

Romanian citizens to the initiative of the Hungarian authorities over the disambiguation of the Magyar name of the village they were living in. Finally, changing the toponymy also reflects the struggle for authority or legitimation of power: the German versions were the result of Vienna's efforts to impose itself, the Hungarian version reflected the efforts of Budapest, and the Romanian versions, those of the Romanian national activists. In this matter, the Hungarians had the most important stakes: on the one hand, they wanted to show the Hungarian ethnic structure of the regions, and on the other hand, they wanted to prove that these regions were under Budapest's administration.

Berecz's book ends with a series of conclusions in which the author reiterates some of the issues already mentioned in the introduction. The results of Agoston Berecz's research are satisfying not only for the curiosities it identifies in the history of nationalities in Southeast Europe; they also draw the attention of researchers of local history, the Hungarian language system, etymology and of the history of names and naming processes. On the one hand, it can be a subject of macro-history, but on the other hand, it could also be a subject of micro-history by referring to many localities and communities of Transylvania and due to the use of various primary sources. The most important aspect, however, is that none of the subjects of historical research can ever be completely exhausted and explained, especially the history of the nationalities in areas as heterogeneous as Transylvania and Banat. The results of Berecz's work demonstrate that nationalism has penetrated all manifestations and actions of communities and its documentation is possible by addressing various types of historical sources.

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Petronel Zahariuc, Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu (eds.), *160 de ani de la Unirea Principatelor: oameni, fapte și idei din domnia lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza*, Iași, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, 2020), 666 p.

The latter half of the 19th century brought forth a new dimension with regards to the further development of the Danubian Principalities. Even though foreign historiography tends to gravitate in its analyses towards the reign of King Charles the 1st, the beginning of the "modern Romanian state" is placed at an earlier date. With the year 1859 comes the unification of the two separate states into one nuclear entity under the rule of prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866). An iconic moment, with a

plethora of ramifications and effects, both internal and external, the union truly marked the beginning of a new era. The historiography of his reign is a vast, but not an exhaustive one. The findings of new sources in the archives, the rapid development of technologies and methodologies applied to this area of study, or simply new interpretations of arguments already formulated, are of help in expanding not only the quantity, but also the quality of historical writing. The volume *160 de ani de la Unirea Principatelor: oamenii, fapte și idei din domnia lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza* can be placed in such coordinates. Being the written form of papers presented at a homonym symposium held in Iasi in 2019, the book honors the memory of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and his actions which aided the development of the unified Romanian state.

Regarding the editors, Petronel Zahariuc is a Romanian historian and university professor at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, the Faculty of History. His area of expertise lies mainly in the medieval and early modern Romanian history, the history of the Church, social history. He is a prolific researcher, having authored several books, articles, studies, collaborations in different volumes. For his PhD thesis, in 2005, he was awarded the “A.D.Xenopol” prize of the Romanian Academy. Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu is also a Romanian historian and lecturer at the same university as Petronel Zahariuc. His area of interest concerns diplomatic relations in the latter half of the 19th century, focusing on the case of Russia and Romania between 1878 and 1893, which was the topic of his PhD thesis. In 2019 he was the recipient of the “Nicolae Iorga” award offered by the Romanian Academy. Each of the editors has contributed to the present volume, with studies that stray a bit from their usual research interest, without diminishing the quality of their work.

Grouping several well-established Romanian historians and PhD students, alongside international names, the book manages to bring forth fresh theories, arguments, and presentations of diverse aspects of the period 1859-1866. In its 666 pages, the publication is comprised of a total of 22 studies, grouped in four big chapters: “People”, “Facts”, “Ideas”, and “Alexandru Ioan Cuza’s posterity”. The studies are not divided equally between the four, but the order follows a logical and thematical succession of events.

The book opens with Mihai Cojocariu’s study, “From the history of a night: Iasi, during the night of 3 to 4 January 1859”, which showcases the discussions, tensions that had happened on the night before the Moldavian election. With the use of memoirs as a primary source, the historian tries to highlight whether Cuza’s election was a premeditated action or a rather spontaneous one. The author considers that the real “mastermind” was

Anastasiu Panu, backing his arguments by correlating the remaining historical evidence.

The next two studies focus solely on the princely personality of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, analyzing his actions in different manners. First, Dumitru Vitcu, "Cuza Vodă- «an exemplary historical personality»", articulates a study that showcases the success of Cuza's reforms in their entirety. Next, Paul E. Michelson, "Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 1859-1866: A developmental assessment", applies a specific methodology in the survey of Cuza's reign. A distinguished American historian with a well-established background on Romanian studies in the modern period, using the theoretical model elaborated by Lucian W. Pye, his paper tries to find an answer to the following question: "How well did Romania do under Alexandru Ioan I in dealing with the problems of development?". Michelson chose to focus, due to spatial limitations, on the problem of Romanian national identity, the problem of establishing regime legitimacy, and the issue of political participation in the new Romanian state. On the first two fronts the Romanian prince is awarded a good evaluation by the author, the final one remaining lackluster, a truth that remains valid for the upcoming decades.

