Cultural Dimensions of the Great Union: the Heliade Case

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Abstract: Surely, 2018 will remain in history as the *Year of the Centenary*, as the year in which Romania celebrates a century from the fulfillment of a natural dream of any nation: the geographical integration. But we say from the very beginning: here is the key in which the following text should be interpreted. By avoiding the protoconist theses and accents, we postulate that the moment of 1918 would have been impossible without an intellectual, cultural, spiritual effort, whose beginnings are lost in old age. No scientist having the courage to accurately place this *beginning* in time. In other words, we are trying to decipher how beyond the accents with obvious exaggerated notes, the year of 1918 is the fulfilment of a historical, military, national but also cultural effort.

Keywords: *Târgoviște; Ion Heliade Rădulescu; history; centenary.*

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Introduction

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But we say from the very beginning: here is the key in which the following text should be interpreted. By avoiding the protoconist theses and accents, we postulate that the moment of 1918 would have been impossible without an intellectual, cultural, spiritual effort, whose beginnings are lost in old age. No scientist having the courage to accurately place this *beginning* in time. The *tracomunist* exaggerations, as dangerous and mistaken as the *Dacian* ones, can today no longer procure adherents in the academic world, but perhaps only in the world of spiritual exalts. The fact that behind such theses are often big names of the Romanian culture (I refer, among others, to Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu or Edgar Papu), is a historical truth that must be understood and explained in another context, perhaps as a reaction to historical and cultural proletcultism of the late twentieth century.

In other words, we are trying to decipher how beyond the accents with obvious exaggerated notes, the year of 1918 is the fulfilment of a historical, military, national but also cultural effort.

In this context, we will interpret the role of the *City of Targoviste* in achieving the Union in 1918, this firstly being a cultural and spiritual role. It is about understanding the spirituality in formation, the deciphering of the spiritual geography, including more centuries than the 3 in which Targoviste was the capital of Wallachia, being the home of over 33 voievodes. For 1918 wouldn't have been possible without bringing a certain degree of cultural and spiritual identity, or developing a minimum national conscience.

1. Capitals and *Capitals*

As I was previously speaking about a certain protoconist accent in assuming a privileged posture in a much wider history, I will try to very quickly get through the register the places that could, at some point, be considered *capitals*, although the lexicon of those times didn't qualify them as such. We can talk about residences, ruler's citadels, reinforced monasteries, defensive cities, and so on, but not about *capitals* in the modern sense of the term. This terminological specification is needed.

We begin this short historical incursion with Baia, today a settlement in the Suceava County, but during the time of Bogdan the 1st (1359-1365) being an extremely important fortress, at least from a commercial perspective. About the same time (1310-1352), Basarab the 1st establishes

his residency in Câmpulung, in the Muscel depression, and can therefore be assimilated as the *first capital* of the first ruler of Wallachia. We will often meet Câmpulung in our spiritual growth, even if Vladislav the 1st moves the royal residence to Curtea de Argeș, where the capital remains until the end of Mihail 1st's reign (1420). The XVIst century marks the development of the Work of Manole (1512-1517), but also its emergence in this landscape of the great Moldavian capital that Iasi was about to be. Alexandru Lăpușneanu (1564) fulfills this act that will remain in force until 1862, after which in 1859 will have fulfilled its purpose through the figures of Cuza, Kogălniceanu or Alecsandri.

More turbulent than the history of Wallachia, Moldova can also remember Rădăuți as a *capital*, where we find an important episcopal center in the XIV century, or the Roman that Roman the 1st talks about (1391-1394), who also establishes a ruler's citadel here, followed by Stefan cel Mare who raised a fortress, or Siret – a settlement upgraded to the status of *civitas* in the XIVth century, and even to the rank of throne residency. But the history of Moldova is closely related to that of Suceava, the *capital* of Suceava since Petru Mușat (1374) until the second ruling of Al. Lăpușneanu (1564), but also Vaslui, city which Stefan cel Mare gives the status of a *capital* by establishing here the royal residence in 1475.

There is how, in less than 4 centuries, in Moldova alone we can talk about at least 7 cities with, although substantiated, claims of being former capitals of the country. In turn, Wallachia seems to have a more settled history. After the Câmpulung of the XIVth century, it is time for Târgoviște to be the throne seat of Wallachia until the middle of the XVIIth century.

