INTERCULTURALISM IN THE POLITICAL ARISTOCRACY MEMOIRS OF ROMANIA DURING 1881-1914

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Abstract
Interculturalism, explored by anthropologists, sheds light on global dynamics in the past two centuries. The 19th century featured economic interdependence and labor mobility. In Europe's La Belle Époque, the nobility, predominantly in foreign affairs or state institutions, demonstrated unique intercultural interactions. Romanian nobility of the late 19th century, educated in Western universities, engaged in cultural exchanges during events like Eastern celebrations, mingling with peasants. French correspondence occasionally included phrases like "je un dor de vous." Memoirs reveal intercultural instances, emphasizing a network of connections. Romanian noble families intertwined with French, Russian, Austrian nobilities through marriages, some residing abroad, notably in Paris. Bucharest hosted French newspapers reporting global news. The daily life of the Romanian nobility authentically exemplifies interculturalism, offering historians a valuable perspective on their evolution until the First World War.

1. Introduction

Historical research increasingly appeals to concepts and methods from other sciences to analyze certain periods in the evolution of human communities. In addition to political, military, or diplomatic aspects, in recent decades, historians have oriented their investigative approach towards everyday life and its multiple implications, aspects that can offer a clearer picture of the past. For a long time, the nationalist perspective of analysis, understanding, and explanation of the 19th century, as the century of the formation of nation-states, is predominant in Romanian historiography to highlight identity, those specific elements of the nation-state.

The paradigm of interculturality and its research methods, [Zhu Hua, 2016], such as critical discourse analysis, critical incident, conversation analysis [Zhu Hua, 2016], can be applied with interesting results for Romanian society in the second half of the 19th century. The existence of political and social elite from the old boyar class can be consider as an example of a group where intercultural communication is present. Moreover, in the memoirs, journals that exist in archive funds or those edited reflect how aware this old boyar class was in everyday life of the presence of elements of interculturality.

2. Literature review

Some literature on this subject are the following books: **"Memorii"** by Constantin Argetoianu [2008]: This memoir by Constantin Argetoianu, a significant figure in Romanian politics, offers a personal and detailed perspective on the political and social dynamics of the Romanian aristocracy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly highlighting the intercultural aspects within this elite group. **"Românii în secolele XIX-XX. Europenizarea"** by Ioan Bulei [2011]: Ioan Bulei's book, which translates to "Romanians in the 19th-20th Centuries: Europeanization," explores the broader context of Romanian society's transformation under European influences. It provides a backdrop against which the intercultural interactions and changes

within the Romanian aristocracy can be better understood. **"Lumea era toată a mea. Amintirile unei prințese"** by Ana-Maria Callimachi [2015]: Translated as "The World Was All Mine. Memories of a Princess," this book by Ana-Maria Callimachi provides a unique view into the life of the Romanian aristocracy from a personal standpoint. It offers insights into the intercultural interactions and lifestyle of the elite during the period covered by Popescu's research.

3. Methodology

The main research objectives are:

a] The research aims to illuminate the unique intercultural interactions of the Romanian nobility in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, highlighting their education in Western universities, cultural exchanges, and intertwining with other European nobilities.

b] A significant objective is to study the Romanian aristocracy's role in modernizing Romania, aligning political institutions and the economy with Western European models, while also discussing the assimilation of bourgeois and intellectual elements within the aristocracy.

c] The research delves into the concept of interculturality from both anthropological and sociological perspectives, emphasizing its relevance in interpreting phenomena and processes in the humanistic domain in the context of globalization and social changes.

d] Investigating the stratification within the Romanian aristocracy, considering aspects such as wealth, functions, responsibilities within state institutions, and family status, to understand the power dynamics and socio-economic changes of the era.

e] The study focuses on the everyday life of the Romanian aristocracy, particularly the imitation of European aristocratic lifestyle and the intercultural aspects manifesting in their social practices, leisure activities, and language use.

f] Utilizing memoirs and journals of Romanian aristocracy members to document their experiences, social interactions, education, and lifestyle, providing a comprehensive view of the intercultural elements in their lives.

