

Scientific report for the project *Foreign diplomats in the Kingdom of Romania. Ways of socialisation and mundanity experiences (1881-1914)*

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Few topics in the reference field of historiography, Romanian and foreign as well, find themselves in a state of potential creativity, such as the one of the interaction between the day to day life of diplomats and the benefits of socialization. A state of creative potency, because, while sources abound, writings on Romanian space are rare or almost missing. Social history and the history of diplomacy seemed a few years ago doomed to never meet. Evolution of historical knowledge to interdisciplinarity however suppressed any such fears. Forms of socialization of the diplomats of the modern world have to be known too, in the end, maybe as well as the routine of the official confronted to the burden of ministerial bureaucracy. It is true that it remains to be proved how the two historical perspectives can live together, although they are apparently less compatible. The metamorphosis of the image of diplomacy from institutional to mundane is a topic of interest. Therefore, one can say, precisely the perspective of such unique symbiosis generated the idea that initiated this project. The structuring of bibliography and the identification of sources have been its first steps.

The team that employed the development of the project first dedicated itself to the documentation activities. Several research stages in archives and libraries in the country and abroad were undertaken. Bogdan Adrian Ceobanu, researcher at the “A.D. Xenopol” Institute of History in Iași and member of the project’s team, conducted several documentation stages. First, from 9th to 17th of June 2013, colleague Bogdan Ceobanu went to Venice, where, on the invitation of the Romanian Institute of Culture and Humanistic Research, has conducted research in the library, whose immediate intellectual gaining was the connection to new tendencies in the research of the history of diplomacy. At the end of the stage, Mr. Ceobanu took part to an international conference, with a paper on which we shall report later. Next, from 6th of June to 7th of July 2013, he went on a new mobility, this time at the Centre d’Etudes des Mondes Russe, Caucasiens et Centre-Européen in Paris. Fellow team member Ceobanu had the opportunity to undertake such preliminary research at the Archives Diplomatiques-Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. He asked to consult inventories and personal

records of French plenipotentiary ministers accredited in Romania. Other issues studied were the ones referring to the content of the diplomatic correspondence between Paris and Bucharest and details on the French Legation premises in the Romanian capital. These very days (November 23rd – November 30th, 2013), colleague Bogdan Ceobanu is conducting a research stage in Turkey, at the invitation of the „Dimitrie Cantemir” Romanian Institute of Culture in Istanbul. He visited the library of the institute, „Koc Research Center for Anatolian Studies” and „Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi”, where, with the lack of personal files, the Bucharest reports of the Ottoman diplomats, especially those approaching the end of the 19th century, capture aspects of political and social life of Romania. To be mentioned, in this regard, record **H.R. SYS 1026 (1892-1899)**. Claudiu-Lucian Topor, project manager, Assistant Professor at „Al. I. Cuza” University of Iași, has undertaken, from November 24th to December 1st, 2013, a documentation stage at the Political Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amtes). The main object of the documentation were the records containing information about the life and career of German diplomats accredited as plenipotentiary ministers in Bucharest between 1881 and 1914. It is about the personnel files (*Personalakten bis 1945*) of nine ministers, characters differing in age, religious beliefs, sociability and personality. The personnel files consulted provide information of first importance to reconstitute the studies and the career path. We insisted, as expected, on the records covering the period spent in the Romanian capital. Documents are written in the old German script (Kurrentschrift), which to the speaker of current German basically means a new alphabetization. Another extremely valuable record for the research, discovered in the archives of Berlin, is named **Das diplomatische Corps in Bukarest** (The diplomatic corps in Bucharest). We asked for consulting five files of this record. They chronologically cover the period between 1886 and 1919 and refer to the life and work of foreign diplomats accredited in the capital of the Kingdom of Romania. In the end, we found it necessary to also go through the content of another interesting record, referring to Romania's diplomatic representation abroad (Rumänien 13 - **Die diplomatische Vertretung Rumäniens im Ausland**). There is a unique opportunity in it to reconstruct Romanian diplomats' image from the reports of German diplomats. Another member of our team, Alexandru Istrate, researcher at the „A.D. Xenopol” Institute of History in Iași, has undertaken, between the 10th and the 21st of November 2013, a documentation stage at Bucharest. He has conducted research at the Library of the Romanian Academy, the National Archives and the „Carol I”

Central University Library. Of great interest for the project's scope is particularly the information included in certain records of the *Manuscripts* section of the Library of the Romanian Academy. At lot A 83 in the „Great archive”, as it is registered in the library documents, were discovered papers regarding the organization of some society events by the royal family. One can find here invites sent to the local elites, but also to the foreign representatives, regarding participation in dinners, balls, offered on special occasions: the royal jubilee, religious and national holidays, anniversaries, commemorations. Apart from sterile information, of statistical nature (guest lists, their placing at the table, etc.), what retains attention is the important role of the royal family in the preparation of such society events.

