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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*

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prof. univ. dr. Alexandru Florin Platon

Instituția coordonatoare de tematică: Academia Română – Filiala Iași

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

Numele și prenumele cercetătorului postdoctoral: Rădvan Laurențiu

Tema individuală de cercetare: De la „burgul saxon” la „târgul de vale” românesc. O cercetare critică a discursului istoriografiei orașelor medievale din spațiul românesc (sec. XVIII-XX)

From the "Saxon burg" to the Romanian "valley târg". An examination of the
historiographic discourse on Medieval towns in the Romanian area
(18th-20th centuries)

- synthesis study -

Laurențiu Rădvan

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In this study we propose a synthesis of the research carried out this year, research that offered a critical approach to the historiographic discourse on Medieval towns in the Romanian area. Such research would be the first of its kind, since there are only few valuable recent studies that would target the vast historiographic corpus in Romania, especially where the 20th century is concerned.

We open this research with a brief insight into later chronicles, to outline how pre-modern scholars viewed towns; we will review 17th - 18th century's works since this is when the first signs of a parting of ways with scholarly tradition appear. Then, in the second part, we will investigate the main trends in historiography which shed light on the origins and the evolution of towns in the Romanian Principalities of the late Middle Ages; we will attempt to explain the differences among the various approaches in Romanian historiography, and identify at the same time the reasons they existed. The 20th century ideological bias which subsumed history and which sometimes reached extreme heights is, to a large extent, responsible for this.

1. Late medieval chroniclers and their perspective on Moldavian towns

The authors of late medieval chronicles did not seem to take a direct interest in how towns formed, how they were organized, their vibrant urban life, and not even their inhabitants. This appearance can be deceiving, however, since a closer look reveals that ancient texts are ripe with references to urban settlements. In our investigation, the point of reference will be the "classics": Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin, and Ion Neculce, with their known works. The first chronicler we

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will study will be Grigore Ureche. Our research sets to create a historical study of the chronicle text, to look at the validity of its claims on towns, rather than to attribute its information to one chronicler or the other. The work that Ureche is usually credited with parts ways with the tradition of court chronicles in the previous century, in that it belongs to a layman, and not to a clergyman, and it promotes a literary and political vision distinct from that of Ureche's forerunners. *Letopisețul* is not dedicated to anyone in particular, but originates in the author's wish to leave for times to come his own version on the past history of Moldavia, thereby revealing a keen sense of history on the part of the chronicler¹. Moreover, it is the first Moldavian chronicle to be preserved in Romanian and the first where an author ponders over the Latin roots of Romanians. Here are the first statements on history as a "cultural asset," which must not be lost. Recording and passing on traditions and noteworthy past events was meant to elevate a nation in the eyes of its neighbours: "chroniclers [...] are keepers of time and harbourers and contemplators of great deeds, so they would not remain trivial, and their neighbours to say that they were indolent or ignorant or not steeped in history."² History could also be a reason for national pride. Ever since the chronicle attributed to Ureche, we will notice that chroniclers begin to expand their historical horizon, which leads us to separate chronicles for the 17th-18th centuries from the previous, which were more limited in scope and language.

A true breakthrough, the chronicle attributed to Ureche also includes some thoughts on Moldavian towns. Since it looks at the country's history from its early stages and up to late 16th century, part of these explorations are also focused on early urban life, that the author, as well as his interpolators, especially Simion Dascălul, subordinate to the *descălecat* (which has the meaning of "foundation"). More notably, the latter is the first to approach the emergence of a

¹ Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche* (Bucharest: 1979), pp. 190-191.

² Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, ed. P.P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: 1958), p. 73; see Panaitescu's considerations at p. 29.

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town: “And it is also thus that the *târg* at Baia was said to be founded (*descălecat*) by some Saxons, who were potters; it also thus that Suceava was said to be founded by Hungarian furriers, called *suci* in their language, and Suceava is called *furriery* in their language.” Other towns are ascribed to the Genovese: “Also in this country were there strongholds that the Genovese built in times past: the stronghold at Suceava and the stronghold at Hotin and Cetatea Albă and the stronghold of Chilia and Cetatea Neamțului and Cetatea Nouă at Roman, where the earth caved underneath and the stronghold fell to pieces.”³

The foundation of towns is a recurring topic in the chronicle. Axinte Uricariul ties the emergence of Roman to the ruler by that same name: „And he [Roman I] built the *târg* of Roman after his name, as he testifies in his document, which is in the Pobrata monastery.”⁴ Misail Călugărul (or Simion Dascălul, according to N.A. Ursu⁵) makes one of the most interesting claims, linking the emergence of towns to voivod Iuga, whose reign was very brief: “[Iuga] had founded (*descălecat*) towns throughout the country, in good places, and built for them *ocoale* around [...]”⁶ Misail is also credited with the testimony on the emergence of Iași: „Voivode Ștefan had founded Iașii and to praise the Lord began building the church of martyr Necolai”⁷, while Panaitescu attributes to Ureche (Axinte Uricariul according to Velciu⁸) the note on the foundation of another town, Hârlău: „it was in 6995 [1487] that voivode Ștefan had founded (*a descălecat*) Hârlăul, wherein he built the stone church and the princely enclosures, with their walls, which still stand today.”⁹

³ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

⁵ N. A. Ursu, “Letopisețul Țării Moldovei până la Aron Vodă. Opera lui Simion Dascălul”, part II, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, 27 (1990), pp. 95-96; part I was published in issue 26/1 (1989).

⁶ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 75.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

⁸ Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, p. 270.

⁹ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 108.

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Instead, the town of Suceava is mentioned when the Metropolitan Church is founded and the relics of St John the New are brought in: „And in the year 6923 [1415] they had brought in with great expense the relics of Saint John the New from Cetatea Albă, from the heathens, and set them in town, in Suceava, at the Metropolitan Church [...] to keep and uphold his seat”.¹⁰ Where other towns are concerned, the chronicle mentions them in relation to events, mostly negative, such as invasions or forays by the Mongols, Poles, Wallachians or Turks. For instance, the towns of Cernăuți and Botoșani only feature several times in such moments¹¹. In this case, the source is easily identifiable: the Old Slavonian chronicles in the 15th-16th centuries, events being quoted without any further additions¹².

A major step ahead for historical accuracy, but also for where literature and style are concerned is made by Miron Costin, believed to be “the most learned of Moldavian chroniclers.”¹³ He focuses on an age that was closer to his day, and he was also involved in many of the events depicted. Costin’s historical comments provide more insight than those of his predecessor, who was too busy with the military and political side of history, without leaving room for opinions that would show any in-depth perception of it. Miron Costin is also superior to Ureche in his status as the first historian to write a history of Romanians, his works (including *De neamul moldovenilor*, *Cronica polonă* and *Poema polonă*) proving that the author had a historical scope that extended beyond the local history of Moldavia¹⁴. Some of his works are historical, but also diplomatic in their intent, the chronicler wishing to promote his country by its culture in front of neighbouring

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 116-117, 136, 140, 152.

¹² *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: 1959), pp. 11-12, 20-21, 78, 91.

¹³ N. Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, eds. Rodica Rotaru, Andrei Rusu (Bucharest: 1996), p. 286.

¹⁴ Miron Costin, *De neamul Moldovenilor*, in Miron Costin, *Opere*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: 1958) p. 241. This edition of Costin’s works also includes *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, *Cronica polonă* and *Poema polonă*.

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powers¹⁵. It was not rarely that his texts give consideration to the Romanians in other Romanian territories¹⁶. The chronicle attributed to Ureche had as well taken a step forward over its precursors, by indicating an understanding of the Latin origin of Romanians (“our origins are in Rome”), even though the author still had difficulties explaining it: “our language draws on many others, and our tongue is still mixed with that of our neighbours.”¹⁷ Instead, Miron Costin proves to have a much deeper knowledge of our Roman origin, which is expressed in absolute terms: “So no one is to doubt that [Romanians] have their roots in Rome.”¹⁸ Miron Costin is also among the first to promote an unbiased and critical practice in writing history, lashing against the so-called *basne*, the fabrications of Simion Dascălul on the origin of the Moldavians¹⁹.

Miron Costin was familiar with towns, both in Moldavia, and in neighbouring lands, especially in Poland, where he lived 20 years²⁰. He travelled for military or diplomatic purposes all around the Eastern and Central parts of Europe, from Wallachia to Neuhäusel (nowadays in Slovakia) or Istanbul²¹. His works, especially *De neamul moldovenilor* or *Poema polonă*, mention on several occasions various towns, but he prefers to stop over strongholds, possibly due to a sense of nostalgia for past times, when Moldavia was as well a country with powerful fortresses²². Among others, Costin relays some interesting details to us. In the Focșani-Odobești area, the ruins of Milcovia were still visible in his time („the rubble [...] on the Milcov, north of Focșeni”), which

¹⁵ According to Dan Zamfirescu, Miron Costin, by his *Cronica polonă*, opens the way to “the diplomacy of culture, conducted by “the means of journals which would inform foreigners on the country, the land, the history of the Romanians” (Dan Zamfirescu, *Contribuții la istoria literaturii române vechi* (Bucharest: 1981), p. 117).

¹⁶ Miron Costin, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, pp. 47-50; Miron Costin, *Cronica polonă*, pp. 202-209, 215, 217.

¹⁷ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 67.

¹⁸ Miron Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 220.

