



# INVENTED GENEALOGIES, FORGOTTEN GENEALOGIES, REPRESSED GENEALOGIES, RECOVERED GENEALOGIES.

*A SURVEY ABOUT THE ROMANIAN GENEALOGICAL KNOWLEDGE*

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*Abstract – I will try, in the following lines, to present a brief history of Romanian genealogical knowledge and the successive losses that have marked it. In my view, these losses, these successive mournings influence even today the way we relate to our own ancestors and, more broadly, the way we relate to the memory of the community and to each other.*

*Keywords:* Genealogy, Family Memory, Historiography, Romanian Aristocracy, Genealogical Imaginary

## **A First Mourning: The Ottoman Rule and the Loss of Genealogical Knowledge**

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of their foundation, the medieval Romanian states, Wallachia and Moldavia, were influenced by the interests of Hungary and gained their autonomy through opposition to it. Gradually, Moldavia will get closer to Poland. The ruling families and the aristocracies of the two principalities are thus linked to the western aristocracies, through the Hungarian and Polish ones. Even if the Wallachians and Moldavians remain mostly Orthodox, the profile of the aristocracy in Moldavia and Wallachia seemed to resemble more and more that of the Central European and Western aristocracies. The clothing, the way of life, the heraldry of the period seem to integrate the elites of the two Romanian principalities into the European aristocratic world.

To better understand how the aristocracy of Moldavia and Wallachia could have looked if it had followed this path, we can look at the Romanian nobles from Transylvania and especially at the very interesting case of the very numerous Romanian nobility from Maramureș. We can legitimately assume that the military rural nobility from Maramureș resembled a lot, in its beginnings, the petty military nobility from Moldavia and Wallachia. Coming into contact with Western rules regarding the structure of the nobility, the Romanian elites from Maramureș began to resemble Western aristocrats. Even the more modest and the Orthodox branches of the Romanian nobility from Maramureș had coats of arms, predicates of nobility, and other aristocratic characteristics<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, the petty nobility from Moldavia and Wallachia, especially after losing its military role and being deprived of the aristocratic characteristics imposed by a Western-type monarchy, could be confused with a “free peasantry”.

The great challenge for the Moldavian and Wallachian aristocracies occurred with the advance of the Ottoman Empire towards central Europe. The presence of the Ottomans in the Balkans and the fall of Constantinople brought a strong enemy to the borders of the Romanian principalities. Despite the anti-Ottoman wars led by rulers such as Mircea the Elder (1355-1418), Stephen the Great (1438-1504), or Vlad the Impaler (1431-1476), the Romanian principalities will gradually come under the authority of the Sultan. For approximately 350 years, Wallachia and Moldavia were subjected to the Ottoman Empire but kept a consistent autonomy, which allowed for, among other things, the existence of a local aristocracy involved in the leadership of the countries.

But this elite has become a bereaved one from a genealogical point of view. Western influences from the first centuries of the Romanian principalities' existence gradually disappeared, being replaced by Eastern fashion and manners, which the Romanian elites, under Ottoman rule, sought to imitate. A large part of the military aristocracy that had played a decisive role in the birth and consolidation of the Romanian principalities fell, as it now lacked the function it had previously held. The aristocratic families that did not adjust to the new Turkocracy progressively lost their authority, their wealth, and, in some cases, their memory. For example, apart from a vague sense of social distinction, the families of *moșneni* and *răzeși* often forgot that

they were descendants of aristocrats from the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and erroneously ended up being assimilated, in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries with a fictional "free peasantry"<sup>2</sup>.

Even the great boyar families that survived as leaders of the Romanian principalities were not encouraged to cultivate their family memory, to build their genealogical trees, or to create their coats of arms. The lack of stability, the frequent conflicts and persecutions, but especially the lack of contact with Western Europe and the submission to the Ottoman Empire, are among the main causes of the underdevelopment of family memory in Moldavia and Wallachia, including at the level of the elites. The Ottoman Empire had an a-noble system, as Olivier Bouquet calls it, and it never encouraged, not even in the metropolis or around the Sultan, the consolidation of aristocratic families with a strong family memory and the ability to pass on some material or spiritual heritage. In the Ottoman Empire, a rank conferred by the reigning Sultan was always more valuable than the memory of honourable positions occupied by ancestors<sup>3</sup>.

