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SOME LANDMARKS REGARDING THE FIRST MUSEOLOGICAL INITIATIVES ON THE LOWER DANUBE. I. GALAȚI AREA

In the city of Galați the first preoccupations of museology – in the sense of bringing together objects of some public interest, originally grouped under the general criterion of «curiosities», their registration and display to be accessible for the public, appeared towards the end of the 19th century, on the general background of the development of humanities and, among others, under the impetus created by the establishment of the National Museum of Antiquities, confirmed through an royal decree signed by Alexandru Ioan Cuza, on November 25, 1861.

In this short intervention the authors introduce the readers into the very beginnings of the coagulation of some collections that are related to certain characters, let's call them prominent in the cultural life of the place – as is the case of teachers Paul and Ecaterina Pașa, or of higher intellectual attire as is the case of the scholars Vasile Alexandrescu-Urechia or Constantin C. Giurescu. In one way or another, these incipient initiatives were at the basis of the contemporary museums of Galați, in which many of the artifacts «collected» by those mentioned are still to be found under the general title of «old fund».

Key words: *the collection, museum, the patrimony, the donation, history.*

The reader will of course intuit (if not, he will discover it in the following lines), that the beginnings of the coagulation of some collections are related to certain characters, let's call them prominent in the cultural life of the place – as is the case of teachers Paul and Ecaterina Pașa¹, or of higher intellectual attire as is the case of the scholars Vasile Alexandrescu-Urechia or Constantin C. Giurescu, whose notoriety exempts us from possible biographical digressions. In one way or another, these incipient initiatives were at the basis of the contemporary museums of Galați, so we will briefly draw them early history.

I. The collection «V. A. Urechia»

The first «artifacts» were reunited on November 11, 1890, on the occasion of the opening of the Public Library named after the illustrious scholar «V. A. Urechia»², in the halls of the «Vasile Alecsandri» high school. The mixed museum fund consisted of

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¹ See for their activity in the field Costin Croitoru (editor). *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălățene, Acte, documente, corespondență și note*. Istros Publishing House. Brăila. 2009. *passim* (this article is a variant of the introductory study of the mentioned volume, see *ibidem*, pp. XVII-XXXVIII).

² I. T. Dragomir, *V. A. Urechia, istoric, publicist, colecționar și muzeograf*. in *Danubius*. VI-VII. 1972-1973. pp. 179-192.

documents, prints, lithographs, photographs, paintings and moulds after some special pieces from the National Museum of Antiquities. Until the completion of the construction of the Cultural Palace, they were partially displayed in the reading room and in the library warehouse, others being found in a special room, namely intended for the expected Museum. It should be pointed and noted that each exhibited piece was accompanied by an identification sheet, on which were written the inventory number, the name of the object and the name of the donor³.

In less than a decade since its opening, the building has become too small, the collection being enlarged with objects of palaeontology, archaeology, numismatics, heraldry, ethnography, various oil paintings, bas-reliefs, documents, old weapons, etc. The press at the end of the century records the existence of the museum; thus the Library of Galați «has next to it a beautiful museum of archaeology and numismatics»⁴; or «owns a huge collection of old documents and a beautiful museum start»⁵, but also the constant growth of its patrimony: «Mr. Senator V. A. Urechia arrived in Galați on Friday, bringing with him a new gift for the institution that bears his name» and which possesses among others «various busts, 6 coloured canvases, donated by D. Voinescu, various ancient objects: the seal of Mihail Vodă Sturza, weapons found at Războieni, numerous autographs, including one from Avram Iancu, about 4 from V. Alecsandri etc., rich internal and external medals etc.»⁶; «Among the many new acquisitions of the Urechia Library in Galați, we will cite a very rare, if not unique, royal mace, from the 18th century in Moldova»⁷; «The documents section, still not open to the public due to lack of premises, is in possession of high value originals, from Vasile Lupu, Mihai Viteazul, Cantemir etc. Romanian sigillography from the oldest centuries to the present day occupies several galleries. In the archaeological collections are kept Horea's whistle, Iancu's sword from 1848, Anastasie Panu's cigar case with the Union of Principalities, an entire room full of souvenirs from Mihail Kogălniceanu, Cuza-Vodă, Negri, Vasile Alecsandri, Gr. Ghica of Moldavia. From this is his last business card made to the late Locini on the eve of his suicide, etc. One room is occupied with medal shelves. Some of these are donations from His Majesty the King. The fights of the Romanians from Transylvania against the Hungarianization are represented by two galleries full of original documents»⁸.

Eloquent for the growth of the collections and the importance of this section of the institution is the article, suggestively entitled *A museum*, which captures in the most praiseworthy terms possible this initiative: «we, the people of Galați, can be somewhat proud, our city has an entire museum – a historical museum that includes precious objects, antiques, hundreds of icons, javelins, maces, decorations and many other things, one older than another, one more interesting than the other... In him, he embodies an entire epoch and summarizes a long time of ups and downs, of wealth and poverty. One by one you look, you admire, you remain ecstatic in front of an object, a memory, an icon, linked each one by one, to a memory, to an episode, to a page of history. Decorations, depicting days of glory, boldness and virtue – javelins and maces – symbols of adventures and bravery fallen prisoners of shameful need, of the need for humility;

³ Lucia Borș *Biblioteca V. A. Urechia*. in Boabe de grâu. III. 1932. p. 348. Nedelcu Oprea. *Biblioteca publică «V. A. Urechia» Galați. Monografie*. volume II. Galați. 2006. p. 408.

⁴ «Ecoul Moldovei». September 25. 1897.

⁵ «Patriotul». February 8. 1898.

⁶ «Voința Galaților». April 29. 1898.

⁷ «Dreptatea». January 1899.

