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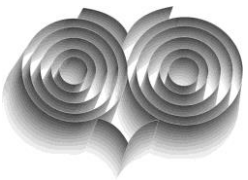

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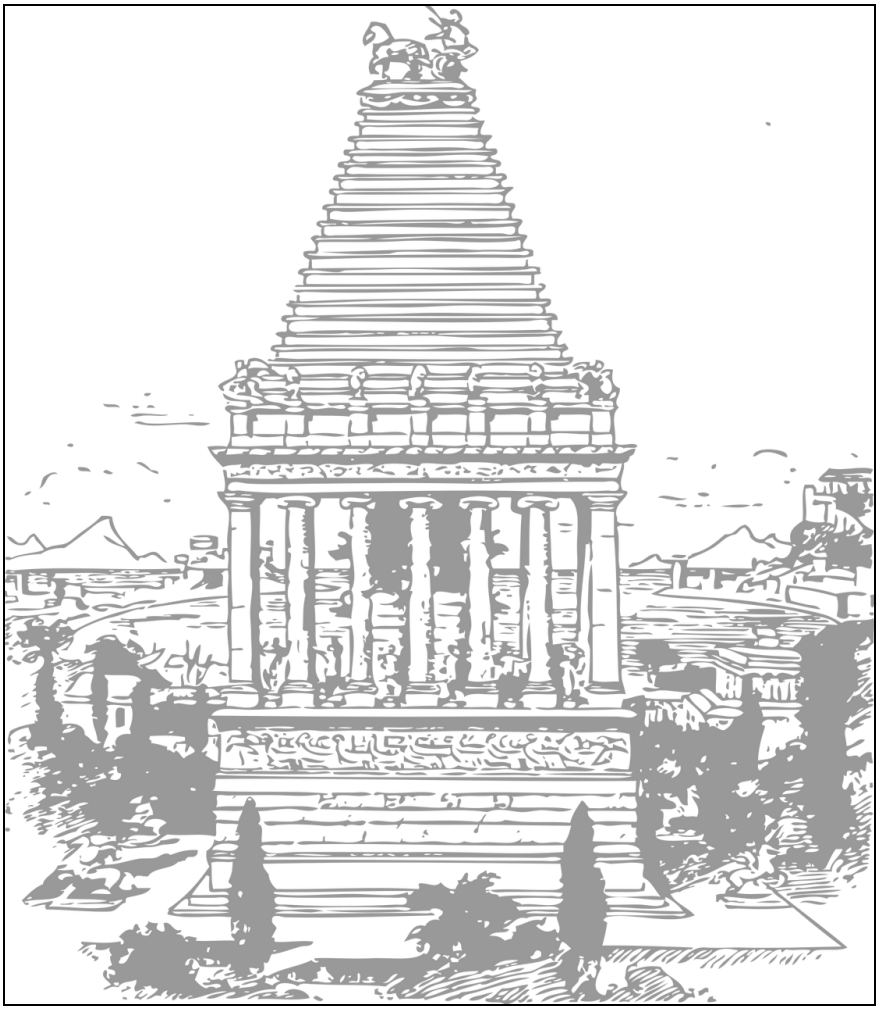

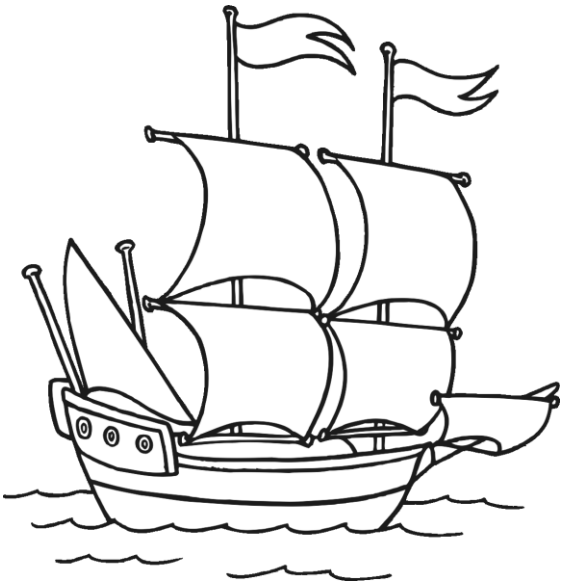

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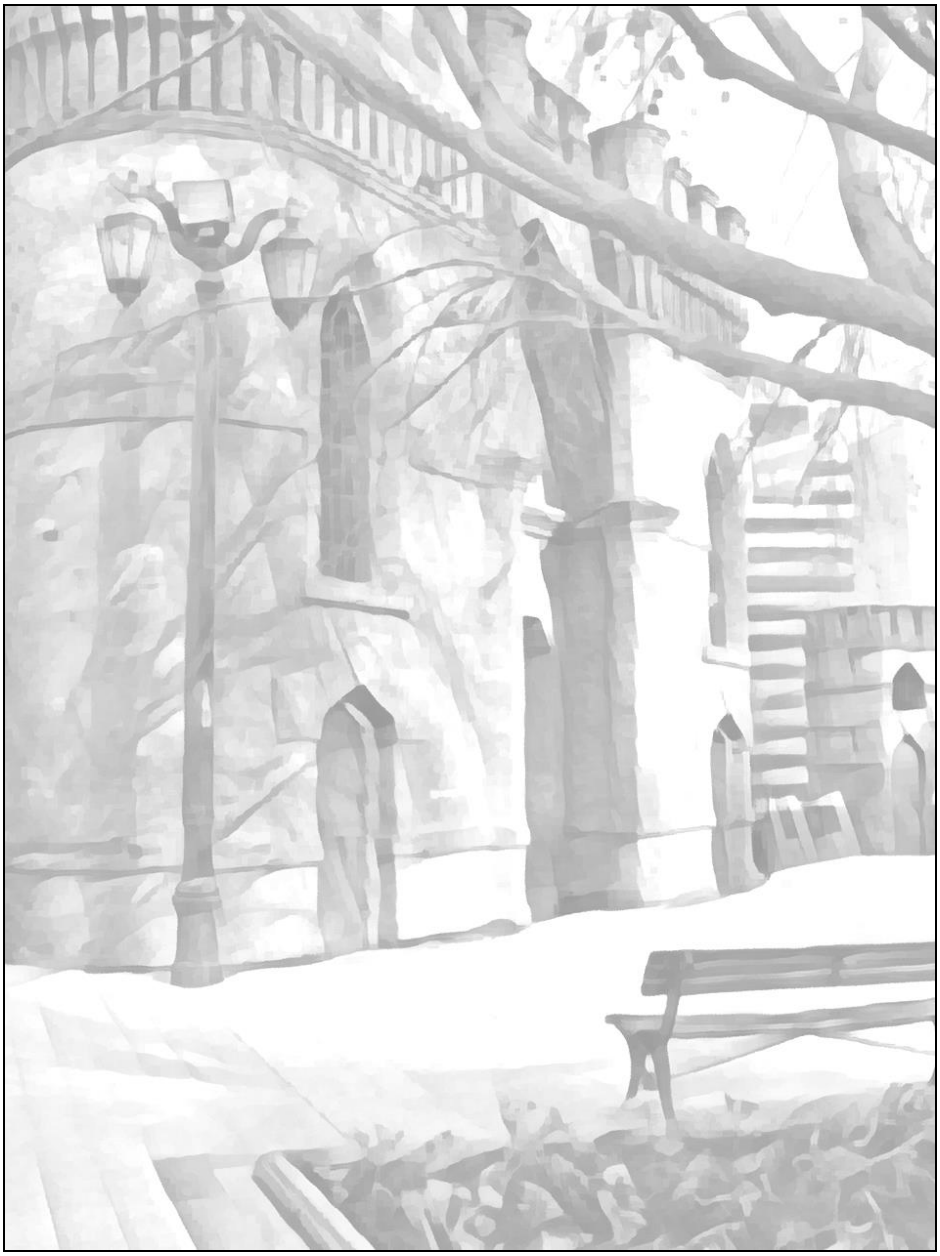

OLD EUROPEAN POPULATIONS. THE ETRUSCAN PRINCESS OF PONTECAGNANO. RITUAL, POWER, AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRE-ROMAN ITALIC ARISTOCRACY

Alexandra RADU[1],2*
[1] Department of Education,
Bucharest University, Bucharest, Romania
2 Cultural Psychology of Sustainable Human Development - Laboratory of Psychology, Salerno, Italy
*Corresponding author: alexandra.peca63@s.fpse.unibuc.ro
ORCID iD: 0009-0005-0350-5316

Abstract
This article explores the archaeological and historical context of the region of Pontecagnano (Italy), focusing on the interaction between the Etruscan and Picentian populations of southern pre-Roman Italy. The focus of the research is the discovery of the painted tomb T.10043, dated to the end of the 4th century î.Hr., which belongs to a local aristocratic elite. Decorated with rare frescoes depicting the "return of the warrior," the tomb offers valuable insight into the social status and burial practices of that era. At the same time, the concept of an "Etruscan princess" is analyzed, in the context of the female princely tombs previously discovered in the same site, dated to the Orientalizing period.
The research places these findings in a broader framework of coexistence and interaction between the Etruscans and the Picentini, in a cultural frontier area. It is argued that these funerary forms reflect not only the individual status of the deceased, but also the social, identity and economic dynamics of a region characterized by intense intercultural exchanges.
The article combines archaeological data, iconographic interpretations and recent literary sources to offer an integrated reading of a multi-ethnic society in full transformation.

Keywords: Etruscans, Picentini, pontecagnano, tomb T.10043, funerary archaeology, cultural synthesis, representation of women in antiquity, identity and collective memory, cultural pluralism

1. Introduction

In the heart of ancient Campania, on the territory of the current city of Pontecagnano Faiano, lies one of the most important archaeological sites of pre-Roman Italy. The National Archaeological Museum of Pontecagnano, suggestively titled "Gli Etruschi di frontiera" ("Border Etruscans"), houses more than 10,000 artifacts from local necropolises, reflecting a continuous history of habitation and cultural exchange for over a millennium. These archaeological treasures provide a detailed look at the complex interactions between the Italic populations, especially between the Etruscans and the Picentini, in a cultural and political frontier space (Moscati, 1999).

Figure 1. Helmet-shaped cinerary cap (late ninth century î.Hr.), with two 3D human silhouettes — a female figure embracing a male figure. Interpreted as a representation of a deity or protective entity accompanying the deceased to the underworld. Exhibited at the National Archaeological Museum of Pontecagnano.

Among the most remarkable recent discoveries is the painted tomb T.10043, dated to the end of the fourth century î.Hr., identified in an elite sector of the necropolis. Built of travertine and decorated with frescoes on the walls and on the access door, the tomb illustrates a scene called "the return of the warrior" – a symbolic representation of aristocratic status and

memory. The discovery of a golden blade crown suggests that the deceased belonged to a ruling class, and some interpretations evoke the hypothesis of a female burial, associated with what popular literature has called the "Etruscan princess" (De Marinis, 2023).

The investigation of these funerary contexts must be understood in the light of the historical interaction between the Etruscan civilization and the Picentine population. Located on the southern border of Etruscan influence, the Pontecagnano area was a space of cohabitation and cultural conflict. As Riva (2005) points out, "the Etruscan-Picentian coexistence in southern Italy generated a unique cultural hybrid, in which Etruscan aristocratic forms blended with local indigenous traditions" (p. 142). Similarly, Turfa (2012) notes that "the local identity in the Orientalizing Campaign was the result of a constant interaction between the commercial Etruscan elites and the autochthonous Picentine communities" (p. 87).

Therefore, the analysis of these funerary structures not only reflects the social structure of a defunct elite, but reveals the dynamics of multi-ethnic societies in transformation.

2. The originality of the research and the delimitation of the field

Although the archaeological and historical literature on the Etruscans, Picentini and pre-Roman Campania is relatively rich, there are few works that investigate the interaction between these populations in symbolic and iconographic terms, focusing on a single case study, such as the painted tomb T.10043. Most studies focus on either artifacts or urbanization processes, without directly integrating the analysis of gender and female representation in mixed funerary contexts.

Figure 2. Equine bronze mask (end of the eighth century î.Hr.), symmetrical welded tablets, decorated by reliefs with hunting scenes (harplet, lion, goat, wild boars and deer). A rare and emblematic artifact, coming from a princely funeral in Pontecagnano, next to horses — a symbol of prestige and sacredness in the Etruscan-Campanian aristocratic culture.

The present paper proposes an original approach by:

- the combination of comparative analysis of aristocratic female tombs from different eras;
- integration of a theoretical framework on cultural pluralism and ethnic border;
- the use of tomb T.10043 as a nodal point for investigating the symbolic transformations of feminine power;
- contextualization of these phenomena in a discourse on collective memory and post-funerary identity.

This research fills a gap in the current literature, bringing to attention the symbolic, identity and social dimension of the Etruscan-Picentian coexistence, with emphasis on the role of women in the cultural border space.

3. Methodology

The present study uses an interdisciplinary approach, combining the archaeological analysis of the funerary material with historical-cultural interpretations regarding the identity and coexistence of the populations of

pre-Roman Italy. The investigation starts from the examination of the context provided by the National Archaeological Museum of Pontecagnano, especially with regard to recent discoveries from the local necropolis, such as the painted tomb T.10043.

The main method consists in the contextual analysis of funerary artifacts, the architectural structure of the tomb and the pictorial decoration, interpreted in correlation with the funerary practices attested in the literature for the Orientalizing and Late Hellenistic eras. Primary archaeological sources (excavation reports, museum catalogue, epigraphic data) are used, as well as secondary sources (historical studies, synthesis works, academic articles).

In parallel, a comparative method is applied to analyze the differences and similarities between the female aristocratic tombs dated in the VIII–VI centuries î.Hr. and the tomb T.10043, hypothetically linked to a high-ranking figure. This comparative analysis aims to identify recurrent cultural patterns or ideological transformations related to the social representation of the elite, especially women.

A third methodological level is the historiographical and cultural one, in which the Etruscan-Picentian coexistence is analyzed on the basis of recent contributions from historical anthropology, social history and regional archaeology. Cultural tensions and syntheses in ethnic border areas will be highlighted, using case studies and theories on cultural pluralism in Antiquity.

Through this triple approach – archaeological, comparative and cultural-historical – the study aims to provide an integrated image of the Italic society of Pontecagnano in the period prior to Romanization.

4. Coexistence and cultural interaction between the Etruscans and the Picentini in southern Italy

The analysis of funerary artifacts from the necropolis of Pontecagnano, especially from tomb T.10043, provides valuable clues regarding the complex cultural relations between the Etruscans and the Picentini in the period prior to the Romanization of southern Italy. This area, located between the sphere of influence of the Etruscans in Etruria proper and the territories occupied by the local Italic populations, functioned as an ethnic and cultural border area, where exchanges, assimilations and phenomena of social and religious syncretism took place.

4.1. Etruscan origin and expansion

The Etruscan population initially developed in Etruria (present-day Tuscany), but from the eighth century î.Hr., it expanded its sphere of influence southwards, reaching Campania through trade, colonies and aristocratic alliances. Pontecagnano, located near the Tyrrhenian coast, thus became an important Etruscan outpost in Campania, being "one of the southernmost expressions of the orientalizing Etruscan aristocracy" (Riva, 2010, p. 82).

This expansion was not achieved through direct military conquest, but rather through matrimonial alliances, transfers of prestigious goods and religious and funerary influence, as evidenced by the wealth of funerary bodies and female princely tombs of the Orientalizing era (Turfa, 2006, p. 143).

4.2. The Picentine population: identity and territoriality

The Picentines, on the other hand, represent a population of Italic origin, linguistically and culturally related to the Sabines, the Osci and the Samnites. Their presence in the southern area of Italy is attested by Greek and Latin sources, but also by archaeological evidence that indicates a stable and continuous habitation, in parallel with the Etruscan expansion. In Bradley's (2000) opinion, the Picentines "were not completely absorbed by the Etruscan influence, but maintained a distinct identity within a relationship of economic and cultural interdependence" (p. 215).

This coexistence was not without tensions, but it seems that, in areas such as Pontecagnano, a form of aristocratic cohabitation prevailed, in which the local Picentine elites adopted Etruscan prestige models, while preserving some of their own traditions, especially in funerary and religious terms.

4.3. Archaeological evidence of coexistence: Pontecagnano case study

Tomb T.10043 is emblematic of this cultural synthesis. The travertine construction, the Hellenistic-influenced painted decoration and the burial objects (including the golden wreath, the vessel with mythological symbols and the decorative festoons) suggest an aristocratic funerary environment specific to the Etruscan-Campanian elite. However, the absence of an abundant

funerary inventory and the modest dimensions of the room could indicate a local adaptation of an Etruscan model to the Picentian social context.

In this regard, Riva (2005) points out that "the funerary forms adopted by local elites in southern Italy do not reflect a simple imitation of the Nordic Etruscans, but a deliberate selection of locally negotiated symbols of power" (p. 147). Therefore, the painted tomb at Pontecagnano must be read as the result of a dynamic cultural interaction, rather than as a pure expression of a transplanted Etruscan tradition.

4.4.Interpretation of coexistence: synthesis, not domination

This perspective is also supported by recent research that defines the area of the pre-Roman Campaign as a space of "cultural hybridization". According to Smith (2014), "local identities in ancient southern Italy were formed in a context of ethnic pluralism and symbolic competition among regional elites" (p. 121). Thus, the coexistence between the Etruscans and the Picentini can be interpreted not as a phenomenon of cultural domination, but as a process of identity negotiation, visible especially in funerary practices, urbanism and iconography.

5. The representation of women in the Etruscan elites – a comparative analysis of aristocratic female tombs

The comparative study of aristocratic female tombs in the Etruscan and Campanian area offers a privileged perspective on how female elites were integrated into the symbolic structure of power, prestige and collective identity in Italian antiquity. Tomb T.10043, recently discovered in Pontecagnano, is part of a funerary model that suggests the deceased's belonging to a higher social class, and its painted decoration brings into question elements of continuity and rupture with the female aristocratic traditions of the VIII-VI centuries î.Hr.

5.1. Female princely tombs in the Orientalizing period

During the Orientalizing period (ca. 730–580 î.Hr.), Pontecagnano was the center of an aristocratic community marked by Mediterranean influences, especially Oriental and Etruscan. Some of the most spectacular tombs from this era belong to women – identifiable by the presence of gold jewelry, bronze

mirrors, ornamental fibulae, and imported luxury vessels, suggesting high status and active participation in social and religious ceremonies.

An eloquent example is the tomb that could be defined as the "tomb of the Princess" from Pontecagnano (7th century î.Hr.), which contained a large amount of prestigious objects, including a golden crown, a cosmetic trousseau and ceramic vessels imported from the Orientalizing. According to Perkins (2007), "the funerary representation of the Etruscan aristocratic woman reflects a double function – as custodian of domestic luxury and as symbolic mediator of family prestige" (p. 172).

5.2. Tomb T.10043: continuities and transformations

In contrast, tomb T.10043 – dated to the end of the fourth century î.Hr. – offers a more sober and symbolic image of the female elite. The burial chamber is painted with narrative scenes – among which the motif of the "return of the warrior" stands out – and the presence of a vessel with possible mythological meanings and a funerary wreath suggests an identity of rank, but not ostentatious.

Figure 3. Ritual ceramic objects discovered in tombs (source: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Pontecagnano, 2021).

This moderation in the display of funerary wealth may reflect an ideological transformation in the representation of the female elite, in the context of intense contact with Hellenistic and Oscan models in southern Italy. Riva (2010) notes that "the female elites of the 4th–3rd centuries î.Hr. are defined more by their symbolic participation in the ideology of the warrior and the house, than by the visible accumulation of funerary goods" (p. 95).

5.3. Similarities and differences between eras

Comparing the two periods, one can identify some major lines of evolution in the social representation of aristocratic women:

The role of women as a symbolic figure in the aristocratic family continues to be emphasized, but with a shift from material expression (jewelry, luxury) to a more narrative and iconographic one (painting, implicit rituals).

In both eras, the woman appears in a central position in the funerary space, not as a passive figure, but as an active representation of the values of the community – hospitality, memory, continuity.

Unlike the Orientalizing period, in the late Hellenistic era the female elites adopt a more spiritualized, discreet representation, possibly under the influence of new religious currents and changes in the structure of the aristocracy.

5.4. Ideological interpretation of tomb T.10043

The painted decoration, rare in the Pontecagnano area, emphasizes not only the noble status of the deceased, but also the transformation of the tomb's function – from a repository of luxury to a space of ritual memory. In this sense, the painting with the return of the warrior could be interpreted as a metaphor for the symbolic return of the absent one – a man, perhaps the husband, brother or son of the deceased – to the family space.

This symbolic resignification of the female role in death shows an adaptation to new forms of cultural representation, which go beyond mere material ostentation. As Camporeale (2001) notes, "Etruscan women are not only reflections of male power, but ideological actors in the representation and continuity of aristocratic values" (p. 234).

6. Coexistence, synthesis and identity in the south of pre-Roman Italy. A cultural-historical reading of funerary symbolism

The study of the relations between the Etruscans and the Picentini in the southern region of Italy, especially in the Pontecagnano area, must be placed in the broader context of the cultural frontiers of Antiquity. In an era marked by mobility, conflict and trade, the Italic space became an area of intense contact between indigenous peoples and external influences, especially from the Greek and Oriental worlds. In this context, the painted tomb T.10043, with its distinct symbolism, reflects not only class membership, but also a composite cultural identity.

6.1. Etruscans and Picentini: origins and relationsin the border area

The Picentian population is archaeologically and literarily attested as one of the Osco-Sabellian communities that migrated south during the first millennium î.Hr., settling in the hilly areas of Campania and Lucania. In contrast, the Etruscans, with a strongly urbanized core in central Italy (Etruria proper), extended their cultural and economic influence southward through trade, aristocratic networks, and the establishment of colonies (Riva, 2010).

Pontecagnano, located near the Gulf of Salerno, thus becomes a point of intersection between these two worlds. As Van Dommelen (2002) remarks, "ethnic borders in Antiquity were not rigid barriers, but spaces for interaction, synthesis and negotiation of identity" (p. 303). The archaeological evidence from the necropolis of Pontecagnano reflects precisely this ambivalence: a local aristocracy adopts Etruscan models (in the architecture of the tombs and in the rites), but also preserves local peculiarities, probably Picentine.

6.2. T.10043: a symbolic representation of cultural synthesis

The mural painting in tomb T.10043 – the scene of the "return of the warrior" – is not a simple iconographic motif, but a narrative choice with a deep cultural charge. This can be interpreted as a gesture of integration into an Etruscan collective memory in which the figure of the returning warrior symbolizes the continuity of the community and the aristocratic ideal of honor and loyalty.

At the same time, the placement of a woman in such a pictorial setting, without an explicit representation, but suggesting her presence through elaborate funerals, shows an adaptation of male heroic iconography in a familial and feminine setting – an aspect specific to the Italic border funerary culture. According to Ceccarelli (2011), "in southern Italy, local elites created a hybrid version of aristocratic values, combining Greek symbolism with Italic and Etruscan traditions" (p. 118).

