

STROLLS IN OLD CORNERS
OF
BUCHAREST

BY
ETHEL GREENING PANTAZZI
&
JULIETA THEODORINI

CULTURA NAȚIONALĂ
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TO THE TRAVELLER

ON arriving in our city you may be disappointed at first to find that it has neither the mysterious glamor of the East, nor the imposing stateliness of the West. Yet if one knows where to look something of both may be found.

The charm of Bucharest lies in its shady gardens, its old churches, and quiet corners which speak of a past full of interest, evoking romantic figures, quaint legends, and many a tragic tale of beauty swept away by fire and war.

Our strolls are little excursions into the regions of fact and fancy of bygone days where we learn to understand and appreciate what we see to-day.

HISTORICAL NOTE ON ROUMANIA

THE birth of the Roumanian nation dates from A. D. 101 when the Roman Legions of the Emperor Trajan conquered the Dacians led by King Decebal. Ancient Dacia covered the territory bound on the East by the Dniester, on the West by the Tisa, and on the South the Danube. Its capital Sarmisegetuza was in Transylvania.

In the 3rd century invasions of barbarian peoples towards Rome and Byzantium obliged the Romans to withdraw to the right bank of the Danube leaving Roumania, then prosperous and well civilized, a prey to the Goths, Huns, Gepiade and Avars for 400 years. The invasions invariably spread over the plains. The Roumanians in their mountain retreats defended themselves vigorously

and organized themselves into small states especially during the period from 800—900 when no incursion of note disturbed them

With the firno-ongric invasions of Hungary (890-900) began another struggle which lasted a hundred years and ended in the Roumanians accepting the suzeranity of the Hungarian Kings with a certain measure of autonomy. The Roumanians had been christianized from Rome, but they established later relations with Bizantium, and held to their Greek-Orthodox faith. In the 12th century the Hungarian Catholic Kings tried to oblige them to abandon their allegiance, and the oppression which followed (1290) decided many leading families to leave Transylvania and establish the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia by uniting several small duchies, which they maintained entirely free. Henceforth, until 1918 although conscious of their racial unity the destinies of three divisions of the Roumanian race followed different paths. The Transylvanians continued to be governed by the Hungarians; Wallachia struggled heroically, but in vain against Turkish invasion, Moldavia, somewhat more fortunate, was much under Polish influence which



Stavropoleus Church

produced an interesting and lasting cultural affinity.

One of the greatest heroes of Christendom Stephen the Great reigned, as Prince of Moldavia during 47 years and fought 36 battles against the Turks, in all but two of which he was successful. Hungary failed to support his efforts and at his death Moldavia exhausted and impoverished fell into the hands of the Sultan; all this occurred at the period of the discovery of America.

Another brilliant interlude in the sombre history of the principalities was the reign of Michael the Brave who succeeded for a brief space in uniting and freeing all the Roumanian provinces (1599) but he fell by an assassins hand, and with his death the union assailed on all sides fell to pieces again and the conditions were even more distressful than before.

In Wallachia nearly a century after Mihai's tragic death, the reign of Prince Constantin Brancovan (1689) gave twentyfive years of peace and prosperity to the principality a period all the more remarkable and striking on account of the troubles which preceded it, and of the decadence which followed it.

The depth of sorrow and bitterness of servitude were felt under the Phanariote Princes (1714-1821). These Greek servants of the Sublime Porte had no other interest in the country than wringing from it a heavy tribute for their own enrichment, and that of a great number of Greek functionaries under their orders.

They were not sufficiently strong to protect their own interests and were obliged to cede Bessarabia (previously an integral part of Moldavia) to the Russians in 1812.

However every cloud has a silver lining, as the Roumanians have learnt from their widely varied experiences, and the Phanariotes bringing in their train, French literature, and culture were the precursors of modern Roumania much as the Norman nobles were the civilizers of England after the Conquest. While, during 90 years 40 Phanariote Princes succeeded each other sometimes at intervals of a few months, (exclusive of 2 Russian, and an Austrian occupation lasting in all 13 years) students sent from Transylvania to Rome had the opportunity there to study original documents, and to learn from authentic sources the true history of their past,

with all the unity of the race implied. Until then all information had been confused and obscure. From their labors sprang the Ardealian School and a cultural renaissance which combined with the influence of the French revolution finally urged the unhappy Roumanians to revolt in such a violent and determined way as to secure the recall of the Phanariotes and to impose the nomination of native born princes as rulers (1821). In 1848 a second revolution brought about a Turkish and Russian invasion, but after the Crimian war (1856) the Principalities were put under the Protection of the Seven Great Powers, and in spite of many unfavourable outside influences, and grievous delays, at length were able to form a union under the name of Roumania governed by a prince elected by the people, Alexandre Cuza.

Although he reigned but 7 years, great reforms in agrarian criminal and civil laws, and the secularization of monasteries were accomplished. Schools, Universities, and Conservatories were founded. Gypsy slaves were also freed. Such sweeping changes in a short time rendered Cuza unpopular, and in order to prevent grave dissensions he abdicated,

and in 1866 Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was elected to take his place. This enlightened man was vouchsafed 47 years of devotion to his adopted country, a reign which was a continuous record of progress and improvement in all departments of national life.

The accession of King Charles nephew Ferdinand to the throne (1914) and the participation of Roumania in the great War (1916) have served to accelerate the tendency towards the adoption of modern ideas and methods. Roumanian is now passing through a period of reconstruction, and the readjustment of its institutions to meet the needs of the greatly increased population of seventeen millions. In spite of the difficult conditions from which it suffers in common with the rest of Europe, everything points to a future of growing prosperity, and a widening influence in the interests of peace, harmony, and order in South Eastern Europe.



HISTORICAL NOTE ON BUCHAREST

PREVIOUS to 12th century nothing is known of Bucharest. Legend attributes its origin to a shepherd named Bucur, who had his pastures on the banks of the Dâmbovița, but the earliest documents known referring to the site speak of it as a fortified area on the hill where the *Radu-Voda* monastery now stands.

From 1400 onward we hear of it as a centre for barter. Conveniently situated on rising ground on the natural highway from the mountains to the Danube, in spite of terrible catastrophies, earthquakes, fires, invasions or plagues which sometimes drove away the whole population, it was constantly re-established, each time growing in population and importance until the present day.

At the epoch of the fall of Constantinople (1453) the Turkish conquests quickly extended to Wallachia and in spite of heroic resistance during three centuries the Roumanians were obliged to pay tribute to the Turks. Many dramatic incidents of this long struggle took place in Bucharest, which was sometimes all that was left for the Wallachian princes to govern. One of the most agonizing moments was when Michael the Brave returning with his army from the battle of Călugăreni (summer of 1595) burnt the city before the arrival of the Turks. When he returned with his ally, Sigismund Bathory, he found the place absolutely deserted. The few buildings which survived the fire were torn down by the Tartar invasion two years later. One of the rare survivals of this period is the Radu-Vodă monastery of which the so-called Bucur's church was the mortuary chapel; the church in the courtyard of the State Archive building is a votive church built by Mihai the Brave himself.

When Bucharest arose again from her ashes the first quarter to be rebuilt was in the neighborhood of the spot where the gift of

Rome, the bronze statue of the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus stands to-day.

Attracted by grants of property a number of boyar (noble) families took up their residence in the city at this period. Their mansions surrounded by great parks were on the right bank of the Dâmbovița. In 1655 the «Metropolia» or Cathedral was built and Bucharest became the seat of the archbishop as well as of the ruling prince.

The period of Bucharest's greatest artistic development was during the reign of Constantin Brancovan (1689-1714), twenty-five years of peace and prosperity. Nearly all the churches of historical interest now to be seen were built at this time, such as the Holy-Apostols (1660) Colței, Antim, Doamnei, Stavropoleos, Enei, Dintr'o zi, Vacarești. Many treasures in the Museum of Antiquities date from this epoch. The palace of Brancovan stood at the place now occupied by the Flower Market.

