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Axa prioritară 1 Educația și formarea profesională în sprijinul creșterii economice și dezvoltării societății bazate pe cunoaștere

Domeniul major de intervenție 1.5 Programe doctorale și postdoctorale în sprijinul cercetării

Titlul proiectului: Științele socio-umaniste în contextul evoluției globalizate – dezvoltarea și implementarea programului de studii și cercetare postdoctorală

Contract: POSDRU 89/1.5/S/61104

Beneficiar: Academia Română

**Mentor/ expert științific
Dr. Andi Mihalache**

Instituția coordonatoare de tematică: Academia Română – Filiala Iași

Tematica: Discurs literar-artistic și construcție identitară în secolele XVI-XX

Numele și prenumele cercetătorului postdoctoral: Iacob Dumitru

Tema individuală de cercetare: Spațiu public și identitate socială în orașul românesc din prima jumătate a secolului XIX

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researchers, especially of those from young generations, remains tangential in front of this generous topic. They are focused especially on types of sociability and public festivities or symbolism and the modernization of urban space (O. Cârstea, C. Ghițulescu, S. Iftimi, A. Istrate, Gh. Lazăr, R. Păun, L. Pilat, M.-R. Ungureanu and others).⁶ A notable exception – for multiple perspectives of analysis, the interdisciplinary methods and used sources – is represented by the cultural history study signed by Dolores Toma, about gardens and promenades from Bucharest at the middle of the 19th century.⁷

The actuality of the theme is explained through a connection to two major tendencies which existed in the research area and the present day public opinion. On one hand, the project is connected to actual directions and methods of international research in the field of Humanities concerning the setting up of a public opinion and the democratization of urban life, the appearing of bourgeoisie, urban modernization, public space which must be seen as a fiction or virtual universe (Davidson, Gyáni). On the other hand, the theme is connected to national scientific preoccupations and also to local communities efforts for recovering, preserving and showing urban historical heritage, which was very much damaged by the abusively systematization during communist regime. The project can offer reference marks about the process of permanent regeneration of urban identity and can serve for rediscoveries or creation of a “local specific” and to its (re)activation in the memory of local community (see for example the eleven editions of Iași Symposium “The Monument – Tradition and future”).

On the basis of literary and artistic sources and graphical representations specific for 19th century, in association with other types of sources, we propose to emphasize the identity potential of urban public space not so much from town planning perspective but especially from cultural and social standpoint. Searching public space opens us new perspectives upon the appearing, evolution of the functioning mechanisms and the effects produced on social and cultural level by

⁶ See: C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu and M. Pakucs Willcocks (ed.), *Spectacolul public între tradiție și modernitate. Sărbători, ceremonialuri, pelerinaje și suplicii* (București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2007);

⁷ Dolores Toma, *Despre grădini și modurile lor de folosire* (Iași: Polirom, 2001).

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the relation identity-alterity. The identification of social stereotypes (redundant images and identity or social life details) and of urban elements which are conspicuous for the writer or artist can be an instrument for checking the importance of a certain public space. More precisely, the emphasizing of these elements can offer clues about social attraction level of public space at a certain moment, about public preferences of attending it in a favorite way or to boycott it and about its social coagulation or marginalization power. We are also interested about the identification and presentation of different types of urban public spaces, with representative examples, about the identification and analyzing of social, cultural and symbolic functions of public spaces. Last but not least, we are interested about identity of social actors who use public space: the high rank boyar, the extravagant lady, the provincial, the dandy, the new rich and the Albanian bodyguard existing in public space.

I. Social Practices and Symbols in Theatres and Music Halls

“Society of the spectacle” – historiographic context

In Christophe Charle's opinion – the author of a new, solid synthesis of socio-cultural history of the theatre phenomenon in four major European capitals – theatre is not only one of the most important and visible cultural institutions, but also the main collective form of entertainment in the 19th century urban environment. Furthermore, the theatre institutions, regarded as epicentres of the “society of the spectacle”, are the laboratories of new cultural and social practices and behaviours.⁸ The significant results of the French researcher are also confirmed by the most recent studies published at an international level.⁹

⁸ Christophe Charle, *Théâtres en capitales: naissance de la société du spectacle à Paris, Berlin, Londres et Vienne, 1860-1914* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008), 8-11.

⁹ We mention here several recent titles: *Le théâtre français à l'étranger au XIXe siècle: histoire d'une suprématie culturelle*, ed. Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2008); Philipp Ther, *In der Mitte der*

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the theatre, at both the level of social practices and representations, and of entertainment and fashionable sociability. We will try to make a comparison, as much as possible, with the European theatrical phenomenon as well, which exerted an incontestable influence on the appearance and evolution of theatre in the Romanian society.

Contribution of elites in the development of the national theatre

The emergence and evolution of the national theatre in the first half of the 19th century occurred under the pressure of the political, cultural and socio-economical ideas and fluster that contributed to the creation of modern Europe. In this international context, where the nations in the Central and the South-Eastern Europe have more or less similar manifestations of their cultural and national aspirations, theatre was a major instrument, used by the progressive elites to reach national objectives.¹⁴ In the Romanian Principalities as well, i.e. Moldavia and Walachia, the process of modernization of the society was stimulated, at the cultural level and not only, by the boyars' "Occidentalization". Having the privilege of material and cultural resources, the boyars involved – from a financial, intellectual, artistic, managerial and social point of view – in the supporting and development of the theatrical art and of its institutions. They were also the best-informed and the most steadfast public of the time.

The period is marked by the domination of the French culture on the whole continent, a phenomenon in which the French theatre was spread by the mechanisms of the cultural transfer, in most of the European countries, including those in the Central and South-Eastern areas of the continent, among which the Danubian Principalities.¹⁵ In the Romanian case, we can identify at least three of the four circuits by which the French theatre spread on the continent, analysed by Christophe Charle in his impressive synthesis dedicated to the society of the spectacle: the

¹⁴ *National Theatre in Northern and Eastern Europe, 1746-1900*, ed. Laurence Senelick, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), I, 1-16.

¹⁵ Yon, *Le théâtre français à l'étranger*, Rădulescu, *Le théâtre français dans les pays Roumains*; Charle, *Théâtres en capitales*, p. 309-354.

