus, and the Celebrated Cities of Corinth, Carthage and Tripoli: from the Original Drawings in the possession of Sir R. Ainslie, Taken during his Embassy to Constantinople. With Historical Observations and Incidental Illustrations of the Manners and Customs of the Natives of the Country.* London: Published by R. Bowyer, at the Historic Gallery, Pall Mall, T. Bensley, Printer, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, 1803.

– *Views in Palestine, from the Original Drawings of Luigi Mayer. With an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Country, and its Remarkable Places. Vues en Palestine, d'après les dessins originaux de Luigi Mayer avec une relation historique et descriptive du pays et des lieux principaux qu'on y remarque.* Printed by T. Bensley, Bolt Court, for R. Bowyer, Historic Gallery, Pall Mall, 1804.

With great success to the public the books were printed in several editions. Also, they were available bounded together as *Views in Egypt, from the Original Drawings in the possession of Sir Robert Ainslie, taken during his Embassy to Constantinople. Views in Palestine. Views in the Ottoman Empire, chiefly in Caramania*, London: T. Bensley, 1804 [Abebooks].

A selection of small and uncoloured engravings was printed in 1833 under the title *A Series of Twenty-four Views illustrative of the Holy Scriptures. Selected from Sir Robert Ainslie's celebrated collections of drawings in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Corinth, Ephesus, &c. &c. &c.* Engraved and coloured by, and under the direction of J. Clarke. With a geographical and historical account of each view, printed by T. Bensley [Rarebooks].

5 | The aquatint

The aquatint was invented by the printmaker Jan van de Velde IV (c.1610-1686) around 1650 in Amsterdam [Ives 2003], but was developed in France and England. *Aquatinta* became the favourite method in the process of colouring books illustrations, because it imitated the watercolour painting, allowing the artist, the engraver and the editor to catch the beauty of watercolour and to offer it to a broader public.

Aquatint may be used to create tones of differing gradations through the process of etching. Its invention and application mark an important development in the travel print, and one that made it possible for the intaglio printmaker to render the subtle atmospherics of watercolour in tonal washes of grey [Fordham, Ives 2003].

Nowadays Mayer's name is known only to a handful of collectors, and then in large part thanks to the volumes of aquatints published after his original work [Llewellyn 2015]. But some of his works were very popular in his last years of life, were lithographed and circulated widely in consecutive editions from 1801 onwards. These editions, which were completed gradually, included paintings by Mayer representing various subjects and done in various engraving techniques, coupled with commentaries in three languages (English, French and German). The descriptions which accompany the illustration are excerpted from travel accounts of the same period [Vingopoulou 2].

Fig. 4: Truppa di Zingane, che assediano la Casa per avere l'elemosina osservato nel villaggio di Gigesti nella valakia.

Fig. 5: Veduta del Villaggio di Gigesti nella Valakia presa da un casino alle sponde del fiume Argis.



6 | Views from nowadays Romania (1794)

The artist was part of the ambassador's entourage in the long return journey from Constantinople to London, undertaken on land because of the war with France [Cernovodeanu 2001, 1220]. Therefore, he had the opportunity to capture on paper some views of Romanian Principalities and Transylvania.

All representations we are interested in were made by Luigi Mayer in 1794, and were printed for the first time in the year 1801, uncoloured, in *Views in Turkey in Europe and Asia, comprising Romania, Bulgaria, Walachia, Syria and Palestine. Selected from the collection of Sir Robert Ainslie. Drawn by Luigi Mayer, and engraved by William Watts*³, with an elucidative letter-press. Published March 1st 1801, by the Proprietor, William Watts. No. 13, London Street, Fitzroy Square, London (reprinted in 1802, 1803 and 1807).

The 1810 edition – *Views in the Ottoman Dominions, in Europe, in Asia and some of the Mediterranean Islands, from the original drawings taken for Sir Robert Ainslie by Luigi Mayer F.A.S. With Descriptions historical and illustrative*, London, Printed by T. Bensley for R. Bowyer, 1810 (second edition of *Views in Turkey* ...), with 32 pages of bilingual text, English and French – has 71 engravings coloured by hand preceded by an historical text about the Ottoman Empire, confuse and false, as a result of compilations by other authors, without direct connection with the represented scenes. But the way in which the artist perceived this area and its people is truly reproduced in drawings. As the publisher assures us in his *Advertisement*, here and there can be found observations made by Luigi Mayer on the spot.

The prints circulated also as loose leafs, a situation that often occurred in that period, the publication date being always specified on them.

