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**The First Romanian Neohellenist:
Constantin Erbiceanu (1838-1913)**

The restitution projects, involving the refreshing or the improvement of the image of some marginal, disregarded and forgotten historians, often unmentioned in the speciality studies or unknown to the majority, can never be useless, according to the common laws in history. Constantin Erbiceanu, this “humble and honest artist”, as Vasile Pârvan, his successor to the academic chair called him, although accepted without uproars in the historians and the theologians conclave as a reliable specialist, enjoyed authority and fame at that time, but after his death, the final stage of a long and complete *cursus honorum*, was soon forgotten. Although he edited valuable texts in the fields of history, philology and theology, he is very rarely quoted in the speciality works and his case hasn't yet made the subject to some prosopographic researches. The fact that the Romanian scientific society lacked specialists in Neo-Greek studies throughout the 20th century does not justify such an attitude. The present study, conjoining the historiographic and prosopographic perspectives, aims at redeeming an inequity of the Romanian historiography, the damnation to a century of oblivion and the disregard of a character wrongly considered nowadays as unimportant even by Neohellenists.

Being one of the five children of the priest Ioan Ionescu and Zoîța (the daughter of the priest Gavril from Hârlău) from Erbiceni village (Bahlui ward, district of Iassy), Constantin was probably born on the 5th of August 1838¹. He remained motherless at the age of 10, his father

1. The truth is that Constantin Erbiceanu himself was not sure of his date of birth. In the archives of Iassy, there is mail among the authorities who had to issue a birth certificate on C. Erbiceanu's name, but curiously, there was no date of birth on it. See D.J.A.N Iași (National Archives, Iassy), fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei (1790-1900), record 33/1861-1962, leafs 22-24.

taking the responsibility of bringing up his children all by himself². He attended 3 years of elementary school, where his name and his brothers' changes to Erbiceanu, after their native village, beginning with Sârca in 1844, where the psalm reader Genăuță was teaching making use of the harshest methods, and then in Târgu Frumos. Since the two years spent here were of no use, his father decides to send Constantin, as he had done with the elder son, Gheorghe, to the Socola Seminary³, where the two brothers stood out for their graceful voices, suited for church songs.

"Little Erbiceanu", as Constantin was known in school, graduated from the Seminary in July 1858, after six years of study⁴, and in the autumn of that year, trying to avoid the ecclesiastic career towards which his father guided him, he enrolled for the preuniversity courses of the future "National Highschool" from Iassy⁵. Having poor knowledge in exact sciences (actually the teachers' conduct left much to be desired at the establishment of Socola, where the teachers missed the classes quite frequently)⁶ he was aware of the fact that he could hardly withstand attending courses at the new school⁷; on the other hand, having had enough of his austere life he was leading since the graduation from the

2. His father and an uncle (the psalm reader Ioan) had Spinoasa estate in their administration, where they bred sheep, cultivated "greens" and also had a melonfield (Constantin Erbiceanu, *Viata mea scrisa de mine după cât mi-am putut aduce aminte*, Tipografia "Gutenberg", București, 1913, p. 7)

3. Here his teachers are Neofit Scriban (philosophy), Iosif Bobulescu (religion history), I. Mandinescu (history), Augustin Scriban (agronomy, geometry, physics), Ieromonahul Inochentie (An introduction to theology), Ieromonahul Climent (Latin and patrology), I. Ștefănescu Flor (church songs), T. Spacovici (vocal music), etc.

4. See D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza". Rectorat, record 12\1860, leaf 4.

5. Searching in the archives the documents of Seminarul Veniamin and of Academia Mihăileană I couldn't find the seminary certificate or any trace of his attendance of the classes at the National Highschool. There's no wonder to it, taking into account the indifference of the Orthodox Church of the 19th century to the state of the archives and of the libraries or the fact that more than half of the records of Mihaileanu Academy - National Highschool vanished without a trace in the past 2 decades, being registered to "missing property". Therefore, we should consider what the Neohellenist himself tells us in his autobiography, quoted at the footnote no.2.

6. Gh. Adamescu, *Istoria Seminarului "Veniamin" din Iasi (1803-1903)*, Bucuresti 1904, p. 102.

7. The emphasis on subjects such as Maths, daily present in the pupils' time-table at the Mihaileanu Academy, sometimes even twice a day, made it hard for young men insufficiently prepared at those subjects to resist school (D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Academia Mihăileană, record 47/1859-1860).

Seminary, he decides to attend, in the autumn of 1860, the courses of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Iassy. Thus, among the “ordinary” students in Theology, selected of the 8th grade pupils, recently eliminated and the 7th grade at “Veniamin” Seminary, we find young Erbiceanu sombre and dilligent, conscientious and always present for classes, (as he himself writes “I took up learning seriously and I succeeded”). Having no fortune, he was working as clerk (first-class writer) at the Metropolitan Church in Iassy, where he kept this job during his studies.

The Faculty of Theology at the University of Iassy had an unfortunate destiny; it only benefited from the contribution of two teachers, (although there were four teachers assigned to) who taught all the subjects (An Introduction to the New Testament, Hermeneutics and Exegesis, Pastoral Theology, Ethics and Canonical Law, Ecclesiastic History, etc.) the two of them having declared their enmity⁸: Vladimir Trimpoleos Suhopan and Filaret Stavropoleos Scriban. If we add to this the lack of attendance (in 1863, there were 9 students, whereas at the Faculty of Law only 43 students attended the courses)⁹, it is obvious why it was dissolved in 1864, having only two graduates on four years study (C. Erbiceanu and Filotei Romanescu).

Being a remarkable student, assessed as outstanding in all subjects, both in his behaviour during the year and at the examination¹⁰, he acquired the status of scholarship student¹¹ (boarder), since at the beginning of the Romanian university life there was a real enthusiasm for “poverty certificates” handed out even by those who didn’t deserve them. He was not content with attending the classes in theology, therefore he selectively attended the classes of the Faculty of Philosophy; the miscellaneous manuscript written by C. Erbiceanu and donated to the Academy Library in Bucharest¹², which includes *inter alia* “Note de logică luate de mine în Universitatea de Iași la Titu Maiorescu pe la

8. Cf. Gh. Adamescu, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

9. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza”. Rectorat, record 24/1863, leaf 84.

10. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza”. Rectorat, records 20/1860, leaf 24-26, 17/1861, leaf 11, 13/1861, leaf 19, 20, 32.

11. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza”. Rectorat, record 30/1864, leaf 8.

12. Biblioteca Academiei Române București (The Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest), the Romanian manuscript 3348, donated by C. Erbiceanu in 1907.

1863" ("Notes of logic jotted down by me at Titus Maiorecu's courses in 1863 at the University of Iassy").

Having finished his studies, Erbiceanu takes part in a competition that selected young men for studies abroad, that being a good opportunity for those who wanted to improve their education in European centres, the Ministry conceding that there were very few specialized teachers, thus granting scholarships abroad in all fields. In the Faculty of Theology they come up with two places, obviously taken by the two graduates Erbiceanu and Romanescu who were to spend one year in Athens and one in Paris¹³.

