

# King Charles I and Decision Making Process in the Romanian Foreign Policy before the First World War

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*«La politique extérieure de la Roumanie est dans le sens intégral du terme tout récente. L'histoire de deux principautés vassales de l'Empire Ottoman en offre toutefois des cas isolés, sans continuité, [...]. Mais ces manifestations sporadiques ne peuvent être citées qu'à titre de curiosité historique, ne se rattachant en aucune sorte à la politique actuelle, qui ne remonte pas au delà de l'avènement du prince, ensuite roi, Charles de Hohenzollern au trône de Roumanie. Faute de passé, la politique extérieure de la Roumanie manque de tradition. Créée de toutes pièces par le souverain, celui-ci lui fit adapter sa tradition personnelle et lui voua une préférence si vive, qu'il s'en réserva jalousement l'exercice toute sa vie. La maxime: «Heureux les peuples qui n'ont pas de politique étrangère» a longtemps pu être appliquée <avec> sans paradoxe au peuple roumain, cette politique ayant constituée une prérogative exclusive du roi, avec lequel elle s'était à la fin identifiée. La caractériser, par déduction, en caractérisant <le roi> Charles I<sup>er</sup> lui-même serait moins superficiel qu'il ne semblerait au critique grave, seulement tout jugement porté aujourd'hui sur le roi trop récemment disparu, et déjà victime du zèle ingrat des panégyristes, serait provisoire et relatif, cette tâche est réservée aux historiens occidentaux de demain qui, sans parti pris, dégageront sa figure des éloges et des flagorneries ainsi que des incriminations et des attaques acerbes dont il été objet et, mettant à contribution les témoignages de première main, le fixeront dans ses vraies proportions et sous son vrai jour. [...] Ceux qui ont attribué à Charles I<sup>er</sup> un rôle créateur ou actif auraient été bien embarrassés de citer à l'appui de leur assertion un seul cas concret, en dehors de la politique extérieure, son unique œuvre personnelle. L'histoire définitive de cette œuvre est condamnée à rester longtemps encore peut-être dans l'obscurité ou dans l'incertitude des suppositions basées sur l'examen de ses résultats. Le roi n'a jamais divulgué le secret de son action diplomatique, à laquelle il n'initiait personne. [...] Mateiu I. Caragiale, *En 1918*, in idem, *Opere*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 274-279.*

By the First World War, diplomacy continued to be a reserved field in all the 19<sup>th</sup> century European states<sup>1</sup>. Generally speaking, the strategy of security and foreign policy depended and were the result of a restricted group of decision makers. Along with the mechanisms used in the so-called *decision making process*, the scheme of the decision making groups was roughly similar for the greatest number of the European international system's performers, with the inherent nuances. It was especially the case of the monarchical Europe and it was generally circumscribed inside of a closed triangle consisting of the Monarch / President, the Prime Minister, and the minister of Foreign Affairs. Far from being rigid, the formula was associated

<sup>1</sup> See René Girault, *Diplomatie européenne et impérialisme, 1871-1914*, Paris, 1979, p. 13; Roderick R. McLean, *Royalty and Diplomacy in Europe, 1890-1914*, Cambridge, 2001, *passim*.

with a series of variations from one state to another and also inside of each of them. For instance, the apparent inexistence of a hierarchy in the case of the Italian scheme was in contrast with the 'chain of command' visible in the Romanian case especially after 1888. Similarly, the numerous moments of 'contraction' of the Romanian decision making center from tripolarism to bipolarism were in contradiction with the constant tripartite setting up in the Belgian, Italian, or British cases.

Almost all around in the European monarchal states, in Berlin, St. Petersburg, Rome, London, Vienna, Brussels or Bucharest, the monarchs were first-rank decision makers. On the basis of a tradition connected to the early modernity, the 19<sup>th</sup> century rulers continued to confer a special importance to the prerogatives in this field. This was the case not only for those that had exceptional powers at disposal, such as the Russian Tsar or the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, but also for the constitutional monarchs, like Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, German Emperors William I and William II, the queens and kings of the Great Britain from Victoria to Edward VII and George VI, King Leopold II of Belgium, and so on<sup>2</sup>. This is the reason why during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by 1914, the international relationship continued to a significant extent to be inter-dynastic<sup>3</sup>.

Diplomacy represented the king's reserved domain also in the pre-War Romania. Under the circumstances of the parliamentary life, the monarch was regarded in Romania as the only warrant of the foreign policy's continuity, like in many other European states. Since 1866 Romania was a constitutional monarchy. In the political system of the Kingdom, the Monarch had a clear ascendancy over the other political powers due to its right of legislative initiative, to the absolute right of veto that allowed it to reject any law passed in the Parliament, and also to the special powers in the field of foreign policy and of military affairs; finally, it was due to the influence exerted by the Monarch individually and daily over his ministers. According to this "central European version of the constitutional monarchy" or of "constitutionalised absolute monarchy", the King, in agreement with the Romanian

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<sup>2</sup> See John Röhl, *The Kingship mechanism in the Kaiserreich*, in Idem, *The Kaiser and his Court. Wilhelm II and the government of Germany*, [Cambridge], 1994, p. 107-131; Paul Kennedy, *The Kaiser and German Weltpolitik: reflexions on Wilhelm II's place in the making of German foreign policy*", in *Kaiser Wilhelm II New Interpretations. The Corfu Papers* (ed. by John C. G. Röhl, Nicolaus Sombart), [Cambridge], 1982, p. 143-168; Keith Robbins, *The Monarch's Concept of Foreign Policy: Victoria and Edward VII*, in *An Anglo-German Dialogue: The Munich Lectures on the History of International Relations* (ed. by Adolf M. Birke, Magnus Rechtken, Alaric Searle), Munich, 2000; Samuel R. Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, Londra, 1991, p. 13-57; Girault, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> See R. A. Kann, *Dynastic Relations and European Power Politics, 1848-1918*, "Journal of Modern History", XLV (1973), 3, p. 407-408; T. G. Otte, «*The Winston of Germany*»: *the British Foreign Policy Élite and the last German Emperor*", "Canadian Journal of History", XXXVI (2001), p. 471-504 (472).

monarch's own words, represented even the reverse of the famous principle stated by François Guizot, meaning that he took a capital part in the governmental act<sup>4</sup>.

In the Romanian case, the sovereign's prerogatives in the matter of foreign affairs were defined confusedly enough but not less happily, in Article 93 of the Constitution in 1866. According to it, the King – the Prince, before 1881 – “[...] appoints and revokes his ministers, [...] appoints and confirms each public functions, [...] is the head of the army, [...] concludes the necessary conventions for trade, navigation and other like this with the foreign states [emphasis mine]; nevertheless, in order that these acts have the necessary authority, they must first be subjected to the legislative power and approved by it”<sup>5</sup>. Since the constitutional act had been set up in a moment when Romania had not reached yet the independence, the paragraph did not stipulate the political-military conventions, in order to avoid the international complications. Under these circumstances, the King of Romania was in the paradoxical situation not to be able to claim such a prerogative that was not expressly recorded in the Constitution, and at the same time not to be controlled by the Parliament, in the case that this latter exerted it, by interpreting Article 93 in a broad sense. Taking into consideration the possibilities of manoeuvres conferred to the King and government by this confused formulation, the maintaining of Article 93's content in the moment of the constitutional revision in 1884 is somehow explainable<sup>6</sup>.

