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**OFFICIAL LETTERS AND TREATIES BETWEEN THE MARINID DYNASTY
AND THE NASRID KINGDOM DURING THE 7TH AND 8TH CENTURIES
AH (13TH–14TH CENTURIES AD)**

Amal SALEM ATTIA¹

Abstract

Historical scholarship about the Islamic West in the 13th and 14th centuries has shown that royal letters were indispensable forms of governance - for political, military, and diplomatic institutional tasks. For example, letters exchanged between the Nasrid kings of Granada and the Marinid sultans of Morocco present a complex method of mediated communication, facilitated by the use of scribes and trained ambassadors. The mediated letters were frequently composed in Arabic prose with ornate rhymes and would include prayers, praises, and blessings. Diplomatic letters were employed to request military assistance and negotiate or renew treaties and alliance agreements - in particular because of the threat of Christian kingdoms (Castile and Aragon). Many sensitive and urgent matters were otherwise delivered via oral communication (potentially for legitimate reason to maintain operational security). Additionally, letters and treaties included gifts, congratulations, and marital alliances to demonstrate loyalty and trusted friendship to bolster political stability and support. The engagements between the two systems can collaborate together with repeated embassies and planned action, as the Marinids were dependent on granting and military support, while the Nasrid dynasty remained in functional political stability. The letters and treaties provide explicit evidence of the complex political relations, strategic priorities, patronage networks, and general cultural sophistication of the Islamic West.

Key words: Diplomacy, Correspondence, Marinids, Nasrids, Al-Andalus.

1. INTRODUCTION

Historical research does not depend exclusively on pure historical sources; it also makes use of auxiliary sources that possess more hidden information that can be tested and verified for accuracy. Among the most important auxiliary sources are literary sources, particularly those relating to a body of special correspondence (Tosh 2015). A good number of these types of correspondence were edited and distorted by those who collected them or by copyists who edited out the names of certain people and dates and were more interested in the skills of letter-writing than the contents of the letters ('Umayra 2008, 3). Historians confront huge difficulties in determining a text's proper chronology and identifying key players in political events because of this. For this reason, the present study wishes to examine a significant element of the political history of the western Islamic world in the 7th

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and 8th centuries AH (the 13th and 14th centuries AD) when there was considerable correspondence of royal letters which will be studied and analyzed in detail.

2. ASPECTS OF OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Both the monarchs of Morocco and Muslim Spain wrote, and received, many letters from the Diwan al-Rasa'il (Chancellery of Letters), the official state institution tasked with composing royal correspondence. Most correspondence directed to kings, despite its content, was dealt with in this institutional capacity; an example of an institutional body assigned to the drafting and compiling of letters from the sultan. The letter-chronicling body contained several offices, including the katib al-ashghal (Secretary of Affairs), katib sir al-sultan (Secret Kattib of the Sultan), or sahib al-'alama (Keeper of the Signet/Official Seal). (Hassan 1989)

These letters conformed to certain criteria, like preserving the Qur'an by memorization, having a great depth of learning about the Sunnah, history, and biographies, and being aware of a large number of official letters. Moreover, talent for poetry, eloquence of speech, and knowledge of languages and rhetoric were of utmost importance. These qualifications are summarized by Abu Hammu Musa II in his description of the qualities required of the Katib al-Sirr (Secretary of Secrets): "He should be eloquent in speech, courageous in spirit, articulate in expression, knowledgeable in literature, skilled in handwriting, and knowledgeable in resolving and drafting matters." He also said, "From your writing the intellect may be inferred." (Abu Hammu 1956, 288)

Since the letters hold political and historical value for what they reveal about the nature of relations between states, it was necessary to explain them, as they were mostly delivered by ambassadors. Sometimes they were written, while other times the ambassador would convey them orally, out of fear that they might fall into hostile hands. Some letters even contained symbols and coded signs. (Abdelhadi 1983, 22–23)

It becomes evident from the letters exchanged between the states of the Islamic Maghreb that their authors possessed a refined literary prose, encouraged by the rulers who supported men of this art. The style of saj' (rhymed prose) and rhetorical embellishments became widespread—sometimes to the point of exaggeration—in correspondence and written exchanges. These letters were usually introduced with the phrase "from so-and-so to so-and-so," beginning with mention of the addressee and prayers befitting his status. For example: "To the noble rank whose praise sweetens tongues, whose tidings adorn the pages of gratitude, whose sky outshines with the stars of glory and virtues..."; and in another letter: "...to the rank whose reign's conquests are strung together like pearls, whose firm resolve has repaid the debts of days as one redeems coins, and from the depths of whose sound opinions rise the faces of good fortune..." (Al-Qalqashandi 1913, 79)

Then, the name of the addressee would be mentioned, followed by an appropriate supplication for him. After that came the ba'diyya (transition phrase),

which was followed by blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions. The writer would then proceed to the main subject of the letter. At the end, a prayer was usually included for the continuity and stability of the ruler's reign. The letters would often conclude with the phrase: "...may your fortune endure, your glory be protected, and may the noble peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you."

At the very end of the letter, the Sultan's signature would be written in his own hand, in thick script, often with the phrase "Written on the dated day." As Al-Maqrī stated: "The phrase 'Written on the dated day' was the royal mark of that time, written in bold script. Some kings of the Maghreb would instead use the phrase 'Verified on the dated day.'" (Al-Maqrī 1968)

Through the examination of several letters, we can observe variations in their structure, despite efforts to maintain the general features, which typically included:

- The *basmala* and the *tasliya* (invocation and blessing).
- "From..."
- "To..."
- Greeting (*salam*).
- The *ba'diyya* (transition phrase).
- Praise (*tahmid*).
- Blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him).
- Supplication for the Sultan.
- "We have written this..."
- The main subject.
- The ambassador's name.
- The year of issuance.
- The royal mark or signature.

It is noticeable that in many of the letters issued from the Nasrid court, the name of the ambassador was concealed and referred to only as "so-and-so," which makes it impossible to determine whether the ambassador was a judge, a minister, or a scholar.

The Nasrids faced numerous external conflicts with the Christian Mamluks who were united against the Muslims, largely due to their geographical location. This situation compelled them to establish strong relations with the Marinids, driven by mutual interests. Consequently, the Marinid state viewed any attack on the Kingdom of Granada as an attack on Morocco itself. For this reason, they worked to protect the Kingdom of Granada from the Christian Reconquista wars—either in response to the pleas for help sent by the Nasrid kings of Granada or in adherence to the principle of jihad in the path of God (Amer Ahmad 2003, 123).

Sources have highlighted the prominent role of the Marinids in their jihad in al-Andalus, as will be detailed in the following events. Nevertheless, the Nasrids remained wary of them, much like the relationship between the Taifa king Al-

Mu'tamid ibn 'Abbad and the Almoravid ruler Yusuf ibn Tashfin. For this reason, Nasrid policy often oscillated between cooperation with the Marinids to defend the Granadan kingdom and suspicion of their intentions, fearing interference in their internal affairs (Khaldun 2001)

3. THE DELEGATION OF 670 AH / 1269 CE

Sources from the period offer evidence of the correspondence sent from the Nasrid court to the Marinid rulers and in particular as it relates to the reign of Sultan Abu al-Hasan and Abu Inan and from the Diwan al-Rasa'il of Letters.

Most of these embassies were characterized by requests for military assistance due to the difficult situation of the Muslim communities of al-Andalus, particularly to the pressures arising from the emerging kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. Consequently, the Nasrid sultans often turned to the Marinids for help whenever the situation became critical.

In 670 AH / 1272 CE, Muhammad ibn Yusuf, the founder of the Nasrid dynasty, sent an important embassy to the Marinid Sultan Abu Yusuf Ya'qub, seeking aid to halt the Castilian advance led by Alfonso X ("Alfonso the Wise"). However, this appeal went unanswered. Although the Marinid Sultan expressed his willingness to assist, he made it conditional upon concluding peace with the Zayyanids, who were seeking revenge for the killing of Sultan Yaghmurasan's son. This refusal resulted in a dispute between the two sovereigns. (Al-Maqri 1968)

In this situation, the Marinid Sultan responded by prioritizing internal peace and interests in his own state, because he was concerned that direct intervention in the affairs of Andalusia might endanger the security of his state.

Embassy of 674 AH / 1275 CE

Sultan Abu Yusuf Ya'qub al-Marini crossed into al-Andalus four times. The first crossing took place in 674 AH / 1275 CE, following the arrival of an embassy from Muhammad al-Faqih requesting military assistance. Ibn Abi Zar' reported: "Ibn al-Ahmar's envoys came to him one after another, saying: 'O Commander of the Muslims, you are the ruler of this age and the one looked to in these times; it is your duty to aid the Muslims and support the oppressed.'" (al-Fasi 1964, 313)

Responding to this plea, Sultan Ya'qub crossed over to al-Andalus. Prince Yusuf played an active role during this first crossing led by his father. The Sultan entrusted him with command of the Marinid army, composed of five thousand cavalymen, and provided him with war drums and banners. The Marinid forces swept through the Guadalquivir valley, advancing as far as Córdoba, Úbeda, Baeza, and their surrounding areas.

However, upon learning of the mobilization of Castilian forces under the leadership of their commander Don Nuño de Lara (Nunio de Lara), Yusuf returned to his father. A battle soon took place between the two sides near Écija on the fifteenth of Rabi' al-Awwal, 674 AH / 1275 CE. Prince Yusuf commanded the Marinid army of one thousand horsemen and achieved a decisive victory over the

forces of Alfonso X, King of Castile, during which the Castilian commander Don Nuño de Lara was killed. (al-Fasi 1964, 24)

These victories had a significant impact on the survival of the remaining Muslim presence in al-Andalus, as they strengthened the independence of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada and provided it with temporary protection from the Christian threat. Moreover, these successes contributed to consolidating Marinid influence in the southern Andalusian strongholds, such as Gibraltar, Algeciras, Tarifa, and Ronda. It is most likely that the three subsequent crossings of Sultan Abu Yusuf were also undertaken in support of the Nasrids. (Abun-Nasr 1987, 125)

Embassy of 691 AH / 1291 CE

Despite the Marinid victories, they did not have a positive echo at the Nasrid court, and suspicion once again arose in the mind of Muhammad al-Faqih. This apprehension can be attributed to what became known as the "Banu Ashqilula Crisis." As a result, Muhammad al-Faqih reached an agreement with the Castilians to seize Tarifa from the Marinids. King Sancho IV of Castile (Sanch) sent his fleet into the Strait of Gibraltar to blockade Tarifa from the sea and prevent the arrival of reinforcements, while Muhammad al-Faqih provided support on land. (Abun-Nasr 1987, 285)

After a siege that lasted five months, Tarifa fell into the hands of the Castilian Christians and the Granadans in 691 AH / 1291 CE. (al-Fasi 1964, 380 - 81)

When Ibn al-Ahmar requested that King Sancho return Tarifa to him, the latter refused and broke his promise. Consequently, Ibn al-Ahmar sent an embassy to implore the Marinid Sultan to accept his apology for having been deceived by Sancho's treachery. The embassy was headed by Abu Sa'id Faraj ibn Isma'il ibn al-Ahmar and his vizier Abu al-Sultan Aziz al-Dani. Their mission was to present apologies and to renew the peace agreement with Sultan Yusuf ibn Ya'qub. (al-Fasi 1964, 312-13)

The Marinid Sultan received them warmly in Tangier, honored their delegation, and agreed to restore peace between the two parties. It appears that the Marinid Sultan preferred reconciliation in order to preserve the mutual interests of both sides.

Embassy of 692 AH / 1292 CE

After Granada realized the futility of its alliance with Castile and Aragon against the Marinid state, Muhammad al-Faqih decided to travel personally in Dhu al-Qa'da 692 AH / 1292 CE to meet Sultan Yusuf ibn Ya'qub of the Marinids, with the aim of reaffirming friendship and offering an apology. (al-Fasi 1964, 110)

One of the key outcomes of this embassy was the success of the Marinid Sultan in persuading Ibn al-Ahmar to cede to him control over Algeciras, Ronda, Al-'Arsiya, and twenty fortresses. The Granadan delegation also presented several valuable gifts to the Marinid Sultan, among which was a copy of the Qur'an attributed to Uthman ibn 'Affan. Ibn Khaldun recounts:

“...He presented before him a magnificent gift, which greatly delighted the Sultan; among its most precious items, as they say, was the Great Qur’an — one of the four copies sent out by Caliph Uthman ibn ‘Affan to the regions of the Muslim world. This particular copy was the one associated with the Maghreb... it had been inherited by the Umayyads in Cordoba.” (Khalidun 2001, 383)

Embassy of 701 AH / 1301 CE

After the death of Sultan Muhammad al-Faqih, he was succeeded by his son and heir, Muhammad III—known as al-Makhlu’ (“the Deposed”). Upon his accession to the throne in 701 AH / 1301 CE, Muhammad III hastened to renew the bonds of friendship with the Marinids. He sent an embassy headed by his vizier Abu al-Sultan Aziz al-Dani and his secretary Abu ‘Abdallah Muhammad ibn al-Hakim al-Lakhmi to the court of Fez, where they were warmly received and honored.

During their visit, the Marinid Sultan requested that Granada send troops to assist him in the siege of Tlemcen. The Nasrid ruler complied with this request and dispatched a contingent of soldiers who fulfilled their mission successfully.

However, the situation soon changed in 703 AH / 1303 CE, when Muhammad III decided to renew his alliance with the King of Castile, Ferdinand, son of Sancho. This act angered the Marinids, prompting the Sultan to send back the Granadan troops who had been assisting him in the siege of Tlemcen. (Ibn Khalidun 1981)

Embassy of 710 AH / 1310 CE

Muhammad al-Makhlu’ instructed his cousin and son-in-law, Abu Sa’id Faraj ibn Isma’il, the governor of Malaga, to incite the people of Ceuta to renounce their allegiance to the Sultan. At the same time, Ibn al-Ahmar himself prepared for war against the Marinid ruler. Under the pretext of defending against the Christians, Abu Sa’id organized a naval expedition and directed it toward Ceuta, successfully entering and seizing control of the city in 705 AH / 1305 CE. (‘Inan 1997, 212-13)

This event caused great alarm to the new Sultan of Granada, Abu al-Juyush Nasr, prompting him to seek the goodwill of the Marinids. He sent an embassy to Sultan Abu al-Rabi’, informing him of his decision to cede Algeciras, Ronda, and their fortresses, as an encouragement for him to engage in jihad. The Marinid Sultan accepted the offer, and to further strengthen their alliance, he married his sister to the Nasrid ruler and sent him reinforcements, funds, and horses under the command of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Isa al-Yarnyani. Relations between the two dynasties remained friendly until the death of Sultan Abu al-Rabi’. (al-Fasi 1964, 138)

The cordial relations between the Marinids and the Nasrids during the reign of Sultan Abu al-Rabi’ were disturbed only by an incident caused by one of Ibn al-Ahmar’s envoys, who arrived at the Marinid court in a state of severe intoxication. By order of the judge al-Zawili, the envoy was subjected to the prescribed punishment (had).

Seizing upon the situation, the vizier ‘Abd al-Rahim ibn Ya’qub al-Wattasi surrounded the judge in his mosque. The Marinid Sultan intervened to lift the siege and ordered the execution of all the vizier’s supporters who had participated in the

act. Consequently, al-Wattasi renounced his allegiance to Sultan Abu al-Rabi' in 710 AH / 1310 CE and gave his oath of loyalty to 'Abd al-Haqq ibn 'Uthman ibn Muhammad 'Abd al-Haqq. He then attempted to seek assistance from Sultan Abu Hamu Musa II. (al-Fasi 1964, 138)

This incident demonstrates that, although envoys traditionally enjoyed diplomatic immunity, they could still be punished if they violated public order. It also raises the question of whether such punishment applied equally to all offenders, or if it stemmed from underlying political tensions between the two states.

The Embassy of 745 AH / 1344 CE

Sultan Yusuf I sent a letter to Abu al-Hasan al-Marini through his envoy Abu al-'Abbas al-Hassar, informing him about the terms of the Treaty of Algeciras. From this correspondence, it appears that the envoy dispatched by Sultan Yusuf I had initially been sent by the Marinid Sultan Abu al-Hasan to inquire about the events that took place in Algeciras. (Ibn al-Ahmar 1979, 312-13)

The letter referred to the peace agreement concluded with the Castilians but did not detail its main clauses, leaving it instead to the envoy, Shaykh Abu al-Hasar, to explain the content of the treaty orally. This indicates that royal correspondence often avoided including sensitive information—most likely out of fear that the letters might fall into enemy hands. Hence, ambassadors were appointed to deliver the sultan's message verbally and clarify what could not be written down.

The Embassy of 745 AH / 1344 CE

Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj sent numerous letters to the Marinid state concerning the relations between the Muslims of al-Andalus and the Christian kingdoms to the north, namely Castile and Aragon. Among these was a letter he dispatched with his envoy to the Marinid Sultan Abu Inan, informing him about the Granadan–Castilian relations as governed by the existing treaties between the two kingdoms. It was deemed necessary to keep the Moroccan ruler informed about current events, especially following the mutual complaints exchanged between Granada and Castile.

The letter stated: "...The King of Castile has repeatedly sent envoys to us, seeking the release of his men who have taken refuge with us. They have presented numerous complaints and submitted various grievances, some of which are related to your noble authority... Therefore, we have dispatched to your court someone who will explain these matters in detail, clarify their purposes, and provide a full account of the situation. He is well-informed, experienced, and knowledgeable in these affairs. He is that commander, and we trust that your noble court will kindly listen to what he conveys and give due consideration to what he presents..." (Muhammad 2005)

This correspondence illustrates the diplomatic coordination between Granada and the Marinid court regarding sensitive issues in Andalusian–Christian relations, as well as the reliance on envoys to communicate and clarify complex political matters.

The Embassy of 748 AH / 1347 CE

From the letter dated 748 AH / 1347 CE, which Sultan Yusuf I sent to Abu al-Hasan concerning the announcement of two Granadan victories over the Christians, it appears that the Marinid Sultan was actually the first to dispatch an embassy seeking information about the wars of Banu al-Ahmar against the Christians. The letter reads: "...We have received your letter, which holds the weight of an army in the eyes of the enemy, and your message filled with sincere promises and successive determinations..." (al-Khatib 1973, 129)

The messenger who delivered this letter was the noble commander Sheikh Abu Mahdi ibn al-Zarqa. Sultan Yusuf I also entrusted him with a reply to the Marinid Sultan, in which he wrote:

"...When our purpose was made clear and revealed, we entrusted your reward to God, asking Him to increase your prosperity, protect your glory, and spread your good reputation across the two horizons. Your envoy, the esteemed commander—may God honor him—will clarify to you what we have briefly mentioned and present before you the details of what God has granted us. Your noble attention to his words shall be sufficient, and your noble judgment shall be gracious..." (al-Khatib 1973, 133)

Thus, Sultan Yusuf I refrained from disclosing the full purpose of his message in writing, leaving the confidential details to be conveyed orally by his envoy, Sheikh Abu Mahdi ibn al-Zarqa. This reflects the discreet diplomatic practice of the time, aimed at safeguarding sensitive information from falling into enemy hands. (al-Khatib 1973)

The letter reveals that this embassy was preceded by other missions from the Banu al-Ahmar concerning the Christian threat; embassies served as the link between the two parties to learn about enemy movements and the main plans that needed to be implemented.

Embassy of the year 754 AH / 1353 AD.

As part of strengthening the bonds of affection and friendship between the two states, Sultan Yusuf ibn al-Ahmar received an embassy sent by Sultan Abu Inan al-Marini. In response, he sent his own envoys back with the Marinid delegation to express his desire and goodwill in maintaining continuous relations between the two kingdoms. The letter stated: "...We have decided to send to your exalted court this letter along with your envoys who have arrived to us, renewing the covenant and reaffirming the affection you have shown and we have reciprocated, and expressing our appreciation for your noble intentions, which will only grow stronger. The bearer of this message is the commander Abu [name omitted], who holds a high position in our court and possesses experience and integrity in diplomatic matters. We have sent him alongside your envoys—may God bless their journey and residence—entrusting him with all the details discussed with them and charging him to convey to your court all that we wish to express..." (al-Khatib 1973, 131)

It seems that the sultans used to take advantage of the arrival of a foreign embassy to send their own envoys back with it, both to save time and to ensure that their message was delivered verbally by representatives who directly embodied the authority of the ruler.

Embassy of the year 750 AH / 1349 AD:

Following the internal revolt launched by the people of Tunis against Abu al-Hasan al-Marini, the latter sent an embassy headed by Sheikh Abu Muhammad ibn Ahbana, requesting assistance in facing this uprising. Sultan Yusuf I responded with a letter written in 1349 AD, in which he expressed his regret for being unable to provide support due to the circumstances he was facing from the Christians. He also informed him of the arrival of two Moroccan ships on the Andalusian coasts, the first of which had docked at the port of Al-Munakkab² (Almuñécar). (Ibn Khaldun 1981)

Embassy of the year 751 AH / 1351 AD:

Sultan Yusuf I sent an embassy led by his ambassador, Commander Abu al-Hasan 'Abbad, to the Marinid Sultan, informing him of the withdrawal of the armies of Alfonso XI from Gibraltar following the latter's death due to the plague in 751 AH / 1351 AD. He also informed him that he had sent a letter of condolence to the Castilian throne, addressed to King Pedro I, upon the death of his father, Alfonso XI. (Muhammad 2005, 352)

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

Sultan Yusuf I sent a mission to Sultan Abu Inan concerning the appointment of Sheikh Abu Zakariya al-Barqaji as governor of the city of Marbella. The latter himself headed this embassy, carrying with him a letter of recommendation confirming his nomination for the post. It appears that Yusuf I's choice to have the new governor personally lead this mission aimed to allow him to engage directly with the Marinid Sultan and become better acquainted with him.

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

² Port of Al-Munakkab (Almuñécar):

Al-Himyari described it as follows:

"The port of Al-Munakkab is a summer harbor, protected on its eastern side. It has a river that flows into the sea, and upon it stands a large, impregnable fortress surrounded by a suburb, a market, and a congregational mosque. Within it are numerous ancient ruins, including aqueducts and wells still used today for irrigation. Near the fortress, to the north, stands a great vaulted structure built of stone — square at the base and pointed at the top — about a hundred cubits high, with an opening at its summit for channeling water brought to it. On the southern side of this vaulted building, a channel was carved from top to bottom to allow the water to flow down to the ground, indicating that the water came from a source higher than this monument. It was from this port that Imam Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya set sail when he entered al-Andalus, in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal of the year 138 AH. Following the port of Al-Munakkab lies a pleasant medium-sized town with abundant fisheries and plentiful fruit."

The Marinid Sultan Abu Inan sent an embassy laden with gifts and accompanied by a fleet to assist Sultan Yusuf I against the Christians, in response to the mission previously sent by Yusuf requesting military reinforcements and supplies. However, it appears that this embassy did not receive a favorable response from the Marinid Sultan. Consequently, Yusuf I sent another letter requesting aid from the Marinids, stating: "...We have sent someone to present before you the loyalty we hold toward your noble brotherhood, to speak in your presence about these matters, and to express the sincerity of our intentions with complete clarity. He is the distinguished and honorable ." (al-Khatib 1973, 254)

Beyond what is mentioned in the letter, nothing is known about the events or the dialogue that took place between the two rulers, and thus many details have been lost.

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

As part of the cordial relations between the two states, Sultan Abu Inan sent an embassy bearing a gift to Sultan Yusuf I. In response, Yusuf I dispatched an embassy with a letter in which he expressed his gratitude for this gesture and praised the Marinids' support for the cause of jihad in Al-Andalus. The Marinids were always careful to send gifts that would strengthen the Kingdom of Granada and help it withstand Christian attacks. These gifts often included horses and finely crafted spurs and weapons. (al-Khatib 1973, 108)

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

Sultan Yusuf I sent an embassy bearing a congratulatory letter to Sultan Abu Inan on his recovery of the city of Tlemcen from the Banu Ziyān. The letter does not specify who led the mission, mentioning only "so-and-so." It also indicates that Sultan Yusuf of the Nasrids entrusted the ambassador with additional verbal messages to deliver personally, as stated in the letter: "...We have chosen for this mission those who will represent us in this matter and fulfill the duties required of them at the proper time. They are the foremost among our officials and the finest of our servants — so-and-so and so-and-so. May God grant them honor and dignity, bless their journey and their stay. We have dispatched them to your noble court, the destination frequented by embassies, to convey to your gracious attention the sincerity of our friendship and to emphasize the depth of our esteem for you — matters whose foundations, we know, need no further explanation to you..." (al-Khatib 1973, 216)

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

Yusuf I sent a letter to Sultan Abu Inan through one of his servants named Ghalib, on the occasion of the conquest of Tlemcen. The letter expressed support and a desire to maintain the friendly relations between the two states. The ambassador was also entrusted with a gift, as stated in the letter: "...Having learned of your movement, which — God willing — heralds good fortune and success, we have sent along with it such mule mounts as we were able to provide, hoping they may be of

service to your noble endeavors, offered in the spirit of generosity and in keeping with the tradition of gifting..." (al-Khatib 1973, 75-77)

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

Yusuf I sent a letter to Sultan Abu Inan through one of his servants named Ghalib, on the occasion of the conquest of Tlemcen. The letter expressed his support and his wish for the continuation of the friendly relations between the two states. The ambassador carried a gift, as mentioned in the letter:

"...When we learned of your campaign, which — God willing — ushers in the signs of prosperity, we sent along with it as many mules as we could provide, hoping they might be of service to your noble station, offered generously and in accordance with the custom of gift-giving..." (al-Khatib 1973)

Embassy of the year 752 AH / 1351 AD.

The victories achieved by the Marinid Sultan Abu Inan Faris in North Africa, where he managed to subdue the provinces that had rebelled against him, prompted Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj Yusuf I to send a congratulatory embassy. The letter stated: "...Upon the first arrival of this news, we granted it the joy it deserved and appointed our messenger to be sent to your noble court to affirm our commitment and convey what is customary to express of glory and generosity. We now renew our congratulations to you and spread praise for your steadfastness. And if we were to describe the joy we feel for your happiness and the delight at the order you have restored..." (Muhammad 2005, 86)

In this letter as well, as in most of those reported by Lisan al-Din Ibn al-Khatib, the name of the envoy who carried out this embassy is not mentioned.

Embassy of the year 753 AH / 1352 AD.

A special embassy was dispatched regarding Prince Abu al-Fadl al-Marini, the brother of Sultan Abu Inan, who had fled from the custody of Sultan Yusuf I. Consequently, the latter sent an embassy to apologize for his shortcoming. He appointed as envoy someone who had personally witnessed the events, entrusting him with explaining all their details, as he was the most capable of accurately describing and reporting what had happened. The letter stated: "...We have sent to you with this letter the commander so-and-so, who happened to witness this affair in person and saw its events unfold before his eyes. He will convey to you our position on the matter as love dictates and will clarify what cannot be expressed in writing. Your noble station will kindly listen to what he delivers and receive with acceptance what he conveys..." (al-Khatib 1973, 547)

Both parties exchanged letters and embassies following the flight of Abu al-Fadl. Three successive letters reached the Marinid court, the first of which reported his escape. These letters aimed to refute the allegations that Sultan Yusuf I had assisted Abu al-Fadl in rebelling against his brother. In the end, he relied on the bonds of affection and the historical ties that had long united the two kingdoms. However, the Marinid Sultan's response to this matter remains unknown. (al-Khatib 1973, 142)

Embassy of the Year 753 AH / 1352 AD:

Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj Yusuf I sent a message to Sultan Abu Inan Faris informing him of his recent correspondence with the King of Castile regarding the rights of Muslims living under his rule and among his Christian subjects. The message was accompanied by a gift to the Marinid Sultan. (al-Khatib 1973, 135)

Sultan Abu Inan, in turn, responded with an embassy and a gift worthy of his status. Sultan Yusuf I stated: "...Your servant, so-and-so, the bearer of the noble gift, appeared before us and conveyed your gracious intentions, noble purposes, and sincere promises..." Sultan Yusuf I then replied to this Marinid embassy with a letter addressing political and diplomatic matters with Castile, accompanied by a gift that included several horses. (al-Khatib 1973, 547)

Embassy of the Year 754 AH / 1353 AD:

The exchange of letters and embassies between the two states continued, whether to inform one another of events taking place in al-Andalus or to convey congratulations. Among these was the embassy sent by Sultan Yusuf I to Abu Inan to congratulate him on his victory over Prince Abu Thabit al-Zayani in Tlemcen.

In pursuit of the interests of the Banu al-Ahmar, it appears that the Zayyanid sultans had previously assisted them whenever Christian attacks occurred. However, during this period, relations with the Zayyanids were strained. Therefore, political pragmatism dictated that maintaining good relations with the Marinids—who possessed superior military power—was a wiser course.

The letter stated: "...We rejoiced greatly at the completion of God's blessing upon you and the consolidation of your fortune, as required by sincere affection. Our relative, so-and-so, has been sent to you for this purpose; he will convey to you what we have entrusted him with, and we trust you will graciously accept what he delivers and listen to what he communicates..." (al-Khatib 1973, 547)

Hence, sultans would send ambassadors personally to deliver their messages, as written letters did not always include the full purpose of the communication. The ambassador, acting as the sovereign's voice, would orally convey the sultan's intentions—especially given the sensitivity of such missions and the risk of letters falling into enemy hands.

Embassy of the Year 754 AH / 1353 AD:

In the letter sent by Abu al-Hajjaj to the Marinid court, it is shown that Sultan Abu Inan had previously dispatched his ambassador, Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Ibn al-Khatib, who delivered a verbal message to Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj. Later, another embassy was sent, headed by Abu Abdullah Ibn Faruq. Abu al-Hajjaj took advantage of Ibn Faruq's arrival to send him back with a message to inform Abu Inan of the arrival of his envoy in Granada and to brief him on the treaty concluded with the King of Castile.

The letter stated: "...During his stay with us, your messenger, the esteemed commander Abu Abdullah Ibn Faruq—may God honor him—delivered your letter, which contained the good news of the assistance granted to you by divine

providence. However, we do not know the reason for his embassy..." It was customary that, upon the arrival of an envoy to one of the two kingdoms, the receiving ruler would send a message to the other sovereign informing him of the envoy's arrival and confirming that he had conveyed his message. Subsequently, Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj sent two letters to Abu Inan: one concerning the 1348 treaty concluded between Granada and Castile, and the other regarding the conquest of the fortress of Qanit, achieved by Sultan Yusuf I (al-Khatib 1973, 493)

From what has been mentioned above, we can conclude that every victory achieved by the Nasrid sultans was also considered a victory for the Marinids. For this reason, both dynasties were keen to exchange congratulations and gifts after each triumph, sharing with one another the details of their accomplishments. The Marinids had become the military and protective wing upon which the Nasrids relied in times of conflict or war. Therefore, it was in the Nasrids' best interest to seek their assistance. The close geographical proximity between the two kingdoms also played a significant role in strengthening their relations, particularly in the frequent exchange of embassies sent to the Marinid court to request military support—sometimes more than three embassies in a single year, which was notably more than those exchanged with the Zayyanid or Hafsids dynasties. Thus, these embassies formed a bridge of communication that helped delay the fall of al-Andalus. It is also noteworthy that the rulers consistently relied on prominent figures and scholars, whose names appeared repeatedly in the historical records of these diplomatic missions.

Embassy of the Year 754 AH / 1353 AD

Following the victory achieved by the Marinid Sultan Abu Inan over Prince Abu Thabit, Sultan Yusuf I sent him a congratulatory embassy. In the letter he wrote to him, he stated:

"...We have felt great joy at the completion of God's blessing upon you and at the fulfillment of your victory, with the utmost affection that a devoted ally may feel. We have rejoiced in the continuity of your good fortune, which divine grace has made manifest. We have therefore sent one who represents us to convey our congratulations in the spirit of sincere friendship — our relative, the noble Abu [name omitted]. We have entrusted him with our message for you, which he will deliver and convey, and we hope you will graciously accept what he presents and listen to what he conveys..." (al-Khatib 1973, 82)

This letter, like many others, does not specify the name of the ambassador who headed the mission, except for the mention that he was one of Sultan Yusuf's relatives.

Embassy of the Year 754 AH / 1353 AD

The exchange of congratulations and news between the two kingdoms was a distinctive feature of their relations, as they never missed an opportunity to send embassies or letters of congratulations. In 754 AH / 1353 AD, Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj

Yusuf I sent a congratulatory embassy to Sultan Abu Inan al-Marini on the occasion of his conquest of Bejaia.

The letter sent by Sultan Yusuf reveals that he learned of this victory from his envoy, who was present at the Marinid court. When the envoy returned, he informed him of the news, as stated in the letter: "...When our messenger returned from your court, having clarified the ambiguities and resolved the uncertainties, he informed us of the conquest that made heads rise high in pride, that brought joy to swords, that made steeds delight in its glory, and lances sway in its honor — the conquest of Bejaia, may God protect it..." (al-Khatib 1973, 87)

Following this, Sultan Yusuf sent a letter of congratulation through a special envoy, saying:

"...We hastened to dispatch one who would convey our heartfelt joy for these blessings and express our delight in full measure. For this purpose, we selected so-and-so — may God preserve him and bless his journey and stay — and entrusted him to convey the sincerity of our friendship, whose fruits are true, whose proofs silence opponents, and whose fabric shines with the silk of loyalty. We hope he fulfills his duty to the fullest and conveys our message in the best possible manner, confident that Your Grace will kindly listen to his words and receive what he delivers with favor..." (al-Khatib 1973, 92)

Embassy of the Year 754 AH / 1353 AD

Sultan Abu Inan al-Marini sent to Sultan Yusuf Abu al-Hajjaj a gift consisting of horses, a number of fine weapons, and spurs, accompanied by a special embassy for this purpose. Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj replied with a letter expressing his gratitude for the gift. The exact year of this embassy is not known, though one researcher suggested that it likely took place toward the end of Abu al-Hajjaj's reign. The letter reads: "...Your envoy, so-and-so, arrived before us and delivered words whose truth was confirmed by deeds, and expressions made eloquent by glory and virtue, words that strengthened and fulfilled the bonds of hope..." (al-Khatib 1973, 150)

Embassy of the Year 755 AH / 1354 AD

After the death of Sultan Abu al-Hajjaj Yusuf I, his son, Sultan Muhammad V al-Ghani Billah, sought to maintain the friendly relations between Fez and Granada as they had been during his father's and ancestors' reigns. To this end, he sent his vizier, accompanied by a delegation led by Lisan al-Din Ibn al-Khatib, and among the envoys was the judge Abu al-Qasim al-Sharif. The embassy carried a letter announcing the death of his father, Abu al-Hajjaj, and expressing his desire to preserve the amicable relations that had long existed between the two states, as well as requesting assistance against the Christians. When Ibn al-Khatib appeared before the Marinid sultan, he recited verses, among which were the following (al-Khatib 1973, 498):

Khalīfat Allāh sā'ada al-qadar, 'Ulāk mā lāḥa fī ad-dujā qamar

(O Caliph of God, aided by destiny, your glory rises like the moon in the dark night.)

Wa dāfa'at 'anka kaff qudratihi, Mā laysa yastaṭī'u daf'ahu al-bashar

(The hand of His power has defended you from what no mortal could ever repel.)

Wajhuka fī an-nā'ibāt badru dujā, lanā, wa fī al-muḥl kaffuka al-maṭar

(Your face in trials shines like a full moon, and your hand in the land brings rain.)

Wa an-nāsu ṭarran bi-arḍi al-Andalus, Lawlāka mā awṭanū walā 'amarū

(All the people of Andalusia — without you, they would have neither homes nor life.)

Wa jumlat al-amri annahu waṭan, Fī ghayri 'ulyāk mā lahu waṭar

(In sum, the homeland's honor and purpose belong to you; without you, it has no protector.)

Wa man bihi mudh waṣalta ḥablahum, Mā jaḥadū ni'matan walā kafarū

(Since you joined them with care, they have never denied your favor nor turned away.)

Wa qad ahammat'hum nufūsum, Fawajjahūnī ilayka wantazarū

(Their hearts were troubled, so they sent me to you, awaiting your guidance.)

These verses, which Ibn al-Khatib recited before the Marinid Sultan, had a profound impact on him. Ibn Khaldun described the event, saying: "...The Sultan was moved by these verses and granted him permission to sit. He told him to present himself to them with all their gifts, then he loaded them with generosity and granted them all they requested. Our Shaykh, the judge Abu al-Qasim al-Sharif, who was part of that delegation, said: he had never heard of an ambassador completing his mission before being received by the Sultan except in this case..." (al-Khatib 1973, 241)

Thus, the eloquence of Ibn al-Khatib served both as a means and an end to achieve his objectives. The Sultan Abu al-Anan praised him highly, and Ibn al-Khatib returned crowned with success, becoming an exemplary ambassador relied upon for important missions. This embassy also highlights the new Sultan's concern for consolidating his authority, both to guard against internal ambitions and the ever-watchful Christians.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, the importance of letters and treaties in documenting the political history of the Islamic West becomes clearly evident. They allow us to understand the nature of the relationships that linked the Sultans of Islamic Morocco with the Christian states and the Kingdom of Granada, which were mostly aimed at improving relations and strengthening ties. Accordingly, we have enumerated these embassies according to the date of their dispatch and their purpose. These treaties also demonstrate the sultans' care in setting specific conditions regarding who would draft the treaties and which ambassador would be entrusted with delivering the message.

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**BARBU CRAIOVESCU ȘI RADU CEL MARE – NOTE PE MARGINEA UNUI
DOCUMENT DE CANCELARIE / BARBU CRAIOVESCU AND RADU THE
GREAT – REMARKS ON A CHANCERY DOCUMENT**

*Liviu Marius ILIE**

Abstract

The Craiovescu family constituted one of the most prominent boyar lineages in medieval Wallachia. The four brothers – Barbu, Pârvu, Radu, and Danciu – served as high officials under the Wallachian rulers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, while also associating their name with the foundation of the Bistrița monastery. Among them, Barbu was the most influential, occupying, during the reign of Radu the Great, the foremost position in the princely council for a period of eleven years. A document issued by Radu on 15 April 1498 does not place Barbu Craiovescu at the head of the witnessing boyars, a notable absence that raises important questions. An analysis of the religious chronology indicates that, in 1498, Easter fell precisely on 15 April. The ruler of Wallachia appears to have celebrated the Feast of the Resurrection together with most of his leading boyars, either at Govora Monastery – recipient of the donation issued on Easter Day – or in Bucharest, where the ruler is attested four days later. As for Barbu Craiovescu, he appears to have celebrated Easter separately from the rest of the Wallachian political elite, a choice that may be interpreted as an expression of his individual authority. A plausible location for his celebration of Easter is the Bistrița monastery itself, the foundation of the Craiovescu family.

Key words: *charter (hrisov), chancery (cancelarie), throne succession (succesiunea tronului), Barbu Craiovescu, Radu the Great (Radu cel Mare), Bistrița monastery (mănăstirea Bistrița)*

„A răposat robul lui Dumnezeu, jupan Barbul marele ban al Craiovei, care și-a schimbat numele în Pahomie; veșnica lui pomenire” (Bălan, Chircă, Diaconescu, Ene, Florea, Iancovescu, Ene, Rizea 2005: 215). Scurtul fragment de pe piatra de mormânt pusă la biserica Adormirea Maicii Domnului a mănăstirii Bistrița face referire la unul dintre cei mai importanți dregători ai Țării Românești de la sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea și începutul celui următor – Barbu Craiovescu. Fiul al lui Neagoe de la Craiova (Stoicescu 1971: 17), cel amintit la 1 iunie 1475 (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 245), Barbu apare adeseori în sursele istorice ale vremii, alături de frații săi, Pârvu, Danciu și Radu (Stoicescu 1971: 18-19). Nu doar prezența în sfatul domnesc subliniază importanța lui Neagoe de la Craiova; de curând, el a fost identificat cu un anume „căpitan Nagoi”, participant la campania de iarnă din 1461-1462, condusă de

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Vlad Țepeș împotriva otomanilor și menționat cu acest nume în scrisoarea adresată de același voievod muntean lui Matia Corvin, la 11 februarie 1462 (Gheorghe, Weber, Anca, Lazăr, Fuchsbaauer 2019: 125).

O danie a celor patru fii ai lui Neagoe oferită mănăstirii Sf. Pavel de la Muntele Athos, datând din 28 ianurie 1501, relevă vechimea familiei din care aceștia se trăgeau, numele strămoșilor urmând a fi trecute, conform uzanțelor, în pomelnicul sfântului locaș – „Barbul și Vâlcsan și Vlada și Maina și Neagoe și Stana și Vinia” (Ștefănescu, Diaconescu 1972: 8). Despre puterea și vechimea Craioveștilor amintește și piatra tombală a lui Vladislav II, așezată tot de fiii lui Neagoe de la Craiova ulterior morții sale, în vremea domniei lui Neagoe Basarab, în semn de recunoștință „pentru că Vladislav i-a ridicat vlasteli” (Gheorghe, Weber, Anca, Lazăr, Fuchsbaauer 2019: 239-241). Cum Vladislav II a domnit între 1447 și 1456 (Rezachevici 2001: 98-100), importanța Craioveștilor trebuie să fi fost recunoscută de domnie la jumătatea secolului al XV-lea, prin includerea lor în rândul vlastelilor, termen împrumutat din Serbia medievală (Šarkić 2023: 42-59) și folosit pentru a desemna o categorie a elitei politice a Țării Românești, apropiată într-o formă sau alta de domnii munteni (Donat 1996: 178-180; Anton Manea 2002: 57-65; Gheorghe, Weber, Anca, Lazăr, Fuchsbaauer 2019: 241).

Importanța familiei rezidă și în intrarea ei în categoria ctitorilor de mari mănăstiri muntenești. Nu întâmplător piatra tombală a lui Barbu Craiovescu fusese pusă la Bistrița, acest așezământ monahal fiind legat de familia Craioveștilor. După cum reiese din același izvor epigrafic, acesta s-a călugărit, luând numele Pahomie. Lângă această inscripție, s-a păstrat un făclier de piatră cu textul „Pahomie monah, ctitor” (Bălan, Chircă, Diaconescu, Ene, Florea, Iancovescu, Ene, Rizea 2005: 215). Decizia intrării în monahism trebuie să fi fost influențată și de faptul că Barbu nu avusese copii, lucru confirmat de un hrisov târziu al lui Mihnea Turcitul, emis la 17 mai 1589 – „Barbu ban a fost sterp și n-a avut fii din trupul lui” (Ionașcu, Lăzărescu-Ionescu, Câmpina, Stănescu, Prodan, Roller 1952: 404). Un document foarte important ce amintea relația Craioveștilor cu mănăstirea Bistrița fusese emis la 16 martie 1494 de Vlad Călugărul, domnul Țării Românești oferind Bistriței un hrisov de întărire a tuturor posesiunilor sale și menționând și numele ctitorilor: „am văzut[...] cu câtă silință de trudă iubitoare s-au sîrguit bunii și credincioșii și preacinstiții noștri vlasteli, jupan Barbul Craiovescul, cu frații săi, jupan Pârvul și Danciul și Radul și au ridicat din temelie atotcinstitul mai sus zisul hram pe râul numit Bistrița” (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 403-404). Nu trebuie neglijat faptul că fiii lui Neagoe erau menționați tot ca vlasteli, cu doar un an și jumătate înainte de sfârșitul domniei lui Vlad Călugărul și începutul domniei fiului acestuia, Radu cel Mare, în toamna anului 1495 (Rezachevici 2001: 129-130).

O analiză a prezenței lui Barbu Craiovescu în sfatul domnesc al lui Radu cel Mare poate releva unele aspecte importante ale relației acestui boier muntean și a familiei sale cu domnia Țării Românești; o discuție separată merită a fi făcută asupra documentului domnesc din 15 aprilie 1498 (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 460-461), care,

deși trecut adeseori cu vederea, poate aduce unele informații noi despre relațiile de putere de la sfârșitul secolului a XV-lea. Analizând cele aproximativ o sută de documente care au fost emise de Radu cel Mare și au ajuns în vremurile moderne, cercetătorul își poate face o imagine de ansamblu asupra sfatului domnesc, reușind adeseori să deceleze un *cursus honorum* al boierilor mai importanți. Trebuie spus încă de la început că, deși cele mai multe acte domnești ale lui Radu au ieșit din cancelaria sa în calitate de domn titular al Țării Românești (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: passim; Ștefănescu, Diaconescu 1972, passim), totuși câteva dintre acestea au fost emise ca asociat la domnia tatălui său, Vlad Călugărul (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 373-374; 414-415; Diaconescu 1974: 294), urmând un model succesoral mai vechi, întâlnit atât în Țara Românească, cât și în alte state medievale (Iliescu 1951: 39-60; Vîrtosu 1960: passim; Rezachevici 2001: passim; Ilie 2004a: 67-82; Ilie 2004b: 37-52; Ilie 2008: 75-90; Ilie 2018: 475-516).

Analizând cele mai vechi documente cu sfat domnesc ale lui Radu cel Mare, se poate observa că, în lista martorilor, Barbu Craiovescu a urcat de pe a doua poziție pe prima, în mai puțin de doi ani de la preluarea domniei de către Radu voievod. Cum ultimul act domnesc emis de Vlad Călugărul datează din 8 septembrie 1495 (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 417), abia după această dată se poate vorbi de o domnie în calitate de titular al tronului pentru Radu cel Mare (Rezachevici 2001: 129-130). Cel mai vechi document cu dată precisă emis de Radu voievod datează, însă, din 31 ianuarie 1496, fiind scris la Craiova (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 427-428). Două luni și jumătate mai târziu ieșea din cancelaria Țării Românești cel mai vechi hrisov cu sfat domnesc al lui Radu cel Mare – la 14 aprilie 1496, acesta oferea câteva posesiuni mănăstirii Govora, lista membrilor sfatului domnesc fiind deschisă de „jupan Draghici Vintilescul” și „jupan Barbul Craiovescul” (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 432). Trebuie notat faptul că prima apariție a lui Barbu Craiovescu în sfatul domnesc al lui Radu cel Mare era pe poziția a doua în lista martorilor. După alte trei luni și jumătate, la 1 august 1496, un alt document oferit Govorei avea în fruntea sfatului pe „jupan Draghici al lui Stoica” și pe „jupan Barbul Craiovescul” (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 437), pentru ca la 9 ianuarie 1497, Tismana să primească o poruncă domnească al cărui sfat se deschidea tot cu „jupan Draghici al lui Stoica” și „jupan Barbul Craiovescul” (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 438). Se poate observa că în cele trei hrisoave ieșite din cancelaria lui Radu cel Mare, în care Barbu Craiovescu ocupa cea de-a doua poziție din sfatul domnesc, acesta îi succedea lui Drăghici Vintilescu (o dată) și lui Drăghici al lui Stoica (de două ori), o mai veche analiză genealogică concluzionând că acești doi boieri ce purtau același prenume erau, de fapt, una și aceeași persoană (Florescu 1930: 15-19).

La 1 aprilie 1497, Radu cel Mare confirma mici posesiuni de pământ unor slugi domnești, documentul având în partea de final un sfat domnesc deschis de „jupan Barbul Craiovescul” (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 448). Aceasta este cea mai veche mențiune a lui Barbu Craiovescu pe prima poziție în lista martorilor ce confirmau o decizie domnească a lui Radu voievod. Cum spuneam și mai sus, în mai puțin de

doi ani, Barbu Craiovescu a urcat de pe a doua pe prima poziție a sfatului domnesc. O analiză a documentelor muntenesti de cancelarie arată că Barbu și-a păstrat această poziție câștigată în primăvara anului 1497 până la sfârșitul domniei lui Radu cel Mare (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: passim; Ștefănescu, Diaconescu 1972: passim).

Deși acest loc nu a fost niciodată contestat pe parcursul perioadei în care Radu a ocupat tronul Țării Românești, un act domnesc aduce o noutate față de această prezență continuă pe prima treaptă a sfatului domnesc. Documentul datează din 15 aprilie 1498 și, deși are sfat domnesc, Barbu Craiovescu lipsește, lista martorilor fiind deschisă de fratele său Pârveu Craiovescu („jupan Pârveu mare vornic”). Actul emis la jumătatea lunii aprilie a anului 1498 reprezenta o danie oferită mănăstirii Govora, constând în „livada care este lângă hotarul vlădicesc, oricât a ținut popa Buncea, pentru că a cumpărat-o egumenul Dorotei de la popa Buncea, pentru 1500 aspri” și în „vadul Slatinei, de la Trestioara și din jos și din sus, cu livezile și cu pădurea și cât este curățat în pădure” (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 461). Egumenul Dorotei al Govorei este amintit în documentele Țării Românești, începând cu 4 februarie 1488 (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 335), el fiind o prezență constantă în actele domnești înainte de cel din 15 aprilie 1498 (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 353, 361, 410, 435, 457). Posesiunile întărite de Radu cel Mare prin acest ultim document nu par a fi foarte mari – o livadă cumpărată de egumenul Dorotei, respectiv livezi și o parte de pădure în vadul Slatinei și împrejurul Trestioarei, nume de locuri ce au fost identificate în județul Vâlcea (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 571, 580; Bâzgan 2004: 91, 101).

Comparativ cu alte hrisoave oferite de Radu cel Mare Govorei, precum dania plenară din 1 august 1496 (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 433-437), actul domnesc din 15 aprilie 1498 pare a fi mai degrabă unul conjunctural, micile bucați de pământ întărite de domnul muntean mănăstirii fiind mult mai puțin întinse decât satele menționate cu doi ani mai devreme. Totuși documentul are în partea sa de final, așa cum subliniam și mai sus, sfatul domnesc al lui Radu cel Mare, cu excepția lui Barbu Craiovescu. De ce să se fi adunat voievodul muntean împreună cu cei mai importanți boieri ai săi pentru a confirma mici posesiuni de pământ mănăstirii Govora? Un posibil răspuns este oferit chiar de data emiterii actului domnesc, 15 aprilie 1498, care, în acel an, a reprezentat... duminica Paștilor. Chiar dacă uneori domnii munteni menționau ca element cronologic secundar perioada sărbătorii Învierii (Ilie 2021: 27-32), în acest caz scribul documentului, Stanciu grămatic, nu a considerat important să menționeze acest aspect, notând fără emfază: „am scris în luna aprilie 15, în anul 7006 <1498>” (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 461). Cu doar un an mai devreme, în primăvara lui 1497, în două danii mănăstirești ale lui Radu cel Mare, una pentru Dohiar de la muntele Athos și alta pentru Govora, se menționa că fuseseră scrise „în postul mare, în Lunea Mare”, prima (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 443), respectiv „în postul mare, în Miercurea Mare”, cea de-a doua (Panaitescu, Mioc 1966: 446). Stilul mult mai elaborat al acestor două hrisoave, conținând o arengă aflată la începutul fiecărui act, i-a făcut probabil pe scribi să detalieze și elementele cronologice, menționând

apropierea sărbătorii pascale. Stilul concis al poruncii domnești din 15 aprilie 1498 nu a lăsat loc pentru prea multe intervenții din partea lui Stanciu grămatic.

Deși prea multe informații despre sărbătorirea Paștelui în Țara Românească în secolul al XV-lea nu sunt cunoscute, documentul din 15 aprilie 1498 poate înlesni câteva supoziții. Domnul Radu cel Mare și boierii din sfat, cu o excepție, se găseau în același loc. Stilul laconic al redactării nu ne permite să știm unde a fost emis documentul, scribul menționând doar când, nu și unde a fost scris acesta. Este posibil ca domnul și boierii săi să fi făcut Paștele chiar la mănăstirea Govora și, fiind prezenți acolo, egumenul să fi profitat de ocazie pentru a primi un act doveditor pentru câteva mici posesiuni ale mănăstirii. Govora, așa cum se poate observa din actele domnești ale lui Vlad Călugărul și Radu cel Mare, a fost mult legată de familia domnească în sfertul de secol în care cei doi au ocupat tronul Țării Românești (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: passim; Ștefănescu, Diaconescu 1972, passim). Că domniile își puteau petrece perioada Paștilor în mănăstirile de care se simțeau apropiați, se poate vedea încă de la începutul veacului al XV-lea – la 28 martie 1415, chiar din mănăstirea sa, Cozia, Mircea cel Bătrân oferea călugărilor vama de la Genune, Mihail logăfăt notând că „am scris când a venit Io Mircea voievod la mănăstire, La Cozia, în postul mare” (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 80); deși scribul nu menționa ca atare, 28 martie 1415 a căzut în Joia Mare, prezența lui Mircea cel Bătrân la Cozia cu câteva zile înainte de Paști putând însemna că acesta a rămas și pentru sărbătoarea propriu-zisă în mănăstirea unde, câțiva ani mai târziu, își va fi găsit locul de veci.

Există, în mod evident, și posibilitatea ca Radu cel Mare și boierii săi să fi celebrat Învierea în altă parte, poate chiar în București, unde domnul se găsea la 19 aprilie 1498, așadar în joia de după Paști, când dădea o danie Hilandarului (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 463). Lipsa sfatului domnesc în actul pentru această mănăstire athonită nu însemna neapărat că domnul nu se mai găsea alături de boierii săi, ci reprezenta o practică a daniilor pentru Muntele Athos, care, în multe cazuri pe parcursul veacului al XV-lea, nu necesita o intervenție a boierilor martori pentru a confirma decizia domnească. O paralelă cu un alt caz anterior poate fi utilă. Cu patru decenii înainte de documentul lui Radu cel Mare din 15 aprilie 1498, la 16 aprilie 1457, Vlad Țepeș oferea satul Troienești mănăstirii Cozia, scribul notând că acea zi reprezenta „Sfânta și Marea Sâmbătă” (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 200). Atrage atenția faptul că dania era tot una nu foarte extinsă ca și porunca domnească dată de Radu cel Mare. Este posibil ca uneori domnul să fi petrecut sărbătoarea Învierii alături de boierii săi și de egumeni ai mănăstirilor, momentul fiind folosit de aceștia din urmă pentru a primi confirmări ale unor mici posesiuni, cercetări mai noi arătând că voievozii munteni puteau aduna elite politice și ecleziastice alături de ei cu ocazia sărbătorilor religioase (Coman 2025: 61-95).

Revenind la Barbu Craiovescu și reamintind prezența sa constantă pe prima poziție a sfatului domnesc vreme de unsprezece ani până la finalul domniei lui Radu cel Mare, atrage atenția lipsa acestuia în rândul boierilor martori, în documentul din 15 aprilie 1498. Cea mai plauzibilă explicație este că Barbu a ales să petreacă

sărbătorile pascale separat de domnul muntean și de ceilalți mebrii ai sfatului domnesc, lucru ce poate da măsura puterii sale. Acțiunile sale politice care vizau influențarea domniei Țării Românești la începutul veacului al XVI-lea (Stoicescu 1971: 17) își găseau astfel rădăcini încă de la sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea. Unde să fi ales Barbu Craiovescu să petreacă sărbătoarea pascală a anului 1498? Cea mai la îndemână variantă era chiar ctitoria familiei sale – mănăstirea Bistrița. Arătam mai sus că la 16 martie 1494, Vlad Călugărul confirmase Bistriței mai multe posesiuni ale sale, menționându-i pe Barbu și pe cei trei frați ai săi în calitate de ctitori (Panaiteanu, Mioc 1966: 401-405). Aceluiași așezământ monahal îi oferiseră Craioveștii un clopot la începutul domniei lui Radu cel Mare – „în numele Adormirii Preasfintei Născătoare de Dumnezeu și în zilele binecinstitorului Io Radul voievod a făcut acest clopot al mănăstirii Bistrița, jupan Barbul și Pârvul și Danciul, Radul, 4 frați; în anul 7005 <1 septembrie 1496 – 31 august 1497>” (Bălan, Chircă, Diaconescu, Ene, Florea, Iancovescu, Ene, Rizea 2005: 226). Importanța mănăstirii vine și din faptul că Mihnea cel Rău a distrus Bistrița pe fondul conflictului cu boierii Craiovești, autorul *Letopiseșului cantacuzinesc* subliniind că „mănăstirea lor, pe care o făcuse ei pre râul Bistriții din temelie, o au răsipit” (Grecescu, Simonescu 1960: 16). Dacă adăugăm și alegerea de către Barbu Craiovescu a aceleiași mănăstiri ca loc de înmormântare a sa, putem avea o imagine de ansamblu a importanței Bistriței pentru boierii Craiovești, în general, și pentru Barbu, în special. Nu este, așadar, exclus ca acesta din urma să fi petrecut Paștile din anul 1498 la mănăstirea familiei sale, Bistrița. Ținând cont de importanța sărbătorii Învierii Domnului pentru creștinii secolului al XV-lea, este puțin probabil ca Radu cel Mare să-l fi trimis pe Barbu Craiovescu să rezolve posibile chestiuni urgente chiar în ziua de Paști.

Studiul istoriei poate fi adeseori îngreunat de sursele ce lasă loc interpretării. Documentul din 15 aprilie 1498 intră în categoria izvoarelor care dezvăluie parțial informații despre importanța sărbătorilor religioase în viața omului medieval, temă studiată în ultima perioadă și pentru Țara Românească (Ilie 2021: 27-32; Coman 2025: 61-95). Raritatea acestor surse pentru spațiul muntenesc în veacul al XV-lea nu permite adeseori concluzii ferme, analiza praznicelor creștine rămânând deschisă unor idei sau surse noi.

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SOVEREIGNS OF ROMANIA (CUZA, CAROL I, FERDINAND I AND MARIA, CAROL II, AND MIHAI I), THE BRĂȚIANUS (ION, IONEL, AND GEORGE) AND DOBRUDJA

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Abstract

The sovereigns of Romania – and members of the Royal Family – had a predilection for visiting Dobrogea – including its southern part, the Quadrilateral, with the so-called Silver Coast (Balchik was the summer residence of Queen Maria) or the Danube Delta. King Carol I participated, together with Queen Elizabeth, in the inaugurations of buildings and civil constructions in Constanța, and Mamaia was, especially in the interwar period, often visited by the sovereigns (including the young Michael I). Also, the Brătianu politicians had a predilection for Dobrogea, visiting it repeatedly, participating in public meetings or inaugurations of various buildings.

Key words: *Cuza Vodă, Carol I, Ferdinand I, Carol II, Brătianu, Dobrudja, Constanța, Tulcea.*

Introduction

Even before Dobrogea, which was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1877-1878, was reintegrated into the Romanian State – from which it had been dislocated at the beginning of the 15th century, when it belonged to Wallachia led by voivode Mircea the Elder (1386-1418) –, through the provisions of the Berlin Peace Treaty (June 13-July 13, 1878), the Ruler of the United Romanian Principalities Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866) would set foot in this ancient province of Romanian ethnogenesis twice – in 1860 and, respectively, in 1864 (on his way to Constantinople).

The first of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's journeys through Dobrogea was in 1860 (Cioroiu, 1984: 51-52). The prince was going to Constantinople, on the Galați-Sulina-Varna route, to obtain recognition of the union of Moldavia with Wallachia. The description of the journey was made by one of his companions, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Minister of Public Instruction.

"From Galați to Sulina, the journey was made with the French ship 'Taurus'. At Sulina, the corvette 'Beirut' – a ship in the service of the Turkish Navy in Constanța – awaited him, specially sent by the Porte to bring the Romanian prince to Constantinople. Cuza was greeted by Salih Pasha and Nusred Pasha, whom the prince greeted kindly, but with the dignity due to independent Romanian sovereigns. All civil and military authorities were ordered to give honor to Prince

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Cuza, who was greeted, under the Romanian flag, by a salvo of 21 guns. The commander of the corvette was a famous sailor, originally from Abyssinia.

(...) The return journey was made with the battleship 'Balkan' of the French Company. Dimitrie Bolintineanu recounts, in detail, the ordeals they went through. Arriving in Galați, the Prince and his delegation were received with great pomp and a lot of people. The prince is said to have exclaimed: 'I know how these things are done. I don't like comedies'. At Medgidia, the Circassians from the Ottoman army presented him with honor, and at Cernavodă, the Prince and his suite passed between two rows of mounted Circassians, who welcomed him with cheers. Here, Romanian ministers had come to welcome him, with whom he crossed into the country".

Cuza's second journey through Dobrogea, on the Cernavodă-Constanța route, took place in June 1864.

The 'Curier d'Orient' of June 18, 1864, describes this journey in detail. The Lord's retinue was much larger than the one in 1860, five civilians and five military.

"The Lord and his retinue embarked in Giurgiu, on the Austrian ship 'Archduchess Sofia' of the Austrian Danube Company. On the ship, Cuza received the homage of Brigadier General Sahib Pasha, attached to the Lord, who informed him that, in Constanța, the corvette 'Beirut' was waiting for him, made available by the sultan for the journey to Istanbul. At Cernavodă, the gentleman is welcomed by the Dobrudjans, and the Muslims give him a batal wrapped in the tricolor. From Cernavodă to Constanța, at 10 o'clock, he leaves on an express train, personally driven by the railway director, Trevor Barkley. The gentleman had put on his low-dress uniform. There is a fifteen-minute stop at Medgidia. The train arrives in Constanța at 11.30. As a thank you, the gentleman gives Barkley a watch decorated with his initials in diamonds".

And 'Courier d'Orient' comments: "In Constanța, all the civil and military authorities were gathered on the jetty to do His Highness the honors. The prince went aboard, in the large ship 'Beyrut', in front of which the Romanian tricolor fluttered; the crew was mounted on the spars and the moment His Highness set foot on the deck of the 'Beyrut', a salvo of 21 cannon shots greeted the Sultan's illustrious guest". On the return, the Romanian delegation followed the same itinerary. From Cernavoda to Giurgiu with the Ottoman warship Kilidji-Ali, 'magnificently decorated' (Cioroiu, 1984: 52-53).

It is worth emphasizing that aspects of Cuza's passage through Dobrogea are retained in Dobrogea folklore.

A series of stories and legends about Alexandru Ioan Cuza still circulate in Dobrodjan folklore today. Most of them highlight a character characterized by a sense of justice, dignity, and closeness to the common people, a brave, kind, and quick-witted gentleman. In this sense, Cuza to the Sultan, *Cuza's Ocaua*. There is no shortage of memories of some Dobrodjans about the unifying lord.

"Thus, the memories entitled *Copiii de școală și Cuza* talk about a visit by Prince Cuza to a school in Târgu Neamț; about the order he introduced in the

country (*Pe vremea lui Cuza*); about the lord's habit of walking around fairs dressed in the clothes of a common man, in order to dispense justice (Medgidia)".

Particularly interesting are the portraits that the owners of these memories made of Mr. Cuza. One of these refers to one of the two passages through Dobrudja of the Romanian prince: "I saw Rîșic-Pașa at Sulina. He came with Cuza Vodă. I saw Cuza, don't lie, just a stone throws away. Cuza was a tall, fair-skinned man, with a corœtian nose. I see him in portraits too, but he doesn't look like it, he looks too reserved; and no, he was fair-skinned. I can see him thanking everyone who greeted him. He went to the commission. There he had a palace and a table. He invited many people to the table. His chair was higher, and ours, lower and lower, until the end... He put food and Cuza's wine cup for each person. I can hear him telling us: 'drink to Cuza's health'. And whatever food he ate, he gave us too, so much so that he sat in the palace, but we sat in the ceadir. And Rîșic-Pașa's chair was lower than Cuza's. If you had seen it, the pasha's clothes shone so brightly, it was only gold, but Cuza's were not so shiny. He laughed at every word he said. And everyone praised him for being a good master. He stayed in Sulina for three days and then he left. Since, then I have not seen either Rîșic-Pașa or Cuza-Vodă".

Speaking about when the railway was built, a contemporary of the event recounts memories of Cuza's passage through Dobrudja in 1860: "In 1861 (*Sic!*), it seems to me, when Mr. Cuza came and crossed the Danube on a Romanian ship to go here to Țarigrad, they could barely find a passenger car for the gentleman and his entourage. I can almost see Cuza now: tall, strong, broad-shouldered, with a goatee, like at that time, and an officer's cap on his head. When the ship left the Romanian shore, the Romanian border guards all shouted in unison: 'Hurray! Long live Mr. Cuza'. When he arrived on the right bank at Cernavodă, the Turkish border guards greeted him with the same cheers in Turkish" (Dumitrașcu, 2018).

Visits of King Carol I in Dobrudja

Until recently, the idea that Prince Carol I set foot in Dobrogea on November 14, 1878 – given the official takeover of Dobrogea, by the civil administration and military units, respectively, was accredited. And when, Carol I read, in Brăila, the two documents that formalized the recovery of Dobrogea and its inclusion in the Romanian State.

In the pages of the 'Monitorul Oficial' of Romania, however – reproduced in several volumes (Ciorbea, 2022) – there is the account according to which on June 6-8, 1867, the ruler was in the Danube Delta, visiting Tulcea and Sulina.

At the beginning of June 1867, more precisely on the 5th and 6th, Carol visited Brăila and Galați. Here he boarded the ship 'La Magicienne' under the French flag for a visit to the Danube Delta and ports in southern Bessarabia.

From Galați the ship set off for Tulcea. It docked in the port for an hour. The event was announced and prepared by the authorities. Civil and military officials from the Ottoman Empire troops greeted Carol. A musical band boarded the ship,

which, together with another one on the quay where a military band was also present, created a festive atmosphere.

Departing for a visit to the Danube Delta, Prince Carol wanted to see the canals of the Delta, mainly the works carried out by the European Commission of the Danube in Sulina.

From Tulcea 'La Magicienne' first sailed on the Sfântul Gheorghe arm, turned around and entered the Sulina canal. It did not stop in the port of Sulina, it sailed further 'a little out to sea' (sic), Prince wanted to see the mouth of the Black Sea. The ship made a turnback maneuver and docked in the port of Sulina, where Carol was awaited by the 'Pasha of Tulcea', the mutasherif or governor of the Tulcea sanjak, the highest figure in the Ottoman administration in Dobrudja who had come especially to welcome the prince. Civil servants, officers and many residents greeted the prince. Carol disembarked, went to the headquarters of the European Danube Commission in Sulina, where he had a meeting with the officials and consuls attached to the city. Then came the moment when Carol was invited in a boat to visit the dikes, the lighthouse and other works to modernize navigation on the canal and in the port.

In the evening the port was dressed in festive clothes. The population came out onto the quay. The ships in the port and the ship under the Austrian flag that had accompanied the ship 'La Magicienne' had their illuminated flags raised with lanterns. Historical sources tell us that the show was splendid.

Carol had invited the families of the notables of Sulina aboard 'La Magicienne' because they had expressed their desire to greet him, and the prince invited them to the ball organized on board, an event that lasted until 11:30 p.m.

A few hours later, the ship left very early in the morning for Tulcea. Here he disembarked accompanied by the head of the Ottoman administration. To the applause of the people of Tulcea, the two headed for the administration headquarters, the so-called 'mansion', where they stopped for a short time. He returned aboard the French ship and set off for the Chilia Canal to visit the northern part of the Delta and several ports on the left arm of the canal. In front of the port, Ismail was greeted by the inhabitants, the military and warships specially sent by the European Commission of the Danube to honor the prince. Romania.

Having arrived at the port of Chilia, Carol disembarked and was invited to participate in a *Te Deum*. He then stopped at the house of the notable Bariore where he received the delegation of officials and soldiers. Here the archpriest of Ismail extended his welcome to Carol I. He then visited the old church 'Saint Nicholas', founded by Prince Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) and the remains of the fortress built by Genoese merchants many centuries earlier.

Returning aboard 'La Magicienne', the prince sailed towards the port of Vâlcov. He spent the night on board. In the morning, he noticed another French ship nearby, 'Le Mortiere', which had sailed before 'La Magicienne' to sound the depth of the arm and avoid a naval incident. He also entered the Oceacov arm, admiring the mouth of the estuary from the ship in the Black Sea. Returning to the port of

Vâlcov, in an area where the water was deep enough, 'La Magicienne' dropped anchor and the prince got out in a boat to go see the port, the town and the surroundings. The residents gave him an equally beautiful welcome, and he met there with representatives of the community, civilians and military. On the seashore, he went, obviously accompanied, to Valul lui Traian near Jibrieni, where he stopped and was served breakfast on the grass. The representatives of the authorities promised to erect a monument in memory of the stop made by Carol I. On the return to Vâlcov, he was accompanied by local people on horseback. He boarded 'La Magicienne', being greeted by the residents who approached the ship with their boats. The next morning was Chilia. In the evening, the port was illuminated with lanterns. Notables with their families, they attended the ball offered by Carol which lasted until 11 p.m.

The next day, Carol and the French ship sailed to Ismail, where the ship anchored. The prince disembarked, passed under the triumphal arch erected by the locals, and toured the city accompanied by the ship commanders under the flags of France, England, and Russia.

The next day, on June 10, 1867, accompanied by Ismailis on horseback, the prince set off for Bolgrad. Thus, ended Prince Carol's first visit to the Danube Delta, the northern area of Dobrudja, and the ports of southern Bessarabia" (Ciorbea, 2022; xxx 2022 *Casa Regală a României*).

After 1878, the first visit to Dobrogea – now (it is divided into two counties: Constanța and Tulcea) – takes place in October 1879 (October 15-17, when he visits Tulcea; October 30, when he makes his first visit to Constanța).

Every year, on May 9, the historical calendar of the Romanian people marks the date of the proclamation of the Independence of Romania, under international conditions which, in 1877, facilitated the affirmation as such of the sovereignty of the modern Romanian State. In the consciousness of the era, it is noteworthy that this date – May 9 – was perceived as the symbolic moment of the proclamation of Independence, as, for example, the Romanian magazine published in Transylvania, in Gherla, "Cărțile săteanului român" records: "The day of May 9/21, 1877 will be written in golden letters in the history of Romanianism forever great and victorious, for on this day (Monday) the Diet [Assembly of Deputies] and the Senate of Romania – with one soul and one will, with one mind and one heart – proclaimed ROMANIA as an INDEPENDENT STATE (the unattached kingdom). And through this, breaking the covenants signed with tears of blood by the Romanian lords Mircea and Bogdan – with the pagans Bayezid and Selim I – THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE became LORDS over their lives and fate!"

Indeed, on this day, Foreign Minister M. Kogălniceanu is questioned about Romania's conduct in the Russo-Turkish War, the response of the great Romanian politician constituting, in fact, the Declaration of Independence of Romania: "Gentlemen Deputies, I have not the slightest doubt or fear of declaring before the National Representation that we are a free and independent nation"; on the same day,

the Assembly of Deputies votes a resolution by which "it takes note that the war between Romania and Turkey, that the severance of our ties with the Porte and the absolute Independence of Romania have received their official consecration" (also on the same day, the Senate also adopts a similar act). (By coincidence, the next day, May 10, was the day on which King Carol I celebrated his entry into the Capital in 1866. Independence would be celebrated, until 1947, on this day in May, in his Memoirs, the Sovereign recording for May 10/22, 1877: "Today's national holiday is celebrated this time with distinction, as the day of the proclamation of independence".)

Romania's participation in the war against the Ottoman Empire, alongside Russia, would materialize not only in the consecration of obtaining Independence – recorded as such by the decision of the Berlin Peace Congress (1878) – but also in the reintegration of the Romanian territory between the Danube and the Sea (*Dobrogea/Dobrudja*) to the Romanian State, in November 1878, a historical reparation also validated by the Great Powers.

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From now on, Dobrudja will experience a true national-spiritual and economic renaissance within the Romanian Kingdom, the worthy King Carol I have a more special propensity towards this province than towards other regions of the Country, until his death (September 1914).

Thus, the very content of the first official documents addressed to the Dobrudjans on November 14, 1878 – *High Order of the Day to the Army on the Occupation of Dobrudja*, respectively the *Proclamation to the Dobrudjans* – is exemplary for the concern that the Romanian state authorities would show, in the following decades, for the modernization of Dobrudja: "Christians and Muslims, welcome the Romanian authorities with confidence; they come with the specific task of putting an end to the painful trials you have gone through, of healing the wounds of the war, of defending your person, property and legitimate interests, finally of developing your moral and material well-being" ([Carol I] (1939), 297).

King Carol I (1839-1914; Prince: 1866-1881; King: 1881-1914), "*Beiul Carolu*" – as he was called by the Dobrudjans until 1878 – would make his first official visit to Dobrudja in October 1879, when he arrived in Constanța and Tulcea, being greeted with joy and trust by the Dobrudjans who came out to meet him. "These populations, composed of all nationalities, all regions, Romanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Germans, Turks, Tatars, were all united by a single feeling: the desire to see, to greet, to love their good ruler, the representative of freedom, justice, tolerance and European civilization". Residents of the villages lined up along the Cernavoda-Constanța railway came, "to listen, at least in the run of the railway, to the Romanian sovereign, and the women and children, seeing the train, threw themselves to the ground as a sign of respect" (Lascu, 1999).

In Tulcea, the sovereign laid the foundation stone of the Dobrudja Monument, visited the churches in the city, the schools there (Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek, German, Protestant, Armenian, Israelite), and other institutions. The ruler's presence in Dobrudja provided the occasion for the inhabitants of several settlements to submit petitions demanding economic and social improvements, expressing their confidence in the sovereign's sense of justice, "and be assured, Your Majesty, that we and our children, basing ourselves on the principles of freedoms enjoyed by our brothers – *as was said, for example, in the petition of the inhabitants of Hârșova* –, will defend the estate from any external invasions or interference by enemies" (Ciocoiu, 2022: 14-15).

The ruler's impressions of this trip to Dobrudja are given in a letter sent to his father, which said, among other things, highlighting the Romanian historical traditions in this part of the country: "From far away, very close to each other, on mounds and hills, the ruins of Roman fortresses can be seen, both on the shores of the Sea and on the banks of the Danube. Similarly, in the middle of the country, from horizon to horizon, apart from the ruins of fortresses, so many natural and artificial mounds can be seen, that if we were to look at them as army graves, of which there are many, *we could truly say that the Romanian in Dobrudja is everywhere treading on the ruins of the greatness of his ancestors!* (our emphasis)".

The next visit of the Sovereign – proclaimed King in 1881, Romania being transformed into a kingdom at 14/26 March – will take place in Constanța, on September 10, 1889, accompanied by the crown prince Ferdinand; the city is visited (the Cathedral, the Greek Church, the Armenian Church, the Mosque, the City Hall, the schools, other institutions). "A long time has passed since I came to Dobrudja. My joy is all the greater, however, to find myself together with the heir presumptive of the Crown in your midst and to note the great progress made in the course of 10 years", the sovereign would confess at the respective gala lunch. After welcoming the presence of "our young navy" (represented by the ship 'Elisabeta'), Carol I concludes: "I raise this glass in honor of Dobrudja, so that this beautiful province, in which the Romanian sentiment took root in such a short time, may prosper and develop in peace and quiet, in the health of the townspeople of Constanta, who, by giving us such a brilliant and warm welcome, have shown us their love and devotion, for which I thank you with all my heart.

Long live Dobrudja and its port of Constanța"! (Lascu, 1999: 168).

The following year, on October 9/21, 1890, King Carol I will participate in the solemn laying of the foundation stone of the 'King Carol I' Bridge over the Danube, delivering a short speech in which he states that "I am happy that I was able to crown the first pillar of the bridge in front of such an imposing gathering and the population of Dobrudja, who ran from all sides to witness this work, which will forever link these two banks of the Danube, twinning interests and cementing the union between these two trunks of the Romanian State in a lasting and imperishable way" (Lămurăanu, 2004: 121).

Five years later, the sovereign will witness the inauguration, on September 14, 1895, of the majestic lace arch over the Danube, the 'King Carol I' Bridge designed by Eng. Anghel Saligny). The festivities are impressive and truly popular (over 20,000 'souls' participate); during them, "the culmination of the celebration was the crossing of the bridge by the 15 locomotives, whose whistles, together with the sounds of the ships stationed in the port of Cernavoda, the booming of the cannons on the hill and the gunboats, the sound of trumpets, drums, military music and the acclamations of the crowd produced – the press of the time recorded – a concert impossible to say and describe" (Lascu, 1999: 201).

The King's response to the speeches revealed, among other things, the importance that the head of state attached to the economic prosperity of modern Romania: "Gathered here, on the shores of Dobrudja, the country united by the blood of our braves and forged again, through an iron chain with Romania, we celebrate an event eagerly awaited by the entire country, which will find a great resonance far beyond its borders. The completion of the bridge over the Danube, desired by Me for a quarter of a century, is today an accomplished fact and this towering work rises before us as a clear testimony of the strength of the Kingdom.

Human genius, in which the progress and strong momentum of Romania are reflected, has overcome all difficulties, has removed all obstacles, in order to execute this lasting and imperishable work, *which must show the world that the people are worthy of their beautiful calling at the mouths of the Danube and on the threshold of the East* (our emphasis).

Monuments are the living history of peoples; to this day, the traces of Trajan have not been erased. Who does not speak of his bridge at Severin? May God grant that the second bridge, established after thousands of years on the Lower Danube, may live for centuries to tell future generations, from generation to generation, *that only through sacrifices, struggles and steadfast work could the Romanian State be founded* (our emphasis).

I can be proud, however, that under My Reign this great bridge was conceived and completed by our engineers, which will attract a significant part of European trade to our railways, because today we control the shortest line between the northern seas and the countries of the East.

Let us now cast a glance further out to sea, onto this boundless waterway, where the countless paths of movement of the entire world intersect, which spread wealth among nations. Through the port of Constanța, the bridge over the Danube opens up this broad path for us, which will unexpectedly increase our commercial relations and ensure our maritime development" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 162-163).

The modernization work of Dobrudja will continue at this end of the 19th Century, the Romanian Kingdom experiencing, in its entirety, a significant development, especially in economic terms; a component that will become increasingly important for Romania over time will be the Port of Constanta, a work of considerable dimensions – for that era – towards which King Carol I constantly

showed his special concern. "Today's celebration has double importance – *he will say at the celebration of the beginning of the Port's works, on October 16, 1896* – because by laying the first stone of the new port of Constanța, we have also laid the foundation for our maritime development" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 176; Lascu, 1999: 213).

Until the official inauguration of the Port in 1909, the King would often be on the construction site, would be shown the plans, and would supervise the progress of the works. "The huge work of the Port, the works of the City Hall and especially the strengthening of the banks, were examined in detail by the great king and often his authorized word, placed where it was needed, smoothed out many of the difficulties that the accomplishment of these works encountered", reports a contemporary in 1914 (Lascu, 2018: 135).

The Romanian Navy also benefited from the support of the Head of State, he participated, on several occasions, in Constanța, in the consecration of ships, an occasion with which he reiterated the importance of the navy for the country's trade: "I raise my glass to a happy future of our merchant navy, as well as the military one, being certain that both, in fulfilling their duty, far from the country, will be animated by a single feeling, will be guided by only one thought: the Fatherland and national honor, and that on their ships, wherever they may be, the cry so dear to all will resound: «Long live Romania!»", said Carol I in 1898, at a banquet given on the ship «King Carol I» ([Carol I], 1939, II: 210).

No opportunity was missed to refer to Dobrudja and its inhabitants: "Thanking you warmly for the brilliant welcome with which we were greeted – *the King toasted in Constanța, on September 23, 1907, at the end of some military maneuvers*h – I wish the county and the city all happiness and that our great port may become a source of wealth for the country, ensuring its economic development.

To the health of the inhabitants of Dobrudja!

Hurray!" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 383).

In the first decade of the 20th Century, the Royal Family undertook several trips on the Danube, stopping at Tulcea, the Danube Delta, and Sulina.

One of these trips took place on May 6-7, 1908.

„Today, the Sovereigns are due to arrive, and from 7 a.m. onwards, there is great excitement on all the streets. All the mayors and municipal councilors have arrived from the county.

At 8 a.m., the passage of the schools begins, which are arranged in the places indicated in the program.

The officials gather at the reception pavilion erected at the pier.

In the morning, the monitors arrived in the port: *Ion Brătianu, Lascăr Catargiu, Mih. Cogălniceanu, Alex. Lahovari*, who anchor in front of the Romanian pontoon.

On the left bank of the Danube, the corvettes also arrived: *Maior Giurescu, Maior Const. Ene, Maior Șonțu Gheorghe, Maior Nicolae Ion, captains Lascar Bogdan, Valter Mărăcineanu and Romano Mihail*, as well as 4 gunboats. All of them dock on the

banks of the Danube. The entire city floats in greenery and tricolor, especially the streets where the royal procession will pass.

Almost all the houses are decorated with flags, garlands and carpets.

Everywhere you can see paintings representing the royal family. In the pavilion are the consular corps, the inspector of the European Commission, the communal council, members of the Chamber of Commerce, the agricultural inspector with the regional commission, the archpriest with the clergy, the Israeli cantor with his son and the hodja, members of the Israeli community and many other people. Also in the pavilion are the invited ladies as well as the committee of the regional Society 'Vatra Luminoasă' [The Luminous Hearth] .

It is 8:45 a.m. when the royal yacht appears, coming from Isaccea and having as its vanguard the ship 'Dunărea' and preceded by several commercial vessels and the Italian warship 'Galileo'. When the yacht enters the harbor range, the cannons of the monitors salute the royal ship with 21 shots. Music plays, endless urals start from the chests of thousands of citizens on the quay.

After the yacht makes its rounds, it docks amid delirious cheers at the splendidly decorated Romanian pier. On the pontoon, the King and Prince Carol are received by Mr. General Averescu, the Minister of War, who arrives in the morning with the monitors, as well as by General Culcer, the commander of the Dobrudja division. Also arriving with the royal yacht were Prime Minister Sturdza and Morțun, the Minister of Public Works, then the sovereign and Prince Carol review the company of honor, the societies, and the students at the high school, whose choir sang the royal anthem, and converse with the high school principal.

H.M. The King then comes to the reception pavilion where he is greeted by Mr. Sebastian Teodorescu, the mayor of the city, who presents him with the traditional chicken and salt, welcoming him to the land of Dobrudja. Mr. Prefect Bălțeanu who accompanied the Sovereign from Isaccea introduced the people in the pavilion with whom His Majesty spoke to each one separately.

H.M. The Queen being indisposed, remained on the yacht where the Ladies offered her bouquets of flowers, as did Mrs. Dr. Călinescu vice, the president of the regional society 'Vatra Luminoasă' who offered the Sovereign a splendid bouquet from the society. H.M. thanking her, he inquired about the progress of this society.

Upon leaving the pavilion, a former official named Sandovici presented the Sovereign with a petition. After this, H.M. The King, accompanied by Prince Carol and followed by a large cordon of carriages in which there were official persons, traveling along Carol, Elisabeta, and St. Nicolae streets to the cheers of the crowd, went to the city Cathedral where Father Niculescu, the county archpriest, officiated a Te-Deum. After this, with the same procession, the sovereign went to the Commemorative Monument of Re-annexation which he visited. There were over 100 veterans who had arrived from the county, and Major Emanoilescu, also a veteran, gave the Sovereign an enthusiastic speech. His Majesty spoke in part with several veterans.