The scholarship was to begin in January 1865 and was even to all the other state scholarships abroad (50 ducats a month)¹⁴. It lasted one more year until January 1868, and it was entirely spent in Athens (The Faculty of Theology), giving him more time to study. Meanwhile Erbiceanu led a sober life, as he himself stated, he learned Ancient and Neo-Greek, both in school and in private. As he had been in Iassy, now he was a example of conduct attending here too the classes of the Faculty of Theology and Letters just as his brother, Gheorghe, had done it 10 years ago. The same above-mentioned manuscript includes a summary on Greek syntax illustrative for the hardworking Romanian's progress. Whereas at the beginning of the text his pen proves to be unsteady, revealing spelling mistakes and revisings, at the end they disappear, his handwriting turns intelligible, without any alterations or clumsiness. As a matter of fact, as the scholar would assert in his late years of life, Greek is a difficult language requiring constant work ("this is a difficult language, it takes a lifetime study")¹⁵.

The money he saved in Athens (80 louis) facilitated his travel to Paris where he attended some classes that didn't seem to impress young Erbiceanu. His goal was to study philosophy in Germany, but "the plots of some fervent people" whose names he does not mention, resulted in not

13. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza". Rectorat, record 33/1864, leaf 1.

14. A.N.R. București (National Archives, Bucharest), fond Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, record 521/1867, leaf 152 and 52/1865, leaf 9. See also the Registration Book of the University of Athens hold at the Museum of University, Athens, for other interesting data about C. Erbiceanu (his colleague's, his statements an the registration interview, etc.)

15. C. Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

receiving the approval they yearned for, despite their exceptional marks got in Athens (λίαν καλῶς), failure that affected him to the end of his career: "I might have achieved more if I had studied in Germany too"¹⁶.

Coming back in 1868, Erbiceanu goes in for the department of Philosophy at the "St. Sava" Highschool in Bucharest and he's assigned the job, but at the request of the director of the Permanent Council of Education, August Treboniu Laurian, gives it up in favour of the latter's son, Dimitrie. Instead, this organization issues a document that assigned Erbiceanu as substitute teacher at the Universal and Ecclesiastic History department of the Theological Seminary of Socola. However, the future Hellenist was not content with being a teacher submitted to the pressures and influences of the ecclesiastic hierarchy and he goes on exploring the ground of the lay educational system.

In June 1870, along with two other applicants, he takes part in a competition for taking up the department of history of the Military School in Iassy. Before this he had requested in an application addressed to the board to have acknowledged "the rights he gained" at the contest in 1868 and to be given the job without having to pass another exam¹⁷. However, they adjourned it, because one of the examiners, N. Ionescu, had left for Bucharest, without even notifying the board, where he had been conferred a place in Parliament.

Two months later, another competition which would arouse Erbiceanu's interest was that regarding the department of Greek at the National Highschool in Iassy, where he was the only candidate. The surprise itself was not his participation but the results he scored at the four written tests and at the four oral ones, the general grade point average of which was 4.88, too low for the future renowned Hellenist who had studied in Athens and anyway, insufficient (6 was the minimum grade point average) for his recommendation to teach this subject¹⁸.

16. *Ibidem*, p. 15.

17. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza". Rectorat, record 109/1869-1870, leafs 1,2,7-11.

18. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza". Rectorat, record 124/1870, leafs 9,18,23,30, 32-41. Two years later, the job is taken by V. Burlea, a Romanian from the Bucovina who had finished his studies in Vienna with a general grade point average of 7.92. Failure, certainly unexpected, more painful, since he had been the only candidate and sure of his success, neither discouraged him nor deterred him from becoming an exceptional Hellenist in less than two decades. Undoubtedly, he had had enough of contests.

In 1871, the attempt made by the Archimandrite Clement Nicolau—the titular of the department of Dogmatic, Moral and Pastoral Theology at the Seminary of Socola—on the metropolitan Calinic culminated in the vacancy of the department. With the help of the metropolitan and the headmaster, Erbiceanu succeeds in being appointed to this subject as a substitute teacher by the Ministry, being replaced by Archimandrite Sprânceană¹⁹.

There was also a temptation for clergy life, encouraged by the metropolitan Calinic himself who wished that the professor ascends the clerical hierarchy, but he quickly and resolutely did away with it. Having his brother and above all his self as counsellor, Constantin Erbiceanu reaches the conclusion that he was unable to stand up to the exigencies of the monastic life, which implied the annihilation of freedom of thinking, and, why not, of intimacy. He had already met his wife-to-be, Aglaea, born in 1853 in the Negrescu family, related to the rich Zappas. Having his religious ceremony on the 20th of May 1873 and the civil ceremony in July²⁰, the professor's financial status improved to some extent owing to his wife's substantial dowry.

Having taken this decision, declares Erbiceanu, "it goes without saying that I was soon persecuted, but my enemies could do no harm to me for I did what I thought to be right"²¹. The persecutions he refers to were coming from the people close to the metropolitan Calinic, who hadn't succeeded in manipulating him and who thus found himself bereft of authority. As for his teaching at that time, he seemed to have been pleased, claiming that "he rather lectured than gave lessons".

The next ten years were peaceful, the professor's only concern was to support his family, getting ever larger; he supplanted vacant departments, taught in the Academy of young ladies or gave private lessons of Greek. The twin girls, Aglaea and Constanța were born in 1874, the former died soon after her birth, two years later Laurențiu was born, then Constantin in 1877, and Eduard the youngest in 1880²².

19. A.N.R. București, fond Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, record 87(I)\1871, leafs 39-41, 55-58, 62.

20. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Tribunalul Iași, secția III, record 22/1873, leafs 126-128.

21. C. Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

22. D.J.A.N. Iași, fond Starea Civilă, Născuți, record 733\1874, leaf 99, record 473\1877, leaf 94, record 579\1880, leaf 63.

The chance to assert himself came pretty late, in 1882, when the metropolitan Iosif Naniescu asked him to publish, together with Drago-mir Demetrescu, a clerical magazine, financially supported by the Metropolitan Orthodox Church, where they were supposed to cautiously defend the metropolitan from the blows focused against him. “*Revista Teologică*” (“The Theological Magazine”) had a good start coming to hit in time what it aimed at, making its contribution to a large extent to the bringing forward of the values in Romanian ecclesiastic society. The fact that Erbiceanu was the man-of-all-trades of the new magazine, so well thought of in the ecclesiastic circle, stands proof for the various articles signed by him (of the 63 articles published in the magazine, 59 are under his signature, and only one is signed by D. Demetrescu, one by the bishop Melchisedec, and another one by the editorial staff; for the section notes and information, four are signed by Erbiceanu, three by Demetrescu, one by Melchisedec and seventeen by the editorial staff)²³ and also for the disappearance of the magazine once the professor moved to Bucharest in 1887.

