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Life story of Radion Chiaburu

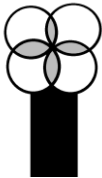
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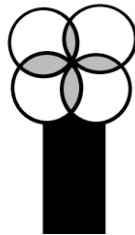


“Because every family has its history”

Life story of Radion Chiaburu

(b.10 April 1920)

classmate with
Great Prince of Alba Iulia
Mihai of Romania
(in classes I-V of high school,
between 1933-1937)



Memoriae



Radion Chiaburu and Gheorghe Dușa, classmate at the “palatine class”. Photo made by (then) Prince Mihai of Romania.

FOREWORD

The present book reunites the memories of Mr. Radion Chiaburu, with the purpose of making them known to those interested, especially to family. A central aspect of the biography is represented by years 1933-1937, when, for five years, Radion Chiaburu was classmate to the Prince Heir, Mihai (Michael) of Romania¹.

These stories were collected by us in September-November 2013, during multiple “biographical interviews”, at the request of his niece, Miss Blanca Iordan. We first met with Mr. Chiaburu on Sunday, 1 September, after which followed the actual interviews (all of them recorded): Tuesday, 3 September; Tuesday, 10 September; Thursday, 19 September; Tuesday, 24 September; Thursday, 3 October; Tuesday, 8 October; Tuesday, 5 November.

Writing the memories, we followed their chronological order: we tried to present the “palatine class” as a special episode of Radion’s life – his perspective being completed by that of his other classmates (Lascăr Zamfirescu, Ioan Jurchescu, Mircea Ionnițiu). Because we weren’t the first² (and, we hope, we won’t be the last) to write about this subject, we tried to read all the sources we could find (especially articles from papers and historical magazines). Finally, the palatine class became, naturally, the most consistent part of the book (it occupies more than half of it).

Of great help was Miss Florentina Țone who kindly provided us the texts written by her about the “palatine class” (from which not all were found on the Internet) and gave us some information “behind” the interviews.

¹ We used the Romanian version of the name Mihai (and not the English one, Michael) of patriotic reasons.

² The merit of realising the first reportage about the “palatine class” (in 2007) belongs to Miss Florentina Stoian (Țone), journalist at Romanian paper “Adevărul” (*The Truth*).

We referred to the protagonist by its first name, Radion¹, not due to lack of respect, but to ease the reading of the book (always writing, in a polite way, “Mr. Chiaburu”, would have made the book more difficult to be read).

I think that the memoirs of Mr. Radion Chiaburu are interesting in a way that would span outside the country because it shows an amazing destiny, telling the story of a Romanian peasant from Bessarabia who, for his qualities (intelligence and virtue), was selected in the royal class of Prince Heir Mihai of Romania at Bucharest. This moment of his biography strongly affected his ulterior life.

By translating this book we also tried to put Monarchy in a different light for those not having the tradition of Royalty², showing one of its advantages: that the future King is grown and educated to be Monarch.

- Tudor Vișan-Miu,
January 2014

P.S.: We mention that us – me and my twin brother, Michael – aren't students at the “Saint Sava” National College (to which the “palatine class” belonged), but at another centenary high school, “Gheorghe Lazăr”.

¹ In the first version of the book we had written “Rodian” instead of “Radion” – resembling the Russian version of the name (“Rodion”).

² Romania was a Kingdom between 1866 and 1948. The Republic was created by Soviets, the communist regime falling in 1989. Despite Romania remained a republic after 1990, there are some (including us) that consider restoring Royalty would be legitimate and in the benefit of the country.

History of Bessarabia

The “historical Bessarabia” was included in Burebista’s old kingdom of Dacia (82-44 B.C.). After his death, under Roman rule came only the southern part of the territory (in 57), the rest remaining outside of Roman direct control even after the Kingdom of Dacia was fully conquered (in 106). After the Romans retreated from Dacia (in 271), the territory was invaded by nomadic tribes in the III and XI centuries. Genovese travellers built or extended strongholds on the Black Sea shore (eg. Cetatea Albă) and Danube (eg. Chilia, Ismail). In the first part of the XIVth century – after fights against the Tatars (1328-42), the territory was conquered by Wallachian ruler Basarab I (c.1310-1352); the Wallachian rule lasted until Mircea “the Elder” (1386-1418), coming under Moldavian rule in 1365, during Alexander “the Good” (1401-33). In 1484, Ottoman ruler Bayezid II (1481-1512) conquered Chilia, Ismail and Cetatea Albă. *To make a distinction between the Ottoman-conquered Moldavian territory and the one left to Moldavia, two names were used for the first territory: **Bugeac** (from “Bucak”=“boundary land”, in Turkish) or **Bessarabia**.* In 1538, after Moldavian ruler Petru Rareș (1527-38; 1541-46) fought against the Ottoman empire, Sultan Suleiman “the Magnificent” (1520-1566) retaliated, conquering Tighina stronghold – expanding the “Bugeac”. In 1713, the Ottomans conquered Hotin stronghold. During the Turkish occupation, tatars became the majority population in Bugeac. In the Russo-Turkish war of 1806-1812, the Russian Empire occupied most of the Romanian territory. Winning the war, Russia initially demanded at the peace talks domination over both Romanian countries (Wallachia and Moldavia), but, under pressure of external factors, especially the imminent war between Russia and France (their alliance gradually crumbling), reduced its claims to all Moldavia and, in final, only to the territory between Dniester and Prut (from which a part belonged to the Ottoman Empire, but the rest to Moldavia)¹. Under the Russian domination over “Bessarabia”², the Russian Empire made population changes to “russify” the region, deporting Turks, Tatars and over 30.000 Moldavians (that resettled in Ottoman-ruled Moldavia) and bringing instead 60.000 Bulgarians and 150.000 Russians and Ukrainians. Also, the name of cities were russified (eg. Chișinău -> Kișiniov) or Turkish names were used instead of Moldavian ones (eg. Frumoasa ->Kagul, Oblucița ->Ismail, Cetatea Albă ->Akkerman, Tighina ->Bender). *This way, the Russian authorities tried to*

erase the “Moldavian history” of Bessarabia.

After the Crimean war (1853-1856)³, through the Treaty of Paris, Wallachia and Moldavia rested under Ottoman rule, while Moldavia received a part of the Bugeac (Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail counties) as a “buffer area” between the Ottoman territories and Russia. After the union of Wallachia with Moldavia (1859) that followed after the Treaty of Paris, the 3 counties were included in the United Principalities, that won independence from the Ottoman Empire through the war of 1877-78, being allied with Russia, but with the price of losing the three territories (Cahul, Bolgrad, Ismail) that gave Russia the much-desired access to the Danube.

The Russian domination over Bessarabia lasted until 1917.

¹ The Treaty of Bucharest from 28 May 1812, signed at Manuc’s Inn, violated international law, because the Ottoman Empire ceded territories that didn’t belong to it but to a vassal autonomous state (Moldavia), whose territorial integrity the Empire had to protect. This „diplomatical fraud” was possible due to the support given by France (that time, the greatest European power) to Russia, and the ability of the French negotiator Alexandre-Louis Andrault, count de Langeron, who served the interests of the tsar.

² The Russian empire expanded the name of „Bessarabia” from the Bugeac of 1484 and the territories later conquered by the Ottomans (eg. Tighina, Hotin) to the **entire territory between the Dniester and Prut**, in order to justify to the Great Powers the annexation of a territory that belonged to their previous allies, the Moldavians, that aided the Russian armies in the war against the Ottomans (!). For this, they made use of a confusion from the Polish chronicles and later narrative creations, that suggested the existence of a separate province called „Bessarabia” that existed at the middle of the XIIIth century between Prut and Dniester.

³ War in which Russia lost to an alliance between the Second French Empire, the British Empire, the Ottoman Empire and Sardinia. Its causes were multiple: for the British, it was the fear of the Russian expansion to India; for the catholic French, it was the fight with orthodox Russia for influence in the Ottoman-controlled „Holly Land”. The alliance of the western powers with the Ottoman Empire was seen by Russia as a treason, but future tsars (Alexander II and III) didn’t seek „vengeance”.

FAMILY. HOME VILLAGE. PRIMARY STUDIES

Radion Chiaburu was born on 10 April 1920, in the village Peceștea (Peciște)¹ from Orhei county, in the region of Bessarabia (between Prut and Dniester rivers), in the Kingdom of Romania.

Radion's father was Nicoale (Nicholas) Chiaburu, "free peasant" which worked his own lands. His mother was Elisabeta (Elisabeth), wife of a peasant – which, at the countryside, means a combination between housekeeping, raising children and working the fields.

According to locals, Peceștea is an old village of "răzeși"² from the time of Moldavian voievod Ștefan (Stephen) Mușatin "the Great" (1457-1504), "even older".

That days, the peasant families had many childreb. In the same way, the Chiaburu family was pretty large, Radion being the first born, the biggest of the brothers.

In order, after him followed (*I approximate the year of birth*):

- **ION** – with one and a half year younger (b.1921 – in autumn)
- **PARASCHIVA** – 3 years younger (b.1923)
- **ANDREI** – 8 years younger (b.1928)
- **NINA** – 10 years younger (b.1930)
- **CONSTANTIN** – younger than Nina but older than Pavel (born between 1931-1936)
- **PAVEL** – 17 years younger (b.1937)

¹ Today a village in the Moldavian Republic. At the 2004 census, it had 1914 villagers. A hundred years before, it has 1600 settlers (in 1904, according to the "Geographical Dictionary" made by Zamfire Arbore).

² In the Middle Ages, in Moldavia, a "răzeș" was a free peasant which belonged to large groups owning in common the fields of the village, but who worked independently, with his family, on the agricultural lot assigned to him.

Radion's father, Nicolae, also had many brothers (seven or eight). Older than Nicolae was Ștefan (Stephen), who had plenty children, between them being Valentin (b.1915), primary cousin to Radion.

The father's family name, CHIABURU, meaning "rich peasant", isn't incidental, but significant: Nicolae's father, Radion's grandfather, Andrei (Andrew) Chiaburu, was a rich peasant, a "chiabur"¹. Andrei Chiaburu was a leading peasant of his village, one of the richest from Peceșteea. Radion doesn't remember when his grandfather was granted land, but knows that he left it to his children, equally dividing it, a part of land coming to Nicolae, his father. Nicolae Chiaburu also bought land, besides the one he owned, so he could leave also it inheritance for his children: to his daughters, as dowry at marriage, to his sons, as the land they had to work to assure their living.

While purchasing land, a judicial problem appeared: a law suit regarding 5 hectometers of land bought at the border between the Peçiște village, purely Romanian, and the Puzopca village, purely Russian. Even though a jurist, Radion doesn't know the details of this case – that ended in 1940, after the Russians reoccupied Bessarabia; that was it's result, we don't know – in the new historical conditions, it was irrelevant, anyway. This experience disconcerted his father in a significant way. After years, he told his son: *"You should become a lawyer, so that in this way you will help me reclaim the land for which I had to pay twice"*.

The settlement (Peceșteea) being very old, it was profoundly affected by the period of Russian domination on the territory, that lasted more than a century (1812-1918). It had lasting effects on many "fields", such as administration:

¹ The word "chiabur" comes from Turkish *kibar/kiabir*, which means "noble, rich, wealthy" or "polite, courteous". The proper sense of the Romanian word refers to the rich peasant forming the bourgeoisie of the villages, who possessed more land they could work alone (just in family), using paid labor force to work their fields.

the settlements were organised only in villages and not grouped in communes (like on the rest of the Romanian territory) – a situation found even in today Bessarabia.

Also, the fact that the state functions were previously occupied on ethnic criterias, only by the “ruling ethnicity” (the Russians), had lasting effects: even after Bessarabia united with Romania (1918), the Romanians couldn't immediately occupy the important offices (still held by Russians), despite that Peciște village was “purely Romanian”.

Another problem was the lack of education: the Romanians from Bessarabia from until 1918 could study only in Russian schools, receiving insufficient and rather poor education. Also, they were taught only in Russian Cyrillic alphabet – having different, special letters -, reason for which, after 1918, they had to learn the Romanian Latin alphabet together with their children.

Eventually, the state of the village was raised – through education – in two ways: by the efforts of the teachers who came from the Romanian Kingdom to Bessarabia; by the “interbellic generation” (to which Radion belonged), the first in the village to follow superior studies (high school) and professions (teachers, priests, craftsmen);

Radion should have started the primary studies at 7 years in his native village (Pecește) in year 1927 but he was sick in the first year of school, beginning his studies at 8.

The school of the village was new, being established 10 years before (1918). It had a single class, where children of different ages studied. Here, Radion had as classmate the son of the priest, Nicolae Hrișcă.

In the first years, the teacher was the priest's wife, who was also Radion's godmother (godfather being the priest). In the fourth class, teacher was Efrim Prodan, who trained the children for the examen to enter high school. The fact that the school's teacher was hosted by Radion's family, in their house, was an advantage for Radion, who could receive additional training – that helped him for the exams and later school performance.

LICEUL „ALEXANDRU DONICI”

After Radion graduated the 4 primary classes, with good results, his father spoke with one of his brothers, Ștefan (Radion’s uncle), asking for an advice: to which high school should he send his son, who studied so well? Ștefan recommended the High school for boys „Alexandru Donici” of Chișinău¹, that his own son (Valentin) was still following at that time (he as in the 7th class of high school, out of 8). Radion’s parents did well know what would following high school at Chișinău mean: send their son far from home for 8 years, seeing him only during holidays (Christmas, Pesach and Summer holidays), with the perspective Radion would move to the city. Knowing it’s for his best – they let him go.