6.3. Cultural pluralism and local orientalisms

Both the Etruscans and the Picentines were deeply influenced by the contact with the Near East and archaic Greece. Artifacts from female princely tombs (Phoenician fibulae, Greek pottery, Egyptian mirrors) reflect a localized Orientalism, in which these objects take on new meanings depending on the cultural context in which they are inserted (Izzet, 2007).

Tomb T.10043 continues this tradition by selecting iconographic motifs that are not exclusively Etruscan, but are adapted to a multi-ethnic local identity. Especially in the southern regions, the idea of a mixed aristocracy, in which the Etruscans and Picentines collaborated, is reflected in the style of the tombs, in the combination of cremation and inhumation practices, and in religious syncretism.

Thus, the painting of tomb T.10043 is not just decoration, but the expression of a hybrid funerary ideology, in which elements of the Greek-Oriental imaginary are reformulated to serve the local Italic elite. This phenomenon can be understood in the light of recent theories on cultural hybridization and symbolic "glocalization" in Antiquity (Van Dommelen, 2006).

7. Conclusions

7.1. Memory, identity and cultural heritage in the Pontecagnan area

The Pontecagnano area offers a paradigmatic case of cultural synthesis between Etruscans, Picentini and Greco-Oriental influences, visible both in artifacts and in funerary ideological practices. This coexistence was not a passive one, but a creative one, giving rise to hybrid cultural forms, in which identity was not fixed, but constantly negotiated through rituals, symbols and prestigious relationships. The painted tomb T.10043 thus becomes not only an archaeological object, but a social and

ideological document, in which an aristocratic female figure is implicitly represented by a symbolic discourse of return and memory.

This identity negotiation between diverse cultural influences — Etruscan, Picentina, Greek, Oriental — reflects a model of functional pluralism, in which borders do not separate, but stimulate cultural creativity. As we have shown, "cultural pluralism is not perceived as dilution, but as a surplus of meaning, and ethnic borders are treated as spaces of symbolic creation".

7.2. The legacy of cohabitation: reflections in today's culture

This ancient cultural dynamic has left its mark on the Campania region to this day. The Etruscan-Picentian heritage is not just a museum reality, but a living one, integrated into the local identity. Toponymy, rural architecture, culinary customs and ritual practices (including religious processions and ancestor worship) bear the traces of this historical stratification.

Today, Pontecagnano Faiano is a city that capitalizes on its archaeological heritage as a central element of community identity. The National Archaeological Museum of Pontecagnano is not only a cultural institution, but also a space for education and symbolic reactivation of the past. Projects such as L'emozione di una scoperta, dedicated to tomb T.10043, become modern forms of "storytelling" of local history, in which the current population reinterprets its own past.

In addition, many of the social values present in the local culture – respect for elderly women, extended family rituals, the importance of hospitality and gift – can be related to that Italian aristocratic tradition, in which the extended family was the symbolic nucleus of the continuity of the community. Thus, we can affirm that the cultural heritage of Etruscan-Picentian coexistence has not been forgotten, but transformed into cultural codes that continue to structure daily life.

7.3. The position of women: between visibility and symbolic authority

An essential aspect revealed by tomb T.10043 and the aristocratic female tombs of the Orientalizing era is the social visibility of women within the local elites. Unlike other ancient Mediterranean societies, the Etruscan

culture and, in part, the Picentine culture, recognized a certain degree of autonomy and prestige for women of high rank.

The fact that the woman buried in T.10043 is honored by a painted tomb – a rarity in the Hellenistic era – and indirectly represented by masculine symbols (the warrior, the return, the house) indicates a transfer of prestige from the family sphere to the funerary one. So, not only men were associated with line and memory continuity, but also women, especially those belonging to the elite.

This pattern can be interpreted as a form of feminine symbolic authority, also visible in older artifacts such as rich funerary furniture, mirrors, and ceremonial fibulae. As Perkins (2009) states, "the representation of women in Etruscan culture is one of the most progressive in the Mediterranean world, through the public recognition of their social function"[14].

Therefore, in the context of the Etruscan-Picentian synthesis, the woman appears not only as a ritual subject, but as an agent of continuity and collective memory – a central figure in the community's imaginary.

7.4. Relevance for historical-cultural studies

The study of the Pontecagnano case offers us a methodological and epistemological lesson: contextual archaeological analysis, combined with historiographical reflection, allows for a deeper reading of cultural identity. It is not only about discovering who the Etruscans or the Picentines were, but how they coexisted, created, represented themselves and were represented. In a current global context, in which pluralism and identity are once again tense topics, the example of a multicultural and creative antiquity becomes all the more relevant.

Pontecagnano is not just an archaeological area; it is a metaphor for pre-Roman Europe — a place of encounter, negotiation and identity creation. The painted tomb T.10043 offers us a symbolic window into a world in which female elites, warrior symbolism and funerary painting composed a complex language of collective memory. And this world continues, in a discreet form, to live in the local people, in their culture, in the active memory of a plural and profound past.

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Photo sources:

1. Helmet-shaped cinerary cap (late ninth century î.Hr.), with two 3D human silhouettes — a female figure embracing a male figure. Photo published by Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Pontecagnano "Gli Etruschi di frontiera", on the official Facebook page, post with the ID 5202331606503314 within the 1000594956677021 set, accessed on August 8, 2025.

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GHEORGHE I. BRĂTIANU: "THE BLACK SEA ISSUE IS ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF HISTORY" (FOUR LECTURES AND AN ARTICLE FROM THE YEARS 1943–1944)

Stoica LASCU, PhD, *Ovidius* University, Constanța

Abstract: *The author of the remarkable synthesis, written in French, Marea Neagră (published posthumously, in Munich in 1969, and translated into Romanian in 1988), the great Romanian historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu (1898-1953) referred to the history of the Black Sea in various guises in the 1930s-1940s – conferences, articles, speeches. In the present material, the Black Sea issue is presented at four conferences and one article, from 1943 and 1944*.

Keywords: Gheorghe I. Brătianu, The Black Sea Issue, Russia, Romanian History.

Gheorghe I. Brătianu (1898-1953) occupies a prominent place in our historiography, as shown in an early scientific reassessment of the scholar who died in detention (without having been judged). He contributed to raising our historiography to a higher, modern level, comparable to other European historiographical schools[i]**.** In the most recent (2021/2022) academic synthesis of the "representatives of Romanian historical writing," it is stated that he "is undoubtedly one of the most well-known and gifted Romanian historians, with lasting prestige both nationally and internationally. This is due to his meticulous education, intellectual endowment, wide cultural horizon, versatile erudition, lucidity, interpretative flexibility, and the meticulousness with which he elaborated his works.[ii]"

A learned historian and politician[iii] (including the founder of a political formation[iv]) – whose "relevance as a scientific and human model" is recognized as such – his life[v] and scientific work[vi] have attracted increasing interest over the past four and a half decades from Romanian scholars of Clio.

In this context, the editorial recovery of his major historical works in the 1980s – ***The Historical Tradition Regarding the Foundation of the Romanian States*** (published in 1980, edited by the diligent cultural figure Valeriu Râpeanu[vii]), ***The Black Sea: From Origins to the Ottoman Conquest*** (1988: edited by the versatile historian and editor Victor Spinei[viii]), and ***Une énigme soignée / A Historical Enigma and Miracle: The Romanian People*** (in French and separately in Romanian, editions edited by the renowned medievalist/Byzantinologist Stelian Brezeanu) – became remarkable milestones in the recovery of the fundamental values of our culture[ix].

The Romanian historian was also a prolific lecturer, delivering various public lectures – at the Athenaeums and on the radio (in addition to his university lectures) – some of which were included in a standalone volume published at the beginning of 1942[x].

In the present article are made available to today's interested readership four lectures and one article dating from 1943–1944[xi], all addressing the question of the Black Sea (including the Straits) in its historical context[xii]—examining in particular the interests of the Great Powers, most notably those of the Russian Empire and the U.S.S.R. (without becoming entangled in unscientific polemics)—and emphasizing the role of the Romanian space within the Pontic basin ("starting from the observation that our history has developed and continues to develop between two permanent factors: the Mountain and the Sea"), including the issue of Bessarabia[xiii].

The Black Sea Issue

Lecture by Mr. Gh. I. Brătianu

On Tuesday afternoon, at the Romanian Athenaeum, within the framework of the "Free University" lecture series, Professor **Gheorghe I. Brătianu** delivered a talk on *"The Black Sea Question"*, considered in the light of Romanian political history, world history, and the political and military events of the day.

From the outset, the lecturer stressed the importance of the topic, recalling the subjects that, prior to the last war, had been the focus of the famous lectures of "his unforgettable predecessor, Professor Nicolae

Iorga," at the Chair of History of the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest: *"The Rhine Question," "The Danube Question,"* and *"The Ocean Question."*[xiv]

Professor Gheorghe Brătianu then developed his lecture with erudition and eloquence, grounding it in facts and documents, and starting from the observation that our history has developed and continues to develop between two permanent factors: the Mountain and the Sea.

One of our earliest voivodes styled himself "Ruler of the land from the mountains to the sea," and whenever the enemies from our immediate neighborhood sought our destruction, it was in the direction of the mountains and the sea that they first struck.

Examples:

When the voivode of Wallachia was invaded by the Ottomans, our access to the Danube and to the Sea was the first to be cut off. Stephen the Great had to fight the enemies of Moldavia both in the mountains of Suceava and at Chilia and Cetatea Albă.

Yet the Black Sea Question is not merely a chapter of Romanian history; it is also one of world history.

Within this history, the Black Sea has always appeared as a primary goal and principal instrument of Russia's enduring aspirations for expansion into Europe.

And in the path of these expansions, we have always been the first to stand exposed.

The salvation of our national existence lay in the fact that each of these Russian attempts at expansion invariably collided with the contrary stance of the Great European Powers, which—acting for their own security—have always had an interest that we should remain here, at the eastern frontier of Europe, sometimes whole, sometimes dismembered, but always a barrier and a guard.

Beginning especially with the seventeenth century, the Russians—under two of their most prominent rulers, Tsarina Sophia and Tsar Peter I—undertook three serious attempts at expansion, along three distinct directions: first toward the Sea of Azov, then toward the mouths of the Danube, and a third time toward the Caucasian littoral. Since their main adversary was the Ottoman Empire—then still powerful—these attempts succeeded only in part, and all were ultimately equivalent to genuine failures.

Each time, St. Petersburg naturally sought to win over at least one European power in favor of its ventures. And from these ventures, several lessons may be drawn—lessons of lasting relevance.

Thus, for example, shortly before the Peace of Klausewitz, while the Russians were scheming to secure against the Ottomans the alliance of Leopold of Austria, they did not succeed, for the emperor was warned by one of his imperial counsellors—an instance of prophetic foresight on the part of a diplomat of three centuries ago—who informed him that the security of Austria and of Europe depended on Russia's *not* possessing Crimea and Bessarabia (the Budjak), and that such security could only be complete if supported by an unthreatened Transylvania.

The lecturer further quoted the chronicler Neculce, who recorded one of the "clauses" of the international treaty between his Prince and the Tsar of St. Petersburg, by which a Moldavia whole and entire was recognized, with Bessarabia and the Budjak as rightful parts of it, and with its natural frontier, the Dniester. A precious lesson, for even the history of Russia thus vindicates Romania!

This stands in contrast with Molotov's ultimatum of 1940, which justified its claims by alleging that Bessarabia had a Ukrainian population. This brazen falsehood—emphasized the speaker—is refuted by Russia's own history.

Another lesson to be retained is never to underestimate—whether in diplomatic or in military struggle—one's adversary, in this case, the Russian.

For instance, much has been said of Peter the Great as the creator of modern Russia and its civilizer—by cutting the peasants' long hair, abolishing their caftans, and introducing other reforms, comparable to Kemal's reforms in present-day Turkey. But less attention has been given to another aspect, one whose reality we see most clearly today: that Peter the Great, the creator of the modern Russian state, was also the founder of Russian militarism, which—with few interruptions in history—reappears today in all its aggressive clarity.

Likewise, both Peter the Great and Stalin prepared militarily in secret, without the knowledge or cooperation of the outside world. From Peter the Great's time onward, the Ural region was transformed into a vast industrial zone. Throughout the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, Russia waged war exclusively with Russian iron from the Urals,

converted into enormous mines and factories served by millions of serf peasants.

Today, Russian expansionism seeks to reassert itself in identical fashion. (This second part of the subject, *The Black Sea Question*, is to be developed by Professor Gheorghe Brătianu in his lecture announced for next Tuesday.)

Under these conditions, the famous *Testament of Peter the Great*— although historically apocryphal and produced in its time by interested parties for what might even then be called "propaganda purposes"— remains nonetheless valid as an eloquent expression of Russia's permanent imperial ambitions, all the more threatening in its categorical injunctions, which appear to have been faithfully obeyed by Peter's successors, regardless of "ideological" color:

- A Russian people permanently and powerfully armed;
- Constant interference in all European affairs;
- Aiming successively at Europe's discord and subjugation;
- And seeking free access to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea— thence to all the seas of the world[xv].

The Expansion of Russia into the Black Sea. The Question of Bessarabia

Second Lecture by Mr. Gh. I. Brătianu at the Athenaeum University

At the Athenaeum University, Prof. Gh. I. Brătianu continued, before a large and distinguished audience, his exposition on the question of the Black Sea.

After recalling the stages of Russian expansion into the Black Sea during the eighteenth century — through the three wars against Turkey, which in 1739, 1774, and 1792 pushed ever farther south the frontiers of the Orthodox Empire — the lecturer turned to the fourth war, that of 1806–1812, during which, for the first time, the question of Bessarabia arose as part of the territorial claims of the Russian Empire. It is worth noting that it was only twenty years before the annexation of Bessarabia that Russia became master of present-day Transnistria, whose southern half it took from the Turks and Tatars in 1792, and whose northern half it acquired in the second partition of Poland in 1793. If, therefore, we cannot in this regard claim historical rights in the true sense of the word — our national aspirations lying elsewhere —

neither can Russia assert between the Bug and the Dniester any older rights or traditions. With regard to Bessarabia, he stated that he does not share the view upheld by certain Romanian historians, from Xenopol to the present — with the notable exception of Nicolae Iorga — who attribute the loss of this province to the treachery of the Moruzi dragomans, allegedly bribed by Russian diplomacy.

On the basis of documents published even by the Russians themselves, a very different conclusion emerges: that Russia had set out to annex the Romanian Principalities in their entirety. Checked by Napoleon's victories, it was obliged at Tilsit to evacuate them; but, an agreement having been reached between the two emperors, Napoleon and Alexander, Russia continued to occupy them, since the French did not evacuate Prussia either. A letter from Napoleon I to Caulaincourt, his ambassador in St. Petersburg in 1808, clarifies this understanding: the Emperor Alexander was not to hurry to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia, just as Napoleon was in no hurry to leave Prussia. He even urged Alexander to occupy Sweden as well; and indeed, in 1809, Russia annexed the Grand Duchy of Finland. Such agreements between empires constitute a lesson of history — one that our political leaders in 1940 disregarded. One may ask whether the cession of Bessarabia could have been avoided, and again whether resistance would have been possible; but in any case, a minimal sense of foresight and even a cursory knowledge of historical circumstances would have prevented the evacuation under the conditions in which it took place three years ago — circumstances that proved fatal to the entire political situation of our country and to the preservation of its borders.

In these negotiations, in which our countries were merely a bargaining chip in the compensation system of the two emperors, there appeared for the first time the question of "a narrow strip of land, which, not forming a province, is called Bessarabia." This referred to what is today Budjak, then under the possession of Tatars subject to the Sultan, whereas the northern and central parts of Bessarabia were an integral part of ancient Moldavia. Russian diplomats argued that this undefined region was not mentioned in the Treaty of Tilsit and therefore could remain occupied.

Meanwhile, the war between Russians and Turks resumed. After Tilsit, the latter had lost all confidence in Napoleon; the Franco-Russian treaty had produced the same effect in Persia. Nevertheless, the Turkish fortresses on the Danube resisted, and the Russians made no significant progress. "Everything will end," wrote Joseph de Maistre in 1810, "with a

dismemberment of Moldavia, either to save its honour or to ruin a province." On the other hand, Russia was anticipating a new war with Napoleon and had an interest in settling the conflict on the Danube. The Turks, exhausted, also sought peace, as they no longer expected any real support from the French emperor. At one point, the Russians demanded the Siret River as a frontier, but the Phanariot dragomans opposed this vigorously in order to preserve a princely throne. The Turks then tried to secure southern Bessarabia for themselves, in order to keep Russia away from the Danube — a solution that would be adopted more than half a century later by the Congress of Paris in 1856. Finally, they agreed upon the Prut line: "I give you the Prut, nothing more; the Prut or war," declared the Grand Vizier to General Kutuzov.

He had, moreover, received instructions from the Tsar to grant the Turks this "grave concession," on the condition that a treaty of alliance also be concluded. This treaty was never finalized, yet peace was achieved, and Russia's frontier extended to the Prut, through an unforeseen conjunction of circumstances and as the result of a chance negotiation.

What would have happened had peace not been concluded? The Turks did not trust Napoleon and feared that, in one way or another, they would fall victim to Russian expansion. Leaving the issue unresolved risked the Russians returning at some point to seize more than just Bessarabia. Yet the prestige of the Sultan had to be maintained, and it was easy to place the blame on those who negotiated the peace: the Turkish negotiators were exiled, while the Moruzi "ghiaurs," victims of intrigues by other Greeks, were executed. One may say of them, when a descendant in Russian service considered them the instigators of the annexation of Bessarabia by Russia, that they did not merit "ni cet excès d'honneur, ni cette indignité." Evidence of bribery and treachery does not withstand scrutiny — in fact, the treaty was ratified by the Sultan after war had already broken out between France and Russia.

It thus becomes clear what "national and historical" rights Russia can invoke regarding Bessarabia: "a narrow strip of land," without a defined name or borders, brought under its control by the accident of war, and which it was ready to return to the Turks in exchange for an alliance that they refused.

From 1812 onward, the protest of the Moldavian boyars shows that this was "the heart of the country, more than half the country." Contemporary sources describe how deeply the people felt the cursed river as their frontier. In the light of these circumstances, the justice of history is

to be pronounced regarding the Romanian land of Bessarabia. Indeed, the Russian point of view is summarized most clearly at the end of his book by the Bessarabian Leon Casso, university professor and Minister of Education in Tsarist Russia:

> *"A Russian military writer (General Kuropatkin), calculating the Russian wars in the Balkan Peninsula, found that Russia had reached its natural southwestern frontier as early as 1792, after the Peace of Iași, by which it received the left bank of the Dniester, when all the last outpourings of blood from the campaigns against Turkey (three wars in the eighteenth century) added only 'a strip of land,' as he calls the territory between the Prut and the Dniester… Would it not be better," asks Casso, "to value this 'strip,' which reminds us to this day of the great deeds of the Russian army? Would it not be better to cherish this image as all that remains of the Eastern dreams and unfulfilled designs?"*

This is the true significance of Bessarabia for Russian policy and history: a mark remaining within its borders, of its desires for conquest that periodically spill over beyond Constantinople, across the Black Sea and the Straits, onto Europe and the world. Bolshevik historiography once defined the "occupation of Bessarabia" as "the first anti-Soviet intervention by foreign imperialists." We can reverse the definition with far greater justification: the occupation of Bessarabia by Russia is the first intervention against the Romanian nation, by Moscow's imperialism, aimed at subjugating the entire continent under its destructive rule. In light of these circumstances, the objectives of European policy regarding Bessarabia are made clear: a gateway for Russian incursions, a defensive wall for Romania.

Professor Gh. I. Brătianu's lecture enjoyed remarkable success[xvi].

The Black Sea Question in the First World War

Lecture by Mr. Gh. I. Brătianu in the "Free University" series, held last evening at "Dalles"

Recalling the phases through which the Black Sea question passed in the modern era, Mr. Gh. Brătianu distinguishes three stages: the period of Turkish dominion over all its shores; the struggle between Russia and Turkey, culminating in 1833 with the Treaty of Unkiar Iskelesi, a true Russian protectorate over the Ottoman Empire; and the intervention of Europe, which for a century — from the Convention of London (1841) to

Montreux (1936) — sought to assert its right of control over a region in which economic and political interests were so deeply intertwined.

From this perspective, the tendency of the Western powers, particularly England, to position Romania as a barrier against Russian expansion toward the Danube and the Balkans becomes apparent. Romania in fact constituted the advanced position protecting the Straits system.

The regime of the Straits remained during this period that established by the Treaties of Paris (1856), London (1871), and Berlin (1878). The Black Sea was closed through the Straits to warships, except for those considered by Turkey to belong to “friendly and allied powers.” In reality, it was a situation of equilibrium and status quo, which lasted until the threshold of our century.

However, after Russia’s expansionist efforts in the Far East were frustrated by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, it turned its attention to southeastern Europe: the question of a new regime for the Straits became the ambition of the Tsar’s new Foreign Minister, [Alexander] Iswolsky.

Following the Reval meeting between Edward VII and Nicholas II, he deemed the moment favorable to raise the issue with the Central Powers. In the Buchlau meeting with the Austro-Hungarian Chancellor Aerenthal (1908), he categorically presented a question of mutual advantage: Austria would annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Russia would obtain the right of passage for its warships through the Bosporus and Dardanelles. Austria generously conceded, exceeding its authority, as the issue could only be resolved with the assent of all powers. England’s opposition, however, thwarted the plan, and Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, also prompting the proclamation of Bulgarian independence, without any compensation to Russia.

This “trick” aroused in Iswolsky a deep resentment toward Austria and Germany, forming one of the preparatory factors of the world war. Meanwhile, conflicts intensified. The Berlin-Baghdad transversal line cut across Russian expansion toward the Aegean and the Mediterranean. The influence of geopolitical forces came into play.

When war broke out in August 1914, the first concern of the belligerents was the position and neutrality of Turkey. Enver Pasha initially considered approaching Russia, which refused, as it conflicted with its claims on the Straits. The Turkish-German alliance and the opening of

hostilities in the Black Sea by the former German ships *Goeben* and *Breslau* relieved Russia of this concern. Tsar Nicholas was greeted upon his return from Crimea with the cry: “Constantinople, a Russian city. The Black Sea, a Russian lake!”

The preparation of the Allied expedition to the Dardanelles — an initiative of Minister Winston Churchill — clarified Russia’s position. The issue was officially opened by the memorandum of 17 March 1915, in which Russia demanded the annexation of Constantinople, the Straits, and a covering territory in Thrace and Asia Minor. The threat of resignation by [Sergei] Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, which hinted at the possibility of a separate peace, compelled France and England to concede. The latter, however, secured advantages in the Aegean and Persia in its response. The concern of the French ambassador [Maurice] Paléologue is notable, as it opens perspectives on the future development of Russian imperialist ambitions.

The war, however, continued on its course. The attack on the Dardanelles was repulsed; operations in the Caucasus brought the Russians in the winter of 1915–16 to the line Trabzon–Erzurum; Romania’s resistance in 1917 maintained the Danube front. Only after the outbreak of the Russian Revolution did Austro-German troops enter Ukraine. By the summer of 1918, the Black Sea had effectively become a German-Turkish lake. Yet the course of the war was determined capriciously. A few months later, the Allies became the masters of the Black Sea.