⁸ «Drapelul». February 4. 1899.

icons – holy images of Christ, figures of the holy Virgin. And all this gathered from the world, gathered from cities and from different characters, here they are gathered and twinned, caressing each other, alleviating the humiliation and poverty of past times... This museum will remain an immortal monument for our city. I don't want praise; I can't bring it to old Urechia. In front of a large, old monument, you can only be silent and admire them. The words are too empty to perfectly convey the feelings that trouble your brain and mind»⁹.

In 1901 a report prepared on the activities undertaken within the Library in the first decade of operation, specifies: *«in addition to books, Mr. Urechia donated a rich collection of artistic canvases, prints, medals, souvenirs from illustrious men of the country, which souvenirs were the beginning of an interested contemporary museum [...] the numismatic collection was greatly enriched by the donations received, counting over 500 different old coins [...] the museum contains precious objects, ancient things, each related to a memory, an episode, a page of history»¹⁰.*

V. A. Urechia's appetite as a collector would have determined his good friend, Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu, to say that his friend was able: *«to bring from Madrid, if he found them, Attila's glasses»¹¹*, allusion to his documentary journey to Spain between 1861 and 1862¹².

The only known inventory of these mixed museum collections dates from September 12, 1903, after the disappearance of the founder, when a commission appointed by the Library Committee, based on a report, in the absence of keys, forces the 20 gallantry with the contribution of a locksmith. At the moment, approximately 1,239 pieces housed in 20 gallantry are registered¹³.

In the following years various other donations complete the museum collection «Urechia»; unfortunately, these are recorded in documents only as a general title, without being nominated, for example, Professor Alador Baum donated *«a museum object»*, Gh. I. Deciu donated *«25 museum objects»* etc.¹⁴. Subsequently, two of the most substantial donations were registered: in 1915 Nicolae Zugrafu offered a collection of objects from the Crimean War, collected directly from the battlefield, and in 1934 the M. Helder collection entered the Museum's patrimony.¹⁵

About the same period dates the first initiative to reorganize the institution, thus argued: *«Unfortunately, we, the beneficiaries, have never been able to give due importance to the Library and Museum «V. A. Urechia» and after 30 years we are in such a situation that being lacking premises, the precious collections are threatened by daily destruction... we will need to do something important for the Library and Museum «V. A. Urechia»»¹⁶.*

The expected separation of the Museum and its transformation into the National Museum in Galați did not take place, and this also represented the opening of a series of unfortunate events for its important collections, culminating in the very abolition and loss of identity. They hit the base of the Galați cultural edifice: the earthquake of November

⁹ «Universul». no. 209-210. October 29-30. 1899.

¹⁰ The Archive of the Library «V. A. Urechia» (below we will quote as BVAU Archive). file XXXI. 7-9 r/v, 1901.

¹¹ V. Goia. V. A. Urechia. București. 1979. p. 85.

¹² See in this matter A. Popa, V. A. Urechia – istoric, Galați, 2001, pp. 127-128.

¹³ BVAU Archive. file XXXIII. 1903. f. 60, 62-67, 73-76. See full text at N. Oprea. *op. cit.*. pp. 417-425.

¹⁴ BVAU Archive. file XXXIV-XLV. 1904.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, file XLV, 1915, f. 38-39. See full text of the donation act at N. Oprea. *op. cit.*. pp. 429-430.

¹⁶ *Apud* N. Oprea, *op. cit.* p. 434.

10, 1940 that destroyed some artifacts, the burglary of December 1941 through which many objects were stolen, the war that forced the evacuation of some pieces from 1943 to 1948, the requisition of the Cultural Palace building by the Soviet army, at which point the doors of the rooms where the Library's materials were stored were forced open.

Finally, in 1948 the Museum was «reorganized». With the takeover of the Cultural Palace «V. A. Urechia» from the Soviet army, Covurlui County Cultural Adviser requested the intervention of the Ministry of Arts and Information from the Ministry of National Education in order to transfer the «*museum objects*» to the «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» Museum. The request was approved, already on December 31, 1948, the first handover-receipt report being concluded¹⁷. This act constitutes, in fact, the beginning of the dissolution of the «V. A. Urechia» Museum and Pinacoteca. The objects that belonged to him, as many as have been preserved, were «lost» in the patrimony of the «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» Museum, which later became the County Museum of History and the Museum of Visual Art, in which they did not constitute any moment, as would have been appropriate, at least in memory of their initiator, *the Urechia fund*.

II. The collection «Ecaterina and Paul Paşa»

In 1937 the «Cuza Vodă» Association was established with the stated purpose of ransoming the land, restoring the house of the former county leader and setting up a museum (the initiative was not new, since 1907 a request had been submitted to the Senate signed by several hundred people from Galaţi, requesting the purchase of the house by the state and the establishment of a «*museum in memory of Cuza*», unfortunately unfinished¹⁸. After 14 years, a memorandum submitted to the Ministry of Cults and Arts also called for the redemption of the building and its transformation «*into a museum containing all the memories left from the unforgettable ruler*»¹⁹) which, for the most part, would be dedicated to the life and work of the first ruler of the United Principalities²⁰.

Until the time of redemption, the building had received various destinations²¹. In the period 1909-1913 the «Villa» had been inhabited by Grigore Trancu-Iaşi, hosting «the seat organized by the Committee for the erection of the statue of Mihai Eminescu» or the meetings of the «Literary Salon led by brothers Botez and C. Z. Buzdugan»²². Later, for seven years, until 1920, the «Mihail Kogălniceanu» Girls' High School operated here²³.

As we have shown, in 1921 a memorandum submitted to the Ministry of Cults and Arts signalled the degradation of the building and the intention of the signatory committee to redeem it and turn it into a museum²⁴. The initiative remains without echo,

¹⁷ Costin Croitoru (editor), *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălăţene...*, p. 116, document no. 160.