“Alexandru Donici” High School was considered a *“institution for children coming from less rich families, but with capabilities”*². Beside its prestigious graduates³, a proof to this will be Radion’s own later school performance (as we shall see in the following chapters). Well trained, Radion passed the examen to enter high school with the highest grade, “Very good”⁴.

After being admitted to school, Radion had to obtain textbooks for school. Those days, few printed books were found in Bessarabia, Radion having to buy already used books from former students. Going from a place to another buying old books, he got sick of typhoid fever – being hospitalized most of the first trimester of school. After he got better, going to school in November or December 1932, he

¹ Chișinău was at 71 kilometers distance from Peceștea village.

² <http://chisinaul.blogspot.ro/2012/04/liceul-alexandru-donici-din-chisinau.html>

³ They studied here: doctor **Grigore Alexandru Benetato** (1905-1972); linguist **Nicolae Corlăteanu** (1915-2005); folklorist and ethnographer **Petre V. Ștefănuță** (1906-1942). *The name of the institution comes from fabulist poet Alecu Donici (1806-1865).*

⁴ Those time, in Bessarabia, high school grades were not from 1 to 10 (as in today Romania), but from 1 to 4 (“Bad”, “Not to good”, “Good”, “Very good”) – similar to the Russian model, from 1 to 5.

was pretty weak. The headmaster saw him and said: “*Dear boy, go home, eat well in Christmas, and come to school after New Year...!*”. Indeed, sitting home during the holidays, he fully healed, returning to Chişinău in January. There he was staying at the boarding school – with bedrooms that once belonged to „Sfatul Țării” (*The Nation’s Council*), the Parliament of Bessarabia, the school’s building being its seat in 1917-1919¹.

Although he had just recovered from a severe illness, the teachers weren’t quite indulgent with him, but actually started very soon to evaluate his knowledge and give him grades. Radion managed to learn in a few days what he lost in weeks of school while being sick and get only “Good” and “Very good” grades (this wouldn’t have been possible if he wasn’t well trained since entering high school). He was given a “Not good” grade to a subject that required more than knowledge: talent. But this matter and how did Radion got to continue his studies in the Kingdom’s capital will be explained in the following chapter.

PALATINE CLASS

Historical note:

«For those not familiar with the details of our history, I must explain that prince Michael became heir of the throne when prince Carol, his father, renounced “beyond recall” to his rights to the throne. In 1927, king Ferdinand died, and young

¹ During its history, the school building belonged to the following institutions: High school for boys no. 3 (1901-1917), “Sfatul Țării” (1917-1919), “Alexandru Donici” High School (1919-1933), Faculty of Agronomy of Iași University (1933-1940), Institute of Linguistics and Literature of Tiraspol (1940-1945), the Soviet administration / Agricultural Institute of Chişinău (after 1945), the Academy of Theater, Arts and Music of the Moldavian Republic (after 1990). The building resisted two world wars (1914-1918; 1939-1945), a Bolshevik revolution of 1917, two big earthquakes (10 November 1940, 4 March 1977), and today is in a nearly perfect shape.

prince Mihai became King of Romania. Being infant, he was given a Regency. Three years later, in 8 June 1930, prince Carol returned to Romania, with the support of some politicians who had enough of the monopoly the Brătianu family and the Liberal Party had in the government. When he arrived in Bucharest, Carol was proclaimed king, and his son Mihai, the former king, was declared the new prince heir, with the title of “Grand Prince of Alba Iulia”.»
(Mircea Ionițiu, „Memories and thoughts”, 1993)

An unexpected choice

«In year 1932, king Carol II formed a committee with a special task: travel the country and find students for the „palatine class” (a special classroom for future king Mihai, then a 11 years child). Carol II wished his son would study among representatives of all social classes, from all the historical provinces, including two children from the ethnical minorities: Hungarian and German. The class, formed at Carol’s initiative and supported by minister of Education Dimitrie Gusti, was to be formed by children from Mihai’s generation, “good in mind and body”, that passed with grade 10 the examen to enter high school¹, and function in the Royal Palace. It would be a mix between a civil and a military school: it belonged to “Saint Sava” National College of Bucharest, but coordinated by military officers².

Those days, high school lasted 8 years, following the 4 classes of primary school that the Prince followed at home with teacher Nicolae Saxu. [...]»

(Florentina Țone, „A school for one child”) [1]

¹ Other criteria: the “chosen” be healthy, have a nice look and have a positive influence over Prince Mihai.

² Directors: in first years - colonel **Traian Eremia Grigorescu** and lieutenant-colonel **Emil Pălăngeanu**; after IVth class: commander **Preda Fundățeanu** and captain **Mircea Tomescu**; from VIIth class deputy-colonel **Dumitru Dămăceanu** and major **Mircea Tomescu**.



Radion Chiaburu as student of
the "palatine class" in Bucharest

In January 1933, looking for a peasant's son to choose for the "palatine class", teacher Nicolae Saxu - member of the committee to form the "palatine class", former private tutor of Prince Mihai during the first 4 years of school (1928-1932). teacher of music and drawing - came to three high schools in Chişinău, one of them being "Alexandru Donici" High School. There he evaluated many students, one of them being Radion Chiaburu. He noticed that he had good grades at all classes, with a single exception: musical education – where he received "Not good".

A few days after the day of examination, the "winner" was announced. Since we knew the result, we will observe that Radion being chosen was a problem for two reasons:

- 1) After he was chosen, teacher Saxu told him: *"I noticed you were a clever boy, but you didn't know to sing. Still, I stepped on my soul and picked you"* – in other words, I neglected that you didn't know to sing and appreciated your other qualities. From one perspective, the situation is very impressive: Saxu, who taught music and drawing, chose a boy who didn't have the aptitude of singing (Radion) between the Bessarabians, who, generally, sang beautifully. Thinking about this moment, Radion says: *"What great chance I had, even lacking the talent to sing!..."*.
- 2) Also, picking him, Saxu ignored the problem of age. Because Radion started the primary school a year later, he was, institutionally, from Prince Mihai's generation (first class of high school), but, as age, he was older than the Prince and all his other classmates by one year. *"As age, I was a mistake in the Prince's class, being the eldest"*, says Radion.

"I don't know why he picked me, there were many good students in high school" – says Radion, with great modesty

A day after Saxu's visit, the rumor that Radion would be picked in the "palatine class" began to spread. To prepare his parents for this possibility, Radion wrote home: *"Mom and dad, it is possible that I may go from Chişinău to Bucharest, because I may have been selected to study in the class of Prince Mihai"*. Reading his letter, his parents were glad for this amazing achievement, but, in the same time, sad that Radion would depart from his homeland. His mother was crying, fearing she wouldn't see her son: *"They took my boy! I won't see him!..."*. Still, they let him go. For them, simple peasants, it was an extraordinary difference from Radion studying, after 4 classes in Peceştea village, from 8 years in Chişinău (between the best), to 8 years in Bucharest, in the same class with the Prince! But, as we shall see, Radion will adapt perfectly, becoming one of first students of the class!

One evening, while making his homeworks at the boarding school with another classmate, the deputy headmaster came: "Who is Chiaburu?". "I", he replied. "Come with me to the headmaster". Arriving in his office, the headmaster told him: "Young master, I find great joy in telling you were selected in the class of Prince Mihai. You will go tomorrow morning in Bucharest. Mr. Pamfil, deputy of Orhei county, teacher of chemistry and physics at our school, will come with you". Radion remained speechless. He made his luggage and, joined by deputy Pamfil, he left with the train to Bucharest, at the Ministry of Education. There, Radion was asked a parent: *"What are you doing here?"*. Radion explained he was selected for the Prince's class. *"Indeed? Then you will be classmate with my son: Dan Mavrus"*. The man he knew that day (Ion Mavrus) will play a significant role in his life (of this, we'll talk later). Meeting there, Mr. Mavrus kindly helped them reach the Royal Palace on Saint Ionică Street, where deputy Pamfil left Radion at the house of captain Petre Petrovici – who will be his host in Bucharest.



Radion in Cișmigiu park. First photo in Bucharest

Ionnițiu also recalled how he got selected in the palatine class: *“By passing the IVth grade exam, we passed to a new stage in our education: we nearly became high-schoolers. [...] But before that, we had to pass the examen to enter the desired high school. As for me, I wished to follow the same school as my brother, Nicolae: Spiru Haret. [...] The results arrived many days after the exam, leaving you pretty much time to sit and worry you may fail and have to prepare for another exam in Autumn. I was very glad when I heard I was admitted to Spiru Haret high school. But my studies here lasted only a trimester. I remember that, when I came to*

school, I was quite arrogant, due to the fact I was the first of my class during the primary studies. But at high school things weren't easy as at Clemanța: after a few lower grades at the classes I thought I was an expert (Romanian language and literature, Geography), I realised I must change my study method and become more serious.

After the school started, in the middle of Autumn, my father got a call from general Traian (Eremia) Grigorescu (son of the hero of the Mărășești battle, Eremia Grigorescu – my note), from the Royal Palace. I was quite impressed. [...] I soon forgot this incident, until when, near Christmas, my father revealed what it was about: I was chosen among a group of students of the same age as Prince Mihai as candidates for the special royal school. I was very proud, although my parents warned me it is possible I may not get selected. They knew there were 3 candidates from Spiru Haret high school, and only one or two could be selected. [...] We gathered at the Royal Palace on Saint Ionică Street on 30 January 1933 (this date is probably imprecise: then took place the official opening of the class, with all students selected, not a preparative reunion – my note). I was directed to a two story building, at the first floor – first on the right. In that room there were many officers and a large group of students. I recognized two classmates, **Dan Cernovodeanu** and Radu Câmpeanu (the others I didn't know). We all waited a few minutes, impressed by the place in which we found ourselves, knowing some of us may become classmates. First spoke general Grigorescu, explaining the reason of this reunion, that not all candidates arrived, some coming from the countryside, and that Prince Mihai will soon come and we will be introduced to him. He told us how to behave. We were arranged by height and waited the arrival of our possible new classmate [...] quite shy, the Prince came and shook everyone's hands. We replied with a formal "Long live your Majesty", as we were suggested, then presented us by name and school. After the Prince left, we were told that we shall know if we got selected or not. I remember quite vague that, no long after that, the school's headmaster, Mr. Focșa, informed me I was selected to the royal class, in which I represent Spiru Haret high school, having to contribute to the institution's prestige. He wished me luck [...]" („Memories și reflecțiuni”, pp.24-25)

In the Prince's class

„Common sense, patriotism and the comrade spirit were the traits that defined these children” – Ioan Jurchescu about his palatine classmates [7]

Selected in January 1933, Radion was the of the “palatine students” to arrive at the Palace (where some came since autumn of winter 1932), at the end of the first trimester. He arrived in the capital on 29 January, coming to the Palace the next day. The official inauguration of the class took place that day, on **30 January 1933** – beginning with a religious service made by Parent Nicolae Popescu, who taught religion at the class: *“a simple service to mark an event, with prays and sprinkling of holy water. Every student had to tell a their part of the pray, that Parent Popescu transformed into a confession of humility and faith” (Ioan Jurchescu)*

At first, the class had 9 students – including Prince Mihai. *“The selection was cleverly made, in order to represent the geographical regions, the social classes and the ethnical minorities” (Mircea Ionnițiu).*

Besides **Radion Chiaburu**, son of a peasant (Nicolae Chiaburu) *from Bessarabia* – Peceștea village, Orhei county, the other 7 were:

- ❖ **Dan Cernovodeanu**, son of an active military officer
- ❖ **Ion Dinulescu**, son of a railway engine driver at the Grivița factory
- ❖ **Mircea Ionnițiu**, son of a librarian at „Cartea Românească” – *The Romanian Book* (Nicolae Ionnițiu)¹

¹ **Mircea Ionnițiu** came, from his father's side, from a family of merchants: his great-grandfather was leader of the craftsmen guild (“staroste”) in Bucharest; his grandfather, Theodosiu (1842-1918), opened a library together with his brother, Constantin; his father, Nicolae (1880-?), studied in Paris and together with other associates, founded the *Cartea Românească* commercial society.

- ❖ **Dan Mavrus**, a lawyer's son, working for a wood factory (Ion Mavrus)
- ❖ **Ștefan Popescu**, a lawyer's son (Tudor Popescu) *all above from Bucharest;*
- ❖ **Tănase Mărgelatu**, a mailman's son *from Muntenia (Crevedia commune, Vlașca county);*
- ❖ **Gheorghe Dușa**, a peasant's son *din Ardeal (Toderița commune, Făgăraș county);*

“At first, the boys were quite shy, but they got more courage due to Prince Mihai, who was very friendly, seeing his colleagues as his future classmates. From then, the nine palatine students became lifetime friends.” [4].

