

Andrei Oțetea, Ed., *The History of the Romanian People*, Boston, Mass., Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974, pp. 637, \$ 15.00.

This is the first volume in the National Histories Series, edited by Professor Sherman D. Spector (of the Russell Sage College, well known to us as the author of Spector-Rene Ristelhueber, *A History of the Balkan Peoples*, New York, Twayne, 1971), whose intent is «to present the historical evolution of a nation as that nation's historians see it. In this way, indigenous historians can present contemporary interpretations of their national history, and American readers may gain new perspectives and insights not generally available in the West».

The original work —*Istoria Poporului Român*—was prepared for a Romanian audience, and «its success has led to its appearance in an English-language translation».

Prepared by 14 Romanian authorities, its 23 chapters, divided into 4 parts (Ancient History, Medieval History, Modern History and Contemporary History), are the best available presentation of the «revised» Romanian history from the contemporary Marxian (socialist) point of view. There are no footnote references, and the bibliography (pp. 618-623) refers nearly entirely to Romanian studies. Quite interesting and valuable are 11 color and 144 black and white illustrations.

Spector recommends this history «to those dispassionate and objective American readers who wish to acquire an appreciation of the struggles Romanians have endured since they were swept up into the whirlwind of international politics». We heartily agree with his recommendation, although the presentation is not «dispassionate and objective», being a frankly ideological version of the present regime's views of the «forms of social and national struggle whose crowning glory was the insurrection of August 23, 1944, raised to a higher stage in our days by the Romanian Communist Party which serves the noblest causes of our people» (p. 617).

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Stefan Ionescu - Panait I. Panait, *Constantin Vodă Brîncoveanu, Viața-Domnia Epoca*, Editura Științifică, Bucharest 1969, pp. 464.

Since the turn of the century students of Rumanian history, especially native scholars, have written much about Constantine Brîncoveanu (1688-1714), voevode of Wallachia, and an outstanding figure in the history of the Danubian principalities. Many monographs and articles have appeared in historical journals and encyclopedias dealing with the part the Wallachian ruler has played in the tumultuous history of the region. Brîncoveanu had maintained intimate associations with the Greek intellectuals of the time and had done much to support and to protect them.

This book by S. Ionescu and P. Panait, containing new information and considerable material drawn from the archives (one of the good points of the work) completes the historiography dealing with Constantine Brîncoveanu\*.

The opening chapter of the book with the title *Constantin Vodă Brîncoveanu în Istoriografia Română și străină*, pp. 5-28 (Constantine Voda Brîncoveanu in Rumanian and

\* Chapters II, IV, V, VII, IX and X are the work of S. Ionescu, and the remaining four chapters of P. Panait.

foreign historiography) deals, as the title indicates, with the sources, both Rumanian and foreign, that refer to the life and work of Brincoveanu. These include the works of older and younger Rumanian scholars, authors of monographs (most of which are drawn from archival materials) and deal with the diplomatic relationships of Brincoveanu and the «stolnic» Constantine Cantacuzene with Russia, England, France and Turkey, not to mention the associations with some Greek clergy and laymen. The authors certainly almost exhaust the Rumanian and foreign bibliography on the subject, but they omit to mention the basic work of the Greek scholar Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, especially his contribution to the collection Hurmuzaki, *Documente*. Also missing are certain studies from the Greek bibliography which may not deal specifically with Brincoveanu but certainly make comments on his personality and particularly on his relationships with the Greeks, such as George Castriotis whom, as is well-known, the ruler used in his diplomatic missions to Russia, John Avramios, Mitrophanes Gregoras and Chrysanthos Notaras. The most important of these studies are: Theodore Athanasiou, *The Greek Schools in Rumania 1644-1821*, Athens 1898; Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Selections from the Jerusalem Compilation* (Analecta Ierosolymitika Stachyologias), Vols. 1-5, St. Petersburg 1899-1915; Chrysostom Papadopoulos, *Nicholas Papadopoulos Comnenos (1651-1740)*, Alexandria, 1913; by the same author «Chrysanthos Notaras before his elevation to the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem» *Nea Sion* 26, (1931), 81-101; K. D. Mertzios, *Monuments of Macedonian History*, Thessaloniki 1947; D. B. Economides, «John Avramios the Cretan», *Athina* 54 (1950), 59-93; G. P. Cornoutos, «Schools of Kastoria in the Ottoman period», *The Antony Keramopoulos Award*, Athens 1953, 426-468.