¹⁸ According «Tribuna Liberală». no. 1573. March 4. 1907.

¹⁹ According Galaţi County Directorate of National Archives (below we will quote as DJANG). *fund: Primăria oraşului Galaţi*. 1921. file no. 20.

²⁰ *Asociaţia Casa «Cuza Vodă». Actul constitutiv. Statutele*. Galaţi. 1937. 15. On July 14. the constitutive act and the statute of the «Cuza Vodă» House were submitted to the Covurlui county court for authentication, According DJANG. *fund: Primăria municipiului Galaţi*. file 17/1939. p. 35.

²¹ Leon Eşanu. *Infiinţarea muzeului «Cuza Vodă» in oraşul Galaţi*. in *Cercetări Istorice*. IV. 1973. p. 40.

²² See Gr. Trancu-Iaşi. *Casa lui Cuza Vodă*. in *Acţiunea*. IX. no. 2369. April 24. 1938.

²³ See Paul Păltănea. *Câteva date despre începuturile oraşului Galaţi*, in *Anuarul Institutului «A. D. Xenopol»*. Iaşi, 1969. p. 134.

²⁴ Idem, *Al. I. Cuza şi Galaţi*. in *Danubius*. II-III. 1969. p. 135.

since two years later, on July 30, 1923, another committee was set up with a synonymous goal: *«to buy back the building in the city of Galați – the former home of the unforgettable ruler Al. I. Cuza and to give this building a more worthy destination compared to the memories that the entire Romanian people have from the one who laid the foundation for today's Romania»*²⁵. Again, the intentions were not realized, judging by the findings of another «committee» organized in 1937; in addition to the deplorable condition of the building, *«everything is in the greatest irregularity and disorder. No minutes of the decisions taken, no complete register of income, expenses and deposits»*²⁶. Finally, in the mentioned year, it is decided to achieve the declared purpose of the association, organizing a public subscription: *«in our city, the first port of the Danube, is the house where Alexandru Ioan Cuza, ruler of Covurlui County, lived. After many attempts, we finally managed to start an action that we hope will lead us to purchase it and turn it into a regional museum with several sections. For this purpose, we thought of appealing to all people of soul...»*²⁷. A year later, on March 8, 1938, the Association announced the fulfilment of the first objective it had assumed: the redemption of the former ruler's building; from this date he was officially in possession of the house²⁸. The other two objectives followed: the restoration of the building and the establishment of the Museum dedicated to the personality of Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

The donation that was to be the nucleus of the expected exhibition from «Villa Cuza Vodă» belonged to the teachers Ecaterina and Paul Pașa, from School of boys, number 6. On April 24, 1913, by the address number 213 submitted to the relevant Minister, P. Pașa requested: *«as there are six classrooms at this school, two of which are available (storage space), I have the honor to ask you to approve the establishment of a museum in these rooms as well as a conference room and school celebrations. Regarding the painting of the halls, the furniture necessary for the museum, stuffed animals and birds, antiques, the library, etc., I am committed to make it as soon as possible from donations, having already collected some of the material»*²⁹. The initiative received a favourable opinion, so that through the address of the School Inspectorate of Covurlui County number 3506, of May 5, 1913, the director of School no. 6 was notified: *«in accordance with the order of the Ministry No. 30641/913, I have the honour to inform you that following your report no. 213, the Ministry approved that in the two free rooms of the school a museum will be set up in one, and the other to be used for conferences and school celebrations»*³⁰.

The patrimony of this School Museum consisted of donations, collected by its initiator, as mentioned in a letter, dated April 30, 1913, addressed to the administrator of the House of Schools³¹: *«Having started, I will bring people from the locality to school every day to convince themselves of the reality. With nothing at the beginning, now I only started to gather something in a few days. But when my visitors see that you give me the contest, procuring the above [at least 25 animals and 25 stuffed birds, our note], each*

²⁵ DJANG, *fund: Primăria municipiului Galați*, file 22/1923, pp. 3-4.

²⁶ *Ibidem. fund: Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Dunărea de Jos*. file 21/1937. pp. 21-24.

²⁷ *Ibidem. fund: Primăria municipiului Galați*. file no. 17bis/1939. pp. 31-37. See also «Adevărul». July 13. 1937.

²⁸ *Ibidem. fund: Primăria municipiului Galați*. file no. 16/1939. p. 235. 249.

²⁹ Costin Croitoru (editor). *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălățene...* p. 15. document no. 1.

³⁰ *Ibidem.* p. 20. document no. 8. However. only on July 15. 1921. the museum institution was recognized as a legal entity. being valued at approximately 5 million lei, According DJANG, *fund: Primăria municipiului Galați*, file no. 16/1921. p. 14, 16.

³¹ Costin Croitoru (editor). *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălățene...* p. 14. document no. 4.

then will compete to make donations. I have the greatest certainty of success in my plan, because everyone I addressed was as excited as I was». In general, these donations of the most varied parts, but which, not infrequently, are also represented by objects or materials necessary for the equipment and maintenance of the building, can be traced in the Official Gazette of the Ministry where constantly, P. Paşa forwarded «thank you publications», «including the names of the persons as well as the objects donated to this school». Moreover, «for donors who will donate objects worth over 300 lei, they will write them on a marble plaque in the museum hall; as well as the people on the Committee. For donors with higher values, I will put them in the museum and their portrait, in painting».

Shortly after receiving the approvals, a Committee was set up, which included 10 local personalities, among whom, in addition to the two initiators – Paul and Ecaterina Paşa – were also the President of the Galaţi Court of Appeal, the director of the National Bank, the branch Galaţi, the head of the docks, a doctor, a naval major³².