The initial steps had been taken, from now on C. Erbiceanu’s career and life gets set for a constant ascent. As a matter of fact, he himself believed that the chance in 1882 was the turning point of his life: “I haven’t invested materially but morally. I came off successfully”²⁴. Known more as a lecturer up to that moment (in the Metropolitan Church or at the school festivities), his work for the magazine made him rise a step in the scholars’ opinion, compelling his recognition as an earnest and diligent specialist, thus getting back his self-confidence. More important was that being an editor and, moreover, keeping close to the metropolitan assured him free access to the “basements of the Metropolitan Church” where there were unexplored documentary treasures of whose existence people generally knew about but they couldn’t have been studied. Motivating the need for reference material for the publication, Erbiceanu immediately gets the metropolitan’s consent thus launching his Hellenist activity that would bring him recognition and fame. A few words written by him are relevant to this circumstance: “I

23. See Mircea Păcurariu, *Bibliografia artcoalelor privind istoria Bisericii Române în “Revista Teologică” de la Iași*, in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, 1985, no. 11, p. 400-412.

24. C. Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

was aware that inside a basement under the dwellings belonging to the Metropolitan Church there was an considerable number of old Greek manuscripts, thrown away as worthless to one side of the basement in a state of decay. I also knew that those manuscripts had belonged to the Greek school in Iassy, to pupils and teachers, and I reflected on our poor knowledge of old history on our instruction and education in the past and that, no matter how one would consider it, the existence of the schools in our country in the past belongs by rights and entirely to us, the Romanians, regardless of the school profile. Therefore I only took away the veil that kept in darkness the past of our national education. I also appreciated and knew that because of the Greeks' abuses of all kinds for almost two centuries, the Romanians conceived a strong aversion and hostility for everything that was Greek or of Greek origin. Despite the aversion and contempt for Greeks that I saw, I made up my mind to bring them to light to publish their contents, after I had studied them first. I found them deplorable: some of them rotten, others mouldy, some speckled, dirty, as they threw on them all the trash in that basement. As I was finding them, I would take them home, place them around the stove, dry them and then I would examine them minutely²⁵.

Erbiceanu had already taken to researches in the field. "The fervent passion" he talks about made him go on at a wild pace with his going to the University Library in Iassy, to that of the Monastery of Neamț, and then, travelling to Bucharest at his own expense, to the library of the Theological Seminary there, the one that took over the Library of Hungro-Wallachian Metropolitan Church. He would become in time specialist in Greek manuscripts, in deciphering and assigning them.

In 1885, at the 50th anniversary of Romanian University education since the foundation of the Mihaileanu Academy (1835), he has the idea and the courage to bring forward to the rector of Iassy a topic for a lecture at the anniversary festivity. Receiving Culianu's consent, Erbiceanu read *Speech delivered in the hall of the University of Iassy on the Greek and Romanian school since the times of Vasile Lupu and Matei Basarab until 1828 on the occasion of the national university education jubilee* ("Discurs rostit în aula Universității din Iași asupra școalei grece și române din timpul lui Vasile Lupu și Matei Basarab până

25. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

în 1828, cu ocazia serbării jubileului semisecular al învățământului superior național”)²⁶. The strong impact on the audience made up not only of university professors and students but also of personalities of Romanian culture (D. A. Sturdza, Spiru Haret, bishop Melchisedec, metropolitan Iosif Naniescu) was doubtlessly according to the originality of the ideas exposed. Frantically acclaimed by the audience and his friends, the author of the speech got himself noticed by influential people. That was another encouraging and crucial moment of his career. After the successful lecture, D. A. Sturdza, the Minister of Public Education, invited him for a hearing and, noticing the scholar's resolution of proceeding his researches, he suggested him to come to Bucharest to teach at the Central Theological Seminary having the same conditions he benefited from in Iassy. Erbiceanu agrees to it and, advised by his friends, on a subsequent hearing at the minister, he requests the latter the vacant position as Manager of the Church Printing House. What he got was much beyond his expectations. Beginning with 1st of January 1887 he would be appointed professor at the Central Seminary, Manager of the printing house, editor at the “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” magazine, and substitute teacher at the Faculty of Theology.

The unexpected success wove a net of conspiracies and dissatisfactions having him as target, which was obvious for a barely known newcomer from Moldavia, who would receive four well-paid jobs in Bucharest undoubtedly aimed at by many others. His response to the local scholars' reaction came out of a titanic work, having to cope with four challenges at the same time. Up to the eyes in his work, he went on this way for 9 years and succeeded to compel recognition in the very face of the envious persons. “I was sitting day and night at my desk working, he writes, and I wouldn't go out except for classes. The people around me at that time know me. I had come to be unable to walk right, I was hesitant”²⁷.

As an editor at the magazine, Erbiceanu had in mind to publish articles that would impede the catholic propaganda, editorials on theological issues, and above all to publish documents for the history of the

26. Published under this title in the “Revista Teologică”, III, 1885, no. 16, p. 124-128, no. 17, p. 132-135 but also in excerpt, Iassy, 1885, pp. 37 and in A. D. Xenopol, C. Erbiceanu, *Serbarea școlară de la Iași. Acte și documente*, Iași, 1885, p. 48-77.

27. C. Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

Romanian church. Unfortunately, they were not edited in chronological order—it would have been impossible anyway—but as he found them. He dealt with many religious themes, scholars and church figures' autobiographies²⁸, published some of their known or very little known works²⁹, brought out editorials and articles of ecclesiastic law³⁰, funeral speeches³¹, and other various ones.

28. Such as: *Câteva date asupra vieții părintelui iroschmonahului Nectarie, protopsalt în Sfântul Munte Athos, șezător la schitul românesc Prodromul*, in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XIII, 1889, nr. 7, pp. 410-413; *Nectarie Ieromonahul, psaltul școlii din București și reformatul sistemului vechi de psaltichie*, in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVI, 1893, nr. 10 (pp. 808-820); *Chiril Lucaris*, in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXXV, 1911, nr. 2 (pp. 1204-1234), nr. 3 (pp. 296-308), nr. 4 (pp. 433-444).

29. A few examples: *Chiriac Romniceanu, Cuvânt îngropător atotdeauna*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XII, 1888, nr. 9 (pp. 603-611); *Liturghierul din 1702 imprimat de Șerban Cantacuzin vel paharnic*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XIII, 1889, nr. 9 (pp. 157-164); *Cea mai veche explicare a Liturghiei și a tot ritualul din Biserica Ortodoxă în limba românească*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XIII, 1889, nr. 3 (pp. 152-156); *Un manuscript românesc*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XIV, 1890, nr. 7 (pp. 521-537); *Un manuscript grecesc al lui Hrisant, patriarhul Ierusalimului (necunoscut în literatura greacă până acum)*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XIV, 1890, nr. 5 (p. 423-428); *Manuscriptul grecesc al lui Manuel Notarul*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVI, 1892, nr. 5 (p. 319-334); *Descrierea manuscrisului Arhim. Iacob Ioanitul. Sintagma sa alfabetică*, in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVI, 1892, nr. 1 (pp. 31-60), nr. 2 (pp. 140-156); *Sintagma lui Iacob Ioanitul*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XV, 1892, nr. 12 (pp. 902-905); *Mărturisirea credinței ortodoxe a lui Ghenadie Scolarul dată sultanului Mehmet după cererea sa*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXV, 1901, nr. 7 (pp. 601-609); *Note dintr-un manuscript tot al arhimandritului Chiriac Romniceanu*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXVII, 1903, nr. 2, pp. 210-214; *Dedicația lui Macarie cântărețul către Mitropolitul Grigorie*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXXII, 1908, nr. 1 (pp. 37-43), etc.