¹⁹ Miron Costin, *De neamul Moldovenilor*, pp. 242-243, 247, 260. Neculce also takes a similar stance in the preface to his chronicle (Ion Neculce, *Opere. Letopisețul Țării Moldovei și O samă de cuvinte*, ed. Gabriel Ștrempel (Bucharest: 1982), p. 158).

²⁰ He studied in Bar, Podolia (Miron Costin, *Opere*, pp. 7-9).

²¹ Dumitru Velciu, *Miron Costin. Interpretări și comentarii* (Bucharest: 1973), p. 58, 119-122.

²² Miron Costin, *Cronica polonă*, pp. 205-206; *Poema polonă*, pp. 222-223; *De neamul moldovenilor*, pp. 265-266.

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Dimitrie Cantemir also refers to (he places them not far from the Mera monastery). By relying on Ureche, they both mistake it for another stronghold, Crăciuna²³, which was in fact on the Siret river²⁴. There was also a stronghold near Soroca, and Costin ascribes its durability to voivode Petru (probably Petru Rareș)²⁵. The chronicler does not forget to draft several town lists, which he organizes across districts²⁶, and also inserts several legends where towns are mentioned. They also include the one on the emergence of Moldavia. A noteworthy detail is that, when describing the battles fought by the Hungarians and the Mongols (Cumans, actually) in King Ladislaus's time, Miron Costin cites a theory on the origin of the name of Siret, which is also mentioned by Simion Dascălul (and integrates it in the text on "the origin of Moldavians," compounded by the much railed-against legend of the robbers who colonized Maramureș)²⁷. However, unlike the one considered to be Ureche's interpolator, who wrote immediately before Costin, the latter added another detail, namely that the battle with the Mongols took place where the town of Roman was later erected: "the Mongols were attacked in Siret, and the battle was waged in Roman [...]. And, although the town of Roman did not stand there yet, it was built in memory of the place where victory was gained."²⁸ Miron Costin was convinced that the town of Roman owes its emergence to Roman I: "under his reign [Roman] was the town of Roman built, bearing his name."²⁹

Further on, in the same work, which describes the actions of Dragoș, Miron Costin credits him with bringing Saxon craftsmen in Wallachia, who were transferred by him „near the

²³ Miron Costin, *De neamul Moldovenilor*, p. 266; Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea stării de odinioară și de astăzi a Moldovei*, vol. II, eds. Dan Slușanschi, Valentina Eșanu, Andrei Eșanu (Bucharest: 2007), p. 156.

²⁴ Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Bucharest: 1913), p. 311, doc. CXXXIX; for the location of Crăciuna, see C. Cihodaru, "Cu privire la localizarea unor evenimente din istoria Moldovei: Hindău, Direptate, Crăciuna și Roșcani", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, 29 (1982), pp. 629-631.

²⁵ Miron Costin, *Cronica polonă*, p. 205.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 216-217; *Poema polonă* (version C), pp. 390-391.

²⁷ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 68-69.

²⁸ Miron Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 228.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

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mountains,” and wrote about towns that “were mostly founded by Saxons, and it was them, along with the Hungarians, that also created the vineyards.” Suceava is given the same interpretation as the one by Simion Dascălul, who believed that town owed its emergence to some furriers coming from Hungary³⁰. Manuscript C of *Poema polonă* also provides the only considerations by Costin on the organization of towns: „in towns, the *voiti* are called *șoltuzi*, and they have the *pârgari* in their service, whose name is Hungarian.”³¹

Written in a style closer to personal memories, Neculce’s chronicle continues that of Miron Costin, taking the history of Moldavia up to the first rulers called Phanariotes. Neculce proved to have a remarkable sense of continuity, which led him to take over from where Costin stopped, who also continued Ureche’s chronicle. This understanding of history writing shows that these scholar-boyars felt they were engaged in a common effort, and not an individual one, the writing of their country’s history, which they tried to relate to the history of the world at large. Neculce compensates his lack of education in Polish schools possessed by his forerunners by the experience he had gathered in a true *cursus honorum* of local offices, but also by the years spent in Wallachia (where his uncle was *stolnic* Constantin Cantacuzino), as well as in Russia and Poland. All this allowed him to expand his political scope and to better understand the place Moldavia had in the area. Also, this experience reinforced his belief that Russia was the only one that could rid the country of Ottoman rule³².

Since we wrote only late, in the 18th century, and since he succeeded other chroniclers who had dealt with early Moldavia, Neculce focused less on this topic and much less on the emergence of towns. His only note on this matter can be found in *O samă de cuvinte*, where Neculce records

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 232-233; see also Adolf Armbruster, *Dacoromano-Saxonica. Cronicari români despre sași. Români în cronică săsească* (Bucharest: 1980), p. 162.

³¹ Miron Costin, *Poema polonă* (version C), p. 391.

³² Ion Neculce, *Letopisetul Țării Moldovei și O samă de cuvinte*, ed. I. Iordan (Bucharest: 1956), pp. 12-13; Dumitru Velciu, *Ion Neculce* (Bucharest: 1968), pp. 159-160.

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the information which ascribes „the foundation (*descălecat*) of the town of Siret” to Dragoș, who had supposedly established here „his seat”, and „built a *zamecă*, an earthen stronghold, and therein princely houses and stone church”, the church of the Holy Trinity. Dragoș’s consort was allegedly Saxon and had possibly founded the Catholic church in town³³. It was also in his compilation of stories that Neculce passes on an anecdote, late and probably genuine³⁴, regarding prince Gheorghe Ștefan. It was said that, when crossing with troops from Transylvania into Moldavia, he had commanded the *șoltuz* in Roman to pay a winebarrel to a herdsman³⁵. The towns are otherwise mentioned in the same context as with the other chroniclers, as places where rulers have their seats or where various events occur, mostly unfortunate: battles, natural disasters, epidemics or boyars being beheaded, with even one of the chroniclers sharing this fate: Miron Costin³⁶.

*

We should ask ourselves: how much historical ground do the chroniclers' writings have? How much of what they have written is just legend, and how much historical tradition, be it popular or scholarly, relayed for generations and generations? What was the source of their information? Even the chroniclers confess to having sought inspiration in several places. On the one hand, they relied on external sources, useful to create a background for many of the events involving Medieval Moldavia. Most are works written in the Polish or Hungarian lands, which the chroniclers were more familiar with, as they had been educated outside the country, especially in the Polish environment. The main sources of chronicles also include the so-called „*letopiseț unguresc*” („Hungarian Chronicle”), chronicles in Wallachia, the chronicle of Joachim Bielski, that

³³ This account is not included in the above-quoted edition Iordan, 1956. It was found in mss. 254, f. 177 and included in edition Ștrempel, 1982, pp. 161-162.

³⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu, „Valoarea istorică a tradițiilor consemnate de Ion Neculce”, in *Studii de folclor și literatură*, ed. H.H. Stahl et al. (Bucharest: 1967), p. 471.

³⁵ Ion Neculce, *Opere*, p. 183.

³⁶ Miron Costin was killed at Roman in 1691, by order of Constantin Cantemir (Dumitru Velciu, *Miron Costin*, pp. 117-119).

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of Martin Kromer, the *Cosmography* of Gerard Mercator, the *Sarmatiae Europae descriptio* of Alexander Guagnini (translated into Polish by Martin Paszkowski), the chronicle of Poland by Paul Piasecki, that on the history of Transylvania by L. Toppeltin, and others³⁷. For the internal history, they could rely on court chronicles³⁸, as well as on newer ones. Simion Dascălul, Miron Costin and Neculce suggest that a certain Eustratie *logofătul* had already written a chronicle (called *Letopisețul moldovenesc*), in Romanian or Slavonic, but it did not reach modern times³⁹. Historical tradition, transmitted orally, was a major source for chroniclers when other sources were not too helpful. The preface of the chronicle attributed to Ureche confirms this: “the first writers did not find any written word [...], but rather wrote from stories they heard one from the other.” In the addition that Simion Dascălul is credited with, he claims that he wished to complement Ureche’s work and took some of his sources from: „[...] documents in our language”⁴⁰, meaning the internal texts he had access to. Neculce, in *O samă de cuvinte*, refers us directly to the source of his historical accounts: “A collection of words heard from man to man, from men old and ancient, which are not written in the chronicle, but were written here [...]”⁴¹. The same Neculce mentions that not all the stories (especially the ones called *basne*) must be frowned upon as unsubstantiated fabrications, when referring to certain accounts, such as those referring to the Poles who ploughed Dumbrava Roșie or to the origin of Movilă family name: “this is why I do not

³⁷ P.P. Panaitescu, *Influența polonă în opera și personalitatea cronicarilor Grigore Ureche și Miron Costin* (Bucharest: 1925), pp. 20-37, 83-106; Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 36-47; Miron Costin, *Opere*, pp. 30-31; Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, pp. 271-305.

³⁸ Published in *Cronicile slavo-române*.

³⁹ P.P. Panaitescu, *Influența polonă*, pp. 53-57; Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 24-25, 39-40; references in chronicles: Miron Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 220; *De neamul moldovenilor*, 242-243, 260-261; Ion Neculce, *Opere*, pp. 157-158. Dumitru Velciu disputes the existence of this chronicle too (Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, pp. 237-242).

⁴⁰ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 64-65.

⁴¹ Ion Neculce, *Opere*, p. 161.



