

A History of the Romanians in 100 Memorable Episodes



Dorin Matei

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Bucharest, Casa Radio Publishing House, 2018

ISBN 978-606-8468-87-7

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– edition of the project *Eu aleg România* –

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All text, audio and video material
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A History of the Romanians in 100 Memorable Episodes

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Plea for history

History as a subject matter (or history-speech or history writing) is a form of knowledge of the life of humans who lived in the past, like many other forms of knowledge of the life of present people. History as reality is the very life of humans who lived long time ago. Between reality-history and history-speech (or the historical writings) there are inherent differences, as the past reality cannot be resurrected as such, and can be remade only in some degree, depending on the traces left from that time which are called roots (sources, testimonies). The discovery and study of these sources is an arduous work that can be done only by experts, namely those people who have a dedicated education in this direction. Nevertheless, the past like other fields, is dealt with by amateurs also. The difference between an expert and an amateur who studies the past is huge: while the amateur knows the past through what others said and wrote about what was then, the expert has the capacity to go to the sources, to decode them, to compare them, to give them back in a critical way, to establish what is valid and what is false in those testimonies. In other words, only the expert researches or makes an "enquiry", while the amateur studies through taking over from the others. As in day by day life, the difference between critically restituted history and "told" history based on perceptions is hard to make, a lot of people grow disappointed by the knowledge of past, distrustful of history and even denigrators of historical writings.

Even so, knowing the past life was not and is not a waste for the majority of people. We do not know through which mechanisms of mind we are attracted by "the people who were" (Nicolae Iorga), we do not know why we feel fascinated by the past worlds, but we cannot repress those feelings. Prestigious brain workers talked about this. For example, Paul Valéry said: "Do not think there is no point in meditating on the past with what it has revolute. It shows us especially the frequent failure of too precise predictions and, on the contrary, the great advantages of a thorough and constant preparedness which, not pretending to create or ignore the events - which invariably are surprises or lead to surprising consequences -, allows humans to act as quick as possible on the unforeseen; history, I'm afraid, does not allow us at all to predict, but combined with the independence of spirit can help us see better". As a result, even if it cannot help us make predictions, knowing history makes us "see better" the life each of us is living. Through one of his heroes, William Faulkner said: "The past is never dead. In fact, it is not even past". Truly, the past is never dead, as it is life, more precisely life experience and this does not die, does not go obsolete. So, just like every one of us is attracted by memories, communities too are attracted by history, by collective memory. We live a moment of intense remembrance, we feel the need to clarify our fate as a people and nation. In recent decades, we wavered between two extremes on considering history, namely that of glorified and immemorial history in which everything is spotless and dramatic, on one side, and that of a shameful history, of a submissive people lacking verticality, without a worthy language and a culture, on the other side. It is now the time to reconsider the present and past life and to know the facts depending on the truth that is possible for humans to know, to assume all our avatars, good and bad, to convey the right lesson to our followers. But the simple fact that, being mentioned as Romanians in sources older than one millennium, we still exist in this part of the world, with an old state completed in 1918, with the flaw of the Danube and the Olt, with the watcher and guarding Carpathians, with the churches of Densus and Curtea de Argeş, with the tomb of the great prince in Putna, with the Cernavoda bridge and the gates of Maramures, shows us we did not get lost in the world, we pulsate in the rhythm of this human universe and we want to go towards the future. In our day by day life, the memory of the acts of our ancestors - including those who forged Romania - can be a terrific remedy in the face of discouragements and an impulse for the good deeds that will come. In its way, history continues to be "the teacher of life" (*Historia magistra vitae*), and to us, Romanians, this teaching has in its center "all that extent

of place where Romanian is spoken" (Mihail Kogălniceanu), meaning Romania and the Romanians in the surroundings and more far away. It is our duty to know ourselves, and the best way to do this is the very past life of our people, and that is history. As a consequence - as Marguerite Yourcenar said - love for the past actually means love for life, and he who loves life is condemned to love history.

Ioan-Aurel Pop

Thinker of Hamangia

There are two statuettes molded in clay - a woman and a man. They belong to Hamangia culture, from the 4th to 2nd millennium BC. They differentiate from other similar creations of the era with the way the human body is rendered and the fact that the artist knew to engrain a real personality, which makes them unique in the art of that time.

Why 100? And why essential moments? And why Romanian land?

100, to be a round number and to have enough reasons to be proud of the contributions that this land had to the universal civilization.

Essential, because there are many accomplishments that reached universal consecration and were included to UNESCO World Heritage or were acknowledged as universal priorities. And we are to blame for those which haven't received such a confirmation. On Romanian land, because some belong to certain moments in history when other peoples lived on this land. But, as one could see in any French, English, German or American Museum or museums from any other place in the world, they are part of the heritage of that place and are included among the reasons of pride for the people that lives at present in that territory.

These 100 creations and realizations - that the project "I choose Romania" presents to you in this set - should be present in every school manual and any high school graduate should have heard of them. This is not the case, for all of them. We thought it was necessary to bring them forward to you now, in an anniversary moment, in order to offer you one more reason to be proud that you are Romanians and to persuade you that we have the duty to respect the facts of our predecessors by means of what we do day by day and that us, on our turn, should leave reasons of pride to our heirs.

The first essential moment that we submit to you is illustrated with two 4,000 - 6,000 years old statuettes. They belong to Hamangia Culture, which was developed in Dobruja from the 4th to the 2nd millennium BC and discovered by the Univ.Prof.Dr. Dumitru Berciu. If you see them for the first time, with the glance of the 2018 individual, you might be wondering why they could be considered symbols of an essential moment. They are quite conceptual and pristine. Have you ever observed your child's first attempts to draw? You have surely remarked how fumble the human figures drawn were. Then, after some years, depending on each individual talent, of course, the drawings start to look increasingly more similar to the reality they are based on. However, the humankind needed hundred of thousands of years in order to come to the statues of Eastern Antiquity, then to the wonders of Ancient Greece.

The two statues, known as "The Thinker" and "his Wife" embody a height of the Neolithic art. Let's look at some of the previous creations, from the Upper Paleolithic. "Venus of Willendorf" is probably the best known. It is believed to be rather a cult item than an artistic one, as it embodies the fertility cult, implied by well thickened feminine attributes. Or let's look at some of the anthropomorphic representations discovered previously to the Hamangia statues in our territory, such as the Rastu statuette, of the Vincea culture or the statuette in Turdas. The schematics of the representation are obvious and so is the lack of attention to reveal feelings and temperaments specific to the human species.

Here is how professor Vladimir Dumitrescu used to describe Hamangia "Thinker": "The man is molded as he sits on a clay stool which is glued to him; his spine is bent, his neck and head are leaning forward, his elbows rest upon his knees and his palms seem imbedded in his cheeks; his legs - which are molded apart - have their knees raised

naturally for someone in a sitting position on a round stool and his feet are relatively short. His sketched face - slightly diamond shaped - is nevertheless realistically treated; the forehead is very narrow, the nose is strongly highlighted, the eyeholes are triangular and scooped and the mouth is like a little hole in the chin, while the nose and the ears are represented by some small holes.

The head of this statuette is similar to a certain degree to some heads from Turdas, but its plastic value is way superior, as the artist even manages to render the deformation of the cheek muscles, slightly moved by the pressure of the palms. Here, some of the plans of the figure are too trenchant, but the exceptional talent of the molder is seen in the way he treats many of the details of the body; to those presented above we add the molding of the pectoral muscles and the spine - vertically fluted and bent - and, moreover, the truly striking expression of the face. It is obvious that we should consider him a genuine artist, if we take into consideration that by molding this statue he unleashed himself almost completely from the rigid schematics and the standard canons of that time and not only did he give the lump of clay the right shape of the human body, but also impregnated it with a genuine personality.

What was the unknown artist thinking and which was his model? We will never know. Were these statuettes only cult objects, as some archeologists incline to believe or did the creator want to achieve an art work? The controversy will likely continue for a long time.

Let's look again at the two statuettes and let's remember that in 2000, an international commission has designated this masterpiece, "The Thinker", as one of the 10 artifacts of the human culture that should represent our planet.

Sultana lovers

A male-female couple belonging to the Gumelnita culture, virtually unique in this part of Europe, where a mother and a child appear most often

3.4 million years was the duration of the first era in the human life, the Stone Age. If you only tried to mentally compare these 3.4 million years with the 2018 years of our era, you would probably understand better why the Antiquity pieces presented in this series are, nonetheless, some essential moments. Or even better, think of how many months a computer stays on top after you bought it, until a new and superior motherboard or graphics processing unit is released. The breakneck speed that drives the technology changes in our life prevent us from perceiving the "revolution" that a simple statuette represented some thousands of years ago.

2,000 or only a few hundred years later (the dating methods don't allow us to have a greater precision), somewhere in Southern Romania as well, in Sultana, a master whose name we will probably never know, achieved a similar masterpiece as "The Thinker" and "His wife", driven by a reason we will probably never know. The sculptures belong to Hamangia culture, as we have already seen. We are talking about a male-female couple as well, less contrived as far as plastic molding is concerned, but with a human emotion as intense as the hamangian couple.

Mental changes came along with changes made in our ancestors' way of life, from the Paleolithic hunter and picker, concerned to find food every day, to the human of the last Stone Age and the Neolithic (polished stone) who became a cattle breeder and has diminished his obsession of finding food daily.

The man has time now to bend over his own existence, to start asking questions on his sense on Earth, to search for explanations for nature's phenomena, at the level of his knowledge from that time. Beliefs are shaped and bound and man starts to relate with the surrounding medium. His feelings become more powerful and he starts to reflect them in his artistic creations.

The piece that we submit today, uncovered by Professor Vladimir Dumitrescu in the framework of the final Neolithic culture Gumelnita, has been named "Sultana lovers", like the name of the site it was unearthed from. Gumelnita culture spread across an area that included Wallachia, Dobruja, part of Central Bulgaria, reaching close to the Aegean Sea. It is defined by a beautifully painted ceramics, including with gold, anthropomorphic and animal representations, which, unlike the Cucuteni culture, are more diverse in typology and some of them are made of bone and even marble.

This group is one of a king among artistic accomplishments, not only for Gumelnita culture. But let's give the floor to Professor Vladimir Dumitrescu, to present his discovery: "A wholly unusual appearance so far - it is a group-statuettes [...] - female and male, molded in cylindrical bodies and strictly sketched heads; but an almost unexpected feeling for a Neo-Eneolithic culture, apart from the novelty of the work, comes from the fact that the man puts his left arm under the woman's neck and she holds his waist with her right arm.

The Gumelnita group is indeed unique from almost all points of view, in the Neo-Eneolithic culture in Romania and the neighboring regions, where the only groups uncovered so far represent a mother with her child in her arms and two-head statuettes from Rastu and Vincea." Since the date when the professor was writing these rows, other statue-like couples have been discovered in Gumelnita culture, but they don't achieve the artistic level of this one.

Indeed, if we look at the group, it is impossible not to observe the protective gesture with a complete tenderness of the man holding the woman's shoulder. The two characters leave the impression of relaxation, leisure and peace. Then, the way the two characters are placed, in a center of a pot, distinguishes the work. Its creator placed the man and the woman in the center of life. Almost 6,000 years ago, he was aware of the idea that we are later going to find in all the great mythologies of the world regarding the birth of the Universe through the separation of two basic elements of life: the female and the male one. Their union by means of sacred matrimony ensured the endurance of life and the rich crops.

The spiral-like motive painted on the woman's body suggests the indefinite extension of this process, a guarantee for preservation and persistence of life. The ceaseless cycle is also emphasized by the polychromic pot they are placed into: red (life) and white (death) rhombs which intertwine with no beginning and no ending, like the decorating framing of the medieval miniatures later-on, in which the spindle motive has no beginning and no ending.

The couple of lovers in Sultana could be considered an archetype of the human's conception on existence which is going to have its mythological scenery fixed in writing, along with the civilizations of Ancient Orient.

Frumusica Dance

Pot pad belonging to the Neolithic Cucuteni Culture, made up of 5 intertwined bodies, that offer the impression of a circular dance.

Three steps lightly to the left

And another three to their right

Catch their hands and then unbind

Gather round and again unbend,

And clomping stomp the ground

With soft tact

This is how the circular dance is done in the poem *Zamfira's Wedding*, by George Cosbuc.

"The circular dance is extremely prevalent in the entire Eurasia, in Oriental Europe, in Melanesia and to the Indians of California" - Mircea Eliade says. In Paleolithic it was practiced by hunters in order to prevent the soul of the fallen animal from hurting him or to ensure the multiplication of the game. But once the human moves from hunter and picker to food producer, by means of farming, the significance of the dance becomes related to the circular time and the cosmic cycle. According to Eliade, "As the world and the human existence are valued in terms of vegetal life, the cosmic cycle is perceived as an indefinite recurrence of the same rhythm: birth, death, rebirth." It is the cycle of human and vegetal life that the human life depended on.

"The circular dance" or the "hora" has survived until today in the universe of the Romanian village, through a mechanism that researchers weren't able to totally decode. Its ritual significance has remained almost the same: the place of those who leave is taken, one by one, by other dancers. Moreover, the Sunday dance has gained new senses in the community: it is the moment where the week-long happenings are communicated.

In what was named as the "archaic European civilization", developed towards an original direction that distinguishes it from the Middle Eastern cultures (some hundred years later) and those of The Central and Septentrional European cultures, Cucuteni Culture fills a special place. Only due to our proverbial "idleness" this culture is not yet included in UNESCO World Heritage. The archeological findings on a 350,000 square kilometers area show us a society with a blooming material situation, an active intellectual life, concerned with innovation and the production of prestige goods. The Cucuteni Culture is unique in Europe. Citing Professor Vladimir Dumitrescu, "We could say without hesitation that these anonymous artists, from over five millennia ago, were fully equipped with a sense of colour and shape, conjugating the chromatic harmony with the elegance of silhouettes [...], the potter artisans of Eneolithic in Romania have created precious works, of an artistic level unattained by their European 'colleagues'. The elegance of the ceramic shapes, the harmony of colors, the confidence of the motives' lay-out, often their syntax and sometimes their combination of the surface of the pots rightfully deserve our admiration. And it is natural to ask ourselves how were the people from more than five millennia ago able to realize works that would make any decorator nowadays so proud, although the technical means they had were so little?

Using a repertory of ceramic basic motives, dominated by the spiral in the form of a reclined S, cucutenian artisans created a greatly refined and diverse decoration. They proved to be extraordinarily inventive by mixing three colors (white, red and "black",

which was actually chocolate) in painting geometric motives in a seemingly endless variety.

Plastic executions in the pottery field are fortunately completed with those thousands of clay statuettes uncovered in the settlements of this civilization. There are proves that the artisans have also created statues of more than a half a meter high, but only fragments of these were preserved. The exceptional executions include the molded cats, which were presumably holders for the pots, as we later meet in Pietroasele Treasure, this time made of metal. In spite their small dimensions, they were able to render the animal's strain before jumping on the prey. The anthropomorphic pots are fewer and were molded without head and arms. But they include the piece that could be considered as one of the most emblematic for the Cucuteni Culture. It consists of a pot pad, made up of five female bodies suggested by the molded chops, because the artist didn't mold the heads, legs or hands. These five torsos are united at the level of the arms and legs and separated on two registers through oval holes between the hands and torso and respectively the torso and legs. The anonymous artist thus suggests the sensation of circular movement and dance rotation. The idea of a sacred ceremony and a dance, meant to bring sunshine which implies abundance in the crops, is enhanced by the motive of eclipses painted in white against a red background. Father Constantin Matasa, a ceramics researcher in Cucuteni Culture and creator of Regional Archeological Museum in Piatra Neamt, has called it "The Frumusica Dance". Although it is not as notorious as "The Craiova Union Dance, created by Theodor Aman, "The Frumusica Dance" is evidence of a civilization unmatched in Europe at that time of more than five millennia ago and proves an equally old spiritual steadiness.

Darius's Campaign

The expedition of 514-512 BC undertaken by Darius to the Balkan Peninsula, and the first information about the Getao-Dacians provided by Herodotus

"Darius, king of the Persians, crossed into Europe. He ordered the Ionians to sail their vessels to Pontus Euxinus, down to the Istros River, where they were to wait for him and build a bridge across the river. Before reaching the Istros, Darius first won over the Getae, who deem themselves to be immortal. For the Thracians, the people of Salmydessos and those who occupy the territory north of the cities of Apollonia and Mesembria surrendered to Darius without a fight. The Getae's reckless behaviour, however, brought them into bondage, for all their being the bravest and most righteous of all Thracians."

This is how Herodotus, often styled "the father of history", introduced our forefathers. The "recklessness" of opposing Darius was probably no less due to their faith in their immortality, as mentioned by Herodotus, than to their genetic heritage, according to more recent studies purporting that our roots are closer to the Baltic populations. The Getae's language itself was rather akin to Balto-Slavic than Latin, as some pseudo-historians put forth with no clear evidence. As time passed, the Getae's "recklessness" came to be replaced by the proverb that says: "The head that bows is not severed by the sword" – a loan from the Russian space rather than a Romanian creation, as it is commonly believed.

Herodotus went on to comment on the great family of the Thracians, to whom the Getae also belonged: "The Thracian race are the next in numbers to that of the Hindus. If they came to be united under one single leader or one common design, they would be unconquerable, and much more powerful than any other race, to my reckoning. Alas, this is not something ever to foresee, which is why they stay a vincible race." A peculiarity that seems to have extended down to their descendants, unaltered.

There are other ancient sources providing information on the Thracians, prior to the above description of the Getae. Thracian populations reached as far as Asia Minor in the 12th century BC, and it seems that the mythical king Midas ruled over the Phrygians, another Thracian kind. King Midas is best known to us from two legends. It was said that everything he touched would change to gold. As desirable a quality as it might seem, the poor king, however, was facing certain death from starvation. He stood in prayer to the gods, who finally consented to let him become a regular mortal again. The other legend tells about Midas being asked to arbitrate a music contest between Apollo, who played the lyre, and Pan, who played the flute. Since Midas chose Pan to be the winner, Apollo went angry and put a spell on Midas, by which he grew a donkey's ears. To cover his shame, the king had to wear a special, double-pointed cap to cover his ears. The Phrygian cap became famous several thousand years later as it was adopted as the "liberty cap" during the French Revolution, when the human rights were enforced with the aid of the guillotine. Many historians tend to assign the Phrygians an important role in the fall of the Hittite Empire.

The Thracians are also mentioned in Homer's classic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, in the 8th century BC. In *Rhesus*, a tragedy attributed to Euripides (480-406 BC), the Thracian king by that name joins in the Trojan War at the head of an army of myriads. Although it is hard to believe that so large numbers of warriors could be gathered at that time, Thucydides, a Greek historian and general, mentions that the army of another Thracian king, Sitalkes, amounted to 150,000 troops.

To come back to Darius' expedition as he reached the bank of the Istros, in Herodotus' report, which was not mere hearsay, but the result of wide travel and solid documentation.

"After they had walked for two days upriver from the sea, the men built a bridge across the river, at the place where the Istros branches out." There is no record of how the bridge was built, but historians claim to have located the spot somewhere near today's Isaccea. Historical sources describe Darius' expedition to have ended in disaster, though it is hard to say how things actually happened. We know for a fact, however, that the Danube has since become a border of the Persian Empire.

It was for the first time when the great river became a state frontier. The event marked the destiny of this land as the virtual borderline separating the European from the Oriental civilization. Fortunately, this first attempt to place us in the Oriental orbit failed, as would all further attempts, eventually.

The campaign of Lysimachus

Dromichaetes, ruler of the Getae north of the Danube River, prevails over the Macedonian king Lysimachus, formerly a general in Alexander the Great's army, and teaches him a lesson by inviting him and his party to a sumptuous feast while Dromichaetes and his men were having a modest repast.

History schoolbooks tell about the glorious and wise Dromichaetes, the first notable king of the Getae, and the haughty Lysimachus – "the one who ends the battle", or "the Victor" –, one among Alexander the Great's six generals who shared dominion over territories of the Macedonian Empire after Alexander's death.

When Lysimachus was about 60 years of age, he started an expedition, in 293 or 292 b.C., against Dromichaetes. Lysimachus' son Agathocles had run an earlier campaign against the same king of the Getae, sometime between the years 300-297 b.C., which had ended up in disaster. The wise Dromichaetes had then set free Agathocles and sent him back home, loaded with most precious gifts.

When Lysimachus came as far as the Danube River, a subject of Dromichaetes came to him and told him he had fled and was seeking revenge against the Get king, offering to lead the Macedonians along the shortest way to the fortress of his sovereign. The invaders followed the self-styled fugitive through arid, hostile places where they suffered from thirst and hunger. Exhausted and depressed, they were ambushed by the Getae and made to surrender without resistance. Dromichaetes' men asked him to let them execute Lysimachus in revenge. The wise king, however, persuaded them it was better to let Lysimachus live and show him how wrong he had been to come and try to conquer them. Therefore, he invited the Macedonians to a feast, where they were served all kinds of refined, delicious courses on silver platters and wine in gold and silver bowls, while the Getae were feasting separately on modest food and were drinking from horns and wooden tumblers. At the height of the dining spree, Dromichaetes stood up, filled with wine the biggest horn and, while calling Lysimachus "father", asked him which of the two feasts looked more worthy of a king – that of the Macedonians or that of the Thracians? Lysimachus could not avoid the obvious answer: "That of the Macedonians, indeed!" "Then why," said Dromichaetes, "did you choose to leave your brilliant kingly life in luxury and comfort and ventured hither to do battle against a savage tribe of uncouth barbarians living in a wild land of freezing winters and barren soil? Why did you run against all reason to take your warriors across such countryside as no alien host will ever manage to go safe?"

This is the only record of the encounter, as related by Diodorus of Sicily in his *Bibliotheca historica*. A seductive and moralizing story indeed, in which the contemporary reader would, however, be inclined to see allegory rather than fact. The story is, in fact, a pattern common to other pieces of antique writing, with different characters to play the parts. Herodotus, for example, brings together Mardonius, son-in-law of Darius and commander of the Persians, and General Pausanias, in command of the Spartan expeditionary force, who drove Mardonius away. Moreover, Diodorus of Sicily was known for his moralizing penchant, if we are only to refer to an opening fragment of the 21st volume of his work: "A wise man should avoid all vices – greed above all, for this vice, inducive of hope for profit, will drive many to foul action, while it lies at the heart of so much evil for humanity. Therefore, being the mother of all injustice, greed will wreak havoc to not only individual citizens, but even the greatest of kings".

Archaeological finds, too, speak against Dromichaetes' avowal of his countryfolk's and his own poverty. The tombs of the time (4th century b.C.) revealed gilded helmets, body armour, bowls, phials and gilded silver cups in the shape of animal horns (rhyton)

– for example, at Agighiol, Tulcea County; Băiceni-Cucuteni, Iași County; Coțofenești-Vărbilău, Prahova County; Craiova, Dolj County (a Getae princely tomb in the Cernele necropolis); Peretu, Teleorman County.

In conclusion, this alluring tale to be found in most history schoolbooks will hardly find support at the level of historical fact. All the same, it paints a cherishable picture of our ancestors: living at the crossroads of historical turmoil, poor but just, honest, forgiving and unvengeful – or, if such might be the case, there is always a wise mind in authority to stop the slaughter. Diodorus Siculus left us with such a charming tale! Moralizing feast or not, Dromichaetes can be considered a great king for the generosity with which he treats a valiant opponent over whom he prevails not only on the battlefield, but also in terms of political thinking. It is a most beautiful homage to the first known king of the Getae, who can thus be compared with the most accomplished monarchs of ancient history.

Murus dacicus

An extremely inventive Dacian method to build up fortified walls

Trajan's forum - this monument raised in Rome to mark the victory of the Roman Emperor in his wars with the Dacians and also their bravery - is also displaying some scenes of siege on Dacian fortresses. Here, Roman soldiers are climbing the walls on stairs, but they are pushed back. They start the siege over again and they eventually win. In another scene, the soldiers carrying hacks are trying to make a hole in the walls, but they fail. Then, they bring a wooden tower and try to step on the walls from it. All the fortresses have eventually surrendered. Apart from the undeniable force of the Roman army, which had an empire behind it that reached a climax under Trajan, the Dacian fortresses had a disability that mattered a lot: they did not have any water reserves. They weren't designed to face a long siege. As a matter of fact, one of the metopes shows a dramatic scene: the defenders, the aristocrats (tarabostes) and common people (comati) sharing their last water reserves. In parenthesis, there were opinions that this scene is a mass suicide, so as the defendants would not fall in the hands of the conquerors, but historic scripts do not support such a supposition.

An expert in military architecture of Dacians, Professor Ioan Glodariu, gave this explanation: some people which did not have permanent armies did not use the tactic of siege, even if they were aware of it (the so-called "barbaric" people, based outside the borders of Hellenistic kingdoms or the Roman Empire, as well as people from the Hellenistic kingdoms and especially the Roman Empire. Their attacks were always whipping and short. That is why Dacian fortifications weren't designed to resist long sieges."

There was an extraordinary effort in building these fortresses, a 150 years long effort. Professor Glodariu was also the one who identified 90 fortifications, placed on commercial roads, passage ways, and in strategic points - "a genuine defensive system of Dacia, which would be unique in the barbarian Europe of that time. A feature that attracted attention was represented by the paired-fortresses, placed at the entrance and exit of the roads that crossed the Carpathian chain. It is important to underline that this system was made through the work of free people, covering their duties to the king

Certainly, qualified workers from the Greek colonies at the Black Sea were used and they passed on the technique of Hellenistic construction of walls. But due to natural conditions, they had to develop their own form of wall, which the archeologists called "murus dacicus". Such a wall was 3 meters thick and lacked foundation. The soil was previously prepared, which sometimes involved a huge work volume. The methods used were either offset, cutting steps into the hilly bank, hewing the massive rock, or bringing clod from other areas.

Where that was the case, even small buttresses were made, in order to prevent landslides. The fronts of the wall were made up of wrought chalk blocks and the space between them was filled with "emplecton" - clay or broken stones. In the Hellenistic wall, wooden bars shaped as dovetail were introduced into some spouts dug in the wall in order to strengthen the outer wall. As opposed, in murus dacicus, those bars were the elements that fastened the outer wall to inner wall.

On the coping of the walls thick bars were laid oblique so as to allow the rain water to flow, and a clay coating was placed above to protect them from fire.

Preserved original texts show us that Romans considered these fortifications and fortresses as serious hurdles. Therefore, according to Dio Cassius, "Trajan has initially conquered the bolstered mountains and started to climb the heights and then, with

great risks, he occupied hill after hill and got closer to the Dacian capital." Dio Cassius is also the one telling us that one of the conditions that Decebal faced in order to clinch the peace that ended the 102 war was "to dismantle the fortifications". This information is confirmed by Trajan's Forum, where we can see Dacians breaking a fortress wall with their staples. Moreover, archeological findings have unveiled traces of destruction and hasty restoration of walls, around the 105-106 war, at Piatra Rosie, Blidaru and Sarmisegetusa. Then, at the end of the second war, Romans have completely destroyed the Dacian fortresses. The Forum also shows Roman soldiers burning a fortress. One and a half century worth of building efforts was destroyed in a few days. Because, eventually, the walls and fortified lines couldn't actually defend nowhere, regardless of the skill and effort used to design and build them.

Appollodor of Damascus' Bridge

One of the greatest achievements of the Antiquity is the bridge built over the Danube at Drobeta Turnu Severin. No other similar bridge has been built ever since. "Trajan has built over the Istru [Danube] a stone bridge for which I can't admire him enough. Other constructions by Trajan are wonderful too, but this one is above all of them. There are 20 stone pillars in four arrises; the pillars are 150 feet (around 44m) high, apart from the foundation, and 60 feet (around 17.5m) wide. They are 170 feet (around 50m) apart and united through a concave. How could we possibly not marvel at the cost of those pillars? Shouldn't we be amazed by the masterly way every pillar was placed in the middle of the river, into swirly water and muddy soil, given that the flow of the river could not have been diverted?" We have quoted above the description made by Dio Cassius for the bridge built over Danube by the Greek-Syrian architect Apollodor of Damascus (60-125), likely between 103 and 105, before the second war of the emperor against the Dacians. According to archeologists, the bridge was 1,135m long, 19m high (a correction in the number presented by Dio Cassius) and approximately 15m wide. It was made up of crossed wooden bars, supported by stone pillars, bricks and mortar and common cement made of volcanic ash brought from Italy. Two castra were guarding the two ends of the bridge, one on the Serbian bank and one on the Romanian bank, called Drobeta. As a scene on the Forum shows, the emperor brought an offering to the opening of the bridge, and the Roman Senate has issued a bronze coin to mark the achievement. Four hundred years later, the Byzantine writer Procopius of Caesarea would still mention it as a great achievement. The material and ingenuity investment in this work shows the importance that Trajan paid to subjugating Decebal's Dacia. The reason was thus summarized by the same Dio Cassius: "Trajan was afraid of a war staged against the Romans who remained on the other side, after the freezing of Istru, and he built that bridge in order to facilitate transport over it."

But the wonder didn't last for long. In the 3rd century, Dio Cassius wrote: "Yet today the bridge is useless, as there are only the pillars left and it is impossible to cross over them; one would say that they were built only to prove that nothing is impossible to the human nature [...]. Hadrian was afraid that barbarians would defeat the guardians of the bridge and will be able to easily cross to Moesia; that is why he destroyed the upper part." Other historians adjudge the demolition of the bridge to Aurelian, the emperor under whom the Roman administration withdrew from Dacia, in 271. King Francis of France is said to have asked Sultan Suleyman to allow him to demolish a pillar of the bridge, in order to uncover the secret composition of the cement used. In 1856 the Danube reached one of its lowest levels and the pillars became revealed out of the water. In 1906, the International Danube Commission decided to destroy two pillars which hampered navigation. In 1932, there were still 16 pillars under the water. Today, only the first and the last pillar are visible, on the Romanian and the Serbian banks of the Danube.

The bridge built by Apollodor of Damascus - the same person who was going to build the Forum named as Emperor Trajan in Rome - Trajan's Forum - is not listed among the seven classic wonders of the Antiquity, but it was certainly one of the greatest engineering achievements of those times. A proof for this is also the fact that the work is mentioned in the opera of Pliny the Younger, Dio Cassius, Ammianus and Procopius of Caesarea. We should also add that 1850 years more had to pass until another permanent bridge over the Danube could be built, in the same area.

Apart from its reputation, this bridge has a special meaning for us. It is the symbolic bridge that took us into what today we are calling "Europe", not the geographical continent, but a community of values and civilization, the highest that humanity ever

reached. Back then, this community used to be called The Roman Empire. It is true that we have entered it after a war that has largely destroyed the Geto-Dacian civilization and caused many casualties. Back then, there was no other way of getting in: you would either obey voluntarily or you would be conquered. Our ancestors chose to fight, which their descendants always did too. The access to the Roman world eventually ended in forming a new people, through a process that lasted for many centuries, a Latin population - us, the Romanians. A big sacrifice usually lays at the foundation of every great and enduring work.

Tropaeum Traiani

The monument at Adamclisi was erected by the Romans in memory of their victory against Decebalus during the 102 A.D. Dobruja campaign.

Historians have yet to cast light on quite a few queries concerning the Adamclisi complex of monuments, apart from the certain knowledge that they relate to the military encounters between Dacians and Romans. Of the three monuments – an altar, a tumulus or barrow, and Tropaeum Traiani – the last one is the most important.

The practice of raising tropaea – memorials in honour of military victories – was adopted by the Romans from the Greeks. Originally, the arms and armour of the defeated enemy were hung from a tree, the names of the victor and of the vanquished were carved on the bark and the monument was dedicated to some deity. It is the Romans who, inspired by such temporary arrangements, proceeded to build more solid monumental structures. Domitius Ahenobarbus and Fabius Maximus are supposed to have raised the first tropaeum in the wake of a victory won in Gaul in the year 121 B.C.

The Adamclisi memorial was raised in 109 B.C. by order of Emperor Trajan of Rome. Most historians agree that the monument must have been raised to commemorate a victory the Romans had won against the Dacians and their allies in this part of the world. Several frames on Trajan's Column render battle scenes in places that look different from the one commonly known in the Orăștie Mountains. In the winter of 101-102 A.D., during the first Daco-Roman War, Decebalus organized an attack meant to create a diversion to loosen the pressure of the Roman army on the capital of Sarmizegetusa. Therefore the Dacians, in alliance with the Roxolan Sarmatians and perhaps with Germanic Boers, put up a charge in Dobruja. There are scenes on the Column showing horsemen crossing the frozen Danube while the ice breaks and they struggle to get out of the icy waters. At first, the Roman castra were taken by surprise and there was much speculation on the impact of the charge. Trajan himself is featured stepping on to a flagship sailing down the Danube towards the river mouths. A known fact is that the attack was eventually repelled.

In 109 A.D. Trajan had a tropaeum in his name built on the site of today's Adamclisi. The place was nothing like a random choice, as it was at the crossroads of important trade routes of the time and not far from the border of the empire – so it was there to be seen both by the emperor's subjects and by the "barbarians" who had not yet been subjugated. A stone pedestal in excess of 40 metres in diameter supported a cement tambour round which 54 metopes were applied illustrating the bitter battles that had been fought here. Unfortunately, only 48 of them lasted into our days – which, unlike the Column of Rome, fail to piece together in one coherent story. Furthermore, as a provincial achievement, they are of a lesser artistic quality than the display of the Column. A rectangular tower made of regular stone blocks stood in the middle of the tambour to allow for the construction of a cone-shaped roof. The tower was reshaped as a hexagonal prism lately and goes up an additional 10.64 metres, with the memorial proper on top of it, about the same height. The entire monument, which has been recently recomposed, reaches up to nearly 40 metres.

The existing documentary sources are unanimous in emphasizing the importance attached by the Romans to their victory over the Dacians. Here is how Dio Cassius describes the celebrations organized in the imperial capital: "After his return to Rome, Trajan was visited by scores of emissaries of various barbarian tribes and even Hindus. The festivities lasted one hundred and twenty-three days, during which time some eleven thousand wild and domestic animals were slaughtered and ten thousand gladiators performed in fighting". No other instance in Roman history is known when they should have erected both a memorial in Rome and a tropaeum elsewhere in memory of one

and the same victory.

The two monuments are a chronicle carved in stone of a moment of much more significance to us, however, than to Trajan and the Roman Empire, as they mark the beginning of the formation of the Romanian people. The process itself was no paradox and no miracle whatsoever. On the contrary, it was much similar to the formation of other nations across modern Europe. The nearest example might be that of the French. The Gauls were subjected by the Romans after bitter resistance, just like the Dacians. A process of Romanization ensues in terms of culture, law and language – a process which, in the case of the French, has never been disproved by scholars. Then migratory tribes came in succession to mingle with the Romanized population, of which the Franks had a stronger influence as they imposed their name and the ruling class – and then the Vikings. In our case, at first were the Slavs and then the Kumans.

Again, the Germans or the Italians are not challenged historically regarding the formation of their national states, a process that ran much in parallel with that of our people, and no one has ever considered the Germans or the Italians as "junior" nations formed only in the 19th century. Unlike any other nation in Europe, we have been struggling for centuries against malicious detractors to prove our continuity on this territory, and the fact that we are indeed a full-fledged nation. The astral character of the Romanian people comes not from a singularity we are sometimes trying to prove to ourselves, but from the very fact that our ethnic evolution looks very much like that of other European nations.

Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa

The capital city of the new Roman province, symbol of a new dominion and of continuity

The name of the capital of the Roman province of Dacia seems to condense a 200-year history of this territory under Roman occupation: a new city founded by the Roman conqueror, though not alien to the local inhabitants, for whom it was important to preserve a familiar toponym – Sarmizegetusa.

The astral moment of the integration of the territory marked by the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube River and the Black Sea into the European concept of that time has been the subject of heavy dispute among historians, both from abroad and at home. It is a matter of little wonder, though, since we speak about a crucial moment in the ethnical development of our nation.

It was speculated that 200 years of Roman occupation is too short an interval for an actual Romanization process to have succeeded, since by 271 A.D. (a rather conventional, undocumented date) all Roman foot had withdrawn south of the Danube. One may logically wonder: if there was no genuine Romanization, how come that we are still a people of Latin descent? And where else in European history was such a large territory completely deserted by its population? In history, however, logical thinking is sometimes challenged.

The fact that Dacia was the only province settled by Rome north of the Danube makes it a special case to ponder over. The reasons were both economic and strategic. Emperor Hadrian, Trajan's next in line, was tempted to leave the province but was promptly persuaded to keep the post, which is telling of the importance of Dacia for Rome, as are the many wars waged by the Roman emperors for two centuries against the Dacians who lived outside the conquered territory and against other enemies from across the borders of the empire.

Emperor Trajan attached special importance to the organization of the new province as he remained here several months after the war was over. It was upon his order that the capital Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa was established, following the old ritual adopted from the Etruscans: the governor of the province appointed by the emperor, D. Terentius Scaurianus, delineated the perimeter of the new city with a plow pulled by a white ox and a white cow. Hadrian had another three settlements raised to the status of municipalities. Eventually, the territory that made up the Roman Province of Dacia included 11 municipalities, which means more urban settlements than in any of the older Roman provinces.

None of these cities emerged on the ground of formerly existing Dacian settlements, though all of them – except one, Romula – preserved Dacian toponyms with slight phonetic adjustments. Just like in other parts of the empire, the cities were organized after the Roman pattern. The town planning, cultural and religious activities, the Roman lifestyle and civilization are no different from other provinces of the empire, except for the somewhat lower standards in comparison with the more developed ones. The forum, the streets, the thermae, the sewerage and the heating system, the temples, the administrative facilities are all identical with those of the rest of the empire.

Therefore, the urban civilization introduced north of the Danube represented an important Romanization factor which, despite the features of a peripheral province, displayed a certain occidental character. Besides planning and architecture, this character is also reflected in the adoption of Roman deities, the religious organization of the communities, the artistic trends, the material civilization. Four cities with the status of *coloniae* – Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Apulum, Napoca and Potaissa – benefitted from the privileges

offered by *ius italicum*, which is further proof of the extent of the Romanization process. Moesia and Pannonia had no city with this status, and Syria and Macedonia, another two Roman provinces, barely equaled numerically the situation in Dacia. An *ordo Augustalium* existed in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa with a social, political and religious character, as well as a *concilium trium Daciarum* for the celebration of the imperial cult. After the conquest, all of the occupied territory was declared *ager publicus* and shared among the military and the settlers. Reduced to an inferior social position, the native population was compelled to readily integrate with the new society. In fact, most artifacts preserved point to an obvious Romanization at the level of material civilization.

To conclude with, our presence is denied in the very areas where Romanization was the most intensely and directly applied, unlike outside the Carpathian Arc where Roman influence was more like a second-hand process, as a result of trans-Carpathian contacts.

Another, less pleasant, conclusion: the Roman occupation created a pattern in the development of this territory that the next 2000 years have not succeeded to change, as we are still not succeeding today: the western part of the country is more urban, more developed economically and better integrated with Western Europe.

Ego Zenovius votum posui

The above inscription, translating approximately as "I, Zenovius, offered this gift", was engraved on a fibula found in a place off the beaten path, which proves that it was a local artifact that had not been brought from south of the Danube River. It stands out as a piece of material evidence of the Christian status of the local population.

The Romanians are the earliest people converted to Christianity in South-East Europe. Unlike with other Europeans, such as the French, Christianity was not enforced by some monarch dissatisfied with the various tribal beliefs that atomized his authority, but was gradually adopted by most of the population.

The migrants who crossed the territory were adepts of the Arian branch of Christianity, so called after the name of Arius of Alexandria whose teaching was denounced as heresy by the First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. It was not the case, however, with the Daco-Romans, who had readily assimilated the original Christian faith after Emperor Aurelian withdrew the Roman administration and army from Dacia in 271, as there was no more political authority to stand against the trend.

During the 4th and the 5th centuries Christianity spread widely among the rural population who was more conservative by definition. When the Slavic pagan tribes came to settle down west and south of the Carpathian Range they found a fully Christianized population in the former Roman province.

The vehicle of Christianity into Dacian territory was the Latin language. The basic items of the specific vocabulary stand proof for that: Christian derives from christianus, cross from crux, to baptize from baptisare, saint from sanctus, etc.

A most remarkable artifact that speaks of Christian influences is a donarium (a tribute to a divine figure, in this case to God), known as the Biertan Donarium. Only a bronze plate was preserved of the original chandelier dating in the 4th century, which contains a votive inscription and the monogram of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The pieces were found some 250 years ago by a local of Biertan, a few kilometres away from the village, among the roots of an old oak tree felled by a storm. The place was then called "The Fount Bog", and today it is called "La Chinedru". Chinedru was a Romanian hamlet settled in the 19th century, which which was deserted and disappeared after the agrarian collectivization process in the mid-20th century. The Chinedru area lies in the Copșa Mare Valley and not in the Biertan Valley, as it was thought – an important specification made by Dr. Gheorghe Baltag, a researcher from Sighisoara. The artifact was concluded to originate south of the Danube and is speculated to have been either lost on the way during some transport from across the Danube, or plundered by Visigoths from a basilica of the Roman Empire and abandoned on their way to North-East Transylvania. Medieval maps display a fairly important road passing through Biertan, which might well have been used by Visigoths in ancient times. However, the donarium was found at Chinedru, a glen still barely accessible today, which no important road is likely to have crossed. In the course of archaeological research performed by Gheorghe Baltag in 2008-2009 traces were found of an old human settlement near Chinedru which probably dates from the same period as the donarium.

Some time ago, historian Kurt Horedt professed that "the Christian chandelier (the donarium) had belonged in a wooden chapel of a hermit settled in the deep Copșa valley" to preach the Gospel and baptize the Latin-speaking population of the area. To this purpose he built a baptisterium – a small edifice where baptism was officiated – which was supplied with fresh water by a live spring that has not yet run dry today. The artifacts discovered in 1775 were later appropriated by the mayor of Mediaș, Conrad von Heydendorff the Elder, a scholar who was the first to analyze them. In a letter

he wrote in 1779, he arrived at a very interesting conclusion: the Greek-Oriental or Orthodox Church, considered as tolerated in the Middle Age, just as the Transylvanian Romanians (Wallachians), was much older than the "acknowledged" churches and had initially preached the Gospel in Latin before the Slavic language was imposed.

Christianity and the Romanization made the foundation that sustained the resistance of the population round the Carpathian Range against the successive migrant invasions that either passed over or settled down in this territory.

Pietroasa Treasure

A treasure made up of unique elements

What might seem like the screenplay of an Indiana Jones movie is only the sad story of the discovery and recovery of the best known treasure found in our territory: "The hen with golden chickens."

Somewhere around the Easter of 1837, two peasants - father in law and son in law - from the village of Pietroasa, Buzau County, found a precious treasure in gold items, while working in a rock quarry. Subsequent research established that the treasure consisted of 22 pieces. Only 12 of them were recovered, while the other ten seem forever lost. The two men hid the treasure. After more than a year they had to move it to some relatives, and this way the number of people who were aware of it rose to five. It remained there some other months, until they sold it to a Lebanese entrepreneur, Verussi, who was working on a bridge construction. To be able to hide the pieces easier, he destroyed most of them by hammering them and many of the decorating stones ended up on the ground. One of the initial "owners" swept and threw them in a ditch in the yard. After speaking to a jeweler in Bucharest and learning that those rocks were also gems, he came back and recovered the big ones. The rest ended up in the garbage pit. Pigs grouting for food took them out of the garbage, then children saw them and spread the news to the entire village. The leaseholder of the village found out and threatened to call the authorities. Then Verussi was brought in and the leaseholder got the dodecagonal pot, as a price for keeping the secret. But he was not satisfied with that and a new negotiation took place in Buzau, at the house of the leaseholder's wife, and in the end he received a thick golden ring and money. The story spread again and too many people were talking about the treasure found. The leaseholder decided to hand Verussi over to the authorities, which were also informed by other means. In July 1838, a commission of the Interior Minister, led by the brother of the prince, came to Pietroasa. Confronted with a letter which mentioned the buried treasure, Verussy eventually admitted and led the investigators to the place where he had buried it.

The stormy story of the Pietroasa Treasure was not over yet. After being carried to the 1867 universal exhibit in Paris, it was laid in the Antiquity Museum, hosted by the University of Bucharest. The show case it was being kept would close as a safe deposit overnight, but the custodians forgot to lock it and the treasure was stolen in November 1867. After being recovered, it faced another watershed moment, nine years later, when it was saved from a fire. It was evacuated to Moscow in 1917 and came back to the country only in 1956, due to a goodwill gesture by Khrushchev.

We insisted on the story related to the discovery of the treasure, because it is iconic for our attitude as a people, towards the vestiges of the past. And we are not only talking about the contemporary episode of the Dacian bracelets or other valuable items illegally taken out of the country. Here we include the pathetic state that marks so many other monuments of the past.

The emblematic value of Pietroasa Treasure also comes from the message it carries as historic evidence. The presence of this treasure in the Carpathian Danubian Pontic area is part of a general phenomenon for the world bordering the Roman Empire. Research revealed that the third and fourth centuries were dominated by an increased trend towards gold jewelry, in spite of the vehemence by some Roman moralists or fathers of the early Church, like Joan Chrystostom. Some emperors have even issued banning laws, which prohibited wearing gems in jewelry. Such laws were inefficient though. "Barbaric" people who assaulted the empire caught this taste too. Rome hoped to get peace in exchange of subsidies. The gold money gained this way was melted and jewelry was made from that metal. Germanic artisans to the North of Black Sea

combined the Roman polychrome style with animal elements in the Iranian art. They took over the technique called "cloisonné", by means of which gems or semiprecious rocks or just glass paste were included in the golden slip through "cells" often shaped as a honeycomb. And Pietroasa treasure is the living proof of that phenomenon. Historians agree that it had the character of a cult and belonged either to Goths, or Ostrogoths or Visigoths. Five of the pieces are made solely of massive gold - the plate which was cut into four, the massive cylindrical tie, and the one with runic inscriptions, the Oenochoe spill and the "patera" - a pot used in libations. They prove the continuity of the Greek-Roman art, though some "barbaric" influences are visible. Seven other pieces are evidence of the new taste of the 4th and 5th Century, with a trend towards luxury and polychromies: the broad tie, four birdlike shaped fibulae - the source of the name "the hen with golden chickens" - and polygonal cups, with feline-shaped holders. This is how these works with an extraordinary artistic value illustrate the moment of change in the world and cohabitation of the Roman past (and native past, here at the Danube's mouths) with new peoples which were going to shape the face of Europe.

Torna, torna, fratre

These words, considered a sample of Proto-Romanian language, are attributed to a soldier in the Byzantine army during a campaign against the Avars in the year 587 A.D.

The Avars, supposedly a people of Turki origin settled in the Tisa Plain, between the Frank Empire in the west and the Byzantine Empire in the east, played a certain part in the history of Europe for about two centuries while often storming the borders of the latter. The Byzantines, in their turn, organized military expedition against the Avars in retaliation. Such an expedition was described by Theofylact Simocatta, an early 7th century historiographer from Egypt, whose records written between 610 and 641 are an important source of information for that epoch.

"Comentiolus ["the most important man in the Byzantine emperor's guard", as Theofylact Simocatta mentions] deployed the army in single file and ordered them to march forward toward Astice at night time, to stay guarded, and the next day to charge against the khan like a storm and wreak havoc among the enemy. But the fate turned adverse to the plan of the expedition, for, just like a bumble bee wrecks the bees' toil in the hive, it overturned the commander's painstaking preparation. Indeed, after the sunshine sank into the somber night and the beautiful light-shedding lamp surrendered to the power of the night, one of the beasts of burden shook the load off its back. As it happened, its master was walking ahead, but those following in trail saw the animal dragging the load behind and shouted at the master to turn back and replace the load on the animal's back. Well, this was the reason why the army fell out in disorder and turned around in desperate flight; for they had all heard the call and mistook the words for a warning signal seemingly urging to flee, as if the enemy were closer than they had reckoned. Chaos and commotion scattered the troops in disorder; everyone was shouting loud, urging one-another to turn back in the language of the land: torna, torna - "turn back, turn back" - as if a skirmish had broken out in the night. The army spread out like a harmony played by the chords of a lyre. The khan himself ran for his life from this second and most serious danger, leaving the beaten path and moving away, to find an even more unexpected escape than the first time. So did the Roman soldiers (the Byzantines), who took flight no less, in fright of a false danger. Yet, the latter slaughtered a good many Avars in an unexpected clash of the two hosts, for some of the Roman army returned and stormed the enemy vigorously."

A similar description was left by Theofanes Confessor (born round the mid-8th century), who noted: "calling out in his mother tongue: Torna, torna, fratre (turn back, turn back, brother)". The word "fratre" was invoked to demonstrate that it was not a military order, like some commentators had interpreted.

Historians and philologists have not yet agreed if torna, torna, fratre are the first words in Proto-Romanian or just an idiom in Latina Vulgata. The origin of the phrase cannot be specified in any of the Romance languages. The Latin language lost its coherence after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 4th century, after the Greek language came to power in the Eastern Roman, or the Byzantine Empire. The Latin spoken in the former Roman province of Dacia, separated from the western version of Latin by the dominions of the Huns, Gepides and then Avars in the Tisa Plain, underwent an independent course of development. One century before, Priscus of Panion, while describing a message sent from Byzantium to Attila, mentioned a so-called ausonic language used by the Huns when communicating with the Romans, which was a version of Latin spoken by the population north of the Danube. It is a similar process with that on the territory of today's France, which is however better documented.

The evolution continued in the 7th and 8th centuries. The isolation of the Latin version north of the Danube from the western world – also from the communities south of the Danube, which had adopted the Greek language by now – allowed for a more fluent evolution, unhindered by the constraints of scholarly Latin that operated in the West.

Originally in the form of an idiom that made a difference from classic Latin, the Romanian language may well have developed faster than other Romance languages, as many linguists consider. The famous words *torna, torna, fratre* which upset the Byzantine troops, where Greek was probably the language spoken by the most, would be standing proof for that.

In any case, one thing is certain. We need not wait, like in the 1950s, for the Slavs to decide on the formation of the Romanian language. We may consider that the process was largely completed in the 8th century, a time when the speakers of Romanian stood out among the other, more or less temporary, inhabitants of this territory.

Murfatlar Churches

Churches carved in chalkstone, a one of a kind monument in Europe

In the summer of 1957, at the chalkstone pit in Murfatlar (previously called Basarabi - this is the reason for the double name of the compound discovered there), in the Tibisir Hill to the Southwest of the village, workers at the quarry came across a little church carved in the white massif. The archeologists began excavations. In a few years, they uncovered a complex made up of six small churches, galleries and crypts. The discovery is similar to other areas of the Byzantine Empire, especially the rupestral compounds of Cappadocia and Anatolia, but it also has many elements that make it unique. So what is it that was discovered at Murfatlar (Basarabi)?

Firstly, there is a quarry of blocks used at the "rock wave", which lies, a kilometer apart, on the hill to the North of the village and lasts for a distance of 59 kilometres. It used to connect the fortresses Axiopolis (Cernavoda) and Tomis (Constanta). The size of the work shows that it was made by a public authority, likely on the order of the Byzantine emperor, during the second half of the 10th Century. A natural barrier - Carasu Valley - was doubled this way, on the segment where the Danube and the Black Sea are closest, in order to enhance protection of the Silistra settlement. This was the capital of the Paradunavion theme (an administrative unite in the Byzantine Empire) and, by extension, Constantinople. The wave was especially necessary during winter, when the Danube would freeze, Byzantine ships couldn't patrol and invaders could easily cross the frozen river. Some of the rooms dug in chalk are made by the workers at this quarry. Items such as clay pots, pickers, whetstones, lighters and bone utensils were found inside.

There are also six churches with the traditional sectors: the altar, the nave and the narthex. One of them is larger, while the others are smaller. All signs suggest a monastic settlement. Artisans who built them in a clumsy manner were well aware of the Byzantine monuments of the era. The ceilings of the rectangular little churches and those of the galleries imitate the semi cylindrical vaults, while the ceilings of the squared and irregular rooms are slightly convex. A Byzantine "cross" vault is imitated at the crossing point of two galleries. Some saint and orant figures are wearing Byzantine costumes, and several representations of crosses come from the same source. The belts at the front of the vaults and traces of plaster seem to suggest that the interiors were painted in red dye. There are also six galleries, used as a funerary space.

Such monastic settlements are also found in Besserabia, Crimea, Caucasus, Apulia or Asia Minor. The mixture of tribes and faiths that the decorations of the walls suggest is what gives singularity to the Murfatlar complex. There are inscriptions in Runic, Cyrillic, Glagolitic characters; with onomastic, evangelical or chronologic references which assist in determining the age of the complex. A Turanian Aian is mentioned, who converted to Christianity, like Dimian, Simeon, or a sir Gheorghe - probably a local head. There is also a repertory of symbolic geometrical, zoomorphic or anthropomorphic motives, sometimes close to the canon of such representations in the European art of that time, other times schematic, unwieldy simplified. The large number of representations of horses and riders suggest the presence of nomadic steppe populations that had just converted to Christianity. The symbol of the cross might lead to the idea of a Byzantine dominance or it could come from an older autochthone background. Interlacing snakes with or without a savage head, a sort of dragons, lead us to think of North European Art and mythology. Their presence is not surprising. Dobruja was in the way of "the road from Varangians to Greeks", which is the road connecting Scandinavia to the Byzantine Empire, with a major role in the birth of the Russian principalities. That road was used by merchants who came down from the North and also Viking fighters of the Byzantine

emperor. That area is the source of another Murfatlar symbol - the sailing ship - and the labyrinth is often met in the symbolism and mythology of the Antiquity.

Such monastic settlements also had missionary roles in those times. Those were turbulent times, there were many heathens and refuges in caves or shelters carved in rock were welcome. At the same time, in Murfatlar we find elements of a certain monastic mentality which was specific to the remote border of the Byzantine world. There are echoes of heterodox doctrines. Around the same era Paulicians native from Asia Minor were brought here. They distinguished between God who created the Earth and the one who created the spirits, so the latter was considered worth of adoration. Therefore, this is how a few square meters carved into a chalk wall could harbor such an ethnically and spiritually diverse world. How many of us have entered it or heard of this place in Dobruja which is unique in the world through the affluence of evidence gathered altogether? They remained inlaid in chalk, such a crumbly material, as testimony for 100 years old past of these places, undocumented in any written evidence. Some of the inscriptions, a partial liturgical formula, say: "We are obliged to...We are obliged to preserve these testimonies.

Colonization of the Transylvanian Saxons

Brought over by the Hungarian king Geza II (1141-1162), the Saxons left their mark on Transylvanian civilization and culture

In the year 1103, Anselm of Braz restored the fortress and the estate of Logne to the Stavelot (Malmedy) Monastery for 12.5 silver marks and left together with his sons to Transylvania ("Hungary", according to the documentary source). He was said to be the colonizer of the Saxons in the Orăștie area. 45 years later, the Annals of the Rode Monastery noted that Hezelo of Merkstein near Aachen had sold his entire fortune to this monastery and left in the same direction. It is the first recorded name of a Saxon who came to Transylvania.

What made these people leave their native land, sell away their possessions and leave for some unknown destination, in perfect ignorance that they were to have a say in the history of their new home?

The Saxon colonization was an ample demographic relocation to the east, culminating in the 12th to the 14th centuries. The process was determined by multiple causes relating to the domestic developments in the Germanic space. The influx of Germanic population was encouraged by the Hungarian monarchs, as the colonists were the vehicle of advanced agricultural, manufacturing and commercial technologies and knowledge. They were settled in Transylvania, a newly conquered territory but yet to be fully controlled, mostly inhabited by Romanians, and were engaged in defending the frontiers of the kingdom and of the Carpathian mountain passes.

