

## REVIEWS

### PROFESSOR ANATOL PETRENCU – SEPTUAGINTA ANNIS!

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For historians from the Republic of Moldova – and, to no lesser extent, for us, the people on this side of the Prut River that divides our country –, it is an occasion for tribute and celebration: the president of the “Alexandru Moșanu” Association of Historians from Chișinău, Honorary Member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, celebrated seven decades of life!

One of the most active presences in the academic, scientific and social-civic space on the banks of the Bac River, Habilitated Professor Anatol Petrencu represents, without a doubt – through all his multiple activities – the gold mine of today’s Moldovan Historiography.

The scientist from Chisinau (born in the small town of Căușeni – documented on June 6, 1455; today it has 16,000 inhabitants; a number of intellectuals from Bucharest, Constanța, and Buzău regularly participate in national-cultural events that take place here – on May 22, 1954) is one of the most well-known, prolific and respected researchers in the field of History in the Republic of Moldova:

– with a sustained scientific activity, materialized in numerous books and hundreds of studies and articles (he is also a PhD supervisor; founder and director of the Institute of Social History “ProMemoria”);

– didactics (professor at the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the State University of Moldova, dean during 1990-1992);

– social-civic (participant in national political life, president, in 2006-2010, and since October 2021, of the “Alexandru Moșanu” Association of Historians);

– social-historical and cultural journalism (he is the signatory of numerous materials on his own blog – with incisive articles and pertinent expressions of attitudes with a national-cultural relevance so necessary in the maintenance of Romanianism across the River Prut and its path towards integration into the European Union).

A tonic spirit, a precious companion and always a welcoming host (through his recommendation, for example, on March 28, 2023, I was able to hold a conference in front of students from the “Alecu Russo” State University in Bălți, an event moderated by Professor Lidia Pădureac, Vice-Rector of the University), with

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engaging affability and animated by a patriotism typical of Moldovans who have drunk from the springs of the national consciousness and history of the Romanians, Professor Petrencu is, I believe, the most present Senior of the Clio Museum beyond the Prut at meetings and events of a (national-)scientific nature organized in the Country; and not only in Bucharest, but also in many other smaller cities and towns – including in Dobrogea (in Constanța, respectively at the Holy Monastery of Dervent).

His personality is retained in the representative *Enciclopedia reprezentanților scrisului istoric românesc* [Encyclopedia of the Representatives of Romanian Historical Writing] (5 Vols., 2022; coord. [Eds.]: Victor Spinei and Dorina N. Rusu), published under the aegis of the Section of Historical Sciences and Archaeology of the Romanian Academy: “Specialist in contemporary history. Research on the contemporary history of European countries, deportations from the Moldavian S.S.R. during the Soviet period, the history of the Second World War. Author of monographs, collections of documents, collections of studies, university and school textbooks and over 600 scientific and journalistic articles” (vol. IV (*O-R*), pp. 152-153: *v o i c e* PETRENCU Anatol; compiled by *G.P.*) (Professor Gheorghe Postică was born in the same year; he was elected, on September 25, 2024, Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy).

The published books, all printed in Chisinau (except for the *Encyclopedia...*, published in Bucharest), are:

(single author): *Învățământul istoric în România (1948-1989)* [Historical Education in Romania (1948-1989)] (1991, 112 pp.); *Istoria universală. Epoca contemporană, 1939-1993 (Europa, SUA, Canada)*. Prelegeri [The Universal History. Contemporary Era, 1939-1993 (Europe, USA, Canada). Lectures] (1995, 272 pp.) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition completed, 1995, 346 pp.; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition completed, 1995; 4<sup>th</sup> edition, anastatic, Iași, 2010); *Basarabia în al Doilea Război Mondial: 1940-1944* [Bessarabia in the Second World War: 1940-1944] (1997, 346 pp.); *România și Basarabia în anii celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial* [Romania and Bessarabia in the Years of the Second World War] (1999, 176 pp.); *În serviciul zeiței Clio* [In the Service of the Muse Clio] (2001, 816 pp.); *Polonezii în anii celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Istoria politică* [The Poles during the Second World War. Political History] (2005, 246 pp.); *Basarabia în timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial: 1939-1945* [Bessarabia during the Second World War: 1939-1945] (2006, 224 pp.); *Varșovia văzută de un istoric basarabean* [Warsaw Seen by a Bessarabian Historian] (2006, 144 pp.); *Istoria contemporană. Studii, materiale, atitudini* [Contemporary History. Studies, Materials, Attitudes] (2011, 580 pp.); *Un scurt popas necesar drumului* A Short Stopover Necessary on the Road (2014, 328 pp.); *Rusia, 2019: „Acesta a fost un an greu...”* (“это был тяжелый год...”) [Russia,