30. Such as: *Material pentru Dreptul Bisericesc Oriental*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVI, 1892, nr. 6 (pp. 417-428) și 7 (pp. 705-710); *Despre Canoanele Sfinților Apostoli*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXI, 1897, 4, pp. 379-404; *Canoanele sfinților și prea înțelepților apostoli comentate*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXIII, 1889, nr. 8 (pp. 725-752), 9 (pp. 849-874), XXIV, 1900, nr. 11 (pp. 988-1019); *Canoanele Sinoadelor Ecumenice*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXIV, 1900, nr. 5 (pp. 412-443), 6 (pp. 505-527), 7 (pp. 629-635); *Un nou codice de legislațiune românească*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXVI, 1902, nr. 9 (pp. 1017-1029); *Legea clerului și regulamentele*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XXVI, 1902, nr. 1 (pp. 119-127).

31. *Cuvânt funebru*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XIII, 1890, nr. 11, p. 592-600 (pentru prof. D. Stoica 1814-1899); *Necrolog la funeraliile episcopului de Roman, Melchisedec Ștefănescu* (1892, 16 mai), "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVI, 1892, nr. 5, pp. 335-344; *Necrologul episcopului Inochentie Chipulescu al Bucureștiului, 1813-1892*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVII, 1893, nr. 8, pp. 716-718; *Cuvânt funebru la moartea P.S. Arh. Ieremia Gălățeanu* (1893, dec. 27), in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", XVII, 1894, nr. 11,

Working as a printing house manager also took him a lot of time. When he got the job, the situation of the institution was a rather difficult one, from a financial and organizational point of view. Nonetheless, he succeeded to go on with the government subventions³² and to raise the bid of the printing activity; we also owe him the printing of religious books in Latin characters, probably the most important initiative of a manager of the Ecclesiastic Printing House. Constantly supported by the minister D. A. Sturdza and by the metropolitan, always concerned with the idea of creating a fund of the printing house, with the possibility of self-financing in major projects, Erbiceanu does not pay enough attention to the formality for the account balances. That is why, after D. A. Sturdza had left the ministry and once the metropolitan had been dismissed, he was asked to hand over his resignation. His dissent to resign before finishing to print the series of church books in Latin alphabet, entails the assignment of a synodical committee to censor the activity. Although he was blackmailed by its members (they claimed 60,000 lei, a large amount at that time) for the infringements they had found, everything culminates in his paying a 600 lei fine, resigning and two-years suspension from his position as editor at the “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” magazine.

Professor at the Theological Central Seminary, C. Erbiceanu also worked as a substitute teacher at the Department of Ecclesiastic Law and Interpretation of the Canons at the Faculty of Theology. Since 1892, in conformity with the ministerial orders, he had to choose one of the two, that is as a substitute teacher at the University. He had nothing to reproach himself with as a university professor. The students enjoyed his lectures, he was not strict about them. It was his great reputation as a teacher and scholar that, after becoming a titular professor, in February 1895, brought him the title of dean in March 1896. He obtained 4 votes

pp. 918-924; *Discurs la înmormântarea episcopului Chesarie al Buzăului*, în “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, XXI, 1897, nr. 6, pp. 585-587.

32. In his missives with the ministry, Erbiceanu knows to be very convincing, proving the need of going on with the subventions and indicating the losses that would follow if it were otherwise; on the other hand, he paid no attention to the bureaucratic matters, a fact that exposed the ministry clerks to ticklish situations (A.N.R. București, fond Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunilor Publice, record 5162\1889, vol. II, leafs 3, 4, 11, 19, 30, 42, 43).

of 8, as to the 3 obtained by the former dean and his friend N. Nițulescu³³ and the outcome would give him a real pleasure that he wasn't too bashful to show and at the same time gave him an impulse; his wife wrote to their daughter: "Papa was elected dean; oh, I'm not that glad about it, but Papa is very jovial, young and handsome, as he hadn't been for a long time"³⁴.

However, he stood out not only as a theologian, but also a renowned Hellenist. That was why, when in May 1897 the department of Greek language and literature remained vacant, after Epaminondas Francudi's death, Erbiceanu was thought to be fit for a substitute teacher there, being appointed for this position by the new dean V. A. Urechea³⁵. Advised by his doctors, Erbiceanu gives his resignation at the University in 1904, this implying the end of his teaching career. So diligent in the past there was nothing left for him but his work as editor at the magazine and the sessions of the Romanian Academy.

Greek erudite societies ("The Constantinopolitan Silogos" and "Society of Medieval Studies in Constantinople") chose him as member in the last decade of 19th century (in 1886, respectively 1889). The Neo-Hellenist went very frequently to the Romanian Academy where he had a reliable supporter (D. A. Sturdza), offering manuscripts and unique printed works, sending his writings (for example *Cronicari grcei cari au scris despre români în epoca fanariotă*), to be read in plenum for which he is congratulated by the High Forum.

At the meeting on the 20th of March 1890 the Bureau of the history section set forth the election of new correspondent members, one of them being C. Erbiceanu, who scored well (17 white balls and only 3

33. A.N.R. București, fond Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunilor Publice, record 287\1896, leaf 12. This came up on the 23.03.1896. On the 11th of March 1896 Carol I signs a royal decree (no. 2504) in which he appoints Erbiceanu as dean (record 287\1896, leaf 14). We have reasons to believe that Erbiceanu had already some knowledge about the duties of a dean as it seems that he often acted as dean's substitute in Bucharest; on the 10th of July 1889 he signs as a dean a student certificate (no. 46) on the name Șt. Vărgolici (A.N.R. București, fond Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunilor Publice, record 5109\1889, leaf 48).

34. Constanța Erbiceanu, *Scrisori*, București, 1989, pp. 81-82 (the letter from 21.03.1896).

35. In June 1897 Erbiceanu's name appears on the pay lists of the Faculty of Letters with a salary of 350 lei (A.N.R., București, Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunilor Publice, record 106(I)\1897, leaf 83).

black ones). The same day, a letter signed by M. Kogălniceanu and D. A. Sturdza let him know that: "In appreciation of your important activity in history research and your valuable publications, the Romanian Academy, during its session on the 20th of March this year has elected you correspondent member for history section, hoping that in the future you will prove to be one of the industrious people of our national culture..."³⁶. His being elected as a correspondent member undoubtedly impelled his researches as he himself states³⁷ and strengthened his partnership with the Academy to which he offered copies of his publications, documents and manuscripts.