The Saxons arrived in several consecutive waves, in larger or smaller groups led by the more well-off peasants or craftsmen, or lesser noblemen, who negotiated with the royal authority on the conditions of their installation. The earliest wave arrived in the early 12th century and settled near the Alba Bishopric. They were "the first guests of the Kingdom", according to the privilege granted by King Andrew II in 1206. In the latter half of the the century they inhabited the Sibiu area. The same King Andrew II awarded them the Diploma Andreanum, or Goldener Freibrief der Siebenbürger Sachsen, which mentions that the Saxons had been invited by King Geza II (1130-1162), whose granted privileges were reinforced by the new royal decree. The Saxons then spread into the Bistrița, Reghin and Rodna areas, which ensured the borderline drawn by the Eastern Carpathians. Eventually, after the Teutonic Knights left the Bârsa Land, the Saxons filled the gap, as well as on the Târnavă Rivers, at Mediaș and Sighișoara.

The privileges granted by the Hungarian royalty, as well as the absence of a Germanic gentry to exert authority upon them, allowed the Saxons to develop their own administration, which delayed the emergence of an aristocracy among them, thus encouraging the consolidation of social solidarity. The military purpose for which they had been brought over, against the background of Tartar, then Ottoman invasions from across the mountains, led to the apparition of strongholds and especially fortified churches.

The Saxons' colonization of areas largely inhabited by Romanians sparked a series of conflicts over land and forest ownership. As they benefitted from Hungarian privileges while the Romanians were gradually losing their rights to the point that they were denied both their status of a "nation" and their religion, the Saxons put pressure to deprive the Romanians of their properties. Some of these conflicts had a happy ending though. A document dated 13 January 1383 issued by the mayor of Sibiu attests an agreement between the Saxons and the Romanians "settled around us", at the advice of Goblin, Bishop of Transylvania. The agreement was made "to forever preserve the concord of peace" – which did not happen, as we learn from other sources, as the

discords over pastureland did not cease. A document from 1557 reads about a lawsuit between the Romanian community of Petriș village and the Saxons of Satu Nou (New Village) from Bistrița District over a forest that the Romanians claimed to belong to them from old times. They invoked a document from 1366, when the judge-mayor and the juror-citizens of Bistrița had decided that the forest belonged to the Romanians and the Saxons were to move their village elsewhere if they could not live without a forest. However, the same document acknowledges that the Romanians had accepted that the Germans keep the precincts of their village near theirs, which ended up in reconciliation between the parties and "gratitude to the Romanians" and "tokens of friendship" – which lasted as late as 1557.

In conclusion, the Saxon colonization had a dual effect: it contributed to the economic development of the areas where they settled down, while the German gentry that had in time risen from the mass of the colonists only added up to the oppression of the local population. It is, however, undeniable that the presence of the Saxons played a moderating part in the conflicts between Romanians and Hungarians, and it marked the Transylvanian background, the customs and the civilization standards of the Transylvanian population.

After an 800 years' co-existence with Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania, and after having survived dire persecutions after World War 2, the German Saxons were sold out into the Federal Republic of Germany by Nicolae Ceaușescu, and those who did not manage to leave before 1989 hastily did so right after 1990. They are left with the nostalgia of their life in Transylvania and we are left missing an ethnic population of industrious, disciplined people with whom we did not have significant conflicts while living together.

Igris Library

Cistercian monks in Pontigny, France, have founded the Igris Abbey in 1179. The library from this abbey is the first library documented on our territory.

Cistercian monks had a major influence on the economic, social and spiritual life of the Medieval Europe (they were thought to be the best farmers and represented the most technologically advanced community in Europe). Their order was founded in 1098 by Robert de Molesme, willing to return to the monastic life principles of Saint Bernard, from which the Cluny Abbey had alienated. The first genuine and documented library which existed in the Carpathian-Danube-Pontic space is also related to this order.

In the Palm Sunday of 1179, after gaining approval by the King Bella III (1172 - 1196), twelve monks and an abbot settled on the left bank of the river Mures, to the East of Cenad. They were coming from the Burgundian Monastery at Pontigny (the place of exile, from 1164 to 1166, of Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury who opposed the English King Henry II risking his life). They founded a branch-abbey of the Cistercian Order. It was provided with lands and gained income from the salt shipped on Mures. That used to be one of the richest monasteries in Transylvania. Shortly afterwards, around 1202 or 1207, it founded a branch-abbey at Carta, on the bank of the river Olt. Igris was the place of burial for the second wife of King Andrew II, Yolanda of Courtenay. Hungarian historiographical tradition required that her husband was buried there too.

The notoriety of Igris Abbey was also confirmed by its temporary right to issue and maintain public acts. Even the Papal Court has entrusted it with some ecclesiastic disciplinary and arbitration missions. The presence of the Cistercian order in Transylvania, for a few hundred years, contributed to an alignment of this area to the Middle Age Western civilization. The missionary role played by the branch-abbey created in Transylvania (the two already mentioned and one of nuns, in Brasov) appears much clearer. These settlements clearly had a missionary role that they accomplished aggressively. They were founded in border areas, among non-believers and Greek schismatic people. For instance, in Igris, there was an area with a large Romanian density and with many Orthodox monasteries.

The Constitution of the Cistercian Order stated the duty that the mother-abbey provides the newly founded settlement with the main necessary religious books, which had to be copied after those in Cîteaux through the work of the monastery's scribes.

In the 12th Latin manuscript, dating from the end of the 12th Century and stored at the Library of Montpellier University, there is a list of books from the Pontigny Monastery. Somebody wrote next to some of the titles that the respective manuscript was "sent to Hungary". Other notes mention the absence of the respective manuscripts from the library at Pontigny Monastery and we can assume that at least some of them took the same road. As the branch-abbey at Igris was the only subsidiary, that was the place where the manuscripts arrived and we have a list of the books from its library. As we said, it was the first genuine library built in our territory.

We have to underline the importance of such a treasure of dogmatic theology and scholastic philosophy in Transylvania, which was certainly required by readers, because, otherwise, the effort and expenses (copying manuscripts was a very precise and costly work) would not have been spent, for it to be taken to such a long distance. The list is dominated by writings by Saint Augustine who had a great influence on Saint Bernard. Igris also received works by Saint Gregory the Great. They represented the necessary reading for the completion of spiritual training of novices that entered Cistercian monasteries, a genuine treasure of dogmatic theology and scholastic philosophy.

Fate wasn't too favorable to the Igris Abbey. Though it was strongly fortified, it was ransacked by Tatars in May 1241. We don't know what happened to the precious manuscripts of the library. A piece of information from 1247 shows it as active, so the abbey was not completely destroyed. A powerful reanimation of paganism takes place during the rule of Ladislaus IV the Cuman. In 1280, the abbey is attacked by Cumans. In the second half of the 14th Century, the decline becomes more and more pronounced. The slackening ties of dependence and connection inside the order and interference of local elements brought the abbey in a very serious situation. It was going to disappear in 1551, when the Ottoman Beylerbey Mehmed conquered the Cenad fortification and destroyed what was left from the Igris abbey.

As a mark for the history of those places, a bridge of connection with Western Europe's civilization was destroyed by the Eastern invasions.

Churches in Strei and Densus

An Orthodox church from Transylvania built around 1270, a synthesis of Byzantine and Gothic styles.

"In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Sir Candres and Lady Nistora and their sons have built this monastery to the great Martyr and soldier of Christ Saint George and it was accomplished and written for the memory and health and salvation of their souls, in the days of sir Jigmon and under the rule of the voivodes Ioanes and Jacob". That is written on the inscription of the votive picture of Streisangeorgiu Church. It was in fact a re-building, because there is an older inscription, dating from 1313 - 1314, at the same cult site, which says: "In the year six thousand eight hundred and twenty two the church was started, with the help of Saint George and Mother of God and all the saints, to the help and forgiveness of sins of Prince Balea and the help and salvation and forgiveness of sins of Father Nenes, Teofil Zugravul."

The building of Streisangeorgiu, similarly to the one in Strei or Densus are physical and spiritual evidence for the continuity since the era of the Roman province Dacia to the first Romanian rule. And we are going to see immediately why physical.

When they first came to Transylvania, Hungarian kings were obliged to accept islands of Romanian rule, for some hundred years, in the marginal areas of Transylvania (Maramures, Barsa Country, Fagaras and Hateg - this latest area probably had the largest concentration of principalities). They were organized into a kind of village assemblies, led by princes and principal councils and they recognized the suzerainty of the Hungarian king, but enforced their own laws and practices (*jus valachicum*). The explanation for their survival comes from both geographical reasons (territory well defended by relief conditions, with a more difficult access) and practical and military reasons. The new kingdom needed the armies of these princes to help defend borders and for various military expeditions, as confirmed by documents from that era.

As the new state was organized, Szeckler and Transylvanian Saxon settlers were brought and they took over some of the military jobs of Romanian principalities. As the feudalizing process was rushed, the importance of these principalities and their status were reduced.

Documents from that era help us determine how things developed. Initially, the princes had their land possessions recognized. Sometimes Hungarian kings would offer them donations, although that occurred less frequently than in the case of Hungarian upper class. The 1366 royal decree assimilates as Transylvanian noblemen those princes awarded with royal diplomas (written documents) for their lands. Therefore, Romanian princes, longstanding possessors of lands, were facing a superior authority, represented by Hungarian castellans. This authority allowed them to possess unhindered their principalities for a while, in exchange of certain services to the fortress and the king. When they found that the legal possession was conditioned by owning a written document, these princes cited the services they offered in order to get diplomas from the king or his representatives. A letter by King Sigismund of Luxembourg, issued shortly after he was elected as Roman-German lord, in 1412 and addressed to Pope Paul Joan XXIII reminds of "the many liberties that kings of Hungary gave to the Hungarian, Transylvanian Saxon, Szeckler and Romanian noblemen in Transylvania".

Although in this document the Hungarian king places Romanians along the "standings" - meaning noblemen, Transylvanian Saxons and Szecklers - some years later, after the Bobalna Uprising, Romanians disappear from the known standings. Many of the Romanian princes would seek to become part of the Hungarian upper class, in order to keep their lands and privileges. For two centuries already, a process of social stratification

had begun. It is certified by the fact that these princes would build separate residences and court churches. Stone buildings are evidence of this. Many of them were erected on top of older, wooden ones, in Hateg area, where the most ancient and important group of Romanian Middle Age churches was preserved, out of the whole region inhabited by Romanians. Churches and princely-nobiliary courts were discovered at Streu, Streisangeorgiu and Densus. Densus Principality laid in the South-East of Poiana Ruscai Mountains. In the 15th Century it was made of 24 villages, exclusively possessed by princes of Densus or along with other princely families. The family of Densus princes appears mentioned in documents after 1360. Their predecessor was a village prince, who probably lived around 1300. Princes in Densus had also raised a tower-house, a fortification in a remote area, a few kilometers apart from their residence.

The three religious settlements at Strei, Streisangeorgiu and Densus stand out by a few particularities. The Streisangeorgiu church has been built in Romanesque style. The spire of the church in Strei is built in a late Romanesque shape. The Densus settlement, which has a square aisle and a semicircular apse, is built in a "simple Greek cross", but with a Romanesque - like tower above the central bay, surrounded by a support vault. The combination of Byzantine and Romanesque elements offers a unique character to the Densus foundation.

But what unites them and enable us to say that they are a physical evidence of continuity is the use, in all three of them, of materials disbranched from Roman era monuments (elements from the neighboring Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetiza in Densus) and integrated into the new constructions made by Romanians who resulted from the fusion of Dacians and Romans.

Foundation of the Romanian Principalities south and east of the Carpathian Mountains

The great Mongol invasion of the early 13th century, culminating in the campaign across Poland, Hungary and up to Bohemia and Moravia, did not spare the territories inhabited by Romanians. Through the "Pax Mongolica", which lasted nearly 100 years, taxes were imposed on the extra-Carpathian Romanian population. On the bright side, however, the "Pax Mongolica" blocked the expansion of the Catholic Hungarian Kingdom over the Carpathians. Just like the Arab or Ottoman domination, the Tartars limited themselves to collecting a tribute while granting the locals large autonomy and the right to practise their own religion. Therefore, with almost a thousand years of Christianity behind, the Romanians remained in the Orthodox rite behind the Tartar shield, and were also able to lay the foundations of medieval states, unlike their brothers from Transylvania whom the Hungarian domination prevented to go the same way.

To some extent, Transylvania also benefited from the "Pax Mongolica": it kept its autonomy inside the Hungarian Kingdom as King Andrew III's efforts to curtail the rights of the Transylvanian nobility failed. The king himself acknowledged the separate status of the province when he spoke of *regnum nostrum* (our kingdom, Hungary) and *regnum Transilvaniae*. At some point, he summoned an assembly of the nobility which included Romanian representatives. With time, however, the Romanians' rights would be seriously limited, with the exception of those living at the periphery of the province. Consequently, an increasing number of Romanian aristocrats would accept to be assimilated as Hungarian subjects, only to preserve their privileges.

Others, however, preferred to cross over the mountains, thus contributing to the formation of the Romanian feudal states south and east of the Carpathians. This migratory movement was mentioned by chroniclers as "dismounting" and became, as modern historiography records, the main force in the emergence of the two feudal Romanian states which in European chancelleries went by the names of Wallachias – Wallachia Minor and Wallachia Major (or Moldowallachia of the Eastern Principality).

The foundation of the two Romanian feudal states was the outcome of an internal process of economic, social and political development, as has been demonstrated by research and archaeological finds. A catalyzer in the process was also the position of the territory in the path of important commercial routes, especially in the case of the eastern Principality of Moldova. Written sources of the time mention the existence of solid political formations ruled by a knez or a voivode. The best known document is the Johannite Knights' Diploma of 1247 which describes the situation south of the Carpathians, when the Hungarian authorities brought the Johannite knights to the Severin area. Lesser records mention political organizations east of the Carpathians. According to the chronicle of Ottokar of Styria, the Transylvanian voivode Ladislau Kan held Otto of Bavaria prisoner and sent him to the Wallachian voivode across the mountains at the beginning of the 14th century. Two decades later, sources mention military corps that came to the aid of Polish monarchs.

The Romanian Principality emerged, according to Nicolae Iorga, "as an original concept, solely rooted in local traditions [...] it is for the first time in the East that such a national concept appears as the equivalent of the territorial concept that sanction the states of Western Europe".

In a somewhat different manner, some 30 years later Moldova was founded. A legend has it that the name of the principality was given by Voivode Dragosh after his dog Molda that drowned in a river.

As the power of the Tartars slackened, in the time of Louis I, Hungary resumed its expansionist and catholicizing campaigns east of the Carpathians (never abandoned by the Papacy, in fact). A sort of frontier county was created here to withstand the onrush, governed by Dragosh from Maramuresh. The follower of Dragosh was banished by another rival from Maramuresh who had been exiled by the Hungarian royal authorities, and the latter takes over the scepter in 1359. In the same year, in Wallachia, Nicolae Alexandru founded the Metropolitan Seat, under control of the Constantinople Patriarchy.

Stifled in Transylvania, the Romanian "franchises" continued south and east of the Carpathians. The province of Ardeal was thus "restored its natural role of cradle of the state, as philologic and linguistic research granted it the role of cradle of the Romanian language and people", as the same Iorga wrote.

The geopolitics of the time had intended to make the Carpathian Range into a frontier between the Catholic Hungarian dominion on one hand, and the Mongol threat and the Orthodox Byzantine world, on the other. Insensitive to geopolitics, the Romanians found the solution while crossing through the Carpathian passes, thus surmounting all obstacle in the way of their spiritual unity. As for the political unity, it was to be achieved only five centuries and a half later.

Posada: the first memorable victory of a feudal Romanian army

There is no clear record indicating the precise location of the first important battle which sanctioned the establishment of Wallachia, the original Romanian state. The event mentioned as "The Battle of Posada" in historical accounts does not exactly match an actual fact of history. The toponym "La Posada", as it occurs in later documents, refers to the military conflicts between the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg and Vlad I (1395) which took place in the Cerna Mountains.

The scarcity of documentary sources prevents an accurate backtracking of the process along which the original Romanian state was founded. The existence of several political establishments called kniezates and voivodeships between the Danube and the Carpathian Mountains in the mid-13th century is recorded in the Diploma of the Knights of St John, or the Diploma of the Joannites, a document issued by King Bela IV of Hungary to confirm those settlements as military outposts against non-Christian invaders. It is also known that, in the 1280s, Voivode Litovoi confronted the Hungarian king, was killed in battle and his brother Bărbat, being taken prisoner, paid a handsome ransom to be set free. At the turn of the century, all the provinces between the Carpathians and the Danube were united under the control of the dominion centred in the Argeş area. The first ruler of this new political establishment was mentioned in a later document, dating in 1332, under the name of Tihomir – a name that raised considerable speculation regarding its ethnic origin. Not that the Germanic origin of Clovis might have in any way altered the Latin origin of France's population, or that the French were less proud of their historical past.

The new state was in a relationship of vassalage to the Hungarian Kingdom. A digression is needed at this point, only to avoid the temptation of judging historical realities from the perspective of our present-day knowledge of the world. In early medieval times the notion of independence, or the desire thereof, was of little relevance. The times were hard and people had to stay united to survive, both socially and politically. On the social level a powerful seigneur was sought to bow to in allegiance in exchange for your protection, while offering him your armed resources, along with other vassals like yourself. On the political level the pyramid was built up through the royal families. There was an overlord whose power and influence grew in proportion to the number of vassals he managed.

By the early 14th century, the "Mongol umbrella" that had protected the territories south and east of the Carpathian Mountains from Hungarian or Polish aggression had nearly vanished. The Hungarian Kingdom went through a profound crisis which ended when the dynasty of the House of Arpad was replaced by the House of Anjou coming from Sicily. At this point, the voivode south of the Carpathians seized the opportunity to change his status in relation to the Hungarian Crown.

In 1324, the vassalage relations between Voivode Basarab I and the new Hungarian king were on a normal course following negotiations, according to a document dating in that same year. However, the next year a certain Ștefan, son to a Kuman count, was denounced as having "slandered our Lord Carol, by the gift of God's grace illustrious King of Hungary, and extolled Basarab the Transalpine, unfaithful to the Sacred Crown, while purporting that the power of our Lord the King can by no means withstand or compare with the power of Basarab". Tensions gradually escalated into military conflict, especially after the Papacy had praised Basarab as a devoted defender against the heathendom, while the Hungarian king was trying to describe him to the Western world as an ally of the non-Christians.

The battle of Posada lasted four days, from the 9th to the 12th of October 1330. It was depicted in the *Chronica Hungarorum*, or the Vienna Illuminated Chronicle, written for

the Hungarian king Louis I (1342-1382) in order to legitimate the claim of the Anjou dynasty over Hungary. "Countless Romanian hosts on top of the ravines, dashing from all over the place, were raining arrows upon the Hungarian army downhill, along a passage which could hardly be called a road [...] The most agile horses and soldiers fell dead in the hustle and jostle as the abrupt acclivity prevented them from climbing against the Romanians on either side of the road, neither could they go ahead or flee, the king's soldiers were trapped like fish in the net. Young and old they fell dead, princes and noblemen alike. And the Romanians brought many prisoners along with them, both wounded and unscathed, and many arms and precious apparel of all those who fell; gold and silver coins alike, and precious bowls and baldrics and many a horse with saddle and harness [...] And the king and a few other men himself barely escaped." It should be added that the king lost his royal seal in the battle.

This was the glorious military victory which sanctioned the foundation of the first Romanian state, a new political formation which was to hold the balance between the Western and the Eastern worlds. In the centuries to follow there were times when we slipped into the Oriental realm, but were hardly ever fully assimilated by it, and times when we reverted to the Western world, to which we were fully entitled through birth and structure.

The buckle from the tomb in Curtea de Argeș

The royal tomb in the Princely Church of Curtea de Argeș where the buckle was found proves that, in those times, our royalty was little different from those of Western Europe

Is it possible that a 14th century girdle buckle may be the relic of an astral moment? It appears so, if only one has the right perception of history to ask the right questions, especially in a context when "the traditional prejudices of the past century (i.e., the 19th c.) about the standards of feudal civilization in the time of the Romanians' national foundation" have remained largely unchanged at the level of general perception, despite the earnest academic studies of Professor Răzvan Theodorescu and those of a connoisseur of the epoch, Pavel Chihaiia.

So, what is the story of this buckle that no school book ever cares to mention? It was found in a princely tomb in the St. Nicholas Church in Curtea de Argeș during the archaeological investigations that started in 1920. Historians are still debating over who was buried in that tomb. Fact is, the apparel of the deceased was after the Occidental fashion, no different from the looks of the painted founders of the church or the way Mircea the Elder looks in the votive painting at Cozia Monastery. The buttons display the emblem of the Basarab dynasty. In itself, the buckle might be thought of as an exotic ornament to meet the taste and desire of a lesser prince from some remote land of Europe. If analyzed, however, within the context of the archaeological finds and wall paintings, it will acquire a different signification, thus described by Pavel Chihaiia: "The civilization patterns of the upper classes went at the same pace as the Occident, until the Ottomans enforced their domination [...] many knightly adornments display similar features with their Western counterparts. Some of them are of an outstanding artistic value that illustrates the spiritual ambience of the epoch." This spiritual ambience could not have been recaptured in the absence of this and other similar ornamental artifacts – certainly not so much from the deplorably sparse written reports that survived.

The buckle features the gate of a sumptuous castle whose walls are figured by the felt girdle, embroidered with beads and staple. It looks rather like a castle scene with three personages performing. The buckle is composed of four molded pieces: two turreted towers (to which the girdle used to be attached), the central piece with the open gate structure wherein a swan is seen; the gate structure is flanked by two symmetrical edifices with small balconies that hold the figures of a man and a woman. Three of the pieces are cast in solid gold (the two side towers and the central piece of the gate structure with the edifices left and right); the fourth piece, which is inside the gate, is copper covered in blue enamel. The exact place where this piece of jewelry was manufactured could not be identified. Speculations were made about similarities of the gate structure with the tower at the head of the bridge over the Vltava River in Prague, raised in 1372. In any case, the buckle is known for sure to belong with a group of similar ornamental artifacts found across an area that stretches from England down to our country and from Viking territory down to Italy, all of which define the so-called "International Gothic Style".

Two lovers in a castle are remindful of a common motif of gallant medieval literature that brings forth the theme of secular, as opposed to spiritual, love. The trend originates from the 12th century in reaction to religious disputes as well as under the influence of Ovid's writings that bring out the image of Venus, goddess of love. Pavel Chihaiia would identify similar scenes and attire as those featured on the Curtea de Argeș buckle from the St. Anton of Padua's Church in Ravenna to the Krakow Cathedral, to St. Catherine's Church in Frankfurt am Main, to the ivory frame of a small mirror at the British Museum, dating from the same period but brought over from France.

The third character on the buckle, the swan with a feminine face, is no less interesting as it symbolizes the feelings of the two lovers. Since ancient times, the swan has been known to incarnate Venus. Pavel Chihaiia assimilated the swan on the buckle with "Frau Welt", the medieval equivalent of Venus, which appears in the sacred sculptures of the age with the meaning given by the monk Konrad von Würzburg, as an indictment of worldly pleasures and temptations, and of secular emancipation in general. According to the said monk, a Francon knight who used to cherish glory, read Gothic novels and overindulged in worldly vanities met with a beautiful "Frau Welt" who, when she turned her back on him, proved a hideous display of frogs and lizards.

As for the head cover of the fantastic swan with a woman's face, the explanation is that Venus or "Frau Welt" was, according to the popular notion of the time, a respectable lady who should never appear bareheaded in public, like the young woman in the balcony. That is why the swan's head was covered by a night cap, seemingly of silk or some other precious material. Pavel Chihaiia identified similar night caps at Gudela von Holtzhausen's funeral monument in the Frankfurt Dome, on Mary Magdalene's wooden sculpture in Kunsthalle, Hamburg, or on one of the consoles of the "Beautiful Fountain" in Nürnberg, all of which date from the same epoch as the buckle herein described.

This is how, under proper scrutiny, a piece of jewelry can evoke the ambience from the Court of the early Basarab Dynasty, a close mirror of the European fashion and mores of the age. We know nothing of their reading habits, as we know nothing of the books from the libraries at Cârța or Igrîș except for a list of their titles to be found somewhere in France.

The historian will sign off here, possibly leaving the pen to a talented narrator who could tell the fascinating story of a love affair at the Princely Court of the Basarabs, no less captivating than those of Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Romance of Troy or the Romance of the Rose by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meune.

Vodita, the first organized monastery!

The first spiritual monument built in a trefoil apse in our land

On the Romanian bank of the Danube, straight after the river makes its last turn forward, before it lashes into The Iron Gates gorge, some stone prongs arise. Cows used to herd there. The place came back to tourists attention, in 2001, after the new Monastery Vodita was hallowed close by. Perhaps most of those who reach the area and see the ruins do not understand their meaning and they wouldn't know how to answer if asked why those walls could be the proof for an essential moment in our history. And, after learning the answer, they would find it even harder to understand why we are treating them with such neglect.

Here, at Vodita, monk Nicodim has twice build-up a monastery, during the second half of the 14th century. We don't know too much - neither the sources are very reliable - about Nicodim. He was said to be born Aromanian, which might explain his settlement to the North of the Danube. He could as well have come to those areas during efforts to counter the Catholic offensive, after the Hungarian King Louis the Great had annexed Vidin and Craina, which in 1366 were organized into a "banat". He was a wise man, as shown by his correspondence with the last Bulgarian patriarch from Tarnovo, Saint Eftimie. Nicodim had pen crafted the first certainly dated manuscript in our land, a four gospel kept in a splendid silver bundle. He wasn't the founder of the monastic life in or country, as it was thought for a while, because the monastic life existed some centuries before. He is the one who organized it and directed it after a Byzantine-Athonite chronicle, according to the spiritual breath brought by Hesychasm (it required that the monk was isolated, a search for silence and a continuous contemplation that would bring him a greater adjacency to God).

But the role of the monastic missionary movement, initiated by Nicodim, was due to be more participatory and important in the life of the Romanian Countries. The hierarchy of feudal states (that "family of royals", where each was filling either a more important or a subordination position, depending on the economic and military force displayed) was also identified through the ecclesiastic institution. The ambition of the extra-Carpathian Romanian countries to enter the European "royal family", mostly catholic, found itself impeded by their accession to the Slavic-Byzantine ecclesiastic hierarchy. We were and we remain the only Latin people of Europe with an Orthodox confession. The monastic movement has had a decisive role in enhancing Orthodoxy and countering Catholic proselytism. The 14th century and the first decades of the subsequent century were decisive in this matter. The competition between Western monastic orders and the Byzantine inspired monasticism had been unfolding on these lands for two centuries. The royal Hungary had called itself and got the confirmation of Rome as a propagator of Catholicism in this area. The conversion was often made by force, as it happened in Vidin, where Vladislav Vlaicu crossed the Danube in the autumn of 1368, called by the Bulgarian rioters who unleashed a violent reaction against Franciscan missionaries. Monastic orders were installed in Transylvania, military monastic orders were also brought and placed at the borders, in order to disseminate the Catholic faith, in exchange of substantial privileges. The same thing happened to the Orthodox monastic movement.

The laic regime has offered considerable privileges, including immunity and the right to self-management to the monasteries that were built particularly in the border area. This is how monasteries such as Vodita, Tismana and Cozia became the largest owners of land and recipients of privileges and tax exemptions, including military liabilities. As academician Razvan Teodorescu wrote, the era between 1300 and 1400 "clearly meant the century of triumphal assertion of Orthodox monasteries in the spiritual life and in

the civilization of Romanians from states created now." The history of the two buildings from Vodita stands as testimony.

The first house of worship, Vodita 1st, considered as the first organized monastery in our country, was awarded to Litovoi by some historians. The embedded opinion says that it was the work of "Chir Nicodim and his brothers", around 1372, after the Banatul Severinului came under the domination of Romanian rulers. Vladislav-Vlaicu has given villages to the monastery and offered important exemptions. The construction wasn't too solid and the archaeological research showed that its existence was transient. However, the king of Hungary managed to retake the Banatul Severinului. Nicodim and his brothers moved to Tismana, where they built-up another monastery. They returned to Vodita after the Romanian rulers have re-conquered the Banatul de Severin, around 1383 - 1384 (the bell of the new building was dated in 1385) and resumed efforts to resist the tendency to Catholicization, that came from over the mountains. The victory of Orthodoxy was due to be complete after the failure of the Ferrara Council (Florence), in 1438 - 1439. For many years now, the Byzantine emperors were trying to negotiate a Western support against the Ottoman danger, in exchange for the reunification of the Christian Church. The reunification decision adopted by the Council was rejected by the important ecclesiastic centers at Ohrida and Pecs, the Western support failed to appear and Constantinople was conquered.

But the second building from Vodita has an additional meaning. Learning from the first failed experience, Nicodim and his constructors have added four pilasters in the nave to the trefoil apse scheme, as a support for possible side archways that received the discharge of squinches and offered stability to the construction, removing the risk that the side walls would collapse under the heaviness of the arches. Vodita 2nd would become the prototype for the subsequent development of ecclesiastic architecture in the Romanian Country.

Therefore, is it worth considering that the long-neglected Vodita rundown ruins are the symbol of an astral moment of our history?

Rovine: Mircea the Elder's glorious triumph over the Ottomans

On command, a bridge of flatboats locks the banks across the stream,

Making way for swarms of legions marching under fanfare scream:

Infantry and cavalry, all in faith to Allah sworn,

Like a cloud of darkness raiding, all over Rovine swarm.

Any regular schoolchild must have read at least once these lines from Epistle III by Mihai Eminescu. This exquisite poem will forever stamp our memory with a vivid picture of the battle of Rovine, our first epic military clash with the Ottoman Empire. Historians, however, still find it hard to identify the precise location of Rovine, whether there was one battle or two, as well as the precise time of the event (October 1394 or May 1395).

The general perception of Rovine is that of a Romanian-Ottoman confrontation, whose true significance can be seen in the general context of the Ottomans' progress towards the Danube River and the large scope politics engaged by Prince Mircea the Elder.

The Ottoman Turks settled down on the continent of Europe in 1354. The core of their power used to be in Anatolia, while their European dominion, known as Rumelia, was yet to be connected with their Asian territory through the conquest of Constantinople and the control of the Straits. It was not long before the Ottoman sultans understood that, in order to accomplish this feat, they should adopt the strategy of the Romans and the Byzantines for the Danube and the Black Sea area. The Danube line became all the more important to the Ottomans under Sultan Bayezid I. During that same period, a strategy was developed by the opponents of the Ottomans which was also to be later applied in warfare by Princes Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave – namely, the conclusion of mutual agreements with sovereigns from Anatolia, Iran or Georgia. Indeed, the Romanian princes were the most successful in battle when the Sublime Porte was engaged in parallel conflicts in the Asian part of its territory.

The size and resources of Wallachia, along with its Christian Orthodox population, prevented the country to take its well-deserved place within the Pax Christiana borders, under the spiritual rule of the Pope, as opposed to Pax Ottomanica. While assuming the standard of Christian crusaders in this part of Europe, the Hungarian Kingdom went in fact after its own interests in the Balkans, in an effort to force the Orthodox population under the Catholic umbrella. Two hundred years later, however, the battle of Mohacs put an end to their onslaught and the Hungarian Kingdom was wiped off the map of Europe.

According to Ottoman chronicles, a cooperation between Mircea the Elder and the leaders of the Anatolian anti-Ottoman resistance seems to have been initiated by the latter party. In fact, Mircea may well have provided the European powers with a clearer notion of the emerging Ottoman danger at a time when the only part of the continent under direct threat were the Balkans. The same Ottoman chronicles tell about intense preparations made by Bayezid I in 1392 for a campaign against Wallachia – a context against which Mircea deemed it opportune to turn to Hungary for an alliance. Eventually, the sultan had to confront the threat coming from Anatolia. In the battle of Çorum, Central Anatolia, Bayezid I ended up in defeat, which provided an opportunity for Sigismund and Mircea to undertake heavy anti-Ottoman action south of the Danube. From that point, the sultan is compelled to focus on the European front and, in 1393, he conquers the Tarnovo Tsardom.

As the mighty Mongol sovereign Timur Lenk made his presence felt in Anatolia, Bayezid had to march his troops again toward the Asian side of his empire. Against

this background, along with Sigismund's presence in Moldova in late 1394, it is hardly probable for a Wallachian-Ottoman confrontation to have occurred at Rovine in October that year. As a matter of fact, that date is only mentioned in the late ten copies of the Serb annals. It was not before early 1395 that Bayezid returned to Rumelia, his European dominion.

A suggestive description of the final outcome of the Romanian-Ottoman clash is provided by the Ottoman chronicles of the 15th century, which mention a fierce battle from which the sultan fled to safety, only to return years later to bitterly chastise the infidel.

A troubled period ensued, when a certain Vlad – "the Usurper", as historians nicknamed him – seems to have shared the rule of the country with Mircea. The battle of Nicopolis was another notable event when the European crusaders were defeated on account of the Western knights' stubborn refusal to comply with the advice of the Wallachian prince, who was only too familiar with the enemy's tactics.

After Bayezid I was defeated at Ankara and taken prisoner by Timur Lenk, his two sons Mehmed and Süleyman contended for succession to the throne – the former in Anatolia, the latter in Rumelia. It was an excellent opportunity to eliminate or at least reduce substantially the Ottoman influence in Europe. The only one to have played an active part in the process was Mircea the Elder, as Sigismund of Luxembourg, king of Hungary and chief crusader, had lost interest in the issue and switched focus on striving for the Roman-German crown. With whatever resources he could gather, Mircea managed to bring Musa, his own candidate on to the Ottoman throne, to whom he also gave his daughter in marriage. After Musa was banished, Mircea made another two unsuccessful attempts with Orhan and Mustafa, while the Constanza Council was failing to realise a European Christian coalition.

In conclusion, Rovine may be seen as a symbol of Mircea the Elder's anti-Ottoman politics, a crucial moment in our national history.

Cozia Monastery, the wonder on the Olt Valley

Cozia Monastery - Foundation by Mircea the Elder - a place of worship and culture.

The traveller to the Olt Valley who stops in front of Cozia Monastery and crosses its sill will learn that it was built by Mircea the Elder and other general information. He won't be able to understand, even from the History manual, why Cozia is among the 100 essential moments of this land. So, which are the stories of Cozia?

Cozia Monastery and Cotmeana - which was otherwise under the authority of Cozia - are the symmetric pair of Vodita Second and Tismana and another acknowledgement of the victory of Orthodoxy by monks faced with Catholic infiltration. If the 12th and 13th centuries were governed by a certain balance between these two influences, the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century remove any doubt in this matter. Otherwise, the Catholic wallings remain simple, provincial and lack the lordly spirit. Catholicism associated with the expansion of the Hungarian Kingdom or the pressures from the Polish Kingdom is losing the battle. Monks are offering the leadership all their support and the leadership, through donations and all kind of exemptions, makes Cozia the second most rich monastery in the country, after Tismana.

The story of this monastery is also interesting (with no intention to fuel in any way the "Cuman" theories). At first, its name appears alternatively as Nucet or Cozia. Another Nucet, in Dambovitza County, was an older building and there was a risk that, in centuries, the donations to one or the other could get mixed, Mircea's Nucet has become Cozia, the Pecheneg-Cuman name that was translated in the same way.

The Church of Cozia Monastery remains the only construction built in a trefoil apse scheme dating from the 14th century which lasted integrally until nowadays and is also a proof of a follow-up on the Vodita 2nd pattern which becomes an archetype of Muntenian monastery buildings in the Middle Ages. In the same way, the brushwork from its pronaos has remained the archetype for monastery paintings in the same area and time frame. These are evidence for Cozia's prestige - the foundation by the most illustrious princes of Wallachia, during the first two centuries of its existence.

Perhaps the essential and defining feature of the grand church having the Trinity as its titular saint at Cozia Monastery is made up from the harmony offered by its balanced and beautifully proportionate volumes - academician Razvan Teodorescu wrote - [...], by the elegant juncture of wavy, straight and sudden turned lines in its gable and apses, by the parament where, due to its backdrop carved in the stone of window frames, its dim archivolt and the bows that happily rhyme the medium and upper register of the facades and no less due to the terracotta ornaments from the same area of the parament, the risk of a certain monotony - so often met in Byzantium and in Balkans - in swinging the brick rows and the grouted sections is avoided. "These are features also met in Saint Nicholas in Arges, built-up 40 years earlier which differentiate the buildings from our country to those met in the South of Danube, even if the stonemasons came from there. In the flat relief sculpture with notched profile which decorates the archivolt and the window frames at Cozia, academician Virgil Vatasianu found Georgian influences, additional influences that came from the East and which were going to culminate with Dragomirna and Three Hierarchs in Moldova, in the 17th century. Among the bird-like motives found in the stone sculpture that decorates Cozia one could see the bi-cephalous Aquila, a symbol of Byzantine - Balkans rulers, which Mircea was able to display after he included in his title in 1388 the formula: "possessing and ruling [...] and on both sides on al Podunavia, yet up to the greater sea and prevailfog of the Durostorum fortress."

The same Balkanic influence is seen in the art of liturgical embroidery which in the Romanian Countries has reached its highest expression in 14th - 16th century and that was not accidental, as they remained the only area out of the Ottoman realm. It is possible that these elements alone wouldn't have justified the astral nature of Cozia building. But it is at the same time a symbol for the intellectual and artistic climate that ruled Lower Danube in those times and which was named "international". Nicolae Iorga was the first who was in charge of the effects of the encounter between East and West in this area, determined by late crusades, the increasing Ottoman threat and the failed efforts to reconcile Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Also visible in the military and ecclesiastic architecture, the influence of the Gothic is even easier to grasp in the sumptuary arts and moreover in clothes worn by Romanian princes or their wives as displayed in votive pictures. At Cozia, Mircea the Eldest appears in a tunica with staple seams in the form of medallions, a hose and a cloak that envisages the pursuit of Byzantine imperial chlamys. He is painted in the same way at Curtea de Arges, which confirms that this was the appearance of the voivode in the time of whom Wallachia has reached its largest territory. To a stranger that comes for the first time in these lands, a journey to Cozia, along with "Miorita", "Mesterul Manole" and "Luceafarul", with due explanations, would be enough to understand our history, past and present.

Tetraevangelium Gavril Uric

It was made in 1429 by monk Gavril Uric from Neamt Monastery to be used by Lady Marina, the wife of Alexander the Good. It is illustrated by four miniatures of the evangelists on the cover pages. It was the first Romanian illustrated Tetraevangelium which was preserved. It is stored at Bodleian Library of the Oxford University.

"With the goodwill of the Father and the help of the Son and with the accomplishment of the Holy Spirit, this Tetraevangelium was worked upon during the time of the devout and Christ loving prince Alexander Voivode, prince of Wallachia and Moldavia, and his devout lady Marina. Due to their ardent will and love for the loving words of Christ, this was diligently written in the year 6937 (1429) and was ended in 13 days in March, by monk Gavril, son of Uric, who used to write at Neamt Monastery." These were the final words in the first manuscript illustrated with miniatures which was preserved in the territory of the Romanian countries. Before telling its story, let's clarify what a Tetraevangelium was: an Orthodox liturgics book, which comprises the four canonic Gospels.

The one that created the wonder, Gavril Uric, was the son of a man who used to write ruling documents ("uric" means privilege or possession act) and who became a monk named Paisie in his senescence. The son was due to wear the monastic robing early in his life.

We are not aware of his previous accomplishments, but this manuscript is considered a masterpiece of the universal art of miniature illustrations and is cited as such in the great works dedicated to this field.

Despite its late emergence in the Romanian space, the art of decorating manuscripts begins with a masterpiece. Moreover, Gavril Uric created a school at Neamt Monastery, which was going to influence creations of this kind in the subsequent centuries. It is remarkable that in a profession which implies imitation, artists that followed him have taken over the scheme and compositional structure, but created original works which reached an artistic level, although not as high in value as the one from 1429.

We don't know if Gavril Uric copied a manuscript which was certainly Byzantine, or made a new one starting from a prototype or created an original work. But it is certain that the portraits of the four evangelists have an artistic value difficult to match and unanimously recognized. Each of the Gospels is preceded by the portrait of the evangelist sitting on a chair, with architecture elements on the background. The balance (which suggests the serenity and depth of their meditation) and the rhythmicity (shown inclusively through the opposite positions of the first two and the last two - the first and the last are sitting of chairs with a backrest, unlike the second and the third - the architectural elements in the first and the last miniature are predominantly horizontal, while the two miniatures in the middle are predominantly vertical) define the composition.

The Byzantine influence is obvious in some elements of the composition (as the valance supported by columns), but also, the autochthone influence is reflected through the church tower distinctive of the spate where the miniature was made or the walls such as those of the fortified monasteries in our territory.

The evangelists' portraits are well customized. Portrait of Luke is thought to be one of the best made; the evangelist appears bent over the papyrus he writes on and his moves are rendered without altering the focus needed to put on parchment the Good News (Gospel). Matthew is both focused and impassioned in preparing the tools he would use. Marcus is pictured while in the middle of the hand writing process, and items placed on the desk at his left remind of still life by Flemish masters. Finally, Joan is

surprised in a twisting movement as if he would want to listen to the divine inspiration or maybe to communicate the end of the mission (if we are to consider that he had finished his work, which appear to be laid on the desk. The strips which border every miniature are in a compositional and coloristic harmony with the evangelists' portraits.

As Grigore Popescu-Valcea used to write in the album dedicated to Romanian Medieval Miniaturist, "the most significant quality of the four miniatures is the chromatic solution, which emphasizes the personality of Gavril Uric as a great colorist". Many years before, Nicolae Iorga used to generally write about the coloristic of our miniaturists: "Miniature in our land presents a very interesting note as far as the color game is concerned [...] to us, the color is one of the main elements of art [...] This world of ours is not a quiet world, a vapid world, but one which assimilates everything that offers light and knows how to use the effects of light in order to create beauty."

For a better understanding of the overall value of Romanian manuscripts illustrated by miniatures, let us add that the work of Romanian copyists ensured the preservation of a great part of Byzantine - Slavic religious literature, taking into account that to the South of Danube, it was much more difficult for such centers of manuscript transcription to exist.

If there is any way that this presentation persuaded you to look for these masterpieces in museums and libraries, this will not be easy for you. The Tetraevangelium of Uric is stored at Bodleian Library of the Oxford University nowadays; two others, made by Teodor Masisescul in Neamt, in 1491 and 1492, are stored at the History Museum in Moscow; Marisescul has also made a similar work in 1493, which is kept at Munich State Library; The Tetraevangelium in 1502, copied and illustrated with miniatures by Monk Philip, is in Vienna, and another one, from 1504, is stored at Cetinije, in Montenegro. Fortunately, the 1473 Tetraevangelium, which features the portrait of Stephen the Great, has remained at Putna Monastery.

In 1883, Melchisedec bishop used to write: "The Romanian Academy would make a great service to our intellectual culture and arts, if it took action, by means of expert people, to gather into an album all the remnants of our ancient culture, which are stored in monasteries. [...] Such a work would be of great honor to our nation [...] this work that we are proposing should not be postponed for long, because our precious monuments wear out, deteriorate and go to pieces as days go by". An incentive which is also valid nowadays.

The Battle of Varna

The participation of Iancu of Hunedoara in the last great European crusade

The Battle of Varna (November 10, 1444) marked the end of a historical age. For nearly 100 years knights and sovereigns from the West came to the eastern parts of Europe to fight against the unbelievers, in what was called "late crusades", but without a concrete result in political terms – that is, without succeeding in stopping the advance of the Ottoman Turks into the Balkan Peninsula and further to the Danube. It was a form of direct connection of this space to the European civilization to which it rightfully belonged. After such an alarming defeat for Europe at Varna begins the fracture between South-East Europe and the Occidental "world economy", as Braudel called it. From now on, this geographical space was gradually pulled – and in many forms, not only by the subjugation of the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space – into the Ottoman "world economy".

It is without doubt that the failure of these "late crusades" comes from the lack of unity of the Europeans, especially the Westerners, who were not in the front line under the direct attack of the Ottomans. The battle of Varna is no less the case, and the next short narrative should be illustrative of the fact.

As a consequence of the Council of Florence in 1439, where Emperor John VIII of Byzantium agreed upon the reunification of the Eastern Church with the Western Church, Pope Eugene IV called for a new crusade, on January 1, 1443. At that time, several European states initially expressed their intention to take part in the crusade, an intention that was not materialized eventually, for various reasons. The Hungarian Kingdom remains the main power around which the crusaders' alliance formed. Unfortunately, the course of events was influenced by the wavering attitude of King Ladislau I (who was also King of Poland since 1434). On April 15, 1444, King Ladislau I solemnly promised to the Papal legate Julian Cesarini that he would launch an offensive against the Ottomans. On April 24, however, he secretly sends an envoy to negotiate peace with the Ottoman Sultan. On June 12, a ten-year peace treaty was concluded, subsequently ratified by the Hungarian king.

Meanwhile, merely 17 ships were gathered from the promised Western fleet which was supposed to reach the Straits and further sail up the Danube. The ships headed to Constantinople in July. At the end of the same month, the king of Hungary received the Turkish envoys and signed the peace treaty with the Sultan in Szeged. The news stirred confusion in the West, and the Republic of Venice announced its ships would return home if the king's army hadn't started on to the Balkans. On the other hand, Cesarini pressed King Ladislau I not to keep his word given to a heathen. Cesarini also brought the news that the Sultan had moved away to Asia to quell a riot there, and the ships that were headed for Constantinople could lock him there.

In spite of the advice of Iancu of Hunedoara, who was aware of the insufficient power of the allied forces and the fatigue of its men due to the numerous campaigns carried out in the previous years south of the Danube, King Ladislau yielded to Cesarini and proceeded to move his army to the Danube. An army contingent from Wallachia would join his forces along the way.

Some historical sources say that an old Bulgarian fortuneteller woman predicted to the Romanian Prince Vlad Dracul, who was on march to join the king's forces, that King Ladislau I would not be victorious in the battle. At the sight of the royal military force, the fears of the Romanian prince increased and he and Iancu of Hunedoara tried to persuade the Hungarian king to avoid a direct confrontation, but the advice was ignored. Relying on off-base intelligence, the Hungarian king assumed the sultan could

not return from Asia as he must have been hindered by the Western fleet. In fact, Murad II had no difficulty returning to Europe and hurried toward Varna with a much larger army. Some rumors circulated at that time that the sultan would have bribed the fleet commanders.

At the meeting held the day before the battle, in November 9, Iancu of Hunedoara made his mark rejecting the idea of settling a reinforcement for a prolonged resistance against the Ottoman forces, as long as the allied forces did not have sufficient food supplies. He pleaded instead for a vigorous attack to rout the Ottomans, knowing that the chances of success were low and a victory depended on the will to fight and well coordinated actions.

On the morning of the battle, the Ottomans started the attack and shattered the right flank of the allied army, where the infantry detachments of bishops of Eger and Oradea were deployed. Iancu of Hunedoara then counterattacked and rebalanced the odds. The Ottomans, however, used a trick: they put cracked bags loaded with money on the back of the camels, which also frightened the enemy's horses; the money fell and scattered on the ground and the European soldiers stopped to collect them, wasting precious time. The battle was definitely lost for the European forces when the Hungarian king, an impetuous and inexperienced young man, ignored Iancu of Hunedoara's advice and rushed against the Ottomans without repositioning the frontlines. He was killed, and his head, raised at the top of a spear, terrified the Europeans, who abandoned the fight and ran for their lives.

But then, why can a lost battle be an important historical moment? Well, in this case, the battle of Varna marked the end of an era and the beginning of another - and, above all, it taught the Romanians that they should rely on themselves only. The protection established by Iancu of Hunedoara over the other two Romanian states was to be a model for other Romanian princes until 150 years later, when Michael the Brave accomplished the first Union of the Romanian Principalities.

Dracula

Dracula's myth and its meaning

The King [of Hungary, Matia Corvin] narrated, as confirmed by secretaries who assisted to the description, that at his [Vlad Tepes] order, 40,000 people of both gender and different ages, belonging to the rival faction, were killed by means of the most refined tortures. Some of them were killed by being broken under the wagons' wheels, others undressed and stripped of their skin to the viscera, others sitting on pales and broiled on hot charcoal; others were gored with pales through their heads, through their chest, through their navel or - something which is despicable even to be told - through their buttocks and all through their viscera to the mouth; and, not to miss any form of cruelty, he used to put pales on the mothers' both breasts and impale their children onto them; finally, others were killed in other ways, as terrifying as possible, by previously torturing them with several endeavors that the cruelty of the most terrible tyrant was able to contrive.

The fragment above, detached from the writing of Bishop Nicolae de Modrusa - a papal delegate to these areas in 1462, as part of the crusade preparations - describes the conversation that he had in Buda with king Matia Corvin about the Romanian ruler Vlad Tepes. It is an illustration of bloodthirsty Dracula. An image that made Vlad Tepes the most notorious Romanian rulers in the world's public view. An image that we, as Romanians, contest and keep wishing to get rid of. Therefore, it should not be considered an astral moment. Isn't it, however, an astral moment that we missed, at least until now?

Let's see in brief how the image was built of a bloodthirsty ruler who ended up being the most notorious vampire in the world.

Two sets of stories were established about the facts of Vlad Tepes, almost contemporary with the Romanian prince (historians couldn't yet agree on the time or the author that wrote them). A direct lineage between them could not be established and they nevertheless had different purposes. Slavonic stories present a Vlad Tepes who is a great dominator, brave and wise, who strengthens the power of reign, recommended as a model to Tsar Ivan III. As a matter of fact, in the time of another tsar, Ivan the Terrible, Petru Rareș was also recommended as a model.

Instead, the German stories - written under the influence of the conflict between the Romanian prince and Saxon merchants, unhappy with actions taken by Tepes to stop their abuses (and here it must be pointed out that from the Court of Buda King, letters were issued which asked the merchants not to offend the Romanian ruler anymore) - have imposed the figure of a diabolically cruel, sadistic and savage tyrant. The author(s)' intention to depict in the darkest colors possible is obvious. Similarly to the Slavonic stories, the German ones were very successful and were printed and edited until 1530 in 14 editions. The German text was translated and elaborated in Latin, the language of Western Europe's chancellery. Stephen Andreescu used to write: "The two literary-historical products of the second half of the fifteenth century, viewed as a whole, reveal for the first time convincingly a continuity of the culture from the Carpathian-Danubian space, a culture with a double opening, towards the Orient of Byzantine-Orthodox tradition and to the Roman-German West. And that happened precisely when European humanists began to be interested in the origins of the Romanians and their purpose in fighting the Ottomans. Unfortunately, the German version was enhanced by the stories and interests of Hungarian King Matia Corvin. Willing to justify the lack of effective assistance to Vlad Tepes in fighting the Ottomans and the spending for other purposes of the money sent by the West for the anti-Ottoman drive, the Hungarian king invented stories as the one that opened our narrative and also invented letters alleging the

betrayal of Tepes and an arrangement between and the sultan, in order to motivate why the king threw the Romanian prince in chains instead of helping him.

Thanks to this "certification," the information was integrated into Pope Pius II's comments in Ebendorfer's chronicle. Later on, Bonfini - a chronicler from the Court of the Hungarian King, was going to write in a mitigated form the stories about the cruelties of Tepes. They were later reproduced in a work that enjoyed great success in Europe, Sebastian Münster's *Cosmography*. At the beginning of the 19th century, Johann Christian Engel rediscovered the German stories and resumed them into a history of Moldavia and Wallachia, while the Polish Adam Mickiewicz rediscovered the Slavonic ones. Victor Hugo dedicated to Vlad Tepes a few verses in *La légende des siècles*, and Bram Stoker had consecrated him as the prototype of the bloody vampire, based on the information provided -again - by the Hungarian scholar Arminius Vambery.

For Romanian historians, it has become a real duty to demonstrate - obviously, most often only in Romanian - that Vlad Tepes was a brave ruler and, particularly, a normal man. And this, given that the contemporary of Tepes of France, Louis XI, had had identical behavior and was treated similarly by some authors, without anyone challenging, however, his quality of a great king of France. Our inability to go beyond the Budapest filter in sending a right image to the West has made us miss an astral moment of history.

The battle of Podul Înalt (the "High Bridge")

The outstanding victory achieved by Stephen the Great against the Ottoman army led by the Sultan, and its European signification

"We, Stephen Voivode [...], hereby advise your lordships that around the Epiphany of last year the afore-named Turk sent into our land and against us a great big host of men-at-arms [...] Upon hearing and seeing this, we took up the sword and, with the aid of our Almighty Lord God, stood up against the foes of Christianity, prevailed upon them and trampled them underfoot and made them all taste of the edge of our sword [...] If this gate [of Christianity] is lost – may the Lord keep us from it –, then all of the Christian world will fall in dire jeopardy."

This is how Stephen the Great informed Europe from Suceava, on 25 January 1475, about the victory obtained on January 10 at Podul Înalt over the invading Ottoman army. It may be counted among the most notable military successes of the Romanians, "our own Thermopylae", as Nicolae Iorga once said.

The highest geo-political stakes of the moment was control over the Black Sea and the course of the Danube River. Some 10 years before the battle near Vaslui, Sultan Mehmed II had allegedly said that "So long as Chilia and Cetatea Albă belong to the Romanians and the Serbian Belgrade belongs to the Hungarians, we will not be able to completely defeat the *giaours*". Along with the Genovese city of Caffa in Crimea, these cities marked the most important trade route between Europe and Asia. The Dubnic Chronicle, a document coeval with the events, mentioned that the Ottomans had undertaken the 1475 campaign "with a mind that, as they say, if they were to come out winners, they should take further steps to invade the whole Kingdom of Hungary". This assumption was to be shared a little later by King Ladislau II of Hungary, who acknowledged that Moldova was like a barrier for Hungary and Poland, and Stephen the Great was the one who "locked the way across his country toward the neighbouring kingdoms".

The several raids that Stephen the Great conducted into Wallachia in order to enthrone there a ruler in favour of the anti-Ottoman project and thus secure the Danube course determined the sultan to divert and redeploy a consistent army that was then besieging the Albanian city of Skodra, defended by Albanians and Venetians. A large fresco in the Doge's Palace of Venice illustrates the encounters around this city of great strategic importance to the Venetians. The Ottoman army, under the command of Hadim ("the Eunuch") Suleyman Pasha, Beylerbey of Rumelia (the European part of the Ottoman Empire), who was originally bound for Italy, was commissioned toward Moldova. It was very unusual for an Ottoman army to engage a campaign in the dead of winter. Besides the sloppy, rutted roads, there was the problem of ensuring the fodder for the animals, the main means of transport at that time.

It was an arduous progress that lasted four months. Then unexpectedly, when they eventually reached Moldova the weather became unusually warm and the roads an ordeal to travel along. An Ottoman chronicler noted that "the skies would shoot upon them sharp arrows of rain [...] And so their resplendent garment was defiled and rotted like gardens in winter, withering all splendour thereof [...] While every horseman and servant was soaked in the fierce rain, all the hawks trained to fly in fight looked little more than miserable poultry plucked of their feathers."

Stephen the Great was awaiting the Ottomans in a well-chosen spot, where his father Bogdan II had beaten the Polish army that intended to impose their own candidate for the Moldavian throne in the year 1450; and Stephen, as a child, had been witness to that particular battle.

As they came out of the Lipovăț forest, the Ottomans found themselves in front of a marshland (the bog of the Bârlad River) some 10 kilometres long to the hill on which stood the city of Vaslui and 2-3 kilometres wide, between the hills of Munteni to the right, Timotei and Pai to the left. The battle was not a cavalry charge in the fashion of western tournaments. Stephen obliged the Ottomans to attack the only visible part of his army, the line of defence at the north-eastern end of the marshland (a place called "La Poduri", where the Racova flowed into the Bârlad River), in a V-shaped formation with its flanks open to the Moldovan counterattack from the hills. Hadim Suleyman was unable to deploy his troops in order to outflank the Moldovans toward Vaslui, as the densely wooded hills around the Bârlad bog stretched widely in a succession of hilltops and valleys of different orientation. Besides, the marshland hindered the traditional charging strategy of the overwhelming Ottoman cavalry.

On Stephen's order, "a warlike clamour of alphorn and trumpet calls" surged not far from the fortifications close to the place where the Racova flowed into the Bârlad. The Ottoman advance force fell for the signal and charged in deafening uproar. The frightening din made even Stephen himself, standing at the head of the bulk of his troops, probably on the Munteni Hill, shudder with horror. At this, an elderly boyar kneeled down and addressed him: "My lord, fear thou not, for we shall all stand with you in brave allegiance today, and God in Heaven will give us succour". A fierce battle ensued, with charges and counterstrikes from both sides.

