

IN MEMORIAM

May God rest in peace Prof. Univ. Dr. DAN ZAMFIRESCU!



On the death of Professor Dan Zamfirescu (December 21, 1933 - July 16, 2024), the Presidium and the History and Archaeology Section of the Romanian Academy of Scientist they send sincere condolences to the family:

“Prof. Dr. Dan Zamfirescu – publicist, editor, literary historian, Byzantine scholar, essayist and formidable polemicist – member of the Romanian Academy of Scientists passed away at a patriarchal age. He was born on December 21, 1933, in Căteasca Village (Argeş County), into a family of small landowners. He graduated from high school in Bucharest in 1952. He studied Theology until 1956 in Sibiu and Bucharest, and completed his Master’s degree in Byzantine Studies with the renowned specialist Alexandru Elian,

in 1959. In 1966, he obtained another Bachelor’s degree at the Faculty of Slavic Languages, Russian Language and Literature section of the Institute of Foreign Languages and Literatures, in Bucharest, and in 1971, he obtained his Doctorate in Philology.

Between 1959 and 1973, he was successively librarian and editor of the publications of the Romanian Orthodox Church, editor of the magazine “Romanoslavica” of the Association of Slavists in Romania and then, of the magazine “Contemporanul”.

He was a teacher, starting in 1994, at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the “Valahia” University in Târgovişte – Lecturer (1994-1995), Associate Professor (1995-1996), Full Professor and Head of the Department (1996-2004), Consulting Professor (2004-2005) – in the discipline History of Romanian Literature, specialist in the history of ancient Romanian literature.

He left behind an impressive journalistic legacy in prestigious cultural magazines – «Contemporanul», «Gazeta literară», «Ateneu», «Flacăra» etc. – but, especially, scientific: *Neagoie Basarab și învățăturile către fiul său Theodosie. Probleme controversate* [Neagoie Basarab and his teachings to his son Theodosie. Controversial Issues] (1973), *Contribuții la istoria literaturii române vechi* [Contributions to the History of Ancient Romanian Literature] (1981), *Nicolae Iorga. Etape către o monografie* [Nicolae Iorga. Steps to a Monograph] (1981), *Cultura română – o mare cultură cu destin universal* [Romanian Culture – a Great Culture with

a Universal Destiny] (1996), Romanian Culture – a European Synthesis (2002), *Istorie și cultură* [History and Culture], I-II (2003) etc.

In 2014 he was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the «Saints Cyril and Methodius» University in Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria).

Between 2004-2008 he was a deputy, elected on the PRM lists, electoral district 12, Călărași.

May God rest his soul in peace!”

The great scholar is the author of numerous volumes – critical academic editions, documentary studies, collections of articles, polemics – that dimension the Romanian culture of his time:

Studii și articole de literatură română veche [Studies and Articles on Ancient Romanian Literature] (1967: 230 pp.); *România – pământ de civilizație și sinteză. Articole și reportaje* [Romania – Land of Civilization and Synthesis. Articles and Reportages] (1969: 136 pp.); *Literatura română veche (1402-1647)*. Introducere, ediție îngrijită și note de G. Mihăilă și Dan Zamfirescu [Ancient Romanian Literature (1402-1647). Introduction, Edited Edition and Notes by G. Mihăilă and Dan Zamfirescu] 2 vols. (1969: 310+296 pp.); *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie*. Text ales și stabilit de Florica Moisil și Dan Zamfirescu. Cu o nouă traducere a originalului slavon de G. Mihăilă. Studiu introductiv și note de Dan Zamfirescu și G. Mihăilă [The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Son Theodosie. Text Selected and Established by Florica Moisil and Dan Zamfirescu. With a New Translation of the Slavonic Original by G. Mihăilă. Introductory Study and Notes by Dan Zamfirescu and G. Mihăilă] (1970: 426 pp.); *Atitudini* [Attitudes /Essays/] (1970: 174 pp.); *Spre noi înșine. Eseuri despre problemele culturii române actuale* [Towards Ourselves. Essays on the Problems of Current Romanian Culture] (1971: 146 pp.); *Neagoe Basarab: 1512-1521. La 460 de ani de la urcarea sa pe tronul Țării Românești* [Neagoe Basarab: 1512-1521. 460 Years After His Accession to the Throne of Wallachia] (Scientific Coordinator) (1972: 454 pp.); *Neagoe Basarab și învățăturile către fiul său Theodosie. Probleme controversate* [Neagoe Basarab and His Teachings to His Son Theodosie. Controversial Issues] (1973: 452 pp.); *Permanența patriei* [Permanence of the Fatherland] (1975: 366 pp.); *Istorie și cultură* [History and culture] (1975: 236 pp.); *Independență și cultură* [Independence and Culture] (1977: 190 pp.); *Via Magna* (1979: 296 pp.); *N. Iorga. Etape către o monografie* [N. Iorga. Steps Towards a Monograph] (1981: 186 pp.); *Contribuții la istoria literaturii române vechi* [Contributions to the History of Old Romanian Literature] (1981: 464 pp.); *Accente și profiluri* [Accents and Profiles] (1963-1983) (1983: 510 pp.); *Un om pentru istorie* [A Man for History] (1985: 196 pp.); *O carte fundamentală a culturii europene, broșura însoțitoare a ediției Dobrotoljubie: La Philocalie slavonne de Païssy Velichkovsky; Réproduction anastatique intégrale de l'édition princeps, Moscou, 1793, soignée et présentée par Dan Zamfirescu* [A Fundamental Book of European Culture, the Companion Booklet to the Dobrotoljubie Edition: La Philocalie slavonne by Païssy Velichkovsky; Anastatique reproduction intégrale de l'édition princeps, Moscow,

1793, Edited and Presented by Dan Zamfirescu] (also printed in English and Ukrainian) (1991: 28 pp.); *Ortodoxie și romano-catolicism în specificul existenței lor istorice* [Orthodoxy and Roman-Catholicism in the Specifics of Their Historical Existence] (1992: XIII+356 pp.; 2013: 470 pp.); *Războiul împotriva poporului român* [The War Against the Romanian People] (1993: 360 pp.); *Fenomenul Caritas sau mântuirea românilor prin ei însisi* (co-author: Dunitru Cerna) [The Caritas Phenomenon or the Salvation of the Romanians by Themselves] (1993: 48 pp.); *Regele și Mareșalul* [The King and the Marshal] (1994: 48 pp.);

Lucian Blaga și condiția culturii românești [Lucian Blaga and the Condition of Romanian Culture] (1995: 24 pp.); *Mircea cel Mare, factor hotărâtor în configurarea politico-istorică a Sud-Estului european*, în colaborare cu Fănuș Neagu și Virgil Joița [Mircea the Great, a Decisive Factor in the Political-Historical Configuration of Southeast Europe, in collaboration with Fănuș Neagu and Virgil Joița] (1995: 162 pp.); *Cultura română, o mare cultură cu destin universal* [Romanian Culture, a Great Culture with a Universal Destiny] (1996: 270 pp.); *Paisianismul. Un moment românesc în istoria spiritualității europene*. Volum alcătuit în întâmpinarea Primului Congres Ecumenic Internațional „Paisie Velicicovski și mișcarea /moștenirea sa spirituală”, Italia, Magnano, 20-23 septembrie 1995. Cu binecuvântarea Înalt Prea Sfințitului Dr. Daniel, Mitropolitul Moldovei și Bucovinei, de dr. Dan Zamfirescu [Paisianism. A Romanian Moment in the History of European Spirituality. Volume Compiled in Anticipation of the First International Ecumenical Congress “Paisie Velicicovski and His Spiritual Movement / Legacy”, Italy, Magnano, September 20-23, 1995. With the Blessing of His Holiness Dr. Daniel, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bucovina, by Dr. Dan Zamfirescu] (1996); *A treia Europa: alternativă realistă la iluziile sinucigașe* [The Third Europe: A Realistic Alternative to Suicidal Illusions] (1997: 128 pp.); *Cultura română – sinteză europeană* [Romanian Culture – European Synthesis] (2002: 364 pp.); *Istorie și cultură* [History and Culture], Vols. I-II (2003: 620+638 pp.); *Locul și rolul culturii române în Europa și în lume. Discurs de recepție, rostit la 28 ianuarie 2005 în Sala de festivități a Universității „Valahia” din Târgoviște* [The Place and Role of Romanian Culture in Europe and in the World. Reception Speech, Delivered on January 28, 2005, in the Festivities Hall of the “Valahia” University in Târgoviște] (2006: 64 pp.); *Spre o nouă contraofensivă spirituală* [Towards a New Spiritual Counteroffensive] (2006: 394 pp.); *Mircea cel Mare. Scutul Europei* [Mircea the Great. The Shield of Europe] (co-authors: Fănuș Neagu, Nicolae Șerbănescu, Alexandru V. Diță, Virgil Joița, Radu Ștefan Vergatti) (2009: 704 pp.); *Istoria Românilor văzută de Neagu Djuvara. Fals științific sau trădare de țară?* [The History of the Romanians as Seen by Neagu Djuvara. Scientific Falsehood or Treason to the Country?] (2012: 102 pp.); *O nouă viziune asupra istoriei culturii bulgare din secolele XIV-XVIII* [A New Vision of the History of Bulgarian Culture from the 14th-18th Centuries] (2013: 234 pp.); *Cartea românească de învățătură a Sfântului Ierarh Varlaam* [The Romanian Teaching Book of Saint Hierarch Varlaam] (2013: 1.100 pp.); *Marile Minee de lectură de la Târnovo ale Patriarhului Eftimie*. Ediție facsimilată de