### **Genealogies with a Strictly Functional Character: Estate Documents, Wills, and Lineages**

We can ask ourselves what happened to genealogies and filiations during the long period of Ottoman rule. Even if the crystallization of family identity and memory was not encouraged by the historical developments in the Romanian principalities, some genealogies were perpetuated for centuries almost exclusively thanks to their functional character. Interest in ancestors and relatives and attention to transmission appear where they support and legitimize land possession. In the Romanian Middle Ages, personal freedom and nobility were linked to land possession. Wills establish a reality in which transmission is generally made to the descendants of a family. Along with the land and other assets, there is also a chance for the family history and identity to be carried forward. Mourning is soothed by continuity and transmission. The documents confirming the estates had the role of assuring the possession of land upon the ascension of a new ruler to the throne. In such documents, the ancestors were invoked, as were the genealogical

roots that legitimized the respective dominions. The ancestors were also invoked in the estate documents, which established the borders and the neighbourhoods, and in the countless disputes that arose between the various owners of the estates. The legitimization of a possession was often done by appealing to the lineage, that is, to the previous generations of owners of the disputed land. To ensure their possession, the descendants sought to argue their position by referring to the rights of their ancestors. Thus, a Romanian genealogical discourse appears; it is most of the time very dull but extremely useful for the descendants. It mattered whose descendant you were, from whom you had inherited, and how the estate had passed from one owner to another. Concrete needs related to social status and wealth urged Moldavians and Wallachians to write down their ancestors, to refer to them, and to include them in genealogies.

But, obviously, only a small part of the population had land to pass on or inherit. Genealogical knowledge was concentrated on those social strata for which ancestors meant privileged status and a better life. The interest in the ancestors was synonymous with freedom and privileged status, and that is why the champions of genealogical memory were the *moşneni* and the *răzeşi*, who belonged to the privileged strata but were eternally threatened with the loss of status in the case of the loss of their estates. Information about the genealogies of serfs or even Romani slaves appears in documents only in relation to the interests of the masters.

## **17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Contacts with the West and a New Interest in Lineages and Genealogies**

The interest in ancestors reappears gradually when a severance from the Ottoman influence and a closeness to the Western world are felt. This time, it is not just about the ancestors on which the ownership of a stretch of land is based. The genealogical interest is refined, it turns into a disinterested search for the roots and into the crystallization of an individual and group identity. Moldavia seems to be more advanced on this path of intellectual interest in origins, not only in individual genealogies but also in collective roots. The explanation is the

proximity of the Moldavian elites to Poland, the privileged destination of the Moldavian boyars, for studies and, if necessary, for refuge. The intellectual elites in Poland used the Latin language, and the genealogical culture was much more developed in the Polish-Lithuanian Union, where the aristocracy, the *szlachta*, was very numerous and influential, and its members were attentive to cultivating the memory of their ancestors, to the coats of arms by which they identified themselves, and to the status of their families. The first great Moldavian chroniclers, Grigore Ureche (1590-1647) and Miron Costin (1633-1691), studied in Poland. The two chroniclers cannot be forgotten in any attempt to write a history of the idea of Romania because they were interested in the roots of the Moldavians, Wallachians, and Transylvanians, in their distant ancestors, in their descent from the Romans. The chroniclers were not the only ones interested in genealogies and roots far back in time, but also the Movilă family, one of the most influential ruling families in the history of Moldavia, which Grigore Ureche's father had served and into which Miron Costin had even married. The Movilăs were very connected to Poland and had allowed themselves to be seduced by the hypothesis of Roman origins to such a degree that they even built genealogies that presented them as descendants of the Roman dynasty of the Flavii or of the *gens* Mucia<sup>4</sup>.

