

**PROFESSOR VALENTIN CIORBEA  
– SEPTUAGINTA QUINQUE ANNIS!**Stoica LASCU<sup>1</sup>DOI <https://doi.org/10.56082/annalsarscihist.2021.2.7>

In a less favorable time – in the pandemo-medical context – of marking some landmarks of contemporary culture, the birth of 75 years ago of the dean of today's Dobrudjan Historiography – the Professor of History Valentin Ciorbea cannot be hidden (b. October 12, 1946, in Transylvania). After the disappearance of the late Gheorghe Dumitraşcu (+2017) and Ion Bitoleanu (+2020), Professor Valentin Ciorbea, the most prolific historian from Dobrudja, is at the helm of Clio's Ship in the space between the Danube and the Sea; the research of the past of this ancient Romanian territory has materialized it, over the years, in one of the most prolific teaching and publishing activities at the level of the national ensemble of servants of such a tried tutelary goddess of History.

And not anyway, but through a sum of qualities, which we revealed a quarter of a century ago – time strengthening, and confirming, the connotations on occasion of the “half-centenary of the historian of the Port of Constanța” (in a material published in 1996 in the magazine “România de la Mare”, from Constanța).

«Although widowed by works that present monographically, thematically or synthetically, the centuries-old history of the Romanian land between the Danube and the Sea – the due exceptions illustrate the idea as such – our historiography still benefits from books and its circumscribed activities. And fundamental books in this sense are those elaborated by prof. Univ. Dr. Valentin Ciorbea, from the Naval Academy “Mircea cel Bătrân”, Dobrudjan by adoption –was born half a century ago, on October 12, 1946, in the commune of Intergalde, Alba County.

The trajectory of the life of the one who is the historian of the Port of Constanța and of the Romanian merchant navy – high school studies at Râmnicu Sărat, university at the University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” from Iași (graduated in 1970), Professor in pre-university education from Constanța and Mangalia (in 1970-1975), then Professor at the Naval Academy “Mircea cel Bătrân” from Constanța (Assistant – 1976; Lecturer – 1978; Associate Professor – 1990; Professor – 1995) – hints at a vocation as a teacher and researcher with the most notable results,

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<sup>1</sup> Associate member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, Director of the Center for Historical and Archaeological Sciences of the European Institute for Multidisciplinary Research.

materialized in both teaching and scientific careers at the highest levels of the profession.

I met him two decades ago, handling the roles of microfilmed newspapers at the Constanța County Library (by the way – if he has to be given a name, it may not be superfluous to consider that of the historiographical and geographical officer of Dobrudja, the owner of the most remarkable library in the city, until the First World War – Marin Ionescu-Dobrogianu); with the meticulousness of the Transylvanian, the thematic or signaling sheets were drawn up – as if I still have them in front of my eyes – on the basis of which the doctoral thesis was elaborated, in 1982 – *Evoluția Dobrogei între anii 1918-1940. Contribuții la cunoașterea problemelor economice, sociale și politice* [The Evolution of Dobrudja between 1918-1940. Contributions to Knowledge of Economic, Social, and Political Issues]. At that time, this thesis – its non-appearance damages the national historiography of a valuable research, scrupulous, thoroughly articulated in the sources of time – introduced in the national-territorial equation of the respective approach an extension of the investigation on the existing Dobrudjan counties in the Romanian State during 1913-1940: Durostor and Caliacra. This unitary approach to the research of national history is a priority in specialized research, no one has investigated such an issue before him. It is a priority and a merit that should be retained as such.

Present, later, with numerous specialized articles in magazines from Bucharest, Iași, Constanța, Valentin Ciorbea will stand out for the sobriety and seriousness of their conception, of their writing. There are articles that prepared the books later, the ninth decade being fruitful in terms of the appearance of studies, the participation in numerous scientific sessions, the excerpt from the documents of the news time that will be the basis of those volumes.