At the moment of victory, however, they appeared exhausted and no longer capable of resolving the problems of Eastern Europe. In these turbulent years, Romania’s resistance and Turkey’s national revival were the only factors maintaining balance and security in the Black Sea region, as confirmed by the Lausanne Conference (1923) with the adjustments made at Montreux (1936).

The Black Sea question is one of the essential dimensions of Romanian history, which has unfolded from the earliest times between mountain and sea. At times, fate placed both challenges before us in a tragic alternative, only to resolve both itself, as occurred in 1918.

Even today, they continue to share our concerns and aspirations. Yet with regard to the mountain, we may be more confident. The obstacle encountered along the way is only a single people, fewer in number, raised now in our path merely by a transient circumstance, which they have exploited.

The maritime question, with its neighboring regions, and the vast continent of Eurasia, remains a permanent preoccupation of our history. The mobilization of all our resources will be necessary to defend, within its natural borders, the existence of our country and the destiny of our nation, precisely where fate has placed it and where the will and interests of Europe have established it[xvii].

Russia's Policy and the Fatality of the Straits

by Gheorghe I. Brătianu

Recently, the director of *Curentul* reproduced the interesting article from the English magazine *Nineteenth Century* concerning the "constants of Russian policy[xviii].

One of these constants — and here it becomes particularly clear to anyone who studies these issues even minimally — is the need for expansion toward a free sea, an access to the broad spaces of the planet, which would allow the full economic and political exploitation of the enormous resources accumulated across the continental expanse of Northern Eurasia, over which the tsars' dominion has flowed through the centuries, and now that of the Soviet Union. Today's war is fought, among other things, under the banner of the same old slogan: *"the sixth part of the world"* that the USSR claims as its own — in terms of area, if not population — asserting the right to send its products into the open seas and oceans from its own ports, which are not frozen shut for most of the year or patrolled by foreign fortresses and warships. Hundreds of thousands of lives are lost in some of the fiercest battles in history, in which countless military and civilian materials are destroyed daily, all in order to reopen Peter the Great's former "window" onto the Baltic Sea, or that through which Empress Catherine gazed from the rocky shores of Crimea toward the distant Bosporus.

Until recently, at the entrance to the city, in the port of Sevastopol, stood a colossal bronze statue of Lenin; at its feet, Soviet soldiers and sailors directed their gaze toward the same southern and western horizons, driven by the age-old aspiration.

Yet in times of profound transformation, experienced by our generation, even the most traditional constants must adapt their methods if they wish to achieve their objectives. In the era of sailing ships and slow

seventeenth-century navigation, with limited-range firearms and sluggish communications, access to the Baltic or Black Sea could pose challenges — by the standards of the time — for the Russian Empire's policy. These challenges served the needs of its commercial expansion and its political prestige. But these naturally enclosed seas, hemmed in by opposing shores, already posed the most formidable obstacles to reaching the open sea. Consider only the present geographical aspect of the issue, which is more than sufficient to clarify the situation.

To reach the Baltic, the front line today nearly coincides with Peter the Great's boundary; Russian forces barely reached the eastern end of the Gulf of Bothnia. Let us suppose, however, that Russian troops expanded again over Finland and the Baltic states, reaching the borders of the tsarist empire of 1914 or the USSR of 1940. Russian economic and maritime power would still be constrained to the margins of waters enclosed by the territorial outline of the Scandinavian peninsulas, where, in past centuries, it had to share dominion with Sweden or, more recently, with Germany. And access to the northern open sea and ocean is guarded by the Danish Skagerrak and Kattegat straits; the cannon at Copenhagen can close the gate just as effectively as a minefield; the "exit" is, in reality, a dead end, a bottleneck, and the northern straits are linked to so many complex global economic and strategic interests that Germany found it preferable to bypass them, creating its Kiel Canal.

The Black Sea, a lake closed to the Ottoman Empire, does not offer better prospects for Russian expansion. Its navigation key has, from the earliest times, been the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits — the centuries-old goal of Russia's route to the world's major trade arteries. Yet this key is not in Russian hands, and these straits have long been tied to the most vital interests of other states, which consider it wiser for the balance of the world that no continental or global expansionist power hold such a commanding position.

Suppose, however, that by a coincidence of circumstances, resuming the thread of the Russo-French-English negotiations of 1915, Russia were to take control of the Bosporus and Dardanelles, swallowing even the "langue de chat" of the Gallipoli peninsula, which had once blocked the division of Europe between Napoleon and Alexander I. Beyond the straits lies only the Aegean, a sea with a limited horizon, dotted with islands, among which Imbros and Tenedos nearly close the coveted route to the South by their very geographic positions.

Let us again imagine that the Slavic flood poured over Central Europe, encompassing the regions now under Marshal Tito's command, and reached the Adriatic shores; even this sea, the map shows, is easily closed at the Strait of Otranto. But even if, impossibly, all these obstacles were removed, only the narrow space of the Eastern Mediterranean would open to Slavic power, locked and guarded by the fortresses of Malta, Pantelleria, Sicily, Crete, Cyprus, and Suez. Moreover, this part of the Mediterranean is the hub of maritime communications to India, vital to the British Empire. Here too, Russia does not find a free path to the boundless horizons that contemporary economic and strategic development demands of a great power.

Instinctively, imperial Russian policy, during the age which history marks as one of colonial imperialism, sought from the end of the nineteenth century other solutions to the old problem, pushing eastward — to the symbolic "power of the East," Vladivostok — along the Trans-Siberian route, seeking access to the boundless spaces of the Pacific, the ocean of the future. But the fatality of the straits pursued it there as well, with the same implacable persistence. Since Emperor Alexander II lightly ceded, for a trifling price, the enormous riches of Alaska to the United States, the frozen shores of the Bering Sea offer little navigational prospects east of Kamchatka. Further south, the Sea of Okhotsk is blocked by the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin, whose southern half belongs to Japan, while the Japanese Sea itself is enclosed by the Japanese archipelago and the Korean peninsula; in the Tsushima Strait, Admiral Rozhestvensky's proud fleet met its grave in 1905. The geographical fatality of the straits again places obstacles to Russia's age-old ambitions, in Asia as in Europe.

Russia, however, attempted another route to the open sea, one it had not been able to reach either to the West or to the East. At one point, its influence became evident in Iran, and the entire northern part of Persia fell within its sphere of protectorate. Here, however, it had to choose between the old directions of its historical expansion and the new prospects of its policy in Central Asia: the 1915 agreement, which confirmed the old mirage of the Straits — over which, like a golden vision, shone the dome of Hagia Sophia — sacrificed to the foresighted British policy the economic and strategic realities of the Persian spheres of influence, so close to the borders of India. Yet even here, the fatal lock of the straits reappeared: even if Russian forces reached the Persian Gulf, the path of expansion would have been blocked by the narrow passage between the coast of Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, which, by chance, was again in British hands.

Viewed in the light of these planetary-scale perspectives, the geopolitical problem of Russian expansion, the current struggle of the Soviet Union, seems to grind its immense powers more for the deceptive realization of past ambitions than for truly carving new paths into the future. These observations are not solely ours; they have, at other times, been expressed in the writings of Russia's own political and military leaders. A century ago, during the preparation of the Organic Regulation, General Kisseleff still saw the occupation of the Romanian Principalities as a significant step in the policy of the Orthodox Empire. "If it is objected to me," he wrote in 1832, "that the goal of Russian policy is not territorial expansion, I will respond that events are stronger than any forecast, and that Russia has not moved in more than a century from the banks of the Dnieper merely to stop at those of the Prut." Yet three-quarters of a century later, General Kuropatkin concluded in his book on *the problems of the Russian army* that Russia had already reached, as early as 1792, through the Peace of Iași, its natural southwestern border at the Dniester, and that all the bloody wars of the nineteenth century had added only the "strip of land" of Bessarabia — a gain that justified neither so many sacrifices nor so much enmity.

Does not the epilogue of the first half of our century bring Kuropatkin's judgment into full light of actuality?

We no longer live in the age of wooden ships, whose construction the tsarist apprentice Peter the Great learned at Saardam. Radio waves carry news instantly from one end of the globe to the other; fast vessels traverse the seas in a matter of days, airplanes cross the skies in a few hours. Access to a sea, closed by the fatality of the straits, does not solve the problem of Russian economic and strategic power, no matter how many millions of people fall in battle, or how many billions are spent on arms and ammunition.

If we examine the Eurasian margins once more, the traditional routes to the Baltic and Black Seas yield no positive results in the spirit of the modern century: these are routes guarded by the interests of others, constrained by the multiple borders of various nations, each zealously defending its existence, forming an entire system of in-depth barriers to Russian expansion, which cannot achieve here the great objective dictated by the changed conditions of modern technology.

Thus, for its access to the vast spaces of the open seas, only two possibilities remain — aside from the still unlikely case in which it would integrate all European countries within its borders to the Atlantic Ocean. One would be to open a route along Finland's northern coast, toward the

mountainous far north of Norway, thereby reaching the warm waters of the Gulf Stream — i.e., the free sea, without straits, with an outlet to the Atlantic. The claim to the port of Petsamo (awarded in 1944 — ed.), which the USSR did not acquire in 1940 and where, coincidentally, significant nickel deposits are exploited by Canadian interests, is certainly a step along this line of expansion, dictated by geographic realities. It is one of the "corridors" Russia could claim to realize its longstanding policy aspiration.

There is, however, another. From northern Iran, where Russian interests currently predominate in Tehran, another "corridor" could extend southward to reach the shores of the Gulf of Oman, beyond the Strait of Hormuz between Persia and Arabia, where, at the border of British Baluchistan, the route to the distant Indian Ocean opens. It is roughly in this same region that Alexander the Great once reached the Ocean, whose waves nearly shattered his ships, and which he faced from the deck of his flagship Nearchus to mark his dominion to the ends of the inhabited world. Here lies the prospect of penetrating the warm seas of the globe and establishing a vast transcontinental axis "from the Arctic lands to the tropics," as the Soviet geography would doubtless like to define it.

But history teaches us that any "corridor" of a continental power toward the sea encounters obstacles. It is significant, however, that in its expansion from the North toward the Atlantic, Russia clashes with the inevitable opposition of the Anglo-Saxon powers, who occupy Spitsbergen and Iceland and consider the entire Norwegian coast to be within their exclusive sphere of influence. Likewise, in any potential attempt to reach the open waters of the Indian Ocean, it would meet the circle of possessions of the British Empire and its dominions, which guard everywhere—from Madagascar, taken from the French, to Singapore, seized by the Japanese—the entire expanse of the free waters of the South.

We pause here for observations, the conclusion of which readers will undoubtedly draw for themselves. Should Russian policy ever succeed in circumventing the geographic fatality of the straits, which limits its maritime prospects at every latitude, it will still not be able to avoid the equally evident fatality of conflict with British power, if not with the entire political system of the Anglo-Saxon states. No constant is more solid than that inscribed in history by the very design of the map[xix].

Gh.I. Brătianu

The Black Sea Issue after the First World War

Lecture by Prof. Gh.I. Brătianu at the University of the Athenaeum

Two events dominate the Black Sea question in the period following the First World War: the Russian Revolution and the Turkish Revolution.

In the summer of 1918, after the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, the Black Sea had effectively become a German-Turkish lake.

The circumstances on the Western Front and the armistice of 11 November 1918 at Compiègne brought Allied control to these parts of Europe as well.

The Allies could have chosen between two solutions: either reaching an understanding with the Soviets, with whom their relations had been severed, or waging war against them by supporting with arms the new national states born of the Russian Revolution, as well as the counter-revolutionary movements that had spread across significant parts of southern, northern, and eastern Russia. However, they did neither. The peoples, exhausted by war and stirred by communist propaganda emphasizing social issues in all countries, allowed the Red Army to eliminate its internal opponents one by one and to reconstitute the old imperialism on new and even stronger bases.

In this attitude, the question of oil also played a significant role, influencing the 1919 Peace Conference and all subsequent international gatherings. From the rivalry between the two major corporations, the American Standard Oil and the British Royal Dutch Shell, Soviet policy benefited, having discovered in oil one of the most important factors to support its expansion.

South of the Black Sea, the victorious powers of 1918 had decided to carve up the territory of the Ottoman Empire until its elimination. For some time, the Sultan’s advisors, left in Constantinople under English occupation, entertained the illusion that with certain concessions and a humble attitude, they could gain the goodwill of the peace conference. However, the conditions presented to them quickly dispelled these calculations.

Anyway, the reaction of indignation within the army brought General Mustafa Kemal to power. Under the most difficult conditions, he gathered nationalist elements within Asia Minor and began, with the most limited and primitive means, the struggle for liberation and for the restoration of a national Turkey. The victory of 1922 vindicated him, and the Treaty of Lausanne recognized the rebirth of Turkey under its great leader and first president, Kemal Atatürk.

Together with Romania at the mouths of the Danube, Turkey at the Straits constituted, in the turbulent interwar years, a guarantee of peace and security along the shores of the Black Sea.

This example of Kemal's Turkey must always be kept before us in difficult moments, such as the one we are experiencing today. Even during the last war, a verse of Virgil haunted me in moments of crisis: *Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem* — there is only one salvation for the defeated: to hope for no salvation.

In the hour of danger, let us be steadfast, resolute, and determined in defending our land and our rights. Let the responsible leaders of the country choose the path. But one thing we must not allow to be diminished: the moral capital of bravery represented today by the Romanian people and its army.

I am confident that God will not abandon us, but God helps those who are worthy[xx].

NOTES

[i] [Ștefan Ștefănescu], *V o c e – BRĂTIANU, Gheorghe I.* (semnată Șt.Șt.), in *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești (Encyclopaedia of Romanian Historiography)*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1978, pp. 72-73.

[ii] Victor Spinei, Gheorghe I. Brătianu: Between the Vocation of History and the Temptation of Political Life, in Victor Spinei (ed.), *Romanian and European Historiographical Confluences: 90 Years Since the Birth of Historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu*, "Al. I. Cuza" University, Iași, 1988 [x+550 pp.], pp. 91-267 (also included in – Idem, *Prominent Figures of Romanian and World Historiography and Philology*, Istros Publishing House of the Brăila Museum, Brăila, 1996 [414 pp.], pp. 235-267; Șerban Papacostea, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: The Historian and the Politician*, in *Revista Istorică*, vol. IV, no. 1-2, 1993, pp. 19-32; Gheorghe Onișoru, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: Political Life (1944-1947)*, in *Xenopoliana. Bulletin of the A.D. Xenopol Academic Foundation of Iași*, VII, no. 1-2, 1999, pp. 37-44; Petre Otu, Aurel Pentelescu, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: History and Politics*, Corint, Bucharest, 2003 [200 pp.]; Ioan Scurtu, *Gheorghe Brătianu, Political Activity*, *Revista Istorică*, New Series, XIV, no. 5-6, 2003, pp. 31-50.

[iii] Victor Spinei, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: Between the Vocation of History and the Temptation of Political Life*, in Victor Spinei (ed.), *Romanian and European Historiographical Confluences: 90 Years Since the Birth of Historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu*, "Al. I. Cuza" University, Iași, 1988 [x+550 pp.], pp. 91-267 (also included in – Idem, *Prominent Figures of Romanian and World Historiography and Philology*, Istros Publishing House of the Brăila Museum, Brăila, 1996 [414 pp.], pp. 235-267; Șerban Papacostea, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: The Historian and the Politician*, in *Revista Istorică*,

vol. IV, no. 1-2, 1993, pp. 19-32; Gheorghe Onișoru, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: Political Life (1944-1947)*, in *Xenopoliana. Bulletin of the A.D. Xenopol Academic Foundation of Iași*, VII, no. 1-2, 1999, pp. 37-44; Petre Otu, Aurel Pentelescu, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu: History and Politics*, Corint, Bucharest, 2003 [200 pp.]; Ioan Scurtu, *Gheorghe Brătianu, Political Activity*, *Revista Istorică*, New Series, XIV, no. 5-6, 2003, pp. 31-50; Gabriela Gruber, *The National Liberal Party – Gheorghe I. Brătianu* [Preface by Vasile Ciobanu], European Institute (Academica Collection), Iași, 2013 [302 pp.].

[iv] Aurel Pentelescu, *In the Face of History: Gheorghe I. Brătianu (1898-1953). Fifty Years After His Death*, Dacia Publishing House (Social Sciences. Politics Collection, 16), Cluj-Napoca, 2003 [212 pp.]. Nicolae Enciu, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Historian and Man of the Citadel (1-2)*, available at https://www.art-emis.ro/personalitati/gheorghe-i-bratianu-istoric-si-om-al-cetatii-1 (February 12, 2023);https://www.art-emis.ro/personalitati/gheorghe-i-bratianu-istoric-si-om-al-cetatii-2 (February 13, 2023).

[v] Gabriela Gruber, *The National Liberal Party – Gheorghe I. Brătianu* [Preface by Vasile Ciobanu], European Institute (Academica Collection), Iași, 2013 [302 pp.].

[vi] Pompiliu Teodor, Radu Mârza (eds.), *Incursions into the Work of Gheorghe Brătianu: Studies and Historical Interpretations*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 1999 [132 pp.]; Victor Spinei, *A Plurivalent Florilegium*, in *Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Studies and Articles on History*. Edited by Victor Spinei and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University Press, Iași, 2010 [424 pp.], pp. 9-21.

[vii] See the documentary volume, with the accompanying explanations and comments (including the inclusion of articles and reviews related to Gheorghe I. Brătianu and the reissued volumes) – *Gheorghe I. Brătianu 1980-1980*. Compiled and edited by Valeriu Râpeanu and Sanda Râpeanu, n.p., n.d. [Bucharest], 2019 [424 pp.]; I had the honor – as a young museum curator – to be the author of a modest article, published in a journal from Constanța (December 1980): *Gheorghe I. Brătianu and the Reinterpretation of Historical Tradition*, anthologized on pp. 160-163.

[viii] Victor Spinei, *The Genesis of Gheorghe I. Brătianu's Synthesis on the Black Sea Area*, in *Gheorghe I. Brătianu, The Black Sea: From Origins to the Ottoman Conquest* (Vol. I-II). Translated by Michaela Spinei. Edited edition, introductory study, notes, and bibliography by Victor Spinei, Meridiane Publishing House (Art Library Series. Arts and Civilizations 464), Bucharest, 1988 [352 pp.], Vol. I, Bucharest, 1988, pp. 5-63 (Reprinted in the 2nd Revised Edition, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1999, pp. 13-49).

[ix] Petre Otu, *Gheorghe I. Brătianu and the Issue of the Black Sea Straits (1933-1944) – "The Fatality of the Straits"*, in *Romanian Military Thinking*. New Series, XXXV, no. 1, 2024, pp. 216-227.

[x] Gheorghe I. Brătianu, ***Words to the Romanians: Ten Lectures and Speeches***, n.p., Bucharest, 1942. The volume (210 pp.) is dedicated to the Romanian officers and soldiers, comrades from two wars, in memory of those who fell in the hope of the future, and includes the following lectures: ***The National Idea among Hungarians and Romanians***, ***Hungary's Historical Mission***, ***The Evolution of the National Idea***, ***Mihai Viteazul's Entry into Alba Iulia***, ***Geopolitics, an Educational and National Factor***, ***May 10***, ***Three Faces of Founders***, ***Moldavia***, ***Romania under Ferdinand I***. The final part of the ***Foreword*** (pp. 7-11): ***May these words to the Romanians, seeds carried by opposing winds in times of great trial and sorrow, bear fruit in the Romanian consciousness and in the complete fulfillment of all***

its hopes and aspirations. December 1941 G.I.B. (p. 11). In 1996 and 2018, the volume was republished, under the editorial care of Professor Ion Toderașcu from Iași – ***Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Words to the Romanians: Ten Lectures and Speeches***. Edition, introductory study, notes, and index by Ion Toderașcu, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University Press, Iași, 1996 [LXVI + 180 pp.]; ***Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Words to the Romanians***. Third revised and expanded edition, edition, introductory study, notes, comments, and index by Ion Toderașcu. ***Historica Series***, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University Press, Iași, 2018 [220 pp.].

[xi] Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Words to the Romanians. Ten Lectures and Talks*, n.p., Bucharest, 1942. The volume (210 pp.) is dedicated "to the Romanian officers and soldiers, comrades in two wars, in memory of those who fell, in hope of the future," and includes the lectures: *The National Idea among the Hungarians and the Romanians*, *Hungary's Historical Mission*, *The Evolution of the National Idea*, *Michael the Brave's Entry into Alba Iulia*, *Geopolitics as an Educational and National Factor*, *May the 10th*, *Three Portraits of Founders*, *Moldavia*, and *Ferdinand I's Romania*. The closing lines of the Preface (pp. 7–11) read:

"May these words to the Romanians, seeds carried by adverse winds in times of great trial and sorrow, bear fruit in the Romanian conscience and in the full fulfillment of all its hopes and aspirations. December 1941, G.I.B." (p. 11) In 1996 and again in 2018, the volume was republished under the care of the Iași scholar Ion Toderașcu: *Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Words to the Romanians. Ten Lectures and Talks. Edition, Introductory Study, Notes, and Index by Ion Toderașcu*, "Al.I. Cuza" University Press, Iași, 1996 (LXVI + 180 pp.); and *Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Words to the Romanians. Edition, Introductory Study, Notes, Commentary, and Index by Ion Toderașcu. Third Revised and Enlarged Edition*, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University Press (Series "Historica"), Iași, 2018 (220 pp.).

[xii] See, in detail, Victor Spinei, *The Genesis of Gheorghe I. Brătianu's Synthesis on the Pontic Space*... See also: Sergiu Iosipescu, *Gheorghe Brătianu's Pontic Studies*, in Victor Spinei (ed.), *Romanian and Universal Historiographical Confluences. Ninety Years since the Birth of the Historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu*, "Al.I. Cuza" University, Iași, 1988, pp. 85–120;
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[xiii] See, in this regard, the more recent introductory study to the well-known (reissued) volume of the great Romanian historian: Nicolae Enciu, *Introductory Study*, in Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Bessarabia: National and Historical Rights. Edition and Introductory Study by Nicolae Enciu*, Știința Publishing House, Chișinău, 2023, pp. 5–48 (also reproduced in "Revista de istorie a Moldovei" [Chișinău], no. 1–2 (133–134), 2023, pp. 134–153; no. 3–4 (135–136), 2023, pp. 131–149).

[xiv] See, in this context: Stoica Lascu, *Nicolae Iorga – Historian of the Black Sea in a Regional Geopolitical Context*, in *Black Sea Region at the Crossroads of Civilizations* (Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Niko Berdzenishvili Institute),

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[xv] xxx *The Black Sea Question. Lecture by Mr. Gh. I. Brătianu*, in *Curentul*, vol. XVI, no. 5,440, April 9, 1943, p. 3.

[xvi] xxx *The Expansion of Russia into the Black Sea. The Question of Bessarabia. Second Lecture by Mr. Gh. I. Brătianu at the Athenaeum University*, in *Ibidem*, vol. XVI, no. 5,446, Aprilie 15, 1943, p. 3.

