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# Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire

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## **The Struggle for Independence and Unity — a Permanency of the Romanian People's History : 2,500 Years Since the Defensive War Waged by the Geto-Dacians against the Aggression of the Persian Empire Led by Darius I**

In the long history of the Romanian people, its permanent tenacious struggle for the defence of freedom, independence and territorial integrity has stood out as one of its fundamental traits, and the military effort was called upon to play the essential part in the preservation of those characteristic features that were able to ensure its development in keeping with its own options. Repeated foreign invasions, the aggressiveness of some states or big empires which along history surrounded and permanently attempted at the integrity of the Romanian people's millenary habitat, the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, called for the mobilization of all forces and energies, which proved inexhaustible since they were always animated by the unflinching will to live a free life and be master in one's own country.

Located "in the way of all evils", as chronicler Grigore Ureche suggestively wrote, "one hand on the plough and the other on the weapon" all the time, the Romanian people lived in a perfect symbiosis with the land it lived on and tilled, the woods, the valleys, the fields and the mountains making up, at hard times, the natural defence redoubts, true secret shelters for the non-combatant population. The wonderful harmony of relief also provided the resistance with support points, turned into true operational bases when the offensive potential of the invading forces was already worn down, wherefrom wide-scale actions were launched for the liberation of the territories temporarily under foreign sway.

The constructive and defensive effort made by the Romanian people, and its Geto-Dacian forefathers, throughout its multimillenary existence relied mainly on one of its basic institutions of a permanent type, the army, an emanation of the people placed at its service, which has always played an important role in ensuring the continuity of the national being, in the preservation of freedom and independence, of the territorial integrity of the ancestral hearth.

The participation of the entire people, alongside the army, in the military actions carried on for the country's defence has stood out as a defining trait of the millenary struggle waged by the Romanian people and its forefathers against invaders, irrespective of the number and quality of the forces committed by the latter. Far from being a mere assertion, this has been fully attested to by sources of the time ; whenever the country was in danger, the entire people (all able-bodied people capable of bearing weapons or of inflicting losses upon the enemy — men, women, young and old) rose in arms as a single being,

taking advantage of the relief forms that they were familiar with and used skilfully, and dealt deadly blows at the enemy, irrespective of the season, day and night, until the latter was definitively chased away from the ancestors' land.

The major characteristic of the Romanian military effort has been the righteous nature of the wars waged, which were always defensive. "As a matter of fact, the history of our people, the history of our army", the President of Socialist Romania pointed out, "eloquently demonstrates the fact that the Romanian people, its army never set to itself aggressive aims"<sup>1</sup>.

Archaeological discoveries have clearly proved that one of the oldest and most original civilizations known in Europe<sup>2</sup> took shape and developed uninterruptedly in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area.

Already in the 9th—8th centuries BC, when in the area north of the Balkans and north of the Danube the Geto-Dacian people emerged as a distinct entity within the great kin of the Thracians, and then throughout its entire evolution, one can note a remarkable ethno-cultural and linguistic unity. That specific, original civilization was permanently enriched through contacts with the most advanced civilizations of the ancient world (Persian, Greek, Roman). Confronted since the dawn of its history with the aggressive actions of some nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples or with the hostility of some big empires, the Geto-Dacians put up stubborn resistance against the encroachment of their own territory, and that stood out as a defining trait throughout their history. It is worth mentioning in this respect that whatever the strength and organization of the invading armies, whether the attacks were mounted by migratory populations (Scythians, Celts, Bastarnae and Sarmatians) or by kingdoms or empires (the Persian Empire, the Macedonian Kingdom and, later on, the Roman Empire), the posture of the political-State formations and, later on, of the centralized Dacian State was the same: military effort and stubborn resistance involving all human capabilities for safeguarding the independence and integrity of its habitat.

Accordingly, it is not an accident but, on the contrary, a fully relevant fact that the first literary source recording the Romanian people's forefathers shows them in a great predicament when faced with the army led by Darius I, "king of the kings", which was "as thick as blackberries". The description of the confrontation between the Getae and the Persians in 514 BC made by Herodotus, the "father of history", was the first written attestation of an armed conflict waged on the territory of present-day Romania, an account showing the high soldierly skills and moral virtues of the Geto-Dacians already at the time they entered world consciousness. The firm, singular resistance of the "bravest and most righteous among the Thracians"<sup>3</sup>, as Herodotus characterized the Geto-Dacians in contrast with the other Thracian tribes, which surrendered without fight to the huge Persian army, stands out as a symbol throughout the Romanian bimillenary history.

Evincing such spiritual and moral-volitive qualities that were acknowledged and realistically praised by the most outstanding histo-

rians of the ancient world, the Geto-Dacian people, always an example to its contemporaries, succeeded in making its own way up the scale of historical development. Evolving directly from the political-State formations that had offered resistance to the Persian, Scythian and Macedonian invasion, the Dacian State under Burebista and Decebalus became an European great power, with socio-economic and political structures of its own, a redoubtable military organization, paralleled by a clearly defined strategical outlook. Of the defensive struggles carried on against foreign aggressions, the conflicts with the Macedonian monarchy under Alexander the Great in 335 BC and, thereafter, with the Hellenistic kingdom of Thrace led by Lysimachus in 300—299 and 292 BC, when the Geto-Dacians were ruled by a wise politician and skilled commander, King Dromichaites, ended in important strategical victories of the Geto-Dacians, and the Macedonians' ambitions to take hold of the north-Danubian-Pontic territories and get full control over that large river were quenched for good and all.

The non-aggressiveness evinced as a remarkable permanency throughout their history by the Geto-Dacian forefathers and later on by the Romanian people was suggestively expressed in two similar instances: in 292 BC Dromichaites asked the Macedonian king: "Why have you endeavoured, much against the grain, to bring your soldiers over to places where no alien army can find an escape under the open sky?"<sup>4</sup> Equally dignified and relevant, a true arch over the time in terms of outlook and behaviour, was the answer given by Romanian voivode Menumorut to the Hungarian invaders: "The territory that he asked from our goodwill we shall never cede to him as long as we are still alive [...] Neither out of love, nor of fear shall we cede him any bits of our land [...]"<sup>5</sup> In 1683 chronicler Miron Costin was to voice clearly the same unfaltering love for his ancestors' land: "We must not give the place, for this land is oozing with the blood of our forefathers"<sup>6</sup>.

A creation of a remarkable political-military personality of Romanian history and not less of the world, Burebista, the centralized and independent State provided the Geto-Dacians with a unitary political framework enabling them to cope, for more than 150 years, with the expansion of the greatest power of the antiquity — the Roman Empire. The "great State" set up by the "first and greatest of all Thracian kings"<sup>7</sup>, an outcome of the internal evolution of the autochthonous society and political materialization of the ethnical and cultural unity of the entire Dacian world, would definitively remain, even under the circumstances of some territorial changes or diminishings, a true reality, an objective existence on the map of Europe.

In the latter half of the 1st century AD Dacia again enjoyed the place and role of the second big power in Europe, especially in the time of "hero-king" Decebalus, a great strategist and versatile diplomatist, a prominent personality of the ancient world.

During his 26-year reign, Decebalus proved to be a highly gifted strategist and politician as most suggestively described by Roman historian Dio Cassius some 130 years later: "[...] he was very deft in drawing war plans and in fulfilling them, knowing to choose the right oppor-

tunity to attack and to withdraw in due time; clever in laying traps, he was a valiant fighter who knew how to use a victory but also how to come out well from a defeat; for these reasons, he was for a long time an enemy feared by the Romans”<sup>8</sup>. Well-conceived plans, military actions carried out at the right time and in suitable places chosen beforehand, reveal a military outlook on a par with that of the greatest strategists of the ancient world, a versatile diplomatist’s mind capable to rally all the potential enemies of the empire into a sole anti-Roman front, the embodiment of the hot desire for the freedom and independence of his people, for which he finally laid down his life: all this outlines the portrait of one of the most illustrious personalities of Romanian and world history — Decebalus.

Two summit moments in the Daco-Roman confrontations, the wars in 85—88 and 101—106 AD, meant in fact the collision of two strategies, of two political and military conceptions: the Roman offensive and expansionist conception, on the one hand, and the defensive conception of the Dacian Kingdom, aimed at the defence of its own independence and territorial integrity, of its own cultural assets, on the other hand. The heroism, the spirit of sacrifice and exceptional military virtues proved by the Geto-Dacians and duly highlighted by all ancient sources<sup>9</sup> were defining traits of the legitimate and direct forefathers of the Romanian people, in whose physiognomy and psychomoral structure these lofty qualities can be traced.

The Roman victory in 106 AD, the transformation of a part of the Dacian Kingdom into a Roman province speeded up the process started long before of a profound and wide-scope intertwining of the two big civilizations, Dacian and Roman, of moulding a new ethnic-historical reality in Southeast Europe — the Romanian people. *“With an unquenched thirst for liberty, with its determination not to bow to foreign rule, resolved to always be itself, the sole master of its life and fate, which it had inherited from the Dacians, and evincing a rational spirit, judgement and creative passion, bequeathed by the Romans, the Romanian people, that had emerged in the world, recorded a heroic, eventful and great history spanning nearly two thousand years, continuously developing and strongly asserting itself in ranks of the peoples, and today, of the nations of the world”*<sup>10</sup>.

All material proofs testify to the unbroken continuation of life in the entire Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area over the 3rd—13th centuries, recording the natural evolution, under new circumstances, of the Romanian people and of its struggle along the same major coordinates — independence, unity, self-dependent statehood.

The confused contradictory assertions in some ancient sources of a later date — taken over and inflated by historians who misrepresent the Romanians’ history — according to which, alongside the Roman troops and administration, the civil population would have also withdrawn en masse south of the Danube, leaving behind, in the former province, a so-called “demographic vacuum” that various migratory populations allegedly rushed thereafter to fill up, are entirely refuted by numerous archaeological, linguistic and toponymic proofs<sup>11</sup>. The

tains and places as given by the Dacians and ROMANS ... many of whom unchanged to the present or whose affiliation is easily identifiable such as the Danube, Mureş, Tisza, Dniester, Someş, Olt, Pruth, the Carpathians, etc.

Archaeological research has provided a great many evidence on the evolution, without any interruption whatsoever, of the Romanian settlements, some of them continuing to exist for several centuries and historical periods. The over 140 Romanian urban and rural settlements identified as belonging to the period following Aurelian's withdrawal testify to a remarkable continuity, a fact attested, among other things, by their employment in the 4th—13th centuries as well<sup>12</sup>.

A direct heir to the traditions of its illustrious forefathers, the Romanian people would prove, in the ensuing centuries, its vitality, strong capacity of resistance and assimilation in front of all migrators, who could not alter its ethnic being, language and civilization<sup>13</sup>.

Possessors of a superior material and spiritual civilization as compared to the neighbouring populations, as one of the oldest peoples in Eastern Europe, the Romanians have boasted an uninterrupted continuity from antiquity to the present, a further proof of the unquestionable reality of their unity of kin, culture and attitude in front of aggressions, of their unbroken inhabitation of the same territories — the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. The successive migratory waves delayed, but could not check the setting up of the first political formations on the territory of ancient Dacia, the knezates and voivodates of the 9th—11th centuries, and their union within the three Romanian feudal states: Transylvania, Muntenia (Wallachia) and Moldavia. The organization and consolidation of the feudal states gave the Romanian people political identity grounded on its ethnic and cultural unity, created propitious conditions for the development of the productive forces, for the passage of the society onto higher stages of material and spiritual civilization, being a new step forward on the road of the natural historical development irrevocably calling for the reconstitution of ancient Dacia.

Under the leadership of the great voivodes and founders and then of their successors, stubborn defenders of the independence and integrity of Romanian statehood, the traditional autochthonous military structures acquired defining traits in terms of organization and concrete forms. The rising in arms of the entire able-bodied population and its embodiment in the *greater army*, the carrying on of wide-scale defensive operations in which the manoeuvring of forces and combat means pursued the permanent harassing of the enemy, the annihilation of its logistic system and then its involving into a decisive battle in a terrain that was at its disadvantage, represented, in a nutshell, the secret underlying the victories won by the Romanians over the invading armies. Through great sacrifices, a heavy material and human toll, the Romanian countries managed, by joining efforts in front of the common enemies, to preserve their political autonomy versus the expansionist tendencies of the big neighbouring powers, the Hungarian and Polish kingdoms, the Ottoman, Habsburg and Tsarist empires.

From the late 14th century till 1878, the peaks of which were the great Romanian victories scored at Rovine (1395), Podul Înalt—Vaslui (1475), Jiliştea (1574), Călugăreni (1595), was settled in favour of the Romanian statehood that could be neither subdued, nor abolished, and this unlike the fate met by the states bordering on it in the south and west (Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary), which were wiped off from Europe's political map by the Ottoman offensive.

By withstanding the Ottoman Empire, at the time of its maximal ascent, the Romanian countries provided the states in the centre and west of Europe with the tranquility they needed for their development. This truth is most clearly revealed in a letter sent by Stephen the Great, the ruler of the Romanian Country of Moldavia, to the Doge of Venice on May 8, 1477: "We need not say how useful this country of Ours has been to the Christian affairs, for we consider it superfluous, because it is all too clear that she is the stronghold defending the Hungarian Land and Poland, and a shield to both kingdoms. Moreover, as the Turks have stumbled over us, many Christians have lived in peace for four years now"<sup>14</sup>.

Concomitantly with the big battles waged for the preservation of independence, the struggle for the union of all Romanians into a sole sovereign State within the territorial boundaries of ancient Dacia was another defining trait of the Romanian people's history. The achievement of the union of the three Romanian countries under the sceptre of Michael the Brave in 1599—1600, though short-lived, was nothing but a political sanctioning of an unquestionable reality: the full ethnic and cultural unity of the Romanian people<sup>15</sup>. That ideal cherished by all Romanians asserted itself as an ever-present item in the programmes of all the Romanian risings for social and national justice in the centuries following the deed achieved by Michael the Brave. In January 1859<sup>16</sup>, with the union of Moldavia to Muntenia, the foundations were laid of the modern Romanian State, while in 1877 the objective course of history recorded the winning of full independence, arm in hand, on the battlefield south of the Danube in the war waged against the Ottoman Empire<sup>17</sup>.

After the winning of State independence, and in parallel with the political-diplomatic and military steps taken by the responsible decision-makers in Bucharest aimed at strengthening the country's international status, the liberation of the historical provinces still under foreign sway at the time and the making of the Romanian unitary national State became the major goal of the Romanian political life. A participant in the first world conflagration starting with 1916, Romania fought on the side of the Entente for the liberation of the provinces under the sway of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The aims pursued lent the war waged by Romania a righteous, legitimate character, of rounding off the nation within the borders of a sole, independent and sovereign homeland. Voicing the unfaltering will of the entire Romanian people, the plebiscitary decisions taken throughout 1918 on the basis of the peoples' right to self-determination sanctioned the

making of the Romanian unitary national State. In Chişinău, Cernăuţi and Alba Iulia representatives of all social classes and strata, of all political parties decided, in full freedom, upon the Great Union within the ancient borders of Dacia. Subsequently, the peace treaties did nothing but sanction an accomplished fact, the result of the will and action of the entire Romanian people<sup>18</sup>.

Throughout the inter-war period, though a consistent promoter of peace and good-neighbourhood, of the observance of every State's independence and territorial integrity — Romania had declared for international détente and cooperation — she was however compelled to cope with repeated irredentist pressure, with the hard reactions of the neighbouring revisionist states.

The ascent of fascism in a number of European countries, and starting 1933 of Hitlerism in Germany, the wavering attitude and appeasement policy adopted by the great powers and the other states made it possible for the Third Reich to unleash World War II on September 1, 1939. Under the circumstances of the fascist and revisionist states getting political and military supremacy in Europe, Romania, completely isolated, was imposed by force and the threat of force the painful territorial amputations of 1940. The setting up of Antonescu's dictatorship, the German troops' arrival in Romania and, implicitly, her drawing into Nazi Germany's sphere of domination led to the Romanian army's dragging, against its and the people's will, into the war against the Soviet Union.

Under the serious dangers hovering over the Romanian State and people, the Romanian Communist Party had the historic merit of having taken the lead of the antifascist and anti-war forces, of all the progressive forces of the nation, and of having initiated and coordinated wide-scale resistance against Nazi Germany and Antonescu's dictatorship, against the war.

At the head of the working class, of the masses, of all the anti-fascist forces, working out and translating into life realistic programmes of action in agreement with the political-military circumstances, the party of the Romanian communists succeeded in organizing a broad front of political forces and groupings that actually involved the entire Romanian nation in supporting the efforts for Romania's getting out of the war, her joining the United Nations, for driving the German occupants away from the country and the overthrow of Antonescu's dictatorship<sup>19</sup>.

The victory of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation in August 1944, organized and led by the Romanian Communist Party, a true turning point in the Romanian people's history that shortened the war by at least 200 days through its impact upon the evolution of military developments, was the expression of the unanimous adhesion of the entire people and of its army to the aims written down in the programme of the antifascist resistance: the overthrow of Antonescu's dictatorship, turning weapons against the Reich, the country's joining the United Nations in an ef-

fort to defeat Nazi Germany, to liberate Romania's north-western part and thus abolish the stipulations of the loathsome Vienna Diktat. In those days of August 1944, the entire people, the entire army acted as a sole being, mobilized through the tireless activity of the Romanian communists. Shortly after the main concentrations of Hitlerite forces inland the country had been annihilated, the Romanian army resolutely engaged in grim battles for the liberation of the temporarily occupied north-western territory and, after crossing Romania's State frontier, for the liberation of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria until the final victory over the armies of the Third Reich on May 9, 1945<sup>20</sup>.

Embarking upon the road of building up the socialist society, the Romanian nation has reached higher peaks of progress and civilization, the ever increasing development in all fields of activity creating prerequisites for the consolidation of the homeland's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The traditional unity between the people and the army has been further strengthened, acting as a defining factor in the carrying through of Romania's home and foreign policy. As a result, the army, part and parcel of the people, has acquired specific structure, physiognomy and functions as a revolutionary, socialist army, which has as its basic mission the defence of the homeland's revolutionary achievements, independence and integrity, and has ever strongly integrated into the socio-political life, taking an active part in the economic construction, in the scientific and cultural-educational activity carried on in the Romanian society.

The most fertile period in the new history of Romania and of her army, the richest in terms of achievements throughout the entire history of the country, ushered in by the historic Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, has been mirrored in a more comprehensive and harmonious Romanian policy worked out and brilliantly promoted by the President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Romanian armed forces, a prominent personality of the contemporary world.

The widely open policy of cooperation, understanding and mutual assistance with all the countries of the world promoted by Romania starting 1965 has made known to the world the principles of the Romanian foreign policy, shortly turned into norms of conduct in the relations she promotes in the international political life: observance of national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, renunciation of force or of the threat of force, equality of rights between all the states of the world, irrespective of their size or political system, mutual advantage, etc.

The defence of the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the Socialist Republic of Romania is part and parcel of the general process of building up the multilaterally developed socialist society.

In agreement with this principle, the military doctrine of Socialist Romania, an outcome of the outlook and widely prospective thought of the Commander-in-Chief, provides for the struggle of the entire people, in the event of a war, until the aggressor is definitively chased away and the temporarily occupied territory completely liberated<sup>21</sup>. As a matter of fact, with respect to the current matters pertaining to the



homeland's defence, Romania's President pointed out : "under these conditions, it is obvious that a possible war in the future cannot be but a defence war, a people's war in which the entire people should participate, closely united, under the leadership of our Communist Party — the leading political force of the nation, therefore of the fight for the defence of independence and of the revolutionary conquests"<sup>22</sup>.

Grounded on two and a half millennia of documentarily attested fighting traditions, the present Romanian doctrine, scientifically substantiated and structured in the years that have passed since the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, is the keystone of the homeland's defence. The army of the Socialist Republic of Romania, the people's armed arm, a heir to long-standing and glorious fighting traditions and victories, is the backbone of the entire defence system, being prepared for its fundamental mission — defence of the homeland's independence, sovereignty and integrity.

Old as the people from which it was born, the army of Socialist Romania, embodying the loftiest fighting virtues of the forefathers, is a shield alongside the entire people to the most valuable assets of the Romanians throughout their history : *independence, freedom, unity and territorial integrity.*

## Notes

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## Relations of the Geto-Dacian World with the Neighbouring Peoples

As far as Romania's ancient history is concerned, the question of the ethno-cultural and geographical delimitation of the Geto-Dacians from the neighbouring ethnic groups, on the one hand, and that of their relations with other peoples throughout centuries, on the other hand, are of overwhelming importance for a wide universal approach of the Romanians' ancestors' place in the history of the Carpatho-Danubian space and in Europe in general.

A constant concern for Romanian historians, these questions are also in the focus of experts today, who place their main emphasis "*on those historic deeds which favoured contacts of life and mutual influence among the populations of these areas, a process which lay at the basis of the formation of our nation, of the peoples of the Balkans and of other neighbouring peoples*"<sup>1</sup>. The idea of a close interdependence of civilizations, a characteristic trait of Romanian historiography, is indeed the only way to correctly and subtly assess, in the spirit of scientific truth, the contribution of the autochthonous element as compared to that of various allogeneous elements to the formation of the cultural treasure of ancient Dacia. Handed down throughout centuries, it gave the Romanian people its unmistakably specific traits, providing it with everlasting and solid links with the big family of European peoples.

From this point of view, the study of written sources is undoubtedly indispensable, but — it should be said — not always enlightening. The ancient writers, whether Greek or Latin, had a constant and understandable preference for political history, mostly for the wars waged by the Geto-Dacians, and when they happened to take an interest in their ethnography (Herodotus and Strabo, for instance), they concentrated on the spiritual culture (beliefs, morals) most of all, ignoring entire sectors of the material life and culture. For instance, if our information had come from written sources alone, the history of the relations between Dacians and Romans from Burebista and Caesar to Decebalus and Trajan would have amounted to an unbroken string of conflicts, which would render the Daco-Roman symbiosis difficult to explain. In fact, these relationships were much more complex, involving many-sided economic and cultural exchanges, illustrated by a wealth of archaeological and numismatic documents found in Dacia's territory.

Political history points to the increasingly growing power of the Geto-Dacians in comparison with other peoples, to that epoch of maximum development (1st century BC — 1st century AD) when they asserted themselves as an important force in the region and even in

ancient Europe as a whole. Burebista's far-reaching rule and large number of soldiers or the staunch resistance Decebalus put up to Rome give only a partial image of the role, and specific position of the Geto-Dacians in the historical context of the ancient world. What characterizes and gives a unique personality to this people is its civilization. An analysis of the Geto-Dacians' material and spiritual assets, considering their evolution and connections in all directions, may help us correctly grasp the relation between tradition and innovation, between autochthonous elements and allogeneous elements, in short can give us the measure of the creative power and also of the capacity of cultural integration of the Romanians' ancestors.

In this respect, archaeology is, obviously, irreplaceable. It is not by chance that Vasile Pârvan, the founder of Romanian modern archaeology, who started the study of Dacia's protohistory, evinced for the first time the links of the autochthonous civilization with the great civilizations of European antiquity<sup>2</sup>. Besides his monumental work *Getica*<sup>3</sup>, special mention deserves Pârvan's conferences at Cambridge in March 1926, when he also referred to the relations of the Carpatho-Danubian people with the Villanovans, Greeks, Scythians, Celts and Romans<sup>4</sup>. Considering the modest stage attained by archaeological research at the time and several dominant historical ideas which influenced his scientific approach, we shall understand why some of Pârvan's opinions and conclusions can no longer be accepted today or must be amended. Irrespective of these rectifications, some of them major ones, Pârvan's great merit is the same: placing the Geto-Dacians' cultural evolution in the natural framework of world history, and seeing it as a permanent interaction of the ancestral autochthonous stock with various foreign elements which influenced it, in one way or another, along the time.

This comprehensive outlook paved the way for the Romanian historical and archaeological research of a recent date, of the last decades in particular. Providing irrefutable material evidence of the autochthonous character, of the ethno-cultural unity and continuity of the Geto-Dacians, the archaeologists study with equal interest the finds which point to the former's contacts with other peoples and civilizations, which influenced them and which they influenced to a smaller or greater extent.

As known, the first historical mention of the Getae is related to an important event of world history — the expedition of the great Persian King Darius to the mouths of the Danube in 514 BC. On that occasion, the south-Danubian Geto-Dacians made a glorious entrance on the stage of history, arousing Herodotus' admiration. The study of artifacts entitles us to place the separation of the northern branch from the big family of the Thracian tribes two or three centuries earlier, more precisely as far back as the 8th century BC. The archaeological culture of the Basarabi type, dating back to the middle period of the early Iron Age (Hallstatt C, about 800—650 BC) and stretching from the Banat to the Dniester and from the Transylvanian Plateau to the Balkan Mountains, was in fact the first big north-Thracian cultural unit we can already term as Geto-Dacian<sup>5</sup>.

Even at that remote chronological level, the archaeological finds evince contacts with other populations and tribes both eastward and westward. Some tools and harness pieces in iron and bronze and a string of gold adornments (some of them zoomorphic), similar to objects north and east of the Black Sea, are thought to be linked to the inroads of a population of eastern horsemen, the Cimmerians. As these are mostly isolated objects or treasures (Boarta, Firiteaz, Biia), the archaeological identification of the Cimmerians in the regions inhabited by the Geto-Dacians is quite difficult. But it can be admitted that a series of elements of the "Thraco-Cimmerian cultural circle" are explained by the relations of the Thracians with the northern Pontic area and the Caucasus<sup>6</sup>.

Iron and bronze adornments and arms from the same period (8th—7th centuries BC) were found in the Basarabi necropolises and particularly in those at Balta Verde, and certain funerary rites were noticed which cannot be explained unless the close contacts of the Thracians with the Illyrians or the creation of an Illyrian enclave in the south-western part of present-day Romania are considered<sup>7</sup>. Isolated projections of the Illyrian culture were found farther east (Trestiana, Vaslui county, and Stoicani, Galați county) and continued in the south-west of the country in the next period, as, for instance, in the necropolises at Ferigile (Vilcea county) and Gogoșu (Mehedinți county)<sup>8</sup>.

From that period (Hallstatt D, about 650—450 BC) onwards, an important and durable role in the historical and cultural evolution of the Geto-Dacian world had the contacts with two great civilizations: Greek and Scythian. The foundation of the city of Histria (Istros) in the year 657 BC, according to tradition, by colonists from Miletus marked the beginning of the long-standing economic, cultural and political links of the Geto-Dacians with the Greek world. Later, other colonists from Miletus founded the city of Tomis (today Constanța), and colonists from Pontica Heraclea founded Calatis (Mangalia). An important role in the relations of the Geto-Dacians with the Greeks had Tyras, a Milesian colony at the mouth of the Dniester (today Belgorod Dniestrovsky, USSR) and some colonies on the Bulgarian shore of the Black Sea: Dionysopolis (today Balçic) and Odessos (Varna). The finds in the "civil" area of Histria, and in the tumular necropolis of the same city show that as far back as the 6th century BC close links had been established between the colonists and the Geto-Dacians in the territory lying between the Danube and the Black Sea<sup>9</sup>. At that time Greek products started being sold through the agency of Histria and other, colonies, reaching the remotest parts of Dacia — amphorae and Greek luxury earthenware from the 6th—5th centuries BC were found in the Stîncești stronghold (Botoșani county), in the Curteni settlement (Vaslui county), at Brăilița (city of Brăila), as well as at Barboși and Frumușița (Galați county)<sup>10</sup>. Soon, however, the colonies started producing their own goods, often observing the needs and tastes of the autochthonous consumers. That is why in the Geto-Dacian settlements and necropolises from the 4th—3rd centuries BC numerous products from the Pontic workshops were found: pottery, adornments, arms, tools, implements, side by side with goods still im-

ported from metropolitan Greece, most of all amphorae, in which the traditional products of the south, wine and oil, were transported<sup>11</sup>.

In the 7th century BC, following their victory over the Cimmerians, the Iranian population of the Scythians extended their domination over the entire northern Pontic area, occupying the steppe and controlling the forest-steppe zone where populations in part of Thracian origin lived. Under the circumstances, a group of eastern origin settled in Transylvania, archaeologically attested to by the necropolises of the Ciumbrud type (7th—5th centuries BC) and identified as being the Agathyrse Herodotus (IV, 48) placed at the sources of the Maris (Mureș) river. According to some researchers, the Agathyrse were already Scythians themselves, but anyhow Iranians, while according to others they were more probably a Thracian population pushed eastward by the Scythians<sup>12</sup>. In the same period, the first Scythian inroads and infiltrations proper into the extra-Carpathian zones of present-day Romania, mostly in the plains, are considered to have taken place. In the 6th—5th centuries BC, the Scythians' impact on the Geto-Dacian world showed in the building of the first defence strongholds with earthen vallums of the kind found at Stințești<sup>13</sup>, and in the adoption of new types of Scythian arms (such as the short sword — *akinakes*) and adornments by the autochthonous people, like those found in the cemeteries at Ferigile (Vilcea county) and Bîrsești (Vrancea county)<sup>14</sup>.

The expedition of the Persian King Darius referred to above rounded off that complex historical picture. Presented by ancient authors as a punitive action against the Scythians, that expedition had in fact a wider strategic aim: to secure the rear of his front in Thrace in view of Greece's conquest, by the subduing of the Pontic colonies and the annihilation of their potential allies, the Scythians, Geto-Dacians and Odryssae. Although it did not end with a decisive victory, the expedition of Darius had important effects for the entire Southeast Europe. Southern Thrace remained under Persian domination for half a century and the Scythian expansion was checked for a while.

Founding their own kingdom between 490 and 470 BC, the southern Thracians — the Odryssae — took from the Persians a series of elements of State organization and culture. In the latter half of the 5th century and the first half of the 4th century BC, under the rule of intrepid kings, such as Sitalkes or Cotys, the kingdom of the Odryssae reached its acme, extending its rule to the Lower Danube<sup>15</sup>. The contacts of the Geto-Dacians with the Odryssae, who also contributed Greek and Persian influences, show in the treasures of Thraco-Getic art such as those of Agighiol, Peretu, Băiceni, Craiova, Vratza, Borovo, etc. In the form, decoration and iconography of the vessels, of the gold and silver adornments and harness pieces from these treasures (dating back mainly to the second half of the 4th century BC) the contribution of the big civilizations of that time is obvious as assimilated by the local toreutic workshops<sup>16</sup>. At that time too, the potter's wheel started being used by the Geto-Dacians under Greek and south-Thracian influence<sup>17</sup>.

After mid-4th century, the political and cultural configuration changed with the ascent of Macedonia under Philip II. The kingdom of

the Odryssae fell victim to the Macedonian expansion (341 BC) and Philip's victory over Atheas (339 BC) considerably reduced Scythian pressure in the east. The Geto-Dacians would now come in direct contact, for more than half a century, with the Graeco-Macedonian world and its Hellenistic civilization. Once again archaeology comes to complete, detail and even correct the image supplied by written sources which only inform us about the conflicts of the Geto-Dacians with the Macedonians of Alexander the Great and Lysimachus. The archaeological finds reveal an unprecedented intensification of the economic and cultural relations between the two worlds, illustrated by the dissemination of Hellenistic merchandise (pottery, amphorae in particular, to-reutic products, jewellery)<sup>18</sup> and by the growing circulation of Macedonian coins in the Carpatho-Danubian area. Those coins, the tetradrachms of Philip II in particular, were the favourite prototypes of the local mints in the 3rd—1st centuries BC<sup>19</sup>, one of the most remarkable achievements of the Geto-Dacian civilization in the late Iron Age.

The flourishing of the Geto-Dacian culture in the 4th—3rd centuries BC, based on rich autochthonous traditions and stimulated by the Hellenistic influence, is first and foremost revealed by the investigation of settlements. Some of them — Zimnicea (Teleorman county), Coțofenii din Dos (Dolj county), Poiana (Galați county) and Bunești (Vaslui county) — were already *davae* (Geto-Dacian word for *oppida*) with a rich economic life, and it was not by accident that the Geto-Dacian settlement conquered by Alexander the Great on the left bank of the Danube was called *polis* (city) by the ancient source. The density and welfare of the population also showed in the numerous cemeteries, with rich funerary objects, investigated over the recent decades in the region of the Lower Danube: Independența, Enisala (Tulcea county), Brăilița, Zimnicea (Ialomița county), etc.<sup>20</sup>. In Transylvania, that culture had particular features determined by the distance from the centres of Greek civilization and the direct contacts with the Central European civilization of the Celts (La Tène).

In the latter half of the 4th century BC, the Celts had reached the western regions of present-day Romania (Crișana), wherefrom following the courses of the Someș and Mureș rivers they penetrated into the Carpathian arch. For some time, they exerted political-military domination in those zones, obviously hindering the traditional links of the local population with the related tribes in the extra-Carpathian space and with the Greek world. The lack of written sources with direct references to the Celts is fully compensated by the archaeological research. The discoveries dating back to the La Tène period made in numerous places in Transylvania show that in the 3rd—2nd centuries BC the Celtic presence there was an actual fact<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, however, the Geto-Dacian finds in the Celtic settlements and necropolises prove that the two populations soon found a way to live in peace<sup>22</sup>, which stimulated, although not to the extent Pârvan believed, the cultural progress of the autochthonous population, especially in metal-working, pottery, arms and coinage.



The penetration of the Celts had important and durable consequences also on a larger plane through the changes brought about in the ethnic and political picture of the entire Southeast European space. In the west, a massive and powerful group of Celtic population (Anartes, Cotyni, Scordisci, etc.) bordered on Dacia, while in the south her direct links with the Hellenistic world had been cut in the 3rd century BC by the foundation of the Celtic kingdom at Tylis in Thrace. That was the historical background when the Germanic tribes of the Bastarnae penetrated into the east of Dacia around 200 BC, as recorded by ancient sources. For the 2nd—1st centuries BC, the archaeological research brought to light the Poienești-Lukashevka culture in the area between the Carpathians and the Dniester, whose major elements (pottery, adornments, tools) originated in the Oder-Elba region, in the Germanic culture of the Jastorf type<sup>23</sup>. Although the written sources say nothing about it, the archaeological finds show that the local population continued to exist until the Bastarnae's domination was removed by mid-1st century BC<sup>24</sup>.

One may say that the penetration and temporary settlement of foreign populations in Dacia's territory in the 3rd—2nd centuries BC under the circumstances of somehow lesser relations with the Hellenistic and south-Thracian world, were a brake on the development of the autochthonous society, hindering the unification of the Geto-Dacians at an earlier stage and delaying the setting up of the centralized Dacian State to the 1st century BC, under Burebista. Certainly, the situation was but temporary. The subsequent historical and cultural evolution proved that the autochthonous Geto-Dacian stock prevailed on all planes: on the one hand, the Geto-Dacians removed Celtic and Bastarnian domination and managed to oppose the Roman expansion for a long time, and on the other hand, they organically and creatively assimilated a string of foreign cultural elements, which alongside the powerful autochthonous traditions make up the originality of their civilization in the 2nd century BC and 1st century AD. It is what Vasile Pârvan called the "true modern Getic civilization which, relying on old Getic bases to which Celtic, Greek and Roman influences were added (almost no Scythian influence, but some Sarmatian instead), will lie at the foundation of the Daco-Roman culture"<sup>25</sup>.

Basic elements of one and the same culture dating from that time were found in the rural settlements, the large settlements of the oppidan type (*davae*), as well as in the stone-walled strongholds throughout Dacia and even beyond her borders<sup>26</sup>. Hand-made pottery continued — in point of technique, forms and decoration — the old Hallstatt traditions, while the pottery made on the potter's wheel was enriched with new forms, often after Hellenistic prototypes (vessels of the kantharos, krater and pythos types, amphorae)<sup>27</sup>. Imitation was however free, innovating, as one can see in the Getic cups with relief decorations which took as a model the Delic or Megarian cups, but had an original, highly varied ornamentation. Again under Hellenistic influence, joined by late Celtic influence, the local production of painted ceramics developed in Dacia starting with mid-1st century BC.

The iron tools found in Dacia can also be traced to foreign types, either Celtic or Roman<sup>28</sup>. Some are sure to come from Celtic and Roman workshops, but most of them were made in Dacia by local or foreign metal-workers. The iron workshops from Grădiștea Muncelului, where Roman tools were made in the 1st century AD, provide telling information in this respect. The same holds true for arms and harness pieces, most of which are of the La Tène type (for instance the ones in the princely tombs of Popești and Cugir)<sup>29</sup>. Clothing and adornment objects of the classical period are also frequently indicative of foreign prototypes; nonetheless, they illustrate more than any other field of material culture (apart from ceramics) the originality of the Geto-Dacian civilization. We here refer first and foremost to the silver adornments from the 1st century BC with stylistic, typological, technical and functional elements of Greek, Celtic and autochthonous origin that merged in an artistic synthesis specific to Dacia<sup>30</sup>. Some of the adornments, as well as some of the silver vessels found in the same treasures are considered to have come from Roman or even Italic workshops. Anyway, throughout the 1st century AD, Roman fashion became increasingly preponderant in Dacia, showing in the proliferation of new types of fibulae which replaced the La Tène ones.

It is obvious that the assimilation of various elements of foreign culture, Greek and Roman in particular, was favoured by intense trade relations, most convincingly attested to by the large number of imported objects and the impressive amount of coins found in Dacia (more than 25,000 Roman republican denarii)<sup>31</sup>. In this respect, efficient intermediaries were the foreign craftsmen who worked in Dacia for the local market or the architects and builders who helped the building of the civil, military and sacred architectural edifices in the Orăștie Mountains. Through this, as well as through long political relations, the Geto-Dacians of Burebista and Decebalus got more and more acquainted with aspects of the Graeco-Roman classical civilization. Some epigraphic findings (Grădiștea Muncelului, Ocnița) show that they were familiar to some extent with the Greek and Latin languages<sup>32</sup>.

Therefore, the Roman conquest found a people with an old flourishing culture, that had been in contact with the classical civilization, the Greek one in particular, for seven centuries, and was able to assimilate a superior culture and to influence it. Consequently, the prerequisites of the Daco-Roman synthesis emerged in that permanent interaction of civilizations characteristic of the historical evolution of the Romanian space. Fully true, in this respect, is Pârvan's assertion: "The protohistory of Dacia is the best introduction to the history of the oriental Roman world"<sup>33</sup>. With the victory of the Romans, a new and fundamental chapter opened in the national history. From that moment onwards, throughout the period in which a part of the Dacian land belonged to the Roman Empire, it was no longer a matter of mere contacts between two peoples and civilizations, but of their co-inhabitation and close blending in all fields of material and spiritual life, finally leading to the formation of a new people — the Romanian people.

## Notes

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## **514 BC — History Records the First Battle Fought by the Geto-Dacian People for the Defence of Its Ancestral Land**

The Geto-Dacians entered the written world military history and, at the same time, mankind's consciousness with the first wide-scale conquering expedition staged by a huge empire of the ancient world — the Persian Empire — on the territory of present-day Romania. From that event on, widely reverberated in the history of the Romanian people's forefathers, all ancient sources referring to the latter's feats of arms unanimously recorded them as a defining trait of their very existence and historical development — the struggle for the defence of the ancestral land. "*The heroic struggles of the Dacians*", the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania pointed out, "*won the praise of the historians of the ancient world*"<sup>1</sup>.

Quite relevant, in this regard, is Herodotus' account: "Before reaching the Istros, he [Darius] first vanquished the Getae, who consider themselves immortal. The Thracians who hold the land of Salmydes and those who inhabit the areas north of the cities of Apollonia and Mesembria — and call themselves Skyroniases and Nipsei — had surrendered to Darius without offering any resistance"<sup>2</sup>. The Greek historian further narrates that, unlike the latter, the Getae took the daring decision to face Darius. "The Getae, however, who had taken the reckless decision [of facing Darius], were conquered quickly albeit they are the bravest and the most righteous among the Thracians"<sup>3</sup>.

According to Herodotus' account, Darius pursued "to punish" the Scythians for their frequent forays in the Persian Empire, the strongest State of the Ancient Orient. By 525 BC the Persians had taken hold of all Greek towns in Asia Minor and of Egypt, thus stretching their empire from India to the Eastern Mediterranean. Darius I (521—486 BC) reorganized the State and strengthened the royal and military power of the empire<sup>4</sup>.

Darius' campaign in 514 BC was determined by more complex and general causes than an ordinary punitive expedition against the Scythians. Actually, the "gigantic expedition" was determined by economic reasons and, obviously, by military and political ends as a natural corollary on the eve of the big confrontation with the Greek cities. As a matter of fact, with the expansion of the Persian Empire, the Greek element would be ever more present in the Persian king's policy. By 517 BC the Persian State had extended its supremacy over the East Mediterranean zone as well, thus coming into an irreducible conflict with the Greek mainland cities for economic and political-military interests. The western coast of Asia Minor (Ionia) had been already con-

quered and the Greek cities in Europe were seriously affected by the new economic and strategic situation established in Eastern Mediterranean. Darius I considered that the inclusion of the Greek insular and mainland cities within the borders of his empire was the only viable alternative for the definitive and favourable settlement of the big economic and military conflict already unleashed. Darius pursued to secure absolute control over the Straits, and at the same time to subdue all the Greek towns on the western and northern coasts of the Black Sea. It was only in this way that the Persian king could deprive Greece of an important raw material source — the Pontic, and, of course, Geto-Dacian grain, thereby dealing a deadly blow particularly at Athens<sup>5</sup>. Undoubtedly, the Scythians also entered Darius' strategical plans, the security of the empire's northern borders against the latter's forays being a stringent necessity before embarking upon the big confrontation. It is not impossible for the "Great King" to have also taken the Getae into account, as he must have known about them, and also about the Greeks and the Thracians in the Balkan Peninsula. An inscription discovered at Susa speaks about the Scythian tribes from "beyond the river" (Istros) which had been already subdued, and *Kudra* (Thrace) is also mentioned among the satrapies, in addition to Ionia and others<sup>6</sup>. Hence, Darius' plan equally aimed at securing the empire's north-eastern border, through the conquest of Thrace and the subduing of the Getae, before the final attack against the European Greece. This notwithstanding, the expedition against the Scythians, as depicted by Greek historian Herodotus, seems to have had only a secondary, demonstrative role within the overall Persian policy vis-à-vis the Balkans and the lands of the Lower Danube, and the desideratum of securing control over the commercial roads linking Europe to Asia. Obviously, the expedition might have also been a demonstration of force pursuing to attract the Thracians, the Macedonians and the Geto-Dacians into the empire's sphere of influence, thus isolating European Greece. Before crossing into Europe, Darius had initiated sea reconnaissance actions on the Greek European littoral, and Byzantium had already accepted the suzerainty of the "Great King", so that when the campaign started, Darius, master of the Thracian Kersones, must have had sufficient knowledge about the Scythians, the Thracians and the Geto-Dacians.

Mainly, to attain these aims (therefore, not only the "punishment" of the Scythians), Darius worked out a strategic plan commensurate with the power of the State he led. In an earlier stage, the plan provided for a strong blow to be dealt at the north-Pontic Scythians, the subduing of all Pontic Greek towns, and finally the transformation of the Black Sea into a Persian lake. Within this strategy, a first step was the vanquishing of the south-Balkan Thracians and of the north-Balkan Geto-Dacians. The Persian expeditionary corps built up for the operations in the Pontic-Danubian area was deemed at the time — in our opinion the figures are exaggerated — as consisting of 700,000 men, the land troops, and 600 ships provided by the already vanquished Greek towns on the coasts of Asia Minor<sup>7</sup>.

The campaign<sup>8</sup> — as follows from Herodotus' account — seems to have had three stages, out of which only the second one is relevant for our discussion, namely that waged north of the Balkans, characterized by the stubborn struggle of the Geto-Dacians in defence of their own territory. Briefly, during the first marching stage the Persian expeditionary corps crossed the Straits (the Hellespontus), advanced up the western coast of the Black Sea, subdued, without fighting, the Skyromiases and the Nipsei from the kin of the Thracian Odryssae, and a part of the fleet made a "two days' sail up the river" to the place where the Istros' mouths are branching off, in order to build a pontoon bridge on which the Persian land army was to cross the river.

In the second marching stage, the advance of the Persian army met with worse conditions due to the stubborn resistance put up by the Geto-Dacians. The latter's attitude obviously contrasted with that of the south-Balkan Thracian tribes, which offered no resistance whatsoever, being from this point of view a surprise that Herodotus hurried to record in the most commendatory terms. Obviously, the Geto-Dacians' "recklessness" to resist the Persian army was nothing else but the materialization, in the military field, of their firm resolve to oppose the encroachment of their own territory and the Persians' intention of subjecting them.

This political-military reality promptly recorded by Herodotus and also praised by the "father of history" induced the great historian to describe the Geto-Dacians as the "bravest and most righteous among the Thracians", to reveal that trait of their moral-spiritual profile according to which they "consider themselves immortal", and also to make an *excursus* in their spiritual life. "Bravery" and "righteousness" were salient features of the Geto-Dacian people which many ancient historians would stress and set as an example even to societies that had reached a high development level such as the Greek society and, later on, the Roman one. They were major moral features transmitted to the Romanians, throughout the centuries, as fundamental peculiar traits.

Even the Persians seemed to have been surprised by this resistance since they, aware of the Getae's military capacity and soldierly virtues, included Getic contingents into their expeditionary corps.

The battle between the Geto-Dacians and the Persians is difficult to locate. There may have been several battles, according to the unions of tribes archaeologically identified in the area lying between the Balkans, the Danube and the Black Sea. Anyway, we know for sure that one such battle, mentioned by Herodotus, took place south of the Danube. Here, we have in view the Getic cultural complex at Dobrina-Ravna, very similar in structural and ethnical respects with the one at Ferigile-Birsești, either complex belonging to one and the same great Thraco-Getic unit<sup>9</sup>. A strong tribal union may have existed in the south of present-day Dobrudja, the same as it can be assumed that a Thraco-Getic union may have existed also north of the Histria-Danube line at the time when sources of a later date speak of a certain "king of the Histrians" (most likely of the Getae living in the Istros region) opposing Scythian King Atheas in 339 BC; moreover, in northern Dobrudja coins were dug out bearing the name of Moskon, a Getic king, which

indicates that the political entity may have been of an earlier date. Of course, in the 6th and 5th centuries BC, there may have been several centres of socio-political and military life within the tribal unions framework. The Tariverde-Beidaud culture corresponds to such a well-structured political-State formation which might have had the necessary power to put up resistance against the Persian army<sup>10</sup>. It was assumed that Darius crossed the mountains through the Ajtos-Provadija defile, being immediately faced with Geto-Dacian resistance. However, in our opinion there was not a single battle, because the Geto-Dacian political-military entity had enough forces to engage several battles in defence of its liberty. The Geto-Dacians' bravery and good organization must have impressed the "Great king", since for the next stage of the Persian campaign he drew part of the Geto-Dacian army on his side.

The Geto-Dacians must have offered resistance both in the south and in the north of the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea before the Persian army crossed the pontoon bridge built across the Danube, where the fleet waited for the arrival of the land troops. Most of the researchers generally agree that Darius crossed the Danube at Isaccea, a frequently used crossing ford ; however, there are also historians who think that the Persians may have crossed the river at Cernavodă, considering that the fleet sailed for two days from the sea to the place where the pontoon bridge was built. Quite possible, the Persian column advancing along the littoral headed from Histria, along the Carasu Valley, towards Cernavoda, too. In our opinion, the crossing took place at Cernavoda. To this effect, we also have in view the discovery of the emblem-sword at Medgidia, which should be related to a triumphal monument or a mausoleum-tomb of a Geto-Dacian leader killed in the fight against the Persians. This piece was discovered in 1955 in the ridges bordering on the Carasu Valley, wherefrom stone is quarried for the cement factory in Medgidia. It has the shape of an *akinakes*, dagger of Medo-Persian origin with zoomorphic ornamentation on one of its sides. The other side has two spikes with which the piece was fixed on stone or in wood. Its shape reminds of the daggers in the bas-reliefs decorating the palace at Persepolis, while the ornamentation is a blend of local tradition with Persian, Scythian and Greek influences. This interesting discovery — a unique one in the Thraco-Getic world — leads us to the assumption that it was at Medgidia, in the territory lying between the Danube and the Sea, that one of the battles fought by the Getae against the Persians in 514 BC might have taken place, and that an obelisk or an altar was built there, on which this emblem-sword was fixed as a token of the political and military power<sup>11</sup>.

The ancient sources make no mention of any other resistance, except for that offered by the Geto-Dacians, before Darius reached north of the Danube. The Greek cities on the western and northern coasts of Pontus Euxinus could no longer promote an independent policy, as long as those in Asia Minor contributed a great number of ships to Darius' expedition. Histria, too, was taken in the vortex of the events occurred in late 6th century BC ; its position was twofold delicate : first, in relation to the local population, the Geto-Dacians, who were defending their



freedom and with whom it had close economic relations, and then in relation to the Persian State since its metropolis, Miletus, was taking part in the expedition led by Darius<sup>12</sup>.

Once the land forces crossed the Istros, they advanced through the Geto-Dacians' territories in north-eastern Muntenia, southern Moldavia and Bessarabia, where the latter, either by themselves, or together with the Scythians, must have met them with the same hostility, attacking the Persian troops as the south-Danubian Geto-Thracians had done. The route followed by Darius could not be accurately established. Actually, nobody knows how deep did Darius advance into the Geto-Scythian territories. Some historians (R. Ghirshman)<sup>13</sup> think that he only reached as far as the Dniester, an assertion than cannot be accepted without reserve, because it would mean that the Persian expedition had been aimed at the Getae alone, and not at the Scythians. This latter opinion cannot be ruled out either, because Darius was forced, first of all, to break the Getae's resistance who, being masters, alongside the Scythian farmers, of the Pontic granary, automatically focused Darius' attention and his policy regarding the Greek mainland cities.

Taking into account the information handed down by Herodotus, the Persian campaign against the Scythians would have lasted — after the Danube had been crossed — 60 days at the most.

According to Darius' plans, the Scythians had to be "punished" during this span of time, but the king's return seems to have been precipitated. The Persian army met with enormous difficulties. The Scythians were laying everything waste ahead of Darius' troops; here we must have in view the practice used, on this occasion too, by the Geto-Dacians as far as the Dniester, where they were neighbouring the Scythians, so that it was in the Getic territory that Darius met with difficulties of this kind. Generally, it is thought that the Persian army could not advance more than 1,000 km from the Danube, therefore we feel inclined to think that Darius had to face mainly the Getae, rather than the Scythians. The latter had decided to avoid an "open encounter", and to keep on withdrawing, the more so as they had not received any help, not even from the Agathyrses, who were related to the Thraco-Getae.