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believe it to be a fabrication.”⁴² For more recent events, chroniclers used the testimonies of the time, adopted from contemporaries; they were personal witnesses to some⁴³.

Those involved in elucidating the sources used by chroniclers were not too concerned with identifying or settling the authenticity of information on towns, and mainly focused on political matters. A recurring topic in the chronicles mentioned is the *descălecat* or the foundation of towns and the contribution of foreigners, both Saxon and Hungarian. Miron Costin took the most decisive stance in this matter, along with Ureche, who mentions several towns, such as Baia and Suceava. This topic comes to complement ideas expressed on the emergence of Moldavia, which features, by putting together information relayed by foreign chronicles and those in local tradition, as a new country, which appeared in a deserted, and then populated place⁴⁴. Archaeological research revealed that areas east of the Carpathians were indeed faced with a significant population decrease during Mongol domination. This all changed from mid 14th century on, when this land came under Hungarian influence, and then became a distinct principality⁴⁵. The “deserted” land of Moldavia must however be approached as those *terra deserta* in Transylvania or even Poland, mentioned as well in the context of colonisations and already thoroughly discussed. Beyond the Carpathians, the Saxons answered the call of the Hungarian kings and settled in areas around the future towns of Sibiu, Orăștie, Sebeș, Sighișoara, Mediaș, Brașov and Bistrița. The southern parts of Transylvania are indicated as *deserta* in royal documents, and this was also why they had been granted to the newcomers. Romanian historiography challenged the notion of an unpopulated territory in southern Transylvania, especially since this was an area densely inhabited by

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 158.

⁴³ Miron Costin, *Letopisețul*, p. 166; Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, pp. 305-307.

⁴⁴ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 66-71; Miron Costin, *Poema polonă*, pp. 229-233. See also *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 156, 160.

⁴⁵ N. Zaharia, M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Em. Zaharia, *Așezări din Moldova de la paleolitic până în secolul al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest: 1970), pp. 141-143, 148.

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Romanians, confirmed by findings and narrative sources. Various arguments as to the meaning of *terra deserta* were brought⁴⁶. If we cross into Moldavia, we will notice that we are dealing with a territory inhabited by an Orthodox population, which is suggested by sources both before the *descălecat*, and after it. Somewhere south or east of the mountains (in the east, more likely), after the bishopric of Cumania was established (1227), 13th century documents mention the „valahi”, who have their own *pseudoepiscopis*, and who had *Grecorum ritum*⁴⁷. The same Orthodox in the Moldavian area, this time after Moldavia was founded and had emerged as a principality, would strive via their leaders to officially create religious establishments in their own country, a process which was set in motion under Petru I⁴⁸. This is why Dragoș and his men, representatives of the Catholic king of Hungary, in whose name they came to seize this land, met a non-Catholic population here. The recreation of the ancient Catholic bishopric of Cumania, this time called “the bishopric of Milcovia” (1347)⁴⁹, clearly reveals that this land needed to be organized on political, demographical, but also on urban grounds. What had previously existed here, a world at the edges of Europe, under the sway of Mongol heathens, did not meet Western standards, which was much better organized in those times.

Back to the foundation of towns, which is an integral part of the foundation process for the entire country (*descălecatul*), we may say that it captures the state of affairs in early Moldavia. Other sources have already told us what the chroniclers confirmed as well, that Baia, Siret or Suceava are among the first urban settlements in the country. As for Baia, Simion Dascălul indicates that he found his inspiration in a form of the so-called „Letopiseț unguresc”, which did

⁴⁶ Ștefan Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, vol. I, 2nd ed. (Cluj: 1972), pp. 126-128; Thomas Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania* (Bucharest: 1981), pp. 149-154.

⁴⁷ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki*, vol. I, part 1 (Bucharest, 1887), p. 108, doc. 83; *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series D, I (Bucharest: 1977), p. 20, doc. 9.

⁴⁸ Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate* (Iași: 1997), pp. 174-196.

⁴⁹ *Documenta Romaniae*, D, I, p. 63, doc. 34. The issue of reactivating the former bishopric of Cumania was debated ever since 1332 (*ibidem*, D, I, p. 45, doc. 22).

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not endure to this day⁵⁰. The role of Saxons in the foundation of Baia is also supported by recent research⁵¹. We have already shown that Neculce tied the emergence of the town of Siret to Dragoș. This story is not present in any of the previous chronicles, neither that of Ureche, nor that of Miron Costin. Neculce did not rely on Nicolae Costin's *Letopiseț* either, even though he was his contemporary and was familiar with this chronicle. He only mentions the building of the Volovăț church by Dragoș, without mentioning other details⁵². It follows that this story was the result of his creative work, drawing on oral accounts that circulated in the Siret area⁵³. Another oral account, recorded in modern times, considered Sas, son of Dragoș, to be the one who had erected the residence and the church⁵⁴. In this case, recent research do not fully back up the information in the chronicle, but do not completely invalidate its claims. What is certain is that Catholic colonists played a major part here as well, as they were responsible for urbanizing the settlement. We do not know whether Dragoș brought the settlers or not, but when Lațcu ruled, they were here, since this ruler had negotiated the creation of a bishopric in Siret in 1371. For the Catholics, but also for the Dominican monks arriving here, Margaret, mother to Petru I, built the church of St John the Baptist. The church's location, in the middle of the marketplace, shows the important role German settlers had in creating the town, its significance in the community being proven by St John's presence on the seal⁵⁵.

All this supports the significant role played by foreign settlers in urbanizing Suceava. The interpretation regarding the Hungarian name of Suceava is encountered both in Miron Costin's

⁵⁰ *Cronici slavo-române*, p. 156, 160; Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 46, 71.

⁵¹ See details in Laurențiu Rădvan, *At Europe's Borders: Medieval Towns in the Romanian Principalities* (Leiden: 2010), p. 458-465.

⁵² Nicolae Costin, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, ed. Constantin A. Stoide, I. Lăzărescu (Iași: 1976), pp. 74-75.

⁵³ Constantin C. Giurescu, "Valoarea istorică a tradițiilor", p. 443, 476; Dumitru Velciu, *Ion Neculce*, pp. 162-163, 167-169.

⁵⁴ Simeon Reli, *Orașul Siret în vremuri de demult* (Cernăuți: 1927), pp. 20-23, 94.

⁵⁵ Vîrtosu, "Din sigilografia", pp. 476-477; *Documenta Romaniae*, series A, I (Bucharest: 1975), p. 1, doc. 1.

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work, and in that of Simion Dascălul, and even though the former was aware of the latter's contributions⁵⁶, it may stem in an explanatory legend that circulated at the time, without being actually invented by one of the chroniclers. The so-called Transylvanian origin of Simion Dascălul⁵⁷ was supposedly the cause of this information, even though linguistic research on the Simion's language in the chronicle does not support this theory⁵⁸. In Hungarian, *szűcs* indeed meant „furrier” and since a sizeable Catholic community, with its own church, had lived in Suceava up to mid-16th century, the legend probably connected it with previous historical facts.

It was still on the subject of Suceava that Grigore Ureche mentions the building of the St Demetrius church by Ștefan the Great “in the *târg*,” to celebrate the victory in Codrul Cosminului (where he had called for St Demetrius' help)⁵⁹. Even though archaeologists claimed this place of worship actually belonged to Petru Rareș⁶⁰, part of the historians also take into consideration the theory of this church being first built by Ștefan⁶¹.

*

The environment of former colonists arriving into Moldavia also ties in with other traditions, that chroniclers combined with accounts extracted from foreign chronicles. The legend of the Roman robbers, combined with the battles against the Mongols waged by Ladislaus the Saint, inserted by Simion Dascălul, were supposedly based on the same „Hungarian chronicle” mentioned above. Petre P. Panaitescu supports the theory that it existed⁶², while I.C. Chițimia,

⁵⁶ Miron Costin, *De neamul moldovenilor*, p. 242-243.

⁵⁷ N. Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, p. 253.

⁵⁸ Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, pp. 199-203.

⁵⁹ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 103, 115.

⁶⁰ M.D. Matei, Al. Rădulescu, Al. Artimon, “Bisericile de piatră de la Sf. Dumitru din Suceava”, *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 20/4 (1969), pp. 547-548; Mircea D. Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală românească*, pp. 154-156.

⁶¹ Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc, “Biserici dispărute la Suceava”, *Historia Urbana*, 15 (2007), pp. 181-183.

⁶² Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 46-47.



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Dumitru Velciu and others believe Simion Dascăluș had never laid eyes on any such work⁶³. Along with possible sources in the Polish environment (for the story of the robbers), we cannot rule out a possible influence from a version of the *Moldavian Russian Chronicle*⁶⁴, that Simion may have had access to⁶⁵. As for Ladislaus's battles against the Mongols, he may have added information from other sources in the Catholic Hungarian environment of Moldavia⁶⁶. Towns here had, until mid-16th century, major Hungarian communities (especially in the Lower Country), where Saint Ladislaus was also worshipped, a widespread practice in the Hungarian environment. A significant detail is that the seal from the modern period of the Catholic community in Bârlad allegedly had the image of St Ladislaus kneeling and looking at Virgin Mary, seated on a cloud⁶⁷. We are not aware of how old this seal was, but it is the presence of St Ladislaus that gives rise to a dilemma. We would have considered this seal to be of recent date if Marco Bandini, when mentioning the earthen stronghold near Bârlad, would not have recorded another local account, which included Ladislaus: "two stadia away from the market town, there lay the ruins of a Mongol fortress, on the shore of the Bârlad [river], where the Mongols had defended when King Ladislaus pursued the Scythians victoriously around 1236;" this is one of the two occurrences when St Ladislaus is mentioned in Bandini's *Codex*⁶⁸. Coincidentally, Simion Dascăluș's fabrications, those connecting the colonization of Maramureș by Roman robbers and the battles against the Mongols to the same

⁶³ I. C. Chișimăia, *Probleme de bază ale literaturii române vechi* (Bucharest: 1972), pp. 253-260; Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, pp. 226-237.