[xvii] [Gheorghe I. Brătianu], *The Black Sea Question in the First World War. Lecture by Mr. Gh. I. Brătianu in the "Free University" series, held last evening at "Dalles"*, in *Universul / Capitala*, vol. 60, no. 345, December 17,1943, p. 3.

[xviii] In the introduction to the Romanian translation of this stimulating article, written on the banks of the Thames, the director of the hosting publication, the well-known and influential journalist Pamfil Șeicaru, concludes at the end of a detailed piece: *"In this atmosphere (among the Allies, at the end of 1943, conditioned by the issues of delimiting their postwar spheres of influence — ed. note) of oscillation, of hesitation in the face of threatening realities, the English magazine* ***The Nineteenth Century and After*** *has the courage to present Russian reality. It is a journal that has been published since 1877 and represents British political thought, thought that receives direct inspiration from the British Foreign Office. In its November and December 1943 issues, it published two articles entitled* ***'Constants in Russian Foreign Policy'****, both signed by the editor of the magazine, which means they establish the magazine's stance. We reproduce them in full: today the article published in November, and tomorrow the article published in December. Readers will verify the English point of view and will be surprised at how different it is from what is propagated in Romanian or in French on Radio London. The campaign they conduct (so many have whispered insinuations of intent) finds complete confirmation, so that without hesitation I shout — Yes! England is right, but only the England represented by the magazine The Nineteenth Century and After, the England that senses and even has a clear vision of the great Russian threat. The constants of Soviet Russia's foreign policy?… The conquest of all continents, Moscow as the center of the planet. A bold dream? Yes, but the shortsightedness of the great democracies makes it possible."—* Pamfil Șeicaru, *Yes! The English Are Right!*, in *Curentul*, vol. XVII, no. 5,752, 21 February 1944, p. 1. The Romanian version of the article *Constants in Russian Foreign Policy* (signed *By the Editor*) was published in the issues of 21 and 22 February 1943.

[xix] Gh.I. Brătianu, *Politica Rusiei şi fatalitatea Strâmtorilor*, Ibidem, XVII, nr. 5.777, March 17, 1944, pp. 1, 5.

[xx] [Gh.I. Brătianu], *The Black Sea Question after the First World War.* Lecture by Prof. Gh.I. Brătianu at the Ateneum University, in *Timpul*, VIII, no. 2,477, April 2, 1944, p. 3.

MAY 26 - GEORGIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY
(Some pages from the history)

Tamar BERUCHASHVILI
Ambassador of Georgia to Romania

Every year on May 26, Georgians celebrate Independence Day, marking the moment in 1918 when Georgia declared its freedom from the Russian Empire. On that day 107 year ago, Georgia established the first Social-Democratic Republic in Europe that was governed by principles of democracy and equality and was dedicated to the progress and human emancipation.

During its brief, only two-year long history (1919-1921), the Democratic Republic of Georgia laid a solid foundation of the modern Georgian statehood. "The commitment to the European models of government and to an alliance with European powers began with the Georgian democratic republic".

'The Independence Act of Georgia", declared on May 26, 1918, outlined the fundamental principles of the Nation's democratic development. According to the Act, "the Democratic Republic of Georgia provides equal guarantees of political and civil rights to every citizen irrespective of their nationality, creed, social status or sex".

Independence Act. Photo: National Library Archives

On February 19, 1919, as a result of the first democratic elections, the Constituent Assembly (analogue of the modern parliament) was formed, elected through free, direct, universal and proportional elections. Fifteen political parties participated in the elections; six of them went into the parliament. Among them, the Social Democratic party gained the majority of votes.

Meeting of the Constituent Assembly. Photo: National Library Archives

Following the restoration of the statehood, Georgia focused its foreign policy on both gaining the international recognition of its sovereignty and conducting independent foreign relations. Foreign Ministers of the Republic - Akaki Chkhenkeli and Evgeni Gegechkori, both prominent Georgian politicians and public figures - represented the country abroad and cultivated widespread international ties, enabling the country to open diplomatic and consular missions in Germany, the Swiss Confederation, Turkey, Armenia, Romania, Italy and Austria. The independence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was de jure recognized by Turkey, Germany, the Swiss Confederation, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Austria, Romania, Poland, Argentina, Czechoslovakia and Estonia. Georgia became the only Trans-Caucasian nation to earn the de jure recognition from the Soviet Russia under the Moscow Peace Treaty of 7 May 1920.

In December 1918, the first diplomatic mission of the Republic of Georgia was opened in Bucharest, led by distinguished Georgian politician and diplomat, member of the Social Democratic Party, Sosipatre Asatiani

(1872, Kutaisi - 1971, Paris). The military attaché, Mikhail Paghava and the secretary, Anton Karpovich, also represented the Georgian mission.

The Georgian mission: military attaché Mikhail Paghava, head of the mission Sosipatre Asatiani and the secretary Anton Karpovich.
Photo: National Library Archives

In Romania, despite its semi-official status (Georgia was not yet recognized de jure), mission established excellent relations with the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as with the Ministry of Economy (Georgia mission tried to facilitate import of wheat from Romania in exchange for Georgian tobacco). Sosipatre Asatiani actively collaborated with both the Romanian and French-language press in Romania. He also had very good cooperation with the Romanian Academy, in particular with Nicolae Iorga and Ion Bianu. With their help, in the Library of the Academy, he discovered the Gospel published in Tbilisi, by the printing house of King Vakhtang VI of Kartli, with the autograph of Anthim Iverieli, which is still preserved there. The Georgian mission also had good relations with the Anthim Monastery in Bucharest. In this challenging time, the Georgian diplomacy made every effort to maintain a permanent representation of Georgia in Romania well realizing the importance of its geographical location as the shortest route from Georgia to Europe as well as its waste natural resources and cultural closeness of two nations. Unfortunately, due to the lack of funds, the mission in Bucharest was closed in September of 1919. Since 2019, in the center of Bucharest, on the wall of the former Majestic Hotel, there is a commemorative plaque of the first diplomatic mission of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in Romania.

Between 1918-1921, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, RSFSR, United States of America, Ottoman Empire, Poland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Persia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Estonia, and Latvia opened their diplomatic and consular representations in Tbilisi. Throughout 1919, Georgia unsuccessfully attempted to gain French or British protectorate on Georgian foreign affairs and defense and join the League of Nations on 16 December 1920.

On February 21, 1921, the Constituent Assembly of Georgia adopted the most progressive constitution of that time in Europe. This document, which received great recognition in the world at that time, determined the political division of the State and its territorial organization, as well as wide spectrum of rights and freedoms, including the rights of women, religious and ethnic minorities. It also abolished the death penalty, introduced the legal system, both fiscal and monetary policies, and provided a series of regulations on defense, national language, agriculture, ethnic minorities, and the national system of public education.

Regrettably, the first Georgian constitution lasted only four days. On February 25, 1921, Georgia was occupied by the Russian Red army of Bolsheviks that brought Soviet rule and halted Georgia's democratic development for about seven decades before re-establishment of the Independence in 1991.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in exile continued to be recognized internationally as the only legal government and unrelentingly proceeded to oppose th Soviet regime.

The 26 May, the day of the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Georgia - the Independence Day, holds significant place in hearts and minds of Georgians. It represents the collective aspirations of the Georgian society to determine its own destiny, to strengthen independence, consolidate

democracy, and join the European family. On that day, all country pays tribute to the visionaries who paved the way for an Independent Georgia. Among them, the first Georgian women parliamentarians have a special place.

After Norway, Georgia was the second European state where women were elected at the National Parliament. This happened on November 22, 1918, when the Georgian National Council approved the law - "Regulations on Elections to the Constituent Assembly". The law was highly progressive due to its substantive and political significance. It states that **"**the Constituent Assembly is composed of members, elected by the general population, despite gender, by equal, direct and secret ballot with proportional representation, according to the rule;" "citizens of both genders of the republic are entitled to vote in the Constituent Assembly Elections if they attain the age of 20 on election day". In the elections of 1919, five women were elected to the Constituent Assembly, at a time when in the majority of countries in the world women had no right to vote; furthermore, Kristine Sharashidze was elected as a member of presidium (Secretary). In 1919, the Constituent Assembly of the Legislative Body of the Democratic Republic of Georgia consisted of 130 deputies, five of which were women:

Minadora Orjonikidze-Toroshelidze

Photo Courtesy of the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia.

In 1918 Minadora Orjonikidze-Toroshelidze assisted the National Council of Georgia to adopt the Act of Independence, which established the Democratic Republic of Georgia in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution

of 1917. Ms. Orjonikidze-Toroshelidze was one of the signatories of the act. In 1919, Minadora was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and she was appointed to become a member of the Labour and Public Health Commission.In February 1921, during the attack of the Soviet Russian army, Ms. Orjonikidze-Toroshelidze worked for the Georgian Red Cross. After Georgia became a part of the Soviet Union, she joined the anti-Soviet movement. After an uprising in Georgia, Minadora was exiled to Moscow and she was not allowed to return to Tbilisi until 1950. She passed away in 1967.

Eleonora Ter-Parsegova-Makhviladze

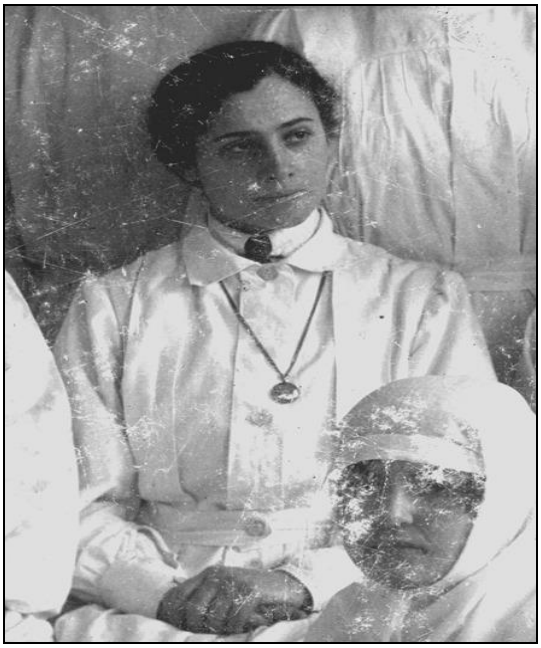

Photo Courtesy of the Soviet Past Research Laboratory

Ter-Parsegova-Makhviladze joined the Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1902. After the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, the Sukhumi branch of the Batumi Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, of which Ter-Parsegova was a member, took effective control of the town, briefly replacing an Imperial administration. She was frequently seen marching at the head of demonstrations and she propagated revolutionary ideas among her students. After the revolution was crushed, she was

imprisoned until the 1917 revolution toppled down the Russian monarchy. In 1918 Ms. Ter-Parsegova-Makhviladze was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Later, in 1926 she was arrested by the Special Commission of the Georgian SSR and she was deported from Transcaucasia. After returning from exile in 1930, Eleonora engaged in private pedagogical activities. Her date of death is unknown.

Kristine Sharashidze

Photo Courtesy of National Archives of Georgia

Kristine Sharashidze joined the Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1905. She actively participated in revolutionary demonstrations in Tbilisi between 1905 and 1906. In addition, Ms. Sharashidze wrote in the newspaper. In November 1905, during the Armenian-Tatar clashes in Tbilisi, she provided medical assistance to the injured. In 1917 Kristine was a member of the board of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians, as well as a member of the founding society of Tbilisi State

University. In 1919 Ms. Sharashidze was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. She was a member of the Secretariat of the Presidium and a member of the Library, Editorial and Public Education Commissions.

Anna Sologhashvili

Photo Courtesy of National Archives of Georgia

Anna Sologhashvili joined the Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1903. From 1918 she contributed to the activities performed by the National Council of Georgia and signed the Act of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. In 1919 she was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and she was appointed to become a member of the Library and Editorial Commission. After Georgia became a part of the Soviet Union, she was involved in the anti-Soviet movement. She was arrested in 1937 by the regional department of the South Ossetian Autonomous District. On November 27, 1937, the so-called Troika accused Anna Sologhashvili of anti-Soviet and anti-collective propaganda and “chauvinist” sentiments, as well as links with the Menshevik leader Ramishvili. She was sentenced to death.

Elizabeth Nakashidze-Bolkvadze

Photo Courtesy of the Soviet Past Research Laboratory

Elizabeth Nakashidze-Bolkvadze joined the Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1904. She worked with the peasants in the Guria region. In 1905, after a split in the Social Democratic Party, she sided with the Mensheviks. In 1907, she was elected a member of the Guria Committee of the Social Democratic Party. After the arrest and deportation of the members of the Guria Committee in 1907, Elizabeth was expelled from Transcaucasia and she returned to Georgia after the February Revolution of 1917. On March 20, 1917, Ms. Nakashidze was elected chairwoman of the Guria Women's Society. In March 1918, she was a candidate for membership in the Central Committee of the Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In 1919 she was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and became a member of the Labour Commission.

Even though Georgian women were one of the first in the world to win the right to vote, the race for equal opportunities still is going on. Despite

challenges, women in Georgia have repeatedly proven that they can break stereotypes and they have a great potential.

Since May 26, 1918, Georgia witnessed numerous trials and turbulences, including historic changes, economic hardships, wars and the continued occupation of Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia (20% of country's territories) by the Russian Federation. Despite these challenges, over the past three decades after the restoration of independence in 1991, with strong efforts of the Georgian people and support of our friends, Georgia has emerged as a trusted and committed partner on the international arena, with its geopolitical, economic, and cultural interests extending globally. As the EU candidate country since 2023, Georgia remains firmly committed to the process of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration that is a civilizational choice of the Georgian people enshrined in the Georgian Constitution.

In 2025, we mark the National Day of Georgia on the background of the challenging security environment in region in times of distractions and unpredictability. Sustainable and just peace is essential for a better future and Georgia is committed to strengthening stability in our region in close partnership will all likeminded partners.

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160 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF ELENA VĂCĂRESCU

Nicolae MAREȘ

Motto - *the Romanian idea cannot be dissociated from the cult of the Romanian past.*

Elena Vacarescu

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Camil Petrescu wrote about the noble descendant of the Văcărești family that she has the truest Romanian blood, she honors with her personality two literatures - Romanian and French. Personally I would say - universal literature - in its entirety. /NM/

Elena Văcărescu is known both as a writer and as a successful diplomat. She was a member of the Romanian Academy and laureate of the French Academy Award. Proving a great character, she self-exiled in Hexagon, when King Carol I disavowed her engagement to the future King Ferdinand of Romania, the one named after the First World War - Intregitorul.

Elena Văcărescu was born exactly 160 years ago, on September 21/October 3, 1864, in Bucharest, being the daughter of the diplomat Ioan Văcărescu and Eufrosina Fălcoianu. She was related to noble families such as Cantacuzino and Rosetti, being descended, on the paternal line, from the famous Văcărești family. Iancu Văcărescu was her grandfather. Eloquent is the fragment in which Elena evoked her childhood years: "In my grandparents' house, where I lived, there was a quiet patriarchal existence and, according to the custom of the time, strongly contested between the traditions of the East and that thirst for the West, for which our nation, avid civilization and listening to the urge of origin, I have always been possessed".

The chronicles of the time depict Elena Văcărescu happily sitting in the shade of old trees, where she hid from the governess of British origin and family members, to write poems. He will complete his studies in Paris, where he will study philosophy, poetic art and history, taking courses at the

Sorbonne University. **A**mong her teachers we find Sully Prudhomme, Leconte de Lisle, Jose-Maria de Heredia and others.

He debuted in 1886 with "Chants d'Aurore", the volume enjoying favorable reviews from specialized critics, being rewarded with the Special Prize of the French Academy.

In 1888, she returns to Bucharest, becoming maid of honor at the wedding of Queen Elisabeta /Carmen Sylva/; it was a good opportunity to establish the most cordial relations between the two literati. He traveled with Queen Elizabeth to the princely courts of Germany, Austria, England or Italy. On that occasion, he will meet the emperors Franz Joseph of Austria and Wilhelm II of Germany.

In 1889 he published "Dâmboviţei's Rhapsody", a collection of popular songs, depicting the existence of the Romanian peasant, opus translated into German, even by the queen; then the work will be published in French, English and Italian.

In 1890, after a long period spent with the Royal Family, between Elena Văcărescu and Prince Ferdinand, more than romantic love relationships were established - secretly supported by Carmen Sylva. The two decided to get engaged in secret, without the consent of the rigid King - Carol I.

It is known that, at the engagement ceremony, Elena Văcărescu, the one who would go on to become the queen of Romania, caused great admiration with her words: "For me, my oath means that no other man will ever approach me so as long as I live. And no one will be able to release me from this oath "... The relationship between Elena and Ferdinand lasted for almost a year. But, under the pressure of gossip, Carol I disavowed the engagement between the two. This in the name of the House of Hohenzollern to which Ferdinand belonged. The reason was stupid - the "alteration" of royal blood with Romanian blood. Equally stupid was the statement of the president of the Council of Ministers, the conservative Lascăr Catargiu, who in turn categorically opposed the relationship between the two, stating categorically "Your Majesty, this is not possible!".

Years later, the self-exiled woman will record the scene of the separation between the two as follows: "/Ferdinand/ controls his sobs, rests his forehead hopelessly on my shoulder. (…) At that moment, I shouted: «Only Romania and its future matter. You will be a great king! The rest, your happiness or mine means nothing"

Shortly after, he will also write the following message to Ferdinand:"Tagi Guangi much loved, dear Ferdinand, I am stunned, crushed by pain. For eight days the tortures and humiliations are falling on me. Today, the king, who they managed to mount terribly, asked me to leave. Yes, I must leave in shame. No one believes in our love, but God knows, God judges us. They say I twisted your mind and you knew it all along, didn't you? That it was not so, that I only care for your heart, only this strong passion in front of which I have resisted for so long, that I was always the one who put you on guard against the consequences that I am the one overwhelmed by now.

They took everything from me, my reputation, my love stronger than life, and the queen, the queen is hardened, annihilated. I am finished, liquidated. The equally cruel and unjust king, he, whom I so loved and faithfully served. Pray to God, Ferdinand, that I do not come to despise him. Our desperation is atrocious. Oh, Tagi, Tagi, who will pity me, the queen? I'm so afraid that dad will kill himself. Write to me, I beg you. I love you so much, Hélène."

In the meantime, King Ferdinand's family decided to marry him with a royal being - according to the statute -, being chosen as his consort - Maria - the daughter of Alfred Ernest of Edinburgh, so the son's niece of to Queen Victoria of Great Britain, and having Maria Alexandrovna as her mother, the daughter of the Tsar of Russia, Alexander II .

The marriage took place on January 10, 1893, and the two had six children, the eldest, baptized Carol, would become King Carol II of Romania in the 30s of the last century.

Elena Văcărescu resumed her life, at first in Venice and Rome, and later settled in Paris. Here he initiated a literary salon where important literary personalities were present, such as Marcel Proust, Miguel de Unamuno, Aristide Briand, Sarah Bernhardt or Paul Valéry.

In 1908, he published the novel "Amor vincit" - and in 1911 "Vraja", works inspired by Romanian mythology. They were followed by the collections "Kings and queens that I have known" or "Le Roman de ma vie".

In 1912, he wrote the play "Cobzarul", which was performed at the Paris Opera. Also during that period, he established collaboration relations with the Romanian publications "Adevărul" and "Dimineaţa".

In January 1919, Elena Văcărescu became a member of the Romanian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, being also elected general secretary of the Romanian Association attached to the League of Nations, a position from which she supported the cause of peace. It is the time when he met Nicolae Titulescu - between the two establishing a close relationship, which will last until the death of the great diplomat.[1]

In 1922, she was elected a permanent member with full rights in the presidium of the Commission for Intellectual Collaboration, sponsored by the League of Nations, and in 1924, she participated, along with prominent personalities of the European intellectual world, in the establishment of the International Institute for Intellectual Collaboration.

The Romanian exegetes did not highlight the fact that Elena Văcărescu also stood out as a translator. She translated into the language of Hugo, the verses of Mihai Eminescu, Octavian Goga, Lucian Blaga, Ion Minulescu, George Topîrceanu, Ion Vinea and others. Elena Văcărescu's creation was in turn translated into Italian, Danish, Dutch and even Chinese.

On June 11, 1925, Elena Văcărescu became an honorary member of the Romanian Academy, being the first woman to have this privilege, coming as a well-deserved public recognition of her artistic and diplomatic merits. We reproduce the following excerpt from his reception speech. "Born from the purest Romanian soil, raised generation after generation in the whirlwind of Romanian centuries, I breathed the fragrant breeze of our springs (...) I love my country for all its authentic originality, from which my own originality emerged (...) I I served the Romanian idea, I tried to spread abroad the fame of the Romanian nation and I served the expansion of the

[1] Cf. appendix 1.- George G, Potra Pro and Contra Titulescu see and Elena Văcărescu, *„Projected across political horizons“,* exerpts from a conferance held in Cannes, March, 18, 1941, respectively Hélène Vacaresco, *Nicolas Titulesco,* in *Hélène Vacaresco. Une grande européenne,* édition soignée et avant propos par Constantin I. Turcu, Editions de la Fondation Culturelle Roumaine, Bucarest, 1996, pp. 152–154.

Romanian soul in the world (...) I first learned that the Romanian idea cannot dissociate from the cult of the Romanian past".

In 1927 he received the "Legion of Honor" order from the president of the French Republic; it is also the year in which the "Universal Library" is established to support translations. She becomes a member of the International Committee for the diffusion of Arts through Cinema. In 1930, she was awarded the "Crown of Romania" Order as a high officer, and in 1934 she was among the founders of the Romanian House in Paris.

From 1945, Elena Văcărescu was a cultural advisor at the Romanian Legation in France, becoming a member of the Romanian delegation that participated in the Paris Peace Conference the following year. Throughout this period, she will continue to be actively involved in supporting the national cause, showing herself as a "Romanian of the truest Romanian blood, who proudly affirms her Romanian origin and soul"; these are the appreciations of the writer Camil Petrescu, mentioned above.

Elena Văcărescu passed to the eternal, on February 17, 1947, at the age of 82, being buried in Paris, so that in 1959, her earthly remains would be brought from France and buried at the Bellu Cemetery, alongside those of the illustrious his ancestors, the Văcărești family. She bequeathed most of the family's wealth to the Romanian Academy in her will. My colleague - the university diplomat Ioan Stăvăruș, who brought all his manuscripts to the country, handing them over to the Romanian Academy - deals with the above. Elena Văcărescu's memoirs being published in 2023 by the distinguished Mrs. Stăvărus, Ioan's wife.

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"A Christopher Columbus of the political order of the "New Continent""

Titulescu died recently. Our great Titus is no more! What a wonderful being we have lost: the enigmatic master of the verb, with his unusual strength and silhouette projected over all political horizons.

I spent months and years of my life with him, collaborated, thought and suffered with him for twenty years... I remember the League of Nations, the happy Europe, too sure of itself (and - alas - of others!). the meetings in

which, with a sure step, with a high forehead, with broad shoulders, with an imposing demeanor, Titulescu passed through the crowd of delegates to go up to the tribune. How close this image is still to me and, at the same time, how far away! For, there, in Geneva, he was encouraged by unanimous admiration; his great project seemed to be realized, to be built in spite of so many contrary feelings and so many blind plans. In the evening, in our meetings, of the Romanian delegation, he always wanted to carry out his project, to present it as concretely as possible: the creation of a really useful Little Entente, the Balkan Entente; both ententes supporting each other and forming the pillars of the Near and Middle East.