Some of them gave the Sovereign a petition. The committee for the erection of the monument was also presented here. His Majesty the King took pictures with the officials and ministers and greatly admired the park that was built on the embankment of this monument. Then going down to the city, he went directly to the pier, from where, boarding the Royal boat, he visited the monitors off the Danube while cannons were fired from the ships' sides. After the review of the ships, the Royal boat also passed by the Italian ship «Galileo», which greeted the Sovereign's passage with several cannon shots. While the Sovereign was visiting the ships, Her Majesty the Queen received various delegations of citizens on board. The undersigned, as secretary of the 'Vatra Luminoasă' association, was also received by Her Majesty, thanking me warmly for the work we do to achieve the purpose of this society, promising that he will receive more blind people from our county in the colony in Bucharest.

After Her Majesty the King returns to the yacht, all the ministers take their seats on the ship, except for General Averescu together with the county prefect, after which the royal yacht, amidst the roar of cannons and the cheers of the crowd, makes the rounds and departs for Sulina (...) (xxx, 1908: 1).

Another moment with Constanța as host, with a special historical charge not only for the people of Dobrudja, was the inauguration, on September 26, 1909, of the Port of Constanța, an opportunity to highlight, on the part of the sovereign, the importance of the country's international commercial ties, the place of Dobrudja and the people of Dobrudja in the national whole. "We can rightly regard it (the Port of Constanța – our note) as a key factor in our economic prosperity and as a national pride. The Port of Constanța, with the help of our maritime service, has put us in constant and direct contact with foreign fairs and ports, especially with western Europe, which is the largest buyer of our national products.

The activity of this commercial center, which will certainly take place without damage to our Danube ports, will be *the true barometer of our economic development* (emphasis added).

Therefore, I believe that although the great works that have been carried out so far are only a beginning compared to what the future holds and that *Constanța will become in a short time, not too distant, one of the most important ports of the Black Sea* (our emphasis).

On this occasion, I cannot fail to note today – *continued King Carol I, explaining the importance of the political moment for the people of Dobrudja* – a close and close connection between this event and the entry of the people of Dobrudja into the full constitutional life of the country. Through this perfect embodiment of Dobrudja from the Romanian homeland, from whose bosom nothing can separate it, the goal of the ancient fighters for the domination of the Black Sea, the dream of the Old Mircea [cel Bătrân] Voievod and of Ștefan the Great [cel Mare], was fulfilled forever.

At the end of the Sovereign's response, he expressed his gratitude to the people of Dobrudja for the hospitality with which they greeted him each time: "With deep gratitude I thank everyone for the brilliant welcome with which I was greeted

by the city, as well as for the good wishes that were brought to me in such warm and flattering words, and I am happy that I have the pleasant opportunity to raise my glass to the ever-increasing prosperity of the port of Constanța and for the happiness of our dear people of Dobrudja" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 411-412; Lascu, 1999: 445-446).

Indeed, the inhabitants of Dobrudja had for some time benefited from even greater attention from the Romanian authorities, led by the King; he had indeed indicated to the Parliament, in the Royal Message [*Mesajul Regal*] of November 15, 1908 – when the opening of the annual session of the Legislative Bodies was marked – the need for the people of Dobrudja to be granted all political rights, namely to be able to participate in elections and have representatives in Parliament. "Yesterday marked thirty years since, at the head of the army, I set foot on the land of Dobrudja, regained through the blood of our brave soldiers and fallen in the war of independence. Since then, this part of Romania has gained a strong momentum. Through the national conscience through the great and fruitful works with which the Kingdom has continuously endowed it, it is today forever united with the motherland, through feelings of love and gratitude.

The time has come, however, to extend our constitutional regime to the counties of Constanța and Tulcea" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 395).

As a result, starting in 1912, the people of Dobrudja will send their representatives to Parliament (deputies and senators), the time up to this date being devoted to political and public debates on the constitutional translation of the King's instructions; initially, a restrictive law is adopted regarding the political rights granted to the people of Dobrudja and only through the energetic intervention of the Sovereign is this modified beneficially; the delegates of the inhabitants of Dobrudja presented themselves to the king with memoirs, and the king, "the only one who knew Dobrudja and the soul of his subjects better", intervened to amend the law "in accordance with the recommendation of the sovereign, who truly understood the superior interests of his state" – said Const. Venturatu, a resident of Hârșova, in the pages of the newspaper 'Dobrogea jună' in 1914 (Lascu, 2018: 137-138).

In 1913, the Southern part of Dobrudja was reunited with the actual body of the Romanian territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, the counties of Durostor and Caliacra being added to the other administrative components of the Old Kingdom.

In his constant concern for the destinies of the country, the sovereign visited, in May 1914, "the new territory annexed to Romania", at the end of the trip expressing his satisfaction "for the love with which we were greeted by the entire population, regardless of nationality or faith. The endless acclamations from the ancient city of Mircea the Elder, especially (Silistra – our note) have found a grateful echo in our hearts; my living wish is that this ancient city, so flourishing until a few centuries ago, will regain, together with the entire region that surrounds it, its former splendor, through a new surge of prosperity under My reign", it was stated in a Letter [*Scrisoare*] of the Sovereign addressed to Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu.

In just a few weeks, the King will be in Constanța for the last summer, when he receives the visit of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia (June 1, 1914). "We all remember how, during the preparations for receiving the Tsar, he regularly went to the Casino twice a day to personally inspect the progress of the works and to give himself a lot of instructions about what needed to be done. These visits – *a memoirist recorded in the 'Conservatorul Constanței', in the fall of 1914* –, almost unnoticed even by the visitors who walked along the embankment opposite the boulevard, he made them with the same simplicity and lack of etiquette that had made the great Captain the most beloved of the ordinary people of Constanța". Indeed, King Carol I came to Constanța several times a year, "without the boring pomp for a King, he crossed the city every day, almost alone in a carriage, to go to the port to the Queen's Pavilion and to return to the Palace, and we – *contemporaries testify* – had become so accustomed to this that the noisy manifestations from other parts were replaced by greetings full of respect and deep love, to which he responded with obvious pleasure".

The sovereign felt especially in his element when, often, he stopped – alone – in the classes and laboratories of the 'Mircea' Boys' High School: "In the last four years of his life, there was no spring in which this school did not have the honor and pride of a royal visit" (Lascu, 1999: 697).

As a sign of respect for the memory of King Carol I, the mayor of Constanța, Professor Virgil P. Andronescu, will propose to the Municipal Council, on November 4, 1914, the erection of a Monument and a Statue to the one who "showed his endless love, raising the port and the city to the height where it is, supporting our development needs with advice and deed, giving a clear indication of what we should be; we are obliged to give a clear proof of gratitude and, to this end, I propose that in our city we erect a grand monument to him, which will show the future, through his presence here, that our dominion at Sea is forever and that we knew how to raise our soul and heart to his great deed and thought" (Lascu, 1999: 691-693; 695-606).

... Unfortunately, today, the memory of the deserving Sovereign is not honored in proportion to his worthy deeds; the 1914 project never came to life, and later the establishment of a new form of state – the Republic – cast King Carol I into a shadow that should, today, be removed.

The Dobrudja people, especially – to whom King Carol I constantly manifested his attachment – must recover their historical values, the Captain of 1877 being given due honor (in Tulcea, there is a bust of the Carol II!); one of the large and well-managed communes of Dobrudja – such as Cumpăna or Comana, for example (I already showed, at the beginning of this material) – should dispute the primacy in bearing the name of Carol I, the issue being, of course, not political sympathies, but national gratitude. And perhaps such an initiative should be taken into account as soon as possible, because, in the fall, we mark (as I said once again, in 1998) 120 years since the Reintegration of Dobrudja into the Romanian State, Carol I being – alongside Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu (and a Dobrudjan locality should bear his name!) and Mihail Kogălniceanu – one of the fathers of Romanian Dobrudja.

The Travels of King Ferdinand and Queen Maria in Northern Dobrudja (Danube Delta).

Queen Maria in Balchik (Southern Dobrudja/Oadrilater)

The successor of the first King of Romania, his nephew Ferdinand I (August 24, 1865-July 20, 1927; King: 1914-1927) also made – together with his wife, the Princess, then Queen Maria (October 29, 1875-July 18, 1938) – several visits and ‘royal journeys’ to Dobrudja.

Thus, in September 1915, the new Sovereigns were guests of the Tulcea people, they visited the new archaeological excavations at the Histria Fortress, as well as the Altân Tepe copper mine (Ciocoiu, 2022: 118-120), and in the 1920s they also made visits, one of which (from May 1926) was described at length in the queen’s diary: “Both [Monasteries] Cocos and Celic-Dere are located in a beautiful wooded valley, which you would not expect to find in Dobrudja. It is quite strange that most of them are lime trees, and it is so rare to see a lime forest. There are other beautiful varieties of trees among them, a variety of pear trees that I do not remember seeing anywhere else and about which the skilled Colonel «Flora» said that they originated in the Caucasus.

The old nuns of Celic-Dere had, of course, hoped that we would visit them, and we found everything ready and decorated. Later, we had lunch in the garden, at the guesthouse, a beautiful, large white building. We had brought cold food with us. Nicky came too, and we were in a very good mood.

After we had eaten, we went down to the little Russian-style church and were ceremoniously welcomed by all the nuns, a group of women dressed in black. Half of them is Russian. A Te Deum was sung among many icons and candles. The church is made of wood and full of icons of all kinds, but only one is worth noting, the old one, brought from Mount Athos, representing the death of the Virgin Mary. (...)

Our visits to this remote corner are of course rare. I have been here once before, before 1915, and it left me with a beautiful memory. They [the nuns] were very sad that His Majesty did not come to this distant place of theirs.

We met His Majesty in a small town called Niculițel and returned home by another road, partly through the beautiful forest with such different and beautiful trees, in which everything was of a superb green because it had rained very much everywhere. We stopped at a place where we found some delightful wild flowers although, in fact, it is not yet their season” (Ciocoiu, 2022: 134).

King Ferdinand’s last trip to Dobrudja took place in October 1926, in the Danube Delta, on a hunting trip: “And here, as in all parts, His Majesty is greeted by a large crowd of citizens, almost all Russian fishermen, who with their simple, but all the more moving manner, led the distinguished guests in all directions. Inside the hall [of the fishing town of Vâlcov, the Venice of the East, on the cold stones, were lined up about 30 pieces of cod of various sizes, recently caught and which in their huge bellies contained the eggs, which in cod and sturgeon are called black roe” (Ciocoiu, 2022: 138-139).

Queen Maria's connection with the town of Balchik [*Balcic*] is well known (Matache, *passim*) – the favorite area of Romanian artists between the wars (Păuleanu, *passim*), the small town on the Silver Coast of Romania (the Black Sea maritime facade of Southern Dobrogea, incorporated into Romania in 1913) –, starting from her first visit, in 1924; here, according to her wish and instructions, the well-known summer residence – the Lonely Nest (Tenha Juvah) [*Cuibul Singuratic*] or the Balchik Castle – is built.

Michael I, Presence on the Romanian Coast

Another member of the Royal Family, the son of King Carol II, Mihai, Grand Duke of Alba Iulie (1921-2017; king: 1927-1930, 1940-1947) will be present, as a child, almost every year in Mamaia and Constanța: “Mihai's seaside vacations were hosted, until 1927, by the royal pavilion in the Port of Constanța, a pavilion that under the influence of Queen Maria had become the ‘Queen's Nest’. In the summer and autumn of 1926, coming to closely supervise the interior design of the residence in Mamaia, the Queen stopped for a few days at the pavilion in the port, enjoying the presence of her grandson: ‘We got off our train to have breakfast in the pavilion, where little Micky is, having a cold. But he was cheerful, full of fun and in a good mood, happy that we were with him’”, records Queen Maria in her notes (Cornea, 2021¹: 229).

His presence is recorded in the pages of the press, including during the 1930s, when his father was king; he also accompanied him to the Romanian Navy Day ceremonies or other public events that took place on the Romanian coast.

“One of the most beautiful summers that Michael spent in Mamaia seems to have been, without a doubt, the one in 1928, when his grandmother, Queen Maria, Aunt Ileana and Sitta's Greek relatives were with him for a few days. Always present with Michael, Princess Elena dedicated all her time and energy to his education, as King Michael himself confessed: ‘My mother, Princess Elena of Greece, was the one who took care of my education during the first years. She preferred the formation of character according to the English system, which was much more flexible, to the strict German discipline’. Princess Elena seemed to enjoy this little corner of heaven equally, surrounded by her mother, sisters, cousins, and grandchildren from abroad, even if she sometimes drew the reproaches of Queen Maria, dissatisfied that ‘the Greek relatives continued to swarm around Elena's house, forming two royal camps and transforming Michael, the future King of Romania, into a little Greek’. Even so, the preserved photographs betray the happiness and tranquility that reigned in the small house by the sea...” (Cornea, 2021¹: 235).

King Carol II in Constanța. Official Speeches

During the ten years of his reign, King Carol II (1893-1953; king: 1930-1940) visited Constanța every year – preferably in the summer, on occasion of the celebrations for Romanian Navy Day. Each time, he gave speeches in which he emphasized the need to modernize the military and merchant fleet – or the city of

Constanța, including the construction of a royal residence here or participation in various inaugurations –, as can be seen from the examples below.

The Reply of His Majesty the King

Mr. Rear Admiral,

I believe it is almost unnecessary to renew to you, on this day of great celebration for the country and of special celebration and recollection for the Romanian Royal Navy, the love I bear to this element of national defense.

Out of conviction, and on the other hand out of a love that binds me to My navy by the fact that I had the good fortune to stand at its head for several years, I am urged at any moment to take special care of it. In our naval development, on the one hand there is a financial issue – which none of us can consider ourselves completely in control of – and on the other hand there is the issue of personnel training, both from a technical and tactical point of view, and especially from a point of view of the seafaring spirit.

I was prompted by this thought when I felt the duty of sending you that amount, to allow the base ship to be transformed – perhaps definitively – into a training ship, so that it can take our young generation of sailors on the waves of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

For, admitting the old French saying ‘c’est en forgeant qu’on devient forgeron’, only by sailing can you become a navigator. The results of the several voyages that have been made in recent years have been for Me the most obvious proof that in the personnel of the Romanian crew there is that spirit and that great love, without which no navy can exist.

I can assure My navy today that I take care of them and that as soon as there are possibilities, another effort will be made which will have to be decided to include two parts.

The first part is that beautiful issue, which has been dragging on for several years and which I am convinced that My government will do its utmost to resume and bring to a successful conclusion, is the issue of the naval base, a base without which our navy cannot survive. The second part, more difficult, is the increase in the number of units, so that, even if today there are difficulties, even if today the possibility of fulfilling their mission in peacetime, that is, war preparation, is reduced to the simplest expression, I hope that My beloved sailors can look to the future with perfect confidence, assuring them that I will be the one who will always watch over and defend their interests and those of our navy.

With this thought, I raise my glass asking you to shout with Me ‘Long live our navy!’ (Prolonged cheers). ([Carol II], Răspunsul Majestății Sale, 1933: 1).

Visits of His Majesty the King to Constanța

Constanța, 17 August

Yesterday, after the banquet in Mamaia, the Sovereign visited the city hall of Constanța, where Mayor Grigorescu presented him with the plans and projects for the modernization of the city.

Accompanied by Mayor H. Grigorescu, he Sovereign then visited the municipal casino, leaving on foot to the port, to the royal train. The Sovereign made some observations, including the extension of the seaside boulevard to Tataia, the paving of the casino terrace and the activation of the works to consolidate the banks. H.M. the King expressed at the same time his desire that a bust of Queen Elizabeth be erected on the seaside boulevard [it was placed in 1937, work of the Dobrudjan sculptor Ion Jalea], on an anacramente extending into the sea.

At parting, he promised Mayor Grigorescu that he would take the city under royal protection.

AT THE EXPORT SLAUGHTERHOUSE

In the morning, M.S. The King went to the export slaughterhouse whose construction works are in progress – the Sovereign, accompanied by Dr. Alex. Bâcleșanu, general veterinary zootechnical inspector, inspected in detail the works carried out so far, taking a close interest and receiving explanations from Mr. Bâcleșanu. On this occasion, the Sovereign made observations on the completion works and gave plans in this regard. He also inquired about our cattle economy, the valorization of animal products, export, etc. (xxx Vizitele, 1934: 10).

After the Visit of His Majesty the King to Constanța

The Sovereign Took an Interest in the Needs of the City.- A Royal Residence in Constanța

Constanța, August 19

The traditional celebrations of the sea and navy have always been honored with the high presence of His Majesty the King. This year, however, an unusual event occurred on occasion of the festivities. Whereas until now the Sovereign would leave the city in the evening, or at most the next day, with the exception of last year, when he was detained here by the illness of Grand Voevod Michael, this year His Majesty stayed in Constanța for three days, showing from the beginning a special interest in Constanța and the problems related to its prosperity and development, and especially our seaport,

Together with Minister Sasu, Mayor Horia Grigorescu and the assistant mayors Vulcan and Huhulescu, His Majesty the King visited, on the third day, the construction sites and works in the city, including the quarries and the export slaughterhouse, even going to the city hall, casino, etc.

On this occasion, the Sovereign made fair observations of the plans presented by Mr. Mayor of the municipality Grigorescu. What's more, Mr.

Grigorescu was received by the Sovereign at the Royal Pavilion in the port, where he presented all the plans related to the transformation of the port and the city.

For 2 and a half hours, the discussions around these future problems lasted. The problem of water and the consolidation of the banks, which promise to soon make Constanța an island, the sewerage, the arrangement of the beaches and especially the transformation and widening of the Mamaia beach, whose plans were completely changed following the observations made by the Sovereign, did not escape His Majesty the King. Upon Mayor Grigorescu's observation that everything that was done during his mayoralty was achieved from the income brought in by taxes on oil, taxes that are intended to be passed on to the municipality of Ploești, the Sovereign promised his protection of the city, even expressing his desire to make Constanța a royal residence, just as King Carol I had there before the war (xxx După vizita, 1934: 4).

Inauguration of the Export Slaughterhouse in Constanța
The Course of the Ceremonies.- Speech by Mr. V.P. Sassu, Minister of Agriculture.-
Speech by His Majesty King Carol II

As we announced in the previous issue of the newspaper, the solemn inauguration of the export slaughterhouse in the city of Constanța took place on Sunday. On the eve, the members of the government and guests from the capital arrived by train at 10.40 pm. His Majesty the King arrived in the town at 10.10 am by a royal train, pulling directly in front of the 'Queen's Nest' in the port. When he got off the train, members of the government and the heads of civil and military authorities were present. Mr. Scarlat Huhulescu, the Mayor [guarantor] of the municipality, welcomed the Sovereign with the traditional bread and salt, wishing him a 'welcome'. A company from the Royal Navy gave the honors and the military band played the Royal Anthem. The Sovereign, accompanied by members of the government and officials, then got into the car, heading for the slaughterhouse.

Constanța in celebration

Since the day before, Constanța had put on the chosen clothes for the celebration. The honor that the Sovereign does to the city is rewarded by the participation of thousands of citizens. All the breath in a tumult of joy stirred at the command that commanded 'Honor to the King'. On the highway that leads from the city barrier to the seaside resorts, right up to the entrance to the slaughterhouse, a carpet of grass was laid. 500 m in front of the monumental edifice, a triumphal arch awaited H.M. the King. Arriving in front of it, H.M. cut the tricolor ribbon. Throughout the journey, the Sovereign and the entire convoy were accompanied by endless cheers, impressive declarations of love from thousands of citizens. The city streets, the windows of the houses, decorated with greenery and national barks, were bustling with people. The tricolor everywhere, as on great holidays.

(...)

Speech of His Majesty the King

His Majesty the King gave the following speech:

“In the economic development program of our country, the slaughterhouse that we are inaugurating today is a key pawn, meant so that, through its channel, the products of our soil can be transported across the borders. As the Minister has shown, it will play a primary role.

For Me, however, it also means another stage in our development, it means that we have all understood that agriculture, as it has been carried out until today, can no longer be carried out from today onwards.

Living on raw materials is no longer possible.

We must not only be consumers of our products, but we must become transformers of these products, to further elevate and strengthen our economy.

With these feelings, I came with full satisfaction, especially to inaugurate this slaughterhouse today, which I wish, with all My heart, to be what it should be, that is, a fulcrum of our national economy”.

HM THE KING VISITS THE NEW SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The Sovereign then visited the halls of the new slaughterhouse. The reception commission composed of Messrs. Cicero Gorciu, G. Ionescu-Brăila, I. Fianu, C. Grigoriu, Bâcleșeanu, and Florea Stănciulescu gave the Sovereign the necessary clarifications, revealing the systems perfected by the sacrifice and conditioning of the various products, which, apart from meat, remain from the animals.

*

Upon exiting the great hall, little Elisabeta Lupu handed the Sovereign a bouquet of flowers.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

At the entrance to the great hall, there is a bronze inaugural plaque fixed to the right wall, at the head of which stand face to face, the figures of His Majesty King Carol II and Prince Mircea the Elder, between which appear the royal insignia and those of Dobrogea.

The founding inscription follows (xxx Inaugurarea, 1936: 11).

The Great Maritime Celebrations in Constanța

The Banquet on the Ship ‘King Carol’.- Speech of His Majesty the King

The Speech of His Majesty the King

Mr. Minister, Gentlemen,

It is also an unspeakable joy for Me to be able to celebrate this Navy Day under the new auspices of a State body, which will have the exclusive care of this branch of national activity, the new Ministry of Air and Navy.

In My speech last year, I indicated this necessity as one of My long-cherished desires. Today I am happy that it has been fulfilled and to note that it has begun to bear fruit.

This ministry, which began modestly and which I have the pleasure of announcing today, will be completed by the transfer of the direction of ports and water communications from the Ministry of Communications to that of the Navy, will be called upon, I am sure, to strengthen and develop our navy, as I have conceived it, as a unique organism of national prosperity.

Today, we can say that we are celebrating for the first time, here, the celebration of the unified navy of the Romanian country. We are not talking here about the Merchant Navy and the Navy of War, but we are talking about the Navy, and it is not the celebration of navies, but the celebration of sailors.

The sailor spirit, which requires a special education, which makes anyone who has passed through the Navy become and remain a conscious citizen and useful to his country, is the spirit that I want to reign in both the Merchant Navy and the Navy of War.

Our navy has gone through countless hardships, it has gone, I can say, through years of sorrow. Starting today, I affirm – and I will take care that this is a reality – that our navy has stepped onto the path of prosperity, of its increase and strengthening.

The attempts that have been made, modestly, today are beginning to develop more and more, in the realm of the merchant navy, the acquisition of those first ships a few years ago, and next year the bringing of two new passenger ships, which will bear the names of “Transylvania” and “Bessarabia”, in order to carry thus the pride of our united provinces across the seas and lands.

This development, which began as a trade marine, will continue from today – I can affirm – also with the war navy.

It is an expensive navy, yet we need it.

What specific ships will be purchased I do not have the possibility to indicate here.

But I can affirm again that our navy will increase in the years to come.

I also have the joy of announcing that an old project – which I know is dear to all sailors’ souls –, the famous naval base, will begin to be realized.

This is the good news that, on this holiday, I can bring to My sailors, to whom – I think it is almost superfluous to repeat – My soul is so strongly attached and who can count on My full care at any moment.

With all the love of My soul I raise my glass to the increase and strengthening of the navy and especially to the health of My sailors.

(The last words of His Majesty the King were covered by loud applause and ovations.) (xxx Marile serbări, 1937: 1).

Speech of His Majesty the King at the Navy Celebrations.

At the Navy Celebrations, Which Took Place on Tuesday, in Constanta, His Majesty King Carol II Delivered the Following Speech at the Banquet on the Ship 'Bessarabia'

MR. MINISTER, DEAR COMRADES,

The love I bear to our Navy is no secret to anyone, a love that this year I wanted to affirm even more by enrolling My beloved Son in the ranks of the Royal Navy. As you said very well, this past year was a difficult one for our Navy; It was a year that marked real progress, both from a material and a moral point of view.

Our entire conception began to move towards the idea that the navy is not just a toy, because the navy really plays a primary role in our organization, both from the point of view of national defense and from that of our prestige and commercial expansion.

For me, there is one fact that dominates all the others: the arrival of the new "Training Ship".

I have spoken in past years of that famous spirit that created our navy today. Through the arrival of the new ship "Mircea", I hope to see a renewal of the spirit, a strengthening of the seafaring faith and a possibility that our sailors, sailing more on the waters, can affirm their capacity and virtues before the whole world.

From the point of view of national defense, the efforts that have been made to equip the navy show that those who have the responsibility of affairs in this country are determined to strengthen it – to strengthen it as much as our means allow – alongside its big sister, the land army.

Closely linked, the three elements of national defense, the land army, the navy and the air force, are aware that, on the great day of the call, they will be at their duty with all their souls. The example of those of the past, of those whom we have had the mind to commemorate today, is a guarantee to us of this soul and this impetus of all the defenders of the borders.

This defense of the borders, which must be in the soul of every Romanian, not only of those who wear the military uniform, a faith of steel, must form an unshakable rock of all Romanian souls, that what is Romanian cannot be given, that what is Romanian will be defended, and, more than this, if someone is a lover of peace, he must know that the borders once furrowed, cannot be changed without a danger of world cataclysm. I know that this is the faith of all those true patriots, who live within our natural borders.

I know that this is also the faith of our sailors, who will know, the moment we are threatened, to do their full duty, and with the thought that, by defending our borders, we are defending the entire human civilization.

With this thought, bowing before those who sacrificed their lives for the glory and future of our nation, I raise my glass to those who tomorrow, if necessary, will defend it, and if not, will always know how to keep the Romanian flag and prestige high and proud.

Long live the Royal Navy! (Prolonged cheers and applause) (xxx Cuvântarea, 1939: 1).

Signs of Our Gratitude in Perpetuating the Memory of Our Ancestors

At the beginning of the 1990s, in Constanța publications, I sketched a few pages – among the first, after the Second World War, in the Dobrudja area – about the personality and place in the history of Romanians (Lascu, 1991: 3) and Dobrudja (Lascu, 1991¹: 3) of Ion C. Brătianu (1821-1891) (when I had the chance to organize and open a photo-documentary exhibition: “as far as we know, the only event of this kind initiated in the country on the occasion of the 170th anniversary of his birth and the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of the great Romanian patriot” – Lascu, 1991²:); respectively, a few years later, about the connections of Ionel Brătianu (1864-1927) with the area of Romania at the Sea; also in that year, the proposal was made “that the memory of the great political man of modern Romania, Ion C. Brătianu, be immortalized by attributing his name to a locality in Constanța County” (Lascu, 1993: 2); and in May 1998, we pointed out that “Dobrudja, especially – to whom King Carol I constantly manifested his attachment –, must recover their historical values, giving the Captain of 1877 the due honor; one of the large and well-managed communes of Dobrudja – such as Cumpăna or Comana, for example – should dispute the primacy in bearing the name of Carol I, the issue being, of course, not political sympathies, but national gratitude”.

Usually, in a democratic state, in which the components of civil society constitute its skeleton, the initiatives to reveal the personality of some ancestors, fellow citizens with special merits in various fields, fall not so much to the state – as in the case of a totalitarian regime – but to various categories of citizens and apolitical, socio-cultural or even administrative institutions. That is why, a year ago, the Asociația Cultural-Istorică Dobrudjană „România de la Mare” [Dobrudjan Cultural-Historical Association “Romania by the Sea”] from Constanța proposed, in the pages of this daily newspaper, that every year, on November 23 – the day the civil and military authorities entered the city, in 1878 – *Ziua Recunoștinței Constanțenilor* [the Day of Gratitude of the People of Constanța] be marked under the perpetual reminder IN MEMORIAM ILLUSTRUM CIVIUM TOMITANORUM, a proposal that unfortunately did not find the expected echo from the municipal authorities of Constanța. The only manifestations as such were limited to the Association adding four memorial plaques to the emotional heritage of the Citadel as well as to the launch, also in *Cuget liber newspaper*, of a vain appeal for the erection of the bust of the first prefect of Constanța County (1878-1881), Remus N. Opreanu (xxx 1992: 40).

We therefore take the liberty of continuing to sensitize the factors of power, having the certainty that the public opinion of Dobrudja – in particular the people of Constanța – is in consensus with the need for the ancestors to be honored in this corner of the Romanian country at the level of a contemporary civic spirit, of

European extraction, so much proclaimed otherwise. First, we reiterate the proposal that the undersigned previously made in an institutionalized county framework, namely that the memory of the great political man of modern Romania, *Ion C. Brătianu*, be immortalized by attributing his name to a locality in Constanța. At the appropriate time, we argued that the best choice would be the commune of 23 August, which, however, was assigned the so-called Unirea name. We express the hope that a patriotic mayor will be found whose locality will be proud of the name of one of the founders of modern Romania, as was done to Cuza Vodă, Nicolae Bălcescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu and Remus Opreanu – personalities who had such a beneficial influence on national and local history during the time of Ion C. Brătianu.

On the other hand, in 1990, on the occasion of the first celebration of National Day, a proposal was also made that streets in Constanța should bear the names of great patriots who identified themselves with the realization of the ideal of national unity, a proposal that was also appropriated at the time, but which was not put into practice, for reasons, we like to believe, purely bureaucratic and technical. This is why we believe that the current Local Council, the mayor would have nothing to object to some arteries in the city (at that time they were also nominated – Poporului Street, the Prelungirea [Extension] of 1 Mai Boulevard, portions of Aurel Vlaicu Boulevard) perpetuating the memory of some symbolic figures of the perpetrators of the Great Union, representing both the historical provinces and the Old Kingdom – namely *Iuliu Maniu*, *Pantelimon Halippa*, *Iancu Flondor*, *Take Ionescu*, and *Alexandru Averescu*.

It would have been, on the part of the people of Constanța, another testimony of their respect for the sacrifices of their ancestors, instilling in the younger generations, and in this reparative way – with significant civic and moral implications – the feeling of belonging to a history with rich patriotic traditions, in which personal sacrifices were put at the service of strengthening the unity of the Nation, of the prosperity of the Romanian State. It would be yet another reminder of some dominant aspects of Romanian history in a Europe increasingly concerned with recovering the national values of each people in the perspective of integration into a vast family, in which each member can rightly be proud of their exceptional personalities of European dimensions.

Ion C. Brătianu and Dobrudja

As I have shown, Dobrudja – this ancient Romanian province between the Danube and the Sea – returned to the territorial space of our state after the War of Independence, a direct result of the sacrifices and heroism of the young national army on the anti-Ottoman battlefield, but also – equally – of a favorable international (European) context, which was correctly intuited by the government of King Carol I, respectively by Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu (Cantacuzino, 2014: *passim*; Todea, 2011: *passim*; Lascu, 1991: 1, 3, 1991²: 3).

Indeed, in the years 1877-1878, Ion C. Brătianu had – alongside other politicians, including Mihail Kogălniceanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time – a political attitude equally permeated by patriotism and a sense of reality, the issue of Dobrudja (closely linked to that of Bessarabia, Eastern part of Moldova incorporated in 1812 into the Russian Empire) being widely debated in Parliament, in the press, and in diplomatic conciliations. During parliamentary debates, Ion C. Brătianu repeatedly supported the need to pursue a pragmatic policy, which would take into account the attitude of the European Powers, favorable to Russia's territorial expansion towards the Danube Mouths, the recognition of Independence itself being conditioned by the cession of the three Bessarabian counties in the north of the Delta: under these conditions, when the balance of power was visibly tilted in favor of Russia, the defense and promotion of Romania's national interests required the reintegration of Dobrudja within the borders of the Country, Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu bringing historical, strategic, and political arguments before the members of the Legislative Bodies, some of whom did not understand the significance of the reintegration of Dobrudja into the Motherland.

In Ion C. Brătianu's vision, Romania's historical right to the territory between the Lower Danube and the Black Sea appears to be indubitable, undisputable. Being a long historical period in the path of Asian invasions, this territory colonized by Trajan belonged to the Romanians who "drove the Tatars and possessed Dobrudja", the Bulgarian rule being random. "I challenge anyone to come up with a single document to prove that Dobrudja was part of the Bulgarian state. Turkey came at the beginning of the 15th century to take it from us with the sword and now that it has been taken back from Turkey, it has been taken again with the help of Romania's arm. Let us not be told that Dobrudja belonged to Bulgaria – said Ion C. Brătianu in September 1878, from the tribune of the Romanian Senate; WE POSSESSED IT WITH OUR BLOOD, WE LOST IT WITH THE SWORD AND NOW IT HAS RETURNED TO US AGAIN WITH THE SWORD!" (Brătianu, 1932: 102-103).

Among the arguments with pragmatic value invoked by the Prime Minister in favor of Dobrudja, the one regarding the necessity of the country's access to the sea (after the loss of the three counties in the northern Danube Delta) is pertinent, because "by taking Dobrudja we open a gate through which we can relate to the whole world and to the West, towards which you say you have all your aspirations" (he was addressing those who feared the expansion of Russia's influence, by accepting Dobrudja). He was convinced of the strategic importance of Dobrudja for Romania's defense against the Slavic neighbors who surrounded it to the northeast and south, as well as for the stronger imposition of the Romanian State, having Dobrudja, before the European Great Powers: "Only then can Romania be of European interest, when we have the mouths of the Danube in our hands. But when we do not have Dobrudja – *warned Ion C. Brătianu* – we will not have the mouths of the Danube and our country will no longer represent any European interest, then the first foreigner to come will

play his horse in Romania, according to his liking and those who have always wanted to swallow us will rule over the will of the Romanians”.

Ion C. Brătianu showed a constant interest in the economic development of Dobrudja, in improving the lives of its inhabitants. He started from the premise that “gentlemen, the lungs, the mouth through which Romania will breathe and breathe is the Romanian seaport, Chiustengea and Chiustengea will also be the fortress of Romania’s defense: with it we will have to relate to the whole world, through it we will have the greatest means of communication for our trade, especially when the neighboring powers will try to close our gates”. The pragmatic politician was also a lucid visionary, when he stated that “Dobrudja will be not only the garden of Romania, but of the whole of Europe, if only we were active and courageous”, and “Constanța is destined to become one of the first and best ports of the Black Sea”. In 1882, when the issue of buying back the railway line between Constanța and Cernavodă from the English company that had built it in the period 1858-1860 was raised, Ion C. Brătianu highlighted the multiple advantages for the Romanian State, for the wholesalers of the real estate, for this railway line to be bought back: “I am convinced that the railway to Constanța will develop our economic interests and will attract a large part of the traffic not only of the transports made in the East, but also of that from the West and that the traffic will increasingly grow more”.

Ion C. Brătianu also had notable concerns in the sphere of the administrative organization of the new region, noting, in 1883, that “there is no State in the world that has done more for an annexed province than we have done for Dobrudja”, a fact recognized “by the opinion of all the statesmen in Europe”. In his opinion, there were two causes that led to the undeniable progress in the modernization of Dobrudja – the sending here of honest and experienced senior civil servants and the granting by the state of an economic and fiscal regime favorable to the idea of progress: “we occupied Dobrudja with all our might, we gave it a lot of advantages; not only did we send the most distinguished, the most capable and the most honest people there, but we did not subject the people of Dobrogea to any taxes for years, while the poor Romanian villagers (from the rest of the counties of the country – ed.) paid taxes and heavy taxes to support Dobrudja” – declared Ion C. Brătianu in the Assembly of Deputies in November 1883. And here too, in February 1879, he had supported the acute need to help the people of Dobrudja, by opening a credit by the government “to come to the aid of the suffering people of Dobrudja. It is beyond our power to let those people die of hunger, who because of the war left their homes, and today, returning to their homes, have found nothing at home”.

Regarding the relationship between the native Romanian population and the foreign ones, Ion C. Brătianu has an honest historical vision, full of truthfulness: “In Dobrudja there are some Bulgarian colonies smaller than the colonies in Bessarabia, which proves that the main population of Dobrudja are Romanians, and not the Bulgarians who came later and settled here as colonists” – he said in September 1878. As for the native population, Ion C. Brătianu declared before the

deputies “that in Dobrudja we will not find any resistance. Have faith in the manhood of the Romanians, that they will know how to make a free Romania out of a country that was our ancestors’, out of a rich country that provides us with the mouths of the Danube” (Lascu, 2018: 142-143).

Indeed, the decades that followed proved Ion C. Brătianu’s premonition regarding the transformation of Dobrudja into a province with modern institutions and infrastructures, the interest of the Romanian State combined with the work of the Dobrudjans catapulting this province of the Country from a specifically oriental backwardness to a development typical of the end of the 19th century. This is why, upon his passing, on May 4, 1891, the pain of the Dobrudjans is natural, through the disappearance of Ion C. Brătianu, the Romanian region between the Danube and the Sea losing not only a former prime minister of the state among the most capable, but also a true father, co-author – together with Mihail Kogălniceanu and Prince Carol I – of the return of Dobrudja to Romania, of its reintegration into the natural area of the unitary evolution of the Romanian nation; thus, the sorrowful lines written from little town Ostrov by Elisa V. Pius in May 1891 appear all the more understandable and justified: “The Romanians of Dobrudja shed on the venerated tomb of the great patriot Ion C. Brătianu streams of endless tears, deep and inconsolable regrets, leaving History, this impartial judge of nations, to restore to him what human pride had tried to suppress” (Lascu, 1991³: 3).

Ionel Brătianu and Dobrudja

130 years ago (written material in 1994) (Lascu, 1994: 1,6), on August 20, 1864, saw the light of day the eldest son of Ion C. Brătianu – *Ion (Ionel) I.C. Brătianu* (Scurtu, 192: *passim*; Scurtu, Cojocaru, 2017: *passim*); Todea, 2014: *passim*; Noica, 2017: *passim*) –, a prominent personality and reader of modern Romania, a patriot from the pașoptist generation, whose name is linked to fundamental acts in the prosperity of our country in the second half of the last century.

Upon his death, in 1891, the leadership of the National-Liberal Party was taken over by his brother, Dimitrie Brătianu, and after his death, the following year, Dimitrie A. Sturdza was elected president.

The latter would co-opt, in 1897, as a member of the government led by him, for the first time, Ionel Brătianu, as Minister of Public Works (he was an engineer by training), which would constitute the beginning of one of the most prodigious political districts in Romania in the first third of our century.

A career that would be crowned – and would give it truly historical dimensions – through his subsequent activity as Prime Minister of Romania, in several periods: December 1908-December 1910, January 1914-January 1918, November 1918-September 1919, January 1922-March 1926. Starting in January 1909, Ion I.C. Brătianu was also elected president of the P.N.L., which he would lead with undisputed authority until his death – which occurred unexpectedly, on November 24, 1927, due to a “streptococcal angina with septicemia”.

Thus, prematurely, one of the most prominent men of our history passed away, the political personality whose unsullied patriotism guided him throughout his entire activity, his public conduct being forever offered as an example to those of our fellow citizens who take responsibility for the affairs of the City and the destinies, in general, of the Nation: "You are, gentlemen, the representatives of a people who are proud of their past and who must have great confidence in their future. Do not diminish the role that they must have in the world; be as modest as possible for yourself, do not be modest for the people you represent" – he addressed the parliamentarians in December 1919.

As for his father, for Ionel Brătianu, Dobrudja represented a corner of the Country for which he had a special affection. He visited it for the first time in 1879 "when, as a child, I accompanied my father to Tulcea who was making, as prime minister, his first official visit to these places. The evocation of this memory produces in me, as you can easily imagine", he confessed in a toast delivered in Tulcea, on September 20, 1910, a deep emotion.

For Ionel Brătianu, Dobrudja represents an old Romanian territory, which, in 1878, had been regained "through the victory of the Romanian armies", he is being aware that, in Dobrudja, "apart from historical rights, we also represent the element of culture and progress". As Minister of Public Works, Ion I.C. Brătianu pleads for the state to take over, in management, the construction works of the Port of Constanța, in 1899; the private entrepreneur – the Frenchman Hallier – by not honoring his contract, caused damage to the Romanian State, a reason for an energetic intervention by its authorities, led by the Minister of Public Works – Ion I.C. Brătianu.

In the same capacity, as a member of the Government, he pleads for the modernization of our Maritime Fleet, requesting Parliament to vote on credits in this regard, both for the purchase of ships (boats – as he called them), and for the training of navigation personnel abroad, with the idea of giving up the services of "foreign boat captains", so that "little by little we will introduce elements taken from the state navy, that is, Romanian elements", and "gradually we will seek to have only Romanian elements" – he expressed, in the Chamber, on May 6, 1898, the exigency of a national imperative of the era.

Towards the end of the first decade in 20th century], the issue of granting all constitutional political rights to the Dobrudjans would become very topical; on the one hand, the situation in the Balkans was deteriorating, on the other hand, the civic maturity of the Dobrudjans demanded the resolution of a constitutional provisionality that had lasted since 1878 (the Dobrudjans had no representatives in Parliament – until 1912). Highlighting, on December 13, 1908 – in the Response ([Brătianu], 2018: 698-720) to the traditional Message of the King, at the annual opening of the new Parliament's session –, the internal imperatives and the complexity of the international situation, the Minister of the Interior Ion I.C. Brătianu (and Prime Minister from December 27, 1908) pointed out that "We are not a Balkan State, *neither geographically nor politically* (our emphasis)".

As a result of granting political rights to the Dobrudjans, starting with 1908-1909, the foundations were laid – in Constanța and Tulcea – of national party organizations, Ion I.C. Brătianu would be present in Constanța in October 1910, when the National-Liberal Club was inaugurated; later, the speech delivered at the general assembly of the Constanța liberals, on November 20, 1911, was developed on the idea of revealing the liberal doctrine ‘By Ourselves’ [*Prin noi înșine*], of a party that “seeks to strengthen our (rectus – the Country [*Țara*]) in the economic realm, in order to be as little as possible – and to end up not being at all – tributary to others. He tends to *value our work and capital* (our emphasis). The former and future prime minister does not miss the opportunity to touch the local patriotism of those present, promising that “We [the liberals] want to make Constanța *a center of light and prosperity that will reflect like a lighthouse, far and wide, on the other shores of the Black Sea, Romanian life and civilization* (emphasis added)”.

And on another occasion, Ion I.C. Brătianu in Constanța: thus, on December 1, 1913, he pleads for the success of the social reforms projected by the P.N.L., confessing, in front of the “big landowners in Dobrudja”, that “there are *few Romanians across the Danube who are more connected to Dobrudja than to me* (our emphasis)”; here, however, is the text of the speech delivered before the liberal leaders in Constanța: “There are few Romanians across the Danube who are more connected to Dobrogea than I am.

I could say, in any case, that there is none from my generation, because we were still children when, during the first visit that Ion Brătianu made to Dobrogea, then re-established as Romanian, I had the happiness of accompanying him.

Since then, a secret and personal connection has been established in my soul, even as a child, with this land of the Romanian country. I then experienced the first moments of Romanian national life in Dobrogea and in the warmth of these feelings a lasting connection was made between me and Dobrogea.

Gentlemen, that is why it was perhaps even more natural for me to be one of the first who, when the Eastern crisis broke out, understood that our national duty was that from this crisis the borders of Dobrogea should be enlarged.

We, the National Liberal Party, have considered from the beginning that our demands had to be satisfied at any cost.

Thanks to the national consciousness, thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of our army, these demands are satisfied today. And today I am happy to find myself in an enlarged Dobrogea. And because you have new powers today, new duties are also imposed”; and in the toast given in his capacity, at the Casino, the celebrant would express beautiful appreciations to the people of Constanța: “Gathered in Constanța, the lung of our economic life, the chosen flower of the Romanian civilization, a focus from which we claim that this civilization radiates as intensely and as far as possible in a the East called to a new life”.

Ion I.C. Brătianu had a consistent patriotic attitude also vis-à-vis the need to reunite Dobrudja, by recovering, in 1913, its Southern part, dislocated by the Great

Powers in 1878. In his capacity as party president, he made the following declaration to the Senate, on September 5, 1913: "In the name of the national-liberal party, we declare that we are happy to vote for the annexation of the new territory, which consecrates the enlargement of the Kingdom and constitutes the reward for the great momentum of the nation and the army"; also, in his capacity as prime minister, when, in March 1914, the Law on the Organization of New Dobrudja [*Dobrogea Nouă*] was discussed in Parliament, he supported its adoption, highlighting its comprehensive functions towards the alien populations, but also the firmness of the Romanian legislator in ensuring the integration of the two sub-Dobrudja counties.

Devoted son to his people, Ionel I.C. Brătianu remains in national history as one of the most exemplary personalities, with an exemplary activity for the generations of Romanians who followed him, and for us, the people of Dobrudja, his memory demands all the more honor as he had such a special affection for the issues and fate of the region between the Danube and the Black Sea – Dobrudja.

Gheorghe I. Brătianu and Dobrudja

The great Romanian historian (Spinei, 1988: 91-267; Pentelescu, 2003: *passim*; Otu, Pentelescu, 2003: *passim*; Todea, 2014: *passim*) (January 28, 1898-April 23/24, 1953) was the son of Ionel I.C. Brătianu; graduate of the Sorbonne University (with a PhD in 1929), Professor of History at the universities of Iași (from 1920) and then Bucharest (from 1940), full member of the Romanian Academy (1942), director of the Institute of Universal History in Iași (1935-1940), respectively of the 'Nicolae Iorga' Institute of Universal History in Bucharest (1941-1947).

Specialist in the history of the Middle Ages and the history of the Black Sea. In terms of political activities, he will, naturally, be active within the National Liberal Party, from which he will form a dissidence – in the summer of 1930, after the accession to the throne of Carol II, whose follower he was –, as another separately/independent Liberal Party (in February 1938 he returns to the core of the National Liberal Party) (Gruber, 2013, *passim*). In the 1930s, the National Liberal Party (George Brătianu) was active in the socio-political life of Romania (Scurtu, 2003: *passim*), he will be present in Parliament, and his leader will manifest attitudes that campaigned for a rapprochement/alliance with Germany and against a rapprochement/alliance with the Soviet Union.

After August 23, 1944 – when Romania leaves the alliance with Nazi Germany, joining the United Nations Coalition – he will be isolated in the new social-political framework (Onișoru, 1999: 37-44); he will dedicate himself to scientific research – especially research on the history of the Black Sea –, in June 1948 he will be excluded from the new Romanian Academy, and in May 1950 he will be arrested and imprisoned without a trial; he will die in prison in Sighet on the night of April 23/24, 1953.

The materials below reflect his connections with the Romanian space between the Danube and the Sea, respectively with the recent history and the issue

of the Romanians (improperly called “colonists”) who were settled in the counties in the South of the region – Durostor and Caliacra, the so-called Quadrilater – many of whom were Vlachs (Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians) from the former Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire (respectively, from Ottoman Macedonia, incorporated in 1913 into Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Albania).

Hopes Coming from Macedonia
Prosperous Colonies of Macedonians in Quadrilater
A Vast Colonization Program

- Interview with Prof. George Brătianu, MP -

(...) “Of the four villages visited in detail (Uzungi, Orman, Tatar Atmagea, and Frașari), I will only talk to you about two, which I consider particularly characteristic”.

At Tatar Atmagea

Tatar Atmagea. Old village. The Macedonians [*Sic!* -- it’s about Vlachs, *recte*: Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians] settled there by purchasing real estate from the locals and especially from Turkish emigrants.

“The Aromanian colonists in Tatar Atmagea succeed through their sober life and through a strong vitality, manifested in abundance. The richness of the harvests and the intensive cultivation of the land call for the vigorous activity of the Aromanians in that village. I found elderly people, very elderly – who nevertheless condemn themselves with the robustness of young people. Please emphasize that these people, in their vast majority, were engaged in trade and shepherding until the present day, and now they are skilled, capable and passionate plowmen. Does this hasty, easy and complete transformation not reflect a rare spirit of initiative? But does not the case of the Aromanian from the village, who saved up penny by penny and built the mill with an electric motor, show the same spirit of initiative and a definite ability to keep up with the new times?

‘By Ourselves’

Frașari. The second village, in a completely different characteristic. New commune, barely two years old. Exclusively, Aromanian colonists and inhabitants of the Kingdom, especially from *Muntenia*.

The contrast between the two categories of inhabitants exists.

The Macedonians. I admit, they had difficulties – the difficulties of the beginning. They are proud that they overcame them. They formulate new plans. And to achieve them, they do not ask for outside help but rely exclusively on their own strength. I have the impression that if I had awakened their hope in help, perhaps they would have felt vexed. An unyielding “through ourselves”, Mr. Brătianu observes, laughing.

The colonists from the Kingdom. Brave, energetic, tenacious. But from their ranks, some were found to take advantage of our passage there and request our interventions in Bucharest. Which did not happen with the Aromanians.

The Current for Emigration in Romania

The Aromanians from Frașari spoke to me insistently about the wishes of those who remained in Greece to come to us. Moreover, only a small part of the 1200 emigrant families in Frașari actually came. The others are expected and the day after, some of their envoys have come to see if the installation is ready for them.

Speaking of the Frașari, I must add that many Macedonians from there have also passed through America (I spoke English with some of them), which explains, in part, their intrepidity and passion for modern means of work. In this latter regard, I will mention that although the agricultural routine of the Aromanian colonists is of recent date, the methods for cultivating the fields are, almost exclusively, among the most modern".

Extensive colonization

- A guiding control will be established over the political parties -

Mr. Prof. Univ. George Brătianu continued:

"Naturally, such elements must be received, encouraged, helped. When the Italians raise the issue of emigrating to Tripolitania, or when the Greeks urge them to emigrate to America, the Aromanians hesitate and only with difficulty decide, because their eyes are directed towards Romania. Energy, spirits of initiative, sobriety, applications for modernization and nationalism like those of the Aromanians eager to settle in our country, are necessary not only for the Quadrilater, but also for other lands. Therefore, a vast colonization program must be conceived and applied.

In the fall, we will establish a committee that will include figures from all political parties, and we believe that no refusal will be possible to our appeal, the issue having such a precise and highly national character.

Immediate measures

I reminded Mr. Brătianu that there are some problems that require immediate resolution. Thus, the Central Consumer and Production Cooperatives gathered in Constanța, Murfatlar, and Caraomer [Negru Vodă] (in the center of the colonization region) 5,000 cubic meters of timber, necessary for the colonists for construction, as well as about 700 thousand roof tiles, which the House of Proprietors cannot distribute, because it does not have the necessary funds to cover the expenses made by the cooperatives. In particular, there are about 300 houses there, built up to the roof, which will be ruined by the weather if they are not covered before the arrival of winter.

I know these needs, the unsolved of which is mainly due to inheritances”, Mr. George Brătianu answered me. “In a few days, I will return from Iași and I will intervene urgently, so that what is urgently needed and everything that is possible to satisfy is satisfied in the shortest possible time” (Miciora, 1927: 1).

For the Macedonian colonists
- Saving the 300 uncovered dwellings -
Intervention of Prof. George Brătianu, MP

The sad state of affairs, which we were forced to reveal yesterday, following the letter of Prof. Muzaca (of Vlach origin / Balkan Romanian – our note), had beneficial consequences. The appeal, that measures be taken without delay, at least regarding the urgent needs of the Macedonian colonists, was heard, taken into account and – what is most important – the beginning of its satisfaction is signaled.

Thus, we are given the information that Mr. Chițoiu, the director of colonization at the Central House of Proprietary Affairs, intervened for the urgent acquisition of a loan of 20 million lei, necessary for the payment of lumber and tiles, which the Central Cooperatives collected in Dobrudja and Cadrilater, for the completion of the 300 homes of the colonists, exposed to ruin, if they are not covered and closed before the arrival of bad weather.

Mr. G. Cipăianu, Undersecretary of State for Agriculture, approved the intervention and personally, is interested in the rapid acquisition of the aforementioned loan (Mic., 1927: 7).

After the Disaster at Tatar-Atmagea
The Impressions of Mr. Gh. Brătianu

Mr. Gheorghe Brătianu visited the Tatar-Atmagea locality where a fire destroyed numerous households, leaving the settlers on the roads.

To one of our editors, who asked for his impressions of this visit, Mr. Gheorghe I. Brătianu said:

“Learning of the disaster that struck the flourishing households of the Macedonian settlers in Tatar Atmagea, whom I had seen a few years ago, I accepted the proposal of my friends, Mr. Constantin Hentzescu and Victor Papacostea, former deputies elected in the counties of New Dobrudja [*Dobrudja Nouă*], and I went to see the effects of the disaster on the spot.

Through an unfortunate confluence of circumstances – the men taken to another commune for elections, the strong wind blowing straw from house to house, the lack of any effective means of extinguishing the fire in the locality – the effects of the fire in these times of drought were truly catastrophic.

More than half of the houses were destroyed. Barns with corn, wheat and oats were completely burned; stables were reduced to ashes, with cattle all. The Macedonian [*Sic!*: Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians] colonists had built solid settlements, which I had visited seven years ago, at their beginnings, when I had already spoken

to your newspaper about this matter. Today only a few collapsed walls remain. I remember the image of an old colonist, with his characteristic bearing, stunned like a stone wall on the ruins of his house, his gaze lost in the distance, unable to utter a word. The same pitiful sight on the hardworking Turkish inhabitants, whose farms were hit just as hard.

What is more regrettable, however, is the fact that we were the first, after more than eight days, to take an interest in the fate of these unfortunates. No help to put out the fire, no authority is taking care of the victims. Moreover, as seven years ago, I found the same characteristic trait in the colonists: the pride of only asking for what they believe is their due. Settled without the help of the state, even in the hour of misfortune they do not ask the administrative bodies for more than that minimum of solicitude to which their work and spirit of enterprise give them a full right. I have once again confirmed my opinion that our nation has nothing but to gain by placing these elements of a constructive and stubborn nationalism, at all borders as well as in all sectors of economic struggle. Too much time has passed anyway. There are problems that demand their solution more and more urgently. It is a true state crime not to deal with all the care with the elements that can form a national elite in the economic life of the country. Let us not pay too dearly, in soon, for the effects of the inexperience and carelessness of recent times" (xxx, 1934: 6).

Romania Between Germany and the Balkans

(...) I must touch on one more issue that may be misinterpreted: that of the counties of Southern Dobrudja [*Dobrudja de Miază Zi*]. Annexed by Romania in 1913, at the end of the Balkan War, reoccupied by the Bulgarians during the war, together with Old Dobrudja [*Dobrudja Veche*], from 1916-1918, returned to Romania in 1919, after long discussions at the Peace Conference, the rights of the Romanian state over this territory seemed to contravene the strict application of the ethnic principle.

It has been said that Romania's rule over the territory, which extends from Silistra to Balchik, would be only the result of strategic needs, or of the policy of balance between the Balkan states, before the European war.

Thus posed the issue – and there are still quite a few who do not conceive it otherwise – it no longer seems sufficiently justified today in relation to the possible claims of our Southern neighbors.

However, two considerations of particular importance are ignored: firstly, that this territory, inhabited at that time mostly by Turks and Tatars, was offered to us in 1878 before the establishment of the independent Bulgarian state, together with Varna and Ruse [*Rusciuc*], and if Romania did not accept it, it was because it did not want to lose its right to Southern Bessarabia through a transaction, which Russia demanded in return.

Secondly, the Romanian population of Macedonia, passing in 1913 under the rule of the Balkan states, more nationalistic than the Ottoman Empire, it was appropriate to give the Romanian state the opportunity to settle on its territory these

elements that it had taken care of until then, from an ecclesiastical and cultural point of view. In fact, although not to the extent that it should have been, there were colonizations of Aromanians in this region between 1925 and 1935 with interesting results for its economic prosperity. Moreover, following the massive population exchanges determined by the Treaty of Lausanne in the Balkan Peninsula, there is no other solution left for the problem of these minorities scattered from the main mass of the Romanian nation and destined for a slow but fatal denationalization over time (Brătianu, 1939: 2).

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DIPLOMACY AND CANDIDATES FOR BULGARIAN RULER 1877-1879

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Abstract

The present study presents the diplomatic negotiations and the main candidates for a future Bulgarian prince. The positions of the Great Powers regarding the form of state government and the place of the monarch in it are outlined. The main foreign and Bulgarian candidates for the throne are presented, as well as the election itself. The main purpose of the study is to trace and analyze the diplomatic conversations, the candidacies, and preferences of the Great Powers for the election of a Bulgarian prince. To achieve this goal, problem-thematic and problematic chronological methods are used. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the election of a Bulgarian prince was a decision of the Great Powers, with the Russian Empire playing a key role in this process. The Bulgarian people were kept away from these negotiations and subsequently a candidacy was imposed on them to accept.

Key words: Bulgaria, diplomacy, prince, government rulers.

Introduction

One of the crucial issues that were discussed in diplomatic circles on the eve of the Bulgarian Liberation were about the form of state structure and the personality of the ruler. The republican ideas professed by L. Karavelov and V. Levski have been forgotten. Foreign diplomats and representatives of the Bulgarian political emigration perceived the monarchical form of government as the most suitable for the Bulgarian people. The Bulgarians, led by the memory of their medieval state tradition, also want to see a tsar at the head of their state.

On the question of the origin of the future ruler, the diplomats of the Great Powers declared their position that he should be a foreigner, because among the Bulgarians they did not see a prepared person for this exalted position. In the preliminary Treaty of San Stefano and the subsequent Congress of Berlin, the Bulgarians were given the opportunity to elect their prince, who must be confirmed by the Sublime Porte, with the consent of the Great Powers. Nowhere is it written that the ruler must necessarily be a foreigner. But the condition that he should not be a representative of one of the functioning European dynasties suggests the desire that he should not be a Bulgarian, but a foreigner, and not from a high noble class.

The main goal of this study is to follow the diplomatic negotiations and the main candidates for Bulgarian monarch. To achieve it, historical sources from the

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Bulgarian periodicals, archival documents and memories of contemporaries have been studied. In the study, the problem-thematic and problem-chronological methods were used.

1. Foreign candidates for Bulgarian ruler

Until the election for Bulgarian prince was held, the names of several candidates were discussed in diplomatic circles and various organizations. Some of the most prominent are the Romanian prince Carol I, Valdemar of Denmark, the Serbian king Milan, the Montenegrin voivode Božo Petrovic, Prince Bibesko, the German ambassador in Vienna Prince Henry XXV.

After the signing of the Treaty of Berlin, the name of Prince Valdemar of Denmark was mentioned as a candidate, which was seen sympathetic to the future Minister of War P. Parensov. But too soon it was forgotten, because according to the treaty, the brother of the future Russian Empress and the son of the Danish king could not be Prince of Bulgaria (Parensov, 1909: 23-24).

Another name that was considered for the highest post in the newly liberated Bulgarian state, immediately after the end of the work of the Berlin Congress, was that of the Duke of San Donato, Pavel Demidov. His candidacy was supported by some circles in Russian society, because immediately before these events he held the post of mayor of Kiev (Zornitsa, July 27, 1878.) But this proposal is not serious, because subsequently, it was discussed neither in the press nor in the highest diplomatic circles.

A very current candidate is that of the Montenegrin voivode Božo Petrović, who was supported, especially by St. Petersburg circles, immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Berlin. The contender was a cousin of Prince Nikita, who was also considered a Bulgarian prince (Maritsa, October 6, 1878). The Slavophiles and a significant part of the senior military were agitating for Bozho Petrovich. Even the Minister of Defense D. A. Milyutin stood behind the candidacy, who saw in his person a guarantee for the future development of Bulgaria in the Slavic spirit (Radev, 1990:146; Milyutin, 1950:294). The Bulgarian press also pays serious attention to this candidacy. In the late autumn of 1878, it became relevant again and on this occasion the newspaper "Bulgarin" reported that according to a letter from Cetina, the candidacy of Božo Petrović again took a serious direction. *"This candidacy, which has been rejected so far, has again been brought to the stage by the Russian government. Already in Berlin it was proposed that Bozho Petrovich should become a Bulgarian prince, but he did not take him seriously, and the forces did not show attention."* (Bulgarin, November 30, 1878). The renewal of the candidacy of the Montenegrin voivode in November 1878 was dictated by complex diplomatic negotiations, in which some parameters were clearly outlined, such as the intransigence of the Sublime Porte in relation to a Russian candidate, implying Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov and Count N. P. Ignatiev (Bulgarin, November 30, 1878). At the beginning

of 1879, Božo Petrović continued to be one of the most controversial candidates, along with Prince Al. Battenberg (Maritsa, 26 January 1879).

The other serious candidate for the Bulgarian throne was the Romanian prince Carol I. He advertised his claims to the Bulgarian throne during the negotiations between the Russian Empire and Romania for the upcoming Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878). In his memoirs, Count N. P. Ignatiev states that Prince Karol diplomatically made a hint about his desire for the Bulgarian throne and his dream to devote himself to the creation of Bulgaria and its social structure. In the meeting with Count J. Bratianu confirmed and even encouraged these claims. From the words of J. Bratianu it is not clear the purpose of the election of Prince Carol, which he desired. N. P. Ignatiev concluded that in this way the liberal ministers wanted to remove him from the country, fearing his personal influence. His other assumption is that they seek to establish a personal union between Bulgaria and Romania.

In reply to hints and inquiries about the future Bulgarian prince, a diplomat declared that the Russian emperor did not yet have a candidate for Bulgaria, that the choice of the prince would depend on the population itself, and that if Prince Carol wished to run for office, he should draw the attention of the Bulgarian population to himself (Ignatiev, 1986:362).

The wishes of Prince Carol I to become Bulgarian ruler were also stated at the meeting between Count N. P. Ignatiev and the Romanian royal couple on January 20, 1878 (Ignatiev, 1986:362). Then they unequivocally expressed their desire to be called by the Bulgarians to rule Sofia.

In pursuit of his ambitions, the Romanian prince sought international support from the Great Powers and the Sultan. Proof of this is the correspondence between the Russian Imperial Commissar Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov and the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople Prince A. B. Lobanov-Rostovsky at the end of 1878. In a special telegram on December 14, the ambassador wrote that the Prince of Romania, through his envoy, expressed to the Sultan, the English, French, and Austrian ambassadors his desire to be elected Bulgarian prince. All of them gave their consent, except for the Austrian ambassador (Ignatiev, 1986). In his reply, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov firmly stated that the candidacy of Prince Carol I had no chance of success among the Bulgarian population.

Despite the indirect agitation on the Romanian side, the British diplomacy also lobbies for this candidacy, which wants to prevent Russian political influence in the Balkans through a Romanian-Bulgarian dualistic state. During the sessions of the Constituent Assembly in 1879, the English delegate Palgrave agitated some of the Bulgarian deputies to support the candidacy of the Romanian prince for the Bulgarian throne. In his memoirs, M. Balabanov describes in detail his meeting with the delegate, who exhorted him that the election of King Carol I would be good for Bulgaria and would be looked upon with a good eye by Western countries. On the very day of the election, the English delegate exhorted Dr. Tsankov to support the

candidacy of Prince Carol I. To these demands, the Bulgarian politician replied that in their choice they would trust Russia's proposals." (Radev,1990)

Along with the Romanian king, his brother Frederick Hohenzollern also appeared as a candidate for the Bulgarian throne. But his candidacy was declared inappropriate, one of the reasons being that he belonged to the ruling dynasties in Europe, and the other was that he was the brother of Prince Carol I.

In addition to the Romanian king, another of the Balkan rulers showed undisguised ambitions for the Bulgarian throne. This is the Serbian ruler King Milan, who dreams of becoming the head of a large South Slavic state. Russia supported this candidacy, and she always withdrew it when diplomatic negotiations for the Bulgarian prince became more complicated. Thus, in February 1879, in the final part of the debate, Russia again withdrew the candidacy of King Milan, and Russian diplomacy even sent Gen. M. Chernyaev and M. Lobaratich, the well-known Serbian engine, to Sofia and Tarnovo to influence the Bulgarian representatives in this direction (Zornitsa, Feb. 22, 1879). The "Golos" newspaper reacted to the candidacy of King Milan. In his article, he stated that the Serbian ruler was a tool of Austria and saw in him a threat to the Russian Empire and its policy in the Balkans. The goal of the Serbian king, according to the newspaper, was to annex Bulgaria to Serbia by temporarily renouncing the Serbian throne, appointing a provisional government, and after his election to the Bulgarian throne to be re-elected as a Serbian ruler (Maritsa Feb. 2, 1879). Despite all these shuttles and publications in the press, it was not possible to officially put forward the candidacy of King Milan, both on the Russian side and on the part of another of the Great Powers, and it can be assumed that it was used for smear during the diplomatic negotiations.

Knyaz A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov also declared his candidacy for the Bulgarian throne. It is popular among the Bulgarian population due to its activities in the structure of civil government. His positive is the fact that he is a representative of the Russian Emperor Alexander II, and the Bulgarians openly declare their desire for their ruler to be Russian. The ambitions of the prince were further fueled by the position of the Russian autocrat to give the Bulgarian population complete freedom in the election of a monarch. This decision of his was shared after the end of the Congress of Berlin, in the summer of 1878, and can be seen as an emotional move because of his decisions (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

In a letter dated August 14, 1878, to the Minister of War D.A. Milyutin, Prince A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov stated that the choice of a Bulgarian prince should not be left to chance and political intrigues. He suggests not to rush the withdrawal of the Russian army. The latter proposal is dictated by the idea of staying longer in the post of Russian imperial commissar and better preparing his candidacy. By letter dated August 21, 1878, the Minister of War informed the prince that it had been reported to official St. Petersburg. Regarding the candidacy of the Serbian king, Milan expressed the opinion that it had no real chances, because the Great Powers would not allow the creation of a strong and influential principality in the Balkans.

For the same reason, he considered that the Romanian king Carol I also had no prospects of success. Regarding the extension of the Russian occupation, D.A. Milyutin emphasizes that the international obligations arising from the Berlin Treaty must be respected (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

A strong move in the agitation of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov was that he stood behind the demands of the Bulgarians for a revision of the Treaty of Berlin and supported all actions conducted with the decisions on the national question. This increased his popularity, and he continued to report to St. Petersburg that it was not yet time for the election of a prince, due to unrest among the Bulgarians (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

A large part of the Bulgarian population also stood behind the candidacy of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov. In his face he sees his future prince. Indicative in this regard is the article by M. D. Tihchev from Tulcea in the newspaper "Bulgarin". In it, the author states that the personality of Prince Dondukov fully meets the expectations of the public for a Bulgarian ruler. His devotion to the Bulgarians, his activity in the organization of government, administration and army are emphasized. Its role in the unification of the Bulgarians in one country and the sharp reaction to the decisions of the Berlin Congress are emphasized (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

The candidacy of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov is the subject of comments from the European press. Everyone agrees that he has great popularity among the Bulgarian population and can easily win the elections for the throne. But in all the articles it is pointed out that the Great Powers will not approve this candidacy because it is of a Russian and defends the idea of a united Bulgaria (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

The ambition of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov to become a Bulgarian ruler won him many opponents. Most of the Russian officers in Bulgaria criticized the prince for his actions in defense of Bulgarian national interests and were dictated by his intentions to increase his influence among the Bulgarians. His work became the subject of criticism, as proof of this are the reports of Prince Al. Tseretelev and Prince A. B. Lobanov-Rostovsky. The critics were joined by some of the European governments, which quite officially expressed disappointment with the behavior of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

The campaign against the prince yielded results. According to official sources from European capitals, Emperor Alexander II ordered Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov to give up his ambitions. The result of this polemic is visible in the subsequent position of the prince, who express the opinion that the Bulgarian monarch should not be a Russian subject or a representative of the Russian Empire (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

Despite this retreat, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov did not lose hope for the Bulgarian throne. Proof of this is the time during which Alexander Battenberg's candidacy was imposed. To discredit the prince, he pointed out to D. A. Milyutin the fact that he did not belong to Eastern Orthodoxy and such a monarch could strengthen Austrian influence in Bulgaria (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

The hopes of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov to become a Bulgarian prince finally collapsed a few weeks before the election, after the explicit instruction of official St. Petersburg not to include any Russian subject in the election. But despite this, he makes attempts to postpone the choice in time. His last desperate attempt to get out of the situation with honor was related to his idea to invite the Bulgarian deputies to elect him as a prince, and he to give up voluntarily, arguing that the Great Powers would not accept this choice. But the subsequent Russian diplomatic intervention in the person of diplomatic agent Davydov prevented this senseless scenario (Indzhov, 2016:131-135).

The other popular name among Russians, conjugated for a future Bulgarian prince, is that of Count N. P. Ignatiev. It also appears in the newspaper controversy that touches on this issue, but openly neither the count himself nor anyone else officially nominates his candidacy. The Bulgarian people are ready to accept it unconditionally, and one of its most ardent supporters is St. Stambolov. On the eve of the royal election, at a meeting of Marno Pole, held on April 15, 1879, he proposed to the Bulgarian deputies to elect N. P. Ignatiev as prince. His arguments are as follows: *"Count Ignatiev, says St. Stambolov, is a wise and skilled diplomat, an experienced administrator and a statesman and he will be our mentor, our adviser, because we are all still young, inexperienced in politics and he will guide us in everything... With it, gentlemen, we will be able to acquire San Stefano Bulgaria more easily and earlier..."* (Marinov, 1992:83)

A large part of the Bulgarian deputies decided to support Count N. P. Ignatiev as a Bulgarian prince. But their passions were quickly cooled by a telegram from St. Petersburg, which recalled the imperial decision for a Bulgarian prince not to elect a representative of the Russian Empire (Marinov, 1992:84).

Shortly before the election of a Bulgarian prince, Prince Georgi Bibesco – a Romanian boyar, expert in military affairs, joined the race. He sent to the Bulgarian founders the brochure "Features from the life of Prince George Bibesco", which recommended him for the high post (Zornitsa, April 19, 1879). According to a report of the "Maritza" newspaper, the brochure is entitled "Candidate for the Bulgarian throne" and is signed by P. Gabrovets. (Maritsa, February 13, 1879) But even before this candidacy was officially announced, the name of Prince Bibesco had been conceived for the Bulgarian throne since the summer of 1878. *"Prince Bibesco's candidacy is pure fiction. It has never been offered, and if it is offered... It will not work. The Bulgarians want a Bulgarian prince and are struggling to succeed. Russia is against of their desires,"* writes the newspaper "Bulgarin" (Bulgarin, Aug. 20, 1878) But despite these correspondences, Prince G. Bibesco took his candidacy for Bulgarian prince too seriously. For agitation and popularization, immediately before the election as a Bulgarian prince, he spent considerable funds, which we read about in the memoirs of D. Marinov. The author says that to impose the candidacy of Prince G. Bibesco, a special envoy arrives in Tarnovo, who visits all prominent MPs. According to rumors, in the old Bulgarian capital, he carries with him more than 15-20 thousand Napoleons for bribing the representatives. D. Marin writes that his stay in Tarnovo

lasted more than a week. The turning point that put an end to the agitation of the envoy of Prince G. Bibesko was with P. Karavelova. The latter stated to him bluntly that this candidacy not only had no chance of success, but the deputies would not even entrust him with the royal stable (Marinov, 1992:82).

A serious candidate for the Bulgarian throne was the personality of Prince Reus. He was well acquainted with diplomacy and politics in the Balkans as a former German ambassador in Constantinople, and he was given an advantage by the fact that he was related to the Prussian and Russian imperial families (The Daily Telegraph, December 21, 1878). During the unofficial discussion of the candidates by the Bulgarian founders, the older Bulgarians preferred Prince Royce, because as an older man they found him more experienced in diplomacy and more capable of governing the Bulgarian principality (Zornitsa, January 25, 1879). Nevertheless, until the beginning of February 1879, nothing positive was known about the candidacy of Prince Reuss among the highest political circles, and during the election itself, his advanced age was pointed out as a disadvantage of his candidacy.

Prince Alexander Battenberg's candidacy appeared just before the Congress of Berlin (Zornitsa, June 29, 1879). As the nephew of the Russian Empress Maria Alexandrovna, he is associated with the Russian imperial court and the ruling dynasty, from where the last, decisive word in the election of the Bulgarian monarch is expected. He was the son of the German prince Alexander von Hesse and had family ties to the English royal family and the Polish aristocracy. It is said that Alexander was prepared for this post by Russian diplomacy already during the Russo-Turkish war.

Since the fall of 1878, Alexander Battenberg's candidacy has been gaining popularity. In all press reports, his name is invariably present. One of the advocates is the Russian emperor. On September 9, 1878, a meeting was held in Livadia, which was attended by Prince A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov and D.A. Milyutin. One of the questions is about the candidate for the Bulgarian throne, which has not yet been decided. Emperor Alexander II supported the candidacy of Al. Battenberg, and Prince A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov considered that this election would not be warmly received by the Bulgarians, at whom it should be announced that a Russian subject would not be allowed to participate in the election (Milyutin, 1950:103).

Towards the end of the year, according to journalists, the main candidates are the Prince of Battenberg and Prince Reuss, because both have family relations with both the Russian Empire and Prussia. When the Bulgarians challenge these candidates, the personality of Alexander Battenberg is supported by the younger ones, who want a young and energetic man as prince (Zornitsa, January 25, 1879). During the debates in the Constituent Assembly, nothing has yet been clarified on the issue of the future Bulgarian prince. Even at the beginning of February 1879, information appeared that *"Prince Battenberg, who had recently been in Potsdam, announced that he would not accept the throne of Bulgaria."* (Zornitsa, February 1, 1879) But later the young prince changed his mind and became the official candidate of the Russian emperor. At

the end of March, the newspaper "Maritsa", referring to information from the "Morning Post", reported that Al. Battenberg accepted the candidacy for the Bulgarian throne, and that his election was recovered (Maritsa, March 20, 1879).

2. Bulgarian Candidacies for Prince

Among the many candidates for the Bulgarian throne, there are also Bulgarians. The elevation of a Bulgarian candidate for prince, regardless of the agreements reached in Berlin, was also a topic of diplomatic negotiations. During the frequent contacts between the British, Russian and Turkish governments, England repeatedly spoke in favor of the idea of raising "*some excellent Bulgarian to princely dignity*" (Zornitsa, November 16, 1878) and openly opposed the candidacies of the Serbian prince, Count N. P. Ignatiev and Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov.

Immediately after the end of the Berlin Congress, the name of Stefan Bogoridi's son, Aleko Bogoridi, a man with some managerial experience and diplomatic practice from Vienna and Paris, was launched for Bulgarian prince. His candidacy found a worthy reflection in the press of the time. The newspaper "Zornitsa", reprinting the Western comments as early as June 29, mentions "*that at the suggestion of Russia, Aleko Pasha Bogoridi, son of the late Kotel resident Stefanaki Beya, would be elected Prince of Bulgaria.*" (Zornitsa, June 29, 1878). In subsequent messages, Aleko Bogoridi and Prince Al. Battenberg are the most frequently mentioned candidates. In the direction of Aleko Bogoridi's desires and ambitions to become a Bulgarian prince, the negotiations between him and Prince A. B. Lobanov-Rostovsky in March 1879 for the post of governor of Eastern Rumelia testify. In Paris, the Russian diplomat goes to assess Aleko Bogoridi whether he has the qualities to be named as the Russian candidate. But his wife, listening attentively to the praises of the Russian prince, who pointed out that the Emperor of Russia highly valued his extraordinary qualities and had opted for him, said: "If His Majesty has such a good opinion of my husband's abilities, why does he not recommend him for Prince of Bulgaria?" Knyaz Lobanov gives an interesting explanation, pointing out that the post of Governor-General is more important, since Macedonia will be annexed at the first opportunity to the region of Eastern Rumelia, which will thus become the nucleus of the future whole of Bulgaria. In addition to Aleko Bogoridi, another representative of this influential family does not hide his ambitions for the royal throne. This is Emanuel Bogoridi – son of Nikola Bogoridi and Princess Konaki. His candidacy was not widely reflected and supported, but in 1887, after the abdication of Alexander I, he was again a candidate for the vacant throne (Radev, 1990: 459).

In the race for the Bulgarian throne, due to his noble origin, one of the heirs of the prominent Chiprovtsi citizen Georgi Peyachevich joined. This was Count Gabriel Pejačević, the seventh son of Ferdinand and grandson of Charles III, Count Pejačević, who laid the foundation for the Virovitica Lodge in Croatia (Marinov, 1992:82). But his candidacy did not receive popularity and necessary attention, both from the Great Powers and from the Bulgarians.

Among the other Bulgarian candidates for the throne, the one of Alexander the Exarch (1812-1891) is especially commented on. To realize his ambitions, he sought support among the deputies of the Constituent Assembly. In two proclamations he wrote from Paris, he proposed himself as a Bulgarian prince. In a letter to M. Balabanov, he stated that the ruler should be a Bulgarian and there were persons with the necessary qualities among the people. In his argumentation, he points out that a foreigner will not know the Bulgarian language, traditions, and customs, but will only live in luxury and will spend the people's money (Petkov, December 07, 2007). The proposal did not meet with support, because M. Balabanov was confident that there was no worthy candidate for prince among the Bulgarians.

Alexander Exarch also sent a letter to his compatriots from Paris, in which he recommended him as a Bulgarian prince. In it, he listed all his merits to the Bulgarian people from 1841 and expressed thoughts about what he could do if elected (Zornitsa, April 19, 1879).

In his attempts to win the trust of the deputies, Alexander Exarch sought the assistance of P. R. Slaveykov. Convinced that the Bulgarians did not have a worthy candidate for Prince, P. R. Slaveykov published an open letter to the Bulgarian contender in issue 1 of the *Osten* newspaper of March 5, 1879, in which he noted that this choice was not appropriate and would not make the foolish act of recommending him or advising the deputies to elect him as a prince (*Osten*, March 5, 1879). P. R. Slaveykov admits that Al. Exarch is not devoid of some abilities, but advises him not to lie and expose himself, because he is not suitable for a prince. But the subsequent insistence of the prominent Bulgarian forced P. R. Slaveykov with irony and sarcasm to advise him to make a warm winter room, to go home in it and look after his old age (*Osten*, March 5, 1879). The correspondence between the two ends with the Paris letter of Al. Exarch dated April 5/17, 1879, in which the candidate-ruler offered to donate to the newspaper published by P. R. Slaveykov against his election as prince.

The outcome of the dispute in absentia between the two was an article in the newspaper "*Osten*" from April 20, 1879, in which he reiterated his position that the election of a Bulgarian as prince would contradict the people's character, and the candidacy of Al. Exarch is inappropriate (Petkov, 2003:137; *Osten*, April 20, 1879).

Despite the opinions expressed that not only Alexander the Exarch, but the Bulgarian people cannot nominate a person worthy of a prince, there are also opinions against foreign candidates. Even G. Benkovski declared himself against the monarchy and foreign representatives for the Bulgarian throne. He does not dispute the assertion that the Bulgarians do not have a well-expressed aristocracy and ruling class; that there is no person with authority to put him alone at the head of government. But he declares that a foreign prince will come to Bulgaria with his foreign ideas, with his palace mores, and will want to make us what his class is – gorgeous, depraved and inflated (Madzharov, 1968:310).

3. Rules and choice for a Bulgarian prince

In accordance with the provisions of the international agreements, the election of the first Bulgarian prince was entrusted to an assembly of prominent Bulgarians, which should include all clergymen ruling the dioceses, Bulgarian vice-governors, presidents of all ranks of courts and six elected persons from each district. Regarding the candidacy of the prince, nothing has been determined. The principle of succession, financial maintenance and the basic powers of the ruler are defined (Archives speak, 2008: 159-160).

A few weeks before the election of a prince, other opinions were heard regarding its conduct. In a letter from Prague, published in the newspaper "Der Osten" of February 20, 1879, it was recommended that the Bulgarians form a committee of deputies to enter negotiations with the candidates, to present their demands to them and to assess them. In this way, Bulgarians will be able to actively participate in the choice, and not someone else to decide for them (Maritsa, March 2, 1879). This proposal is good as a wish, but practically impracticable, considering that the Great Powers, and especially official St. Petersburg, will not allow such activity on the Bulgarian side, because they decide the choice of a Bulgarian prince according to the clauses they have agreed upon in Berlin.

The Bulgarian people showed great interest in the question of the election of a prince. Publications appeared in the press with specific requirements for him. The most active were the newspapers "Zornitsa" (Dec. 7, 1878), "Bulgarin" (November 26, 1878) and "Maritsa" (January 19, 1879). The generalized idea is that the monarch should be free, have a high education, know well the basics of political economy, respect the laws, and be familiar with the character and aspirations of the Bulgarian people. They even reprinted the classification of the Golos newspaper, in which the candidates are divided into three categories. In the first category are placed the names of A.M. Dondukov, N.P. Ignatiev, A. Bogoridi and Y. Bratiano. It is specified that the Great Powers, especially England, France and Austria, will protest the first two, and the Russian Empire will protest the other two. In the second category are the names of the Bavarian prince Arnulf, Carol and his brother. The conclusion is that they cannot be elected because they are from royal houses. Therefore, the choice will be between the persons of the third category – Para. Battenberg, Prince Reuss and B. Petrovich (Maritsa, January 19, 1879).

Bulgarians learn about the candidates for ruler only from the press. Society was kept away from the great diplomacy of determining the future prince. In this diplomacy, the opinion of any of the representatives of the people regarding the person who should occupy the throne is not sought. In this way, the election of the first Bulgarian prince becomes a diplomatic game of the Great Powers, without the participation of those who will be ruled by him.

The election of a Bulgarian prince took place in the conditions of strong agitation against the election of a prince of divided Bulgaria. The people were ready to adopt the constitution, to order the administration, but to elect a vicerealty in place

of a prince (Maritsa, March 23, 1879). This radical measure was not reached and on April 17, 1879, the election of a Bulgarian prince was started. Golovin provided us with information about the holding of the only session of the First Grand National Assembly. He was given the floor of the Metropolitan of Ruse Gregory, who stated that there were several candidates for Bulgarian prince, but most of them were not suitable. The only mention is made of the candidacy of Prince Rice, who is presented as an honest and serious person. After this inauguration, Metropolitan Gregory proposed Prince Alexander of Battenberg as Bulgarian monarch, who was recommended by the Russian emperor. The election was approved unanimously by all MPs (Radev, 1990: 152).

The analysis of the first and only sitting of the First Grand National Assembly shows that the main candidates have not been presented to the MPs and there are no debates on them. There is also no voting for the candidates. The person recommended by the Russian Emperor for Bulgarian Prince was approved unanimously and the election of the monarch was not conducted by the Bulgarians themselves, but by the Russian Emperor and confirmed by our people's deputies.

