LITERATURE, MODERNITY, NATION
THE CASE OF ROMANIA, 1829-1890

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the development of a literary culture among the Romanians in the period 1829-1890; the effect of this development on the Romanians' drive towards social modernization and political independence; and the way in which the idea of literature (as both concept and concrete manifestation) and the idea of the Romanian nation shaped each other. I concentrate on developments in the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (which united in 1859, later to form the old Kingdom of Romania).

I begin with an outline of general social and political change in the Principalities in the period to 1829, followed by an analysis of the image of the Romanians in European public opinion, with particular reference to the state of cultural institutions (literacy, literary activity, education, publishing, individual groups) and their evaluation for political purposes. I then go on to examine the same cultural institutions from internal sources, with particular reference to the significance accorded to cultural activity by contemporary actors. The last part of this section traces the origin and crystallization of certain key concepts in Romanian discourse: 'literature', 'nation', 'Europe'.

The next two chapters follow the formal creation of public institutions of education, publishing and the press within the context of the Russian protectorate (1829-1848) and the period during and after which Romania gained her independence (1848-1890). In the course of this analysis I examine the way in which symbolic value was attached to these institutions.

I then present three, much smaller, case studies of Romanian literature 'in the field'. I have chosen major aspects of the work of three major writers, who are respectively Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889), Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) and Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917).

I thus seek to provide:

- An overview of the international and institutional contexts of Romanian social and cultural development in the period under discussion.

- Some case studies of the relationship between the development of a national literature and the formation of a national identity. Romania constitutes an unusual model for anyone interested in European or colonial types of this process.

I
Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................. 2
Table of Contents ................................................................................................. 3
List of tables and graphs ....................................................................................... 5
Introduction ........................................................................................................... 6

Literature, nation (7), modernity (11), Romania (13)
Structure (17), Periodization (19), Sources (21)

PART I

1. 1774 - 1829 ..................................................................................................... 25
   Politics and social change .................................................................................. 25
   Western images and projections ...................................................................... 40
   The state of culture ......................................................................................... 51
      a) Literacy .................................................................................................. 53
      b) Education and the public sphere ......................................................... 59
      c) Printing .................................................................................................. 71
   Literature, nation .............................................................................................. 87

2. 1829 - 1848 ................................................................................................... 102
   The Great European Family ............................................................................ 102
   Education ........................................................................................................ 105
      a) Wallachia ............................................................................................... 105
      b) Moldavia ............................................................................................... 115
   Books, printing ............................................................................................... 121
   The periodical press ....................................................................................... 132
   Literature, nation ........................................................................................... 140
   Revolution ..................................................................................................... 146

3. 1848 - 1890 ................................................................................................... 151
   Education ........................................................................................................ 151
      a) Institution-building, 1848-1864 ............................................................. 151
      b) Primary education, 1864-1890 .............................................................. 158
      c) Secondary education, 1864-1890 ......................................................... 161
      d) Universities, 1864-1890 ..................................................................... 164
PART II

4. Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist ...................... 192
5. Ion Luca Caragiale: The Tall Tale of the Romanian Nation ....... 217

Conclusion ........................................ 251
Bibliography ....................................... 257
Acknowledgements ............................. 288
LIST OF TABLES AND GRAPHS

1.1 Romanian language printing, 1801-1830 by region 83
1.2 Romanian language printing, 1801-1830 by subject 84
1.3 Romanian religious books by region of publication, 1801-1830 85
1.4 Romanian secular books by region of publication, 1801-1830 85
1.5 Religious and secular books in the Principalities, 1801-1830 86
1.6 Religious and secular books in the Habsburg Lands, 1801-1830 86

2.1 Estimated Romanian book production, 1830-1878 121

3.1 Public primary schools: Attendance and Results, 1890-1891 160
3.2 Public secondary schools: Attendance and Results, 1890-1891 161
3.3 Students by religion in public secondary schools, 1876-1882, 1888-1892 162
3.4 Bucharest University: enrolment and graduation in selected years, 1864-1906 164
3.5 Iași University: enrolment and graduation in selected years, 1870-1900 165
3.6 Distribution of presses by locality (Principalities / Old Kingdom), 1830-1890 187
3.7 Printing presses in the Principalities / Old Kingdom, 1830-1890 187
3.8 Secularization of the press in the Principalities / Old Kingdom, 1830-1890 188
3.9 Romanian literary periodicals (all locations), 1830-1890 188
3.10 Patterns of growth in the provincial press: Botoșani and Giurgiu, 1866-1890 189
3.11 Books published in Piatra Neamț, 1876-1900: a selection 190
INTRODUCTION

Many historians of ideas and of society have commented in different ways on the fact that 'literature' and 'nation' become constituted as distinct categories in nearly all parts of Europe in the period running approximately from 1700 to 1900. ‘Literature’ is proposed as a branch of intellectual activity distinct from history, philosophy or theology. The ‘nation’, it is argued, is a natural unit for the creation of states to replace despotic empires.

This work attempts to examine the introduction and development of these concepts in that part of Europe which became known after 1881 as the Kingdom of Romania, and formed the nucleus of a larger Romanian state created in 1918. This process began at the end of the eighteenth century; I choose to end my account in 1890. There is no reason to suppose that the definition of these ideas was complete or final by that date – as with any extensively used words, the meanings of the concepts literature and nation in Romanian continued to change in time. People who were interested had, however, by that date, reason to believe that not only a kingdom called Romania, but also something called ‘Romanian literature’ and ‘the Romanian nation’ had come into existence, even if they might have been hard pushed to provide an objective definition of these things.

My starting-point was a desire to provide a contribution to the study of the process of nation-building in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, using the case of Romania to clarify the role played by programmatic literary movements in the development of national sentiment and political nationalism. I was interested in studying Romanian cultural history in the context of nineteenth-century social and political developments in order to evaluate and possibly refine the existing scholarship on the origins, forms and nature of nationalism in Europe. I was also interested in filling an important gap in the English-language historiography on nineteenth-century Romania. For despite the existence of an increasingly large number of excellent scholarly works on Romanian political development in English, there was still little in the way of work based primarily on the Romanians’ own vision of their cultural experiences, and of a detailed account of
Introduction

nineteenth century Romanian attitudes to national identity and its role in determining the political formations in which Romanians lived with each other and with others.

Literature, Nation

A study of the relation between literature and nation could take many forms. One could catalogue and periodize individual spheres of literary activity and try to establish causal relations between their appearance and certain political effects, comparing or contrasting these effects with those brought about by extra-literary impulses, for example the economic. One could analyse the content of cultural products such as fiction or poetry and produce a typology of representations or types of the nation; again comparing or contrasting them with 'real' social practices of the national group in question. One could examine the trajectories of individuals involved in the production of culture, and seek to find correspondences between success in the cultural field and success in the political. One could study the 'importance' of literature to the Romanian national identity; or the 'influence' of nationalism in literature; the impact of politics on culture, or the other way around.

The analysis of the concept 'nation' can cover everything from the word to the designated human group or political institution; 'literature' has had as many or more different significations: a system of lettering; a totality of texts; a selection thereof; the activity of producing and distributing them; the symbolic value attached to any of the above. This imprecision, and the bewildering variety of forms in which they manifest themselves, explains and partly justifies the fact that much work in the field has been characterized by diverse collections of smaller case studies rather than overarching theories. But a review – however


\footnote{Probably the three most important collections are: *Actes du IVe Congrès de l’Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée.* Fribourg 1964.}
Introduction

summary – of some general tendencies will not be out of place here.

Generally speaking, specialists in East European nation-building processes have traditionally drawn attention to the importance of literature for the national identity; or at the very least to the importance of intellectual élites and the movement of ideas over the economic and social structures of the region. On the other hand, influential typological studies of nationalism in Europe have tended to minimize the content of national ideology in favour of materialist explanations of the appearance of nationalist movements.

Within the study of nationalism, attention has very frequently been given to literature under the rubric of 'social communication': literature is generally assimilated to ideology and to the means of its dissemination. It is considered to be one of the important tools in making the spread of nationalism possible. It is seen as a locus for the growth and transmission of myths, memories and historical traditions; the inculcation of standardized but 'authentic' values and knowledge; the demarcation and preservation of symbols. Although this theory has been criticized for its mechanistic presuppositions and its failure to pay attention to the

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4 Peter Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of East European Nationalism", in idem & Ivo Lederer, eds. East European Nationalism. Seattle, 1969, p. 3-54; and Ivo Banac, The National Question in Yugoslavia. Yale UP, 1984 both argue that ideologies are more important than social structures in the development of nationalism in Eastern Europe. Even a more materialist thinker like Katherine Verdery is prepared to agree that nationalism is not just a superstructural reflection of bourgeois capitalist development: "This discourse came to permeate society so completely that its terms garbled the transformation of the socioeconomic order." Transylvanian Villagers. Berkeley - Los Angeles - Oxford, 1983, p. 183. Irina Livezeanu, Cultural politics in Greater Romania. Ithaca, NJ, 1995, p. 7, argues along similar lines.


content of national cultures, it has its uses as a model, and as stated I am interested in the ‘machinery’ of nation-building through literature just as much as in the content. We need however, to consider two further objections to the idea that literature is a mere ‘tool’ in the hands of the nationalists. One is that if literature is simply a mechanism for the inculcation of ideologies, why is it that literature is so persistently associated with national movements, and not with other ideological causes? For instance, Marxist critics have for a long time seen literature as the product and reflection of class interests and struggles, and yet the idea of literature as reflecting class identity has taken far less root in the popular imagination, even allowing for the problems of ‘false consciousness’ adduced to explain this lacuna. The second objection lies in the fact that although social communication theory appears to minimize literature and literary ideology, its advocates paradoxically end up overrating literature’s importance and its efficiency as a transmission belt for national ideologies. They claim literature is a mere mechanism; but they assume that this mechanism is itself frictionless, that it never breaks down, that there is no shrinkage or distortion between the message sent and the message received through the medium of literature. This is to fall prey to a simplistic empiricism, assuming that the recipient population is a mere empty vessel or blank sheet to be filled or inscribed with the relevant message: no attention is given to forces which obstruct or slow down the nation-building project. Paradoxically, these last two theses are borrowed directly from nation-builders and received uncritically as such.

Perhaps it would be more useful if we were to think about the ‘means of transmission’ as itself endowed with symbolic content. Then we could provide a sociology of national literature which could describe the institutions of culture without judging their importance only by their efficacy. For instance, in late nineteenth-century Romania virtually everybody who spoke on the subject regarded schools as key institutions for the development of the nation; they were frequently referred to as ‘sacred’ without irony or even a metaphorical sense being

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8 This criticism was made by Michael Mann (op. cit., p. 36-38) of Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities. London, 1983.
intended. And yet the same writers did not shrink from admitting their inefficacy as tools for the inculcation of given messages. I will show that the language used to describe schooling, and that of ‘enlightenment' in general, itself produced a myth of the sacrality of pedagogy in which literature, the ultimate didactic convention, was given pride of place.

The critic Michael Werner has produced a possible list of sites of importance for the investigators of the nation-building process and a critical assessment of the efficacy of the various institutional processes at work in the creation of a national literature:

1. the relative impact of state centralism;
2. the role of the intellectuals in politics;
3. Schooling;
4. Literary criticism;
5. the relation between belles-lettres and science;
6. Literature and collective identity.⁹

I find this schema useful, and have followed it to a degree in structuring my own research. However, before outlining my own procedures, I should note that the use of a research model developed in a West European context has certain advantages but also disadvantages for investigating an East European case. Its utility lies in the fact that such a method opens up the possibility of comparability across cultures, and the establishment of criteria which transcend the individual case. Starting from Western (especially Franco-German) norms is also important and useful because these were precisely the models (perceived often to be in symbolic constrast to each other) with which Romanian nation-builders operated in the nineteenth century. The impact of the West in the whole of South-Eastern Europe has been fundamental for structuring modern identities in the region: one writer has even gone so far as to liken the introduction of Western ideas in the Balkans in

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the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the coming of Christianity.\textsuperscript{10}

On the other hand, paying attention to relations with the West as 'a force for change' does not permit us to overrate the degree of real change in Romanian society and culture. The role of the West as model was itself solicited and manipulated in the period under study; examining the Romanian case in the light of Western 'norms' is not therefore an act of methodological innocence. Even later critics' theories of influence evoked the concept of the contrasting modelling power of French and German culture: French was perceived to be superficial and inflexible, and German to play an organic and catalytic role.\textsuperscript{11} Furthermore, Romanian contacts with the West were frequently indirect and were mediated by a number of intermediate cultures: Russian culture was one, others included Greek, Hungarian, Austrian, Serbian and Ottoman. More importantly, as Werner himself points out, the West European conceptions of 'national literature' were often elaborated with an eye towards the exclusion of other cultural claims; at the very least, their pretence to universality should not be taken at face value.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Modernity}

This raises the question of whether the term 'modernity', which I use to frame this discussion of literature and nation in Romania, is in fact appropriate. Modernity as a sociological concept was developed in nineteenth-century Western Europe to refer to the general transformation of states, societies and economic systems, and the total reorganization thereof on new bases, characterized by the establishment of complex political systems, rationalization, science, industry, capitalism, democracy and secularism.\textsuperscript{13} It can refer to a \textit{fait accompli} or an


\textsuperscript{11} This theory is associated particularly with the Romanian thinker Lucian Blaga (for details see Hitchins, \textit{Rumania 1866-1947}, p. 306ff.) but also affects more recent accounts of influence: see e.g. the important essay by Andrei Corbea, "Zur Problematik eines „Deutschen Modells“ der Junimea-Gesellschaft." In Al. Zub, ed. \textit{Culture and Society}. Iași, 1985, p. 101-112.

\textsuperscript{12} Werner, \textit{op. cit.}; a problem also identified by Christophe Charle, \textit{Les intellectuels en Europe au XIX\textdegree siècle}. Paris, 1996, p. 20.

inconclusive process; something to be rejected, or a desideratum: for many Romanians of the nineteenth century it was both.

The idea of "modernity" as an analytical concept has been criticized for its generality, as well as for its Eurocentrism. The latter charge can be accommodated if the analyst does not assume, as many have, that the Western European patterns of modernization form a universal blueprint for the development of the rest of the world; or that the West "modernized" without interacting profoundly with the people and systems of every other continent. The accusation that the term is too general is harder to refute. Nevertheless I find it useful as a short means of expressing the presence of the idea of radical change in material and cognitive methods of social organization that took place in the West and proved to be a crucial paradigm in the thought of the people I am studying.

Another advantage of the term modernity is that it signals the importance of what has been called "one of the fundamental features of Romanian cultural experience", namely "its relationship with time". The development of the ideas of literature and nation in Romania occurred in the context of "a dramatic relation with historical time, one both of rupture and of attachment to tradition." Insofar as modernity proposes a critical attitude to the past, it contains within it the seed of the possibility of irreversible change and the ability to alter the self-image of a given community; in the literary sphere, through the creation of new texts and the reordering of the old, it involves the use of textual technology to restructure social memory in a way that corresponds with the use of other forms of technology derived from science and put to the service of the modernizing project. As far as modernity in literature is concerned, at least since Baudelaire, one of the pioneers of the term modernité in French, the implication has been that "literature has a constitutive affinity with action, with the unmediated, free act that knows no

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However, I should emphasize I treat the concept of modernity as an idea rather than a detailed description of what actually happened in Romania. Indeed, in the case of Romania, it is more appropriate to speak of the consciousness of the absence of modernity, or, in Ernest Gellner’s phrase, its uneven diffusion. For instance, educational and language reform was envisaged not as a consequence of economic modernization, but as a catalyst for it, or at times even a substitute for it. As such, the concept is ideologically charged: it is necessary to bear in mind that our understanding of the term derives directly from the debates on modernity in the period under study, both in the West and as received and reinterpreted by Romanians. The role of modernity as a modelling idea among the Romanians will be examined thoroughly later on. For the time being I should like to note its utility in understanding that the correlative development of the ideas of nation and literature in Romanian discourse should not be seen as taking place in some bell-jar of hypothetical experiment, but in a much larger context of social change.

Romania

A fourth term in my title, namely “Romania”, also warrants some initial clarifications. As already stated, I shall be dealing very largely with what happened on the territory of what formed the so-called “Old Kingdom” of Romania. This raises some problems of terminology, but also some questions of method.

The first modern state to be called “Romania” was created from the Union of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859. Its new name and its formal independence from the Ottoman Empire were internationally recognized in 1878; it became a kingdom in 1881. “Moldavia” and “Wallachia”, it should be
noted, are foreign and not local names, and appear only occasionally in Romanian sources, generally under the influence of foreign writings. The usual internal name for Wallachia was Țara Rumânească, and the inhabitants called themselves rumâni, or occasionally români.\textsuperscript{21} Moldavians called their country Moldova, and themselves moldoveni; but the term rumân/român was regularly in use there too.\textsuperscript{22} It was generally accepted that, as the Metropolitan of Ungrovlahia Theodosie wrote in 1680, Moldavians and Romanians “all flow from the same source.”\textsuperscript{23}

However, the term “Romania” was not in use in Romanian in this period. In Latin, in the early Middle Ages it had referred to the Eastern Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{24} This usage became obsolete after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, but in the West continued to designate more limited areas of the Empire, particularly the area lying south of the Balkan and east of the Rhodope mountain ranges, but sometimes for the whole of the Ottoman Empire’s European possessions, for which the Turks themselves used Rumeli.\textsuperscript{25} “Romania” in this sense was commonly used by European writers in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{26} But its use in either internal or foreign writings for any of the lands north of the Danube was virtually non-existent before 1830, and even after that date the sense was generally confined to meaning Wallachia.\textsuperscript{27} The term was promoted and given an ideological

\textsuperscript{21} The spelling rumân instead of roman can be easily explained by two vowel-changes common to Romanian: o>u (Latin longus became lung; bonus > bun; dolor > durere; nomen > nume, ponere > pune); and a>ă (ă transcribes the Old Cyrillic letter ă; spelt i in Romanian in certain periods): campus > câmp; panis > pâine; quando > când, etc. (P. P. Panaitescu, Interpretări românești. 2nd edn. București, 1994, p. 65.) The question of what local people called themselves before the early 15th century, when we have clear evidence that they called themselves something like romani and believed themselves descended from the Romans, is immaterial to this thesis.


\textsuperscript{23} BRV, I, p. 234.

\textsuperscript{24} Robert Lee Wolff, “Romania.” Speculum, XXIII, 1, 1948, p. 1-34.


\textsuperscript{26} Two examples will suffice. a) The English traveller Richard Bright, writing about Gypsies in Eastern Europe, spoke of their presence “in Walachia, Slavonia, Bessarabia, Tartary, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania” (Travels from Vienna through Lower Hungary. Edinburgh, 1818, p. 527). b) The Russian Decembrist P. I. Pestel drew up a plan in 1821 for the division of Turkey’s European possessions into a “Greek Kingdom” with ten regions: Wallachia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, Morea, Thessaly, Macedonia, Livadia. For Pestel, “Romania” has its capital at Adrianople, and borders on the Aegean sea, the Balkan mountains and Macedonia. (Vosstanie Dekabristov. Dokumenty. Tom VII. Moskva, 1958, p. 327.)

\textsuperscript{27} E. Stănescu, “Roumanie. Histoire d’un mot, chez les Roumains au XVIe-XIXe siècles.
importance largely by French writers (but also by some Romanians). By 1848 the larger sense of the term was being widely vehiculated, and it did not take long for the term to become the natural replacement for Moldova and Ţara Rumânească (or the portmanteau terms such as Moldovalachie used in French) when the Principalities were united after 1859. It is nevertheless anachronistic to refer to the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia as “Romania” before 1859. The general term used for Moldavia and Wallachia in international diplomacy from the early nineteenth century onwards is “The Danubian Principalities” and I shall use this term.

Equally important to note in any consideration of Romanian national identity is that the Old Kingdom of Romania did not include all Romanians in one state. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were around three million Romanians in the Habsburg Empire, and approximately one million in Tsarist Russia. These populations and the lands they inhabited were integrated into the Old Kingdom after the First World War. Bessarabia, lost to the Soviet Union after 1944, now forms the independent Republic of Moldova; while virtually all the former Habsburg territories (Transylvania and adjoining parts) continue to form an integral part of Romania today. The Habsburg Romanians had a distinct tradition of intellectual activity which was crucial for the development of Romanian national identity as a whole; but about which I will not be saying a great deal. In this and other ways, my thesis does not presume to survey the literature of all the


Ibid.; the most influential work was J.A. Vaillant, La Romanie ou histoire, langue, littérature, orographie, statistique de peuples de la langue d’or, ardaliens, vallaques et moldaves, résumés sous le nom de romans. I-III. Paris, 1844; but this was preceded by idem, Grammaire Roumâne [sic] à l’usage des Français. Bukarest, 1840 (a reedition of his Grammaire vallaque [sic] à l’usage des français, 1836); E. Kohly de Guggsberg, (‘Le Philodace’), Aperçu sur l’éducation chez les Roumains, suivi de quelques remarques relatives à la prospérité des Principautés. Jassy, 1841 (for the use of the term “Romanie” in this work see N. Iorga, Istoria românilor prin călători. 2nd edn. Bucureşti, 1928, IV, p. 83); E. Regnauld, “Les Principautés Danubiennes. Romanie ou Moldovalachie.” Revue indépendante, Paris 1843, p. 519-540.

29 The only exception is Northern Bukovina, which became part of the Soviet Union in 1944, and is today in Ukraine.
Introduction

Romanians. This is not to suggest that what happened in Transylvania is neither interesting or relevant to a discussion of modern Romanian identity, far from it: they have received a good deal of historiographical attention, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that Romanian national identity in Transylvania has received more detailed study in English-language historiography than the "Old Kingdom" lands.\(^\text{30}\)

It is, however, legitimate to acknowledge that the political and cultural movements in the Principalities and the Old Kingdom had an independent dynamic; and that the traditions, representations and experiences of the Principalities that have dominated modern debates on Romanian identity, if only because state traditions and social and political institutions were maintained and affirmed there first. The prevailing trend in modern Romanian historiography (both political and literary) has been to give much more attention to the Principalities - some admitting this openly as a choice, others less critically and assuming a "custom".\(^\text{31}\) This may be a good or a bad thing, and indeed there are many reasons for saying that it is not. I am treating an institutionally crucial segment of the life of the Romanians in the nineteenth century: after 1918, this institutional framework continued to dominate Romanian political life, while facing the challenge of integrating different provincial traditions, with greater or lesser success.\(^\text{32}\) I hope this study can form a basis for understanding the ongoing debates and contests over Romanian cultural identity in the twentieth century; but


it should be borne in mind that I am describing the dominant, but by no means the only traditions of Romanian cultural development.

*Structure of thesis*

It should be clear enough from the above methodological discussion that the number of potential objects of study under such a title are enormous, and the complexities of the case under study could hardly be exhausted within the parameters of a PhD thesis. I hope, however, that they also provide an idea of the kind of questions one might address, the kind I have chosen to address, and also some justification for the manner in which I have chosen to structure my research.

An introductory chapter focuses on the sociopolitical and cultural status of the Romanians of the Principalities in the period before 1829. An account of the prevailing political and social conditions is followed by an analysis of the image of the Romanians in European public opinion, with particular reference to the state of cultural institutions (literacy, literary activity, education, publishing, individual groups) and their evaluation for political purposes. I then go on to examine the same cultural institutions from internal sources, with particular reference to the significance accorded to cultural activity by contemporary actors. The last part of this section traces the origin and crystallization of certain key concepts in Romanian discourse: ‘literature’, ‘nation’, ‘Europe’.

The next two chapters follow the formal creation of public institutions of education, publishing and the press within the context of the Russian protectorate (1829-1848) and the period during and after which Romania gained her independence (1848-1890). My account will be structured largely in a chronological arrangement, looking in some detail at the more particular contexts that conditioned cultural activity in different periods. In the course of this analysis I seek to address a series of questions concerning the origins of a debate about the idea and uses of literature; the major political currents animating this debate; the success in applying these theories, and whether their application led to social change or improvement, or a changing self-conception of Romanian identity; the role of the centralized bureaucracy, and of foreign interventions and influences in
Romanian society.

I then present three, much smaller, case studies of Romanian literature 'in the field'. I have chosen major aspects of the work of three major writers, who are respectively a literary critic, a poet and a dramatist. Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889) is Romania's best-known poet and the one most widely acclaimed as representative of the national genius. I undertake here a detailed analysis of his political journalism and the kind of nationalism expressed there, while also relating it to some of his poetical work. Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) is perhaps Romania's best-loved playwright, and generally associated with an ironic and satirical approach to national identity. I look at some of Caragiale's short stories with a view to analysing certain stereotypes put into circulation or developed by him. In so doing, I hope to provide a brief examination of how stereotypes are elaborated, but also how they can be contested or made provisional within the functioning of a given literary genre, in this case the short story. Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917) was Eminescu's mentor, editor and promoter; he also carried out a bewildering variety of cultural 'tasks' in the second half of the nineteenth-century, from establishing an autonomous literary criticism, running literary circles, becoming rector of Iași and then Bucharest universities, rising to Minister of Education, and later Prime Minister. In a separate chapter I examine his attempts to argue for literature as an autonomous form of expression, not dependent on politics but also equally significant for the cultural life of the nation. I argue that this attempt failed philosophically and practically, and attempt some explanations as to why this might be.

My thesis therefore limits itself to a structured account of the institutions in which a modern written Romanian culture developed, and the use of a number of case studies to detail selected major topoi of Romanian discourse. I use successively several different techniques of analysis, from a sociology of the instruments of diffusion, to that of the actors, to that of individual works, to genres on the margins of literature. A different author would have made a different selection, and I hope other authors will. If I have succeeded in opening up a field for further exemplification and more work that would refine the conclusions arrived at here, I feel the task will have been justified.
Periodization

The periodization of modern Romanian culture is a complicated and by no means settled problem. There is an entire bibliography dedicated to the subject, and one could even periodize these theories (inter-war periodization, communist periodization, etc.). Romanian historians have frequently formulated their periodizations with half an eye to what they reveal or conceal about 'development' in relation to Western time-frames, and indeed a classic work in the field, Eugen Lovinescu's *Istoria civilizăției române moderne* (1924-1926) proposed the idea of 'synchronism' as both a desideratum and a historical law governing the meaning of Romanian modernization. One of the most salient strategies of nationalist Romanian cultural theorists, particularly in the 1980s but also earlier, involved precisely this issue, and led to the development of a whole theory of 'Romanian protochronism' which argued the temporal priority of Romanian achievements vis-à-vis the West.

Aside from these problems, however, a sufficiently large number of historians of Romanian culture have settled on the period 1770-1830 as a fundamental turning point in the history of mentalities and indeed in terms of every facet of cultural change in Romania. I have treated this in my introductory chapter as a distinct period, but also used it to some extent as a base line for measuring degrees of change over the nineteenth century in subsequent chapters. This may have the disadvantage of making the earlier age appear static and the post-1830 period as one of change and progress. I have, however, tried wherever

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36 This was the effect of Pompiliu Eliade’s classic works *De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie*. Paris: E. Leroux, 1898; and *L'esprit public en Roumanie au XIXe siècle*. 2t. Paris, 1905, 1914. It is to some extent still present in Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866*. 19
possible to distinguish particularly in the earlier period between general trends and individual actions; and to date more closely the appearance of particular aspects of the changes that have often been hidden under the cloak of the idea of “an age of transition”. I then work broadly through the period until 1890.

The latter date is considerably more arbitrary than the first, and does not, I admit, appear to correspond particularly neatly to any specific moment of structural change either in politics or literature. A number of minor but significant factors converge, however, to set my rather open ending at this date, above and beyond the need to keep down the volume of material under study. By taking the story beyond 1878 and Romanian independence, we can see how (or rather, if...) a literary culture changes before and after statehood is achieved. The period 1878-1890 saw the first establishment of an acknowledged canon of Romanian writers, with the accompanying formal consecration and contestation. A number of the major nineteenth-century writers died around that date (Alexandrescu 1885, Bolliac 1885, Creanga 1889, Eminescu 1889, Aleksandri 1890, Kogalniceanu 1891, Odobescu 1895, Ghica 1897). From a sociological point of view, too, institutions like national schooling and a free press but also fiction and theatre had taken definite shape by 1890 and would thereafter expand dramatically. Politically, the monarchy and electoral and party systems had been established. In terms of nationalism’s concrete aims, a major shift occurred in 1891 with the establishment of the Romanian Cultural League which gave a completely different importance to the Transylvanian question within the cultural politics of Old Kingdom Romania. On the other hand, many of the central themes concerning Romanian national identity, that preoccupied the post-1890 writers - examples include the peasant, modernity vs. tradition, the Jewish question - had been established in the previous period, as had the major literary genres. Accordingly, I will treat my endpoint as a provisional resting-place from which it is possible to look both backwards at the newly constructed forms, and forwards to their further implementation and the consequences thereof. A study taking developments up to the First World War would be fascinating, but requires a new and systematic gathering of material that lies outside the scope of this work.


20
Introduction

Finally, it should be stressed that I am not attempting to make excessive claims for the decisive importance of either the subject or the period I am studying, or its determining effects on Romanian identity today. There are a number of similarities to be drawn between nineteenth-century cultural politics and cultural politics today, but there are also a great number of differences, and it were well to remember this, particularly as much mention of Romania's cultural heritage in foreign-language work is occasioned purely by a desire to elaborate more or less deterministic theories to explain present conditions. I have tried to provide my own answers at certain stages to the question of what traditions were important in the shaping of a modern Romanian literary culture: these may have become constraining at certain stages but are not "fatal" and do not explain everything about Romania. It is difficult to come to judgements about causality in history without examining a much wider range of potential causes and mobilising factors than the present thesis allows: in general I have been more interested in unearthing individual strategies than sketching thumbnail theories of destiny.

Sources

It is, I hope, clear from the way I have outlined my research above that this thesis has been built on a base of wide reading, of an extensive rather than an intensive nature. It has been part of my agenda not only to consider the question "what is literature?" as potentially applicable to any text, but also to consider the answers as having potential repercussions in all areas of social life. I have deliberately read behind and around the limited canon of 'classic' literature in order to look at larger contexts and processes. I have not ventured beyond the published sources to undertake explorations in archives. However, I believe I have tackled the published primary and secondary literature in a thorough, if not exhaustive manner, starting with the suggestions of my supervisor and continuing with systematic use of the principal bibliographical tools, anthologies and collections of sources. I am particularly indebted to one reference work, the

38 I list these separately at the beginning of my bibliography.
Introduction

Dictionarul literaturii române pînă la 1900, which provides the most comprehensive guide to primary and secondary literature published at that time (1979). I supplemented the remarkable collections in the British Library and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies Library, London, with extensive soundings in the catalogues of the principal research libraries in Romania, notably the National Library [Biblioteca Națională], the library of the “Nicolae Iorga” History Institute, Bucharest Central University Library, and the Romanian Academy Library [Biblioteca Academiei Române]. I have consulted contemporary editions extensively, and looked beyond the selections and formatting of modern critical editions of major authors.

Romanian historiography has a bad reputation in the West. This is at least partially deserved; but we should remember first of all that it is mainly the bad works that have attracted attention.\textsuperscript{39} Behind this is a lesser-known tradition of fairly modest scholarship which might sometimes be accused of provincialism but deserves to be taken into account. Considerations of space make it impossible to include a detailed account of the large secondary literature, or the immense problems facing Romanian literary history in general.\textsuperscript{40} Readers can see where I have obtained my information and where I disagree with major interpretations in the footnotes: space does not permit the listing of every work I have read which touches on a given subject, although I have tried to be as thorough as possible. Those versed in such matters will recognise that I am indebted, even where I take issue with them, to the works of scholars such as Mircea Anghelescu, Sorin Antohi, Daniel Barbu, Paul Cornea, Alexandru Duțu, Ștefan Lemny, Adrian Marino, Zigu Ornea, Andrei Pippidi, Alexandru Zub and others, as well as to their predecessors, such as Nicolae Iorga, Pompiliu Eliade, Ioan Filitti, George Călinescu, Dumitru Popovici and others. Outside Romania the works of Sorin Alexandrescu, Dennis Deletant, Catherine Durandin, Klaus Heitmann, Keith


\textsuperscript{40} For some general considerations see Nemoianu, Virgil “Romanian literary history.” SEE, IV, 1, 1977, p. 108-118; Duțu, “Le renouvellement de la culture...”; Frederick Kellogg, A history of
Hitchins, Paul Michelson, Katherine Verdery and others have provided a framework in which the study of Romanian identity has become not only possible but intellectually exciting. My conclusions are presented at the end: before that, as Ezra Pound remarked in his *ABC of Reading*, "there is a long boring part", namely the exposition.

*Romanian historical writing*. Bakersfield, CA, 1990 largely ignores literary history.
PART I
1. 1774-1829

Politics and Social Change

The political status of Wallachia and Moldavia in the fifty years before 1829 is not easy to define: not only was it peculiar within Europe, but it was also subject to intense military and diplomatic contestation throughout this period. Nominally, the principalities were under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Sultan, and remained so throughout this period. Also nominally, they enjoyed a degree of autonomy: they were ruled by Orthodox Christian princes; maintained certain of their own political and judicial institutions; and were in theory not open to Muslims wishing to settle or trade there, or to Ottoman armies in peacetime. In return they provided the Porte with large quantities of raw materials and money, and offered men to perform given military and labour services at nominal rates.

What was the basis of this state of affairs? According to a petition sent by a group of Wallachian boyars [nobles] to St. Petersburg immediately after 1821, in the Middle Ages the “Wallachian nation” had been ruled by “a legitimate prince of the same nation” until 1382. At that date the Prince Mircea “in order to forestall the disasters menacing our fatherland”, resolved “in agreement with the people” to conclude a treaty with Sultan Bayezid I. But the Sultan reneged on this agreement and forced “the Wallachian nation” to take up arms with the Ottomans. After this “the Wallachian nation” remained quite free until 1462, when a prince called Layote renewed the treaty with the Turks “of his own free will and in agreement with his entire nation” only for Sultan Mehmed II to break it, and “to subjugate the country completely and oppress the people”. There were many further disputes, including a revolt in 1470, but “the peaceable character of the nation” persuaded the Wallachians to place their faith in “the deceptive promises” of the Sultan.

The above is one of many such documents presented by the Wallachians in their requests for alterations in their political status, and the Moldavians produced

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1 Hurmuzaki, Documente, X, p. 575-577. The document is in French, hence “la nation valaque”; “un prince légitime de la même nation”; “les désastres dont notre patrie était menacée”; “d’accord avec le peuple”; “de son bon gré et d’un avis commun avec toute sa nation”; “soumettre totalement le pays & oppresser [sic] le peuple”; “le caractère paisible du [sic] nation lui persuada d’ajouter foi aux promesses trompeuses.”
similar claims regarding their own province. The rights of the Principalities were thus presented as ancient traditions requiring restoration, usually through the intervention of foreign powers. In practice, this ideology of autonomy was of relatively recent elaboration, and can be seen as the result of profound changes in the nature of Ottoman control over the principalities. These changes were contradictory in their direction and their effects.

On the one hand, the Ottomans' position in Europe had weakened considerably. Under the expansionist pressures of the major East European states (in the case of the Principalities, Austria and Russia, although the role of Prussia is not to be ignored), they were losing territory. Since the defeat of the Ottoman army at Vienna in 1683, the Austrians had gained control of Hungary, Transylvania, and the Banat; temporarily annexed Serbia and Oltenia between 1718 and 1739; obtained large portions of the Kingdom of Poland in the first partition of 1772, extending to the north of the principalities and bordering on Moldavia; and in 1775, negotiated the cession by the Ottomans of part of Northern Moldavia, which they renamed Bukowina and which gave them a foothold towards further potential gains.

Meanwhile, Russia's rise to the status of a major imperial power was said (by one interested observer) to be the most remarkable event in modern history since Columbus discovered America, and (by another) to have caused "the system of Europe" to have undergone "a complete revolution". A Russian army had first appeared on the Moldavian frontier in 1709, and though defeated at Stăniloiești on the Prut two years later, waged a long series of southern wars against the Ottomans which was to last until the end of the nineteenth century, and to influence profoundly the directions of Russian foreign policy even in the twentieth. Russia had not only made major gains in the Baltic and Eastern Europe

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2 For a repertoire, see Georgescu, Mémoires 1769-1830.
3 the part of Wallachia west of the Olt river, sometimes known as Little Wallachia.
6 Volney, Considérations sur la guerre actuelle des Turcs. Londres, 1788, p. 45.
7 The literature on Russia's involvement with the Balkans is vast; for a recent survey, see Hugh
at the expense of Sweden and Poland, but also conquered from the Ottomans a vast expanse of territory between the Dnieper and Don rivers (in 1774), as well as the right to sail ships through the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean. The annexation of the Crimea and dispersal of its Muslim population followed shortly on in 1783, and in 1792 Russia pushed its frontier as far south as the Dniester, enabling the foundation of new ports and cities on the Black Sea. Her troops effectively occupied the principalities from 1769 to 1774, 1788 to 1792, 1806 to 1812, and 1828 to 1834, and on numerous occasions it appeared likely that Moldavia or Wallachia, or both, would be awarded to her. They were secretly promised to Russia by Napoleon at the Treaty of Erfurt in October 1808, and Russia’s possession of them even appeared as a fait accompli in a work of geography published in Paris in 1811. In the end, however, and principally as a result of the French invasion of Russia in 1812, the Principalities returned under Turkish suzerainty and Russia had to be contented with the annexation of the part of Moldavia between the Prut and the Dniester rivers, which she renamed Bessarabia and which she slowly incorporated into her Empire.

On the other hand, the Ottoman administration did not remain passive in the face of these threats to its European possessions. Already in 1711, when the Moldavian prince Dimitrie Cantemir colluded with the Russians in their first serious attempt to annex Ottoman territory, the Sultan reacted by attempting to tighten his political and economic grip on the principalities, and arrogating the right to appoint them himself without consultation of the local nobility. The same practice was extended to Wallachia following the execution of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu for collusion with the Habsburgs in 1714. The practice of appointing princes from among the Orthodox élite of Constantinople was not a new one: it had functioned informally since the sixteenth century, and fairly regularly since

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8 Documente privind istoria României. București, 1956, introducere, I, p. 494-496. 1787-1791 (Moldavia) and 1789-1791 (Wallachia) saw Austrian occupations, and 1821-1822 a Turkish one.


10 On Bessarabia, see now Paul Cernovodeanu, *Basarabia. Drama unei provincii istorice*
the mid-seventeenth. Moreover, as some recent studies have shown, the Romanians’ claim that a firm system of dynastic succession and an organized system of estate assembly among the native nobility existed prior to the establishment of vassal relations with the Ottomans may have been a late elaboration, if not a historical fiction.

However, it is clear that the management of the Principalities underwent something of a change with the appointment of Nicolae Mavrocordat (1680-1730) to the throne of Moldavia in 1711, and subsequently to that of Wallachia in 1716. Immediate consequences included attempts to organize stricter and more regular principles of tax collection, and to restrict the privileges of the nobility, making them dependent on service to the state. These attempts were renewed by Nicolae’s son Constantin (1711-1769), who ruled on six occasions in Wallachia and four in Moldavia between 1730 and 1769, and produced the first major codification of the duties of the boyars to the state and their hereditary rights. This “charter” was seen as the cutting edge of Ottoman reformism, and was published in the Mercure de France on the occasion of the Turkish embassy to Louis XIV’s France in 1742. Like many princes, the Mavrocordats posed as defenders of the


11 Andrei Pippidi, Hommes et idées du sud-est européen à l’aube de l’âge moderne. Paris / Bucarest, 1980, p. 341-350 (who proposed that the dates 1658-1831 might be more appropriate to a periodization of “The Phanariot Era”); Bogdan Murgescu (“Phanariots’ and ‘Pământeni’. Religion and ethnicity in shaping identities in the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire”, in Maria Crâciun & Ovidiu Ghitta, eds. Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe. Cluj-Napoca, 1997, p. 196-204) has gone so far as to suggest that no substantial change took place in the fundamental elements of the political system of the principalities from the mid-16th century until 1822. While this may be the case, the idea that rights had been taken away at the end of the reigns of Brancoveanu in Wallachia and Cantemir in Moldavia was strongly present in the eighteenth century: see e.g. Chesarie, preface to Mineul pe Ianuarie, Râmnic 1779 (BRV, II, p. 236); I. Cantacuzino, petition of 11 May 1791 (N. Iorga, “Viața unui mitropolit de altădată: Filaret al II-lea.” Convorbiri literare, XXXV, 12, 1901, p. 1128). In other words, if it was a myth, it was a contemporary one, and not only a nineteenth-century one: further evidence supporting this point of view in Fl. Constantiniu, “Când începe epoca fanariotă?” SMIM, XI, 1992, p. 109-116.


14 Anne-Marie Cassoly, “Autour de l’insertion dans le Mercure de France de la «Constitution» de Constantin Mavrocordat.” RESEE, XIX, 4, 1981, p. 751-762. The Romanian original was recently
peasantry against the depredations of the boyars, and Constantin initiated major reforms of the status of the peasantry, issuing decrees in Wallachia in 1746 and Moldavia in 1749, encouraging “all sons of the fatherland” to return to their homesteads and be temporarily free of serf obligations.\(^\text{15}\)

All this can be seen as part of Ottoman policy to repopulate the Principalities after years of war, and ensure a productive revenue for themselves and a stable regime at the edge of their European possessions.\(^\text{16}\) A further extensive legislative programme was introduced by Prince Alexander Ipsilanti (1724-1808) following the reestablishment of order after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774: this amalgamated Byzantine law codes with local customary law, as well as a few elements of Western Roman legal practice.\(^\text{17}\) And a final recodification took place in each province at the end of the Phanariot period, with the Codes of the Princes Callimah (1816) in Moldavia, and Caragea (1817) in Wallachia, with the former showing the strong influence of the Austrian Civil Code of 1811. These latter codes remained in vigour in the field of civil law until 1866, and were particularly notable for the introduction of certain concepts of natural rights \([drituri firești]\), civil status \([stare politicească]\), the common good \([obștescul folos]\).\(^\text{18}\) One contemporary actor, the Wallachian boyar and writer Ienăchiță Văcărescu, even spoke of the right of peoples \([dreptul noroadelor]\).\(^\text{19}\) On the other hand the Phanariot princes often elaborated a conservative discourse

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around tradition and submission [supunere] of the flock [raia/pliroma] to the God-given ways of the state, as evidence of their loyalty to the Ottoman regime. Application of the laws did not often pass far beyond the stage of theory, and the traditional privileges of the nobility, as well as the often arbitrary imposition of obligations by imperial edict [ferman] from Istanbul, prevailed over the rule of law. Thus a bizarre mixture of custom and precedent, outdated and totally inapplicable Byzantine laws, together with a proud evocation of ‘enlightenment’ and ‘reason’, gave the Principalities a peculiar place in the institutional and ideological system of the Empire.

Criteria for establishing citizenship remained vague. Acquisition of noble status in the Principalities depended on lineage (which could be organized by marriage to the daughter of a native boyar); or on property - which could be achieved also by marriage, or also by awards by the Prince. Following Constantin Mavrocordat’s first reforms in Wallachia (1740) and Moldavia (1741), the rules of inheritance of noble status were at once codified and restricted - they were made dependent on service to the state, and only minor ranks (the so called neamuri and mazili) with limited privileges were left open to those whose parents had held office.

In these circumstances - and with the Phanariot princes and their entourages as an inevitable presence in Romanian life - collaboration and intermarriage between the two groups became the norm. One chronicler wrote in the 1740s that “when God wills it to be that iron does not rust, and there will be no Turks in Constantinople, and no wolves in the world that eat sheep, then perhaps there will be no Greeks in Moldavia and Wallachia.” But, he added, then there would be no boyars either: and in fact boyars in the Principalities often contributed to the indigenization of Greeks by offering their daughters in marriage to outsiders of an inferior social standing who had come to study at the Academies.

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of Bucharest and Iași, or to merchants and agents operating out of Constantinople. This was so to such an extent that it was in many ways difficult to distinguish between the two ethnicities. Different members of the same family might be considered “Greek” or “Wallachian” (respectively, “Moldavian”) according to given marriage patterns. This process continued into the nineteenth century: all of the so-called “native” princes appointed to govern the Principalities between 1822 and 1856 spoke and wrote Greek fluently, and most married into Greek or Hellenized families.

This does not mean that there were not differences between Greek princes and administrators, and local nobility. In fact anti-Greek feeling in the Principalities appeared as early as the end of the 16th century and can be detected from time to time throughout the early modern period. But antipathy towards Greek and Balkan upstarts, based on social criteria and an attachment to tradition, included a good dose of opportunism and demagogy on the part of the enunciators, and there are few signs that this occasional xenophobia became more frequent in the period up to 1821. Romanian historians who have analysed the ethnicity of those who held high office in the eighteenth century, have shown that Romanian boyars were not entirely oppressed and underprivileged, and took an active part in government and administration.

For while some chronicles reflect a consciousness of a ‘native’ ideology, this did not necessarily preclude a general admiration for Greek language and culture. In 1817, the Moldavian boyar Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu complained to the Russian ambassador in Constantinople of “the misfortunes attendant on the

24 Mazilu, op. cit., p. 191-205, treats the example of the Cantacuzino family of Moldavia; Iorga called them “enemies of the Greeks, but protectors of cultural Hellenism”. (Histoire de l’enseignement en pays roumains tr. Alexandrine Dumitrescu. Bucarest, 1932, p. 56.)
28 E.g. the Letopisetul Țării Moldovei (1661-1729) published in Cronicele Românei, III, p. 40-95; Ioniță Canta, Letopisetul Țării Moldovei (1741-1769), ibid., p. 183-193.
country since the introduction of Greeks into positions of influence”; he accepted that the prince’s immediate entourage might be Greek, “and long may it continue, but all the other positions and jobs which directly and daily influence the interests of the country should be always and exclusively occupied by Moldavians.” But the same man was one of the chief financiers of Prince Alexander Ypsilanti’s invasion of Moldavia in 1821, and on his death in 1836 bequeathed two of his Moldavian estates to the Greek school in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{29} Hostility towards Greeks in visible positions of power can be distinguished from a general admission of Greek as a language of culture and commerce. There might thus be considerable competition and conflict on the economic and social level within the country; but patriotism was largely defined in terms of protecting the limits of the nobiliary ranks, rather than in terms of ethnolinguistic consciousness. The appointment of princes at Constantinople was evidently an affront to any idea of complete local autonomy, and it was claimed in this period that “the election of princes by the natives is the most ancient and fundamental privilege of our fatherland”; but again this did not result in an expression of outrage against Greek culture. Indeed many of the terms used to define ‘native’ rights - \textit{aftronomie}, \textit{pronomiile patriei}, were Greek in origin.\textsuperscript{31} In short, Greekness meant cultural prestige and influence at Constantinople, whereas “Moldavianness” or “Wallachianness” meant native rights.

A similar state of affairs prevailed among other ethnicities. In the commercial class \textit{[tagma negustorească]}, they might have rights according to their membership of a guild \textit{[breaslă]} or corporation bearing a charter from the prince; or might have placed themselves under foreign consular jurisdiction [these were called \textit{suditi}]. Jews, for instance, might be represented institutionally in a “Jewish guild” \textit{[breasla jidovilor]} or individually in whatever guild represented their

\textsuperscript{29} Memorandum to Stroganov (c. 1818), in Georgescu, \textit{Mémoires 1769-1830}, p. 66; \textit{AF}, II, p. 539.

\textsuperscript{30} Mihai Dimitri Sturdza, “A Moldavian Russophile. The grand treasurer Iordake Roznovanu, 1764-1836.” \textit{SADAH}, X, 1972, p. 156.

profession; or alternatively according to their possession of foreign protection through one of the consulates. But boyars might equally take on the status of foreign consular subjects for trading purposes, and to limit the hold the local administration had on them. Urban administration might be in the hands of a council [epitropie] composed largely of non-Romanians. In Botoșani, for instance, a reform proposal of 1827 suggested the epitropie be composed of two Armenians, two Jews, two Moldavian or Greek merchants, and two Moldavian boyars. In other towns the prince tried - not always with success - to establish his rights as feudal landlord of the market or urban administration. This slow process of transformation was not completed before the legislation of 1831-1832, the Organic Regulations, imposed it by edict.

This was a very different picture from the foreign writers’ image of the principalities, which often involved a sharp distinction between “Greeks” and “national” (Wallachian, Moldavian) elites, in the government and culture of the province. This was analysed by a Frenchman, Jean-Louis Carra, in terms of “national character”. Interestingly, a response to Carra’s book, in pamphlet form, was published in Vienna in 1779, which contested the terms whereby the latter defined “national character”. The author, one Gheorghe Saul, a courtier in Moldavia of possible Albanian origin, objected that

The author speaks of the proportions and the strength of these people, of their languages [langues] and the ones they learn, their exercises, their dress, the beauty of the women, the manner of speaking [langage] of the country: Sirs, I fail to comprehend what connection there is between these things and national character.


See the case of Ploiești (Wallachia) in C.C. Giurescu, Contribuțiuni, p. 70-74.


“...traits which lead to an understanding of the general character of a nation; and one must observe and isolate these traits. Knowledge of the climate and of the dominant education thus furnish the observer with secondary means to perfect his judgements and reduce them to maxims.” Jean-Louis Carra, Histoire de la Moldavie et de la Valachie. Jassy, 1777, p. xxv-xxvi.

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33 See the case of Ploiești (Wallachia) in C.C. Giurescu, Contribuțiuni, p. 70-74.


35 “...traits which lead to an understanding of the general character of a nation; and one must observe and isolate these traits. Knowledge of the climate and of the dominant education thus furnish the observer with secondary means to perfect his judgements and reduce them to maxims.” Jean-Louis Carra, Histoire de la Moldavie et de la Valachie. Jassy, 1777, p. xxv-xxvi.

36 Gheorghe Saul, Lettre a Messieurs les Auteurs du Journal de Bouillon sur le compte qu'ils ont rendu d'un livre intitulé Histoire de la Moldavie... Vienne, 1779; repr. in Alexandre Cioranescu, "Le Serdar Gheorghe Saul et sa polémique avec J. L. Carra.” SADAH, V, 1966, p. 57.
A strong enough statement that a different conception of nationality existed than that defined, according to Western norms, by language.

The economic system of the Principalities has been variously described as ‘tributary’ and ‘proto-colonial.’ They were one of the principal suppliers of grain, timber and foodstuffs to Constantinople, and in theory goods for export were to be purchased pre-emptively at a fixed price by agents of the Sultan. Boyars complained that their homeland had been turned into a “province of peasants.” But at the same time active commerce was developing in the principalities, and there were opportunities to make large fortunes exporting goods to Russia or to Central Europe. Commerce has traditionally been seen in the literature as an activity in the hands of foreigners - *rarus mercator Moldavus*, as Dimitrie Cantemir put it - and considerations of status and tradition tended to cause the nobility to affect a disdain for making money. The emphasis has been on merchants attempting to enter the boyar class; but there is also considerable evidence of boyars being extremely active in international exchange, and large fortunes were amassed in this way.

What was missing was a systematic exploitation of resources. Though the development of exchange relations in agriculture can be dated a long way back, and though the commercial exploitation of the Principalities’ natural resources was on the increase, this by no means revolved exclusively around cereal production. As late as 1833, cereals accounted for no more than a sixth of the value of Wallachian exports, as against 50% represented by trade in cattle and related produce. Established commercial companies in Central Europe (Vienna, Leipzig) bought large quantities of Romanian livestock - one particularly active trading house in Vienna was laying out 10,000 piastres a week for the import of

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1,000 oxen - but similar outlets for agricultural produce appeared only after 1830. Alcohol production was one of the major sectors to be developed early on as an object of commerce: in 1785, there were over 800 stills in Moldavia, whose production capacity exceeded the total volume of cereal exports from that province; but before 1800, rotation of fields was unknown, as was fertilization of the soil. Ploughshares were wooden, not metallic, and agricultural method remained at the slash-and-burn stage. If there were a considerable rush on land in the beginning of the nineteenth century, this did not immediately lead to an increase in production, nor to a harsher exploitation of the peasantry, but was done partly to obtain or to buttress noble status, and partly for the want of other permanent investments.

Manufacture developed haltingly. Besides the closed market and artificial pricing of the Ottoman suzerain power, local boyars and merchants (some of whom did not lack capital) were reluctant to invest in permanent establishments in an atmosphere of political insecurity; nor were they encouraged by the government, who rightly saw that the development of local resources might lead to territorial interest from the neighbouring powers. Moreover, these powers were beginning to see the Principalities as an important outlet for their own manufactured goods, and acted to prevent the development of competition. Thus, in 1789-1791, when Wallachia was occupied by an Austrian army, factories were forcibly shut down, and salt mines blown up. Manufactories, such as there were, remained in the hands of boyars or foreigners working under princely disposition (which might be withdrawn at any change of prince). Areas like food, clothing, and paper were developed on a fairly small scale. The largest manufactory in Bucharest in 1803 employed 60 workers.

As the Austrians and the Russians pressed their claims during the numerous wars against the Ottomans, hundreds of schemes were proposed for the disposal of the Principalities, from the establishment of national princes, to a temporary (25-year) independence, to their annexation to Poland, to rule under a

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Prussian prince, to the establishment of a “Greek” or “Dacian” kingdom, independent under various degrees of subordination to Russia or Austria. Romanians participated occasionally in these plans, elaborating their own projects, but in general international diplomacy took its course without much consideration for the locals’ opinions.

Paradoxically, it may have been the Principalities’ lack of institutional solidity and economic development that ensured their survival against such odds. Most states who were involved at one stage or another in plans for a partition of the Principalities in fact held more urgent territorial interests elsewhere. In 1771, Frederick the Great rejected Russian plans for the independence of the Principalities under the rule of his younger brother, because his interest in acquiring the Polish lands of Posen, Thorn and Danzig was stronger. Likewise, negotiations between Napoleon and Alexander I in the early 1800s failed not because the former was unwilling to let the latter have the Principalities, but because neither party wished to cede ground to the other in Silesia. The Empress of Austria Maria Theresa’s words on a proposed partition of 1777 have been often cited, but deserve repeating, as they sum up a certain attitude towards Moldavia and Wallachia which shows how cultural considerations influenced those of international diplomacy:

What would we gain by pushing our conquests even to the gates of Constantinople? Unhealthy provinces, without culture, depopulated or inhabited by perfidious and ill-intentioned Greeks, would be more likely to exhaust than to augment the forces of the monarchy.

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45 In general, European historiography has concentrated on European diplomacy, while Romanians have emphasized Romanian participation and initiatives. For an exception, see N. Iorga, Desvoltarea ideii unităţii politice a Românilor. Bucureşti, 1915. Vlad Georgescu, Mémoires 1769-1830, p. xix, counts five Romanian projects for the Union of Moldavia and Wallachia: all were elaborated in political conditions created by Russian or Austrian intervention in the Principalities.


47 M.S. Anderson, op. cit., p. 40-47.

Even her chancellor Kaunitz, who was much more keen to prosecute claims to the Principalities, confessed to his employer that they were “full of the wildest people”. It appears that Turkish diplomats were aware of Austrian preferences for gains in Poland over Moldavia, as they suggested a partition of the former to the Austrian ambassador in Constantinople; which of course was what actually happened.

For, despite the annexations of Bessarabia and Bukovina already mentioned, the Principalities remained as tributary states of the Ottoman Empire, while Poland, the Crimea, Venice, Ragusa, Georgia, Finland and other apparently much more stable East European entities were destroyed and absorbed by neighbouring empires. In comparative terms their status changed surprisingly little in a period of almost total transformation throughout Europe and both Americas. It was only following a further Russian invasion that the Principalities’ juridical status as Russian protectorates was firmly established, and the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 foresaw the drawing up of statutes whereby a fundamentally new civil administration was installed: and even then the Organic Regulations, as they were called, claimed legitimacy on the basis of “traditional rights” of the two countries.

In such a context, it is perhaps not surprising that statements of Romanian identity in the early nineteenth century might involve a particular political impulse, in terms of practical attempts to define the rights and status of the Principalities; but also, on the discursive level, a struggle to distinguish themselves from immediate neighbours and rivals. Wallachians and Moldavians were first and foremost Orthodox Christians, which meant that they might be expected to define themselves against non-Christians in the political sphere (against Ottoman suzerainty) and the economic (against alleged Jewish

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49 Roider, op. cit., p. 132.
51 For the debate on the status of the principalities in this period, see Barbara Jelavich, “Balkan nations under European Protectorship.” Actes du premier congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes. Sofia, 1969, IV, p. 397-408 (and Andrei Oțetea’s remarks, ibid., p. 433-435).
commercial domination). But as diplomatic events developed and it became possible that the principalities might be swallowed up either by the Russian Empire or in some kind of Greek confederation, the Romanians also had to distinguish themselves from their co-religionists, Russians or Greeks.