Stephen the Great, who had kept the bulk of his troops along the slopes and valleys of the Munteni Hill, ordered a heavy cannonade and discharge of incessant flights of arrows, then went for a straight charge into the midst of the Ottoman army's right flank.

It was a crushing victory. Mara, the widow of the former sultan Mehmed II, noted that "never had an Ottoman army suffered a similar defeat", and the Italians spread the news of the first victory in open field won by a Christian army against the Ottomans. One year later, the sultan engaged a chastising expedition from which he returned unsuccessful.

Feleac Cathedral

(Bishopric, then became Archdiocese / Metropolitan Church in the XIV century, founded by Stephen the Great)

The help given by the Romanian princes to the monasteries of the Holy Mountain, generally from the Ottoman Empire, was recognized in writing, but not enough and, particularly not in vehicular languages. But the importance of the contribution which allowed the Christian settlements in the Ottoman world to survive was recognized.

Less was written about the support that princes of Wallachia and Moldavia gave to the settlements and to the Orthodox hierarchy of Romanians in Transylvania. Perhaps the documents are also fewer than in the first case, but the phenomenon deserves a better notoriety.

The situation of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania was marked by the offensive of Catholicism and the persecution to which it was subjected by the Hungarian Catholic kings. The existence of many Orthodox churches and monasteries is archaeologically and documentarily certified. The oldest name of notorious priest in Transylvania is that of Nanes, mentioned in an inscription from 1313 to 1314, at the church of Streisangeorgiu. The inscription at Ramet Monastery, in which the name of Archbishop Ghelasie appears, dates back in 1376. He is the first Orthodox hierarch in Transylvania whose name is known to us.

Towards the end of the 15th century we find out the name of the first Metropolitan of Transylvania: Ioanichie, attested in 1479. Nine years later, the headquarters of the Transylvania Metropolitan Church was established at Feleac and remained there for almost seven decades. The place was not chosen randomly. The locality is mentioned in 1367, when patricians of Cluj complained about the villagers from Feleac, accusing them of being thieves and making brigandaje in the roads. The accusation would seem illogical, because only ten years later, the King of Hungary, Ludovic I, entrusted the inhabitants of Feleac, a Romanian village (villa olachorum) with the responsibility of guarding the commercial road that linked Cluj with Southern Transylvania, along the river Somes. For that endeavor, Feleac needed to offer 20 men. We find the explanation if we take into account other documents that speak of the existence of a territorial principality or perhaps even a voivodeship at Feleac until 1538, as academician Stephen Pascu believed. In 1534 two jurors are mentioned, and in 1538 the judgment seat was at Feleac, with the participation of the juror (one Michaelis Wayda kenezius) and the villagers. So, at the beginning of the 16th century, we have a territorial formation on the border of Cluj, where Romanian law applies, which shows its strength and would fully explain the presence of the Transylvanian Metropolitan Church in the same place.

Therefore, the complaint of 1367 would merely be the proof for the attempt by the Hungarian patricians to obtain, with the King's support, the dispossession of the Romanians of their land, for acts that the King not only ignored, but entrusted to those accused the duty to counter them.

The establishment of the Metropolitan Church of Transylvania at Feleac is also linked to the building of a church here, which was preserved to this day. A Slavonic Tetraevangelium carries a note that looks like that: "With the Father's will and with the help of the Son and the work of the Holy Spirit, this Tetraevangelium was executed at the command of our highly sanctified Archbishop Sir Daniil in the days of the great King Matia. It was written on the name of Feleac, near the city of Cluj, where they built a church, dedicated to the Blessed Mother Paraskeva, in the year 6997 [1488], the month of October and 25 days." Tradition counts Stephen the Great, prince of Moldavia, as the founder of the church, which was not reasonless, as he was the one that founded the

Episcopate of Vad, near Dej. And nine years later, the tetraevangelium was locked out of the command of "the servant of God Isaac the treasurer." He was a great beneficiary of the prince of Moldavia. From Grigore Ureche's Chronicle we learn that Stephen the Great sent him and scribe Tautu to greet the King of Poland John Albert, who had announced that was going to fight against the Ottomans, but the prince anticipated his hidden intentions. The two envoys brought many gifts to the King of Poland, which he "received with love, and from here they crossed the river Nistru [...] It was there where they discovered all their cunning things and their hidden deeds, because they had caught scribe Tautu and Isaac the treasurer, and locked them in manacles and send them to be incarcerated to Lvov." The Battle at Codrii Cosminului followed (October 26th 1497) and ended with the crushing victory of the Moldavians. Perhaps as a sign of gratitude for escaping the detention of the Polish king, Isaac the Treasurer had locked the Tetraevangelium mentioned in December of the same year.

While the Metropolitan of Ungrovlachia (Wallachia) was appointed as "exarch of all Hungary and the Plains [Transylvania]" by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Stephen the Great and then Petru Rares took care of the Orthodox people around Cluj and Maramures.

The church that was founded in 1488 is a mixture of Byzantine and Gothic elements. It resembles a hall, with vaults on stone ogives in the nave, while the mural painting is Byzantine. It is a sign for this place and for the interferences specific to this space.

Documents have preserved the streak of the pastorate metropolitans at Feleac, starting with "Sir Daniil", then Mark, Danciu, Peter. Troubled times followed, in the mid-16th century for Transylvania, both politically and religiously. At the end of the century, the Metropolitan Church's seat had moved to Alba Iulia.

Taking into account that these historical facts are unknown not only to the general public, but also to many students of history faculties, it is no wonder that theories about the lack of Romanians' lineage awareness in the Middle Ages could reverberate.

The painted churches in the North of Moldova

Unique monuments in the world

There is almost no need to argue that the painted churches in northern Bukovina are an astral moment of the Romanian people, as their unique character in the world should be considered enough. The best known and best preserved exterior wall painting, listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, are the churches of Voroneț, Hunor, Moldovita, Sucevita, Arbore, Probota, Patrauți and "Sfântul Gheorghe" in Suceava.

Historians have yet to find a clear explanation for the origins of the exterior painting that adorns these churches, made during the sixteenth century. German professor Wilhelm Nyssen mentioned the theories that churches were too small, so biblical scenes were painted outside, to allow a larger number of believers to see them. But the churches of Wallachia were equally small, and yet the phenomenon did not occur. He then spoke of the expansion of the traditional custom of decorating Easter eggs, which would have also inspired the decoration of churches. Professor Vasile Dragut recalled the widespread Middle Ages practice of decorating the facades of houses with polychromies and painting exteriors on Moldovan churches since the fifteenth century. It is certain that a unitary program and a decoration of the facades of the churches from the socket profile up to the top have never existed anywhere in the world.

The execution of the exterior paintings became possible after the Moldavian craftsmen realized that the interior paintings, made shortly after the rise of the church, suffered from a slump in the masonry which caused the detachment of the plaster and, implicitly, of the mural painting. The exterior wall painting was executed about five years after the worship place was built. The exterior paintings are made in frescoes, the only technique that allowed them to withstand the weather. It's a technique that demands great craftsmanship. It is made on small areas of the fresh plaster, and excludes any subsequent retouching.

The iconographic enactment of the interior paintings quadrates with rules elaborated in Byzantium. The dominant dome of the nave is always reserved for the "heavenly church," with the figure of Jesus the Pantocrator (ie, the Almighty). The theme of Salvation is illustrated in the altar. The walls of the nave and the vaults around the dome are filled with the main moments of the action of Jesus: Baptism, Transfiguration, Entry into Jerusalem, Lazarus Resurrection, Prayer on the Mount of Olives, Judas' Betrayal, Jesus in front of Pilate, Christ Carrying the Cross, Crucifixion, Descent of the Holy Spirit.

In the narthex, Mary and the saints are painted, and the ecclesiastic calendar is displayed, starting with the first day of the ecclesiastical year, September 1st. Some hints to the contemporary events are also present. Professor Virgil Vatasianu interpreted in this way the presence of the horsemen's convoy led by Archangel Michael, with Emperor Constantine the Great behind him, in the narthex of the Church of Patrauți.

The battle of Constantine the Great with Maxentius (312) was evoked. The legend says that the Roman Emperor saw a bright cross in the sky of the day, and the ecclesiastical authors interpreted the fight as one against the unbelievers, like the ones that Stephen the Great had with the Ottomans.

The echoes of the present seem even stronger in the iconographic program depicted on the outer walls. A vast representation is filled by the Heavenly Hierarchy (the Cin) and the Tree of Jessei. The latter theme, which depicts the genealogy of the Savior's body, reaches its richest aspect of the post-Byzantine period in Moldova. And that was not by accident, as the right of Petru Rareș, a bastard of Stephen the Great, to the throne of the country, was disputed. The biblical image was meant to help

him support the claims of the throne. Wilhelm Nyssen also made an analogy between the presence of the philosophers in the Tree of Jesse with the western portal of the Chartres Cathedral, where the Mother of God with the baby is surrounded as embraced by sciences represented in the image by seven wise men of the Antiquity.

Another theme that points strongly to the realities of the time is the acatist hymn, written on the occasion of the siege of Constantinople by the Persian king Chosroes (626). Then the capital of the Byzantine Empire had allegedly escaped thanks to the intervention of the Virgin. The representation of the Acatist Hymn ends with the scene of the siege of Constantinople, except that it's not the Persians which are painted, but the Ottomans.

At Arbore, whose exterior painting was made in 1541, when the political situation of Moldova after the replacement of Petru Rareș by the sultan had changed, the painter had to point out that it was a siege that had taken place in 626. And in Voroneț, where the exterior painting was made in 1547, the siege does not appear anymore. But in the scene of the Last Judgment, the Ottomans are easily recognizable among those who will burn in the everlasting fire, and St. George appears on the Southwestern buttress as he kills the dragon while on a horse.

Also in Voroneț, as remarked by the German professor Wilhelm Nyssen, the Western viewer "who, through the late Gothic and Renaissance, completely disintegrated from the spiritual world of the Fathers" of the Church, will be surprised to find that in the scene of the escape from Heaven, Adam and Eve do not appear naked, but they wear clothes at first. Heaven is no longer a world of paradisiacal nakedness," and Adam and Eve become naked only after the drive out of Heaven.

Let's finish this short presentation with the thoughts of two great art historians.

The Polish Josef Stryzowski notes: "These are the treasures that the most informed connoisseur through his own journeys can not see anywhere else. Above everything that can be seen in Moldova are those strange churches which, due to their polychromy, can be compared with the Church of San Marco in Venice or with the Dome of Orvieto [...] Something similar could not be offered by another country in the world." And the Frenchman Paul Henry wrote: "Exterior painting is what Moldova produced more personal and more original."

The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Son Theodosie

A work comparable with Machiavelli's *Il Principe*

Standing out as the first monumental piece of Romanian literature, *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Son Theodosie* could hardly be expected to be spared the trial of disputed authorship.

The first hostile comment, resting on the common conclusion of the scholars who studied the manuscripts preserved, was that it was written in the Slavic language. This is easily accountable by the fact that Slavic was still, at the time, the language of culture across the territory south and east of the Carpathian Mountains.

Secondly, although it is written in the first person, Voivode Neagoe Basarab was denied not only authorship of the work, but also the original idea of such a project. While the argument might be conceded strictly with formal respect to the literary achievement, it would be unfair to overlook the logical integration of the content and message of the text with the voivode's political, cultural and educational strategies and initiatives during the exercise of his sovereign power, a brief survey of which will give us a better understanding.

The late 15th and the early 16th centuries were times of dire convulsions for Wallachia, when princes fell victims to intestine conflicts between rival factions of the nobility. Neagoe himself was enthroned after Vlad Voivode the Younger was beheaded in the city of Bucharest. He came up with a cogent family tree to warrant his access to the throne, and in official documents he added to his name the surname of Basarab, the dynasty that opens the history of the Principality of Wallachia. Neagoe Basarab conceived a cultural project intended to reinforce the dynastic concept, in that a monarch was ordained by divine design, "anointed by God", and not invested at the will of the boyars. His project includes the foundation of the new Metropolitan Cathedral in Târgoviște and, most notably, the celebrated Monastery of Curtea de Argeș, consecrated on August 15, 1517, with the participation of the Ecumenic Patriarch of Constantinople, four foreign bishops, monks and priors from the Holy Mount Athos, the Princely Court and countless commoners. The destination of the foundation was not merely that of a church, but also "a mausoleum for himself and his family – as Emil Lăzărescu said; it remains [...] a great, splendid white shrine".

The Teachings... are also integrated into Voivode Neagoe's project, as they belong in a literary genre much appreciated in the Middle Ages called "The Prince's Mirror". There is little doubt that the text was not written by the monarch's hand – not that he was illiterate or uneducated though, as there are documents preserved in his acknowledged handwriting. Neagoe was brought up and educated in the scholarly spirit of Bistrița Monastery, later spent time in the company of Patriarch Nifon who arrived in Wallachia in 1503, and he had a close relationship with the Bishop of Râmnic, Maxim Brancovici, whose niece Despina (herself an educated lady) he came to marry.

The Teachings... include entire pages quoted from previous pieces of writing, which was not unusual at that time, when there was no such notion as plagiarism. On the contrary, it was an approved custom to adopt predecessors' comments that reflected your own opinion. However, the combination and arrangement of the quotes is an original construct, and so is the section comprising practical political advice, which reflects the personal experience of the voivode.

The work as a whole is a blend of sacred (mainly in the first part) and profane. The first part is meant to be a sort of "theology for the heads of state", as Dan Zamfirescu puts it, with moral and pedagogical lectures from the Bible and writings of theological

scholars. The 13 chapters of the second part make up a genuine dissertation in the art of governance, with recommendations meant to ensure the sovereign's authority over his subjects. Theodosie, the voivode's son, is instructed to choose his subjects by their competence and not by their social origin. "And if one of the poor gents is more sedulous than a boyar's son or some kin of yours, you shall not give the rank to the latter, in all falsity; but give it to the poorer gent if he is worthy and earnest, and he will do justice to his office".

The monarch should be firm but just in his judgment: "My son, there are two ways in judgment: one that leads to prejudice, and the other to relief and success. And the lord that comes fair in justice, he is the rightful lord and master, rightfully anointed by God, and shall inherit the light that never fades."

The chapters of the latter part bring the work closer to the Renaissance concept of Machiavelli's contemporaneous political treatise *Il Principe*, written in 1513, though there is no reason to suspect a direct influence. The resemblant views are a symbol of our connection to the mainstream of European ideology, despite the marginal position of our country on the continent and the insistent attraction of the Ottoman "world economy", in Fernand Braudel's terms.

The purpose of the work is summarized as follows: "There, my brothers, is what I endeavoured to write for you, to the best of my understanding of the matter. [...] From Adam hitherto many an emperor and kings have followed, and many a book was written [...] and then all passed away like the morning dew, and naught is known in this day of those great emperors and kings [...] if not the good they will have done in their lives, for those will not perish to the end of time". The educational function of history is underlined by Neagoe in conclusion: "Therefore, pray listen and be advised of their worldly passage, and you shall grow in wisdom if you stand in fair judgment thereof".

Neacșu of Câmpulung's Letter

The First Preserved Romanian-language Document

The moment when writing one's the national language imposes itself over writing in a consecrated language of Christianity – either Latin for the Catholic world, or Slavonic for the Orthodox world – differs among various peoples. For us, Romanians, such a process is one of the definite marks of our emancipation from the West – whose values we have never actually denied, but with which it was increasingly difficult to keep pace.

The Latin language paved the way for the Western world to assimilate the Italian Renaissance, while we embraced Slavonic and remained in the South-Eastern world which would become part of the Ottoman Empire. Orthodoxy has brought us undeniable benefits in terms of ethnic integrity, for the Romanian people associated Catholicism with the proselytism of the messengers of the Papacy, and especially with the offensive of the Hungarian Kingdom. Over the centuries, the memory of the times was still alive through the words of Steward Constantin Cantacuzino: "Relentlessly obdurate, the Hungarians have stood against and loathed the Romanians".

From a cultural point of view, by joining the culture of the Slavs south of the Danube our horizon was restricted, mainly because Slavonic soon became a dead language, and the Slavonic culture at the disposal of the clergy was poor.

The context and, above all, the reasons that led to the long-term writing in the Romanian language using the Cyrillic alphabet was a long-debated subject in Romanian historiography. Perhaps there was not enough insistence – taking into account the scarcity of the preserved written sources – on the distinction between official, chancellery or ecclesiastical writings, on one hand, and the daily notes or the common correspondence, on the other.

Although the number of literate people was not very high, the Romanians, as historian Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu pointed out many years ago, were not a people of farmers and animal breeders who could not write and read. It is also hard to assume that for centuries the correspondence of ordinary people had been in Slavonic. German traveller Schiltberger, who visited Wallachia in 1396, noted that the Wallachians "have their distinct language". In 1409, John, Archbishop of Sultanieh, noted that the Wallachians spoke a language resembling Latin, "therefore they boast that they are Romans". In 1866, Titu Maiorescu wrote: "For the Romanians, the language is the most revered remnant from their Latin ancestors, which reminds them even today, in this age of decadence, of a noble Antiquity and which has always been their unique but reliable compass to keep them on course and protect them from being adrift and lost in the way of the waves of immigrant peoples that haunted Trajan's Dacia". Even for the official documents written in Slavonic it was established that the clerks were Romanians who thought in Romanian and wrote in Slavonic – as proven by the mistakes identified in their texts. Moreover, most of the preserved names of the clerks were Romanian. As a last piece of evidence, several annotations in Romanian were found on property documents written in Slavonic and issued by the Princely Chancellery.

Indirect mentions about writing in Romanian were also kept. In a Cyrillic spelling book, *On Writing*, dating in 1420, Serbian scholar Konstantin the Philosopher (Kostenecki) explained: "So, in Romanian it is spelt ,bea' [,to drink'], marked by the Slavic graphic sign for the diphthong ,ea', not ,be". It is clear that he had read texts written in Romanian with Cyrillic characters. We also know that Stephen the Great's oath to King Casimir of Poland in 1484 was conceived in Romanian and translated into Latin, the official language of the Polish Court. Furthermore, in 1495 a priest was paid by the Saxons in Sibiu to write some letters in Romanian.

Much has been written about rhotacized texts from Maramureș, so called because they display a phonetic feature called rhotacism, specific to the idiom spoken in Maramureș, consisting in changing an intervocal consonant into "r" in certain words inherited from Latin. The original texts are assumed to have been written in the interval between the 13th and the late 15th centuries, though they came down to us only in the form of 16th century copies.

The earliest specimen of Romanian writing which has been preserved in the original to this day is a letter dated in 1521, signed by a certain Neacșu of Câmpulung – the old capital of Wallachia – and sent to the municipal judge of Brașov city. The author of the letter was informing Johannes Benkner, the judge of Brașov, about an invasion being prepared across the Danube by the Ottomans. In the letter is mentioned Negre, the author's son-in-law, who traded goods from the south of the Danube. In the text of the letter only the introductory and closing formulas are in Slavonic. According to research, the letter was very likely preceded by another (judging by such syntagms as "And again do I bring to your knowledge", or "those ships that you know about sailed across"). The letter has an oral character, consisting of Latin words in proportion of 92,31%.

Unlike the Strasbourg Oath, the language of Neacșu's letter is very similar with the Romanian language spoken today.

Nicolaus Olahus

The Transylvanian humanist, friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam

Nicolaus Olahus is better known abroad: about him wrote mainly Hungarian, Belgian, Dutch and Slovakian scholars. The Romanian historiography admits this and it wasn't able to offer a good explanation for the shadow that lingers in Romania over this important member of the European "republic of letters" from the 16th century.

As his name testifies, Nicolau Olahus was a Romanian ethnic. He never denied his ethnicity, which is clearly mentioned in his ennoblement act from 1548: "As it is for your people, this is what we found out from the trustworthy service of some of our faithful, that you were born from the eldest forefathers of the Romanian kin, your father being Ștefan Olahul, the strong man, and in his time some of your family were princes of the Wallachian Dacia which is now the Romanians' country."

He himself wrote about his Romanian ancestry: "Mânzilă from Argeș, whose wife was Marina, the sister of the same Ioan the voivode [John Hunyadi], had two children, among others: one was called Stanciul, who had his own sons, Dan and Petru; another was called Stoian, which means Ștefan. This one had two sons, myself and Matei, and his daughters were Ursula and Elena. When Dracula took the throne, he caught my uncle, Stanciul, in a trap and put him to death by hatchet. Ștefan, who was still a boy, to save himself from his tyranny, escaped by the grace of God to king Matiaș [Matthias Corvinus], which - as my father himself told me - decided repeatedly to take his army and go to enthrone my father. But my father, seeing the frequent changes made there for one to get to the throne were perilous, preferred to marry my mother, Barbara Hunszar, in Transylvania and live a private life, and not to end up on the throne, exposed to thousands of dangers, to be killed just like his ancestors were murdered." About his country of origin he was going to write in his brother's (Matei) epitaph: "The ancestors' country from over the Carpathians, from a famous kin, gave me life; here I was but a guest."

So here we have the explanation for his family's move to Transylvania, which was part of the Hungarian Kingdom, ruled for a long time by John Hunyadi and his son, Matthias Corvinus, whose nephew, Nicolaus Olahus, was also going to be a regent of what was left of that country after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, when the Hungarian army was defeated by the sultan Süleyman and after that the Hungarian state disappeared.

So, without denying his Romanian origin, Nicolaus Olahus became a citizen of his new country, studying there and making a career at Court for himself, where in time he was to reach the highest dignities. But before that, he had to taste the bitter years of the exile. Before leaving for the great battle of Mohács, as a sign of great trust, king Louis II named Olahus as the secretary and adviser of Queen Mary in his absence. After the defeat Olahus accompanied the fugitive queen in her exile, all the way to the Low Countries, where Maria was named governor by her brother, emperor Charles V. As her adviser, Nicolaus Olahus was a much celebrated protector for his contemporaries from the "republic of letters" - and also for the present day Belgian and Dutch historians.

At first, it was hard for him to endure the exile. He wrote to a friend: "The people here have different customs from mine. You'd think that everything is sham or pretension. A lot of things are promised by word, few are fulfilled by deed. One is greeted with joy, but in the depths of the soul lie a whole different kind of emotions. All they are planning for is to get profit and benefit. One rather looks after his personal interest than after strong friendships and compassion for fellow humans. Besides, neither they're understanding me, neither I'm understanding them, so you can figure out for yourself how much misery the disarray brings upon the man."

After the peace treaty from Oradea Mare (1538) between king Ferdinand I of Habsburg and John Zápolya, the two contestants for the throne of what may have remained of Hungary, Nicolaus Olahus came back home. He didn't stay long and he never returned, because he was called again by Ferdinand I and became his adviser. In 1543 he was named bishop of Zagreb, and on May 7th 1553 archbishop of Esztergom and the Primate of Hungary. From 1562 he was regent of the Hungarian crown. He died in Bratislava on January 14th 1568.

The bitter exile in the Low Countries was made easier by the friendships he established there with the humanists of that period, with which he kept an ample correspondence. Among them, Erasmus of Rotterdam had a very special standing. To the widespread disbelief of the members of the "republic of letters", the great humanist wrote back to him immediately (the reply reached him in a few days, which was unusual, considering the state of communications in that epoch) after the first letter sent by the much more younger Olahus, arrived from the Romanian realm. This event was what instantly made Nicolaus Olahus a prestigious figure in humanist circles. Even if they never met in person, Erasmus always laid an extra set of tableware when eating, just in case his younger friend might show up. Erasmus wrote to him: "My dear Nicolaus, it's of great comfort for me that one might still find a few candid and honest spirits in this century, which everywhere gives birth to all sort of human made horrors, a century in which the faith, the compassion and the humanity are not only frozen, but it seems that they were killed and buried forever." And, as a supreme commendation, he wrote on December 11th 1531: "Olahus - this name envelops all the benefits of the friendship."

Filip Moldoveanu, Coresi

The first printed Romanian texts

In 2003, the academician Virgil Cândea was calling for something that, alas, was never going to have the deserved result. "There are a lot of issues related to the Romanian printing's history - for Romanians and for orthodox peoples in Eastern Europe and the Near East - that we consider to be worthy of further or more thorough investigation by the Romanian historians in the time that we still have until 2008, in order to be able to welcome this great celebration of the Romanian culture as it deserves."

In 2008 was the 500th anniversary of the first text printed in a Romanian territory. It happened only half a century after Gutenberg had printed the first book. It's noteworthy that "Liturghierul lui Macarie" [a mass methodology textbook], printed in 1508, came 20 years earlier than the first print shop opened in Transylvania. Macarie was not Romanian, he was a printing apprentice in Venice under the famous Aldo Manutius, and then he worked in Montenegro before becoming a refugee in Wallachia, where he invented new typography letters, different from the ones he had previously used.

The first Romanian printed text, using the Cyrillic alphabet, was made by Filip Moldoveanu in Sibiu in 1544 (a Romanian Lutheran catechism), but no copy survived. Instead we still have the Slavo-Romanian Gospel Book, printed by the same Filip Moldoveanu sometime around the year 1554 - before Coresi started his printing career. Examining the Romanian language used, the scholars decided that the translation had been done in Moldova. In a letter dated March 11th 1532, an unknown author informed an academic from Kraków University that a man from Moldova came to Wittenberg to study the work of Luther, because he intended to arrange the printing of the four gospels and Paul's letters in Romanian, Polish and German.

The work of these first typographers was taken over by their successors and the demand for Romanian books - even if with Cyrillic letters - was ever more high, replacing the Slavonic books, because, as Coresi wrote in the Gospel Book from 1560-1561: "In the holy church is better to speak five meaningful words than ten thousand incomprehensible words in a foreign language." In fact, Coresi was not only a typographer but also a skilled translator and a Romanian language stylist. Thus, printing helped the strengthening of the Romanian literary language, in the same form, in the whole space where these printings circulated.

The circulation of the books may be retraced by examining both the princely donations and the annotations made by their successive owners. "Cazania lui Varlaam" [sermon book] also known as "Carte românească de învățătură" [«Romanian Book of Learning»], the first Romanian book printed in Moldova around the middle of the 17th century, was mentioning itself that it was intended «for all the Romanian kin, regardless of where it lives.» Some people from Baica, Sălaj County, raised money and jointly bought a copy in 1648 in order for it to be «learning for all Christians and light for all the books.» Șerban Cantacuzino sent copies of «Evanghelia» (1682) and «Apostol» (1683) at Veștem and Tilișca (Sibiu County), at Daia and Pianu de Sus (Alba County). In 1902, at Păcliaș (Alba County) was constructed a special box to hold «the old Gospel» bought on December 10th 1731 «from the village's funds». In a religious book printed in 1709 at Bucharest one may find the following annotation: «Written by me, priest Toma from Zagon, being in the Tower jail together with priest Dumitru from Arcuș, having shackles on our feet for our faith, 1747, the month of oct. the 3rd day.» It would be worthy to collect and publish all this annotations as they speak about Romanians' unity and kin consciousness better than any academic treatise.

The universal merit of this moment is not related only to the role played by the printing and the printed books for Romanians, but also their role regarding the expansion of the printing south of Danube, in the Near East and even in the remote Georgia. A few landmarks. Until the start of the 19th century, the only printing houses functioning uninterrupted in South-Eastern Europe were the ones in the Romanian Countries, and they were a source of books for all the region's peoples that spoke either Slavic or Greek. The first Bulgarian book was printed at Braşov in 1824. The first printed book from Istanbul was printed in 1727 by a man born in Cluj, Ibrahim Müteferrika, but his printing shop didn't survive long. The great Serbian scholar Dositej Obradović wrote that "every time I was in church I used to hide in the altar, take a Romanian ,cazanie' or ,prologue' and read it until the mass was over."

At Snagov, Antim printed five books in Greek, sponsored by [the Wallachian prince] Brâncoveanu; one of them was an "Antologhion" with 1.000 pages, an essential ecclesiastic book for the whole Greek world, from Constantinople to Alexandria, in Egypt. Manos Apostolu thanked him in his foreword dedicated to Brâncoveanu in "Pildele filosofeşti" ["Philosophic Parables"] (1713): "By your soul's greatness and illustrious charity, the Greeks' teachings are returned to their original dignity." The academician Virgil Cândea pointed out the great number of patristic byzantine texts saved for posterity by being printed in the Romanian Countries, as the "Patrologia" by Jaque Paul Migne testifies. Brâncoveanu was also the one who printed the first book in Arabic and he sent an Arabic typograph in Syria, a work continued in the 18th century. And Antim Ivireanul also sent to Georgia its first typograph.

"We offered a lot to the South-Eastern European culture and we are expecting more gratitude", wrote Gabriel Ştrempele. But first of all we, Romanians, should be aware of this cultural work.

Despot's Academy

Prince Despot established in September 1562 or - the latest - in March a latin school, "Schola Latina", headed by Ioan Sommer

As it was the case with the Catholic offensive from the 12th-14th centuries, associated with expansive ambitions of the Hungarian Kingdom, so it was seen in the Romanian territories the Protestant offensive from the 16th century as an attempt by Protestant powers to subjugate the Romanian Countries.

Alexandru Lăpuşneanu, twice ruler of Moldova (1552-1561; 1564-1568), was a staunch adversary of the spread of Protestant ideas from Transylvania. Besides supporting the Orthodox church from Transylvania, Lăpuşneanu also offered scholarships to the most promising youngsters in order to study abroad. He also established a school under his authority in Hârlău, realizing that in the dispute of ideas with the new church men with good education were needed. This initiative came at the same time with the establishment of Jesuit schools as part of the Counter-Reformation (a move by the Catholic Church to fight Protestantism), but also with a reorganization of schools in some Protestant countries - needed to form clerics for the new church.

The initial purpose of the Hârlău school was changed between the two reigns of Alexandru Lăpuşneanu, when ruler was Prince Despot. But who was this fairytale figure who stayed two years on the Moldavian throne and established the first laic middle school in Moldova?

Despot was born at the start of the 16th century on one of the Greek islands, most probably Crete. In 1547 he enrolled in the Montpellier University, using an Italian version of his name. He was a good student, gaining a solid humanist culture. There he encountered for the first time the Protestant ideas. He wandered at various European courts, and he became acquainted with the German scholar Melancton. He becomes a Count Palatine of the German Empire, acquiring the right to name notaries and also confer academic titles. Reaching Poland after 1557, he starts to be interested in the Moldavian throne. With the help of people from Transylvania loyal to king Maximilian II, son of emperor Ferdinand I of the Holy Roman Empire, and of the Polish nobleman Albert Laski, he defeats Alexandru Lăpuşneanu and takes the Moldavian throne.

He starts his reign with two surprising acts. He issued a decree for religious tolerance, inviting in Moldova any Protestant persecuted in his own country. He also issued a proclamation to Moldavian people: "With you, brave kin of warriors, descendants of the brave Romans who made the world tremble, [...] I hope to regain back and as quickly as possible my Moldova's lands retained by the infidel, meaning Danube's bank, and not only that but Wallachia too [...] And with this we will make ourselves known in the whole world as true Romans and Romans' descendants, and our name will be immortal."

On April 13th 1562 the imperial agent Belsius wrote to emperor Maximilian of Habsburg that "after the fire from Hârlău, [Despot] intends to move the school to Cotnari, half a league from the old location." Johann Sommer (born in 1542 in Saxonia, attended the Frankfurt an der Oder University, named head of the college by Despot; after Despot's death he left for Transylvania where he was a school headmaster in Braşov) wrote: "He started to build a school in the town Cotnari, where most people are Saxons and Hungarians, and gathered from all over the country young men whom he cared for to learn, to give them food and to buy them clothes with his own money, and he decided to pay rather handsomely the teachers, considering that there weren't so many students." After some years, Nicolae Costin was much more concise: "As in Cotnari there were many Saxons at that time, they did for them a church and a school and they gathered a library."

At this college following the Italian model and having a boarding school came to study children of small boyars and townfolk. Despot invited the most famous teachers and humanists to teach here. One of them, Joachim Rhaeticus, wrote to a friend: "[Despot] invited me in Moldova, offering a salary of 400 talers and a home for free, but I won't go there." Others accepted instead, like Hermodorus Lestarhus from the Zenta Island, but when he reached the Danube he was informed about Despot's killing and returned.

The main study subjects were Latin language and culture. Sommer also wrote that he was responsible with "educating the children [...] until they will master the basics of Latin language and will know to talk as correctly as possible in Latin." In the five study groups were also taught rhetoric, poetics, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, geography. Probably the program was inspired by Western European schools: it started early in the morning, with a break between 10 and 12 o'clock. One day every week was reserved for religious education: history of the church, the Bible, catechism and prayers.

"Despot didn't give up on his plans to build a library because he was convinced that such a thing awards the highest honor and dignity to princes", wrote the same Sommer. The library "had all kind of books", and "its shiny roof it's said to be the refuge of runaway muses". The project was compromised by Despot's death, killed in a revolt of his boyars. But the Cotnari school remained active. It functioned as a grammar school for two-three years, proof that the society needed it and it was not just the project of a runaway adventurer. In 1588 Petru Șchiopul judged it to be a dangerous hotbed of Protestantism and donated it to the Jesuits, so it became a Catholic grammar school and a center of Catholic propaganda.

1568 religious tolerance in Transylvania

The first edict for religious tolerance in Europe

On October 31st 1517 Martin Luther nailed to the door of the church inside the Wittenberg castle the list of 95 items - his proposition to reform the Church. It's the moment regarded as the start of the Reformation, a movement rooted in the need to change the Catholic Church, degraded by corruption and nepotism and the selling of indulgences, that led to the establishment of new churches.

One less discussed aftermath of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation (movement started by the papacy, seeking to restore the Catholic dominance) were the religious wars that haunted a great portion of Europe from the middle of the 16th century until the Westfalia Peace (ending The 30 Years War), when the existence of the Lutheranism and Calvinism were recognized, beside Catholicism, in the Holy Roman Empire. The religious wars caused, besides property damage, between 2 and 4 millions dead, only in France, between 1562 and 1596. At European level the religious wars may have caused between 5 and 18 millions casualties. It's estimated that some European regions lost up to 30% of their population.

History only recorded six tolerance edicts in the 16th century, four of which in Western Europe. In 1562 the edict of Saint-Germain by Catherine de Medici offered a limited tolerance, a few weeks after a massacre against the Huguenots, which didn't have long lasting effects. In 1573 in the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom all churches were declared equal. A year later, the Utrecht Union (established by the northern provinces of the Low Countries in order to escape from the Spanish domination) issued a decree by which religious tolerance was established. Finally, in 1598 the French king Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes providing religious freedom to the kingdom's Huguenots.

The other two religious tolerance edicts were issued on Romanian territories, and it's a pity that this fact is not widely known. The first came from Prince Despot who used it as an opening act to his reign in Moldova in 1561, inviting all the oppressed Protestants to leave their countries and come in Moldova. The text was more than welcomed, as both his predecessors, Ștefăniță Rareș and Alexandru Lăpușneanu, adopted policies of religious persecution.

The second edict was adopted by the Diet of Transylvania, at Turda, at the session from January 6-13th 1568. Here is its text: "His Majesty, Our Lord, as he decided at previous meetings with the people and the community regarding the religion, so this meeting also reasserts that preachers will teach the gospel everywhere, each according to his own faith, and if the community wants him, that's fine, if not, nobody should force him, because they would upset the peace of his soul, but they should choose a preacher whose teachings they like. Therefore, none of the superintendents, and no one else, shouldn't try to harm the preachers, nobody should be scolded over religion by no one, as we ruled in our previous constitutions. No one is allowed to threaten someone with the deprivation of freedom or function because of teachings, as the faith is a gift from God that comes by hearing, and hearing is by the word of God." It was also the moment when the Unitarian Church was recognised, the only church established in Transylvania, which was going to join the Lutheranism (recognised as "accepted" religion in 1560) and the Calvinism (recognised in 1564). Together with Catholicism, these were the four "accepted" religions - formally recognized in Transylvania.

Obviously, we shouldn't think that the situation was idyllic. The Catholics were dispossessed by much of their property. In Cluj, for example, from some 8.000 inhabitants maybe 500 were still Catholics. A Jesuit wrote in 1579: "In times past, Cluj-Mănăștur looked like a monastery, but after the monks were cast off by the heretic

masters that inhabited this place, it was transformed in a sort of castle; the chambers of the monks were demolished [...] Bound by the monastery is a quite big church, but it was stripped of all ornaments. As the heretics stole all the garments, the holy goblets and adornments of the altar, they burned the statues, they broke the stained glass of the windows and they didn't leave but the empty walls. When they leaved, the monks buried in the ground some chests with gold and silver goblets and some clerical garments which were more valuable, but the heretics found it and took it from there."

The tolerance provided for by the Diet of 1568 didn't extend to the Romanians too, their Orthodox religion being unrecognized. A Catholic that stayed for a while in Transylvania, Posevinus, wrote the following about their condition: "These ones [Romanians] have a metropolitan with his residence in Alba Iulia [...] The prince strengthens his dignity; he only needs to produce a letter from any patriarch or bishop that certifies he's a bishop [...] But if some nobleman under whose jurisdiction they are wants to force them into his heresy, and they complain (as they use to do) to the prince, the prince cannot punish but with words [of rebuke] and reprimands, as any sect is free on its own domain."

However, comparing these conditions with the death toll from the rest of Europe, we may agree that these two edicts of tolerance deserve to be more well-known and to take their place beside the classic ones, like the one from Nantes.

"Palia de la Orăștie"

A monument of the Romanian language from the middle of the 16th century, the first translation into Romanian of the Old Testament

"As we saw that all languages have and flourish with the glorious words of God, only us, Romanians, in our language don't have." This is how the creators of "Palia de la Orăștie" motivated their initiative. The fact that this first attempt to translate the Bible into Romanian was the work of some Calvinists probably explains in part the limited dissemination of this monument of the Romanian language from the 16th century. Besides, the first solid study of this work was done by the renowned French Latinist and medieval literature expert Mario Roques (1875-1961).

The work was printed "with the knowledge of His Majesty Sigismund Báthory, voivode of Transylvania and of the Hungarian country, and with the knowledge and approval of all the great noblemen and advisers of Transylvania, for the strengthening of the holy church of the Romanians." From the same preface one can find out that the translation initiative came from Mihail Tordași. He was elected by the Diet of Turda in April 21st 1577 as bishop of all the Transylvanian Romanians that embraced Calvinism. The Protestants' proselytism effort in the East was seeking to obtain either an union with the Orthodox Church, for which they negotiated with the Patriarch of Constantinople, either the mass conversion of the Orthodox population. The Calvinists even established an episcopate for Romanian Calvinists in Transylvania. Beside bishop Tordași, the preface mentions "Herce Ștefan, preacher of Christ's Gospel from the city of Caransebeș, Zacan Efrem, teacher of teaching and with Pestişel Moisi, preacher of the Gospel from the city Lugoj and with Archirie, arch-priest of county Hunedoara."

The preface asserts that all the five books of Moses were translated. But only the first two books were printed in "Palia". We should also explain the name of the printing, which comes from the Greek "he Palia", meaning the Old Testament. We don't know if the other three books of Moses were indeed translated, and if so, why they were not printed. There's a hypothesis that the success of the printing among the Orthodox Romanians was so limited that it's authors just gave up.

Also in the preface one can find out that the translation was done "from the Hebrew language in Greek, and from Greeks in Serbian and other languages and from those languages translated into the Romanian language." We don't know the translators' names, but experts decided that the main source of translation was the "Pentateuhul" (the five books of Moses) printed by Gaspar Heltai in Cluj in 1551, and an edition of "Vulgata" (a Latin version of the Bible) was also used. Relative to the texts translated into Romanian from Slavonic, "Palia" is a huge step forward. The translator is versed in Latin and Hungarian but also in Romanian.

We must also examine the hurdles encountered by the translator (or translators), because a person from our days cannot understand them thoroughly without further explanation. The Romanian language was asked to produce - based on foreign intellectual models but also by its own resources - an intellectual written variant, which at that time didn't exist. And not for any text but for the most sacred text of the Christianity. The Bible's text has certain features that make a translation difficult. The original text was very different from the Indo-European languages. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, except a few chapters written in Chaldean and others in Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek, except the Gospel of Matthew, written in Syro-Chaldean (Aramaic). The first psychological obstacle was that of the sacred languages used for the Bible's text. The second one was met by the translator when, being in front of a blank sheet of paper, he had to fill it using a literary language absent in those times. It's the same

position in which Luther found himself when he translated the Bible into German, and in order to solve this he created the rules of German literary language, Hochdeutsch.

"Palia de la Orăștie" is a text that contributed to the building of the Romanian literary language without complexes. The linguistic framework reveals an effort to reach for the reader with a text reconstructed in a language as accessible as possible for him, without being overloaded with vernacular means of expression. The translator ceases to look with mystical respect to the languages from which he translates and doesn't try to reproduce at any cost their spirit into Romanian, nor to enrich the Romanian with their structures. The two sources - Hungarian and Latin - are merged, losing their identity and becoming a Romanian text. The author was interested to deliver an intelligible text to the reader. It might be the best Romanian translation of a biblical text from the 16-17th centuries. The Bible translated in 1688 by order of Constantin Șerban might be the first complete version, but many fragments from "Palia" are superior.

"Palia" was printed by two of Coresi's apprentices: deacon Șerban and Marian the scribe. They started to work on November 14th 1581 and finished in June or July 1582, in the city of Orăștie.

In Transylvania mainly biblical texts per se were translated, while in Moldova and Wallachia there was a preference for "cazani" (textbooks). This is explained by the demand of the intellectual class, but also by the reaction of the Orthodox Church. Under the assault of all kind of protestant denominations, it initially chose to react with a boycott. And then it used the religious textbooks. While in the West a direct contact with the source was encouraged, here, where no one doubted the loyalty of people for the Orthodox denomination, it was asked of them only to follow a behavioral code.

We cannot finish without stressing that in "Palia de la Orăștie" appears for the first time in a text (previously there was only the signature of Nicolae Românul from 1568) the word "Romanian" ["român"], and not the old version "rumân".

Cluj University (1581) – The Major Jesuit College, matching universities in Germany, France, Italy

The Protestant offensive from 1560-1580 removed almost any trace of Catholicism in Transylvania. A Jesuit, visiting Transylvania in 1579, compared the situation of Catholicism there with India. The few remaining Catholics were under pressure. "The heretics [meaning the Protestants - wrote a Catholic], keeping their habit, are ceaselessly slandering [...] spreading lies [...] passing around rumors that there are transvestite women among us that gave birth."

In 1571 prince of Transylvania becomes Stephen Báthory, a Catholic. He was the one to implement in Transylvania the Council of Trent's (1545-1563) recommendations, with a special focus on biblical and liturgical education for clergy, and education in general, in order to thwart the educational work of the Protestants.

At that time, the Jesuit Order had the best network of schools, most important among them being the collegium maius ("major colleges"), similar and equivalent with universities. They were the ones whom Stephen Báthory entrusted with the establishment of a college in Cluj. On December 20th 1579 took place the first grammar lectures, for lower grades, at the former Benedictine monastery in Cluj-Mănăştur. Almost two years later, in 1581, the activity was moved inside the city walls as two different institutions: a college and a seminary for priests. Properly endowed (they were gifted with a few villages, amounting to a total of some 500 families, beside other benefits and properties and also money) by the founding diploma issued on May 12nd 1581 (confirmed a year later by Pope Gregory XIII), the two institutions were able to make development plans. «The enlightened prince [Christopher Báthory, Stephen's brother, became prince of Transylvania in 1575] sent here his chancellor in the third day of Palm Sunday, together with the Italian architect, to build the schools in town and to arrange the monastery as a dwelling for us.»

The major college, with an academy rank, had three colleges (Theology, Philosophy and Law) and their graduates get all the titles, like in any other similar school from Italy, France, Spain or Germany. There were an inferior cycle with five grades and a superior one with two grades. The topics of study were grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, Greek language, philosophy, theology, history, and the teaching was done by renowned professors (Jacobus Witek, Antonio Possevino, Stephanus Arator), which ensured an European type erudition level.

To lure the "heretics", "gentleness" was advised. Daily attendance of religious services was not mandatory for new students, at first. This kind of tolerance and the high level of education quickly made the school much sought after, even by Orthodox students.

Even Nicolae Pătraşcu, the son of Michael the Brave, was supposed to study at the Cluj college. In 1586 there were 350 students. In 1583 a boarding school was built too, with room for 150 students. For accommodating poor students The Holy Trinity Convent was established. The students were all equal in rights and obligations, regardless of their social status or wealth. The education's quality was noted by inspectors sent almost every year from Rome.

Notwithstanding, rector Jacobus Witek was also criticized. One of his rivals, Stephanus Arator, accused him of transforming the college in a sort of inn for his Polish friends. He also declared his surprise regarding the school's diet. "Every day meat is served twice at lunch, and in [fasting] fish days fish is served twice. First course is pastry, second course is veal or lamb meat, third course is chicken cooked with black pepper and saffron, the fourth course is mashed vegetables, and the fifth course is fruits and

cheese; I have never seen anywhere this kind of life, in none of the collages of the Society [of Jesus - the Jesuits], but maybe this is the Polish custom."

Alongside the college was the seminary producing Catholic priests, which was the object of Antonio Possevino's special attention. The Seminary was free (including accommodation, food, teaching and laundry); the students were required to bring their own clothes, books and bed linen.

The college had a library that made an impression upon Arator, who mentions nine books "written with gold". It also featured forbidden books, especially classic Latin literature, reserved exclusively for teachers. It was one of the most important libraries from South-Eastern Europe.

Here there were held theatrical performances, open to the public, in order to display to the people the school's intellectual value and the openness of students and teachers. The repertory included plays inspired from ancient classic plays and themes from the Old and New Testament. Students and teachers also took part in religious debates.

The plague epidemic of 1586 virtually decimated the college and the seminary. It was also the year of Stephen Báthory's death. In 1588 was called back to Italy Possevino, who had been very active and also very skillful in the relations with the Protestants.

The Diet of Mediaș from October 1588 decided the expulsion of Jesuits from Transylvania. Accordingly, the functioning of the college and seminary was temporary suspended. In 1591, asked by Pope Sixt V, prince Sigismund Báthory called back the Jesuits. But, alas, the activity of the college and seminary was going to last just until 1603, when a revolt of the local people of Cluj against the Jesuits resulted in the burning and complete destruction of both buildings.

Even with its short lifespan, the Jesuit college of Cluj generated an intellectual emulation whose memory lingered through the centuries. It was the first university established on the Principality of Transylvania's territory, the first higher education institution established on the territory of nowadays Romania.

The unification by Michael the Brave

The first unification of the Romanian Countries and its relevance

In a document adopted in Iași on May 27th 1600, Michael the Brave called himself «I Mihail voivode, by the mercy of God, prince of Wallachia and of Transylvania and of Moldova.» He made for himself a seal containing all the coats of arms of the three countries. He became prince of Wallachia in 1593 and then conquered Transylvania in 1599 and Moldova in 1600. These are indisputable historical facts. But disputed are the reasons behind his conquest and whether he intended or not to establish a single state, which obviously he didn't succeed to do in the short time of this first reign of a Romanian prince in all three feudal states where Romanians lived.

Starting with the 1848 generation - and especially after the publication of the monograph dedicated by Nicolae Bălcescu to the brave prince -, the unification by Michael the Brave became a symbol of the Romanians' dream to live in the same state. A disputed symbol, as stated above.

The critics say that personal ambition was the sole driver behind the conquest of Transylvania and Moldova. Or that he wanted to rule them all only because it was a defence necessity, that the purpose of the unification was an anti-Ottoman crusade.

If Michael the Brave was the first to achieve a short-lived unification, he was not the first who thought about it. Throughout the whole 16th century, the idea of the three Romanian states' interdependence was an established fact. Michael the Brave adopted a policy already tried by Petru Rareș [Peter IV of Moldova] in the first half of the 16th century. And Michael was totally aware of this interdependence, as he said to the apostolic nuncio Malaspina: "They [Wallachia and Transylvania] are so mutually subordinate and bonded together that if one falls the other will fall too, and if one preserves itself the other will be preserved too." In a memorandum to emperor Rudolf II, received on January 17th 1601 in Vienna, he wrote: "But from Wallachia and Moldova, Transylvania can be easily conquered."

Nor the idea that Wallachia, Moldova and Transylvania were in fact one and the same was not new. A century earlier, in a letter sent on May 8th 1477 to the Doge of Venice, Stephen the Great [prince of Moldova] used twice the phrase "l'altra Valachia" referring to Wallachia. Even foreigners were aware of this fact. The Dalmatian diplomat Tranquillus Andronicus wrote in 1528: "In the ancient times all the Romanians ("Valachi") were living under a single prince." Another scholar, Paolo Giovio, asserted: "The entire Wallachia is divided in two parts, forming two states." We should also mention Stephanus Brodericus, bishop of Sirmium (he might have borrowed this from Antonio Bonfini, the chronicler of king Matthias Corvinus, who wrote the same thing): "Transylvania is contained between the two Wallachias: the Romanian Country [the Romanian name for Wallachia] and Moldova, the first being next to the Danube and the second next to the Black Sea; these two, together with Transylvania, are occupying today that part of Europe that in times past had been Dacia."

When Michael the Brave became simultaneously prince of Wallachia and Moldova, it already wasn't a novelty that a prince from one country to declare himself the prince of the other or, after leaving his throne, to get the throne of the other. In 1552 Alexandru Lăpușneanu, as claimant for the throne of Moldova, took an oath at Bakuta, on Dniester, as "prince of the countries of Moldova and Wallachia". In 1558, Despot, at that time only a courtier of Alexandru Lăpușneanu, was calling him "voivode of Moldova and Wallachia". When he became a claimant to the throne too, Despot called himself "prince of Moldova and of the Wallachian territories".

In 1574 the throne of Moldova was taken for the first time by a member of the Basarab dynasty of Wallachia, Peter the Lamb. Until then, both the Moldavian princes that intervened in Wallachia to enthrone a favorable prince and the Wallachian princes that were trying the same in Moldova were always using a member of a local dynasty. This phenomenon persisted in the 17th century, when more than one princes occupied successively the throne of Wallachia, respectively Moldova.

Even more significant, starting from 1574 boyars from Wallachia were being named in some of the highest positions at the Moldavian court, and vice versa. Until the end of the 17th century, 34 boyars had been named consecutively in high positions in both countries. Obviously, not everybody was content with this innovation. The arrival of Peter the Lamb was met with much hostility. It's also true that some Wallachian boyars, the Buzescu family first and foremost, were opposed to the reign of Michael in all three countries. Only with the chroniclers of the 17th century, Dimitrie Cantemir and Stolnicul ["The Steward"] Cantacuzino, and then with the Transylvanian School, did the idea of a common origin and national unity transcended from the common conscience level to the level of national ideology. But it's clear that the deed of Michael the Brave was not merely an accident of history.

With his gift to capture historical realities in just a few words, Nicolae Iorga wrote: "The critical historian has to step in to assert once again that this fact [the Romanian Countries' unification] was not present in the conscience of Michael the Brave with the same clarity that it would have been in the mind of a contemporary politician, who listened lectures and read books about the Romanians' history and the universal history, who passed exams on law philosophy and who was taught to theoretically understand what are the vital necessities of a nation. He was not guided by a long cultural development, pursuing a precise and unabated purpose, asserted by thinkers and sung by poets. He wasn't told everyday by both the morning and the evening newspaper that there's an expectation for a man to accomplish this work, and no daily publicist promised him that he will take and hold the power in exchange for this work, and then the national gratitude together with whatever rights of succession it might provide..."

The "Trei Ierarhi" monastery

A princely necropolis built by Vasile Lupu in the byzantine tradition and with a sophisticated outdoor decoration

How much can relate to us, people of today, the stone lacework of the "Trei Ierarhi" ["Three Hierarchs"] monastery built by the Moldavian prince Vasile Lupu (1634–1653), about the times from more than three and a half centuries ago?

The 17th century was a troubled one. Europe experienced a 30 years war, Vienna was besieged for the second time by the Ottomans. On our lands there were countless wars. "The volatile fate" also leaved its mark on the artistic life. The man of the baroque century tried to compensate the ephemeral passage through an insecure world by pomposity - pomposity of ceremonies, pomposity of garments, pomposity of artistic monuments. In the particular case of the founder of Trei Ierarhi there was also the desire of a "new man", son of aga Nicolae Coci - an Albanian mercenary from the Balkans -, who became prince of Moldova under a byzantine emperors' name, Vasile, to assert his dynastic ambitions also by building an architectonic monument. It was planned as a necropolis, just as Neagoe Basarab had done over a century before in Wallachia with the "Curtea de Argeş" church. It's also important to mention that Trei Ierarhi was going to be the burial place of two princes with an unhappy fate: Dimitrie Cantemir and Alexandru Ioan Cuza, brought here after their long years of exile.

The church of the Trei Ierarhi monastery, wrote academician Răzvan Theodorescu, is aligning us "with the European «first baroque», in his post-byzantine variant." It's a monument which broke the local tradition by its ornamentation, but preserved the traditional Moldavian architectonic design and structure.

Again, the academician Răzvan Theodorescu describes the stone lacework: "Luxury facings in which anonymous carvers with crafting genius put - above and below a twisted belt and a gray marble band decorated with masks and haulms, in complete and deliberate stylistic and technical contrast with the rest of the work - dozens and hundreds of alternating blocks - carved with the boundless scrupulousness and an almost algebraic rigor of that Islamic ornamentation that was so treasured at that time, in a barely felt upwards growth from geometric to vegetal - zig-zags and braids, lines of intersected circles, braces and flower pots, shields and fruits, and finally and again, flowers, countless flowers with uneven petals, in an amazing variation, them too becoming gradually geometric until changing into the «solar disks» mentioned by the [Ottoman traveler] Evliya Celebi, in patterns that even if cut into stone generate the perception of a popular ornament carved in a gate's or a peasant chair's wood from Moldova or Oltenia or Transylvania, when the same patterns do not become a clear rosette or the «propeller» of our always suggestive folklore."

Two foreign travelers who visited it a short time after its consecration, in May 1639, compete with each other in praising its beauty and the wealth of outdoor and indoor decorations. Evliya Celebi wrote that "10 Egyptian treasures were spent" for the building of the monastery, which "cannot be described nor by word, nor by quill." And Paul of Aleppo was praising its paintings which "are made of gold leaf and lapis lazuli, and their beauty cannot be compared with nothing." To strengthen its prestige even more, Vasile Lupu brought there the relics of Saint Paraskeva of the Balkans. It was sent from the Constantinople Patriarchy as a token of gratitude for the repaying of its debts. It came on a ship through the Black Sea, escorted by three Greek metropolitans. On June 13th 1641 the relics were put inside the church of the Trei Ierarhi monastery. It was going to be moved in the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iaşi, after its consecration on April 23rd 1887.

Another two important events happened in this beautiful monastery. On September 15th 1642 a synod started there, lasting for 43 days. It discussed the "Confession of faith" redacted by Petru Movilă, metropolitan of Kiev, as a reaction to the Calvinist attempts of infiltration in the Orthodox Church through patriarch Chiril Lucaris of Constantinople, who was killed by the Ottomans in 1638.

The second event was the wedding of Vasile Lupu's first daughter with Janusz Radziwill, future ataman of Lithuania, an important Calvinist Polish nobleman, in 1645. Miron Costin wrote: "There was no shortage of any finery, as it was necessary for such a happy occasion, with so many princes and important people coming from foreign countries. Master cooks brought from other countries, songs and dances, both local and foreign." The same chronicler mentions discussions among the noblemen: "They told prince Vasile about the stray religion and also something not really comfortable about the Turk's Empire." But the prince already had decided a change in the foreign policy, aiming for closer ties with Poland. This was also reflected by the Golia Church, built in a different baroque style from Trei Ierarhi, closer to the Polish style. In the same vein, the prince discarded his hat with crown from the paintings depicting him.

