

THE UNION OF THE PRINCIPALITIES WITH FOREIGN PRINCE FROM STRATEGY OF DIPLOMACY TO ROMANIAN NATIONAL PROJECT

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Abstract. In Romanian historiography, the beginnings of the modern idea of political unity, of the national state, are placed in the years of the rule of the native princes (1822-1828) and of the Russian occupation, when the first modern manifestations in this sense appeared, concerning the union of the Wallachia with Moldavia, as a Romanian state, a buffer state between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, based on the historical rights in relation with the Porte, a state with modern institutions, according to the understanding and interests of the elite of the time. An interesting conclusion, resulting from a contextual analysis of the transformations of the period, without benefiting from too many explicit documentary references. Nevertheless, previous proposals concerning the establishment of a principality or kingdom of Dacia have been intensively discussed by Romanian and foreign historians, but, in our opinion, insufficient clarification has been provided regarding the extent to which these proposals belong or not to the history of the modern Romanian national project.

In order to be able to make some reasoned conclusions we propose to conduct a comparative study. On the one hand, the "Dacia project" promoted by Russia in the years following the Treaty of Kuciuk Kainardji and the Ainali Kavak Convention, subsequently associated with some Russian plans for the reorganization of the Balkans promoted especially by Ioannis Kapodistrias, deserves special attention. On the other hand, after 1821, in a historical context influenced by the outbreak of the Greek revolution and the efforts of the Great Powers to find solutions for the organisation of a Greek Christian principality, *the first Romanian proposals for the Union of Moldavia with Wallachia into a national state* were to appear, the most important being the proposal of January-February 1830 to achieve the union with a foreign prince, in the person of Gustav of Vasa, former Crown Prince of Sweden.

Rezumat. În istoriografia românească, începuturile ideii moderne de unitate politică, de stat național, sunt plasate în anii domniilor pămâtenene (1822-1828) și ai ocupației rusești, când ar fi apărut primele manifestări moderne în acest sens, privind unirea Țării Românești cu Moldova, ca stat românesc, un stat tampon între Rusia și Imperiul Otoman, bazat pe drepturile istorice în raport cu Poarta, un stat cu instituții moderne, conform înțelegerii și intereselor elitei de atunci. O concluzie interesantă, rezultată dintr-o analiză contextuală a transformărilor din epocă, fără a beneficia de prea multe referințe documentare explicite. Cu toate acestea, propuneri anterioare privind constituirea unui principat sau regat al Daciei au fost intens discutate de istorici români și străini, dar, în opinia noastră, nu au fost aduse suficiente clarificări cu privire la măsura în care aceste propuneri aparțin sau nu istoriei proiectului național românesc modern.

Pentru a putea formula niște concluzii argumentate, ne propunem să realizăm un studiu comparativ. Pe de o parte, "proiectul Dacia" promovat de Rusia în anii care au urmat Tratatului de la Kuciuk Kainardji și Convenției de la Ainali Kavak, asociat ulterior unor planuri rusești de reorganizare a Balcanilor promovate mai ales de Ioannis Kapodistrias, merită o atenție deosebită. Pe de altă parte, după 1821, într-un context istoric influențat de izbucnirea revoluției grecești și

de eforturile Marilor Puteri de a găsi soluții pentru organizarea unui principat creștin al Greciei, aveau să apară primele propuneri românești de unire a Moldovei cu Valahia într-un stat național, cea mai importantă fiind propunerea din ianuarie-februarie 1830 de realizare a unirii cu un principe străin, în persoana lui Gustav de Vasa, fost principe moștenitor al Suediei.

Keywords: political emancipation, national state, modern state, foreign prince, comparative method.

The historiographical questions concerning the idea of national unity, of the existence of a national state project among Romanians have a considerable longevity and continue to preoccupy today's historians. The subject is particularly vast, with multiple ramifications, exposes the person who approaches it to a number of risks, and has an undeniable identity value. In this respect, Paul Michelson suggests a distinction between myth as a coherent narrative explaining a particular past and myth as a historiographical fake, a rhetorical construction designed to legitimize and manipulate¹. Is the idea of the nation state a historical reality in the first half of the 19th century, supported by documents, or a historiographical myth? Did the Moldavians and the Wallachians consider themselves two different ethnic entities until 1840, only to discover suddenly in 1848 that they were Romanians? Has our historiography inoculated to the nation a historical memory that has no support in reality, has invented a "struggle for national unity" prior to the forty-eighter movement? There are recent works that explicitly formulate or suggest affirmative answers to these questions².

Two main arguments are invoked, not without complexity, apparently leading to potentially credible demonstrations. The first argument concerns historiography, upon which a discourse of legitimization of Romanianism has been placed, and has been seen as part of the "national rhetoric" of the last almost two centuries. Privileged themes, canonical interpretations, historical myths with an identity function have been identified as certain evidence of the nationalism of Romanian historiography, presented more as an instrument of national identity than of

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¹ Paul E. Michelson, *Teleological History and the Romanian Past: Just Say „No!”*, in „Analele Științifice ale Universității «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» din Iași”, *Istorie*, LXIV/2018, Număr special *Marea Unire a românilor (1918) – Istorie și actualitate*, Volum editat de Petronel Zahariuc, Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, Adrian Vițalaru, Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2019, p. 22-24.

² Lucian Boia, *În jurul Marii Uniri de la 1918. Națiuni, frontiere, minorități*, București, Humanitas, 2017, p. 6-7; Neagu Djuvara, *O scurtă istorie a românilor povestită celor tineri*, București, Humanitas, 1999, p. 148-150. In a recent book, Ioan Stanomir attributes to forty-eighter movement the entire merit of the Romanian national construction, like a "pioneer and laboratory" (p. 15), the architect "of an imaginary that will populate the national pantheon" (p.16), but also the sin of having contributed to the foundation of the later forms of ideological and political authoritarianism (*Așteptând revoluția: Pașoptismul și vocile sale*, București, Humanitas, 2019, *passim*).