

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

PNII-RU-TE-2012-3-0288

Project manager

Dr Claudiu-Lucian Topor

YEAR 2014

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

Commemorations bring into the life of present communities the fibre of past historical communities. To be sure, not of any past, but only of the usable one. They fortify the society by recollection, heal the soul wounds, through the pious exercise of coming to peace with the once enemy, they cultivate heroism as a virtue of all and in the service of good. The year 2014 bears in itself the symbolism of the global proportion of a great event: this year marks 100 years since the start of World War One. Nothing was saved from the influences of its occurrence and legacy. The world underwent profound changes since then. It became what it is today. It is therefore natural to witness an exceptional number of remembrance events, to which both the political elite and the academia brought their contribution. The agenda of any representative institution, of a national or international standing, included events such as conferences and other gatherings dedicated to the centennial of this great catastrophe of mankind. The international publications turned their attention to contributions thematically associated to the historiographical problematics raised by this war; the collective volumes, some still in press, considerably increase our ideatic knowledge, albeit an already extensive one, on the significance of the centennial. In an ocean of information, the currents of which inevitably lead towards the source of international conflicts, the project's team avail itself of the opportunity to bring about a valuable input to the remembrance drive animating the world stage. All of the team's commitments were thematically adequate to the current year's objectives, namely the identification of the socialisation milieus and the description of the mundane experiences of the foreign diplomats in Romania, as well as the collecting of the foreign diplomats' recollections on the Romanian society. Thus, project manager Claudiu-Lucian Topor participated to several events occasioned by the First World War centennial, where he delivered presentations that contributed to the increase of the international visibility of the project. On the 16th of June, he presented at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, at the invitation of the Centre for the History of International Relations and the German Cultural Centre, the paper entitled *Germany and Romania at the onset of the First World War (1914)*. The paper sheds light on how the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 instilled an intensely executive (diplomatic) charge to the Romanian-German relations, somewhat to the

detriment of the political influences prevalent up to that moment. The change is observed later on, after the death of King Carol I, a political actor difficult to replace in the traditional scheme of traditional relationships configuration. The activity of the diplomatic body appears more intensive and conclusive... The denouement of every situation is apparently dependent on the ability, personality and inspiration of two individuals relatively little-known until then: Alexandru Beldiman, the diplomatic representative of Romania to Berlin, the baron Hjalmar von dem Bussche Haddenhausen, the plenipotentiary minister of Germany in Bucharest. Bussche's activity in the light of the research carried out within the framework of the project, has interested us in particular. Baron von dem Bussche reaches Bucharest relatively late, after the war commenced and Romania decided through the Crown Council from Sinaia to remain neutral. The official assuming of the diplomatic mission takes place on the 18th of September 1914. He stayed in Bucharest until the day Romania and Germany became enemies in the world conflagration (15/28 August 1916). He died at the age of 72, leaving behind a rich career in diplomacy, a large and eye-pleasing family, in which the German blood was mixed with the Latin one. He never desired and never attempted to put himself forward more than necessary. Everything he conducted was bureaucratic in nature, strictly protocolar act. He full-heartedly wished for success, but for this he required something more. For some arrogant, for others limited, he found little sympathy in Romania. He would have also needed chance to succeed in everything he set his mind too. For this reason, the Bucharest episode can hardly be considered a failure of his career. Without major accomplishments, Bussche nonetheless remains the last plenipotentiary of Imperial Germany accredited to Bucharest. His departure, in September 1916, literally puts an end to a historical era. A pale figure that future generation will nevertheless remember. The complete portrait of the German plenipotentiary, as well as the socialising aptitudes during the Bucharest sojourn, were, for that matter, treated at large in another presentation entitled *Hilmar von dem Bussche Haddenhausen... The last plenipotentiary of Imperial Germany accredited to Bucharest*, delivered at the conference ***Diplomați, societate și mondenități. Sfârșit de "Belle Epoque" în lumea românească***, organised at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași in the framework of our project (PN-II-RU-TE-2012-3-0288) on the 5th-6th of September 2014. This conference represented the most important scientific event organised in the framework of the project for the year 2014. Besides the members of the research team, the event was attended by twelve specialists from prestigious Romanian academic centres, such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara or Galati. The proceedings volume will be published in 2015 at the "Al. I. Cuza" University publishing house.