The plate numbering and order differs in the two volumes, and they are not related to the travel timeline. The views that immortalize fragments of life from nowadays Romania are: *View of the Aluta; Entrance to St. Mary's Convent; Church & Convent of St. Mary, Pitesti; View near Bucuresti; Palace at Bucuresti; Palace at Bucuresti. Plate II.*

These were the only works of Luigi Mayer known to Romanian historiography until Constantin Karadja found in an antique store in London the watercolour *Fianco del Palazzo del Principe della Valachia nella città di Bucuresti* (Side of the Palace of the Prince of Wallachia, in Bucharest) [Karadja 1922, 66 and fig. 2]. Than silence for decades.

Paul Cernovodeanu mentioned in a footnote that he knew about some «new engravings made by Mayer in Wallachia and the Carpathians» [Cernovodeanu 1994, 129, footnote 2], in different collections and I was lucky enough to trace back some of these in a research from 2011-2012, identifying eight further original watercolours painted by Luigi Mayer. Information about those by than unknown images came only from auction houses and antique stores from United Kingdom⁴ and The United States of America⁵ [Spănu 2012a; Spănu 2012b]. Among other things, I also found out then about the fate of the works signed by Luigi Mayer that were part of Sir Robert's collection. Robert Ainslie sold his collection of paintings by Luigi Mayer in March 1809. Christie's sale lists also 'the entire collection of drawings, and paintings in oil of sir Robert Ainslie', over 300 items. Robert Sharpe Ainslie or his son Charles purchased 42 lots of gouaches on paper with painted borders which remained with the family until October 2009. They were the basis of a new collection, to which were added the pieces collected by Charles Ainslie and P.H. Sandilands. The new collection was discovered, with great surprise, by the family, only at the death (in the same year as the auction) of Mr. Ainslie Sandilands from Down County. Even more interesting is the fact that the paintings were never displayed, but kept in the portfolio: they were so fresh at the time of sale

³ All the illustrations that represent scenes from nowadays Romania were engraved by William Watts (1752-1851), a landscape painter, illustrator and very active engraver, who worked in many European Countries. Watts also worked on the engravings from *Collection of Coloured Views in the Turkish Provinces with Descriptions in French and English*, printed in the same year, 1801, illustrated also with images made by Luigi Mayer from the collection of Sir Roberts Ainslie.

⁴ James Adam & Sons Ltd. Fine Art Auctioneers & Values since 1887 [Adams 2009a; Adams 2009b] and Abbott and Holder Ltd. [Abbot & Holder 2012a; Abbot & Holder 2012b; Abbot & Holder 2012c].

⁵ Leslie Hindman Auctioneers Inc., from Chicago-Illinois [Leslie Hindman 2009].

that they just seemed to come out from under the painter's brush. Maybe from here their value, measured this time in money, not in their quality of historical document, the 43 watercolours being sold in 2009 with prices between 3.000 and 30.000 € per piece. In my recent searches I found even more expensive pieces for painter's works representing events or places from other parts of the world, but let's not digress from the topic that interests us. [Adams 2009b; Taylor 2013, 175]. Documenting myself for this article I was fortunate to discover some of the artist's working drawings, again at an auction house, this time at Christie's from London. At the British Drawings & Watercolours auction from July 2, 2019, lot 77 included «31 Views in or near Wallachia (modern Romania), including views of Constantinople, Pisenza and Bucharest 4 July 1794». In fact, from all the images of Lot 77, 19 represents places from nowadays Romania. The drawings are made on paper with «black and red chalk, grey wash, variously heightened with gum Arabic, watercolour, pen and black ink, heightened with white, squared for transfer». They belonged to Sir Francis Sandilands who, according to family tradition purchased them in the 1970s [Christie's 2019].

I contacted the British Drawings & Watercolours Department of Christie's and, with the precious help of Jonathan den Otter, I have received the contact details of the present owner of these drawings, Paul Sandilands from Brackley, Northamptonshire, himself an artist. From the correspondence with him I found out that an ancestor of his family married into Sir Robert Ainslie's family and that his father bought the pictures many years ago, but did not tell the family details about them. The images reproduced in this article were provided at a very good resolution and quality by Jonathan den Otter from Christie's with the generous permission of their owner, Paul Sandilands. I am grateful to both of them.

A number of the works from the Ainslie Collection were later acquired the British Museum: 59 of them are kept in the Prints and Drawings Collection. More were acquired by or donated to Victoria & Albert Museum. Some are to be found scattered throughout the world in private collections, at art auctioneers, museums and in libraries. I'm sure there will be more details coming soon, because Luigi Mayer still has a lot to say through his art. In the meantime, as far as I'm concerned, I will continue to inquire about his works which are equally pleasing to the eye and bearing historical information.