With or without prerogatives, diplomacy represented King Charles I's reserved domain, the king being the only warrant of the foreign policy's continuity, under the circumstances of the parliamentary life. As one of the few ‘person in the know’ of the period, P. P. Carp did not scruple to declare this fact in the Parliament in 1888, from his position as minister of foreign affairs: “The foreign policy does not belong to the country, the foreign policy belongs to the king [...], the foreign policy must have a well defined and well established goal and a continuity standing under the protection vis-à-vis the party political fluctuations, and the Crown represents this continuity, since it is the supreme referee vis-à-vis the parties and has a larger preponderance than the Conservatives' head and the Liberals' head [...], the sovereign represents the country's sovereignty”<sup>7</sup>.

It is true, it is worthy to specify that there existed in Romania in the period between the Independence and the First World War an institution that came into

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<sup>4</sup> For this argument. see S. E. Finer. *The History of Government*, [Oxford], III, 1997, p. 1567 ff; Karl Löwenstein. *Die Monarchie im modernen Staat*, Frankfurt on Main, 1952, p. 26 ff; Vasile Docea, *Studiu introductiv*, in Carol I, *Jurnal*, I, 1881-87, [Iași], 2007, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Monitorul. Jurnal oficial al României*, partea oficială, no 142, July 1/13, 1866, p. 637 ff; for *Legea pentru revizuirea și modificarea unor articole din Constituțiune* [Law for revision and modification of several articles in the Constitution] (June 8, 1884), see *Monitorul Oficial*, no 51, June 8/20, 1884, p. 1041-1048.

<sup>6</sup> See *Monitorul Oficial*, no 51, June 8/20 1884, p. 1043; Ion Mamina, *Monarhia constituțională în România. Enciclopedie politică, 1866-1938*, Bucharest, 2000, p. 29-35.

<sup>7</sup> *Dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților* [hereafter, *DAD*], no 14, December 8 1888, p. 212-213.

being by the rigors of the parliamentary monarchy's regime, had only a consultative part, and activated in the foreign policy's area, that is the Crown Council<sup>8</sup>. Anyhow, taking into consideration its absolutely sporadic functioning – it was convened only on two occasions, on April 2, 1877, and July 21, 1914 – it is difficult to include it among the decision makers that had an effective part in the preparation and co-ordination of the country's foreign strategy.

Similarly anyway to the greatest number of the royalties of those times, the manner in which Romania's sovereign and 'his ministers' administered the foreign affairs was therefore, at least prior to the First World War, 'absolutist one', rational and still relying on the idea of *arcana imperii* and escaping from the control of the parliamentary instances. Exactly because of the 'springiness', more exactly of the 'confusion' of the constitutional stipulations in the field, the Parliament's function of joint partner in the foreign policy's directing was atrophied considerably, especially after 1880. The national representation obviously continued to exert a certain right of information and control in this field by voting of several laws, such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs' budget, the examining of the *Cărți Verzi* [Green Books]<sup>9</sup>, the minister of foreign affairs' interpellation and examination, and so on. Nevertheless, the preparation of the directions in the foreign policy strategy, the diplomacy's line of conduct policy and even the final decisions in certain crisis moments continued to be unknown to him<sup>10</sup>. First and foremost, this was the case of the alliance treaty with the Central Powers in October 1883, which existence was constantly denied by the representatives of the government, during all the interpellations in the two chambers. The same minister of foreign affairs, P. P. Carp declared in 1888 that "[...] *The matters of foreign politics do not have anything to do with the Parliament* [emphasis mine]. Such a matters do not concern the parties; the King is the one who represents the country as a whole and *He is the one to lead the foreign policy* [underlined in the original text], which needs to be consistent and not to be improvised."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See I. Mamina, *Consiliile de Coroană*, Bucharest, 1997, p. 7-51.

<sup>9</sup> See Ministerul Afacerilor Străine [hereafter, MAS], *Documente oficiale. Neutralitatea Dunărei. Diverse*, Bucharest, 1876; MAS, *Documente oficiale din corespondența diploamtică de la 5/17 octombrie 1877 până la 5/27 septembrie 1878, prezentate corpurilor legiuitoare în sesiunea anului 1880-81*, Bucharest, 1880; MAS, *Documente oficiale din corespondența diplomatică de la 2/14 septembrie 1878 până la 17/29 iulie 1880, prezentate corpurilor legiuitoare în sesiunea anului 1880-81*, Bucharest, 1880; MAS, *Cestiunea Dunărei. Acte și documente*, Bucharest, 1883.

<sup>10</sup> An exception was the period of the Balkan Wars, when the Parliament, because of objective reasons, was solicited to endorse the government's foreign policy. On May 11-13, 1913, the text of the Protocol of St. Petersburg was presented in the Parliament in a secret assembly and was adopted in both chambers by a majority vote. On July 3, an extraordinary session is convoked in order to vote the Romanian entering in the war and the law for settling of the state of siege. See Anastasie Iordache, *Parlamentul României în anii reformelor și ai primului război mondial, 1907-1918*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 95.

<sup>11</sup> *Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma* [hereafter, *ASDMAE*], *Serie Politica A (1888-1890)*, Romania, busta 107, fasc. 1, 35 anni: 243, no 206, R 498/165, Curtopassi to Crispi, Bucharest, December 18, 1888. Although Carp made an attempt to diminish

During his entire reign, King Charles I represented the constant presence in the field of the foreign affairs, and the decision making center in this matter was defined and set up preponderantly depending on his will<sup>12</sup>. As we already mentioned, the Prime Minister and/or the minister of Foreign Affairs were his associates. The terms of the Constitution were those that permanently coerced the Monarch to carefully select his assistants inside of the government, since Article 92 stipulated that no act issued by the King was to be available whether it was not to be countersigned by a minister, who consequently was to become responsible for the respective act<sup>13</sup>. Meanwhile, the regime of the ministerial responsibility could not determine a minister to accept superficially to sign an act, especially in the cases that it infringed the expectations of a certain segments of the public opinion, as it was the case in 1883. Therefore, in certain circumstances, the cooperation with this group would become for the monarch an extremely venturesome alternative in cases of governmental instability; this is the case of Lascăr Catargiu conservative government that came to power on March 29, 1889: either the prime minister or the minister of foreign affairs had no idea of the previously assumed foreign commitments, but they decided for neutrality in front of the Parliament<sup>14</sup>!

In order to prevent such a blocking, the Monarch's tendency in time was to settle down upon a group of "intimate counselors" that shared his conceptions in geopolitics and strategies, originating in both political groups that rotated at the government. Their profile and also their relationship with the Monarch tended in some cases to be different than that specific to the dignitaries in a constitutional state. It was completely dissociated to that of the great majority of the "bourgeois" coming to power by the constitutional and parliamentary progress of the political life and by vote. Maybe because of vanity, some of them insisted on underlining in a pure spirit of *Ancien Régime* the privileged relationship that connected them to the Monarch, by promoting some real or imaginary dignities typical for the Renaissance monarchies; in this sense, one should see, for instance, the title of *gentilhomme de la Chambre [du Roi]* assumed by P. P. Carp and underlined by the specific signs of the uniform, when this leader acted as plenipotentiary minister in Vienna. Therefore, as a whole those charged with the foreign affairs portfolio after 1881-1883 were more similar to the state men in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thinking and acting in the terms of "the cabinet diplomacy" as "King's ministers". This reality naturally led to an even more isolation of the foreign politics from the government, the parliament, the public opinion.