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the interest in genealogy was manifested even in the works of the most important Romanian humanist of the time, Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723), who is known to have written, around 1716-1717, a book about the boyar families from Moldavia, *Liber moldavicae nobilitatis genealogiae, latio sermone a nobis conscriptus* (*Cartea ghenealoghiilor niamurilor boierimii moldovenești pre carea cu limba latinească am scris-o*) [The Book of the Genealogies of the Moldavian Boyars, Written in Latin]<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately, this inaugural work of Romanian genealogy is lost. Therefore, Romanian genealogical science has been marked, since its beginnings, by a disappearance, an absence. From Dimitrie Cantemir, we still have a list of boyar families from Moldavia, which is, of course, incomplete and full of fanciful information about the origins, but it is the first of its kind in the history of the Romanian principalities. The list is included in *Descriptio Moldaviae* [The Description of Moldavia], in chapter XV, *Despre nobilimea moldovenească* [About the Moldavian nobility]<sup>6</sup>.

In Wallachia, the great *ban* Mihai Cantacuzino (1723-1793), from the Măgureanu branch, wrote a work dedicated to the history of the Cantacuzino family, *Ghenealoghia familiei Cantacuzinilor, a căria izvorâre se trage din neamul de Valoa, din Perii de Franța, începându-se de la anul 800, pogoară până la anul 1787* [The Genealogy of the Cantacuzino Family, that Originates in the Valois Family, in the Peers of France, Between 800 and 1787]. Beyond the various genealogical theories long since disproved, such as that of the French origin of the Cantacuzino, the work shows a remarkable interest in the history of one's own family and remains the first writing entirely dedicated to the genealogy of a Romanian family.

## The 19<sup>th</sup> Century: The Heyday of Romantic Genealogy

If in the West the genealogical mythologies flourished during the Renaissance<sup>7</sup>, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the era in which the boyar families from Moldavia and Wallachia started to be interested in their own origins. The contact with the Western world made the Romanian boyars want ancestors as ancient and as illustrious as possible, nobiliary particles, noble titles, and coats of arms. The Romanian principalities had an aristocracy, but historical conditions had made it very different from the Western aristocracy. Paradoxically, the ideas of the French Revolution and the boyars' desire to modernize Romanian society reach Moldavia and Wallachia at the same time as the will of the boyars to resemble the Western aristocracy as much as possible.

This combination of democratic spirit and feudal nostalgia is best illustrated by the Wallachian boyar C. A. Rosetti (1816-1885), a revolutionary from 1848, writer, a left-wing liberal and republican politician. He signed "Count Rosetti" and despite his anti-aristocratic rhetoric daily politics, he held on to his alleged title of count of the Holy Roman Empire. The title had in fact belonged to an extinct branch of another Rosetti family, originating from Moldavia<sup>8</sup>. The thirst for noble titles and coats of arms is also illustrated by an amusing example provided by Ion Ghica in his letters to Vasile Alecsandri.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Romanian genealogical imaginary flourished. Moldavian and Wallachian boyars dreamed of Roman, crusader, or Tatar ancestors, they drew coats of arms, they spoke French, and

they dressed, they built, and furnished their houses according to Western fashion. The Romanian boyars moved further and further away from their Eastern heritage and started to lead a life like their peer aristocrats from France, England, Russia, or Germany. I add here just a few examples of fanciful genealogies that tried to connect the Romanian boyars to the Western aristocracy: the Balș family, old Moldavian boyars, believed in their descent from the French counts of Baux; the Sturza boyars, which gave several rulers to Moldavia, considered themselves descendants of the Hungarian counts Thurzó of Bethlenfalva; the Oțetelișanu from Oltenia were the descendants of a fictitious count Otto de Lisch; and the Obedeianu of an Italian crusader called Obedino<sup>9</sup>. Beyond fashion and social snobbery, the need of the Romanian aristocrats to find (or invent) their illustrious ancestors in Western Europe can speak of the feeling of an absence and the attempt to replace it. It was as if the Romanian elite had tried to renew the thread with the history before the Ottoman domination.

### **A 19<sup>th</sup> Century Genealogist Who Was By No Means Romantic**

A special case is that of the cupbearer Costandin Sion (1795-1862), a Moldavian boyar who did not belong to the circle of great boyar families but who acted like a grandee and proved his literary talent in a book about the ancestors of his contemporaries<sup>10</sup>. Although his *Arhondologia* [The Archontology], written between 1840 and 1857, contains many genealogical details useful even today<sup>11</sup>, the book is primarily a memoir in which the author settles accounts with his contemporaries. But the essential criterion of judgment is the genealogical one. The evils and injustices that Sion identifies in Moldavian society have their origin in sins of a genealogical order. We can identify a few of these.