The stone of Trei Ierarhi, a unique monument in our architecture (if experts are debating a precedent in the tower of Dragomirna built by Anastasie Crimca at the beginning of the 17th century, they are also unanimously stating that Trei Ierarhi was not followed by any similar building), it's a testimony of the destiny of these lands to be at the confluence of different civilizations and, alas, conflicting Powers, but also of our ability to assimilate different influences like the opulent Ottoman-Iranian style or the Western baroque, via Poland, in an original synthesis or, as the French historian André Grabar was saying, in an "aesthetic of the compromise".

Petru Movilă

The metropolitan of Kiev and his role in preserving the Orthodoxy against the efforts of Catholicization

One might ask what relation could it be between the actions of Petru Movilă, who became metropolitan of Kiev in the first half of the 17th century, and landmark events in the Romanian territories. There is a relation because, even if he leaved this land, he kept a strong bond with his place of birth and has done a lot for its inhabitants, also playing an important role in the history of the Orthodox Church.

He was born in Suceava on December 21st 1596, in the large Movilă family. His father, Simion Movilă, was an ataman, commander of the army, and he was going to rule Wallachia (1600–1602) and Moldova (1606–1607). In 1608 Petru leaved for Poland, to study in Lviv. After graduation he became a Polish resident in 1617. He was staying with the family of the Polish nobleman Stanislav Zolkiewski, chancellor and great ataman of the Polish Crown, aiming to learn the craft of war from him. He fought in the Battle of Țuțora (near Iași, September 17th–October 7th 1620) between Polish and Ottoman forces, in which Zolkiewski was killed. He is again in the Polish camp the following year, during the campaign of Sultan Osman II in Moldova. An anonymous Polish author wrote that Movilă was the reason for Poland to send a small skirmish force in Moldova, because he "was absolutely convinced that the Moldovans will capitulate and their country will not be devastated." He also took part in the defence of Hotin in 1621. His merits were later recognized: "Not small was his service to the Republic, even by harming his own health." Movilă himself wrote: "I worked driven by the desire to serve the fatherland against Sultan Osman, the Turkish emperor, the main enemy of this fatherland and of the whole Christianity." During the Hotin campaign, one of his comrades found a "Tetraevanghel" [the four Gospels] written at Neamț Monastery in 1493 by Teodor Mărișescul. Petru bought it from him with golden coins, kissed it, and kept it with himself his entire life. In 1637 he gifted it to the famous Pecersca Monastery.

In October 1622 the king of Poland recommends Petru to the Grand Vizier for the throne of Moldova. But Petru was not interested anymore in political dignities. He lived on his personal fief, in Rubejovka. In 1627 he became a monk. And in the same year he is elected abbot of Pecersca Monastery. It is not clear what determined him to take this step. In part, it might be the legacy of his grandfather, Ioan Movilă, a grand chancellor of Moldova who became a monk under the name of Ioanichie, or his uncle Gheorghe Movilă, who was metropolitan of Moldova. From 1633 to 1646 he was the metropolitan of Kiev and of the whole Ukraine. He died on December 22nd 1646.

Petru Movilă became metropolitan of Ukraine in a moment of great religious tensions in this part of Europe. The synod of Kiev in September 1627 delegated Meletie Smotrițki to prepare the Orthodox to negotiate in August 1628 their reconciliation with the "united", meaning the Orthodox that adopted Catholicism. The metropolitan of Kiev, Iov, and his archimandrite, Petru Movilă at that time, thought it necessary to seek a modus vivendi. But Smotrițki ignored the order to proceed with prudence and redacted a catechism full of Catholic dogmas. He translated it into Greek, Slavic and "Walach". He then redacted an "Apology" asserting that the Orthodox dogma is full of heresy and only the Catholics preserved the genuine Christian dogma. He sent this work to Iov and Petru in order to be printed. Left without an answer, he printed it himself in Lviv. A synod decided that Smotrițki will be sent before a canonical court. But the renegade had the support of Pope Urban VIII and of the Polish king, Sigismund III. The issue of the wealth of the Orthodox churches in Ukraine and Poland, disputed with the "united", was regulated after 1633, when Petru became metropolitan. Petru Movilă also dismissed a proposal, made by the "united" metropolitan of Lviv Ruțki via Smotrițki, to join himself the "united" Church

and even become a patriarch of Kiev under the authority of the Pope. Petru Movilă also redacted a "Confession of Faith of the Eastern Church", appreciated as a masterpiece of clarity and solidity of the faith.

In November 1631 Petru Movilă had founded, as executor of metropolitan Iov's testament, a college later turned into an Academy that was going to be named after him. Therefore he became the founder of a higher education institution - the future University of Kiev. The study program was following the Western model and had five years.

As already mentioned, he didn't forget his place of birth. When asked by Vasile Lupu, prince of Moldova, he sent him teachers for the school founded by the prince at the Trei Ierarhi Monastery in Iași.

In the first half of the 17th century the light of books arrived in Moldova and in Wallachia with the help of Petru Movilă. He was not satisfied only to print Romanian books in Kiev, but in 1633 at the court of Matei Basarab, the prince of Wallachia, arrived hieromonk Meletie the Macedonian with the news that the metropolitan of Kiev was able to send him a printing press together with master printers. The new printing house was established at Câmpulung, where it also printed books for the Balkan Orthodoxy. Under the influence of the Kiev College, Matei Basarab established under the authority of the Târgoviște Metropolitanate a "Schola graeca et latina".

In his testament from 1646, Petru Movilă wrote: "All that I had, and even on my person, I sacrificed myself for the praise of God and for serving Him." It's very sad that the deeds of this Romanian scholar are so little known in these days to his descendants.

"Cazania lui Varlaam"

Was appreciated by Nicolae Iorga as the most popular work of our old times. It also contains the first Romanian verses.

"Metropolitan Varlaam ended up on his throne without ever being a bishop. [...] For 20 years he was the abbot of his monastery, being just a peasant's son from the Odobesti region, without any higher cultural interest whatsoever.» This is how Nicolae Iorga portrayed the one who was going to print the first Romanian book, «Cazania» [«Homily»], the Luther's Bible equivalent in our culture.

His date and place of birth are unknown. His lay name was Vasile Moțoc. During the first reign of Miron Barnovschi (1626–1629) he was summoned to be a confessor at his court. On September 3rd 1632 he was enthroned as metropolitan. In 1653, following the banishment of Vasile Lupu, he returned to the Secu Monastery, where he leaved for four more years.

Metropolitan Varlaam helped Vasile Lupu in his cultural and ecclesiastical work. Some of Varlaam's achievements were determined by outside calls. Such was his involvement in the theological dispute of his times. In 1629, in Geneva, was published a "Confession of Faith" of the Orthodox Church under the signature of Cyril I Lucaris, patriarch of Constantinople, based in part on the Calvinist doctrine. It seems that, in fact, the work was only attributed to him. It aroused a great unrest among the Orthodox. Petru Movilă, metropolitan of Kiev, redacted a "Confession of Faith", also approved by a synod in Kiev, which he translated into Greek and Latin and sent it to the patriarch of Constantinople, Parthenius I. Petru asked Varlaam to summon a synod at Iași in 1642, which also approved Petru's text in the presence of delegates from Constantinople. Later, called upon by the great scholar Udriște Năsturel, great chancellor of prince Matei Basarab of Wallachia, Varlaam was going to write himself a "Reply Against the Calvinist Catechism" - the first Romanian theological polemics work.

But the most important work of Varlaam is still the "Romanian Book of Learning", or "Cazania", which - wrote Nicolae Iorga - "was asked from him by the epoch's spirit". The first part of the book contains excerpts from the Gospels with corresponding annotations for 32 Sundays. The second part relates the lives of saints, ordered by calendar, starting with Saint Simeon Stylites the Elder (September 1st) and ending with the decapitation of John the Baptist (July 29th). As attested by a letter sent by Varlaam to the czar, the "Cazania" was already redacted in 1637. The preparation for printing and the printing itself started in 1641. It has 506 leaves and is illustrated by xylography with biblical scenes, faces of saints and flowery initials. In terms of graphic art, it was the most beautiful book printed by Romanians by that time, and a while after that. In the Preface, prince Vasile Lupu wrote: "We are gifting this present to the Romanian language", and Varlaam explains: "Our Romanian language, which has no book in its language, with hardship can understand another language's book."

Varlaam's "Cazania" it's a monument of the Romanian language and literature. In that times it was read like a novel, as Varlaam is also our first storyteller, and his stories might be likened with the Moldavian churches' murals. The work's success might be owed to the veritable fairy tales with their miracles, which the lives of saints were. But it's also owed to the language used by the author, faithful to the epoch's idiom. So he helped unifying the norms of the Romanian literary language of the 17th century.

"Cazania" had the most wide dispersion of all the old Romanian printings, and it was the most read book in our past. It was bought and read by dignitaries and court servants, boyars, scribes, deacons and transcribers, typographers, and priests. It was used by multiple generations of priests. It was so much desired that in the first years after its

printing it used to be copied by hand. There were many cases where families from the same village went to court for the book's ownership, but even whole villages did the same. The book was bequeathed to descendants and was protected with lethal maledictions inscribed on it in order to impress and prevent its theft. Some copies circulated between all three Romanian Countries. In Transylvania, for example, were found 366 printed and 43 handwritten copies of "Cazania". Varlaam was the first hierarch who crushed the political borders and spoke to all Romanians.

Nicolae Iorga wrote about the impact of Varlaam's "Cazania": "Varlaam left aside all the learning he had or he might have had and spoke the language of his peasants. This is the explanation of a fact that I noticed more than once in Transylvania: in abandoned churches, in the piles of dust amassed maybe in centuries, sometimes arises a leaf with that big, strong letter by which one can recognize at once Varlaam's Cazania. There are no masses anymore in the church, the voices were muted long ago, the dust of oblivion piled up inside the empty walls year by year, decade by decade, century by century, and in spite all this the leaves of Varlaam's Cazania still don't die, which shows us what bonds once were between all Romanians, in all the villages of the Romanians' land, even if here and there there might have been rulers from a different kin than the one of the petty monk who became the metropolitan of Moldova. [...] It happened not once that when a priest knowing theology arrives in the present day villages and wants to insert some knowledge in the minds of his villagers, as quite often he doesn't comprehend it himself, even if, or more true, exactly because he passed exams regarding it, a voice raises from the crowd and tells him: «Father, it's very nice what you're saying, but it would be better by the old book.» The old book, for all the Romanian provinces, it is this book of father Varlaam."

Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin

The last chronicler, the first historian.

New times - new historians. Or, better said, in new times - historians, because until then we only had chroniclers. "By the manner in which a nation's history is written one can judge and conclude regarding the culture and civilization reached by the said nation and the level of development of its literature", wrote V.A. Urechia. After the Slavonic language was substituted by Romanian under the Protestants' influence, here comes the second pillar of the modern national conscience: the history, meaning the knowledge of the old deeds that represent a nation's dowry and award it with cohesion.

This occurrence took place around the middle of the 17th century, the start of the "first Romanians' modernity", especially in Moldova. Three names showed up there, which are (still?) taught in any school: Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin and Ion Neculce.

The second one is himself one of the "new people", but rose quickly among the country's old boyars, showing contempt for a "parvenu", Constantin Cantemir, a prince of Moldova not willing to listen to the old boyars. It seems that at one point he even told him: "More with the glasses, Your Highness, and rather thin with the laws." Ironically, he was going to be killed by order of Dimitrie Cantemir's father, as the old man favored loyalty for the Ottomans and rejected a closer relationship with Poland.

All three of them wrote: "this is for the sons and grandsons, to be their learning." Or, as Neculce put it, "so, reader brothers, the more you'll strive to read this chronicle, the more you'll know to avoid the perils and the more you'll be learned to answer to counsels, whether secret or military, and to discuss with princes and with the righteous peoples." They surpass the chronicle stage by framing their country's history in relation with the world history: "And this is to be known, that this country being smaller, not one thing did it by itself, without an alliance or interference from other countries."

And because they had studied in Poland (Ureche and Costin) and they had to reply there to questions about the origins of their kin, they were interested in retracing it: "To still leave it unwritten, as this kin is slandered with great disgrace by some authors, is a pain for the heart. The thought to set off this toil prevailed, to bring to light the nature of this kin, from what fountainhead and kin are the dwellers of the country", wrote Miron Costin, the most preoccupied by this issue, proof being the fact that he wrote a distinct study, "De neamul moldovenilor" ["About the Moldavians' Kin"], even if it was so difficult to be written that "the thought gets frightened." "De neamul moldovenilor" was one of the capital books of the Transylvanian School, who was going to find in it many arguments regarding the Latinity. His patriotism - a new sentiment dedicated not to the "Christian kin" as in the Middle Ages, but to his country - is highlighted by two events. In 1672, after the conquest of Kamianets-Podilskyi, the Grand Vizier asked him if the Moldovans are happy about the subjection of the stronghold. Miron Costin replied: "We, the Moldovans, are happy for the Turkish empire to widen everywhere, as much as possible, but for it to widen over our country we are not glad." In the fall of 1699, returning from the Battle of Vienna, the Moldovans found out that Petriceicu, a claimant to the throne, was approaching with an army from Poland. Prince Gheorghe Duca wanted to make his escape, but Miron Costin stopped him by telling him: "Let's not give up this land, because this soil is kneaded with our ancestors' blood."

Miron Costin also wrote that the Romanians from Transylvania "even today are more numerous than the Hungarians, starting from the Serbs' Bacica in Timiș, all over the Mureș, in Hațeg, around Belgrade [Alba Iulia], [...] in the land of Olt and everywhere in Maramureș.» About the name of his people he wrote: «The most truthful, genuine name, from the first founding arrival of Trajan is rumân or romanus, and this name was

always kept by this people among themselves, immediately after the founding arrival and after the devastation, as it was said, and also after the second founding arrival, until today. The same name is usually given to the Wallachians and Moldavians and also to those that live in the Country of Transylvania.»

Ureche and Costin were using both domestic and foreign written sources, the oral tradition, but also documents kept at monasteries, numismatic sources ("I had a copper coin found in the ground near Roman", relates Miron Costin) and archaeological sources: the ruins of Trajan's bridge at Turnu Severin or the Trajan's Wall.

The investigation was done, wrote Ureche, "for us to be able to find out the truth, so I will not be a writer of empty words, but of truthful [words]." "I will be responsible for what's mine, for what I write", wrote Miron Costin, too. But Neculce founded the memoirs genre. His chronicle is rather a secret history, with obvious personal interests, and less a work of public education. Its value resides in the savory of his personality and in the genius of his language and narration. He rediscovers the vernacular language, a century after Ureche had discovered the intellectual writing. Its a local reaction to the European culture. "We were never entirely European, without a local opposition being born", wrote Nicolae Manolescu.

Miron Costin wrote programmatic, for the knowledge of other people than his own. Besides, among the manuscripts in the library of Louis XV there was a copy of "Letopisețul" by Miron Costin. It was a French translation done in 1741 by Nicolas Genier of Smyrna, an employee of the library. The manuscript was discovered by Nicolae Bălcescu. The French historian Ubidini wrote on October 21st 1860 to Mihai Kogălniceanu about this fact, and he proposed the manuscript's translation, which "in the present conditions would bring great benefits". Obviously, the project was never put into practice.

Nicolae Milescu

The first Romanian who traveled to China.

Nicolae (Milescu) Spătarul was born in 1636. He never used his cognomen, Milescu, and neither did his contemporaries. Ion Neculce was the one who «baptized» him Milescu, in his work «O samă de cuvinte». His family name seems to have been Spata and his family came from the Aromanians communities in Peloponnesus. But Milescu stuck so well to his name that it seems that this is how he will always be remembered.

He was also called Nicolae "The Snub-nosed". In circumstances not entirely elucidated his nose was slightly maimed as a punishment. This was meant to stop him from claiming the country's throne. Neculce also relates that: "Nicolae went to the German country and there he found a physician who bled his cheek and nicked his nose and so, day by day, the blood was clogging and his nose grew back and he was cured."

He then went to good schools: the Princely School of Iași, founded by Vasile Lupu, and the Great School of Istanbul. Before turning 35, when he was forced to leave the country, he was a secretary under prince Gheorghe Ștefan, "spătar" [constable] under prince Gheorghe Ghica and "capuchehaia" (ambassador to Istanbul) under prince Grigore Ghica. Speaking many languages, he proved to be useful to the ex-prince Gheorghe Ștefan, who was aiming to get help from Sweden and France against the Ottomans. In Stockholm he befriended the French ambassador, marquis Arnauld de Pomponne, a literate and friend of Lady de Sévigné. With his help he reached the court of Louis XIV.

Even if Nicolae Iorga was calling him the first great estranged, he always kept in touch with people from home. He received letters from metropolitan Dosoftei of Moldova, from a group of boyars led by Grigore Hăbășescu, and he also received in Moscow delegates of prince Brâncoveanu. Nicolae Spătarul was in Russia sent by the patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos II Notaras, who had been asked by the czar to send him well educated people that know foreign languages. He was received at the czar's court as a translator for Greek, Latin and Romanian.

In February 1675 the czar named him head of a diplomatic mission to the Chinese emperor. He returned to Moscow on January 5th 1678. There are three letters from him about this distant mission. He was appreciating his own success, citing a Chinese dignitary: "I think the czar specifically chose Your Excellency to speak with us, people not skillful, not used to reply otherwise than downright and without digressions."

When meeting the Chinese emperor he always insisted that the rank of his master would be respected. In the "Journal" describing his travel, he wrote that he asked to personally hand over the czar's letters to the emperor, but it was explained to him that this was not possible, as the letters had to be seen first by officials and examined by them and only after that the ambassadors were to be presented to the emperor, "where it might be possible that they will be asked about their master's wellbeing."

Disgruntled as he couldn't hand over in person the czar's letters, at the second meeting he kowtowed in such a manner that it didn't follow the etiquette, but also in such a way that it couldn't be directly imputed to him. The Chinese chronicles are telling a different story. The emperor organized a dinner to honor Nicolae and his retinue. After eating, the emperor ordered for wine to be poured into Nicolae's goblet and then called a few people around the throne and toasted himself a goblet of wine. A latter report noticed that the czar's messenger was not accustomed with the rituals and ceremonies of the imperial Chinese court and was asking the department of colonies to teach him in this regard. After returning home he had a rather difficult but brief period as the czar who

used to protect him had died. But thanks to the relations he had cultivated and his higher education, he quickly returned in the court's grace. He died in 1708, after also serving Peter the Great. His Journal about his travel was at that time the most informed document about Siberia and it rectified a lot of erroneous information previously related.

Nicolae (Milescu) Spătarul has a few priorities in the Romanian culture. He was the first to translate a philosophical text into Romanian ("The Treatise on the Dominant Rationality") and the first Romanian orientalist. He was the first to translate the whole Old Testament into Romanian, using the Protestant edition of the Frankfurt Bible, and as such proving "for the first time the Romanian language's capacity to express the most profound truths and to render the texts considered to be the most venerated in the Romanian culture of that time", wrote academician Virgil Căndea. He was the first to think about finding a philosophical foundation, an explanation and an argument for liberating the Romanian Countries from under the Ottomans. He wrote a text where he comments on the famous dream of Nebuchadnezzar, as interpreted by prophet Daniel, reaching the conclusion that the Ottoman Empire was doomed to be destroyed under the blows of an empire which assumed the Byzantine mission, an idea which was going to be embraced by Dimitrie Cantemir.

Nicolae (Milescu) Spătarul had all the traits of the European humanists of those times: love for the literary works of the Antiquity, passion for philology, a critical methodology for translating classical texts, an equal attitude towards both sacred and secular texts, treated without discrimination by the same criteria, getting rid of the ecclesiastical authority principle in regard with the canonical character of the biblical texts issue, the careful selection of critical editions, regardless of the denomination who had edited them.

Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible

Asked by the author Marin Preda which is the best Romanian translation of the Bible, archimandrite Bartolomeu Anania (who was going to become the first metropolitan of the Cluj, Alba, Crișana and Maramureș Metropolitanate) replied: the one from 1688, known as "Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible" or "The Bucharest Bible". And this, even if the syntax is close to the Greek original and its language seem to be "ungainly here and there, following an alien pattern."

It's called "Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible" because this variant was done during his reign (1678-1688) by a team of scholars headed by the prince's brother, stolnik Cantacuzino, an important humanist. The Bucharest Bible proved to be the most lasting of his foundations. It was a work of ample national cooperation, as the prince, the Greceanu brothers (Radu and Șerban, they did the "bulk of the work", as C.C. Giurescu put it) and stolnik Constantin Cantacuzino were Wallachians; Mitrofan, bishop of Huși, and Nicolae Milescu (the main translator of the Old Testament) were Moldavians; and prefaces from the New Testament of Bălgrad [Alba Iulia] from Transylvania were also used. There were quite a few scholars that helped with the translation, but their names were lost, as we found out from the phrase with which the known and unknown translators ask the readers for leniency: "Of you, faithful reader, we humbly ask that, reading this holy and godly book, where you will find wrongs in this work of ours do not curse, but like a good man with a good heart correct it, and do not blame us but forgive us, because we are intemperate humans too, having the weak spirit that does not allow any human to be without fault." About the anonymity of some of the translators, Bartolomeu Anania wrote: "We open the book and we don't find it [the name], we close the book and it is inside of it."

The reason of the translation work was explained as follows by its authors: "Your Highness, [...] you let God to speak, like some light being under cover until now, but you'll put it on a candlestick to enlighten the church's peoples in the home: Wallachians, Moldavians, and Transylvanians." In a letter for the book's dedication Patriarch Dositheos II Notaras of Jerusalem wrote: "The New Scripture, being scattered in old books and with great toil found, is to be read by the country priests according to the Greek custom, as you ordered it for an easy reading [...] The Old Scripture, by translating it into Romanian, you made it possible to be read." Because "since, according to the political laws, it is not right that a Greek man does not know the Greek laws, how it was more rightful that the Romanian Christians did not know the God's laws [...], because if God speaks to them with a foreign voice, [they] do not listen." Previously the patriarch wrote to prince Șerban Cantacuzino that: "The Transylvanian Orthodox asked us to give them some writings as to be able to reply to the Calvinists, which were troubling them beyond measure."

Academician Virgil Cândea noticed that only the practical needs of the church did not justify this first variant of the Romanian Bible. There were books much more needed by the church and the clergy than the Bible. Furthermore, this was a luxury edition. It was a big sized book with a distinguished binding, with 933 leaves (not counting the prefaces), with symmetrically displayed text on two columns of 59 rows, with stylish ornate initials, and remarkable refined miniatures. It's a synthesis of the Wallachian and Moldavian typographic art. The work was done preponderantly by laymen and less by clerics. The content of Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible certifies the presence of all the European humanist features of that time in the Romanian culture.

The translators explained the process of selecting the appropriate sources: "if you'll bother to examine in detail the meaning of this Holy Scripture and if you'll compare it with some books, except the Greek, Latin and Slavonic ones, in some other languages and it wouldn't be the same, do not rush to slander out of hand, but look in other

Greek books and you'll find a book printed in Frankfurt, and that book is the oldest." They had an equal attitude towards both sacred and secular texts, treated without discrimination by the same criteria, selecting carefully the critical editions, regardless of the denomination who had edited them.

Virgil Căndea was also the one who proved that Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible became the text with supreme authority in the evolution of the sacred printings of Romanians, as all the Bible's variants in Romanian that followed, either translations or revisions, are based on the 1688 text, regardless if the authors are conceding it or not. Furthermore, it's the only Romanian version that remained unchanged for a century and a half. The next editions followed at four-five decades each or even more frequently.

Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna wrote in the preface of the "Sibiu Bible" (1858): "a people's biblical language only once can be built. If the great hurdle of a faithful and meaningful translation was surmounted and if the people already received that language, speaking likewise inside its very soul, than the descendants cannot make a new one, but only to renew and to improve it, as it would have been renewed and improved by the initial translator of the Bible, if he would have lived in their century."

In the spiritual heritage of every European nation the date of the Bible's translation is considered a celebration. The making of Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible represents the formal act of birth of the Romanian literary language.

Romanian princes' involvement in the Battle of Vienna, 1683

For more than two centuries after the conquest of Constantinople, when trying to persuade their children to stop playing outside and come home, mothers from Western Europe were threatening them that the Turks were coming. The fear of Turks was strong but the danger of sultans conquering Europe was not real.

Historians proved that the Ottoman army was not capable to mount campaigns further than Vienna. The great Ottoman armies mentioned by sources had, besides a combatant force similar in size with the European ones, numerous craftsmen that accompanied them. When leaving for a campaign, the Ottoman commanders took with them from armorers, tailors, and stablemen to cooks. It's true that, as the Ottoman chronicler Na'ima relates about the Battle of Zenta (1597), it could have happened that cooks would grab their ladles and defend themselves when a daring Christian army unit would penetrate deep into the Ottoman camp.

The Ottoman armies reached twice Vienna, the most advanced point in Europe they have ever reached: in 1529 and 1683. At the second siege also took part the prince of Moldova, Gheorghe Duca [George Ducas] (1678–1683), the prince of Wallachia, Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688), and the prince of Transylvania, Mihail Apafi I (1661–1690). This was a critic moment for the Romanian Countries and it deserves to be looked at.

The end of the 17th century marked a change in the balance of power in this region. The siege of Vienna by the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa was the last writhe of the Ottoman Empire. After it, the Ottomans have been in a perpetual defensive stance, until after the First World War, when the sultans' empire would disappear. It's also the moment when the Habsburg Empire was winning important positions along the Danube, including the capture of Transylvania, whose ownership had been disputed with the Ottomans after the first siege of Vienna. In a short time, a new competitor from the East was going to arrive: the Russian Empire of Peter the Great.

Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa, who was going to pay with his life for his failure at the walls of Vienna, started the expedition on March 31st 1683. Only in June was he joined by the armies of Wallachia, Moldova and the Tartars, at Osijek, on the Danube. On June 29th 1683 he entered the Austrian territories. Charles V, Duke of Lorraine, and his army were not able to stop the Ottoman advancement, so they reached the walls of Vienna on July 14th and in two days the city was encircled.

The Grand Vizier didn't trust the Romanian princes that much and their soldiers were used especially for logistic works (construction and mending of bridges). A chronicle form the National Library of Naples tells us about the slowness with which prince Apafi joined the Ottoman expedition. Apparently he gifted the Grand Vizier with a cart of velvet and 25.000 Hungarian golden coins in order to be allowed to keep its troops off the battlefield. He was also one of the first to leave the Ottoman camp.

As for them, Gheorghe Duca and Șerban Cantacuzino, in spite of all their disagreements, worked together to thwart the Ottomans' plans. The Grand Vizier had taken with him as a hostage Vienna's ambassador at Istanbul, Georg Kunitz. One of Kunitz's men, Iacob Heider, was passing regularly through the Romanian camp and also provided a link with the besieged troops, passing them information about what was happening in the Ottoman camp. The information was hidden inside melted wax. Another spy was dressed in Wallachian clothes. Șerban Cantacuzino also helped Kunitz to receive correspondence form the Austrian army outside Vienna. When the besieged troops were on the verge of giving up and surrendering, he sent a Jesuit monk to persuade them to resist. He also fed disinformation to the Ottomans about the city's garrison's mood, telling them that they couldn't resist much longer.

The soldiers of prince Duca secretly crossed the ditches of the fort providing the besieged with information and reassuring them so they won't surrender. On August 21st, a Moldovan somehow "got lost" inside the city and informed the garrison that the Ottomans were struggling due to the lack of feed for their horses. On September 11th, prince Duca allowed the passage through his camp of an envoy who was bringing letters from Charles of Lorraine to Kunitz for the third time.

On August 6th, while Romanians were working to repair a bridge from a big island on the Danube to the bank near the city, the Austrians opened fire. As it was already settled, the Romanian soldiers retreated immediately without any resistance. On August 30th a similar scene took place, even if the Grand Vizier had asked that the Romanians would be closely monitored. Such behavior was not unheard of. A while ago, [the Wallachian prince] Matei Basarab and [the Moldavian prince] Moise Movilă refused to take part in the siege of Kamianets-Podilskyi, defended by the Polish, and so they forced the Ottomans to give up the siege.

For sure, some legends were also born after the battle, such as the one about Șerban Cantacuzino filling his cannon balls with straw so they won't damage the walls of Vienna. But also sure is that the Romanians' role was recognized later in a letter sent by

Count von Waldstein to Șerban Cantacuzino, and also by the fact that emperor Leopold I offered to the descendants of Șerban Cantacuzino the title of Count of the empire.

The saving of Vienna is owed to the Polish king John III Sobieski, who had been implored by the envoy of Leopold I and the Pope: "Sire, save the empire!" After just 100 years, his country was going to be ripped apart by agreements in which the Habsburg Empire was part.

The condition of a people who sits at the border between great powers is not an easy one. Much diplomatic skill is needed to resist. In 1683 the Romanian princes proved that they had such a skill.

St. Sava Academy

The first was created by [prince] Brâncoveanu, with teaching being done in Greek. In the 20th century is substituted by a national cultural institution with teaching being done in Romanian.

The Phanariot century, still seen in a such a bad light in our country for no good reason, also meant the existence of the higher education whose history is not well known by the general public. It's true that it was done especially in Greek, but it was established by the last native princes, before the arrival of the so-called "Phanariots", among whom, truth be told, there were more Romanian princes than Greek.

The establishment of the princely Academy of Bucharest is still a disputed issue. Most historians tend to place it during the reign of Șerban Cantacuzino. It's true that it assumed its definitive form during the reign of his nephew, Constantin Brâncoveanu. In Moldova, there was a similar institution established under [prince] Antioh Cantemir, in 1707.

Constantin Brâncoveanu, aiming to reorganize the school, called on Chrysanthus Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem, asking him to devise the curriculum. Notaras had studied in the West. Nicolae Iorga wrote about him that it was "a zealous light diffuser". Notaras thought that building schools is more useful than building monasteries.

After the new curriculum was adopted, Brâncoveanu issued a decree establishing the teachers' salaries. He made a 30.000 talers deposit at the bank of Venice and all the school's expenses were going to be paid from the 810 talers annual interest. From the fishing tax on lake Greaca, another 50 lei went annually to the school to support the foreign and poor students.

The subjects of study were: logic, rhetoric, physics, about the sky, about birth and death, about the soul and metaphysics, about classical authors and the sermons of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, classical literature, and grammar and spelling exercises in Modern Greek. The Scholastic theological education was giving way to secular authors, philosophy and natural sciences.

After 1707 the princely Academy operated intermittently because of lack of funds. In 1749 a decree of prince Grigore Ghica indicates his concern to ensure the school's budget, so that the teachers won't worry anymore about their salaries. He designated Metropolitan Neofit to collect the priests' tax in order to pay the teachers. In 1761, in order to expand the school's building, prince Constantin Mavrocordat ordered the abbot and monks of St. Sava (the monastery was placed where the University Square statues are today) to move to Văcărești and for their dwellings to be repaired to be used as classrooms, teachers' housing and accommodation for boarding school students. Only starting from 1761 did the Academy get its own building with full rights of using it. Constantin Mavrocordat gave up the princely right to inherit the wealth of people that died without heirs and that wealth was going to be used for the building of bridges, hospitals, and for this school. As the tax on priests and this new source of income were still not enough, the prince ordered that the income of the Glavacioc Monastery will also go to the school's budget. From 1765 the income of Dealu Monastery is also added to the school's budget, so the teachers would be able to focus only on "teaching the apprentices, without partitioning their thought by worrying about their salary."

Another prince thoughtful about the school was Alexandru Ipsilanti. Reaching the outskirts of Bucharest to take over the throne, while waiting for his retinue to be put in order, he wrote on February 13th 1775 to the metropolitan and asked him to make a report about the state of the education. The Academy "had fallen into a dark and

moonless night, left without teachers and without students." Ipsilanti built a new edifice for the Academy, at St. Sava Monastery, a big building with classrooms, teachers' lodging and dormitories for students. It had a living-room, a kitchen and a bakery. The construction was finished in three years. The prince also started a more general reform of education. All the schools were "meant to open inexhaustible and redeeming streams for those who feed the love of learning and those who want to rise by its charity from their abject condition." "In every town I put teachers both of country's language and Slavonic language so the boys would learn the basic knowledge, because when they will get old they shouldn't be ignorant", wrote the prince. Studying was done in five cycles of three years each. At the same time the learning of western languages was introduced.

The wars that followed disrupted the school again. It resumed its functioning in 1791. The new prince, Mihai Suțu, moved his Court in the Academy's building and the school was moved to the "Domnița Bălașa" Monastery, causing great difficulties in its functioning.

Prince Alexandru Moruzi (1793–1796 and 1799–1801) was the first to introduce public exams for the evaluation of students' knowledge. The Academy had just regained its splendor, luring students from all over the Balkans, when a new war between the Russians and the Ottomans hit the country. The new metropolitan, Ignatie, managed to revive it. He decided that the exams will be public and the capital's inhabitants may be in the audience. At the end of the exams, the metropolitan gifted the teachers with expensive watches and the students with books signed by himself.

But the era of the education in other languages than Romanian was coming to an end. In 1817 the school's administrators petitioned prince Caragea for the establishment of a high school in the Romanian language and it was going to be founded a year later by Gheorghe Lazăr. The first teachers of the Romanian schools functioning after 1821 were graduates of the princely Academy, like Ion Heliade Rădulescu and Eufrosin Poteca.

Dimitrie Cantemir

The first internationally recognized Romanian scholar

"The much lightened and much learned Dimitrie Cantemir, prince of the Russian Empire, hereditary prince of Moldova, providing a model as worthy of praise as it is uncommon, he dedicated his illustrious name to the scientific research. And by his subscription, our Society gained a new radiance and a peerless adornment." This is how the Berlin Academy of Sciences announced on July 11th 1714 the acceptance of the scholar among its members. Dimitrie Cantemir's name it's also present on the Sainte Geneviève Library's frontispiece, in Paris, joining other important names of the European culture, including Racine, Dryden, Bossuet, Locke, Leibnitz, Newton.

Dimitrie Cantemir was born on October 26th 1673. He lived for a decade and a half in exile, in Istanbul, where he learned the Turkish language and studied the Ottoman civilization and history. He became convinced that the times of the sultans were over, so, when he became Moldova's prince in 1710, he didn't waste any time to sign a secret treaty with czar Peter the Great, by which he vowed allegiance to him while the latter was guaranteeing the hereditary reign of the Cantemirs in Moldova. It's worth mentioning the treaty's Article 11: "The Moldova Principality's lands, according to the old Moldavian [border] demarcation, for which the prince will have ruling right, are those stretching between the river Dniester, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Bender, with all the land of Budjak, the Danube, the frontiers of Wallachia and of Transylvania and the boundaries of Poland, as by the demarcations made by those countries."

The knowledge of the scholar and the political reality proved to be very different. The czar's army entered Moldova and was defeated at Stănilești in 1711, so Cantemir and 4.000 of his people had to go into exile. Some of the boyars and servants that had accompanied him returned to Moldova after a while. But not Cantemir, who wrote: "sweet is the love of land [country]". He [his remains] was going to return only on June 14 1935. He is buried at the Trei Ierarhi Church. His grave features a black marble plate with the following text: "Here, returned from a long and tough exile, braved for the freedom of his country, is resting Dimitrie Cantemir, prince of Moldova, learned scholar of the Romanian past."

A military officer of Peter the Great described him as it follows: "This prince was a short man, with a fine molded body, a beautiful, stern man and with such a pleasant appearance as I have never seen in my life. He was polite, affable, and also gentle, polite, and fluently speaking, talking very fine in Latin, which was very pleasant for people who speak this language and had the joy of entertaining with this prince." One shouldn't think that he was a scholar buried among books - even if he really studied a lot -, estranged from the mundane life. He used to delight Peter the Great with lewd jokes. And an event that happened after the Battle of Zenta (1697), where the Ottomans were defeated by the Austrians and forced to retreat to Belgrade, proves that he was a man able to handle even the most dangerous circumstances. Cantemir, traveling with his servants, stopped near the walls of Timișoara. There was a severe drought and drinking water was hard to find. Cantemir and his companions found a fresh water spring. Cantemir ordered his tent to be set right on top of the spring. So his Moldovans had plenty of water while the Ottomans were desperate to find some. One morning a servant was bringing fresh water to the cook and an Ottoman soldier caught him. So the Ottomans made a big scene, but Cantemir told them that he found the body of a dead Christian in the spring and didn't want the Ottomans to be tainted with such water. But in the meantime he managed to clean the spring, so now he was inviting them to drink fresh water.

Being an encyclopedic spirit, Cantemir approached multiple fields. He was a historian and left us texts about the Romanians' age and origins, following up the work of Miron Costin with "Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor" ["The Chronicle of the Romanian-Moldo-Wallachians' Age"]. He was also a geographer and ethnographer, writing "Descrierea Moldovei" ["The Description of Moldova"] and other valuable texts about the czar's campaigns in Caucasus and "Sistema religiei muhammedane" ["Islamic Religion's System"]. He was a philosopher and wrote "Divanul sau gâlceava înțeleptului cu lumea" ["The Divan or The Row Between the Sage and the World"] and also a work of historical philosophy about the rise and decline of kingdoms. He wrote the first allegorical, autobiographical novel in the Romanian literature, "Istoria Ieroglifică" ["The Hieroglyphic History"]. He wrote a treatise about the Ottoman music's history and produced the first musical notes system for Ottoman music.

The work that earned him universal fame is "Istoria Imperiului Otoman" ["The History of the Ottoman Empire"]; its original manuscript was discovered by the academician Virgil Cîndea at the Harvard University's Library, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. The great orientalist Josef von Hammer-Purgstall wrote about this work: "there are few books that ever enjoyed such a fame", adding that it is "an authority on anything related to Turks' historical events, habits and language." In its time it was one of the books most sought after. The British historian Arnold J. Toynbee once said that it's the book that all his life he wanted to have in his bookcase. Father Prévost used Cantemir's book as a source of inspiration to reconstruct the Istanbul environment in one of his novels. In the Encyclopedia of d'Alembert and Diderot, "Istoria Imperiului Otoman" was recommended as the best work on this subject.

"Each generation of our modern and contemporary culture asked for such an edition [the complete works of Dimitrie Cantemir] and each deplored the failure to materialize it in its entirety", wrote Virgil Cîndea. Let's hope that such a generation will be born at some point.

The unification with Rome

The role of the United Church of Transylvania in preserving and developing the national conscience of Transylvanian Romanians

The unification of a part of the Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania with the Catholic Church, from which the Greek-Catholic Church was born, couldn't be absent from the 100 moments chosen to mark the Great Unification's Centenary, regardless of the controversy and accusations that were and still are aroused by this moment. It was, as Nicolae Iorga wrote, a "decision, from the national viewpoint, full of happy and unhappy consequences, persisting even today."

In order to understand the decision made by a part of the Orthodox clergy and flock in Transylvania, a few elements have to be mentioned. Transylvania was a territory where the Reformation made a rapid advancement in the 16th century. Until the end of that century, the influence of the Catholic Church was significantly diminished there. In spite of a few attempts to recover, the Protestant religion became in the 17th century the official religion of the principality. The Romanians, the largest population in Transylvania, continued to be only tolerated from a political and religious point of view.

In the 17th century the Protestantism carried an intense campaign of proselytism to persuade the Romanians to cast aside their faith and embrace the new religion. Steps to lure and reward the priests and the believers who accepted the conversion were taken but also repression, taxes and other obligations were imposed on those who refused. They managed to subordinate the Orthodox metropolitan and to weaken and shatter his jurisdiction. But, in the end, the politics of "Calvinisation" failed, in part exactly because it was aggressive, and partly because of the noblemen's opposition, who were reluctant to lose the income collected from the Orthodox population and clergy. With his ability to synthesize, this is how Nicolae Iorga summed up the Calvinist program: "it was indeed - and it cannot be denied - one of cultural advancement for the Romanians, too. [...] But, besides these recommendations, also useful to the Romanian culture, there was an attempt to confound the Romanians' Church, a humble one, with the Transylvanian Hungarians' dominant one."

The Catholics proved to be much more cunning. Their influence grew significantly as the armies of the Austrian emperor were getting closer to and in the end conquered Transylvania, a fact recognized by the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699). It was a process that lasted a decade and the Jesuits advanced step by step, succeeding in breaking the Protestant Hungarian noblemen's resistance, reluctant to admit any official recognition or rights for the "Wallachians".

To regain its economical, political and religious positions lost to Protestants, the Catholic Church had to grow its flock. As the "re-catholicization" of the Lutherans, Calvinists and Unitarians was virtually impossible, the Jesuit missionaries turned their attention to Orthodox Romanians, whose number was larger than that of all the three "privileged nations" combined. Catholics were hoping that, by converting them, they will also sever all ties, of every nature, with the Orthodox Romanians from Wallachia and Moldova, and they will become a starting point for converting those, too. As opposed to the Ukrainians (the Union of Brest - 1596) and the Ruthenians of Carpatho-Ukraine (the Union of Mukachevo - 1664), the Romanians had never done such a thing.

On August 23rd 1692 emperor Leopold I issued a decree that established the equality of the United and Catholic clergy regarding tax exemptions, rights and privileges. But only in 1697 did the metropolitan Teofil of the Orthodox Romanians and other 12 arch-priests signed a formal act of union. The Orthodox Church denies the fact that in February 1697, at Alba Iulia, a synod decided the unification with the Catholic Church

by accepting the four points of discrepancy, and that metropolitan Teofil signed on March 21st 1697 a resolution sanctioning the decision, which is also certified by a letter sent on June 10th 1697 to cardinal Leopold Kollonich, archbishop of Esztergom and Hungary's primate. The unification was conditioned by keeping unchanged the rites and the holy-days' calendar, and only the four dogmatic points regarded by the Council of Florence (1439) as separating the Orthodox and the Catholic churches were to be accepted: 1. The Pope is the chief of the whole church; 2. the Eucharist might be also done with unleavened bread; 3. the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (Filioque); 4. besides heaven and hell there is also a purifying place called purgatory.

These were also the conditions under which metropolitan Atanasie Anghel accepted the unification together with 38 arch-priests, signed for a second time on October 7th 1698. This one is also contested by the Orthodox Church.

On February 16th 1699 was signed into law the first diploma regarding the religious unification, which stipulated that only the clergy and its proprieties were to enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Catholics. The exclusion of the laymen instigated vast movements of protest. As such, on March 19th 1701 the emperor was forced to issue a new diploma that specified in 15 points the terms of the unification. The United laymen were guaranteed the same rights under the law as the whole country, so they were not going to be just "tolerated" anymore. The original document was lost at some point and it was found only in 1938, in the Library of the Bruckenthal Museum in Sibiu. Quite a few of the diploma's provisions in favor of the Romanians were never applied in the real life. However, the Transylvanian School and the revival of the national reawakening movement couldn't even be imagined without this unification.

The Văcărești Monastery

Unique architectural monument in Southeast Europe

More than 300 years ago, a jewelry of medieval Romanian architecture, unique in Southeastern Europe, began to be built. After 268 years, a totalitarian regime ordered the demolition of the monastic complex to build in its place - how significant! - a new court, which eventually hasn't been built. Today, in that area there's an "urban delta".

"In the fifth year of his Highness's reign, Nicolae Vodă, His Highness's monastery from Văcărești being finished and being decorated with all the adornments both on the inside and on the outside, the prince threw a great feast in the The Holy Trinity day, which is the monastery's dedication day. And going with all the hierarchs and the abbots and all the boyars and merchants and all kind of people of all ranks, they were all feasted properly", wrote Radu Popescu, the official chronicler of prince Nicolae Mavrocordat. He added that the prince had decided that from the monastery's income "the foreigners should be hosted, the paupers should be dressed, the hungry should be fed, the sick should be cared for, and the prisoners should be mercifully investigated."

The construction started in 1716, resumed after 1719 and was finished in September 1722. On September 13th 1724 it was sanctified and in one year the surrounding wall was completed, which turned it into a real fortress. The construction took so much time because Nicolae Mavrocordat was taken to Transylvania by the Austrian troops that occupied București during the war with Ottomans from 1716-1718. The son of Nicolae, Constantin Mavrocordat, added the chapel in 1736 and the pavilion with scaled columns recalling of palm tree trunks. A cultivated southern French traveler, merchant and collector, Jean-Claude Flachet, called it "the most beautiful church I know in the Greek world", meaning the Orthodox world.

Academician Răzvan Theodorescu underlined the significance of the monastery: the first monument which clearly outlines that a Phanariot dynasty meant to continue the Brâncoveanu, Cantacuzino, Basarab families' traditions, in a word, of the Romanian statehood, as there's nowhere to be found south of Danube, where all states had disappeared for three centuries, swallowed up by the Ottoman Empire.

Between 1716 and 1722, under the administration of the boyars Matei Mogoș, Manolache and Iane, this monastery - the peak of the Brâncoveanu style and also the swan song of the ancient Romanian art - was adorned with a wealth of sculpture, from the portal to the gorgeous and enormous columns of the narthex to the neo-Corinthiac capitals. The plan of the monument developed a narthex conceived as a princely necropolis, echoing the previous model of Hurezi, Cotroceni, and the Metropolitan Church. Words can hardly describe to today's people - who cannot admire the monument but in archive images - the richness and sumptuousness of the stone decoration, or the splendor of the frescoes. The inscription of the monastery was stamped by the reunited coats of arms of Moldova and Wallachia.

Dedicated to the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, the monastery was poorly administered and was in a bad condition in the mid-nineteenth century. At that time it was converted into a jail. An unfortunate idea, hiding it from the faithful's view, as Nicolae Noica put it, that facilitated its assassination, for she had disappeared from the public conscience as a place of worship and only remained as a prison: "At Văcărești!" At the beginning of the 20th century, a jail director had the idea of pouring concrete over the carved stone girdles that encircled the monastery. It was eventually a good thing, protecting them from destruction and weathering, and they were to come to light after 1973, when the jail was abolished and the restoration work began. But fate was still ruthless with the wonder founded by the Mavrocordat family. After a decade, București's systematization

plans conceived by the two "enlightened" minds of the communist regime, Nicolae (also a Nicolae!) and Elena, wanted to build there the future Supreme Court. The efforts of some courageous intellectuals whose names must be mentioned - Grigore Ionescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, Răzvan Theodorescu, Henrieta Delavrancea Gibory, D.M. Pippidi, Vasile Drăguț, Aurelian Trișcu, Radu Popa, Virgil Cândea - failed to save this monument, unique in Southeast Europe.

The story of Văcărești Monastery's tragedy must be completed with the story of the library that Nicolae Mavrocordat tried to build there. A library catalog of 1723, which survived, includes 237 authors. In regard to the endowment of this library, the Romanian prince was in competition with king of France Louis XV. Delegates of the latter were in Istanbul to buy rare manuscripts. But Mavrocordat was one step ahead of them, for he knew much better the places to buy and paid prices that the king's emissaries could not afford. Nicolae Mavrocordat had already gifted the king of France with two precious manuscripts. He also sent him a very rare one from the 8th century, "The Holy Parallels", the first writing of St. John of Damascus. It has 394 leaves written on parchment, with beautiful two-column uncial characters and 1,658 thumbnails, a rarity for a miniaturized manuscript. The titles of the chapters and the names of the authors quoted are written on gold. It has 456 portraits in medallions embroidered with gold pearls. The king of France sent him instead a contemporary printing, which could be bought at any antique shop in Paris. And in the catalogs in which this manuscript is presented, the name of Nicolae Mavrocordat is not mentioned.

When the Romanian prince died, there was news that the prince's library would be sold, and some people were eager to buy it: Pope Clement XII, the Roman emperor Charles VI or king George II of England. It was a fake news, for Constantin Mavrocordat had no intention to sell it. But it was eventually scattered by the turbulent times fallen over these lands.

Inochentie Micu Klein

The promises made in the first Leopoldine Diploma of the Unification in 1699, but especially in the second one from 1701, given to the "Wallachian bishop, priests, and nation", were not implemented. The Diet and the "nations" recognized at that time wouldn't accept the change, and especially granting rights to the United plebeians. The Vienna Court, faced with the Transylvanian nations' opposition, wouldn't hurry to implement the provisions of the Diploma. The one who fought for the provisions of the Diploma to become effective, triggering the struggle for the political and national emancipation of the Transylvanian Romanians in 1729, was Ioan Micu, known as Inochentie Micu after becoming a monk, and also called Micu-Klein ("klein" meaning "little" in German).

He was born on June 24th 1700. At the Academic College in Cluj he had as professor Franciscus Fasching, who supported the Latinity of the Romanians. On February 25th 1729 he was appointed bishop of the United Church by the emperor. Now having a new status, he bluntly put forward the issue of the United Romanians' rights, promised through the Leopoldine Diplomas. He addressed many requests to the emperor, the government, the Diet, the imperial chancellery, including Pope Benedict XIV. He tried to extend the authority of the bishopric to the non-United Romanians. In 1742 he was opposed to the Catholicization of the United Romanians. He moved to Blaj the headquarters of the United bishopric, which he endowed with a monastery and a cathedral, schools, a printing shop, a library and archive, transforming the city into the cultural center of the Transylvanian Romanians. The school was considered to be the main means of lifting the Romanians. He sent the first students on scholarships to Rome and Vienna. He asked for a general representation of the Romanians, in the entire hierarchy and in all the dignities of the country: "one shouldn't decide anything for us without us and in our absence." Under Maria Theresa (1740-1780), he asked for the Greek-Catholic clergy and nobility to be recognized as the fourth political nation, with equal rights, as the other three in the Principality. In doing so, he exceeded the provisions of the Leopoldine Diploma of 1701. In his requests to the Vienna Court he invoked the ancient and Roman origin of the Romanians in Transylvania. The rights of the Romanians no longer depended solely on the chosen denomination. He therefore invoked the Romanians' priority, Latinity and continuity. The historical notions started to become means of political struggle.

He addressed his requests directly to the emperor, who, invoking the Principality's autonomy, redirected them to the Aulic Transylvanian Chancellery and to the Diet, where the bishop had to present them personally, as he was a member of the Diet from 1733. The two institutions were fiercely opposed to the demands of Inochentie Micu. The validity of the Leopoldine Diploma was called into question; it was argued that the United clergy was not honest in its faith and had taken the step just from opportunism; Romanians are many, but just barbarian "plebeians" who cannot form a "nation"; they came from Wallachia and Moldova, so they were not ancient inhabitants of the country, and were inclined to all the iniquities and avoided paying taxes. In 1733 the Vienna Court asked for a census, which showed that the United Romanians represented 85.857 families, that is, a larger community than any of the four formally recognized denominations.

Maria Theresa's Court, involved in the wars with Prussia, did not want to alienate the Transylvanian Diet. But it also could not ignore the issues raised by Inochentie Micu, for it threatened the Union. The Diet, convened in Sibiu in 1744 at Maria Theresa's request, was to establish the legal status of the United Romanians. But the discussions in the Diet ignored the demands put forward by the empress and the idea of a fourth political or constitutional nation was rejected. According to their legal status, only the

clergy and the nobility enjoyed the rights of the country on whose land they lived. The Nations' Representatives adopted a vehement protest against the Romanians' demands: "The United bishop and clergy ask for things [that] no one has ever asked from our forefathers, nor can they ask from our descendants [...] A request that, in fact, shakes and upsets the entire system of this country, maintained so far in good order in both the religious affairs and the political and economic affairs. Finally, it asks something the Wallachian clergy and plebeians, according to their well-known nature, are never entitled to. "

Taking advantage of the outburst of a revolt led by a Serbian Orthodox priest, the opponents accused Inochentie of secretly supporting that movement. Inochentie was summoned to Vienna. Before leaving, he convened in Blaj on July 6th 1744 a large synod of clerics and laity, from whom he obtained approval to continue his actions. The synod convened at Blaj was a true national representation, and Inochentie was behaving not only as a religious leader, but as a true political leader of his oppressed people.

When he arrived in Vienna, he disputed the competence of his interrogating committee and leaved for Rome in secret, hoping to get the Pope's support. Vain hope. Moreover, deprived of income in his exile, he had to resign from the position of bishop of the United Romanians in 1751. He died away from the country on September 23rd 1768, in Rome, abandoned and without seeing accomplished the ideals for which he had fought all his life. But he had succeeded in articulating a program of political claims, based on which the national struggle was going to continue.

The reforms of Constantin Mavrocordat and Joseph II

The first Enlightenment reforms in the Romanian lands

The reform measures taken by the princes of Iași and București were compared with those of the enlightened despots of Western Europe.

Constantin Mavrocordat, of Greek origin, played the most important role, but when the Galați governor sent him a letter in Greek, he was admonished: "Do not write in Greek anymore but write to us in Romanian." The fact that he had six reigns in Wallachia and four in Moldova gave his reforms a unitary character.

The beginning of the reforms is marked by the great decree of February 7th 1741. The main concern was the taxation system, unsettled by the destruction caused by so many wars. The prince abolished the multitude of taxes and introduced a unique tax, to be paid in "four quarters". The principle of the tax reform was a deal (the so-called "rupture") agreed between the treasury and a group of taxpayers by which the amount of the tax was set and also the terms when it should be paid. Until then, no taxpayer knew exactly what he had to pay. Another principle was to establish a rigorous record of taxpayers. Each received a sort of fiscal record, complete with his distinguishing physical features. The third principle was to restrict the various categories of tax exemptions. Constantin Mavrocordat wanted a free peasant, from the legal point of view, with duties regulated by the prince, not by the owner of the estate. He tried to impose these measures gradually, and with the metropolitan Neofit's help, but the boyars refused. On August 5th 1746, the prince convened a large gathering of the clergy and boyars where the peasants' servitude was canonically condemned: a Christian cannot hold his brother into servitude. The former serfs became free men. Everyone was bound to a 12-day a year corvée regime. In Moldova, however, the resistance of the landowners was even more fierce. The gathering convened there refused to canonically condemn the serfdom and set the number of corvée days at 24 for serfs and 12 for free men.

The prince appointed stewarding boyars in every county to judge the causes, so that people no longer needed to go all the way to the capital. "The doors of the Divan were open and [he] talked a great deal with the rabble, and he made them so bumptious that no boyar could tell a peasant even a word, as he immediately cried out to the prince and for the most trifling issue of some stupid peasant a great boyar might lose his face, and even go to jail." He introduced the salaries for dignitaries and public servants, an important step in the state's modernization, creating a dependence relationship between the dignitary, now an employee, and the central authority that had appointed and was paying him. He published all these regulations under the title of "Constitution", in the periodical *Mercure de France*.

The Romanians' attitude towards reform was brilliantly synthesized by [author Ion Luca] Caragiale: "let it be revised, I accept it, but nothing should be changed." Neither Mavrocordat's reforms resisted too long, but the reality forced their resumption on future princes.

In Transylvania, one of the objectives was the state structures' uniformity in all the empire's provinces. Maria Theresa raised by decree the Principality of Transylvania to the rank of Great Principality. It stated that it was not a subject of "any other kingdom or other jurisdiction, but is governed by its own laws, magistracies and institutions, and administered by the governor and the provincial council, under our supervision." It was a clarification meant to point out that Transylvania had been and remained a distinct entity than the former Hungarian kingdom, precisely to put an end to the tendencies of some Hungarian noblemen to assimilate the former with the latter. Also at that time, chancellor Kaunitz resisted an attempt by count Gabriel Bethlen to introduce in the coat

of arms of the Grand Principality of Transylvania the double cross, a heraldic symbol meant to suggest a link with Hungary. On November 26th 1783, the administrative reorganization of Transylvania was carried out, and the old territories of the political "nations" (Hungarians, Saxons, Szeklers) were abolished. Ten counties were created, with much diminished powers, any autonomy was abolished, and the officials were now appointed by the state and responded only to it. By two decrees, dated 1781 and 1782, Joseph II imposed the "con-civility" for Romanians and Saxons, meaning the equality of rights for the two ethnicities. Another measure aimed at separating the executive power from the judicial one.

The creation of the border guard regiments was not only for a military purpose, as some contemporaries people had already noticed: "the first and the main target of the establishment of the military border was neither the guarding of the mountains nor of the paths - it could have been secured much more cheaper -, but the country's security and increasing the state's real power".

Initially three Romanian border guard regiments and three Szekler were created. Those who enlisted were getting rid of serfdom, becoming free men. As a side note, the military uniforms in which the Szeklers are so proudly marching today are nothing else but that old uniforms of the border regiments. They kept the tradition, but we, as in so many other cases, lost it.