Thus, in 1992 he co-authored the volume *Academia Navală Mircea cel Bătrân. Tradiții, prezent, perspective* [Mircea cel Bătrân Naval Academy. Traditions-Present-Perspectives] (104 pp.), so that in 1994 the work *Portul Constanța – de la antichitate la mileniul III* [the Port of Constanța – from Antiquity to the Third Millennium] (280 pp.) – the first work dedicated to the Port published in the last 55 years. A synthesis of great scientific and stylistic accuracy – qualities peculiar to all his studies, in fact –, the monographic volume proves the author's availability for wide-ranging works, both thematic and chronological. Written concisely, not risking in assessments that do not have sufficient documentary coverage – the work filled a gap in the historiography dedicated to Dobrudja and its economic and social specificity. Having the education of the Iași historical school – nationally recognized as superior, through the meticulousness and seriousness of the research, to other university centers –, the Professor from

Constanta not only strictly followed the evolution of the Port, but also framed these countries.

The same vision imbued with professionalism and rigor of documentation is found in the next book of his reign (written in collaboration with Carmen Atanasiu) – *Flota Maritimă Comercială Română. Un secol de istorie modernă – 1895-1995* [Romanian Commercial Maritime Fleet. A Century of Modern History (1895-1995)], published in 1995 /224 pp./. And this monograph is open in approaching a new topic – it is the first book dedicated, after the war, to the Romanian merchant navy. It aims at the birth, strengthening, evolution of this component of the national economy, on the existence of which depends, to a large extent, the prosperity and solidity of the country's prestige found on various meridians of the globe. Although statistical data abound in some places, technical-constructive characteristics specific to ships – and this work is distinguished by the sustained documentary effort, by the clarity of its organization, systematization, and exposition. At the end of the volume – the reader is convinced that the Romanian State has always been concerned with the provision of its maritime service, the development of the commercial fleet in the second half of our century being one of the strategic priorities in terms of transport the construction of the great shipyard from Constanța and the modernization of the Danube ones.

Consistent with his concerns, Professor Valentin Ciorbea presents himself at the marking of the Centenary of the Port of Constanta with a new approach to its history – *Portul Constanța 1896-1996* [The Port of Constanța 1896-1996] /208 pp. + 12 pl. color/. Accompanied by numerous photos, maps, sketches, graphics – the pages of the beautiful book dedicated to the CENTENNIAL of the Port (the cover seems less inspired, the agglutination of the drawings confusing the reader in the absence of clear explanations) remain, in my opinion, the purest homage, expressed in higher professionalism, brought to the history of the Port of Constanța to mark its jubilee. Along with the other volumes, they once again consecrate the quality of port historian to Mr. Valentin Ciorbea, who, at the age of 50, appears to the city and national historiography with a new enterprise, under the sign of Clio and Fortuna with Pontos, the protectors of ancient Tomis.

We wish you, Mr. Professor, dear colleague and dear friend, good health and may the Lord give you to enjoy life for many decades to come, to have the power to give our historiography new proofs of love for the historical truth, to bring new testimonies of the passage of our predecessors through the tumultuous and de facto rich life of Dobrudja» – I said a quarter of a century ago.

There are appreciations that, as I said, time has validated as such, quantitatively – and, no less, qualitatively – in 45 volumes (by a single author, co-

author, coordinator, or editor) and dozens of studies (almost 130) published in magazines and specialized volumes.

The scientific work materialized in the editorial appearances that are of reference in the respective issues, appreciated as such by the confreres and the national academic and scientific forums (the Tomitan historian is a laureate of the Romanian Academy, with the “*Mihail Kogălniceanu*” Award, in 2007; with other recognitions, among which including the “*Gheorghe I. Brătianu*” Award, of the Romanian Society of Historical Sciences, awarded in 2004; and recently, the Romanian Academy of Scientists honored him with the *Jubilee Diploma and the Gold Medal* for his entire scientific and academic activity, on the occasion of his accomplishment age 75).