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the sense of his own words – "*Regele nu trebuie să acționeze și nu va acționa vreodată contra voinței națiunii* / the King should not act and will never act against the national will" –, it is also true that his theory was little connected to the constitutional doctrine and, more than that, set down a dangerous precedent regarding the Monarch's (ir)responsability.

<sup>12</sup> For King Charles I's foreign policy, see also Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *La politique extérieure du Roi Charles I de Roumanie*, Bucharest, 1940.

<sup>13</sup> Mamina, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> ASDMAE, *Serie Politică A (1888-1890)*, Romania, busta 107, fasc. 6: T. 963, Curtopassi to Crispi, the *ad interim* minister of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, April 12, 1889, 13 hour.

The “patrimonial” feature of the structure and of the decision making group for the foreign policy was also expressed in the period by the perpetuance and favors given to the private correspondence<sup>15</sup>, an *arcane* that put this intimate group into connection to the Prince and through the agency of which the matters referring to the Romanian foreign policy was dispatched the exchange of letters. It was about a rich correspondence directly kept up by ministers, diplomats, and military men with the Monarch, relying upon a privilege originating also in the Renaissance (*immediatrecht*) and that avoided the established structures of the constitutional state, that is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, in the case of the exchange of letters of the Ministry of War<sup>16</sup>.

The sketch of the Romanian decision making group demonstrates a high mobility, especially in its structure, which was extremely fluctuating in time. The bipolar system, especially in the formula King-Prime Minister, but also King-Minister of Foreign Affairs, substituted in time the three-polar system between K-PM-MFA. Its more and more reduced size and indirect its mobility were due primarily to the Monarch’s will. This will’s hidden motive would be a little later explained by one of the Italian plenipotentiaries in Bucharest, Carlo Fasciotti, as follows: “[...] [...] Your Excellency was to notice with how much jealousy King Charles wishes to keep secret about the agreements that join this state to the Triple Alliance. [...] The reasons that convinced the Romanian wise and cautious Monarch

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<sup>15</sup> See Michel Senellart, *Artele guvernării*, Bucharest, 1998, p. 253.

<sup>16</sup> Inside of this extensive private correspondence, see for instance the private letter written by the Romanian minister in Brussels and the Hague, Văcărescu, comprising references to the similar similar position that the Belgian monarch had in the administration of his country’s foreign policy: “*Le Cabinet du Roi a ici une grande importance sous la haute direction de Mr. Van Praet, Ministre de la Maison du Roi; [...] Enfin, au nombre des attributions plus importantes et des plus délicates du Cabinet il faut ranger celle qui se rapportent à l’initiative et à l’intervention particulière de Sa Majesté dans des questions qui intéressent personnellement le Roi, Sa Famille, aussi bien que l’Etat, comme, par exemple, les mariages des membres de la Maison royale, les négociations et correspondances à ce sujet. Il y a enfin l’obligation qu’a le Cabinet de pouvoir mettre le Souverain en situation d’avoir toujours présent l’état des relations extérieures du Royaume dans les questions actuelles comme dans le passé. Tous les rapports politiques des agents belges à l’étranger sont soumis par le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères au Roi. Le Cabinet, avant de les retourner à ce département, fait, sur l’ordre de Sa Majesté les extraits ou les copies ayant intérêt à être retenus et consultés ultérieurement, et les conserver dans les archives particulières du Roi. C’est le Roi Léopold I<sup>er</sup> qui a institué et donné cette organisation à son Cabinet. Souverain éminemment constitutionnel et qui en est resté comme le modèle pour la postérité, Léopold I<sup>er</sup> tout en laissant une grande liberté d’action dans les choses intérieures à ses ministres responsables, gardait pourtant une part large et presque exclusive dans les affaires extérieures, comprenant que le désintéressement ne peut être de mise pour le Prince qui représente la souveraineté nationale au dehors, dans des questions qui concernent autant la sécurité de l’Etat que l’intérêt, le prestige et l’honneur de sa Couronne. Tout ce qui regardait les relations avec l’étranger passait par les yeux du Roi, était réservé à sa décision et son Cabinet l’aidait dans cette tâche*”. [...]. Biblioteca Națională, Bucharest, mss., *Fond Brătianu*, dossier 459, p. 7-16, Teodor Văcărescu to Charles I, Brussels, August 10/22, 1884.

to keep so severe a secret are of two kinds: on the one hand the will to do not uselessly expose the country to the Russian hatred and reprisals and on the other hand the necessity to take into consideration the hostility of a great part [in 1912 – emphasis mine] of the Romanian public opinion against the Triple Alliance generally and [against] Hungary particularly”<sup>17</sup>.

The decision making center in the foreign policy had obviously a so called zero moment, which theoretically corresponded to the gaining of independence, meaning the way out of Romania from the “non-alignment” period by the negotiation and conclusion of the alliance with the Central Empires, approximately between June and October 1883. The effective decision was taken in 1883 by Ion C. Brătianu the President of the Council, King Charles I and D. A. Sturdza the Minister of Foreign Affairs; the order in which they appear in this enumeration is not by chance, as it is demonstrated pretty clearly by the archive documentation<sup>18</sup>. On an immediately inferior position there were a similarly reduced number of “performers” and/or “initiated”: the plenipotentiary minister in Vienna, the Junimist Petre P. Carp, whose activity in a certain moments much surpassed the position of a simple negotiator and performer of the decisions coming from the centre (actually, Carp was the one who forced the discussions around the hypothesis of an alliance with the Central Empire since the winter of 1882), the plenipotentiary minister in Berlin, Gheorghe Vârnav-Liteanu, Alexandru Beldiman, as the head of the Political Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since July 1883 (*chargé d'affaires* of the Legation in Berlin in the summer of the same year and attaché of the prime-minister I. C. Brătianu during the negotiations in Gastein until October 1883<sup>19</sup>), and, last but not least, Queen Elisabeth, the Monarch’s confidant also in the matters of foreign policy, certainly well informed about the adherence negotiations and, as it seems, even the inspirer of a certain line of conduct in the evolution of these talks<sup>20</sup>. Somehow non-realistic, King Charles I’s tendency after this zero moment was to “freeze” the composition of a decision group and even to restrain the circle of those “initiated”, under the circumstances that, for instance, no one of the plenipotentiary ministers that followed to Carp in Vienna after 1884 was officially informed about the existence of the alliance treaty with the Central Empires. The Royal legation in Berlin between 1888 and 1896 was actually in a similar situation in the period between the resignation of

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<sup>17</sup> ASDMAE, *Archivio di Gabinetto (1910-1920)*, casella 27, titolo III, fasc. 359: Private letter no 5, reserved, by courier, Fasciotti to San Giuliano, Bucharest, December 26, 1912.

<sup>18</sup> See *Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale* [hereafter, ANIC], *Casa Regală*, dossier 19/1883, *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> See *Anuarul Ministerului Afacerilor Străine al României pe 1897*, Bucharest, 1897, p. 70-71.