There were significant consequences for the Romanians after the establishment of the border regiments. The number of free Romanians increased. A specific lifestyle took shape, with its own administration, justice and economy. The Romanian border guards played an active role in the national liberation struggle of Romanians in Transylvania and Banat.

Supplex Libellus Valachorum

The Transylvanian Romanians' national reawakening movement

After the death of emperor Joseph II, in the former Hungary and the Grand Principality of Transylvania the Hungarian nobility and the Saxon patricians started a full-blown campaign to abolish all reforms. Diets were convened again to ensure a return to the situation before the emperor's reforms. Everywhere there were shouts of "Restitutio in integrum". They wanted to abolish the Romanian border regiments, too. According to the law, the true soldiers of the fatherland can only be the rulers, the noblemen and the Szeklers, the Romanian border guards were not needed, so they were to be discharged. It was a general uproar, including against the introduction of German as the administration's language for the entire province. The Hungarian royal crown, deposited in the imperial treasury by Joseph II as being superfluous, was brought back with indescribable fervor to Budapest.

Romanians also organized themselves. There was pressure on the two bishops, United Gherasim Adamovici and Orthodox Ioan Bob, to put themselves at the forefront of the movement. On December 21st 1790, in Cluj, the Diet started its session (it would last until August 9th 1791). Here also arrived an extensive memo written by the Romanian leaders and addressed to emperor Leopold II.

The memorandum opens with the ascertainment that everywhere the government wants that "the rights of both the man and of the civil society" to be extended to all the people; as a result, the Romanian nation demanded to be given back its ancient rights taken from it. It is the oldest nation, descended from Trajan's settlers and it lived there without interruption. The testimony of king Bela's anonymous notary is invoked, according to which when the Hungarians arrived in Transylvania they found the Romanians there. Historical documents were invoked that initially the Romanians had the same rights as the Hungarians. The Romanians' fate changed decisively only in the 17th century through the document *Approbatae Constitutiones*, which tightens the conditions of the three nations' union and the laws in favor of the four recognized religions. The Romanian nation had never been stripped of its "regnicolar" rights ("regnicolar" were called the nations that enjoyed legal recognition) by a legislative power, nor was it declared tolerated, for otherwise the nobles created from its ranks could only enjoy the honor of nobility, like the Armenians, for example, but not the legal rights and immunities associated with it. The Romanian nation demanded that the notions of tolerated, admitted to be abandoned and to be given back its old place among the "regnicolar" nations. The Romanian clergy, nobility and ordinary people should enjoy the same rights as those which make up the system of nations, and the Romanians should occupy a proportionate number of positions, according to their share of population.

Read in the Diet in June 1791, the memo raised consternation. The Aulic Chancellor of Transylvania, count Samuel Teleki, said that the Romanians may be the oldest inhabitants, but they were subjected by the sword. They never had equal rights with other nations. They have no reason to ask: they do not have their own territory or any privileges. The advancement of the Romanians among the recognized nations is dangerous and would undermine the country's constitution. The Romanians, by gaining land and by ennoblement, are considered to be part of the nation in whose midst they live. They occupy fewer positions because they do not have trained people. They might be numerous, but their people are boorish, uneducated, and are blindly following a clergy who itself is in need of a better education. Precisely because they are so numerous, their political leadership requires special care and provision. The only obtained concessions

were the free exercise of the Orthodox religion and the right of the non-United to occupy functions that were not reserved for the four recognized religions.

The memo was published by a Saxon, I.C. Eder, and Ioan Piuariu-Molnar under the title that was going to remain established in history, "Supplex Libellus Valachorum". Continuing the work of Franz Josef Sulzer, who had published in 1781 a history in which he denied the formation of the Romanian people north of the Danube (he was at loggerheads with the Wallachian prince), Eder developed arguments to combat the origin and the age of the Romanians in Transylvania. Interestingly, Michael Lebrecht's opinion also changed. Prior to Supplex, he considered the Romanians to be the result of the mixing of Roman settlers with native population. The Roman vestiges, the Romanian people being so numerous, the Romanian names, the garb, the customs, the Latin language, cleaner even than the Italian, were invoked as proof. After Supplex, the Romanians are nothing more than Bulgarians or Cumans, whose shabby clothes do not remind of Romans.

The genesis of Supplex - wrote academician David Prodan - is the very struggle for the political rise of the Transylvanian Romanians, it is synthesizing this struggle. Through collective creation, the work started by Inochentie Micu-Klein continues and develops. The authors of Supplex add new and enlightened ideas, such as equality, social contract, human rights and citizen's rights. The most important political act of the Transylvanian Romanians in the 18th century was born at a time when great thoughts of renewal fought all over Europe. "The memoir thus remains not only an indicator of a local development, it also tells us the extent to which this evolution has been drawn into the great waves of renewal or transformation in the European world" - stressed David Prodan.

The capitulations

Weakened by the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Prussia allied with Catherine II's Russia. They committed to each other, inter alia, to support their territorial interests against Poland. In order to counteract the new alliance, France and Austria determined the Ottoman Empire to declare war against Russia in 1768. During the war, several projects of division or unification of the Romanian provinces generated by the conflicting camps were advanced. Empress Catherine advanced the "Dacian project," through which she wanted to create an outpost against the Habsburgs, but also against the Ottomans. Obviously, the Austrian emperor Joseph II opposed. Thus, the "Romanian question" started to take shape, which was to become more and more a part of the public consciousness and of the European political projects, but it also generated a national reaction domestically. At the Peace Congress of Focșani in 1772, besides the fact that the boyars of the two Principalities demanded their unification, they brought to the great powers the texts of the "capitulations" that would have been concluded between the Ottoman Empire and the Romanian princes over the centuries. Their content was accepted at that time as it was later.

After the historic role of the "capitulations" ended and the Romanians achieved the Unification of 1859, and then gained independence in 1877-1878, historians were able to study the documents with a critical eye. And they found out that, in the form invoked by the boyars of Moldova and Wallachia in 1772, they never existed.

Yet, enough testimonies survived, both from Romanian and foreign sources, which suggest the existence of agreements on the basis of which the Romanian Countries, although under Ottoman suzerainty and having a series of financial, economic and military obligations to the Gate, maintained a wide internal autonomy. The earliest internal mention is from 1542. At that time, a deputation sent by Petru Rareș to Poland, led by ataman Vartic, informed the Polish king that the sultan violated "the treaty and the agreements concluded by his ancestors with Moldovans." Half a century earlier, the Italian humanist Filippo Buonaccorsi-Callimachus wrote to the Pope: "The Wallachians, having rejected the weapons and endeavor, have agreed [with the Ottomans] through treaties not as losers but as victors." Dimitrie Cantemir also invoked the old documents and "hagglings" with the Gate to prove that it didn't follow its promises. And yet, very serious Romanian historians said that the documents presented at the 1772 Peace Congress were not genuine. And they were right.

Only the research done in the Ottoman archives solved the mystery. According to the Islamic conception, the sultan did not endorse any treaties with the "infidels," being his duty to make them his subjects and bring them to the House of Islam. But political realities made it necessary for one to find a solution for cases where the most powerful sultan failed to fully conquer a people or a land. In his generosity, he could unilaterally give a sign of his benevolence in the form of an "ahidname". This unilateral act, according to Islamic law, was perceived in European law (Byzantine or Western) as a bilateral act, the result of a negotiation, which it really was in fact.

The Romanian boyars, who did not find the old "ahidnames", which in time changed their name into "berate" or "hatt-i sharif", restored them ad hoc in the form of acts that reproduced "the treaties" with the Gate. Their content was consistent with what was known to have been contained in the acts approved by sultans, but this form was the most accessible to the Europeans. Nicolae Iorga thought that this "lasting agreement" between the Romanians and the Ottomans was one of the "Romanian initiatives" in the universal history. And it wasn't the only solution found by the Romanian princes to "translate" into the Ottoman law realities from the Byzantine law. In order to continue to exercise the rights of founders of places of worship within the Ottoman Empire, they became timariots of those churches and monasteries. The timariot was, in the Ottoman

Empire, the one who received the usufruct of possessions, without effectively possessing them, for the only master could be the sultan. In this capacity, the Romanian princes not only didn't ask anything from the respective establishments, but could intervene in their favor at the Gate.

The "capitulations" are a proof of the Romanian states' continuity during the medieval period and into the dawn of the modern age. Naturally, their existence is being challenged by our neighbors or former neighbors. After Russia had accepted them when serving its interests, Soviet historians challenged them. Why does the 19th century French historian Edgar Quinet explain to us: "For a moment I admit, even if it's false, that all the known treaties by which Moldo-Wallachia retained its autonomy and sovereignty would have been lost [...] Wherever the Muslims conquered something, they did so in the name of Allah; they annexed the conquered land to the Muslim land, declaring it the dominion of the Qur'an's God. This is why the first sign of ownership or only possession was the building of the mosque [...] But nothing similar is to be found in the principalities [...] What a more reliable demonstration that the Romanian land is not and has never been a Muslim land [...] Therefore, the Danubian Provinces do not belong to Islam; so it's equally clear that the Islam has no right to cede, to alienate or to give any part of it. How could Mohammedanism surrender Bucovina to Austria and Bessarabia to Russia?"

Horea, Cloșca and Crișan

The social and political correspondent of the Transylvanian School

The reform policy initiated by empress Maria Theresa and continued by her son Joseph II aimed, among others, to regulate the obligations towards the noblemen, so that those towards the Austrian state could also be met. In Transylvania, imperial reforms were impeded by laws of a feudal nature and the conservatism of the Hungarian nobility. It was the most numerous nobility in Europe at that time, while three quarters of the province's population (most of it being Romanians) were in serfdom. The situation was described by a French contemporary, J.P. Brissot, who was to take part in the French Revolution, as follows: "The feudal regime, whose horrific features have been wiped out almost all over the earth, keeps all its rigors in this land [Transylvania] ... Here are those old English barons, those French counts, sitting in their small castles, looking at their serfs like they are some furniture at their disposal as they wish, and whose freedom, work and even life they can play with, sell, and estrange." The two trips undertaken in the Great Principality of Transylvania (1773 and 1783) allowed Joseph II to convince himself of the status of the serfs and the urgent need for a definitive settlement of obligations. During the first voyage, the emperor had asked to be taught a few Romanian words. Those who were throwing to the ground before him were told: "szkula, szkula" [corrupt Romanian pronunciation of "get up, get up"] and promised to examine their claims: the "ojcauta". However, the Hungarian nobility was fiercely opposed, arguing that the abolition of serfdom and the right of free relocation for serfs would lead to a massive migration of Romanians to the south and east of the Carpathians.

A special situation was recorded in the area of the Apuseni Mountains, organized after the Habsburg conquest, because of the richness of its underground, in a fiscal fiefdom directly dependent on the Court of Vienna. The leasing of income has led to the restriction of the last freedoms that the "moți" [local name for the Romanian population; singular - "moț"] enjoyed, first and foremost the right to tend pubs. The moți sent a few delegations to Vienna, led by Nicula Urs Vasilie, better known as Horea. He was a woodworker and built several churches, including the one in Cizer, Sălaj county. He went four times to Vienna. On the first and third trip he was accompanied by Ion Oargă, also known as Cloșca. On the fourth journey, Horea managed to be received by the emperor, whom he personally handed the petition.

At the autumn fair in Brad, October 28th 1874, Horea convened a meeting for Sunday 31st October at the church in Mesteacăn. Here, the peasants decided to go to Alba Iulia to join the border regiments, which meant liberation from serfdom. The next day, however, at Curechiu, some noblemen's men tried to stop them using force. In response, Zarand peasants led by Crișan, a former soldier in a line regiment, attacked the noblemen's residences in the Brad area. The movement expands quickly into Zarand and also in parts of Hunedoara. Villages with Hungarian serfs also joined and the disorder spread as far as Sălaj, Maramureș and Sătmar or towards the Szekler counties.

Scared, the noblemen took refuge in the walled cities. The rioters that besieged the fortress of Deva wrote an ultimatum, delivered at Șoimuș on November 11th. The most radical program of the revolt called for "no more nobility to be, but whoever may be received somewhere in the imperial service should live from it", "the noblemen owners should forever leave the noblemen's estates", they should also pay taxes and the noblemen's lands should be divided "between the common people, according to the order of the emperor that will be issued."

In order to halt the momentum of the movement, on November 12th and 18th, the noblemen concluded four ceasefires with the rioters. The imperial troops were also put

in motion. In clashes that took place in late November, the rebels gain victory.

But on December 7th, vice-colonel Kray, assisted by the Orthodox bishop, defeated the rebels at Mihăileni. Horea discharged the rest of his army and went into hiding with Cloșca in the Scorușet wood, in the Gilău Mountains, planning to re-launch the uprising the next spring. But on December 27th the two men were captured and taken to Alba Iulia, being imprisoned in the fortress's dungeon. In late January 1785 Crișan was also captured, and a commission appointed by the emperor started to investigate the three men. Crișan killed himself, and Horea and Cloșca, after being paraded through villages in chains, to be an example to whomever might think of rebellion, were executed on February 28th 1785 in front of a large audience at Alba Iulia, by being broken by the Wheel.

The revolt had a strong European resonance, as few Romanian events had ever known until that time. It took place in the time of the American War of Independence and close to the French Revolution. More recent analyzes integrate it with the "Atlantic Revolution," as are characterized today the decades of revolutionary transformation in the late 18th century. For the first time, large segments of Europeans were aware, through the news of the uprising, about the reality of the persisting serfdom imposed by the conservative Hungarian nobility and the situation of the Romanians. It was for the first time when the informational blockade of the Hungarians, who had managed through the Middle Ages to filter the information about Romanians that reached Europe, was broken. The newspaper Politische Journal, in Hamburg, wrote: "The rioters from Transylvania are Romanians, the descendants of the Roman colonies in Dacia; they are mostly Orthodox and are by far the majority of the inhabitants of the principality [...] They are truly slaves, without any wealth and without rights, bound to the estate and to the land."

At the same time, the revolt was the first revolutionary, violent assertion of the Transylvanian Romanians, the involvement of the crowds in the Romanians' political-national struggle, carried out until then only by the representatives of the Romanian cultural elite.

Transylvanian School

Proposed for the first time the replacement of the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin one

The first generation of Romanian scholars who consistently devoted a great deal of a prodigious activity to cultural and educational measures for the masses was that of the Transylvanian School. Through its coryphaei, the Transylvanian School started the polemic with the authors who, after the publishing of *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, were struggling to prove that the Romanian people had formed anywhere else only not in Transylvania, and that they were not descendants of the Romans. For this reason they exaggerated the Roman origin, considering that the Dacians would have been exterminated after the conquest of Dacia. One particular thing was that they wrote a large part of their work in Latin, so that those works would have an European circulation.

Samuil Micu wrote a history of Romanians in Latin, for foreigners, which he then summed up for the Romanian reader in "Scurtă cunoștință a istoriei românilor". It addresses the history of Romanians in general, disregarding the borders separating them. He also wrote the "Istoria, lucrurile și întâmplările românilor pre scurt" ["The History, the Issues and the Incidents of the Romanians in Short"] (1806). In the four volumes he wrote about the colonization of Dacia, the princes of the Romanian Countries, the history of the Romanian bishopric in Transylvania. In the preface he noted: "You, Romanian speaker, receive this little bit of but with great difficulty and carefully gathered history of your people, and if you can strive, but if you cannot, at least urge and help others who can more protractedly and more extensively the things and the events of the Romanian people [...] to write them down and to make them known to all the people." For "the Romanian scholars cannot lead the uneducated and simple to wisdom other than by the book that illuminates their minds and they also should understand what is good and useful. But even these few scholars are not enough to teach so many, but it's easier to be done by books, for every ordinary man who can read, by reading he's slowly beginning to understand and know." Gheorghe Șincai wrote "Hronica românilor și a mai multor neamuri..." ["The Chronicle of Romanians and of more Kins..."] by which he definitively imposed the unitary treatment of the three Romanian Countries. And Petru Maior, whom Pompiliu Teodor considered to be the greatest Romanian historian at the beginning of the 19th century, wrote, in a direct polemic with the theses of Sulzer, Engel and Eder, "Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dachia" ["The History for the Romanians' Beginning in Dacia"] and another work, "Dialog pentru începutul limbii române între nepot și unchi" ["Dialog Between Nephew and Uncle for the Beginning of the Romanian Language"].

Together, they have produced works such as "Elementa linguae daco romanae sive valachicae" (Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Șincai) and the "Lexicon of Buda" (Samuil Micu, Petru Maior, Vasile Coloși, Ioan Corneli, Ioan Teodorovici and Alexandru Teodori). "Elementa" is the first printed grammar of the Romanian language. Examples from all Romanian provinces are used and, being written in Latin, it was also accessible to some foreign scholars. Samuil Micu printed in Vienna in 1779 a book of prayers with Latin letters, containing the first brief exposition of the etymological orthographic system with Latin characters.

Their erudition was discussed, their purist excesses in linguistics were recalled, but their contribution to the development of Romanian education in Transylvania was not highlighted enough. Gheorghe Șincai played the most important role; at some point he was appointed administrator of all the Transylvanian United schools. He was facing a huge task, for the Transylvanian schools, especially in villages, lacked buildings, teachers, textbooks, and the teachers were poorly paid. Gheorghe Șincai ran the

"school of norms", where the teachers were studying for six weeks a year and received certificates according to their performance. Those who didn't take all the exams had to return with the next series. The United bishop I. Bob wrote to archpriest Chiril Topa, urged by Gheorghe Şincai, about the support that the clergy should have given to the village schools: "For it's about the choice of teachers, you will agree with the villagers and choose as teacher a man that is able not only to be the village's deacon, but also to learn the norm, and you'll send here the chosen ones at the beginning of the next Christmas fast to be taught, but prepared as such that they'll be able to live by themselves through the whole fast." Between 1782-1794, Şincai founded 300 schools, "300 little cultural springs", as Nicolae Iorga put it. As a reward, because he urged the bishop with rather too much perseverance to be given the school's house to have his own home and to raise his grandchildren, he was arrested and beaten, "that, because of this pain, I also lost my teeth later," he wrote.

An equally important activity was carried out by Petru Maior. Here is how a contemporary source described it: "Petru Maior went to the villages, where he gathered the small children, organized an exam, and those who knew were praised by him, the others were paternally rebuked and he set ways for them to learn. In the summer, he walked through the fields, through the forests, where he knew that the small children were gathering to shepherd the cattle, and seeing them he called them to him, and as they knew him immediately they all ran to him, and he was asking them what they had learned and taught and enlightened them once more, as he had an exceptional sweetness when talking with small children, for which he was loved by everyone." But not really everyone. "So great was initially the stupidity of the people about this learning issue, as some, like some great blight had arisen in the village, even went to the lords of the land to denounce the archpriest so they would be spared from learning. But after a while, seeing not only their own sons, but through them even themselves becoming more learned about useful things, they forgave Petru Maior and his parents for the sins they had imputed them."

After Inochentie Micu Klein and the authors of the Supplex had created the national struggle's program, after Horea, Cloşca and Crişan had joined the common people with that struggle led by intellectuals, all the Romanians were gathering around the national liberation idea through the Transylvanian School.

Budai Deleanu's "Țiganiada"

It proclaims the value of national history as a source of literary inspiration, the first great creator of the Romanian literature

If we were to answer honestly, how many of us would admit that we didn't read Ion Budai-Deleanu's work, "Țiganiada"? Our only baroque work in the true sense of the term, as Nicolae Manolescu characterized it, is the only epic of the Romanian literature. Țiganiada remains a unique phenomenon in the Romanian literature, without any followers. Only later it was recognized as valuable, being printed for the first time (the first version) by Theodor Codrescu in the "Buciumul român" magazine in 1875-1877. The second version was published in 1925 by Gheorghe Cardaș. The first version reflects the skeptical atmosphere of the crisis of the Enlightenment's values and myths. The second variant introduced the great romantic hero through Romândor, the people, through which Vlad Țepeș survives, projected in the future as an eternal and permanent aspiration. According to a commentator, there's almost no critic to be found today to portray it to the readers in a proper way. The judgements vary from considering it a joke, for the amusement of the author and his friends, to the political and philosophical message of Budai-Deleanu, a synthesis of the legitimate aspirations held by the Romanians for centuries.

But first, let's briefly introduce the content. It consists of 12 songs. The action takes place in 15th century Wallachia, during the times of Vlad Țepeș. Preparing for the fight with the Ottomans, the prince gathers the Gypsies forming an army armed and fed by himself. They are paraded before the prince in detachments, and then they go to Bărbătești and Inimosa [fictitious settlements with names reminding of "courage"] to set up camp. They always quarrel on their way. Satan, who supported the Ottomans, steals Romica, Parpangel's fiancée. He looks for her and finds her in a palace in a haunted forest. Saint Spiridon makes a sign and the palace and Romica disappear. Parpangel wanders grieving through the forest, drinks water from an enchanted spring, gains supernatural powers, puts on the armor of the brave Argineanu, and wreaks havoc among the infidels. In the battle between Țepeș and the Ottomans, saints and devils also intervene. Finally, the battle is won by Vlad Țepeș. Eventually, Parpangel marries Romica. At the wedding, he tells the story of his journey to Hell and Heaven. The Gypsies want to establish a state of their own, but they quarrel about the form of government, and also about who should be the leader; it degenerates into a brawl and in the end they scatter.

Vlad Țepeș is then removed from the throne by the boyars. His army chooses a new leader, Romândor, of whom they ask to be taken "either to freedom or to death." The text is accompanied by ample footnotes, signed by Mândrilă, Părintele Filologos, Cocon Erudițianul, Cocon Simplițian, Popa Nătăroi, Vintilă, Androfilos [fictitious characters; the first five names might be translated as "The Proud One", "Father Philologist", "The Learned Young Master", "The Simpleton Young Master", and "Priest Witless"; the last two seem to be just proper names], through which Ion Budai-Deleanu accentuates criticism and satire.

Why did Ion Budai-Deleanu write this epic? He gives us more than one explanation. He wanted it to embody a "new and original Romanian creation", being aware from the beginning of the difficulties he would encounter. He also regrets the fact that "by taking the thread of our Romanian people's history, since they have settled in Dacia, many and many men, with all kind of bright virtues, only now we would know if from time to time among the Romanians there were men who have written about their lives, and with a skilful quill adorning their deeds and raising them according to their worth, to be sent to the future grandchildren." In another place, he writes: "I have created this

poetic work or, better said, this plaything, with the purpose of introducing a new taste of Romanian poetry". And in a letter to Mitru Perea (the anagram of Petru Maior) in the work's preface, he says: "But you should be very careful, because the whole story seems to me to be just an allegory in many places." It would seem that he intended to confuse even more those who would read *Țiganiada*.

Indeed, the Gypsies are a metaphor to highlight the chaos, the selfish weaknesses of the humankind. "By Gypsies one should understand others, too, who have done and are doing exactly what Gypsies are always doing. The wise one will understand [...] that, as I am a Gypsy like you [in the letter to Mitru Perea, he devised a Gypsy biography for himself in order to justify the title of the work], we thought it would be proper to write for our Gypsies so they would understand [...] and learn not to do only such madness when it will happen to be faced with an event like this." Vlad Țepeș, for its part, is a term of reference and of antithesis to the contemporary world, the ideal image of a well-organized state.

It is a world of madness, of an order turned upside down. The world is haunted by blind events and apparitions that remove a man from the righteous path. When Parpangel wakes up from his dream, he finds himself in a pond with frogs, not in the castle of delights. The epic is a question: whether humanity has a chance to achieve social happiness, a question of the 18th century.

The author of this strange writing is the ultimate Western man, without losing anything from the spirit of the Transylvanian peasant. He had a faultless acquaintance with classical literatures - Italian, German, French - quoting Milton and Gibbon. As George Călinescu wrote, "only Eminescu, later, forced the language or stirred up after forms with such a system, and Budai is a great forerunner of him." And let's conclude with the appreciation of another critic: *Țiganiada* appeared in a still unborn culture. It makes a jump, "recovering all of a sudden a series of literary stages and ages [...], aligning it as much as possible with other old Western literatures."

The movement of Tudor Vladimirescu

The beginning of the national reawakening movement

"And after the death of His Highness (Alecă Suțu), a Tudor Vladimirescu arose, being a sluger [small official in charge of food supplies] in the land of Oltenia, and he gathered some fools, wanting to do justice in Wallachia", said a sidenote on a manuscript from the bishop's library in Buzău, contemporary with the events. Initially considered a rebellion, then "elevated" to the rank of revolutionary movement, it became a revolution, but today is virtually not remembered anymore, like many other essential moments of our 19th century history, the century of the national reawakening.

The causes of taking up arms were recorded even by contemporary sources. "For six years the tyrant Caragea has not left the poor patriot peasants but their wretched souls inside their forsaken bodies." Tudor's slogan was "Justice and Freedom." An Austrian document interpreted it as follows, also conferring it an European framing: "From Tismana Monastery, where he established his headquarters, he [Tudor] launched a proclamation to the Romanian people conceived in an genuine Carbonari style [the Carbonari were an Italian secret revolutionary organization, active between 1800 and 1831], to urge them to take up arms to free the serf from the alleged tyranny of the nobility and existing authorities, his motto being: peace for the cottages, war for the palaces."

The causes were much deeper and related to the need for major changes to replace the "old regime", which no longer corresponded to the Romanian society's stage of development. The draft memos submitted by boyars at that time reflect these changes, which demanded another state organization, a greater freedom of movement and ultimately the independence.

Tudor had risen from among the free boyars and he had legal knowledge (he won a lawsuit in Vienna). During the Russian-Ottoman War of 1806-1812 he commanded 6,000 soldiers. He received the rank of lieutenant in the czar's army. He read "Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dacia" ["The History for the Romanians' Beginning in Dacia"], by Petru Maior. A contemporary describes him: "A man of a rather tall than middle stature, fair proportionate waste, blond face, yellow mustache, chestnut hair, cheek rather round than oval, not too fat but neither thin, with a small chin - not an ugly man; he stood upright, struttingly; speaking brief, harsh and, by his faculty, eloquent; air of commander."

One of the controversies surrounding the year 1821 concerns the ties that Tudor had with Eteria, the secret movement of the Greeks, originating from Russia, initially with the blessing of the czar. Eteria's dream was the restoration of the Byzantine Empire. In return for the help they were expecting from Russia, they agreed for Moscow to annex the Romanian Principalities, a fact that the Eterists kept hidden from Tudor. He made an agreement with Eteria. "We will facilitate the passage of prince Ipsilanti over the Danube to go for the liberation of his homeland, and we will be helped by the Russians to conquer the fortresses on our country's land, and then they will let us free and with our own laws," Tudor thought. He also had an agreement with the great boyars Grigore Brâncoveanu, Grigore Ghica and Barbu Văcărescu, members of the Ruling Committee established after the death of prince Alexandru Suțu, and they gave him an act that showed that Tudor had been chosen to raise "the people with arms" for "the common benefit of the Christian kin and of our homeland".

On the evening of the same day when he received the act from the three great boyars, January 18/30 1821, Tudor left Bucharest for Oltenia. On January 22nd he reached the Tismana Monastery. The next day, on the Padeș plain, the proclamation to the country

was read. "No law withholds the man from facing evil with evil! When the serpent gets in your way, you hit it with the bat to protect your life [...] But the dragons that swallow us alive, say our chiefs, both churchly and political, how much more should we suffer them to suck our blood from us?" On March 19th 1821 he was at Cotroceni. In three days he already entered București. On March 23, he signed an agreement with the boyars. He basically abandoned the claims and principles proclaimed at Padeș in exchange for legitimacy conferred to its movement by the boyars. Meanwhile, the czar repudiated the Eteria. The boyars, seeing that there is no hope of help from Russia, have begun to ask him to withdraw. Tudor occupied new points in București: Mihai Vodă Monastery, the Bellu Garden, Antim Metropolitan Church and Monastery, and the Argeș and Sabar crossing points.

In May, the Ottoman Empire decided to resort to repression. Ottoman troops advanced slowly, amid some negotiations with Tudor, while his relationship with Eteria was deteriorating. "I will go over Olt, with all the People's Assembly, to fortify myself in the monasteries which I have filled with provisions and soldiers, and I hope to resist there for a long time, like in some fortresses, until we will force the Turks to give back the country's rights and privileges that the people demanded through me from the High Porte", decided Tudor. He never managed to do it. Through the betrayal of his captains, Dimitrie Macedonschi and Hagi Prodan, Tudor was captured by the Eterists and taken to Golești on May 21st, then taken to Târgoviște, subjected to a mock trial and murdered on the night of May 26-27 1821. The resistance struggle went on for two months, especially in the Tismana area.

"He had the potential of a great man, but the time, the place and the means he didn't have", wrote a contemporary. "The rising of Tudor was the awakening of the nation", stressed Nicolae Bălcescu, one of those who continued his work.

The native reign restoration in the Romanian Countries

After the defeat of Tudor Vladimirescu, the Porte occupied the Principalities. Under international pressure, it summoned two boyar delegations, one from Wallachia and the other from Moldova, to present the countries' demands.

On July 1st 1822, the native princes were named: Ioniță Sandu Sturdza in Moldova, respectively Grigore Dimitrie Ghica in Wallachia, ending a century of Phanariot reign. The Principalities' situation was desperate. Because of the fear of the Ottoman occupation, many people had fled, there was talk about "the great exodus". In fact, the first native reigns were going to end the same way. In 1828, when the Ottoman-Russian war broke out, an eyewitness noted that in București the streets "were full of thousands of vehicles loaded with women, children, animals [...] crossing, crushing, running away without knowing where."

The prince of Moldova, Ioniță Sandu Sturdza, surrounded himself only with enemies of the old regime, as such as, according to a source, "you could not see other faces at the Court of Ioan Sturdza Vaivode except with a beard, in every corner." "For six years, the history of Moldova will be marked by the struggle of a part of the boyars for the formation of the new state with those among the voluntary exiles, [who were] against the prince, whom they did not want to recognize", wrote Nicolae Iorga. The prince told the boyars: "After the providence elevated me to this high rank, even if I was lower among you, to rule you I did not use neither the conceit nor the harshness of the Greeks, thinking of acquiring your love by meekness, but I deluded myself, as my kindness has made you forget the duties that bound you to this throne, on which I sit today. Remember that we lost it due to our intrigues and the rush of one against another, so the strangers owned it for so many years." Alecu Russo describes as follows the atmosphere in Moldova at that time. "The ambitions of the prince are boiling, the partisans are whispering, the constitutions and projects are raining, the political friendships are breaking up, the transactions and the betrayals are clashing, concluding and transforming every day [...] All the projects resemble each other even in principles and all are in agreement: to restrain the power of the government, and to put the country under the rule of the boyars. Every group makes its own constitution."

The former great boyar Grigore Ghica, now the prince of Wallachia, did not have to face the opposition of the great boyars, like the prince of Moldova, elevated from among the small boyars.

Here, two camps were formed, too, but without the same struggle of ideas like in Moldova. The social and political pressure did not allow the princes to begin the societal reforms that the new realities demanded, but something they tried anyway. Grigore Ghica ordered in 1822 the elaboration of an Administrative Regulation, which established the duties and incomes of the dignitaries. In Moldova, regulations were developed for the functioning of the Divan, the courts and the treasury. The nationalization of the "dedicated" monasteries' [monasteries donated by princes to the Greek Orthodox Church, as an act of piety] wealth was tried, but Russia opposed.

In the projects of the great boyars was clearly outlined the national program: return to native reign, abolition of the Ottoman "commercial monopoly", freedom of trade, regaining the territories occupied by the Ottomans ("rayahs"), but also an oligarchic regime. The young boyars, who formed the first wave that studied in the West, also included ideas of social reform. All agreed that reforms could only be imposed with outside support; of Russia, for the great boyars, or of the Porte, for the small boyars.

In the projects that have been preserved, a new political language is noticeable. A conscience that we belonged to Europe, that we lagged behind it and that, by origin and

past, we are no lesser than it - a sense of national pride. A memorial from Wallachia reads: "Romans we are, brothers, obviously and with good evidence, the history proves us and all the nations of Europe know us! Our people were famous!" Another document urged: "The rotten and riddled with holes ship of the Romanian people needs today a well-crafted sailor, who knows how to guide it depending on how the wind blows [...] And this is the unification!" While Dinicu Golescu noted that "We are lagging behind all the nations", another source said: "And you don't have to pay much attention to find out, judging with no bias, that any Romanian in his usual state and even being unlearned is equal with an European in judgement, and better than any European with regard to the purity of the heart, which is the most precious treasure that God gave to the man." This solution was also proposed: "Of course the Romanian is united with the Romanians, but the unification for the common cause can only be done by the majority, if not by all the people." And the great boyar Iordache Roset Roznovanu wrote about "the common connection of all the [social] classes of inhabitants, the national connection [...] they all will be able to shout against any temptation, all will be united with the same perseverance and, then, who will be able to defeat the united nation, and shatter its righteousness?"

The Akkerman Convention, September 25th 1826, imposed by Russia to the Porte, consecrated the most important demands of the Romanians: the prince chosen by the Divan for seven years from among the native boyars, a tribute exemption for the Principalities for the next two years, the fixing of the tribute and royalties according to the hatt-i sharif of 1802, and the freedom of trade, but with the obligation to ensure grains for the Porte. Following the Akkerman Convention, Russia's power over the Principalities greatly increased. Moldova was filled with Russians, whom the prince loved "as the salt in the eyes", says Constantine Gane. Ioniță Sandu Sturdza said: "I neither laughed when they came, nor will I cry when they'll leave."

The Convention also provided for two commissions to be set up to draw up the Principalities' internal organization regulations. They were not able to do it. A new war prevented them.

The Organic Regulations

After 1822, the Russian protectorate of the Principalities, until then only a result of the regional balance of power, gained an European endorsement. The Anglo-Russian Protocol of March 23rd 1826 separated the Greek question (the war of independence was going on in Greece) from the Romanian one, and it barred Russia's access to the Mediterranean, but gave it a free hand in the Principalities. The defeat of the Ottoman fleet at Navarino on October 8th 1827 by a French-Russian-English naval force opened the door for Russia's war with the Porte, with the commitment not to make any territorial annexations. The war started in 1828 and ended with the Treaty of Adrianople (September 2nd 1829). The Principalities were granted freedom of trade and it was recognized the right to national administration, while also the territories occupied by the Ottomans to the left of the Danube (rayahs) were returned.

Although, according to the French consul Viollier, the Russian invasion of 1828-1829 did cost the Romanians "more blood and tears than all the previous ones together", it also marked the beginning of a vast reform process for the Romanian society, the leaving of the sphere of the Ottoman "economy-world" (as Fernand Braudel put it), in which they had entered around the middle of the 16th century, and a return to Europe. The reorganization of the Principalities was under Russian supervision. In the instructions sent from Saint Petersburg it was stipulated that the institutions of the two Principalities should be similar, in order to "bringing closer two peoples whose name, through law, through the origin of the nation, through the local state of affairs, it's proper to be kept closely linked." In June 1829, the two commissions for the drafting of the Organic Regulations were set up. Each commission had four members (two elected by the Divan and two by Russians) and a secretary. During the sessions, the Moldovan boyars proposed the unification, with two capitals, even under a foreign prince if needed.

An essential role in the reformation work was played by the Russian general Pavel Kiselyov, whom Nicolae Iorga described as "a very gifted administrator, one of the last students of that 18th century state philosophy, with all its positive and negative parts, a convinced annexationist, who did not believe neither in the right to life of the small nations nor in the ability of small states to cope with the ferocity of the empires, fulfilled his mission both by justifying the trust of his sovereign and performing the work of law and order, not imposing - we would say - but supervising the implementation of the best possible constitution for the Principalities, compatible both with the past and with the interests of the great empire whose representative and mandatory he was." Many of the administrative measures initiated or supervised by general Kiselyov were in line with the progress. But the contradictions between the true needs of the Romanian society and the limits imposed by the provisions of the Organic Regulations are also obvious. They were drawn up by representatives of the great boyars and reflected their interests as great landlords.

Organic Regulations have nevertheless been a progress for Romanian society. It recognized the existence of a Romanian nation and established common norms of organization, it stipulated that "the inseparable union" represents a "necessity of Salvation", and a series of feudal practices and institutions were abolished. The principle of the separation of powers in the state was legislated. The legislative power consisted of a Popular Assembly, and the executive power was exerted by the prince, assisted by an extraordinary administrative council (six members) and an administrative council (three members). The judiciary was organized on modern basis, acknowledging the authority of court decisions. Departments were created, specialized public services were set up. A single tax was established and the principle of budgeting was adopted. To prevent and combat epidemics, quarantines at borders and inside the Principalities were established. Sanitary administration and hospitals were organized. For the first

time, the idea of public interest being above the individual interest is present. A.D. Xenopol wrote that "the idea of the state in its modern conception is born for the first time for the Romanians, as the life of a whole, drafted on common norms, that is, on laws." In 1831 a census took place, in order to implement the new taxation system. Archives and a record-keeping system were organized. State food reserves were built, for emergencies like hunger or drought, and the mail system was created.

The organic regulation was met with strong opposition. Especially the great Moldovan boyars were opposed, creating enough problems for Kiselyov. This opposition was somewhat illogical, for the great boyars gained almost full authority over the land and over the peasants' work. The British Consul, Blutte, said the opposition had, in both Principalities, a deeper, national character, against the power Russia was gaining over the Principalities' society. This was added to the impression produced by the repression of the Polish uprising in Warsaw in November 1831. The boyars would have liked a collective pledge of the European powers instead of the Russian protectorate. Blutte also intermediated Mihai Sturdza's *démarche* to the English government in 1830. It was the first request for obtaining an Anglo-French guarantee for the Principalities, but it did not work.

The Organic Regulation, drafted under Russian occupation, hated by all and burned at the very beginning of the Revolution of 1848, represented nevertheless the beginning of the process of modernization and re-occidentalization of the Romanian society, including the imposition of French language instead of Greek for salon conversations.

A not-too-difficult process, and about its stumblings a funny episode related by Radu Rosetti it's illustrative. A lady, noting that she was staying with her back to her father, said, "Merci for I stay with my back to you." Such episodes were also mocked by Vasile Alecsandri through the character Chirița.

Petrache Poenaru's pen

Obtained a patent in France for an "endless portable pen, feeding by itself with ink"

Noting that Petrache Poenaru, domiciled in Tournon street no. 27, had truly invented an interesting and internationally useful object, he was issued with "a patent for invention and perfecting for five years, for an endless portable pen, feeding by itself with ink". The patent, signed by Corbière, secretary of state at the Department of the Interior, is kept at the Academy.

Who was Petrache Poenaru and how did he come to invent the first fountain pen in the world? He was born in Benești, Vâlcea County, on January 10th 1799. His mother entrusted him to her brother, engineer Iordache Otetelișanu, to give him a good education. He received a scholarship at the Obedeanu School in Craiova. He became a teacher at Gheorghe Lazăr's school, replacing Eufrosin Poteca. He was Tudor Vladimirescu's secretary and took part in all his meetings. On May 14th 1821, Tudor sent him to Laybach with a delegation to present to the participants of the Holy Alliance Congress the demands of the Wallachian people. In Brașov he received the news about the murder of Tudor. He gave up his mission but still went to Vienna, for philosophy studies, then became a student at the Polytechnic School in Vienna. "I understand that in Paris not only the course of these sciences is shorter, but the tools and the machines are more, and more perfect," he wrote to his uncle. In October 1825 he arrived in Paris, where he continued his studies at the Polytechnic School. He asked his uncle to help him with money so that he can continue his studies in Vienna, otherwise he will remain "on the streets, starving to death, getting to selling my books and clothes just to keep myself alive."

Being a poor student, he had to copy the courses. Dipping again and again the pen in the ink pot, he gets the idea of a writing tool that would make his work easier. A pen that is always full of ink, can be worn in your pocket like a pencil, and used at any time. He presented to the Manufactures Bureau the pen he invented, with the plans' drawings and explanations, and demanded the patent, which, as we have seen, he will obtain with no. 3208. We [Romanians] do not know what consequences his invention had, and it doesn't seem to matter to us either. It should have been a reason for pride for us, but the fact was quickly forgotten.

The reasons why Petrache Poenaru's name appears in the suite of the 100 important moments of Romanian history are not just the invention of the first fountain pen in the world. He is part of a gallery of personalities of that age who have contributed enormously to the Romanian education system. Those people understood that school is the main means of raising the nation.

Returned home in 1832, he was appointed teacher at the St. Sava National College, then director of the Schools' Administration. He sought to set up as many village schools as possible. After the emancipation of the Gypsy slaves, he ordered to the county teachers not to do any discrimination in schooling between Gypsy and Romanian children. Every other month he published "The Village Teacher" magazine, designed to cultivate the peasantry. He elaborated the educational reform project, debated and promulgated by the Popular Assembly on February 21st 1847. Petrache Poenaru guided the Romanian school structures so as the young students would know the scientific and technical achievements of Western Europe. The best were stimulated by prizes and he urged them to study abroad. On September 7th 1833, Ion Ghica (geometry and history) and Nicolae Bălcescu (French grammar) were awarded. Also, let's not forget that in 1839 he was elected member of the Athens Archeology Society, and that he was the author of the first Romanian law project for the adoption of the decimal metric system.

During his travels, he was interested to find out how was the education organized in those countries. Here's what he wrote to merchant Hagi Pop from Sibiu after such a trip to England. "Do you know, sir, that here there are fewer schools of higher education than in France or Germany, but primary schools are scattered over a larger area than in any other country except, maybe, Austria. A few of these schools are state-run, but most of them are run by philanthropic societies. In these schools, young people of both sexes receive free of charge not only the learning, but they're also hosted, nourished and dressed at the expense of different societies. I have not seen a single village, in any part of England where I have traveled, that did not have the school labeled: «Free school, maintained by voluntary contributions»."

Probably from the same voyage we have the first description of a train trip related by a Romanian. "From Manchester I went to Liverpool and I made the voyage in a whole new way, which is one of the wonders of this age. It's been nearly a year since a company built an iron road between Manchester and Liverpool, whereby passengers and goods are transported by train up and down between these two cities. Twenty wagons linked to one another and carrying 240 people are all pulled by a single steam machine, and so quickly the train advances that the best racing horse could not keep up with it, even in forced gallop. Even so, the movement is very easy and you couldn't notice that the wagons are moving forward if there wouldn't be the wheels' noise and if the objects would not disappear in front of your eyes as soon as they appear, as such as you almost believe that every thing goes forward, but the wagons themselves."

On September 10th 1870 Petrace Poenaru was elected member of the Romanian Academy. The reception speech was given on September 8th 1871, on the subject of Gheorghe Lazăr and the Romanian school. In 1872 he followed after Ion Heliade Rădulescu as the head of the Academy. He died on October 2nd 1875.

The Scăieni Phalanstery

Why include the phalanstery from Scăieni among the important moments of our history? We believe that it has its place here, because it shows us the efforts to connect the Romanian space with everything that meant inquiry and novelty in Western Europe, including an utopian trend. But then again, this affair has all the ingredients of a typical Romanian one.

Utopian socialism was a trend of thought of the early stage of the socialist movement, illustrated by the French Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier and by the British Robert Owen. They thought of a perfect society (each differently), which was supposed to bring freedom, equality and prosperity to all the citizens. Charles Fourier's ideas also inspired Teodor Diamant to set up a phalanstery in Scăieni, following the model of the French thinker.

Charles Fourier's utopian model was based on two elements. The phalanx was a total of individuals (1,600) who formed the societal production collective. The phalanstery was a settlement-palace, built ad hoc according to a specific plan, where the phalanx's workshops, schools, canteens, kitchens, libraries, and the center of economic and intellectual life were installed. Fourier was not the supporter of full equality, but he considered that the friendly relations established between the members of the phalanx could help harmonize the conflicting interests of the rich and poor, who would have known anyway a better life than in the ordinary society. Fourier insisted on the full fulfilling of all the provisions and was very critical towards the slightest deviation, seen as a dangerous heretic act. That's why he repudiated any attempt to put his doctrine into practice. During his lifetime there were only two attempts to establish phalansteries: one in France and the other in Scăieni.

Ion Ghica characterizes Teodor Diamant as "a leading, intelligent, hardworking, persevering and very devoted man." He graduated as valedictorian from St. Sava School. In 1830 he left for Paris, where he was won by Fourier's utopia. Once he embraced an idea, he dedicated to it unconditionally, popularizing it and gathering followers with a truly contagious eloquence and power of persuasion. The same Ion Ghica describes him preaching Fourier's doctrine in Paris, at an intersection, to "workers, men and women, quite badly dressed." As soon as he returned home, in 1834, he started to propagate the Fourierist ideas. N. Kretzulescu wrote that, "aspiring only to establish phalansteries, preaching Fourierism with all the fire he was inflicted with, he addressed general Kiselyov and the ministers, who all sought to make him leave aside his utopias and offered him jobs where he would have been able to put his capacity and knowledge in the service of the country. But he categorically refused to give up his ideas." It seems that his memory deluded him, as Kiselyov had already left the country when Diamant came back. I. Heliade-Rădulescu offers him the "Curierul" newspaper to popularize his ideas. On June 24th 1834, Diamant wrote to Fourier that he already had land offerings on which he could build a phalanstery. N. Kretzulescu, who delivered the letter, said the French master would have disapproved Diamant's initiative, for his doctrine would have still required many studies before being applied.

The Scăieni estate of young boyar Emanoil Bălăceanu was chosen. An uninspired choice, for he was the incessant protester type, always dissatisfied, always assaulting the authorities with complaints and petitions. Also, he always had money problems. At the end of 1835 or the beginning of 1836, Bălăceanu wrote a notice announcing the establishment of a pension in Scăieni. "The organization of this pension will be elaborated and implemented by Mr Teodorache Diamant, who studied in Munich, Bavaria, and Paris after a very useful system that will develop the morale, mind and power of the people, invented by Mr. Karl Furie from France."

Future colonists were invited to become members of an unprecedented association for communal living and working, where they would live a new life in prosperity, dignity and full freedom. As some of those who accepted the invitation said in a trial opened against Bălăceanu, they were promised that they'll find the "golden age, the earthly heaven". "A part of them, displeased by the yoke of living through sweat and labor under the masters here in București, and another part by word of mouth, urging each other and hearing the conditions under which the spouses would be admitted, they hurried in person to the courts and certified their contracts and went prepared with them to Scăieni, asking to be admitted to spend there the expected golden age."

Bălăceanu did not make the estate available for free to the community, but rented it for 1,200 golden coins a year, a not exactly modest price. But he omitted to tell them that the estate was already mortgaged and burdened by even more debts. Only one month after the establishment of the society, the estate was subjected to seizure. After endless conflicts with those who claimed the land in exchange for debt, in September 1836 the authorities announced their intention to investigate what's up with this Scăieni Society. But Diamant had already lost interest with the phalanstery. On December 3rd 1836, Bălăceanu was arrested, and on the same day, 10 of the Scăieni Society's members addressed the authorities with a petition accusing Bălăceanu of their state of affairs and demanding that they will be allowed to leave the phalanstery. No later than December 30th the society was disbanded.

This was the end of the first attempt to bring the benefits of socialism on Romanian soil.

Historical Magazine for Dacia (1845-1848)

The role of historiography in the national awakening process

On January 12, 1845, Augustus Treboniu Laurian, a Transylvanian man who came to Bucharest and became a teacher at St. Sava, sent to George Baritiu in Brasov the announcement that he and Nicolae Balcescu had set up a history magazine, Magazin Istoric pentru Dacia [Historical Magazine for Dacia]. He asked him that this announcement should be published in a circulation equal to that of "Gazeta de Transylvania" [The Transylvanian Gazette], and be sold along with it. He also asked him to publish it in "Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură" ["Sheet for mind, heart and literature"], along with a comment signed by George Baritiu, like Heliade Radulescu did in Curierul Romanesc [Romanian Courier]. The first and the only purely Romanian magazine was born, because nobody tried to make a periodical publication where national history studies were published, until then - Nicolae Iorga wrote in 1903.

Laurian's text was printed in "Foaie pentru minte inima si literatura" on January 29th. After an enthusiastic presentation on the importance of national history, it was shown that "history is the first book of a nation."

The magazine was due to have six headings: 1. "The Romanian Chronicle", where chronicles and annals written in Romanian were published; 2. "The Romanian diplomat", for official acts, treaties and conventions; 3. "Dacian Memoirs" - references from Greek, Latin, Byzantine authors, about Dacia, translated into Romanian; 4. "Dacian inscription", which included ancient and medieval inscriptions, descriptions of architectural monuments, graves; 5. "The Historical Dissertation" - the chronology of the Romanian rulers, critical studies, geographic and ethnographic descriptions and 6. "Bibliographic Bulletin" - which included the list of new writings and reviews about Dacia. The publication aimed to cultivate the interest and love of Romanians for their past, to initiate a campaign for the gathering of national history documents, as Kogalniceanu did in Moldova, by means of the Romanian Archives and the publication of the chronicles, and in Transylvania Baritiu, by means of "Foaie pentru minte, inima si literatura".

On April 19, 1845, A.T. Laurian addresses a request to print the publication at St. Sava's printing house. The first issue appeared on July 1, 1845. Between 1845 and 1848 he published five fascicles, totaling 1945 pages. In 1850-1851, in Vienna, A.T. Laurian pulled out another two by himself. In June 1846, Bălcescu left for Paris, initially for three weeks, but was due to "lag" until 1848, as A.T. Laurian said. Throughout this time, A.T. Laurian has been practically the only one in charge of the magazine. In a letter to Vasile Alecsandri, on November 29, 1847, Balcescu admitted: "It has been a long time since I couldn't send articles anymore". He asked Alecsandri to work together in order "to rise the Magazine a little more". Laurian also imposed the spelling, which followed the example of periodicals published in Brasov. "As one of the views of the Historical Magazine is to spread the knowledge of history for Romanians in all the provinces of Dacia, the editorial staff will use a more progressive, but moderate language and spelling, which should be welcomed as well as possible by various Romanian dialects and should take what deems to be good and sensible from each dialect or, better said, provincialism. To this effect, as well as regarding the spelling, the one adopted by "Gazeta Transivlaniei" was partially accepted". This was announced from the first issue of the publication. Then it was the transition towards the Latin alphabet; Laurian called on Baritiu to do the same: "You should also latinize the letters, as we are going to introduce completely the Latin characters starting next year. It would not look well for the Transylvanians to remain behind, when they were the ones that started first with Latin letters."

Announcing the publishing of "Historical Magazine for Dacia", Baritiu wrote: "We have only now received the first number of this useful book and we rush to announce it to our public and to recommend it to them [...] As we believe that there is no individual with a Romanian heart that wouldn't be interested in this national writing, we will gladly reproduce here what we believe that is worth to be known by everyone who love their nation". In disseminating the Historical Magazine for Dacia all over the territory inhabited by Romanians, Laurian was supported by G. Baritiu, Ion Maiorescu, Timotei Cipariu, Constantin Diaconovici-Loga and a great number of book shops. The circulation was around 1.000 copies on issue, but, as it was rapidly sold, another circulation of 1,500 copies was published. It was one of the highest circulations, in comparison with other Romanian publications of that era.

In the first volume, N. Balcescu published a Preliminary paper on the sources of Romanian history, and A.T. Laurian wrote the Preliminary Address to the history of Romanians. The study of A.T. Laurian was a succinct synthesis of Romanians' history, from their origins to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Reproducing Laurian's study, Baritiu wrote: "It would be impossible not only for Romanians, but also for foreigners that are friends of the historic truth, not to be convinced of our roots, after reading with a little attention and taking also into account the vocabulary of our language.

One year later, A.T. Laurian published the study in Latin, French and German, to facilitate its access to the universal network. Shortly afterwards, a presentation of the study appeared in a publication from Leipzig, which gave Laurian the occasion to comment: "One small thing makes foreigners think of us now and then. Something larger would make them think of us many more times. It is only our fault if they forget us".

The National Theatre (Iasi and Bucharest)

In 1840 and 1846, respectively, the two national theatres were founded

In our country, the theatre was one of the signs of national awakening. The first figure who mentioned a national theatre was Ion Campineanu, one of the leaders of the National Party and participant in the 1848 Revolution. As a matter of fact, after the revolution, printing the word "national" on posters announcing theater pieces was forbidden.

Gheorghe Asachi organized the first show in Romanian, played by Romanians. He did that in order to "create a breach in that foreign-mania, by addressing the patriotic hearts with the language of the homeland". Constantin Ghica put his house at his disposal. Asachi improvised the scene, translated the play, and was the director, the author of the sketches and costumes, and incurred the cost of the decorating painter and the engineer's payment. *Mirtil and Hloe*, written by the Frenchman Florian, was the first piece represented in Romanian. Metropolitan Veniamin Costac witnessed, among others, the show which took place on the evening of December 27, 1816. Some of the spectators wept, excited. Two years later, in Bucharest, at St. Sava high school, Gheorghe Lazar organized with his pupils the first theater performances in Romanian.

On the evening of August 29, 1834, in the packed chamber of Momulo's theater (built by the Italian chef with the same name) at the intersection of the Edgar Quinet and the Academy streets, "a Romanian theatre was witnessed for the first time in Romania's existence [meaning that a play was performed in a theatre room], with young Romanian artists, Romanian military music [...] The curtain rose; when I saw the audience, I got dizzy; the tears and the sweat sucked me, Aristia was a prompter; he cried: "Courage, do not leave me, children!," said one of the heroes of the evening. It was a full success.

Oddly, in Bucharest we had the building of the National Theatre before actually having a national theatre. The construction works started before the 1848 Revolution at the Great Theatre building, as it was initially called. They were resumed in 1850. The architect was asked to enlarge the room capacity to 1.000 places, instead of 500. As the foundation had already been laid, he had no choice but to narrow the corridors, the entries, the foyers and build three rows of loges. Grigore Alexandrescu wrote to Ghica that, as the costs engulfed by the new building were too high, a committee was created to investigate "where the money was hidden. But it is possible that nobody will be affected by that, because everything is made formally here". Constantin Nottara wrote: And the walls were rising day by day every day, the wains carrying brick and lime, as well as logs, came one after the other, except for those that turned right or left, close to the building, to secretly unload in some courtyards for the need of other private buildings."

The theater was ready at the end of November 1852 and the inauguration took place on the evening of December 31 the same year, with a play for the benefit of the poor in the capital, in the presence of Voda Știrbei. Caesar Bolliac tells the moment in the *Trompeta Carpatilor* [Carpathian Trumpet]: "This inauguration was done; but it was performed quietly, fearfully, without prologues or patriotic hymns, which were all canceled; any hint at a national celebration was stifled [for fear of Russia and the Gate]. At seven and a half hour, the room was full and was shining in its entire splendor. The afflux of public was so high, that the price of one ticket rose to one golden coin for a seat at the pit. Lodges were shining with the luxury of gilt and women's elegant wardrobe, whose stilted parure reflected the numerous shafts of light and looked like some butterflies in a hive of bees. [...] All forces and all shapeliness were represented, from the high ranking lady with their foreheads shining with brilliants, to the modest bourgeois lady, in a white tulle cap and in a simple muslin dress. Here and there, among the modern

tailcoats, pieces of long coats could be hardly seen, as well as a few felt coats, a sad reminder of old times. [...] Three raps made by the stage director gave the starting signal; a minute of silence and then we were extremely pleased to hear the preludes of a flute [...] which made the majestic room respond in some mellow, sweet and prolonged tones. A thunder of cheers and shouts of "well done" covered the last vibrations. The curtain rose and the performance began with the song called Zoe."

Frenchman Ulysse de Marsillac wrote that the theater hall in Bucharest was "very fancy, freshly painted and polished, but it was wonderful, as the show room in Bucharest is one of the most beautiful in Europe, [...] The seats are not made with parsimony, everyone sits comfortably." Ferdinand Lasalle, a German socialist philosopher, believed that "the splendor of the hall and the splendor of the costumes surpass what you can see in the German theaters, apart from the Berlin opera. Dresden and many other cities can not bear a resemblance, and F. Damé, another French passerby through Bucharest, considered it, "by stature and size, as the third theater in Europe." The splendor was going to disappear under the German bombs in August 1944.

