

SOCIALIST ROMANIA, HISTORICAL MONUMENTS AND EUROPEAN FRIENDSHIPS IN THE 1970S

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Abstract. This purpose of this review is to recreate the affairs surrounding historical monuments during the 1970s in the Socialist Republic of Romania – SRR, as described in *The Bulletin of Historical Monuments – BHM* after its resumption over a 25-year hiatus. Nicolae Ceaușescu’s state leadership began in 1965, and an apparent independent and Western-oriented foreign policy was formed, meant to individualize the SRR from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block. The BHM contains substantial international activity reports: brief news, reviews of foreign publications, notable international events organized by the SRR, interactions with UNESCO, activities of ICOMOS, other international conferences, professional visits of Romanian experts in Eastern countries and contributions by foreign researchers to the BHM. The most important category of articles refers to the consistent collaboration with the Center in Rome. The Center was formed during the late 1950s, as one of the most influential international collaborative networks, that eventually evolved into ICCROM. SRR was one of the pioneer countries involved in practical and scientific collaborations in the field, alongside with the Rome Center. On one hand the articles addressing international affairs reveal that the Romanian professionals were highly involved and connected with their western peers. On the other hand, the most significant international legal agreements established between 1947 and 1989 were accepted in Romania only following the collapse of the Totalitarian Regime in 1989. From the international activity and the advancement of the field during that period, it emerges that, indeed, the quality of the works and professionalism in the field of restoration reached a peak, followed by a sudden interruption.

The national activity in the field of historical monuments. The communist regime (1947-1989) came with severe censorship and changes: the nationalization of real estate properties, the closure of the private economy and the subordination of architects to the state, that became the unique client as well. The Directorate of Historical Monuments – DHM was the main state body that managed the historical monuments activities for the state between 1952-1977 and continued and enhanced the restoration tradition established since the last quarter of the 19th century [1]. After the major earthquake that occurred on March 4, the DHM was silenced and reorganized. Two main directions of restoration coexisted, the conservative and innovative, of Italian inspiration. The two leading supporters of the two directions were architects Ș. Balș and Horia Teodoru. Both obtained state scholarships at The Romanian Academy in Rome, amongst many other [2] and were educated to base their interventions on substantial art history research [3]. Many of the directors of DHM, were also highly trained as they were university professors: Duiliu Marcu, Richard Bordenache – became

chief [4] around 1953, Grigore Ionescu and Curinschi-Vorona, deputy director between 1963 and 1968, Bordenache from around 1970 and art historian Vasile Drăguț between 1971-1976.

The authorities restarted the publication of *The Bulletin of Historical Monuments – BHM* [5] interrupted for 25-years [6], with a singular number in 1958, of a dense political infusion. In the 1970s, the contents of the periodical publication reveal: historical researches and archeological findings and narratives of restorations works, the advancement of the fields of theory and practice (protection areas, rural heritage, displacement of monuments, micro-professional issues, innovations at a high-quality level) and the third category, drawn from the second but more extensive is the systematization of historic centers and areas and the fourth – the international activity. The main periodical publication renders the professional atmosphere in the 1970s.

The Commission of Historical and Art Monuments – CHAM [7] within DHM had weekly meetings for discussing, adjusting and approving restoration and intervention projects in the 1970s, showing similar preoccupations as the periodical publication: increasing interest in contemporary insertions into monastic assemblies and new construction in historic sites – schools, school groups, hotels, spas, car parks. In the secretariat of the commission, many significant restorations works and current repairs began to be approved without debates among the members of the commission. These changes reveal that great trust was placed in the specialists working in the DHM, and at the same time, the insertion projects were considered the most significant and in need of debates and adjustments.

In the same time, Nicolae Ceaușescu [8] aimed for international recognition. He continued the previous foreign policy of enhancing relationships with the socialist states but in the same time he cultivated illusions of friendships with western states. Due to the cult of his personality, the humanities and especially historians developed protochronism, that emphasized the idea of strong state identity and hence individuality and state independence from Moscow, ideologies that were reflected in the field of historical monuments. The November 1971 Party Plenary [9] decided a greater state interest in particular historical monuments with strong national identity features like: the fortresses of the Orăștiei Mountains, Alba Iulia, Turda and medieval monuments – such as the monasteries from Bucovina. A period of national reorientation of party politics was starting. Ceaușescu began to use national history and tradition, and especially in the Thracian origin of national identity in both internal and external affairs [10]. Cultural heritage became a propaganda tool and gained substantial financing.