pe manuscrisele de la Dragomirna și Putna [The Great Readings from Târnovo of Patriarch Eftimiy. Facsimile Edition from Manuscripts from Dragomirna and Putna Monasteries] vol. I (2015: 858 pp.); *Împotriva distrugerii României* [Against the Destruction of Romania] (2017: 412 pp.); *Mircea cel Mare. Domnul ortodoxiei biruitoare. Argumente pentru canonizare* [Mircea the Great. The Lord of Victorious Orthodoxy. Arguments for Canonization] (2019: 48 pp.); *Apărarea prin Biserică, Mitropolitul Moldovei Gheorghe al IV-lea (1722-1729) și istoria cărții românești din secolele XVI-XVIII* [Defense Through the Church, Metropolitan of Moldova Gheorghe IV (1722-1729) and the History of the Romanian Book from the 16th to the 18th Centuries] (2019: 220 pp.).

Leading representative of Romanian culture in the last half century, through the great and profound scholar, “The history of Romanian writing was marked by the contributions of Dan Zamfirescu. The author’s spiritual profile represents a model for researchers of the history of the old Romanian language and literature, for his great and diverse involvement in Romanian social and cultural-scientific life for several decades. The history of Romanian writing was seriously marked by the contributions of Dan Zamfirescu (if we think only of Marin Sorescu), who was then forced, in an existence fractured by adverse times, to navigate the turbulent waters of destiny. The historian Dan Zamfirescu became known especially as the editor (together with Florica Moisil) of the book *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie* [The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Son Theodosie] and of an anthology of ancient Romanian literature.

That is why the human and cultural model offered to Romanians by university professor Dan Zamfirescu is a good sign that cultural Romania has a vehement defender of the values of the Romanian nation, a supporter of «reapproaching humanistic values, a supporter of Denis de Rougemont’s proposal to achieve a united Europe through culture» (Maria Diana Popescu, June 9, 2011).

As a well-known publicist (1946-2025) – with whom he had been close since the 1960s – appreciated upon his death: “the true measure of the personality of the scholar of grace, Dan Zamfirescu, was when, under his care, *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie* [The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Son Theodosie] appeared. Which were followed, also thanks to Dan Zamfirescu, by *Cartea românească de învățătură a Sfântului Ierarh Varlaam* [the Romanian Teaching Books of Varlaam], another treasure of our classical culture.