⁶⁴ *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 154-160.

⁶⁵ See P.P. Panaitescu, *Influența polonă*, pp. 35-37; Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Tradiția istorică despre întemeierea statelor românești*, ed. Valeriu Râpeanu (Bucharest: 1980), pp. 155-156; Brătianu sees in this king *Laslău* ("craiu Laslău") a synthesis of several historical figures, king Ladislaus the Saint, voivode Ladislaus of Transylvania and king Ladislaus IV the Cuman (*ibidem*, p. 166).

⁶⁶ See also N. Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, pp. 252-253.

⁶⁷ Iosif Gabor, *Dicționarul comunităților catolice din Moldova* (Bacău: 1996), p. 44.

⁶⁸ Marco Bandini, *Codex. Vizitarea generală a tuturor bisericilor catolice de rit roman din Provincia Moldova, 1646-1648*, ed. Traian Diaconescu (Iași, 2006), pp. 104-106. Bandini also relates that pieces of St Ladislaus's relics were embedded on a cross in the Catholic church of Hârlău (*ibidem*, p. 232).

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Ladislaus were recorded at the same time as Bandini travels through Moldavia⁶⁹. St Ladislaus's worship had reached full flight in the 14th century, and he was worshipped because he had battled the heathen, in a time when new battles were waged, this time with other pagans, the Mongols; from Hungary, through settlers, this cult reached Moldavia⁷⁰. It was no accident that I. C. Chițimia saw this legend, as well as that of Iațco the beekeeper, as grounded in popular tradition⁷¹. Previously, Petre P. Panaitescu, following Onciul's line⁷², accepted a possible scholarly origin from Hungary, without taking into account the fact that Hungarians crossing into Moldavia could have perpetuated the legend as part of the cult of St Ladislaus, writing into it information which had to do with their own tradition and which regarded Hungarian campaigns against the Mongols in mid-14th century. Even though it was placed against an inappropriate historical background and was adopted inadequately by chroniclers, this information can be a starting point towards the emergence of Hungarian communities in Moldavia, an emergence which is also related to the emergence of towns.

Other details in chronicles regarding towns are probably founded on real fact, even though time left its traces, and some further additions distanced them from the original corpus of information. The extensive work undertaken by Ștefan the Great in Iași was misinterpreted later on by chroniclers, who attributed to him "the foundation (*descălecat*) of the *târg*," even though the town had already existed for a century⁷³. If this information were not be a fabrication, as those ascribed to Simion Dascălul or Misail Călugărul, it could lead to a possible confirmation by Ștefan

⁶⁹ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 68-69.

⁷⁰ Details in Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: 2002), pp. 173-194, 361.

⁷¹ I. C. Chițimia, *Probleme de bază ale literaturii române vechi*, pp. 257-260.

⁷² Dimitrie Onciul, *Originile principatelor române* (Bucharest: 1899), pp. 96-99; P.P. Panaitescu, *Influența polonă*, p. 36, note 1; see Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 189 and the legend of St Ladislaus's divine intervention in favour of the Hungarians and the Szeklers who fought with the Mongols around 1345.

⁷³ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 103.

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of the old town privilege, as he had done in Vaslui and Bârlad⁷⁴. The statement which credits voivode Iuga with the foundation of towns, villages, and *ocoale* must have also had its grounds. The author of the interpolation adopted the account which claimed that one of the first Moldavian rulers had played an important part in the development of the country at one point. Since this ruler could not have been Iuga, who only ruled for approximately one year, it was another ruler who had partly been the drive behind this process. Two rulers fit this profile: Petru I (chronicles do not provide too much information on him) and Alexandru the Good. They both had longer reigns, and both were tactful in their internal and external policies; in their time, the country began to push forward and to develop. The fact that, when it describes Alexandru the Good's reign, Misail Călugărul provides a lot of information on the administrative and clerical organization of the country could hint at Alexandru. On the other hand, Petru I is the one who erected several strongholds, and also contributed greatly in the development of Suceava and Siret⁷⁵.

Whereas relatively frequent mention is made to towns in chronicles, especially to large urban centres, where the main events unfolded, the townspeople do not enjoy the same popularity. With the exception of several anecdotic accounts (Neculce), the townspeople seem to weigh little in the affairs of Medieval Moldavian society. Other categories, such as the peasants, do not receive better treatment⁷⁶. Even though the chronicles were limited in their perception of social aspects, the townspeople were indeed secondary in social, demographic or economic matters. They were few in number, and, even if some are wealthy and influential⁷⁷, their power was no match to that of

⁷⁴ *Documenta Romaniae*, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96; p. 279, doc. 151.

⁷⁵ Laurențiu Rădvan, *At Europe's Borders*, p. 531, 536.

⁷⁶ Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, p. 332.

⁷⁷ N. Iorga, *Relațiile economice ale țărilor noastre cu Lembergul*, vol. I (Bucharest: 1900), pp. 30-31; Radu Manolescu, "Cu privire la problema patriciatului în orașele Țării Românești și Moldovei (sec. XV-prima jumătate a sec. XVI)", *Cumidava*, 4 (1970), pp. 93-95; Mircea D. Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală românească*, pp. 94-97; also Ștefan S. Gorovei, "Cu privire la patriciatul orășenesc în Moldova medievală. Câteva observații preliminare", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, 25/1 (1988), pp. 253-265).



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the boyars. The inconsistent policies of the rulers, as well as the destructions they suffered (pillaging, fires, earthquakes) prevented towns from reaching the prominence that similar settlements in Western Europe had.

The attitude that chroniclers had towards towns was influenced by their origin and background. They were all boyars, and some, like Ureche, was a descendant of the old boyars of Moldavia. Based on documents preserved, those conducting research on his family, especially Ștefan S. Gorovei and Dumitru Velciu, state that the oldest certain traces revealing the age of the Ureche male line reach Ștefan the Great. Boyars named Ureche are also present in Alexandru the Good's council, but they could not be directly associated with the future Ureche family. Instead, a connection appeared on the female line, so the roots of the family could even reach the first rulers of the country⁷⁸. We cannot rule out that some of the information adopted in the chronicle (initially by Ureche and then by Simion Dascălul), which cannot be explained by written sources, had their source in the oral accounts kept, in the scholar's family, or in other boyar families⁷⁹. Their members displayed an awareness of their belonging to a special category of people, the elite of the country, so we may consider them as true "repositories" of historical information. This is why accounts preserved orally (but also in writing, indirectly, via property documents) in old boyar families could play a major role in transmitting historically-significant information over time.

Modern research confirmed a large part of the chroniclers' statements, and even those of the interpolators, and this reinforces the historical value of the information on the emergence of Moldavia and of its towns. Some of these statements are certainly not derived from written sources used by chroniclers, but from local historical tradition. We should also reconsider the role of interpolators, since not all their interferences with the text compromised the original chronicles,

⁷⁸ Details in Dumitru Velciu, *Grigore Ureche*, pp. 7-29.

⁷⁹ I. C. Chițimia, *Probleme de bază ale literaturii române vechi*, pp. 322-325.

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and not all introduced false information. Some even came to complement the chronicle, even though they did not match the style and the clarity of the original.

2. Romanian historiography of the twentieth century – discourse and perspectives on medieval towns in the Romanian Principalities

A quick review of the works of historians in Romania in the past century indicates that their interest in towns was generally low. The specifics of medieval society led to a keener interest in the rural world, with its two main components, the boyars and the peasants. In the Romanian Principalities, unlike Transylvania, political institutions followed the Byzantine model, an initiative which baffled local historians, especially when they focused on towns. Based on available sources, Romanian historians admitted that certain features related to Central Europe existed, without being able to provide a consistent explanation as to who introduced them and how they affected towns in the area. Conflicting or ambiguous information in sources on towns south and east of the Carpathians have determined historians to group under two major interpretations when considering the emergence and the organization of urban centres. Some of them claimed that towns emerged as predominantly commercial centres and were supported by social elements coming from outside. Others believed that towns emerged once Romanian medieval society reached a new stage in its development, the “division of labour”, namely the separation of crafts and agriculture; the latter perspective sees towns as manufacturers of goods rather than trade centres.