Between the 18th and the 21st of June 2014, Claudiu-Lucian Topor, the project manager, was present in Sarajevo at the international gathering 'The Great War: Regional Approaches and Global Context. International Conference on the Occasion of the First Centennial of the Beginning of World War One', where he delivered the paper entitled *A forewarning of a*

massacre in the antechamber of the War? The German legation in Bucharest and the diplomatic scandal of the "Microbes" (1916). The investigation starts *in media res* with the presentation of an international diplomatic scandal (the discovery of viols of anthrax and of a large quantity of explosives in the abandoned precincts of the German diplomatic Agency in Bucharest), the genesis of which should be however traced to the previous years. For a historian to understand this peculiar "scandal of the germs", he must have a deeper knowledge of the "secrets" of the representation of the German interests at the level of diplomatic agency in Bucharest. These "secrets" leads us to social formulae and links within the Romanian society. The account of denizen Andrei Maftai, a mysterious character authorised to live in the building of the German diplomatic agency, or that of Michael Markus, the building's caretaker, reveals certain pre-war ramifications of the "scandal's" casuistic, collaborationism and widely anterior arrangements. At the same time, the event itself reveals the degree to which the personnel of the diplomatic agency was involved in the social relations of the moment. It is not the premeditation of a massacre, as it is the metamorphosis of a social perception of the German diplomacy and of the German diplomats. From the tolerance shown before the war, to the aggressive rhetoric typical of war days.

Another conference occasioned by the centennial of the First World War took place in London, between the 1st and 4th of August 2014: Perspectives on the `Great War`. World War One International conference, Queen Mary, University of London. Dr Claudiu-Lucian Topor delivered on the second day of the event the presentation entitled *The Romanian World as reflected in wartime memoirs. Society and mores during the German military occupation (1916-1918)*. An attempt at capturing the Romanian society of the Old Kingdom, the habits and mundaneness during times of war, of privations and curtailment of liberties. The German memorial literature describes a world that must be understood through its becoming. The society of war time is heir to the peacetime one. In order to understand the German perception, which is unilaterally negative and under the sway of the context, one has to look into the past and ascertain the behavioural habits of Romanians. In other words, a look back through time. How does the pre-war Romanian society looks like? What are its goals and aspirations? How prepared is the generation of war for the coming conflagration? The Romanian war memoirs are quick to deliver verdicts and to pass judgements. Every author hopes that the future will take note of his experience. The paradox is that both the Romanian and the foreign authors reveals vices and sins common in the society. What the German memoirs say about the immorality, waste, and slavishness of the Romanians, the Romanian elite finally admits. It is true that only the converted one, which eventually experienced defeat. A new society is needed, other politicians are necessary. Just as the critics of the society from before the war did. The same habits, aptitudes, qualities, deficiencies are found in the press and literature works. Caragiale's depictions are not war ones. Only the Caragialesque characters are also found in the German war memoirs!

The 2014 series of scientific events dedicated the memory of war was closed by another international participation, the conference organised on the 24th of October 2014 by the Romanian Institute for Culture and Humanities in Venice. The event (colloquium) was called *I Romeni nella Grande Guerra (1914-1918). Afrontare la Crisi. Eludere la Guerra. Preparare la belligeranza* and gathered, in a refreshing discussion session, Romanian and Italian specialists, who recalled the rich past of bilateral relations. The paper entitled *La diplomazia tedesca di fronte alla neutralità romena (1914-1916)* was presented at this event, a text which sheds light on the similarities, expressed on the diplomatic level, existing in the path of the common Romanian-Italian political discourse during the neutrality years. Romania's neutrality interpreted by the German decision-makers involved similarities, as well as significant differences. The text attempts to elucidate them both, by making use of the documentary sources from Berlin. They reveal the strategies employed by, and the aptitudes of the diplomats involved at the very centre of events. The test of maturity of the German diplomats during the first years of war took place in Bucharest and Rome. In both cases it was failed!

The activity of the other members of the research team in 2014 fruitfully combined documentation work with the dissemination one. In the following we will present them in detail. **Dr Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu** carried out his assigned activities on several levels. During the two stages conducted in Bucharest, at the Central National Historical Archives and the Library of the Romanian Academy, he consulted records from the Russia and France Microfilm Collection, and the personal correspondence of Gh. Derussi. On the other hand, in Iași, as part of the research carried out in the archives of the Central University Library, his attention turned to the analysis of the Bucharest-based periodical *L'Indépendance Roumaine*, in order to assess the integration of the foreign diplomats into the wider Romanian society at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Another aspect of his activity was represented by his attendance of scientific gatherings. In this sense, he took part in the aforementioned conference *Diplomați, societate și mondenități. Sfârșit de Belle Époque în lumea românească*, Iași, 5-6 September 2014, organised in the framework of the project, delivering the paper entitled *Din istoria Legației Franței la București (1880-1914)*, in which he set to identify those who represented the interests of French diplomacy in the Romanian capital, in terms of a series of sociocultural variables: social origin, educational profile, diplomatic career, professional prestige, but also their integration into the Romanian society. Another aspect he brought to attention concerned the residency of the French Legation in Bucharest, from the standpoint that one of the elements of preeminence in a state's representation has always been represented by the "diplomatic hotel". The other presentation, entitled *Din căsătoriile diplomaților străini în societatea românească (sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea – începutul secolului XX)*, was delivered at the national conference *Zilele Universității „Al.I.Cuza” Iași*, hosted by the Faculty of History of the home university between the 24th and the 25th of October 2014. In this presentation, Dr Bogdan-Adrian Ceobanu sought to identify the foreign diplomats that married