II Țara Românească în politica Europei răsăritene în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea, pp. 29-50 (Wallachia in the framework of Eastern Europe in the latter half of the 17th Century). The authors here attempt to give the historical setting of Europe in the second half of the 17th Century and to relate to this the political situation in the Danubian principalities at the time. Also examined are the relationships of Wallachia with Poland, the Hapsburgs, England, France, and Sweden, and the major historical events of the period (the battle of Kahlenberg, the siege of Vienna, the capture of Buda, and so on).

The authors are also here preoccupied with the personality of Șerban Cantacuzene, whose Byzantine heritage is emphasized, and his policy in the period of the anti-Ottoman alliances. Also touched upon is Șerban's use by Brincoveanu on diplomatic missions as well as of the archimandrite Isaia, abbot of the Athonite monastery of St. Paul, to Russia. I point out here a contradiction. The Greek merchant Dementie Fomin is correctly described as a Greek agent (agentul grec, p. 45), but erroneously cited on p. 154, Chapt. IV, as a Russian agent (agentul rus). The fact is that he was a Greek. See also Paul Cernovodeanu, «Bucares, important centre politique du Sud-est européen à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et au commencement du XVIII<sup>e</sup>», in *RESEE* 4 (1966), 1-2, 158.

III (a) Situația Social-Economică a țării Romanëști în timpul Dumniei lui Constantin Vodă Brincoveanu, pp. 51-58 (The social and economic situation in the Danubian principalities in the age of Constantine Voda Brincoveanu). This chapter deals with the geography of the country including a description of the plains, the villages, and the demographic picture of the area at the close of the 17th and especially the early 18th Century. The sources are taken from more or less contemporary writers and travellers such as Anton Maria del Chiaro, the Swede Paul Strassburg, and the Greek Caesarios Dapontes, inter alia. Here the authors tell of the soil, the produce, the agronomy, fishing, and minerals of Wallachia which were decisive factors in the economic growth of the country of Brincoveanu.

III (b) *Desvoltorea vieții urbane. Politica viscală*, pp. 82-126 (The growth of urban life. Taxation policy). Here the administrative structure of Wallachia, the economic structure, the existing trades and the development of new professions are dealt with. Also pointed out by the scholars is the organization of professional guilds and societies, the flourishing economy of Wallachia with its numerous Rumanian, Greek, Armenian, and Jewish merchants, the trade fairs and the caravans that linked the West with the Middle East. They then describe the rise of the goldsmith and silversmith professions in centres such as Brașov and Sibiu, and the great emporia for the transshipment of wheat and cereals. The trade relationships between Wallachia and Venice through Moschopolis is noted. The economic stability of the country was disturbed by the frequent imposition of various taxes by the Ottoman authorities.

IV *Inceput de Domnie*, pp. 127-161 (The Beginning of the Reign). As the title indicates, the chapter deals with the early period of the rule of Brincoveanu and the many problems facing the young voevode. Before moving on to the narrative of events, the authors describe the uneasy political climate, the recurrent rebellions and the troubled atmosphere within which Brincoveanu reached manhood. At this point, the role played in the education of the young nobleman by his uncle Constantine Cantacuzene is mentioned. After enlightening the reader about the family of the Wallachian leader, the authors go on to relate the political problems inherited by Brincoveanu from his predecessors. Also mentioned in passing are his relationships with Louis XIV, the Hapsburgs, and the Cantacuzenes, following which, on pp. 160-161, his genealogical tree is presented.