2019: “This was a Difficult Year...” (“это был тяжелый год...”) (2020, 296 pp.); *A fi profesor de istorie în Republica Moldova. Cu prilejul conferirii înaltului titlu de DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA de către Universitatea de Stat „Alec Russo” din Bălți* [Being a History Professor in the Republic of Moldova. On the Occasion of the Conferral of the High Title of DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA by the “Alec Russo” State University of Bălți] (2021, 236 pp.); *Ucraina în flăcări* /Articole, recenzii: 2022-2024/ [Ukraine in Flames /Articles, Reviews: 2022-2024/ (Academy of Romanian Scientists. State University of Chisinau. State University “Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” of Cahul. Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova “Alexandru Moșanu”), no publisher, Chisinau, 2024 /180 pp./;

(co-author, co-editor): *Relațiile româno-italiene: de la confruntare la colaborare. 1945-1985* [The Romanian-Italian Relations: From Confrontation to Collaboration. 1945-1985] (1993, 216 pp.); *Crestomație la Istoria românilor. 1917-1992* [Chrestomathy in Romanian History. 1917-1992] (co-editor: 1993, 295 pp.); *Istoria universală, 1939-1944: manual experimental pentru clasa IX-a a școlii de cultură generală* [World History, 1939-1944: Experimental Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade of the General Education School] (1995, 176 pp.); *Istoria universală. Epoca contemporană. Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [World History. Contemporary era. Textbook for Grade 12] (2002 /2 editions/); *În apărarea istoriei și demnității naționale. Culegere de documente* [In Defense of National History and Dignity. Collection of Documents] (co-editor: 2003, 96 pp.); *În apărarea istoriei și demnității naționale. Culegere de documente* [Marshal Ion Antonescu and Basarabia. 1941-1944. Collection of documents] (co-editor: 2008, 350 pp.); *Teroarea stalinistă în Basarabia. Studii, documente, memorii* [Stalinist Terror in Basarabia. Studies, Documents, Memoirs] (co-editor: 2013, 360 pp.); *O istorie a Basarabiei* [A History of Basarabia] (co-editor and co-author: two editions: 2015, 424 pp.; 2018, 424 pp.); *Românii în Gulag: memorii, mărturii, documente* [Romanians in the Gulag: Memoirs, Testimonies, Documents] (co-editor: vol. I, 2014, 352 pp.; vol. II, 2015, 362 pp.); *Republica Moldova în căutarea identității. Materialele Conferinței Științifice Internaționale 30 de ani de la proclamarea Independenței Republicii Moldova, 23-24 august 2021* [The Republic of Moldova in Search of Identity. Materials of the International Scientific Conference 30 Years Since the Proclamation of the Independence of the Republic of Moldova, August 23-24, 2021] (co-editor and co-author: 2021, 760 pp.); *Enciclopedie. Centenarul Războiului de Reîntregire și al Marii Uniri (2014-2020)* [Encyclopedia. Centenary of the War of Reunification and the Great Union (2014-2020)] (co-author: 2022 /Bucharest/, 1712 pp.).