The cupbearer is exasperated by the “new people”, by the upstarts, by all those who come from modest families but who end up occupying important positions and getting rich. Without having noble origins, the descendants of merchants, craftsmen, or even peasants buy boyar ranks and, in this way, fraudulently enter the nobility of Moldavia. We are dealing, obviously, with the frustration of the petty boyar who con-

siders himself of good extraction and who sees himself outclassed by people from lower social strata. Such are „proștii rădicați la boierie” [those from the lower classes elevated to nobility] and „noile rădicături de-ale domnului Mihai Sturza” [those recently ennobled by prince Mihai Sturza], simple people transformed into nobles by the greedy ruler Mihail Sturdza in order to „măscărească noblesla Moldovei” [to mock the nobility of Moldavia]. The violation of traditions and the changes much more accelerated than in the past, the signs of modernity, displease the memorialist. We can consider Sion, beyond the small horizon of the competition for the boyar ranks, as an anti-modernist and as a defender of the Old Regime and the old social hierarchies based on birth.

A favourite target of the cupbearer Sion, and one of the explanations he offers for the decline of Moldavia’s nobility is the large number of foreigners who bought themselves boyar ranks. Sion lends the most unfriendly characterizations to the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Russians, Armenians, Jews, and even the French and Germans who had penetrated the nobility of Moldavia.

Costandin Sion has a good memory, he has lots of literary talent and he is very mean to his contemporaries and their ancestors, whom he does not consider worthy of the boyar status. He does not seem at all touched by the romantic thrill of the age, with a notable exception: when it comes to his own genealogy. The refined connoisseur of genealogies, who mercilessly dismantles the attempts of many contemporaries to appear more noble than they were, is not shy at all when it comes to building one of the most amazing genealogical fantasies for his own family. Suddenly romantic, Costandin Sion, the descendant of a *răzeși* family, dreams of being the descendant of the Tatar khans.

## Octav-George Lecca and the Romanian Genealogical Imaginary

The first attempts at Romanian genealogical synthesis are placed under the sign of romantic genealogy. Whoever is looking for a collection of genealogical mythologies of the Romanian aristocracy should first of all turn to the two books written by Octav-George Lecca (1881-



1969), published at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>12</sup>. However, Lecca also has the great merit of having been the first genealogist to gather together the genealogies of a substantial number of boyar families from Moldavia and Wallachia. Beyond the fanciful theories about the beginnings of families and the numerous mistakes or omissions, Lecca cannot be denied the title of pioneer in a field in which, even today, we have not yet managed to have a more complete synthesis. The recent project coordinated by prince Mihai Dim. Sturdza (1934-2020) has so far only reached the families with the letter E, still missing part of the letter C<sup>13</sup>. In Octav-George Lecca's works we can still find today, as we also find in Costandin Sion's, many precious details and suggestions for understanding the history of Romanian aristocratic families. But both the cupbearer's wickedness and Lecca's romantic dreams must be analysed with a critical eye today.

## **Modernization and Westernization: Recoveries and Losses. The Second Mourning**

I have thus far tried to argue that the rupture with Western Europe and the entry of the Romanian principalities under Ottoman rule represented the fundamental brake on the development of the Romanian genealogical culture. And that the rapprochement with the West boded well for genealogical interest. Why then did I mention "mourning" in the context of modernization and westernization? Because, while the social elite of Moldavia and Wallachia met, at studies, in wars, or at balls, Russian, French, or German aristocrats and began to resemble them more and more, becoming more and more interested in genealogy, something very precious was also being lost. The historical context had meant that, in the Romanian Middle Ages, the language of worship and culture was Slavonic, and documents in Romanian would also be written in Cyrillic characters. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cyrillic writing was gradually abandoned, but at a rather accelerated pace. The Latinity of the Romanian language was a strong argument for the noble origin of the people and for the Romanians' belonging to the European world. A language that descended from Latin could no longer be written with the Cyrillic characters that were already beginning to be

