

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

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Project manager

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In the nine remaining months (January-September) of uninterrupted activity within the project, the research team aimed to edit the volume containing the proceedings of the international conference organised in 2015 (The diplomats' society in the Romanian public space. Perceptions, images and representations in the last decades of 19th century and the first half of 20th century). The volume, which will have the title ***Through the Diplomats' Eyes: Romanian Social Life in the Late 19th and early 20th Century***, is being printed by Parthenon Verlag, Geist und Wissenschaft, Kaiserslautern (Germany). It includes 21 papers belonging to young as well as established researchers, from Romania and from abroad. It was structured into four chapters, each team member being in charge of editing and proofreading one of them. Mr. Claudiu-Lucian Topor, the project manager, is in charge of editing the first chapter (***Rebuilding the Romanian world - Cultural and social perspective***), showing an original (from a social and cultural point of view) picture of the diplomats' representations of the Romanian world – established historical paradigms (sometimes prejudices), such as the country's position as an interface of the Balkans (Nicholas Pitsos, *Balkans beyond the Danube ? Romania and Romanians perceived by French diplomats during the Eastern Question*), as an outpost of Latinity (Emanuela Costantini, *Italy's view of her Latin sister. Carlo Fasciotti between the Balkan Wars and the First World War*) or as a country of contrasts and contradiction (Alma Hannig, *The land of contrasts and contradiction. Perceptions of Romania among Austro-Hungarian diplomats on the eve of the Great War*). The second chapter (***The Diplomats' political ties and ideological connections***) has been edited by researcher Bogdan Adrian Ceobanu. The papers presented expand the horizon of perception, at the level of the diplomats, towards the assimilation of the Romanian political construction and the articulation of ideological connections. Revealed to the diplomats (many of them still on their missions) the Romanian society appears as intensely divided and fragmented by political infighting. The Romanian political scene gets the attention it deserves. The foreign diplomats analyse the constitutional mechanism and the parliamentary system, collecting information about internal disputes and socialising with party leaders. This kind of personalised and non-conventional connections, oriented according to the objective of the diplomatic mission, sometimes result in friendships, sometimes in antipathies. The third chapter of the volume (***Developing biographies – Depicting social behaviour***) is dedicated to the biographies of diplomats present in the Romanian public space and to studying their conduct in society. The portraits of three ministers-plenipotentiary from three different periods, Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles (Bogdan Adrian Ceobanu, *A British Diplomat in Romania: Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles (1887-1891)*), Hans Freytag (Dorin Demostene Iancu, *A German diplomat in Bucharest: Hans Freytag (1921-1926)*) and Pellegrino Ghigi (Adrian Vițalariu, *Pellegrino Ghigi as the minister plenipotentiary of Italy in Romania (1938-1941)*) reduces the risk of stereotyping when reading the texts and stimulates the appetite for comparative portrayals. In the same chapter, the editors have decided to include

contributions that involve prosopographical approaches and a rigorous analysis of the impact family ties and social life have on classical diplomacy. The last chapter, (*The Diplomat's routine*) has two sections; one of them focuses on the practices of negotiations and constraints that may be used in the diplomats' activity, while the other discusses protocol and convenience. The task of editing and proofreading the texts and of verifying the translations was undertaken by researcher Daniel Cain.

As a whole, the volume contributes to the rediscovery of a society in the middle of a process of transformation. The texts published by the contributors (among them members of the project team – **Claudiu-Lucian Topor, *Impressions from the memoirs of German diplomats accredited in Bucharest (1881-1914). Topics, obsessions, and prejudices regarding the Romanian society***; **Bogdan Adrian Ceobanu, *A British Diplomat in Romania: Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles (1887-1891)*** ; **Alexandru Istrate, *Courteous conversation and exquisite cuisine at the King's table: on dinners and diplomacy under the reign of king Carol I***; **Daniel Cain, *The long way home: the repatriation of diplomats after Romania's Entry into the Great War (August 1916)***), prove that, although explored for a long time by foreign travellers and adventurers, the Romanian scene reveals itself without censorship to the diplomats, too. They are not the most comfortable of guests, but it is surprising that their stories are, however, lively reports. Unlike other observers (politicians), the diplomats (or at least part of them) travel around the country and discover not just the Romanian city, but also the Romanian village. They have a keen eye and the ability to portray not just the aristocrats, but also the peasantry. Influenced by social extraction, education and prejudice, the foreign diplomat's journeys through Romania remain conditioned by the length and the object of their missions. Sometimes it only takes place at symbolic level. For some it engenders dilemmas and mysteries, but at the same time the desire to return, for others the journey to Bucharest is an experience in a peripheral space, a transition towards real civilisation, a purgatory or an endless exile.

Apart from editing the volume, the members of the research team have dealt with the dissemination of the results obtained so far and with establishing contacts with other Romanian specialists. In this respect it is worth mentioning the presence of Mr. Claudiu-Lucian Topor, the manager of the research project, at the National Congress of Romanian Historians, which took place between 25 and 28 August in Cluj-Napoca. On this occasion, the volume with the papers presented at the national conference held in 2014 (*Diplomați, societate și mondenități. Sfârșit de "Belle Époque în lumea românească"*) was presented, receiving the unanimous appreciation of the audience.