The readiness of the Bulgarian elite to unconditionally submit to the will of St. Petersburg regarding the candidate for prince was noted by the contemporaries of the events Dr. Tsankov (Radev, 1990: 146) and A. Tsanov (Tsanov, 1991: 11). Both were adamant that the election was on the order of the Russian emperor, and the attitudes of the people and deputies were in line with the policy of official St. Petersburg, because he was proposed by Emperor Alexander II and is his relative and namesake.

The following words of D. speak best of the reaction of the election among the Russian political elite. A. Milyutin: *"On our instructions, Prince Alexander of Battenberg, nephew of the Empress, was unanimously elected."* (Milyutin, 1950: 138)

Conclusions

In the restoration of Bulgarian power, in the spirit of the time, the architects of the new statehood imposed the monarchical form of government. In connection with this, the question of the personality of the Bulgarian prince arises. The Great Powers determined that he should not be a representative of any of the existing European dynasties, thus placing him on a low rung in the hierarchy of the European monarchical family. As a result of diplomatic negotiations, the candidacy of Prince Alexander of Battenberg was favored, which was proposed by the Russian Emperor for approval by the First Grand National Assembly. Thus, the Bulgarians are deprived of the opportunity to establish their own dynasty and faithful to their national psychology, they are satisfied that none of them manages to surpass the others. The establishment of the monarchical form of government and the election of a foreigner to the Bulgarian throne was not a precedent in European practice at that time. Other neighboring Balkan countries, such as Greece and Romania, are examples in this regard.

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**“OSPĂTĂRIA ȘCOLARĂ” UN PROIECT SOCIAL ȘI EDUCATIV
INDISPENSABIL LA ÎNCEPUT DE SECOL XX* / “SCHOOL CATERING”,
AN INDISPENSABLE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

*Narcisa Maria MITU**

Abstract

Several special women from the high society of Craiova stood out through volunteer efforts and philanthropic acts, at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. One of the projects initiated during this period is the one known as the “School Catering Society” or the “School Canteen Society”. In Craiova, the “School Catering” Society was founded in 1899, at the initiative of Lucia N.P. Romanescu, benefiting from the support of a committee of ladies and the sustenance of the communal administration. The purpose of the project was twofold, on the one hand to offer a hot meal to a disadvantaged segment of the students in Craiova, and on the other hand, to raise the morale of those children. It is an example of aspiration, involvement, dedication, hard-working and achievement of a group of ladies from the high society of Craiova, who chose to turn their attention to those in need, rather than being concerned of only their garments, and fall into the passion of playing cards. At the head of the “School Catering” Society, in the position of president, there can be identified several ladies, involved since the beginning in the organization: Paulina Vorvoreanu (1899), Ema Teodorianu (1899, 1901-1908, 1912), Maria Manea (1906), Maria V. Vanghelie (1912), Maria Budeanu (1939) etc.

Key words: *Craiova, “School Catering Society”, Lucia N.P. Romanescu, Ema Teodorianu.*

Societatea „Ospătăria școlară” sau „Societatea Cantinelor Școlare” a fost rodul muncii mai multor femei deosebite din elita craioveană, femei care s-au remarcat prin acte de voluntariat și filantropice la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și în prima jumătate a sec. XX. Societatea „Ospătăria școlară” a fost fondată în anul 1899, la inițiativa Luciei N.P. Romanescu, beneficiind de concursul unui comitet de doamne și de sprijinul administrației comunale.

Cine a fost inițiatoarea acestui proiect?

Lucia Romanescu s-a născut în 1868, la București, fiind fiica generalului Ștefan Fălcoianu, fost șef al Marelui Stat Major al Armatei. Și-a făcut studiile în Franța, în pensionatul „Le Rudies” la Avon-Sur-Marne, perioadă în care a fost

* Lucrarea a fost susținută în cadrul Conferinței anuale a Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane din Craiova - C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor: Istorie, cultură, civilizație. De la spațiul oltenesc la orizontul european, Craiova (România), 19-21 noiembrie 2025.

inițiată în activitatea de asistență socială dar s-a ocupat și de activitățile auxiliare și complementare școlii („Gazeta de Sud”, 22 mai 2010: 9). Abilitățile dobândite în perioada locuirii sale în Franța, au contribuit la crearea unei frumoase instituții de binefacere în orașul în care a ales să trăiască, Craiova.

După finalizarea studiilor, reîntorcându-se în țară, s-a căsătorit, la 21 mai 1894, cu liberalul Nicolae P. Romanescu, fost primar al Craiovei și deputat de Dolj, de care divorțează la 9 iulie 1924, după 30 de ani de căsnicie. În timpul mariajului au avut 6 copii: o fiică, Măriuța, și 5 fii – Ionel (aviator, mort în timpul Primului Război Mondial), Marcel (scriitor, diplomat), Alexandru-Mircea (diplomat), Radu-Carol (doctor în științe economice), Nicolae (medic).

Ce a determinat-o să se aplece asupra nevoilor celor mai puțin favorizați de soartă? Putem lua în calcul câteva ipoteze: experiența sa ca și copil orfan cât și influența pe care a avut-o Regina Elisabeta asupra acelui suflet de copil. Rămasă orfană de mamă la mai puțin de trei anișori, s-a apropiat de Regina Elisabeta, tatăl său fiind aghiotantul Regelui Carol I. În aceste împrejurări, a crescut sub grija și îndrumarea atentă a Reginei Elisabeta care suferea după pierderea fiicei sale, unicul copil, de numai 4 ani. Moartea fetei a făcut ca Regina să se implice în susținerea copiilor fără părinți, înființând mai multe orfelinate.

O altă ipoteză o reprezintă statutul femeii din elita societății din perioada respectivă care, neputându-se implica în activități ce țineau de carieră, se angaja în activitățile sociale sau de salon. De asemenea, educația și practica din școala franceză unde cursanții erau implicați în activitățile sociale, cât și condiția modestă, după cum ne spune fiul său Nicolae N. Romanescu, în lucrarea *Trei generații*, și mă refer la averea nu foarte consistentă a familiilor din care proveneau părinții ei (Brâncovenii și Fălcoienii), făcând-o să se simtă mai apropiată de poporul afectat de lipsurile materiale și spirituale (Romanescu, 2020: 114). La toate acestea s-au adăugat și câteva trăsături care o defineau pe Lucia ca om și ca mamă, dacă ținem cont de faptul că aceste calități sunt prezentate de propriul copil: „comportarea afectivă”, „exteriorizarea unei demnități fără aroganță”, „frumusețea fizică”, „abordarea conversațiilor cu «toată lumea» - o purtare publică populară” (Romanescu, 2020: 114).

Doamnele aflate în funcția de președinte a Societății.

La conducerea Societății „Ospătăria școalelor”, în funcția de președinte, am identificat mai multe doamne: Paulina Vorvoreanu (1899), Ema Teodorianu (1899, 1901-1908, 1912), Maria Manea (1906), Maria V. Vanghelie (1912), Maria col. Budeanu (1939) etc.

Paulina Vorvoreanu (născută Vrăbiescu) s-a născut la 8 septembrie 1854, în Craiova, și a decedat la vârsta de 90 de ani (30 septembrie 1944) în localitatea Grădinile, jud. Olt (S.J.A.N. Dolj, Fond Familial Vorvoreanu, dosar. nr. 341: 3, 4.). A fost al doilea copil al familiei Constantin și Anghelița Vrăbiescu. La vârsta de 18 ani, s-a căsătorit cu Gogu Vorvoreanu, mare latifundiar și fost primar al Craiovei („Universul”, 28 ianuarie 1911: 5). Au locuit împreună în Casa Vorvoreanu, actualul Palat Mitropolitan din

Craiova. Dintre activitățile filantropice în care s-a implicat activ, amintim: ajutorarea militarilor români participanți în Războiul de Independență de la 1877, participând la finanțarea și întreținerea Spitalului „Independența”, membră a Societății „Crucea Roșie”, filiala Craiova, membru fondator al Societății „Caritatea” având ca scop ajutorarea săracilor din Craiova („Romanulu”, 18 noiembrie 1877: 1). A ajutat numeroase asociații și biserici, donând o sumă importantă pentru reabilitarea integrală a bisericii „Sfinții Arhangheli”. Pentru actele sale de caritate, a fost decorată cu *Meritul Cultural* în grad de Cavaler (MO, 08 iulie 1933: 4546).

Emma Theodorian s-a născut la Craiova, la 15 februarie 1840, și a decedat la 24 aprilie 1935, la venerabila vârstă de 95 de ani. Din mariajul cu Ion Theodorian, directorul Prefecturii Gorj, a avut doi fii: Mariu Theodorian Carada, fost senator, și Caton Theodorian, președintele autorilor dramatici din România. În cursul vieții sale, de aproape un secol, s-a implicat activ în susținerea mai multor așezăminte culturale, create de ea, și în acțiunile de binefacere din oraș. A contribuit la colectarea de ajutoare pentru sinistrații din capitală, în urma inundațiilor catastrofale ce au afectat Bucureștiul (1864). În 1869 s-a instalat în funcția de conducere a Fundației „Dima Popovici”, al cărei scop era creșterea fetelor sărmene „de bun neam născute”, activitate pe care a desfășurat-o timp de 20 de ani. În timpul Războiului de Independență a României a făcut parte din Comitetul de Doamne aflat la conducerea Spitalul Independența din Craiova, ocupându-se de organizarea unei serbări în grădina Bibescu (parcul de astăzi) al cărei scop a fost strângerea de fonduri pentru răniți, apoi a fost numită președinta Societății „Cantinelor școlare”.

Împreună cu Adelina Oltean, a depus eforturi considerabile pentru obținerea de fonduri și subvenții necesare înzestrării bibliotecii Colegiului „Carol I”, condus de profesorul Mihail Străjean, pentru înzestrarea Crucii Roșii, organizând numeroase baluri. În 1916, când România intră în Primul Război Mondial, deși în vârstă de 76 de ani, o găsim lucrând în cadrul Crucii Roșii, la spitalul din Sinaia, oferindu-și serviciile. Pentru activitatea sa a fost distinsă cu Crucea Comemorativă „Elisabeta”, decorație oferită de Regele Carol I doamnelor care s-au devotat răniților în Războiul de Independență a României (Mitu, 2024: 449-451). Iar alături de Lucia Romanescu, a primit medalia „Răsplata Muncii” pentru învățământul primar cl. I („Adevărul”, 20 ianuarie 1902, p. 3).

Maria col. Budeanu. A fost căsătorită cu colonelul I. Budeanu. Despre Maria se știe că a fost imaginea după care s-a realizat, în Făgăraș, bustul Doamnei Stanca, soția marelui voievod Mihai Viteazu. Ideea i-a aparținut lui Nicolae Iorga (1936), iar Maria Budeanu a fost cea care a transpus-o în realitate, constituind un comitet de femei, al cărui președintă a fost, ridicând acest bust, finalizat în anul 1938 și inaugurat la 1 decembrie 1939 (Dan, 1989: 1).

În aceeași măsură de generoase, atât cu Societatea „Ospătăria școlară” dar și cu alte societăți de binefacere, s-au dovedit a fi multe alte doamne craiovene, Maria N. Popp, a cărei familie era foarte implicată în susținerea Societății „Basarab”, societate considerată „sora” societății „Ospătăriei școlară”, cele două instituții completându-se reciproc, deoarece Societatea „Basarab” oferea, în fiecare iarnă, haine groase, ce puteau fi purtate o perioadă mai îndelungată, dar care susținea în egală măsură și ospătăria

scolară, căreia i-a oferit, în anul 1911, un cec în valoare de 1.000 de lei, din ale cărui cupoane se folosea în fiecare an societatea. De asemenea, amintim doamnele Maria Arnold; Alisa V. Roman, Maria P. Chițu, Ecaterina Căpreanu, Angela I. Pleșa, Elvira Vrabiescu, Nathalie general Angelescu care au susținut societatea atât din punct de vedere moral, etic cât și material („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 13 martie 1912: 3).

Care era obiectivul înființării acestei societăți?

Scopul proiectului, pe de o parte, era acela de a oferi o masă caldă unui segment defavorizat al elevilor din Craiova, dar silitori, iar pe de altă parte, de a le ridica moralul.

Hrana era oferită contra cost, preț modic, 10 bani/portie. Pe copiii cu adevărat foarte săraci, societatea avea grijă să-i recomande altor societăți de binefacere, unor persoane generoase, cu suflet nobil, sau unor instituții care achitau acele bonuri. Masa consta într-o porție caldă de ciorbă cu carne și o felie generoasă de pâine. Beneficiul acestor mese l-a reprezentat frecventarea regulată a cursurilor pentru că, ne spun documentele, pe copiii care locuiau departe de școală, părinții preferau să îi țină acasă decât să facă mai multe drumuri pentru a le aduce prânzul, cât și asigurarea unei alimentații corespunzătoare în perioada de creștere a unui copil. O masă regulată și bogată în calorii permitea elevului să-și îmbunătățească atenția și să asimileze mai ușor informația. „Au observat mulți profesori, atât la noi, în România, cât și în străinătate, că mulți dintre copiii, cari la începutul iernii și înainte de a veni la cantină erau slabi, palizi și molatici, «după câțva timp de nutriție regulată s’au schimbat cu totul, au devenit rumeni, grași, vioi, și cu multă sânguință la învățătură, și că în multe școli cantinele au îndoit numărul elevilor, iar promoțiunile s’au întreit, și mediile școalelor au crescut în mod simțitor». La această concluzie s-a ajuns de-a lungul timpului, dar a fost recunoscută public în discursul rostit la 10 ianuarie 1910, cu ocaziunea aniversării unui deceniu de existență a Societății în „Dare de seamă asupra mersului Societății „Ospătaria școlară” („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 11 martie 1912: 2-3).

Cantinele funcționau pe timpul iernii, având un program regulat, de la 1 noiembrie până la 1 martie. Au fost înființate trei cantine: una la sediul societății și altele două la școala Obedeanu și la școala Traian, și se acorda o medie de 20.000 și, mai târziu, (1909) chiar de 30.000 de porții pe sezon. Mâncarea era servită la ora 12, pe baza unui bon, acceptate fiind numai cele ștampilate de primărie, deoarece fuseseră puse în circulație și bonurile contrafăcute. Autorul articolului din ziarul „Universul” din anul 1909, N. Ciocârdia, expunea emoția cu care copiii se îndreptau spre cantine, „este mișcător să vezi, cum la amiazi, după eșirea din școală, pâlcuri de băieți și fete se îndreaptă către cantinele școlare”, și imaginea nerăbdătoare a copiilor care așteptau cuminiți să își primească porția de mâncare: „Băieții de-o parte, fetele de alta, privesc cu lăcomie cazanul din care ese aburul ce deschide și mai mult apetitul, și nerăbdarea li se citește pe față în așteptarea porției” (Ciocârdia, 1909: 2). Copiii erau educați să se comporte cuviincios la masă, să aștepte în liniște sau să folosească corect tacâmurile,

uneori iau parte chiar la pregătirea alimentelor și la servitul mesei: „Câte o doamnă din societate, dând dovadă de sentimente de cel mai desăvârșit altruism, prin faptul că renunță la liniștea copiosului prânz de acasă, umblă printre mese și cu o dragoste de mamă sfătuște pe unul să nu mănânce prea repede, pe altul cum să ție lingura, altuia îi arată poziția cuviincioasă pe care trebuie s'o aibă oricine la masă, și pe toți întrebându-i dacă s'au săturat, sau dacă le-a plăcut mâncarea din ziua aceia” (Ciocârdia, 1909: 2). Atmosfera din sala de mese este, de asemenea, maiestos prezentată „... și aci se așează veseli în sala de mâncare, fiecare la locul său, așteptând cu nerăbdare să li se aducă porția dorită de ciorbă cu carne și de pâne. După ce cazanul aburând și coșulețul de pâne au făcut rotogolul meselor și strachinele s-au umplut, se face în sală tăcere și dintr-un colț al salei se aude glasul argintiu al aceluia, pe care-l ajunge rândul, ca să zică Tatăl nostru” (Ciocârdia, 1909: 2).

Deși înființată de numai un an de zile, Societatea a fost recunoscută ca parte a activității sociale, motiv pentru care reprezentanta sa a fost invitată să participe la Congresul de la Paris.

La Congresul internațional de asistență publică și de binefacere, organizat în cadrul expoziției universale de la Paris din 1900, Lucia Romanescu a prezentat un raport cu privire la cantinele școlare, în care excludea gratuitatea hranei, deși multe alte cantine din țară o practicau, pentru simplul motiv că nu dorea să facă din această instituție doar una de asistență socială, ci și de prevedere și de moralizare (*Anuarul Ziarului Patria*, 1906: 163-164). Săracul nu trebuia să considere că prin natura situației sale se cuvine să fie ajutat și, totodată, nu se dorea să fie atinsă demnitatea omului, și acest gest al gratuității trebuia restrâns doar la persoanele infirme, foarte înaintate în vârstă și care, cu adevărat, se găseau în imposibilitatea de a mai muncii. Chiar Spiru Haret, ministru al Instrucțiunii publice, a militat împotriva acestei gratuități. Principiul călăuzitor era acela că, copilul trebuie să învețe că nimic nu se obține fără un minim de efort și că trebuie să muncească pentru a putea trăi („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 13 martie 1912: 3). Raportul a fost considerat ca desiderat internațional și a fost votat ca atare în ședința plenară a Congresului, la 4 august 1900.

Importanța rolului deținut de Societatea „Ospătăria școlară” este amintită și cu ocazia împlinirii a 40 de ani de existență, eveniment desfășurat în localul societății din str. Buzești, la nr. 46, la 9 decembrie 1939, când președinta acesteia, Maria col. Budeanu prezenta o dare de seamă asupra activității anului 1938—1939, prilej cu care a arătat și opera de asistență socială împlinită de societate („Universul”, 10 decembrie 1939: 5). În 1939, continua să-și îndeplinească activitatea pentru care fusese creată. Cantina de lângă școala Obedeanu, având local propriu, acorda hrană unui număr de 125 de copii, elevi proveniți de la școlile primare: Obedeanu, Madona Dudu – băieți și fete, Traian și Școala nr. 10. Cantina funcționa fără ajutorul oficialităților, fiind vizitată de rezidentul regal, Dinu Simian, și generalul C. Vasiliu („Universul”, 27 noiembrie 1939: 5).

Pe lângă cantinele școlare, doamnele din comitet și-au extins ajutorul și către oamenii străzii, constituind o altă cantină, militându-se pe lângă cerșetori ca în

schimbul banului fizic să primească un bon pe baza căruia să obțină o masă caldă la cantină și să nu-l cheltuiască pe băutură cum obișnuiau, în general, și chiar obișnuiesc să facă cerșetorii. „Milostenia noastră încurajează adeseori vițiul, în loc să ajute neputința” (*Dare de seamă asupra mersului societății „Ospătăria școlară”, 1910: 8; „Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 11 martie 1912: 2-3).*

Recunoaștere juridică

În 1899, Societatea „Ospătăria școalelor” a cerut să i se recunoască calitatea de persoană morală, motiv pentru care a depus un proiect de lege în Cameră („Voința Națională”, 24 februarie 1899: 3). Pe 4 decembrie 1901 a fost recunoscută ca persoană morală. În 1923, la 25 iunie, societatea ospătăria școlară primea personalitate juridică („Dimineața”, 06 iulie 1923: p. 3; „Presă”, 27 iunie 1923: 3).

Cum erau obținute fondurile necesare susținerii acestor cantine?

Un rol important revenea membrilor societății care cotizau lunar cu o sumă stabilită. Cotizația lunară a fiecărei membre a fost stabilită la început la suma de 2 lei/lună și 1 leu la înscriere. Alte surse erau donațiile, sumele câștigate din vânzarea bonurilor a câte 10 bani, subvenții ale diferitelor instituții din oraș (aici erau puse cutii speciale pentru donații) și veniturile obținute din organizarea a diferite expoziții (la intervale mici de timp), serbări, loterii, și alte manifestări culturale publice care să-i sporească câștigurile. Încă din anul înființării, s-a constituit un fond de rezervă în valoare de 4.300 lei, sumă depusă în casa Primăriei, în contul destinat cantinelor. Primăria prevedea în bugetul său anual câte o sumă destinată societății: 1.000 de lei (1901) sau 1.500 de lei (1902). Diferite sume de bani au fost prevăzute în bugetul Școlii Trișcu (1.500 de lei), în bugetele bisericilor Madona Dudu și Sf. Ilie (câte 500 de lei) („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 01 ianuarie 1903: 2). Pentru perioada 15 februarie 1899 - 1 noiembrie 1901, veniturile Societății «Ospătăria școlară» din cotizații, subscripții și rezultatul unui bal au fost de 10.151 de lei. Din acești bani, 1.346 de lei au fost cheltuiți cu organizarea cantinei de la școala Trișcu („Voința Națională”, 28 noiembrie 1901: 3). Serbarea dată în seara de 29 decembrie 1901, cu un beneficiu net de 1.540 de lei, cât și expoziția de obiecte casnice, organizată de comitetul societății, cu un beneficiu de 1.671 de lei, au completat veniturile deja existente („Voința Națională”, 20 februarie 1902: 2).

În 1903, Ministerul de Instrucție transmitea către directorii școlilor primare din Craiova, o circulară prin care le solicita acestora susținerea Societății „Ospătăria școlară” din oraș („Universul”, 26 noiembrie 1903: 3). În 1908, Primăria orașului a cumpărat de la „Ospătăria școlară” 2.000 de bonuri de hrană, pentru a le oferi gratis elevilor săraci („Universul”, 17 noiembrie 1908: 4) și a donat societății suma de 1.000 de lei („Universul”, 24 octombrie 1908: 6). În anul 1909, din conferințe, cotizații, donații, loterii etc. s-au încasat 16.670,45 de lei (6.647,82 de lei au fost cheltuiți iar banii rămași s-au adăugat la fondul de rezervă). Numai Maria N. T. Popp a donat în anul respectiv suma de 1.000 de lei (Ciocârdia, 1909: 2).

În 1909, Lucia Romanescu, a cerut Primăriei să înscrie în bugetul anului viitor suma de 1.000 de lei pentru ajutorul Societății („Universul”, 13 februarie 1909: 5). Subvenții erau acordate an de an și de instituția Prefecturii (SJAN, Dolj, fond Prefectura județului Dolj, Serviciul Administrativ, dosar nr. 222/1906: 3).

În perioada 1909-1910, excedentul era de 2.038,97 de lei, bani proveniți din organizarea: pomului de crăciun – 106,30 de lei; donații pentru clădiri de cantine – 700 de lei; subvenții – 2.600 de lei; donații – 218 lei, bonuri de masă – 1.813,80 de lei, dobânzi- 134,15 lei, cupoane – 1.717,77 lei și cotizații – 2.507 lei (*Lui Spiru C. Haret „Ale tale dintru ale tale”: la împlinirea celor 60 de ani*, 1911: 887).

În 1914, „Ospătăria școlară” a adresat un apel tuturor celor cu dare de mână, rugându-i să ofere și ajutoare în natură: fasole, cartofi, varză etc., menționându-se faptul că numărul copiilor care mănâncă zilnic la cantine crește, iar veniturile societății nu sunt suficiente pentru a satisface cererile („Universul”, 10 octombrie 1914: 5). Potrivit dării de seamă realizată pe anul 1914, numai la cantina de la școala Obedeanu au fost servite 64.580 de porții într-o perioadă de numai două luni. Cheltuielile au fost considerabile deoarece cantina a fost construită pe spezele societății („Universul”, 22 noiembrie 1914: 2).

În sala Teatrului Național, la inițiativa Luciei Romanescu și a doamnelor membre au fost susținute conferințe de către erudiți ai poporului român din perioada interbelică, precum: Barbu Delavrancea (la 24 aprilie 1906.), tratând despre „Geniu și poezie populară” („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 02 mai 1906: 3); profesor Tzigara-Samurcaș (17 februarie 1908), conferențiind despre „Tezaurul artistic al Olteniei”, zi în care s-a organizat și o loterie, ocazie cu care s-au câștigat mai multe obiecte: un serviciu de lavoar, un ceas de aur pentru bărbat, un ceas de aur pentru damă, un vas pentru flori, un serviciu de ceai, o pungă de argint pentru damă, douăsprezece pachete de ceai, oglindă, o cană de apă, șase linguri de argint, o păpușă și o față de masă, toate în valoare de 1.349 de lei. La acest eveniment au participat, alături de doamnele din comitet: Emma Theodorian (președintă), Maria Manea, Maria Chițu și Ecaterina Petreanu (vicepreședinte), Maria Arnold și Alexandrina Piperescu, (secretare), și Lucia Romanescu și Elena Măldărescu (casieră) și câteva dintre notabilitățile orașului: primarul Ciocazan, prefectul Vercescu și primprocurorul Neațu („Dimineața”, 19 februarie 1908: 1; „Neamul Românesc”, 22 februarie 1908: 363).

O tombolă a fost organizată și în seara zilei de 10 ianuarie 1909, când a fost organizat un bal, dat în sala Teatrului Național din oraș, care marca 10 ani de funcționare. Lucia Romanescu, casieră în perioada respectivă, menționa că seara fusese un succes, încasările fiind în valoare de 3.847,40 de lei, sumă din care scăzând cheltuielile de 1.128,75 de lei, rezulta un profit net de 2.718,65 de lei. Se vehicula informația că numai loteria produsese suma de 1.973 de lei, și că printre obiectele vândute la loterie, lucrate și pictate în mare parte de doamnele și domnișoarele din elita craioveană, era și un superb cofret pictat și dăruit de Principesa Maria („Viitorul”, 30 decembrie 1908: 3; „Voința Națională”, februarie 1909: 3).

Evenimentul a fost prezentat în ziarul *Neamul Românesc*, autorul articolului făcând elogiul efortului doamnelor din societatea caritabilă dar și critica subtilă a neimplicării celor din elita societății: „«Ospătăria școlară» și-a serbătorit, printr'un bal, destinat tot pentru mărirea fondului, zece ani de viață neîntreruptă și folositoare. Serbarea, deschisă prin conferința inteligentă și modestă a d-nei Adina E. Bănescu, a avut un tablou al unei șezători țerănești de toată frumuseța. Liga ar putea să și-l însușească la serbarea ei și, dacă va fi cu puțință, să-l transforme într'o adevărată șezătoare țerănească. Să vadă boierii cel puțin pe scenă pe țerani cu nevestele și copiii lor! Din elită n'au venit decât aceia cari erau, prin anumite situații administrative, oarecum obligați. Publicul cel mare l-au format cei mai mărunți din elită. D-na Lucia Romanescu, îmbrăcată într'un costum românesc din Ținuturile muntoase, a avut frumoasa idee ca, la danțul cu care se încheie balurile, așa-numitul cotidion, «surprisele» cele mai multe să fie obiecte românești, executate de atelierul «Roiul», în locul caraghiozlicurilor nemțești, ungurești sau franțuzești, au figurat obiecte folositoare și obiecte românești” (*„Neamul Românesc”*, 04 februarie 1909: 180).

În perioada sărbătorilor de iarnă, era împodobit un brad de Crăciun „cu ceea ce se adună din prisosul copiilor de bogătași”, și, astfel, un număr însemnat de elevi, între 500 și 600 de copii săraci primeau în dar, de Sărbătoarea Nașterii Domnului, câte un cadou. În general, se ofereau obiecte necesare la școală, jucării, dulciuri (săculeți cu migdale, cu curmale, cozonac, bomboane) și articole vestimentare. În anul 1908, beneficiari ai unor astfel de cadouri au fost 290 de fete și 250 de băieți (Ciocârdia, *Universul*, 03 martie 1909: 2).

În ziua de 23 martie 1930, la Cercul militar, Societatea „Ospătăria Școlară” a organizat un matineu dansant, banii obținuți fiind utilizați în folosul căminelor și cantinelor din localitate (*„Universul”*, 22 martie 1930: 8).

Casa regală s-a implicat, de asemenea, în susținerea acestei societăți. Regina Elisabeta și principesa Maria au oferit diverse lucruri pentru a fi expuse în cadrul expozițiilor sau pentru loteriile societății. Unele lucruri au fost confecționate chiar de mâna acestora, cunoscută fiind creativitatea celor două fețe regale. Lucia Romanescu, într-un discurs ținut cu ocazia organizării vizitei Regelui la Școala Trișcu din Craiova, declara că a fost sfătuită de Regină ca „oriunde va fi să caute a lucra pentru copiii, cari au trebuință de ajutorul nostru” (*„Gazeta Transilvaniei”*, 13 martie 1912: 3).

O atenție deosebită a fost acordată de către organizatorii Societății „Ospătăria școlară” expozițiilor. Ele erau organizate, în perioada de început, destul de des, aproape anul. Prima despre care avem informații este cea deschisă la 29 decembrie 1901, într-o sală de pe Calea Unirii, a „maestrilor din Craiova”. Nu există foarte multe informații, știm doar că a fost organizată din inițiativa Luciei Romanescu și că a avut un caracter filantropic. Următoarea expoziție s-a deschis la 5 mai 1902, în sălile pavilionului construit de E. Redont în Parcul Bibescu, și a fost o expoziție de artă. Nu cunoaștem cine și ce a expus; știm doar că marele politician local, N. N. Popp, posesorul uneia dintre cele mai importante colecții de artă din oraș, a fost menționat, de presa vremii, ca fiind cumpărător al unui tablou expus (Rezeanu, 1984: 44). Tot în 1902 este menționată

expoziția de artă națională care își dorea să contribuie, prin piesele expuse (broderii și țesături naționale), la dezvoltarea industriei casnice naționale. O categorie importantă de vizitatori au reprezentat-o elevele școlilor primare și secundare din oraș. O altă expoziție de artă și industrie națională a fost realizată în anul 1907, la sediul societății, tema principală constituind-o observarea și înțelegerea realizării mătăsii, fiind expuse diferite faze ale acestei industrii. A fost cadrul propice pentru elevele școlilor profesionale de a cunoaște și a se familiariza cu stofele și țesăturile naționale.

Expoziția istorică de antichități (1903/1904) a fost una dintre cele mai mediatizate dintre cele organizate de această societate, foarte multe periodice din perioada respectivă acordându-i coloane întregi, fiind descrisă cu lux de amănunte, fapt care ne permite să facem o reconstituire completă a pieselor expuse și a atmosferei care a dominat perioada de timp în care s-a extins. A fost organizată în pragul sărbătorilor de iarnă, în localul Minerva, și cuprindea mai multe secțiuni: obiecte care aparținuseră lui Tudor Vladimirescu, armele generalului Solomon, bibiluri vechi (lucruri migăloase - dantelă lucrată cu acul sau cusătură cu colțișori – aplicată la guler, la mâneci sau la poalele cămășii), obiecte de cult, obiecte vechi familiare. Cum scopul expoziției era acela de a crește fondurile societății, intrarea era, firesc, contra cost, suma fiind destul de „neînsemnată” spunea autorul articolului din ziarul „Adevărul”. Aceeași sursă prezintă modul în care erau expuse exponatele „sunt aranjate cu gust, căci modul lor de plasare este o excelentă indicațiune de chipul cum ar putea cineva să-și înfrumusețeze interiorul casei după valoarea obiectului”. În mijlocul expoziției era plasat un cazan foarte vechi, „aparținând d-șoarei Vasiliu, așezat pe o ladă acoperită cu un frumos șal. În lăuntru e pusă o plantă, așezată așa încît totul formează o decorațiune măreață”. În imediata apropiere se găseau obiectele care avuseseră legătură sau proveneau din perioada lui Tudor Vladimirescu: un pupitru de alamă vechi pe care era amplasată o gravură luată după un portret al celui din biserica Crețesti, iar la spatele gravurei, pe un pedestal, bustul și steagul eroului de la 1821. Sub ele se găsea un autograf al viteazului oltean. În fața grupului de exponate dedicate lui Vladimirescu, se afla o piramidă de arme vechi, încrustate cu sif, aur și argint, ce aparținuseră generalului Solomon, „al cărui splendid portret este unul dintre cele mai interesante și care aparține colecției d-rei Opran” și completa perfect de bine o altă colecție aranjată cu mult gust în care se regăseau: un pumnal care aparținuse șefului răzvrătiților circazieni, Șamil, și o tabacheră de aur a lui Constantin Ipsilante.

Numismatica era, de asemenea, bine reprezentată prin monede de aur, argint și aramă, care aparținuseră dacilor și domnitorilor Vladislav, Basarab și Mircea și care – se spunea – „ar face față oricărui muzeu”.

Printre obiectele expuse se mai afla o colecție veche de tablouri, în cea mai mare parte opere ale talentatului pictor Aman, precum și ale altor maeștri ai pensulei. „Într'un costum de spătar bătrânul Anwa, tatăl artistului, redat, cu multă măiestrie pe o pânză, ne amintește costumele secolului trecut, dându-ne în acelaș timp o idee de valoarea celui ce l-a făcut; un tablou care o reprezenta pe prima soție a lui Aman, tatăl pictorului Aman, și pe care îl oferise spre expunere aceeași domnă Culcer. Pictura era

descrișă ca fiind una „interesantă” în care se remarcău „cele mai mici detalii de îmbrăcăminte și bijuteriile bogate obișnuite pe acele vremuri ... admirabil executate”. În expoziție figurau, totodată, portretele lui Constantin Lazaro și Iordache Otetelișanu, fondatorii celei de a doua școli de fete în România; câte o pagină istorică dedicată strămoșilor primarului Nicolae Romanescu: Constantin Romanescu, fost secretar al guvernului provizoriu și membru al guvernului de 12 de la 1848, exilat cu alți revoluționari de frunte, care a luat parte activă la mișcarea politică din Craiova (1857) și a făcut parte din Constituantă (1866); Petre Romanescu, participant activ în revoluția de la 1848, căruia, pentru ajutorul oferit capilor revoluționari din Oltenia, i-a fost bătută o medalie de argint; un Callimachi de la 1519, în care se fac elogiile lui Vlad Dracul, exemplar care nu se mai găsea nici în biblioteca Academiei; volume vechi - adevărate documente ale artei tipografice: un Robert Stephanus (1503), un Dante (din prima tipărire), un Aldin (1566), un Plautiu (1591), Epistolele lui Cicerone (1548), un Gryphus (1554), 6 volume Elzevir (1633), alte tipărituri din 1503, *Istoria bisericilor din Transilvania*, Frankfurt (1604), o carte care a aparținut lui Napoleon al III-lea, un Virgiliu de la 1791 din exemplarele Luvrului, o ediție princeps de la 1588 din scrierile lui Montaigne, o colecție de cărți ale mănăstirii de la Brădești cu legătură foarte rară „l'évêque”, etc. Erau expuse și obiecte rare, precum: cești care au aparținut lui Ludovic Filip, o frescă provenită de la orașul Pompei, vase în diferite stiluri, ș. a.

În clasa obiectelor de cult erau prezentate publicului: iconostasul prințului Bibescu, fresce din secolul al XVIII-lea, unele aparținând mănăstirii Brădești, ridicată în timpul lui Matei Basarab de către Barbu Brădescu, un dulap plin cu icoane, tablouri de mare valoare cu teme bisericești, ce aparțineau d-nelor Chițu, Romanescu, Georgescu, Dancov, Vasiliu, Zavarov și Gigurtu, și care ofereau „un farmec deosebit expoziției”.

Cusăturile migăloase (bibilurile) vechi erau expuse în vitrine, ele constituind „cea mai interesantă podoabă a costumelor femeiești”. „Acele bibiluri lucrate de mână sînt atît de fin executate, culorile lor sînt atît de bine combinate încît putem judeca de pe ele cît gust aveau femeile din timpul lor”. Colecția aceasta aparținea d-lui general Cica. O bogată colecție de țesături din secolul XVIII și XIX reprezenta gustul cu care femeia română era înzestrată.

O altă parte a salonului era amenajată ca o cameră în miniatură aparținând secolelor anterioare, cuprinzând obiecte necesare dotării unui camere și accesorii de îmbrăcăminte: canapea, ladă, pendul (ceas), rochii aparținând d-nelor căpitan Costescu, Moscu, Romanescu, o toaletă din colecția d-rei Atanasescu, un covor din colecția d-nei Manea, configurând traiul simplu al strămoșilor noștri, având în vedere timpurile instabile pe care le traversaseră și care, de multe ori, îi obligau să-și părăsească căminele. Acestea erau completate cu obiecte familiare aparținând strămoșilor, precum: ceasuri, argintărie, cercei, bucle de centură, peceti, obiecte mici întrebuințate în diferite momente ale vieții, două policandre frumoase, o statuie de bronz, vase în diferite stiluri și din diverse perioade, o bicicletă cu roți de lemn din anul 1886, acte și diplome vechi: un act arăbesc de la 1813 în care se vorbea despre România, hrisoave de ale lui Matei Basarab și Constantin Brâncoveanu.

De asemenea, în cadrul expoziției au fost expuse și obiecte realizate sau aparținând familiei regale: o plăpămioară lucrată de Regină pentru Principele Carol, atrăgea atenția prin modul în care era lucrată dar și prin mesajul cusut pe ea. „Pe un fond de mătase roșe o garnitură de broderie artistic executată, formează acest obiect de preț. În mijloc, brodat, se citesc cuvintele: Nani, Nani, Bobocel. Iar de jur împrejur la distanțe egale: Cuminte, viteaz, frumos, harnic, darnic, simpatic, cuvinte ce rees dintr'o măiastră împletitură de mătase”. Din partea Regelui au fost primite două mari tablouri făcute de celebrul pictor Schoenberg: «Lupta de la Plevna» și «Primul tun». Lucillus.

Expoziția a fost, așadar, extrem de importantă atât din punct de vedere cultural, prin însemnata valoare istorică a obiectelor expuse, cât și prin scopul filantropic pe care l-a generat („Adevărul”, 13 ianuarie 1904: 4; „Adevărul. Ediția de dimineață”, 15 ianuarie 1904: 1; „Universul”, 07 ianuarie 1904: 1).

Autorul articolului din „Adevărul” declara că ar trebui să fie suficient spus numai scopul expoziției, „pentru ca lumea dornică de a face binele să se grăbească a o vizita”. Referindu-se la expoziția din 1904 de la Minerva, în „Gazeta Transilvaniei” se scria că: „N'am rămas școlar în Craiova, care să nu fi vizitat espozițiunea din sala Minerva, unde se putea învăța cea mai frumoasă lecție de istorie, unde se puteau vedea resturile de vitejie ale trecutului nostru oltenesc, unde s'a făurit una din verigele, cari trebuie să lege trecutul nostru istoric de viitorul nostru, care nu poate fi al nostru fără cunoașterea trecutului; acolo, tineri și bătrâni, săraci și bogați, timp de două luni și-au dat întâlnire, animați de aceleași simțeminte pioase cătră trecutul nostru, și de solidaritatea pentru viitorul nostru” („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 11 martie 1912: 3).

În cadrul expoziției „Ospătăriei școlare” din anul 1906, au fost prezentate produse ale Școlii de sericicultură înființată de M. S. Regina, stofe de mătase admirabil executate (mătase care nu provenea din străinătate) având rolul de conștientizare a publicului că se poate produce mătasea și la noi în țară, iar cu sumele achitate pentru aducerea acesteia din străinătate să se deschidă noi locuri de muncă. Lângă ele erau aranjate exemplare de industrie veche, cu caracter național; de olărie, foarte bine realizate din punctul de vedere al culorilor, al formei și al decorațiilor; stofe „de cea mai mare fineță” făcute la Plătărești; obiecte de pielărie, executate în penitenciare și montate cu cel mai mare gust; o colecție de perii, executate în modul cel mai bun și elegant, tot în penitenciare; velințe cu colorit foarte frumos și cu desene foarte interesante, durabile; covoare cu interesante desene. Mai toți pereții expoziției, erau acoperiți cu covoare frumoase și fotografii ce prezentau covoare, primite de la casa artelor (Călugăreanu, 1907: 2).

La expoziția din 1906, de la București, Societatea a obținut medalia de aur „pentru buna ei organizare”. Medalie de aur a obținut și fondatoarea ei, Lucia Romanescu care a mai primit din partea Regelui medalia „Răsplata muncii”, pentru serviciile aduse învățământului public („Gazeta Transilvaniei”, 13 martie 1912: 3).

Probabil că s-a continuat și în anii următori cu organizarea altor expoziții, însă informațiile lipsesc. Facem un salt în timp și vorbim despre realizarea unei alte

expoziții în anul 1941, în timpul președinției Mariei col. Budeanu, pentru care avem material informativ. Maria Budeanu și Elena Cănciulescu au deschis o expoziție plastică în sala „Cercului profesorilor” din str. Unirii, nr. 72, la etaj, unde au fost expuse peste 130 de pânze, majoritatea abordând următoarele teme: flori, portrete, interioare de biserici, peisaje din parcul Bibescu, natură moartă etc. Expoziția era deschisă de la începutul anului până la 16 ianuarie, fiind vizitată zilnic de un public select, amator de artă („Universul”, 03 ianuarie 1941: 8).

Exemplul oferit de societatea înființată de Lucia Romanescu a fost preluat și de către alte doamne din elita societății craiovene. Amintim în acest sens ospătăria școlară deschisă la școala israelito-română din localitate, oferind masa zilnică unui număr de 75 de copii săraci care frecventau școala. Inițiativa a aparținut baronesei de Hirsch, în 1920, care dăruia anual suma de 1.000 de lei, restul banilor provenind de la „Societatea damelor israelite” sub patronajul căreia se afla și ospătăria („Adevărul”, 23 octombrie 1898: 2).

În concluzie, așa cum era organizată în Craiova, Societatea „Cantinelor școlare” a fost privită ca: instituțiune de binefacere (care nu dorea să întrețină cerșetoria ci să ofere un ajutor celor nevoiași); ca o anexă a școlii primare (hrana oferită îi ajuta și din punct de vedere intelectual pentru că, fiind bine hrăniți, se puteau mobiliza mult mai ușor să participe la activitățile intelectuale iar frecvența la cursuri era ridicată) dar și ca instituție de cultură națională prin promovarea artei și industriei românești, și, factorul cel mai important îl constituia dezvoltarea sentimentului de solidaritate între toate clasele societății. Cantinele au jucat și rol educativ, prin faptul că strângeau la un loc copii din toate zonele, permițându-le să se cunoască între ei și să socialize, să lege prietenii iar prin evenimentele pe care le organizau (serbări, expoziții, conferințe), se urmărea „dezvoltarea interesului pentru arta românească precum și sentimentul de solidaritate națională”. Este un exemplu de dorință, implicare, dedicare, frământare și realizare al unui grup de doamne din înalta societate craioveană care a ales să-și îndrepte atenția spre cel aflat în nevoie decât să ducă grija toaletelor și să cadă în patima jocului de cărți. În acest efort de într-ajutorare întâlnim, alături de doamnele prezentate mai sus, și alte categorii sociale, inclusiv comercianții din oraș care s-au implicat în procesul de susținere al acestui proiect, oferind diferite articole pentru dotarea cantinelor școlare.

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ASPECTE PRIVIND DESFĂȘURAREA MANEVRERELOR REGALE
LA CRAIOVA (SEPTEMBRIE 1903)* / ASPECTS OF THE ROYAL MILITARY
MANOEUVRES AT CRAIOVA (SEPTEMBER 1903)

Alexandru CERNAT**

Abstract

The autumn of 1903 marked two major events in Craiova, both significant not only locally but also nationally: the royal autumn military manoeuvres and the inauguration of Bibescu Park. The present study focuses on the first of these events and seeks to provide an overview of the planning and execution of the manoeuvres. The royal autumn military manoeuvres brought to the capital of Oltenia numerous political and military figures, both Romanian and foreign, as well as members of the Royal Family. Consequently, the event attracted the attention of the national press for several days. Significant military and administrative efforts were required to ensure the successful organization of the event.

Key words: military manoeuvres, Craiova, Carol I, royal visit, Bibescu Park

Luna septembrie a anului 1903 a adus pentru capitala Olteniei două mari evenimente, manevrele regale de toamnă respectiv inaugurarea Parcului Bibescu, momente a căror organizare s-a realizat printr-un efort administrativ susținut. În cuprinsul textului de față se va contura o imagine a primului eveniment, a manevrelor regale, în privința inaugurării Parcului Bibescu, prin bogăția informațiilor care ne-a rămas, putând constitui un subiect de sine stătător. Pentru a evidenția doar o mică parte a efortului de organizare administrativă, se poate aminti pentru început apelul pe care Primăria Craiova l-a lansat locuitorilor orașului în vederea unei bune primiri a Regelui Carol I, precizându-se că, în perspectiva sosirii Majestății Sale în oraș, ocazia fiind cea dată de manevrele militare de toamnă din luna septembrie, proprietarii de case, îndeosebi cei care dețineau case pe străzile: Carol I, Justiției, Unirii, Bechetului, Amaradia, Casarmelor, Sf. Dumitru, Liceului, Bibescu și Abatorului, străzi ce erau direct vizate deoarece pe acesl traseu urma a se deplasa regele în parcursul său spre a vizita diferite instituții ale orașului, până la finalul lunii august, imobilele „să se găsească în cea mai perfectă stare de curățenie, gardurile, grilajurile dinspre stradă să fie reparate și vopsite, fațadele caselor să fie de asemenea tencuite și spoite cu var de culoarea pietrei de Rusciuc, galben deschis (...)”. Totul trebuia să fie bine pus la punct până la începutul lunii septembrie, dorindu-se „a lăsa

* Material ce a stat la baza unui subcapitol al tezei de doctorat: *Vizitele Familiei Domnitoare/Regale a României la Craiova 1866-1947*.

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Suveranului o impresie bună asupra modului de gospodărie a locuitorilor Craiovei și a salubrității orașului nostru în general", la final regăsindu-se semnătura primarului Nicolae Romanescu, cat și a șeful Serviciului C. F. Russu, datat 16 iulie 1903 (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 39, 41).

Asupra evenimentului găzduit de oraș sunt informați și epitropii Bisericii Madona Dudu, primind vestea că Regele Carol I, alături de Principele Ferdinand, urmau a fi prezenți la Craiova cu ocazia manevrelor de toamnă. Se reliefa totodată un amănunt important, dificila situație financiară prin care trecea orașul *„Comuna fiind la moment într-o situație financiară dintre cele mai critice (...)”*, motivându-se și de ce a ajuns orașul într-un asemenea impas financiar, cerându-se epitropilor, prin bunăvoința lor, să contribuie cu o sumă *„cât se poate de îndestulătoare”* la cheltuielile ce vor fi făcute cu ocazia primirii Regelui Carol I, cheltuieli cu decorarea străzilor și nu numai (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 42). Tot în vederea organizării, din partea Serviciului Statului Major, Corpul I de armată, se trimite către primarul Craiovei, având subliniat *urgent*, o întrebare cu privire la locația unde va sta Suveranul la momentul vizitei la Craiova, dată de conjunctura desfășurării manevrelor de toamnă, cerându-se informații punctuale privind strada cât și casa unde va fi *„cuartiruit”* regele (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 43). Așadar, treptat, se puneau la punct detalii ale vizitei. Și Uzina Electrică din Craiova a fost abordată, scopul fiind acela de a clarifica unele aspecte ce țineau de iluminat, în contextul vizitei înalților oaspeți. Se cunoaște faptul că în epocă, iluminatul stradal, seara, reprezenta nu doar un aspect de necesitate, dar și un moment aparte, festiv, de care orașul se bucura. Aspect care s-a putut observa și în cadrul desfășurării altor momente festive. În acest sens, directorul este rugat a informa Primăria dacă, cu ocazia vizitei înalților oaspeți, uzina ia cumva unele măsuri privind *„o iluminare sau expoziție”*. În cazul în care răspunsul era unul pozitiv, primăria ruga uzina să îi aducă la cunoștință de îndată ceea ce s-a planificat pentru a se pune în acord la nivel de organizare (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 46).

Din detaliile prezente în documentele de arhivă, reiese și componența inițială ce a fost avută în vedere asupra participanților din partea Familiei Regale. Un exemplu în acest sens este informarea din partea Primăriei Craiova către prefectul județului Dolj asupra sosirii Regelui și Reginei, însoțiți de Principele și Principesa României, vizită ce urma a se întinde pe mai multe zile, despre aceleași persoane amintind și primarul Nicolae Romanescu în cuprinsul unei invitații trimisă școlilor (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 44, 47). Din nefericire, dintre persoanele mai sus amintite, se va constata ulterior că două nu au putut întregi tabloul participanților, anume Regina Elisabeta și Principesa Maria. Despre lipsa Reginei Elisabeta avem informații prin intermediul unui răspuns la o adresă trimisă de doamnele din societatea craioveană, prin care o rugau pe aceasta să participe la inaugurarea Parcului Bibescu. Mareșalul Curții, generalul Priboianu, dând un răspuns respectivei adrese, precizând că: *„Din înalt*

ordin, am onoarea a vă ruga să binevoiți a încredința pe doamnele care au subsemnat telegrama către M. S. Regina, că M. S. Regele, adânc mișcat de dragostea cu care doamnele craiovene înconjoară, în orice ocasiune, familia regală, le mulțumește călduros și regretă foarte mult că accidentul întâmplat M. S. Reginei la picior, care este încă umflat, o pune în neputință de a umbla, deci de a merge la Craiova spre a asista la serbările proiectate, ceea ce i-ar pricinui o mare osteneală” (Adevărul, 3 octombrie 1903). În ceea ce privește lipsa Principesei Maria, deși informații clare în acest sens nu sunt vehiculate, putem ține seama că Maria trecuse recent prin nașterea Principelui Nicolae, context care să fi conturat situația celui tablou al participanților. Cu ocazia fericitului moment, din partea primarului Nicolae Romanescu s-au trimis felicitări cuplului princiar Ferdinand și Maria pentru noul născut: „în numele orașului, cuprins de mare bucurie la primirea fericitei vești, urez Altețe, noroc și prosperitate augustului născut, prințului Nicolae al României, care face să crească dragostea și devotamentul națiunii Române pentru falnica sa Dinastie”, Principele Ferdinand răspunzând într-un mod cordial. Scrisori de felicitare pentru noul născut al familiei s-au trimis de asemenea și regelui (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 79-81, 90).

Ministerul de Război a fost abordat de către Primăria Craiova privind posibilul suport pe care l-ar putea oferi în vederea unei bune organizări a evenimentului de la Craiova. Se cerea sprijin în vederea decorării străzilor, amintindu-se de un arc de triumf și o piramidă de arme în zona străzii Carol I, piramidă a cărei realizare, menționa Primăria Craiova, avea nevoie de sprijinul Ministerului de Război, rugându-se ca acesta să ia măsuri pentru ca respectiva lucrare să fie realizată din tunuri, arme vechi și drapele ale armatei. În continuare, din document se constată faptul că inițial se apelase la ajutor local, la Comandamentul Corpului I de armată, care însă „n-are asemenea arme și astfel suntem nevoiți a recurge la binevoitorul ajutor al dumneavoastră” (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 56). Corpul I de armată a trimis însă primăriei Craiova „lista cartierelor pe timpul Manevrelor Regale (...)”, solicitându-se acesteia din urma a completa în spațiul aferent, sub titlu, cartierele persoanelor prezente în respectiva listă, în intervalul 25 sept – 1 oct. Documentul cuprinde spații punctate, numerotate care urmau a se completa. Se începea cu Casa M. S. Regelui, apoi atașaii militari, infanteria, cavaleria, jandarmi, trăsurile cartierul general etc. (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 184-186). În ceea ce privește decorarea străzilor, s-a făcut apel și la Comandamentul Corpului II armată spre a oferi „tot ce ați avea prin depozit și care ne-ar putea servi la împodobirea străzilor (...)”, dându-se ca exemple steaguri, stoffe, panoplii etc, menționându-se că autoritățile craiovene se vor ocupa de transportarea și aducerea înapoi a obiectelor (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 60).

Un important detaliu al evenimentelor este și cel privind tradiția găzduirii oaspeților regali la Craiova. O adresă a oficiului telegrafic către primărie, informa asupra instalării a două posturi telegrafice, unul în casa dl. Glogoveanu, iar cel de-a doilea în casa dl. Davidescu, în casa Glogoveanu fiind găzduit Regele Carol I cu ocazia

manevrelor regale, iar în casa Davidescu Principele Ferdinand. În continuare se cereau detalii în care camere să fie instalate respectivele posturi telegrafice, specificându-se ca în cazul în care va veni de la Palatul Regal cineva spre a lua măsurători locuințelor, în vederea distribuirii camerelor, să se amintească și de problema telegrafelor (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 385). Informația este importantă în vederea studierii evoluției găzduirii Familiei Regale la Craiova, ce în mod tradiționat s-a realizat la Palatul Glogoveanu. În anul precedent, 1902, când Principele Ferdinand a vizitat Craiova, a fost însă găzduit de Virgil Davidescu, mare proprietar (*Adevărul*, 19 noiembrie 1902). Conjunctura atunci fusese și una deosebită, în acel an 1902 murind Elena Glogoveanu, la vârsta de 75 de ani (Gigurtu, 2015: 212). Se constată așadar că Principele Ferdinand continua găzduirea la casa dl. Davidescu și în acea toamna a anului 1903.

Autoritățile locale erau atent preocupate nu doar în privința găzduirii Familiei Regale, situația devenind provocatoare în ansamblul ei, așteptându-se a veni oaspeți din toată țara, iar capacitatea hotelurilor în acest sens putând să fie insuficientă. Astfel, primarul a făcut un apel la prefectul poliției Craiova spre a realiza un „*tablou indicând aceste case precum și chiria zilnică cu care Domnii proprietari se angajează a pune la dispoziția vizitatorilor orașului fiecare din camerele D-lor*”. În continuare se argumenta că prim apelarea la această soluție s-ar putea evita posibilitatea apariției unui haos din cauza lipsei camerelor la hoteluri, sau din cauza unor proprietari care cer o chirie zilnică foarte mare (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 174). De la Primăria Craiova s-a trimis comerciantului Luca Nicolescu, în numele Eforiei Madona Dudu, solicitarea de a fi furnizată lenjerie pentru 40 de camere ale hotelului Minerva, rugăminte fiind ca aceasta să se dea pe datorie, banii fiind plătiți din bugetul pentru primăvara anului 1904. Ca argument al siguranței și credibilității colaborării se menționa că instituția Madona Dudu era cât se poate de bine administrată, dispunând de bune resurse financiare, fiind „*cea mai avută din Oltenia*”. În cazul în care nu se ajungea la un acord, se specifica în adresă rugăminte de a indica de unde se poate închiria „*rufărie pentru opt zile*” (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 263). În privința disponibilităților de găzduire, devenea tot mai clar că hotelurile de care dispunea orașul erau insuficiente pentru numărul mare de participanți care se aștepta. Primăria vine cu un apel public către cetățenii orașului, rugându-i pe aceștia a se implica pentru o cât mai bună desfășurare a momentului, și a găzdui într-un mod cât de bun posibil oaspeții Craiovei: „*rugând de asemenea, în mod deosebit, pe toți bunii cetățeni, să grăbească a face să se indice în tabloul ce s-a înființat la Prefectura Poliției câte persoane binevoiesc a găzdui fiecare dintre Domniile lor. Credem că ar fi în adevăr de un folos moral Cetății noastre ca cu toții să ne convingem că trebuie să dăm ospitalitate atașăților militari și diferiților ofițeri care însoțesc pe Majestatea Sa Regele și să lăsăm puținele camere din hoteluri la dispoziția invitaților deputați și senatori din fostele și actualele Corpuri Legiuitoare și alte persoane de considerație care pot veni să ne viziteze*” (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 276). Cum se aștepta ca spre finalul lunii septembrie,

cât timp aveau loc evenimentele, foarte multă lume să fie prezentă în zona Craiovei, și îndeosebi multă lume dorind a se deplasa nu doar în oraș ci și spre manevre, se sublinia insuficiența birjilor de care dispunea orașul. Primarul Nicolae Romanescu, în acest sens, facea un apel către prefectul poliției în a discuta cu ceilalți prefecti și șefi ai polițiilor din București, Pitești, Ploiești, ca respectivii să convingă cei mai de seamă birjari, cu cele mai frumoase trăsură și cai, să vină pentru o săptămână la Craiova, unde aveau ocazia a câștiga datorită evenimentului, mult mai mulți bani ca în orașele lor (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 93-94). Desfășurarea evenimentelor s-a conturat a fi așadar deosebit de provocatoare sub aspect organizatoric. În acens sens, poate fi amintit că în intervalul 14 – 21 septembrie 1903, nu mai puțin de 93 de persoane având pregătiri diverse din zona politică, militară, religioasă, culturală etc, au participat în cadrul unui comandament local, la discutarea și punerea la punct a ultimelor aspecte organizatorice cu câteva zile înainte de primirea înalților oaspeți, aceste întâlniri având loc în sala mare a liceului „Carol I” (Deaconu, 2001: 114).

Cu puține zile înainte de așteptarea înalților oaspeți, și anume pe 24 septembrie, s-a conturat și „*Programul oficial al primirii Majestății Sale Regelui*”. Așadar vineri, 26 septembrie, ora 4 p.m., Suveranul urma a ajunge în gara orașului Craiova, acolo unde avea loc primirea oficială. Traseul regelui de la gară corespundea cu străzile: Carol I, Justiția, Unirea, Madona, urmând o oprire la biserica Madona Dudu, oficiindu-se un Tedeum. Spre reședința regală, deplasarea pe străzile: Madona, Unirea, Bibescu, Bulevardul Mihai Bravu. La ora 7 seara la palat, un prânz regal. Sâmbătă, 27 septembrie, urmau a avea loc manevrele regale. La ora 7 seara, prânz la palat, iar la ora 9, la Teatrul Național din Craiova, o reprezentație de gală. Duminică, 28 septembrie, manevrele regale continuau. Seara, ca și în ziua precedentă, tot la ora 7, urma a avea loc prânzul regal la palat. Luni, 29 septembrie, o vizită la diferite instituții publice, precum: Liceul Carol I, Palatul de Justiție, Școala Fiilor de Militari, Arestul Central, Școala Trișcu, Bisericile Sf. Dumitru și Sf. Treime. În partea a doua a zilei se desfășura festivitatea la parc, expoziția, cursele. La ora 7 seara, la Școala Militară se ținea un prânz regal. Seara, iluminarea orașului cât și a parcului, focuri de artificii. Ultima zi a șederii la Craiova consta într-o paradă miitară pe platonul Bălții Verzi, la ora 9 jumătate dimineața, ca apoi, la ora 1 p.m., Suveranul să părăsească orașul Craiova (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 479). Programul trebuia să fie răspândit urgent, astfel s-a apelat la ajutorul unei cunoscute tipografii locale, tipograful Samitca fiind rugat ca de urgență să imprime programul în 1000 de exemplare, din care 500 în format mare (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Primăria Craiova, Serv. Administrativ, dosar nr. 27/1903: 462).

Asupra debutului manevrelor regale se conturau treptat informații în presa națională a epocii (*Voința Națională*, 24 septembrie 1903) relatându-se prezența Principelui Ferdinand, însoțit de fratele său Principele Carol de Hohenzollern. Manevrelor s-au desfășurat în proximitatea Craiovei, informații venind din satului Segarcea, unde Principele Ferdinand alături de fratele său au ajuns, însoțiți fiind și de

maiorul Grecianu, locotenent-colonelul Antonescu, maiorul Lupu și prefectul Vrăbiescu. Diferite personalități militare i-au așteptat pe oaspeți pe peronul gării din Sergacea, printre aceștia: generalul Zossima, colonelul Cerchez, cât și alți ofițeri de cavalerie. Notabilitățile satului Sergacea erau de asemenea prezente, proprietari, cât și diferiți oameni veniți să asiste, iar țăranii, în haine populare, erau pregătiți pentru oaspeți. Generalul Zossima a oferit Principelui Ferdinand raportul de situație a trupelor, principele purtând ulterior discuții cu persoanele prezente, printre care dl. Davidescu „de la domeniile coroanei”, dl. Costescu ce deținea calitatea de șef al poștei și telegrafului pe parcursul desfășurării manevrelor regale. S-a mers apoi în sat, în Segarcea, prezența oaspeților înviorând mulțimea, primind din partea țăranilor două petiții. În următoarea zi, la 9 dimineața, Principele Ferdinand împreună cu fratele său au trecut în revistă regimentele 2 și 4 roșiori. Se anticipa că în următoarea zi se va da startul exercițiilor între regimentele 1-6 roșiori, aflându-se sub comanda principelui moștenitor (*Adevărul*, 23 septembrie 1903). Activitățile întreprinse cu ocazia manevrelor au adus și o premiră în domeniul telegrafiei militare, astfel încercându-se telegrafia optică, pe o distanță de 7 km, cu un aparat Mangin, încercare ce s-a dovedit reușită. O serie de detalii arată și felul în care Ferdinand aprecia și era interesat de aspectele tradiționale, țărănești. Principii, plecând de la reședința lor, pe jos, însoțiți de generalul Zossima și aghiotanții, au urmărit cu plăcere o horă care se desfășura chiar în mijlocul drumului. Mergând fără aghiotanți, la întoarcere, au oprit din nou la horă pentru aproximativ o oră, observând cu viu interes jocul țăranilor și soldaților (*Voința Națională*, 25 septembrie 1903).

După ce experimentul telegrafic militar mai sus amintit se desfășurase în ziua de 23 septembrie, în următoare zi, dimineața, Principele Ferdinand la comanda diviziei de cavalerie a realizat manevre, inamicul fiind poziționat în zona Segarcei. Divizia era compusă din 6 regimente de roșiori și trei baterii de artilerie, fiind îndreptată dinspre satul Calopăru, spre Segarcea. Comandanții atât ai brigăzilor cât și regimentelor au primit aprecierea Principelui Ferdinand pentru felul cum s-au desfășurat lucrurile. La manevră a participat de asemenea și Principele Carol (*Adevărul*, 25 septembrie 1903). Problema disponibilităților de cazare amintită anterior, reușise oarecum a se reglementa, cel puțin marile personalități prezente în oraș cu ocazia evenimentelor găsiseră a fi găzduite în diferite locuri, după cum urmează: D. Sturdza era găzduit la Vorvoreanu, V. Lascăr la primarul Nicolae Romanescu, iar Ionel Brătianu la hotelul Minerva. Desigur, Carol I, în vechea tradiție, era găzduit la palatul Glogoveanu (*Adevărul*, 26 septembrie 1903).

La 25 septembrie, primul ministru D. Sturdza a sosit la Craiova, călătorind cu un tren special alături de o serie de atașați militari (francez, german, italian, turc, grec și norvegian), aceștia din urmă în jurul orei 5 plecând spre manevrele regale. Primirea făcută primului ministru la Craiova a fost una călduroasă, fiind întâmpinat de primarul Nicolae Romanescu, prefectii de poliție și județ, notabilități ale orașului, oficialități (*Adevărul*, 27 septembrie 1903). Așa cum s-a putut observa, Principele

Ferdinand asistase la pregătirile manevrelor în prealabil, fiind prezent înainte de sosirea propriu-zisă a regelui, sosire ce era anunțată în presă, precizându-se că Suveranul urma a se deplasa spre manevrele regale, de la Sinaia spre Craiova, trenul însă oprind inițial într-un sat din proximitatea Craiovei, pentru asistarea la manevre, și anume la Sălcuța (*Voința Națională*, 26 septembrie 1903). Așadar la 26 septembrie, ora 6 dimineața. Regele se afla pe peronul gării Sălcuța, rămânând însă în tren până la ora 8, momentul primirii fiind unul deosebit, oamenii veniți a-l vedea pe rege dând dovadă de mult entuziasm, peronul gării fiind „*literalmente tixit de proprietari și popor, care au alergat din toate împrejurimile*”. După o serie de discuții ce au durat câteva minute, Suveranul a plecat alături de statul major, generali și ofițeri, spre Radovan, la 10 kilometri distanță față de Sălcuța, acolo fiind prevăzută a se da prima luptă. Alături de aceștia au mers și diferiți oameni cu ale lor trăsură, curioși a asista la desfășurarea trupelor. Situația manevrelor militare cu o zi în urmă, la data de 25 septembrie, era următoarea: În partea de nord se aflau cinci batalioane de infanterie, iar trei batalioane erau poziționate pe colina Radovanului, aferente șoselei Craiova - Calafat. Divizia de cavalerie ce se afla sub comanda Principelui moștenitor Ferdinand era compusă din cinci regimente de roșiori. Lângă Dâlga și Belciu erau amplasate două baterii, acoperite de trei escadroane, la Segarcea, Sălcuța și Fântânele. Infanteria și artileria se regăseau în partea de sud-vest, în jurul satelor Galicinica, Cioroiul și Perișorul. Trei regimente de călărași compuneau brigada de cavalerie. O baterie era poziționată la Perișor. Pentru 26 septembrie, tema zilei era următoarea: spre Craiova înainta corpul de sud, misiunea fiind de a cuceri trecătorile de peste Jiu, cât și dealurile de la Cârcea. În opoziție, corpul de nord încerca să respingă ofensiva, până la sosirea unor noi trupe dispuse între Craiova și Balș. Manevrelor s-au desfășurat în condiții meteorologice foarte bune (*Adevărul*, 28 septembrie 1903).

Primirea regelui la Craiova s-a așteptat conform programului, în ziua de vineri 26 septembrie 1903, următoarele zile fiind încărcate de evenimente (*Voința Națională*, 27 septembrie 1903.). Tot în ziua de 26, dar în prima parte a zilei, s-au desfășurat luptele în apropierea satului Sălcuța, lupta desfășurându-se între trupele corpului nord-est și trupele corpului sud-vest, trupele generalului Tell înaintau spre Craiova, iar cele ale generalului Gigurtu, unde era și divizia Principelui Ferdinand, aveau obiectivul de apărare a orașului. Armatele ce se înfruntau au debutat printr-o luptă de artilerie. Din trupele generalului Tell s-au remarcat trei regimente de cavalerie care au întreprins o spectaculoasă șarjă contra trupelor principelui, dispunând de cinci regimente de roșiori, s-a reușit a se respinge atacul. Generalul Tell, aflându-se la conducerea unei divizii ce se compunea pe o mare întindere în zona Radovanului, a inițiat o ofensivă contra generalului Cica, ce apăra Craiova. Mișcările militare au continuat până în jurul orei 2 p.m., atunci când semnalul de încetare a luptelor pentru ziua respectivă a fost dat. În cele ce au urmat, Suveranul s-a deplasat la Segarcea, acolo unde a vizitat școala, populația cât și autoritățile locale făcându-i o călduroasă primire. A urmat apoi mult așteptata deplasare atât a Principelui Ferdinand cât și a Regelui Carol I la Craiova, în acest sens, principele a

așteptat în gara Sălcuța sosirea regelui de la Segarcea, urmând împreună deplasarea spre capitala Olteniei (*Adevărul*, 28 septembrie 1903).

Fără a intra în detaliile fastuoasei primiri de la Craiova, de menționat că în oraș s-a ajuns în jurul orei 5 p.m. (*Monitorul Oficial*, 30 septembrie 1903). După mult așteptatul moment de la Craiova, seara, Principele Ferdinand s-a deplasat cu trenul la Segarcea, așteptat fiind a ajunge în jurul orei 7.30 p.m., acolo unde avea stabilit cartierul princiar (*Adevărul*, 28 septembrie 1903).

Ziua următoare, 27 septembrie, se contura ca una a continuării sărbătorii în Craiova, dar totodată și continuarea manevrelor regale, așadar dimineața devreme, în jurul orei 7, statul major al Corpului I armată s-a deplasat la km. 9, deasupra Podariului, urmat de trăsurile atașatilor militari, așteptând sosirea regelui, urmându-i și domnii miniștri Sturdza și Lascăr. În jurul orei 9 a urmat deplasarea cu trăsurile în zona Livezi-Podari, acolo unde erau marcate a se desfășura manevrele pentru ziua respectivă. Suveranul, împreună cu suita sa, era condus de 10 trăsurile, la stânga Suveranului fiind Principele Carol (fratele Principelui moștenitor Ferdinand), iar în a doua trăsură D. Sturdza și V. Lascăr. În ceea ce privește manevrele, în ziua respectivă trupele generalului Gigurtu au fost respinse de trupele generalului Tell, până în satul Podari, confruntarea fiind între trupele de infanterie și cele de artilerie. În vederea desfășurării manevrelor, se realizaseră dinainte tranșee, fiind deosebit de apreciate. Pentru ziua respectivă, 27 septembrie, manevrele s-au încheiat în jurul orei 3 p.m., iar la ora 3 și un sfert a urmat retragerea spre Craiova a Suveranului alături de suita sa, de principii, atașatii militari străini, cât și D. Sturdza și V. Lascăr. După ce prima parte a zilei fusese ocupată de manevre, în cea a doua parte a zilei s-a efectuat o serie de vizite, Biserica Sf. Treime, Școala Profesională, Școala Militară, Penitenciarul Central etc, ca la ora 7 p.m. să aibă loc prânzul regal (*Adevărul*, 29 septembrie 1903), iar pe finalul serii o reprezentație de gală la teatrul din Craiova, în cinstea Suveranului (Rădulescu, 2019: 73).

Un trimis special al ziarului „Adevărul”, prezent la manevrele regale și în Craiova acelei perioade, a furnizat ample detalii cu privire la desfășurarea evenimentelor. Un aspect important este cel legat de clarificarea începerii manevrelor cu câteva zile înainte de programul stabilit, așa cum s-a amintit deja, evenimentele militare desfășurându-se înainte de prezența Regelui Carol I, doar în prezența Principelui Ferdinand care a ajuns cu câteva zile înainte. Așadar, se specifică: „Când zicem deja manevrele regale trebuie să recunoaștem că anticipăm întrucâtva, deoarece adevăratele manevre regale nu încep decât la 25 septembrie; mai toate ziarele însă au început a face dărilor de seamă asupra luptelor de brigadă contra brigadă, în corpul I de armată, intitulându-se tot anticipat - *Manevre Regale* -”. În privința desfășurării acelor zile la Craiova, dimineața se participa la manevrele regale din proximitatea orașului, iar seara se revenea în oraș (*Adevărul*, 30 septembrie 1903).

În următoarea zi, 28 septembrie, la ora 9 dimineața, Regele Carol I alături de Principele Carol, de primul ministru Sturdza, de ministrul de interne Lascăr, alături de Casa Militară, de prefectul județului, s-au deplasat spre satul Preajba, unde în cea

zi urmau a se desfășura manevrele militare. Atașaii militari străini cât și comandantul corpului I de armată se aflau deja acolo la sosirea Suveranului, salutându-l pe acesta cum se cuvine. În privința poziționării trupelor, corpul N-E ocupa poziția de pe dealul Cârcea, ca post înaintat fiind Preajba, acțiunea fiind gândită a-l ataca violent pe adversar, obligându-l a se retrage spre Jiu. Corpul S-V executa măsurători în vederea atacării poziției adversarului. La ora 10 Suveranul se afla la Preajba, observând acțiunea militară. După respectivul moment, Carol I s-a deplasat spre Malul Mare, în perspectiva observării activității celor două cavalerii adverse, apoi parcurgând drumul spre Cârcea, unde a ajuns la orele 12 jumătate, urmărind executarea atacului întreprins de corpul S-V, ofensiva nu reușește a fi una susținută, apărarea inițiind o contraofensivă și obligându-i pe cei dintâi să se retragă spre Jiu. Suveranul a urmărit atacul până aproape de Preajba, ca mai apoi să observe lupta ce s-a desfășurat la nivel de cavalerie. Manevrele pentru respectiva zi au fost încheiate la ordinul său în jurul orei 2 jumătate, după ce în prealabil a discutat cu Principele Ferdinand asupra operațiunilor ce se desfășuraseră în acea zi. După încheiere, Regele a purtat unele discuții cu ofițerii, plecând ulterior spre Craiova, unde a ajuns în jurul orei 3 și jumătate. Și la plecarea de dimineață spre manevre, cât și la întoarcerea în capitala Olteniei, craiovenii au aclamat îndelung pe Suveran, bucuria manifestându-se și pe traseu, prin satele pe unde a trecut (*Monitorul Oficial*, 1 octombrie 1903).

Ziua de luni, 29 septembrie, s-a anunțat o zi specială, dat fiind că în ziua respectivă nu s-au mai ținut manevre militare, fiind pentru Regele Carol I o zi alocată vizitării diferitelor instituții și locuri din Craiova, ca mai apoi, în a doua parte a zilei, să aibă loc momentul festiv al inaugurării Parcului Bibescu (*Monitorul Oficial*, 2 octombrie 1903), un parc al cărui destin s-a conturat în timp ca locul unde s-au desfășurat nenumărate serbări și festivități (S. J. A. N. Dolj, Fond Jean Porubski, dosar VII/12, *Craiova de altădată*: 69).

După inaugurarea parcului Bibescu și întoarcerea la reședința sa, în cinstea Suveranului, la ora 7 p.m., s-a ținut un mare banchet la care au participat numeroși ofițeri dar și oameni politici, precum primul ministru D. Studza, ministrul de interne V. Lascăr, prefectul județului Dolj, primarul Craiovei, dar și atașaii militari străini, autorități civile, notabilități ale orașului, în total 160 de oameni. Suveranul a ținut un toast pentru Craiova și craioveni, subliniind mulțumirea de care a avut parte asistând la manevrele regale: „*Multe și scumpe legături ne unesc cu Oltenia, de aici a plecat întâiul semnal al războiului pentru neatârnnare. De aici armata a trecut Dunărea, spre a se întoarcere acoperită de lauri. Numele Calafatului și al Corabiei rămân dar neșterse din amintirea noastră. Bătălia de la Rahova a fost în mare parte câștigată de olteni, cu sângele lor ei au pecetluit această frumoasă izbândă (...)*”. În continuare Suveranul a subliniat importanța armatei în privința încrederii, armata fiind o garanție puternică a țării. Corpul I de armată era în mesajul regelui foarte apreciat pentru felul în care s-a comportat în contextul manevrelor regale, Suveranul arătându-se pe deplin mulțumit, încheind discursul prin a spune: „*Cu inima recunoașcătoare, închin paharul meu pentru Craiova, urând orașului toată fericirea, cetățenilor sănătate și județului Dolj prosperitate*” (*Monitorul Oficial*, 2 octombrie 1903). Generosului mesaj al regelui i-a

răspuns generalul Popescu, evidențiind succesul operațiunilor date cu ocazia manevrelor regale, subliniind calitățile soldatului român, ce face față diferitelor situații, pe ploaie sau arșiță. Banchetul a avut loc la Gimnaziul militar, în sala de gimnastică, decorată cu arme, culori naționale etc. Au urmat discuții prelungite până la ora 10 jumătate seara, atunci când Suveranul s-a retras la palatul Glogoveanu. În timpul acelei seri de 29 septembrie, orașul a fost iluminat, pe străzi populația fiind prezentă în număr mare (*Monitorul Oficial*, 2 octombrie 1903).

În ultima zi a șederii la Craiova, marți 30 septembrie 1903, Suveranul împreună cu Principele Carol, cât și cu statul major regal, au plecat de la reședința din Craiova îndreptându-se spre câmpia de la S-V de oraș, pentru trecerea în revistă a trupelor participante la manevrele regale desfășurate în zilele precedente. Trupele se aflau desfășurate pe trei linii: în prima linie infanteria, în a doua linie artileria, geniul și ambulanțele, iar în linia a treia cavaleria și bateriile. După ce a salutat atașatii militari, Regele Carol I a mers la flancul drept al trupelor, acolo unde se afla generalul Popescu, ce i-a prezentat acestuia raportul. Revista trupelor s-a bucurat de o mare mulțime de oameni prezentă, veniți cu trăsurile sau pe jos, în acest sens poliția cu greu reușind să facă ordine. Tot prezente erau și autoritățile locale, miniștrii, elevii și elevele școlilor din oraș, formându-se astfel o adevărată mulțime. Trupele se afișau într-o ținută foarte frumoasă, dând dovadă de energie cu toate că erau la finalul unor zile grele de activități militare, o căldură mare și un praf orbitor. După revistă, trupele s-au poziționat în coloană în vederea defilării, iar după aceasta, Suveranul a discutat cu toți ofițerii superiori, într-un mod critic, în privința a ceea ce a mers bine sau mai puțin bine cu ocazia manevrelor, dând detalii și oferind recomandări pe viitor, mulțumind la final comandantului corpului I de armată și ofițerilor prezenți la manevre (*Monitorul Oficial*, 3 octombrie 1903).

Revista trupelor din dimineața de 30 septembrie a fost și ultimul eveniment al vizitei regale realizate la Craiova în acel an 1903. Alături de principii, și nu numai, Suveranul și-a urmat deplasarea spre gara orașului, pe drum fiind prezentă o numeroasă populație ce îi aclama pe înalții oaspeți. Oamenii erau atât pe străzi cât și la ferestre, aruncând în drum buchete de flori. La gară Suveranul a fost așteptat de autoritățile civile, o mulțime de oameni fiind prezentă la gară, oameni veniți din oraș sau județ. Doamnele din societatea craioveană au oferit buchete de flori regelui, acesta purtând pentru un timp discuții cu persoanele de față, apreciind încă o dată găzduirea ce i-a fost făcută la Craiova. Trecând prin fața companiei de onoare, Suveranul s-a urcat în tren, plecând din Craiova în jurul orei 2, în ovațiile publicului prezent (*Monitorul Oficial*, 3 octombrie 1903). La final, Craiova a oferit și un dar Familiei Regale pentru noul născut Principele Nicolae, cadou ce se stabilise a fi înmănat la Sinaia Principesei Maria, în data de 3 octombrie 1903 (S. J. A. N. Dolj, *Fond Epitropia Bisericii Madona Dudu*, dosar nr. 24/1903: 294).

În privința manevrelor regale, mai precis a importanței acestora, ziarul „Adevărul” oferea explicații privind însemnătatea manevrelor militare, realizate de toate armatele europene, constituindu-se o instituție permanentă, ele oferind

imaginea corectă a pregătirii militare pe care o țară o are, știindu-se în ce măsură armata poate apăra patria. În decursul manevrelor un aspect esențial este acela al efortului militar, fiind total diferit față de parade, acolo unde armata nu acționează ca la război. În cadrul manevrelor se pot contura cele mai ridicate exigențe militare la care sunt supuși atât soldații cât și ofițerii, oferind cadrul propice cunoașterii situației reale a armatei. În privința atașailor militari străini ce au participat la manevrele de la Craiova, intervievați, aceștia s-au arătat plăcut impresionați de cele văzute. De exemplu atașatul german a fost impresionat de infanteria română și rezistența soldaților, dar și ținuta la parada militară. În privința atașatului austriac, acesta a remarcat de asemenea infanteria, fiind impresionat în special de una dintre zilele foarte călduroase când soldații români au arătat o rezistență ieșită din comun (*Adevărul*, 3 octombrie 1903).

Regele și-a manifestat dorința în vederea oferirii de decorații, în acest sens primarul Romanescu a alcătuit un tablou cu 120 de persoane din oraș, pe care l-a înaintat ministrului de interne. La momentul respectiv se aștepta ca regele de îndată să și semneze decretele pentru conferirea decorațiilor celor 120 de craioveni (*Adevărul*, 4 octombrie 1903). În ziarul mai sus amintit, tot în privința decorațiilor, apare și un text prin care, într-o notă comică și ironică, se transmitea că o persoană nu fusese decorată: „Imediat după terminarea manevrelor a avut loc o ploaie cu decorații, care a făcut numeroase ravagii în butonierele încă virgine ale craiovenilor (...) Dar ceea ce este neauzit, nepomenit, infam, este că toată Craiova a fost decorată, numai unul n-a fost decorat: fiul cel mai demn, cel mai genial, cel mai ilustru din Cetatea Banilor, simpaticul bărbat de stat, poet și epigramist, Aurică Blegescu! (...) dar Aurică Blegescu nu are nevoie de decorații, el are idei de reforme, el e adversarul regimului, el n-are nevoie de decorații, căci el însuși e o decorație, o tapițerie a Craiovei! Nu-i trimtem deci condoleanțe, ci strigăm: sus Aurică! Numai tu nu ești decorat în această ingrătă țară! Onoare ție ” (*Adevărul*, 4 octombrie 1903).

Deosebit de importante sunt impresiile intime ale Regelui Carol I cu privire la vizita de la Craiova, pe care le împărtășește într-o scrisoare adresată fratelui său Leopold, impresii așadar într-o formă necosmetizată, neoficială. În scrisoarea trimisă la începutul lunii octombrie 1903, Suveranul îi relatează fratelui său cu privire la evenimentele desfășurate: „Carlo, care din păcate ne-a părăsit prea repede, îți va fi povestit multe. Cred că a plecat de aici cu cele mai bune impresii și că va judeca cele văzute și trăite cu căldura inimii sale și cu un viu interes. Manevrele au fost bine organizate, strategic vorbind, dar defectuos executate din punct de vedere tactic, extinderea liniilor frontului a fost prea mare. În critica mea am putut să laud ținuta și rezistența trupelor, dar a trebuit să dojenesc dispozițiile comandanților trupelor (...). Am suportat bine oboseala, arșița și praful, deși zilele de manevră au fost extrem de solicitante. Primirea de la Craiova a fost nespuse de frumoasă, entuziasmul călduros al populației de-a dreptul emoționant; acolo s-a putut vedea ce rădăcini adânci a prins dinastia în România. La banchetul cel mare am evidențiat în toastul meu faptul că Valahia Mică (Oltenia) este cea mai frumoasă perlă a Coroanei mele, care se distinge în mod special prin dragostea și devotamentul ei față de patrie și acolo bat cele mai credincioase inimi românești. Din nefericire, din cauza suferinței ei de la picioare, care totuși s-a ameliorat mult, Elisabeta nu m-a putut însoți, așa că până la urmă

mie mi-au revenit îndatoririle față de doamne, dintre care multe sunt nemaipomenit de frumoase și distinse” (Cristescu, 2012: 493-494).

Se încheia astfel un final de septembrie 1903 plin de evenimente pentru orașul Craiova, evenimente care așa cum s-a amintit și anterior, au reprezentat pe lângă un moment festiv, și o adevărată provocare din perspectivă organizatorică, atât pentru armată cât și pentru administrația locală.