The aforementioned documentation stages contributed to the elaboration of some useful work tools, set to be completed each year, with the advance of the team members' research. These work tools can be consulted on the web page of the project (<http://history.uaic.ro/research/foreigndiplomats/>). It is worth to enumerate them but especially to explain them: **General bibliography** – structured according to the need to use the methodology of historical knowledge, required for any research approach, but also out of the need to identify the sources of information regarding the life and activity of foreign diplomats; **Thematic bibliography** – which suggests an attempt to update the research regarding the history of the diplomatic corps and diplomacy, as well as the recovery of a tiny part of the voluminous bibliography of social history dedicated to society events and to everyday life; **Repertoire of memoirs and media** – a minimal effort to systematize the autobiographical literature and the press, precious sources in the investigations related to both diplomacy and society events; **Inventory of researched sources** - a regularly updated reflection of the research conducted by team members in different archives in the country and abroad.

The information accumulated in this first stage of development of the project has facilitated the participation of members of the research team at the scientific sessions in the country and abroad. On 14-15 June 2013 an international congress was held in Venice, named „La Lunga Crisi. Italia, Romania e il Sud-Est Europeo dal 1908 alla Pace di Bucarest (1913)”, organized by the Romanian Institute of Culture and Humanistic Research in Venice, Ca'Foscari University, the Department of Political Studies of Roma Tre University and the Romanian Academy. Three of the project members took part to it with papers. Daniel Cain delivered the presentation *Going to War. Bulgarian-Romanian Relationships between St. Petersburg Protocol and the Second Balkan War*. The text revealed the tensions that preceded the interruption of

Romanian-Bulgarian diplomatic relations in the summer of 1913. The Bulgarian Legation in Bucharest represented in this timeframe an important pole of interest for the comments and suspicions that arise in Romanian society. Fellow team member Bogdan Adrian Ceobanu presented the paper *N. Schebeko. A Russian Diplomat in Bucharest at the time of the First Balkan War*. Accredited as plenipotentiary minister in Bucharest in the summer of 1912, Schebeko, like his predecessors, appears „obsessed” with the hypothesis of an alliance between Romania and Austria-Hungary. He tries, on different channels, including by attending high society circles, to penetrate the mysteries of the Romanian foreign policy. Keen observer of high society realities, he tries to diminish the Russophobia found among the members of the Romanian elite. Close also to the King, he is trying to influence politicians to reconsider the ties of friendship with Russia. Claudiu-Lucian Topor, manager of the project, delivered the paper *Bucharest „Mundanity Experiences” in the Wartimes. Scraps of Social Life between the Bulgarian Campaign (1913) and The Great War (1916)*. The paper presents places and forms of socialization in the cosmopolitan Bucharest of the early 20th century. The novelty lies in the overlapping experience of war. Just as other European capitals, early 20th century Bucharest is a city of suffering. Yet, in this war drama, life is pulsating nevertheless. People try to take refuge in a present that makes them forget the horrors for an evening at least. But remarkable differences separate the high society experiences of the Capital’s notabilities between the Balkan wars of 1913 and the mobilization of 1916. The campaign in Bulgaria looks like a wedding party! Open restaurants, great bustle, café enthusiasm. The few signs of war, although visible, seem to be ignored by the public, because, in the absence of confrontations south of the Danube, hospitals will not be filled by wounded. Towards the end of the war adventure, only the cholera epidemic, which occurred among soldiers, seems to wake a certain concern. Only three years later, the war experience begins anew, the same as triumphalist in the Bucharest society. Patriotic feeling fills the streets, but is soon challenged. The true war had begun. Hospitals no longer cope with the wounded wave, the city is immersed in the dark at night, in order to avoid bombing of precise targets. Few amusements remain, and those are suppressed by the prospect of foreign military occupation.