Books by a **single author** – *Portul Constanța de la antichitate la mileniul III* (Constanța: Editura Europolis, 1994); *Portul Constanța 1896-1996* (Constanța: Editura Fundației „Andrei Șaguna”, 1996); *Evoluția Dobrogei între 1918-1944. Contribuții la cunoașterea problemelor geopolitice, economice, demografice, navale și ale vieții politice și militare* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2005) (ediția a II-a, revăzută și reîntregită [second edition, revised and re-completed]. Cuvânt înainte [Foreword] Florin Constantiniu – Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2008); *Din istoria secolului XX. Vol. I: 1918-1939; vol. II: 1939-1945. Principalele teatre de operațiuni militare; vol. III (coautor): 1939-1945. Diplomația războiului* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2006, 2007, 2011); *Generalul adjutant Paul (Pavel) Teodorescu (1888-1891). Vocația creativității. 125 de ani de la naștere* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2013); *Istoricul navei-școală „Mircea”. Epopeea 75 (17 mai 1939-mai 2014)* (Constanța: Editura Academiei Navale Mircea cel Bătrân, Constanța, 2014); *Mănăstirea Dintr-un Lemn – un complex monahal unic în România. Monografie istorică / Dintr-un Lemn Monastery – A Unique Monastic Complex in Romania. Historical Monograph* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, București, 2020).

**Coauthor** – *Academia Navală Mircea cel Bătrân. Tradiții, prezent*, (Constanța, 1992) (second Editions – Constanța: Editura Muntenia, 1997); *Flota Maritimă Comercială Română. Un secol de istorie modernă – 1895-1995* (Constanța: Editura Fundației „Andrei Șaguna”, 1995); *Școala Militară de maiștri militari de Marină „Amiral Ion Murgescu”. Trepte în timp* (Constanța: Editura Muntenia, 1997); *Monografia Academiei Navale Mircea cel Bătrân. Tradiții, prezent, perspective*, Ediția a II-a; *Istoricul crucișătorului „Elisabeta”* (Constanța: Ovidius University Press, 2004); *Nava-școală „Mircea”. Epopeea 75 – O istorie în imagini* (Constanța: Editura Academiei Navale Mircea cel Bătrân, 2014); *Istoria Românilor. Vol. II. Tom II: De la Independență la Marea Unire (1878-1918)*. Ediția a II-a, revăzută și adăugită (coord.: acad. Dan Berindei a.o.) (București: Editura Științifică, 2015); *Ada-Kaleh – Casele de sub ape* (Constanța. Editura Ex

Ponto, 2017); *Comunitatea musulmană din România în ilustrate (1898-1940)* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, 2017); *Dobrudja în documente diplomatice românești (1878-1884)* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, 2019); *Dobrudja în anul 1878 după rapoartele Ștefan Fălcoianu și Ioan I. Murgescu* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, 2020); *Dobrudja în izvoare istorice noi: anii 1877-1878 și 1906* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, București, 2021); *23 august 1944 la Constanța. Cazul Amiralului Horia Macellariu – Testimonii* (Constanța: Editura Muzeului Național al Marinei Române, 2021).

**Coordinator** – *Studii istorice dobrogene* (Constanța: Editura Ovidius University Press, 2003); *Germanii dobrogeni – istorie și civilizație* (Constanța: Editura Muntenia, 2006) (Ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită – Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2014); *Portul Constanța între tradiție, actualitate și perspective* (Constanța: Editura Companiei Naționale Administrației Porturilor Maritime S.A., 2007); *Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră între istorie, actualitate și perspective* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2008); *Dobrudja 1878-2008. Orizonturi deschise de mandatul european* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2008); *In memoriam Liliana Lazia* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2012); *Dobrudja în contextul Primului Război Mondial* (București: Editura Top Form, 2017); *140 de ani de la Unirea Dobrogei cu România. Studii istorice* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, 2018); *Localități ale județului Constanța la 140 de ani de la Unirea Dobrogei cu România* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, 2018).

**Editor:** *Istoricul Navelor Școală „Mircea”* vol. I, II (Constanța: Editura Academiei Navale „Mircea cel Bătrân”, 1997; 1999; Ediția a II-a – Constanța: Editura Academiei Navale Mircea cel Bătrân, Constanța, 2014); *Album fotografic Nava Școală „Mircea”*. Supliment fotografic al lucrării *Istoricul Navelor Școală „Mircea”*, Vol. II (Constanța: Editura Academiei Navale „Mircea cel Bătrân”, 1999); *Bilder aus der Dobrudscha 1916-1918/ Imagini din Dobrudja* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2011); *Tătarii în izvoare arhivistice românești*, Vol. I: *Comunitatea musulmană în Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2011); *Denkschrift Der Deutschen Etappen in der Dobuchscha. Abgeschlossen Mitte April 1917/ Memoriu al Administrației Germane din Dobrudja. Întocmit la mijlocul lui aprilie 1917* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 2012); *Contraamiral Horia Macellariu (1894-1989). Autobiografia din temniță. Miscellanea* (București: Editura Academiei Oamenilor de Știință din România, 2016).

