From religious segregation to cultural heritage: the case of the Armenian community in Bucharest
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FROM RELIGIOUS SEGREGATION TO CULTURAL HERITAGE. THE CASE OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN BUCHAREST

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Abstract: Religious segregation is a process with a very long history, but which has been little analyzed within the Romanian scientific literature. The paper proposes a detailed discussion of how the Armenian community in Bucharest was geographically segregated because of religious reasons by the rest of the Orthodox inhabitants of the city almost five centuries ago. The analysis made by the national and international literature on this subject reveals substantial gaps, with multiple theoretical difficulties in explaining how religious segregation can end up in cultural heritage. Incorporating the urban segregation theory and urban culture, the research proposes an exploratory case study as a conceptual basis for future similar studies. The analyzed data have shown that, in time, due to the expansion of urban space and to certain religious concessions, cities can be the beneficiaries of high-value physical elements with an impact on urban culture, architecture and landscape, all thanks to religious segregation.

Key Words: *geographic segregation, religion, urban culture, Armenians, Bucharest.*

Introduction

This article uses the data obtained by reviewing and analyzing the theoretical background and other sources of information available online to discuss how the Armenian ethno-religious minority in Bucharest has been the case of a clear geographical segregation for centuries. The main cause of this situation consisted in the theological and religious differences within the host society, which led to the discriminatory behavior of the majority and to addressing the minority as heretical and schismatic (Mihăilescu 2003, Damé 2007). Further on, starting from the observation that some of the Bucharest landmarks and symbols now remind us of the cosmopolitan past of the city, the article analyzes the contribution of the Armenian community to the building of the cultural-historical heritage of the capital of Romania. Not only the Armenian community, but also the other ethnic, religious, socio-professional and other communities and minorities, have their contribution "engraved" in the history, heritage and, above all, the geographical toponymy (Nicolae et al. 2006, Airinei Vasile 2016) of Bucharest. This study proposes an analytical look at a seemingly oxymoronic situation, totally different from that of Bennett (1998), which is a difficult one to accept, since at a superficial look it seems paradoxical and apparently incompatible with the reality of the present, namely that religious segregation has left a rich cultural and architectural dignity to Bucharest.

The research makes a substantial contribution to the scientific literature by combining religious segregation with cultural heritage. The national scientific literature does not know any thorough analysis in this respect, and there is a scientific breakthrough that deserves to be explored. Neverhtheless, the international literature is not too abundant either, and the few attempts that existed have taken into account the broad framework of segregation and cultural heritage (Bohland 1982, Byrne 2003), but without emphasizing their effects on the physical landscape (buildings, monuments, streets, toponyms etc.), a goal of this research itself. As I began to document and collect information, it became obvious that this is the point where the article makes a substantial contribution, and Bucharest offers a consistent methodological model that can be replicated in other geographic areas with similar characteristics.

As the theoretical background suggests, the case study dedicated to the segregation of the Armenian community in Bucharest can easily be depicted as part of the broad category of social segregation and, particularly, that of socio-urban segregation (Peach 1975), which is narrower in terms of space manifestation. By the importance of the religious component in the conduct of historical events and in the completion of the main purpose of the research, the present study represents an indispensable part on religious (Smith 2001) and ethno-religious segregation (Keene et al. 2016). However, because it contributes to Bucharest's urban research by pointing out the cultural value of the Armenian heritage, the study is also included in the field of urban and cultural material and immaterial heritage theory (Latham and McCormack 2004). In the spirit of the previous idea, Musil's statement (1995: 682) – "The very streets, with all their bustle and their ornate, pompous buildings, seemed to be in an analogous 'expectant state', as if the hard facets of a crystal were dissolved in some liquid medium and about to fall back into an earlier, more amorphous condition" – may become a leit-motif of the Armenian cultural component of this study.

So, based on this information, I will consider the case of religious segregation of Armenians in Bucharest, a situation that began to unfold from the late fifteenth century and it later transformed into cultural heritage. Lots of the urban parts of the city today remind us of the Armenian community (Airinei Vasile 2016). Therefore, the following sections will be dedicated to the theoretical background of this analysis and to determining the causes and ways in which the Armenians kept their separation from the rest of the inhabitants of Bucharest. The final section of the paper focuses on the assimilation and metamorphosis of old religious animosities into present urban cultural heritage.

Urban segregation

At the end of the first half of the last century, urban segregation became a very attractive subject of analysis for researchers in many areas, the most relevant of the emerging studies focusing on residential segregation (Evans 1934, Marcus and Burner 1936, Myrdal and Bok 1944). From this stage, Wirth (1928) draws attention to the danger of ethno-racial polarization that lurks the American cities, and, at the same time, he highlights the role of worship places in the segregation equation. Later, studies are multiplying by focusing on the increasing urban segregation and fragmentation phenomena, particularly within American societies (Massey 1990), together with the South African (Beinart and Dubow 2013) and Brazilian (Telles 2006) ones as well. Interestingly, Wieviorka (1994: 28), by referring to American cities, states: "American sociologists have contributed – in the broad sense of the term – to the invention of racism". One of the examples he cites in this respect is that of Dow (1929) calling for a gradual segregation of the black population, which ultimately ought to have led to its establishment in a single state. However, it is not to be understood that social segregation is limited to these examples, as it is not the case today. Not only are research papers more numerous, but some of them are looking at very little-known settlements (Ireland 2008), where the idea is that segregation is an urban process that, at least appearantly, knows no boundaries, while other studies refer to the increasing costs of segregation (Carr and Kutty 2008).