The main hypotheses are:

1. *The Romanian nobility in the late 19th century, particularly those educated in Western universities, engaged in unique intercultural interactions.*
2. *The paradigm of interculturality and its associated research methods can provide insightful results for analyzing the Romanian society of the second half of the 19th century.*
3. *The concept of interculturality, from both anthropological and sociological perspectives, is increasingly relevant in understanding the changes brought about by globalization and economic and social interdependencies.*
4. *The modern era in Romania can be analyzed from the perspective of interculturality, moving beyond the dichotomous Marxist view of class antagonism.*

The main research question is:

"How did the experiences and expressions of interculturalism among the Romanian political aristocracy, as evidenced in their memoirs and personal correspondences from 1881 to 1914, reflect and influence the socio-political dynamics of Romania during this transformative period in European history?"

The research methods to answer this questions are the qualitative ones, such as content analysis or cause-effect analysis.

4. Romanian aristocracy and interculturality

The Romanian aristocracy during the period 1881-1914 has predominantly studied from the perspective of its contribution to the modernization of Romania, aligning political institutions and the economy with those already operational in Western Europe. Although in that era the aristocracy presented itself as a social group with all its characteristics, studies dedicated to the modern period do not distinguish between the old land-owning and administratively influential families and the "small and middle nobility" or those who became wealthy through commercial activities. Dissolving at the beginning of the 20th century, as was the case throughout Western Europe, the Romanian aristocracy still provides, for the society of the Old Kingdom, a classic example of interculturality specific to a national state. Constituted as political and cultural elite, the aristocracy assumes the role of having shaped the modern Romanian state. However, due to the evolution of the economy and society, it is compelled to accept within itself elements of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals.

Additionally, for several months each year, a part of the aristocracy returns to its properties, and on Christmas or Easter, it intersects with the rural world during religious services or festivities. The arguments provide primarily by journals, memoirs, and to a lesser extent by correspondence or the press. An example is both the Journal and the Memoirs of Zoe Cămărășescu, the daughter of Queen Elisabeth's lady-in-waiting, Zoe Bengescu. For her, the Romanian language with archaic forms, no matter how much effort she made, could not be adopted because she was to remain "a poor Frenchified woman."[Cămărășescu, Z., 2011, p. 209]

The concept of interculturality, specific to the social sciences in the 20th century, both from an anthropological and sociological perspective, is increasingly relevant in the context of changes brought about by globalization and the intensification of economic and social interdependencies. This has led to a paradigm of difference, [Dietz, Gunther, 2018] highlighting distinctions between living spaces, civilizations, and cultures. It necessitates both a horizontal analysis from ethnic and religious perspectives and a functional, vertical analysis as a strategy for educational policy, tolerance, and communication.

Consequently, interculturality becomes a paradigm for interpreting phenomena and processes specific to the humanistic domain in the context of globalization. Linked to culture and distinct from civilization, a distinction that may blur in certain socio-historical contexts, interculturality as a paradigm is itself used from positivist, relativist, and constructivist perspectives [Bennett, Milton J., 2005].

The concept of culture defined as a set of representation schemes for events held by each state individually. Some of these schemes may sometimes conflict or have similar elements [Paul Kay, 1999]. Consequently, culture constituted as a set of conceptual tools used to make sense of the surrounding world [Paul. Kay, 1999]. Therefore, culture, as an individual or group human activity, is linked both to communication on one hand and, on the other hand, as an element of identification in interactions between individuals or groups.

From the perspective of structuralist anthropology, culture encompasses everything that gives people the ability to live, think, and realize themselves by adapting to the environment in which they live. It simultaneously provides them with the opportunity to develop and create. [Sirota, A, 1998.pp, 91-107].

In the context of the Romanian space, the modern era can be analyze from the perspective of interculturality without being likened to the dichotomous Marxist view of the two antagonistic classes. This is because within the category that holds economic power, there is not only stratification based on wealth but also in terms of functions and responsibilities within state institutions. This is further compound by the age of the family and the status held in society, alongside a numerical increase in the bourgeoisie and, last but not least, the most numerous social category, which remains the peasantry.

