

Abstract
Habilitation thesis

**Professionalization, Social Origin, Career Typologies:
Romanian Diplomatic Corps during the Interwar Period**

I. Academic Career, Institutional Engagement, and Scientific Activity

- I.1. Academic Career
- I.2. Institutional Engagement
- I.3. Research Activities
- I.4. Future Directions in Research and Academia

II. The Professionalization of Romanian Diplomacy: Legation Attaché Entrance Exams in the Interwar Period

- II.1. Recruitment of Staff for the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the First Decade of the Interwar Period
- II.2. New Personnel at Sturdza Palace (1930–1939)

III. From Belgrade to Stockholm: Personnel of Romania's Diplomatic Missions

- III.1. In the Capital of an Allied State: Romanian Diplomats in Belgrade (1919–1941)
- III.2. From Alexandru G. Florescu to Gheorghe Grigorcea: Heads of Romania's Diplomatic Mission in Poland (1919–1939)
- III.3. Romanian Diplomats in the Scandinavian Countries (1916–1947)

IV. From Copyist to Minister Plenipotentiary: Career Pathways in Romanian Diplomacy

- IV.1. Professional Activity of a Romanian Diplomat: Marcel Romanescu (1897–1955)
- IV.2. Constantin Zănescu: A Romanian Diplomat in Fascist Italy (1929–1933)
- IV.3. Dimitrie Iurașcu – Minister Plenipotentiary of Romania in Norway (1934–1939)
- IV.4. A Romanian Consul in Interwar Poland: George-Traian Gallin
- IV.5. From University Professorship to Diplomacy: Gheorghe Tașcă – Minister Plenipotentiary of Romania in Germany (1930–1932)

Conclusions

Structured in four chapters, the work integrates key elements of my teaching career and scientific activity, together with ten studies (nine published in journals and collective volumes and one unpublished) concerning the topic that has been at the center of my research interests over the past decade and a half—the issue of Romania's diplomatic corps. This explains why the habilitation thesis bears the title *Professionalization, Social Origin, Career Typologies: Romanian Diplomatic Corps during the Interwar Period*.

Since the beginning of my academic career (2006/2007), I have been interested in the history of Romanian diplomacy in the first half of the twentieth century. In my doctoral thesis, I focused on analyzing the professional trajectory of Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen (1881–1958). This topic allowed me to move from studying Romania’s foreign policy—through the activity of a former head of diplomatic missions (in Bern, Berlin, and the Vatican) and Minister of Foreign Affairs—toward research on Romania’s diplomatic corps. Thus, from the public defense of my doctoral thesis in 2012 up to the present, my scientific career has focused on four directions/themes of research: Romania’s diplomatic corps in the period 1916–1947; Romania’s relations with various states of the world and with the League of Nations; Romania in the First World War: refugees, diplomacy, and propaganda; Romanian higher education—the case of the University of Iași. These four research directions have also been developed in the context of my involvement in research projects or participation in institutional initiatives, such as the celebration of a century and a half since the founding of the University of Iași.

In my research activity, I have tried not to write “studies based on other studies,” but rather to ground my work in a careful analysis of archival documents. For this reason, I have explored various archival collections in the country and abroad, thus managing to integrate new information into the scholarly circuit and to adopt different perspectives in approaching topics such as Romania’s propaganda at the end of the First World War, Romanian–Polish diplomatic and economic relations, and especially the social and institutional analysis of Romania’s diplomatic corps.

I consider that the experience accumulated throughout my career at the institutional level - through my involvement in editing academic journals, coordinating research projects, and organizing student activities - represents strong arguments in favor of my candidacy for obtaining the habilitation in History. To these are added my scientific activities, the results of which have been disseminated in studies and articles, edited volumes, and through participation in numerous national and international conferences.

From my point of view, Romania’s diplomatic corps in the interwar period was engaged in a continuous process of professionalization. In this regard, the analysis of the exams for the position of legation attaché offers a relevant perspective on the professionalization of the personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, given that, beginning with the second half of the 1920s, there was an increase in the number of candidates coming from diverse social backgrounds and characterized by an educational profile different from that of the previous period. Thus, the recruitment of diplomatic personnel was carried out through “open competitions,” in which dozens of candidates participated.

