

## AN INTERCULTURAL PHENOMENON: PET DOGS IN GERMANY AND THE BENEFITS OF THIS HOBBY

Elena VELESCU<sup>1</sup>

e-mail: elena.velescu@uaiasi.ro

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### Abstract

Over 10 million Germans have a dog as a pet. Sometimes it represents the best friend and it often may be an alternative for children or a partner. In the last few years, there has been a tendency to consider animals close to man, a good reason for specialised companies to take advantage of this hobby and significantly increase their sales in this field. The historian Wolfgang Wippermann, in his book *Die Deutschen und ihre Hunde (The Germans and their dogs)* noticed the incarnation of the dogs into human beings having the needs and the characteristics close to their owners. There are persons who turn their dog into an object of veneration. For over a decade there have been magazines and special shops for dog owners as well as websites, like facebook for dogs where more than 15 000 quadrupeds are signed in ([www.stadthunde.com](http://www.stadthunde.com)). Cosmetics for dogs, such as toothpaste which tastes like chicken or shampoo for the fur, cost the German pet owners an average, about 3, 7 billion, according to the statistics made by the Central Organization of the Zoo Stores (Zoologischer Zentralverband Fachbetriebe). The food for big dogs costs 90 Euros per month in Germany, plus a canine psychologist and massage sessions. In Germany, there are over 5 million dogs, half of a quarter million are from the German Shepherd breed, famous for its loyalty, intelligence and cooperativeness. This dog had an active role in the German history; the Nazis rose it to an icon status within their ideology as a means of propaganda and terror in the concentration camps. After the Second World War, the dogs belonging to this breed had different characteristics in the two halves of Germany. After the unification, a compromise had been reached to so that the current breed possesses the best characteristics of the two types. Today, the German Shepherd is recognized both in the role of Austrian Commissioner Rex, and worldwide there are registered around 10 million copies, according to the World Union of Associations of German shepherd dogs.

**Key words:** pedagogy, language, authentic documents, agronomic profile

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