<sup>20</sup> ANIC, *Casa Regală*, dossier 19/1883, p. 56-57: Personal letter, Liteanu to Sturdza, Berlin, September 4 1883. “[...] *Ayez l’extrême bonté de dire à la Reine que l’entrevue de Gastein est un commencement d’exécution des recommandations que Sa Majesté a daigné me faire à Sinaia et à Predeal, et que j’y ai travaillé avec coeur et confiance, parce que j’ai reconnu que, dans les affaires diplomatiques où la finesse jouait un si grand rôle, la collaboration d’un femme valait autant que l’appui d’un grand Cabinet.* [...]”.

Vârnăv-Liteanu and the installment of the last pre-War titular, that is, Alexandru Beldiman. Since 1888, Beldiman was actually the only diplomat, and since 1896 the only Romanian plenipotentiary accredited at one of the allied Powers who was very well aware of the meaning and the amplitude of Romania's international commitments.

Much later, when trying to elucidate to his own minister of Foreign Affairs why he was not able to find out a real interlocutor in the person of the Romanian representative to Rome in the matter of the secret alliance treaty, the Italian minister Beccaria wrote: "As a matter of fact, His Majesty [Charles I] wants to inform (*mettere in segreto*) an as small as possible number of persons and very few Romanian state men are initiated in. All the acts relative to that agreement, King Charles told me, are kept in a safe in his office"<sup>21</sup>.

The existence of a decision making group having permanently tendencies of contraction at the top level and meanwhile less dispersed at the institutional level was assured also because of some technical "artificial means" originated finally in the same reasons mentioned above. Many times, the Prime Minister cumulates either *ad interim* or during the entire governmental session the Foreign Affairs portfolio. These cases are plentiful, especially after 1895. For instance, D. A. Sturdza, one of the constant promoters of the foreign strategy after 1882, during all four governments that he led, reserved for himself the directing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; it is only a partial exception the third government, in which he offered the Foreign Affairs portfolio to Ionel Brătianu after one year, on the occasion of the reshuffling on July 18, 1902<sup>22</sup>. Still, there are also abnormal cases when, without cumulating the Foreign Affairs ministry, the Prime Minister was the only member of the government to be effectively associated to the Monarch in the administration of the foreign affairs. These cases were favored also by the non-existence of a written standard or at least tacitly accepted by the Government, which was supposed to impose that in limit cases the decision in foreign policy be the result of a consensus, meaning of a consultation between the Prime Minister and the minister of Foreign Affairs. The government led by Ion C. Brătianu between 1881 and 1888 was an example in this sense. The foreign affairs ministers that followed to D. A. Sturdza, that is Ion Cîmpineanu (February 2-October 27, 1885) and Mihail Pherekyde (December 16-March 20, 1888) were deliberately not informed about the real direction of the Romanian foreign policy, and both of them continued to officially affirm the neutrality as international position of Romania. Inquired by the German minister in Bucharest for the sense of such a declarations delivered by Mihail Pherekyde at the end of 1886, in the context of the aggravation of the Austrian-Russian tensions consequent to the Bulgarian crisis, Brătianu declared that:

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<sup>21</sup> ASDMAE, *Archivio Riservato, 1906-1911*, casella V, fasc. 192/1 (Austria-Ungheria; Progetto d'alleanza austro-turco-germanico e turco-romeno): T f. n., Biancheri to San Giuliano, Rome, September 29, 1910, 15 hour (copy for His Majesty).

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. Ioan Mamina and Ion Bulei, *Guverne și guvernanți, 1866-1914*, Bucharest, 1994, *passim*.



“[...] *J'ai laissé faire les déclarations sur la politique extérieure par Monsieur Phérékyde, qui ne sait rien et dont les paroles ne tirent pas à conséquence*”<sup>23</sup>.

However, around two decades after, the existence of such a configuration of the Romanian decision making group was regarded with astonishment by the diplomatic milieu of the West. For instance, in 1910, the Italian minister of Foreign Affairs would be simply puzzled confronted with a telegram sent by Beccaria, the representative in Bucharest, who gave him notice that his Romanian counterpart was not informed by the secret alliance treaties. Considering that it was about an ambiguity, San Giuliano began to require the confirmation of the information: “Top secret, exclusively for You. In order to explain Your telegram no 47, please send me a wire if this minister of Foreign Affairs [Alexandru G. Djuvara, November 1, 1909-December 28, 1910, emphasis mine] really does not know a word about the agreements between Romania and the Triple Alliance, naturally without inquiring him.”<sup>24</sup>!

The paradox was still available for those of the governments that had no member to be warned about the real strategy. There were at least three such a governments before the First World War: Lascăr Catargiu government (March 29-November 3, 1889); the one led by General I. Emanuel Florescu (February 21-November 26, 1891), during which the validity of the alliance treaty with Austria-Hungary, respectively the German and Italian adherence agreements came to an end; finally, P. S. Aurelian government (November 21, 1896-March 26, 1897), a transitional one that, exactly because it was not familiar with the foreign commitments, was “guided” from the shade by Dimitrie A. Sturdza, so that the foreign policy line remain constant<sup>25</sup>.

Between the crisis of 1882-1883 and the First World War, a pro-German and to a certain extent anti-Russian component was present almost continuously inside of the decision group. Beside the Monarch, who was a Hohenzollern and for whom a

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<sup>23</sup> *Biblioteca Academiei Române* [hereafter, *BAR*], mss., CDA, paper case XLIII, p. 67, Heidler to Kalnoky, SP, Bucharest, December 26, 1886.

<sup>24</sup> *ASDMAE, Archivio Riservato, 1906-1911*, casella V, fasc. 192/1 (Austria-Ungheria; Progetto d'alleanza austro-turco-germanico e turco-romeno): T f. n., San Giuliano to Beccaria, Rome, September 28, 1910, 18 hour; *ibidem*: T 47, Beccaria to San Giuliano, Bucharest, September 26, 1910, 11,30 hour. “[...] In order to offer to You a line of conduct, neither this minister [of] Foreign Affairs nor the Romanian minister [in Rome] do know anything about the agreements with the Triple Alliance”; *ibidem*: T f.n., Biancheri to San Giuliano, Rome, September 29, 1910, 15 hour (copy for His Majesty). “The King’s ministry reports from Bucharest as follows: ‘no 48 – Top secret, exclusively for You. When Djuvara received the portfolio of the Foreign Affairs on November 1909, Brătianu gave me notice for all contingencies that he knows nothing about Romania’s agreements with the Triple Alliance and that *the King has no intention to let him know* [emphasis mine]”.

<sup>25</sup> *ASDMAE, Serie P. Politica, 1891-1916*, Romania, pacco 285: T 2726, Beccaria to Visconti Venosta, Bucharest, December 4, 1896, 15,30 hour.

sentimental connection to Germany existed, many politicians and diplomats were involved in the decision making process, many of them being attracted by Germany. They admired its military force and economy and some of them had a German educational background: we refer here to the minister of Foreign Affairs and afterwards Prime Minister D. A. Sturdza, to P. P. Carp, minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the Council, who was even a follower of the German development “pattern”<sup>26</sup>, and to Titu Maiorescu, President of the Council and minister of Foreign Affairs. Petre P. Carp wrote to his brother-in-law D. A. Sturdza in the autumn of 1883, to the end of the negotiations with Austria-Hungary and Germany: “[...] The honor is yours, since it was not to occur without you and when I think about the huge value that even the smallest details in the so tactful negotiations that [last] for nine months, I don’t know what kind of good thing could result whether a man with *French background* [underlined in the original text] was to be instead of you and without [our] *König* [underlined in the original text]”<sup>27</sup>.