But England was intoxicated by the idea of her future trade with Germany, and the "neutrals" (Sweden, Norway) followed her, having the same thought. Upon Stresemann's arrival in Geneva, I see Titulescu speaking about the sinister fulfillment of his prophecies, with a trembling hand gesture and a lost look. And - alas - wouldn't he, himself, be among the first victims of this fulfillment?

Driven out of the country, driven out by the King and those who surrounded him, with a dim look and a hesitant step, this is what the brave and tireless Titulescu had become, the one whose ideas had flown like a banner on the highest mast, dominating! […]. He lived stormily, his hands rose and fell in a rhythm that was a speech. His labor power was inexhaustible. The satisfaction of obtaining justice supported both his legal erudition and his remarkable sensitivity.

He would not change his beliefs for anything in the world. Everything for Romania's rights! He helped her with such laborious will to earn them. He had become the staunch defender of this cause.

He who was so indignant at the lack of gratitude for true patriots, did not suspect that he himself would one day be banished from the family altar where live, in their eternal homeland, the great shadows of the past and who must -remains to the holy country forever. Oh, Titulescu!

Once, talking to me about the poet Mistral[2], whom he loved, he told me almost shouting: "People like him are not only forces of nature, but real events!" This would suit Titulescu so well too. The event that he constituted

[2] Fréderic Mistral (1830–1914). Franch writer of provencal language. The founder of the literary movement of felibris literare. Relation with Vasile Alecsandri. Nobel Prize for literature(1904).

consisted in the fact that, in control for a while of a certain situation, the importance of which he knew how to define precisely, he wanted to lead it to full stability. […].

Like no one else, he understood the plan of destruction that Germany was nurturing, as well as the absolute blindness of some of the French before their own destiny, their abusive indulgence in equally dangerous flattery and threats. […].

When, in 1936, Titulescu, already ill from the pain caused by the knowledge that his work would soon be removed, when he left power, a cry of triumph was heard in Italy and Germany, a cry whose repercussions are heard every day in the occupied countries and even in the free zone.

One of the true pillars of European resistance to the current victor [fascism - n.r.] had been knocked down.

Are there people who do not realize this? […].

Titulescu believed, like Machiavelli, that the greatest good that can be done - and which is also the most desirable - is the good of one's own country. Titulescu served the interests of his own country everywhere. […].

He was driven out of Geneva with the club because he had discovered, under the thorns and roses of Geneva, Germany, Germany swelling every day beyond the brim, by virtue of the amazing privileges which had been granted her to develop so powerfully. Titulescu had followed this process for 18 years; of this enterprise he had studied its contours and discovered its shores. It can be said about him, from this point of view, that he was a Christopher Columbus of the political order of the "New Continent".

The plan of Germany, a plan which at first was hidden by internal movements, but which, with all the attempts at assurance given by Stresemann and his people, drew the promontory and gulfs of its entire geography, finally, the attack and the defense which Germany did not escape not a moment in sight. […].

Titulescu saw Germany dominated by a fixed idea: the revision of the Treaty of Versailles. Since the Treaty of Versailles, Germany has not stopped protesting against the integration of Romania, which it considered excessive, and it was very severe towards the political and administrative capacities of the Romanians, towards their culture and their past. Titulescu always kept an attentive ear ready for the symptoms that heralded the rematch, claimed by Germany and its allies. Titulescu signaled early on the machination by which Berlin gave Versailles a pickaxe from a distance.

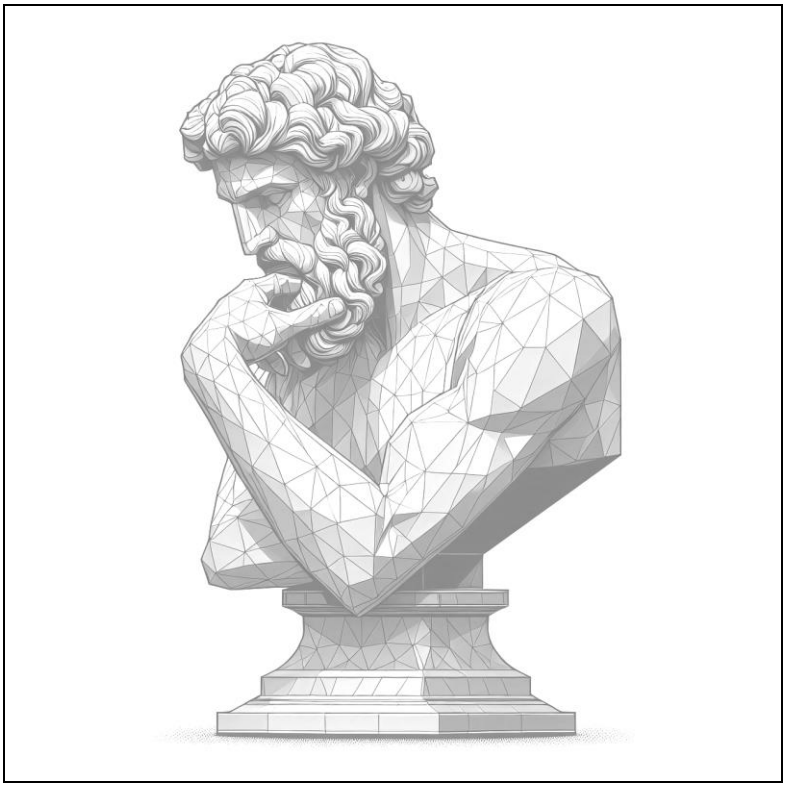
Titulescu appeared as an obstacle in terms of Germany's policy in the Balkans.

But it was at his home, in Romania, that Titulescu would be defeated. His policy, the result of which was destined to abolish war, was to embarrass the financial movement, the vicious game of factory production, which Germany maintained and from which so many countries and, above all, so many politicians, benefited.

Lacking Titulescu, his opinions and contribution, Romania committed a serious act of ingratitude and lack of foresight, because the King was poorly trained or, rather, because he was also caught in the golden network of business. […].

People disappear, but their great ideas remain.

Philosophy



THE CURRENT SIGNIFICANCE OF BLAGA'S CONCEPTION OF METAPHORICAL KNOWLEDGE

PhD Ioan N. ROȘCA[1]

Abstract: *The author exposes and explains the distinctions made by Blaga between plasticizing metaphors and revealing metaphors, between significant myths and trans-significant myths, as well as between these and the categorical ideas, which are involved in myths and metaphors. The author also presents the philosopher's conception of the co-presence of the metaphorical character and stylistic aspects in any form of culture, which also implies the co-presence of all cognitive sources that generate metaphors and, respectively, stylistic attributes or are involved in their genesis. Finally, the author appreciates Blaga's conception of culture as significant and current, on the one hand, because it allows understanding the interaction between the various forms of culture through the thesis according to which all cognitive faculties participate in the genesis of each form of culture. On the other hand, he considers that Blaga's philosophy of culture is important and fruitful also because it allows for the explanation of the autonomy of cultural forms by the fact that each form of culture engages the cognitive faculties in a specific proportion, different from one cultural form to another.*

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In the present study, I analyze Lucian Blaga's conception of plasticizing metaphors and revelatory metaphors and their presence in myths and in all other forms of human creation, including metaphysics and science. Finally, I highlight some current meanings of Blaga's conception, less highlighted by other researchers, regarding the conception of any form of culture as an expression of all cognitive faculties, the differentiation of forms of culture through the different degree to which they engage human creative forces, through the different degree to which they engage human

[1] Ioan N. Roșca is Member of Honor of the Academy of the Romanian Scientists

creative forces, understanding communication between cultures both through their shared logical knowledge and through common stylistic and metaphorical factors, as well as differences from one culture to another, especially through specific stylistic matrices.

Plasticizing metaphors are called so because they plasticize a fact through another fact (the expression of one fact through the expression of another fact). Among the examples given by Blaga, we note an example from one of his poems: “on the streets, thin and tall/ the rain walks on the cataligi”; and another from a popular riddle about a spider: “in a peak of straw/ the monastery of the king”. They do not bring an increase in knowledge of the plasticized fact, they are inherent to the human spirit and arise from the disagreement between the abstract and the concrete, that is, between the descriptive-abstract expression of a fact and the concreteness of that fact, which is not exhausted by abstraction, a disagreement that requires completion through a suggestive comparison with another fact.

According to Blaga, man uses this type of metaphor when “he lives without mystery, without the consciousness of it, in an undisturbed state of paradisiacal-animal equilibrium”[2]. In other words, he analogizes plasticizing metaphorical knowledge with enstatic, ordinary, empirical, or inductive intellectual knowledge, in which the intellect does not leave its ordinary, empirical-inductive patterns, governed by Kantian a priori forms.

Of course, the difference between the two types of knowledge – intellectual enstatic and metaphorical plasticizing – is given by the faculties through which they are exercised: the enstatic intellect and, respectively, the plasticizing imagination.

In turn, we can analogize plasticizing metaphorism with the intellectual definition of notions not by proximate genus and specific difference, but by enumeration, through which we complete a first definition of an object by new features, which do not deepen the initial definition because all the new attributes are located at the level of empirical knowledge or are inductively dependent on the empirical stage. For example, to the definition of man as a rational animal, we can add bipedal, bimanous, featherless, etc., without advancing anything in the mystery of the human being. And in this case, analogy does not constitute an identification of the two modes of knowledge, because the definition by enumeration appeals to the intellect and to empirical aspects of the object

[2] Lucian Blaga, *Geneza metaforei și sensul culturii*, în Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii*, E.L.U., București, 1969, p. 280

to be defined, while the plasticizing metaphor proceeds imaginatively "by approaching one fact to another, more or less similar, both facts being in the domain of the given, imagined, experienced or thought world"[3]. In one of Blaga's examples, the swallows perched on the telegraph wires are called "some notes on a musical staff".

Revelatory metaphors are called so because they “reveal something hidden”[4] of a fact, that is, they reveal a mystery to it. Blaga finds several revealed mysteries in the popular ballad Miorița, including the fact that death is called “the bride of the world,” and death “a wedding,” which gives the fact “death” another meaning, or the comparison of the elements of nature with the participants in a wedding, in a church, through which the whole of nature becomes a kind of church. Among the illustrations with Blaga’s verses, we remember two revealed mysteries, one of snowfall: “The ashes of the angels burned in the heavens/ fall flaming on our shoulders, on the houses” and another of a sunset: “The sun, the tear of God,/ falls in the seas of sleep.” This type of metaphor does not plasticize some facts, but “has a revelatory character, because they cancel the usual meaning of the facts, substituting a new vision for them.”[5] At the same time, they no longer have as their source a disagreement inherent in the human spirit (between abstract and concrete), but rather they spring from the specific way of being of man as an existence in mystery and for revelation.

Therefore, Blaga believes that more appropriate than the Aristotelian definition of man as a political animal (zoon politikon) is the definition given by him, according to which "man is the metaphorizing animal", because: "The emphasis we want to place on the epithet "metaphorizing", is, however, almost destined to suppress animality."[6]

As for the source of revelatory metaphors, it is found, as Blaga states, in man's existential way of living in the horizon of mystery and revelation, but I believe that this source is also inherent in the human spirit, namely in the permanent tendency of the spirit to discover something new not only to satisfy biological needs, but also to fulfill spiritual requirements, the absolute values of truth, good, beauty and sacredness, which are beyond any utility. Moreover, Blaga's conception, according to which revelatory metaphors suspend the usual acceptances of facts in order to substitute other, deeper meanings, is

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 276
[4] *Ibidem*, p. 279
[5] *Ibidem*, p.280
[6] *Ibidem*, p. 282

consistent with the Husserlian phenomenological method, with its two stages: 1) phenomenological reduction, of suspending or bracketing empirical or other knowledge, and 2) eidetic reflection, of accessing the eidos or essence of the objects to be known.

Given that the two types of metaphors have always been characteristic of human consciousness to concretize its abstractions and, respectively, to go beyond the already given knowledge about facts, towards their mysterious hiddenness, Blaga rejects excessive metaphorism, present especially in some poetic creations, in which metaphors do not correspond to either of the two purposes, being cultivated as a forced, abusive metaphorical game, in which the object is tabooed either magically, or aesthetically (as in the poetry of Gongora, Mallarmé, or Valéry), or intellectually (as in riddles), being forbidden to be named as such and replaced by metaphors.

The fact that abusive metaphors (also called catachreses) are admitted in some cultures, but rejected in others means that they, metaphors, are impregnated with stylistic aspects, which, however, arise from a different source than metaphors, namely from the abyssal categories of the stylistic matrix.

From the analysis of metaphors, Blaga moves on to the analysis of myths, which comprise a metaphorical efflorescence.

Myths are grouped, like metaphors, into two categories: significant myths and trans-significant myths. They differ, however, from metaphors, in that they all aim to decipher a certain mystery (such as the origin of a certain field of activity), having a revelatory character. At the same time, they differ from one category to another: “Significant myths reveal, at least by their intention, meanings that may also have a logical equivalent. Trans-significant myths try to reveal something without a logical equivalent.”[7]

Given that philosophical and scientific theories and hypotheses also aim to be revelations of the mystery (for example, to capture the essence or cause of phenomena of the same kind), Blaga discriminates, first of all, between significant myths (because their significance can be expressed through a logical idea) and scientific or philosophical ideas. Both forms of knowledge – both myth and scientific hypothesis – appeal to the metaphorical method of analogy, but the mythical spirit exacerbates analogies (it is their slave), while the scientific spirit controls analogies (it is

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 291

their sovereign), being able to find in a nonanology (a dissimilarity between facts) an analogy (e.g.: the moon falls towards the earth) or, conversely, in an analogy (a similarity between facts) a nonanology (e.g.: the whale is not a fish, but a mammal).

Another difference between myth and scientific hypothesis, Blaga notes, concerns the relationship between known facts and the revelation permitted by the facts: myth integrates (assimilates) the known concrete facts to a revealed power (impersonal or personal – I.N.R. note), while scientific hypothesis cancels the observed facts from which it starts, in order to retain only their common note. Indeed, to illustrate this difference, let us consider that the theory concludes that all people are mortal by generalizing the findings about individual people who have died, but ignoring the concrete cases, after arriving at the idea of all. In contrast, in the Assyrian-Babylonian myth The Epic of Gilgamesh, the idea of man's mortal nature emerges from the events experienced by Gilgamesh, who first lost his friend Enkidu because he had rejected the goddess Ishtar, then, having set out in search of eternal youth, finds out where the flower of immortal youth is found, picks it, but it is stolen from him by the serpent, which symbolizes precisely man's fall from Paradise, through which he became perishable.

In connection with the aforementioned difference, another difference, Blaga notes, consists in the fact that the vision reached by the myth is made up of vitalizing, animated elements that participate in human life, while the vision constructed by science is made up of devitalized elements, substituted for the concrete world.

In trans-significant myths, the difference between myth and science fiction is even clearer in that these myths, being much more extensive and developed than the significant ones, no longer have a logical equivalent, a precise meaning, but are "a kind of revelations that themselves hide an ultimate secret"[8]. To try to assign them certain meanings is to transform them into allegories, but what they reveal is only revelatory through myth, just as "what is 'poetry' in a poem cannot be translated into prose"[9]. They cannot be a kind of collective dreams that would be an expression of the human unconscious, with all their monstrous tendencies (as psychoanalysis claims), because myths, which are "the first great manifestations of a culture", will always bear the imprint of stylistic factors,

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 297
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 300

"will be shaped, internally, by the abyssal categories of a people", while "the dream, the one on the psychological level, is a-stylistic, like any natural phenomenon"[10].

According to Blaga, metaphors and style are present not only in poetry and myth, but also in metaphysics and science. He states: "A cultural creation (mythical, artistic, metaphysical, theoretical-scientific) has two twinned aspects: one metaphorical, the other stylistic. A cultural creation is "metaphor" and "style", in a kind of mystical union"[11].

Metaphysics is metaphorical because it tends to reveal the cosmic mystery. Blaga gives as an example the philosophical system of Leibniz, in which the sensible cosmos (a) is explained by the idea-image of the monad (b), which constitutes the metaphorical core of the entire Leibnizian philosophical system. Generalizing, he states: "A revealing metaphorical core is found in any metaphysical conception: regardless of whether the center of the conception is called Brahman, Atman, the idea, entelechy or the ego, the will, etc." [12]

Similarly, science is also metaphorical because it seeks to reveal the essence of concrete facts from one domain or another of reality through metaphorical ideas-images. For example, in physics sound is understood as vibration, and light in the form of particles or waves.

Blaga also reveals the difference between mythical-poetic and philosophical-scientific metaphors. The main difference lies in the fact that mythical and poetic metaphors respect the parity between the metaphorically amalgamated contents, while metaphors in philosophy and science do not respect it, but substitute the concrete-sensible contents by the ideas-images through which they explain them. For example, in the revelatory poetic metaphor "The sun, the tear of God, falls...", even if the image of the sun (a) receives a new meaning from the image "the tear of God" (b) and is absorbed by it, it does not degrade, but preserves its existence by being absorbed by another, more vast whole. On the other hand, in metaphysical and scientific metaphors, the concrete-sensible images from which they start are annihilated and substituted by the ideas-images through which they are explained.

Returning to poetic language, Blaga shows that not only explicit metaphors, but the entire poetic language is metaphorical through its

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 301
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 315
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 311

material, rhythmic and sonorous side, which also has something analogous to the emotional state or thought. Similar is the language of painting (through color, line, form), sculpture (through matter and volume), music (through tones, melody, harmony), architecture (through tectonic mass and organization of space). Generalizing, Blaga states: “The substance, objectively embodied of the creation of culture of any nature, is in the final analysis, and in some way, always a revelatory metaphor, or if you will a tissue, a weave of revelatory metaphors.”[13]

As for the stylistic component of cultures as a whole, including metaphysical or scientific forms, Blaga illustrates the stylistic characteristics of the culture of ancient Greece, India and Byzantium.

Blaga aims to distinguish cultural creations, including hypotheses, theories and conceptions, which have a metaphorical character and bear a stylistic imprint, from the categories circulated by philosophy, devoid of metaphorical and stylistic aspects. As a result, the categories of receptive knowledge are not myths (as Nietzsche claimed), but categories of this type, Blaga specifies, “(for example, the idea of substance, causality, unity, etc.) undoubtedly enter constitutively into “myths”, as well as into empirical knowledge”[14]. In fact, as he explicitly claims: “Any revealing-metaphorical act already implies categorical conditions”.[15]

Indeed, in the complex process of empirical or, more precisely, experimental knowledge, we cannot seek, for example, the cause of some facts if we do not already have the idea of causality. Or, in a cultural act, in the creation of a poem, we cannot metaphorically potentiate the usual expression of a fact if we do not have expressed the idea of that fact, which in turn presupposed a certain categorical idea, such as the idea of unity or identity of facts of the same kind.

Blaga distinguishes the categories of receptive knowledge, which belong to consciousness and are expressed through ideas that govern receptive (paradisiac) knowledge, achieved through the enstatic intellect, and the abyssal categories, which, in the form of a stylistic matrix, belong to the unconscious and generate the stylistic aspects specific to revelatory (luciferic) knowledge. The categories of receptivity form a constant structure, they can increase numerically, but without changing the structure, and are or tend to become universal, while "the unconscious stylistic matrix

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 31
[14] *Ibidem*, p. 324
[15] *Ibidem*, p. 325

is constituted, above all, of a kind of categorical places, which can be occupied by certain specific categories only through alternation"[16]. For example, among the main categorical places, there is the spatial horizontal categorical place and the temporal horizontal categorical place, the spatial one being occupied by the categories infinite three-dimensional space, or wavy space, or flat space, or vault space, etc., and the temporal one – by the categories time-fountain, or time-river, or time-cascade. By changing some categories with others or by combining two categories into a hybrid one, a lot of stylistic matrices can be created. They differ from one culture to another, or from one cultural stage to another, so, unlike the a priori structures of receptivity, which tend to constancy and universality, a priori stylistic matrices present, under certain conditions, variation and individualization. In general, matrices differ from one culture to another, but also retain some common categories of one categorical place or another. In a cultural community, there are also individual styles. Namely: sometimes the individual adds his own categories to the ethnic, community ones, differing from the ethnic only by peripheral categories, sometimes he differs from the ethnic also by some "primary" categories, but never by all of them: "At least a few, of the important ones, are always collective."[17]

Follows, as Blaga argued in his work Horizon and Style, delimiting himself from Spengler's theory about an autonomous soul of each culture, that: "The stylistic matrix of one culture and the stylistic matrix of another culture often contain various common or related factors."[18]

Through his conception of the metaphor and style of cultural creations, specific to Luciferian knowledge, and the a priori categories of receptive, paradisiacal knowledge, Blaga managed to personally resolve several dilemmas or ambiguities in the field of the philosophy of culture, such as the distinction between culture and civilization, between natural beauty and artistic beauty, between paradisiacal, so-called natural truth and the truth of stylistic, Luciferian creations, etc.

Finally, I highlight some broader current meanings, which result from Blaga's philosophy of culture, but which are not accurately highlighted by commentators.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 136
[17] *Ibidem*, p. 363
[18] Lucian Blaga, *Orizont și stil*, în vol. Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii*, E.L.U., București, 1969, p. 114

First of all, Blaga's conception according to which cultural creations contain plasticizing or revealing metaphors, stylistic aspects and categorical ideas is particularly fruitful and current for the theory of knowledge, if we consider the sources of all these elements of culture. As we have shown, according to Blaga, plasticizing metaphors come from the conflict inherent in the human spirit between the abstract and the concrete, revelatory metaphors spring from man's plenary existential way of tempting the mysteries of the world, that is, also from an inherent attribute of the human spirit, stylistic aspects emerge from the abyssal categories of the human unconscious, which reverberate in the conscious and, therefore, we can add, in the ecstatic intellect of luciferic knowledge, and categorical ideas belong to the enstatic intellect of paradisiacal knowledge. Therefore, according to Blaga, cultural creations are achieved by exercising the human spirit with its inner tension between the abstract and the concrete and its tireless tendency to reveal the mysteries of existence, as well as by engaging the ecstatic intellect of Luciferic knowledge and its conjunction with the enstatic intellect of paradisiacal knowledge. In other words, man asserts himself as a metaphorizing individual and creator of culture through all his subjective faculties, through his entire subjectivity.

Secondly, Blaga's conception of metaphorical-stylistic knowledge allows us to explain both the interaction between the different domains of one and the same culture, through the co-presence in all of them of all cognitive faculties, and the differentiation of domains through the specific weight with which these faculties manifest themselves in each form of culture and value.

Thirdly, Blaga explains that any culture has both a universal and a national character. Any culture is universal through the categories of consciousness, specific to paradisiacal knowledge, and through the categorical places of the unconscious, related to Luciferic knowledge. Through these common elements, cultures are universal through a common essence, through an essential unity, given in a real and conscious way, but also potentially and unconsciously (through the categorical places). At the same time, any culture also participates in universality through various abyssal, stylistic categories, which fill the categorical places and are common or related to other cultures. The national character of any culture resides in the specificity of its stylistic matrix, ensured by some stylistic factors of its own and by the cosmoid structuring of all.