associated with cultural and institutional backwardness. The decision of the elites was certainly one with long-term positive results, but it also produced a rupture, an almost complete abandonment of the knowledge accumulated over centuries. In just two generations, texts written in Cyrillic characters came to be accessible only to a very limited number of scholars and specialists in Cyrillic paleography. Information about one's own ancestors also remained lost, physically very close in private or public archives but culturally a world away. It is impossible for a Romanian today with Moldavian or Wallachian roots to research her or his family history on her or his own, beyond the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, without the support of a specialist in Cyrillic paleography. A barrier that most Romanians have neither the time nor the resources to overcome, especially since Cyrillic writing specialists could never cover the possible genealogical curiosities of a large number of Romanians. Welcomed from an identity and cultural point of view, the transition to the Latin script meant, therefore, a definitive separation of most Romanians from the possible clues that the old documents written in Cyrillic could have contained. A separation and mourning that we may not yet be fully aware of.

## Positivist Genealogy

As previously mentioned, access to the information in the old Cyrillic documents was reserved for specialists, historians, and philologists. Romanian genealogy did not remain in the romantic stage expressed by Octav-George Lecca's books either but developed in a positivist spirit. Learned scholars began to break away from family-cultivated genealogical mythologies, decipher ancient writings, and base their family trees on documents. Apart from great historians like A. D. Xenopol<sup>14</sup>, Constantin Giurescu<sup>15</sup>, and Nicolae Iorga<sup>16</sup>, who also entered the field of genealogy, we must mention several experts who dedicated themselves to unravelling the genealogies of the Romanian aristocracy. For Moldavia, Ioan Tanoviceanu (1858-1917), Gheorghe Ghibănescu (1864-1936)<sup>17</sup>, Sever Zotta (1874-1943)<sup>18</sup>, general Radu R. Rosetti (1877-1949)<sup>19</sup>, Alexandru Saint-Georges (1886-1954), Eugen D. Neculau (1900-1974)<sup>20</sup>, Constantin Cihodaru (1907-1994), and Alexandru I. Gonța (1918-1977). For the Romanian boyars from

Bessarabia, who were integrated into the Russian aristocracy, Pavel Gore (1875-1927) and Gheorghe Bezviconi (1910-1966)<sup>21</sup>. For Bukovina, Teodor Bălan (1885-1972) and Traian Larionescu (1905-1979). For the Wallachian aristocracy, Ștefan D. Grecianu (1825-1908)<sup>22</sup>, Petre V. Năsturel (1854-1920), Ioan C. Filitti (1879-1945)<sup>23</sup>, Emanoil Hagi-Mosco (1882-1976)<sup>24</sup>, George D. Florescu (1893-1976)<sup>25</sup>, Alexandru V. Perietzianu-Buzău (1911-1995)<sup>26</sup>, Dan Pleșia (1912-1997), and Nicolae Stoicescu (1924-1999)<sup>27</sup>. For the history of Phanariote families, Constantin George Mano (1871-1959)<sup>28</sup> and Mihai Dim. Sturdza<sup>29</sup>. For the Romanian nobility in Transylvania, Ioan Cavaler de Pușcariu (1824-1911)<sup>30</sup> and Alexandru Filipașcu (1902-1952), already mentioned.

## **Family Archives, Family Trees, Coats of Arms. National Memory, Family Memory, Class Memory**

Much of the serious and well-documented genealogical research of the authors mentioned above was made possible, in an era when public archives were still in their infancy, thanks to family archives. The relative stability and constant evolution of Romania during the short century of the constitutional monarchy allowed many families to preserve and organize their documents inherited for centuries in private archives and private libraries, kept in their city homes or country mansions. Family memory was a precious symbolic capital and was manifested through beautifully decorated family trees displayed in homes, through document collections, and through carefully preserved old book collections. Families proud of their past used coats of arms, which they displayed on house gables, on business cards and stationery, on cutlery and bedding, and on family tombs. Family portraits, furniture, and other items of historical significance were passed down from generation to generation. Just as coats of arms are insignia that individualize a family, so did the group of families conscious of their past assume a spirit of caste and the mission of representing the Romanian nation, giving it specificity and identity. The aristocracy will increasingly assume, as economic and political influence became more fragile, especially after World War I, a role of representation. It is no coincidence that we find aristocrats mainly in diplomacy, around the

Royal Family, in important positions in the army, and in cultural life. Gradually, the interest of the aristocrats in genealogy begins to inspire the *grande bourgeoisie*, the intellectual elites, and the petty bourgeoisie. Knowing your ancestors was fashionable.