Darius retreated under conditions of permanent hostility and harassment, but the Scythians did not succeed in destroying the Persian army, because, Herodotus also wrote down, the "Scythians did not learn the route they [the Persians] had taken in their retreat".

It is a general opinion that the campaign led by Darius against the Scythians was a failure for the Persian Empire<sup>14</sup>. However, the expedition did not turn into a disaster. It was a demonstration of force meant to impress the Greek cities, the Thracians, the Geto-Dacians and the Scythians, but it was dictated primarily by economic, political and military reasons. Actually, the power of the Scythians and the Getae was not shaken, but the Greek cities and the southern Thracians fell immediately under Persian rule. It is a known fact that Darius left 80,000 soldiers in Europe under command of General Megabazos, who had the task to systematically subject all the tribes and cities south of the Haemus (the Balkans)<sup>15</sup>. Greek and Persian sources attest to Thrace's occupation and incorporation into the empire. Macedonia was already under Persian su-

zerainty, and the Persians took hold of the entire Greek littoral and all the coastal cities, so that Darius could control the entire grain trade from the Pontic area and interfere into Hellas' affairs, those of Athens itself, where he brought the pro-Persian party led by tyrant Hippias back to power. The outburst of the Medic wars and their bad ending for the Persians would bring a change in the Aegean state of things, but Persian cultural and political influences upon the Thracian and Thraco-Getic world were deep-going. Suffice it to mention the art of the Thracian and Geto-Dacian aristocracy in the 5th and 4th centuries BC, well attested in the present territories of Romania and Bulgaria. The very grandeur of the life of the high Geto-Dacian aristocratic society, that can be inferred from the treasures discovered and the inventory of the princely tombs, was influenced by the Persian royalty and aristocracy. Here, we have also in view the golden and gilded silver helmets unearthed at Poiana-Coțofenești, Agighiol, Peretu and Băiceni, which were showy helmets but of a kind characteristic of the Thraco-Getae alone. The vessels discovered in Thraco-Getic tombs contain many pieces which were made after Iranian prototypes, such as the goblets and carafes discovered in the tomb at Vrața<sup>16</sup>.

The Persian troops stayed in Europe for some 40 years after 514 BC, and this presence influenced the Thracians' political and military organization; by 470 BC the Odrissae set up a State of their own taking as a model the Persian satrapy. The Odryian State would extend its political authority as far as the Lower Danube attracted by the Persian model<sup>17</sup>. It was assumed that after Darius' campaign the Geto-Dacians might have been weakened, which would have facilitated the Scythians' penetration south of the Danube. However, the Getae, both those living between the Haemus, the Danube and Pontus Euxinus, and those living north of the Danube continued to develop, creating an ever more prosperous civilization. They permanently improved their political and military organization. Nor were their relations with the Greek cities interrupted, though the latter took part, in one form or another, in the campaign led by Darius in 514 BC.

The Geto-Dacians also defended their liberty against the Scythians, when in 341 BC the latter, headed by King Atheas, penetrated south of the Danube and had to face, in the north of Dobrudja, the natives' political-State formation led by a king called "rex Histrianorum"<sup>18</sup>. Taking into account that the political and administrative structure of the Odryian State was similar, in the main, to the Persian one, it stands to reason that the heads of the Geto-Dacian political formations must have enjoyed an autonomous status. Even when the State of the Odrissae was in its glorious days, the sources mention the existence of cavalry troops belonging to the Geto-Dacians, allies of the Odrissae, which may have existed in the organization of every Getic socio-political formation<sup>19</sup>. The coins dated to the 3rd century BC unearthed in the north of Dobrudja bear the name of King Moskon<sup>20</sup>, while the vessels found out in the tombs at Agighiol, Vrața and Alexandrov those of King Cotyso and of the artisan worker<sup>21</sup>. All this testifies to the economic and poli-

tical power of the Geto-Dacian rulers, who were also protectors of the Greek cities on the western coast of Pontus Euxinus.

The Geto-Dacians' resistance against the most powerful monarch of the Ancient Orient — Darius I — and against a huge army was the first attestation, of this kind, in the written sources of the antiquity. It demonstrated the Geto-Dacians' determination to be free and independent on their native lands. Their bravery aroused the admiration of Greek historian Herodotus, the "father of history", who did not hesitate to hand down to posterity the heroic resistance offered by the Getae, the "bravest and most righteous among the Thracians", two major moral traits the Romanian people has inherited from its ancestors and kept throughout the centuries as an invaluable thesaurus, and to which it has added the feelings of dignity and pride for having been born on the same lands on which its forefathers defended their liberty two and a half millennia ago.

## Notes

1. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 14, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, p. 291.
2. Herodotus, *Istorii* (Histories), IV, 93.
3. *Ibidem*.
4. R. Ghirshman, *L'Iran des origines à l'Islam*, Paris, 1976, pp. 148—149.
5. *Ibidem*, pp. 143—151.
6. W. Culican, *The Medes and Persians*, London, 1965, p. 76.
7. Herodotus, IV, 83—143.
8. For the development of the campaign, see Herodotus, IV, 71—120; J. B. Bury, "The European Expedition of Darius", in *Classical Review*, 1897, pp. 93—112; V. V. Struve, "Darij i skifyi Pricernomorija", in *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 2, 1949, pp. 19—26; P. Alexandrescu, "Izvoarele grecești despre retragerea lui Darius din expediția scitică" (Greek Sources on Darius' Withdrawal from the Scythian Expedition), in *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche* (further quoted as *SCIV*), 7, 1955, 3—4, pp. 319—342; Iv. Venedikov, "La campagne de Darius contre les Scythes à travers la Thrace", in *Studia Balcanica*, 1, Sofia, 1970, pp. 25—32; E. V. Chernenko, *Skifo-persidskaia voina*, Kiev, 1984.
9. Al. Vulpe, "Cercetări arheologice și interpretări istorice privind secolele VII—V î.e.n. în spațiul carpato-dunărean" (Archaeological Research and Historical Interpretations Concerning the 7th—5th Centuries BC in the Carpatho-Danubian Area), in *Memoria Antiquitatis*, 2, 1970, pp. 193—195.
10. C. Preda, "Unele considerații privind geții din Dobrogea în secolele VI—V î.e.n." (Some Considerations on the Getae in the Dobrudja in the 6th—5th Centuries BC), in *Thraco-Dacica*, 3, 1983, pp. 19—24; such a union in the north of Dobrudja, strong from the economic and military points of view if one takes into account the Tariverde-Beidaud cultural complex, could have superior forces and organization able to offer a heroic resistance to the Persian army (*Ibidem*, p. 22). To the area inhabited by this union of Getic tribes belong the emblem-sword of Medgidia and the subsequent impressive discoveries, of a "princely" nature, made at Agighiol, Independența, Vișina (Tulcea county), as well as the coins minted by King Moskon.
11. D. Berciu, *Arta traco-getică* (Thraco-Getic Art), București, 1969, pp. 19—32.
12. S. Dumitriu, "Événements du Pont Euxin de la fin du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle av.n.è. reflétés dans l'histoire d'Histria", in *Dacia*, NS, 8, 1964, pp. 133—144.

13. R. Ghirshman, *op. cit.*, p. 144. See also E. V. Chernenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 81—111.
14. P. Alexandrescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 336—339.
15. Herodotus, V, 2 ; R. Ghirshman, *op. cit.*, p. 44, Megabazos, satrap of Dacchylum and Darius' highly appreciated general subjected all Thrace and forced King Amyntas of Macedonia to accept Persia's suzerainty. W. Culican, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
16. D. Berciu, *op. cit.*, pp. 33—76, 83—93, 123—182.
17. H. M. Danov, *Tracia antica* (Ancient Thrace), Bucureşti, 1976, pp. 267—392.
18. See *Istoria militară a poporului român* (The Military History of the Romanian People), Vol. 1, Bucureşti, 1984, pp. 63—65.
19. Thukydides, *Războiul peloponesiac* (The War in Peloponese), II, 96, p. 1.
20. C. Preda, "Monede de un tip necunoscut provenind din Dobrogea" (Coins of an Unidentified Type Discovered in Dobrudja), in *SCIV*, 15, 1964, 3, pp. 401—410 ; R. Ocheşanu, "Monedele basileului Moskon aflate în colecțiile Muzeului de arheologie Constanța" (The Coins of King Moskon in the Collections of the Museum of Archaeology in Constanța), in *Pontica*, 3, 1970, pp. 126—129.
21. D. Berciu, *op. cit.*, pp. 33—74.

## **The Political-Military Situation in Southeast Europe in the Latter Half of the First Millennium BC**

In the history of Southeast Europe the latter half of the first millennium BC is undoubtedly the period with the most important social, political, military and cultural consequences for the peoples living in that area. The process of multilateral evolution of the Southeast European society in the 5th-1st centuries BC was marked by wide-scope military confrontations on large areas, involving forces struggling in defence of freedom, independence and territorial integrity ; important political convulsions turned into devastating wars with a strong impact on the configuration of the spheres of influence and political régimes ; the spectacular politico-military downfall of some states and the emergence and ascension of others, claiming universal domination ; the struggle of some peoples and states against the expansion of empires or kingdoms ; migrations of populations or groups of populations with significant consequences even for the most powerful states in the area. To put it in a nutshell, the entire political-military evolution in Southeast Europe in the mentioned period, that was so rich in events, appears as a distinct period which paved the way for the great changes at the end of the last millennium BC and the first half of the first millennium AD.

Specifically, the period spanning the 5th-1st centuries BC was deeply marked in Southeast Europe by three important moments : the wide-scope, crucial confrontation, in the 5th century, between the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire, the rise of Macedonia as a big power at the expense of the Greek cities, whose freedom and democracy she restricted to a great extent or utterly annihilated ; in the last thirty years of the 4th century BC the Macedonian kings, Alexander the Great most of all, and the whole Greek world made their military contribution to the struggle for the disintegration of the Achaemenid Empire and the creation on its ruins of the big Graeco-Macedonian Hellenistic monarchy ; the implacable ascension of the Roman Republic in the south of the Balkan Peninsula, and then toward the Danube and the Carpathians, which resulted in the disintegration of leagues and states that had been independent until that moment, but were permanently contesting with each other for power (the Achaean league, the Aetolian league, Macedonia, Epirus, Sparta) and the establishment, instead, of military and administrative districts, the abolition of previous freedoms, the arbitrary setting up of new frontiers, bloody reprisals against any attempts to fight back. In less than 75 years since it had first stepped on the Balkan Peninsula (228 BC), Rome became the incontestable master and arbiter of the largest part of the Mediterranean basin.

In that eventful historical epoch, besides the other peoples engaged in political-military conflicts, the Geto-Dacian people held a distinct place by its continuous effort to defend its independence, the firm rejection of any foreign domination, its struggle arm in hand to definitely chase away the enemy, its uncommon capability to withstand historical adversities.

The evolution of the Thracian society in the north of the Balkan Peninsula, which had started in the Bronze Age, went steadily on in the first stage of the Iron Age, and resulted in the economic, social, political and military development of the autochthonous population which ended with the formation, in the 9th—8th centuries of the first millennium BC, of the Geto-Dacian people with its specific features, utterly distinct from the other Thracian peoples in the Balkan Peninsula. A natural outcome of the generalization of iron tools, the entire economic life of the Geto-Dacian tribes in the vast Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area boomed and they managed to create political-State formations that possessed considerable material resources<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, the growing amounts of material goods favoured substantial demographic growth, which helped each political-State formation raise its combat and defence potential when confronted with adverse armies threatening their freedom.

The fruitful contacts of the Geto-Dacian world with the most advanced civilizations of that time, — Greek and Persian —, its exceptional responsiveness and capacity of assimilating the most important material and spiritual values of the world and, at the same time, of emanating its own elements of civilization to the benefit of neighbouring peoples, contributed to a large extent to a marked development of the Geto-Dacian people in all fields during that period, *“For that time”, Romanian President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out, “the various Dacian State forms reached an advanced level of material and spiritual life. They had relations with other peoples and neighbouring civilizations”*<sup>2</sup>.

A wide-scale conflict broke up in the Istro-Pontic area early in the second decade of the 6th century BC, when Darius I (522—486 BC) started his expedition against the seminomadic Scythian populations living in the plains north of the Black Sea<sup>3</sup>, as part of the military policy programme of the Persian Empire of preparing, strategically, the big confrontation with the Greek cities in the Balkan Peninsula; the expedition aimed at securing the north Asian borders and at drawing the Thracian world into the Persian sphere of influence in order to isolate Hellas. The penetration of the Persian army in the northern Balkan territories, densely populated by the Geto-Dacians, met with the only resistance Darius I was ever offered in his march. This political-military act, widely reverberated at the time, in utter contrast with the peaceful surrender of the other Thracian tribes the Persians met on their way, made Herodotus<sup>4</sup> call the Geto-Dacians the “most righteous and bravest among the Thracians” and admire the “audacious resolve” to oppose the Persian colossus.

The first Geto-Dacian fights recorded in history against a powerful foreign army — the Persian one — are an eloquent proof of the level of military organization attained by the Geto-Dacian tribes and unions of tribes in the 4th—5th centuries BC<sup>5</sup>.

The armed opposition of the Geto-Dacians in the territory between the Danube and the Sea shows them as staunch and fearless champions of freedom and territorial integrity, traits that would be their characteristics throughout their multimillenary presence on the political-military stage of Southeast Europe. Stretching throughout the vast Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, more and more numerous and vigorous as time went by, the Geto-Dacians would be increasingly involved in the events in that part of the European continent, and quite often the participation (or even the absence) of the Geto-Dacian armies was decisive for the wide-scope military actions of other states.

The wars between the Greek cities and the Achaemenid Empire which started in the first decade of the 5th century were marked by highly resounding battles in the history of the ancient world: *Marathon* (490 BC), *Thermopylae* and *Salamis* (480 BC), *Plataea* and *Mycale* (479 BC), those fought at the mouths of the rivers *Eurymedon* (467 BC), *Salamis* (449 BC). Staunch and fierce, the resistance of the Greek cities determined the Achaemenid Empire to give up its intentions of conquering Hellas and to recognize the autonomy of the Ionian cities in Asia Minor<sup>6</sup>.

The Geto-Dacians got involved with important forces in the political-military developments which followed the removal of Persian presence from the western shore of Pontus Euxinus. In 480 BC, the Odrysae laid the foundations of the first known State of the Thracian world. The initial nucleus of the Odrysian State covered a rather small territory bordered by the valleys of the lower courses of *Maritsa* and *Ergenes* rivers as well as the Stranja massif toward the north-west. Afterwards, under Kings Teres I (450—431 BC) and mostly Sitalkes (431—424 BC), the Odrysian kingdom considerably extended and included other Thracian tribes and also a part of the territory inhabited by the Getae between the Haemus and the Danube<sup>7</sup>.

The rivalry between Athens and Sparta caused a most terrible and devastating conflict which went on between 430 and 401 BC and involved, in one way or another, the entire Greek world<sup>8</sup>. The Odrysian State, perhaps a political creation of Athens, was always a faithful ally of the latter and, throughout the policy of Odrysian kings, the Getae from the Balkans to the Danube were involved in military events both in the north, toward the Scythians, and toward the south, where the Thracian kings, Sitalkes in particular, were interested in extending their rule.

The latter half of the 4th century was dominated by the fast ascension of Sparta, the reestablishment of the Athenian League (378 BC) and the Beotian League (371 BC) as Athens and Theba successively took over the political primacy. However, though the generous ideas of the achievement of a pan-Hellenic union gained ground in the social consciousness of Greece in the first half of the 4th century, the evolution of the slave-owning system did not allow for the attainment of those aspirations. In the latter half of the 4th century, the Hellenic world, which had not been able to establish on its own a form of unitary political and economic organization superior to that of a city-State,

fell prey to Macedonia, a slave-owning State on the rise, which took advantage of the external division and internal dissensions in Greece<sup>9</sup>.

Macedonia, which had become a great power of the ancient world owing to Philip II (359—336 BC)<sup>10</sup>, maintained that position until its dissolution as a State by the Roman republic in 148 BC. Eliminating the Odrysian State, crushing the slightest desire of liberty of the Greek cities and gradually submitting all the cities on the northern shore of the Aegean Sea, Macedonia stood out as the only possible champion of revenge over the Persians, an alluring prospect put before the Hellenic cities.

Northwards, the Macedonian expansion met with the stubborn resistance of the Thracian tribes, among which the Geto-Dacians' struggle for freedom had a particular significance. To the Geto-Dacians, checking the Macedonian expansion was a prerequisite for the preservation of their territorial and ethnic unity, at a time when their economic, socio-political and military organization asserted itself ever more powerfully, as a distinct entity against the background of a civilization which had already clearly defined its physiognomy in relation to the surrounding populations, and had repeatedly demonstrated its ability to withstand various conquerors.

The brunt of the anti-Macedonian fights was borne by the Geto-Dacians in the territories between the Southern Carpathians and the Danube and north of the maritime Danube, which were covered in detail by ancient sources of great interest for the reconstruction of the military history of the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. Most remarkable is the Daco-Macedonian war, which began with the daring crossing of the Danube, in 335 BC, by Alexander and his phalanx<sup>11</sup> and ended with the famous victories of the Geto-Dacians led by Dromichaites in 300 and 299 BC against Lysimachus, the able general of the "world conqueror"<sup>12</sup>, who became, after the latter's death, on June 13, 323 BC king of Hellenistic Thrace<sup>13</sup> in Babylon, following bitter fights for power. In the mentioned period that long conflict also recorded a complete disaster inflicted by the Geto-Dacians upon the Macedonian army led by General Zopyrion in the northern Pontic steppes in 326 BC<sup>14</sup>. It ended with a strategic victory won by the Geto-Dacians, and as a result the Hellenistic kingdoms' claims to exert an absolute control on the Danube line or even beyond it had been completely thwarted.

The 3rd—2nd centuries BC were a period full of convulsions in Southeast Europe because, on the one hand, the struggle for power continued in the Hellenistic world, considerably draining, politically and militarily, the Greek states and cities and causing them immense economic damage, and on the other hand, the Roman expansion started in the Balkan Peninsula, first through attacks on the Illyrian tribes, then through direct interference in the home affairs of the Greek world and in the conflicts which tore it apart. All that political-military evolution took place against the background of a strong and overwhelming invasion of Celtic tribes in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, simultaneously with the arrival of the seminomadic Bastarnae of German origin in the north of the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, who were



extremely dangerous neighbours for the Geto-Dacians and the south-Danubian states alike.

In the first half of the 3rd century BC, the Greek world was marked by stubborn fights between the Achaean League (284 BC), the Aetolian League, Sparta and Macedonia, the latter being often an arbiter of the disputes between the Greek cities and leagues. The intervention of Rome, first a diplomatic one, as an arbiter, then militarily ended in the disintegration of all the conflicting states and their transformation into the Roman provinces of Macedonia (148 BC) and Achaia (146 BC). Macedonia and Hellas ceased to be independent states.

The most powerful invasion in Southeast Europe and the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area occurred in the 3rd—2nd centuries BC and was, undoubtedly, that of the Celtic tribes<sup>15</sup>.

The Celts massively penetrated in the Balkan Peninsula, coming from the west of Europe and the Middle Danube, then reaching the coasts of the Adriatic Sea, Greece to pass into Asia Minor. After 280 BC, when they were defeated near Delphi by the forces of the Aetolian league, the Celts divided into three groups. Those led by Comontorios settled in the most fertile area of Thrace, in the valley of Maritsa river, and their political centre was Tyllis (probably Tulovo, in Bulgaria). The presence of that community of warriors among the masses of Thracian tribes and in the proximity of the rich West Pontic Greek colonies provoked the latter's revolt, in which presumably also the Geto-Dacians south of the Danube took part. In the fights that followed, the Celts were definitely defeated and gradually disappeared in the mass of the autochthons<sup>16</sup>.

As compared with the other zones in Southeast Europe where the Celts had penetrated, the territory of Dacia does not show, archaeologically speaking, a massive presence of the Celts. A few Dacian settlements in the Western Plain, now destroyed, the Celtic graveyards in the valley of the Lower Mureş and toponyms in the east of Dacia; however, the archaeological findings generally point to a powerful resistance of the Geto-Dacians to the Celts throughout the area invaded by the latter. The Celtic enclaves east of the intra-Carpathian area were quickly assimilated by the Dacians<sup>17</sup>.

Nor had the invasions of the Scythians or of the Bastarnae in the Geto-Dacian territory east of the Carpathians had a noticeable impact on the Geto-Dacian people. Quite the opposite, there too the local armed response had been most efficient. Led by chieftains of the political-State formations, Zalmodegikos and Rhemaxos for instance, the Geto-Dacians kept being the main power in the area, and emerged as protectors of the Greek cities on the western shore of Pontus Euxinus<sup>18</sup>. At the turn of the 3rd century BC, the Geto-Dacian political-State formation east of the Carpathian arch, under King Oroles, successfully fought the Bastarnae's expansion<sup>19</sup>. Shortly afterwards, as ancient historian Justinus says, there was a "growth of the Dacian power under King Rubobostes", allegedly, one of Oroles' successors<sup>20</sup>.

The Geto-Dacian society in the vast Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area witnessed a complex evolution in the first two decades of the 1st century BC, which underlay the process of socio-economic and political-

military development that resulted in the creation, around the year 70 BC, of the unitary, centralized and independent State under the sceptre of Burebista<sup>21</sup>; this provided the whole Geto-Dacian people with an adequate political framework to further fight for the preservation of its independence, ethnic being and material and spiritual assets. Boasting an utterly impressive military potential — Strabo says that the number of the soldiers that could be mustered raised to 200,000<sup>22</sup> —, Burebista proceeded to a vast unification both by political-diplomatic and military means. Although the founder of the centralized and independent Geto-Dacian State was a most extraordinary personality, he could not have managed to unite under his leadership such a numerous mass of people spreading over a vast territory unless a real unity of the material, cultural, social and linguistic life of the Geto-Dacians had not existed.

The unity of the material life, that can be traced in the identity of various objects found in Geto-Dacian settlements more than five hundred kilometers afar, is fully confirmed archaeologically. The same kinds of vessels, adornments (bracelets, necklaces, fibulae, etc.), tools, arms, dwelling types, sanctuaries, a.o. were found in the present territories of the Banat, Crişana, Oltenia, the Muntenian Plain, Moldavia and Dobrudja. The homogeneity of the civilization of the people that had resulted from the evolution of the northern branch of the Thracians, was so great that it had underlain the genesis of such a powerful State that even after the death of Burebista the Geto-Dacian people did not go back to the old socio-political organization based on temporary alliances among tribes — the military democracy.

It is worth mentioning that the Geto-Dacian State gained prominence in the political-military conjuncture of Southeast Europe by pursuing a very active foreign policy of wide continental consequence. The Geto-Dacians were certainly aware, in the capital city of Sarmizegethusa, located in the mountains south of the present-day town of Orăştie, of the Romans' gradual but irreversible penetration east of the Adriatic Sea.

As the previous policy of expansion promoted by the Roman State<sup>23</sup> was well known, a forthcoming armed confrontation with the Romans loomed ahead for the Geto-Dacian State. Therefore, Burebista and his court followed the events in the Roman world, particularly as at that time the Roman Republic was the scene of a civil war waged by the two pretenders to the supreme leadership, Julius Caesar and Gnaeus Pompeius. The Geto-Dacians must have carefully weighed everything they knew about the two rivals, contemplating a possible armed intervention. Should the party sustained emerge victor, Dacia was to benefit by a string of temporary but most of all long-term political and economic advantages.

In their turn, the two Roman generals who vied for primacy in the State, and knew very well the military potential of Dacia, sought the alliance of the king in Sarmizegethusa by various diplomatic ways.

Burebista set diplomatic contacts with Pompeius through the agency of "ambassador" Acornyon and offered his military support to the Roman general<sup>24</sup>. The option he had made evinced a most realistic political outlook as he pursued to obtain from the Roman ally, whose

military force, at that time, gave him a chance to easily defeat Julius Caesar, the de facto and de jure recognition of Dacia as a sovereign State, the observance of her dominant position in the east and south-east of the Balkans, where Rome had not penetrated, and of her borders.

For reasons which had nothing to do with Dacia, Pompeius was defeated. The one who turned the republic into an empire, Julius Caesar, inaugurated an era of wars against Dacia and his aggressive policy was taken over and furthered by all his successors.

The steady and increasingly menacing advance of the Roman legions toward the Carpathian Danube made the Geta-Dacian people muster its forces, deploy strenuous efforts to check the expansion of the empire toward the Danube and the Carpathians and offer a firm resistance for almost 150 years.

At the end of the first millennium BC, the Southeast European society — torn apart by violent fights for freedom and independence or for political supremacy during the last five centuries (5th—1st BC) — was, for its greatest part, under one rule, that of the “Eternal City”, which had begun by fighting for its own survival and managed, in a short historical interval, to dominate other peoples. The political map of Southeast Europe was now utterly different. The gradual elimination of all the states in the area left two big powers facing each other. On the one hand, the Roman Empire, continuously and implacably expanding toward natural frontiers and, on the other hand, Dacia, the big State created by the prominent personality of the Geta-Dacian people, Burebista. A long period began, spanning about 150 years, in which the Geta-Dacian people fought under the rule of staunch defenders of the people and of the country (Cotysos, Dicomos, Scorilo, Duras-Diurpaneus, Decebalus), who, relying on the traditions of the century-old struggle for freedom of their people, achieved an exceptional mobilization of the latter's energies in the struggle for the defence of the threatened homeland, of their own material and spiritual civilization.

## Notes

1. “Din realizările arheologiei românești în epoca socialistă. Idei luminoase ale președintelui Nicolae Ceaușescu cu privire la importanța istoriei și la interpretarea unor aspecte esențiale ale istoriei României” (From the Achievements of Romanian Archaeology in the Socialist Epoch. President Nicolae Ceaușescu's Luminous Ideas on the Importance of History and the Interpretation of Essential Aspects of Romania's History), in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie*, 36, 1985, pp. 3—29.
2. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building Up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 24, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1985, p. 17.
3. For details on the Persian expedition, see: M. A. Levi, “La spedizione Scitica di Dario”, in *Rivista di Filologia*, 1933, no. 1, p. 11; V. V. Struve, “Darii Skifi Prichernomoria”, in *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, no. 1, 1949, pp. 15—28; idem, “Data pohoda Darii na skifov Pricernomoria”, in *Sbornik akad. B. D. Grekova*, Moscow, 1952, pp. 37—53; I. Venedikov, “La campagne de Darius contre les Scythes à travers la Thrace”, in *Studia Balcanica*, Sofia, 1970, pp. 25—32; A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago, 1963, pp. 183—191.
4. Herodotus, *Historiae*, IV, p. 93.

5. *Istoria militară a poporului român* (The Military History of the Romanian People), Vol. I, București, 1984, pp. 54—60.
6. G. Glotz, *Histoire Ancienne*, II<sup>ème</sup> partie, *Histoire Grecque*, II, Paris, 1929, pp. 1—103.
7. H. Danov, *Tracia antică* (Ancient Thrace), București, 1976, pp. 335—380.
8. The entire, detailed account of the military operations and political-diplomatic confrontations is given by historian Thucydides in his famous work *The Peloponnesian War*.
9. N. G. L. Hammond, G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia*, Vol. II, Oxford, 1976.
10. A. Momigliano, *Filippo il Macedone. Saggio di storia greca del IV secolo*, Firenze, 1954.
11. *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Vol. I, pp. 65—70.
12. Major-General Ilie Ceaușescu, DHist, *The Entire People's War for the Homeland's Defence with the Romanians*, Bucharest, 1980, pp. 26—29.
13. W. Hunerwadel, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Königs Lysimachos von Thracien*, Zürich, 1900; G. B. Possanti, *Il re Lisimaco di Tracia*, Torino-Roma, 1901.
14. Trogus Pompeius, *Istoria lui Filip* (A History of Philip), XII, 2, 6; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I, 11, 32.
15. H. Hubert, *Les Celtes depuis l'époque de La Tène*, Paris, 1932, pp. 293—312.
16. A. Popescu, "Raporturile dintre regatul celtic din Tyllis și orașele grecești de pe țărmul apusean al Mării Negre" (Relations of the Celtic Kingdom of Tyllis and the Greek Cities on the Western Shore of the Black Sea), in *Analele Universității C. I. Parhon*, no. 5, 1965, Social Sciences Series (History), pp. 25—41.
17. V. Zirra, "Le problème des Celtes dans l'espace du Bas-Danube", in *Thraco-Dacica*, I, 1976, pp. 175—182.
18. D. Berciu, D. M. Pippidi, *Din istoria Dobrogei. Geți și greci la Dunărea de Jos* (From the History of Dobrudja. Getae and Greeks on the Lower Danube), Vol. I, București, 1965, pp. 225—231; I. I. Russu, "Zoltes și Rhemaxos. Tracii, scitii și Istria în sec. III—II î.e.n." (Zoltes and Rhemaxos. Thracians, Scythians and Histrina in the 3rd—2nd Centuries BC), in *Apulum*, 6, 1967, pp. 123—144.
19. M. Babeș, "Dacii și bastarnii" (Dacians and Bastarnae), in *Memoria Antiquitatis*, 2, 1970, pp. 215—226.
20. Trogus Pompeius, XXXII, 3, 16.
21. An all-embracing approach in I. H. Crișan's *Burebista și epoca sa* (Burebista and His Epoch), 2nd edition, București, 1977.
22. Strabo, *Geography*, VII, 3, 15.
23. A. Piganiol, *La conquête romaine*, Paris, 1927, pp. 203—396.
24. G. Mikhailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, editio altera, Serdicae, 1970, no. 13.

## The Geto-Dacian — Civilization — Originality and Synthesis

The Geto-Dacians, a powerful branch of the Thracians, were one of the greatest political and military powers of the antiquity, with a high demographic potential and an advanced material and spiritual culture. *“It is well known that already at that time”*, President Nicolae Ceaușescu of the Socialist Republic of Romania showed, *“the Dacians — the most righteous and valiant among the Thracians, as Herodotus called them — had reached a strong economic and social development stage, with its climax under Decebalus — the legendary hero who became a symbol to our people, a symbol of the staunchness and spirit of sacrifice in defence of liberty and independence”*<sup>1</sup>.

The Geto-Dacians are the architects of a brilliant civilization in the Bronze Age, with impressive deposits and hoards of arms, objects and adornments in bronze, gold and silver throughout the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. First mentioned in the Homeric poems as participants in the Trojan war, the Thracians had reached the eastern regions of the Mediterranean, and penetrated into Greece and Asia Minor during the so-called “big Aegean migration” in the 13th—11th centuries BC<sup>2</sup>. After the first 2—3 centuries of the first millennium BC, the northern branch of the Thracian world took a distinct shape into a different people, of Thracian mould, history records under the name of the Geto-Dacians (*Getae*, in Greek sources and *Dacians* in the Latin ones, names that refer to a mere geographical division and not to an ethno-linguistic one). Written sources recorded the Geto-Dacians already in the 6th century BC, while archaeological finds (the Basarabi culture and the Ferigile-Birșești<sup>3</sup> necropolis) place them as far back as the 9th—8th centuries BC. As written sources of the 5th—1st centuries BC show and archaeological finds fully prove, the Geto-Dacians spread from the western shore of the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus) and the Bug (*Hypanis*) river to the Middle Danube, and from the Balkan (*Haemus*) Mountains to the Northern Carpathians. Gradually, they asserted themselves in politics, economy and culture alike, and came to be among the outstanding peoples in Europe and to dominate the entire south-eastern part of the old continent throughout the last two centuries before the Roman conquest. From the political point of view, the Geto-Dacians asserted themselves already in late 6th century BC, at the time of Darius’ expedition against the Scythians in the year 514 BC, and in the latter half of the 4th century BC, when they came into conflict with the powerful kingdom of Macedonia ruled by Philip II and Alexander the Great. In late 4th century and early 3rd century BC, Getic King (*basileus*) Dromichaites, the

ruler of several political-State formations between the Carpathians and the Danube, even managed to defeat several times the powerful army of Lysimachus, the king of Hellenistic Thrace, and to take his son and then the Thracian sovereign himself prisoners<sup>4</sup>.

The Geto-Dacian power reached its climax in the 1st century BC, when Getic King Burebista, at head of the same State formation between the Carpathians and the Danube, unified, together with Great Priest Deceheus, at head of an important intra-Carpathian State formation, the whole Geto-Dacian world into one big powerful State.

To attain that great political aim, the union of all Geto-Dacians, Burebista had first to defeat the Celts, Boii, and Taurisci, so as to liberate the Geto-Dacian territories in the west of Dacia under their occupation; and then to include within the frontiers of his kingdom all the Greek cities on the western and northern shores of the Black Sea, from Olbia to Apollonia. Thus, by mid-1st century BC Burebista had become not only the "first and the greatest of all kings in Thrace and ruler of all the lands on either side of the river"; as shown in the inscription found at Dionysopolis, put in honour of Acornyon, a diplomat at his court, but also the most powerful monarch in the entire Southeast Europe, as Strabo shows, and one of Rome's most feared enemies<sup>5</sup>. From that time onwards, Dacia became the second great power of Europe, after the Roman Empire, and opposed the latter's expansionist aims toward the Danube and the Carpathians.

Under Decebalus the power of the Dacian State was remade on the basis of the previous political formations, and Dacia knew further political glory. During the four fierce wars with the Romans, in AD 85—87, 88, 101—102 and 105—106, Decebalus turned out to be an accomplished commander, strategist and diplomatist, while his well-trained and well-equipped army proved its valour and abnegation in defence of its land and freedom<sup>6</sup>. The conquest of a part of Dacia and its transformation into a province of the empire was to be one of the biggest victories in Roman history. The erection in the capital of the empire of the famous Trajan's Column, which tells the story of the two Daco-Roman wars in marble; of the triumphal monument Tropaeum Traiani at Adamclisi, as well as the matchless splendour of that victory's celebration clearly show how much the fall of the Dacian bulwark meant to Rome, as the only power in that part of Europe that could have opposed it<sup>7</sup>.

The beginning of the history and civilization of the Geto-Dacians can be traced back to the middle of the first stage (Hallstatt) of the Iron Age in the Basarabi culture of the 9th—6th centuries BC, which covers the largest part of the Geto-Dacian habitation area, and the cultural group Ferigile (Vilcea county) — Birsești (Vaslui county), characteristic of the Geto-Dacian population in the southern and eastern sub-Carpathian regions in the 6th—5th centuries BC.

The incipient Geto-Dacian civilization that developed on the autochthonous Hallstatt basis lies at the foundation of a long cultural evolution steadily enriching and renewing itself, and tending toward expansion and unification. The mentioned cultural complex, Ferigile-Birsești, known almost exclusively through necropolises, presents incineration

tombs in tumuli, pottery in the local Hallstatt tradition, iron objects and arms (daggers, hatchets, spear-heads and arrowheads) <sup>8</sup>.

In late 6th century and throughout the 5th century BC, settlements fortified with a ditch and a vallum, strongholds for refuge such as the large one at Stîncesti (Botoşani county) <sup>9</sup> were built east of the Carpathians. Settlements dating from the same period were found in the region between the Danube and the Black Sea (present-day Dobrujia) at Beidaud, Sarinasuf, Vişina (Tulcea county), Tariverde (Constanţa county) showing a strong mutual exchange with the Greek civilization. Here one can find products from the western Pontic cities alongside local ones and Getic earthenware manufactured with the potter's wheel following Greek patterns <sup>10</sup>.

Highly relevant for the evolution of the Geto-Dacian culture in its first development stage are the findings of the Alexandria (Teleorman county) — Bălăneşti (Dimboviţa county) type. This new cultural aspect, mostly present in the Danube Plain from late 6th century to the first part of the 4th century BC, is characterized first of all by the local earthenware manufactured with the potter's wheel, which marked the beginning of the La Tène epoch with the north-Danubian Getae, coexisting with the hand-made pottery of Hallstatt tradition. The potter's wheel, an important element of progress, was taken over by the Getae from the Greeks, both directly, from the colonies on the western shore of the Black Sea, and indirectly, through the agency of the southern Thracians <sup>11</sup>.

In the 4th—3rd centuries BC, the Geto-Dacian civilization reached a new and important development stage. Most of the settlements of that period were centres (strongholds) fortified with defence ditches and vallums. Some of the vallums were dried in the interior by means of a system of adobe bricks and wooden beams. Back to that period can be traced the foundation of important settlements at Zimnicea (Teleorman county) on the Danube and at Poiana — ancient Piroboridava (Galaţi county) by the Sireth mouth, and of the fortresses of Cotnari, Moşria (Iaşi county), Arsura (Vaslui county), Buneşti (Corni, Bacău county), Brăhăneşti (Galaţi county), Beştepe (Tulcea county), Albeşti (Constanţa county), Orbeasca de Sud (Teleorman county), Coşofenii din Dos, Bizdina, Bucovăt (Dolj county), Mărgăriteşti, Morunglav (Olt county).

A string of almost exclusively cremation necropolises, dating from the same period (4th—3rd centuries BC) were found in the region between the Danube and the Black Sea. Suchlike necropolises were unearthed at Satu Nou, Canliia, Bugeac, Nuntaşi (Constanţa county), Enisala, Telia, Independenţa (Tulcea county), etc. The tombs contain urns with cremation remains, adjacent vessels and adornments. These necropolises contain local hand-made vessels, grey vessels made on potter's wheel and imported Greek pottery. Similar finds were made on the left bank of the Danube at Grădiştea-Călăraşi (Călăraşi county) and at Brăiliţa (Ialomiţa county) and farther north at Slobozia (Bacău county). Although these necropolises with a rich and various content have their own peculiarities, the types of local pottery found in them and the burial rite attest to their relation with the rest of the Dacian territory. Some of the types of vessels such as those found at Independenţa — Enisala were also

found in the settlements and fortresses in the north Danubian regions (at Zimnicea, Albești, Poiana, Cotnari, etc.), pointing to the unitary, traditional stock of the Geto-Dacian culture.

The local Thraco-Getic<sup>12</sup> art of the 4th century BC was an outstanding achievement of that period. A number of gold and silver objects, even bronze ones, though more rarely, with rich and various adornments were found, mostly in princely tombs, which shows, on the one hand, the presence of local Geto-Dacian sovereigns and, approximately, their political-centres, and, on the other hand, the wealth and importance of these *basilei* at head of a socially stratified society. The most important finding was made in a tomb at Agighiol (Tulcea county) and consisted of a helmet, a pair of leg-guards and seven silver vessels, one with the inscription KOTYOS. The first two categories and some of the vessels are richly decorated with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic motifs. A similar treasure but with gold objects was found at Băiceni (Iași county), in the proximity of the Geto-Dacian stronghold of Cotnari, which contains a helmet, with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs and spirals, spiral bracelets with animal heads, a necklace, buttons, etc. all in gold. In a tumulus at Peretu, in the plain of Muntenia, unearthed were a gilded silver helmet with zoomorphic, geometric and floral adornments, anthropomorphic vessels and silver brackets. A gold helmet, similarly adorned, was found at Poiana Coșofănești (Prahova county), and a treasure with silver harness pieces in Craiova (Dolj county). To this one should add a ryton-type vessel found at Poroina (Mehedinți county), a silver helmet and two silver vessels unearthed allegedly in the Iron Gates area. Several treasures of the same importance were also found in the territory of Bulgaria, between the Danube and the Balkans, at Borovo, Letnița (Lovec) and Vrața.

As finds show, the area on which such objects were found covers mainly the Getic regions by the Danube, on either side of the river. The various categories of objects have common features as far as the types, the techniques and the decorations are concerned, which give them certain characteristics in relation to the ethnic situation of that time. The high cap helmet type and the technique *au repoussé* are specific to these finds and show their local Getic nature. Their main feature, however, is decoration. The big pieces (helmets, leg-guards, vessels, etc.) display a series of zoomorphic, fantastic or real elements, human figures and a wide range of floral and geometric motifs. The predominantly zoomorphic style (gryphons, stags, birds of prey, etc.) bespeaks an influence of the Scythian art that was altered by the Getic craftsmen.

Compared to the other categories of artifacts and cultural aspects of the 4th century BC, the treasures with gold and silver objects stand out by their rich and various style of decoration. These belonged to leaders of the Getic tribal aristocracy, socially differentiated from the rest of the population.

In the first half of the 3rd century BC the first Geto-Dacian coins were minted, at first in the Getic region of the Danube; subsequently, starting with mid-3rd century BC and until Burebista's ascent the local mint in Dacia reached its highest stage<sup>13</sup>. The Geto-Dacians minted only silver coins, mainly after the tetradrachms of Philip II and the silver



issues of Alexander the Great, Philip III Arideon, Audoleon and Larissa city.

The coins of the first stage (250—150 BC) were very close in style, weight and title to the copied originals. More important centres of that period were in the north-west of Transylvania, in Banat, Moldavia and Oltenia. Several of those coin issues are attributed to the Celts in Dacia. In the second and last stage (150—70 BC), the style of the coins became schematic, the weight was halved, while the silver title was debased. New monetary centres emerged in the Plain of Muntenia, in Oltenia and the south of Transylvania. The diversity of the monetary types bears a direct relation with the socio-political organization of the Geto-Dacians into political-State formations. Maps of monetary finds by type of coin issues helped delimit and identify the chief political-State formations previous to Burebista. There were three big formations in the extra-Carpathian zone of Dacia, and a fourth one in the Mureş Valley, in Transylvania. Silver coins issued in the 3rd century BC by a Getic king named Moskon were found in the northern part of the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea.

In the following stage, covering the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, the Geto-Dacian civilization, at the end of a first stage of transformations and accumulations, took a precise and unitary shape throughout Dacia. A transition period at the beginning of this stage was marked by the emergence of new cultural elements that enriched the previous ones. Regional cultural aspects disappeared, and the Geto-Dacian culture and civilization retained their common and general factors, such as, first of all, the penetration into Dacia of the Celts from the west and of the Bastarnae from the north. Relations with the Greek by the Lower Danube also took political forms.

During this transition period, spanning the mid-3rd century BC and the first half of the 2nd century BC, the foundations of the “classical” period of the Geto-Dacian culture were laid. The changes occurred in that period provided the necessary conditions for the development of a unitary and uniform Geto-Dacian culture in the next period. Starting with mid-2nd century BC, numerous settlements of the *davae*-type were set up which would cover Dacia's whole territory in the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. Besides settlements from the previous epoch, new ones were established at Popeşti (Giurgiu county), Crăsani (Ialomiţa county), Timosul (Prahova county), Cetăţeni (Argeş county), Cirlomăneşti (Buzău county), Sprincenata (Olt county), Ocnîţa (Vâlcea county), Cugir (Hunedoara county), Căpîlna, Piatra Craivi (Alba county), Pecica (Arad county), Cindeşti, Piatra Neamţ (Neamţ county), Somova (Tulcea county)<sup>14</sup>, etc.

Traditional hand-made pottery and pottery made on the potter's wheel from grey paste became wide-spread. The Dacian cup, the vessel with buttons and alveolar strip, the tall fruit dish, the cup in the shape of two truncated cones a.o. spread throughout the territory populated by the Geto-Dacians. Some Greek types of pottery (amphorae, cups, storage vessels) were taken over by the Geto-Dacians and adapted to their own needs. The Geto-Dacian monetary issues multiplied and acquired specific traits, being distributed by political-State formations. Large such

political-State formations, with a solid economic and political organization, were set up in the territories between the Carpathians and the Danube, inside the Carpathian arch, east of the Carpathians and between the Danube and the sea.

Starting with Burebista's epoch and throughout the ensuing period till the Roman conquest, the Geto-Dacian culture reached a high development level in all its compartments. Its content enriched and diversified, knowing the acme of its evolution. The *davae*-type settlements multiplied and flourished during what is known to have been the main development stage. The levels of habitation from this period are the richest in point of findings and most densely populated. A high development level was attained by the well-known *davae* of Popești, Piscul Crăsani, Cetățeni, Cîrlomănești in the territories between the Carpathians and the Danube, Ocnița and Sprincenata in the Olt Valley, Pecica in the Banat, Cugir, Piatra Craivi, Porumbenii Mari, Sîncrăieni inside the Carpathian arch, Poiana, Cîndești, east of the Carpathians, etc. It is during that period too that the *davae* on the Siret, at Brad and Răcătău, were built and they continued to exist until the Roman conquest.

Alongside *davae* and ordinary settlements, true strongholds were built in Dacia in that period. Most of these strongholds were erected on the high hills in the Orăștie Mountains area, along some 150—200 km. They all had stone walls and defence towers with two *paramenta* made of shaped blocks connected with wood beams and filled with stone and earth. Suchlike strongholds were built at Grădiștea Muncelului, at a height of some 1,200 m, where *Sarmizegethusa*, the capital of the Geto-Dacians was located, at Costești, Blidaru and Piatra Roșie, which all formed a complex in the zone of the Orăștie Mountains, adding to which are Bănița, in the valley of the Upper Jiu, Tilișca (Sibiu county), and Căpilna and Piatra Craivi north-eastwards. Farther away are the strongholds of Polovragi (Gorj county) and Bitca Doamnei (Neamț county)<sup>15</sup>.

Crafts at that time developed greatly and spread and diversified largely. In ceramics, besides previous, traditional types, new categories of products appeared. First there were the clay cups with relief decorations, called "Megarian" cups, with rich varied adornments. There were painted clay vessels, a rarer stock, found only in a few settlements and strongholds (*Sarmizegethusa*, Ocnița) and dating back mostly to the 1st century AD. Mention deserve other types of vessels of late Hellenistic and early Roman inspiration (amphorae, kantharos), and the multiplication of the vessels made on potter's wheel<sup>16</sup>.

Silver-working witnessed a particular development in the 1st century BC. Traces of like workshops were found in the settlements of Pecica, Ardan (Bistrița-Năsăud county), Costești (Hunedoara county), Poiana (Galați county), etc. Numerous adornment objects (fibulae, necklaces, bracelets) and silver vessels were made in Geto-Dacian workshops displaying the local, original work and ornamentation style. Most of the silver objects, outstanding masterpieces of the Geto-Dacian art, were found in treasures at Sîncrăieni (Harghita county), Surcea (Covasna county), Herăstrău (Bucharest), Meri Goale (Ialomița county), Bălănești (Buzău county), etc. A high interest aroused the fibulae in the treasures of Herăstrău and Bălănești, which display plates with human represen-

tations. All these products scattered throughout Dacia are, through their number and variety, one of the most original and representative components of the Geto-Dacian culture in the 1st century BC<sup>17</sup>.

Iron-working attained, in the same period, its maximum development level. Under the form of iron dross and blooms, iron reduction, extraction and processing were traced in many Geto-Dacian centres. Big ovens for iron reduction were found at Cireșu (Vilcea county), Doboșeni (Covasna county), Bragadiru (Teleorman county), etc. Large quantities of iron blooms were found in the workshops of Grădiștea Muncelului (Sarmizegethusa). Thirty iron blooms with a total weight of 887 kg were found in one place alone. From such big amounts of raw material, numerous and varied iron tools were made in the local workshops: chisels, adzes, saws, planes, drawknives, drills, compasses, tongs, hammers, anvils, scythes, sickles, iron ploughs, curved knives a.o., found at Grădiștea Muncelului and in other important strongholds and *davae* of Dacia<sup>18</sup>.

Categories of Greek and Macedonian coins penetrated and circulated in Dacia starting late in the 2nd century BC and throughout the 1st century BC. Among these there were the drachmas of the Greek cities at the Adriatic Sea; Apollonia and Dyrrhachium, the tetradrachms from the Roman province of Prima Macedonia, and from the city of Thasos. Most of these coins were found in hoards in intra-Carpathian Dacia and south of the Carpathians, often together or associated with Geto-Dacian coins. Also at that time Roman republican denarii started circulating on the Dacian market to become, after the beginning of the 1st century BC, a current coin with the Geto-Dacians.

As proved by monetary moulds found in the Dacian stronghold of Tilișea (Sibiu county), and those at Ludești (Hunedoara county), Brașov and Poiana (Galați county), with the setting up of Burebista's State, the Geto-Dacians adopted a single coinage, taking as a model the Roman republican denarius. The adaptation of a single coin type throughout Dacia is, alongside other elements of material and cultural civilization of the same time, one of the best proofs of the unitary character of the State of Burebista, and also of the orientation of the Geto-Dacian world toward Roman cultural forms. The over 200 hoards and many isolated discoveries, totalling about 25,000 Roman republican coins found in Dacia, stand proof of sustained Daco-Roman relationships and of a rich activity of the new local mints that made coins of the republican denarius type.

Part of the Geto-Dacian coinage are also the gold coins bearing the legend Koson, issued between 40 and 29 BC and found in Transylvania. It has been suggested that the inscription on these coins could be the name of King Cotiso, one of Burebista's successors. Along the 1st century AD and particularly after the Roman conquest Roman imperial coins circulated in Dacia<sup>19</sup>.

Exchanges and cultural relations with the late Hellenistic world and the ascending and expanding Roman world started to grow and intensify. Luxury earthenware, amphorae, metal vessels, adornments, coins, etc., Hellenistic and Roman imports were frequently found in Geto-Dacian strongholds and settlements. Some of these imports served as models for the Geto-Dacians when they made their own products. Greek and Roman artisans and craftsmen were brought to Dacia and were employed

in the building of the big strongholds in the Orăștie Mountains and for the creation of works of art<sup>20</sup>. Through the agency of those experts and, generally, as a result of the sustained relationships with the Graeco-Roman civilization, elements of the Greek and particularly Latin language and writing penetrated into the Geto-Dacian world. Telling in this sense are the inscriptions on vessels found at Ocnița-Oitenia (BACI C OIAMP-KOY and BVR, REB), the Greek letters on some blocks in the precincts of the stronghold at Sarmizegethusa, and the stamps DECEBALVS and PER SCORILO on a cult vessel from the same stronghold.

Religious life reached a high organizational level with rich manifestations. Its role in the Geto-Dacian society increased so much that it came to identify itself with the royal power. Well-known, for instance, are the role played by Great Priest Deceneus in the unification of the Geto-Dacians, and his prestige at Burebista's court, where he was given almost royal power. It is also known that after Burebista's death, he actually became king of the Geto-Dacians, being followed by Comosicus, a king and great priest himself. The character and importance of religion in the Geto-Dacian society under Burebista and Decebalus were strongly reflected in the religious constructions in the Geto-Dacian strongholds. Five sanctuaries of different types and sizes were traced at Grădiștea Muncelului (Sarmizegethusa) alone, where Dacia's capital had been established. Their size, grandeur and originality are quite impressive. Rectangular places of worship, made up of column bases lines and circular sanctuaries, were unearthed in the sacred area of the Dacian capital.