Radion well remembers the moment he came into the classroom: *“captain Petrovici brought me to the entrance. Ion Dinulescu, the shortest by height, opened the door. Everyone had its desk, with the textbooks prepares”*. Colonel Emil Pălăngeanu, one of the school's headmasters, came inside the classroom together with Prince Mihai, introducing Radion to him (who, until then, never saw the Prince at face). After the “introductions” followed a first lesson, then *“in the first break, the Prince comes to me, touches my shoulder and, seeing me quite developed, says: «You will be in my team. The next break we fight with Cernovodeanu»*. *The others already knew each-other and two sides formed: one led by the Prince and the other led by Dan Cernovodeanu: we fought with shields, played ping-pong, practiced archery” [1*]*

To study in the royal class meant privileges as well as duties. Most of them adapted, with the exception of the

He had a brother (Theodosiu) and a sister. The family name (variant: “Ioanițiu”) came from the latinization of “Ioniță”. [“Memories and thoughts”, pp.12-13]. Nicolae Ionnițiu is the author of a history of Romanian publishing houses, „Istoria Editurii Românești” (1943). Before selected in the “palatine class”, Mircea Ionnițiu followed the first high school trimester at “Spiru Haret” High School in Bucharest (that his brother, Nicolae, also followed) – together with Dan Cernovodeanu.

mailman's son, Tănase Mărgelatu, who, although quite capable, didn't adapt, being excluded from the royal class in the first year (I).

In the second year (II), 4 new students joined the other 8 (the Prince included), raising the number of students to 12:

- ❖ **Gheorghe Grămadă**, peasant's son
from Bukovina (Stroiești commune, Suceava county)
- ❖ **Ioan Gheorghe Jurchescu**, a teacher's son
from Banat (comuna Petnic, Caraș-Severin county)
- ❖ **Walter Heltmann**, a teacher's son
from Brașov, representing the German Saxon minority
- ❖ **Ivan Paul Kovacs**, son of a preacher,
from Târgu Mureș, representing the Hungarian minority

At the opening of the new year (September 1934), Parent Nae Popescu held a new religious service, different from the first (30 January 1933) by the fact it included, besides the Orthodox Christian students (Prince Mihai and the others – including Radion), two students of other religion: Lutheran (Walter Heltmann) and Calvinist (Ivan Kovacs). The moment was very different from "today's largely promoted ecumenism" (I. Jurchescu). *While the minoritarians were both Protestants, there weren't Jews neither Romano-Catholics in the class.*

In the Vth class arrived a new colleague:

- ❖ **Lascăr Duiliu Zamfirescu**¹, a diplomat's son (Alexandru Zamfirescu) and a writer's nephew (Duiliu Zamfirescu).

Born on 23 May 1922 in Berlin, he started his studies in Holland at a nun school, „Sacré-Coeur de Jésus“. In his childhood, he lived in many countries (Brazil—at Rio de Janeiro; in Portugal—at Lisbon), where his father was given by Nicolae Titulescu, minister of foreign affairs, the mission to open Romanian legations (embassies). He came to Romania at 14 years (in 1936), when we was selected in the "palatine class" in its 5th year. [“The beautiful boyars of other times: Zamfîreștii and Rosetteștii”, Laurențiu Ungureanu, *Historia.ro*].

After the 5th year, the class was restructured, most of the students being excluded, with a few exception. In the 8th year came a last new student, **Constantin Malaxa** – a industrialist's son, replacing Lascăr Zamfirescu, who continued his studies at „Saint Sava” High School.



At the end of the 4th year (1936): students and teachers

TEACHERS: (*first row*) Ion Chirescu (music and drawing); Parent Nae Popescu (religion); Gheorghe Lazăr (history); Léon Thévenin (French); (*next row*): Cristian Mușceleanu (chemistry-physics); Ion Bratu (maths); vice-admiral Preda Fundățeanu (studies director); major Mircea Tomescu (deputy director), Alexandru Mumuianu (natural sciences).

STUDENTS: (*third row*): Gheorghe Grămadă, Ștefan Popescu, **Radion Chiaburu**, **Prince Mihai** (in the middle), Mircea Ionnițiu, Walter Heltmann, Gheorghe Dușa; (*last row*) – *at left*: Dan Cernovodeanu, Ion Dinulescu; - *at right*: Ioan Jurchescu, Ivan Kovacs (*Dan Mavrus, who died during the 4th grade, is missing*).

Very inventive, Prince Mihai had nicknames for all his classmates (usually coming from their family name): „Chiabi” for Radion Chiaburu; „Ioani” for Mircea Ionnițiu; „Dindin” for Dan Cernovodeanu; „Helti” for Walter Heltmann; „Jurchi” for Ioan Jurchescu; „Zamfi” for Lascăr Zamfirescu. Meanwhile, all his classmates referred to him as “Your Highness”, being an error to tell him otherwise: only king Carol II called him „Mihăiță”.

Every palatine student had its own desk, according to his height - Dan Mavrus being the tallest, followed by Radion, then by the Prince (who, in the next years, became taller); the shortest was Dinulescu.

A host with luck

The school year had the following structure:

- ❖ the first trimester (starting on 1 September) took place at Sinaia, Peleș Castle (where king Carol II and his court went in that period), until the winter holidays;
- ❖ after Lord’s Baptism (6 January), the students returned to Bucharest, their classroom being inside the Royal Palace on Saint Ionică Street, near “Casa Nouă” (New House) where the king and prince lived
- ❖ at the end, near summer, was the “summary month” (with travels across the country).

„At Peleș castle, the school was established in the apartments of queen Elena, mother of prince Mihai. The classroom was in the former grand hall of the queen, the furniture being replaced with desks. The gym was improvised

Such an error was made by Parent Nae Popescu, who addressed him without “Your Highness”: “*Answer, prince...!*”. “The class was dumbfounded. The Prince remained silent, and the lesson continued normally” – remembers Ioan Jurchescu [7].

² “Casa Nouă” had multiple floors: a basement, a ground floor – where Prince Mihai slept, and the 1st floor – the king’s bedroom.

in the former painting and carving workshop of queen Elisabeta¹. The students and teachers lived in the rooms dedicated to the royal adjutants and ladies of honor (in every room slept at least three children – my note). *“Mihai’s bedroom was near the king’s. But when the king left Sinaia, the prince came to sleep in the same bedroom with us”*. [1*]

In Bucharest, the schoolgrounds inside the palace were described by Radion in the following way: *“On the first floor was the gym, at floor 1 – our classroom and the teacher’s room², the cantina with ping-pong tables, and, above, some kind of workshop to prepare the school curriculum³”*.

In January 1933, the classes started from the second trimester. Arriving last, Radion was hosted⁴ by captain Petre Petrovici of the Royal Guard, in a house near the Palace – separated only by a courtyard.

One morning, lieutenant-colonel Emil Pălăngeanu, teacher at the Military Institute for Physical Training, called Radion to accompany the Prince at his morning exercises, so he wouldn’t be alone. Between 7:00 and 7:30, they did runs, exercises, 15 minutes of gymnastics, then returned home to

Wife of king Carol I (1866-1914) – uncle of king Ferdinand (1914-1927), Mihai’s grandfather.

² The teacher’s room was not full of teachers (as they generally are): in one break, you would find there, at most, the teacher of the previous class, the one who was going to teach after the break and, possibly, the one after him. Otherwise, teachers also taught at other schools.

³ A team of two-three dignitaries from the Minister of Education gathered there to prepare the special curriculum of the royal class.

⁴ Another classmate, Gheorghe Dușa, was hosted by captain Clinteanu of the Royal Guard (starting from the 2nd year: alongside Ivan Kovacs). Most of the students lived in palace buildings, with a few exceptions (eg. Walter Heltmann was hosted by the German teacher, Bernhard Capesius).

prepare for school. Later, the morning workout wasn't coordinated by Pălăngeanu, him being replaced by the physical education teacher, Mr. Roșală.

The 5 classes lasted from 8:00 to 12:50. In Radion's words: *"Every day we started lessons at 8:00 AM. At 9:50 was the big break when we ate. We had classes until 13:00, when the prince left for lunch with the king (accompanied by 2-3 classmates or, in Tuesdays, by the whole class)".* In the evening, before 17:00 to 19:00, the prince did additional, private classes. Again, the tutoring teacher called Radion to accompany the Prince at his lessons. *"This way, I received multiple training"*. Moreover, due to the vicinity of their homes, Radion made his homeworks for the next day together with the Prince. This way, they could advise each other regarding different matters. *"If he didn't understand something, he asked me. If I didn't understand, I asked him"*.

Due to the fact that, arriving last, Radion lived in a home closest to the Prince, exclusively benefiting from activities like the morning exercises, additional private lessons or doing homeworks. I can't refrain from observing that this situation proves the truth of an old saying: **"Last will become first"**.

An interesting event: **"About Magda Lupescu** (mistress of king Carol II) ***I probably knew less than my classmates.*** *I knew she was the reason my father divorced from mother. [...] I remember, one morning, I came from school to the New House behind it. Arriving there, Magda Lupescu was just leaving – and was going to the car. When she saw me, she ran back and slammed the door. It was the first time I saw her, from afar. I may have been foolish, but I did the imprudence of relating this whole story, to which I gave important signification, to one of my classmates, (Dan) Mavrus. I thought of him as someone close to me, otherwise I wouldn't have told him anything. Only if I knew his parents were friends with Magda Lupescu... Through them, this information reached her. After two-three days, my father called me, told me that he found out everything and that he considers it is time I meet her [...]."*

– King Mihai, în "Dialogues..." (Mircea Ciobanu, Humanitas, 3rd edition, 2008, p.136)



Students of the palatine class
in front of Peleş castle
(where the 1st trimester of school was made)

Prestigious teachers

„The curriculum wasn't to different from the general requirements of the normal classes followed by students in the whole country. [...] A special attention was given to sport (gymnastics, ski, camping, riding, tennis), considered essential for a harmonious development. [...]” - Ștefan Ion Ghilimescu [3]

The teachers of the royal class were selected from various schools or colleges in Bucharest. In choosing them, king Carol II consulted prestigious historian Nicolae Iorga¹.

The Romanian language and literature teacher was Gheorghe Nedioglu from „Gheorghe Șincai” High School (whose headmaster he was between 1919 and 1939), author of various school textbooks.

The maths teacher was Ion Gheorghe Bratu.

History was taught by various teachers: in the first years, Enache Ionescu, in the 5th grade, Gheorghe Lazăr, descendant of the famous teacher from Avrig with the same name². Some special lessons referring to the country's grand rulers (like Mircea “the Elder”, Vlad “Dracula”, Ștefan “the Great”, Mihai “the Brave”) were taught by Nicolae Iorga.

Geography was taught by Ion Conea and geographer Simion Mehedinți (1868-1962), textbook author.

Nicolae Iorga (b.17 January 1871 – d.27 November 1940) was a Romanian historian. He produced an unusually large body of scholarly works (1003 books, 12.755 articles, 4963 reviews), consecrating his international reputation as a medievalist, Byzantinist, Latinist, Slavist, art historian and philosopher of history. Held teaching positions at the University of Bucharest, the University of Paris and several other academic institutions. Founder of the International Congress of Byzantine Studies and the Institute of South-East European Studies.

² **Gheorghe Lazăr** (1779-1823) is the founder of the first Romanian-language school in Wallachia, “Saint Sava” school in Bucharest (1818).

Natural sciences (zoology, botany, anatomy) were taught by Alexandru Mumuianu, physics and chemistry – by Cristian Muşceleanu (who Radion especially appreciated for the practical nature of his courses).

Religion and Latin was taught by “Nae” Nicolae M. Popescu¹ (1881-1963), member of the Academy and teacher at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1922-1946).

As foreign languages², they studied:

French - with Léon Thévenin (first 4 years), then M. Condeescu (5th year); and

German – with Karl Bernhard (1889-1981), headmaster of the German High School (from 1923), teacher at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures – German Department at the University of Bucharest, linguist and writer; he hosted at his own house Saxon Walter Heltmann³.

Philosophy was taught by Ion Zamfirescu (1907-2001), also teacher at three other prestigious school: „Saint Sava”, „Gheorghe Lazăr” and „Mihai Viteazul” (where he taught until 1940¹). In the 6th grade, psychology was also studied with Vasile Băncilă², teacher at „Mihai Viteazul” High School. Law lessons were given by jurist Ion V. Gruia (1895-

Nicolae Popescu (b.10 February 1881 – d.11 February 1963), from a family of priests, became member of the Romanian Academy on 5 June 1923, its vicepresident between 30 May 1939 – 1 June 1943, president of its History Department between 1941-1945. His son, Mihai Popescu (b.1909-d.1953), became an actor, despite his father wished for him a career as a university teacher. He became a well known actor at the National Theater. He died young, neglecting symptoms that showed he had a mental disease. King Carol II also spoke three foreign languages: English, French and German.

Born in Sibiu (where he taught a few years in German), Capesius was expert in Saxon language: after studies of classical German, Philology and Theology at Jena and Budapest, **he gave his PhD** in Saxon language at Berlin (1911), and, in Romania, coordinated the **Saxon language dictionary** (1957). His daughter, Roswith Capesius, was a known painter, writer and ethnographer.

1952), constitutional rights teacher at the Faculty of Law of the University of Bucharest and, later, its dean (1941-1948).

Music, drawing and calligraphy were taught by Nicolae Saxu, the private tutor with who the Prince followed with primary studied (I-IV), who also became teacher at high school. Haven't said yet he also was a known choral composer. Music was also taught by Ion Chirescu (who led the choir) and Florica Muzicescu (who gave piano lessons). Lessons of drawing were also given by royal adjutant Dimitrie Ştiubei (1901-1989), marine officer who loved painting.