Along with the structure of the international system in the period, it explains also why this chosen decision group, headed permanently by King Charles, had an at least original manner to get information about the European occurrences. In other words, “its mental map” took shape on the basis of the direct and almost exclusivist contacts with the officials in Berlin and Vienna, established and maintained by the group’s members themselves, that is the King and the Prime Minister and/or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, sometimes even when the last ones had temporarily no official quality, and the Sturdza case is typical in this sense. These contacts relied upon the dynastic connections with the German Imperial Court, the personal ones between Charles I and the Austrian-Hungarian Emperor Francis Joseph I, due to the extensive correspondence kept by the King with some members of the German Imperial family (that is, the Prince and then *Kaiser* Frederic William), with members of his own family, especially with his father; and finally, sporadic enough, relying upon the information sent by the diplomatic representatives abroad; an exception was the private exchange of letters had by the ministers in Berlin, Liteanu (1880-1888) and Beldiman (1896-1916), directly with the Monarch. In a report dated in 1885, Count Tornielli recorded in this sense that “the foreign policy of Romania [...], in its most difficult circumstances, finds its way around Berlin”<sup>28</sup>. The same character

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<sup>26</sup> Cfr. Andrei Corbea, *Cu privire la critica «modelului german» al «Junimii»*, in *Cultură și societate. Studii privitoare la trecutul românesc* (ed. by Al. Zub), Bucharest, 1991, p. 242-253.

<sup>27</sup> ANIC, *Casa Regală*, dossier 19/1883, p. 94-95, private letter, Carp to Sturdza, Vienna, September 30 (new style), 1883.

<sup>28</sup> *35 anni di relazioni italo-romene: 1879-1914. Documenti diplomatici italiani* (ed. by Rudolf Dinu and Ion Bulei), Bucharest, 2001 [hereafter, *35 anni*], p. 180, no 123, Tornielli to Di Robilant, Bucharest, December 17, 1885. “[...]The terms of my personal relations with Mr. Brătianu allowed me to ask him curtaillessly with regard to his voyage to Vienna and Berlin to the end of September, when the unionist movement just bursted out. [...]. *Immediately returned in his states, at the news about the first events in Philippopolis, His Majesty ordered immediately the President of His Counsel of Ministers to go to meet Prince Bismarck. During the last years, Mr. Brătianu has*

completed more specifically in 1887: “[...] *Ainsi que je l'ai écrit à plusieurs reprises, l'orientation de la Roumanie, dans les moments critiques, se forme principalement sur les informations, parfois de nature très intimes, qui parviennent ici de Berlin directement au Roi*”<sup>29</sup>.

For instance, between 1883 and 1888, the Romanian decision group, both the Prime Minister I. C. Brătianu, the minister of Foreign Affairs D. A. Sturdza – after 1885, as minister of Culture and Education<sup>30</sup>! – and King Charles I, performed yearly informing and consultative journeys to Berlin and Vienna, so that the Bucharest government's political and diplomatic strategy relied upon these preferential relations. The fact is actually attested by a series of notes written by D. A. Sturdza – as the only to be accustomed to draw up extensive reports for the King's use on these circumstances –, comprising, sometimes *in extenso* – the summary of his conversations with German and Austrian-Hungarian officials<sup>31</sup>. It is a striking contrast between this permanent flurry to Berlin and Vienna and the lack of an effective communication at the upper level between Bucharest and Roma, since the only meeting between the Romanian monarch Charles I and the King Humbert I of Italy at Monza in October 1891 and also the only official visit of a Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs to Rome performed by Ion I. C. Brătianu in January 1910 were very difficult to be regarded as constant connection! Even the negotiations regarding the Italian adhering to the Austrian-Romanian treaty were to a great extent intermediated by the governments of Vienna and Berlin and a direct contact between Bucharest and Rome was concluded not by chance only during their final stage, along with the arrival in Romania of the Italian new plenipotentiary minister Francesco Curtopassi to the end of March 1888. The lack of informal connection marked actually also the relationship between Bucharest and London, even after the conclusion of the matrimonial alliance in 1893 that was supposed to bring together the two ruling houses.

These visits should not be necessarily regarded as appeals *ad audiendum verbum*, but manners considered as the most secure in order to investigate de international “pulse” in a certain moment. Anyhow, they took in time the shape of a rule to which almost all those “initiated” in the secrets of the Romanian foreign

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*made many visits to the Prince-Chancellor [emphasis mine]. His nowadays impressions had thus a term of comparison in the precedent ones”.*

<sup>29</sup> ASDMAE, DP, *Rapporti in arrivo*, Romania, busta 1398: code appendix to R 856, Tornielli to Crispi, Bucharest, August 13, 1887.

<sup>30</sup> It was to provoke the wax of the titular of the Foreign Affairs, Ion Cimpineanu, who threatened with his resignation consequent to such a mission fulfilled by Sturdza in June 1885; see Apostol Stan, *Ion C. Brătianu și liberalismul român*, Bucharest, 1993, p. 432.

<sup>31</sup> See for instance BAR, *Arhiva D. A. Sturdza*, IV mss. 137, p. 1-22, *Convorbirile ce am avut cu M. Sa Împăratul Austro-Ungariei, cu Comitele Kalnoky și cu Comitele Herberth Bismarck...* [The conversation that I had with His Majesty the Emperor of Austria-Hungary, with Count Kalnoky, and with Count Herberth [sic!] Bismarck ...], Lemberg-Berlin-Vienna-Pest, September 11-23, 1886.

policy were subject to. They indicate precisely enough the vectors to which the decision center gravitates around. Much later, when this period had already come to an end, this practice would be depicted by I. G. Duca, in a manner clearly influenced by the political allegiance, as being typical only to the Conservative-Junimist leaders and not to the Liberals! “[...] In this sense, Maiorescu followed Carp’s opinions when saying: «*In the foreign policy, I follow what Vienna and Berlin say; there is the centre around which our foreign policy gravitates, and not to Bucharest*» [emphasis mine]. In such a manner these people regarded our presence in the Triple Alliance”<sup>32</sup>. It is true that after 1909-1910, at least for the new leader of the Liberal Party, Ionel Brătianu, “the light” ceased to come exclusively from Berlin and Vienna, but the tradition of the preferential contacts with the Austrian-German officials was preserved only scarcely altered by the eve of the First World War<sup>33</sup>.