In the 19th century, and especially in its last decades, the aristocracy is a social category that, in the Romanian context, had not undergone significant changes; on the contrary, it was the one holding both political and economic power. In the Principalities, the Russian model of ennoblement through functions becomes dominant after 1833 [Sturdza, Dimitrie, Mihai, 2004, p. 15]. Thus, in Muntenia, the "quality of noble lineage" is recognized even for those who were not actually nobles [Sturdza, Dimitrie, Mihai, 2004,

p. 15]. What assured them the status of nobility was solely the "royal decree." However, despite the ensuing impoverishment, fragmentation of properties, or loss of functions, the noble status ensured through the compilation of genealogies. The Romanian aristocracy is present based on criteria such as antiquity, origin [princely or noble of the first or second rank], and geographic location. Thus, in the "*Annuaire mondain de la Roumanie*" for the year 1903, after presenting the royal family, the princely families that ruled in Moldova and Wallachia are inventoried. These include the Ghica, Cantacuzino, Moruzi, Șuțu, Calimachi, Bibescu, and Știrbey families [*Annuaire mondain de la Roumanie, 1903*]. The following pages cover the high-ranking and middle-ranking nobility. Consequently, we are dealing with this nobility that considers itself to have inherent authority, [Bourdieu, P, 2007, pp 385,397] refinement, personal distinction [Bourdieu, P, 2007, pp 385,397], and, not least, preeminence in terms of the symbolism of power.

As a result of the economic and political changes that occurred during the 19th century, this nobility quickly established a boundary between the public and private spheres [Mension-Rigau Éric, 1994, pp 225-236]. The demarcation aimed to preserve within the private space a specific lifestyle that ensured the maintenance of one's own identity. This was also because the abolition of noble ranks, parallel to changes in the economy, resulted in the infiltration of elements from the bourgeoisie into the Romanian aristocracy.

For the 19th century, the transformations undergone by the nobility are described in a newspaper of the time: "The establishment of the Moldavian nobility does not know hereditary nobility. The son of a nobleman is no longer a nobleman; there is only a nobility of public functions, the services of the state and the court are mixed with each other and form the steps of the nobility." [Platon Gheorghe, Platon, Alexandru Florin, 1995, p. 93].

In France, where what remained of the old nobility after the political and economic revolutions seems to be a conscious group that holds a set of traditions not shared with any other group or individual they meet. [Platon Gheorghe, Platon, Alexandru Florin, 1995, p. 93] Even in the Old Kingdom, the nobility behaves as such, although, for the most part, they adopt French culture to a considerable extent. Consequently, an increasing number of members of noble families grow up with not only governesses and education but also continuing their studies in major European capitals, accounting for 75% of them. [Iacob, Gheorghe, 2-13, and p.26] this is because the institutions of higher education in the Romanian space did not always match the social status of the Romanian aristocracy. An example in this regard is that as early as 1863, in Paris alone, there were 900 young Romanians, with 400 studying at universities and 500 pursuing high school studies. Among them, only 55 were state-sponsored scholarship recipients from Romania. [Bulei, Ion, 2011, p25] However, not everyone completed his or her studies with a bachelor's degree. The political elite of the Old Kingdom thought and spoke in French because, for example, out of the 141 ministers who served in modern Romania, 101 had studied in France [Sturdza, Dimitrie, Mihai, 2004, p 31]. It is also known that King Carol held audiences in French and spoke in this language during Crown Council meetings.

In fact, the political elite of the 19th century is a nobility caught between modernization and Europeanization on the one hand, and tradition on the other. Many of its representatives are proponents of the English political model, even if their cultural background is predominantly French and German. This is because not only modernization was occurring without radical actions but also because it was being carried out in harmony with tradition.