In classes I-IV, the Prince was in competition with Dan Cernovodeanu. All the students were well prepared, but most had classes above which they preferred others.

Radion performed at all classes and had all aptitudes, including for sport, with two exceptions: music – singing, and calligraphy – nice writing, which he lacked. Despite his handwriting was awful, he wrote “with content”: the graphical form may have been ugly, but the text was well-grounded.

That year he got his PhD in “Romanian spiritualities”, becoming lecturer of Philosophy of Culture and History at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Bucharest. He taught here until 1950, when he was “sent back” by the communists to high school, only to be thereafter “returned” to the University as a teacher of History and universal / compared literature until his retirement (in 1968).

² Radion didn't had the chance to meet V.Bancilă (1897-1979), but other classmates, like Ioan Jurchescu, appreciated him as a “greatly gifted teacher”, who “*remarked himself by having all the qualities of a «full teacher», with wide knowledge of Philosophy, literary talent, sociologist of the Romanian realities of that periods. author of an impressive work regarding the history of culture*”. Another perspective, aside that of the teacher: “*his vast knowledge [...] the courage with which he treats, sustains and defines various themes, notions, ideas, suggesting or giving solutions – is impressive. He is expert in fields like: metaphysics, logic, estetic ethics, pedagogy, sociology, philosophy of culture and religion*”.

Also, he was a disciplined, dutiful student. A proof to this is that, at the end of the 4th class, after the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes (by grade), he and the Prince the “prize for a good character” (1936)¹.

.....
Regarding Prince Mihai, it is said he was a serious student. He was best at (universal) geography and history, chemistry and physics. Above study, he was passionate of mechanics, engines, planes and cars; from then, he knew all types of cars and planes, how they work and their technical characteristics [4&7]. This passion for cars was inspired to him while student of the Technical Aeronautics School in Mediaș.

At other classes he wasn't quite expert. In an elegant way to say it, than affirm even Princes “copy” at tests or ask to be given answers while they are listened by the teacher, we will concede that some classes just aren't useful for a Monarch.

In some years, the students had to buy their own books, whose costs didn't enter in the education budget. The palatine students had the advantage their classmate Mircea was son of Nicolae Ionnițiu, one of the founders of the “Cartea Românească” society – created in the purpose of publishing Romanian books, that, in time, extended its initial domain of activity² - from where they could easily buy school textbooks, cheaper. *„«Cartea Românească» was found in a 5 story building facing Queen Elisabeta Boulevard, between Calea Victoriei and Academy Street. The Library had a section of Romanian books (one of the company's most important, extending across half of the ground floor), and*

In the Prince's qualification for school year 1935-1936, his following qualities were appreciated: „disciplined and dutiful, modest in all situations”, „very good character”. Receiving that prize in 1936, Radion must have had similar qualities.

² *„The library became a magasin with all sorts of things more fascinating than books. You could find there toys, sport items and all kind of interesting objects that attracted the little.” (Mircea Ionnițiu, „Memories and thoughts”, p.17).*

another section of foreign books (published in France, Germany, England and Italy, with papers and magazines from these countries). Between these two sections were the shops [...] with pens and mechanical pencils. In the corner of the ground floor [...] was the stationer's shop and, further, the one with objects of art and painting. [...] From where we got our notebooks, pencils, paper blocks and ink." (op.cit., p.18)

King Carol II closely supervised the activity of the teachers, the curriculum and other affairs regarding the school, but also watched what every student did, inside and outside of the school (eg. he knew everyone's domains of interest, their favorite books....)* Carol asked the teachers not to make any difference between the Prince and his classmate. Actually, *"the Prince didn't had any special privileges: we were asked to treat him as an equal and so we did"* (M.Ionnițiu, „Memories...”, p.167). The King had a special desk in the classroom, from where he could assist at the lessons. Usually, he came to the history lessons – having direct interventions, telling about less known details (sometimes, with events contemporary to His Majesty).

Every day, after the classes ended (13:00), at the King's request, a few students (2-3) participated to the royal lunch. *"To spare ourselves from the frustrations and anxieties of having lunch with the King and other statesmen, we came by rotation, to be uniformly present in face of the royalty."* (Ionnițiu, „Memories...”, p.167). Above these lunches with 2-3 students were the general Tuesday lunches to which all teachers and students were invited, no one missing. From these moments, Radion remembers the following: at the table, the King talked to every student (“he knew us well”). By these lunches he got to know the entire political class of the period (eg. Gheorghe Tătărescu, prime-minister between 1934 - 1937), sitting at the same table with statesmen

* The King also closely supervised Prince Mihai, sometimes in an exaggerate way (eg. he read his letters).

like Nicolae Titulescu¹ - minister of foreign affairs (multiple terms between 1928-1936), from Oltenia; Alexandru Vaida-Voievod² - interbellic politician from Transylvania; Ion Inculeț³ - minister of internal affairs (1933-1936) from Bessarabia. „*At lunch were present from 7 to 9 people: the King, the Prince, 2-3 classmates, the royal adjutant, 2-3 statesmen*”. Despite sitting at the same table with various politicians, the students were instructed “to discuss no politics at all at the school” (King Mihai, “Dialogs...”, 2008, p.126).

Nicolae Titulescu (b.4 March 1882, Craiova – d.17 March 1941, Cannes, France) was a brilliant political man of the interbellum, with international prestige. At the Paris Peace Conference of 1918, he fought for the union of Romania with Transylvania. In 1921 he was sent as the permanent delegate of Romania to the League of Nations at Geneva, being elected for two terms as President of this international organisation (1930-31; 1931-32). He fought against the “revisionism” of some states against the Peace of 1918 (like Hungary, Germany or Italy – what wished a change of borders), encouraging an international collaboration to maintain European peace and security. As minister of foreign affairs he created the “Balkan Agreement” (1934) – to secure a good vicinity with Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. In 1936 he was removed from all functions by king Carol II, going into exile in Switzerland, then France, where he continued to fight for peace until the outbreak of the war (1 September 1939).

² **Alexandru Vaida-Voievod** (1872-1950) started his political activity as a supporter of the Romanian’s in Transylvania national rights. After the Great Union (to which he contributed), he became an important leader of the National Peasants Party. Prime-minister for multiple terms – even during the Great Crisis (in 1932 and 1933). His closeness to king Carol II determined a distantiation from the party’s leader, Iuliu Maniu (who opposed many of the King’s actions). He left PNȚ in 1935, founding his own party and becoming one of the close collaborators of the King (in 1938 he is named royal counselor).

³ **Ion Constantin Inculeț** (1884-1940) was the president of the Parliament of the Democratical Moldavian Republic (independent Bessarabia) under who was voted the union with (9 April 1918).

At such a lunch, during a discussion regarding what we read, *“the King asks me if I read «Cuore»* *. *«I haven’t, you Majesty”, I answered, because I read only the books red by my host, Mrs. Petrovici, pretty ease books (the 100 pages collections appearing twice a week). After this event, “one day, in a break (between the private tutoring), I am called by King Carol from Casa Nouă: «Chiabi!», asking me to come there. Carol remembered I didn’t read «Cuore», sent someone to buy me the book, then waited to see me while I am in break and come from the 2nd floor to give me the book...”* – remembers Radion [1*, 6]

Lessons by travel

„At the end of every year, we made various excursions in the country. We saw with own our eyes what we had learnt during the year” – Radion Chiaburu

„Our education was made by the normal curriculum of those days, with the exception of, at the end of every year, what we learnt during the school trimesters we saw in nature, visiting places.” – Ioan Jurchescu

“One day, Carol convinced the government to buy two special busses for the palatine school, to be used to travel every year in one or another place of the country, for two or three weeks. With these occasions we studied the regions, visited historical monuments and the industrial points.” – Mircea Ionnițiu (“Memories...”, p.167).

“Interesting were especially the vacations at the end of the year. We studied geography and history «right on the spot» – we visited a ruin or went to a monastery – and there we were given lessons of local history, details regarding geography, economy [...] It was very useful.” – King Mihai I of Romania

* Written by Edmondo De Amicis and published in Italy (1886), the book tells a student’s memories regarding school, together with many stories.

At the end of every year, the students went on excursions in the country together with one of their teachers, seeing in nature what they were taught at school (this brilliant idea belonged to King Carol II). They went by the royal train, slept in tents and in monasteries. The trips lasted a month, every year being picked a new region – including the “small countries” (as Iorga called them): “Hațeg country, Bârsei country, Almajului country”.

The students visited and studied battlegrounds (eg. Codrii Cosminului, Călugăreni), castles and strongholds (eg. ruinele cetății Suceava, Hotin - *with history lessons held by Nicolae Iorga*), monasteries (Putna¹) – some painted outside (eg. Sucevița, Humorului, Voroneț, Moldovița), museums, places of birth of writers (eg. Ipotești – Eminescu, Humulești – Creangă; Mircești – Alecsandri²), rulers, historians, politicians; archaeological sites, mines (eg. salt mines at Slănic), industrial buildings (eg. factories), botanical gardens and simple farms in the rural communities. They also made trips to mountain, sea or the Danube Delta.

All pupils were given by then prime-minister³ Gheorghe Tătărescu (close to King Carol II) a travel backpack (regarding which Radion has an interesting story about which I will say later).

„*Visiting, you better remember. We studied to last*”, explained Radion. “*This is why King Mihai is so well prepared: first, because he has a great memory, and then, because of the special education he received*”. A similar observation was made by Zamfirescu: because he visited the

“At Putna Monastery, we slept under a hill, outside of the monastery walls, in tents, to better see the shadow of Ștefan the Great, because, as the abbot told us, sometimes he comes after midnight to see the church he had built.” – Ioan Jurchescu [7]

² Vasile Alecsandri was born at Bacău (1821) but, at old age, he retreated to his estate at Mircești – where he died (1890). Here is found today his memorial house.

³ His term lasted from 3 January 1934 to 28 December 1937.

country from place to place, *“King Mihai knows his country much better than king Carol II”*.

P.S.: The practical nature of these trips could also be found in the practical lessons of teacher Cristian Mușceleanu in the laboratory of the Faculty of Natural Sciences.



Radion Chiaburu (left) and Prince Mihai (right), near the royal train the Hațeg country, having behind the sacs with pieces from the tents.

.....
An excursion described by Ioan Jurchescu in his diary:
*“He got out of the train at Orșova. [...] After a short stop in Petnic commune, my native village, followed the history lesson to the statue of 1848 revolutionary Eftimie Murgu, from the Buzovici park.... We visited the whole region.... Our history teacher, Gheorghe Lazăr, descendant of the famous teacher from Avrig, told us the history of the mines in our country... The Prince wore with him a small shrine to which he prayed every morning and evening, before bedtime. **He respected the faith of his ancestors and, later, he prayed in hard times.**” [7].*



In a village in north of Moldavia.



At the beach in spring 1933.



When they didn't find a place to eat, from multiple tents they made a big shelter to protect them from the sunlight and heat.



At the table under the tent. Prince Mihai is in the head of the table.
The boy with the glass at his mouth is Radion.

Activities outside school

Sports and free time

„Did the Prince played football? Of course, we was an iron defender! No one passed him! He had an expansion.... - Lascăr Zamfirescu¹ [1, 2]*

Prince Mihai did many sports at school: fencing battles, archery², football, tennis. Outside school, the palatine students played ping-pong, rode horses, made bicycle or motorcycle racing³. The students participated at scout reunions, went skiing in January at Sinaia and in mountain travel on vacations. Radion also told us that the Prince liked **hunting**, as his father; one year, Radion went with him, catching a fox. They also played many children games: “hide and seek”, “hit and guess” etc. They also did “nasty things”: “All the students wore with dignity an elegant blue uniform, with the golden blazon of the Royal House; the Prince wore it every day, dressing in the uniform of the Military Academy only for festivities. *«Despite the grace of our uniforms, we still slid the stair railings»*, remembers Ioan Jurchescu. *«The Prince watched us with the hands at his back, laughing as an*

„I will never forget an event with Parent Nae Popescu, our Latin and Religion teacher. [...] He was a very clever and nice man! While we were playing soccer at the Herculane Baths in the summer excursions, on the grass near the train station. At a moment comes parent Popescu: «I want to play!». He had that long priest robe... We made him house keeper so he wouldn't run to much. It was amazing! No ball passed him! He blocked them all, but how do you think? He used his robe and, moving it like a fan, covered the entire gate!” - Zamfirescu [1&2]*

² They did archery not on open field (as usual) but inside the sports hall, big enough for hosting this activity.

³ As for cycling, Radion keeps an amusing but painful memory: *«He shows me his chin and laughs: “In one break in which we prepared for the next day's lessons, we both went (he and the Prince) to do some bike racing. I fell pretty bad and, since then, my chin is cut in half...”» [1].*

accomplice. He was amused as well of the stupid things we were doing.» [7]. Another weekly habit was watching city films – event at which, alongside the students of a male only class, also participated the royal adjutants' daughters, like Ioana Știubei, Oana Dobrovici, Geta Fundățeanu.



3rd year: the palatines learn to ski at Sinaia.