One year later, on March 14, 1914, the Museum financed by «subscriptions and public offerings» is provided by the City Hall at the value of 15,000 lei (in gold!)³³. In the presence of many personalities, on the occasion of the school celebration, on June 22, 1914, the Museum was officially inaugurated.

Its situation in the first year of operation is found in a letter addressed by P. Paşa to Queen Maria of Romania, having the following content: «Since its establishment until now, it is researched daily by many visitors, which proves that the city of Galaţi, the country's first port on the Danube, lacked such an institution so useful, all the more so that throughout the country there are just a few museums, which largely contribute to the completion of the education and instruction not only of students but also of a committee of prominent people of the city, and became the property of the state, but it is up to the committee and the initiators to enlarge and complete it. All the existing furniture and objects in the museum, whose value reached approximately 15,000 lei, is made and collected only through lists of subscriptions and donations». In conclusion, the signatory requests for the Museum objects that belonged to the late King Carol I³⁴. Consequently, on April 30, the Crown Estate sends five boxes of stuffed animals and birds as well as 15 paintings. P. Paşa thanks Queen Maria for the donation in a letter, at the end of which he requests, again, «a small object that belonged to King Carol I» (sic!).

The patrimony and fame of the Museum increased constantly, so that in 1915 P. Paşa asked the City Hall for the insurance of the pieces, as well as «funds for the maintenance of the museum 50-60 lei per month»³⁵. The estimated amount, which was approved by the City Hall to be included in the future budget, amounted to 31,000 lei, of which 20,000 lei were museum objects.

The situation set out is eloquently presented in a report prepared on February 3, 1930, at the request of the Press and Propaganda Directorate «for documenting abroad on Romanian art», which specifies: «the undersigned, together with my wife, both teachers, set up in Galaţi, since 1913, a Regional Museum recognized as a <Legal Entity>. This museum is installed in the building of the primary school for boys, no. 6 from Galaţi. The value of this museum is estimated at approximately – 5,000,000 lei. The museum has different sections. Zoology – geology – petrography, numismatics, archaeology, prints –

³² Ibidem, pp. 20-22, document no. 11.

³³ Ibidem, p. 47, document no. 64.

³⁴ Ibidem, pp. 56-57, document no. 100.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 67. document no. 128.

documents, various historical objects, etc. This Museum, since its establishment, has been visited by tens of thousands of people from the country and abroad (Poles, Czechoslovaks, Dutch, French, English, etc.). I cite only a few names from the Museum's Golden Book: Baron E. Von Nagel (Minister of the Netherlands), Widowietzchi (Minister of Poland), Martin Nuksa (Minister of Latvia), Count Nicola, Abbot Zavoral, Director General of Education in The Hague and Prague, Consuls: Dutch, Polish, Czechoslovak, Persian, Turkish, German, Mexican; His Royal Highness Prince Nicolai, His Royal Highness Princess Elena, former ministers Dr. C. Angelescu, Simion Mehedinți, I. G. Duca, Gr. Trancu – Iași, N. Iorga, I. Andrieșescu, D. I. Simionescu, etc. For the activity carried out at the prosperity of this Museum I was decorated with the Work Reward for Education class I and II, the Crown of Romania, the Star of Romania – officer, Bene Merenti class II and class I. My wife also owns: Reward for education, class I and II, Bene Merenti class II and class I. Regarding the setting up of this Museum, we have made all the moral and material sacrifices, without any material competition from any authority. The current Museum is too small. I urged all local authorities and parliamentarians to present a bill that Villa «Cuza Vodă» in Galați, today an abandoned and ruined building, be declared a <Historic Monument> and then move the Museum to that place. But today's times and unfavourable circumstances prevent the realization of the projected plan and predict that this museum made with much effort, after I retire this year, will be left to deterioration and indifference not having its own building. The objects of the Museum are inventoried, but due to lack of funds we do not have printed catalogues. Private initiatives, in most cases, are almost never encouraged. Only for a zoological object, a snake <Boa Constrictor> in length of 5 meters, I spent for the preparation 8,000 lei, and for a camel, whose skin I sent to the Dermoplastic Institute in Bucharest (Mr. Iosif Enăchescu Muscel, Street Dela Vrancea, No. 27) I was asked 20,000 lei for stuffing, but I gave up executing it. I did what I could, with my own means"³⁶.

The entire collection was ceded on February 20, 1938 to the «Cuza Vodă Association»³⁷; the initiative becoming official through the address no. 8138 of the Ministry of Cults and Arts³⁸. On the same occasion, acts, documents and photographs from institutions and personalities from the city or from the country are collected and thus, on January 24, 1939, the museum that will bear the name of the illustrious ruler is officially opened³⁹, in a festive atmosphere, which included a varied cultural program, broadcast live on the radio⁴⁰.

Paul and Ecaterina Pașa are appointed on the same occasion as honorary members of the new institution, also acquiring the right to consultative voting. At the same time, the members of the museum that had functioned within the Boys' School no. 6 were to be «by right the active members of the new cultural establishment, the Cuza Vodă Museum»⁴¹. Despite the opposition of the two founders, the committee decided that the «Cuza Vodă» Museum and House should be donated to the «Country Guard»⁴². In this sense, the Pașas reacted: «this report was signed by all members of the association,

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 75-77. document no. 152.

³⁷ V. S. Pisică, *Restaurarea din anul 1938 a «Casei Cuza Vodă» din Galați*. in Danubius. XXII. 2004. pp. 185-194.

³⁸ DJANG. fund: Primăria municipiului Galați. file no. 17bis/1939. p. 11.

³⁹ Ibidem, file no. 16/1939. ff. 477-562; See also «Acțiunea», no. 2594 from January 27. 1939; «România», no. 236 from January 27 1939; «Timpul», no. 622 from January 27. 1939.

⁴⁰ DJANG. fund: Primăria municipiului Galați. file no. 16/1939. f. 477.