It was only in 1877, when the Law of Theatres, compiled by Ion Ghica and Petre Gradisteanu, was voted and created the National Theatre in Bucharest, as a Dramatic Society, on March 1st. The Dramatic Society is created in Iasi two years later, in 1879. Its first show was on October 26, 1879 and was dedicated to the celebration of Vasile Alecsandri, who had won the literary contest of all Latinity, organized in the city of Montpellier by the Society for the Study of Romanic Languages. The building of the National Theater in Iasi was inaugurated on 1 December 1896.

At the coronation celebration of 1881, when Romania was proclaimed a kingdom, the allegorical chariot of agriculture was followed by the one of the National Theater. "This is how the role of the National Theater was understood: as a great school of the nation," wrote Ioan Masoff, the author of the most complete history of the Romanian theater.

The Revolution of 1848-1849

The synchronous movement with the European revolution

"The general revolution was the opportunity and not the cause of the Romanian revolution. Its cause gets lost in the days of the centuries. Its triggers were 18 centuries of toil, suffering and work of the Romanian people upon itself" This quote from Nicolae Balcescu summarizes very well the significance of the Romanian Revolution of 1848.

At the meeting of the Romanians in Paris on March 8, 1848, convened by Nicolae Balcescu at his home, the Moldovan revolutionaries did not agree that the revolution would start in Wallachia and then expand to Moldova, but they demanded that the movement should be simultaneous. The link with the Transylvanian revolutionaries was to be made later. The developments took the Transylvanian and Banat Romanians by surprise, without leaders to take the lead and without a clear program. First of all, they had to react to the Hungarian program, which aimed at the restoration of St. Stephen's Crown. Then a generation of young intellectuals came along, led by Simion Barnutiu. Thereafter, Moldovans take part in the events in Transylvania, the Transylvanians get involved in the events in Wallachia and the Wallachians assist in finding a solution to the national problem in Transylvania. Thus, Christian Tell announced Nicolae Plesoianu that the start of revolution in Bucharest was postponed "until our people would return from Transylvania, where they went to align with those from there"

D. Bratianu was present at the Blaj assembly as representative of the Wallachian Revolutionary Committee. The June 10th assembly, which decided to launch the second day of the Revolution in Bucharest, was held in the house of Transylvanian Axente Sever. And Gazeta de Transilvania became the representative publication of the Romanian Revolution, for Romanians in all the provinces.

Eventually, the first to start the battle were the Moldavians. Following the French model, banquets were organized which culminated in the one at "Petersburg" Hotel, in March 27, 1848. A contemporary man noted: "From all the districts, more people with the welfare of the country in their mind came to counsel about what should be done in the current circumstances?" Vasile Alecsandri had the lead role in editing the program. But on the night of March 29-30, Mihai Sturdza triggered the repression.

The Transylvanians followed. There, the authorities sought to prevent the Romanians from gathering in Blaj on St. Thomas' Sunday, on April 18, the first of Blaj's three assemblies. The villagers from Baia said: "Even if they burn or boil us, even if we knew that we are all going to die there, we shall all go to Blaj with the village, in the planed day."

On May 2, Simion Bărnuțiu held a speech in the Cathedral of Blaj. It represented a turning point in the Romanian national movement in Transylvania. The speech set out the basic directions of the national program and the strategy to be followed until 1918. The next day, on the Liberty Plain, people pledged allegiance to the emperor, the homeland and the Romanian nation.

On June 9th, the Izlaz Proclamation, which marks the beginning of the Revolution in Wallachia, was read. Two days later, the revolution broke out in Bucharest. Aaron Florian wrote: "The day of yesterday, June 11, 1848, is a day when a new era begins in the annals of Wallachia. The motto of the civilized populations: freedom, equality, brotherhood is also the motto of the Romanians here". In Wallachia, the revolution has experienced the greatest development and the most advanced measures have been implemented here. The liberation of the peasants and awarding them ownership were common requirements for all the Romanian revolutionary programs in 1848.

Unfortunately, it wasn't possible to implement them. Balcescu wrote to Alexander G. Golescu: "Our property measures which left things in the quondam state are a little damaging, because the peasants do not believe the promises and ask why they do not receive them now". However, the boyars' ranks and the slavery of the Gypsies were annulled, while the tricolor flag and the national guard were established. The unification of the Romanians (for the time being those from Moldova and Wallachia, for obvious reasons) was insistently demanded. Ion Voinescu envisaged the formation of a "large and reaching Daco-Romanian republic". Dimitrie G. Golescu wanted a "round kingdom of Romanians", and his brother, Alexander G. Golescu, wrote to Balcescu: "it is time for us to organize a secret and grandiose brotherhood that will spread across all parts of Romania." In Cernăuți, Mihail Kogălniceanu wrote "The Wishes of the National Party in Moldova", in which Moldova's union with Wallachia was considered "the key of the vault in the absence of which the entire national edifice would collapse".

In Transylvania, as the Hungarians insisted to unite Transylvania with Hungary and refused to accept the Romanians' requests, Hungarians headed towards Austria. August Treboniu Laurian wrote to Balcescu about the position of the Hungarians: "They want to assimilate all nations and merge them into the Hungarian one". Finally, the Romanians organized themselves militarily and responded with armed resistance to Pest's attempts to submit them. Balcescu's efforts to negotiate an agreement with Kossuth could no longer prevent the suppression of the Hungarian and Romanian revolutions by Russia and the Austrian imperial army. The revolution in Wallachia ended similarly, under the Russian and Ottoman swords.

The attempts made by the Romanians in 1848 to win the support of the great powers were not successful. They still weren't able to convince them that a united Romania was a solution for that area. Lord Palmerston wrote to the British Consul in Bucharest, R. Colquhoun, saying he did not believe that an independent state neighboring the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire was viable.

The 1848 Revolution was the first move of all Romanians to reconnect the territories they fully inhabited and without any other mediation in the course of European civilization.

The Refinery at Rafov - the third in the world (1857), and Bucharest - the first oil city in the world illuminated by oil lamps (1857)

In 1857 Bucharest became the first city in the world that was lit with lamp oil. It was a much cheaper and safer solution than ever before

In 1822, in Russia, Dubinin Brothers distilled crude oil in boilers, in a rudimentary manner. In our country, the pharmacist C. Theodor of Iasi had obtained lamp oil since 1833 but did not capitalize on the discovery. In 1840, the first distillery of crude oil, called "gazarie" appears in Lucăcești, Moldova, followed by others, all of them derisory and rudimentary.

In 1848, twenty years later, in Bucharest, Adolf Steege, the apothecary, follows a French recipe to obtain liquid gas, by distillation in the pot for the essences of flowers and plants. This liquid gas proves to be a suitable fuel for lighting and was used by many merchants to lit their stores. The Municipality decides to replace the lightning. The municipality decides to replace the grease-candle lighting with the new product, but the necessary quantities were hard to ensure with the existing facilities and soon it was abandoned. In 1855, the lightning with canola is introduced, but the system is expensive, unpractical and unhygienic. Meanwhile, advised by a teacher from St. Sava, Mihai Alexe, Steege associates with Teodor Mehedinteanu from Ploiesti and goes on with the lab experiments. The product obtained released a vivid and odorless light.

On February 21, 1856, through the Lord's Office no. 160, the Kaimakam Prince of Wallachia approved the illumination of the capital with "idrocarbure". The commission made up of S. Marcovici, Al. Orăscu, Petrache Poenaru, G. Filipescu and N. Păcheanu accepted on March 22, 1856 the illumination with lamp oil. Teodor Mehedinteanu participated in the auction for the lighting of Bucharest which was organized on July 28 - 31, 1856, offering the service at a price of 335 lei per year for each lantern or lamp, while the other participants who used rape or walnut oil, would ask 600 lei per year. His offer is approved and on 8 October the contract was sealed. The total number of lamps was 1,000: 772, which used rapeseed oil, to be adapted, and the rest had to be brought from abroad. Adaptation was 26 lei, and for the imported lamps - 106 lei. After winning the auction, Teodor Mehedinteanu went to Germany and contacted Moltrecht, who built boilers for the distillation of bituminous shale. Appraising Teodor's project, the Germans accept to build the required facilities. His brother, Marin ordered the boilers and in December 1856 the construction of the "gas factory" begins. The installations were quite primitive; the cylindrical boilers of cast iron or iron were heated directly by wood fire. From the distillation boilers, the vapors were routed on copper or cast iron coils, and the refining was made with lye, by manual agitation. The black oil was brought into barrels, which were transported with wagons.

There was a discussion about the location of the "gas factory". It was initially thought to have functioned in Rafov. A closer analysis of the documents showed that it was located in the city of Ploiesti, at the Rafov barrier, near the South Railway Station, on Buna Vestire Street no. 174, across the road from the current veterinary hospital.

Spreading over an area of 4 hectares, the "gas factory" used to process 2,710 tons per year, about 7,5 t per day. Its processing capacity exceeded about 10 times the country's oil production. Another Romanian first: in international statistics, we are the first in the world to officially appear with an industrial crude oil production of 275 t.

The contract signed by Teodor Mehedinteanu on October 8, 1856 had a four year term, and the installation of the lamps and the lighting had to be done within five months of the signing of the contract. Due to the difficulties encountered the process was delayed

by one year. The illumination was made gradually, as the lamps ordered abroad arrived. The first lamps with lamp oil were installed and lit at the end of 1856. According to the contract, lighting was made only 290 nights a year: 23 nights in April - July, and 24 in March, September and October and 26 in November - February. The moonlight was considered to be enough for the rest of the days of the month. The municipality pointed out the streets where the pillars were installed, at a distance of 30 fathoms. They illuminated the main streets, where prominent figures lived, as well as the public gardens and the barriers of the city.

It was only in 1859 that the illumination with oil lamp was introduced on the streets of Vienna (the city railway station had been illuminated with oil lamp since 1856). A year before, the city of Iași had also seen the brightness of the lamp oil lamps, so it was the second city in the world. In the contract concluded on December 30, 1857, for the illumination of the city's streets, the lamp oil produced in the country was preferred, while rejecting the letter of H. et A. Hille company from Vinea, which suggested that the fuel should be brought from Vienna. Craiova followed in 1859 and Ploiesti in 1860.

Ad-hoc divans

First of all, the diffused idea of the common origin and unity of the Romanians had to get the written form by means of the chroniclers and the first scholars of the principalities. Then, from the writings of the scholars, the ideas moved into the political programs of 1848. The conditions for the Romanians' union (or at least part of them, for the time being, due to the political conditions) were ready.

We only had to convince the European powers that the United Principalities were the solution to the bundle of problems they faced here, where the Danube spilled into the Black Sea. "The opportunity, not the cause," as Nicolae Balcescu wrote, was the Crimean War. It was then a model that could easily be identified in all the great moments of our history from then on: we would succeed in reaching our national ideals when Russia was in conflict with Europe or facing great problems.

To persuade Europe, the exiled leaders of the revolution of 1848 have developed a vivid propaganda activity. They militated in the Central European Democratic Committee, set up in London in June 1850 by Giuseppe Mazzini, bringing together representatives of the French, German, Polish, Hungarian revolutionaries. They made good connections in the West, especially among the intellectuals (C.A. Rosetti in Paris, D. Bratianu in London, Ion Maiorescu in Germany), whom they could then call in the difficult moments that had preceded the union.

The deep reason of the Crimean War was that the West understood it was supposed to bar Russia's way to the Straits, especially after Russia had penetrated strongly in the Near East. The dispute for the Holy Sites (Jerusalem and Bethlehem), between Russia (Orthodox) and the Catholics (mainly supported by Napoleon III) was the pretext for the war. In 1853, Russia occupied the Principalities and reached the mouth of the Danube. French-English troops detrained in Dobruja. But Westerners preferred to move the brunt of the battles in the Crimea. The fall of Sevastopol led to the conclusion of peace in Paris on March 30, 1856.

This treaty removed the Russian protectorate over the Principalities, which were only maintained under the suzerainty of the Porte and guaranteed by the great European powers. Organic Regulations were going to be revised according to the wishes of the Romanians. To this end, each principality had to convene an ad-hoc divan representing all classes of society. The wishes of these divans were to be examined by the European powers and the final decision to be enshrined in a Convention that was to be signed in Paris. Finally, freedom of navigation on the Danube and the neutrality of the Black Sea were envisaged.

While the unionist camp does not encounter major problems in Wallachia, in Moldova the kaimakam Nicolae Vogoride was openly against the union, hoping to secure a ruling decree for himself. He falsified the voter lists for the ad-hoc divan in such a way that one result was clearly in his favor.

The Bucharest Commission, created by the Paris Treaty to oversee the fairness of the elections received lots of protests, memoirs and complaints for the breaches made and demanding the annulment of the elections. The actions of Cocuta Conachi Vogoride, the kaimakam's wife, were decisive, as she handed over to the unionists some of her husband's correspondence with the Porte, which proved the fraud.

France, Russia, Italy and Prussia have informed the Porte that if the elections are not canceled, they will break diplomatic relations. The unlocking of the situation came from the meeting of Emperor Napoleon III with Queen Victoria of England at Osborne - a castle on the coast of Wight Island in the English Channel - on July 25 / August 6, 1857.

A compromise solution was found there: England accepted the reversal of the Moldovan elections, and France was satisfied only with a partial union, with the two Principalities having "similar organic institutions".

The statement of reasons for the ad-hoc divan's resolution in Moldova, written by Kogalniceanu, summarizes the essence of the decisions made by the two countries' assemblies: "The greatest and the most general wish - which was decided by all past generations and which is the soul of the present generation, and which, if fulfilled, will bring the happiness to the future generations - is the Union of the Principalities in one state, a union that is so natural, legal and mandatory, because in Moldova and Wallachia we have the same people, identical like no other, because we have the same beginning, the same name, the same language, the same religion, the same history, the same civilization, the same institutions, the same laws and customs, the same reasons and the same hopes, the same necessities to fulfill, the same borders to defend, the same sorrows in the past, the same future to ensure and, finally, the same mission to accomplish". Also, for the first time, representatives of the peasants were elected to a great deliberative assembly; the most notorious of them was Old Ion Roata, pictured by Ion Creanga.

After receiving the two resolutions of the ad hoc Divans, the commissioners drafted their report, which paved the way for signing of the Paris Convention, on 7/19 August, which established the future status of the Principalities. The two countries were to be named the United Principalities of Moldova and Wallachia. They remained under the suzerainty of the Porte and under the collective guarantee of the great Powers. Every country had its prince. All citizens will be equal in front of the laws: the privileges and ranks of the boyars are abolished. By means of this Convention, which becomes the new constitution of the Principalities, the way to unification was open. It was up to the political intelligence of the Romanian elite to find the solution to make it effective.

The double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, on the 5th and the 24th of January

The possibility of having institutions organized on similar bases, like the army, but also two different princes - this is what the Paris Convention offered the Romanians who wanted to unite. It is the merit of the then Romanian elite, since it managed to overcome the differences and impose a solution, which was also accepted abroad in the end and guaranteed the Union.

The principles laid down for organizing the elections were unfavorable. A very high census was required, which greatly limited the number of voters and those who could be elected. In Bucharest, with a population of about 120,000 inhabitants, 308 voters could vote, in the best case. In Ismail, in the second college, there was only one voter who could only choose himself. Most people wanted the union, but there was a "national" camp, which included the former 1848 fighters ("radicals", "unionists" or "progressives") and the conservative group of former princes (Gheorghe Bibescu and Barbu Știrbei in Wallachia and respectively Mihai Sturdza in Moldova) and their supporters.

Elections in Moldova resulted in a majority for the National Party in the Elective Assembly. But different groups were formed inside it: some of them supported Vasile Alecsandri, others supported Costache Negri. 38 candidates were racing to become princes, if we include those from the conservative camp. And here is where the wonder happened. At first, Alecsandri gave up in favor of Negri. But as he was too radical, conservatives wouldn't accept him. In the evening of 3/15th of January unionist deputies met to agree on one candidate. It looked like the summit would end in failure, after talks yielded no result. Then Lascar Rosetti locked the door and said that they should not part until the sole candidate is agreed. Neculai Pisotchi put forward Colonel Alexandru Cuza, who made a strong impression all over the county with his decision to resign as head of Covurlui in protest for the way the lists for the ad-hoc Divan were made. His nomination was accepted by everyone present. The second day he was unanimously elected as prince of Moldova. "An eye witness said: The enthusiastic chants of the people lasted for hours. The prince was so touched that tears appeared in his eyes during the parade". Across the mountains, Gazeta Transilvaniei eulogized Cuza; a portrait as large as the page of the gazette accompanied the text. Between January 8 and 12, elections for deputies for Wallachia's Elective Assembly were held. Although the cities voted in majority and Bucharest exclusively for the candidates of the National Party, most of those elected belonged to the conservatives. The National Party had to take on a big battle to ensure the success of one of its candidates. In order to secure success, propagandist youngsters helped mobilize Bucharest's population: tanners, who were also present in 1821 and 1848, butchers, with their long knives, merchants and inhabitants from the suburbs, slummers with thick bats.

Moreover, students from the upper classes were present, as well as peasants from neighboring villages. In the morning of January 22nd, when the Elective Assembly started its works, the Hill of the Metropolitan Church and the yard of the assembly were full of crowds who booed the opponents of the National Party and even entered the meeting room. "The presence of the crowd gathered on the Metropolitan Church Hill had a bigger contribution than the eloquence of the minority's speakers to make the majority understand" - a report of the Austrian Consul Eder said.

In a meeting of members of the National Party, held on the night of 23 to 24th of January, in a hall of the hotel "Concordia" on the German Street, the current Smardan street (which today is a ruin, to the shame of the descendants of those who made the Union) Dimitrie Ghica - who realized that his candidacy was excluded - proposed that

Alexandru Cuza be elected as prince of Wallachia. The proposal was met with unanimous adhesion. Only the army commander who convened some of the officers from the barracks at his home, General Vladoianu, was informed and agreed to support the decision taken. The following day, on January 24th, 1859, after the Elective Assembly session was opened at 11 AM, Vasile Boerescu asked for a secret session from the president, in order to submit a proposal. The request was admitted and deputies moved to a neighboring hall, where Boerescu spoke again. With an impassionate speech, which made a deep impression, he convinced them to choose Alexandru Ioan Cuza, too. Most of the deputies had tears in their eyes. One representative of the majority, who agreed with the proposal, had cited the precedent of Sweden and Norway, which had the same king. Other deputies - including the sons of Stirbei and Bibescu, as former candidates - also gave their approval. At the end of the vote, all 64 voting ballots had the same name on them.

An even stronger show of joy from the Bucharest' people added to the sentiment of happiness in the Assembly. The crowds mixed with the army joined in the Union Dance at every junction, until late in the evening, in the torchlight; people hugged without knowing each other.

To the telegram that announces his election, Cuza answered: "I thank the Elective Assembly for its unanimous vote of confidence and I declare that I proudly and gratefully accept to be the Prince of Wallachia, as I am the Prince of Moldova."

Cuza's rule marks the start of the creation of modern Romania.

The impropriation law (1863)

After supporting for centuries the holy places with money and estates, the Romanian lands "nationalize" their wealth on the country's territory, as they accounted for 25% of the country's surface

In his short term, Alexandru Ioan Cuza has undertaken reforms and created institutions that have shaped the image of modern Romania: the Statistics Directions, the Universities of Iasi and Bucharest, the Court of Cassation and Justice, the Central Post Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Court of Accounts, The Criminal Code, the City Hall, the House of Deposits and Consignments, the Civil Code. Alongside the agrarian and electoral reform, the law of secularization of monastic property is considered to be one of the most important measures taken by the prince.

For hundreds of years, Romanian princes and boyars were the most important sponsors of Orthodoxy in the Ottoman Empire. Their taxes to the Holy Mountain and to the monasteries in the Near East, the restorations of the holy places paid by the Romanian lands determined the Russian archimandrite Profirie Uspenski to say in the nineteenth century that "no other people had overwhelmed Mount Athos with so many benefits as the Romanian people ". As a matter of ingenuity, the Romanian princes have found the way to be able to exercise their capacity as builders (who in Byzantine law defines not only the one who builds a cult monument, but also the one who rebuilds or ensures its survival). Also, within Islamic law, they intervened as Timariots (owners of the income) of monasteries in their defense in Istanbul, obviously without taking any of the rights they behoved in that quality, but giving money to holy places. Thus, in the course of time, the monasteries of Greece and of the Near East owned considerable areas of land and property in the Principalities.

The bill on the monasteries' property was not among those announced in the Prince's message at the opening of the Chamber in 1863. It would have been a direct challenge to the Guarantee Powers of the Paris Convention, to provide for a way to solve the problem. But the law was to be brought to Parliament's discussion before the electoral or agrarian ones. On August 10/22, 1863, a note was sent to the Porte to resolve the dispute over the property of the monasteries, for a substantial compensation to the holy places. Moreover, a significant sum was offered for the establishment of a secular school and a hospital in Istanbul, where anyone would be received, irrespective of confession. Greek hierarchs rejected the proposal, counting on the support of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, Russia and Austria.

The Porte announced the intention to convene an international conference on this issue, which speeds the vote in Parliament for the impropriation law (the monasteries unrelated to the holy sites in the East were also included in order to avoid a possible allegation of discrimination). The total area thus in the possession of the state represented 25% of the country's surface. On December 13/25, the government presented the secularization bill to the Chamber, which was voted by an overwhelming majority: 93 votes in favor and 3 against. According to the law, Greek abbots were obliged to hand over to the Romanian government "the ornaments, the books, the sacred vessels and the documents" of the monasteries they had led.

The measure was possible due to the support of France, whose authority weighed heavily in the European political concert after the Crimean War. Napoleon III stated in November 1863: "The Emperor's Government and most of the other signatories of the Paris Treaty have not hesitated to admit that it would be contrary to the principles of European public law to indebt the Moldo - Romania by leaving the monasteries, under the rule of foreign monks; these monasteries amounted to a very large part of

their territory in a dead-handed state." Romania also took advantage of a favorable European context, as the Great Powers, and especially Russia, were concerned with the Polish problem, much more important than that regarding the assets of monasteries.

Nevertheless, Russia has found time for this issue, too. Foreign Minister Prince Gorceakov told the chargé d'affaires in Istanbul: "We will continue to consider that the Church of the East is the victim of incalculable loot, and we support, as in the past, the thirteenth protocol of the Paris conference." In the *Le Nord* newspaper, which appeared in Brussels but was subsidized by the Russian Foreign Ministry, a correspondence was published the day before the law was adopted, where the Kogalniceanu government was violently attacked; the correspondent did not hesitate to ironize the Romanians, calling them "alleged Danubian descendants of Romulus." After the vote, the Russians secretly proposed to the Porte the occupation of Romania by the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Austria.

The following year, in 1864, a conference of Ambassadors of the Guarantee Powers was held in Istanbul. Based on the property titles of monasteries related to holy sites in the East, a committee was going to determine the list of those goods, their income and the burdens they charged. Paradoxically, the Greek hierarchs were precisely the ones who did their best to postpone the works of the committee and, ultimately, to thwart them, thinking that this way they would better defend their rights. And they did that as Romania had practically doubled the compensation offer. Finally, due to the firm and permanent support of France and to the fact that the other powers had lost interest in the subject, Russia changed its mind towards the end of 1864, as it had to remain isolated and drew resentments from Romania, where a unanimous agreement had been reached in terms of secularization. Under Carol I, the Romanian Parliament declared the matter closed and no compensation was paid anymore.

Pursuing the method patented in 1859 and using the international context, the brave action of Romanian policymakers put Europe once again in the face of a situation already set.

Universities in Iasi and Bucharest

In his message to the Assembly of Deputies, on December 6, 1859, Alexandru Ioan Cuza said: "Apart from the study of the Letters, the faculties of Sciences, Law, Medicine are definitely necessary, but today's state of Romania and its future require a faculty of economic and administrative science, as well as a faculty of agronomic, industrial and commercial science." There was therefore a need for higher education.

In Moldova, things were much more advanced. On January 1, 1851, Mr. Grigore Alexandru Ghica sanctioned the "Settlement for the Reorganization of Public Teaching". It provided for the creation of free and universal public education in the national language, with primary, secondary and higher education. The superior education had to be organized into four faculties, united into an Academy. But it would take another decade to create the University of Iasi. On February 24, 1856, the Courses of the Faculty of Law were opened. Within only six months, the Department of Cults and Public Teaching decided to postpone for a year the opening of the Faculty of Philosophy and to suspend the Law courses. They resumed on March 18, 1857. At the end of the school year 1858 - 1859, a commission was formed to assess students' courses and attitudes. Then a definitive project for the organization of faculties was called for. Teachers were appointed to draft the statutes and programs of the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Law, which was subject to debate on 1 February 1860. Only those of the Faculty of Law were approved and became a model for the others.

The decisive impetus came from the interim minister of Cults and Public Instruction Mihail Kogălniceanu. The term "university" began to be used in August 1860 in the ministry documents. Kogalniceanu demanded the preparation of the study program for the Faculty of Sciences and the statutes for the Theology Faculty. His absence from Iasi in September postponed the start of the classes at the usual date, September 15, until October 1st. As he returned to the city, Kogalniceanu ordered on October 5 that the statutes of the faculties would be drafted in three days, in order to submit them to Cuza. On October 7, the draft statutes were under discussion. The new institution was organized with legal and disciplinary autonomy. There had been heated debates on the structure and orientation of studies and their free of charge character. However, on October 16, the statutes were presented to Cuza, along with a report by Kogalniceanu. The university was inaugurated on October 26, 1860, in the presence of the prince, in a highly emotional ceremony. In the first years of functioning, the University faced a lack of university staff with a shortage of aspirants and conflicts with the ministry, which had its own idea of university autonomy. The institution will be virtually reestablished by the new rector, Titu Maiorescu, who began his mandate in January 1864. Until 1897, when it was moved to the building that still houses it, the Iasi University functioned in Callimah-Ghica house.

On this side of the Milcov, the Higher Education Council (which replaced Eforia Schools in 1862), noting the lack of teaching staff for secondary education, proposed the establishment of the Faculty of Letters and of the Sciences, on August 31, 1863. On October 12, the Princely Decree for the Establishment of the Higher School of Science was issued, and on November 2nd another Princely Decree announced the Upper School of Letters, which trained students to become teachers of classical and modern language, literature and philosophy, history and geography. A Princely Decree also declared The Faculty of Law as an independent institution on November 25, 1859.

On July 3, 1864, the Minister of Cults and Public Instruction Dimitrie Bolintineanu submitted to Cuza a report, in which he wrote: "Your Higher Prince, there is now left to follow the steps of the other civilized states, and the same way that the encyclopedic education, the preparatory for faculties, form a unit named gymnasium, the higher education, that of faculties, should form a unit, a university body under the name of the

University of Bucharest." The following day, the Prince issued the decree establishing the University of Bucharest, which brought together the three faculties already created: Law, Philosophy and Letters and Sciences. In 1869 the Faculty of Medicine was opened.

The building of the university had already been built. On September 10, 1857 Alexandru D. Ghica, kaimakam of Wallachia, approved the plan for the establishment of an Academy, based on the project of the architect Alexandru Orăscu. It should have been the Palace of the Academy at St. Sava. The old building was demolished and on October 10, the foundation stone was laid. Serban Orăscu, the grandson of the architect, described the ceremony: "According to Costaforu [the first rector of the University], while the cement was being prepared, Alexandru Ghica, tight-belted with a leather apron over his frock coat, got close to the foundation pit, took the cement with the trowel, placed the first brick and hammered it in the four corners. After him, each of the commissioners of the seven Great Powers - who came to Bucharest from the Paris Congress - and notables of the time followed in to raise a brick. "On January 31, 1864, a commission found some major deficiencies: the plaster walls and especially the ceilings were poorly crafted with gravel, the beams of the ceilings were thin in relation to their length and too far apart from each other, the roof was poorly designed, as it allowed water and snow to sink in here and there, the stairway was weak and shuttled at the moves of one individual". The scandal continued for a while, and on December 14, 1869, the edifice was put into operation.

Mihai Eminescu's literary debut (1866)

"The Romanian perception wanted to attribute a fabulous descent to its greatest poet", George Calinescu wrote in the monograph dedicated to Eminescu. It was alleged that his ancestor had been an Emin Efendi, a Turkish merchant who had settled in Moldova and that he christened himself as Eminovici. His friends used to joke with him by calling him "Turkish". Others alleged that he was the son of a Swedish officer, from the army of Carol XII, settled in Moldova. He was certainly Polish after his mother, somebody was ready to prove. He was also alleged to be Bulgarian, Serb or Polish. The truth is that there was no foreigner in his ascendants line for two centuries.

He was a normal child, who read a lot, indeed, but he did not love the school. Nothing out-guessed the genius. Calinescu also described those years like that: "A child that screamed trarara in the yard and danced like a Prussian, with a coif on his head, panicking the coops, climbing the barn and hiding in the house among the shelves of the closet and the candle cases; a child who dabbles in the pond all day long, trying to catch the green relatives of the batraciens, who also runs away from home for days wandering in the woods and stables or evades from school to go walking and has to be run after in order to be caught, he is neither a precocious madcap, nor a solitary and pale jongleur, and from his roguery, talent and imagination, a great poet of the nature will later be uncovered."

In Cernauti, his teacher was Aron Pumnul, whom the children loved very much, because he gathered them and played the ball with them sometimes. At home, he had a sort of library in Romanian, from where he lent books to the children and he also secretly and attractively taught them the Romanian's history.

In the spring of 1864, the troupe of Stefania Tardini came to Cernauti. It was the first time when theatre in Romanian was played in the city. The joy was so high, that wealthy people paid the entrance for students gathered in front of the hall and waiting to be able to sneak in, to help them enjoy this celebration. Many youngsters wrote theatre plays or lyrics and would read each other's creations. Eminescu was the only one who wouldn't show what he wrote.

A tragic incident made him uncover his lyric leaning. Eminescu was a librarian at Aron Pumnul. He died of illness on January 12 1866. When Teodor Stefanelli (a future historian and jurist, member of the Romanian Academy) came to the professor's house, he found Eminescu crying. He came back in the evening and found Eminescu bent over a sheet of paper, where he kept writing and erasing and fixing. He read to Stefanelli the poem he wrote while being overwhelmed by sadness for his teacher's death: "Dress in black, beautiful Bucovina/ With a Green cypress tie your ancient forehead/Cause now from its gold and shiny galaxy/ A white star has gone out.

A month later he made his debut in the magazine Familia, created by Iosif Vulcan at Pest. He put a letter along his lyrics, where he confessed that he was a 16 year old youngster and offered to send correspondences to Bucovina for the magazine. "Even now I remember that I received a letter from Bucovina one February morning, where a 16 year old youngster would send me some literary bids. He was the young Mihai Eminovici. Given the status of our literature in that time, I was surprised by the harmony of the lyrics and his plastic figures and especially by the young age of the author and I willingly opened my columns to this new talent and promising poet. In my enthusiasm, I hurried to present Eminescu to the public in the forthcoming number, with the following editor's note: "We gladly open the columns of our paper to this 16 year old young man, who had made us a pleasant surprise with his first poetic bids". Iosif Vulcan was the one who converted his name to Eminescu, as he did not like Eminovici.

The magazine had a "post box of the editorial office", where there was a pigeon with a sealed envelope in his nib and every number received supporting answers for beginners. As he opened the sixth number of the magazine Familia, Eminescu found his poem "De-as avea" (If only I had), and an answer to the post box, "Cernauti, M.E. And we would gladly receive correspondence". He asked if he could also send other works. He received an answer in the eighth number: "Cernăuți, M.E. We will gladly agree, only that we ask you, as far as it is possible, to use the spelling that we use."

A recent research shows that Eminescu has calculated very well his public appearances. The strategy of successive debuts - "At the tomb of Aron Pumnul, in Cernauti, in January 1866, then at Pest, in the magazine Familia, with the poem De-as avea", February 1866, and in Bucharest, in April 1869 - At the death of Prince Stirbey - was experienced in the first part of his activity, from 1866 - the year of his first appearance - to 1870 - the year of his complete affirmation.

We started with George Calinescu and we end with him. "It is true that all of us have the inner feeling that Eminescu is our greatest poet, but no one has offered so far a critical explanation of this feeling [...] Some admire the thinker, other the nationalist, and finally, others admire the Romanian language writer, although all these reasons could be countered one by one. Each value something else in Eminescu and a brave and clever critic to support the rest has not come yet. Therefore, we do not know why we value Eminescu".

The Romanian Literary Society is created, the precursor of the Romanian Academy

The Romanian language had replaced the Slavonic and the Latin alphabet also replaced the Cyrillic one: in Wallachia it is gradually introduced in schools, in Moldova things went a little slower. It was then the time for the Romanian language to be unified and put into order.

In February 1860, Evanghelie Zappa, a very rich Aromanian (he was one of those who contributed to the revival of the Olympic Games) offered the government a fund of 3,000 golden coins to make "the best Romanian dictionary, the best grammar and the best translations in the national language for foreign classical writers."

As no one else offered to financially support such an endeavor, Zappa was asked to send the 3,000 golden coins that he offered. He added another 2,000, so as not to waste time waiting for other donations. The "Zappa fund" was created by decree, to encourage the progress of the Romanian language and literature. Also, a prize of 200 yellow coins was established for a grammar of the Romanian language and 300 golden coins for the letter "A" in the dictionary. G. Sion reacted, saying that "nobody would start writing a grammar at such a low cost" and asked the state to add funds too and to create a "society that would represent the intelligence, the erudition and the genius of Romania". In his testament, Zappa has allocated an additional sum of 1,000 golden coins, for the future society which was due to be created. To that the 1,000 golden coins offered by Alexandru Ioan Cuza on March 29, 1863, were also added, and a prize was established out of their interest rate, for "the best scientific work written in Romanian on a proposal given by the Superior Council of Public Instruction".

In 1864, Nicolae Kretzulescu has asked the Superior Council of Public Instruction to draft a project of regulation for a committee that would elaborate the dictionary of the Romanian language. On July 18, 1865, the regulation was ready, but Cuza was afraid that it would wind up a reaction by the great circumjacent powers.

The idea as repeated by C.C. Rosetti, the Minister for Cults and Public instruction. At his initiative, the Principality's regency created the Romanian Literary Society, by the decree no. 582, from April 1st, 1866. The number of members was settled to 21: two from Banat, two from Bucovina, two from Maramures and two representatives of the Aromanian from the South of Danube. The area of jurisdiction was limited to the language sector. The act has sparked off a special echo in Transylvania. Iosif Vulcan wrote in Familia: "Great will be the day when representatives of the nation spread over seven countries by the fate will come together; sublime will be that minute when the brother from Pind will shake hands with his brother in Cris."

The first session was not held in 1866, as planned, due to the cholera epidemic. The media of the time said that cholera was not the cause, but it was the lack of money. Ion C. Bratianu commented: "May I be allowed to say transiently that I do not understand at all the idea that led to the postponement of that society. If it was done in order to save money, the idea was poorly understood, because savings could be made in everything, but not in such questions." Not even the budget for the year 1867 has allocated funds for the Literary Society, "out of negligence." However, the convocation, conceived as a response to the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian dualism, was successful. The members of the Society that arrived in Bucharest were welcomed with a pompous reception on July 31, 1867, at the second round of the Highway, under "a shadow decorated with the scouts and flags of the Romanian provinces". The mayor of Bucharest also asked the population to go to the road, where "the Romanian capital will see the entire Romanian language in its arms, tomorrow for the first time"

The inaugural session was held on August 1, 1867. On the streets where the members of the Society passed through, pupils from the schools in Bucharest were singing songs (Union Hora and other "national hymns"). The inaugural meeting was held in the presence of ministers and numerous spectators. A Zappa bust has been inaugurated and the song Sweet and beautiful is our language was sung. The words of Timothy Cipariu - "We started to free our homeland, we started to free our language; we have started, gentlemen, we have just begun, but we have not finished; we are due to continue and finish "- were welcomed with thunderous applause. The inauguration took place in the houses of Constantin Ghica "near the entrance to Cismigiu". The pavement in front of the house was repaired, at the intervention of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction.

In one of the first sessions, Baritiu proposed that it should not remain a simple literary society, but should become an Academic Society. The proposal was approved and divided into three sections: literary-philological, historical and archeological and natural sciences. On March 29, 1879 the law was passed by which "Romanian Academic Society is declared as the National Institute named "the Romanian Academy ".

During the second meeting of the inaugural session, Baritiu was also the one who made a statement of principles, which the Academy sometimes failed to respect: "The works of this Literary Society will be and will remain exempt from any governmental system under any circumstances of any kind and under all the ephemeral political waves, both in its entirety and in each of its members [...] The material assistance that the Romanian state will be about to extend to this scientific institution in favor of the higher national culture will not yet imply any obligation whatsoever."

Carol I becomes Romania's Prince

The cleverness of the decision to bring a foreign prince on Romania's throne

We will probably never know if Cuza really wanted to abdicate to allow a foreign prince on the throne, or if the plotters who had removed him were right to fear that he wanted to reign for life. Certainly, the succession issue had to be resolved quickly, because there was a real danger that the Union could have been reversed.

The Principality's Regency first considered Prince Philip of Flanders, but that would have been an uninspired choice, as he was a nephew of Louis Philippe, and the house of Orleans was claimant to the throne of Napoleon III. On March 14, the Romanian agent in Paris Ion Balaceanu sent a telegram in which he mentioned Carol of Hohenzollern's name as a possible candidate, a French inspired nomination. Carol was a relative of Napoleon III. Soon, Great Britain supported his candidacy, too.

Ion C. Bratianu quickly grasped the advantages of the nomination, as it secured the support of Paris, London and Berlin from the start. On March 18, he arrived in Düsseldorf to ask Carol Anton of Hohenzollern to give his approval for his son to take the crown of the United Principalities. Carol I wrote over the years: "Bratianu made the best impression on the prince and the princely family due to his pleasant look and the attributes of a statesman he had shown in these conversations." Bratianu telegraphed to Bucharest: "Carol of Hohenzollern accepts the crown without conditions". Which was not true, as both he and his father still hesitated, waiting for the blessing of the king of Prussia. The blessing did not come directly, but in a meeting with Chancellor Bismarck, he urged Carol to make the bold decision to go straight to Romania. Bismarck explained that Prussia can not formally support his candidacy. "As Prime Minister, I would be forced to vote against your nomination, no matter how hard it would be for me, because I could not provoke a rupture with Russia now." The time passed, until Bismarck would write: "Germany has little interest in the mouths of the Danube! The interest is 10,000 times higher in the Adriatic Sea and the English rule over the Ionian and Moreian Islands ". Over the years, Carol I also noted: "Romania has become a member, and not least important, in the chain that prevents the peace-disturbers from the East and the West from achieving their evil intentions [...] the country that stands along the mouths of Danube, which are a large European hub for all of Russia's ways to the Balkan Peninsula and, on the other hand, to the West, to the heart of Germany."

The regency has published the Proclamation to the People on March 30, 1866, where it recommended the election by plebiscite of the Prince Carol of Hohenzollern to be Romania's prince. The plebiscite started on April the 2nd and ended on the 8th of April. There were 685.969 votes in favor and 224 against.

On April 19th 1866 I.C. Bratianu accompanied by Carol Davila came back to Düsseldorf. The meeting with Carol lasted for two hours and a half. Davila showed Carol a map of the United Principalities and underlined the fact that the surrounding territories - Transylvania, Banat, Bucovina and Bessarabia are all inhabited by Romanians, and "that is why they will have to be incorporated sometime to the Principality of Romania". The following day, Carol told them that he agreed and the plan to get to the country was arranged. Although this should have been strictly secret, a telegram came from Turnu Severin congratulating Carol for his upcoming arrival.

He made the journey under the name of Karl Hettingen, pretending to do business in Odessa. In Salzburg, on the border with Austria, a customs servant asked him his name. The prince had forgotten the fake name that he was using, but one of his companions intervened and submitted to the servant a travel bag, saying: "I have to declare some cigarettes." That way, Carol had the time to look at his passport and read his name.

One evening in Buzias he got in the vessel that was going to take him to Turnu Severin and to Bratianu. After they reached the land in the Romanian port, "Bratianu took off his hat, stooped in front of his prince and asked him to get in one of the coaches that were waiting for him.[...] The prefect was stunned to learn who was the young man who arrived."

The road to Bucharest and the welcome in the capital were a real triumph. As he was cheered by the people on his arrival to Bucharest, a torrential rain started - "the first rain which had watered and cooled Romania's dry fields in three months - a fortunate coincidence which made a deep impression. Going along the Bridge of Mogosoaia (Today's Calea Victoriei), they passed by a house next to which "a guard of honor with a flag was posted. The Prince asked his companions [in French]: "What is in this house?" General Golescu responded a little confused: "It's the palace." Prince Carol thought at first that he had not got him well and asked him with doubt: "Where is the palace?" - which put the general in even greater confusion. He pointed to the simple one-story house. "From the windows of the palace, a dirty, empty market was visible, where some Gypsies settled, and pigs rolled through the mud", Carol wrote in his memoirs. When his reign ended, a palace worthy of a crowned head rose in the place of the old Golescu houses, the Royal Foundations laid across the road, and pigs and ponds had disappeared from the market.

The adoption of the leu as national currency (1867)

Thibault-Lefebvre, a French traveler from the nineteenth century, wrote: "There are coins of all origins and all kinds nowadays in Wallachia. Calculus currencies, real coins, Austrian, Turkish, Russian coins and, sometimes French, English, Italian coins in use in their countries of origin, demonetized and out of use coins - they are all found in the Principalities, they are accepted and circulated in a tumble which is harmful for everyone, except the exchangers. "The calculus leu" was introduced in the Organic Regulation, aiming to make things simpler. It was a fictive currency, which did not exist in practice, but which served as a monetary value to which all the currencies were referred. Any transaction and any taxation was calculated in lei, but was paid in golden coins, irmiliks, rubles, francs. For instance, a horse was evaluated at 50 lei, but it was bought with real coins" 5 golden coins (which valued 25 lei), plus 3 iuzulics (15 lei), plus 400 ookus (10 lei). The value of the currencies could be very different from one place to another and from one day to the next.

The leu was originally a real silver coin, the löwenthaler, which was issued in the Netherlands in 1575. It also circulated in the Romanian Countries, from the end of the sixteenth century until the eighteenth century, under the name of "leu", because it had the effigy of a lion on the reverse side. It left a lasting impression on the collective mentality and, although it disappeared from circulation, it remained a landmark and became a calculus currency.

During the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, there were attempts to issue a specific coin, which was going to be called Romanat or Romanian, after the example of the French franc. An external loan for the issuing of the Romanian was contracted, sketches were made. Ion Heliade Rădulescu commented: "The Romanians' ear does not bear to hear: a hundred Romanians (as a hundred francs) were paid for an ox." Due to the lack of financial resources and also the opposition from the sovereign power, the Ottoman Empire, the idea was abandoned.

On "April 22 / May 4, 1867", the "Law for the Establishment of a New Monetary System and for the Issuing of National Coins" was published in the Monitor. Official Journal of Romania. The law introduced a modern monetary system in Romania and the leu became the national currency. The normative act explicitly stipulated that Romania's monetary unit was the leu, defined as representing 5 g of silver with the title 835 ‰. The law came into force on January 1, 1868, but the clearance of monetary chaos did not happen overnight. The Romanian Government ordered Watt & Co. and Heaton in Birmingham, in 1867, to strike copper coins worth ROL 4,000,000. The first divisionary coin transport arrived in the country in February 1868.

The next step was to coin and put into circulation the standard (gold and silver) coin. The Finance Minister Ion C. Bratianu made two important judgments that did not respect either the agreement reached with the Ottoman Empire or the 1867 monetary law: 1. the coining of gold and silver coins without imprinting the sign specifically requested by the Porte; 2. The Romanian coins should bear the effigy of Prince Carol, not the arms of the country, as the law provided. The monetary dollies with the effigy of Carol I", were ordered abroad, along with 100 gold coins of 20 lei, also known as the golden pole with the legend: "Carol, the prince of the Romanians".

To those who criticized the replacement of the country's weapons with the effigy of the prince, I.C. Bratianu replied: "For God's sake, do not raise this matter, let it go, leave it for after you have acquired the principle of having a currency!" But the energetic protests of the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire have determined the Romanian government to stop the coinage of the coins and to stop the existing ones from being put into circulation.

On February 24, 1870, the State Mint was inaugurated in Bucharest. On that occasion, 5,000 gold pieces of 20 lei and 400,000 silver pieces of 1 leu were coined. Related to the circulation needs, this first issue by the State Mint had a symbolic significance, expressing Romania's determination to coin its national currency.

The introduction of the national currency in effective circulation was facilitated by Romania's win of independence in 1877 and the founding of the National Bank. The Law of 17 April 1880 and the Statutes adopted on May 25, 1880 established that the tickets issued by the Bank had the value of 20, 100, 500 and 1,000 lei. In order to print them in the country, Eugene Carada was sent to Paris to bring the necessary tools. The operation turned out to be much more complicated than originally thought, and Carada had proposed that mortgage tickets from the reserve of the Finance Ministry should be taken over by B.N.R. and be put into circulation after the Central Bank's insignia and the signatures of the governor, the trustee and a censor were applied on them. The solution was approved, and the circulation of the first papers instead of precious metal money stirred great wonder and anxiety. On Nov. 30, the Curierul National newspaper announced the launch of mortgage tickets with overprint, and the following day, on December 1, 1880, the Bank's counters were opened to the public. The Romanian newspaper headlined: "This day's turn-over exceeded all expectations, as far as we are told."

The first transfer of B.N.R. tickets made in France went to Bucharest in November 1880. They were put into circulation on January 19, 1881. Then they were printed in the country.

Abraham Goldfaden sets up in Iasi the first Jewish theatre in the world (1876)

There are several versions about the origin of the Yiddish language. The 1978 Nobel Prize laureate, Isaac Bashevis Singer, said before the Swedish Academy: "A language of exile, a landless and borderless language, which is not supported by any form of government - the Yiddish language does not have a word for gun, ammunition, military exercise". Yiddish language and culture brought together the Jews from Romania, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia in Central Europe. In this Yiddish archipelago, Iasi and Bucharest played a significant cultural role in the second half of the 19th century.

The first was Iași, the cradle of the Jewish theater. The first Yiddish publication in the world appeared here: KorotHaitim (The Events of the Time) in 1855. Jewish troubadours from Russia and Poland, precursors of Yiddish actors came and played here. In 1876, the poet and composer Avram Goldfaden arrived here from Cernăuți with the idea of setting up a Jewish newspaper. At the suggestion of the Librescus, he decided to create a Jewish theater, with the support of actors Israel Grodner and Suher Goldstein. He tried to make a synthesis of folk poetry, pub entertainment, and audience requirements. Goldfaden designed a musical theater that introduced dance and song numbers. But the first encounter with the audience in Iasi was a fiasco. He later recalled: "I recited my national poem, I leaned in front of the audience, got out of the scene, the audience did not sketch a gesture. Deathful silence. I came out again and recited something cheerful [...] The public kept silent. I left the scene ... I heard whistles ... Luckily Librescu and Grodner waited for me next to the scene and took me home. From the defeat I suffered, a bright beginning was born. "

He continued. The first professional Yiddish theater performances were held in the "Green Tree" garden. They featured simple scenes from everyday life, interlaid with couplets. Mihai Eminescu signed the birth certificate of the Yiddish Theater, with the chronicle (the first in the history of the Jewish theater) published in Curierul de Iasi, no. 93/1876, under the heading "Miscellaneous. Theatrical Notes". "A small summer theater was opened in a garden on the large street, playing in the evangelical language (spoiled German) [...] We have little to say about the plays - they present no big dramatic interest, but the actors' roles were excellent [...] The director of the band has a pleasant voice (baritone) and a nice figure. The areas are evangelical, and the audience, made up of mainly coreligionists of the actors, enjoys its time.

Avram Goldfaden, who raised the Jewish theater to the rank of a necessary institution for the community, was born on July 12, 1840, in Ukraine, in the modest family of a watchmaker. He lived his first theatrical experience at Zhytomyr, where he played the main role in a comedy, on the occasion of Purim celebrations, in 1862/1863. He was a director, he also designed the costumes. After having been successful in Iasi, he started touring. In Botosani they performed for the first time in a theater hall. As he could not pay the rent of the hall, he guaranteed with his band and went to Galați to borrow money. In the city on the Danube's bank he gave his first performances with theater décors. He then arrived in Bucharest, which became the center of the Jewish theater movement. New troops were formed, led by former Goldfaden collaborators. In 1879, he left for Russia with a band of actors. It was successful, and then the Yiddish Theater spread across Europe, but financial problems also arised because too few people paid copyright. "I'm just not a merchant, so everyone can rob me and do what they want with my work, and let me hunger [...] Everyone can play and print my songs without paying anything and they remain honest," he complained. After 1883 and until the end of his life he struggled to survive. He got to Warsaw, then to New York where his plays were played, but he got almost nothing. He accepted the position of director at the Romanian Opera House, but the failure of a show made him resign. He returned

to Europe in 1903 to sell his properties in Romania in order to get money to return to New York. However, he refused to dedicate a work to a wealthy man: "No matter how much a rich man would want to pay for such a dedication, he would not cover even the one hundredth part of the huge credit you have for me. And no one is able to pay it to me. That's my pleasure, my luxury". One day he went to a delicatessen store in New York and asked how much a box of figs cost. That was all he could afford; in fact, it was more than he could afford. When asked what the price was, the merchant replied, "What do you care?" The merchant then dipped a box and, moving from one the shelf to the other, he filled it with sweets. He refused to give him any explanation until the box was full. Then he returned to Goldfaden with admiration: "Mr. Goldfaden, I have been waiting for you for 15 years," Nahma Sandrow, the author of a history of the Yiddish theatre, wrote.

In 1905 he wrote the play David in war in one act, in Hebrew. He directed and composed music, becoming the father of the Hebrew theater. The premiere took place on 25 December 1907. Two weeks later, on 9 January 1908, he died. He was accompanied on his last journey by 104 limousines and 75,000 people.

Romania's gaining of state independence, in 1877

On May 9, 1877, Parliament proclaimed Romania's independence, as confirmed by the words of Foreign Minister Mihail Kogalniceanu: "We are independent, we are a nation of our own [...] we are a free and independent nation."

The proclamation of independence was possible in the context of the anti-Ottoman rebellion which broke out in 1875 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, amplified by the Bulgarian uprising and the armed revolt of Serbia and Montenegro the following year. On June 26, 1876, Tsar Alexander II and Emperor Franz Joseph met in Bohemia and concluded a secret agreement. Austro-Hungary did not oppose Russia's actions against the Ottoman Empire, it was due to receive Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Russia got back the three counties in southern Bessarabia, which it lost in Paris in 1856.

On April 12, 1877, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Russia needed Romania by all means, to be able to carry out the Danube campaign in good conditions, but Carol I did not want to give up the command of the army to the hands of Russian generals. There were several rounds of negotiations and eventually, on April 4, 1877, the Convention which allowed the Russian army to pass through Romania was signed. The Russian troops entered Romania a day earlier than the date of the official declaration of war, without the permission from the Romanian authorities. It aimed to occupy the Barboși Bridge over the Siret, as its destruction by the Ottomans would have made transport much more difficult. The Romanians accepted the Russians' explanations, especially as the Russian troops behaved very carefully, unlike other occupations. Instead, the tsar refused the participation of the Romanian army in military operations over the Danube.

As it was being defeated to the South of the river and in a very difficult situation, the great Duke Nicholas, who led the Russian troops, sent the following telegram to Carol I on 19 July 1877: "The Turks are crushing us, as they are gathering the largest troop masses at Plevna. I want you to make a merger, a demonstration and, if possible, to cross the Danube with the army, as you wish." The Romanian army acted mainly at Plevna, and Carol I led the Romanian and Russian troops on that theater of operations.

It was the first participation of the Romanian army in a war, and a series of deficiencies came to light in the organization and leadership of the troops in the battle. However, the Russian Command has laudatory appreciated the effectiveness of the Romanian artillery and, as compared to the results of its own artillery, has requested the detachment of some Romanian artillery units to conduct the Russian batteries control.

A war council attended by Prince Carol I, Tsar Alexander II, the great Duke Nicholas, chiefs of the major staff and army corps commanders was held on the afternoon of August 29th. Carol I suggested that the general assault should be postponed for a few days, which was the time needed for the deployment of additional Russian-Romanian forces in the west of Plevna. Most of the participants in the war council decided, however, that the attack would take place the next day. The main argument was that it was St. Alexander's day, the Tsar's name day.

Due to a poor reconnaissance, neither the Russians, who had previously occupied the positions in the area, nor the Romanians realized that the target of the Romanian troops' attack, preceded by a deep valley with slopes covered with birch and positions defended by barbed wire, were two scouts which appeared as a single large one, as viewed from a distance. The Romanian troops delivered four attacks on that day, resulting in numerous dead and wounded. Major George Sontu and Captain Valter Maracineanu perished on that day, while Major Lieutenant Colonel Sergei Voinescu and Major Alexandru Candiano-Popescu and Captain Moise Groza came to the fore, as they reestablished

the order in the columns of attack and encouraged the troops. Carol I went to the lines of the 4th Infantry Division to encourage officers and the troops. His presence was acclaimed by soldiers. In the fourth attack, the Romanian soldiers managed to fill the trenches, to climb the parapet and to enter the Grivita 1 scout after one hour. The first ranks included the majority of the commanding officers who effectively pulled the troops after them.

The conquest of Grivița 1 scout was an undeniable success. It was considered as such by both foreign observers and Russians who changed their attitude. The victory also had a positive effect at diplomatic level, as Romanian representatives were accepted as dialogue partners in the European capitals from then on.

Except that we were close to lose the newly gained independence from the Port to the hands of the ally on the battlefield. On February 19, 1878, the Peace of San Stefano was signed, but neither the great powers nor Romania were satisfied with its provisions, as Romania was losing the three counties in southern Bessarabia. At the end of March 1878, Chancellor A.M. Gorceakov expressed direct threats to the Romanian diplomatic representative at St. Petersburg, threatening with "the occupation of Romania and the disarmament of the Romanian army". After being notified, Prince Carol I replied on March 21 that "an army that fought at Plevna in front of the Emperor Alexander II can fight until it is destroyed, but will not allow itself to be disarmed." Steps were made to prepare the territory for armed resistance, troops were organized to that end and Carol I left Bucharest and withdrew to Oltenia.

The opening of the Berlin Peace Congress on June 1, 1878 reduced the tensions and eventually the congress approved Romania's independence.

Ion Luca Caragiale

"Why should we fear and dishearten in vain? There is neither more nor less damage here than in other parts of the world, nor could it be different. Human qualities and flaws are everywhere the same; people are people everywhere [...] so let's not be saddened and worried, thinking that the Romanian world would be worse than others. No, definitely; this nation is not a broken nation; it is just not ready yet; it has not yet been matured as it should. It is not cleared yet of the secular miseries under which it smouldered with its twinge broken; it still does not believe in justice; it still can not take out from its bosoms someone who could lead it; it still does not know whom to listen to because it does not have trust in anyone yet. "These lines drawn from Caragiale's letter to Alexandru Vlahuta should be the starting point to analyze the great writer's work and, implicitly, should explain why his creation was included among the essential moments of our history. "A great writer has a deep vision that the work he created is always the most acute document," George Calinescu wrote.

Caragiale's world was interpreted differently: from an aimless satire to a collection of morons and immorals (E. Lovinescu), to a heavenly, careless and trouble-free world (Mihai Ralea). His plays were booed at the premiere. An anonymous chronicler wrote, on January 24, 1879, trying to convince about the caducity of the Caragialean typologies: "It only scours fleeting, ridiculous, ephemeral flaws. It [the comedy] will be understood, tasted, and applauded as long as those flaws and those ridicules will subsist." In 1891 he was rejected from the Academy Award at the intervention of D.A. Sturdza. In 1904 he was forced to move to Berlin, following unfair plagiarism accusations.