Here, for those unfamiliar with his books and opinions, are some thoughts and comments:

February 4, 2015. Dialogue of “Free Europe” on the topic: *70 Years Since a Conference that Changed the World: Yalta, February 4-11, 1945*:

“The Yalta Conference still stirs controversy today. Some historians believe that the world was divided at Yalta. I will tell you very briefly what happened. Germany was losing the war. This happened in February, in May 1945 Germany would capitulate. The big three discussed Germany’s future first and foremost. There were several problems here. Divide it into five states, the English said into two states.

Then the question of reparations arose and then they asked themselves: But who should pay for the reparations? It is better to take these reparations from a single Germany. And in such a situation Germany was initially divided into three occupation zones, after which it was insisted that France also be given a zone, so in four occupation zones. After which Germany was forced to pay 20 billion dollars, at the 1939 exchange rate, of which 50% went to the USSR.

I return to your topic: who was stronger: Stalin who played at the negotiating table or those who gave in. The truth must be sought in the middle, because Stalin was skillful, it is true, he was a little naughty, that is still true, because he was on a white horse, the Soviet troops were already fighting in the center of Europe, he was the master of the situation, he came late to the meeting of the big three, in order to humiliate the two negotiating partners a little. Stalin wanted the status quo of Mongolia to be preserved, Mongolia which was formally independent, but in reality was subject to the Soviet Union. He also asked for the Kurile Islands, he also asked for the Sakhalin Peninsula and other moments, to which the Westerners gave in.

Stalin insisted that what had been agreed upon earlier, in October 1944, with reference to Central and Eastern Europe, such as: influence in Romania, in Bulgaria, Poland was already under Soviet control and here the Westerners did not even raise the issue, as regards Yugoslavia 50% to 50% influence, as regards Greece 75% influence for the Westerners, 25% for the USSR. Of course, it was Stalin’s insistence and certainly it was, perhaps, the weakness, especially of Roosevelt.

Force mattered a lot, because the Soviet Union was on the rise militarily. The West always looked for a possibility to somehow come to an understanding with Stalin, so that he would not reach La Manche with his troops. And then in October 1944, Winston Churchill made an unexpected visit, he came to Moscow to somehow come to an understanding, to stop Stalin. And that's what he managed to do. The West had to intervene diplomatically to stop this military rollercoaster of Stalin”.

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August 11, 2022. Interview with the IPN Press Agency:

“Let’s not forget that the Bessarabians went through a terrible famine, in 1946-1947, especially in February 1947, the most people died, in all localities, 200 thousand, in total, that’s 10% of the population. Historians demonstrate, with proper documents, that this was a well-thought-out and well-established policy, to starve and discipline, to humiliate the people, through starvation. In 1946-1947, the Soviet Union, which had a territory from Kamchatka to Berlin, couldn’t find a few wagons of wheat to give to the people of Moldova? It could! There have been droughts and hard years, but the world always found some reserves. Now, the policy promoted by the Soviets was to requisition food products – meat, wheat and this certainly led to starvation.

The second wave of deportations that took place on July 15-16, 1949, when the world had already recovered from hunger, 12,860 people were deported. And here the ideology and policy of the Communist Party, which led the Soviet Union, imposed itself, for which our fellow citizens are nostalgic, although it was a state based on fear, on blackmail. The political and ideological factors dictated the collectivization of agriculture. What happened here in Bessarabia? During the interwar period, our peasants were given ownership of 6 hectares of land and more. Here came the Soviet power the land was nationalized, but left to the peasants to work, further.

After the war, in 1949, the task that the Communist Party set here, in Moldova, was to unite these villagers in labor collectives, to take them tools, take their cattle and form the so-called infrastructure. Infrastructure means premises for schools, for town halls, for the collective farm headquarters, for kindergartens, for medical centers. And then the second wave of deportations was thought of, under the pretext of fighting the exploiters, the kulaks [*chiaburi*]. I have a case from the Șoldănești district, when two elderly people, who, although they did not even have land, were included in the list of deportees. Their misfortune consisted in the fact that they had a stone house in the center of the village. And the communists in the village set their eyes on this house, which they transformed into the collective farm headquarters. The purpose of this second wave of deportations was to strengthen the material base of future collective farms, immediately after this wave people went to the collective farm, for fear of being deported. The Soviet Union was a state based on fear, blackmail, starvation.