In England, the nobility was more concerned with maintaining effective power rather than the appearance of power, leading to the adoption of strategies for accommodation with other classes. [Coenen-Huther, J., 2007, p. 39]. In France, the aristocracy continued to cling to privileges and gradually wielded less political power. The Romanian political aristocracy, despite the political ideas it supports, remains a social category united by blood ties and the need to defend the remaining privileges. [Hitchins, K., 1998, p. 39]

The changes occurring in the modern Romanian aristocracy are reflected in the fact that some of them will not be satisfied solely with the incomes provided by landed properties or political positions. They will also engage in other fields such as the military, administration, judiciary, or diplomacy [Nicolescu, N, 2003] [Păunescu, C., Ștefan, M, 2004].

5. Interculturality in romanian aristocracy memoires

The domain of daily life is so vast that it is challenging anyone to establish an analytical model or structure. This is because it involves numerous elements of human existence. As a result, researchers have focused their attention on either a political personality, a social category, a specific time, or larger or smaller human communities. Historians have also directed their attention to lucrative activities or leisure pursuits. What can be noticed is the vastness of documents and sources, at least for the modern era, and any research can be criticized either for not covering all aspects or, despite being exhaustive, for failing to identify unique elements.

Most studies and publications on the daily life of the Romanian space in the second half of the 19th century and up to World War I focus on the everyday life of the middle-class categories of society, the emerging bourgeoisie, and the cultural elite. Only to a very small extent do they concentrate on the high nobility. Therefore, regarding the aristocracy understood as representatives of the old major noble families from the extracarpathian space, their daily life has been considered as the imitation of the European aristocracy's lifestyle rather than from the perspective of interculturality.

An important aspect of daily life is that it must originate from human actions, actions that have causes and consequences as diverse as the actions themselves. Such a mechanistic, deterministic method can lead to results that, in the humanistic domain, may be generalizations with serious consequences, as numerous examples in history demonstrate. Significant in this regard is the statement of Isaiah Berlin, who said, "What I am is largely due to my feelings and ideas, which in turn are the result of the feelings and ideas of the society to which I belong" [Berlin, Isaiah, 2000, p.194]. This makes it even more challenging to construct an image of daily life in a particular historical era. Nevertheless, Isaiah Berlin's statement can be a primary argument for researching the Romanian aristocracy from the perspective of microhistory between the years 1871-1914. This is because the Romanian aristocracy in the Old Kingdom undergoes the same transformation process as the rest of Europe, often merging with the political elite, and its daily life is an imitation of that in Paris or London.

Daily life unfolds in both a public and a private space. The term "public space" belongs to Jürgen Habermas, who used it in his doctoral thesis published in 1962 [Lits, Marc, 2014, p.77]. This term defined the space where the circulation of ideas leads to the formation of a necessary and legitimate public opinion in the case of a democracy [Ballarini, Loïc, n.d.], and during a period of bourgeois development. Over time, due to societal evolution, the concept of public space has not only been applied to describe the realm of ideas and the debate of opinions but also spatially. Because Habermas used the concept of public space for the period when the bourgeoisie was thriving and contributing to the formation of public opinion, consequently, the place where this was most easily identified was the city. The term "public sphere" is also used, originating from Anglophone literature, with a more material connotation [Lits, Marc, 2014, p.70], than an ideational and communicational one.

Another characteristic of public space is that of accessibility, meaning that anyone can be accepted in these spaces [Bodnar, Judith, 2015, p.291] [1]. This is because public space is not just a place where certain events take place but also the permission to participate in those events [Gottdiener, Mark, 1985, p.121] [2]. The industrial revolution led to changes even at the level of the city, diversifying public space to include state institutions, mass media, as well as theaters, cinemas, and spaces dedicated to leisure activities.

The time spent at the estates was not dedicated to checking how they were administered but rather to relaxation, horseback riding, hunting, reading, or study, and occasionally meeting with the local minor nobility and officials. The daily life within the private space of the aristocracy is divided between the residences in Bucharest and those in the countryside. Typically, during the summer, aristocrats would visit their country estates, where they interacted not only with peasants but also with the intellectual elite of the villages, local officials, and the minor nobility. However, members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Bucharest or other prominent noble families also visited families like that of Nicolae Kretzulescu or Elena Văcărescu.