Speaking of Bucharest in 1759 C. Daponte Greek Secretary of the Moldavian Prince Mavrocordat writes; «Worthy of western civilization appears brilliant Bucharest, charming Bucharest, proud city and worthy as

it is to be the seat of Royalty. With one hand the city showers Moldavia with blessings, with the other dominates Serbia, with the right hand adorns herself with ornaments from Venice, with the left borrows beauty from Germany. Her grandeur reaches as far as Jerusalem, her bounty is poured out on the Holy Mountain (Athos)».

Commercial life grew more intense with the settlement of Graeco-Macedonian traders in 1760 under the protection of Phanariotes Princes. Rich merchants frequently built churches as well as the Princes, some of that period being Kretzulescu, Schitu Măgureanu, and New Saint Spiridon. In considering Roumania's history in general and that of Bucharest in particular one must always remember the great and significant role of the church in unifying and sustaining the people during all their vicissitudes—to be Roumanian was to be Orthodox. The piety shown by the great number of charitable foundations is remarkable—Colței, Colentina and Brancovan hospitals being striking examples. In her churches Bucharest has always found comfort and resignation, patience and courage—passive perhaps, but inexhaustable.

Invaders have come and gone Bucharest has remained unshakably Roumanian.

Two Russian and a German occupation lasting (with intervals) from 1769-1834 were not altogether unfavourable to Bucharest's development, (in spite of two severe earthquakes, 1802-1827), the Chaussee Kiseleff, for example, is due to the initiative of a Russian General of that name. After the war of 1812 peace between Russia and Turkey was signed in Bucharest and a new era of increasing political importance began. From 1795, when the first French diplomat was accredited, the French influence was preponderant for a generation. and in fact to this day as anyone remaining, any length of time in the city will readily perceive.

The happy solution of Roumania's political problems was the election of Prince Cuza as reigning prince of the united provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia with Bucharest as his capital in 1859.

His successor in 1866, Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen interested himself deeply in the modernization of the city, living himself in the unpretentious palace on the Calea Victoriei, now used only on official

occasions. In 1881 the United Principalities were raised to the status of a Kingdom by Treaty of Vienna.

The great war interrupted an extensive programme of improvements which has been taken up again with many difficulties and drawbacks since 1918. The large surface of the city (2700 hectares) in proportion to the population (about 800.000) the poverty of many quarters and above all lack of funds make it impossible to keep the streets in good repair at present. The architectural chaos to be remarked, especially in the residential quarters is due to conflicting and irreconcilable influences of which the foregoing lines have given a too brief summary.



ART IN ROUMANIA

THE developement of original ideas in art in Roumania is best studied in the churches where from early times treasures have been preserved from the destruction which overtook those kept in less protected places.

Here we find delicately carved wooden crosses, altar screens, and thrones for the princes, wrought silver candlesticks gem-incrusted reliqueries icons, and marble tombstones draped with rich embroidery such as that of Marie of Mongop, (exhibited in Paris in 1925) and of Eremie Movila.

The inspiration for all these things comes from Rome through Byzantium from whence Roumania accepted its official church and

state system. In the seventeenth century, a flourishing period for architecture of which one sees an especially large number of examples in Bucharest, Venetian, and Italian influence was strong, but combined with Persian, Arabian, and Turkish tendencies previously dominant, they unite to make a distinctive style during the reign of Constantin Brancovan. Of this prince's residences only one now remains, Mogoshoia, a suburban palace near Bucharest restored by its present owner, Princess Martha Bibesco, the authoress. Of the churches we shall speak later.

The nineteenth century was a period of decadence, but at present architects are searching for inspiration among old documents and some succeed admirably in combining modern comfort, with the atmosphere created by archaic ornamentation.

The peasant home is a nest of artists, The father, designer and builder of his own home, carves the wooden pillars and adorns the white walls with stucco decorations of birds and flowers. His wife spins the wool, weaves the linen, prepares dyes, and embroiders clothes, and household linen with elaborate patterns, frequently original, and always



A memorial to soldiers who fell in the Great War

showing restraint in design, and a remarkable intuition for color combinations.

The carpets are especially interesting each district having a style peculiar to it. Those from Oltenița are like tapestries glowing with harmonious colors in floral designs of undeviating regularity. Bessarabian carpets are usually distinguishable by their black background on which are scattered animals birds and human figures naively stereotyped.

Drawn work as fine and dainty as lace is done by little girls whose fingers work as swiftly and skilfully as their mother's. While tending their sheep they knit stockings around the tops of which run bright garlands of flowers. Their brothers in the meantime carve complicated designs on flutes, spoons, or distaffs. The most insignificant household vessels are adorned, and made things of beauty.

The uneventful round of rural life in winter is enlivened by «sitting-parties» where amid laughter songs, and riddles (a favorite pastime) sewing or carving is done by all. As Easter approaches eggs are painted in a surprising variety of designs.

Pottery of interesting shape, and tiles come chiefly from Transylvania. The best original work in these is to be found in pieces made from 1700-1850.

Note: A little book by G. Opresco. *Arta Țărăneasca La Romani* has many illustrations showing good designs which speak for themselves. In French, *Isvor, Le Pays des Saules* by Princess Bibesco — translated now also in to English — gives a detailed account of peasant life and superstitions. For antiques, *Vechie Arta Româneasca* shows many interesting pictures and the text is partly in French. Gaster's books in English are auseful guide to Roumanian Folklore. *Picturesque Roumania*, with an introduction in English and French by Prof. Jorga and profusely illustrated, gives a satisfying idea of eyery part of the country.



ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH
THE MYSTERIOUS TOMB

FOR our first stroll together let us visit St. George's church, one of those old buildings where one feels strongly the spirit of romance which permeates Bucharest for those who know it's history ; although twice partially swept away by fire and earthquake, it still embodies a charm born of centuries of complex influences, of days of splendour and days of despair, and is a link in the golden chain of memory binding us especially with a great moment of the seventeenth century, and with a prince who after a life typical of the changing fortunes of his time, exchanged the princely crown for the crown of christian martyrdom — Prince Constantin Brancovan.

Bucharest was then the capital of a single Roumanian province — Wallachia —, and was under Turkish suzerainty, the princes being nominated by the Sublime Porte. Brancovan is an interesting figure in Roumania's history. When he became ruler the country had gone through a crisis of suffering from invasion fire and plagues, as we read in the «Travels of Marcarius», Patriarch of Antioch who visited the Bucharest in 1659. He tells us that he found the residence of the princes very dilapidated, but the great staircase of Venetian marble, the fine baths, and the paintings in the churches gave him some idea of what luxury and beauty had been destroyed by the recent invasion. Brancovan during a reign of twenty-five years of almost uninterrupted peace due to his remarkable talents as a diplomat, was able to bind up the wounds of his country and to develop and encourage art and literature, as well as adorn it, throughout length and breadth with monasteries and churches, a great number of which exist to-day and from which we can judge and admire the striking talents of the architects, silversmiths, metal workers and wood carvers of those times. Students



Sf. George's Church and the Statue of the Wolf suckling Romulus and Remus

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were sent to Venice at the Prince's expense where they studied art under great masters, while at the same a church was built by him in Constantinopol; he also set up a printing press on the Island of Snagow, where under the direction of the monk Antim — afterwards Metropolitan and one of the greatest artists of his time liturgies were printed in the Roumanian language and read for the first time in the churches.

In person Brancovan was handsome, and possessed a great charm of manner which his sons inherited for Lord Paget, English Ambassador to Constantinopol, on a mission to Carlowitz, was received by two of them at Vacarești and speaks in his memoirs of their courtly manners and culture. His wife, Princess Maruka, was his enlightened companion, herself the foundress and builder of churches. It was she who rebuilt the little church «Intr'o Zi» (Built in a day), which previously was constructed in wood, and actually erected in a day in fulfilment of a vow.

Surrounded by brilliantly attired courtiers Brancovan often made promenades through the streets of his capital, planning the while for its improvement and embellishment. In the

centre of the town he was struck by the fact that an oriental Han, or guest house where men and beast could find shelter from the wind and weather, which occupied a great space at the end of the Lipascani street had a miserable, little, monastery attached to it.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem who was his guest at the time, said to him, as they passed, «Your Highness, men come here from East and West; they do their business and depart with but a poor idea of Bucharest's piety which contents itself with such a mean witness to our faith as this Han of Saint Georgé — here in the centre of the town a worthy temple should be raised up to show to all the world that this is the dwelling place of the Defender of the Faith, the glorious patron of orthodoxy, whose bounty has reached even to the poor Arabs in their far eastern deserts».