This comes out clearly in a statement of 1834, when the boyar Filipescu told the French diplomatic agent Bois-le-Comte that “We would welcome any foreign prince with tears in our eyes, on the condition that he be neither Turk, Russian, Greek or Jew.” The addition of Orthodox to non-Christian nations on the list of unacceptable overlords is remarkable, and perhaps shows an internalization of a general disdain for the Orient. The British consul at Bucharest in 1835 likewise asserted that “It appears beyond doubt that the desire of the whole people is for a foreign Prince, one neither Russian nor Greek: and they are anxious for the union of the two provinces under one Prince.” Of course one of the key features of this demonstration of difference was that is was addressed to Europe. After 1821 it became an international cliché to write that “the eyes of Europe” were “turned towards the East”. It was recognized (and it was a diplomatic reality) that the major political decisions concerning the fate of the Principalities were to be taken not in Bucharest or Iași but in Paris, Moscow, Vienna or Constantinople. Linked to this was the recognition that such decision-making processes would be linked to knowledge of the conditions in the Principalities which would lead to improved political judgements. But the power to know, on which the power to act successfully was thus predicated, was also implicitly conferred to “Europe” and not to the inhabitants of the Principalities. An influential French author wrote in 1777,

54 All sides evoked Europe. The Greek revolutionary Alexander Ypsilanti began his proclamation to the people of Moldavia in March 1821, by invoking “Europe”, who “fixing its eyes upon us, wonders at our inertia ... Europe will admire our valour.” (Richard Clogg, ed. The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821. A Collection of Documents. London 1976, p. 201ff.) The British ambassador in Constantinople told the Wallachian boyars that “the eyes of all Europe were watching the manner in which they would conduct themselves” (Strangford to Londonderry, October 5, 1822, no. 149; repr. (without reference) by Radu R. Florescu, The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities. Iasi - Oxford - Portland, 1997, p. 319). Literally thousands of similar references in Loukia Droulia, Philhellénisme. Ouvrages inspirés par la guerre de
it is not at all the business of these barbarian, ignorant peoples to get to know us first; on the contrary, it is for us, whom the favourable influence of a temperate climate and the fortunate advantage of the exact sciences have raised so far above the other peoples of the globe, in courage, in industry and in enlightenment, to discern the character, the genius, and even the physionomy of the modern peoples, placed on this earth as if subject to our observations and criticisms. It is, in the end, for us to know these very peoples, before these peoples may know themselves and, in their turn, seek to know us. 

And the message delivered to a Wallachian boyar in 1834 was, although politer, based on the same cultural mentality, the same geopolitics of knowledge:

Try to get us used to your names, to your productions, to your magnificent Carpathian landscapes, to your history, to the particularities of your manners and your life. Continue to send your children to study in our schools, to use a language [French], which links you more and more with the intellectual movement of the age; so that Europe may become accustomed to the idea that a Wallachian nation exists; that the importance of this nation should be known; that [Europe] may be moved to sympathy by her [Wallachia’s] efforts to emerge from her sad legacy of ignorance and corruption, and towards constitutional government; make sure we see (to the advantage of the commercial facilities you are developing) an increase in your relations with other peoples; may the improvement of your public and private manners make it clear that you are capable of something more than limiting your life to the enjoyment of the pleasures of Bucharest...

It would be unwise to underestimate the importance of these kinds of statement: particularly if we view the development of Romanian literature as an instrument for “the recovery of national dignity” on an international level, as well for as the internal ordering of the private and public spheres. We should look more closely at the image of the Principalities in Western public opinion at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in order to consider to what extent Romanian cultural identity might be a product of this process of reaction to such “fictions of geopolitics.” What did “Europe” know of the Romanians, and what did it need to be told? More importantly, how did the need to “tell Europe” what it wanted to hear affect the process of self-knowledge in general?

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Western images and projections

The principalities, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were often said to be among the least known provinces of Europe. Not only that, but what attention they did receive from Western writers was generally far from positive. "They are", wrote an anonymous commentator in Blackwood's Magazine in 1826, "utterly insignificant, a strip of territory, at most but 350 miles long, and 160 broad." But, he added immediately, "they are a Border land, and are paved with Russian and Turkish dead."

Like many earlier Western writers on the Principalities, and on Eastern Europe in general in the period, this author liked to portray these territories as a compendium of everything Europe was not. It is not unusual to come across descriptions of them as violent, backward, impoverished, badly governed by cruel tyrants, inhabited by "vegetables" (as Jeremy Bentham described the Wallachians in 1786), whose countenances were "squalid and strongly marked by an unhealthy climate", according to an English naturalist writing eight years later.

The Principalities were seen both as a characteristic consequence and as a peculiar distillation of the despotic features of the Ottoman Empire as a whole. As "distant provinces, connected with the Porte rather by treaty than as integral parts of the Empire", wrote an English observer in 1798, "these unfortunate countries (unfortunate in their political regulation, however blest by the bounty of nature) suffer, though in different degrees, from the harpy touch of Turkish despotism." He went on to add that "their inhabitants are, however, more oppressed than perhaps any people in the empire; nor could they possibly bear such exactions,


60 Jeremy Bentham, Correspondence, vol. 3. January 1781-October 1788, ed. Ian R. Christie. London, 1971, p. 438. Moreover, "of the sleevelessness and stupidity and ignorance manifested ... by the honest Moldavians, no man whose travels have been confined to England and the countries which come next to England, can form a tolerable idea." Ibid., p. 448.


were it not for the wonderful fertility of their soil." In this he was merely confirming the opinion of other writers. The question of whether it was climate or government which has the most influence in determining the character of a given people - a key differend among eighteenth-century political philosophers - seemed to find its resolution in the Principalities, where the obvious fertility of the soil contrasted vigorously with the harshness of the political regime: any inadequacies had to be put down to the latter.

One writer later went so far as to conclude that “the history of Moldavia and Wallachia, filled as it is with bloody tragedy, is without any philosophical interest whatsoever.” But for our Blackwood’s reporter of 1826,

All things grow interesting to the philosopher when they approach the perfection of their state; and these Principalities are actually worth observation, from their making the nearest approach of anything earthly to the perfection of utter public lifelessness. They are the Kingdom of Indolence - the central spot of the great Empire of Sloth, with all its privileges exemplified in all ranks of being, from the princes, nobles, and clergy, down to even the beasts of the forest and the domestic animals. The Boyar will not read, the priest cannot, the peasant never dreams of anything of the kind.

This apparently irredeemable state of cultural inertia, if inevitable as a consequence of foreign rule, was nevertheless astonishing in post-1815 Europe:

This ignorance may be surprising in the remotest corner of the North; but who could expect to find it in the direct road between Vienna and Constantinople, in a land the perpetual subject of Russian and Turkish diplomacy, and among a people to whom Latin was nearly a vernacular tongue, and calling themselves the descendants of the Romans?

It is tempting today to identify the same inertia in the mindset of the journalist himself, as well in that of the Edinburgh editors who published his piece. For his account was not only inaccurate in many places, but much of the information included was simply copied from the best-known earlier account in English, that of William Wilkinson, the British representative in Bucharest from

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62 Ibid., p. 297.
64 Edouard Thouvenel, La Hongrie et la Valachie. Paris, 1840, p. 185. Thouvenel was later French ambassador in Constantinople during the period of Romanian union (1855-1860).
1813-1816. It was also so politically dated that it did not even mention that the Phanariot princes had been overthrown for good following the revolts of 1821 in Moldavia and Wallachia, and that a new regime of “native” princes had been installed at the common agreement of the Sultan and the Russian Tsar. This perhaps explains why no historian has thought it worthy of comment since.

For our purposes, however, the anonymous author provides a useful, if rather melodramatic summary of the picture of the Principalities in the European imagination in the period immediately prior to that under study. Particularly interesting are the views on the cultural development of the Romanians. For in this period, the idea that “the chief glory of every people arises from its authors” and that from the writings of poets emerge “a picture of the character and genius of every nation,” had become commonplaces in the budding philosophy of literature and national power. “Nobody, I hope, will quarrel with me,” wrote one writer on the Principalities in 1782, “when I say that it is the arts and sciences that give a state its security, its fortune, and indeed its good organisation, wherein it has, in a word, all its prestige and its true vitality.” Philosophers of culture and development at the time of the French revolution often in fact did disagree as to whether first to develop the “culture” (understood as agriculture or material resources) or the “arts” (understood as knowledge) of a nation in the search for improvement and perfection - in other words as to the order in which such a programme of civilisation was to proceed. However, attention to the intellectual capabilities of a people was considered an essential part of contemporary

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68 William Wilkinson, An Account of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, with various political observations relating to them. London, 1820.
73 see e.g. Volney, op. cit., p. 102: “It is only when culture has reached its peak, that it is legitimate to turn superfluous hands to the agreeable and luxurious arts. For, when the base has been acquired, one may begin to elaborate forms upon it: then too, by a natural progression a change is effected in the taste and manners of a nation.” On the context of this debate see Sergio Moravia, Il pensiero degli idéologues. Scienza e filosofia in Francia (1780-1815). Firenze, 1974, p. 533-622;
ethnography, significant for the evaluation of their political potential, and by extension for the strategic calculations made around them.  

Ignaz Stefan Raicevich, who was tutor in the 1770s to the sons of Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti of Wallachia and later became the first Austrian consul in the Principalities, returned frequently to the question of education. In general he condemned the way the nobles allowed their children to be brought up amongst "thieving, malicious" gypsies, and lazy Greek monks who, "their customs being what they are, do no great honour to the ecclesiastical estate. ...It is clear that a boy educated among such people, can conceive neither generous feelings nor elevated principles."  

The fact is, that the modern Greek doctors are generally extremely ignorant, and spend their lives dealing with little else other than grammatical minuitae, without any idea of the sciences, belles-lettres, or of taste. Feeble superstitions and beliefs constitute the entirety of their theological learning.  

Raicevich has often been seen as a caustic observer; but his views were fairly commonplace among educated Western Europeans, and were shared, for instance, by a Neapolitan abbot, Lionardo Panzini, who spent some time in Bucharest in the late 1770s. "What profound ignorance reigns here!" The Greek method of education, "adapted as it is to their situation and relations", consists in learning many languages, "but this leaves hardly any time for application to the sciences and for the acquisition of real ideas and cognition, as opposed to mere words."

The men of letters have learnt little since the fall of the Eastern Empire, and even today

any kind of scientific culture is so alien to them, that all their knowledge is limited to an understanding of literary Greek ... their ambitions do not extend further than a material sense of the force and significance of the words, without concern for history, criticism, chronology, geography, and the other necessary auxiliaries to be mastered in order to comprehend what one reads. Grammar is the beginning and the end of their science. ... There are some who have begun to taste of a little French during the sojourn of the Russians in this land in the course of the last war. But in the absence of preliminary studies and of

76 Ibid., p. 243-44.
what in Europe passes for common understanding, the more they read, the less they understand, and they remain forever like puppets.

“Such”, concluded Panzini, “is the state of Greek and Wallachian literature.”

The negative side of whatever literary culture existed in Wallachia and Moldavia often continued to be emphasised by most Western writers over the next forty years. Andreas Wolf, a Transylvanian Saxon and doctor at the Moldavian court, wrote in 1805 that

Education and instruction are greatly neglected in Moldavia. At the school in Jassy, they teach reading, writing, calculation, ancient Greek, Latin and theology, but in spite of this, there is perhaps scarcely one pupil who can satisfactorily explicate an old classical author.

Likewise, the Scotsman William Macmichael, who travelled through Moldavia and Wallachia in 1817, was critical of the superficiality of the Europeanization process, noting that

If the boyars have adopted the vices of civilized Europe, they have made little or no progress in the improvements of polished society. They are extremely illiterate, their only attainment appearing to be a little facility in speaking French, which gives employment to a few refugees of that nation, who are established here, and live by giving lessons in that language. We met also with some Germans, amongst others with two Hanoverian doctors, and two or three Greeks from the island of Candia; the occupation of the latter was that of teaching modern Greek, the language spoken at the court of the Hospodar. One of these Candiotes had a press at Jassy, employed entirely in printing Greek prayer-books; but it appeared that his trade was not very thriving, as he spoke to us of the strong desire he had to revisit his native island.

Macmichael both looks to foreigners for the signs of cultural development, and stresses the unsatisfactory nature of their influence, lamenting the contamination of what he sees as the virtues of the Orient. He finds “the combination of Oriental and European manners and costume” to be

irresistibly ludicrous. The boyar looks like a grave Mahometan; but speak to him, and instead of the pompous and magnificent sounds of the Turkish idiom, he will address you in tolerable French, and talk of novels, faro, and whist.

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78 Letter of 2 February 1777, ibid., p. 170.
80 William Macmichael, Journey from Moscow to Constantinople. London, 1819, p. 84.
81 Ibid., p. 83. Cf. the Comte de Salaberry’s description of Craiova in 1790, where the nobility “mix European grace with that Asiatic negligence which has something noble and tender about it”. Some speak French well; many are addicted to tales and novels. (Voyage à Constantinople. Paris, An. VII, p. 115-116.) The French literary critic and politician Saint-Marc Girardin was saying nothing new in 1835 when he evoked “cette figure moqueuse et toute européenne, faisant avec son attitude, son costume et son chapelet oriental, un singulier et piquant contraste” and “une société qui se débat entre ses anciennes mœurs orientales et ses mœurs nouvelles européennes, qui a pris de la civilisation occidentale ses formes et son élégance plutôt que son esprit et son caractère.” (Souvenirs de voyages et d’études. Paris, 1852, I, p. 282, 287.)
Wilkinson, writing at around the same time of the boyars of Bucharest, drew a broadly similar picture: he confirmed that "an early propensity to learning and literature receives but little encouragement" and had a low opinion of the local versifiers:

If any are able to talk familiarly, though imperfectly, of one or two ancient or celebrated authors, or make a few bad verses that will rhyme, they assume the title of literati and poets, and they are looked upon by their astonished countrymen as endowed with superior genius and abilities.\textsuperscript{82}

The invasion of Moldavia and Wallachia by troops under the command of Alexandru Ipsilanti in March 1821 marked the start of the series of uprisings, battles, massacres and diplomatic tussles leading to the independence of Greece ten years later; it also naturally provoked an increased curiosity about the Principalities in most European countries. Numerous older works were republished or translated at around this time to satisfy public interest.\textsuperscript{83} But the more astute editors and commentators noted the change in mores that had taken place in the past twenty years.\textsuperscript{84} Other observers writing around 1821 note similar alterations in the education of the Wallachians.

François Recordon, who spent time as a teacher in Bucharest in the 1810s and displayed a broadly philhellenic outlook, registered numerous signs of Western influence: the generalized use of European carriages imported from Vienna; the appearance of French cuisine (with its attendant effects on the digestion of the nobility); the introduction of billiards and cards among the young men, and piano-playing among boyars' daughters. But in general, "instruction has not recovered from the dark age initiated before the advent of Greek princes."\textsuperscript{85}

Some boyars have begun to send their sons to French, German and Italian

\textsuperscript{82} Wilkinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 129. cf. Hauterive: "At least the Scots, the Dalmatians and the Gauls have their songs; here the Gypsies are the nation's poets." (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 371).

\textsuperscript{83} Carra was republished in German (1821); Raicevich reedited in Italian (1822), and translated into French in the same year by N.M. Lejeune, who himself had worked as a private tutor in Wallachia and added extensive annotations; Salaberry reworked the relevant part of his \textit{Voyage à Constantinople} as \textit{Essai sur la Valachie & la Moldavie}. Paris, 1821, adding a few notes; Wilkinson was translated into French (1821, reedited 1824, 1831), as well as into Italian (1821), although he had to wait for the next revolution (1849) for a German translation.

\textsuperscript{84} Salaberry's 1821 work was criticized for being out of date (by F. G. Laurençon, \textit{Nouvelles observations sur la Valachie}. Paris, 1822, p. v); Lejeune, the translator of Raicevich, noted that habits had changed completely since the 1780s. \textit{Voyage en Valachie et en Moldavie}, tr. N. M. Lejeune, Paris, 1822, p. 144 n. 1.
universities; and efforts are being made to improve instruction; but the youth are still excessively influenced by their Gypsy nurses, and are brought up in an undisciplined atmosphere. Any disposition to learning can be fed either by the visiting German and Italian theatre companies, which “furnish a means of exciting emulation and the application of the youth to the study of literature, which have been completely neglected hitherto”; or by study at the Bucharest Academy, where Greeks of low standing take “a few courses going by the name of belles-lettres and philosophy”, but which is so disrupted by petty academic and political intrigues that the entire teaching staff has been changed four times in the past three years. The students spend some ten or twelve years learning ancient Greek, but some are unable to read and write in Wallachian; the latter language has no fixed orthography and may by regarded as a patois.

Another Frenchman, Laurençon, who also acted as a private tutor in Bucharest in the years immediately before 1821, noted many of the same phenomena - despite the sporadic efforts of certain Princes and Metropolitans to introduce civilizing measures, “the education of the young men is neglected, and only a few years ago did a few families begin to send their children abroad to study there.” He remarked that it was rare to find a book in the hands of a boyar or his wife, and that the favoured entertainment of the young was to spit into the lake at Herăstrău outside Bucharest, and marvel at the ripples thereby caused.

The French general in Russian service, Louis Alexandre Andrault, Comte de Langeron, who fought in several campaigns in Moldavia and Wallachia from the 1790s to the 1820s, also contrasted the natural fertility of the provinces with the corrupt manners of the governing classes, “whose limited education and precarious authority neither presume nor allow any development of the intellect or talents.” Langeron was able to observe changes in subsequent years in the comportment of the elites of the Principalities - in 1815 he became governor of the

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85 Recordon, op. cit., p. 105.
86 See contracts awarded him by various Princes of Wallachia in V.A. Urechia, Istoria Românilor, X, part A, Bucureşti, 1900, p. 346; & XII, 1898, p. 92-93;
87 Laurençon, op. cit., p. 29-37.
city of Odessa, from where he made further trips and observations, which he noted in his journal: in 1824 he boasted that “Peter the Great did not change the face of his Empire faster than our arrival changed that of Moldavia”. But like many contemporaries, he regarded the modernization of manners in Iași and Bucharest as essentially superficial. Although many of the nobility now spoke French or Italian with some fluency, this did not give him cause to hope for a revival of Greek civilization: “I would like to be able to contribute in giving them the freedom of which some seem to be worthy; but I know them too well to be able to hope for a complete regeneration.”

Superficiality, unfamiliarity with the norms of society, inability to concede an equality of intelligence and learning to ‘the other’, and a more general projection of barbarism in order better to delimit the qualities of civilisation, have all been detected in these writings. They do, however, offer us an insight into the diplomatic and strategic importance of debates about culture in the region in the period. I have already shown how cultural considerations affected Austrian policy towards the Principalities in the 1770s. In 1788, when another Austro-Russo-Turkish war was at its height, Volney advised the French not to come to the Turks’ aid, because

the countries which the Emperor [of Austria] and Empress [of Russia] may get possession of, are in a great measure deserts, and ... they will, in all probability, become more so: a situation which renders it the duty of every good Government to turn its attention more to the encouragement of agriculture than of arts and commerce.

And in 1822, Tsar Alexander I motivated his refusal to support the Greek independence movement on the grounds that the Greeks are “too barbarian to merit it or not to abuse it”.

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89 Ibid., p. 79 n. 1.
90 Ibid., p. 74 n. 1.
93 apud Vlad Georgescu, editor’s introduction to Din corespondența diplomatică a Țării Româniești. București, 1962, p. 8. Two earlier memoirs presented to the Tsar at the beginning of his reign put the problem of Balkan independence in the same terms: Adam Czartoryski, Sur les
Other writers weighed up the potential of the Principalities, always with the condition that a wise and benevolent government based on reason be installed there. Carra, quoted earlier, judged that under the domination of Austria or Prussia, the Principalities would in twenty years’ time “enrich two hundred thousand unfortunate families, who otherwise would be exposed to inactivity and poverty”; while on the other hand “these two provinces can offer a new branch of commerce to the other nations of Europe.” For his part, Raicevich was sure that

were fate to make them subjects of a just, enlightened and humane Sovereign, they would in a short time undergo a complete alteration, and might compete with the most cultivated Nations. Among the Wallachians, in spite of all their unfortunate circumstances, one finds goodly and meritorious persons. Among the Moldavians ... there are some excellent subjects who would cut a figure in civilised societies.

And he and a number of other observers noted the names and attainments of a small number of people with exceptional intellectual abilities which offered hope for the development of the region.

Some observers showed little interest in the intellectual spirit of the inhabitants, but nevertheless saw Moldavia and Wallachia as potential ground for the expansion of Europe’s commercial and geographical boundaries. The remarks of an English officer, Wyburn, made around 1820, exemplify a whole generation of thinking about economic enlargement:

Under a civilized government this river [The Olt] might easily and at a trifling expense be made navigable and an easy level road on its banks, and thus Wallachia might (even with the approbation of these confidants of the political wishes of nature) be said to belong to the

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Systeme politique que devroit suivre la Russie (1803), ed. Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, California Slavic Studies, V, 1970, p. 19-91; and the Marquis de Sainte-Aulaire, “Mémoire sur les principautés de Moldavie et de Valachie” [1807] in P.P. Panaitescu, ed. Corespondența lui C. Ipsiîanti cu guvernul rusesc, 1806-1810. București, 1933, p. 74: “Under the influence of a better-instilled, more moral and less superstitious religion, and under a noble, fair and paternal authority, the Moldavians and the Wallachians would make a most estimable nation. There is talk of constituting henceforth a national government in these countries; but has the state of their civilisation been considered?” Cf., for the views of two other Frenchmen in Russian service at this time, the duc de Richelieu and Jean-François de La Harpe: Andrei Pippidi, “Călătoriile ducelui de Richelieu prin Moldova.” RdL, XLI, 7, 1988, p. 683-696.


Raicevich, op. cit., p. 262.

Ibid (Baș, Rosetti, Cantacuzino families in Moldavia); Bentham, op. cit., p. 438 (one “Constate” & Cantacuzino families in Wallachia); Carra, op. cit., p. 211-213 (“Theodorati” (“Theotokis), Saul, Bogdan in Moldavia; Nicolas Karatzas in Wallachia); Salaberry, Voyage à Constantinople, p. 115, 122, 124 (Știrbei, Cantacuzino & Câmpineanu in Wallachia).
Thus the exploitation and development of the Principalities were an essential part of the definition of the process of Europeanization. Indeed it is possible that the English verb “to Europeanize” was coined to describe this very process. It was a good place to offload finished goods, but also a market for exporting ideas.

We can recognize in these accounts a large number of themes and ideas which became staples of Romanian theory: passivity; the absence of a middle class; backwardness, obscurantism and alienation from Europe; the need for an intellectual élite to introduce rational government and effect a total social transformation; the importance of education, scientific culture; the need to develop language and national character; a struggle between tradition and modernity, between East and West (or North and South); a superimposed layer of foreign (Greek) administrators extorting a suffering native (Romanian) peasantry; the problem of ‘forms without foundation’ and possible false directions of development. A stereotype was imposed which presupposed a lack, and reinforced this notion, turning it into a permanent characteristic. Indeed there is an extent to which this discourse became hegemonic in subsequent historiography.


99 Carra suggested that “the taste for French authors would today make a good object of commercial exploitation in these countries” (Histoire de la Moldavie & Valachie, p. 219). In a memorandum presented to the French foreign ministry in 1782, he proposed importing “ironmongery, cheap jewellery, clocks, watches, gold braid for ladies’ costume, mirrors, garden seeds, French, Greek and Latin books, office furniture, such as writing desks, tables, cupboards and chests, coloured wallpaper, writing paper, thick red, brown, green and other coloured cloth [except blue, which they already have], artificial flowers, inexpensive paintings, prints, mathematical and physical instruments, hunting rifles, pistols, horseshoe iron, jam, liqueurs, ordinary and glazed porcelain, carriages and various other things.” Hurmuzaki, Documente, Suppl. I-II, p. 15. (My emphasis, A.D.-F.)


In what follows I neither wish to argue that the above picture was entirely false; nor that it would have been completely rejected by all contemporary Romanians. Indeed, some Romanians aided foreign writers in their researches, and even suggested certain ideas to them. The cultural practices of the main local actors involved not only passive absorption but also quite sophisticated manipulations of the ideas Europeans had of them; while their development of the concepts of ‘literature’ and ‘nation’ in Romanian reacted to, but also interacted with European expectations and norms.\(^\text{102}\)

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\(^{102}\) Katherine Verdery, “Moments in the rise of the discourse on national identity, I: 17th through nineteenth centuries”, in Agrigoroaei, Buzatu & Cristian, eds. *Românii în istoria universală*, III-i. Iași, 1988, p. 58: the “interstitial” projection of the Romanian subject “caught the creators of that ideology in the currents of more powerful representations from the West”.
The State of Culture

Not all Romanian intellectuals were unconscious of the processes emphasized by the foreign observers. Indeed, for a theory of literature, modernity and nationalism we do not even need the analytic hindsight of modern academics: it was evident enough to Bishop Chesarie of Râmnic, writing in Wallachia in 1778, that a common written culture was a fundamental component of the modern nation:

Wallachia has had three significant epochs or ages. One age in which wars were waged; another in which the foundation of princely monasteries was begun; and another in which was begun the translation of books from Slavonic into the Romanian language.... Without the slightest hesitation we can designate the fourth epoch, or significant age, as being the present age of Wallachia, which the reign of our most enlightened prince Alexander Ypsilant Voevod has made important for future times also; for only in his Highness’s days has the country been so fortunate as to obtain written codes for its government.103

By the 1820s, the idea of printing as an activity conducive to the formation of national identity had become widespread among intellectuals. A Moldavian reform project presented to the Russian consul in 1822 proposed “a public printing house in the language of the fatherland, [...] for all kinds of books that might be necessary, not to be shut down without cause”;104 while in 1826 the enlightened Wallachian boyar Dinicu Golescu wrote that “the printing house is the benefactor of mankind and the main instrument enabling the spread of enlightenment among nations.”105

Those who published the first newspapers in Wallachia and Moldavia were no less convinced of the role of their publications upon the national spirit. Gheorghe Asachi, the editor of Albina Românească [The Romanian Bee, 1829-1849] in Moldavia, described his journal as “the practical method of cultivating the nation”.106 His Wallachian counterpart, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, who printed Curierul rumânesc [The Romanian Courier, 1829-1848], believed that “without national books, without a national literature, neither the patrie, nor patriotism, nor

104 A.D. Xenopol, “Primul proiect de constituțione a Moldovei din 1822.” AARMSI, s. II, t. XX, 1897-1898, p. 131.
106 Albina românească, 2/14 april 1831. Reprinted under the title “Despre cultivarea limbii române
even nationality can exist." Likewise, Zaharia Carcalechi, the publisher of the first Romanian-language periodical in the Habsburg Monarchy (Biblioteca Românească, 1821, 1829-1834): "All the enlightened nations have discovered that, to write books and to disseminate them amongst one's own people, is the most commendable means of enlightening nations."

It is not hard, then, to find evidence of a belief in the salutary effects of literary production on national consciousness. And yet we should not confuse the mere recommendation of books and newspapers, with proof of their operation as a real factor in Romanian society. One could say that a theory of print culture was itself part of the nationalist myth, which in turn was fed by the expectations of political opinion in Europe. We can read these affirmations of literature’s significance in terms of the acquisition of a certain grasp of the terminology of cultural ideology: but unless we know at least something of the extent of their reception and its context, any reading of the literature of the past will be doomed to partiality: we will select as noteworthy what appeals to our own mentality (or to our agenda), and ignore what seemed important or representative to contemporaries.

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a) Literacy

Obviously, an ideology (nationalism) or a state of mind (national consciousness)\(^{109}\) is much harder to disseminate and cultivate through print, if the target audience is largely illiterate. Heliade, in his newspaper prospectus of 1829, claimed that “the benefits of the Gazette are general and aimed indiscriminately at all ranks of men”\(^{110}\), but this was scarcely realizable at the time he wrote.

We have no formal surveys of literacy in the Principalities before the second half of the nineteenth century, but the first one we do have show them as one of the least literate regions of Europe. At the beginning of the twentieth century illiteracy in the Old Kingdom was estimated at 87%; and this in a work of official propaganda.\(^{111}\) Official statistics agree roughly with this estimate: rural illiteracy was calculated at 85% in 1899.\(^{112}\) The rate of literacy in the Principalities, then, was probably lower in 1890 than it was among some parts of Western Europe in 1550.\(^{113}\)

For the earlier period, illiteracy must have been even greater. In 1834, of 1400 new recruits to the newly re-established Wallachian militia, 120 could read: in other words about 8.5% of young and healthy adult males.\(^{114}\) But overall literacy was probably less: nine years later, Petrache Poenaru, director of the Wallachian Council for Education and editor of the first gazette aimed at the rural inhabitants of that province, Învățătorul satului [The Village Teacher, 1843-1852], estimated that “in every village there are, if not more, at least five or six people who know

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\(^{109}\) This is the distinction proposed by Hugh Seton-Watson ("Language and National Consciousness", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, LXVII, 1981, pp. 83-100): "nationalism" denotes a movement and an explicit doctrine, whereas "national consciousness" is simply a state of mind, whose political consequences are latent. See also Hans Rogger, *National consciousness in eighteenth-century Russia*. Cambridge, MA, 1960.

\(^{110}\) "Înșiținătarea", *Curierul românesc*, 1 April 1829, in Aurel Petrescu ed., *op. cit.*, p. 90.


\(^{113}\) About 20 percent of peasants in Narbonne and the surrounding countryside were literate in the late sixteenth century; about 20 percent of lay witnesses (but very few peasants) before the consistory court in Durham about 1570. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Aldershot, 1994, p. 251.

\(^{114}\) As reported by Bois-le-Comte, Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XVII, p. 353.
how to read". Poenaru's colleague, the Bucharest geography teacher and journalist Ion Genilie, estimated a reading population for Wallachia of about 10,000. In April 1848, a teacher from Muscel county in Wallachia gave a more pessimistic assessment, writing that "a few years ago there was scarcely to be found one man with book-learning to every three or four villages."

Travellers' accounts of the Principalities often mentioned the poor education of the clergy, and were surprised by the fact that the priests were often little differentiated from the peasantry amidst whom they lived. We should not necessarily accept this evidence without question, and indeed some writers mention that the priests' education did usually extend to reading and writing. We have internal evidence from the 1820s that large numbers of priests were being ordained "without book-learning, and without their being needed."

A whole series of princes and metropolitans attempted to confine ordainment to literate clergy, but, as one witness wrote in 1818, "this legislation was sometimes respected and sometimes not", and "priests are chosen only from among uneducated people."

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119 See the discussion of this issue in Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, op. cit., p. 118-145.
120 "A priest's learning consists in an ability to read and sing to a mediocre standard in his own tongue." Raicevich, Osservazioni..., p. 243-244. Raicevich had a long (ten-year) experience of the Principalities, whereas Walsh (previous note) was only passing through.
122 Dionisie Fotino, Istoria generală a Daciei [1818] tr. George Sion. București, 1859, III, p. 205 n. 2 & 3. Wallachian measures obliging the priests to learn begin with Antim Ivireanul’s Învățământa besericească in 1710 (reprinted in 1741 and 1774), up to Caragea's decree of December 1817, requiring priests to undergo at least six months of schooling before ordination (G. Bogdan-Duică &
Austrian envoy that “the majority of our priests possess neither the most elementary literary knowledge nor the spiritual training necessary to their vocation.” Some popular jokes collected as late as the 1880s confirm that the idea of a priest who cannot read was a familiar idea to locals as well as to foreigners:

Priest: My good men, do you know what is in this book?
People: We do not know, father!
Priest: Nor do I!

Or:

Priest: My good men, do you know what is in this book?
People: We know, father!
Priest: In that case I’ve nothing more to tell you!

On the other hand, it is safe to estimate that all princes and ministerial office-holders were able to read and write by the 1820s. This had by no means been the case a hundred years before; but the Phanariot princes (who themselves depended for their position on their learning and mastery of foreign languages), had made it a condition for public office-holding that candidates should have diplomas of graduation from the Princely Academies of Bucharest and Iași. In 1777, Carra wrote that he doubted that a single woman in the Principalities knew how to read and write: however, his assertion was firmly refuted by a local boyar, in a pamphlet printed in passable French at Vienna. Slightly later Madame Reinhard, the wife of the French consul in Iași in 1806, noted a disposition to reading among the wives of the Moldavian boyars, and wrote of the Princess that

G. Popa-Lisseanu, eds. Viata și opera lui Gheorghe Lazăr. București, 1924, p. 206-209). In Moldavia these obligations were applied in 1755 (Preface to Sinopsis, BRV, II, p. 119-121; English translation by Teoctist, Metropolitan of Moldavia, Metropolitan Iacob Putneanul, 1719-1778. Neamț Monastery, 1978, p. 93-94). Priests benefitted from fiscal privileges, and one of the few major taxes to which they were subject was for the upkeep of schools, so it is easy to see why illiterate people should want to become priests, and why priests might be reluctant to develop schools.

125 According to a Moldavian chronicle (Neculce, Letopisul Țării Moldovei ed. I. Iordan. București, 1955, p. 386) in 1742 Mavrocordat “told all the mazili in the whole country to bring their children to study at school, in any language they liked, so that there might be learned men in our Moldavian land too, as there are in other countries and places.” Another chronicle says that the horror of the clergy at the thought of having to acquire book learning so late in their lives, was “indescribable”. (Enache Kogălniceanu, in Cronicile României, III, p. 204).
“she expresses herself fluently in French and our literature is not unfamiliar to
her.”127 This in itself was something: a literate élite had been in position for some
time longer than in, say, neighbouring Serbia, where many of the senior instigators
of the Revolution of 1804 were illiterate, as was the country’s ruler until 1838,
Prince Miloš Obrenović.128

However, the division between the literate and the illiterate by no means
corresponded precisely to the division between élite and masses before the mid-
nineteenth century. In general, the decision to educate oneself or one’s children
depended very much on the individual, and need not automatically be associated
with a high social status, or be a sine qua non for achieving it.129 It was quite
possible for lesser boyars, who formed the social basis for provincial government,
to occupy positions of power in the counties, without knowing how to read or
write. Constantin “Dinca” Brătianu (c. 1795-1844), the father of the illustrious
liberal prime-minister Ion C. Brătianu, “knowing neither how to write, nor to read,
barely even able to sign his name”, was elected judge and prefect of Argeş county
in 1835.130 On the other hand, even before 1821, some of the senior offices of the
Principalities were given over to people with specifically intellectual attainments,
who had proved useful to the Prince in one way or another, and often followed
him from Constantinople. The Phanariots themselves could in some sense be seen
as a caste of intellectuals. The leader of the 1821 revolt in Wallachia, Tudor
Vladimirescu (c. 1780-1821), an Oltenian peasant soldier later promoted to the
lesser nobility, could read and write well and is likely to have been familiar with
books and newspapers from Vienna.131

From the early nineteenth century, most villages in the Principalities
tended not to deal with the central state authorities on a personal level, but through

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127 Lettres de Madame Reinhard à sa mère, 1798-1815. Tr. de l’allemande par la baronne de
129 Cf. the Hungarian case, described by István György Tóth, “Lire et écrire parmi les nobles
131 Tudor served as a pandour (frontier soldier) in Oltenia and later as a boyar’s administrator: he
spent some time in Vienna from 1814, dealing with a court case on behalf of his employer, Ioan C.
Filitti, Frământări politice și sociale în Principatele Române de la 1821 la 1828. București, 1932,
p. 19ff.
representatives, and also village clerks. Such a clerkship might be the first step to literary ambition: the father (born 1812) of the great poet Mihai Eminescu held various jobs of this kind. Similarly, the playwright Ion Luca Caragiale's immigrant father (born c. 1825) earned a position in Romanian society through his literacy, as administrator of a monastic estate, subsequently rising to the position of magistrate. Both writers themselves worked as copyists in the early part of their careers.

But although such upward social movement through access to letters may have been surprisingly common for long before 1830 - some historians have talked of the long-term formation of “an invisible bourgeoisie” spreading a common set of national ideas from the late 17th century onwards - it guarantees no kind of circulation of written ideas on a national level. Those free peasants, mercenaries or merchants who made it would hide their peasant culture in their new environment, and look down on the one from which they had emerged. Literacy might indeed enable people to move upwards: but it does not follow that the same literacy spread downwards.

All the same, we must not assume that villagers were completely unaffected by the written word. Many written works would be read aloud to a large group of people, and thus much more widely disseminated than a set of literacy statistics would have us believe. This is particularly true of religious works such as the liturgy and sermons. But it is also valid for popular song and fiction. There are instances of aristocratic collectors of “oral” literature who wrote down songs and poems that had in the first instance been disseminated through print. In the 1840s, the popular writer Anton Pann included in a collection of

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12. Henri H. Stahl, Traditional Romanian Village Communities, p. 109-110. A letter-writing guide in manuscript has survived from the end of the eighteenth century, which notes the forms to be used for a large number of kinds of letter: see CMR, II, p. 292 (ms. no. 547).


16. Idem. “Popular Literature, Print and Common Culture.” CREL, 2, 1985, p. 4-17. One can hardly accept, however, Duțu’s affirmation (p. 12) that “rural culture was in permanent contact with the
poems "gathered from the people", a translation from Lamartine by the "high-cultured" poet C.A. Rosetti. Folk songs collected south of the Danube in the nineteenth century contained motifs also to be found in written chronicles from much earlier periods, suggesting further interaction – although of what kind exactly, is hard to specify.

We depend on the (printed) word of the intellectuals for most of these fragments of evidence. They cannot be completely neglected: or at the very least it is important to establish that villages were not hermetically sealed from all outside or élite influence - a common myth, but a sociologically improbable one, as Jack Goody and others have shown. Where reading was a collective activity, and in communities where information was habitually shared, Poenaru's idea that through five or six literate men in each village he could reach a much larger population was not completely wishful. The scarcity value of books, combined with the difficulty in accessing them, meant that the rural communities would be in a sense prime targets for the inculcation of foreign and new ideas.

literature which developed in town or at Court, thus...conferring to Romanian civilization a specific note in South Eastern Europe."

b) Education and the public sphere

Formal education in the Principalities was, institutionally at least, placed within the closely circumscribed limits of the religious sphere. The ostensible purposes of study were religious improvement and the extension of benefits to the religious community, which in the Ottoman world was in any case the framework within which educational and social welfare was authorized, established and funded. A charter of 1748 issued by the prince of Moldavia compared schooling to "a well from which the mass of people may drink of sufficient learning and wisdom, learning which causes every man to know God."* In 1774, the preface to a Bucharest edition of apostolic texts admitted that "All good and useful works are pleasing to God." But, it was stressed, "especially so are those which are done for the honour and praise, for the greater spreading of the True Word and for the praise of the Holy Church."** Education was a Christian undertaking, and the desire for learning was likened to a profession of faith: "every true-believing Christian desires to enlighten the thought of his and his children's hearts with learning and knowledge."*** The prestige of tradition prevailed over models of individual action, to the extent that Old Testament allusions were often preferred to references to Christ's teachings: both the Phanariot princes in their school foundation charters, and the weather-magicians or wise men of the villages, invoked the same patron for their learning: this was none other than King Solomon.****

The main educational institutions in the Principalities were the so-called "Princely Academies". These had been established in Bucharest and Iași at the end

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141 Apostol cu mila lui Dumnezeu sfântului (București, 1774) repr. in BRV, II, p. 204.
142 Catahisis. Iași, 1777, ibid., p. 220.
143 King Solomon invoked by Dosoftei, Bishop of Rădăuți, in 1787 (Mihai-Ștefan Ceausu, "Școală și educație în Bucovina în perioada Josefinistă și postJosefinistă", AIIAI, XXXI, 1994, p. 232); Mihai Sutu of Moldavia in a school charter of 1793 (Uricariul, II, p. 53); by the authors of panegyrics to Phanariot princes (Radu Păun, "Literatura encomiastică și mirajul puterii absolute în veacul XVIII." RIS, II-II, 1997-1998, p. 295-332; Hurmuzaki, Documente, XIII, p. 293); by translators of Enlightenment literature (CMR, II, p. 175; BRV, III, p. 25, 495); by the solomonari or weather-magicians (Andrei Oișteanu, Cosmos vs. Chaos tr. Mirela Adâscălăie, Bucharest, 1999, p. 185-197; see also S. Mihăilescu, "Solomonarii." Șezăoarea, II, 1893, p. 140-142).
of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries respectively.\textsuperscript{144} They effectively continued Byzantine traditions of learning, with an emphasis on Classical texts and Aristotelian philosophy. Theological texts were used for study, but not as a separate part of the syllabus. Education was geared around Ancient Greek, although other languages were also taught.\textsuperscript{145}

Controversy exists both as to the quality of the education at the Academies, and the extent to which they were a genuine force for social change in the Principalities.\textsuperscript{146} Student numbers reached over two hundred by the 1810s; but the programme was precarious, the social prestige low, and disruptions frequent.\textsuperscript{147} Princely charters dealing with schools reveal an awareness of the insufficiency of educational establishments in the Principalities. These documents, which form a major source of our information about school foundations and the content of instruction, often served as occasions for the ritual enunciation of official pieties and advertisements of princely legitimacy, and need to be analysed with care.\textsuperscript{148}

Nevertheless, some interesting reflections of contemporary mentalities emerge from them. As early as 1746, Prince Constantin Mavrocordat of Wallachia justified his educational reforms by reference to a sense of inferiority: schools are necessary "lest we remain behind other peoples in neighbouring countries."\textsuperscript{149} Twenty years later, Grigore Ghica of Moldavia compared "the state of enlightened celebrity in which our people once were, with the miserable and tearful present state, on account of the lack of instruction".\textsuperscript{150} On the other hand, this very

\textsuperscript{144} The exact dating is controversial: for a resumé of the problems, see A. Camariano-Cioran, \textit{Les Académies princières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leur professeurs}. Thessaloniki, 1974, p. 22-36 (for Bucharest), 85-87 (for Iaşi); new evidence in Andrei Pippidi, "Pouvoir et culture en Valachie sous Constantin Brancovan", \textit{RESEE}, XXVI, 4, 1988, p. 290-291.

\textsuperscript{145} A good survey of the content of teaching at Bucharest is G. Cronţ, "L'Académie de Saint-Sava de Bucarest au XVIIIe siècle: le contenu de l'enseignement." \textit{RESEE}, IV, 3-4, 1966, p. 437-475.

\textsuperscript{146} A useful resumé of the disputes in Paul Cornea, \textit{Originile romantismului românesc}. Bucureşti, 1972, p. 625-626. Since then, a positive assessment has been given by A. Camariano-Cioran, op. cit.; Pippidi, "L'accueil de la philosophie française..." is rather more reserved; Rhoads Murphey, "Westernisation in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire: how far, how fast?" \textit{Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies}, XXIII, 1999, p. 116-139, rejects the idea of advanced secularization among either Greeks or Turks.

\textsuperscript{147} Recordon, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{148} Popescu-Mihut, "Ideologie politică..." loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{149} Iorga, \textit{Hist. de l'enseignement...}, p. 66-67.

\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 84.
awareness provoked a desire to modernize. The observations of the metropolitan of Moldavia, Iacob Stamati, in a report of 1800 on the Iaşi academy, constitute both a critique of the old system and an affirmation of new ideas. Stamati had harsh words for the pretended encyclopaedism of the neo-Byzantine framework of learning, with its “chit-chat about parsing” ["tehnologhicești birfel"]; he saw that language should be taught “not word by word according to the old custom, but concept by concept”:

In all education we develop from the known to the unknown, but not in darkness from the unknown to the unknown, as was taught hitherto in schools... to learn by rote, like parrots, knowing and understanding nothing of what is taught; this caused the students to waste ten or twenty years learning grammar, while the nations of Europe learn this language [Ancient Greek]... more easily than we do, though it is foreign to them.\(^{151}\)

Moreover, the age-old religious function of education was questioned: school “is a place... where a child, attending frequently, learns the appropriate teachings, which include not only learning the fear of God and the dogmas of the Orthodox faith, but also making themselves useful to the fatherland.” For these opinions Stamati cited not only the authority of Cicero but also that of the professors of the University of Göttingen.\(^{152}\)

The influence of Condillac and the modern European pedagogy is evident here;\(^{153}\) and the fundamentally new understanding of pedagogy as progressive

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\(^{151}\) Text reproduced in N. Enescu, “Data anaforalei Mitropolitului Iacob II Stamati privitoare la şcolile din Moldova.” MMS, XLVII, 3-4, 1971, p. 201-203. (Stamati still maintained that Greek was the only suitable language for philosophical instruction). This critique of morals precedes the almost identical one of Andreas Wolf (cited earlier), who was in fact well acquainted with Stamati (see I. Lupşa, “Cum înființează o carte tipărită la Sibiu în anul 1805 personalitatea mitropolitului Iacob Stamati.” MMS, XLIV, 11-12, 1959, p. 850-858). Wolf’s account coincided with the local Metropolitan’s opinion, and was not just an image dreamt up according to “foreign” norms.

\(^{152}\) Ibid. Compare the statement by Constantin Ipsilanti, Prince of Wallachia in 1804, that “the Good Lord gave us to rule, and we should thank him by educating people for the common good.” (apud V.A. Urechia, Istoria românilor, VIII, p. 443).

\(^{153}\) Condillac, Cours d’études pour l'instruction du prince de Parme. Livre I: La Grammaire - the method is not to instil in them, by rote-learning, general principles (which presuppose a series of observations which they have not had the occasion to make), but to lead them from observation to observation, from the known towards the unknown. (Œuvres, t. V. Paris, 1798, p. iii-v.) Professors at Bucharest and Iaşi translated Condillac and his Italian adaptor Francesco Soave into Greek, and taught from manuscript adaptations of his work (Camariano-Cioran, op. cit., p. 201-203, 438-444, 621-622; D. Popovici, Ideologia literară a lui I. Heliade Rădulescu [1935]. Cluj-Napoca, 1977, p. 20-22.) The Romanian ms. translation of Condillac’s Logique by Vasile Vârnav (1825), which is from the Greek, is now known to have been preceded by one directly from the French by Lazăr-Leon Asachi in 1818 (Antonie Plămădeală, Lazăr-Leon Asachi în cultura română. Sibiu, 1985, p. 32-42). On the importance of Condillac’s thought for the linking of nation to language: Hans Aarsleff, From Locke to Saussure. London, 1982, p. 146-209; G. A. Wells, The Origin of Language. Aspects of the Discussion from Condillac to Wundt. La Salle, IL, 1987, p. 9-47.
psychological development rather than rote-learning can be traced throughout nineteenth-century Romanian educational literature.\textsuperscript{154} Other Western writers of the Enlightenment such as Voltaire, Beccaria, and Fénélon, were often (but not always) translated into Romanian from Greek intermediary versions.\textsuperscript{155} Greek was very much the commercial and intellectual lingua franca, and a language with a prestige that Romanian lacked. It is not therefore surprising that conceptualizations of modernity often found their way into Romanian language culture through Greek writings, which in their turn might have been influenced by West European currents.\textsuperscript{156} Likewise, in Bucharest, the Greek Academy was the site of heated arguments as to the relative value of Ancient and Modern wisdom: Rousseau and Heiniccius were read and studied here in the early 1800s, and a movement began "to stamp out that preconceived idea that only what Ancient Greece has given us is good. Modern Europe surpasses even old Hellas in wisdom". Constantin Vardalachos, the director of the Bucharest school from 1805 to 1815, had no hesitation in declaring Newton to be superior to Aristotle.\textsuperscript{157}

Not all translations from the French were revolutionary, or even products of the Enlightenment: a Greek translation of a work originally written as a manual for the instruction of Louis XIV in the 1650s was in use in the Bucharest Academy in the 1810s;\textsuperscript{158} while a set of 17th-century Protestant sermons was considered

\begin{footnotes}
\item[154] The idea of leading pupils "from the known to the unknown" was also propounded by Ion Heliade Rădulescu, "Despre învățătura publică." \textit{Dacia literară}, II, 1840, p. 251-252. It remained a staple of Romanian pedagogy through the nineteenth century: cf. Ion Creangă, preface to \textit{Geografia județului Iași} (1879), cited by N. Țimiras, \textit{Ion Creangă}. București, n.d., p. 135.
\item[157] Camariano-Cioran, \textit{Les Académies Princières}, p. 141.
\end{footnotes}
worthy of translation into Romanian (again, via a Greek intermediary) in 1819.\textsuperscript{159} A religious outlook persisted in the administration, too: the 1814 regulations for the Princely Academy of Bucharest reaffirmed that anybody caught appropriating or misspending money earmarked for schooling was to receive a punishment equivalent to that due for sacrilege.\textsuperscript{160} Translations of Voltaire and other European thinkers provoked counter-attacks.\textsuperscript{161} Many of them show the influence of the reactionary "Paternal Exhortation" \textit{[Didaskalia Patriki]}, a work published in Constantinople in 1798 and attributed to Patriarch Anthimos. In this critique of Western ideas, the Enlightenment was not understood as a secularizing current but rather believed to be part of some imaginary Catholic plot against Orthodoxy and its privileged position within the Ottoman Empire. Not only was this work translated twice into Romanian; its sentiments were also frequently echoed in contemporary Romanian writings, such as those of the monk Naum Râmniceanu, who described Voltaire in the 1830s as "the forerunner of the last Antichrist, the deceiver of the world, the barbarian in the face of God's works, the philosopher of the darkness of damnation, the visible devil."\textsuperscript{162} Meanwhile, strong eschatological and millenarian accents not only continued but became an increasingly strong presence in Romanian written culture towards the turn of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{163} Greek patriots might encourage translations of Rousseau, but they would also spread their conceptualisations of the future through public prophecy.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{159} BRV, III, p.312.
\textsuperscript{160} Popescu-Mihuț, "Ideologie politică...", p. 83.
\textsuperscript{161} Carra, \textit{op. cit}, p. 219; Panzini, in Cortese, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 165; Dimaras, \textit{La Grèce au temps des Lumières}, p. 40ff.
\textsuperscript{164} In February 1806, the Greek metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia Dositheos Filittis appeared publicly in Bucharest and prophesied that in the near future the Russians would be in Paris, and the French in Siberia. (Saint Luce to Talleyrand, 3 Feb 1806, in Humuzaki, \textit{Documente}, XVI, p. 702-704); in fact, a remarkably accurate prediction of the outcome of the Napoleonic Wars!
These aspects of Greek and Romanian culture in the age of the French revolution have often been interpreted as a sign of backwardness and obscurantism or even "cultural schizophrenia." But while the evidence is important and interesting, it should be remembered that such apparently irrational attitudes were common companions of scientific and rational thought in Western Europe too. In post-1688 England, Newtonians combined revolutionary scientific systems with a conservative religious outlook that endured until Darwin, while prophecy and millenarianism proved attractive to radical intellectuals. In pre-revolutionary France, some of the most radical atheists were attracted by theories of the paranormal. Eric Hobsbawm has written that "In purely religious terms we must see our period as one in which increasing secularization and (in Europe) religious indifference battled with revivals of religion in its most uncompromising forms." If it is cultural schizophrenia we are dealing with, it is one that is common to European trends of thought and by no means peculiar to either Greek or Romanian culture.

What tendencies there were towards secular education tended to be confined to the private sphere. The gradual introduction of French as a language of the élite was largely the work of instructors working in private houses, and diplomatic secretaries working for the princes. Many of these secretaries, doctors and teachers were employed in a political capacity, had direct links with Western diplomatic agents in Constantinople (who often suggested their

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167 E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class. Harmondsworth, 1980, p. 54: "Because the luxuriating imagery points sometimes to goals that are clearly illusory, this does not mean that we can lightly conclude that it indicates a chronically impaired sense of reality."

168 Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France. Cambridge, MA, 1968, p. 165: "The literate French of the late 1780s tended to reject the cold rationalism of the midcentury in favor of a more exotic intellectual diet. They yearned for the suprarational and the scientifically mysterious. They buried Voltaire and flocked to Mesmer."


170 P. Eliade, De l'influence française sur l'esprit publice en Roumanie. Paris, 1898, p. 137-171. Some of the first French teachers were working in pensions whose main object was the teaching of Greek: N. Cartojan, "Pensionatele franceze din Moldova în prima jumătate a veacului al XIX-lea." Omagiu lui Ramiro Ortiz. București, 1929, p. 68. For some contracts, see Hurmuzaki, Documente, X, p. 554-555.
appointment to the Phanariot princes), and did not exercise any major effect on the wider intellectual life of the Principalities. On the other hand, the practice of hiring private tutors became fashionable in boyars’ households, and there were repeated requests for tutors in Western languages. In Iași, a single boyar might retain more teachers for the private instruction of his children and relatives than were present in the Academy. By 1806 the Russian consul described the study of French as an “epidemic” in Moldavia. The capacity of boyars to educate their children privately to a high standard may be seen in the case of the Moldavian Scarlat Sturdza (c. 1750-1814), who emigrated to Russia with his children in 1792: the family’s intellectual horizons astonished Muscovite contemporaries.

The French tutors who came were not always treated with the respect they thought they deserved: the boyars who hired them may have felt the need to acquire Western languages and culture, but made no social concessions to those who taught them.

There were other schools teaching Romanian in the Principalities before 1800, but they tended to be sporadic and lacking in prestige. There had been

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173 Stella Ghervas, Alexandre Stourdza (1791-1854). Genève, 1999, p. 16. Cf. the testimony of a Russian, Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, who was in Iași in 1829 and noted that the Moldavian boyars’ education was in some cases “superior to that of our Russian nobles”; G. Bezviconi, ed. & tr. Călători ruși în Moldova și Muntenia. București, 1947, p. 266.

174 In Bucharest in 1804 a certain “Pavillon Bonnet” complained that his employer, the Great Ban Costache Ghica had given him very poor accommodation (“my cupboard is full of holes ... there is no lock on my door ... the rats are my bed-linen”) and failed to let him earn a full keep by teaching other boyars’ children (Urechia, Istoria românilor, VIII, p. 456-468); in Iași in 1817, another tutor, Bacheville, was taunted by his employer’s Albanian guards, and had his wine glass taken away from him at table. Voyages des frères Bacheville. Paris, 1820, p. 212-217.

175 For Wallachia, see Urechia, Istoria românilor, X-A, p. 386-408; for Moldavia, see the documents in Uricariul, II, p. 51-67; III, p. 22-30; X, p. 451. One village school set up in 1817 by the former Grand Vornic of Moldavia, Alexandru Calimah, entitled the latter to tax exemptions on his alcohol-producing stills, not only on the estate where the school was established, but also on other estates. This arrangement was confirmed in 1823 by the Prince Ioan Sandu Sturdza. (Iorga, SD, VI, p. 53-55.)
some sort of provision for Romanian (it was called “Moldavian”) at the Iași academy, but we have scant details outside the official charters.177 An idea of the relative importance of the different languages can be gauged by the salaries given to professors in the Iași school in 1748: 360 lei for ancient Greek, 120 for modern Greek, 130 for Slavonic, and 100 for Romanian.178 The few specific institutions for teaching Romanian were ecclesiastical, such as at the school for priests established at the monastery of Socola outside Iași in 1803.179 In Bucharest there was a school of Slavonic for church and chancery scribes, with seems to have had some sort of provision for teaching Romanian writing from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, but funds and pupil numbers were low. One teacher was fired in 1780 for moonlighting in a pub.180 Individual churches might have priests or scribes who gave elementary lessons in reading and writing. These functioned irregularly both before and after 1821, and any priest wishing seriously to instruct himself would attend the Greek Academy, or travel abroad.181 The upkeep of many schools was in theory to be paid for by annual contributions from the clergy, but the latter frequently resisted or simply did not bother to make these payments.182 Commerce with Transylvania or the Balkan lands tended to be carried out in Greek, German or Italian; while consideration for public office had been made conditional upon knowledge of Greek.183 With the regular Russian military occupations, there was a demand for scribes knowing Russian.184 So it was not surprising that Romanians wishing to advance in life were as keen to be instructed in foreign languages as in their native tongue. There is little evidence before 1821 of Romanian communities actually taking the initiative in expressing the desire for education in their native language, in contrast to neighbouring Serbia, where such

183 Cf. the request by the merchants of Pitești for a Greek school in 1804, which the reigning prince refused (Urechia, Istoria românilor, VIII, p. 441-442).
184 Ibid., IX, p. 390.
requests are on record around 1810.\textsuperscript{185}

However, it was the Phanariots - and not the "native" princes appointed after 1821 - who were responsible for the introduction of Romanian-language higher education in Bucharest and Iași. The first initiatives took place in Moldavia, where in November 1813 Prince Scarlat Callimachi approved some courses in engineering and surveying to be taught at the Academy. These were started the following year by Gheorghe Asachi, and were in fact initially held in French.\textsuperscript{186} Four years later, similar proposals were made in Wallachia by the boyars to the prince, and a Romanian school was established at St. Sava monastery in March 1818.\textsuperscript{187} The principal motivation seems to have been not so much enlightenment of the nation as a need for well-trained land surveyors to provide expert judgement in disputes over purchases of agricultural terrain. This was a period in which the nobility of both principalities sought to expand their land holdings at the expense of the free peasantry, and surveying and dealing in land with the peasantry was one area of public life where it was not possible to do business in Greek.\textsuperscript{188}

Both Asachi and Lazăr were from outside the rank of noble families, and had proved themselves useful in providing just these services. Lazăr was a Transylvanian, who came to Bucharest after being employed in the household of the Wallachian boyar's wife Ecaterina Bărcănescu, on her estate near Ploiești.\textsuperscript{189} Asachi's father was a priest from Podolia (modern Ukraine), of possibly Armenian

\textsuperscript{185} Milenko Karanovich, \textit{The Development of Education in Serbia and Emergence of its Intelligentsia (1838-1858)}. New York, 1995, p. 10-11.

