

VILLAGE COMMUNITY UNRAVELLING FROM CAMPULUNG-MUSCEL AREA

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Abstract: *The village community-structural and functional unit of Romanian society from prehistory until present-represents, despite its simple organisation and structure, an excellent example of social solidarity, of unity, of unaltered storage of traditions and particularities in history, ethnography, language, religious, values that today Romanian society mostly lost.*

Key words: *village community, Campulung-Muscel*

1. INTRODUCTION

The present study intends to elucidate the main causes of Romanian village communities unravelling-especially on the case of Mosnens village communities from Campulung-Muscel area- and the elements involved in this process, which has its beginnings in feudalism appearance in Romanian Lands (aprox. the X-th century) and slowly evolutes, but more and more virulent to the last century.

2. VILLAGE COMMUNITY UNRAVELLING

The feudal occurrence in Romanian Countries marks a point over the village community unravelling beginning; so, from them, it is detaching by enrichment, a lord class that seize the villages, meaning the annuity in nature and work from the peasants. This seizing dates before Romanian feudal states formation and the penetration of Hungarian feudal in Transylvania. The Mosnens village community unravelling from Campulung-Muscel area followed the natural course of village community disintegration from the whole extra Carpathians Romanian area. Also as the other village communities, they have their roots in the transformations occurring in time, in the primitive era.

The village community always represents with its solidarity, a defensive way for peasants' freedom in the feudal period. It must be said that Romania was one of the few European countries that kept the possession of joint property until the XX-th century, revealing that villages of free peasants gathered together in village community, they couldn't be totally enslaved, succeeding to remain free, despite lords' wishes for their work slavery.

About the role played by village communities throughout our history, the report from 1903 of Ion Anastasescu Ghica, the president of Mosnens Village Community Administration Committee from Campulung in the early XX-th century, observes: *"there where the mosnens' institution is still conserved, there where it still exists a small piece of old Romanian bravery and virtue, there where we still hear the sweet Romanian voice, the National Costume is still wear, stubbornly are conserved the traditions and the habits, there where life and living are easier, the good material status is blooming. In the other parts of the country, where the Mosnens and yeomen disappeared, there had also disappeared and altered the Romanian habits and traditions and the Romanian way of being, all these characteristics of hospitality, humanity,*

honesty, virtue and bravery that were the pride of Romanian people"(Anastasescu, 1909).

The village community couldn't resist to commodity-money trade development. The community village couldn't resist to the opening market, to the internal commercial links, to production and crafts increase, to differentiation work. Being a closed economic community, the village community is losing its way into a society where individual work is differentiated and where the economic autarky leave place to commodity trade. So, land property in the village community is transforming into individual possession and the seizing of free village community by feudal who buy and invade the lands, is more increasing. The fact that in Romanian Countries, the village community took place for a longer period of time and that it was stronger than most of European countries, it is due to a weak development of Romanian cities, the main factor for intern market development.

The possession of joint property disintegration of village community land passed through several phases: the first individual property was the house, with its household, while the rest of the land was possessed in common. The second phase was individual family property of agricultural plots by draw, on limited time. The third was the hereditary possession of those plots, but the forests, the waters, the pastures remained in collective property. So, the disintegration is coming from inside, creating wealth differentiation for peasants. In its biological simple form, it is the result of villagers' natural breeding.

One of the main causes for wealth differentiation is work differentiation. The village crafts develop and so are enrichment and differentiation spreading people. In the free villages it was very spread a village craft-the bakery. One of natural occupation of the Mosnens from the Fagaras edges was also butchery because it was favoured by hills and mountain geography rich in pastures. On 22-nd October 1695, Constantin Brâncoveanu spoke about another specific occupation in that area so rich in horned: *"some butchers' from Câmpulungu and from Rucâr and from Dragoslavele"* (Trambaciu, 1997). And the trade made by the villagers outside the villages' bounds brought a wealth differentiation. In 1505, in a paper of Radu the Great was written: *"the Lotrens that were merchants and were carrying shopping from my country or from Hungarians, they should pay custom duties"* (Stahl, 1998).

Within this context, Câmpulung, being placed on the intersection of main commercial roads, it had a favoured area position for goods trade development with the close villages, but also with far away villages.

The city started to produce also for trade needs and that led to a crafts development, a production increase and a work differentiation; in these conditions, the village community began to crumble, slowly in the beginning, but faster and faster starting with XVII-th century.

In the middle of XVII-th century, Paul de Alep wrote about carting that was a payable occupation: *"the rent that those carters take for transport is indeed very huge, really exaggerated"*. The Mosnens from Campulung also did carting,

but only with lords' delegacy. Câmpulung was situated on a road that bound Romanian Country by Transylvania, so it influenced the trade development, the commodity-money relation inside the village community; that would reflect in the possession of joint property' transformation in individual possession.