(from left to right): lieutenant Timco, Popescu, Dușa, Kovacs, Heltmann, Prince Mihai (*taller than them*), colonel Pălăngeanu, **Chiaburu**, Mavrus, Dinulescu, Ionnițiu, Grămadă, Jurchescu, Cernovodeanu



1st year: students practicing fencing at Eforie Nord.

Prince Mihai is the one with striped shirt (detail: he keeps in the sword in the left hand; it is less known the Prince is lefthanded, a thing which was wrong perceived those days)



In the Royal Palace garage.
The Prince rides the motorcycle.



Watteride on Herăstrău lake with the motorboat,
alongside viceadmiral Preda Fundățeanu.



The Palatine class at a grand exhibition at Herăstrău. The Prince is tallest. The man in suit, with a hat in his hand, is the museum director / curator of the exhibition.



1933, end of the 1st year: the palatine students playing “hit and guess”, in an excursion at Lake Saint Ana. Prince Mihai is the one with his palm on his head. Behind him is king Carol II, who observed the game.



PHOTO: **March 1933**,
1st year of school.

The palatine students
planting trees near
Bucharest, at Pasărea,
with teacher Nicolae
Saxu (with hat and
mustache).

In the photo at left,
Radion watches the
camera. Prince Mihai
films the event.



The palatine students in scouting uniforms.

Scouts

The Romanian scouts organisation¹ was created in 1914, being reorganised after the war (1919); its years of glory were between 1928 and 1937 (when it was disbanded). Most of the youth were scouts, and the palatines weren't an exception: *"There wasn't any important scout event (well organised at national level) where the palatine students wouldn't participate along king Carol II himself. In the scouting spirit of helping each other, especially during vacations, the palatines walked long distances, slept in tents and used the natural conditions to physically train themselves or help other people."* (Ștefan Ion Ghilimescu) [3] A touching moment was described by Ioan Jurchescu in his diary: in a vacation, *"after lessons and lunch, we raised our camp and started walking... on the way back, at the border*

Inspired by Robert Baden-Powell's "Scouting for Boys", created in 1908 in England, the Scout Movement was *"a group through which the youth developed altruism, freedom of thought and action, courage, force, health and friendship"*, that became in post-First World War Romania *"the most important organisation to consume the spirit and energie of the youth"*. [3]. *"It was an organisation that gave the young faith in their powers, boosted team and initiative spirit, expanded imagination and as well leveled the differences between social and economical status. Participation was freewilled, but the group also had a paramilitary nature. [...] The Romanian scouts, with the motto "Always ready" (adapted from Baden-Powell's „Be prepared!", my note), was grouped in legions (for every county and municipality), cohorts, centurion groups and patrols. For the youngest, in primary school, was the "Falcon chicks" organisation, whose members became scouts after being admitted to high school. An exam was required to become a scout, testing general knowledge, behavior and relationship with the other members. Once admitted, you had the moral obligation to respect a code of honor. All these were attracting for young people in big cities, who didn't had the possibility to gather in groups for team games, actions in the use of community or other such good deeds. The scout leaders were retired militaries or high school teachers" (Ionnițiu, „Memories...")*

of a village, we stopped by the house of an old lady. She was told that Prince Mihai and his classmates want to take of her yard... we took our tools and started working: some cleaned the dig found in front of the house, other cut woods... Another day ended, but, being scouts, we had accomplished one of our principles: Every day, the scout doed a good deed.” [7]



8 June 1935: on Cotroceni stadium, at the **1st festivity as scouts**. (first line) Prince Mihai, Dan Mavrus, **Radion Chiaburu**, Gheorghe Grămadă

In 1937, “falling in admiration of the nationalism shown by the German Hitlerjugend”, king Carol II disbanded the British-inspired (“Baden-Powell”) Romanian scouting organisation and replaced it with a German-inspired (“Hitlerjugend”) “Staja Țării” (Country’s watch) led by the “Mare Străjer” (the King). “Organised by a military strucutre, the girls and boys of “Straja Țării”, dressed in uniforms, with flags and pennants, participated in great numbers to parades on band music, praising king Carol li in the spirit of an unnatural nationalism what will help the instauration of the King’s absolute monarchy...” [3]

Balanced, Radion only tells us that he and his other classmates (the Prince included) regretted the replacement, in the 5th grade, of the scouting uniform, with a nice hat, with the “străjer” uniform, which a white basque and “Straja Țării” badge. *“We didn’t like the white beret”*, he tells us.



8 June 1937: on the Izvor stadum, at the festivity celebrating the Restoration (1930)

At Dealu Monastery

According to the tradition created by king Carol I (1866-1914) that princes follow military training, Prince Mihai was also honorary student of the 1932-1940 promotion at the “Nicolae Filipescu” Military School at Dealu Monastery, where he was enlisted before his 9th birthday¹, in the same way he also was

By the request sent on 5 October 1930 by king Carol II to general Nicolae Condeescu, minister of the Armed Forces (published in the Official Monitor, no.238 / 10 October 1930), Prince Mihai was enlisted in the Military School on 22 October 1930 by day order of colonel Pascu, commander of the school. According to Benone Petrescu, Mihai first met his classmates at the “N.Filipescu” Military School in June 1933, at the festivities ending the school year [3].

honorary student of the Technical Aeronautics School of at Mediaș (since 20 July 1931). *“But his true and most consistent education was given, I assure you, at the Royal school of the Palace between 1933-1940 [...]”*, says Ion Benone Petrescu, student at the Dealu Monastery School [3] From time to time, with a few special occasions towards the end of the year (from spring to summer, near vacations), the whole palatine class went to Dealu Monastery for a few days. Here, they received military training, in theory (eg. defense) or practice (eg. firing with guns). They shared the same bedrooms with Dealu Military School students.



Visiting the Mausoleum of Heroes at Mateiaș.
On the right: general Traian Grigorescu and Prince Mihai.

Pillow fights at Sinaia

„At Sinaia, Prince Mihai usually slept in a bedroom near the king’s rooms, but when the king left, the Prince came to sleep in our bedrooms: every night, in a different room (we were divided three in a room). I remember one night in the 2nd grade, we had a pillow and hit an old, classical lever watch. I big scandal started. Ernest Urdăreanu (royal adjutant and minister of the court – my note) came and scolded us and the Prince.” – Radion Chiaburu

A similar breach of discipline is recalled by Mircea Ionițiu: *“I remember we were given a difficult task at one of our classes. We, the students, decided by telephone to give our test papers blank. Our strike received a fast reply. In a few hours we were called in the King’s office, all 12. We were given a brutal lessons, being told students shouldn’t behave like this and we were forced to admit he had made a shameful action trying to humiliate our teachers. Carol spoke with passion and didn’t use treats or promises to convince us to behave nicely. But for us was enough. This incident showed me how closely king Carol observed the education of the future king and also how will he knew to reply to challenges against his authority.”* („Memories...”, p.167)

The Christmas play

During the winter holidays, Mihai went with his classmates wandering and singing traditional Romanian Christmas songs (eg. “Irozii”, “Plugușorul”, “Steaua”). In 1936, folklorist and stage director Victor Ion Popa came to the Royal Palace and proposed us a play, “Irozii” (*Herods*), to be played by the palatine students as a celebration of the Lord’s Birth (25 December). The costumes were taken from the National Theater in Bucharest, and some parts of the scenery – living animals! - from the army. The division of roles was quite ironic: Radion, a peasant’s son, played king Herod (who, in the play, just gave the order that 2000 children were killed), while Prince Mihai played a simple shepherd. Other roles were angels, Roman soldiers, the holy child and the mages. Everything, from forming the scenery to learning the roles, was ready in a week. The play, together with winter songs, was first presented to king Carol II a few days before Christmas, in December 1936, then to queen Maria (his mother), as a surprise. “The teachers had an agreement with the royal adjutant, colonel Svidenek, who introduced them into Cotroceni Palace. *«We slowly entered inside, making as few noise as we could while climbing the stairs and going on the hall, then started to sing»*: “O, ce veste minunată!” (*O, what wonderful news!*) then “O, brad

frumos” (Christmas Tree). «We were, of course, excited, but more surprised was the Queen, who came between us, happy to see her nephew singing. After we finished, she gave us a Christmas package with oranges, nuts and chocolate, then kissed her nephew, Prince Mihai, and gave him a sac with golden coins for the poor”.



“Herods”: Radion is king Herod on the throne, while the shepherd - Prince Mihai. One of the roman soldiers is Jurchescu.



Radion's favorite photo, made by Iosif Berman, the official photographer of the Royal House. As Laurențiu Ungureanu observes, the image resembles a scene from the book "The Prince and the Pauper" (Mark Twain, 1881) [2].

Excluded from the classroom due to “budget cuts”

Radion was colleague to the Prince for 5 years, from 1933 to 1937 – when the structure of the class is changed. In the 4th year died one of the students, Dan Mavrus (poor boy!).

After the 5th year, most of the students were excluded from the palatine class, due to “budget cuts”: **Cernovodeanu, Chiaburu, Dinulescu, Dușa, Grămadă, Popescu, Kovacs**. One year later was excluded **Jurchescu**, at the end of the 6th year (1937-1938), only 4 students remaining in the class: Prince Mihai, Ionnițiu, Heltmann and **Zamfirescu** – who, in the 7th year, was replaced by Constantin Malaxa, out of „political reasons”¹.

In 1940, the final exam was given by the Prince, Ionnițiu, Heltmann și Malaxa. The Prince passed with an average grade of 9,50, the other three, with 9,00.

«Very prudent, Lascăr Zamfirescu (89 years) suspects the reason of his elimination from the palatine class: his father being diplomat at Rome, he spent his summer vacations alongside prince Mihai, who also visited the Mother-Queen, who lived in exile in Italy. *“My vacations in Italy together with the Prince were not on the liking of some people in the country, despite we requested and received an official approval. As a result, I was eliminated from the class at the end of the 7th year, with the ridiculous excuse they wanted to reduce the number of students. After me entered the class another boy, Constantin Malaxa, with who I was, otherwise, good friend.”* The fact that Malaxa’s son entered the “palatine class” is the proof of the closeness between king Carol II and industrialist Constantin Malaxa, member of the royal camarilla». („**Malaxa’s son in the royal class**”, Florentina Țone, Historia.ro). Divorcing king Carol II in 1928, queen Elena went in exile at Florence in 1932 – where prince Mihai visited her in summer. She returned to Romania in 1940 by initiative of prime-minister Ion Antonescu, when Mihai became king, offering him a great moral support. Recalling the past, His Majesty considers that *“school and living together with classmates eased the separation from his mother [...]”* (“Dialogs...”, M.Ciobanu, Humanitas, 2008, p.121).

.....
P.S.: To not have an idealised image of king Carol II (who banished queen Elena and lived with someone else), I quote a confession of Lascăr Zamfirescu, who was the Prince's confidant in 1937-1939 (6th year – 7th year), in a very cloudy period of his life: *“We didn't discuss political problems, but personal matters, yes. I was his confidant. Ofently, he told me about his sufferings. I mean, we didn't talk very much, but he often cried before coming to school. Because the nights were awful. There, at the Palace, happened things that shouldn't take place. the King lived a floor above the Prince and he made a great uproar there, with his friends. They played poker, sometimes they got angry and shot with their pistols! And this greatly hurt the Prince! He cried all night!... Of course I couldn't ask him about it, but, in the morning, he came and said me: «They started again». Our desks were quite close in the classroom, next to another. Sometimes we was very sad due to family problems, it affected his childhood...”* [6&9]. Also, despite the exceptional education he assured for the Prince through the “palatine class”, king Carol II didn't gave him any kind of political training: *“My father didn't tell me about any political matter. The affairs of the government were unknown to me, as well as the political situation in the country. When I sometimes asked him «What is happening?» (in reality, above what the press wrote or what people discussed – my note), the King changed the subject. He never wanted to speak with me about this problems. This forced me to go to the court's marshal, Ernst Urdăreanu, who I didn't really trust or respect, to explain me what was happening [...]”* (“Dialogs....”, M.Ciobanu, 2008, p.115); *“Some said he should have taken me with him, assist at the audiences, see how the ministers work.”* (p.144); *“the King didn't treat me as his Heir and didn't cared to teach me the affairs of government.”* (p.124).

All of them became fine men

After being eliminated from the palatine class, the Prince's former classmates continued their studies at other schools, some even following a military training:

- ❖ The „unadapted” **Tănase Mărgelatu** (mailman's son), excluded from the 1st year, became a sailor.
- ❖ **Ion Dinulescu** (worker's son) followed military training, becoming an *active officer*.

- ❖ **Gheorghe Duşa** (the son of a peasant of Făgăraş) followed the Military School of Târgu Mureş and became an officer. Retreated to be a physical education teacher.
- ❖ **Dan Cernovodeanu** (son of an active officer) **became** *historian and heraldist*¹, expert in vexilology (study of flags). *"He had an important contribution regarding in knowing the history of the national flag, the heralds of the Romanian provinces and the monetary emissions on the country's territory"*. In 1978 he settled in Paris.
- ❖ **Ioan Jurchescu** (son of a teacher in Banat) also followed the Târgu Mureş Military School. He didn't join the army, becoming a *lawyer* and moving in Timișoara.
- ❖ **Ivan Kovacs** (the Hungarian priest's son) resettled in Târgu Mureş (his native city), then possibly in Hungary. We don't know what profession he followed.
- ❖ **Lascăr Zamfirescu** (the diplomat's son) became *engineer–electromechanics expert*. He worked at the Malaxa factories for 11 years and at three projection institutes until his retirement. He married Elena Rosetti.
- ❖ **Ștefan Popescu** (the lawyer's son) also followed the Military School of Târgu Mureş, but – together with **Gheorghe Grămadă** (the peasant's son of Bukovina) – died during school, joining their classmate **Dan Mavrus** (a lawyer's son) in the afterlife.