It was also then that opened the series of public conferences at the Athenaeum. The first lecture was a well-deserved success, in spite of the visible emotions (the last two lecturers had experienced notable defeats) and of a small deficiency in speaking³⁸ which however were not impediments to be taken into account at a good orator, accustomed to the audience³⁹. Both his frequent presences as lecturer and the prestige he attained contributed to his election as secretary at the Romanian Athenaeum (history section) after 1900.

For his high merits, he was awarded numerous medals and badges ("The Crown of Romania", "The Star of Romania", "Bene-Meriti", "The Reward for Working") that tell their own story about his claiming his

36. C. Erbiceanu, *Viața mea* ..., p. 29.

37. *Ibidem*.

38. His son Constantin imitated his father in a letter (from Bucharest, 1891, to his mother and sister): "ia înțiabăi cum mi-o stat sfinții" (Constanța Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 22).

39. A letter from his wife to his daughter perfectly conveys the atmosphere: "When we reached the Atheneum, I seemed to calm down a little, it was a full house and the audience were striking sticks and stamping their feet for Papaicu to show up. At 8.30 sharp here it is Papa, dressed in black, he was so nice, young as if he had been 30. First he began to speak by heart; the audience was shouting louder, louder! Then he spoke loud and well and afterwards with a *sans gêne* of university professor he put his golden spectacles ... He began to read, he also added things; he recited some patriotic poems and at the end the audience applauded tempestuously ..." (*Ibidem*, p. 68-69, the letter from January the 9th 1895, Bucharest, from Aglaea Erbiceanu to Constanța Erbiceanu). Another letter, this time from his son Constantin, to his sister Constanța, stands proof for his orator's prestige he enjoyed among the erudites and also in the midst of his family: "the fellow said that he had never seen a professor who could speak with such a spirit as Erbiceanu's; why, the man is all a blaze, all he said was convincing and, knowing the way Papaia speaks at courses, the way he gestures, I gather this is his greatest gift. He's keen on persuading people, a real apostle!" (Letter from Bucharest, undated, *Ibidem*, p. 212).

recognition in the society of that epoch, yet his supreme recognition, his designation for an academician chair, which he longed for with all his heart and waited for eagerly, came in the spring of 1899, at the age of 61. The announcement given by B. P. Hașdeu at the session on the 16th of March 1899, who had found out 5 eligible positions for the full members is followed by a resolution of the history section, read in plenum on the 8th of April, by way of which Erbiceanu and the bishop N. Popea were accordingly nominated. The vote (23 pros and 4 cons for Erbiceanu and respectively 19 pros and 8 cons for N. Popea) was satisfactory for the admission of both scholars in the Romanian Academy.

The speech of gratitude⁴⁰ delivered by Erbiceanu on this occasion, a true schedule in which he promised the carrying on of his research on the Phanariot epoch and on the Greek influences, also reveals the reasons of his being elected as academician —namely the very studies on this topic. The gifts⁴¹ offered to the Library of the Academy were up to the importance of the moment: a manuscript of Romanian *Grammar* of D. Eustatievici (1757) and one of The *Chronicle* of M. Costin (1713). On the other hand, the opening speech (“The Life and the Works of the protosinghellos Naum Râmniceanu”) was almost a year late and therefore was read during the solemn session in March 17th 1900 presided by King Carol I. It was D. A. Sturdza⁴², his supporter, who answered C. Erbiceanu’s discourse, according to the expectations.

There followed a quick integration in the administrative and decision taking structures of the High Forum. He’s now vice-president of the history section, then secretary (since 1902) being a member, the very year of his election, of commissions awarding of various prizes (Cuza, Adamachi, Năsturel) and in 1904 he’s elected vice-president of the Academy. He’s also speaker of the history section of different projects that competed for the Academy prizes or of the studies that were to be published in the Annals or presented in public.

Nonetheless, his activity gradually slows down, his sickness and great

40. Read during the session on April the 10th 1899 (see *Analele Academiei Române. Seria III. Secțiunea istorică. Dezbateri*) = (Annals of Romanian Academy. Series II. History section. Debates), t. 21, 1898-1899, p. 168-170).

41. *Ibidem*.

42. *Ibidem*, t. 22, p.185. On this occasion he offers 22 manuscripts of the erudite monk, Naum Râmniceanu.

age couldn't allow him any longer to keep up with the pace of the tempestuous youth. Beginning with 1908, he distinguishes himself especially as donor for the Library of the Academy, the manuscripts, the printings or the documents which represented a substantial contribution for the institution funds benefiting this time by the donor's short comments. He thus answered Dr. C. Istrati's suggestion⁴³, an enthusiast of antiquities, who had requested that for each donated book Erbiceanu should write some notes on its provenance and other useful details, being the most suitable for this. Actually, he barely addresses any meeting at all, only when he's asked to, and the number of his reports decreased considerably (he only wrote 5 for the last 5 years of his life).

Constantin Erbiceanu bequeathed us major contributions both in theology and history. We need not talk about his theological writings, as long as his cultural history ones are "responsible" for his recognition. He spent his life especially publishing and translating some historical and literary sources, publishing studies on ecclesiastic history or dealing with Greek cultural influences. "This beginner was not a Hellenist", said N. Iorga, probably forgetting about the times he would frequently seek advice from Erbiceanu, mainly on matters that required the knowledge of such a specialist. It is a fact that at that time he was primarily seen as Hellenist, the dominance of this kind of subjects being conspicuous since his activity as a researcher and publicist: his first publication is *Compendium of Greek syntax* (1871), and more than a half (31) of his 59 articles edited in the "Revista Teologică" are related to this field.

His most important studies, that brought him in the spotlight of the scientific world deal, based on the documents discovered, with the importance of the Greek influence on the Romanian society and culture mainly in the 18th century: *Manuscrise grecești existente în Biblioteca Universității din Iași* (*Greek manuscripts present in the University Library of Iassy*), in the "Revista Teologică", Iași, 1885, no. 3, pp. 214-215; *Serbarea școlară din Iași* (A. D. Xenopol, C. Erbiceanu), Iași, 1885; *Istoria Mitropoliei Moldovei și Sucevei și a catedralei metropolitane din Iași* (*The History of the Metropolitan Church of Moldavia and Suceava and of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iassy*), București, 1885; *Cronicari greci cari au scris despre români în epoca fanariotă*. Textul grecesc și

43. *Ibidem*, t. 30, p. 156 (the session on the 3rd of April, 1908).

traducerea română (*Greek Chroniclers Who Wrote About the Romanians in Phanariot Times*. The Greek text and the Romanian translation), București, 1888; *Priviri istorice și literare asupra epocii fanariote* (*Historical and Literary Perspectives on Phanariot Age*), București, 1901; *Bibliografia greacă sau cărțile imprimate în Principatele Române în epoca fanariotă și dedicate domnilor și boierilor români*. Studii literare (*The Greek bibliography or the books printed in the Romanian Principalities during the Phanariot age and dedicated to the Romanian rulers and boyars*. Literary studies, București 1903; *Bărbați culti greci și români și profesorii din Academii din Iași și București din epoca zisă fanariotă 1650-1821* (*Greek and Romanian erudites and professors in the Academies of Iassy and Bucharest in the so-called Phanariot age 1650-1821*), București, 1905.