\textsuperscript{186} Camariano-Cioran, \textit{Les Académies Princières}, p. 108-110, 657-659, is superior to the standard Romanian histories of education, taking into account little-used Greek sources.

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p. 78-83. Documents in G. Bogdan-Duică & Popa-Lisseanu, \textit{Viața și opera lui G. Lazăr}, ed. cit., p. 204-211. The boyars' initial request (10 dec 1817) published here, is definitely not the original, judging by the language. The scholar who first published it, V. A. Urechia ("Domnia lui Ioan Caragea, 1812-1818: Biserica - Școale - Cultura publică." \textit{AARMSI}, s, II, t. XX, 1897-1898, p. 75-76; idem, \textit{Istoria Românilor}, X-A, p. 413) is notorious for his carelessness with documents and may well have failed to mention that he translated it from the Greek. G. Pârună refers to it but does not republish it in the documentary annexe to his biography (\textit{Gheorghe Lazăr}, București, 1973, p. 169-173): his arguments (p. 31-36) that the school was Lazăr's idea have no clear documentary basis.


origin, who had moved to Iași in 1803 and reached a high rank in the Moldavian church hierarchy. Both had been educated in Vienna; Asachi also at Lvov and Rome. Competence in surveying was henceforth made conditional on the possession of a graduation certificate, so it was natural that the boyar class was keen to attend: indeed, the majority of Asachi’s students came from the upper ranks of the Moldavian nobility.

But contemporaries were aware of the significance of the opening of the Romanian schools. Lazăr described the moment as the beginning of “a new epoch... under the protection of the princely sceptre”, and declared his aim to be the justified entry of the Romanians “into the sacred number of the other Enlightened peoples, finding there the lost rank of ancestral honour.” The idea of schooling was changing: knowledge, from conferring grace, character or rank to individuals, came to be seen as a way to establish a cultural genealogy for the ethnic community. Both schoolmasters were very conscious of the fact that Romanian was considered an “inferior” tongue by their Greek colleagues: Lazăr says that the boyars who founded the school considered it a shame for a people not to have an Academy, as have other nations, and to be left “weaker, lower down and more ridiculed than all the other languages and people on the face of the earth.” Meanwhile, Asachi’s classes came under criticism from Dimitrios Govdelas, the director of the Academy in Iași, who denied that a mere engineer “with no idea of philosophy”, would be in a position to offer higher instruction, and threw the traditional accusation that Romanian lacked the necessary scientific terms for higher education. These schools were attended by about thirty pupils each, and were not in existence for long enough to establish a regular routine, a turnover of graduates or a diversified timetable.

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191 Uricarul, XVI, 1891, p. 410-412; Lazăr’s pupils were sons of merchants and lesser gentry: Ștefan Pop, “Colegiul Național Sf. Sava” in Boabe de grâu, IV, 7, 1933, p. 393-394.
193 Isar, op. cit., p. 7-10; Camariano-Cioran, op. cit., p. 638-642.
194 We know the names of 31 pupils at Asachi’s school (Uricarul, XVI, loc. cit.), and 34 at Lazăr’s (Șt. Pop, op. cit., loc. cit.). According to Govdelas, only 6 pupils graduated from Asachi’s school in the five years from 1813-1818: Iorga, Histoire de l’enseignement..., p. 146. For some
In 1820, immediately before the uprising in Wallachia, four students were sent from Bucharest to study in Italy and France, in order to gain the necessary scientific grounding to set up a school with a modern syllabus. They remained there after the insurrection of 1821, which saw the overthrow of the Phanariot regime, and kept in contact with Greek circles in Pisa and at home in Wallachia. The initial conditions for these scholarships, which specified a knowledge of Greek, changed with the regime; in 1824, a candidate was rejected because he did not master Romanian. This has been seen as the first successful and systematic move to “borrow” the learning and literature of Europe for the purposes of reconstructing Wallachian society on a national basis, although princes had occasionally undertaken similar actions before. The correspondence of the monk Poteca, who supervised the students, shows that in February 1822 he was still recognising the old metropolitan Dionisie, a Romanian but a sympathiser of the uprising, as “legitimate metropolitan” (and writing to him in Greek); but that by April the same year he had transferred his allegiance to the new metropolitan Grigorie (and corresponded in Romanian).

After 1821, the schools in Bucharest and Iași ceased to function as many of the teachers and local nobility (whose sons were the main source of intake) fled into exile. From 1822 to 1823 the St. Sava monastery in Bucharest was used by the Turkish occupying force as a military supplies depot. Lazar died in 1823 and Asachi took up a post as the Moldavian diplomatic agent in Vienna from 1822 to 1827. The Saint Sava school was maintained from 1823 to 1825 by a young graduation attestations, Gh. Ungureanu, “Știri inedite despre cursul de inginerie ținut de Gh. Asachi la Școala domnească din Iași.” RA, s.n., VI, 2, 1963, p. 250-251.

195 The text of the original proposal (by Constantin Bălăceanu - one of the official ephors supervising Lazar’s school - and the Metropolitan Dionisie) and Prince Alexandru Suțu’s statement of approval, in Urechia, Istoria Romanilor, XII, p. 84f.


197 Ibid., p. 427.

198 Iorga, Histoire de l’enseignement..., p. 79. 15 Romanians attended Padua University in the 17th century, although this compares poorly with around 2,000 Poles and over 200 Greeks (Pippidi, “Identitate etnoculturală...”, p. 75; cf. idem, “Early modern readers and libraries in South-Eastern Europe”, RESEE, XIX, 4, 1981, p. 710: “there were no more than 55 Romanians from the Principalities educated abroad before the middle of the eighteenth century.”)

199 Bianu, op. cit.

200 St. Pop, op. cit., p. 393.
intellectual, later to make a profound mark on Romanian literature, Ion Heliade Rădulescu; and was formally reopened in 1825 following the return of the students sent abroad. It was now called the “National School” for the first time. One of the newly-appointed professors, Simion Marcovici, declared his intentions “to share with my beloved brothers and patriots, what I learned according to the methods and rules used in enlightened Europe.” ²⁰¹ A school of similar standing was established in Craiova in 1826; while in Moldavia, the school in Iași was also re-established in February 1828, on Asachi’s return from Vienna. Yet again, the arrival of the Russian army caused severe disruption: again the St. Sava school turned from a spiritual haven to a military station. In Iași, Asachi’s school closed due to an outbreak of the plague in 1829; the seminary at Socola was occupied by Russian soldiers; a few months later, it burnt down. ²⁰²

²⁰¹ S. Marcovici, “Cuvântul la deschiderea Şcoalei Naționale”, 15 sep 1827, in Isar, Şcoala națională..., p. 147. Marcovici had been one of the students sent to Pisa and Paris in 1820. He changed his name from Marcu to Marcovici some time in the 1820s, a fact which provides another indication of the generally Russophile direction of the progressive intellectuals at this time. (Al. Marcu, “Un student român la Pisa şi Paris câtre 1820: Simion Marcovici.” RI, XV, 1-3, 1929, p. 17-50)

²⁰² Iorga, Histoire de l’enseignement..., p. 171 n. 3.
c) Printing

Before 1830, presses in Wallachia and Moldavia were almost exclusively run by monks or other clergy, with the occasional secular specialist brought in from Central Europe, Russia or Greece but still under ecclesiastical supervision. The rights of the church to a monopoly on printing had been reiterated several times. However, the right of the temporal powers to police the church’s activity had lately also been asserted: in 1784, Prince Michael Soutzos of Wallachia issued an order forbidding the church to publish works without his prior approval.203

Religious works dominated pre-modern Romanian printing. Until the 1770s, well over 80 percent of book production consisted in religious works: prayer books, books of hours, psalters, liturgies, and the occasional hagiography or edition of the gospels. It is only after 1820 that this figure reduces below 50 percent. A foreign observer naturally associated the publishing activities of the Orthodox Church with pedantry and obfuscation: the printing of liturgies was merely a way of extracting money from the clergy, as a high price could be demanded for such symbolic objects.204 Modern scholars have arrived at a more refined but broadly similar conclusion, namely that the princes and ecclesiastical authorities continued to promote traditional theocratic profiles in their public activities, while secularizing tendencies existed below the surface and in the private sphere.205

The divide between religious and secular is not always easy to draw. An ostensibly religious figure like Chesarie of Râmnic allowed himself space for musings on the philosophy of history, as well as the Word of God: his prefaces to the menaia published at Râmnic included excerpts and adaptations from the Encyclopédie.206 The circulation of secular ideas thus often took place under the

204 Raicevich, op. cit., p. 244-245, who also notes the sale of printed indulgences by the Patriarch of Jerusalem on the occasion of his visit to the Principalities (237-239). One from 1784 has been preserved: BRV, II, p. 286.
respectable cover of divine service books. Likewise, the equation between secular books and innovative ideas is often hazardous: many secular works might be more pedantic and obscurantist in character than the religious ones.\textsuperscript{207} Moreover, it was rare to find secular works that drew no inspiration from religion at all. Ienâchîtâ Văcărescu’s Observations on the Rules of Romanian Grammar and History of the Ottoman Empire, composed in the 1780s and 1790s, are ostensibly works of the Enlightenment, but the author described himself firstly as “dicheofilax [Just Protector] of the Great Eastern Church”, and only secondarily as “Grand Spathar of Wallachia”.\textsuperscript{208}

Romanian book production as a whole increased slowly and consistently throughout the eighteenth century. Book output was much greater than among the neighbouring Serbs and Bulgarians, who had no printing presses on their territories prior to the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{209} In Southeastern Europe only the Greeks, whose output for the eighteenth century ran to 1,521 books, exceeded them in this respect.\textsuperscript{210} Compared to Western Europe, however, the gap is again staggering. More books were published in one year in France in 1584, than appeared in Romanian in the entire eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{211} In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Romanians produced about twenty books a year, as against nearly 3,000 annually in French, and around 6,000 in English.\textsuperscript{212}

There had been few religious works printed in Romanian in Transylvania since the transfer in 1700 of the Orthodox metropolitanate to the Uniate, or Greek-Catholic church, which retained Eastern rites of worship but recognized the Pope
as its spiritual leader. But in 1747 the old Orthodox press was moved from Alba Iulia to Blaj, the seat of the Uniate church in Transylvania, and a number of liturgical books were published in Romanian. The following year Maria Theresa forbade the import of Orthodox books into the Empire. In an attempt to win over the Orthodox population, the Uniates resorted at times to false indications of place of publication with a view to export across the Carpathians (books printed in Blaj, the centre of the Uniate Church in Transylvania, claimed to come from Orthodox Râmnic in Wallachia). They made little progress on the religious front - in 1762 the Habsburgs were forced to reappoint an Orthodox Metropolitan in Transylvania - but the Blaj publications undoubtedly circulated in the Principalities, while Austrian border guards were already on the lookout for “heretical” works coming the other way. Orthodox writers in the Principalities reacted strongly, like Meletie, bishop of Roman who in his Announcements about books published in Transylvania, warned readers against “the wicked reckonings of the Westerners”.

After 1770, a much stronger secular tradition of printing pedagogical and economic works developed in the Habsburg Empire, as part of the general drive by the Habsburg Emperor Joseph I (1765-1790) to cultivate the population, and instil practical economy and literacy in his subjects. Unprecedented types of text - guides to potato cultivation, secular handbooks of morals, grammars and mathematical textbooks - were published here in unprecedented print-runs: over 4,000 copies in some cases. The effects of this operation extended far beyond the intentions of its instigators. It lies beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the impact of Josephinist cultural policy on the Romanians of Transylvania: but the

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216 E.g. Apostol. Râmnic, 1784 in BRV, IV, p. 96-97.
217 Înștiințare despre cărți tipărite în Ardeal, Iași 1805, ibid., p. 122-123.
Habsburg lands henceforth proved to be a powerful centre of diffusion for all Romanians, and also Greeks.\textsuperscript{219}

However, particularly after 1789, when the French revolution broke out and the Transylvanian Romanians stepped up their claims to be considered as a separate ‘nation’ in Transylvania - presenting their famous \textit{Supplex Libellus Valachorum} to the emperor in 1791 - the Habsburg government concentrated on disseminating a reactionary, anti-French ideology. A request for a Romanian newspaper was turned down in 1790, on the grounds that it might spread “the spirit of French insubordination.”\textsuperscript{220}

Nevertheless, the existence of the presses in the Empire was of considerable use to the intellectuals of the Principalities, who frequently went to Transylvania, Hungary or Austria to publish their works. The first published translations into Romanian of Voltaire (\textit{Orestes}, 1820) and Heiniccius (\textit{Logique}, 1829) were done respectively by a Moldavian boyar (Alexandru Beldiman) and a Wallachian monk (Eufrosin Poteca); but both were printed at Buda.\textsuperscript{221} The fact that Romanian as well as Greek intellectuals from the Principalities were actively contributing to the output of the Habsburg presses is important as it mitigates the impression that the Habsburg effort to enlighten the Romanians was exclusively a one-way process.\textsuperscript{222}

The influence of Austrian cultural policy became evident quite quickly in the Principalities. In 1776, Prince Alexandru Ypsilanti hired two Greek master craftsmen to develop the Metropolitan press at Bucharest, and declared a ban on the import of books from abroad.\textsuperscript{223} In 1796, during his second reign in Wallachia, Ypsilanti sponsored the publication of the first work of agricultural instruction to


\textsuperscript{220} I. Lupaş, “Cea mai veche revistă literară.” \textit{Anuarul institutului de istorie natională}, I, Cluj 1922, p. 120-137.

\textsuperscript{221} See the bibliography drawn up by Sámuel Domokos in Péter Király, ed. \textit{Typographia Universitatis Hungaricae Budae (1777-1830)}. Budapest, 1983, p. 488-490.

\textsuperscript{222} As for instance is argued by Mathias Bernath, \textit{Habsburg und die Anfänge der rumänischen Nations-bildung}. Leiden, 1972.

appear there. The first published Romanian version of the legend of Alexander the Great (Sibiu, 1794) was reedited in Iași two years later. Geographical and arithmetical texts now began to appear in Romanian east of the Carpathians.

In the period 1776-1830 only just over half (53%) of Romanian-language books were printed in the Habsburg Empire. In fact, with the exception of the period 1801-1815, when the “Transylvanian school” of Romanian scholars was at the height of its publishing activity, the majority of Romanian books were published in the “Orthodox space” of Wallachia and Moldavia. However, the publication of secular works was proceeding faster in the Habsburg lands, and had begun earlier (see Figure 1.4).

It would be a mistake to underestimate the importance for the development of print culture of the repeated Russian military occupations of the Principalities. Russian involvement has often been seen as negative by historians, and has been given considerably less attention than that of Austria. Nevertheless we can also see an ideology of print-civilization being promoted during the successive occupations. In 1771, the Russian army brought a number of books with them for distribution, while Romanian monks travelled to Moscow and St. Petersburg to obtain more. The first translations of Voltaire into Romanian constituted pro-Russian journalism distributed in 1772 at the order of Catherine the Great; the following year the Empress’s famous Nakaz, or “Regulation”, was translated into Romanian and published at Iași. In the 1780s, a Russophile printer Mikhail Strylbif’skii, set up a press in Iași which published a number of unprecedented

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224 Amfilohie Hotinul, De obște gheografie, Iași, 1795; Elementi de arithmetica, Iași, 1795. Similar such texts of a slightly earlier date have survived in manuscript form: for a detailed analysis, see N. A. Ursu, Formarea terminologiei științifice românești. București, 1962.


227 A. Camariano-Cioran, “Traducerile în limba greacă și română a „Nacazului” (Învățătura)
types of work, such as *A curious account of physiognomy* and *Romanian-Russian dialogues*. He used a typeface close to Russian civil orthography, and probably operated as an agent for Catherine the Great. Some time in the 1790s he published the first book of poetry in Romanian, the Wallachian boyar Ioan Cantacuzino’s *Poezii noo* (“new poems”), including adaptations from Pope’s *Essay on Man* and Young’s *Night Thoughts*. The first secular press to be run in the Principalities was thus a product of Russian influence. So too was the first newspaper: what the Austrians refused in 1789 in Transylvania was realised in Moldavia in 1790, as Prince Grigorii Potemkin brought a press almost at the head of the Russian military effort: if promises of a new edition of Tacitus’s *Germanica* were not forthcoming, then a French paper, the *Courrier de Moldavie*, came out in several issues, mainly dedicated to eulogies of the Russian empress. Meanwhile Greek scholars operating in the principalities dedicated their publications to Russian emperors or generals.

There is little evidence of these works circulating widely, and it is possible that the inhabitants of Iași were more excited by the English beer brought by Potemkin’s army than the arrival of French newspapers. But Russia’s imperial prestige and the imposition of a model which was at once revolutionary in its call to arms, and psychologically amenable because the Russians were ‘of a faith’ with...
both Greeks and Romanians, proved extremely attractive.\textsuperscript{233}

Numerous Romanian publications began to appear in Russia itself after the annexation of Bessarabia - with its substantial Romanian population - in 1812. These were largely administrative and religious in nature, but included such important works as a complete Bible - the first Orthodox one in Romanian since 1688 - produced by the British and Foreign Bible Society in St. Petersburg in 1814; and the new 'constitution' [\textit{Așezământ} in Romanian, \textit{Ustav} in Russian] of Bessarabia at Chișinău in 1818. Besides a substantial number of \textit{feuilles volantes}, a total of 38 Romanian books appeared on Russian soil in the period to 1830.\textsuperscript{234}

Of course, these Romanian books were not the only thing read by the literate inhabitants of the Principalities. Greek being the language of the elite, it is not surprising that a large proportion of subscriptions for Greek books came from Bucharest and Iași, which rivalled Constantinople and Vienna as consumers of the new (and increasingly secular) literature in this language, and even outstripped the demand from the areas later to form part of the Greek state.\textsuperscript{235} French literary and scientific publications circulated initially among small élite groups, both of boyars and churchmen, including from the 1770s the first masonic lodges on Romanian territory.\textsuperscript{236} This resulted in widespread translation and copying of imaginative literature in manuscript form, at a time when publication would have been a risky political act. Authors claimed to be translating such works “simply to pass the time”, or “for the useful delectation of numerous readers” which was a kind of political disingenuousness as much as a declaration of attachment to a theory of

\textsuperscript{233} John Nicolopoulos, “From Agathangelos to the Megale Idea: Russia and the Emergence of Modern Greek Nationalism.” \textit{BS}, XXVI, 1985, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{234} Paul Mihail & Zamfira Mihail, \textit{Acte în limba română tipărite în Basarabia, I (1812-1830).} București, 1993, lists numerous documents not included in \textit{BRV}.

\textsuperscript{235} For Greek publishing and patronage in the Principalities, see L. Demény and C. Papacostea-Danielopolu, \textit{Carte tipar în societatea românească.} București, 1985, p. 241-250.

the leisure class.\textsuperscript{237} Even translations of modern French fiction were presented with an eye to preserving the reverence accorded to writing as the sole legitimate source of knowledge. The following admonitory verses, inscribed on a manuscript version of Voiture's \textit{Histoire d'Alcidaïe et Zélide} in 1783, are eloquent testimony:

\begin{quote}
Of all the things in the world that exist,
Be it not for me to speak, but Scripture's to attest.\textsuperscript{238}
\end{quote}

On the other hand, ownership of books was gradually changing from being a guarantee of religious authority to a symbol of luxury and wealth: boyars ordered the latest Parisian editions and had furniture designed to accommodate them.\textsuperscript{239} By the 1810s, we have some evidence of merchants in Iaşi selling not only tobacco and coffee but French books, at the express demand of local \textit{boyars}.\textsuperscript{240}

But away from the few centres of cultural production, and the boyars' houses, consumption of reading material remained unsystematized. There was a degree of contact between the élite and the peasantry; it may be true that some boyars were still enjoying peasant spectacles; that their own culture was to some extent still oral. But this is no reason to propose a "unified" cultural space, or the dissemination of words and ideas at a uniform rate throughout society. Whatever books or manuscripts circulated, did so in a random and accidental fashion. If there was a "common culture", or even what Stanley Fish calls an "interpretive community"\textsuperscript{241} at the lower levels of society, it had to deal with a thoroughly jumbled and indistinct variety of texts, of distant origin and written for differing audiences. Transylvanian scribes in around 1800 might copy into the same

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{240} N. Iorga, "Un mare negustor ieşean şi clienţii săi." \textit{RI}, XXVIII, 1-12, 1942, p. 49-54.
\end{flushleft}
manuscript works as diverse as the life of a hermit of Mount Athos; a history extracted from the annals of the papal apologist Baronius; and a popular Greek picaresque tale. One hardly imagines that these works were chosen from a wide selection: they constituted a compendium of writings to hand.

Reverence accorded to books cannot by any means always be interpreted as an indication of a general desire for universal education and enlightenment. The idea of the book still frequently carried sacred or magical connotations, both at the level of the exercise of political power, and in everyday village life. Princes might choose to mark the beginning of their reign by the publication of a work of religious instruction or homilies, as a representation of their mercy [milă] towards their subjects, equivalent to the founding of a church; a tradition which continued to have a similar function even when the content of such works became secularized. Meanwhile, on the popular level, the solomonari or weather-magicians would evoke the book to give credibility to their craft: it was believed that

they learn from books that other people can’t understand and cannot read: they learn how to ride dragons, how to summon them, how to keep the weather ... When they finished learning everything from all the books in the world, they would go to a far away country in the East, where they lived in a cave and sat at a stone table and write down all the world’s knowledge in a book.

Of course the power of such magic depends on limited knowledge of lettering, which thereby retains a mysterious and powerful character. The use of books to give credibility to a wide range of ritual activities, from the application of folk remedies to ensure favourable weather conditions, survived well into the twentieth century and is not to be ignored when considering the reception of ideas about the effects of literature on social change. From this point of view, the most

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244 Cited by Oișteanu, Cosmos vs. Chaos. p. 186. Oișteanu argues that the use of a book in such magic rituals was relatively new; in old Romanian, “carte” could refer to a single document, or even an inscribed ring or talisman.

The importance of both Greek and Russian political and cultural currents in the Principalities can be gauged by the history of the first cultural association to be established there. This was the “Greco-Dacian society”, also known as the *Philologike Etauria*, which was founded in Bucharest in 1810 during the Russian military occupation, and was patronized by the Greek patriot and Russian foreign-ministry official Ioannis Kapodistrias. They met in the main hall of the Bucharest Academy, which was decorated with murals portraying Pindar, Aristotle and learned modern Greeks alongside Tsar Alexander I and his late mother, Catherine the Great. The significance of this society, and of the *Philomousos Etauria* founded at Vienna in 1814, has been much discussed. Both were patronized by Alexander I; the former society seems almost certainly to have aimed at legitimating Russian rule in the Principalities, to the extent that historical evidence was collected to attempt to prove an early Slavic presence in the Principalities, such as in the origin of the name of the town Rusciuk [Ruse], south of the Danube from Wallachia.

A contemporary observer described how the Apostles of the *Philike Hetauria* ["Friendly society"], the Greek revolutionary organization founded in Odessa in 1814 and with a wide membership in Moldavia and Wallachia, exploited the idea of culture. They “cloaked the real purpose of their frequent journeys, by pretending to be engaged in works of charity, and in seeking subscriptions for founding and maintaining places of education”; They thus allowed a melodramatic significance to be attached to the patronage of the *Philomouson Etauria* by the Tsar or his minister Kapodistrias. Kapodistrias

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246 Cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: who speaks for ‘Indian’ pasts?” *Representations*, 37, Winter 1992, p. 18: “Indians arrogated subjecthood to themselves precisely by mobilizing, within the context of modern institutions and sometimes on behalf of the modernizing project of nationalism, devices of collective memory that were both antihistorical and antimodern”.


248 Ibid., p. 50.

afterwards denied any direct revolutionary intent, and modern historians have supported him. But the use of the metaphor ("education" = "uprising") was perhaps unhelpful: it is said that a village bey in the Peloponnese was misled by a letter from the Patriarch of Constantinople sending him money and encouraging him to "found schools", into assuming that the latter was inviting him to revolt. It also renders historiographical debates about "the intellectual origins of revolution" in the early nineteenth-century Balkans rather circular: perhaps we need to talk about intellectual activity as a euphemism or alibi for revolution, rather than a cause of it.

But not all intellectuals were faking it: a member of the Philologike Etairia, Dr. Constantin Caracasz, was one of the owners of the first civil press in Wallachia, established in 1817. Caracasz, Radu Clinceanu and Dumitrache Topliceanu sought permission from the prince Ioan Caragea, and received it. They also applied for a licence to print newspapers, which they were refused. (Another proposal to start up a newspaper, by the Greek courtier Nicolae Mavros in 1819 seems also to have come to nothing.) They were, however, permitted to publish works of "philology": "filologhicà, in other words writings concerning the love of learning". Their activity was closely followed by the prince and the divan; their function can be gauged by bearing in mind that the first work to emerge from it was the civil code named after the prince, the Cod Caragea, in Greek in 1817 and in Romanian in 1818.

252 For critiques of "intellectual origins" as a theme in the historiography of the French revolution, see Roger Chartier, The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution tr. Lydia Cochrane. Berkeley, CA, 1991; Daniel Roche & Vincenzo Ferrone, "L'histoire des Lumières" in eidem, eds. Le monde des Lumières. Paris, 1999, p. 497-522. Arguments in Greek historiography have been about "preparedness", social, political and intellectual: see e.g. the essays by Frangos and Koumarianou in Clogg, ed. The Struggle....
253 as reported by von Militz, the secretary of the Prussian ambassador in Constantinople, in Hurmuzaki, Documente, X, p. 85.
254 Urechia, "Domnia lui Ioan Caragea, 1812-1818", ed. cit., p. 89-92, reproduces Prince Caragea's charter in full. Caracasz (1772-1828), a medie of Aromanian origin, had been a member of the "Greco-Dacian Society" in 1810-1812 (N. Camariano, op. cit., p. 40); he wrote an interesting Topography of Wallachia, published posthumously in Greek in Bucharest in 1830.
Meanwhile, a similar operation had been established in Moldavia in 1812: this time the press was exclusively Greek, but it performed similar functions, printing the civil code of the Prince Scarlat Calimah, in Greek only (a Romanian translation appeared later, in 1833). Aside from these important official works, the presses were not particularly active, and it seems clear from the divergence in languages that the considerations surrounding their establishment owed more to the personal interests of the printers and their patrons than to an analysis of what would be best for the social welfare of the Principalities themselves. They were both part of an international network of patronage - the Moldavian press had subscribers as far afield as Vienna, Smyrna and Odessa - and a token symbol of modernity serving to bolster the image of the individual princes, as can be seen by Prince Caragea of Wallachia’s ceremonious donation of a copy of his law code to the University of Oxford. The Iași press printed about ten or twenty books in nine years. Both presses were active in the publication of revolutionary proclamations during the invasion of the principalities in 1821 by the Greek commander Alexander Ypsilanti (son and grandson of Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia); like that revolt, it counted numerous Romanian boyars among its sponsors.255

Fig. 1.1 Romanian-language printing, 1801-1830: by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1801-1805</th>
<th>1806-1810</th>
<th>1811-1815</th>
<th>1816-1820</th>
<th>1821-1825</th>
<th>1826-1830</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habsburg Empire</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transylvania</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallachia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldavia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia &amp; Bessarabia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ambrus Miskolczy, “Le rôle des publications de l'imprimerie universitaire de Buda dans l'évolution de la culture roumaine de la fin du XVIIIᵉ siècle à 1830” in Typographia Universitatis Hungaricae Budae (1777-1830). Publié par Péter Király. Budapest, 1983, p. 301-308, also produced a tabulation by publishing centres but he omitted numerous smaller centres, and any locations then part of the USSR (presumably because considered “Moldavian” according to Soviet language policy).
Fig. 1.2: Romanian-language printing, 1801-1830: by subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of books</th>
<th>1801-1805</th>
<th>1806-1810</th>
<th>1811-1815</th>
<th>1816-1820</th>
<th>1821-1825</th>
<th>1826-1830</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History/ Belles-lettres</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar/ABC</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendars /Periodicals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/ Agricultural &amp;c</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/ Administrative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 89 105 153 94 159 664
Fig. 1.3: Romanian religious books by region of publication, 1801-1830

Fig. 1.4: Romanian secular books by region of publication, 1801-1830
Fig. 1.5: Religious and secular books in the Principalities, 1801-1830

Fig 1.6: Religious and secular books in Habsburg Lands, 1801-1830
Literature, nation

In this long and extremely haphazard process, whereby the increasing weakness of the Ottomans and the irregular but dramatic incursions of the neighbouring powers stimulated expectations of political change at the confines of Europe, we can see how “culture”, in both an intellectual and a material sense, gained an almost totemic value for both Greeks and Romanians. It has been my argument that these symbolic representations at élite level were more important than the development of a large-scale public sphere, which did not actually emerge. After 1821 the growth of Romanian institutions became largely separated from Greek national developments, but in exchange the influence and interference of Russia would become paramount, particularly after the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 which led to the elaboration of the all-important Organic Regulations, and provided for the establishment of new, officialised forms in culture, education, and publishing. But it was before 1829 that the first conceptualisations of ‘literature’ and ‘nation’ appeared in Romanian, and I will end this chapter by tracing the origins of these terms, against the internal and international background already described.

The words literatură and națiune are neologisms in Romanian. Their appearance in this period is merely a part of the massive process of linguistic “cultivation” and lexical enrichment which was yet another corollary of modernization in South-Eastern Europe, and no less symbolically important than the other changes in cultural practices being undertaken in the period. The development of an ideology of language as the basis of nationhood was a universal process throughout Europe, and the Romanians were inevitably influenced by it.256

The historiography has often tended to schematize the creation of a Romanian literary language largely as originating with the efforts of the Transylvanian school in the late eighteenth century, and continuing in the Principalities only after 1821. But it is also true that lexical borrowings - the

simplest but also the most visible phase in the creation of a literary language - from Western languages began some considerable time before. The Transylvanian grammarian Radu Tempea complained in 1797 of writers who used Slavic words when Latin equivalents existed in Romanian; but then so had the Moldavian Matei Millo in a manual of arithmetic compiled two years earlier. The best existing studies on Romanian lexical development have unfortunately somewhat neglected the period from 1800-1821, so it is difficult to be certain as to the exact dating of the appearance of the terms in question.

Like most languages, Romanian has always had a rich stock of words for human collectivities: the German scholar Arthur M. Beyner listed over twenty different terms in texts before 1700 alone. The closest term to “nation” was undoubtedly neam, a word of Hungarian origin originally meaning kind or genus, with many of the same connotations as nation in Western Europe. Like nation, neam could refer to groups of anything, not just people; but in the human context, also like nation, it had connotations of a consanguineous group, and occasionally, of non-Christian groups. This was the term most used by the earliest Romanian writers to reflect on Romanian history, language, and origins.

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257 D. Popovici, La littérature roumaine à l’époque des lumières. Sibiu, 1945, p. 265 (for Tempea); Ursu, Formarea terminologiciei științifice românești, p. 98 (for Millo).
260 for the use of nation to refer to groups of women, birds or animals see the examples cited by Guido Zernatto, “Nation: the History of a Word.” Review of Politics, VI, 1944, p. 351-366; for similar usages of neam see Alexandru Niculescu, “Neam. Considerații filologice și nu numai.” RL, XXX, 45, 12-18 nov 1997, p. 3. Examples in DLR, VII-i, 165, of neam used to refer to kinds of tree, dog, bird, bread, hammer, cheese, parts of speech, etc. “neamul femeiesc” = the female sex.
261 For nation referring to foreign or heathen colonies, see Zernatto, op. cit.; for neam as referring
such as Miron Costin and Dimitrie Cantemir. It might translate as race, family, estate or generation. It grew to have specifically nobiliary connotations, and the term neam boieresc was often used to refer to noble estates. But also, from the mid eighteenth-century, it designated descendants of great boyars who were no longer in state service. When the Moldavian boyars wrote to the Russian general Rumiantsev in 1773 singing the praises of the Empress, they spoke of the benefits to the patrie, to the neamul creștinesc [Christian community] and the neamul ominesc [human race]. There is no need to translate either patrie or neam as “nation” in this context. The next most widely used term was norod (or nărod), which like natio derives from a word meaning “birth” (Old Slavonic rod), but which had specific connotations of the lower people, although usually Christians.

In Transylvania, the Latin natio figured significantly in the political constitution. It was particularly used in the designation of the three nationes receptae, “the constituted nations”. These were the Magyars, the Saxons, and the Szeklers (a people related to the Magyars and inhabiting the eastern part of the Principality) who, according to the “Approved Constitutions” of 1655, had rights to representation in the noble Diet of the Principality. There were likewise four religiones receptae, namely Roman Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran and Unitarian. The Romanians were a mere natio admissa, and their principal religion, the Orthodox, was a religio tolerata. The main political struggle of the Romanians in the eighteenth century was for a fourth natio recepta be created to represent them. This never happened, although it should be noted that it was the status of natio recepta that was refused the Romanians, not the status of natio; and that

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262 Cantemir used the word neam 300 times in his writings, and norod (the next most frequent word for ‘people’) 80 times. Lemny, Originea și cristalizarea ideii de patrie..., p. 69.
263 Giurescu, Contribuțiuni, p. 219ff.
264 Uricariul, VI, p. 416.
265 Beyner, op. cit.
266 For all these matters, David Prodan, Supplex Libellus Valachorum. București, 1971; Keith Hitchins, A Nation Discovered, ed. cit., p. 11-23, 47-59.
267 The Wallachians appear described as a natio in documents ranging from the Constitutiones Approbatae (1655: Part I heading 9 article 1: “quamvis Natio Valachica in Regno propter Bonum publicum admissa sit, cum tamen ipsa vilem suum statum non considerando”, etc) to the Ratio
numerous Romanians held noble status within the other nationes. It is thus in a Transylvanian context that the first usages of the term can be found in Romanian, though it might be in a corporate sense rather than an ethnic one: “the Emperor permitted the Orthodox nation to form a regiment” (1742); or “the Saxon nation of Transylvania” (1750). In the 1770s, the phrase Naționul românesc was frequently used in responses given to Joseph II’s enquiries as to the state of the Romanians in Transylvania. Debate ranged over questions of what kind of nation the Romanians were, although the Transylvanian authorities often made attempts to avoid the term in their dealings with the Romanians, preferring to draw distinctions between plebes and cives; at the very least they would declare that “This plebs has become one of the coarsest of all the nationes of Europe.”

For their part, the Romanians tried to prove that theirs was a Națion with a capacity for “culture”.

In Moldavia and Wallachia, there were no such nationes around which such a debate could develop. The main word for the “country” was simply țară. Put at its simplest, this means “land”. However, by metaphorical extension this also meant the political nation, the forces in the land. Thus țară carried with it a sense not only of land, region, country; but also to an extent of those who participated in the state’s business. In such instances, it is often extremely unclear whether the entire population of the country, or merely a select group empowered or implicated in decision-making, is to be understood. By the mid-eighteenth-century one finds reference to all kinds of țară: the country as a whole; the upper estates; or the mass of people outside any of the privileged estates (nobility, clergy or urban corporation), sometimes referred to as altă țară, “the other country”, to distinguish them from the higher élite. And even then, “this

*Educationis* (1777: “praeter minores alias, septem omnio censeri nationes praecipuas ... Hungaros proprie dictos, Germanos, Slavos, Croatas, Ruthenos, Illyrios, Valachos.”).


opposition is not always expressed in the same rigid terms: Țară could mean both state and people.\(^{272}\) In effect, neither the language nor the institutional framework of government was sufficiently stable for a clear delimitation of the term to prevail. This was true of other terms such as pămînt (land) or patrie (fatherland); their derivatives, as we have seen, often referred to native nobles, but could be used (often demagogically) for the suffering masses.\(^{273}\) In this sense, then, Țară was the key political term which required definition, and many of the same obfuscations arose, as with the term natio: it was something to be a member of, but also something for which you would perform services or good actions.\(^{274}\)

It was therefore fairly normal for Romanian writers of the Principalities translating texts from the Latin, French, English, German, Hungarian, Italian or Russian and coming across the word nation or its equivalents, to use either neam, norod, or Țară, and not necessarily have recourse to a neologism. Individual studies on literary translations of the period show the French nation frequently translated by neam or norod, where it was presumed to mean “people”, and by Țară, where it seemed to mean “country” or government.\(^{275}\)

However, it is Ioan Cantacuzino’s translation into Romanian of the historical novel Numa Pompilius by the French writer Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (1755-1794), probably from 1796, that gives us the earliest documented usage of the term nație in the Principalities.\(^{276}\) The source is probably French (the

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\(^{273}\) Șt. Lemny, Originea și cristalizarea ideii de patrie, cit. supra. On variations in the meaning of patrida in Greek in the same period, see George D. Frangos, “The Philiki Etairia: A Premature National Coalition”, in Clogg, ed. The Struggle for Greek Independence, ed. cit., p. 96-100.

\(^{274}\) In petitions and programmes composed by the Moldavians and Wallachians in French (Georgescu, Mémoires 1769-1830), the term “pays” is much more frequent than “nation”.

\(^{275}\) I. Cantacuzino, Numa Pompilius: “craiul nației sale” / “the king of his nation” (Romanian Academy ms. 1550, cited in DLR). Cantacuzino has been credited by various authors (N. Iorga, La
language of the original), although the formation of the -ie suffix may have been influenced by the Russian natsiya (нациа).277 Florian’s novel had already been translated twice into Russian;278 the translator was living in Russia when he undertook the work, spoke and wrote the language fluently (he later composed his memoirs in Russian), and frequently used neologisms of Russian origin in his Romanian writings.279 However, the variety of models in other languages makes it impossible and indeed pointless to determine a particular linguistic origin for this formation. What is interesting is how the activity of literary translation, undertaken by a politically-ambitious Wallachian boyar in exile in the modernizing cultural environment that was eighteenth-century Russia, provoked the formation of this term.

Nevertheless, the Romanians of the Principalities do not seem to have had frequent recourse to nație in their own language. The classic example used to show the existence of a new idea of the nation based on popular sovereignty is that of Tudor Vladimirescu, the Romanian leader of the military revolt in early 1821, who drew a righteous distinction between neam and norod, identifying the former with the corrupt elite and the latter with the suffering masses: he wrote to a

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277 Tudor Vianu, Probleme de stil și ără literară. București, 1955, p. 67, argued that neologisms ending in -ie and with the accent on the penultimate syllable were introduced through Russian: armie, mistie, nație, colonizație, asociație, emancipație etc; an opinion shared by Rosetti-Cazacu-Onu, Istoria limbii române literare, p. 581-583, who admit multiple French-Italian-Russian derivation, but argue that Russian derivations (ending in -ie, not in -iune) are older and have a wider diffusion in Romanian. The most recent studies (Alexandra Roman Moraru, in Gheție, ed. Istoria limbii române literare, p. 397-411) disprove this, showing usages of administrație, apelație, armistiești, condiție, confuzeție, comisia, comunicarea, conferinție, conștiențe, disputație, donație, emineție, experiențe, fundație, imposiție, instanțe, informație, indulgernțe, iurezdicție, obligație, perpecție, preție, pretenție, protecție, residenție, sentențe, circmstanție nearly all before 1750 in contexts where the derivation could be directly from Latin, or via Magyar, German, Greek, Italian or Polish. On the other hand, these forms did not all become definitive and widely used, and many may have been ‘reintroduced’ via Russian.


Romanian boyar sent to negotiate with them that “it seems you consider the norod, on whose blood the whole noble estate [neamul boieresc] feeds and refines itself, to be as nothing.” Tudor redefined the norod as the true patrie, but did not use the term nafie.

It was only in the 1820s that nafie came into really widespread use in the Principalities. It begins to define something that is not in existence, but needs to become so. Again, foreign commentators participated in the cultivation of this sentiment. In 1821 the Frenchman Laurençon asked a Wallachian boyar what kind of government should be installed, and immediately received a one-word reply: national. “This word is rather vague”, he commented. On the other hand, the reactionary Comte de Salaberry suggested in the same year that “the Wallachians and the Moldavians can, through the intervention of the Holy Alliance, be brought into the order of Nations”. And it is also in the context of comparison with Europe that the Moldavian liberal boyar Ion Tăutu (1795-1830) castigated the élite of the principality, blaming them for

the ills with which for many years you have oppressed the norod of Moldavia, which have made you a laughing stock in the eyes of neighbouring neamuri; which have been an obstacle to the instruction of this norod and an impediment to its happiness; which have caused the neamuri of Europe to number us among the barbarian noroade.

Meanwhile he sardonically advised the “nații of this earth who take up arms for causes that bring no real benefit”, to “follow the example of the passivity of the Moldavian norod.” Superior, European nations were nații or neamuri whereas the Moldavians were just a wretched norod.

Another Moldavian example shows how nafie was developing increasing connotations of positive potential; was preferred to neam; and was associated with that other new-fangled term, literature. A preface to a manuscript translation of

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280 Tudor Vladimirescu, letter to Nicolae Văcărescu [11 Feb 1821]; in Bodea, 1848 la români, I, p. 64: “and you only include the thieving nobles in the fatherland . . . But why do you not realise that the people is the fatherland and not the clique of thieves? And I ask you to tell me what I have done to oppose the people. For I am no other than a man taken from amongst the people of the country who have been embittered and down trodden on account of the thieves.”

281 Laurençon, Nouvelles observations..., p. 45.


French literary works was done, the author claimed, because “The first contains some very interesting examples for the Romanian people, painting the heroism and patriotism of her Roman ancestors. The second is also a philosophical comedy and contains likewise most useful examples for the redress of common vices.”

The enterprise, he hoped, would be welcomed by those who “desire the advancement of the Romanian nation and literature.” The author used the word *neam*, crossed it out, and replaced it with *natie*.

Was this the first use of the term literature? The Moldavian scholar Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723) used the phrase *historia litteraria* in Latin in his *History of the Othman Empire*, but meant something different by it: history written following primary written sources. Elsewhere, he went so far as to claim that the local language did not even have words for the arts and sciences. This is slightly harsh on his predecessors, who had used terms as *scrisoare* [writing], *poetic* [poet], *filosof* [philosopher], *filosofie* [philosophy], *gramatică* [grammar], *retoric* [rhetoric], *meșteșug* [art, craft, trick], *iscusință* [skill, art, talent], *istorie* [history], *methodos* [method], *știință* [science, learning - not just “information”]; *învățătură* [learning], *întelegeciunea* [wisdom], *vers* [verse] but it is true that it was left to him to introduce other terms, such as *autor, comentariu, fabulă, elogiu*.

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286 *Descripția Moldaviei*, p. 310: “Ceterum Moldavi litterarum non solum non amatores, sed et osores cuncti fere exiterunt. Bonarum artium et scientiarum ipsa etiam nomina illis ignorantur.” This claim was repeated by writers in Russian service, such as Johann Eberhard Fischer, “O proiskhozhdenii moldavtsiev, ob ikh iazyke, znatneishikh prikluceniiax, vere, naravakh i povedenii.” *Istoriceskii mestiatsoslov*, Moscow, 1770-1771, cited by Yuri Slezkine, “Naturalists versus Nations: Eighteenth-Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity.” In Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*. Bloomington, 1997, p. 43; also F. de B[awr], *Mémoires historiques et géographiques sur la Valachie*. Francfort - Leipzig, 1778, p. 23. Identifying the source of their observations means again modifying our evaluation of foreign writers’ accounts - they were plagiarizing the best local (and only just published) scholar’s account, rather than ‘inventing’ slanders of their own; although the stigmatic effects of such remarks remained.

These early coinages rarely remained definitive, but were vulnerable to modification into what were perceived to be more “European” forms: for instance, in the preface to his grammar Văcârescu speaks not of știință but șiența, modelled after the Italian scienza.

Cantemir’s comment reflected a general disdain for Romanian literary productions, a disdain also expressed by the brothers Dimitrie and Constantin Ipsilanti, whose illicit voyage to Transylvania in 1782 (which caused the deposition of their father, Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti) they justified by citing the absence of “the great love for belles-lettres which we nurture in our hearts, and which we cannot acquire in those countries for the lack of worthy and educated men.” But they were writing in Italian and probably thought of themselves as Greeks. Before the nineteenth century, elaborate attempts at literary history or literary theory in Romanian were few and far between. Various writers offered morsels of advice on how to read and compose poetry, but this was at an elementary level and directly accessory to its presentation; or confined to apopthegmatic statements on the value of language, writing or books. Before 1800, we have two attempts to catalogue names of writers and of literary production in Romanian. The Wallachian churchman Grigore of Rămnic prefaced an Antologhion of 1786 with a plea that the names of the “holy hierarchs” who had worked for “the defence and mercy of their flock, the Romanian people of the land of Wallachia” by printing books, should not be forgotten: the sense given to these writers’ achievements oscillated between national pride and reverence to them as “enricheners of the Word of God”, although he expressed regret at the fact that many works had been lost due to the “laziness of those who wield pens in the Romanian language.” In Transylvania, a more extensive list compiled by Gheorghe Șincăi around 1790 (which included as Romanian even Latin-language writers of the Byzantine empire!) remained unpublished. Neither of these works

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288 Hurmuzaki, Documente, VII, p. 341: “il gran amore delle belle-lettere”.
290 Grigore Rîmniceanu, “Prefața” la Antologhion, 1786, reproduced in Duțu, Coordonatele..., p. 186ff: “norodului rumănesc al pământului Valahiei.”
contains the word *literatură*. On the other hand, the Transylvanian Romanian Ion Budai-Deleanu used the word in German in the course of a report compiled for the Austrian government on the condition of the province of Bukovina:

Of the Moldavians’ learning (*Gelehrsamkeit*), one can say with a clear conscience, that (in general terms) it does not exist. ... Their literature (*Literatur*), (insofar as such a thing exists), consists only of two editions of the Holy Scriptures, of a *Pravila* or collection of church laws, which are confined to the first seven Synods; and the other church books (there is a multitude thereof); then of a few chronicles or histories of the Romanian nation (*der walachischen Nation*), which can be considered as originally Romanian (*originell walachisch*)^292^ This is a characteristic example of a Romanian writer whose integration into the bureaucratic apparatus of the Habsburg Empire both depended on his ability to mediate between the Romanians and the authorities, and encouraged in him a critical attitude to Romanian culture.^293^ He appears, however, not to have used the term *literatură* in Romanian.^294^

Elsewhere, the word *litere* specifically signifying Latin letters (as opposed to Slavonic characters, which were called *slave*), was used by Transylvanian scholars: in 1801 Samuil Micu specified that “What the Slavs call *slave*, the Romanians call *litere*.”^295^ The Austrian authorities promoted the Latinization of the Cyrillic alphabet in their Empire: this was partly with a view to instilling Catholic principles in their subject population through the Uniate Church, and partly (particularly after 1770) to prepare to introduce German as a language of education in the Empire. *Litere* was thus a concept connected with Westernization of systems of writing and education. It is in this context, rather than any connected


^293^ Cf. the case of Vasile Balș, whose *Beschreibung der Buccowina* dates from 1780 and shows many similarities in attitude. (published in Grigorovici, ed. *op. cit.*).


^295^ Samuil Micu Clain, preface to *Acatist*, Sibiu 1801 (*BRV*, II, p. 425). I thank Dennis Deletant for drawing this text to my attention.
with belles-lettres, that the word literatură was first used, by the historian Petru Maior in 1812: a chapter of his History of the Origin of the Romanians in Dacia was called “On the old literature of the Romanians” and “literature” here meant alphabet. Shortly afterwards the word was used in the preface to a geography manual, published in Buda in 1814, which speaks of the more general need “to print other worthy books in the Romanian language, towards the literature [literatura] of this language, and for the direct benefit of this nation [Națion].” The sense is here wider, but the direct connection with language is retained, and the word is almost gerundive, suggesting a future necessary process: the “letterification” of Romanian through printing and learning.

In Wallachia, the introduction of the idea of literature is often traced to a Soțietate literală [literally, a “Literal society”] said to have been established in 1826 or 1827 by the great boyar Dinicu (Constantin) Golescu, together with the boyar and poet Nicolae Văcărescu, the bishop Ilarion of Argeș, and some young teachers, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Stanciu Căpățîneanu, and the Transylvanian Florian Aaron. We have little documentation on the society, and Heliade’s two later accounts contradict each other. He says that the society had its origins in ideas discussed among the boyars who had fled from Bucharest to Brașov following the outbreak of the 1821 revolt; and that the reigning Prince Grigore Ghica’s brothers took part. If this is the case, and noting that the Ghica, Văcărescu and Golescu families were active members of the Philike Etairia in 1821, it is


297 BRV, III, p. 102.

298 Sorin Antohi has defined Transylvanian philology as a “proto-ideology”, “an ideology whose influence on reality is but partial” insofar as “a collaboration with power is absent” (Imaginaire culturel et réalité politique, p. 145).


not far-fetched to refer to an older cultural model (without implying any direct institutional continuity), namely the Greek *Philologike Etairia* established in Bucharest in 1810, or the *Philomousos Etairia* active in Vienna and the Principalities.footnote[301] Both the earlier Greek societies and the Romanian one reunited high-ranking political officials with intellectuals of lower social standing. Heliade also said it was secret, which, besides being odd for a society dedicated to public welfare, ignores the fact that Golescu had openly proposed the establishment of such an association in a published work of 1826.footnote[302] Most probably, either the society was a cover for with older, indeed secret, societies linked with the *Etairia*, or Heliade was embroidering the idea of literature in a narrative of secrecy and empowerment. He described the statutes of the society as proposing: the establishment of "national colleges" and village schools; the founding of journals, the abolition of the monopoly on printing and the encouragement of translations; the formation of a national "and various other" theatres.

The rhetoric of literary sociability was contradictory: "a secret pact" lay behind such "public works"; the aims were both to stay independent of politics and to determine a national regeneration. It is certainly true that the language of enlightenment - schooling, societies, publication, philology, "preparation" of various kinds - had overtones of revolution in the period, and was interpreted as such both by liberal entrepreneurs and the Austrian state police.footnote[303] Such "word association" proclaimed a link, on the most general possible level, between language and society, but the terms of this relation took on radically different forms: from philology and pedagogy to codewords for insurrection, from conclaves of scholars to the resurrection of a nation. "Literature"'s slippery associations and significations led more often to misunderstandings than to harmony between members.

Whatever the statutes of the society (and thus, the status of literature),

footnote[301]{On Golescu's political activity before 1826 (including a visit to Russia in 1823), see G. Bengesco, *Les Golesco*. Paris, 1921, p. 104-115.}


footnote[303]{Botzaris, *op. cit.*; Gordon, *op. cit.*}
results were forthcoming. In 1828 Heliade published a grammar.\textsuperscript{304} In the preface, he was to insist on this ideology of “letters”, making a slogan of the idea that “it is through letters that literature is born.”\textsuperscript{305} He also wrote that

as to perfecting the language and deciding once and for all on what forms the new terms should take, this will not be possible until an Academy is founded, of several men, whose sole business will be Romanian literature, and who in time will bring order and perfection to the language by compiling a dictionary.\textsuperscript{306}

And he saw this philological effort as essential not just for learning's sake, but for immediate social application, for instance through translations.

Meanwhile, the words \textit{literator} and \textit{literatură} appeared in a book of \textit{Caracteruri} (modelled on La Bruyère’s \textit{Caractères}) published by the poet Barbu Paris Mumuleanu in 1825: it is not glossed in the “list of foreign words” appended to the volume, but the word \textit{academie} is, as: “A society of learned men who study literature, the sciences and the fine arts; and the place where these learned men gather.”\textsuperscript{307} A formulation which might well have been borrowed from a dictionary, but again connects literature to language, to science, and to the formal institutionalization of learning. Moreover, the pedagogic-scientific aspect of the term is dominant, rather than the aesthetic. In 1827, at a speech given at the opening of the St. Sava College, Simeon Marcovici told his audience that he had studied ‘literature’ in France and Italy. Although he had undertaken studies in philology, and later published the first manual of rhetoric in Wallachia (1834) he too was using the generalised sense, slowly becoming obsolete in the West, of literature as learning in general.\textsuperscript{308} The same usage seems to be apparent in an

\textsuperscript{304} In Heliade’s own opinion: “he composed the first methodical and almost philosophical grammar following the methods of Condillac.” (\textit{Mémoires...}, p. v); the rather more prosaic truth is that he adapted a modern French grammar widely used in boarding schools (N.A. Ursu, “Modelul francez al gramicicii lui I. Eliade Rădulescu.” \textit{LR}, X, 1961, p. 326-333).

\textsuperscript{305} Heliade, \textit{Gramatica rumânească} [1828], p. xxxii (Facsimile ed., București, 1980). Heliade in fact attributes this line to the poet Iancu Văcărescu (1792-1863), grandson of Ienăchiță Văcărescu.

\textsuperscript{306} Ibid. For Heliade’s theories of language see the extensive analysis in Close, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47-134.


\textsuperscript{308} Marcovici, cited by Isar, \textit{Școala națională dela Sf. Sava...}, p. 147. The use of “literature” to mean learning and science of all kinds, current throughout the eighteenth century in the West, was going out of fashion by 1800; for early usages reacting against erudition in favour of beauty and lived experience, A. Marino, “Au carrefour des lumières. Transformations du concept de «littérature».” \textit{Synthese}, I, 1974, p. 147-157.
occasional article of 1827 offering “Something about the Armenians and their good literature”, which mentions their historical writings but dwells more on their moral character, on their language and their success in preserving their “nationality”. After 1829, usages multiplied in both principalities.

The introduction of the concept “literature” shows, then, several of the more general characteristics of the process of Westernization and social change. The term appears in rapid succession in different types of writing, without there necessarily being a direct link or “influence” of one usage on another. Different groups of Romanian writers were in touch with different European cultural currents; each may have found the term attractive for reasons of his own; the ideas signified differed considerably in each case. None the less, users of the term repeatedly insisted on several related ideological tenets: the association of “literature” with the community, and its capacity to preserve, improve or confer “nationality”; the generalised advocation of written knowledge understood as a whole, without a specific differentiation (between, for instance, erudition and belles-lettres); the institutions of knowledge, at any level from philological and orthographical norms to pedagogical projects or learned societies.

The 1820s were thus a period of intense preparation, accompanied by the enunciation of many principles that were to guide Romanian society throughout the century. “Enlightenment” in its pedagogical sense became an almost obsessive cry in this decade, the cure to all the ills of society that were now being fairly openly addressed. The need for “light” was prompted by an increasing awareness that the Romanians lagged behind other nations, particularly those of Europe. And although this was again something that the Phanariot princes had been aware of, now was the real moment when the idea became common and

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309 Lascar Rosetti, “Ceva§ de armeni §i de literatura lor cea bunà.” Faima Lipscai pentru Da§ia, nr. 7, Leipzig, 8 nov 1827: “They stayed a moral nation and they preserved their historical writings which go back as far as the Jewish legends, as well as their nationality, both physical and moral. [...] But their mercantile greed caused their dispersal, like the Jews…” Mariana Cristea “Primul ziar românesc «Faima Lipscai», o valoroasà contribuie la istoria presei române.” Studii §i comunicàri. Muzeul Bruckenthal, XIII, 1967, p. 273-284.

310 Lidia Simion, “The Modernization of the Social-Political Vocabulary as reflected in the Romanian Press of the First Half of the nineteenth Century.” RESEE, XXVI, 1, 1988, p. 27-34. This scholar studied the vocabulary of 18 major periodicals from 1829-1852: the word luminare remained dominant until at least 1840, after which date words like democa§ie, emancipare and
valuable currency. The monk and professor Eufrosin Poteca – the guardian of the students sent to Pisa in the 1820s - made what is a characteristic statement: “Do we Romanians ... have to remain for ever cut off from the enlightened nations, far from our European brothers? Could we not borrow from them, to supplement the little knowledge that we have?”

His idea of what “Europe” was, however, is even more interesting:

Peter the Great, the glory [slava] of Russia, is to be praised for his goodness, for he led the whole of Russia both politically and ecclesiastically. Napoleon, the scourge of Europe, is to be praised [lāudāt] for his wickedness, for with his greed he precipitated the alliance of the European emperors, and peace in all Europe.

The idea of Europe, like the ideas of literature and nation, could support an imperial, conservative and explicitly anti-French ideology, as well as one of liberty and independence. A paradox which was to become acute after 1829.
2. 1829-1848

"The Great European Family"

In April 1828, Russian troops crossed the river Prut for the fourth time in sixty years. Not for the first time either, the military occupation saw the establishment of "Divans" [assemblies] in each principality, headed by a Russian military officer.