The religious discoveries in the Dacian capital stand out by their originality and the mystery still surrounding them. Their large number, varied types and concentration into a sacred area in Sarmizegethusa make of the latter the chief religious centre in Dacia. It is highly probable that it was there that the holy mountain (*Kogaionon*) Strabo speaks about was located. Some of these sanctuaries were linked to the worshipping of Zalmoxis, the Geto-Dacians' main god. In all likelihood, the mountain of Grădiștea Muncelului had first been a religious centre and then turned into Dacia's capital, around which the other strongholds of the Orăștie Mountains would be erected. Sanctuaries like the ones at Sarmizegethusa were also found at Costești, Bănița, Bîtea Doamnei, Barboși, Pecica, etc. Places of worship, but of a different kind, were also found at Popești and Ocnița. Small clay statuettes of human figures found in many Geto-Dacian settlements are seen as indicating magic and religious practices or even a hearth cult<sup>21</sup>.

Throughout the Burebista-Decebalus period, the Geto-Dacian culture reached its acme in all compartments. It reflected the economic and political changes occurred in Dacia throughout more than nine centuries. Within its fully unitary traits, one can find the powerful and rich Thracian traditions underlying the Geto-Dacian civilization, as well as progressive foreign elements adapted to the local specific traits.

The high peaks of material and spiritual civilization, and of political organization, the latter shown by the formation of the first Dacian State under Burebista that included the whole Geto-Dacian world, fully confirmed the positive comments of ancient authors on the remarkable features and virtues of the Geto-Dacian people, and set a lasting founda-

tion for the vast and deep-going process of synthesis with the Roman civilization throughout the entire Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area and for the formation of a new people by the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea — the Romanian people.

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## **Political Consequences Entailed by the Roman Empire's Conquest of the Peoples in the Balkan Peninsula, by the Danube and the Black Sea in the 1st Century AD**

The last decades of the 1st century BC had brought about a new political-military and administrative reality in most of the Balkan Peninsula, namely that of Rome's effective presence, an occupation set up slowly, from one stage to another, but which was carried on as part of a clearly-outlined plan from the moment when, coming to rule over a huge empire, she had to fix the limits of her expansion. That is why the Romans would spare no efforts to reach the Rhine, the Danube and the Euphrates. Once these limits reached, they would be crossed but temporarily, in the case of the Rhine and the Euphrates, and for a longer time in the case of the Danube, where, through the making of the sole province north of this large river, namely Dacia, Rome pursued both the exploitation of her riches and the maintenance of a strong bridgehead able to secure the protection of the south-Danubian provinces.

Roman domination in the Balkans and in the regions bordering on the Middle and Lower Danube took a longer time to set up due to the ethno-political complexity of those regions and as a result of the political and military steps taken by the Roman State under the impact of the Southeast European political-military context<sup>1</sup>.

The devastating civil wars that had shaken the Roman Republic in the 1st century BC had left the northern regions of the province of Macedonia outside the immediate concern of the Roman ruling circles. However, a few expeditions undertaken in Thrace, particularly those led by Varro Lucullus in 72—71 BC and by Marcus Licinius Crassus in 29—28 BC, had paved the way for the subsequent effective conquest of the whole region lying between the Danube and the Aegean Sea, and its inclusion into the Roman State.

The ultimate victory won by Octavian Augustus over his political rivals, the setting up of a new form of government, the empire, hence the transformation of the *Roman Republic* into the *Roman Empire* and the setting in of a period of peace allowed for the application of some important reforms in the political-administrative and military fields, as well as the Roman military doctrine was concerned. Reaching natural borders and their fortification were a major target of the military policy promoted by Augustus<sup>2</sup>.

The versatile play of Roman diplomacy, doubled by armed interventions and pitiless repressions against the Balkan peoples which either defended their freedom and independence or rose in arms to win them back made itself felt in the Balkan regions already in early 1st century AD, the more so as here the Thracians, the Illyrians and the Geto-Da-

cians would put up a long and stubborn resistance against any attempt at imposing Roman rule or against the abuses of the imperial administration.

Aware of the immeasurable difficulties entailed by a direct armed intervention and a systematic conquest of the territory inhabited by Thracian tribes in the Balkan mountains, Augustus formally restored the Thracian State of the Odryssae, which remained, however, a cliental State of the Roman Empire, while its kings — Rhoemetakes I, Cotys I — were supposed to implement the Roman policy in the east of the Balkan Peninsula<sup>3</sup>. This puppet-State was given large territories, which in the north stretched as far as the Danube, therefore including ancient regions of Geto-Dacian habitation that had been subdued during the expedition led by Marcus Licinius Crassus in 29—28 BC. Garrisons made up of Thracian forces were established in some places on the right bank of the river, the empire reserving itself the right to intervene with troops, in case of utmost crisis, either for quelling the resistance of the local population or for repelling military actions launched from over the river. From the point of view of the Roman administration, the territories lying between the Balkans and the Danube were assimilated to the military command named *praefectura ripe Thraciae*, which was dependent on the province of Macedonia<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, the south-Danubian territory west of the Isker river, a 30—40 km-deep strip southward, was turned in AD 6 into a military command called *praefectura civitatium Moesiae et Treballiae*, led by a *legatus Augusti propraetore exercitus*<sup>5</sup>, a district that would be changed into the Roman province of Moesia in AD 15<sup>6</sup>.

Gradually but irreversibly, Dacia was encircled in the west by the province of Pannonia<sup>7</sup>, whose military bases had been laid in AD 13—11, and in the south and east, where besides a firm rule over the littoral and absolute control over the cliental State of the Odryssae, the Romans started to extend their control over the north-Pontic littoral, the Greek cities there and the Bosporan kingdom included.

It should be mentioned that all those territorial extensions of the Roman Empire or the control it exerted through the clientage system so much practiced in the 1st century AD had a clear purpose as far as the Lower Danube was concerned: to secure the river border in the west, south and east in front of the strong Dacian State in the north, able due to its demographic, economic and military capabilities to jeopardize any time the Roman political and administrative structures. As a matter of fact, starting with that date, after the Roman Empire had reached the Danube line and had settled, though only partially, the political-military problems in the Balkan Peninsula, the kingdom of Dacia and the Roman Empire remained the sole enemies in the east of Europe throughout the 1st century AD. The antagonistic interests aggravated as Dacia became ever stronger and the rule of the “Eternal City” at the Danube was organized and consolidated. Nor should it be ignored that it was precisely the strength and importance of the Dacian State that prevented the Roman Empire from deploying troops on the territory of the *praefectura ripe Thraciae* and when it did, after the dissolution of the Odrysian Kingdom in AD 46 and Thrace’s turning into a Roman



province, only some auxiliary units were deployed and not legions, the latter being further kept in western Moesia, at Viminacium, Ratrana and Oescus.

Faced with that new unfavourable strategical situation, the Dacian kingdom initiated some offensive actions south of the Danube meant to destroy or weaken the south-Danubian Roman infrastructures or, at least, to prevent the consolidation of new ones. Among those actions were the Dacian attacks of AD 6 against the district of *praefectura civitatum Moesiae et Treballiae*, or those mounted in AD 11 and 15, when Troesmis and Aegyssus, the two important fortresses at the Danube defended by Odrysian garrisons, were successively conquered and even controlled for some time by Dacian forces<sup>8</sup>. It was only by the intervention of a Roman legion that the two strategically important points could be regained. Those vigorous offensive actions could not have been possible had there not been a favourable political-military context in the Balkans. In Illyricum, a region subdued over 14—9 BC but transformed into a province only in AD 85, an uprising broke out in AD 6—9, one of the biggest provincial uprisings ever known to the Roman world, which involved a territory stretching from the eastern coast of the Adriatic to the Middle Danube, Pannonia included; not only the Roman rule in those territories, but the Roman power in Italy itself were threatened. Rome had not been faced with such a danger since the Second Punic War<sup>9</sup>.

The rebels from Illyricum had two clever leaders, Baton and Pinnetes, who knew how to capitalize the enthusiasm of their people, against which wide-scale operations, led by Tiberius, the future emperor, were needed in order to bring it back into submission.

The settlement of the Illyrian problems had brought again the Dacian question to the Romans' attention, the more so as the actions in AD 11 and 15 had proved Dacia's great capacity of response. It was probably in answer to the violent attack on the Troesmis fortress of AD 11—12 that Cneus Cornelius Lentulus, the governor of Pannonia, and Sextus Iulius Catus, the commander of the military district of Moesia, mounted devastating military operations against the Dacians north of the Danube. The forces led by Lentulus took actions west of the Olt river, while those led by Catus east of it, their forays resulting in the destruction of a great number of fortified settlements such as Zimnicea, Popești and Piscul Crăsani. In the wake of this campaign some 50,000 Dacians<sup>10</sup> were forcibly shifted south of the Danube; far from depopulating them, the action only partially attained its aim because other settlements like those at Tinosu and Piroboridava, for instance, continued to exist, while the military power of the Dacian State was maintained intact.

A second large Roman offensive north of the Danube, meant to weaken the military potential of Dacia and of the allogeneous populations (Bastarnae, Sarmatians), took place under the command of Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, Moesia's governor over 62—66<sup>11</sup>. This fresh attempt, too, proved illusory. In 69 and 85 strong Dacian forces crossed south of the Danube and successfully attacked important military objectives in

Moesia, also availing themselves of the fact that the local military garrisons were being shifted to other theatres of actions<sup>12</sup>.

As the Dacians' military actions south of the Danube fostered permanent unrest and instability, the Roman Empire saw itself compelled to reorganize the province of Moesia and to deploy military forces in that region, strengthening response measures which frequently turned into true retaliatory expeditions north of the Danube. These reached their acme especially after the offensive of AD 88, materializing in the wars initiated by Emperor Domitian against Dacia in 87 and 88<sup>13</sup>.

Since Dacia remained the most redoubtable enemy on the European continent and the retaliatory steps against her proved inefficient, the Roman emperors would pass to assuming decisive military actions in order to conquer the Dacian territories north of the Danube.

The political-military reorganization of the Dacian Kingdom and the changes effected in its leadership through the ascent to power, in Duras-Diurpaneus' place, of Decebalus, a strategist and politician of genius, the advocate of an active policy toward the Roman Empire, worsened the contradiction between Dacia and the Roman Empire.

The unexpected defeats sustained by the Roman armies in Moesia in the time of Domitian, as well as the compromise peace favourable to Dacia arrested the attention of the new emperor who ascended Rome's throne, Marcus Ulpius Trajanus (98—117), who decided to settle the conflict with Decebalus' kingdom. The two grim wars in 101—102 and 105—106 would lead to the transformation of a part of Dacia into a Roman province<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the conquest of Southeast Europe, started in late 3rd century BC, was to add a last and highly important territorial acquisition to the empire in early 2nd century AD.

Seen as a whole, the policy promoted by Rome in the Balkan Peninsula in the 1st century AD was part of the general expansionist orientation initiated in the previous centuries. While to set up her sway — and this only by skilfully interweaving diplomacy with direct military interventions — over the south of the Balkan Peninsula, dominated by the Greco-Macedonian world with ancient and versatile political traditions, Rome needed three quarters of a century, she needed only half a century to subdue the Thracian and Illyrian warlike tribes but also more political malleability and stronger military forces. This notwithstanding, the political and military problems posed by the Thracians and Illyrians, definitively integrated into the empire as distinct provinces, remained collateral as compared to the great problem which dominated the Balkan political arena, namely the confrontation between the Dacian Kingdom and the Roman Empire. Raised to the rank of a European great power in the time of Burebista and then of Decebalus, in the second half of the 1st century AD Dacia asserted herself as the main force able to contest the Roman rule, at least as far as the Balkans, which formed the southern frontier of the Dacian world. In fact, the Roman conquest of the territories between the Balkans and the Danube meant the inclusion into the empire of a large area of Geto-Dacian habitation. The event entailed immediate political-military consequences for the Dacian State as a whole, because the wide-scope Roman offensives

in the first two decades of the 1st century and the seventh decade of the same century were undertaken from that recently organized territory. Of course, the new strategical situation in which Dacia found herself, unfavourable through the presence of the Roman military forces and administrative structures in the west, south and east, aroused Dacia's military and diplomatic reaction; she would initiate some wide-scale offensives southwards and eastwards, in order to disorganize or at least to keep at the lowest possible level the Roman military capability. A consequence of the active policy pursued by Dacia was the absence of any Roman urban centres and municipal organization in the territories lying between the Balkans and the Danube.

Another important consequence of the Roman expansion in the Balkan Peninsula and of the empire's actual presence in Dacia, Thrace and Illyria was the beginning of a profound all-embracing process of cultural synthesis between the autochthonous Daco-Thracó-Illyrian stock and the Roman element, a phenomenon with deep-going implications, that would give birth in the ensuing centuries to the Balkan-Danubian-Pontic Roman world, therefore to the Oriental Roman world, a direct inheritor of which is the Romanian people.

Unquestionably, the Roman presence in Southeast Europe spelt progress in the economic field, as all the previous structures, divided as they had been and marked by local particularness, were unified, levelled and coordinated by a sole central organism. This led to considerable progress showed in the making of a sole trade market, the free circulation of goods from the Eastern to the Western Mediterranean and from the Danube to North Africa, the setting up of a sole customs system, the development of the productive forces.

The conquest of a part of the Dacian world called for the establishment of frontiers between the Roman provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior, on the one hand, and free Dacia, on the other. Of course, one can speak about progress in the economic and social life of the occupied territory, about a general development of the society due to the introduction of advanced technology. In the free zones, the socio-economic structures from the previous period, belonging to the best La Tène traditions, were further maintained. The same process of fusion between the autochthonous and Roman civilizations that could be witnessed in the Roman provinces by the Carpathians and the Danube took place, though more slowly and in specific ways, in the unoccupied Dacian territories as well, which were thus gradually but irreversibly engaged in the moulding of a new people in the area bordered on the Carpathians, the Danube, the Balkans and the Black Sea, heir to the best virtues of its Dacian and Roman forefathers — the Romanian people.

## Notes

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## From the Independent Centralized Dacian State of Burebista to That of Decebalus

In the long history of the Geto-Dacians of great importance was State organization, which reached its acme in the time of Burebista<sup>1</sup> and then of Decebalus. This special importance lies in the fact that society went beyond the first stage in mankind's history, that of the primitive communal system, and passed to a superior political organization: the State, which embodied the entire Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area.

Unquestionably, the State emerged in those societies divided into antagonistic classes, in which there was exploitation as an instrument of the ruling social class<sup>2</sup>. When it entered written history, the Geto-Dacian society was undoubtedly divided socially. Speaking about Zalmoxis, Herodotus mentions the "country's high-ranking people"<sup>3</sup>. Sophocles, a contemporary of Herodotus, speaks of a certain Charnabon, who "rules over the Getae"<sup>4</sup>. Athenaios wrote about the marriage of Philip II of Macedonia to Meda, the daughter of Getic King Kothelas, who was reigning south of the Danube<sup>5</sup>. Around 339 BC, sources speak about a "king of the Histrians"<sup>6</sup>, who opposed the advance of the Scythians led by Atheas. In 292 BC King Dromichaetes was fighting Lysimachus<sup>7</sup>. In the 3rd century BC a local ruler in the north of Dobruđa, with the name of Moskon, minted coins by the Hellenistic model with the title of *basileus*<sup>8</sup>. Epigraphic documents discovered at Histria testify to the existence of Getic kings such as Zalmodegikos or Rhemaxos<sup>9</sup> in the 3rd—2nd centuries BC. The use of titles such as *basileus* already in the 5th century BC and then throughout the ensuing centuries is anything but accidental. It mirrors the existence of a socially divided society with ruling people, aristocracy, and common people.

The rich princely tombs at Agighiol (Tulcea county), Peretu (Teleorman county), or Cugir (Hunedoara county), as well as the discoveries at Băiceni-Cucuteni (Iași county), Poiana Coșofenești (Prahova county), Craiova or the Iron Gates, etc. testify to the existence of the same social stratification. A further proof to this is the system of strongholds at Costești, Bănița, Blidaru (Hunedoara county) or Căpîlna (Alba county), which in peacetime were true nobiliary seats.

The natural evolution of the Geto-Dacian society, whose ascending development can be traced archaeologically, especially following the latest research, led to the stratification and, in early 1st century BC, to the clearer shaping of social categories with antagonistic interests, the aristocratic class and the mass of the material goods' producers. It is precisely what derives from Strabon's account<sup>10</sup>. The minute studying of this text pointed to the existence of a society divided into masters

and mastered, the king and his attendants, on the one side, and the subjects, on the other.

The most comprehensive literary text on the structure of the Geto-Dacian society belongs however to Jordanes, who relied on the work of Dion Chrysostomos entitled *Getica* or *A History of the Getae*, unfortunately lost. With reference to the Getae (he calls them Goths), Jordanes, quoting Dion Chrysostomos, wrote that "those of them who were of highest rank were initially called *tarabostes*, then *pilleati*: it is from among them that kings and priests were elected"<sup>11</sup>. It is again he who, referring to Deceneus, wrote that he "chose from among them the wisest and most remarkable men and taught them theology, advised them to worship certain divinities and sanctuaries, making them priests, and called them *pilleati* because, as I think, wearing a cap on their heads which we call by the name of *pilleus*, they were making immolations: then he ordered that the rest of the people be called *capillati*, a name that the Goths [actually the Getae] recall to our days in their songs because of their highest consideration to it"<sup>12</sup>. It was on the basis of this text that the conclusion was reached, already in the last century, that the Geto-Dacian society was divided into noblemen (*pilleati*) and common people (*comati*)<sup>13</sup>.

Literary sources offer us further evidence about *pilleati* and *comati*. Dion Chrysostomos was the first to mention the pilleus-wearers. Speaking about the inhabitants of Bithynia, he wrote that "some had on their head a kind of fur cap as some Thracians, called Getae, are wearing today"<sup>14</sup>. The *pilleati* are also mentioned in an excerpt from the work of Criton<sup>15</sup>.

Dió Cassius, narrating about the first war between Trajan and Decebalus, wrote that Decebalus sent some messengers, right before the defeat, chosen not from among the *comati* — as he did earlier — but the "best of the *pilleati*"<sup>16</sup>. Petrus Patricius specified that with the Dacians the *pilleati* were better ranked, whereas the *comati* are εὐτέστεροι, which means poorer, less valuable, of a lower rank<sup>17</sup>.

One should also mention Sextus Aurelianus Victor who, speaking about Emperor Trajan, wrote that he extended the Roman rule beyond the Danube, integrating the pilleus-wearing Dacians into a Roman province<sup>18</sup>.

The scarce information that came down to us lead to the conclusion that the Geto-Dacians had two social categories: the *pilleati*, on the one hand, wearing a fur cap as a distinctive mark of their high social rank and who were called *tarabostes* at the beginning, and the *capillati*, the bare-headed, on the other hand.

The analysis of the literary sources does not offer elements testifying to the existence of slavery with the Geto-Dacians prior to the Roman conquest. Yet, there may have existed slaves of a patriarchal type, extant in all ancient societies. In all likelihood, they were war prisoners or men who lost their freedom due to the debts they ran into. The patriarchal type-slaves were considered as members of the master's family.

Exploitation was different from the slave-owning kind. By analogy with the Dardanes, the Celts and other peoples the "hypothesis" was

formulated that with the Geto-Dacians there may have been clientage relations between a small circle of aristocrats and a mass of farmers<sup>19</sup> in a society that knew social stratification, but which the specificity of the economy had prevented from developing relations of a true slave-owning type. The peasants were dependent from the economic point of view, but free from the juridical one, a situation to be found on large areas of ancient Europe.

From those mentioned above, one can reach the conclusion that the social stratification of the Geto-Dacian society had begun at least in the 5th century BC, and that it gradually deepened leading, in early 1st century BC, to the crystallization of the social classes, to the emergence of ruling exploiting social categories, on the one hand, and the mass of the producers of material goods, on the other hand, the latter also stratified on the basis of the labour social division. Besides agriculture, one can speak about crafts and trade exchanges.

Various sources (literary, epigraphic, archaeological, numismatic) show that the long process of State crystallization entered, starting the 1st century BC, a higher stage, that of centralization. But to reach it, the autochthonous gentile community must have undergone numerous social transformations entailed by the domestic development of the productive forces.

The main text referring to Burebista's reign belongs to Strabon, which, according to the latest translation, reads as follows: "Burebista, a Geta, taking the leadership of his people, improved these men exhausted by endless wars and raised them so much through exercises, moderation and eagerness for carrying through [royal] orders that within a few years he set up a strong empire and had the Getae subdue most of their neighbours [...]"<sup>20</sup>.

Strabon's text shows that Burebista took over the leadership, hence it was an institutionalized transmittable form of leadership, an opinion supported by the Histrian inscription about the son of King Rhemaxos who was enjoying royal prerogatives<sup>21</sup>. His great achievement was the establishment, within a few years, of that *μεγέλη ἀρχή* translated into "great empire", "great State", and Strabon also narrates the ways used by Burebista to achieve this end. First, he put an end to the endless wars that had exhausted the Geto-Dacians. Burebista would organize a new type-army, transforming the very essence of the military profession, which became an instrument of State policy. Among the methods used by Burebista, Strabon enumerates the exercise, moderation and observance of laws. As far as the exercise is concerned, it has been suggested that by that he meant "military exercise [drill]"<sup>22</sup>.

Highly important for the subject under discussion is the third way by which Burebista accomplished his great work, which actually meant the unification of all Geto-Dacian populations — "observance of orders", "observance of laws". It has been shown that, in fact, those were not laws or customary laws which would have meant that Burebista's State was ruled in keeping with an old, possibly unwritten code of laws, but royal edicts issued by a chancery. Strabon uses the word *πρόσταγμα ἴμ νόμος* = law or *θεσμός* which is the synonym of the

Latin "edictum" met in the documents issued by the chanceries of the Hellenistic kingdoms <sup>23</sup>.

And now the final part of Strabon's text, where he speaks about the subduing of the greatest part of his neighbours. Also from Strabon <sup>24</sup> we learn that the latter were Celts, "who were mixed with the Thracians and the Illyrians"; in the latter we must see the Scordisci living around present-day Belgrade, and the Boii and Taurisci living by the Middle Danube, in the present-day territory of Slovakia.

Burebista subdued the tribes of the Germanic Bastarnae, which had penetrated into the northern and eastern Geto-Dacian territories. Literary and epigraphic texts attest to the fact that all Greek colonies on the western coast of Pontus Euxinus from Olbia to Apollonia, were included in Burebista's kingdom <sup>25</sup>.

Therefore, the area called "empire" by Strabon was extremely large and could not be ruled with the institutions of the old gentile system, but only by means of a superior political organization, namely a State. On the other hand, the State framework was required by the very development of the Geto-Dacian society, which in early 1st century BC was already divided into antagonistic classes. "The making of the centralized State under the rule of Burebista around 70 BC" — the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party on the 2050th anniversary of the setting up of the first centralized and independent Dacian State shows — "was the outcome of the development of the material and spiritual life in the territories inhabited by the Geto-Dacians, who belonged to the great kin of the Thracians, with deep roots throughout the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area" <sup>26</sup>.

In order to establish the form taken up by the Geto-Dacian State, set up in the first half of the 1st century BC, we shall have to see first what kind of institutions it had. The State was headed by the king, who exerted particularly political-military prerogatives. Of the other institutions the first and most important was undoubtedly the army as in all societies divided into antagonistic classes. According to Strabon, Burebista's army numbered 200,000 men <sup>27</sup>. Even if some modern historians have had their doubts about this figure, as in fact about all ancient estimations, it is however incontestable that the number of the effective available for mobilization must have been exceptionally high, if one takes into account the extremely large area of Burebista's kingdom, and the great number of the population identified archaeologically. Unquestionably, Burebista reorganized the army, changing it into an instrument of the State policy. It is the only explanation for the victories he scored over the Celtic tribes and for the conquest of the Greek cities on the western shore of Pontus Euxinus.

When speaking about the Geto-Dacian kings, starting with Burebista, the literary and epigraphic sources mention various high officials who were "attendants to the king" as Strabon called them <sup>28</sup>. From Kryton we learn that in the time of Decebalus some of "those around the king were bound [to take care of] the fortifications, while others were charged with overseeing the people tilling the land with the oxen" <sup>29</sup>.



The inscription at Dionysopolis in honour of Acornyon shows that he enjoyed "foremost and utmost friendship" on the part of Burebista, whom he advised "on the most important matters", and that he "was sent as an envoy to Gnaeus Pompeius". Acornyon's aulic title (*protos kai magistos philos*) is similar to that used at the courts of the Hellenistic kings which strengthens the supposition that the Geto-Dacian State was organized after the Graeco-Macedonian model<sup>30</sup>. A text of Martial speaking about the "seal on the letter of the Dacian ruler"<sup>31</sup> and about a letter sent by Decebalus to Domitian<sup>32</sup>, leads to the same conclusion.

Jordanes wrote that Burebista granted Deceneus almost royal prerogatives (*pene regiam potestatem*)<sup>33</sup>. The same office was held later on, according to Dio Cassius' account, by Vezinas, "who ranked the second, after Decebalus"<sup>34</sup>. Some of the members of the royal family also held high offices at the court of the Geto-Dacian kings. Diegis, Decebalus' brother, carried on peace negotiations with Domitian<sup>35</sup>.

Judge's offices were performed by the king and the priests. With reference to Comosicus, who followed Deceneus, Jordanes wrote that he "was considered king, high priest and judge alike, because he was very deft and administered justice to the people as the highest authority"<sup>36</sup>. The other offices must have been ensured by the priests by analogy with the Celtic Druids who were in charge of judicial matters.

With the reign of Burebista and the setting up of the State, a new stage was reached by Geto-Dacian minting as well. The minting of local coins ceased, replaced by a unitary minting system imitating the Roman republican denari, most probably controlled by the king himself, a system that would be preserved throughout the existence of the Geto-Dacian State<sup>37</sup>.

It is beyond any doubt that the military, political and religious offices were held by aristocrats, by those tarabostes or pilleati, who enjoyed some privileges but were subordinated to the king, and who were due, above all, to keep in obedience the mass of the producers of material goods, to ensure the defence of the country's territory, manpower for public works, the recruitment of soldiers, etc.

In order to establish what type of State and of exploitation the Geto-Dacian State belonged to, one has to take as the main criterion the ownership of the means of production. In our case, as in the period of State organization the Geto-Dacians were, above all and to their greatest majority, farmers, ownership should be related to land, therefore the forms of ownership in agriculture. All documents studied so far attest to the fact that the Geto-Dacian peasants lived in village communities in which the landed property belonged to the community, a fact that most of the Romanian historians have agreed upon<sup>38</sup>. Typical forms of village communities could be found in the Orient, in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, etc., where the existence of an "Asiatic"<sup>39</sup> mode of production, as Marx called it, was attested. However, the term suggested for this mode of production, that was different from the slave-owning one, was considered improper and was generally replaced by that of "tributary"<sup>40</sup> mode of production. In the main, the latter is characterized by the existence of a fundamental contradiction between the adscribed communities and the ruling class as a whole, by common own-

ership of the land coexisting with supreme power ownership and private property, by a despotic State régime and the sporadic character of slavery.

As for the levying of the tribute in kind with the Geto-Dacians, the above-mentioned text preserved from Kryton's work stands proof to the fact that some of "those around the king" were sent to the "lands" to gather the farm products. Tribute-money was levied from the Greek cities mentioned in the inscriptions discovered at Histria.

As for the public works done as part of the tribute, undeniable proofs are the strongholds in the Orăștie Mountains built in stone and included into a true fortification system. The work invested in the building up of this system of fortifications must have been gigantic, if one takes into account its size and monumentality. Only the use of public works, compulsory within the tribute, throughout the large area covered by the kingdom of Burebista can account for the construction of that impressive system of fortifications over a short period of time.

Also pertaining to the tribute was the obligation of the village communities to provide soldiers for the army. Through the implementation of this form of recruitment Burebista managed to raise an army of "some 200,000 men". In the same way must have been raised Decebalus' army as well when he had to face the Roman armies in the time of Domitian and Trajan.

There are no reasons to consider the Geto-Dacian State of an earlier slave-owning type. The Geto-Dacian State can be compared with other states we know even in the Thracian world, with the Odrysian Kingdom, for instance, characterized as a State of a "territorial type", in the sense that its main feature would be the covering of a huge territory, a trait also evinced by Burebista's "empire".

Agriculture, practised within the village communities, laid at the basis of the economy of both the Odrysian and the Geto-Dacians State. In either case there were not an administrative apparatus and a coercive force well developed yet, but rather in an incipient stage.

The Geto-Dacian State set up by Burebista was compared with the kingdom of Philip II of Macedonia on the ground of the fact that both kings made efforts to integrate some Greek cities into their kingdoms, that they promoted a home policy aimed at consolidating the monarchy through the abolishment of the local dynasts' power and the organization of a sole royal army<sup>41</sup>. Macedonia of Philip II offers many proofs testifying to the existence of village communities, of free owners with important prerogatives in the local administration of royal privileges in terms of land-owning and royal monopolies over some resources<sup>42</sup>.

The Geto-Dacian State was therefore the result of the tributary mode of production, which was much more widely spread than the slave-owning one and knew a fan of forms. The tributary system is not a characteristic of the Oriental states alone. It can be found with numerous ancient European peoples such as the Thracians, Illyrians, Iberians, Celts, Scythians, etc., seeming to have been the mode of production characteristic of all the ancient European peoples which reached a high development level, going beyond the social limits of the primitive communal system, without being included within the Graeco-Roman frontiers. The

scarcity of information on this matter, however, makes any comment on their social and political organization rather difficult. Of course, there are numerous differences between the Oriental satrapies or other ancient states with a tributary mode of production and the Geto-Dacian State. One has to look for analogies at the other peoples of ancient Europe which had reached the same level of social evolution and had the same mode of production. The hypothesis was even formulated of a Pontic-Danubian type of tributary mode of production specific to the peoples east, north and west of the Black Sea<sup>43</sup>. Such suppositions are difficult to endorse due to the above-mentioned scarcity of information. It is certain, however, that the Geto-Dacian State was the outcome of a society divided into social classes, of a tribal system.

To conclude with, during its military evolution the Geto-Dacian society succeeded in firmly establishing its State framework in the 1st century BC. The Geto-Dacian State founded by Burebista in the first half of the 1st century BC, rebuilt and consolidated in the time of Decebalus, would undergo many transformations throughout the centuries, knowing its ups and downs, but it would be a permanency in the history of the Romanian people that could never be abolished despite all adversities.

## Notes

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3. Herodotus, *Istoriei* (Histories), IV, 95.
4. Sophocles, "Triptolemos", in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, A. Nauck Ed., Leipzig, 1926, excerpt 547.
5. Athenaios, *Banchetul înțelepților* (The Wise Men's Banquet), XII, 557 b; Jordanes, *Getica*, 65; J. Cawkwell, *Philip of Macedon*, London, 1978, pp. 116—117; A. Bodor, "Structura societății geto-dacice" (The Structure of the Geto-Dacian Society), in Vol. *Studii dacice* (Dacian Studies), Cluj-Napoca, 1981, pp. 9—10.
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14. Dion Chrysostomos, *Discursuri* (Speeches), LXIII, 3.
  15. Kryton, in *Die Fragmente des Griechischen Historiker*, Felix Jacoby Ed., Berlin, 1923, II, 13, 1931.
  16. Dio Cassius, *Istoria romană* (The Roman History), LXVIII, 9, 1.
  17. Petrus Patricius, *Istorii* (Histories), 5.
  18. Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Despre împărați* (About Emperors), 13, 2 ; A. Bodor, *op. cit.*, p. 14, n. 40 translate : "he transformed into a province after he had subdued the Dacian pilleati".
  19. D. M. Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 522.
  20. Strabon, VII, 3, 11 (C. 303/304).
  21. Z. Petre, "Armata lui Burebista" (The Army of Burebista), in Vol. *2050 de ani de la fâurirea de către Burebista a primului stat independent și centralizat al geto-dacilor* (2050 Years From Burebista's Setting up the First Independent and Centralized State of the Geto-Dacians), Bucureşti, 1980, pp. 47—48.
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  32. Dio Cassius, LXVII, 7.
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39. K. Marx, *Norme premergătoare producției capitaliste* (Norms Prior to the Capitalist Production), București, 1956, pp. 8—10, 31.
40. Today there is a large bibliography on this mode of production. For Romania, see especially M. Constantinescu, *Schița unei teorii marxiste a formațiunii social-economice tributale* (Sketch of a Marxist Theory on the Tributary Socio-Economic Formation), București, 1974.
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## The Daco-Roman Wars : Defensive Versus Offensive Strategy

Starting with the last four decades of the 1st century BC that followed the passing away of the “greatest of the kings in Thrace”, as King Burebista<sup>1</sup> was called by his contemporaries, and through the first half of the 1st century AD, Dacia, gradually remade and reunified for her greatest part<sup>2</sup> after the temporary crisis she had known right after the death of the unifier of the Geto-Dacians, became Rome’s chief opponent in Europe, the only State that was well organized, feared because of its military force, and apt to oppose the Roman expansion toward the Danube and the Carpathians. Despite the dynamic military and political policy promoted by Dacian kings like Dicoemes, Cotiso, Deceneus, Scorilo<sup>3</sup>, the establishment of the Roman frontier along the river could not be averted, and an important and ancient territory of habitation of the Geto-Dacian people, the area between the Haemus (Balkan) Mountains, the Danube and the Black Sea was thus turned into military-administrative districts of the empire that in that way acquired an important strategic advantage in relation to Dacia. The policy started by the Roman Empire, of diminishing the demographic and, implicitly, military potential of the Geto-Dacians between the Danube and the Southern Carpathians, did not yield the expected results, despite the important expeditions in AD 11—12 and 62—66<sup>4</sup>. The Dacian State readily reacted and, starting with the seventh decade of the 1st century AD, the policy of the kings in Sarmizegethusa was directed toward taking over and maintaining a strategic and diplomatic initiative meant to build up and consolidate an anti-Roman bloc by the Middle and Lower Danube.

Fitting within the reactivation of that dynamic policy of coalition were the two inroads of the Rhoxolan Sarmatians in Moesia in the winters of 67—68 and 68—69<sup>5</sup>, no doubt coordinated by the Dacian leadership, and the powerful Dacian armed attack in 69—70 on the same Roman province of Moesia. In 85—86 the Dacian kingdom started a new offensive of strategic importance on the Roman rule south of the Danube<sup>6</sup>. The events, both during the operations in 69—70 and during those in 85—86, clearly demonstrated that the strategic goals established by the Dacian chiefs, headed in those years by King Duras-Diurpaneus, pursued the dismantlement of the infrastructures of the Roman administration in the province of Moesia and, by that, the regaining of the territories between the Danube and the Balkans and their union to Dacia again. The wreckage of the Roman army in Moesia in 85—86, the wide scope of the operations and the fact that the governor of the province himself,

Oppius Sabinus, was killed in action, are a confirmation of the political and military intentions promoted in Sarmizegethusa.

The fast succession of events at the Danubian front made the Romans reappraise the whole political-strategic situation. The fact that Emperor Domitian himself hurried together with his staff to the theatre of operations proved the most serious situation thus created<sup>7</sup> for the perpetuation of the Roman rule in the region. We do not have information as to whether the restoration of the situation for the empire's benefit was the result of fighting or of a previous withdrawal of the Dacian army. The latter hypothesis seems more plausible, considering the immediate steps taken by the Dacian political leadership. The Dacians might have known or at least guessed the meaning of the travel to Moesia of the Roman general staff at head with the emperor: the plan of operations materialized shortly afterwards, and pursued the starting of an offensive toward the heart of the Dacian kingdom. The changes in the supreme political leadership of Dacia, seemingly operated in full consensus, pursued precisely to promote to the throne a personality who, through his political and military prestige and skill, should successfully cope with the impending Roman aggression. That seems to be the meaning of Duras-Diurpaneus' abdication<sup>8</sup>, probably very old at the time, and the taking over of Dacia's helm by Decebalus, who certainly had the command of the Dacian army in the operations of 85—86 in Moesia, where he proved to the full his ability as a commander. The same ability of a bright strategist, matched by choice qualities as a wise diplomatist were fully shown by Decebalus during the 20 years when he ruled Dacia, in the heavy and hard confrontations with the imperial Roman armies, standing out as one of the most prominent personalities in Romanian and world history<sup>9</sup>. As a matter of fact, some 130 years later Roman historian Dio Cassius most suggestively depicted him in this way: Decebalus was "very skilled in military matters and in action, knowing when to attack the enemy and to withdraw in time, clever in laying traps, brave in fight, knowing how to make use of a victory and how to turn to his advantage a defeat; for that, he was for a long time a feared opponent of the Romans"<sup>10</sup>.

In the summer of 87, the Roman army under the command of Cornelius Fuscus, commander of the emperor's guard, *praefectus praetorio*, started a vigorous offensive along the line of the Cerna Valley — the Iron Gate of Transylvania, with the target of conquering the capital of the Dacian kingdom, Sarmizegethusa<sup>11</sup>. Well conversant with the Roman tactics, Decebalus induced the unwise Fuscus to advance and fall in the trap laid in a narrow place, probably Tapae (The Iron Gate of Transylvania). Hit unaware, with all ways of retreat barred, the Roman invading army was smashed and lost its daring commander himself, the banners, the war engines, and the Dacians took a big spoil of weapons on the occasion.

A winner in that big confrontation, Decebalus thought it by far more useful to retain his newly won prestige in order to make allies outside and consolidate Dacia's military forces. Aware of the disproportion between Dacia's forces and the Roman Empire's, the Dacian king intensified his internal military preparations and deployed intense diplo-

matic activity, hurrying with the conclusion of alliances with the Germanic populations (Quadi, Marcomanni) by the Lower Danube, thus laying foundations of a powerful anti-Roman bloc.

The Roman reaction, quite foreseeable, materialized quickly in 88, when a powerful army commanded by a fine and experienced warrior, Tettius Julianus, invaded Dacia again. That time, the powerful Roman army managed to shun the traps prepared by the army commanded by Decebalus and, after breaking local resistance, it caught the Dacian troops at Tapae and defeated them<sup>12</sup>. The Roman victory at Tapae, however, remained without immediate concrete results, both because of the Dacians' obstinate resistance and because of the fast deterioration of the political and military relations by the frontier on the Middle Danube, in which Decebalus certainly must have had a role. That situation made Domitian accept the peace repeatedly proposed by Decebalus<sup>13</sup>.

The peace concluded in 89 AD was an unquestionable diplomatic success for Dacia that, despite the result of the confrontation, succeeded in inducing the empire to sign a treaty that secured her important financial and military advantages. The money, technicians and war engines given to Dacia by the empire were used by Decebalus for the consolidation of the country's defence capacity, against future Roman aggression perfectly foreseen by the Dacian king. In the 12 years of peace that followed, taking advantage of the big subsidies granted by Rome, of the engineers and technicians supplied and of the weapons delivered, Decebalus managed to equip and modernize his army that was ready to defend its homeland against any danger<sup>14</sup>, now that it was well drilled, materially well provided, supported by a system of fortifications judiciously distributed throughout the territory and mostly rebuilt in that period.

With the enthronement of Emperor Trajan (AD 97—117) the Dacian problem focused again the attention of the ruling Roman circles that could not forget the terms of the peace concluded by Domitian, nor did they want to give up their expansionist schemes about Dacia. Roman historian and military of the 4th century Ammianus Marcellinus wrote that Trajan took the power decided to settle the Dacian problem for good<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, Dion Chrysostomos disclosed in his "Orations" the intense preparations made by the Dacians on the eve of the conflict, as well as the lofty and noble motivation of those preparations: "[...] I reached the place of enterprising people, who had no time to listen to orations, being nervous and agitated like race horses by the post [...]. One could see there swords, armours, spears everywhere, the place was seething with horses, weapons and armed men [...] [they were coming] to see people fighting [some] for leadership and power, and others for freedom and for their homeland [...]"<sup>16</sup>.

Dacia's great military capacity and her political prestige with her neighbours, the threat posed by that factor of power to the Balkan provinces of the Roman Empire, her rich reserves of gold, salt, cattle, wood, and very high demographic potential, the perspective of acquiring a most favourable strategic position through a possible conquest of the Carpathian arch were elements that counted in the decision of the responsible political figures in Rome when they decided to start the war on



the only power that opposed at that time Rome's aspirations after universality<sup>17</sup>.

The beginning of the war against the Dacians<sup>18</sup> was solemnly declared in Rome, on March 25, 101. After minute preparations, the big army raised, counting some 150,000 men<sup>19</sup>, divided into two groups of forces, crossed the Danube at Lederata (now Romna, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia) and Drobeta (now Drobeta-Turnu Severin), bound to achieve the junction at Tibiscum (now Jupa, Caraş-Severin county) in front of the gorges of the Iron Gate of Transylvania. The concentration and directions set for the two columns of invasion clearly show that Emperor Trajan learned the lessons from the previous expeditions against Dacia. First, the size and composition of the Roman army prove the fact that he mobilized not only the troops stationed in the provinces neighbouring the State ruled by Decebalus, but every available troop the empire could use at that time in fighting a big war. Previous experiences had amply demonstrated that it was not enough to win a victory over the Dacian army in order to smash the resistance capacity of the kingdom between the Carpathians and the Danube. It was only after conquering every stronghold and clearing the territory across which the advance was made that an offensive could be continued safe from the surprise of the "traps" laid by Decebalus, a versed tactician. Moreover, the organization of the two columns, deployed on concentric directions, with the set junction at the opening of the gorges — the access route from the west toward Dacia's capital —, demonstrate that Trajan intended from the very beginning to achieve a fast advance, pursuing the dispersal of the Dacian forces and threatening permanently to surround them. Whereas in point of attainment of the initial target the scheme of the Roman commander was good, as the columns of forces met soon enough at the entry of the Iron Gate of Transylvania, the subsequent course of operations showed that it was Decebalus who had a far-reaching vision of the possibilities of manoeuvring the forces and means in the strategic field. As a matter of fact, the Romans were offered the first wide-scale resistance only at Tapae, where the battle had an undecided result<sup>20</sup>. The Roman army continued its advance through the Haţeg depression, toward the Orăştie Mountains and the Dacian capital, Sarmizegethusa, as shown in the only fragment of a text in the commentaries on that war fought by Trajan left by Priscianus, a 6th century copyist: *inde Berzobim deinde Aizim processimus* (from Berzobis we proceeded to Aizis)<sup>21</sup>.

Decebalus opposed to the offensive started by Trajan toward the heart of the Dacian kingdom in the spring of 101 a defence plan that, through its very conception, was on a par with the art of the most illustrious strategists of the ancient world<sup>22</sup>. Relying upon the exploitation of Trajan's offensive decision and upon his confidence derived from the overwhelming superiority of his forces, the defence plan endorsed by Decebalus provided for a fierce resistance opposed on the offensive directions of the Roman groups of forces, carrying on harassing fights that would culminate with a battle in the only place of passage to the State's capital. The chief target of the first stage of the Dacian king's campaign plan was delaying the enemy forces' advance, scattering them

and pinning down parts of them in order to lessen their offensive capacity along the main direction. In fact, he meant a war of attrition. The pressure put up by the big Roman army engaged in the Carpathian theatre of operations would have to be countered through the starting of an indirect, wide-scale action leading to the opening of another theatre of operations right in the enemy's territory. The Dacian forces and the forces of their allies, the Buri and Sarmatians, squeezing through the passes of the Carpathians in Moldavia or directly marching down the Siret Valley, were to force the passage across the Danube as far from Dacia as possible, through the Dobrudja corridor, and then cross the Balkans to intercept Trajan's communications with the heartland of the empire and trap the Roman army, deeply engaged in Dacia's mountains, between two fronts. The result was expected to be one of the most disastrous defeats ever suffered by the Romans.

The Dacian strategic manoeuvre, brilliantly conceived by Decebalus, proceeded according to the scheme, although the Danube was not as frozen as the Dacian king expected — which was essential in ensuring a swift and complete shift of all forces, without losses —, and the river was crossed with difficulty. The main column of Dacians and Buri developed its offensive toward southern Dobrudja, while the Sarmatian allies and Dacian forces crossed the Danube and made for the passage of Shipka; while the Daco-Sarmatian troops were defeated near that important passage in the Balkans, the chief allied forces faced the bulk of the Roman armies shifted in a hurry to those parts under the command of Trajan himself, on the tablelands at Adamclisi. It was there that the major battle during the first Dacian war was fought in the spring of 102.

The big battle that followed was fierce and bloody. It was the biggest and fiercest of all battles between Dacians and Romans. Casualties were tremendous on either side, but in the end the Romans won owing to their more sophisticated tactics and weapons, to their larger numbers and better preparation.

An altar built by the Romans after the victory, right on the site of the battle, where a few years later an impressive memorial and a powerful city named after the vanquisher, Tropaeum Trajani, were built, bears the inscription: "to the glory and memory of the brave men who, fighting for the Republic, met with their death". The brief inscription shows that the battle was bloody and fierce, with heavy losses both for the Romans and for the Dacians<sup>23</sup>. Although the vast offensive operation carried on by the Dacian forces and their allies failed to surprise, encircle, isolate and defeat the Roman army in Dacia, it however influenced the course of the war, making Emperor Trajan contemplate a peace with Decebalus.

So, after the generalized offensive of the Roman army was resumed in the Orăștie Mountains, the new demarches of the Dacian king for the conclusion of peace were not turned down by the emperor. Although hard for Dacia, the peace concluded in the summer of 102 shows that she was still a feared enemy for Rome which had, at least for a while, to renounce her transformation into a province. Decebalus remained an ally of Rome but did not receive subsidies any longer; he had to return all the war matériel and all masters given by the Romans after the

treaty signed with Domitian, to extradite all deserters, to break down his strongholds, and was not allowed to conclude alliances without Rome's permission<sup>24</sup>. As a guarantee for the observance of the peace terms, a permanent Roman garrison was left in the Hateg plain, on the site of the future Roman colony of Ulpia Trajana Sarmizegethusa, as well as in the places of major strategic importance<sup>25</sup>. At the same time, by the Danube, between Drobeta and Pontes the building started of a fantastic architectural work, unique in the ancient world, by the projects and under the guidance of the Roman architect of Syrian origin, Apollodorus of Damascus, a bridge meant to link still more the already occupied lands in Dacia to the empire's regions south of the Danube<sup>26</sup>.

The terms of the peace, so much to the disadvantage of the Dacian State and hard to bear, could not be accepted by the brave Dacian king, who in 105, besides an intense diplomatic activity, started surprise hostilities against the Romans, attacking the garrisons left by them in Dacia<sup>27</sup>. His daring actions marked the beginning of the decisive war between Dacia and the Roman Empire. Yet, deserted by the allies, utterly disadvantaged by the balance of forces, Decebalus had from the very beginning to resort to strategic defensive. Historian Dio Cassius noted that in that war "Trajan crossed the Istros on that bridge [built by Apollodorus] and waged the war with wisdom rather than passion, defeating the Dacians after long and hard efforts"<sup>28</sup>. The Roman army continued its offensive on several directions, with the Orăştie Mountains as a converging point. The Dacian strongholds were stormed by the Romans, one by one, with great efforts, "mountain by mountain", as Dio Cassius put it, "nearing even the capital of the Dacian king"<sup>29</sup>. In front of the Dacian kingdom's capital, Sarmizegethusa, the Romans met with the defenders' heroic, staunch resistance, that proved their ardent wish to rescue at any cost the sacred city that was the symbol of the very being and unity of the Dacian State<sup>30</sup>. In the end, the Dacians' capital was taken, Decebalus managed to break through the encircling enemy forces and withdraw to other parts of Dacia, hoping to start the resistance in other sites. Followed by the Roman cavalry and summoned to surrender, with the promise that he would be left alive, a promise which Decebalus duely understood, the Dacian king, a symbol of bravery and spirit of sacrifice, embodiment of the Dacians' unbreakable will to live free in their ancestors' lands, killed himself so that they may not have him alive. The moment is depicted on the Column<sup>31</sup> and on a tomb stela discovered at Gramenni (Greece)<sup>32</sup> belonging to cavalry officer Marcus Valerius Maximus, who was a witness to that sublime gesture of heroism. The Dacian king's head and right hand were taken to Ranisstorum, the headquarters of Trajan, where they were shown to the Roman troops as a proof that Rome's greatest and most dangerous enemy in Europe had died.

And so passed away, in 106, the last great king of Dacia, who cherished his country's freedom more than his own life. Opposing the Roman Empire's expansionist policy, Dacia fought just wars of defence. In the epic of the homeland's defence, the Dacians powerfully showed their firm will to keep their independence, lending to the fights against the aggressors a profoundly popular character, showing no mercy to the invaders, which made Dio Cassius write that the "biggest war at

that time for the Romans was the war against the Dacians ruled by Decebalus [...]”<sup>33</sup>.

In order to glorify the great victory over Dacia and mark the remaking of the Roman State's drained finance, a Column showing in 124 episodes scenes from the terrific battle between the armies of the two peoples<sup>34</sup> was built in 113, ordered by Emperor Trajan, in the middle of the recently built Forum. The regard for the defeated, for the staunchness and fierceness with which they defended their homeland, the admiration for the Dacians' collective deeds of heroism, the difficulty of the winner to get the victory are shown all over the Column which, by recounting deeds of bravery of the Dacians and Romans caught in the whirl of a decisive battle, fully deserves the name of Column of Trajan and Decebalus. “*During those fierce armed confrontations*”, Socialist Romania's President Nicolae Ceaușescu showed, “*the Dacians demonstrated their firm will to preserve their independence and territorial integrity, to oppose the strongest military force ever known in ancient times [...] The heroic struggle of the Dacians won the praise of the historians of the ancient world*”<sup>35</sup>.

During the fierce confrontation with the Romans, the Dacians, with a moral strength tellingly shown by ancient historical sources, recorded everlasting pages of heroism in defending their homeland, the right cause for which they fought, the salvation of their very national being. The epic of defence by the Dacian people of the freedom and independence of their ancestral hearth illustrated moral features that were present along the two millennia of struggle for the preservation of the national being in the psychologic structure of the Romanian people.

Whereas the Roman army won the final victory owing to its superiority in all domains of equipment and training, the Dacian army distinguished itself in the battlefield through a tremendous moral-volitive force, a moral strength highlighted in many ancient writings. The two great army commanders — Decebalus and Trajan — stood out through their great organizational capability, their gift as versed strategists and diplomatists, fine organizers and skilful warriors. Their personal examples, their direct participation in battle, in the midst of the troops, were models of action for every Dacian or Roman soldier<sup>36</sup>. Ancient sources perfectly illustrate the significance of the figures on these memorials. Dio Cassius emphasizes “those long and hard efforts” by which the Romans managed to win the victory. The same historian, after stressing that Trajan “gave many proofs of skill in command and of valour, and his warriors faced many dangers with him and proved to be brave”, evoked the heroic and dignified gesture of King Decebalus, who only when everything was lost and he himself was “facing the danger of being made prisoner, killed himself”.