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**A PATH TO AN ASCENDING CAREER: THE “DELEGATED PREFECTS”
IN TRANSYLVANIA, 1918–1928¹**

Andrei Florin SORA*

Abstract

In Romania, in the first decade after World War I, the prefect, in his capacity as chief of the county administration, was the most important representative of the State at the local level. As a political official with a vital role in ensuring electoral success for the governing parties, he was appointed by Royal Decree, upon recommendation of the Ministry of the Interior. Exceptions were made for those designated by the Ministry of the Interior as delegated prefects, usually for a limited period, but with the same responsibilities as permanent prefects. After 1918, the number of delegated prefects in Romania increased; this solution was often preferred for counties considered challenging to manage, including those with a high percentage of ethnic minorities along the border or where the local branches of the governing party were weak. In this article, we focus our analysis on the “delegated prefects” in the 15 counties of Transylvania (the former principality of Transylvania) during the first ten years of Romanian rule. The aim of this research is twofold. Firstly, to provide an overview of the situation, focusing on the legal framework governing the system of delegated prefects. Secondly, to undertake an analysis of this category in terms of educational, social, and professional background.

Key words: prefects, delegated prefects, administrative elites, “regăteni”, Transylvania, interwar Romania.

A modern legal framework, decentralization, the stability of public office positions, and the administration’s independence from the political establishment were topics frequently discussed before World War I and remained subject to ever-growing debate even after the 1918 unification of Greater Romania. Between 1918 and 1925, Romania had no fewer than four administrative regimes, to which we can add the state of siege. Initially, the provisional authorities in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania established, by decree, that the old regulations issued by the previous authorities (Austria-Hungary and Russia) remained in force, with the proviso that the acts excepted should be specified (Sora, 2011: 82). Gradually, in Bessarabia from 1918, and in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian state from 1920 onward, Romanian (Old Kingdom) legislation was introduced, accompanied by the arrival of civil servants from the Old Kingdom. The unification

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and uniformization of the administration were accomplished by adopting the Administrative Law on June 14th, 1925 (effective from January 1st, 1926). The politicians from the Old Kingdom understood the unification of 1918 more as the integration of the new provinces into an already existing system, raising doubts about its functionality. Irina Livezeanu correctly asserts that “the unification was accomplished largely under the aegis and on the terms of the Old Kingdom, whose institutions played a disproportionate role in the expanded state ... In short, institutionally and politically, the Old Kingdom was the cornerstone of the Greater Romanian state” (Livezeanu, 1995: 29).

In this new territorial framework, the prefect, the government's most important representative at the county level, was envisioned as a symbol of the Romanian state and an instrument of centralization, thereby guaranteeing Bucharest's control (Sora, 2022: 298). In a country that introduced universal manhood suffrage in 1919, the prefect played a crucial role in ensuring the party government's victory in elections, which were largely dominated by “regățeni” (citizens of the Old Kingdom of Romania). It should be noted that all the general parliamentary elections held between November 1919 (the first elections in Greater Romania) and July 1927 were organized under a government led by political leaders from the Old Kingdom. Furthermore, the Romanian Constitutions (1866, 1923) gave the King the right to dismiss the prime minister, appoint a new one, and demand the dissolution of the Parliament. Therefore, with the administration's help, the new government organized elections, which it usually won.

Between December 1918 and April 1920, the Transylvanian Provisional Government (the Governing Council/*Consiliul Dirigent*) nominated the prefects, a title used in the Old Kingdom for county chiefs, which replaced that of *fóispán* (lord lieutenant). On November 11, 1928, to end a period of political unrest, the Regency Council agreed to form the government and take power. The results of the November 1919 parliamentary elections, which were largely free, led to the formation of a coalition government dominated by the Romanian National Party of Transylvania and the Peasant Party of the Old Kingdom. This government, led by Alexandru Vaida Voevod from Transylvania, lasted only until March 1920, when King Ferdinand I decided to rely on General Averescu and the politicians from the Old Kingdom. From March 1920 to November 1928, seven governments came and went, all dominated by parties and political leaders from the Old Kingdom, the longest-lasting being that of Ion I.C. Brătianu (January 1922 – March 1926).

After the Romanian government dissolved in April 1920 the regional autonomous bodies, the Ministry of the Interior (then headed by Prime Minister Averescu) recommended new prefects for Transylvania to the King. Therefore, the nomination of delegated prefects became a way for the Romanian government and the political parties from the Old Kingdom to strengthen their power and authority. It was common for a delegated prefect to be a civil servant or an active officer from the Old Kingdom, who was appointed prefect (“titular”) after some time. Keeping a

delegated prefect in a county for a long period and during critical moments (such as elections) became a strategy to reinforce not only the central authority of the state but also the power of the governing parties.

This article investigates who the delegated prefects were in the 15 counties of Transylvania (the former principality of Transylvania) from December 1918 to November 1928, and why this practice was adopted, including its reasons and outcomes. In recent Romanian historiography, there has been sustained concern about local administration and the agents of central power in the regions that united with Romania in 1918: the prefect (lord lieutenants); the deputy head of a county administration (prefecture director) – *subprefect* in the former counties that belonged before 1918 to the Austria-Hungary/ *director de prefectură* – in the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia, the high-sheriff (district chief), and the *prim-pretor* in the former counties that belonged before 1918 to the Austria-Hungary/ *administrator de plasă* – in the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia). Furthermore, there is increased attention, especially in the counties of the former principality of Transylvania, before and after 1918. There are multiple reasons to favor these areas: the former territories of Austria-Hungary before 1918 allow for more complex comparative research (the imperial period and that of a successor state) and comparisons with other provinces of the Habsburg Empire. In addition, there is a high level of international historiographical interest in the Habsburg monarchy and its post-imperial legacies, the successor states of Austria-Hungary, and the mobility of elites under different political regimes. We can also add that, compared to the Old Kingdom, there are more reference works (dictionaries, encyclopedias), published memoirs, digitized press to date, but also greater local interest in recovering the past through local monographs, biographical studies, dictionaries of local personalities or of the 1918 Romanian Union (Sora, 2022: 299-300). Among the studies focusing on public administration and, in particular, on the members of the prefectural corps in Transylvania before and after 1918, we mention those by Gábor Egry (2017), Judit Pál (2018), Judit Pál and Vlad Popovici (2020, 2022, 2023), Judit Pál and Szilárd Ferenczi (2020), Andrei Florin Sora (2019, 2025), and Zoltán Györke (2025).

The prefect was the county's supervisor of all public services. His responsibilities covered almost all areas of public administration, including maintaining public order and security (as head of the county police) and overseeing the enforcement and application of laws. He was responsible for public health, the conservation of public property, and the preservation of public morality, among other things. The prefect's position was essentially political (Sora, 2022: 305). The loyalty of the prefect towards the governing Party can be easily observed by the practice of resignation from the prefect position a few days after the fall of the government. However, even if he was a political officeholder, to be appointed prefect (permanent/titular or delegate), the candidate had first to meet the general requirements for civil servants: Romanian citizenship, of legal age (at least 21 years

old), medically eligible, no criminal convictions, to have completed military service (for men), and all civil and political rights (Györke, 2010: 84).

The “titular” prefect was appointed by royal decree, following a proposal by the Minister of the Interior, and the prefect delegated to this position, for a fixed or indefinite period, was appointed by ministerial decree. Until January 1, 1926, prefecture directors and district administrators (*administratori de plasă/ prim-pretori*), many of whom became delegated prefects during the period studied, were appointed by royal decree; after that date—which coincides with the entry into force of the administrative law of June 14, 1925—they were appointed by ministerial decree, following from 1909 a national competition organized by the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior (Sora, 2011: 285). Certain exemptions were granted by law or by the Ministry of the Interior to district administrators and sub-prefects in Transylvania and Bukovina until January 1, 1926, and in Bessarabia only in the early years of Romanian rule.

With the adoption of universal manhood suffrage in 1919, the prefects' role as the government's electoral agents increased. This task was at odds with their role as guardians of the legality of elections, a role that was difficult to reconcile with their status as political appointees. As in France, the Romanian prefect was an “election maker” (Karila-Cohen, Tanguy: 2022, 173). The legislative elections, and even the local ones, were the main criteria for assessing the prefect's competence. A poor electoral outcome could lead to the removal of the prefect, who was seen as the main responsible (Sora, 2011: 325-326).

In conclusion, the political subordination of the prefects outweighed professional competence. For the political elite and public opinion, the prefect's authority (including winning the election for the governing Party) depended heavily on prior public service experience, personal persuasion, and status as a reserve or active-duty Army officer. This quality was particularly valued in a society deeply shaped by the experience of the First World War, and the prefect was the chief of the county police, able to give orders to the Gendarmerie and Army units in particular situations. Other essential but not mandatory factors that influenced the nomination and retention of the job were: support from the local party organization; authority and effective leadership to persuade other public officials to support the governing Party; familiarity with the county; and membership in one or more power networks.

Starting in 1864, the prefecture director (*directorul de prefectură*), as his first subordinate, could temporarily replace the prefect. Delegating the prefect's powers to another civil servant was a practice used more intensively after 1895, when not only the director of the Prefecture/sub-prefect in the 1925 Law, but also district administrators (high sheriffs) and high officials from the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior were assigned to serve as substitutes for the prefect for a limited period. However, this practice remained limited until 1918. The nomination of delegated prefects for an indefinite period was more frequent after 1919, both in the Old Kingdom and in the newly integrated Romanian state territories. It became

the norm in the counties of the Old Kingdom during the General Văitoianu government (September 27 – November 30, 1919) to ensure the legality of the first post-war elections. In November 1919, for all 34 counties in the Old Kingdom, delegated prefects were in place; 85% of them were magistrates (judges, court presidents, prosecutors, and advisers at the Courts of Appeal). With this measure, Prime Minister Văitoianu wanted to show that he would organize free elections. The magistrates and other public officials were not party members. Although appointing magistrates as delegated prefects was noticeable in other governments, this strategic choice was new. It was soon exported to the new Romanian provinces with the opposite objective of strengthening the governing party in those territories.

This interim period for a delegate prefect could last from a day to more than a year. From an administrative point of view, this nomination served as a transition between the dismissal or removal of a prefect and the nomination of a new one, especially at the beginning of a new government or when the party leadership, at the local and national levels, had not yet designated a candidate for the post. The delegated prefect had all the duties and responsibilities of the titular prefects, as well as nearly the same authority. He received some benefits from this dignity: the right to use an official car with a driver, a law enforcement escort, an official residence, etc. (if he was not the owner of a house at the county seat). On the other hand, he did not take an oath during the nomination as delegated prefect. Usually, he did not receive the salary of a titular prefect, except for an allowance and other expenses. In many cases, they were paid for their actual job (which explains why the administrative general inspectors did not oppose the appointment as deputy prefects). However, the appointment as delegated prefect was a significant springboard towards becoming a permanent prefect, standing for election to parliament, gaining influence at the local level, and establishing close contacts with Bucharest.

To our knowledge, the practice of delegated prefects (excluding the short periods when the “titular”/permanent prefect was missing and the prefecture director/sub-prefect took over his duties) was used only twice in the territories under the jurisdiction of the Transylvanian Governing Council until the appointment of the Averescu government and the dissolution of this autonomous body (March – April 1920). Even though we did not consider it to be modeled on the delegate prefect system, we must mention the case of Lieutenant Colonel Valer Neamțu, delegate (*girant*) at the Prefecture of the County of Ciuc, but also at the prefecture of the neighboring county of Odorhei (possibly here as the incumbent), both counties with a Hungarian majority. Neamțu, a former officer of the Austro-Hungarian Army, had the responsibility to administer the county of Ciuc until the effective entry into office of the prefect Gheorghe Dubleșiu (appointed in April 1919). However, we cannot say that this provisional leadership was modeled on the system of delegated prefects in the Old Kingdom. After Dubleșiu's appointment, Neamțu was appointed (confirmed) prefect of Odorhei County. The second case is better documented.

Octavian Felecan, first-notary and later sub-prefect in Sălaj County, was delegated at the end of January 1920 (effective February 1) to take charge of the Turda-Arieș prefecture, following the promotion of the prefect Zosim Chirtop to the position of secretary general of the Interior Department of the Governing Council. Felecan became “titular” prefect on May 10, 1920, a few days before the parliamentary elections, which shows, on the one hand, that he accepted political subordination to the People's Party and to Prime Minister Al. Averescu, and on the other hand, the lack of loyal local elements, compensated by the appointment as prefects (delegate or permanent) of persons originating from the Old Kingdom or who had connections with the Romanian state before December 1918, including as employees (Sora, 2025a: 152-154).

The small number of delegated prefects in the territories under the jurisdiction of the Transylvanian Governing Council until April 1920 is due to at least four reasons: the delegation to the function of *főispán* (prefect) was not used in Hungary before 1918; the continued validity of Hungarian administrative laws; there is a pool of capable, well-trained people who have a good relationship with the leadership of the Romanian National Party; we have continuity in the leadership of the province. Even though the *főispán* was like the Romanian prefect, a political appointee of the government, he represented more local interests than in the Old Kingdom and offered greater stability in this role. The prefects of the Governing Council were important local figures (known before 1918 for their opposition to the Hungarian government), members of the Romanian elite, and embedded in local networks. For those reasons, Averescu and the People's Party tried to recruit some prefects of the Governing Council.

Shortly after the dissolution of the regional bodies in April 1920, General Averescu's government assumed total control of county administration, including the appointment of prefects in counties that had belonged to Austria-Hungary before 1918. We should mention that since the beginning of Romanian administration in Bessarabia, the prefects have been appointed by the Romanian government. The People's Party (the Governmental Party) did not yet have local organizations, leaders, and members in all Transylvanian counties for future elections. The Parliamentary elections scheduled for May 1920 were postponed in Transylvania, taking place on June 4th (for the Assembly of Deputies) and June 6-7 (for the Senate). The government used this delay to recruit (former) leaders and members of the Romanian National Party and ensure they had loyal prefects.

The People's Party/the Government sought the support/adhesion of the “titular” prefects, negotiating with many of them. The first changes in the prefect dignity were made a month after the Averescu government's nomination. Only five of the 15 prefects of the Governing Council in the Transylvanian counties continued to organize the Parliamentary Elections for the People's Party, Felecan being appointed permanent prefect. The “titular” prefects named by the Governing Council who did not accept membership in the People's Party either submitted their resignations or were dismissed. Six new prefects were appointed by Royal Decree

(as titular), and another four were appointed as delegated prefects (Petru Meteș, magistrate – Alba de Jos County; Mihail R. Sturdza, diplomate from the Old Kingdom – Cojocna County; Vasile Ianza, subprefect – Hunedoara County; Valer Neamțu – Târnava Mică County). As in the Old Kingdom and Transylvania, prefects were often significant members of the ruling political formation. Indeed, in the spring of 1920, some prefects appointed or retained by the Averescu government also established local branches, as Victor Moldovan recalls in the case of prefect Virgil Al. I. Popescu presided on May 13, 1920, at the Constituent Assembly of the People's Party in Bistrița-Năsăud County (Moldovan, 2016: 103).

What were the main reasons for appointing delegated prefects (especially regarding the 15 Counties of Transylvania from April 1920 to November 11, 1928)?

Usually, after the dissolution of the Parliament, the new government promptly organized elections. This policy aimed not only to legitimize the King's designation of the new prime minister but also to prevent time for growing discontent and for the opposition to join forces. Therefore, a new government was in a rush to appoint new prefects, even if they did not always have the candidates' or the local leaders' consent. As in other parts of Romania, the system of appointing delegated prefects continued after May 1920. The longest term of office for a delegated prefect in the counties of Transylvania during the period 1918–1928 was that of Ioan Tulbure, who served as delegated prefect of Făgăraș County between April 1 and November 20, 1926, although this was briefer, for example, than the mandate of Vasile Boneu, chief notary and delegated prefect of Arad County between April 1, 1926, and June 7, 1927. In fact, during the period surveyed, in the 15 counties of Transylvania, unlike in other regions of the country, terms of office for prefects were shorter.

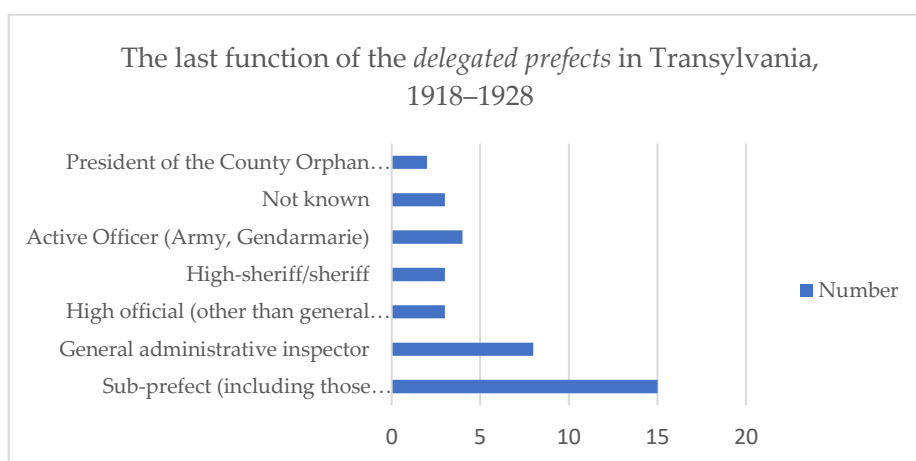
When there was no favoured candidate for the future chief of the county, or when local leaders and those from the National Executive Committee of the Government Party did not agree on the nominee, the appointment of a delegated (interim) prefect seemed a good solution. The system of delegated prefects was a powerful and effective way to consolidate the central administration's and Old Kingdom politicians' control over the new territories. From December 1918 to November 1928, around 30 % of the total number of nominations and confirmations as prefects were delegated. However, except the Știrbey government, the other governments in power between March 1920 and November 1928, all dominated by the political elites of the Old Kingdom, did not use the delegated prefects practice as an instrument to appoint at the head of the Transylvanian counties people from the Old Kingdom or Transylvanians with pre-1918 ties to the Romanian state.

A weak government at the national level (for example, the Știrbey government in June 1927) or at the regional level – in our case study, Transylvania (for instance, the second Averescu government or Take Ionescu government) – prefers to use more of the system of delegated prefects, especially in the moments to prepare the parliamentary elections. This was used in moments when there was a

lack of people capable of winning the polls and being faithful to those who appointed them, appreciated, respected, or little feared by the administration and citizens, but also accepted by the partisans and party members in the territory. It was easier to appoint a delegated prefect, a higher civil servant (general administrative inspector), a magistrate, or the prefecture director.

The Știrbey government chose not to appoint permanent prefects in any county. The appointment of delegated prefects with experience in local (not all in the same county) or central administration could have been a transitional measure, but it also showed a lack of political support at the local level, given that most of the prefects of the Averescu government had resigned or were about to do so. In addition to prefecture directors (sub-prefects) and district chiefs, a substantial number of active military personnel — commanders of gendarmerie brigades (in Brașov County: Lieutenant Colonel Paul Ionescu, from the Rural Gendarmerie; in Someș County: Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Ștefănescu, commander of the 5th Gendarmerie Regiment in Cetatea Albă) — or from the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior (directors, general administrative inspectors, such as Paul Goma or Julien Peter). This preference for appointing delegates also meant that nine of the 17 prefects (two appointments in two counties) appointed between June 5 and June 20, 1927, were originally from the Old Kingdom.

On the contrary, although the government led by Ion I.C. Brătianu continued to use the system of delegated prefects, the PNL—the first party with nationwide organizations (1921)—had established strong local organizations in Transylvania, some with the support of Transylvanians with whom it had close ties before 1918 and who had lived for a time in the Old Kingdom (Alexandru Lapedatu, Solomon Haliță, Alexandru Iteanu, Petru Meteș). We observe a similar pattern in the Averescu III government, even though in March 1926 the People's Party did not have strong organizations in many counties; it relied on people with whom Averescu had collaborated between March 1920 and December 1921.



Until the 1925 law came into effect, the admission criteria for candidates for the prefect position were specific to public functions: Romanian citizenship and not being deprived of civil and political rights. It should be noted that in the Old Kingdom, many of the prefects had higher education, given the prestige and power of the position, and were recruited mainly from among the local elite. The position of prefect served as an escape route for people considered administratively qualified but without a university degree in law or State/Administrative sciences. The increase in the number of central government agents in the territory with a degree in law or state/administrative sciences was aided by contributions from Transylvania and Bukovina. From January 1, 1926, the legal minimum age to be nominated as a prefect (30 years old) and to hold the position was a diploma from a state-recognized higher education institution (from 1929, a university degree). Still, again, the law of June 14, 1925, followed by others, maintained certain or modified exemptions for prefects who had held this position for more than one year (1929 Law - for MPs more than three terms) for a fixed or indefinite period (Sora, 2011: 240-241).

Instead, starting in 1892, their subordinates (prefecture directors and district chiefs) were required to have a degree in law or state sciences. Still, exemptions from the law were granted. Especially after 1908, the percentage of the deputy head of a county administration (*director de prefectură*) and high sheriffs/district chiefs (titles used: *subprefect* before 1904; *inspector comunal* between 1904 and 1908, *administrator de plasă* after 1908) increased substantially, and we also witnessed a gradual professionalization, aided by greater stability in office (Sora, 2011: 230-246). By a ministerial decision of January 3, 1922 (published on January 6, 1922, in the *Monitorul Oficial/Official Gazette*), the admission requirements for the “aptitude and capacity exam for access to the position of district administrator” were: “a degree recognized by the State as a doctor, graduate in law or political science, doctor of medicine, but with two years' experience as a district doctor, engineer with at least two years' seniority in the civil service; captain or lieutenant recently placed in reserve, well noted by his superiors; former rural gendarmerie officer; first-class municipal notaries with at least four years' seniority in this grade, provided they have completed notary school.” (Sora, 2011: 237).

During the interwar period, a larger percentage of prefects in the former territories of Austria-Hungary held higher-education degrees than those in the Old Kingdom and, in particular, in Bessarabia (Sora, 2011: 291). Between the Old Kingdom and Transylvania, the differences in higher education degrees (generally in law) were not substantial, but they were greater regarding the number of doctors of legal sciences, which was higher in Transylvania. Given that many of the delegated prefects in Transylvania are recruited from among general administrative inspectors, Prefecture high sheriffs, chief notaries, and magistrates, the number of higher-education graduates (especially in law) approaches 100%, if we exclude military personnel. Among those with higher education but without a law degree, we first mention Gheorghe Baiulescu, a medical doctor. On the other hand, we can

equate (as the legislation of the time often does) graduation from a higher officer school with a degree in higher education.

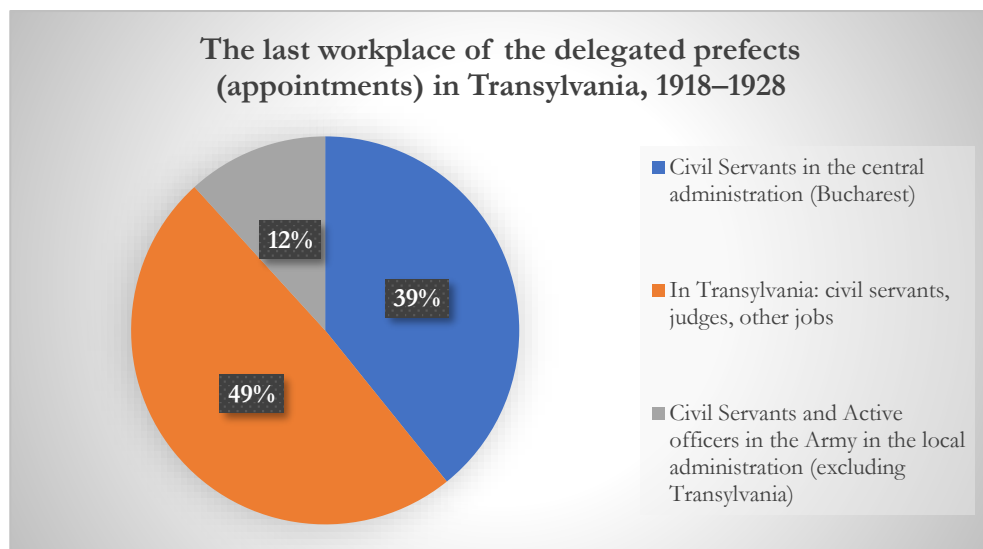
The Romanian governments, dominated by politicians from the Old Kingdom, in addition to appointing prefects, sub-prefects, and district administrators from these regions to the new provinces (Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania, Banat, Crișana), were more open to recruiting people who were originally from or had previously worked in the Old Kingdom. The rise of the Old Kingdom natives to positions of power at the local level was much more intense in Bessarabia and less so in the former territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, due to local resistance, the greater influence of the Romanian elites, and the greater presence of people with higher legal education, some of whom had worked in local administration before 1918 or were employed by the new Romanian regional bodies. In the first years after 1918, there was a logical argument (not always correct): civil servants, officers, and politicians of the Romanian state before 1918 (some of whom were born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire but had careers in the Old Kingdom) were familiar with Romanian legislation. In addition to these considerations, another, often decisive, reason was that these men were loyal, first and foremost, to the political networks in power (from the Old Kingdom) and were already integrated into them.

Especially in Transylvania, instead of proposing candidates from the Old Kingdom as permanent prefects or local people with no political support in the county (even though they claimed to be supporters of the ruling party), the governments chose in many cases to appoint delegated prefects who were civil servants from local administrations (whether in the same county or not), such as sub-prefects/Prefecture directors, chief administrators, sheriffs (*pretori* – deputies of *prim-pretor* in Transylvania) or presidents of the County Orphan Court. In addition, magistrates or higher officers in the Gendarmerie or the Army were also appointed as delegated prefects. Some of these individuals could have other career aspirations, such as becoming later MPs or government members, especially the magistrates. In contrast, others, such as sub-prefects, were required by law to accept promotion as prefect delegates.

The selection of senior officers (including retired generals) or general administrative inspectors as prefect delegates has become increasingly common at the head of Prefectures. In contrast, in both cases, many delegated prefects had fewer ties to the county. This feature is more evident in Bessarabia than in Transylvania or Bukovina. The activity of delegated prefects was not limited to carrying out government orders and securing electoral victories for government candidates, but was also shaped by their undeclared political options, friendships, kinship ties, and patronage and clientelism networks. For general administrative inspectors, there is no clear path to advancement. This post was more significant within the Ministry of the Interior hierarchy than the prefect's, but the prefect's real power was greater. It could more easily influence local politics and economic interests. Preserving regional

influence could be an answer to the choice of general administrative inspector Gheorghe Baiulescu, former prefect of Brașov (January 1919 – December 1920), to be appointed as the delegated prefect of the county of Brașov twice during the studied period (December 1921 – January 1922, February – July 1923). These are the only appointments of general administrative inspector Baiulescu as delegated prefect. Another preference of a general administrative inspector for counties in the former Austro-Hungarian territories is Julian Peter (in Ciuc, Turda-Arieș, Maramureș, Bihor, and Sălaj Counties), born in Switzerland but married to a Romanian woman from Transylvania (see Peter's biography in Chinezu, 2011: 72-75).

In the new provinces, divergences between the *regățeni* (inhabitants of the regions of the Old Kingdom) and the local elites were caused not only by a lack of trust at the leadership level or by competition for positions, but also by clashes of different mentalities, traditions, and administrative education backgrounds. The degree to which the administrative agents of the Old Kingdom were spread across the country varied from region to region: highly visible in Bessarabia, limited in Bukovina and Transylvania. In this last province, few prefects and delegated prefects were born in the Old Kingdom. However, we need to add to this all those born in Transylvania who, before 1918, held a job in the Old Kingdom (for example, the general administrative inspector Septimiu Mureșanu) or/and/or supported Romanian interests during the war.



We have identified three high sheriffs (*administrator de plasă/prim-pretor*) who were appointed as delegated sub-prefects on the same day or a few days after assuming duty as delegated prefects. Furthermore, Virgil Bărcănescu, *administrator de plasă* in the county of Vlașca (Old Kingdom, in the proximity of Bucharest), was

nominated on June 8th, 1927, by the government of Barbu Știrbey to be delegated sub-prefect of Mureș County. In this post, he was empowered as a delegated prefect. Four months later, he was appointed permanent prefect by Ionel Brătianu in a county (Mureș-Turda) with fierce opposition against the National Liberal Party and a substantial Hungarian minority.

On April 15, 1920, Petru Meteș (1886–1946), the first President of the Court of Law in Brașov, was selected by the Governing Council to fill the office of prefect for Alba de Jos County. Six months later, he was transferred by the Averescu government and appointed prefect of Cojocna (Cluj) County. On January 1, 1921, he was appointed by a Royal Decree as a permanent prefect, indicating his political involvement within the governing Party (the People's Party), which lacked leaders and members in Transylvania. Through this position, which gave him greater public visibility and enabled him to build a support network, Petru Meteș seems to have sought an entry into politics. He succeeded in retaining his rank as prefect under the brief government of Take Ionescu (December 1921 – January 1922) and, with the help of Alexandru Lapedatu, in the first year of the Ion I.C. Brătianu Cabinet. In February 1923, he chose to run for the Chamber of Deputies in the Ighiu constituency in Alba de Jos County as the government (National Liberal Party) candidate. The opposition press fiercely attacked his candidacy, mentioning his “anti-Romanian” deeds before 1914. With the help of the local authorities, Petru Meteș won the elections. He served as deputy between 1923 and 1926 (see Meteș's biography in Sora, 2025b).

At first glance, the strangest nomination seems to be that of the diplomat Mihai Sturdza. From an influential noble family of the Old Kingdom, he was a member of the commission charged with enlisting Romanian soldiers from Austro-Hungarian Army prisoners of war in Italy to volunteer for the Romanian Army. In his memoirs, he mentions that in April 1920, he put his diplomatic career on hold, being appointed delegated prefect of Cojocna county and Cluj city: “where I thought that more subtle methods and more diplomatic attitudes could lay the foundations for a beginning of reconciliation between Romanians and the most important national minority” (Sturdza 1994: 61). Later, he became the first secretary of the legation in Budapest. In the opposition press, he is viewed as a traitor because his best friends in Cluj were Hungarian nobles (*Cine sunt purificatorii*: 1). We believe that the nomination as delegate prefect of Cojocna County was part of Sturdza's strategy to obtain the post in Budapest and was endorsed by the Averescu government due to his previous post in Italy and the ties he had forged with various Transylvanian political leaders.

On the other hand, high civil servants from the central administration in Bucharest who acted as delegated prefects did so for many reasons. Firstly, it was a part of their job description, especially for the general administrative inspectors. Secondly, some had political interests in these counties because of family and friends. Thirdly, for some, it was a promotion. Fourthly, their political and administrative careers were not yet complete, and they still hoped to become (again) MPs or be

appointed Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior or State Secretary. Last but not least, they received an allowance for the period spent in the territory.

Conclusions

A Path to an Ascending Career? We can note a visible trend following the nominations: around 30 % of the prefect nominations were delegated. This percentage seems lower than in the other regions of Romania, such as Bessarabia and the Old Kingdom. The most obvious examples are the five delegated prefects who later became permanent prefects. The practice of appointing delegated prefects reveals the tension between centralization and local political realities in the early years of Greater Romania. The delegated prefects were often appointed in counties without a solid local organization of the ruling parties, allowing time to find the right candidate or even to evaluate the appointed delegate. In this regard, the nomination as delegate to the head of a county was a good way to evaluate the individual's loyalty to the Party and to those who facilitated the appointment, especially for those from the public administration (prefecture directors/sub-prefects, high sheriffs). However, favourable factors that contributed to becoming a prefect included public visibility, political and/or administrative experience, legal training, integration into networks of influence and patronage, and membership in or sympathy for the governing Party. This applied to both permanent and delegated prefects. Even if their presence at the local level was short-lived, it facilitated greater public visibility and integration into a network of influence. This network allowed them to establish connections with decision-makers in Bucharest, such as politicians and high-ranking officials, whom they may have previously known through their professional journeys in other countries.

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**INSTITUTIONAL MEDIATION AND IDEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE:
THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE ARTISTIC FIELD IN ROMANIA,
1945–1950**

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Abstract

Institutional mediation constituted the foundational mechanism through which ideological discipline became enforceable within the Romanian artistic field in the immediate postwar years. Against dominant interpretive models that frame early socialist cultural transformation either as the rapid imposition of socialist realism or as the direct result of coercive state intervention, the study demonstrates that mechanisms of regulation, professional normalization, and economic governance played a decisive formative role between 1945 and 1950.

Drawing on legal decrees, organizational statutes, and early administrative records, the analysis traces the dismantling of prewar professional associations and their replacement with centralized regulatory structures, culminating in the legal recognition of the Union of Visual Artists (Uniunea Artiștilor Plastici, UAP) in 1950. Particular attention is paid to the adoption of the UAP statute and to the establishment of economic instruments such as the Plastic Fund, which redefined artistic activity as socially accountable labor integrated into state-managed systems of production, evaluation, and material support.

The article shows that during this formative phase ideological discipline operated less through explicit censorship or stylistic prescription than through institutional mechanisms governing professional membership, access to resources, and criteria of legitimacy. By embedding artistic practice within administratively regulated frameworks, the socialist state effectively reshaped the conditions of artistic autonomy before socialist realism was formally codified as an aesthetic orthodoxy. Institutional normalization thus preceded, enabled, and stabilized subsequent processes of aesthetic standardization.

By foregrounding the administrative and economic dimensions of cultural governance, this study reframes early socialist cultural policy in Romania as a gradual process of structural consolidation rather than an abrupt doctrinal rupture. It argues that the consolidation of ideological authority within the visual arts depended fundamentally on the reorganization of professional institutions, offering a model for understanding how artistic fields are transformed under conditions of political and ideological reconfiguration.

***Key words:** institutional mediation; ideological discipline; visual arts; Romania; socialism; cultural policy; Union of Visual Artists*

Introduction

The years between 1945 and 1950 represent a structurally decisive yet comparatively under-theorized phase in the reorganization of the Romanian artistic

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field under the emerging socialist regime. Rather than constituting an immediate stylistic rupture with prewar cultural arrangements, this interval reveals a gradual but profound transformation of institutional frameworks, professional hierarchies, and mechanisms of artistic legitimation. Through successive legislative acts, administrative restructurings, and regulatory interventions, artistic production was progressively integrated into centralized systems of governance. This transformation reshaped not only aesthetic orientations but, more fundamentally, the material and symbolic conditions under which artistic labor was organized, evaluated, and sustained.

Post-1989 Romanian historiography has made significant contributions to understanding the ideological dimensions of communist cultural policy. Magda Cârneci's synthetic account of Romanian visual arts under communism emphasizes the subordination of artistic production to political authority and the instrumentalization of aesthetics within ideological frameworks.² Cristian Vasile's extensive archival research has clarified the legislative and administrative mechanisms through which cultural institutions were progressively subordinated to party control during the consolidation of the communist regime.³ These studies have been indispensable in documenting the coercive and doctrinal dimensions of early socialist cultural governance. However, they tend to privilege either the formal codification of socialist realism or the explicit political supervision of artistic institutions as the primary locus of transformation.

In the broader historiography of East-Central Europe, the restructuring of artistic life after 1945 has been analyzed within the systemic logic of Stalinist consolidation. Piotr Piotrowski has argued that the transformation of artistic fields across the Soviet bloc occurred through geopolitical realignment and institutional centralization prior to the stabilization of stylistic orthodoxy.⁴ His transnational perspective shifts analytical emphasis from aesthetic form to structural reconfiguration. Similarly, Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius conceptualizes socialist realism not merely as a prescriptive aesthetic formula but as a regime of normalization embedded within administrative, pedagogical, and representational systems.⁵ Such approaches foreground the institutional and discursive infrastructures that sustained ideological authority. Yet even within this

² Magda Cârneci, *The Visual Arts in Romania, 1945–1989. With an Addendum, 1990–2010*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2013, pp. 37–52, 65–79.

³ Cristian Vasile, *Literature and the Arts in Communist Romania, 1948–1953*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2010, pp. 41–78, 109–132.

⁴ Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, London, Reaktion Books, 2009, pp. 11–18, 41–59.

⁵ Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, *Socialist Realism and the Remaking of East European Art History*, in "Revisiting Socialist Realism in Central and Eastern Europe", ed. Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, London, Routledge, 2019, pp. 1–6, 14–19.

comparative scholarship, institutions are often treated as instruments of an already consolidated ideological order rather than as arenas in which authority was incrementally constructed.

A significant strand of scholarship on socialist realism in East-Central Europe has framed cultural transformation either as a top-down imposition of aesthetic doctrine or as an extension of overt political repression. While these perspectives remain indispensable for understanding the ideological consolidation of the Stalinist period, they risk obscuring the infrastructural processes through which ideological authority was rendered durable and administratively enforceable. The Romanian case between 1945 and 1950 demonstrates that the decisive transformation of the artistic field occurred at the level of institutional governance prior to the formal stabilization of socialist realism as aesthetic orthodoxy. The reallocation of professional legitimacy and economic mediation reveals institutional consolidation as the primary mechanism of early socialist cultural transformation during the formative postwar years.⁶

This formative interval therefore requires a more granular reconstruction of this transitional phase. While 1948 is conventionally identified as the watershed year of Stalinization—marked by constitutional reform, nationalization, and the reorganization of cultural institutions—the preceding and subsequent years reveal a more complex process of institutional experimentation, bureaucratic consolidation, and economic restructuring. The formal codification of socialist realism in 1950 crystallized transformations already achieved at the level of institutional governance. By the time stylistic prescriptions were explicitly articulated, the structural conditions of artistic production had been fundamentally recalibrated.

Building on this reframing, the article argues that institutional governance restructured the internal logic of the artistic field before socialist realism was formally codified as aesthetic orthodoxy. Ideological discipline was consolidated structurally before it was stabilized stylistically. Membership criteria, professional accreditation, access to commissions, and economic mediation mechanisms progressively tied artistic legitimacy to institutional recognition. Artistic practice was thus reframed as socially accountable labor embedded within state-managed administrative and economic structures.

Methodologically, the study is grounded in the analysis of postwar legal decrees, published statutes, and administrative regulations governing artistic organizations and economic mechanisms in the late 1940s. Rather than offering a stylistic reading of individual artworks, it reconstructs the procedural consolidation of institutional authority through normative documentation. This approach is informed by Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the artistic field, which conceptualizes cultural production as structured by relational positions and struggles over

⁶ Piotr Piotrowski, *op. cit.* and Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art*, New York, HarperCollins, 1990.

symbolic capital,⁷ and by Michel Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, which illuminates how modern institutions produce regulated subjects through administrative techniques and normative evaluation.⁸ Together, these frameworks allow for an examination of how professional autonomy was reconfigured under conditions of political centralization—not simply suppressed, but reorganized within new structures of legitimacy and dependency.

At the core of this investigation lies the institutional transition from the Syndicate of Fine Arts (Sindicatul Artelor Frumoase), reactivated after 1945 as a professional association rooted in interwar organizational models, to the Union of Visual Artists (Uniunea Artiștilor Plastici), formally established in 1950 as a centralized professional body. This transition exemplifies a broader process of bureaucratic normalization through which artistic representation was subordinated to unified regulatory authority. The restructuring of professional organization did not merely reflect ideological consolidation; it actively produced the administrative and economic infrastructure that rendered aesthetic conformity enforceable.

By foregrounding institutional mediation as a formative mechanism of early socialist cultural governance, this study contributes to Eastern European art historiography by proposing a structurally grounded model of artistic field transformation under political regime change. The Romanian case demonstrates that the consolidation of socialist cultural authority preceded and enabled the aesthetic stabilization of socialist realism, revealing institutional governance as the primary site through which ideological authority was structurally consolidated in the early socialist period, prior to and independently from its full aesthetic codification.

Conceptual Framework: Institutional Discipline and the Artistic Field

This article adopts a dual analytical framework in order to examine how professional legitimacy and artistic autonomy were reconfigured in Romania during the late 1940s. The first component derives from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the artistic field; the second from Michel Foucault's account of disciplinary power. Taken together, these perspectives make it possible to analyze both the redistribution of authority within the cultural field and the procedural mechanisms through which normative alignment becomes stabilized.

In Bourdieu's formulation, the artistic field constitutes a relatively autonomous social space structured by positions, struggles, and competing claims to symbolic capital. Autonomy is not an intrinsic property but a relational achievement, contingent upon the balance of forces between the cultural field and

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993, pp. 29–73.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Vintage Books, 1977, pp. 135–169, 194–228.

the broader field of power.⁹ From this standpoint, transformations in the institutional loci of recognition—such as the bodies empowered to grant membership, visibility, or professional validation—directly affect the internal economy of legitimacy. The analytical value of Bourdieu's model in the present study lies in its capacity to illuminate how shifts in consecratory authority alter the conditions under which artistic value is defined and acknowledged.

Complementing this structural perspective, Foucault's analysis of discipline directs attention to the operational level of power. In *Discipline and Punish*, discipline is conceptualized as a modality of power that functions through normalization, evaluation, and the organization of conduct within institutional frameworks rather than through episodic coercion.¹⁰ Power is productive insofar as it generates categories, procedures, and expectations that shape behavior from within. Applied to the cultural sphere, this approach underscores how statutes, decrees, admission criteria, and administrative routines may function as technologies of regulation that reorder professional life without necessarily invoking explicit prohibition.

The combination of these two frameworks allows the article to distinguish between structural reallocation of symbolic authority (in Bourdieusian terms) and the normalization of professional conduct through regulated procedures (in Foucauldian terms). Rather than presupposing either aesthetic determinism or direct repression as explanatory models, the analysis proceeds by examining how legitimacy, access, and evaluation are reorganized through formalized mechanisms. The conceptual framework thus serves not as an interpretive overlay, but as a methodological tool for identifying how authority circulates and stabilizes within the artistic field under conditions of political transformation.

In the specific case of postwar Romania, this theoretical articulation clarifies how ideological authority was constructed incrementally within institutional frameworks before socialist realism was formally defined as aesthetic orthodoxy. The Romanian transition thus offers an empirical case through which the interaction between structural reallocation of symbolic capital and disciplinary normalization becomes historically demonstrable.

From Professional Association to Instrument of Regulation: The Syndicate of Fine Arts after 1945

Founded in 1921, the Syndicate of Fine Arts (*Sindicatul Artelor Frumoase*, SAF) functioned throughout the interwar period as a professional organization concerned primarily with the defense of artists' material interests and collective representation. Its institutional profile reflected the plural associational framework of prewar Romania, within which professional organizations operated with relative

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–73.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–169.

autonomy and participated in a competitive cultural field structured by diverse aesthetic and ideological orientations.

The reactivation of SAF after 1945 took place within a fundamentally altered political and legal environment. The Law on Professional Syndicates adopted in 1945 and the subsequent constitutional reordering inaugurated by the Constitution of the Romanian People's Republic of 13 April 1948 redefined the juridical framework governing professional and cultural associations.¹¹ Under the new constitutional order, associative activity was subordinated to the principles of socialist state organization, progressively aligning professional structures with the political and ideological objectives of the regime.

This transformation did not initially entail the abrupt dissolution of existing associations. Rather, it initiated a gradual process of administrative integration and functional realignment. As demonstrated by the broader reorganization of cultural institutions during the late 1940s, professional associations were increasingly placed under ministerial supervision and incorporated into centralized systems of cultural coordination.¹² Within this evolving regulatory environment, SAF's capacity for autonomous professional representation diminished as access to exhibitions, commissions, and institutional material support became progressively mediated through structures connected to state authority.

The discursive framework of artistic labor likewise shifted during this transitional period. The language of professional solidarity characteristic of the interwar years was increasingly supplemented by formulations emphasizing social responsibility, productive contribution, and ideological reliability—terminology consistent with the broader redefinition of labor within socialist political economy.¹³ While SAF formally persisted during the immediate postwar years, its institutional position was gradually reconfigured from a self-regulating professional association into an intermediary structure operating within an expanding apparatus of administrative oversight.

SAF thus occupies a transitional place in the reorganization of the Romanian artistic field. Its gradual normalization under conditions of increasing state supervision prepared the institutional terrain for the formal establishment of the Union of Visual Artists in 1950, marking the definitive shift from professional pluralism to centralized regulatory governance.

¹¹ The Constitution of the Romanian People's Republic of 13 April 1948, published in the Official Bulletin of the Romanian People's Republic, no. 87 bis, 13 April 1948. Law no. 52 of 24 January 1945 on the Organization of Trade Unions, published in the Official Gazette, no. 21, 26 January 1945.

¹² Cristian Vasile, *op. cit.*, passim.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

The Institutionalization of Artistic Control: The Union of Visual Artists and the Legal Framework of 1950

The decisive phase in the reconfiguration of the Romanian artistic field unfolded between 1949 and 1950, when a series of provisional institutional arrangements were consolidated into a coherent and legally sanctioned framework. This process culminated in the formal establishment of the Union of Visual Artists (Uniunea Artiștilor Plastici, UAP), which replaced earlier professional associations and fundamentally redefined the institutional conditions under which artistic practice could be pursued within the socialist state. Rather than constituting a merely technical or administrative reorganization, the creation of UAP marked a qualitative transformation in the relationship between artists, professional institutions, and political authority, signaling the transition from professional self-regulation to centralized cultural governance.¹⁴

The legal recognition of UAP was formalized through Decree no. 266 of 23 December 1950, which granted the organization official status as the sole representative body of professional visual artists in Romania.¹⁵ By concentrating artistic representation within a single, state-recognized institution, this decree effectively subordinated professional affiliation to criteria defined, monitored, and enforced by public authority. Membership in UAP thus became a decisive condition of professional legitimacy, regulating access to commissions, exhibition opportunities, and material resources. In this context, professional inclusion was transformed from an expression of collective self-organization into a mechanism of institutional regulation embedded within the administrative structures of the socialist state.

The normative foundations of this new institutional order were codified in the Statute of UAP, adopted on 20 October 1950. The statute articulated a redefinition of artistic activity by explicitly assigning it a social and ideological function. Artistic production was framed as a contribution to the educational and cultural objectives of socialist society, aligning creative practice with the broader political project of social transformation and ideological formation.¹⁶ While the statute did not yet impose a fully elaborated aesthetic doctrine comparable to the later, more rigid formulations of socialist realism, it nonetheless established a normative horizon within which artistic legitimacy was evaluated primarily in terms of social utility, ideological alignment, and institutional conformity, rather than through autonomous professional or aesthetic criteria.

¹⁴ Cristian Vasile, *Intellectual and Artistic Life in the First Decade of the Communist Regime*, București, Humanitas Publishing House, 2014, pp. 88–96.

¹⁵ Decree No. 266 on the Recognition of the Union of Visual Artists of the Romanian People's Republic as a Legal Entity of Public Utility. 23 December 1950. Official Bulletin of the Romanian People's Republic.

¹⁶ Union of Visual Artists. Statute of the Union of Visual Artists, adopted on 20 October 1950.

Significantly, the statute also introduced mechanisms of internal regulation that reinforced the disciplinary role of the organization. Provisions concerning membership admission, professional evaluation, and participation in officially sanctioned artistic activities positioned UAP as both a representative and supervisory body. This dual function blurred the distinction between professional self-organization and administrative control, embedding ideological discipline within routine institutional procedures rather than relying on explicit prohibitions, censorship, or direct intervention. Through these mechanisms, compliance with institutional norms became a condition of professional continuity, normalizing ideological alignment as an integral component of artistic life.¹⁷

Taken together, the legal recognition of UAP and the adoption of its statute marked a decisive shift from professional pluralism to centralized regulation. By redefining the criteria of professional legitimacy and embedding artistic practice within state-supervised structures, the 1950 framework established the institutional conditions that enabled the later stabilization of socialist cultural policy.¹⁸

Institutionalized Admission and the Reconfiguration of Professional Legitimacy (1950)

The institutionalization of ideological discipline becomes analytically tangible when examined through the admission procedures established by the Statute of the Union of Visual Artists (Uniunea Artiștilor Plastici, UAP), adopted on 20 October 1950. The Statute, formally recognized following Decree no. 266 of 23 December 1950, defined the Union as the sole professional organization representing visual artists in the Romanian People's Republic.¹⁹

Under Article provisions concerning membership (as stipulated in the 1950 Statute), admission required formal application, evaluation by designated commissions, and approval by governing bodies of the Union.²⁰ While the Statute did not yet codify socialist realism as an obligatory aesthetic doctrine, it explicitly framed artistic activity as socially responsible labor contributing to the cultural and educational objectives of the state.²¹ This formulation established an evaluative horizon in which professional recognition was inseparable from institutional approval.

¹⁷ Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, *Intellectuals in the Field of Power*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2007, pp. 116–123.

¹⁸ Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996., pp. 65–72.

¹⁹ Decree no. 266 of 23 December 1950 on the Recognition of the Union of Visual Artists of the Romanian People's Republic, *Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române*, Bucharest, 1950.

²⁰ Union of Visual Artists of the Romanian People's Republic, *Statutul Uniunii Artiștilor Plastici*, Bucharest, 1950.

²¹ Ibidem.

The crucial transformation lies not in explicit stylistic prescription but in procedural relocation of consecratory authority. Prior to this reorganization, professional legitimacy had been mediated through plural professional associations, exhibitions organized by diverse groups, and market-based recognition. After 1950, access to official exhibitions, commissions, and institutional acquisitions was structurally mediated through UAP membership.²²

The UAP Annual Report for 1950 further confirms that participation in collective exhibitions and engagement in state-sanctioned cultural initiatives constituted central indicators of professional responsibility.²³ The language of evaluation emphasized discipline, productivity, and contribution to the cultural education of the masses. Although articulated administratively rather than doctrinally, these criteria effectively aligned professional validation with ideological conformity.

This micro-level procedural shift substantiates the broader claim that the foundations of later aesthetic standardization were laid through institutional restructuring. By centralizing the authority to recognize artistic status, the state did not immediately impose stylistic orthodoxy; rather, it reorganized the field's internal mechanisms of legitimacy, thereby rendering future aesthetic codification structurally enforceable.

Economic Mediation and the Institutionalization of Material Discipline: The Plastic Fund (1949)

If the reorganization of the Union of Visual Artists reallocated symbolic authority within the artistic field, Decree no. 343 of 19 August 1949 concerning the establishment of the Plastic Fund (Fondul Plastic) restructured its material infrastructure.²⁴ Published in the *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române*, no. 54, 20 August 1949,²⁵ the decree regulated contractual procedures, payment mechanisms, and institutional competencies related to artistic commissions and acquisitions. Its language is administrative and contains no explicit stylistic prescriptions; its significance therefore lies not in aesthetic regulation, but in the centralization of economic mediation.

By concentrating financial administration within a state-regulated framework, the Plastic Fund significantly narrowed the viability of independent economic transactions outside officially recognized channels. Access to remunerated artistic work increasingly required participation in institutional structures sanctioned by public authority. Artistic production was not formally monopolized,

²² Ibidem.

²³ Union of Visual Artists of the Romanian People's Republic, Raport anual, 1950, UAP Archives.

²⁴ Romanian People's Republic. Decree No. 343 on the Organization and Functioning of the Plastic Fund of the Painters and Sculptors of the Romanian People's Republic. 19 August 1949.

²⁵ Official Bulletin of the Romanian People's Republic. No. 54 (20 August 1949).

yet the material conditions under which it could be professionally sustained were redefined through regulated financial circuits.

From a Foucauldian perspective, this reorganization exemplifies a modality of disciplinary power operating through infrastructural structuring rather than overt prohibition.²⁶ The decree did not prescribe aesthetic form, nor did it directly suppress alternative practices; instead, it reconfigured the economic environment within which artistic activity became viable. By aligning material subsistence with institutional affiliation, the Plastic Fund gradually transformed economic dependence into a mechanism of professional regulation.

The economic centralization enacted in 1949 thus functioned as a structural precondition for the subsequent stabilization of aesthetic orthodoxy. By embedding artistic labor within administratively controlled financial systems, the socialist state secured a durable mechanism of discipline that preceded and facilitated the later codification of socialist realism.

Normative Discourse and Professional Evaluation: Early Mechanisms of Ideological Alignment

The institutional restructuring of the Romanian artistic field in the immediate postwar period was accompanied by the gradual articulation of normative discourses that redefined the criteria of professional legitimacy. Beyond legal statutes and organizational reforms, ideological discipline was increasingly exercised through evaluative practices embedded in routine administrative documentation. Annual reports, internal regulations, and official correspondence produced by the Union of Visual Artists in 1950 reveal a growing emphasis on professional conduct, collective participation, and thematic orientation as central markers of artistic legitimacy, signaling a shift from autonomous aesthetic judgment toward institutionally mediated evaluation.²⁷

These documents indicate that artistic assessment was progressively reframed in terms that linked professional recognition to demonstrable social and ideological engagement. Participation in officially organized exhibitions, responsiveness to institutional directives, and alignment with subjects deemed socially relevant were consistently presented as core professional obligations. Although articulated in predominantly administrative and ostensibly neutral language, these criteria effectively established a normative framework within which ideological conformity functioned as a prerequisite for professional validation. Evaluation thus became a key site where ideological expectations were translated into practical standards of professional behavior.²⁸

²⁶ Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–169.

²⁷ Union of Visual Artists. Annual Report, 1950, UAP Archives, ff. 3–5.

²⁸ Cristian Vasile, *Intellectual and Artistic Life...*, pp. 97–104.

The UAP Annual Report for 1950 provides a particularly illustrative example of this transformation. The report explicitly identifies participation in collective exhibitions and contributions to the cultural education of the masses as primary indicators of professional responsibility. Rather than invoking explicit aesthetic prescriptions or stylistic mandates, the document frames these expectations in terms of organizational discipline, productivity, and social usefulness. This mode of articulation enabled ideological imperatives to be internalized as professional norms, blurring the distinction between administrative evaluation and ideological alignment. In this context, professional merit was increasingly assessed through indicators of institutional engagement rather than through autonomous criteria of artistic quality.²⁹

Importantly, the emergence of evaluative norms did not operate in isolation but was closely linked to mechanisms regulating access to institutional opportunities. At this stage, ideological discipline functioned less through direct censorship or explicit prohibition than through selective access to exhibitions, commissions, and material resources. Artists whose work conformed to emerging thematic priorities and representational expectations benefited from increased visibility, institutional recognition, and economic support. Conversely, those whose practices diverged from these norms encountered administrative marginalization, manifested through limited participation in official exhibitions, reduced access to commissions, and diminished professional visibility.³⁰

This system of indirect regulation proved particularly effective during the transitional period under examination. By embedding ideological expectations within routine evaluative procedures, institutional authorities were able to foster gradual compliance without resorting to overt repression. The ambiguity inherent in evaluative criteria—framed in terms of productivity, usefulness, and participation—allowed for flexible application while maintaining clear normative boundaries. In this sense, the normalization of evaluative norms functioned as a preparatory phase for the more rigid aesthetic and ideological codification that would characterize cultural policy in the following decade. Professional evaluation thus emerged as a central instrument in the consolidation of ideological authority within the artistic field, operating through procedural normalization rather than explicit aesthetic coercion.³¹

Conclusion

The reconfiguration of the Romanian artistic field between 1945 and 1950 reveals that the consolidation of socialist cultural authority unfolded less as an

²⁹ Union of Visual Artists. Annual Report, 1950, ff. 4–6.

³⁰ Susan Emily Reid, *Socialist Realism in Eastern Europe*, "Oxford Art Journal 19", no. 1, 1996, pp. 44–47.

³¹ Katherine Verdery, *op cit.*, pp. 70–76.

abrupt aesthetic revolution than as a carefully staged institutional realignment. The transition from the Syndicate of Fine Arts to the Union of Visual Artists, the juridical recognition of the latter through Decree No. 266/1950, and the establishment of the Plastic Fund by Decree No. 343/1949 collectively recalibrated the structural grammar of artistic existence. Professional legitimacy, material subsistence, and symbolic visibility were progressively subsumed within a unified administrative framework that rendered artistic production intelligible—and viable—only within regulated circuits of recognition.

This transformation did not initially depend upon the prescriptive enforcement of stylistic orthodoxy. Rather, it redefined the infrastructural conditions under which aesthetic choices could be sustained. Access to commissions, exhibitions, materials, and remuneration became contingent upon institutional affiliation and evaluative approval. In this sense, economic mediation functioned as a subtle yet decisive vector of ideological normalization. The mechanisms of membership validation, juried assessment, and centralized distribution of resources gradually embedded political criteria within the operational logic of professional advancement. Ideological discipline thus emerged not primarily as censorship in the narrow sense, but as structural conditioning: a reorganization of the field's internal hierarchies that rendered conformity materially advantageous and deviation increasingly precarious.

The institutional consolidation of the late 1940s established the durable preconditions for the subsequent codification of socialist realism as aesthetic orthodoxy. Once the structures of recognition, funding, and exhibition were centralized, the transition from infrastructural alignment to doctrinal uniformity required comparatively limited coercive intervention. The artistic field had already been reorganized in such a way that ideological authority could circulate through routine procedures of accreditation and resource allocation. What followed was less an imposition *ex nihilo* than the crystallization of tendencies inscribed within the newly configured administrative order.

The Romanian case therefore underscores the temporal priority of institutional transformation in processes of cultural reorientation under state socialism. Cultural power proved most effective when diffused through bureaucratic rationalization, professional standardization, and economic integration. The redefinition of artistic autonomy occurred not through its formal abolition, but through its relocation within an apparatus that simultaneously guaranteed subsistence and delimited expressive latitude. Autonomy became conditional, negotiated within parameters set by the state yet operationalized through professional bodies that mediated between artists and political authority.

More broadly, this trajectory invites a reconsideration of how cultural fields are restructured in periods of systemic political change. Ideological regimes do not secure hegemony solely through overt repression or explicit stylistic prescription. They consolidate authority by reshaping the institutional ecologies that sustain

creative practice—by redefining legitimacy, redistributing resources, and reorganizing professional hierarchies. In Romania's early socialist years, the transformation of the artistic field illustrates how administrative consolidation can precede, prepare, and ultimately normalize aesthetic orthodoxy. The durability of socialist realism was thus grounded not only in doctrinal affirmation, but in the infrastructural reengineering of the conditions that made artistic production socially and economically possible.

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**VIEWS ON THE RUSSIAN AND ARMENIAN OCCUPATION IN
AZERBAIJAN (ACCORDING TO MATERIALS FROM 'VARLIQ' JOURNAL
(1979-2014))**

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Abstract

The journal "Varlıq" (1979-2014), under the leadership of Javad Heyat, played a crucial role in preserving national identity and consciousness in Southern Azerbaijan. The journal exposed the damage inflicted on Azerbaijan by Russian and Armenian occupations by shedding light on historical facts. Emphasizing that Karabakh is an ancient cradle of Azerbaijani civilization, the journal used historical evidence like the Azikh Cave to counter Armenian attempts at historical distortion. It also detailed Tsarist Russia's policies of Armenizing the Caucasus and the tragic consequences of the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan. The article highlights the founding of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) and the ideology of its leader, M.A. Rasulzade, "To Turkify, to Islamize, to Modernize." The journal informed readers that the independence promised by the Soviets was a lie and conveyed the resistance of M.A. Rasulzade and N. Narimanov against the regime's oppression. The January 20, 1990 tragedy and the international community's indifference to it were criticized in strong terms. The journal condemned Armenian terror and genocide in Karabakh, stating that its roots lay in the Russian occupation. Finally, "Varlıq" emphasized that Islam is a religion of peace, opposed the misuse of terror, and highlighted the importance of national unity by publishing the support of religious leaders.

Key words: *"Varlıq" Journal, Azerbaijani Identity, Russian Occupation, Armenian Aggression*

Introduction

The journal "Varlıq" played an exceptional role in Azerbaijan's cultural and intellectual life, especially in Southern Azerbaijan, during the late 20th century, by preserving national consciousness and identity. Published in Tehran between 1358 and 1392 in the Shamsi (The Solar Hijri) calendar (1979-2014 AD), the journal quickly gained the appreciation of Azerbaijani intellectuals and a wide readership, serving as a unique platform for the promotion of national culture, language, and history.

Javad Heyat (1925-2014), a distinguished scientist, renowned surgeon, and public figure from Tabriz, was a key figure in its activities as the founder and editor-in-chief. J. Heyat's vision was to elevate "Varlıq" beyond a mere literary-cultural publication, transforming it into a powerful tool for disseminating objective and accurate information about Azerbaijan's rich history, mother tongue, and national struggle.

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Under his leadership, the journal deeply illuminated the independence struggle of Northern Azerbaijan against Tsarist Russia's occupation, the re-establishment of national statehood traditions, the glorious history and fate of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and the Karabakh issue resulting from Armenian aggression. It also covered significant moments of Azerbaijani history in general. In this way, "Varlıq" strengthened the cultural and spiritual bond between the two branches of Azerbaijan by delivering the truths about Northern Azerbaijan's national awakening, independence aspirations, and the history of Karabakh to readers in Southern Azerbaijan. For these services, J. Heyat was named "The Dede Korkut of Azerbaijan" by his contemporaries (Varlıq, 1384/2005, № 1-2 136): 159).

This article meticulously analyzes the invaluable work of the journal "Varlıq" and J. Heyat in this field, the main topics covered, the methods of their promotion, and the role the journal played in the formation of the ideology of Azerbaijanism.

1. From Ancient Times to the Tsarist Russian Era

The journal "Varlıq" showed a special interest in the history of Northern Azerbaijan, particularly in the history and culture of Karabakh. Numerous articles by prominent Southern Azerbaijani intellectuals, including Javad Heyat, Samad Serdarinia, Mir Hidayet Hesari, and Bayramali Fağfuri, are particularly noteworthy.

The article "Karabakh: An Ancient and Magnificent Cradle of Civilization" by Tabriz-based historian S. Serdarinia provides important information on key historical and cultural topics for Azerbaijani history, such as the Azikh Cave, the 400,000-year-old Azikh man, and the Kuruchay culture. The article also highlights the Armenians' attempts to distort and appropriate this historical heritage (Sərdariniya, 1379/2001, № 4 (119): 94-98).

According to the journal, at the beginning of the 8th century, as a result of Arab invasions, part of the Christian population of the ancient Azerbaijani state of Albania was Islamized. Another portion, at the request of the Armenian clerics, was forcibly subjected to the Armenian church by order of the Arab caliph Abd al-Malik, which led to their forced Armenianization. The journal states that these processes ultimately led to the decline of the Albanian language and culture (Hesari, 1384/2005, № 1 136): 53).

The journal "Varlıq" also provides information about the prominent 18th-19th century traveler and Sufi poet, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. According to the journal, he belonged to the Ni'matullahi Sufi order, was known by the nickname "Mastalishah," and wrote poetry under the pen name "Tamkin." The article details Shirvani's works, including "*Hadaïqu's-Seyahat*," "*Riyazu's-Seyahat*," and "*Bustanu's-Seyahat*" ("*Gardens of Travels*"). When discussing his travels, the text specifically emphasizes his view of Irevan (Yerevan) as an Azerbaijani city. Shirvani stated that the city's main population consisted of Shiite Turks, with a very small Christian Armenian minority (Möhsini, 1384/2005, № 2 (137): 26).

In "Varlıq," certain historical issues of Northern Azerbaijan from the late 18th to the early 20th century, along with the harsh consequences of the Russian occupation, were presented to readers in Southern Azerbaijan. The journal gave special attention to the history of Karabakh. In a series of articles by S. Serdarinia published in *Varlıq*, the journal explores the history of Karabakh. These include "Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar's Attack on Karabakh" (Sərdariniya, 1377/1998, № 1 (108): 125-134), "Karabakh During the Iran-Russia Wars" (Sərdariniya, 1377/1998, № 3 (110): 100-113), and "Karabakh under Tsarist Occupation" (Sərdariniya, 1378/1999, № 3 (114): 89-99). These pieces cover historical events such as Agha Mohammad Khan's attack on Karabakh, the resistance of Ibrahimkhalil Khan and his vizier, the poet Vagif, against the Qajar occupation, and the killing of the Qajar ruler in Shusha. The articles also highlight how, despite the heroism of Ganja Khan Javad Khan and the Qajar crown prince, Abbas Mirza, Ganja, Karabakh, and all of Northern Azerbaijan ultimately fell under Russian occupation, with the tragic consequences of this occupation being detailed.

In his article "Mirza Mohammad Hasan Fani Zunuzi" (Sərdariniya, 1372/1993, № 2 (89): 136-146), S. Serdarinia provides information about the prominent 19th-century Azerbaijani poet Mirza Abdur-Rasul Fana. The article includes examples of the poet's works, such as poems about the tragedy of Karbala and those encouraging the jihad of Irevan Khan Huseyn Khan Sardar against Russian occupation. A compelling example is: "For a jihad against the hateful Russians, Sardar issued a new order to the army, The Sardar, raising his voice among the army, reminded them of Judgment Day. For the revival of the faith, in the struggle with the cruel people, he sacrificed his own head." (Sərdariniya, 1372/1993, № 2 (89): 144-145).

"Varlıq" journal condemned the Armenian celebration of the anniversaries of both the 1805 Treaty of Kurakchay, which led to the Russian occupation of Karabakh, and the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan, which partitioned Azerbaijan. According to the journal, this "disgraceful treaty" was signed following a Russian victory during the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar, resulting in the occupation of Northern Azerbaijan (Qarabağ erməniləri., 1372/1993, № 3 (90): 133). "Varlıq" referred to Tsarist Russia as a "prison of nations," stating that the Russians treated the people of the occupied countries like captives, seeking to destroy their historical culture and Russify them (Fəğfuri, 1368/1989, № 1 (72): 60).

Additionally, in his article series "Irevan Was a Muslim Province" (Sərdariniya, 1375/1996, № 2 (101): 134-145; Sərdariniya, 1375/1996, № 3 (102): 123-132; Sərdariniya, 1383/2004, № 2 (133): 107-117) and other articles such as "The War Between Armenians and Muslims in the Caucasus in 1905-1906" (Sərdariniya, 1379/2000, № 2 (117): 97-106) and "Karabakh in 1918-1920 and Genocide in Baku and Other Cities" (Sərdariniya, 1381/2002, № 1 (124): 65-81), S. Serdarinia presented various topics to Southern Azerbaijani readers. He provided information on issues such as: Tsarist Russia's attempts to Armenianize the Caucasus through its Christian

missionary policy; the organized mass migration of Armenians from Iran to Azerbaijani lands; the establishment of an Armenian province in Irevan, a historically Muslim territory; the creation and exacerbation of Armenian-Muslim conflicts; the Armenian-Muslim clashes of 1905; the genocides committed against Muslims by the Dashnaks in 1918; and the forceful expulsion of Muslims from their homes.

2. A Look at the Independence Struggle and the Soviet Occupation

Although the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 granted enslaved nations the right to self-determination, these rights were quickly revoked, and a colonial policy was reinstated. After Northern Azerbaijan was subjected to the Soviet occupation in 1920, a struggle against national and religious values was waged under the guise of a "cultural revolution" (Əbilova, 1389/2010, № 2-3 (157-158): 121-126). The journal also wrote that Russian historiography was falsifying Azerbaijani history and criticized the notion that Azerbaijanis supposedly joined Russia voluntarily in 1813 to escape Persian oppression (Fəğfuri, 1368/1989, № 1 (72): 60).

The journal dedicated a special place to the history and promotion of the struggle for independence against Russian occupation and the establishment of national statehood. In J. Heyat's article, "Mammad Amin Rasulzade," detailed information about the life, ideology, activities, and works of the leader of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) is provided to Southern Azerbaijani readers. The author notes that Rasulzade's motto, "Freedom for the peoples, independence for nations!" became a national slogan (Heyət, 1369/1991, № 4 (79): 8).

J. Heyat discusses Mammad Amin Rasulzade's political activities as the leader of the Musavat Party, emphasizing his election as chairman of the ADR National Council and his socio-political and journalistic efforts for republicanism. He also states that Azerbaijani territories were liberated from occupation with the help of the Ottoman Turkish Army of Islam, led by Nuru Pasha (Heyət, 1369/1991, № 4 (79): 10). J. Heyat writes that the ADR was not only a democratic state but also a national and Muslim one, and the fundamental motto of the Musavat Party and the state was "Turkify, Islamize, and Modernize." The author notes that according to the Declaration of Independence, which served as a constitution, all ADR citizens were granted equal rights regardless of religion, language, nationality, or gender, and the Turkish language was declared the state language (Heyət, 1369/1991, № 4 (79): 11, 18). However, the life of this republic was short-lived.

J. Heyat quotes the words of M.A. Rasulzade: "After the Russian occupation, although Azerbaijan was seemingly governed by Muslim Narimanovs, the real power was in the hands of the Russians, Georgians, and Armenian communists who were Dashnaks until yesterday. All of Azerbaijan's wealth was being plundered" (Heyət, 1369/1991, № 4 (79): 11-12). J. Heyat also informs readers about Rasulzade's works written after the occupation, such as "Siyavush of Our Century." He also recounts the ADR leader's activities during his years in Russian captivity and as an émigré abroad. The author notes that while in Russian captivity in Moscow,

Rasulzade rejected the Soviet government's proposal to change the Arabic-Persian alphabet. Rasulzade argued that this change would be a blow to Turkic-Islamic unity and that the alphabet could only be reformed (Heyət, 1369/1991, № 4 (79): 13).

The journal "Varlıq" informed its Southern Azerbaijani readers that a letter sent by the first Soviet leader Lenin to S. Ordzhonikidze before the April 1920 occupation contained the order, "It is of the utmost importance for us to seize Baku." This, the journal argued, showed that the independence promised by the Soviets to Muslim peoples was a lie (Lenindən., 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 61). Furthermore, the article titled "Two Letters from Doctor Nariman Narimanov" (Doktor Nəriman., 1368/1990, № 4 (75), 49-61), which included translated excerpts from the first Azerbaijani communist leader N. Narimanov's appeal to the Soviet government, particularly to Stalin, titled "On the History of Our Revolution in Border Regions," was of great importance. It helped convey the history of Northern Azerbaijan and the tragedies caused by the Russian occupation to Southern Azerbaijani readers.

N. Narimanov's work provides a comprehensive analysis of the processes that occurred in the border regions of the Russian Empire, particularly in the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, during the October Revolution. Based on his personal observations and political evaluations, the work reveals the unique features, difficulties, and differences of the Bolshevik revolution in these regions. Narimanov particularly emphasizes the differences between the revolution in Russia and the border regions, noting that in the latter, national and religious issues played a significant role alongside the class struggle. His work gives special attention to the national question. He touches upon the Bolsheviks' mistakes on this issue, their failure to pay enough attention to "national culture" and "national originality." He criticizes the harsh stance of the Baku Bolsheviks, especially S. Shaumyan, on the national issue, stating that it negatively affected the local population's attitude toward the revolution. This topic is also present in the provided texts; for example, the question "Should Azerbaijan be an independent republic or should it be attached to Soviet Russia?" (Nəriman., 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 50) is highlighted in this context. Narimanov criticizes the domination of non-Muslims in the Azerbaijani government and local state institutions, the exclusion of Azerbaijanis, the transfer of Azerbaijan's resources abroad, and the fact that Soviet Azerbaijan remained independent in name only. He stressed the need to take local conditions and the interests of the local population into account (Doktor Nəriman., 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 50).

The philologist from Zanjan, Gulamhuseyn Begdili, emphasized that everyone should know about the disasters caused by the Russian occupation. In his introduction to the translation of Kara Namazov's work "Sheikh Shamil," which was presented in the "Varlıq" journal, he stated that everyone and their children who suffered from Russian oppression and captivity should take heroes like Sheikh Shamil as an example (Namazov, 1371/1992, № 1 (84): 66). Begdili also mentioned the Azerbaijani philosopher Heydar Huseynov, who wrote about Sheikh Shamil and committed suicide as a result of the oppression he faced from the Soviet government.

He provided information about the freedom struggle of Caucasian mujahideen who followed Sheikh Shamil's path against Russia (Namazov, 1371/1992, № 1 (84): 72).

The "Varlıq" journal condemned the Stalinist Soviet regime's change of the name of our people's language from "Turkish" to "Azerbaijani." According to the journal, this step was aimed at separating the Turks from their national roots, but it was noted that this goal was not achieved (Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyətinin.., 1371/1992, № 3 (86): 8). Additionally, the national struggle against the Russian and Armenian occupation and the freedom movement of Northern Azerbaijan that began in 1988 were extensively covered. An article published in "Varlıq" discussed the abandonment of the official flag of Soviet Azerbaijan and the re-adoption of the three-colored flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR). The slogan of the ADR leader M.A. Rasulzade, "A flag once raised shall never fall!," also found a place in the journal (Şimali Azərbaycan.., 1369/1991, № 4 (79): 29).

The journal "Varlıq" provided extensive coverage of the freedom movement that began in Northern Azerbaijan in 1988, as well as the national struggle against the Russian and Armenian occupation. The January 20, 1990, tragedy was discussed in particular detail. Regarding the event, J. Heyat wrote: "Why does the entire world rise up when a Christian's nose bleeds from the UN to other organizations and churches, everyone objects but when a Muslim's blood is shed, no one says a word?" (Heyət, 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 22-23). While the January 20 tragedy was a severe blow to the Azerbaijani people, "Varlıq" emphasized that the event was a part of the Azerbaijani people's national freedom struggle and that it paved the way for national independence (20 Yanvar.., 1384/2005, № 3-4 (138-139): 135-136).

The journal "Varlıq" published an appeal from Sheikhulislam Allahshukur Pashazade, Chairman of the Caucasian Religious Council, to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. In this appeal, it was emphasized that the bloody act carried out by the Soviet government and the Soviet army on January 20 was a crime against the Azerbaijani people. It was also stated that in committing this bloody crime, the Soviet government targeted religious beliefs and the religion of Islam, wrongly accusing Muslims of chauvinism, racism, and radical nationalism. However, the appeal asserted that such acts are considered evil in Islam and are strongly rejected, and that the religion of Islam is a religion of peace. Sheikhulislam declared that the Soviet army acted like an occupying force against the Azerbaijani people, who were Soviet citizens, and he cursed the culprits, expressing his belief that justice would prevail with God's help (Şeyxülislam.., 1369/1990, № 1 (76): 50-51).

3. The Armenian-Muslim Conflict and Karabakh

In his works, J. Heyat examines and exposes the genocides committed by Dashnak and Assyrian terrorists in Southern Azerbaijan, as well as the desire of Western states and Christian missionaries to establish a Christian state in Azerbaijani territories using Armenians and Assyrians. For instance, based on his father's memoirs, Mirza Ali Heyat, and the work of Tabriz-based historian Ahmed

Kesrevi, "18-Year History of Azerbaijan," J. Heyat states that in 1918, in and around the regions of Khoy, Salmas, and Urmia, Armenian and Assyrian terrorists, supported by the U.S. Consulate and led by Mar Shimun and Petros, attempted to establish a Christian state by annihilating the Muslim population. To realize this vile plan, they plundered Muslim homes and subjected them to genocide. This tragedy was brought to an end by the Ottoman army that came to aid the Muslims (Heyət, (1383/2004), № 1 (132): 146).

J. Heyat provided information about the genocides committed against the Muslim population in Karabakh, while also emphasizing that Karabakh was the center of Azerbaijan's music culture. He stated that the origins of the tragedies there were rooted in the Russian occupation, particularly the Treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay. Heyat interpreted the temporary victory of the Armenians as a victory of the Christian world over the Muslims (Heyət, 1371/1992, № 1 (84): 5). J. Heyat wrote that Armenians had territorial claims not only against Azerbaijan but also against Iran and Turkey, where they had lived peacefully for centuries, and that their chosen path was not the right one. Heyat predicted that these tragedies would ultimately conclude with the victory of the Turks and the unity of the Turkic-Islamic world (Varlıq, 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 7). J. Heyat concluded with a plea to God for salvation, writing: "O Lord! Is there no dawn for this dark night? We ask for light, but you give us fire?" (Heyət, 1371/1992, № 1 (84): 5).

When discussing the epic of "Asli and Kerem," J. Heyat notes that this epic is also widespread in Southern Azerbaijan. Heyat explains and condemns the situation in which a fanatical Armenian clergyman, Kara Keshish, refuses to give his daughter Asli to the Muslim Turk Kerem, whom she loves, due to outdated religious traditions (Heyət, 1990: 86). The author provides examples of works on this subject, such as the Armenian writer Khachatur Abovyan's story "The Turkish Girl," Nariman Narimanov's "Bahadır and Sona," and Uzeyir Hajibeyov's opera "Asli and Kerem," and calls for brotherhood and friendship among peoples (Heyət, 1990: 88). The journal "Varlıq" reports that Hajibeyov's "Asli and Kerem" and similar works were staged multiple times in Tabriz and various Iranian cities in the 1940s (Vəkilov, 1383/2004, № 2 (133): 124; № 3-4 (134-135): 146). In his examination of the works of the Azerbaijani poet M.A. Sabir, J. Heyat notes that in his poem "Beynelmîle" (International), the poet also addressed the Armenian-Muslim conflict instigated by the Tsarist government. Heyat writes that Sabir called for friendship and brotherhood among peoples, stating that it was a time for unity, not a time for discord and ignorance (Heyət, 1998: 24).

In S. Serdarinian's article, "Karabakh in the Years 1923-1988," published in "Varlıq" (Sərdariniya, 1382/2003, № 2 (129): 94-103), the establishment of Armenian autonomy in Karabakh after the Soviet occupation is discussed. The article states that this situation paved the way for Armenianization in a region that was historically Azerbaijani territory, and that with Soviet support for Armenians, violent incidents occurred against Azerbaijanis. As a result of Armenia's occupation,

Azerbaijanis were expelled from their homes. It was also stressed that the January 20 tragedy in Baku was committed against Azerbaijanis who were protesting this situation (20 Yanvar., 1384/2005, № 3-4 (138-139): 135-136).

The "Varlıq" journal published statements from prominent religious figures against the Armenian occupation of Karabakh, which criticized the genocides against Muslim Azerbaijanis. In this context, the statement of the Iranian Ayatollah Golpayegani is of great importance. The statement noted that enemies, fearing that our brothers, the Muslim Azerbaijanis, would be freed from the yoke of Soviet imperialism and gain their freedom, deliberately escalated the war against them (Ayətullah., 1371/1992, № 1 (84): 9). "Varlıq" provided extensive coverage of the January 20, 1990, Baku massacre. In this regard, J. Heyat posed a question in his article: "Why does the entire world rise up when a Christian's nose bleeds from the UN to other organizations and churches, everyone objects but when a Muslim's blood is shed, no one says a word?" (Heyət, 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 22-23). The journal published statements of support from high-level Iranian religious figures and the Iranian Parliament for the struggle for rights of Muslim Azerbaijanis. It also mentioned that memorial ceremonies for the January martyrs and Karabakh martyrs were held at Tabriz University and in various mosques in Iran (Varlıq, 1368/1990, № 4 (75): 25-43).

"Varlıq" also provided information about a conference held in Baku (Heyət, 1380/2001, № 2 (121): 3-7). At the conference on "Islam's View on Terrorism," held in Baku on December 20-21, 2001, a message from the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, was read. This message was published in the journal along with J. Heyat's own presentation. Heydar Aliyev's message stated that Azerbaijan is located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, and people of various religions and cultures have lived in peace in this region for centuries. The message emphasized that Azerbaijan, having suffered from Armenian terrorist acts, understood the essence of this problem well and believed that the conference would contribute to the fight against international terrorism. Aliyev expressed that some powers use religion as a tool to achieve their biased political goals, and their actions are contrary to the humanist principles of the religion of Islam (Heyət, 1380/2001, № 2 (121): 4-5). The journal also highlighted these words of Heydar Aliyev: "We all must serve one purpose: to protect the unity, integrity, and sovereignty of Azerbaijan!" (Azərbaycan Cümhurrəisi., 1372/1993, № 3 (90): 82).

At the conference on "Islam's View on Terrorism" in Baku, J. Heyat gave a presentation titled "The Relationship of Islam and Terrorism," in which he emphasized that Islam is a religion of peace, morality, and love. He stated that the Holy Quran forbids terrorism and the killing of innocent people. J. Heyat showed that Islam recognizes the right to self-defense, but even in this case, it forbids the use of illegitimate methods such as terrorism. Based on the 64th verse of Surah Al-Imran, he called on all people to unite around the belief in one God and to defend good against evil. He provided the following verses from Surahs Fussilat and Al-Ma'ida as examples: "Good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with that which is best."; "And do

not let the hatred of a people drive you to exceed the limits. Fear Allah."; "Whoever kills a soul without just cause it is as if he has killed all of humanity. And whoever saves a life it is as if he has saved all of humanity." (Heyət, 1380/2001, № 2 (121): 5-7).

Conclusion

Finally, it can be said that the journal "Varlıq," through the tireless activities of J. Heyat, went beyond being a mere cultural publication. It played a critical role in the formation of Azerbaijan's national identity and historical memory. Its pages comprehensively covered the struggle for independence of Northern Azerbaijan against the Russian occupation, the wars fought for the establishment of a national state, and the fate of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR). Articles about the life, political ideology, and activities of Mammad Amin Rasulzade conveyed to Southern Azerbaijani readers that his slogan "Freedom for the peoples, independence for nations!" was a national symbol.

The journal not only exposed the genocides committed by Armenian Dashnak and Assyrian terrorists in Southern Azerbaijan but also linked the historical roots of the Karabakh problem to the Russian occupation and the Treaties of Gulistan-Turkmenchay. The journal harshly criticized the international community's indifference to the January 20, 1990, tragedy, and the lack of interest in the bloodshed of Muslims was met with fierce protests. The journal "Varlıq" supported the ideas championed by the magazine "Molla Nasreddin," such as the fight against feudalism, the Shah and Tsar regimes, and religious superstitions, as well as promoting friendship among nations and defending women's rights (Sərdariniya, 1364/1985, № 9-12 (79-82): 107; Şəhanqi, 1375/1996, № 3 (102): 57-60). J. Heyat's activities in "Varlıq" took significant steps toward the preservation and promotion of Azerbaijan's ancient culture, especially historical monuments like the Azikh Cave. The journal also condemned the Soviet regime's attempts to change the name of the Turkic language and defended the original name of the Azerbaijani language as the "Turkic language." The publication of Nariman Narimanov's appeal to the Soviet administration in "Varlıq" revealed the effects of the Bolshevik revolution on Azerbaijan, its mistakes on national issues, and the tragic consequences of ignoring the interests of the local people. The journal strengthened the fighting spirit of the Azerbaijani people by promoting the struggles of heroes like Sheikh Shamil against Russian oppression. "Varlıq" rejected all forms of terrorism, emphasizing that Islam is a religion of peace, morality, and love, and opposed the misuse of the religious beliefs of Muslims. The statements and support of religious leaders, especially the message of Heydar Aliyev, published in the journal, showed the importance of the unity of religious and national forces for the integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. Under the visionary leadership of Javad Heyat, the journal "Varlıq" was more than just a cultural and scientific publication. It was a vital force in the revival of Azerbaijan's national consciousness, serving as both the pulse of the national movement in Southern Azerbaijan and a spiritual

bridge to Northern Azerbaijan. The journal played an undeniable role in promoting historical truths and strengthening the people's desire for independence. By providing an objective assessment of the Russian occupation of Azerbaijan and Armenian-Dashnak terror, Javad Heyat was able to present and promote the history of Azerbaijani independence in his works. Even after Heyat's death, "Varlıq" continues its activities in Ankara, symbolizing an eternal torch that illuminates the path to preserving national unity and historical memory.