What can we understand from this short and latent presentation of Romanian capitals? That it is extremely difficult to rigorously and accurately establish merits, roles and historical determinism. In this context we should understand that each *capital* had its historical place and role. Or as P.P. Panaitescu used to say: *the capitals are chosen firstly on economic grounds, or for strategic reasons.*

2. Targoviste and Ion Heliade Rădulescu

I wouldn't want to rush through the centuries in which Targoviste was the capital of Wallachia, or oversee the signs of the beginning of Romanian culture from these places, but I want to emphasize on an authentic Romanian intellectual, who pins Targoviste on the map of spiritual geography of our development: Ion Heliade Rădulescu. He is the best example of how the moment of 1918 wouldn't have been possible if all the

spiritual moments, starting with the *Letter of Neacșu from Câmpulung*, the Enlightenment and humanist thinking, until the forty-eighter militancy wouldn't have been, in fact, a desire to its fulfillment.

There is a red thread in the Romanian spirituality, an essential theme that unites us over the centuries. 1918 comes to hypothesize this reality, this unwritten meta-history, but present in the factual history through events, moments, places or representative people. Such a spirit is Ion Heliade Rădulescu, him really putting Târgoviște on the map of the development of our identity.

Although the work of Ion Heliade Rădulescu is mistaken with the history of the Romanian forty-eight movement, I will not insist on Rădulescu's encyclopedic contributions in the Romanian culture, but only on its apprehension towards the spiritual foundation, the building of ideas. He is a maker of Romania, as academician Dan Berindei used to emphasize. And for this I will take a pledge from the illustriouses of the Romanian culture.

When Heliade Rădulescu would skip to the Eternal East, Cezar Boliac would write: *Death finally came to place the crown of immortality on the name of Heliade. It hesitated much. It seemed shy, even after the intellectual death would approach him who the creator has placed immortality in. Born on the land ridden with the blood of the Romanians spilled for the Romanian glory, born in the ruins of the palaces of the Bessarabians, judging himself and falling asleep on the musk rising to cover, as a deposit, the most pure Romanian against the defamation of foreignism, some would say that the genius of Romania little by little tangles in this child (...). To make praise to Heliade, it would be a loss of time. The Romanian Schools, the Romanian Theatre, the Romanian Literature, the Romanian Language, the Romanian Patria will forever call Heliade's name, Heliade, Heliade everywhere, Heliade was, for half a century, in all of those. And at the commemoration of a century since the birth of Heliade, in the first day of the year 1902, sitting in the tribune of the Romanian Academy, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu would say: The microcosm of a generation that continues in today's generation, as today's generation will continue to be in future generations, the biography of Eliade is all of you, and his personality should be evoked, for a nation that is ungrateful to the great people that struggled to elevate it is a rootless nation, a dead nation, a nation that commits suicide (...). For a nation, to love its greatest people is like loving oneself.*

3. Instead of conclusions

In other words, 1918 is the fulfillment of a factual history (written and unwritten), but also of a spiritual history, of a national aspiration, also

written and unwritten. And the place of Ion Heliade Rădulescu in this last hypothesis of our existence is unquestionable. Unfortunately, like many other Romanian intellectuals, it happens that the personality of the Targoviste thinker is today, more or less, placed in *index*, thus the more our exodus here is being argued.

For the commemoration of 200 years since his birth, in the Aula of the Romanian Academy, Eugen Simion pointing out that Ion Heliade Rădulescu is without doubt the father of the Romanian literature, would outline the use of the past in the official rhetoric on this topic. *IHR was considered to be the father of the Romanian literature, which means he no longer is.*

Beyond the shadows and lights of a troubled period, the personality of Ion Heliade Rădulescu appears as that of a great lover of nation and country. In a letter from March 1851, discovered by Professor Nicolae Chipurici from Târgu Severin, the Romanian patriot appears, just as history should remember him: *he would often talk trash about me, but God help he would stick to the principles that kept the country, the autonomy and sovereignty, cause there are no other for salvation in our times*, a sign of his most profound thought, one of deep franc-masonical inspiration: the renunciation to the possibility of own affirmation for the collective affirmation of a nation, which determines D. Popoviciu (1935) to state that *Ion Heliade Rădulescu was, and will forever be, a fighter in the midst of a generation of fighters, for the salvation of my country; a builder of a new generation* (Popovici, 1939, p.11).

References

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