Regarding the meetings with the local minor nobility, especially the visits that Dr. Kretzulescu received at the Leurdeni estate and mansion, his daughter Anna Kretzulescu-Lahovari wrote about them in "*Memories*." Among the visitors were not only old noble families like the Golești or Odobești, Câmpinenii,

but also the Misses Brătianu or General Davila with children whom he left on vacation, alongside those of Nicolae Kretzulescu [Kretzulescu-Lahovari, Anna, 2018, p.119]. During these visits to Leurdeni, in the summer, members of the diplomatic corps whom the Romanian doctor and diplomat had met in St. Petersburg or Bucharest would also come, including Ambassador of Belgium to Bucharest Baron Hooricks, Count Tornielli with his wife, Baron d'Aehrenthal, the wife of the Russian ambassador, Hitrowo, with children. The Văcărescu and Catargi misses with their mothers also came to visit [Kretzulescu-Lahovari, Anna, 2018]. The Kretzulescu children wore Romanian folk costumes at the estate, staged plays in which parents and visiting guests were spectators, took walks around the estate in a Dogcart, a carriage bought from Vienna. The costumes for the plays were also made by the children [Kretzulescu-Lahovari, Anna, 2018].

Phil Withington argues that analyzing the language used in a given historical period is essential for understanding the society of that time [Withington, Phil, 2010]. By examining the language used by people of that era, historians can identify concepts that allow a better reflection of the mindset and actions of the people of that period [Withington, Phil, 2010]. Following Phil Withington's perspective, for the Old Kingdom period in Romania, it would be accurate to use the terms "boier" [noble] and "boierime" [nobility] for that social category, which owned landed properties and, by virtue of these properties enjoyed certain privileges by birth. However, these boiers, who had studied in Paris, spoke and wrote, including their memoirs, in French, and use the term "aristocrat" when referring to aspects of everyday life. An example is Mișu Văcărescu's comment on one of the social events in Bucharest that he attended, a reception at Maria Fălcoianu's, where there was "an aristocratic and elegant perfume" [un parfum d'aristocratie et d'élégance] [Claymoor, 1883].

One of the elements of interculturality is language as the primary means of communication. In the 19th century, the French language was akin to what English is today. The aristocracy in Europe used the French language almost as a lingua franca. The German language occupied the second-place position, not only for Romanians in territories under the domination of the Habsburg Empire and later Austro-Hungarian Empire but also for those in the Kingdom. The Romanian political aristocracy learned French within the family, and there were moments when within the family they speaks French.

In her memoirs, Zoe Cămărășescu wrote, "In the house, only French was spoken, with my mother, with us, with relatives, and friends. His Romanian was distorted." [Cămărășescu, Zoe, p.8] This might be because her father, Alexandru-Ahil Bengescu, had spent his childhood and lived in France until the age of 21. In his *Memoirs*, General Radu R. Rosetti mentioned that his father had attended high school in Toulouse and loved France and French culture. He also shared that when he and his brother argued, the brother would disdainfully refer to him as "salle valaque" [General Rosetti, Radu R, 2020, p.106].

Moreover, there is French-language press whose articles seem to address only the aristocracy and its daily concerns, such as *L'Independence Roumaine, Bucharest, La Roumanie Illustrée, and Annuaire Mondaine de la Roumanie*.

Family correspondence is predominantly in French, both letters and postcards written on Easter and, alongside "Christos a înviat!" [Christ is risen!], the greetings are written in French: "Nos meilleures souhaits de bonheur ce charmant trio. J'ai un grand dor de vous. Ma seule consolation est que vous êtes contentes. Tout à vous de cœur!" [Our best wishes for happiness to this charming trio. I miss you greatly. My only consolation is that you are happy. All my heart to you!] [ANIC, Fond Catargi, f 20]. The postcard signed by Marie Poenaru and addressed to Elena Catargi in Monaco. In Marie Poenaru's text, there is another word in Romanian, "dor," which is underlined. It is not the only example of correspondence among the Romanian aristocracy that includes the word "dor." Typically, it appears in letters between spouses or between parents and children. Furthermore, the calling cards sent on various occasions are in French, although there are situations where Romanian is used. However, when some of them hold public positions, they use Romanian when requesting services, as is the case with D.A. Sturdza. As the Minister of Domains, he asks the recipient to visit him before going to the King to discuss issues related to the Tulcea Prefecture [BNR, Arhiva istorică, *Fond Brătianu*, f11].