He began to write late, but this is common to almost all his successors in the field. He needed time to prepare himself studying assiduously and with pleasure, consulting his few working materials and the works of the foreign scholars, in fact turning much later into a self-educated person⁴⁴. He himself had realised his fondness for history, that was why he tried to follow this road: "It also stood in my nature to analyse and thoroughly search for old things to find out something new. And I succeeded"⁴⁵.

In order to draw up his works, Erbiceanu appealed to his knowledge of Ancient and Medieval Greek history, always seeking to be well informed, a reason for borrowing and buying the new publications in the field. He was especially acquainted with the works of the Greek historians and men of letters (Paparrigopoulos, Sathas, Papadopoulos-Kerameus), and he was doubtlessly aware of Emile Legrand's works and those of many other European specialists (it seems that the publication of the study *Cronicarii grceci...* in 1888 should be directly connected with Legrand's *Epistolaire grec* and with other works of Sathas). Since the very beginning of his research he was conscious of the flaws in his writings because that the explored field was "very little known, unexplored and almost forgotten".

We know that he was analysing carefully the manuscripts and the

44. C. Erbiceanu, *Viața mea...* p. 28.

45. *Ibidem*, p. 19.

documents, "his loyal friends", as V. Pârvan wrote, he would frequently visit the monasteries throughout the country hoping to find new sources of information about the past or he would buy such precious stuff from the booksellers on plump sums. Moreover, he was charged by his rivals with having appropriated, by unknown ways, old writings that he himself would sell to the antiquarians, but in fact it proved to be only wickedness and envy. He was an addict to unique books and old documents, a character who turned out to be one of the most important donors to the Library of the Academy, and it was against his nature to commit such things.

First of all, we are interested in the scholar's opinions regarding the Greek influence and the Phanariot century for which he was first looked at distrustfully and even suspected him of playing the game of Greek propaganda. His contemporaries were sometimes casting him a sceptical look, as in Erbiceanu's family, which was not of Greek origin, there were three Hellenists all of them having completed their studies in Athens: Gheorghe Erbiceanu, his elder brother, classicist, professor of Ancient Greek, the latter's son, Octav Erbiceanu, author of a remarkable study on Homer's *Iliad*, taking into consideration by the university authorities from Iassy (before the 1st World War) for a possible position at the department of Byzantinistic and, of course, Constantin Erbiceanu, the Neo-Hellenist.

He was not "the Greeks' man" and the evolution of his career, the audience and the prestige that he came to enjoy contravene with those suppositions. Having to fight against the prejudices of his time according to which the cultural creations within Romanian borders were not written in the national language and, moreover, they originated in the Phanariot epoch or in the entire epoch of the Greek influence would only make him be worthy of the contempt, and at the most of the indifference of the Romanians, Erbiceanu tried, fighting the windmills, to alter his contemporaries' beliefs and mentality and his on-goings were mostly successful⁴⁶.

46. We should not forget that at the time Erbiceanu begins research, the Romanian culture was marked by a profound anti-Phanariot trend which considered that the epoch of the Greek influence was a disastrous one for the country, in all records, including the cultural one. See for instance the lecture given by Șt. Vârgolici at "Junimea" in 1877 entitled "Influența fanariotă" ("Convorbiri Literare" X, no. 1, pp. 73-74).

As the first Greek documents and manuscripts he received were those referring to the princely Academies, he initially concentrated on the Phanariot educational system. He sought to prove that that was according to the demands of those times, and thus answered those who denied the existence of a serious education. His arguments were documentary and speculative; for instance: “on the other hand, claims Erbiceanu, we must admit the hypothesis that for half a century one could hardly find a scholar among Romanians”⁴⁷. The scholar thought that this type of education must have been useful to the Romanians as long as the Greek teachers, descendants of the Byzantium, “were with good reason better-educated and prouder than us”⁴⁸. Moreover, the Greek schools from the Principalities were in his opinion “noble butterflies that played pranks on the Romanian fields pied with flowers”⁴⁹.

Realising that under the Phanariots the élite of the Principalities spoke Romanian no more, Erbiceanu studied the literary creations of that epoch, striving to figure out its cause. “Much stronger, more efficient and more useful than the Slavonic influence”⁵⁰, the influence of Greek language —says Erbiceanu, “on good grounds”, as he loved to stress— is a beneficent one, especially that during the Slavism, the Romanian language faced a long stagnation. The elimination of the reminiscences of the Slavonic language⁵¹ was another positive aspect.

In fact, the scholar was trying to prove a fact hardly accepted at that time, that is the political and moral influences must be perceived and weighed differently from the Greek cultural ones which generally use up themselves effectively for the Romanian space⁵². He’s even tempted here and there to urge to the oblivion of the ominous aspects of this threefold influence, as “the circumstances brought in their train those happenings”⁵³.

A work displaying stretching out four decades could not avoid the usual contradictions of the evolution of any character, the manifestation

47. C. Erbiceanu, *Bibliografia greacă ...*, p. IV.

48. *Ibidem*, p. VI.

49. A. D. Xenopol, C. Erbiceanu, *Serbarea şcolară de la Iaşi ...*, p. 33.

50. C. Erbiceanu, *Cronicari greci ...*, p. IX.

51. *Idem*, *Priviri istorice şi literare...*, p. 28.

52. A. D. Xenopol, C. Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

53. C. Erbiceanu, *Bibliografia greacă*, p. VIII.

of the times it crossed. The Hellenist generally made the distinction between the Greek cultural influence, a beneficent one compared to the Slavonic, and the political influence, disastrous for the Romanian society. Out of carelessness or, maybe, out of a deficient explanation, C. Erbiceanu also has excerpts when he contradicts himself especially when he writes about the cultural influence. There is also the possibility that the ideas laid out vary according to his readers, and particularly to his audience. If his writings usually praise the teachers of the Greek schools and underline the advantages of the Romanian culture brought about by the above-mentioned institutions in *Istoria Seminarului Veniamin din mănăstirea Socola* (*The history of the Veniamin Seminary of Socola Monastery*) Iași, 1885, the young professor maintains, in a collection of ideas and in a precarious correlation of arguments, the intellectual and the moral obscurity of the Greek teachers (p. 13) as well as the lacking of real utility of the Greek schools on behalf of the Romanian spirit (p. 14).