As it regards the 3 graduates the palatine class:

- ❖ **Mircea Ionnițiu** (a librarian's son) –the only to be the Prince's classmate in all 8 years of school– graduated the Faculty of Law and became the *royal secretary* of His Majesty (after 1940), replacing Ioan Mocsony-Stârcea². He followed the King in his exile, in Switzerland, France and London (March 1948), then moving to the United States of America together with his wife, Rodica – where he got a living.

His brother or cousins also followed similar domains: Ștefan Cernovodeanu – genealogist, Paul Cernovodeanu – historian.

² From Bukovina. Had superior studies at Cambridge University.

- ❖ **Walter Heltmann** (a teacher's son in Braşov) may have become an architect (Radion isn't sure). After 1948 he moved to Germany, at Tübingen.
- ❖ **Constantin Malaxa** (son of industrialist Nicolae Malaxa) moved to USA in 1948 together with his family (his father and his sister, Irina Malaxa, married to Nobel-prize biologist George Emil Palade).

About Radion Chiaburu's future profession we shall speak in the following chapters.



King Mihai in 1934, at 14 years.
Photo received by Radion.

Summary: the palatine class (1933-1940)

“Elite of Romanian schools – son of peasants, diplomats, officers, teachers, lawyers and priests; rich and poor; from villages and cities; Romanians and other nationalities.”

“The class of prince Mihai represents the whole country, because it includes poor and rich, children from villages and cities, Romanian or not” („Albina”, 1933).

„A capsule of the Romanian society” (Diana Mandache)¹

The palatine class was formed at king Carol II’s initiative, being supported by Dimitrie Gusti, minister of Education, and historian Nicolae Iorga.

The palatine students

In 8 years of studies, 14 children were, for a shorter or a longer period, classmates to the future King:

1. **Dan Cernovodeanu** (I-V): an officer’s son, Bucharest, representing the army
2. **Ion Dinulescu** (I-V): a train engine mechanic, Bucharest, representing the working class
3. **Mircea Ionnițiu** (I-VIII): a librarian’s son from "Cartea Românească", Bucharest, representing trade
4. **Dan Mavrus** (I-IV, *died during school*): a lawyer’s son, Bucharest, representing liberal professions
5. **Ștefan Popescu** (I-V): a lawyer’s son, Bucharest
6. **Radion Chiaburu** (I-V): a peasant’s son, Peceșteea village, Orhei county, representing Bessarabia
7. **Gheorghe Dușa** (I-V): a peasant’s son, Toderița commune, Făgăraș county, representing Transylvania
8. **Tănase Mărgelatu** (I): a mailman’s son, Crevedia commune, Vlașca county, representing Muntenia

„Royal children, unique portraits in history”, in the album “Royal Childhood”, 2013, Bucharest, p.5

New-comers:

9. **Gheorghe Grămadă** (II-V): a peasant's son, Stroiiești commune, Suceava county, representing Bukovina
10. **Ioan Gheorghe Jurchescu** (II-VI): a teacher's son, Petnic commune, Caraș-Severin county, representing Banat
11. **Walter Heltmann** (II-VIII): a teacher's son, Brașov, representing the German Saxon minority
12. **Ivan Paul Kovacs** (II-V): a priest's son, Târgu Mureș, representing the Hungarian minority
13. **Lascăr Zamfirescu** (V-VII): a diplomat's son
14. **Constantin Malaxa** (VIII): a industrialist's son, Bucharest

Explanations: In the 2nd year (1933-1934), a child leaves the class and other 4 enter it (**total: 12 – with the Prince**). In the 5th year a new student arrives (**total: 13 – with the Prince**). The major change takes place after the 5th year: a child dies (**Mavrus**); then most of the students are eliminated due to “budget cuts” (**Cernovodeanu, Chiaburu, Dinulescu, Dușa, Grămadă, Popescu, Kovacs** – in the 5th year; **Jurchescu** – in the 6th year) or out of “political reasons” (**Zamfirescu** came in the 5th year and was replaced by Malaxa in the 7th year). In 1940, the final examen was passed by 4 students: **Prince Mihai, Ionnițiu, Malaxa, Heltmann**; the average grade of the Prince was 9,50; of the others: 9,00).

Incomplete list of teachers

Note: Some teachers were named in various articles and Ionnițiu's memories, but without the subject taught. Those that Radion didn't recognize possibly taught after the 5th year. By their profession, I aproximately introduced them here (their name is written oblique):

- ❖ GEOGRAPHY: **Ion Conea, Simion Mehedinți**
- ❖ HISTORY: **Enache Ionescu** [I-IV], **Gheorghe Lazăr** [V-?], **Constantin C. Giurescu, Nicolae Iorga** [on special occasions]; **Vergiliu Arbore**
- ❖ ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: **Gheorghe Nedioglu** (I-V...), **Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu, Dan Smântănescu** (VII..), *Alexandru Rosetti, Dumitru S. Panaitescu* (literary pseudonym: *Perpessicius*).

- ❖ MATHEMATICS: **Ion Gheorghe Bratu**
- ❖ PSHILOSOPHY: **Ion Zamfirescu** [VII-VIII]
- ❖ PSYCHOLOGY: **Vasile Băncilă** [VI...]
- ❖ LAW: **Ion V. Gruia**, *Ioan Grigore Periețeanu*
- ❖ RELIGION: **Parent Nicolae „Nae” Popescu**
- ❖ LATIN: **Parent „Nae” Popescu**, *Nicolae Herescu*
- ❖ MUSIC: **Nicolae Saxu**, **Ion Chirescu**, **Florica Muzicescu**, *Emanoil Ciomac*
- ❖ DRAWING: **Nicolae Saxu**, **Dimitrie Știubei**, *George Oprescu*, *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș*
- ❖ PHYSICS. CHEMISTRY: **Cristian Mușceleanu**
- ❖ PHYSICAL EDUCATION: **Roșală**
- ❖ NATURAL SCIENCES: **Alexandru Mumuianu**
- ❖ FRENCH: **Léon Thévenin** [I-IV], **M. Condeescu** [V]
- ❖ GERMAN: **Karl Bernhard** (literary pseudonym: *Bernard Capesius*)

Headmasters

The palatine class was funded by the Ministry of National Education.

It was coordinated by royal adjutants: colonel **Traian Eremia Grigorescu**, lieutenant-colonel **Emil Pălăngeanu** (both decorated with Mihai Viteazu Order). After the 4th year of school (1935-1936), the school was coordinated by commander **Preda Fundățeanu** (as headmaster) and captain **Mircea Tomescu** (as deputy headmaster). After 1938-1939, the class was led by deputy-colonel **Dumitru Dămăceanu** (as headmaster), cavalry officer, and major **Mircea Tomescu** (as deputy headmaster)¹.

According to king Mihai, the two headmasters didn't got along, for an unknown reason. About Mircea Tomescu, “*young cavalry officer, very intelligent [...] whose spectacular military career was brutally interrupted by the Marshal*” – in 1941, king Michael speaks in his dialogs with Mircea Ciobanu (Humanitas, 2008, pp.117-119).

AFTER THE PALATINE CLASS

Military studies at Târgu Mureş

In autumn 1937, leaving the palatine class along other 7 classmates, Radion had to continue his studies somewhere else. The history teacher Enache Ionescu wished he would follow the „Matei Basarab” High School in Bucharest and become a history teacher. *“In truth, I was good at history, but, actually, I was good at all subjects...”*. Instead, king Carol II instructed him to follow a military school, and Radion followed. *“Maybe he sent me there because I was too energetic”*. In those times, 5 military schools existed in Romania:

- **„Nicolae Filipescu” Military School¹ in Târgovişte**, at Dealu Monastery – closest to Bucharest (with a special class for prince Mihai)
- **„General Macarovici” Military School in Iaşi**
- **„Mihai Viteazul” Military School in Târgu Mureş²**
- **„King Ferdinand” Military School in Chişinău**
- **The Military School in Cernăuţi³**

Today “Dimitrie Cantemir” Military College (since 1999). Created in 1912, functioned at Dealu Monastery until the earthquake of 1940, that destroyed the school’s building. Moved to Predeal until 1948, then to Breaza city, Prahova county, in 1957. The new name, „D.Cantemir”, was probably given by the communists out of political reasons: N.Filipescu (1862-1916) was statesman during the Kingdom.

² Today „Mihai Viteazul” Military College. Created in 1919 by royal order, in the place of a former Austro-Ungarian cadet school opened in 1909. Moved after the Vienna Diktat in August 1940 to Timișoara, until 1946. Disbanded, it was reestablished in 1977 at Alba Iulia (where it functions today).

³ Today, “Ștefan cel Mare” Military College. Created in 1924, moved during the war at *Roman* (June ‘40), *Târgoviște* (July ‘40), *Câmpulung Muscel* (October ‘40), again at *Cernăuți* (October ‘41), *Timișoara* (January ‘44), *Pitești* (January ‘45) and, finally, disbanded (May ‘45). Reestablished at *Câmpulung Moldovenesc*, in 1953 (where it functions today).

Looking for the institution that would give him the best training, Radion omitted the Dealu Monastery School – a high school more for elites (as a proof to this, the Prince himself was a honorary student here, according to the King's wish and the tradition set by his forerunners). Although he could have followed a military school in Bessarabia (at Chişinău or Cernăuţi) or Moldovia (at Iaşi), in the end, not the criteria of distance towards his homeland counted, by that of quality of the preparation he would be given: Radion choosed the military school at Târgu Mureş, for multiple reasons: 1. Transylvania, and Târgu Mureş in particular, was a place where education had great importance, being a "center of teaching"; 2. it had a material base superior to other military schools, coming from the former Austro-Hungarian caded school that existed here (opened in 1909). For his admission, Radion received a recommandation from king Carol II.

„The conditions to be admitted were quite rough: the students had to be physically and mentally capable, learn good and do sports. Not few were the ones who renounced after being admitted, because the military rigor and severity wasn't easy to bare” (NICOLAE BALINT). Besides military training were the theoretical classes (as in every high school): of tehcnical nature, based more on scientific subjects (maths, physics, chemistry), and the modern profile, based more on philological aptitudes (languages – Romanian, German, French, Latin).

From his teachers, Radion quicly remembered Traian Codreanu, who taught physics and chemistry. Math was taught by a Hungarian (István Nagy), then by a Romanian (Mr. Viciu). A classmate, Ion Torlan, became a doctor. After the war, he ran in Germany, at Frankfurt am Main, together with his friend. At the Târgu Mureş Military School he also met former palatine classmates: in 1937 - Gheorghe Duşa and Ştefan Popescu (the last dying during studies); then, în 1938 – Ioan Jurchescu (after being eliminated from the palatine class in the 6th year), all recommended by the King. Radion studied at the technical profile, Jurchescu at the modern one.

In the building of the former “Mihai Viteazul” Military School of Târgu Mureș activates today the University of Medicine and Pharmacy.

King Mihai also received a military training: besides following the “Nicolae Filipescu” Military School at Dealul Monastery (1930) and the Technical Aeronautics School at Mediaș (1931), he followed the school of sergeants as member of the Guard Battalion (graduated at 23 April 1936, following an exam that took place at Sinaia, in the presence of king Carol II, with a practical and a theoretical examination), and, as plutonier-student, the 1st year of the Training School for Officers – “Prince Carol” infantry section (16 October 1936 – summer 1937), then the 2nd year (1937-1938). In autumn 1937 he became second lieutenant, at the age of 16, according to tradition (“Dialogs..”, 2008, p.125), by a ceremony held on 24-25 October 1937 at Sinaia. Prince Mihai became member of the 1st Mountain Hunters Battalion “King Carol II” and was named honorary adjutant of the King. Beside the landforces, he was enlisted on 15 August 1939 (Navy Day) in the Romanian Royal Navy, with a aspirant military rank equivalent to that of second lieutenant in the Land Forces. *“Only his admission as an officer in the Aerial Forces missed, domain which, for sure, would have been on the Prince’s liking, due to his passion for engineering and tehncics.”* (op.cit., p.285). In 1940, Prince Mihai started his active service in the Guard Battalion (16/19 August-4 September). Afther king Carol II’s abdication (6 September 1940), now king Mihai became Head of the Army, being advanced by prime-minister and general Ion Antonescu at the rank of division general. On 10 May 1941 (the national holiday), king Mihai became, at Ion Antonescu’s initiative, Marshal of Romania, through a ceremony held at the Royal Palace. His Majesty was “the youngest and oldest living Marshal of Romania” (op.cit., p.290)

@ **“Marshals of Romania”**, coord.Teodor Frunzeti, Corneliu Andone, Ion Giurcă, Marian Moșneagu, Vasile Popa, Florin Tucă, editura Rao, 2013: «**King Mihai, youngest Marshal of Romania**”, pp.278-297

Surrendering Bessarabia

In summer of 1940, Radion graduated the Military School and passed the final examen (the baccalaureate), said to *"open the world's door for the young"*, with succes. The door of the future was opened ahead...