Nevertheless, when analyzing the social origins of the legation attachés admitted during the first interwar decade, we observe that many came from influential families (some of them of boyar origin), who were involved in political life or had connections with the political world, as well as from families of lawyers, magistrates, or physicians. Among the young men admitted to the diplomatic corps were also the sons of diplomats, which led to the emergence of small “dynasties” within Romania’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Bilciurescu; Cretzianu; Nanu). This phenomenon changed in certain respects during the second interwar decade. Competition in the entrance exams became increasingly intense, yet most of the young men admitted to the diplomatic career still came from families of lawyers, magistrates (Camil Demetrescu), university professors (the Rădulescu-Pogoneanu brothers), or even diplomats. Even so, a visible process of change in the “social composition” of Romanian diplomats during the interwar period can be observed. Representatives of former boyar families became increasingly less present within the diplomatic corps, while members of the bureaucratic and intellectual elites were increasingly well represented in a career that offered them opportunities for professional and social advancement.

Unlike the period before 1918, when Romanian diplomats were educated primarily abroad, the legation attachés who joined the ministry during the interwar period completed their university studies in Romania, generally graduating from faculties of law. Most of them were graduates of the University of Bucharest, and only a few legation attachés came from the Universities of Iași, Cluj, and Cernăuți. It should also be noted that 79.5% of the legation attachés admitted during the second interwar decade came from the Old Kingdom.

The professionalization of the diplomatic corps, as well as the limits of this process, can also be observed through the analysis of the profiles of heads of diplomatic missions and of the diplomatic staff in certain capitals. For example, Romania’s diplomatic mission in Belgrade was led by five diplomats between 1919 and 1941. This demonstrates that there was stability at the leadership level of the Belgrade mission, compared to the diplomatic representation in Warsaw, which was headed by ten diplomats. At the same time, some of the diplomats who served in Yugoslavia had received professional training within diplomatic missions in the Balkan region, while for others, the Belgrade mission represented the beginning of their formative trajectory in Southeastern Europe. These examples indicate the existence of a certain institutional logic within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed at specializing diplomats in handling matters related to the Balkan area. Moreover, other diplomats were transferred from Belgrade to Prague or vice versa, either following a legation chief or due to their expertise in the “Little Entente dossier.”

Warsaw represented a launching pad in diplomacy for mission heads coming from outside the diplomatic corps, rather than a stepping stone for career diplomats. Viewed from this perspective, Romania's diplomatic representation in Poland was more of a place for the final stage of a career than a transitional stage toward heading other diplomatic missions, as was the case, for instance, with Romania's representations in the Scandinavian countries. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that the authorities in Bucharest generally sent to Warsaw experienced diplomats who had distinguished themselves in the central administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in the leadership of diplomatic missions, as well as mission chiefs from outside the diplomatic corps who had long experience in domestic politics (R. Franasovici) or had previously held positions in the Romanian state administration (V. Cădere). This situation suggests that the post in Warsaw was important for Romanian diplomacy, both from the perspective of the Romanian–Polish alliance and because it served as an observation point for developments in Northern and Eastern Europe. However, only one of the heads of the diplomatic mission in Warsaw had served in the Polish capital prior to his appointment as head of the legation (Alexandru Iacovaky).

In the case of Romania's representation in the Scandinavian countries, it is notable that for 10 of the 23 heads of diplomatic missions, it was their first experience of this kind. This demonstrates that diplomatic missions in Northern Europe could be perceived as a testing ground or a promotion opportunity for talented diplomats, or for diplomats with long-standing service in the ministry who had experienced a winding career path.

Therefore, by analyzing the heads of diplomatic missions in Belgrade, Warsaw, and the Scandinavian countries, as well as the institutional trajectories of other diplomats, several career typologies can be identified. On the one hand, there are career diplomats, hired by the ministry through competitive examinations and following a professional trajectory up to the rank of plenipotentiary minister and head of a diplomatic mission. From this category, I have analyzed the cases of Dimitrie Iurașcu and Constantin Zănescu, diplomats who entered the ministry through competition before the First World War.

On the other hand, there are mission chiefs appointed from outside the diplomatic career. For some of these, diplomatic experience represented only a “sojourn” abroad, after which they returned to their previous professions or re-engaged in political life and academia (as was the case with Gheorghe Tașcă), while others continued their diplomatic activity and were integrated into Romania's diplomatic corps (Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen, Carol A. Davila). Evidently, other types of career can also be identified. Marcel Romanescu, a career diplomat, concluded his professional trajectory with the rank of legation counselor, whereas George-

Traian Gallin represents a classic example of a “consular track” within Romanian diplomacy. Moreover, Gallin was one of the Romanians from the territories united with Romania in 1918 (Bukovina) who was integrated into the Romanian consular service and pursued a career in countries (Poland and Germany) where his linguistic and political expertise was put to use. Overall, these examples reflect the mixed character of the Romanian diplomatic corps during the interwar period, situated at the intersection of institutional professionalization and the practice of political appointments.