The analysis methodology has evolved with increasing research, and theory has become more solid. Urban development has speeded up social polarization processes, so that nowadays, as White (1983) noted, many urban spaces are fragmented, both socially and geographically / physically. Moreover, social segregation affects cities in multiple plans, including racial segregation (Rabinowitz 1994, Jencks and Peterson 2001, Massey and Denton 2003), ethnic segregation (Johnston et al. 2007), socio-economic segregation (Morgan 1975, Narodowski and Nores 2002, Tammaru et al. 2016), educational segregation (Domina 2006, O'Nions 2010) and, last, but not least, religious segregation (Smith 2001, Murtagh 2011, McKeown 2012). All these types of segregation leave a spatial footprint on the urban environment, which would translate into concrete forms of geographical segregation. The literature records many studies

that have focused on spatial segregation forms such as the slums (Davis 2006), the ghettoes (With 1929, Wilson 1989), the polarized spaces occupied by the urban privileges (Mionel 2012), which symbolically bear the name of the Golden Ghetto (Wagner 1976), as well as many other spatial forms of social segregation (Wievieorka 1994). For example, Harrison (1972) proposes an interesting approach to vocational education and training in urban ghettos, while Hutchinson and Haynes (2018) say that these are a contemporary global issue marked by controversy.

For Central and Eastern Europe, at present, the most pressing socio-urban problem is that of Roma communities (Mionel and Neguţ 2011, Méreiné Berki et al. 2017). This community is affected not only by ethnic segregation, but also by increasing inequality and socio-economic segregation according to the most recent studies (Tammaru et al. 2016). Segregation has prompted some authors to talk about racial cities (Picker 2017) within which the Roma concentration gave rise to vicious spaces of marginalization, poverty, stigma (Mionel 2013) and racism (Cashman 2017). For example, one of the top quoted contemporary specialists in the field (Wacquant 2013), evidences ethnic and racially marginalized groups – a situation in which the Roma are included – which appear to be urban outcasts. In this state of affairs, a defining contribution has also been given to Chelcea and Druţă (2016), talking about zombie socialism and the rise of neoliberalism in post-socialist societies. Moreover, some voices supporting the existence of solid connections between segregation and attachment to the place appeared in Central-Eastern Europe (Málovics et al. 2019). In the authors' opinion, this relationship is very strong and contradictory at the same time and it is based on the social relationships within the segregated communities, on the characteristics of the neighborhoods landscape and on the processes that our society is currently facing as a whole.

Urban religious segregation

The existing differences between certain religious communities at the moment of interaction may generate various types of segregation, as it is the case of ethnic, rasial and economic differences within other similar communities. Generally speaking, religious segregation represents the division of the population according to their religion. This concept has been applied in cases where religion has caused a spatial rupture within the population, creating a true social phenomenon (Knox 1973). In the same line of thought, in order to define this social phenomenon in his analysis on the situation in Pakistan, Akkara (2000) used the expression: 'religious apartheid'. Almost any scientific analysis that focuses on religion beliefs and rationality (Attfield 1970), ethno-religious segregation (Adair et al. 2000, Murtagh 2011) and sectarian politics and segregation (Damluji 2010) raises a number of fundamental issues. Due to the delicacy of the subject and of religion in particular (Smith 2001), such themes are not paid too much attention by the non-theological academic community. Therefore, when bringing up the question of dividing religious communities, polemics often arise (Hutchinson and Haynes 2018). Such situations arise precisely because of religious beliefs that – in most cases – preach justice, understanding and, above all, what we are very interested in analysing, 'living together'. In other words, although this has been happening since antiquity, denomination should not cause divisions within the community.

To elucidate a somewhat religious segregation problem, we have found first an answer to the question: 'can religion divide or cause population segregation?'. Well, many people have tried to answer this question that was launched by a U.S. website. The opinions have largely inclined towards a dual response, which shows that, on the one hand, religion unites people, and, on the other hand, it separates them; however, it is up to the individual to take one side or the other. However, at the individual level, religious separation is insignificant compared to the attitude a human group may adopt, especially since the implementation of the process is carried out in urban areas. The diversity of urban, social, cultural behaviours and so on, makes

it very difficult for human groups to take position in one context or another. There is no novelty that individuals naturally presenting similar features tend to occupy similar spaces and to behave in quite a similar manner, especially if they are the result of immigration (Wieviorka 1994). However, this depends on the people belonging to that group (Mionel 2012). The same happens with religion, in the sense that when the number of supporters within the city is large, they are concentrated in urban areas (Gale 2013), usually around the place of worship, causing a geographic area segregated on religious grounds (Flint 2010), but when the followers are few and scattered in space, we cannot talk about segregation.

The polarizing behavior generates an emergence of distinctive religious landscapes, which has also been seen by some as "a signifier of (possibly immutable) cultural difference" (Phillips 2006: 27). But, on the other hand, there have also been cases which make us think about the ancient and medieval policies of religious separation of social groups. An American court ruled that authoring a school unit to coincide with the religious boundary of a neighborhood is to the advantage of religion. Thus, that fine line of the voluntary association on religious grounds, which I mentioned earlier, was overcome by imposing an explicit political limit on the basis of the people's belief by the authorities (Norgren and Nanda 2006).