⁴¹ Ibidem. file no. 16/1939. p. 17.

⁴² Ibidem, file no. 19/1939, p. 13.

except for the undersigned, as the museum had been donated and was intended for the city of Galați, and not for the Guard»⁴³, as an alternative, proposing: «so that this cultural institution of general interest for the city of Galati, the museum made with so much effort and sacrifice by us, not to be destroyed, but on the contrary to progress through the care you will give it and to become a future as close as possible an ornament of the city of Galati, we donate it to the City Hall of Galati»⁴⁴. The new reality is enshrined on April 30, 1941 by order 25,302 of the Ministry of Cults and Arts, empowered by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers⁴⁵.

Regarding the management of the new museum institution, Paul Pașa, in a memorandum addressed to the Royal Residence of the «Lower Danube» Land, wrote: «I worked for my country as much as I could and I knew how. Please accept what you believe in, but look for the successor who will continue and complete this work»⁴⁶.

In 1942, Dimitrie Stăhiescu, a teacher at the «Vasile Alecsandri» High School in Galați, was appointed director of the «Cuza Vodă» museum: «we considered that you, as a teacher of history and archeology, at «Vasile Alecsandri» High School, are the most suitable person to correspond to the goal pursued by the above-mentioned institute of culture. We have no doubt, Professor, that you will do your best for this cultural establishment to take an ever-increasing development and become a real adornment of our city by collecting everything that may be of interest not only in the past of Galati and Covurlui County, but also of the whole Lower Danube region, which was and is the intention of generous donors»⁴⁷. This is also the moment when (February 25) a very rigorous inventory of the objects from the «Ecaterina and Paul Pașa Museum from Villa Cuza Vodă» is drawn up in 13 large galleries, five small ones, as well as numerous other isolated ones⁴⁸.

Taking over the position entrusted to him, D. Stăhiescu becomes acquainted «on the go» with the museum's patrimony, including through an active correspondence with P. Pașa, retired to Bucharest. In this sense, eloquent is an epistle sent by the latter, which also includes explanatory notes on some archaeological pieces: «So far, I have sent you two postcards related to the Pașa Museum with some clarifications you needed. In this letter I give you the explanations you asked me for, being the following: the 3 amphorae in front of the museum are brought by me. The first-largest is from the Byzantine Fortress Heraclea (today Enisala, Tulcea County) used by the Genoese-pirates for the conservation of drinking water, which was brought from great distances. The second vessel is from the Calatis Fortress (Mangalia) used for the preservation of cereals in times of drought; and the third vessel, the glazed one, once more recent, and is found at the Carsium Fortress (Hârșova) used for oil preservation. The inscribed stone is from the time of Emperor Trajan, found near Galați (Șendreni commune) in the vineyard of the vegetable merchant Tofan from Galați. That stone was once used in a Roman temple. The inscription was translated both by Bărcăcilă, the Director of the high school from Turnu-Severin, when he came with the students at Galați to visit the Museum, and by professor N. Iorga during his visits to our Museum - being members of the committee. If you can't find the translation in the Museum's archive, you can do it yourself - as a specialist you

⁴³ *Ibidem*, file no. 27/1941, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, file no. 27/1941, p. 8. L. Eșanu, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁴⁶ DJANG, *fund: Primăria municipiului Galați*. file no. 16/1939. pp. 15-16.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, *fund: Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Dunărea de Jos*. file 218/1942. p. 3.

⁴⁸ Costin Croitoru (editor). *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălățene....* p. 94. document no. 154.

are. It is about building a Temple of the God Jupiter, as a thank you for defeating and driving out the barbarians of ancient Dacia.

Then there are some bricks and stones noted by me, from: Trajan's Bridge, Adam-Clisi, Hârşova, Sarmizegetusa etc. The beheaded Roman soldier is found in the excavations at Măcin, and the Capitol is taken out by divers from the bottom of the Danube, near Silistra. Regarding the 2 sarcophagi and the ten boxes placed in the corner between the closet No 1 and the closet No 2 (these are boxes, the sarcophagi being in front of the Museum), I can give the following explanations: during the time when Professor C. Giurescu was royal resident in Galaţi, had provided in the budget of the Residence an amount for the excavations and archaeological researches in Tulcea County, Constanţa, Tecuci (Poiana), wanting to give a great development to my Museum. In charge of the research he had entrusted the University Professors: Lambrino, Radu Vulpe, and Asvarian. The last two are currently in Rome. The sarcophagi are therefore brought to the Museum during the time of Professor Giurescu (former Resident) and found as far as I can remember at Igliţa near Măcin, as well as what you will find in the ten yet unpacked boxes.

You could be interested in the Covurlui Prefecture from the Residence archive, to know for sure where exactly they were found. Also, there you will probably find the correspondence with the respective rural town halls, where the excavations were made as well as a memorandum of mine regarding the improvements that had to be made to the Museum. C. Giurescu is a man of great value and if he was still living in Galaţi, he would have made many improvements. You can find a copy of my memoir at Galaţi City Hall when I handed it over with the Museum on May 3, 1942. You should look for her at Teodoreanu, the City Hall Secretary. This memorandum for guidance will be of great use to you, especially since you have as mayor Mr. Ghita Vasilie, a man of all kindness, skill and initiative that characterizes him»⁴⁹.

For that interval, documentary materials illustrating the history of the «Cuza Museum» are reduced in number. In order to fill some of these gaps, we further present an «activity report» signed by D. Stăhiescu himself, entitled *Data on the history of the Museum «Cuza Voda» during 1942-1948*: «<House Cuza Vodă Association>, after reconstituting the building where Alexandru Ioan Cuza lived in the street of the same name, when he was a county leader in Galaţi, had decided to organize a memorial museum in this building, which would include historical documentary material from the time of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and the era of the Union of Romanian Principalities. With some effort, the <Cuza Voda Association> managed to gather a fairly small material – some objects that had belonged to the Cuza family, displayed in six glass windows and some paintings from the union era displayed on the walls – all sitting in the large hall below and on the two sides. Then, the <House Cuza Vodă Association>, seeing its purpose fulfilled, dissolved and entrusted the keys of the building to the Galaţi City Hall care, following that this beginning of the museum would develop over time.