However, from a stylistic point of view, cultures are equivalent in value, there being no superior and inferior styles.

In conclusion, Lucian Blaga's philosophy of culture is current through the following major ideas: 1) any form of culture is achieved through the exercise of all human faculties, conscious or unconscious; 2) forms of culture differ from each other by the different degree to which they involve the various subjective faculties; 3) any culture has a universal character and a national stylistic character, national styles being equivalent in value.

"TOPICALITY" AND "OUTDATEDNESS" OF THE CODES: THE LAW AND ITS GREAT CHALLENGES

Marco BENCIVENGA
Teseo University,
Piazza Umberto I, San Cipriano Piacentino (Sa), 16 84099, Italy
Tel.: +39 089 202 7721; Email: presidenza@istitutoteseo.eu

§1. Possible "outdated" aspects of codification: the aspiration for uniqueness

The complex and epochal work of codification in its long elaboration and historical event, finally concentrated in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, offers us the possibility of autonomous reflections on the subject.

More specifically, the idea is to try to compare this legal and civil horizon that came from the past - a *past* that, in reality, has in any case had a different impact[1] on the following centuries, even within modernity itself - with the dominant legal-political manifestations in the contemporary scenario, reasoning, for ideas, around a certain current*/non-current axis of reference*, referred to the very work of codification.

In this regard, our ideas can start from a peculiar assumption, namely that Justinian's codification should be interpreted - in addition to its many, more analytical technical aspects, seen specifically - as a great *exercise in vision*, as a general action more comprehensively understood: that is, the *vision* of an entire, thousand-year history reconstructed on its various levels, from the legal to the political-civil in the broadest sense, which presupposed, in order to be realized, an extraordinary "exercise" capable of integrating and coordinating this endless historical and cultural heritage. Knowing how to bring together the many threads of their own legal and civil history required, for those new coders, the adoption and development of a great capacity for "vision" to be understood as an awareness of complexity, first of all, but also its possibility of translating into

[1] S. SCHIPANI, *Le vie dei codici civili*, op. cit., but also the two important volumes of SOLIDORO MARUOTTI, *La tradizione romanistica nel diritto europeo*, op. cit.,

a *coherent set of parts* coherently united together. But it is precisely on this more general aspect attributed to the great late antique codification that a first food for reflection can also emerge, in its comparison with the contemporary socio-political and legal environment, since it is precisely in the aforementioned claim to compose a coherent set of parts by the ancient codification that one can guess an element, so to speak, "critical". This element, which is somewhat predominant in the design of Giustini's codes, is his central claim to uniqueness, that uniqueness pursued and rediscovered as a fundamental mission that characterizes his enterprise. As Schipani rightly points out, the primary intention of the codes was that of a unification of the legislative and juridical material, of a reduction of the many rights of the people to a single right - certain, definitive, decisive. Such an operation, marked by multiple noble implications and a real, great political and civil vision, in comparison with modern perspectives, however, also seems to suffer from a strong autocratic and imperial ascendancy, which in fact was really at work in the strong intention and control of the entire codification enterprise by Justinian.

From this point of view, the project of Corpus *Iuris* signals its belonging, in addition to a rich legal tradition and a long civil history, also and perhaps above all to the largely absolutist will of the imperial figure, who perhaps precisely in this intention of definitive *synthesis* of legal history, of a *reduction to the single* of the multiple models of legislation and law seems to resonate, it seems to be able to be reflected, in what we could define as an "empathetic" model with its own prerogatives of vertical domination, recognizable in Justinian's vision also on the military, political and religious level. In fact, the emperor pursued the path of "reunification" in the various areas of his domain, in which the "reunion of the ius" worked in parallel with the dreamed reunion of the empire, as well as a rediscovered unifying religious peace. Now this perspective, so peculiar to that historical epoch that was in fact rather distant, and in many respects so specific to that imperial phase that began at least with Theodosius II and matured with the great emperor who codified, really seems very far from the prerogatives of contemporary civilization and in general of the history of recent centuries, in which, at least on the level of intentions, a *liberal-democratic culture of universal suffrage has been imposed,* it is a so-called "rule of law" in which the power of a single person should be banished, any absolutist or even only top-down solution to social and political life.

Therefore, the aspect so central to the codes, constituted by their capacity for *legal unification*, alongside the parallel aspiration to position themselves as definitive, and which probably constituted in the context of their drafting and publication a characteristic lived in a positive way to the perception of the time, cannot resonate as well in today's sensibility, since it is now marked by coexistence with the multiplicity and dynamism of both relationships, both of the judgments and of the legal and moral guidelines themselves.

Evidently, in the imperial world, pursuing a single model could be an acceptable perspective, the search for "*totality*" was a positive value in itself; But in today's context, chasing a "*totality*", looking for a definitive solution, appears to be a risk. In truth, we understand this danger all the more during this more specific era: in which a tendency of supranational government has already been taking shape for some decades, well witnessed today by the European Union, for example, and whose propensity to overlap with national legislations does not always seem appreciable, gradually imposing a certain "uniform law", a "single norm" to be lowered above, it would seem, of the same local parliamentary legislative elaborations. In this sense, therefore, it could even be said that a certain tendency to codify actors in the large international and supranational institutions has returned, but, if the "universal" intention of civil integration is appreciable, a feeling of danger also emerges, that of a *unicizing* drift and in its own way vertical, which descends from these international institutions on entire states, legislations, traditions, specific choices and local customs. The risk that, under the sign of "uniformity" and regulatory uniformity, an excessive devolution to the *global* compromises and too compresses the needs of the *local*, observed in this case on a political and legal level.

As can be seen, this is a very important issue but also rich in potential levels of interpretation, and which has recently been involving various disciplines of study and animating a certain intellectual debate, for example in Europe, but whose origin for various aspects can be identified precisely in the "great vision" of *Corpus Iuris* in its tendency towards universalism, but also connected with a certain absolutist risk, and belonging, at least as a great original model of sensitivity and "total" vision of law - a risk more subtly insinuated, perhaps, today, in the context in full evolution of States in the global era. We will return for a few jokes to this peculiar dilemma, but in the meantime we can recognize that the prevailing aspect in the ancient

codification that Schipani summarizes when he says it is an operation in which "everything is included", as *written*, and as *certain*, appears far from the contemporary vision of law and the State.

In comparison with modernity, this propensity appears to be a *potential problem*, rather than a solution - rather, the contemporary perspective reveals a fundamental direction towards an idea of legislation - and constitution - that is always dynamic, open, evolutionary. The ability *to constantly question* oneself, also on a legal and constitutional level, appears to be a founding and essential fact of modern systems, a kind of cornerstone of contemporary democratic society, especially in its most clarified intentions and ideal manifestations.

§2. The other side of coding

On the other hand, if certain "absolutist" reflexes may seem connected to the "definitive/definitive" universalism of the Codes, however, it is also necessary to note in them an aspect of different tenor, and with a different tone of interpretation, which we can assume and evaluate with renewed interest. In fact, we have seen how in the Justinian codes something very different from a pure absolutist devolution also acts more subtly: that is, a conception of codification as a synergy between the social partners, between the emperor, the jurists but also, at the base, the people themselves, as Schipani also pointed out, especially when considering the *Institutiones* and their spirit, so central to the definitive system of *Constantinopolitan codification*. There seems to be something ancestral and profound in this propensity, which defines the work of the codes in the sense of a kind of "*social contract*", of a renewed pact of the social life of the ancient world. We can then see here a different value in action connected to the act of codification, generated in its own *vision* - the one already referred to as a perspective of privileged reading, at the beginning of these *Conclusions* - following which the recovery of jurisprudential knowledge and a new foundation of the law of the entire company seem to have taken place through a double movement, on the one hand of reality, extensive *civil involvement* in the elaboration, at different collective and sapiential levels, of the technical and interpretative drafting of the Codes, on the other hand through an even more extensive and deeply conceived recovery of Roman culture, in some ways of its own long and complex history.

In fact, there is a non-secondary atmosphere of civic "belonging" in the codes, which seems above all to bring it back to a certain "democratic" spirit, or perhaps better to a certain community involvement, to a sharing in the sense of citizenship, and in a profound belonging to the identity of the *civitas*. From this point of view, then, the *exercise of vision* carried out by the ancient Codes could offer something significant and important even today, since in it, alongside the pre-eminent ownership of imperial protection, there is actually also affirmed, more or less in parallel, a great capacity for *authentic* involvement of the entire social body, as well as to draw on its own history that has come from the centuries; we could say, affirming in this way a virtuous attitude of affirmation horizontally of the legislative and civil project, and not only vertically of its decisions. The Codes wanted to recover the entire active spirit in the law of Rome, if not even the archetypal element of equality and collective valorization in some respects, far out, if not against, any intention of arbitrary supremacy of class, race, people, economic census. This, then, appears today more than ever to be a value to be recovered not only present in the Codices, but in fact characterizing their spirit in its heart, in which in reality it wanted to find an effective and precise arrangement of the entire legacy of the juridical and civil culture of Roman history, therefore also its venerable already republican tradition: this is attested by the evaluated jurists themselves, recovered and elected by the arrangement of the new Codes. We can therefore affirm that such a spirit and capacity for vision, so convinced of the need for self-knowledge and, where possible, also for the recovery of one's entire history, instead appears in the present time as a great positive value, because such an attitude can offer itself in antithetical terms to some negative qualities of contemporary society, which often seems to function under the sign instead of *forgetting*, so the loss of memory and one's own history often asserts itself today as a widespread way of being.

Especially, when the most uncontrolled and unregulated tendencies of the financial market are asserted in it, which sometimes seem to be unrestrained or limited for their interests and traffic, and therefore often "pressing" against the modern constitutions themselves and their constraints of social and protective inspiration; as it happens, evidently, when in the current time we observe the evolutions of the so-called "neoliberalism". The example of tradition, the authentic dedication to the values of its entire history assumed in its many cultural differences and declinations, really seem to be essential and certainly quite topical values

that an undertaking conceived in the name of the Codifications can still offer us. It could be said, therefore, that in this aspect the other side of the legislative universalism chosen by the Codes is revealed in all this, marked by a sincere open adoption of shared values, and with a strong idea of equality and protection at its center.

Codification, therefore, as an imperial work, in an authentic bond between the government and the people, which, in this way, posits itself, albeit in its own way, as a value that can be pursued today more than ever; and all the more so, when we see how such an "authentic link" between the governmental spheres and society - today, often, "consumerist" - appears to have been largely fractured at the present time. This peculiar aspect that can be found in the codifications - seen, as mentioned, in their most intimate revelation as an "exercise in vision" - we can therefore fully appreciate and also acquire, because in it the powerful nucleus of a real civil belonging resonates with evidence, where late ancient society still recognized itself, and which found in law a zone, probably, of greater "social communication" between groups, powers, classes.

But this devolution to an integrative universalism and transversal to classes and peoples seems to be revealed in the Codes also in a further and far from trivial aspect, namely what emerges in the last chapter of the fundamental study, already considered several times, by Aldo Schiavone, in which a fascinating - but also pervasive - intuition emerges, namely that in Roman juridical history starting from the late Republican era, then matured and taken up again by the great jurists of the Severian era, a dynamic of acceptance in the *Roman Ius* of the sensitivity linked to *natural law* has in fact been established, through an evolution that, however, never managed to mature in that ancient world of Rome. As Schiavone explains, the strong rooting of Roman legal custom prevailed in a practice aimed at the private, where a certain "social ethics" could not really develop to the end, in the prevalence, as Schiavone himself says, "of property" instead of "of contract". It is important, however, from this perspective to collect the fundamental *tension* at stake, and capable as such of offering an additional value, still useful in the situation of today's world: in fact, inherited from Ciceronian thought up to the jurists of the imperial era such as Gaius, Ulpian or Papinian, the tension between *natural reason* - Gaius - and positive law was consummated in ancient centuries, between *natural equity* – Ulpiano – and the fatality of history, between the search for a *just order* and the concrete case of the reality of human inequalities. Faced with

the great question of slavery, for example, the recognition of a potentially higher law of nature emerged on several occasions, all the more necessary and evident as the situation of relations between peoples became more complex, as the imperial state expanded, as well as more complex responses were demanded in the face of the political-economic crisis of the time and, properly, to the *disproportionality* that this new civil entity now seemed to manifest during such a historical phase. The thinkers of law were therefore able to accept, above all else - of any contingency and specific reason, or historically inherited - a *tension* directed towards a *higher ethics*, consequently cultivating the idea of a *natural equity* through which, therefore, to obtain or try to achieve a *just order*, conceived not in disproportion, but according *to measure*.

Here, this pending tension between *abstraction* and *possibility*, between the theoretical isolation of law and the ethical necessity of its practical realization, seems in turn to be something exemplary, even for the contemporary era. In which, in fact, more and more juridical cultivation finds outside its domains, indeed, a reign of *disproportionality* in reality and social relations, in political practices and in scientific and knowledge evolutions, and where values such as equity, just order, collective interest or the recognition of strong inequalities often seem to be mercilessly overtaken by this dizzying reality, continuous transformation. It is the *tension itself*, probably, that offers itself from that ancient juridical context as a very significant experience for us, a tension, which seems to have been combined at that time also with a desire, with a peculiar desire - that of rearranging the imbalance and disorder of the world, and which, however, now as then, under renewed and much more complex challenges, He returns again in front of the law. A great, unprecedented challenge, where the call to natural law finds itself having to rethink if not face, even today, many ideological and conceptual tears that would like, by definition, to go even *beyond nature itself*, and as such. The lesson to be deduced by following Schiavone's reflection is, consequently, precisely the one not followed, to the end, by ancient jurisprudence, namely the need to get out of one's theoretical isolation on the part of men of law, and inevitably try to take sides by courageously entering into the civil discussion, and to affect it.

§3. Autonomy *versus* heteronomy: the art of jurisprudence as a model of critical independence

Dwelling once again on codification in its address dedicated to one's own history and memory, jurisprudential and political, we can actually understand a further level of value, which can be assumed to our consciousness as moderns. It is a reflection maintained for almost the entire course of this research, linked to the pedagogical dimension of law and its codifications: well, it will be necessary to recognize within them a real, authentic properly *pedagogical action*, unfolded over the entire civil life of one's time, and projected as a model of knowledge for the centuries to come and the following generations. But with regard to this, it should above all be understood that, through the virtuous attendance of the codification intention, late antique society seems to have established itself as a privileged path, so to speak, of *systematic self-formative application*, because it was forced, through a targeted and in-depth study of law, to cultivate itself in the *ars* jurisprudence and knowledge of the laws. This devolution to law, recovered after a period of serious abandonment, thus determined a peculiar cognitive attitude, precisely capable through the *ius* of placing itself in a valuable *self-formative* and *systematic condition*, that is, knowing how to cultivate and improve oneself through such a mission of knowledge, both theoretical and practical.

The special socio-cultural value should therefore be noted, also because this systematic adoption of the *ius* was not limited to a simple passive acquisition of notions coming from tradition, but was achieved through the difficult work of selecting materials, and even more so through their *remeditated election* and new recruitment, as a privileged civil and legal path in its own functional arrangement of social life. The *functionality* itself, as such, attests to this effort, which was therefore not only aimed at an appreciable cult of the past and tradition, but even if not above all at a work of reflection and *re-meditation* that was anything but secondary, in its important intellectual exercise as well as in its civic commitment.

As such an example of *civil self-formation*, capable of study but also of re-elaboration at the same time, the topical moment of ancient codifications is therefore revealed in this peculiar aspect as significant as it is current, because it places an exercise of *living knowledge* at the center of

the social pact and civil cultivation, imbuing it with high wisdom the common collective education.

But at this point a further significant aspect emerges on this line of reflection, namely the non-trivial position of importance assumed by jurisprudential knowledge in its assumption, so central, promoted by the codification enterprise. In this reliance on the knowledge of jurists, in fact, a special consideration and validation of an art of interpretation and thought is affirmed in parallel, where the late ancient world was able to recognize the ability to process judgment and the techniques of response as a level of decisive value for a just civil life. Here, this recognition of an art such as jurisprudence seems to restore a high vision in the social relationship between politics, economy and "cultural capital", a vision where the deep and meditated knowledge - typical of men of law - is assumed, recognized in a preeminent position of prestige, and taken as a model of its new civic orientation. The importance of such an assumption of value must be emphasized, because it gives us back a political action capable of placing at its center not the pure pursuit of domination and economic or military supremacy, but an *art*, a disposition of the spirit, a patrimony of knowledge: how much more urgent then today, when we see the strong risk of a pure orientation of public affairs in an economic and business sense, if not purely lobbyistic, parallel to a progressive devaluation of humanistic knowledge, culture, and the critical elaboration of thought itself. But it is precisely the peculiar gift of critical *exercise* of thought that characterizes the profile of jurists and their specific model of knowledge: therefore, this central assumption of value of theirs in the ancient enterprise of the Codes should, in turn, be adequately recognized and recovered also for the present time, in which it seems necessary in fact to regain a fair role of value in the exercise of applied interpretation, to a distinction based both on the profound competence of knowledge and on the acute capacity of judgment - a mode of distinction worthy of the most attentive minds, "*prudentes*" in the oldest and broadest sense of the word.

In such an exercise of judgment and of the "capital of knowledge" represented by the art of jurisprudence, another decisive value is affirmed, namely its indispensable formation and affirmation within the exclusive perimeter of an *autonomy* of interpretation itself and of the *corresponding* individuality in-game call. In this way, authentically recovering the art of jurisprudence means in itself also recovering a decisive space reserved for the autonomy of interpretation as such, and therefore a crucial space for

the exercise of freedom of judgment, expression and thought itself. The importance of such a condition is great, in a society in which preserving spaces of authentic autonomy is a decisive prerequisite for its functioning, if the factor of freedom is still to make sense.

On closer inspection, this disregards the premise we would call a state constitutional, perhaps at the level of the forms considered democratic: but in reality, we understand that it is precisely a legal autonomy that can authentically guarantee one a "continuity of contact" with a certain exercise of freedom itself, which does not appear to be taken for granted even in the so-called "democracies".

Whether and to what extent in modern democracies there is a space for a real autonomy of the juridical is certainly a great question, outside the scope of these freer final meditations, but certainly it is the example that came from ancient codifications, in which, not only, as we said, the figure of the jurist assumed a significant centralitywith his entire historical transmission of knowledge, but also and above all he reserved a high value of consideration for his special attitude towards *choice* and judgment, that is, towards his position as *critical knowledge*, every time, capable of interpreting situations - something, then, which in itself, in its own constitution, guaranteed a possibility of choice *every time* it could be interpreted, *interpreting again*, and therefore a possible space of action left open for the implementation of freedom. All this thus attests to an important value, which not only from the codifications but from a large part of the ancient age and from the tradition of Romanity comes down to us preciously, called to preserve in the most credible way this autonomy of the juridical understood, however, especially, in the free autonomy and possibility of interpretation: a dimension that is by no means taken for granted, as we have already said, because the power of interest lobbies can "inhibit" today more than ever the autonomy of the jurist, alongside the state apparatuses often assumed as a space for clientele, and the often unidirectional "narrative" pressures of the parallel apparatuses of communication and mass media, which are also able to condition, if not acquire a certain discourse, and position, evidently, of the legal world within itself.

The *pedagogy of the Codes*, then, reveals itself precisely in its strong devolution to the art of jurisprudence, as a true "social program" of extensive public and private teaching of legal knowledge but also of significant *enhancement of interpretative autonomy*, albeit reserved for a social island, that of the jurists and their space of thought and practice.

In this way, such a *pedagogy*, then as now, can preserve a precious area, marked by a certain *critical autonomy* in society called upon to face any, albeit possible, derivative in the sense of the *heteronomy of domination* coming from any position - political, military, health, communicative, financial... That he should impose it.

§4. **The *responsibility* of interpretation and the *"automated"* ius**

This observation can therefore very well accompany us to consider the scenario that is currently emerging, in which the easy way of a certain "automation" of choices, judgments, calculations in many social spheres seems to impose itself more and more, under the suggestive push of the computing powers of processing: a process of technological modernity to be kept under control in its evolutions, and of which, above all, the easy drift, so to speak, of more or less passive reliance on the "machine", that is, on the calculation and then on the choice made directly by the new "*digital computer machine*", must be questioned. The decision-making power of artificial intelligence appears as a kind of "toy country" where judgment, understanding, and then *de-deciding* by humans can be "spared", leaving this always tiring path to computer automation. A "technological spectacle" at the end of which, most likely, a real *collective de-responsibility of human society could turn out to be the result* , leaving - almost without realizing it - from any ethical constraint according to a *principle of responsibility*, which can be called into question on serious indications, for example, of an important contemporary thinker such as Hans Jonas. At such a delicate point, then, it is precisely the most subtle lesson coming from the Codes, and from their implicit and explicit cultivation of jurisprudential criticism, that can come a fundamental indication: that of a unique peculiarity of *the capacity for human interpretation*, as well as of its inescapable condition of *autonomy* in judgment and in the elaboration of its criticism; and with it, again, the force of *individual responsibility is* also unavoidable, and coincides with the very exercise of the "response", of the applied interpretation.

Dimensions such as those of *flexibility* and *adaptability*, connected by definition to human judgment, to its ability to elaborate considering the many contextual and environmental factors, prove to be decisive factors,

therefore, in this complex phase in which the shadow of a certain "technological ius" seems to be looming, if not of an unprecedented 'ius informatico'. In this regard, a recent intervention[2] by Danilo Ceccarelli Morolli, committed to reasoning precisely around the great question *I. A. - Human intelligence*, can offer a significant contribution. The Italian scholar, in this enlightening test of reflection, goes back to the famous statement of Celsus, which went down in history as the essence synthesis of the legal task, precisely outlined by the ancient jurist as "*ars boni et aequi*", an expression whose *semantic significance* - as Ceccarelli Morolli defines it - can directly refer to the "ontological essence" of law: *But if law is an art of good and fair, how does it relate, as such, to the advent of new technologies*? What is at stake, for the scholar, is *the very centrality of human judgment*, what we have summarized just above in the autonomy-heteronomy dialectic of jurisprudential interpretation, which is being questioned today: according to Ceccarelli Morolli, *it is a matter of understanding more deeply first of all the very concept of "equity"* therefore going back to the definition given by Aristotle, who maintained that the call into question of *equity* was to be fully related to justice and taken into account the *concrete case*, since it was necessary in the application action precisely to mitigate the rigidity *in the abstract* of norms and laws. Human intervention, therefore, is already in itself involved in the exercise of the first principle of the legal art, fairness *so* inextricably linked to the concreteness of cases and to the contextuality, even the most complex, of individual situations. On the other hand, for Ceccarelli Morolli the other basic principle of law, the *bonum*, constitutes the very end to which legal activity as such should tend, as a "*north star that orients the interpreter and the operator of the law*" in their action and thus "render justice".