Beyond the theoretical side presented above, specific cases where urban society was divided on religious reasons come and support the claim that this process has affected and still affects some cities of the world (Adair et al. 2000, Murtagh 2011), sometimes in combination with other forms of urban segregation (ethnic, racial, etc.), and other time independently of those (Mionel 2012). Where large numbers of immigrants are present, as it is the case of Western cities, this process is likely to occur. Most often, groups from Muslim countries (Gale 2013) are prone to separation of religion because that culture focuses on the Koran ideology of behaviour or lifestyle (Holden 2009). Examples like these are the British cities (particularly London, which is more than eloquent): "the British capital is much more segregated on religious grounds rather than racial (...) a dramatic map outlined by researchers at University of East London shows how London has become a 'pot' of religious enclaves and that minority religions in some areas reach 80% of the population" (24DASH 2007). According to Steele (2005), columnist for the The Guardian, another particular case is that of cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are geographically split into three denomination categories: Muslims, Catholics and Orthodoxs. Also, the new urban trend in Lebanon reveals new denominational residential models, as shown in the study by Glasze (2006). The perpetual crisis that has ruined the Near East for over seven decades or the Israeli-Arab conflict has led to a strong polarization of cities and to a vertical (ethnic, confessional, religious etc.), as well as horizontal, segregation, that is to say, to neighborhoods that are more homogeneous from a religious point of view. According to Agbaria (2018), the situation in Israel is called religious ethnonationalism. Similarly, the traces of the conflict and, at the same time, their impact on religious segregation are visible today in both Ireland (Shirlow 2016) and Iraq (Corvalan and Vargas 2015), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and many other cases. Similar examples can be found not only in the West or in the Middle East, but also in Africa (Sedra 1999, Gambo and Omirin 2012).

Cultural heritage

Calame (2011) emphasizes religious segregation in his valuable work that speaks of divided cities. Not only does it analyze the conflicting history of concerned cities (Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar and Nicosia), but it also makes an explicit reference to the cultural heritage of the communities that inhabit them. Conversely, according to Freeman's study (1999), cultural inheritance can influence residential patterns and it can predispose urban space to segregation. For example, if we take the correct assumption that the manifestation of different forms of segregation imprints space, as suggested by Byrne (2003), then it is no doubt that its landscape dimension undoubtedly influences cultural heritage and practice.

In accordance with the examples mentioned so far, historically, Central and Eastern Europe also faced multiple ethnic segregation situations on ethno-religious principles (Keene et al. 2016). The Jewish community is the one that suffered the most from this point of view, and the literature that was dedicated to it is witnessed (Hsia and Lehmann 1995, Paudice 2014). Similar to the segregation of the Armenians in Bucharest, the Jewish medieval ghetto, after Hoffmann (2008), left a rich historiographical and cultural legacy. Further east, in the former Russian Empire, the same minority was forced to live in a clearly defined space perimeter, roughly in the geographic area occupied today by Eastern Europe, with no permission to defend this space than under entirely different conditions (Solzhenitsyn 2004). Their cultural dignity, which Caffyn and Lutz (1999) rightly claims to have been oppressed, as well as other minority groups that have existed or have migrated to Europe during the last centuries (Tunbridge 1994), are now observed everywhere in cities which have formed substantial communities. Wirth's statement (1928), which says that segregated urban landscapes are constituted as cultural communities that express a common heritage of traditions and feelings, is as valid as a decade ago. And what he believed about the segregation of Jews in American cities, namely gravitating around religious life (Wirth 1928), can easily be applied to other ethno-religious minorities, and the spatial footprint is visible today, most often, in the form of places of worship and of what Epstein and Kheimets (2000) called as cultural segregation.

Methodology

This article focuses on implicit or explicit religious segregation (Norgren and Nanda 2006), a social process with a conceptual age and significant dynamics, as we mentioned earlier. Using the case study methodology (Tellis 1997, Yin 2017), we discuss how the long history of religious segregation is transformed into cultural dignity and how it deletes the collective mentality of the separatist relational legacy of socio-urban groups. According to the data and information gathered from various sources, the Armenian minority, at the heart of the historical process of religious segregation, has increased slightly over time, but with it the assimilation process has also accelerated.

The research has gone on for a long period of time and it has embarked on several discontinued stages. The first step, the most consistent one, occurred about ten years ago, during my PhD study, when I investigated urban segregation in Bucharest. The sources of documentation were numerous and very varied: historical sources, ethnic studies, scientific articles, and others. At this stage, historical documentation (Kipping et al. 2015) was decisive, and the main purpose was to find out what and if ethnic communities were structured in space. The second stage started in 2013, with the occasion to attend the International Conference on Romanian-Armenian Cultural Heritage, organized in Bucharest by the Ministry of Culture and the Romanian Academy (Hayern Aysor 2013). Using the data from the previous stage, I continued to gather information to support the hypothesis – derived from the information already collected – that the Armenians in Bucharest received discriminatory and segregating treatment from the city administration and the Orthodox Church at that time, and implicitly, from its parishioners. The third step is the most recent, and it involved the correlation of information on the old locations and spatial developments of the segregated community with the elements of the current urban framework that recall the past events and which, within a tourism perspective, could generate valuable capital (Isaac 2009, Jackson 2010).

This research is, above all, an exploratory one (Stebbins 2001), which seeks to pave the way for other studies with similar themes. For a comprehensive understanding of the relationship of religious segregation with cultural heritage as a subject of research, this paper critically reviews the scientific articles published in various national and international scientific journals circumscribed to urban space. Articles in peer-review and scientific books have been considered to be some of the best sources of information for this study because they provide

the most current, stable and reliable academic source of information. As Bowen (2009) said, this method is a cost-effective means of collecting information, as well as a method that remains unchanged and unaltered by the research process or the presence of the researcher. Last but not least, in the literature analysis section, the study takes the form of a systematic quality review, following a specific protocol, for a more scientific approach (Sandelowski 2008), thus ensuring a more accurate and detailed image of the literature on religious segregation and cultural heritage.

