

Why bother to reprint a study that is now over 80 years old, the editor asks? There are several reasons for this, including expanding the access of historians to a book that had an unfortunately limited distribution, the bringing back into contemporary historiography some of Iorga's original insights, and the restoration of an important part of Romania's cultural legacy. Pippidi also notes that the book's tripartite approach to the Romanian past provides an introduction to a key element of Iorga's thought which emphasized the land (geography), people (nationality), and civilization (the "idea", "life"). These were among what Iorga called in his 1938 paper at the Zurich International Congress of the Historical Sciences "the permanences of history".

The editor points out that while nine decades of study have added significantly to our knowledge of these subjects, in most respects these are details rather than a wholesale reevaluation of art and literary history. This edition skillfully augments the original text by adding over 100 footnotes, but does this in a way that does not swamp the 1929 text.

The parallel treatment begins with the days of the wooden churches and popular song and in less than 100 pages brings the story down to the 19th century in six succinct chapters. The South East European specialist will welcome the chapters dealing with architectural borrowings from the Byzantines and the Serbs and the remarkable flowering of Romanian culture under Ștefan cel Mare, while the student of Romanian history will appreciate the insights into Romanian culture provided by this survey. The instructive introduction helps place Iorga's life and work in context and the notes provide for further exploration of an exploration of Romanian art and literature that demonstrates the continuing usefulness of Iorga's scholarly instincts.

*Paul E. Michelson*

N. Iorga, *Opinii sincere și pernicioase ale unui rău patriot*, translated and edited by Andrei Pippidi, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2008, 266 pp.

More than a century ago, N. Iorga was not only a prodigy of Romanian culture, (publishing more than 60 books and pamphlets by the time he was 30); he was also the *enfant terrible* of the Romanian historical profession. Perhaps none of his early publications made such a sensational splash as two collections of articles that had appeared in the French-language Romanian newspaper, *L'Indépendance Roumaine*. The books, *Opinions sincères. La vie intellectuelle des Roumains en 1899* (1899) and *Opinions pernicieuses d'un mauvais patriote* (1900) indicted by name many of the leading Romanian cultural figures (Hasdeu, Urechia, Tocilescu) and institutions (the archives, the universities, the Romanian Academy, the press), home truths that led to attempts oust him from his university post and closed the doors for a time to resources controlled by these affronted cultural figures. The books became bibliographical rarities. Now Humanitas has done us the service of publishing a translation into Romanian, interestingly with – according to the back cover – an eye toward analogies between Romania in 1899 and Romania in 2009 and the need for forthright discussion today of weaknesses of the same Romanian cultural institutions and their leaders that Iorga took on in 1899–1900.

The books were important in two respects. The first was that they represented the "going public" of the coming historiographical generation, which also signaled the growing professionalization of Romanian historical scholarship. The second was that their publication marked a major turn in Iorga's own evolution. Up to this point, he had shunned politics and at the outset had no intention of becoming involved with politics (a stance similar to the anti-politics movements of the 1980s and 1990s). It had seemed to him that 1899 was the start of a moment of "regeneration" for Romanian culture and that a no-holds barred cultural critique could help Romania "create a civilization, a true and unique one corresponding to our real nature and our best and noblest inheritance". (See Iorga's autobiography, *O viață de om așa cum a fost*, Vol. I, p. 318). This almost inevitably led him into political journalism and political life; the second volume of his autobiography was not so incidentally subtitled "Luptă".

Iorga's attack on mediocrity, cronyism, patronage, and pretension, the editor notes, was remarkably similar to that launched in the 1860s by the charge of Junimea's Titu Maiorescu that Romanian culture was totally derivative, merely "forms without foundation" (p. 12). Indeed Iorga began an intense collaboration between 1900 and 1904 with the Junimist journal *Convorbiri Literare* (which from 1902 to 1906 was under the editorship of the historian Ioan Bogdan, his close associate and brother-in-law), though he himself was never a Junimist. At same time, he wrote extensively for the conservative journal, *Epoca* (edited by Nicolae Filipescu; these pieces were collected in 1903 as *Cuvinte adevărate*), contributed to the short-lived *România Jună* (1899–1901), and became involved in the peasantist review, *Sămănătorul* (which he edited from 1905–1906; most of these articles were published as *O luptă literară. Articole din Sămănătorul*, two volumes, 1914–1916).

A further key moment in Iorga's development occurred in 1902, when he spent time at Blaj in Transylvania, where he was impressed by the Transylvanian peasantry in comparison with those in the independent Romanian Kingdom, and by the threat of "denationalization" from the Magyars in Transylvania and from the Francophone elite and the Jews in the Regat. (This was the subject of a final series in *L'Indépendance Roumaine*, collected under the title *Scènes et histoires du passé roumain. Un procès de désnationalisation*, 1902.) This led, logically, to the March 1906 theatre protest and then to the events of 1907.

As the editor notes, Iorga's "generous illusion" that a new society was about to emerge and that egoism, greed, clientism, and sacrificing all moral scruples for economic, social and political gain would be overcome proved mistaken (p. 9). Romania, of course, failed to change from an oligarchical state in which the largely peasant population was effectively shut out of political life (pp. 10–11). This led to the explosive peasant uprising of 1907, in which Iorga came down strongly for the peasantry and which demonstrated that a good deal of what he had been arguing prior to this was true.

The editor is somewhat pessimistic about what he finds here, especially the striking analogies between Romania today and over a century ago. Much of the intellectual elite is still rewarded for mediocrity and toadyism, tends to sugar-coat or simply avoid controversy, and relies on connections for advancement rather than real achievement. (pp. 7–8). Critics are still identified as "traitors to the nation" and "poor patriots" and, like Iorga, reproved for "naming names" in their work. The jury remains out on Romania today, but time is slipping away. The need to reform the national "civic spirit" is just as great today as it was then. N. Iorga was not afraid to point it out when the emperor didn't have any clothes. Healthy cultures need more people willing to do that. Attacks on the "Establishment" are usually not welcomed, as Pippidi's introduction shows in the case of 1899–1907. But intellectuals faithful to their calling to speak the truth to power must not betray their trust. Hopes for a new beginning in Romanian public life have been so often bungled that there is good reason for pessimism. However, there are still signs among younger scholars and courageous survivors of older generations that we can be hopeful for the future... for the time being.

Paul E. Michelson

Andrei Pippidi, *Case și oameni din București*, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2008, 209 pp.

This fascinating book collects a series of articles in *Dilema Veche* under the rubric "SOS București"; and is an important addition to the much too small shelf of books dealing the history and architecture of modern București. The purpose of the series was to draw attention both to the oft-neglected attractions of Romania's capital (overlooked through ignorance and the bustle of life in a city of 2 1/2 million people) and to historic structures threatened by mindless development and the pursuit of economic gain to the detriment of other values (what the author calls the "aggressive ravishing" of București's historic fabric).

This is a passionate book detailing one outrage after another. These range from the scooping up of classic buildings by the Romanian *nouveaux riches* (who then proceeded to modernize these structures out of recognition including air-conditioning units in every window), to the conversion of