International affairs. Prior the new edition of BHM – 1970, according to Curinschi’s publication, the main source of information, G. Ionescu and Curinschi were designated to participate at many international events [11] such as: The 2nd Congress of architects and technicians of monuments, Venice, 1964 where the international charter of conservation and restoration was adopted, The constitutive Congress of ICOMOS, Warsaw, 1965 and other events after 1977. According to Curinschi, his book was praised at international level by Piero Gazzola - The first president of ICOMOS, co-author of the text Charter from Venice, Ferdinando Rossi Engineer, director of Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Carlo Ceschi - Architect – important professor

from the restoration courses in Rome and Vahtang Beridze Academician from the Art Academy in Tbilisi. The author seems to have had cordial relations at least with professors Roberto Pane and Gazzola, authors of the text Charter from Venice. Pane even agreed to participate in a conference held by Curinschi in Vicenza on the History of Romanian Architecture. Gazzola handed him letters of recommendation, addressed to some famous personalities in the field from Spain Greece that facilitated his study visits in these countries and <<in between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, The Baltic Sea and Sahara Desert>> [12].

Another DHM representative that had good external connections was Vasile Drăguț, member on the Rome Center Board since 1960. One of the first countries that received technical missions from The Centre was SRR, amongst France, the German Democratic Republic and Poland [13]. Jokilehto mentioned that Drăguț had a similar approach with that of Gertrude Tripp - Restorer at Bundesdenkmalamt and Johannes Taubert, Vienna, Director of the restoration atelier of Munich in Bavaria, Bayerische Landesamt für Denkmalpflege. They all foresaw good scientific outcomes in international collaboration. Drăguț introduced his country to The Centre, and organized seminars with their assistance – “a very difficult task in Ceaușescu’s Romania” [14]. Jokilehto remembers [15] that Drăguț was “the only person who, during his long membership in the ICCROM Council, made questions in the field of humanities. All the others made administrative questions”.

The most consistent international activity was the collaboration between DHM and the Roma International Center for Studies in Conservation and Restorations of Cultural Goods. The external frescoes from the north and Moldavia monasteries were brought to the attention of The Rome Center in 1969 due to unicity, complexity and urgency in conservation and restoration. The Center started to prepare a visit to SRR and requested information about humidity, temperature, wind, microclimate for each monument, pigment and binder analysis, detailed info about any conservation works previously conducted from their Romanian peers. The delegates of The Rome Center who visited the North Moldavia Monasteries in October 1971 were: Arch. prof. Raymond Lemaire (Belgium), Paul Phillipot (Italy) – art historian, arch. Paolo Mora (Italy) – mural paintings restorer, Gary Thompson (Great Britain) – chemist and scientific consultant specialized in humidity and air pollution problems, an international and interdisciplinary team due to the unicity and complexity of the subject. The monasteries in Humor and Moldovița were chosen for interventions. The international endeavors had two goals, to find optimal solutions and to train new specialists. The coordinator of the restoration works was the painter Constantin Blendea, who graduated fresco restoration in Italy in 1971, seconded by Nicolae Sava. Five students were delegated from the “Nicolae Grigorescu” Beaux-Arts Institute in Bucharest the class of monumental painting. And DHM delegated seven restorers, one chemist and one art historian – to assist the works. [16] Other professionals that participated were Emmerich Mahapp (Austria), team manager, Zbigniew Majcherowicz, restorer (Poland), Helmut Scholtz, restorer Fritz Buchenrieder, chief restorer (DRG). Several publications followed in BHM by V. Drăguț [17], P. Phillipot and P. Mora [18] and half of the 3rd number from 1973 of BHM was dedicated to the external fresco restoration works in the international campaign at