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initiative, who founded, in 1818, the theatre of Cișmeaua Roșie, where the plays were performed in Greek and German.²²

The establishment of the Literary Society [Societatea literară] in 1827 gave a significant impetus to the dramatic art, but it had a short life. In 1833, the activity of this society was continued by the Philharmonic Society, which actually was the first Romanian school of theatre and music with a systematic programme. The performers came from among the low-rank boyars and among the bourgeois, the environments of social origin being similar – except for the historical differences – with those in Europe.²³ In the absence of a national repertoire, translations were resorted to, especially from the French drama, but also from the Italian and German ones, a big number of boyars and scholars of the period being rallied: Ion Văcărescu, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Grigore Alexandrescu, Constatin Aristia, Ion Câmpineanu, Ion Voinescu, Grigore Grădișteanu, Emanoil Florescu, Ion Florescu and others. Beyond the actors' training and stimulation of the national dramatic creation, by performing in Romanian, publishing in a specialized review ("Gazeta Teatrului Național" [National Theatre Gazette]) and collecting funds to raise a building for the National Theatre, the Philharmonic Society contributed in a significant way to the formation of a theatre and music public.²⁴

In Iași too, the artistic activity makes great strides, due to both Gheorghe Asachi's abnegation and the contribution of the young boyars that had an Occidental education and obvious intellectual and artistic qualities: Costache Negri, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Vasile Alecsandri, Alexandru Mavrocordat, Nicolae Docan, Matei Millo and others.²⁵ Furthermore, as it happened in Bucharest, the institutionalization of the artistic education will be attempted, by establishing in

²² Camariano, "Le théâtre grec à Bucarest", 381-416.

²³ Charle, *Théâtres en capitales*, 113-117.

²⁴ *Dicționarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900* [Dictionary of Romanian Literature from the Beginings to 1900] (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1979), 796-797. See also Ulysse de Marsillac, *Guide du voyageur à Bucarest* (Bucarest: Imprimerie de la Cour, [1876]), 46-47.

²⁵ N. A. Bogdan, *Orașul Iași. Monografie istorică și socială, ilustrată* [The City of Iași. A Historical and Social Illustrated Monograph] (Iași: Tipografia Națională I. S. Ionescu & M. M. Bogdan, 1913-1915; an anastatic print: Iași: Tehnopress, 1997), 283.

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of public opinion. Very telling in this line are Vasile Alecsandri's plays, with strong satiric and social characteristics. In the years preceding the revolution, the great success that the Romanian satiric plays enjoyed confirm that the progressive public, "finding great pleasure" in the artistic form of the drama, received its reforming message as well.

Theatre and music was an important cultural and educational instrument used by the elites in the process of modernization and reformation of the Romanian society. The urge of Iancu Văcărescu, administrator of theatres under Prince Alexandru Suțu, referring to the "cultivation and enrichment of the Romanian language and to the correction of social bad habits"³⁰ by means of the theatre is frequently reaffirmed all over the 19th century.³¹ The educational and cultural role of the theatre is also underlined by the theatre critics of the time, like Radu Ionescu, who states that "theatre strengthens our character by the tests that we see life exposed to, it educates our taste, develops our intelligence, perfects our language and gives us a literature". In his opinion, theatre has the clear advantage of consolidating the national identity, the patriotic and civic feelings, as it is the "school of a nation and the only school where thousands of people are addressed every day."³² The elites, but also the Romanian society as a whole, generally acknowledged the cultural and identity potential of theatre, its modernizing role, and so they supported, from a financial point of view as well, the development of this institution meant to promote the cultural and national values.³³

³⁰ Florin Tornea, *Studiu introductiv* [Introductory study], in *Primii noștri dramaturgi* [Our first dramatists], ed. Al. Niculescu (București: ESPLA, 1956), 6.

³¹ "Despre influența teatrului asupra năravurilor unei nații" [On the influence of theatre upon the bad habits of a nation], *Gazeta teatrului național* [National Theatre's Gazette] (București), no. 2, (1836): 19, apud Istrate, "Teatre, saloane, banchete", 407.

³² Radu Ionescu, "Teatrul românesc" [Romanian Theatre], in *Independința română* [Romanian independence] (București), no. 92 (1862), apud Dumitru Bălăeț, *Regăsindu-l pe Radu Ionescu* [Finding Radu Ionescu Again], in Radu Ionescu, *Scrieri alese* [Works] (București, 1974), XV.

³³ Iacob Negruzzi, "Din copilărie. Aduceri aminte și impresiuni" [My Childhood. Memories and Impressions], in Iacob Negruzzi, *Scrieri alese* [Works], vol. 2 (Chișinău: Editura "Știința", 1992), 13-14.

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Cantacuzino, Ghica, Suțu, Catargi, Greceanu, Aslan, Beldiman, Filipescu, Grădișteanu, Bellu et alii.³⁸

In the boyars' houses or on their lands, with some exceptions, will be also established the first public theatre and concert auditoriums. They imitated the model of Occidental rooms, without being able to offer the similar comfort for the audience. The first theatre in Bucharest, known as the "theatre of princess Ralu" or the "theatre of Cișmeaua Roșie", was founded in 1818 and destroyed by a fire in 1825. The auditorium had boxes with latticework for the Turkish families and was quite spacious, but badly built, badly lighted and unheated. Though most of the people in the public wearing oriental and occidental dresses had serious lacks of artistic education, theatre enjoyed a given success in the epoch.³⁹ The theatres made in the houses of Slătineanu and Bossel in București had dusty, badly lighted and badly heated auditoriums, with narrow, smoky boxes and small stages, lacking the necessary machines.⁴⁰ Though praised in the press⁴¹, at its inauguration, the headquarters of the first public theatre in Iași, *Théâtre de variétés*, did not fulfil all the necessary conditions for good functioning. Open in 1832, in the houses of aga Lascarachi Costache, called Talpan, the theatre had an elliptic room, nicely decorated, with stalls, a gallery and three ranges of boxes, but it was poorly lighted with tallow candles, which were smoking and smelling bad.⁴² The same specific illumination problems characterized the theatre of Copou as well, established in 1846 and which Iacob Negruzzi describes as follows⁴³:

³⁸ Emanoil Hagi-Mosco, *București. Amintirile unui oraș. Ziduri vechi. Ființe dispărute* [Bucharest. Memories of a City. Old Walls. Departed Souls] (București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1995, p. 97-100.

³⁹ Camariano, "Le théâtre grec à Bucarest", 381-416; Ionel Zănescu and Camelia Ene, "Teatrul de la «Cișmeaua Roșie»" [The Theatre from 'Cișmeaua Roșie'], *Magazin istoric* [Historical magazine] 12 (2003): 43-46.

⁴⁰ De Marsillac, *Guide du voyageur à Bucarest*, 47, 50.

⁴¹ *Albina românească* [Romanian bee] (Iași), 4 and 8 December 1832.

⁴² Dumas and Dumas, *La France et Iași*, 118-119.

⁴³ Iacob Negruzzi, (1842-1932), a writer and politician, editor of the *Convorbiri literare* [Literary conversations] journal, in which capacity he significantly contributed to the development of Romanian literature.