As a historian, I tell you: the Russians always they did well when they had good relations with the West. And, on the contrary, when these relations were bad, then their economy lagged. And now the Russian Federation is blocked by the entire civilized world. We could agree with the younger nostalgia, who say that they want to live in a big country, but this big country must be based on democratic law, on

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human freedoms. Look at what is happening in Russia today, for example, there are no alternative sources of information, there are only official ones, this cannot be attractive for thinking people”.

*December 1, 2023.* Blog:

“Today marks 105 years since the end of the process of reunification of the Romanian provinces and the formation of a unified contemporary Romania. The principle of nationalities – «each people in its own country» – also triumphed among the Romanians.

In the effort to establish a country in which all Romanians could find themselves, Bessarabia was the first province that, on March 27, 1918, by a majority vote of the then Parliament (*Sfatul Țării* / Country Council), decided to unite with the Motherland Romania. In the conditions in which the Great War (later called World War I) was still continuing, and the military forces of Romania’s ally, Tsarist Russia, had become uncontrollable and anarchic, the politicians of Bessarabia at the time – Constantin Stere, Ion Inculeț, Pan Halippa, Pantelimon Erhan, Ion Pelivan, Gherman Pânteia, Vasile Țanțu, and many others, decided to unite the Moldavian Democratic Republic (Bessarabia) with Romania.

The example of Bessarabia was followed by Bukovina and Transylvania, thus establishing a unified Romania within its natural borders.

But fate was not kind to the Romanians. In June 1940, the Soviet totalitarian regime annexed Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, the Herța Land, and Romanian islands at the Mouths of the Danube. In the conditions of World War II, on the occupied Romanian territories, the Kremlin created the so-called Moldavian SSR (today – the Republic of Moldova/RM).

Although the Russian Federation recognized the independence of the RM within the borders inherited from the USSR, the Kremlin continues to control the city of Tighina with its surroundings and eastern districts of the RM and to threaten Chișinău with a new occupation.

Just yesterday, November 30, 2023, during the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov declared: «In fact, Moldova is destined to be the next victim in the hybrid war launched by the West against Russia».

Chisinau’s reaction was: Deputy Prime Minister Nicu Popescu once again asked the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova; once the Russian troops are withdrawn, «favorable conditions will be created for the <exclusively peaceful> resolution of the Transnistrian conflict».

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This position is strange: as if what Mr. Nicu Popescu calls the «Transnistrian conflict» were an internal antagonism of the Republic of Moldova (by the way, what Russian troops are stationed on the territory controlled by Tiraspol? How did they get there if they cannot pass through Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova does not want them?).

As long as the Republic of Moldova exists as an independent state, it (the state of the Republic of Moldova) needs to amend the Constitution in which, at the recommendation of Russia, the status of a «neutral country» was imposed on us (this ineptitude must be excluded) and to clearly express the admission of the Republic of Moldova to NATO.

Congratulations to all Romanians on Romania Day!

Health and success to all”.

*May 10, 2024.* Public debate organized by the IPN News Agency, on the topic *EU Expansion After the Collapse of the USSR: Causes and Effects. Moldova's Lesson:*

“With reference to the collapse of the Soviet Union, we know that Putin considers this to be the greatest geopolitical catastrophe, which is not true. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a triumph of the peoples annexed by military force to the Soviet Union at different stages. In 1991, the Baltic countries rejected the proposals and offers made by the Russian Federation. In December 1991, in Alma-Ata, the Commonwealth of Independent States was established, at that time the idea was to create a community of states that would compete with the European Union. But the ambitions of Yeltsin, the then president of the Russian Federation, were quickly noticed. The former communist countries Poland, Hungary, the Baltic countries, these states have repeatedly revolted against communism and Soviet domination. Therefore, proclaiming their independence, of course the European Union was an attractive objective for them, because here human rights are respected, the state serves the citizen not the citizens serve the state.