Mayer's drawings and watercolours are signed, dated and inscribed with information about the place represented. It is important to specify that the drawings and watercolours are numbered identically, which is very useful for the next step. Therefore, with all these illustrations at hand, the route of the British through nowadays Romania seems to be like this: in Wallachia they passed through Giurgiu, Capociani⁶, Bucharest, Florești⁷, Gigești⁸, Pitești, Curtea de Argeș, Spino⁹, Keineni¹⁰, they entered Transylvania through the Turnu Roșu pass and left it through the Banat in Timișoara. Suiting this evolution, the order of the illustrations¹¹ that describe settlements from Romania is the following:

- *Ballo di ragazze valacche osservato nella città di Giorsiova, Tavola no XLV/II del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (watercolour nr. 47 of the picturesque voyage of Sir Knight Robert Ainslie);
- *Parte del Villaggio di Capociani con Ponte del Barche sul Fiume Argis nella Valachia* (watercolour nr. 50);
- *Chiesa con cimitero Greco nelle vicinanze de Bucaresti città capitale della Valachia* (watercolour and drawing nr. 51 and also a print);
- *Veduta di una parte della città di Bucaresti presso alle sponde del Fiume* (drawing nr. 53);
- *Fianco del Palazzo del Principe della Valachia nella città di Bucaresti* (watercolour nr. 54 and print);

Fig. 6: *Veduta del Secondo Cortile con la Chiesa del Convento Greco detto Curle d'Argis nella Valakia.*

Fig. 7: *Passaggio di un torrente molto gonfio nelle vicinanze del fiume Argis nella Valakia.*

Fig. 8: *Parte del Villaggio detto Spino all'ingresso della Valle dell'istesso nome nella Valackia.*

Fig. 9: *Passaggio sopra un ponte di Arbori nelle Montagne della Valakia.*





- *Palace at Bucuresti. Plate II* (print);
- *Ballo di Ragazze valacche osservate nella città di Bucuresti in Valakia* (drawing nr. 57);
- *Veduta del Villaggio Floresti nella Valachia Presa della Fonatana sull'ingresso* (watercolour and drawing nr. 58);
- *Truppa di Tigane su aprediano la Casa per avere la cerimonia osservato vel villaggio di Gigești nella Valakia* (drawing nr. 59);
- *Veduta del villaggio di Gigești nella Valakia presa da un casino alle sponde del fiume Argis* (watercolour and drawing nr. 60);
- *Dervisc ubbriaco, che predica agl' infedeli [osservato nel villaggio] di Pitesti nella Valachia* (watercolour and drawing nr. 61);
- *Veduta {di una parte} del villaggio di Pitesti nella Valachia presa alla {dalle} sponde del fiume Argis* (watercolour and drawing nr. 62);
- *Spaziosa valle irrigata dal fiume Argis nella Valachia disegnata dal convta di S.M. Curle d. Argis* (watercolour nr. 63);
- *Veduta del primo cortile del convento greco detto Curle d'Argis nella Valachia* (watercolour nr. 64 and print);
- *Veduta del secondo cortile con la Chiesa del convento Greco detto Curle d'Argis nella Valakia* (watercolour nr. 65 and print);
- *Castello ruinato, osservato nel vicino da un piccolo villaggio, con vista del fiume Argis nella Valabia* (drawing nr. 66);
- *Passaggio di un torrente molto gorsio nelle vecinanze del Fiume Argis nella Valakia* (drawing nr. 67);
- *Parte del Villaggio detto Spino all'ingresso della Valle dell'istesso noma della Valackia* (drawing nr. 69);
- *Passaggio sopra un ponte di Arbori nella Montagne della Valakia* (drawing nr. 70);
- *Veduta di Bosco nelle Montagne di Valabia con ponte di albori* (drawing nr. 71);
- *Torrente con alberi, e veduta di Bosci nelle Montagne della Valak* (drawing nr. 73);
- *Passaggio di un valone tra le Montagne della Valabia* (drawing nr. 75);
- *Veduta delle Montagne della Valabia in vecenezza di Fiume Aluta* (drawing nr. 76);
- *Veduta di torchi tra le Montagne della Valakia* (drawing nr. 77);
- *Veduta del Borgo di Keineni in vicinenca della Città dell'istesso nome sul fiume Aluta nella Valachia* (drawing nr. 80);
- *View of the Aluta* (print);
- *Piazzza nella città di Malinbok¹² nel banato di Temesvar, copiato dal disegno originale de viaggio del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie nel 1794* (watercolour);
- *Veduta Boscareccia tra le montagne di Transilvania sulli confini di Valachi, copiato dal disegno originale de viaggio del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie nel 1794* (watercolour).

