

Intermediary research report

Project Code: PN-II-RU-TE-2012-3-0078

Project Title: **Visions and Perceptions of Romania in the Russian Imperial Discourse and Public Sphere in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century**

Project Director: Dr. Andrei Cușco

Reporting Period: January – December 2015 (third stage)

According to the general project objectives and to the concrete priorities sketched throughout the preceding period of research activities, during 2015 the members of the research team structured their activities along the three basic tracks outlined previously, i.e., the launching of a documentary series, the publication of articles in specialized scholarly journals and the further collection of materials in domestic and foreign archives (see the relevant section in the 2014 report). Thus, the project's members continued to work on the collections of Russian diplomatic sources (reports) pertaining to Romania. In the first half of 2015, the project's team focused its efforts on the transcribing and translation of the sources to be included in the next volume of the series (covering the period 1899-1905). At present, the basic text of this volume (including the reference matter) is almost ready. Over 90% of the editorial and substantive work has been completed. Unfortunately, the publication of these materials had to be postponed due to unforeseen obstacles, linked to the limited access of the editors to Russian archival sources. Specifically, the project members do not have access to the Russian diplomatic reports for the year 1899, which made the publication of the next volume in the series impossible (at least this year). Despite the official requests and letters addressed by the editors to the Russian archives in order to gain access to a number of relevant documents covering the year 1899, these attempts failed. We intend to pursue our work on the prospective volumes of Russian diplomatic documents concerning Romania. Our aim for next year is to cover the subsequent (1909-1913) period. Our future plans also depend on the more systematic access to the archival collections in Russia, which will hopefully be improved once the Moscow-based Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI) is reopened, in the near future.

The International Conference *Romanians during World War I: Temptations, Opinions, and Actions during the Period of Romania's Neutrality* (with a Special Section: *Russia and Romania in 1914-1916. Visions, Perceptions, Interpretations*). The entire project team has been closely involved in organizing the international conference *Romanians during World War I: Temptations,*

Opinions, and Actions during the Period of Romania's Neutrality, with a special section concerning the Russian-Romanian relations during the first two decades of the 20th century. The symposium, held in Iași, on October 8-9, 2015, featured a number of participants from various university centers in Romania, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. The significant contribution of Dr. Flavius Solomon and Dr. Bogdan Ceobanu to the organization of the event should be particularly emphasized. Their efforts were decisive for the successful outcome of the conference proceedings. The conference materials will be published in 2016, in a special supplementary issue of the Yearbook of the "A. D. Xenopol" Institute of History in Iași (a CEEOL-indexed journal).

Research activities: Andrei Cușco. During the current year, the project director participated at two academic events, where he presented certain research results and materials relevant to the project's thematic focus. Thus, on May 31 and June 1, 2015, A. Cușco presented a paper on *Constantin Stere, "the Bessarabian Question" and the Neutrality-Era Debates in Romania (1914-1916)* at the international symposium "Constantin Stere: Prozator, publicist, jurist și om politic. La 150 de ani de la naștere", organized in Chisinau by the Moldovan Academy of sciences on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Stere's birth. A. Cușco also submitted a paper (*From Enemies to Allies: Mutual Images and Discursive Practices in the Russian-Romanian Relations before and during World War I*) to the Special Section on *Russia and Romania in 1914-1916. Visions, Perceptions, Interpretations* within the International Conference *Romanians during World War I: Temptations, Opinions, and Actions during the Period of Romania's Neutrality*, held in Iasi on October 8-9, 2015 (see above). The paper discussed the course of Russian-Romanian relations in the period immediately preceding and during World War I. In this interval, a transition occurred from the 1912 moment, marked by a heightened symbolic tension, to the gradual "normalization" of the neighboring empire's image in the last two prewar years. This subject was approached through three representative cases that epitomize the mutual "gaze in the mirror" of the Russian and Romanian elites during World War I. From the Romanian side, the paper examined the little-known work of Vasile D. Moisiu, published in 1915. On the Russian side, it discussed the positions expressed, during 1914-16, by some of the most active Russian nationalist and irredentist activists and thinkers of that era – D. N. Chikhachev and D. N. Vergun. Chikhachev appears, in his travel notes, as a supporter of a hard, "realist" approach in Russian foreign policy, which also had an impact on his image of Romania. Despite his criticisms of the Westernizing tendencies he perceived within Romanian society, he believed that Romania was not "lost" for the Russian cause and also that the two states had an

obvious “commonality of interests” in the strategic and economic sphere. This was a precondition for their eventual rapprochement. Vergun, who advocated Bukovina’s annexation to the Russian Empire, displayed an explicit interest in Romania’s place within the new post-war order. He fervently supported a “permanent alliance” between Russia and Romania, which would result in a customs union and in the effective subordination of Romania’s foreign policy to Russian imperial hegemony. This was to be achieved through the two elements within Romanian society perceived as “pro-Russian:” the clergy and the peasantry. Thus, Romania entered the general schemes and plans for post-war border revision, serving as a perfect illustration of the entanglements between domestic and foreign policy that framed the actions of the region’s rival imperial players.