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The first interpretation received support when Romanian historiography was moving on from Romanticism to Positivism. A. D. Xenopol (1847-1920),⁸⁰ one of the first outstanding Romanian historians, supported the role of Germans in the creation of Moldavian towns, where they had allegedly brought institutions similar to those in Transylvania or Poland.⁸¹ Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), took a similar approach. He was a follower of *sămănătorism* and of other theories which promoted the idea that Romanians had developed a mainly rural society in the Middle Ages, independently from the people around them.⁸² Since the urban world was set against the rural one, Iorga openly supported the theory that towns in the Principalities were erected by foreigners: “today, we can say beyond any doubt that our towns have not been founded by Romanians.”⁸³ For Iorga, trade routes which crossed the Romanian-inhabited areas had a major role in the foundation of the towns and the Principalities, as did the settlers. The economical interests of the European powers paved the way for the emergence of towns, since roads could not ensure free and thriving trade without political protection.⁸⁴ Unlike Iorga, Gh. I. Brătianu (1898-1953), a representative of

⁸⁰ Lucian Boia believes that Xenopol “was a historian in the full sense of the word, even a great historian, maybe, but too focused on the theory of history and on large works of synthesis” (Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească* (History and myth in Romanian consciousness) (Bucharest: 2005), 95.

⁸¹ A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană* (The History of the Romanians in Trajan Dacia), vol. III (Bucharest: 1914), 250-252.

⁸² N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor* (The History of the Romanians), vol. III, 2nd ed. by Victor Spinei (Bucharest: 1993), 141-142.

⁸³ N. Iorga, *Istoria industriilor la români* (The History of industries and the Romanians), in Iorga, *Opere economice* (Economic Works), ed. Georgeta Penelea (Bucharest: 1982), 175.

⁸⁴ N. Iorga, *Negoțul și meșteșugurile în trecutul românesc* (Trade and crafts in Romania’s past), in Iorga, *Opere economice*, 12.

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the „new school” of historiography between the two World Wars,⁸⁵ was more reluctant in supporting the foreign element theory.⁸⁶

The direction opened up by Iorga was followed by another representative of the “new school”, Petre P. Panaitescu (1900-1967), who will be a particular focus of interest for us, since he had shifted his perspective several times over his career. In a volume of studies published immediately after the war, and written in an economic materialist vein, Panaitescu had added a novel text, which shares its perspectives with “new school”: *Comunele medievale în Principatele Române*. In this study, the author promotes his support for the autonomy theory and for the important role of foreign colonists, who boosted trade in emerging towns: “[...] Towns in Moldavia and Wallachia formed self-governing communities akin to the general European features of the medieval institution, which existed in our area as well, with aspects more in the vein of the specific Saxon type and somewhat reminiscent of the Polish one”.⁸⁷ The author does however admit to a distinction between urban centres: “Saxon towns were local industrial centres, with major guilds that had built at their own expense stone walls with towers which surrounded the entire *târg*, unlike the towns in the Romanian area, with wooden palisades and focused on trade.”⁸⁸ The Germans had crossed south and east into the Carpathians, where “they were responsible for the

⁸⁵ See Al. Zub, *Istorie și istorici în România interbelică* (History and historians in interwar Romania) (Iași: Junimea, 1989), 170-179. Documents regarding the debates which involved the “new school” in Ștefan S. Gorovei, Lucian Nastasă, Petre Țurlea, “Școala nouă” de istorie. Mărturii documentare” (The “new school” of History. Testimonials documentary), in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, 22 (1985), no. 1, 23 (1986), no. 1 and 24 (1987), no. 2.

⁸⁶ Gh. I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Albă* (Bucharest: 1935), 123; see also *Marea Neagră de la origini până la cucerirea otomană* (The Black Sea from its early history to the Ottoman conquest), 2nd ed. by Victor Spinei (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 73-75.

⁸⁷ P. P. Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale în Principatele Române” (Medieval communes in Romanian Principalities), in Panaitescu, *Interpretări românești* (Romanian Interpretations), 2nd ed. by Ștefan S. Gorovei and Maria-Magdalena Szekely (Bucharest: 1994), 141.

⁸⁸ Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale”, 128-132, 140-142.

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structure of our ancient *târgs*, which imitated [...] Saxon towns.”⁸⁹ Unfortunately, the fact that this volume of studies was published in 1947 undermined any acclaim it could have received, since historians were – at that time – more busy with survival than scientific debate.⁹⁰

The discourse of many historians writing before 1947 had a nationalist bias, specific to the inter-war period. Panaitescu refers to towns in the Romanian Principalities as being “ours,” and the towns are called “Romanian.”⁹¹ The works of Constantin C. Giurescu (1901-1977) display a similar language: in his well-known inter-war synthesis, *Istoria românilor*, he mentions “the population in our towns.”⁹² This is how we may discern a strain of discourse characteristic of the generation which lived through the emergence of Greater Romania, a generation which was however aware that the Romanian state had been created by uniting provinces where, historically speaking, specific local features existed.

*

The Marxist trend began to infiltrate the mainstream after the World War II. Influenced by the theories which toed the line of Communist internationalism, Romanian historiography aligned itself to interpretations set out by Moscow historians, which claimed that the Middle Ages were an age of anachronism, riddled with feudal dissolution and vast class struggle. The unfortunate influence of Mihail Roller (1908-1958), who had become the driving ideological force in the field of history,⁹³ led to a ban on the works of Iorga, Panaitescu, Brătianu, Giurescu, Nicolae Bănescu or

⁸⁹ Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale”, 142.

⁹⁰ See the editor’s comments in *Postfața* for *Interpretări românești*, 247-248.

⁹¹ Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale”, 144.

⁹² C.C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor* (The History of the Romanians), vol. II, ed. Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest: 2000), 318-319. An analysis at Alexandru Zub, “Constantin C. Giurescu: perspectivă istoriografică” (Constantin C. Giurescu: historiographically perspective), in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, 16 (1979), 489-500.

⁹³ See Aurel Pentelescu, “Mihail Roller și stalinizarea istoriografiei române în anii postbelici” (Mihail Roller and the Stalinization of Romanian historiography in post-war years), in *Analele Sighet*, 6 (1998), 588-602.

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Ion Nistor (to mention but a few of the leading historians of the day).⁹⁴ Their opinions became inaccessible, and not even students of History had a chance to become familiar with them.⁹⁵ As a member of the “new” cleansed Romanian Academy, Roller supervised a history manual, full of errors, which became a hallmark for historical education in the 50s; it was republished many times and was also translated into Hungarian and German, so it could also reach the minorities.⁹⁶ The nationalist outlook on Romanian history was now giving way to an internationalist approach. “Class struggle” became the social paradigm, for Antiquity and medieval or modern times alike; social classes received vast attention, and the “under-privileged” were the main focus. The previous divisions of time were considered obsolete and arbitrary, as were the scientific methods of the historians in pre-Communist times.⁹⁷ In this schoolbook, towns were completely relegated to a lesser role, without ever being seen as significant. On several occasions, the author admits that “foreign merchants” also settled within towns, only to claim later on that “in Moldavia, the structure of *târgs* was similar to the one in the Slavonian knezats”!⁹⁸ The author inform us that “Stephen the Great helped the townsfolk to overcome the competition from foreign merchants” and that the town populace “fell into bondage” because of the “Turkish invaders, who sought to

⁹⁴ A list of the most significant prohibited works at Florin Müller, “Politică, ideologie și istoriografie în România anilor ’50-’60” (Politics, ideology and historiography in ’50s-’60s Romania), în *Istorie și societate. Culegere de studii de istorie modernă și contemporană* (History and society. A collection of modern and contemporary history studies), eds. Constantin Bușe, Ileana Căzan (Bucharest: 2000), 107-109.

⁹⁵ Florin Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu* (From Răutu and Roller to Mușat and Ardeleanu) (Bucharest: 2007), 38-39, 59-60.

⁹⁶ Mihail Roller (1908-1958) was second in command to Leonte Răutu in the Department for Agitation and Propaganda (details in Pavel Țugui, *Istoria și limba română în vremea lui Gheorghiu-Dej. Memoriile unui fost șef de Secție a CC al PMR* (Romanian history and language at the time of Gheorghiu-Dej. Memoirs of a former head of department in CC at RWP) (Bucharest: 1999), 7-12; Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 23-25.

⁹⁷ Al. Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub comunism* (Closed horizon. Romanian historiography under the communism) (Iași: Institutul European, 2000), 65-66.

⁹⁸ *Istoria R.P.R. Manual pentru învățământul mediu* (History of the PRR. Manual for secondary education), ed. Mihail Roller (Bucharest: 1952), 98.

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dictate trading relations in form and fashion,” statements with no actual support.⁹⁹ It was no accident that towns receive no interest. Until the 17th century, historical sources do not indicate any situations which could be described as “class struggle” in the urban world, situations which would have been useful for the type of historical discourse that Roller promoted. Another reason behind his avoidance of this matter was that the bourgeoisie, the most vilified social category in the publications of the day, descended in part from medieval townspeople. It was only natural that the priorities would be describing the peasants and the upheavals they had caused, exposing the local boyars as slave drivers and incriminating Ottoman rule. His style and his arguments had a substantially ideological component, since “purging the past” was now the order of the day.

In 1955, in response to Roller's singular schoolbook, it was decided that several teams of scholars would create a new treatise on history, meant to promote a new, official version on Romanian history. Andrei Oțetea (1894-1977) had an important role in shifting the focus on national history, by limiting and then gradually eliminating Roller's influence on historiography.¹⁰⁰ As concerns medieval towns, this new volume would state: “Previous historiography - both Romanian and foreign - driven either by cosmopolitan or chauvinistic trends promoted a number of misconceptions as concerns the initial stages of urban life in regions south and east of the Carpathians. Basing its assumptions on Miron Costin’s statement on Moldavia that “most of the towns were founded by Saxons,’ as well as on the role played by trade and the administration of towns by external elements, it very often looked upon our ancient urban settlements as the work of foreign, and especially German, colonists, seen as the heralds of civilisation to these parts of the world. By isolating the process of urban emergence from the general evolution of society, bourgeois historiography has either come to underestimate the urban factor, or to arbitrarily oppose

⁹⁹ *Istoria R.P.R.*, 126, 147.