## Notes

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  4. Florus IV, 12, 19; Strabo, VII, 3, 10; generally, see D. M. Pippidi, "Tib. Plautius Aelianus și frontiera Dunării de Jos în ser. I. e.n." (Tib. Plautius Aelianus and the Frontier of the Lower Danube in the 1st Century AD), in the volume *Contribuții la istoria veche a României* (Contributions to Romania's Old History), 2nd edition, București, 1957, pp. 287—329.
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  6. About these wide-scale actions see H. Daicoviciu, *op. cit.*, pp. 277—287; R. Vulpe, I. Barnea, *Din istoria Dobrogei* (From Dobrudja's History), Vol. II, București, 1968, pp. 68—77; *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Vol. I, pp. 144—151; sources: Suetonius, *Domitianus*, VI, 1; Tacitus, *Agricola*, 41, 1; Eutropius, VII, 23, 4; Jordanes, *Getica*, 76.
  7. St. Gsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 135—137.
  8. N. Gostar, V. Lica, *op. cit.*, pp. 54—59.
  9. D. Tudor, *Decebal și Traian* (Decebalus and Trajan), București, 1977, pp. 89—92.
  10. Dio Cassius, LXVII, 6, 1.
  11. The unfolding of this campaign is analysed in detail by R. Vulpe, I. Barnea, *op. cit.*, pp. 69—72.
  12. Dio Cassius, LXVIII, 10, 1; St. Gsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 216—218.
  13. *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Vol. I, p. 150.
  14. *Ibidem*.
  15. Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIV, 3, 9; see Dio Cassius, LXVIII, 7.
  16. Dion Chrysostomos, *Orationes*, XII, 16, 18, 20.
  17. Edward N. Luttwak, "Cucerirea Daciei în contextul strategiei generale a Imperiului roman" (Dacia's Conquest in the Context of the Roman Empire's General Strategy), in *File din istoria militară a poporului român* (Pages from the Romanian People's Military History), no 12, București, 1984, pp. 33—45.
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  22. R. Vulpe, "Dio Cassius et la campagne de Trajan en Mésie Inférieure", in *Studii clasice*, 6, 1934, pp. 211—223; R. Vulpe, I. Barnea, *op. cit.*, pp. 85—92.
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  26. D. Tudor, *Podurile romane de la Dunărea de Jos* (The Roman Bridges by the Lower Danube), București, 1971, pp. 53—153.
  27. Dio Cassius, LXVIII, 10.
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  31. Scene CXLVII.
  32. M. Speidel, "The Captor of Decebalus. A New Inscription from Philippi", in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 60, 1970, pp. 142—153.
  33. Dio Cassius, LXVII, 6.
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  35. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 14, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, p. 291.
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## Dacia over 106—275

“It is very good that you prepare yourself to write about the Dacian war. For what subject can be more topical, richer and vaster and, at last, more full of poetry and nearer to legend though all facts are real? You will sing new rivers, rivers that cross the plains, new bridges built over rivers, camps settled on the steep slopes of the mountains, a king [Decebalus — a.n.] driven away from his royal seat, nay even from life, without having ever lost hope; in addition to this, two triumphal victories, of which one [Domitian’s — a.n.] was the first won over an undefeated people, while the other [Trajan’s — a.n.] the last”<sup>1</sup>. These words were addressed by Pliny the Young to his friend Canninius Rufus, who intended to write a book about the fiery armed confrontations between the Romans and the Dacians at the beginning of the 2nd century AD.

The terms used with reference to the Dacian war — a “rich” and “vast” subject, full of “poetry”, seeming to belong to the “realm of legend”, whose evocation called for praising “a king who did not lose hope” and who had led a people “undefeated” until then — made actual again the truth Herodotus had recorded for posterity almost six centuries earlier and Strabo only a century earlier concerning the wisdom and the high moral and military virtues of the Geto-Dacians and of the leaders of their State<sup>2</sup>.

“The defence of Dacia’s land by its people”, Romanian scholar Vasile Pârvan, who dedicated his whole life to studying the history of the Geto-Dacians, wrote “was such a hymn of love as but rarely peoples were destined to bestow on their homeland in danger”<sup>3</sup>.

The fierce battles of 101—102 and 105—106, which proved once again that resistance against the aggression committed upon its land was a fundamental characteristic of the Geto-Dacian people, ended, notwithstanding its bravery and the strategic capability of King Decebalus, in the occupation of a considerable part of Dacia by Trajan’s legions and in her inclusion in the Roman Empire.

The way to that act was prepared by the peaceful or violent impact of Rome’s implacable advance north-eastward, which had begun in the 2nd century BC, and by the expansion of its domination in the last decades of the 1st century BC over the territories lying between the Balkans, the Danube and the Black Sea, an area inhabited by a dense Geto-Dacian population; that meant in fact the beginning of the Dacian people’s coexistence with the Roman element.

That co-inhabitation paved the way for the interpenetration of the Dacian and Roman civilizations, a process which was permanently strengthened by the economic and diplomatic contacts or, on the contrary, by the hostile contacts between the Romans and the Dacians north of the Danube ; that process reached its climax in the 1st—3rd centuries AD, when the being of the Romanian people was shaped in its salient features, as the fundamental result of the complex and vast fusion of the two material and spiritual civilizations.

Following the annexation made by Trajan in 106, in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area two distinct entities emerged : on the one hand, the Roman provinces of *Dacia* — including the Transylvanian tableland, Oltenia and the Banat — and *Moesia Inferior* — incorporating up to 106 the territories between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains, and between 106 and 117 those of Muntenia and south Moldavia too, up to the line of the Lower Siret, the Trotuş and the Oituz rivers — and, on the other hand, *Free Dacia*, that is the rest of the territory of Burebista's former centralized State.

It should be underlined that despite these divisions, the Roman rule in Dacia did not mean a dissociation of the ethnic unity of the Dacian people, its massive pre-eminent persistence attesting to the uninterrupted continuity of habitation of the same area, the preservation of the autochthonous stock of material and spiritual life. All categories of sources — whether archaeological, literary, epigraphic, numismatic or toponymic — brought to light irrefutable proofs in favour not only of the continuity of the Dacian people in its millenary cradle, but, even more, of its active participation in the process of Daco-Roman symbiosis<sup>4</sup>.

The political-military and administrative changes occurred north of the Danube in early 2nd century compelled, however, the Dacian people to operate an important shift in its State life in the territories lying west, north and east of the Carpathians, where it organized an adequate framework for the maintenance of an independent identity. The results of the archaeological research undertaken over the last two decades clearly demonstrate the specific character of the Dacian culture, the development of the Dacian people's civilization in those regions from the classical Geto-Dacian *La Tène* being today an unanimously accepted fact.

Naturally, it took several decades, after the war had ended, to have the former political and military structures in the free territories completely restored.

The internal consolidation of the Dacian community living outside the Roman rule, the intense relations maintained with the neighbouring Roman provinces, Dacia and Moesia Inferior, created favourable conditions for the gradual but rapid unification of the small territorial polities of the free Dacians and for instilling new life into the statehood which would acquire the basic characteristics of the classical organization they had under Decebalus : a typically traditional economic life, a well-defined infrastructure, a deeply stratified society, a military system capable of ensuring defence and also of sustaining large-scale attacks on the Roman provinces.

One cannot speak, of course, of a single Dacian State spreading from the Danube mouths to the Tisza river, with a single leadership and suprastructure covering the entire territory.

The unifying process east of the Carpathians gathered momentum in mid-2nd century, leading to the emergence of the State of the Carpians (in the Moldavian Plateau) and the State of the Costobocae Dacians<sup>5</sup> in the north. An inscription in Rome, referring to the events of the year 170, mentions a certain "rex costobocensis" and his wife, queen Ziais, and the other members of the royal family<sup>6</sup>, and this is extremely precious information with regard to the pyramid of State organization in the free Dacians' society during the last decades of the 2nd century. This documentary proof logically leads to the hypothesis that the Carpians State was also ruled by a monarch. The silver coin hoards discovered on Moldavia's territory (corresponding approximately to the area covered by that State), especially those at Puricani (Neamț county) and Măgura (Bacău county), consisting of 1,159 and 2,830 coins respectively, reveal a well-structured community from the social and political points of view. In the same way as the Costobocae were the bearers of a culture of an obvious autochthonous origin called Lipița, the Poieniști culture, specific to the Carpians, without doubt, of Dacian La Tène tradition; the density of the rural settlements and of the necropolises discovered in the perimeter of this culture attests to the existence of a wide economic basis of the Carpians State.

Polities of the free Dacians can be ascertained in Maramureș, where a culture of Medieșul Aurit type was found; it seems that the locality served as the economic, if not also the political centre of that polity. An important group of free Dacians continued to live in Crișana, the Arad Plain and the Tisza Plain, developing a specific culture — Sintana Arad. The westernmost Dacian group lived in the territory of present-day Slovakia, and they had a specific culture known in the specialized literature as the Puchov-Prěšov culture.

While in the latter half of the 2nd century the political and military supremacy in the free Dacian world was held by the Costobocae, later on, especially in the 3rd century, it devolved upon the Carpians State, consolidated as a redoubtable power centre in the neighbourhood of the imperial provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior and in front of the attacks of various nomadic populations coming from the north and east.

Although not supported by archaeological finds, one can imagine the existence of such fortifications as that *Castellum Carporum* mentioned by Zosimos<sup>7</sup>, or of a military body which consisted of the two basic arms — infantry and cavalry — of such strength that it could face powerful Roman units and successfully keep at bay the surrounding migratory populations. A large-scale confrontation seems to have taken place in northern Dacia between the Costobocae and the Vandals in the last third of the 3rd century, of which the Roman diplomacy was not alien<sup>8</sup>. The Carpians State put up fierce resistance against the German Goths. The fact that the Goths had to maintain their bases of attack against the empire for more than five decades in the 3rd century in the northern part of the Black Sea proves that they could not extend their



domination over the free Dacians, who were thus a shield to the north-eastern Roman provinces. The Carpians themselves used to say that they were "stronger than the Goths"<sup>9</sup>.

Therefore, free Dacia consisted of polities in the north and west and of the powerful State of the Carpi in the territory east of the Carpathians, all of them belonging to the Dacians, who continued to live according to the old traditions of the autochthonous La Tène epoch. The attack of the free Dacians against the provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior carried on in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, on their own initiative, in connection with the revolts of the Dacian population living in the two provinces, or in alliance with various other populations, were proofs of a great strength, which caused great concern to the Roman administration and army in respect of the security of that part of the empire<sup>10</sup>.

Facts confirmed Trajan's opinion, which he held ever since he had become an emperor, that the Dacians, independent and organized, were the main obstacle to the expansion of the empire. That is why in the wars of 101—102 and 105—106 he did not aim at obtaining a mere military victory, but at establishing a firm and lasting Roman rule over the territories north of the Danube. The measures taken after the conquest, of particular significance for the subsequent development of Dacia, were a telling proof in this respect<sup>11</sup>.

In order to annihilate any tendency to revive a powerful Dacian State, that would have been a threat to the empire, the political structures of the conquered people were abolished. Taking into account that from the beginning of the 2nd century the empire spelled "provinces"<sup>12</sup>, Dacia was organized as an imperial province; a single entity at the beginning, she was subsequently, divided into two — Dacia Superior (the northern and central part) and Dacia Inferior (the southern part), while by the year 170 into three: Dacia Porolissensis, Dacia Apulensis and Dacia Malvensis. Being under the direct control of the emperor, the province of Dacia was ruled by a representative of the emperor, selected from among the former consuls, a *Legatus Augusti propraetore*, a title to which, after the division, *Trium Daciarum* was added. The *Legatus* exercised the supreme attributions concerning the administration, justice and army, being assisted by a citizens' council — *Concilium Provincia-rum Daciarum Trium* — and having at his disposal a corps of officials for the main domains: fiscal, municipal, juridical, etc.

The administrative organization was doubled by a military one, destined to defend the province from outside attacks and also to ensure that the freshly subdued population was kept under control, and to stifle its violent reactions. The main basis of the military system were the *castra*, over a hundred of them, most of which placed on the borders of the province, as the most advanced line of fortifications aiming to block the access to its territory<sup>13</sup>.

Among strategically important and particularly large *castra* we should mention those at *Micia* (Vețel, Hunedoara county), *Porolissum* (Moigrad, Sălaj county), *Angustia* (Brețcu, Covasna county), *Praetorium II* (Racovița, Vilcea county), *Romula-Malva* and *Slăveni* (Ilt

county), *Drobeta* (Drobeta-Turnu Severin). When the border line was pushed farther east, probably in the time of Septimius Severus, the *limes Alutanus* — represented by the natural obstacle that was the Olt river — was doubled by the *limes Transalutanus*, with a defence system consisting of 17 castra, watch towers and earthen vallums. Such fortifications were made not only in the border areas, but in the inland of the province too, such as those at *Apulum* (Alba Iulia), *Potaissa* (Turda, Cluj county), *Războieni-Cetate* (Mureş county). A few castra functioned temporarily in the Muntenian Plain, as well as in Moldavia, among which we mention the northernmost one — *Bitca Doamnei* (nearby Piatra Neamt).

The defence system organized in Dacia underwent various changes, caused by the political-military situation, the entire chain of fortifications being rebuilt in the first half of the 3rd century.

The military troops sent to Dacia consisted of *Legio XIII Gemina*, stationed at Apulum, and *Legio V Macedonica*, brought over in 167—168 and stationed at Potaissa; there were also other units such as: *Cohors III Gallorum*, *Cohors I Hispanorum Veterana*, *Cohors I Brittanica milliarum civicum Romanorum*, *Cohors II Brittanica equitata*, *Cohors III Campestris civicum Romanorum*, *Ala I Claudia Capitoniana*, *Ala I Hispanorum*, *Ala I Asturum*, *Ala I Palmyrenorum*. It is estimated that, besides the mentioned legions, 49 cohorts, 15 alae and 15 numeri had garrisons in Dacia during the period of Roman domination.

The roads had particular strategical function and their network was permanently enlarged and improved, as they ensured the rapid movement of troops, the link between castra and between towns, and facilitated at the same time the transport of goods and of people, thus helping the development of the socio-economic life.

Besides the peaceful contacts in the economic and other fields, many violent confrontations were recorded between the free Dacians and the Roman provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior<sup>14</sup>. Thus, a notable intensification of the offensive of the Costobocae, Carpi and other free Dacians against the two Roman provinces occurred in the first seven decades of the second century — 117—118, 143, 156—157, 167—168, 170; then, after a period of about sixty years of relative peace, a new outbreak of violence — especially in the years 238, 242, 245—247, 272. In 170, for instance, the Costobocae made a raid of such proportion that they reached up to Eleusis and Athens, and in 245 the Carpi crossed the Muntenian Plain and the Olt river advancing up to Ulpia Traiana Colonia Dacica Sarmizegethusa and Apulum, an action which determined the Roman authority to give up the *limes Transalutanus* and to set back the border of the province on the *limes Alutanus*.

Many a time, as in 117—118, 167—168, 192, 245—247, to mention just a few cases, the attacks of the free Dacians combined with the insurgent acts of the Dacians in the province in an impressive rising of the Dacian people to struggle for regaining freedom and independence. Outstanding Roman commanders fell on the battlefield, such as Quadratus Bassus, the governor of the province of Dacia, during the uprising of 117—118, or famous General Claudius Fronto, during that of 170.

Some of those confrontations were ranked, at that time, among the big wars. Ancient sources consider, for instance, the victory won in 156—157 by Emperor Antoninus Pius against the “great Dacians” as one of his most important deeds, which earned him the title of Dacicus Maximus, in a period when the Roman army was gaining resounding victories over the Germans, Britons, Moors and Judaeans<sup>15</sup>.

The fusion of the Roman and the Dacian civilizations, a vast process which in the 1st—3rd centuries covered the entire material and spiritual life of the people living in the area bordered by the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea, both those who were under the Roman occupation and those who continued their free and independent life, was the fundamental characteristic of the evolution of the autochthonous people inhabiting that area. Although, as any conquest, Dacia's conquest also had tragic consequences for the life of the Dacian people, the close entwining of the two civilizations for quite a period of time brought about new and strong progress of the economic, social and cultural life in that area.

The main branches of the economy — agriculture and cattle breeding —, in which the Dacians were greatly skilled, developed. The exploitation of the riches of the soil and subsoil — gold, silver, iron, copper, oil, salt, limestone, marble, wood — was intensified and diversified. Gold and silver, which, as a royal monopoly, were one of the sources of power of the Dacian State and one of the main reasons of Roman expansion into the intra-Carpathian area, were given special attention, the gold and silver mines becoming the possessions of the emperor during the occupation. Old trades were improved and new ones appeared. The local products coexisted with the Roman ones, showing both their own style and reciprocal influences.

The urban settlements played an outstanding role in the organic intermingling of the two civilizations. On the site of some of the old Dacian market-towns mentioned by Ptolemy, the famous geographer of the ancient world, the urban settlements of the province of Dacia<sup>16</sup> developed and were promoted to the highest ranks in the administrative hierarchy of the empire, becoming municipalities and colonies and keeping the previous names accepted in the Roman terminology — Drobeta, Napoca, Potaissa, Porolissum, Dierna, Ampelum, Tibiscum a.s.o. Special mention should be made of the only town which from its very foundation held the rank of colonia<sup>17</sup>, namely Ulpia Traiana Augusta Colonia Dacica, to which, after 118, in the memory of the old capital of Decebalus, still alive in the consciousness of the Dacians, the name of Sarmizegethusa was added. It remained the true administrative, political, religious and cultural capital of Dacia, but it was surpassed in point of urban and economic development by the old Dacian town of Apulum.

In that process of fusion, one should also note the ever greater presence of the Dacians in the social, political and military life of the empire. In connection with the latter aspect, the military one, it should be stressed that a great number of local people were enrolled in the Roman units garrisoned in Dacia. Moreover, due to the military qualities of the Dacians, well known to the Romans, Dacian cohorts and alae were

set up even in the initial period of the province's existence and they served in other parts of the empire, such as *Ala I Ulpia Dacorum*, organized by Trajan and stationed in Cappadocia province, *Cohors I Ulpia Dacorum*, also set up by Trajan and stationed in Syria, *Cohors II Augusta Dacorum pia fidelis milliaria equitata*, its garrison at Teutoburgium (today Dalj, Yugoslavia) in Pannonia, *Cohors I Aelia Dacorum*, sent to Amboglana (today Birdoswald, in Brittany). Dacians were recruited for the units of the imperial guard, too. In the course of time they were also promoted to offices of greatest importance in the Roman army, as was the case of Regalianus, who, according to *Historia Augusta*, was "famous in military art [...] and allegedly a relative of Decebalus himself"; he was even proclaimed emperor by the troop under his command in Moesia Inferior<sup>18</sup>.

In the latter half of the 3rd century the political and military situation in the areas around Dacia became particularly unfavourable to the Roman Empire. Certain internal phenomena, especially the military anarchy that weakened the empire, the attacks of the free Dacians, the growing danger posed by the Goths and other migratory populations created a feeling of insecurity; that was the reason of Emperor Aurelian's decision to withdraw the administration and the army from Dacia and strengthen the frontier of the empire on the Danube<sup>19</sup>.

Aurelian's withdrawal of the army and administration in 271—275 did not involve the inhabitants of the province, who continued to live their lives in the ancient homeland, restored to its unity after the disappearance of the artificial borders between imperial Dacia and free Dacia. The results of the archaeological research, numismatics, toponymy, linguistics, written sources and studies of highly scientific authority definitely refute the assertion of some pseudo-historians, of the past or today, concerning an alleged "demographic vacuum" that would have occurred in the area situated between the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea as a result of the Daco-Roman wars and of the withdrawal of the legions and imperial authorities from Dacia, an aberrant theory concocted on the basis of allegations — lacking the support of real facts — taken at random from the texts of ancient authors of a later date and presented as sources of information, with the aim to serve political trends that promote factors of a nature to upset the objective course of history.

Aurelian's withdrawal did not mean a total abandonment of Dacia by the Romans, because strong bridgeheads continued to link the empire to the north-Danubian region, the relations between them taking on a form adequate to the new conditions.

The historical evolution of the Romanians' ancestors over the 106—275 period demonstrates that the presence of a prevailing Geto-Dacian element, the active process of osmosis between the Dacian and the Roman civilizations, the uninterrupted continuity of material and spiritual life in the same area are the decisive factors of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people. The birth of the Romanian people, with its specific features, is part of the general process of peoples' emergence in the Roman world. The process shed light on the existence of a basic, autochthonous stock — the Geto-Dacians in the case of the Romanians, the Gauls in that of the French, the Iberians with the Spaniards and the

Portuguese, the Italic populations, the Gauls and the Etruscans with the Italians — and of a colonizing element — the Romans —, who gave them the language, the Latin character adding harmony and beauty to the language of all those peoples, each with its own distinct traits. It can be said that, in contrast with the social and political spheres, where the peaceful coexistence alternated with sharp confrontations, the acceptance of the Latin language not only by the well-to-do people, the inhabitants of the towns, but also by the entire local mass of people in the villages was the result of a general consensus between the Dacians and the Romans. Thus, as early as its ethnogenesis, the Romanian people was not a marginal, isolated people, but asserted itself as an active component of the new European community, taking shape during the period of decline and fall of the last world empire of the ancient world.

*“With an unquenched thirst for liberty, with its determination not to bow to foreign rule, resolved to always be itself, the sole master of its life and fate, which it had inherited from the Dacians, and evincing a rational spirit, judgement and creative passion, bequeathed by the Romans, the Romanian people”, President Nicolae Ceaușescu underlined, “that had emerged in the world, recorded a heroic eventful and great history spanning nearly two thousand years, continuously developing and strongly asserting itself in ranks of the peoples, and today, of the nations of the world”<sup>20</sup>.*

Born from a superior symbiosis, the Romanian people, in its existence — without any caesura — on its ancient land, withstood all vicissitudes, defending, when necessary arm in hand, its being — unitary by origin, language, civilization and culture —, the political and State personality, the right to decide its own fate, and took part, by developing its material and spiritual creation, in the international exchange of assets, asserting itself with dignity in the great family of mankind.

## Notes

1. C. Pinius Caecilius, *Epistularum Libri Novem*, VII, 4, 1—2.
2. Herodotus, *Istoriî* (Histories), IV, 93; Strabo, *Geografia* (Geography), VII, 3, 11.
3. Vasile Pârvan, *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei* (Getica. A Protohistory of Dacia), București, 1926, pp. 78—79.
4. See, among others, D. Protase, *Problema continuității în lumina arheologiei și numismaticii* (The Problem of Continuity in the Light of Archaeology and Numismatics), București, 1966; *Autohtonii în Dacia* (The Natives in Dacia), București, 1980; L. Birzu, *The Continuity of the Romanian People's Material and Spiritual Production in the Territory of Former Dacia*, Bucharest, 1980.
5. In connection with the Carpi and the Costobocae, see I. Ioniță, *Din istoria și civilizația dacilor liberi. Dacii din spațiul est-carpatic în secolele II—IV e.n.* (From the History and Civilization of the Free Dacians. The Dacians in the East-Carpathian Area in the 2nd—4th Centuries AD), Iași, 1982; G. Bichir, *Cultura carpică* (The Carpiian Culture), București, 1973; I. I. Rusu, “Les Costoboces”, in *Dacia*, NS, 3, 1959.
6. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, VI, 1801.
7. Zosimos, *Istoria romană* (The Roman History), I, 80.
8. Dio Cassius, *Istoria romană* (The Roman History), LXXI, 12, 1—2.
9. Petrus Patricius, *Istoriî* (Histories), 8.
10. Radu Vulpe, Ion Barnea *Din istoria Dobrogei* (From the History of Dobruja), Vol. II, *Romanii la Dunărea de Jos* (The Romans by the Lower Danube),

- București, 1968, pp. 197—292 ; M. Macrea, *Viața în Dacia romană* (Life in Roman Dacia), București, 1969, pp. 43—49, 436—455.
11. See Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *From Ancient Dacia to Modern Romania*, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 50—52.
  12. Mihai Gramatopol, *Arta imperială a epocii lui Traian* (The Imperial Art of Trajan's Epoch), București, 1984, p. 249.
  13. For information about the military system in Dacia, see M. Macrea, *op. cit.*, pp. 176—250 ; D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană* (Roman Oltenia), 4th edition, București, 1978, pp. 251—325 ; Colonel Cristian M. Vădescu, DHist, *Armata romană în Dacia Inferior* (The Roman Army in Dacia Inferior), București, 1983, pp. 69—149 ; idem, *Fortificațiile romane în Dacia Inferior* (The Roman Fortifications in Dacia Inferior), Craiova, 1986, pp. 12—97.
  14. With regard to military aspects, see *Istoria militară a poporului român* (The Military History of the Romanian People), Vol. I, București, 1984, pp. 187—207.
  15. Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
  16. See D. Tudor, *Orașe, țirguri și sate în Dacia romană* (Cities, Towns and Villages in Roman Dacia), București, 1968.
  17. H. Daicoviciu, *Dacii* (The Dacians), București, 1965, p. 244.
  18. See *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Vol. I, pp. 210—212.
  19. Radu Vulpe, "Considérations historiques autour de l'évacuation de la Dacie", in *Dacoromania*, 1, 1975.
  20. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 14, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, p. 292.

## **The Formation of the Romanian People in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic Area : a Blending Between the Dacian and Roman Civilizations**

In the history of East and Southeast Europe, the Geto-Dacian people, a distinct cultural entity among the numerous Thracian tribes already in the 9th—8th centuries BC, who inhabited a territory stretching from the Haemus (Balkan) Mountains in the south to the Wood Carpathians in the north and from the Hypanis (Bug) river in the east to the Bohemian Quadrilateral in the west<sup>1</sup>, held one of the most important political and military positions manifest in its relations with the Graeco-Roman world in particular but also with the other populations around : Bastarnae, Scythians, Celts, Iranic Sarmatians and other Germanic populations. The Geto-Dacians' special moral and spiritual virtues, their qualities of staunch combatants, of fierce defenders of their freedom and ancestral hearth under remarkable military and political leaders, which expressed their high socio-economic and political-military development and material and spiritual culture, were admirably though realistically estimated by all great ancient historians<sup>2</sup>.

From all the contacts and mutual influences of the Geto-Dacians with other peoples and civilizations — Greek, Persian, Roman — the ones with the latter were the longest in time and space. The outcome of the complex, profound blending in a large area of the Dacian and Roman civilizations was the formation and development of a new people, the Romanian people.

An ample and long process, the synthesis of the two civilizations witnessed several stages, which can be defined according to their characteristics and component parts.

The gradual transformation of the territories on the right bank of the Danube, between the river, the Black Sea and the Balkans — the part that would later become the province of Moesia — into a Roman province actually meant, in those circumstances and given the objective situation, the annexation of a first and important region of Burebista's former Dacia.

These territories, which joined very early the intense circuit of assets of the Roman economic, social and political life would be, by their position, organization and material and human potential, the most important and advanced base for the next step of the Roman expansion, the north-Danubian Dacia.

Following two great armed conflicts between the Dacian kingdom and the Roman Empire in 101—102 and 105—106, the entire plateau of Transylvania, the current territories of the Banat and Oltenia were turned into the imperial province of Dacia and, temporarily (between 101

and 117), the territories between the Carpathians and the Danube were annexed to the province already existing south of the river, Moesia Inferior.

The transformation of large Carpatho-Danubian-Balkan regions with an old and dense Geto-Dacian population, from the Transylvanian plateau to the Balkan Mountains, into a Roman province resulted in the inclusion of the autochthonous population into a new politico-administrative framework, in close and direct contact with the Roman civilization, a fundamental process for the birth of the Romanian people by the Carpathians, the Black Sea and the Danube. "*Roman victory*", Romania's President Nicolae Ceaușescu shows, "*was the starting point of a long period when the Dacians and Romans lived together and the intertwining of their respective civilizations became more accentuated. As attested by contemporary written records, by archaeological research and scientific findings, it was at that time that the Dacian-Roman symbiosis was achieved, and a new people began to take shape, relying on the highest virtues of both the Dacians and the Romans. That is how the Romanian people was born*"<sup>3</sup>.

Although the regions right and left of the big river had a remarkable ethnic-geographical unity, their interdependence being revealed and proved true on numerous occasions, from the point of view of the symbiosis with the Roman element each had its peculiar features. Thus, while the conquest and annexation of the Geto-Dacian territories on the right bank of the Danube by the empire seemed to have been slower, the impact of the conquerors on the conquered being not so violent, in the territories of the Dacian State ruled by Decebalus the very violence of the two wars and the measures that were deliberately more radical marked the evolution of the situation. In the south and north of the Danube alike, most of the political (the State, the army), social and religious structures of the Dacians were abolished following the Roman occupation, which caused tremendous material and moral damage to the Dacian people<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, alongside the provincial organisms, Geto-Dacian specific ways of life, traditions and for a while even the spoken language were further maintained throughout the conquered territory.

Fundamental for the future ethno-socio-cultural processes were — in the light of the absolutely objective archaeological evidence and of the literary and historical documents — the continued existence of the vigorous Geto-Dacian trunk in the Carpatho-Pontic-Balkan area, the basic ethnic group in these territories, and the new and marked progress in all domains in the region.

All along the Danube course, starting even with the place where the river Ogosta merged with the Danube, the fortifications and most of the settlements on or near which the Romans later built their castra, as well as the rivers bear exclusively Daco-Moesian names: *Cebus-Cebum*, *Oiskos-Oescus*, *Asamus-Asamum*, *Dimum*, *Iatrus-Iaterus*, two settlements named *Sacidava*, *Appiaria*, *Sucidava*, *Capidava*, *Salsovia* or *Muridava*, *Saprisara*, *Giridava*, *Zisnudava*, *Buteridava*. Inland, "between the river and the Haemus Mountain", Ptolemy mentioned cities with undoubtedly Dacian names — *Dausdava*, *Tibisca*<sup>5</sup>. The Dacian or Daco-Thracian anthroponyms are frequent in Moesia Inferior in inscriptions



at *Novae* (Sviștov), *Durostorum* (Silistra), *Traiani* (Adamclisi), Constanța county, *Troesmis* (Turcoaia, Tulcea county), *Barboși* (Galați county), a.o. <sup>6</sup>.

The south of the territory between the Danube and the sea had a dense Dacian population, as mentioned by a border inscription dating to the mid-2nd century AD. Inscriptions also mention *vici* (villages) bearing the names of autochthonous people or of Getic settlements or ancient Thracian tribes : *vicus Buteridavensis* (Mihai Viteazu, Constanța county), *vicus Turris Mucaporis/pius* (Anadolchioi, Constanța county), *vicus Amlaidina* (Urluchioi, Constanța county), *vici* : *Sardes* and *Asboldina* (in the proximity of Callatis-Mangalia, Constanța county), *vicus Scenopesis* (near Capidava, Constanța county), *vicus Vergobretani* (Girliciu, Constanța county), *vicus Ausdecensium* <sup>7</sup>. It has been convincingly proved that numerous local Geto-Dacian population continued to exist during the Roman occupation, producing pottery in the good old Getic tradition (pots, jars, cups). The burial rite proper to them was preserved along the 1st—3rd centuries AD. It is the case of the rural settlements, urban or military centres such as those at : Lom, Sviștov, Nova Cerna, Oriahovo, Staroselo (in Bulgaria), Enisala, Garvăn, Somova, Isaccea (Tulcea county), Gura Canliei, Alimanu, Bugeac, Dervent, Histria, Adamclisi, Constanța, Mangalia, Valul lui Traian, Runcu, Sibioara, Ovidiu (Constanța county) <sup>8</sup>.

As for the evolution of the demographic situation north of the Danube, the archaeological research attests most clearly that during and after the Daco-Roman war of 105—106, an “annihilation” of the Dacians, as sustained by later ancient authors with few knowledge about what happened in early 2nd century AD and by some historians of more recent times, is out of the question <sup>9</sup>.

Official documents issued by the empire during the Daco-Roman wars or shortly after these wars had ended (inscriptions, coins) speak about a “victory”, “submission” of Dacia — *Dacia Capta*, *Victa Dacia*, *Victoria Dacica* (on coins) <sup>10</sup> —, a “triumph over the Dacians”, a “submission” of the Dacians, a “victory” over them (in inscriptions) <sup>11</sup>, and not of an “annihilation”, “destruction”, “extermination” of the Dacian people. Anyway, like measures could not have served the Roman administration interested in steadily and efficiently using the autochthonous population in all the domains of the economic life. The images on Trajan’s Column show the surrender of whole Dacian communities to Emperor Trajan, and it is obvious that they were shown mercy and understanding. The artist who so keenly and truthfully rendered scenes from the two wars could not have possibly missed mass massacres of the civil defenceless population, or of people who were surrendering. Most of the population who survived the wars continued to live in the new province, and their existence is proved by archaeological discoveries, the toponyms, hydronyms, and people’s names, as well as by the substantial contribution to the Roman military structures ; the Dacians started being incorporated into the Roman troops right after the conquest and that went on for a long period of time.

Telling proofs are the archaeological finds which attest to the existence of about 260—280 possible village hearthes with traces of Dacian and Roman habitation. Some are mentioned in ancient works of geo-

graphy — *Cedonia, Certiae, Blandiana, Aquae, Caput, Bubali, Pons Augusti, Petris, Vicus Pirustarum*<sup>12</sup> —, in inscriptions or juridical texts — *pagus Aquensis, pagus Miciensis, vicus Patavissensium, vicus Anartorum*<sup>13</sup> — or were archaeologically identified in Carset, Boarta (Sibiu county), Archiud (Bistrița-Năsăud county), Cernatu (Covasna county), Ci-pău, Lechința de Mureș (Mureș county), Mugeni (Harghita county), Noș-leac, Obreja, Rădești (Alba county), Feldioara (Brașov county), etc. Maps of those autochthonous rural settlements show that they spread throughout the area of the province, while their rather large surface, one to eight tenths of a hectare, the rich and varied archaeological material speak of a rather numerous population with an advanced socio-economic stratification.

The preservation of the traditional forms of habitation is obvious not only in the rural settlements, where hand-made pottery with the alveolar strip and undulated lines, ornaments, housing construction and victuals pits specific to the Dacians were found, but also in urban centres, where suchlike products were also found. Quite relevant, part of these villages are in the vicinity of the cities and the castra of legions or auxiliary troops, most of them set up on the very spot or in the neighbourhood of such ancient hearthes.

A specific trait of the territories of Dacia on the right bank of the Danube as compared to the territories of the province of Dacia is that there the colonization had been somehow unsystematic. On the contrary, the colonization of the province of Dacia was intense, intentional and systematic, for besides the army (the most numerous as compared to the other imperial provinces) colonists were brought from the whole Roman world: “*ex toto orbe romano infinitas o copias hominum transtulerat ad agros et urbes colendas*” (“[Trajan] had brought an infinite number of people from all the parts of the Roman world to people the cities and till the fields”), which distinguished the intra-Carpathian lands and those west of the Olt river from all the other regions of the empire as far as the force of the symbiosis of the autochthonous element with the colonists is concerned.

The construction of tens of fortifications in Dacia and Moesia Inferior in the 1st—3rd centuries undoubtedly required the employment of the local population. Even if not directly involved, the military being the main builders of the edifices and of the precincts with their fortification elements, the natives surely did auxiliary works without which such constructions could not have been erected.

The involvement of the local population around the castra in the daily life of the units quartered there, the presence of indigenous military in the limes and inland garrisons are further aspects of the vast and profound symbiotic phenomenon throughout the area of the two Carpatho-Danubian provinces, Dacia and Moesia Inferior. Archaeological findings in the “Podetii” plateau near Alba Iulia are relevant for the participation of the native population in the life of the city and of the legion, after the setting up of the castra and of the canabae. Twelve incineration tombs were unearthed in the necropolis of the city, dating back to the period of the Roman rule and belonging, most probably, to

Dacian autochthons. Their stratigraphic position shows that they were posterior to some interment tombs with wood coffins (obviously belonging to colonists) that they superpose. In some cremation pits with traces of secondary cremation, fragments of Roman provincial vessels and coins<sup>14</sup> were found, proof that some ancestral rites were maintained in the Roman epoch, too, by the local population that was a distinct and active presence in the life of the chief politico-military centre of the province of Dacia. The massive and active participation of a part of the autochthonous Dacian population in the "most marked mass involvement in the State life of the Roman Empire — the military service"<sup>15</sup>, both in the province and in the rest of the empire, resulted in fast social and economic changes, higher development and its transformation into a powerful factor of cultural synthesis between the Dacians and the Romans.

Quite relevant, for instance, is the fact that in Moesia Inferior, with the exception of a few texts in Greek, the epigraphic monuments coming from civilians, or military in active service bearing Dacian or Thracian names, therefore of an obvious autochthonous descentance, are written in Latin, the language they spoke at home and, in the case of the military, in their units. There are numerous cases in which the parents, military in their turn too, bore Daco-Thracian names and their sons took typically Roman names. On the other hand, there are also cases of whole families with Daco-Thracian names, even if the father or his sons had served under the arms. The existence of an impressive number (about 3,000) of inscriptions in Latin shows that the Latin had been quickly assimilated by the Geto-Dacians in the civil life or in the army. With the introduction of local recruitment, each unit restaffed its troops with conscripts from the rural settlements in the proximity of the castrum<sup>16</sup> or of the urban centres. This cohabitation castrum-civil settlement or city-rural territory and the participation of the Dacians in the economic life of the respective garrison deepened and speeded up the blending of the two — Dacian and Roman — civilizations.

The presence of a large army in the province of Dacia shows the major strategic importance attached by the Roman ruling circles to this province. The occupation with large effectives, the fact that not only the frontiers but also the inland of the province witnessed a high density of troops of all categories all along the 165 years of occupation shows that an intense military life proceeded in Dacia. Epigraphic discoveries show that the Dacians joined the Roman army soon, from the very first years after the conquest, the main modality being the creation of auxiliary units with the ethnicon *Dacorum* — of the Dacians (epigraphically documented as six, but probably amounting to nine) — sent to various frontier sectors of the empire. Obviously, all along the 2nd century, when the troops were recruited, such an ethnicon clearly shows that the respective troops were made up of Dacian autochthons, which renders ineffective the biased interpretation of a text by Eutropius to the effect that there was no longer any male population in Dacia after the 105—106 war<sup>17</sup>, and all the more so the "extermination" of the Dacians. All this indicates again a high demographic potential, the local population being able to offer a mass of recruitable young men even in the first ten years after the conquest. Large possibilities for troop recruitment

were manifest all throughout the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century. The ascent of some military of Dacian extraction such as Regalianus, Aureolus and Galerius to the highest ranks of Roman military command, and even to the imperial throne rounds off the picture of the active presence of the autochthonous Dacian element throughout the existence of the province<sup>18</sup>.

The conquest by the Roman armies of a part of north-Danubian Dacia did not mean the inclusion of all Dacian territories into the Roman Empire. The territories east of the Carpathians, Maramureş, Crişana and, after a short period of occupation, Muntenia too formed, all throughout the existence of the intra-Carpathian province, the so-called free Dacia, where the Dacian people uninterruptedly continued its life according to its traditions, and where the Geto-Dacian statehood further developed its socio-political, economic and military instruments and structures meant to further ensure the independence and free development of the Dacian people.

An important element of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people is that the Dacian people in free Dacia also contributed to the blending of the Dacian and Roman civilizations. Crişana and Maramureş, but particularly Moldavia and Muntenia, maintained by political and economic means in the sphere of interests of the empire for longer periods of time, had been important commodity markets and sources of raw materials already in the pre-Roman period. The links of the two Carpatho-Danubian provinces (Dacia and Moesia Inferior) with the Dacians in free Dacia kept being very close by means of trade routes and mostly due to the active trade with the population in those regions<sup>19</sup>.

The presence of Roman imported commodity (pottery, coins, articles of luxury, tools, arms) in the Dacian settlements and complexes in the 1st—3rd centuries is an irrefutable archaeological reality. The penetration of Roman merchandise and merchants in free Dacia and, the other way round, of Dacian commodities and merchants in the two Roman provinces is archaeologically documented; this met the needs of a steady trade supplying the free Dacians with manufactured products, articles of luxury and jewellery, earthenware, clothes, while the Roman administration got raw materials and Dacian products, and often recruits for the army. Just as in the case of the territories under Roman occupation, the period running from the early 2nd century to mid-3rd century was for free Dacia too the most prosperous one as far as the symbiosis with the Roman civilization was concerned. Therefore, when speaking of the vast and complex process of blending of the Dacian and Roman civilizations, one has to take into account both the spatial factor, the entire Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, which coincides with the area of habitation of the Romanians, as part of this broad and profound phenomenon of cultural and linguistic interpenetration, and the temporal one, this process going back to the 2nd — 1st centuries BC and reaching its acme in the 1st—3rd centuries AD, when the Dacian people in the Roman province and the free Dacians adopted rapidly and to a decisive extent forms of Roman material and spiritual life. The outcome of that complex evolution was the Romanian people, which continued the

struggle for the preservation of its ethnic being, its freedom, unity and territorial integrity against foreign aggressors for centuries on end.

Heir to the glorious Geto-Dacian and Roman traditions in this area, the Romanian people would prove its vitality and resilience in front of the migratories, who could no longer bring structural alterations to its ethnic being, language and civilization.

## Notes

1. I. I. Russu, *Limba traco-dacilor* (The Language of the Thraco-Dacians), 2nd edition, București, 1967, pp. 33—36.
2. A. Petre, "Geții și dacii din Scythia Minor, documentați în izvoarele scrise de la Sofocle la Strabo", *Getae and Dacians of Scythia Minor Documented in Written Sources from Sophocles to Strabo*, in *Pontica*, 7, 1974, pp. 9—26; H. Daicoviciu, "Daces et Gètes dans les sources antiques", in *Thraco-Dacica*, 3, 1982, pp. 144—146.
3. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 24, Editura Politică, Bucharest, 1985, p. 17.
4. *Istoria militară a poporului român* (The Military History of the Romanian People), Vol. I, București, 1984, pp. 180—182.
5. Ptolemy, *Geografia* (Geography), III, 10, 6.
6. R. Vulpe, *Histoire ancienne de Dobruđja*, Bucarest, 1938, pp. 190—191; Vl. Djordjiev, "Raporturile dintre limbile dacă, tracă și frigiană" (Relations of the Dacian, Thracian and Frigian Languages), in *Classical Studies*, 2, 1960, p. 39, 58; idem, *Trakiiskiat ezik*, Sofia, 1957, passim; I. I. Russu, *op. cit.*, p. 47—48, 82—85.
7. M. Munteanu, "Despre magistraturile sătești din Dobrogea romană (sec. I—III e.n.)" (On Village Magistrateship in Roman Dobrudja, 1st—3rd centuries AD), in *Pontica*, 4, 1971, pp. 125—136.
8. C. Scorpan, "Aspecte ale continuității și romanizării băștinașilor din Dobrogea în lumina recentelor cercetări" (Aspects of the Continuity and Romanization of the Natives of Dobrudja in the Light of the Latest Research), in *Pontica*, 3, 1970, pp. 139—170.
9. See, among others, L. Bală, "De la romanisation de la Dacie", in *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debrecinensis*, 14, 1974, pp. 53—67.
10. P. L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des II. Jahrhunderts*, I Stuttgart, 1931, pp. 105—145.
11. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (further quoted as *CIL*), XII, 105; *devictis Dacia* (AD 107—108); *Anné Epigraphique*, 1934, no. 2; *secunda expeditione in qua universa Dacia devicta est* (AD 106); H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Berlin 1892—1916, no. 8863; *CIL*, VI, 1444; *Traianus Dacicus [...] gentem Dacorum et regem Decebalum bella superavit [...]*. To these official but differentiated, precise and real expressions on the fate of the Dacian people we add the writings of Dio Cassius, *op. cit.*, LXVII, 14, 1; Eutropius, *op. cit.*, VIII, 2, 2; Rufius Festus, *Scurtă istorie a poporului roman* (Short History of the Roman People), VIII, 2; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Istoria romană* (The Roman History), XXI, 5, 14; Aurelius Victor, *Despre împărați* (On Emperors), XIII, 3; Eusebius, *Cronică* (Chronicle), 194, 4; Jordanes, *Faptele romanilor* (Facts of the Romans), 267.
12. Ptolemy, *Geografia*, passim; *Tabula Pentingeriana*, passim; *Itinerarium Antonini*, passim.
13. *CIL*, III, 1407, 1351, 8030; *Digesta*, L, 15, 1, 9.
14. M. Macrea, D. Protase, "Șantierul A.lba Iulia și împrejurimi" (The Alba Iulia Digging Site and the Surrounding Area), in *Archaeological Materials and Research*, 5, 1959, pp. 435—452; D. Protase, *Problema continuității în Dacia în lumina arheologiei și numismaticii* (The Question of Continuity in Dacia in the Light of Archaeology and Numismatics), București, 1966, pp. 16—19.

15. B. Gerov, "Romanizmăt mejdu Dunava i Bălkana", II, "Ot Hadrian do Konstantin Ve.iki", in *Godišnik na Sofijskata Universitet. Istoriko-Filologiceski Fakultet*, Sofia, 8, 1952.
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17. Eutropius, VIII, 6, 2; *Dacia enim diuturno Deceballi viris fuerat exhausta* (Dacia had been drained of men following the long war of Decebalus).
18. I. I. Russu, *Daco-geții in imperiul roman* (The Geto-Dacians in the Roman Empire), București, 1980, pp. 57—64.
19. Attentively and ever more thoroughly studied over the last twenty years, the civilization of the free Dacians was the subject of some syntheses of which we mention: Gh. Bichir, *Cultura carpică* (Carpian Culture), București, 1973; idem, "Les Daces libres de l'époque romaine à la lumière des données archéologiques", in *Thraco-Dacica*, 1, 1976, pp. 287—308; Ion Ioniță, *Din istoria și civilizația dacilor liberi. Dacii din spațiul est-carpatic în secolele II—IV e.n.* (From the History and Civilization of the Free Dacians. The Dacians of the Eastern Carpathian Area in the 2nd—4th centuries AD), 1982; Gh. Bichir, *Geto-dacii din Muntenia in epoca romană* (The Geto-Dacians of Muntenia in the Roman Epoch), București, 1985.

## **The Evolution of the Process of Political-Military Organization in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic Area in the 4th—13th Centuries**

It is an incontestable truth that the withdrawal of the Roman army and administration from Dacia — although these would be maintained and even strengthened in certain periods south of the former province — was a major event in the history of the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. The withdrawal as such permitted the remaking of the unity of the ancient territory of Dacia, where no demographic changes occurred. The unity of territory was soon matched by a cultural-linguistic one so that, when the big migrations of the last third of the 4th century AD started, the nomadic or seminomadic populations that crossed the Carpatho-Danubian space in quick succession met a people with a well-shaped civilization which could no longer be either displaced or essentially altered. The more stable presence of the Germanic (Gothic) element in eastern Dacia in the first three quarters of the 4th century had no important social or demographic consequences for the autochthons although some elements of the Germanic material culture in course of fast assimilation could be traced in the Sintana-on-Mureș culture.

The change in the politico-military relations in the northern Pontic steppes and by the Lower Danube and the start of the devastating Hunnic invasion, which shows in the burnt settlements dating from the end of the 4th century and the beginning of the next one, resulted in a relative retreat of the population from the territories where invasion recurred, although it is probable that the Hunnic impact in certain territories, forests and mountains in particular, was felt less or not at all. We only briefly mention the nominal rule of the Gepidae in the west of Dacia, with no socio-cultural effect or demographic impact on those territories, which also holds good for the Avars, whose impact on the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area was, like in the case of the Huns, inconsequential, actually nul, as the Avar horsemen were bound south of the Danube to attack the rich Roman-Byzantine cities there. More persistent and durable were the Slav migrations and invasions, at first extremely devastating, then less so, as they settled themselves. The Romanian people, with a much more advanced civilization, assimilated and integrated a series of Slav elements into its own linguistic inheritance in a relatively short time, while fully asserting its total pre-eminence in the material and spiritual culture (language included) so that ethnically and culturally the Slavs who stayed north of the Danube were totally assimilated by the autochthons.

The historical facts forcefully show, after the 3rd century AD, the uninterrupted presence of autochthonous human settlements in the Car-

patho-Danubian-Pontic area in essentially non-modified ethnic proportions and structures, which is an irrefutable argument of the continuity of the Romanian people with no demographic gap at all, and utterly invalidates the theory of a demographic "vacuum", resulting from the "catastrophic" vision of the big migrations.

On the other hand, a vast archaeological material that attests to the traditional occupations of the local people (tens of pieces of farming outfit, tens of workshops for the processing of raw materials, for the manufacture of tools and instruments of work, harness pieces, household objects, arms, vestiges of metal-working, etc.)<sup>1</sup>, the utilization of technologies inherited from the Dacians or learnt from the Romans most convincingly demonstrate that the Romanian society — a stable and durable one on the strength of these very occupations — had created and developed solid economic structures throughout the 4th—13th centuries on the basis of the above-mentioned demographic growth, structures which had a crucial role in the process of socio-political and military organization of the Romanian people.

As shown above, the population growth, its concentration on territories that varied in size can give us a measure of the evolution of its socio-political organization, the maturity of the socio-political and military institutions in a certain historical stage, given the fact that a human community with a certain demographic density necessarily organizes itself to put order into the relations between various social categories, and the relations of the community with the migratory populations as a temporarily dominant military force. Hence, a "public force" was needed, made up of people from the respective community, in charge of various public offices (maintenance of order, legal and military attributions, taxation, etc.). It is known that everywhere where human communities organized into massive concentrations of villages existed, the socio-political and military organization process was an inexorable reality irrespective of the historical epoch. As far as the Romanians are concerned, the relation between demographic concentrations and their socio-political and military organization was confirmed by the full correspondence between the archaeologically identified groups of villages and the documentary attestation of the corresponding political-military organisms in the same territorial limits<sup>2</sup>; thus, the attempt to establish a direct connection between the demographic groupings archaeologically identified for the 4th—13th centuries and the process of socio-political organization is a pertinent thing to do, fully justified and most necessary. And this the more so as there are other arguments as well which prove that the Romanian society had already set up its socio-political basis with the corresponding institutions. As shown recently<sup>3</sup>, the social structure of the Romanian north-Danubian communities in the 4th—13th centuries was the territorial village community with its characteristic institutions, where social differentiation had already occurred following the appearance of private property, which would entail important structural changes and the dissolution of the community character.