The journals of our aristocracy are also in French. An example is that of Elena Lahovary, later remarried as Șuțu, or the daughter of one of Queen Elisabeth's ladies-in-waiting, Zoe Cămărășescu, born

Bengescu. The journal of Elena Șuțu is dedicated to the two "now disappeared" men [Soutzou, Zoe *Jurnal de ma vie*], George Em. Lahovari and Alexandru Șuțu. She is the daughter of Jean N. Alexandrescu, "a large landowner, deputy, senator," and Zoe, born Ghermani. Through her marriage to Lahovari, who died in a duel with Nicolae Filipescu, she entered the ranks of the great aristocracy, and similarly through her second marriage to Alexandru Șuțu. This is because her father, and especially her grandfather, held the position of the court's "cafegiu" [coffee master] at the beginning of the 19th century. According to the criteria mentioned in Mihai Dim. Sturdza's *Encyclopedia*, the holders of this position did not fit into the aristocracy. Nevertheless, in the subsequent period, he would occupy administrative positions and acquire estates, eventually becoming wealthy enough for his daughter to enter into a marriage with a member of an aristocratic family.

As noted in her journal, Elena Alexandrescu has been educated in France since the age of nine, from where she returned as the wife of George Em Lahovari, the owner of the French-language newspaper *L'Independence Roumaine*. Her journal entries reveal the daily concerns of the aristocracy. Especially noteworthy is the organization of theater performances, for which they imported costumes from Paris. The cast of the play "Chicago – Bucharest" includes, among others, Michette Ghica, Anna A. Lahovary, Elena Ghica, Constantin Lahovary, Alexandru Davila, and Dimitrie Șuțu. After her marriage to Alexandru Șuțu, secretary at the Romanian legation in Athens, she spent the majority of her time traveling in Europe or Egypt, visiting museums, and meticulously recording the artworks she admired. Her journal also documents her participation in hunting and tennis parties, and in the early 20th century, her involvement and passion for bridge.

Another journal, this time belonging to a representative of the Romanian aristocracy, makes some references to moments of interaction between the two social classes, the aristocracy and the peasantry, without emphasizing belonging to the privileged category.

Zoe Cămărășescu is the youngest daughter of Queen Elisabeta's lady-in-waiting, Zoe Bengescu, from the Rosetti family. Born in 1895, she begins her Journal in 1909 at the age of 14. Being a representative of the old boyar families, learning foreign languages is an essential element of her education. Consequently, she writes her entries in French. In the early notebooks, she makes no mention of her father but focuses more on her mother and older sisters, such as Elena or Ella, married to George Băicoianu, and Maria, married to Nicolae Racotă. Maria's husband owned the estate in Ștorobăneasa, where Zoe joyfully spends 15 days to escape the heat, dust, and school life in Bucharest. The joy of going to the estate is immense but requires adherence to the customs of the "good society," namely the observance of "farewell visits" that had to be made before leaving Bucharest.

Regarding the journey from Bucharest to Ștorobăneasa and then to Alexandria, there is no mention for the summer of 1909 whether it was made by automobile. The usual activities include strolls, tennis matches with Florica and Noemi Rosetti, photographing landscapes, horseback riding lessons, and readings from French literature.

On May 11, 1909, she even records a visit to the animal fair. The purpose of such a visit was not mentioned, and it is unclear whether she and her friend Florica accompanied, presumably, Nicolae Racotă. A first interaction with the peasants noted on Thursday, May 14/27, 1909, when she dances in a traditional circle dance called "hora." Details about the duration of the dance and whether it took place in the manor's courtyard were not write down, as she will record in the years to come.