A word was sufficient — on the morrow work was begun and carried on unceasingly during two years. Marbles from Greece, metals from the Transylvanian mines, precious woods from the high Carpathians were brought to adorn the new monastery and church. At length all is ready for the consecration. Now

the great day arrives — from his palace (now the Flower-Market), the procession sets forth. Soldiers lead the way, making place for «Boyars» (Lords) in their long mantels trimmed with fur, and their high fur bonnets adorned with jewelled clasps, then come the priests gorgeous in stiffly embroidered vestments, and monks with floating black veils attached to their cylindrical hats, In their midst is the Patriarch of Jerusalem the most exalted prelate of the Church and seven foreign Bishops who lend the dignity of their presence to the scene. Then comes Brancovan finely attired in his rich ceremonial dress — a curved, gem-incrusted sword girt to his side. Following at a short distance is the Princess Maruka, surrounded by her ladies dressed in Venetian brocades and velvets; in all a glittering cortege. Among the Princes retainers is the Keeper of the Royal Purse who scatters gold pieces to the right and left all along the route crowded by a throng of citizens. The bright beams of a July sun shine in all their radiant beauty on the brave array.

After the consecration of the church with many symbolic rites — the Prince makes a touching speech in which he renders thanks

to God who has blessed the undertaking, and enabled him to keep his vow. Then all the dignitaries present are invited to a banquet at the monastery adjoining following which each Bishop is presented with a richly embroidered silk handkerchief (naframa) in which is knotted bright new pieces of gold.

Seven years of beneficent activity fled swiftly by. At court intrigues were rife and plots to depose the prince were not lacking. Firm in the belief that he was ruling in the best interests of his country Brancovan ignored the sinister whisperings which sometimes reached his ears. In spite of his munificence his wealth increased yearly until the Turks spoke of him as «Altin Bey» or the «Prince of Gold» and it would seem that envy of his riches was one of the principal causes of his downfall. During Holy-Week (1714) unpleasant rumors were rife at court. Still Brancovan refused to give a listening ear to friendly warnings and continued to follow the church services of the season with accustomed devotion. Suddenly one morning an agitated chamberlain came to announce the arrival of a Turkish envoy from Constantinople — Aga Mustapha by name.

Brancovan gave orders to receive him fitly but the Aga forced himself into the presence of the prince; his face fierce and sombre, he snatched from his bosom a square piece of black silk, which he thrust on Brancovan's shoulder saying: «You are dethroned» — It was the end.

Before the populace was aware of what had occurred, Brancovan was hurried away secretly, accompanied by his wife, four of his children, a little grandchild, and his faithful minister Vacarescu. Good Friday saw them en route for Constantinople — where they were cast into the prison of the Seven Towers. For three months every cruel device known to the Turkish jailer's ingenuity was used to make Brancovan reveal the hiding place of his immense fortune which proved to be the famous Zecca of Venice. Then he and his family were ordered to renounce their Christian faith. They had held their religion as the very corner stone of their country's existence, and clung to it in days of humility, as they had upheld it in days of power. They were unshakable.

On August 15 th, the festival of Mary, a strange sight was to be seen in Constantinople.

The Sultan sitting in a kiosk witnessed the execution of the Roumanians. A procession offering a strange contrast to the one seven years earlier in which the chief actors were the same, wound its dusty streets of the capital. Clad only in their shirts, barefooted, haggard, worn, Brancovan and his family awaited their doom. Once more each victim in turn was adjured to renounce Christ. In a calm voice the Prince replied «Our earthly possessions are lost, we have still our souls, and we shall keep them».

The executioner raised his axe and the eldest son Constantin was the first to die. As his manly head fell severed from his body the Sultan bent his gaze upon the face of the agonized father but found no sign of weakness there. One after another the children fell encouraged by their father to meet the end bravely. Vacaresco too in his turn was massacred, and finally the noble prince himself. The heads were paraded through the streets on pikes and the bodies thrown into the Bosphorus.

The unhappy widow and the little grandson were spared and allowed to go to a monastery. Doubtlessly Doamna Maruka, in this retreat, found compassionate friends, and these

when night came stole quietly in boats to the spot where Brancovan's body had been thrown, and recovering it secretly, gave it Christian burial. Fifteen years later Prince Mavrocordat, the first of the Phanariote Princess who were destined to rule Roumania for a hundred years sat on the throne of Brancovan. His sympathy for the widow of his murdered predecessor, was aroused by Princess Maruka's friends for he aided her to return to Roumania, offering her hospitality, and giving her the opportunity to transfer the remains of her husband in secret to his native land. Two centuries have rolled away since then and preparations were in hand for a solemn religious ceremony in memory of Brancovan in 1914. In the troubled times when he died all records of his burial place had been lost and it was with regret that historians could not assign any one of his numerous foundations as enshrining his tomb.

Note: Princess Maruka's fifteen years of exile were spent in the seraglio of the Khan of Crimea, a vassal of the Sultan. In spite of her enforced seclusion, winning the good will of all the inmates of the harem, she was able to communicate with Vienna. A Princess of the Holy Roman Empire her powerful relations secured her release after long and difficult negotiations with her jailers.

Visiting St. George's on Good Friday afternoon of that year I stopped to chat with the old priest who, full of his subject conducted me to a carved stone slab let into the floor of the church, «I must tell you of our of great discovery», said he, — «During the summer the sexton asked my permission to polish the silver lamp which is suspended above this tomb because the church was being prepared for the Brancovan memorial services. I hesitated to have the venerable relic touched, for during my long tenure of office, I had never allowed it to be taken down, having learned from my predecessor that it should always remain where it had been placed by the hands of the anonymous donor. He insisted however, saying. «I should very much like to do so, because when filling it with oil. I seem to see some letters engraved on it». This decided me to grant him his request, and great was his excitement when he was able to spell out the words written in ancient script. «This lamp lights the tomb where lie the remains of Prince Constantin Brancovan, and is given to Sfântul Gheorghe by his wife, Princess Maruka, who hopes by the grace of God to repose by his side. July

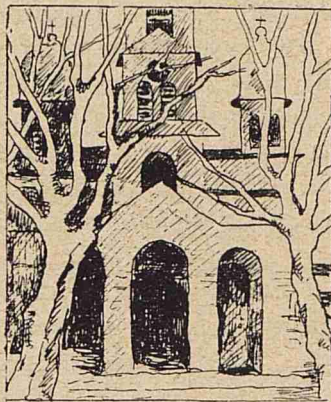
12th 1720». There before our eyes for eight generations the lamp, had burned and we were ignorant that the noble Brancovan was sleeping his last sleep in our midst».

Investigated by archeologists the lamp and inscription were declared to be genuine — and thus the mysterious tomb was identified at the very moment when throughout Roumania in all the churches and monasteries he had built, prayers were offered for his soul, and his fame recalled for the edification of his countrymen — as a reminder that the good men do may live after them, and not as Shakespeare says: «be interred with their bones».

In the soft enshrouding dusk of the Good Friday afternoon I felt it was good to be in that place. The reverend father recalled to his duties left me. As his footsteps receded, echoing gently on the stone pavement I scattered my tiny bouquets of pink and blue hyacinths on the grey marble slab and kindled my slender candle from Doamna Maruka's votive lamp while my heart communed silently with the past.

Note: Biserica Sfântul Gheorghe, Piața Sfântul Gheorghe, was built in 1707. In 1802 an earthquake destroyed the mo-

nastery to which it was attached, and damaged the church itself severely. In 1847 fire almost swept it away completely. The present church is very different from the original built by Prince Brancovan, although several features, of his church are incorporated in the present one.



A STROLL ON CALEA VICTORIA

LONG ago when the Dâmbovitza, clear and sparkling flowed through flowery meadows, the people hereabout used to say, «Sweet water of the Dâmbovitza who taste of thee will never leave thee!». The Dâmbovitza of to-day, «cabined, cribbed, confined», and most unappetizingly dirty has lost its charm for Bucharest, and it seems impossible to believe that it is the same river when one rediscovers it in all its pristine beauty not many miles out of town.