In fact, today there is an unprecedented phenomenon also in terms of legal elaboration, which outlines on the horizon a sort of new disciplinary field in which the logics of computing power should meet with the forms of law, and defined by the neologism "Cybernetics". The forms of this new disciplinary field of Cybernetics are manifested in the various logical-computer applications currently under development, of which we recognize

[2] D. CECCARELLI MOROLLII, *Il concetto di 'limite' nel diritto (romano). Brief* reflections, published in "Rome and America. Diritto romano comune online", N.1-2023, pp. 81-82. It can be consulted at https://www.romaeamerica.it/2023/07/11/danilo-ceccarelli-morolli-il-concetto-di-limite-nel-diritto-romano-brevi-riflessioni/

above all the most specific declinations: *predictive analysis systems***,** i.e. the use of algorithms capable of offering statistics relating to the legal data of lawsuits and disputes and thus offering possible preventive tools; legal *tech* tools, i.e. web platforms that can offer automated legal services, such as contracts, legal advice or bureaucratic paperwork; predictive justice systems, i.e. real "solutions entrusted to the computer" which can suggest judgments to judges after a rapid computer analysis-comparison, carried out by *machine learning algorithms* on data and jurisprudential precedents.

As can be seen, a scenario in great evolution, within which, however, the risk that we have noted above is already evident, that of a devolution not to *human interpretation* but to *the automation of computer systems* and artificial intelligence; moreover, the case of the Compas system has already become controversial, which has brought out an orientation in its evaluations that is anything but satisfactory or in itself "neutral"; also because It will have to be reiterated in reality that, in spite of everything, the heritage of the *databases* processed by computer intelligence come in any case from original content produced by human beings, and therefore distinguished as such by the inevitable partiality of human actions themselves.

But above all, as Ceccarelli Morolli reasons, it is evidently inappropriate to attribute to computer equipment the weight of what must be recognized as a real *ars*, that is, the right itself: that specific *capacity for interpretation* that we have seen characterize the jurisprudential identity in its essence, and aimed at understanding the rules through a flexible and contextualized application of them. As the scholar says, law is an art of "***weighing ethical principles and balancing the interests at stake***", and its representatives must therefore "feel" it intuitively, rationally and emotionally when they are called upon to apply it, citing the contribution of François Gény[3].

Therefore, the possibility, although useful in terms of consulting databases and storing cases with the support of computer science, excludes at the same time an exclusive or in itself central use of artificial intelligence in legal work, because its realization within the exquisitely human judgment and interpretation can only remain decisive within it.

Above all, within an *exclusive and decisive human responsibility*, recalling in this precisely the thought of Jonas, when the German

[3] F. GÉNY, *Metodo di interpretazione e fonti del diritto privato positivo*, edited by G. Tarello, UTET, Turin 1955

philosopher reiterated the fact that "*man is the only being who has the responsibility of being*".

The aid of algorithmic "intelligences", therefore, must be placed in the order of what it really constitutes, that is, an *instrument*, an *instrumentum* simply at the disposal of human decision-making, as is already the case with so many instruments, "prostheses" that the history of humanity has put to its use. So that the dilemma will have to be overcome, so to speak, by returning to the very basis of the two conceptions, the *instrumental* and the *critical-interpretative*, and consequently by noting the inevitability of the latter in the substantial management of the former.

This seems to be the only logically viable way: the risk, otherwise, is that of a "*dehumanization*" of justice, with automated decisions that would not adequately take into account the specificities of each concrete case, the social and cultural context in which it is inserted, the emotions and values that come into play each time.

If law is "art", in fact, that is, an expression of human *creativity* and judgment, it is legitimate to ask whether algorithms can ever replace man in his elaboration and application, being certainly neither a real art nor a real interpretation capable of originality.

Ultimately, artificial intelligence can be a valid ally of the jurist, but it can never completely replace him. Law, as the "*art of good and fair*", requires a *humane and contextualized approach*, which knows how to balance the need for certainty and predictability with the flexibility and adaptability necessary, as mentioned, to guarantee justice in a constantly changing world. It may be useful, in this regard, to report directly the somewhat pertinent considerations on all this by Jonas himself, taken from a stimulating volume entitled *On the Edge of the Abyss*[4], and structured on the model of the interview. When the discussion comes to the topic of "computer machines", the thinker offers this enlightening starting point, according to which modern information technology constitutes "a mechanical activity performed first by a living being and then by a machine", whereas the possibility of attributing something similar to human critical awareness to it is completely misleading, because "whoever seriously considers this hypothesis compares first of all calculation to thought and then thought to consciousness". In fact, you need to understand this aspect well:

[4] H. JONAS, *On the Edge of the Abyss. Conversations on the relationship between man and nature,* Einaudi, Turin 2000

"That the automaton can become, through the execution of tasks, itself alive, acquiring a psyche with its own will is nothing but unbridled speculation", (...) "Just as sensitivity cannot be ascribed to a thermostat because it is sensitive to external stimuli, neither do we have reason to ascribe thought to a mechanical process because, predisposed by us to do so, it operates in a corresponding way to thought."[5]

Jonas, therefore, distinguishes calculation from *thought*, as well as thought itself to consciousness: the work of the computer thus reveals itself for what it is, that is, an operation of calculation capable of carrying out with great diligence the necessary mechanical steps of a process - but, in reality, this same operation is destined to be always assumed by an act of consciousness, from a consciousness that, alone, gives its meaning.

Before the process of calculation there is, therefore, always a *human instance* as *an education*, just as at the end of the same process there is an act of consciousness, an awakening, always equally human. Education first, and then consciousness, therefore open and close any process of meaning, thus forcing human consciousness itself to take responsibility. Consequently in this precise essential functioning there is the call into question and the specific function as such of jurisprudential knowledge, and any application of law endowed with meaning - under the double moral star of *aequum* and bonum - can only observe its rigorous logic.

§5. Knowledge of Measure and Limit: Towards a Proceduralist Commitment to Law

Thus resuming the thread of discourse carried out by these conclusions, it can be seen how the essence of jurisprudential identity, observed and reconstructed in this work in its Western birth in the heart of Roman civilization, can really - if included, precisely, in its most authentic essence - represent a fundamental device of equity and wisdom aimed at constituting a bulwark against any drift of *imbalance*, *disproportion* and in-discrimination, in its position, on the contrary, as the wisdom of *measure* and limit, those to be placed in opposition to the action of the uncontrollable processes of technological society, in all its possible contemporary variables.

[5] Ibid., pp. 45-48

Measure and *limit*, as such, represent the true profound dimensions to which to refer, today, those most pertinent to the role and function of legal thought and action.

However, it seems right to conclude by broadening, even outside the "giuscibernetic" problem, the horizon of the challenges that seem to arise in the complex framework of contemporary society, in the face of law. Disproportionality and *imbalance* can also be those that tend to be imposed, for example, by the security company, and by the info-electronic constraint to which the entire society of economic exchange could address, in the replacement of money with fully digital cards and payments. These are scenarios that are far from alien to the present moment, and in which many problems, inherent to the freedom of individuals, or their *privacy*, seem to emerge more and more effectively. The possibility of a[6] potentially oppressive control of technological apparatuses over the entire existence of people appears today truly tangible and evident, as does the insidious possibility of monitoring, profiling, action and data acquisition brought about by the use of *social media*[7] today. The spaces of communication, currently, seem to be a really uncontrolled territory, and the discussion remains open and quite intense in this regard; but already a certain path of answers seems to have been marked, for example by the fundamental contributions on the subject offered by Stefano Rodotà, about the historical regulation of *privacy*[8], and in general on the new relationship between the contemporary world and the context of rules[9]. It will be, from this conceptual magma always in motion, only perhaps here to detect a value, fixed precisely by the thought and regulation proposed by Rodotà, namely the task for the right to *protect the fragile parts of contemporary society*, which in reality are made up of the common population itself.

In fact, what seems to be most looming is precisely the imbalance between the omnipotence of information production and control systems in the *techno-digital* age and the infinite array of their common users, who do not really have access to their basic and substantial control. The issue of *privacy*, in fact, has been prepared entirely on the basis of this premise,

[6] D. LYON, *The culture of surveillance. How the Control Society Made Us All Controllers*, Luiss University Press, Rome 2020

[7] S. ZUBOFF, *The Capitalism of Surveillance*, Luiss University Press, Rome 2019

[8] S. RODOTA', *Tecnologie e diritti*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1995

[9] S. RODOTA', *La vita e le regole. Tra diritto e non diritto*, Feltrinelli, Milan 2009

namely the protection of the "digital citizen" from the immense power of Big Tech and its coils of insinuation and control even within the depths of the daily life of contemporary citizens.

The role of the contemporary jurist – and with it his legal training – therefore remains entirely valuable and, almost, we could then overturn the interpretation encountered in the previous chapters proposed by Schiavone, regarding the function, so to speak, of "exclusive custodians" by jurists in archaic republican Rome: a distinct and oligarchic caste, capable of "keeping under control" but in a precise sense of domination the parallel legislative production with a strong democratic trend line. The jurists, that is, "held in their hands" in a conservative sense the political-legislative dynamics of the laws. Today, in some respects, the risk seems to have become the opposite: the political and industrial spheres often transgress the constraints imposed by the jurisprudential measure. We can witness a double phenomenon: on the one hand, a certain "masking" of politics within a "legal skin", as has been seen in recent decades with international military invasion operations justified, in some way, by an alleged indication of equally alleged "international courts". Whose statute of neutrality and objectivity, from the beginning and for some time now, has been heavily questioned. On the other hand, we are witnessing an almost out-of-control "regulatory hyper-production", produced by liberal-democratic politics and a certain bureaucratic and administrative drift. A tangible phenomenon in the daily needs of citizens, for example in a country like Italy.

Once again, therefore, the reference to the *sense of measure* that should guarantee legal wisdom, its very mode and raison d'être, could act as a moment of moderation by "calming" this often uncontrolled tendency. A paradoxical function, but perhaps not meaningless here to be called into question, of a right called to "moderate laws", or perhaps better an uncontrolled normative production; but in this way, in reality, perhaps decisively redetermining a policy of separation of powers and sensible applications relating to the different prerogatives by the social spheres in action.

On this path we then meet another great contemporary thinker, Jürgen Habermas, who in his *Facts and Norms*[10], for example, seems to deal with such an interweaving in a rather in-depth way: the German philosopher in fact recalls the problem of overcoming a pure "pragmatic

[10] J. HABERMAS, *Facts and norms. Contributions to a Discursive Theory of Law and Democracy,* Laterza, Rome-Bari 2013

model" of the production and application of regulations, caught in the present time very often dominating the political scene, civil and legislative of contemporary society. The so-called *criteria of efficiency*, as such, seem to have carried out a process that has seen them invade, starting from the purely *administrative sphere*, also the entire scaffolding and conception of the political sphere and its logic of management, but detaching themselves from what Habermas calls "conditions of legitimacy". However, this conception of purely functionalist politics and especially of law must be overcome, and propose in its place the frequentation of a new paradigm, the so-called *proceduralist paradigm*, in which the function of "opening the world" connected to the legal sphere is maintained and relaunched, as a continuous and further work of interpretation. The *proceduralist* paradigm is somehow connected to a *discursive theory of law*, through which the democratic rule of law opens up to communicative procedures and presuppositions capable of making possible a *discursive formation* of opinion and will[11].

In this type of horizon, a purely abstract conception of the law should therefore be overcome, convening an always open and always lively encounter between the legal public sphere and the arena of public debate at the center of social participation. A "pure fulfilment" of legislation that claims to be in a neutral position therefore no longer seems acceptable, whereas in the decision-making processes of governments, administrations, bureaucracies the criteria of efficiency will certainly have to be added more and more "legitimacy filters", which therefore knows how to combine pragmatic decisionism with a weighting of collective goods, in this following the inspiration and model of procedural law itself. In many respects, as can be seen, Habermas' complex philosophical reflection is probably one of the most stimulating horizons in which the political problem meets the juridical one, and through which we can glimpse sustainable and even possible answers to the real complexity of the socio-economic, cultural and more broadly anthropological horizon of our time, among those currently found in the context of philosophical and juridical discussion. This dissertation, far from exhausting the complex theme of the role of law in contemporary society, is proposed as a contribution to the reflection on this problem, starting from a genealogical perspective that has its roots in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. Through the diachronic analysis of the evolution of the

[11] Ibid., p.419

concept of codification, it was intended to highlight the tensions and continuities between the ancient ideal of a universal and immutable law and the needs of a world in continuous transformation, characterized by globalization, the digital revolution and the emergence of new forms of power. If the ambition of an all-encompassing and static law, an expression of an absolutist vision of power, appears today to be an illusion, the Roman juridical legacy nevertheless retains a paradigmatic value. The centrality of interpretation, the search for a balance between the universal and the particular, the formation of a jurist capable of autonomy of judgment and ethical responsibility, are essential elements for a law that aspires to be an instrument of justice and human promotion. The advent of new technologies and artificial intelligence, in particular, raises crucial questions, which challenge contemporary legal reflection. How do you combine the need for certainty and predictability with the flexibility and adaptability needed to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world? How can we preserve the centrality of human judgment and contextualized interpretation in the era of automation, avoiding the risks of a "dehumanization" of justice? How can we guarantee the protection of fundamental rights, such as privacy, in the face of the new forms of power that are asserting themselves in the infosphere? This investigation, therefore, despite its limitations, has tried to offer a contribution to these questions, drawing on contemporary philosophical thought and the reflections of jurists who have dedicated their work to the defense of rights in the digital age. While on the one hand it emphasizes the inescapable responsibility of man in the face of the consequences of technology, on the other hand it is hoped that a purely pragmatic model of law will be overcome, in favor of a proceduralist paradigm that promotes participation, public debate and the protection of citizens from new forms of power. Ultimately, law today is configured as an art of "weighing" and "balancing", an art that requires not only technical competence, but also ethical sensitivity and profound humanity. Only a law capable of combining tradition and innovation, certainty and flexibility, can be a valid tool for building a just and equitable society, up to the challenges of our time.

HOW DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION INFLUENCES ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANIES IN ROMANIA

Mihai PECA[1]*
[1] ICDL Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Corresponding author: mihai.peca@icdl.ro

Abstract
Digital transformation is one of the most profound processes of organizational change today, influencing the structures, practices, and identities of companies around the world. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Romania, this process is marked by the tension between limited resources and the pressure to adapt quickly to a global digital economy. This article investigates, from a philosophical and interdisciplinary perspective, how digital transformation shapes organizational culture in Romanian SMEs. The epistemological, ethical, and socio-cultural dimensions of the phenomenon are analyzed in relation to concepts such as collective identity, technological autonomy, and the meaning of work in the digital age. In conclusion, it is argued that digital transformation is not just an instrumental change, but a process of redefining the values and symbols that underpin organizational life.

Keywords: digital transformation, organizational culture, SMEs, organizational philosophy, digital ethics, Romania

1. Introduction

Digital transformation is often described in terms of technology through the implementation of cloud storage solutions, the use of artificial intelligence, process automation, or the adoption of online collaboration platforms. However, at a deeper level, digital transformation proves to be a cultural and philosophical process that affects how organizations build their identity, values, and daily practices.

In Romania, SMEs are the backbone of the economy, representing over 99% of all active companies and approximately two-thirds of jobs, thus forming the "backbone" of the Romanian economy. These companies face the pressure of digitization coming from two directions. On the one hand, from the market and customers, who demand fast, transparent, and digitally adapted services, and on the other hand, from European institutions, which promote initiatives such as *the Digital Europe Programme* and *the SME Digitalisation Index.*

In this context, organizational culture, understood as a set of values, norms, and symbols, is undergoing a profound transformation. It is no longer just a matter of adopting technical tools, but of redefining how organizations relate to time, space, authority, and the meaning of work.

This article aims to explore these transformations through an interdisciplinary approach, situated at the intersection of the philosophy of technology, organizational studies, and Romanian economic realities.

2. Originality of the research and delimitation of the topic

Although management literature frequently addresses the digitization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in terms of efficiency and competitiveness, fewer studies focus on the cultural and symbolic dimension of digital transformation.

However, organizational philosophy provides an appropriate framework for analyzing not only "what is changing," but also "what new meanings are being constructed."

The topic is defined by reference to three levels:

- Technological: analysis of digital means (platforms, applications, algorithms).
- Cultural: the impact on organizational norms, values, and symbols.
- Philosophical: reflection on how technology redefines collective identity and the meaning of work.

This approach offers a double originality: on the one hand, by focusing on Romanian SMEs as cultural spaces; on the other hand, by using the philosophy of technology as a lens for interpreting the phenomenon.

3. Theoretical foundation: between philosophy and organizational sciences

3.1. Organizational culture as a symbolic phenomenon

In 1984, Edgar Schein, one of the leading theorists of organizational culture, defined organizational culture as a set of basic assumptions formed over time, which have worked well enough to be considered valid and to be passed on to new members as the correct way to perceive and act within the organization. In other words, organizational culture represents the values, norms, and symbols shared by group members, which guide their collective behaviors and common perceptions of reality. This perspective highlights the fact that the set of formal rules does not exhaust culture; on the contrary, the essence of culture lies in the shared meanings that give coherence to actions in an organizational context.[1]

From a philosophical and sociological perspective, organizational culture is seen as a fundamentally symbolic phenomenon, a "horizon of meaning" common to members. Gareth Morgan suggested that, in essence, the culture of an organization means "shared meanings, shared understanding, and shared thinking" among members. Similarly, William Ouchi describes organizational culture as a "set of symbols, ceremonies, and myths that communicate the basic beliefs and values of the members of the organization"[2] **.** Such symbolic elements (rituals, stories, organizational heroes) act as mechanisms through which values and norms become visible and are transmitted internally. Therefore, organizational culture goes far beyond the inventory of formal procedures: it provides a common system of meanings and beliefs that give direction, meaning, and identity to behaviors within the organization. Culture functions as an implicit framework that shapes how individuals perceive, think, and act together, enabling coordination and cohesion in organizational life.

[1]https://www.easistent.ro/?p=8631#:~:text=Ogbonna%2C%20%C3%AEn%201992%2C%20consolida%20definirea,9

[2] ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, Octavian MOLDOVAN Felicia Cornelia MACARIE

3.2. The philosophy of technology

Martin Heidegger emphasized in his essay "On the Question of Technology" that technology is not a simple neutral tool, but a way of revealing (Entbergung) the world[3] . In other words, technology shapes the way reality appears to us, determining what emerges as "truth" (aletheia) in our experience. Heidegger pointed out that any technology implies a certain understanding of the existence of things. For example, a hydroelectric power plant makes the river appear not as a free natural phenomenon, but as a utilitarian reservoir of available energy.

In this sense, considering technology merely as an externalized means is to ignore its profound influence on how we interpret and value the world. Applying this idea to the contemporary organizational context, it follows that modern digital technologies not only facilitate work processes, but actively shape how the reality of the organization is perceived and experienced by its members. Recent studies inspired by the philosophy of technology and new materialism argue that digital technologies "cannot be viewed merely as simple tools, but as active agents that shape and influence organizational realities"[4] .

In other words, introducing a digital system within a company changes not only the speed or efficiency of processes, but also the way employees understand and relate to their work. Digital technology creates new practices and frameworks for interaction, reorganizing communication and information flow, which leads to the emergence of new experiences and values in organizational culture. From the perspective of technology philosophy, we can say that digitization reveals a new configuration of the organizational world, causing organizations to reevaluate their processes, relationships, and the meanings they generate within themselves.

3.3. Romanian SMEs as spaces for transformation

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Romania are in a paradoxical position in relation to digital and cultural transformation. On the one hand, resource constraints limit their ability to adopt advanced technologies: many SMEs have limited financial resources, and major investments in digital infrastructure are often postponed because the costs are considered too high. The limited budgets of these firms are prioritized for immediate needs (salaries, raw materials, etc.), making it difficult to allocate

[3] https://www.thecollector.com/heidegger-technology/

[4] https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/sociology/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2024.1426930/full

funds for large-scale digitization projects. This reality is reflected in the slower pace of adoption of new technologies among Romanian SMEs compared to large companies or the EU average, a phenomenon documented by reports on the digitization of the local economy.

On the other hand, however, the structural flexibility of SMEs gives them an important advantage: due to their small size and flexible organizational structure, they can adapt and innovate more quickly. Unlike multinationals, which often exhibit bureaucratic inertia, small companies are less bureaucratic and more open to change, reacting promptly to emerging opportunities.[5]

This increased agility allows SMEs to easily experiment with innovative cultural models and new technologies, quickly integrating unconventional ideas or practices into their way of working.

Studies show that many technological and organizational innovations originate in the SME sector, precisely because these smaller entities take risks and test new solutions in a way that large companies are reluctant to do.

Therefore, Romanian SMEs can be seen as true spaces for transformation, like living laboratories where constraints can coexist with creativity. Despite limited resources, their flexible organizational culture facilitates the adoption of innovative practices (both technological and managerial), contributing to the evolution of the organizational climate and their long-term resilience.

4. Methodology

This paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach, designed to capture both the empirical and organizational dimensions of digital transformation, as well as its philosophical and symbolic implications. The choice of this methodology is justified by the complex nature of the research subject, the intersection between organizational culture, technology, and the specific characteristics of Romanian SMEs, which cannot be reduced to a single analytical paradigm.

Conceptual analysis

The first methodological step consists of a conceptual analysis of the notions of "digital transformation" and "organizational culture." Digital

[5] https://www.fdc.ro/imm-definitie-provocari-si-rolul-crucial-pe-care-intreprinderile-mici-si-mijlocii-il-au-in-economia-mondiala/#:~:text=IMM,oportunit%C4%83%C8%9Bi%20%C3%AEn%20schimbare%20din%20domeniu

transformation is defined, according to the European Commission, as the process by which organizations integrate digital technologies into all aspects of their business, generating fundamental changes in their business model and organizational culture. At the same time, organizational culture is understood, according to Edgar Schein, as a set of shared values, norms, and symbols that shape the behaviors and thinking of the members of the organization. The conceptual analysis allowed us to define the theoretical framework and understand the connection between digitization and internal cultural transformations.

Secondary case studies

The second methodological step consisted of using secondary case studies, extracted from the literature and recent reports on SMEs in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) reveals significant gaps between SMEs in the region and the EU average, especially in terms of the integration of advanced technologies.

At the same time, research dedicated to SMEs highlights the fact that their flexibility and less bureaucratic structure facilitate the rapid adoption of innovative practices. The comparative l analysis of these sources highlighted the particularities of the Romanian context, but also common trends in the region.

Philosophical reflection

Finally, the methodology includes a philosophical reflection on the relationship between humans and technology and on the ethical implications of digitization. Inspired by Martin Heidegger's vision, which describes technology as a "way of revealing" the world and not simply a tool, this reflection allows us to understand how digital technologies are reconfiguring organizational reality. In addition, recent literature on the philosophy of technology argues that digital tools must also be analyzed from the perspective of ethical responsibility and impact on organizational values. This dimension adds depth to the empirical analysis, highlighting the symbolic and normative role of digitization.

Methodological synthesis

By combining the three levels—conceptual, empirical, and reflective—an integrative perspective on digital transformation emerges. This captures both the concrete dimensions of digitization (processes, infrastructure, efficiency)

and the symbolic and normative dimensions (values, meanings, responsibilities). In this way, the methodology supports the paper's objective of understanding how Romanian SMEs can become spaces for cultural and technological transformation, going beyond simple technical adaptation and articulating a holistic vision of digitization.