It would have been expected that, for his determination, for the consistency and for the tenacity with which he dedicated himself to shedding light on the perennial, truly representative values of Romanian literature, art, philosophy and culture, the scholar Dan Zamfirescu would be appreciated and supported with due measure. But, in the unfortunate tradition of the abandoned and unfinished wall, he was subjected to long and poisonous accusations and misinterpretations intended to make him the exponent of an intolerant and irremediable nationalism. The reason, or rather the pretext, was the way in which Dan Zamfirescu joined the polemic generated by

protochronism. The point here is that some enlightened minds of this nation have the privilege of being the authors of premieres in essential fields of science and human knowledge. Everyone knows, doesn't it?, that Ștefan Odobleja anticipated cybernetics, just as Constantin Paulescu is the one to whom insulin is owed. That their merits were not recognized and patented is very true. Equally true is the fact that not all the academic and university spirit on the lands of Miorița and the abandoned and unfinished wall fought for this cause.

Fortunately, there were also brave and worthy people who committed themselves to this effort, scientists and men of conscience among whom Dan Zamfirescu has his place that is difficult to dispute. I cannot help but admit that, in some of the themes he developed based on the ideas launched by Edgar Papu, Dan Zamfirescu also issued a series of questionable or even exaggerated assessments, which provided the pretext for his being labeled as a nationalist-chauvinist or even worse! The simple labeling, of course, takes the place of a rigorous and reasoned confrontation of opinions. Although, to be fair, this does not mean that he can be denied, in bloc, the good faith and the soundness of a substantial part of his assertions" (Șerban Cionoff, July 16, 2024)

And an Orthodox encyclopedist and scholar of our time (1937-2020) – writer, essayist, literary historian, university professor – also extensively characterized his activity: "I have reproduced these fragments (I have quoted myself) because Dan Zamfirescu is called, more jokingly, more seriously, the Byzantine. Others call him the Great Byzantine. Others call him the new Nae Ionescu or the Phantom of Nae Ionescu, or the Offensive Byzantium, or the Anti-Modernist Hurricane, or in other ways.

These are names that show how Dan Zamfirescu's work is received in Romanian culture today. This work provokes deep adhesion or rejections. But it leaves none of those who know it indifferent.

Dan Zamfirescu worked at one point in the editorial office of the magazines edited by the Patriarchate. As an editor, he personally knew all the hierarchs of the Church of our time, all the theology professors from Bucharest and Sibiu, all the medieval scholars, Slavists, Byzantinologists, and philologists dedicated to our literature in the feudal era.

He also worked at the Slavic Association (between 1961 and 1968), where he participated in dozens of seminars, scientific sessions, national or international symposia on a wide variety of topics.

Always informed, up to date, with the most diverse conquests of his favorite field – Romanian literature and culture in the feudal era –, he brought to the studies dedicated to these historical periods, the strong light of demonstrations and conclusions definitively imposed in Romanian and European science.

There are studies on the Greek documents emanating from the chancelleries of the Romanian lords, on the Holy Prince Neagoe Basarab, the great passion of his life, on some aspects of the art of the word in our texts from the feudal era, but also on issues such as the work of Saint Simeon *the New Theologian*, on the diffusion of the *Filocalia*

[Philokalia] in the Orthodox space, on the relationship between the local, the national and the universal in cultural acts.

The most important scientific efforts were dedicated by Dan Zamfirescu to the Holy Prince Neagoe Basarab.

We read his exegetical volumes about the theological, literary and sapiential creation of Neagoe and we understand how much erudition, documentary precision and philological meticulousness Dan Zamfirescu brings to everything he writes.

We find the same dominant qualities in the pages he dedicated to Saint Paisius of Neamț, the Philokalia or the role that Romanian monastic life had in the evolution of European culture, especially that of Orthodoxy.

His study *Paisianismul. Un moment românesc în istoria spiritualității europene* [Paisianism. A Romanian moment in the History of European Spirituality] (1996) is, in this sense, a model and an indispensable reference point for all those interested in the relations between our culture and other cultures.

In fact, in 1990, Dan Zamfirescu printed in a massive, simply overwhelming volume, *Dobrotoliubie*, an anastatic edition of the *Filocalia* [Philokalia] in the Slavonic language that Orthodox theology owes to the venerable Saint Paisius of Neamț.