That summer, he went on vacation in Bessarabia to visit his family in Peciște village. On his road he saw people were pretty agitated. A villager alerted him of the situation: *"I saw the administration making their luggage and retreating from Bessarabia. Go to the village of the priest and speak with him, to find out what's going on!"*. Following his advice, Radion went to Parent Hrișcă and, in the evening, listening together to the radio, found that Bessarabia had been surrendered to the Soviet Union, and the locals were given 3 days to evacuate the region (until Soviet occupation). Learning this, Radion went right away to his family, gave them the news, his mother prepared him a pie for the road, said goodbye, then he took the road back to Romania... Crossing 10km in a horse-drawn cart led by his brother, Ion, he found rows of people that were leaving Bessarabia, so he told his brother go home with the cart, because he would walk down following the line.

On foot, only with his backpack¹, his military school uniform (that he had to give back) and his civilian clothes., he walked a full day and night, reaching Iași in the morning, then Bucharest. Arriving in the capital's train station, he left his luggage there and went to the family of Ion Mavrus, Dan's father (his deceased classmate), with who Radion used to be

This backpack was given to Radion by prime-minister Gheorghe Tătărescu in 1933, using it while going in the summer vacations at the end of the year. After he left Bessarabia in June 1940, Radion still kept the backpack – which he still keeps today, without use. He explains his attitude by the "love for what is yours", the key-feature of Moldavians: *"Origin makes me to keep everything"*.

friend. Seeing him, Mr. Mavrus asked, surprised: “Why are you here?”. Radion shortly explained he took refuge from Bessarabia. The lawyer understood the situation and pragmatically asked him: “Where is your luggage”. “At the train station”. “Go and bring it here”. When he returned, he had been prepared a room at the 2nd floor, in quite convenient conditions (with a separate entrance). Radion was hosted in Bucharest by the Mavrus family until the age of 35, when he got married in 1955.

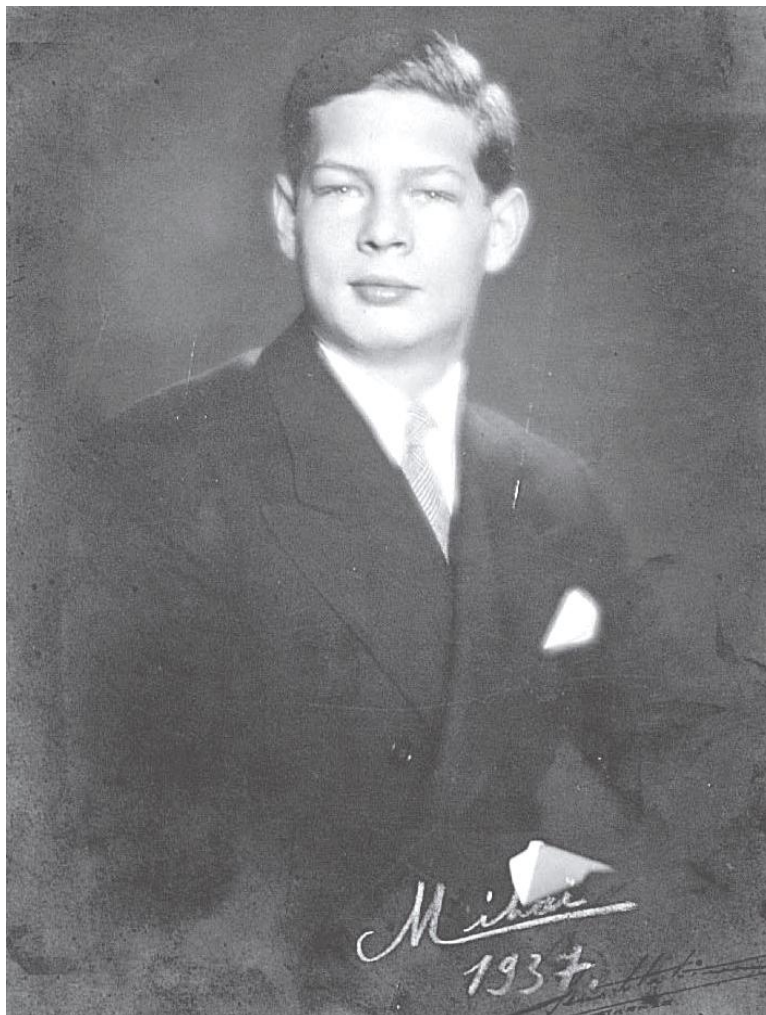
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P.S.: The last 4 palatine students (Prince Mihai, Ionnițiu, Heltmann, Malaxa) gave the final exam in the day Romania was given the Soviet ultimatum to surrender Bessarabia (26 June 1940). The moment was described by Mircea Ionnițiu:

„We had to sustain our final exam in the Throne Room of the Royal Palace, dressed in elegant clothes, with a white tie and dress coat. The examination was made by a special team of university teachers. The King was also there and spent a few hours listening to the answers we gave. After a few hours, he left the room to meet with the Royal Council gathered in order to discuss the ultimatum received from the Soviet Union, demanding the surrender of Bessarabia, northern Bukovina and a small part of Moldavia (Herța land – my note). I find it ironically that in the day we «entered the world» the structure built by king Carol through his politics crashed. After losing Bessarabia and Bukovina we also lost northern Transylvania to Hungaria and then south Dobruja to Bulgaria. Three months later Carol abdicated and left the country, receiving no support from a place or another in the country” („Memories and thoughts”, pp.167-168), receiving the burden of ruling the country to his son, now king Mihai I of Romania.

In the Royal Air Forces

After graduating high school (1940) Radion Chiaburu became plutonier-student and, from the Army fields he chose the Air Forces. For two years he followed the Military School for Aviation Officers in Bucharest at Cotroceni. After graduation, on 10 May 1942 he became second lieutenant in

the Royal Air Forces, by the decree given on 8 May 1942 by “Antonescu, Marshal of Romania, Head of the State”¹.



Prince Mihai in 1937. Photo received by Radion.

Decree published in “Monitorul Oficial”, no.108 / 10 May 1942 (year CX), part 1. The list in which Radion Chiaburu is included can be found at pages 17-18.



Summer 1943 near German major Erich Gerlitz, commander of the School of Figher Pilots at Galați, Radion Chiaburu (right) presents king Mihai the situation of the school.

In 1942, he followed the School of Figher Pilots at Galați – for perfecting courses, where he also had German trainers. *“I was a fighter pilot, I am war veteran. I wan’t on the battlefield, I was in the plane”*. He was pirt of the first generation of pilots to fly the last-generation planes **IAR-80**¹. A moment at the Galați school: “Captain Bocșan together with second lieutenants Tiberiu Rado, **Radion Chiaburu** and Mihai Berbecaru, prepared for patrol acrobatics. When the

Fighter and bombing plane made by IAR Brașov, built between 1939-1943. Those days, IAR 80 could be compared to the most modern fighter planes (eg. German Bf 109, British Hawker Hurricane and Supermarine Spitfire). **SPEED: 550 km/h at 3970m (4th place in the world)**. In the second part of the war, this project proved to be technologically outdated. Five years after the war ended, these planes were totally replaced with Soviet models. In 1955 the Military Command of Air Forces decided their disruption. No full model was kept.

school is filled with Romanian officials, German colonels, flying inspectors and so many others, the patrol goes up in the air and runs a demonstration that amazes the whole assistance. At the end they are congratulated by everyone, the Royal guests and the Romanian superior officers, and by the German that visited the school [...]"¹

After finishing his "final training" at Galați, he was assigned, among other pilots (one of them being Ion Torlan) to protect the essential strategical points – like the Cernavodă bridge over Danube (engineered by Anghel Saligny) in Dobruja – against the Soviet bombers. Near the Danube were two military airports – one between the Șocariciu and Cocargeaua communes in Călărași county²; the other at Mamaia in Constanța county. „We were a team of specialized pilots, being required to lift in air in a short time so that we could counter the enemies coming from Danube valley”, remembers Radion.

During the rest of the war – including after the “change of sides” (1944) -, he defended only the Romanian territory and didn't fight outside borders. He was twice decorated.

.....
King Mihai was also passionated by aviation. «*The Prince took flying lessons in a civilian plane with double command, under oversight by flying instructor Traian Udriski, pilot of the Royal House. Later, after he was crowned and became more experienced, Udriski let him fly the plane, fulfilling the King's wish to «conquer the sky» by himself. He did it so many times thereafter...*» [7] *³

From the book “Hearts to span across the sky of the country” by Cornel Marandiuc (Dacia publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 1985) – interview given by Aviation Generalul Anton “Mache” Mărășescu.

² Curiosity: The name of both communes come from Gypsy language, being changed by Decree no.799/17 December 1964 – Șocariciu became Unirea, and Cocargeaua became Borcea.

³ About instructor Udriski and the “secret” flying lessons in the 40s, without Antonescu's consent, king Mihai spoke in his dialogs with Mircea Ciobanu (Humanitas, 2008, pp.100-103).



Besides aviation, Radion followed at “no frequency” the Faculty of Law at the Bucharest University, attending some lessons and giving the exams. He was attracted to this domain by Ion Mavrus, legal consultant of the „România forestieră” joint stock company for forest exploitation, trade and industry of wood¹. Living at his house, he received from Mavrus a special and practical training on laws.

The family refuge in August 1944

After king Carol II’s abdication, the *de facto* leader of the country became prime-minister Ion Antonescu, who gave himself dictatorial powers as “Conducător”, leaving king Mihai a strictly symbolic role.

In June 1941, at marshal Antonescu’s orders, the Romanian army, allied with the German army, started the eastern campaign against the Soviet Union in order to

At this society, Mavrus was also member of the administration council; at the meeting on 11 March 1945 we was chosen delegate administrator („Monitorul oficial”, no.108/16 May 1945 – part I, year CXIII).

release the territories surrendered in summer 1940 (Bessarabia, northern Bukovina and Herța land). They did so in July, but the Chiaburu family continued to live on the released Bessarabean soil until August 1944.

After the defeat of the Axis troops at Stalingrad battle (1942-1943), the war front was breached, the Soviet army starting to enter Romanian territory, reaching, in August 1944, the borders of Bessarabia. In this situation took place the King's action of 23 August 1944 (explained below), through which we left the alliance with Nazi Germany (against the Romanian army started to fight) and stopped fighting against the Soviet and British-American troops, with who they signed a armistice.

Unfortunately, this action couldn't prevent the Soviets to reconquer the Romanian territory between Prut and Dniester surrendered in 1940 and recovered in 1941 – who was divided after 1944 in the so-called “Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic” (most of the territory) and “R.S.S. Ukraine” (the south of the territory).

Fortunately, warned by Radion, the Chiaburu family had time to take refuge beyond the Prut, on Romanian territory, before Bessarabia was occupied by the Soviets. On this matter, Radion asked for the King's help, who discussed the problem with the marshal of the court, Dimitrie D. Negel. Being administrator of the Royal Domains¹, Negel supported the Chiaburu family's refuge and gave them a home in Segarcea, Dolj county in Oltenia, on a royal estate.

The Bessarabians who took refuge in 1944 had a different status from those who did so in 1940, the Soviet authorities making many attempts to return them in Bessarabia. Happily, the Chiaburu family didn't encounter such problems – probably also due to the support given by the Royal House. In fact, Radion considers the success of his family's refuge is owed to the Royal Family. Many years

After 23 August, Negel became minister of Agriculture in the short-lived Constantin Sănătescu government (until 3 Nov. '44).

after, he says that “*the fact that I was classmate with the King was for me a salvation. Because, this way, I took my family to refuge*”¹, housing it at a royal estate in Segarcea.

In 1945, Radion’s aprents, Nicolae and Elisabeta, had 65 years. At Segarcea, his father worked as team leader on the Crown’s Domains, which after 1948 became state farm – working here until his retirement. From Segarcea “rose” his children:

- ❖ **Ion** became agricultural foreman. After 1944 he worked at a farm in Segarcea, becoming head of the farm.
- ❖ **Paraschiva** graduated the Diocesan High School for girls. She marred the priest’s son, Nicolae Hrișcă (who followed theological studies, becoming not a priest but a farmer). After 1944, the Hrișcă husbands went to Târnava county, Nicolae becoming farm head at Mediaș city, Târnava county (today Sibiu county).
- ❖ **Andrei** graduated 3 years of high school and became a tailor, according to his parent’s wish. After 1944, he moved to Bucharest.
- ❖ **Nina** reached Iași, were she graduated the Faculty of Textile as *valedictorian* (first student of her promotion). She became head of activity, then director of the Popular Factory in Bucharest.
- ❖ **Constantin** reached Timișoara, were he graduated the Faculty of Textile. He became chemist engineer and head of the Plastic fund compound.
- ❖ **Pavel** became chief-engineer and Mediaș, marrying a woman native to this city.

Action of 23 August

Made by king Mihai of Romania with support of opposition party leaders, the Action of 23 August 1944², meant the end of

From the 2007 interview, „*I owe the monarchy!*”.

² An account of this moment was given in Mircea Ionițiu’s memories, royal secretary and direct witness: „Memories and thoughts”, pp.44-63 (wednesday, 23 August and thursday, 24 August).