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**MASCA DIN OGLINDĂ¹: CONTRASPAȚII DIN IMAGINARUL SPECULAR /
MIRRORMASK: COUNTER-SPACES IN THE SPECULAR UNIVERSE**

Andi MIHALACHE*

Abstract

We fog up the mirror and place our palm upon it: to take our own fingerprint and, at the same time, shake hands – as a sign of farewell – with the person we were a few seconds ago. What does the mirror we have turned toward offer us? A worn-off cold reflection of the mirrored figure, or that figure's portrait – its interiority – endowed with traits it knows well and with flaws which it might wish to escape? Both possibilities are feasible. Some mirrors merely duplicate us, destroying our uniqueness; they update our appearance unenthusiastically, with a formalism difficult to contain; they “add” too little to us. Other mirrors rummage through and then condense us, reducing us to a single trait covering the entire surface of the reflection. A mirror stalks us from several corners, probes us, and reveals us. It does not abide by a frontal snapshot, because from whatever angle it scrutinizes us, it fashions another way of being, not always agreeable. Therefore, we do not advance through time by synchronising our features, but by incessantly reconciling their conflicts. Individuals find it challenging to gather themselves into a roughly unitary “self”, while we pay a tax to duplicities, contradictions, and inconsistencies of every shade. We shift behind the mirror; we follow its steps, because it does not render the appearance with which we enter it; it covers our face with a foreign, discomforting, flaking makeup. Fortunately so. Perfect overlaps with ourselves can be suicidal: when we seek to eliminate our own imitation, we may kill – through excessive similarity – the original itself. We look into a mirror to recognise ourselves, but it believes we are asking its opinion. Hence, it is not at all obliging; it even adds wrinkles. It owes us nothing, for it has as many victims as there are clients who pass through it. Thus, the beholder does not always leave satisfied. The best remedy may be to believe that we have seen ourselves in someone else's mirror because we have not crossed our own sufficiently. The mirror is a cold-blooded clerk; the report it drafts for the human being always bears today's date. It attaches itself to none of the changes it depicts to us throughout life. Nor does it ever provide us with a synthetic or midway portrait. It compromises for no one; each mirroring of an individual dwells in its own brief, one-glance truth. Notwithstanding, the mirror draws us, irresistibly, toward an encounter with an ever-changing other – coming

¹ Titlul acestui text este inspirat atât de filmul *Masca din oglindă/Mirrormask* (2005), cât și de o carte a regretatului coleg, prieten și filosof George Bondor. În acest volum, intitulat *Dansul măștilor: Nietzsche și filosofia interpretării*, autorul glosa în jurul noțiunii de simulacru: „După cum știm, tradiția platoniciană a instituit aparența ca opusul privativ al ființei. Ideea este rezultatul unei gândiri care a pus ființa ca nemijlocită. La Nietzsche, în schimb, aparența nu mai este «copia unui model». [...] În spatele unei aparențe nu pot fi descoperite «lucruri în sine», ci doar alte aparențe. [...] Dorința de a fi înțeleși intră astfel în concurență cu voința de viață. [...] Voința de putere ar fi deci voința de aparență, așadar de interpretare” (Bondor 2020: 233-234).

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straight at us from the cold sheen of the glass. The mirror is the most poignant customs officer of change. Though memories continually seek a convenient age, they never succeed in bribing it. It staunchly maintains its opinion. Hence, the ritual of looking into the mirror assures us that, through our own face, we exist only in the passage of time.

Key words: identity, double, mask, portrait, imaginary, mirror

Într-un basm chinezesc, șase sori pricinuiau pământului o arșiță cumplită (Lin 2017: 27-28). Eroul care trage cu arcul în ei, ca să-i stingă, eșuează. Dar își atinge scopul săgetând oglindirile acelor sori într-un micuț ochi de apă. După logica universurilor magice, realitatea întreține *prezența* unui lucru, reflectarea preluând *esența* acestuia. Dar chiar și în târâmurile vrăjite, ne avertizează Henri Michaux, „cei mai mulți oameni n-au altă treabă decât să-și roadă dublul” (Michaux 2012: 17). Cum rămâne atunci cu noi, cei de aici, robii reproducerilor furibunde: tot mai puțin intimizate și prea mult socializate? În vremurile imemorale, când eroii voiau să doboare astrul zilei cu arcul, „nu exista aproape nici un loc pentru un sine privat, așa cum îl cunoaștem astăzi. Te defineai pe tine însuși/însăși prin legăturile de rudenie, rangul social și reputația, nu printr-un simț interior al sinelui, prin valorile și atitudinile tale personale. Dacă voiai să îți înțelegi sinele, te uitai mai degeaba în exterior pentru a-ți înțelege locul în comunitate, decât în interior. [...] Nu prea ar fi avut sens să te gândești la tine însuși/însăși ca fiind definit/ă de o «personalitate internă». Acest lucru este mult diferit de gândirea noastră actuală despre puterea aproape magică a sinelui: capacitatea unui individ de a-și transforma gândurile personale într-o nouă realitate. [...] Unde este linia de demarcație între intern și extern? Ce este sinele esențial? În Antichitate, locul pe care îl ocupai în comunitate era o parte constitutivă a sinelui tău esențial. [...] Astăzi mulți oameni consideră că relațiile lor sociale sunt stimuli externi. Ne simțim definiți, în schimb, de gândurile și sentimentele noastre, pe care credem că le cunoaștem prin introspecție” (Lowery 2025: 52). Din păcate însă, oglinda poate, cel mult, să lucreze cu noi, nu pentru noi. N-are nici cea mai mică intenție să ni se subordoneze. Și nici gând să ne măgulească. Unde mai pui că nici noi nu mai stăm grozav cu vederea: ochii ne părăsesc repede; și se împleticesc încă de la începutul privirii. Într-o oglindă te străbați. N-o să te odihnești într-însa. E un ortoped al inimii, un îndreptar al gândului. Iar motivele sunt înșiruite mai jos.

Fizionomiile nu răsar din întâlnirea privirii unuia cu văzul celuilalt. Totul se filtrează printr-o oglindă. Și ea își vede de treabă. Cultivă întâlnirile mediate; și existențele răsrănțe, adiacente, secunde; lipsite parcă de o consistență reală; ca și cum oamenii ar trăi cu adevărat în registrul specular, umbrind, numai în trecere, dimensiunea empirică a vieții. Nu se întâlnesc vizual cu ei înșiși; se întrevăd din coada ochiului. De ce? Chipul nu se încheie în bărbie. Oglinda este aceea care îi pune un capăt, strângându-l între ramele sale. Ți-a citit răsufarea, ți-a învățat ezitățile. Știe ce adevăr ai vrea să-ți între în ochi fără să-ți înăbușe pleoapele. Mai ales că te-ai înstrăinat

de antecedentele tale speculative. Și cele rămase din înfățișarea de altădată îți vin acum de primprejur. Oglinda e o lentilă încercănată cu nevroze. Căci nu e partizana văzului unanim. Are și oglinda o îngrijorare a ei: că, recăpătându-ți văzutul nemediat de sticlă, lumea palpabilă, temporar abandonată printre reflectări, o să-și reaseze imaginile în tine. De unde și litigiul periodic cu toate clonele stărilor noastre de spirit. Îndepărtându-te de ele, înfometezi oglinda. Nu-i lași niciun profil de mestecat. În definitiv, care-s anamorfozele cu care oglinda te ispitește? Ne răspunde, pe larg, Emanuele Coccia, care subliniază capacitatea oglinzii de a ne face exteriori nouă înșine: „În oglindă devenim dintr-odată *pură imagine*, ne descoperim transformați în ființa pură, imaterială și non-întinsă a sensibilului. Însă forma noastră, aparență distilată de tot ce nu e perceptibil, există acum *în afara* noastră, *în afara* corpului și *în afara* conștiinței noastre. [...] Orice imagine ia astfel naștere prin separarea formei lucrului de locul existenței sale: *acolo unde forma e în afara locului, o imagine are loc* [s.a.]” (Coccia 2012: 30-31). Apoi, ca să traducem spusele lui Michel Foucault în termeni istorici, invocăm statisticile ce demonstrează că, în prima parte a secolului XX, se produce o „ameliorare estetică” a populației, însoțită de un nou comportament domiciliar: „Oglinda oferă contemplației acest corp perfecționat. Abia în secolul al XVI-lea a apărut, importat din Veneția, acest obiect prețios. Este rar și scump, și, între cele două războaie, în locuința muncitorului sau a țărânului există doar o singură oglindă, mică, atârnată deasupra unui lighean, pentru barba masculină. Oglinda de mari proporții, în care te poți vedea în întregime, poate fi întâlnită numai în casele celor avuți. [...] Individul va înceta să-și perceapă identitatea corporală în privirea celorlalți pentru a și-o contempla în marea oglindă din sala de baie. Care sală apare către anul 1880 în locuința burgheză: este locul cel mai secret al acesteia, unde, eliberat de gătelile sale (brasieră, corset, perucă, proteză dentară etc.), individul poate în sfârșit să se vadă, nu în aparența lui socială, ci în desăvârșita lui nuditate. [...] Răspândirea oglinzii nu aduce nici o informație în ceea ce privește interiorul trupului. Radiografia ieri, astăzi ecografia, scannerul, investigația nucleară ne destăinuie ceea ce se petrece în acest interior. Eficace mijloc preventiv, dar și o sursă de noi neliniști. Nimeni nu se mai mulțumește cu o simplă simptomatologie: căci toată lumea se înverșunează să descopere cauza primă a celei mai neînsemnate disfuncții. Explorarea trupului interior nu suprimă anxietatea, ci o deplasează. Unde se ascunde, în trupul acesta a cărui aparență satisfăcătoare o observ în propria mea oglindă, microbul, virusul care se înverșunează să-l distrugă? Unde? Când poate fi limitată furia etiologică?” (Ariès & Duby 1997: 6-7). Medicalizată astfel, oglinda e tapițată cu angoase: luciul ei se umple cu chipuri coșcovite și figuri creponate; și cu acele colțuri de gură ce trag zâmbetul în jos. E vorba de identitatea pe care ți-o alcătuiești din portrete, dar nu știi pe care să-l iubești ca să decizi cine ești. Îți acoperi oglinda cu suspiciuni, dar tot degeaba. Te uiți într-însa îndelung, fără să știi de când durează privirea asta. Ce geamăn scoți din apele ei? Ideea de *latitudo similitudinis*, așa cum o concretizau gemenii, a preocupat destul de mult vechile culturi europene (Zuccolin 2020: 63-70). După cum urmează: te așezi în fața oglinzii ca să simulezi că n-ai niciun amestec în felul în care arăți. E ca și cum ai

ține locul unui semen ale cărui trăsături le-ai vrea pentru tine. Și speri că oglinda ți le-a pus deoparte; șterpelindu-le îndemânatic la o ultimă scrutare a celui invidiat. Slabe speranțe. Ne oprim la oglindă, dar abia dacă ne zărim într-însa. Ne uităm în gol, căci privirea ne fuge din ochi. Te cauți și nu te afli, pândind, neobosit, un unghi nepăzit, unde oglinda e mai puțin vigilentă. Dacă nu, o să ne pierdem printre contradicțiile ideii de oglindă, asimilată atât cu vanitatea dulceagă cât și cu introspecția amară. N-o să scăpăm din întortocheatele ei reflectări: „A disimula înseamnă a te preface că nu ai ceea ce ai. A simula înseamnă a te preface că ai ceea ce nu ai. Una trimite la o prezență, cealaltă la o absență. Dar e mai complicat decât atât, căci a simula nu înseamnă a te preface. [...] Deci, a te preface, sau a disimula, lasă intact principiul realității: diferența rămâne clară, nefiind decât mascată. În timp ce simularea repune în cauză diferența dintre «adevărat» și «fals», dintre «real» și «imaginar». Este bolnav oare simulantul, de vreme ce produce simptome «adevărate»? Obiectiv, nu putem să-l tratăm nici ca bolnav, nici ca sănătos” (Baudrillard 2008: 6). Venim la oglindă ca să ne mințim. Să jucăm teatru cu noi înșine. Ne-o confirmă orice istorie a recuperărilor de sine: „Puse aparatul de ras pe marginea chiuvetei și își clăti fața cu apă rece. [...] Se aplecă înainte, dar [...] dădu doar de figura lui reflectată în oglindă și de acolo chipul lui obosit și parcă dintr-odată îmbătrânit îl cercetă cu îngrijorare. Își prinse în palma dreaptă bărbia și își trase pielea de pe obraji în jos și în sus peste maxilar, încercând să fixeze un zâmbet care însă se scurse odată cu ultimele picături de apă printre cutele care porneau din colțul gurii” (Cupșa 2013: 93). Prin urmare, oglinda este locul unde se intersectează imitația, multiplicarea și parodia. Astfel, viitorul se chinuie să înlocuiască trecutul, iar cel din urmă acaparează prezentul. În consecință, *Chipurile ascunse* de Salvador Dalí se întind către un viitor imediat, prin care artistul îl mai traversase cândva: „[...] este mai interesant, în loc de a «copia istoria», să anticipăm și să o lăsăm să imite cât poate ea mai bine ceea ce noi am născocit” (Dalí 2015: 6). Oglinda ne lasă în noi un rictus cu buletin de zâmbet. Ceea ce îndeamnă individul să se simtă întruna asimetric față de sine. Omul se naște dintr-o mediere perpetuă; aceea dintre el și nenumăratele lumi care-l resping, apoi, îmbunate prin reflectări îndemânaticе, îl compun. Și toate aceste schimburi simbolice, prin care individul își adjucecă, măcar temporar, o interpretare asupra propriei persoane, se produc la nivelul marelui negociator care e corpul: „Corpul nostru nu este doar un spațiu expresiv printre altele. Acesta este numai corpul constituit. El este la originea tuturor spațiilor expresive, mișcarea expresivă însăși, acel ceva care proiectează semnificațiile în afară, dându-le un loc [...]. Corpul este mijlocul nostru general prin care avem o lume” (Merleau-Ponty 1999: 186). Urmând cele susținute cândva de profesorul și psihiatrul Mircea Lăzărescu, am îndrăzni să presupunem că omul oglindit este o ființă de sinteză, compromis, medie, interval. Individul nu e restricționat la capacitățile lui senzoriale: are nevoie de un *dincolo* ca să se simtă întregit. Deși mărginit adesea la datele lui biologice, omul este o „ființă intermediară” tocmai prin tinderea către ceva mai sus de condiția lui mundană; ceea ce oglinda îi promite, uneori cu prea multă larghețe. Urmând cele susținute cândva de profesorul Lăzărescu, vom îndrăzni să afirmăm că, din punct de vedere metodologic,

oglindea este un simbol ce se pretează „înțelegerii participative” (Lăzărescu 1994: 61). Iar istoria culturii ne pune la dispoziție multe asemenea proceduri textuale. Și una dintre cele mai cunoscute exorcisme de tip narativ sunt cele înjghebate de Jorge Luis Borges; a cărui frică de oglinzi era, probabil, un pretext de a se auto-include în povestea acestora, a Împăratului Galben, de exemplu: „În acele vremuri, lumea oglinzilor și lumea oamenilor comunicau. În plus, erau foarte diferite; nu se brodeau nici ființele, nici culorile, nici formele. Ambele împărății, a oglinzilor și a oamenilor, trăiau în pace și comunicau prin oglinzi. Într-o noapte, oamenii din oglinzi au invadat pământul. Erau puternici, dar, după sângeroase bătălii, arta Împăratului Galben a triumfat. El a respins asaltul invadatorilor, i-a închis în oglinzi și i-a obligat să maimuțărească, într-un soi de visare, toate mișcărilor oamenilor. Le-a luat puterile și chipurile și a făcut din ei simple reflexe servile. Într-o zi, însă, ei se vor trezi din magica lor letargie. [...] În fundul oglinzii vor întrezări o dâră abia ițită, a cărei culoare nu va semăna cu nici o alta. Apoi, puțin câte puțin, se vor trezi și celelalte forme. Treptat, ele vor începe să difere de noi și, tot treptat, vor înceta să ne maimuțărească. Vor sparge barierele de sticlă sau metal și, de astă dată, nu vor mai fi înfrânate [...]”² (Borges 2006: 17-18). Ce să pricepem din fabula borgesiană? Oglinda nu ne scapă din ochi. Iar Borges se teme de bestiarul pe care ea îl înmagazinează, ca să pună de-o parte, și apoi să dispună tot ceea ce înseamnă *diferență*. Astfel, îndărătul oglinzii e o lume cu rosturi împrăștiate; iar oglinda o etalează excesiv ca s-o țină mai bine în frâu, nu ca s-o ordoneze. Prea alintate fiind, oglinzile își ridică reflectarea la rangul unui act de putere, asezonat, bineînțeles, cu destul capriciu. Se înstăpânesc asupra realului, cenzurându-i reproducerile. Copiile nu reușesc, totuși, să se preschimbe din aparențe în esențe. Își pierd statutul de semnificanți și rămân de capul lor. Fără un semnificat revendicat cu tărie, consistența lor se diminuează, spectralizându-se. Și cum confruntarea dintre imagine și suportul ei fizic se termină, predictibil, cu victoria celui din urmă, reflectările sunt desemnificate și trimise înapoi, în spatele sticlei. Dar nici oglinzile nu se dau bătute. Vor aștepta momentul potrivit revanșei: căci omul își poate trăi adevărul numai dacă acesta-i înmulțit, distribuit, vascularizat; orice formă de unicitate îl determină să se simtă fragil, amenințat, efemer. Din această cauză, individul, obsedat de el însuși, se închide în registrului imaginarului; iar oglinda primind ca misiune circumstanțierea unui personaj, merge mult mai departe, către obnubilarea acestuia. Iată și unul din neajunsurile individualizării pe filieră speculară: după ce ai frecventat neostenit oglinda, lumea nu-ți mai aparține; nu mai semeni cu nimic din ea. Ba și mai și: o notorietate construită narcisic este astăzi cea mai bună procedură de anonimizare a subiectului; care coboară, încet-încet, de la nivelul vedetizării, ajungând, pe nesimțite, acolo unde subînțelesul vieții sale îmbracă straiile banalului, nespusului, debusolării. Asta e și frica lui Borges: că oglinzile au dârzenia lor, recidivând la nesfârșit; și că imaginea ne capturează ființa complet, prima furând celei de-a doua orice întâietate. Ceea ce ne amintește de cartea lui Horia Vicențiu Pătrașcu, unde autorul relevă un

² Vezi *Animalele din oglinzi*, în Borges & Guerrero 2006, p. 17-18.

anumit complex al omului de orișicând. Care anume? Dependent fiind, din dorința de a supraviețui, de toate câte îi par utile, fie ele ființe, lucruri ori mașini, individul e animat, de la un timp, de „dorința de a se elibera de *secundaritatea* ontologică pe care i-o alocă modul lui de viață” (Pătrașcu 2024: 195). Or, în această actualitate croită din pixeli, conflictul cu imaginile ce ni se substituie nu se rezolvă, dar persistă. Mai ales că o anumită cultură a reproducerii din zilele noastre nu ne redă chipul, ni-l dictează. Așa că aspirația emancipării de o înfățișare ce-i parvine omului din exterior, pe baza gusturilor și a modelelor, este cumva firească. În caz contrar, arată Horia Vicențiu Pătrașcu, omul este pasibil de „ratarea unicității” sale. Iată și explicațiile care vin cu semnificativ adaos la problematica dublului: „Mitul lui Narcis nu poate fi înțeles decât în context al valorii absolute a individualității, Narcis fiind figura exemplară a autocontemplării formei unice pe care un om crede că o posedă. [...] Iubirea de aproapele este concepută ca *iubire față de un dublu*, ca iubire față de un alt *ego*. Nu ni se cere să-l iubim pe cel care nu ne seamănă sau care nu are ca și noi, ci tocmai pe acela care ne seamănă întru totul, care are ca și noi, care este ca și noi înșine. [...] *Eul* este în concurență cu sine însuși, cu «imaginea» lui – ca un fractal al societății concurențiale din care provine, căreia îi aparține și a cărei structură o reproduce în interiorul său. [...] Întrebarea pe care o putem pune acum în modul cel mai direct: oare dacă ne-am întâlni față în față cu noi înșine – ne-am iubi sau ne-am detesta/urî? Dacă ar exista un om perfect identic cu noi înșine – l-am cultiva, i-am căuta prietenia, ne-am înțelege cu el sau, dimpotrivă, am face tot posibilul să-l exterminăm, să-l îndepărtăm, să-l facem să-și ia tălpășița de pe domeniul identității, care, prin definiție, nu poate suporta decât un singur rezident? [...] Dublul reușește să saboteze și în cele din urmă să se substituie sursei sale, deși, [...] trebuie spus că, în cele din urmă, nu putem discerne între original și copie, între sursă și întemeiat, între nebun și fantasmă – tot ce reținem este lupta acerbă, concurența care se instalează între cele două ipostaze asemenea, identice” (Pătrașcu 2024: 49-54). Acestea fiind spuse, ce să mai credem despre oglinzi? Le contemplăm ca să ne domolim dioptriile, până când ilizibilul din ele devine încifrabil. Ne consolăm cu o firavă prezumție: o slăbiciune cunoscută numai nouă, dar nemărturisită decât oglinzii, aproape că nu există. Cel mai greu este, totuși, s-o ferim de propria memorie. De aceea, o și cedăm adiacențelor din oglindă, *celălalt*ilor amenajați de ea. Și ne confesăm acestora până înroșim obraji sticlei.

În primul capitol al lucrării sale *Cuvintele și lucrurile*, Michel Foucault comenta, după cum bine se știe, un tablou din 1656, aparținând unui maestru spaniol din secol XVII, Diego Velázquez (1599-1660). Este vorba despre *Las Meninas/Însoțitoarele*, în traducere liberă doamne de companie ale infantei Margarita Teresa, fiică a regelui Philip IV și a reginei Maria Anna. Cu acest prilej, filosoful menționa o oglindă din spatele picturului: „Această oglindă traversează întreg câmpul reprezentării, ignorând ceea ce ar putea capta acolo, și restituie vizibilitatea a ceea ce rămâne în afara oricărei priviri. [...] Trebuie deci să ne prefacem că nu știm cine se reflectă în adâncul oglinzii și să interogăm această reflectare în imediatul existenței sale [s.n. A.M.]” (Foucault 1996: 51). *Cuvintele și lucrurile* nu este singura carte în care M. Foucault abordează tema oglinzii. Bunăoară, în

volumul *Utopiile reale*, el scrie: „Oglinda, până la urmă, este o utopie, dat fiind că este un loc fără loc. În oglindă, eu mă văd acolo unde nu sunt, într-un spațiu ireal care se deschide în mod virtual în spatele suprafeței, sunt acolo, acolo unde nu sunt, un fel de umbră care îmi oferă mie însumi propria mea vizibilitate, care îmi permite să mă privesc acolo unde sunt absent: utopie a oglinzii. Dar ea este, în același timp, și o heterotopie, în măsura în care oglinda există în mod real, și în care are, asupra locului [*place*] pe care-l ocup, un fel de efect retroactiv; pornind de la oglindă, eu mă descopăr absent din locul [*place*] în care sunt, din moment ce mă văd în ea. Pornind de la această privire care, într-o anumită măsură, mă vizează, din adâncul acelui spațiu virtual aflat de cealaltă parte a oglinzii, eu revin către mine și reîncep să îmi îndrept privirea spre mine însumi și să mă reconstitui acolo unde sunt; oglinda funcționează ca o heterotopie, în sensul că face ca locul [*place*] pe care eu îl ocup în momentul când mă privesc în ea să fie în același timp absolut real, în legătură cu întregul spațiu ce-l înconjoară, și absolut ireal, dar fiind că este obligat, pentru a fi perceput, să treacă prin acel punct virtual aflat în fața lui. [...] Oglinda în care eu nu sunt reflectă contextul în care eu sunt” (Foucault 2024: 61-62, 77). Ajunși la oglindă, oamenii nu-și vizualizează fața, o costumează. Și o adăpostesc în priviri. Căci oglinda n-o să-i cedeze întrebătorului decât tăcerea lui subcutanată: aceea latentă, de sub figura preluată de mântuială. Oglinda nu reflectă o imagine, marchează o disjunctie. De altminteri, când poposim într-o oglindă, plecăm imediat din alta. Cu oglinda nu dezvoltăm o înțelegere, ne calmează un protocol. Care nu rezistă. Căci oglinzile nu corectează. Mai curând admonestează: „Oglinda nu linguește, ea îl reflectă cu fidelitate pe cel care se uită în ea, acel chip pe care nu-l arătăm niciodată lumii pentru că îl ascundem cu ajutorul *personei* – masca noastră de actori. Oglinda însă se află dincolo de mască și arată adevăratul chip. Aceasta este prima probă de curaj cerută de drumul spre interior, o probă care-i sperie pe cei mai mulți, căci întâlnirea cu sine însuși face parte dintre acele lucruri neplăcute pe care le evităm atâta timp cât putem proiecta în exterior tot ceea ce este negativ. Când suntem în stare să ne vedem propria umbră și să suportăm cunoașterea ei, atunci abia am rezolvat o mică parte a sarcinii: am suprimat cel puțin inconștientul personal. Însă umbra este o parte vie a personalității și vrea de aceea să participe într-o formă sau alta la viața întregului. Ea nu poate fi îndepărtată prin argumente și nici nu poate fi făcută inofensivă prin sofisme. Această problemă este extrem de dificilă căci ea nu numai că angajează întreaga ființă a omului, ci îi amintește totodată de neputința și de neajutorarea sa. Naturile puternice – sau mai curând ar trebui să le numim slabe – nu agreează această aluzie și-și inventează un dincolo de bine și de rău eroic, tăind nodul gordian, în loc de a-l desface. Însă, mai devreme sau mai târziu, datoriile trebuie plătite” (Jung 2014: 29-30). Privim în oglindă de fapt pândindu-ne; cu spaima că ea zărește o grea restanță biografică ce se ni vede de peste umăr; o povară de trecut pe care nu ne-o însușim, disimulând-o încontinuu; punând în seama altora niște trăiri care ne aparțin în exclusivitate. Prin urmare, n-o să ne simplificăm viața dacă nu ne complicăm identitatea. Altminteri, sinele rămâne o nelămurire străvezie, fără întretăieri cu frica de răspunsuri; deraiază la intersecția dintre uimirea perpelită și dilema blazată. Astfel, *eu sunt*-ul nu-și mai pune punct; preferă virgula, oglinda de

rezervă, diagnosticul amabil. Viața întrezărită în oglindă este, în acest caz, o capitulare cu jumătate de gură. Altminteri, ce rost are să-ți pui o mască și să te uiți apoi în oglindă? Nu ai ce să-i arăți, iar ea nu are ce să rețină din tine. Și dacă nu renunți la deghizare, oglinda n-are de ce să-și apropie aparențele unei figuri trucate. Sau poate crezi că, în intrândul specular, o să rămână acolo ceea ce vrei tu și nu ceea ce poate să-ți restituie ea? Muiată în apele unui vis lucid, oglinda n-o să ne redea ceea ce am fi dorit să se întâmple, apăsând, în schimb, pe cele petrecute deja. Oglindirea asta denunțătoare o să devină o cauză primă a realităților ocolite; sunt realități aparte, care-s precondiția unui adevăr cu întindere mică, dar cu relevanță mare: mințirea de sine ca reîntemeiere biografică; care, nu rareori, ne condamnă la un faliment existențial. Și ca să înțelegem mai bine, să ne gândim la filmul *Vanilla Sky* (2001). Ce concluzii desprindem din el? Lucrurile trăite cândva, concret, nu sunt aceleași cu acelea recuperate, ulterior, pe care speculară. Apare mereu un prezent defect, care nu-i, la urma urmei, decât fuga celor săvârșite din fața faptelor neasumate. Putem omori pe cineva, cu sau fără intenție, pentru ca, în memoria viselor noastre să ucidem pe altcineva. Astea sunt jocurile imaginației, care nu-i totdeauna simpatice. Reintrăm astfel în tematica dublului, așa cum e tratată ea de F.M. Dostoievski. Sumbru și clasic. Personajul principal al nuvelei *Dublul* (1846), Iakov Petrovici Goliadkin, remarcă, de la o vreme, că oriunde ar merge, cineva îl însoțește de aproape: îl escortează, îl îngână, îl persiflează. Conștientizează, îngrozit, că viața lui are o replică. Și nu una oricare, ci caricaturală, intruzivă, tupeistă, malefică: „Toate presimțirile domnului Goliadkin se adevărează pe deplin. Tot ceea ce bănuise el, tremurând de groază, se petrecea aievea. Răsuflarea i se opri și-i veni amețală. Necunoscutul ședea pe patul lui, îmbrăcat ca și el cu mantaua, cu pălăria pe cap, și zâmbind vag, cu ochii ușor mijiți, îl salută prietenește, cu o ușoară înclinare a capului. Domnul Goliadkin vru să strige, dar nu izbuti; să protesteze într-un fel oarecare, dar nu avu putere. Părul i se făcu măciucă în cap; aproape leșinat de groază, domnul Goliadkin se prăbuși pe un scaun. Avea și de ce: îl recunoscuse foarte bine pe acest prieten nocturn. Prietenul său nocturn nu era altul decât el însuși – domnul Goliadkin, un alt domn Goliadkin, dar absolut identic cu el –, într-un cuvânt, ceea ce s-ar chema dublul său sub toate aspectele” (Dostoievski 2018: 63). La un moment dat, totul devine halucinant și societatea îl condamnă pe Goliadkin la o previzibilă internare în ospiciu. Iar sfârșitul cărții e demn de un thriller american. Numai că, în derularea peliculei, scena povestită din Dostoievski n-ar dura nici măcar un minut: pacientul odată plecat către spital, dublul țopăie satisfăcut în jurul trăsorii. Într-un acces de bucurie dementă, Goliadkin-junior, cum îi spune scriitorul, își ia originalul în balon. De parcă i-ar da lovitura de grație. Dar nu-i așa, puțină răbdare vă rugăm. Deși spera că în drumul său e însoțit de medicul Krestian Ivanovici Rutenspit, Goliadkin realizează că, instantaneu, acesta ia chipul mult urâtului dublu. Nu avea, deci, cum să se apere de această creatură a anticipărilor sale. Goliadkin-junior nu-l mai flanca demult. Îl locuia în mod laborios, autoritar, temeinic. Nuvela dostoevskiană a inspirat, în 2013, o comedie neagră regizată de Richard Ayoade și intitulată *aidoma*, *The Double*.

Patronate ori nu de vreun dublu, oglinzile sunt și răutăcioase, și politicoase, și insinuante. Omul le-a meșterit și din obsidian, și din bronz, și din cositor. Însă atitudinea față de ele nu s-a prea modificat, opțiunile nefiind prea multe. Aveam de-a face cu „acea oglindă necruțătoare care vă amplifică *dinăuntru* [s.a.]” (Vișniec 2012: 34), ne asigură Matei Vișniec, un fan al imaginărilor specular. Iar oglinda crește în noi datorită poveștilor prin care o șlefui, diversificându-i astfel unghiurile din care ne-am putea admira. O extensie imagistică e o gonflare semantică: văzută pieziș, din oglindă, lumea își îngroașă stratul de semnificații. Până și eventuala lărgire a trăsăturilor noastre lățește și înțelesul cuvintelor care le descriu. Paradoxal, oglinda e mai mult figurativă decât enunțiativă. Iar teoria cuantică nu e străină de această viziune. Ea sondează lucrurile, ființele și situațiile ce relaționează, caracteristicile fiecăreia dintre ele depinzând de maniera în care se influențează mutual: „Când ne imaginăm totalitatea lucrurilor, ne imaginăm că suntem *în afara* universului și privim «de acolo». Dar nu există un «afară» față de totalitatea lucrurilor. Punctul de vedere exterior e un punct de vedere care nu există. Orice descriere a lumii se face din interiorul ei. Nu există lumea văzută din afară, există numai perspective interioare, parțiale, care se reflectă întâmplător. Lumea este această reflectare reciprocă a perspectivelor” (Rovelli 2021: 160). Cum se tot repetă astăzi, nu există proprietăți în afara interacțiunilor dintre ele; apoi, ni se repetă că și acele însușiri sunt relative, ridicând intensitatea evoluțiilor din noi la puterea a doua, a treia, ori poate și mai și: „Inconștientul nostru nu interpretează doar datele senzoriale, ci le îmbunătățește. Trebuie s-o facă, deoarece datele furnizate de simțurile noastre sunt de proastă calitate și trebuie restaurate pentru a fi utile. De exemplu, o imperfecțiune în datele furnizate de ochi provine din așa-numitul unghi mort, un punct din spatele globului ocular, unde se face conexiunea între retină și creier. Apare astfel o zonă moartă în câmpul vizual al fiecărui ochi. În mod normal, nici măcar n-o observi, întrucât creierul completează imaginea pe baza datelor pe care le primește din zona înconjurătoare. [...] Majoritatea dintre noi stocăm în memorie trăsăturile generale ale chipurilor pe care ni le amintim și, când vedem pe cineva cunoscut, identificăm persoana potrivit chipul la care ne uităm cu chipul din acel catalog” (Mlodinov 2013: 62, 85). Și tocmai din acest calup restrâns de informații vizuale ne selectăm și o imagine de sine: urzică de angoasa unei asemănări cu cine nu trebuie, dar și roasă de amărăciunea că felul în care arătăm nu e reiterat, niciun pic, de altcineva. Observată în oglindă, o dominantă fizionomică e despicață în aspecte contradictorii, dar la fel de autentice, dat fiind că acestea apar în conștiința unor observatori diferiți: tu și eu. Evidențiem, așadar, regimurile de auto-situare a materiei, concretizarea lor în corpul uman; adică imaginea noastră despre trup și confruntarea acestei percepții cu informațiile luate din manifestările speculare. Și ne întrebăm: opinia despre noi înșine e deja inclusă în imaginea de sine?; ori ia naștere prin ciocnirea dintre percepția asupra propriei înfățișări, pe de o parte, și „adnotările” pe care oglinda le sugerează, pe de alta? Să mizăm pe ceea ce știm: omul asediază oglinda, preferând să ascundă într-însa; apoi, oglinda nu e doar stăpâna divergențelor. Este ea însăși imaginată, încontinuu, și încă

foarte variat. Mai ales că între individ și oglindă se interpune sectorul cerebral al anatomiei umane. Potrivit neurologilor, acesta modifică impresiile pe care sticla ni le transmite despre propriul trup, făcând ca o singură oglindire să aibă mai multe istorii: "...o versiune oarecare a corpului este în permanență re-creată în activitatea creierului. Eterogenitatea corpului este copiată în creier, acesta fiind unul dintre semnele importante ale orientării creierului față de corp. În sfârșit, creierul poate face mai mult decât să cartografieze stările care apar în realitate, mai mult sau mai puțin fidel: el poate și să transforme stările corpului și, mai senzațional, poate stimula stări ale corpului care n-au apărut încă" (Damasio 2016: 110). Iată că fenomenologia percepției poate primi sprijin și din direcția medicinei, cea din urmă putând explica, în stilul ei, de ce oglinda e un veritabil *magister ludi*; sau, mai pe șleau, este o gazdă bună pentru versatile imagini de sine: "Imaginea lumii nu ține [...] de o reproducere directă, ci de un artefact specular presupus a garanta aparența cea mai conformă cu vederea, dar care nu ne oferă de fapt decât iluzia realității" (Wunenburger 2004: 314). Oglinda ne desituează, îngropând un tânăr adevăr sub o crustă de năluciri bătrâne: "La vremea aia primeam multe amenzi de la circulație. S-ar fi zis că de fiecare dată când mă uitam în oglindă era roșu" (Bukowski 2017: 180). Nu e vorba de *depășirea*, ci *încălcarea* unor limite ale vizibilului. E un reflex banal: extindem în imaginar ceea ce nu-i cu putință în real; cu precizarea că acea contravenție o realizăm *post factum*, nu într-un prezent controlabil al existenței, ci într-un *prea târziu* al oglinzii, al memoriei din ea. E o oglindă amortit-gălbui, coclită-n anii săi cei vechi; una care îmbătrânește până și «eurile» înghesuite-n ea: "Conștiința Eului îi califică pe oameni să-și recunoască propria imagine în oglindă. [...] Ce se întâmplă atunci când ne privim în oglindă? Ce ne învață această capacitate în legătură cu esența conștiinței Eului? În fața oglinzii ne disociem în observator și în obiectul observat, suntem concomitent subiect și obiect [...]. În limba japoneză lucrurile sunt limpezi, căci «a recunoaște» înseamnă totodată și «a fi despărțit». Deosebirea despre care e vorba poate fi asemănată cu deosebirea dintre a fi martor și a fi implicat. [...] Ne recunoaștem în oglindă deoarece între noi și oglindă există o distanță. Conștiința Eului are nevoie de distanță și permite distanța. Dar nu trebuie doar să ne așezăm concret în fața oglinzii pentru a afla ceva despre noi, ci ne putem întreba ce se întâmplă cu noi și putem observa conștient, de la o anumită distanță, partea furioasă a personalității noastre. Această distanțare are avantajul că nu ne lăsăm permanent sau în întregime la discreția afectului, în cazul în care conștiința Eului recunoaște furia, nu trebuie neapărat ca un impuls de distrugere să aibă câștig de cauză și să copleșească Eul ca o catastrofă naturală" (Daniel 2021: 18-20). Cam așa stau lucrurile. Dacă distanța dintre privitor și obiectul privit e anulată, individul riscă să se confunde cu propria-i mască. Omul devine portretul unei imagini. Să ne amintim însă de vorba lui Orhan Pamuk: "bineînțeles că nu există oglinzi perfecte. Există doar oglinzi care corespund cu desăvârșire așteptărilor noastre" (Pamuk 2025: 51). Ele pretind că ne zămislesc un geamăn și, de fapt, ne scornesc un simulacru. Ori, în cel mai bun caz, un eu interimar. Din acest motiv, suntem prinși mereu între stadiul percepției, unul final, și acela al privirii, unul inițial. Percepția e

cumva împăcată cu sine, ia de bun ceea ce-i pune ochiul sub nas. Privirea e mai suspicioasă. Dă târcoale: poate-poate denaturează ea ceva. În definitiv, avem atâtea oglinzi după câte chipuri am frecventat. Într-o scrisoare către Carl Gustav Jung din 3 martie 1911, Sigmund Freud sublinia pericolul ca un psihanalist să se lase derutat de nesfârșitele manevre ale Eului: „Doar Eul joacă rolul mășcăriciului de la circ, care face tot timpul pe deșteptul, pentru ca publicul să creadă că el comandă tot ce se petrece în arenă” (Freud-Jung 2015: 588). E clar că problema automatizării îl obseda, de vreme ce relua acea caracterizare a bufonului în epistola din 14 martie același an. De unde și întrebarea: suntem spectatori ai oglinzii sau regizori ai propriei noastre imagini? Oricare ar fi răspunsul, pe placul nostru ori ba, contează că în fața oglinzii să nu ne fie frică de ceea ce am putea fi. Evident, angoasele nu lipsesc și au motivații solide. Căci oamenii nu pot să se mai vadă cu propriii lor ochi, iar „suspendarea efortului de a fi ei înșiși este uneori tentantă” (Le Breton 2018: 13). Cumva explicabil și întrucâtva riscant. După unii filosofi ai imaginii, a ne privi în oglindă e un act de imagine substitutiv, o formă de vivificare a imaginii. Această modalitate de însuflețire a vizibilului reflectat „nu vizează asimilarea imaginii și a corpului, ci posibilitatea ca, în principiu, cele două entități să fie înlocuite una cu alta. În substituție, corpurile sunt tratate drept imagini, iar imaginile drept corpuri. [...] Acte atât productive, cât și distructive, astfel de procese sunt mai actuale ca niciodată” (Bredenkamp 2018: 57, 179). Astfel, noi cerem sticlei să primească în luciul ei nu un chip anume, ci raporturile sinelui cu această înfățișare prezumtivă. Privitul în oglindă e ca vorbitul prin somn. Adevărul care iese la iveală e pe jumătate anonim. Nu prea avem pe cine reclama. Mai ales că oglinda ne mituiește și totodată ne înspăimântă. Din ea extragem, adesea, câte o privire cu ambiții de prognostic. Astfel, din bestiarul specular, iese la iveală câte un trecut ce va să vină, dar pe care noi nu ni-l imaginăm încă, nici măcar ca viitor: „Înainte de toate, recunoașterea fețelor nu depinde doar de capacitatea de a analiza aspectele vizuale ale unui chip – trăsăturile sale specifice și configurația generală – pentru a le compara cu altele, dar și de capacitatea de a mobiliza amintirile, experiențele și sentimentele asociate cu chipul respectiv” (Saks 2014: 102). Oglinda răsfoiește o înfățișare ori alta, fără a memora vreuna. Mizează pe capacitatea noastră de a *recunoaște* imaginea pe care ne-a oferit-o cândva. Oglinda nu-i un memorial, e un pretext al rememorării. Nu depozitează nimic, bizuindu-se pe dorința omului de a-și recupera, prin analogie, o figură reflectată, dar altminteri ignorată. Oglinda nu-și păstrează niciun chip pentru ea: îl ține însă la îndemână ca să ni-l încredințeze la momentul aducerilor aminte. Trecutul din oglinzi nu survine, ci ne așteaptă până când intrăm iarăși înăuntrul acesteia: „Spațiul chipului e doar *umplut*, nu e *construit*. Dacă timpul lipsește, spațiul e exagerat, de parcă ar vrea să facă uitat faptul că timpul a fost alungat din el, și tot ce se află în el devine ultraclar și neliniștitor [s.a.]” (Picard 2023: 149). De aceea, oglinda nu se mulțumește să resusciteze fizionomii. Ea cultivă încruntările care ne tănuiesc spusele. Bunăoară, Mircea Cărtărescu nu se vede în oglindă, își răsfoiește chipul. Nu-și vizualizează fizionomia, o costumează. Își caută cuvintele-n priviri. Căci oglinda n-o să-i cedeze întrebătorului decât tăcerea lui subcutanată. Aceea

de sub figura pe care sticla o reflectă de mântuială: „[...] înainte să plec de aici, victorios (căci nu asta înseamnă numele nostru?) și înfrânt, am ținut să te mai văd o dată, Victor. Am mers la baie și te-am privit din nou, cum am făcut-o întreaga săptămână. Fața ta uscată și brună, ochii tăi atenți și severi. Amurgul etern care-ți înconjoară capul ca o aură. Vei rămâne oare mereu lângă mine? Sau vei pleca, așa cum toți adolescenții îi părăsesc pe care cei ce se dizolvă, încet, în maturitate? Înainte să plec, am suflat aburi peste imaginea ta și am scris cu degetul pe oglindă: DISPARI” (Cărtărescu 2019: 143). Descoperim aici un gest cu o lungă genealogie, prelungită, ce-i drept, de bizareriile literaturii ezoterice de la începutul secolului XX. Bunăoară, Ernest Bosc, cunoscut sub pseudonimul J. Marcus de Vèze (1838-1913), recomanda drept leac sufletesc „oglindea de cristal Sfânta Elena”. Decisivă, în opinia lui era „inscripționarea” oglinzii care, ulterior, mai trebuia și rugată: „Faceți o cruce pe un cristal cu ulei de măsline pur și, sub această cruce, scrieți cu cerneală Sfânta Elena. Dați cristalul să-l țină un copil, așezați-vă în genunchi în spatele lui și repetați de trei ori rugăciunea: *Deprecor Dominus Helena mater regis Constantini/Te implor, doamnă Elena, mamă a împăratului Constantin*” (Bosc 2016: 31). Oglinda ne reflectă îndeobște fizionomia; dar ne redă și cuvintele asociate ei: fie scrise pe un abur efemer, lătit pe lustrul ei, fie puse deja pe hârtie și lipite într-un colț al sticlei; e un soi de contiguitate între înțelesul cuvântului, literele care-l transpun și falsa transparență a sticlei; s-ar părea că oglinda ne încurajează gândurile; de fapt le semnifică, ea copiind acele vorbe ce ne adăpostesc ideile; ca și cum cele inscripționate pe sau lângă apele ei ar veni din inima universului specular³. Oglinda este ventriloul gândurilor inactive încă. Și totodată un egoscop: nu ne vedem din exterior, ne privește ea din interior. Este *sinele* un rege al oglinzilor sau oglinda este rugina de pe toate încrângăturile lui *eu însumi*? Curmând dialogul cu celălaltul din oglindă, eul primar se plimbă printre suspiciunile alambicate; este acel ego de care ne pierdusem și acum, iată, îl redeschidem, făcându-l contemporan cu ceea ce am devenit între timp. Iată ce ne spune o voce a celebrului *Cenaclu de Luni*: „Zgomotul mă fascinează, mă obsedează. Câteodată mă sperie. În orice caz, sunt absolut sigur că vine *din oglindă*. Există cineva în interiorul ei care dorește să-mi comunice ceva. Iată dovada: pocnesc din degete, aștept puțin și, după câteva zeci de secunde, *el* repetă, aproape identic, sunetul produs de degetele mele. Bat din palme și *el* bate, la rândul lui, din palme [...]. *El* captează sunetele vieții mele cu o energie din ce în ce mai mare. E ca o gaură neagră care îmi aspiră încetul cu încetul identitatea. [...] Ei bine, ceea ce încerca *el* să-mi trimită înapoi, ca pe o minge de ping-pong, erau propriile mele bătaii de inimă. [...] Îi spun «eu sunt» și el repetă «eu sunt». [...] Astăzi a înțeles logica limbajului articulat și mi-a strigat: «Ajutor!» Sunt la capătul puterilor. Povestea asta durează de șase luni și am impresia uneori că alunec într-o lume paralelă pe cale să mă transform pe mine în oglindă” (Vișniec 2011: 180-181). Aspirația

³ Referitor la *compensarea prin identificarea în oglindă*, Verena Kast scria: „O identificare în oglindă se produce când fantasmezi sau visezi o relație cu o persoană pe care o apreciezi foarte mult și care îți seamănă în anumite aspecte esențiale. Această relație aduce cu sine o revalorizare narcisică” (Kast 2020: 99).

personajului de a deveni el însuși o instanță de reflectare ar însemna două lucruri: fie vrea să trăiască în aceeași țară cu făcătorul de zgomote, fie vrea să-l anihileze, limitându-se la administrarea egoului unificat. E ca și cum ar spune *da* cu semnul exclamării și încă un *da* cu semnul întrebării. Oglinda este indigoul sonorizărilor prin care omul se auto-validează. Dar oglinda nu-l înregistrează „în direct”. Existența pe care o copie ea nu este un stop-cadru al vieții personajului, ci doar eco-ul acesteia: oglinda stenografiază cuvintele prin care omul și obiectul nu discută, se tatonează. Chipurile căror altor oameni ne mențin imaginea în împărăția speculară? Căci numai având înfățișarea unui om de altădată vom trece de examenul asemănării cu vechii locatari ai oglinzii. Potrivit neuroștiințelor, acest fenomen se explică tot pe socoteala unei reflectări: „În anii 1990, cercetătorii au descoperit un alt grup de neuroni. [...] Pentru că acești neuroni răspund la acțiuni executate de alții, sunt denumiți *neuroni-oglină*. Ei sunt activați atunci când un alt agent e observat folosind obiecte într-un anumit scop. Astfel, noi potrivim comportamentul corporal pe care îl observăm la alții cu propriul nostru vocabular motor intern. [...] Ne folosim propriul automodel inconștient ca să ne punem în pielea altora, cum s-ar zice. [...] Sinele conștient este, așadar, nu numai o fereastră spre îndeletnicirile propriului Eu, dar și o fereastră spre lumea socială. Este o fereastră bidirecțională. Pe de o parte, ridică până la nivelul disponibilităților globale procesele inconștiente și automate pe care le folosesc constant organismele pentru a-și reprezenta comportamentul unii altora. Și astfel procesele ajung să [...] devină un element al realității noastre subiective. Pe de altă parte, ele conduc la o enormă expansiune și la o îmbogățire a simulării noastre interne a lumii. De îndată ce creierul nostru sunt capabile să reprezinte nu doar evenimente, dar și acțiuni – adică, evenimentele orientate spre scop cauzate de alte ființe – nu mai suntem singuri. Există și alții, cu mințile lor” (Metzinger 2015: 201-202). Prin urmare, în oglindă ne *re-vedem* pe noi înșine ca să *recunoaștem* ceea ce semenii au lăsat în noi. În oglindă ne recapitulăm, travestindu-ne cu trecuturile celorlalți. În istoriile lor ne așteaptă moduri de a fi la care aderăm, nu fără unele dificultăți de camuflare.

Oglinda dă un contur privirii și un plus de suprafață neliniștii. Căci timpul alungă câte un dublu, un alter-ego, un androgin. Curgerea lui nu ține cont de acea „dorință de doi” pe care Roland Barthes o remarcă în mirările lui Robinson Crusoe; care vedea, pentru prima oară pe insula lui, niște urme umane pe nisip: „Unul apare ca o pedeapsă. A fi condamnat să nu fii decât Unul înseamnă a fi pedepsit pentru ceva. Robinson își exprimă mereu această credință: că, fiind condamnat să trăiască singur pe o insula pustie, își plătește greșelile din tinerețe și, mai ales, revolta împotriva tatălui care-i interzisese să plece pe mare. [...] Și apoi, episodul descoperirii urmei de pași omenești: totul este, de acum, articulat cu suspansul descoperirii altui om. Ceea ce vom enunța astfel, ceea ce este valabil pentru fiecare dintre noi: Doi este suspansul lui Unu (și Unu îl are pe Doi în pânțele)” (Barthes 2018: 174-175). Dacă în literatura română îl avem, grație lui Mircea Cărtărescu, pe Victor și iarăși Victor, în literatura universală îl cunoaștem, datorită lui Herman Hesse, pe Max Demian, un soi de dublu pentru Emil Sinclair: „– Micuțule Sinclair, fii atent! Eu va trebui să plec. Poate că

vreodată o să mai ai nevoie de mine [...]. Dacă atunci mă vei chema, n-am să mai sosesc atât de năvalnic călare pe armăsar ori cu trenul. Atunci va trebui să te asculți pe tine însuși, vei băga atunci de seamă că sunt înlăuntrul tău. Pricepi? [...]. Tot ceea ce mi s-a întâmplat de atunci a fost dureros. Însă când găsesc câteodată cheia și cobor foarte adânc în mine, acolo unde în oglinda întunecată dorm imaginile destinului, atunci nu trebuie decât să mă aplec asupra oglinzii celei negre pentru a-mi vedea propria imagine, care acum seamănă întru totul cu el, el, prietenul și călăuza” (Hesse 1997: 251). Sinele extins al lui Demian e coaja eului al lui Sinclair. Transfuzia de însușiri de la unul la celălalt e evidentă. Demian este conținătorul – matrioșka dacă vreți – lui Sinclair. Și, în definitiv, insuficiența de tine însuși te forțează, oricine ai fi, să-ți construiești o replică; iar pe scheletul ei să înalți o nouă persoană care ești tot tu. Doar că mergi la frizer și îți dai ghionturi cu stupefierile bătrânului din oglindă. Astăzi, o metamorfoză, cum e senectutea, ne ia pe nepusă masă: nu se instalează, ne surprinde; iar în oglindă se comportă ca un tragic accident.

Ideea că năvălim dimineața în oglindă și nu ne prea convine ceea ce vedem acolo este deja un clișeu, oricât de îndemânatică ar fi transpunerea lui literară: „[...] pe când se bărbieră în baie, a aruncat o privire în oglindă să se asigure că briciul rade egal și nu rămâne nici un firicel de păr. Și brusc a observat că din oglindă îl urmărește un bărbat pe care nu-l cunoaște, nu e chiar așa de tânăr, e cam botos, i se vede deja a doua bărbie, are cearcăne și pielea îi e ușor încrețită sub ochi. S-a îngrozit nerecunoscându-se, s-a simțit străin de tot ce se întâmpla cu el în mod obișnuit și a avut senzația tâmpită că bărbatul din oglindă e o ființă care nu depinde de el, iar el, Șurik, cel care se bărbieră, e imaginea lui reflectată. A gonit vrăjitoria asta, dar nu s-a mai regăsit pe el, cel dinainte” (Ulițkaia 2008: 365). Aici nu e vorba de imaginea cuiva, ci de o masculinitate generică, pe care personajul mai mult și-o promite decât și-o constată, verifică, atribuie. Oglinda apare la începutul și la sfârșitul romanului, individul pe care ea îl semnalează nefiind Șurik, ci timpul care trece în dauna acestuia. Am fi tentați că credem că, uitându-ne în oglindă, ne comandăm un portret. Și folosim aici termenul „portret” în sensul echivalării lui cu o imagine cumva „construită”. Căci în dese rânduri un „tablou” desprins din oglindă este derivatul unui canon vizual-scenic, de multă vreme tipizat. Este și motivul pentru care, uneori, înțelegem portretul specular drept o anchiloză a percepției de sine. S-ar presupune, deci, că ceea ce vedem în ea ar ține mai mult de manierismul tabloului și de mitomania penelului – acest ustensil al inventării de sine. Așa să fie? Oglinda imită, traduce sau copie? Ce ascunde în pliurile sale? Victor Ieronim Stoichiță crede că „ea nu ține locul lucrului semnificat (așa cum fac harta Italiei pentru Italia, portretul lui Cezar pentru Cezar), ci îl reprezintă reflectându-l. Pentru ca oglinda să fie reprezentare (și nu simplă suprafață lustruită și înrămată), lucrul reprezentat trebuie să se afle în fața sa, în vreme ce lucrul reprezentat într-un tablou și pe o hartă este totdeauna *altundeva* [s.a.]” (Stoichiță 1999: 216). Desigur, e mai greu de acceptat că oglinda nu ne reproduce în mod servil, ci doar descinde din ceea ce ea vede în noi. Contrar așteptărilor, este doar hieroglifa unei prezențe. Intrând într-o cameră, chipul tău e strâns cu putere la pieptul lunecos al unei oglinzi. Iar

împrejurimile și se adună strâns în jur, de parcă te-ai pune sub un microscop: „Conceptul de chip, susțin eu, împreună cu cel de libertate și responsabilitate, face parte din înțelegerea noastră interpersonală a lumii. Ceea ce înseamnă că, atunci când vedem un ansamblu de trăsături ca pe un chip, noi nu le interpretăm biologic – ca un film vizibil care învăluie un creier și care lasă să pătrundă în interior, prin ochi și urechi, informația pe care o procesează creierul respectiv. Ce vedem noi este prezența *ta* reală în lumea noastră comună. Chipul meu este, de asemenea, acea parte din mine către care își îndreaptă atenția ceilalți ori de câte ori mi se adresează cu «tu». Eu sunt în *spatele* chipului meu și totuși sunt prezent în el, vorbind și privind prin el o lume a celorlalți care sunt, la rândul lor, în egală măsură dezvăluiți și ascunși ca și mine. Chipul meu este o graniță, un prag, un loc în care îmi fac apariția precum monarhul în balconul palatului său. [...] Prin urmare, chipul meu este legat de patosul condiției mele. Într-un anumit sens, tu ești întotdeauna mai conștient decât pot fi eu de ceea ce sunt eu în lume; iar când mă confrunt cu propriul meu chip poate exista un moment de panică, în care încerc să potrivesc persoana pe care o cunosc atât de bine cu acest chip pe care alții îl cunosc mai bine. Cum poate persoana pe care o cunosc din primele mele zile de viață ca o unitate continuă să fie identică cu această carne în descompunere pe care alții au cunoscut-o în toate schimbările ei?” (Scruton 2023: 135). Fiecare dintre noi obține un chip dacă are emoții de oglindit alături de alții. Ne câștigăm chipul printr-un rit de trecere, luând asupra-ne sentimente ce nu ne aparțin; dar care, din oglindire în oglindire, ne sculpează profilul. Cum spunea și Jacques Derrida, „lumea conține oglinda care o captează și reciproc. Prin tot ceea ce captează, pentru că ea poate capta totul, fiecare parte a oglinzii este mai mare decât întregul, dar atunci este mai mică decât ea însăși” (Derrida 1997: 332). Ce presupune deci privitul în oglindă? A nu fi, totuși, complezent cu micul *eu însumi*, a extinde distanța dintre mine și mine; ca să nu mă mai fixeze acolo unde mă așază privirea altora⁴; și să nu mai domicilieze într-un colț stingher al sinelui meu. Și apoi, dacă te prefaci prea mult că ai fi cineva anume, la un moment dat nici nu va mai fi nevoie să te prefaci deloc: „Eul narcisic este inseparabil nu numai de o rană constitutivă, ci de deghizările și deplasările ce se țin de la un capăt la altul și constituie modificarea lui. Mască pentru alte măști, travesti sub alte travestiuri, eul nu se distinge de propriii lui bufoni, și el merge șchiopătând pe un picior verde și pe unul roșu” (Deleuze 1995: 187). După cum observa Carl Gustav Jung, „numeroase persoane se identifică atât de complet cu atitudinea lor exterioară, încât ei nu mai au nici o relație conștientă cu procesele lor interioare. Oricum, se produce și situația inversă; imaginea sufletului nu se proiectează, ci rămâne în subiect; acesta se identifică astfel cu sufletul propriu în măsura în care este convins că modul său de a se comporta față de propriile procese lăuntrice reprezintă caracterul său unic și real” (Jung 2003: 469). *De cine te ascunzi sub chipul acesta?* Întrebarea e cu atât mai grea cu cât răspunsul pare mai facil. Știm că măști sunt destule. Ludice, sarcastice, inteligente, neobrăzate de-a dreptul: „Apropo de

⁴ „[...] chipul celuilalt, al meu, era acum pictat în ochii ei [...]” (Marías 2002: 255).

maskă, umblu cu ea pe figură de mic, așa că, atunci când ies în lume, nici măcar nu o pot desprinde. Ar trebui să o dau jos odată cu pielea” (Pop 2015: 51). Iar oglinda e un avatar consacrat al măștii lăuntrice din fiecare: „Oglinzile, de-a lungul mileniilor, ne-au ajutat mai puțin să ne vedem cum ne văd alții, cât să arătăm așa cum am voi să fim văzuți, dând aparenței noastre într-o aparență încă o amăgitoare aparență. Oglinzile ne sunt complice și am vrea să le facem să ne privească cu ochii iubirii sau ai oricărei alte distincții. Este însă posibil ca jocul acesta părelnic să străbată și ceva din adevărul nostru, fără ca noi, prefăcuți, să știm sau să avem bănuială. Când însă vrem să ascundem chinul de pe chip, atunci reflecția ne ajută să ne travestim, mincinoasă, acuzând, cu bună știință, adevărul care trăiește, viu și crud, în sinele nostru ascuns” (Creția 2005: 92). Oglinda articulează un *dincolo* care nu-i totuna cu departele. Dimpotrivă, după cum arăta Emmanuel Lévinas, chipul este una din modalitățile *apropelui*, înfățișarea obligându-ne să tratăm „subiectivitatea ca *altul în același* [s.a.]” (Lévinas 2006: 188, 232). Ne convine ori ba, în apele oglinzii vom vedea, mereu, cât de colaterali ne suntem: totdeauna în preajma evazivului *noi înșine*. Ne ținem așadar în proximitate, dar de cealaltă parte a privirii noastre⁵ (Coetzee 2019: 61). Gata oricând să propunem un derivat care ne ia locul. Oglinda ne smulge de pe chip o mască și apoi alta, coborând treaptă cu treaptă în adâncimile sinelui nostru stratificat: „Dacă există întotdeauna un sine în spatele oricărui personaj pe care ni-l imaginăm și în pielea căruia intrăm, ar trebui, prin extensie, să existe întotdeauna un sine în spatele sinelui. Ideea sugerează un regres infinit, problema homunculus-ului dusă la extrem” (Wegner 2012: 288). Din oglindă fie desprindem un portret, fie ne resemnăm cu o mască. Portretul e negociat, pe când masca nu⁶ (Flusser 2015: 106-107). Dacă în primul caz tranzacția reușește, în cel de-al doilea nu se pune problema. Portretul e un

⁵ Oricât de dureros ar fi uneori, scriitorii văd un impas identitar drept un necaz ocular: „[...] îmi imaginez o rană care plânge undeva în caverna dindărătul ochilor. Fără îndoială, trebuie s-o găesc și s-o îngrijesc, altfel o să mor din pricina ei” (Coetzee 2019: 61).

⁶ Despre mască nu putem spune doar că ne deghizează. Pe timpul carnavalului, ea poate fi și întoarsă, răsturnându-se, o dată în plus, semnificările chipului nostru diurn, convențional, de toate zilele. Ridicând acest gest la un nivel existențial, Villém Flusser glosează: „Măștile pe care le purtăm peste măști și sub măști stau altfel decât odinioară: ca măști ce pot fi întoarse. De pildă, chestiunea așa-numitei identificări s-a modificat, la fel ca întrebarea referitoare la suflet și trup, la idee și materie. Nu se mai dezbate problema «ce sunt eu sub atâtea măști?» – cu alte cuvinte așa-numita chestiune a cepei. Mai degrabă ceea ce odinioară se numea «eu» apare acum ca acel cârlig ideologic de care sunt atârinate măștile cu partea lor interioară, întocmai cum masca apare ca acea parte ideologică exterioară din care se observă «eul». Adevărata problemă a identificării devine dialectică negativă dintre partea interioară și cea exterioară a măștii. Iar asta, la rândul său, înseamnă că, deși purtăm în continuare măști și jucăm roluri, deși istoria și istoriile continuă deci, totuși, modul istoric de a-fi-în-lume se apropie de sfârșit. E drept că suferim în continuare din cauza istoriei și acționăm în ea, dar nu ne mai putem angaja față de ea și în ea la fel ca odinioară, fiindcă putem întoarce pe dos toate rolurile din ea [...]”. Vezi subcapitolul *Gestul întoarcerii măștii*, în Flusser 2015: 106-107.

compromis, masca e o soluție de avarie. Dacă în cazul portretului omul și oglinda au ce-și spune, în privința măștii lucrurile stau exact pe dos: om și oglindă își întorc reciproc spatele. Oglinda nu este, așadar, cochilia chipului, este scoarța gândului: „[...] niciodată nu ne-am gândit că oglinzile sunt ospitaliere. Oglinzile primesc totul în liniștite, cu un fel de amabilă resemnare” (Borges 1998: 102-103). Prin urmare, să ne privim în aceeași oglindă până când o să credem că unul e celălalt. Și de ce am face acest lucru? Oglinda are mai multe adevăruri pentru aceeași realitate. Aceea reflectată. În funcție de colțul din care o acostăm, oglinda ne deschide un alt tablou în care intrăm. Ea ne propune autoportretul unei persoane care, adesea, nu ne mai corespunde. În oglindă ne suntem doar vecini nouă înșine. Acolo suntem, mai degrabă, analogi altcuiva. De unde și dilemele de rigoare: ce iscodiri uităm în oglinzile altora? Sau poate le punem acolo intenționat, pentru ca, vrând-nevrând, scrutările lor să preia cadența neizbânzilor noastre? Așa cum răzbate el din oglindă, sinele e destul de alergic la actualitate. Are însă totdeauna nevoie de alte timpuri, în care să externalizeze ceea ce nu-i priește momentan. Totodată, nu se dă în vânt nici după rememorări, deschizându-se trecutului numai sub protecția amneziei. Chiar dacă oglinda nu ne poate da o imagine a corpului în totalitatea lui, părțile de trup care defilează înaintele sunt metonimii ale întregului; sunt stenograme ale stării de spirit ce ne exprimă mai adecvat, nu neapărat mai veridic: “Măcar de m-aș simți eu pe mine în corpul meu! Dar nu mă simt eu pe mine nici în el și nici în afara lui. Nici nu sunt corpul meu, și nici nu îl văd. Amândouă – și corp și suflet – sunt ceva ce eu nu posed. (Pauză) Ah! Iar atunci când mă zăresc din spate, tocmai deplasându-mă, sau mă văd dintr-o parte, în oglinzile retrovizoare – mă cuprinde spaima de propriul mister. Iar oribil e chiar faptul că mă simt coexistând cu mine înșămi. Iată-mă umblând ca și cum aș fi legată de un vis al meu care sunt chiar eu. Când mă văd în oglinzi din spate, s-ar zice că am pe o alta în mine, sau că eu sunt alt lucru. Mă înstrăinez pe afară de mine...Ce groaznic e că de fiecare dată nu putem vedea decât o latură a corpului nostru. Oare ce se petrece pe partea pe care nu o vedem atunci când noi nu putem s-o vedem? Sunt sigură că, dacă am putea privi un corp din amândouă părțile simultan – da, chiar în același timp -, ni s-ar dezvălui ceva uluitor și nou”⁷ (Pessoa 2022: 58). Oare omul chiar nu se cunoaște și se caută realmente? Ori e cabotin și se complace într-un fel de-a v-ați ascunselea cu un Eu de care ar vrea (ori nu) să scape? Probabil că, în oglindă, suntem convingători, fără a fi și sinceri. Rămâne doar să aflăm, dacă vom putea vreodată, ce cotă de minciună ia parte la un mic quantum de adevăr.

Omul este foarte mult „el însuși” – și punem aici ghilimelele în semn de ironie – tocmai în acele eforturi de a se falsifica. De ce? De la o vreme realizăm că ne rătăcim printre propriile noastre substitute. Că ne dizolvăm în ceea ce faimosul *noi înșine* nu conține deloc. Și dând la o parte acel plus de valoare pe care ni-l atribuim fraudulos, doar mimându-l, o să rămânem cu un rest de viață mai săracă, dar mai apropiată de adevăr. Excesul, butaforia sau disimularea sunt modalități, indirecte, de a ajunge la

⁷ Vezi *Dialog în grădina palatului* în Pessoa 2022: 58.

dimensiunile cât de cât corecte ale unui caracter. Paradoxal, exagerarea este un indicator al moderației, al mediei, al normalului. Sărind calul, ne vom da totdeauna de gol. Și sesizând căderea succesivă a măștilor, ne vom replea într-un ego ceva mai strâmt, mai ponderat, mai smerit. Nu ajungem însă prea repede la acest gen de resemnare, căci oglinda ne convinge, mai întâi, că, orice identitate am adopta, ea ar fi incapabilă să ne cuprindă. Bunăoară, în piesa *Regele moare*, personajul principal joacă nedumerirea ca să obțină, finalmente, un surplus de auto-identificare: „*Regele*: Am o oglindă în măruntaie, totul se reflectă, văd din ce în ce mai bine, văd lumea, văd viața care se duce. *Marguerite*: Treci dincolo de oglinziri. *Regele*: Mă văd. Dincolo de tot și de toate, sunt eu. Nu mai sunt decât eu, pretutindeni. Sunt pământul, sunt cerul, sunt vântul, sunt focul. Sunt eu în toate oglinzile, sau sunt oglinda tuturor? *Juliette*: Se iubește prea mult. *Doctorul*: O boală psihică arhicunoscută: narcisism” (Ionesco 2005: 169). Oglinzile paralele sunt o prezență cumva clișeizată în dezbaterile despre universul specular. Căci ele nu sondează și nu au, în consecință, ce să anunțe; fiind, la rigoare, non-intenționale, din pasivitatea lor n-o să ne alegem cu reproduceri, ci numai cu redundanțe. Confruntarea lor se soldează cu un meci nul. Iar dacă un individ intervine între ele, portretul pe care și-l procură astfel nu poate decât rebarbativ: „[...] în două oglinzi așezate una în fața celeilalte iau naștere două serii indefinite de imagini inserate una într-alta, care nu aparțin niciuneia dintre cele două suprafețe, deoarece fiecare este replica celeilalte, care formează deci un cuplu, un cuplu mai real decât fiecare dintre ele. Astfel încât văzătorul, fiind prins în ceea ce vede, se vede tot pe el însuși: există un narcisism fundamental al oricărei viziuni” (Merleau-Ponty 2017: 175-176). Cum să scăpăm din aceste chingi vizuale? Cum să ne rupem de această eternă reîntoarcere a aceluiași chip? Vorbești cu tine la diferite persoane, îndeosebi a treia, ca să te dezimplici din ceea ce trăiești. În loc să reduci totul la tine însuși, e preferabil să-ți descoperi un dublu⁸; adică o persoană care-ți este aidoma și te repetă cu o exactitate înfricoșătoare. Așa pățește personajul lui José Saramago: un modest profesor de istorie care realizează că nu e tocmai un unicat, existând undeva un individ ce-i semăna leit; așadar, altcineva îi împărțea povestea, purtându-i chipul prin lume: „[...] presupunând că există o persoană care e o copie a ta sau tu o copie a ei și, după câte se vede, chiar există, n-ai nici o obligație să pornești în căutarea ei, tipul ăsta există și tu nu știi, tu ești și el nu știe, nu v-ați văzut niciodată, nu v-ați încrucișat niciodată pe stradă, cel mai bun lucru pe care îl ai de făcut e, Și dacă-l întâlnesc într-una din zile, dacă mă încrucișez cu el pe stradă, întrerupse Tertuliano Máximo Afonso gândul, Întorci capul, nu te-am văzut, nu te cunosc [...], E greu să consider străină o persoană care e la fel cu mine, Lasă-l să fie în continuare ce a fost și până acum, un necunoscut,

⁸ Din punct de vedere neurologic și nu simbolic, dublul este o halucinație: „Dublul autoscopic este literalmente o imagine în oglindă a propriei persoane, cu stânga transpusă în dreapta și viceversa, oglinzind propriile poziții și acțiuni. Dublul este un fenomen pur vizual, fără identitate sau intenționalitate proprii. Nu are dorințe și nu ia nici o inițiativă; este pasiv și neutru” (Oliver Sacks 2016: 241).

Da, dar străin nu va putea fi niciodată [...]. Va lua cu el o oglindă suficient de mare, astfel încât, odată înlăturată, în sfârșit, barba, cele două figuri, una lângă alta, să poată fi comparate direct, în care ochii să poată trece de la chipul căruia îi aparțineau la chipul căruia i-ar fi putut aparține, o oglindă care să declare sentința definitivă, Dacă ceea ce e la vedere e identic, trebuie să fie și restul [...]" (Saramago 2009: 30-31, 198). Asemănarea cu careva ne scoate din anonim, ne trezește interesul față de ireductibilul propriei figuri. De parcă, până atunci, nu-i dăduserăm cine știe ce atenție. Numai că dilemele stoarse din oglindă nu întăresc două identități, ci elimină doar șansa simplelor asemănări. Urmează îndelungi scotociri în oglindă, ca și cum misterul identificării cu altcineva ar sta, exclusiv, în fizionomie; responsabilă, conform vechilor credințe, și de modul nostru de a fi. Celălalt ne intrigă în măsura în care vrem să aflăm dacă dubletul fizic este și unul moral: „Chipul vine din ascuns și se duce în ascuns, iar pe drumul de la un ascuns la altul se lasă recunoscut, dar numai așa cum se lasă recunoscut cineva aflat pe drum, așadar în treacăt și nu pe deplin" (Picard 2023: 9). Este o opinie publicată în 1952. De atunci, au apărut cercetări care oferă explicații de ordin neurologic unor prezumții culturale. Astfel, în 2019, Michael S.A. Graziano scria că „mecanismul atenției poate exista chiar și dacă mecanismul conștiinței e defect. Evident, atenția nu este doar concentrarea locală a conștiinței. E o proprietate diferită. [...] Conștiința poate fi separată de atenție nu doar în cazul oamenilor cu leziuni cerebrale, ci și la cei sănătoși. Oamenii pot să acorde o atenție minimă unor imagini vagi sau afișate într-un interval scurt, în sensul că își concentrează asupra lor resursele de procesare și chiar reacționează la ele, deși susțin că nu au văzut absolut nimic" (Graziano 2021: 135). Așadar, cu toate că oglinda e consacrată ca un monument al subiectivității umane, universul specular nu e nici deconcertant, nici monocord, nici dereticat. E situat la jumătatea distanței dintre regie și haos, într-o zonă-tampon, a congruențelor imagistice. Care nu ne plictisesc, lăsându-ne fără păreri. Dimpotrivă. Marea problemă nu e că doi oameni arată identic: ei își conștientizează reciproc istoria datelor corporale și a accidentelor de parcurs; dar sunt șocați de hazardurile gemene pe care le-au trăit simultan. Deducem, de aici, destule complicații. Cum e să descoperi o persoană care ți se suprapune imagistic atât de bine încât chiar existența ta devine improbabilă? Similitudinea ucide identitatea. Astfel încât te retragi voluntar din ceea ce știai că ești, considerând că, în fond, până să descoperi acest *alter ego*, nici nu existaseși aievea. Ba poate că tu îl parazitaseși pe celălalt. El e cu atât mai real cu cât e mai surprinzător prin felul în care ține, neapărat, să coincidă. Ca și cum oglinda lui s-ar arăta oarecum indulgentă cu oglinda ta. Așa că dinastia marilor dubluri literare nu se oprește la Saramago. Mai nou, norvegianul Jon Fosse, laureat al premiului Nobel (2023), vine cu propria lui contribuție în materie: doi pictori cu același nume, Asle. În consecință, ei nu fac schimb de măști, ci de tablouri: în care pictorii se ascund, se invadează, se asistă bilateral. Uneori, se copie cordial ori, dimpotrivă, se confundă isteric. Alteori, dublul pe care-l întrețin, de la distanță, respiră printr-o ciorovăială șăgalnică, de cuplu conjugal. Ceea ce nu e totul, căci, între cei doi nu se încheie niciodată un pact imagistic. Nu se alternează benevolent, se destituie vehement. Cu

condiția ca fiecare episod de acest gen să aibă un final deschis, mai bine spus inversabil. Astfel, o perioadă e marcată de unul, fiind urmată de o alta, mănuită de celălalt. Eul și dublul își dispută aceeași mască (adică pictură) până li se face lehamite; și ca să se împace, se expediază, mutual, printre severele neasemănări dintre primul și al doilea Asle: merită căutate! Pentru că, în orice diferență, hibernează fix contrariul ei. Totuși, să nu-l înțelegem greșit pe Jon Fosse: cei doi Asle nu formează un dublu concurențial. Mai curând, remedial. Așadar, n-avem de-a face cu acea duplicare care-ți spune-n față: „Eu sunt toate eșecurile tale”. Uite de asta tablourile-oglinzi repetă un chip lăuntric, ce se întoarce iar și iar, ca și cum ar vrea să arate că, din figura asta, de care ești sătul, lipsește, tipător, ceva; care să te completeze în mod recurent, căci un eu polimorf cere întruna ajutor: „[...] ceea ce pictam, de fapt, erau umbrele, întunericul din toată lumina, adevărata lumină, lumina nevăzută, dar vedea cineva asta? observa cineva asta? [...], îmi zic și mă gândesc că așa sunt toate tablourile mele și nu înțeleg ce vreau să spun prin asta, că așa sunt toate tablourile mele, ce vreau să spun prin asta? fiindcă ăsta nu e tablou, ci doar o imagine simplă de la care am început, dar în toate tablourile pictate de mine se află ceva la care trimite tocmai imaginea asta, indiferent cât de diferite între ele sunt toate tablourile pe care le-am pictat, și poate e pentru că seamănă cu imaginea care se află adânc în interiorul meu, imaginea din mine, fiindcă pe ea tot încerc mereu să o pictez, și ca să adaug întotdeauna lumină în tablourile mele, ca să fac lumina să emane din ele, asta trebuie să fac, trebuie să intru în mine însumi adânc, cât de adânc pot, și astfel să intru și să ies din imaginea aceea [...]” (Fosse 2022: 74, 101-102).

Nu lași nimic oglinzii. Dimpotrivă, îi captezi lustrul și-l iei cu tine; pentru ca orice întâlnit să se recunoască în cel ce-și poartă oglinda pe față: „Și interacțiunea socială necesită imitare [...]. Imitația este capacitatea de a recunoaște, a reprezenta în creier și a simula acțiunile altora, chiar și atunci când motivația acestor acțiuni rămâne ambiguă. Imitația poate conduce și la empatie și ne poate permite să rezolvăm situații sociale ambigue. [...] Ba chiar creierul nostru posedă neuroni-oglinzi care ne permit să copiem pe plan interior atât acțiunile spontane, cât și cele deliberate ale altora” (Kandel 2023: 343). Nedorindu-ne deci să fim prea critici cu ceea ce nimeni dintre noi nu poate ocoli, adoptăm și poziția conciliantă a lui Emmanuel Lévinas: „A simți înseamnă a fi înăuntru. [...] Suprafața se poate transforma în interior [...]: ascunsul devine deschis, iar deschisul devine ascuns [...]” (Lévinas 1999: 113, 166). Nu e nicio rușine să ne temem de oglindă. În fond, oricare dintre noi are cel puțin o minciună de apărut. Oricât de banal ar fi însă, disconfortul cu pricina are ceva funambulesc într-însul: în cele două sensuri ale cuvântului, de bizarerie, dar și de echilibristică. De aceea, ochii pieptănă oglinda și îi fac curte. Și, totodată, adunăm destule motive să nu ne prea uităm într-însa, nerecunoscând că vrem încă multe de la ea. Ca într-un vis, apele oglinzii inundă camera și noi ne scufundăm într-însa până la podea, ca să găsim acolo

un ciob dintr-un chip neîncercat până azi⁹. Oglinda nu ne livrează, de bună voie, niciun autoportret. Dimpotrivă, ne pune serios la treabă. Adică ne criptează întreaga ființă, lăsându-ne doar șansa de a ne desena în minte vreo înfățișare, bună sau rea, din spatele ochilor: „Oglinda este locul de întâlnire cu tine însuși. [...] Ochiul cu care te uiți este unul critic, ca față de un străin, și nu voit, ci fiindcă într-adevăr îți apari ție însuși, așa cum arăți în oglindă, ca un străin. Oglinda te redă așa cum apari, cum te văd adică ceilalți și primul gând în fața oglinzii este totdeauna: «Care va să zică așa arăt!». [...] Cel din oglindă ești tu, iar tu, cel ce privește, ești străinul. [...] Oglindirea proprie nu este și nu poate fi niciodată simplu neutră. Ea este, știut ori neștiut, întotdeauna încărcată cu un plin sufletesc care *caută* acolo și de aceea nu este o simplă privire, ci de fiecare dată o «întâlnire». În privirea ce ți-o dai ție se uită un ochi mult mai adânc, deschis dinlăuntrul acelei identități cu tine însuși care prilejuiește orice intimidată și care, într-adevăr, face ca privitul în oglindă oamenii să-l facă fără martori, ca pe o intimă treabă sufletească. [...] Străinul trăsăturilor tale nu te îndepărtează, nici nu te face simplu privitor, ca la celelalte fețe omenești străine, ci dimpotrivă te *ispitește*. E o nevoie de a te recunoaște în cel din oglindă, de a-ți însuși trăsăturile tale, de a fi una cu ceea ce vezi, nevoie care face ca oglindirea să nu mai fie o privire, ci un întreg proces sufletesc. Se *întâmplă* ceva în tine când te uiți în oglindă, privitul are un sens, și anume: asimilarea trăsăturilor tale, a străinului pe care ele ți-l dezvăluie” (Dragomir 2005: 13-14, 16-17). Afirmările lui Alexandru Dragomir concordă cu ideile lui Jean Baudrillard, care releva aceeași repliere a oglinzii în spațiul strict al îngrijirii trupului. Numai că trimiterile la designul interior sunt acompaniate de comentarii subordonate unei posibile antropologii a reflectării: „[...] celelalte obiecte se eliberează de ea și nu mai sunt tentate să trăiască într-un circuit închis cu propria lor imagine. Cum oglinda încheie spațiul, ea presupune un perete și trimite la un centru: cu cât avem mai multe oglinzi, cu atât intimitatea camerei e mai formidabilă, dar și mai răsfrântă asupra ei însăși. Tendința actuală de a înmulți deschiderile și pereții transparenți merge în sens invers. (Pe lângă acestea, toate trucajele pe care le permite oglinda sunt împotriva exigenței actuale de transparență a materialului.) Cercul a fost spart, și trebuie să recunoaștem în ordinea modernă o logică reală când elimină, în același timp cu sursele de lumină centrale sau prea vizibile, oglinzile care le reflectau, cu alte cuvinte orice centru și orice întoarcere la centru în mod simultan, eliberând astfel spațiul de strabismul de convergență care făcea decorul să se uite cruciș la el însuși, precum

⁹ Este o idee preluată de la Jacques Lacan, îndeobște asociat cu sintagma „stadiul oglinzii”. Dar pentru a merge la sursa primară, să cităm un fragment din conferința pe care Jacques Lacan o susținea la 17 iulie 1949, în cadrul celui de-al XV-lea Congres Mondial de Psihanaliză, desfășurat în Zürich: „[...] le *stade du miroir* est une drame dont la poussée interne se précipite de l'insuffisance à l'anticipation – este qui pour le sujet pris au leurre de l'identification spatiale, machine les fantasmes qui se succèdent d'une image morcelée du corps à une forme que nous appellerons orthopédique de sa totalité, – et à l'armure enfin assumée d'une identité aliénante, qui va marquer de sa structure rigide tout son développement mental” (Lacan 1966: 97).

conștiința burgheză. Paralel cu oglinda a mai dispărut ceva: portretul de familie, fotografia de nuntă din dormitor, portretul în picioare sau până la brâu al proprietarului din salon, fotografia copiilor pusă pe ramă mai peste tot. Toate acestea constituiau oarecum oglinda diacronică a familiei, dar dispar odată cu oglinzile reale, la un anumit nivel de modernitate (a cărei difuzare e încă relativ modestă). Chiar și opera de artă, originală sau în reproducere, nu mai apare ca o valoare absolută, ci la modul combinatoriu. Succesul gravurii în decorația interioară, ea fiind preferată tabloului, se explică printre altele prin mai mica ei valoare absolută, așadar printr-o mai mare valoare asociativă. După modelul lămpii sau al oglinzii, nici un obiect nu trebuie să redevină un punct focal intens¹⁰. Nu toată lumea rezonază cu această mistică a emancipării de orîșice, cu atît mai mult cu cît substratul ideologic al acestui citat e destul de limpede. Omul este și așa o ființă aproximată, expusă desituărilor identitare. Și una dintre cauze ar fi, cum crede Bogdan Ghiu, „văzul vâscos”. Ce vrea să spună? Nu mai privim indiscret sau șiret. Ochii nu mai aruncă ancora undeva. Vizualizăm cele mai multe lucruri pe diagonala semnificațiilor: „Nu există invizibil. Nu există decît ascuns. [...] Vedem tot mai mult altceva, adunat, tangențial. Privirea înnebunește. [...] Omul înecat în uman. Totul e *chip* în jur, numai omul lipsește” (Ghiu 2008: 30, 37, 216). Trăim într-o oglindă cu pomeții osoși, care nu se lasă-n seama vârstei, dar nici optimistă nu prea este. Ne îngăduie o imagine încropită; dar nu din reflectări, ci din unghiuri de vedere. Așa că nu ne oglinдим ca să decidem cine suntem, ci ca să aflăm a cui este oglinda. Ochii se agață de ramele oglinzii, nelăsând nicio versiune de-a noastră să se așeze în ea. Privirea se refuză văzului și-i este greu să hotărască ce reflectare îi cade mai bine. E teama că oglinda o să ne închidă într-un portret rigid, din care să n-avem scăpare. Sunt niște nuanțe pe care Marin Tarangul le-a pus mai bine în cuvinte: „Dacă vederea este prea zgomotoasă, privirea caută tăcerea lucrurilor. Dacă vederea memorează lucrurile, privirea caută uitarea lor. Vederea cercetează mulțimea lucrurilor, privirea caută lucrurile în timp. De aceea, ochiul caută, privirea găsește” (Tarangul 2024: 17).