A favourable circumstance arose in this regard through the <Paul Paşa donation>. In 1939, the retired teacher Paul Paşa (who organized at Primary School number 6 – whose director was for a long time – a school museum, whose inventory had increased over time and barely fit in the two classrooms of the school, affected in this purpose) he established in Bucharest, and donated the inventory of this museum to the City Hall of Galaţi to be installed in the more spacious rooms of the <House Cuza Vodă>.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, pp. 100-101. document no. 156.

The material was complex, very varied, with a pronounced scholar character, but very useful for students. Paul Paşa, who held the key to the museum, kept it open to the public for about two years (between 1940-1942), then left the city leaving for Bucharest.

The mayor's office then suggested to professor Emanoil Constantinescu, assistant mayor, who was also a history teacher, to take over the management of the Museum; but he refused. A younger history teacher was proposed. I was requested and so, in 1942, the City Hall entrusted me with the administration of the Museum, without salary, providing me with only two rooms in the house that had been built for the Museum chancellery, the other two rooms in front being occupied by offices of «Passive Defense», under the leadership of Major Clopotaru.

After my installation in the new home, I reopened the Museum to be visited by the public. I searched and then managed to purchase items to increase the inventory such as: clay pots, paintings and some documents on parchment and paper from the time of Voivode Mihail Sturza, brought by the undersigned from the county (published in the local magazine <Orizonturi>), making calls and through the newspaper <Acțiunea> for this purpose.

A precious archaeological material, brought by the university professor C. C. Giurescu from Dinogetia and sheltered for a long time in the basement of the County Prefecture, was brought to the Museum – before my arrival – and temporarily stored in the attic of the building, until a specialist is found in order to research and exhibit it in the rooms of the Museum, which could not be done.

I worked alone to guide visitors, as well as cleaning, sometimes being helped by some of my students from the High School «V. Alecasandri», history lovers.

In the summer of 1944, when the city of Galați, in the midst of the war, had begun the evacuation of the authorities, I packed in a crate, provided by the City Hall, some of the most valuable objects, which the City Hall took to the refuge with its archive. I, being concentrated at the Covurlui Territorial Centre, had to leave the city, leaving with my unit in Teleorman County.

In October 1944, returning to Galați, I found a disaster here. During the terrible bombing of the city by Hitlerites, a bomb hit the Aschinger house [?] near the Museum, destroying it, and the blast produced by the explosion shattered all the windows in both buildings of the Museum. I began to take the necessary steps. I put, at my own expense, the windows in the apartment where I lived and then I addressed the Technical Service of the City Hall for the windows in the Museum building, which were more numerous. I found all the agreement from the chief engineer Nicolae Damian and the sub-engineer M. Dunăreanu, who took measures to put the windows from the City Hall funds. It was also drilled and the roofing sheet because of the splinters that fell from the bombing projectiles and the rainwater was leaking quite seriously inside. In this case, I did not get the City Hall competition, so I hired, on my account, a tinsmith, which I paid from my teacher's salary, with the amount of about one million lei (in the inflation currency of that time).

I then brought the box from the City Hall with the objects I had packed and put in their place. In 1945, we reopened the Museum for the public and appealed through the newspaper <Acțiunea> for new purchases of objects. The museum had begun to have an increasing number of visitors, among whom the students of the schools had shown a special interest. Among the most important visitors, I mention Miron Constantinescu, then minister, university professor Șerban Cioculescu and others, who wrote their impressions in the honor book of the Museum.

Also, in the fall of 1944, the <Passive Defense> offices were re-installed in the rooms it had previously occupied, remaining until the end of 1946, when the military unit was disbanded. But just now, when it seemed that we had remained calmer and hoped for more favourable prospects to open up for the Museum, for a better organization, Colonel Ioan appeared, who had probably obtained the approval of the City Hall, and asked me to make the Great Hall of the Museum available for soldiers' bedroom. About 20 beds were brought, the soldiers keeping the hall occupied until the end of the year, thus determining the closure of the Museum. It is conceivable how we should crowd the material next to the walls, not having full certainty for its good preservation.

Finally, in 1947, all the soldiers were gone. We then began, again, the reorganization of the Museum, creating the conditions for it to be visited by the public. In February 1948 – however – another trouble fell on this institution. This month, the mayor Ilie Ramini [?] puts the entire building next to the Museum, where I also lived, at the disposal of the Brigadiers who were to make the dam from Prut Valley, informing me to look for another house, within a month.

At the end of March, I left the rooms where I lived and with them the management of the Museum, entrusting the keys to the City Hall. The period in which I led the Museum was: 1942-1948. Such harsh circumstances have been a serious obstacle to the development of this institution»⁵⁰.

Next, the collection «*Ecaterina and Paul Paşa*» followed the destiny of the «V. A. Urechia» collection, «spilled» in the patrimony of the «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» Museum, lost in the few preserved inventories, so like the last one, not individualized in the contemporary emulation of the Museum, as it would have been appropriate, at least in the memory of the initiators.

III. The collection from Royal Residence

Organized on the principles of a museum in 1939, the «Regional Museum from Galaţi» consisted, as we have shown, of the collections «V. A. Urechia», «Ecaterina and Paul Paşa», to which were added, obviously, other donations, exhibited in 1939 at «Villa Cuza Vodă». On May 9, 1953, the Regional Museum – «Cuza Palace» is registered in the list of historical monuments, through the minutes no. 16 of the meeting of the State Committee for Architecture and Constructions, Historical Monuments Approval Council⁵¹.