V *Lupta pentru Consolidarea și entinderea puterii*, pp. 162-193 (The struggle for stabilization and the growth of power). Brincoveanu's attempts to find some kind of balance between the conflicting interests of the Powers each of which looked upon Wallachia with a different eye, is next described. His relationships with Ottoman Turkey after the battle of Zărnești is dealt with, as well as with the Hapsburgs, with whom he was associated through his friendship with Count Ludovic Ferdinand de Marsigli. Also covered are his ties with the military governor of Transylvania General Veterani, the French ambassador Castagnères with whom he formed ties through his diplomatic agent in Constantinople John Porphyrites, and with his influential and powerful Greek friend and kinsman Alexander Mavrogordato, great dragoman of the Porte. As for his relationships with Peter the Great, all the attempts of Brincoveanu are described in which he kept contact with the Russian tsar through his trusted collaborator in Macedonia the Greek George Castriotis of Kastoria who was sent to Moscow to continue the efforts of the archimandrite Isaiah, through his friend Nicholas Milescu, a secretary at the Russian court. The chapter is concluded with Brincoveanu's relationships with Alexander Mavrogordato and the Vatican.

VI *Politica Brincovenească la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, pp. 194-230 (The political policy of Brincoveanu in the early 18th Century). Here are examined the problems of the Wallachian leader with the neighbouring countries of Poland and Russia, his diplomatic activities at the court of Peter the Great, as well as his moves against Catholicism. Also mentioned are his relationships with Paget, the British ambassador at Constantinople, and his visit to that city where he met with Alexander and Nicholas Mavrogordato. Then follow: his adventures in Adrianople, a chronicle of the contemporary political changes in neighbouring Moldavia, and the dispatch of Jacob Pylarinos and the patriarch of Antioch in 1703 to Constantinople to see the Venetian *bailo* and well-known philhellene Ascanio Giustiniani. The embassy of Cornea Brailoiu and Stephen Cantacuzene in 1704 and the mission of Brincoveanu's friends and close collaborators Dositheos, patriarch of Jeru-

salem, and George Castriotis to Russia were all moves to form a common front against the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans.

VII *Adîncirea crizei regimului politic (1707-1711)*, pp. 231-264 (The deterioration of the political crisis in the regime).

The chapter opens with the clash between the prince and the Cantacuzenes whose role in the political life of Wallachia is closely examined. But that which particularly interests the authors is the relationship of Brîncoveanu with the court of Peter the Great, especially in the period 1707-1711, the preparatory years from one point of view for the Russo-Turkish war which was to soon break out. The authors also deal with the personality of Nicholas Mavrogordato, and relate at length the preparations for the Russo-Turkish war which occurred in 1711, the relationship of Demetrius Cantemir with Brîncoveanu as well as the flight of Thomas Cantacuzene, commander of the Wallachian army, to Russia, a fact that compromised his relationships with the Turks. The chapter concludes with the flight of Cantemir to Russia, his replacement by Nicholas Mavrogordato and the peace of Pruth (21 July 1711), all events that inevitably led to a depressing atmosphere for both Wallachia and especially Brîncoveanu.

VIII *Sfîrşit de Domnie*, pp. 265-305 (The end of the Reign). The events leading to the massacre of the unfortunate prince are described. These were the Russo-Turkish war of 1711, the flight of Cantacuzene to Russia, and the intrigues of his family. The Greek doctor in Constantinople, the Chiote Antony Koraes, who had been his personal physician in Wallachia, sent word in ample time to Brîncoveanu warning him of the Turkish plans for murdering him, but events moved very rapidly culminating in the murder of the Wallachian leader together with his family, and to the assumption of the throne of Wallachia by Stephen Cantacuzene (1714-1716) who vainly tried to convince public opinion at the time that he had in no way been responsible for the death of his predecessor. The former great spatharius, Thomas Cantacuzene, had asserted the same to his Russian superiors. But the popular muse of Rumania soon began to sing the praises of the tragic prince in verses that spoke with touching affection and sorrow of the unfair end of the prince and his family. Also discussed are the diplomatic reports on the event by the European ambassadors at the Porte and the reactions of the press of the period.