monastery [19]. In 1975 The center offered numerous scholarships for the training of architects and painter restorers within DHM and also awarded a high qualification for the organization of the pilot site at Humor [20]. The other articles published in BHM in the 1970s about international relations contain: short news section, collaborations with Italians, The Centre in Rome – the most consistent category, ICOMOS affairs, UNESCO, activities in socialist countries, events organized in Romania and other. BHM in the 1970s often contained random, abbreviated articles that resemble an incomplete puzzle of the international random occurrences presented in condensed lines. The news-mosaic seems to be inspired by western and international periodical publications [21]. Important events were described, such as: international gatherings, synthesis concerning innovative conservation methods on universal historical landmarks, climatic related degradations and protection, important archeological findings in remote countries on cultural landmarks, iconic publications, open air museums of rural heritage or the foundation of professional or educational institutions, restoration awards, news about tourism and historical monuments. The international section was an innovative trend from the traditional edition of BCHM [22]. Tereza Sinigalia was the first author who wrote a brief section on foreign activity in 1970 [23] and two other authors continued the section Olga Mărculescu [24] and Nicolae Rădulescu [25]. In the beginning of the 1970s the section was solitary amongst national news, but was slowly being accompanied by large scale international relations articles. In time, the international sections became more and more consistent. A few iconic publications were reviewed in BHM – Cypress Icons [26], Romanische Wandmalerei [27] and Architectural monuments in the Soviet Republic of Armenia [28], The International Repertoire of Medievalists [29] or the Albanian journal Monumentet Tirana [30]. Short articles from specialized foreign journals were reviewed: restorations in France [31] and the Research Laboratory of Historical Monuments at Champs Sur Marne, equipped up to date for the research of different artistic materials and techniques, similarities between English and Swiss architecture [32], the publication of a Romanian peer in an international periodical [33]. Significant international gatherings were held in RSR: The 9th International Congress of the Roman Frontier [34], Mamaia, 1972 with 160 delegates from 30 countries and The International Conference of the Committee EIRENE for classical studies in socialist countries formed in 1957, was organized twice in SRR [35] in Eforie, 1960 and in Cluj-Napoca, 1972. The last one was coordinated by academician C. Daicoviciu and the included linguistics, literature, history, history of philosophy, science and religion, archaeology, medieval and the survival of antiquity even epigraphy sections. USA and western European countries - UK, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Federal Republic of Germany participated. Another proof of the strong international relations in the field of historical monuments during the 1970s is the National Colloquium organized by DHM and the national ICOMOS, Suceava, 1977. P. Phillipot was one of the keynote speakers, amongst delegates from Italy, Belgium, France, Portugal, Yugoslavia, The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic [36]. Romania is a UNESCO member since 1956, hence concerning activities were published as well. The final report of the meeting of experts on the training of architects and technicians in the conservation of monuments

and historic centers – UNESCO, Pistoia, Italy, 1968 [37] and the Report on the 15th General Conference of the UNESCO, Paris, 1968 [38] were published in the BHM. The publication mentions a UNESCO Mission in Romania [39] in 1975, that promoted the good governance of the world on problems raised by the preservation, restoration and enhancement of cultural heritage.

Some of the DHM were delegated for professional exchanges in foreign countries. V. Drăguț [40] wrote in 1971 the ongoing restoration works and archeological findings in Bulgaria. Adrian Corvătescu [41] visited The Polish People's Republic and wrote about the powerful organization of the activity in the field of historical monuments. A documentary trip on rural heritage to the Polish Republic was organized with international participation [42] in 1972 in the framework of documentary exchanges between SRR and the Polish Republic [43].

Sometimes foreign researchers published in BHM: Vlasta Dvorakova (Czechoslovakia), Peter Fister (Yugoslavia), Walter Miler Arendt (Federal Republic of Germany) [44] Silvio Curto [45]. Even P. Gazzola [46], the president of the Scientific Council of the International Institute of Castles – signed an article about the 11th Scientific Meeting, 1971, and the representative of the SRR was professor G. Ionescu.

Several international gatherings were presented in BHM. The European year of Architectural Heritage, Zurich, 1973 It was the preparatory conference for the launch of the celebratory year. 300 delegates from 27 countries of different specialties discussed the programming of the year under the theme A future for our past. The article does not mention a Romanian presence [47]. Later on, the annual session of scientific communications of DHM, 15-17 of May, 1975 under the auspices of the same theme A future for our past was described, without mentioning any international presence [48]. Other events were described in the BHM. The seminar on the integration of contemporary architecture near ancient buildings, Kazimierz Dolny, 1974 was organized by the International Union of Architects in collaboration with the ICOMOS, Europa Nostra and the Polish Society of Architects described without mentions regarding the participation of SRR delegates [49]. The international colloquium Safeguarding the historical cities of Bruges, 1975 was presented by a set of principles for the rehabilitation of the historical city without mentions about the SRR delegation [50]. The Conference organized by the local authorities in Prague, 1975 about the historical monuments and surrounding areas from the city was attended by the Romanians Cristian Moiescu (who rehabilitated the Voievodal Palace in Bucharest, the Gabroveni and Manuc Inns) and Marinel Daia, the deputy director of DHM and architect [51].