Results and Discussion

Armenians – a long-lasting presence in Bucharest

Formed later than communities from Moldavia – which served even in the Romanian army (Egner 2016) – and Transylvania (Gazdovits 1996, Albinetz 2012), the Wallachian Armenian community has a newer history and thus it is poorer when compared to the other two. This has not prevented the community to have a "heightened vitality". 1400-1435 is the approximate time interval to determine Armenians in Bucharest, according to Terzian (2001). They are certainly among the first aliens who arrived in the Romanian space since the late fifteenth century: "they have already settled in different Wallachian cities. They are in Bucharest, Târgovişte, and in Râmnic" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 444). Going in the same direction, Majuru (2008: 138-139) admits, with some uncertainty: "Armenians seem to be the first to arrive in the Romanian area – they are certified in 1421 to Cetatea Albă". Anyway, within the range of historical events, it is certain that the oldest mention on paper of the Armenians across the hearth of Bucharest dates from the seventeenth century: "Armenian slums are mentioned in documents of the seventeenth century. There, and they had a church" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 230). Therefore, we can only accredit Giurescu (2009: 512) when he affirms: "an old and important colony in Bucharest was formed by the Armenians". Majuru (2008: 13) believes that, between 1650 and 1700, Armenian slums are emerging into the fair area: "on the north bank of Dâmboviţa, merchant slums existed, such as Sf. Vineri, Răzvan, St. Ion Nou, Olteni, Serbians, as well as the Armenian slum" (Majuru 2008: 13). Moreover, the documents quoted by Giurescu (2009) certify that the Armenians lived in Bucharest in 1640, while in the eighteenth century, news and notes on the Armenian community multiply.

Paul Strassburgh (Ambassador to the king of Sweden) notes, together with his visit in March 1632, that Bucharest is a very large city where "merchants of all nations live together: Greeks, Armenians, even Turks" (Iorga 2008: 57). According to Giurescu (2009), during the reign of Prince Leon (1632), all city streets and markets alike were full of goods that Italian, Greek, Armenian and Turkish merchants exposed for sale. And, it is undeniable that until the eighteenth century trade was in the hands of foreigners in the town along the banks of Dâmboviţa river, Armenians holding an irrefutable role in this area, as it is pointed out in the following passage of Damé (2007: 53): "Saxons came to Bucharest, Sibiu and Brasov, Armenians, Turks, Greeks like to bring all their (...). For the people, foreigners meant heathen Turks, Armenian heretics, Jews, Protestants and Catholics". Although sedentary long before the eighteenth century, the Armenians are, according to Damé (2007), not only 'heretics', but they are also still 'foreigners'.

The age of the Armenian presence in Bucharest is strengthened by their payment of taxes since the sixteenth century, and the physical elements present in the space, such as (for the same century) "towards the south (...) the Armenian stone pillar" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 139). The peers that delimited the border of Bucharest city in mastering its metropolitan hearth recorded the Armenian stone pillar located in the south-east out of town, near Giurgiului road and Şerban Vodă pond, in the act of June 1, 1668 (Terzian 2001, Ionescu-Gion 2003). Moreover, Iorga (2008: 115) records: "there are Armenians... on an Armenian Lane (...) and they do business with the Turks". That is, in Bucharest, in what taxes are concerned, the merchants were divided

into "Romanian merchants, Braşov dwellers, chiprovăceni, Armenians and Jews, [who] contributed according to their needs, and contributed almost to everything" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 452). Ionescu-Gion (2003: 452) confirms that, between 1689 and 1714, "the contribution is made according to everyone's possibility (...) 200 plates for the Armenians".

It is well known that the Armenians were great traders of coffee and tea (Florescu 2008), as they were "specialists" on this (Giurescu 2009). In short, they were coffee traders, hence the saying "when an Armenian arrives in a city, the first thing to do is have coffee (so as to verify the standard of living by the liquor's quality) and then go to the Armenian Church (if there is such a place of worship in that city)" (Antonian 2011). In addition, a register book from 1832 contains "38" coffee traders "out of which 16 are Armenians according to their names" (Giurescu 2009: 542). Finally, a special category was made by "the Armenian silk traders", mentioned in the privilege given to the Dyers Guild, dated August 18, 1824 (Giurescu 2009: 580).

The Armenians had good trade relations and business relations with the Turks. Regarding the locals' initial aversion to religion on the Armenian heretics – as Damé (2007) called them – and regarding the commercial activities they practiced, it is stated: "there was a nameless grief in Bucharest, when people saw and heard that the Turks sell in the Hebrew and Armenian market lamps, bowls and holy vases from the cathedral in Târgovişte" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 158). These events mark an important point in what I will develop in the following sections. From the quote, we can see that no foreign interference in the natives' religion was acceptable, especially coming from the Armenians who were considered heretics, so schismatics (Mihăilescu 2003) for the local orthodox Christian church at that time. Such events were probably preceded by an order settling the Armenian community outside the city in a peripheral well-defined and geographically segregated area of Bucharest. Despite all the misunderstandings, disagreements and tensions between the local and indigenous communities, by the end of the twentieth century, trade still remained in the hands of the outsiders arrived in Bucharest (Ionescu-Gion 2003, Giurescu 2009, Damé 2007, Majuru 2008).