IX *Renaşterea culturală si artistică*, pp. 306-309 (The cultural renaissance). This chapter deals with Brîncoveanu's contributions to the intellectual life of the country, such as his role in the establishment of the famous school of St. Sava which was better known as the Academy, and in his support of the five printing presses. Mention is also made of his deposits of monies with the Venetian treasury, the Zecca, the relationships of Brîncoveanu with the Greek circle in Venice (Jacob Pylarinos, John Avramios, George Magiotas), his Florentine secretary Anton Maria del Chiaro, and others. Here I would point out that his agent in Venice who was delegated to make the Wallachian's deposits with the Zecca was the Greek Nicholas Karayiannis of Jannina, with whom he kept up a close correspondence. Among the letters are those in which he asks Karayiannis to look after the young scholar Chrysanthos Notaras, then an archimandrite (see K. D. Mertzius, *Monuments of Macedonian History*, Thessaloniki 1947, p. 462, fn. 2, 3, and A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Selections from the Jerusalem Compilation*, vol. 2, p. 328). A passionate admirer of the Italian renaissance, Brîncoveanu sent young students on scholarships to Italy who would eventually carry back to Wallachia the intellectual atmosphere of the Italian universities. Such scholars were the Rumanians Răducanu Cantacuzene, George Damianos, Palladios Damianos, and the Greeks George Trapezuntios and Anthony Strategos. I would

add a further comment at this point. To Trapezuntios's credit his subsequent activities fully justified the hopes of Brîncoveanu. When Trapezuntios had received his doctor's degree of philosophy from the university of Padua in 1709, the Greek protégé and friend of the prince, John Avramios, together with other Greek and Italian scholars, compiled an impressive anthology with title «Selections of Poetry» which they dedicated to Brîncoveanu and his family (see E. Legrand, *Bibliographie Héliénique . . . au XVIIIème siècle*, vol. 1, p. 67). I rather doubt that Anthony Strategos was ever a subsidised scholar of Brîncoveanu. This at least I conclude from the perusal of some 115 documents in the archives of Venice and Padua. Moreover, K.T. Dimaras's bibliographical notes on «Anthony Strategos», published in *Eranistis* 5 (1967), 1-8, supports my contention. I would like to add that the well-known man of letters belonging to the Greek circle of Venice, Nicholas Vouvoulis, was subsidised by Brîncoveanu through the intervention of Chrysanthos Notaras (see C. Papadopoulos, *Chrysanthos Notaras*, p. 89). At all events, the cultivation of the Greek language and the growth of the printing press owe much to the tragic Wallachian prince, as does the Academy of Bucharest which was run on the lines of the Italian prototypes, and especially of the university of Padua, the pride of the Serene Republic of Venice. The Academy had as its first directors and instructors Greeks, among whom were Sevastos Kyminitis (see regarding his work E. Hurmuzaki, *Documente* XIII/1, ed. by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus), the Cypriot Marcos Porphyropoulos, George Ipomenas-Trapezuntios (S. Lambros had been preparing a Miscellany of his works, Documents found after his death, *Neos Ellinonmemon* 4 (1917), p. 248), John Comnenos (see the excellent study by Olga Cicanci-Paul Cernovodeanu, «Contribution à la connaissance de la biographie et de l'oeuvre de Jean (Hiérothée) Comnène (1658-1719)» in *Balkan Studies* 12 (1971), 143-186, and D.M. Nicol, «The doctor philosopher John Comnen of Bucharest and his biography of the Emperor John Kantakouzenos», *RESEE* 9 (1971), 513-526.

In the light of the above, the authors do not exaggerate when they describe Bucharest in the reign of Brîncoveanu as an outstanding cultural centre of southeastern Europe. Many distinguished intellectuals had visited the court of the Wallachian prince, including foreigners such as Germanos of Nyssa (see the monograph by Cleobulos O. Tsourkas, *Germanos Locros, Archevêque de Nysse, et son temps (1645-1700)*, Thessaloniki 1970), John Caryofilis, John Avramios, George Magiotas and the aggressive Peloponnesian patriarchs of Jerusalem, Dositheos and Chrysanthos Notaras. Moreover, the Orthodox Church found in the person of the prince a great patron and guardian. Large numbers of persecuted clergy found asylum at his court, and the prince subsidised the publication of religious books and tracts which were of great help in counteracting Catholic propaganda. In this sector the contributions of Anthimus, of Metrophanes Damascene, George Rodovici, Michael Istvanovici, and Chiriță, inter alia, were substantial. At this point, the authors speak of the personality of Anthimius of Iveron, one of the most distinguished of printers in the period, and reference is also made to the books published by the Glycides brothers in Venice, and the activities of Jeremias Kakavelas, Dositheos and Chrysanthos Notaras, John Avramios and Athanasios of Antioch against the Catholics. The authors conclude the first part of this chapter, which is devoted to learning in the age of Brîncoveanu, with review of the chroniclers of the period, and speak of the Wallachian leader's library which after his death was moved to the monastery of Hurez. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to the arts in the age of Brîncoveanu, including architecture, painting, sculpture, and so on.