Standing on the bridge at the foot of the Calea Victoria ready for a leisurely stroll along the main artery of Bucharest's traffic, we see on the right bank of the river the monumental Law Courts, and the Palace for the Senate now building.

Next is a gymnasium with a swimming pool, and just behind a quaint, tiny church, Old St. Spiridon built in 1701 by Constantin Mavrocordat.

We must descend a few steps to enter, and examine the wonder working icon before which lies a pile of missives with requests for the good saint's intervention in favor of the writers. The gilt strands draped about the icons are from the «bateala» or wedding veil ornaments of brides married in the church surely from brides happily married and grateful.

Not far along the river bank, to the right, is the hill on which stands the earliest extant building in Bucharest, the so called Bucur's Church. High perched on a fragment of fortress wall it is a favorite subject for the artist's brush, and guests of Bucharest will not regret making a short detour from the highway to salute the modest ancestor of the many churches they will see during their walks abroad.

Before we take our way along the busy Calea Victoria let us listen for a moment to the ballad about it which the poet Alexandri gives us.



Calea Victoria on a holiday

In the town of Bucharest, at the head of the main road, seven brothers, handsome as gods, tall like pines, are waiting with a crowd of friends for the arrival of their brother-in-law Mogosh, a high official, and his wife, their sister. They are lying in the shade and feasting, when suddenly the eldest brother sees Mogosh approaching, riding on a sorrel horse.

Good-day my seven brothers!

«Good-day, brother-in-law we, were not expecting you so soon, but where is our sister? Perhaps you have forgotten that you promised to bring her to see us, nine times in the winter when there are many holidays, and four times in summer during the busy season?».

«No, my brothers, I have not forgotten, but when I was on the way with her, we met Turks, and Tartars and they stole her away!».

«What, they have stolen her, and you have fled? Then die like a dog, for you are not worthy to be in our family!».

And drawing their seven swords they pierced him to the heart.

Just as they were going to leave the spot, they saw approaching a fine painted carriage,

drawn by twelve steeds with flowing manes, and seated in it, blooming as a flower, their sister Stanca.

«Good-day, mydear brothers», said she, «Where is my husband?» With seven swords in his heart as a man deserves who was unworthy of us, and could not protect his wife from the pagans!». «Alas!» she cried. «You did not understand that Mogosh was joking». And throwing herself on her husbands body, her arms about him, and her mouth to his, she died before the eyes the crowd at the bridge and that is why the place was called Podul Mogoshaiu (The Mogoshaiu Bridge).

Turning from legend to reality, we see on our right the Post Office, and vis-a-vis the State Deposit Bank where Trust Funds are administered. It is considered one of the handsomest buildings in Bucharest in the style of the French Renaissance. The church next to the Post Office is modern and chiefly interesting to the faithful because it contains relics of St. Ciprian.

We now come to the corner of Lipscani Street onwhich are most of the principal banks, including the National Bank which can be seen from this corner with a fine

statue to Eugen Carada, the founder in a corner of the courtyard. On Lipscani Street are also many retail shops in fact, it is the heart of the shopping district. In former days it was entirely occupied by Jewish merchants, the bulk of whose merchandise came from Leipzig, hence the name. Continuing we pass the Prefecture of Police on the right side, with the former Russian Legation a little farther on, while on the left is the entrance to an arcade in the style of those seen in Italian cities. A few steps farther on, just beside a jewellers shop, a passage leads behind the warehouses to the Biserica Doamnei. Like a lady in reduced circumstances, this little church seems to shrink sensitively away from the plebian packing cases, and bales of goods stacked about it.

Biserica Doamnei, the Princess' Church built in 1683 by Sherban Cantacuzino, at the request of his wife, (hence its name) has much of interest to offer the careful observer, in spite of the ravages of time and neglect. Near the altar screen one finds the «Epitaf» representing the Entombment of Christ, embroidered by the Princess herself. In the lower right hand corner are the kneeling figures of

the donors and two children, all with crowns on their heads. The frescoed walls are blackened with smoke but some fragments of them can be admired showing original adaptations from Byzantine models. Lately a public spirited citizen enclosed the church with a fence, and doubtless repairs to this interesting souvenir of the Prince who distinguished himself among the defenders of Vienna from the Turks, will follow shortly.

Now we come to the Boulevard Elisabeta, a broad, modern avenue as animated as the Calea Victoria itself. Looking up the Boulevard to the right we see the imposing monument to Ion Bratiano, with the inscription, «By our own arms, by our own hearts, by our own brains!». This was the doctrine of the great political leader who was instrumental in bringing King Carol to Roumania, and who side by side with the enlightened King helped Roumania to realize her own powers in every field of human endeavor.

A short distance further up the Boulevard is the statue of Charles Rossetti, a contemporary of Bratiano who by his writing, and convincing eloquence did much to help in the great task. Rossetti's wife was an Englishwoman,

born Mary Grant. On the bas-relief of the pedestal of the statue she is depicted with her arm about her young son listening to a speech made by her husband. His courageous companion, and sharer of years of exile and hardships, this exceptional woman is still remembered in Bucharest a residential street being called «Maria Rossetti».

Still further along the Boulevard another statue is erected to the memory of Pake Protopopesco a lover, and benefactor of the city of which he was many times mayor.

The corner on which we are standing might justly be called the centre of Bucharest. In the vicinity are almost all the leading clubs, hotels, restaurants, and the best shops. Two harried policemen are required to regulate the traffic to the best of their ability.

At the left the Cercul Militar (officers club) completed in 1916, and luxuriously appointed has a whole block to itself. At the corner of Edgar Quinet street we find the unpretentious Capsa's Hotel and Restaurant spoken of by every writer who has visited Bucharest in the last sixty years, among them Edgar Saltus, and Quiller-Couch. It used to be the meeting place for the «jeunesse dorée» of the

town especially at the aperitif hour, but since automobiles have come into fashion the old leisurely habits are disappearing, and passing beauties no longer encounter the battery of appraising eyes which awaited them here ten years ago.

The next point of interest is the National Theatre (on the left) an institution dear to the hearts of the Bucharestois, During nine months of the year performances are given every evening, with frequent matinées. Classical plays translated from English, French or German, alternate with original Roumanian works Every season prize competitions are held for the encouragement of young playwrights, and the winning pieces are presented on the stage Shakespeare is much appreciated, Last season, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Midsummers Night Dream* were each played several times, and were splendidly mounted. G. B. Shaw is also well known to the public, his «*Cesear and Cleopatra*» drew big audiences, and *St. Joan* was the most successful piece of all played, during the season the seats being sold out long in advance. This was due, in part, to the fact that the leading role was taken by Maria Ventura.



A gypsy flowergirl

For foreigners the historical Roumanian plays are attractive owing to the faithful reproductions of costumes and accessories.

Half a block farther on we come to the Kretzulesco Church in an interior courtyard. An excellent choir draws large crowds here on Sundays. There is no fixed hour for the services, any time from half past nine until eleven people are going in and out. As usual in Orthodox churches there are no seats. Now we come to the Royal Palace, used only on official occasions, as the Royal Family lives at Cotroceni. The Guard is changed every day at eleven thirty, and a knot of idlers is always to be seen at the entrance gates watching the ceremony. Opposite the Palace is the Foundation Carol, a cultural institution with library and lecture hall, in connection with the University. Organized by King Carol with great foresight, and endowed with numerous scholarships it has already given results worthy of its founder's hopes, and is constantly enlarging its field of usefulness.

At the next corner we find the Atheneum, with its Greek portico standing at the back of a pleasant garden which is lined on either side with portrait busts

of illustrious citizens, mostly of the last generation.

As the Foundation Carol was the work of the late King so the Atheneum is due in great part to the influence of Queen Elisabeth. Completed in 1888 it was built by popular subscriptions, the smallest sums being gratefully received. «To give a leu for the Atheneu» was a familiar phrase for many years. It contains a concert hall where a thousand people can enjoy the music. Symphony concerts are held regularly once a week during the season, as well as numerous other concerts, and many leading musicians from every part of Europe have performed to crowded houses here. There are also several galleries where picture exhibitions by individual artists are held, in addition to the yearly Official Salon. A permanent collection of Grigoresco's paintings can be seen every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 11 to 3., and many statues of high artistic merit are permanently exposed in the Rotunda. Over the main entrance are mosaics representing Neagoe Bessarab, the builder of Curtea de Argish, Alexander cel Bun, King Carol and other royal patrons of art.