¹⁰⁰ Țugui, *Istoria și limba română*, 30-35; an analysis of the contents of the treatise (volumes I-IV) and of the contributors in Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 237-271.

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it to the social and economic array to which it pertained.”¹⁰¹ Since sources prevented a complete rebuttal of the presence of “foreigners” in the urban centres of Principalities, the authors mentioned strike a compromise: “the emergence of towns in Moldavia and Wallachia is, *as everywhere*, the result of internal needs, which could have been to a certain extent catered to by foreign elements as well.” Even so, the origin of towns remained rural.¹⁰² Despite all of the above, towns are not discussed in a separate chapter, but are included under the topic “the development of crafts, trade, and towns.” As a social group, the townspeople are approached on eight rows, while slaves are assigned more than one page.¹⁰³ One paradox was that the authors had seen fit to illustrate the chapter with a beautiful image of the medieval seal of Baia, a town which had been home to a large Catholic community.¹⁰⁴ It was no accident that the chapter on towns and their economic development in the Middle Ages had been entrusted to Barbu Cămpina and M. Berza, the advocates of the new trend of interpretation in historiography that relied on dialectic materialism.¹⁰⁵

The history treatise revealed that the part played in urbanization by various groups of settlers within the Romanian Principalities did not match the ever-growing nationalist bias of the Communist Party. This is why many historians adhered to the new official doctrine, which stated that Romanian society had evolved since the oldest days (from prehistoric times!) on a path of its own. This massive turn towards a different perspective can also be linked to the dramatic changes that the Communist regime had initiated in Romania,¹⁰⁶ changes which broke with the path followed by the country in the century before. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Romanian

¹⁰¹ *Istoria României* (History of Romania), ed. A. Oțetea, vol. II (Bucharest: 1962), 289.

¹⁰² *Istoria României*, 289-290.

¹⁰³ *Istoria României*, 307-308.

¹⁰⁴ *Istoria României*, 290, fig. 90.

¹⁰⁵ Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 252.

¹⁰⁶ A general approach on this topic in Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul comunist* (Romania under the communist regime), 2nd ed. (Bucharest: 2006).

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society had steered decisively to Western values,¹⁰⁷ so the changes brought about by Communism had to be justified both ideologically, and... historiographically. The new theories on the historical evolution of this area in the Middle Ages were meant to show that continuity actually existed between that period and the contemporary one. In order to bring the new interpretations in line with the Marxist paradigm, the social division of labour, the significance of crafts within towns, the “crystallization of feudal relations,” and the already-mentioned class struggle were brought into focus. The urban phenomenon was seen as being a native one, subjected to only few external influences. This trend was more or less adopted by Constantin C. Giurescu, Petre P. Panaitescu, Nicolae Grigoraș, Ștefan Olteanu, Constantin Șerban, Mircea D. Matei, and others. We will stop at only the more prominent of them: Constantin C. Giurescu and Petre P. Panaitescu, whose opinions had the widest impact.

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Except for several town monographs, no extensive work had been published on urban centres until the end of the 60s. For most historians, research into the past history of towns was a marginal field, over which political, economic or social history had the upper hand. The first work of synthesis on towns in the principalities is *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene*, published by Constantin C. Giurescu in 1967. Between the two World Wars, this historian had taken a neutral stance on the role of colonists (which he considered to be merchants, above all) in the development of towns.¹⁰⁸ Giurescu had criticized Iorga for some unsubstantiated statements, and had claimed to be a supporter of critical thinking, “unburdened by politics or passion.” Even so, he did stand out early as a follower of the great scholar, by supporting ideas that linked history to nation and

¹⁰⁷ An excellent synthesis regarding the history of the Romanians and Romania during the modern period at Keith Hitchins, *România. 1866-1947* (Romania. 1866-1947) (Bucharest: 2004).

¹⁰⁸ Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, 299-325.

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patriotism, and which would later foreshadow “autochtonist” theories.¹⁰⁹ It was no accident that he revised his own opinions after the war, and adapted his discourse and theories to the official doctrine, which claimed a local origin for urban centres within the Romanian area.

Given the large number of sources on Moldavia, Giurescu admits that a process of colonization did exist, which also involved the arrival of some Germans in the towns of the area. However, he does not agree to their role in the emergence of urban centres: “we would be wrong to ascribe to them [the Germans] the creation of the some of the oldest Moldavian towns, as well as the teaching of the urban lifestyle to Romanians.”¹¹⁰ Towns are seen as stemming from larger villages, centres of areas where the native population was denser, and where the seats of local rulers had been located. The *târgs* related to these villages had allegedly existed “ever since the Romanian-Slavonic coexistence,” but this claim has no support other than the purely linguistic one.¹¹¹ The time when towns arose had predated the emergence of Moldavia as a medieval principality, a theory which is not substantiated by archaeological confirmation today.¹¹² Whereas, between the two wars, the author had acknowledged that there was no definite evidence which would indicate that the Romanians had been the majority in towns, he now claimed this as fact, by also relying on “deductive reasoning.”¹¹³ This had to do more likely with the points that he had yielded to censorship and to those overseeing publications, since the author goes on to make a rather comprehensive list of the Germans, Armenians, Hungarians, and Ruthenians living in various Moldavian towns.¹¹⁴ When discussing the legal structure, he admits that: “there is no doubt

¹⁰⁹ Boia, *Istorie și mit*, 115-119.

¹¹⁰ Constantin C. Giurescu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea* (Marketplaces, towns and strongholds in Moldavia from the 10th century to mid 16th century), 2nd ed. by Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest: 1997), 85.

¹¹¹ Giurescu, *Târguri*, 74.

¹¹² Giurescu, *Târguri*, 70-82.

¹¹³ Giurescu, *Târguri*, 85.

¹¹⁴ Giurescu, *Târguri*, 82-99.

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that the most powerful of all influences on customary law was the German influence.”¹¹⁵ This was an attempt to reconcile sources with the “autochtonist” theory that had been officially promoted.

Despite all its weaknesses and ideological detours mandated by the age when it was published, Giurescu’s monograph is one of the most rigorous scientific ventures in Romanian urban history of those times. How do we explain then the compromises that this great historian had made with the new interpretations promoted by the “regulators” of Romanian history? Upon closer examination, we may notice that it was his own academic and political background that made Constantin C. Giurescu undesirable for the Communist regime. Part of the same generation as Petre P. Panaitescu and Gh. I. Brătianu (the three were born between 1898 and 1901), Giurescu became a Professor at the Faculty of Letters of the Bucharest University in 1926.¹¹⁶ He had political sympathies which favoured Gh. I. Brătianu's liberals and he had supported King Carol II. After the King's authoritarian regime came to power in 1938, Giurescu was appointed governor (*rezident regal*) for the Lower Danube County (February 1939), then Minister-Secretary of State responsible for the single party, the National Renaissance Front (September 1939); he later became a Minister of National Propaganda (from March 1940 on).¹¹⁷ Ousted from University, he was arrested in May 1950 and was included in the so-called “officials' group,” being imprisoned in Sighet (where Gh. I. Brătianu passed away in 1953) for five years. Throughout this time, the new regulators of historiography labelled him a “Fascist,” even though he had had nothing to do with the Legionnaires and extreme-right parties.¹¹⁸ Following his release in 1955, he was under house

¹¹⁵ Giurescu, *Târguri*, 173.

¹¹⁶ *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești* (An encyclopedia of the Romanian historiography), ed. Ștefan Ștefănescu (Bucharest: 1977), 156.

¹¹⁷ Details in Constantin C. Giurescu, *Amintiri* (Memories), ed. Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest: 2000), 272-287.

¹¹⁸ Mihail Roller, “Consfătuirea istoricilor din R.P.R.” (The meeting of the historians from PRR), in *Studii*, 6 (1953), no. 1, 72; Traian Udrea, “Despre unele probleme privind știința istorică în R.P.R.” (About some issues regarding historical science in PRR), in *Studii*, 8 (1955), no. 1, 108. See also Andi Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive în*



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arrest for several months, only to be gradually later reintegrated in the History Institute of Bucharest and in the Faculty of History.¹¹⁹

Constantin C. Giurescu's compromises in historiography may probably be explained by the author's desire to publish his works and to carry out his profession as a historian.¹²⁰ Before 1947, Giurescu had gained substantial scientific acclaim, since he was a reputed figure in historical research, and his works were even successful with the larger public. His works of synthesis and his Romanian history books were published in many editions and sold well. The change brought about by the instatement of the Communist regime was dramatic for him; between 1948 and 1957, Giurescu did not publish anything else.¹²¹ The first step towards his rehabilitation as a historian and being accepted by the regime was taken in 1957, when he had published a valuable work which looked into an "accessible" topic, the 1835 Russian map of the Principalities.¹²² In much the same way as Panaitescu, Giurescu benefitted from a relative opening (although prudent and controlled) that the Bucharest regime had shown after Stalin's death.¹²³ This opening had varying degrees: the regime took a harsher stance after 1958 towards the affairs of the country, so as not to allow any deviation and to appease Moscow, especially since it had withdrawn its troops from

România "democrat-populară" (History and discursive practices in "popular-democratic" Romania) (Bucharest: 2003), 74-75.