Historical background of urban religious segregation

Once established in Bucharest, Armenians form a significant community both because of their numbers and the economic power they exhibit (Mihăilescu 2003, Majuru 2008). From the point of view of religions, in 1878, Bucharest has a population of over 177 000 inhabitants divided as it follows: "Orthodox – 132 987; Catholics – 16 991; Protestants – 5854, Armenians – 790; Lipoveni – 206; Hebrew – 20 749; Mohammedans – 43; various – 20" (Damé 2007: 143-144). The number of Armenians remains almost unchanged, since the same author recorded about 700 Armenians in Bucharest, according to statistics in the year 1906. Mihăilescu (2003) lets us better understand how the Armenians were concentrated in Bucharest after being incorporated by the city during successive increases. In the year 1860 (Fig. 1), a number of over 520 Armenians is concentrated in the vicinity of Calea Moşilor, and the rest are in other urban areas. In fact, only here the Armenians – around their old slum – had great economic significance.

The religious origin of the Armenian segregation: theological differences

Due to its quasi-hermetic nature (linguistic, and religious especially) kept for a long time, the Armenian community has managed to attract antipathy in Bucharest. Any relationship with the Armenians and their religion is very good now, but the same cannot be said about the beginnings of the community – the XVth and XVIth centuries – in Bucharest area. Because there were doctrinal differences, which were minimal, it is true, to the Orthodox faith, the Romanian Orthodox Church did not accept them into the city centre with the other people, thus isolating them. Therefore, the population, that would mosly follow the church dogma, did not take a different view on the issue.
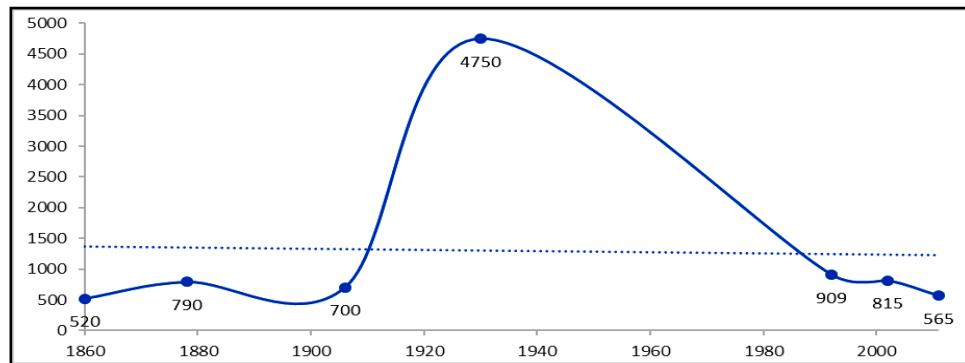
Fig. 1 – **The evolution of the number of Armenians in Bucharest over the last 150 years**
Source: various compiled data

The Armenian Apostolic Church was among the churches that separated from the universal church, along with other churches: "the full separation of western and eastern neighbours, so religious and national isolation, this is the cultural characterization of Armenia made during the fifth and sixth century" (Iorga 1913: 8). These churches – and therefore their believers – are known as anti-Chalcedony, old Orthodox, or Oriental churches. In an interview (Şchiopu 2009), writer Paul Bogdan, who is also pastor of the Armenian Church of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, reveals, most likely, the real reason for discrimination and sagging the Armenians outside the city from the beginning. The Armenian pastor noted that the Armenian Apostolic Church (and therefore the Armenians) "was blamed of being heretical" (Şchiopu 2009). A strong argument for this finding is – in his opinion – that "at Voroneţ (...) the Armenians [are] painted by the Turks. These differences are based on the antipathy of Greek origin" (Şchiopu 2009). The Turks, according to Damé (2007), were neither more nor less than pagans therefore associating or putting together the two ethnic minorities denotes the Romanians' disparagement. The Armenians have been, from ancient times, in a dispute with the Greeks, as the latter attempted to introduce the Greek language as a ritual one. Thus, the only possible detachment was a doctrinal or theological distinction. Let us not forget that even the name of the religion derives from Greek, from the two words: 'ortho', meaning straight and correct, and 'doxa', which means learning, knowledge. Therefore, the right doctrine or orthodoxy is the correct one.

When analysing the religious relationship between the Armenians and the Bucharest citizens, an important element on segregation is the hermetic character of the Armenian community during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when they began to make their appearance and settle in Bucharest. As a specialist considers, the Armenian Apostolic Church, which is a purely national church, that supports the destiny of one nation (Enache 2011), i.e. the Armenians, was not acceptable for the leaders of the Orthodox Church.

The Armenians hold the same main religious holidays as the Orthodox Romanians. However, through the theological differences mentioned above, the Armenian Orthodox and the Bucharest Orthodox citizens, include Christmas celebration. Orthodox Armenians everywhere celebrate Christmas on January 6 (Epiphany once) and not on December 25 according to the local Orthodox rite. In fact, by celebrating Christmas and Epiphany on the same day, Armenians kept the original traditions of Christianity (Vosganian 2012). Until the nineteenth century, another important theological distinction was given by Easter. Resurrection was celebrated (as it still happens in other states) with the Catholic. To no longer be considered heretics because of the separate celebration of Easter, the Armenians claimed and obtained exemption from the Supreme Patriarch, and since then this change is respected. It should be

added that the monastic life was of a very traditional nature to the community. Not everyone could become a priest or a monk, but that one who wanted to give his life to the service of God should have come from the ranks of the wealthy Armenian ranks, a rule that was probably sent to Bucharest.

From theological differences to geographic segregation

As for Bucharest, the church was closely related to the Greek one. The same happened to the monasteries which owned one quarter of the arable land before the secularization in the nineteenth century. Bucharest was also "owned" by the Orthodox Cathedral, and that is why the church's administrative influence was exercised over the city and its inhabitants. There were also religious services which were held in Greek and Slavic languages in many churches. Hence the incompatibility between the Armenians and the Greeks (who influenced the Romanian Orthodoxy) as mentioned above, that harboured a religious dispute since the fifth century. Lacking an alphabet until the fifth century, the Armenian community was forced to listen to their liturgy instantly translated in the church. The priests were holding the Mass in Greek and a few scholars were simultaneously translating into the Armenian language for the people (Şchiopu 2009). After the fifth century, the Armenians created their own alphabet and this is when religious differences and divisions appear, and they come to Bucharest with the arrival of the Armenians. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church wanted nothing but their conversion to Orthodoxy.