5. Digital transformation and organizational culture in Romanian SMEs

5.1. From hierarchy to network

One of the major effects of digitization on SMEs is the change in the way organizational structures are configured. Traditionally, small and medium-sized companies operated on the basis of simple hierarchies, but with clear lines of authority. With the adoption of digital collaboration platforms (Slack, Microsoft Teams, Asana, etc.), these hierarchies tend to "flatten," and the emphasis shifts from rigid chains of command to flexible communication networks. The literature emphasizes that digitization is leading to more horizontal forms of organization, based on connectivity and rapid information exchange.

In Romania, this trend translates into a partial democratization of access to information: employees have the opportunity to participate more actively in decision-making processes and contribute directly to information flows, reducing dependence on traditional hierarchical channels. At the same time, according to recent analyses, SMEs that adopt digital platforms collaborate more effectively and manage to reduce internal communication barriers, which promotes innovation and organizational resilience.

5.2. Collective identity and belonging

Digital transformation is not only changing the way we communicate, but also our perception of organizational belonging. In a digitized work environment, belonging is no longer defined exclusively by the physical space of the office, but by participation in digital networks, visibility on online platforms, and involvement in virtual collaborative projects.

This change profoundly influences collective identity. Instead of a sense of community based on physical proximity, a distributed identity is emerging, built through digital interactions and recognition of the visibility of online contributions. For Romanian SMEs, this reality has a particular impact, given that many of them have adopted hybrid or remote working solutions during the

pandemic, and organizational cohesion has had to be reconfigured through virtual spaces.

Thus, organizational culture takes on new symbolic meanings: traditional rituals and symbols (physical meetings, informal interactions in the office) are complemented or even replaced by digital rituals (regular video calls, asynchronous communication, virtual social spaces).

5.3. Digital leadership

Digital transformation requires the emergence of a new type of leadership. While in the traditional paradigm the leader exercised a predominantly authoritarian and controlling role, in the digital context the emphasis shifts to facilitative leadership based on stimulating continuous learning, managing online collaboration, and promoting a culture of innovation.

The literature on e-leadership emphasizes that digital leaders must have technological skills, but also the ability to manage cultural and generational diversity. In Romania, this transformation has major implications: SMEs often bring together heterogeneous teams, in which digital natives (young people familiar with technology since childhood) collaborate with employees trained professionally in a pre-digital era.

This context generates challenges related to communication, working styles, and resistance to change.

Thus, the role of the digital leader becomes that of a cultural and technological mediator, capable of integrating the experience of older generations with the dynamism and adaptability of younger ones. At the same time, leaders are called upon to ensure a balance between innovation and ethical responsibility, in a context where digitization is not only a technical process, but also one that redefines organizational values and symbols.

6. Philosophical dimensions of digital transformation

6.1. Autonomy and technological dependence

Digital transformation brings a philosophical ambivalence between autonomy and dependence. On the one hand, digital technologies increase the autonomy of employees and organizations: rapid access to information, the flexibility of remote working, and the use of collaboration tools offer a greater degree of freedom and control over work.

On the other hand, these benefits also generate new forms of dependence. Organizations are becoming increasingly dependent on global technology providers (Microsoft, Google, Amazon Web Services), which raises issues of digital sovereignty and control over critical infrastructure. The philosophy of organizational freedom is thus reconfigured: internal autonomy is often exercised within a framework marked by structural dependence on global actors, which limits the strategic options of Romanian SMEs.

6.2. The meaning of work

Another essential aspect is the redefinition of the meaning of work. Algorithms and automation take over repetitive and standardized tasks, leaving room for activities based on creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.

The philosophy of work, from Hannah Arendt to contemporary authors, emphasizes that work is not only a means of subsistence, but also a framework for personal and social fulfillment.

In SMEs, this process is very visible: their small size and the proximity between members encourage experimentation with new forms of cooperation, where the meaning of work does not derive exclusively from tasks, but from visible contributions to common projects. Therefore, digital transformation not only optimizes productivity, but also reorients the value horizon of work towards expressive and relational dimensions.

6.3. Digital ethics

Digitization brings to the fore a series of ethical dilemmas that become an integral part of organizational culture. These include:

- employee surveillance through monitoring software, which raises questions about the limits of confidentiality and trust;
- the use of personal data and compliance with the legal framework (GDPR) in a context where data is becoming a strategic resource for organizations;
- the balance between professional and private life, affected by the permanent availability required by some digital platforms.

The philosophy of digital ethics proposes guidelines for addressing these dilemmas: transparency, responsibility, respect for autonomy, and the cultivation of trust.

For Romanian SMEs, integrating these principles is extremely important, as the lack of clear ethical policies can generate internal tensions and the loss of trust capital, which is an almost "vital" resource for small organizations.

6.4. Time and space in digitized organizations

Digital technologies are radically reconfiguring the perception of time and organizational space. Work is no longer limited to the "9-to-5" interval and the physical office, but takes place in a digital continuum, where synchronous and asynchronous coexist.

Manuel Castells spoke of the "space of flows," in which digital interactions transcend traditional geography and create new forms of social coordination. This dissolution of the boundaries between work and personal life is, however, ambivalent: it offers opportunities for flexibility and autonomy, but also risks of information overload, burnout, and the blurring of boundaries between the professional and private spheres.

For Romanian SMEs, which often operate with limited resources, these tensions are amplified.

Digitalization allows them access to global markets and collaborators; on the other hand, it creates the pressure of permanent connectivity, which can affect organizational balance and the lives of employees. The philosophy of organizational time and space, in this sense, becomes a critical tool for understanding how digitalization is changing not only work processes but also the human experience of work.

7. Cultural resistance and the paradoxes of digitization

A phenomenon often overlooked in studies on digitization is cultural resistance. In many Romanian SMEs, employees perceive technology as a threat to job stability, seeing automation as a process that could marginalize their skills or even replace their positions. In other situations, digitization is associated with a break from the "traditional way of working," which is perceived as more personal, safer, and more familiar. In the literature, this resistance is explained not only by a lack of digital skills, but also by identity and symbolic dimensions: people relate to their work as an integral part of their own identity, and technological changes can be perceived as a threat to this continuity (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2011).

From an organizational philosophy perspective, resistance should not be interpreted exclusively as an obstacle, but as a form of identity defense. It

expresses people's need to protect the meaning of their work, values, and community practices in the face of changes perceived as imposed or rapid. In this sense, managing digital transformation cannot be reduced to the implementation of technical infrastructures, but must include processes of dialogue, negotiation, and cultural co-creation that recognize and integrate employee concerns.

At the same time, the phenomenon is marked by a series of paradoxes of digitization.

First, technology promises increased efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness, allowing SMEs faster access to markets, customers, and resources. Second, the uncritical or unilateral implementation of digital solutions can generate anxiety, alienation, and a decline in social cohesion within organizations (Zuboff, 2019). Thus, the same process that promises innovation and flexibility can cause psychological insecurity and cultural resistance.

Understanding these paradoxes is essential for the responsible implementation of digital transformation. Beyond technical tools, digitization is a deeply cultural and symbolic process that requires attention to the identity dynamics of organizations and the balance between the promise of efficiency and the need for meaning and cohesion. In the case of Romanian SMEs, where resources are limited and interpersonal relationships are closer than in corporations, these paradoxes are felt even more intensely.

8. General conclusions and recommendations

Digital transformation is profoundly influencing the organizational culture of SMEs in Romania. It is reconfiguring traditional hierarchies, replacing them with networked structures, democratizing access to information, and changing the way collective identity and belonging are defined.

At the same time, the meaning of work is shifting towards activities based on creativity and collaboration, while leadership is becoming less authoritarian and more focused on facilitating learning and cooperation.

From a philosophical perspective, digital transformation is not just a technological process, but an act of symbolic construction: organizations rediscover and redefine their values through digital technologies. It brings with it paradoxes and cultural resistance, which must be understood not only as obstacles, but as legitimate forms of identity defense.

Moreover, it reconfigures the relationship between autonomy and dependence, raises questions about the ethics of data use, and changes the

perception of time and organizational space. Ultimately, it can be said that digital transformation represents, for Romanian SMEs, a test of cultural creativity and ethical maturity, rather than a simple adoption of technological tools. It opens up the possibility of a new organizational paradigm, in which technology is not an end in itself, but a medium through which people rediscover the meaning of work, belonging, and shared responsibility.

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FROM LANGUAGE TO LIFE: CHOMSKY'S PHILOSOPHICAL LEGACY IN AN AI-DRIVEN WORLD

Alexandra RADU[1],2*
[1] Department of Education, Bucharest University, Bucharest, Romania
2 Cultural Psychology of Sustainable Human Development – Laboratory of Psychology, Salerno, Italy
*Corresponding author: alexandra.peca63@s.fpse.unibuc.ro
ORCID iD: 0009-0005-0350-5316

Abstract
Language has long been considered one of the defining features of the human being, but Noam Chomsky's theories have radically reconfigured this understanding. By introducing the concept of "generative grammar" and supporting the innate language hypothesis, Chomsky proposed that language is not just a social or cultural construct, but a fundamental dimension of human nature. These ideas have profound philosophical implications: if linguistic structures are universal and pre-exist individual experience, then freedom, knowledge, and human identity unfold within this constitutive framework. In parallel with the intuitions of philosophers such as Wittgenstein or Cassirer, Chomsky's theories suggest that the limits of thought and culture are inseparable from the linguistic structures that make them possible. Moreover, their impact is not limited to the academic field, but extends to social and political life: language is, in this perspective, an instrument of emancipation and resistance, giving individuals the opportunity to oppose oppression and build communities of solidarity. Therefore, Chomsky's theories not only explain the mechanisms of language, but also open up a philosophical horizon essential for understanding the human condition, making language both a natural phenomenon and an existential space.

Keywords: Chomsky, language, philosophy, generative grammar, freedom, existence

Introduction

In the contemporary humanities and social sciences, language is considered a fundamental dimension of human existence. Just as research on acculturation has attempted to explain the processes by which individuals adapt to cultural diversity (Berry, 2001, 2005, 2008; Chirkov,

2009; Ozer, 2013), Noam Chomsky's theories about the universality of language raise major philosophical questions about the nature of man and his cognitive structures. If in cultural studies the emphasis falls on dialogue and interaction between traditions (Gamsakhurdia, 2018), in linguistics, Chomsky proposes the idea that the diversity of languages originates in a common structural scheme, inscribed in human nature (Chomsky, 1965, 1986). This hypothesis radically changes the paradigm: language is not just a cultural construction, but a universal biological faculty.

The question of defining language is essential to understanding the philosophical impact of Chomsky's theories. Wittgenstein (1922/2010) pointed out that the "limits of language" coincide with the limits of thought, showing that language does not only describe reality, but constitutes it. Cassirer (1944), in turn, interpreted language as a symbolic tool that underpins culture and knowledge. In contrast to these cultural or phenomenological views, Chomsky (2000) argued that language is an "organ of the mind", similar to other cognitive faculties, implying that its structures are universal and innate. This paradigm shift from language as a cultural product to language as a biological faculty forces philosophy to rethink the relationship between nature and culture, between freedom and determinism.

At the same time, Chomsky's theories have implications that go beyond linguistics. In a manner comparable to the criticisms of mechanistic models of acculturation (Rudmin, 2009; Weinreich, 2009), Chomsky rejects behaviorist explanations, which reduce language to simple associations between stimuli and responses (Skinner, 1957). In his famous review of Verbal Behavior, Chomsky (1959) showed that such a model could not explain the unlimited creativity of human language. This position supports the idea that the human being is fundamentally creative and free, even if he acts within universal structures. From a philosophical perspective, it opens the discussion about human freedom as a possibility to create new meanings within the limits imposed by innate cognitive structures.

In addition, Chomsky's conception invites a rereading of the relationship between the individual and the community. If language is innate, then every human being has access, at least potentially, to the same cognitive resources. This universality implies a fundamental equality between people, and this aspect has not only philosophical but also political consequences. Chomsky himself emphasized, in his political writings, that language and critical thinking are tools of social emancipation (Chomsky,

2000). Thus, language is not only a biological or cultural phenomenon, but also a space of resistance and transformation, where freedom is manifested through the ability to criticize and create alternatives to dominant power structures.

In conclusion, the introduction of Chomsky's theories into the philosophical debate highlights a productive tension: language is simultaneously universal and particular, natural and cultural, biologically determined and open to creativity. This tension invites philosophy to go beyond reductive interpretations and explore language as a constitutive space of the human condition. In this sense, Chomskyan linguistics cannot be separated from philosophical reflection, since it reconfigures the way we think about freedom, knowledge and existence.

Foundations of Chomsky's theory

Chomsky introduced the concept of "generative grammar", arguing that all languages have a basic universal structure (Chomsky, 1986). This theoretical framework suggests that language is not an exclusively cultural construct, but a constitutive dimension of human nature. In this regard, Chomsky contradicts behaviorist perspectives and proposes an anthropological vision in which man is "programmed" for communication.

1. The philosophical dimension

1.1 Chomsky and the human condition

Noam Chomsky's theories introduced a radically new paradigm: language is a universal biological faculty, an integral part of human nature (Chomsky, 1965, 1986). This perspective suggests that each individual is endowed with an innate linguistic structure—the "universal grammar"—that makes unlimited creativity of speech possible. Philosophically, this position shifts the discussion of language from the cultural level to the ontological level, suggesting that speaking is equivalent to being human.

1.2 Cassirer and the symbolism of culture

In contrast, Ernst Cassirer (1944) understood language within a symbolic philosophy. For him, man is not only homo sapiens, but above all a symbolic animal: the being who lives and develops in the universe of symbols. Language is not just a cognitive tool, but the foundation of culture,

religion, art, and science. Unlike Chomsky, Cassirer did not seek innate universal structures, but emphasized the constitutive symbolic and cultural character of language.

1.3 Wittgenstein and the limits of thought

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922/2010) brought another dimension: for him, "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world". Language is not just a set of internal structures (as Chomsky states) or a cultural symbol (as Cassirer argues), but a horizon of possibility for thought and reality. Later, in Philosophical Research, Wittgenstein (1953/2009) emphasized "language games" – practical and communal contexts through which meaning is born.

1.4 Comparative synthesis

The three perspectives offer a complex picture: Chomsky emphasizes biological universality, Cassirer on cultural symbolism, and Wittgenstein on the epistemological and pragmatic conditioning of language. Together, they show that language is simultaneously natural, cultural, and existential.

The table below illustrates these theories and their main philosophical implications:

Table 1. Comparative table: Chomsky – Cassirer – Wittgenstein

Author	Vision of language	Level of analysis	Main philosophical implications
Noam Chomsky	Language as a universal biological faculty (generative grammar)	Ontological/cognitive	Language defines human nature, creativity is structured by innate rules.
Ernst Cassirer	Language as a symbolic form, a cultural foundation	Anthropological / cultural	Man is *a symbolic animal*, language underpins culture and meaning.
Ludwig Wittgenstein	Language as a limit of thought and as "language games"	Epistemological / pragmatic	Meaning depends on usage and context, language conditions our world.

Comparative analysis therefore highlights the fact that language is an irreducible dimension of the human condition. Chomsky shows that language is inscribed in our biology, Cassirer emphasizes that it is the foundation of culture, and Wittgenstein reminds us that language draws the limits of thought and reality that we can conceive. Together, these perspectives suggest that the development of language is inseparable from the development of the individual and society: without language there is no knowledge, without symbols there is no culture, and without communities of meaning there is no humanity. Therefore, the study of language is not just a linguistic exercise, but a reflection on the very essence of human life.

2. Language in the Age of Technology: AI and Linguistic Transformations

The development of language has profound effects on the individual and society: the formation of thought, identity, communication, culture. In the age of AI, this development is accelerated and significantly modified. Large language models (LLMs), smart replies, and language assistance tools generate new habits, norms, and risks (Hohenstein et al., 2023; Yakura et al., 2024).

2.1. The impact of language development on human life and the influence of AI. From the Chomsky paradigm to the AI paradigm...

Noam Chomsky described language as a universal faculty, biologically rooted in human nature. In his theory of generative grammar, language is not a simple cultural tool, but a constitutive quality of the human species (Chomsky, 1965, 1986). This view places language in the sphere of nature and suggests that each individual carries within himself the cognitive structures necessary to create and understand unlimited sentences. In this paradigm, language is inseparable from the human being and his existential condition.

However, the emergence of artificial intelligence opens a new historical stage, one in which language is no longer exclusively human prerogative, but can be generated and processed by machines. Large language models, such as ChatGPT, manage to produce coherent texts, learn from interactions, and provide responses that mimic natural language

(Hohenstein et al., 2023). This situation requires a paradigm shift: language, once seen as an ontological given, is also becoming a technological artifact, which raises unprecedented philosophical and ethical questions.

The confrontation between the two perspectives is significant. If for Chomsky language is the expression of human cognitive freedom, in the age of AI there is a risk that this freedom will be shaped or even conditioned by algorithms. AI-generated language has the potential to influence human language itself, as demonstrated by recent studies showing the takeover of expressions and structures from interaction with AI systems (Yakura et al., 2024). Thus, language ceases to be just a natural dimension and becomes a field of negotiation between man and technology.

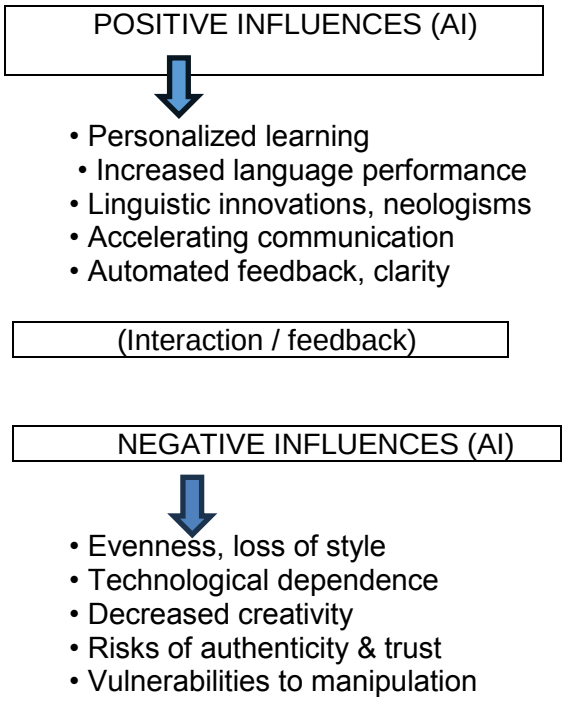
The outcome of this confrontation is ambivalent. On the one hand, AI democratizes access to language, providing educational tools and support for expression, which can strengthen the role of language as a foundation for individual and collective development (Zou & Xie, 2024). On the other hand, transferring some of linguistic functions to machines risks diminishing human authenticity and creativity if humans become overly dependent on automatic suggestions or predefined patterns. Philosophically, this forces a reassessment: if language is no longer just "ours", what does it mean to be a talking being in the age of AI?

Table 2. Pros and Cons of AI for Language

Aspect	Advantages	Disadvantages
Learning and education	Personalization of learning; increasing language performance (Zou & Xie, 2024).	Dependence on technology; decrease in one's own creativity.
Variability and innovation	The emergence of neologisms and new expressions; linguistic diversity (Yakura et al., 2024).	Homogenization of styles; reduction of dialects and variations.
Social communication	Speed up conversations; increased positive tone (Hohenstein et al., 2023).	Negative perceptions of authenticity; potentially manipulative.
Structure of language	Grammatical clarity; Access to multiple translations and styles.	Oversimplifying syntax; stylistic standardization.

Figure 1. Positive and negative influences of AI on human language

(Figure made by the author, based on Hohenstein et al., 2023; Yakura et al., 2024; Zou & Xie, 2024).



3. Conclusions

The analysis of Noam Chomsky's theories, compared with the perspectives of Ernst Cassirer and Ludwig Wittgenstein, reveals that language represents a fundamental and irreducible dimension of human existence. Chomsky showed that language is innate and universal, a biological structure that makes unlimited creativity possible. Cassirer emphasized the symbolic dimension of language, showing that it constitutes the foundation of culture and of the formation of man as a symbolic animal. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, highlighted the epistemological and pragmatic role of language, suggesting that its limits coincide with the limits of thought and reality that we can conceive.

In the age of artificial intelligence, language is undergoing further transformations, which influence both the way individuals communicate and the way societies develop. AI brings undeniable advantages, such as personalizing language education, clarity of expression, and speeding up communication. However, it also introduces risks, including stylistic uniformity, reduced individual creativity, and loss of perception of authenticity in social interactions. Philosophically, these effects show that language is a space of tension between the freedom to create meaning and the responsibility to preserve authenticity and diversity.

Thus, the study of language is not reduced to a linguistic analysis, but constitutes a reflection on the human condition. Language is simultaneously natural, cultural, and existential, and its development shapes both the individual and society. In this context, it is necessary to develop an ethics of digital language, which capitalizes on the advantages of technology without compromising authenticity, creativity and linguistic diversity. Only in this way can language maintain its fundamental role in the formation of human thought, identity and communities. Cassirer, E. (1944). An Essay on Man. Yale University Press.

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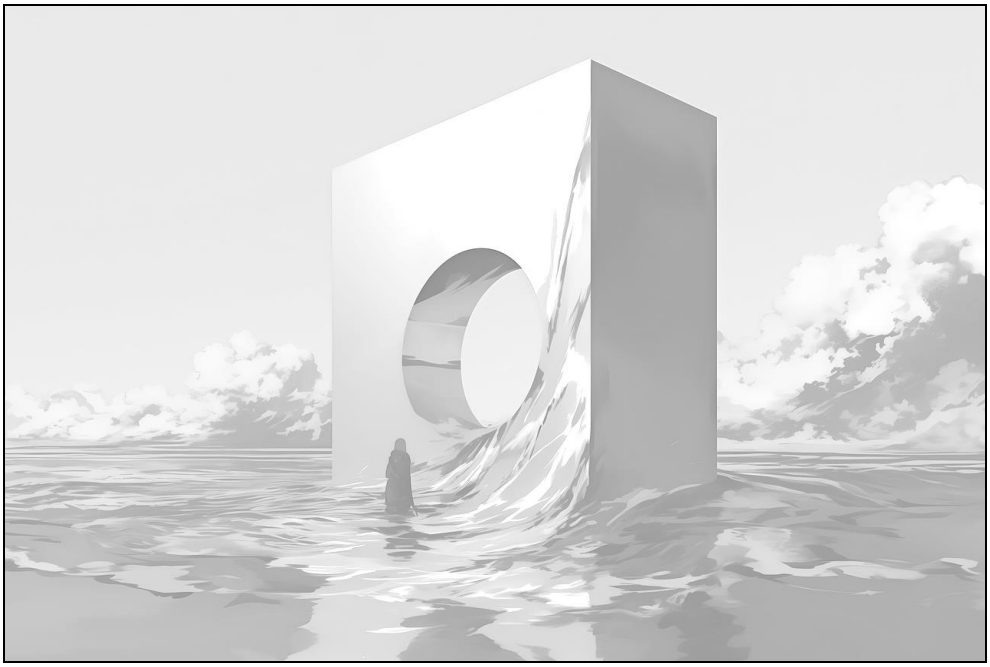

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