in Romania from various reasons: personal interests or following scandals. Belgian, Bulgarian and Russian diplomats fell within this scope. Last but not least, we focused on publishing the results of the research conducted so far within the framework of the project. In this sense, the study entitled *N. Shebeko e le relazioni romeno-russe nel contesto dello scoppio della Prima guerra balcanica* (15 pp.) was published in the volume *Fra neutralità e conflitto. L'Italia, la Romania e le Guerre balcaniche*, a cura di Antonio D' Alessandri e Rudolf Dinu, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, Roma. Similarly, another study entitled *Some considerations regarding the social behaviour of foreign diplomats in Bucharest in the '80s during the 19th century* is pending publication by Isis Press publishing house, in the volume *Southeastern Europe in the 19th Century: Historical Perspectives on Socio-Economic and Diplomatic Challenges (Proceedings of the Black Sea Historiographies workshops organized by ICR Istanbul and Center for Ottoman Diplomatic History)*, coordinated by Sinan Kunalalp and Silvana Rachieru.

Dr Alexandru Istrate conducted in 2014 two documentation stages at libraries and archives from Romania or abroad. The first took place in Bucharest between the 15th and the 20th of June 2014. The research focused on the manuscript records from the Library of the Romanian Academy. It was also possible to consult and take photographs of what specialists call the "Great Archive", registry numbers A 83 and A 84, two volumes containing unpublished information regarding the festivities from the royal court, as well as the list of persons on the palace registries from a timespan of almost three decades. Hundreds of files preserve not only the names of the guests to the palaces from Bucharest or Sinaia, but also chronicles the aspirations and goals of the Romanian elites, providing, to whomever desires to untangle them, the radiography of those broadly known as from the "top" of Romanian society. Fellow researcher Daniel Istrate also worked during this time with the correspondence of Queen Elisabeth, likewise kept at the Library of the Romanian Academy. Papers sent and received from the era's notabilities help us to have a more nuanced understanding of a world that nowadays is rather perceived through the veil of a bohemian atmosphere. The National Archives and the Archives of the Bucharest Municipality were also visited during this stage. From among the consulted records, we mention the Royal House records, the Carol I personal records, the Elisabeth personal records, the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction records, the Ministry for Public Works records, and the Bucharest Township records. Dr Alexandru Istrate identified possible clues concerning the architecture of the protocol employed in the case of invitations sent by the Royal House. The state institutions, ranging from ministerial headquarters, townships, prefectures, universities and the Academy, to courthouses and courts of audit, were all solicited to send on a periodical basis their personnel records, from which the individuals that became part of the monarchs' entourage were selected, according to their political affinities. The second documentation stage was conducted between the 19th of October and the 2nd of November 2014 at the National Library of France, Paris. One of the set goals was to update the bibliography on the project's theme, to identify possible

historiographical connections with the topic of the assumed analyses. From the point of view of accustomedness with the methodologies employed in the field, with the historiographical approaches, the aim was to get closer to the French historiography. Works published in journals, author books and proceedings volumes were looked up in the library's database. Part of them will be found in the bibliographic references inserted into the studies currently under way. The work in the above-mentioned libraries and archives was completed by the work in the Central University Library and the Iași County Archive Direction. With respect to the project's dissemination requirements, Dr Alexandru Istrate followed suite and sent for publication two studies: Alexandru Istrate: *Jenseits von Vorurteil und Lob: Bilder der Königin Elisabeth in der rumänischen Memorienliteratur* in S. I. Zimmermann and E. Binder-Iijima (eds.) *"Ich werde noch vieles anbahnen" Carmen Sylva: die Schriftstellerin und erste Königin von Rumänien im Kontext ihrer Zeit. Übersetzungen ins Deutsche: Silvia Irina Zimmermann, Edda Binder-Iijima...*, respectively Alexandru Istrate, *Etichetă și protocol la balurile Curții Regelui Carol I*, set to come off the presses in 2015 at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University printing house, in the proceedings volume of the conference *Diplomați, societate și mondenități. Sfârșit de "Belle Époque" în lumea românească* that took place in Iași between the 5th and 6th of September 2014. In the former paper, Dr Alexandru Istrate attempted to expound on the image of Queen Elisabeth in the correspondence of the age, in the press, as well as in the memoirs signed not just by those from the Queen's inner circle, to find her beyond the protocolar rules, even when the public sentiment ran against her. The royal family too was challenged by the twists of fate, tribulations that nevertheless rarely became known in the public space. Historical analysis, literary perspective, artistic credentials, journalistic opinions, malicious comments, were all brought together into a working folder to be used for reassessing the first queen of the Romanians. The second study aimed to understand the social and political function of the balls at the royal court, beyond superficial appearances, the illusion of splendour and entertainment. It is well known that the purpose of the court balls went well beyond the exclusively mundane. Supporting sociabilities without admitting any compromise in regards the conduct, bringing together people of different social conditions, the balls played a civilising role. Enjoying a privileged exposition, they pleaded the cause of good manners in a world marked by the dream of modernisation.