Another important fund, with archaeological specificity, comes from the archeological research journey performed by Mircea Petrescu-Dîmboviţa⁵², in the '40s of the last century and deposited at that time at the Royal Residence of the Lower Danube County, today mostly in the management of the History Museum in Galaţi. Mircea Petrescu-Dîmboviţa's presence in Galaţi was not accidental at all. Here he was born on

⁵⁰ Archive of the History Museum of Galaţi, unpagged, non-inventoried document, written at 23.02.1976.

⁵¹ V. S. Pisică, *Cum a devenit monument istoric «Casa Cuza Vodă» din Galaţi*, in *Danubius*, XVIII, 2001, pp. 181-183.

⁵² Incidentally, the archaeological sites identified on this occasion later became systematic sites that provided an extremely significant heritage, see Costin Croitoru, *Galaţi. O bibliografie arheologică şi numismatică*, Istros Publishing House (Romanian Academy. Commission for the History of Romanian Cities), Brăila, 2012, *passim*; Idem, *Galaţi. Repertoriul descoperirilor arheologice şi numismatice*, Publishing House of the History Museum, Galaţi, 2013, *passim*. As a «case study» see also Idem, *Câteva documente inedite referitoare la situl arheologic «Cetăţuia» de la Stoicani (judeţul Galaţi)*, in *Memoria Antiquitatis*, XXXI-XXXII (2015-2016), 2016, pp. 319-330.

May 21, 1915, in a family of leading intellectuals of the city⁵³, so that his appointment, after graduating from the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy Bucharest, as a delegate of the National Museum of Antiquities and the former Royal Residence in Galati of the Lower Danube, for undertaking an «archaeological trip» in Covurlui County it was as natural as could be⁵⁴.

The new graduate received support for the proper conduct of this research, according to his own confession⁵⁵, from Constantin C. Giurescu – former royal resident of the land⁵⁶, institution that also financed the project. Then, he was helped by Professor Scarlat Lambrino, former director of the National Museum of Antiquities, Professor I. Andrieşescu, former director of the Seminary of Archaeology and Prehistory of the University of Bucharest and Ion Nestor, former curator and later director of the National Museum of Antiquities. The documentation for this extensive field research meant, first of all, the consultation of the answers to Alexandru Odobescu's *Archaeological Questionnaire*, which were also published on this occasion⁵⁷, remaining still, after 80 years, next to those for Dorohoi county, the only ones published, obviously, except Brăila⁵⁸. Starting from the verification, in the field, of the information provided by the answers to the Questionnaire, three itineraries were followed, during which 30 points of archaeological interest were collected and listed, from various periods, from the Neolithic to in the early Middle Ages. All these new discoveries were published by the discoverer⁵⁹.

Also, on the initiative of Constantin C. Giurescu, an extensive raising campaign had started «in the territory» in order to collect the fortuitously identified archaeological materials at the Residence's headquarters⁶⁰, testimony standing in this regard two documents⁶¹ relative to the identification of six, respectively two Roman and Byzantine

⁵³ Costin Croitoru, *Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița și începutul cercetărilor arheologice în sudul Moldovei*, in Costin Croitoru, Cristina Bodlev (editors), *Despre începutul cercetărilor arheologice la Dunărea de Jos (I). Contribuțiile lui Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița*, Istros Publishing House, Brăila, 2018, pp. 15-56.

⁵⁴ Costin Croitoru, *Călătorie de cercetare arheologică în județul Covurlui*, in V. Spinei, N. Ursulescu, V. Cotiugă (editors), *Orbis Praehistoriae. Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița – in memoriam*, Publishing House of «Al. I. Cuza» University, Iași, 2015, pp. 645-655.

⁵⁵ Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, *Mulțumiri și recunoștință*, in *Arheologia Moldovei*, XXVIII, 2005, p. 36.

⁵⁶ Leontin Negru, *Istoricul Constantin C. Giurescu în funcția de Rezident Regal al Ținutului Dunărea de Jos*, in Ștefan Stanciu, Costin Croitoru (editors), *Perspective asupra istoriei locale în viziunea tinerilor cercetători gălățeni*, I, 2005, Istros Publishing House, Galați, 2005, pp. 99-112.

⁵⁷ Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, *Răspunsurile învățătorilor din județul Covurlui la Cestionarul lui Alexandru Odobescu*, in «Acțiunea» (Galați), April 1939.

⁵⁸ Ionel Căndea, Costin Croitoru (editors), *Documente privind istoria Brăilei. Răspunsurile la chestionarele Odobescu și Hasdeu pentru județul Brăila*, Istros Publishing House, Brăila, 2015.

⁵⁹ Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, *Călătorie de cercetare arheologică în județul Covurlui (24 aprilie-14 mai 1939)*, in *Orizonturi. Revista Asociației Profesorilor Secundari din Galați*. III. no. 5-9 (1940). 1941, pp. 3-23 (= Idem, *Archäologische Forschungsreise in Bezirk Covurlui (Untere Moldau)*, in *Dacia*, VII-VIII (1937-1940), 1941, pp. 427-447). Both materials are also to be found at Costin Croitoru, Cristina Bodlev (editors), *op. cit.*, pp. 85-106 respectively pp. 107-132.

⁶⁰ «A real understanding of the importance of archaeological research has guided Mr. Prof. Constantin Giurescu, Royal Resident of the Lower Danube County, to take the initiative of a vast archaeological research program, inscribing in the budget of the County the amount of one million lei, thanks to which the National Museum of Antiquities was able to organize new research sites in different places of the Land. At *Dinogetia* and *Enisala* the excavations began on July 15 and will soon begin at *Troesmis*. Mister Resident Regal Giurescu visited several sites in full activity, interested in the research results. The research was directed especially in Dobrogea, because this Romanian land is rich in traces of the past», According «Buletinul Ținutului Dunărea de Jos», I, no. 22-23, 1939, pp. 4-5.