Near the corner of Calea Griviței (the street leading to the North Station), stands the old Stirbey Palace, a house of large hospitality in generations gone by, then come the Ministry of Finance's commodious quarters and not far from them we find an old-fashioned house now a shop for Roumanian embroideries) once the home of the Moruzzi family from which visitors of a hundred years ago carried away memories of good conversation and abundant good cheer. Immediately following comes the Roumanian Academy, founded in 1866 on the same lines as similiar institutions abroad, and ever since the foster mother of literature and science. In the quiet reading rooms there are thousands of volumes in many languages at the disposition of students. A fine collection of manuscripts, prints, pictures, old books, many with rare bindings can be examined, and in the impressive lecture hall communications are frequently made giving the results of research in science, archeology, or other branches of learning. One of the recent speakers was the eminent American, Dr. Shotwell.

Our attention is next attracted by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, and then by

the striking residence of the Cantacuzino family, which was built by the late G. Cantacuzene known familiarly as the «Nabob» and supposedly the richest man in the Roumania of his day. On the opposite side of the street, a little farther along, is the home of Princess Alexandrina Cantacuzino, internationally known for her philanthropic and feminist activities. The last house on the right side contains a lending library including English and French books founded by Mademoiselle Hélène Văcărescu the poetess who is Roumanian delegate to the League of Nations.

Before us now is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, housed in the imposing palace of the late Prince Demetru Știrb. On the left is the Chaussee Kiseleff with the Natural History Museum which compares favorably with similar museums in the occident, thanks to the scholarly activity of Dr. Antipa, its director.

We are now in the finest residential neighborhood in the city. Boulevard Lascar Catargiu, Filipescu, and Bonaparte Parks as well as the Chausée itself are full of handsome houses, those in the Parks for the most part having been built since 1918.

Thus we see the Calea Victoria to-day. Perhaps it may be interesting to know the impression it made on Mr. Wilkinson, British Consul in 1820 (the first British Consul to Bucharest was appointed in 1802). He tells us that the street then called Podul Mogos-haiu was paved with planks, and describes the thundering of the carriages along it, and the frequent accidents to the horses owing to unexpected holes in the boards, as the road was constantly in need of repairs. Semi-oriental magnificence marked the costumes of the boyars and their lovely ladies, but the gypsy coachmen driving the luxurious carriages were not seldom clothed in ragged liveries, and even sometimes bare-footed. Undisturbed by clouds of dust, or by the odorous whiffs from exposed garbage heaps in the gypsy slave quarters attached to the aristocratic residences lining the roadway, the gay crowd spent hours every day promenading in their beloved street, exchanging greetings and the latest gossip, saluting with deep respect the court dignitaries passing that way, or consuming wine and cake at the fashionable confectioner's shop of the day.

«Times change and we change with them»,

but could Mr. Wilkinson return to-day he would find in the Calea Victoria, with its new name, and greatly modified background the same gay animation, other dames, equally fair, and elegant, and the indefinable Roumanian atmosphere, which attracted his attention, and inspired his pen a hundred years ago.

Note: Sir A Stanley estimates the number of Boyar families at 100 in 1856, most of which had houses in Bucharest. In addition 30,000 landed proprietors formed the society of the country.





Ruined Tower of the Mihai Voda Monastery (The Archives)

THE ARCHIVES
MONASTERY OF MIHAI VODA

CROSSING the Dâmbovitza from the Cismigiu Garden we see the monastery built by Mihai the Brave in 1594. The building is now used as a deposit for the State Archives, and is in great part a restoration, the only sections of the actual palace built by Mihai being the church in the courtyard, and a crumbling tower gate.

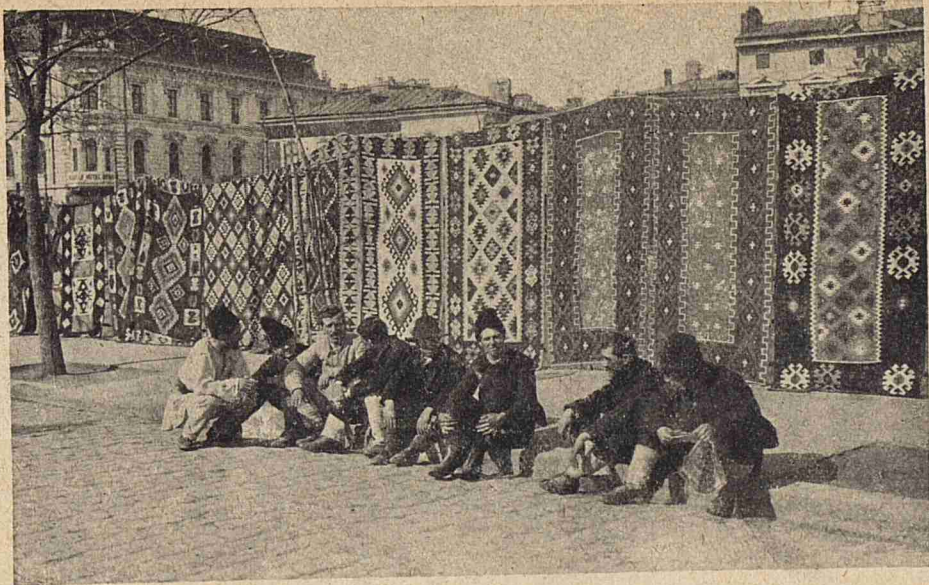
The wing on the right of the modern entrance (in Strada Archivelor) is now used as a Museum to house an admirable collection of prints, etchings, books, seals, church vessels and icons presented to the city by M. Olsewski. It is well worth visiting and is open on Sundays and holidays from ten to three.

A number of books are by Englishmen, a particularly interesting album of sketches being the large one done by George Hering in 1838.

One print by Luigi Mayer, an Italian artist, shows the Palace then called the «Princely Palace» as it was in 1793. As a matter of fact the residence of the Princes situated very near the Monastery was destroyed by fire in 1790, rebuilt and again burnt in down in 1812. For a long time the ruin, of which no trace can now be found, were called the «Burnt Palace».

The monastery sheltered the Princes during the periods of restorations and it was there that Sir Robert Ainslee, the English Ambassador to Constantinopol was received by Constantin Moruzzi when on a visit to Bucharest. Here is a description of the reception written by Luigi Mayer who accompanied the Englishman.

«The Prince, clad in green sits on a sofa; near him sits Sir Robert at the left (the place of honor in Turkey). The members of the Ambassador's suite are given seats; The Boyars stand in a row opposite them. Behind are the servants carrying trays laden with all sorts of refreshments. An empty throne represents the Sultan. The authority of the Prince is symbolized by his sword suspended close behind him».



On the Quay of the Dâmbovița

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THE METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

THE Cathedral set on a high hill rising abruptly from the right bank of the Dâmbovitza is the very core of Bucharest's history. There is the past, rich in tradition embodied in the church, the present and the future in the Parliament (Camera Deputaților) at its side.

Approaching the hill from the Market (Hala Centrala) we pass the Brancovan Hospital and the Domnitza Balasha church (Church of the Princess Blanche) and presently arrive at the vegetable and fruit market by following the sidewalk decorated on either hand with Roumanian rugs woven in gay colors which are suspended on the iron railing of the hospital garden.

At the foot of the hill we find a stone cross placed there in commemoration of Brancovan's father murdered on the spot 350 years ago, a victim of the troubled times in which he lived.

Mounting the hill we see the silhouette of a great bell, hung low on a heavy beamed scaffold outside the Monastery gate. This bell is the only one in the city with a deep sonorous tone and is associated in the minds of the Bucharestois with all great events of sorrow or rejoicing. Climbing still higher we pass through the tower gate way built by Brancovan, and see the Cathedral itself before us. It seems small and low if we approach it with pre-conceived ideas of massive Gothic structures. The walls are stuccoed a pale tan color and pierced with a few small windows and the roof is surmounted by four cupolas. The principal exterior decoration is a beautifully executed frieze of interlacing bands, a design original to Roumania, and seen on many buildings.