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by the effects of an well-plotted practical joke against an emotive actor, whose foreseen denouement took place on the stage, to everybody's great amusement. "This was a happy house, that of Trifeștii-Vechi, and yet there had never been so much laughter in there before"⁴⁸, concludes Iacob Negruzzi, showing thus the society's preference for the playful side of theatre. The conclusion is axiomatic for that time, as many theatre devotees understand this art, regardless of the genre and of the place of occurrence, as an exclusively entertainment form.

Dramatic genres preferred by the public

The companies that played in Iași and Bucharest were Romanian, French, Italian and German, though the dramatic repertoire was predominantly French. The genres that the Romanian public preferred in the first half of the 19th century were the comedy, the vaudeville and the melodrama, minor or "variety entertainment" genres, also known as "industrial theatre" or "light theatre".⁴⁹ The public's desire for entertainment, preoccupied more by novelty and less by the quality of the artistic act, was fed by variety shows, tableaux vivants or circus shows.⁵⁰ In the second half of the century, opera, comic opera, operetta and drama performances were also present.⁵¹ The plays were rarely restaged, only in the cases of great success, as it happened with Alecsandri's *Coana Chirița* [Mrs Chirița], in August 1850, at the Bossel auditorium, where the actor Matei Millo⁵² had to replay the show three times, a "thing that had never been heard of before in Bucharest".⁵³

⁴⁸ Negruzzi, *Din copilărie*, 18-20.

⁴⁹ Yon, *Le théâtre français à l'étranger au XIXe siècle*; see also the review of this book, signed by Stéphanie Loncle, in *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 39 (2009), <http://rh19.revues.org/index3957.html>, accessed on 28.10.2010.

⁵⁰ Bogdan, *Orașul Iași*, 280-282; Istrate, "Teatre, saloane, banchete", 403-407.

⁵¹ De Marsillac, *Guide du voyageur à Bucarest*, 47.

⁵² Matei Millo (1814–1896), the descendent of an important boyar family, an exceptional actor, playwright, theatre director and manager, he played an essential part in the development of the national theatre.

⁵³ Radu Olteanu, *Bucureștii în date și întâmplări* [Bucharest Told in Dates and Events] (București, Paideia, 2002), 150.

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images caught by the foreign observers represent telling testimonies on the variety of the interpersonal relations taking place in this space.⁵⁷ In 1840, Ignățiu Weinberg wrote down his favourable impressions on the theatre of Iași, with a few reserves related to the artistic tastes and morality of the society that used to go to the shows. In the first range of boxes, occupied by the aristocracy, "nice ladies, wearing bright, tasteful outfits, make a really splendid picture. Here, the theatre serves more as a place to meet friends, or to show a smart outfit, or to make circulate, like a fire, from one box to the other, the anecdotic gallant gossip and, if necessary, to send to the stalls, in many copies, scandalous satiric poems. During the performance, in the boxes they speak continuously; now and again you can hear a roar of laughter, when the actor recites some equivocal or frivolous sentence, and there are plenty of such sentences in the French vaudeville."⁵⁸ A similar atmosphere is noticed by the French diplomat Édouard Thouvenel, who attends the theatre of Bucharest, in 1840. Surprised to see it existed, and disappointed by the ordinary aspect of the building, a big booth, the French traveller is however pleasantly impressed by the interior of the theatre room and particularly by the presence of the high society, whose magnificence successfully compensates the architectonic lacks of the building. The ladies, dressed in the latest Parisian fashion, wear their jewelleries with great grace. The gentlemen, with few exceptions, wear the French costume or the gala military uniform. The officers swarm around women like the officers in France. The Prince and the members of his family are present in the Princely box. During the breaks, the public speak about the actors' talent, in French almost all the time.⁵⁹ The descriptions, too numerous to be all mentioned, are eloquent as for the social and identity potential that the auditorium in general, or the box in particular hold. The main indicators of the social status, like clothes and accessories, education and refinement of the manners,

⁵⁷ Vezi și Olga Flegont, „Le théâtre en Moldo-Valachie au XIX siècle vu par les étrangers”, *Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art* 6 (1969): 205-226.

⁵⁸ Dr. Ig. Weinberg, „Iașii în vara anului 1840” [Iași in the Summer of 1840], transl. by Bogdan-Duică, *Convorbiri literare* [Literary conversations] (București) 9 (1926): 651.

⁵⁹ Édouard Thouvenel, *La Hongrie et la Valachie : souvenirs de voyage et notices historiques* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1840), 174-176.

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boxes reflected their splendour in the ocean of lights of the room, presenting to the eyes a magical delightful picture."⁶³ It was a cosmopolitan society:

"from the high society lady, her forehead sparkling with brilliants, to the modest bourgeois woman, with a white muslin bonnet and simple dress. Here and there, among the modern tailcoats, one could see the tail of a kaftan, a remainder of former times, obsolete elegance of the Phanariot etiquette."⁶⁴

Towards the middle of the century, we can see slight modifications in the cultural preferences and in the social composition of the theatre public. The spectacle provided by the theatre devotees will however remain equally attractive for the contemporaries. In this line, Ioan Gr. Ghica, who knew this world quite well, wrote:

"If somebody wants to embrace in a glance the whole Moldavian society, if he wants to admire our beauties, whose reputation is proverbial now, if he wants, in a word, to see all our luxury and manners, than he should go to the theatre. There, the oldest and richest families fill the first-range galleries, showing such luxurious outfits and elegance that a foreigner could believe, for a while, that he has just arrived to Paris."⁶⁵

Knowing it is observed, the theatre public offers thus its own social spectacle, as Ioan M. Bujoreanu underlines, when talking about the ladies who display their expensive outfits in the auditoriums, "because they always dress well when they believe there would come many people."⁶⁶

Of course, part of the learned people goes to the theatre out of cultural reasons, especially when the performances received a favourable notice. Curiosity and the wish for entertainment are other reasons, much stronger ones, that attract the public to the theatre. Not least, for the high

⁶³ *Vestitorul românesc* [Romanian herald] (Iași), 3 January 1853, apud Ionuț Niculescu, "Teatrul național – 150. În folosul a tot neamul românesc" [National Theatre – 150. To the Use of the Whole Romanian Nation], *Magazin istoric* 12 (2002): 25.

⁶⁴ An article by Cezar Bolliac published in "Trompeta Carpaților" [Carpathians' trumpet], January 1853, apud Niculescu, "Teatrul național", 21.

⁶⁵ Ghica, "O iarnă la Iași (1849)", 132.

⁶⁶ Ioan M. Bujoreanu, *Mistere din București* [Mysteries of Bucharest] (București: Minerva, 1984), 72.