When he was reproached that he was only addressing the immediate reality, he replied: "The trivial life of mine, of ours, of all the Romanians, that is what interests me; that is what irresistibly draws my attention... Lucky those who are able to look from above, unable to feel what they tread on! Lucky them! Thick must be their soles! "

He considered that the "abscess" of society was the poor family education, the lack of culture of those called to public service, the public servant's disinterest in the one whom he was serving. In Caragiale's plays, the newspaper fills a leading position. Rica Venturiano and Nae Catavencu, two main characters, are journalists. The first writes in his gazette about his beliefs: "Our God is the people: box populi, box dei! We have no other faith, no other hope than the people! We have no other policy than the sovereignty of the people. "In Conu Leonida fata cu reactiunea, the paper is the supreme authority which, and by means of which the reality is established and governed. In O noapte furtunoasa the paper is read in a genuine ritual and everyone understands what they want to. The lack of media professionalism is also the subject of several moments and sketches: Reportaj, Ultima ora, Groaznica sinucidere din strada Fidelitati.

His pungent irony does not spare either the politicianism or the incoherence of politicians. Farfuridi is monumental in his speech: "One from two, allow me: either to be reviewed, I agree! but nothing should change; or not to be reviewed, I agree! but then there should be changes here and there, that is in essential ... points". And the following remark also belongs to him: "We have repeated with our ancestors, but I hate the traitors." Catavencu's motto is: "Romania should be well and all Romanians should thrive." And Agamita Dandanache is at ease with himself: "Me too, in all the chambers, with all the parties, like the impartial Romanian!" In Orientale, under the pretext of irony towards the legislative bodies in Turkey, he targeted his contemporaries: "GeanabetEddin: I have the honor to propose the next amendment to the unique art... Unique Art: Senators and deputies receive a quadruple daily pay, during the parliamentary vacations. Voices: Too much, sir! Do not be upset! GeanabetEddin: ... threefold, as during the session (Long applause).

Corruption shakes society and institutions. Prefect Tipătescu is sympathetic to the policeman Pristanda, who openly cheats in the business with the city flags: "I do not look if he gets one or two jacks ... especially a man with a difficult family." In Conu Leonida față cu reacțiunea, when he found out that it was the policeman who had released the gunfire overnight, Eftimita warns Conu Leonida's that police does not allow fire arms in the city; he replies, "Well then, don't you see that here was the police in person ...". Pristanda apologizes to Catavencu after arresting him at Tipătescu's order and released him at Zoe's request: "Forgive me, considering my mission, with a high understanding of the constitutional mechanisms in Romania: "I mean, do we not know how the police works? In a constitutional state, a policeman is no more nor less than an instrument! "

Caragiale is also rough to the Romanians in general. Conu Leonida urged his wife: "Let's go to the revolution too!" What does the Romanian want? "He no longer pays tribute [...] every citizen takes an equally good monthly wage". "Kiss him in the face and eat everything from him", Pristanda's wife used to say.

But eventually everything ends well: "Everyone went to the square independently." Or as Cațavencu tells Tipătescu at the end of the play: "Forgive me and love me because we are all Romanians!"

"His role was to contribute in part to the recovery of our public life and, in essence, his dramaturgy is not grudge, but love," Barbu Stefănescu Delavrancea wrote.

Spiru Haret

On January 30, 1878, a young 27 years old man held a doctorate in Paris on the subject of the "invariability of the large axes of planetary orbits". The Paris magazines published glorious reviews, and the Paris Observatory Annals printed his work entirely in 1885. Another great Romanian mathematician, Gheorghe Jîțeica, appreciated his doctoral thesis as follows: "He has forever enrolled Haret's name in science . "Spiru Haret was the first Romanian who obtained a PhD in mathematics in France. He almost missed his appointment to sustain his thesis. In April 1877 we joined Russia in the war against the Ottoman Empire. The Romanian scholars in Paris thought that it was their duty to come to the country to enlist, but the Education Minister G. Chițu telegraphed them to stay there and continue their studies.

Most of us do not primarily relate Spiru Haret's name to this fundamental contribution to Mathematics and Astronomy, a science that he loved since he was in the third grade, after reading an article about the moon. Spiru Haret is the one who placed Romanian education on solid ground. He understood perfectly the role of education in a society and strived to create the necessary conditions for teachers to be able to do their job, and for students to learn.

He had a special respect for teachers. As he became minister, he oversaw the placement of a medallion in the school hall to recall his teacher, Toma Savescu. He attended the ceremony and made a beautiful eulogy. At a meeting of the teaching staff, when the chairman of the assembly greeted him and thanked him for having "come down" among them, he replied that he did not descend, but came in the middle of his colleagues, because he also was a teacher.

In March 1897 he was appointed for the first time as Minister of Instruction and Cults. It was then when he elaborated two basic laws for the educational system: the law regarding secondary and superior education (1898) and the law for the professional education (1899). He created school butteries and initiated the practice of free distribution of manuals to poor children. After he left the ministry, he was sad to see how, in a pure Romanian tradition, others sought to destroy what he had built. He came back to head the ministry and he created the House of Economy, Credit and Aid of the Teaching Staff.

He was well aware of the material situation of the Romanian school. In 1862, when he had secured a scholarship at St. Sava, he found the school's building as "a small, old and damp house, with the classrooms built around the courtyard, in randomly built rooms, some in a state of indescribable infection." In 1879 he went to an inspection around schools in Moldova. He disappointedly wrote: "One thing we would have wanted to find was to see the teachers loving their profession, taking care of it all the time, seeking to constantly improve its course and having the duty of honor to get results as good as possible. Instead, apart from some exceptions that console us in part, I have seen a lot of indifference, the post of professor is considered to be a sinecure or a reserve in the case of failure in other jobs." He refused to compromise, a fairness that many of his contemporaries found difficult to understand. In September 1872, he was part of an examination committee for the scholarship contest. A senator which was a cousin of the Education Minister, General Tell, had a protégé who would have lost his scholarship. Tell had the possibility to pass him, but he wanted to give an impression of legality. He called the teachers from the examination committee in his cabinet, along with the protégé and three of the students admitted, randomly chosen and asked that they should be examined in front of him. Haret and another professor resigned in protest. In 1882 he was appointed member of the Permanent Council of Instruction, alongside Al. Orăscu, P.S. Aurelian, General Davila. He soon resigned, as he fell out with the minister. The next minister appointed him as the general inspector of schools, a job created at

that time. He took his task seriously, traveled across the country, made reports, and was not discouraged by the fact that many were left unanswered or even unread.

His ideas often created dissatisfaction, because they hit old customs. At a celebration ceremony in Bucharest - which was held with great solemnity and all schools were gathered in the Senate Hall - he spoke about promoting students at all costs. "In addition to the harm done to the pupil by forcing him to go to a higher class, which he will not be able to follow; there is also the moral harm to teach him to despise the established rules and to make him believe that everything is achieved by favor. No greater harm can be done to young people than to put such ideas in their minds". He also said that "the baccalaureate, which by itself does not prove anything about the students' ability, had ruined the annual exams, which were a true institution." Private special schools, the so-called "baccalaureate factories," attracted all lazy students. He was also against the second examinations in September of all pupils that failed in the June exams. "Hard working students have become an exception; the classes were filled with lazy beings, who came to school without even trying to look busy; perpetrators of all kinds of turbulence, insubordinate and even insolent with the teachers, as they were sure that they have no power over them. Everyone counts on the September exam, which is not being prepared by studies but by interventions in relation to the teachers. "

He died on December 17, 1912. A newspaper wrote that "rarely has a funeral seen so many people attending and a more sincere pain for the loss of a man." The epitaph on his grave could have had his own words written: "It is not with hate that the good of a country could be worked upon, but only with love."

The establishment of the National Bank of Romania

"Posterity will gratefully acknowledge in its annals that Romania has today acquired the institution of a National Bank, at the proposal of the conservative government and with the efforts and insistence of the party and the liberal government. This development equally honors those who have taken the initiative and those who have made it happen." Additionally to the statement of reasons on the establishment of a "Scompt and Circulation Bank ", Deputy Constantin Chitu pointed out that "both the constituent principles and the tools of the mechanism needed for its functioning were taken almost entirely from the constitutive law of the National Bank of Belgium, which gave that small but happy country, the most beautiful and bright results, in a relatively short space of 30 years." Belgium also inspired the Romanians to make up their first Constitution.

On February 27, 1880, when the I.C. Bratianu submitted the draft bill to the Chamber, he cited "the legitimate desire of every individual to acquire easily and with the lowest interest the capital needed to move his commercial and industrial activity."

Eugeniu Carada (1836-1910) had the legislative initiative to create the National Bank of Romania and was also the one to make concrete steps to institutionally organize and build the B.N.R. Palace. Eugen Carada could be considered the founder of this fundamental institution of the modern Romanian state. Carada refused the job of governor, but worked inside and for the National Bank of Romania until the end of his life. Upon his disappearance in February 1910, the future Governor I.G. Bibicescu said: "Carada lived a lifetime of work as few did; a lifetime of struggle as few fought; a lifetime of sacrifice as no known individual has done; and all of them - life, labor, struggle and sacrifice - they were all dedicated to the public good! "

On March 27 - that is, one month after being submitted - the draft law was approved by the Senate with 26 votes in favor and 3 against. Four days later, on 31 March 1880, the Assembly of Deputies adopted the law with 55 votes in favor, 2 against and 14 abstentions. The law was promulgated by King Carol I on April 11, 1880, and was vested with the seal of the state. It was published in the Official Gazette on 17 April 1880. According to the law, the National Bank of Romania was a discount and circulation bank in the form of an anonymous company with a share capital of 30,000,000 lei, with the exclusive privilege to issue bank tickets to the bearer. The state held one third of the shares, and the other two thirds belonged to private individuals. The presence of the state was supposed to guarantee the prestige of bank tickets issued by B.N.R. and to convince those who had to subscribe to the social capital. The State granted to the National Bank of Romania the concession of the issuing privilege by requiring it to take on obligations in exchange: to withdraw the mortgage tickets from circulation in maximum four years, to establish branches and agencies in the main cities and especially in each county residence, to place an amount equal to half of the paid-up share capital in Romanian public effects, to perform the state cash service without any indemnity, to fix the interest to the expected effects at a maximum of 7%, to publish the weekly and monthly statements regarding the BNR operations in the Official Gazette and in four other newspapers.

On July 15, 1880, Ion I. Câmpineanu became the first governor of the BNR, a post which he held until 1 December 1882. He continued as director - elected by the Shareholders' Assembly - until his death, in 1910. At the first General Meeting, shareholders elected four directors and four censors of the National Bank, whom they had the right to elect, in addition to the two directors and three censors appointed by the Government, as a result of the state's participation in the bank's capital. The assembly was extended until the next morning, as two rounds of voting were held. Here is a passage from that report : "As a second ballot was due to be held, because the other two directors and the

fourth censor did not meet the absolute majority, and given that the sitting opened on 15 July at nine o'clock in the morning lasted until July 16, at 4 o'clock in the morning, the meeting was suspended for eight hours, and all the shareholders were called in for the reopening at 11 o'clock in the morning "(they probably were tired because they did not calculate correctly, as there are only seven hours from 4:00 to 11:00!). The Liberals' newspaper said: "Never has any economic enterprise seen such a large number of people, from the country's most talented and wealthy men to the poorest man who saved a small amount of money, piece by piece ".

The great change that the creation of B.N.R. brought about was the printing of paper money with precious metal coating. That change had a higher emotional impact than the introduction of the banking card. For the first time, the merchant got the payment in banknotes. When the first merchant on Calea Victoriei accepted the first tickets of the Bank, the world gathered as if they were watching a show. It is true that then the merchant went quickly to the Bank's counters to convert the B.N.R. banknotes in gold coins, but the first step had been made.

On December 31, 1880, the first balance sheet of B.N.R. showed that the expenditures were 79,567 lei and the incomes were 119,399 lei. BNR was the 16th bank established in the world, of the almost 200 central banks existing today, ahead of those in Japan, Italy, Switzerland or the United States of America.

Romania becomes a kingdom (1881)

Initially set for May 10, 1881, the proclamation of the Romanian Kingdom was moved earlier, to April 8, at the insistence of members of the government. Bratianu also cited to the king the possible hurdles from abroad if he did not hurry. But, as Carol I's memoirs show, the internal quarrels had more to do with it. "Yesterday [14 March] there were violent debates in the Chamber [...] following which both the government and most Legislative Bodies decided to immediately declare the Kingdom. The Conservative Party, through one of its best speakers, T. Maiorescu, tried to prove that the liberal government and its partisans nurtured republican ideals in the bottom of their hearts and that they could never be a party of order and support for the Dynasty [...] As a result of these debates, the emotion is so big that today all the ministers came to the prince early this morning and asked him to allow them to proclaim the Kingdom today by the Chambers; most of them are so revolted by the charges brought to them yesterday that they no longer want to wait another day. "The next day, at the proposal of General Lecca, "the Chamber of Deputies, with the power of the sovereign right of the nation, proclaims His Royal Highness, Prince Carol I as King of Romania." The law was immediately elaborated: " Art. I Romania is proclaimed a Kingdom. Prince Carol I receives for himself and his descendants the title of King of Romania; Art. II The heir to the throne will have the title of crown prince of Romania. "

C.A.Rosetti, the President of the Chamber, "grizzled into republican ideas", took the floor: if Romania has acquired today what other peoples did not acquire in hundreds of years, it is due only to the close union of the people in all national issues in front of which all differences of views and feelings faded away.

The bill was taken to the palace to be signed by the king and then to be submitted to the Senate. At 16:00, the Senate session opened. After the speeches were over, all senators and all deputies went to the palace to pay tributes to the king. The big news has spread like the lightning across the city, and a kind of drunkenness came over the inhabitants. When senators and deputies approached the palace, led by the metropolitans and bishops and they saw the prince and princess at the window, they burst into strong cheers. Senate President Dimitrie Ghica read the law, and everybody shouted, "Long live the King! Long live the Queen! "

The manifestations of joy took the news of the coronation to Carol's hometown. "A child from Sigmaringen - a king! This has not been recorded so far either in the history of the Hohenzollernian Princialy House or in this modest Swabian town" Carol's father wrote.

The government came with the proposal of some very expensive and pompous crowns. The King was definitely against this idea, because expensive royal insignia did not correspond to the country's traditions, and were only suitable where they had a historical value as legacy of the past centuries. He requested that a steel crown should be made for him at Arsenal, from one of the cannons conquered at Plevna, and a simple golden crown for the queen. Finally, the king's crown had the shape of a circle on top of which eight hemispheres were mounted to support the royal globe with the "Danube Cross"; on the inside, the crown was covered in red velvet, which highlighted very well the bright steel.

The dawn of May 10 was announced to the capital by 24 cannon shots. At 10:15 AM, the King and the Queen left Cotroceni on the beltway line towards the North Railway Station. Upon arrival, the cortege was formed: the king on a horseback, the queen in an eight-horse carriage. The convoy left in the following lineup: a gendarmerie platoon, the police prefect, another gendarmerie platoon, the Rosiori squadron, two supply officers of the Court, the Marshal of the Court with two royal adjutors, 62 flags of the army, with music of Rosiori, the King, the Major Chief of Staff and the King's military

House, the queen's carriage, with the General Commander of the Territorial Division and General Inspector of the National Guard alongside, a large group of cavalry officers and a Rosiori squadron. The garrison troops were on both sides of the route to the Metropolitan Church and presented honors.

The convoy got to the Metropolitan Church at noon. Its members walked the Hill of the Metropolitan Church in a background of bells and choruses sounds. Delegations of districts and communes as well as, 6,000 cheerfully welcoming people, threaded on both sides of the road. A religious service was held outside. Four generals, accompanied by the banner men of the 4th and 6th Infantry Regiments and 9th and 12th Dorobanti regiment brought the crowns to their majesties. The Pre-eminent and Moldovan Metropolitans gave the blessing, which were saluted with 101 cannon shots. The pre-eminent Metropolitan brought forward a parchment where the event was recorded in writing. The document was then given to the Minister of Cults to be preserved in the State Archives.

The convoy was restored and headed to the Palace, where it arrived at 14:00. The crowns come to the palace in an equally imposing convoy. They are handed over to their majesties in the Hall of the Throne. The King held a speech: "I am proud to receive this crown, which was made of the metal of a cannon sprinkled with the blood of our heroes and which was sanctified by the church. I receive it as a symbol of Romania's independence and power! It will be a testimony of the difficult and glorious times we had gone through together and will remind future generations about the heroism of their parents and about the union that prevailed between the prince and the people.

The first alternating current power station in Timisoara

On 12 November 1884 Timisoara became the first electrically lighted city in Europe. Public lighting in the city that stretches along the Bega river dates back to 1760, when it was made with oil and grease lamps fixed in wooden poles along the main streets of the Citadel. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the streets were illuminated with 274 large lamps and 70 small lamps maintained by private entrepreneurs. Johann N. Preyer, mayor of Timisoara in the middle of the nineteenth century, wrote: "The exceptional illumination, which will soon function on gas, is recognized as unprecedented throughout Hungary." From the budget of 1854, 7,500 florins were allocated to the street lighting and 6,520 florins for the salaries of the teachers.

The decision to introduce air gas was taken in 1955. The Austrian Air Gas Company built the gas plant and the new type of lighting was introduced on September 1, 1857. The network had 200 lamps and covered the streets of the Citadel. It was extended to the main streets since 1860 and in the coming years it was also extended to public and private buildings. Timisoara was the first city in Hungary to have an air gas factory. In 1903 the factory and the network were bought by the town hall. The system continued to work for peripheral street lighting until the middle of the fifth decade of the 20th century.

Due to requirements of the Austrian Society deemed as too high, the City Hall decided to introduce electric lighting in 1882. There were negotiations with Anglo-Austrian Brush Electric Comp. Limited Company and its offer was accepted and a contract was concluded on December 25, 1882. The firm pledged to build the Electric Plant and ensure public lighting from September 1, 1883, in exchange of an annual amount of 24,500 florins and the right to sell electricity to institutions, businesses and individuals. The construction of the power plant lasted longer than expected, so the public lighting was inaugurated only on 1 November 1884. The public lighting on the streets was provided by 730 lamps, with a network of 60 km of streets, operated with power supplied by the electric plant, which was equipped with machines that were presented at the Vienna exhibition of 1883.

The cost was very high: for each of the 730 electric bulbs, the company received 82 crowns from the City Hall. To reduce the costs, the Municipal Council decided to buy the power plant together with the transformers and the street network.

On September 1, 1893, the entire plant was acquired for 200,000 golden florins. From the same year, the tariff for the electrical public lighting was reduced by 66%. Since 1902 it has been free of charge. The price of electricity for important consumers has fallen by 6 - 40%.

On May 3, 1910, a hydroelectric power station was connected to supply the power grid. It was the first move of this kind on Romania's territory.

Although Timisoara was the first European city where a public electric lighting network operated since 1884, experiences and facilities of this kind existed on our territory before that date. On July 11, 1868, newspapers in Iasi announced that in the garden of the house in Copou of Logothete Costache Sturza the "Electric sun" lit up. The experience was so successful that it was repeated on Sunday, July 14, 1868.

In Bucharest, the first electric lighting installation was built in 1882 for the Royal Palace. It also supplied power to the Cotroceni Palace was fed, the National Theater at festive shows, and the Cismigiu Garden. The City Hall first installed the electrical light at the Abattoir. The Grozavești plant which supplied electricity to the city was built between 1888 and 1892. The Filaret plant was built in 1908. At first, voltaic arc lamps with large

globes were used. Academician Constantin C. Giurescu remembered that he saw them on Kiseleff Road and Lascar Catargiu Boulevard. In 1906 there were 151 such lamps and 66 incandescent lamps. As in Timisoara, the air-gas lighting operated in parallel, for a while, using the Auer light bulbs since 1894.

Victor Babes

A personal tragic event changed Victor Babes's course of life and gave the world a scholar who founded a new discipline in medicine and paved the way for the discovery of antibiotics. Since he was 14 he was writing poems. He could not decide between anatomy and theater and enrolled at the Budapest Conservatory. He finally chose medicine after his youngest sister, Alma, died of intestinal tuberculosis, aged only 14, in front of his eyes.

In the fourth year, his Vienna teachers recommended him as an assistant at the Faculty of Medicine in Budapest, at the Department of Pathological Anatomy. In 1882 he went on a study trip. Immediately after arriving in Paris, he wrote to his father, "Life is terribly expensive here [...] staying at a miserable hotel away from the city, unable to heat the cell and eating once a day, that is, lunch." The French professor André Victor Cornil helped him and hired him at his institute, offering him a material situation that would allow him to focus on his studies. His value was quickly recognized. Only two weeks after arriving in Paris, he was asked to check the autopsy result of former Prime Minister Léon Gambetta, correcting the findings of the first autopsy.

Together with Professor Cornil he would write the first bacteriology treaty in the world, paving the way for a new medical discipline. If Pasteur and Koch demonstrated that infectious diseases can not occur without the pathogen entering the body, Babes has thoroughly established the process by which these agents cause disease in the body. Without these discoveries, prophylactic medicine could not have made the rapid progress it recorded. Contrary to the opinion of that era, he insisted on the influence of environmental and living conditions in the case of illness, after finding, based on dissections, that the same germ caused different damages, depending on the health of the patient, which was greatly influenced by the living conditions, hygiene, food, etc. As Victor Babes said, by studying the diseases, the medicine had forgotten about the sick individual. The treaty that he wrote along with the French professor Cornil was published in May 1885 and its success surpassed even the most optimistic expectations of the authors. The work was awarded by The Academy of Sciences in Paris, in a meeting chaired by Pasteur, on February 26, 1887. Within days after publication, the bacteriology treaty ran short of circulation. The media hailed the work as an event of great importance, meant to open a new age in medicine.

The research on rabies must be included among the great achievements of Victor Babes. He discovered that Pasteur's method to weaken the virus was not really secure. In March 1891, a savage wolf rammed into the Sadagura fair and bit men and animals. The Austrian administration sent the patients to Bucharest to be treated at the institute of Babes. He applied the immunized blood treatment on these patients, which was due to become the "Romanian anti-rabies vaccination method". The Institute has become one of the first anti-rabies centers in the world.

But how was the institute established? Impressed by the success of the anti-dipterous serum and anti-rabies treatments set up by Victor Babes in Budapest, D.A. Sturdza the Minister of Public Instruction, went to ask him to come to Romania. He promised to build a research institute for him, equipped with the most modern facilities. When he came to Bucharest, Babes was going to discover that not everyone was glad with his arrival. His introduction to the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest prompted the opposition of some members of the faculty council, who launched a media campaign. An anonymous letter was even sent to Babes, along with cuts from newspapers to convince him to give up.

He would also stir the unease of some powerful people of that time. In 1892, a serious cholera epidemic broke out in Galicia, from where it quickly spread to Hungary, Serbia and Russia. The authorities asked Babes to come up with a plan to prevent the spread

in Romania as well. Babes imposed a strict quarantine at the entries to the country, but it disturbed many people who had commercial interests, both in Romania and abroad. The counselor of the Austro-Hungarian Legation paid a visit to the institute and promised a substantial donation for his research if he agreed to "relax" the quarantine regime. He had a stormy discussion with the Romanian Prime Minister. His speech at the 11th Congress of Medicine in Rome in 1894 about the impact of social conditions on illnesses raised a large echo and the text was required for publication in many countries. On his return home, Prime Minister Lascar Catargiu told him that he would never get to hold a congress abroad while he was in office.

Victor Babes discovered 50 new germs. He proved that a microbial disease could be treated with substances that are born in the body of the germs which cause other diseases; this way he anticipated the antibiotic treatment, 60 years ahead. He discovered the principle the passive immunity, by introducing into the body not the attenuated microbes, but the ready-made antimicrobials. In a conference held at the Athenaeum, he said: "In our country, the person who makes useful discoveries is prevented from enforcing them and persecuted by those who should support him, while any discovery or communication, no matter how dubious, are received here with the arms wide open if they come from abroad. "

On 1 October 1926 he retired and was told that he had to leave his home in the institute compound. He died on 19 October 1926.

Anghel Saligny

"This enduring and fadeless work must show the world that the Romanian people are worthy of its beautiful call to the mouths of the Danube and the gates of the East." These words were uttered by King Carol I at the inauguration ceremony of the Cernavoda bridge on September 14, 1895. The bridge over the Borcea horn and the one crossing the Danube were the longest bridge complex in Europe and the third in the world, with its length of 4.088 m.

An international competition was held in order to build them. The Romanian government was unsatisfied by the offers of foreign firms, so it handed this task to Anghel Saligny.

His origins date back to the French family Chatillon-Coligny, which was first documented in 944. A descendant learns about the beauties of Moldova from Mihail Kogalniceanu and accepts Ion Ghica's proposal to come to the principality and teach French. He married a Polish woman here. Anghel Saligny was their second child, born on May 2, 1854. He graduated Politehnica of Berlin, Charlottenburg, at the age of 20. He was offered a job of professor at the Dresden Polytechnic, but he refused: "Although my family was born from the waters of the Loire and then wandered through the world, we were always loyal, so if a country gave us asylum and recognized us as its sons, we can not betray it."

Anghel Saligny's name is related to all major public works since 1877. He has made the first combined bridges (rail and road). In a world first, he designed and produced reinforced prefabricated concrete silos in Braila and Galati, between 1884 and 1889. Anghel Saligny has extended the works for the development of the Constanta port with a special basin for oil export, multiple tanks for receiving and storing oil products, four large depots with silos and a maritime railway station. Installations for oil and grain exports in Constanta were unique in Europe.

Anghel Saligny brought two major innovations in the construction of the Cernavoda Bridge: the new beam system with consoles for the bridge superstructure and the use of soft steel instead of puddled iron as a building material for bridge aprons. The achievement of Saligny has definitively established the superiority of this material for metallic bridges.

At the inauguration, a commemorative document was embedded in the Cernavoda portal of the bridge: "We, Carol I, after five years of steady work, as God had offered peace and grace to the country, we passed over the waves of the two horns of the great Danube and we beat the last stud (in fact, a silver clench) which concluded and ended these glorious works." The document mentions all the personalities involved in the event, except for Anghel Saligny and the team who worked at the bridge. Then the speeches followed. The Prime Minister said, "Your Majesty, you and the soldiers of the country were victorious in the Bulgarian plains, and with the skilled men of the country you have subdued the great Danube." Then a train made up of 15 locomotives and adorned with green flags and garlands crossed the bridge with 60 km/h. Another train followed, travelling at 80 km/h, made up of a locomotive and several wagons which carried 400 people invited to the banquet organized after the inauguration. All these happened while Saligny was in a boat under the bridge. The King sent a lieutenant to bring him to the banquet.

The Danube put the new construction under great strain in 1897. The waters blew great guns over the bridge, surpassing by one meter the highest levels known until then. The water and the powerful wind have washed away the ballast in some areas, leaving the metals suspended and the rails hanging. The damages were quickly repaired and the train traffic was resumed. After Romania entered the First World War, Anghel Saligny

was asked to point where the TNT load should be placed at the Cernavoda bridge, in order to dismantle it. What must have been in his heart?

In 1897 Saligny was elected a titular member of the Romanian Academy. The nomination was quite difficult, as he was rejected on the first round because he did not own too many printed works. The then president of the Academy, Nicolae Kretzulescu, organized a trip on the Danube and arranged for the participants to get to Cernavoda when the sun rose. The members of the Academy were invited to the ship's deck and were amazed at the view of the bridge. They asked who designed and realized it and the president replied: "The one you rejected at the elections a few days ago." At the second ballot he was unanimously elected.

On February 17, 1913, Anghel Saligny was elected as a member of the Council of Censors at the National Bank of Romania. In 1916 he was delegated along with other representatives of B.N.R. to accompany the thesaurus of B.N.R. to Moscow. He was part of treasury inventory committee after the first installment was deposited in Kremlin.

Let us end with a beautiful description of the Cernavoda bridge, signed by Alexandru Vlahuta: "Ahead of us, in the silence of the night, the 'King Carol' Bridge rises white and shining under the starlight sky. The beauty and greatness of this powerful embodiment of the Romanian ingenuity make us believe that we are in a world of charms, in front of one of those silvery bridges that the childhood stories told us about. The supporting pillars, built out of stone, are so far apart from each other and so tall, that it seems that all the huge iron wattle which the staggering trains run on floats in the air, as light as a lace. Now, the two shores rejoin forever under the virtuosity of this arch of triumph dedicated to the old Danube by the people who fought with it for so many centuries and shed its blood in it so many times, to defend the Western civilization.

The Autocephaly of the Romanian Church

After the War of Independence, the question of the ecumenical recognition of the Autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church was also raised. But let us first understand what autocephaly means. The autocephalous church has its own organization, and any other church has no right to intervene. The autocephalous church is exempted from the three duties: it can prepare the Holy Chrism its own, does not seek approval for the establishment of its first hierarch elsewhere, and ordains its leader by itself.

The confirmation of autocephaly has been prepared since the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. The secularization of the monasteries that belonged to holy sites in the East put the issue of church independence on an irreversible course. The Royal Decree no. 27 of March 18, 1863 established that Romanian was the language of cult in all churches in Romania. At the end of 1864, three laws were enacted to reorganize the Romanian Orthodox Church, whose unification had not yet been achieved, after the 1859 Union. On Dec. 3, 1864, the Organic Decree for the Establishment of a Synodic Central Authority was signed into law. The first article stated that the Romanian Orthodox Church "was and remained independent of any foreign church authority".

The idea was renewed in the Constitution of 1866, where it was stated that "the Romanian Orthodox Church was and remained unattained by any foreign hierarchy, preserving its unity with the Ecumenical Church of the East with regard to the dogmas."

After the state gained its independence, the recognition of autocephaly was required. The Patriarch of Constantinople, however, did not want this to happen. On February 13, 1879, Ioachim III wrote to Primate Metropolitan Calinic Miculescu to tell him that the law on the organization of the Romanian Orthodox Church approved in 1872 was based on something non-existent: the autocephaly of Ungrovlahia Metropolitan Church. Calinic replied: "It is enough to argue that Romania is an independent state in all its aspects, to prove that the autocephaly of our Church is an incontestable and indisputable fact."

On March 25, 1882, Metropolitan Calinic Miculescu along with all the Romanian hierarchs celebrated the service of the Holy and Great Chrism for the first time in our country. It was the clearest assertion of autocephaly. Joachim III addressed to the Romanian hierarchs a synodic letter, in which he qualified the action of the Romanian Synod as non-canonical and accused the Romanian clergy of innovations, such as baptism by spraying, not by immersion. The Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church discussed this letter on October 23, 1882. A commission made up of members of the Synod was asked to draw up a report where it was stated: "The Romanians did not receive either the Christian baptism and doctrine or their first bishop from Constantinople." It was then stated that the Romanian Countries refused the ascendancy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople throughout the middle Ages. "Based on our Romanian history, based on our modern legislation, based on the dignity of the Romanian state and the dignity of the Romanian nation, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declares that the Romanian Orthodox Church was and autocephalous in Romania and no foreign church authority has any right to impose anything on us."

On December 10/22, 1883, the Ecumenical Patriarch Ioachim III had a meeting with the diplomatic representative of Romania in Istanbul, Petre Mavrogheni. The Patriarch admitted that, as a result of independence, it was natural for the Romanian Orthodox Church to experience autocephaly, as was the case with the Greek Church (1850) or Serbia's Church (1879). Mavrogheni pointed out that the situation dated back 17 years and it was hard to believe that the heads of the church might be convinced now to come to ask the Ecumenical Patriarchate for formal recognition. The Romanian envoy also cited an argument that had to determine the ecumenical patriarch to settle the conflict

as soon as possible: the Russian-Bulgarian propaganda and the Catholic propaganda, which heavily undermined its authority in the Balkans.

Only the new Patriarch of Constantinople, Joachim IV (1884-1886), agreed to resume talks on autocephaly. On December 25, 1884, Mavrogheni was visited by Constantin Calliadi Bey, one of the patriarch's advisors, who told him that Ioachim IV was glad to recognize autocephaly if he was asked to do so by the Romanian Orthodox Church and by the government. The Ecumenical Patriarch wanted to strengthen the spiritual union of the branches of Orthodoxy in the context of the danger of Pan-Slavism, for which the Russian Church had become a servile instrument. A consistent correspondence with Bucharest followed with great discretion, to agree on the texts of the requests from the Romanian Orthodox Church and the government, and on the text of the patriarchal act (tomos) on the acknowledgement of autocephaly.

On April 24, the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was convened in a secret meeting to give its approval and in a solemn session on the next day, to sign the acknowledgement act. The works of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church were opened on May 1, 1885. D.A Sturdza, the Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Instruction, carried the message to King Carol I, which marked the importance of the moment.

A.D. Xenopol

In 1930 philosopher N. Bagdasar wrote: "The philosophical work of A.D. Xenopol is very little known in our country [...] Xenopol carries another importance for us, the Romanians: he established the indisputable contact between Romanian and foreign philosophy, by means of his philosophical work. That is why our disregard for his philosophical work is even stranger." And it remained strange until today.

In 1889, after the publication of first volume of *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană* (the History of Romanians in Trajan's Dacia), the first synthesis of Romanian's history, A.D. Xenopol received the Academy Award and was elected a corresponding member of the Academy. He was elected as a full member of the Academy, after the issue of the last volume, in 1893.

The major contribution of A.D. Xenopol at a universal level consists in the elaboration of a theory of history. In his time, history had an uncertain status, balancing between "science" and "art." In the definition of science, the principle of Aristotle laid the basis: there is no science without general. Xenopol was placed between one trend and the other, trying to reconcile them by theorizing the idea of "historical series".

In his work *Istoria ideilor mele* (the History of My Ideas), Xenopol noted the moment when he started to deal with the problems of the theory of history: "In that year [1894], on September 6, I was heading to my usual evening walk on the beautiful Copou alley and a thought that often accompanied my historical research has once again resurfaced in my thoughts with a special force, namely: how is it possible that in history the study of the mind's process of research may be separated from these researches themselves, how could there be two disciplines engaging in these questions. [...] Why one science would be necessary in history to determine how the historian should think and another to establish the application of this thinking on the facts?" Six years later he published the volume *Les principes fondamentaux de l'histoire*, in Paris, after intense research. A year on, the work appeared in Iasi in the Romanian language. It stirred great interest abroad, but in the country it was fiercely discussed only in *Convorbiri literare* (literary conversations) .

With Xenopol's work, Romanian philosophical thinking enters the circuit of European values. The publication of *Les principes fondamentaux de l'histoire*, which helps him become a correspondent member of the French Academy, was documented by major foreign philosophy journals in France, Italy, Germany. His ideas trigger approval or polemics from Croce, Rickert, Berr, Lacombe. The most important publications of sociology and philosophy ask for collaboration, congresses of sociology invite him, even when his views are contrary to those of the organizers. In 1906 more than 15 French magazines reproduced, signalled or discussed his works. In 1908 he published the *Théorie de l'histoire*, which brought him broad recognition and the nomination as a foreign associate member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. "A lecturer at the Sorbonne at the Saint-Simon Circle and a collaborator with the major specialized publications, a member of several academic societies, he enjoyed a prestige that no Romanian had ever acquired," noted academician Alexandru Zub. Sociologist Georges Gurvitch and the historian and philosopher Raymond Aron quoted him in their writings. With the theory of history, Xenopol has earned himself a place in the history of universal thinking.

Xenopol introduced a new criterion for classifying the sciences: repetition and succession. Repeating acts occur without suffering essential changes in time. The succession facts change as they are subjected to an action in time by a force. In succession phenomena, changes are so important that the repetition element becomes negligible. "There can be no question of the superiority or inferiority of one of the two classes of science -

coexistence and succession - to the other, because the larger weight of the historical sciences to establish the truth about the phenomena studied is compensated by a wider penetration of the causal network," the Romanian scientist wrote. The facts never repeat identically in history, but they have a certain degree of generality. "History is the only genuine explanatory science, while the law sciences only seek to establish facts and laws."

The idea of historical series was resumed in the second half of the last century by the French historian Pierre Chaunu in the form of serial history. Chaunu does not mention Xenopol's name anywhere, so can a relationship be established? - asked academician Alexandru Zub. And he then showed that there was a chronological coincidence between the Sorbonne doctorate thesis of Octavian Buhociu in 1957 about Xenopol's conception and the moment when Chaunu began to draft his new serial theory. But how could anyone remonstrate to the French historian that he did not mention Xenopol, when the Romanian scientist's work is so little known in his own country?

Let us end with a quote from the same academician Alexandru Zub: "After three-quarters of a century, the assertion of the series as one of the most fertile directions of historiography is an indirect tribute to the systematic efforts of the Romanian thinker."

Junimea and the debate about the ways to modernize Romania

The exact date when the Junimea Society was established is not known: it was either in October 1863 or in the spring of 1864. The founding members decided that this issue would not be investigated, so there was a joke about it: "the origin of Junimea is lost in the night of time". The society was given this name by Theodor Rosetti, after initially someone else had suggested calling it "Ulpia Traiana". There are elements that show the spirit that originally dominated at Junimea. In the debates, the "seniors" stood "sprawled" on sofas, while the "caracuda" (non-valuable members) was seated. After 10:00 PM, the talks ceased and tea was served. "Caracuda" rushed ravenously, asking for the salon doors to open, and the food was quickly torn out. At first, when the meeting was held at Titu Maiorescu's house, "at the Three Hierarchs, the tradition required that the Union Hora (Dance) should be danced in the corner at Petrea Bacal", on his departure, Jacob Negruzzi remembered. Although "Junimea" started out as a society which did not like politics, its most prominent figures penetrated the political battlefield a few years later. They cumulated months of absences, which would lead to the dilution of the sessions. The definitive move of Maiorescu - the soul of Junimea - to Bucharest, was a heavy blow to the activity of the society. Slavici described the atmosphere in December 1877: "The literary meetings here are going better than last year and the world begins to give them some importance. It is understood that they do not come even close to what "Junimea" is. The heart is missing and I believe that in Bucharest it will always be missing. The atmosphere is bad. "

One of the first goals of Junimea was to organize a series of conferences. Gheorghe Panu recalled that at the first conference he found himself in front of "the most elegant and cultivated audience in Iasi for 30 years: much of the old aristocracy and everyone were wearing splendid clothes at the conferences inaugurated by Mr. Maiorescu ". Aside from the conferences, the second goal of "Junimea" was the editorial activity. Gheorghe Panu wrote: "The Junimea Society will start by printing works of all Romanian chroniclers and historiographers in a new edition." Bessarabian Nicolae Casu bought a printing house, but the authorities of Bessarabia did not allow him to take it to Chisinau, so he sold it at more than easy rates and it is not known if they were ever paid in full. They also created a bookstore, but both businesses proved bankrupt and he sold them at a loss. They had more luck with Convorbiri Literare (Literary Conversations), a publication that has penetrated massively in Transylvania as well.

There were a few key moments that defined Junimea. The first was the debate around the spelling. It was more than a strictly philological discussion; it was a component of the re-evaluation process of the Romanian cultural-ideological phenomenon. Titu Maiorescu's proposals have been appreciated for their rigor. It was the first great success of "Junimea", and the principles proposed by Maiorescu are still valid in their essence today. Another factor that brought prestige and contributed decisively to the imposition of junimism in public consciousness was the aesthetic directive. Maiorescu is the creator of the philosophical aesthetics in our culture. Maiorescu was a mentor in a moment of cultural chaos, the creator of Romanian literary criticism, not a pioneer, but a founder. The literary movement "Junimea" appeared in the consciousness of the time as a unitary direction, with a clearly defined program and orientation. And at the same time it brought together very different literary personalities, like Eminescu, Caragiale, Creanga or Duiliu Zamfirescu.

The literary work of the great creators of Junimea was often the most important way of imposing it to public consciousness. If it wasn't for the great literature, "Junimea" and junimism would not have become what they were.

One of the basic ideas of "Junimea" was the antinomy between the Romanian background and the imported forms of civilization (especially from France!). The adoption of civilizing

norms from the area of forms could only have results if they were an expression of the millenary background or were necessarily claimed by it. The principle had been brutally violated between 1840 and 1870. In the study called *În contra direcției de astăzi în cultura română*, (Against today's direction in Romanian culture) in 1868, Maiorescu wrote: "First make the Romanian people more educated and active, and then, by means of good schools and good economic development, give them the light and the independence of character of the true citizen. Subsequently, the legal form upon which they will draw up their public and private relations will come by automatically and will be fit for their state of culture. But do not start with administrative and constitutional regulations, as no people have ever been renewed through laws and governments, since the world exists, but the laws and governments have only been the incidental expression, the external result of the inner culture of a people." He was basically right, when he criticized the taking-over of some forms for which the fund was still missing here. Forms that the West had reached after a hundred or two hundred years of natural, organic evolution. But history does not stand in place, so that we can get through it step by step, like the West has organically done. For several hundred years, the Romanian society has moved from one transition to another, desperate to catch up with the West, due to a different course of history.

As opposed to the revolutionary forty-eighters legacy, now tacitly abandoned by the former revolutionaries of 1848, Junimea brings a moderation of the reformist impulse. By appeasing the rampant enthusiasm, and through an increase in sobriety, weight and rigor, the junimism was the necessary complement to liberalism, and both played a constructive role.

The Romanian National Parties in Transylvania, ASTRA and the Memorandum Movement (1892)

After its defeat in the 1866 war with Prussia, the Habsburg dynasty found no other rescue solution than the dualistic pact with Budapest and the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The completion of the Austro-Hungarian pact happened while Romanian leaders were unprepared, divided and lacking a popular political program. Moreover, they were now deprived of any support from the Vienna Court, and the autonomy of Transylvania was suppressed. Transylvania was dominated by the idea of passivity and non-participation in political life, as a sign of the refusal to recognize the dualism and the loss of autonomy of the province, while in Banat and Bucovina the Romanians who had always assigned lawmakers to the Parliament in Budapest accepted to participate in Hungary's electoral and political life. A long process of clarification and unification of the national struggle followed, culminating in the memorandum of 1892.

The Romanian National Party of Banat and Transylvania - respectively - were established in February 1869. Due to their tactical differences, their collaboration was difficult. Romania's gaining of independence had a favorable effect on the national movement of Romanians in the dualistic monarchy. Nicolae Cristea (editor of the Sibiu Romanian Telegraph newspaper - *Telegraful român*) wrote: "Today no one dares to distinguish the Romanian from the Romanian, either anywhere, in Moldova, Muntenia (Wallachia), Ardeal (Transylvania), Banat, Bucovina, Bessarabia [...] We are saying it without shame: The year 1877 gave Europe a new people. "George Barițiu commented on the situation after 1877:" From now on, the Romanians from Brasov and Sibiu and other so-called activists began to wipe their eyes, too, and when they saw that more than one hundred Hungarian newspapers made a single chorus in the unanimous fight against the independence of the Romanian state, our good activists woke up even better. "

The general conference of the Romanian voters in Transylvania and Hungary met in the festivity hall of the "Emperor of the Romans" Hotel in Sibiu, on the morning of May 12, 1881. On the sidelines of the conference, George Barițiu had consultations with Titu Maiorescu with A.T. Laurian and other personalities in Bucharest. After three days of debate, the program of the National Party of Hungary and Transylvania was approved, thus unifying the two Romanian parties in Banat and Transylvania. According to the decision of the national conference, George Barițiu made a Memorial the following year. The document marks the call to democratic Europe and the internationalization of the Romanian issue. For the first time the appeal to the Vienna Court was abandoned, and Budapest was ignored. The text included direct references to human rights: "the struggles for human rights were common to Romanians and oppressed peoples throughout Europe and in all the centuries, and the difference was and still is only in the form of the despotism endured by the peoples."

In 1884, the *Tribuna* magazine was published, which, with the support of a large popular audience, will embark on a continuous struggle against the legislation issued after the end of dualism. At the party's national conference on May 7-9, 1887, a Memorandum was decided. Ioan Slavici was initially handed the task to draft the document, and then the task was passed on to Aurel Muresianu and Iuliu Coroianu. It was only at the end of 1888 that Iuliu Coroianu's project was adopted. After the 1892 visit to Bucharest by of Ioan Ratiu, Vasile Lucaciu and Iuliu Coroian and the discussions with the Romanian authorities, the idea of the Memorandum was discussed by the Central Committee of the PNR. It was debated paragraph by paragraph and it was pruned, so that the emperor would not be presented with a text that was too long.

On March 25, 1892, a national delegation (300 Romanians) submitted the memorandum to the Vienna Court and requested an audience at the Emperor. He refused to see

them. The envelope containing the document was sent, without being opened, to the Hungarian government to be "resolved" and the government ordered the investigation of the culprits. On 13 May 1893 the prosecutor-general in Cluj charged the whole executive committee of P.N.R. The process was held in Cluj, between April 25 and May 13, 1894. The Romanians held numerous and strong manifestations of solidarity, which raised concerns from the authorities. One of the accused said during the trial: "What is being discussed here is the very existence of the Romanian people. The existence of a people is not discussed, but it is stated." They were given heavy prison sentences; the hardest sentence was against Vasile Lucaciu, 5 years of prison, as he was considered the "intellectual author of the movement". German diplomat Anton von Monts wrote to Chancellor Leo von Caprivi: "The judging of Romanians by a Hungarian nationalist jury could only result in their condemnation; the government was in an embarrassing situation. On the one hand, it could not secure a legal conviction and, on the other, could not avoid violating the law."

During his visit to Vienna in 1895, Carol I asked for the release of those responsible for the memorandums. The Emperor found a compromise solution: he decorated those who condemned them and freed the detainees.

The "Library for All" Collection

"A librarian in Bucharest - Mr. Carol Müller - made the decision to print a string of well-chosen, beautiful and cheap books. He asked for the support of Mr. Dumitru Stăncescu, a good Romanian writer, commissioning him to choose the books which were due to be printed." This was the way that Foaia poporului, (the People's Sheet) from Sibiu, announced the publication of the "Library for All", in 1895. From the very beginning, it was a collection for all Romanians, inside Romania's borders and beyond.

At the end of March 1895, Povesti alese (Special tales) appeared in Bucharest at the Publishing House of Carol Müller Library, the first volume of a literature collection that was sold for 30 bani per volume (a newspaper cost between 5 and 15 bani and included remarkable writings of Romanian and universal literature. The idea came out from the discussions of the librarian Carol Müller with Caragiale, Delavrancea, Vlahuta and was inspired by a German collection. Dumitru Stăncescu (1866-1899) a writer, folklorist and translator, was in charge of the collection. Special Tales by Hans Christian Andersen was the first volume.

The 100th number was festively accompanied by a foreword by Dumitru Stăncescu, who wrote: "I believed in the success of this publication from the start. Noticing the great desire for lecture, seeing how the weak and bad novels were being sold for a long time, we imagined that it was impossible that among so many readers could not be a part who would feel the desire, the need to read things that would increase their knowledge and thin their spirit, and the taste to finally read something better and more serious." The collection has seen a circulation which was never known until then (7,000-10,000 copies). Approximately 1,000,000 copies were printed until 1899. That year, Carol Müller faced financial hardship, sold his business and in May he gave the editor Alcalay the right to continue to publish the books from the Library for All collection. In the same year Dumitru Stăncescu died. In 1918 the collection reached the number of 1,000. It should be said that some tomes contained several volumes: Manon Lescaut, which appeared in 1896, was numbered 60, 65 and 66; The Count of Monte Cristo, by Alexandre Dumas, printed in six volumes, had 29 numbers. The leadership of the collection was assured in turns by Aurel Alexandrescu-Dorna (journalist and translator) Victor Anestin (publicist and author of popular books), Ludovic Daus (playwright and poet), and journalist Iosif Nadejde.

In August 1923, Vasile Demetrius was in charge of the collection, which revived it. Until 1929 he re-edited the old numbers and then resumed the publishing of new books. In 1936 the collection got to number 1,500. It had become the oldest and most popular Romanian collection of literature and one of the oldest in Europe. In 1934 Vasile Demetrius wrote: "In addition to the primary school, which is to blame for the illiteracy, the Library for All created the taste for reading, cultivated and civilized the Romanian people in the cities, and got all the way to the village homes."

After the nationalization in 1948, the old series ceased to exist. It had reached a circulation of over 26,000,000 volumes. The last volume in the old series was numbered 1575-1576; it was a volume signed by Cicerone Theodorescu, and had a name like a premonition name: Cantece de galera (Galley Songs).

It was resumed in 1950, in an intermediate numbered series, by the State Publishing House for Literature and Art. The first volume, in 40,000 copies, was a collection of lyrics by George Coșbuc. The collection has gone into the patrimony of several publishers; Minerva Publishing House looked after it the longest period. It changed his format and numbering over time. At the end of 1966, a general culture sub-series was initiated, where works of cultural history, monographs and biographies, history syntheses, fundamental philosophical writings, famous travel journals were published. Even under

the communist regime, it managed to fulfill the goal of its creation: to offer the public a diversified and qualitative literature at a modest price.

In 1935 to mark 40 years of its existence, Vasile Demetrius had the idea to publish a catalog of titles, preceded by the appreciation expressed by some personalities for the collection. Let's quote a few.

I. Agârbiceanu: "It has been, since its creation until today, good and cheap bread for all the culture lovers. [...] Personally, I remember with genuine piety the square books with an orange cover for which I was saving my money from the third grade of the high school to buy each new number that appeared."

M. Celarian: "To the generation before 1916, the small, pocket library was a treasure. Today, after the war, in changed times, we do not believe that the sportive school students would fill the pockets of their coats with its editions twisted at the corners. It seems that sport had replaced the sacred occupation of the elative reading. [...] To the reader in lack of means, only this Library of 30 bani was accessible, where Maiorescu, Virgiliu, Dante, Alecsandri and Bolintineanu would fit in very well. "

Mircea Eliade: "I sent my first manuscript to the Library for All in 1920, when I was only 13 years old. It was a volume called *Gâze și găngăanii* (Bugs and buzzers). Fortunately, I never heard about it again. A tasteful man threw it to the garbage bin, like he should have. Since then, I have a more sincere admiration for the Library for all."

Let's conclude with Nichita Stănescu's poetic image from the catalog printed at 75 years of its existence: "It made the paper look like light. It made possible that the light could be printed. "

Emil Racovița

At the suggestion of Grigore Antipa, Emil Racovita was elected member of the Romanian Academy, in 1920, with 21 votes out of 21. In his speech, Antipa gave him a praise that fully justifies the presence of this scholar among the 100 essential moments of our history. "His scientific work across this short while, his solid knowledge of all branches of zoology, his eye of an observer and his balanced judgment, and not least his eminent personal qualities of a good comrade drew attention upon him and recommended him to Mr. Gerlache, the leader of the Antarctic Belgian expedition, as a zoologist for this great scientific expedition, which performed an important work in 1897-1899. Belgica was the first vessel to have spent the winter in the Antarctic regions. [...] The entire zoological part of the expedition was entrusted to him. [...] The numerous monographs published by the various specialists, who have processed the fauna material collected by Racovita, show how skillfully he has accomplished the task he had assumed and how precious was the biological data gathered by him in understanding the course of life in those regions that have not been explored until then. "

There is little talk today in our country about this expedition, the first in the world to reach those harsh parts of the Earth. It was called "Belgica" after the name of the ship which was used in the expedition. Adrien de Gerlache, the organizer and the captain of the ship Roald Amundsen (the future conqueror of the South Pole), the American doctor Frederick Cook, the Polish men H. Arctowski and A. Dobrowolski and the Romanian Emil Racovita took part in the mission. When he was asked to take part in the expedition, Racovita was in the military service. Gerlache asked the Flanders Countess to intervene with King Carol I so as Racovita would be released from the army, and in July Racovita received an unlimited leave.

After Belgica arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Racovița took advantage of the occasion and, instead of wasting a month with banquets and parties which were thrown in the honor of the expedition members, he went to Punta Arenas, Argentina, to explore the Patagonian jungle. When he went to take him back, Gerlache wrote at home: "We can already send some interesting samples of the Magellan Fauna to the Interior Ministry." It is true, Racovitte had lost some of the plants and animals collected; some of the herbarium had been nibbled by mice, and the fall of a horse caused the loss of jars with small fauna elements.

On 27 January 1898 they landed on an island, which was later given a name by Emil Racovita. He named it Cobalcescu, like his natural sciences professor at the "United Institutes" High School in Iasi - the great naturalist Grigore Cobalcescu (1831-1892), one of the founders of Romanian geology.

On February 28, Belgica was in front of a huge icepack, torn by wide cracks. Commander Gerlache ordered the ship to go ahead, despite the opposition of the other members in the expedition. He was hoping to be able cross the floating ice and then sail through clear waters to the South. Emil Racovita and Roald Amundsen were among those who strongly opposed the advance. They did not lack the courage, but they feared the risk that the important collections and the observations might not reach their fellows. On 4 March 1898, as the advance to the South had become impossible, they decided to return to the north, but there was no success. The ship was blocked in an ice cube.

On May 17 the long polar night began, which was going to last for three months. No other human being had ever faced it in the middle of the ice, beyond the South Polar Circle. Emil Racovita synthesized the effects of the polar night in this way: "The continuous darkness does not only have a bad effect on the soul, it is also harmful to the body. Anemia soon haunted our little colony. The faces become yellowish; the breathing became more difficult, the simplest movements causing heartbeat. Like shadows, we

were crawling in the unceasing darkness, through the mud of snow that the blizzard built on the deck of the ship." Any long-term intellectual work had become impossible. They were having troubles sleeping and the psychic problems added to the gastric and circulatory conditions.

It was only after one year, on 14 March 1899, and after a titanic work, that Belgica escaped from the icepack and was able to return to Punta Arenas on 28 March.

"Although this considerable number of bio-economic works and this great scientific activity which unfolded in a relatively short time were enough to ensure him a consecrated name in science, our compatriot, who had barely completed the task he had undertaken with the Antarctic expedition, was moving into a new direction - again in an unknown field - where large and difficult problems opened up a new and vast field of work for him"- Grigore Antipa wrote. In the spring of 1904, while on an oceanographic study trip, he explored the fauna of Cueva de'l Drach in Majorca. There he discovered a new genus of crustaceans. As he explored the theme, he noted how little known and researched the cave fauna was. After a critical review of the previous conceptions, he published a work in 1907, where he presented the program of the new branch of biological science, a branch that he created: speleology. In 1920 he founded in Cluj the first speleology institute in the world.

Nicolae Iorga

"The work of Iorga is so vast - perhaps the most extensive work in the history of universal culture - it reaches such diverse fields, that an overall study of it would have to be carried out by a group of researchers with a thorough ideological and expert training, who would also have the necessary respite for such an endeavour." This is how the historian Mihail Berza described the great scholar in the mid-1960s of the past century, when discussions about Nicolae Iorga were resumed in Romania. So how could anyone say everything about him in a few minutes? Perhaps by recalling some of his research directions, some of his ideas about history, and especially how the academic world reacted to his tragic death.

Prior to entering the first grade, Nicolae Iorga had read in original some books of Victor Hugo and other French writers. In the 6th grade he was a perfect connoisseur of Latin and Greek. At 19, he became a high school teacher. He graduated the university in a single year. At 22, he was a doctor at the University of Leipzig and at the age of 23 years he became a professor at the University of Bucharest. He wrote a synthesis of the of Romanians' history in ten volumes, he wrote some numerous other syntheses and monographs, he edited an impressive number of documents, he composed lyrics, wrote plays, left travel notes and memories, delivered thousands of conferences. According to the secretary of Nicolae Iorga and the composer of his bio-bibliography Barbu Theodorescu, the scientist has left us 1,250 volumes and 25,000 articles. When Iorga was 40, A.D. Xenopol noted, "One would gapingly wonder how a brain was able to conceive so many works and a hand to write them."

When he was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of Oxford University, on May 3, 1930, he was brought forward in the following manner: "I present to you a man who knows a lot and who wrote a lot and if I would call him Tit Liviu of his Trans - Danubian Dacia, I would hide what should be said first of all: that he wrote historical works in four languages, that he searched through the most hidden origins, that he converted historical stories in plays, has his name blended with history itself. [...] Because he did not only describe the deeds of the Romanians, he did not only publish the monuments and pervaded their art, their monasteries and places with a curiosity like Pliny's; he pursued the Turkish annals stretching across five centuries, he depicted them in as many tomes, as well as investigating the customs and settlements of all the nations of the Southern and Eastern parts of Europe. Because in this respect no one enjoys a greater and a more widespread fame."