The results of some project-related research activities have been synthesized by A. Cușco in an article (*The „Church Question” in the Romanian Principalities and the Romanian Kingdom in the Mirror of Russian Imperial Discourse (1860-1914): Between Continuity and Change*) that is forthcoming in the Yearbook of the “A. D. Xenopol” Institute of History in Iasi (in December 2015). This article discusses the link between the domestic and foreign policy of the Russian Empire through the lens of the religious aspect. It is based on the case study of the „church question” in the United Principalities/Romania, highlighting the perceptions of this issue within Russian official and diplomatic circles. The argument is built upon the premise that religion was one of the main elements of the Russian imperial project, not only for legitimizing imperial expansion, but also for constructing and reproducing difference. The dangers of ‚contamination,’ apostasy and uncertain loyalty lurked in the background of imperial policies and often framed the authorities’ attitude towards ‚suspect’ religious communities. Just as frequently, the Russian observers transferred their own fears and phobias generated within the empire to external contexts. The Russian perceptions of the Romanian case are a revealing example of this logic. The language and conceptual categories that emerged during the 1860s in the Russian Empire’s Western borderlands in connection with the ‚Polish Question’ and the role of the Catholic clergy were reproduced in the Romanian case. The religious dimension provides a unique basis for an *entangled history* of the mutual Russian and Romanian perceptions. The quasi-obsessive threat of ‚Latinism’ and the cliché of the pervasive danger of Catholic propaganda that dominated the Russian images of the Romanian church and society allowed the Russian observers to project the ideal vision of the Self through the inverted mirror of the Other. In the first decade of the 20th century, as the Russian-Romanian relations gradually improved, these discursive elements faded

away, but they never disappeared entirely. Only the fundamental changes brought to the region by World War I radically altered the earlier discursive patterns in this regard.

Between August 3 and 9, the project director left for a research trip to the British National Archives in London (Kew). Pursuing the line of research initiated last year, A. Cuşco focused his attention primarily on the British diplomatic correspondence on Eastern Europe during the period of World War I, which is a part of the greater War collection. A. Cusco examined, specifically, the holdings of the following archival units: FO 371/1900-1906 (Romania in 1914), FO 371/2241-2282 (Romania in 1915), FO 371/2602-2634 (Romania in 1916), FO 371/3140-3160 (Romania in 1917-1918). Overall, over 2200 pages of archival documents have been photographed. These sources contribute significantly to the picture of the wartime diplomatic negotiations and of Romania's relations with the Entente Allies (including Russia) during the period of Romania's neutrality and active belligerent status. The materials concerning the course of events during 1918, when the country's situation is very closely followed by the British diplomats, are particularly interesting. This is connected to the dramatic shifts in Romania's international status and foreign policy, which reflected the larger developments on the Eastern Front. A. Cuşco was also interested in the attitude and positions articulated by British diplomacy towards the situation in the Western borderlands of the Russian Empire, in the context of the region's national movements and of the occupation policies introduced by German armies on these territories (or, conversely, of the Russian occupation policies in Galicia). These aspects allow the application of the comparative approach to the Romanian case and further complicate the connection between the domestic and foreign dimensions of Russia's (and its rivals') actions and decision-making on the fronts of the Great War.

Research activities: Flavius Solomon. During the current year, Flavius Solomon's activity within the project team was structured along the following lines: 1. Transcribing and translation of the Russian diplomatic documents and sources pertaining to Romania (1888-1916); 2. Participation at scholarly conferences and symposia; 3. Finalizing and publishing an article in a WoS-indexed journal and another article in an ERIH (A)-indexed journal; 4. Organization of an international conference within the project's thematic area; 5. Collection of documentary sources in various libraries and archives.

Flavius Solomon presented original papers related to the overall topic of the project at two international scholarly events. Thus, in the framework of the conference *Constantin Stere* –

jurist, profesor universitar, publicist, prozator și om politic. La 150 de ani de la naștere (Chișinău, May 31 – June 2, 2015) Dr. Solomon gave a talk on *Constantin Stere, Germany, and Romania's Neutrality, 1914-1916*. In the framework of the symposium *Romanians during World War I: Temptations, Opinions, and Actions during the Period of Romania's Neutrality* (Iași, October 8-9), Dr. Solomon presented a paper on *Romania in the Foreign Policy Representations of the Russian Empire on the Eve of World War I*.