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Ioan Gr. Ghica confesses⁷⁰, who was a familiar of this artistic environment, which he had attended since his youth. And if the impetuous son of the Prince did not manage to marry with the French actress Elvira Bonzé (alias Rose Pompon), other boyars had better luck, like Constantin Balș from Dumbrăveni, who married with the former actress of the Burgtheater from Vienna, Ana Schaeme (1811–1887).⁷¹ Regarded from this standpoint, theatre is a place of gallant affairs. The intimacy of the box encourages erotic relationships to emerge or to be kept alive.⁷² Some of them occur in great secrecy, others, discovered, lead to major scandals, like in the case of adulterous relations. The victim of such a scandal was the family of the Prince of Walachia, Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, whose sister-in-law had an affair with a Russian officer, baron Uxküll. The letters of the lovers reached the Prince's hand while he was at the theatre. By mistake, they circulated in the auditorium, to the delight of the gossip fans, who immediately revealed the content, and to the Prince's great discontent.⁷³ The visits to the box were a matter of social conveniences and of high life rules, their purpose being thus underlined by Iacob Negruzzi:

“The lionesses⁷⁴ go to the theatre to receive visits in their boxes, the lions to fly from one box to the other. Here they enter with a bunch of flowers, there with a candy box; they smile and talk everywhere; they know all the ladies in the room, they can give you any piece of information about anyone in the public of the lionesses, who, during this, look through their binoculars all

⁷⁰ Ghica, “O iarnă la Iași (1849)”, 132.

⁷¹ *Familiile boierești din Moldova și Țara Românească. Enciclopedie istorică, genealogică și biografică* [Boyar Families in Moldavia and Walachia. A Historical, Genealogical and Biographical Encyclopaedia], co-author and ed. Mihai Dim. Sturdza, tom. I (*Abaza–Bogdan*) (București: Editura Simetria, 2004), 619.

⁷² Bujoreanu, *Mistere din București*, 72.

⁷³ Grigore Lăcusteanu, *Amintirile colonelului Lăcusteanu* [Colonel Lăcusteanu's Memories], ed. by Sanda Vânjoglu (Galați: Editura “Porto-Franco”, 1991), 38.

⁷⁴ In Romanian “Lei” [lions] / “paralei”, “leoaiice” [lionesses] / “paraleoaiice” – names, with a pejorative meaning (with masculine and feminine variants), for dandy. Borrowed in Romanian from English and French, after 1833 (Adriana Babeți, *Dandysmul. O istorie* [Dandyism. A History] (Iași: Polirom, 2004), 65-71, 105-123.

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appetite for classical music of the Wallachian and Moldavian boyars, so in the early decades of the eighteenth century appeared the first amateurs who knew to play the piano or harp. According to Western educational model, which has been assimilated in the boarding schools and monasteries from abroad or through foreign governesses brought in the country, besides foreign languages and Western dances, playing to a musical instrument, especially piano, harp and guitar, has become a part of noble girls education. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, many girls of boyars and merchants from Wallachia learned to play the piano in the Ursuline convent from Sibiu⁷⁸. Meanwhile, the companies trading from Sibiu and Brașov sold musical instruments in the Romanian Principalities and they mediated the employment of the first private music teachers for boyars' children from the two principalities⁷⁹.

The fruit of this education is not slow in developing in the Romanian society, several sources mentioned ladies and young ladies of the Sturdza, Palade, Lătescu, Brâncoveanu Slătineanu families and others with good musical abilities. We can see an increasing interest of high society for Western music, especially for German music⁸⁰.

Interpretation of cult music among the social elite, however, encountered resistance, motivated by traditions and prejudices. In Moldova and Wallachia, for a long time the professions of musician and actor could not be practiced by boyars because it was considered degrading. Despite all of these resistance and prejudices, which, in some degree, would have prevailed until in the mid-nineteenth century, Western music will get gradually practitioners among social elite.

Beginning with third or four decades of XIX century almost all children of the great aristocratic families receptive to the rigors of Western-style education, started to take music lessons with foreign teachers. Musical instruction is an essential educational criteria for young ladies of high society. They began their musical studies at an early age, having foreign

⁷⁸ Nicolae Iorga, „Contribuții la istoria învățământului în țară și în străinătate (1780–1830)”, *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Literare* 29 (1906–1907): 35-38, 42.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁰ William Wilkinson, „Relațiile despre Principatele Țării Românești și Moldovei”, in *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea. I. (1801–1821)*, (București, 2004), 640.

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Her efforts to spread out the taste for instrumental and vocal music of Western lineage have been successful in the society of Iași. In addition to music consumers first talented amateurs have appeared such as: Nicu Bucșenescu, Matei Buhuș and Manolache Chrisenghi, "all Moldovan boyars, who played the violin and often did duets with Elena Asachi, who played the piano"⁹². In his *Souvenirs*, George Sion recalls a literary and musical soiree which took place in the garden of Gheorghe Asachi, where he listened to Asachi Elena, who played the piano, and her daughter, Hermione, playing by herself the harp, but also in her mother's piano accompaniment⁹³. We affirm that, unlike other cultural salons of the time, the Elena Asachi's one had a clear artistic identity and it can be considered a real "musical laboratory".

In the mid-century music was well represented among elite from București as Aurélie Soubiran Ghika said, giving examples from her husband's family: Catherine Ghica, one of the most seductive artists, and her daughter whose piano talent was difficult to reach even by the young Parisians⁹⁴. Another talented pianist in Bucharest was Alexandrina (Lucia) Mavros, Ion Ghica's wife. Accompanying her husband in exile, in 1848, she earned her living giving piano lessons to families of diplomats in Constantinople⁹⁵. Therefore, Wallachian ladies were also practicing music, but they had the common sense "to do it for themselves and at their homes", as Aurélie Ghika observes⁹⁶, indicating that there are still prejudices concerning the incompatibility between aristocratic status and artist's profession. Although music becomes more common among elites, especially among women, it is consumed in private or in small and privileged space. Artistic practicing on a public stage is rare, the amateurs using music especially as a noble remedy against boredom or a way to conspicuous in the society.

⁹² Teodor T. Burada, „Schită biografică. Elena Asaki”, *Convorbiri Literare* nr. 7 (1887): 638-641.

⁹³ G. Sion, *Suvenire contimpurane* (București, 2000), 306-307.

⁹⁴ Ghika, *La Valachie moderne*, 73.

⁹⁵ Radu Sc. Greceanu, „Lucia Ghica: o ipostază necunoscută a soției lui Ion Ghica, Alexandrina, în perioada 1854–1862”, *Arhiva Genealogică* 1 (6), nr. 3-4 (1994), 263.