Based on a direct knowledge of the historical documents as it was rarely seen in historiography, he wrote studies of Romanians' history and universal history. The history of the Ottoman Empire was the most important approach on the subject, when he wrote it and many years later. The British Arnold J. Toynbee wrote about the book that does not have a Romanian translation, even today: "I regret never knowing Nicolae Iorga. [...] I am especially grateful to him for writing the History of the Ottoman Empire - that great history of Iorga that I have in the library in a German edition.

Nicolae Iorga is a great figure of science and history both in Romania and Europe and the whole world, and his tragic end was a general loss. "Iorga was one of the great Byzantinists, and among other works, he left us the History of the Byzantine life and that Byzantium after Byzantium, which defined for the first time a historical reality and the continuity of Byzantine forms after the Ottomans conquered Constantinople. Moreover, it includes so many ideas for future directions of research that they could make up a research plan for a specialized institute for half a century. Iorga is also the only Romanian historian who has so far managed to go beyond treating the national history in the conventional "drawers": Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, depicting

it in its natural course. It is true that the abundance of sources and the approach make it difficult to be read by a non-specialist, sometimes even for experts.

Nicolae Iorga was also the creator of the Romanian School in Paris and the "Romana House" in Venice, institutions where many Romanian historians and philologists studied during the interwar period.

In the speech at the National Theater in Iasi, on November 25, 1918, Iorga said: "The Romanian Lands appeared as a historical necessity after 1300, a folded political structure demanded by the great needs of the universal economic life. They guarded the way, safeguarded the peace, and secured the trade, against the Tartars and the Turks. They have also maintained a balance in this geographical area." On another occasion, he emphasized: "The difference between the universal history and the national history so far disappears, a distinction that is meant to remain only in the pedant or comfortable disparities of the history departments. The life of a people is incessantly mixed with the lives of others, depending on them and continuously affecting their lives.

At the death of Nicolae Iorga, who was assassinated by the Legionnaires in November 1940, 47 universities flew the flag at half-mast. In December 1940, when the French capital was under Nazi occupation, Mario Roques, a historian and philologist specialized in medieval literature, held a speech in Paris in front of a gathering convened by the French Academy to honor Iorga's memory: "Nicolae Iorga was one of those men of epic times, initiators, leaders, tireless guides of their nation, who must understand everything that is about their country, to be aware of everything that is happening, but especially to unravel nations by applying everything in their country, to organize everything, to check, correct, and often start everything from the beginning."

Iorga wrote his own epitaph: "They were cutting an old fir/ Because it was casting too much shadow ..."

Traian Vuia, the first flight 1906

In 1902, when he left for Paris, Traian Vuia told his mother: "Do not cry, Mom that I'm going away, but you will hear beautiful things about me and I will not come back from where I'm going except by flying in the air with a machine that I am going to make."

In order to pursue his passion for flying, Traian Vuia gave up a promising career as a lawyer, which he had started under the guidance of Coriolan Brediceanu, and left for Paris to prove that the future of the flying belonged to self-propelled devices heavier than the air. In achieving his dream, he received material support from Coriolan Brediceanu, Petru Groza's father, Nicolae Titulescu and other Romanians.

In an autobiographical sketch, Vuia wrote: "My flying machine was designed in the winter of 1901-1902. [...] I was surprised to find that all the elements for the mechanical flight existed, and I was wondering why people were losing their time with the airship balloons. [...] Driven by the enthusiasm and the sacred fire of faith, ignoring the hardships and material hindrances, we continued, and in the winter of 1902-1903, the machine was already conceived in all detail." On February 16, 1903, he presented a memo to the French Academy of Sciences entitled "Automobile Airplane Project". A committee of the most famous French scholars was formed, who decided: "Achieving and solving the issue of flying with a heavier machine than the air is a chimera. This conception could only arise from a sick brain. "Vuia did not give up and he patented his invention in France six months later, on August 7, 1903.

He then went on to practically build the prototype of the aircraft. The entire mechanical part of his machine was finished in February 1905, but as he ran out of funds, he was forced to postpone the project for a while. In December he was ready and he was able to begin the experiments: first the road runs without the wings. In December 1905, on a very cold weather, he caught a cold and it was not until February 1906 that he could resume. At that time no one in Europe had built an analogue flying machine.

On February 5, an experiment with the wings fit in was due to take place. The powerful wind prevented this, but as there was many people who gathered, including photographers he disassembled the wings and rolled machine trailed by the propeller. The newspapers commented on the event and he received numerous messages. "From Bucharest, I received encouraging letters, expressing the desire to make these experiences a national matter, making many promises and urging me to refuse any foreign contest, which I did." Obviously, he did not receive any help from the Romanian government.

On March 18, 1906, his experiment with the mounted wings was successful. The French magazine L'Aerophile wrote about the success: "Beautiful spring day, clear and blue sky. A small wind blows from north-east to the left of the pilot. The device was pushed from the hangar on the road from Monteson to Sena. The reservoir was ignited around 3 o'clock, and after five minutes the pilot sat on the pilot's seat, holding the steering wheel with the left hand and with the right one he opened the CO2 gas valve in the engine. The device was set in motion, without noise, accelerating the forwarding speed. The pilot released the valve with his right hand and grabbed the lever for gas expansion into the engine. The machine continued accelerating and, after a course of about 50 m, lost contact with the ground without the pilot realizing the take-off time. The versatility of the vapor engine was revealed in all its elegance. During that while, the expansion lever slowly slid down its sector and reached the dead end. The engine suddenly stopped. The propeller stalled and the wind blew the machine to the right, bouncing it by a tree and causing damage to the right wing and the propeller. The machine fell and resumed contact with the ground as beautifully as it took off. The device had risen to about one meter in height and ran through about 12 meters in the air." Another Parisian newspaper wrote: Vuia Airplane is making a successful flight. "In any case, this jump

was a enough of a response to those critics who said Mr Vuia's airplane was too heavy and that he would never rise from the ground."

The novelty that Vuia brought, apart from the take-off using the means on board, was the take-off / landing train. Until then, the Wright brothers had managed to rise from the ground with a catapult. He used a monoplane, with a front-mounted propeller, and an empennage made up of an elevator and a steering in the rear.

Unfortunately, Traian Vuia did not patent his invention in time. Santos Dumont, who attended Vuia's flight, gave up the balloon flight. He also flew on September 14, 1906, with a heavier machine than the air, and his flight on October 20 of the same year, 1906 was officially approved as the first flight with a heavier device than the air. He used the principle established by Vuia, according to which the duration and speed of the flight were determined by the power of the engine.

At the International Exhibition in Paris in 1931, Brazil held a reception in the memory of Santos Dumont, and the French Air-club was invited. Its members considered that it would be appropriate for Romania's pavilion to arrange a reception, as our country had had a pioneer in aviation. But Dimitrie Gusti, the Commissioner of the Romanian pavilion, fell seriously ill and those who replaced him did not seem interested, so nothing was done.

Constantin Brancusi

My life was just a series of miracles, "said Constantin Brancusi. He left home at age 11, leaving a widow mother behind. He came to wash barrels at a landlord in Craiova. After being admitted to the School of Arts and Crafts in Craiova city, he began his apprenticeship in a furniture workshop. The school principal noticed his talent and sent him to the National School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, with a scholarship and a recommendation letter. In 1902 he went on foot to Paris, where he arrived two years later, in 1904, ill and without money, after a journey through Germany and Switzerland. He washed dishes in the evening in restaurants. He went to a masked ball of the Belle-Arte Academy in 1907, dressed with a sort of alpenhorn, with bells on his arms and legs, with a riddle on his head, wrapped in two oriental rugs, with the one on his back hanging like a train. He returned home at dawn, riding, followed by a large escort. At age 30 he was expelled from Belle-Arte for old age. In the heart of Paris, where he did not live in isolation - as demonstrated by his ties and friendships with Rousseau Vamesul, Guillaume Apollinaire, James Joyce, Modigliani - Brancusi remained a Romanian peasant by his way of living, making his furniture with his own hands, warming himself with a stove brick, and having his own oil press.

Brâncuși's creation is a happy betrothal of Mediterranean sensitivity and oriental wisdom, Carola Giedion-Welcker believed. Incarnations in stone or bronze, Brâncuși's works propose to the viewer a "liberation", a detachment from the corporal's burden, specific to Oriental philosophy. It was not by accident that his master book became the one about the Tibetan ascetic and poet Milarepa, who lived during the second half of the 11th century and the first third of the next one. Brancusi even said: "In India I found my wisdom. Preserved under the rain of the West and the stupidity of Paris: la paix et la joie! [peace and joy]".

Rodin suggested to him to be a monitor in his studio, but Brancusi refused, considering that nothing could grow in the shadow of the great trees. He has not been attached to any program of his training period and has remained a solitary for all his life. He approached the sculpture directly, without a previous model in clay. "Direct hewing, that is the real road to sculpture, but also the most dangerous for those who do not know how to walk." And he was defining his belief: "Create like a god, order like a king, work like a slave."

He resumed endlessly a small number of plastic themes, seeking to achieve perfection. "Simplicity is not a goal in art, but you unwillingly reach it as you approach the real meaning of things." With Muza adormită [Sleeping Muse] from 1909/1910, Brancusi touches the expressive simplicity and the perfect form for the first time. On the nude and compact volume, the shape of the eyes and the features of the face are barely sketched. And Începutul lumii, [the Beginning of the World], from 1924, remains the most perfect embodiment of the ovoid, the metaphorical image of the myth of origin. The successive busts called Domnișoara Pogany [Miss Pogany] allow the pursuit of each stage of simplification. The mouth and the eyes, clearly defined in the first forms, become more and more vague. In the last version, of 1931, the arms and the hands merge into one form. A similar evolution is seen at the successive versions of the Bird. The sculptor removes any superfluous detail for the essential form. He is thus getting close to the mythical idols of prehistory and antiquity. This explains the reception of his work by both the simple audience and the refined connoisseurs. It was a sculpture that came back to simplicity and which revived echoes from the depths of memory.

When he left Rodin's workshop, he also did so with the hope of an order by Vasile Morțun, "a sort of socialist with a ministerial frock coat." He ordered a statue for Spiru Haret. "I liked Haret: a mathematician in charge of lighting the villages." The monument he had thought of - he had warned Morthun that "I would not portray in marble the

defunct Excellency dressed in a frock coat" - was a fountain. Fantana lui Haret [Haret's fountain] was an archaic and stylized fountain for one of Bucharest's squares, with water for thirsty travelers. "I was reviving an old peasant custom for the urban dwellers. In the rural areas it used to be called "the spring of so-and-so", "the fountain of so-and-so", depending on the names of the founders." Mortun refused his project. "I saw Haret in a frock coat in front of the University, lined up as a soldier, in a scrolling of statues. An architectural and plastic horror. I have finished with Romania then. I returned now, at an old age, driven by nostalgia and the kindly insistence of Mrs Areta Tatarescu, a tasteful lady from our Oltenian lands ".

He also came back at the suggestion of the sculptor Milita Patrascu, to build a monument in Târgu Jiu dedicated to the heroes of the First World War. Brâncuși did not ask for any money for the "Heroes Way" complex consisting of the Masa Tăcerii [The Table of Science], the Poarta sărutului [The Gate of the Kiss] and Coloana fără sfârșit [the Endless Column].

Constantin Brancusi offered to the Romanian state to leave to it 200 works and his workshop in Paris as heritage. The Romanian state refused. Today, Brancusi's workshop is admired by millions of visitors at the "Georges Pompidou" Cultural Center in Paris. But one could think that maybe it was better that way, when one sees how the monuments of the "Heroes Way" complex are treated here, when one knows that his original project is no longer respected today, as the route is obstructed by buildings built up later, when one finds out that the house where Brancusi was born collapsed in the centenarian year.

The one who is the starting point for all the paths of contemporary sculpture urged us: "Do not look for obscure forms or mysteries. I give you pure joy. Look at them until you see them. Those closer to God have seen them. "

Gheorghe Marinescu

In the early decades of the last century, those who would pass by the Sinaia Park in the summer could gaze at a person sitting on a bench and looking at a voyage microscope. It was the founder of the Romanian neurology school Dr. Gheorghe Marinescu, on holiday.

Gheorghe Marinescu was supposed to become a priest. He remained without his father when he was barely one year old, but had a mother who struggled to send him "to learn", although she could hardly ensure the living of her two children. He committed himself to attending the priestly career at the end of the seminary, having to pay the tuition fees otherwise. But the calling for his passion was stronger, and he paid those fees with money earned from meditations. He gave the equivalent exam for the high school and baccalaureate in letters. He submitted applications to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the National School of Bridges and Roads to engage in a baccalaureate in science, in one year time, and registered to both faculties. After the first year he chose Medicine. The contact with the dissection room was tough. For two weeks, he was not able to get close to it. But in the end passion has prevailed.

He rapidly gained the appreciation of his colleagues and teachers, especially Victor Babes. In July 1889 he was sent to Paris, as president of medical students at the inauguration of the new Sorbonne. Based on a recommendation letter signed by Victor Babes, among others, he is received by the great neurologist Charcot to work in the Salpêtrière hospital. Recognizing his merits, Charcot invited him to classes. At Charcot's exposition, Gheorghe Marinescu presented the results of his own experiments with rabbits, showing the degeneration process of the nerve fiber. A Romanian doctor attending the lesson wrote: "It was for the first time in the annals of the French clinic that a stranger spoke to the audience during a lesson and in front of the head of the service." A few hours later, Gheorghe Marinescu was due to learn that the Romanian state had cut his assistant professor wage at the Victor Babeş Institute, a solution found by the teacher to send him to Paris without a scholarship and to ensure the support of Gheorghe Marinescu's mother, who had no other source of income.

The student who continued his studies in Paris was quickly recognized and appreciated by French physicians. A funny episode happened when Marinescu held the parasitology exam. Professor Blanchard, a taciturn, used to keep looking at the catalog during the exam. Which he also did when Marinescu was answering the question. When the results were published, Marinescu was dissatisfied that he had just scored 18 (the maximum was 20), and sent his calling card to the teacher, asking for a review. Blanchard went out in the hall immediately, and apologized, explaining that as a principle he would not give the 20, but that he would make an exception in the case of Gheorghe Marinescu and give him a mark of 20.

It is difficult to explain in detail the findings and priorities of Gheorghe Marinescu, in such a specific field as neurology. We will list them only. Using the photomicrography (microscope photography), which he studied in Belgium and which he introduced at Charcot's clinic, he published the first atlas of histology of the nervous system in the medical literature. In 1895, the German physicist Röntgen discovered the X-rays. One year later, Gheorghe Marinescu convinced the Romanian physicist Dragomir Hurmuzescu, who worked at the Sorbonne Physics Laboratory, to make the first radiographs in the world of the hands of patients suffering from acromegaly. Shortly after the invention of the camera, Gheorghe Marinescu ordered a cinematographic device from the Lumière brothers, which he paid for. By slowing down the imagery, he created a complete picture of walking in various cases of paralysis. In 1894, the work written with the French neuroscientist Sérieux on the treatment of epilepsy was awarded by the Academy of Medicine in Brussels. Along with the most important French neurologists, he took part

in the foundation of *Revue Neurologique* magazine. He was one of the first to use electroencephalography to study brain diseases. He also approached endocrinology, studying the role of the pituitary gland, in cases of acromegaly. C.I. Parhon later noted: "In his service at Pantelimon Hospital, Romanian endocrinology was born".

The first successful operation on the spinal cord was made in 1912 at Pantelimon Hospital, on a student with lower limb paralysis. Gheorghe Marinescu diagnosed a tumor that compressed the spinal cord in the chest region and convinced Ernest Djuvara to operate it. Marinescu's prestige made Djuvara to accept, though he had not worked on the nervous system before. He opened the spinal canal in the location indicated by Marinescu and removed the tumor. To the astonishment of those who did not believe in Marinescu's solution, the student left the hospital completely cured and resumed his studies. Surgeon Thoma Ionescu performed the first brain surgery. At the request of Gheorghe Marinescu, he operated on a pressman suffering from aphasia (speech disorder) due to an abscess of the left temporal lobe, resulting from an otitis. The intervention was successful. He also studied the phenomenon of aging. "Rejuvenation is a chimera," he wrote, "regardless of the method used, the course of evolution can not be reversed. But it is not impossible to temporarily revive various processes of life [...] One should not give in to first impressions, which could support unrealistic hopes."

The most appropriate epitaph could be the very words of Gheorghe Marinescu: "Life is a great gift of nature, but the real happiness is to do good to your country and your people."

Henry Coanda, the first flight with a reaction plane

The Romanian scholar Henri Coanda designed the model of a "non-propelled plane" and exhibited it at the 1907 Berlin International Salon, but the propulsion solution he imagined did not raise any interest. He did not give up and continued his research.

In Bucharest, the Commander of the Army's Arsenal provided him with the necessary elements to build and test missiles. One of the missiles lifted after launch, stood up, twisted and collapsed in flames, in a courtyard near Arsenal. It became a newspaper subject; an actor appeared on stage and launched bright fuselages in a show on the streets of the Academy. To find the best wing profile of a device that would have flown at an unimaginable speed for that time, Henri Coanda had to do a series of experiments. He demanded approval from the French authorities - and he hardly received it - to mount a test balance on the front of a locomotive. He traveled with that locomotive at night, in the winter of 1909-1910, when the traffic was lighter between Paris and St. Quentin. While the locomotive was speeding at 95 km / h, he was making measurements with the wind blowing in front of it. He invented a chronophotograph, a device which would render the movements of air on the photographic plate, and its gliding by the wing profile.

After the French engineer Gustav Eiffel met him, he wrote to the one who recommended him: "He knows more than any other experienced gray-haired engineers, he knows better than everyone what he wants, what he has to do and how to work. I will support him with all my enthusiasm, because I see in his preparations everything I dreamed of doing if, alas, my age would have allowed me, but I'm more than 70 years old and I do not dare anymore to try anything. That is why I feel that this Coanda does what I myself would have wanted to do for humanity."

Over the years, while he was celebrated in America as the father of the aviation on reaction engines, some big American industrialists asked him what industrial and financial groups have supported him in the research for the first reactive aircraft. "I wrote to my father in Romania asking for money, and Dad, gave up his savings from his income as a soldier and teacher and sent me what he had gathered from an officer's salary and from a wage at polytechnics." The Americans did not commented anything more.

In October 1910, at the Second International Aeronautics Salon in Paris, Henri Coanda exhibited the world's first reaction airplane. The director of La Technique Aéronautique magazine wrote about Coanda's plane: "It is one of the rare devices in which everything is new, and the judicious and rational manner in which the inventor leaves the known paths in this direction to face the risks of innovation is a reason strong enough for us to decide to carefully examine the means that the inventor uses in his work."

The plane created by Henri Coanda brought some novelties in aviation. For the first time, the fuel and lubricant tanks were installed in the upper wing, the thickness of which was large enough to allow this. Another priority was to abandon the fabric cover of the wing and use instead a rigid cover made of thin plywood. The two front wheels could be partially slid into the lower wing. It was the first attempt to use the retractable landing gear. Following the experiments on the Eiffel Tower terraces and on board the locomotive, Coanda introduced the onset board slot that increased the buoyant landing force. But the great novelty was the air-reactor engine, invented and built by Coanda, who had no access to any sources of documentation or any previous experiments. When he saw his plane at the Salon, Eiffel said, "It is a pity, boy, that you were born 30 years, or even 50, too early, way too early."

On a December day in 1910, the plane was brought to Issy-les-Moulineaux. He told Voisin and Bréguet - two pioneers of the French aviation, who were there and who knew that Henri Coanda was not a pilot: "I will try to drive a little on the ground."

But let us allow Coanda to tell us how things unfolded. "I had no intention to fly the plane that day, only to control the reaction device on the ground. The engine went well in the workroom. But when I installed it on the airplane, the heat from the two nozzles, which leaked back along the cockpit, was too strong. In this situation, I mounted two simple plates at the top and bottom part of each nozzle to blow off the heat that emanated towards me. The nozzles were naturally apart from the wood fuselage so as not to burn the device. When I climbed into the open cockpit and started to roll the plane on the ground, I noticed that something was wrong. The reaction jet was not sitting in the asbestos exhaust pipe, but it got out and touched the sides of the fuselage. As I feared that the plane would catch fire, I focused my attention to adjust the reaction engine and did not notice that the plane was speeding. Then I looked out. The walls of Paris (the walls of the Paris fortress were not yet completely demolished) were right in front of me. I did not have the necessary distance either to stop or to go back, so I tried to fly over them. But there was no one to teach me how to fly, and my plane was new and completely different. I forced the device to lift too suddenly and it engaged in speed limit. The left wing broke, and my plane collapsed on the ground. Because I did not wear the seat belt in the open cockpit, I was thrown out at the time of the crash. I recovered my spirits and felt as if everything in me had been shaken. My reaction plane was burning a few yards away."

Since then, he has only flown as a passenger. And the prophecy of Eiffel was fulfilled. Thirty years more had to go by before the reaction plane became a reality.

Romania's Entry in World War I

At the outbreak of World War I, Romania chose to remain neutral. The country was unprepared for war. Two years of diplomatic negotiations followed, and Bucharest wanted to obtain from the Entente countries (France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy, from 1915) firm assurances that at the end of the war Romania would be able to achieve the union with the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Russia, however, did not want to endorse such a document, for Moscow did not want a stronger Romania on Russia's course to the Straits or to claim Bessarabia, the Romanian historical region they had abducted in 1812. At the beginning of August 1916, the President of France sent a telegram to the Tsar of Russia, asking him to be more conciliatory with Romania. At the same time, Romania was given an ultimatum: either it would join in the war, or it may bid farewell to the project of national unity. The reason for this ultimatum has come to light in recent years, when more documents have been disclosed. In the European Chancelleries there had already been discussions that Russia's resistance was slackening. France sought to create an alternative pole of resistance in the Balkans, through the junction of the Romanian and Greek forces, prepared to intervene when the collapse of the Russian front became imminent. That is why France insisted on an offensive of the Romanian army south of the Danube, a situation morally impossible for us, because we entered the war to free our brothers from Transylvania.

On August 4, 1916, the Romanian Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu, in the most secretive way, signed a political and a military convention between Romania and France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia. The two conventions, signed at the residence of Vintilă Brătianu, brother of the Prime Minister, provided for the recognition of Romania's right to unite with the territories in Austro-Hungary that are inhabited by Romanians. Romania was to declare war against the Central Powers not later than 15 August 1916, and Russia was to support it with a strong offensive to secure the Romanian port of Constanța.

Despite de secrecy of the signed conventions, on August 13 the newspaper "Universul" released a special edition announcing the summoning of the Crown Council for the next day. "We can add, based on confirmed knowlegde, that, as far as the diplomatic negotiations with the Quadruple Alliance [Entente] are concerned, they have been successfully concluded and acquired the official definitive form, wrote "Universul".

The preliminary measures to be taken immediately before the mobilization of the Romanian army was a better kept secret. The task of devising these measures was assigned to Major Radu R. Rosetti, Chief of the Operations Command, in agreement with his superior, Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Rășcanu, Head of Section III of the General Staff. For maximum security level reasons, the work of Major Radu R. Rosetti had to be known and approved only by Ion I.C. Brătianu, Prime Minister and also Minister of the War until August 15, 1916.

On Sunday, August 14, although measures had been taken "to confuse public curiosity", thousands of citizens overcrowded the Elisabeth Boulevard and the streets leading to the Cotroceni Palace, where the Crown Council was held. The crowd was forbidden to cross the Elefterie Bridge, and the Prefect of the Romanian Capital announced in the morning that the newspapers will not release special editions before the official press release.

The officials summoned to the Cotroceni Palace started to arrive at 9.30 a.m, and by 10.15 a.m. any random person in the courtyard of the Palace was removed. The meeting of the Council lasted until 1.00 p.m. Prime Minister Brătianu, members of the Government, politicians Nicolae Filipescu and Take Ionescu – all were greeted with cheers by the crowd on their departure. Police guards were patrolling the streets of the Capital. One topic was discussed in breweries and on every street corner: "What

shall we do? What decision will the Crown Council take?" Everyone was thrilled to bet on what would be the outcome of the Crown Council's meeting, and everyone thought they were right.

Constantin Argetoianu, a Conservative politician of the time, wrote: "Round 5 p.m. I watched the mobilization proclamation from my balcony. The street was crowded with people, like on a feast. Frenzy and hugs, roar and increasingly loud cheers after a quarter of an hour. In an open limousine, the king and the queen were passing by, as their motorcade headed to Kiseleff Boulevard. I had the chance to witness for the first time in Romania a real effusion of love and loyalty to the Royal House. The limousine could barely advance. [...] At sunset the atmosphere of euphoria began to change a little. No lantern was lit on the streets, and strict curfew was imposed on the restaurants, pubs, party venues, as well as residential buildings".

A contagious enthusiasm prevailed both in the Old Kingdom and in Transylvania about the beginning of the fight to liberate the national territories occupied by Austria-Hungary. Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu had been careful to declare in the Crown Council that had decided on Romania's joining in the war: "Even if we are defeated, the fact that four of the greatest powers of the world have acknowledged the rightfulness of our national claim and sanctioned by a solemn act the ethnic boundaries of the Romanians over the Carpathians, the cause of the Romanians will make a step forward, bigger and more important than ever. And if not today, we will reap the fruits of our sacrifice and the claim of our rights in the near future".

Facing great difficulties and losses, the Romanians had to wait another two years until their dreams came true.

Hermann Oberth, inventor of the first ever model rocket with liquid fuel

122 years ago, in a house in Sighișoara, a group of people were commenting one evening on the prophecy made by one of their elders: "In a hundred years people will fly to the Moon!" The discussion occurred in the incidental presence of a four-year-old by the name of Hermann Oberth. The next day Hermann manufactured a locomotive using a hammer and a jack plane and asked his parents if the toy could take him to the Moon.

When he was about six years of age, Hermann began to record his inventions in a notebook, such as a water mill powered by the impetuous stream of the Niagara Falls, or the lightning machine, able to capture and store electric energy for dry weather spells. His mother wrote to a friend of hers: "He is not so keen on adventure books as his brother Adolf who simply devours every story he falls upon about Indians and the like. Instead, he goes for all kinds of scientific and technical magazines, and what surprises me most is that he is beginning to understand what he reads."

During the winter holidays of 1905-1906 he read Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* and *Around the Moon*. He proceeded to calculate and check if Jules Verne's affirmations went in line with the laws of physics and discovered that the author had neglected the tremendous force applied on the crew when the shell was released from the cannon. The solution was a vehicle with gradual propulsion – a rocket. But what kind of fuel should it use?... In the meantime, he was doing research in space medicine – a world premiere, in fact. He would jump off the 6-meter high diving board at the swimming pool in Sighișoara and calculated by how much the acceleration of his free-falling body exceeded normal gravity. In 1908 he made a centrifugal machine to test body resistance to increasing speed. Later on, when it was proved that a properly trained person could resist forces that exceeded 6 or 7 times the natural gravitation, he commented: "The demonstrated reality does not surprise me as much as the fact that they didn't believe me for 40 years."

Hermann was considered a freak by his fellow townsmen: steeped in his calculations, he used to walk through the gutter instead of on the sidewalk, to avoid bumping into passers-by. He had been nicknamed "Moon-Oberth".

In 1917 he created the first model in the world of a rocket powered by liquid fuel. He provided the instrument compartment with a gyroscopic device to ensure flight stability, plus an automatic electric command. In 1918, when he tried to have the invention patented, he met with the following answer: "There is experimental proof that rockets cannot fly in excess of 8 kilometers. So there must be an error somewhere in your calculations." In the summer of 1920 he completed the project of a rocket powered by hydrogen and oxygen in Munich, Germany. While still there, he invented the multistage rocket powered by liquid fuel, based on rigorous calculations – the first ever such project.

In the spring of 1922 he completed a manuscript containing a detailed theory of rockets, a dissertation he presented at the Heidelberg University. The exposition was well received, but the thesis was dismissed as too technical for astronomers, too outlandish for mechanical engineers, and perfectly unrealistic for the medical profession. On May 23, 1923 he presented his work one more time at the Physics Department of the Cluj University. This time it was accepted and Hermann was granted the rank of professor. It was the first institutional acknowledgement of his remarkable achievement.

In 1923 he had his work published at the Oldenbourg Publishing House in Munich at his own expense, after it had been refused by four publishers before. The title was *The*

Rocket into Interplanetary Space". The book was appreciated as "the real beginning of the cosmic era". Oberth was the first to develop structural concepts and projects based on digital calculations. He would describe the technical details of present-day spaceships, while the ignorant public consider them as recent inventions.

In 1925 Oberth moved to Mediaş, where he benefited from the existence of the aviation military school workshops. Shortly afterwards, Mediaş became the Mecca of space flight, the destination of letters from all over the world. After a second book was issued, considered the "Bible of astronautics", Oberth received a letter from the film director Fritz Lang who invited him to cooperate in a film based on the script written by Lang's wife, *The Woman in the Moon*. The rocket designed for the film was strikingly resemblant with present time spaceships. He was proposed to devise a real one that should be launched during the advertising campaign for the film. Several students came to his aid, among whom one Wernher von Braun. The premiere of the film occurred in 1929 and was a great success. As he had not succeeded to finish the construction of the rocket by then, the UFA Studios denied him the final payment. Left with barely enough for the fare home, he got on the train and returned to Mediaş.

The most legitimate voice to testify to the role of Hermann Oberth is undoubtedly Wernher von Braun, the mastermind of the World War 2 German rockets and the American Apollo Program: "Any great idea needs a prophet whose most challenging and unrewarding mission is to pave the way towards acknowledgement and accomplishment. Similarly, each scientific discovery needs a scientist capable to precisely establish the baseline and the conditions for its implementation, as well as its importance and practical application. Professor Oberth was, in the field of space exploration, both a prophet and a scientist. He did not need costly laboratories or trial equipment worth billions. With the brilliant creative power of an admirable spirit, he set the foundations of a new, powerful industry."

Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz

The campaign plan for 1917 on the Romanian front, widely discussed with Russian allies and French Military Mission led by general Henri Mathias Berthelot, offered the main role to the First Romanian Army. The main strike was to be launched by this large unit alongside the Fourth Russian Army, in Nămolosa sector, with the aim of destroying the main enemy corps, the 9th German Army led by general Johannes von Ebner. The enemy's goal was to eliminate Romania from the war and to reach Southern Russia, in Ukraine, in order to benefit from the agricultural resources of that region. Fieldmarshal August vonMackensen, the commander of forces in the Curvature Carpathians, had foreseen the launching of the main strike in the Namoloasa sector too, which indicated the weak informative activity of the two belligerent parts. Simultaneously, a group was attacking on the Oituz Valley, and was due to join the main forces to the East of the Middle Carpathians. As always, all plans were overturned by reality. The first of three large operations which unfolded in 1917 was carried out in Mărăști area by the Second Army led by general Averescu. On the 11/24 of July, general Averescu launched the offensive. The heavily fortified Mărăști village could not be conquered through a straight attack. An intense artillery barrage was launched. After heavy confrontations, Plaiul Măgurii, Cornul Măgurii and Măgura Cașinului were conquered on the 18/31 of July. The battle for Mărăști was over. General Averescu wrote: "The people of modern Romania must well engrave in their souls the day of June 11th 1917, when that day, for the first time, its young army which received the baptism of blood only 40 years before at Grivița, achieved its first real victory, which was an offensive and final victory". The conceiving, organising and execution of the operation were impeccable, therefore Mărăști became a model of military art. Unfortunately, the offensive was halted after the heavy defeat suffered by Russian troops on the Galicia front, so the initial successes could not be fully capitalized.

The battle for Mărăști unfolded between the July 24th/6 of August and 6 of August/ August 19th, 1917. According to the initial plan, Romanian and Russian troops should have started the offensive in the morning of the 13/26 of August. But a day before, the 5th Russian Army was ordered to stop preparations pending new orders, due to the situation in Galicia and Bucovina. Therefore, the Romanian Army had to also stop preparations for the offensive. Those who launched it were the Germans, in the morning of 24 of July/6 of August, as Russian main units were on the move towards Bucovina. Many Russian soldiers refused to fight. Showing great bravery, the Romanian and Russian units which accepted the confrontation managed to hold on. It was then when the phrase "No access through here" was born. The order paper by general Eremia Grigorescu, the commander of the 1st Army, stated that Mărășești became "the tomb of German illusions". For fourteen days, Romanian fought hard, as they had to also cover positions abandoned by Russian soldiers. The day of August 6th/19th marked the defeat of the German offensive. The battle was largely echoed in the media of that time. The director of "Le Figaro" newspaper wrote: "Mărășești is the Romanian Verdun". The outskirts of Mărășești city were the scene of distinction for the soldiers of the 32nd Regiment "Mircea", from the machine guns unit of the 51st Infantry Regiment led by captain Grigore Ignat, whose fighters were found "dead, with their hands still clasped on the weapons, under a pile of enemy bodies", defending the 100th benchmark whose loss would have forced half of the Romanian troops over the Siret river. Subaltern Ecaterina Teodoroiu died during the last day of the confrontation.

The battle of Oituz started on the 26th of July/8th of August. The enemy anticipated the main strike in the direction of the town of Onești. Heavy fighting took place at Cireșoia, where the German advance was halted. It was there where corporal Constantin Mușat died, the one who fought without a hand, a symbol of "a moving example of awareness

of the duty to the country, beyond the boundaries set by the laws of nature and those of the people."

In his book "The heroic battles of my troops", general Kurt von Morgen, commander of the 1st German reserve corps, wrote: "The enemy's resistance, notably that of the Romanians, was unusually tough and consisted of 61 counterattacks during 14 days. That led to a bayonet confrontation and caused considerable losses for us. It is true that the battles in August brought us a local success, but not a decisive one; they proved that Romanians became worthy enemies. After six months of training apart from the battleground, under French leadership, they fought better, they were led more skilfully, while the cooperation between infantry and artillery was tighter". British historian Robert Seton-Watson stated that "Romanians prevented Mackensen from occupying Odessa and prevented Leopold of Bavaria to reach Moscow", and the former US President Theodore Roosevelt said in an interview on August 27, 1917, to the New York's correspondent of "Romania" newspaper: "During this war Romanians soldiers proved a lot of courage. The only certain point on the Eastern Front is the place where the Romanian army is".

The victories at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz ensured the preservation of the Romanian State, which in one year time would gather around it all the provinces inhabited by Romanians.

George Constantinescu, Sonic Theory, 1918

The British magazine "The Graphic" published a picture in 1926 of the most illustrious science figures in the world: Einstein, Edison, Kelvin, Marie Curie, Bell, Marconi. Gogu Constantinescu was among the 17 scientists, too. From 1907 until 1965, when he passed away, he virtually certificated one invention at every four months, on average. He is the creator of a new science, sonicity, which studies the conveyance of energy by sonic waves. Nobody before him could find a solution to produce massive amounts of sonic or ultrasonic energy and did not think that both sounds and ultrasounds are capable of carrying large quantities of energy that could be used for industrial purposes. By studying mathematical solutions of musical harmony, he managed to demonstrate that sounds can propagate energy. "During a trip to America I had the chance to meet the great inventor Edison. I asked him which was the latest invention he was developing. Mr Edison (his interpreter, because Edison was completely deaf) told me he was building a machine which would automatically record the sound of a song played at a piano, and then it would render the whole melody to the auditorium. The only difficulty that Edison faced was the fact that he found no one to teach him the laws of harmony". All experts were mocking about his project. Gogu Constantinescu told him he believed it was possible. "Edison told me to follow him in his office, where we spent the whole night talking about his project".

Gogu Constantinescu established the basic physics principles of sonicity on the way and laws for generating and reflecting the sonic wave, as well as the equations of sonic waves. Most of his achievements were in the field of energy conveyance through liquids. An important breakthrough when he understood that the sonicity rules were similar to those of electricity. He managed to develop rotating engines powered by sonic waves through water pipes, which operated without noise, as electric engines did. Until him, the conveyance of energy to a certain point was made by hydraulic methods, through cables and electric wires.

At the bridges course that Anghel Saligny taught at the National School for Bridges and Roads, he demanded a bridge project in stone or concrete as a diploma project. Gogu Constantinescu presented the project of a concrete bridge. Saligny reacted: "How is this possible? Didn't I tell you at the course not to build concrete bridges?" Gogu replied he will build concrete bridges. The teacher didn't get angry and the two remained friends. In that time there were no classes on reinforced concrete and there was no established calculation theory. Some serious accident involving concrete bridges already occurred, bringing into doubt the use of concrete in constructions.

In 1910 he left for Great Britain. His kitchen became the first sonic laboratory in the world. He was considered "a crazy Romanian". One time, he moved the laboratory to an island on the river Thames. There he managed to punch a hole in a block of stone by means of the sonic procedure he developed. But one day, the Thames overflowed and he barely managed to evacuate his "mysterious" installation. During demonstrations presented in London, someone from the audience meddled with a cane under the installations in order to make sure that nothing was hidden, that it wasn't a gimmick.

Though he managed to achieve decisive results and numerous patent documents, their immediate application was not yet possible and he could not obtain the necessary funds in order to carry on with his experiments. He then left for the United States. There, laying the patent acts based on the sonicity application in America, the Washington Patents Office rejected them as being "impossible". He had to bring along a number of well known scientists who swore that they had seen his machines operating. During the First World War he was back to Britain. By that time, the problem of firing a machine gun through the propeller blades so that bullets would not touch it was not yet resolved. The British Admiralty remembered the "crazy Romanian" and invited him to take part to

a contest aiming to solve the problem. He demanded that a sonic laboratory should be made for him, which was built in 1918 at West Drayton. The device he made proved its reliability and the British bought 50.000 copies. The Germans tried to copy the device from downed planes, but didn't manage to achieve the same performances. In 1918, the British Admiralty allowed him to publish the first volume of the Sonicity Theory, but only in 150 copies, all marked "Strictly secret". In London he became "the man of the day". As many of his inventions were subjected to military restrictions, the new science reached harder the public consciousness.

Subsequently, he founded , the "Sonica" enterprise in Romania with the support of the Romanian Bank led by Vintilă Brătianu, with the aim of promoting sonicity applications. But as his enterprise didn't yield profits, the shareholders asked for an explanation. He told them that research and invention work does not necessarily have immediate results. Observing the shareholders' lack of patience, he filled in a cheque, returning the funds invested, and left. To the shareholders surprise, the cheque was certified.

The Union with Bessarabia (1918)

Romania joined the Triple Entente into the First World War, in order to gain the liberation of its brothers within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. But in 1918, the first territory that united with Romania was Bessarabia, part of the territory of its former ally, Russia, since 1812, when it was forcefully detached from the territory of the Romanian Principality of Moldova.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 and the following period enabled the Romanian movement for national liberation in Bessarabia to escalate and, in time, to clarify its goals. Initially, only autonomy was requested, as well as obtaining civic and national rights. Parties were created, conventions of different social-professional classes were held. The next phase was the proclamation of independence, in order to finally achieve the Union.

On 21 November 1917, the Country's Advisory Council began its works. On December 2, a Declaration was adopted, marking the formation of the Moldavian Democratic Republic, which was to be part of the Russian Democratic Federate Republic. The executive power was conferred to the General Directors Council. During the inaugural session of the Country's Advisory Council, the Transylvanian Onisifor Ghibu said: "You have been suffering for 100 years and now you see your ideals achieved. We have been suffering for one thousand years and the moment of justice has not arrived yet. The moment of justice for our entire people has to come".

The young state was not able to cope with the anarchy established by Bolshevik gangs and Russian troops that were disorderly leaving the Romanian front. On December 27, authorities in Chişinău asked that a volunteers regiment that was about to come in Romania from Russia to be put under their command. As it arrived in the railway station, the volunteers regiment came under rifles and machine guns fire from the Bolshevik units. Moreover, Bolsheviks in Chişinău stormed the headquarters of the Inter-Allied Commission, taking into custody servicemen and clerks from the Entente states who were serving there. General Shcherbachev, commander of the Russian troops on the Romanian front, asked the Romanian Government to ensure the security of the Chişinău - Ungheni railway. Therefore, the decision was made to send the 6th Army Corps to re-establish order, and afterwards the Romanian troops were due to be withdrawn at the request of the legal authorities in Chişinău. On the 15th of January 1918, France's minister to Bucharest wrote to the French consul in Chişinău: "All my colleagues, ministers of Allied Powers, and myself are authorized to officially declare that the entry of Romanians troops entry in Bessesarabia represents a sheer military action intended to secure the normal activities behind the Russian-Romanian front, according to the rules established for all belligerent states. Therefore, Romanian troops entry in Bessarabia will not have any influence on the actually political situation there, or on the country's future fate".

As a result, the Bolshevik government in Petrograd broke diplomatic relations with Romania and seized the Romanian thesaurus, which was carried off to Moscow. On the 24th of January, the Country's Advisory Council proclaimed the country's independence. Ion Inculeţ became the republic's president, and Daniel Ciugureanu, the chairman of the Ministers' Council.

On the 23rd of March, Ion Inculeţ, Daniel Ciugureanu and Paul Halippa were invited to the Ministers' Council meeting, chaired by Alexandru Marghiloman. He asks them for an opinion on the union with Romania. Halippa and Ungureanu immediately accepted. Everybody waited for Inculeţ to answer. To the unanimous surprise, he asked for a respite to reflect on the matter. He went to the ministers of Italy, France, Great Britain and United States in Iasi and asked them: how would they consider the union of Bessarabia

with Romania, made with the approval of Germany? Italy's minister answered that the Allies had no important interests in Russia to contribute to its partition. The British said London would not oppose, US minister assured him that his country would support our union, and France's minister said: "Do the union as soon as possible!". He then went to I. C. Brătianu and told him everything. Brătianu urged him to carry on with courage. Then Inculeț went to Alexandru Marghiloman. He informed him about the previous visits and conditioned the union by the observance of reforms already under way in Bessarabia. Marghiloman agreed with his conditions.

The accomplishment of the Union was also prepared in Chișinău, with negotiations held between Constantin Stere and the important landowners in Bessarabia, who feared the agrarian reform already endorsed by the Country's Advisory Council, as well as the meeting with Alexandru Marghiloman, held on the evening of March 26, 1918.

The next day, on March 27th, the Country's Advisory Council voted, with 86 votes in favour, 3 against, 36 abstentions (13 members were absent) the next resolution: "In the name of the people of Bessarabia, the Country's Advisory Council declares: The Moldavian Democratic Republic (Bessarabia), within its borders between Prut river, Nistru river, the Black Sea and the old boundaries with Austria, separated more than 100 years ago by Russia from the body of old Moldova, based on the historical right and on the popular right and in line with the principle that peoples should decide their own fate, from today on and forever is united with its mother, Romania".

The Unification of Bucovina in 1918

"Until that time (the year 1775, when the Ottoman Porte gave up Bucovina to the Habsburg Empire, with no right, through a simple convention) there has never been a country named Bucovina, although, since the beginning of the XVth century, a woodland by that name is mentioned near the Polish border", wrote Dimitre Onciul.

During the First World War, both Russia, placing its stakes on the Slav element, and the national Ukrainian movement in Galicia and Bucovina claimed Bucovina.

Itself, the Romanian national movement, although divided between the loyalty towards Vienna and the will to unite, whose leaders were scattered from Vienna to Basarabia, becomes, as the end of the war got closer, increasingly active. "For refugees from Transylvania and Bucovina, many of them recently demobilized by the Marghiloman government, Basarabia became a new home country. In its service they put all their spiritual forces, helping the consolidation of the new Romanian life in the province between Prut and Nistru", wrote Dimitrie Marmeliuc, university professor, member of the National Council.

On October 14th, at Cernăuți, an important national assembly was organised, attended by deputies in the Viennese Parliament, former deputies in the last Diet of Bucovina and mayors. They adopted The Motion in which the representatives of the people declared themselves as "holding power of the national sovereignty, Constituent of this Romanian country". It decided "the unification of the entire Bucovina with the other Romanian countries in a national and independent state". They instituted a National Council of 50 members to defend the rights of Romanians in Bucovina and to establish a connection between all Romanians. The Council was to keep a strong relation with the government of Romania, in Iași.

On October 21st, refugees from Bucovina in Chișinău would gather again, in the presence of the USA and France envoys, and adopt the resolution that stated that "the entire territory from the Habsburg monarchy, claimed by the Romanian state, recognised and guaranteed by the alliance treaties signed by Romania with the powers of the Triple Entente be liberated and unified with the home-country". In the first edition of "The Voice of Bucovina" newspaper, issued on October 22nd 1918, Sextil Pușcariu published the article "What we want". "We want to remain Romanians, on Romanian land and lead ourselves, as our Romanian interests demand it (...). We claim that, together with our brothers in Transylvania and Hungary, which share the same situation, we create a future that suits us and our Romanian thinking."

On November 3rd, the National Assembly of Ukrainians, that took place in Cernăuți, decided the incorporation in the new Ukrainian republic of the largest part of Bucovina. Ukrainian soldiers that had returned from the war and members of the Ukrainian legion terrorised the population in Cernăuți. They entered the National Palace, where the headquarters of The National Romanian Council were placed. To reset order in Bucovina, Iancu Flondor solicited the help of the Romanian government. For this purpose, on November 2nd 1918, Vasile Bodnărescu was sent to Iași. He met the Romanian prime minister, Alexandru Marghiloman, who promised the Romanian National Council to deliver arms, to build a body of officers or a national guard. Because the situation in Cernăuți had become critical, Vasile Bodnărescu headed back to Iași, to ask the intervention of the Romanian army in Bucovina. The Eighth Division was sent, lead by general Iacob Zadic. On November 11th Romanian troops entered Cernăuți and they were welcome by the population. On November 12th, the Romanian National Council adopted the temporary Fundamental Law for Bucovina.

On November 14th, general Arthur Văitoianu, the internal affairs minister, presented Dimitrie Marmeliuc to prime minister C. Coandă, in Iași. "You have been chosen by general Văitoianu for an important mission in your Bucovina - general Coandă told him. You will leave immediately, by plane, there you will ask mister Iancu Flondor, to whom you will deliver this envelope, to come to Iași as soon as possible, also by plane". Flondor appointed Sextil Pușcariu to go, in his place, to Iași. On November 17th, Marmeliuc was sent to Chișinău to communicate to Ion Nistor, leader of people from Bucovina in Basarabia, that he was waited for in Iași. At this moment, Ion Nistor, Sextil Pușcariu and the representatives of the Romanian government decided the next steps to be taken.

The Romanian government offered refugees from Bucovina in Basarabia three train wagons that brought them to Cernăuți. On November 25th they decided the convocation, for November 28th, of the Bucovina General Congres.

In the council hall of the Mitropoly Palace in Cernăuți, the Romanian delegats were joined by those of Ukraineans, Germans and Polish. A couple thousand people from Bucovina were also present. Pan Halippa, Ion Pelivan, Ion Buzdugan were present from Basarabia. There were also present Romanians from Transylvania. The Polish and German representatives sustained the unification. "What a beautiful day was that November 28th! The sky seemed to rejoice for our happiness, sending us, at that beginning of winter, warm rays of sun", wrote Dimitrie Marmeliuc. And a special edition of the Voice of Bucovina announced: "Our golden dream has come true. Today, our parents who died for this dream will find their peace in this free land"

The Unification of Transylvania, 1918

There were two decisive days of the fight for unification led by the Romanians in Transylvania in 1918: October 12th and 18th. On the first day, the Oradea declaration was adopted. The text was elaborated by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod. The document clearly contests the right of the Budapest parliament and of the Hungarian government "to consider themselves as representatives of the Romanian nation, to be able to represent their national reasons at the General Peace Congress". The self-determination principle, in a Wilsonian formula, is combined with concepts circulated by the Romanian elite of the 19th century. On October 18th, Vaida-Voevod talks for the first time in front of the Parliament in Budapest, on behalf of all Romanians. The stenograph of the session recorded the moment in which he read the document adopted in Oradea. "The room was inflamed with panic". "The Declaration" and "the Discourse" had one other meaning, equally important. The big powers, especially USA, were expecting that former nationalities of Austria-Hungary to express their options publicly and to be institutionally validated. I. G. Duca remembered: "We received from Budapest Vaida-Voevod's discourse, as he read it in Parliament. The signal of our Transylvanian brothers' liberation. When Brătianu read it to us during the gathering at Mârzescu's (in Iași), we were all crying with excitement and joy."

In the following period, all across Transylvania, councils and national guards were formed, alongside the Hungarian ones, to sustain public order and safety. On October 31st the Romanian National Council was formed and it was made of six representatives of the Romanian National Party and six of the socialists, under the presidency of Ștefan Cicio Pop.

Between November 13th and 15th, after the signing of the truce between the Triple Entente and the Hungarian government, at Arad discussions have been held between a Hungarian delegation of the Romanian National Central Council and the government in Budapest. Because of the Hungarian delegation's position, the discussions failed. The Romanian news paper issued on November 21st published a call to the Romanian people to Alba Iulia. "History calls us to act. The indivertible course of human civilisation has taken our Romanian people from the darkness of slavery to the light of self awareness. We have woken from our death sleep and want to live beside other nations of the world, free and independent"

On the morning of November 23rd, a Farman 40 plane took off from Bacău, heading to Blaj. The pilot, Ștefan Niculescu, and his passenger, captain Victor Precup, had their faces coated with paraffin, to endure in the open cockpit, at -40 degrees, at 2600 meters altitude, when crossing the Carpathians. Captain Precup had a sealed bag, with three documents: a letter from Ion I.C. Brătianu to the Romanian National Central Committee, a letter from Nicolae Bălan to Vasile Goldiș, who informed about his mission in Iași and the assurance from French, English and American ministers, that they will be supported in their action of unification and the request that the decision of unification would be the result of a great national assembly, best to be held in Alba Iulia, at the same time with the one in Cernăuți and another one, written by Bălan for Vasile Suci, president of the Romanian National Council in Blaj. The plane landed, after a two hours and a quarter flight, on Câmpia Libertății (The Field of Liberty), in Blaj. The two were surrounded by people who had crossed Târnava river with their clothes on, when they had seen the tricolour on the plane.

"Almost 100 000 peasants, heads of their villages, wearing their festive clothes, holding the national flag and playing music, singing and cheering headed, in special trains or wagons attached to trains from all directions to the fortress of our dreams" - remembered Ion Clopoșel, chief editor of The Romanian newspaper. Another Mârza, besides the only photographer of that historical day, that took part at the gathering in Alba Iulia, was

Traian. His father left with the official delegation of the people in Galtiu towards Alba Iulia, at 4 in the morning, on foot. Traian Mârza wished to also there too, although he was only 7 years old. He asked a German soldier who was quartered in the village and who was about to set for Germany, to take him along. On the way, he is seen by the commander and, after he finds out that the boy wants to get to Alba Iulia, he takes him in his carriage. That is how Traian Mârza got to Alba Iulia on the 1st of December 1918.

One day before the reunion in Alba Iulia, Cicio Pop led a conference. Those present discussed whether the unification should be done under conditions or not. The youth ask for giving up any conditions. Maniu sais that the unification is necessary, that the people must be calmed down and that a transition period is needed.

The next day, members of the national counsel and delegates of the councils from all the regions got together. Ştefan Cicio Pop was the first one to speak. Afterwards, the 1228 mandates of the delegates were checked. Vasile Goldiş read the unification Resolution, with one main issue: "The National Assembly of all Romanians in Transylvania, Banat and Ţara Ungurească(Hungarian Country), gathered through their righteous delegates in Alba Iulia, on November 18th - December 1st 1918, decree the unification of these Romanians and of the territories inhabited by them with Romania. The National Assembly proclaims the unalienable right of the Romanian nation over the entire Banat, included between Mureş, Tisa and Danube rivers. "The century old dream has come true.

Saving Vienna, Prague and Budapest from the Bolshevik revolutions

The unification in 1918 was a dream come true for Romanians. It happened in a surprisingly favorable context for us, after, in the previous time, we had been, several times, close to losing even the state we still had unoccupied by the Central Powers. The Unification was possible because a political and intellectual exceptional elite knew how to mobilize Romanians to fight. But the Unification in 1918 was also possible because this project of ours found a great support in the powers of the moment. They saw a meaning for Romanians in this part of Europe, troubled by the Bolshevik revolutions. They saw that the Romanian soldier, unlike the Russian, Hungarian, Austrian or German soldier, did not listen to the call of the Bolshevik revolution. Moreover, the Romanian soldier saved Vienna from the Bolshevik revolution, defended Prague against "the reds", liberated Budapest of Béla Kun and, along with the Polish soldier, he was ready to fight against the Red Army. A British officer who was in Basarabia in 1918-1919, said that the importance of the Romanian army to defending the whole Europe against Bolsheviks cannot be enough stressed. He noticed the exceptional spirit of the Romanian soldier, who made the Bolshevik trials of recruitment useless.

In the autumn of 1918, Iuliu Maniu, who was an artillery sub-lieutenant, being at the same time responsible with military matters and foreign relations in the Romanian National Central Committee, was in Vienna. His mission was to make a Romanian army out of the regiments of the Vienna and Prague Garrisons. He convoked all Romanian officers of the two garrisons and told them to form The Romanian soldiers' in Vienna counsel. The 100 officers subordinated to him. On November 1st, Maniu went to the Austrian war minister and asked him to recognize the Romanian military counsel and to put the barracks of the 64 Regiment – made of Transylvanians – and spaces in the ministry building at its disposal. He got six rooms on the mezzanine. They had phones and a car with a red-yellow-blue flag. They issued a Romanian soldiers' Newspaper, edited by a journalist from Bucovina. Viorel Tilea, who later became a politician and diplomat, and who was close to Iuliu Maniu at the time, remembered: "One of those days, shots were heard on the Ring. A bullet came in through the window, in the room of the Romanian National Council secretary's, of the Austrian War Ministry. Communists had managed to find arms and had begun their attack against Reichstag, the Post Office and Police, to get complete control over Vienna. Police was as good as nonexistent and its effectives insufficient. The Austrian soldiers had been demobilized. The Austrian War minister called for Iuliu Maniu and asked him that Regiment 64 and other Romanian military units re-establish order. Under the orders given by the Romanian National Council, the Romanian army got out on the streets, holding its tricolor flag and, after heavy fighting, brought back the order". For some days, public order and safety in Vienna were sustained exclusively by the Romanian regiment. The Viennese rascals, who were after the prey, had been silenced.

In Prague, revolution began on October 28th 1918. In the city there were Regiment 2 Braşov, Regiment 51 Cluj and part of Regiment 37 Oradea mare. There were no Czech troops. Still, there were Hungarian and German troops. The first adjutant of Regiment 2 Braşov was Alex. Şimon, who took control of the Romanian troops, organizing them into the Romanian Legion in Prague. He made an agreement with the Czechs, according to which Romanian military took upon themselves to assure order in Prague and on a 10 kilometers diameter around it.

Ion Clopoşel, chief editor of The Romanian newspaper, remembered: "The revolution started on the night of October 31st – November 1st. With the speed of lightning it spread all around the old monarchy. There were three days of horrific pillage. (...) On the day of the revolution, soldiers from Arad left their posts and threw their weapons in the river, from the bridge. In the city's garrison there were numerous troops and people

were terrified of the unknown". Unsatisfied with the newly established demarcation line, set at the Paris Peace Conference, Károlyi government resigns and turns power over to "Hungary's proletariat". The communist Hungarian republic is born. After the beginning of the Bolshevik revolution in Oradea, on March 24th, Romanian leaders were hospitalized. On April 20th, people from the city sent carriages and other vehicles to bring Romanian soldiers that had stopped, due to exhaustion, at Tileagd, that is how desperate they were to have them in the city sooner, to stop the red terror.

Romanian military were welcomed as liberators in Budapest too. Along with the physical terror, the communist regime installed by Béla Kun had also brought a ferocious famine. Campaign kitchens of the Romanian army fed the starved population of the city. Years later, when signing the Anti-Comintern Pact, the Hungarian foreign minister was keen on stressing (a detail that hadn't previously been written in the discourse) that the Hungarian people can be proud to be the first to eliminate a communist government, to the distress of the Romanian foreign minister, Mihai Antonescu, who, not understanding German, asked his advisers to translate a text he had made, that he later read. But the moment for a response had passed.

Between the two World Wars, there have been trials to form a "sanitary cord", based on Poland and Romania. It did not work out. The project was resumed, on different bases, nowadays, as the Three Seas Initiative.

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