Consequent to the King’s wish to hold the secrets of the foreign policy only at the disposal of a very restricted group of “initiated persons”, the diplomatic native personnel – as we said above, excepting the intervals when P. P. Carp acted in Vienna and Vînav-Liteanu and Alexandru Beldiman in Berlin – played an extremely marginal part in the administration of the alliance relationship. Because of the monopoly claimed by the Monarch and his ministers in the field of foreign affairs, the diplomatic elite of the Kingdom had as a whole a merely “ethereal” part in the decision making process<sup>34</sup>. The technological process occurred in the field of communications – the emergence and generalization of the telegraph – had provoked since the half of the 19th century an important change in this way at the European general level, drastically limiting the diplomat’s temporal and real space of maneuver, driving him more and more from the decision making to the consultative area. In the case of the Romanian diplomatic corps, the lingering in a function almost exclusive of appliance and execution was strengthened by the “absolutist” view of some of the Monarch’s intimate counselors, who were charged with the daily administration of foreign policy. It was especially the case of D. A. Sturdza, *le petit*

<sup>32</sup> See I. G. Duca, *Amintiri politice*, I, Munich, 1981, p. 15. “[...] Brătianu could not share such a conception and, after he had energetically protested against the way in which the Alliance had been renewed, he formally declared to the King that he did not believe that one could find a government to be able to put into practice an alliance extended under these circumstances. He and his party, Brătianu added, were not able to put this treaty into practice in case of war”.

<sup>33</sup> His first official visit, as President of the Council of Ministers, in the summer of 1909, confined itself to the meetings in Karlsbad with Aehrenthal, Bethmann-Hollweg and ... King Edward VII, see *35 anni*: 484-85, no 431, Beccaria to Tittoni, Bucharest, October 1, 1909.

<sup>34</sup> When the Romanian envoye to the British Court, Ion Bălăceanu complained to the half of the 90s that his activity in London was completely neglected by the decision makers in Bucharest, the former general secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alexandru Ghica Brigadier replied kindly: “My dear, if I were you I would rent a pretty country house in Boulogne where to settle down with my family and I wouldn’t go to London unless three or four times a year, only to attend the official receptions and to expose my uniform, because, take care!, by no means they would let you do politics [emphasis mine]”. Ion Bălăceanu, *Amintiri politice și diplomatice, 1848-1903*, (ed. by Georgeta Filitti), Bucharest, 2002, p. 281.

*gris*<sup>35</sup>, a follower of the Bismarck pattern in business management. This was defined by a precise and rigid hierarchy, of complete obedience of the employee whose right of opinion and decision was denied and whose only duty was to fulfill the orders without interferences and as quick as possible. Certainly, such a reality should not be overestimated, since the Romanian diplomat should not be regarded as a simple puppet. The part taken by him in expressing certain strategies and even in drawing up the decisions continued to be in certain cases essential, but only indirectly, especially because of the mental map induced to the central decision makers through the agency of the information submitted.

A particular function in maintaining and developing of the alliance relations was inevitably given to the plenipotentiary ministers of the allied Great Powers, especially to the German one. Bernhard von Bülow, for instance, also due to his personal capacities, especially to his tact and subtleness proved in negotiations, became to act between 1888 and 1893 like a King's real personal counselor; Charles I allowed himself to discuss with him more than with any among the Romanian officials of those times<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, the ministers of the Triple Alliance became to surpass their status of observers of the Romanian realities and of performers of the orders sent from the center, and sometimes interfered in the decision making process, thus "inspiring" a certain attitudes and even decisions taken by the Crown in direct connection to the foreign policy. In order to offer only one example, it is illustrative the exposure drawn up by the Italian minister Curtopassi around the position held by the plenipotentiaries of the Triple Alliance on the eve of the nomination of the Conservative government led by Lascăr Catargiu:

"Yesterday, before the nomination decrees for the new ministers be signed, His Majesty invited the German representative to the Palace [...]. Asked about the warrants that could calm and maybe satisfy the three allied Courts, he summarized them as follows: 1. *the assurance given by the minister of Foreign Affairs to the three representatives of the Central League that nothing is to be changed on the foreign policy matters*; 2. *the new Government's commitments that it will not continue to supervise and to expel the Russian emissaries and propagandists*; 3. *the finishing of the fortification system around the capital and on the Sereth line*; 4. *the quickening of the arrival of the hereditary prince in Romania* [emphasis mine]. The Monarch promised not to sign those decrees and not to receive his new counselors until he was to be sure of their ascent on the above matters [...]. At the end, my colleague was

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<sup>35</sup> The appellative used by Prince Dimitrie I. Ghica, one of the young attachées mad with the rigour imposed by Sturdza in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see *BAR*, mss., S 42(3)/DCCLXVII, Ghica to Constantin C. Manu, [Bucharest], [1896].

<sup>36</sup> See Georges Fotino, *Les Missions de Goluchowski et de Bülow auprès du Roi Carol I-er de Roumanie*, "Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique", 46 (1932), p. 275-279; Dan Berindei, *București 1888: Bülow raportează lui Bismarck. În capitala României independente*, "Magazin istoric", 1983, XVII, no 11, p. 17-21; no 12, p. 73-76; Idem, *Bernhard von Bülow und Rumänien in der ersten Jahren seiner Mission in Bukarest*, in *Deutsche Frage und europäisches Gleichgewicht. Festschrift für Andreas Hilgrüber zum 60. Geburtstag*, Köln-Vienna, 1985, p. 47-66.

required to repeat [...] to the representatives of Italy and Austria-Hungary the details of the meeting with him"<sup>37</sup>.

Without denying these interferences, one should say that the Romanian monarch was far of obeying voluntarily and on any circumstances to the "recommendations" coming from Berlin, Vienna, or Rome. Because of his "resistance", He many times provoked the irritation of the chancellor von Bismarck, "*il pro tempore padron del mondo*"<sup>38</sup>.

Inside of the decision making group, the King's position evolved in ascendancy beginning with the 80s and became preponderant to 1888-1892. During the long Liberal government between 1881 and 1888, it was rather a tandem between Charles I and I. C. Brătianu to work and, despite some contemporary perceptions and especially the classical meaning in the specialized literature, the tone inside of the decision making group at least in certain key moments seems to had been given by the former republican and conspirator in 1848 and 1866. The fact is actually explainable when one takes into consideration the personality and also the great authority conferred by a long political activity to the Prime Minister. Beyond any doubt, old Brătianu was one of the great builders of modern Romania. He had been the one that, beside many other achievements, had negotiated in 1866 the coming of the future King Charles I of Hohenzollern in the country; he had been the one who accompanied the young prince in his incognito voyage towards Romania<sup>39</sup>. At least after 1881, the relationship between I. C. Brătianu and the Monarch was rather an *inter pares* one than a hierarchical one. No minister subsequent to him enjoyed of a similar treatment from the King's side, neither of the same appreciation. Regarding the foreign policy, his point of view seems to weigh in a certain moments even more than the King's one. "You will judge and decide"<sup>40</sup>, wrote the minister of Foreign Affairs D. A. Sturdza in August 1883, to the very end of a private letter where there were presented the circumstances that drove Romania towards an alliance with the Central Empires, and also the King's and his options. The final decision belonged certainly to Charles I, but Brătianu's one made the materialization of the alliance as being possible.

The decision's collective framework beyond any doubt marked the first age of the Romanian foreign policy and the native decision making group in the whole period of the long Liberal government to Ion C. Brătianu's resignation in 1888. It

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<sup>37</sup> ASDMAE, *Gabinetto Crispi*, cartella nr. 3, fasc. 6b, Romania: Curtopassi to Crispi, Bucharest, April 11, 1889, 21,50 hour: *ibidem*: R. 300/73, segreto, Bucharest, April 12, 1889.

