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Born in 1956 in Bucharest
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ARBEITSVORHABEN

Theodoros (a novel)

My project is to write "Theodoros": a historical novel describing the fantastic life and destiny of a Greek-Romanian character born in 1818 in Wallachia, the southern part of what is now Romania. Teodor is the lowborn child of two servants at the court of a great boyard. At birth, it is prophesied that he will become an emperor. This prophecy becomes his greatest obsession. The first part of the novel deals with his childhood and adolescence in Wallachia. At the age of 17, he disappears from Wallachia for good, and the second part of the novel begins. At greater and greater intervals, his mother receives his letters from disparate locations in the Levant and Orient – the Greek Archipelago, Palestine, Petra, Baalbek, Alexandria – describing his adventurous life and the cruel, audacious actions he takes in search of power and wealth. He signs these letters with the Greek variant of his name, Theodoros. The prophecy is indeed fulfilled in the third part of the book. After twenty years of wandering over the sea and through picturesque lands, he arrives in Abyssinia, takes part in the "war of the princes", exchanges his name and personality with the most important Abyssinian warlord, and finally takes power, becoming the famous emperor Tewodros II of Abyssinia. He dies fighting Queen Victoria's soldiers in 1868.

This is the novel's "realistic" framework, but the meaning of this novel lies in its vision. I would like to create a whole miraculous world involving the story of King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, and their legendary son Menelik, who, according to the sacred book Kebra Nagast, stole the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem and brought it to Abyssinia. As I envision it, in the end the whole novel will resemble Albrecht Altdorfer's painting "Alexander in the Battle of Issus": a large, all-encompassing, and fascinating panorama of a magnificent time.

Recommended Reading

- Cartarescu, Mircea. *Orbitor. Corpul* [The Body 2002; Der Körper 2011]. Bucharest: Ed. Humanitas, 2002.
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