The only comment that draws attention is the one regarding Radu Tunaru, about whom she mentions hosting Maria for a day during the events of 1907. The word used is "revolution," and she considers Radu Tunaru "un vrai Roumain" (a true Romanian). For a 14-year-old, the gesture of helping a family member seems heroic, indicating that the environment in which she grew up and lives is one marked by social status differences. A "true Romanian" is someone who defends tradition and the family of the estate owner in the context of a social revolution. During another traditional dance [hora], which she notes was held in the manor's courtyard, she recalls that "rahat și vin" [sweets and wine] were distributed to the peasants.

The return to Bucharest made for the festivities of Materna, a charitable society aimed at helping women and children. Within this society, the first female doctor in Romania at that time, Maria Cuțarida-Crătunescu, had been active for many years. After the conclusion of the celebrations, preparations were for

the departure to Sinaia since, during the summer, the royal family resided at Peleș Castle. The ladies-in-waiting accompanied the queen, so the daughters of Zoe Bengescu moved to a rented apartment for the entire period.

The pages of the journal encompass the activities in Sinaia, where tennis matches, the visit of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, walks with Queen Elisabeth, English language lessons with Miss Driscoll, and the Lahovari family ball, play significant roles.

Visiting Prince Bibescu's residence and Martha de la Posada's is impressive for Zoe, about whom she writes that it is different from all the other evenings she had. Equally significant were the concerts organize by Queen Elisabeth, where George Enescu and Cella Delevrancea are almost permanent guests. Other important events include Blériot's flight, a solar eclipse, and a new winter sport, bobsledding.

Among other activities, Zoe, along with her friend Florica Radu, participates several times in séances held at the Filliti family residence, and finally yet importantly, she mentions the cinema. For the walks during their stay in Sinaia, she notes that they travelled in automobiles owned by Morțun, George Bibescu, or those belonging to the royal household.

It is interesting to note that the journal concludes in 1919, and the Memoirs published by descendants provide extensive information on various aspects of Zoe's life. Elements of interculturality highlight the cultural and social diversity she encountered and interacted. Information about education, holidays, sports, and more offers a more complete picture of her life.

The fact that there is no information about the financial situation directly from the journal may indicate a lack of interest or awareness of this aspect in her personal record. However, mentioning that the income comes only from her mother and from the Royal House, and that her mother's dowry had been spent, suggests a concern related to financial resources and a possible limitation within her family. It is interesting to analyze how financial aspects influence Zoe's perspective and life in a broader social context.

The existing journal at the National Archives concludes in 1919. Several elements of interculturality are present in the *Memoirs* published by descendants over the years, where information about education, holidays, practiced sports, and much more can be found. The journal does not reveal information regarding the financial state. Despite being part of the aristocracy, the income comes solely from her mother and the funds provided by the Royal House, as her mother's dowry had been spent by *Papa Achille*."

Zoe Cămărășescu describes a significant moment regarding the interculturality present within the Romanian aristocracy as follows: 'Vasile, today, tell me a story. And Vasile's story was like no other in the world. He had learned, in his village of Fîrțătești, from the elders, some beautiful tales with dragons, emperors, winged horses, stories with Saint Friday and Saint Sunday, enchanted forests, golden apples, and a magical bird, each more beautiful than the other' [Cămărășescu, Z., 2011, p 55]

Or the description of Maria's wedding at the Ștorobăneasa estate: 'There were musicians, champagne, and speeches, both witty and moving, as was customary at a grand wedding. After the meal, the hora dance unfolded in the courtyard with the bride and the wedding guests amidst the villagers. From hora to sârba and into the beat, you could only have seen how our ladies gathered the tails of their dresses on their arms, beating the ground and raising the dust.'[Cămărășescu, Z., 2011, p. 47]

If Zoe Cămărășescu or Elena Șuțu wrote their journals in French, Ana-Maria Callimachi [Callimachi, Ana-Maria, 2015] does not refer in her *Memoirs* about the language in which she wrote them. Similarly, there is no mention of the language used in family discussions or at social events in her memoirs, unlike the explicit mention made by Anna Kretzulescu-Lahovary, or Radu R. Rosetti for example.