Here's what N. Iorga, a close friend of his, said about the scientist C. Erbiceanu: "he foresaw the difficulties for a very long time to be a pretentious dilettante and he didn't overcome them sufficiently to become a haughty erudite. He remained the enthusiast researcher who daily nourished his live soul 'till the autumn of his life with modest but true scientific success"⁵⁴. Therefore he was not an erudite, at least not from the perspective of the positivist science, but he was a humble and diligent worker, and also a fervent orator who made his own way in life. He neither joined the romantic historians as A. D. Xenopol or V. A. Urechia nor his fellows from the criticism. In fact, he associates the two historiographic trends both in age and method and mentality. Neither the "critic triad" and the new trend in general, nor the romanticism adopted him although he wasn't on bad terms with either of them. However, I believe he would have liked to approach more firmly the new critical trend, towards which his protector D. A. Sturdza urged him and which he felt more anchored to (there's an obsessive recurrence of expressions referring to positivism in his writings: "clear evidence", "positive materials", "positive data", "unquestionable arguments", etc). This didn't

54. N. Iorga, *Cuvântare la înmormântarea răposatului C. Erbiceanu*, in *Analele Academiei Române, Dezbateri*, t. XXXV, 1912-1913, p. 56.

happened and Erbiceanu did not entirely side with “the young”. His age didn’t allow it.

His writing is not, most of the times, very clear and attractive, it seems rather obsolete, heavy and sometimes exaggerated. The explanation is simple: even though he was not a man of letters, Erbiceanu fulfilled himself in the middle of the 19th century, in a world in transition, who learnt on the fly what was the Latin alphabet, Europe and what represented the Union of Moldavia and Walachia. The difference in this respect between him and V. Pârvan, a magician in writing and his successor to the chair of academician, is surely huge. Yet, we should not forget that Erbiceanu went, actually, to schools in Iassy and Athens in the middle of the 19th century and not to western schools at the end of the century.

In his relation with the Romanian cultural and academic society with the other scholars, Erbiceanu tried to hold his leading position, avoiding making enemies by conceit or slander and also avoiding doing any harm in his turn. We know that he and Ionescu Gion were at animosity but being the one who drew up an account about the latter’s work for an awarding, he agreed to it. And we may go on giving examples.

Some of his friends and close companions are A. D. Xenopol, N. Iorga (Erbiceanu was the godfather of Iorga’s elder daughter), P. P. Carp, N. Nițulescu in whose company he would often work and criticise the new publications on the market. It was still D. A. Sturdza the one he worshipped. The professor would write that the latter was “the only man to whom I am profoundly grateful”⁵⁵. It was obvious why. Actually, A. D. Sturdza found him in Iassy in 1885 and had him brought to the capital and also signed in his favour for his position as printing house manager and supported him in need as minister, man and scholar. He facilitated his election as correspondent member and then as full member of the Academy. D. A. Sturdza was Erbiceanu’s providential man, present, after 1885, to all the most decisive moments of the Hellenist’s existence.

The mail correspondence among the Erbiceanus is the most illustrative source for their family relations. The scholar was a sensitive and affectionate husband and father, ready to do anything for his children.

55. C. Erbiceanu, *Viața mea...*, p. 22.

Any sacrifice is worth making even with the price of his compromising. We would find him exhausted, concerned with the exams of his son Laurențiu and nervous about the possibility of his son's not passing the examinations⁵⁶. Large amounts of money from the family budget were spent for Constanța, the future great pianist and teacher. Her studies in Leibnitz, Paris and other European centres meant great sacrifices, often mentioned in letters, and moreover, he often sent his wife Aglaea lest she should not be alone among strangers, as he writes⁵⁷, the two of them being very close to each other. He's really glad about the pianist's success and makes announcements about her concerts in the publications in the field. Besides, he blames his wife for not having paid a critic to write about Constanța's concert in Paris in the winter of 1900, for "if you didn't talk to somebody for some critical articles, then you're likely not to have one, when I hear that in Paris critics are being paid"⁵⁸.

The frequent insubordination of their son, Eduard, pupil at the School of Artillery Officers on Dealul Spirii requires the intervention of his father to D. A. Sturdza. The youngest member of the family, who had been insubordinate since childhood, was caught by his superiors walking together with another colleague in the company of a prostitute, being sent to prison, risking to be expelled from school. In the two letters, addressed to his protector, old Erbiceanu weighs his age and his work in the benefit of the country, begging mercy for his son. Besides, he's willing to intercede to King Carol I to solve the problem that endangered the future of his child⁵⁹. He also appeals to his friend Iacob Negruzzi⁶⁰ for the exemption from military service of his nephew, Octav

56. Constanța Erbiceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 100 (the letter from Bucharest, 21.10.1897, Aglaea to Constanța).

57. *Ibidem*, p. 145 (the letter from Bucharest, 15.02.1900, Constantin Erbiceanu to Constanța and Aglaea).

58. *Ibidem*.

59. We reproduce only the first and the last rows of the letter to D. A. Sturdza which reveal the father's despair: "Dear Mr. Sturdza, I humbly beg your pardon. May that the benefits I brought to my country and my venerable age to soften your heart for the sake of a poor father". And he ended: "Forgive my crying while I'm writing these rows. Have mercy!" (Biblioteca Academiei Române, București, the letter of the 20th of September 1901, cota S 28 (2)/DCCCLXXV).

60. Biblioteca Academiei Române, București, the letter of the 4th of January 1891, cota S 27LI.

Erbiceanu (former student at the University of Athens and infected, as his father and uncle, with the “virus” of the Hellenism).

But there is also the other side of the coin: the family supported the scholar whenever it was necessary. The main support was his wife Aglaea, 15 years younger than him. The age gap approached them even more. She was the one who turned him gradually from a morose Moldavian into a man of society. It is she who consciously gives up a lot for her husband’s career and professional satisfaction. An excerpt from mother—daughter mail correspondence is revelatory in this respect: “I don’t want anything for me, wrote Aglaea Erbiceanu, but the best for my family, especially for dear Constantin who is honest and hard-working”.

The scholar’s physical suffering due to a stubborn phlebitis as a consequence to his overworking, a leit-motif both of his works, autobiographies and letters, led to his being less energetic in his last years. Although he slows down after his entrance at the Academy, he’s under medical or balneary treatment, his health having been irremediably affected; he was very old. C. Erbiceanu was dying in Bucharest in the night of March 8th 1913, having his friends and some of the family members around him. At the Academy, after the president I. C. Negruzzi made the announcement, the session in that morning marked their regret by standing silently. N. Iorga assigned to deliver the funeral speech on behalf of the High Forum.