Even if the historical data does not record such events in Bucharest (except their physical separation from the Bucharest citizens), Paul Bogdan says that, on the territory of Romania, "[there] is historical evidence that the Armenians were victims of a small pogrom under Ştefăniţă Vodă. They were expelled from their homes, tortured, their ears were cut off, only to return to Orthodoxy" (Şchiopu 2009). By comparison, in the same century (the sixteenth) in which Ştefăniţă Vodă ruled Moldavia, it is recorded that the Armenians started to settle in Bucharest. Their acceptance by the church and by the Bucharest inhabitants was not less hostile than in other regions of present-day Romania, but it was certainly less painful stinging in a physical sense. In other words, the Armenians in Bucharest did not undergo the torture from Moldavia.

Therefore, due to the religious prejudice of Romanians in Bucharest, the Armenians "have been considered schismatic and isolated for a long time" (Mihăilescu 2003: 143), and they first settled outside the city as "they were forced to inhabit the periphery of the fair, close to Calea Moşilor" (Mihăilescu 2003: 147): "Tradition says that once, when the Armenians came to Bucharest, the Patriarch of the country, knowing them as defile, threw them out of the town so as to build churches and houses, isolating them from the true Christians, just as the Jews were isolated in ghettos or 'Judengasse' in other cities from Italy and Germany" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 381). The analogy to the most famous ghetto in history, the one in Frankfurt am Main (Wirth 1928) is not random. The Armenians of Bucharest, just as Jews in Frankfurt (Fuchs and Krobb 1999), were forced to settle away from the excitement of the city centre. The Armenian segregation took physical, even geographical forms. The 'Judengasse' in Frankfurt am Main was created "by the decree of the king [and] was located in a less inhabited area, far from the residents' homes (...) on the bank of a canal that drained stretched along the old city wall" (Wirth 1928: 76).

Ionescu-Gion's notes (2003) on this matter could be irrelevant, if we did not take into account Damé's (2007) and Caselli's ideas. The French scholar comes and strengthens Ionescu-Gion's allegations (2003) in these words: "in Bucharest the Armenians were treated like the Jews in the middle ages: they were forbidden to live in the city. They had to settle outside the borders of the city, where they established their neighbourhood... that is still called the Armenian slum" (Damé 2007: 22). Caselli – the one who has dealt with the rubric "What were once Bucureştii" in the Municipal Gazette (Orăşanu 2003), until his sudden death – wrote in the

pages of the issue of August 19, 1934: "In fact, in the time when the Armenians were thrown out of the city to build churches and houses, the last slum outside of Bucharest was Father Hierea's slum, who was then the city barrier. The Armenians settled beyond the city barrier – at the time, but to this day we do not know well – and began to build their homes" (Terzian 2001: 4).

The old Armenian settlement and assimilation

Despite their separation, the "Armenians passed through massacres and wanderings, bearing the label of stateless people accustomed rather to sneak unnoticed, to whisper and to go live in wisdom (...). They learned to live smothered" (Vosganian 2009: 90). The previous fragment fits the Armenian community in Bucharest quite well and it proves that the "smothered life" meets our view of the Armenians living in Bucharest who were forced to live separately from one another, thus segregated, which made them feel different.

With time, however, the successive increases in the urban geographical area included the space occupied by the Armenian suburb in the hearth of the city. This event happened in the eighteenth century. However, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, a significant number of Armenians came to Bucharest. The first Armenian migration flow came from Turkey due to persecution and massacres that occurred during this period in the Turkish Empire and the second was recorded after the World War I, which entirely consisted of refugees (Giurescu 2009). Without decreasing absolutely, the Armenian community started to reduce its number of members.

As previously appreciated, as time went by, the Armenian community became less and less important in terms of spatial concentration. The most important factor in the assimilation process was the mixed marriages between the Armenians and the other Bucharest residents (Giurescu 2009), on the one hand, and the religious concessions which approached the two groups, on the other hand. One example is the statistics of 1899 when the Armenians, along with the Gypsies, were placed in the category dedicated to registered Romanians. This implies whether that their number was very small and therefore not given attention or that they were in an advanced state of assimilation, this time prompting authorities to register them as Romanians. The first version does not count as relevant as long as there are 91 English in the statistics. The Armenian community included many more members at the time. Therefore, the second hypothesis proves to be credible given that, nearly 40 years earlier, the Armenians are separately registered. The same goes for "the statistics" in 1779 (Mihăilescu 2003).

The urban heritage of ancient Armenian slums, left once outside the city, is portrayed by Vintilă Mihăilescu (2003). This author wrote, in his Bachelor paper, that the midway neighbourhoods and the Armenian "houses have, in general, the right height, whether a monotonous or an original appearance (...) there are often crooked and narrow streets (...) that you can hardly steer through them" (Mihăilescu 2003: 12). Also, when analysing the streets arrangement in 1978, the author mentions the Armenian village slum – evoking a "so confusing" street morphology that you can find yourself lost.