The International Council on Monuments and Sites – ICOMOS – was founded as a non-governmental organization in 1965, when a telegram sent to the Romanian delegation led by professor Curinschi, deputy director of the DHM forbade the engagement of SRR – considering the adherence <<an unwanted intrusion in the internal affairs>>, although no prohibition had been expressed prior leaving the country [52]. In a few years SRR became a member of ICOMOS. At the General Assembly of ICOMOS held in Paris in November 1970, Romania's adhesion was accepted, but there isn't information about the national delegation. It has also been established that the Romanian DHM professionals will contribute to the scientific periodi-

cal Monumentum and Bulletin de l'ICOMOS and there were discussions about organizing international ICOMOS events in SRR [53]. Soon the SRR formed its national organization after the state reconsidered its prior decision following the international activity in Bucovina [54]. The national members of The National Committee of ICOMOS were appointed within DHM and other cultural significant institutions: Richard Bordenache president, Ș. Balș secretary, Constantin Bălan, members - Virgil Bilciurescu, V. Draguț, Grigore Ionescu, Emil Lăzărescu [55]. National [56] or international meetings with active delegates from SRR [57] were briefly presented in BHM. During The 4th General Assembly “The Small Town”, Rothenburg, Germany, May 1975 [58], Drăguț was elected as general rapporteur of the assembly and president of the Program and Budget Committee.

European friendships. Our research reveals both a considerable presence of Romanian specialists in the international environment, certainly broader than emerges from this research, but also a rich involvement in the activities of the SRR of some prominent specialists from Italy, Luxembourg, Vienna, Italy, the UK and other. Added to these are the international positions held by Vasile Drăguț and the international respect for the Romanian specialists that emerges also from other described contexts, as well as the importance of Gazzola and Philpott's personalities involved in the restorations on the territory of the SRR. The international relations of the Romanian specialists in the 1970s are remarkable, with all the constraints and restrictions imposed by the state regarding relations with Western Europe. On one hand the information on international relations published in BHM is extensive, addresses both western and eastern subjects, on topics such as international meetings, rural heritage, tourism, education, restoration of historic centers and cities, translation, restoration, archaeological discoveries, innovative conservation projects, field organization in other countries and significant publications. On the other hand, BHM was asymmetrical in its coverage, omitted details about Romanian representatives at global gatherings and displayed selective amnesia toward most of the international legal agreements launched between 1947-1989, that have not been adopted due to political restrictions. Most of them were signed, translated and published in the BHM only after the fall of the totalitarian regime, without any critical observations. For example, in 1972, Sinigalia wrote that CHAM discussed a list of historical monuments that bared universal value [59], formed on similar criteria to the present classification requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage List. The article does not mention The UNESCO World Heritage Convention launched on 16 November 1972, that was adopted in Romania only in 1990, after the fall of the Communist Regime. Most of the national monuments displayed in Sinigalia's article were enlisted in the World Heritage List gradually, only after 1993. The collaborations and activities between the DHM and the Center in Rome and with the Italian peers were amongst the most significant. What was behind the connection? Could it have been that the Romanians integrated the Italian approach after the second World War and the numerous scholarships the Romanian had in Rome? Professional affinity? Latinity? The Romanian scholarships in Italy? Did the personalities of V. Drăguț, G. Ionescu, Curinschi or others count? Were there affinities between the famous art historians Drăguț and Philpott based on professional respect? Was it

Drăguț and his diplomatic skills? Was it a good professional training inherited through the traditional apprenticeship system of several Romanian generations? Was it Ceaușescu's ambition to present a high scientific level as an external image of SRR? Was it the substantial financing? Was it the thorough research and scientific approach on the Romanian side? The entire activity of DHM presented in BHM demonstrates that the national professionals were aware of the natural international progression, were in synchronicity with the west and demonstrated a remarkable scientific alignment and recognition, in contrast to the state's official passivity concerning international legal agreements. The Romanian professionals aligned their knowledge with the theoretical and practical developments in restoration at international level. The works undertaken during the 1960s and 1970s were held in high regard by international groups and continue to reverberate in the professional Western society.

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