The comparative method, consistently used by Dan Zamfirescu as a medievalist, Byzantinologist, Slavist, philologist, and literary historian, helps us to better understand what he himself calls «the essence of Romanian spiritual history and destiny». In this sense, his protochronism is not only consistent and clearly stated, but also strongly and convincingly argued. Moreover, to my knowledge, no one has dared to argue with Dan Zamfirescu on philological, historical-literary or medieval topics. I am sure that if a reckless person had the nerve to initiate such a polemic, the erudition, the rigor of the demonstrations and the logic of the exposition practiced by Dan Zamfirescu would crush him.

Documentary rigor, exegetical finesse, historical and comparative erudition, demonstrative force and severe philological meticulousness are also found in the recent re-edition of the masterpiece that Saint Hierarch Varlaam, Metropolitan Moldavia (1585-1657), so beautifully titled its *Carte românească de învățătură (Cazania)* [Romanian Educational Book (Cazania)] printed in Iași in 1641-1643.

The new edition, made in two impressive volumes (vol. I study, vol. II text), was printed in Bucharest in 2011-2012 in 1,500 pages.

Anyone who reads Dan Zamfirescu's books can easily see that, as in the case of Mircea Eliade, they are deeply imbued with the attitudes and thinking of Nae Ionescu.

In fact, in his role as founder and director of the «Roza Vânturilor» Publishing House, Dan Zamfirescu began his activity by publishing in 1990 in the Anastasian edition precisely the volume with Nae Ionescu's articles edited by Mircea Eliade" (Professor Mihail Diaconescu, 2017).

In an obituary for "the nationalist scholar Dan Zamfirescu", the same thematic priorities are emphasized: "Chronologically speaking, his efforts focused on the

Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab [Teachings of Saint Neagoe Basarab], on the recovery, study and publication of the *Cazaniile* [Kazanii] of Saint Metropolitan Varlaam (the language of the *vechilor Cazanii* [Old Kazanii] as the poet Alexie Mateevici put it), on the spiritual renewal brought by Saint Paisius of Neamț (with its cultural and national effects), on the interwar intellectual ferment and the activity of Nae Ionescu, on the effort to bring to light Volume X of Mihai Eminescu's Complete Works, on the affirmation of the Romanian national spirit in the post-December period, on the recovery of some difficult-to-access titles through the «Roza Vânturilor» publishing house” (Vlad-Mihai Agache, July 21, 2024).

At the end of these brief connotations on the activity of the late scientist, full member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, let us recall a fragment of one of his speeches (September 13, 2016): “We fought for 26 years to put things in order, to show that it was the greatest victory in Romanian history, at Rovine, that it was the victory that decided our destiny for 600 years and that it was the victory that stopped Bayezid from giving the horse oats in the «pristol of Rome». It is something that must enter our minds that we then made universal history. Unfortunately, our great Nicolae Iorga, who hated Hasdeu and, unfortunately, had his lapses, turned the history of the Romanians inside out. He accepted a false date through which he falsified the entire history of the Romanians. And I think we managed to show that thanks to the victory of May 17, 1395, Bayezid did not reach Rome. If he had reached then, for a hundred years we would have had an Italy with Muslims, just as now there is the prospect of having all of Europe Muslim. Then, keeping Bayezid here, Michelangelo and Leonardo could exist, the entire Italian Renaissance was possible because this man, ours, beat Bayezid. An absolute reality in which the Romanian nation was forced, because this was the process, with an army of 10,000 men, not a small army, but a professional army, to receive him at the Danube and carry him through the forests to the back of the Argeș Court, where, the Turks said, they took the mountains on their backs... well, there they had their feet in Argeș and the mountains behind them. When Bayezid arrived there, he found himself with 40,000 men, because that was the size of the large army, which crushed them. We have, two years later, the French testimony of Philippe de Mézières, to whom Iorga dedicated his doctoral thesis, from Paris, in which he quoted that very text, but he did not see what was there... they destroyed 30,000 people, but many Christians also died. That was the battle that decided our destiny and that drew the line for 600 years”.

A remarkable scientist, a strong personality – of European stature – of contemporary Romania, with deep and consistent national-patriotic convictions, a man of the Agora, the late meticulous researcher and encyclopedist Professor Dan Zamfirescu leaves an unmistakable void in today's Romanian culture.

On the death of the great scholar – may he rest in peace!

Stoica Lascu