Nichita Stănescu scria cândva: „– Sunt cinci oglinzi, dar numai una / îți oglindește chipul. Care-i chipul tău. Care?” (Stănescu 2013: 294). Dar noi? Suntem una din cele cinci versiuni probabile ale oglinzii ori câte puțin din fiecare? Oglinda nu știe ce concluzie să-ți dea. N-are răbdare cu ceea ce-i oferi. Și nu dispune de o imagine *pret à porter*, în care să te simți din start acasă, dintotdeauna acolo. Nu-ți rezervă niciun chip în care să te întorci și să-ți vii în fire. În oglindă nu te redobândești deloc, ea aruncându-ți în brațe mereu un alt siamez. Asta-i oglinda, o împăciuire a contrastelor care ne escrochează cu tandrețe; e o amăgire ce izbucnește, răzbate ori se dezice din privitorul ei. Oglinda stârnește Dublul, dar curtează Umbra. Și ne predă adevărului secund, înflorit din multele conotații ale vizualului. Astfel, o să luăm pe cont propriu o stimă de sine, dar nu una oricare, ci aceea ricoșată din elasticitatea reflectărilor. Și n-o să fim altceva decît propria noastră mască; nici chipul și nici felul nostru de a fi n-o

¹⁰ Vezi subcapitolul *Oglinzi și portrete* în Baudrillard 1996: 16.

să mai poată evada dintr-însa. E cazul să intervină *Omul care vedea dincolo de chipuri*: într-o carte cu asemenea titlu e clar că autorul își face de lucru prin universul specular: „Cine să fie? Încerc să-i ghicesc meseria: croitor, funcționar, grefier; dacă mi-l imaginez mai înalt, mă încumet să evoc un bancher, un profesor universitar, un avocat. Din păcate, rămâne indescifrabil, cu fața brăzdată de riduri, cu gâtul numai piele și os, uneori lăsați, torsul rahitic. Nu pot dibui identitatea acestui patriarh, fiindcă anii l-au uzat și l-au mumificat. Vârsta se dovedește romancier nepriceput; până la urmă, poveștile pe care le scrie pe corpul omului se confundă; personajele nu-și mai trădează ocupațiile, sunt doar niște bătrâni. Nu mai sunt niște sportivi bătrâni, niște frumoși bătrâni, niște trădători bătrâni, sau niște deputați bătrâni, nu, doar niște bătrâni. Vârsta compune romane groaznice, fiindcă se place doar pe ea însăși; distruge chipurile ca să se regăsească; portretele le înlocuiește cu oglinda propriului ei chip” (Schmitt 2018: 77). Într-o oglindă ca asta te simți în plus față de tine însuși. Ea rupe șiragul amintirilor cu care îi ieșim în față, furându-ne totodată și iluzia că am ști de unde venim. Ne rățăcește printre recurențe înrăite care ne supun astfel unui trecut-premoniție; ce ne împinge către o versiune anterioară, dar neașteptată a sinelui pe care societatea nu ni-l aprobă, dar ni-l îngăduie: „Lumea îl pierduse nu numai pe Dumnezeu, ci și pe Diavol. Așa cum ea proiectează răul în asemenea imagini ale nedoritului și neplăcutului, ea proiectează și binele în imagini plăcute pe care le venerază pentru că realizează ceea ce se consideră indezirabil de realizat în propria sa persoană. Sunt lăsați alții să facă eforturi, în timp ce stai la locul tău și privești, ceea ce se cheamă sport; sunt lăsați oamenii să rostească cele mai unilaterale extravaganțe, ceea ce se cheamă idealism; scuturăm de pe noi răul, iar cei din jur, pe care îi stropim astfel, devin țapi ispășitori. Astfel totul își găsește locul său în lume și în ordinea lumii; însă o asemenea tehnică de sanctificare și de îngrășare a țăpilor ispășitori prin proiectarea în afară a celor lăuntrice nu e lipsită de primejdii, căci ea umple lumea cu tensiunile tuturor conflictelor lăuntrice care nu au ajuns să fie rezolvate. Oamenii se omoară între ei sau fraternizează între ei, și nu sunt în stare să-și dea seama bine dacă o fac cu toată seriozitatea, sau nu, și de fapt fiecare se dedublează parțial și i se pare că tot ceea ce se petrece are loc pe jumătate în fața realității și pe jumătate în spatele ei, ca un duel în oglindă, o imagine a luptei dintre ură și iubire [...]. Nesiguranța unui om care, trăind printre alții, vrea altceva decât vor ei îl făcea pe Ulrich să simtă o strângere de inimă; privi chipul tatălui său. Poate că tot ceea ce el considerase a fi o particularitate a personalității lui nu era nimic altceva decât o contradicție, o împotrivire la adresa acelui chip, o răzvrătire din copilărie? Căută o oglindă, dar nu era niciuna acolo, și nimic altceva în afara acestui chip nu răstrângea lumina. Îl scrută pentru a constata asemănările. Poate că existau. Poate că totul se afla acolo, rasa, dependența, impersonalul, curentul eredității în care fiecare din noi nu este decât o unduire, un rid, limitarea, descurajarea, veșnica reîncepere și repetare și mersul în cerc al spiritului, lucrul acela pe care în cea mai profundă voință de a trăi el îl ura într-atât! [...] Agathe se observase cu toată atenția; începuse dintr-o întâmplare prin a-și examina chipul, căci privirea îi căzuse asupra propriei fețe și nu se mai abătuse după aceea de la

oglinadă. Fusese reținută acolo ca atunci când uneori n-ai mai vrea să mergi mai departe, dar faci mereu câte o sută de pași mai departe până la vreun obiect care a devenit deodată vizibil, și unde îți pui în gând că te vei întoarce în cele din urmă și mereu constăți că nu te întorci totuși. În felul acesta, și fără nici un fel de vanitate, era reținută de peisajul sinelui propriu, cu care în clipa aceea se confrunta sub un suflu de sticlă în oglindă. [...] Din oglindă se răsfărâgea simțământul neliniștilor aceluia ceas care nu se lasă înțeleș pe de-a-ntregul” (Musil 2018: 498, 675, 827). Din oglindă fie desprindem un portret, fie ne Chiar dacă oglinda nu ne poate da o imagine a corpului în totalitatea lui, părțile de trup care defilează înainte-ne sunt metonimii ale întregului; sunt stenograme ale stării de spirit ce ne exprimă mai adecvat, nu neapărat mai veridic: ”Măcar de m-aș simți eu pe mine în corpul meu! Dar nu mă simt eu pe mine nici în el și nici în afara lui. Nici nu sunt corpul meu, și nici nu îl văd. Amândouă – și corp și suflet – sunt ceva ce eu nu posed. (Pauză) Ah! Iar atunci când mă zăresc din spate, tocmai deplasându-mă, sau mă văd dintr-o parte, în oglinzile retrovizoare – mă cuprinde spaima de propriul mister. Iar oribil e chiar faptul că mă simt coexistând cu mine însămi. Iată-mă umblând ca și cum aș fi legată de un vis al meu care sunt chiar eu. Când mă văd în oglinzi din spate, s-ar zice că am pe o altă în mine, sau că eu sunt alt lucru. Mă înstrăinez pe afară de mine...Ce groaznic e că de fiecare dată nu putem vedea decât o latură a corpului nostru. Oare ce se petrece pe partea pe care nu o vedem atunci când noi nu putem s-o vedem? Sunt sigură că, dacă am putea privi un corp din amândouă părțile simultan – da, chiar în același timp -, ni s-ar dezvălui ceva uluitor și nou” ¹¹. Oare omul chiar nu se cunoaște și se caută realmente? Ori e cabotin și se complăce într-un fel de-a v-ați ascunselea cu un Eu de care ar vrea (ori nu) să scape? Probabil că, în oglindă, suntem convingători, fără a fi și sinceri. Rămâne doar să aflăm, dacă vom putea vreodată, ce cotă de minciună ia parte la un mic quantum de adevăr.

Oglinda nu este însă crusta chipului: ne privim într-însa până o credem că unul e celălalt. Căci oglinda are mai multe adevăruri pentru aceeași realitate. În funcție de unghiul în care o acostăm, oglinda ne deschide un alt tablou. Și, după ceea ce susțin fenomenologii, are motivațiile sale, deloc neglijabile: „[...] marginea câmpului vizual nu este o linie reală. Câmpul nostru vizual nu este decupat în lumea noastră obiectivă, nu există nici un fragment care să aibă margini clare, așa cum peisajul se încadrează în fereastră. Vedem atât de departe cât se întinde puterea privirii noastre asupra lucrurilor – cu mult dincolo de zona vederii clare și chiar în spatele nostru. Când ajungem la limita câmpului vizual nu trecem de la vedere la non-vedere. [...] Ceea ce vedem rămâne întotdeauna nevăzut din anumite privințe: trebuie să existe părți ascunse ale lucrurilor și lucruri «în spatele nostru», dacă trebuie să existe un «înainte» al lucrurilor, lucruri «în fața noastră» și, în cele din urmă, o percepție” (Merleau-Ponty 1999: 332-333). Nu vedem nimic în oglindă: nu înainte ca văzul să repereze antecedentele înconjurătoare ce pot să contextualizeze, cu ceva noroc, acea imagine pe

¹¹ Vezi *Dialog în grădina palatului* în Fernando Pessoa, *Marinarul și alte ficțiuni*, traducere de Dinu Flămând, București, Editura Humanitas, 2022, p.58.

care oglinda nu ne-o dăruiește, ne-o împrumută doar. Ea, oglinda, creează adesea un autoportret cu care nu coincidem: „[...] fiecare își este cel-mai-departele, tot atât de departe pe cât este eu de tu, atunci când spun: «tu ești»”¹² (Heidegger 2011: 105). Punând problema astfel, capitulăm: în oglindă ne suntem doar tangențiali; inevitabil analogi altcuiva. De unde și nelămuririle, cam oportuniste: ce semnamente uităm în oglinzile altora?; și pentru care să ne simțim vinovați?; sau poate le așezăm acolo intenționat, pentru ca, vrând-nevrând, scrutările lor să preia cadența dezamăgirilor noastre? Din ochii evazivi ai oglinzului cresc genunchii osoși oglinzii. Cei din urmă n-o să se moaie vreodată. Și se abonează la ultimul cuvânt: omul își vorbește, oglinda îi dictează. Sau, în cel mai bun caz, îl dresează. Ea aplică pornirilor noastre o pedagogie cu efect abraziv. Oglinda e un polizor al temperamentelor: e mama îndrăznelilor teșite de atâtea eșecuri. Între hotarele ei respectă regulile casei. Nu înghite nimic poruncitor, zănatic, nonșalant. În oglindă nu e loc de revărsări imagistice. Totul e strâmtat, codificat, sinoptic. Jorge Luis Borges ar spune că oglinda este o circumstanțiere a realității: „Simplificarea conceptuală a stărilor complexe este de multe ori o operație instantanee. Faptul însuși de a percepe, de a fi atent, este de natură selectivă: orice atenție, orice fixare a conștiinței noastre comportă o deliberată omisiune a ceea ce este neinteresant. [...] Viața noastră este o serie de adaptări, cu alte cuvinte, o educație a uitării”¹³ (Borges 2000: 67). Astfel, în pauzele dintre o uitare și alta, subzistă, efemer, și-un sărman portret specular. În mica lui alcătuire intră și acele contraspații pe care oglinda le cuprinde, dar nu ni le arată pe fundalul unei reflectări. Și noi ne pasionăm tocmai de acele necunoscute care, în mod normal, nu ne apar de după umeri. Așa că manipulăm oglinda în fel și chip, dorindu-ne să capturăm, din orice poziție, aspectele pe care viclenia ei ni le face inaccesibile. Observăm aici nu numai o turbulență vizuală, ci și una memorială. Ceea ce vedem nu e totuna cu ceea ce rememorăm: „Claire nu putea să se sprijine de balustradă și să se uite peste întinderea de apă. Nu putea să se sprijine din cauză că nu exista. Nu avea cum s-o localizeze, cum să se îndrepte spre ea sau s-o atingă. Exista doar în lumea reflectată de această oglindă miraculoasă: o oglindă care – acum Claire era sigură – izbutea cumva să nu reflecte lucrurile obișnuite și atât de familiare din care era alcătuită lumea de zi cu zi, ci lucrurile la care putea să viseze – lucrurile care până acum ar fi existat doar în închipuirea ei. [...] Claire ridică oglinda ca să vadă dacă reflectarea ei aduce vreo îmbunătățire realității. [...] La început nu privi direct în ea. O înclină în diferite unghiuri și se uită la seria de reflectări ale dormitorului. Când observă că aceste reflectări nu prea difereau de ceea ce vedea în fiecare zi cu ochii ei, simți un tremur de dezamăgire, dar și – într-un fel ciudat – o anumită ușurare. Deci până la urmă nu fusese *nimic* altceva decât imaginația ei. Era o oglindă oarecare – ba mai mult, foarte murdară și fără nici o formă. Cum putuse să creadă altceva? Magia nu exista. O știa lumea-ntreagă! În cele din urmă, întoarse oglinda ca să fie orientată direct spre fața ei. Iar de data asta lucrurile arătară altfel. Din

¹² Heidegger 2011: 105.

¹³ Vezi *Postularea realității*, în Borges 2000: 67.

oglinadă o priveau aceiași ochi albaștri-cenușii, dar fața ei nu mai era aceeași. [...] Era fața ei, da, dar în același timp una pe care aproape că n-o recunoștea. Fața asta era frumoasă. [...] Claire reîncepu să-și ia oglinda cu ea. O avea oriunde se ducea. Nu doar fiindcă părea să-i înfățișeze chipul pe care voia să-l vadă, ci și fiindcă, atunci când îi arăta străfulgerări ale celorlalte lucruri din jur, foarte multe păreau într-un fel mai viu colorate și mai frumoase. Și totuși, doar atât oferea: străfulgerări, nimic mai mult. Asta o făcu pe Claire să se întrebe dacă nu cumva îi juca feste memoria, fiindcă, din câte-și aducea aminte, când era mai mică și avea obiceiul să se uite în oglindă, vedea reflectările sub forma unor imagini stabile și clare. Însă nu mai era așa. Reflectările apăreau și dispăreau foarte repede. Înclinând oglinda înapoi și încolo, Claire le putea face să revină, însă doar pentru câteva secunde” (Coe 2020: 26, 46, 49). În oglinzi de poveste, ochii ne înghit gândurile, iar privirea ne soarbe sentimentele. Derealizându-ne complet, nu ne sărăcim. Din contra. Acolo, în imaginarul specular, se înfiripă, tot din noi, un *celălalt*; la care ne uităm pe sărite, palid, sacadat, intermitent; și, totodată, cu ceva speranță, de parcă ne-am mai naște o dată; atunci când, închinându-ne oglinzii, ne traversăm destinul pe diagonală; și uite așa devenim alții, căci până și răsufarea noastră nu mai e cum era, respirăm acum cu un alt accent.

La fel ca în basme, distanța dintre noi și oglindă nu este o categorie a realului, ci un ingredient magic, ajustabil la infinit. Privirea oglinzii se așterne peste întreaga încăpere și ochiul ei nu ne dă pace. Se uită la noi din orice obiect pe care îl reflectă. Iar lucrurile nu au niciodată dimensiuni constante. Se reconfigurează reciproc, în funcție de curiozitatea celui ce vizitează oglinda. Până ce ea simte că musafirul nu mai pleacă de acolo. Și ia măsuri. Intrusul se scufundă neconștient în multiplicările de sine, fascinat de ieșirea lui în afara cadrelor concretului. De unde ideea de oglindă-portret, ce ne studiază și ne dă de gol, ne divulgă și ne învinuiește. Dacă preluăm toate chipurile perindate cândva printr-o oglindă, s-ar putea să nu-l mai reținem chiar pe al nostru; pentru că ar cântări deja extrem de greu, încărcat fiind cu edemele altora. Ne repetăm, etern, unii pe alții. Și când nu acceptăm ceea ce ne arată oglinda, zgârcenia reprezentărilor de sine nu ne impune o eradicare vizuală, ci mai mult atitudinală: ne îngropăm fața în mâini. Da, suntem împovărați de prea multe vizualizări. Ochii ne sunt grei de plictis, pupilele de acreală. Așa că se face seară în orice oglindă. Obosit, chipul nu mai poate fi decât trup. Iar corpul se împuținează până când, din el, nu mai rămâne decât oglinda. Hai să visăm că ea o să se-ndure de noi și o să tragă cortina peste un chip ațipit.

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IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR GHEORGHE PLATON
(FEBRUARY 26, 1926-JANUARY 24, 2006) – ON HIS CENTENARY

*Stoica LASCU**

For today's generations of young servants of Clio, the need for human and scientific models must be imposed as a necessity in an increasingly disoriented world. Romanian historiography, at least from the last half Century – to refer only to this dimension of the national culture –, has, fortunately, a number of personalities who can constitute true pillars, landmarks and scientific and ethical models.

Professor Gheorghe Platon (member of the Romanian Academy) from the 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University in Iași – is one of them.

Born in the town of Buhuși (in Neamț County), on February 26, 1926 (died on January 24, 2006), he attended primary school there (1933-1937), then the 'Gheorghe Asachi' Teachers' Training School in Piatra Neamț (1937-1944) (taking the exam, in 1946, at the 'Ferdinand I' High School in Bacău. In Iași, he attended the 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University (founded in 1860 under the name University of Iași; between 1933 and 1942 it was called Mihăileană University) – it has had this name since 1942), History courses (1946-1950). He completed all the teaching stages – preparator (1950) (in parallel, researcher at the 'A.D. Xenopol' Institute Iași), Lecturer (1960-1970), Associate Professor (1970-1974), university professor and later scientific supervisor of the doctoral thesis in the specialty 'Modern History of Romania' (1974-1996); he was head of the Department of Romanian History (1973-1983, 1989-1991), and from 1996 until his death (2006) – consulting Professor; he also held numerous positions in scientific and research bodies in the field of History, and was a member of the Romanian Academy (since 1990).

He defended his doctorate in Historical Sciences at the 'Babeș-Bolyai' University in Cluj (1969), with the thesis *Situația și lupta maselor populare din Moldova în preajma și în timpul anului revoluționar 1848* [The Situation and Struggle of the Popular Masses in Moldova Around and During the Revolutionary Year 1848] (scientific supervisor Prof. Dr. Ștefan Pascu).

The brilliant representative of Romanian Historiography – which also illustrates the prestige of the 'Iași School' of history –, a true *brand* of research and writing, with new interpretations, of the Modern History of Romanians, is the author of representative volumes, elaborated on the basis of unpublished documents or elaborated as syntheses, of dozens and dozens (about 240) of scientific studies.

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The volumes (16 – eight books by a sole author, four as co-author, four as an editor and co-author) are – *Domeniul feudal din Moldova în preajma revoluției de la 1848* [The Feudal Domain of Moldavia on the Eve of the Revolution of 1848] (1975), *Cuza Vodă. In memoriam. Culegere de studii cu ocazia împlinirii unui secol de la moartea domnitorului* [Cuza Vodă. In memoriam. Collection of Studies on Occasion of a Century Since the Death of the Ruler (1973 – ed. and author)], *Masele în revoluția română de la 1848* [The Masses in the Romanian Revolution of 1848] (1974), *Lupta românilor pentru unitate națională 1855-1859. Ecouri în presa europeană* [The Struggle of the Romanians for National Unity 1855-1859. Echoes in the European Press] (1974), *La voie des Roumains vers l'indépendance* [The Romanians' Path to Independence (1977 – co-ed. and author; editions in English and Russian)], *1859 – L'union des Principautés Roumaines* [1859 – The Union of the Romanian Principalities] (1979), *Geneza Revoluției române de la 1848. Introducere în istorie modernă a României* [The Genesis of the Romanian Revolution of 1848. Introduction to the Modern History of Romania (1980 – 2nd edition, 1999)], *Istoria modernă a României. Compendiu* [Modern History of Romania. Compendium] (1980), *România în relațiile internaționale: 1699-1939* [Romania in International Relations: 1699-1939 (1980 – co-ed. and author)], *Istoria orașului Iași* [History of the City of Iași], I-II (1980 – ed. and author), *Moldova și începuturile revoluției de la 1848* [Moldova and the Beginnings of the Revolution of 1848] (1993 – Chișinău), *Cum s-a înfăptuit România modernă. O perspectivă asupra strategiei dezvoltării* [How Modern Romania Was Made. A Perspective on the Development Strategy] (1993 – co-authors: V. Rusu, Gh. Iacob, V. Cristian, I. Agrigoroaiei), *De la constituirea națiunii la Marea Unire. Studii de istorie modernă* [From the Establishment of the Nation to the Great Union. Modern History Studies], I-VI (1995-2006), *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea. Context european, evoluție socială și politică (Date statistice și observații istorice)* [The Boyars of Moldavia in the 19th Century. European Context, Social, and Political Evolution (Statistical Data and Historical Observations)] (1995 – co-author Alexandru-Florin Platon), *Istoria românilor. Vol. VII/I-II. De la Independență la Marea Unire (1878-1918)* [History of the Romanians] (2003 – ed. and co-author.), *O istorie a românilor. Studii critice* [A History of the Romanians. Critical Studies] (1998 – co-author), *Romania. A historic perspective* [] (1998 – Boulder-New York – co-author), *Românii în veacul construcției naționale – națiune, frământări, mișcări sociale și politice, program național* [Romanians in the Age of National Construction – Nation, Turmoil, Social, and Political Movements, National Program] (2005).

Marking this year (February 26) the Centenary of his birth, disciples and authorities organized – in Iași and in his hometown of Buhuși – two emotional-memorial events.

Thus, at the Multifunctional Educational Center in Buhuși, “the event *Omagiu la centenar* [Homage at the Centenary] took place, dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Professor Gheorghe Platon. The event was organized by

the Buhuși City Hall, in partnership with several cultural and educational institutions. The event brought together prominent personalities from the academic and cultural environment, along with representatives of the local administration. The anniversary marked a Century since the birth of the historian who contributed decisively to the development of modern Romanian historiography. During the ceremony, moments from the life and scientific activity of this son of Buhuș, were evoked, with an emphasis on research dedicated to the modernization of Romanian society and the Revolution of 1848. The organizers emphasized the importance of preserving the memory of the great personalities who marked the cultural destiny of Romania. The event was also attended by the historian's son, university Professor Alexandru-Florin Platon, along with other guests from the university environment.

The event developed the following topics: Prof. univ. dr. Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Tatăl meu, istoricul Gheorghe Platon: parcurs biobibliografic în vremuri schimbătoare* [My Father, the Historian Gheorghe Platon: Biobibliographic Journey in Changing Times], Prof. dr. Gabriel Leahu, *Rigoare, demnitate și tradiție: moștenirea profesorului și academicianului Gheorghe Platon* [Rigor, dignity, and Tradition: the Legacy of Professor and Academician Gheorghe Platon], Oana Lazăr (writer and publicist), *Finis coronat opus. Istoria interviurilor cu academicianul Gheorghe Platon la TVR Iași (sau ce nu s-a văzut la televizor niciodată)* [Finis Coronat Opus. History of Interviews with Academician Gheorghe Platon on TVR Iași (Or What Was Never Seen on TV)], Prof. dr. Ioan-Romeo Roman, *Normalistul Gheorghe Platon* [Normalist Gheorghe Platon], Assoc. Prof. dr. Ioan Dănilă, *Gheorghe Platon și Maria Platon – comilitoni ai culturii* [Gheorghe Platon and Maria Platon – Fellow Soldiers of Culture].

"The event – *journalist Ioana-Suzana Tăutu wrote* – ended with a special note of gratitude from the son, who first of all thanked them to the students present for having brilliantly completed the lesson of patience, lasting over two hours, continuing with the teachers present, moderators, guests, being grateful for the honorable position of representing the academician as a successor and addressing a very valuable exhortation: we all have dear people who will not be eternal; they will live forever if we remember them.

The legacy of academician Gheorghe Platon remains alive through his works, through the disciples he trained and through the values he consistently promoted. His centenary was not only an anniversary moment, but also a history lesson for those present, a reaffirmation of the importance of culture and education in Romanian society".

In Iași, the Branch of the Library of the Romanian Academy (of which he was honorary director in the 90s) – and not, as far as I know, within the Section of Historical Sciences and Archaeology of the Academy... – organized, on February 26, the conference *Gheorghe Platon. 100 de ani de la naștere* [Gheorghe Platon. 100 Years Since His Birth], at which Prof. univ. dr. Gheorghe Cliveti, corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, and Prof. univ. dr. Mihai Cojocariu, from the 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University of Iași, evoked the contributions of academician Platon to the

study of modern Romanian history and his role in the formation of several generations of historians.

Let us also mention, on this Centenary, that, over time, the great historian was honored – while still alive – by offering tributes, within History periodicals, on anniversary dates.

On the 65th Anniversary:

In 1991, a Supplement to the yearbook of the Faculty of History is dedicated to Professor Gh. Platon, respectively through the special *bio-bibliographic material* due to a colleague – Ion Toderașcu, *Profesorul Gheorghe Platon la a 65-a aniversare* [Professor Gheorghe Platon on the 65th Anniversary], in Supplement to the *Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”*. Istorie. New Series, Volume XXXVII, 1991, pp. 1-40 pp.

On the 70th Anniversary:

Acad. Dan Berindei, *Academicianul Gheorghe Platon la 70 ani*, in „Memoriile Secției de Științe Istorice și Arheologie”, 1991, p. 7.

The Yearbook of the Faculty of History (Supplement XLII-XLIII/1996-1997 [published: 1998]) pays tribute to the professor – Ion Agrigoroaiei, Gheorghe Cliveti (coord. [Eds.]), *Național și social în istoria românilor. Profesorului Gheorghe Platon la a 70-a aniversare* [National and Social in the History of the Romanians. To Professor Gheorghe Platon on His 70th Anniversary] (1997 – 468 pp.). The volume debuts with two special articles – Al. Zub, *Pe marginea unui Curriculum academic: Gh. Platon* [On the Edge of an Academic Curriculum: Gh. Platon] (pp. 9-16), and Ion Toderașcu, *Un profil aniversar: profesorul Gheorghe Platon la 70 de ani* [An Anniversary Profile: Professor Gheorghe Platon at 70] (pp. 17-58).

Al. Zub (B. 1934) – “After some vicissitudes without significant consequences, Gh. Platon had completely moved to the chair, where he then trained and guided so many series of students. He enjoyed respect and quickly became a pillar of the Faculty and a major landmark in modernist studies. His scientific record already included very meticulous studies, based mainly on archive materials. He had published, year after year, since 1955, thorough contributions to the knowledge of rural life, all of indisputable interest, about boyar domains, peasant unrest and uprisings, the development of the internal market, the feudal reserve, etc.

It can be said that the first decade of activity is dominated by socio-economic restitutions and some concerns about political history, especially regarding the *Pașoptist* revolution. The second, starting around 1965, indicates insistent demographic studies, related to the population of some fairs (Huși, Bârlad, Iași), of the Moldavian city as a whole or of Dobrogea, in addition to other studies that continue the history of social movements in Moldova in the first part of the 19th Century, the revolutions of the same era (1821, 1848), the manifestations of the national cause until 1859, etc. An important monograph on *Domeniul feudal din Moldova în preajma revoluției de la 1848* [The Feudal Domain in Moldova Around the Revolution of 1848] (Iași, 1973) is also placed in the

same period, along with some studies on the development of industry, mining, the plot of Ioniță Popovici (1839), and so on. The third decade indicates an increased interest in political history, especially the 1848 revolution, which remained a constant preoccupation of the author, for the Union of the Principalities, no less frequent in the respective bibliography, then for the acquisition of independence, with all its consequences on the internal and external level. To this last event he dedicated, together with L. Boicu, a succinct synthesis (also in foreign languages), which remained a referential text for those interested in such a matter. This is also the case of the Union of the Principalities, to which the historian always returned. The fourth decade, if such a relative sectioning of a continuous and unitary activity is admitted, the decade richest in scientific manifestations, seems dominated by the concern for synthesis, be it often didactic, but always attentive to nuances and well-balanced from the angle of writing. Dense pages on the history of education, on the echoes of the French Revolution, on evolution and revolution in the development of modern Romania complete the thematic area of his rich record. Many others can be added, especially those regarding great figures of our history and historiography. They denote a constant, rigorous, methodical reflection on the facts and equally on the reflex produced by them.

The research done in the archives, but also on basis of the studies undertaken by other historians, urged Gh. Platon towards monographic restitutions, with a clear penchant for exhaustiveness. It is not abusive to identify in them a monographic spirit, otherwise dominant in the historiography of Iași.

The insistence with which he studied agrarian history proved productive in explaining issues of eminent interest. The monographic study on the feudal domain in pre-*Pașopist* Moldavia remains an example of meticulous exploration of archival material”.

Ion Toderășcu (1938-2022) – “Professor Gheorghe Platon (I mean here the man at the chair at all stages of his development) personified himself through his knowledge and exactingness. Erudite, orderly and with a beautiful speech, His Excellency ensured, from the beginning of his career, the respect of his students. His presence also helped him a lot an essential condition for a teacher. He was imposing through what he said and through the way he communicated. In the consciousness numerous series of students, Gheorghe Platon remained as a professor of great didactic-scientific authority, master of the tools of his profession, with rigorous logic and perfect clarity, preoccupied, to the point of obsession, with explaining the historical phenomenon. I still hear his leitmotif question in seminar classes or other professional meetings: ‘why ...?’ (and the question that is always present in D. Onciul’s dialogue with the students immediately comes to mind: ‘Do you have the document?’). Nothing without explanation and understanding. He was and remains to this day a devotee of this pair. Professor Gheorghe Platon imposed, in his surroundings, a note of moderate severity, which could not be denied to him. Those of us who were his students and then collaborators in the Department of Romanian History (which he headed between 1973-1985 and 1990-1991) shared it with him and

followed it. We understood that it is a condition for work done well and on time. Gheorghe Platon, the Professor, affected a lot of time and a lot warmth of soul to those who turned to his advice and guidance. Solicitudine is one of his great qualities, through which he ennobled himself with his mission. It is, as I said before, a true privilege to find yourself around a teacher of such generosity, with such scientific understanding and such love for the profession"

On the 75th Anniversary:

Volume XXXVIII/2001 [414 pp.] of the *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A.D. Xenopol”* in Iași is dedicated to *Omagiu Profesorului Gheorghe Platon* [Homage to Professor Gheorghe Platon] [On His 75th Birthday], the first 23 pages, under the heading *In Honorem*, including the articles – Al. Zub, *Acad. Gheorghe Platon* (pp. 7-8), V. Cristian, *Gheorghe Platon, asistent* [Gheorghe Platon, Assistant] (pp. 9-12), Dumitru Ivănescu, *Gheorghe Platon și epoca unirii* [Gheorghe Platon and the Era of Unification] (pp. 13-16), Gheorghe Cliveti, *România modernă în relațiile internaționale: perspectiva faptului național* [Modern Romania in International Relations: The Perspective of the National Fact] (pp. 17-20), M. Cojocariu, *Pașoptismul românesc* [Romanian Pașoptism] (pp. 21-23).

Al. Zub – “The most important contributions of the historian from Iași concern the modern era in the Danube-Carpathian space, an era that he sought to define from multiple angles, from its genesis and limits to its most hidden meanings. A double dimension, social and national, is recognized in almost all his writings as a constant, to which the author understood to add so many others, complementary and relevant. The transition to modernity, the social-political turmoil at the turn of the 19th Century, the revolution of 1848, studied as a pan-Romanian phenomenon, the Union of the Principalities, the reforms, the fight for independence, external ties throughout a century and more, these are just a few lines of a large-scale project, whose convergence seems indisputable to us.

We owe the historian Gheorghe Platon one of the most solid works of a modernist attentive to the integration of modernity into the overall Romanian development, but also an exemplary pedagogical devotion, one that the Romanian world still needs so much.

Let us wish him, on this anniversary break, health and increased work, to the joy of those who still see in history a beneficial source of reflection and encouragement to self-transcendence!"

Vasile Cristian (1936-2006) – “The seminars on Modern History of Romania were the main instrument at the disposal of assistant Gh. Platon for the training of those who had then embraced the more delicate than ever profession of history. However, they were added to the leadership of the circle with the same profile, in a period in which the student scientific circles, of Eastern inspiration, aimed, in fact, to continue the good tradition of the Iași historical school from the interwar period. The circle meetings were a true spiritual delight, and the preparation of the works turned into an exercise of great rigor even if the authors were sometimes a bit

intrigued by the fact that they had to modify them 4-5 times before presenting them to the circle or sessions. The maximum seriousness impressed by the circle's supervisor proved to be particularly useful to all those who attended him and who, accepting it at the time, strove to take it over for their own activity and, at the same time, to transmit it to those whom, later, they guided in turn.

A particularly interesting moment during the period when I worked with the assistant Gh. Platon was the preparation of the Centenary of the Union of the Principalities. The official spirit of that time was, as is known, internationalist. Gradually, however, nationalist notes began to appear, the first of the most striking being linked precisely to the anniversary of January 24, 1959. The fact surprised a good deal, even though the previous year the Romanians had said goodbye, in an atmosphere of spontaneous enthusiasm, to the most striking instrument of internationalism, the Soviet troops (listening to Radio *Hora Unirii*, my father asked me to turn down the volume of 'Voice of America', the then subversive station with ideas and promises in which some still continued to believe).

To mark the event, students from the three History faculties [in Bucharest, Cluj, and Iași] were to prepare a national scientific session and a professional competition on the topic of the Union.

For the latter, a team was formed, from our year (actually, a group), being selected Gh. Buzatu, Vasile Russu, Leon Șimanschi, C. Scorpan, Aurel Grigore, the supervisor being, naturally, the assistant Gh. Platon. Since it was a competition, the preparation went down to the smallest details, with discussions of a more general nature alternating with a kind of training competition between us, with the most diverse questions (including those in which the 'computer' Gh. Platon was a master, such as: 'On which page in Riker is it mentioned about ...?'). There were a few extraordinary weeks, which I, the assistant Platon and us, could only imagine as being crowned with triumph. However, stolen by the generosity of the people of the 1859 Union, we had forgotten that we were in another '59. Assistant Gh. Platon was not considered worthy to lead our delegation to Bucharest, his place being taken by the contemporary history teacher, a Jewish-Illegalist [Janeta Benditer: 1917-1980]. Our assistant only drove us to the train station, to emphasize that, even so, he was with us, wishing us success. To this day, I cannot forget his beautiful sad smile from that time. Of otherwise the measure, with motivations that could not be in any way professional, did not have all the consequences that we could have suspected, since the competition did not take place. In addition, there was a risk that at such a competition, interventions would be made that, being oral, could not be checked in advance, so they could deviate from the typical of the time. For certain regional differences, it is perhaps interesting to remember that at the student scientific session, the only official event left (apart from the inevitable banquet), a colleague from Bucharest reproached his colleague Vasile Russu, author of the paper *Mihail Kogălniceanu și Unirea Principatelor* [Mihail Kogălniceanu and the Union of the Principalities] (prepared under the guidance of Gh. Platon), for talking too much in his paper about ... Mihail Kogălniceanu!

Memories related to the closeness to our assistant are numerous, but also diverse, as the times imposed on them. We went on a long study trip together, most of it through Transylvania, we did the then usual 'voluntary work', digging holes for trees or trenches for pipes (in the last two years before December 1989, we, now teachers, did something similar within six days of 'productive work', just like all the 'unproductive' employees, a measure that is difficult to understand, difficult to comment on. With Professor Platon now at the helm, we, those from History, had the 'work front' at the Botanical Garden, from where one evening we had a revelation-image, that of Ceahlău in the distance, an image that we believe is possible only in the descriptions of the oldest)".

"Since it is not necessary to undertake here a proper assessment of Professor Gheorghe Platon's contributions to the elucidation of many of the aspects related to the foreign relations of modern Romania, we consider it appropriate to invoke those directions where specialized research has and will have much to owe to the openings operated by the master. Because Professor Platon has the undisputed merit of reconsidering the European impact of the affirmation of the Romanian nation in its entirety and not only in the expression of small state entities, like 'pupils thrown by circumstances at the gate of Europe'. The affirmation of the Romanian nation was viewed in close connection, revealing profound interferences, with the profiling of the Europe of nation-states. The decisive impulses were given, in the sense shown, by the revolutions of 1821 and 1848; Union and Independence decisively consecrated the national principle, whose moment of triumph was to be the Great Union.

The rendering of such developments of energies incited, especially in the case of our great historians, the exalting plea, with often thesis titles, as if to inhibit the strictly reconstructive-factological, positivism approach. Great historians, including Professor Platon, were given, from the height of the overall understanding of historical developments, to carry out first-order demonstrations, to formulate exciting working hypotheses, to guide neophytes. to endorse achievements in the field of specialized research. That is, where Professor Platon's contributions have expanded the limits, re-establishing themselves, over time, as milestones".

Also (2006), posthumously:

Obituary signed by Nicolae Edroiu (1939-2018), corresponding member of the Romanian Academy:

"After the relative 'thaw' of the 1960s, the historian can aspire to the valuable recognition of the results of his scientific and didactic activities. Thanks to his performances, Gheorghe Platon climbed the steps of professional consecration in the university and academic center of Iași. His doctoral thesis, defended at the University of Cluj in 1971, with Professor Ștefan Pascu as scientific supervisor, outlined historiographical the feudal domain of Moldova in the first half of the 19th Century, drawing attention to the combination of the agricultural tradition and the conservatism of a part of the country's boyars with new methods and innovative forms of organization in the rural socio-economic landscape of the eastern parts of the Romanian area. In his

later works, the historian would demonstrate the revolutionary developments in the field of Romanian agrarian life, the economy in general, demography and culture, thus outlining the preparation of the 1848 Revolution in the Romanian Countries, to which he would dedicate countless studies of historical reconstruction and interpretation. Other research, resulting in notable results, concerned the moment of the Union of the Romanian Principalities in 1859 and the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, whose reflection in European public opinion and in Western historical documentation he followed during his research and scientific documentation internships carried out in Belgium and France. Associate Professor and then Professor at the 'A.I. Cuza' University in Iași, historian Gheorghe Platon would dedicate impressive scientific and didactic-pedagogical efforts to Romanian history education, contributing to the training of numerous researchers in the field, archivists and museographers, history teachers who filled the schools in Moldovan localities and beyond".

Respectively – Volume XLIII-XLIV/2006-2007 [822 pp.] of the *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A.D. Xenopol”*, in the *In Memoriam* section – Ion Agrigoroaiei, *Gh. Platon, Profesorul nostru* [Gh. Platon, Our Professor] (pp. 805-806), Gheorghe Cliveti, [Modern History of Romanians in the Work of Gh. Platon] (pp. 807-808), Gheorghe Iacob, *Gh. Platon – schiță de portret* [Gh. Platon – Portrait Sketch] (pp. 809-810), Doina Calistru, *Liberalismul românesc în viziunea profesorului Gh. Platon* [Romanian Liberalism in the Vision of Professor Gh. Platon] (pp. 811-815), Dumitru Ivănescu, *Profesorul Gheorghe Platon, așa cum l-am cunoscut* [Professor Gheorghe Platon, as I Met Him] (pp. 816-817), Ion Toderașcu, *Gheorghe Platon – un Profesor emblematic* [Gheorghe Platon – An Emblematic Professor] (p. 818).

Ion Agrigoroaiei (1936-2021) – “He was demanding himself and demanding, in a university manner, of his students and colleagues, considering that we have not only rights, but also duties and obligations, a mission to fulfill in the University and Society. Everyone who knew him was impressed by the way he organized his work, in a daily schedule that was strictly observed for many years. The isolation in the ‘separate room’ behind the glasvand (he also received me there, in January 2000, at 8 am, when I presented my Doctoral thesis to him, in his capacity as a member of the Doctoral Commission; I had not met him personally until then – I called him on the phone –, but he accepted to be one of the members of the Commission after going through the thesis, defended later, in May – our note) was only an appearance, being always happy to have a discussion on professional topics, to offer a consultation, to share his views on the issues facing the Faculty or the University etc.

He was of a generosity rarely seen in the academic world, guiding with competence and dedication generations and generations of students, young graduates, teachers and researchers in the process of their scientific and didactic development. The list of those who defended their doctoral thesis under the scientific guidance of the Professor and Academician is edifying for the remarkable results obtained by some young people, reaching the high steps of performance.

He maintained a permanent connection with the graduates of our Faculty and was welcomed with joy in the numerous meetings he had with History teachers from different counties, as such meetings caused him immense satisfaction. He was interested in the achievements of our graduates, participated in the meetings organized by different promotions, I felt him vibrating at their satisfactions and embittered at the difficulties they faced in practicing the profession.

He constantly insisted on creating a climate conducive to the fulfillment of our personality and played a decisive role in the smooth running of the Department and the Faculty, an authority with a hard word to say, which decision-makers took account or should have taken account. He was involved, at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, in redefining the University's statute, contributing substantially to its new organization and promotion of true values. It is regrettable that a man of such moral and professional integrity was not elected dean of our Faculty, in the first 'free' elections held at the beginning of 1990".

Gheorghe Cliveti (B. 1952, Corresponding member, since 2022, of the Romanian Academy) – "Impressive, downright exemplary, appears, in an overall assessment of the Professor's work, the assiduous journey from special studies to syntheses. A journey that, of course, was marked by circumstances, by changes in times and people, times that were some for the primary school, middle school and high school student, others for the student, others for the assistant, lecturer, associate professor, professor, others for the academician Professor Gheorghe Platon. During the years of his 'scientific apprenticeship', carried out in a 'team' coordinated by Dimitrie Berlescu, he studied aspects of social history, regarding the state of the peasantry and the landowner reserve from the 'era of the Organic Regulation'. He was also concerned with aspects of historical demography, with reference to the fairs and cities of Moldova in the first half of the 19th Century. In almost all his studies from 1955 to 1965, he used 'statistical methods', 'quantitative history', with data built directly from archival sources and not taken 'ready-made' from other publications.

He was thus able to assert his special qualities as a researcher, avoiding major themes, which in the aforementioned years were suffocated by Marxist-Leninist thesism. The first major theme, the 1848 revolution in Moldova, he had the chance to attack within the parameters of the Doctoral program. It was the chance to encounter the scientific research of Ștefan Pascu and especially those of David Prodan, in Cluj, where the modern era of Romanian history was no longer considered so much as the 'era of the formation and consolidation of capitalism', as the era of the formation and affirmation of the nation. The encounter with the 'Cluj school' was happily completed with another, namely, with the works of the French professor Jacques Godechot. An encounter to which he owed the prospect of integrating the phenomenology of Romanian modernity into a Euro-Atlantic horizon. The result was to be the book *Geneza revoluției române de la 1848* [The Genesis of the Romanian Revolution of 1848], one of the prestigious monographs of the 'Iași school of history'. The theme of the revolution implied returns or contents on aspects

of social history, historical demography, but also the temptation of other major themes: the Union of the Principalities, Independence, the preludes to the Great Union. The highest goal of the Professor's scientific activity became the synthesis of modern Romanian history, with notable achievements, from the 1985 university textbook to volume VII of the recent Academy treatise, all following a sustained 'historiographic construction site work', also attested by the five volumes of studies at the 'Al.I. Cuza' University Publishing House.

The temptation of synthesis was aroused by an almost complete fusion of research and teaching activity. At courses and seminars, the Professor also attended lectures, with forays into "routes of details". He never hid his conviction that his great vocation was that of Professor. He became well known, in the country and abroad, as a man of the Chair. I was his student, doctoral student and assistant. I was able to know firsthand the demands to which he subjected his 'apprentices' on the historiographic construction site of the modern era. He wanted, at the 1999 symposium dedicated to the Union of the Principalities and held in the 'A.D. Xenopol' Amphitheater of the University, to announce his successors in the Modern History of Romanians course. And only a few years later, on a day of January 24, the Professor left among those who were his colleagues or disciples, accompanying him, on his last worldly journey, with deep pain, but also with the warm thought that he was given to be forever happy through what he knew and loved himself, through what, above all, he made others know and love, through the rare gift of scrutinizing, from the height of everything he had accomplished, Boundlessness, and of justifying, from the same height, Unforgetting".

It is also worth mentioning, in this series of recollections and portrayals of Professor Gh. Platon, the appreciations of a former student Stefan Lemny (B. 1952, settled in Paris in 1990, being, from the following year, at the National Library responsible for the history collections for Central and Eastern Europe, who attests, remembering, in 2020 – "As a researcher at the 'A.D. Xenopol' Institute of History [in Iași], with the 18th Century as my field of exploration, I met Professor Platon again in another way than through his master class. How could I have attempted to study this interval between the long Romanian Middle Ages and the modern era without his perspective-opening analyses? Apart from rigorous studies on the genesis of Romanian capitalism – such as *Domeniul feudal din Moldova în preajma revoluției de la 1848* [The Feudal Domain of Moldova on the Occasion of the 1848 Revolution], Iași, 1973 – his book on *Geneza revoluției române de la 1848* [the Genesis of the Romanian Revolution of 1848], published by Junimea in 1980, was a true *Introducere în istorie modernă a României* [Introduction to the Modern History of Romania], as stated in the second part of the title. It was not a synthesis, but a way of thinking about the historical process in question, in the spirit of a total history, as proposed by the School of Annals. His vision was influenced no less by another prominent historian,

less incorporated into the Annals, but just as revolutionary in his time: Jacques Godechot, known for his Atlanticist conception of the French Revolution”.

Following in his footsteps, the historian from Iași shed light on the ‘structural’ revolutions – demographic, agrarian, industrial – that preceded and generated the Revolution of 1848. But he took a step further. And what a step! He was at the antithesis of the French historian’s conception for whom, once the Elbe had been crossed, the revolutionary spirit did not advance towards the East. Moreover, Romanian specificities allowed him to shed light on yet another phenomenon that accompanied the structural transformations of the Carpatho-Danubian space: the ideological revolution!

Those who followed Professor Gheorghe Platon’s courses abandoned, under his influence, the concept of the ‘Romanian revolutions of 1848’ that continued to be used in the 1970s, in favor of the ‘Romanian revolution’. Reading this book opened up new horizons. As for me, I found here a source of reflection for understanding the themes that concerned me at the time: the genesis of national consciousness and patriotism. Even more remarkable, his analysis was highlighted by images that are not common in the writing of history, such as when the author metaphorically evokes the spiritual unity of Romanian society, ‘a stage in which, under the watchful eyes of the same director, the scenes and major acts of the same play unfold separately’.

I understood better the ‘human dimension of the historian’ Gheorghe Platon: his gentleness, contrary to the impression produced by the emotion of some exams, his modesty, discretion, generosity, and, above all, his enormous cultural passion, punctuated by his ritual presence at the concerts of the Iași Philharmonic”.

And – at the end of these brief connotations – let us mention that, recently, a well-known cultural magazine from Bacău, *Ateneu*, dedicated a page to Professor Gheorghe Platon, in its February issue, under the signature of Cornel Simion Galben, under the title *Centenar Gheorghe Platon*, from which we reproduce a few sentences from this comprehensive synthesis: “His impressive scientific activity carried out for more than half a century includes, in addition to the textbooks, monographs and collections of documents mentioned, more than 300 titles, to which are added over 250 reviews and articles inserted in the pages of publications that are not only scientific, such as *Academica*, *Analele Bucovinei* (where he also appeared on the editorial team since the first issue, in which he signed the program article entitled *Argument*), *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie ‘A.D. Xenopol’*, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie* (Cluj-Napoca), *Arhiva genealogică*, *Arhivele Olteniei*, *Ateneu*, *Carpica*, *Cercetări istorice*, *Contemporanul*, *Contrapunct*, *Cronica*, *Destin românesc*, *Glasul Bucovinei*, *În linie dreaptă*, *Nouvelles Études d’Histoire*, *Revista de istorie*, *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, *România literară*, *Southeastern Europe*, *Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae*, *Transylvanian Review*, etc. His prodigious academic career continued after 1996, when he retired, working as a consulting professor and completing his work, which over time has seen numerous successes, rewarded with the Second Prize of the Ministry of Education and Training for scientific activity (1968) and the ‘N. Bălcescu’

Prize of the Romanian Academy (1975), with the titles of ‘outstanding Professor’ (1984) and ‘Emeritus Professor’ (1998), of doctor honoris causa of the University of Angers (France, 1998), of the University of Craiova (1999) and of the University of Suceava (2002), of Honorary Citizen of the cities of Bârlad and Buhuși and of the commune of Bălțătești (Neamț). He was also awarded the Order of Labor, 3rd class and the *Ordinul Pentru Merit* [Order ‘For Merit’], in the rank of Knight, and his colleagues elected him, in 1989, a member of the Senate of the ‘Al.I. Cuza’ University.

The culmination of all his work was marked by his acceptance as a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy (1990-1993) and then, as a full member (1993-2006), in the period 1990-2000 also fulfilling the function of secretary of the Iași branch of the Romanian Academy. Within the high academic forum, he was also president of the Romanian part of the Commission of Romanian and Polish Historians, which functioned within the History and Archaeology Section of the Romanian Academy, and since October 2000 he has also been among the members of the Commission for the Attestation of Diplomas and University Titles under the Ministry of Education and of the National Council for Academic Accreditation and Attestation. Member of the National Council of Historians of Romania, of the Society of Historical Sciences and of the Commission for the History of International Relations in Milan, founding member of the ‘Nicolae Titulescu’, ‘Nicolae Iorga’ and ‘A.D. Xenopol’ Foundations, he always responded generously to invitations addressed by the institutional forums of Bacău, acting as a member of the ‘Renașterea’ Cultural Association in Buhuși and supporting, as a teacher, the evolution of hundreds of history teachers from Bacău County. Considered by them the patriarch of the Union, he passed away on the very day that was so dear to him, leaving posterity a work that deserves to be deepened and valued on a national scale”.

Professor Gheorghe Platon ennobled Romanian Historiography and constituted – as collaborators and disciples have revealed and as mentioned in this memorial – an unmistakable landmark of it. His books, the research directions and elaborate syntheses, his exemplary professionalism, his ethical and human conduct stand testimony also at this Centenary.

Book Reviews

Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, *Mitropolitul Andrei Șaguna. O biografie culturală. Prefață de Ioan Bolovan* [Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna. A Cultural Biography. Preface by Ioan Bolovan] (Academia Română – Centrul de Studii Transilvane), Editura Școala Ardeleană, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, 366 pp.; ill. ISBN978-606-797-994-7

Three years ago, on occasion of a century and a half since the fall into the Lord of the learned and national fighter Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna – enthroned in 2011 by the Holy Synod among the Saints of the Romanian Nation –, the Cluj historian Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan published a precious volume with the above title.

With the following structure: *Prefață* de [Preface by] Ioan Bolovan (pp. 7-10), *Cuvânt-înainte* [al autorului] [Foreword [by the Author]] (pp. 11-13), *Andrei Baron de Șaguna, o biografie culturală* [Andrei Baron de Șaguna, A Cultural Biography] (pp. 15-63), *Ierarhul baron: decorațiile, nobilitatea și heraldica șaguniană* [The Baron Hierarch: Decorations, Nobility, and Șaguna Heraldry] (pp. 65-86), *Activitatea editorială și opera publicistică* [Editorial Activity and Journalistic Work] (pp. 87-109), *Ziditor al unității românești prin Biserică* [Builder of Romanian Unity Through the Church] (pp. 111-136), *Cofondator și prim președinte al „Asociațiunii ASTRA”* [Co-founder and First President of the ‘ASTRA Association’] (pp. 137-184), *Andrei Șaguna și profesorii Academiei de Drept din Sibiu* [Andrei Șaguna and the Professors of the Sibiu Academy of Law] (pp. 185-210), *Ierarhul și Împăratul, o corespondență inedită* [Tshe Hierarch and the Emperor, An Unpublished Correspondence] (211-227), *Episcopul Andrei Șaguna și ministrul Alexander Bach* [Bishop Andrei Șaguna and Minister Alexander Bach] (pp. 229-258), *Un vis neîmplinit: ridicarea unei biserici-catedrale în Sibiu* [An Unfulfilled Dream: The Construction of A Cathedral Churches in Sibiu] (pp. 259-291), *Efigiile ierarhului, douăsprezece portret* [Effigies of the Hierarch, Twelve Portraits] (pp. 293-327), *Bibliografie selectivă* [Selective Bibliography] (pp. 329-356), *Indice* [Index] (357-363).

The signatory of the relevant op, in the motivational argument, reveals to the reader that “in the context of the round homage, of the 150th anniversary of Andrei Șaguna's passing to the eternal, I considered it my duty to offer historians, theologians and Romanian readers, in general, a new book about the great archbishop, a work written not in the genre of a classic monograph, but comprising ten chapters that particularly thematize his intellectual biography and cultural work, as the title of the volume indicates. With the exception the second chapter, written for the first time, all the others were originally published in various volumes and specialized periodicals, as I mentioned at the end of each chapter. All of them, however, were revised and added, based on sources and information discovered after their initial editing, striving to give the volume a structure, but also a coherent form” (pp. 12-13).

And the Professor-prefacer, historian – also from Cluj-Napoca – Ioan Bolovan (corresponding member of the Romanian Academy) explains, in turn: “The author entitles this volume «A cultural biography» because he wanted to illustrate, through

the selection of the nine studies, the intellectual profile and broad cultural horizon of the great hierarch. Starting from this intentionality assumed and recognized even at the beginning of the volume, the included materials reveal Andrei Șaguna as a founder of cultural institutions that ensured the Romanians in Transylvania not only the survival of their identity, but also the cultural and even material progress of the nation" (p. 8). Indeed, the new book contribution of the prolific scientific researcher from the 'George Barițiu' Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca – "author, co-author and coordinator of over 20 books and volumes, of over 130 specialized studies, of approximately 270 popularization articles, evocations, reviews and reading notes in specialized magazines, of spirituality and culture, in books and collective volumes published in Romania and abroad" (as shown in the introductory note accompanying the volume) – aims, and succeeds with more than enough, to outline the (national-)cultural dimension of the great Transylvanian Romanian; with certain and known origins, nota bene, Aromanian; he himself – the prototype of the plenary Romanian - did not, however, mention his ancestry from the layers of Balkan Romanity. The author reveals, however, in the subchapter Origin, family and education, that "Andrei Șaguna's personality bore the deep seal of his origin and the family in which he was formed. Born in Miskolc in northeastern Hungary, on January 1, 1809, Anastasiu was the third child of the Aromanian merchant Naum and Anastasia Șaguna. His ancestors, both on the maternal and paternal lines, are part of the South-Danubian or Balkan Romanity spread in the mountainous regions of Pindus, Gramosta [*Sic!* – in text: Gramatos] and Olympus, in the geographical space of today's Greece, Albania, [Northern] Macedonia, and Bulgaria. In history they are known as Macedonian-Romanians, Aromanians" (pp. 15-16).

A 'cultural' dimension, here, outlined not in a monographic volume as such, but in a structure emerging from the perspective of the author's Șagunian preoccupations, spread over several years; thus thematically ordered, the studies contribute to a monographic vision (and it is not excluded that the tenacious author (in full creative maturity: born in the sign of Gemini, in A.D. 1986) will give us, in years, an integrative monograph of this overwhelming personality of Romanians/Romanity.

Fully mastering the science of revealing the essential from a sea of – apparently – arid documentary testimonies, the author accurately revives circumstances, institutions and people from the era of Șaguna, reveals the visionaryism and national-political pragmatism put at the service of his congeners of Nation, Language and Faith in the midst of the affirmation of the Century of Nationalities. At the same time, the author also has the science of synthetic description, so difficult in the case of great and complex representative figures of a nation and era: "In the light of the biographical details presented (in the study Andrei Baron de Șaguna, a cultural biography, which opens the volume – our note), the personality of the great hierarch of the Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary, the metropolitan of happy memory Andrei Baron de Șaguna, is revealed

to us in a different perspective than the classical one, in which he was portrayed by those who focused on his life, activity and work. Jurist and philosopher by academic training, Orthodox priest by spiritual vocation, profound theologian and hierarch by divine grace, polyglot scholar, leader of the Romanian nation and head of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania and Hungary, true politician and skillful diplomat, Andrei Șaguna embodied all these hypostases, without being able to be circumscribed to just one of them. His intellectual and cultural profile presents him as a true homo europaeus, with a horizon that was both national, ecumenical and imperial, as few of his Romanian, Hungarian, Serbian, German or other Central-Eastern European contemporaries had since the mid-19th century” (p. 63).

The studies themselves – twinned in this op (and) chosen presentation and graphic design – are also accompanied by a selective Bibliography, sub-segmented in accordance with the usual scientific requirements. Naturally, the author carried out a ‘selective’ operation, fatally limited (not included, among others – for example – is the beautiful and exemplary “story” of the father-history professor Ioan Lupaș about Anastasia Șaguna, published in several editions, the princeps edition: 1912; in 1943, in Sibiu it was reprinted in the collection of *Biblioteca „Anastasia Șaguna”*. Nr. [the ‘Anastasia Șaguna’ Library. No. 1], with the subtitle *Viața unei mame credincioase* [The Life of a Faithful Mother]); Șaguna deserves, however, to have a Bibliography as complete as possible – in which all the volumes relating to her life and activity, including all the studies – published in various places in the country – and, no less, press articles (including materials relating to the various cultural-scientific manifestations and related memorials) would be listed.

For example, three (at least) volumes were published in Constanta – Justin Tambozi, Justinian George Tambozi, *Andrei Șaguna, apostol al românilor ortodocși din Ungaria și Transilvania* [Andrei Șaguna, Apostle of the Orthodox Romanians in Hungary and Transylvania] (Andrei Șaguna University), Andrei Șaguna Foundation Publishing House, Constanța, 1996 /62 pp./; Justin Tambozi, Atena Tambozi, Justinian George Tambozi *Andrei Șaguna. ▪Apostol al românilor ortodocși din Ungaria și Transilvania. ▪Scrisoare privind oportunitatea sanctificării primului mitropolit ortodox Andrei Șaguna (1809-1873) adresată Patriarhiei Române* [Andrei Șaguna. ▪Apostle of the Orthodox Romanians in Hungary and Transylvania. ▪Letter on the Opportunity of Sanctifying the First Orthodox Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna (1809-1873) Addressed to the Romanian Patriarchate] (Moscopolitan Academic Foundation), Justin & George Justinian Tambozi Publishing House, *Andrei Șaguna, contemporanul nostru* [Andrei Șaguna, Our Contemporary], “Andrei Șaguna” Foundation Publishing House, Constanta, 2000 /321 pp./. (And I myself, at the beginning of the 1990s, highlighted – with the informational-scientific means of that time, without having priority concerns about Șaguna – the personality of the great Transylvanian (a)Romanian, in the Iași magazine “Contact internațional” (no. 27-28 of 1993): *Andrei Șaguna. Repere biografice* [Andrei Șaguna. Biographical Landmarks] (pp. 2-6), *Apărarea drepturilor naționale. O dimensiune politică* [The Defense of National

Rights. A Political Dimension] [Andrei Șaguna] (pp. 12-14), respectively *Starea culturală a aromânilor în vremea „îvirii” lui Andrei Șaguna* [The Cultural State of the Aromanians at the Time of Andrei Șaguna's 'Emergence'] (pp. 15-19).

The valuable volume ends with a useful *Index* (also selective – but without the author indicating it as such) – constituting a reference point for Șaguna's bibliography, the fruit of the scientific and ideological efforts of a young representative of our Historiography today.

Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu (coord. [Ed.]), *România de la război la pace* [Romania from War to Peace]. [Cuvânt înainte /Foreword by/ Dr. Florian Banu], Editura Pim, Iași, 2023, 506 pp.; ill., facs. ISBN 978-606-13-7944-6

The initiator and coordinator of this volume of studies is one of the most well-known, appreciated and prolific – in terms of editorial work and the organization of cultural events with a memorial-historical character – teachers in Romania (with professional activity in her hometown: born November 24, 1942, Bârlad).

President for decades (1974-2020) of the Bârlad Branch of the Romanian Historical Sciences Society, the industrious servant of the Clio Museum is the author of several volumes of history – especially of her native lands in a national context;

Such as – *Istoria Bârladului* [History of Bârlad], 2 Vols. (Vaslui, 1998: 436+462 pp.; and 2 more editions, augmented: 2002, 2015), *Războiul și jertfa datoriei. Bătălia pentru Basarabia și nordul Bucovinei* [The War and the Sacrifice of Duty. The Battle for Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina] (Iași, 2006: 454 pp.), *Posteritatea lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza* (co-editor) (Bârlad, 2008: 254 pp.), *Societatea de Științe Istorice Bârlad între trecut și viitor* [The Bârlad Society of Historical Sciences between the Past and the Future] (Iași, 2011: 510 pp.), *Alexandru Ioan Cuza și demnitatea națională* (ed.) (Bârlad, 2011: 442 pp.; ed.) *Personalități bârlădene* [Personalities from Bârlad], 2 Vols. (Iași, 2012: 481+483 pp.), *Bârladul și gloria militară* [The Bârlad /City/ and Military Glory] (Iași, 2013: 604 pp.), *Războiul pentru Țară* [The War for the Country] (ed.) (Iași, 2018: 574 pp.), *Eroism și jertfă pentru Țară* [Heroism and Sacrifice for the Country] (ed.) (Iași, 2018: 609 pp.), *Alexandru Ioan Cuza și România Modernă. 200* [Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Modern Romania. 200] (Iași, 2020: 567 pp.), *România în război* [Romania at War] (ed.) (Iași, 2022: 487 pp.), *Memoria culturală a Bârladului* [The Cultural Memory of Bârlad] [Cuvânt înainte /Foreword by/ de Laurențiu Chiriac], 2 Vols. (Iași, 2023: 1.062+872 pp.); and about which a well-known historian of our time said: “The 3 volumes provide a comprehensive insight into of the evolution of Bârlad – from ancient times until contemporaneity – the contribution of the city and its personalities representative, to the material and cultural life of the Country of Moldova and especially Romania. The effort of documentation, analysis and synthesis – continued for many years by teacher Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu – it should emphasized appreciated and above all remembered. And the work itself constitutes the stable basis of future research” – Acad. Dinu C. Giurescu, *Cuvânt înainte* [Foreword], in *Istoria Bârladului*, vol. 1, Editura Pim, Iași, 2015, pp. 7-8;

But also of some thrilling travel volumes, the octogenarian teacher being also a tireless globe-trotter: *Amurgul zeilor* [Twilight of the Gods] (Iași, 2006: 682 pp.), *Trezirea dragonului* [The Awakening of the Dragon] (Iași, 2007: 720 pp.), *Paradisul Pierdut* [The Lost Paradise] (Iași, 2007), *Nemurirea Mogulului* [The Mogul's Immortality] (Iași, 2009: 680 pp.), *Asaltul Tigrilor* [The Tiger Assault] (Iași, 2010: 707 pp.), *Cavalcada Destinului* [The Cavalcade of Destiny], Iași, 2011: 700 pp.), *Hoinărind Pământul* [Wandering on Earth] (Iași, 2012: 706 pp.), *Unde zboară condorii* [Where the Condors Fly] (Iași, 2017: 450 pp.), *Sabia focului* [The Fire Sword] (Iași, 2016: 525 pp.), *Tsunami în Arhipelag* [Tsunami in the Archipelago] (Iași, 2020: 517 pp.); referring to this part of the activity of Clío's distinguished servant, the late Professor Gheorghe Buzatu (the day before his death, in his office in Iași, he had participated in a scientific session in Bârlad, on May 19, 2013...) wrote about Oltea-Elena Gramaticu-Răcșanu: "The Professor collaborated intensively and consistently in the media local and central, but especially, in recent years, benefiting from the information and impressions collected following the trips undertaken persistent and systematic, in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and of the South, Australia and New Zealand, used to divide us impressions and beliefs, in several suggestively titled volumes: *Amurgul zeilor* (Iași, Editura Pim, 2006, 680 p.), *Trezirea dragonului* (ibidem, 2007, 720 p.), *Paradisul pierdut* (ibidem, 2009); *Nemurirea Mogulului* (ibidem, 2009, 680 p.), *Asaltul tigrilor* (ibidem, 2010, 707 p.), *Cavalcada destinului* (ibidem, 2011). These volumes enjoyed an excellent reception from the part of the readers and commentators".

The content of this thematic volume is as follows: Florian Banu, *Cuvânt înainte* [Foreword] (pp. 9-12). Mircea Tănase, *Tratatul României cu Tripla Alianță. O alianță politico-militară conjuncturală, necesară, secretă și... caducă (140 de ani)* [Romania's Triple Alliance Treaty. A Conjunctural Political-Military Alliance, Necessary, Secret and... Caducous (140 Years)] (pp. 13-24); Alin Spânu, *Pregătirea informativă/contrainformativă a armatei române înaintea marilor bătălii din vara anului 1917* [The Informative/Contrainformative Preparation of the Romanian Army Before the Great Battles of the Summer of 1917] (pp. 25-36); Alin Spânu, *Un strigăt de onoare. Scrisoarea lui Nicolae Iorga către regele Ferdinand (19 februarie 1918)* [A Shout of Honor. Nicolae Iorga's Letter to King Ferdinand (February 19, 1918)] (pp. 37-45); Corneliu Ciucanu, *Basarabia în cadrul relațiilor româno-ruso-sovietice. Înainte și după Conferința Păcii de la Paris (1919-1920)* [Bessarabia Within Romanian-Russian-Soviet Relations. Before and after the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920)] (pp. 46-97); Oltea Răcșanu Gramaticu, *Nicolae Iorga, militant consecvent al demnității naționale* [Nicolae Iorga, Consistent Militant of National Dignity] (pp. 98-114); Ion Giurcă, *O controversă. Rezistență sau cedare în anul 1940* [A Controversy. Resistance or surrender in 1940] (pp. 115-129); Stoica Lascu, *110 ani de la reîntregirea Dobrogei. Modernizare, întărire a românității, conviețuire multiethnică în județele sud-dobrogene Durostor și Caliacra* [110 Years Since the Reunification of Dobrudja. Modernization, Strengthening of Romanianness, and Multi-Ethnic Coexistence in the Southern Dobrudja Counties of Durostor and Caliacra] (pp. 130-155); Stoica Lascu, *În urma /Sic! – anul/dramei naționale 1940 – cedarea*

și a sudului Dobrogei/Cadrilaterul [After /Sic! – In the Year of / National Drama 1940 – The Ceding of Southern Dobrudja/Quadrilateral] (pp. 156-181); Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu, *Orgolii și speranțe pe Frontul de Est (1941-1944)* [Conceits and Hopes on the Eastern Front (1941-1944)] (pp. 182-207); Ion Giurcă, *Cooperare militară româno-germană în prima parte a campaniei din anul 1941* [Romanian-German Military Cooperation in the First Part of the 1941 Campaign] (pp. 208-222); Nicolae Ionescu, *România alături de Axă în infernul de la Stalingrad* [Romania Alongside the Axis in the Inferno of Stalingrad] (pp. 223-246); Laurențiu Chiriac, *Tratatul secret de ieșire a României din războiul cu Națiunile Unite (1943-1944)* [Secret Negotiations for the Exit of Romania from the War with the United Nations (1943-1944)] (pp. 247-262); Gheorghe Mârzenicu, *Orașul Bârlad în război, august 1944, din perspectiva documentelor sovietice de arhive militare* [The Town of Bârlad at War, August 1944, from the Perspective of Soviet Military Archive Documents] (pp. 263-276); Gheorghe Mârzenicu, *Răpirea marelui Ion Antonescu din București și expedierea la Moscova (31 august 1944)* [The Kidnapping of Marshal Ion Antonescu from Bucharest and the Shipment to Moscow (August 31, 1944)] (pp. 277-287); Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu, *Procesul și execuția marelui Ion Antonescu* [The Trial and Execution of Marshal Ion Antonescu] (pp. 288-300); Florian Banu, *Economia României – de la povara Convenției de Armistițiu la nedreptățile Tratatului de Pace (1944-1947)* [Romania's Economy – from the Burden of the Armistice Convention to the Injustices of the Peace Treaty (1944-1947)] (pp. 301-328); Anatol Petrencu, *Conferința de Pace de la Paris (1946). Poziția U.R.S.S. față de România* [The Paris Peace Conference (1946). The Position of the U.S.S.R. Towards Romania] (pp. 329-336); Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu, *România la Conferința Păcii de la Paris (1946-1947)* [Romania at the Paris Peace Conference (1946-1947)] (pp. 337-350); Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu, *Who's Who* (pp. 351-451); Oltea Rășcanu Gramaticu, *Anexe* (pp. 452-502); *Lucrări semnate de autor* [Works Signed by the Author /Coordinator/ (pp. 503-504).

As shown in *Foreword*, “An exciting title for an extremely current volume, given that polemology – the branch of political science that studies war as a sociological phenomenon – tends to accredit, through a series of recent volumes, the idea that war is a true «natural state» of to mankind! In other words, we are condemned to live permanently *Bellum omnium contra omnes*. Well, that pernicious idea is disproved by the studies gathered in this new volume, which fully demonstrate that mankind has been permanently concerned with the prevention of wars, through deployment, and with their conclusion as quickly as possible, when prevention failed, through more treaties more or less secret” (p. 9).

Indeed, the themes addressed – which belong to established historians, well-known in the national scientific environment – bring documentary and interpretative novelties, thereby placing the volume on the first floor of our today's Historiography.

Iosif Bencze, Marius Marian Olteanu (coord. [Eds.]), Cosmina-Adela Lăzărescu, Iulia Adriana Brașov (authors), Casa Regală a României în cronicile „neoficiale” ale Monitorului Oficial” 1886-1894. Carol I [The Royal House of Romania in the

“Unofficial” Chronicles of the ‘Monitorul Oficial’ 1886-1894. Carol I], **Volumul 7, Volumul 8, Editura Centrul tehnic-editorial al armatei, București, 2024, 966 pp. + 982 pp. [doc. 1-618, 619-1.107]. ISBN 978-606-524-091-9**

The meritorious authors – under the coordination of Commander Iosif Bencze and Col. Eng. Marius Marian Olteanu –, archivists at the General Archive Depository “General Grigore Costandache” in Pitești, have carried out, over several years, a Sisyphean task of tracing in thousands of pages of the “Official Monitor” the activity of the Royal House, namely of the sovereigns Carol I (1839-1914; Prince: 1866-1881; King: 1881-1914) and Ferdinand I (1865-1927; King: 1914-1927). The result, to date, is a number 12 volumes – published between 2010 and 2025 – totaling almost 10,000 pages, summing up 5,500 documents (this year, 2026, the last two volumes are to be printed).

Two years ago, in 2024, volumes 7 and 8 were published – which we propose for the awards; in fact, the entirety of this monumental documentary reconstruction, through the prism of the activities of the Royal House, bears witness to the motivation for awarding one of the Section’s awards.

Referring to the two volumes, it should be emphasized that the over 1,100 documents – dated over a period of 8 years, between January 2, 1886 and December 30, 1894 – offer, like the other volumes, an overview of the political, cultural and social, ecclesiastical, military life, of the daily activities of the Royal House, which contribute to a more applied knowledge of the history of the Old Kingdom:

participation in events of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in annual religious ceremonies; attendance at various school ceremonies, participation in charity evenings and balls and celebrations, visits to exhibitions, visits to various regions of the country (Sinaia, Slatina, Iași, Constanța, Brăila, Galați, Craiova, Călărași, Bușteni, Tulcea, Târgu Ocna, Buzău, Focșani, Mizil, Ploiești, Câmpulung, Curtea de Argeș); receptions in audiences, various congratulatory telegrams, humanitarian aid for disaster victims;

detailing visits abroad;

historical anniversary events (Fall of Plevna, May 10, March 14, “anniversary of the proclamation of the Kingdom”, etc.); receptions of delegations of the Parliament and some County Councils; receptions of diplomatic representatives and representatives of royal houses, participation in cultural events (at various schools, at the University of Iași – Crown Prince Ferdinand assisted, on May 23, 1893, at the laying of the foundation stone –, at the Conservatory of Music, at the Athenaeum, at the inauguration of the “new Colțea Hospital” and the “inspection of the new Central Military Hospital”, at the Romanian Geographical Society, the Jockey Club – including assistants at horse races –, at the Normal School of Teachers, etc.) and of the Romanian Academy (including the Sovereign’s chairmanship of the general assemblies), conference hearings;

receptions at the Royal Palace of student delegations, the presence of the Sovereign and the Crown Prince at various schools, including to assist “the students’ exam”;

participation of the Sovereigns in the laying of the foundation stones of the Palace of Justice (October 8, 1890), respectively of the Bridge over the Danube (October 9, 1890);

inaugurations of various social-cultural establishments, health bulletins of the Sovereign and other members of the Royal House, royal balls, various messages, presences of Sovereigns abroad, presences of crowned heads or members of European royal houses in Bucharest, receptions in audiences of members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Romania, establishment of states of mourning at the Royal Palace and the Royal Family;

inspections of military units, presences at military maneuvers at the Army Arsenal, inspections at the Cotroceni military camp and the fortified belt of the Capital; inspections at various military units – the 3rd, 5th, 6th, 9th, 21st, 28th Infantry Regiments, the 8th Călărași Regiment, the 2nd and 3rd Roșiori Regiments, the 2nd and 6th Artillery Regiments, the 7th Line Regiment, the 1st Engineer Regiment, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Hunters Battalions; at the Officers’ School, the Military School of Infantry and Cavalry, the Artillery and Engineer Application School, the Cavalry Division, the War School.

The excerpts from the precious documentary source that is the ‘Monitorul Oficial’ are accurately reproduced; both volumes benefit – at the beginning of each: vol. 7, on pp. 3-62; vol. 8, on pp. 3-57 – from extensive summaries of each document.

The determination of the two authors, to put at the service of historical research, such a precious documentary tool – which is difficult to reach, otherwise – deserves to be recognized, they represent valuable documentary tools of our Historiography today.

Octavian Buda, *Privirea lui Thanatos. Epidemii, războaie, asasinate, masacre în șase istorii medicale locale și globale. Ediție ilustrată* [Thanatos’s Gaze. Epidemics, Wars, Assassinations, and Massacres in Six Local and Global Medical Histories. Illustrated Edition], Polirom, Iași, 2024, 464 pp.; ill., facs., map. ISBN 978-630-344-017-0

Here is a volume of a completely different kind – of history and essays of a specific compartment of medicine and society; it belongs to a primary care physician psychiatrist, doctor of Medical Sciences (but also a graduate in Philosophy from the University of Bucharest, in 1997), holder of the Course on the History of Medicine and Medical Culture from the specialized university in Bucharest (the ‘Carol Davila’ University of Medicine and Pharmacy) – the physician-historian who overwhelms us, in this volume, through the vastness of his humanistic culture, through his thorough knowledge of historical sources; and no less through the assertions that outline a coherent vision of such a specific theme; as summarized by Professor Vladimir Beliş, the book is “A true epic, passionate, of great erudition, written with extraordinary attention to each detail narrated. Proof that the

history of a complex science such as forensic medicine is part of the important endowment of medical, social and cultural knowledge”.

The ample and profound volume belongs to an author who, until its conception and printing, had numerous and precious other contributions embodied in independent works – *Iresponsabilitatea* [Irresponsibility] (2006), *Criminalitatea, o istorie medico-legală românească* [Criminality, a Romanian Forensic History] (2007), *O antropologie a marginalului. Psihiatria judiciară românească: 1860-1940* [An Anthropology of the Marginal. Romanian Forensic Psychiatry: 1860-1940] (2007), *Despre regenerarea și... degenerarea unei națiuni* [On the Regeneration and... Degeneration of a Nation] (2009), *Medicină socială și identitate națională. Antropologie culturală, psihiatrie și eugenism în România: 1800-1945* [Social Medicine and National Identity. Cultural Anthropology, Psychiatry and Eugenics in Romania: 1800-1945] (2013), *România fără anestezie. Discurs medical și modernitate în vremea lui Carol I* [Romania Without Anesthesia. Medical Discourse and Modernity in the Time of Carol I] (2013), *Alte capitole din istoria psihiatriei românești* (co-editor) [Other Chapters in the History of Romanian Psychiatry (co-editor)] (2014), *Scurtă istorie a revanșei. Duel sau crimă?* (coautor) [A Short History of Revenge. Duel or Crime?] (2016), *Minovici, o sută de ani de pionierat* (coautor) [Minovici, One Hundred Years of Pioneering] (2017), *Giudețul nebuniei. Expertize psihiatrice în trecutul românesc: 1646-1940* [The *Giudețul* to Madness. Psychiatric Expertise in the Romanian Past: 1646-1940] (2021).

But here is the thematic content of the volume – “a fascinating book that integrates within a unitary reflection several grim exemplary stories, from us and from the world, in which – to remain in the symbolism of the title – the almighty Zeus (or at least Asklepios, the god of medicine) faces the sagacity of the god of death, Thanatos” (Sorin Antohi) – Prolog. *Et in Arcadia ego. Cele șase părți ale dramei* [Prologue. Et in Arcadia ego. The Six Parts of the Drama] (pp. 9-15).

PARTEA ÎNTÂI [Part One]. *De la Ciurma lui Iustinian la Ciurma lui Caragea: o istorie a Morții Negre* [From the Plague of Justinian to the Plague of Caragea: a History of the Black Death] (pp. 17-93 – *De ce epidemiile (ne) schimbă istoria?* [Why Do Epidemics Change History (Us)?], *Ave Mors Nigra, morituri te salutant!*, *De la Basarab I la Marea Molimă bucureșteană, 1813* [From Basarab I to the Great Bucharest Plague, 1813], *Un secol mai târziu... La grippe à la Roumanie, 1918* [A Century Later... La grippe à la Roumanie, 1918], Epilog []). PARTEA A DOUA. *Decapitarea ca simbol național: reconstituirea chipului lui Mihai Viteazul* [The Decapitation as a National Symbol: Reconstructing the Face of Michael the Brave] (pp. 95-145 – *Între istorie și medicină: cum arătau oamenii în trecut?* [Between History and Medicine: How Did People Look in the Past?], *Craniologie „mistică”* [‘Mystical’ Craniology], *Francisc Rainer: anatomie, antropologie și fotografie* [Francisc Rainer: Anatomy, Anthropology, and Photography], *Reconstrucția facială a craniului lui Mihai Viteazul* [Facial Reconstruction of the Skull of Michael the Brave], Epilog). PARTEA A TREIA. *Autopsia unui asasinat politic: Barbu Catargiu* [Autopsy of a Political Assassination: Barbu Catargiu] (pp. 147-200 – *Asasinatul, vector de modernizare?* [The Assassination,

Vector of Modernization?], *O zi furtunoasă: 1862, 8 iunie, București* [A Stormy Day: 1862, June 8, Bucharest], *Necropsia medico-legală efectuată de Iacob Felix & Co.* [Forensic Necropsy Performed by Iacob Felix & Co.], *Perfectul asasin, prefectul asasin și vizitiul fantomatic* [The Perfect Assassin, the Assassin Prefect, and the Ghostly Coachman], Epilog). PARTEA A PATRA. *Mina Minovici: știința din spatele morții* [Mina Minovici: the Science Behind Death] (pp. 201-255 – *Istории crepusculare: cadavrul, nebunul și medicina legală* [Twilight Histories: the Corpse, the Madman, and Legal Medicine], *Asistentul lui Carol Davila* [The Carol Davila's Assistant], *Acolo unde moartea slujește vieții: Morga orașului, 1892* [Where Death Serves Life: The City Morgue, 1892], *Despre crime și criminali: contrazicându-l pe Lombroso* [On Crimes and Criminals: Contradicting Lombroso], Epilog). PARTEA A CINCEA. *Moartea unui laureat Nobel la Mărășești: Eduard Buchner, chimiștii și Primul Război Mondial* [The Death of a Nobel Laureate in Mărășești: Eduard Buchner, Chemists, and the First World War] (pp. 257-314 – *Toți pentru kaizerul Wilhelm al II-lea! Manifestul celor 93* [All for Kaiser Wilhelm II! *The Manifesto of the 93*], *Elixirul vieții și fermentul: frații Buchner și nașterea biochimiei* [The Elixir of Life and Ferment: the Buchner Brothers and the Birth of Biochemistry], *În apărarea „onoarei germane”: pe ambele fronturi ale Marelui Război* [In Defense of ‘German Honor’: on Both Fronts of the Great War], *Armele „invizibile” ale Primului Război Mondial: gazele de luptă* [The ‘Invisible’ Weapons of the First World War: Combat Gases], Epilog). PARTEA A ȘASEA. *Pădurea ororilor: Katyń și medicii legiști din România* [Forest of Horrors: Katyń and the Romanian Forensic Doctors] (pp. 315-374 – *Pactul Molotov-Ribbentrop și „execuția” unei națiuni* [The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the ‘Execution’ of a Nation], *Adevărul din pământ, 1943: legiști din toate țările, uniți-vă!* [The Truth from the Ground, 1943: Forensic Doctors from All Countries, Unite!], *Soarta unui medic legist imparțial: Alexandru Birkle* [The Fate of an Impartial Forensic Doctor: Alexandru Birkle], *Intermezzo medico-legal: Mihail Kernbach și Ioan Moraru. Confuzii și deformări* [Forensic Intermezzo: Mihail Kernbach and Ioan Moraru. Confusions and Distortions], Epilog). *Note și referințe bibliografice* [Notes and Bibliographic References] (pp. 375-438), *Lista ilustrațiilor și credite* [List of Illustrations and Credits] (pp. 439-452), *Indice selectiv de nume proprii* [Selective Index of Proper Names] (pp. 453-463).