The next three studies focus on different personalities of the epoch. Ștefan S. Gorovei, "A Moldavian scholarship recipient in Turin (1860)", wishes to bring to the attention of other historians the existence of Petre Borș, one of the first Romanian students awarded a scholarship to facilitate his studies abroad, in Turin. Petronel Zahariuc signs the paper concerning the personality of Scarlat (Sofronie) Vârnav, titled "«Father Vârnav says yes! » New information concerning the biography of a Unionist: Scarlat (Sofronie) Vârnav". The author's aim is to further enrich the knowledge surrounding him, painting a chronological picture of his life, which captures the complexities of the character. The final study of the first big thematic group, is written by Ion I. Solcanu, "The «voyages» of Princess Elena Cuza to the Romanian Principalities and to Paris (1862-1863)". The author undertakes the task of revealing the itineraries and goals of Elena Cuza's voyages in the years 1862-1863. Making use of historical documents from the archives, correspondence between county officials and the press of the time, Ion I. Solcanu adds a new puzzle piece to the picture of the era.

The second section of the book shifts away from the people of the epoch, focusing more on the events that shaped it, with a special attention being given to the European context in the aftermath of the Crimean War (1853-1856) and the Paris Peace Congress of 1856. Both events left Russia in an unfavorable position, an aspect which reflected in its future diplomatic relations with Romania, more so as the young state was fighting for the

international recognition of the union. Cristina Țurcan, "Notes on the instructions received by N. K. Giers around the time of the Union of the Romanian Principalities", opens this section with a case study on the instructions received by the newly appointed Russian consul in Bucharest from the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister, A. M. Gorceakov. The set of guidelines from the 16th of September 1858 constitutes, from the author's perspective, a landmark in the new approach of Russian diplomacy, an aspect very few have explored previously.

Eugen-Tudor Sclifos's study, "France, Russia and the *«fait accompli»* (January-February 1859)", is complementary to Cristina Țurcan's in both subject and analysis. The historian from Chișinău aims to capture, based on research done in the Russian archives, the shifting attitudes of Imperial Russia in its foreign affairs policy. The context this time moves to the years 1859-1860, relating to the way in which the Great Powers reacted to the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Without a shadow of a doubt, Russia orchestrated her actions to obtain a positive and friendly outlook from France, by "wholeheartedly" supporting the union of the Principalities.

On the same topic, of Romania being caught in the machinations of the Great Powers on the diplomatic scene, the following two studies can be included: Gheorghe Cliveti, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Napoleon III during the difficult years, 1863-1865", and Ion Varta, "Contributions to the history of the Russian-Romanian diplomatic relations during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza". Professor Cliveti's paper illustrates the ways in which during the end of Cuza's reign there had been a subtle, but notable shift in the relationship between the Romanian prince and Napoleon the third of France. Moreso, it highlights the apprehension shown by the powers to the internal reforms system perpetuated, rather aggressively after 1864 by Cuza, and the ways in which such attitudes further impacted his demise in 1866. However, Ion Varta pays attention to the development of the relationship between Russia and Romania. A plus point of Varta's presentation lies in the fact that he addressed the thorny problem of the Romanian Orthodox church in the larger context on Russian Orthodoxy and the impact of the reforms concerning the clerical sphere initiated by Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

If one searches for studies that show how an internal matter is perceived and reinterpreted in the paradigm of the foreign countries, two very good analyses can be found in this volume. First, a researcher from the University of Roma Tre, Antonio D'Alessandri in "The fight for the Union of the Romanian Principalities and the Piedmont of Cavour", considers that Cavour's attitude was a direct result of the Kingdom of

Sardinia's own goals in resolving the "Italian question". Gheorghe Negru, a historian from Chişinău, in "The Union of the Romanian Principalities and the impact of this event on Bessarabia (the years 1860)", sets his sights on Bessarabia. A former province of Moldavia, it is interesting to see how the union of the two Romanian states had a twofold impact: on the alignment of the Romanian cultural and political movements in Bessarabia to the ones in Romania, and on the demeanor of the Russian administration. Overall, the context after the loss of the Crimean War, drove Imperial Russia to reform itself on the inside, starting with an aggressive russification policy of the different disparate provinces.

The second part of the publication ends with one of the editor's own works, "The Establishment and Organisation of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign and State Affairs (1862-1866)" by Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu. His study begins with three essential questions: which were the most important moments pre-1862 in the making of the Foreign Affairs ministry and how they influenced the further organization of it, what were the main legislative changes from 1862 up to 1866, and who were the people that helped build the ministry. By investigating these issues, he brings a great contribution to the study of the evolution of Romania's diplomatic legislation, which tends to focus on the period after 1878.