What distinguished the 1828-1834 period from previous occupations was that it left a durable framework of legislation in both Principalities, composed in collaboration between the Russians and the local élites, and bearing the semblance of constitutional government. Russia was becoming experienced in establishing puppet regimes in Eastern Europe, and had had a hand in the establishment of "constitutions" in Georgia, Finland, Poland, the Free Republic of Cracow, and Bessarabia, a process which can be seen as a kind of reactionary replica, on a smaller scale, of the regimes set up by Napoleonic France in Western Europe from 1795 to 1815. But after the Decembrist uprising in 1826, they became more careful about nomenclature, and the Principalities' new laws were not called constitutions but Organic Regulations, in consideration of Russian sensibilities about the C-word.

The Russians tended to exaggerate the extent of their "civilizing mission", and the regulations go on at inordinate length, and in no particular order, about the need to reform everything from street-cleaning to property-holding. Many scholars have thus been tempted to date the beginning of modern Romanian history from 1829 (and provide a schematic materialist reading of cultural development "caused" by the clauses of the Treaty of Adrianople which provided for the freedom of

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2 Stevan K. Pavlovitch, History of the Balkans, 1804-1945. London - New York, 1999, p. 45, shows the same caution at work in newly independent Greece (where the term syntagma was used); and autonomous Serbia (ustav). Ustav (in Romanian, Așezământ) was also the term used for the regulations promulgated in Bessarabia in 1818.
commerce in the Principalities). It is certainly convenient to draw straight lines across the historical record; but as we have seen, signs of innovation in many fields can be traced throughout the period to 1829; and we shall also see that many of the post-1829 institutions were less than they were cracked up to be.

For General Pavel Kiselev, the President Plenipotentiary who oversaw the elaboration of the Organic Regulations and their initial implementation, the bearded boyars were “surely the most turbulent intriguers of all the bearded creatures thronging under the arch of heaven”, which was not a merely casual insult, but a direct reference to the fine distinctions between different ranks of boyars, which were displayed, among other things, by the length and cut of their beards. In Russia, this visible marker of rank had been abolished by decree a hundred years before, and its persistence in the principalities constituted an obvious indicator of reactionary particularism and a “non-European” society. Many other Russians felt the same: Alexander Pushkin, who was exiled in Chișinău in the early 1820s, describes a journey eastwards to Odessa in 1823 as representing a return to civilization: “I left my Moldavia and put in my appearance in Europe.” Russian military and diplomatic officials tended to look down on the locals, and were somewhat irritated at the granting of political rights more extensive than those which they enjoyed at home. As late as 1846 a monk who travelled to Bucharest expressed surprise that the local inhabitants were white, and not brown, although he reassured himself that “Slav blood flows in their veins.”

A more interesting series of observations was made by the diplomat Aleksander I. Mikhailovskii-Danielovskii in 1829. For him, at first sight

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Bucharest “is not a European town - its streets are narrow and bad smelling, while the people (of which the streets are full) have Asiatic faces and speak a language I don’t understand.” He was willing to change his mind, however, on discovering a bookshop which stocked a number of titles forbidden for sale in Russia:

Seeing myself among books, I began to breathe in an atmosphere which seemed more familiar to me. I felt as if I had been transported to Europe, for I had been travelling for two weeks across the steppes of Bessarabia, Moldavia and Wallachia, and seeing ignorance and barbarity all around me, I had reckoned myself to be outside of Europe.8

And it seems that Moldavian boyars did not necessarily look to Moscow for enlightenment: according to one contemporary eye-witness,

none [of the Moldavian nobles] knew Russian or had the curiosity to visit Moscow or Petersburg; from their conversation it became clear that they regarded our North as a savage land. On the other hand, quite a number of them travelled to Vienna.9

Russians and Romanians, then, competed to establish a series of cultural indicators which would help to assert imperial control or enable the flaunting of national independence. Whatever the validity of the above-cited observations, it is clear that signs and conceptions of “European culture” - in all forms, from literature and civilisation to skin colour and facial hair - were considered crucial by both sides in terms of the reading of a society’s “progress” and “character.”

Given the Russian administrators’ self-attributed role as the bearers of civilisation in the Principalities, and as godfathers to the Romanians’ induction into “the great European family”,10 it is not surprising that they gave attention and publicity to the reorganization of schooling, particularly in Wallachia where Kiselev had his headquarters.

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8 Ibid., p. 270.
10 Kiselev used this phrase in 1829 (Bitis, op. cit., p. 252; Hurmuzaki, Documente, Supl. I-iv, p. 359). It had already been used in respect of Wallachia in 1820 by the English agent Wyburn (cited in previous chapter, note 97); and was repeated by Gheorghe Asachi in 1829 and BarbuȘtirbei in 1832 (apud Vlad Georgescu, Political Ideas and the Enlightenment, p. 40 n. 21) and the French professor L. Repey in 1836 (apud Al. Zub, A scrie și a face istorie. Iași, 1981, p. 93.)
Education

a) Wallachia

Already in 1831 there were 11 teachers in Bucharest and 5 in Craiova ready to resume activities; by March 1832, 14 more had been appointed to give two-month courses to prospective teachers in the county towns.11 “National Colleges” were reestablished in Craiova and Bucharest: the schools commission [Eforia scoalelor] reported in May that there were 421 pupils in the primary classes and 139 at gymnasial level. Two primary schools teaching Russian were established in Bucharest in June.12 Petrache Poenaru, recently returned from state-sponsored studies in Vienna, Paris and England, was named as chief inspector of the teaching corps, and subsequently director of the Schools Commission.13

The decisive regulation, the Regulament scolar, entered into force in 1833: its authors, Barbu Știrbei and Costache Moroiu, had been educated in the West and were advocates of the modern pedagogical systems of Beccaria and Pestalozzi.14 It established four levels of education: primary (începătoare), to last four years in Bucharest and three in the provinces; secondary (umanioare), four years, at Bucharest and Craiova only: complementary (complimentare) three years; and higher specialized (cursuri speciale), including law, applied mathematics and agriculture.15 All this happened before the appointment of the prince: Alexandru Ghica, the candidate selected by Russia, and subject to confirmation by Sultan Mahmud II, did not get to kiss the latter’s feet until May 1834.

Numbers in the National College varied. At the end-of-year examination in

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13 Potra, op. cit., p. 71, 77.
15 Iorga, Hist. de l’enseignement..., p. 197-204.
September 1834, Poenaru declared that there were 890 pupils, including those at the 2 subsidiary primary schools at the Amzei and St. George churches. In 1836, 865 were examined at the end of the year (at all levels) of whom 290 were made to retake. Most of these were attending only the primary classes: in 1838, there were 914 pupils in primary schools, and 174 at St. Sava, where the law course (the most popular of the *cursuri speciale*) was attended by 45 students.\(^6\)

School examinations were occasions of great pomp, and were attended by the reigning prince, who would give a speech to the assembled pupils and their parents. Festive poems were composed and recited: in July 1837 the Philharmonic Society of Wallachia organized a “pastoral festival” with a theatrical representation in honour of Prince Ghica to mark the end-of-year exams.\(^7\) In 1839 the Prince not only attended but inspected all the classes and even permitted his hand to be kissed by some pupils of the college. Pupils were given regular uniforms: a frock coat, “civil” trousers with dark yellow cord, cap, leather necktie and a serge mantle: any tailor found making up such a uniform illegally would be fined.\(^8\) Teachers were to wear a frock coat with a violet-coloured velvet collar and white stitching, a three-cornered military cap (but with no feather: these were reserved for higher administrative ranks). If they attained a noble rank (and various professors were awarded ranks, rising successively higher in the administration), they were allowed additional stitching on the cuffs and pockets.

Thus, both by their dress and by their rank, professors were given a recognized position in the apparatus of the élite serving the state, and while ministerial positions were reserved by tradition for the hereditary boyars, teachers could progress through the system and wield considerable authority.\(^9\) For example, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, one of the few leaders of the 1848 revolution in Wallachia not


to belong to the extended inter-related clan of boyars that formed the nucleus of power in the province, owed his prestige and a recently-conferred title to his pedagogical activities.\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, the first Prime Minister of Romania not to have been born into the native aristocracy, Petre Aurelian (1833-1909, Prime Minister in 1896-1897) was the son of a Transylvanian teacher who took up a post in Slatina in Wallachia in the 1820s.\textsuperscript{21}

A further important characteristic of the teaching staff was the high proportion of Transylvanians taking up posts in the Principalities. This tradition began with Lazăr and continued with figures such as Ioan Maiorescu, Eftimie Murgu, August Treboniu Laurian, Florian Aaron, Alexe Marin, Iosif Genilie, Nicolae Bălașescu, Dionisie Romano, who all taught in Wallachian schools and were to play an important role in the political and intellectual life of the Principalities.\textsuperscript{22} Their superior training, often in the theological schools of the Habsburg Empire,\textsuperscript{23} and their willingness to perform functions which the Wallachian native élite considered beneath themselves, enabled them to enter society on a professional footing, where they formed a component part of the developing intelligentsia. However, this influx of Transylvanians into the administration of the Principalities was not always well-received. The Orthodox authorities initially objected to candidates belonging to the Uniate church, and only relented when insufficient Orthodox candidates could be found.\textsuperscript{24} Local administrations, meanwhile, might take exception to outsiders: the appointment in 1847 of a Transylvanian professor of Romanian in Brăila led to calls for his


\textsuperscript{22} For individual careers of Transylvanians coming to Wallachia see \textit{DLR1900}, s.v. (for Laurian, Maiorescu, Aaron, Murgu); Nicolae Isar, "Ideile social-politice ale lui Iosif Genilie, profesor la Colegiul Național "Sf. Sava"." \textit{Studii}, XXVI, 6, 1973, p. 1251-1262 (for Genilie); Mirea Păcurariu, "Profesori transilvăneni la școlile teologice din Țara Românească și Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea." \textit{MMS}, XLIV, 1-2, 1968, p. 29-49 (for Romano).

\textsuperscript{23} In 1830 there were about 40 Romanians at Buda University, making it the largest centre for higher education for Romanians in the West (G. Bogdan-Duică, \textit{Eftimie Murgu}. București, 1937, p. 20).

\textsuperscript{24} Hurmuzaki, \textit{Documente}, X, p. 232, 248. Cf., in Moldavia, the rejection of a "schismatic" German, Tollhausen, in 1844 (Filitti, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 599).
replacement by a native.25

The National School at St. Sava was therefore conceived to produce well-trained professional public servants. Those who passed the special courses could obtain certificates to practise as lawyers or civil engineers. Numerous graduates of the school distinguished themselves both on the political and literary stages in the course of the nineteenth century: pupils included the Brătianu brothers, Vasile Boerescu, Christian Tell, C.A. Rosetti, Ion Ghica, Grigore Alexandrescu, Cezar Bolliac, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Nicolae Filimon and Nicolae Bălcescu. Of 90 ministers in Romanian governments from 1866 to 1890, at least 18 had been educated at Sf. Sava.26 However, this accounts only for a fifth of such appointments. The senior officials in the education department had studied in France, and travel to the West for educational or simply recreational purposes was becoming a large scale phenomenon in the 1830s and 1840s.27 A Western training was almost invariably preferred when it came to obtaining professional posts: a student of St. Sava such as Alecu Orășcu, who was awarded a diploma to practise topography and surveying in 1840, was subsequently sent to Berlin and Munich, which suggests that his training in Bucharest was not considered sufficient. This was the normal pattern of development for anybody who wished to progress to higher office in Wallachia.28

Despite the manifest attempts to make public education the business of the state, there was certainly room for private individuals to manipulate the system. J. A. Vaillant, a Frenchman recently arrived in Bucharest, had obtained in 1830


27 In 1830, around 25-30 Romanians and Greeks from the Principalities (mainly Wallachia) were enrolled in institutions of higher learning in Paris and Geneva. P. Eliade, La Roumanie au XIXe siècle. Paris, 1914, II, p. 262. Florea Ioncioaia, “Tineri din Principate la studii în Europa (1800-1834). O tentativă de sistematizare.” Anuarul institutului de cercetări socio-umane „Gheorghe Ţincai”, I, Tg. Mureș 1998, p. 34, estimates that this represents only about two-thirds of the real number. By the eve of the 1848 revolution, there were nearly a hundred in Paris (according to the philo-Romanian French publicist Paul Bataillard: Anul 1848, I, p. 37).

28 Istoria Universității din București, ed. cit, p. 84-85; for Orășcu, p. 95 n. 114.
permission to open a private boarding house teaching French to the daughters of the Wallachian nobility. Two years later - following the publication of a poem to the glory of Count Kiselev - he obtained a contract to run the boarding-house for pupils attending the National College at St. Sava. His high standards of organization and the fact that he taught in French attracted a large number of pupils, as well as a salary twice as large as that of the Romanian teaching staff. However, in 1833, he entered into conflict with the inspector, Poenaru, and his contract was revoked. Vaillant then withdrew and set up a private boarding-house with equal success and was occasionally able to obtain further subsidies from the state. His presence in Bucharest was obviously of some irritation to the authorities, although whether on account of his conspiratorial activities (he was an active freemason) or because he constituted a successful rival to the state educational programme is not entirely clear. Other Frenchmen were also able to attract pupils away from the National College while at the same time working on its payroll.

Indeed, although the Organic Regulation sought to control both the content and language of instruction in private schools, the authorities were often helpless to act. This problem was as acute in the county schools as in the capital: different regions had different traditions of private instruction, frequently developed according to the needs of heterogeneous local merchant communities. In Brăila, Wallachia’s main Danubian port and only recently reincorporated into the principality after the Turkish fortress was demolished in 1831, commercial power was largely in the hands of merchants of Greek or Balkan origin: the Romanian community, “largely composed of fishermen or innkeepers”, lacked influence. The new public school attracted only five pupils in 1833, while the town’s two Greek schools housed over a hundred, more than half of them Romanian. In 1839, Italian and book-keeping were introduced here at the insistence of the local merchant committee. In Turnu-Severin, on the Austro-Hungarian border, the notables

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30 Filitti, *op. cit.*, 233-234.
repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction at having to pay taxes towards a “national” (Romanian) teacher, preferring to spend more money on Greek or German teachers.\textsuperscript{32} In Ploiești in the 1840s, Greek and German were requested with similar insistence, to provide the necessary training for commercial dealings with Transylvania, and the local merchants who were expected to fund the Romanian public school opted for teachers in these languages ahead of paying a Romanian teacher.\textsuperscript{33} In all these towns, the teachers were interested in collaborating with the local merchants to provide a practical education in foreign languages on a profitable basis, but were forbidden from doing so by the central authorities: instead, they were encouraged to inspect and shut down schools which failed to teach at least the catechism in Romanian.

The authorities tried to insist on an education in which “the language of the fatherland must dominate”, and “religion and morals should be of capital importance”; but private schools flourished throughout Wallachia in the period to 1848. In 1832 there were 28 private schools in Bucharest alone, of which 13 gave instruction in Romanian, 12 in Greek, 6 in French and one in German. By the end of the school year, the number had reached 38, the majority of which were now in Romanian, and nearly 1,300 pupils were thought to be attending: a number which outstripped those attending the public schools.\textsuperscript{34}

However, official policy towards education was often ambiguous and contradictory. The use of Western models as a basis for social and political progress led to the promotion of French as a desirable language of education. The Russian administration of 1828-1834 had used this language almost exclusively in its dealings with the local élite, as did the foreign consular representatives who wielded such a strong influence in local politics. From 1830, a commercial code was in operation that had been translated from the French on Kiselev’s

\textsuperscript{32} Pajură & Giurescu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 94-105.
\textsuperscript{33} Boncu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 40-42, 49.
\textsuperscript{34} Gheorghe Rășcanu, \textit{Istoricul învățământului particular în România}. București, 1906, p. 76-79, 95-98. These are only those recorded by state inspectors: the real number was certainly larger. On the oral evidence of local inhabitants, Rășcanu (\textit{ibid.,} p. 79-83) estimated that there were up to 30 private teachers (of which 11 attached to monasteries) in the small market town of Râmnicul Sărat, Northern Wallachia around 1830.
recommendation. Although the Organic Regulation insisted that education should be carried out in the national language, entry to higher-level courses at the National College was made conditional on knowledge of French.\textsuperscript{35}

Having encouraged the development of national sentiment in the 1820s and 1830s, Russia acted with increasing nervousness in the 1840s and her consuls found many pretexts to reduce the apparently dangerous effects of their own policies. In his speech at the annual prize-giving of 1845, Prince Bibescu made it clear that "words or opinions which, cast before tender souls, can only produce damaging effects" would not be tolerated. The accusation that Romanian was "still an impoverished language, without its own literature..., ill-fitted to serve the cause of enlightenment" was again raised, and heavy taxes were imposed on private boarding houses. National feeling was not condemned, but redefined in terms of religious subjection and sacred duty: "the name of the fatherland, that holy name, should be like that of God, and nobody is free to take it in vain, nor it is given to anyone of any age to enter into its mysteries."\textsuperscript{36}

Of the several solutions proposed, including an offer to host Romanian students at universities in Russia,\textsuperscript{37} the one that was tried in 1847 in both principalities was the replacement of higher education in Romanian with courses in French. This was intended both to restrict the spread of liberal ideas beyond the noble élites, and to remove any pretext for continuing to send youth abroad to Paris, where the danger of meeting with "revolutionary" currents was all too apparent. Teachers were hired from France for this purpose, and Poenaru, who had been the moving spirit of education in Romanian, was removed from his position at the head of the Schools Commission.\textsuperscript{38}

French foreign minister Guizot reacted quickly, noting that "We already exercise in those countries, through education, through our literature and thought
the empire of our ideas and our civilisation, a moral influence which it is in our interest to maintain and develop”, and help was quickly forthcoming.39 In St. Petersburg, on the other hand, Imperial Chancellor Nesselrode wrote to Russia’s consul in Bucharest expressing his anxieties: “In principle we should applaud the princely government’s efforts to organise in the country an educational system such as might obviate the need to frequent foreign universities”; but, on the other hand,

nothing could be less calculated to reassure us in this respect than the organisation of the college after the French system which, furthermore, is to be put into operation by Parisian professors [...]. In such circumstances the princely government, far from remedying the evil, is aggravating it to the greatest possible degree. The Emperor charges me to advise you to exercise a most particular vigilance.40

The Prince’s initiative, then, attempted both to exploit the general admiration for French as a language of civilisation - an admiration shared by the Russian consuls as much as by the Wallachian liberals - and to give the appearance of reacting to the Russian displeasure at the development of education in the vernacular. But he only managed to make himself appear untrustworthy to both parties; he was being too liberal in his conceptions, and too autocratic in his manner of government. Repeated protests in June 1848 led to his abdication and flight into exile, before the new system had been put into practice.

Education in the Wallachian villages was developed from 1838. A law decreed that the vergers [îârcovnici] of the village churches, who had traditionally been responsible for whatever education existed in the countryside, should make themselves available for public teaching. The construction of school buildings was left to local notables (who might well oppose such an initiative as it drew agricultural labourers away from working on the boyars’ estates). The pay for the teachers was to be drawn from each pupil, at the rate of two lei per month and a set ration of foodstuffs. The teachers had to collect this themselves, which was extremely difficult given that they had few means to assert or enforce their

39 Isar, op. cit., p.47.
authority. Candidates for posts in village schools were to attend the county school
for a three-year training programme, four months per year from April to August,
while teaching in the village during the winter months. This timetable presented
obvious problems as it overlapped with the agricultural growing season. The
provincial head-teachers repeatedly drew this problem to the attention of the
authorities but central government merely suggested the use of force for bringing
recalcitrant candidates back to college and told the teachers to “tie them up, if they
don’t understand otherwise.” Most were reluctant to attend for more than one or
two terms.\footnote{G. D. Iscu, Contribuții privind învățămîntul la sate în Țara Românească pînă la jumătatea secolului al XIX-lea. București, 1975, p. 60-62.}

The types of people that came forward to train as village teachers were
very diverse socially, and included unemployed boyars’ sons, millers, shepherds,
pigmen, village headmen, merchants, leasehold-farmers, leather-workers, or
priests’ sons. Only around a quarter of candidates came from the clergy, who were
reluctant to disrupt their traditional livelihood to take on new responsibilities.\footnote{Ibid., p. 58; see also idem, “Le début de l’enseignement public dans les villages en Valachie.” \textit{RESEE}, XII, 2, 1974, p. 221-234. Constantin Constantin, teacher at Bârcănești in Prahova county in 1843, was a former serf from Transylvania (Boncu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 80).} A
large number had had little previous instruction themselves: of nine candidates
presenting themselves in Brâila in 1838, two were able to read and write.\footnote{Perianu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 65-66 (document, p. 128).} Some
used the opportunity to learn basic literacy skills that would enable them to work
in the service of merchants and noblemen, and failed to take up their duties in the
villages.\footnote{Iscu, Contribuții, p. 163 (report from Gorj county, 1845).}

At the same time, numerous conflicts occurred in villages between the new
appointees and the existing authorities. In the village of Măldărești in Vâlcea
county in 1844, the teacher Costache Mazilescu attracted the distrust of the
notables by wearing Western clothes and averting the peasants to certain
unscrupulous practices in matters of land-purchase. Mazilescu was subjected to
successive humiliations, including being stripped to the waist and locked outside
in the rain, and a beating by the village guards: fifty strokes on the back. Even

\footnote{1829-1848}
after successive interventions from central government in Bucharest, he was not reinstated and it became difficult to find teachers to take his place. In Valeni de-Munte, the local boyar is said to have cursed the newly-arrived professor in front of his servants and threatened him with violence if he did not leave the town, which he was eventually forced to do.

The preferred method of education was the “Lancasterian method”, so named after an English educationalist who had developed it on Bible missions to Spain. It was deliberately designed to enable the teaching of the maximum possible number of children per teacher. A Wallachian primary school would consist of one hall, divided into two halves. One side had twelve benches, for the first class. Pupils were ranged on the benches according to ability and promoted from the back bench to the front, bench by bench, as they progressed. At the end of the bench were monitors, appointed from among the brighter pupils. These were supposed to act as intermediaries between teacher and pupils: they would stay behind for an hour’s further instruction at the end of the class. This first class would be engaged in learning the rudiments of the alphabet. The other side of the room, accommodating the second class, was to be fitted with metal semicircular tables. Pupils would be ranged on the outside of the semicircle, while a monitor would survey them from within. Writing was taught first using a sand-box and a stick; then with chalk on a slate blackboard, and finally - once the child had mastered all the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet then in use - on paper. Teachers were, moreover, made responsible for the extra-curricular behaviour of the pupils: for instance by forbidding their participation in “disorderly masquerades” and other traditional folk practices at Christmas and other feast times.

The geometrical certitudes of this teaching method were scarcely reflected

46 Boncu, op. cit., p. 51-52.
48 Potra, op. cit., p. 94-96.
in terms of practical results. The statistics of the age naturally flattered the
government’s achievement, and claim in 1846-1847 that 2,315 schools were
教学 48,545 pupils throughout the country, achieving an attendance rate of
between 15 and 60 percent of school-age boys. These figures would of course vary
from month to month: for instance, in Vlașca county a total of 1,335 might be
attending in January, but in March as agricultural tasks beckoned, this number
reduced to 710, and in April to a mere 50. But it was clear that many of these
schools were not in a functioning state. In Cazasu village near Brăila, there was a
new building in 1840; but three years later it had been taken over by a local
functionary and the school was being run in a peasant’s house. The boyar might
throw the children out of the school buildings and use them for his own purposes;
even demolish the school or transform it into a summer residence. A regular
school had two to three rooms, only very occasionally four. Many were of mud-
and-branch construction: in the absence of glass, leather skins or bladders
stretched over the windows in winter. In Telega the school was “a little shed
hardly big enough for two cattle.” A further problem was fuel shortages and
arguments over who was to pay for this (the villagers were eventually ordered
to). Following the outbreak of the 1848 revolution and the subsequent repression,
the village system was to be swept away, not to reopen again formally until
January 1857.

b) Moldavia

The development of schooling in Moldavia was in many ways similar to
that of Wallachia, based as it was on the provisions of the Organic Regulations
which dictated almost identical measures for both principalities. The major
difference was that no public school network was established in the villages.

50 G. D. Iscru, “Date privind învățământul public la sate în Țara Românească în ajunul Revoluției
din 1848.” Rdf, XXII, 6, 1973, p. 84-88.
51 Perianu, op. cit., 140.
52 Iscru, Contribuții, p. 181.
53 Boncu, op. cit., p. 74-77.
54 G. D. Iscru, “Contribuții privind învățământul la sate în Țara Românească și Moldova în anii
Prince Mihail Sturdza (1834-1849) was also considerably more wary of the effects of education on the public spirit, and intervened frequently to regulate the system whenever potentially liberal currents set in.

As already mentioned, an institute for higher education had been established in Iași by Gheorghe Asachi in 1828. In May 1829, the Bucharest paper *Curierul rumânesc* announced that “the gazettes of Europe are full of the news of the public examinations in Iași”, but Europe here only meant St. Petersburg, and the announcement was probably a propaganda exercise in which educational progress could be seen to be flourishing in the wake of the Russian military victories.55

The situation improved after the Organic Regulation was proclaimed on New Year’s Day 1832. In February, Asachi began a 3-month course for the preparation of teachers in the new primary schools to be established in seven county towns in Moldavia: teachers were indeed despatched to the provinces in September, when elementary schools teaching the basic operations of reading, writing and arithmetic opened.56 A public girls’ school was opened in Iași in 1834, offering a three-year course comprising the basic operations and household economy, supervised by a nun.57 And in 1835, amidst great festivities, the “Academia Mihaileană” - named after the recently-appointed Prince - was inaugurated. This incorporated the old College, with its five-year programme, to which were added two years of higher education, organized into “faculties” of law and philosophy, as well as the possibility of extra classes in Russian and agriculture. The system was therefore designed to cover everything from the catechism and elementary grammar to ancient Greek, mathematics, rhetoric, geography, natural history and even anthropology. Graduates of the law faculty received the title of *avocat* [advocate, barrister] permitting them to plead in public cases, while those who followed the extra courses in agriculture would be awarded

56 Bădăru (I), p. 352-353.
57 Filitti, *op. cit.*, p. 598. The school had 81 pupils by 1840.
It has been suggested several times that this Academy was equivalent in capacity and function to a modern university. But it is important not to mistake the grandiose plans of a projected syllabus for evidence of what was really taught and what its social effects really were. This myth was in fact promoted by contemporary officialdom. In reality, the attendance level at the higher faculties was low and fell from year to year, which suggests that Moldavians did not feel the Academy’s training was useful or beneficial in terms of their career. The law courses functioned only intermittently: they were initially taken on by the state jurist Christian Flechtenmacher, who was replaced in 1837 by a Dr. Maisonnabe, who taught in French. The provisions conditioning access to public office on graduation from the respective faculties remained a dead letter. The very presence of a large number of foreigners staffing the educational system is evidence that the local system was not able to provide sufficient staff to fill the new institutions. Meanwhile the Moldavian government continued to send students abroad to study, although Russian and German universities were preferred to those of France and Italy. A certificate of graduation from the local database was a symbol of an elite status, not a guarantee of professional competence.

58 Bădărău (II), p. 219. Timetables Ibid., p. 225-231. See also the curricula of 1835 repr. in Mihai Bordeianu, “Date noi privitoare la istoria învățământului românesc.” AIIAI, XIV, 1977, p. 327-331. 59 A. D. Xenopol and C. Erbiceanu, Serbarea școlară de la Iași. Iași, 1885, p. 141; later, citing the same tradition, by Bordeianu, op.cit. G. Bădărău, Academia Mihăileană (1835-1848). Iași, 1987, p. 87-90, first criticizes the ‘university’ claim, then accepts it. 60 For instance, at the inauguration of school courses in 1834, the syllabus was said to “correspond to the system of the most advanced in Europe, and suiting the needs of the local inhabitants.” V. A. Urechia, Istoria scolilor... I, p. 109. 61 24 students in the Philosophy faculty in 1841-1842, falling to 17 the following year; in 1845-1846, 13 students in both Philosophy and Law faculties, with no new intake. Gh. Platon & V. Cristian, eds. Istoria Universității din Iași. Iași, 1985., p. 31. 62 Andrei Rădulescu, “Pravilistul Flechtenmacher.” AARMSI, s. III, t. I, 1923, p. 211-217. 63 Filitti, op. cit., p. 603-604. A dissatisfied young intellectual, Ion Ionescu [de la Brad], described the system of élite appointment in Moldavia as a “mediocracy”: letter to George Baritiu, 1 May 1844, pub. in C. Bodea, Lupta românilor pentru unitatea națională, 1834-1849. București, 1967, p. 255-256. Here he also suggests that the public schools outside Iași were virtually non-functional. 64 As in Wallachia, Transylvanians had been hired to teach law and theology: a process which began with the arrival of the Saxon Christian Flechtenmacher in Iași in 1814, and continuing with three theologians brought to the Socola Seminary in 1820. In 1832 the jurist Damaschin Bojincă arrived from the Banat, followed in 1836 by Eftimie Murgu. On a Romanian from the Bukovina teaching in Iași, see Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, “The Biography of an Illustrious Stranger: Samoil Botezatu.” New Europe College Yearbook, 1995-1996. Bucharest, 1999, p. 323-357; on one from the Banat, see Horst Fassel, “Relații literare româno-germane: Zaharia Columb.” ALIII, XXVIII,
Academy was generally equated with a baccalaureate by the French and German universities.\textsuperscript{65}

As in Wallachia, pressure was put on private schools to conform to the programmes and legislative norms of the state. The right of minorities such as Jews and Armenians to run their own schools in peace was questioned, and the Schools Commission proceeded to intervene directly in matters of education. Because the Jews, it was said, “do not imbibe the principles which transform mere co-inhabitants of a state, although of a different religion, into a political body of useful members of society”, the government “has the right, founded on important interests of state, to advise on the education of the Jews, without upsetting their religious principles.”\textsuperscript{66} The Armenians, on the other hand, were characterized as “a gentle people”, and allowed to continue the administration of their own schools, provided that the catechism was said in Romanian and a government inspector was to be allowed to make supervisory visits.\textsuperscript{67} Provisions for “national” uniform were extended to pupils of these schools, who were made to wear a frock coat, trousers and cap of dark blue cloth, with a light cherry-coloured lining to the collar and pockets.\textsuperscript{68} Meanwhile the professors were awarded noble ranks as in Wallachia.\textsuperscript{69}

The Moldavian authorities also faced strong opposition from the private schools. An 1836 survey showed a total of 71 private schools in the province, with 1,301 pupils; as against only 865 pupils in the state schools.\textsuperscript{70} The private pensions


\textsuperscript{66} Filitti, op. cit., p. 602 n. 9.


\textsuperscript{68} Gheorghe Rășcanu, Istorical învățământului particular..., p. 108-110.

\textsuperscript{69} For Moldavian ranks in 1835: Hurmuzaki, Documente, Supl. I-v, p. 180-185.

\textsuperscript{70} Bădărău (II), p. 214.
were the favoured establishments for those wishing to climb the social ladder. In contradistinction to Wallachia, where the national college was an extremely important breeding-ground for future élites, no significant groups of intellectuals were formed at the state schools. Several of the liberal boyars who were later to lead the campaign for the Union of the Principalities - including Vasile Alecsandri, Constantin Vârnava, Manolache Roset, Anastasie Panu, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Constantin Negruzzi - learned French together and formed lasting friendships at Victor Cuénim’s boarding house in Iași. Not all private establishments were what they claimed to be: a country boyar “from a mountainous region” who hired an instructor to teach his offspring French, was humiliated on their arrival in the capital to discover that their instruction had been in “a sort of Italian jargon”; due warning notices were posted in the Romanian Bee newspaper to prevent further deceptions. It seems, however, that the private schools were severely discouraged in the 1840s: although their number had been rising continually until then: in 1842, 42 schools were recorded, with 709 pupils, and, in 1846, there were only 30 (315 pupils), as against an alleged 2,186 pupils in public schools.

Also as in Wallachia, the attempts to establish public education in Romanian were continually hampered by the superior prestige of French, which had taken over from Greek as the language of the élite. And here too, the prince proposed French as an alternative to Romanian in an effort to quash the development of national feeling. Already in 1836, Sturdza had attempted to introduce legislation to this effect, but was opposed strongly by the Schools Council who saw its raison d’être threatened. In 1846, however, with the support and advice of the Prussian consul Neigebauer, Sturdza succeeded: the number of grades was reduced from seven to four, and the Academy’s buildings were handed over to a Frenchman, Alexandre Malgouyerné, who set up a “French institute”, a kind of private boarding house with a mere three grades of education. In the

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71 Cartoian, op. cit., p. 70-71.
73 Bădărău (II), p. 214, 221.
schools regulation of 1847, the class-bound thinking behind this procedure was laid bare:

In moral life, as in the material one, if we were to offer the same instruction to the different ranks of society, we would be making the same departure from the truth and would encounter the same discordances, as if we would try to subject different varieties of living creature to one and the same food.  

But as in Wallachia, these measures were short-lived and the events of 1848 were to consign this project to the dustbin of history.

74 Bădășău (I), p. 355-359. See also the prospectus put out in October 1846 by a Frenchman, A. Gallice, for an "Institut d'Education Classique" (Uricariul, X, p. 418-428).
Books, printing

Sadly, there are no satisfactory calculations for the increase in Romanian book production for the period after 1830. The two accounts known to me produce greatly differing figures, one almost exactly double the other (See Fig. 1).

However, it is beyond all dispute that the period after 1830 witnessed an unprecedented explosion in book publishing. Both of these sets of figures probably underestimate the true extent of output. We can say with safety that more Romanian books were published in the period 1830-1860 than in all previous history. The printed Romanian word became commonplace, not rare; was no longer naturally associated with the sacred; and was being reproduced on an industrial scale, distributed by industrial means.

**Fig. 1: Estimated Romanian book production, 1830-1878**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1831-40</th>
<th>1841-50</th>
<th>1851-60</th>
<th>1861-70</th>
<th>1871-78</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>c.1,600</td>
<td>c.2,400</td>
<td>c.1,700</td>
<td>c.7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>c.1,200</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>c. 14,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1830, a large number of literary works still circulated in manuscript form without ever being published: probably as many different titles as there were published works. The author Grigore Plesoianu complained in 1829 that

I have seen many men taking a pen in their hand, inspired by patriotism to translate; but realising that there is nobody to print them, remained sighing with tears in their eyes and

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75 Now that the *Bibliografia românească modernă (1831-1918)*, 4 vols., București, 1984-1996, has been completed, a more accurate calculation would be possible given a team of researchers and a few months to spare. The total number of entries in these volumes is over 75,000.

76 A) represents figures scattered through Mircea Tomescu, *Istoria cărții românești*, p. 134, 137, 138; B) is drawn from Barbu Theodorescu, “Cartea românească de-a lungul secolelor.” *Studii și cercetări de documentare și bibliologie*, VII, 1, martie 1965, p. 45-57. Neither explains either their workings or their source-material. Tomescu, I suspect, is using as a source the catalogues of D. Iarcu (*Analele bibliografice române*, București, 1873) and G. Popescu, *Sise ani din literatura română* (București, 1879). Theodorescu mentions (rightly) that these are unsatisfactory but cites no other source or workings of his own. The figures in A) are repeated by Dumitru Trancă and Ion Marinescu, *A General Survey of the Romanian Book*. București, 1968, p. 19, again without providing sources.
cursing those who oppose the setting up of a commercial printing house.\textsuperscript{77} Only ten years later, the opposite sentiment - a fear of the consequences of intellectual overproduction and the banalization of print, was beginning to make itself felt.

The proprietors of printing presses in the Principalities remained limited in number. They benefited from the protection of the state, and also from an exclusive licence which guaranteed them against competition. The state monopoly in printing was further enforced against the traditional rights of the church. This can be seen from a case in 1833, when Heliade accepted a commission from the bishop of Buzău to print a liturgical work in 2,000 copies. Shortly after this, the same bishop set up his own press, and started to print the work himself. He then brought a suit against Heliade for not having fulfilled his order. In the subsequent proceedings, the judge awarded compensation to Heliade for the infringement of his monopoly, and ordered the said bishop to close his press down. The power of the church to act independently of the government even in religious matters, was thus being seriously curtailed.\textsuperscript{78} The Bucharest metropolitanate did not even possess a press after 1836.\textsuperscript{79}

Kiselev himself was extremely active in the promotion of printing activity during the period of his administration: the “Revision commissions” established by him in 1830-1831 sent out a large number of printed circulars and questionnaires in order to collect data on the state of the economy, the population and so forth.\textsuperscript{80} In 1832 the Wallachian Organic Regulations were printed, although they were not circulated immediately because Kiselev wished to annex to them a number of supplementary regulations concerning landholding, peasant-landlord relations, schooling and so forth.\textsuperscript{81} The printer, Heliade, was later to claim that, beyond the 2,000 copies ordered by Kiselev – with the obligation not to circulate

\textsuperscript{77} apud Paul Cornea, Originile romantismului românesc. Bucureşti, 1972, p. 446-447.
\textsuperscript{79} T.G. Bulat, “Tipografiia Mitropoliei Bucureştilor între anii 1810-1864.” BOR, XC, 5-6, 1972, p. 583-590.
\textsuperscript{81} Hurmuzaki, Documente, Supl. I-iv, p. 402.
them for a year – he printed a further 1,500 copies without the government’s permission but without having been explicitly forbidden to do so; and that he put them into circulation once the one-year embargo had expired. This may or may not be the case – what Heliade, a notorious self-aggrandiser, chose to say in Paris after 1848 needs to be accepted *cum grano salis*, although we do know that the Wallachian regulations circulated publicly in Moldavia.

In the latter province, the two editions to be published – in 1837 and 1846 – omitted the first chapter detailing the composition of the General Assembly and the election of the prince, as well as that concerning the establishment of a native militia. A French-language edition printed in Paris in 1846 was confiscated by customs officials. So any copies of the Wallachian regulations – which technically could not be refused import if they had passed censorship there – were welcome. Such relations between publication and public spirit were partly determined by the attitude of the respective authorities: but the attitude of those who controlled the presses themselves could have an influence too, as Heliade’s action shows.

But in both Principalities, the monopolies would be challenged in the late 1830s. In Moldavia, the young boyar Mihai Kogălniceanu, returning from higher study in Berlin and France in the company of the sons of Prince Sturdza, sought from the state a concession for a second press. He proposed that the state buy the machinery, but that he would print for lower prices than those charged by Asachi. The latter objected vigorously to this potential infringement, and obtained the support of the Metropolitan of Moldavia. Called to arbitrate, the State Assembly ordered that Kogălniceanu be allowed to lease the Metropolitan press, and be awarded various state publishing contracts, the principal among them being the editorship of the *Foiașă sâlaşă* [Village Broadsheet, 1839-1846], which had previously been Asachi’s concern. Kogălniceanu’s publishing activity had rich results for Romanian culture: he produced the first printed editions of the old

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Moldavian chronicles; numerous innovative literary and historical journals; translations of Russian, Spanish and French literature; even Romania's first cookbook. The manner of his ascendancy is significant. Although he represented a challenge to the establishment (and was frequently a victim of state censorship), he succeeded in penetrating the market in two ways. Firstly, he appealed to the state for support; secondly, he took over the resources and function of the Orthodox metropolitan authorities. It was not the only contract Kogălniceanu bid for: he later tendered successfully to run the Moldavian courier service.

In Wallachia, the "pluralization" of the press happened in a slightly different fashion, but the results were similar. This time it was a government official rather than a youthful upstart who resented Heliade's stranglehold on the production of literature. The Council for Public Education, led by Petrache Poenaru, had been showing signs of dissatisfaction with Heliade for some time in the 1830s, partly as a consequence of political intrigues and rivalry, but also because of his alleged abuse of the privilege. Heliade "demanded large advances of cash and then would not finish the job"; the state even temporarily reverted to having school books printed by the Orthodox Church. But in 1837, a new, state-financed press, purchased from the prestigious Parisian firm of Alphonse Didot at a cost of over 2,000 ducats, was established in the College of Saint Sava. This press would run until 1860, when it was amalgamated with the Orthodox Metropolitan press to form Romania's first State Printing House. Thus, bizarrely, the state monopoly was broken by forces within the administration itself.

In the 1840s an increasing number of printers set up in Bucharest, a larger town with a more active merchant population than Iași. By 1848 there were at least seven presses there. The centre of gravity of Romanian publishing activity had moved by this time from Buda to Bucharest: in 1837, in a characteristic move,

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85 V. Stan, "M. Kogălniceanu - antreprenor de poște." *AllAI*, XXXI, 1994, p. 443-484.
86 Or so Benjamin Barker, an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society interested in printing Bibles in Bucharest, was told by Poenaru in September 1835; E. D. Tappe, "Rumania and the Bible Society until the Crimean War." *SEER*, XLVI, 106, 1968, p. 100.
87 Ionașcu et al., *Istoria Universității din București*, p. 122ff.
even the Romanian printer at the Buda university press, Zaharia Carcalechi, renounced his post there, crossed the Carpathians, and opened for business in the Wallachian capital.®

Nevertheless, the role and profession of printer continued to be a closely guarded one. Most Romanian printers before 1848 - Asachi and Kogălniceanu in Iași; Heliade, C. A. Rosetti, Anton Pann and Zaharia Carcalechi in Bucharest - were also writers, editors of papers, teachers and public functionaries, albeit of widely differing social backgrounds.® Even after this date, political and literary groupings who wished to run a newspaper or publish books tended to acquire their own press, remaining suspicious of entrusting the production to other hands.

New categories of expression began to appear consistently in print in the period after 1830. Numerous books of lyric verse now appeared in Romanian, particularly in Wallachia. Some poets sought to praise the Russian protectorate: Gheorghe Asachi, for instance, had already composed an ode to Tsar Alexander on the occasion of his visit to Bessarabia in 1817, and in a composition celebrating the New Year in 1830, compared the civilizing efforts of the Russians to those of the classical poets whose harmonious music could tame wild beasts. In Wallachia, the great boyar Iancu Vâcârescu (1794-1863) published a “Romanian March” for the newly re-established Wallachian militia, and expressed gratitude to the Russians for allowing this to happen; his protégé Heliade likewise published an “Ode to the Russian Campaign of 1829”. The dedication of flattering verse to those in positions of influence was commonplace throughout this period.® Public examinations, court ceremonies, and similar ritual events provided the occasion for reading of verses. Some of this verse celebrated the (Moldavian, Wallachian)

®® For the intellectual shift to the Principalities generally, Cornea, Originile ..., p. 477; for Carcalechi’s move, Crețu, op. cit.
®® The other were virtually all foreigners: Iosif Copainig, Feminand Ohm, the Hristidi brothers, Frederic Walbaum, Enric Winterhalter in Bucharest; the Fourreau brothers, Prof. Kemminger, and a Jewish press in Iași. cf. Crețu, op. cit.
®® See e.g. the Wallachian poet Grigore Alexandrescu’s composition Înalțimii sale Prințului stăpâniei ad Moldovii, Mihail Sturza, pentru anul 1842 [“To His Highness the ruling Prince of Moldavia Mihail Sturza, for the year 1842”], which was written in the hope of a job at the Moldavian court. (Alexandrescu, Opele, I. București, 1972, p. 277; cf. E. Lovinescu, Grigore Alexandrescu. București, 1928, p. 207, 216.) Alexandrescu noted how other Wallachian poets (Heliade, Marcovici, Aristia) tried to win princely favours in the same way (Ion Roman,
nation through the evocation of historical ruins or landscape, or the brave acts of national heroes. Pushkin, Schiller, Byron, Lamartine and Scott provided consistent models, but recourse was also had to older writers like Voltaire. The latter’s *Henriade* provided the inspiration for the Constantin Negruzzi’s *Aprodul Purice* [1837] and for Heliade’s *Michaida* [1845], which celebrated, respectively, a servant of the Moldavian prince Stephen the Great and the Wallachian Michael the Brave. In general the Moldavian and Wallachian pantheons of heroes remained separate until the 1860s. Other writers sought the opposite effect, and an older tradition of unpublished verse satire was continued in subtler forms, such as adaptations of La Fontaine’s fables which could be read in a local key. There was also - particularly in Bucharest - a wide network of surreptitious, satirical or scurrilous verse, continuing even after the formal abolition of censorship in 1862.

In fields like political thought, however, the development of public arenas for discussion was considerably weaker. A short popularizing treatise on “the political sciences” was one of the first articles to be published in the Wallachian press; but this was not a work of great originality. Its author, Simeon Marcovici, also produced the first treatise of rhetoric to be published in the principalities, which took more examples of this art from the speeches of Count Kiselev than

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91 Some of the rhetorical tropes (landscape, ruins, bravery) are analysed in Paul Cornea, ed. *Structuri tematice și retorico-stilistice în romantismul românesc*. București, 1976. There is no systematic analysis of the historical subject matter of poetry of the period, but the continued separation of regional traditions was effectively the same as that found in schoolbooks, and studied by Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, “Personajele istorice românești și oferta manualelor de istorie din Principatele Române.” *Rl*, n.s., VII, 9-10, 1996, p. 719-739.

92 Thus Alexandrescu’s *Lebada și puii corbului* [“The Swan and the crow’s chicks”] was intended as a satire on the Russian consul in Bucharest (idem, *Opere*, ed. cit., I, p. 142-144, commentary p. 408-409; there is an English version in Henry Stanley, ed. *Rouman Anthology*. Hertford, 1856, p. 205); Heliade’s *Mâceașul și florile* [“The Dog-rose and the flowers”] circulated on printed sheets in Bucharest in 1844 and ridiculed the government’s offer of mining concessions to the Russian engineer Trandafilov (Heliade, *Opere*, ed. Popovici, I, p. 134-139; Popovici showed (ibid., p. 558-560) that Heliade’s claim that this poem circulated in 30,000 copies was a great exaggeration.


94 S. Marcovici, “Ideea pe scurt asupra tuturor formelor de obâluire.” *Curierul românesc*, I, nr. 29, 30 & 39, Jun-Aug 1829; partly repr. in Paul Cornea & Mihai Zamfir, eds. *Gîndirea românească în
from any other author. The majority of documents expressing political ideas - written as they were at specific conjunctures, for pressing purposes, again by the implicated élite - were confined to spheres of diplomacy or small confederative groups and remained unpublished. Only after the Union of the Principalities in 1859 did the number of published works on politics come to rival the number of privately-circulated documents and memoranda.

Historiography was in the same situation. Before the 1840s the most illustrious chronicles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were only known in manuscript form. We know of 46 Romanian manuscript copies of Miron Costin’s *Chronicle of Moldavia*; even that is a large figure, compared to the four surviving copies of Constantin Cantacuzino’s *History of Wallachia*, or the two of Dimitrie Cantemir’s *Chronicle of the Antiquity of the Moldo-Wallachian Romanians*. The most detailed works had been published by Greek scholars in Greek, although we should also remember that numerous foreign authors’ accounts, for all their errors, were based at least partly on internal written sources. Although several works of Romanian historiography had been published earlier abroad in translation, it was only in the 1830s and 1840s that printed works of history began to appear in Romanian in Moldavia and Wallachia.

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99 D. Cantemir’s *Historia incrementorum atque decretorum imperii aulae othmanicae* appeared in English translation in 1734-1735, French in 1743, German in 1745; his *Descripția Moldovei* in German in 1771 and in Russian in 1789; his *Vita Constantini Cantemiri* in Russian in 1783. Parts of a Greek translation of Nicolae Costin’s chronicle of Moldavia (written c. 1712) was published in *Vol. XI of Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, Paris, 1827.
100 The solitary exception is Cantemir’s *Descrierea Moldovei*. Neamț, 1825.
The most modern and influential synthesis, Mihail Kogălniceanu’s *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie et des Valaques transdanubiens* (Berlin, 1837) was published abroad in a foreign language. Kogălniceanu had studied in France and Germany with the sons of Prince Mihai Sturdza (whose ward he was), and his work was written at the suggestion of the Prince’s cousin Alexandru Sturdza (1791-1854), a counsellor in the Russian Foreign Ministry who helped tutor Kogălniceanu. It praised the Russian protectorate in the preface, and was at least partly designed as a propaganda exercise. The period dealt with ended in 1792, and a projected second volume describing more recent events was never printed, undoubtedly for political reasons. Of about 500 copies printed, 80 reached the principalities. It did not sell well: there were enough copies remaining in 1854 for a second printing to be deemed unnecessary by the Berlin publisher, who remarkeated the remaining copies with a new preface. However, Kogălniceanu’s conception of Romanian history - both in terms of the geopolitical area treated and in the method applied - was by far the most modern of any in Romanian to that date, and the recent assessment of one scholar, that Romanian historical ideology has remained more or less the same since, is only a slight exaggeration. What is interesting, however, is how this and other works of Kogălniceanu’s - including one of the first modern critical overviews of Romanian literary history - were directed with Russian support at a European audience, rather than produced for the domestic market.

Meanwhile, many historiographical printing projects went unrealised. Florian Aaron was unable to complete the publication of his school history manual in the 1830s, despite having received state subvention for the first two volumes.
Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi’s plan to publish a nine-volume edition of the works of Dimitrie Cantemir failed to attract subscribers. One project which succeeded, not surprisingly, was Asachi’s translation of Karamzin’s History of Russia, published in Iași in 1833. Editorial proposals of the 1830s in both Moldavia and Wallachia to publish the Transylvanian historian Gheorghe Șincai’s Chronicle of the Romanians were delayed for ten years: although the editors again had the support of the state in appealing for subscriptions, they could not raise the money or find the requisite number of readers. (One volume was printed in Iași in 1844, but the edition was not completed). \(^{104}\) Important works would lie in manuscript for years before being printed: Nicolae Bălcescu’s History of the Romanians Under Prince Michael the Brave, a classic of Romanian historiography, was not published until 1877, twenty-five years after the author’s death.

On the other hand, signs of the existence of a market begin gradually to appear, particularly in the larger towns, and especially for translations of popular fiction, political memoirs, romances and other works from the West. It has been estimated that 615 literary, philosophical, scientific and didactic works were translated into Romanian from 1830 to 1860; in other words, 10-20 percent of all publications. \(^{105}\) The great majority of these translations (nearly 60 percent) were from the French: a situation which bears remarkable similarity to that prevailing in Russia eighty years earlier, or even to that of eighteenth-century Spain. \(^{106}\) Most of them were also published in Bucharest, whose role as a publishing centre was growing visibly. The most popular authors included Dumas-père, Byron, Florian,

\(^{104}\) V. Cristian, “Editarea și difuzarea cărții românești de istorie (1821-1848).” AIIAI, XII, 1975, p. 58-59; G. Potra & V. Curțicăpeanu, “Istoricul tipării și difuzării cronicii lui George Șincai.” AIC, XVI, 1973, p. 84-92. In Wallachia, government officials pushed hard for local administrations to find subscribers, but met with resistance in certain quarters, such as Muscel county, where the ispravnic wrote back saying he had more important things to be doing (Ibid., p. 134).


\(^{106}\) Of 765 translated works published in Russian from 1756-1775, 402 (52%) were of works originally in French, and many others (e.g. works of English, or Italian literature) were translated from a French intermediary translation. Gary Marker, Printing, Publishing and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia. Princeton, 1985, p. 88. Nearly two-thirds of 1200 translations into Spanish in the eighteenth century were from the French: Javier Fernández Sebastián, “Pépinsele Ibérique” in Daniel Roche & Vincente Ferroni, eds. Le Monde des Lumières. Paris, 1999, p. 415.
Molière, Kotzebue, Georges Sand, Voltaire and Marmontel.\textsuperscript{107}

Those who planned these translations did so in a manner that was as systematic as it was impracticable. Heliade - whose Advertisement of 1846 foresaw the translation of nearly 250 works of history, philosophy, law, political economy, natural science, beaux-arts, poetry, drama and fiction, at the rate of 21 a year - desired “to give to his nation the beginnings of a universal library. In it will be comprised the most remarkable ancient and modern authors, whose writings have contributed to the fulfilment of the great realisation of civilization, to the formation of the human mind and heart, to the perfection of mankind.”\textsuperscript{108} In fact the very idea of translation was a translation, of a scheme launched in 1830s France by the author Aimé Martin, the Panthéon littéraire. Only 11 works in this particular subscription scheme ever saw the light of day. Plans such as these promoted a utopian and mechanistic view of the effects of literature on society.\textsuperscript{109} Nevertheless, Heliade managed to win the support of the Prince of Wallachia, whose name he astutely placed at the top of the list of subscribers.\textsuperscript{110}

Such publishing schemes can be said to constitute a shaping force in the idea of literature itself. The moral effects of works of the imagination were loudly proclaimed; the publishers’ assertion - however unreal - that through such books the nation could model itself and educate itself towards perfection, can be said to have installed itself in the collective structures of the market. This was partly a product of the very suddenness of the development of a “public space” - the literary ideal was consciously invoked as “beginning” in the 1820s, and the entrepreneurs presented themselves explicitly as founders, as pioneers. A common strategy of literary critics and publicists was to declare that they were the founders of a new tradition. “About twenty years ago the word literature began to be heard in Romania” wrote Heliade in 1845, but he believed it to be “still in swaddling

\textsuperscript{109} Sorin Antohi, \textit{Imaginaire culturel et réalité politique dans la Roumanie moderne}. Paris, 1999, p. 26, has called this mentality “eschatological foreshortening.”
clothes". Such a viewpoint, obsessively dwelt on but also real, enabled the import of a Western body of works to be seen as a unique spur to cultural growth and perfection, and the importers to portray themselves as moral founders or initiators of the national spirit. As one critic observed, “imitation took on here an integral character; we borrowed Western forms without distinction, en masse, and not at all in the deliberative light of the ‘critical spirit’.”

Other translations, however were more wordly in their content and more modest in their pretensions. Titles translated in the 1830s and 1840s include *The Brazilian Betrothal* by Mistress Norton; *Don’t Play with Fire* by Marville; *Love on the Scaffold; The Killer of Hearts; Spanish Revenge; The Shoes of the Most Noble and Well-Beloved Captain Spacamonte; The Married Man Who Wants to Play at Being Young.* Although one must not mistake this for the average level of the entire Romanian public - anybody who was anybody could already speak French and would not need the conduit of translation to access such works - it certainly shows that the publishers were as interested in developing a commercial market as in providing enlightenment and salvation through literature. They were providing for the two extremes of literary fantasy: those who wanted to know everything, and those who wanted to know nothing.

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111 Helide, “Chemare” (1845), *ibid.*, p. 452. Over twenty years later, the critic Titu Maiorescu asserted that “Romanian society around 1820 began to awake from its lethargy”, but, criticizing the efforts of his predecessors, believed that only in his own time could one discern the development of “a literature still young and in part unrecognised, but which, through its sure and solid spirit, gives us the first element of legitimate hope for the future.” Maiorescu, “În contra direcției de astăzi în cultura română” (1868) in *Crivice* ed. Dominica Filimon-Stoicescu. București, 1967, I, p. 147, and “Direcția nouă în poezia și proza română” (1872), *ibid.*, p. 157. Nicolae Manolescu (*Contradicția lui Maiorescu.* 2° edn. București, 1973, p. 260), remarks on the contradictory elements of this critical strategy: “the religious spirit of the founder is set against the “polemical” spirit of he who denies the value of the past.”
The periodical press

As we have seen, there had been several proposals to establish a newspaper in the Principalities before 1821, but none met with official approval. A further proposition, made in 1827 by the enlightened boyar Dinicu Golescu likewise encountered the opposition of the authorities, although Golescu did manage to organize a paper in distant Leipzig, of which only a few copies have recently been discovered.\footnote{Mariana Cristea, "Prismul ziar românesc Faima Lipscai, o valoroasă contribuție la istoria presei române." Muzeul Bruckenthal, Sibiu: Studii și comunicări, XIII, 1967, p. 273-284.}

But it was with Russia's support, and during the latter's occupation of the Principalities, that the first newspapers in Romanian were established. Both Golescu in Wallachia, and the Moldavian Gheorghe Asachi had established close links with the Russian occupying authorities: Golescu had travelled to St. Petersburg in about 1823; Asachi did so in the winter of 1828-9, as a member of the commission responsible for drafting the Organic Regulation of Moldavia.\footnote{He published an account of his travels in Albina Românească, 25 sep-4 dec 1830; repr. in G. Ivașcu, ed. Reflector peste timp. Din istoria reportajului românesc. Vol. I: 1829-1866. București, 1964, p. 8-48.}

They each applied for permission to the respective Russian civil administrators (Feodor Pahlen in Wallachia, November 1828; Feodor Mircovici in Moldavia, April 1829). This being granted, Curierul românesc [The Romanian Courier] saw the light of day in April 1829, and Albina românească [The Romanian Bee] in June the same year. Romanian literary historians have detected French and Italian influence in the names of these journals;\footnote{Mircea Anghelescu, Ion Heliade Rădulescu. O biografie a omului și a operei. București, 1986, p. 44; Valeria Osoianu, "Date noi cu privire la apariția unor periodice ale lui Gheorghe Asachi." SCB, III, 1957, p. 269-276.} but the titles chosen were generalized throughout Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire by this date.\footnote{starting with Potemkin's military journal, the Courier [sic] de Moldavie (Iași, 1790); also a Courrier d'Egypte during the French occupation (1798-1801), and, more recently, a Courrier de Smyrne (1828): (Robert Mantran, ed. Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman. Paris, 1989, p. 455). As for the Albina, this could easily be Russian in inspiration (the first journal of the Moscow Academy, dating from 1759, was called Trudolubivaja Pchela or "The Diligent Bee"; later the Severnaia Pchela ("Northern Bee") was one of the most popular Moscow papers); there was also a Greek Bee in Paris in the 1820s (Constantin Dimaras, Histoire de la littérature néo-hellénique. Athènes, 1965, p. 176).}

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Moldavia, we have an instruction of Mircovici, Vice-President of the Assembly, specifying what the Russians saw fit to be published: “In this kind of journal should be published not only administrative news, but also the measures of the government which insist on the abolition of the greedy and oppressive actions of the native aristocracy.”\textsuperscript{118} The first number of \textit{Curierul rumânesc}, on the other hand, had two sections, “foreign news”, and “domestic news”; much of the former was drawn from French-language Russian publications. The fact was stressed that “With each day, the measures of the high powers show in practice how much our good president cares for the inflorescence of our fatherland.”\textsuperscript{119}

The hand of censorship weighed upon the contents: \textit{Curierul rumânesc}, for instance, was forbidden to mention the plague that had swept Bucharest in 1829, lest the Russians’ public claims to have eradicated this from the principalities come under question. Both papers published articles in French as well as Romanian, thus indicating that the papers were partly intended as a conduit of publicity in diplomatic circles. However, when Heliade began to publish favourable commentaries on the July Days of 1830 in France, and various political articles asserting the monarch’s “absolute duty to fulfil the contents of the laws” and criticizing the tyrant who “turns all the powers of the state against the people”, the Russian high command published a notice informing readers that only documents bearing the signature of the director of the political chancery were to be considered official, and that the remaining articles were of an unofficial character. The authorities clearly felt the need to distance themselves from the paper: thus was a marginal degree of autonomy obtained.\textsuperscript{120}

Despite the fact that the papers had the full support of the government - such as it was - to ensure a wide subscription and an efficient distribution, they encountered severe difficulties in their early years. Of the Wallachian press, the French diplomatic agent Bois-le-Comte wrote in 1834 that “there was so little interest in its publication, that nobody came to buy it, and [Heliade] had to take it upon himself to circulate it. He distributes around 300 copies, to his various

\textsuperscript{118} Mircovici to Divanul Obșteșc, 26 Dec 1829, cited by Osoianu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 271.