The first of the “stories”, *De la Ciuma lui Iustinian la Ciuma lui Caragea: o istorie a Morții Negre*, presents a history pigmented with numerous examples of the evolution/involution of contagious diseases, so that in the second part the author undertakes a reconstruction of the face, in our days, of the voivode Michael the Brave, by recreating the physiognomy starting from a skull, “a technique as meticulous as it is fascinating in its results” (dr. Mihail Mihailide). The third part presents the autopsy of the first political assassination at the dawn of the modern history of the young Romanian State – of Prime Minister Barbu Catargiu (1807-1862; he sleeps his eternal sleep in the tomb located in the commune of Maia, Ialomița county), the first Prime Minister of the United Principalities (January 22, 1862-June 8, 1862) –, the author framing him in the context and history of several such acts of

assassination with a political character; today's reader – less familiar with the historical context of the era – is presented with fragments of the political testament and the speech on the Agrarian Law (which could have motivated the “order” of the assassination), delivered on his last day of life, June 8, 1862. Next, the chapter on *Mina Minovici: știința din spatele morții*, reveals aspects of the personality of the founder of Forensic Medicine in Romania, and other members of the Minovici medical dynasty”. The last two “stories” introduce little-debated historical persons and processes into our historiography, the author's merit being relevant.

A book with a unique theme and approach, pioneering in our Historiography, enriched, here, with a volume that deserves to be known beyond the borders of the country and the Romanian language. A translation into English (or even French) would give the fully justified measure of its place in European historiography (and, no less, of the talented and prolific author).

Dan Cătănuș, Vasile Buga, Mihai Burcea (coordonatori [Eds.]), 23 August 1944. O istorie așa cum a fost [August 23, 1944. A History as It Was]. **Argument de prof. univ. dr. Ioan Scurtu. Autori: Constantin Hlihor, Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Onișoru, Dan Cătănuș, Alesandru Duțu, Cristian Troncotă, Mihai Burcea, Ottmar Trașcă, Constantin Corneanu, Vasile Buga, Alina Ilinca, Liviu Marius Bejenaru, Tudor Vișan-Miu, Ștefan Bosomitu, Bogdan Jitea, Elena Negru, Gheorghe Negru, Liubomir Ognianov, Tatiana Volokitina, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2024, 628 pp.; ill., facs. ISBN 978-606-537-729-5**

The completion two years ago of eight decades since Romania's separation from the alliance with Nazi Germany and its joining the United Nations, in August 1944, gave rise to the appearance of several volumes analyzing the era, based on new documentary evidence and new interpretations, mainly from historians who have emerged in the last two or three decades (but also alongside established historians).

As Professor Ioan Scurtu pointed out in *Argument*, “It was natural that on the 80th anniversary of August 23, 1944, several books and studies dedicated to this important event in the history of Romania, of the Second World War and the geostrategic evolution of Europe would be published. The present volume is part of a new approach, based on archival documents brought to light in recent years and on the use of other sources, on a broad vision of the whole of international life – primarily the mutations that occurred in the balance of power –, as well as on the establishment of new connections between the military, political and diplomatic events against the background of which Romania's ‘change of direction’ took place on August 23, 1944.

It is well known that, over the eight decades, August 23 was strongly politicized, to the point that the main actors were marginalized and even arrested (three of them – Iuliu Maniu, Constantin I.C. Brătianu, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu dying in prison), and in the foreground were propelled people who then had a marginal role, or even none at all.

The present volume – coordinated by historians Dan Cătănuș, Vasile Buga and Mihai Burcea – includes 17 studies, with a broad theme, which promotes a new vision, based on documents and a deep reflection, specific to scientists, on what August 23, 1944, represented.

All of this constitutes an ARGUMENT to present this volume, but also to allow me some personal considerations, being one of the few living historians who have covered the 80 years after August 23, 1944” (p. 11).

And Professor Ioan Scurtu, the most representative historian of the era, concluded, quoting one of the authors of the studies, “The connection with the past is inherent. After all, why do we study history?” (p. 20).

And the initiator of the volume, the researcher Dan Cătănuș would record in *Note on the Edition*: “The initial proposal belonged to the signatory of these lines and was based on a series of personal observations regarding the increasingly obvious disinterest manifested in the public environment towards the act of August 23, 1944, especially after the death of King Michael I (December 5, 2017), the last great protagonist of those historical events. A similar trend, even if not as radical, was also observed in academic historiography, in which the subject of August 23, 1944, became increasingly marginal, appearing to be ‘tired’. The trend is explainable, in part, by the excessive, distorted exploitation of the subject before 1989 and then in the ‘revisionist’ period of the 1990s-2000s, as well as by the emergence in the foreground of new themes, specific to the times we live in.

And yet, the events that led to the change of regime on August 23, 1944, constitute one of the most important episodes of contemporary Romanian history, which further present – as will be seen in this volume – numerous undeciphered or controversial aspects” (p. 21); and also: “Although they address distinct themes, the articles are often complementary. At the same time, they inevitably contain overlapping aspects. Readers will also notice that there are events on which the authors in the volume have different interpretations. But this is precisely the true science of history, in which the authors have the freedom to form and express their own opinions. And the diversity of opinions ensures scientific progress. And, why not admit it, it also ensures the attractiveness of scientific works, as we hope will happen in the case of the present one.

A preliminary confrontation of points of view took place on occasion the conference “Romania at the crossroads: August 23, 1944. New assessments 80 years after the events”, organized by the Center for Russian and Soviet Studies within the I.N.S.T., on June 20, 2024, at the House of the Romanian Academy”.

The real test for the authors, however, will remain the reaction, once the book is published, of the demanding history public in Romania. The real test for the authors, however, will be the reaction, once the book is published, of the demanding history reading public in Romania” (p. 23).

The 17 studies that make up the volume are: prof. univ. dr. Ioan Scurtu, *Argument* (pp. 11-20, *Notă asupra ediției* [Note on the Edition] (Dan Cătănuș) (pp. 21-

24), Constantin Hlihor, *Rivalități geopolitice și interes național în spațiul românesc în timpul celui de-Al Doilea Război Mondial. Cazul evenimentelor de la 23 august 1944* [Geopolitical Rivalries and National Interest in Romanian Space During World War II. The Case of the Events of August 23, 1944] (pp. 25-46 – Operațiunea Bodyguard în România, Actanții evenimentelor de la 23 august 1944 în „ceața” creată de operațiunea Bodyguard, Câteva concluzii [Operation Bodyguard in Romania, The Actors of the Events of August 23, 1944, in the ‘Fog’ Created by Operation Bodyguard, Some Conclusions]). Ioan Scurtu, *Relațiile „partidelor istorice” cu mareșalul Antonescu* [The Relations of ‘Historical Parties’ with Marshal Antonescu] (pp. 47-59). Gheorghe Onișoru, *O controversă istorică? Rolul Regelui Mihai la 23 august 1944* [A Historical Controversy? The Role of King Michael on August 23, 1944] pp. 60-78). Dan Cătănuș, *Rolul P.C.R. în răsturnarea regimului Antonescu, 22 iunie 1941-23 august 1944* [The Role of the R.C.R. in the Overthrow of the Antonescu Regime, June 22, 1941-August 23, 1944] (pp. 79-152 – P.C.d.R. după 22 iunie 1941. Pierderea legăturilor cu Moscova, Reorientarea spre o politică de Front Unic Național, Lupta pentru supraviețuirea Partidului, Sabotajele și lupta de partizani, Frontul Unic Național, Frontul Patriotic Antihitlerist, 4 aprilie-22 august 1944, Realizarea Frontului Unic Muncitoresc, Realizarea Blocului Național-Democratic, Participarea P.C.R. la „conspirația” condusă de Regele Mihai, Variante de încheiere a Armistițiului, P.C.R. la 23 August 1944, Concluzii [C.P. from R. After June 22, 1941. Loss of Ties with Moscow, Reorientation Towards a Policy of a United National Front, The Struggle for the Survival of the Party, Sabotage and Partisan Struggle, United National Front, Anti-Hitler Patriotic Front, April 4-August 22, 1944, Creation of the United Workers’ Front, Creation of the National-Democratic Bloc, Participation of the R.C.P. in the ‘Conspiracy’ Led by King Michael, Variants of Concluding the Armistice, R.C.P. on August 23, 1944, Conclusions]). Alexandru Duțu, *Implicarea unor cadre militare în pregătirea loviturii de stat de la 23 august 1944* [Involvement of Military Cadres in the Preparation of the Coup d’État of August 23, 1944] (pp. 153-165). Cristian Troncotă, *Percepția actului de la 23 august 1944 după 80 de ani. Rolul lui Eugen Cristescu și al S.S.I. în desfășurarea evenimentelor* [The Perception of the Act of August 23, 1944 After 80 Years. The Role of Eugen Cristescu and the S.S.I. in the Unfolding of Events] (pp. 166-193 – Obiectivul strategic, Accesul la documente, Rolul principalilor actori, Liderii Blocului Național-Democratic, Mareșalul Ion Antonescu, Rolul S.S.I. – contactele cu aliații anglo-americani, Nu a fost nici o conspirație sovietică, Două decizii complementare [The Perception of the Act of August 23, 1944, After 80 years. The Role of Eugen Cristescu and the S.S.I. in Course of Events, Strategic Objective, Access to Documents, Role of the Main Actors, Leaders of the National-Democratic Bloc, Marshal Ion Antonescu, Role of the S.S.I. – Contacts with the Anglo-American Allies, There Was no Soviet Conspiracy, Two Complementary Decisions]). Mihai Burcea, *Conjurația ignorată. Rolul Comitetului Militar la înfăptuirea Actului de la 23 August 1944* [The Conspiracy Ignored. The role of the Military Committee in the Execution of the Act of 23 August 1944] (pp. 194-281). Ottmar Trașcă, *Germania nazistă și actului de la 23 august 1944. Percepții, reacții și consecințe* [Nazi Germany and the act of August 23, 1944.

Perceptions, Reactions, and Consequences] (pp. 281-323). Constantin Corneanu, *Armistițiul României cu Națiunile Unite (12 septembrie 1944) și interesele geopolitice ale marilor puteri* [The Armistice of Romania with the United Nations (September 12, 1944) and the Geopolitical Interests of the Great Powers] (pp. 324-367 – În capcana unui „joc murdar”, Stockholm, capitala tuturor speranțelor, Eșecuri militare, alternative strategice și geopolitice, Amăgiri și deziluzii, Cereri inacceptabile, perspective îngrijorătoare [Trapped in a ‘Dirty Game’, Stockholm, the Capital of All Hopes, Military Failures, Strategic, and Geopolitical Alternatives, Deceptions and Disillusions, Unacceptable Demands, Worrying Prospects]). Vasile Buga, *Reflectarea în istoriografia sovietică/rusă a rolului Regelui Mihai I al României în înfăptuirea actului de la 23 august 1944* [Reflection in Soviet/Russian Historiography of the Role of King Michael I of Romania in the Execution of the Act of August 23, 1944] (pp. 368-393 – Reflectarea actului de la 23 august 1944 în memorialistica sovietică, Reflectarea în istoriografia rusă a rolului jucat de Regele Mihai în înfăptuirea actului de la 23 august 1944, Destinul monarhiei după lovitura de stat din 23 august 1944 în viziunea istoriografiei ruse, Concluzii [Reflection of the Act of August 23, 1944 in Soviet Memorialist, Reflection in Russian Historiography of the Role Played by King Michael in the Act of August 23, 1944, The Destiny of the Monarchy After the Coup d’État of August 23, 1944 in the Vision of Russian Historiography, Conclusions]). Alina Ilinca, Liviu Marius Bejenaru, *Baronul Mocionyi-Stârcea: Povestea personală și povestea lui 23 august 1944 în documentele fostei Securități* [Baron Mocionyi-Starcea: Personal Story and the Story of August 23, 1944 in the Documents of the Former Securitate (pp. 394-418 – Povestea personală, Povestea actului de la 23 august 1944, În loc de final [Personal Story, The Story of the Act of August 23, 1944, Instead of the End]). Tudor Vișan-Miu, *„Din zilele lui august 1944...”: Istorie și propagandă în memoriile generalului Dumitru Dămăceanu* [‘From the Days of August 1944...’: History and Propaganda in the Memoirs of General Dumitru Dămăceanu] (pp. 419-464 – Dumitru Dămăceanu – ofițerul, Dumitru Dămăceanu – memorialistul, „Insurecția armată” din august 1944 în memoriile generalului Dămăceanu, „Fapte, amintiri, considerații”: de ce memoriile nu au putut fi publicate? [Dumitru Dămăceanu – the officer, Dumitru Dămăceanu – the Memoirist, ‘The Armed Uprising’ of August 1944 in the Memoirs of General Dămăceanu, ‘Facts, Memories, Considerations’: Why Could the Memoirs not be Published?]). Ștefan Bosomitu, *„Lumini și umbre”. 23 august 1944 în memoriile foștilor ilegaliști ai partidului* [‘Lights and Shadows’. August 23, 1944, in the Memoirs of Former Illegalists of the Party] (pp. 465-523 – Introducere, „Ilegalitate” – „ilegalist”. Clarificări conceptuale, „Eliberarea” – comuniștii din închisori, „Contactul dur cu realitatea” – comuniștii „ilegalizați”, „Învingători și învinși” – cadrele internaționale, În loc de concluzii: memoria personală vs. Memoria partidului [Introduction, ‘Illegality’ – ‘Illegalist’. Conceptual Clarifications, ‘Liberation’ – Communists from Prisons, ‘Hard Contact with Reality’ – ‘Illegalized’ Communists, ‘Victors and Losers’ – the International Cadres, Instead of Conclusions: Personal Memory vs. the Memory of Party]). Bogdan Jitea, *23 august 1944 pe marile ecrane comuniste* [August 23, 1944 on the

Big Communist Screens] (pp. 493-523 – Filmografia lui 23 august 1944, Străinul (1964), Serata (1971), Stejar – extremă urgență (1974), Ziua „Z” (1985), Concluzii [The Filmography of August 23, 1944, The Stranger (1964), The Evening Party (1971), Oak – Extreme Urgency (1974), ‘Z’ Day (1985), Conclusions]). Elena Negru, Gheorghe Negru, Acțiunile regimului bolșevic de „deromânizare” a Basarabiei (primăvara-vara anului 1944) [The Bolshevik Regime’s Actions to ‘de-Românize’ Bessarabia (Spring-Summer 1944)] (pp. 524-546 – Reinstaurarea regimului sovietic și rolul represiei, Reeducarea populației, Reorganizarea sistemului școlar, Concluzii [The Reinstatement of the Soviet Regime and the Role of Repression, Re-Education of the Population, Reorganization of the School System, Conclusions]). Liubomir Ognianov, 9 septembrie 1944 și mutațiile politice din Bulgaria [September 9, 1944, and Political Changes in Bulgaria] (pp. 547-564). Tatiana Volokitina, În pragul păcii. Pregătirea și semnarea Convenției de Armistițiu cu Bulgaria [On the Threshold of Peace. Preparation and Signing of the Armistice Convention with Bulgaria] (pp. 565-580). *Addenda* – Grupaj de fotografii [„în cea mai mare parte”] inedite și legende descriptive [Group of /‘mostly’/ unpublished Photographs and descriptive captions] (pp. 581-608). *Abrevieri* (pp. 609-611). *Indice de nume* (612-626).

Here are some conclusions and assertions from the authors: *Constantin Hlihor*: [In June-July 1944, “The objectives of the Bodyguard mission in Romania were achieved for the Allies, and the Soviet offensive was coming over Romania like a roller. Thus, August 23 was a purely Romanian solution in an atmosphere of maximum uncertainty and constraint generated by geostrategic and geopolitical developments (our emphasis), which the Romanians were unable to influence or use to save national interests” (pp. 44-45).

Gheorghe Onișoru: “Therefore, analyzing the evolution of the relations between King Michael and Marshal Antonescu, one can clearly see a gradual but certain degradation of them, starting from January 1942, a phenomenon that accelerated in part in 1944. Despite his youth, the Sovereign understood exploiting the experience of his close collaborators, but also of politicians of the stature of Iuliu Maniu, he being the de facto leader of the coalition that removed Ion Antonescu from power. *The act of August 23, 1944 – despite the course of events in the following years – brought Romania back to the United Nations camp at the last moment* (our emphasis). The transformation of the country into a battlefield with unpredictable effects in the case of resistance on the fortified line on which Antonescu relied and which – in the face of the massive ground offensive of the Red Army, doubled by the bombings of American aviation – was avoided” (pp. 77-78).

Dan Cătănuș: “However, much remains unexplained aspects regarding the activity of the R.C.P. during the Second World War, in the fight against the Antonescu regime and in the preparation of August 23. Within the party, there were major failures and conflicts, which culminated in the overthrow of the general secretary (appointed by the Comintern), under one of the harshest accusations: agent provocateur of the Security (an accusation refuted after the investigations of the

party commission in 1966-1968). Many of the suspicions and adversities that arose during the war continued to manifest themselves after August 23, and even gained momentum, as happened in the Pătrășcanu case. This explains Moscow's insistent interest, in the immediate aftermath, in finding out what happened in Romania, the activity carried out by the R.C.P. between 1941 and 1944 and the involvement in the preparation of August 23. It is yet another proof of the lack of the connections between the local communist leadership and the Soviet leadership" (p. 151).

Cristian Troncotă: "In April 1940, the S.S.I. drew up an extensive Synthesis on the war preparations of the U.S.S.R. The conclusion formulated by the country's main secret service was decisive. The Soviets, through their military doctrine, if they were to get involved in the war, had to carry out the war to the end, that is, until *the destruction of the adversary*, understanding by this *the imposition of the Soviet regime*. Or, in other words, whoever goes to war against them risks being Bolshevized. As a simple coincidence, also in April, but in the year 1944, the Romanian authorities learned about the armistice conditions proposed by the Soviets and which, in essence, meant the same thing: 'unconditional surrender', that is, the destruction [*Sic!*] of the Romanian state by imposing the Soviet regime.

Therefore, the change of front produced by the act of August 23, 1944, which had as its main consequence the acceleration of the process of occupying the country by to the Red Army, is a false problem, stated, undoubtedly, by interested political circles (emphasis added). The fundamental problem that should keep us focused is how we perceive today what we can call the fate destined for Romania, as result of the context in which the Second World War broke out and its consequences for Romania. In this war, Romania was a victim of the geopolitical games of interest of the great powers, unlike the First World War, when it was a beneficiary. History is contradictory, because it is a sum of contradictory stage events, which we like to call historical eras. *The Communist Era was not a consequence of the act of August 23, 1944* (our emphasis), but the fate of a small country, like Romania, established by the Great Powers at a certain stage" (pp. 191-192).

Ottmar Trașcă: "The coup d'État of August 23 and Romania's detachment from the alliance with the Third Reich accelerated the outcome of hostilities on the southern flank of the Eastern Front, the situation of Army Group 'South Ukraine' quickly becoming catastrophic. As a result of the fact that the Romanian Army followed the royal proclamation without hesitation – which provided for a ceasefire on the Eastern Front – and consequently abandoned its positions, numerous German units were soon surrounded, captured or destroyed by the Red Army forces. The causes of this major defeat cannot be attributed exclusively to the coup d'État of August 23, 1944 and Romania's withdrawal from the war – as former German military commanders, more or less involved at that time in the events on the Romanian theater of operations, tried to explain, to a good extent, a responsibility at least as great falls on the erroneous measures and late decisions taken by the decision-making bodies in the Reich" (pp. 320-321).

Constantin Corneanu: "The representatives of the U.S. and Great Britain were not among the signatories of the Armistice Agreement on the night of September 12-13, 1944. On the evening of September 12, 1944, starting at 10:00 p.m., the final discussions on the Armistice Agreement took place between the Romanian delegation and the diplomatic representatives of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., and Great Britain. The Romanian delegation returned to the country on September 14, 1944. On September 15 and 16, 1944, the Romanian Government discussed the content of the Armistice Agreement and established the manner of applying its provisions. In the Kremlin's strategic plans in Europe, Romania would be involved, after August 23, 1944, by using: 1) as an advanced Soviet military base; 2) the economy, especially oil and food resources, as sources for strengthening the Soviet potential; 3) of the Romanian Government, as a puppet in control of the most important segment of the Danube, thereby managing to control a main transport artery in Southern Europe; 4) of military force as a supplement to the armed forces of the Soviet Union" (pp. 466-367).

Vasile Buga: "At the last time, Russian historians recognize that the Soviet factor played an important role in the installation in Romania of the government led by Petru Groza. They write that 'the documents show that the Soviet side actively participated in the formation of coalition cabinets. Thus, in the spring of 1945, the direct military and political pressure of Soviet representatives brought to power the cabinet of P. Groza in Romania, into which the communists entered. To achieve this goal, the visit to Bucharest of the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, A.I. Vyshinsky, was intended, but in addition, at a critical moment additional Soviet divisions were temporarily introduced into the Romanian capital'. The positive attitude of the Russian authorities towards the former sovereign of Romania, their recognition of his real merits in carrying out the courageous act of August 23, 1944, of Romania joining the anti-Hitler coalition, was also manifested later, when he was invited, in May 2000, at the military parade in Moscow dedicated to the 65th anniversary of the victory over Hitlerite Germany" (pp. 392-393).

Tudor Vișan-Miu: "Finally, we can ask ourselves whether if General Dămăceanu [1896-1978] had lived longer (he would have turned 93 in July 1989), his memoirs could have seen the light of day during the 1980s, when a series of professional works appeared detailing the role of the army? Unable to give a definitive answer, it must be recalled that, in 1977, the issue had nevertheless reached the table of Ceaușescu and the C.C. of the P.C.R., and, after the general's death, the only effort to publish it was limited to an article in *Magazin istoric* in 1984. Finally, after 1989, in general, military memoirs written during the communist regime – being exposed to some propaganda distortions – received quite modest attention, *perhaps justifying, nowadays, an effort to recover the history they contain* (our emphasis), beyond propaganda and mystifications" (pp. 463-464).

Ștefan Bosomitu: "As I have observed in this text, people recall in different ways the histories in which they took part together. They remember different contexts and situations, interpret the facts in their own way and relate everything to

personal experience. A sign that *the party's memory* had not canceled their *personal memory*. Of course, we should not let ourselves be easily misled by these personal narratives – as being profoundly different from the official narrative. On the contrary, one can easily observe common places, issues that are not and cannot be deconstructed or interpreted. The history of the events of August 23, 1944, remained a story that the former illegalists of the party would remember differently. Beyond the hegemonic narrative, there were a multitude of interpretations and recollections related to the circumstances and consequences of that history. My text attempted to capture precisely those details and nuances that individualize personal narratives in relation to the official history of the event” (p. 492).

Bogdan Jitea: “The moment of August 23, 1944, constituted for the Romanian communist vulgate the act of birth of a new regime destined to make a tabula rasa of the old ones. Cinematography, as the most important of the arts cultivated by the regime, brought its offering on the propaganda altar. The process was not, however, linear and without syncope. The reflection on the big communist screens of the act of Antonescu’s overthrow started slowly, in close connection with the environmental political context. *Valurile Dunării* [The Waves of the Danube] (1960) represents the turning point in the filmography of August 23, 1944, as a cinematic expression of national communism. The communist film industry had in Titus Popovici that politically committed writer who understood that for propaganda to work, not only gross falsehoods are needed, but also fragments of truths. The film that brings together all the clichés of Ceaușescu’s historiography regarding August 23, 1944, is *Ziua Z* [D-Day]” [1985] (pp. 522-523).

Valentin Ciorbea, *Comuna Întregalde în izvoare istorice* [Întregalde Commune in Historical Sources]. Editor prof. univ. dr., Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, București, 2024, 168 pp; tab. ISBN 978-630-6518-34-0

Professor Valentin Ciorbea – who will turn 80 this fall – is a well-known personality among historical scholars in our country.

A recognized specialist in the history of modern Dobrudja and, especially, the interwar history, of the Romanian Navy and the Merchant Navy, of the Port of Constanța – the historian from Constanța (a native of Transylvania, born on October 12, 1946 in Alba County, in the heart of Transylvania) considered, a short time ago, that he also owes a contribution to the research and writing of some landmarks of the history of his native town.

I was looking, a few years ago (2021), “with the meticulousness of the Transylvanian, the thematic or signaling sheets were drawn up, at the Constanța County Library – as if I still have them in front of my eyes – on the basis of which the doctoral thesis was elaborated, in 1982 – *Evoluția Dobrogei între anii 1918-1940. Contribuții la cunoașterea problemelor economice, sociale și politice* [The Evolution of Dobrudja between 1918-1940. Contributions to Knowledge of Economic, Social, and

Political Issues]. At that time, this thesis – its non-appearance damages the national historiography of available research, scrupulous, thoroughly articulated in the sources of time – introduced in the national-territorial equation of the respective approach an extension of the investigation on the existing Dobrudjan counties in the Romanian State during 1913-1940: Durostor and Caliacra. This unitary approach to the research of national history is a priority in specialized research, no one has investigated such an issue before him. It is a priority and a merit that should be retained as such.

Present, later, with numerous specialized articles in magazines from Bucharest, Iași, Constanța, Valentin Ciorbea will stand out for the sobriety and seriousness of their conception, of their writing. There are articles that prepared the books later, the ninth decade being fruitful in terms of the appearance of studies, the participation in numerous scientific sessions, the excerpt from the documents of the news time that will be the basis of those volumes”.

Thus, this volume was born – the fruit of archival research. Here is how the author motivates his scientific approach:

“Why this group of documents from the chronicle of Întregalde commune? Why did I, prof. univ. dr. Valentin Ciorbea, decide to carry out this project? The answer is simple. I was born and raised in the village of Necrilești. My parents, Niculae Ciorbea and Elena Paul, were also born in Necrilești, like their parents.

For me, this village was the eye of contact with the universe and remained the miraculous place where I feel closest to nature. This is where I truly recharge my energies. As a child, I admired the starry sky and the green mountains from spring to autumn, covered in snow in the harsh winters.

I understood from childhood the extraordinary connection of the villagers with the surrounding nature. As animal breeders, they took impressive care to ensure hay for the cattle. Most of them had cows, sheep, goats, horses, and oxen. The mowing period, followed by drying and gathering the hay in the barns, was a ritual in which all family members participated, from older children to grandparents. In the village there were people engaged in the production of charcoal, which they used in the communes of Alba Iulia and Teiuș. They obtained another income from the firewood they sold in the same areas. During the harvest, they went to the villages in the plains where reapers were needed. From here they brought their corn and wheat for food during the winter” (p. 5).

“The graves of my relatives, grandparents, mother, aunts, uncles, and cousins also connect me to Necrilești.

I studied at the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the ‘Al.I. Cuza’ University in Iași. Through government assignment, I became a professor in Constanța. I regretted Transylvania, especially cities like Alba-Iulia, Teiuș, Sibiu did not have places in the assignment. I would have happily returned to my beloved Transylvania.

The profession of university professor [at the ‘Ovidius’ University of Constanta] combines with that of researcher. In my investigations at the Romanian Academy Library, I sporadically encountered information about the communes of

Întregalde. I filed them in the hope that I would find the time necessary for more extensive investigations into the past of the commune.

Geographically located in the Trascău Mountains, the commune of Întregalde reveals its name as its geographical position between two rivers, the Găldița that flows through Necrilești and the Galda that runs through Ghioncani and Ivăniș, to merge at the entrance to the village of Întregalde, approximately 1 km from the center of the settlement. On a geographical area of 82.86 km², the villages of the commune of Ivăniș, Iliești, Ghioncani, Dealul Geogiului, Marinești, Modolești, Necrilești, Sfârcea, Popești, Tecsești and Întregalde.

According to the census data, on December 1, 2021, 459 people were counted in the commune of Întregalde" (p. 6).

The commune of Întregalde has archival sources kept at the Alba County Service of the National Archives; we found and photographed several dozen documents from the following funds: Tecsești Orthodox Parish; Întregalde City Hall; Inventory of registers belonging to the Întregalde commune City Hall, period 1943-1955; Întregalde Gendarme Post, 1942-1944; Întregalde Militia Post, 1950-1956.

From the researched files, we selected 84 documents relevant to the activity of the Întregalde City Hall, the situation of the inhabitants in terms of material and social aspects, living conditions, education, demography, the heroes of the commune who fell in the Eastern Campaign, anti-communist fighters, etc. The volume opens with a document from 1884 that includes the names of parishioners from the hamlet of Tecsești and ends with an informative note regarding the anti-communist attitude of the priest from the village of Necrilești who served in 1953.

These pages constitute a heartfelt confession of one of the best-known, nationally, sons of the Întregalde commune – *recte*, of the Necrilești hamlet –, they could form the basis of a future extensive thematic monograph. Professor Ciorbea has laid, with love, rigor and science, a first documentary stone in its construction.

Delia Roxana Cornea, *Vilegiatura la malul mării și patrimoniul său arhitectural. Istoria băilor de mare și a cazinourilor din Constanța și Mamaia. Seaside Leisure and Its Architectural Heritage. The History of Sea Bathing and the Constanța and Mamaia Casinos* (Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie Constanța), Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2024, 518 pp.; ill.; facs., sketches. ISBN 978-606-020-857-0

A graduate of the 'Ovidius' University in Constanta, with a Bachelor's degree in History (2001) and a PhD thesis at the 'Valahica' University in Târgoviște (with Professor Ion Calafeteanu), with the thesis *Exilul politic românesc 1945-1965* [The Romanian Political Exile 1945-1965] (2013), the author of this volume – a native of Dobrudja (born February 11, 1978, Baia commune, in Tulcea county –, has established herself as a devoted and diligent servant of the Clio Muse; both scientifically – she had the strength to move, with certain scientific results, from an initial research theme (which dealt with the Romanian post-war exile) to one of a

completely different nature (circumscribed by the history of Dobrudja) – and managerially-curatorially.

Taking over the position of manager, in December 2024, of the Museum of National History and Archaeology in Constanța, is seen (in June 2025) by this laborious researcher with a modern managerial vision, as “a great challenge, because the museum is now going through a process of relocation and reorganization. The last move took place in 1977, when it moved from the old headquarters – currently the headquarters of the Archbishopric – to the old Communal Palace. At the same time, the reorganization of the institution was also carried out, becoming the Regional Museum of Dobrogea, the Museum of National History and Archaeology Constanța. So, it received not only a new name, but also a new status, with a character of national importance.

As for me, I tell you with all sincerity that it is a period of great challenges, not only for me, but for the entire collective of the museum. Apart from one person, all those who participated in the move in 1977 are long retired – some, unfortunately, are no longer with us. So, you realize that we are in a situation where, every day, we have managed a new challenge.

Of course, there are activities that we have carry out, many of which we are already used to – we are specialists and we move on. As I said at the beginning, Constanța is, itself, a city with a rich history. However, in recent years, we have not had the necessary promotion. What happened? We have entered a shadow cone”.

Precisely in order not to remain in the unwanted ‘shadow cone’, the new manager is at the origin – alongside and together with his colleagues – of diversified cultural-exhibition and curatorial actions.

The appearance of the present volume also falls within this context.

It completes the author’s rich bibliography, such as, books by a single author – *Recuperări istorice: Asociația Foștilor Deținuți Politici Români de la Paris* [Historical Recovery: The Association of Former Romanian Political Detainees in Paris] (2010), *Reședințele regale de la Marea Neagră: Casele de vis ale Reginelor României* [Royal Residences on the Black Sea: Dream Homes of the Queens of Romania] (2021); co-author – *Cazul Arthur și exilul românesc* [The Arthur Case and the Romanian Exile] (2006: with Dumitru Dobre), *Istoria pe un clișeu: Dobrogea interbelică în colecția fotografului V. Nicolau* [History in a Cliché: Interwar Dobrogea in the Collection of Photographer V. Nicolau] (2016: with Corina Apostoleanu; 2018: English version), *Tezaurul de sculpturi de la Tomis-Constanța* [The Treasure of Sculptures from Tomis-Constanța] (2024: with Aurel Mototolea, C.A.C.G. Alexandrescu, Irina Sodoleanu, Andreea Andrei, Cristian Cealera); co-coordinator (and author) – *Moștenirea culturală turcă în Dobrogea* [Turkish Cultural Heritage in Dobrudja] (2013: with Tasin Gemil and Gabriel Custurea), *Dobrogea în contextul Primului Război Mondial* [Dobrogea in the Context of World War I] (2017: with Valentin Ciorbea and Corina Apostoleanu).

The thematic content of this bilingual volume (in case of a necessary re-edition, it would be more appropriate, I believe, to have separate publications – in

the two languages, Romanian and English, for easier dissemination in the Western scientific environment) is as follows:

Cuvânt-înainte [Foreword] (pp. 7-8). Capitolul I. *Bulevardul Elisabeta și vechiul căzin – Ante-proiecții ale unui deziderat edilitar (1880-1921)* [Chapter I. Elisabeta Boulevard and the Old Casino – The Dawn of Urban Aspirations (1880-1892)] (pp. 9-76). Capitolul II. *Sezonul estival la Constanța la cumpăna secolelor XIX-XX – Băile de „La Vii” și inaugurarea celui de-al doilea Căzin comunal (1893-1903)* [Chapter II. Summer in Constanța at the Turn of the 20th Century – “La Vii” Baths and the Second Casino (1893-1903)] (pp. 77-144). Capitolul III. *Noi proiecte edilitare dedicate vilegiaturii – Extinderea și lărgirea bulevardului Elisabeta, construirea noului cazinou și mutarea băilor la Mamaia 1903-1910* [Chapter III. Constanța and New Tourism Ventures – Expanding Elisabeta Boulevard, Building a New Casino and Relocating the Bath to Mamaia 1903-1910] (pp. 145-267). Capitolul IV. *Vilegiatură și loisir la Constanța și Mamaia (1911-1940)* [Chapter IV. Vacations and Leisure in Constanța and Mamaia (1911-1940)] (pp. 269-441). Capitolul V. *Turismul și patrimoniul arhitecturii de vilegiatură la Constanța și Mamaia, de la debutul celui de-Al Doilea Război Mondial și până la prăbușirea regimului comunist (1940-1989)* [Chapter V. The Architectural Heritage of Tourism in Constanța and Mamaia from the Beginning of World War 2 the Fall of Communist (1940-1989)] (pp. 443-516) and a Afterword: *Cazinoul, o perlă a coroanei Constanței* [The Casino, a Pearl of the Constanța’s Crown], by Professor univ. dr. Florin Anghel (pp. 517-518.)

The volume is elaborated on the basis of meticulous documentation – in archives, the press of the time, historiographical works related to the subject (in a possible re-edition, it would be beneficial to complete it with a bibliographical arrangement of the sources, respectively, of Indexes) –, the author possessing the science of phrasing the historical events and processes in question; written in an accessible way for an easy reading, without lexical preciousness, the volume constitutes an agreeable and useful reading.

Here are some excerpts:

“Closely linked to the history of the seaside resorts was the history of the casinos in Constanta and Mamaia; the city had a dance hall – kursaal 9880-1891), the old communal house (1892-1910) and from 1910 the diaphanous Art Nouveau building, the Communal Casino, which still adorns the Constanta seafront today. Mamaia also had many moments of glory and decline and after the old bathing pavilions were, one by one, damaged or destroyed, starting with the years 1934-1935 the Mamaia Casino was built here. Then, as now, visitors came to take sea baths and sun baths and to enjoy the entertainment offered by the city and the resort, in an annual cycle perpetuated for more than a century. Then, as now, locals and visitors alike enjoyed the benefits of beaches, the joy of parties and the freedom of summer vacations, this being the spirit that I tried to capture in this volume” (p. 7).

“Not many references have survived about the events of the 1939 summer season, but the national press nevertheless provided very accurate information

about the Navy Day Celebration. The festivities of this 'great year', as King Carol II said, were highlighted by the incorporation of the new school ship Mircea into the Romanian fleet. On the same day, the foundation stone for the Taşaul Harbour was laid to the north of Constanța, which is intended to accommodate the warships of the Royal Navy as well as the merchant navy. We must mention, however, that a significant development at the time was the establishment and activity of the Association of Balneo-climateric Municipalities of the Black Sea coast of Dobruja, chaired by Engineer N. Caranfil, who was making sustained efforts for the tourist development of the whole area.

The association, which grouped Constanța with Mamaia beach, Eforie, Carmen Sylva, Techirghiol, Mangalia, Cavarna and Balçik with Kranevo beach, was based in Constanța, and its aim was to ensure the development of the resorts through a joint activity program, which was to include the following urban ventures: 'a). The construction and enhancement of land and water transportation routes linking these localities; b). The supply of drinking water in plentiful quantities to all the bathing resorts, as well as sewerage; c). Illumination of all resorts with electric lighting in optimal conditions; d). Cleaning up the marshes and swamps on the coast; e). Afforestation of the Black Sea coast from Constanța to Kranevo, planting alongside roads and creating parks around the resorts; f). The construction of breakwaters to protect the beaches, as well as shoreline reinforcement works; g). Building wharfs.

If at least part of this ambitious program had been put into practice, the Romanian coastline between Constanța-Mamaia and up to Kranevo would have become the Romanian Riviera of Europe. However, the Second World War put a sudden stop to this ambitious program, and the destruction that followed would cancel the progress that had been made during the interwar period" (pp. 434-435).

"The third phase in the history of Mamaia resort took place between 1975-1985, when several tourist attractions distinguished themselves through their elegant and diverse architectural styles, and through the superior quality of the facilities they offered such as Caraiman II, Condor, Alcor, Vega, Ambassador, Savoi and Lido hotels which opened on the northern side of the resorts. Aside from the accommodation units, a ski-lift was also built on Siutghiol Lake (1975), as well as several piers, tennis court, discos, water sports centers, and water slides were also added. Additionally, the old Castel complex was renovated and transformed into the Neckerman Club, exclusively for German tourists.

By the early 1970s, Mamaia had become a fair competitor of its foreign counterparts such as the French Riviera, attracting a great number of European tourists, especially Germans and Scandinavians. Year after year, the resort hosted a significant number of cultural and sports events, such as The Mamaia National Contest for Romanian Light Music Composition and Performance (the first edition was held in 1963), The Miss Litoral Beauty and Elegance Contest, The Animated Film Festival, The Romanian Ceramics Decade (first edition in 1987), The Ancient Theatre Evenings, The Mamaia Yachting Cup, and the Mamaia Tennis Cup, and others".

The Casino, a Pearl of the Constanța's Crown], profesor univ. dr. Florin Anghel: autoarea „a reușit să aducă publicului o carte document și monument. Este un demers copleșitor pentru autoare, dar benefic pentru comunitate, pentru cei care iubesc istoria locurilor frumoase și pentru toți care își doresc să privească trecutul și prin prisma unor ochi și voci care nu au stăpânit prima scenă a deciziei. Volumul autoarei îmbină o imensă documentație de arhivă cu una de presă foarte consistentă și cu opinii extrem de bine articulate și puse în contextul epocii. Aveți în mână cea mai valoroasă istorie a Cazinoului din Constanța, o poveste așteptată de multă vreme, în contextul în care în spațiile memoriei se cer atât de vital revăzute, apreciate și revizitate” (p. 517).

At the end of these brief notations, we highlight the observations of Professor Florin Anghel, with whom we are in symphony (however, not with the author's absolute belief that this volume is “the most valuable history of the Constanta casino, a long-awaited story” /p. 517/; abstraction is made, here, the extensive volume by the late Doina Păuleanu – mentioned, it is true, sparingly, especially in the beginning, in the pages of this volume; whose author, to her credit, honestly records in the very first footnote: “A syntagme taken from Doina Păuleanu, who published [in 2011] *a reference monographic work* dedicated to the Casino, a work that should be, for any person interested in knowing this matter, *a mandatory reading* /our underlinings/p. 9/): the author “has managed to bring to the public a book that is both a document and a monument. It is an overwhelming undertaking for the author, but beneficial for the community, for those who love the history of beautiful places and for all who wish to look at the past through the prism of eyes and voices that did not control the first scene of the decision. The author's volume combines immense archival documentation with very consistent press documentation and with extremely well-articulated opinions placed in the context of the era. You have in your hands the most valuable history of the Constanța Casino, a story that has been waiting for a long time, in the context in which the spaces of memory are so vitally needed to be reviewed, appreciated and revisited” (p. 517).

Gheorghe Dumitrașcu, *Oameni și fapte din istorie (studii și articole)* [People and Facts from History (Studies and Articles)]. Ediția a II-a, revăzută și adăugită, Editura Fântâna lui Manole, Golești-Vâlcea, 2024; Editura Intol Press, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 2024 / 892 pp.; ill., facs. ISBN 978-606-8641-41-6; ISBN 978-606-8701-45-5.

Like teacher Oltea Gramaticu, from Bârlad – briefly mentioned in the bibliographic notes here – the author of this volume also represents a milestone in high school education in the Country (respectively, in Oltenia, in the Râmnicu Vâlcea area), through the didactic, scientific (with a doctorate in History, defended in 1984) and managerial personality that he has demonstrated since the 1960s of the last century; teacher, head of school and social-political institutions, founder of publications and various professional-scientific and civic associations, author of numerous studies and

articles on history, signatory of several volumes – *Râmnicul medieval. Studii și documente* [Medieval Râmnic. Studies and Documents (co-author with Corneliu Tamaș)] (1995), *Epopeea Independenței României în conștiința vâlcenilor* [The Epic of Romanian Independence in the Consciousness of the People of Vâlcea] (2003), *Spiru C. Haret – apostol al conștiinței naționale* [Spiru C. Haret – Apostle of National Consciousness] (2008), *Haretismul în cultura românească – județul Vâlcea* [Haretism in Romanian Culture – Vâlcea County] (2008), *Haretismul în școala românească – județul Vâlcea* [Haretism in the Romanian School – Vâlcea County] (2013), *Istoria învățământului din Vâlcea în anii României moderne – 1821-1918* [History of Education in Vâlcea in the Years of Modern Romania – 1821-1918] (2018), *Oameni și fapte din istorie* [People and Facts from History] (2021), *Haretismul în școala și cultura românească (Vâlcea)* [Haretism in Romanian School and Culture (Vâlcea)] (2023).

At a venerable age (born April 19, 1938, in Râmnicu Vâlcea), a devoted servant of Clio, he gathered some of the studies published in this volume.

Whose thematic composition is:

Argument (pp. 11-12)

I. *Personalități românești* [Romanian Personalities] (pp. 13-570): Oameni de stat [Statesmen]: Alexandru Ioan Cuza și Carol I, Constantin Argetoianu, Alexandru Averescu, Ion C. Brătianu, Ion I.C. Brătianu, Vintilă I.C. Brătianu, Nichifor Crainic, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Ion Gh. Duca, Ioan Emanoil Florescu, Grigore Gafencu, Take Ionescu, Iuliu Maniu, Alexandru Marghiloman, Nicolae Rădescu, Ion Mihalache, Mihail Manoilescu, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, C.A. Rosetti, Constantin Stere, Pamfil Șeicaru, Nicolae Titulescu, Ioan V. Totu. Istorici [Historians] – Nicolae Bălcescu, Gheorghe Brătianu, Constantin C. Giurescu, Nicolae Iorga, Dimitrie Onciul, Vasile Pârvan, Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, Alexandru D. Xenopol. Filozofi, sociologi [Philosophers, Sociologists] – Petre Andrei, Dumitru Drăghicescu, Dimitrie Gusti, Simion Mehedinți, Mihai Ralea, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru. Cărturari, îndrumători ai învățământului [Scholars, Educational Leaders] – Mihai Eminescu, Ion Ghica, Spiru Haret, Gheorghe Lazăr, Ion Maiorescu, Titu Liviu Maiorescu, Petrache Poenaru, V.A. Urechia.

II. *Tendențe de idealizare a imaginii României interbelice (1918-1940)* [Tendencies of Idealizing the Image of Interwar Romania (1918-1940)] (pp. 571-662) – *O analiză nuanțată* [A Nuanced Analysis] (pp. 572-590), *Practici politice, guvernamentale și administrative* [Political, Governmental, and Administrative Practices] (pp. 591-617), *Radicalizarea socială* [Social Radicalization] (pp. 618-639), *Abandonarea regimului democratic românesc interbelic* [Abandonment of the Interwar Romanian Democratic Regime] (pp. 640-662).

III. *Însemnări necenzurate* [Uncensored Notes] (pp. 663-847) – *Istoria între adevăr și mistificare* [History Between Truth and Mystification], *Pericolul pierderii demnității naționale* [The Danger of Losing National Dignity], „*Istoria nu ne învață nimic*” – *declară public unii lideri politici* [“History Teaches Us Nothing” – Some Political Leaders Publicly Declare], *Guvernării de azi calcă în picioare istoria poporului român* [Today’s Rulers Trample on the History of the Romanian People], *Ignorarea trecutului: un atentat*

la conștiința națională a românilor [Ignoring the Past: An Attack on the National Conscience of Romanians], *Monstruosul genocid împotriva românilor transilvăneni (1848)* [The Monstrous Genocide Against Transylvanian Romanians (1848)], *Adevărurile lui Karl Marx despre români* [Karl Marx's Truths About Romanians], *Controverse cu privire la domnia lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza și conspirația „Monstruoasei coaliții”* [Controversies Regarding the Reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and the Conspiracy of the “Monstruous Coalition”], *Cum s-a reflectat în discursul public din istoriografia noastră abdicarea lui Cuza* [How Cuza's Abdication was Reflected in Public Discourse in Our Historiography], *Alexandru Ioan Cuza și Mihail Kogălniceanu în jurnalistica eminesciană (sinteză)* [Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Mihail Kogălniceanu in Eminescu's Journalism (Synthesis)], *Esența istoriei românilor în opera lui Mihai Eminescu* [The Essence of Romanian History in the Work of Mihai Eminescu], *Interpretări și controverse cu privire la marea răscoală românească din primăvara anului 1907 (interviu cu istoricul Gheorghe Dumitrașcu, realizat de Petre Cichirdan)* [Interpretations and Controversies Regarding the Great Romanian Uprising of the Spring of 1907 (Interview with Historian Gheorghe Dumitrașcu, Conducted by Petre Cichirdan)], *Idealul național prezent în sufletul generației Marii Uniri* [The National Ideal Present in the Soul of the Great Union Generation], *Un episod dramatic din lupta eroică a ostașilor din Regimentul 2 Vâlcea (1916)* [A Dramatic Episode from the Heroic Struggle of the Soldiers of the 2nd Vâlcea Regiment (1916)], *Jertfa supremă și eroismul dascălilor vâlceni pentru făurirea României Mari* [The Supreme Sacrifice and Heroism of the Vâlcea Teachers for the Creation of Greater Romania], *Semnificația istorică și contemporană a Tratatului de Pace de la Trianon (4 iunie 1920)* [The Historical and Contemporary Significance of the Trianon Peace Treaty (June 4, 1920)], *România Mare și învățămintele istoriei (interviu cu istoricul Gheorghe Dumitrașcu, realizat de Petre Cichirdan)* [Greater Romania and the Lessons of History (Interview with Historian Gheorghe Dumitrașcu, Conducted by Petre Cichirdan)], *Însemnări despre politica electorală în România interbelică* [Notes on Electoral Politics in Interwar Romania], *Destrămarea României Mari în vara și toamna anului 1940 (80 de ani de la marea tragedie teritorială românească)* [The Disintegration of Greater Romania in the Summer and Autumn of 1940 (80 Years Since the Great Romanian Territorial Tragedy)], *Un asasinat odios (din 27-28 noiembrie 1940), care a zguduit de revoltă și indignare o lume întreagă: Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940)* [A Heinous Assassination (November 27-28, 1940), Which Shook an Entire World with Revolt and Indignation: Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940)], *Responsabilitatea clasei politice în apărarea integrității teritoriale a României* [The Responsibility of the Political Class in Defending the Territorial Integrity of Romania], *I.G. Duca și Vâlcea* [I.G. Duca and Vâlcea], *Un deschizător de drumuri în istoriografia contemporană românească: prof. univ. dr. Titu Georgescu* [A Trailblazer in Contemporary Romanian Historiography: Prof. Dr. Titu Georgescu], *Continuăm ce am început* [We Continue What We Started].

IV. *Didactice tradiționale* [Traditional Didactics] (pp. 849-891) – *Prețuirea școlii și a dascălilor ei de altădată* [Valuing the School and Its Teachers of the Past], I.L. Caragiale, *revizor școlar de Vâlcea* [I.L. Caragiale, School Inspector of Vâlcea], *De la*

„cantinele școlare” haretiene, la programul „laptele și cornul” [From the “School Canteens” of the Haret, to the “Milk and the Horn” Program], *Ocrotirea orfanilor de război* [Protecting War Orphans], *Obsesia „lecției!”... de altădată* [The Obsession with the “Lesson!”... of the Past], *Nu lăsați timpul să treacă pe lângă voi!* [Don’t Let Time Pass You By!], *O promoție a generației anilor ‘50* [A Promotion of the Generation of the 50s], *Un gând bun, frumos și generos tuturor dascălilor vâlceeni* [A Good, Beautiful, and Generous Thought to all the Teachers of Vâlcea], *Școala românească a „vremurilor de ieri” și a „vremurilor de azi”* [The Romanian School of “Yesterday’s Times” and “Today’s Times”], *Feriți-vă de impostura intelectuală!* [Beware of Intellectual Imposture!]. *Sursele imaginilor* [The Image Sources] (p. 892).

As the author shows in *Argument*, through this volume – a collection of studies and articles published over three decades in various scientific and cultural publications – “he persistently tried to approach historical reality, with the desire to offer a true image of the society of those times, through ‘people and deeds’, ‘with the good and the bad’, without diminishing or obscuring their contribution to the progress of Romanian society. As for the personalities inserted in the work, the author suggests that they must be viewed in the disturbing context of the time in which they had the strength to manifest themselves patriotically and not to lower their brilliance, due to changing times, reducing their valuable and historical dimension to ‘little pygmies’, in comparison with the foreigners, who were glorified beyond measure” (p. 11).

And: “By going through the content of the book’s pages, it is found that the author constantly reminds us of the moral authority, dignity, competence and patriotism of the great forefathers and considers that nothing can be more harmful in the new path we have to travel in today’s European concert than the constant worship, on our knees, to the gods of others. In this terrible confusion in which we find ourselves no longer seeing saving horizons ‘through ourselves’, it is possible to deliberately break, alone, the connection with the past to which we owe our existence and to take hesitant but noisy steps towards the impossibility of reviving the prosperous life of our own people” (p. 11).

All these statements, assertions and value judgments coming from an honest and devoted servant of Romanian school and culture - which can also form the basis of scientific knowledge, on the part of the younger generations, of the history of our nation.

Ion Negrei, *Traseul spre lumină și libertate al Basarabiei (1917-1920). Bessarabia’s Path to Light and Freedom (1917-1920) [Bilingual Volume]*. Volum îngrijit de Cristian Bențe [și] Sebastian-Dragoș Bunghez. Traducere în limba engleză realizată de Laura-Rebeca Stiegelbauer [Edited by Cristian Bențe /and/ Sebastian-Dragoș Bunghez. Translated from Romanian by Laura-Rebeca Stiegelbauer], „Vasile Goldiș” University Press, Arad, 2024, 316 pp. ISBN 978-973-664-969-1

The well-known historian and national-cultural activist from Chisinau (b. March 12, 1958) have published a bilingual volume dedicated to the history of

Bessarabia – so necessary in disseminating the true facets of the history of 1917-1920 in international scientific circles.

As can be easily seen, the author focuses his research mainly on the events of 1917-1918, highlighting the main stages that led to the preparation, proclamation and consolidation of the Union of Bessarabia “with its mother Romania”.

They are important to be known by the lecturer and readers who are not familiar with an objective presentation of the events of those years.

The thematic content of the volume is as follows: Romanian text: pp. 3-156, English Version: pp. 157-315 – *Table of Contents* (pp. 5-6), *Preface*, by The Editors (pp. 159-161), *Translator's Note* (pp. 163-164), *Instead of Introduction: Homage to the Union Generation* (pp. 165-173), *“The Changing Face of the Russian Leadership”* (pp. 173-176), *“Cuvânt Moldovenesc” – the Tribune of the Bessarabian Romanians* (pp. pp. 177-180), *Constitution and Activity of the Moldavan National Party* (pp. 180-184), *Congress of Moldovan Teachers (May 25-28, 1917)* (pp. 184-199), *Introduction of the Latin Alphabet in Bessarabia* (pp. 199-201), *Nationalisation of Education in Bessarabia* (pp. 201-205), *Congress of Moldovan Military (October 20-27, 1917)*, *Proclamation of the Autonomy of Bessarabia* (pp. 205-214), *Organising Office of the Council of the Country. Convocation of the Council of the Country* (pp. 214-222), *Proclamation of the Moldovan (People's) Democratic republic. December 2, 1917* (pp. 222-231), *Moldovan Democratic Republic Fights Anarchy* (pp. 231-233), *Proclamation of Independence of the Moldovan Democratic Republic. January 24, 1918* (pp. 233-237), *January 24, 1918. Chișinău Declaration of a Group of Intellectuals from “All Romanian Countries”* (pp. 237-242), *The Vote by the Council of the Country on the Declaration of Union of the Moldovan Democratic Republic (Bessarabia) with Romania. March 27, 1918* (pp. 242-250), *Bessarabia's Messengers to the General Congress of Bukovina* (pp. 250-260), *December 1, 1918. Chișinău Salutes Alba-Iulia* (pp. 261-269), *The Act of Unconditional Union of Bessarabia with Romania. November 27/December 10, 1918* (pp. 269-270), *The Participation of Bessarabians in the First Parliamentary Elections in the Unified Romania* (pp. 270-287), *Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920): International Recognitions of the Acts of Union of Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania* (pp. 287-292), *Instead of Conclusion: Quo vadis, Republic of Moldova?* (pp. 293-297), *Annex* (pp. 299-315).

The author shows that “The Union of Bessarabia with Romania was a responsible and courageous act of the politicians from Bessarabia. At a time when Bessarabia was in danger of disintegration and the establishment of the Bolshevik Red terror, the act of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania was the solutions to save the population of the country from the totalitarian perspective of development, and the event as such is the most beautiful page of political history written in the Bessarabian area by the sons and daughters of this land and in the interest of the entire population of this area” (p. 167).

“During the totalitarian Soviet regime, everything was done to make that the names of those who honourably represented the national interest would disappear forever from the memory of our nation. In practice, several generations in

the post-war period knew nothing about the contribution of the Union generation to the economic prosperity of the peasantry, to the support of national culture, to the cultivation of national consciousness and identity, to the maintenance and promotion of the ideas of national unity, while Bessarabia, as well as other Romanian territories, were under foreign rule. This historical injustice and historiographical gap must be removed" (pp. 169-170).

And, also, a timely setting in the historical context of our days: "Moldova's European vector is currently being put to the test. The moment calls for a maximum concentration of all resources to achieve the proposed goal. The political class in Chișinău is facing a serious test of responsibility. But we must understand that the success of Moldova's European integration does not depend on Chișinău alone. The post-Vilnius situation dictates the need to implement rapid and well-thought-out sectoral policies on the part of the decision-makers in Chișinău, Bucharest, Brussels and Washington, and calls for concrete actions to ensure the security and well-being of the region and the European continent.

If the pro-European approach of the Republic of Moldova will be successful, then it will be the second page of success written by the political class in the Bessarabian space. For the time being, the only and the most beautiful page of political history written in the Bessarabian area remains that of 1917-1918" (p. 297).

A constitutive title of Moldavian historiography, this volume represents yet another testimony to the professionalism and national-cultural devotion of Clio's servants between the Prut and the Dniester, to the role that historiography can play in forging Romanian feelings of identity everywhere, including through the appeal to research and knowledge of the true history of our nation.

This book constitutes testimony in this sense.

Printed in Arad, under the auspices of a university publishing house, the volume constitutes, at the same time, a testimony to the guild solidarity of Clio's servants from both sides of the Prut, an example of good practices in the scientific and national-cultural collaboration of Romanians everywhere.

Anatol Petrencu, *Ucraina în flăcări* /Articole, recenzii: 2022-2024/ [Ukraine in Flames /Articles, Reviews: 2022-2024/] (Academia Oamenilor de Știință din România. Universitatea de Stat din Chișinău. Universitatea de Stat „Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” din Cahul. Asociația Istoricilor din Republica Moldova „Alexandru Moșanu”), f.e. [no publisher], Chișinău, 2024, 180 pp. ISBN 978-9975-66-795-1

The personality of the author of this volume – recently septuagenarian (b. May 22, 1954) – is retained in the representative *Enciclopedia reprezentanților scrisului istoric românesc* [Encyclopedia of the Representatives of Romanian Historical Writing] (5 Vols., 2022; coord. [Eds.]: Victor Spinei and Dorina N. Rusu), published under the aegis of the Section of Historical Sciences and Archaeology of the Romanian Academy: "Specialist in contemporary history. Research on the

contemporary history of European countries, deportations from the Moldavian S.S.R. during the Soviet period, the history of the Second World War. Author of monographs, collections of documents, collections of studies, university and school textbooks and over 600 scientific and journalistic articles" (vol. IV (O-R), pp. 152-153: v o i c e PETRENCU Anatol; compiled by G.P.) (Professor Gheorghe Postică was born in the same year; he was elected, on September 25, 2024, Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy).

A recognized national-cultural activist, initiator of numerous scientific events (president of the Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova "Alexandru Moșanu"), he is the author of dozens and dozens of historical and socio-political studies and articles, as well as numerous volumes – (single author): *Învățământul istoric în România (1948-1989* [Historical Education in Romania (1948-1989) (1991, 112 pp.); *Istoria universală. Epoca contemporană, 1939-1993 (Europa, SUA, Canada)*. Prelegeri [The Universal History. Contemporary Era, 1939-1993 (Europe, USA, Canada). Lectures] (1995, 272 pp.) (2nd edition completed, 1995, 346 pp.; 3rd edition completed, 1995; 4th edition, anastatic, Iași, 2010); *Basarabia în al Doilea Război Mondial: 1940-1944* [Bessarabia in the Second World War: 1940-1944] (1997, 346 pp.); *România și Basarabia în anii celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial* [Romania and Bessarabia in the Years of the Second World War] (1999, 176 pp.); *În serviciul zeiței Clio* [In the Service of the Muse Clio] (2001, 816 pp.); *Polonezii în anii celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Istoria politică* [The Poles during the Second World War. Political History] (2005, 246 pp.); *Basarabia în timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial: 1939-1945* [Bessarabia during the Second World War: 1939-1945] (2006, 224 pp.); *Varșovia văzută de un istoric basarabean* [Warsaw Seen by a Bessarabian Historian] (2006, 144 pp.); *Istoria contemporană. Studii, materiale, atitudini* [Contemporary History. Studies, Materials, Attitudes] (2011, 580 pp.); *Un scurt popas necesar drumului* A Short Stopover Necessary on the Road (2014, 328 pp.); *Rusia, 2019: „Acesta a fost un an greu...”* (“это был тяжелый год...”) [Russia, 2019: “This was a Difficult Year...” (“это был тяжелый год...”)] (2020, 296 pp.); *A fi profesor de istorie în Republica Moldova. Cu prilejul conferirii înaltului titlu de DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA de către Universitatea de Stat „Alecu Russo” din Bălți* [Being a History Professor in the Republic of Moldova. On the Occasion of the Conferral of the High Title of DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA by the “Alecu Russo” State University of Bălți] (2021, 236 pp.); *Ucraina în flăcări /Articole, recenzii: 2022-2024/* [Ukraine in Flames /Articles, Reviews: 2022-2024/ (Academy of Romanian Scientists. State University of Chisinau. State University “Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” of Cahul. Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova “Alexandru Moșanu”), no publisher, Chisinau, 2024 /180 pp.;

(co-author, co-editor): *Relațiile româno-italiene: de la confruntare la colaborare. 1945-1985* [The Romanian-Italian Relations: From Confrontation to Collaboration. 1945-1985] (1993, 216 pp.); *Crestomație la Istoria românilor. 1917-1992* Crestomație la Istoria românilor. 1917-1992 [Chrestomathy in Romanian History. 1917-1992] (co-editor: 1993, 295 pp.); *Istoria universală, 1939-1944: manual experimental pentru clasa IX-a*

a școlii de cultură generală [World History, 1939-1944: Experimental Textbook for the 9th Grade of the General Education School (1995, 176 pp.); *Istoria universală. Epoca contemporană. Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [World History. Contemporary era. Textbook for Grade 12] (2002 /2 editions/); *În apărarea istoriei și demnității naționale. Culegere de documente* [In Defense of National History and Dignity. Collection of Documents] (co-editor: 2003, 96 pp.); *În apărarea istoriei și demnității naționale. Culegere de documente* [Marshal Ion Antonescu and Basarabia. 1941-1944. Collection of documents] (co-editor: 2008, 350 pp.); *Teroarea stalinistă în Basarabia. Studii, documente, memorii* [Stalinist Terror in Basarabia. Studies, Documents, Memoirs] (co-editor: 2013, 360 pp.); *O istorie a Basarabiei* [A History of Basarabia] (co-editor and co-author: two editions: 2015, 424 pp.; 2018, 424 pp.); *Românii în Gulag: memorii, mărturii, documente* [Romanians in the Gulag: Memoirs, Testimonies, Documents] (co-editor: vol. I, 2014, 352 pp.; vol. II, 2015, 362 pp.); *Republica Moldova în căutarea identității. Materialele Conferinței Științifice Internaționale 30 de ani de la proclamarea Independenței Republicii Moldova, 23-24 august 2021* [The Republic of Moldova in Search of Identity. Materials of the International Scientific Conference 30 Years Since the Proclamation of the Independence of the Republic of Moldova, August 23-24, 2021] (co-editor and co-author: 2021, 760 pp.); *Enciclopedie. Centenarul Războiului de Reîntregire și al Marii Uniri (2014-2020)* [Encyclopedia. Centenary of the War of Reunification and the Great Union (2014-2020)] (co-author: 2022 /Bucharest/, 1712 pp.).

The thematic content of the present volume, with a special theme, is the following:

Conținutul tematic al volumului este următorul: *Abrevieri* [Abbreviations] p. 7), *Introducere* [Introduction] (pp. 7-8);

I. *Ucraina în flăcări* [Ukraine in Flames] (pp. 9-34) – I.1. *Aspecte metodologice ale studiilor* [Methodological Aspects of Studies] (pp. 9-14), I.2. *Aspecte istoriografice ale cercetărilor* [Historiographic Aspects of Research] (pp. 15-32), I.3. *Izvoarele folosite* [Sources Used] (pp. 32-34);

II. *Rusia împotriva Ucrainei. Studii* [Russia Against Ukraine. Studies] (pp. 35-114) – II.1. *Rusia, 2021: „Mai la nord de Coreea de Nord! ”* [Russia, 2021: “Further North of North Korea!”] (pp. 35-40), II.2. *Ghepardul Asiei Centrale mai șiret decât ursul siberian* [The Central Asian Cheetah is More Cunning Than the Siberian Bear] (pp. 40-44), II.3. *„Nu uitați de unde ieși gazeli”* [Don’t Forget Where the Gazelles Come From”] (pp. 44-45), II.4. *Premisele, mersul și perspectivele războiului ruso-ucrainean* [The Premises, Course, and Prospects of the Russian-Ukrainian War] (pp. 46-55), II.5. *Exportul grâului din Ucraina* [Wheat Exports from Ukraine] (pp. 55-56), II.6 *A purta titlul de academician nu înseamnă obligatoriu să fii înțelept/școlit: cazul Andrei Marga* [Having the Title of Academician Does Not Necessarily Mean Being Wise/Educated: The Case of Andrei Marga] (pp. 57-61), II.7. *O săptămână istorică sau Rusia – stat terorist* [A Historical Week or Russia – A Terrorist State^o] (pp. 62-69), II.8. *La moartea unui colaboraționist ucrainean (pro-putinist)* [On the Death of a Ukrainian (Pro-Putinist) Collaborationist] (pp. 67-69), II.9. *Războiul agresiv al Federației Ruse împotriva Ucrainei: analiza situației actuale* [The

Aggressive War of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine: Analysis of the Current Situation] (pp. 69-79), II.10. *Războiul agresiv al Federației Ruse împotriva Ucrainei: analiza recentelor contribuții istoriografice* [Russia's War of Aggression Against Ukraine: Analysis of Recent Historiographical Contributions] (pp. 80-87), II.11. *Barbaria rușilor în Ucraina și poziția Chișinăului oficial* [The Barbarity of the Russians in Ukraine and the Position of Official Chișinău] (pp. 87-92), II.12. *D-ale Istoriei... Rușii au aruncat în aer barajul hidrocentralei de la Kakhovka sau Timpuri noi, aceleași tactici* [From History... The Russians Blew Up the Dam of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Station or New Times, the Same Tactics] (pp. 92-95), II.13. *Vladimir Putin și jocul primejdios cu Istoria* [Vladimir Putin and the Dangerous Game with History] (pp. 95-98), II.14. *Rusia, înainte, spre trecutul stalinist!* [Russia, Forward, Towards the Stalinist Past!] (pp. 99-101), II.15. *Vladimir Putin ne-a dat dezlegare* [Vladimir Putin Gave Us Detachment] (pp. 101-103), II.16. *Războiul agresiv al Rusiei în Ucraina și poziția Chișinăului oficial* [Russia's Aggressive War in Ukraine and the Position of Official Chișinău] (pp. 103-106), II. 17. *Dispariția lui Navalni* [Navalny's Disappearance] (pp. 106-108), II.18. *Tradiționala obrăznicie a rușilor* [The Traditional Impudence of the Russians] (pp. 108-110), II.19. *NATO și securitatea de stat a Republicii Moldova* [NATO and the State Security of the Republic of Moldova] (pp. 111-114);

III. *Războiul de cucerire al Rusiei analizat în cadrul forurilor științifice* [Russia's War of Conquest Analyzed in Scientific Forums] (pp. 115-125) – III.1. *Conferință științifică „Politica agresivă a Federației Ruse față de statele din spațiul fost sovietic” /la 24 februarie 2023, sub egida Asociației Istoricilor din Republica Moldova „Alexandru Moșanu”, la Biblioteca națională a Republicii Moldova/* [Scientific Conference “The Aggressive Policy of the Russian Federation Towards the States of the Former Soviet Space” /on February 24, 2023, Under the Auspices of the Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova “Alexandru Moșanu”, at the National Library of the Republic of Moldova/] (pp. 115-118), III.2. *Mass-media și Războiul hibrid. Conferință internațională /6-7 octombrie 2023, la Universitatea „Dunărea de Jos” din Galați/* [Mass Media and Hybrid War. International Conference /October 6-7, 2023, at the “Dunărea de Jos” University in Galați/] (pp. 118-121), III.3. *Securitatea națională poate fi asigurată doar prin accesarea Republicii Moldova în NATO. Comunicat pentru presă /al Asociației Istoricilor din Republica Moldova „Alexandru Moșanu”, 8 noiembrie 2023/* [National Security Can Only Be Ensured by the Accession of the Republic of Moldova to NATO. Press Release /of the Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova “Alexandru Moșanu”, November 8, 2023/] (pp. 122-123), III.4. *Ucraina: doi ani de rezistență împotriva invadatorilor ruși. Masă rotundă /organizată la 22 februarie 2024, de către Asociația Istoricilor din Republica Moldova „Alexandru Moșanu”/* [Ukraine: Two Years of Resistance Against the Russian Invaders. Round table [Organized on February 22, 2024, by the Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova “Alexandru Moșanu”/] (pp. 123-125).

Concluzii [Conclusions] (pp. 126-127), *Anexe. Recenzii* (10 cărți) [Appendices. Reviews (10 Books)] (pp. 128-177), *Indice de nume* [Index of Names] (pp. 178-180).

Passionate about history since childhood, Anatol Petrencu has been researching for half a century and addressing the most painful and significant events of the Moldovan state, he repeatedly declared that “There is a debate among historians: Truth or Homeland. I think I always choose Truth over Homeland. I fight for the truth, for the Romanian people, for our Homeland”. For decades, Anatol Petrencu has remained a model teacher for entire generations: “Petrencu was and remains the historian who not only writes history, but also makes history here, in the Republic of Moldova, being recognized throughout the Romanian space and abroad,” is the opinion of Lidia Pădureț, vice-rector at the ‘Alecă Russo’ State University in Bălți. So that Ion Negrei, his good comrade, may have words of appreciation for the present volume as well, “The most shocking event, the Russian aggression against Ukraine. *Ucraina în flăcări* [Ukraine in Flames] brings together his studies on the events that took place since 2022 in our space, in the Ukrainian, Romanian, as well as throughout Europe. It condemns this aggression and warns of the danger that looms over civilization”.

Supporter of Ukraine’s right to defend itself and exist as an independent country, the history professor and national-cultural militant from Chișinău – proves through the consistency of his attitude – among the few, in this sense, servants of Clio from beyond the Prut – principledness and promotion of historical truth.

Gavriil Preda (coord. [Ed.]), 23 august 1944. Adevăr și mistificare [Studii]. Mircea-Dorel Suci (consilier editorial), Corint Istorie. Autori români, București, 2024, 608 pp. [+16 pp., unnumbered, interleaved between pages 481 and 482]; ill. ISBN 978-606-088-629-7

Initiated and coordinated by the recently septuagenarian Professor Gavriil Preda (born August 15, 1955), the volume is built on his conviction that it “attempts to approximate the truth of the historical facts regarding August 23, 1944 in accordance with the current state of national historical research, thus removing [*Sic!*] the erroneous interpretations that existed until December 1989” (p. 16). A goal fulfilled as such, by appealing to new documentary sources – from authors recognized for their meticulousness and professional honesty – and by critically reviewing the specialized literature.

Its content (15 studies, and 18 authors) is as follows: Gavriil Preda, *Argument* (pp. 5-16).

Partea I [Part I]: *Înainte de 23 august 1944* [Before August 23, 1944] (pp. 17-161) – Petre Otu, *România în al Doilea Război Mondial. Dimensiuni geopolitice, geostrategice (militare) și economice* [Romania in World War II. Geopolitical, Geostrategic (Military), and Economic Dimensions] (pp. 19-55 – Introducere, Poziția geopolitică și geostrategică a României, „Problema militar românească” interbelică, De la neutralitate la război. România în ochii ciclonului, Campania din Est (22 iunie 1941-23 august 1944), Campania din Vest (23 august 1944-12 mai 1945), Concluzii [Introduction, The Geopolitical and Geostrategic Position of Romania, The Interwar

“Romanian Military Problem”, From Neutrality to War. Romania in the Eyes of the Cyclone, The Eastern Campaign (June 22, 1941-August 23, 1944), The Western Campaign (August 23, 1944-May 12, 1945), Conclusions]). Constantin Corneanu, *Alianțe politice din România înainte și după 23 august 1944* [Political Alliances in Romania Before and After August 23, 1944] (pp. 56-126 – O situație dificilă pentru Axă, Opoziția politică sub protecția statului, PCR devine un aliat politic frecventabil, Unitatea opoziției politice, un drum lung și chinuitor, Lupta pentru putere și amplificarea neînțelegerilor, Asaltul asupra puterii, Sprijinul sovietic este esențial [A Difficult Situation for the Axis, The Political Opposition Under the Protection of the State, The PCR Becomes a Frequentable Political Ally, The Unity of the Political Opposition, a Long and Torturous Road, The Struggle for Power and the Amplification of Disagreements, The Assault on Power, Soviet Support is Essential]). Petre Opreș, *Operațiunea Iași-Chișinău, relatată de mareșalul Rodion Malinovski la Academia Militară „Mihail V. Frunze” de la Moscova* (1958) [The Iași-Chișinău Operation, Narrated by Marshal Rodion Malinovsky at the ‘Mihail V. Frunze’ Military Academy in Moscow (1958)] (pp. 127-161).

Partea a II-a [Part II]: *La 23 august 1944* [On August 23, 1944] (163-404) – Ioan Scurtu, *Constituirea guvernului de la 23 august 1944 și activitatea sa până la intrarea în legalitate* [The Formation of the Government on August 23, 1944 and Its Activity Until Its Entry Into Legality] (pp.165-199). Ottmar Trașcă, *Germania nazistă și actul de la 23 august 1944* [Nazi Germany and the Act of August 23, 1944] (pp. 200-265 – Istoriografia germană, Evoluția raporturilor româno-germane în perioada premergătoare actului de la 23 august 1944, Percepții și reacții ale Germaniei naziste la Actul de la 23 august 1944 [German Historiography, The Evolution of Romanian-German Relations in the Period Preceding the Act of August 23, 1944, Perceptions and reactions of Nazi Germany to the Act of August 23, 1944]). Cătălin Turliuc, *23 august 1944: schimbarea de regim și ordinea constituțională* [August 23, 1944: the Change of Regime and the Constitutional Order] (pp. 266-288). Sorin Aparaschivei, *Raportarea serviciilor de informații străine la Actul de la 23 august 1944 și urmările acestuia* [Reporting by Foreign Intelligence Services at the Act of August 23, 1944 and Its Consequences] (pp. 289-325 – Regele Mihai I face planuri pentru rezistența subversivă contra ocupației politico-militare sovietice, Actul de la 23 august 1944, o surpriză strategică!, Stalin își revine din surpriza strategică de la 23 august 1944 și ocupă România printr-o operațiune sub steag fals, A avut Occidentul un plan de luptă contra sovieticilor din România?, Concluzii [King Michael I Makes Plans for Subversive Resistance Against the Soviet Political-Military Occupation, The Act of August 23, 1944, A Strategic Surprise!, Stalin Recovers from the Strategic Surprise of August 23, 1944, and Occupies Romania Through a False Flag Operation, Did the West Have a Plan to Fight Against the Soviets in Romania?, Conclusions]). Alin Spănu, *23 august 1944 – variante, percepții și explicații* [August 23, 1944 – Variants, Perceptions, and Explanations] (pp. 326-350). Valentin Ciorbea, Dan-Dragoș Sichigea, *23 august 1944 în spațiul fluvialo-maritim românesc: provocări, soluții, consecințe* [August 23, 1944 in the Romanian River-Maritime Space: Challenges, Solutions, Consequences] (pp. 351-404).

Partea a III-a [Part III]: După 23 august 1944 [After August 23, 1944] (pp. 405-596) – Ioan Chiper, Constantin Hlihor, *Consecințe geopolitice și geostrategice ale evenimentelor de la 23 august 1944 din România [Geopolitical and Geostrategic Consequences of the Events of August 23, 1944 in Romania]*. (pp. 407-433 – Introducere, Actul de la 23 August a adus comunismul în România și a deschis calea comunizării statelor central și sud-est europene?, Evenimentele de la 23 august 1944 au modificat raporturile dintre membrii Coaliției Națiunilor Unite în Balcani?, Au condus evenimentele de la 23 august 1944 la scurtarea războiului cu șase luni de zile? [Introduction, Did the Act of August 23 Bring Communism to Romania and Pave the Way for the Communization of Central and Southeastern European states?, Did the Events of August 23, 1944, Change the Relations Between the Members of the United Nations Coalition in the Balkans?, Did the Events of August 23, 1944, Lead to the Shortening of the War by Six Months?]). Florian Banu, *Câteva considerații privind consecințele economice ale Actului de la 23 august 1944 [Some Considerations Regarding the Economic Consequences of the Act of 23 August 1944]* (pp. 434-480 – România – aliatul incomod, preocupat de bunăstarea economiei naționale, 12 septembrie 1944 – o Convenție de Armistițiu dictată dur și acceptată cu resemnare, Prevederile economice ale Convenției de Armistițiu, mai importante chiar decât prevederile militare, Aplicarea prevederilor economice ale Convenției de Armistițiu – de la discursul oficial la realitățile dure, Dificultățile trecerii la economia de pace și la refacerea țării (1945-1946), Conferința de Pace de la Paris și ultimele reverberații economice ale Actului de la 23 august 1944, Exilul românesc parizian apără interesele României, Concluzii [Romania – the Inconvenient Ally, Concerned with the Well-Being of the National Economy, September 12, 1944 – an Armistice Convention Dictated Harshly and Accepted with Resignation, The Economic Provisions of the Armistice Convention, Even More Important Than the Military Provisions, The Application of the Economic Provisions of the Armistice Convention – From Official Discourse to Harsh Realities, The Difficulties of the Transition to a Peace Economy and the Reconstruction of the Country (1945-1946), The Paris Peace Conference and the Last Economic Reverberations of the Act of 23 August 1944, The Romanian Exile in Paris Defends the Interests of Romania, Conclusions])). Vasile Buga, *Reflectarea Actului de la 23 August 1944 în istoriografia sovietică/rusă [Reflection of the Act of 23 August 1944 in Soviet/Russian Historiography]* (pp. 481-516 – Istoriografia sovietică despre Actul de la 23 august și importanța acestuia, Reflectare Actului de la 23 august 1944 în memorialistica sovietică, Reflectarea Actului de la 23 august 1944 în istoriografia rusă [Soviet Historiography on the Act of August 23 and its Importance, Reflection of the Act of August 23, 1944 in Soviet Memoirs, Reflection of the Act of August 23, 1944 in Russian Historiography])). Alexandru Ghișa, *Impactul Actului de la 23 August 1944 asupra relației dintre România și Ungaria* (pp. 517-540). Viorel Domenico, *23 august 1944 în filmul românesc [August 23, 1944 in Romanian Film]* (pp. 541-580 – Cinematografiștii: momentul trăit, Confiscări și abuzuri, Cinematografia și reflectarea evenimentelor de la 23 august 1944, Cenzură și urmărire informativă Aplicarea prevederilor economice

ale Convenției de Armistițiu – de la discursul oficial la realitățile dure, Manipularea prin film: studiu de caz – filmul Tudor Vladimirescu [Cinematographers: the Moment Lived, Confiscations and Abuses, Cinematography and the Coverage of the Events of August 23, 1944, Censorship and Informational Surveillance Applying the Economic Provisions of the Armistice Convention – from Official Discourse to Harsh Realities, Manipulation through Film: Case Study – the Film Tudor Vladimirescu]). *Anexă* [Appendix] (pp. 581-596). *Miercuri, 23 august 1944: două mărturii memorialistice* [Wednesday, August 23, 1944: Two Memoirist Testimonies] (texte selectate și adnotate de [Selected and Annotated Texts by] Mircea-Dorel Suciu) – Șerban Cioculescu: *Memorial 23 august 1944* [Memorial August 23, 1944]; Vasile Ionescu: *Proclamația regală: înregistrarea la Palat și difuzarea la radio* [Royal Proclamation: Recording at the Palace and Broadcast on the Radio]. *Index* [Onomastic] (pp. 598-605).

As the editor says, “The August 1944 act in Bucharest was not accidental, but was the consequence of actions carried out during the period 1939-1944 between a series of external and internal factors of a geopolitical, military, economic, political nature, etc. Therefore, the action of August 23, 1944 in Bucharest has its genesis in the changes that occurred in the balance of power between the great European powers and the system of alliances between them since the end of the interwar period and during the Second World War, changes that directly targeted Romania's situation and its evolution internationally, but which influenced the political and military decisions taken by the leadership factors in Bucharest during the aforementioned time period” (pp. 5-6). And Professor Petre Otu, an authority in the field of military history:

“Through its geographical and geostrategic position, through the military effort in the two campaigns of 1941-1944 and through its economic potential, the beneficiaries being, in a first phase, Germany, and later, the Soviet Union, the Romanian state was an actor with a relatively high weight in the political, military and economic dynamics of the Second World War. It was the greatest war experience in the history of Romanians, which significantly influenced their post-war destiny and, why not, the collective Romanian mentality” (p. 55).

A consistent collection of studies, this volume is a benchmark for the degree of scientific quality of our Historiography today, documentary novelties and approaches to new thematic subjects, with nuanced interpretations of events – without falling into the sin of blaming previous research, but explaining the respective historical context – being able to stand for a closer knowledge of the events triggered on August 23, 1944.

Dan Prisăcaru, *Rezistență și supraviețuire la trio confiniumul Marilor Puteri. Repere istorice și identitare (1914-1940)* [Resistance and Survival in the Great Powers' Trio of Confinement. Historical and Identity Landmarks (1914-1940)]. I-II. Prefață: Prof.univ.dr. Ioan Bolovan. Notă asupra ediției: General de brigadă prof.

univ. dr. ing. Ghiță Bârsan. Introducere: Prof. univ. dr. Petre Otu. Postfață [Afterword]: Prof. univ. dr. Cătălin Turliuc, Editura Academiei Forțelor Terestre „Nicolae Bălcescu”, Sibiu, 2024, 600 + 408 pp.; ill., maps, facs. ISBN 978-973-153-585-2; 978-973-153-587-6

The book we are presenting to your attention consists of a large volume (in two volumes), due to a valuable servant – and institutional manager at the same time (he is the director since 2018 of the ‘Ștefan cel Mare’ Military Museum. Moldova Branch, Iași, of the ‘Ferdinand I’ National Military Museum) – of the Clio Museum, and is presented as a valuable documentary contribution to the knowledge of the history of Romania in the first half of the last century. Namely, it is the volume with the aforementioned title, whose thematic structure – volumes I and II – is as follows: (Vol. I): *Prefață* [Preface] (pp. 5-8), *Notă asupra ediției* [Note on the Edition] (pp. 9-12), *Introducere. De la un război la altul* [Introduction. From One War to Another] (pp. 13-16), *Mulțumiri* [Acknowledgements] (p. 17), *Abrevieri* [Abbreviations] (p. 18). *Cuprins* [Contents] (pp. 19-20).

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As can be seen, the volume benefits from recommendations and praise from some top representatives of our Historiography today – prof. univ. dr. Ioan Bolovan, corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, respectively professor prof. univ. dr. Cătălin Turliuc, from the 'A.D. Xenopol' Institute of History of the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, brigadier general prof. univ. dr. eng. Ghiță Bârsan, commander (rector) of the 'Nicolae Bălcescu' Land Forces Academy in Sibiu – “Colonel (ret.d.) dr. Dan Prisăcaru [b. December 14, 1964] is known in specialized circles, as well as by those interested, as an energetic, dynamic and tenacious person in carrying out the scientific projects undertaken or entrusted to him for resolution, a firm follower of rigor and high-quality professionalism” (Ioan Bolovan); “As a result, the present work, two massive volumes, totaling over 1,000 pages, A4 size, structured in eight chapters, comprising 50 consistent studies and articles, is, in our assessment, in the register of academic excellence, through its scientific content, research in national and foreign archives, argumentative rigor, careful analysis and eventual synthesis, conclusions

with warning force on the risks and states of danger to Romania's security, in the period 1914-1940, generated by threat factors from the directions, East, West and South, but also by internal factors, such as the deficiencies and vulnerabilities of the Romanian state and society between the wars" (Ghiță Bârsan); "Dan Prisăcaru has produced a book that is dense in terms of issues, of historiographical interest, thoroughly documented and argued, the result of an intense research effort in archives and libraries. I also note the rich iconography of the volumes, which adds additional nuances to the understanding of the studies included in the volume" (Petre Otu); "The eight parts of the volumes that bear evocative and well-chosen titles bring together a considerable number of studies that cover the fundamental moments of national history, especially the military one, starting with 1916, the year of our entry into the Great War and ending with the disastrous year 1940, the year of the – temporary – end of Unified Romania" (Cătălin Turliuc).