While discharging socio-economic and administrative functions, the village community also assumed politico-military attributions, regarding its defence against outside interference, meant to regulate the relations



of the community, by its representatives, with the migratories; one may say that after the Roman rule north of the Danube had been withdrawn at the end of the 3rd century, the socio-political structure that emerged throughout the territory of ancient Dacia was the territorial village community, which took over the basic attributions and functions of the former structures — the community or the unions of territorial communities — the continuity of the objective process of political organization being thus ensured.

The application of the methodologic principle of identifying the political structures in relation to the presence of demographic concentrations in the Carpatho-Danubian territory allowed for the identification of several groups of villages of the 3rd—4th centuries which could have been socio-political formations of the type of unions of village communities. For instance, the map of the settlements of the 2nd—4th centuries AD east of the Carpathians shows that there were over 200 settlements grouped into several large demographic communities. The most important of them in point of density is the one located between the middle courses of the rivers Moldova and Bistrița, consisting of almost 40 villages<sup>4</sup>.

Another large group was located along the middle course of the Siret, between Siret and Berheci, made up of more than 20 settlements<sup>5</sup>.

A somewhat smaller group of ten settlements was located between the two first groups, along the Siret, and an even smaller one (six settlements or so) along the middle course of the Troțuș<sup>6</sup>. Farther northwards, there were three other groupings: one of six settlements between the middle courses of the Moldova and Suceava<sup>7</sup>, another one with nine settlements on the Siret close to where it meets with the Suceava<sup>8</sup>, and the third one with seven settlements north-east, between the Prut and one of its tributaries<sup>9</sup>.

Somewhere between the lower courses of the Jijia and Bahlui another group with more than ten settlements was discovered<sup>10</sup>, and in the Bîrlad zone and at the confluence of the Vaslui and Bîrlad rivers there were two groups of ten and five settlements<sup>11</sup>, respectively.

In the south of Moldavia, there were two groups of villages: one between the lower courses of the Bîrlad and the Siret, and another one between the Milcov and the Rîmnic<sup>12</sup>.

The research made for the following 5th—11th centuries revealed an unbroken continuity of habitation, the demographic groups keeping approximately within the same territorial limits as in the previous period<sup>13</sup>.

As for Transylvania's territory, the evidence on the settlements dating back to the 6th—7th centuries AD shows that there were several groups of villages between the Criș and the Someș (more than 15 settlements)<sup>14</sup>, between the Mureș and the upper course of the Someș (more than 20 settlements), between the upper courses of the two Tîrnava rivers, in Bîrsa zone, in the Carpathian curvature, and in the south of the Banat, by the Danube, which continued to show an increased density throughout the 8th—11th centuries<sup>15</sup>.

Similar groups of villages were identified between the Carpathians and the Danube as well. For instance, a large group dating back to the 6th—7th centuries was located between the middle courses of the rivers Ialomița and Dîmbovița stretching as far as the Danube (on either side of the Mostiștea); another group was identified on the middle course of the Buzău, where a compact community existed since the 4th century and where the events described in the letter in Greek from AD 374 happened, on which occasion some major traits of the village community in that area are also mentioned<sup>16</sup>. Over the 8th—11th centuries the number of the population groups increased, new settlements being identified around the town of Brăila, on the Danube between Călărași and Oltenița, around the town of Giurgiu and in its surroundings, in the territory of Bucharest and in the south of Oltenia<sup>17</sup>.

These being the facts revealed by archaeological research, the question arises as to what extent suchlike concentrations of human settlements belonging to the Romanian population, as shown, correspond to socio-political formations with institutions attesting to a process of socio-political and military organization in a certain stage of its evolution. In this respect, there is an instance, beyond any question whatsoever, of complete agreement of such demographic concentrations with their politico-military character. These are the Romanian State formations in Transylvania at the turn of the first millennium AD, formations mentioned by Anonymous — i.e. those led by Menumorut, Gelu and Glad — whose institutions, army, administrative organization, etc. show the stage reached by the process of political-military organization at that time, namely that of organisms with a mediaeval State character. Of a particular interest to us here and now is whether the territorial location of these formations corresponds to their frontiers as described in the chronicle. The research made to this effect demonstrates that the archaeological limits of these organisms fully agree with those described in the chronicle.

Commenting on the penetration of the Hungarian tribes in Transylvania, the anonymous chronicler of King Bela mentions the existence of a political organism extending west to the Tisza, east to the Piatra Craiului Mountain, south-east to the Meseș Gates, north beyond Satu Mare and south to the Mureș river<sup>18</sup>.

The second voivodate (State formation ruled by a voivode) was in the Transylvanian Plateau, stretching to the Meseș Gates in the north-west, while the other frontiers coincided with the southern and eastern limits of the Transylvanian Plateau<sup>19</sup>.

The third voivodate mentioned by Anonymous was located between the Danube and the Mureș, stretching north to the Mureș, south to Orșova and south-west to the Cuvin stronghold<sup>20</sup>.

From the archaeological point of view, the limits of these political-military organisms correspond to the three massive demographic concentrations identified through diggings. Thus, the group of over 40 settlements in north-western Transylvania corresponds to the territory of Menumorut's voivodate, the one in the central part of Transylvania, in the plateau, between the Mureș and the Someș, with some 20 settlements

to Gelu's voivodate, while the one in the Banat, also with numerous settlements, to Glad's voivodate.

A similar correspondence is noted with some demographic groups from the previous period. Unfortunately, written sources are not so clear in this respect. For instance, the narrations of some Byzantine chroniclers attest to the existence of some political formations in the latter half of the 6th century and throughout the next century, stretching between the Carpathians and the Danube, and led by Dauritas or Daurentios (Laurentios in a recent interpretation), Ardagast, Musokios and Piragast<sup>21</sup>, considered of Slav origin. However, the archaeological research made in the Muntenian Plain shows that the settlements in that area, their material culture had a powerful Latin character, therefore they belonged to the autochthonous Romanian population just as the Ipoțești-Cindești-Ciurel cultural complexes did<sup>22</sup>. Some researchers tried to locate the formations led by Dauritas, Ardagast and Piragast, drawing the conclusion that they were located between the middle courses of the Dîmbovița and the Ialomița, where maps of the settlements of that time point to a large demographic concentration. Musokios ruled in the Buzău region (the middle course of the river with the self-same name), where there was a massive concentration of human settlements already in the 4th century. Hence, they must have been Romanian and Slav communities organized in political formations of the type of unions of territorial communities, led by the above-mentioned rulers<sup>23</sup>.

We have no direct knowledge as to how these political organisms discharged their military attributions of self-defence over the 4th—7th centuries. They are likely to have opposed an armed resistance to the invaders, the Huns in particular. For instance, the Visigoths opposed the Huns, and the autochthonous formations must have joined in, especially those in the centre of the Moldavian plateau, both in direct confrontation and in the construction of those earthen vallums called "high walls" in chronicles<sup>24</sup>. The extensive damage sustained by the autochthonous settlements in late 4th century, in central Moldavia in particular, archaeologically documented, could be explained through the resistance the autochthonous political formations in that region, "popular romanias" or "peasant democracies" as Nicolae Iorga called them, offered to the Huns when they started to penetrate in the mentioned area after AD 376.

As for the weapons in use at that time, they are known from archaeological finds. Things should be approached with some reserve in this respect too, because the arrowheads, for instance, found in these settlements may come from other places than the local workshops. More convincing are other weapons, such as the hatchets found at Arborea, Liteni (Suceava county), Fedești and Șulețea (Vaslui county), Bratei (Sibiu county), etc.<sup>25</sup>, as well as various tools also used as weapons, such as scythes, sickles, pitchforks a.o.

It can be said that in the history of the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, the period spanning the 4th—7th centuries was marked by the existence of communities and union of communities (military-agrarian communities in Dobruđa in the 7th—8th centuries), whose political-mi-

litary functions make them stand out as an intermediary link in the unbroken chain of the socio-political organization of the autochthonous human communities, giving substance to the process of historical continuity in the mentioned area.

With the period of relative calm and demographic stability occurred in late 8th century a new epoch began, in which the process of political organization, and of military organization as well as a basic component of State organization, entered a higher stage.

Under the circumstances of new economic and social structures, the old socio-political formations — communities or unions of communities — of the previous stage acquired new dimensions, in terms of the maturation reached by the institutions and their internal attributions, and from a territorial point of view, following the unification achieved by agreement or by force. Knezates, voivodates or lands, all of them organisms with a State character, which from that time onwards started being recorded by written history, represent a higher stage in the evolution of the Romanian people's political organization in the territory of present-day Romania toward the independent feudal states of mid-14th century.

Besides archaeological findings, the written sources now provide ample information on the process of State organization, on the increase of the defence function through the achievement of a defensive system based on fortifications, on the military institutions, etc.

We have already mentioned Anonymous' accounts about the existence in late 9th century and early 10th century of large Romanian State organisms in Transylvania, of the voivodates (duchies) or lands type, ruled by voivodes (duces) such as Menumorut, Gelu, Glad, whose residences were fortified with moats and earthen vallums: Biharea, Cluj-Mănăștur and Dăbica, Cuvin and Orșova (Rescia)<sup>26</sup>. An inscription on a vessel in the Sinnicolau Mare treasure dating back to the 9th—10th centuries tells us about other political rulers, such as *jupans* Voilă and Vataul, who exercised political-military prerogatives in the Banat.

In the eastern part of the country, in Dobrudja, the inscription of Mircea Vodă from 943 and those of the monastic complex of Basarabi speak about other rulers of local political organisms, *jupans* Dimitrie and Gheorghe<sup>27</sup>, while a Greek toparch at the end of the 10th century records the existence of another ruler by the Lower Danube, who had a stone-walled fortification as his place of residence<sup>28</sup>.

Other written documents, as well as the archaeological research speak of the existence of like Romanian political organisms in the 8th—11th centuries south and east of the Carpathians. The Byzantine writer Kedrenos reports in his chronicle the existence north of the Danube in the 10th century of fortifications that were the places of residence of political rulers<sup>29</sup>, and at Slon and Bucov (Prahova county) archaeological diggings brought to light wooden and stone fortifications from the 8th—11th centuries, which are believed to have been the place of residence of a political ruler in that area<sup>30</sup>. Similar structures were unearthed and studied east of the Carpathians, such as the fortifications at Fundu Herții, Dersca, Horodiștea (Botoșani county), considered as poli-

tical and administrative centres of Romanian State-like organisms from the 8th—11 centuries<sup>31</sup>.

The institutional content of these State organisms places their internal political structure at a higher level than that of the previous political formations. The principle of the eligibility of the ruler, that had prevailed in the previous stages, was gradually replaced by succession. The traditional election of the political ruler from among the ablest and bravest men was about to be restricted to only one family. Glad's successor, for instance, called Ahtum, belonged to the same family<sup>32</sup>.

The army, as a central institution of the State, took full shape at that time. The three Romanian rulers in Transylvania mentioned by Anonymous offered a fierce armed resistance to the Hungarian armies by means of a military apparatus able to fulfil the mission of State defence<sup>33</sup>. The records of the Greek toparch, on the other hand, speak of a number of 300 horsemen and infantrymen, ready to defend the place of residence of the ruler of the political formations at the Lower Danube. The inscription of 943 at Mircea Vodă mentions the battles fought by the army of the Romanian political formation ruled by jupan Dimitrie against the Byzantines, and an old anonymous Turkish chronicle also mentions the opposition in the 9th—10th centuries of the political formations east of the Carpathians to the Cumans<sup>34</sup> threatening to conquer them.

The weapons used in battle are somewhat better described in written sources and shown by archaeological finds. Weapons diversify and improve<sup>35</sup>, a proof that starting with the 8th—9th centuries the Romanian military and political life changed and got renewed, as part of the all-European changes in warfare technology and the making of appropriate arms, with important consequences both for the defensive system and for the elaboration of various warfare tactics adjusted to the new types of offensive weapons in particular<sup>36</sup>.

The period spanning the 11th—13th centuries in the history of the Romanian people was an epoch of further political-military efforts for State consolidation when the last migratory wave swept the Romanian space, being highly detrimental to the general development of the mediaeval Romanian society.

With feudal economic and social structures as a background, the Romanian State formations of the previous stage kept developing, increasingly tending toward unification to enhance their resistance capacity in front of the attempts made by some foreign populations, such as the Hungarians in Transylvania, or the Petchenegs, Cumans and Tartars, in the case of the Romanian formations east and south of the Carpathians, to conquer them.

The State organisms called lands (voivodates) in the documents of the time, such as Bîrsa Land, Hațeg Land, Maramureș Land, Terra Ultra-silvana, Făgăraș Land, Severin Land, the Romanians' Land, the Brodnics' Land, Litua Land and the lands ruled by Litovoi, Seneslau or by Tatu, Sestlav and Sacea became larger through their unification. Their institutions developed ever more, their defensive function relying now on a system of wooden and earthen fortifications as well as stone fortifications, and on a military apparatus formed from a nucleus of a stand-

ing army to which added all those able to bear arms in times of trouble. Their evolution showed in the process of continuous political unification of the historical provinces, the liberation from the foreign political domination and the winning of independence becoming major tasks that would be fulfilled in mid-14th century owing to the Romanian people's struggle and sacrifices.

## Notes

1. Findings of this kind are extremely numerous; part of them were synthetically presented in several studies and works, of which we mention: Dan Gh. Teodor, Ștefan Olteanu, *Teritoriul est-carpatic în secolele V—XI. Contribuții arheologice și istorice la problema formării poporului român* (The Territory East of the Carpathians. Archaeological and Historical Contributions to the Topic of the Romanian People's Formation), Iași, 1978; Ștefan Olteanu, *Societatea românească la cumpăna de milenii (secolele VIII—IX)* (The Romanian Society at the Turn of the Millennium, 8th—11th Centuries), București, 1983; Ștefan Pascu a.o., *Istoria gândirii și creației științifice și tehnice românești* (A History of Romanian Scientific-Technical Thought and Creation), Vol. 1, București, 1982; I. Tripșa a.o., *Din istoria mealingiei românești* (From the History of Metal-Working in Romania), București, 1981; N. Maghiar, Șt. Olteanu, *Din istoria mineritului în România* (From the History of Mining in Romania), București, 1970.
2. Further details on this question will be given below.
3. Șt. Olteanu, "Cu privire la structura socială a comunităților sătești dintre Carpați și Dunăre în secolul al IV-lea e.n." (On the Social Structure of Village Communities Between the Carpathians and the Danube in the 4th Century AD), in *Revista de istorie*, no. 4, 1984, pp. 362—331; *Istoria militară a poporului român* (The Military History of the Romanian People), Vol. 1, București, 1984, pp. 216—225.
4. Gheorghe Bichir, *Cultura carpică* (The Carpic Culture), București, 1973, plate I. Monetary findings dating back to the 2nd—3rd centuries AD also show that these were grouped in the mentioned area, which gives substance to life in this region from the economic point of view as well (*Ibidem*, plate II).
5. *Ibidem*, plate I.
6. *Ibidem*.
7. *Ibidem*.
8. Ion Ioniță, *Din istoria și civilizația dacilor liberi* (From the History and Civilization of the Free Dacians), Iași, 1982, fig. 8.
9. Gh. Bichir, *op. cit.*; Ion Ioniță, *op. cit.*, fig. 8.
10. Gh. Bichir, *op. cit.*, plate I.
11. Gh. Bichir, *op. cit.*; Ion Ioniță, *op. cit.*, fig. 8.
12. Gh. Bichir, *op. cit.*, plate I.
13. Dan Gh. Teodor, *op. cit.*, fig. 1; Șt. Olteanu, *Societatea românească la cumpăna de milenii (secolele VIII—IX)*, the map.
14. Mircea Rusu, "Avars, Slavs, Romanic Populations in the 6th—8th Centuries", in *Relations Between the Autochthonous Population and the Migratory Populations*, București, 1975, fig. 1.
15. Șt. Olteanu, "Realități demografice în Transilvania în secolele VIII—XI" (Demographic Realities in Transylvania in the 8th—11th Centuries), in *Revista de istorie*, no. 12, 1975, pp. 935—946; Mircea Rusu, "Frühformen der Staatsentstehung in Rumänien. Betrachtungen zur sozialökonomischen und politischen Lage", in *Zeitschrift für Archäologie*, Berlin, 1984, 18 p., 198.
16. Șt. Olteanu, "Cu privire la structura socială a comunităților sătești dintre Carpați și Dunăre în secolul al IV-lea e.n.", pp. 327—328.
17. Șt. Olteanu, *Societatea românească la cumpăna de milenii*, pp. 30, 34, 86—88.
18. *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, Széptetery Ed., Vol. I, Budapest, 1937, Anonymous, chapters 11, 19, 51.
19. Ștefan Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei* (The Voivodate of Transylvania), Vol. I, Cluj, 1972, p. 31, where the borders are commented upon.

20. *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, I, pp. 49, 89—91.
21. *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, Vol. II, Editura Academiei, București, 1970, pp. 517, 519, 605, 607.
22. Maria Comșa, "Unele considerații privind situația de la Dunărea de Jos în secolele VI—VII" (Some Considerations on the Lower Danube Situation in the 6th—7th Centuries), in *Apulum*, 1974, pp. 30—35; idem, "Directions et étapes de la pénétration des Slaves vers la Péninsule Balcanique aux VI<sup>e</sup>—VII<sup>e</sup> siècles avec un regard spécial sur le territoire de la Roumanie", in *Balcanoslavica*, 1, Prilep, 1974, pp. 9—15.
23. For the Romanic character of the material culture in the researched settlements, see Maria Comșa, "Les formations politiques (cnezats de vallée) du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle sur le territoire de la Roumanie", in *Prace i materialy muzeum archeologicznego i etnograficznego w Łodzi*, Seria archeologiczna, 25, Łódź, 1978, pp. 109—118; idem, "Socio-Economic Organization of the Daco-Romanian and Slav Population on the Lower Danube During the 6th—8th Centuries", in *Relations Between the Autochthonous Population and the Migratory Populations*, p. 196.
24. *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, Vol. II, p. 133.
25. Dan Gh. Teodor, *Teritoriul est-carpatic în veacurile V—XI e.n.*, p. 35; E. Zaharia, *Populația românească în Transilvania în secolele VII—VIII* (The Romanian Population of Transylvania in the 7th—8th Centuries), București, 1977, pp. 80—96.
26. For details, see Șt. Olteanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 185—187.
27. Ion Barnea, Ștefan Olteanu, *Din istoria Dobrogei* (From the History of Dobruja), Vol. III, București, 1972, p. 212; the inscription of 943 is at the History Museum of the Socialist Republic of Romania.
28. C. B. Hase, *Leonis Diaconi*, Bonn, 1928, pp. 501—503; the dating of the fragments is done by M. V. Levchenko, in *Vizantiskii Vremennii*, Vol. IV, 1951, pp. 42—72.
29. *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, Vol. III, Editura Academiei, București, 1975, p. 141.
30. Maria Comșa, "Cercetările de la Slon și importanța lor pentru studiul relațiilor feudale de la sud de Carpați" (The Researches at Slon and Their Importance for the Study of the Feudal Relations South of the Carpathians), in *Studii și materiale privitoare la trecutul istoric al jud. Prahova*, Ploiești, 1969, pp. 21—29; idem, "Raport preliminar asupra săpăturilor de la Slon-Prahova" (Preliminary Report on the Diggings Made at Slon, Prahova County), in *Materiale*, Oradea, 1979, pp. 309—310.
31. D. Teodor, "Așezările întărite din regiunile est-carpătice ale României în secolele VIII—XI" (Fortified Settlements in the East-Carpathian Regions of Romania in the 8th—11th Centuries), in *Hierasus*, 1978, p. 199; M. Petrescu Dîmbovița, Dan Gh. Teodor, Victor Spinei, "Les principaux résultats des fouilles archéologiques du Fundu Herții, Roumanie, dép. de Botoșani", in *Archeologia Polski* 1971, pp. 363—370; Șt. Olteanu, *Societatea românească la cumpănă de milenii*, pp. 34—47 ff.
32. G. Popa Lisseanu, *Izvoarele istoriei românilor* (Sources of the Romanians' History), Vol. I, p. 57.
33. Lieutenant-General Ilie Ceaușescu, *DHist, Transylvania — an Ancient Romanian Land*, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 38—42.
34. Mehmet Ali Ecrem, "O mențiune inedită despre românii din secolul al IX-lea în *Oguznamé*, cea mai veche cronică turcă" (An Unknown Mention on the Romanians of the 9th Century in *Oguznamé*, the Oldest Turkish Chronicle), in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie*, 21, 1980, 2, pp. 287—291.
35. Details at Șt. Olteanu, *Societatea românească la cumpănă de milenii*, pp. 190 ff.
36. *Istoria militară a poporului român*, Vol. I, pp. 248—251.

## **Mircea the Great (1386—1418) : the Accomplisher of Wallachia and Illustrious Army Commander**

Part and parcel of the Romanian ideal for social justice, liberty and national unity, the “union of the Romanians into a single independent State in terms of both domestic and foreign affairs” gave a stimulus, as Cezar Bolliac, the 1848 Romanian revolutionary said, to the “national feelings throughout Romania ever since history began to tell us something about Dacia”<sup>1</sup>. The awareness of a common origin grounded on the identity of language, traditions and customs, on the economic identity and also complementarity of the communities on either side of the Carpathians, the need to defend themselves against a common foe — first against the migratory populations moving down from the Baltic regions or from Asia’s inmost depths, then against the Hungarian and Polish kingdoms, the Golden Horde, the Ottoman, Habsburg and Tsarist empires — made the Romanians understand since the earliest times that “it is in their union that their might lies”.

Yet, the embodiment of all Romanian-inhabited territories into a single, centralized and independent State, the way it had been in the epoch of Burebista, the great king of united Dacia, could not be achieved in the Middle Ages through a single political-military effort and from the very outset. The explanation does not lie in the fact that the Romanians would not have been able to produce great men such as Alfred the Great, Philip August or Ferdinand of Aragon under the name of a Litovoi, Petru (Peter), Asan (Asen), Bessarab, Bogdan, Mircea, Iancu, Vlad or Stephen, but in the geo-political position of the Romanian habitat placed — as chronicler Grigore Ureche put it — “in the way of all evils”, at the crossroad of all the invasion routes, and in the contact area of the conflicting big aggressive powers of the Middle Ages. “When the North wanted to go towards the South, when the West wanted to reach the East”, Nicolae Iorga concludes, “they all met here”<sup>2</sup>, which explains why “history finds the Romanian here before anybody else and [...] as a soldier”<sup>3</sup>. The permanent menace which, after the withdrawal of the Roman legions southwards, began to hover over the territory north of the Danube made the Romanians adopt specific forms of political and military organization like confederations (unions) of village communities (“popular romanias”), knezates and voivodates (“duchies”), generically called “lands” in Romanian, “vlachies” or “terra blachorum” etc. in the foreign sources, as parts of a single Romanian “Country” — i.e. “Romania” (“Balac”, “Blokümannaland”, “Magna Valachia”, etc.). Through the adamant struggle of the entire people, of all village communities, the Romanians succeeded not only in saving their



ethnic being and liberty, but also in scoring important victories in the achievement of their State unity through the unification on wide areas by mid—14th century of the knezates and voivodates into Romanian centralized and independent feudal states. All throughout that period the Romanian armies were mostly made up of the numerous free peasantry of the village communities. After Aurelian's withdrawal, the migratory tribes were confronted with the resistance of — according to Mamertinus as quoted by Nicolae Iorga — a “peasant army, the cavalry of the ignorant peasants (*ignari agricolae*)”<sup>4</sup>. The same peasants who, except for their working tools turned into weapons, “did not have other weapons but bows and arrows”, would put up resistance, in late 9th century and early 10th century, under the command of “dukes” (*voivodes*) like “Gelu the Romanian”, “Salanus”, Glad, Menumorut, to the aggression of those migratory tribes which history would record after the conquest of the “Land” of Ung or Ungvar, inhabited by Slovaks and Romanians, under the name of “Hungarians”<sup>5</sup>. Against the background of the long battles the Romanian armies waged against the latter and, later on, against the mediaeval kingdom of Hungary, the Romanian Country of Transylvania (“*Valachia Transilvana*”) was formed in the 11th century. The resistance struggle started under the sword of voivode Giulea in 1002—1003 against the annexionist policy led by the kings in Buda would prolong until in early 14th century under the leadership of voivodes like Roland Borş (1282, 1284, 1288—1293) and Vladislav (Ladislav) Kan (1294—1315). Through the peace treaty of Szegedin (April 8, 1310) the latter recognized the suzerainty of King Charles I Robert of Anjou (1308—1342) to whom he handed back Hungary's crown captured in 1305. That treaty sanctioned the status of Transylvania as a separate ethnic and political entity, distinct from the Hungarian kingdom, having its own administrative-territorial and military organization, and only linked to Hungary's king by virtue of the feudal vassal relations, through the voivode's oath sworn to the crown, the same as Flanders was bounded to Spain or Aquitaine to England. Trying to explain the causes underlying that reality, prestigious Hungarian historians provided the following synthetic conclusions: “Transylvania and Hungary never confounded, being always two distinct countries”, since “the Transylvanian compass needle” was “fixed towards the Orient because of the population [Romanian — a.n.] who belonged, for its greatest part, to the Oriental [Orthodox — a.n.] Church, while Hungary was orientated towards the West ever since the time of her first king”<sup>6</sup>.

In the same epoch, of consolidation of Transylvania's unified voivodate, written sources mention with reference to the Romanian resistance put up to the big Mongol-Tartar invasion (1241), that the invaders had to fight the “peoples of Wallachians” (*ulaghi*) east and south of the Carpathians as well as the armies of the “white Romanians” (*ulakut*) from the “Land of Asen”. Indeed the Tartars had to face the resistance offered by both the voivodates east and south of the Carpathians headed by dukes like “Mishelav” (called *Seneslau* in the Diploma granted by King Bela IV of Hungary to the Knights Hospitallers in 1247) and the entire armed force of the Asenid Empire<sup>7</sup>.

Founded in the wake of the anti-Byzantine uprising in 1185—1186 by the Balkan Romanians led by voivodes Petru (Peter) and Ioan (John) Asen, with the help of the Cumans and Bulgarians in the north of the Balkan Peninsula, this “*empire*” of the Romanians and Bulgarians was the second feudal State which, in the 12th—13th centuries, expressed the Romanian will of liberty and union<sup>8</sup>. One century later, a new independent Romanian State emerged on Europe’s map — the Romanian Country of Muntenia (“Wallachia”). The event took place in the context of the fights waged for repelling the claims to suzerainty of the kings in Buda. The foundation and consolidation of the big Wallachian voivodate is tellingly linked to the defeat of the aggressive forces headed by Charles I Robert of Anjou at Posada in 1330<sup>9</sup>, a defeat inflicted by the *greater army* of voivode Bessarab I (1310—1352). After the victory, the process of unification continued towards the confluence of the Siret and Pruth rivers with the Danube through the unleashing, in 1343, of a long war against the Golden Horde, a war that would be ended by the Wallachian princes two decades later through the extension of their State’s borders almost as far as Cetatea Albă, where the Dniester flows into the Black Sea.

The Wallachian princes — heirs to the dynasty founder Bessarab I —, who called themselves voivodes “of the entire Wallachia”, had made of the unification of all the Romanian “lands” the major goal of their political programme. Gradually, during their fights against the expansionist tendencies of the Hungarians and of the Golden Horde, they would unite under their rule the Romanian “lands” of Severin, Amlaş, Făgăraş and the entire south-eastern part of Moldavia, a territory which the Romanians north of the Danube mouth called Bessarabia in their memory. The anti-Tartar “reconquista” would be then taken over by the Romanian voivodes east of the Carpathians (Moldavia) until the Tartars were finally pushed beyond the Dniester and their suzerainty completely removed. The struggle for independence and political unification of the Romanian territories east of the Carpathians also developed on two fronts — anti-Tartar and anti-Hungarian — over 1342—1343, the resistance being organized with the help of the Maramureş inhabitants led by voivode Bogdan of Cuhea, particularly against the expansionist tendencies of Angevin Hungary. The “foundation” of the Romanian Country of Moldavia (“Valachia Minor”) is considered to have occurred in 1359, when in the wake of the victory won by the army headed by Bogdan<sup>10</sup> the Hungarian suzerainty was removed and the victorious voivode ascended the throne of Moldavia under the name of Bogdan I (1359—1365).

In a similar context, also fighting on two fronts — against the Tartars and the Byzantines — was completed the process of unification of the Romanian territories between the Danube and the Black Sea. The “Land of the Romanians”, as mentioned by the Venetians<sup>11</sup> in mid—13th century, and called “Aulualah” by Persian historian and geographer Abulfelda in 1321, was unified by the rulers of the “Cărvuna Land” (Cavarna), the Balica, Teodor and Dobrotiță brothers<sup>12</sup>. Remaining the sole ruler over these territories, Dobrotiță (c. 1348—1386) was recognized by the Byzantines as the *despot* of this territory to be later known, in his memory, under the name of Dobrogea (Dobrudja).

By the end of the 14th century, through a stubborn struggle against foreign aggression, the Romanians had set up several centralized feudal states, whose main mission for the ensuing centuries was to be the assertion of full independence and the achievement of the union of all Romanians within the borders of a sole Romanian State in the hearth of old Dacia — i.e. “*Romania*”. “It was for this” — Nicolae Bălcescu concluded, after he had surveyed the entire Romanian political-military history of the 14th—18th centuries — “that Mircea the Old and Stephen the Great fought all throughout their life and incurred the terrible onslaughts of the Turks ; it was for this that Michael the Brave fell killed in the field near Turda, it was for this that Șerban Cantacuzene drank poison, it was for this that Horea died a terrible death, being broken on the wheel”<sup>13</sup>. Relying on the broad popular masses, on the peasantry which made up, as a whole (both the free peasants and the serfs), the “greater army”<sup>14</sup>, as shown in a document from the time of Mircea the Great (1386—1418), namely on the “*main force of the struggle against foreign domination, for winning and defending independence*”<sup>15</sup>, the great Romanian voivodes endeavoured to fulfil the Romanian ideal of liberty and union under the circumstances when, after 1388, the Romanian habitat had become a major target aimed at by the aggressive policy of the greatest military power of the 14th—17th centuries — the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, this was the task Mircea the Great, too, inherited with the country’s throne from his Bessarab forefathers. A son of Radu I (c. 1377—1383), the “Great Voivode” who defended arm in hand the Severin Land against Hungarian aggression, a grandson through his mother Ana (nun Calinichia) of Dobroțița<sup>16</sup>, the maker of the Romanian State between the Danube and the “Great Sea” (the Romanian Country of Dobrudja), and closely related to the Serbian ruling princes and the Bulgarian tsar of Diu (Vidin), Ioan Sracimir (c. 1356—1396), Mircea was born in the late seventies of the 14th century. The years in which he grew as a future leader, diplomat and army commander after the model set by his great forerunners, in the spirit of the century-old fighting traditions of the Romanian people for the defence of its ancestors’ land, coincided with the political-military assertion, as a highly perturbant factor in Southeast Europe, of the young Ottoman State under emirs Orhan Gazi (1325 — c. 1362) and Murad I Hüdavendigâr (c. 1362—1389).

Associated to the reign by Dan I (c. 1383—1386) before 1385, Mircea I was to assume the rule of the Romanian principality south of the Carpathians on September 23, 1386, when his brother fell killed while defending, with the coalesced forces of the Romanians from Wallachia and Dobrudja, the Danubian “vlachia” of Dristor (Siliștră) attacked by the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Shishman (1371 — c. 1394) and his Ottoman allies. Remaining the “sole ruler” on the Argeș throne, Mircea set forth his political programme by resolutely pledging in one of his donation acts to be a worthy “successor [...] in rule”<sup>17</sup> of his father and brother, a good “*hospodar*”, a maker and defender of his country. And indeed, as great Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga underlined, the years when “Mircea took over the power in his skilled hands, the sole, indisputable power, he would almost always make luckily use of”<sup>18</sup>, years of the most fierce clashes with the Ottoman power, represented the epoch of the widest

territorial extent of the Romanian Country of Muntenia, which resolutely defended the southern Danubian-Pontic Romanian border, also taking important steps towards the unification of all Romanian "lands".

A good "hospodar" (manager) and a skilled architect, Mircea the Great strengthened the defensive capacity of the country south of the Carpathians by rebuilding or completing the double Danubian fortification belt; it is during his reign that the stronghold-towns and ports at the Danube fords — Chilia, Vicina, Brăila, Hirșova, Dristor, Turtucaia, Giurgiu, Șiștov, Zimnicea, Turnu (Small Nicopolis), Celei (?), Turnu Severin — and also those on the Pontic littoral — Enisala, Caliacra, etc. — strongly developed. He included into a sole fortification system the inland fortified towns and strongholds located in the mountainous and submountainous areas — Argeș, Tîrgoviște, Cîmpulung, Cetatea Dîmboviței — and those at Poenari, Căpățineni, Stoenesti; the strongholds at Breaza, Făgăraș, Sibiel, Bran, Crăciunea, etc. would be organized as the last resistance belt in front of the Ottoman invasion and as a defensive outpost to Transylvania and Moldavia. He backed up the development of trade, handicrafts and mining, completed the administrative-territorial division of the country, reorganizing the tax system in order to ensure the money and matériel needed for the equipment and maintenance of the army. He stated the obligation for all able-bodied men to take part in the defence, mentioning in his donation acts that nor were the village communities in bondage exempt from joining the country's "greater army". Indeed, it is only the rising to arms of the country's "greater army" besides the princely troops that can account for the brilliant victories won over armies boasting an impressive number of soldiers for that time as were the Ottoman armies. Another characteristic of his time was the transformation of every rural settlement into a true stronghold: the communities would fortify their villages — if lacking natural conditions favourable to the defence — with pallasades, ditches and earthen walls as was the case at Coconi, on the Mostiștea river, Brătia on the Ialomița river, Frumoasa on the Vedea river, Frățești near Giurgiu, etc. Ahead of his army, organized on districts and under the banners of the princely fortresses' chieftains, Mircea promoted loyal and skilful people, such as Ban Aga, Great Ban and Vornic (Chamberlain and Supreme Judge) Radu, Vornic Vlad, Logofăt (Chancellor) Baldovin (who was granted many villages in Dobrudja for his "faithful service"), etc. Thus, the famous strategist managed to secure an extremely worthy military command. A great number of young "jupani" (boyars) in charge of the army detachments, such as Aldea, Bran, Bratu, Mudricică, Danciul, Luca, Stan, Drăgan, etc. were under his direct command.

A versatile diplomatist and strategist, Mircea managed through the agency of some skilled ambassadors like brothers Roman and Manea Herescu or Radu Gotca to win Poland over to his side (1389—1391) in order to obviate the Hungarian threat hovering over his country, and later on, when faced with the Ottoman aggression, to conclude on an equal footing (March 7, 1395) a military alliance with Hungary's king, Sigismund of Luxemburg (1386—1437). He also secured the support of the Anatolian Seljuk princes, thereby compelling Bayezid the "Lightning" to permanently fight on two fronts, in Rumelia and Anatolia, a

strategical situation of utmost importance to Mircea, for it enabled him to win some brilliant military victories during the anti-Ottoman war of 1393—1396 in campaigns which, starting with the battle fought at Kari-novasî, would record the great victory won at “rovine”, in the sub-mountainous region near Curtea de Argeş (May 17, 1395). This latter battle, ended with the defeat of Bayezid and known to the Romanian people as the great victory of Rovine, was won over an utterly superior enemy in point of manpower and combat technology. Indeed, in the campaign launched in May 1395 the sultan mustered all the human availabilities of the empire and of his Balkan vassals. According to the data provided by the alliance treaty Mircea concluded with Hungary’s king at Braşov (March 7, 1395<sup>19</sup>), large Ottoman forces were concentrated in the south of Dobrudja, while the chronicle authored by Mauro de Orlini suggested a Serbian-Ottoman penetration through Diiu (Vidin) towards the bridge across the Jiu river at Craiova (Ponsiona). However, the main blow was dealt “frontally”, at Nicopolis, while an army corps meant to bring Vlad Bessarab, Mircea’s nephew, on the Wallachian throne was presumably advancing along the Ialomiţa river, after the “akinjis” had received a “firman [...] to attack Wallachia from all sides”<sup>20</sup> in order to cover the main directions of the attack. It was a “great war” in which the Romanian prince successfully applied the tactics of withdrawal on inland alignments while striking in turn the enemy corps.

According to the Ottoman-Byzantine chronicles — which mention that Mircea “gathered his army from throughout the country”<sup>21</sup>, thus mustering a “great army”, and that the Romanians skilfully handed their “weapons and fighting tools” — in the defensive fights were engaged all able-bodied men, actually the “greater army” as a whole. The traditional tactics of the “scorched earth” was resorted to: all settlements were laid waste, the people with their goods were withdrawn from the way of the invader who was harassed day and night. The decisive battle was delivered near the fortress of Argeş (“Arkaş”) on May 17, 1395, in the “high impenetrable mountains”, a “rocky dangerous” place for the Ottomans, as it had many valleys with “caves” and was crossed by “muddy torrents”, and the Romanians attacked from the heights; it is for these reasons that Serbian chroniclers called that battle, in which their cnez Constantin Dragaş (Dejanović) died, the battle of “Rovine”.

The remarkable military successes won by the great voievode and ruling prince Mircea were owed to a great extent to his initiative of achieving a united anti-Ottoman Romanian front to which the rulers of the Romanians in the other two sister-countries, the Romanian Country of Moldavia and the Romanian Country of Transylvania, also adhered. The Transylvanians lent him military support against the Ottoman invaders during the hard years 1395—1396; later on, under his banners would also fight, alongside the Romanians of Dobrudja, troops sent by his friend and ally Alexander the Good, the ruling prince of the Romanian Country of Moldavia (1400—1432) for repelling the frequent Ottoman attacks aimed at the Danube mouths. It was there, on the battlefield, that the traditional ties between the Romanians throughout the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area welded, within the joint effort of the

entire people for the defence of the Romanian territory between the Danube and the Sea (1400—1402).

Along more than thirty years of struggle for the assertion of Romanian independence, Mircea I Bessarab succeeded in consolidating the work of his forerunners, and also in gaining great successes as far as the fulfilment of the union desideratum was concerned through a wise internal policy and clever initiatives in his foreign policy. Taking over the mission of the anti-Tartar "reconquista", he strengthened his authority in south-east Moldavia, the region where — at the confluence of the Siret and Pruth rivers with the Danube and of the Dniester with the sea — the terminal sectors of the large commercial roads linking Northern and Central Europe through the Black Sea to the Orient lied. He extended his rule north of the Danube mouths up to Chilia, the whole territory adopting and perpetuating from that moment onwards the name of the Bessarab dynasty. During the first big Ottoman offensive (1388—1389) against the Romanian territories between the river and the sea, Mircea, a heir and successor of his uncle Ioanco<sup>22</sup>, unified Dobrudja with the "Country", a territory embodying the Danube mouths, Caliacra, Dristor and the entire Danubian "vlachia" up to Shishtov. Although documents recorded his rule over either side of the river under the name of "Podunavia", the natives have kept it alive in their memory to our days through the name of a Wallachian building on the Lom river, the monastery of Bassarabovo. Availing himself of the struggle for Hungary's crown between Sigismund of Luxemburg and Poland's King Wladislaw II Jagiello (1386—1434), he made the two sovereigns — in the position they assumed as suzerains of Transylvania — acknowledge his rule over the Banat of Severin, the "duchies" of Amlaş and Făgăraş and over the fiefs of Bologa and Bran fortresses. He would complete his work by bringing Alexander the Good on the throne of the Romanian Country of Moldavia, a prince faithful to his ideal of safeguarding Romanian independence.

Eager to get a posthumous satisfaction over the great ruler — called by humanist historian Leunclavius the "strongest and bravest among the Christian princes", who threw into the shade the fame of Sultan Bayezid I and became, after the latter was taken prisoner by Timur Lenk (1402), a true judge of the political situation in the Ottoman Empire, where he either enthroned sultans (Musa Celebi, 1411—1413) or supported pretenders to the throne (Mustafa Celebi) thus obviating the Ottoman danger from the country's borders —, Turkish chroniclers of a later date accredited the idea of Mircea's defeat by the revengeful Sultan Mehmed I in 1415 or 1417. It is possible that an agreement may have been reached between the Romanians and the Ottomans, the great ruling prince paying the tribute like a redemption of peace, so as to be able to reconstruct his country so much drained by wars. To believe, however, that Mircea may have lost in the above-mentioned years the Severin, Turnul, Giurgiu and the whole Danubian-Pontic Romanian province from Dristor to Enisala is nothing but preposterous, since he bequeathed his son Michael, much like an incentive, his title sanctioning the successes scored following his policy of reunifying "Dacia". "I, Mir-

cea [...] great Voivode and Lord, mastering and ruling the whole country of Wallachia and the parts beyond the mountains, and the Tartar parts, as well as Herteg [lord] of the Amlaş and Făgăraş, and Prince of the Banat of Severin and on either bank [of the Danube — a.n.] throughout Podunavia and down to the Great Sea, and ruler of the Dristor fortress”<sup>23</sup>.

As a matter of fact, the Byzantine chronicles clearly show that it was only under the reign of Michael I (1418—1420), the son of Mircea, that the “Great Vlachia [the Romanian Country of Wallachia] was subdued by the Ottomans”<sup>24</sup>, the successors of the great voivode and ruling prince consenting to their vassalage status in relation to the Ottoman Empire.

Prince Mircea the Great — a founder and unifier of the “Country” —, whose ascent to the throne of the Romanian Country of Wallachia reached its 600th anniversary on September 23 last year, died on January 31, 1418, and was buried in the monastery of Cozia he had founded on the bank of a river with an ancient Dacian resonance — the Olt river. He handed down to his after-comers, until finally accomplished, the task of making further endeavours for the achievement of the sole independent State of all Romanians : *Romania*.

## Notes

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5. “Anonymi Be'ae regis notarii Gesta Hungarorum”, in *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanorum*, fascic'le I, București, 1934, pp. 74—76, 96.
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8. See N. Choniates, “Despre Isac Anche'los” (About Isac Anche'los), I, 4, in *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, Vol. III, București, 1975, pp. 253—353; cf. *Istoria militară a poporului român* (The Military History of the Romanian People), Vol. I, București, 1984, pp. 297—308.
9. See “Chronicon Pictum Vindobonense” in *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanorum*, fascic'le XI, București, 1937, pp. 234—236.
10. Hurmuzaki, I/1, p. 622.
11. Apud Nicolae Iorga, *Veneția în Marea Neagră* (Venice in the Black Sea), I, *Dobrotici*, in *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secției Istorice*, s. II, 26, 1914, pp. 1043—1044.
12. See Ioan Cantacuzino, “Istorii” (Histories), in *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, Vol. III, București, 1975, pp. 491—495.
13. Nicolae Bălcescu, “Mersul revoluției în istoria românilor” (The Revolution in the History of the Romanians), in *Scrieri militare alese* (Selected Military Works), București, 1957, p. 195.
14. *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B, *Țara Românească (1247—1500)* (Wallachia. 1247—1500), Vol. I, București, 1966, p. 18.

15. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 9, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, p. 338.
16. Apud Sergiu Iosipescu, *Balica, Dobrotiță, Ioancu*, București, 1985, pp. 124—125, 169—171.
17. *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series B. *Țara Românească*, Vol. I, pp. 23—24.
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20. For details see, *Cronici turcești privind țările române. Extrase* (Turkish Chronicles About the Romanian Countries. Excerpts), Vol. I, M. Guboglu, M. A. Mehmed Eds., București, 1966, pp. 157, 113, 303, 402, 442 ; *Cronicari munteni* (Wallachian Chroniclers), M. Gregorian Ed., Vol. I, București, 1961, pp. 84—85, 239.
21. See *Cronici turcești*, Vol. I, pp. 39, 48, 113 ; G. Sphrantzes, *Memorii 1401—1477* (Memoirs 1401—1477), V. Grecu Ed., București, 1966, p. 223 ; *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, Vol. IV, București, 1982, pp. 455, 457.
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## **Romanian Mediaeval Military Thought and Art in the Political and Military Context of Southeast Europe : General Traits and Specific Features**

During the historical period under discussion, the Romanian military thought and art passed through one of the most important stages throughout their existence. Faced with comprehensive and particularly complex issues, brought about by the politico-strategic situation in which the Romanian people, always characterized by constructive vocation, was compelled to devote a major part of its efforts to defending its ethnic being, liberty and independence, military thought and art envisaged and found ingenious solutions and ways for organizing and carrying on armed struggle, all of which converged towards solving that famous military problem, so colourfully and realistically defined by Nicolae Bălcescu, “which is nothing else but how to defeat a bigger army with a smaller one”<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, the “*uninterrupted struggle for its own development, for freedom and independence*”, which is the “*basic characteristic of the entire history of our people, decisive for its very way of life, its outlook and ideals*”<sup>2</sup>, left an imprint on Romanian military thought and art throughout the Middle Ages.

The military thought and art were basically conditioned by and developed under the impact of factors and circumstances specific to the feudal epoch such as economic, technical-scientific and cultural progress, which determined their contents, trends of development and main features. Of cardinal importance for the studying and understanding of the military thought and art of the Romanian people at that time is the assessment made by Romania’s President Nicolae Ceaușescu ; “*From olden times, the wealth of the soil and subsoil, the diligence, inventiveness and creative capacity of the Romanian people, have secured, in spite of adverse historical conditions, the continuous development of the forces of production, the progress of Romania’s material and spiritual life*”<sup>3</sup>.

The distinctive character of the Romanian military thought and art stems, first of all, from the fact that they were centred on a different type of armed conflict, namely on the war waged by the entire people as a specific and traditional method throughout the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, as the only efficient solution in the struggle of the inhabitants of this ancient land against stronger enemies<sup>4</sup>.

Epistemology shows that the Romanian warfare model was an objectively determined law-like necessity, because concomitantly with the broad process of the making and consolidation of the Romanian states in the Middle Ages the powerful Ottoman Empire appeared, whose policy of domination and oppression spelt serious danger to many peoples’

freedom and integrity, the Romanian people's included. Later on, other big states and empires were founded in the neighbourhood of the Romanian people, such as the Tsarist and the Habsburg Empires, which also pursued expansionist aims. Nor were the Romanians' neighbours — the Hungarian kings, the Polish noblemen and the Tartar khans — less greedy for territorial conquests. As a result of those special historical and geographical circumstances, the Romanian people was compelled to wage many fierce wars against all kinds of invaders and aggressors, against foreign domination for more than half a millennium<sup>5</sup>.

The Romanian military thought and art during the historical interval we are dealing with knew their own development determined by the military policy pursued by the Romanian countries, by the strategic objectives of the national defence system, by the human, material and spiritual availabilities of the Romanian people, by the physical-geographical conditions in which the battles took place, by the level attained by mediaeval science and technology, by the fighting capacity and equipment of the Romanian armies, as well as by the nature and way of action of the invaders.

The studies on Romanian military thought and art show that one of their essential features is continuity, as a result of the fact that the politico-strategic aim that governed them throughout Romanian history and territory, both in the ancient times and in the Middle Ages, was the defence, at the cost of any sacrifice, of the land, of the ethnical being, of the territorial integrity and independence against all those who in one way or another attempted on them. It is quite natural, therefore, that starting from the earliest Middle Ages the Romanians' forerunners had to take over from their ancestors the strategy and tactics of the "scorched earth" and to implement it in the struggle for the country's defence during adverse situations, to use the most diverse and ingenious procedures and means of fighting, to take into account the advantages presented by the terrain and all forms of relief, by the various constructions and works in order to annihilate the enemy's net superiority in all respects and, ultimately, to force it give up aggression or drive it beyond the borders<sup>6</sup>. General Radu Rosetti considered with good reason that the Romanian military art of the Middle Ages stemmed from the development of the military art practiced "by the Dacian population in the 3rd century, which military art was in its turn a natural continuation of the warfare art [...] of the oldest inhabitants of Dacia"<sup>7</sup>.

However, the factors and directions of continuity do not affect the unmistakable individuality and specificity of the military thought and art during the Middle Ages. The characteristics of the defence wars waged in specific conditions, the number of political and military personalities who wrote chronicles or other works in which the military phenomena were expounded upon and analysed thus gaining the status of institutionalized forms of a true Romanian warfare school, give an outline of the ideological features and of the practical implementation of the doctrine of the homeland's defence with the participation of the whole people, which has reverberations in contemporary times in the military doctrine of Socialist Romania.

Following the vigorous line of the great traditions of military organization and fighting methods, the Romanian army passes more and more through a period of general theoretical pursuits, of attempts at doctrinal synthesis, of original conceptions and ideas concerning the organization and conduct of campaigns and battles. In other words, the Romanian military thought and art penetrate ever deeper in the realm of doctrinal pursuits in the form of works belonging to State and army leaders of the epoch, a fact that had a cardinal importance for their horizon and scientific probity. It was therefore a period in which people with remarkable personality and cultural refinement devoted themselves to scientific activity in the field of military thought and art. From the theoretical and methodological points of view the study of the chronicles and works of Nicholas Olahus, Grigore Ureche, Miron and Nicolae Costin, Neagoe Basarab, Prince Despot, High Steward Constantin Cantacuzene, Dimitrie Cantemir, etc. is valuable for understanding the Romanian military thought and art in the historical period under review.

The military thought and art assumed the responsibility of drawing up the strategic scenario for the Romanian model, because, indeed, there was such a model of planning and waging war with decisive aims and in most complex forms, which on the epistemological plane has a number of essential features such as : the basic aim of the armed struggle is defence of the ethnic being, of unity and independence ; the victory in war is gained by a series of successive campaigns and battles meant to gradually wear down the enemy forces and which, as a rule, end in a decisive battle ; a military organization on solid social bases within which the peasantry had the decisive role, with the possibility of a wide mobilization of the forces of both the State and the people, in order to successfully cope with the external danger ; a flexible well-articulated military system permanently ready to fight back the surprise attacks launched from various directions and on several fronts ; the success in war depends to the greatest extent on the material and moral resistance of the army and of the population ; and, lastly, in order to obtain victory in the confrontation with a numerous and well-equipped enemy, a number of qualitative factors are required at the level of the strategic and tactical leadership, the existence of fighters with high virtues, the use of a wide range of forms and methods, as well as the turning to best account of the advantages derived from the physical-geographical conditions of Romania's territory <sup>8</sup>.