For 2014, **Dr Daniel Cain** aimed to continue his research of the archives from Sofia in order to identify new documentary evidence on the activity of the Bulgarian diplomats accredited to Bucharest, at the beginning of the last century. The main focus of the investigations carried out is Simeon Radev, the plenipotentiary minister to Bucharest between 1913 and 1916, who left a rich archival material, partially inaccessible. His personal archive (correspondence and memoirs) became part of the Bulgarian State Archives from Sofia only as late as 2010, and only a part of it is available for research (186 archival units). As a matter of fact, Dr Daniel Cain intends to finish in 2015 a novel editorial project, which will contain the

diplomatic reports and, to the degree to which this is possible, a part of the memoirs of Radev referring to the period spent in the Romanian capital, extremely demanding for a cabinet chief. Similarly, fellow researcher Cain continued the work on the lists containing the names of all the members of the diplomatic body accredited in the Old Kingdom, which will be available on the project's website (the documentary platform section) starting with 2015.

Part of these researches materialised into a series of presentations that focused on the structure and decisional role played by the Romanian and foreign diplomatic bodies accredited to Bucharest around the onset of the First World War. In this sense, Dr Daniel Cain participated to the national conference *Diplomați, societate și mondenități. Sfârșit de Belle Époque în lumea românească*, Iași, 5th-6th of September 2014, organised within the framework of the project, where he delivered the presentation entitled *Un ministru bulgar la București: Simeon Radev*. This diplomat's activity served as the starting point of an extensive research, subsequently presented at international conferences dedicated to the centennial of the First World War: the paper entitled *Former enemy, possible ally: the Romanian-Bulgarian Relations during the Romanian Neutrality (1914–1916)*, delivered in Venice on the 24th of October 2014, at the conference *Romeni nella Grande Guerra (1914–1918). Affrontare la Crisi. Eludere la Guerra. Preparare la belligeranza* organised by the Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica di Venezia, Università Roma Tre and the Babeș Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca; the paper entitled *Cultural identity and duty: Romanian and Bulgarian diplomatic corps during the Great War*, delivered at the *Francophilie et germanophilie en Europe sud-orientale à la veille et pendant la Première guerre mondiale* international colloquium, Bucharest, 29 November 2014, organised by the Centre Régional Francophone d'Études Avancées – Villa Noël, Institut Français de Roumanie and the University of Bucharest. In terms of publications, Dr Daniel Cain published the article *La via della guerra: le relazioni romeno-bulgare tra il Protocollo di San Pietroburgo e la Seconda guerra balcanica* in the volume *Fra neutralità e conflitto. L'Italia, la Romania e le Guerre balcaniche*, edited by A. D' Alessandri and R. Dinu, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, Roma, 2014, (p. 125-144). The article *Un diplomat bulgar la București: Gheorghii Kalinkov (1911-1913)* was published in the journal *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, Vol. XXVII, 2014, p. 73-84. A valuable contribution on the work and personality of the Bulgarian minister in Bucharest, Gheorghii Kalinkov, an individual who carries out an intense diplomatic work meant to deter the Romanian intervention into the Balkan conflict. But he collided with the intransigence of his immediate overseers, who ignore the appeals to moderation advanced by the diplomat. Kalinkov is forced to admit that the entire political-diplomatic action of the Bulgarian government on the cusps of the Great War was based on an erroneous argumentation. More precisely, Sofia held the belief that the Romanian territorial claims were immoral, and that in the event of a Romanian attack in Southern Dobrudja, Bulgaria would have her defenders.

Finally, the publishing of the documentation instruments on the project's website (history.uaic.ro/research/foreigndiplomats) continued throughout 2014. The project members set the groundwork of the **documentary platform**. A much-welcomed special section containing the original or transcribed versions (accompanied by a Romanian translation) of the most representative documents for the theme at hand. The platform currently holds three sections: 'the Diplomatic Body in Bucharest', 'Dinners and audiences at the Royal Palace' and 'Memoirs and autobiographical works'. The platform will be completed and amended as our work will progress.