The significant aspect of the interculturality present in the Romanian aristocracy is what Zoe Cămărășescu notes about the education of girls: "studies were only a complement to education. We had to know: French very well, to have solid notions of French literature, to speak as many languages as possible, to play the piano. But, above all, to be 'well brought up' [Cămărășescu, Z., 2011] . Another argument is the notebook of memories [ANIC, fond Barbu Știrbey], found in the Barbu Știrbey fund and whose owner is not mentioned but in which Al. Crețianu, I. Cantacuzino, Marie Știrbey, Lily Catargi also write. The questions and answers are in French. When asked about favorite writers or historical figures, Hugo, Chateaubriand, Mirabeau, Romain-Roland are mentioned, respectively Francis I, Lagardère, Jean-Christophe.

Defenders of the property decreed "sacred and inviolable" by the Constitution of 1866, patriots nurturing a sincere love for the country's land, [Dumitrescu, D., 2007, p.19] understanding, in some cases, the situation of the peasantry, from the positions of the class from which they came, respectful of the country's religion, which they considered a traditional cultural good, the representatives of the aristocracy imposed in the political life of the modern era a particular style that distinguished them from the other participants in the political act. Faithful to the given word, men of honor for whom the phrase "noblesse oblige" made sense, holding personal prestige as a family inheritance, the aristocracy considered politics not only an occupation but also a way of public manifestation [Dumitrescu, D., 2007, p19].

In addition, this nobility considers itself to have innate authority, refinement, personal distinction and not least a preeminence in terms of the symbolism of power. Significant in this sense can be the statement of Isaiah Berlin, who said that, "what I am is due mostly to my feelings and ideas which in turn are the result of the feelings and ideas of the society to which they belong" [Berlin, I., 2000, p. 194]. This identity of the Romanian aristocracy is easy to notice not only from the press of the time that records the "events of the day" but also in terms of homes, clothing and even the use of paper for daily correspondence on which you can notice the monogram sometimes silver, sometimes gold.

The Romanian aristocracy often behaves as a closed group, as one of its members notes "it was almost excluded to meet in a salon or at a high-life ball a wife, a daughter or a sister of a liberal. When one ventured, they made such faces that they did not try a second time." [Argetoianu, C., 2008, p.113] The attitude manifested towards the members of the National Liberal Party is also explained by the fact that most of them came from the small boyars, townspeople, intellectuals but who held political power. Consequently, this conservative aristocracy ends up sanctioning with the exclusion "from society" its own members for the simple reason that they were part of the liberal governments.

Regarding the Romanian political elite, where we find many representatives of the great boyar families, it is generally considere that they imitate European models, which happens at the border of the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, Constantin Argetoianu noted in his *Memoirs* "people with a handout had organized their lives and houses according to the norms and fashion of Paris. The Romanian language remained all behind the door, but the French one replaced the Greek one around the sofas" [Argetoianu, C., 2008, p.113]. But its integration into the European aristocracy also implies interculturality both at the level of this social category in Europe and internally by adopting the Romanian popular costume, fairy tales, dances, food.

6. Conclusion

This research on interculturalism in the Romanian political aristocracy from 1881 to 1914 provides a profound insight into the socio-political dynamics of Romania during a significant transitional era in European history. Key findings of this study include: **Intercultural Interactions**: The Romanian aristocracy, educated and influenced by Western European culture, engaged in unique intercultural interactions. These were manifested in their participation in foreign affairs, state institutions, and cultural exchanges, as well as in their personal lives, notably in matrimonial alliances with other European nobilities; **Influence of Global Dynamics**: The study revealed how global dynamics, such as economic interdependence and labor mobility during Europe's La Belle Époque, impacted the Romanian aristocracy, encouraging a network of intercultural connections.; **Role in National Modernization**: The Romanian aristocracy played a pivotal role in aligning Romania's political institutions and economy with Western European models, contributing significantly to the nation's modernization process.; **Reflection in Personal Correspondences**: The memoirs and correspondences of the Romanian nobility serve as valuable primary sources, offering historians rich insights into the daily life and intercultural experiences of this elite group until the outbreak of the First World War.

In essence, this research underscores the importance of interculturalism in understanding the evolution of the Romanian aristocracy and its impact on the broader socio-political landscape of Romania during this transformative historical period.

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