The specific character of the Romanian military thought and art was determined by the fact that they had to solve the contradiction between the big needs of the army and the limited possibilities of maintaining, in peacetime, large troops able to face on equal terms the armies of the big empires and kingdoms of that time, which aimed at bringing the Romanian countries within their borders. The option of the politico-strategic authorities was to engage the entire people in the defence of the homeland. That was the fundamental idea of the Romanian military thought and art from which all the other warfare principles and methods stemmed like branches from a vigorous trunk. It is therefore an irrefutable reality that *"while working for the country's progress, our people has always been prepared also for defending it.*

*More than once in the past, people were keeping also weapons near the ploughs and implements, ready as they were at any moment to defend the ancestors' land"*<sup>9</sup>. The independent or autonomous status of the Romanian countries enabled them to have not only a military force of their own, but an original system of defence too. There was a generally institutionalized framework, consisting of "oastea cea mică" (the smaller army), i.e. the detachments or small units belonging to the princes and to the boyars, on the one hand, and "oastea cea mare" (the greater army), on the other hand, set up by raising the entire people to arms, especially the peasantry, both categories of military forces being at the disposal of the voivode, who exercised his prerogatives as supreme commander in wartime.

A defining feature of the Romanian mediaeval military thought and art is their unitary character throughout the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, stemming from the geographical unity, from the unity of language and culture, of creed and kinship, from the unexhaustible ethnic strength, these being the vital support in the struggle for the defence of the ancestral land, of national and State entity throughout the Middle Ages. This ensured the continuity of the Romanian people within organized states<sup>10</sup>, as well as the "awareness in the consciousness of an entire people that there is no difference between a Romanian country and another Romanian country, that all Romanians live like one people in one single country"<sup>11</sup>.

A pertinent analysis will lead to a number of conclusions as to the unitary character of the military thought and art as a law-like necessity and a result of objective and subjective factors. In the course of time among the Romanian countries there were true mediaeval pacts of good neighbourhood and alliance, which reflected the need of solving the ever more complex contemporary problems through joint efforts<sup>12</sup>. The permanent battles carried on by the Romanian armies "under joint banners were possible because the soldiers were of the same ethnic origin, shared identical aspirations as sons of one and the same people, only artificially, that is administratively, separated by the vicissitudes of history"<sup>13</sup>. The reason and sense of the Romanian people's struggle for unity, the cornerstone of the entire doctrinal edifice called upon the Romanian military thought and art to achieve joint stands and actions of the three Romanian countries<sup>14</sup>, a concern that got concrete shape in most varied forms and modalities; that was necessary because "*For many centuries the Romanians had been living in different states, but despite that division they were always fully aware of the idea of unity, of their belonging to the same single people*"<sup>15</sup>, and the military thought and art fully accepted that reality. Anywhere we look, to any domain, whether political, economic, cultural, spiritual or, last but not least, military, we shall notice that the fight for unity and freedom was a matter of consciousness to the entire Romanian people.

Serving the Romanian people's ideals and aspirations for unity and independence, the military thought and art in the epoch of Michael the Brave, a true "Dacian king", as Nicolae Iorga called him, contributed to the achievement of the first centralized and independent State of the Romanians from the Romanian Country of Muntenia (Wallachia), the

Romanian Country of Moldavia and the Romanian Country of Transylvania. The Romanian people was convinced by its own experience that the fulfilment of the ideal of unity and independence could not come from the outside. Therefore, "The only solution left was Michael's, that of organizing the Romanian ethnic area by the Romanians themselves, first of all by the endeavours of Muntenia. A natural solution for everything that linked the three countries, whose fate was after all at stake. It was those very links and common destiny that made the people of that time think of it, willy-nilly, above and beyond State organization, as a whole with interdependent parts" <sup>16</sup>.

An epoch-making event and a peak wherefrom a stream of light brightened the consciousness of the ensuing generations with the sparkle of great ideals in the centuries that followed, the union of 1600, achieved under the sceptre of Michael the Brave, recalled the times of ancient Dacia and rendered evident, by the strength of facts, that "*the idea of the union of the Romanian principalities, the idea of making up a strong State on the soil of Dacia could not be killed and can never be killed because the idea was deeply implanted in the veins, in the consciousness and spirit of our whole people*" <sup>17</sup>. In this respect, Grigore Tocilescu said: "Michael remained for ever the national hero of all Romanians, the symbol of unity for the brothers divided by a cruel fate and by invading neighbours" <sup>18</sup>. "To forget Michael, now and ever", Nicolae Iorga wrote, "would mean to forget ourselves, to give up our mission" <sup>19</sup>.

The existence of the State, with the specific institutions and the autonomy of the Romanian countries, which ensured them room and conditions for movement and action, were factors that helped the military thought and art to find solutions for settling the highly complex political and strategical situation of the Romanian countries in the Middle Ages, located as they were at the crossroads of conflicting interests between some powerful feudal states — the Hungarian feudal kingdom, feudal Poland, the Ottoman, Habsburg and, later on, Tsarist Empires — which contended with each other for hegemony in Central and Southeast Europe. In this context, the Romanian territory was a prime target in the conquest plans of these kingdoms and empires, both due to its riches and to its strategic position which, depending on the stand taken, closed or opened important directions of action towards the heart or towards the east of Europe <sup>20</sup>. Considering the plurality of the strategic fronts, the Romanian military thought and art resorted to solutions and modalities in keeping with the historical realities, relying first of all on the resources of the Romanians in the entire Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. Ingenious political and diplomatic solutions were employed for that purpose, whereby the Romanian countries avoided to face several enemies at the same time or to defend themselves simultaneously on a number of strategical directions, the Romanian State rulers and army commanders combining cleverly and with great ability military force and diplomacy <sup>21</sup> in defending the ancestral land. Moreover, when confronted with the Ottoman expansion, they made repeated and persevering efforts with a view to reaching agreement with Hungary, Poland, Russia, etc. There were even cases when on the basis of pledges taken through treaties concluded as early as in Mircea the Great's time, the

Porte provided the Romanian voivodes with military forces for repelling the invasions of other expansionist powers.

In the operational field, the Romanian mediaeval military thought and art were characterized by the organization and carrying on of actions that relied greatly on manœuvres, flexibility and adaptability to the conditions in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic territory, as well as by the employment of a wide range of fighting forms and procedures. *Strategy*, as a component part of military art and as the “science of leading the armies”<sup>22</sup>, acquired specific features both through its fundamental aim — defence of the ethnic being of the Romanian people, of the land and of independence — and through the way in which it formulated and implemented the means of carrying it out. The main features of the Romanian strategy were: the correct adjustment of the aims to the means; the proper selection of the strategic targets; the selection of adequate forms of action; gaining and keeping the initiative; the concentration of forces for the decisive battle; ensuring strategic actions and surprise. The fighting forms of strategy were the defensive and the offensive, with strategic counter-offensive as an intermediate stage.

The strategic objectives were selected after the prince and his counsellors, who formed a true general staff, had made a careful analysis of all political, economic and military factors. In all situations the main objective was the forces of the enemy, which had to be crushed in the battle or driven away from the country. When that aim could not be attained at once, the campaign was divided into stages, each with partial objectives which, if successively attained, ensured the fulfilment of the general aim. This way of thinking and action too placed Romanian strategy higher than the strategy of some West-European armies of that time, which often pursued only the conquest of strongholds and other territorial targets. While in France, for instance, “every nobleman had his own fortified nest to secure his domination and defence against outside threat”<sup>23</sup> (a kind of fortresses whose number increased rapidly and were called “adulterine” by the English in the 12th century) as they considered that a “principality was, actually, nothing but a more or less coherent network of duties incumbent on castles”<sup>24</sup> and the war was therefore a battle for carrying fortifications, especially by siege, in the Romanian countries the theatres of military actions and military art were altogether different.

The masterly application of elastic strategy, harassment, the blending of political and military means, the skilful use of such fighting forms as, for instance, the ambush and the surprise attack, the best utilization for the defence of the advantages offered by the terrain, the proper use of the field and permanent fortifications, the carrying on of vigorous offensives both in the tactical and in the strategical fields, all this attests to the fact that the Romanian military art was fully mature at that time as a result of century-old accumulations in terms of quality and quantity, which were preserved and handed over from generation to generation and became defining elements in the national military thought and practice. Whereas in the West, the battle was usually regarded as a festivity or a tournament, almost completely lacking any combination,

in the Romanian countries the engagement of the main enemy forces was the result of wide-scale military actions, an act in which surprise played an essential role. While in the Western countries a battle could take place, as a rule, only with the consent of the two adversaries, and the main acts of a war gravitated around the sieges of fortresses, in the Romanian countries wide-scale battles were fought in open areas. For instance, during the wars the Netherlands waged against Spanish domination, which covered a period of 69 years, there were more than 100 sieges and only a few battles were fought in open areas, of which the most important is considered that of Nieuport around the year 1600.

As a component of military art, battle tactics was characterized by particular dynamism, creativity and efficiency, the combination in time and space of the action of several arms manœuvred promptly and skilfully. The main forms of battle used by the Romanians were the attack, from which they expected decisive results, and the defence. While in the West the battle disposition or, in other words, the battle order remained rigid, invariable and schematic, the Romanians resorted to articulated dispositions during the offensive as well as during the defensive. The battle disposition was often the following: in the front, a line of light cavalry which had the mission to cover the deployment of the main forces, to reject the similar elements of the enemy and force the latter to engage its main forces in an unfavourable area. If, while fighting, the cavalry of that line entered the fire range of the enemy main forces then it withdrew to the flanks; the main forces were deployed on two lines: in the first line there were cavalry and infantry formations, with the infantry in the centre and the cavalry in the flanks; in between them there were groups of light artillery; in the second line were the rest of the cavalry and infantry and part of the heavy artillery, which was placed to act in the frontal direction or in the flank. Part of the heavy artillery was kept in reserve. Salvoes from a short distance were often fired with great effect. The cavalry in particular gave strong and rapid blows in the flanks and in the rear. Cooperation between "units" and weapons was well ensured. The leadership was exercised by the ruling prince through direct command. He was always there where the main blow was given, where the danger was the greatest, where the fate of the battle was at stake.

Viewed in a European context, the Romanian military thought and art show even more their original character, as well as their own deeply scientific and methodological features, especially if account is taken of the fact that in the mediaeval West there was a general regression in terms of warfare schemes and methods as compared to the ancient epoch.

Relevant in this respect are the opinions of some acknowledged specialists, who consider that "between the battle of Cannae\* and the end of feudal cavalry there is nothing but a long period of decadence"<sup>25</sup>. Fuller, in his turn, was of the opinion that in the Middle Ages "In the West, military organization had disappeared"<sup>26</sup>, while reputed contemporary British historian Liddle Hart concluded that "in the West, in the Middle

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\* Ancient town in Apulia (near the mouth of modern river Ofanto), scene of a great defeat of the Romans by Hannibal in 216 BC.

Ages, the spirit of feudal knighthood was hostile to military art”<sup>27</sup>. Adding to the above is the opinion of French General L. M. Chassin, who went so far as to consider that “although the feudal society was profoundly military, yet no interesting teaching reached us from the military writers”. One of the reasons for this regression in the Middle Ages was that in Western Europe the military conflicts had usually the character of cast or dynastic confrontation between feudal lords<sup>28</sup>, which left its imprint both on the military organization and on the way of planning and fighting a battle. There were even situations in which in the “declaration” of war the belligerent sides demanded that the place and the day of battle be fixed. In such cases the manoeuvre was almost absent from the strategic or tactical field, the mass cavalry charge being almost the only method used in the battles that took place. With reference to the battle of Farmigny, Jean de Bevil wrote that “an army should never manoeuvre in front of another one”<sup>29</sup>. When referring to the Middle Ages, especially to the period of classical feudalism in Western Europe, one can even less speak of a people’s war which was, in principle, excluded from the defence methods. The feudal class considered the military profession a pursuit exclusively reserved to noblemen, a fact that led to the emergence of a warfare aristocracy. Fighting was usually done on horseback, so that the knight became the central figure in the battles<sup>30</sup>.

Characterized by continuity, originality and realism, flexibility and adaptability, as well as by dynamism and an obvious lack of aggressiveness, Romanian mediaeval military thought and art were important factors in the Romanian people’s struggle for defending its ethnical being, unity, independence and existence as a State. It is not by chance that a well-informed contemporary, the Ragusan L. Tubero, an official historian of the Hungarian kingdom in the first decades of the 16th century, wrote with admiration that “These Romanians evince so much ardour for freedom, that they could not suffer to be enslaved either by the neighbouring Ottomans, whose weapons smashed the rule of all Christian kings, or by the Hungarians [...], although many a time both had tested them in war. Therefore, nothing can be done against them by force [...]”<sup>31</sup>.

The unquenched thirst for freedom, the ardent desire to be independent, the boundless concern for defending one’s ethnical being, the ancient land and the inestimable material and spiritual assets created with toil and sweat, by honest work<sup>32</sup> had left indeed their imprint on the Romanian military thought and art in the mediaeval epoch, its pivot being the doctrine of the homeland’s defence through the struggle of the entire people, a sine qua non for defeating a superior enemy in terms of numbers and equipment.

## Notes

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## **The Making of the Unitary Romanian National State in 1918 — an Outcome of the People's Struggle**

The making of the unitary Romanian national State in the memorable year 1918 was the crowning of the Romanian people's century-old aspirations after unity and independence, of the dream for which numberless generations of forerunners struggled and laid down their lives; it was an expression of the objective laws of social and national progress, which secured forever the full unity of the Romanian nation, opening the way towards its ever stronger assertion among the peoples and nations of the world.

Seen in historical retrospect, the great victory won by the Romanian people in 1918 and its sanctioning through the system of the Paris treaties in 1919—1920 make it even more obvious that Romania was not among the profiteers of a peace reached through the goodwill of the victors or winners, a peace brought about by the hazard of victory in war, and the union was the live and dynamic expression of the Romanian nation's will, of the century-old aspirations of a people firmly determined to live a united, free and independent life in its ancestral hearth. Pointing out the historical circumstances under which national unity was completed, the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceauşescu, underlined: *“The formation of the unitary Romanian national State was not the outcome of agreements reached by negotiations, but the outcome of the fight waged by the entire people inspired by the age-old hope for unity, and by the determination to make the dream for which so many generations of forerunners had fought and laid down their lives, come true”*<sup>1</sup>.

On account of unfavourable historical circumstances, the Romanian people had to develop, since time immemorial, in a permanent struggle with hardships and difficulties of all kinds, with many domestic and foreign adversities. However, in spite of all obstacles, nobody and nothing could quell the Romanian people's will to live freely and independently in its forerunners' hearth. The ideals of national unity and independence permanently purpled the Romanians' fighting banners and increased tenfold their forces, impelling them to write down pages of a true epic in the struggle for maintaining its national being, its territorial and State unity, for the country's independence. Ideals deeply rooted in the very genesis of the Romanian people, one of the oldest European peoples, which had succeeded, 2050 years ago, in making the first centralized and independent State under the reign of Burebista, and then of the hero-king Decebalus, who entered the Romanian people's consciousness as a symbol of the spirit of sacrifice in defence of liberty and independence.

Shaped as a unitary people in the ancestral hearth of Dacia, keeping up its material life and linguistic ethnics in spite of history's heavy storms, the Romanian people turned the idea of the country's unity and independence into its loftiest ideal and fundamental aspiration, the very sense of its historical development, national unity representing, as stated in the 1848 revolutionaries' programme, the "keystone without which the entire national edifice would break down". Likewise, it is quite relevant that all programmes and theoretical works drawn up by the 1848 movement leaders permanently evoked the outstanding personalities of the Romanian voivodes to whom the accomplishment of national unity was the supreme ideal. "My heart throbs", Mihail Kogălniceanu exclaimed, "when I hear the names of Alexander the Good, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave! And I am not ashamed to tell you that they are to me much more than Alexander the Great, Hannibal or Caesar; these are heroes of the world, while the former are the heroes of my motherland"<sup>2</sup>. In his history about Michael the Brave's deeds, Nicolae Bălcescu was to call up, with deep emotion and gratitude, the glorious moment the entire Romanian people had lived at the time: the Union of Muntenia (Wallachia), Transylvania and Moldavia into a sole homeland within the borders of ancient Dacia, with Michael as ruling prince of Wallachia, Transylvania and the whole of Moldavia.

The permanence of the ideal of national unity accomplished by Michael the Brave in 1600, Moldavia's Union with Muntenia in 1859 and the proclamation of Romania's full State independence on May 9, 1877, sanctioned by the Romanian soldiers on the battlefields in Bulgaria during the Russo-Romanian — Turkish war in 1877—1878, brilliantly crowned the century-old struggle of the Romanian people for liberty, being the national mainstay of the 1918 Union.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the Romanian people's struggle for State unity had got new scope, involving all social classes and political groups both in traditional Romania and in the Romanian territories subject to foreign sway and representing an ever-present concern in the theoretical and practical activities of the workers' and socialist movement on both sides of the Carpathians.

On the eve of the outbreak of World War I in Europe, the accomplishment of the national unity ideal was dominating the entire society, the most progressive-minded figures of the Romanian people. Romania took part in World War I for her right cause — the union of all Romanians into a strong and independent State. Romania's siding with the Entente had a righteous, liberating character. In the combats waged for the homeland's defence against the German militarist occupants during World War I, for safeguarding unity and territorial integrity, the Romanian armies, the people's masses throughout the country wrote down everlasting pages of heroism and abnegation, of self-sacrifice and ardent patriotism, lending their struggle a broad national popular character.

The wide-scade demonstrations organized throughout the war, the thousands of volunteers enlisted for the cause of the country's completion, the support given by ever wider strata of the people are only some facts pointing to the entire Romanian nation's will to achieve unity.

Under the circumstances in which a great part of Romania's territory was occupied by enemy troops, and the existing economic and socio-political contradictions aggravated, the revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation intensified ; with the prolongation of the war, it grew ever stronger both in the subdued provinces and in Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrudja — occupied by the Central Powers' armies shortly before. The plundering, terror and arbitrary actions of all kinds stirred up the entire people's hatred and revolt. The ideal of national unity was the strongest moral support underlying the Romanian soldiers' heroism in the battles delivered at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz in summer 1917, when the German armies under command of Marshal Mackensen sustained a heavy defeat, and as a result the German-Austro-Hungarian plans aiming at the dissolution of the Romanian State were thwarted.

The collapse of tsarism, the victory of the Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 sounded as an ardent urge to struggle for the fulfilment of the aspirations after liberty and self-determination nurtured by every people in the world. The intensification of the struggle for national liberation, the military defeats sustained by the Central Powers represented strong factors in speeding up the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The words written by Friedrich Engels to Romanian socialist Ioan Nădejde as far back as in January 1888 were thus proved true : "If tomorrow the despotism in St. Petersburg fell down, there would be no Austria-Hungary in Europe the day after tomorrow"<sup>3</sup>. As a matter of fact, in 1916 Vladimir Ilych Lenin had called the Austro-Hungarian monarchy a "feeble union of a few cliques of social parasites", emphasizing that, historically, Austria-Hungary's abolishment was but a continuation of the Ottoman Empire's dissolution, being, the same as the latter, a requirement of the historical process of development. This forecast came true in 1918, when the sovereign and independent national states of the peoples in Central and Southeast Europe were formed on the ruins of this empire of sad memory.

The Romanian people's struggle ranged with other peoples' movements for national self-determination and the removal of foreign domination. It had a wide-scope bourgeois-democratic character, involving the bourgeoisie and the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia and the other social and political forces and groups.

The wide-scope popular demonstrations organized throughout 1918, the entire people's upholding the cause of the union, the actions initiated by political groups and personalities voiced the will of the entire Romanian nation. For instance, the proclamation adopted in Jassy on October 6/19, 1918, at the big rally in Piața Unirii (The Union Square) occasioned by the arrival to the freed country of the first Romanian groups of refugees from Austria-Hungary, read : "it is our claim to be freed from the yoke of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and we are resolved to fight by all possible means and in every possible way for the entire Romanian nation to make up one free national State"<sup>4</sup>.

With the drawing nearer of the successful issue of the popular masses' struggle in Transylvania for full unity all social strata were deeply stirred up. In September 1918, the Romanian socialists proposed the setting up of the Romanian National Council — a body made up on a parity

basis of representatives of the Romanian National Party and of the socialist movement meant to lead the movement for national unity within the context of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Working people of Romanian, Magyar, German and other origin voiced their will to shake off the yoke of the Austro-Hungarian sway and unite with the mother-country. During the big rally of the workers of Csepel factory, held on September 30, 1918, also attended by numerous intellectuals and students, Tiron Albani was to point out the stand of the Romanian socialists, who claimed that the "Romanians, too, should have the right freely to decide upon their destiny, that is to decide by themselves the State framework within which to live in the future" <sup>5</sup>. To the same effect spoke other participants in the rally as well. Strong demonstrations of the broad popular masses took place during that period throughout Transylvania and the Banat, the claims for union, political rights and liberty being present everywhere.

On October 18/31, 1918, the Central Romanian National Council was set up as the "sole body representing the Romanian people's will" made up of six social-democrats — Tiron Albani, Ion Flueraş, Enea Grapini, Iosif Jumanca, Iosif Renoiu, Basiliu Surdu — and six representatives of the Romanian National Party : Vasile Goldiş, Aurel Lazăr, Teodor Mihail, Ştefan Cicio-Pop, Al. Vaida-Voievod and Aurel Vlad <sup>6</sup>.

Regional and local national councils and national guards were set up throughout Transylvania as organs of the bourgeois-democratic movement. Acting under the direction of the Romanian National Council, they consisted, for their greatest part, of representatives of the working class, the peasantry and the intellectuals, many of whom were members of the Social-Democratic Party.

The setting up of the Romanian National Council, right after the outbreak of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, a council with a widely popular character, gave a fresh impetus to the struggle for Transylvania's liberation and for her union to the mother-country. To the working people it had become very clear that there was a close relationship between the settlement of the national problem and that of the social one. In an editorial entitled "What Do We Want?", *Adevărul*, the press organ of the Romanian socialists, pointed out that: "The revolution and the capitulation have created for all nations in the country the possibility to decide their fate by themselves, to shape their own future as well as the State frameworks within which they wish to live in future. The Romanian National Council is called upon to take one step farther and to declare clearly and explicitly that we wish the entire Romanian people in Hungary, Transylvania and the Banat to be questioned through a referendum, through a general vote, as to what kind of State framework they wish to have in future" <sup>7</sup>. And socialist Ion Mihuş, in a statement carried by the same newspaper, emphasized that the "social liberation of the entire Romanian nation" was required.

The events in Transylvania influenced and speeded up, in their turn, the movement in Bukovina. On November 15/28, 1918, the Congress of the representatives of Bukovina's population unanimously decided the "unconditional and eternal union of Bukovina", within its old boundaries, to the kingdom of Romania, after 144 years of foreign domi-

nation. Also, it is known that on March 27/April 9 the same year Besarabia united with Romania<sup>8</sup>.

The acts of union were enthusiastically greeted by the Romanian people throughout the country. These manifestations of enthusiasm, adhesion and happiness blended with the energetic actions aimed at preparing Transylvania's union to the Motherland. The manifesto issued by the Central Romanian National Committee on November 7/20, 1918, stated to this effect : "The irresistible evolution of the human civilization took the Romanian people, too, out of the darkness of slavery towards the light of self-awareness [...] We want to live beside the other nations of the world, in freedom and independence".

The ten days of preparations for the assembly in Alba Iulia were the most enthusiastic, the most hectic, the most exciting in the history of the Romanians in Transylvania and the Banat, of the entire Romanian people which was looking forward to the last act of the accomplishment of its unity as a State and nation within its historical borders.

The rallies organized for the election of delegates to the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia, attended by workers, handicraftsmen, intellectuals, peasants, women and men, old and young, proved the solidarity of all Romanians around the greatest problem in the people's history, their unflinching will to unite. Tens of thousands of Romanians, some setting out immediately after the exact place and time had been conveyed, all of whom sang "Awake Ye, Romanian !" and bore the national tricolor flags, made from the remotest regions for Alba Iulia. "We need not tell it to each other", teacher Ilie Cristea wrote in *Glusul Ardealului* newspaper during those days ; "suffice it to look into each other's eyes to be sure that the hour has struck. The word kept until now in the deepest corners of our souls will be uttered in a single, impressive and unflinching voice. Our union will be unquestionable"<sup>9</sup>.

More than 100,000 people — workers, peasants and intellectuals — gathered in Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, in that place where the martyrdom of Horea, the hero of popular tales and the symbol of Dacia's revival as Karl Marx called him, had taken place in 1785. They came to sanction the law-like, objective and progressive act of completing the unitary Romanian national State. Attending the assembly were 1,228 delegates, elected by vote in the electoral constituencies or the Romanian political organizations and institutions throughout Transylvania, among whom there were politicians and leaders of the national movement<sup>10</sup>.

The assembly of December 1, 1918, adopted the historic Declaration of Alba Iulia, a memorable document of the union, the product of all Romanian political and social forces in Transylvania.

Taking the floor before the masses, Iosif Jumanca declared on behalf of the Romanian Social-Democratic Party : "Today we too are coming here, we, the genuine representatives of the Romanian workers of Transylvania and the Banat, we are coming to declare before you, before the Socialist International and before the entire world that we want the union of all Romanians. Social democracy does not spell the absence of the national feeling. We do not say *ubi bene ibi patria*, but we say that *where your homeland is, there must you shape the happiness of your life*. And we have no fear that the Romanian working people, who have

now broken the fetters of a century-old slavery, will lack the power to ensure their right to a free life in Romania as well [...] We have always lived together with our Hungarian comrades [...], but today the moment has come for us to declare that indeed, as a class, we cherish solidarity with them and are not their enemies, but in future we want to be an independent flower in the great bouquet of the international”<sup>11</sup>. The broad participation of the popular masses in Alba Iulia asserted once again and definitively the Romanian people as the maker of the Union, a result of its century-old struggle for liberty, unity and national independence.

The declaration of the Social-Democratic Party on the Union published in *Adevărul* newspaper read: “The proclamation of all the Romanians’ union is an accomplished fact today [...] We, the Romanian socialists, have also had our share in its adoption”<sup>12</sup>. Hailing the accomplishment of Romania’s State unity, the Transylvanian socialists declared: “We, who have been also ceaselessly fighting and sacrificing our work for both the national and social liberation of the Romanian people, cannot forget the past and cannot object when it comes to the achievement of national liberation. We did it so as our struggle for the abolition of any class domination and for the building of the socialist society be much more easier in the future”<sup>13</sup>. Poet Emil Isac wrote: “Our independence is a sine qua non of our future and our independence can only be ensured when there are no more Romanian provinces, but all Romanians live one and the same State life. Such is the supreme argument for which in Alba Iulia Romanian socialism declared in favour of the ideal of uniting all Romanians”. A people that has not achieved its political unity “can never develop its national specificity for the good of the entire mankind”<sup>14</sup>. The co-inhabiting nationalities, who throughout a tormented history had joined the Romanian people in its struggle for social and national liberty, voiced their adhesion and resolve to back up the grandiose act of the Union completed on December 1, 1918.

Publicly expressing their resolution to fight for the consolidation of the Union achieved on December 1, 1918, the German population stated in its press organ: “The Germans in older Romania, the Banat, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania now step united into the political life of the Romanian State to which they have adhered willingly and on their own initiative thus voicing once again their will to unite with the Romanian State”<sup>15</sup>.

It should be mentioned here that many representatives of the co-inhabiting nationalities declared for the union. The manifesto undersigned on November 3, 1918, by most outstanding representatives of the Hungarian cultural and public life such as Endre Ady, Bartok György, Kodaly Zoltan, Varga Jenő, read, for instance: “We have nothing to claim from the sister nations. We, too, are a revigorated nation, a force now freed on the ruins of the monarchy. We feel relieved at the thought that we are no longer forced to be the pillars of oppression. Let us live in peace, side by side, like free nations with other free nations”<sup>16</sup>. The Magyar prefect of the Arad county, Dr. Varjassy Lajos, confessed in his turn: “To me it seems quite natural that a people full of dignity should



no longer want to tolerate slavery, very much as we ourselves (the Hungarians — a.n.) refused to tolerate it from Austria”<sup>17</sup>.

The making of the unitary Romanian national State in the ancestral hearth of Burebista's State was the work of the entire Romanian people. The accomplishment of the 1918 Union was not the work of a sole social class or political party, but it represented, as we have shown, the goal and work of the entire Romanian nation; it was this ideal that all the scholars and great thinkers of the Romanian nation, all the progressive forces of the Romanian society worked for.

The Romanians' heroism in the struggle for the completion of the national State unity was appreciated and eulogized at the time and over the ensuing period by statesmen and heads of State all over the world. The acknowledgement by the Entente great powers, time and again, of the peoples' right to self-determination as well as of the right of the Romanian people to national State unity, the assertion of the lofty principles of equity and justice which were to underlie the post-war world order, all this increased the confidence of Romania, of the other small and medium-sized states in the work to be sanctioned by the Peace Conference. To this international forum Romania submitted, for an official acknowledgement, the historic decisions of the Romanian people solemnly proclaimed during the plebiscitary representative and democratic assemblies of the broad popular masses, held on March 27, November 28, and December 1, 1918. The peace treaties of 1919 and 1920, the Paris Peace Conference were not asked to create a completed Romanian State. The Peace Conference was called upon to juridically sanction the work of the popular masses through the acknowledgement of the principle of national self-determination, which the Romanian people had already implemented, facing the international community with an accomplished fact the way it had done in 1859<sup>18</sup>. If Mihail Kogălniceanu was right when saying, with reference to Moldavia's union to Muntenia in 1859, that the “union was the work of the nation”, one can assert with good reason that the Great Union of 1918 was the work of the entire Romanian people, the successful crowning of the century-old struggle of the most advanced forces of the people all throughout the ancestral territory of the Romanians.

The accomplishment of Romanian State unity provided the national and socio-economic framework for the development of modern Romania and favourably influenced the entire economic political and social evolution of the country. Favourable conditions were created for the development of the progressive forces of the society, with deep-going consequences for the life of the Romanian society.

## Notes

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2. Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Texte social-politice alese* (Selected Socio-Political Texts), București, 1967, p. 107.
3. *Presa muncitorească și socialistă din România* (The Workers' and Socialist Press in Romania), Vol. I (1865—1900), București, 1964, p. 190.

4. *Marea Unire de la 1 Decembrie 1918* (The Great Union of December 1, 1918) (Societatea Astra), București, 1934, p. 23.
5. *Adevărul* of October 18/31, 1918.
6. At length in 1918. *Unirea Transilvaniei cu România* (1918. Transylvania's Union with Romania), 3rd edition, București, 1978.
7. *Adevărul* of October 21/November 3, 1918.
8. Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *From Ancient Dacia to Modern Romania*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1985, pp. 615—738.
9. *Glasul Ardealului* of November 17/30, 1918.
10. Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 692—709.
11. *Drapelul* of December 1/14, 1918.
12. *Adevărul* of December 2/15, 1918.
13. *Ibidem.*
14. *Ibidem.*
15. *Mediascher Zeitung* of January 11, 1919.
16. *Adevărul* of October 28/November 10, 1918.
17. *Arady Közlöny* of November 21, 1918.
18. Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 738—788.

## **The Romanian Revolution of August 1944 — the Crowning of the Romanian People's Struggle for Social and National Liberation**

An energetic act of will and action of the entire Romanian nation, unequivocal assertion of the Romanian people's determination to be free and master in its own country, to fulfil its legitimate aspirations towards socio-economic and cultural progress, long and minutely prepared by the Romanian Communist Party in close collaboration with the other democratic and antifascist national forces, the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation triggered off on August 23, 1944, is deeply rooted in the historical past.

The 1944 Revolution was not an accidental phenomenon or the expression of a conjuncture of international events, but it was a revolutionary act having its own internal determinants. It represents one of the great victories scored by the Romanian people and its army against foreign domination, and naturally integrated into the chronicle of the struggle waged by the forefathers throughout the centuries under the head of illustrious political and military commanders such as Dromi-chaites, Burebista and Decebalus, Gelu and Glad, Litovoi and Dobrotiță, Bessarab, Mircea the Great, Stephen the Great, Vlad the Impaler and Iancu of Hunedoara, Michael the Brave and Horea, Tudor Vladimirescu, Avram Iancu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and many others.

The Romanian Revolution of August 1944 was, therefore, the acme of incessant efforts made along history that took a heavy toll of human lives and material sacrifices. At that crucial moment in the life of the Romanian nation foreign, imperialist domination was definitively abolished, and favourable conditions were created for Romania's engagement in the vast revolutionary process of building up a new society devoid of exploitation and oppression — the socialist society. The antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation in August 1944, as Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of Socialist Romania, underlined, *“led to the homeland's real independence, to Romania's revolutionary socialist transformation. The masses gained, by armed struggle, the right to liberty and independence, the right to be the masters of their national riches, to shape their destiny according to their own interests and aspirations, as well as the possibility to build in their homeland the most righteous and advanced social system — the socialist and communist system”*<sup>1</sup>.

In August 1944, as always when the existence of the Romanian State and nation was at stake, the entire people, the country's “greater army” rose to fight under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party, the political force that was most concerned with the fundamental

national interests of the Romanian people. The country's liberation from the domination of Nazi Germany, the regaining of national independence and sovereignty would become the fighting goals of the entire Romanian people.

Confronted with a highly difficult situation — occurred in Romania's history in 1940—1941 through the country's isolation, the maiming of the national territory, the setting up in early September 1940 of a government led by General Ion Antonescu, which aligned the country with Hitler's Germany, the penetration of Wehrmacht troops into the national territory (starting October 1940), and Romania's commitment to the Hitlerite war on June 22, 1941 —, the Romanian people answered promptly and firmly through the employment of various combat forms and methods, through a wide-scale, conscious adhesion to the fighting programme worked out by the Romanian Communist Party. This was the most dynamic political force of the nation which, from the very beginning, adamantly rose against the anti-Soviet war, a war alien to the Romanian people's interests and abhorred by the whole nation, for the country's getting out of that war and its joining the anti-Hitler coalition, for the overthrow of Antonescu's régime and the restoration of Romania's independence and territorial integrity. *"The overthrow of the government of the fascist-military dictatorship"*, President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out, *"the withdrawal from the anti-Soviet war thus appeared to the masses of the people, to the broad circles of public opinion as a burning, vital necessity for our very national existence, for safeguarding the supreme interests of the entire people, for the future development of our society"* <sup>2</sup>.

To achieve this vital desideratum of the Romanian nation, the Romanian Communist Party, the major political force of the antifascist resistance movement in Romania, clearly set down in its programme-documents, drafted in 1940—1941 — *Our Viewpoint* (September 10, 1940), *Circular of the CC of the RCP* (January 1941), *From the Iron-Guardist Régime to Military Dictatorship* (February 26, 1941), *Circular of the CC of the RCP of July 8, 1941*, *The Struggle of the Romanian People for National Freedom and Independence* (September 6, 1941) — the general strategy to be pursued for the development and intensification of the national resistance movement. They stipulated the making up of the National United Front of the entire Romanian nation, of all social classes and categories irrespective of their political beliefs. This orientation of the Romanian Communist Party created favourable premises for the victory of the Romanian Revolution of August 1944, representing, as a matter of fact, an unprecedented solution in the international communist and workers' movement, since it created an original way of political-military action meant to achieve a national consensus against the background of diverse ideological orientations.

Consistent with its action strategy within the national resistance movement as a whole, the Romanian Communist Party tenaciously worked on multiple planes. Under its direct guidance and decisive influence numerous strikes and protest demonstrations of the workers were organized as well as claiming actions of the peasantry, an intense propaganda activity was carried on, patriotic combat formations were set up and

trained secretly, partisan detachments were formed. As a result of it, the resistance movement became a conspicuous reality in 1940—1941 Romania in all domains of the socio-economic, political and military life. As for the army, the action of the Communist Party and of the other national political forces led to the army's transformation into a genuine component of the resistance movement, ready at any time to start the fight for the restoration of the country's independence and territorial integrity<sup>3</sup>. The Romanian antifascist resistance movement in the years of World War II also developed outside the national frontiers, as numerous Romanians then abroad, in France, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Great Britain, etc. joined the anti-Hitler struggle in the respective countries<sup>4</sup>.

Unflinchingly working for the setting up of the National United Front of the Romanian people, the Romanian Communist Party made concrete proposals to other political parties and organizations, to some representatives of State institutions, making of their stand vis-à-vis the nation's supreme interests — Romanian independence and unity — a preliminary condition. Its policy aiming at setting up a national united front, considerably facilitated by the self-dissolution of the Comintern in spring 1943, scored a first victory through the achievement of the Anti-Hitler Patriotic Front in the summer of the same year. This political body rallied, on the basis of the Communist Party's platform of action submitted to the entire national resistance as early as 1940—1941, the following parties and democratic organizations: The Ploughmen's Front (the peasantry's democratic political organization), the Patriots' Union (a political organization coalescing the patriotic intelligentsia), the Socialist-Peasant Party, the Madosz (the Union of the Magyar Working People in Romania), and for a short time, from September 1943, the Social-Democratic Party. Shortly afterwards, the Communist Party got in touch with representatives of the royal quarters and of the high military leadership in order to establish the ways for a decisive switchover in the country's domestic and foreign policy. By mutual agreement with the Social-Democratic Party, the Romanian Communist Party set up the United Workers' Front, the backbone of the National United Front which, as President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out, was *"an essential factor in the fight for Romania's getting out from the war waged against the Soviet Union and joining the anti-Hitler coalition, for embarking on the road of democratic development and socialist transformation of the country"*<sup>5</sup>.

After achieving the unity of action of the working class, the alliance policy promoted by the Romanian Communist Party recorded a new victory on May 26, 1944, when the National Democratic Coalition was set up consisting of the Romanian Communist Party and the democratic organizations under its influence (the Ploughmen's Front, the Patriots' Union, the Madosz), the Social-Democratic Party, the Socialist-Peasant Party, the National-Liberal Party (led by Gheorghe Tătărăscu) and the National-Democratic Party.

Tenaciously pursuing the achieving of the National United Front, the Romanian Communist Party further conducted negotiations with the leaders of the two big bourgeois parties of the country — the National-

Peasant Party (Iuliu Maniu) and the National-Liberal Party (C. I. C. Brătianu) — and succeeded in achieving the National Democratic Bloc in June 1944. This political organism was made up of the country's four major political parties: the Romanian Communist Party, the Social-Democratic Party, the National-Peasant Party and the National-Liberal Party. The platform of political action of the National Democratic Bloc, actually the widest alliance of political forces ever achieved in Romania, contained the essential goals in the communist programme worked out as early as 1940—1941. Relevant for the prominent political part played by the Communist Party in the achievement of the political alliances also was its presence in every political organism set up over 1943—1944. Therefore, the backbone of this system of political alliances including the entire patriotic and antifascist, national political spectrum, the army and the royal quarters included, was the Communist Party, which worked out and implemented its policy in full freedom of action, without any contacts with the international communist movement and the Comintern, its leading forum <sup>6</sup>.

The original way resorted to by the Romanian Communist Party in setting up the National United Front was in fact a première in the international communist movement, since it was for the first time that a communist party achieved a political alliance made up of so diverse forces — from democratic, revolutionary parties and organizations to bourgeois parties, the royal quarters and military chiefs — on a joint platform of struggle. The Communist Party's policy aimed at achieving the National United Front in order to rescue the homeland also provided an original pattern of solving a complex historical situation, a specifically Romanian solution of uniting all the nation's vital forces in the struggle for democracy, national independence and sovereignty. *“The setting up of the Workers' United Front, of the Democratic Front as well as the links established with the army, the Supreme Commander and other national forces”*, President Nicolae Ceaușescu points out, *“created favourable conditions for passing to the carrying out of the armed insurrection, for the victory of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation”* <sup>7</sup>.

The Romanian people's resistance movement, carried on under the leadership of the Communist Party, reached unprecedented scope in summer 1944 when, internally, a true revolutionary climate developed in Romania as the broad masses' will to fight, their determination to engage actions at once were ever more obvious, and the political crisis of the ruling circles, unable to find a way out from the disastrous situation the country found itself in, acutely deepened. The development of the military and strategical events in the international arena showed the irreversible ascendancy of the United Nations as the Axis' troops sustained heavy defeats on all theatres of military operations. On August 20, 1944, at the southern wing of the Eastern Front the Soviet Army mounted a new offensive on the Jassy-Kishinev alignment, intended to annihilate the “South Ukraine” German Army Group, and reach the Eastern Carpathians alignment and the Focșani-Nămoloasa-Galați — the maritime Danube fortified line. On the whole, the international situation developed favourably following the great victories won by the Soviet

Union, the successes of the other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, which were dealing heavy blows at the enemy on various fronts. Moreover, an important role was played by the landing of Anglo-American troops on the western coast of Europe and the intensification of the general fight of the peoples against the fascist invaders.

In mid-August 1944, making a keen analysis of the internal situation and international events, the Romanian Communist Party, in collaboration with the other forces in the system of alliances it had wrought, decided upon triggering off the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation.

On August 23, 1944, through the sovereign decision of the highest decision-making factors of the wide coalition of national political forces, the whole insurrectional mechanism was promptly and faultlessly set to motion, without any previous written or verbal understanding with states in the anti-Hitler coalition. That day in the afternoon Ion Antonescu, received in audience by the king, as well as the other ministers of his government were arrested; a new government was set up under the aegis of the four major parties in the National Democratic Bloc, with the participation, for the first time in Romania's history, of one representative of the Romanian Communist Party. The government's statement clearly outlined the goals of the liberation struggle: the immediate conclusion of the armistice, Romania's getting out of the Axis and the mopping up of the national territory of Hitlerite occupants, the liberation of the country's north-western part snatched away through the imperialist Vienna Diktat of August 30, 1940, the setting up of a democratic régime, Romania's joining the United Nations' coalition. By joining the anti-Hitler coalition, Romania assumed, through her sovereign will, the status of a co-belligerent against Hitler's Reich. Therefore, the triggering off of the Romanian revolution marked the beginning of Romania's war against Nazi Germany and Horthy's Hungary under the circumstances in which there was no agreement with the states in the anti-Hitler coalition.

Romania's entering the war against the Nazi Reich on August 23, 1944, at a time decided upon by the internal political decision-making factors, in the context of an international political-military situation that had not shown any clear prospects of the Axis' defeat, when the fate of the world conflict had not been decided yet and Hitler's Germany was far from being defeated, was, therefore, an act of full and legitimate national sovereignty, expressing the unflinching will of the Romanian people to safeguard its State independence. The goals underlying Romania's joining the United Nations were exclusively in keeping with the fundamental interests of the Romanian people. "The Romanian people", the declaration of the head of the Romanian State read, "is determined to be the master of its own destiny. Anybody who opposes our freely-made decision, which does not infringe upon anybody's rights, is our nation's enemy"<sup>8</sup>. The sovereign, legitimate nature, in keeping with the national interests of the Romanian people, of Romania's decision to join the anti-fascist war was also clearly pointed out in the statement of the new Romanian government: "From now on we are determined to be masters

of our own destinies. The decision to denounce the alliance treaties with the Axis powers \* and to cease the state of war with the United Nations represents the entire people's will. These decisions do not disregard the rights of any foreign State, nor do they harm the interests of other nations" <sup>9</sup>. For securing "its future", for defending the "vital interests" of the nation — independence, sovereignty, the country's liberation from foreign occupation, a system of democratic rights and public freedoms — the Romanian Communist Party, the fundamental political force carrying through Romania's grand act of sovereignty and independence of August 23, 1944, summoned in its Declaration of August 23, 1944, "the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, all the citizens of Romania to mercilessly fight, by every means, against the deadly foe of the Romanian people, for ensuring the latter's future" <sup>10</sup>.

The Romanian Communist Party, the highest decision-making factors of the Romanian State, outrightly voiced the firm decision of the Romanian people to defend with all its might the homeland's imprescriptible rights : independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On the call of the Communist Party, of the country, the entire Romanian army, although in a highly difficult military predicament, proved its loyalty to the homeland's supreme interests and, supported by the whole nation, launched the fight against the enemy troops.

The Romanian army's swift volte-face against the Hitlerite troops was a unique case in the history of World War II, and a source of precious military teachings. According to the operational Directive issued by the General Staff on the evening of August 23, 1944, the Romanian army, whose effectives exceeded 1,100,000 men, concomitantly carried out three highly complex military operations : the annihilation of the German forces deployed in the national territory ; the reshuffling of the Romanian troops at the southern wing of the Soviet-German front and their massing up north of Bucharest in view of the subsequent offensive for the liberation of the country's north-western part ; the covering of the western and south-western frontiers, and of the Romanian-Hungarian line of demarcation in Transylvania imposed through the fascist Vienna Diktat. The victory of these military actions was to ensure the new government its liberty in domestic and foreign political actions through driving away the enemy troops from the country and denying the Hitlerite and Horthyst troops their drive from outside Romania. Likewise, favourable prerequisites were created for triggering off the decisive operation to liberate the country's north-western part snatched away through the Vienna Diktat.

Starting with the evening of August 23, 1944, the Hitlerite troops were attacked and crushed everywhere. Grim fights went on in the areas of Bucharest, the Prahova Valley, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Medgidia, in the Bărăgan Plain, in Bukovina, in the Banat, in southern Transylvania and Crişana, in southern Moldavia, in Oltenia, along the Romanian course of the Danube and in many other places. The Hitlerite troops deployed

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\* Actually there were no such treaties ; the formal juridical act of Romania's "alliance" with the powers in the Axis was Ion Antonescu's joining the Tripartite Pact on November 23, 1940.



in the Bucharest area were crushed until August 28, 1944, through the exclusive effort of the Romanian army and of the patriotic combat formations, which enabled the Capital's population to welcome, on August 30, the Soviet army's units in a town entirely freed through its own efforts. Pointing out the bravery of the Romanian military, General Mihail Racoviță, the then Minister of War, said: "I am proud that in the country's Capital there are such brave troops and competent commanders that have been able to score one of the greatest victories, drawing upon themselves the admiration of our great allies"<sup>11</sup>.

Everywhere, the Romanian military forces were supported by the patriotic combat formations, by thousands upon thousands of workers, peasants and intellectuals, which once again demonstrated the vitality of the Romanian tradition of waging the entire people's war in defence of the homeland. The military confrontation with the enemy had the peculiar traits of the people's war both in point of the entire people's rising to fight and of the fighting forms employed: ambushes, barricades, simultaneous offensive and defensive actions in a specific sector, harassing actions, etc.<sup>12</sup>.

It was through the revolutionary struggle of the entire people, whose main powerful tool was the army, that over August 23—31, 1944, outstanding military results were scored. Sustaining minimal losses — 8,586 men —, the military and popular forces of the Romanian revolution freed through their heroic efforts the central and southern parts of the country, an area of about 150,000 sq km, in fact the entire national territory under the Romanian government's jurisdiction on August 23, 1944, inflicting upon the enemy casualties amounting to over 61,000 military, killed and prisoners, 14 generals and 1,421 officers included, which means the equivalent of six Wehrmacht infantry divisions or 30 per cent of the monthly casualties average sustained by Hitler's Germany on the eastern front in summer 1944. With the 19,000 sq km freed daily, the military operations carried out by the Romanian army in August 1944 ranked with the broadest and most efficient operations mounted by the anti-Hitler coalition troops over 1944—1945.

Likewise, considerable quantities of armament and war matériel were captured, among which 222 and 428 serviceable aircraft and warships, respectively. Thanks to the swift crushing, capturing or chasing of the enemy, the latter was denied the possibility to damage communications, military and economic targets, which, safely kept, were put at the service of the anti-Hitler coalition, a fact that had a remarkable share in sustaining the war effort during the subsequent stage of the war.

A true "turning point" in the development of the military operations carried out at the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, "one of the decisive events of the Second World War"<sup>13</sup>, to quote the outstanding British historian Hugh Seton Watson, the revolution triggered off on August 23, 1944, and its successful development had a remarkable strategic-military share in the winning of victory in May 1945. Under the impact of the Romanian revolution the German defensive at the southern wing of the Soviet-German front definitively collapsed, and so did the entire Wehrmacht disposition in the Balkan

Peninsula. The historic Romanian act opened the "Focșani Gate" in front of the Soviet troops, thereby enabling them to cross without fighting the Focșani-Nămoloasa-Brăila fortified line, considered as "one of the strongest strategic defence alignments in Europe"<sup>14</sup>, and to advance unimpededly towards the heart of the continent along the strategic direction of the Danube Valley, and towards the Balkan Peninsula. Equally important for the development of the war against Nazi Germany and Horthy's Hungary were the consequences entailed by the sudden change, favourable to the United Nations' coalition, occurred in the balance of forces between the two conflicting sides, the cutting off of the main supplies from Romania, especially of oil and cereals, as well as the true seism brought about in the Reich's system of alliances. By its strategic and political consequences, the Romanian revolution of August 1944 shortened World War II by some 200 days<sup>15</sup>.

The strategic advantages deriving from Romania's joining the United Nations, her great share in the winning of the victory over fascism did not confine only to the consequences of her starting the war on Hitler's Germany and Horthy's Hungary. From August 23, 1944, till May 12, 1945, Romania committed to the anti-Hitler war effectives amounting to 540,000 military, who carried on wide-scope military operations in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, that is on one of the most important strategic directions — the Danube basin — which was to play an essential part in speeding up the Wehrmacht's defeat. Quite telling is also the fact that 25—30 per cent of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak perimeter, considered by Hitler as vital for changing the course of the war, was freed by the Romanian army.

The analysis of the historical data and facts shows that, through the unfavourable impact upon Hitler's Reich in the development of the war in Europe, through the manpower and matériel she committed to the defeat of fascism, Romania ranked the fourth among the countries in the anti-Hitler coalition, as the London newspaper *Sunday Times* considered before the war was over, on January 8, 1945.

The balance-sheet of Romania's contribution to the defeat of fascism also highlights that the Romanian people firmly militated, with abnegation and valliancy, against the most dangerous foe of mankind — fascism —, that Romania's national independence and sovereignty strongly rely upon the military effort and the blood shed for the cause of democracy and the peoples' freedom, of peace and understanding on our planet.

Romania's joining the war against Nazi Germany and her great military and economic-financial contribution to the victory won in May 1945 enjoyed wide international appreciation. Authorized opinions of some high-ranking political and military personalities, who officially committed the newspapers, press agencies and broadcasting stations in their countries, praised Romania's courage for having made that historic switch-over in her domestic and foreign policy<sup>16</sup>.

Recognizing the huge importance of the Romanian act of August 23, 1944, the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium granted the head of the Romanian state the "Victory" Order, the highest Soviet war decoration. High-level officials from the other big states in the anti-Hitler coalition also made statements wherein they stressed the altogether special import-

ance of Romania's joining the anti-Hitler war : J. V. Stalin, the Supreme Commander of the Red Army, Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, Cordell Hull, the US Secretary of State, Eduard Beneš, the President of the Czechoslovak Republic, V. M. Molotov, the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, Jan Masaryk, head of the Czechoslovak delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, etc. Numerous newspapers, press agencies and broadcasting stations acknowledged Romania's massive contribution to the victory over fascism.