⁶¹ Costin Croitoru (editor) *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălățene...* pp. 89-90. document no. 148-149.

coins on the territory of Luncavița commune. Two months later from the date of their submission, the pieces in question, together with the forwarding addresses, were given for identification to Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, who added the determination of numismatic emissions at the bottom of the page.

Unfortunately, a tragic event – the assassination of Prime Minister Armand Călinescu – meant the withdrawal of the Royal Resident in Bucharest, severely affected, so that the development that archaeological research tended to know in the area of southern Moldova and northern Dobrogea, was, for moment, off.

We know only one inventory of the fund raised at the office of the Royal Residence, and this is also due to M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, requested by Constantin C. Giurescu in this regard. The latter also offered its support for the publication of the inventory⁶², although at that time he had been appointed minister of the National Renaissance Front. Of course, some pieces remained unpublished, arriving at the Residence after the above inventory. An example of this is the report on the delivery-receipt of the mentioned fund⁶³, *«remained in the custody of the Prefecture of Covurlui and which was destined for the <Cuza Vodă> museum in the locality»*, which mentions on July 11, 1942 that *«the following objects were also entrusted to the Museum, later brought to the Residence and therefore not included in the inventory compiled by Mr. Petrescu-Dîmbovița»*.

1/. A Byzantine gold coin from the time of Emperor Basil II <the Bulgar slayer>, from the treasure of Dinogetia;

2/. A silver candlestick found in the commune of Văcăreni, Tulcea County;

3/. A Romanian copper coin from the time of Catherine II, found in the same commune»;

The same document mentions two shortcomings, «motivated»;

«Are missing:

1/. Fragment of a Neo-Eneolithic stone stab, from Trg. Berești.

2/. A flat polished, Neo-Eneolithic stone ax from Sîpeni.

These two objects were taken by Mr. Mircea Petrescu Dîmbovița, against receipt and taken to Bucharest to be studied, and will be returned to the Covurlui Prefecture, respectively to the <Cuza Vodă> Museum».

For many other archaeological pieces that arrived through the Royal Residence at «Villa Cuza Vodă», no other clarifications can be made, except that they come from the north of Dobrogea. Of course, the hypothesis that they should belongs to the sites funded for research by the administrative forum of the Lower Danube is justified, but we do not have data to confirm it. The lack of documentation regarding this material had urged the directors of the Galați museum institution to send on September 26, 1958 to the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest the address no. 458, with the following content⁶⁴: *«our museum is in possession of a rich archaeological material (Roman and early feudal) from the excavations carried out in northern Dobrogea before August 23, 1944, as we are informed by Prof. Avachian et al. In order to identify this material, it would be necessary for Prof. Avachian, a collaborator of your Institute, to travel to Galați. Even if he is no longer in possession of the documentation from the respective sites, we consider*

⁶² Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, *Inventarul materialului arheologic dela Rezidența Regală din Galați*. București. 1940. The material is also to be found at Costin Croitoru. Cristina Bodlev (editors). *op. cit.*, pp. 133-156.

⁶³ Costin Croitoru (editor). *Pagini din trecutul muzeografiei gălățene....* pp. 101-102. document no. 157.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 215, document no. 227.

that he could specify the origin of the objects by localities (place of discovery). In order to capitalize and exhibit the archaeological material shown above in the basic exhibition of our museum, please make us our interpreter next to Prof. Avachian, asking him to please travel to Galați for the purpose shown above. The costs of transport and accommodation concern our museum. Undoubtedly, the publication of the material in question is reserved for Prof. Avachian».

As it can be already guessing, the Royal Residence fund is not individualized in any way within the patrimony, obviously extended, of the current History Museum from Galați, although, at least apparently, it is somehow easier to reconstruct due to the publications of Mircea Petrescu -Dîmbovița. Today, in the context of the resettlement of Romanian historiography, but also of museum principles, which tend to focus especially on smaller spaces, such as regional or local, it would be necessary to systematically present the archaeological collections of the History Museum from Galați, especially of what, traditionally, is called the «old fund», and which, for most of the pieces, has at least a minimum of information, which can be reconstructed with the help of the documentary archive. Of course, such an approach is also tributary to some somewhat reparative joints related to the «prehistory» of Galați museology and of course, as I suggested, in homage to the coryphaeus of the field.

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Кройтору К., Гелецький І. Витоки перших музеологічних ініціатив в регіоні Нижнього Дунаю, м. Галац

У місті Галац перші паростки музеезнавства - у сенсі об'єднання об'єктів, що становлять певний суспільний інтерес, спочатку згрупованих під загальним критерієм «цікавинки», реєстрація та демонстрація яких була доступною для громадськості, з'явилися наприкінці XIX століття на загальному тлі розвитку гуманітарних наук і, серед іншого, завдяки створенню Національного музею старожитностей, заснування якого було підтверджено королівським указом, підписаним Александром Іоаном Кузою 25 листопада 1861 року.

У цьому короткому викладі автори знайомлять читачів з самим початковим етапом створення деяких колекцій, пов'язаних з певними особистостями, назовемо їх видатними в культурному житті регіону, а саме вчителями Паулом та Єкатериною Паша та представниками інтелектуальної еліти, вченими Василем Александреску-Урекією або Константином С. Джіуреску. Так чи інакше, ці перші ініціативи були покладені в основу сучасних музеїв Галаца, в яких багато артефактів, «зібраних» згаданими людьми, все ще можна знайти під загальною назвою «старий фонд».

Ключові слова: колекція, музей, вотчина, пожертвування, історія.