During the current year, Flavius Solomon, together with Andrei Cușco, worked on the appropriate revisions and adjustments for the article *How Much Ideology Can Diplomacy Endure? The Early Phase of Soviet-Romanian Relations, November 1917–February 1918*, according to the comments and suggestions formulated by the anonymous reviewers. The article is now published in Issue 63 (2015), Volume 3, of the WoS – ISI-indexed journal „Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas”, which is rated as one of the most important publications worldwide specializing in the history of Eastern Europe. Also, during the reporting period Dr. Solomon was closely involved in revising and finalizing the article *Discourses of Empire and Nation in Early 20th-Century Bessarabia: Russian-Romanian Symbolic Competition and the 1912 Anniversary* (co-authored with Andrei Cusco), which is forthcoming in Nr. 4 (2015) of the ERIH (category A)-indexed journal „Ab Imperio”.

Finally, during the current year, Flavius Solomon further pursued his research activities in various archives and libraries within Romania (The Romanian National Archives, in Bucharest; The State Archives in Iași; The Central University Library in Iași), but also in Austria (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna) and Germany (Politisches Archiv Berlin). Dr. Solomon was particularly interested in the evolution of the Russian-Romanian relations immediately before and during World War I. The main emphasis during the course of the research rested on the interaction between the Great Powers and its impact on Romania.

Research activities: Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu. Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu's research activity in the framework of the project was pursued on several interconnected levels. One of these aspects concerned the dissemination of research results. Dr. Ceobanu participated at three scholarly conferences, including a national symposium, held in Iași, and two international events, organized in Sofia and Cluj-Napoca. At the national colloquium *Biography – Prosopography – Genealogy: Methodological Debates and Case Studies from Antiquity to the Present*, which took place on May 16, 2015, he presented a paper on *Gheorghe Rosetti-Solescu- A Diplomat of the Old Kingdom*. The topic was far from accidental, being highly relevant to the project's focus.

Rosetti-Solescu was the longest-serving among the chiefs of the Romanian diplomatic missions in Saint-Petersburg, holding this position for around 16 years. He also married into the milieu of the Russian elite: his wife was Olga Giers, the daughter of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, N.K. Giers. Using Rosetti-Solescu's personal and diplomatic correspondence, Dr. Ceobanu was able to trace not only his diplomatic career, but also the personal relations and networks he developed within Russian high society. He was also able to examine the way in which Russian imperial diplomacy perceived the main domestic and foreign policy issues pertaining to the Romanian state. Within the *11th CONGRESS OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES*, SOFIA 2015, Dr. Ceobanu submitted a paper with the following title: *From Berlin to Sarajevo: Romanian-Russian Relations, 1878-1914*. The author attempted to discuss the evolution of the political and diplomatic relations between the two countries during the period from the Berlin Congress to the Sarajevo murder. Dr. Ceobanu emphasized the transition from the initially tense and cold Russo-Romanian relations to a phase of normalization. He pointed out several important stages in this process: the proclamation of the Romanian Kingdom and Russia's attitude in the matter, the Franco-Russian alliance and its impact on Romania, the official visit of King Carol I to Russia, in the summer of 1898, the attitude of the Russian Empire towards Romania in the context of the Balkan Wars. Pursuing the same research track and building on his earlier scholarly interests, Dr. Ceobanu presented a paper, in October 2015, on the topic of *"The Diamandi Incident": The Situation of the Romanian Diplomats in Russia (1917-1918)*, at the international conference *World War I - The Other Faces of the War*, organized by the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca. Closely looking at the moment of the arrest of the Romanian diplomats in the Russian capital on New Year's Eve of 1918, Dr. Ceobanu concluded, based on previously unpublished documents, that this was not the only case in which Romanian diplomats had been arrested in Russia before 1918. Instead of focusing on Bolshevik ideology, the author emphasized the importance of the outbreak, the course and the major implications of World War I for the evolution of European diplomacy.

Another important aspect of Dr. Ceobanu's research activity within the project was the further collection of documentary sources. During several research trips to the Romanian National Archives in Bucharest, he examined the official correspondence of the Russian diplomats accredited in Bucharest in the early 20th century. Dr. Ceobanu continued his earlier research on the *Microfilm Collection. Russia*, held in the Bucharest archives. He also investigated the personal fund of Constantin Diamandi, who was the Romanian envoy to St. Petersburg during the period 1914-1918. Both the personal and the diplomatic correspondence of this figure could

contribute to opening new avenues for further research. Dr. Ceobanu's other research trips focused on the archival funds preserved in the Library of the Romanian Academy (in the Manuscript Division) and in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest (e.g., Fund *Historical Archive*, Fund *Petrograd*, Fund *World War I*).

The project essentially achieved its major initial goals. However, certain project objectives (specifically, those related to the publication of the next volume in the series of Russian diplomatic sources pertaining to Romania, as well as the quantitative scholarly output measured in the number of articles published in scholarly journals) had to be partially adjusted, due to unforeseen circumstances. The changes in the project agenda are also linked to the extension of its duration (by 10 months) due to certain budgetary adjustments in 2014. We will take the necessary steps to adequately fulfill the initial goals of the project during the next (and last) project year.