The Cathedral was built by Prince Constantin Sherban, the last of the Bessarab line, about 1658. The consecration is described by Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch who took part



The Metropolitan Cathedral

in the ceremonies accompanied by his secretary Paul of Aleppo. He tells us of many curious features, the sanctification of the altar, the washing of the holy table, the marking of the faces of the four evangelists at the four corners of it, of the Bishops mounting ladders to paint crosses on the four exterior walls; of the magnificent costumes heavy with embroidery worn by the Prince Mihnea III and his courtiers; of the feasting and rejoicing of the citizens on the hill.

In reading documents of that period we see what a great influence the Metropolitan had over the Princes and Governors of the country who were in duty bound to consult him on all important occasions.

The relics of Saint Demetru which lie in the church encased in a fine silver coffin were brought from the Bulgarian village of Bessarab by the Russian General Solticov during the war of 1769-74. When the Russians left Bucharest a pious citizen, Hagi Demitris, begged the General to leave the venerated remains in the Cathedral which he consented to do. The scenes depicted on the sides of the coffin set forth the incidents which occurred during the transport of the remains from

Bulgaria. One sees how the body fell into the Danube but was miraculously rescued. St. Demetru's body is taken in solemn procession around the Cathedral in times of drought while intercessory prayers for rain are offered.

When the Bulgarians were in Bucharest during the German occupation of 1916, they greatly desired to regain possession of the body of Saint which they still consider as theirs. They entered the Cathedral, and tried to lift the coffin, but it was so abnormally heavy they could not move it. In the meanwhile the monks rang the great bell to alarm the citizens who ran in crowds to the hill. When they saw the danger which threatened, although they had great confidence in the power of the Saint to protect himself, they sent a delegation to Field Marshall Mackensen to inform him of the event, and he gave strict orders that the relic was not to be disturbed. «Saint Demetru makes himself heavy when he does not wish to be moved» is a common belief among the crowd in the market place.

Of the many interesting ceremonies of which the Cathedral has been the scene during centuries, none has been more significant

or important than the one held in 1925 when Miron Christea the Metropolitan, was raised to the rank of Patriarch of the the Orthodox Church, the first Roumanian to be thus honored, a tribute not only to his eminent qualities as an ecclesiastic, but to the growing importance of the Roumanian church.

Note: Travelers in Bucharest on Good Friday, Easter, or Christmas should not fail to witness the extremely interesting ceremonies at the Cathedral. Every Sunday at half past ten there is a full choral service. A detailed description of the customs and ceremonies at the outstanding church festivals is given in «Rumania in Light and Shadow» by E. G. Pantazzi. (Fisher Unwin London).



STAVROPOLEUS CHURCH.
THE MIRACULOUS ICON OF THE
VIRGIN IN OLARI CHURCH



Behind the Post-Office we find this exquisite little church, A very jewel of delicate outline, it seems placed in the banal commercial street by magic hands. The more one looks at its proportions, its carving and frescos the more one wonders at its beauty. It too has its legend. After Brancovans death the Phanariote Prince, Nicholas Mavrocordat was sent by the Sultan to rule Wallachia. One of the leading noblemen, Balaceano was bitterly opposed to this rule of a foreigner, and forgetting prudence, once

exclaimed in a gathering of friends, «By the help of God we shall get rid of the Greek!». The walls had ears, and swift vengeance followed. At the instigation of the Prince Balaceano was murdered. His home stood on the spot where the church is now, for his property being confiscated was given to a Greek retainer of the Mavrocordats, Stavropoleus by name, and he built the church in 1729.

In winter nights when all is still, and the snow piled high passersby may hear whispering, and sighing the little church. Is it the murdered Balaceano's restless spirit still lingering there?

THE MIRACULOUS ICON OF THE VIRGIN IN OLARI CHURCH

The exterior of Olari Church is quite uninteresting, but it is to see the miraculous icon that we have turned our footsteps to Calea Mosilor, where it stands quite near the centre of the town. On entering a heavily embroidered Communion cloth placed in a frame near the door attracts our attention. There are also some silver lamps, and four icons covered with silver gilt on the altarscreen

worthy of notice. The magnet which draws crowds to the church, however is an unusually large icon, covered with silver gilt, framed, and preserved under glass representing the Virgin Mary, or as she is always called in Roumanian, the Mother of Christ. About the neck of the image are fixed crosses, medals, rings, and other jewelry, gifts of the faithful who have been cured by the intervention of the miraculous picture. Before the Great War the number and value of these votive offerings was much greater than to-day.

On Friday afternoons there is always a crowd, especially of women of every class, kneeling in prayer before the icon, or lighting tapers before it, as the priest, in a soft, monotonous voice reads the «Acatist», or Litany of Praise to the Virgin.

The story of the Icon relates that during a massacre of Christians in Macedonia, in 1812, a group of Roumanian refugees headed by the priest who carried with him this icone from their church fled from the Turks in a small boat. Overtaken by a sudden tempest, they were on the point of drowning when the priest holding aloft the icon, prayed fervently

to the Virgin to save them from peril. As if in immediate answer to his supplications, the storm passed and the shore was reached in safety. After many difficulties, and adventures they reached Bucharest, and some of their descendents are among the leading citizens of Bucharest to-day.

The Icon was at first deposited in a church in the Strada Batiste, and later in the Icoana Church in Strada General Lahovary, which still bears its name. Finally, in 1819, the Metropolitan decided to place it in the Olari church where according to a solemn decision it is to remain forever. Such is the fame of its efficacy that when King Ferdinand was seriously ill with typhoid fever it was carried to him, and he shortly after recovered. On that occasion the route by which it was carried was crowded with citizens who pressed forward to kiss, or touch it.

The «Acatist» read every Friday afternoon at Olari is an ancient litany in honor of the Virgin, dating from the reign of Heraclius in Byzantium in 610. Terrified by an overwhelming invasion of Persians, the Roman Emperor wish to move the capital to Carthage, but the Patriarch vigorously opposed this

decision, and organized the population to resist a seige. Many church vessels were sold to buy equipment for the soldiers, but the greatest treasures of all, the icons of the Mother of Christ, held by the priests near the walls above heads of those fighting, incited the Christians to prodigious efforts to save their city. After six weeks the seige was raised, and the spontaneous hymn of glorification to the Virgin sung by the defenders on that occasion is the «Acatist» still intoned by the spiritual descendents of the pious citizens of Byzantium in Bucharest.



THE MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITES

WE find the Museum of Antiquities on the Boulevard Elisabeta, not far from the corner of Calea Victoria, on the ground floor of one of the University buildings. The statue we see in the small square opposite the entrance is that of Mihai the Brave, the only Roumanian ruler before the present King who reigned over all the Roumanian provinces. The two marble statues on either side represent George Lazar (on the right) and John Heliade Radulesco, two men who rendered eminent services to education in the country in the last century.

Before entering the Museum let us walk to the corner of Boulevard Bratiano, for on the corner is a typical residence, surrounded by a pleasant garden, of a Boyar family of

a hundred years ago. At present it is occupied by the offices of the Mayor of Bucharest.

On the opposite side of the street we see the Coltzea Hospital. A small marble tablet on the fence tells us that formerly a observation tower stood here built by the soldiers of Charles XII of Sweden in 1712. It was pulled down in 1888.

In the hospital garden there is a statue of Spatar Mihail Cantacuzino who built the Monastery in 1695. The modern hospital, the largest in Bucharest, has taken the place of the Monastery, but the funds are still administered by descendents of the founder, who direct a vast organization in the interests of charity known as The Eforia of the Civil Hospitals. The chapel, carefully preserved, is exactly as Cantacuzino left it, and is a happy example of the harmonious union of Eastern and Western currents in art in Roumania, at that period.

Returning to the Museum, we find on entering that the exhibits are crowded together, and the lighting poor. Lack of funds has prevented the arrangement of proper quarters for these, and a great number of other objects of highest interest kept packed in

cases for want of space, but it is hoped very shortly to remedy this unsatisfactory condition of affairs.