⁹⁶ Ghika, *La Valachie moderne*, 73.

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If amateurs with musical skills who come from the elite animated the ambience of a aristocratic salon with one small concert, the consistency of musical live from Romanian Principalities is found especially in the concerts of professionals, of foreign artists who visited the two capitals.

Musical life in Iași and Bucharest

The statistic analysis of the information which is contained there in the *Musical chronicle of Iași city*⁹⁷, a volume made by Theodor T. Burada on the base of the announces and chronicles in *Albina Românească* [The Romanian bee] journal and *Gazeta de Moldova* [Moldavian newspaper], offer us the possibility to jump to conclusions about musical life from Iași. Between 1831 (when the first announce appeared) and 1860 there were aproximative 90 important concerts which were announced in the press. Of course, their number is higher, but not all the concerts were in the media attention. The average was about three shows a year, but there were years in which the press recorded only one main concert or years with 5 or 8 concerts as it happened in 1832, 1841, 1847 and 1850. The small number of concerts is understandable: most concerts were supported by the few foreign artists, singers and actors of itinerant theatre and opera in the tournament, which usually went through the Romanian Principalities in their way to major cities in Russian Empire or Ottoman Empire.

The perfect period for organizing shows was in autumn, winter and spring. This calendar was sometimes influenced by holidays and religious fasts when the shows were banned by a disposals issued by ecclesiastical authorities. The disposals were not strictly kept because we could identify several concerts held in December, so in the period of Christmas fasting.

More than a quarter of the musical performances were organized in the public halls of entertainment, but also in those administrated by Bösel and Momolo⁹⁸ Momolo in Bucharest, at

⁹⁷ Burada, *Cronica musicală*, 1061-1101.

⁹⁸ Johann Strauss-the son together his orchestra gave a concert in Momolo concert hall on 6 January 1848 (Olteanu, *Bucureștii*, 161).

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salons; we can mention here the salon of Știrbei palace, where the piano player Leopold Mayer and the singer Henritte Karl performed in 1843.¹⁰⁰ Another salon well known at the time was the one of Princess Cleopatra Trubetzkoï. The hostess knew the lifestyle of Russian aristocracy, she became a part of them through marriage but also she knew the fashionable life from Paris where she lived a period after she had become widow and where she had a fashionable salon. Once returned home, by 1838, Princess Trubetzkoï opened a fashionable and cultural salon in Bucharest. Her salon became one of the most important places of cultural and artistic life of the Wallachian capital.¹⁰¹ Besides politics, literature and theater, it could be listened to high quality music. Among the famous artists who have performed in this room, apart from Liszt and possibly, Leopold Mayer, the pianist it is mentioned the young Romanian musician – Dumitru G. Florescu.¹⁰²

The successful shows were usually repeated and popularized in press through favourable articles. Enjoyed successful performances were repeated often, and popularized by the rave reviews in the press. Liszt's case is representative, he gave that three or four concerts in each of the two Danube capitals. In Iași, he played in Căzlariu house, where there was the Austrian Consulate, and in the salons of Alecu Balș and Esmeralda (Didița) Mavrocordat.¹⁰³ In Bucharest, gave a concert in the salon of Trubetzkoï house, two in Momolo hall and another concert at the prince palace.¹⁰⁴

Returning to the central events of Theodore T. Burada, at least four concerts are given by blind soloists, the evidence placed these actions among charity gestures of local aristocracy. Widespread practice among elite, philanthropy was also present in art, examples being mentioned by foreign travellers. In 1840, as stated Iganțiu Weinberg, the public amateur of music from Iași

¹⁰⁰ Florian Georgescu, „Regimul construcțiilor în București în deceniile IV–V din secolul al XIX-lea”, *București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie*, 5 (1967): 62-63.

¹⁰¹ George Potra, „Vechi case bucureștene: Casa Cleopatra Trubetzkoï”, *București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie* 8 (1971): 149.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁰³ Octavian Beu, *Franz Liszt în țara noastră* (Sibiu, [1933]), 16-57.

¹⁰⁴ Olteanu, *Bucureștii*, 158.

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II. Social Practices and Symbols on Promenades and in Public Garden

The social use of natural spaces

Except fashionable salons – places situated between public and private sphere – the most important open public places attended by Romanian social elite in the first half of nineteenth century were promenades and public gardens. Many contemporary records confirm that social life of Romanian elite from Iași and Bucharest – the capitals of the two Danubian principalities – focuses in these public places.¹⁰⁹ For this reason, we have decided to highlight some of the specific social aspects of these public spaces.

Until the setting up of promenades and public gardens, the people used for recreational needs the natural spaces, private or public: forests, fields, ponds, orchards, vineyards and natural gardens.¹¹⁰ Many of them were replaced, in time, in promenades, public gardens and summer gardens, the latest being very popular in the second half of the nineteenth century.

These places were frequented by all social classes beginning with the late eighteenth century. They served not only for leisure but also of public events: military exercises and parades, sanctification, various solemnities and popular meetings.

The long social use of these natural areas has led, in time, some social division in their attendance; some of them were preferred by ordinary people, like Filaret garden and other many gardens on the banks of Dambovită river. Some other gardens were preferred by the elite, like Colentina and Baneasa, in Bucharest, or Copou, in Iași. Maybe quite this social and functional segregation marked their later destiny. Some of them lost the attractiveness as places of entertainment or public events. The others, on the contrary, benefited a long social recognition. We are speaking about promenades and landscaped gardens, whose historical existence interfered with the existence of elite.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Kunisch, *București și Stambul. Schițe din Ungaria, România și Turcia* (București, 2000), 82-89, 120-123.

¹¹⁰ George Potra, *Din Bucureștii de ieri*, I (București, 1990), 304-322.

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looks like a rose, with greenhouses, springs and cascading streams".¹¹⁴ The few images that still exist, fortunately, confirmed the description of Alecu Russo. In an oil painting from 1842 shows a part of the summer palace's garden of Michael Sturdza, with large terraces and walkways, with decorative lawns in French garden style, with belvedere, pool and fountain, and trees placed after a certain plan. The garden's core is rounded by the abundant vegetation, like English park, which switches from the register of arranged vegetation to the wild one. The surrounding hills and the swamp of Bahlui River seem to be natural extensions of this nice princely garden. The garden is placed in such a picturesque landscape which gives the visitor a special landscape perspective, but also a pleasant place for social contacts (Fig. 5).

