

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 statification 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.

ANTONIA-ANNAMARIA VARGA

*MA student, Faculty of History and Philosophy,
Babeş-Bolyai University*

E-mail: varga1antonia@gmail.com

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

Cristian Bădiliță is an essayist, theologian and contemporary poet. He studied at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest and theology in Madrid. He has authored many theological articles. Veronica Isăilă is a student of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, at the

Faculty of Letters. She was the one who transcribed the text from the 1937 edition and added several explanatory notes.

The subject of the book is a compilation of texts that evoke the most remarkable moments and personalities of Blaj. It is a memoir because the author, Alexandru Lupeanu-Melin, drafted short stories from his own life, as well as stories about the events that had taken place in Blaj, events that outline the history and characteristics of the city. The book originally appeared on the occasion of the bicentennial of Blaj; it was compiled by collecting several articles published by Lupeanu-Melin in the *Unirea Poporului* newspaper. Many authors compared his style with that of Ion Creangă or Ioan Agârbiceanu, which is why, for the reader, it is a truly pleasant read. The purpose of the *princeps* edition was to provide the Blaj public a view on the importance of their city for the national culture and to offer them anecdotes about the past, which they would thus come to know in detail. The edition published in 2020 brings forth the works by lesser-known authors, works that nonetheless contributed to the formation of the historical past of the city of Blaj and its importance for national history.

The book is structured in the form of a collection of short stories, organized chronologically, written in an accessible manner, thus making the most popular events of Blaj easy to understand. The 37 stories are preceded by a prologue and the volume ends with a postface. The prologue is written by Ștefan Manciușea, who was a contemporary of Alexandru Lupeanu-Melin. He was a teacher, a geographer, and a Greek-Catholic priest from Blaj. He presents Lupeanu's activity within the associations and institutions where he worked. Thus, we come to know that Alexandru Lupeanu lived between 1887-1937, as well as additional information regarding the school he attended, his professions, namely that of a teacher, director of the Blaj Girls' High School, director of the Blaj Central Library, editor for many publications and founder of *Unirea Poporului* newspaper, and a member and president of major associations such as ASTRA. The postface is authored by Ioan Buzași, a literary historian from Blaj whose works investigate the literary past of this city, but also that of its important figures. It summarizes aspects of the author's life, but it also analyzes the importance of this book for the literature of Blaj.

Because of the fact that it is a collection of short stories that recount certain episodes from the lives of certain figures or from within the larger historical events, and it is not a scientific approach, we cannot talk about a certain methodology used in its elaboration. The style is literary, it uses an archaic language, characteristic to the region and period in which the book

was written. All these variables make it possible to integrate the book into the memoir genre.

The sources used are newspaper articles, in which Alexandru Lupeanu-Melin recounted his memories of his school years, the events of 1918 in which he took part, as well as several eulogies he had given for certain figures. He also used the memories that the priest Nicolae Coroiu from Bucium-Saşa left in a manuscript. The book does not differentiate between the memoirs of the priest (he is not even mentioned as a source of inspiration) and those of Lupeanu, the stories are written in the first-person singular from the author's perspective.

The book is an interesting read to those passionate about history and it offers new perspectives to those who desire to find out more about Blaj's past in the form of anecdotes, which are not recorded in other sources, and which show the specifics of this city. It begins chronologically (and it includes a legend) with the founding of Blaj by Ionochentie Micu Klain; it then speaks about the figures who marked Blaj's education and church life: about Timotei Cipariu, Ioan Fechetu Negruțiu, Augustin Bunea, Ioan Moldovan or Vasile Suci. About lesser-known events, about the Revolution of 1848 and about how the achievement of the Union of Romania in Blaj was seen. Other interesting stories depict the recounted events about what was happening in the lives of the students from Blaj, how they learned to pass on lessons even through plays during the summer holidays, the accommodation conditions and the habit of picking grapes, details that are truly little known. The book reveals the names of the first engravers from Blaj and the institutions of that time. The volume includes figures such as Rozalia Munteanu, who was the first Romanian teacher from Transylvania.

However, the book cannot be considered history, it is somewhere between history, memoir and literature, but it can be used to extract little known information about people and facts from that city, about the life of students before the Union of Romania. It is written with accents belonging to the romantic style, Lupeanu being known for his nationalism.

The 2020 edition is thus a welcomed publication, as it allows today's readers to easily read text that is difficult to understand because it uses archaic language, but also full of toponyms and figures that deserve to be explained. This republication answers these needs by providing all the necessary information.

My opinion is that *Evocations from the Life of Blaj*, the 2020 edition is worth reading by all those interested in the history of Transylvania, but also by those who want to know several beautiful stories about the

Romanians' past, having been written in a literary manner that is easier to understand due to the explanatory notes made by the editors. But we must not forget to apply a grid of objectivity because subjectivism is a major characteristic of this book.

MARIA-DENISA ȘERBĂNETE

MA student, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University

E-mail: serbanete_denisa14@yahoo.com