<sup>38</sup> The Italian ambassador in Berlin, De Launay, reported in the spring of 1889 that "[...] *Le Chancelier à passé sous silence la Roumanie. Mais je sais par le Secrétaire d'Etat qu'ici l'on est peu édifié à l'égard de Son Souverain. Il s'attribue de grandes qualités qui lui sont contestées; il est plein de suffisance, n'écoute pas les conseils qui lui sont donnés dans son propre intérêt*". *ibidem*, *Gabinetto Crispi*, Serbia, cartella 3, fasc. 6c (XXIX): R. 326/128, De Launay to Crispi, Berlin, March 16, 1889.

<sup>39</sup> See Stan, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>40</sup> ANIC, *Casa Regală*, dossier 19/1883, D. A. Sturdza to I. C. Brătianu, Sinaia, August 4/16, 1883.

was not by chance that the Italian minister in Bucharest, Count Torielli, noted in 1885 when referring to the Romanian decision making group that “King Charles [has] *direct* and continuous *part* [emphasis mine] in the leading of Romania’s foreign policy”<sup>41</sup>.

Later on, during the years immediately after Brătianu’s resignation from the head of government, the part taken by the King inside of the decision making group became preponderant and the other decision poles were subordinated. The profile was changed, meaning that the structure of “one group” was replaced by “preponderant leader”. In reality, the opinion of the King, as the dominant leader, became the only relevant one. In such a structure, although the other elements – Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister – continued to have the ability of debating and proposing alternatives, it became really a simple academic exercise, not relevant for the decision making process in itself from the moment in which the leader externalized his opinion... In the case of Romania, the change was especially determined by the recognition of the competences and abilities of the Crown in the field of foreign affairs.

Such a reality is amply attested in the diplomatic and the other sources. The examples inserted here exclusively belong to several foreign diplomats. For instance, the French minister in Bucharest, Jules Henrys d’Aubigny, concluded in September 1896, at the end of an investigation regarding the decision makers and the Romanian foreign policy’s directions, that: “The truth is that the King is above the parties; He is the only leader of the country’s foreign policy. For many years, with a sustained tenacity, he has been above the Liberal, Conservative and Junimist ministers, having one and the same purpose that is the agreement with government of Vienna under the patronage of the one of Berlin”<sup>42</sup>. A little later, in 1909, the Italian minister Beccaria Incisa, the dean of the diplomatic corps – his permanence in the Romanian capital has already counted around 14 years – wrote even more categorically about this field’s working process: “[...] As I have many times noticed in my correspondence with this ministry [of Foreign Affairs – emphasis mine], *the best warrant for the Romanian foreign policy’s stability is His Majesty, he who holds the effective supreme direction and would not allow that the essential principles be modified without his complete consent* [emphasis mine]”<sup>43</sup>. Actually, it seems that the Monarch did not conceal the manner in which He supposed to administer the foreign affairs, which were always – as we said above – of Absolutist feature, relying upon the *arcana imperii* idea, very similar at that time with the one promoted for example by his “brother” and allied, Francis Joseph<sup>44</sup>. Duke Caracciolo di Castagneta reported

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<sup>41</sup> ASDMAE, DP (1867-1888), *Rapporti in arrivo*, Romania, busta 1398, 35 anni: 180, no 123, R. 593, Torielli to Di Robilant, Bucharest, December 17, 1885.

<sup>42</sup> Cfr. V. F. Dobrinescu, I. Pătroi, *Carol I văzut de un diplomat francez*, in *Omagiu istoricului Ioan Scurtu*, Focșani, 2000, p. 128.

<sup>43</sup> ASDMAE, Serie P. *Politica, 1891-1916*, Romania, pacco 287, 35 anni: 477-78, no 425, R. 254/26, by courier, Beccaria to Tittoni, Bucharest, February 9, 1909.

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. Jean-Paul Bled, *Franz Joseph*, Bucharest, 2002, p. 21, 449-457.

from Bucharest in 1909 that “[...] It seems that King Charles is excessively jealous with regard to the leading of the foreign policy, and actually it was the day before yesterday when he repeated to me that ‘the foreign policy should be led from the top, since the parliament and the public opinion are extremely sick of suspicion in front of instructions’”<sup>45</sup>. As the President of the Council of Ministers Titu Maiorescu confessed to the Italian *chargé d'affaires* Auriti in the autumn of 1913, the Monarch “wishes that his ministers be in the foreign affairs rather performers than inspirers and, in such an arguments [dealing with the international affairs] to demonstrate that they rather wish to limit their action than to increase”<sup>46</sup>.

The Crown’s preponderance in the field of foreign affairs was for the first time openly contested in 1889 by Lascăr Catargiu, shortly after his installing to the government, in a speech delivered in the Chamber of Deputies. As Italian minister Curtopassi wrote in April 1889, “[...] answering yesterday to Mr. Carp, who asked for more explanations about the international policy that the new government would promote, Mr. Catargiu said as follows: ‘The foreign policy that Mr. Carp wished to promote is so antinational that, if one day he would dare to confess it, his stay in Romania would not be possible [anymore]. *Rosetti-Carp government, as Mr. Brătianu’s government, was a King’s personal government* [emphasis mine]; it depends on the Parliament to subvert any personal government and, if the country does not want the Crown to promote a personal policy, then it [the Parliament] should remove each governments of this kind’”<sup>47</sup>. According to the Conservatives’ viewpoint, Romania’s option in the field of foreign policy had to be “neutrality in its real sense”! The very same Catargiu affirmed on March 30, 1889 that: “We, as small nation that should be grateful to all the powers, should save from provoking, from displeasing each of them and we shall do our best in order to protect the neutrality in its real sense and to defend it against all those that would attack it. [...]. A peaceful and friendly policy to all the powers, a completely impartial and sincerely neutral policy is the only that could be useful for our country. We have condemned the

<sup>45</sup> ASDMAE, *Archivio Riservato, 1906-1911*, cassella I, fasc. 19/VIII Balcani (Serbia-Romania-Bulgaria), 35 anni, p. 482, no 429, R 1427/144, confidential, the *chargé d'affaires* in Bucharest, Caracciolo, to Tittoni, Sinaia, July 9, 1909. See *ibidem*, *Archivio di Gabinetto (1910-1914)*, pacco 9 bis, Romania no 12/2, fasc. 12 (*Notizie sulla Corte Rumena*), 35 anni, p. 512-513, no 456, Private letter, no 83, reserved, through courier, Fasciotti to San Giuliano, Bucharest, February 29, 1912. “[...] *Cum este știut, Regele Carol și-a asumat în mod aproape exclusiv politica externă și [cea] militară, și, pentru restul, domnește și în același timp guvernează cu concursul unei restrânse oligarhii* / As it is well known, King Charles assumed almost exclusively the foreign and military policy [emphasis mine], and, for the remainders, He rules and at the same time governs through the instrumentality of a restricted oligarchy”.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, *Archivio di Gabinetto, 1910-20*, casella 27 titolo III, fasc. 348: R 1728/411, Auriti to San Giuliano, Bucharest, September 15, 1913.

<sup>47</sup> ASDMAE, *Serie Politica A. 1888-1891*, Romania, busta 107, fasc. 6: Curtopassi to Crispi, Bucharest, April 14, 1889.



foreign policy promoted by the past government [Rosetti-Carp], now servile, then provocative and never correct"<sup>48</sup>.