On November 21st-22nd, the home institution of the project, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, hosted a workshop named *Diplomacy and society in Eastern Europe. Directions, sources, methods of research*, event planned in this year’s scheduling. In addition to project members, historians and researchers of Iași took part in the section dedicated to the

topics of our research (*Past and present in the study of diplomacy. The editing of sources and the challenges of social history*), some of them with good reputation in the history of diplomacy and international relations. Presentations of the project members (abstracts are available on the web page of the project) focused on presenting the following topics: Claudiu-Lucian Topor, project manager, delivered a text on the institutional preoccupations of German academic, regarding the editing of the diplomatic history sources. Two relatively new work instruments (*Handbuch der Diplomatie, 1815-1963. Auswärtige Missionschefs in Deutschland und deutsche Missionschefs in Ausland von Metternich bis Adenauer; Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes 1871-1945*) were analyzed under the aspect of conception, methodology and editorial difficulties. Daniel Cain presented *The editing of the diplomatic sources in Southeastern Europe*. The text reveals the obstacles and the benefits of the effort of publishing some voluminous collections of diplomatic documents, in a region of Europe that for a long time lacked control over fundamental historical sources. Alexandru Istrate presented the paper *About diplomats in the autobiographical literature. Reading notes*. The message conveyed by the author is that reading to some diplomats we shall go back to another history, one of authenticity and genuine emotions. The „weight“ of some memories is not given by the reputation of the signatory or by the richness of the reported facts. It lies more in the honesty of the narrator, the polemical spirit and, not least, the veracity of the „reunions“ he causes or the humanity in such evocations. We appreciate this kind of writing insofar as, involuntary, it comes in contrast with deliberate falsifications and festive phraseology. Bogdan Ceobanu stopped again over Russian diplomats in Bucharest, in the presentation *A Russian consul in Iași at the end of the 19th century. Alexandru Girs*. It is of interest, especially, the way in which he perceived and how he was perceived by the society of Iași at the end of the 19th century. His presence in the public space was noted by the press and the memoirs of the epoch, him being remembered by contemporaries as „extremely skillful among all Russian agents residing in the Kingdom and the most feared“. Alexandru was fond of hunting, was close to historians and people in the theatre world, translating from Russian and arranging several plays on the scene of the Iași theatre, in different theatrical seasons. The parties organized in the lounges of the consulate were to be reported by the periodicals of the epoch, capturing the politeness and good taste of Girs family. Besides the interventions in the workshop mentioned above, two of the project members, Daniel Cain and Claudiu–Lucian Topor, took part (or will participate by the end of December) to national scientific gatherings. On October 25th-26th, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza“

University of Iași held the annual scientific session of the teaching staff, researchers and doctoral students of the Faculty of History. On this occasion, Claudiu-Lucian Topor presented the paper *Religious sensibilities in the time of the Great War. Romanians, Bulgarians and relics of St. Demetrius*. There is without any doubt a certain symmetry of social behavior in Romanians in the strange association between high society and the mystical specific of religiosity. In a Sunday of February (1918) took place an event (stealing of the relics of Saint Demetrius Basarabov, protector of Bucharest) that reveals unprecedented reactions, but probably long practiced in the subconscious of the Bucharest people imbued with piety. A public show is born unexpectedly in a sad world, that of war. Recovered, not without adventures, by German officers, the relics returned to a capital overjoyed by the power of the divine miracle. The outskirts flood the Metropolitan Hill, the common folks kneel on the route of the relics' returning to the Cathedral, each attendant lights one or two candles, although, under military occupation, wax almost vanished. A reward was required for the German soldiers, now regarded with humanity. A religious feeling which cannot be excluded from the mundane life when referring to early 20th century Bucharest. In the end, a few words about our colleague's Daniel Cain presentation at the annual scientific sessions of the „Nicolae Iorga” Institute in Bucharest. Named *A Bulgarian diplomat in Bucharest: Gheorghii Kalinkov (1911 - 1913)*, it brings to attention a figure of which little is known in Romania. His short career is limited to his position in Bucharest in a time of seizures in the Balkans. Named head of a Bulgarian legation, without any sort of diplomatic preparation or salon manners, but a smart person, Kalinkov is facing the challenge of the outbreak of the first Balkan War. More precisely, he must use all his influence to bridge the gap between the Romanians' expectations and the intransigence of the authorities in Sofia. In order to penetrate the spirit of a country, the diplomat must first know it. For Gheorghii Kalinkov, Romania is the country of the most strident political contradictions. A state in which the Constitution is a „function”, the electoral system – „scam and corruption” and parliamentarism – „a false and insidious lie”. Bucharest is „the center and the mirror of Romanian oligarchy”, a city which, for the Bulgarian diplomat, represents a „modern Babylon” and „Little Paris” in everything, especially in what concerns the political and family habits, „base and vile”. For such a life, admits Kalinkov, you need „good health, a full bag, strong nerves and a healthy stomach”. Here are intertwined „all the memories of the past and all the hopes of the future”. The Capital of the Old Kingdom is „the furnace of Romanians culture, politics, science and art”, where the European civilization, poorly understood and poorly applied,

intersects with the darkness, ignorance and indecency of the East.

The research activity is permanently monitored. Together with the team members, we have conducted periodical evaluations of the degree of implementation, with the project manager in charge of coordinating the research and acting as the liaison element.