The village community property was undermined also by religious settlements; the monastery increased its dominium gaining ground on village community plots, collecting tools or wagers from Mosnens.

Following the wealth differentiation, some villagers became poor whose plots had been reduced by successive divisions, by plenty tolls, by wars, sickness. For example, in XVII century, it appeared a new expression –“Colibasi” for the poor people living in the village and instead of living in houses, they were living in huts, being considered the village community poor.

As it was expected, the village couldn't be anymore a social unit as different social classes were already formed. The village community land property disintegration in individuals' property was unequal made on Romanian Countries area. Some villages remain until later times with a communal property; others were earlier divided in plots for different owner.

Even in the XIV-th century it can be found pieces of “ocina” in Romanian Country. Inside village community property, the delimited property coexisted with possession on joint property for a long period of time. In 1597, Groșii village, Șerbu, Stoian, Anca and others possessed their plots as possession on joint property, but others as Felea, Valente, Radu and other people had bought their plots or they had received them as dowry.

Another cause of disintegration was also the penetration of foreign elements in the village community and the most frequent in the XVI-th and XVII-th centuries was met to lords who were buying parts of village community land and they theoretically became members of the village community. The lords get a little part of land, but they increase it in a progressive manner and that kind of progressive seizure of village land was more and more often met.

Gheorghe Gh. Dobrin, the secretary of Mosnens village community from Arefu said about strangers who come to seizure the land: “*the big thieves came and with ruses and false papers put their hands on Mosnens green gold. And the processes with all kinds of invaders were lasting for hundreds of years, but people became always poor, but they fought eve with their life sacrifice and I don't have enough time to describe how many troubles strangers brought in our ancestral hearth. I stop only on the day of 2nd of August 1861, when with the price of 12.701golds, the Arefu Mountains, the slept Iordache Filipescu House property, had been bought by Mihail Hagiș Ștefan, who became inhabitant in Căpățâneni village and he put a milestone on Măgurela ridge. And his son, George Ștefănescu, to whom a statue was built in the yard house, on 2nd of April 1882, he made an act for peace and gave to Mosnens a surface of 750 hectares from the milestone till the Bad Valley, and the rest of the mountains was bought in exchange of one square meter box full of money by the German Emil Lesel, came from Hamburg, Germany*” (Anastasescu, 1909).

Besides the lords, other foreign elements were able to penetrate the village community area. Many wealthy merchants bought land and invest their money in plots from that area. In 1597, Mihai from Târgșor bought “ocina” from several Mosnens from Popești, becoming feudal owner in that village. Therefore, at the end of XVII-th century, on different ways, a massive penetration of foreign elements had been made in village community lands, rushing to its winding up to which had a contribution also to the internal disintegration of village community.

A very interesting moment was when the Roma people began to take up their residences on village community lands, frequently creating conflicts between them and villagers. That

phenomenon continues also today, as an example, it is showing us a newspaper from Muscel area: the taking up of residence of ethnics from Cetățeni and Pravăț Big Valley on „Cetățuia Negru Vodă” Monastery land, respectively on Nămăești Mosnens Village Community, created plenty dispute in the area. Very often the instance made a decision and the owners won the causes and it followed the land release of Roma cottages from the two localities.

An important source about the life of Mosnens village community from Campulung is given by I. Ghica: “*Especially the Mosnens from Campulung lived from bad to worse, most of all when the strangers from the other side of Danube came and sit in the time of Phanariot regime when the prescriptions of royal decrees weren't taken in count anymore; those decrees absolutely forbid the wealth alienation of village community towards strangers to community, even if they were Romanian people or foreign people, chancellors or particulars, clergymen or laymen*” (Anastasescu, 1909).

In the XVI-th century occurred the phenomenon named **wager**, meaning mortgage on land. In case of loaning, if the debtor couldn't pay his debt, the pledge land remained to the creditor. This institution can be considered as the forerunner for land tenancy which occurred in the XVIII-th century.

We can date the beginning of village community crumble in connexion but also as a consequence of an increasingly occurrence of commodity-money trade, meaning the end of XVI-th century and beginning of XVII-th century. The signs of that process were the occurrence of usury and currency devolution.

3. CONCLUSION

This research tries to present succinctly the causes, the elements and the modalities in which this old institution- the village community- slowly disappeared from history, crumbling and dissolving in forms of civilization which although modern, they are axiological inferior to village communities.

From ancient times until the XX-th century, the village community represented the structural and functional base unit of the society. Nowadays, in the current society evolution, morally perverted and led by a more and more acute sense of individual property, by a destructive individualism, by a lack of solidarity between people, the study of the way that the organisation manifests, of the working, of the cohabitation and of the mentality of people from the village communities, it represents one of the multitude moral elements that history has given to us. The village community represents an excellent example of social solidarity, of local traditions and national particularities' perpetuation, priceless values that in the current globalisation process, much of our conational people had forget.

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