**X Personalitatea lui Constantin Vodă Brîncoveanu și locul său în Istoria Românilor,**

pp. 391-415 (The personality of Constantine Voda Brîncoveanu and his place in Rumanian history). The last chapter of the book examines Brîncoveanu as a feudal lord, a political leader, diplomat, and instigator of a new intellectual and educational order inspired by the Italian renaissance. He was, moreover, the prime force in creating a pan-Balkan anti-Ottoman coalition with the backing of Peter the Great, and with his brilliant diplomatic achievements was able to ensure Wallachia long periods of peace especially in those very unsettled times. The authors praise also his religious policies, staunchly Orthodox, despite the various pressures of Catholic propaganda, and emphasize the flourishing of the arts and literature in his reign, the subsidising of scholars and monasteries in the East as well as the Byzantine ceremonial traditions of Brîncoveanu's court.

The period of Brîncoveanu's rule was one of splendour for Wallachia and the prince is rightly considered to be among the greatest of voevodes or in the words of the authors: «... Astfel, Constantin Brîncoveanu ... situându-se în galeria marilor domnitori ai țărilor române, alături de Mircea cel Bătrîn, Iancu de Hunedoara, Ștefan cel Mare, Vlad Țepeș și Mihai Viteazul ...» (p. 414).

An extensive summary in French is added (pp. 417-423), then follow the Table of Contents (pp. 424-428), the list of illustrations (pp. 429-461), and lastly the contents (pp. 462-464) with two interesting maps of Wallachia, the first indicating the economic growth of the country in the 17th-18th Centuries, and the second depicting the monuments, religious and secular, of the age of Brîncoveanu. Useful and of considerable interest are the 52 illustrations supplementing the text.

The work has been assembled methodically and carefully, and the authors have obviously gathered the relevant sources, published and in manuscript, which are noted in the bibliography. Perhaps the Greek sources could have been consulted more than has been done, such as the prefaces to the religious books published in Greek which the authors dedicated to Brîncoveanu in most flattering fashion. These prefaces reflect the close ties of Brîncoveanu with these men of letters as well as his efforts in supporting Orthodoxy in the East (this would particularly apply to Chapt. IX). For these prefaces one should consult E. Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle* (vol. 3) and *au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle* (vols. 1-2), Paris 1895-1918, passim. I note some minor errors and add certain bibliographical sources: the authors on p. 103 could not have used the book by Joachim Martinianos, *Moschopolis 1330-1930*, Thessaloniki 1957, pp. 102 ff., where much useful information for the commercial traffic between Wallachia, Moschopolis and Venice is to be found; on p. 321, the teacher of the Academy Marcu Cipru is none other than Marcos Porphyropoulos, as this is correctly pointed out on p. 358; on p. 323, Constantine Satras is obviously a mistake for Constantine Sathas; and I could not identify Atanasie N. Gondas (sic). On p. 388 the work of D. B. Economides, «John Avramios the Cretan», *Athina* 54 (1950), 59-93 should have been cited; and on p. 448 Palladis Cherasim is in fact the Patriarch of Alexandria, Gerasimos Palladas (see N. B. Tomadakis, «Two Confounded Cretan Patriarchs of Alexandria, Gerasimos I Spartalios and Gerasimos II Palladas» in *Kretika Chronika* 3 (1949), 165-203 (especially pp. 175-203).

But these omissions in no way detract from the extremely useful book by the two Rumanian scholars which is indeed a valuable addition to Balkan historiography.

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