### **Filiation as Guilt During the Communist Regime: Hidden Genealogies, Forgotten Genealogies, Repressed Genealogies. The Third Mourning**

The developments that seemed to bring us closer and closer to the Western attitude towards genealogy were brutally interrupted. With the establishment of the communist regime, genealogy was exiled for a long time from the regime's official historical literature. Genealogy was regarded as a reactionary discipline, a brake on progress. The "new man" dreamed of by the communists had no past and no ancestors. He only had a future carefully prepared by the party. The past had to be forgotten or adapted to the communists' ideological needs. This time, mourning was no longer metaphorical. People died in political prisons or in labour camps, and family memories disappeared with them. The fates of three of the genealogists mentioned above speak of this period marked by mourning: Sever de Zotta was taken by the Soviet Army from his estate and died somewhere, in a labour camp in the USSR; general Radu R. Rosetti and Alexandru Filipașcu died as political prisoners in Romania. The past became a burden and a source of guilt. The simple fact of bearing names like Cantacuzino, Ghika, Sturdza, Rosetti condemned their bearers to persecution and marginalization. Descendants of historical families who were not killed were forced to go into exile or to live on the fringes of society. Young genealogist Mihai Dim. Sturdza was told that he had no chance of entering the Faculty of History in Bucharest with the name Sturdza. A former army general's daughter, born in Rome at the time when her father was a military *attaché* in the Italian capital, had to add a letter to her identity documents and declare that she was born in Roman, a city in Moldavia. For the descendants of the old Romanian elites who had not died in prisons or fled the country, such adjustments of genealogies or of their own biographies were mandatory in order to survive. These

survival strategies can be identified most easily in the autobiographies that Romanians were forced to write during the communist regime. These autobiographies required numerous genealogical details, even about distant relatives. In many autobiographies, landowners became farmers and factory owners became craftsmen<sup>31</sup>, in the hope that the political police, the Securitate, could be deceived<sup>32</sup>.

The generations born under communism didn't even need to pretend they didn't know much about their family history. Information about their own families was becoming increasingly vague and distant. The memories about ancestors had disappeared, family documents and libraries had been burned, and family furniture and objects had been destroyed, confiscated, or sold. A heavy shroud had been thrown over Romanian genealogical knowledge.

### **After 1989: Commemoration, Recovery, Critical Analysis**

The collapse of communism in 1989 allowed repressed knowledge to come back to life. The losses had been enormous, and the trauma still persists today, but the victims of communism could finally be commemorated, and many of the hidden memories could surface. Historians could once again deal with genealogy, and descendants of families who had been persecuted by the Communists could publish their memoirs or write about their family history. The surviving family archives were able to provide exceptional testimonies, true revelations<sup>33</sup>. Among the historians who were at the forefront of the revival of interest in genealogy, I must first mention Neagu Djuvara (1916-2018), Ștefan S. Gorovei, Mihai Dim. Sturdza, Mihai Sorin Rădulescu<sup>34</sup>, Paul Păltănea (1924-2008), Paul Cernovodeanu (1927-2006), Constantin Rezachevici (1943-2021), Ștefan Andreescu, Andrei Pippidi, Matei Cazacu, Sergiu Iosipescu, and Petronel Zahariuc. The new context allowed for the publication of documents relevant to genealogical research<sup>35</sup>. In the last three decades, numerous books dedicated to Romanian ruling families have been published<sup>36</sup>, as well as history books exploiting genealogical material<sup>37</sup>, volumes dedicated to the history of certain families written by the very descendants of the respective families<sup>38</sup>, conversation books containing rich genealogical material<sup>39</sup>, prosopographic studies<sup>40</sup>, and books about the aristocratic residences<sup>41</sup>.