\textsuperscript{119} Anghelescu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47.
employees. The *Wallachian Courier* and its literary supplement still have no more than 200 and 50 subscribers respectively.*"^\textsuperscript{121}\) Meanwhile in Moldavia, *Albina românească* ceased publication in July 1833. Asachi wrote to Kiselev attributing "the lack of success which this publication has known" to "the difficulties confronting the civilisation of a people who are only beginning to learn in an advanced age", and requested the latter's intervention. Kiselev could think of little that he could do to help: "As for supporting [your journal], I can hardly take measures against the will of the Moldavians who have no desire to read gazettes written in their own language"; but promised to continue to subsidise the *Buletin* of government resolutions which was published alongside *Albina*.\textsuperscript{122}\) The papers were resuscitated in 1836 (*Curierul*) and 1837 (*Albina*).

Nevertheless, however anodyne the first journalistic efforts of the Moldavians and Wallachians proved to be – the poet Vasile Alecsandri was later to comment that the *Romanian Bee* was "condemned to merely collecting honey from the flowers of the prince’s garden"\textsuperscript{123}\) - their role in initiating a public space in which literature could be disseminated and encouraged is undeniable. Both papers issued important literary supplements - Heliade put out an *Adaos literal* in 1830 and 1831, and Asachi edited *Alăuta românească* [The Romanian Lyre] in 1837 and 1838 - which effectively established belles-lettres as a domain distinct from the mainstream of news and official writing. They came out under the shadow of the news papers, which themselves were permanently under the shadow of the Moldavian and Wallachian governments - which in their turn were overshadowed by the Russians and their interests. But the editors showed sufficient talent and resource to be able to continue publication through to 1848 - albeit with numerous interruptions - and establish at least a model for cultural development through literature, even if the practical results of this "culturalization" were negligible. It is equally clear, however, that "literature" was

\textsuperscript{120}\) Ibid., p. 47-52.
\textsuperscript{122}\) V. Osoianu, *op. cit.*, p. 271-273.
from the beginning the conceptual medicine of the state rather than, as Asachi himself might have put it, the nectar of the nation.

An idea of how the Moldavian government expected newspapers to function in the period before 1848 can be obtained by examining the regulations issued in 1839 for a journal to be distributed to the villages of that province. The publication was conceived “so that there should be no mishaps in the event that the Government should make something generally known to the inhabitants of the land”, and to be printed in as many copies as there were villages in Moldavia. It was to include, besides commercial information, announcements of epidemics or livestock diseases, and official appointments (“which the Government considers appropriate to be made known”), “information useful to the inhabitants of the villages, such as: necessary practical knowledge, economical methods and improvements in agriculture, and others similar.” Every village of over 50 people was legally constrained to subscribe. The system of distribution was as follows. The Department of the Interior sent it to the ispravnici; the ispravnici entrusted it to the schools inspectors who were then to extract a receipt from the village priest and to have it sealed with the village seal, the form of the receipt to be published in the first issue of the Bulletin. These receipts were then to be returned periodically to the Interior Department. After church on the first Sunday after the receipt of the Bulletin, the priest was obliged to read out the paper “so that all may hear”, and the village sentinels were to sign on the paper’s margin that it had been read. The paper appeared intermittently from 1839 to 1846, under the alternating editorship of Asachi, Mihai Kogălniceanu, and Costache Rollà, and is illustrative of the caution exercised by the authorities when disseminating the written word outside the normal circle of educated society.

In Wallachia, the press was more diverse, and more active, but probably of a more varied quality. Apart from Curierul rumânesc, one notable achievement was România (Dec. 1837-Dec 1838), the first - and significantly named - daily

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124 Rolla was a participant in the Moldavian 1848 revolt and Vasile Alecsandri’s brother-in-law.
125 Pravila pentru așezarea unui Buletin sătesc, întărită cu Ofis Domnesc, cătră Sfatul Cârmuitar (14 May 1839), in Leguiri în ramurile administrative și giudecătoarești votate de generalnica obștească adunare în sesiile anilor 1834-1841. Iași, 1842. On the actual functioning of the paper:
newspaper in Romanian. It was run largely by expatriate teachers at the St. Sava college, and although it only lasted a year, it introduced a new rhythm and spring into Bucharest literary life. Linguistic analysis has shown how the pressures of daily writing and editing had a strong influence on the development of vocabulary: in transposing news reports, the authors of România introduced words like protest, protocol, inauguratie into the Romanian language. A popularising scientific article introduced two more words, as readers learnt that “In many caves one may see certain very strange tricks of nature; . . . embellishments of all kinds, of which those which hang from the vault of the cave like icicles are called stalactites, while those standing on the floor of the cave like columns are called stalacmites.” 126 No other newspaper sustained daily publication for as long as this until C. A. Rosetti’s Românul was established in 1859.127

Meanwhile Heliade was, with his usual verve and ingenuity, dreaming up new journals and reviews with which to “educate the nation.” His literary ideology, like that of many of his contemporaries, sought to address not just problems of language and aesthetics but, through these, the entire gamut of Romanian social development: “Literature is dear to us, because hitherto we have not given it our attention; but when we will have all worked at it together, then we can also hold in affection bricklaying, ploughing and the rest.” Literature and language were perceived as sacred crafts which would act as archetypal catalysts to infuse energy into the profane crafts of industry. With the short-lived Muzeul National [1836-1838] he promised a “literary and industrial journal”; next, he put out the Curier de Ambe Secse [Courier for Both Sexes, 1837-1847] a review which would appear twice-yearly, “once for gentlemen and once for the ladies”, and would address problems of “literature, industry, economics, child-raising, good housekeeping and domestic economy, fields and gardens, moral tales and other similar subjects. It will also include, and with due dispatch, prints of fashionable figures for men and women alike.” The latter item seemed to have

been included as a kind of lure to subscribers, one which indeed worked well: Heliade managed to attract a readership of over a thousand, without apparent recourse to the patronage of the state or of aristocratic circles which were his usual standby. But, once he had thus “caught” his audience, he withdrew the prints “as they didn’t at all suit the purposes or the subject matter of this paper.”\textsuperscript{128} The journal made room for the encyclopaedic as well as the alluring: in 1847, Heliade began a serialized “dictionary of literature” with an article on the word \textit{Academy}; but the project never got beyond the letter “A”.

The years 1829-1847 saw the publication of no fewer than 43 journals of one kind or another. The vast majority of them appeared in Moldavia and Wallachia, another indication of the shift in intellectual life away from Transylvania and the other provinces of the Habsburg Empire, where political conditions were now considerably less favourable to Romanian publications. However, few of them were able to last more than a year or so, and even the most consistent of them ceased publication for extensive periods.\textsuperscript{129} They rarely achieved a print-run of more than 500, and many had even smaller readerships: Kogălniceanu’s acclaimed \textit{Propășirea} circulated in just forty copies.\textsuperscript{130}

Most papers in the years up to and including 1848 were generally idealistic and multidisciplinary in their concerns: \textit{Curiosul}, edited by Cezar Boliac in 1836-1837 promised that the press “together with the theatre and the collection of classic authors, will thrust us more rapidly towards that which consummates and makes a nation happy: ‘enlightenment’.”\textsuperscript{131} \textit{România} aimed to “instil religion and give out morsels of science and literature.” Ion Genilie’s \textit{Universul} [1845-1848] offered “remarkable novelties, from all of nature, culture, literature”; Sigismund Pop’s \textit{Democrația} [Pest, 1849] promised “news from Hungary, rural economy,

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{128} Anghelescu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 99-101.
\bibitem{129} Dan Berindei, \textit{Cultura națională română modernă}, p. 152. 21 in Wallachia, 16 in Moldavia, 6 in Transylvania. Berindei calculates that 16 of these papers lasted at least three years: in reality only about 8 did so without interruption.
\end{thebibliography}

137
geography, natural history, physics, humorous verses and sayings”, in short “everything that a people ought to know.” These papers were envisaged, then, as nothing less than a kaleidoscopic filter (or Icon of the World, to name yet another title) through which the entire Romanian nation was meant to experience the entire rest of the world, and profit from it to achieve perfection.

The period from 1830 to 1848, then, was a time of establishments and beginnings, but simultaneously of intense nervousness about the unknowable (and feared) effects of social development. An ideal of pedagogy and enlightenment was laid down - but nobody agreed how far to take the project. The intellectuals of the 1820s had insisted that “enlightenment of the people” would bring Moldavian and Wallachian society out of backwardness: the more they were conscious of this backwardness, the more imperative was the need to create an intellectual élite. The problem was one that faced society as a whole rather than just the educational system, which was supposed to be the cure. A strong state was believed to be the solution for developing a “weak” society. This rhetoric of improvement, initiated by the Russian administration, was advocated equally by the liberal opposition. But scientific and applied courses were weakly attended, and the level of instruction low. Medical educators, for instance, did not advocate scientific cures, for they knew that there were few means to implement them in the villages. Even so, talk of “intellectual overproduction” and fear of the effects of large-scale schooling began to develop. In 1839 the schoolmaster at Brăila in Wallachia had drawn attention to the fact that “the chancelleries are shuddering with the crowds of children who have scarcely learnt to read and waste the best years of their youth waiting to fill the shoes of a dead, pensioned or promoted copyist.” On the one hand he hoped to transform “the young generation’s applications for jobs into commercial registers”; on the other, he declared that the “national character” required peasants not to desert their ploughs and oxen, “their

132 Quoted ibid., p. 82, p. 88, p. 94.
133 Icoana lumii, published by Gheorghe Asachi in Iaşi, 1840-1841 and 1845-1846.
134 In 1841 an agricultural school was set up to provide for private economic development in Moldavia; but it functioned irregularly. Al. Andronic & Gh. Ungureanu, “Învăţământul agricol în Moldova pînă la jumătatea secolului al XIX-lea.” SCŞ - istorie, IX, 1-2, 1958, p. 99-123.
only peaceful means of subsistence.”

But neither the critiques of commentators nor the actions of government were sufficiently disinterested to enable the system to change for the better. The contradictions were inherent in the nature of the Russian protectorate, which first enforced secular enlightenment on the Romanian people and then forbade it on account of its social consequences. The purpose of education was declared at the outset to provide an élite for the state (“to raise public functionaries in a manner suited to their future destiny”, as article 422 of the Organic Regulation put it). At the same time the instruction of the masses was viewed with grave suspicion alike by the Russian authorities, who feared an uprising in Moldavia along similar lines to the one that had taken place in Cracow in 1846; and by the boyars, who feared for the future of their serf labour. It was not as if the instruction of the masses had got out of hand - on an estimate from 1849, only one five-hundredth of the Moldavian population frequented the public schools. However, the government’s policy, which had installed education at the heart of public life and then restricted it to the top level of society, helped to increase both the depth of the division between state and society and the prestige of education as a means to power. Meanwhile, the liberal opposition, many of whom saw their newspapers and teaching posts at risk, spoke out for the expansion of public education, but effectively in the same, elitist terms. Both the government’s and the opposition’s attitudes reinforced the basic problem: an ever more sophisticated system of higher learning was being proposed for the improvement of a society that was scarcely learning to read, while the alphabetization of the mass of peasants was viewed with anxiety, and thoughts of potential social disintegration.

136 I. Penescu, “Cuvântul rostit la 30 iunie în şcoale de Brăila.” Mercur (Brăila), 1839, reprinted in Dacia literară, III, Iaşi, april 1840, p. 449-450: cf. Costache Conachi, in a letter to Metropolitan Veniamin in 1837, condemning “the blind haste with which we thought to gain enlightenment without considering that eyes emerging from the darkness must open little by little, so as not to be blinded all the more.” Poesii. Iaşi, 1887, p. 327.

137 Bădărău (II), p. 223.

138 Moldavian liberals’ appeals for educational development in Leonte Radu’s reform project of 1839 (Hurmuzaki, Documente, Supl. I-vi, p. 82ff); Petition-proclamation of 28 mar 1848 (Anul 1848, IV, p. 100); M. Kogălniceanu, Dorințele partidei naționale din Moldova, in Bodea, 1848 la români, I, p. 673. All request a university, rather than an extension of schooling to the villages.
In the previous chapter, I showed how the idea of literature made its appearance in Romanian culture in the early 1820s, and was not initially distinguished from the idea of learning in general. After 1830, usages of the term *literatură* multiplied.\(^{139}\) In the early numbers of *Curierul Rumânesc*, *literatură* was equated with learning, for instance in an advertisement for a book called *Curs de literatură*,

in which are included ecclesiastical selections, apologies, allegories, rhetoric, moral and philosophical pieces full of wisdom and high considerations, from which not only the youth, but also older people can learn good lessons and steer clear of bad habits; all this knowledge has been gathered from the wisest French authors, who are Chateaubriand, Buffon, Fénélon, Lessing, Molière, Massillon, and others who in time have written for the benefit of all mankind, teaching them to walk on the paths of righteousness and wisdom.\(^{140}\)

Likewise, Asachi provided a definition of the “man of letters” [*Omul literat*] as he who "seeks ... to gather ... the soul and thought of great men of all ages and countries. He speaks with them in their language, whose fragrance he can then use to enrich the dialect of his patrie. He undertakes the gathering of foreign literature, with whose essence he beautifies the national literature."\(^{141}\) Asachi saw the nation not as defined by it but as owning it: "having over it a right of ownership extending even to those who have nothing else."\(^{142}\) In both these quotations we can see how the idea of literature involved a general appeal to European sources, but also a vision of how this general fund might be turned into Romanian “property”.\(^{143}\)

Particularly in the new journals, one could see a movement away from the idea of *literatură* as learning in general, to a usage connoting poetic or original

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\(^{139}\) In the Wallachian newspaper *Curierul rumânesc*: “Avertisment”, nr. 1, 1829; “Despre Literatura Românească”, *ibid.*, p. 433-434; Year III, 1831, p. 82 has an announcement of a meeting of the London “Society for the Encouragement of Literature”. From 1833 there is a special heading on *Literatură*. In the Moldavian *Albina Românescă*: Anon, “Despre literatură”, I, 1829, p. 19; “Despre Literatura Românească”, II, 1830, 51-52; Asachi, “Despre literatura românească”, 1830, p. 12, &c.

\(^{140}\) *Curierul românesc*, 1829, apud A. Camariano, *Spiritul revoluționar francez și Voltaire…*, p. 159.


\(^{142}\) “Referat asupra gramaticii lui Gh. Saulescu”[1833], *ibid.*, p. 467.

\(^{143}\) Cf. Anderson’s concept of a “private-property language”: *Imagined Communities*, p. 68.
compositions, and an emphasis on style and virtuosity in the use of language. From 1833, *Curierul Românesc* had a special heading on Literatură: under this rubric, Heliade published articles with titles like “On eloquence in antiquity” and “On poetry”. In the following year, he ran another series, dealing with subjects such as “Style”, “The Sublime” and “The Simple Mode of Writing”, while the Buda publication *Biblioteca românească* in the same year asserted, in an article entitled “On literature”, that Romanians have a greater aptitude for poetry than for other genres. 144

The Romanians’ reception of the idea that poetry was a paradigmatic form of literature did not lead to the development of an ideology of literature’s autonomy. Far from being independent from society, literature was representative of it, for instance in the following statement by the Wallachian poet Cezar Bolliac: “For the philosophical physiognomist who wishes to study a certain nation from a distance, the most characteristic and suggestive trait is poetry: popular poetry.” But elsewhere Bolliac equated “patriotic sentiment, emulation in learning, literary productions and the diffusion of the enlightenment”. 145 And in neighbouring Transylvania, the idea of literature as an index of national levels of civilisation was more important to the Romanian publicist and editor George Barițiu than aesthetic or stylistic criteria:

> Books published in a given language are the representatives of a national literature, and literature gives us a measure according to which it is possible to judge the state of culture of a nation. 146

It is in this light that we should read other statements of the period concerning the development of a Romanian literature, such as that of the schoolteacher Aaron Florian, writing in the Bucharest journal *România* in 1838:

> Romanian literature is advancing with manly paces. In all the provinces where Romanians live, a noble impulse to read and to write can be felt. Literary productions of all kinds, originals and translations, in prose and poetry are spreading a light of salvation and driving out darkness. 147

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144 On the (French, but also Greek) sources of Heliade’s ideas on literature, D. Popovici, *Ideologia literară a lui I. Heliade Rădulescu*. București, 1935.
If literature was associated with national success, reports of its progress were obviously flattering to the Wallachian government. It claimed that the Russian mission of enlightenment (also in a religious-missionary perspective, if we consider the implications of the weakening of the power of the Islamic suzerain) was working, in tune with a European idea of progress which was still justified in terms of a divine impulse.\textsuperscript{148} Given the very marked increase in book production during the period, we might also think it expressed a heartfelt admiration in the face of the changing fortunes of the Romanians. But at almost exactly the same time, Aaron was expressing completely different views, this time in private, in a letter to Barîtiu:

\begin{quote}
The rust of Greek culture has not yet been wiped off, Gallomania rules with an iron sceptre, Romanian literature has no admirers except for the youth being trained today in the schools; any literary production meets with obstacles, or it is undertaken in vain, or - in short - goes quite unrespected.\textsuperscript{149}
\end{quote}

Such remarks, while produced at least partly by Aaron’s own professional dissatisfaction, as a Transylvanian trying to make his way in the unfamiliar and cliquish Wallachian society, provide a more general idea of the frustrations of the age, while continuing to reinforce the notion that “literature” could be seen as representative of the state of the nation as a whole.

Undoubtedly the most innovative literary programme of this period was that laid down in Mihai Kogălniceanu’s \textit{Dacia litterară}, brought out in Iaşi in 1840. We have already seen how Kogălniceanu challenged Asachi’s claim to a monopoly of literary production, and acquired a lease on the Orthodox Metropolitanate’s printing press. The programme of his journal constituted a similarly courageous attack on accepted methods. In the preface to the first number, Kogălniceanu outlined his nationalist aesthetic: the ideas of “abandoning

\textsuperscript{148} On the providential nature of progress in the period, cf. an English clergyman’s commentary on a voyage down the Danube in 1837: “steam is calculated to prove the precursor of civilization, civilization of education, education of religion, and religion of happiness. The effect of the perfect organization of the existing arrangements will be to bring all the provinces on the banks of the Danube, with those bordering on them, into contact with the arts and sciences, the civil institutions, and the moral, commercial, and religious resources of western Europe; and a brighter, happier day will dawn on Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia, Sclavonia, Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Wallachia, and Moldavia. Nor will these countries be a limit to bound the operations of the mighty moral engine.” (Charles B. Elliott, \textit{Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia and Turkey}. London, 1839, I, p. 192)

\textsuperscript{149} Murgescu, \textit{op. cit.}, loc. cit.
politics”, putting aside provincial concerns (the invocation of Dacia in the magazine’s title represents an attempt to overcome the persistent regional identities, and the narrow preoccupation with Moldavian governmental business that Asachi’s organ evinced), and occupying itself only with “national” literature, were all laid down. So too was the principle of an objective criticism: “Our critique will be impartial; we shall criticise the work, and not the person.” In other words, criticism and evaluation were not mere tools for promoting political agenda and battles of personal ambition. A third step towards an organic model of national literature is the attack on foreign translations: “the desire for imitation has become amongst us a dangerous obsession, for it kills the national spirit in us. This obsession is particularly dominant in literature.” His solution is not a universal utopia - like that of Heliade - but a vision of the nation: “Our own history has sufficient heroic deeds, our beautiful lands are large enough, and our customs sufficiently picturesque and poetic for us to find subjects for writing among ourselves, without needing for this purpose to borrow from other cultures.”

These four proposals - the anti-political, the anti-regional, the impartial stance, and the stress on an original national taste - constituted a major theoretical contribution towards the idea of a national literature. Furthermore, Dacia litterară managed actually to practise the ideals it preached. The paper cemented links between different provinces by publishing writers from Wallachia - including Heliade, Ion Ghica, and the poet Grigore Alexandrescu - and reproducing articles from the recently-established Transylvanian paper Gazeta de Transilvania and its literary supplement Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură [“Paper for the mind, the heart, and literature”, 1837-1848, 1849-1865]. Its stress on originality succeeded, not least because Kogălniceanu and his contributors had experienced, through their Western travels and education, more modern conceptions of what a “national culture” was supposed to look like. Kogălniceanu’s critique of “xenomania” is no mere angry rejection of the West, but an attempt to strike a

150 Kogălniceanu, “Introducție” in Dacia litterară, 1, ian-feb 1840, p. 4.
critical balance between both Western influence and Romanian nationalism.\textsuperscript{151}

*Dacia litterară* was in fact so good that the Prince, Mihai Sturdza, shut it down after three issues. According to two different accounts, the journal was banned either because Asachi - always close to the prince - was personally offended by the publication of a critique of his lithographs of Moldavian historical scenes; or because a translation of a Russian traveller’s account of a journey through Moldavia contained the proverb “The fish always rots from the head down” - assumed to be a veiled implication that something was rotten in the state of Moldavia.\textsuperscript{152} Such governmental hypersensitivity gives a good indication of the extent to which literary reviews effectively operated - or at least, were read as operating - in a small but highly charged world of courtly intrigue and reading between the lines. Paradoxically, however, precisely by taking it so seriously and interpreting it in such a way as to be permanently soliciting meaning from it, the state’s repressive action served only to enhance the symbolic status of cultural activity.\textsuperscript{153}

Kogălniceanu stressed the fact that his was a “literary” enterprise. When promoting *Dacia litterară*, he had stressed both to the state censors and to the readership the idea that his journals would be “completely unconnected with any political interest, and will deal only with literature.”\textsuperscript{154} Three years after this journal’s closure, Kogălniceanu and his collaborators Vasile Alecsandri and Constantin Negruzzi tried again, this time with a journal entitled *Propăşirea* (“Progress”, January-October 1844).

The initial editorial, submitted to the censors in November 1843, began: “Romanians have begun to value the benefits of publicity. Various political and literary broadsheets, under various names and with various tendencies have been

\textsuperscript{151} Cf. Garabet Ibrăileanu, *Spiritul critic în cultura românească* [1909], Bucureşti, 1984, p. 41, who observed of *Dacia litterară* that “Western influence and Romanian nationalism are concomitant phenomena.”

\textsuperscript{152} *DLPR*, p. 141.


\textsuperscript{154} Kogălniceanu, letter to interior ministry, 24 jan 1840, cited by Maria Platon, *Dacia litterară*. Iaşi, 1974, p. 352.
established in all three provinces of the old Dacia.” In the hands of the censors this became:

Banishing from its columns anything understood by the strict word of politics, dealing in no way with political news or discussion, or with the events of the day, throwing out any translations of foreign writings, which, having no positive interest for us cannot enrich our literature, our sheet will contain nothing but original Romanian compositions divided into sections.  

The title, Progress, was also considered suspect and was amended to The Scientific and Literary Broadsheet. What Kogălniceanu himself had proposed to the censors in 1840 - that he was dealing with literature, not politics - was now enforced to absurd degrees: even favourable reports of events, such as the emancipation of the state’s gypsy slaves, were cut.  

Kogălniceanu and his collaborators were able to make a virtue out of a necessity, and use “literature” as a synonym for intellectual superiority and for political integrity. It also became a position from which to promote the “national”: foreign writings were now criticised not because they endanger literature from an aesthetic point of view, but because they are associated with political slander, intrigue and liberalism. Literature belongs to the nation, as opposed to politics which is the state’s business.

Kogălniceanu thus played on the double-edged meaning of “literature”: he used it to promote “nationality” as a political force and at the same time to deny involvement in “politics”. But his career trajectory is paradigmatic for many Romanian men of letters: he capitalized on this to take leading positions in the 1848 revolution, in Alexandru Ioan Cuza’s Unionist government of 1859-1866, and in subsequent liberal governments into the 1880s. The postures and styles of this professed (or enforced) literary “antipolitics”, which led of course, to political power, can be said to anticipate the literary strategies of later writers, such as Titu Maiorescu in the 1860s and 1870s, as well as a host of more provincial journalists.

In February 1848, revolution broke out in Paris and the Bourbon monarchy was overthrown. The effects of this event spread rapidly throughout Central Europe, and demonstrations and uprisings occurred within a month in Frankfurt, Berlin, Venice, Vienna, and Budapest. For the Romanians, the most extensive and violent involvement took place in Transylvania, where a small group of Romanian intellectuals initially sided with the Hungarian revolution, but were later largely to take up arms on behalf of the Emperor, becoming engaged in a long and bloody civil war which was to have lasting effects on the relations between the two peoples and become the key reference point for the ulterior development of Romanian national ideology in that province, including the first openly political expressions of the desire to unite with the Romanians of the Principalities.¹⁵⁸

The events in Moldavia and Wallachia, which concern us more directly, were of shorter duration and equally unsuccessful in their aims.¹⁵⁹ In Moldavia, a series of protests against the abuses of Prince Sturdza began in March. Revolutionary pamphlets circulated and public demonstrations were held. These protests were put down with relative ease by the prince, and the ‘revolutionary force’ (disgruntled noble factions would be a more accurate description)¹⁶⁰ soon fled the country: some to the Habsburg lands of Transylvania and Bucovina, where they continued their activity, and some to the West via the Moldavian port of Galați and Istanbul.

As for the Romanians of Wallachia, a small liberal élite group returning
from Paris in the spring of 1848 managed to overthrow the reigning prince George Bibescu in June. Demonstrations took place attended by up to 30,000 people.\textsuperscript{161} A revolutionary government was established and "points" drawn up in July. The revolutionaries toyed with property reform and expended energy in a wealth of rhetoric. Both Wallachian and Moldavian political visions followed a conception of state formation as national states as a series of buffers against the great reactionary empires of Austria and Russia.\textsuperscript{162} Their plans were soon compromised, first by a deal struck with the Ottomans (August 1848), and then militarily by the invasion of the Russian army in September.

In the 1848 revolution itself, printing was to play a central symbolic role. Especially in Wallachia, where some of the major activators were themselves proprietors of presses, the idea that the press was a key factor in enlightening and motivating "the people" - that mysterious variable - was enacted in various ways. On the 15th of June, a printing press was paraded through the streets in a cart, disseminating leaflets and poems against censorship.\textsuperscript{163} In some instances, the act of printing proclamations and newspapers was invested with as much meaning as the published content. Heliade was fond of recounting that, as the first print-roll of the revolutionary "Proclamation of Islaz" came off his press, a night-owl flew into his workshop and struck a beam, so dying; an occurrence which mimics folk sacrifices made at the consecration of churches.\textsuperscript{164} Printers' shops operated as houses of credit and meeting places for revolutionaries.

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\textsuperscript{161} Report of British consul Colquhoun, in Bodea, \textit{1848 la români}, II, p. 864. Earlier, Prince Bibesco had estimated the number of those "who are dreaming of a new order" at around 60 or 70 men (Duhamel to Kotzebue, 7 May 1848, in Varta, ed. \textit{Revoluția de la 1848}, p. 88).
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{162} Common cause with the Hungarian liberal revolution was advanced particularly by Nicolae Bălcescu (on whom see Bruce Fryer, "Bălcescu and the national question in 1849." \textit{EEQ}, XII, 2, 1978, p. 189-208) and Ion Ghica (who was influenced by Czartoryski's ideas of a common Polish-Hungarian-Romanian-Ottoman front backed by France against Russia – see e.g. \textit{Anul 1848}, I, 645-646). Dimitrie Brătianu headed a Romanian political mission to Pest in July/August (Bodea, \textit{Lupta}, p. 157-158). Other Romanians (notably Alexandru G. Golescu and Ion Maiorescu) sought common cause with German or Austrian liberals and hoped to unite with Transylvania under Austrian suzerainty (see petitions of 1848 and 1849 ibid., p. 336-340 & 343-346; Golescu, letter of 1850 in G. Fotino, ed. \textit{Boerii Golesti}. București, 1939, III, p. 91-109). On plans for a Romanian state as a semi-colony of France, see \textit{N. Istrati}, letter to G. Baritiu, 15/27 feb 1847, in Bodea, \textit{Lupta}, p. 304-305; \textit{Ion C. Brătianu}, letter to Paul Bataillard, in \textit{Anul 1848}, II, p. 188-189.
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\textsuperscript{163} Antohi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 88-89.
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\textsuperscript{164} Anghelescu, \textit{Ion Heliade Rădulescu}, p. 219.
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The year marked a high point in the production of newspapers in Wallachia. Indeed freedom of the press was one of the very first measures to be passed by the Wallachian provisional government, before the abolition of the death penalty or of corvée labour. The Proclamation of June 1848 asserted that

To kill the truth, to extinguish light, to obstruct good deeds by obstructing the press is a betrayal of one’s fatherland, an apostasy in God’s eyes. The freedom of the press can harm nobody except the sons of darkness.\(^{165}\)

The press is thus universal but also sacred and national: its enemies are nothing less than “the sons of darkness”; its position at the heart of public identity was wholeheartedly confirmed. The newspaper was a major tool for constructing and defining a concept of “the people” and in arrogating the right to speak in its name. This is evident in the new names given to the 1848 papers in Bucharest. Whereas previous journals had tended to take on names which were the usual metaphors for a purveyor of information - *The Courier, The Bee, The Village Teacher, The Organ of Enlightenment* - in 1848 the press started calling itself *The Sovereign People* or *The Romanian Infant*, to name the two most important papers of the Bucharest revolution. The role of the press therefore advanced from a means of communication with “the people”, to being an actual metonym or even a substitution for it.

These last two titles - the former edited by Dimitrie Bolintineanu and Nicolae Bălcescu, the latter by C.A. Rosetti - in other words the most liberal of the Wallachian leaders - enjoyed a high profile in the unfolding of events. Editing a journal was considered at least as patriotic as leading the National Guard or acting as chief representatives of the Wallachians to the Sublime Porte: this was as much a “Revolution of the Intellectuals” as any other in Europe that year. Again, their efforts were often symbolically loaded in a way that attracted more attention to the idea of a newspaper than to the real content thereof. For instance, Rosetti, who had

\(^{165}\) *Proclamația și programul revoluționar* (Islaz, 9/21 June 1848); Bodea, *1848 la Români*, I, p. 534; cf. Article 4 of the new constitutional project submitted to the Sultan (Bucharest, 4/16 August 1848, in Varta, ed. *op. cit.*, p. 211). The Transylvanian “Points of the Romanian Nation” (Blaj, 5/17 May) made similar claims (Bodea, *1848 la români*, I, p. 485). However, the more moderate Moldavians (*Petiție of 28 March/9 April*, ibid., 359-364; *Programul revoluționarilor moldoveni*, 12/24 May, p. 507-508) placed much less emphasis on press freedom despite the fact that they had known a harsher regime; only Kogălniceanu (*Dorințele partidei naționale din Moldova*, ibid., p. 654) insisted upon it.
been briefly imprisoned in the early days of the revolution, and subsequently released through the intervention of his business partner Enric Winterhalder, claimed that he did not pause on his release but stayed up two days and nights composing the first number of his paper.\textsuperscript{166} It was the revolutionary's first duty. Hyperbolic significance was attached to minor aspects of the craft: when Bălcescu decided to introduce some routine format changes into \textit{Popolul Suveran}, he justified himself to his readers thus:

The editors of this paper, seeing the need which the nation feels today for a paper which can develop the principles of our constitution and to give extensive treatment to all questions both internal and external, have determined to give it the format shown.

On the other hand, he and his colleagues wavered as to what kind of “people” their paper was: the orthography of the title changed from “Poporul Suveran” (issues 1-2), to “Popolul Suveran” (issues 3-7), back again to “Poporul” (8-14) only to settle finally on “Popolul” from issue 15 to the time of the magazine’s suppression in September.\textsuperscript{167}

But at the same time it is no coincidence that the press was associated with the most progressive political interests. \textit{Pruncul Român} was delicately balanced between acting as an official conduit for the ideas of the provisional government and taking a more radical independent line. Like all Romanian papers of the period, the heterogeneity of tone and subject-matter sometimes deprived it of consistent interest: the editors were writing for everybody and nobody. The contents ranged from intense presentation of social-scientific theories (“There are as many systems as there are heads. The invisible makes itself visible, the untouchable makes itself felt. The idea becomes reality, and reality in thousands of forms becomes a utopia. . .”)\textsuperscript{168} to rhymes and allegories attempting to explain the revolution to a more popular audience. But it appeared with impressive regularity, and clung to its promotion of the cause of the peasant against the strong opposition of other revolutionaries. \textit{Poporul suveran} provided a similarly heady mixture of poetry and politics, and likewise sustained the emancipation of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[166] G. Zane, \textit{Studii}, ed cit., p. 413.
\item[167] T. Virgolici, “Dimitrie Bolintineanu la \textit{Poporul Suveran}.” \textit{RITL}, XVIII, 1, 1969, p. 57-59. The word for people in Romanian is now generally spelt “popor”.
\item[168] \textit{Pruncul Român}, 29, joi 19 august 1848, p. 117.
\end{footnotes}
peasantry. Both were suppressed in September 1848.

During the 1848 revolution, then, the participants accorded great symbolic importance and a high degree of public visibility to the press. What its real effects were in raising consciousness on a truly national level at this stage, is a harder question to answer. Men like Heliade and C.A. Rosetti were believed by the other revolutionaries to have been the most popular and recognizable figures amongst the urban masses.169 After printing the above-mentioned proclamation, Heliade in fact closed down his press. Rosetti’s press, while it played a considerably more active role in the revolution itself - publishing the important newspaper Pruncul Român [“The Romanian Infant”, June-September 1848] - was continually losing money throughout the revolution, and its proprietor nearly went bankrupt. Even when commissars of the Wallachian provisional government were selected to enter the villages and “excite the peasantry”, printed material was used in the proclamations not because the peasantry could read but because “it impresses the villagers more seeing them printed”.170 The government used priests as much as schoolteachers as instruments through which to influence the people. It is hard to judge whether print was not used as a medium because impractical in the illiterate villages, or because undesirable in the hands of a peasantry from whom many boiers feared revolt and disobedience; the attitudes of members of the government, particularly as regards the peasant and property, were sharply divided. But at the same time it is also clear that in Bucharest in 1848 it was the idea of print that was being celebrated, and not what could be communicated through it.

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169 “Lower-class people, youth, students and merchants would know him,” said Ion Ghica of Heliade. Anghelescu, op. cit., p. 212.
3. 1848-1890

Education

a) Institution-building, 1848-1864

The 1850s were a paradoxical decade in Romanian history. The liberal aristocrats were exiled in Europe, disunited and quarrelling over the reasons for the failure of the revolution; a more bourgeois élite took its place. Industry and communications registered new firsts, such as the first modern oil well and the first section of railway on Romanian territory; but also the first modern financial crash. The military occupations by successive waves of imperial armies, with all their concomitant inconveniences, began again: but at the same time, the educational institutions that had been started before 1848 were to reappear too.

The new princes of Wallachia and Moldavia, Barbu Știrbei and Grigore Alexandru Ghica, who were to rule until 1856, had both been part of the Schools Commissions of the respective provinces in the 1830s and 1840s and were convinced of the importance of education for the development of society. This time Moldavia moved faster: an important step was taken on January 1st 1851, when Ghica issued a new school decree providing for education to be extended to the villages, although the choice of day for the announcement of this measure suggests the traditional posture of princes in their capacity as dispensers of mercy more than it does the urgency of modernization. Their establishment was to be the task of the monasteries and the estate-owning aristocracy, whose rights to hold markets on their property was made conditional on their founding of a school.

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1 Turkey in Wallachia from Sep 1848 to May 1849; Russia in Moldavia from June 1848, then in Wallachia from September 1848 to April 1851; subsequently in both Principalities from July 1853 to July 1854; Austria from July 1854 to 1857.

2 St. Sava in Bucharest was inoperative from June 1848 to November 1850 (Ionașcu et al., Istoria Universității București, p. 98-100); in Ploiești the central school was used as an army hospital by the occupying forces in 1848-1849 and many books were destroyed (Boncu, op. cit., p. 45). For a description of St. Sava during the Russian occupation of 1853-1854, see J. H. Skene, Frontier Lands of the Christian and Turk. London, 1853, l, p. 343-344.

3 For the traditional issuing of decrees on New Year's Day, see e.g. Alexandru Ipsilanti's famous charter of 1775 (Hurmuzaki, Documente, XIV-ii, p. 1271), and the Organic Regulations for Moldavia.
commercial incentive was proposed, that a literate class of labourers would work more efficiently; and some nobles were to establish successful schools on their estates. But generally, resistance was high: of the 63 schools proposed at the beginning of the decade, only 19 were in operation by 1859, with fewer than 400 pupils. Plans for an institute to train village teachers were not put in place until 1856 (not until 1860 in the provinces), and manuals aimed specifically at teaching basic literacy skills were not distributed before 1868.4

In Wallachia too, public education was slow to get back on the ground. In the 1851, the first year of reestablishment, there were fewer than 2,000 pupils in the public system; two years later, the number of private educational establishments in Bucharest outnumbered those of the state fivefold.5 The rural network remained closed during Știrbei’s reign. In 1857, provision was made for 2,000 rural schools to open, but only 417 were opened by the end of the year, and if the inspector’s report for Ilfov county (surrounding Bucharest) is anything to go by, few of these were really functional.6 The number increased vertiginously in the following years, with the magic figure of 2,000 village schools reached in Wallachia in 1860, but little attention was paid to standards, and in the rush to create, teachers were hired with no condition other than that they could prove their ability to read, write and perform the elementary mathematical operations. Salaries were doubled in order to encourage enrolment. All these hasty measures had to be undone in the early 1860s, and by 1865 the number of village schools in Wallachia had reduced by half again to around 1,000. In Moldavia in the same year, there were a total of 321 schools.7

At the level of higher education, institutional expansion took place at a similarly rapid rate and was subject to the same formalist considerations. A powerful étatist current dominated the legislation. To a large extent, the rush to

5 Iorga, Hist. de l’enseignement..., p. 250.
6 “Of 67 schools”, he wrote, “44 have no benches, 46 no semicircular tables, 48 no chairs, 54 no alphabet tables, 55 no adding tables, and 47 no teacher.” At least the inspector could count. Cited by Berindei, op. cit., p. 59.
create public institutions of learning was influenced by diplomatic considerations. Following the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War (1856), the Principalities were placed under the protectorate of the European powers in permanent session at the Congress of Paris, and were subject to the intense scrutiny of foreign observers: for the Romanians, then, one of the crucial concerns of the 1850s and 1860s was the need to prove their potential as a nation. Although the development of public education might seem a minor concern amidst the complexities of diplomatic negotiations, it was nevertheless essential for the Romanians to dismiss the myth that they were a weak and backward people, and to register themselves on the international thermometer of civilisation. If a people’s aptitude for statehood was to be judged by “commerce, by literature, by a common faith, by interchange of thoughts and improvements”; and if, as a leading light of liberal public opinion had stated in 1849, it is better for uneducated peoples “to be under the despotism of foreigners than of natives, when those foreigners are more advanced in civilisation and cultivation than themselves”; it was not surprising that the Romanians felt the need to fight their battles on the cultural plane. In 1856, the diplomat Nicolae Golescu tried hard to persuade Napoleon III that:

If it has not always been in her power to conquer the barbarians and to stop their march towards the West, she [the Romanian people] has given them all their first baptism in civilisation… in the moral and intellectual field, she is still the master of this world. The image of Romania is reflected in everything that shines in this semi-barbarian society, just as in the West the great and beautiful image of your France is reflected in all the marvels of your modern civilisation.

In his memoirs, the diplomat and writer Ion Ghica recalled a meeting with the Austrian consul in Bucharest who refused to believe that Romanians would be capable of running an adequate postal service.

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9 J. S. Mill, “Vindication of the French Revolution of February 1848”, in *Collected Works*, vol. XX. London/ Toronto, 1985, p. 348. Mill was talking about the Serbs and Croats: he would undoubtedly have felt the same about the “Roumans”.
I answered the diplomat by saying that, just as we were able to learn the differential and integral calculus, so that we can handle the functions

\[ \frac{dx}{dy} \quad \text{and} \quad \int \frac{dx}{dy} \]

just as well as Delaunay and Puiseux, then we were no less sure to learn, if not in a few weeks, then in a few months, to handle the receipt, expedition and distribution of letters and parcels just like the employees of the Austrian and Russian postal services.\(^{11}\)

Such were the circumstances in which higher education underwent rapid surgical improvements. Already in 1851 Prince Ghica had provided for the reestablishment of “faculties” at the Iași academy: by 1855 there were two faculties (philosophy and law) and 2 higher courses in Romanian literature and political economy. They constituted an important breeding ground, not so much for the new generation of professionals (only 8 regular students in the law faculty), but for the political battles to be fought over the issues of Union. After Prince Ghica’s resignation in 1856, his provisional successor, Teodor Balș, a conservative anti-unionist, suppressed the philosophy courses for fear of democratic agitation.\(^{12}\) Meanwhile in the Law faculty, a third political current was stirred up by the Transylvanian Simion Bărnuțiu, a veteran of the 1848 revolution, and a proponent of Union but a bitter adversary to the idea of a foreign prince.\(^{13}\)

In the intensely personalised atmosphere of public life, and given the open, public nature of the Academy’s courses, the lecture stand often became a stage for political debate and electioneering. The idea of a university had been an essential strand of nationalist ideology for the Romanians of Transylvania, particularly among lay intellectuals like Bărnuțiu who were looking for alternative institutions to the church which could act as a focus for the development of national sentiment.\(^{14}\) Once in Iași, he and his colleague Alexandru Papiu-Iliarion (also a lawyer) simply continued their campaign.


\(^{12}\) *Istoria Universității din Iași*, p. 35-37.

\(^{13}\) N. Grigoraș, “Activitatea lui Simeon Bărnuțiu la Iași (1855-1864).” *Steaua*, XVII, 8, august 1966, p. 82-90. Bărnuțiu had been summoned to Iași by his fellow Transylvanian A. T. Laurian, chief inspector of schools, whom he succeeded in this post. He continued to bring Transylvanian friends and colleagues to Iași: of the 11 professors appointed at the inauguration of the University of Iași in 1860, 5 were Transylvanian.

It was not surprising, then, that on the accession of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza to the throne of both Principalities in 1859, the founding of a University would figure among his principal concerns. The project featured largely in the Prince’s message to the Moldavian people;\(^\text{15}\) and a constitutional project drawn up by Mihai Kogălniceanu in the same year provided for the establishment of a university.\(^\text{16}\) The statutes were written in early 1860, and, after various delays owing to political intrigues, the University was solemnly inaugurated on October 26\(^\text{th}\). Again, the date had a religious significance: October 26\(^\text{th}\) is St. Demetrius’ Day, a festival of major significance in the Orthodox calendar. The government purchased one of the largest and finest noblemen’s houses in Iaşi for the new institution.\(^\text{17}\) At the inauguration, a cortège proceeded through the streets of Iaşi from the old Academia Mihăileană to the new building; there were banners for the different faculties; a university seal and sceptre; white drapery and carpets with tricolor borders; an artillery salute. In the evening a banquet and an “extraordinary musical and theatrical representation” were held. Occasional verses were composed on set themes: “enlightenment”, “the progress of the country”, “union”; musical and torchlit parades were arranged.\(^\text{18}\)

As before, the concept of “enlightenment” was the keynote. Significantly, the old religious sense of light was stressed. The professor George Mârzescu told the assembled youth to “Rejoice at the inauguration of this sacred haven… your shining triumph, your path to enlightenment is open before you, walk on it if you have a heart, if you love your country and your fellow citizens”; and the priest Filaret Scriban apostrophized the Lord:

\begin{quote}
We beg you, then, o merciful Lord, and fall down before you and ask, as your prophet Solomon once did, to send us the light and wisdom that sits upon your throne, and to shed it upon your new Israel… make this establishment to be a source of light, of righteousness, of truth, and of salvation for your people.\(^\text{19}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{15}\) Monitorul Oficial al Moldovei, II, 55, 6 dec 1859, p. 103ff.


\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 140.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 112-115.

\(^{19}\) Anuarul Universităţei din Iaşi pe Anul Scolar 1895-1896. Iaşi, 1896, p. 110ff.
This was the fulfilment of the long-cherished project to construct universities in place of the church; the sacred element had not disappeared in the course of the transition.

In Bucharest the establishment of the University took place four years later. As in Iaşi, the process effectively involved the expansion of the old special courses of law, engineering and philosophy, and the attribution of a higher status to them: they were renamed as faculties in 1858. A new building was begun in the heart of Bucharest, in a style deliberately imitative of the French Second Empire: when it was completed in 1869, it was one of the largest edifices in the capital. The St. Sava monastery and the buildings attached to it, where the old college had functioned, were demolished in 1870 to make way for further expansions.

There were only 16 professors at the inauguration in 1864, but they were men of high profile in public life. The three key members of the law faculty, Costaforu, Boerescu and Bozianu, had all obtained the title of docteur en droit from the University of Paris, and had all been ministers in Prince Cuza’s government, having gained their reputation writing political articles and brochures in Bucharest or Paris. The rector of the science faculty, Al. Orăscu, was the chief architect of the Directorate of Public Works, and would become a senator in 1868 and a minister in 1876. A.T. Laurian, rector of the faculty of philosophy and letters, had played a major role in the revolution of 1848, and was now a parliamentary deputy and a high official in the Ministry of Education, as well as Prince Carol’s Romanian teacher. Significantly, these men came from commercial or clerical backgrounds or from the lesser nobility; they belonged to the first generation to hold positions of state on the basis of their intellectual ability alone; and their arrival coincided with Romania’s independence.

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20 Prince Carol of Hohenzollern, on his arrival in Romania in 1866, described it as “one of the city’s most imposing buildings” while the metropolitan church struck him as “old and insignificant”, and the prince’s residence, he was astonished to find, was a simple two-storey house. Memoriile Regului Carol I al României, tr. Stelian Neagoe. Bucureşti, 1992, I, p. 84, 82, 60.
21 Istoria Universităţii Bucureşti, p. 113-116.
23 Mamina & Bulei, op. cit., p. 223.
Their political ascendancy, and the establishment of the universities, was simultaneous with the systematic exclusion of the clergy from positions of influence. 1864 was also the year in which the Orthodox monasteries in the Principalities would be expropriated of their vast land-holdings by the state; the high prelates, once members of the administrative and judicial councils, were gradually stripped of their civil functions, and the clergy was generally outmanoeuvered and discredited in favour of the lay powers. Kogălniceanu, the moving spirit behind most of the reforms effected by the Cuza government in the early 1860s, underlined the role of public instruction in the new political order:

In place of the royal palace we should erect the palace of science; in place of the Prince we should put intelligence; in place of the great administrative, financial and military authorities, which are to be displaced, we should put the great schools, the faculties…

Perhaps the most indicative symbol of this change was the fact that the Senate, the new upper parliamentary chamber created by the Constitution of 1866 was to meet for a time, not in the old Assembly building next to the Metropolitan church, but in the University. The authorites were thus indeed displaced, but into the University, rather than by it.

b) Primary education, 1864-1890

The founding of the Universities was just one aspect of the transformation of the entire political system during the 1860s. Among the fundamental reforms of the period - secularization of the monasteries, emancipation of the peasantry, currency reform, a modern constitution - was the Law of Public Instruction of 1864. For the first time (and six years before Britain), education was made obligatory for all inhabitants of Romania, male and female, between 8 and 12 years of age. The structure of primary, secondary and higher education was reaffirmed, and made the entire responsibility of the recently-founded (1862) Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction, which was modelled on the French institution of the same name and also had full control over ecclesiastical affairs. However, the ideological differences inherent in Romanian politics - and

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24 Cited in *Istoria Universității din Iași*, p. 42.
especially the battle between the Conservative and Liberal parties in formation - caused the application of this law to be subject to the same pendulous swings, from frenetic institution-building to sudden withdrawal of funding, as in the earlier period. While a Liberal education minister like C.A. Rosetti proposed in 1866 that the Law should be massively publicized “with placards, leaflets, beating of the drum”, and pursued the ideal that “there should not remain a single commune without a school and not a single boy or child who lacks sainted book-learning”, his Conservative successor in the following year admitted frankly that “education is obligatory only on paper”, and advocated the abolition of many primary schools.26

The primary schools were the most vulnerable area of the system, and the first to suffer when the government sought to take measures to reduce the spread of learning (or its obligation to fund it). Several conservative ministers attempted to absolve the government of direct financial responsibility for it, and to place the duty to educate the villagers in the hands of priests, principally for financial reasons but also in line with the formal conservative recourse to religion as a moral force opposing secular, rational methods. So as not to contravene the 1864 Education law - which foresaw the establishment of schools “in every rural commune”, the Conservatives adopted, in March 1874, another law on administrative units which halved the number of communes.27 Only the consistent intervention of Titu Maiorescu, the literary critic become Education Minister in April 1874, saved the principle of obligatory education and prevented the entire rural educational structure from being handed over to the clergy.28

Responsibility for funding the proposed schools was naturally a delicate issue, and the state cannot be said to have mastered the problem in the period under discussion. According to article 42 of the law, the state was to pay the teachers and the service staff, and the village authorities were to provide or construct an appropriate building, which the state would pay to maintain. But this was not put into action: for instance, in Botoșani county in the 1871-1872 school

27 from 2,901 to 1,410: Adâniloaie, op. cit., p. 223.
year, fewer than half of the 47 schools had a state-salaried teacher. From 1879, certain conditions were placed on the county councils to fund rural schools, and in 1893 the Law of primary education and teacher-training provided (article 81) that the state should pay for the salary of one teacher in all schools, and half the salary of any other teachers. Even then, many village communes could ill afford education: the expense required to maintain a school in many cases exceeded the total commune budget for the year.

The number of pupils enrolled in primary education more than doubled, from an estimated 85,237 in 1865 to 203,491 in 1890 (Fig. 3.1). But the population rose by nearly 50% in the same period. The distribution was by no means even: in 1865, there were 57 schools in one county in Moldavia (Suceava), while in another (Putna) there was only one.

In the village of Minjești in Vaslui in 1875, the inspector could find only one literate person, although there was a school paid for by the state budget. Nearly 90 percent of those enrolled nationally were in the first or second year, and more than half of all pupils failed (or failed to attend) the end-of-year examination, and were therefore in danger of forgetting any literacy skills they may have learned. In some localities, the local authorities would take great interest in schools, going so far as to double up their own posts as village mayor or secretary with that of schoolteacher; in others, the school would be left in the care of whoever volunteered to take up the post.

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30 For the text of the law, see Buletinul oficial al Ministerului Cultelor și instrucțiunii publice. I, 10 august 1893, p. 20-32.
32 For the former figure, Istoria învățământului din România. Vol. II (1821-1918). București, 1993, p. 231; for the latter, see Figure 3.1 below.
33 Adâniloaie, op. cit., p. 214.
35 In Coșula, Botoșani county, the mayor took on the job of schoolteacher; the teacher at Trușești in the same county was also the archivist in the subprefecture. Marin, op. cit., p. 195-196.
36 In 1866, Alexandru Odobescu complained in parliament that a schoolteacher on his estate had abandoned his duties and returned to his old trade as a pigman. Buletinul Instrucțiunii Publice, I, 1865-1866, p. 230.
Fig. 3.1: Public primary schools: Attendance and Results, 1890-1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population:</td>
<td>4,150,645</td>
<td>885,700</td>
<td>5,036,345</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of school age:</td>
<td>289,164</td>
<td>258,099</td>
<td>547,263</td>
<td>54,130</td>
<td>51,609</td>
<td>105,739</td>
<td>653,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled:</td>
<td>120,783</td>
<td>23,152</td>
<td>143,935</td>
<td>37,447</td>
<td>22,109</td>
<td>59,556</td>
<td>203,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended exam:</td>
<td>89,902</td>
<td>13,447</td>
<td>103,349</td>
<td>29,634</td>
<td>17,241</td>
<td>46,875</td>
<td>150,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted:</td>
<td>61,312</td>
<td>8,814</td>
<td>70,126</td>
<td>21,005</td>
<td>11,524</td>
<td>32,529</td>
<td>102,655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The failure of both local and central authorities to manage in the face of the vast challenges of educational development, was acknowledged by contemporaries and even became something of a commonplace, qualifying for treatment in the journalistic satire of the day. Only with the Education Act of

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37 Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, [hereafter M.C.I.P.], Bioulul Statistic. Statistica învețământului primar, urban și rural pe anii școlari 1889-1890, 1890-1891, 1891-1892 în comparațiune cu anul 1888-1889. București, 1892. (derived from Tables 1-6 and 17-22, pages 54-61 and 80-87). Expressed in percentages (with school-age children at 100%) this comes to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of school age:</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled:</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended exam:</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted:</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School-age children were reckoned between 7-12 years. As Frédéric Damé, the compiler of these statistics, pointed out, the proportion of children enrolled to children of school age should not be regarded as definitive, for at least two reasons: 1) the number of children attending private primary schools (around 8,000 at primary level, plus around 9,000 Jews) had not been taken into account; 2) the statistics for children of school age were collected with the aid of the village mayors, who might have distorted them upwards (in order for a village to qualify for a school) or downwards (if he wanted to avoid the obligations to provide a site for schooling). See also idem, Statistica învețământului Privat pe anul școlar 1891-1892. București, 1893; and idem, Recensământ copiilor în vârstă de scoală în comunele rurale. București, 1894. A useful overview of the problems of nineteenth century educational statistics is G. Retegan, “Contribuți la istoria statisticii învățământului din România, 1830-1940.” in Din istoria statisticii românești. București, 1969, p. 365-377. Almost all contemporary sources contain errors of addition; I have corrected them discreetly where possible. Some sources (esp. the school inspectors St. C. Michailescu, Incercări critice asupra învețământului nostru primar, and Al. N. Vitzu, Studiu asupra învățământului secundar din România. - both pub. București, 1888) contain statistics only for Wallachia; this fact has not been taken into account by the authors of the volume Istoria învățământului din România, Vol. 2 (1821-1918). București, 1993, who present them as valid for the whole of Romania; this work should therefore be used with circumspection.

1898, under the leadership of Spiru Haret at the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction, were genuine and radical improvements made to the system, and village schools established as permanent and stable institutions.\(^{39}\)

c) Secondary education, 1864-1890

A similar rate of change can be found at secondary level: In 1865 there were 30 licee or urban high schools (of which only four offered more than a basic four-year programme); by 1890, there were 73, including two schools of fine art and two musical conservatories.\(^{40}\) In many county towns, large buildings, larger than any other in the town, were constructed, often in conscious imitation of Bucharest and Iaşi universities.

Fig. 3.2: Public secondary schools: Attendance and Results, 1890-1891\(^{41}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes I-IV</th>
<th>Classes V-VII</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>8,541</td>
<td>2,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended exam</td>
<td>7,483</td>
<td>2,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>5,116</td>
<td>1,650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of them were requested repeatedly by the local authorities, such as the liceu founded at Botoşani in 1867.\(^{42}\) Many others were ordered to be set up by state decree. The gymnasium at Dorohoi came into being in 1879 in this way, with the government issuing a state subvention of 5,000 lei to which the municipal council added 2,500, plus an engagement to provide a site, furniture, educational materials - which were not yet centrally controlled - and heating. The professors (recommended by the town mayor and appointed by the ministry) were the town


\(^{40}\) *Istoria învățământului din România*, II, p. 233; MCIP, loc. cit.

doctor; the county surveyor; two local magistrates; two barristers; a priest and a deacon; in other words the town’s existing officialdom. Four years later the school had one class of nine students. In Târgovişte the lyceum was the subject of a local scandal as the headmaster fled with the local salaries in 1878. Nevertheless, the secondary school network was to develop in time into a solid base for the training of a native élite. By 1890 they were catering for about 12,000 pupils (see figure 3.2).