Prior to the description made by Mihăilescu in the twentieth century, the area occupied by the Armenians appeared different. Besides narrow, dirty and twisted streets, the Armenian slum landscape was filled with many shanties. Even the merchant shops were themselves rather miserable hovels which only needed one spark to turn them into ashes (Damé 2007).However, in 1914 the past shapes or the foreign spirit of estates hardly escaped Westernization and they are met completely misplaced in the midst of new buildings, "right in the streets if the city centre (...) in the Armenian suburb" (Mihăilescu 2003: 14). To better understand what followed after the assimilation process, we should take a look at the new living space. For example, Majuru (2008: 54) suggests the case of Dămăroaia peripheral neighbourhood. Therein, among the ethnic minority populations between 1930 and 1960, there were Jews, Armenians, Russians,

Italians, Hungarians, Germans, etc. We infer, therefore, that the Armenians are no longer a compact community as they used to be in the past. With time, among the ethnic Armenians living in Bucharest, there are weak spatial relationships, but strong cultural relations. The Armenians ensured that their institutions and cultural legacy components are preserved and even developed in the spirit of maintaining alive the memory of ancestors who arrived in Bucharest.

Although they were never very numerous, the Armenians have developed a great culture. In 1930, less than 4 750 Armenians lived in the city, representing 0.74% of the population of Bucharest at that time. Moving further to their statistical situation, after the 1989 revolution, at the first census achieved only three years after this unwelcome event, the capital recorded 909 Armenian people.   Otherwise, if we refer to the year 2002, their number barely lifted across the country to nearly 1 800 people, most of whom were part of mixed families, which is, incidentally, a good example of assimilation. Bucharest barely accounts for 815 people in this census. As for the 2011 census, only 565 inhabitants of the capital were also declared to be of Armenian origin (National Institute of Statistics 2012). At the same time, the average of the inhabitants of the Armenian community was placed in the last century and a half around 1 300 ethnicities, due mainly to the contribution made by the migratory flow resulting from the Armenian genocide during the First World War, easily observable on the graph. The constant decrease in the number of Armenians can be seen in terms of changing cohabitation behaviors between themselves and the majority population and, more importantly, the emergence of cultural affinities. The situation which in the past divided, with the passage of time, worked in the favor of their integration and, then, of their assimilation. The trend shown in the graph goes to a quasi-total assimilation, but their cultural memory will remain permanently rooted in the landscape of Bucharest due to the aspects developed below.

Armenian cultural heritage in the twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century

The Armenian cultural life is therefore of inestimable value. The Armenian Community in Bucharest founded a school in 1817 to strengthen the cultural bases and, respectively, to keep alive the spirit of the Armenian education (Diradurian 2002). Benevolent associations have played a role in the life of this community. In the Armenian spirit, the 'Rozy foundation' was created for help, education and cultural preservation among the youngsters, according to Majuru (2008). And between 1833 and 1840, a cultural society called Ararat was created, which is present to this day in the local community. But not the same thing happened to the Romanian-Armenian Commercial Bank opened in the eighteenth century.

Of inestimable cultural and religious value is the Armenian Church (Jeamgocian 2015). Erected in 1638 out of wood, it was replaced nearly fifty years later, according to Giurescu (2009: 514), by a brick church financed with "the money of the rich Armenian Adrianople". Spiritual life today originated in the monumental church built between July 24, 1911 and September 6, 1915, in the area of the old Armenian neighbourhood at the corner of Carol I Boulevard and the Armenian street (Stoica and Ionescu-Ghinea 2005). Or, as noted by Giurescu (2009: 514), "in «the Armenian slum» next to the Armenian lane", as recalled by an old song in Bucharest: «There is a noble mansion on the Armenian lane»". The homonymous street also reminds us of the Armenians' presence in the Bucharest urban area.

All these Armenian landmarks in Bucharest urban culture appear today as a repayment to the religious injustices of the past and to urban segregation. The Armenian urban landmarks are well ingrained in the collective mind of Bucharest citizens today, being a true "brand" of urban culture because of their age. We cannot talk about the Armenian community in Bucharest without mentioning the famous Manuc Bei and his inn full of history and architectural beauty. Therefore, a prominent representative of the Armenian community in Bucharest was Manuc Bei, thanks to his wealth. Few people know the real name of this rich merchant, named

Emanuel Mirzaian. He had lent money to the country twice, once the sum of 100 000 pans, and 60 000 pans, the second time. Among other things, Manuc Bei has played an important role in the Romanian history, as he led negotiations with the Russians in 1808 to conclude peace, which was signed in the end just inside the inn he built in Bucharest. The Armenian merchant Manuc was even called "prince of Moldavia" on September 28, 1808, but he never got to actually be handled this function because of the Russo-Turkish War (1806-1812) (Giurescu 2009).

But, as stated above, the most pleasant memories of Bucharest about this Armenian are given by the famous Armenian Tavern's Inn today that delights the eyes of the locals and visitors. An interesting and also intriguing description was given by Ionescu-Gion. He wrote in his history dedicated to Bucharest that "the inn (...) in Bucharest was one of the most visited inns between 1808 and 1860. Manuc inn yard was memorable for the noise, dirt and crowd of carriages that were in it. Many travelers, who descended from the inn, however, came to see it because of its picturesque courtyard and the superimposed pillars of the chambers" (Ionescu-Gion 2003: 493-494). I was saying that the foregoing description is intriguing, because, currently, the inn is a place where tourists come from everywhere, but for lunch, to taste the spirit of Bucharest, and to admire the nice local, where noise, dirt and carriages were in the past, and not for the picturesque athmosphere mentioned by Ionescu-Gion. Manuc Inn's is today an urban area that is full of history, a sight not to be missed and always present in all tourist guides, located in the proximity of the Old Court Palace. In other words, the centre of Bucharest comprises an important glimpse of Armenian culture.