Thorough genealogical studies dedicated to the Romanian nobility in Transylvania have also been published<sup>42</sup> but also genealogical research about merchants and craftsmen<sup>43</sup>, the bourgeoisie, the dynasties of artists<sup>44</sup>, and even the peasantry, as well as about the elites belonging to the Hungarian<sup>45</sup>, German<sup>46</sup>, Jewish<sup>47</sup>, Armenian, or Greek<sup>48</sup> minorities. The study of heraldry also developed through experts such as Dan Cernovodeanu (1921-1999), Sorin Iftimi (1965-2021), Tudor-Radu Tiron, Silviu Andrieș-Tabac and Szekeres Attila István.

The most important academic project to recover genealogical knowledge and encourage interest in ancestors is the one led by Professor Ștefan S. Gorovei from the Romanian Institute of Genealogy and Heraldry “Sever Zotta” in Iași, who regularly organizes the National Congress of Genealogy and Heraldry, and who edited the new series of the magazine *Arhiva Genealogică* [*The Genealogical Archive*]. Prince Mihai Dim. Sturdza relaunched the idea of creating an encyclopaedia that would include as many boyar families from Moldavia and Wallachia as possible, currently reaching the letter E. I tried to save as many family memories and private archives as possible through the project *Memoria elitelor românești* [*The Memory of the Romanian Elites*]<sup>49</sup>, through the *Istorie cu blazon* [*Emblazoned History*] book series from the Corint Publishing House, and through the website *Povești cu blazon* [*Emblazoned Stories*]<sup>50</sup>, and I aim to inventory and publish the hundreds of family trees made by George D. Florescu. An excellent online project is the website dedicated by Florian Budu-Ghyka to the Ghika family and to other related families<sup>51</sup>.

## The Current State of Romanian Genealogical Science and of Family Memory in the Romanian Space

Genealogical knowledge has found its place among specialists in the field and even among historians who do not consider themselves genealogists but who use the relevant information provided by genealogical studies in their historical research. Dialogue with representatives of other disciplines seems more difficult. Unfortunately, even in the academic environment, stereotypes contradicting documentary reality are perpetuated, such as the ones according to which Romani-

ans did not have an aristocracy or that it would be impossible for them to discover their ancestors beyond the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among the general public, interest in genealogy is not very high. Lessons in schools dedicated to getting to know one's own family or history contests in which students are encouraged to discover the history of their families are very useful. Without having precise statistics at my disposal, direct observations from the last decades lead me to affirm that, in general, Romanians rarely know their ancestors beyond the generation of their great-grandparents. We are a society with a short genealogical memory. The hypothesis I am advancing is that the successive mournings that the Romanian genealogical memory has gone through are not unrelated to this tendency to quickly forget the ancestors.

It remains to be seen, in the future, to what extent the proximity to the West will stimulate, once again, Romanians' interest in their own roots.

- <sup>1</sup> Alexandru Filipașcu, *Enciclopedia familiilor nobile maramureșene de origine română*, Eikon, București 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> For details on the history and status of the *moșneni* from Wallachia and the *răzeși* from Moldavia, see Filip-Lucian Iorga, *The Romanian 'moșneni' and 'răzeși': free peasants or aristocrats?*, in *Actas Congreso Internacional de las ciencias genealógica y heráldica Madrid 2020, 20-23 octubre 2021*, Ediciones Hidalguía, Madrid 2022, pp. 219-231.
- <sup>3</sup> Olivier Bouquet, *Imperial Genealogies in Republics: The Case of Turkey*, in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, No. 58-2, 2011, pp. 146-178 (<https://www.cairn-int.info/journal-revue-d-histoire-moderne-et-contemporaine-2011-2-page-146.htm> [January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023]).
- <sup>4</sup> Filip-Lucian Iorga, *Strămoși pe alese. Călătorie în imaginarul genealogic al boierimii române*, Humanitas, București 2013, pp. 69-71.
- <sup>5</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Miscellanea Genealogica*, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"*, XXI, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, Iași 1984, pp. 492-495.
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