Maria Theresa and Horses. The Legend of the Empress's Death in the Romanian Contemporary Mindset

Abstract:

From the very beginning, the death of the empress Maria Theresa gave rise to a series of legends in the collective mindset. The reforms initiated by the empress within the Habsburg Empire weren't agreed by the conservative elite that instinctively felt that through their implem entation, was to lose a multitude of political advantages in the favour of the central power. It was not a mere chance, that dubious rumours concerning the deviant sexual behaviour of the empress were spread in the collective m entality through the servants from the nobles' courts. Empress's admiration towards breed horses led in the end to an explanation for her passion in relation to a certain sexual behaviour and finally to explaining Maria Theresa's death through this type of sexual behaviour. Thus, the legend of the empress's death received zoophiles and perverted connotations and was kept in the collective mindset as a mark of the spicy stories. Later, the legend was transferred through oral communication in the field of Romanian imaging, becoming one of the m ost known of this kind. This study aims to thoroughly analyse the importance of this legend in the Romanian contemporary mindset taking into account discussions and individual testimonies. On the basis of the anthropological m odel, will be studied all the erotic and perverted aspects that Romanian society associates with this legend. The research entails am ong others: careful monitoring of all articles related to this topic and of opinions expressed on several discussions forum s. At the end of the research paper, will be analysed the bas-relief from the "Dacia" cinema in Bucharest, where the sym bolic depiction of the death is associated in the local collective mindset with the theme of the empress's death.

Keywords: *Maria Theresa, death, legend, contemporary m indset, testimonies.*