Historian, with the vocation of professorship, the hard-working researcher has – as can be seen from the above list – the grace of collegiality (see the numerous volumes prepared or coordinated with other colleagues, almost all former students

or PhD students), the honest and consistent mentor of young people willing to engage in scientific research; as a PhD supervisor (I think, so far, over 30 PhD students), he gave a distinct allure, through the scientific seriousness of the research act, the “Ciorbea brand”. And as a recognition of his place on the top floor of National Historiography, there are testimonies, among others, the two massive volumes dedicated to his reign – five years ago (*Profesorul universitar dr. Valentin Ciorbea la 70 de ani. O viață în sîajul muzei Clio*. [University Professor Dr. Valentin Ciorbea at 70 Age. A Life in the Slipstream of the Clio Muse]. București: Editura Etnologică, 2016 /876 pp./, volume coordinated by Virgil Coman, Luminița Stelian, Nicoleta (Grigore) Paraschiv –, respectively, one, more special, completely recent (*Valentin Ciorbea, Profesor universitar doctor, 75. In Honorem. Raportul ucenicilor*. [Valentin Ciorbea, Professor PhD, 75. In Honorem. The Report of the Disciples], Constanța: Ex Ponto, 2021 /596 pp./, editors: Dr. Nicoleta Paraschiv and Dr. Luminița Stelian).

The reader, more carefully, can notice that Professor Valentin Ciorbea is familiar with the research areas dedicated to the Navy and the Port of Constanța, respectively Dobrudja after 1878 – research materialized in synthesis or thematic works, but also in extremely useful document editions. But not only that – the three volumes dedicated to the Great World War (less known, unfortunately, among readers) place the UOC academic among the few knowledgeable and specialists in military and political-diplomatic issues of the Second World War World.

As the perseverance and the relentless inclination towards new research directions led the Transylvanian-Dobrudjan man to Oltenia, a space where he founded, in 2014, at Dintr'un Lemn Monastery (near Râmnicu Vâlcea) a unique research institution, through his profile, in the Romanian space – *Centrul de Cercetare al Conlucrării Bisericii Ortodoxe cu Armata României „General Paul Teodorescu”* [Research Center for the Cooperation of the Orthodox Church with the Romanian Army “General Paul Teodorescu”] (and he is also responsible for the design and editing, since 2014, of its yearbook, documented and lush magazine “Misiunea”).

The personality of Professor Ciorbea, one of the most active, in editorial terms, member of the Section of Historical Sciences and Archeology of A.O.Ș.R. (where he is a corresponding member), but he does not limit himself only to these briefly revealed valences – researcher, teacher, mentor, initiator –, his presence, invigorating, in the public space bringing a plus not only of information, but also of balanced judgments on the purpose knowledge of History, the detection of its perennial teachings, without false judgments, or with prejudices and partisanship; In an interview on the eve of his seventh and a half decades, he confessed: “The fact that I studied, researched and taught contemporary history brought me a rich experience and ability to understand the past and the present. The profession of

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historian requires constant passion and dedication. You are an investigator, analyst, and writer. You also have a great responsibility for the written discourse and the impact it can have on the community in publishing and in the future. It is a difficult but beautiful profession. About my most beautiful accomplishments, I can say that there are some that I think are worth mentioning: the discovery and guidance of some talented students and PhD students, who have confirmed their profession. I would add the books that I managed to write after research in archives and libraries”.

His knowledge – resulting from bibliographic mastery and archival research –, his life experience, his entire scientific and professional activity and his honesty give him the credibility and authority of a true intellectual of the Tomis Agora and a scientist of Dobrudja, a prominent senior of contemporary Romanian historical science.

*Happy Birthday, Clio's Distinguished Teacher and Senior!*