Michael Sturdza opened officially the garden for the public in April 1839, although it is possible that this garden was attended previously. The reason for this is an old custom. The princes and boyars opened their private gardens to public, irrespective of social status, in order to maintain, in this way, the festive dimension of collective parties.¹¹⁵ In this way they were interested to promote their public image. Garden of Socola helps to emphasize the prestige and power of prince in public. However it was opened to visitors only on Thursdays and Sundays, from four o'clock in the afternoon until evening.¹¹⁶ Because of these restrictions, the garden was not too favoured by elites. Their preferences are also directed to Copou promenade.

An explanation of this situation is the heterogeneity of social and behavioural primitivism of ordinary people which attended the garden. The crowd does not make a clear distinction between natural areas and recreational facilities. In the woods but also in the public gardens the crowd behaves in the same way, direct, simple and uncivilized. In Romanian society the public garden is a new creation that the ordinary people, ignorant, appreciate it after its value system and education. He can't understand that is not allowed to be destroyed the grass and the flowers and not to drink water from fountains. On the other hand, even if he wants, he can't have the same

¹¹⁴ Russo, *Iassy*, 251.

¹¹⁵ Toma, *Despre grădini*, 132.

¹¹⁶ „Suplement” of *Albina românească*, nr. 32 (23 aprilie 1839).

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The promenade

At the same time, there were administrative concerns for setting up the first promenades. In 1832 the promenade on Dealul Mitropoliei [Metropolitan Hill] was set up in Bucharest (Fig. 1). Unlike existing walks in major European capitals, this one was modest and had a boulevard of land sunk, bounded by a fence and planted chestnut trees on the edges and equipped with lanterns and benches. In order to safeguard arrangements made with great expenses and to regulate public behaviour, authorities have imposed operating hours of the promenade, which however was not observed. With some intermittence, authorities have succeeded to maintain the "avenue", which was the main promenade of the city for more than a decade and a half, until the public found more attraction for Kiseleff promenade and Cismigiu garden.¹¹⁸

The most important promenade from Bucharest was Șoseaua Kiseleff [Kiseleff Road], known as the popular term "Șosea" [Road] (Fig. 3 and 4). It had begun to be landscaped as the largest promenade in 1832. The promenade was designed with five bands – one for carriages, two for pedestrians and two for riders – but only three bands were established finally. Kiseleff Road got a modern appearance only after 1843, when, under the strong leadership of the landscape architect Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer, began to make Herăstrău garden on both sides of the road. The public preference for upgrading Kiselev Road and its continue modernization during a quarter of century offered to the promenade an appearance which could satisfy even the most demanding foreign visitors. One of them, the German Richard Kunisch, described the promenade in 1857 as it follows:

"The first day after arrival, I went to the Road. [...] In fact it has only a quarter of a mile long and it has no other purpose than to serve as corso for boyars. It is therefore absolutely essential because all social life is concentrated in saloons and on the Road; winter adds theatre attendance. [...] Going to the Road happened all season that is why many works have been made at the promenade in order to become a pleasant place for stroll. The promenade start in the extension of Mogoșoaia Street – the main street which crosses the city and where there are

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 348-362.

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work would have been performed in the coming years but the results were far from being similar to those from Herăstrău garden in Bucharest.¹²⁴

Social show of promenade

The fame of Copou promenade is not so due to utility facilities or landscape but mainly to the show created by the society who met during their daily stroll. Mihail Kogălniceanu helps us to identify the social actors, intentions and reasons for which they had frequented this place. He also presents the social ritual of Copou promenade:

“On this beautiful promenade [...] the high aristocracy of Moldova, old or new native boyars, our brave officers, our most elegant ladies, young gentlemen from administrative, judicial and religious institutions, nuns in vacation, the young students of the Academy, the mistresses of chancellor A., magistrate V., chamberlain S. and equerry D. [...] all these categories of our very stratified society usually go to four or five hours in the afternoon, in the long rows of Viennas' carriages, fashion 1849, coaches from the Ypsilanti days, Lippovans' small horse cabs, cabriolets of Rădăuți; pass the main street, swallowing clouds of dust and reaching at the barrier of city, throwing sights on public garden obelisk, go to Copou. Few of them, getting off from carriages [and stroll...]; others prefer to spend time in the carriage, with legs crossed, leaving the other beasts to move for them”.¹²⁵

All those who were part of high society or aspired to this status were present in such a place. The promenade is certainly the urban area with the largest public polarization power elites in the first half of the nineteenth century. Therefore carriage rides on paths for walking, became a daily ritual almost mandatory for good people, which explain the extremely high number of crews present in this space. As Timotei Cipariu and George Barițiu tell us, at 1836, there wasn't a boyar

¹²⁴ Manolachi Drăghici, *Istoria Moldovei pe timp de 500 de ani până în zilele noastre*, vol. 2, (Iași, 1857, Constantin Mihăescu-Gruiu, ed., București, 1999), 337.

¹²⁵ Kogălniceanu, *Tainele inimei*, 66-67.

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Demidov and his companions who visited Bucharest in 1837.¹³² Kiseleff Road did not excel at that time in the facilities and maintenance but what particularly amazed the observer, besides the number, variety and luxurious crews, were the civilization contrasts reflected by the clothes and manners of those who occupied these carriages: women and youth with western toilets, following the latest fashion, besides old men with venerable beards and stately old oriental clothes, coachman wearing in Russian or Turkish clothes besides mercenaries luxurious dressed and armed. Timotei Cipariu and George Barițiu are even more impressed than Demidov about promenades of Bucharest. Metropolitan Alley, Băneasa and Herăstrău drew them a particular attention, both by the show society and the perspective offered by the city. Unfamiliar with the Romanian extra Carpathians pattern of cities, large, irregular and full of contrasts but yet charming, the two Transylvanian travellers expressed their sincere admiration for this type of urban landscape.¹³³ Another Transylvanian, Ioan Oros Rusu, was also curious about the show provided by the high society of Iași who attended Copou promenade.¹³⁴

Tramping promenade is done slowly, because so of the carriages crowded and the need to look at the society or even to talk from the coach to coach. Surrounding landscape or monuments lined along the promenade did not particularly attract public attention who came to walk, and who's more concerned about society parade held in this space. Central points of promenades, where carriages rows went to, were stroll rounds which delimited promenade's extremities or certain sections like the great round of Kiseleff Road from Bucharest. The carriages spin around these rounds or going up and down along the promenade, respecting usually one way. Circulating clockwise were menacing youngsters who wanted to stand out or curious foreigners, as did Ioan Oros Rusu, in 1849, during his staying in Iași.

¹³² Gh. Bezviconi, *Călători ruși în Moldova și Muntenia* (București, 1947), 314.

¹³³ Netea, „Timotei Cipariu”, 121, 129.

¹³⁴ Ion Ranca, „Capitala Moldovei la 1849 în viziunea unui memorialist pașoptist ardelean”, *Revista Arhivelor* 39, nr. 3 (1977): 307-308.