Fig. 3.3: Students by religion in public secondary schools, 1876-82, 1888-92

Most of the pupils attending secondary schools were Orthodox (Fig. 3.3). However, the number of non-Orthodox pupils, especially Jews, was slowly increasing. In Moldavia the number of Jews in boys’ secondary schools rose to as

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42 Valeria Ciachîr, “Învăţămîntul secundar din România în perioada 1864-1900.” RI, n.s, I, 3, 1990, p. 239.
43 Petru Răşcanu, Istorîcul învăţămîntului secundar. Iaşi, 1906, p. 21-22. According to the local headmaster, “the commune finds itself obliged to fill the vacant posts, provisionally, with persons who, it is true, possess the necessary scientific qualifications, and thus fulfil all the legal conditions for being good teachers; having, however, other serious and difficult occupations, are materially unable to occupy themselves uninterruptedly with the professorial chairs entrusted to them.” M.C.I.P., Expunerea situaţiunii judeţelor pe anul 1880. Bucureşti, 1882, p. 101-105.
44 M.C.I.P., Biuroul Statistic, op. cit., p. x-xi & diagram no. 2.
much as 50 percent.\footnote{M.C.I.P., Biuroul Statistic, Statistica învestământului secundar, p. xi. In this period, an average of 14% of the urban population in Romania were Jews, but in individual towns in Moldavia this could rise to 50 percent or more. Hitchins, România 1866-1947. București, 1996, p. 182.} Romanian public schools had always been open to Jews, and after 1864 the government had pursued an assimilatory policy, strongly encouraging the enrolment of Jewish pupils, with the possibility of pursuing alternative classes in religious instruction. However, beginning in the 1880s, increasing numbers of Jews were either persecuted or simply turned away from Romanian high schools: this persecution became official in 1893, when taxes for “foreign” pupils were introduced, and Jews were prevented from enrolling before Romanians in over-subscribed schools.\footnote{Edmond Sincerus [=Elias Schwarzfeld], Les Juifs en Roumanie depuis le traité de Berlin (1878) jusqua ce jour. Londres - New York, 1901, p. 118-143. Dr. E. Schwarzfeld, “Situatia evreilor in România. Privire retrospectivă asupra anului 1883.” Anuar pentru Israelitii, VII, 1884, p. 71-72.} But the great majority of Jews continued to be educated in private schools or by individual tutors often known as belferit [= German: Beihelfer], which were not recognized by the state.

Also significant was the decline in enrolment in the Orthodox seminaries. This correlated closely to the rise of secondary schools: while the number of boys attending the latter rose by over 3,000 from 1876 to 1891, the number attending seminaries (included in the former figure) fell by 2,330 in the same years.\footnote{M.C.I.P., Biuroul Statistic, op. cit., p. x. Secondary schools from 7,281 in 1876 to 10,317 in 1891; seminaries from 2,923 to 598.} It is difficult to cite direct evidence showing that the children enrolling in secondary schools were making a deliberate choice for a secular career, where their elder brothers attended a seminary; but it is clear from these statistics that the secondary schools replaced the religious learning hitherto on offer. It is also true that the seminaries were deliberately run down by the state at this time, and little funding was given to the church or theological institutions in this period: for instance, the Iași faculty of theology was shut down in 1865.\footnote{For a contemporary critique of the government’s policy see P. Gârboviceanu, Mai pot fi hirotonisiti preotii semnariștitii cu 4 clase? Discurs rostit in Camera Deputaților. București, 1897.}

d) Universities, 1860-1890

If primary and secondary education more or less kept pace with each other, the universities of Iași and Bucharest grew somewhat faster than the rest of the
system. At the beginning (1860 and 1864 respectively), there were 11 professors at Iași and 110 students enrolled; in Bucharest, 16 professors and 123 students. The 1864 Law regulated meanings: universities were said to be constituted by “more than one faculty established in a locality”: the first faculties to be organized were those of law, sciences, and letters and philosophy. However, medical faculties, by European standards an indispensable condition of university status, were not created until 1869 (Bucharest) and 1879 (Iași).

The disproportionate enrolment of students in law faculties was a general European phenomenon during the period: see Christophe Charle, Les intellectuels en Europe au XIXe siècle. Paris, 1996,

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Fig. 3.4: Bucharest University: selected enrolment & graduation, 1864-1906

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Theology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1878-79</td>
<td>36 27 9 21 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>73 54 30 2 29 5 113 - 17 -</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-86</td>
<td>83 36 42 5 45 1 219 1 26</td>
<td>148 -</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>101 30 95 4 66 10 172 - 26</td>
<td>88 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>687 115 344 38 298 6 502 - 23</td>
<td>106 2</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>2,297 99 545 21 263 11 487 - 37</td>
<td>56 18</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licences awarded, 1864-1906</td>
<td>2,902 427 267 (doctorates): 832 (pharmacy): 651</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
<td>- - 21 - 81 2 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in figures 4 & 5, the Law faculty was the most popular in both universities: it ensured both a profitable career and a useful preparation for entering political life, where lawyers formed a high proportion of deputies and ministers. On the other hand, the actual number of graduates represented but a small proportion of those enrolling.

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49 Ionășcu et al., Istoria Universității București, p. 202; Berlescu, op. cit., p. 182-183.
51 Ionășcu et al., Ist. Univ. București, p. 202-203; for number of licences awarded, Bozgan, op. cit., p. 32. Note that some students enrolled in more than one faculty: the real number of individuals enrolled in 1895-1896 is only 1,680, and not 1,937 (the sum of those enrolled in each faculty). All figures for before 1892-1893 are highly approximate; scholars have worked from retrospectively-compiled data given in the first University yearbook (Anuarul Universității București pe anul școlar 1892-1893 ed. T. Maiorascu. București, 1893) and on subsequent archive research.
52 The disproportionate enrolment of students in law faculties was a general European phenomenon during the period: see Christophe Charle, Les intellectuels en Europe au XIXe siècle. Paris, 1996,
Fig. 3.5: Iaşi University: selected enrolment and graduation, 1870-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870-71</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With only 217 new graduates (licenciates and doctorates) at the end of the 1901 academic year, and a still undereducated clergy in considerable excess of the actual number of parishes, it is difficult to argue that Romania suffered from an excessive "superimposed layer" of refined unemployables. On the contrary, one could argue that greater problems were posed by the fact that the existing intelligentsia was too small, and failed to penetrate a great variety of institutions.

The qualification criteria for public employment did not help matters: foreign university degrees were initially preferred for public functions. After 1875, magistrates were obliged to have university degrees, and the qualifications of the local universitites were accepted for such posts. But the preference for foreign degrees persisted, and indeed a certain hierarchisation was observable at the beginning of the century. If, in 1905, around 400 lawyers out of 2,200 (18.2%) practising in Romania had academic qualifications from abroad, the proportion was somewhat higher (41.7%) for magistrates with permanent tenure. On the other hand, some members of the élite got by with no diploma at all: the Liberal politician Dimitrie A. Sturdza, several times prime minister, education minister and President of the Romanian Academy, had undertaken study at several German universities but had no degree. He successfully rebutted those who challenged his

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53 Berlescu, *op. cit.*, p. 182-183, 191, 194; Platon & Cristian, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 82-84. The same caveat about the accuracy of figures before 1900 applies to Iaşi University.

54 Gârboviceanu, *op. cit.*


lack of formal qualifications by referring to his membership of "one of the greatest noble lineages in modern Romanian history." A recent study has shown that, up to 1914 access to ministerial office was largely confined to members of the old high boyar élite.

The philosophy and letters faculties housed a number of prestigious figures of intellectual life, among them the philosopher and critic Titu Maiorescu (at Iași from 1863-1871, at Bucharest from 1884 to 1910), the historian A.D. Xenopol, author of the first lasting modern synthesis of Romanian history (at Iași from 1880); the philologist B.P. Hasdeu (at Bucharest from 1878), the classicist and archaeologist Alexandru Odobescu (at Bucharest from 1878). However, enrolment was considerably lower than in the other faculties, and indeed many of the professors practised separate careers as lawyers, professors in private schools, or politicians, while the ostensible aim of the faculty was to provide teachers. Interestingly, in contradistinction to primary and secondary education, relatively little attention was given to Romanian language and history. The history courses dealt largely with World History, while study of Romanian was subordinated to Latin. In Bucharest in 1866, French was "absolutely obligatory", while Romanian was not. In 1878 a special chair was created at Bucharest for Romanian literature and history; in 1891 the faculty was divided into three sections (philosophy, history and philology).

The science and medical faculties were slower to get off the ground, but gradually gained sound reputations. Significant figures included the astronomist Constantin Gogu and the bacteriologist Victor Babeș; these and others had been largely trained in France, and were beginning to publish work that was appreciated in international circles. The medical faculty of Bucharest was also the first to award doctorates (from 1879 onwards); the other faculties would not begin doing so until the early 1900s.

59 Berlescu, op. cit., p. 150-154; Ionașcu et al., Istoria Universității București, p. 148-150.
The teaching staff of both universities were very active in political life. This was particularly true of the Law faculties, but the generalization is valid for all disciplines. A calculation, taking the total number of professors who taught at either University from 1860 to 1895, and seeing how many of them figure on the lists of parliamentary representatives (deputies or senators) in the period 1866 to 1900, shows that of 192 professors, no fewer than 68 were parliamentary representatives before the end of the century. Each University sent two representatives to parliament, elected by the teaching corps (who retained the right to vote separately in their constituencies of residence - professors therefore had two votes, unlike any other electors). Although professors were not the most numerous professional group in politics, it was certainly true that politicians were a major presence in the universities. Moreover, politicians did not hesitate to recruit students for political demonstrations and displays of demagogy. And although many attempts were made to separate parliamentary and pedagogical affairs - for instance by the sacking of professors who absented themselves from courses in order to attend Parliament (or practise at the bar) - this was frequently done with political intent in order to remove a rival from a University chair or a ministerial position: there was little, if any cross-party solidarity on the matter.

There were simply too many professors with a vested interest in politics for

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60 Lists of professors from the founding of the Universities in *Anuarul Universității din București pe anul școlar 1892-93* ed. T. Maiorescu. București, 1893 and *Anuariul Universității din Iași pe Anul Școlar 1895-1896*. Iași, 1896; lists of parliamentary deputies, extracted from *Monitorul Oficial*, published in Mihai Sorin Rădulescu, *Elita liberală românească* (1866-1900), ed. cit., p. 160-299. I eliminated from the list of professors a) two who died before 1866, and were therefore unable to figure in the lists of deputies, although both (Ioan Maiorescu and Simeon Băruțiu) were extremely active in public life; and b) theology professors, who were all priests or monks and therefore not generally destined to pursue parliamentary careers, although one or two did. I have not included professors (such as Nicolae Iorga), who, although appointed by 1895, only became parliamentarians after 1900.


62 In an analysis of selected occupations among 656 members of three pre-World War I Romanian legislatures (1895, 1901, 1910), Andrew Janos came up with the following figures: 60 university professors, 47 secondary school teachers, 142 practising lawyers. “Gentry in the Modern World: The Romanian Boyars and Hungarian Nobles in the Politics of the Rising National State.” *IVe Congrès International d’Études du Sud-Est Européen.* Bucarest 4-10 Sep 1974, Table XIV (Typescript copy in the library of the Nicolae Iorga History institute, Bucharest.)

measures to be taken, and University professors - unlike other state employees - were not obliged to renounce their posts before entering Parliament.\textsuperscript{65}

In the space of about sixty years, then, the modern institutions of education had not only been founded; they occupied a central and privileged space at the heart of public life. There were around seven thousand teachers of all kinds in the country in 1890.\textsuperscript{66} In many rural areas they were still outnumbered by the priests, whose status, and influence on the mentality of the uneducated peasantry was still decisive.\textsuperscript{67} Contemporaries were very conscious of the insufficiencies of the system, and did not shrink from attempting to analyse Romania’s pedagogical ills. One critic described the structure as “a pyramid placed on its head, with the upper part being the most developed, when things should be exactly the other way around”\textsuperscript{68}, another criticised “the accumulation of studies which give rise to nothing except an unjustified arrogance”;\textsuperscript{69} a third feared that “the treasure of ideas, which, thanks to Western culture, have become the patrimony of a chosen few, remain hidden from the great mass of the Romanian people; and the distance between the nation’s two parts is becoming greater and greater.”\textsuperscript{70} On all sides of the political spectrum, it was the system’s novelty, superficiality, elitism and formalism that came in for most criticism.

\textsuperscript{64} The tribulations of Titu Maiorescu, appointed rector of Iaşi University in 1863, are paradigmatic in this respect. On the many attempts at denunciation, accusations of infidelity, and even a challenge to a duel, see Z. Ornea, \textit{Viaţa lui T. Maiorescu}, I. Bucureşti, 1986, p. 174-345.

\textsuperscript{65} With the exception of Titu Maiorescu (see preceding note), whose dismissal was subsequently revoked. The matter was regulated in the Electoral Law: Article 27 obliged active members of the military, the judiciary, public and fiscal administration, the National Bank, deputy mayors and others to resign their posts before entering Parliament, while Article 28 absolved professors of the same obligation. Thus the philologist B. P. Hasdeu was successfully prevented from taking up his seat in 1884, not because he was a university professor, but because he held the allegedly compromising post of state archivist. Paraschiva Câncea, “Oamenii de știință în viața politică a României din secolul al XIX-lea.” \textit{RdI}, XXXIV, 8, 1981, p. 1485-1487.

\textsuperscript{66} A total of 5,943 in the public system (119 in higher instruction; 1,142 in secondary; 4,682 in primary). \textit{Anuarul M.C.I.P. pe anul 1893} ed. Fr. Damé. Bucureşti, 1893. p. iii-vi. There were 1,137 known teachers in the private network in 1881 (Gh. Răşcanu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 159). Though these statistics should be taken \textit{cum grano salis}, the possibility of many unregistered private teachers is counterbalanced by the fact that many state professors moonlighted in private schools.

\textsuperscript{67} In Neamţ county in 1880 the inspectors counted 87 professors and 219 priests (excluding monks). \textit{Expunerea situaţiei judeţelor pe anul 1880}, p. 178.


\textsuperscript{69} A.T. Laurian, cited by Iorga, \textit{Hist. de l'enseignement...}, p. 294.

\textsuperscript{70} Take Ionescu, cited by Foni, \textit{Legea asupra învețământului primar}, ed. cit., p. 3.
One of the most fundamental problems of the project was emphasised by the writer Ioan Slavici. In his capacity as schools inspector in 1881, Slavici insisted that

in Romanian schools we must teach less than in France or Germany because in Romania, neither the professors nor the students live in the cultured environment of France and Germany. In particular, it must be borne in mind when syllabi are drawn up that a great number of things which children in Western countries learn intuitively in the street or at home, have to be learnt here in school and from books.\textsuperscript{71}

Given that education in Romania was methodically introducing pupils to a culture without the contextual understanding to be drawn from daily life, the Romanian pupil, although no less intelligent, would inevitably learn the same things more slowly than a Western child. And while education was constantly evoked as the conduit whereby the Romanian nation could achieve fulfilment, in practice it often operated as a machine for the inculcation of alien models as a means to that end.

Slavici’s recommendations are all the more significant because they come from a commentator who generally advocated “organic” development in Romanian culture: who believed, more than the liberals, that culture should develop on the basis of the existing limits of Romanian society rather than from foreign ideological models. But for Slavici - and for his cultural mentor Titu Maiorescu - “popular culture” still meant the instruction of the masses by the urban élite, on the latter’s terms.\textsuperscript{72} The fact that that élite had only foreign models to offer made social integration through education all the more difficult to achieve; but the only solution available was, paradoxically, more school.

Nevertheless, the importance attributed to teachers was as remarkable as their profession was new. School was seen as a secular agent of progress, as the education minister Dimitrie A. Sturdza declared in 1885: “More than other peoples, it is through schooling that we are to exist, to develop, to march forward.”\textsuperscript{73} At the same time, teachers were perceived as having a sacred mission in connection with the nation. Sturdza also expressed his wish that “teachers should consider school as if it were a church”, while his Liberal colleague Mihai

\textsuperscript{71} M.I.P.C., \textit{Starea Învețământului Public Secundar la finele anului scolaru 1880-1881 după rapoartele comisiunilor caru asistau la esamene}. București, 1881, p. 54.


\textsuperscript{73} Cited in Platon & Cristian eds., \textit{Istoria Universității Iași}, p. 83.
Kogălniceanu said that they should make “an apostolic mission” of their calling; a school inspector likewise referred to teachers as “cultural sacerdotes”. A professor speaking at the funeral of Gheorghe Asachi in 1869 said that Asachi “has left us as a noble and sacrosanct bequest, the duty to sustain and develop the national schools.” As for the social effects of education on the population, perhaps typical is the figure described in the playwright Ion Luca Caragiale’s sketch “How somebody becomes a revolutionary and a politician”, in which the tale is told of a country boy who comes to town to study for the priesthood; sent one evening by his landlord to fetch coal, he becomes en route embroiled in a political demonstration, and renounces his priestly vocation:

What would he have become? - a country priest.
Isn’t it better to be a politician in the capital?
Can one really compare the modest career and humble activity of a poor village priest, with the career and activity of a citizen of the capital, who is called once a year, regularly, each spring, to determine the political course of the Romanian kingdom?

If the drive towards secularization was irreversible, at the same time the transition to a new set of values required nothing less than a leap of faith.

Education, then, was conceived in nineteenth-century Romania as a tool with which a rational society could be created, and the Romanian language and people rescued from the state of contempt and ridicule in which it was held. It was likewise used to mobilise sectors of society - the peasantry, but also minorities such as the Jewish and Armenian communities - in the interests of the state. However, in this drive towards modernity, a lot of the structural characteristics of religious authority - a high symbolic profile in public affairs; a major attributed role in providing moral direction to the nation; intense vigilance on the part of the political authorities; positions of leadership assumed by teachers - were taken over by the new secular institutions. On the other hand, the process of education introduced a fundamental problematic into Romanian life: the ideas of “enlightenment” which were to “save” the nation had to be inculcated by books,

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74 Gh. N. Costescu, op. cit., p. 97.
75 Michailescu, op. cit., p. 169.
76 Dr. Istrati, Discurs Funerar pronunțiat la ocașunea înmormântării ilustrului bărbat Gheorghe Asachi în 14 Noiembrie 1869. Iassi, 1869, p. 10. [my italics, AD-F]
77 Caragiale, op. cit., p. 190.
1848-1890
drawing precisely on means which were foreign to, and necessarily overrode or rejected, the folk-culture which was coming to be perceived as the nation's traditional resource. The creation of institutions of learning generated profound changes, which envisaged nothing less than the restructuring of the nature of government and the ethical roles of religious and secular leaders, as the traditional authority of the church and the aristocracy was to be replaced by the authority of modern ideas and a "scientific" attitude towards political administration.  

This awkward marriage between scientific principles and religious forms was to be the social and intellectual basis for Romanian developments in the future.

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Printing, publishing

Despite the failure of the revolution in all Romanian lands, publishing continued to expand and the number of books published continued to rise. Although in Wallachia, a large number of the active literary figures - Heliade, Ion Ghica, C. A. Rosetti, Nicolae Bălcescu - found themselves in exile, the state encouraged the publication projects of those who stayed, and fostered the writing of school manuals, the editing of journals, and the distribution of literary works. In Moldavia, the more liberal regime of the Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica allowed a wider variety of literary activity. A key year was 1856, following the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War which effectively ended that empire's direct influence in the internal affairs of the principalities. Ghica was able to proclaim an end to the rigid censorship laws which had held back publishing projects hitherto. This measure became general for both principalities following their union in 1859, and freedom of publication was enshrined in Alexandru Ioan Cuza's *Laws Concerning the Freedom of the Press*, promulgated in March 1862.

During this time the development of "the author" as a distinct professional character began to gain a degree of respectability. Prior to 1848, a writer like Heliade could be accused of "making a business and a merchandise out of literature" and "dragging Romanian poetry through the mud"; C.A. Rosetti, a liberal boyar who ran a *cabinet de lecture* in Bucharest in the 1840s and endeavoured to make money out of publishing and selling books, encountered the staunch disapproval of his snobbish aunts. The few surviving contracts made before 1848 show that the authors paid for their works to be published, or were sponsored by an aristocratic patron. After this date, it is possible to find instances

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83 For pre-1848 contracts see N. Iorga, "Gheorghe Asachi ca tipograf și editor după catalogul lui din 1847." *AARMSI*, s. II, t. XXXIV, 1911-1912, p. 748 (for Manolache Draghici's *Istoria
of authors of original works of literature receiving money from publishers, and the rudiments of a system of payment by royalties: In 1860, the publisher George Ioanid, who had the right to print 2,000 copies paid the author C.D. Aricescu by the page for his novel The Falcon of the Carpathians; the author also received twenty free copies and a box of vellum paper. However, cases of authors who made their living only by writing were virtually non-existent in nineteenth century Romania, and extremely rare in the twentieth.

By mid-century, Romania was for the first time attracting the attention of the Western public. The first steps towards a reception of Romanian literature abroad can be seen during the time of the Crimean War, when the Principalities began to appear regularly in newspaper reports in the West. If, as Lewis Namier remarked, the average educated Western European gentleman would have been at a loss in 1848 to comprehend the situation of any East European peoples beyond Poland and Hungary, then five years later publishing was doing its bit to give a few cultural hints of Romanian life. Amongst these early publications were E.C. Grenville Murray’s Doine; or, The National Songs and Legends of Roumania (London, 1854); the Hon. Henry Stanley, Rouman Anthology, or Selection of Rouman Poetry Ancient and Modern (Hertford 1856); in Vienna, Henri Erlich’s Airs nationaux roumains (1850); and, in Paris, Vasile Alecsandri’s Les Doïnas (1853) and his Ballades et chants populaires de la Roumanie (1855), as well as Carol Mikuli’s Douze airs nationaux roumains (1855). The cultural significance of such apparently minor publications increases if one considers that the ethnonym “Romanian” was almost completely unknown in Western Europe before the 1840s; and their political significance is equally apparent, as is witnessed by the fact that Lord Palmerston had a copy of Stanley’s anthology on his drawing-room

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table at the height of the diplomatic negotiations over the future of the Principalities in 1856.87

From the late 1850s, but especially after the administrative completion of Union in 1861, the number of printing presses grew rapidly, and their location diversified to an extent inconceivable thirty years before. Before 1860, printing in the Principalities was confined to the large towns - Bucharest, Iași; Craiova and Brăila (both from 1838), Galați (1847) - and the religious centres: Râmnic and Buzău in Wallachia, Neamț Monastery in Moldavia. Episcopal sees like Argeș, Huși and Roman lacked presses, as did Botoșani, which had a population of 25-40,000 in the period under discussion and was one of the largest towns in either principality.88 The expansion, however, was remarkable. In 1859, there were presses in only seven localities in the Principalities; by 1890 this number had risen to over forty. This period coincided with the reorganization of the provincial prefectures following Union and Independence; the establishment of law courts and chambers of commerce on a uniform national basis, each with their own printed Bulletin or newsletter; the spread of secondary education to all towns; the founding of local “Athenaeums” or cultural societies from the 1870s onwards. By 1880 most county towns had a local newspaper of some kind.

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that printing was a generally viable commercial activity. Many of the presses were owned by an élite which did not seek to make a profit from them, and the printing industry throughout the country saw a fairly rapid coming and going of entrepreneurs. For instance, the number of printing presses in Bucharest actually halved from 14 to 7 between 1863 and 1867 as a result of the bankruptcy and consolidation of a number of firms. The amateur politician-printer was no longer such a widespread figure; and the consolidation of the larger companies proceeded apace. Thus, the Junimea literary society in Iași, having started out with their own press in 1866, disposed of it (having lost money

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88 In this town the first press was acquired in 1866 by a schoolteacher I. V. Adrian, who had lost his post and wished to avenge himself on the local authorities. Ileana Turușancu, “Reviste botoșanene din trecut.” *LL*, III, 1957, p. 297-298.
continuously) in 1871; in Craiova, the long-standing local professional printer, Iosif Samitca, was able to buy out presses set up by local schoolteachers and politicians in the 1860s; in Bucharest, C.A. Rosetti, increasingly involved in politics, put some journalist protégés of his in charge of his press, and later sold out at a loss to his workshop manager, Carol Göbl.⁸⁹

The proportion of Romanians involved in printing also fell: all the large commercial printing firms in 1890 (Carol Göbl, Şt. Rădisescu, Socec in Bucharest; Hershcu Goldner, Adolf Bermann and the Șaraga brothers in Iași; Iosif Samitca and sons in Craiova) were owned by Jews, other than those of Theodosius Ionnițiu and Luigi Cazzavillan in Bucharest, who were Greek and Italian respectively. In the town of Botoșani, where printing activity was started up (as was typical) by local school teachers in the 1860s, all five printing works in 1906 were Jewish-run; the same was true in Piatra and other Moldavian towns. Printing had changed irreversibly from being a protected activity accessible only to the religiously ordained, to a business like any other.

Most of those who made money in printing up until 1890 carried out commissions from the state. Before 1848, as we have seen, Heliade and Asachi had virtual monopolies on state publishing. Both were particularly adept at exploiting their unique position. In 1840, Heliade was advanced the sum of 48,000 lei against the future printing of state documents for eighteen months, putting up his press as collateral.⁹⁰ In the same year, Gheorghe Asachi was given an estate at Petrodava in Moldavia for the establishment of a paper factory, a business on which he held a monopoly until 1852: all public institutions were “harshly commanded” not to buy paper from anybody else, even though malicious tongues in the Moldavian chancery put it about that his paper was both poorer quality and more expensive than the imported variety. The grounds of his establishment included a jardin anglais, fruit orchards, and even a set of swings for the villagers.⁹¹ Only in 1856, when the veteran entrepreneur finally found himself out

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⁹¹ N. Iorga, “Gheorghe Asachi ca tipograf și editor…”, p. 748.
of favour, was he refused a contract for manufacturing postage stamp paper, because “the government no longer awards that kind of protected business.”

Even after the Union of the Principalities, however, when commercial diversity in the book trade became a permanent reality, the majority of publishers continued to depend on state patronage, particularly that of the Ministry of Education; while students themselves formed the main market. Already in 1854 the Bucharest bookseller Iosif Romanov had set up a special branch of his store for educational books, with agents in ten Wallachian provincial towns. A book catalogue of 1876 put out by the Iași publisher/bookseller Dimitrie Daniel is revealing: it addresses itself to “the honourable directors of boarding schools, the studious youth of the high schools, lyceums, seminars - the honorable permanent committees of the councils for the awarding of prize books…” The largest publisher in late nineteenth-century Romania, Carol Göbl (est. 1876), retained close links with his former employer, C.A. Rosetti - by now an influential member of government - and was able to win many state printing contracts in spite of the fact that the state had its own press. (In fact Göbl even ran the state press briefly in 1881-1882, after the intervention of Rosetti). His main rival, Vladimir Socec, likewise leant heavily on the production of school books and official publications for his success: in his 1868 catalogue are listed no fewer than 180 school manuals, of which 46 were language manuals. It was this assurance of business from the rather étatist educational programmes that enabled him to own the modern machinery on which were printed the first collected editions in Romanian literature, printed in deluxe formats from the 1870s onwards. The prestige and success of the few can be judged by the fact that, in 1884, Göbl was one of the first private individuals in Romania to install a telephone. Besides a welter of educational material, he printed the Annals of the Romanian Academy; the

Bucharest postal directory; the official journal of the Bucharest municipal commune; the state budget; electoral lists; doctoral theses; school examination regulations; political speeches; pamphlets; collection of state historical documents; as well as some poetry and religious works and over 20 newspapers.97

The dependence on school books for success is also true of the other great publishing houses, Şaraga, Goldner and Samitca. Predictably enough the single largest-selling volume in the Romanian nineteenth century was a school book.98

A final development of the late 1880s, was the appearance of the first successful “popular” editions. The technique of printing large numbers of copies to attract a mass market had scarcely been attempted, dependent as it was on a wide base of readers. The few who had tried - such as George Ioanid in the 1850s - had not made a success of it.99 In 1885, the Samitca firm in Craiova initiated the series Mica biblioteca a istorioarelor interesante [Small library of interesting tales]. As well as being a success in terms of popularization, the enterprise exercised an important effect on Romanian culture in its own right, as it was to include some of the first full-length translations of works by Tolstoy, Maupassant, Heine, Goethe, Dostoevski, Benjamin Constant, and others. The first full-length translation into Romanian of Dante’s Inferno was published in such an edition in 1885.100 This enterprise was widely imitated after 1890, notably by the Şaraga brothers in Iaşi, and Carol Müller, in Bucharest, whose series Biblioteca pentru toţi [Library for Everybody] thrives to this day.

But these were to be essentially twentieth-century phenomena. In the nineteenth century, publishing could not be said to have reached the mass of the population. It was the state that determined the market, and the state that placed

97 A full list in Tipograful Carol Gobî, p. 3-136. In 1901, he took over from SOCEC the publication of the Annals of the Romanian Academy.
98 Metodă nouă de scriere şi citire pentru usul clasei I primărie. De instititorii I. Creangă, C. Grigorescu, Gh. Ienâchescu, N. Climescu, V. Recemă & A. Simionescu. Iassy, 1868. This work, a basic reader for primary schools, is said to have sold nearly half a million copies in the twenty - five editions to 1898: G. Călinescu, Ion Creangă. Viata şi opera [Opere, vol. XIV] Bucureşti, 1972, p. 56, 134. The Gobî-published Education-ministry approved Carte de citire [Reading Primer] by I. Ionescu, had the following print runs: 1st edn, 1884, 7,000cc (pt. I) + 4,000cc (pt. II); repr. in 1885: 8000 + 3000cc.; in 1886, 15,000 + 7,300cc. Tipograful Carol Gobî, ed. cit.
99 P. Cornea “O întreprindere editorială bucureşteană . . .”
100 Tomescu, op. cit., p. 36-40; Vasile Cărăbiş, “Tipografiile din Oltenia.” RMM, 4/1982, p. 78-84.
the orders. Without this impulse and support, few of the publishing achievements of modern Romanian public letters would have been possible. The initiative for enlightenment through books had passed definitively from the neighbouring empires - Austria and Russia - and, at the same time, out of the hands of the Orthodox church. It was the Romanians themselves who were carrying on this process.
The periodical press

The period from 1849-1854 was generally inauspicious for the Romanian press: following the successive interventions of Turkey and Russia in the Principalities, most of the journalist-revolutionaries either fled abroad or were sent into exile in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Radical disagreements over the causes of the Revolution's failure, and strong personal recriminations, prevented even the expatriate journals from maintaining a consistent front. However, analyses of the revolution's failure did not blame the superficiality of literary imaginings, but continued to reinforce the idea's importance, as in the opening editorial of one of the more important newspapers to appear in exile, Junimea română ("The Romanian Youth", Paris, 1851):

We have to create a national literature, a national identity, national arts. When all these things exist and the breath of liberty has given them life, we may consider ourselves to be an immortal people... We will treat the arts, literature, history, politics, morals, everything from one single viewpoint: the Fatherland.\(^{101}\)

Back home, the restored governments of Moldavia and Wallachia did not outlaw the press entirely, but they effectively restricted it: there were but two papers countenanced in Iași, Zimbrul [The Bison] and Gazeta de Moldavia, the latter run by Asachi, the veteran government servant now in his sixties.\(^{102}\) Bucharest had only the rural newsheet, The Village Teacher, and a Romanian Messenger of state business.

In the late 1850s newspapers and literary journals picked up again. The collaborative efforts of Kogălniceanu and Vasile Alecsandri continued with România literară [Iași,1855] and Steaua Dunării [1855-1860, also published in French as L'Étoile du Danube, 1856-1858]. The first of these continued the promotion of Alecsandri's collections of Romanian folk poetry: significantly, all provinces were represented in an attempt to signify the cultural unity of the

\(^{101}\) apud Al. Duțu, Sinteză și originalitate în cultura română. București, 1972, p. 184, who remarks: "Evidently, we are dealing here not merely with an aim that endowed the literature of the Enlightenment period with a militant character, but with a concentration of all activity in the sphere of political value, which rejects everything incompatible with the political objective; intellectual activity is focused on the present."

\(^{102}\) Again, the names mattered: Asachi's old title, The Romanian Bee, was now unacceptable: he had to revert to a Moldavian gazette. The Bison is a heraldic symbol of Moldavia.
Romanian people - a more modern and more subtle political use to which literature was now being put. At the same time, political articles on the abolition of serfdom were a regular feature.\(^\text{103}\) The second paper was a lobbying organ for the Union of the Principalities. It managed to cause heroic irritation to the cabinets of Britain and France - who in 1857 were still opposed to the Union of the Principalities, but at the Convention of Paris had proposed elections in Moldavia and Wallachia to put a nominal democratic seal on their policies - by publishing leaked documents proving that anti-Unionist leaders in Iași had been engaged in vote-rigging.\(^\text{104}\) But it also published a broadly representative sample of the poetry and prose of the 1850s.\(^\text{105}\) *Steaua Dunării* managed, unlike many other publications, to live up to its claim to be a *jurnal politic, literar și comercial* - an almost obligatory subtitle in the age. In his opening editorial Kogălniceanu outlined how he saw literature and politics fitting together: “Politics has become today the soul of the modern world; at it are aimed the broad tendencies of literature, which formulates and disseminates ideas”; for the achievement of political ends, he recommended “a noble, national literature, apt for forming our minds and hearts, a literature in which we can take pride in front of foreigners.”\(^\text{106}\) This was perhaps the most lucidly formulated programmatic statement of the cultural ambitions of the 1848 generation. And the foremost location of this synthesis of literature, politics and industry was declared to be the press itself, which he claimed was

> the extended echo of human speech; the tribune in which the voice of the masses resounds to the ends of the civilized world... it plays in the intellectual field the same role that the steam-engine plays in the material field.\(^\text{107}\)

Kogălniceanu drew much of this rhetoric [with acknowledgement] from a French popularizing publication, Artaud’s *Encyclopédie des gens du monde* (1844), and it

\(^{103}\) M. Kogălniceanu, “Sclâvie, vecinătate și boieresc”, 6 feb 1855; N. Ionescu, “Sclâvia neagră și cea alba”, 6 dec 1855. The liberal views expressed in this last article resulted in the paper’s suppression.


\(^{107}\) “Jurnalism românesc în 1855” *România literară*, nrs. 4-6, jan-feb 1855; repr. ibidem., p. 336.
is tempting to dismiss it as irrelevant to Romanian society. However, this metaphor imposed itself insofar as, like many other theories or programs, Moldavian publicity required a reading of European norms and expectations - which themselves were often positivist projections - rather than a real analysis of local conditions of production.

However, entrepreneurs and press-owners were becoming more and more adept at challenging the state and influencing the state of events. C.A. Rosetti’s Românul [“The Romanian”] was one of the most enduring and outspoken of newspapers during the period of Cuza’s rule; in 1864 the government, nervous at the paper’s demagogic power, placed severe restrictions on its distribution. But Rosetti, who by now had at his disposal a number of alternative presses, was not to be defeated: he managed to put out no fewer than ten intermediate titles under different names in the period to 1866. He had more than a dozen full-time writers working for him. The radical discontinuity of publication did not seem to bother Bucharest publicists: they made up for it by publishing twice as many newspapers.

Românul became one of the most influential newspapers in the country. Whether this was due to its wide circulation or the fact that its proprietor held ministerial office in the 1870s and early 1880s is hard to say. Its print run certainly rarely exceeded two or three thousand copies: but it became a bête noire of the Conservative party, whose own journal Timpul [“The Times”] had neither the editorial consistency nor the financial organization which Rosetti could achieve. Românul was in many ways the prototype for the big newspapers Universul [“The Universe”, est. 1884] and Adevărul [“The Truth”, 1888], which, in the last years after the period we are studying, were able to reach circulations of over 10,000 on a regular basis and sustain publication for many years afterwards.

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108 cf. Francesco Guida, “The Concept of Europe in Romania and Romania’s Image in Western Europe”, in Stefano Bianchini & Marco Doge, eds. The Balkans: National Identities in Historical Perspective. Ravenna, 1998, p. 76: “It may seem strange that the spreading of literary tastes and philosophical ideas or at times mere fashions, should play a part in developing the concept of a nation, but at a time when this idea was at the very basis of modernization and was seen as new and progressive, there was nothing particularly surprising in the equation ‘(Western, French) culture = national ambitions.’”


110 Circulation figures for Universul: 5,000 in 1884, 50,000 by 1898. Gross, op. cit., p. 10.
Such frenzied activity also fostered the appearance of the professional writer, who might hire his services to a number of different causes over the years, in the interests of commerce. Before 1866 journalism could be said to depend directly on personal and political allegiance, and to have little dynamic of its own: the career of Dimitrie Bolintineanu, who often moved from newspaper columnist to government minister and back again in the course of the Cuza government, is a case in point. After this date, men like Caragiale and Hasdeu attempted to make money working for papers of different political colours at different times: although they played the system to an extent, this could be generally interpreted as a genuine interest in making a living from writing: they were not essentially interested in political power for its own sake. Caragiale's career, however, demonstrated amply that the professional position of independent journalist and man of letters was simply not possible without other means to draw on. Although he was one of the most popular newspaper writers in the country during the 1880s and 1890s, he left Romania in disgust in 1904 as soon as he received an inheritance that enabled him not to have to live in the service of politicians.

With the administrative completion of Union in 1861, and the election of a Carol of Hohenzollern as prince of the United Principalities in 1866, the number of titles began to rise dramatically. Journalism and printing spread to smaller provincial centres and became truly national phenomena. Each county town generally had at least a Bulletin issued by the local prefecture or county court; from the 1880's a Bulletin of the local Chamber of Commerce; and a host of smaller reviews. The sheer number of these is often remarkable. Focșani, a small town whose principal distinction is its position on the frontier of Moldavia and Wallachia, had no press until the establishment of a Commission there in 1859 to administrate the Union of the Principalities. In the thirty years from then to 1890 it produced 43 newspapers. There were 36 papers in Botoșani in Moldavia from 1866-1890; in Giurgiu from 1871-1890 there were 23 (see tables). Many of these

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For an overview of Caragiale's journalistic entanglements and allegiances, see Marin Bucur's introduction to Caragiale, *Restituirii*. Cluj-Napoca, p. 7-33. He wrote, among other papers, for the Conservative *Alegătorul liber* (1875-76); the Conservative *Timpul* (1878-81); the liberal *Voința națională* (1885); the Junimist *Constituționalul* (1889); the liberal *Gazeta poporului* (1895); and finally the conservative *Epoca* (1896-97). *DLR* 1900, p. 159.
were of course ephemeral and insignificant; some of them served minority populations, such as the Jewish and the Bulgarian communities of the last-mentioned towns respectively. Others played a significant role in the expansion of mainstream literary reputations, as they put into circulation the works of the more prestigious metropolitan authors. A famous poet like Eminescu or Alecsandri would have his works reproduced in almost every town in Romania. One can get an idea of this process by considering that no fewer than 175 newspapers, almanacs, calendars or literary supplements published work by Alecsandri in the period to 1918. This would greatly increase authors' renown, but in the virtual absence of enforcement of copyright laws, earn them little direct money. On the other hand, despite this vast reproduction, most of the population had probably never heard of Alecsandri. In the early 1900s, researchers visiting the late poet's country estate found that the villagers were completely ignorant of the local estate owner's vocation as a writer.

Almost all elections in the years after 1866 were accompanied by a concomitant mushrooming of political newspapers. Many imitated the styles and even names of the prestigious publications of Bucharest and Iași: there was many a provincial *Bee* or *Courier*, or *Literary Romania*. As in the capital, the newspapers were a crucial battleground for the ambitious and the demagogic. The words “Free”, “Independent”, “Popular”, “Literary”, and above all, “National”, were incessantly invoked. As B.P. Hasdeu (himself a veteran polemicist) put it:

> The publicist, down to the very last man, always speaks in the name of the entire country, proclaiming himself to be the most complete expression of the nation. And, you will well observe that nobody can prove him wrong in this respect, except another publicist; for only he has the mandate to represent all those who do not know him, have never seen him, never spoken with him, nor, possibly, ever even heard his name.

In the heady world of fin-de-siècle Romania, where everybody scrambled to be a journalist and the press laws were among the freest in Europe, others fought back with satirical aplomb. The subtitle of a Bucharest publication of 1886 perhaps expresses this mood best. It called itself *The National Shrike. National,*

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112 The next most widely-published authors: Coșbuc (in 143 periodical publications); Eminescu (in 132); Dimitrie Bolintineanu (in 97). *DPR, indice persoanelor.*


free-mongering, lobster-hued, cherry-coloured, purple, fence-sitting, ironical, cupboardeering, high-spirited, droll, salted, peppered, piquant, amusing, duty-stamped, perfected, collectivist, diurnist, Bratianu-ist, vizirial, ministerial, governmental, Carlist, spiritist, Dynastic, regal, satyrical, empirical, humoristic, free-changeist, free-thinking, free-standing newspaper, seeking subscribers and ever-mindful of the salvation of the fatherland." By 1890, the world of Tristan Tzara was not so far away.

Following the Union there also appeared on the scene the most prestigious literary journal of all, and one which, in the wake of national independence, proposed radical innovations in cultural theory and strategy: *Convorbiri literare* ["Literary conversations", 1867-1944]. This monthly was the organ of the *Junimea* group (established 1864), a heterogeneous meeting of intellectuals, boiers, political, legal and military men centred around the new University of Iaşi and with a broadly conservative political agenda. With the exception of its dynamic leader, Titu Maiorescu, a Transylvanian professor’s son and rector of the University from 1864 to 1866, the rest of the group were aristocratic Moldavians; most had had a Western university education. A monthly journal was only one of *Junimea*’s initial means of dissemination - others included a press, a bookshop, public lectures and private readings - but it was *Convorbiri literare* that was to endure the longest and establish the most influence.

By advocating the autonomy of the aesthetic, and particularly by promoting themselves as cultural innovators, *Junimea* enhanced their intellectual prestige, and attracted authoritative figures from the older generation, such as Vasile Alecsandri and Ion Ghica. As the leaders of *Junimea* became increasingly implicated in party politics, the review abandoned Iaşi, a city for which they had tried to envisage a role as a cultural centre of excellence now that it had lost its status as capital of the Moldavian state, and was established in Bucharest in 1885.

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115 Sfârânciogul național Ed. Câștâ Niculescu (București mar-apr 1886; Râmnicu Sârat jan 1887; București feb-nov 1888). "Ziar național, libertății, stăcii, conabii, purpuriu, muchelui, zețelemejui, dulapgui, hasilu, nostim, sărat, pipere, piquant, amuzant, timbrat, perfeționat, colectivist, diurnist, Brătienist, vizirial, ministerial, guvernamental, Carlist, spiritist, Dynastic, regal, satyric, empiric, humoristic, liber schimbist, liber cugetător, de sine și stă[tă]tor, de abonați rîvnitor și de salvarea patriei, pururea țădăitor." PPR, I, p. 673.
But throughout the early years of the magazine, the separation of politics and art was excellently stage-managed. The writers all involved themselves in politics in some manner or other: but they managed to sustain a non-political profile for the magazine, and waged political battles in other papers, such as *Timpul*. Under the surface, of course, there were vast tensions and contradictions, and politics almost inevitably crept into the most abstruse intellectual scenarios. A study on the philosophy of Schopenhauer led to questions being asked in Parliament; the Conservatives’ battle against the nascent Socialist movement was fought during the 1880s in literary criticism, over topics such as “Impersonal Emotion” and authorial intentionality in art.\(^{117}\)

It was in fact to be the socialist paper, *Contemporanul* (1881-1891) and particular its chief theorist, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, which constituted Convorbiri’s main literary rivals. Gherea had arrived in Romania in flight from neighbouring Bessarabia and had set up *Contemporanul* following the example of the synonymous Russian *narodnik* paper *Sovremennik*.\(^{118}\) The editor, Ion Nădejde, set new journalistic standards by initiating a series of exposés of plagiarisms in other newspapers. If for Convorbiri literare, the key-word had been critică, for *Contemporanul* the tone was given by the word știință. “Scientific” standards were called for in university life, in philosophy, in agriculture. It was also the first paper in Romania to be seriously influenced by ideas of feminist emancipation: the journal published numerous articles on this theme by Sofia Nădejde, and Dobrogeanu-Gherea’s study of Eminescu (1887) contains some of the first feminist literary criticism worthy of the name.\(^{119}\) Prestigious figures like Ion Luca Caragiale - never happy as a protégé of Maiorescu - and the young Nicolae Iorga, associated themselves with Gherea on the cultural plane if not on the political. Ironically, the Romanian socialists had only turned their journal into a literary review after extensive political harassment: their career was the reverse of that of

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119 The first Romanian paper to be edited by a woman had been *Amicul familiei*, ed. Constanția de Dunca, Bucharest 1863-1865 and 1868 (PPR, I, p. 31).
Junimea, moving from political failure to literary prestige: their review was one of the most popular in the country in the 1880s, with a print run of over 3,000 copies.\textsuperscript{120}

At the end of the nineteenth century, then, a strange paradox prevailed. One literary journal promoting aesthetic autonomy was run by men occupying major positions of political power, while another, whose patrons were condemned to political marginality, insisted on literature's socio-political function. The "symbolic capital" acquired through the press, then, was a necessary precondition, but at the same time no guarantee on its own, of political success.

Meanwhile, the reading-structures that Anderson has evoked - the ability of the newspaper to organize a daily solidarity on the level of reading, among a massive and anonymous group of people - were in fact conspicuously absent from Romanian life. The intellectuals' projected dream of them existed, however, and perhaps even substituted for them.

\textsuperscript{120} Iorga,\textit{ Istoria presei româneşti}, p. 135.
Fig. 3.6: Distribution of presses by locality (Principalities / Old Kingdom), 1830 – 1890


Fig. 3.7: Printing presses in the Principalities / Old Kingdom, 1830-1890

Source: ibid.
Fig. 3.8: The secularization of the press in the Principalities / Old Kingdom, 1830-1890

Source: ibid.

Fig. 3.9: Romanian literary periodicals (all locations), 1830-1890

Source: DPLR.
Fig. 3.10: Patterns of growth in the provincial press: Botoșani, Giurgiu.

**Periodical publications in Botoșani, 1866-1890**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>2 (1 calendar, 1 ephemeral)</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1 (calendar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1 (calendar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>4 (3 ephemeral)</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2 (1 calendar, 1 irregular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4 (1 irregular, 2 ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>6 (4 irregular, 1 Yiddish ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>2 (irregular)</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>4 (all irregular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>3 (2 irregular, 1 calendar)</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>6 (4 irregular, 1 Yiddish, 1 ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>3 (1 irregular, 1 calendar)</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>6 (5 irregular, 1 Yiddish ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>2 (1 calendar)</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>4 (all irregular, 1 Yiddish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>5 (3 irregular, 1 Masonic ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>6 (2 irregular, 1 ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1 (calendar)</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>6 (2 irregular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>8 (2 ephemeral, 2 irregular)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of publications: 36
Ephemeral (2 numbers or fewer): 10
Irregular: 9
Foreign-language: 3 (Yiddish)
More than 2 years, regular: 4

**Periodical publications in Giurgiu, 1871-1890**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>5 (1 ephem., 2 for three months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>2 (Bulgarian, 1 ephemeral)</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>4 (1 ephemeral, 1 irregular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1 (Bulgarian)</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1 (irregular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>2 (Bulgarian)</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>3 (1 irregular, 1 ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>2 (Bulgarian)</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>3 (1 irreg., 2 ephemeral, 1 Bulg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>2 (1 Bulgarian)</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>3 (2 irregular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>5 (1 Bulgarian, ephemeral)</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>4 (2 irregular, 1 ephemeral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>2 (both irregular)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of publications, 1871-1890: 23
Ephemeral (2 numbers or fewer): 5
Irregular: 3
Foreign-language: 5 (Bulgarian)
More than 2 years, regular: 3

Source: DPR
Fig. 3.11: Books published in Piatra Neamț, Moldavia, 1876-1900: a selection.

Andrieș, Const. V. The "Archimandrite Chiriac Nicolau" mixed rural primary school in Vânătorii Neamț Commune, Upper Ward, Neamț County. 1896.

Boteanu, Gh. On the origin of armies in Europe. 1882

__________, Don-Alfonso of Castille. 1882.

__________, Poems. 1885.

Bușureanu, Vasile C. Analysis of the saline mineral waters of Vânătorii Neamțului. 1893.

Gheorghiu, C.D. A complete handbook of gymnastics. 1889.

__________, Calendar of superstitious women. (In Collection of popularized literature and science) 1892. 2nd edn., 1907.

__________, The game "Oina"* and the rules for general competitions. 1898.


Herovanu, Nicolae I. (Neamț county controller) Economic study on the imposition of direct taxes and the organization of accounting and collection services. 1882

Isăcescu, Zulnia C. The culture of silkworms. 1894.

__________, On the need for an elementary teacher-training course in girls’ primary schools. 1886.

Lazu, Grigore N. Freemasonry. 1884.


Negre, Ioan Gheorghe Asachi. His life, works, and the age he lived in (1788-1869). 1882.

Scuțărescu, Calistrat The education of children with professional training. 1901.

Vrânceanu, Const. Basic notions of the Geography of the local commune. 1892.

* Oina = a village ball game.

Source: BRM
PART II
MIHAI EMINESCU: METAPHYSICAL NATIONALIST

In English-language studies of Romanian nationalist ideology, the name of Mihai Eminescu, "Romania's national poet", crops up regularly, and he is almost invariably cited as one of the precursors of the extremist nationalism of the twentieth century. Actual analyses of what he wrote are harder to find. In this chapter I shall attempt a detailed review of Eminescu's political journalism and some of his literary compositions with a view to clarifying his conception of the Romanian nation. I shall look first at the origins of his thought both in earlier Romanian writings and in German philosophy (particularly Schopenhauer); and then go on to place his writings in the particular social and political context in which they were written, distinguishing between aspects of Eminescu's nationalism which are common to many Romanian writers, and not just to him, and particular aspects which he alone stressed, which are unique to his work and thought and which subsequently became central tenets of Romanian nationalist ideology.

My intention is not to come up with any new theory of nationalism; nor would a study of Eminescu be the best way to do so, if one believes Ernest Gellner's assertion that "we shall not learn too much about nationalism from the study of its own prophets". Nor do I wish to treat Eminescu as a pure ideologue. In the context of this thesis, the interest lies largely in attempting to show how certain socio-political ideas and literary forms served to work together to reinforce each other status and prestige within the Romanian cultural field described in previous chapters. An analysis of Eminescu's writings in the context of literary

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production of his own time is useful not only because it avoids the kind of interpretive foreshortening which makes Eminescu either the prophet of Romania’s future, or the root of all subsequent intolerance in Romanian history. Written texts by their nature can and will be re-read in contexts totally different from those in which they were composed: admirers of Eminescu have included the feminist Sylvia Pankhurst and the dramatist Eugène Ionesco as well as the extremist Iron Guard leader Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu. But this does not render the particular world in which his writings were produced irrecoverable; indeed, it is necessary to examine this context in order to establish why Eminescu’s ideas took the form they did.

Born in 1850 in Northern Moldavia, the son of an estate administrator and lesser boyar, Mihai Eminescu was sent at the age of eight to the German National-Hauptschule in Cernăuți [Czernowitz], the capital of the Austrian province of the Bukovina, and subsequently lodged there at the house of Aron Pumnul, professor of Romanian language and literature, for whom he worked as librarian. Pumnul, a Transylvanian who had played an active role in the Romanian cultural movement up to and during the year 1848, had fled to the Bukovina following the suppression of the national uprising in that year: the province was something of a place of exile, being far removed from centres of agitation, but also a meeting place for Romanian paşoptişti or “forty-eighers” from different provinces.

The concerns of the Transylvanians constituted a continuation of the work of their eighteenth-century predecessors, who had established the Roman origins of the Romanian language and begun to produce grammars and dictionaries enabling Romanian to be taught in schools and seminaries. The group were influenced not only by this native tradition and by leaders of the Orthodox and Uniate church, but also by Western political and philosophical ideas. They were familiar with the metaphysics of Kant, and interpreted him in progressive, nationalist terms: using his ideas to criticise organised religion and create for

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themselves a secular tradition of political action and public education - partly as a weapon in a struggle against the clergy, who up until then had dominated intellectual life and were seen by the Imperial Government as the only Romanian representatives worth dealing with; but also as an instrument for social change and as the basis for ideas of progress and claims for freedom "for man to exercise his reason" as one of the group, Gheorghe Baritiu, put it.\(^5\)

Aron Pumnul's contribution to this movement included a work entitled "The independence of the Romanian language", which Eminescu knew, and which provided a succinct definition of the term nation (națiunea):

The nation is comprised of a people of the same blood, the same customs and which speaks the same language. The people is the body of the nation, while the language is its soul. Therefore, just as a body without soul is dead, so is the nation dead without language. Nationality is the God-given, eternal, innate and inalienable right [of a people] to make use of her language in all the necessities of life: in the house, in church, in school and in administration.\(^6\)

The influence of Pumnul, and the use by Eminescu of ideas of individual autonomy in defence of national improvement and civil rights is evident in the earliest of Eminescu's writings. His first published poem was "On the Death of Aron Pumnul" and represents Romanian youth gathering in unison around their master's grave. Moreover, Eminescu's definition of nation derived fairly directly from that of Pumnul, with the addition of claims for a territorial basis for a nation: the Romanian people is, he says, "a nation of men, tied, through tradition, customs and language to a patch of land which we can, with undeniable title, call our country." His definition stayed more or less the same throughout his writing life, and he insisted that all the relevant conditions be fulfilled: it was not possible to be part of the Romanian nation only by dint of language, or birth, for these characteristics could apply to sinister Greeks or to unpatriotic Francophile students.\(^8\)


The early belief in progress and enlightenment, as justified by reference to Kant, is demonstrated in the polemical articles with which Eminescu began his journalistic career in the Budapest paper *Federațiunea*. In “Să facem un Congres” [Let’s hold a congress], he called for the democratic wishes of the Romanians of the Habsburg Monarchy to be respected, for their equal federal rights to be considered alongside those of other national groups, and for an elected representative of the Romanian nation to communicate the people’s will to the emperor. In “Echilibru” [Balance], published in the same year, he argues that the sciences “ought to present works belonging to the nation, whereby she can contribute to the enlightenment and advancement of mankind” and that legislation should be “the application of the most advanced idea of right in relation to the requirements of the people”. He uses the philosopher’s terminology to reject the ‘transcendental’ right of kings to rule, and says that

the rights and laws which are to govern over us, are immanent to us, that is immanent to our requirements, our life - we have only to request them from ourselves. That we are being stopped from exercising them, does not change their essence at all.

Eminescu had by this time begun to study in Vienna, and was beginning to engage in first-hand study of Kant and German idealists - indeed his article shows signs that he is keen to parade his knowledge of the (to him) new philosophy: the conclusions he draws, however, and the general emphases, are in tune with the liberal nationalism of the generation of 1848. Inalienable human rights, constitutional liberties, the progress of mankind, practical demands: Eminescu’s beliefs do not yet bear the hallmarks of his later (and highly conservative) interpretation of the German metaphysics. They also indicate a favourable disposition towards French ideas: not only are his appeals couched in the language of French-revolutionary idealism, but he also explicitly mentions the influence of France on Romania, and considers it to be based on “recognizable superiority and individuality.” There are, admittedly, traces of Romantic language-theory to be found at this early stage: he writes that “the measure of civilisation of a people today is; a sonorous language, suitable for expressing notions through sound,

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9 *Federațiunea*, 5/17 aprilie 1870 (SP, p. 85; 86; 92).
thoughts through order and logical emphasis, and sentiments through ethical emphasis."^{10}

Such views, then, would by no means make Eminescu unique or even very innovative within the Romanian context: the historian and liberal statesman Mihai Kogălniceanu, for one, had introduced ideas derived from Herder and Fichte as early as the 1830s. These types of statement are worth noting nevertheless in order to show a certain current of civic thought which he flirted with and then rejected. Indeed, early proposals of Eminescu’s, for instance the universalist notion that “a people’s civilization consists especially in the development of those general human tendencies, which are unquestionably those of all men, be they large or small, rich or poor”^{11}, were even sometimes attacked as being not nationalist enough.

Eminescu’s career as political writer and journalist was interrupted after 1871 as he pursued his university career in Vienna and Berlin, with the financial support of the Iaşi literary society “Junimea”. Although he failed to obtain the doctoarate expected of him, his Junimist patrons found him a series of posts, first as a schools inspector in Iaşi and Vaslui counties, then as librarian at Iaşi University. It was only in 1876 – when the Conservative government fell and he was sacked on (probably trumped-up) charges of having misappropriated books – that Eminescu returned to journalism. He was then entrusted with the editorship first of Curierul de Iaşi (from 1876 to 1877) and then, in Bucharest, of the party’s main propaganda organ Timpul (until 1883).