The first thing we see after traversing the corridor is a model of the Cathedral of Curtea de Argish with all the details of the ornamentation faithfully reproduced. Another model in an adjoining room shows what the colossal tower of Trajan's day, built by Roman soldiers at Civitis Tropensium (to-day Adam Klissé in Dobrogea) must have been like. Original sculptured stones from the monument can be seen at the Historical Museum in Park Carol. Before the war the most valuable exhibit of the Museum was the «Treasure of Pietroasa» twelve articles made of gold found by a peasant while plowing in 1837. Dating from the fourth century A. D., the treasure, of finest workmanship, consists of a large disc, a tall slender pitcher, two vases, four fibulas, two rings and a collarette. Sent to Moscow for safe keeping during the war, with many other precious articles belonging to the nation, as well as to private citizens, they have never been returned by the Soviet Government. What we see in the Museum to-day are copies of originals.

Tear vases, pottery lamps, coins, statues, dating from the time of Trajan (most of them from the neighborhood of Constantza, the ancient Tomis) fill the corridor, and many cases and shelves.

The chief interest however, centres in the room containing the altar screen, carved stalls, doors, from the Monastery of Cotroceni (16th Century), and other churches and monasteries. Especially worthy of notice are the door of the Snagov Church (1453) and frescos from Curtea de Argish.

Those who have leisure to examine the numerous church vessels in silver, many of most delicate beauty will be well repaid for the time spent. The objects are all labelled.. Another room contains, vestements and Bibles in rare and precious bindings.

The Museum is open from 10-3 on Thursday and Sundays.

THE AMAN MUSEUM

Theodore Aman holds a unique place in the history of the developement of painting in Roumania. Born in 1838 he grew up in

an atmosphere in which artists were considered as simple journeymen, for art in the country at that time was almost entirely confined to the conventional decoration of churches.

His talent, and great desire to study abroad decided his parents to send him to Paris where he worked in the studio of Drolling who appreciated him as one of his most distinguished pupils. Aman's style was influenced by the many currents in art in Paris, especially by the school of Salvatore Rosa. Later he travelled in Turkey, and visited the Crimea during the war where he painted a picture of the Battle of Alma.

Returning to Roumanian in 1858 he founded the first School of Fine Arts to which he devoted the greater part of his energy until his death in 1891. During the reconstruction period in which he lived he played a significant and noble role by raising the status of the artist from that of a simple craftsman to the high place it occupies to-day. To him is also due the first Art Gallery in Bucharest now in the Atheneum.

The Museum which we visit was his home, designed, and built by himself where he worked

surrounded by pupils and friends. Among the pictures preserved are many of great interest as historical documents, such as the two large canvases showing the Proclamation of the Union of Wallachia, and Moldavia to form the Roumanian Principality, and the scene when Prince Carol was officially proclaimed ruler in 1869. Other pictures show life in the country among the peasants, or among the friends of the artists, and are faithful records of the Roumania of his day. As engraver and sculptor also Aman was a prolific worker and left many charming examples of his art, a representative collection of which is preserved in the Museum.

Note : The Aman Museum in Strada C. A. Rossetti near the corner of Strada Boteano is open on Tuesdays, Thursday and Sundays 9—12 and on Sundays in the afternoon also.

SIMU MUSEUM

The Simu Museum is a striking example of what can be done by a man endowed with taste and means in the course of a comparatively few years. M. Simu has travelled all over Europe bringing home with him treasures of art which he has arranged with

decernment in the Gallery built to contain them. Recently M. Simu put the crown on his work of enlightened patriotism by presenting this unique gallery with all it contains to the people of Roumania.

Examples of the work of leading French artists of the last and present generation are in the majority. Foreign visitors will find much to interest them, for nearly all Roumanian artists are represented and if time is, limited a better general impression of modern tendencies in art can be obtained than elsewhere. Attention is particularly drawn to the carved and gilded wood throne, a faithful copy of that used by Prince Peter Raresh (16 th century), a splendid specimen of the woodcarvers art.

Note: The Simu Museum on Strada D. A. Sturdza is open on Sundays from 10—1 throughout the year.

Other Museums in Bucharest with interesting collections cannot be visited at present owing to repairs or building. These are the Kalinderu, the exterior of which is very striking being adorned with plaster bas-reliefs, tiles, niches for statutes, iron brackets and other curiosities (Strada Renasterei, 2) and The Ethnographical Museum at the Chausee which is not yet installed in the new premises. A very complete collection of Icons at the Casa Scoalilor (Strada General Berthelot) may be seen on request.

CURTEA DE ARGESH

THE traveller arriving at the quiet little town of Argesh can hardly believe that it was once the capital of a princely domain, and the scene of a luxurious court life.

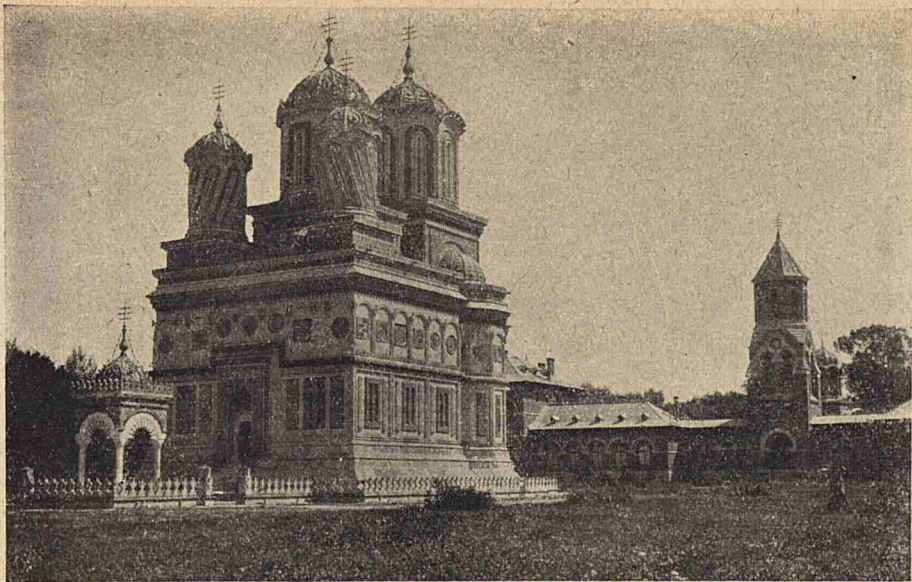
It was here in 1508 that the scholarly Prince Neagoe Bessarab built the beautiful-cathedral which remains to-day one of Roumania's most treasured ornaments.

The Prince called to his aid all the resources of the country for the construction of this church. Persian, Armenian, Arabian and Turkish motives were mingled harmoniously in its ornamentation. Carried away by the desire to realize his dream the Prince had come to the end of his resources long before the building was finished. He meditated imposing fresh taxes on his already heavily burdened

subjects, and had called together his Council for that purpose when his wife, Despina, entered the room where the meeting was held, carrying her jewel case in her hand which she begged her husband to accept instead of taxing the people. Her generosity enabled the church to be finished worthily.

The story of the building of the church is told by the poet Alexandri, as follows: Prince Neagoe employed as chief architect, Master Manolè who worked side by side with the other workmen as was customary in those days. The walls were unstable, constantly crumbling, and making it impossible to advance. Every night the work of the day was destroyed. Manolè perplexed, and troubled had a dream in which it seemed as if a voice were speaking to him saying, «Master Manolé, you build in vain, the walls will never stand firm until you have immured a living body in the foundation!».

Manolé tried to brush away the memory of the nightmare in spite of the deep displeasure of the Prince who had given him the honor of building the church because he was considered the most gifted architect in Eastern Europe. Time after time the same



Curtea de Argeș

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accident was repeated, and night after night Manolé had the same dream now become an obsession. One night he answered the voice, asking, «Whom must I put in the wall? The voice answered, «The first person who comes who comes to the church to-morrow after the the hour of noon has struck!».

Every day the wives of the builders came to bring them food, and the young wife of Manolé was always among the first. The dreadful thought filled her husband with horror, but he hoped against hope that on this day she would not come. Alas! Her little figure was seen approaching in the far distance. «O God!» he entreated in despair, Send a tempest, send wind, send rain, so that the path will be swept away and she will turn back. The pitiless sun still shone brightly, and running ahead of her companions she arrived the first of all.