The penultimate part of the book contains the most thematically diverse studies. Bogdan Mateescu, "The agrarian issue during the Union year. A comparison between the obligations of the corvée labourers and the wealth and income of the corvée labourers", opens with a call to revive the study of the Romanian agrarian question with a new, more rigorous methodology. The author advises historians to begin focusing on points, such as the integration of geography, statistics in historical research. For the sources, he relied mainly on the population censuses of 1850 and 1860. Overall, Bogdan Mateescu puts into discussion a new and modern inquiry method, with the added plus of concentrating on its interdisciplinary applications. Nicoleta Roman in "The orphans of the reigning princes, the children of the nation. The feminine side of the 19th century", brings to the attention of the reader a lesser-known part of the Romanian society of the time, by focusing on the orphans of the epoch, and the ways in which women organized societies in order to offer help and support.

The following two papers, signed by Simion-Alexandru Gavriş and Bogdan Popa, talk about the press of the period. Simion-Alexandru Gavriş, in "A Iaşi based conservative newspaper: Viitorul (1861)", chose this particular newspaper due to its importance to the incipient conservator movement in Moldavia, being its only media outlet during the reign of Cuza. His study adds new prospects to the study of the media history of

the epoch. Bogdan Popa, "Cultural modernisation as a second effect. «The Press Act» of 1862 and the book trade in Romania", has a different approach, with the analysis of the law mentioned. Although the main objective of such a law was to control what was written in the press, the author's argument is centered around it helping propel the development of written culture in Romania. It managed to strengthen the relations between libraries, editors, and the authors. With these two studies, readers begin to understand that during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, reforms were not merely implemented at a high level, lacking concrete implications in the micro-zones of the community. They impacted all aspects of society, with durable results for the future reign of King Charles the 1st.

A similar approach is taken by Ioan-Augustin Guriță, "The law of the secularization of monastery wealth and the monastic establishment of Iași", who pieces together an important picture of the mechanisms implemented once the secularization law was proclaimed. As he admits in the beginning of the paper, his interest lied on the people chosen by Cuza to undertake the process of secularization in the monastical area of Iași. The subject of the modernization of society is predominant in the study of Vitalie Văratîc, "Jibreni: the project of the first Romanian harbour at the Black Sea in the second half of the 19th century". The last one of the "Ideas" chapter, the author summarizes the history of such a project, that ultimately never came into fruition.

The final section of the book, suggestively titled "The posterity of Alexandru Ioan Cuza", is comprised of studies that highlight the historiographical legacy of the Romanian ruler. Silvana Rachieru, "Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Constantinople: protocol dilemmas and places of memory in the official travels within the Ottoman capital (1860, 1864)", presents a compelling narrative concerning the remembrance in the collective memory of Cuza's two visits in Constantinople. Making use of the surviving artistic renditions of the event, combined with accounts of participants, the author analyses the ways in which prince Cuza was received by the sultan, comparing the two different occasions (1860 and 1864). Directly contradicting existent historiographical perceptions, she underlines the importance of understanding and acknowledging the reforms (*Tanzimat*) that reshaped the Ottoman Empire. It is naïve to talk about the antithesis of modern, European (Romania) and traditional, oriental (Turkey), which so often characterizes the relationship between the two states in the second half of the 19th century.

Mircea-Cristian Ghenghea, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza- the «tyrant» and the «immortal». Little-known images in the press of 1867 and 1908", preoccupies himself with the image of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in two main

sources: a calendar for the 11th of February 1867 (a year after his abdication) and an almanac from 1908. Both are, as the author rightfully underlines, means of propaganda, used either to bring out the negative (the calendar), or the positive (the almanac) traits of the ruler, by referring to the contrasting image of King Charles the 1st. The final paper, signed by Andi Mihalache, “The construction of the Romanian pantheon and the structuring of the modern Romanian space: the funerals and statufication of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1873, 1912)”, is a study of the history of collective memory, of how the death of a political personality impacts his further legacy, applying this to the case of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, who died in exile in 1873.

This book brings paramount contributions to the historiographical landscape regarding the first ruler of unified Romania, Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866). It manages to compile different perspectives, themes, and approaches into a singular volume, that never once suffers from a lack of cohesion in speech, a remarkable aspect for such a large body of work. Basing their work on extensive study of archival documents, memoirs of the time, newspapers of the epoch, or other fruitful primary sources, each author presents their arguments in a concise, pertinent, and logical manner. The reader of such a volume, a researcher in its own right or not, can savor each page, despite the book’s monumental length, due to the wide array of well-written provocative topics.

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Alexandru Lupeanu-Melin, *Evocări din viața Blajului*, Edited by Cristian Bădiliță in collaboration with Veronica Isăilă, Bucharest: Editura Vreamea, 2020, 270 p.

The book *Evocations from Blaj's life* by Alexandru Lupeanu-Melin was published for the first time in 1937, but it was republished in 2020 by Cristian Bădiliță in collaboration with Veronica Isăilă. It was republished in 2020 as it was part of the *Mica Romă XII* Collection, which aims to bring lesser-known authors who have written about Blaj into public view.

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