More than two years were necessary to the King to destroy this Conservative "viewpoint" about Romania's part on the international stage, it is true, at the cost of the expiration in November 1891 of the first agreements that connected Romania to the Triple Alliance. Anyhow, the vehemence of the Conservative leader calmed down gradually as a result of the progressive action of the Monarch<sup>49</sup> to "convert" the Conservatives from the "neutral" policy to the one of alliance with the Central Powers. The "relentless" Catargiu became to be congratulated by King Charles in June 1892, in a moment when the Monarch's "exegesis" took effect or, in other words, the Prime Minister unconditionally consented to the restoration of the alliance with the Central Powers, in the following words: "*Vous êtes un bon patriote, et dorénavant je Vous place dans mon esprit sur la même ligne que feu Jean Bratiano*"<sup>50</sup> – that is on the same line of no one else than Brătianu, whom Catargiu had accused in 1889 of leading a King's "personal" government! On the same circumstances, Al. Lahovari declared to the German minister von Bülow that: "*Il ne s'agit plus de la politique de tel ou tel chef de parti, mais de la seule politique étrangère que la Roumanie peut suivre, la politique nationale, qui est consignée dans les stipulations secrètes que nous adoptons*"<sup>51</sup>. Nevertheless, one should note that this time the collocation of "national policy" indicated a completely different policy than that that Lahovari had referred to in March 1889, using the same formula.

The necessity of expanding the decision making group through the insertion of new elements and especially the transfer of responsibility at least partial from the Monarch to the Government would be real debates only on the eve of the First World War. For instance, Duke of Castagneta noted in 1909 that "Some political personalities criticize and regard as anti-constitutional the monopoly that King Charles uses to maintain in the foreign policy of Romania"<sup>52</sup>. Minister Fasciotti anticipated a double finality in a more applied analysis that took into consideration the manifestation of some important segments of the public opinion, more and more hostile to the alliance with the Central Empires, the inevitable extension of the suffrage, but also the minor prestige of Ferdinand, King Charles I's successor: "[...] Supposing that – once with the new King – *the foreign policy would not continue to be the Crown's exclusive privilege as it is now, I note that here is no way to demonstrate that Romania would continue to orientate itself to Austria-Hungary and Germany* [emphasis mine]. Despite what they call here 'the ravishment of Bessarabia', Romanian people's feelings are more directed to the great Orthodox power [Russia] than to the oppressor of their brothers in Transylvania. And, beyond

<sup>48</sup> Cfr. *DAD*, no 70, assembly on March 30, 1889, p. 1281-1282.

<sup>49</sup> Cfr. *DDI*, 2, XXIII, p. 46-47, no 61, Curtopassi to Crispi, Bucharest. October 10, 1889.

<sup>50</sup> *GP*, VII, p. 180, no 1485, R. 60, secret, Bülow to Caprivi, Sinaia, June 15, 1892.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> *ASDMAE, Archivio Riservato, 1906-1911, casella I, fasc. 19/VIII: R 1427/144 Caracciolo to Tittoni, Sinaia, July 9, 1909, quoted.*

the aversions, one should take into account the interests and better saying the needs of the Romanian State, which very probably one day or another should try extend itself, if it wishes to continue its life. [...] *The characters that are most devoted to the dynasty note that it would be appropriate that the foreign policy be promoted by the Government and not exclusively by the Monarch. 'The new King' – they say – 'should make use more discretely of his legitimate influence and to let to the Government a larger freedom of action and consequently o greater responsibility, while diminishing proportionally the excessive responsibility that burdens now on the Monarch* [emphasis mine].<sup>53</sup>

Brătianu's return to power in January 1914, as the political character most imprinted in the nationalistic way and possessing a certain educational, political and ideological profile considerably different that that of His Majesty's other counselors, did not change, contrary to the appearances, the realities in foreign policy's area. Actually, consciously or not, Brătianu brought further the idea of *arcana imperii* in the Romanian foreign policy, as an education reflex or a typical feature, he manifested affection for the practices of the cabinet policy; actually, he was characterized by a chronic lack of confidence and a suspicion regarding his government and party colleagues<sup>54</sup>. In the first part of 1914, the internal affairs, the party matters, the elections held him far from the international policy<sup>55</sup>. Thus, the King continued to control the foreign policy until the summer of 1914, when an external factor, that is the outbreak of the war, radically changed the international and home parameters. The ultimate decision making unit in the already known formula broke down, although only along with the Monarch's passing away in October 1914. Charles I's disappearing represented a referential moment in the diplomatic history of modern Romania, more important maybe than the decision of neutrality in August 1914. It induced a new configuration of the ultimate decision making unit by the prime minister's emergence as preponderant leader, with all the consequences originating in I. C. Brătianu's features, opinions, intellectual and ideological background; among them, there was the decision to enter the World War along with the Entente, after two years of temporizations, impossible sinuosity and exasperating politics. Therefore, in the summer of 1914, once with Charles I's disappearance, the auspices mentioned by Baron Fasciotti in the sense of the transfer of responsibility from the Crown to the Government were accomplished.

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<sup>53</sup> *35 anni*, p. 512-513, no 456, Fasciotti to San Giuliano, Bușteni, June 6, 1912, quoted. "[...] Still, from now on – to a shorter or less term – the extension of the suffrage is inevitable and, along with the new and more numerous electors and with the minor personal prestige of the new Monarch, the Royal authority will be held between more restricted limits."

<sup>54</sup> In the period of neutrality, the daily administration of the foreign policy belonged exclusively to him and supposed an even more pronounced isolation of the decision. Unlike Charles I, who had permanently preserved the co-operation with one of the government's members, Brătianu acted almost exclusively through the agency of several elements outside of the official area: each kind of intimates, from relatives to former colleagues in the university, in the clearest Renaissance spirit.

<sup>55</sup> *35 anni*, p. 589-93, no 536, Fasciotti to San Giuliano, Bucharest, June 11, 1914.

As a conclusion, it results clearly enough that the elements of modernity in the Romanian foreign policy should not be searched in the decision making area, but rather in the bureaucratic structures to implement them. Since the end of the ninth decade of the 19th century, these latter in an obvious process of variation, and it was especially at the level of the diplomatic elite, which since the 80s are ranged progressively to the Western standards regarding the recruiting norms, the intellectual background, and so on. However, in the sense of the above mentioned of the transfer of responsibility, the lack of substantial changes in the decision making area did not isolate the Kingdom in comparison to the remainder of the European governmental landscape, since the dynastic secret diplomacy was the general mark of the time. An Italian journalist wrote in 1906: "If in the matters of internal policy, the Parliament, the universal suffrage, the public opinion or the «chorister» and the leaders are highly reckoned on for a long time, in the foreign matters the policy necessarily remains restricted, closed, jealous, esoteric, as it had been in the times of Richelieu. [...] Honestly speaking, the number of the characters that contribute to the regulation of the world business does not reach 25 simultaneously..."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See C. Placci. *Le chiacchiere diplomatiche (A proposito delle Memorie del principe Hohenlohe)*, in *Il Marzocco*, October 21, 1906. apud E. Decleva, *Fra «raccoglimento» e «politica attiva». La politica estera nella stampa liberale italiana, 1870-1914*, in idem, *L'incerto alleato. Ricerche sugli orientamenti internazionali dell'Italia unita*, Milan, 1987, p. 16.