¹¹⁹ Giurescu, *Amintiri*, 335; Dinu C. Giurescu, *De la Sovromconstrucții nr. 6 la Academia Română. Amintiri, mărturii* (From Sovromconstrucții no. 6 to the Romanian Academy. Memories, testimonials) (Bucharest: 2008), 129, 155-157, 217, 249.

¹²⁰ Giurescu, *De la Sovromconstrucții*, 213.

¹²¹ See *Bibliografia lucrărilor lui Constantin C. Giurescu* (The bibliography of Constantin C. Giurescu's works), in Giurescu, *Târguri*, X-XVI. One article appeared in 1955 in a journal from abroad (probably given for publication after 1955).

¹²² Constantin C. Giurescu, *Principatele române la începutul secolului XIX. Constatări istorice, economice și statistice pe temeiul hărții ruse din 1835* (Romanian principalities in the early nineteenth century. Historical, economic and statistical findings based on the Russian map of 1835) (Bucharest: 1957).

¹²³ As the authority of Roller and his team decreased, effective measures included: the publication of new dedicated journals and the restructuring of editorial committees in the existing ones, the creation of new research institutes (such as the one of archaeology in Bucharest, 1956), re-establishing the relationships with specialized international organizations (Țugu, *Istoria și limba română*, 54-63).

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Romania.¹²⁴ These variations always impacted historiography.¹²⁵ Giurescu was really accepted by the regime only after the changes which took place in its upper echelons, after 1965, when Nicolae Ceaușescu came to power and tried to separate himself from the politics promoted by the Soviet Union.¹²⁶ Therefore, Romanian historiography slid on an increasingly nationalist slope, of which several historians became more accepting in the interwar period - Giurescu and Panaitescu were among them.

Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene met with numerous issues before coming to print. The author had finished it in 1964,¹²⁷ but he had to wait for a fairly long time for the approval of authorities to publish it at the Romanian Academy Publishing House. These hesitations were not owing to the fact that this work deal with towns in general, and its topic was, as we have shown, adapted to the tenets of the new ideology. The problem was the fact that Giurescu had also discussed towns in the territories which had, in the mean time, been annexed to the Soviet Union: Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. 16 of the 43 towns examined by the author were no longer part of Romania, and academic debate over them could only irritate Moscow, which feared possible territorial claims by Romania.¹²⁸ Another major work had been in a similar situation several years before, but one dealing with linguistics. At the end of 1955, it was discussed whether the second volume in Sextil Pușcariu's *Limba română* should be published, after having been postponed ever since 1948 on. The author, who had died in 1948 as well, had been investigated by Communists and had been banned from publishing as “undesirable”. This work posed issues similar to the ones

¹²⁴ Deletant, *România*, 146-153.

¹²⁵ Țugui, *Istoria și limba română*, 140-155; Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 137-138, 143-167.

¹²⁶ Deletant, *România*, 162-179.

¹²⁷ Initially, the work had been drafted at the History Institute of Bucharest in 1959-1960, as Giurescu himself states in a note on the first edition (Giurescu, *Târguri*, ed. 1967, 7, note 1). The work had been sent for typesetting in June 1966 (see the final note of the publishing house).

¹²⁸ In its final form of publication, the contents indicated that these towns were part of the Moldovan SSR, and the Ukrainian SSR (Giurescu, *Târguri*, ed. 1967, 379).

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raised by Giurescu's later book on towns, since it included a series of maps which indicated where Romanian was spoken and which naturally expanded over Romania's borders at that point. The risk of sparking disputes in foreign relations led to the decision being relegated to the head of state, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, which is a suggestive indication of the levels of authority required for decisions which would normally have nothing to do with politics. Authorities also saw the linguistic stake of the argument, since the USSR promoted the existence of a “Moldovan language,” and this volume would have provided a scientific answer to this challenge. Sextil Pușcariu's work followed a similar path to that of Giurescu's: limited circulation, destined only for specialists, and not for the general public.¹²⁹

Another questions still exists: did Giurescu have the consent or the support of the cultural and political representatives of the regime in order to carry out his research? It goes without saying that this kind of subject could only be included in a research programme following prior approval, and Giurescu himself was well aware of this, especially since the topic was politically delicate. This approval must have come from above. Giurescu later became involved in an argument with the pro-Moscow historians in the Soviet Republic of Moldova (part of U.S.S.R.). Soviet historiography was more and more bent on inculcating the idea of a Moldovan people and language, distinct from the Romanian people and language. For instance, A.M. Lazarev adapted some older points and, in 1974, published his work *Moldavskaja Sovetskaja Gosudarstvennost' i bessarabskij vopros*, which, based on an abusive and biased interpretation of sources, attempted to bring historical evidence for a “Moldovan” nation.¹³⁰ Irritated, the Bucharest regime consented,

¹²⁹ Abroad, the volume was first sent to the Western libraries and later on to the “friendly nations” in the Communist area (Țugui, *Istoria și limba română*, 209-220).

¹³⁰ A.M. Lazarev, *Moldavskaja Sovetskaja Gosudarstvennost' i bessarabskij vopros* (Soviet Moldovan statehood and Bessarabian question) (Chișinău: Cartea Moldovenească, 1974). Before that, the same author published *Vossoedinenie moldavskogo naroda v edinnoe sovetskoe gosudarstvo* (The reunification of the Moldovan people in a single Soviet state) (Chișinău: Cartea Moldovenească, 1965).

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among others, to an academic response to this pseudoscientific work, and Constantin C. Giurescu himself was tasked with this. In 1976, a publishing house used as a cover by the regime published Giurescu's work, *Cum se falsifică istoria*, signed under Petre Moldoveanu, his pen name.¹³¹

Nicolae Ceaușescu's rise to power and the apparent liberalization promoted by the regime (with the apparent distancing from Soviet views) that he had applied in the first few years¹³² ultimately led to the work being published. Printed in 1967, the book had only a limited circulation, and was not sold in bookshops. Academics could only obtain it with prior approval at the distribution venue of the Academy Publishing House, each name being highlighted on a separate list.¹³³ Even so, the work became a seminal one, and is even today quoted in studies which deal with towns in medieval Moldavia.

*

We have already mentioned that Petre P. Panaitescu displayed a dramatic change of his views on towns. In his chapter on towns in *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova* (1957), the author followed a neutral approach,¹³⁴ for which he was rebuked shortly afterwards.¹³⁵ One

¹³¹ P. Moldoveanu, *Cum se falsifică istoria* (How to falsify history) (Milano: Nagard, 1976). In *Târguri sau orașe*, Giurescu asserts that the theories of F. Grecul in a work on Moldovan towns published in 1949, which claimed that “the development of Moldovan towns was based on that of Slavic towns” or that the towns borrowed structural elements from the Kievan Rus’ were inaccurate. Grecul had also claimed, much in the spirit of the times, that Iorga, Ursu, Filitti and Giurescu had disseminated “reactionary theories” on “the backwardness of the Moldovan people,” statements which, according to Giurescu (who obviously felt to be the target) found no support in real life. N.A. Mohov’s similar ideas, expressed in *Istoria R.S.S. Moldovenești* (The History of Moldovan SSR), vol. I (Chișinău: 1954) were also challenged as being “baseless” (Giurescu, *Târguri*, ed. 1997, 14).

¹³² Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 323-324, 336-341.

¹³³ See the *Foreword* signed by Dinu C. Giurescu in *Târguri sau orașe*, ed. 1997, II.

¹³⁴ V. Costăchel, P. P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV-XVII)* (Feudal life in Wallachia and Moldavia (14th-17th century)) (Bucharest: 1957), 413-444.

¹³⁵ An editorial in “Studii”, 11 (1958), no. 6, 16, unsigned, criticizes the authors of the work, Panaitescu included, since “in a more dire fashion [...], the role played by the masses in shaping history has been neglected” and that the authors “only mention class struggle in a short chapter counting only 13 of the 545 pages of the work.” Also, “no mention is ever made of the role played by the townspeople in creating the centralized state, a direct role, highly significant [...]”



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decade later, Panaitescu completely shifted his theories in *Introducere la istoria culturii românești* (published posthumously, in 1969). This time, he no longer mentions communes in the principalities and settlers, but comes up with new concepts, such as the Romanian *târguri de vale* and *orașe-obștii*, which supposedly predated the emergence of the principalities. He focuses on the role of local political and economic centres entertained by the *târgs*, the *orașe-obștii* being a “a specific Romanian creation, a Romanian solution in the development of urban life in medieval Europe.” The author had some trouble finding arguments in this respect, since the only self-proclaimed *obște* in the Romanian area had been the urban community from Câmpulung, Wallachia, and this happened only late, in the 17th-18th centuries. However, the author did not abandon some of the ideas stated in this earlier works: he claims the commercial factor was a reinforcing element in urban development, since foreign communities settling in towns in the principalities were seen as iconic for special relations existing between Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia. He does admit to the existence of Germans in towns, but continues to refer to them as “Romanian-type towns.” Finally, and surprisingly, the foundation of towns is seen as having „the cultural role of promoting social freedom.” In Panaitescu’s opinion, towns stand out as hotspots of innovation, promoting „an opening up of economic relations with Europe as a whole.” This medley of ideas, which combines faith in the “Romanian” and “rural” origin of towns with the idea of promoting “social freedom” only deepened controversies on the emergence of towns instead of laying them to rest.¹³⁶ In the 60s, there was no place for Germans and foreigners in general in the emergence of towns.