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Another extravagance about crews, which only great landowners could afford in the middle of the nineteenth century, was the Albanian [arnăutul] from the carriage trestle. This one was distinguished by his martial and proud attitude, loyalty in the domestic service, the exotics and the richness of arms and clothes.¹³⁹ His appearance in public drew attention to pedestrians and imposed a higher respect, which, of course, increased the social prestige of his master. In a time when the symbolic elements of aristocratic status was eroded by social ambitions of the bourgeoisie, the Albanian was no longer an element of physical protection, but a mark of social distinction, a "flagship" of the nobility of blood, obsolete but still visible in the public space.

Around crew it has been developed, in a short time and having as a background the conceited competition among boyars, a whole symbolism regarding public representation of the social hierarchy. Origin, type, colour, carriage ornaments, heraldic symbols, real or fanciful, marked on it, emphasized specific social claims, supported by number, race, origin and colour of horses harnessed to the carriage. Other elements of the social message emanating from ethnicity and clothing of coachman who drove the crew, and the number of servants from the carriage's back.

Another status that was part of the recipe for success it was fashionable clothing. This was a mark of good taste, wealth and social status. Public space was ideal for showing off the latest, the most expensive and the most spectacular clothes. "Copou is the arena where our ladies, the great ones and less important ones, young and old, ugly or beautiful, compete for the brightness of clothing"¹⁴⁰, emphasized Alecu Russo, indicating another function of promenade, which was a public stage for daily fashion parades. Women wore bright ball clothing and jewellery which amazed because of their number and value. Men weren't inferior; they wear elegant and expensive civil suits or gala uniforms. All these were displayed ostentatiously, in spite of the dust raised by horses and carriages and to foreigners' surprise to see such unusual clothes on the streets.

Interhuman contacts facilitated by the promenade and public garden are not consumed only on visual level, but it also involves verbal communication, which gave to these places an

¹³⁹ Kunisch, *București și Stambul*, 78-79; De Marsillac, *Guide du voyageur à Bucarest*, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Russo, *lassy*, 252.

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Conclusions

The financial and cultural resources of the Romanian elites allowed them to support the cultural and artistic act. They aided and encouraged the development of theatre and music in Romanian society; they initiated the establishment of artistic education and contributed to the creation of a national dramatic and musical repertoire. The elites are also the ones who made possible the first areas adequate to the artistic-cultural manifestations, providing, at the same time, the most well-informed and consistent public, at least for the early 19th century. Furthermore, the progressive elites used theatre and music as an important cultural and educative instrument in the process of modernization and reformation of the Romanian society.

Theatre and concert halls have also a clear social dimension: they send to special public, with social and educational differences, with some artistic tastes. Obviously, the time when music was still considered a private art in civilized countries, many concerts were given in salons of Romanian boyars who were determined by the philanthropic impulses. Others, arising from sincere taste for art of a small part of public can be included in the cultural development of program promoted by Romanian elites. Equally important, the fact remains that most of these shows are associated with fashionable practices of time, presenting aspects of entertainment and sociability, social status and symbolic status of elites. Even if they were made for a different historical context and chronology, the statements of French historian Sophie-Anne Leterrier on a similar theme can be partially applied to Romanian elites from the mid nineteenth century: "Music is a source of legitimacy and prestige for the classes who lost political power's privileges. The superiority of spirit replaces advantageous blood prerogatives in defining a new elite that knows how to combine safety taste, the result of a perfect education, and the courage of aesthetic choice." Although the loss of aristocratic privileges in 1858 by Romanian aristocracy was not equal with the loss of political power, the increased dilution of this social category affected the traditional elite image and identity. We believe so, at least in part, the patronage of cultural activity

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PUBLIC SPACE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY CULTURAL AND SOCIAL MEANINGS

Abstract

In the first half of the 19th century, theatre and concert halls, promenades and public gardens are the most important urban public spaces, with complex cultural and social functions. New cultural and social practices and behaviours are experiences in this "society of the spectacle". In this paper, we analysed the relationship between the high society – mainly selected from among the social elites, the boyars – and the public space, regarded as both a cultural institution and a social space for society life. Advantaged by its financial and cultural resources, the boyars assumed an artistic, intellectual, managerial, financial and social role in the support and development of artistic life and of the institutions related to it. They also gave the most well-informed and consistent theatrical and musical public. In this context, we underlined some aspects pertaining to the evolution of the first theatre and music events, generally occurred in the area of the boyar house, to the contribution of the learned boyars in the creation of a national theatre and music repertoire and to their interest in using theatre and music as a media instrument, for the education of public opinion. Moreover, we underlined the social and identity-related role of the theatre, promenade and public garden used as public spaces of sociability and elite representation. We believe that by exploring the relationship between society and public space, in terms of both social practices and representations, and entertainment and fashionable sociability, we can better understand the process of modernization of the Romanian society at the level of social behaviours, an aspect that has been neglected in Romanian historiography.

Keywords: public spaces, social identity, theatre, music, promenade, public garden, Romanian elites, social practices, sociability, entertainment