Relying on this war effort, permanently kept at high levels, the Romanian political and military authorities claimed a co-belligerency status for Romania as early as September 1944. The co-belligerency status would have granted Romania the international acknowledgement of the active role she played in the winning of the victory of May 1945, and would have had beneficial effects on the country's subsequent development, on her status in the international arena. In spite of the demarches she had made, at the Peace Conference Romania was compelled to sign the peace treaty as a defeated power, which seriously told on the subsequent political, economic and military development of the country. However, this did not discourage the Romanian nation. Brave and loyal, closely rallied around the Communist Party, the Romanian nation has resolutely embarked on the road of building a new, socialist society, had devoted all her stamina to peaceful construction, militating for peace and international security, for cooperation and understanding among peoples.

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## **The Outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on the Homeland's Defence and its Materialization in the Military Doctrine of the Socialist Republic of Romania**

The struggle for the homeland's defence has been one of the fundamental coordinates of the Romanian people's multimillenary history that can be traced right through the entire Romanian military thought and practice from times of yore to the present. Generations after generations of ardent patriots, great Romanian leaders and army commanders valiantly fought and, when needed, heroically laid down their lives for that lofty cause. Underlining this historical truth, President Nicolae Ceaușescu said : *"The valiant army of the fearless Decebalus, the legendary leader of the Dacians, the staunch soldiers of our famous voivodes and great army commanders — Mircea the Old, Ioan of Hunedoara, Vlad the Impaler, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, expressing the undying love of liberty of the people, heroically and valiantly defended the ancestral land, generously shed their blood for it, chose if needed heroic death rather than bow down to the enemies, never betrayed the cause of the people"*<sup>1</sup>.

The lofty ideal of homeland defence ceaselessly impelled, from one epoch to another, Romanian military thought, doctrine and theory. It was on their sacred grounds that the "armed power" concept and its corollary, the doctrine of the entire people's war, crystallized and developed from generation to generation. The lofty tradition of the war for the defence of the homeland, of its independence and integrity has actually dominated the entire national military history starting with the first fights of the Romanians' Geto-Dacian ancestors for liberty and independence against the invading Persian armies, since which two and a half millennia were celebrated last year, until nowadays.

The outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on the homeland's defence marked a new stage in the annals of the Romanian military thought and practice, a step forward as far as the national military patrimony is concerned. For the first time a multidisciplinary, deeply realistic, original and innovating way was worked out of approaching and solving the complex problems of the homeland's defence, of the national military thought and practice in relation to Socialist Romania's domestic conditions and the international background.

The new stage was marked by the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, held in July 1965, which has ushered in the epoch of the most grandiose and richest achievements in the entire history of the Romanian people and has also brought about a highly fertile period in the Romanian military theory and practice, in the activity carried on with the view of continuously strengthening the homeland's

defence capacity. Against this background socio-political, economic and ideological prerequisites were created for the present outlook of the Party and State on the homeland's defence under the present-day conditions. Within these prerequisites, the socio-political thought of President Nicolae Ceaușescu has played the decisive role, bringing about a true revolution both in the field of social theory and practice and in the way of approaching and solving all the problems of the homeland's defence, of the contemporary military phenomenon. "The leader of our nation has determined a radical turning point in the military field both through a reappraisal of the previous conceptions and orientations, and particularly through providing the State defence function with original ideas derived from the consistently scientific appraisal of domestic and international realities. The concepts, theses, ideas and solutions put forward in this respect are a highly valuable contribution to the development of Romanian and world military thought, to the enrichment of modern military science" <sup>2</sup>.

The quintessence of contemporary Romanian military thought is fully expressed by the outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on the homeland's defence the way it has materialized in the military doctrine of the Socialist Republic of Romania. Through its contents of ideas and methodological applicability this outlook stands out as a remarkable comprehensive synthesis of the orientations, options and solutions on the basis of which the problems raised by the organization of Socialist Romania's national defence have been approached and solved. This outlook has taken into consideration the way the objective laws and principles of modern warfare apply to the internal and international realities, the multimillenary traditions of the Romanian people's struggle for the defence of its ancestral land, the experience it has acquired in building up the new society, the generalization of conclusions and teachings derived from the scientific analysis of the evolution of the contemporary political-military phenomenon.

The outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on national defence under the present-day conditions is a synthetic aggregate of ideas and principles of highly theoretical and practical value, among which pride of place is held by the thesis according to which the homeland's defence is part and parcel of the unitary process of building up the multilaterally developed socialist society, and, implicitly, the cause and work of the entire people. This cardinal thesis governs all fields of activity involved in the efforts made for strengthening the country's defence capability, the contents, structure and traits of Socialist Romania's military doctrine.

In the Party outlook the indissoluble unity between construction and defence establishes the importance and size of the place and role of the country's armed power as an integrant part of the social system as a whole, its strength sources and the dialectics of its development. The doctrinal importance of the principle of construction-defence unity has been multilaterally substantiated by Romania's President and Commander-in-Chief of the Romanian armed forces, Nicolae Ceaușescu, as follows : *"the activity of the army, the raising of its political and combat preparedness, its equipment with the necessary means is part and parcel*

*of the building of the multilaterally developed socialist society in our country, of the work of our entire people for the implementation of the home and foreign policy of socialist Romania*"<sup>3</sup>. In the light of this thesis the defence of the homeland's independence, sovereignty and integrity has gained, for the first time in the Romanian military thought and practice, unprecedented doctrinal scope and significance. The organic integration of national defence matters into the process of building up and developing the socialist and communist society is a guarantee for permanently keeping high the country's defence capability, at its best operational level, by intensifying the multilateral action of the factors determining it. On this basis, the present social framework lends the military effort maximal dimensions, generalized on the scale of the entire nation, mustering up, in case of need, all the human, material and military availabilities of the country. The principle of construction-defence unity bestows a realistic and scientific character upon the current Romanian military doctrine, providing it, at the same time, with real chances of development and enrichment abreast with the evolution of the entire social system. The requirements of this principle do not confine to theoretical desiderata, but they take on concrete forms and ways of manifestation in the activity of building up and defending the Romanian society in the present stage. It is on their basis that the concordance between the army's overall training programme and the sole national plan for the country's socio-economic development is achieved. Telling, in this respect, is the fact that the 1986—1990 Five-Year Plan for Romania's development, besides providing the main guidelines for the country's intensive socio-economic development, also marks a new stage in the work and life of the armed forces, in their military and political training, in the rise of the homeland's defence capability to the level of present-day requirements. Likewise, the indissoluble link between construction and defence implies the organic integration of the armed forces in the entire economic, socio-political, cultural, scientific and ideological life of Romania. In this way, the adamant unity between the armed forces and the people acquires new scope, becoming indeed the main motive power of the strengthening of the homeland's defence capability, the indestructible binder of the national defence system of the entire people for the safeguarding of the revolutionary achievements, of the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the outlook of the Romanian Communist Party, of its General Secretary, the homeland's defence is the entire people's cause and work. This outlook has not been worked out on a bare ground, but it represents the quintessence, raised at a higher level, of a multimillenary military experience, according to which the homeland's defence was the first and foremost duty of the Romanians, and the rise up in arms for freedom and independence expressed their unflinching determination to defend their ancestors' land against any invader. In this respect, Nicolae Bălcescu pointed out that : "[...] every Romanian was born with the duty to be a soldier and to defend the State in case of need, and when the enemy encroached upon the Romanian land, the entire country had to rise in arms"<sup>4</sup>.

In the epoch ushered in by the Party Ninth Congress this glorious national military tradition has acquired new socio-political, economic and ideological dimensions, and the homeland's defence has truly become a cause and work of the entire people. Substantiating this cardinal thesis of the present Romanian military thought and practice, Nicolae Ceaușescu, the President of Romania, emphasized that the *"fight against any imperialist aggression, the defence of the country's revolutionary gains and independence can only be the work of our entire Romanian people which, if need be, must rise as one man to safeguard its revolutionary achievements, independence and right to a free life"*<sup>5</sup>.

In keeping with this outlook, the State defence function has been raised to the rank of an all-national cause that can only be achieved through the joint efforts of the entire people. The righteousness of this outlook lies in the decisive role played by the people's masses in history. Under the present-day conditions in the Romanian socialist society every citizen is, on the one hand, an owner, producer and beneficiary of his work's products, and, on the other hand, a defender of his socialist homeland. From a civic duty the homeland's defence has become one of the fundamental rights of every citizen, irrespective of social origin, political allegiance, level of culture, sex, nationality, religion, etc., sanctioned by the country's Constitution and the *Law on the Organization of National Defence in the Socialist Republic of Romania*, and guaranteed by the entire activity carried on by the Party and State in the military field.

The outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on the homeland's defence has taken into account the evolution of the present international situation, the mutations occurred in the contemporary military phenomenon, the impact of the new technical-scientific revolution on the military field, everything valuable in the world military theory and practice. It has been permanently enriched with conclusions and teachings of great theoretical and practical value as a result of the keen analysis of the evolution of the contemporary political-military context made at the congresses, national conferences and plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and on other occasions as well. *"The building of socialist society"*, the head of the Romanian State pointed out, *"is taking place in complex international circumstances, characterized by the existence of power politics, of military conflicts and wars and by the persistence of the danger of a world war. In these circumstances, socialist Romania is in duty bound to take all steps for the development of its defence capability, for the organization, training and endowment of the army, so that, in all circumstances, it should fulfil its sacred duty toward the people and defend the people's revolutionary gains, its independence and sovereignty"*<sup>6</sup>.

The realistic character of the present Romanian outlook on the homeland's defence derives from the agreement of the theses, ideas, conclusions and solutions it contains with the requirements and principles of modern warfare, the mutations occurred in the contemporary military phenomenon, the impact of the new technical-scientific revolution on the military field, the tendencies shown by the evolution of



contemporary doctrinal-strategic outlooks. Moreover, the approach and settlement of the complex problems of national defence in close relation with the socio-political and economic realities of Socialist Romania, with the evolution of the contemporary world political-strategic context lend the Romanian outlook on the homeland's defence a powerful prospective force, a true capacity of anticipating and grasping the current prospects and tendencies in the development of the military phenomena, and of working out realistic, adequate options and solutions for strengthening the homeland's defence capability.

The outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on the homeland's defence is materialized in the military doctrine of the Socialist Republic of Romania, whose founder is President Nicolae Ceauşescu, and which contains an aggregate of theses, ideas and options concerning : the fundamental political-military goal of national defence ; the character, phisognomy and salient features of the entire people's war ; the organization, equipment and training of the forces making up the national defence system ; the inalienable right of the constitutional bodies and Party supreme forums to lead the country's armed forces ; the creation and development of the national production of military technology ; the contents and principles underlying the development of contemporary Romanian military art ; the organization and management of the instructive-educational process in the army ; the principles underlying the Romanian army's cooperation with the armies of the socialist states, with the armies of all peace- and security-loving states, irrespective of their social system.

Setting out from the Romanian people's vital interests and aspirations, from the goals of the Party and State home and foreign policy, the fundamental political-strategic target of the national military doctrine is the defence of the homeland, of the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, of the right to build up the socialist and communist society on the Romanian land. Defining the fundamental target of Romania's efforts in the military field, President Nicolae Ceauşescu pointed out that she *"will never aim at aggressive actions against a State, that under any circumstances, our country, our people will fight only for the defence of its independence and sovereignty, against any attempt of domination and oppression, to ensure our nation the right of building its socialist and communist society freely, in cooperation with the other socialist countries"*<sup>7</sup>. This statement highlights the non-aggressive character of Socialist Romania's military doctrine, the role of the army in the Romanian socialist society.

The fundamental political-military goal of the homeland's defence determines the highly national character of Socialist Romania's military doctrine, being in full agreement with the actual capabilities of the Romanian people, with the need to have one's own military policy and an original doctrinal orientation. "To make the military doctrine an imported product, to transplant it from elsewhere would be tantamount to overlooking the domestic realities it is called upon to mirror, the needs it is bound to answer to the highest degree, the availabilities it has to capitalize as fully, reasonably and efficiently as possible in case of need"<sup>8</sup>.

The outlook of the Romanian Communist Party on the homeland's defence is mirrored in the doctrinal theses, ideas and options referring to the nature, physiognomy and salient features of the war whereby, in the event of an aggression, the Romanian people will defend its revolutionary achievements, national independence and sovereignty, the country's territorial integrity. In the outlook of the Party General Secretary *"for Romania a possible war in the future cannot be but a war for the defence of her revolutionary achievements, against any aggressions, for the defence of the country's integrity and independence and the entire people will participate in it"*<sup>9</sup>.

The Romanian concept of the entire people's war is a synthesis of the experience gained throughout history and the present requirements regarding the strengthening of the homeland's defence capability. The Romanian people's history has confirmed the righteousness and realism of the doctrinal option for the entire people's rise in arms as the sole viable way to defend the homeland against a superior enemy in point of manpower and technology. In the struggles waged along the millennia for the defence of its ancestors' land, the Romanian people accumulated rich and valuable experience conducive to judicious theoretical and practical conclusions on the people's war<sup>10</sup>. It is on this genuine "gold lode" that the present doctrine on the contents, physiognomy and salient features of the entire people's war for Socialist Romania's defence has been multilaterally substantiated.

Besides its national doctrinal importance, the concept of the entire people's war has a particular international significance. It is a faithful expression of the right to self-defence sanctioned by the contemporary international law. Through its targets, political and military contents, the doctrine on the entire people's war for the homeland's defence mirrors the unflinching resolve of the Romanian people to defend the country's liberty and territorial integrity and, at the same time, to make its contribution to the strengthening of security, friendship and peace all over the world.

The Romanian outlook on the people's arming has found its best materialization in the national defence system. By synthesizing the rich and valuable experience of the Romanian people's struggle for freedom and independence, the national military doctrine defines the contents, principles of organization, training and management of the national defence system both in peacetime and in wartime. Unlike other contemporary military systems almost exclusively grounded on the armed forces, the Romanian defence system has a complex and diversified structure capable to ensure the highly efficient and unitary preparation, mobilization and employment of all the country's human, material and military availabilities of the country against any aggressor. Each component of the national defence system has its specific targets, duties, organizational structure and means of action, but they are complementary and convergent as far as their fundamental mission is concerned. The national defence system contains, on the one hand, the armed forces made up of the army (the land, air and naval forces — a.n.) and the forces of the Ministry of the Interior as structures of a standing, specialized, professionalized type, and, on the other hand, the territorial

defence forces and means including the patriotic guards, the youth's formations for the homeland's defence, the civil defence formations as well as other bodies and formations which, according to the law, could be set up in case of need. Following a complex process of strengthening and adaptation, the national defence system keeps improving and developing abreast with the improvement of the social framework, with the country's economic and demographic availabilities, with the preparation of the national territory for defence. On this basis a multifunctional logistic system has been developed which ensures the equipment and provisioning, medical assistance and transports, the financing and rational employment of all means earmarked for national defence.

A major materialization of the Romanian doctrinal outlook on the homeland's defence are the creation and development, on the basis of the increase in the economic and technical-scientific power of the country, of the own armament and military technology production needed for the modern equipment of all the forces in the national defence system. Under the present international political-military circumstances and as a result of the technical-scientific revolution, the creation of the national defence industry is a law-like objective necessity. Firm defence and the strengthening of national sovereignty and independence are un conceivable unless the country's military power is provided with the necessary combat means, first and foremost by the national industry. For Romania this necessity is the more so stringent as the national military doctrine needs such combat means as to answer both the requirements of the entire people's war for the homeland's defence and the country's geoclimatic conditions. As a result of it, on the basis of the highly scientific and realistic outlook worked out by President Nicolae Ceaușescu and in full harmony with the general progress in the Romanian economy, science and technology recorded in the years of socialism, particularly over the last two decades, a strong and modern defence industry has been built in Romania, the production of which has led to the increase, with every passing year, of the combat equipping of the army and of the other forces making up the national defence system with armament and military technology of a Romanian make. If, for instance, in 1965 the national defence industry contributed some 30 per cent to the army equipment, the figure raised to 50 per cent by the end of 1970, to about 65 per cent in 1980 and to over 70 per cent in 1985<sup>11</sup>.

The keystone of Socialist Romania's military doctrine, the essential factor ensuring the cohesion and dynamism of the national defence system is the fundamental doctrinal principle according to which the Romanian Communist Party, the ruling political force in the Romanian socialist society, the vital centre of the nation leads all the forces and means making up the Romanian armed power. The entire, non-transferable responsibility incumbent on the Party and State for the settlement of all problems pertaining to national defence, the organization, equipment, training, employment and command of all the forces called upon to defend the country stems from the very outlook of the Romanian Communist Party, of its General Secretary on the homeland's defence conceived as part and parcel of the work of building up the socialist and communist society on Romania's land. Nobody else can know.

better the needs and the most adequate ways for the organization and securing of the homeland's defence than the Romanian people, its Communist Party, the supreme bodies of Romanian State power. Substantiating this doctrinal principle, which expresses an essential inalienable attribute of national sovereignty, President Nicolae Ceaușescu underlined that the "*sole leader of our Armed Forces is the Party, the Government, the national supreme command, only they can give orders to our Army and only these orders can be carried out in the Socialist Republic of Romania!*"<sup>12</sup>.

For the translation into life of this defining principle of the military doctrine an original system has been institutionalized for the management of national defence, a system that is well structured both horizontally and vertically in the socio-State mechanism, able to ensure a permanent, adequate and competent command at all levels of military actions.

Materializing the Romanian Communist Party's outlook on the homeland's defence, the military doctrine also includes the guiding orientations and principles pertaining to Socialist Romania's military relations with the socialist countries that are members to the Warsaw Treaty, with all the socialist countries, with the developing countries fighting for the consolidation of their national independence, with all states irrespective of their social system. In this domain, the essence of the doctrinal outlook of the Party and State lies in the grounding of these relations on the firm observance of the principles of national independence and sovereignty, full equality of rights, **non-interference in any way** into the internal affairs, mutual advantage, the renunciation of force and the threat of force, the right of every people to be master of its own destinies and decide upon its life as it wishes without any interference from the outside. The concrete principles, forms and ways of military collaboration between Romania and other countries have been laid down in bi- and multilateral treaties, agreements and conventions she is a part to and which contain military stipulations, and in various mutual understandings as well.

A creation of President Nicolae Ceaușescu, the military doctrine of the Socialist Republic of Romania is, therefore, a materialization of the Romanian Communist Party's outlook on the homeland's defence and distinguishes itself through original, scientifically substantiated contents of ideas that ensures the realistic and proper settlement of all problems pertaining to national defence today; at the same time, it stands for a qualitatively higher stage in the development of the Romanian military thought and practice, an original, praiseworthy contribution to the development of contemporary military science.

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## **The “Nicolae Ceaușescu Epoch” — the Epoch of the Most Remarkable Achievements in the Multimillenary History of the Romanian People**

In the Romanian people's multimillenary history the period ushered in by the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party of July 1965 is, beyond any doubt, the epoch of the highest upsurge in all fields of material and spiritual life of the Romanian society. A turning point of utmost importance for the destinies of contemporary Romania, an event unfettering huge creative energies, the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party has propelled the country on the trajectory of the most grandiose achievements throughout its entire existence. It ushered in a period that has entered the Romanians' consciousness as the “Nicolae Ceaușescu Epoch”, in token of their gratitude, appreciation and high esteem for the prominent personality of Romania's leader, for the clear-sightedness and revolutionary spirit with which the people's dearest son is leading the nation's destinies on the road of great economic and social transformations, for the tireless international activity he carries on by consistently promoting a policy placed in the service of peace and détente, of cooperation, for a better and more righteous world on our planet.

Over the past 22 years the innovating outlook of Romania's leader has strongly asserted itself, has put its imprint on the way of being, thinking and working of the Romanian people. Nowadays, there is, in fact, no domain in the economic, political, social, cultural and ideological life that has not undergone a process of fundamental renewing, invigoration and reappraisal, in a profoundly revolutionary spirit, of all problems raised by reality. It is the historic merit of President Nicolae Ceaușescu to have made a keen analysis of all problems involving the country's multilateral development, to have done away with dogmatic and obsolete concepts, with routine and conservatism, to have imposed the firm promotion of a live thinking, of the creative spirit, to have seen that wide possibilities are created for the full assertion of the human personality.

Setting out from the requirements of social progress, from the decisive role of developing the productive forces, of building up a unitary, dynamic, modern and thriving national economy, the head of the Romanian State has worked out and multilaterally substantiated over this period a strategy organically linked to Romania's concrete historical conditions. This strategy includes, among other things : the achievement of a high accumulation rate by earmarking about 30 per cent of the national income for the development fund ; relying on the Romanian people's creative work, on its own efforts ; the harmonious, well-balanced

distribution of the productive forces throughout the homeland's territory ; the development and modernization of industry ; the carrying out of a new agrarian revolution ; the development of education, science and culture ; the moulding of the new-type man, with a deeply revolutionary, patriotic consciousness, fully and responsibly involved in strengthening the defence of the homeland's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The implementation of this strategy has turned Romania from an agrarian country with a backward industry — as she was in 1945 — into an industrial-agrarian country with a strong, modern industry, an agriculture in full swing and thriving science and culture.

Industrialization has been the main orientation in the building up of the new Romanian society. As a result of a wide-scope, deep theoretical and practical reappraisal, industrialization has become the backbone, the pivot of the country's general multilateral progress. Today there is no field of societal development which does not benefit of the decisive contribution of the Romanian industry to the settlement of the complex problems raised by the country's rapid advance on the road of multilateral progress.

Romania's President has consistently militated for a vigorous industrialization of the national economy, at such rates that are seldom reached in the world, for the building of new highly efficient, technical and productive industrial branches and sub-branches, bearers of technological-scientific progress, setting out from the truth demonstrated by life itself that, historically, industrialization is the great and sole chance for building, under Romania's specific conditions, a new prosperous and independent country.

As a result of the steps taken in this respect, in 1986 Romania's industrial output was 111 times higher as compared to 1944<sup>1</sup> and six times bigger as against 1965. At present, 82 per cent of the fixed productive funds were obtained in the 1965—1985 period<sup>2</sup>. Due to the priority development of high technology branches and sub-branches, in 1985 the overall industrial output of 1945 was achieved in only three and a half days, and the industrial output of 1965 in only 60 days<sup>3</sup>.

At the same time, a policy of judicious siting of the productive forces and of balanced development of all the country's counties and localities has been carried out.

After 1965, Romania's agriculture entered a new qualitatively higher stage of development, referred to in the scientific work of Romania's President as the new agrarian revolution. Thanks to the accelerated development of industry, agriculture, in its turn, has benefited of increased technical-material availabilities with every passing year.

It is the indisputable merit of Romania's leader that of having imparted an accelerated dynamics to the development of agriculture, in full agreement with industry, so that, in this way, a train of problems may be solved in the near future, such as the differences between towns and villages, between farm work and industrial work, etc.

The making of a modern national economy is closely linked to the international policy of peace and collaboration, of solving the big issues of the contemporary world, a policy most consistently promoted by Ro-

mania, by her President. The modernization of the Romanian economy materializes in cooperation not only with the developed countries, for drawing the latest gains of world science and technology into the national economic circuit, but also with the developing countries, in order to help them solve the problems raised by their economic development.

Romanian science has known high progress over the last 22 years thus becoming a true productive force.

It is the outlook of Romania's President that science and technological research should underlie the wide-scope modernization programmes of the productive-economic structures, the approach of the laws of nature and society, the entire educational activity for the shaping of a new man, with a revolutionary consciousness and a creative, multilateral personality.

Thanks to the tireless activity of Academician Eng. Elena Ceaușescu, DChem, Chairman of the National Council for Science and Education, a distinguished stateswoman and scholar of world fame, Romanian science devoted all its creative energies to research in the top technology fields. Through a series of original scientific contributions, especially in the field of chemistry, contributions that have been eulogistically appreciated in the widest scientific and technical circles throughout the world, Academician Eng. Elena Ceaușescu, DChem, imparted to the whole scientific activity in Romania the developing rate, quality and innovating, revolutionary spirit necessary for the homeland's rapid and multilateral progress.

The guarantee of the historic achievements of the contemporary Romanian science lies in the training and specialization of a large detachment of specialists and researchers in all fields of activity. If in 1965 Romania had only 43,500 scientists working in 110 research institutes, by the end of 1985 the detachment of the Romanian scientific creation boasted some 263,000 researchers, engineers and highly skilled technicians who worked in 215 institutes, to which 100 farming research and production stations<sup>4</sup> should be added.

During the "Nicolae Ceaușescu Epoch", historical research has acquired its true mission, has rediscovered its genuine springs and importance. Pointing out that nothing can be built if the past is ignored, that it is essential to take over everything good and provide the development with new bases in keeping with the knowledge level reached by mankind, the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party has enriched the science of history with original theses and appreciations on the dialectical relationship between past, present and future.

By outlining the fundamental coordinates of the national history, namely the multimillenary age of the Romanian people, its Daco-Roman origin, its autochthony and continuity in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, the indestructible unity of the Romanians throughout their whole existence as well as their permanent struggle for liberty, for the defence of independence and the accomplishment of the State unity, Romania's President has lent the historical research its full meaning, its true power in moulding the Romanians' national awareness, in the patriotic education of all the homeland's citizens, in instilling into the heart of every inhabitant the firm determination to raise his homeland onto new peaks



of progress and civilization, to defend, even at the cost of his very life, the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of his homeland.

The urge to write history — military history included — the way it was, with its lights and shadows, and not according to one's own subjective wishes or to some momentary political requirements is a guide and directory for Romanian historiography on the road of truth and respect for all peoples.

Underlying the Romanian scientific performances as a strong factor of culture and civilization has been education. Today, every Romanian citizen, irrespective of nationality, is ensured access to all levels and forms of education, ten-year education being compulsory. In Romania education is free, the Romanian State defraying all expenses for the teaching staff and the needed material basis. Quite telling for the prestige of the Romanian higher education is that more than 20,000 students from various countries of the world are learning in Romania every year<sup>5</sup>.

In the 22 years that have elapsed from the Party Ninth Congress, Romanian art and culture have also blossomed out. They offered the entire world telling proofs of the Romanians' talent and artistic vocation through works of great value authored by many plastic artists, musicians, men of letters or by people from other fields of artistic creation and performance.

Everything Romania has achieved during these years has been most expressively materialized in the people's material and spiritual well-being, in an increased level of civilization and in the continuous growth of life quality — the supreme goal of the Party and State policy. Benefiting of this generous policy devoted to man, the entire Romanian people has not only the image of the vast work characterizing the "Ceaușescu Epoch" but also the satisfaction of its own work.

In Romania, a country which does not know today the unemployment phenomenon, job availabilities have increased since 1965 by about 3.4 million<sup>6</sup>. Over the same period the working people's incomes have considerably increased, and so have all categories of pensions.

Industrial development has ensured the necessary conditions for carrying out a vast house building programme. Over the last 20 years about three million flats have been built from State investment funds or with State assistance, which allowed for more than 11 million citizens to move to new dwellings<sup>7</sup>.

Anybody visiting Romania today can see the huge achievements that have radically changed the country's look and the way of life of its inhabitants. Anybody can admire the Danube-Black Sea Canal — a magnificent work which will endure for millennia —, the Transfăgărășan — a road built across the peaks of the stately Southern Carpathians —, the underground railways in Bucharest, big hydro-power stations, the gigantic industrial fortresses, the splendid look of the towns and villages. All this and many other things are telling achievements — that no man of good faith can contest — of the most fertile period in the history of the Romanian nation.

Not only visitors can become acquainted with these achievements. They are known all over the world through the products of the Roma-

nian industry which have met with a well-deserved appreciation beyond the borders of the country : aircraft, helicopters, computers, drilling outfit, high-tonnage sea-going ships, cars, rough ground motor vehicles, diesel-electric locomotives, lathes, railway carriages, automatic telephone exchanges, colour TV sets a.o.

The permanent concern of the Party and State policy for truly reflecting the entire people's interests has entailed, with every new stage in the development of the society, the improvement of management forms, of democracy. The essence of this democracy lies in the ensuring of large political freedoms, of fundamental social rights for all the homeland's citizens, in ensuring the participation of all working people, irrespective of nationality, actually of the entire people in the implementation of the country's home and foreign policy, in the management of the society. On the initiative of President Nicolae Ceausescu a wide, unitary, all-embracing system, unique in its own way, of democratic bodies was set up, institutionalized and permanently perfected : the councils and assemblies of the working people — seen in their threefold position, as owners, producers and beneficiaries of the national wealth —, the county councils, the national councils, and the congresses of the working people in industry, agriculture, education, science, culture and other domains, all of them widely democratic bodies ensuring, by all levels of social organization, the organized participation of all social classes and categories, of the entire people in the working out and implementation of the policy of the Romanian Communist Party, in the management of society as a whole. A telling example of the wide participation of the people's masses in the analysis and settlement of the major problems of the homeland's development is the Third Congress of the Working People, held in September 1986, attended by more than 11,000 delegates, out of which over 600 took the floor and made a great many suggestions on the improvement of work in all fields of activity <sup>8</sup>.

A striking expression of the superiority of socialist democracy, of the system of rights and freedoms guaranteed in Romania are the settlement of the national problem for good and all, the ensuring of full equality of rights in all fields, the participation of every citizen, whatever his nationality, of the entire people on an equal footing in the management of the socio-economic life.

Indeed, in Romania all working people, irrespective of nationality, are ensured the widest rights, the fundamental socio-economic rights in the first place. Romania has ensured what many states, the most developed ones included, have not managed to ensure yet, namely the right to work, one of the fundamental rights of man. In this respect, an essential role has been played by the powerful development of the productive forces, their rational distribution throughout the territory of the country.

Likewise, the right to instruction has been guaranteed and conditions have been provided for mother tongue education as well. As a result of it, young people belonging to the co-inhabiting nationalities can be educated both in their mother tongue and in Romanian, as they choose, enjoying fine opportunities to assert themselves in all domains,

to hold offices according to their competence and training in any socio-economic, administrative, scientific or cultural unit, in any locality or zone in Romania.

The Romanian State also ensures all citizens' access to mass-media— newspapers, magazines, books etc. are printed in large editions in the mother tongue of the nationalities every year —, to culture, to scientific and artistic creation. There is a wide net of musical institutions, cultural-scientific universities, public libraries, museums, memorial houses, cultural houses and clubs, etc., which carry on their activity in the mother tongue of the co-inhabiting nationalities as well.

Among the fundamental issues pertaining to the development and improvement of the entire Romanian socio-economic life, those referring to the defence of the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity have been also brilliantly solved.

President Nicolae Ceaușescu, Commander-in-Chief of the Romanian armed forces, has initiated and substantiated a deeply revolutionary original outlook on national defence. His scientific approach to this matter has aimed at a critical, selective, innovating reappraisal of the previously-used conceptions and solutions, at grounding the State's defence function on original ideas drawn from a comprehensive analysis of the international realities, from the multimillenary experience of the Romanian people with respect to the defence of its national being and ancestral land. The concepts, theses, ideas and solutions initiated to this effect stand out as a decisive contribution to the substantiation of the present Romanian military doctrine, to the enrichment of the national military art, which are exclusively serving the defence of Romania's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Within the context of the homeland's defence, Romania's President has stated the fundamental thesis according to which this is part and parcel of the complex process of building up the new society. This thesis has been developed and completed through pointing out the connexions characterizing the construction-defence unity, namely that the character, level and structure of the national economy, in a word the country's economic power, have a direct and decisive influence on the military power of the State. In this respect, the Commander-in-Chief has underlined that “[...] *the ever stronger socio-economic development, the continuous rise of the material and spiritual living standard of our people are decisive factors for the strengthening of the country's defence capacity [...]*”<sup>9</sup>, that the greater the successes in this domain, the stronger the determination and firmness of the entire people to defend its achievements, its homeland and independence.

In full agreement with the fundamental aspirations of the Romanian people, President Nicolae Ceaușescu has clearly defined the strategic aim of Romania's efforts in the field of national defence, as well as the kind of armed response that our country will give to any aggressor who would infringe on the homeland's supreme interests, pointing out that: “[...] *unless we succeed in hindering a new world war and in securing peace, a future war will be for Romania a war of defence of her revolutionary achievements, against any aggression, for the de-*

*fence of the country's integrity and independence, and the entire people will participate in it!"*<sup>10</sup>

The essence of this conception lies in the fact that in case of an armed aggression against Romania the country will commit to struggle, in one form or another, the entire able-bodied population. However, the overall commitment of the nation to this military effort calls for the existence of a defence system able to meet in the best possible way the needs of the entire people's war. This system, created on the basis of the clear-sighted outlook of the leader of the Party and State, is the most impressive achievement in the field of the strengthening of the homeland's defence capacity during the epoch ushered in by the Party Ninth Congress.

The essential features of the present defence system of Socialist Romania as against previous postures or other contemporary military systems are its original structures, and its structural and functional valences. It consists of the country's armed forces, i.e. the army (land, air and naval forces), and the units of the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the patriotic guards, the youth's defence formations and the civil defence formations. This structure provides an adequate organizational framework for training and preparing the entire human and material resources of the country in peacetime, and for a decisive response in the event of an aggression.

By creatively developing the Party's outlook on the role and place of the army within the social organism as a whole, the Commander-in-Chief has worked out new, original theses and ideas, highly valuable orientations in terms of principles and methodology which clearly outline the missions incumbent on this State establishment in the entire economic, social, political and cultural-scientific life of the country. Following the implementation of this outlook, today there is no field of socio-economic life in which the Romanian army, part and parcel of the people and its armed detachment, does not take an active part or have a great share. In the outlook of the Romanian nation's leader, it is only by closely blending the work for the homeland's development with the preparation for defence that the Romanian army will be even more strongly linked to the entire people, will know why it has to do its utmost in order to defend the peaceful work, Romania's life and independence.

Looking in retrospect at the road covered during this period of great achievements in the life of the Romanian people, we can say with good reason that Romania has made huge steps forward, that she has gone a long way from the starting point in her development, that is after the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation in August 1944. This road was anything but smooth; there have been many obstacles and hardships, most of which of an objective nature, but sometimes of a subjective nature, too. Among the objective hardships, beside the big natural calamities that have struck Romania (devastating floods in 1970 and 1975, a catastrophic earthquake on March 4, 1977), she has also felt the negative effects of the world economic recession, as well as of the unjust policy of high interests rates, of international usury. As a result, in 1981—1985 alone Romania was

compelled to pay an additional sum of more than 2 billion dollars following the increase of interests as against the initial level<sup>11</sup>. Telling for the subjective hardships Romania had to face are President Nicolae Ceaușescu's words: *"We had to overcome a lot of hardships, while advancing on unknown paths. Certain mistakes, too, were made, there were certain shortcomings, and a number of new contradictions cropped up. But characteristic of the entire activity throughout this period has been the Party's determined action to do away with everything negative, to overcome the difficulties, shortcomings and contradictions, to achieve a full agreement between the productive forces and the social relations, with a view to ensuring the balanced, harmonious development of all economic and social sectors, of our country in general. This has ensured our steady advance onto new peaks wherefrom we can confidently look farther [...]"*<sup>12</sup>.

In conformity with the resolution of the Party Thirteenth Congress, the fundamental strategic goal of the 1986—1990 Five-Year Plan is Romania's advance, until 1990, from the stage of a developing country to a superior one, that of a medium-developed country. *"By 2000"*, President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out, *"Romania will be a multilaterally developed socialist country in terms of industry, agriculture, education, science and culture, of the general living and civilization standards of the people"*<sup>13</sup>.

For the attainment of this goal, Romania has passed to the intensive development of the entire national economy, resolutely carrying through a new technical-scientific revolution and a new agrarian revolution. In fact, the intensive reorganization of all industrial branches will be generally completed in a few years' time, so that the general level attained by the industrial output, its quality and technology be comparable with the levels reached by the economically developed countries. This will provide the necessary means for raising the material and spiritual living standards of the people, and for further developing the productive forces, science and culture as decisive factors of Romania's advance onto new peaks of progress and civilization.

An outstanding achievement of the epoch ushered in by the Party Ninth Congress and a telling proof of the Romanians' wish for peace, friendship and cooperation with all the states of the world, whether big or small and irrespective of their social system, the foreign policy promoted by Romania throughout this period has earned her the status of an active participant in the settlement of the big problems confronting mankind.

The entire activity carried on by the Romanian State in the international life has rendered evident, with the undeniable force of facts, the organic intertwining, actually the indissoluble unity between home and foreign policy, the idea according to which the successful implementation of the programme of economic-social development has been and will be possible only under conditions of peace and détente, of international harmony. Grounding her foreign policy on the principles of full equality of rights, respect for national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, mutual advantage, renunciation of the use and threat of force, Romania has carried on a broad, widely

open international activity in the name of the loftiest ideals of the contemporary epoch.

The dynamics in Romania's international policy is reflected, among other things, by the wide development of her foreign relations. If in 1965 Romania had diplomatic relations with 67 countries (economic relations with 98), today she develops diplomatic and economic relations with 155 states<sup>14</sup>.

Of utmost significance to the development of Romania's international relations have been the intense activity carried on by the leader of the Romanian Party and State, his numerous meetings with heads of states and governments, and party leaders, the visits he made to other countries. Since the Party Ninth Congress there have been more than 200 top-level official visits to countries on all continents, and meetings and talks with over 300 heads of states and governments<sup>15</sup> have taken place in Romania. The 22 treaties of friendship, more than 100 solemn statements and joint statements, and about 560 other official documents concluded on those occasions<sup>16</sup> have opened large prospects for the development of Romania's collaboration with those states, both bilaterally and in the international arena, for the promotion of each and every people's concern for peace, détente and progress.

Decisively stimulated by the political thought and action of President Nicolae Ceaușescu, Romania has played an active, highly dynamic role in the settlement of the cardinal problems confronting the world at present: peace and disarmament, nuclear disarmament first and foremost, security and cooperation in Europe and throughout the world, eradication of underdevelopment and the building of a new international economic and political order, the democratization of international relations, the problems of the environment, etc. Romania's initiatives in this respect are well known in the world. Let us mention some of them: at the suggestion of Romania the UN General Assembly proclaimed the "UN Decade for Disarmament 1970—1980"; the significant contribution to the preparation, development and successful conclusion of the first Conference for security and cooperation in Europe, to the drafting of the Final Act signed in Helsinki; Romania's great share in the convening and proceedings of the first special session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament held in 1978; "The Appeal of the Romanian People" bearing 18 million signatures, forwarded to the second special session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament; at Romania's proposal, in 1982 the UN General Assembly adopted the "Statement on the Peaceful Settlement of International Differenda", while in 1985, again on the initiative of Romania, it unanimously passed the "Solemn Appeal to all states in conflict to put an immediate end to armed actions and settle the issues between them by way of negotiations and of the pledge of the UN member states to exclusively settle all extant tensions, conflicts and differenda by political way, to renounce the use of force and any interference in the internal affairs of other states"; the submission to the special session of the UN General Assembly in 1975 of the document entitled "Romania's stand on the building of a new international economic order", and many other such initiatives.

Evidence of the high prestige, consideration and esteem enjoyed by the activity of President Nicolae Ceaușescu, more than 150 volumes, either authored by him or dedicated to his personality, were printed in 21 languages — among them all international languages —, in some 30 countries all over the world<sup>17</sup>.

The international developments of the last 22 years fully confirmed the correctness of the assessments made by Romania's leader on the characteristics of the contemporary epoch, on the contradictions and evolution of the international life, which testifies to his great capacity of scientifically analyzing and interpreting the complex contemporary international phenomenon, its fundamental processes and tendencies.

Pointing out that the older contradictions in the world have grown worse, Romania's President has underlined that the contradictions between rich and poor countries have escalated as never before, that during the last few years the international life has reached unprecedented tension, the highest since the end of World War II. *"The growing danger of a new world war, of a nuclear catastrophe"*, President Nicolae Ceaușescu showed, *"asks all peoples to do their utmost to check the dangerous course of events. That is why the fundamental problem of the contemporary era is the halting of the arms race, first and foremost of the nuclear one, the passage to disarmament and the ensurance of a lasting peace in the world"*<sup>18</sup>.

During the referendum organized on November 23, 1986, the Romanian people, voicing its supreme aspiration of peace, its wish to build a new society in peaceful conditions, answered the appeal of President Nicolae Ceaușescu in an impressive unity by saying a steady "YES" to the five per cent cut down, already in 1986, in Romania's armaments, military manpower and expenditures. Through this collective decision, of overwhelming historic and exceptional political significance, the Romanians have set the whole world an example of a people which has conscientiously assumed the historic responsibility of opening the road towards the true implementation of disarmament as a vital desideratum of mankind.

The outlook of President Nicolae Ceaușescu on the important role incumbent on the Romanian army in the struggle for disarmament is an example worth being followed by all the states of the world. Pointing out that the Romanian army is part and parcel of the people, Romania's President underlined that: *"everything that is done — in one field or another — interests our army as well. Therefore the achievement of disarmament, a cut in the military spendings is also a concern of the army. Perhaps the military men understand better than other people do that it is high time for an end to be put to the arms race, for the passage to disarmament, primarily nuclear disarmament. In this sense the military men must be more active than they have been so far"*<sup>19</sup>. Calling the attention to the growing gap between the economically developed countries and the poorly developed ones, to the existence of large areas of starvation, poverty and illiteracy in the world, Romania's leader has consistently underlined the necessity of building a new political and economic order, a fairer and more righteous life on our planet.

Seen at history scale, 22 years are a relatively short period of time, but for the Romanian people it has been the period of the most impressive achievements throughout its multimillenary existence. Never was the Romanians' history so rich in achievements, never had the life of the Romanian people a clearer and brighter sense, and never did the Romanians' homeland enjoy, in the constellation of the world's states, the magnificence it has acquired in this epoch — the "Nicolae Ceaușescu Epoch".

## Notes

1. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 29, Editura Politică, București, 1987, p. 678.
2. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 29, Editura Politică, București, 1987, p. 456.
3. *Scinteia* of July 19, 1986, p. 2.
4. *Scinteia* of July 19, 1986, p. 3, and *România liberă* of July 17, 1986, p. 3.
5. *Scinteia* of July 19, 1986, p. 8.
6. *Ibidem*, p. 2.
7. *Ibidem*, p. 3.
8. *Scinteia* of September 7, 1986, p. 1.
9. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 29, Editura Politică, București, 1987, p. 245.
10. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 29, Editura Politică, București, 1987, p. 246.
11. "Comunicat cu privire la îndeplinirea Planului național unic de dezvoltare economico-socială a Republicii Socialiste România pe anul 1985 și pe întreg cincinalul 1981—1985" (Communiqué on the Implementation Stage of the Sole National Plan for the Socio-Economic Development of the Socialist Republic of Romania in 1985 and over the 1981—1985 Quinquennium), in *Scinteia* of February 7, 1986, p. 2.
12. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 29, Editura Politică, București, 1987, p. 458.
13. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building Up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 28, Editura Politică, București, 1985, p. 54.
14. *Scinteia* of July 19, 1986, p. 8.
15. *Scinteia* of July 19, p. 8.
16. *Ibidem*.
17. *Ibidem*.
18. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Romania on the Way of Building Up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society), Vol. 28, Editura Politică, București, 1985, p. 84.
19. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building Up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 20, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981, p. 483.



# Book Reviews

## OPERA TOVARĂȘULUI NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU — TEMELIE A GÎNDIRII ȘI PRACTICII MILITARE ROMĂNEȘTI CONTEMPORANE (COMRADE NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU'S WORK — FOUNDATION OF THE ROMANIAN CONTEMPORARY MILITARY THOUGHT AND PRACTICE).

Panel of authors : General *Constantin Olteanu*, DHist, General *Iulian Topliceanu*, PhD, Lieutenant-General (Ret) *Gheorghe Zaharia*, DHist, Colonel *Florian Tucă*, DHist, Colonel *Gheorghe Tudor*, DHist, Editura Militară, București, 1985, 205 pp.

In the history of the Romanian people, the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party has been a true turning point with a far-reaching historic echo, an epoch-making event that has wrought deep-going transformations in the social and economic environment and has brought about progress and great achievements. An epoch that bears the name of President Nicolae Ceaușescu, entrusted by that congress with the leadership of Romania's destinies, the activity and creation of whom are indissolubly related to the tremendous changes undergone by Socialist Romania.

The book, written by a prestigious panel of authors, is a homage paid to the original contribution of the leader of Socialist Romania to the development of military science, theory, art and practice, to his decisive role in working out Romania's military doctrine. The authors' comprehensive analytic and descriptive approach is organized in five chapters, which present the determining influence exerted by the vast work of President Nicolae Ceaușescu on the present-day socio-political thought, his decisive contribution to the scientific substantiation of the country's multilateral development programmes, of the Romanian Communist Party's policy regarding the defence of the revolutionary achievements, of national independence and sovereignty, to the substantiation of the national military doctrine and of the role of the army in the socialist society, to the development of the contemporary military thought.

Stress is laid on the turning point marked by the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in the country's life, due to the "[...] *definite departure from the old, dogmatic, rigid conceptions, taking a firm stand against everything no longer harmonizing with the new economic and social conditions, boldly promoting the new in all fields of activity*"<sup>1</sup>.

From the vast socio-political work of the leader of the Romanian nation, a lengthy survey is made of the theses, ideas, assessments and orientations referring to: the stages of the revolution and socialist construction in Romania and the continuity of the revolutionary process; the dialectics of the general-particular and objective-subjective relations in the building and defence of the socialist system in the contemporary epoch; theoretical and practical questions raised by the growing role of the subjective factor in the building up of the new society; the essence, role and functions of the socialist State, the State of the revolutionary workers' democracy<sup>2</sup>; the struggle between the old and the new in society; the role of nations under the present-day circumstances and in the future; the dialectical correlation between home and foreign policy. The authors have also showed

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 15, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1979, p. 373.

the realistic solutions offered by President Nicolae Ceaușescu in his work for the settlement of the cardinal issues of the contemporary world, solutions based on a thorough analysis of the contemporary epoch, of the processes and tendencies manifest worldwide, and which envisage the ensurance of a lasting peace on our planet through the cessation of the arms race, of the nuclear one in particular, the passage to disarmament, the establishment of a new international economic order.

A special chapter has been devoted to the most intense activity deployed by the leader of the Romanian people starting with his youth years and until the Ninth Party Congress, a period which contributed to his formation and development as a staunch revolutionary, in the heavy heroic struggle carried on under the banner of the Romanian Communist Party during the underground years, in the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation of August 1944, in the great battles for the transformation of the Romanian society.

As a result of a vast documentation, rich data are provided with respect to the contribution made by the President of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu, to the development and implementation of the RCP policy in the military field over the period spanning 1950—1954, when he was in the higher command of the army, with the rank of a general, in his capacity as Deputy Minister and Head of the Higher Political Department of the Army and then as First Deputy Minister. This chapter lays stress on the actions taken by the President of Romania for the elaboration of new regulations and instructions which gave scope to the exercising by the Communist Party of its leading role within the army, for the establishment of a new system of training, instruction and guidance of the Party cadres, of the military cadres in general, for the settlement of the major problems of the instructive-educational process as the main factor increasing the combat readiness of the army, for the improvement of the military education system. The authors underline the truth that, after the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party, a new, decisive stage has been ushered in as regards the working out of a scientific outlook able to ensure a unitary guidance of all efforts made for the increase of the defence capability. Emphasis is placed on the theses, ideas and orientations of utmost value in the theoretical work of the Romanian leader referring to: the dialectical unity existing between the work of building up the multilaterally developed socialist society and the strengthening of the homeland's defence capability; the social character of homeland's defence; the inalienable right of the country's constitutional bodies, of the Romanian Communist Party to decide on the training and employment of the armed forces of Romania, to run the entire national defence system; the principles underlying military cooperation with the countries that are members to the Warsaw Treaty, with all socialist countries, the developing states and other states, irrespective of their social system.

The book enlarges upon President Nicolae Ceaușescu's outstanding contribution to the working out of Socialist Romania's military doctrine as a unitary aggregate of ideas and principles adopted by the Romanian State, the totality of its options concerning the organization, equipment, training and running of the forces and means meant to defend the people's socialist achievements, the homeland's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression. An analysis is made of the concept of the entire people's war, a concept specific to the Romanian contemporary military doctrine, extensively and thoroughly substantiated by the Party and State leader, who underlined: "[...] a possible war in the future cannot be but a defence war, a people's war, in which the entire people should participate, closely united, under the leadership of our Communist

*Party — the leading political force of the nation, therefore of the fight for the defence of the independence and the revolutionary conquests”*<sup>2</sup>. The national defence system, the materialization of the doctrinal principle of arming the people, has been devoted a section of the monograph, with emphasis on its components, structure and tasks in the light of the ideas and orientations of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Another chapter of the book deals with the original outlook of the leader of the Romanian people and its role in the socialist society. Scientifically appraising the complex problems of the army, President Nicolae Ceaușescu has substantiated theses, ideas and orientations of a high value in terms of principles and methodology, which define the army as a projection of the people, a school of political, patriotic and revolutionary education, an institution of utmost importance of the socialist State, and has set the objectives, directions and tasks for enhancing its combat capability, for involving it in the socio-economic development of the country, in the entire socio-political life, in the implementation of the foreign policy of the Romanian Communist Party and of the Romanian State.

This chapter also contains the defining orientations in the work of the leader of the Romanian nation in connection with the organization, development and content of the instructive-educational process, meant to ensure that the training of the army and of the other component parts of the national defence system be done according to the latest gains in the field of military science and technology, of other sciences, in keeping with the conclusions drawn from the experience of the defence fights fought by the Romanian people, from a critical approach to the lessons of contemporary military developments.

While stressing President Nicolae Ceaușescu's prestigious contribution to the development of military thought, the authors also put forward new ideas and conclusions as to the types of war under the present-day circumstances, their socio-political and military essence, the causes and bearings of armed conflicts nowadays, man's decisive role in coming out victorious in just, legitimate wars for the liberation and defence of one's own homeland.

Through its entire content, the present monograph is a rigorous survey of President Nicolae Ceaușescu's thought and action devoted to Romania's socio-economic development, special emphasis being laid on the novel original contribution to the development and enrichment of the revolutionary theory and practice regarding the homeland's defence, the safeguarding of peace, of the freedom and independence of all the peoples of the world.

*Senior Lieutenant SORIN ENCUȚESCU*

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<sup>2</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 13, Meridiane Publishing House, 1978, p. 418.