At the burial there were present many personalities of the cultural society, such as N. Iorga, I. C. Negruzzi, M. Șuțu, and also friends and colleagues at the Faculty of Theology and “*Biserica Ortodoxă Română*” magazine. The funeral speeches, given by N. Iorga in the name of the Academy, Badea Cireșeanu, in the name of the Faculty of Theology, P. Gârboviceanu in the name of the Central Seminary and of the magazine, I. Nistor on behalf of the students in theology, expressed their honours for the deceased scholar⁶¹. It was, doubtlessly, a much better circumstance than the impact at the death of another academician, B. P. Hașdeu, when, as it is well-known, the Academy, the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy and the General Department of National Archives sent

61. All these 4 funeral speeches are to be found in “*Biserica Ortodoxă Română*”, XXXVII (1913), no. 1, pp. 74-87.

all of them only one representative, in the person of D. Onciul⁶².

The generations to come were not so generous about Erbiceanu as they were during his lifetime, because the echoes of his career and work were constantly fading out. If in 1914 V. Pârvan praised the scholar in the opening discourse at the Academy, mainly appreciating “the source of knowledge” on the education and ecclesiastic background which the scholar’s work placed in the historiography, C. Erbiceanu draw too little attention from specialists after his disappearance. Today there is no study to deal with the personality and contribution in the field of cultural history⁶³, although many of the conclusions the pioneer Hellenist reached to are still valid⁶⁴.

But which are the reasons of his being thoroughly ignored? We surely have nothing to do with a “conspiracy of silence” as in the case of B. P. Hașdeu. He kept on being acknowledged as a theologian by theologs and as a historian by historians. Let’s try to answer.

First of all, in his last years, C. Erbiceanu, being in pains, he wasn’t so active, either as a publicist or at the Academy, which considerably enlarged the gap between his image and that of other young enthusiast fellows in the “critical trend”. In the second place, we should not be ignorant of the fact that the Romanian-Greek studies (especially the cultural ones), which he himself initiated, was no longer new but an interest for some specialists better and better trained, such as C. Litza,

62. Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, *Concepția istorică a lui B.P. Hașdeu*, in “Studii”, X, 1957, nr. 5, p. 141.

63. There were two articles of very low quality without critical spirit which present Erbiceanu as theologian and historian of the Church (Manole Petru, *Constantin Erbiceanu*, in “Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei”, 1960, XXXVI, nr. 3-4, pp. 248-254; Teodor N. Manolache, *Constantin Erbiceanu*, in “Mitropolia Olteniei”, XV, 1963, nr. 3-4, pp. 247-252. There is also here a brief layout in *Centenarul Facultății și Institutului de Teologie din București*, în “Studii Teologice”, XXXIV (1982), nr. 1-2, pp. 31-33). In fact the authors make use only of the autobiography quoted by us as source of inspiration (C. Erbiceanu, *Viața scrisă de mine...*) and the approach is entirely superficial, their printing being probably imposed by the 50 years since the scholar’s disappearance.

64. Erbiceanu was little quoted by specialists, mainly to specify that he omitted this or that manuscript, that he couldn’t read properly a signature or a dedication, which didn’t escape the one who mentions him. Except: Vasile Grecu in *Abriss der rumanischer Byzantinistik* (in *Sudost-Forschungen*, Oktober 1942, VII Jahrgang, Heft 1/2, pp. 164-201) and Alexandru Elian in *Die Byzantinischen Studien in Rumanien. Bemerkungen und Ergänzungen zu einem “Abriss der rumanischen Byzantinistik”* (in *Balciana* V₁ (1943) 33-78).

G. Murnu, Orest Tafrali, N. Iorga and Demosthene Russo. In the third place, in the tumult of the 20th century, his former friends and fellows would have different scientific views and mentalities from “Mr. Costachi” the man of the second half of the 19th century, surpassed in many ways. There was a gap which deepened as time went by. Having studied in Iassy and Athens, on methods which were thought to be obsolete and old at the end of the century, he could no longer compare himself to the newcomers who were studying in the western countries and no longer kept up with the new demands. The injustice was perceived when we realise that the historians were and still are, at one time, outdated in methods, mentality and style and there still must remain something that turns into classicism. In the fourth place, as Hellenist, Erbiceanu was confronted with a harsh attack coming from Demosthene Russo, the authority in the field between the two world wars. Although the latter frequently made use of C. Erbiceanu’s publishing (*St. Nifon’s Life*, *The Chronograph of Dorotei from Monembasia*, etc) in his studies, noticing oversights and mistakes in his translations —typical, we would say, of those times— he often considers C. Erbiceanu as an improvised Hellenist, an amateur who did not come to have complete knowledge of Greek language and to use it with efficiency. “Neither Erbiceanu’s translations nor anything that came out his pen, is recommendable”, wrote Demosthene Russo⁶⁵, referring to the texts translated by the Neohellenist in *Cronicarii greci*. The devaluation of C. Erbiceanu’s image as Hellenist in the 20th century is also a consequence of the reproaches made this way by the renowned Byzantinist.

Another controversial issue is his election in the most imposing cultural and scientific forum in the country, the Romanian Academy, a moment that labels his full consecration in his life. Since he was so soon forgotten, did he become a member of the Academy on his own credit?

65. Demosthene Russo, *N. Chiparissa, Cronica Moldovei*, in D. Russo, *Studii istorice greco-române*, Opere postume, Fundația “Regele Carol II”, București 1939, t. II, pp. 482-483. It seems that D. Russo’s attitude changed after the scholar’s death (1913), as in 1901, in a revue of the study *Manuscrise grecești în Biblioteca Academiei Române* (*Greek manuscripts in the Library of the Romanian Academy*), edited by the Byzantinist C. Litzica, thought that “the only tireless worker in Greek influences in the country was professor Constantin Erbiceanu...” D. Russo, *Manuscrisele grecești din Biblioteca Academiei Române. Notițe critice și paleografice* (*Greek manuscripts in the Library of the Romanian Academy. Critical and paleographical Notes*), excerpt from “*Noua Revistă Română*”, t. III, 1901, p. 3).

Was there any need for a specialist in the new field promoted by him or were there any other criteria than work and the scientific impact, being greatly supported and stealthily introduced? Or perhaps, wasn't there another advantageous offer as long as many of the academicians of those times didn't particularly stand out?

Although he had friends and supporters in the academic circle, where he was honoured as a reliable and excellent scientist, C. Erbiceanu entered the Academy and followed the career we talked about just because he was fit for his destiny, he was well-trained for science and because specialists in the field of Greek-Romanian studies were needed. How else can we explain the torrent of books, brochures and articles in Byzantine and Neo-Greek studies since the beginning of the 20th century? All the data we possess lead to this conclusion.

The Neohellenist did not have the posterity he would have deserved. Being a pioneer in the field of Greek influences in the Romanian culture space, mainly in the Phanariot age, he nonetheless remains a classicist and a symbol. There obviously existed a distance of values between him and the representatives of the new historical trend such as N. Iorga or V. Pârvan which was mostly due to the differences of age and education. To us, C. Erbiceanu is the excellent scholar whom we cannot simply judge according to the criteria of the "critics trend" and who enabled the transition in age, method and view, from the times of V. A. Urechia and A. D. Xenopol to those of the above-mentioned "young" historians.