«Come up the ladder, my beloved, he cried, Look what I am doing». Then as she mounted he gently persuaded her to stand against the wall and while pretending to joke he began to build around her, while she stood with clasped hands watching him. He worked quickly, and as the wall rose breast high

she cried, «Manolé, you are smothering me! Manolé'I cannot breathe: Stop, Manolé, stop this dreadful game! He only worked the faster and at last could only hear the faint wihesper of the gentle voice imploring, «Manolé, Manolé!

Now all prospered. Manolé worked feverishly day and night, avoided by his terror-stricken companions who murmured among themselves that he was possessed by a devil.

At last the marvel was finished, and the Prince completely satisfied knew that he saw before him the most perfect edifice in the East. «Truly, Master Manolé, he said, you were famous before you built this church, but now you will be immortal! You need strive no more, for I am determined that this church shall remain the only one of its kind». Master Manolé stood silent. Since his work had been finished he had fallen into a deep melancholy. The Prince, misunderstanding his silence thought he was planning fresh marvels, and in order to make sure his church would never have a rival he gave orders to have the unresisting Manolé taken to the roof of the building and abandoned there. In the silent night the Master heard the gentle

voice of his dead wife calling him, and horrorstricken sprang madly from the roof to his doom. Where he fell a fountain welled up which is still called «Manole's Fountain».

Curtea de Argesh possesses another claim to our interest in an older church than the one of the legend. It is the Princely Church (Biserica Domneasca) which has remarkable frescos in Giotto's manner. Recent excavations have brought to light the tomb the Prince who built it, a Bessarab who died, probably, in 1352. Fragments of a royal robe embroidered with pearls, and beautiful jewels were found beside his remains.

King Carol took a deep interest in Curtea de Argesh, and on his initiative the cathedral, then in a ruinous state was repaired, a task which took ten years. There he lies buried, as does his wife, Carmen Sylva, poetess, friend of the blind, a noble Queen, and true mother of her people. Here too Neagoe and the generous Despina sleep amid the beauties they created.

Note: An excursion to Curtea de Argesh, either by train or motor can be made in a day, leaving early in the morning, and returning late at night. It is advisable to take a picnic lunch as the village has few resources.

THE PARK CAROL

PARK Carol situated near the Filaret Station is one of Bucharest's most agreeable corners. Shady alleys, flowerbeds full of perfume and color, mirrored in broad basins of clear water, a cool lake in the centre of which is an island and from it springing a Turkish minaret, each in turn charm the eye, and invite a leisurely visit.

It was here in 1906 that the great Exhibition took place which marked fortieth anniversary of King Carol's birth. The buildings one sees in Roumanian style were erected then to house the exhibits.

Placed on an eminence in the centre of the park is the Historical Museum recently renovated and re-arranged. Our space is too limited to enumerate the attractive exhibits, but mention must be made of a very complete collection of uniforms used in the

army at different periods, and pictures and bronzes representing dramatic moments in Roumanian history. The latest important contribution to the Museum is the Banner of Stephen the Great discovered by the French Army in the Zographos Monastery at Mount Athos where it had been since 1500, and generously presented to Bucharest.

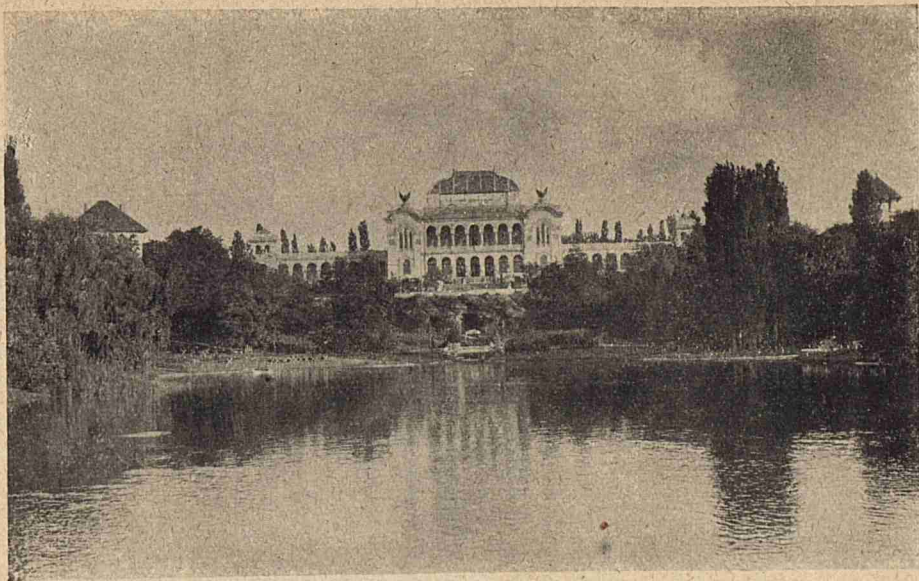
In front of the Museum the row of sculptured stones (52 in number) is from Adam Klissé in the Dobrogea, (anciently Civitis Tropensium) and formed part of the great tower built by Trajan's soldiers.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, covered by a simple marble slab, is guard by sentries on the terrace in front of the Museum.

In a retired corner of the Park we find the Arena where open air concerts and patriotic festivals are held during the warm weather.

The red brick church near the Arena, on a wooded hill is called, «Cuțitul de Argint» (The Silver Knife).

Bucharest has another large park in the centre of the town, Cismagiu Garden which is especially attractive in June when thousands of roses are in bloom.



The Historical Museum Park Carol (Muzeul Militar)

www.dacoromanica.ro

TWO EXCURSIONS: SNAGOV AND SINAIA

AN excursion to Snagov Lake can easily be made in a day by motor., and it is a favorite resort of the people of Bucharest.

In the centre of lake is a pretty island with the ruins of a Monastery of the fifteenth century. The fine carved wood door of the Church can be seen in the Museum of Antiquities, in Bucharest. This Monastery was the scene of many important events in local history. Here the founder of the Cantacuzino family in Roumania was imprisoned at the instigation of a rival, in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century the Monk Antim set up the printing presses from where religious books were sent out to all the Eastern Christian countries, even to those as far away as

Syria. Brancovan used often to visit Antim here, and was his appreciative and generous patron.

Later Snagov was used as a prison, until the secularization of the monasteries in 1867, when, already falling into ruin, it was deserted by the few remaining monks.

It too has a legend like so many of the monasteries of olden times. In this case it curious to note with what persistence certain types of legends are repeated in each country all over the world. The belief was current that another island on Snagov, had-existed, adorned with a monastery much more beautiful and much older than the one here, and that during a titanic storm, island and monastery sank to the bottom of the lake, where by a miracle, the monks continued their life and prayers just as before this extraordinary event. On quiet evenings the peasants thought they could hear the church bells ringing quite distinctly at the bottom of the lake. One day after a storm the monks saw some thing floating on the water which proved to be (so they declared) the door of the submerged monastery. This magic door they took reverently to

their own chapel, and it is the very one seen to-day in the Museum of Antiquities. This latter incident in the legend must have been added to a much older one, owing to the admiration excited by the door among the unlettered peasantry.

Sinaia, the fashionable summer resort in the Carpathians is a four hour journey by train from Bucharest and can easily be visited during a days excursion especially in the summer when there are frequent, and convenient trains.

Permission to visit the Royal Palace of Pelesh can be obtained from the Architect's Office in the Royal Park, and an enchanting hour may be spent amid fine pictures and objets d'art artistically arranged in the apartments full of historic souvenirs.

The seventeenth century monastery founded by Spatar Mihail Cantacuzino is well worth a visit, and accessible, being on the main road not far from the station.

The main attraction of Sinaia is its delightful situation, with its river, forest, and lovely vistas, which will surely tempt the traveller to prolong his stay to the utmost limit possible.

CONCLUSION

IN the foregoing pages no attempt has been made to point out all the «corners» of beauty and historic interest in Bucharest. It is hoped, however, that during even a short visit to our city, travellers will find the indications useful if they wish to become acquainted with something more than can be seen in the crowded streets.



Photos by Mr. I. Berman

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