## **ISTORIA MILITARĂ A POPORULUI ROMÂN (THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE)**

Vol. I, **DIN CELE MAI VECHI TIMPURI PÎNĂ ÎN SECOLUL AL XIV-LEA** (FROM THE OLDEST TIMES TO THE 14TH CENTURY). Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, DHist (Editor), Editura Militară, București, 1984, 436 pp. + 188 illustrations ;

Vol. II, **EPOCA DE GLORIE A OASTEI CELEI MARI. A DOUA JUMĂTATE A SECOLULUI AL XIV-LEA — PRIMA JUMĂTATE A SECOLULUI AL XVI-LEA** (THE GLORIOUS AGE OF THE GREATER ARMY. THE LATTER HALF OF THE 14TH CENTURY — THE FIRST HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY). Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, DHist (Editor), Editura Militară, București, 1986, 638 pp. + 270 illustrations ;

Vol. III, **EPOCA LUPTEI NAȚIONALE PENTRU UNITATE, LIBERTATE ȘI INTEGRITATE TERITORIALĂ. DIN EPOCA LUI MIHAI VITEAZUL PÎNĂ ÎN AJUNUL REVOLUȚIEI POPULARE CONDUSE DE HOREA (1550—1784)** (THE EPIC OF THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR UNITY, FREEDOM AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. FROM THE EPOCH OF MICHAEL THE BRAVE UNTIL THE EVE OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION LED BY HOREA — 1550—1784). Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, DHist (Editor), Editura Militară, București, 1987, 688 pp. + 279 illustrations.

A comprehensive ten-volume survey of the military past of the Romanian people is to be brought out, fruit of the endeavours of a large team of military and civilian historians guided by Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, LHist, under the aegis of the Romanian Commission of Military History and of the Centre for Studies and Research in Military History and Theory. The first three volumes of *Istoria militară a poporului român* were brought out by the Military Publishing House in 1984, 1986 and 1987. It is a work that supplies ample information and displays original methods of approaching the studied phenomena, bringing novel things in Romanian historiography. It relies on the outlook that the multimillenary military history of the Romanian people is an inseparable and integrant part of the national history as a whole.

The first volume, which deals with the military history from ancient times to the 14th century, presents the military art and strategy of the Romanians in a unitary conception, in the context of their uninterrupted abidance in the same place — the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. An ample and documented survey is made of the beginnings of the military phenomenon ; the socio-political evolution of the northern Thracian tribes and the military assertion of the Geto-Dacians, starting in the 6th century BC with the armed confrontations of the Romanian people's ancestors with the Persian, Macedonian, Celtic and Scythian armies ; the formation of the centralized independent Dacian State ; Dacia's military policy under Burebista ; the military confrontations between Dacians and Romans in the 1st century BC ; Dacian wars under Decebalus to check Roman expansion ; the political-military developments in Dacia in the 2nd-3rd centuries AD ; the resistance struggle of the Romanian people against the invasions of the migratory populaces ; the struggle of the Romanian polities in defence of their autonomy in the 8th—13th centuries ; the setting up of the independent feudal states in the 14th century.

The military history of the epoch is described in close correlation with the other defining phenomena of the socio-economic life. The authors lay stress on the originality of the Geto-Dacian civilization, on the formation of the Romanian people, pointing out that its existence in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area started in the 3rd century AD. A remarkable scientific analysis is made of the emergence and development of the State with the Romanians, and irrefutable data are supplied

to demonstrate that, through its ancestors, the Romanian people boasts a more than 2,000 year-old State life. Casting light on the most valuable historical sources and archaeological evidence, the authors place their main emphasis on the uninterrupted continuity of the material and spiritual life, as well as of State organization throughout the period under discussion.

The second volume deals with the evolution of the Romanian military phenomenon in the interval spanning the latter half of the 14th century — when the self-reliant feudal states asserted themselves — mid-16th century, when important economic, social, political and military mutations occurred in the Romanian society.

A natural continuation of the first volume, the second tome brings out in bold relief the fact that over the 14th—16th centuries, the military factor — in its most direct expression: the army — distinguished itself among the basic components that ensured the evolution of the Romanian people in its specific framework. Facing multiple and quasipermanent dangers, having to fight for her own survival, mediaeval Romania kept improving her military instrument, so as to render it capable to discharge its missions, building it according to availabilities and shaping it according to long-standing traditions.

The book reflects the evolution of the Romanian mediaeval military structure in accordance with the determining economic, social, political and cultural factors, with the quantitative and qualitative changes in world military history, in general, and in Central and Southeast European military history, in particular.

Several chapters are devoted to the dynamics of military processes, with special stress on the consolidation of the Romanian countries of Muntenia (Wallachia), Moldavia and Transylvania during the confrontations with the Hungarian Kingdom and the first fights with the Ottomans, by mid-15th century, victorious confrontations led by great army commanders such as Mircea the Great, Alexander the Good, Dan II, John of Hunedoara and Vlad the Impaler.

An extensive survey is made of the new historical stage marked by the military policy for the defence of State freedom and integrity in the epoch dominated by Stephen the Great, a prominent personality of military thought and practice. Marked by brilliant victories in the battlefield, Stephen the Great's epoch was an acme of the Romanian mediaeval military history. Other State leaders such as Petru Rareș, Neagoe Basarab or Radu of Afumați enhanced the political and military brilliance of the epoch ushered in by Stephen the Great.

The volume makes a synthesis of the main features of the military effort deployed along two hundred years of heroic fight for free Romanian statehood and also reveals the peaks reached by Romanian military thought and art in the glorious age of the "greater army".

Based on the thorough study of ample Romanian and world history, on the critical reappraisal of primary sources, the third volume, which covers the latter half of the 16th century through the 18th century, succeeds in highlighting the fact that starting with the latter half of the 16th century and until mid-17th century the development of events concentrated on the achievement, with the military means characteristic of that time, of the union of the three Romanian countries — Transylvania, Muntenia and Moldavia — into a centralized unitary and independent State. The Union Century was marked by the exemplary military effort of the entire Romanian people under the glorious banner of its aspirations after unity and independence, and Romanian history ranked at a place of honour the names and deeds of some great rulers and army commanders. Among them, one man and his deed shine with the force of an emblem — Michael the Brave and

the Union of 1599—1600 — who provided the Romanian people with a political programme and a never-dying creed.

The authors lay stress on the fact that even though the overwhelming concentric aggression of the neighbouring great powers led to the annulment of the Brave's deed and hindered the restoration of the union, in the ensuing stage, the Reforms Century, the Romanian society worked out and developed adequate means apt to ensure, notwithstanding the pressure exerted by the empires contesting with each other over the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, its ethnic and political survival. In the volume it is forcefully shown that by brilliantly blending diplomacy with armed defence, the Romanian people firmly embarked upon the modernization of its own socio-economic, political and military structures, that were to enable it, under new circumstances, to carry on its struggle for independence and union.

Large room has been devoted in the volume to the evolution of Romanian military thought and art, to the salient features of the Romanian outlook on warfare and military organization, to the specific original contribution of the Romanian people to the development of European military science. The volume is intended for specialists and all those fond of history alike, as a valuable guide to and first hand documentary source on Romania's history.

The three volumes benefit by extensive bibliographies — general bibliographies, and a bibliography after each chapter —, glossaries of technical terms and detailed indexes. The text is richly illustrated with maps, sketches, photos, which help providing data and aspects that otherwise could not have found their place in the book.

*Colonel VASILE ALEXANDRESCU, DHist*

Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, DHist,  
**INDEPENDENȚA POPORULUI ROMÂN — OBIECTIV FUNDAMEN-  
TAL AL POLITICII PARTIDULUI COMUNIST ROMÂN. TRADIȚIE,  
ACTUALITATE, PERSPECTIVE\*** (THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE  
ROMANIAN PEOPLE — FUNDAMENTAL AIM OF THE ROMANIAN  
COMMUNIST PARTY'S POLICY. TRADITIONS, PRESENT FEATURES,  
PROSPECTS)

Editura Militară, București, 1986, 366 pp.

An outstanding editorial event of 1986 was the publication of the book *Independența poporului român — obiectiv fundamental al politicii Partidului Comunist Român. Tradiție, actualitate, perspectivă*, which enriches the important work of Lieutenant-General *Ilie-Ceaușescu*, DHist, a Romanian military historian well known in the international historiography. The book approaches, under various aspects, a paramount and most topical issue of the contemporary world — the independence of the nations and states — providing an exhaustive scientific survey of the subject in terms of international law, history and politics, highly relevant for the past, present and future of the phenomenon under discussion.

The author makes an in-depth analysis of the concept of independence as a principle of international law, and reveals the fact that despite its relatively late emergence in the historical evolution of interstate relationships, due to the opposition of empires, the fight for independence was the complement of the development, along centuries, of the subjugated, oppressed peoples or peoples in the sphere of interests of those empires, the Romanian people's history serving as an illustration in this respect.

Making a synthetic analysis of the circumstances in which the principle of independence emerged until its conventional sanctioning as a fundamental principle of the contemporary international law, the author surveys and refutes the attempts of some theoreticians of imperialist and neoimperialist allegiance to empty it of substance by advancing all kinds of theories, such as that of limited sovereignty, restricted independence, or of a world State.

The arguments on the objective law-like requirement for the promotion of the principle of State independence and sovereignty in interstate relations render the book highly topical and give it perspective, as the observance of this principle entails the observance of all the other fundamental principles of contemporary international law — the principle of the sovereign equality of states, the principle of non-interference in home affairs, the principle of non-resorting to the threat and use of force, the principle of the peaceful settlement of interstate disputes, the principle of self-determination, the principle *pacta sunt servanda*, etc. — which, as known, make up a *body of norms* of utmost generality, imperatives pertaining to the *jus cogens*, hence binding all states to observe them, thus meeting the aims of contemporary international law — peace on our planet.

As it is only natural, the greatest part of the book is devoted to the firm and courageous actions of Socialist Romania, of the Romanian Communist Party, for the assertion and consolidation of national independence, the fact being stressed with good reasons that throughout the entire multimillenary history of the Romanian people *independence* has been its most cherished asset, for the maintenance of

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\* An English version of the book has been published in September this year.



which tremendous human and material efforts have been made, and which is, today too, the fundamental aim of the entire Romanian home and foreign policy.

Naturally, the Romanian current outlook on national independence, the fruit of the original and daring thought of President Nicolae Ceaușescu, has acquired a new and comprehensive form. The author deals at length with the concept, pointing out the objective, plenary and inalienable character of national independence, which is not a gift from others, but an imprescriptible right of the nations. "Refusing in all firmness, in August 1944, to let others decide on its future", the author shows, "the Romanian nation showed ostensibly its resolve to unwaveringly follow that path, to admit no foreign interference in its home affairs, in its independent assertion worldwide".

In the years following the victory of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation, and mostly after the outstanding event in the Romanian history that was the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party of July 1965, Romania has resolutely and irreversibly pursued a courageous policy in support of the principles of national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in home affairs: her stand has been in full concordance with the objective requirements of the present world, with the foremost aspirations of the peoples. This policy, the author points out, has earned Romania an unparalleled prestige in history so that, nowadays, in the literature devoted to contemporary international politics the name of Romania and of President Nicolae Ceaușescu signify the steady promotion of the principle of national independence and sovereignty, of the other basic principles of contemporary international law.

The author's severe criticism of unscientific theories on an alleged obsolescence of the concepts of State and independence is based on solid arguments which demonstrate the necessity for a long-term maintenance of national states as subjects of international relations, within a system helping them fully assert their complete equality and independence, as an important prerequisite for the eradication of economic gaps, for the building up of a new world economic order.

The book ends with the axiomatic words of the President of Socialist Romania: "*The future belongs to a better and fairer world, to social and national equality, respect for each people's right to free and independent development*". A possibility and a desideratum which may come true if the peoples understand that independence is the most valuable asset for which no sacrifice is too great, a truth historian Ilie Ceaușescu magnificently demonstrates in his new highly topical book, meant for a wide range of readers — historians, diplomats, jurists, political scientists, etc. —, Romanians and foreigners alike.

Major IOAN TALPEȘ, DHist

*Ilie Ceaușescu, Florin Constantiniu, Mihail E. Ionescu,*  
**ROMANIA, 23 AUGUST 1944.**  
**200 DAYS SPARED FROM WORLD WAR II,**  
Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1984, 243 pp.

Authored by prestigious and well-known historians, the book was brought out first in Romanian (1984 and 1985), then in English (*Romania, 23 August 1944. 200 Days Spared from World War II*, Bucharest, 1984, and *A Turning Point in World War II. 23 August in Romania*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985), Spanish (*Con 200 días de antelación*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985) and French (*200 jours plus tôt. La seconde guerre mondiale écourtée grâce à la Roumanie*, Imprimerie Orveninghe Courtrai, Belge, 1986). It is the fruit of ample research on Romanian and world history, pointing out the truth that the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation triggered off under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party on August 23, 1944, an event of utmost importance of World War II, which brought the victory over Nazi Germany at least six months nearer, was an organic part of the multimillenary struggle of the Romanian people in defence of the integrity of its national territory and of its independence, threatened almost always by superior enemies, for the assertion of its aspirations after peace, good neighbourhood and understanding among peoples. Showing that the Romanian revolution of August 1944 was the outcome of the unity of action of the whole Romanian nation, the authors point out that the historic act of August 23, 1944, had not been a mere change in the political régime, the result of a coup d'état, but the very acme of a long struggle for the restoration of national independence, for the democratic renewal of the country the entire Romanian nation was hoping for.

With an extensive archive documentation as a basis, the development of the Romanian revolution of August 1944 is described, emphasis being laid on the fact that it started at a time when the defeat of Nazi Germany was not clear yet, as the Wehrmacht still had strong defensive and even offensive capabilities. The major element of the Romanian war effort was the Romanian army (more than 1.1 million soldiers), which on August 23, supported by the entire Romanian people, turned weapons in its entirety against the Wehrmacht. Likewise, the working out of the combat plan devolved upon the supreme national command, at the strategic level, and upon the commanders of large units and units, at the tactical one; over August 23—31, 1944, the Romanian forces liberated through grim fighting the whole national territory then under the jurisdiction of the Romanian government (some 150,000 sq km, the equivalent of the territories of Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark taken together), inflicting heavy casualties upon the enemy (61,503 military). The authors make a survey of the far-reaching international echo of the Romanian revolution all over the world, of the eulogistic comments made by high political and military personalities of that time, by numerous press correspondents, etc. who pointed out the exceptional significance of Romania's political and military action for the course of World War II, and, for the first time in the historiography of the subject, of Nazi reaction to the Romanian revolution and the political, military and propaganda countermeasures undertaken by the Reich to regain control over Romania.

A special place in the structure of the book is held by the chapters on the logistic and political military-strategic impact of the Romanian revolution on the

course of World War II. Underscoring Romania's strategic importance in the war as a whole in summer 1944 and making comparisons with other strategic operations conducted by the armies of the states in the anti-Hitler coalition in the second part of the conflagration, the authors convincingly demonstrate, with professional uprightness, the remarkable contribution of the Romanian action of August 23, 1944, to shortening the last world conflagration. The authors point out that when Romania joined the allies, the strategic situation at the southern wing of the German-Soviet front radically changed, leading to the collapse of the German defensive in Southeast Europe, to a huge translation westward (some 900 km) of the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, a fact that enabled the Soviet forces to cross at a high speed — about 45 km per day — the area freed by the Romanian forces and to take advantage of the “widest open flank ever known in modern warfare”, as commented upon by reputed British military theoretician B. H. Liddel Hart. Equally important was the change in the ratio of forces between the conflicting coalitions, as it suddenly tipped the scale, owing to Romania's daring action, “*in favour of the Allied Nations and against Germany as compared to the period previous to August 23, 1944*”. From the logistic point of view, the authors show, of utmost importance was the fact that, as far as the war economy of Nazi Germany was concerned, the Wehrmacht could no longer use the Romanian oil — and not only the oil, to be sure — which immediately joined the availabilities of the anti-Hitler coalition, and the Nazi war machine was dealt thereby a crushing blow. The act of national dignity performed by the Romanian people in August 1944, the authors further show, also entailed terrible political crises in the states in the orbit of Nazi Germany, i.e. Bulgaria and Finland, which shortly afterwards broke their alliance with the Reich.

Setting out from the fact that Romania's strategic share in the victory over fascism did not end with her joining the allies against Hitler's Germany and Horthy's Hungary, at the end of the book the authors make a brief but relevant survey of Romania's participation in the anti-Hitler war, stressing the overall, multilateral commitment of all military, human, material and financial resources of the country, the strategic contribution to the great victory of May 1945.

All this has entitled the authors to support the irrefutable impressive historical truth according to which Romania's military and economic-financial contribution “shortened the second world conflagration of the 20th century by some 200 days”, and she ranked the fourth among the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, after the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain.

The highly scientific and rigorous analysis, and the correct conclusions put forward make of the book *Romania. 23 August 1944. 200 Days Spared from World War II* a valuable achievement of the Romanian contemporary historiography, an excellent work that singles out the Romanian factor in the military developments that occurred in the final stage of World War II, and helps foreign readers to better know the strategic-political significance of the Romanian action of August 23, 1944, the Romanian share in the victory over fascism.

*Major ALESANDRU DUȚU*

## **COORDONATE ALE DOCTRINEI MILITARE ROMÂNEȘTI** **Studiu politico-militar (COORDINATES OF THE ROMANIAN MILITARY** **DOCTRINE. A Political-Military Study),**

Colonel *Mihai Arsintescu*, Colonel *Victor Deaconu*, PhD, Eds., Editura Militară, București, 1986, 327 pp.

In the period ushered in by the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party of July 1965, the renewing outlook of Nicolae Ceaușescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, President of the Socialist Republic of Romania and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, has had a decisive impact on all domains of the economic, social and political life in Romania. Within these domains, national defence as well has undergone radical, renewing changes in both military theory and practice.

The outlook of the Romanian Communist Party, of its General Secretary on the homeland's defence materializes in the current military doctrine of the Romanian State, a doctrine relying upon the lessons drawn from the homeland's multi-millenary history, upon Romania's present-day realities considered against the background of the international developments.

Its salient features are presented in the book *Coordonate ale doctrinei militare românești*, a valuable political-military study worked out under the aegis of the Centre for Studies and Research in Military History and Theory in Bucharest by a team of experts in this domain: Colonel *Mihai Arsintescu*, Colonel *Victor Deaconu*, PhD, Colonel *Emil Burbulea*, Colonel *Aurel Petri*, PhD, Colonel *Emanoil Stanislav*, Colonel *Constantin Toderășcu*, DHist, Lieutenant-Colonel *Valentin Moldoveanu*, Major *Simion Boncu*, Major *Iacob Prada*, Captain *Barbu Aanei*, Captain *Alexandru Donovici*.

Furthering previous preoccupations, the authors have intended and fully managed to synthetize the richness of ideas that lend content and originality to the Romanian current military doctrine, to highlight the profoundly scientific and realistic character of the RCP outlook on the homeland's defence, the theses, principles, norms and fundamental orientations of the activity in the field of national defence, the modalities of translating them into military practice.

Stressing President Nicolae Ceaușescu's decisive role in substantiating the Romanian current military doctrine, the authors bring to the fore his orientations, theses and ideas that show his decisive contribution to enriching the contemporary Romanian military thought and practice. They refer to: the definition, character and essence of the entire people's war for the homeland's defence; the factors underlying Romania's military power and the priority place of the material-economic factors in determining this power; the relation between the human element and combat technology in armed conflicts, and the decisive role of man in winning victory in a war; the content and ways of increasing the value of the national political-moral capabilities as a major source of military power; the principles governing the organization, leadership and action of the national defence system, the role, share, destination and missions of its components; the role and social functions of the army in the current development stage attained by the Romanian society; the aims of Socialist Romania's military strategy; the principles guiding the equipment, drilling and education of the troops and of the other forces making up the national defence system; the principles and norms underlying Romania's foreign military relations, a.s.o. These elements, making up a coherent unitary sys-

tem, are presented in the book in logical sequence and harmonious correlation, with emphasis placed, by profoundly scientific arguments, on the brilliant thought of President Nicolae Ceaușescu, the great founder of new Romania and a wise military strategist.

In its wider scientific acceptation — as it is, in fact, the case in the present book — Romania's military doctrine is an aggregate of principles, theses, ideas and options of the Romanian State with respect to the organization, equipment, preparation and leadership of all necessary forces and means for the armed defence of the people's revolutionary achievements, of the homeland's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression.

Starting from this definition, the authors analyse the content, problems, functions and features of the present-day Romanian military doctrine, its relations with military politics and science. Approaching the historical, economic, socio-political, ideological, cultural-scientific and legal bases of the Romanian military doctrine, the scientific analysis made by the authors particularly points to the historical roots of this doctrine, roots deeply cast in the Romanians' multimillenary past. The words of the leader of the nation stand out as a conclusion drawn from the lessons of history: *"The difficulties which the Romanian people had to face, the adversities they had to overcome, as well as the victories they won in crucial moments of their existence, undeniably show that a people determined to defend its land, liberty and independence, determined to spare no effort to assert its inalienable rights, to win a dignified place under the sun, can be defeated or subjugated by nothing, by no one and never!"*<sup>1</sup>

An important place among the questions approached by the authors is held by the harmonious dimensioning of the national military doctrine according to the principle that the work of socialist construction and defence are inseparable facets of the unitary process of building up a new society in Romania.

In close connection and full harmony with a realistic policy oriented toward peace, security and détente, the Romanian military doctrine has adopted the conceptual framework that suits best the transformation of the State's military function into a function of the entire society, achieved through the whole people's direct participation in the fight for the homeland's defence. The Romanian doctrinal option regarding the people's defence war has been clearly formulated by President Nicolae Ceaușescu: *"The defence of the country is the duty of every citizen; under present-day conditions, in case of a war, not only the army, but all the citizens must be ready to fight for the defence of the liberty, sovereignty and integrity of the homeland"*<sup>2</sup>.

Relevant to all those interested in knowing the Romanian view on the homeland's defence is the emphasis placed in the book on the fundamental political-military purpose of national defence, eloquently and brilliantly synthesized in the words of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces: *"Socialist Romania will never aim at aggressive actions against a State. [...] under any circumstances*

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 14, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, pp. 303—304.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 4, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1970, p. 288.

*our country, our people will fight only for the defence of independence and sovereignty, against any attempt of domination and oppression [...]”<sup>3</sup>.*

Making a pertinent analysis of a problem that is vitally important to the Romanian people, that of national defence, the book stands in row with other prestigious works in this domain, being a valuable scientific instrument for all those interested in getting acquainted with Romania’s military doctrine, a true message to all nations of the world for the achievement of détente and collaboration, of disarmament, of a better and fairer world, free of wars, for the triumph of peace on Earth.

*Captain TEODOR REPCIUC*

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<sup>3</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. 13, Meridiane Publishing House, 1978, p. 417.

## **FILE DIN ISTORIA MILITARĂ A POPORULUI ROMÂN. STUDII (PAGES FROM THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE. STUDIES),**

Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, DHist (Editor), Vol. 15, Editura Militară, București, 1984, XVIII + 430 pp; Vol. 16, Editura Militară, București, 1985, XIX + 479 pp.

Volumes 15 and 16 of the prestigious series *File din istoria militară a poporului român. Studii*, initiated and edited by Lieutenant-General *Ilie Ceaușescu*, DHist, bring to the circuit of Romanian historiography, through the studies they contain, new facts and aspects based on already confirmed analyses and conclusions regarding the revolutionary act of August 23, 1944, and Romania's contribution to the victory over fascism.

Volume 15 was devoted to the 40th anniversary of the historic act of August 23, 1944, that led to the overthrow of Antonescu's dictatorship, to Romania's leaving the war fought on Nazi Germany's side and her turning weapons on the Hitlerite aggressors. The insurrection was of crucial importance in the Romanian people's history, because it marked the beginning of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation, as defined and characterized with clear-sightedness and in-depth thought and analysis by Romania's President, *Nicolae Ceaușescu*. The theoretical and practical meanings underlying this concept are investigated in a scientific manner, the historical roots are revealed of the August 1944 revolution, a moment fitting in the multimillenary, uninterrupted struggle of the Romanian people in defence of its inalienable rights, of national independence and sovereignty. The authors present the causes and facts that made it possible, at a time of hard trial for the Romanian people, to prepare, organize and successfully carry through the revolution. Emphasis is placed in this respect on the role of the Romanian Communist Party in the working out of a clear strategy, of rallying the country's socio-political forces into a wide national antifascist front, with the August 1944 revolution as the climax of the Romanian people's national liberation struggle, as an expression of its ideals, interests and unflinching determination to be independent and sovereign, master of its own destiny. An important place in the book is held by the analysis of the political and diplomatic actions in the summer of 1944, especially in August, when the masses' revolutionary ebullience reached its acme, and the army was ready to switch — and it did so in its entirety — to smashing the Hitlerite and Horthyst occupation troops. The authors highlight the internal and international importance of the victory of the Romanian revolution and of Romania's joining the anti-Hitler coalition, the impact of that moment on the subsequent development of the war, the end of which was brought some 200 days nearer. The Romanian revolution of August 1944 evinced all the attributes of an act of full and legitimate national sovereignty, being the expression of the Romanian people's unflinching will to safeguard State independence, and it opened the path to the remarkable successes won by the Romanian people in the socialist years.

Dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany, volume 16 presents the active share of Romania, of her army in the defeat of Nazi Germany, the contribution of the Romanian people — along with the other peoples of the world — to the defeat of fascism.

A series of studies reconstitute the road of fight and sacrifice covered by the Romanian army, the Romanian people's material and human efforts throughout

the period August 23, 1944—May 12, 1945. Fighting side by side with the Soviet Army for the liberation of the north-western part of Romania, and then of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria from fascist domination, Romania committed to battle 538,000 military who, for 263 days, crossed through bitter fighting over 1,700 km and sustained 170,000 casualties (killed, wounded and missing). The authors scientifically substantiate that through the military effectives constantly engaged and the material and human forces mustered up to sustain the anti-Hitler war, Romania ranked the fourth among the countries that contributed to smashing the Hitlerite war machine.

Romania's outstanding military and economic efforts met with wide international recognition that is presented in the book along with the important political, economic and military-strategic consequences of the Romanian act of August 1944 and Romania's participation in the anti-Hitlerite war for the course and shortening of the world conflagration.

The presentation of the actions taken by Romania against fascism and for the restoration of peace in the world is rounded off with that of the changes wrought in the Romanian military body on the path of its transformation into a new-type, revolutionary army.

An outcome of deep scientific investigations made by reputed Romanian military and civilian historians, the two volumes, like, as a matter of fact, the whole series, stand out as a great editorial event, making a fundamental contribution to the knowledge and clarification of major aspects of the Romanian national history.

*MARIA GEORGESCU, Sc. Res.*



**23 AUGUST 1944. DOCUMENTE (AUGUST 23, 1944. DOCUMENTS),**  
Vols I—IV, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1984—1985, 3,012 pp.

A unitary, four-volume collection containing 1,392 documents (3,012 pages) and referring to the socio-political, economic, military and diplomatic situation of Romania over 1939—1945, the book was compiled by a team of experts in contemporary history — university professors, researchers and archivists — and edited by historians Ion Ardeleanu, Vasile Arimia and Mircea Mușat.

As a whole, this collection of documents and documentary materials provides the historians, actually all those interested in getting a deeper insight into the evolution of the Romanian society during World War II, with an impressive amount of historical information, never published before or less known, assessments and conclusions on the internal and international actions and events that occurred prior to, during and after the victory of the Romanian revolution of August 1944.

Volumes I and II contain documents covering the period January 1939—October 1944 in connection with: the fight of the progressive forces in Romania in defence of the country's national independence and territorial integrity; international solidarity with the victims of fascist aggression; the dramatic situation of the Romanian State following its external isolation and the territorial dismemberments operated at its expense in 1940; the organization and development of the antifascist resistance movement; the preparation, development and internal and international importance of the Romanian armed insurrection of August 23, 1944; the liberation of the whole national territory from Hitlerite and Horthyst rule and domination by October 25, 1944.

Volumes III and IV contain documents and materials covering the period October 26, 1944—August 24, 1945, regarding the historical events in Romania and in other countries in that period; Romania's victorious participation in the anti-Hitler war; the actions carried on under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party for economic recovery and the implementation of a programme of democratic transformations, for the integral fulfilment and in due time of the obligations assumed by the Romanian State under the Armistice Convention.

Each volume has a list — in Romanian and English — of the documents it contains, volumes I and III have extensive prefaces in Romanian and English, and volume IV ends with a valuable selective index. The documents in foreign languages in the original are accompanied by translations into Romanian.

Edited under the aegis of the General Department of the State Archives and the Centre of Studies and Research in Military History and Theory, and published by the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House in Bucharest in 1984—1985, this collection of documents and materials is a source of truly scientific value, which substantially enriches research on a turning point in the Romanian people's contemporary history — the revolution of August 1944 —, an event with major implications not only in the Romanian people's subsequent evolution, but also in shortening World War II by some 200 days.

Numerous documents included in these four volumes fully reveal the advanced, scientific, realistic character of the strategy of the Romanian Communist Party — the brain and heart of the Romanian antifascist resistance — that ensured the rallying of all forces in the struggle for the safeguarding of the national interests, the coalition of political parties and groups representing all Romanian social classes and categories, as well as the quarters of the Royal Palace and

the army, and aiming at the restoration of the homeland's independence, sovereignty and integrity.

Through the abundance of information it provides, its highly scientific standing, the selective index and the translation into English of the list of documents and of the prefaces, through the wide area of internal and external sources which the documents and materials were selected from, the collection *23 August 1944. Documente* stands out as an indispensable instrument for the studying and understanding of the role and importance of the Romanian revolution of August 1944, of Romania's real contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany.

*Colonel CONSTANTIN TODERAȘCU, DHist*

## 1848 LA ROMĂNI. O ISTORIE ÎN DATE ȘI MĂRTURII (1848 WITH THE ROMANIANS. A HISTORY IN DATA AND DOCUMENTS),

Cornelia Bodea Ed., Vols I—II, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1982, 1,276 pp.

Two massive tomes, brought out in an elegant edition, are offered by Cornelia Bodea, an expert in modern history, to all those who turn affectionately to the Romanian people's past, to its century-old struggle for national and social liberation, for the achievement of State unity and independence. It is not — as one may be led to believe — a work of interpretation of the Romanian revolution of 1848, which the authoress has repeatedly dealt with, but a collection of documents of inestimable value and interest on that crucial moment of Romanian history. It has not been the authoress' intention to provide an exhaustive collection of documents referring to the revolution in the Romanian principalities, but rather to present in a coherent whole the most important of them, those that feature the Romanians' liberation movement between 1784 and 1851. And she did it with a dedication that passion alone can generate, with exemplary professionalism and lofty patriotic consciousness.

The fundamental idea pervading the book, expressed as a matter of fact in everything Cornelia Bodea wrote about the Romanian revolution of 1848, is the unitary character of the revolution, mirrored in its preparation and development alike, in the relations between the leaders of the revolution. Besides this major idea, the authoress was guided by the wish to bring to the fore other very important aspects of that event as well, that express its complex character and account for the place of reference it holds in the Romanian history. As she clearly confesses in her *Foreword*, the documents gathered between the covers of the two volumes are meant "to reflect the unity of ideas and goals that filled distinguished minds with enthusiasm and set the people to fight for social and political justice and freedom, for national unity and independence; to illustrate the echoes come from abroad and the links with the advanced thought and movements of the time; to present the revolution in the European context; to also show the adversities and obstacles it encountered, the reactions and interferences, the oppression and strong fist put up by the absolutist Habsburg, Ottoman and Tsarist empires". An explicit presentation of the principles and options underlying the selection of the sources, an operation performed with wisdom, skill and minuteness, that blows out many conservative "opinions", older or of a recent date, and first of all the theory of an allegedly imported revolution. "Adversities", "obstacles", "interferences", "oppression or strong fist" are presented through these testimonies in their naked, direct, original form, especially the schemes of the reactionaries at home and above all, of those abroad up to their most destructive form: the military intervention of the big neighbouring empires.

The book consists of three parts preceded by the above-mentioned *Foreword* — *Precursorii* (The Forerunners, pp. 1—354), *Revoluția* (The Revolution, pp. 355—1,115), and *Epiloguri, Perspective* (Epilogues and Prospects, pp. 1,117—1,199) — and ends with a general index. Every volume has also a list of illustrations and their sources. A total of 356 documents, most varied in nature, from mere data to thrilling presentations of fierce battles.

A fruit of research as assiduous as thirsty for novelty, Cornelia Bodea's collection also contains a number of documents never published before; of great interest are the British consular reports, with news about the course of events,

as well as the pages from the bulky correspondence of the administrative bodies in Transylvania, papers concerning the relations between the Romanian and the Magyar revolutionaries, along with European (*Revue des Deux Mondes*) and North-American (*The North American Review*, Boston) echoes of the Romanian revolution.

The authoress' characteristic minuteness has produced a distinguished edition in which the documents are presented in their primary authenticity, which makes some documents published before be rendered only now in their complete and accurate form.

The volumes of documents edited by Cornelia Bodea present a live story of a crucial moment in the modern epoch of the Romanian people's past. They are not only an indispensable instrument of work for the period they refer to, but also a most efficient means of patriotic education.

*Colonel CONSTANTIN CĂZĂNIȘTEANU*

**DOCUMENTE PRIVIND ISTORIA MILITARĂ A POPORULUI ROMÂN.**  
**Ianuarie 1848—decembrie 1856 (DOCUMENTS ON THE MILITARY**  
**HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE. January 1848—December**  
**1856).**

Volume compiled by Colonel *Constantin Căzănișteanu* (Editor), *Maria Georgescu*, *Dorina N. Rusu*, DHist, Editura Militară, București, 1985, LXX + 376 pp.

Brought out under the aegis of the Centre for Studies and Research in Military History and Theory, the new volume of military documents dating from the modern epoch covers, unlike the previous ones\*, a period in the middle of the past century decisively marked by the revolutionary events of 1848—1849, by the Romanian people's energetic struggle for the renewal of the bases and supra-structure of the society, for independence and national unity. The 306 Romanian and foreign documents, the latter translated into Romanian, provide an image of the evolution and involvement of the autochthonous military body in the Romanian society, the endeavours made by Romanian patriots for the development of its own armed forces despite adverse international circumstances and the status of the country: Muntenia (Wallachia) and Moldavia were still separated, under the suzerainty of the Porte and the protectorship of Tsarist Russia, Transylvania and Bukovina were under Habsburg rule, and the other Romanian lands, too, were under foreign sway. Moreover, the outbreak and development of the Crimean War (1853—1856), with part of the military operations taking place in Romanian territory, besides the material damages and numerous sufferings inflicted on the population, curbed for a while the progress of the army. However, the Romanian military forces managed to take further steps toward their modernization and, most important of all things, to maintain their individuality, proving — as shown by Colonel Pavel Skeletti, one of the prominent representatives of the officer corps — that “they are Romanian in name and heart alike” (Doc. 276).

The authors obviously assigned more space to the 1848—1849 period: the 125 documents include, besides the chief programmes with regard to the revigoration of the society as a whole and the assertion of the Romanian spirit, all the measures taken by the revolutionary power in Muntenia and Transylvania for augmenting and consolidating its armed forces precisely by a general summoning of the people to arms, in defence of the conquered freedoms, of the right to a dignified life. As stressed in the brief yet meaningful introductory note, it was the outlook of the leaders of the Romanian revolution of 1848 — many of whom former military — that the army, preserver of the old and glorious fighting traditions, had to be one of the basic elements of the new national edifice, the chief instrument for winning full independence. In addition to the standing units however, powerful formations of a popular type started being set up — the national guard and the corps of pandours and volunteers, under commanding General Gheorghe Magheru.

The documents also present the original features and forms of the Romanian popular army in Transylvania, headed by Avram Iancu, in the fight for the assertion of the Romanian people's sacred right to a life of its own, against social and national oppression. Although suppressed through the armed intervention of the big neighbouring reactionary powers, the Romanian revolution gave direction to the Romanian people's subsequent evolution, setting the fundamental targets

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\* The other volumes covered the years 1878—1896.

for its progress. Despite foreign occupation and interference, the responsible factors, the military cadres — always powerfully imbued with patriotism — militated and worked in various ways for the reorganization and preparation of the army in view of attaining those targets. The documents contain numerous data and assessments regarding the development stage of the troops and their needs; a tendency can be noted of attaching more importance to the territorial formations of frontier-guards and foot soldiers in Muntenia, of gendarmes and *slujitori* in Moldavia, of enlarging their missions, as well as of improving the equipment and instruction of the troops, of raising the level of knowledge of the commanding officers through the reopening of the military school in Bucharest and the foundation, in 1856, of the one in Iași.

In order to ease the reading of the documents, the authors have provided the book with a glossary and a general index: resumé of the documents in French and Russian facilitate reading for foreign researchers. Through the body of documents related to the Romanians' modern military history, the authors of the present book have done a very useful and important act of culture. Further endeavours are needed to round it off.

*DUMITRU PREDA, Sc. Res.*

**1918 LA ROMÂNII. DESĂVÎRȘIREA UNITĂȚII NAȚIONAL-STATALE A POPORULUI ROMÂN. DOCUMENTE EXTERNE (1918 WITH THE ROMANIANS. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE'S NATIONAL-STATE UNITY. FOREIGN DOCUMENTS), Vol. I (1879—1916), Vol. II (1916—1918),**

Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1983, 1,342 pp. + 123 illustrations.

There are events in the peoples' life that fulfil century-old aspirations and crown just as long struggles; there are events that mend historical injustices and justify all sacrifices made for their achievement; there are events that represent turning points in the historical development of a people or of a territory, becoming true symbols through the significance acquired in the memory of the contemporary and ensuing generations. Such an event was the accomplishment of the unitary Romanian national State in 1918, a moment with profound meanings, as it was the triumph of the Romanians' century-old struggle for unity, but also with deep bearings on Romania's subsequent development on the road to progress and civilization.

Such a major event naturally enjoyed the attention of Romanian, but also of foreign historians who in books, articles, studies a.s.o. tried to highlight its entire significance. This is what the present volumes of documents do, published under the aegis of the General Department of State Archives in Bucharest by the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House under the telling title *1918 la români*.

Devoted to the Romanian people's struggle for the completion of national-State unity the way it is mirrored in foreign sources, the two recently published volumes contain documents chosen from the stock of microfilms and xerox copies in the holdings of the prestigious Archives in Bucharest, or found in foreign archives, libraries and museums.

The 456 documents collected in these volumes emanated from heads of states and governments, from ministers and diplomats in Romania and in other states at that time, from military personalities and men of culture, etc. from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Russia, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Spain, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Poland.

The information provided by these documents, the authors' comments and conclusions in connection with actions, events or personalities in Romania and in the Romanian territories that were still under foreign rule make a clearer image of all this, of the righteousness of the cause for which the Romanians fought, thus allowing for assessments in full harmony with reality. They round off the picture given by the internal sources, adding more information to the data comprised in previous works on this memorable event in the Romanian people's history.

Expressing, for their greatest part, the official viewpoint of various states on the legitimacy of the Romanian cause and of the efforts made by the Romanians for the accomplishment of their loftiest desideratum — the making of the unitary national State — the documents gathered in these two volumes fully demonstrate that the act of 1918 of uniting again all Romanian provinces within one and the same State entity was the work of the broad people's masses, the natural outcome of the struggle of the entire Romanian people, the coronation of its century-old aspirations and endeavours. The documents clearly present the actions taken throughout the period that followed Romania's winning full independence.

with a view to accomplishing the old dream of unity, dealing more, as it was only natural, with the diplomatic, political, economic and military efforts made in the years of World War I, between 1916 and 1918, when Romania fought on the side of the Entente powers, i.e. precisely those states that had promised to meet her national desiderata. The documents gathered in the two tomes illustrate also the wide external reverberation of the great events that occurred in Romania in 1918, a year with profound historic meanings, highlighting that the Romanians' fight answered the loftiest ideals a people can cherish in full legitimacy.

Through their great variety, both in terms of the content and of the countries from where they emanated, the 456 documents are sources of inestimable value for a better knowledge and understanding of the preparation and development of that crucial event which was the accomplishment of the Romanian unitary national State. Ranged in chronological sequence, in the languages in which they were originally issued, also accompanied by excellent translations into Romanian, they point to realities that cannot be questioned.

Edited in conditions that observe the most up-to-date norms used in editing documents worldwide, the two volumes are an indispensable working instrument to any researcher who studies one of the most important events in the modern history of Romania. At the same time, through their rich and varied information, fine language and especially their emotional content, these two volumes of documents are useful to any history lover, Romanian and foreign alike, as a means of acquaintance and rapprochement among peoples, among nations.

*Sc. Res. DORINA N. RUSU, DHist*



Colonel *Gheorghe Tudor*, DHist, **ARMATA GETO-DACĂ (THE GETO-DACIAN ARMY)**,

Editura Militară, București, 1986, 224 pp.

Written and printed in anticipation of the historic event celebrated last year — 2,500 years since the heroic fights of the Dacian people against the powerful armies of the Persians led by Darius —, the book *Armata geto-dacă*, authored by a well-known military historian, Colonel Gheorghe Tudor, was an editorial event of 1986.

A result of a thorough and responsible investigation of rich Romanian and foreign bibliography, the subject approached by the author is of utmost interest for military and civilian historians, as well as for young and senior readers, who are eager to get acquainted with and study the historical past of the Romanian people. In his book, the author presents the historical, geographical and demographic framework in which the Geto-Dacian army came into being, its organization, equipment and training, as well as the heroic and many a time unequal struggle waged against the powerful armies of the Persians, Macedonians and Romans, in defence of freedom, independence and the ancestors' land.

Divided into eight chapters, with a highly scientific, informational and educational content, a method and style proper to the author, the book fully meets a deeply felt requirement of the Romanian historiography. The sources and facts are approached and interpreted by the author in the light of the precious indications of the Party General Secretary on how to analyze the historical phenomenon in the general context of the factors that bore upon the evolution of the Geto-Dacian army, to highlight the salient features of a heroic people resolved to fight and defend its land and kin at all costs. The facts and events described in the book are sustained with primary sources, the writing is careful and the style smooth. The book will surely be a working instrument for experts and a valuable means of patriotic education and cultivation of old and rich fighting traditions.

Completed with photos, sketches and maps, the book is a credit to the author and a true act of culture. At the same time, it will be a stimulus to all readers of the present-day generations and of the generations to come to cherish, preserve and further the fighting traditions built 2,500 years ago by the army of the Romanians' ancestors, to creditably fulfil the lofty mission entrusted by President Nicolae Ceaușescu, namely that of being valiant defenders of the forefathers' heritage: Dacia's land, the freedom and independence they defended with painful sacrifices.

Colonel *COSTICĂ UCRAIN*, DHist

*Sergiu Iosipescu*, **BALICA, DOBROTIȚĂ, IOANCU**

Editura Militară, București, 1985, 182 pp.

The prestigious collection "Domnitori și voievozi" (Princes and Voivodes) initiated by the Military Publishing House in 1973 for the presentation of those political and military personalities who cut a conspicuous figure in the Romanian history has aroused the interest of history-loving people and of specialists alike. The Military Publishing House has accustomed its readers with books of incontestable value and the recent book authored by well-known mediaevalist Sergiu Iosipescu is no exception, being one of the most successful monographs of the younger Romanian historiography.

The book provides, in the wider context of the history of Central and Southeast Europe, a comprehensive fresco of the Romanian society in the 14th century. Among the great personalities of that time there are those who unified the Romanian lands and broke new paths, such as Bessarab I in Muntenia (Wallachia), Bogdan in Moldavia, Balica, Dobrotiță and Ioancu în Țara Cărvunei (Charcoal Land). The name of that land is of Latin origin and refers to charcoal burning. Proof to it stand both Byzantine texts and Genoese nautical maps, some drawn by Tietro Vesconte, where the land is shown under the name of Carbona, obviously a translation.

The volume opens with an imaginary travel in space and time starting in the Carpathians of the Dacians and Romans to end on the Black Sea shore, the purpose of which is to reconstitute the geographical area and evolution of the Pontic regions in the early Middle Ages as part of the Romanian civilization in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic and Balkan area. Țara Cărvunei, with the strong fortress of Kaliakra, in Dobrudja, as its capital, evolved as a Romanian land during the comprehensive process of unification, on large areas, of the territories inhabited by the Romanians. The epic of brothers Balica and Dobrotiță, and of the latter's son, Ioancu, was reconstituted with the help of a rich bibliography, the main stress falling on sources of that time analyzed in connection with the geographical realities, the mentalities of that epoch and of the authors.

The author convincingly demonstrates with philologic and historical arguments that the names of the rulers of Țara Cărvunei are Romanian. Balica is a derivative of Bale or Bală, a frequent name in all regions inhabited by Romanians north and south of the Danube. Boyars in Muntenia and Moldavia were called Balica, and in Transylvania the name appears in a Latin-Hungarian transcription as "Dalc" (an illustrious representative of the Dragoș family, the first princes of Moldavia). Dobrotiță is a diminutive, ending in *-iță*, from Dobrotă, a Romanian name that was very common in the Middle Ages. The suffix *iță* was used mostly by the Romanians in the Balkans — see Niculiță, the ruler of the Thessalian Vlachs, and Ioniță, the Vlach emperor (1197—1207); Ioancu, "Juanchus" as referred to by the Genoans, "filium bonae memoriae magnifici domini Dobrodize", is also a Romanian name, currently spelt as Iancu.

During his long reign, Dobrotiță (1348—1386) managed to bring under his rule the entire territory between the Danube and the Black Sea and, in keeping with the usages of that time, that land was called Dobrogea (Dobrudja). Putting up a joint front with the princes of Muntenia, he defended the southern part of the Romanian borders. Despot Dobrotiță, whose title had been recognized by Emperor John V Palaeologus, together with Vladislav I Vlaicu staunchly opposed the anti-Romanian coalition of Angevin Hungary and Genoa.

After Dobrotiță's death, his son Ioancu was attacked by Ivan Shishman, the Bulgarian tsar of Tirnovo, supported by the Ottomans. He could not seemingly resist the attack and retreated in the stronghold of Varna. The defence of the Romanian Danubian-Pontic land devolved on the ruler at Argeș, Dan I, and his brother, future Prince Mircea the Great. The latter, the author shows, was Dobrotiță's grandson (Ana, who took monastic vows under the name of Kalinikia, was Mircea the Great's mother and Dobrotiță's daughter), hence not a conqueror, but a prince who united two Romanian lands, whose rulers were related to each other and allies.

The book is highly stimulating, with daring hypotheses and new information that may determine experts to reappraise data and facts which, as structured by the author, acquire new meanings.

By the deep analysis of the historical processes, the solid conclusions and scientific presentation, in an accessible style, of great rulers, Sergiu Iosipescu's book makes an important contribution to the development of Romanian and Southeast European historiography.

MIRCEA SOREANU

## LUPTA ÎNTREGULUI POPOR (THE ENTIRE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE), Romanian Magazine of Military History, Bucharest, 1984 —

The magazine *Lupta întregului popor*, a quarterly brought out under the aegis of the Romanian Commission of Military History, was first issued in the latter half of 1984 and benefits by a prestigious and active editorial board, made up of historians of unquestionable value: Ilie Ceaușescu, President of the Romanian Commission of Military History, Constantin Antip, Ion Ardeleanu, Constantin Căzănișteanu, Florin Constantiniu, Mircea Mușat, Ștefan Pascu, Ștefan Ștefănescu, Florian Tucă, Gheorghe Tudor and Gheorghe Zaharia. The title *Lupta întregului popor* is the supreme doctrinal principle itself through the application of which the Romanian people has survived all storms of history, in an exemplary continuity in time and steady abidance in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area.

Nine issues have been put out so far, plus a special number in English in 1985. The last quarter of 1986 saw the printing of another special, in Romanian and English, dedicated to the anniversary of 2,500 years since the defence struggles fought by the Geto-Dacians, the ancestors of today's Romanians, against the superpower of the ancient world, the Persian armies led by Darius I, "king of the kings".

On the upper side of the frontcover the readers of the magazine can every time see the figure of Prince Michael the Brave — one of the great heroes of the fight for freedom, independence and unity, a strategist of genius, under whose rule the people accomplished a fundamental ideal: the union into one State of the three Romanian countries — Muntenia (Wallachia), Moldavia and Transylvania. The contents and layout of the magazine, improved with every issue, fully contribute to acquainting the readers with the landmarks of the multimillenary history of the Romanian people and its army, as recommended with good reason in the inaugural article, suggestively entitled "Beginning of a Road" (*Lupta întregului popor*, No 1/1984, p. 1). The pages of the magazine are pervaded by the thought and deed of a great many gifted and ardent fighters for the defence of the ancestral hearth, for checking the invaders and resolutely resisting them, as well as for social justice through permanent struggle within the frontiers.

The magazine systematically presents important moments in the development of the Romanian people and its army, the principles and conceptions of Romanian military thought, art and action, specific ingenious military forms, procedures, methods and structures related to the defence struggle carried on by the Romanians in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, where history established them and from where not a single thought of migration or invasion has ever moved them. In distinct articles, the magazine presents the place and role of Romanians in other peoples' history, their contribution to the treasure of human civilization and to supporting the fight for freedom and independence of other states, revealing important aspects pertaining to world military thought and history.

While always observing historical truth and by consistently applying in the approach to the vast area of historiography dialectical and historical materialism, the Programme of the Romanian Communist Party for the Building of the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society and Romania's Advance Toward Communism, the work of Nicolae Ceaușescu, the leader of the Party and of the State, the magazine propagates ideas, theses, information, etc. in harmony with the principle of scientific objectiveness that makes of History a true instrument of friendship among peoples, of influencing in the positive interstate mutual acquaint-

tance, regard and understanding, of consolidating friendship and peace in the Balkans, in Europa and the world over. Hence, also the lofty and noble mission to combat in the magazine, in a thoroughly substantiated way, the distortions, slanderings, mistifications and hateful ideas regarding the history of the states — European in particular — and historical science.

Independent articles (texts and iconography), as well as those included under permanent headings — Fundamental Truths of the Romanian People's History ; Heroes That Lived and Heroes That Live ; Great Battles (from Romanian and world history) ; Monuments of Fight ; History of the World and the World of History ; Traditions ; Fundamentals of the National Military Doctrine ; Great Army Commanders (Romanian and Foreign) ; Incredible, yet True ; From the Activity of the Romanian Commission of Military History ; History Books and Magazines, etc. — incorporate contributions of reputed military and civilian historians, researchers, archivists, museographers, teaching staff, writers, publicists as well as of readers who, through studies, war memoirs, essays, recollections, documents, etc., provide the public at large with timely, correct information about history in general and military history in particular.

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