Everything we have mentioned above answers the question addressed by Tunbridge (1994), who claims that cultural heritage is defined by two fundamental aspects. The first refers to the value of objectives that constitute or are considered cultural heritage, and the second concerns the interpretation of the outstanding components. In accordance with the issues raised by it, the Armenian church, the Armenian Street, Manuc's Inn, the Melik House (which houses the Theodor Pallady Museum) and the Zambaccian Museum are today of definite cultural value (Table 1). One more argument is that the cultural event called the Armenian Street Festival

Table 1

The most important components of the Armenian cultural heritage

Name	Type	Description	Year
The Armenian Church	architectural	It was first built with wood and then made of stone	1638
Armenian Street	toponymic	It is the expression of space markings in the current city of the former Armenian slum once outside the city gate	–
Melik House	architectural	It is one of the oldest houses in Bucharest and it displays the museum dedicated to the painter Theodor Pallady	1770
Manuc's Inn	architectural	The best-preserved old inn in Bucharest, located in the historic center. Unlike previous objectives, it is not in the area of the former slum	1808
Zambaccian Museum	architectural	Located outside the former slum, the museum bears the mark of the Armenian collector and critic Krikor H. Zambaccian	1940
The Armenian Street Festival	cultural festival	An event meant to keep the memory of the Armenian community alive, which is happening in the homonymous street	2017

(Vișan 2017), which attracts many tourists, takes place annually in the perimeter of the former slum, marked on the map of Bucharest in Google Maps by the phrase " the Armenian neighborhood". Thus, the former neighborhood is, on the one hand, a true 'segregated landscape of the past', as Byrne (2003) said about the spaces marked by racism, and, on the other hand, an urban architectural gain. Bucharest, whose cosmopolitan history is well-known, can use this cultural heritage for tourism purposes, as suggested by Caffyn and Lutz (1999), and because, as Jackson (2010) points out, formerly segregated communities will always remain a subject of marketing the heritage identity and a key cultural resource.

Conclusions

The present paper highlights the long history of establishing the Armenians in the current space of Romania. Using historic sources, I placed the discussion about the Armenian community in an evolutionary context, exploring and, at the same time, pointing out precisely the moment of the arrival of the first Armenians in Bucharest and the manner in which they were received and treated. The purpose of their coming is a pragmatic one: the practice of their occupation, i.e. trade. The privileged religious relationship that the Romanians in Wallachia had with the Greeks and the Slavs, from whose holy books they were inspired and in whose languages the services were held in the churches of Bucharest, led to a discriminatory behavior towards the Armenians. Because they were practicing a different form of Orthodoxy, the Armenians were treated as second-hand inhabitants, and they were even called heretics and schismatics. In addition, the quasi-hermetic nature of the community, especially linguistic and confessional, generated the antipathy of the people living in Bucharest. Thus, the result of the first years of cohabitation materialized in the Armenians' obligation to locate their homes and to build their neighbourhood outside the city. They have never questioned their chasing away, as they were an important source of income for the administration, and they were taxed like those who lived in the city. In terms of socio-urban geography, this is geographic segregation determined by religious factors and, therefore, it is religious segregation.

Because the Armenian relationship with the native inhabitants was built on religious divergences as a way of cohabitation from the beginning, the research focused on highlighting the process of urban segregation. The corroboration of the specialized literature with the Bucharest case study strengthens the definite purpose of the research, as one observes that urban segregation on ethnic and religious grounds involves cultural elements. The research information has shown that ethno-religious segregation influences the urban landscape and, conversely, the urban landscape thus altered creates the premises for a particular type of cultural manifestation, and Bucharest is no exception to this principle. Moreover, the article argues and supports the idea that there is a striking resemblance between the segregation of the Armenians in Bucharest and that of the Jews in the European cities of the Middle Ages, especially Frankfurt am Main.

By the end of the eighteenth century, when Bucharest had expanded sufficiently to incorporate the Armenian slum, one can not speak of assimilation, although the relations may have improved to a substantial extent. It is certain that the passage of time has diminished the dissensions and it created an ever-increasing openness from both religious communities. In fact, the urban dynamics and the constraint of no longer being separated was the main force of change in behavior, and the Armenian slum has been transformed into an indissoluble part of Bucharest and a real urban landmark. The gradual decrease of interest in the ethnic, linguistic and religious character of the Armenians, together with the emergence of mixed marriages, was another major cause of the assimilation process. Once the two conditions were met, the need and historical reality of the Armenian space concentration disappeared. The data in the article validates the hypothesis that, in the middle of the last century, the Armenians were already spatially scattered to the point where we can find them in new neighborhoods, such as Dămăroaia, located in the outskirts of the city.

Having all this in mind, we have been able to ascertain, and this is the most important conclusion of this article, that religious segregation, viewed temporally and evolutionary, is not always similar to an urban disease, but rather, it can be transformed into cultural heritage. The Bucharest case study strengthens this conclusion by pointing out how the old slum outside the city gate is today an organic part of the urban, architectural and cultural landscape. And equally true is that the cultural heritage of religious segregation is a valuable subject of patrimonial identity and a key cultural resource. Nevertheless, there remains at least one question to which further studies will have to answer, namely, how solid the link between segregation, in general, and cultural memory or social memory of once segregated spaces is. As such, further studies, starting from this analytical model, could investigate whether other forms of social and / or geographical segregation encountered in many cities around the world have highlighted the specific cultural landscape and how valuable this is for the urban environment. Moreover, greater attention may be paid to elements that differ from those identified in this study and which certainly can make a substantial contribution to the theory and literature of the relationship between segregation and culture.

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