Eminescu’s political writings inevitably bear the influence of his Junimist patrons,^{12} notably that of Maiorescu, whose attacks on the superficiality of existing Romanian cultural models constituted the keystone of the group’s ideological position. Maiorescu had called for Romanian assertions of nationality to be tempered “within the limits of truthfulness” and Eminescu gave support to this apparently radical position; he also, however, defended Maiorescu against charges of “cosmopolitanism” on the grounds that a non-national viewpoint is

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^{10} Ibid., p. 84.
^{11} Ibid., p. 88.
^{12} For an extensive discussion, see Ornea, Junimea și junimismul. București, rev. edn. 1978, p. 528-565.
“impossible”: “The individual who truly desires to work for society cannot do so in the name of a humankind which does not exist other than in its concrete parts – in nationalities.”¹³ In private, however, he was prepared to admit to a friend that “The Romanian people does not exist – the only thing that does is the possibility to form it.”¹⁴

Other aspects of Maiorescu’s writings were taken up wholesale by Eminescu: for instance the former’s assertion that “Our only real class is the Romanian peasant, whose reality is suffering”¹⁵ found its echo in Eminescu’s statement that “There remains to us but a single positive class, off whose back all of us live - the Romanian peasant.”¹⁶ This position, combined with the belief that the peasant represented the true nature of the Romanian essence, was to form the basis of Eminescu’s political thought, which he was to sustain throughout his life.

This was not the only conservative, “Junimist” position which was open to Eminescu, as can be seen from a brief examination of another member of the Junimea group, Petre Carp. Carp, although an aristocrat and initially a defender of landed interests, did not approve of such a reactionary stance, and accepted the consequences of the constitutional changes Romania had undergone:

All serious conservatives should have given their consent to the completed deed; they should have admitted the social revolution, the democratisation of society, as an irrevocable given... It was merely a misfortune that democratisation here took place from the top down, and not the other way round.

He argued that there were other ‘positive classes’ besides the peasant, citing the artisan class and the class of leaders, to be selected on merit rather that lineage.¹⁷ Eminescu, however, rejected both Carp’s attitude to democracy, and his analysis of class structures: he refuted the continuing independence of the artisan and the răzeş [free peasant], blaming their demise on democratic nationalism: “The history of the past 50 years, which many call a national regeneration, could with better reason be called the history of the annihilation of the free peasants and

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¹⁶ “Influenţa austriacă asupra românilor din principate.” Convorbiri literare 1 Aug 1876; SP, p. 136.
¹⁷ E. Lovinescu, Istoria civilizaţiei române moderne (Bucureşti 1924-1926), II, ch. 12.
These classes did not go on to form a stable bourgeoisie, but have aspired to nobility and become lesser gentry; or worse, have sought jobs from the state, and formed a *plebs scribax* or “proletariat of the pen-nib.” Here we see Eminescu explicitly rejecting the modernising aspects of Carp’s conservatism, and adding a distinctly pessimistic reading of Maiorescu’s theory of culture and of the peasant class.

Metaphysical philosophy as a basic for Romanian conservative thought was not new, as we have seen, and certainly Maiorescu’s theory of “form without essence” is partially derived from Kantian distinctions between the essential and the merely sensational categories. However, Eminescu made particular use of post-Kantian ideas which, although not unknown to the Junimea circle, constituted a distinct development and advance on Maiorescu’s theories. The main German influence on Eminescu’s thought was Schopenhauer. This may seem a strange choice for an East European nationalist: after all, Schopenhauer rejected any possibility that his metaphysical system should be used to promote nationalism:

> It should be remarked in passing, that patriotism, when it wants to make itself felt in the domain of learning, is a dirty fellow who should be thrown out of doors. For what could be more impertinent than, where the pure and universally human is the only concern, and where truth, clarity and beauty should alone be of any account, to put into the scales one’s preference for the country to which one’s own valued person happens to belong, and then, with that in view, do violence to truth and commit injustice against the great minds of other nations in order to puff up the lesser minds of one’s own?

However, such statements did not impede the adaptation of Schopenhauer’s thought by nationalists all over Europe. This was particularly characteristic of the “disillusioned” generation of post-1848 Europe, for whom the earlier idealists held less and less allure, and who were acutely attracted by a philosopher whose system seemed to have partially anticipated both the new psychology of Nicholas Hartmann and the developing discourse revolving around evolutionary theory and “the struggle for existence”. Eminescu was no exception to this.

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18 “Influența austriacă; *SP*, p. 128.
As Bryan Magee has noted, however, the actual difference in philosophical method between the "idealist" Fichte and the "pessimist" Schopenhauer is not as great as their political differences. Fichte's 'completion' of Kant's work depended on the union of the 'real' (noumenal) and 'apparent' (phenomenal) worlds in the 'I'. This is not in fact irreconcilably different from Schopenhauer's solution to the same problem, which also saw the 'phenomenal' and the 'noumenal' as products of the ego, but in the form of will and intellect. Fichte used this union of the self and the other to develop an ideology of the sovereign state uniting the individual and the ethnic community. In the individual's mind "dwells a love for the whole, of which he is a member, for the state and the fatherland, and he will destroy any other selfish emotion". Schopenhauer, on the other hand, saw the will as unwholesome and destructive, unable to be mastered by man; he pessimistically advocated the repression of the will's desire, and, as we have seen, believed that the counterpart of the ego was a pure universalism and not at all, as Fichte had proposed, a closed political unit.\(^1\)

In fact Eminescu takes ideas from both philosophers. The influence of Fichte and the idealists entered his work precisely where Schopenhauer fails to be of use to him, mainly when dealing with questions of the nation, of political economy, or of history. Thus Eminescu presents "the interior history of peoples" as "a struggle between the state and individualism". He sees the struggle as coming to a conclusion in the harmonization of separate interests: "The state however, as a higher form of the same principle [i.e. individual interest], does not see in classes distinct individuals, but a complex of social organisms, an individual: the nation."\(^2\) The reconciliation of state and individual in an organic, integrated national community seems, in this early work, to be pure Fichte. Yet Eminescu would have denied his influence, and in fact advised his younger Junimea colleague, Ioan Slavici, "to forget Fichte and Hegel and start from Schopenhauer."\(^3\)

What was it about Schopenhauer's philosophy that particularly attracted Eminescu? Firstly, of all the post-Kantian metaphysicians, Schopenhauer's was

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\(^2\) "Influența austriacă"; *SP*, p. 118-119.
the most reactionary. Schopenhauer vigorously opposed the actions of the 1848 constitutionalists in Frankfurt, and defended the idea of property: both these were causes dear to the heart of Romanian conservatives. Eminescu realised that he could use Schopenhauer's ideas to present Maiorescu's "forms without essence" attack on foreign culture, in such a light that the metaphysical argument could not be interpreted as liberal. He wrote excitedly to Maiorescu:

The philosophy of right, of the state, and of history are appropriate only in Schopenhauer, and moreover, the key to a true exposition of these ideas is to be found in his metaphysics... I believe I have found that which unlocks the problems of these matters, by grouping the opinions and systems of proof which accompany each phase of development in opposites surrounding the atemporal in history, right and politics; but not in the evolutionary sense of Hegel's ideas. For in Hegel thought and existence are identical. Here, not so. The practical interest for our nation, would consist, I believe, in sweeping aside all the theoretical justifications for importing foreign institutions.24

By adapting Schopenhauer's conception of the will, Eminescu was able to reject developmental ideas of "the force of history". He could use this to attack those who believed that Romania's alignment with Western institutions was not a superficial and inappropriate borrowing of forms, but part of an inexorable historical process; he could also counter with the proposal of an anti-republican, anti-constitutional, aristocratic state. After all, the problem with organic communitarian models, from a conservative agrarian viewpoint such as that of the 19th century Romanian Conservatives, is that they leave no justification for the hierarchical orders of society: Fichte's ideas, it is true, were unpalatably republican. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, looked much more appealing:

A constitution embodying abstract justice would be a wonderful thing, but it would not be suited to beings such as men.

...The monarchical form of government is the form most natural to man... republics are anti-natural, artificial and derive from reflection.

...The only solution to the problem is the despotism of the wise and noble members of a genuine aristocracy, a genuine nobility, achieved by mating the most magnanimous of men with the cleverest and most gifted women. This proposal constituted my Utopia and my Platonic republic.25

Eminescu took these ideas and put them fairly directly into his own writings:

Nobody, apart perhaps from ignorant gazetteers, can sustain any more that freedom to vote, assembly and parliament are the foundation of a state. Whether they are or not, the
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

state has to exist and is subjected to certain natural laws, fixed, stubborn, and consequently undefeated. The distinction is, that in constitutional life the struggle for existence of the social groups who have little book-learning, gains resonance; whereas in the absolutist state that struggle is regulated by a much higher power, that of the monarch. ...While in neighbouring states a beneficent absolutism held sway... here the Voevod's hands were tied...

Schopenhauer's influence shows through not only in the advocation of absolute monarchy. It is apparent too in Eminescu's belief that the struggle for existence (Schopenhauer's concept of 'the will to live' foreshadowed the Darwinian idea) provides no justification for optimistic *laissez-faire* positivism, but corresponds rather to an unfathomable and maleficent force. Thus, discussing the evolutionary idea, Eminescu rejects Spencerian interpretations of the theory, and criticizes Darwin's optimism:

Against the scepticism that could result from the struggle-for-existence theory, he aligns the assertion that in the end superiority will be victorious... For a long time we have considered modifying the theory of the struggle for existence in view of the cases in which decrepitude and parasites come to exploit and master the healthy, powerful elements.

This pessimistic view of evolutionary theory derives fairly clearly from Schopenhauer, who wrote of "nature's unambiguous declaration that all the striving of this will is essentially in vain. If it were something possessing value in itself, something which ought unconditionally to exist, it would not have non-being as its goal." 28

Much has been made of Eminescu's pessimism, both by his detractors (some of whom assume that because of it he cannot have been a worthy nationalist) 29, and by his admirers, who frequently quote one passage where he bemoans that fact that Schopenhauer "revealed to us the necessity of living amidst institutions which seem to us untruthful, and made pessimists of us. In this

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27 *Timpul* 6 Aug 1881; *SP*, p. 363.
28 Schopenhauer, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
conflict we frequently lose the joy of living and the desire for struggle.\footnote{Cited by Călinescu, \textit{op. cit.}, II, p. 109. Another apologist, Liviu Rusu, has argued that Eminescu's appropriation of Schopenhauerian pessimism was at the superficial, "intellectual" level, and that the poet's profoundest, most authentic trait was an "optimistic enthusiasm". ("La perspective de la profondeur dans l'étude des influences littéraires et de l'originalité illustrée par le rapport entre le poète Eminescu et Schopenhauer." \textit{Actes du IVe Congrès de l'AssociationInternationale de Littérature Comparée}. Fribourg 1964, ed. François Jost. The Hague, 1966, II, p. 1031-1035.) But in his Juvenalesque satire \textit{Scrioarea a doua} [The Second Letter, 1881], Eminescu declared emphatically that his "disgust" was a quality of his inner soul, which could not by reconciled by the superficial action of his intellect [Și dezgustul meu din suflet să-l împac prin a mea minte./ Dragul meu, cărarea asta s-a bătut de mai nainte.]} I don’t think this passage in any way constitutes proof that Eminescu rejected Schopenhauer’s pessimism - in the same article he attacks Comte’s positivism, the “empty and barren phraseology of Hegel” and the pretence of Fichte and Schleiermacher to resolve the problems of the universe with meaningless abstractions.

Moreover, although pessimism would seem at first to be an inappropriate quality for an officially-sanctioned national prophet - after all, what use is a prophet who brings no good news? - Eminescu managed to combine the role of doom-monger with that of emblem of his people in certain remarkable ways. After all, the role of national ideology is not always simply to eulogize the nation, but also to mobilize it at specified moments; and this is often achieved by conjuring up images of the endangered, victimized and even martyred nation. Not only well-known poetic examples from the nineteenth-century, like the Serbian propagation of the Kosovo legend, or the image of Poland as the suffering “Christ of Nations” serve to illustrate this: for example, a perceived threat of annihilation could be seen as crucial for mobilizing both American and Russian national sentiment during the Cold War. Eminescu saw his role as pointing out the deficiencies of the Romanians as much as enumerating their special virtues. This is perhaps particularly true of his political writings, where there was less stylistic room for the compensating virtues of lyrical expression or wry humour, such as may be found in his literary writings. Thus, in his short fable “Kant” he was able to make gentle fun out of the pretention that high-flown philosophy might have relevance to the immediate needs of the average peasant, as the tale’s protagonist expounds the metaphysical doctrine to bemused locals in a village tavern. But in his journalism, as we have seen, the lyrical framework falls away, and the

\textit{Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist}
pessimism is no longer poetic, but accompanies explosive warnings of what will happen to the fatherland should his words go unheeded. Lying behind the apparently apolitical statement about the meaning of his most celebrated poem, *Luceafărul* [The Evening Star] that “he is immortal, but lacks good fortune”\(^{31}\), is the same vision, this time ethnically politicized, applied to the Romanian people:

Our peasant is the same as fifty years ago, but the burden he bears is tenfold. He carries on his back: several thousand landowners (at the start of the century a few tens), thousands of waged employees (at the start of the century a few tens), hundreds of thousands of Jews (at the start of the century a few thousand), tens of thousands of other foreign subjects (at the start of the century a few hundred).\(^{32}\)

Nevertheless Eminescu was fascinated by death, and took much solace from the ideas, derived by Schopenhauer from oriental religion, of metempsychosis, namely the transference of the soul into another body, and palingenesis, “the decomposition of the individual in which the will alone persists and, assuming the shape of a new being, receives a new intellect.”\(^{33}\) Schopenhauer saw only the conscious intellect as mortal, whereas for him “the metaphysical will” was essentially indestructible; Eminescu took this idea of immortality of the will, and used it to develop a nationalist theory of history positing continuity with Romania’s glorious past. His poem “Doina” [1883] describes Stephen the Great, 15th century ruler of Moldavia, rising from the grave and coming to the aid of his people, who have been overrun by strangers; likewise “The Third letter” [1881] ends with an invocation to Vlad the Impaler to return and round up the frivolous youth, who with their foreign habits, claim to rule the nation. The novella *Poor Dionis* [1872] describes a poor peasant child, lost in the streets of Iaşi, who, finding himself magically attracted to a book filled with geometry and metaphysics, is transported back into an earlier incarnation as a monk in the time of Prince Alexander the Good. This fantastic narrative was just one of the forms in which Eminescu displayed his ability to weld the magical logic of the traditional fairy tale with a remarkably modern historical logic of national destiny, through the figure of the hero with (scientific) supernatural gifts whose adventures take place in historical time, not in mythical lands. Such fictions were a


\(^{32}\) “Influența austriacă”; *SP*, p. 144.

\(^{33}\) Schopenhauer, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

substantive advance in the imagining of continuity, placed on a new psychological plane.

This trope of România rediviva derives, then, not from Christian sources, but from markedly modernist European current of thought. Admittedly, Eminescu did not explicitly militate against Christian theology - though he did write a poem entitled 'Eu nu cred nici in Iehova' [I don't believe in Jehova], and extensively explored Eastern religious thought. But the originality of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, and its usefulness for Eminescu, lies partly in the fact that he can claim the immortality of the will to belong to himself as an intellectual genius, rather than to a Christian saviour. He can also substitute Romanian national figures - or, as in the poem "Rugăciunea unui dac" (A Dacian's Prayer) - a localized paganism - for the saints of the Orthodox church.

Moreover, Eminescu was able to make use of a small loophole in Schopenhauer's system to argue that his own genius was immortal. Schopenhauer was generally extremely careful to point out that the noumenal will which directed the course of the world could not be apprehended by man's intellect: "the intellect is physical, not metaphysical." Intellect is generally apportioned according to purpose; thus men have a much greater intellect than do animals, because

the endless augmentability of his needs has made necessary a much greater degree of intellect. Only when this is exceeded through an abnormality does there appear a superfluity of intellect exempt from service: when this superfluity becomes considerable, it is called genius. Such an intellect will first of all become objective, but it can even go on to become to a certain degree metaphysical.\(^\text{34}\)

This was a favourite passage of Eminescu's, and he used its strictures about the limited 'apportioning' of intellect to argue against the creation of a modern industrial state:

Nature gave man limited power, sufficient only to sustain himself and his family... and "a little more". From this tiny surplus of the producer's homestead, the whole of the nation's civilisation must live. If we use this surplus to feed foreign ideas, institutions, and forms without essence...\(^\text{35}\)

To himself, however, he awarded himself the God-given role of genius: "the God of genius drew me from the people, just as the sun draws up a golden sun from the

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 59-60.
\(^{35}\) Timpul, 21 Dec 1877; SP, p. 205.
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

sea of bitterness. This allows Eminescu to sustain a belief in the immortality of his intellect and his poetry, as well as his will: it permitted him to argue the indestructibility of anti-democratic conservatism, as well as the continuity of blind will which we cannot apprehend or master:

I have said in more than one sentence that whoever desires the healing of the evils which plague our country, will become, to a greater or lesser degree, conservative, and any reform that is to be introduced into our laws, for it to be good, it will have to be conservative. Even the few laws of value in the present Parliaments and in those past, are conservative, with all the power of the word, and have nothing to do with the social contract of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. From the Liberal point of view, this law is a heresy...

As I say, it would have been possible for Eminescu to have come to such conclusions independently of a reading of Schopenhauer: nor is it necessary to make Schopenhauer responsible for Eminescu’s nationalism: the latter’s statement that “feeling for the fatherland is so great in [Schopenhauer’s] eyes, that on the scale of human virtues sacrifice for the fatherland comes close to full sanctity” constitutes a demonstrable falsehood. However, the fact that his conservatism is so often metaphysically expressed, the fact that it was so explicitly anti-constitutional, and anti-contractual, and the fact that he backed up this view with a pantheistic belief in “continuity” and “avatars of the will” - all point to Schopenhauer as Eminescu’s natural antecedent in political philosophy.

There were other historical models available to Eminescu from Romanian history, but he did not select them. For instance, Eminescu’s contemporary, A.D. Xenopol (1848-1920) who likewise studied in Berlin under Junimea’s auspices, also produced a critique of contemporary Romanian society based broadly on the “forms without substance” argument, and attacked many facets of Romania’s development, from the inadequate legal framework to the anomalies of the education system. But he did not propose a wholesale rejection of modernity: rather, he argued that “we should direct our efforts towards attacking the misapplication of these principles, and not against the principles themselves.”

36 see E. Lovinescu, op. cit., II, chapters 5 and 6.
37 Timpul 14 Oct 1879; SP, 256-257.
39 Ibid., p. 211.
Eminescu had no such words for constitutionalism: he quoted proudly the fact that "up until the Phanariots we had no code of law - a sign, that it wasn’t necessary." Stephen the Great, on the other hand,

knew how to smash to pieces the Turks, Tartars, Poles and Hungarians, knew a little Slavonic, had several rounds of wives, drank deep of the old wine of Cotnar, and once in a while chopped off the head of a boyar or the nose of a Tartar prince...What did he bother his head with ideas, the way our gazetteers do, what did he know about the mental subtleties of our days?40

Eminescu’s own mediaevalism, then, was not communal-democratic but essentially authoritarian in temper. It can justifiably be said that he was innovative in the Romanian political context, in pointing out some of the key problematic issues of modern democratic consent - that the intimate assembly of the ancients is no longer possible in a mass society; that the governed and the governors may become mutually alienated; that modern institutions are at best a pale imitation of ancient symbolic forms. But however incisively he asked the questions, he could not offer realistic solutions: even in his retrospective idealisation of mediaeval Moldavia, the people disappear from view and only the forceful power of the autocrat is stressed.

"Just as there is folk-poetry" says a character in one of Schopenhauer’s dialogues, "and in the proverbs, folk-wisdom, so there has to be folk metaphysics."41 Eminescu was a folk-metaphysician par excellence: but his treatment of death in poetry can be said to be metaphysical in a way that departs significantly from the folksy. The theme of passivity in the face of death is generally considered to be a staple of Romanian folklore, especially as exemplified in the ballad Miorița [The Ewe-Lamb], in which a shepherd faces death calmly in spite of the fact that the ewe-lamb he tends warns him that his companions are to betray him. Yet, as G. Călinescu has pointed out, the shepherd “does not sing of death in its proper sense, his representation of it is not in the slightest ecclesiastical; he has, in a word, not a shadow of a notion of the metaphysical process."42 In a most lucid analysis, Călinescu goes on to demonstrate how Eminescu is able to work his philosophical concerns into poems

40 Timpul, 21 Dec 1877; SP, p. 201.
41 Schopenhauer, op. cit., p. 96.
42 Călinescu, op. cit., II, p. 403.
that, in their rhythm and subject-matter appear folkloric and naturalistic. When Eminescu writes lines like

Only man is changeable,  
Upon the earth a wandering race  
But we can keep our place,  
As we were so we remain:

The sea and rivers’ course  
The world and its dusty plains,  
The moon and the sun we remain  
The wood and the water-source.  

- it is clear that he is not just identifying ventriloquially with the forms of nature, but with the stylised Romantic symbols of his nation. “The woods are brother to the Romanian”, he said in another poem in a folkloric metre and tone. As Călinescu further remarked, “there is in Eminescu’s poetry a fine conjunction of popular mythology and philosophy of annihilation, in a form which appears linear, but which nevertheless is a sophisticated admixture.”

The themes of death and rebirth, aligned with folkloric themes, appear again in songs sung by members of the right-wing nationalist legionary movement in inter-war Romania:

Legionaries do not fear  
That you will die young  

For you die to be reborn  
And reborn to die  
Death, only the Legionary death  
Is a joyful wedding for us.

The link between Eminescu’s *folclor savant* (as Călinescu termed it) and the lines quoted above, is unmistakable.

While I do not wish tediously to repeat what is already well-known - that Codreanu, the legionary movement founder, admired Eminescu fanatically, and took inspiration from him - a couple of points are worth noting in this connection. First of all, that the legionaries’ cult of sacrifice in the name of the nation came

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43 “Revedere”, cited ibid., p. 404.
44 Ibid., p. 407.
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

not only from Orthodox theology, nor yet from concepts of fatality in Romanian folk literature, but also, and possibly predominantly, from Eminescu himself. Secondly, the nihilist intellectuals who supported the movement, did not need to go abroad to find ideas to justify an anti-democratic, conservative, transcendental antisemitic nationalist movement in Romania: in the writings and personality of Eminescu, it had been part of the Romanian tradition for nearly 50 years before the foundation of the Legion of the Archangel Michael in 1927.

As for Eminescu’s antisemitic pronouncements they too are well-known; but, unlike many other aspects of his nationalism hitherto covered, they are neither unique to him nor are they particularly egregious when compared to the opinions of many of his contemporaries. He saw them as “in general incapable of industrial work. However many Jews there might be in a town, we won’t find them working either in factories or in workshops.” He also described them as “a parasite element of middlemen, whose activity does not reduce the cost of exchange of products, but increases it... They, as a commercial element, are absolutely damaging in all countries.” His solutions to the Jewish question ranged from creating conditions for assimilation to encouraging emigration: “but”, he added in one article,

with the lax organisation we suffer today, with the corruption instituted mainly by the administration, even the best and most nationalist solution would be nothing but a palliative against an acute symptom, rather than the particular medicine to cure the organic disease we suffer from.

In other words, although unquestionably antisemitic, he did not instigate violence against the Jews, nor advocate enforced expulsion: his articles fairly consistently argue for the problem to be treated by the reorganization of the general economic system, rather than by direct interventionist policies against Jews. The period in which Eminescu wrote saw frequent ravaging of synagogues, burning of Jewish houses, arrests, forcible expulsions from Romania, and several murders caused by

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47 Ibid.

48 Timpul, 17 Jul 1879; SP, p. 250. This line of argument is again borrowed from Maiorescu, who criticized Liberal economic policy, and accused the Liberals of trying to manipulate anti-semitism to cover up for their political shortcomings. See “Contra şcoalei Bârnuţiu” [1868] in Maiorescu,
racial incitement. The motivation for this seems to lie at least partly in medieval notions of Jews as killers of Christ, rather than scientific theories of race: the 1868 sacking of a Galați synagogue apparently started following a rumour that Christian blood was being used in Jewish rituals. Eminescu did not generally use language of this kind. Nevertheless, he did advocate on occasion the withdrawal of Jews’ licences to sell liquor; which policy was frequently implemented, and often led to Jews being arrested as vagrants and then forcibly deported.49

Eminescu, then, despite his tendency to home in on the ethnic dimensions of many other issues, saw the question mainly as a political-economic one. The large number of his pronouncements on the subject is partially, but not exclusively, explicable by the fact that he was editing a political weekly at a time when the Western Powers assembled at the Congress of Berlin made recognition of Romanian independence conditional upon the admission of Jews to Romanian citizenship. This characteristic of Eminescu’s writings on the Jews has led some commentators to rebut the charge that his attitude towards the Jews is primarily ethnic in content.50 It is, however, a common feature of antisemitic discourse that it claims a basis in some extra-racial quality – in this case, economics – in order to appear to provide “autonomous” proof of the veracity of the ethnic characteristics under discussion, and thus to bolster the plausibility of the racial argument. It is true that Eminescu’s writings on Jews are by no means exceptional in the context of the age. But he himself protested vigorously on at least one occasion when he was accused of philosemitism.51

Yet another critic, William Oldson, has constructed an interesting thesis around Romanian anti-semitism, arguing that Romanian politicians and writers of the nineteenth century were not racists of a fanatic nature, but that they developed a peculiar variation on the antisemitic discourse, “neither humanitarian nor doctrinaire”. This discourse was primarily elaborated for the purposes of

\[\text{Critice, II, p. 204-205. But Eminescu did not follow Maiorescu in advocating “the fundamental ideas of humanity and liberalism” against the excesses of the day.} \]

\[\text{49 A detailed account of the Jewish question surrounding the recognition of the Romanian state in Frederick Kellogg, The Road To Romanian Independence West Lafayette, IN 1995, p. 39-61.} \]


\[\text{51 “Reflectare.” Curierul de Iași, 7 iulie1876, in Opere, IX, p. p. 149-150.} \]
countermanding the Western Powers' resented insistence that Jews enjoy citizenship rights as a condition of the independence granted at the Congress of Berlin (1878): its principal component was an argument that the "Eastern" Jews to be found in Romania were not of the same grade of civilization as urban Jewry settled in the West. This was not, Oldson maintains, an argument from race but from cultural characteristics and lifestyle: it involved rationalizing the arguments against the Jews in a style less impeachable by the West. He concludes that Romanian anti-semitism, though brutal and intellectually shallow, was providential for the Jews in that its vagaries and divergence from the modern norm allowed them to survive. He points Eminescu up as an "apostle of ethnic nationalism", but concludes that he was "more of a xenophobe than a physically violent fanatic".52

This is not an unreasonable assessment, but it is important, I think, to note that Eminescu did make very emphatic use of such concepts of race such as were current in the 1880s. If the word "racist" to describe a pseudo-scientifically legitimated course of political action had not yet been invented, the idea of race was common currency throughout Europe.53 Moreover, it is not hard to find instances of Eminescu specifically using the concept of race to attack the "rationalist" line of argument. Nevertheless, he inverts the points of reference by making racism a Jewish weakness:

Whenever the Israelite question is discussed, the Romanian writer is terrified lest he be seen to interpret it as race hatred, as national or religious prejudice.[...]

We are accustomed to look at matters in a more natural manner. [...]. They came into our country not as friends, nor as men seeking their daily bread, but as enemies; as a foreign race they declared war upon us, to the death, using instead of knives and pistols, drink falsified with poison. [original emphasis].54

It is clear, then, that Eminescu’s writings did much to validate the use of the argument from race when discussing the Jewish question, and that he was keen to adapt relatively new European scientific writings in this direction. If one is to distinguish between race as a generalized concept within 19th-century...

52 Oldson, A Providential Anti-Semitism, p. 163; p. 121.
53 Eric Hobsbawm locates the 1880s and 1890s as the key period in which "scientific" groundwork of racism gained ground: see his Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Cambridge 1990, p. 107-109.
anthropology, and racism as a later, pseudo-scientific legitimation of segregation and antipathy, one could say that Eminescu took the former as his starting point, but led the argument a long way towards the latter position.

Eminescu's anti-foreigner rhetoric emphatically does attain violent pathological degrees when it comes to Greek liberals. He developed what he called "the theory of the superimposed layer" to attack "these parvenus who, through their similarity in religion, managed to intermingle with Romanians, to deceive them and become their masters: and, for their plan to succeed better, they bought up all our national instincts."^55 He came to blame them, and only them, for the foreign domination of Romania, for the perceived "false forms of culture" that he had previously accused French-educated Romanians of instituting, and for the conditions of the Romanian peasant:

the reins of true mastery have escaped from the hand of the autochthonous element and fallen into foreign hands... our own people, exploited wickedly, impoverished, diminishing numerically and without a clear consciousness of what should be done.. We have, then, a layer superimposed upon this people, a kind of sediment of pick-pockets and coquettes, risen from the admixture of oriental and occidental scum, incapable of truth and patriotism.^56

Eminescu goes on to apply "scientific" ethnological theories of race:

Comparative cranioscopic studies would be of use, and the youth of the medical faculty would do some good, comparing the cubic capacity of a true, daco-romanic skull with the confines of those sunken hollows in which resides the intellectual sterility of the red party.^57

"Everything must be Dacianized from now on", he insists, and ends on an apocalyptic note: "for the presently dominant generation (i.e. the liberal "foreigners"), the genius of the Romanian people is a book bearing seven seals."^58

What to conclude after this? Eminescu's outburst is all the more peculiar considering that there is virtually no evidence of an influx of Greeks into Romania at this stage of its history: the community was, rather, on the decline. One could explain it in terms of the immediate political circumstances, as a way of returning journalistic fire against the liberals who, being essentially Bucharest-based and

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54 *Timpul*, 1 Nov 1881 in *Opere*, XII, p. 389.
56 Ibid., p. 353-354.
57 *Timpul*, 6 Aug 1881; *SP*, p. 358.
58 *Timpul*, 29 Jul 1881; *SP*, p. 352, 356.

211
lacking support in Moldavia, had adopted a vigorously antisemitic line to attract
support there. In exchange to this insult to his native Moldavia, Eminescu tried to
paint the southern province of the Romanian kingdom as awash with its own
foreign element, the Greeks. The Liberals had successfully attacked the Junimist
politician Petre Carp for his philosemitism, and Eminescu was trying to attack the
"Red party", as he called it, by associating them in the same way with a foreign
element.59

At least part of the explanation lies in a symptomatic exasperation with the
entire mechanisms of constitutional government, which, after five years of
supporting the out-of-office Conservatives, had reached breaking point. While a
fixed philosophical vision gave great force to his lyric creations, it could be said
to have soured his political outlook irremediably. The world of political action
was merely phenomenal; it had no metaphysical basis and could be rejected at
will. This led him to the paradoxical position of denying the reality of Romania’s
hard-won independence. Eminescu frequently attacked sovereignty together with
liberty, equality and fraternity: the failure of the newly-created national state to
conform to his organic vision of what it should be led him, in heated moments like
these, to reject the Romanian state absolutely.60

A related factor was the contradiction contained in Eminescu’s
conceptualization of the peasant, presented as the carrier of the undying Romanian
essence. Metaphysically the peasant was (and often still is) seen as some kind of
symbol of transcendent wisdom, the thing in itself, the id; this belief was held not
because the peasant was (like outer space), unknowable, or because (like God) he
knew everything; but because nobody did happen to want to know about him, and
nobody would give him anything much to know. As Eugen Weber put it, “the
reality was different from the lore. Giving the peasant his due in literature seemed
to absolve the cultivated ruling classes from giving him his chance in fact.”61
Moreover, Eminescu’s strong sense of history - of past offences against the
Romanian nation living on in the present - required him to defend the peasant not

60 e.g. “Icoane vechi și icoane nouă, II: Paralele economice” Timpul, 13 Dec 1877; “See what a
wretched state we have reached as a result of sovereignty, liberty, fraternity, equality and the rest!”
SP, p. 182.
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

just against real threats but the injustices of the last century that the Phanariot Greeks had allegedly perpetrated against the autochthonous population. This anti-Phanariotism had been a staple of the 1848 generation, and showed itself to be a remarkably deep-seated element of Romania’s historical mentality. Eminescu never reconciled the contradictions of a high authoritarian politics with an often deeply felt identification with the class who suffered most in 19th century Romania.

A final point worth bringing in is that Eminescu’s sense of threat to his ethnic nation, and the perceived absence of any political mechanism to defend himself, makes him argue as though he were part of a minority himself, whereas in fact he belonged to an ethnic group forming a 90 percent majority in his particular state. George Schöpflin’s comments in an article on the East European situation over 100 years later are remarkably relevant:

This history of having been deprived of power has contributed to majority national behaviour under post-communism, in that majorities behave as if they were in mortal danger of extinction...Where a community has lived with the sense of threat, it will go on looking for external dangers, whether they exist or not: indeed, they will create them and sometimes end up victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy, that the feared threat actually becomes a real one.

The difference between the 19th situation and the contemporary one described by Schöpflin is that the party in power in Eminescu’s time was as vigorous and xenophobic, as ethnically nationalist, as Eminescu himself; unlike the Marxist governments of post-1945 Eastern Europe, the “red” (Liberal) party of the Romanian 1870s and 1880s did not ostensibly suppress the national ideal. But the outcome, “a set of public identities marked by deep fissures and contradictions”, was essentially the same.

Perhaps the most enduring Romanian symbol of the kind of nationalism Eminescu advocated, is his own life. Titu Maiorescu’s mythologization of him in a posthumous edition of his poems makes Eminescu sound like his own view of the Romanian nation:

61 Weber, op. cit., p. 503.
His ostensible life-story is easily told, and we don't believe that in its entire course any external incident would have had a very significant influence on him. What Eminescu was, and what he became, is a result of his inborn genius... His pessimism was not the limited complaints of an egoist unsatisfied with his own fate, rather it was etherealized under the calmer from of a melancholy for the fate of mankind in general.  

Eminescu's own dramatization of himself as a poet can be seen in his account of the symbolic meaning, as he saw it, of "The Evening Star", his greatest poetic achievement: "The allegorical meaning I gave [The Evening Star] is that, although genius knows no death, and its name escapes from simple forgetting, on the other hand, on earth he can neither make anybody happy, nor be happy himself. He is immortal but lacks good fortune."  

Part of the Romanians' image of their national poet and symbol consists in a reading of Eminescu as some kind of Goethe-like polymath:

Friendless in his lifetime and made fun of, Eminescu becomes after his death, through an equally violent exaggeration of [his] cult, the prototype of all the human characteristics and virtues.

History? Eminescu.

Political Economy? Eminescu.

Pedagogy? Eminescu....

Eminescu too has become, in the absence of a true criticism, the beginning and end of each and every disciple, the supreme authority, the "all-knowing one".  

This sense of Eminescu as somehow prototypical, a poetic incarnation of the indestructible will of his people, derives at least partly from his own work. Even if it is not the only possible interpretation, it cannot easily be dismissed as a wilful manipulation of his legacy to promote whatever national ideology happens to suit the moment. Moreover, I would suggest that it is this very process of metaphysical systematizing - involving aspects of reincarnation; an attempt at "timeless" rather than developmental interpretations of historical forms; together

65 Călinescu, op. cit., I, p. 263.
66 Ibid., p. 335. Elsewhere Călinescu spoke out against exaggerated symbolic readings of his life: see Mihai Eminescu: Studii şi articole. Iaşi, 1978, p. 106-117. But as Ioana Pârvulescu has recently shown, neither he nor other critics have successfully evaded the temptation to interpret Eminescu in terms of his own symbolic system. "«Luceafărul poeziei româneşti»." RL, XXXI, 1,
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

with a reading of traditional fatalism in terms of sacrifice and rebirth - that constitute the essence of Eminescu’s contribution to ideological forms of nationalism in Romania.

The “content” of his work, as opposed to the “form”, is not something whose importance I would wish to disparage, still less explain away (that goes for the great beauty of his poetry as well as his antisemitism): but I would argue that most of the subjects he dealt with were on the political and literary agenda prior to his arrival on the scene. The image of the peasant as “the only positive class” and the carrier of the material and spiritual burden of the nation, comes to Eminescu’s work from Maiorescu. Anti-semitism was not Eminescu’s private property but something he shared with Ion Brătianu, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Kogălniceanu, Ion Heliade Rădulescu and most other literary and political figures of his time. Authoritarian anti-liberal sentiment is as old as the hills, while its revival and articulation in the late nineteenth century coincided with Eminescu’s entry into public life owes something to him, it should be stressed that he was the servant of this movement rather than its master. But the establishment of the image of Eminescu as a poetic emanation of the profound will of the Romanian people was irresistible, especially to a generation whose infatuation with the significance of literature was such that a liberal spirit could declare, typically, that literature was “the only form of life in which we have produced something by ourselves.”

It became natural, then, to interpret Eminescu’s writings in terms of his own poetic mythology, and the same aura was more or less critically extended to all his writings, which could become a kind of “true gospel of Romanian nationalism”.

Some might argue that, since Schopenhauer’s thought had been known in Junimea circles prior to Eminescu’s interpretation of it, then this aspect of his work was not original either. Maiorescu himself seems to have been aware of Schopenhauer at least since 1861, and other Junimists, Vasile Pogor for instance, got to know the philosopher’s writings well. But nobody except Eminescu among the Junimea group seems to have grasped the potentiality of the mystical,

67 Xenopol, op. cit., p. 182.
Mihai Eminescu: Metaphysical Nationalist

palingenetic nature of the indestructibility of the will. Pogor’s own memoirs describe the consternation which the introduction of these ideas caused when Eminescu read his story Poor Dionis to Junimea in 1872. Nobody then could have imagined that the story of a poor peasant boy in a fleece hat who imagines himself reincarnated in the court of a Moldavian prince, could possibly become a prototypical Romanian story: but then they were not to know of another peasant boy in a fleece cap who would imagine himself as “the practical reincarnation of all ancestral bravery and wisdom from the Dacian kings onwards to Romania’s feudal princes and the more recent fighters for national independence”\(^{70}\), and who happened to be the leader of their country.

Eminescu’s nationalism, then, was conservative, authoritarian, ethnically motivated, and based, as one astute critic has recently pointed out, on “the awareness of the irreversibility of the break with ‘the fundamental class’ (Iorga), which constantly nourished a mauvaise conscience patriotism from which they attempted to escape by inventing a theory of returning in illo tempore.”\(^{71}\) In many respects this was quite typical of many European nationalisms of the period in which Eminescu was writing. The unique appeal of his interpretation of Schopenhauer, however, and the very artistry of the poems in which these ideas took form, has ensured that Eminescu has become one of the most deeply-embedded lodestones of Romanian nationalist ideology. That his oeuvre still occupies the central position in the Romanian literary canon, means that he will remain a focal reference point for both advocates and critics of Romanian nationalism.

\(^{68}\) Or so the 1941 editor of Eminescu’s political writings, Ion Crețu, described them (Oldson, op. cit.).

\(^{69}\) On the introduction of Schopenhauer’s thought into Romania, Ornea, Junimea și junimismul, p. 158ff. Pogor’s account of this reading is reprinted in Eminescu, Proza literară. București 1964, p. 337-340.

\(^{70}\) Gallagher, Romania After Ceausescu, p. 58.

In a lecture delivered in Paris in 1948, Mircea Eliade offered a theory of national literary traditions whereby each nation’s literature is defined in terms of two polar opposites: “Any genuine culture is polar; that is, it appears in antonymic and complementary spiritual traditions.” Thus, a national literature depends not on a monolithic linear inherited canon, but on a play between two opposites within it: Dionysus and Apollo in Greek culture, Dante and Petrarch in Italy, Rabelais or Montaigne versus Pascal in France, Meister Eckhardt or Goethe as against Wagner or Nietzsche in Germany, and so on.¹

For Romanian literature, Eliade acknowledges Eminescu’s uniqueness, but cautions that “his work cannot represent the Romanian spiritual phenomenon in its entirety. Alongside Eminescu, we have to mention Caragiale.”² Very broadly speaking, the “Eminescians” embody conservatism, a romantic view of history, an emphasis on rural indigenous traditions, emphatic lyricism in their attitude towards nature, women and love. “Caragialians”, on the other hand, stand for a critical cosmopolitanism, an inferiority complex versus the Western society, an ironic view of Nature, the ridiculing of patriarchal customs, and so forth.

This is interesting not only in the way it relativizes the idea of striving to create a unified national canon of literature - an ongoing enterprise today even in the developed Western nations - but also because it is a useful, and as far as I am aware, largely unnoticed, starting point for a discussion of the role of language in the development of nationalism. Most theorists either point to the importance of a unified national literature if they want to argue in favour of linguistic nationalism; or will describe a state of polyglot chaos artificially unified by non-linguistic factors, often political and economic. Examples of the former abound, particularly among literary critics and writers who see themselves as working for the nation’s

² Ibid.
good by dint of the fact that they "guard" or protect its language. The latter position might be illustrated by the ‘instrumentalist’ approaches of theorists like John Breuilly or Eric Hobsbawm, who argue that planned language construction is merely an instrument of power politicians who have their own, and not their people’s interests, at heart: “How else, except by state power, could Romanian nationalism insist in 1863 on its Latin origins... by writing and printing the language in Roman letters instead of the hitherto usual Cyrillic?”

Both schools make the mistake of assuming that the invention of a literary tradition either succeeds or fails, that there is no halfway stage; and that linguistic nationalism is only in evidence where there is an attempt to construct a pure, monoglot language and literature. An exception is Hobsbawm’s suggestion that

Alternatively, the heritage of sections, regions and localities of what had become ‘the nation’ could be combined into an all national heritage, so that even ancient conflicts came to symbolise their reconciliation and higher, more comprehensive plane. Walter Scott thus built a single Scotland on the territory soaked in the blood of warring Highlanders and Lowlanders, Kings and Covenanters, and he did so by emphasising their ancient traditions.

Which is all very well except that - as Hobsbawm points out elsewhere, but not here - Scott failed to unify the Scottish nation either politically or culturally. Hobsbawm might have been nearer the mark had he posited a model of Scottish literary culture had he introduced, say, Robert Burns, as a vernacular nativist opposite pole to Scott’s national epic; or, if that sounds too much like socialist realism (the view of Scott as an unhealthy bourgeois and Burns as a proletarian prophet coloured Soviet images of Scottish literature for a long time), one could propose the “quadrilateral” description of Scottish culture as put forward by Alistair Gray. Perhaps theorists of nationalism, in attempting to treat the subject on a world-wide scale, don’t have time to treat the problematics of national identity within a language, and concentrate only on the validity or otherwise on the debating positions of those engaged in conflict between languages.

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4 Ibid., p. 90.
To return to the Romanian instance: in the period leading up to and immediately after the creation of an independent state in 1877, the Romanian language was still far from codified. Not only were there many grammatical and orthographic irregularities, but also arguments continued as to the degree of Latinity which Romanian did or ought to contain. Dictionaries and etymological works published in the period show the tortuous and difficult nature of this process: I. Massim and A.T. Laurian’s *Glosariu Roman* published in Bucharest in 1871 goes as far as placing words of non-Latin origin in a separate, appended volume from the main body of his dictionary. The traditional wisdom (and the best-known to students of nationalism) justified Romanian social and psychological unity by the fact that, as Eminescu put it:

There is perhaps no other nation numbering twelve million people whose constituent parts are as little differentiated as the Romanian one. The language is possibly unique in knowing hardly any dialects; popular customs are the same.

Yet claims of this sort do not represent the only tendency of the period. Attempts to prove a Latin origin for the language not only differentiated Romanian from her Slavic and Hungarian neighbours, but provided a cultural link with the West. This link, however, created problems of its own: with the dominance of French as a secondary language of education, arguments arose within the Latinists as to what extent words could be borrowed from French, which was a Latin language but, problematically, a foreign one. Thus it can be seen even from a brief and incomplete summary that the difficulties for Romanian literary nationalists did not end simply with the issuing of an edict changing the alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin.

The contribution of the playwright and storyteller Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) to the political linguistic debate was, in explicit terms, short; but he represents the opposite pole from Eminescu in that he praised the Romanian language not only for its unity but for its variety:

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7 Cited by Grațian Jucan, ‘Mihai Eminescu despre geniul poporului român’, *Transilvania*, n.s., XXIV (C), 3-4, 1994, p. 23. It should be noted, however, that Eminescu did not advocate a Latinist linguistic purism. He may harp on about the Romanian language’s superiority and the solidarity of its dialects, but he would have opposed “scientific” attempts at cleansing it of its vernacular elements. French and Greek neologisms upset him more than anything.
The Romanians today are a people of over ten million souls in all, with one and the same language, which (boasting aside) is extraordinarily beautiful... a possession all the more original for being a medley of ancient inheritances and acquisitions - Greek, Slavonic, Oriental and other - all stamped with its undeniable seal of nobility, a Romance, Latin seal, which proves it their true and indisputable owner.*

This represents an unusual appreciation of the heterogeneity and complexity of a language, in contrast to the prevailing monolingualistic propaganda of the day; yet, as the above quotation shows, Caragiale's argument need not represent either an unpatriotic stance or a sense of inferiority towards Western cultures.

His fiction, too, although it frequently parodies and ridicules linguistic forms, does not simply attack the shortcoming of the Romanian language; just as his satires on minor officialdom and provincial high-lifers, on what Hobsbawm calls 'the lesser examination-passing classes' often draw one's attention to the serious problems of communication, social life and administrative government in the new state rather than indulging in purely negative caricature. "Telegrame" is a short narrative presented exclusively in the form of telegraphic correspondence between a small town lawyer trying to expose a scandal in the local prefecture, and the prime minister and king, who delegate replies via the newly-founded ministries. The lawyer and the other provincial correspondents write in a bastardized Moldavian telegraphese; the Bucharest officials respond in the Frenchified Romanian which was then the high fashion. Two points can be made. Firstly, the political object of the satire can be read not only to be the absurd pettiness of the local scandal itself - corruption, nepotism, absenteeism, drunkenness and sexual infidelity are all targeted - but also the weakness and arbitrariness of the young structure of government, which demands that redress of such wrongs can be dealt with only by petition to the King or Prime Minister. Likewise in the linguistic satire, where both the vernacular of the provincials and the cosmopolitan idiom of the capital are satirized equally: no distinction is drawn between them in point of silliness. Yet because of the dual nature of language in storytelling - because, in Bakhtin's formulation, language is both represented (here, as an object of laughter) and representing (the means by which language is

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Caragiale ridiculed) - Caragiale can demonstrate the vigorous potential of the language at the same time as he mocks the various deformations of it.

Caragiale’s imitation of both regional dialects and official forms of discourse is remarkable for its comprehensively wide range of targets. “Proces Verbal” [Procedural Report] represents the procedural memoranda of police authorities dealing with a housing dispute; “Un pedagog de şcoala nouă” [An educationalist of the new school] targets professors and linguists, and similarly appropriates their discourse; “Five O’clock” mimics the conversations of would-be high society at a Bucharest tea-party (English customs, French language, Romanian petty jealousies); ‘High Life’ tells the story of a provincial journalist who writes glowingly of the prefect’s wife when she appears at a charity ball, but is let down by a typographical error when the article is published, causing his flattery to be debased into insult; ‘Urgent...’ again uses official correspondence to illustrate the failure of a local authority to provide winter fuel in a girl’s school. Regional dialects of Romanian are similarly given full representation: “O Fâclie de Paçte” [An Easter Torch] has a Moldavian setting, while “La Hanul lui Mânjoală” [At Mânjoală’s Inn] uses Muntenian forms to full effect; “Un pedagog de şcoala nouă” parodies Transylvanian philologists, while, as we have seen, the unique linguistic oddities to be found in Bucharest are not left untouched. In this way, Caragiale was able to build up a complete panorama of the multifarious languages, and political modes of discourse, prevailing in newly independent state. To put it more succinctly one could say, paraphrasing Dickens, “He do the Romanians in different voices”.

Curiously, however, although he has of course been recognized by his compatriots as a comic genius and as the founding father of a certain satirical tradition, this is almost never seen explicitly as contributing explicitly to an idea of the Romanian nation. Though the concept of ‘caragialism’ became a familiar trope to describe an absurd Romanian situation, and Caragiale himself is a celebrated figure in literary history, he does not appear in discussion of the Romanian national idea with anything like the frequency of Eminescu or Nicolae Iorga, or other figures at the traditionalist, peasantist pole of Eliade’s dichotomy.

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9 M. Bakhtin, ‘From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse’, in The Dialogic Imagination, tr. &
Indeed, Eliade himself, in the lecture alluded to above, does not even properly
discuss the cosmopolitan element of the Romanian tradition, but merely reduces
his treatment of it to a discussion of the Romanian expatriate community which he
links back to the nomadic pastoral traditions of Romanian shepherds, who need to
“become aware of the mission history asks of them.”

However, one could just as well argue that Caragiale was vital to the
establishment of the Romanian literary language as a tool of nation-builders to the
extent that he recognised and reconciled the diversity of the Romanian language,
and saw the way that heterogeneity can produce uniqueness in a language.
Bakhtin comments on the way that nations can objectivize their linguistic
consciousness only through consciousness of another’s tongue; that the Roman
literary language - the ancient ‘pure’ source that contemporary Romanian scholars
were trying to obtain - achieved its stylised uniqueness only through the pervasive
relationship it maintained with earlier, seemingly definitive Greek forms.10

Similarly, Caragiale’s formal borrowings in the realm of storytelling -
“Hanul lui Mânjoalâ” shows the influence of Poe, while “Curiosul Pedepsit” [The
Curious Man Punished] is a paraphrase of one of Cervantes’ contes, and “Kir
Ianulea” takes its theme and plot from Machiavelli - set up zones in which the
diverse Romanian dialects could ‘interanimate’ each other (to use Bakhtin’s
word), as well as spaces for the indigenous narrative traditions could play out their
differences from, and similarities to, Western models.

In this sense Caragiale set up frameworks and spaces for dialogical debate,
without which the Romanian literary language, and indeed its identity, would not
have matured in the way it did. Walter Benjamin writing of the Russian storyteller
Nikolai Leskov, aphorizes that “The storyteller is the figure in which the righteous
man encounters himself.”11 For Romania, Caragiale was the figure in which the
young national language encountered itself for the first time.

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10 Ibid.
The encounters described in Caragiale’s sketches and tales often remain simply that: incidental contacts, rather than discoveries or revelations. His characters frequently fail to grasp themselves, or find themselves confused or even deranged by the unfamiliarity of their surroundings: far from learning from experience and emerging better, wiser men, these newly enfranchised people seem to discover only that they are unable to comprehend the world they inhabit. In “Cum devine cineva revoluționar și om politic” [How somebody becomes a revolutionary and a politician], the tale is told of a country boy who comes to town to study for the priesthood; sent one evening by his landlord to fetch coal, he becomes en route embroiled in a political demonstration, and is arrested for hurling the said coal at a cordon of mounted policemen. The narrator ends by linking the sacred catechism the boy set out to learn, with the new secular faith he meets with, by accident as if by holy destiny, in an alley behind the National Theatre:

Can one really compare the modest career and humble activity of a poor dear village priest, with the career and activity of a citizen of the capital, who is called once a year, as by clockwork, every spring, to determine the political course of the Romanian kingdom?¹²

The same path of descent from high expectations to the depths of failure is described at greater length and psychological detail in “Două loturi” [Two lottery tickets]. Mr. Lefter Popescu and his wife have lost two winning lottery tickets: Mr. Popescu must pay ten percent of the winnings to an army captain who lent him the money to buy them. He and his wife undergo trials and torments of greed; cause to be harassed an old-clothes woman said to have purloined them; fail to show at work; eventually Mr. Popescu loses his job. On clearing his desk before leaving, he finds the tickets - but the numbers are inverted, each winning in the other lottery. Then, as now, the lotteries are proclaimed in the name of the nation and the advancement of civilization: the beneficiaries are “the Company for founding a Romanian University in Dobrogea, at Constanța” and “the Association for the foundation and endowment of an Astronomical Observatory at Bucharest”. But no such enlightenment dawns upon Popescu (whose Christian name is Eleutheriu, “liberation”, but shortened to Lefter, “penniless”) and his wife. Nor

yet upon the reader. Caragiale first stages a “respectable” ending with Mrs. Popescu taking the holy orders, and her husband wandering the streets of the capital, muttering “vice versa! A word

vague as the vagaries of the vast sea which beneath its unfrowning surface conceals in its mysterious rocky depths innumerable ships, shattered before they could reach harbour, lost for ever!

But...as I am not one of those ["respectable and self-respecting"] authors, I prefer to tell you straight: after the row at the bank I don’t know what happened to my hero and Mrs. Popescu.13

Eric Tappe rightly defends this ending against charges of artistic irrelevancy: “there is a good deal to be said for the gently frivolous conclusion to a story which was otherwise on the point of getting itself taken too seriously.”14 But there is more to it than that. The apparently offhand closing remark masks a disturbing observation about what actually happens to people who are shipwrecked on the rock of lottery greed: they become unknown and forgotten. Just as the Popescus are unable to find true happiness owing to their material lust and sloth; just as Romania will not attain enlightenment through endowing hasty institutions with the income of greed (on the last page we glimpse a Fire Service Observatory, a possible social inferno in place of the proposed astronomical heaven); so Caragiale offers us not even catharsis or expiation as an ending, but unknowingness of a bitterly trivial nature. This obliquity in conclusion is characteristic of many of the best modern short stories: James’s “The Turn of the Screw”; Joyce’s “An Encounter”, Herman Melville’s “Bartleby”: but whereas these last examples invariably invest their endings with a certain cosmic resound, pleading with the universal - “Ah, Bartleby! Ah humanity!” - Caragiale simply shrugs off his ignorance; insouciance as the true horror.

Even when Caragiale does treat more substantially religious types of knowledge, there is no sense of the characters “discovering” themselves or arriving at wisdom. One of his greatest tales, “O șâclie de Paște” (An Easter Torch), gives a highly atmospheric and gruesome rendering of an attack on a traumatized Jewish innkeeper in a marshy Moldavian village. Leiba Zibal has

13 Ibid.
Ion Luca Caragiale

moved from Iași, where he lost his job as a tavernkeeper’s servant because he fainted at the sight of blood, and moved to Podeni. In his turn he also has to lay off his servant, an idle, dishonest worker who threatens him back: “‘Wait for me on Easter eve, mister: we’ll crack our painted eggs... I’ll be closing your account too, let me tell you.’”

Leiba goes at once to tip the ominously cheerful subprefect, who scorns the Jew’s fears but warns him to guard against the wicked poor of the village. Easter night comes around: the mail-coach brings word that the inn-keeper at the post before has been mauled by a hooligan. Two medical students aboard the coach are discussing the incident in the light of the modish scientific theories of the day:

Atavism ... Alcoholism and its pathological consequences ... Congenital vice ... Deformation ... Paludism ... And neurosis! So many conquests of modern science ... And the case of reversion!

Darwin ... Haeckel ... Lombroso ...

At the case of reversion, the coachman’s eyes bulged; and in them shone a profound admiration for the conquests of modern science.

Later that night, Leiba hears his tormentors drilling through his door; in his delirium he ensnares the arm which comes through the hole, fixing it to a post. But horror strikes, to the chime of the Easter Sunday church bells, as he is moved to revenge by cruelly burning, with “an Easter torch”, the murderous arm. A crowd gathers.

“Leiba Zibal,” said the innkeeper in a lofty tone and a broad gesture, “is off to Iași to tell the rabbi that Leiba Zibal is not a Jew ... Leiba is a goy ... For Leiba Zibal has lit a torch for Christ.”

While the ostensible content of this grotesque tale is, as one critic has suggested, “the ingenious cruelty of the man deranged by fear”; its true subject is knowledge and what one does or does not learn from it. The knowledge of Christ’s resurrection revealed in church that night is travestied into the passion suffered by a non-believer, persecuted into awareness but unlikely to survive his

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16 Ibid., p. 60.
17 Ibid., p. 68.
18 Ibid., editor’s introduction, p. xxii.
"conversion". Leiba’s own recourse is to the letter of the law, as he pays protection to the subprefect; but the law offers him no redemption for his tribute, merely biding him be silent, "lest he awaken a desire to transgress in bad and poor men." Let down by his usual observance - he lives by the maxim "he who pays well is well guarded" - Leiba is overtaken by his irrational imaginings, until he is transformed at the end into "a scientist who seeks by mixing elements to catch one of nature’s subtle secrets, which has long eluded him." The medical students, blinded by the light of modernist scholarship and theories of racial stereotypes, are oblivious to the bloody violence of the attack they have witnessed. Yet none of these systems of belief can halt the onset of yet another sacrifice in the night of traditional religious festival. Caragiale may have gone some way to unifying the Romanian language; but he can only describe, not reconcile, differences in belief. All we are left with at the tale’s end is a morsel of old advice:

And the man set off slowly eastwards, up the hill, like a sensible traveller, who knows that on a long journey one does not set out at a hurried pace.  