¹³⁶ P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii românești. Problemele istoriografiei române* (Introduction to the History of Romanian culture. Issues of Romanian historiography), ed. Dan Horia Mazilu (Bucharest: 2000), 263-275.

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What led to this dramatic change in the opinions of well-versed historian like Petre P. Panaitescu?¹³⁷ First of all, Petre P. Panaitescu's past was somewhat chequered. Much like his colleagues, Panaitescu asserted himself in the academia relatively early as a prodigious historian and promoter of new and well-documented interpretations in Romanian historiography.¹³⁸ His works, published before or during the war, such as *Influența polonă în opera și personalitatea cronicarilor Grigore Ureche și Miron Costin*,¹³⁹ *Călători poloni în țările române*,¹⁴⁰ but most of all the then-controversial *Mihai Viteazul*,¹⁴¹ as well as *Mircea cel Bătrân*,¹⁴² brought him vast recognition. However, his pro-Legionnaire ventures during the war mattered more once the Communists came to power. It was actually during the Legionnaire government that he had been, for a short while (Oct 1940-Jan 1941), head of the “Cuvântul” newspaper and had held the office of Rector at the University of Bucharest. In November 1940, he even headed a committee that reviewed university professors and investigated over 340 members of the staff, with a good many of them being temporarily relieved for anti-Legionnaire sentiments.¹⁴³ Although he had been

¹³⁷ Panaitescu adhered to the new, Marxist-based interpretations in other studies as well. His article “Dreptul de strămutare al țăranilor în Țările Române (până la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea)” (The right of displacement of peasants in the Romanian principalities (until the middle of the seventeenth century)), in *Studii și materiale de istorie medie*, 1 (1956), 63-122, is a good example.

¹³⁸ Details regarding the activity of Petre P. Panaitescu between the two world wars in Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Petre P. Panaitescu, coordonate ale unei evoluții” (Petre P. Panaitescu, coordinates of an evolution), in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, 19 (1982), 501-515.

¹³⁹ P. P. Panaitescu, *Influența polonă în opera și personalitatea cronicarilor Grigore Ureche și Miron Costin* (The Polish influence in the work and personality of chroniclers Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin) (Bucharest: 1925).

¹⁴⁰ P. P. Panaitescu, *Călători poloni în țările române* (Polish travellers in the Romanian principalities) (Bucharest: 1930).

¹⁴¹ P. P. Panaitescu, *Mihai Viteazul* (Michael the Brave) (Bucharest: 1936). One of the reasons for the controversy was the somewhat harsh response given by Nicolae Iorga to the opinions expressed by Panaitescu in this volume, opinions which refuted the Michael the Brave's princely origins (Gorovei, “Petre P. Panaitescu”, 510-514).

¹⁴² P. P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân* (Mircea the Old) (Bucharest: 1944).

¹⁴³ Giurescu, *Amintiri*, 300-303; Constantin Petculescu, *Mișcarea legionară. Mit și realitate* (Legionnaire movement. Myth and reality) (Bucharest: Noua Alternativă, 1997), 191; other details in Pavel Țugui, *File de istorie culturală. Fapte, confruntări, documente* (Pages of cultural history. Facts, confrontations, documents) (Bucharest: Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, 2009), 531-533. As the year 1940 drew to an end, Panaitescu was involved in another

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accused of participations in the acts of the Legionnaire regime, he was acquitted in June 1941; between December 1942 and March 1943 he was interned in the camp at Târgu Jiu, being then relocated to Goștinari-Ilfov under house arrest.¹⁴⁴ In December 1944, he was discharged from his position at the University. We will not find him later on, in 1948, among the members of the “new” Romanian Academy (which he had joined when he was 34), cleansed of all “hostile elements.” His activity continued intermittently throughout the 50s at the History Institute of Bucharest, a time when his presence in the academia was discreet.¹⁴⁵ In 1952, Panaitescu was warned by Mihail Roller on the contents of his writings (he published under the pen name of Al. Grecu).¹⁴⁶ Roller, as mentor and censor of the new historiography regulated by the Communist regime, attempted and even managed for a short while to impose his view on history. Panaitescu was at first more reluctant, so he had great difficulty in publishing his works in the years to come, even under a pen name; in 1956, he was even arrested for conspiring to overthrow the state.¹⁴⁷

Without any memoirs where Panaitescu himself would provide a consistent explanation for the choices he had made throughout his life time,¹⁴⁸ we would find it hard to provide a certain reason which would shed light on his crossing over into the Marxist camp. The historian probably attempted to obtain the consent of the regime in order to keep his freedom and to be allowed to write. This is how we believe Mihail Roller's influence on him may be explained: he played on his fears of the reprisals that his Legionnaire past might have incited. Among others, Roller used

controversy. After Nicolae Iorga was assassinated (November 27, 1940), Panaitescu, then a rector, refused to fly the black mourning flag, and only later consented to this (opinions in Gorovei, “Petre P. Panaitescu”, 518-519).

¹⁴⁴ Ioan Oprea, *Cercuri culturale disidente* (Dissident cultural circles) (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2001), 161.

¹⁴⁵ Gorovei, “Petre P. Panaitescu”, 518-519.

¹⁴⁶ Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive*, 64-65.

¹⁴⁷ Details regarding the investigation from 1956 (as well as the one in 1941, after the Legionnaire government), in Oprea, *Cercuri culturale disidente*, 48-56.

¹⁴⁸ Fragments from Petre P. Panaitescu's diary were published in 1974, but they only include testimonies from his youth, before the 30s (Petre P. Panaitescu, *Pagini de jurnal (1921-1927)* (Pages of diary (1921-1927)), ed. Silvia Panaitescu (Cluj: Dacia, 1974).

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Panaiteescu to transcribe and publish medieval documents in a collection that he had supervised, without however mentioning the other scholars involved on its title page.¹⁴⁹ His fear of jail probably had another major role in his decision.¹⁵⁰ The hindrances to his research, the inability to use the name he had made for himself between the two wars, the fear of not falling victim to a new ideologically-based cleansing, all these led him to gradually embrace the new ideology which dominated historiography. He surrendered his previous beliefs and one can even see him accept the new Marxist principles.¹⁵¹ This transformation was also motivated by Panaiteescu's philosophy. Even before the Communist regime was instated, he had revealed himself as a supporter of historical materialism, with a focus on economic determinism.¹⁵²

More paradoxical is the relationship between Panaiteescu and Giurescu, who stood together in historiography, but fell apart because of politics. According to Giurescu's memoirs, in 1938, Petre P. Panaiteescu was on a list of those entertaining pro-Legionnaire views, which were to be interned in the camp at Miercurea Ciuc by a decision of the Minister of the Interior, Armand Călinescu; Constantin C. Giurescu was among those who intervened in his favour. Instead, two years later, in November 1940, the cleansing committee at the University of Bucharest, headed by the Panaiteescu, now a rector, decided among others to eliminate Giurescu from the university, since Legionnaires disapproved strongly of him.¹⁵³ In the 50s, both found themselves in the same

¹⁴⁹ Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 249-250; also 169-171, 214. The collection mentioned is *Documente privind istoria României*, where the names of those actually contributing, Panaiteescu included, is not mentioned.

¹⁵⁰ Unlike other historians of his time (Giurescu and Brătianu, but others as well), Panaiteescu managed to avoid being imprisoned for a larger period of time.

¹⁵¹ Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive*, 106.

¹⁵² Gorovei, "Petre P. Panaiteescu", 515-517. Andrei Oțetea would note, in the speech occasioned by Panaiteescu's demise, that his approach to historical materialism "simplified [for Panaiteescu] the crossing from economical determinism to Marxism, in the most complex and genuine sense of the word" (Andrei Oțetea, "P. P. Panaiteescu", in *Studii*, 21 (1968), no. 1, 213).

¹⁵³ Giurescu, *Amintiri*, 302-303; Opriș, *Cercuri culturale disidente*, 172.

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boat, being marginalized by the Communist regime, later restored to their standing by the same regime.

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The interpretations of various authors were strongly influenced by the times in which they lived and the ideologies they lived under.¹⁵⁴ Before World War II, when Romanian historiography had a more solid connection to the European one, the view that gave great credit to Germans in the urbanization process had gained ground, thanks to major representatives such as Iorga or Brătianu. However, a trend that supported a “local path” in the development of towns had also begun to gain popularity, and Giurescu was its advocate. This interpretation may be explained by taking into account the decades that followed the year 1918, after Greater Romania emerged and the country sought to establish an identity in the new European background. The Communists' rise to power also led to a single ideology being enforced, which determined dramatic changes in historiography. The historians had limited freedom of movement, and historical creations had to be regulated by the authorities. The “autochtonist” current suited the regulators of historiography, especially since the regime was seeking for a way of its own to evolve in the Eastern bloc, but this time from a different perspective.

Iași,

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Cercetător postdoctoral

Dr. Laurențiu Rădvan

Rădvan

¹⁵⁴ Boia, *Istorie și mit*, 111-114, 121.

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