The Republic of Moldova must meet the economic level of the European Union. We must have a competitive economy with the countries of the European Union. The Baltic countries had this competitiveness. They also had a higher degree of development and standard of living in the Soviet Union. These states were more developed than the metropolis Russia. For this reason, we should not be surprised that they were quickly accepted into the EU, the rule of law works in the Baltic countries, and if these certain criteria are met, the countries are accepted into the EU.

Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine changes things a lot. It has been found that Europe's dependence on Russian gas is very dangerous for the existence of the European Union. In recent years, we have witnessed a distancing from energy

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sources in Russia, the search for other alternative sources is changing the situation of the European Union, and the Republic of Moldova, which wants to integrate, must take these changes into account”.

May 25, 2025. The Death of Joseph Stalin, Reflected in the Press from Chisinau.

„On May 23, 2025, the Department of Romanian, Universal History and Archeology of the State University of Moldova organized the Scientific Session, the 11 Edition. During this Conference, I presented a paper on people’s reactions to the passing of Joseph Stalin.

The death of a person is a natural thing: we are all mortal. The death of a dictator is something completely different, especially – of a bloody tyrant like Joseph Stalin. The death of the dictator (March 5, 1953) sparked various reactions in the USSR and the world.

The prisoners of the Gulag felt a relief from their fate, some of them openly expressed joy. The leadership of the USSR and a large part of Soviet society, however, expressed sadness, concern and, respectively, expressions of devotion to Stalin's cause.

The theme remains current in national and universal historiography due to the rehabilitation of the dictator Stalin by the current leadership of the Russian Federation; busts and monuments are erected to Stalin, his image appears on icons of the Russian Orthodox Church, etc”.

July 18, 2025. Inauguration of the “Alexandru Moșanu” Hall at the State University of Moldova. Round table organized by the “Alexandru Moșanu” AIRM:

“In the following, we will briefly present only the scientific and academic activity of the university professor, doctor habilitated in historical sciences Alexandru Moșanu [19 July 1932–7 December 2017], president of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (1990-1993), honorary member of the Romanian Academy, honorary president of the Association of Historians of the Republic of Moldova, which today bears his name.

Alexandru Moșanu was one of the founders of the Association of Historians of Moldova (AIRM), being elected its first president (1989-1990), and since 2009 – he has been honorary president of the AIRM. In this capacity, he contributed to the promotion of historical truth, advocated for the non-interference of political factors in the sphere of professional activity of historians.

In 1982, Alexandru Moșanu was awarded the title of Professor. He is the author of two monographs and over 100 scientific papers.

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In the late 80s and early 90s of the last century historians in the Republic of Moldova had problems with the subject of history taught in pre-university and university education institutions, and in particular what name to give it. Some historians proposed the «History of Moldova». The question arose: «Which Moldova? Of the medieval Principality of Moldova? Or of the Moldavian SSR?» Other historians proposed the «History of the Homeland», etc. And then Professor Alexandru Moșanu convinced specialists in the field: the «History of the Romanians» is correct. In a situation where a people is divided into several states, in such a case the history of the nation, of the people, is studied. Thus, historians from Chisinau, but also their colleagues from the republic, including a good part of the non-Romanian historians, accepted the name History of the Romanians. Sometime later, the Romanian Academy brought out the academic editions of the past of our people, called History of the Romanians.

Professor Alexandru Moșanu played a particularly important role in the preparation and holding, between June 26 and 28, 1991, in Chisinau, of the International Scientific Conference «The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and its Consequences for Bessarabia», presenting the basic report at that memorable scientific forum.

Through the written and spoken word, Alexandru Moșanu pleaded for the rehabilitation of the historical truth about Romanian unity, about the Romanian character of Bessarabia. His position was also constant and consistent regarding the teaching of the subject «History of the Romanians» in education at all levels in the Republic of Moldova”.

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