Reflected in the closing proverb is a further remarkable aspect of this tale, also found in much of Caragiale’s work, namely the great attention paid to the effects of travel on perceptions of time, and on the spread of information. Many of the types of knowledge that are juxtaposed in "O făclie de Paște" - and the news of the savagery in the neighbouring village - come to Podeni by mail coach. Leiba himself marks time by its arrival and departure: he is in fact obsessed by it, and treats it almost religiously - he wife’s remark "Leiba, here comes the diligence; I can hear the bells" sets it against the bells of the church, which the rest of the villagers obey. In Leiba’s obsession with transport-time, one is reminded of the Lilliputians attempting to ascertain the purpose of their captive Gulliver’s pocket-watch:

And we conjecture that it is either some unknown Animal, or the God that he worships: But we are more inclined to the latter Opinion, because he assured us ... that he seldom did any Thing without consulting it. He called it his Oracle, and said it pointed out the Time for every Action of his Life.  

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19 Ibid., p. 68.
20 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*. London, 1726. Book One, Ch. 4
At another point, Leiba sees that Podeni is a bad place for an inn, "since the building of the railway, which makes a wide detour of the marshes." He yearns for the railway which would bring trade; in others of Caragiale's tales, such as "C.F.R." [Romanian Railways] and "Accelerat nr. 17" [Fast Train no. 17], trains form the setting for tales of danger and attack, and themes of mistaken identity. They also bring about disturbing changes to one's perception of time and space: in the latter story, two men enter a compartment and sit out "two-three kilometres in silence". Time is described by a unit of linear distance, while conversation stops. Here, as throughout Caragiale's *œuvre*, we get a sense of something strange and distorting about railways: here one has to bear in mind not only their effect on time-space perception, but also the fact that, in the Romania of the 1870s and 1880s, they operated as a kind of symbol for foreign domination of commerce, as well as for fear of invasion. Elsewhere the modern invention is represented as a kind of debased national religion: in "O zi solemnă" (a solemn day) the mayor of a provincial town becomes obsessed with getting his town's name, in red letters like a saint's day, on the timetable plate of the Bucharest-Berlin express. Railways and mail-coaches bring connections, news and trade, and in "O facie de Paște", unspeakable fears: they will not, however, bring redemption. To achieve that, Leiba Zibal has to set out on foot at the end of the tale.

The fleeting, apparently repetitive nature of Caragiale's work might be summed up by this image of mechanized movement. He himself was criticized for excessive foreshortening, foreignness and dependence on stereotype. To G. Călinescu, Romania's foremost literary historian, he was "a Thracian who does not represent us totally; he only exaggerates one of our meridional notes." But he knew what he was doing with his types; they are utterly unlike the "reversion to type" of the racial theorists. Lying behind the many repetitions and reappearances of stock characters, there is always an acknowledgement of their provisionality, their irreconciliability, and, supremely in "O facie de Paște", of their dangerous consequences. Titu Maiorescu quite missed the point when he asserted that Leiba

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Zibal is the archetype of the Jew. It is the tale itself which is the type; and its genius lies in its ability, as Benjamin also wrote, “to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger”. It is hard to say whether Caragiale realised whether, in the figure of the Jew, he was grasping one of the key tragic subjects of the century to come; but the unhappy failure to understand what such an encounter meant in the modern world, the impossibility of gleaning any wisdom from it, is only true to the internal logic of this most luminous Romanian tale. He may have reconciled the Romanian language, but he could not do the same for Gentile and Jew, peasant and cosmopolite: his work is the portrayal of those misunderstandings and the measure of those distances between men.

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23 T. Maiorescu, “Contraziceri? Mic studiu de strategie literară” [1892] in Critice București, 1967, II, p. 309. Maiorescu probably made this comment as a cheap shot against his rival and Caragiale’s friend, the Jewish social theorist and literary critic Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, to whose criticisms this article was a response, and whom Maiorescu and his circle nicknamed “Leiba”.

In discussions about intellectual life under the Ceaușescu regime in Romania, theorists have had to look for reasons why writers were not able or willing to form a serious opposition movement that postulated independent artistic values as a threat to the all-pervasive state ideology. While acknowledging that the repression of artistic freedom of action was considerably more brutal in Romania even than in the rest of the Soviet bloc, analysts often look to the historical relation between intellectuals and the state for an explanation. Michael Shafir, for instance, argues that the Romanian intellectual's traditional dependence on the state for his living, and the custom of subordinating personal views to those of the political leadership, “contributes heavily towards conformism”.

A further factor given by several analysts is the successful manipulation by the state of intellectuals' feelings towards the nation. “More than to any other factor, however, the quiescent attitude displayed by the Romanian creative intelligentsia is to be attributed to the nationalist line adopted by the party leadership in the early 1960s. Intellectuals were now allowed to give vent to hitherto suppressed nationalistic feelings... thereby channelling possible dissent and demands for reform from the domestic to the external sphere... It was a cunning argument, since a considerable part of the creative intelligentsia rates national interest above any other, its self-perception remaining primarily that of ‘defender of the nation’”. Katherine Verdery, meanwhile, draws parallels with earlier periods in Romanian history, particularly the inter-war period: “In both that period and the Ceaușescu era, all worked together to produce the nation.[...] This meant that, regardless of who said what, all groups were responsible for recreating the Nation - a nation divided between mental and manual, with internal group diversity something to be wished away rather than encouraged.” While both Shafir and Verdery see the intellectuals' response as resulting more from the abuse and a manipulation of the national discourse than as a direct product of it,

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there is a tacit assumption that had a more autonomous intellectual culture existed in Romania prior to communism, a stronger resistance would have been possible.

It is therefore worth asking the question: what attempts were made by Romanian intellectuals, in the early stages of the country’s independence, to create a literature which would not depend on patriotic criteria? Were such attempts doomed to failure? In this chapter I look at the ways in which Romanian critics in the late nineteenth century attempted to answer these questions. My discussion focuses on two major figures, Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917) and Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea (1855-1920) who in different ways tried to propose a framework for the production and evaluation of literature with reference to values other than “national” characteristics. I take as my starting-point the arguments about literature and nation in the 1860s and 1870s: the period in which the independent Romanian state came into being requires particular examination, if we are to answer the question of how artistic production relates to national ideology and to state power.

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Almost from the beginning Romanian nationalists leaned heavily on Western aesthetic ideas when constructing their nation; the thinkers who introduced and disseminated ideas of the nation, were often the same people as those who have a knowledge of modern aesthetics. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the earliest work in Romanian that bears the name Aesthetics was composed by a liberal nationalist politician, Simion Bărnuțiu (1808-1863). Bărnuțiu had been a key figure in rallying the Romanian population in Transylvania, and was familiar with Kant’s work through the interpretations of W.T. Krug, Kant’s successor in the chair of philosophy at Königsberg. He interpreted the Kantian metaphysic in progressive, nationalist terms, and his

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3 Simion Bărnuțiu Estetica [course delivered at Iași, 1858-1863]. București, 1972.
writings endorsed the typical nationalist solecism of allowing the moral freedom of the individual to apply to the collective identity of his people.\(^5\) His vision of liberty was closely tied to the idea of a "national personality":

> the true liberty of any people cannot be but national [...] A nation's liberty is as closely tied to its personality, as that of normal persons, if not more so; the liberty of the nation itself bears the image of the nation, as personal liberty bears the image of the personality of the man.\(^6\)

He saw this idea of national character as being based primarily on language; and the right to use one's native language was a fundamental political right - Bårnuțiu was more insistent on this point than were the rest of his Transylvanian colleagues.\(^7\) Having escaped to Iași after playing a leading role in the Transylvanian national uprising of 1848, he taught logic at the local lyceum from 1855, subsequently becoming professor of letters and law at the University until shortly before his death in 1864.\(^8\)

Bårnuțiu's concept of the beautiful also comprised the concept of liberty: in his *Estetica*, art is distinguished from mere craft or instinct as being "beautiful, free, ingenious and good (*pulchra, liberalis, ingenua, bona*)" as opposed to "laborious, illiberal, secular and mercenary (*operariae, illiberales, seculariae, mercenariae*)".\(^9\) Nevertheless, his outlook shows distinctly collectivist traits: his aesthetics is not the individualist concern for private pleasure but something which is to be used to benefit the entire community. Nor does he see artistic endeavour as being opposed to the state: "because culture is the toughest power on earth, and is a new citadel of national unity, the entire nation must pool its powers for the raising of this seat, and to make culture a common concern, that all may rejoice in its fruits, as in a common good."\(^10\) Culture, for Bårnuțiu is not dissociated or autonomous from political purpose, as it is for Kant: on the contrary, it is central to defining the political state, and operates not as a safeguard

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\(^6\) Idem, "Frați Români - discurs rostit la 2/14 mai în catedrala Blajului" [1848], in Bodea, *1848 la români*, I, p. 446.


\(^10\) Idem, "Frați Români", p. 463.
against power but as a tool to obtain it. In matters of language and law, his ideal model was irredeemably Latinist.

After his death in 1863, Băruțiu’s ideas, at once philological and political, were taken up by liberal groupings in Iași. Led by Nicolae Ionescu, they formed the so-called “Free and Independent Fraction” of the Liberal Party, pursued anti-Semitic selection policies within the University, and were wooed by the Bucharest Liberal party, which lacked support in Moldavia. Ionescu and his supporters also followed Băruțiu in rejecting the election of a foreign prince, and for a time opposed the very Union of the Principalities which had been the key step taken in 1859 towards the formation of the Romanian state.\footnote{Z. Ornea, \textit{Junimea și junimismul} 2\textsuperscript{nd} edn. București, 1978, p. 253-259; N. Grigoraș, “Activitatea lui Simeon Băruțiu la Iași (1855-1864).” \textit{Steaua}, XVII, 8, august 1966, p. 82-90.}

This was the situation which Titu Maiorescu and his colleagues in the \textit{Junimea} cultural society were faced with in Iași, at the time of their formation in 1864. Most of the group’s founding members came from aristocratic families, but Maiorescu was an exception. His father, Ioan Maiorescu, was a peasant’s son and had risen to political prominence during the 1848 uprising, representing Romanian interests at the Frankfurt parliament. Maiorescu himself was educated abroad from the age of 11: first in Vienna, then in Berlin and Paris: not from private means, but from bursaries awarded by the Ramonțai fund of the Metropolitanate of Blaj and from the then ruler of Wallachia, Barbu Știrbei.\footnote{Z. Ornea, \textit{Viața lui T. Maiorescu}, București, 1986, I, p. 41-42, 64-66.} It seems not unreasonable to characterize Maiorescu, a man with a Western education, but without land or private wealth, as the first truly bourgeois Romanian intellectual. However, he clearly resented being dependent on the public institutions for his education and living: he paid back the cost of his education to the Uniate church when an old man in 1910, and throughout his life made a living as a barrister to avoid the accusation of sponging from the state - although in fact he often acted as advocate for the state. This strategy led to other accusations of conflicting interests and neglect of public duty, from his many political rivals.\footnote{Ornea, \textit{Junimea}, p. 282-283.}
The *Junimea* group, of which Maiorescu was the clear intellectual leader, disseminated their views through three principal channels: public lectures; the literary magazine *Convorbiri literare*; and the publication of books of Romanian poetry and historical documents. *Junimea* had an ostensibly anti-political agenda: the aims were literary and didactic, lectures and articles treated subjects like Shakespeare, Darwin, German history, "phrenology and physiognomy", "Elements of education". Although such themes could obviously have (and were given) political interpretations, the basis of the claim to autonomy lay not so much in the content as in the new style in which culture was manifested, and the way in which it was supposed to relate to society. An early prospectus of 1863 sees Maiorescu particularly concerned to address questions of family and private life, and dissociating literature from politics:

If Iaşi is no longer the centre of administration, then it should become the centre for some other activity, the centre of a literary and scientific movement. Public courses are also a small part of such a movement. However, for them to have an effect in society, they should be sustained amongst women, the true social element of modern times.15

Obviously the attempt to use culture for certain specific ends has not disappeared; culture’s concern, however, has moved from the affairs of state to those of society, and from the public to the private sphere.

Maiorescu’s attacks on Băruţiu and his followers criticise the identification of ‘culture’ with ‘nation’, and attempt to promote not just a national culture, but a learned one:

"Nationality”, if this word is to have a merit and a value, cannot be used as a pretext for hiding barbarity and idleness, and our future aim is not merely to preserve our language and blood and brute territory, without any nobler aspiration. Even the wild Indians of America have reached this stage, but for the same reason the American Indians constitute a horde, not a nation. Language and blood and territory are precious elements as a means to a higher end, and this end can be none other than the progress of human civilization by means of tolerance and learning, through material comfort and a morality fitting to a people’s grade of culture.16

A very conscious attempt was being made to separate cultural from purely national concerns. Of course, the need to define the latter, and distinguish between civilized “nations” and barbarian “hordes” has not disappeared; but ethnicity is

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defined as a means, rather than an end and the uncritically “Romanianist” perspective is questioned.

The principal target of Maiorescu’s critique was Bărnuțiu’s adulation of all things Latin: not only in the postulation of Roman law as a model for the new state, but in philological matters, particularly with regard to the transcription of the Romanian language in the Latin alphabet (it had been changed from Cyrillic in 1860). Maiorescu ridiculed the etymological Latinist approach of the Transylvanian school and resigned from the recently-founded Romanian Academy in 1869 when he saw the Transylvanian element had gained predominance in this institution. He argued that these neo-latinisms were “unwieldy and anti-Romanian”, and proposed the language of the ordinary people as the correct model for linguists to follow:

What are we to do with these slavisms which have taken root in the language of the Romanian people? [...] To throw them all out and to replace them with other words by academic decree is impossible; they are too many and too closely tied to the peasant’s daily life. How can the peasant change the brazdă (furrow) on his pamînt (land), the bujor (paony) in his garden, the ciocan (hammer) on his nail, the castravete (cucumber) on his table, the clește (tongs) on his vatră (hearth) and the Crăciun (Christmas) on his calendar?

Maiorescu’s linguistics, although based on a belief in progress and civilization, has recourse to the practice of the peasantry, whom he defends a couple of pages later against the enthusiasms of the revolutionary nationalists, whose “declarations of libertate [liberty, Latin word] failed to extract the people from their robie [serfdom, Slavonic]”.

This was in fact the background of the famous “forms without essence” slogan with which he had attacked his liberal opponents so forcefully in 1868, in “În contra direcției de astăzi în cultura română” [“Against today’s direction in Romanian culture”]. It is often forgotten that Maiorescu’s attack on superficial forms was centred around philological arguments, rather than on a defence of the national essence; and that the peasant was not invoked merely against corrupting Western institutions, but against purist historicist nationalists who wished to indulge in what he considered an unwholesome piece of social engineering. Admittedly, Maiorescu did not disbelieve the widespread Herderian notion that

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different cultures have and require different arts and laws and customs: indeed, we see him writing in 1865 to his brother-in-law that "it is my conviction, that every people is a limited individual entity; it should have its own laws, its own art, its own literature, its own politics, just as it has its own language". Yet he rejected Herder’s idea that peoples are formed by climates, and intended to develop Herder’s theories to combat "absolute political maxims". That Maiorescu was not unilaterally anti-Western is evident in the "In contra" articles: the "truth" that he proposed should replace the "untruth" of the Latinists was a foreign, European one:

If the foreigners today know and recognize that we are from the Latin vine, the merit is not ours, but that of the philologists Dietz, Raynouard, Fuchs, Miclosich, Max Müller and others, who, not with pretentious illusions, but with solid laws of science have proven the essential Latinity of the Romanian language.

In his early career he was frequently attacked as a cosmopolite, and had this to say in response:

If we recall that it is a question here of science and nothing but science, it is permissible to ask these gentlemen [the Romanian Academy], whether they do not somehow believe that science is exclusively national? that there exists a Romanianist version of truth? [...] However much you refuse it: the truth is, and remains cosmopolitan: science - and in this respect art too - develops in view of, and for the good of the whole world, and does not grow protected by the obsequiousness of local ignorance [...] What is bad for us is bad for other people too, and only those Romanian writings which would be beautiful and just for every nation, can be beautiful and just.

Art and learning, then, were for Maiorescu to be judged against European norms: national character does not represent for him, at least at this stage, the principal criterion determining aesthetic judgement. In fact the reverse could be said to be true: only the impartial application of aesthetic principles will allow the national character to flourish. His promotion of truth and civilization remains a patriotic act, to be sure - "If this is your Romanianism, and no other, then it has become a national duty to combat it" - but it is not based on historicist ethnic notions, nor is it absolutist in its implications.

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20 "în contra directiei de astăzi în cultura română" [1868] in *Critice*, I, p. 150.
22 Ibid.
A second point worth making is that, in a country where the determination and fixing of grammatical and other linguistic norms take place coterminously with the creation of the state, and indeed are occasioned by the perceived need for a new national identity; it is not surprising that political groupings will form around apparently innocent and apolitical questions of grammar and orthography. As Gellner aptly notes, "In the marriage between culture and polity which is required by nationalism, both partners had to be brought into existence before they could be joined unto each other. This made the task of the nationalists correspondingly more arduous and hence, often more brutal."23 The creation of orthographic and semantic norms, like deciding which side of the road to drive on, could be seen as an area of culture which is almost never democratic in that its application effectively requires a unilaterally decreed set of rules for it to work: Maiorescu's arguments for the application of popular norms and against the institution of Latinist models was highly effective in the long run, even if it did earn him the strange tag of "cosmopolite".24 He may not exactly have been responsible for reducing the ideological heat emanating from such apparently formalistic problems - in fact he increased it if anything; yet his solution to them was in fact more liberal than he is often given credit for. Moreover, his political partisanship did not affect his opinion regarding the teaching of Latin in Romanian schools, which he favoured, although he gave philosophical rather than patriotic reasons for it, of the "it helps order the mind" variety.25

Nevertheless, he and his Junimea colleagues' claim to political neutrality was, to say the least, tendentious. At the time of the dethronement of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in February 1866, the Junimists Vasile Pogor and Petre Carp occupied the posts of prefect of Iaşi and private secretary to the locotenenta domneasca, the interim government that functioned prior to the installation of Carol of Hohenzollern as Prince. At this time, the "free and independent fraction"

23 Gellner, Encounters with Nationalism, p. 30.
24 Maiorescu himself seems to have relished this point: "Majorities", he once wrote, "are a factor of the greatest significance in politics, being a sure thermometer for showing how far certain ideas have entered and taken root in a society, and thus at what stage practical laws can be formulated from them. But when it is a question of an undertaking in the ideal sphere, be it a work of art, a scientific theory, or merely a critical work, majorities mean nothing, since such works have always been initially accepted by a minority." In "Observâri polemice" [1869], Critice, I, p. 141.
mentioned earlier, consisting of various followers of Bărnuțiu, were briefly involved in a separatist attempt at a coup d'état, led by the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Calinic Miclescu. At Pogor's instigation, Maiorescu set about editing a political journal, *Vocea Națională* ["The National Voice"], which naturally condemned the separatists and ran for eight issues until order was restored. For Maiorescu to remain neutral in this affair was almost impossible: his animus against the Barnutians was not a purely linguistic affair, but had run through a court case alleging his impropriety that had temporarily led to his deposition as rector of the university, and even, in May 1866, a challenge to a duel.  

In fact the apparently paranoid and chauvinist accusations of Bărnuțiu's followers that the *Junimea* group represented "cosmopolitan" and "masonic" interests in the new Romanian state had some basis in fact, as the researches of Mihai Dimitri Sturdza have shown. A large proportion of *Junimea* 's members were also member of the masonic lodge *Etoile de Roumanie* established in 1865 and dependent on the Paris lodge *Grand Orient*. Its members comprised a mixture of the Moldavian conservative elite with foreign (Greek, Jewish, German) merchants, intellectuals and functionaries. Moreover, the establishment of both *Junimea* and *Etoile de Roumanie* owed a lot to the propagandistic efforts of the *Alliance Israélite*, also based in Paris and seeking through freemasonry to win support for the cause of Jewish emancipation in an unfavourable political climate. The duration and effectiveness of this marriage of convenience were short-lived, and it would be an exaggeration to reduce *Junimea* to the status of a mere organ of foreign political interests. But it is certainly the case that Maiorescu and others were capable of using the ostensibly apolitical institution of a literary society as a cover for the activity of various (in fact conflicting) political interest groups.

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In view of this, Maiorescu’s opposition to Bărnuțiu’s philological principles takes on a distinctly political light. As a result of his actions, he benefited from the favour of Prince Carol, who also appreciated his pro-German intellectual orientation. When a Conservative government was appointed in 1871, Maiorescu was able to use his connections to obtain public funds for scholarships abroad for writers associated with the Junimea circle, including Mihai Eminescu, Ioan Slavici, A. D. Xenopol and Gheorghe Panu: he continued this practice when he was Minister of Education between April 1874 and January 1876, despite running into political trouble for having awarded scholarships without having instigated a selection procedure.\(^9\) Surely this is just the kind of centralist cultural policy that his enemy Bărnuțiu had called for, and hardly corresponds to his prior stated aim of avoiding politics and decentralizing the cultural honeypot? In many ways it is: and yet Maiorescu himself would not have conceived his behaviour as morally compromised.

Another literary historian, Sorin Alexandrescu, has, on the basis of such phenomena, interpreted Junimea’s importance not with reference to foreign interests but as a pressure group within Romanian society “which acted both politically and culturally to impose its own view”. The conception of Junimea as a society of equals which laid the basis for modern Romanian literature and played little role in political life is merely “the image which it successfully imposed upon public opinion and used to strategic ends.”\(^{30}\) Such an analysis need not immediately render false and hypocritical Maiorescu’s claims to be promoting aesthetic values, but rather demonstrate his talent in establishing an institutionalized group to inculcate these values. In fact Junimea as a group gave birth to so many talented critics whose ideas often conflicted with each other, that it is impossible to talk of a uniformly inculcated ideology. We could analyse Maiorescu’s ruthless pragmatism as justified in the service of philosophical ideas, or criticize the latter as a mere superstructural cover for the former.

We might also be tempted to detect here what Ken Jowitt describes as the “principle of limited good” applying here - the concept that any communal

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cultural or economic resource is perceived in peasant-based societies essentially limited, and not dynamic. The operation of this principle of limitation leads any extraneous source of wealth to be conceived of as having certain magical, ‘treasure-chest’ qualities: resources available beyond the normal limit are thus not saved, but plundered for immediate gain. Certainly Maiorescu did not hesitate to use the state’s money to promote his own men and his own beliefs, and to the extent that he sought to eliminate Bărnuțiu’s men from the educational system. Yet Maiorescu was a typical German bourgeois, and hardly a peasant by upbringing or education. If he acted upon “limited good” principles, it was if anything not the instinctive reaction of a peasant mentality but the conscious application, by a man of European temperament, of what he considered suitable for Romania. Indeed, Maiorescu’s concern was to some extent justified by the genuine lack of human resources in the educational field. Nor was his educational policy purely reactionary or centralist - the money saved from disbanding certain state-funded school boarding houses, was re-invested in școli normale (teacher training institutions) and in primary education. His decisions were taken in almost complete ignorance of economic factors: although he was shocked and surprised at the expense incurred by the state in employing administrators, he had no statistical information or budgetary norms to compare with, a state of affairs which seems to have been normal for much of Romania’s pre-World War I domestic policy. Yet he encouraged the students he sent abroad to study philosophy and not law or economics, as he believed in the ‘objectivity’ of the former and scorned the ‘political’ bias of the latter: philosophy could hardly be said to be the choice of a peasant mind. This sincerely held belief in the power of art and ideas to resolve social questions, and to shape the evolution of Romanian


32 Lovinescu, T. Maiorescu, p. 287-289; 290-291. Irina Livezeanu’s perspicacious study of the way in which rapid expansion of higher education in a society which could not satisfy the expectations of a large educated elite, contributed to the spread of extreme nationalistic sentiment, gives further cause for reconsidering Maiorescu’s education policy. Livezeanu, Politics and Culture in Greater Romania, 1918-1930. Ithaca, NY, 1995); see esp. p. 235-241.


society, is decidedly aestheticist, and indeed the whole separation of economic and ideological questions shows the influence of a Western way of thinking.

That Maiorescu separated philosophical from economic considerations in his mind, does not mean that his championship of a literature independent of political interests was anything less than disingenuous. Indeed, his theoretical pronouncements on poetry and prose reveal a number of inconsistencies. In “O cercetare critică asupra poeziei române de la 1867 [A critical survey of Romanian poetry in 1867]” Maiorescu’s initial claim is that “Poetry, like all the arts, is called upon to express the beautiful; in distinction from science, whose business is truth.” And furthermore, “the idea or object expressed in poetry is always a sentiment or a passion, and never a purely intellectual cogitation, or one belonging to the scientific realm”. However, his analysis of what he means by this distinction displays numerous logical faults. He has to confess that “Goethe in Faust speaks a great deal about science, Corneille in Horace of acts from Roman history [...]; all these, however, only as occasions to show human passions and sentiments.” There is, then, a connection - politics and science do arouse sentiments. How are they separated? Maiorescu doesn’t explain. He makes on several occasions an attempt to distinguish between ideas and sentiments, but he also recommends a definition of beauty as “a production which gives us the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time”. As Paul Georgescu points out, Maiorescu’s poetics is riddled with imprecise terms and a lack of clarity as to the relation between ideas and poetry. Part of the problem appears to stem from the fact that for different writers he used different principles of judgement: thus for Caragiale he developed a theory of “impersonal emotion”, yet he defended Alecsandri for his representation of “a distinctly powerful and personal sensation”.

Nevertheless, one can detect a clear sense of what kinds of ideas Maiorescu was attempting to remove from the poetic canon, and what ones he

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35 “O cercetare critică asupra poeziei române de la 1867” [1867] in Critice, I, p. 11, 32.
37 For Caragiale see “Comediile d-lui Caragiale” [1885] in Critice, II, p. 277; for Alecsandri see “Poeți și critici” [1886], ibid., p. 288. The contradiction was picked up by Gherea, of whom more shortly.
declared admissible, from the following passage in praise of Alecsandri’s collections of popular verses and ballads:

Politics, declamations against absolutism, mannered reflections upon the Divinity, immortality, etc., etc. do not achieve their purpose, and fail to force the reader to come down from the heights of poetic impression into the midst of their everyday preoccupations. Not that the people are merely insensible to such things; but when they make poetry, they don’t make politics; when their heart leaps, their reflective capacity ceases. One does indeed find Romanian poetry against Russia and Austria, but not because Russia is the ‘colossal scourge of the North’, and Austria ‘the despotic absolutism’, but because the foreigner is still a foreigner, whatever political form may subjugate him.  

Observable here is a clear distinction between ‘national’ sentiment and ‘political’ idea: Maiorescu is prepared to admit the former as a natural, even popular subject for poetry; but the latter is dismissed as the concern of liberal intellectual rabble-rousers. True national sentiment, then, can be connected with ‘the people’ and with ‘poetry’, and at the same time dissociated from politics and the affairs of the state. Thus his evaluation of the patriotic poetry of Octavian Goga contains the following lines:

It is fair to say that patriotism, as an element of political action, is not material for art, however many deviations have been made, and still are being made, from this basic rule. Particularly those who lack literary talent seek to cover up that lack through the provocation of certain states of the soul, that are very important in other respects, but not in aesthetics. Nevertheless, patriotism is, in sincere hearts, beyond any political tendency, a true and deep sentiment, and in this capacity it can be, in certain conditions, a creator of poetry.

The conditions which Maiorescu ascribes to Goga’s poetry? “The maintenance of a healthy air and the avoidance of ill-adapted exoticisms”. “Our poetry has no business with the effeminacies of decadent writings... it has sprung straight from popular song and has an accentuation of words much more varied than the French language, for example.”

This may at first sight seem incompatible with Maiorescu’s earlier championing of European values: yet he saw the connection of national sentiment and popular, peasant values as being a characteristic of European art. In fact, in his evaluations of Romanian prose writings, he developed a theory of short fiction which effectively assigns to this genre the role of fixing national characteristics:

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40 Ibid., p. 466-467.
...the proper subject of the novel is life specific to the nation, and the principal personages ought to stand as types for an entire class, especially for the peasant and for the lower class. [...] whereas the tragic hero, driven by his powerful personality, creates by himself, through his own feelings and actions, the conflict of circumstances and a catastrophe in the action, the hero of the novel finds himself placed beforehand within the limits of class and nationality, and his evolution consists in the struggle of suffering with these limits, towards a catastrophe in sentiment.  

Why does the hero have to come from the lower classes?

For the popular type especially is uncrafted and impresses itself with the reality of a product of primitive nature. [...] The nature itself of humankind, and not conventional fashion is the object of novelistic art; thus the popular type is its material, and not the figure from the salon.  

Thus Maiorescu is able to develop the idea of art coming from the people, and yet at the same time promote the image of the peasant as a kind of depoliticized art object. Many of the writers of short stories that Maiorescu invokes, such as Slavici and Ion Creangă, and also Eminescu, indeed came from rural backgrounds, and from the lower classes: but it is hardly true to say that such men were devoid of “the levelling processes of high culture”. Indeed, it has been suggested that it is only through the dissemination of high-cultural norms through the new national education systems that members of the peasant classes in Romania came into contact with the literary world, and vice-versa. Maiorescu’s sceptical attitude towards the notion that people of rural origin could be the producers of refined literary art is evident in his appreciation of the early works of the novelist Mihail Sadoveanu (who was to become one of the classic exponents of the Romanian “peasant novel”):

And seeing as Mr. Sadoveanu has thus shown himself master of an original talent, sprung from the very foundation of the land in which he was born, we henceforth wish him the broadening of his knowledge through higher studies and the multiplication of his sensations, through contact with a more advanced civilization, that he may widen the sphere of his conceptions and be shielded from the monotony into which even the most forceful talents can fall if they remain reduced to an excessively restricted horizon.  

In fact the image of the peasant appealed to Maiorescu precisely because he could suggest it as a kind of European phenomenon; moreover, he sees the peasant novel as a field of European culture in which Romania can compete: the theory is

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42 Ibid., p.252.
44 Maiorescu, “Povestiriile d-lui M. Sadoveanu” [1906], Critice, II, p. 474.
developed in an article reviewing the reception of Romanian literature abroad, particularly in Germany. Thus,

We Romanians nevertheless should rejoice seeing that, after several generations of our youth have received so many ideas of science and so many sentiments of art from abroad, the time has arrived when we too can respond with something, as young Romanian literature is able to give to old Europe the occasion for an aesthetic emotion even from the pure source of its popular life.45

The aim of Maiorescu's aesthetics, then, is as much to provide a Romanian contribution to European culture, as to isolate it from Europe. He succeeded in having influence in part because he was able to play to more modern European conceptions of art and culture than his Liberal rivals. Yet at the same time he was able to align the concepts of peasant, art, and nation in a way that separated all three of these categories from progressive political ideas. If literature was no longer in the service of the state, it was only too deeply associated with the concept of nation. And the nation, in its turn, was given as its symbol something called 'the peasant' which represented it abroad in what Maiorescu saw as "the great family of Western European nations", but at home was used as the emblem of an increasingly reactionary Romanticism.

An intriguing index of the complex and paradoxical values now attaching to the figure of the peasant, towards the end of the period we are studying, is revealed by the arguments revolving round his representation in the new realist works of fiction of Ioan Slavici (1848-1925). Slavici's Nuvele din popor [Novellas from the people], published in volume form in 1881, constituted something of a landmark in the development of Romanian realism. They depict scenes of rural life in Transylvania and the author's native Banat from the inside: the author successfully manages an accumulation of detail, a narrative tone which projects the reader into an observation-point within the village world, rather than describing it from the outside; an approximation of peasant speech in dialogue. Much of the critical reception of these works dealt, however, with another problem - whether the peasant was the most suitable subject matter for portrayal in works of art.

German critics agreed as to their 'national' value: a writer in the literary review *Gegenwart* declared that “The principal value of these tales lies in their warm presentation of Romanian popular life. There has been much abusive, ironical talk of 'the interesting nationalities'. However, Romanian popular life is truly interesting and does not deserve irony.” He went on to say that the novella *Popa Tanda* [The Priest Tanda] is “one of the pearls of the book, even from the point of view of the work of art itself, leaving aside its value for cultural history.” The reviewer of the *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* had some reservations: he remarked that “in all of them the element in which the literature of old, civilized Europe has its centre of gravity, is lacking: psychological analysis. ... These simple people do not reflect upon their actions, which are as spontaneous as they themselves, but stand before us just as they were taken from real life.” Nevertheless, he continued, “Slavici’s sketch is, through its clear perspective on the life of the Romanian peasant, the most remarkable and the most individual of them all”; and he rated Slavici’s tales above those of Iacob Negruzzi, upon which “the specifically Romanian spirit is not so decisively imprinted.”

The argument continued to run throughout 1882. One critic from the liberal, progressive wing of *Junimea*, Nicu Xenopol, wrote that

> With Mr. Slavici you sense you are in a world which few have known hitherto, in a world distinct from all others, in a world in short about which you can say: these are Romanian peasants, this is how they feel, how they live, how they think. 

However, Xenopol also made a plea for novelists to broaden their focus and to consider depicting the life of other classes such as the urban bourgeoisie. This brought a fierce rebuke from Slavici’s friend and journalistic colleague Eminescu, who insisted that: “any significant literary work should comprise, alongside the intellectual act of observation and conception, an attempt to resume certain particular elements from the life of the people.” Slavici’s tales, in a completely ruined environment such as is the superimposed layer of the plebs in Romania, amidst a corruption which combines the vices of the Turkish Orient with those

46 Cited ibid., p. 244-246. Iacob Negruzzi, another leading *Junimist*, was the chief editor of *Convorbiri literare*. His literary productions are now mostly forgotten.

of the West, they have preserved their spiritual good health, they reflect the ethnic youthfulness, the cleanliness of custom, the serenity of the Romanian race.\textsuperscript{48}

Irrespective of their conflicting points of view, these writers are both in agreement that literature's role is to reflect and to represent a national reality. Their disagreement lies in the importance to be accorded to the peasant in comparison to the rest of Romanian society: whether he constitutes "the sole positive class", or whether other sections of society deserve attention too. But they both believe that the Romanian peasant can be known through literature, and that this is perhaps the best way to do so. Slavici himself was also of this opinion, that no serious Romanian man of letters today can doubt the truth that the starting point of any original literary production is the intellectual life of our people. [...] Only from popular literature can we know the views and the taste of the people, through it alone will we learn to think and feel Romanian, and therefore our school should give to future generations a knowledge of, and love for, popular literature.\textsuperscript{49}

It was precisely this blurring of the boundaries between the peasant and the littérateur, between the 'scientific' collection of tales written by the folk and the 'aesthetic' creation of a literature about the folk, that embedded the image of the peasant most deeply into the collective imagination of the Romanian people.

It took a progressive political idealist, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea [1855-1920], to challenge Maiorescu's virtual dominance of the Romanian literary critical scene. Gherea had settled permanently in Romania in 1879, a socialist exile from Tsarist Russia; he seems to have ventured on to the field of literary criticism following the suppression of the socialist newspaper \textit{Basarabia} in 1881.\textsuperscript{50} His critiques of Maiorescu's literary ideas focussed on the contradictions in his metaphysics: he attacked the concept of "impersonal emotion" which Maiorescu had used to defend Caragiale, and when confronted by claims to higher philosophical reasoning, was spurred to attack them too:

Metaphysical aestheticians, seeing beautiful artistic works, have begun to speculate upon the abstract notions of the beautiful, of art, and then, from these heights of speculation, they have descended to earth; but even then not in order to study the conditions in which


\textsuperscript{49} Ioan Slavici, "Literatura poporană" [1883] repr. in \textit{Amintiri} ed. cit., p. 422.

works of art are created but in order to impose certain conditions by virtue of the laws and rules discovered on high, in the lofty world of metaphysical speculation.  

His critical approach, naturally enough for a socialist, was to reject purely aestheticist approaches as “inconsequential”, and focus on the social environment in which art is produced: indeed, he was something of an initiator in this respect. He did not totally reject aesthetic factors in literature: he criticised the social realism of Zola as “so many fixed laws, like geometric theorems” and saw literature as depending not only on a favourable social environment, but on the purely accidental appearance of genius at certain points in history. Nevertheless, in his essay on Eminescu [1887] he speaks “first about his social meaning, then about his aesthetic significance.” He criticizes Eminescu’s idealization of the past, his passivity, and his sexism - “the moral and ideal level of his tendencies is lower down than his artistic level.” - but praises what he reads as Eminescu’s social portrayal of the alienation of contemporary bourgeois society and the proletarization of the artisan and free-peasant classes. The appraisal is remarkable for its modernity, and contains aspects of numerous major critical approaches used today: Marxist, feminist, psycho-biographical and so on.

This incisive critique had the unintended countereffect of eliciting even more abstracted and aestheticized readings of Eminescu’s work than before. Maiorescu’s famous essay of 1889, ‘Eminescu și poeziile lui [Eminescu and his poems]’ seems to have been a fairly direct response to Gherea’s sociological reading. Whereas Gherea pleaded with Eminescu to “come down to earth, look at your surroundings, how extended, how varied, how profound is life, what inexhaustible sources it contains for sadness and joy, for crazy tears and Homeric laughter”, Maiorescu writes that for the poet “any descent into the conventional world was an irritation and an instinctive disagreement”, and that any worldly

52 Idem, “Asupra criticei” [1887], ibid., p. 36.
54 Idem, “Eminescu” [1887] ibid., VI, p. 62; p. 116. Gherea suggests instead “a comrade woman [...] a woman who can hold up the flag on which are written the highest demands for the future of mankind, who can raise this flag and hold it alone if need be; who can suggest to children the highest virtues of the citizen; a woman who knows how to toil and to struggle”, but it seems a bit much to express surprise that “such a woman did not even cross Eminescu’s mind”! (p. 121.)
55 Ibid., p. 81.
accolade would have been met with "a Homeric laugh or that smile of piteous indulgence that he reserved for worldly nothings".56 Maiorescu’s asocial, transcendental vision of Eminescu’s genius has won out: as one critic notes, "Eminescu, like any myth, has acted to forget its author, seeming to be born from an inexplicable union of Romanian earth and heavens."57

Elsewhere, Gherea attempted to refute the belief that literary works had managed to provide a true picture of the peasantry. In his article The Peasant in Literature (1897), Gherea saw that the critical debate was obscured by the mistaken belief that a novel or novella as a collection of data and facts from the life of the peasantry:

But, an artwork is not a work of ethnology or sociology. Those kinds of scientific works can indeed give us some fragmentary observations and each researcher can bring us different facts - some good, others bad, their only condition is that they be true [...] however, what is most important and what constitutes in the first instance the problem of art is the fact that it creates life for us in all its richness and variety of manifestation.

And - criticizing those who would either idealize or execrate the rural world in the service of certain interests - “Art tries, and ought to, give us whole men - if it does not, it is no longer art.” “Therefore, the striking contrast between these two ways [ideal or dystopian] of depicting the peasantry and the life thereof, itself shows that neither represents the complete truth.”58 Nevertheless, the fact that the figure of the peasant had apparently made a favourable impression in Western Europe, combined with the fact that it served the ongoing need for a symbolic representation of ‘the spirit of the people’, meant that most attempts to dismantle the questionably democratic logic of such questionably realistic representations were doomed to failure. The outbreak of a massive peasant revolt in Romania in 1888 only intensified the perceived need for public manifestations involving the peasant as a symbol of the Romanians.

Although Gherea’s influence was recognized by numerous literary critics of the next generation - indeed Eugen Lovinescu acknowledged him to be “the founder of our criticism, in the modern sense of an analytic method”:59 - he failed

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59 Lovinescu, T. Maiorescu, p, 502.
to create a lasting school. Just as his fledgling socialist party took the nationalist route after 1899, so the bulk of his literary colleagues (many of them the same men) moved towards a more nationalist position: both the conservative sămănătoriștii (“Sowists”) and the more broadly progressive but similarly nationalist Populist movement centred around the Iași-based Vieata românească [“Romanian Life”] magazine, recruited heavily from amongst Gherea’s supporters. The primary motivation for this was clearly the belief that socialism was a mere “exotic plant”, as populist C. Stere called it, that would never flourish in pre-industrial Romania. Yet it had significant implications for the aesthetic doctrine, as can be seen from a brief examination.

To some extent Gherea did not so much separate debates about aesthetics from debates about the national essence, as relegate them both, to the extent that he would have abolished them if he could. As we have seen, he was harshly critical of metaphysical approaches to aesthetics: “It’s a mere shame”, he wrote, “that Plato’s entire aesthetic is a fantastic hypothesis, a fantasy like any other, a very poetical one, but nonetheless still a fantasy.” In many ways, this was the same as his view of the nation. His early criticism bears the influence of Spencer, and especially Hippolyte Taine’s model of a literature being predominantly influenced by its racial, historical and climatic environment. But he subsequently rejected their interpretations, having had their nationalist implications flaunted against him in the course of his polemics with Maiorescu and his followers, in favour of a purely Marxist interpretation. Likewise, he rejected early on liberal conceptions of the “family-nation” (the terms of the liberal 1848 generation), delivering a harsh critique of the nation as “a sentimental, ideological-utopian fantasy” which “never existed, does not exist and never will exist.”

Gherea threw out the nation in the same terms that he threw out aesthetics: it was not surprising, then, that the revisionists who adopted nationalist postures would also attempt to rescue aesthetics from the dustbin of ‘fantasy’, and, more to the point, weld the two together into a potent artistic programme.

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60 Kitch, *op. cit.*, p. 73-74.
61 Gherea, “Asupra criticii metafizice și celei științifice”, p. 256.
Paradoxically, however, Gherea denied charges that his brand of socialism was anti-national. As his attitude towards the Jewish question show, Gherea did not feel strongly inclined to militate for their cause, and while sympathetic, preferred to advocate a path of Jewish assimilation into the Romanian national identity, including in the case of his own self. He was strongly Russophobic in most of his political writings. He analysed Romanian society as a "social organism", and believed that "what is true for an individual is equally true for a nation"; he criticized the excessive size of the bureaucratic class, inimical to "all interests, economic, intellectual, cultural, national." He defended himself against charges of cosmopolitanism: with some justification, he pointed out that "bourgeois" critics also borrowed most of their ideas and habits from the West European metropolis, and that liberal institutions were just as much "exotic plants" as socialist theory. Indeed, Gherea argued, if "the liberal youth began agitation and propaganda for liberal ideas after they had already been implemented in Europe", the socialists were more original, as they "are beginning agitation and propaganda for a set of ideas before they have been implemented in Europe".

In fact all parties engaged in the debate about literature and nation in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s had come to relative agreement at least about the terms of the debate. Maiorescu made concessions towards the admission of the national as an overarching category determining cultural production: Gherea also came to analyse Romanian society within a national framework. Both adeptly used arguments about literature in an attempt to promote political ideologies, both gained prestige by presenting themselves as more "critical" and "scientific" than their predecessors; both renounced literary criticism after a certain age to concentrate on their political ambitions. They differed in their attitudes as to what should be done about it, but agreed that Romania was a society of superficial institutions and imported ideas. In fact even the theory of "neoserfdom", the conception of colonialist capital Gherea developed and which numerous Western

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sociologists and political scientists have found time to praise, has precedents in Junimist thought. And despite the differences in their aims, both appealed to “European” ideas to promote Romanian cultural development. Their intellectual strategies and their attitudes towards use of literature as a means towards the fulfilment of Romanian social aims were perhaps less divergent than their rates of success: Maiorescu rose to the rank of Prime Minister, and showed himself a master of international Realpolitik during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 (while continuing to display a bust of Kant on his mantelpiece); Gherea continued to earn his keep running a restaurant in Ploiești railway station (where Maiorescu would stop to eat on his way to holidays in Germany).

In a sense, the two rivals fulfilled each other’s critical predictions: Maiorescu exemplified Gherea’s critique of the doctrine of the aesthetic serving elite interests; Gherea proved Maiorescu right insofar as a criticism which linked art to its social function got him nowhere politically. But neither theoretician could quite escape the stereotypical in their representation of the future: if Maiorescu developed an ideology which effectively cantoned Romanian development within the limits of a patronizing theory of peasant specificity, Gherea’s optimism in the possibility of the “normal” development of capitalist industry in Romania proved equally illusory. They provided critiques of “the untruth of our forms of culture”; but in their success, and respectively, failure, neither managed to create a sphere of intellectual production that was independent of the idea of either state or nation.

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67 See e.g. Gherea’s flamboyant use of West European critical norms to attack Maiorescu in “Asupra criticei”, p. 21.

CONCLUSION

In the first part of this thesis, I undertook an analysis of the cultural institutions that are commonly said to have formed the basis of the nation-building process among the Romanians of the Old Kingdom, during the nineteenth century, the period in which they first gained their independence: schools, universities, printing presses, newspapers, but also concepts and attitudes evoked by those who established and justified these institutions. In the second part I described and tried to explain three major literary manifestations of attitudes towards national character and destiny in the late nineteenth century.

There is still much research to be done on national identity in nineteenth-century Romania. In particular, we still need to know more about areas such as religion, folklore, institutionalized sociability (clubs, societies) or to individual actors, movements and practices, where 'thick description' of the context in which ideas about the nation were worked out might lead to deeper, or even different conclusions. But I hope to have given an idea of what became normal and possible in Romanian literary culture by 1890. I have shown that print and education embedded themselves into the heart of public life in the new state; but that they did so in spite of, possibly even at the direct expense of, their actual efficacy as instruments of dissemination of the national ideal. They were necessary symbols of nationhood. They were explicitly invoked in terms which likened them to surrogate or neo-religious institutions. Like religious institutions, they were both exalted to the status of the mysterious, and also denounced as false idolatry. Sociologically, the replacement of the clergy with the intelligentsia worked out fairly directly, although the process was by no means complete in the period under discussion.

As mentioned in the introduction, hitherto most attention has been given to literature's importance for nationalism under the rubric of social communication. Benedict Anderson has famously given the name imagined community to the result of this process: the formation of homogeneous groups with a common language, whose solidarity will come to depend largely on some phantom of literary communications. For Anderson, literature is important as 'the technical
means for representing the kind of imagined community that is the nation', while
print has 'a strategic role in the dissemination of ideas', enabling the formation of
‘reading coalitions’ against dynastic empires.\footnote{Benedict Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}. London, 1991, p. 25; 34 n.58; 79.} Ernest Gellner, too, was happy to
proclaim in respect of the contribution of literature to nationalism, that “the
medium is the message”: that the general process of what he called the \textit{semanticization of work}, and the development of “a plant called a national
educational and communications system” using print culture, is of greater
significance than the actual beliefs, myths, ideologies that this system

I have tried to show that on the contrary, print culture was itself an
ideological construct as well as a means of dissemination or an instrument of
capitalist infiltration. Its installation – whether at Phanariot or Russian instigation
in the earlier period, or on Romanian initiative later – seemed to be simple
materialism according to physiocratic rules for the formation of a useful
population, or as one school inspector put it, the “physiological guarantee of a
nation’s happiness”.\footnote{But like Gulliver’s watch in the eyes of the Lilliputians, the
oracular ritual associated with it was more important than its rather banal
mechanical function. Books, schools and other ritual objects of civilization were
acquired as necessary accoutrements of statehood according to mid nineteenth-
century European conception of national progress. But they were not always used
to these ends, and certainly did not lead to the disappearance of personalized,
patrimonial forms of wielding power. “Culture” became an instrument of
clientelism, a site of personal competition for resources, although as a reified
symbol of both the traditional and the modern it was far from universally admired.

As for the question of “modernity”, I have tried in what I have presented
to move the argument on from simply trying to assess the degree of “success” or
“failure” with which Romanian society adapted itself to rational forms of
organization. Different attitudes to time, reason, science and religion often existed
simultaneously, not only on different levels of society but even in the subjective
Conclusion

outlook of the same individual. The faith placed in reason was often highly
ditrational, whereas attitudes towards religion could be extremely pragmatic and
instrumental. In other words, the old and the new were not simply doing battle
with each other, but led a complicated co-existence. I have read Caragiale’s work
as a site in which these encounters found their most complex and revealing
expression.

But what of the artistic value of these works? Here I would like to do more
than mouth the customary platitudes of the sociologist of literature, who tends to
claim that value is not an issue. In my chapters on Caragiale and Eminescu I hope
to have shown that there was no lack of artistry and finesse at the individual level.
Caragiale managed to provide representation of national types while at the same
time showing the hilarious and shocking provisionality of these types. His work is
a profound meditation on the relationship between the accidental and the specific.
Eminescu’s poetry and political writings projected a powerful and peculiar
representation of the relationship between the self, history and ethnic community
which later generations found irresistibly appealing. Maiorescu produced scathing
critiques of “the untruth of our forms of culture” and showed himself to be a
brilliant, Machiavellian impresario. To write about literature’s emblematic
function does not means we should ignore the complexity of individual texts, or
the sophistication of individual practitioners.

What made the development of Romanian national literature even more
complex is its relationship with “Europe”. In the first chapter I stressed the
importance of the fact that the most influential early representations of Romanian
specificity and projections of its future destiny were authored by West Europeans:
and there is a sense in which much of Romanian national discourse can be seen as
a response to this characterization from the outside. Romania’s intellectual
relationship with the rest of Europe was by no means an equal one, as Eugène
Ionesco was (sarcastically, but also painfully) aware:

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3 St. C. Michailescu (inspector scolar), Incercări critice asupra învețământului nostru primar. București, 1888, p. 67.
4 A claim with its own hidden ideological assumptions, as Pierre Zima has shown. “Littérature et
société: pour une sociologie de l’écriture.” In A. Kibedi-Varga, ed. Théorie de la littérature. Paris,
1981, p. 282-298. John Hall provided a judicious review of the trap of viewing literature as

253
To be the greatest Romanian critic! - this still means you being a poor cousin of European intellectuality!

What sad circumstances have forged for Romania this walk-on role in culture? I am to die, without having played a role on the European stage, which will be annihilated without my help!\(^5\)

That Ionesco managed to avoid this fate had everything to do with ‘becoming’ a European, which effectively meant ‘losing’ his Romanianness.

However, the saving concept of “Europe” could not work unequivocally in the favour of the critical intelligentsia. Indeed, however much 19th and 20th-century cultural critics believed that there was a place in the sun for every ‘regional’ or ‘minor’ manifestation of art in Europe, it remains true that the transforming power of art depends on how that art is valued from the centre. Moreover, the Romanians’ status at the margin of European civilization would take more than art to transform it. The Romanian critic Adrian Marino came to the same conclusion: “Romanian culture is and remains minor by definition. The Romanian man of culture cannot but be an eternal pupil, disciple, epigone, suiveur of an occidental ‘maestro’. Nothing more. His capacity to take the initiative is congenitally, structurally refused.”\(^6\)

To a superficial eye this might seem an overstatement; or even, to a more cynical one, a refusal not of initiative but of responsibility. As I have tried to show, however, attempts to stake claims to liberty by appealing to concepts of the autonomous value of European literature become much harder for intellectuals on the margins of that Europe, than it does for those in the centre, involving as it does a certain dependency of ideas. If the European political and economic elites had decided to invite the Romanians to join the Great European family, the invitation was not issued in Romanian. The intellectuals’ mission to “enlighten the people” brought with it conceptual alienation as well as methodical socialization. Paradoxically, Romanian literary nationalism owes many of its formal and ideological components not to an attempt to represent the national self to the nation, but to re-present it to Europe. By studying the transfer of ideas and institutions to Romania, I hope to have shown that this process reveals not just a “conceptual inadequacy” or “superficial spirit”, on the part of the Romanians, but


also questions some of the claims to universality of West European literary ideology. The sociological counterpart of this is the fact that literary development and increase in reading, where it did happen, did not in itself lead to the restructuring of society on more rational bases. Recent studies of societies as diverse as eighteenth-century England and twentieth-century Polynesia support this, although we should take care not to romanticize illiteracy.\(^7\)

For in the development of a Romanian national literature, it was not just Romanian literature that was overrated, but Western literature too, in fact the power of literature in general to effect social change without itself being changed. Ion Luca Caragiale spoke of "fetishism" among the Romanian public when he dared to criticise Hugo and Schiller, and was vilified for it: to criticise the thing imitated was almost more sacrilegious than to criticise the imitation.\(^8\) Eminescu's obsession with German metaphysics bears some of the same traits. In this sense, Maiorescu's attempt to warn his fellow countrymen of "the untruth of our forms of culture" holds a lesson for Westerners too: analysts who criticize the weak tradition of cultural autonomy in Romania (and attribute it to "Oriental", rather than Western influence) should consider the paradoxical premises on which such autonomy is based; the fundamentally European origins of the politicization of literary culture; and the unequal terms on which Romania absorbed European models.

This is not to subscribe to a simplistic notion of an "innocent" Romania subject to a sadistic version of the Western Enlightenment.\(^9\) To do so would be to fall prey to the Romantic paradigm – vouched for frequently enough in the period under study – of Romania as an unfortunate youth in the clutches of an aggressive and uncaring foreign master. The idea of literature, like the national idea and the idea of Europe, was both received seriously and manipulated in sophisticated

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\(^9\) Street's (justified) critique of the universalist belief in the rationality of letters runs into problems when it is read as "the site of tension between authority and power on the one hand and resistance and creativity on the other" (8). This itself contains unexamined residues of aestheticist 'autonomist' desiderata (particularly the idea that creativity and power are necessarily opposed, locked in struggle).
fashion. Like the question of tradition and modernity, the problem of “Romanian” and “European” culture was not always one of two opposing partners but of an intricate series of connexions, enacted textually but imagined genealogically: either as part of “one great family” or as “poor cousins”. The development of a national literature in Romania may bear certain similarities to national literatures developed in post-colonial cultures: unlike, say, Latin American national movements, however, recovery of national dignity meant Europeanization, not separation from Europe.10 “Romanian literature” neither sprung from the pure well of the popular spirit, nor was it entirely a “foreign form” imposed from outside: it was rather the product of intellectual negotiation between Romanians and outsiders, differentiation within a programme of incomplete integration.

It would therefore be missing the point, in conclusion, to say that “the structure of Romanian nationalism is like this.” Or, to put it another way, the structure of Romanian nationalism is not specifically Romanian but is built up around an ongoing relationship with a normative model located elsewhere.

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AG Arhiva genealogică, new series, Iași 1994-

AHRF Annales historiques de la révolution française. Paris, 1927-

AIIAI Anuarul institutului de istorie și arheologie „A.D. Xenopol”. Iași 1963- (after 1990: Anuarul institutului de istorie „A.D. Xenopol”)

AIIC Anuarul institutului de istorie din Cluj. Cluj, 1958-

ALIL Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară. Iași, 1964-

AUB Analele Universității București. București, 1954-

AUI Analele științifice ale Universității „A.I. Cuza” din Iași. 1955-

BS Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki, 1960-

BOR Biserica Ortodoxă Română. București, 1888-


CREL Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires. Bucarest, 1973-

CMRS Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique. Paris, 1960-

EEQ East European Quarterly. Boulder, CO, 1967-

LL Limbă și literatură. București, 1955-

LR Limba română. București. 1952-


MMS Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei. Iași. 1925-

RA Revista arhivelor. București, 1924-1946; n.s., 1958-

RER Revue des études roumaines. Paris, 1952-

RESEE Revue des études sud-est européennes. Bucarest, 1963 -

Rdl Revista de istorie. București, 1974-1989 (succeeding Studii)

RI Revista istorică. București, 1915-1946; n.s., 1990-

RIS Revista de istorie socială. București, 1996-

RITL Revista de istorie și teorie literară. București, 1964- (succeeding SCILF)

RL România literară. București, 1968-

Rdp Revista de pedagogie. București, 1954-

RMM Revista muzeelor și a monumentelor. București,

RRH Revue roumaine d’histoire. Bucarest, 1962-

SADAH Societas Academica Dacoromana. Acta Historica. Monachii, 1959-

SAHIR Studia et acta historiae Judaicorum Romaniae. Iași, 1996-

SAI Studii și articole de istorie. București, 1956-

SCB Studii și cercetări de bibliologie. București, 1955-


SCS Studii și cercetări științifice. Iași, 1950-1962

SEE Southeastern Europe. USA (various universities), 1974-

SEER Slavonic and East European Review. London, 1932 -

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SMIM  Studii și materiale de istorie medie. București, 1956-

SMIMod Studii și materiale de istorie modernă. București, 1956-


SUBB Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Cluj, 1956-

SVEC Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century. Oxford, 1955-

Publishing Houses


EDP Editura didactică și pedagogică.

EE Editura enciclopedică.

EPL Editura pentru literatură.

EȘ Editura științifică.

EȘE Editura științifică și enciclopedică.

ESPLA Editura de stat pentru literatură și artă.

EUAIC Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași.

EUB Editura Universității București.

FCR Editura Fundației Culturale Române.

FRLA Fundația regală pentru literatură și artă (1938-1940, Fundația pentru literatură și artă «Regele Carol al II-lea»)

UP University Press
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DLR  Dicționarul limbii române. I-XII to date. București: EA, 1913-.


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260
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