About the last two plates, sold by house Dorotheum in Viena [Dorotheum 2005, lot 179 and lot 181] it is impossible for me to be sure, the legend is different from the other watercolours, and are not numbered, but my best guess is that are watercolours «copied after original drawings». By comparing the drawing and/or the watercolour with the prints, where this is possible, one can see several differences that should be mentioned, but which I will treat in detail in another study. For now, here, it should be said only that, of course, the drawings are schematic, but providing all the necessary information, the watercolours are not only the most detailed, but the most credible representations, with realistically rendered people, landscapes and architecture, while the prints are colder, and significantly modified by the engraver: parts of watercolour and some elements of street or landscape decoration, as well as characters are missing, the position

⁶ It could be the village and commune Adunații-Copăcenii from Giurgiu County or the old village Copăcenii, nowadays included in the homonym commune from Ilfov County, both situated South of Bucharest.

⁷ The village Florești is now part of the commune Stoenesti, Giurgiu County, North West of Bucharest.

⁸ Unidentified locality, possibly vanished. It could be about Golești of Băilești or Golești of Ștefănești, or Gănești of Pietroșani, all in Argeș County.

⁹ Should be the village Spinu in Vâlcea County.

¹⁰ Still existing Căineni, nowadays a commune in Vâlcea County.

¹¹ At each view I have specified whether it is a drawing, a watercolour or a print, sometimes two or even all three types of images.

¹² Unidentified locality. It is possible to be the locality Mașloc, in Timiș County.

within the composition, direction of walking, physiognomy and, particularly, the clothing of most people have been changed, instead architectural details or even entire buildings – not at all representative for the represented place – were added in prints, although they do not exist in the drawing/watercolour.

The original numbering of drawings lets us understand that other watercolour paintings existed with topics from nowadays Romania. It seems that at least 10 watercolour paintings with images from Wallachia are missing. This argument leads to a total amount of at least 35 watercolour paintings with subjects from Wallachia. It is very probable, that the number of illustrations from Transylvania, out of which we know only three, is much bigger, considering the large area covered and the beauty of the places through which the travellers passed. They stopped in Sibiu for sure, it is known that they had lunch with Baron von Brukenthal, but I have not found (yet) any evidence drawn, painted or printed.

In all these 28 views that we already have, Luigi Mayer has paid great attention not only to the architectural elements of the buildings, but also to the occupations of the locals, the clothing and the characteristic details of the places crossed. Looking closely, in his images we find information of political and economic nature, as well as of social and religious life. The artist has depicted sequences of daily life both from the lives of the simple and many, but also aspects of the concerns of the representatives of the ruling classes.

Luigi Mayer is the first artist who has represented faithful fragments of life from urban and rural Romania.



Fig. 10: Veduta del Borgo di Keineni in vicinanza della Città dell'istesso nome sul fiume Aluta nella Valachia.

7 | Conclusions

Even if the Orientalism didn't turn out to be a defined style until the nineteenth century [Thorton 1994, 4], its roots can be traced back starting with the preference for the exotic and picturesque in the eighteenth century, when any European with some knowledge of the East could be an Orientalist. Oriental subjects were depicted by travelling artists through Oriental countries, in scenes evidently selected to suit the taste of the European public [*Pre-Orientalism*; Tromans 2010, 159]. The Orient was considered everything East of Western Europe to the Near-Middle-Far East, including Balkans and Russia [Tromans 2010, 157].

The eighteenth century Grand Tourists were not concerned about holy sites, like Jerusalem, but they were much more interested in antiquity. The Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire takes off after the French Revolution in 1789. With the French invasion of Italy in 1796, Italy was closed to travellers and everyone was going to the East. Most often, if not always, up to Constantinople.

At the end of the eighteenth century, western artists living in Constantinople became an indispensable part of the European way of social life developed around the embassies in Pera. This western setting provided painters with a milieu from which they received commissions that enabled them to meet their social needs and thus sustained their life in Constantinople. Their works became part of books with engravings, were stored in collections or decorated walls of European aristocrats' houses [*Intersecting Worlds*].

The interest ambassadors such as Choiseul-Gouffier and Robert Ainslie had in the archaeology and picturesque views of Antiquity during the second half of that century, as well as the paintings they commissioned and books they published reflects, on the one hand, their Enlightenment ideology, on the other hand, heralds Romanticism [*Intersecting Worlds*].

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