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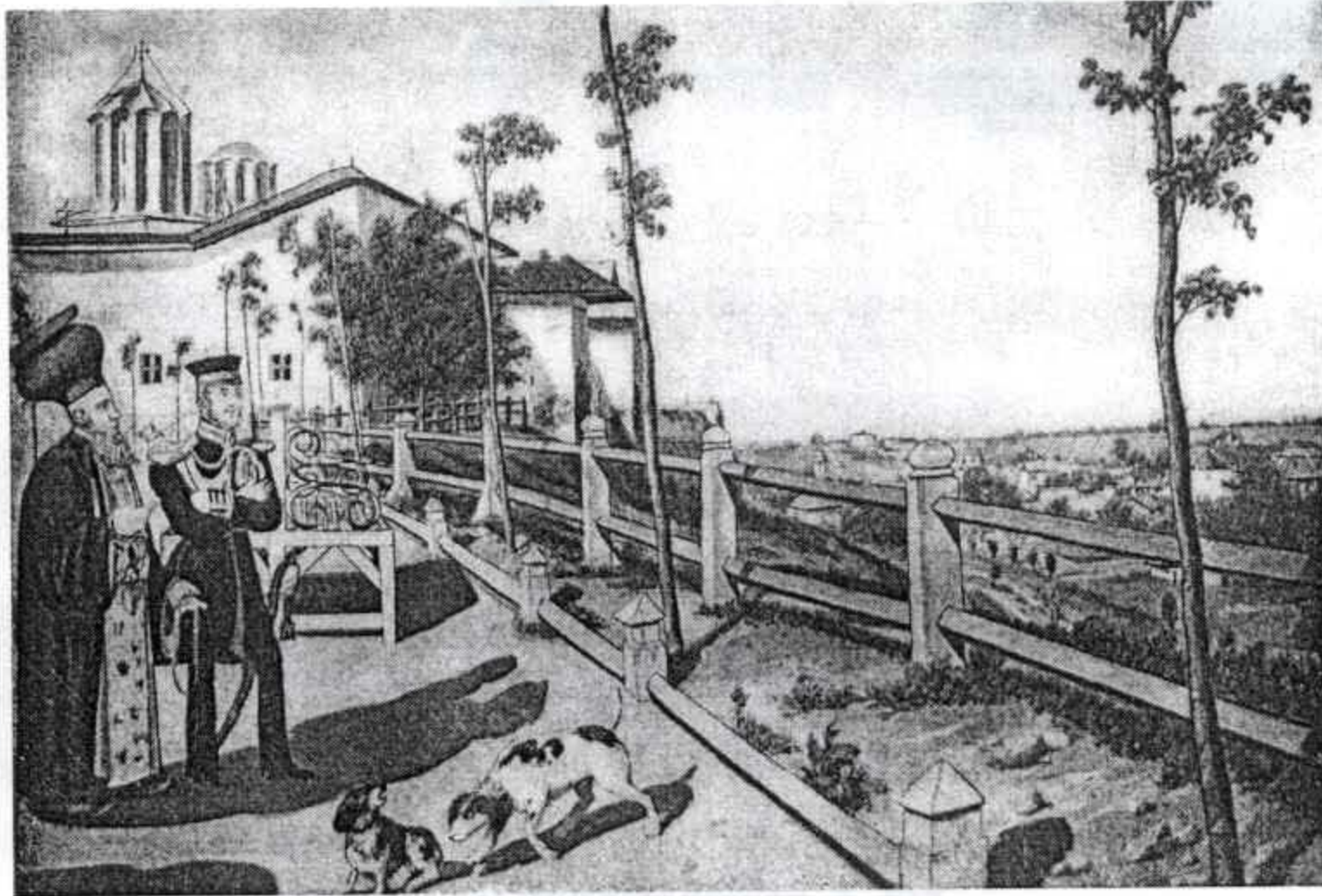


Fig. 1. Metropolitan Hill promenade in Bucharest, 1832
(A. Verss, *Pictorul Barabas și românii* [Painter Barabas and Romanians], Bucharest, 1930).



Fig. 2. Second rank boyars riding in Bucharest, 1825.
(Watercolor by Auguste Chevalier de Henik Stein. Romanian Academy).

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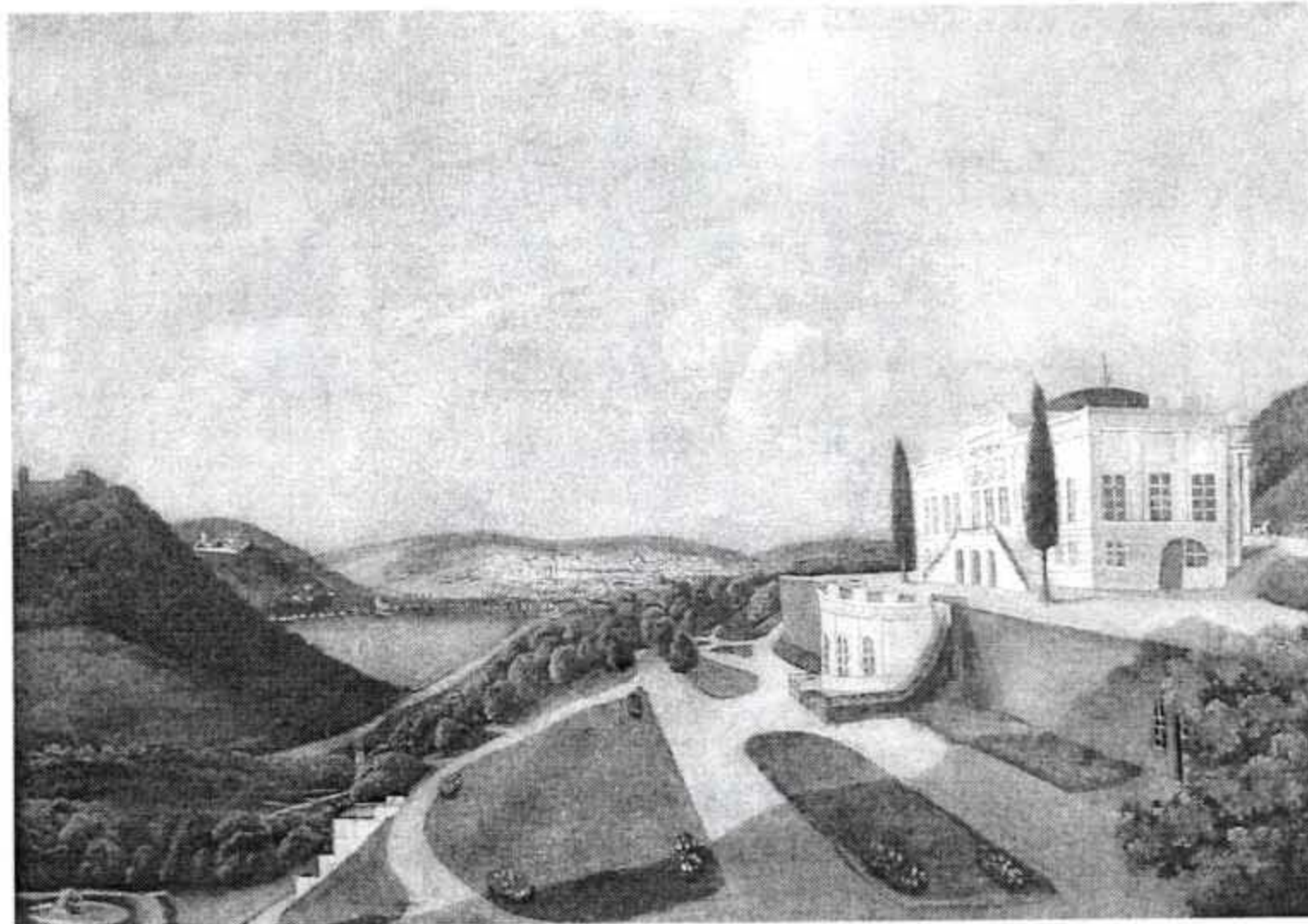
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**Fig. 5. Summer palace and garden of Prince Michael Sturdza
from Socola, Iasi, 1842.**

(Adolf Krantzlerger, painter at Theatre from Iași. Romanian National Archives. Iași County Branch)

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