The combined studies are based both on the related bibliography and, above all, on unpublished archival sources, the author proving to be a careful and honest analyst, based on documentary sources, of the historical issues under discussion. A rich bibliography, rendered according to scientific usage, conclusive assessments of rare temerity among those issued by confreres – in the spirit of historical truth and a comprehensive national-patriotic vision –, a very rich and suggestive illustration (including maps and facsimiles) are elements that contribute to the completion of a volume of primary importance in our Historiography today.

Cristina-Narcisa Vergatti, Radu-Ștefan Vergatti, *Mici meserii uitate sau dispărute* [Small Forgotten or Disappeared Crafts], Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2024, 230 pp., ill., facs. ISBN 978-606-738-075-0

The well-known and prolific historian – who will be ninety next year (born December 10, 1937) – is one of the distinguished scholars who serve Clio, with a vast humanistic culture; a graduate of the Faculty of History in Bucharest (1965), he defended an acclaimed doctoral Thesis in 1980, on the topic *Probleme ale omului și societății în literatura orășenească franceză din a doua jumătate a sec. al XIII-lea* [Problems of Man and Society in French Urban Literature from the Second Half of the 13th Century]. He had a sustained teaching activity, both in higher education – Assistant (1965-1971), Lecturer (1971-1977), Associate Professor (1990-1999) and university Professor (1999-2004) (at the "Valahica" University of Târgoviște – where he is also a doctoral supervisor in the period 2004-2008), and for a period (1977-1990), also in high school. Specializing mainly in the field of Medieval History and Historical Demography (but also in some periods of Universal History), he is the author of dozens and dozens of studies and history articles, as well as numerous books (about 25: 12 – unique author, 13 co-author), such as – *Pe urmele lui Vlad Țepeș* [In the Footsteps of Vlad the Impaler] (1979), *Pe urmele stolnicului Constantin Cantacuzino* [In the Footsteps of the Stolnik Constantin Cantacuzino] (1982), *Cetatea Poienari* [Poienari Fortress] (1984, co-authors Maria Ciobanu and Nicolae Moisescu), *Neagoe Basarab* (1986), *Vlad Țepeș. Viața, faptele,*

domnia [Vlad the Impaler. Life, Deeds, Reign] (1996), Nicolae Spătarul Milescu. *Viața, călătoriile, opera* [Life, Travels, Work] (1998), *Studii de demografie istorică românească* [Studies in Romanian Historical Demography] (2002, co-author Louis Roman), *Historia Ponticae. Varia* (2002), *Populație. Timp. Spațiu. Privire asupra demografiei istorice universale* [Population. Time. Space. A Look at Universal Historical Demography] (2002), *Sfânta Alianță: Un model istorico-juridic pentru o Uniune Europeană* [The Holy Alliance: A Historical-Legal Model for a European Union] (2004), *Mircea cel Mare – Scutul Europei* [Mircea the Great – The Shield of Europe] (2009, co-authors Fănuș Neagu, Alexandru V. Diță, Virgil Joița, Nicolae Șerbănescu, Dan Zamfirescu), *Din problematica Umanismului românesc* [From the Problem of Romanian Humanism] (2007), *Puncte de vedere asupra faptelor petrecute în România între 21-23 ianuarie 1941. Points de vue sur les événements déroulés en Roumanie du 21 au 23 janvier 1941. Ediție bilingvă* [Points of View on the Events that Happened in Romania from 21 to 23 January 1941. Bilingual Edition] (2011), *Nicolae Iorga în arhivele vieneze și ale Siguranței Regale (1903-1914)* [Nicolae Iorga in the Archives of Vienna and the Royal Security (1903-1914)] (2012, co-author Cornelia Bodea), *Unchiul și nepotul: Matei Basarab și Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu* [Uncle and Nephew: Matei Basarab and Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu] (2014, co-author Cristina Vergatti), *Brâncoveniști* (2014, co-authors Agnes Erich and Cristina Vergatti), *Cetatea Poienari – cetatea lui Vlad Țepeș* [Poienari Fortress – Vlad the Impaler's Fortress] (2015, co-authors Cristina Vergatti and Cornel Popescu), *Probleme ale omului și societății în literatura orășenească franceză din a doua jumătate a secolului al XIII-lea* [Problems of Man and Society in French Urban Literature from the Second Half of the 13th Century] (2012), *Apostol D. Culea în slujba românilor din Basarabia* [Apostol D. Culea in the Service of the Romanians of Bessarabia] (2016, co-authors Cornel Popescu and Cristina Narcisa Vergatti), *Ștefan Ciobanu, un savant profesor luptător nămfricat pentru unirea Basarabiei* [Ștefan Ciobanu, a Scholar Professor Fearless fighter for the Unification of Bessarabia] (2018), *Retrospective asupra Marelui Război* [Retrospectives on the Great War] (2018, co-author Cristina Narcisa Vergatti), *Războiul lung din secolul al XX-lea* [The Long War of the 20th Century] (co-authors Octavian Buda and Cornel Popescu), *Radu cel Mare, Neagoe Basarab și Biserica Ortodoxă* [Radu cel Mare, Neagoe Basarab, and the Orthodox Church] (2021), *Prin Bucureștii veacului XIX înainte și după Tolstoi* [Through the Bucharest of the 19th Century Before and After Tolstoy] (2021, co-author Cristina Narcisa Vergatti), *Câte ceva despre clerici și drumuri din Țara Românească* [A Little Bit About Clergy and Roads from Wallachia] (2022, co-author with Teodor Șerban and Mihai Muscariu), *Complexul monastic Strehaia* [Strehaia Monastic Complex] (2023).

To a question, eight years ago, “What was the ‘secret legacy’ that Romania had in the quiver of history, so that this act of union was possible?”, the distinguished scientist answered, in an interview, in accordance with his national-historical convictions – resulting from scientific research and the solid education received in an extended family, that produced illustrious Romanian intellectuals, and, no less, within the framework of truth:

“The historical legacy was particularly strong. First all, there was a permanent connection between all the regions inhabited by Romanians, even if in the Middle Ages these were separated, being divided into distinct historical states. The connection occurred, first all, through those who practiced transhumance. Second, through merchants who passed from one area to another. Third, through the Orthodox Church, which maintained its faith, with its rites, for the vast majority of Romanians. There were also great lords and voivodes, who kept the connection between the Romanian regions. Don’t forget Mircea the Great, who in Transylvania ruled Amlaș, Făgăraș, and the fortresses of Huedin and Bologa, Vlad Dracul who had strong ties with Transylvania, Stephen the Great [*Ștefan cel Mare*], who ruled the Cetatea de Baltă also in Transylvania and built the fortresses of Hotin, Soroca, Orhei, Tighina along the Dniester and strengthened the White Fortress, in front of the Black Fortress of the Cossacks. Don’t forget Michael the Brave [*Mihai Viteazul*], who achieved the first union of all Romanians in 1599-1600. Even though it had a confessional and political character, its resonance was huge. Throughout Europe, among humanists, the feeling arose that oriental Latinity existed and had been preserved here, regardless of political borders. Don’t forget that the rich lord Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu owned the domain of Sâmbăta and, through the threads of his policy, he also ruled Moldova. In practice, he achieved a union of the two states, even unofficially. Starting from these realities, the Phanariot lords also tried to unite the two states, the strongest example in this sense being the Mavrocordat family. In the 19th century, during the Russian temporal rule, the creator of the organic regulations, Count General Pavel Dmitrievich Kiseleff, dreamed of becoming prince of both Danubian Principalities. During the unsuccessful revolution of 1848-1849, one of the main points of its programs was that of achieving the union of the three Romanian countries. Thus, in 1856, at the end of the Crimean War, during the peace negotiations in Paris, Gheorghe Magheru was able to read a letter from the Romanian political leaders in front of the delegates of the great powers who were participating in the Peace Congress. The letter had an effect, it was supported by the representative of England, by that of France and even those of Russia – Prince Gorchakov and Count Kiseleff. Thus, in 1859 the first stage of the emergence of the modern Romanian state was achieved. It was at the merit of the politicians of that time that they knew how to take advantage of an extraordinary event, the Crimean War, and to achieve the first stage of the unification of the country. Other extraordinary events followed, which allowed the continuation of the formation of the Modern Romanian State – the 1877-1878 Russo-Romanian-Turkish War, which led to the Independence of the Romanian State and its elevation to the level of a Kingdom; at the same time, the second stage of the formation of the Romanian national state was achieved at that time, through the reunification with Dobrudja and the Danube Delta. In 1918, at the end of the First World War, Romania took advantage of the willful action and enormous sacrifice of the Romanian people and achieved Greater Romania, through the union of Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania, and Banat with the Kingdom of Romania”.

The structure of the volume is as follows – *Mărturisiri* [Testimonials] (pp. 7-11), *„Oltenii”* [The Oltenians], *Tocilarii* [The Geeks], *Tinichigii-Cazangii* [Tinsmith-Boilermakers], *Lustragii* [Polishers], *Pălărieri și modiste* [Hatters and Milliners], *Remaiajul* [Remakes], *Stopajul stofelor* [Fabric Stopping], *Rudarii* [Wooden Object Makers], *Birjarii/Vizitii* [Carriers/Coachman], *Potcovarii/Fierarii* [Farriers/Blacksmiths], *Haranșamente* [Baggage Makers], *Sacagii* [The Sackmen], *Stucatorii* [Stucco Makers], *Tăietori ambulanți de lemne* [Woodcutters], *Transperanțiștii* [Transperantists], *Vânzători ambulanți de ziare* [Itinerant Newspaper Sellers], *Flașnetari* [Music Box Operators], *Fotografi ambulanți* [Itinerant Photographers], *Chivuțele* [Women Who Whitewashed a Building], *Florăresele* [Florists], *Stenografia* [Stenographers], *Dactilografia* [Typing], *Bragagii* [Braga Sellers], *Coșarii* [The Chimney Sweeps], *Telegraful și telegrafiștii* [Telegraph and Telegraphists], *Argintarii* [The Silversmiths], *Muzica de altădată* [Old-Time Music], *Telefonistele* [Telephone Operators], *Bărbierii* [The Barbers], *Vechii anticari* [Old Antique Dealers], *Sobarii* [The Stovemakers], *Taxatoarele și taxatorii* [The Tax Collectors]. *Bibliografie* [Bibliography], *Indice de nume* [Name Index].

This volume, with a completely new theme, is based on a rich bibliography, on sources from the interwar press, on the author's memories. Disappeared professions are revived, which gave Bucharest its charm, and characters are revived – some with names as such – who gave the picturesqueness of a great metropolis.

Here are some examples:

Shoe shiners – “In the past, when you got off at the Bucharest train stations, you were greeted by porters and then by the shoe shiners. The latter were equipped with a stool on which they sat in front of the customer, a small box with a support on which the foot was placed. Most of them also had a second stool, on which the customer sat. In some parts of the city, such as the one near the fence of the Bucharest City History Museum, there were many such shoe shiners. There was a place where 30-40 shoe shiners of all nationalities were lined up. Since it was a place where you could earn a good living, being a ford, because many people passed by who needed their shoes polished, you would negotiate for a place... There were some kind of bosses, ‘*nene*’, who demanded a ‘fee’ to let the shoe shiner work there. Among the shoe shiners there were also some desperate people from society. In the years 1950s of the 20th Century, there were some people who were expelled by communists from everywhere, who could not find jobs for political reasons. I personally know that between 1950 and 1960, there, at the University, there was a shoe shiner, a former colonel decorated with the Mihai Viteazul order, expelled from the army because he had fought heroically on the Eastern Front. The communists had not forgiven him. After spending three or four years in prison, he became a shoe shiner and worked very conscientiously there, in front of the University. The shoe shiners each had several boxes of boot polish. The box had a piece of wood that would hold the customer's foot in a certain position. In addition to these, they had shoe shiners and a box of wax with which they polished the shoes” (p. 36).

Chivuțe [Women Who Whitewashed a Building] – “The name ‘*chivuțe*’ today may seem strange. In the past, the name *chivuțe*, spoitorese or bidinărese who gives with the brush designated a profession: it was practiced by a group of women of modest origin, working by the day, ‘on the *binale*’ (construction sites). Their main occupation was plastering or whitewashing walls, ceilings, fences or entire buildings, in more modest households. They generally used white lime in which, sometimes, they poured color to give the plastered wall a yellow or reddish hue. They usually gathered and stood about right at the entrance to Str. Bazaca, in a place between the old Flower Market, now disappeared, and the entrance to Hanul lui Manuc to be hired for work. There you would see them gathered, several in one place, crouching, smoking, sometimes also having a *ghioc* in their hand with which they would guess the future, because they could have, right, more professions. They were easy to distinguish. On their shoulders, or placed next to them, were their tools – brushes with long, unmistakable handles, buckets, sometimes ladders that they climbed to reach the higher parts of the houses or rooms. Usually the *cinvutele* worked in families – there were two sisters and their daughters, or a mother with her daughters, or even three generations. They had scarves on their heads, tightly tied to protect their hair. They sometimes had necklaces around their necks, and large earrings in their ears (...) Today, with the workers’ blocks built by the communists, with the establishment of cooperatives of craftsmen and painters, the *cinvutele* have disappeared, and their job is practiced mainly by men, although it is still a very difficult one” (pp. 112-113),

Chimney sweeps – “All those who were involved in repairing and cleaning chimneys were called chimney sweeps, sometimes hornari. The chimney sweeps’ guild was regulated at least since the Phanariot period. In 1937, Mayor Al.G. Donescu established that this profession could only be practiced with authorization. Chimney sweeps had to register at the city hall, presenting their professional qualification documents, health certificate, certificate of good conduct, military record, two photographs in chimney sweep uniform - established by the city hall. They were equipped with some specific to their work: metal, straw and wooden brooms, cannonball, rope, etc. They necessarily had a cotton and metal braided odgon. Its length varied depending on the number of floors crossed by the chimneys they had to clean. At the end of the odgon there was a heavy metal ball, which slid along the chimney, from its mouth, on caá, to the stove at the lowest level. This ball removed the slag and cleaned the chimney, In addition to this cable with a heavy ball at the end, chimney sweeps also had various brushes with the help of the carrot they cleaned the chimneys inside. In some cases, they entered the house and used small doors next to the stoves to reach the inside of the chimneys. In order to easily reach the top of the chimney, they usually had a ladder that they fixed firmly to the roof and then climbed up the chimney” (pp. 138-139).

This book, very richly illustrated, is yet another confession of the authors' appetite for the 'little' makers of history, discerning in its pages a comprehensive sympathy for the 'anonymous' hard workers, also creators of modern Romania.

Maria Gogu Zinovii, *Basarabia și Transnistria în Gulagul sovietic. Deportări și muncă forțată* [Bessarabia and Transnistria in the Soviet Gulag. Deportations and Forced Labor] [Cuvânt-înainte /Foreword/: prof. univ. dr. hab. Anatol Petrencu] (Agenția Națională a Arhivelor. Universitatea de Stat din Moldova), Editura Lexon-Prim (Seria „Arhiva”), Chișinău, 2024, 220 pp; ill., facs. ISBN 978-9975-173-04-9

The book that we submit to the attention of the readers of this History publication belongs to a meritorious researcher from Chișinău – namely an archivist in the General Directorate of the Governmental Archival Fund within the National Archives Agency of the Republic of Moldova, member of the Steering Committee of the Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova 'Alexandru Moșanu'.

It is a Doctoral Thesis defended in 2023, printed the following year with the title above.

The appearance of this monograph, based on the doctoral thesis in historical sciences, defended by Ms. Maria Gogu Zinovii, is the culmination of the author's many years of activity within the Doctoral School of the State University of Moldova, in the ANA's repositories, but also of the materials acquired during the Memory Expeditions – expeditions to Siberia, where Bessarabians and Transnistrians remained to live.

The thematic structure follows a usual academic technique in such cases of scientific research: *Cuvânt-înainte* [Foreword] (p. 5), *Lista de abrevieri* [List of Abbreviations] (p. 6), *Introducere* [Introduction] (pp. 7-10).

I. *Gulagul – Obiect al cercetării istorice* [The Gulag – Object of Historical Research] (pp. 11-58 – I.1. *Gulagul și dimensiunea sa economică* [The Gulag and Its Economic Dimension]). I.2. *Scrieri istorice privind Gulagul*: a) Istoriografia română; b. istoriografia rusă privind munca în Gulag; c. tematica muncii în Gulag în lucrările istoricilor occidentali [Historical Writings on the Gulag: a) Romanian Historiography; b. Russian Historiography on Work in the Gulag; c. The Theme of the Gulag in the Works of Western Historians]). I.3. *Surse istorice privind munca în Gulag*: a. Documente inedite de arhivă. b. Documente de arhivă editate. c. Izvoare de istorie orală [Historical Sources on Work in the Gulag: a. Unpublished Archival Documents. b. Edited Archival Documents. c. Oral History Sources]. Concluzii la Capitolul I [Conclusions to Chapter I]).

II. *Locuitorii din RASSM (1924-1940) și RSSM (1940-1941) pe șantierele Gulagului* [Residents of the MASSR (1924-1940) and the RSSM (1940-1941) on the Gulag Construction Sites] (pp. 59-145 – 2.1. *Crearea RASSM, instaurarea terorii staliniste și deportările de populație la munci forțate* [Creation of the MASSR, Establishment of Stalinist Terror and Deportations of the Population to Forced Labor]. 2.2. *Instaurarea Puterii Sovietice în RSSM și exilările de populație la munci în anii*

1940-1941, în Siberia: *Lucrul în mine, Munca la tăiatul pădurilor, Munca în colhozuri, sovhozuri și fabrici, Pescuitul, altă muncă practică de basarabeni în Siberia, Munca deportaților în infrastructură și construcții* [Establishment of Soviet Power in the RSSM and Deportations of the Population to Labor in 1940-1941, in Siberia: Work in Mines, Work in Logging, Work in Kolkhozes, Sovkhozes, and Factories, Fishing, Other Work Practiced by Bessarabians in Siberia, Work of Deportees in Infrastructure and Construction]. Concluzii la Capitolul II [Conclusions to Chapter II].

III. *Munca locuitorilor din RSSM deportați în anii 1944-1956* [The Work of the Inhabitants of the RSSM Deported in 1944-1956] (pp. 146-196 – 3.1. *Reluarea represiunilor în Basarabia în anul 1944 și exilările la munci în Gulag* [Resumption of Repressions in Bessarabia in 1944 and Exiles to Work in the Gulag]. 3.2. *Basarabenii pe șantierele Gulagului în anii 1944-1949: Aspecte ale muncii copiilor deportați, Munca femeilor deportate din Basarabia* [Bessarabians on the Gulag Construction Sites in 1944-1949: Aspects of the Work of Deported Children, The Work of Women Deported from Bessarabia]. 3.3. *Deportații din anii 1951-1956 la muncile din Siberia* [Deportees from 1951-1956 to Work in Siberia]. Concluzii la Capitolul III [Conclusions to Chapter III].

Concluzii generale [General Conclusions] (pp. 197-199). *Bibliografie* [Bibliography] (pp. 200-212). *Indice geografic* [Geographical Index] (pp. 213-216). *Indice de nume* [Name Index] (pp. 217-220).

As Professor Anatol Petrencu, the supervisor of the Doctoral thesis, points out in the *Cuvânt-înainte* [Foreword], “The work is unique in the number of archival documents that have been researched and put into the scientific circuit, through the numerous testimonies of survivors and their descendants. These researches and oral history studies were carried out both in the Republic of Moldova and in Siberia, the Russian Federation, especially in the regions of Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Tyumen.

The monograph is structured in three chapters and eight subchapters, Introduction and Conclusions. It is written in an accessible language. The work is completed with photographs from archival documents and photographs from personal archives the photographic material used by the author represents a visual document, an important tool in the rendering of history, which has a special impact on readers and helps them to better, and more clearly understand historical contents.

Apart from the fact that the monograph has an original scientific character, we also mention its *practical value* (emphasis added). The materials of this work have a didactic importance and can be used in teaching normative and special courses at the Faculties of History in the Republic. The study can be useful in the process of developing didactic literature for university education, of synthesis works in the field of Romanian History. The research materials can be of real use to pupils, high school students, students, doctoral candidates, all those who are interested in the problems of deportations by the Soviet State” (p. 5).

The first monograph in Moldovan national historiography devoted to the subject of deportations from the perspective of the daily life of people forcibly

displaced to Siberia and Kazakhstan, is elaborated by consulting both archival sources and testimonies of victims and their descendants.

The work constitutes a first attempt at a systematic and complex treatment of the peculiarities of the work of Transnistrians and Bessarabians in the Gulag. The systematization and generalization of documents, specialized literature and oral history testimonies allowed us to identify the work that the deportees did, how many hours a day they had to work, what kind of tools they had to fulfill their work norms, how they managed to manage without adequate clothing and with a malnourished food ration, etc.

After studying archival documents and specialized literature, the author “came to the following conclusions: Transnistrians were the first to go through the ordeal of deportations and extremely hard labor in the Gulag. Most of the people deported from the RSMS and later from the MSSR in the first year of life in Siberia died of cold and hunger. They had a very hard time in exile because they came from an area with a milder climate than that of Siberia, compared to other deportees, who were used to such temperatures” (p. 198), concluding: “we can say that those deported to the Stalinist Gulags were like slaves. For decades, it was considered important to increase industrial output in certain branches of the economy, such as coal, steel, oil, etc. At first, the so-called planned economy may have shown success, but later it proved to be inefficient, and ultimately led to the collapse of the Gulag system.

I found that the effectiveness of labor, often, simply had no point, had absolutely no economic value” (p. 199).

Written soberly, without falling – taking into account the affective-emotional nature of the topic – into the trap of counterproductive rhetoric from the perspective of historical accuracy, the work constitutes an radiography of the topic analyzed by documentary means; the statements are supported by archival attestations and oral history testimonies, in a sober, concise writing. The work illustrates the high professional and scientific level of Moldavian Historiography.

„Anuarul Muzeului Național al Marinei Române” [The Romanian National Naval Museum Yearbook] [Constanța], XXVIII, 2025, 358 pp.; ill., map, facs., tab. ISSN 2601-4513. ISSN-L 2601-4513

Dunărea și Marea Neagră în spațiul euroasiatic. Istorie, relații politice și diplomatie, XIII. Lucrările celei de-a XXIX ediții a Conferinței Naționale de Comunicări Științifice a Muzeului Național al Marinei Române [The Danube and the Black Sea in the Eurasian Space. History, Political Relations and Diplomacy, XIII. Proceedings of the XXIXth Edition of the National Conference of Scientific Communications of the National Museum of the Romanian Navy] [Constanța], 2025, 402 pp.; ill., map, facs. ISSN 2601-1999. ISSN-L 2601-1999

The two volumes constitute the scientific production, materialized in the two periodicals, for the year 2025 of the Romanian Navy Museum in Constanța. As

can be seen, both appear with admirable continuity, each issue offering readers documentary surprises and new thematic approaches.

Their content – belonging to a constant group of collaborators, recognized specialists in the respective thematic fields – is as follows:

„Anuarul Muzeului Național al Marinei Române” [The Romanian National Naval Museum Yearbook] – dr. Vasile Mărculeț, *Haralfd Sigurdarson (Hardrada), de la prințul norvegian fugar la comandantul varegilor din garda imperială de la Constantinopol (1030-1043)* [Haralfd Sigurdarson (Hardrada), From the Fugitive Norwegian Prince to the Commander of the Varangians in the Imperial Guard in Constantinople (1030-1043)]: pp. 9-46, dr. Marian Boza, *Anul 1783 pentru Crimeea* [The Year 1783 for Crimea]: 47-64, Dragoș Dumitru Dragomir, *Soarta pădurilor Dobrogei, la cumpăna secolelor al XIX-lea și al XX-lea* [The Fate of the Dobrudjan Forests, at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries]: 65-73, dr. Luminița Stelian, dr. Angela-Anca Dobre, *Percepția radioului în viața dobrogenilor* [The Perception of Radio in the Life of Dobrudjans]: 74-86, dr. Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Pericolul minelor din Marea Neagră, după Primul Război Mondial* [The Danger of Mines in the Black Sea, After the First World War]: 87-99, dr. Luminița Giurgiu, dr. Teodora Giurgiu, *Granița româno-iugoslavă în dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților (1923) – poziția Partidului Național Român* [The Romanian-Yugoslav Border in the Debates of the Assembly of Deputies (1923) – the Position of the Romanian National Party]: 100-116, dr. Stoica Lascu, *Portul Constanța și Marina – în câteva repere publicistice interbelice (semnate de I.N. Duployen)*. Documentar [The Port of Constanta and the Marina – in Several Interwar Journalistic References (Signed by I.N. Duployen). Documentary]: 117-157, dr. Lavinia Dumitrașcu, drd. Oana Grigoruță, *Avocați constănțeni din prima jumătate a secolului XX* [Lawyers From Constanța in the First Half of the 20th Century]: 58-174, dr. Silvia Ioniță, *Activitatea Diviziei de Dunăre după ultimatumul din iunie 1940 și până la intrarea României în război, reflectată în Registrul Istoric al Statului Major Marină – Cronologie selectivă III* [The Activity of the Danube Division After the Ultimatum of June 1940 and Until Romania's Entry Into the War, Reflected in the Historical Register of the Naval Staff – Selective Chronology III]: 175-199, colonel (r) Remus Macovei, *Reacția refugiaților ardeleni la manifestările antiromânești de la Cluj, din noaptea de 3/4 martie 1944* [The Reaction of Transylvanian Refugees to the Anti-Romanian Demonstrations in Cluj, on the Night of March 3/4, 1944]: 200-207, plutonier adjutant șef (r) Eugen-Dorin Spătaru, *Participarea Regimentului 93 Infanterie „Cloșca” Arad la luptele pentru apărarea Moldovei (aprilie-iunie 1944)* [The Participation of the 93rd Infantry Regiment ‘Cloșca’ Arad in the Battles for the Defense of Moldova (April-June 1944)]: 208-227, dr. Daniel Niculae, *23 august 1944 în Memoriul sergentului sanitar Drăgoi Nicolae din Batalionul de Gardă a Palatului Regal* [August 23, 1944 in the Memoir of Medical Sergeant Drăgoi Nicolae From the Royal Palace Guard Battalion]: 228-232, dr. Marian Zidaru, *August 1945. SSI monitorizează activitatea serviciilor informative anglo-americane din cadrul legațiilor anglo-americane din București* [August 1945. SSI Monitored the Activity of the Anglo-American Information Services Within the Anglo-American Legations in Bucharest]: 233-247, comandor dri.ng. Marian

Tănase, *Divergențe între S.U.A. și U.R.S.S. privind aplicarea dreptului maritim internațional: acțiuni în Marea Neagră (1983-1986)*: 256-271, comandor (r) dr. Marian Moșneagu, *Ieșeni care au contribuit la afirmarea Marinei Române* [People of Iași Who Contributed to the Affirmation of the Romanian Navy]: 272-294, comandor (r) dr. Ioan Damaschin, *Presa de marină a României. Scurt istoric* [The Romanian Navy Press. A Short History]: 294-303, dr. Andreea Atanasiu-Croitoru, *Pictori și pictură marină în arta românească* [Painters and Marine Painting in Romanian Art]: 304-324, dr. Carmen Irène Atanasiu, *Mărturii inedite. Noi contribuții la istoria marinei române* [Unpublished Testimonies. New Contributions to the History of the Romanian Navy]: 325-333, dr. Claudia Lupu, *Restaurarea unei cărți de cult* [The Restoration of a Cult Book]: 334-346, dr. Stoica Lascu, *Recente cărți referitoare la Basarabia anilor 1918 și 1924 și Transnistria anilor 1941-1944* [Recent Books on Bessarabia in 1918 and 1924, and Transnistria in 1941-1944]: 347-357.

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Publications with a tradition in recent Romanian historiography, the two scientific yearbooks of the laborious researchers from Constanța prove their scientific value, the devotion and professionalism with which they serve the muse Clio, and to the contributors – old collaborators and friends of Romanian naval museography – no less gratitude for their steadfastness.

Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Pe teme de istoria politicii externe a României. /Studii/* [On Topics Related to the History of Romania's Foreign Policy./Studies/], Editura StudIS, Iași, 2025, 474 pp.; ill., tables, facs., ISBN 978-606-48-1318-3

Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Pe teme din istoria economiei românești /Studii/* [On Topics of the History of the Romanian Economy / Studies/], Editura StudIS, Iași, 2025, 544 pp.; ill., facs. ISBN 978-606-48-1278-0

Known and appreciated as an archivist and historian, Constantin Cheramidoglu – doctor in History in 2003; b. October 4, 1959: author of several volumes – *Mărturii documentare* [Constanța – Documentary Testimonies] (co-author) (2012), *Comerțul maritim al României în perioada interbelică* [Romania's Maritime Trade in the Interwar Period] (2020), *Grecii Constanței vechi* [Ancient Greeks of Constanța] (2022), *Arhive dobrogene* [Dobrudjan Archives] (2023) – decided, "an approach that we appreciate", to collect in two volumes his studies and articles published over the years in books and periodicals. He confesses to us in the *Argument* of the first volume (p. 3) that he "developed the topics based on subsequent research, as well as materials that have not been published before".

As noted, in a journalistic presentation, Professor Valentin Ciorbea, "Going through the summaries we find that the themes addressed have as documentary support the foreign and Romanian press, but also other documentary references. As a geographical area it was limited to Dobrogea, especially the Balkan area in the first half of the 20th century".

And as the author says, "This volume brings together number studies and articles previously published in specialized journals, which I developed based on subsequent research, as well as materials that have not been published. Chronologically, they fall into the first half of the 20th century and concern the policy pursued by Romania in the Balkans, its relations with neighboring countries or

countries interested in this area, but also the interests of the great powers in this region. I have also added material regarding the Ukrainian minority in Romania, in the context of the World War and that regarding emigration through the port of Constanta, issues that are directly related to Romania's policy at that time" (p. 3).

The first volume includes 23 studies – *Politica României în Balcani, în viziunea observatorilor străini (1911-1913)* [Romania's Policy in the Balkans, in the View of Foreign Observers (1911-1913)], pp. 7-30; *1913. Acțiunea României în Balcani, în viziunea presei străine* [1913. Romania's Action in the Balkans, in the Vision of the Foreign Press], pp. 31-60; *Implicațiile din 1913 în politica de alianțe a României* [The Implications of 1913 in Romania's Alliance Policy], pp. 61-78; *Iunie 1914. Constanța pe harta diplomatică a Europei* [June 1914. Constantza on the Diplomatic Map of Europe], pp. 79-100; *Relațiile României cu Austro-Ungariei în perioada neutralității (1914-1916) din perspectiva presei franceze* [Romania's Relations with Austria-Hungary during the Period of Neutrality (1914-1916) from the Perspective of the French Press], pp. 101-116; *Relațiile României cu Germania în perioada neutralității – în viziunea observatorilor străini* [Romania's Relations with Germany during the Period of Neutrality – in the Vision of Foreign Observers], pp. 117-132; *Relațiile româno-bulgare în perioada neutralității (1914-1916), în viziunea presei franceze* [Romanian-Bulgarian Relations during the Period of Neutrality (1914-1916), in the Vision of the French Press], pp. 133-158; *Cauza României susținută de români în societatea și presa franceză (1914-1918)* [The Cause of Romania Supported by Romanians in French Society and Press (1914-1918)], pp. 159-176; *Imaginea idealului național românesc în presa franceză a vremii (1914-1918)* [The Image of the Romanian National Ideal in the French Press of the Time (1914-1918)], pp. 177-190; *Presa internațională despre intrarea României în Primul Război Mondial* [The International Press About Romania's Entry Into the First World War], pp. 191-210; *Octombrie 1916 – Căderea Constanței, în opinia publică internațională* [October 1916 – The Fall of Constantza, in International Public Opinion], pp. 211-230; *Imaginea armatei române în presa străină a anilor 1916-1918* [The Image of the Romanian Army in the Foreign Press of the Years 1916-1918], pp. 231-252; *Dobrogea – mărul discordiei între țările Puterilor Centrale, în anul 1918* [Dobrudja – the Apple of Discord Between the Countries of the Central Powers, in 1918], pp. 253-276; *Portul Constanța și interesele Puterilor Centrale (1916-1918)* [The Port of Constantza and the Interests of the Central Powers (1916-1918)], pp. 277-288; *Cum vedeau aliații României politica Germaniei la Gurile Dunării, în timpul Primului Război Mondial* [How Romania's Allies Saw Germany's Policy at the Danube Mouths, During the First World War], pp. 290-304; *Basarabia și interesele Marilor Puteri în anii Primului Război Mondial* [Bessarabia and the Interests of the Great Powers During the First World War], pp. 305-319; *Despre posibile schimbări teritoriale ce vizau și România (a doua parte a secolului XIX și prima jumătate a secolului XX)* [On Possible Changes Territorial Issues that Also Targeted Romania (Second Part of the 19th Century and First Half of the 20th Century)], pp. 319-336; *Contextul politic al Tratatului de la Craiova (1940) din perspectiva presei franceze* [The Political Context of the Treaty of Craiova

(1940) From the Perspective of the French Press], pp. 337-350; *Activitatea minorității ucrainene din România în timpul războiului antisovietic* [The Activity of the Ukrainian Minority in Romania During the Anti-Soviet War], pp. 351-368; *Chestiunea Dobrogei în relațiile româno-ruse văzută prin presa vremii* [The Dobrudja Issue in Romanian-Russian Relations Seen Through the Press of the Time], pp. 369-392; *Problema gurilor Dunării și a strâmtorilor pentru economia României interbelice* [The Problem of the Mouths of the Danube and the Straits for the Economy of Interwar Romania], pp. 393-408; *Emigrația prin portul Constanța (1935-1947)* [Emigration Through the Port of Constantza (1935-1947)], pp. 409-440; *Presa străină și percepția ei în presa românească (1912-1940)* [The Foreign Press and Its Perception in the Romanian Press (1912-1940)], pp. 441-456; *Indici toponimici și antroponimici (selectivi)* [Toponymic and Anthroponomic Indices (Selective)], pp. 457-473.

The author placed images taken from various sources at the end of the articles, which support the thematic content.

In the second volume, under *Argument* (pp. 7-8), compared to the first version of the articles and studies, the author specifies: "This volume brings together a sum of materials previously published in various collective volumes and magazines, which, according to the principle that allows history to be continuously rewritten, we have enriched with information acquired after their publication. We have thus tried, first, to facilitate access to these materials, and on the other hand to bring them up to date, by integrating new documentary sources which, even if they do not essentially change the image of the analyzed subjects, add new arguments and relevant details to them. We have also added material that has not been published before" (p. 7).

The titles of the studies and articles in this second volume are:

Comerțul exterior al Basarabiei în vremea administrației rusești [Foreign Trade of Bessarabia During the Russian Administration], pp. 9-25; *Dobrogea la 1878-1879. Impresii și opinii din presa vremii despre ce ar trebui făcut* [Dobrudja in 1878-1879. Impressions and Opinions from the Press of the Time About What Should Be Done], pp. 26-44; *Comerțul exterior al României în vremea regimului protecționist din anii '30* [Foreign Trade of Romania During the Protectionist Regime of the 1930s], pp. 45-94; *Dimensiunea economică și politică a unei lucrări ingineresti (Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră)* [The Economic and Political Dimension of an Engineering Work (Danube-Black Sea Canal)], pp. 95-135; *Despre navigația comercială pe Nistru în prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea* [On Commercial Navigation on the Dniester in the First Half of the 20th Century], pp. 136-157; *Concurența dintre marile porturi ale României* [Competition Between the Major Ports of Romania], pp. 158-180; *Considerații privind comerțul de tranzit derulat prin porturile de la Dunărea de Jos în perioada interbelică* [Considerations Regarding the Transit Trade Carried out Through the Ports of the Lower Danube in the Interwar Period], pp. 181-204; *Considerații privind tranzitul cehoslovac prin portul Constanța în perioada interbelică* [Considerations Regarding the Czechoslovak Transit Through the Port of Constanța in the Interwar Period], pp. 205-220; *Despre tranzitul polonez prin portul Constanța în perioada interbelică* [On Polish

Transit Through the Port of Constanța in the Interwar Period], pp. 221-233; *Tranzitul de mărfuri sovietice pentru Germania prin portul Constanța în anii 1939-1941* [Transit of Soviet Goods for Germany Through the Port of Constanța in 1939-1941], pp. 234-242; *Bulgaria după Primul Război Mondial și interesele unei fabrici de ciment din România* [Bulgaria After the First World War and the Interests of a Cement Factory in Romania], pp. 243-255; *Destinul industrial al orașului Cernavodă* [The Industrial Destiny of the City of Cernavodă], pp. 256-273; *Constanța versus Varna – rivalități istorice* [Constanța versus Varna – Historical Rivalries], pp. 274-293; *Traficul de pasageri prin portul Constanța în perioada interbelică* [Passenger Traffic Through the Port of Constanța in the Interwar Period], pp. 294-310; *Problemele tehnologice ale începutului exportului de sare al României pe mare* [Technological Problems of the Beginning of Romania's Salt Export by Sea], pp. 311-323; *De ce nu am mai avut armatori români?* [Why Didn't We Have Romanian Shipowners Anymore], pp. 324-342; *Marina Comercială Română în viziunea armatorilor* [The Romanian Merchant Navy in the Vision of the Shipowners], pp. 343-358; *Istoricul introducerii combustibilului lichid la vasele maritime române* [History of the Introduction of Liquid Fuel to Romanian Maritime Vessels], pp. 359-372; *Așezarea industriei petroliere la Constanța (1897-1916)* [The Establishment of the Oil Industry in Constanța (1897-1916)], pp. 373-391; *Noi date privind activitatea Societății „Steaua Română” la Constanța (1897-1916)* [New Data on the Activity of the 'Romanian Star' Society in Constanța], pp. 392-402; *Odiseea navelor Societății „Steaua Română” în timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial* [Odyssey of the Ships of the 'Romanian Star' Company During the Second World War], pp. 403-417; *Despre activitatea Societății „Româno-americană” la Constanța* [On the Activity of the 'Romanian-American' Company in Constanța], pp. 418-428; *Traficul petrolier în portul Constanța în anii 1939-1944* [On the Activity of the 'Romanian-American' Company in Constanța], pp. 429-437; *Despre activitatea Societății „Astra Română” la Constanța* [On the Activity of the 'Astra Română' Company in Constanța], pp. 438-449; *Exportul de produse petroliere din România spre Turcia (1900-1940)* [The Export of Oil Products from Romania to Turkey (1900-1940)], pp. 450-466; *Linia maritimă Constanța – New York* [The Constanța – New York Sea Line], pp. 467-480; *Ipoteza tranzitului de petrol caucazian prin România în anii 1941-1943* [The Hypothesis of the Transit of Caucasian Oil through Romania in 1941-1943], pp. 481-488; *Brăila pe harta petrolului românesc* [Brăila on the Map of Romanian Oil], pp. 489-503. *Lista figurilor* [List of Figures], pp. 504-505, *Indici de persoane și locuri* [Indexes of People and Places], pp. 506-525, *Figuri* [Figures], pp. 527-544 (31 photo reproductions and facsimiles).

Referring to the theme of this second volume, Professor Valentin Ciorbea, the dean of historical studies in Dobrogea today, rightly points out that “As for us, we would like to point out that we found in the contributions of Dr. Constantin Cheramidoglu information, data and analyses that complete our research on the Dobrudja area” and “The author considered it appropriate for the reader to attach 31 period images from the ports of Constanța, Brăila, and Galați from the interwar period. As stated, the second volume brings to our attention 28 studies and articles. Our attention was particularly drawn to the studies regarding the role of the port of

Constanța as an international maritime gateway for Romania and our country's neighbors, the activity of some trading companies specialized in the export of petroleum products to various European markets. Historians and those passionate about the past of the Dobrogea area and beyond will find in the two volumes unpublished information, assessments and conclusions supported by the author through solid and diverse documentation".

The result of the long and constant documentation and research of the meticulous servant of the Clio Muse, the two volumes place the laborious author among the foremost historians of Dobrudja today.

Constantin Hlihor (coordonator [Eds.]), *Alegător în România secolului XX. Între speranțe, promisiuni și interesele guvernanților* [Voter in 20th Century Romania. Between Hopes, Promises, and the Interests of the Rulers]. **Autori: Luminița Banu, Florian Banu, Mihail-Andi Băncilă, Mariana Cojoc, Marian Cojoc, Ecaterina Hlihor, Constantin Hlihor, Gheorghe Onișoru, Cristian Sandache, Ioan Scurtu, Meteor Press, București, 2025, 352 pp.; ill., facs. ISBN 978-973-728-916-2**

The initiator and editor of this volume, recently septuagenarian (B. May 3, 1955) is a very productive servant of Clio (an officer by career, with a doctorate in History, university Professor), being a pioneer in our historiography in the last three decades in the field of geopolitics. He is the author of almost 20 volumes by sole author and co-author (with translations, some of them, in English) and of numerous other volumes as an editor. On occasion of the publication of the last volume (last year), the professor from Iași Cătălin Turliuc noted: "A scholar and appreciated historian, equally well-versed in the mysteries and networks of geopolitics and international relations, Professor Constantin Hlihor offers us in this volume [*Cu mâinile altora. România și războaiele prin intermediari în Africa (1970-1985)*] a relevant analysis of a little-known and often overlooked chapter of our contemporary history. concealed by our historiography today. The internal conflict in Angola and the war between Somalia and Ethiopia, on which the author insisted in his approach, gave Romania the opportunity to consistently express in the sub-Saharan geopolitical area its position towards the reality of a divided world and always on the brink of a major war. Romania's foreign policy at that time, even if marked by an indisputable ideological background, was one of wide openness and carefully balanced moderation, with an extension towards pragmatism and political-ideological considerations alike".

Here is the thematic diversity of the author's volumes (and, in some, co-author): *Anul 1940. Drama românilor dintre Prut și Nistru* (coautor cu Ioan Scurtu) (1992), *Complot împotriva României. 1939-1947* (coautor cu Ioan Scurtu)(1994), *The Red Army in Romania* (co-author with Ioan Scurtu) (2000), *Istoria secolului XX* [History of the 20th Century] (2000), *Geopolitica și geostrategia în analiza relațiilor internaționale contemporane. Considerații teoretice și metodologice* [Geopolitics and Geostrategy in the Analysis of Contemporary International Relations. Theoretical and Methodological

Considerations] (2005), *România. Căderea comunismului și nașterea democrației: 1989-2000* (2006), *Politica de securitate în domeniul internațional contemporan. Domeniul energetic* (2008), *Geopolitica. De la clasic la postmodern* (2011), *România și șocurile geopolitice ale războiului rece* [Romania and the Geopolitical Shocks of the Cold War] (2016), *Revoluție și tranziție la români într-un secol scurt. 1918-1989* [Revolution and Transition for Romanians in a Short Century. 1918-1989] (2017), *Decembrie 1989 prin ochii tinerilor militari de atunci* [December 1989 Through the Eyes of Young Military Men of the Time] (2019), *Cu mâinile altora. România și războaiele prin intermediari în Africa (1970–1985)* [With the Hands of Others. Romania and the Proxy Wars in Africa (1970–1985)] (2025).

The thematic structure of the 8 studies is: Constantin Hlihor, *Cuvânt-înainte* [Foreword] (pp. 7-15), Constantin Hlihor, *Alegătorul din România secolului al XX-lea în fața urnelor. Între promisiuni uitate și speranța unui viitor mai bun* [The 20th-Century Romanian Voter at the Polls. Between Forgotten Promises and the Hope of a Better Future] (pp. 17-60), Luminița Banu, Florian Banu *Alegeri, alegători și aleși în România monarhică (1866-1946)* [Elections, Voters, and Elected Officials in Monarchical Romania (1866-1946)] (pp. 610-166), Ioan Scurtu, *Alegătorul român din perioada interbelică (1919-1937)* [The Romanian Voter in the Interwar Period (1919-1937)] (pp. 167-189), Cristian Sandache, *Partidul „Totul pentru Țară” și electoratul din România, în alegerile parlamentare din decembrie 1946* [The “Everything for the Country” Party and the Romanian Electorate in the Parliamentary Elections of December 1946] (pp. 190-210), Gheorghe Onișoru, *Profilul alegătorului de la 19 noiembrie 1946* [The Profile of the Voter of November 19, 1946] (pp. 211-230), Mariana Cojoc, Marian Cojoc, *Electorat și electorale în secolul XX între Dunăre și Mare* [Electorate and Electoral Processes in the 20th Century Between the Danube and the Sea] (pp. 231-266), Constantin Hlihor, Mihail-Andi Băncilă, *Alegătorul militar în secolul XX. De la gardian al urnelor la statutul de votant* [The Military Voter in the 20th Century. From the Guardian of the Ballot Box to the Status of a Voter] (pp. 267-299), Ecaterina Hlihor, *Perenitatea unor cuvinte în discursurile electorale din România secolului XX. Câteva considerații* [The Perennity of Some Words in 20th-Century Romanian Electoral Discourses. Some Considerations] – (pp. 300-326). *Despre autori* [About the Authors] (pp. 327-335).

In the *Foreword*, the coordinator reveals several assertions of a general nature, related to the topic addressed:

“Free and fair elections, based on universal suffrage, represented for Romania, as well as for other states in our geographical proximity, one of the essential indicators showing the extent to which society has entered Western modernity. Elections produce the selection and legitimization of a political elite to access and manage political power at a given time in society based on the commitments it assumes to society. If this is not respected, voters can hold the elected officials accountable by not granting them another mandate to manage the country’s affairs” (p. 7).

And the editor also points out that

“The structuring of the volume was done in the logic of historical research of facts and events that took place in space and time, from the general to the particular, without taking into account other criteria for arranging the studies included” (p. 15).

And the most extensive study, of Luminița Banu and Florian Banu, reveals that “the introduction of universal suffrage did not mean a renunciation of the long-practiced methods of falsifying elections, but, on the contrary, brought more violence and defiance of the legal framework”. It did not mean, as the coordinator himself comments, “the attenuation of political instability and the elimination of political factions promoted by the royal camarilla, regardless of who was on the Romanian throne. In this context, the reaction of a part of the electorate was not at all surprising, many citizens looking with hope towards the extreme left or extreme right movements. The violent reaction of the authorities (arrests, torture, devastation of offices, closure of publications, declaration of political formations as illegal), not infrequently by violating the legal framework, produced an even greater weakening of citizens’ trust in the positive values of the democratic political system” (pp. 9-10).

A unique thematic approach in our Historiography, this volume constitutes, through each study, a relevant contribution to the increasingly innovative thematic area of today’s historical research. The credit goes to the initiator and, naturally, no less, to each author – well-known personalities of contemporary historical writing.

Corneliu-Mihail Lungu, Magdalena Albu, Stefadina... file de arhivă. Omagiu Istoricului Ioan SCURTU, la 85 de ani. Volum îngrijit de prof. univ. dr. ... și dr. ... [Stefadina... Archive Files. Homage to the Historian Ioan SCURTU, at 85 Years Old. Volume Edited by Prof. Dr. Corneliu-Mihail Lungu and Dr. Magdalena Albu], Editura Stefadina, București, 2025, 410 pp.; ill., facs. ISSN 2392-6899

I pointed out at the beginning of this year, in a specialized magazine, that last year, 2025, our Historiography was in a moment of celebration – Professor Ioan Scurtu had reached a venerable age on November 27. And I noted then: “Professor Ioan Scurtu, founding member of the Romanian Academy of Scientists (and former president of the Section of Historical and Archaeological Sciences) – born in Neamț County 85 years ago, on the date of N. Iorga’s assassination (November 27, 1940), is among the first-rate scientific personalities that the country can be proud of; and for our Historiography, no less, the celebration of the age of the scientist with such a vast editorial production – the most authorized, with scientific validation, researcher of the interwar period, and not only, of Romania –, with national-cultural attitudes and firm patriotic conduct – constitutes a professional duty that springs from the soul of every servant of Clio, of the Romanians who have appropriated national history – especially that of the past century –, from the books of the one to whom, for many, he was a precious mentor.

As the venerable historian – who has also held various high-level positions, such as director of the ‘Nicolae Iorga’ Institute of History, general director of the

National Archives, inspector general in the Ministry of Education, president of the Romanian Society of Historical Sciences, dean of several History faculties, founder and director of historical publications, PhD supervisor of dozens of young researchers –, recently summarized (on September 9th), ‘By the summer of 2025, I had published 52 books of my own, 59 as coordinator and co-author, 108 as collaborator, 18 of which in languages of international circulation. In addition, there are over 500 studies published in specialized journals. In 2002, Ars Docendi Publishing House included 48 of these in the volume: Ioan Scurtu, *Studii de istorie* [Historical Studies]’ (573 pp.)”.

This anniversary, which should have been of the soul and solidarity of the servants of the Clio Museum in our country, unfortunately did not have national relevance - with a few, and all more significant and precious, exceptions. I am thinking, first all, of the initiative of his archivist and historian colleagues Corneliu-Mihail Lungu and Magdalena Albu, from S.C. Stefadina Comserv S.R.L. (Bucharest), who made this volume appear – 14 “studies published by historian Ioan Scurtu”, also represented to the reader in this way.

It is about the studies – 6 Martie 1945 – *Între legendă și realitate* [March 6, 1945 – Between Legend and Reality] (pp. 9-27), *Amintiri și reflecții privind activitatea Corneliiei Bodea* [Memories and Reflections on the Activity of Cornelia Bodea] (pp. 29-41), 1917 – *Preludii ale Unirii Basarabiei cu România* [1917 – Preludes to the Union of Bessarabia with Romania] (pp. 43-60), 1918 – *Anul întregirii României și contextul european* [1918 – The Year of Romania’s Unification and the European Context] (pp. 61-77), 1918: „Voința întregului popor” [1918: ‘The Will of the Whole People’] (pp. 79-88), *Făuritori ai Unirii Basarabiei cu România* (1918). *Ion Inculeț* (1884-1940). *Pantelimon Halippa* (1883-1979). *Constantin Stere* (1865-1936) [Makers of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania (1918). *Ion Inculeț* (1884-1940). *Pantelimon Halippa* (1883-1979). *Constantin Stere* (1865-1936)] (89-112), *Tratatul de la Trianon – istoriografie și politică* [The Treaty of Trianon – Historiography and Politics] (pp. 113-128), *Lupta pentru apărarea Marii Uniri din 1918* [The Struggle to Defend the Great Union of 1918] (pp. 129-140), *Reunirea Basarabiei și Bucovinei de nord cu Patria-mamă – obiectivul fundamental al intrării României în cel de-Al Doilea Război Mondial* [The Reunification of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina with the Motherland – the Fundamental Objective of Romania’s Entry into World War II] (pp. 141-153), *Ocupația străină – grea povară pentru poporul român* [The Foreign Occupation – A Heavy Burden for the Romanian People] (pp. 155-177), *Constituția din 1923, în perspectiva istoriei* [The 1923 Constitution, in the Perspective of History] (pp. 179-197), *Istorie și actualitate: Unitatea națională și „sacrificiul istoric”* [History and Current Affairs: National Unity and the ‘Historical Sacrifice’] (pp. 199-249), *Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, repere arhivistice și istorice* [Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, Archival and Historical Landmarks] (pp. 251-257).

They are complemented by 4 “collegial appreciations” (pp. 261-403) – Aprecieri colegiale [Collegial Appreciations /Reviews/] (prof. univ. dr. Corneliu-Mihail Lungu: *Ioan Scurtu, Tezaurul României de la Moscova* [The Romanian Treasury

in Moscow], Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2014] (pp. 261-263), prof. univ. dr. Constantin Hlihor: *Ioan Scurtu, reprezentarea trecutului istoric, între propria percepție și analiza surselor documentare* [Ioan Scurtu, the Representation of the Historical Past, Between One's Own Perception and the Analysis of Documentary Sources] (pp. 265-271), Dr. Magdalena Albu: *Sinteza vieții unui istoric: Ioan Scurtu* [Synthesis of a Historian's Life: Ioan Scurtu] (pp. 273-305), Magdalena Albu: *Profesorul Ioan Scurtu: „Mi-a fost dat să trăiesc sub mai multe regimuri”* [Professor Ioan Scurtu: “I Was Given the Opportunity to Live Under Several Regimes” /Conversation/ (pp. 307-403).

And at the end of the volume a touching *Cuvânt de grație* (p. 409), by dr. Mihai Nicolae, founder of SC Stefadina (established in 1996, having as its main activity the provision of services specific to the archival field) – “On the occasion of his anniversary, we express our gratitude to the historian and Professor Ioan SCURTU, for the special honor of having been present, permanently, alongside the ‘Stefadina’ Publishing House and, also, with numerous scientific research works, in the pages of the ‘Stefadina... file de arhivă’ Magazine, a publication on historiographical-archival themes, born at His Excellency suggestion and practically concretized by those who had the chance to know the Professor and collaborate with him in the historical and archival realm, carrying forward the tradition inherited from their mentor, Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu”.

The volume is prefaced with an *Argument* (p. 5) by Professor Corneliu-Mihail Lungu, a long-time and steadfast collaborator – including at the helm of the National Archives – of the one being honored: “The grace of the Supreme Lord endowed the Man Ioan SCURTU with a fate rich in brilliance and creativity, in proportion to his value affirmed, demonstrated and confirmed throughout his life, especially through the Work created and left as a legacy to Romanian historiography and spirituality.

As a recognition of the greatness of such a person, over the years, prestigious institutions have published reference works about the historian I. SCURTU, such as „*Profesioniștii noștri*” [Our Professionals], edited, more than once, by the Romanians from Sfântu Gheorghe, who had become a minority in the heart of the Country. The volumes published on the 70th anniversary, or eight decades of the great historian's existence, bear witness, becoming, in turn, pages of history...

Based on such realities and editorial achievements, I considered that the *Stefadina... file de arhivă Magazine*, which the historian, professor and researcher Ioan SCURTU honored, for a decade, with specialized studies, can dare to dedicate a special issue to him, defined, with modestly, but full of admiration, as a Tribute to his 85 years of life.

On the same basis, of objective realities and incontestable evidence, those who are tasked with demystifying history and destroying the values of identity spirituality will not succeed, and the geniuses of the Romanians will endure...”

A soulful volume, an offering to the leading Romanian historian of our time – through the scientific substance of his studies and books, through his devotion to serving national history, to defending its perennial truths.

Mihai Nicolae, Magdalena Albu, *Dialoguri pentru Istorie* [Dialogues for History]. Volum îngrijit de dr. ... și dr. ..., Editura Stefadina, București, 2025, 566 pp., ill., facs. ISBN 978-606-9662-58-8

A volume of a special nature was published last year by Stefadina Publishing House. It is, in fact, a volume of conversations between historian Magdalena Albu and a number distinguished representatives of our current Historiography, “all of whom are approaching eight decades of age, and some of whom are already beyond their prime”; in *Argument* (not specifically signed), the two *îngrijitori* [editors] show that “We have dared to support the emergence and bequeathing to future generations of *Dialoguri pentru Istorie* [Dialogues for History]. Their authors are prominent representatives of the historiographical front, with a rich scientific work and a long pedagogical activity, all of whom are on the verge of completing eight decades of life, and some of them exceeding their generous age. We have included in this volume personalities who have collaborated at the Stefadina Publishing House and the Magazine, as well as in scientific activities initiated by our Society.

Those present in the pages of *Dialogues* considered that this work is intended to be a model to be followed by younger generations, vigorous and eager to cultivate interest and love for Romanian History. Thus, it would contribute to restoring this science to its legitimate rights and to the pedestal that the great classics of the field, led by the brilliant Nicolae Iorga, climbed on it” (p. 9).

Here are some summary extracts from the statements of those interviewed:

Profesorul Ioan Scurtu [B. November 27, 1940], „*Mi-a fost dat să trăiesc sub mai multe regimuri*” [Professor Ioan Scurtu: “I Was Given the Opportunity to Live Under Several Regimes”] (pp. 13-110 – “In this spirit (of the Law promulgated on July 4, 2023, which is based on the so-called concept of ‘Educated Romania’ – our emphasis), the subject History of the Romanians was eliminated from education, so that young people would not know the past and be able to make comparisons with the current situation. It should be emphasized that the draft law was discussed and approved in the Committees of the two Chambers, put to a vote in plenary article by article, but none of the 469 senators and deputies referred to the need for patriotic education and proposed that the history of the Romanians be maintained and take its rightful place in pre-university education. Taking stock, I found that I held seminars and courses with at least 3,000 students, I supervised about 300 theses degrees, 150 scientific and methodological papers for the first degree, 50 Master Theses and 72 Doctoral Theses. I have published 52 author’s books, 62 as coordinator and co-author, 108 as collaborator, of which 18 in internationally circulated languages”);

Dialog întru istorie cu opera profesorului Petre Țurlea [B. June 17, 1947], *acest Perpessicius al istoriografiei românești* [Dialogue in History with the Work of Professor Petre Țurlea, this Perpessicius of Romanian Historiography] (pp. 111-144 – “Therefore, the popularization of all great Romanian personalities, from all fields, is necessary, and that of the life and work of Nicolae Iorga, in Romania at the beginning of the 21st Century, can contribute to directing society towards true values, can contribute to restoring respect for the past of the Romanian people, to recognizing its place and role in the world of today and yesterday”);

Profesorul Ion Solcanu [B. October 19, 1943], „*Istoricul trebuie să aibă în vedere, întotdeauna, documentul: de ceramică, de piatră, de pergament sau de hârtie!*” [Professor Ion Solcanu: “The Historian Must Always Consider the Document: Ceramic, Stone, Parchment or Paper!”] (pp. 145-211 – “In my view, as someone who has been in militant politics on the front lines, I would say at the national level, for 19 years, doubled by the profession of historian, politicians are of four categories: visionary statesmen (I would include Ștefan cel Mare, Mihai Viteazul, Kogălniceanu and Ionel I.C. Brătianu), statesmen (starting with Alexandru Ioan Cuza and continuing even with Carol I and those from the first half of the century of the *Unification of the Romanian Nation*), politicians (those who hold various public dignities, work in the national interest, without neglecting their own interest, legally) and politicians (countless and rightly forgotten, are those who do not think about the interest of the nation, of the people, but think about the next elections”);

Profesorul Ioan Opreș [B. June 9, 1942], *întâlnire cu memoria Patrimoniului Cultural Național* [Professor Ioan Opreș, Meeting with the Memory of the National Cultural Heritage] (pp. 213-236 – “Understanding History and its teachings, not making it forgotten, seems to me to be the permanent obligation of the museum. Whoever neglects it and copies it carelessly, risks causing serious harm to the nation. Historians – and in cultural memory institutions, specialists serve Clio – cannot deviate from their obligations. Regarding my modest contribution to the affirmation of museums, I confess that, mainly, I insisted on coagulating the professional group to affirm its guild solidarity and to be united in supporting fully due rights”);

Ana Grama [B. August 19, 1940], *Doamnă a arhivaliilor. Din fondurile documentare ale Mitropoliei Ardealului* [Ana Grama, Lady of the Archives. From the Documentary Funds of the Transylvanian Metropolitanate] (pp. 237-261 – “I had no ambitions that were harmful to anyone, assuming the attitude of the mouse-archivist, locked in the given room. Reality offered me the open path that I needed, also ensuring me freedom, an independence that I did not give up, allowing me choices that I do not regret. My subject on my own path, carefully corroborated with the given whole!”);

Profesorul Gheorghe Sbârnă [B. February 8, 1942], *drumul carului și drumul istoriei* [Professor Gheorghe Sbârnă, the Path of the Chariot and the Path of History] (pp. 263-281 – “In the heritage of Romanian culture, Nicolae Iorga was the most complex personality, belonging equally to universal culture. His prestigious name

as a scientist and, at the same time, a politician and statesman, joined the greatest in the world, in relation to the important events of the first half of the last century”);

Profesorul Tasin Gemil [B. September 21, 1943], *un tătar din România, pe drumurile istoriei* [Professor Tasin Gemil, a Tatar from Romania, on the Roads of History] (pp. 283-303 – “Being a Tatar in Romania, but not only in Romania, meant having great frustrations and permanent fears. First of all, it was the complex of one who no longer has his own country. There is a saying: ‘The Tatars no longer have their own country, but they are now in all countries!’ In a way, the Tatars share the tragic fate of the Jews left without a country and forced to wander the whole world. Like the Jews, the Tatars have a great power of survival, of adaptation. They taught them the necessities of life”);

Profesorul Mihai Drecin [B. November 11, 1944], *și responsabilitatea de a fi istoric* [Professor Mihai Drecin and the Responsibility of Being a Historian] (pp. 305-338 – “Between 1968-2024, I published as sole author, co-author and editor 14 volumes in publishing houses in Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest; 84 studies in collective volumes, 118 in specialized and cultural journals, I gave 345 communications in Oradea, main university centers in the country, several studies abroad. I published a series of reviews, prefaces and afterwords to volumes edited by me with former doctoral students. My orientation towards researching the history of the ‘Albina’ Bank in Sibiu was motivated by discussions with my Father, an employee of this bank during the interwar period. He told me about its beginnings and role in the history of Transylvanian Romanians, about the executive directors”);

Dr. Ioan Lăcătușu [B. September 25, 1947], *cărturarul român din inima țării* [Dr. Ioan Lăcătușu, the Romanian Scholar from the Heart of the Country] (pp. 339-373 – “In 2010, within the Eurocarpatica Publishing House of the European Center for Covasna-Harghita Studies in Sfântu Gheorghe, the *Our Professionals* Collection was established, within which, to date, 40 volumes have been produced. All the troubles of the Romanians in the counties of Covasna and Harghita start from their status as a ‘majority, numerically minority’. In practice, they cannot confidently decide the problems of preserving and affirming the Romanian identity. A ‘breath of oxygen’ is represented by the Orthodox Diocese of Covasna and Harghita and the subordinate and partner cultural institutions and, more recently, the presence of the Romanian Academy in the area”);

Profesorul Cornel Sigmirean [B. June 7, 1956], *„Toate lucrurile care le-am obținut în viață sunt rezultatul destinului, asta e clar”* [Professor Cornel Sigmirean: “All the things I have achieved in life are the result of destiny, that’s clear”] (pp. 375-396 – “At the end of nine years of research, after seeing over 300 linear meters of archives from the country and abroad, filed in 34,000 files, we reached 7,778 young Romanians, registered at 84 universities in Europe. But, I succeeded, I admit, and driven by an immense desire to convince Romanians that, in the history of Transylvania, they were not just a people of peasants, that there was an intellectual elite, that there was a nobility that was at the peak of the political movement in the 18th and 19th centuries”);

Profesorul Dumitru Preda [B. June 17, 1951], *sub semnul istoriei și al diplomației* [Professor Dumitru Preda, Under the Sign of History and Diplomacy] (pp. 397-423 – “We are a country with a historical destiny and a historical experience that signifies experience, and today, we are witnessing that people from different countries are giving us lessons that, when we were proving our vitality, did not even exist on the map of Europe. Our multi-millennium past represents a priceless treasure. It is a pride that needs to be cultivated, and here I say that it is a big mistake that the number of history lessons has been reduced and they are trying to dilute it even more, that history should be introduced mandatory regardless of what baccalaureate you hold”);

Profesorul Ion Vlad [B. February 19, 1950], *„... Ne-am bătut ... cu cei mari, cu imperiile ... și iată-ne, suntem tot aici, în picioare, ... suntem vii și facem istorie, pe când imperiile sunt ... doar în istorie!”* [Professor Ion Vlad: “... We fought ... with the great ones, with the empires ... and here we are, still here, standing, ... we are alive and making history, while empires are ... only in history!”] (pp. 425-462 – “Arriving in Brașov, a military lecturer at the history department, I found my niche, discovered the Brașov archives and historiography, the specialized institutions and local historians and I set off. It wasn’t easy, of course, I was a lone wolf, the local environment did not promote research and journalism; I enrolled in a doctorate, the first in the institution, in March 1989, but I was more hidden than tolerated in my endeavor”);

Arhivistul Tudor Rățoi [B. January 14, 1953], *„Această instituție a Arhivelor Naționale, a fost totul pentru mine”* [The Archivist Tudor Rățoi: “This Institution of the National Archives Was Everything to Me”] (pp. 463-502 – “We are contemporaries with our own past, because everything that happens to us in the present stems from the more recent or more distant past and we should always relate to it, with wisdom and honesty, in deeds and not just in words, a need that would require surgical treatment in the Romanian space, where we have become somewhat accustomed, for a very long time, to say one thing and smoke another, as Arghezi said”);

Profesorul Nicolae Noica [B. July 7, 1943], *prețuitor de seamă al documentelor de arhivă* [Professor Nicolae Noica, a Great Admirer of Archival Documents] (pp. 503-516 – “The fact that we now see in the public space, wanderings, untruth and aggression, intellectual decline and rudimentary expression is, I believe, only the consequence of the deliberate cutting out, for commercial purposes, of a slice of the broader reality of Romanian society. Perhaps I seem idealistic or overly optimistic, but, for me, the village – seen as the mother of the Nation – retains its essential role in defining national identity. Of course, modernity has touched it too, but, in its essence, it still preserves the authentic Romanian spirit”);

Profesorul și arhivistul Corneliu-Mihail Lungu [B. November 9, 1943], *un autoexilat printre documentele de arhivă ale istoriei* [Professor and Archivist Corneliu-Mihail Lungu, A Self-Exiled Among the Archival Documents of History] (pp. 517-554 – “Throughout my octogenarian life, I have learned from friends not to hate my enemies, and my enemies have taught me to respect and appreciate my friends more and more. I feel obliged to note that I had many friends during my childhood, my

student days, throughout my entire professional activity, among university professors and even among students. Since I was unable to hate or be hostile, I want to believe that I had no enemies. However, over the years, there have also been some who have been hostile to me out of envy, jealousy or their native malice”);

/dr. Mihai Nicolae/, Cuvinte pentru speranța în Documentele de arhivă... [Dr. Mihai Nicolae/, Words for Hope in the Archive Documents...] (pp. 555-566 – “Practically, in addition to physical archiving (by the ‘Stefadina’ Society, which reached 67 km of the archive – our note) intended for processing documents in order to manage and use them efficiently, we are particularly concerned with electronic archiving, which constitutes the future, without ever excluding, however, the original archival document, the essential identity matrix of the past of a people, of a national culture. Because the document itself needs to be preserved, taking account the appropriate parameters from a technical point of view, in order show its value over time – either in the immediate or distant future”).

Here is an unusual and unique volume, in terms of its theme, precious in terms of its personal ‘stories’ – which develop professional-scientific career paths, assertions and convictions forged from the perspective of defending national history –, from some remarkable representatives of today’s Historiography, indispensable for those who, in the future, will dare to sketch a history of Romanian Historiography from the last half century - from the second half of the 20th century and the first quarter of the 21st century. Congratulations to each of them – and, no less, to the initiators!

Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria de după 1989 prin experiența unui istoric* [History After 1989 Through the Experience of a Historian], Editura Junimea (Colecția *Historia magistra vitae*), Iași, 2025, 326 pp.; ill., facs. ISBN 978-973-37-2955-6

We recall, in this anniversary review, for the informative benefit of the hurried citizen – but interested in the intellectual and professional path of great contemporary personalities – just a few of the titles, almost all of which constitute pioneering works in our Historiography:

– books by a single author: *Din viața politică a României. Întemeierea și activitatea Partidului Țărănesc (1918-1926)* [From the Political Life of Romania. The Foundation and Activity of the Peasant Party (1918-1926)] (1975: 198 pp.), *Viața politică în România* [Political life in Romania]. 1918-1944 (1982: 336 pp.), *Din viața politică a României (1926-1947). Studiu critic privind istoria Partidului Național-Țărănesc* [From the political life of Romania (1926-1947). A Critical Study on the History of the National Peasant Party] (1983: 552 pp.), *Contribuții privind viața politică din România. Evoluția formei de guvernământ în istoria modernă și contemporană* [Contributions on the Political Life of Romania. The Evolution of the Form of Government in Modern and Contemporary History] (1988: 688 pp.), *Istoria Partidului Național-Țărănesc* [History of the National Peasant Party] (1994: 488 pp.), *Istoria României în anii 1918-1940. Evoluția regimului politic de la democrație la dictatură*

[History of Romania in the Years 1918-1940. The Evolution of the Political Regime from Democracy to Dictatorship] (1996: 252 pp.), *Viața cotidiană a românilor în perioada interbelică* [Daily Life of Romanians in the Interwar Period] (2001: 280 pp.), *Istoria românilor în timpul celor patru regi, 1866-1947* [History of Romanians During the Four Kings, 1866-1947], 4 vols, (2001: 236+198+338+224 pp.), *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989 în context internațional* [The Romanian Revolution of December 1989 in International Context] (2006: 364 pp.), *Istoria Românilor de la Carol I la Nicolae Ceaușescu* [History of Romanians from Carol I to Nicolae Ceaușescu] (2010: 280 pp.), *Un istoric pe meridianele lumii* [A Historian on the Meridians of the World] (2013: 278 pp.), *Tezaurul României de la Moscova. Note și amintiri privind activitatea Comisiei Comune româno-ruse (2004-2012)* [The Treasure of Romania in Moscow. Notes and Memories on the Activity of the Romanian-Russian Joint Commission (2004-2012)] (2014: 368 pp.), *Povestiri adevărate. Memorii* [True Stories. Memoirs] (2022: 612 pp.), *Martor la impunerea, evoluția și prăbușirea regimului socialist totalitar din România (1957-1989)* [Witness to the Imposition, Evolution and Collapse of the Totalitarian Socialist Regime in Romania (1957-1989)] (2024: 248 pp.); and very recently: *Istoria de după 1989 prin experiența unui istoric* [The History After 1989 Through the Experience of a Historian] (2025: 326 pp.);

– co-author: *Istoria României între anii 1918-1981* [History of Romania between 1918-1981] (1981: 376 pp.), *Actul de la 23 August 1944 în context internațional* [The Act of 23 August 1944 in an International Context] (1984: 626 pp.), Titulescu and the Peace Strategy ((1984: 646 pp.), *Democrația la români (1866-1938)* [The Democracy among the Romanians (1866-1938)] (1990: 248 pp.), *Anul 1940. Drama românilor dintre Prut și Nistru* [The Year 1940. The Drama of the Romanians Between the Prut and the Nistru] (1992: 192 pp.), *Istoria Românilor în secolul XX (1918-1948)* [History of Romanians in the 20th Century] (1999: 687 pp.), *Istoricul Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România (1935-2009)* [History of the Romanian Academy of Sciences (1935-2009)] (2009: 214 pp.), *Istoria Academiei de Științe din România. 1935-1948* [History of the Romanian Academy of Sciences. 1935-1948] (2014: 288 pp.), *Istoria Asociației Oamenilor de Știință din România. 1956-1996* [History of the Romanian Association of Scientists. 1956-1996] (2016: 360 pp.);

– coordinator/author (thematic syntheses, collections of documents and/or studies, several titles are translated into languages of international circulation or/and published abroad): *Istoria Basarabiei. De la începuturi până în 1994 / 1998 / 2003* [History of Bessarabia. From the beginnings to 1994] (1994: 412 pp.; additional editions – 1998: 370 pp., 2003: 606 pp.), *Minoritățile naționale din România. 1918-1938* [National Minorities in Romania. 1918-1938]. Documents], 4 vols. (1995-1999: 782+680+606+516 pp.), *Ideologie și formațiuni de dreapta în România. 1927-1943* [Ideology and Right-Wing Formations in Romania. 1927-1943], 7 vols. (1996-2009: 680+304+364+444+414+412+452 pp.), *Tratatul de Istoria Românilor* [Treatise on the History of Romanians], vol. VIII: *România întregită (1918-1940)* [Unified Romania (1918-1940)] (2003: LIII+856 pp.), *Marea Unire din 1918 în context European* [The Great Union of 1918 in a European Context] (2003: 448 pp.), *Structuri politice în Europa*

Centrală și de Sud-Est (1918-2001) [Political Structures in Central and South-Eastern Europe (1918-2001)], 2 vols. (2003: 238+328 pp.), *România. Marea Unire* [Romania. The Great Union] (2008: 120 pp. – with editions in French, English, German, Italian, Spanish).

“I felt the need to pay tribute to the greatest Romanian historians – Nicolae Iorga and Gheorghe I. Brătianu – who were victims of political regimes: Iorga was assassinated by legionnaires in 1940, and Brătianu died in the Sighet prison for political prisoners in 1953. Through their work, they opened my intellectual horizons and made me understand the need for national history to be presented in an international, primarily European, context. Secondly, I had the chance to work in two institutions honored by these personalities: the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest and the ‘N. Iorga’ Institute of History. Moreover, I had the pleasure of working for five years in Nicolae Iorga’s office, as director of the institute founded by the great historian.

In the same spirit – of respect and gratitude – I evoked four great historians that I knew: Constantin C. Giurescu, Dumitru Almaș, Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, and Cornelia Bodea.

In the turbulent atmosphere after December 1989, I was elected head of the Department of Romanian History and I considered it useful to evoke the activity carried out to return to normality and stimulate colleagues and students to capitalize on their intellectual potential at the highest possible levels.

After 1989, I witnessed the unleashing of a negativism that is difficult to imagine, but understandable to a point, because it was necessary to break with the old regime, which also included culture, including historiography. But it came to contesting the role that Romanians had throughout history, to denying its emblematic personalities, including the historians Nicolae Bălcescu, A.D. Xenopol, N. Iorga, Dimitrie Onciul, Constantin C. Giurescu, etc. I considered it my duty to give some positive replies, presenting the main milestones regarding the place and role of Romanians in universal history, their contribution to European and world culture and civilization” (p. 5).

And in this memoir volume – “produced, like that of the Stories published in 2022, over several years, some chapters or parts of them being published in various magazines or volumes, to which I have made the changes imposed by the passage of time” –, illustrated with many documents, Professor Scurtu develops the life and social-academic excursion, allowing the reader to learn about the trajectory of one of the most representative personalities of Romanian Historiography and Culture today.

As a sign of respect for the predecessors, the great historians of 20th Century Romania are evoked, right at the beginning of the volume:

“I felt the need to pay tribute to the greatest Romanian historians – Nicolae Iorga and Gheorghe I. Brătianu – who were victims of political regimes: Iorga was assassinated by legionnaires in 1940, and Brătianu died in the Sighet prison for

political prisoners in 1953. Through their work, they opened my intellectual horizons and made me understand the need for national history to be presented in an international, primarily European, context. Secondly, I had the chance to work in two institutions honored by these personalities: the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest and the 'N. Iorga' Institute of History. Moreover, I had the pleasure of working for five years in Nicolae Iorga's office, as director of the institute founded by the great historian.

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The thematic structure of the volume is:

Prolog [Prologue] (pp. 5-8). Capitolul I. *Omagiu celor mai importanți istorici români. Nicolae Iorga și Gheorghe I. Brătianu: doi istorici români de talie mondială* [Chapter I. Homage to the Most Important Romanian Historians. Nicolae Iorga and Gheorghe I. Brătianu: Two World-Class Romanian Historians] (pp. 9-18), Capitolul II. *Cinci ani de activitate în biroul lui Nicolae Iorga* [Chapter II Five Years of Activity in Nicolae Iorga's Office] (pp. 19-36), Capitolul III. *Mari istorici pe care i-am cunoscut – Constantin Giurescu – de la închisoarea Sighet la Academia Republicii Socialiste Români* (pp. 37-49), *Dumitru Almaș – omul și opera* (pp. 50-59), *Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu – profesor și arhivist* (pp. 60-65), *Cornelia Bodea – Amintiri și reflecții* (pp. 66-71) [Chapter III. Great Historians I Have Known – Constantin Giurescu – from Sighet Prison to the Academy of the Romanian Socialist Republic (pp. 37-49), Dumitru Almaș – the Man and His Work (pp. 50-59), Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu – Professor and Archivist (pp. 60-65), Cornelia Bodea – Memories and Reflections (pp. 66-71) (pp. 37-71), Capitolul IV. *Șeful catedrei de istoria românilor* [Chapter IV. Head of the Department of Romanian History] (pp. 73-84), Capitolul V. *Replici pozitive la adresa celor care denigrau istoria poporului român – Români în secolul naționalităților* [Chapter V. Positive Replies to Those Who Denigrated the History of the Romanian People – Romanians in the Century of Nationalities] (pp. 86-90), *1918 – victoria principiului naționalităților în Europa* (pp. 91-104), *Nicolae Titulescu –*

românul european (pp. 105-110), *O arteră navigabilă europeană: Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră* (pp. 111-116), *Istoria României – de la Yalta la Malta (1945-1989). Între mit și realitate* (pp. 117-128) [Chapter V. Positive Replies to Those Who Denigrated the History of the Romanian People – Romanians in the Century of Nationalities (pp. 86-90), 1918 – the Victory of the Principle of Nationalities in Europe (pp. 91-104), Nicolae Titulescu – the European Romanian (pp. 105-110), A European Waterway: the Danube-Black Sea Canal (pp. 111-116), Romanian History – from Yalta to Malta (1945-1989). Between Myth and Reality (pp. 117-128)] (pp. 85-128), Capitolul VI. Nici pe guvernării români nu i-am omis. Studiu de caz: aplicarea tratatului de la Trianon – Optanții unguri, Fundația Gojdu, Arhivele Transilvaniei, Dezarmarea Ungariei [Chapter VI. I Didn't Leave Out the Romanian Governors, Either. Case Study: The Application of the Treaty of Trianon – The Hungarian Optants, Gojdu Foundation, Transylvanian Archives, The Disarmament of Hungary] (pp. 129-148), Capitolul VII. 27-28 martie 2025 – în Sala Unirii din Chișinău, cu gândul la istoria Basarabiei și Bucovinei – Un eveniment simbolic, Complicitatea Marilor Puteri privind ocuparea Basarabiei și nordului Bucovinei de către Uniunea Sovietică [March 27-28, 2025 – in the Unity Hall in Chisinau, with the Thought of the History of Bessarabia and Bukovina – A Symbolic Event, The Complicity of the Great Powers Regarding the Occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by the Soviet Union] (pp. 151-160), Capitolul VIII. Aprecieri privind evoluția României în contextul internațional după 1989 – Revenirea la democrație, „Sacrificiu istoric” [Assessments of Romania's Evolution in the International Context After 1989 – The Return to Democracy (pp. 162-175), “Historical Sacrifice”] (pp. 176-190), Capitolul IX. Director general al Arhivelor Statului/ Naționale [Director General of the State/ National Archives] (pp. 191-268) – *Congresul internațional al Arhivelor din septembrie 1992 (Canada)* [International Congress of Archives in September 1992 (Canada)] (pp. 193-202), *Masa rotundă organizată de Societatea Americană pentru Arhivistică (SUA, septembrie 1992)* [Roundtable Organized by the American Society for Archival Studies (USA, September 1992)] (pp. 203-209), *Congresul Internațional al Arhivelor din septembrie 1996 (China)* [International Congress of Archives in September 1996 (China)] (pp. 210-216), *Inițiator și semnatar al unor documente vizând restituirea arhivelor românești aflate în alte state (1992-1996)* [Initiator and Signatory of Documents Regarding the Restitution of Romanian Archives Located in Other States (1992-1996)] (pp. 217-245), *Contribuția mea la înființarea Facultății de Arhivistică (1992) și a altora la desființarea acesteia (2020)* [My Contribution to the Establishment of the Faculty of Archival Studies (1992) and of Others to Its Abolition (2020)] (pp. 245-253), *Legea Arhivelor Naționale, adoptată în 1996* [National Archives Law, Adopted in 1996] (pp. 254-268), Capitolul X. Președintele Secției de Științe Istorice și Arheologie a Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România [Chapter X. President of the Section of Historical Sciences and Archeology of the Academy of Scientists of Romania] (pp. 269-288), Capitolul XI. Copreședinte al Comisiei Româno-Ruse pentru Tezaurul României depus la Moscova în 1916-1917 [Chapter XI. Co-President of the Romanian-Russian Commission for the Romanian Treasure Deposited in Moscow in 1916-1917] (pp. 289-314).

And *Epilog* [Epilogue] (pp. 315-321 – “I have published volumes of documents, studies and books on the years 1944-1989, in which I have demonstrated that it was not a linear period, but rather experienced important developments, marked by the Soviet occupation from 1944-1958, when the old elite – political, economic and largely cultural – was destroyed. After 1964, a national policy was returned to, and in the 1970s Bucharest was a center of world diplomacy; from 1982 the situation deteriorated as result of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s decisions regarding the early payment of the foreign debt and the forcing of exports to procure the necessary currency; the state of discontent became generalized, culminating in the huge popular movement of December 1989.

By the summer of 2025, I had published 52 books as an author, 59 as a coordinator and co-author, 108 as a collaborator, of which 18 in languages of international circulation. In addition, over 500 studies published in specialized journals are included. In 2002, Ars Docendi Publishing House included 48 of these in the volume *Studii de istorie* (573 p.)” /p. 317/).

A true panorama of the development of Romanian society after 1989, seen through the eyes of a hardworking, honest and upright historian, a servant devoted to revealing the historical truth, within the boundaries of science, of his Nation - this volume constitutes a fundamental book of contemporary memoirs.

Stoica LASCU

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Reference citations

I. Reference-List Entries for Periodicals (APA Style)

a. An Article in a Journal with continuous paging

Harrison, R.L., & Westwood, M.J. (2009). Preventing vicarious traumatization of mental health therapists: Identifying protective practices. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 46, 203-219.

In-text citation (Harrison & Westwood, 2009)

b. An Article in a Journal with separate paging

Damean, S.L. (2013). The Royal Family of Romania and the National Reunification War. *Analele Universității din Craiova. Istorie*, 23(1), 43-50.

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The 1990 book: (Sternberg, 1990: 45)

The first 2003 book: (Sternberg, 2003a: 23)

The second 2003 book: (Sternberg, 2003b: 25)

The 2007 book: (Sternberg, 2007: 139)

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III. Archival Documents and Collections

a. Collection of letters from an archive

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J.G. (2016, April 11). 7 Deadly Environmental Disasters. Retrieved April 25 2016, from <http://www.history.com/news/history-lists>

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