Antonescu's dictatorship, Romania leaving Hitler's war against the United Nations and joining the antifascist coalition and restore of the national independence and sovereignty. The effects of this action are the best reflected in His Majesty's radio "Proclamation to The Nation" in the evening of 23 August:

„Romanians, In the hardest hour of our history I decided, in full communion to my people, that there is only one way to save the country from total disaster: leave our alliance with the Axis powers and immediately cease fire against the United Nations.

Romanians, A new government of national union was entrusted the mission to fulfill the country's wish to make peace with the United Nations. Romania accepted the armistice offered by the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America. From this moment cease the fights and any acts of hostility against the Soviet army, as well as the state of war against Great Britain and the United States. Receive the soldiers of these armies with faith. The United Nations assured us the independence of our country and the nonintervention in our internal affairs. They admitted the injustice of the Vienna Diktat by which Transylvania was taken from us.

Romanians, Our people understands to be the master of his own faith. Anyone who would be against our freely taken choice is an enemy of our nation. I order the army and call the people to fight will all means against such people. All citizens must gather around the throne and the government to save the nation. He who disobeys the government and is against the people's will is a traitor.

Romanians, The dictatorship is over and all oppressions cease. The new government means the beginning of a new era in which the rights and liberties of all citizens will be secured and respected. Alongside the Allied armies and with their help, mustering all the forces of the nation, we shall pass the boundaries imposed by the unjust Vienna Diktat to release Transylvania from foreign domination.

Romanians, The future of our nation depends on the courage with who we shall defend our independence from any attempt against the choices we freely maid.

With full trust in the future of the Romanian people, we walk with determination on the road to create tomorrow's Romania, a free, strong and happy nation.

Mihai"

This action brought the hostility of the German nation, whose planes bombed on 24 August "Casa Nouă" and the Palace building where once functioned the palatine class. Fortunately, the King took refuge from Bucharest for his own safety.

After 23 August 1944, the Romanian army started the western campaign to release Romanian and foreign territory (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia) from Nazi occupation. As a pilot, Radion continued to protect strategical points in Transylvania, whose liberation ended on 25 October 1944, king Mihai's birthday. On the European continent, the war ended on 8 May 1945, with Germany's surrender.

Soviet occupation

To distribute the post-war events in Romania (who had a fate similar to that of most eastern European states) I quote Mircea Ionițiu, who analyzes the events in his memoirs:

«[...] I wish to remind the events that led to the establishment of the first communist government under the control of the Communist Party, when the nation's will was defied, when an international agreement was broken and when the Red Army destroyed the country's independence.

As a personal secretary of king Mihai I could closely observe the course of events. Romania had signed an armistice with the Great Powers: the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, when the German-Romanian front was broken in August 1944. Thereafter, an Allied Control Commission, led by a Soviet representative, was formed to supervise state administration and see the armistice conditions fulfilled. Soon it was seen that the representatives of the western powers weren't consulted regarding the commission's activity and participated only symbolically. Also, we were so naïve to believe the declaration made by the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, V. Molotov, made in April 1944, that the USSR would not modify the political and social structure of Romania. Three things influenced the country's future in that period. **The first was the permanent economical pressure made by Soviet military and civilian organisations**, that created a crisis in the economy, weakened after 3 years of war. The Romanian economical basis was undermined by influx of Soviet rubles with which the Russian armies filled the market and which the Romanian government was forced to buy. The inflation made by these

debts was increased by the paralysis of the economy due to the Red Army occupation, of tomorrow's insecurity and the near-complete lack of transports. **The second was the duplicity of the Communist Party, that,** while his representatives participated at the Council of Ministers, **led,** with the help of their political allies, **a campaign to destroy the country's political and social structure.** I have no doubt these actions were coordinated by Andrei Vişinki, Soviet deputy minister of foreign affairs. By a strange coincidence, on first visit at Bucharest, in October 1944, the first government crisis started. [...] In the meantime the Communist Party encouraged economical chaos, accusing the democratic party of being incapable. **The third was what analysts of the post-war period called American policy of no policy.** They consider that the United States refused, during military operations in Europe, to make any political agreement, that they remained indifferent to the future of south eastern Europe, that they didn't want to be involved [...]; the American military leaders didn't want to assume obligations in this region. Moscow must have concluded that she had free hand to do anything. Maybe this made Stalin proclaim, in his intimate circle, that *he who controls a territory will impose his social system there.*» („Memories..”, pp.86-88) In this situation, the following events took place: „After Vişinski's visit in Bucharest in autumn 1944, the Communist Party **leads the campaign to overthrow the government [...] (and) starts public protests**”; the Sănătescu government is forced to resign, the King choosing to form a new government “a neutral person, with prestige and unblemished past” (general Nicolae Rădescu), *“but disorder continues in the country”.* Arriving in Bucharest, Andrei Vişinki asks the resignation of the Rădescu government (that the King is forced to request) and unofficially impose the **naming of Petru Groza,** *“the only man that, as prime-minister, the Soviet Union would trust”* – who the King finds himself forced to form the government. The Groza cabinet included mostly communist ministers (6 March), but didn't include the main parties (Liberal and Peasant), who “refused any collaboration”. *“None of the western powers recognized*

*the Groza regime, because it didn't include the main political parties, as it was requested at Yalta" and say that "in those conditions, they won't sign the peace treaty". In August 1945, king Mihai asks for a "re-examination of the Groza cabinet's status", but he refuses to resign, reason for which the King stops any relation with him or his ministers. The "royal strike" starts, but, after months of diplomatical discussions between the Grand Powers, in December 1945, a compromise is made: "two new representatives of the main political parties will join the Petru Groza cabinet", that "must give insurances to the western powers regarding it will organise free elections" (pp.89-96); "The Moscow compromise was a great disappointment for king Mihai, the main parties leaders and all those entrusted in democracy" (p.101); „This compromise showed **western democracies couldn't end the Soviet domination** and, until the relation between the Grand Powers will change, the **communist power will increase**" (p.97). And so it happened...*

After the war, in May 1945, Radion was still in the Air Forces. In July 1945, the Romanian pilots wanted to organise an air show with the war veterans and other non-military units (eg, parachutists) – for which the best fighter pilots were selected. In July, the units¹ gathered at Clinceni field and started preparations. In the acrobatical formation of 3 IAR-80 planes led by captain Constantin Șendrea of the Ziliștea Figher Pilots School (moved in 1945 to Timișoara) participated *second lieutenant Radion Chiaburu* and lieutenant Constantin Baltă.

The squadron of Dalnic field led by Burnaia Irina, a few gliders (one piloted by flight instructor and acrobat Valentin Popescu), 3 IAR-80 planes, a large group of parachutists led by instructor Demetrescu Traian Popa (who had multiple national parachutting records), 30 IAR-39 planes etc. ("**Memories and notes on captain Băzu Cantacuzino**", STAR TIPP, Slobozia, 2008 – from the chapter "A show canceled sine die", general Ion-Oiță POPESCU, pp.24-28)

At first, the show – by its unofficial name the Show of Victory or of Gratitude for our WW2 heroes – had to take place on 20 July, Air Forces day and Saint Elijah, or in September 1945¹. Preparations took place in June or August 1945 on Clinceni airfield, at 15km far from Bucharest, being coordinated by commander Ion Țuculache Stănculescu, aided by general Ion Oiță Popescu – who recalls: *“Most of the military planes and gliders, as well as the turism planes, were old, their flight hours soon to end, some even having war explosion traces. A proof of these deficiencies appeared during the training flights, when engines stopped and planes were forced to land near the airfield, fortunately without grave results. [...]”* (op.cit, p.25). Captain Șendrea experienced what general I.O.Popescu considers the “most thrilling accident”: while the 3 IAR-80 formation made a dive above the center of the airfield, where the flight coordinators were found, “it had to straighten 40-50 meters above the field and start climbing in order to make loopings and back flights”. During these maneuvers, a piece from captain Șendrea’s plane broke off, *“and, after a series of chaotical moves, the plane started loosing speed and crashing”*. *“Terrified, we were convinced at that small height the pilot couldn’t save himself with the parachute. Still, he managed to do so and, after a few seconds, touch the field a hundred meters far from where we were standing. The parachute wasn’t fully opened and it landed pretty close to the crashed plane’s debris. I didn’t imagine someone could escape alive from such a*

General I.O.Popescu recalls the date of the show as 20 July 1945, Air Forces Day / Saint Elijah – saint patron of aviation, the preparations taking place in June. Other sources state the preparations took place in August 1945 or after 2 September, the show having to take place on 23 September. It is possible more preparations took place in June and August, and two presentations, with two different dates for the show: first, on 20 July, after which it was canceled; then again, in September 1945, after it was permanently canceled.

crash. But, what wonder! Until we reached the crash site, we saw the pilot crawling away from the fallen plane to avoid a possible explosion. I released him from the parachute straps, I helped him rise on his feet and, in the end, we found out, in everyone's joy, he didn't have any serious injuries. In the meantime the airfield's doctor came and, after easy care, declared him good to fly. A possible explanation is that pilot Șendrea Constantin wasn't badly injured by that brutal fall because, on one hand, he had robust, sporting condition, and, on the other hand, being small in height and having low weight, the gravity forced acted easily over him when he fell. [...] The last to come at Clinceni airfield, who showed his acrobatic program a single time was Bâzu¹." (op.cit, pp.25-26). During the preparations, Radion met the members of the "Escadrila Albă" (*White Squadron*)²: Mariana Drăgescu³ (with who he became good friend), Virginia Thomas, Nadia Russo and Eliza Vulcu.

Constantin M. Cantacuzino (b. 11 November 1905, Bucharest – d.26 May 1958) was an ace of the Romanian Air Forces during WW2. After 1945, he piloted a private Bucker Jungmeister plane ("YR-BÎZ"). On 21 January 1948 he left the country by Italy and landed at Milan, then moving to Spain, where he earned a living by air shows. He died after a rare complication coming after a successful ulcer medical intervention, being buried at Madrid.

² Unit of female pilots that evacuated the wounded from the battlefield, namely on the Eastern front. Its official name was "Escadrila Sanitară" (*Medical Squadron*).

³ **Marie-Ane-Aurelia Drăgescu** (b. 7 September 1912, Craiova), "*female legend of Romanian aviation*", was one of the first pilots of the "White Squadron" (together with Virginia Thomas and Nadia Russo). She evacuated over 1500 wounded soldiers during the war (1941-1945). Became a supervisor at the Flight School at Chitila and flight instructor at Aircraft School at Ghimbav-Brașov, until her flight licence was withdrawn (1955); worked as typist until retirement (1967). On 7 September 2012, aging 100 years, she was decorated and raised to the rank of commander ["The flighter", Laurențiu Ungureanu, in "Historia", no. 133 / February 2013 , pp.43-49].



(from Mr. Vasile Ristea Tudor's private collection)*:
Radion is surrounded by 4 members of the White Squadron
(Mariana, Nadia, Virginia and Eliza Vulcu) and other two pilots:
gliders Rodica Popescu and Cornelia Fotache

“When the preparations were over, we decided, after receiving the necessary approvals, to make a demonstration on Băneasa airfield, in front of Romanian air force leaders and the Allied Control Commission, that at us was only Soviet, a week before it would have been presented to the public. [...] The civilian planed, that I coordinated, were to lift from Clinceni airfield, while the military planes would lift from Pipera (including the IAR-80 formation in which Radion took part – my note). The demonstration was a great success and a surprise that aroused unanimous admiration for the persecuted Romanian pilots and our air forces [...]”. The show was opened by a military plane dragging after him a 8m long flag, followed by gliders, balloons hunt and other

* This photo – as a copy in Mariana Drăgescu's own collection – can also be found in “The White Squadron. A subjective history” by Daniel Focșa (Vremea, 2008, Bucharest, 136 pag.), at page 74.

solo acrobatic shows of military, gliding or sport planes. The show gradually became more energetic: national parachuting champion Traian Dumitrescu-Popa threw himself out of the plane with two late opening parachutes. After opening the first, simulating a drop goal, he opened the second, so close to land he barely had time to open it completely¹. *“Towards the end, when the assistance was greatly captivated, came the massive formation of military planes lifting from Pipera, who wrote on the sky, with the clouds, letters “M I”, coming from MIHAI I. This showed the devotion and love that the air forces and the Romanian people still had for their young and wise king”* (op.cit., pp.26-27). The demonstration ended with an acrobatics show made by “Bâzu” Cantacuzino, that lasted 25 minutes².

Despite that the demonstration was a succes as it regards the assistance’s reaction, who praised the event, the show wasn’t approved. In the mostly-Soviet Allied Control Comission, during T.Dumitrescu-Popa’s acrobatics, “while some members were amazed by the event (having words of admiration like „ocen haroașo” or „ocen krasivâi”), others were disturbed by the suspence, saying that in the Soviet Union this wasn’t allowed”³. *“Everything ending well, we*

Additions not found in the quoted book but included in the original manuscript kept by Mr. Vasile Tudor.

² The moment was described in “Un grand nom de l'Aviation: Le prince Cantacuzino-Bâzu”, published in “Les Vieilles Tigres” (pp.22-32) –no.82, written by commander Dan Vizanti, ace of the Romanian air forces and commander of the 6th Fighters Group – that between 1943-1944 defended Bucharest and the whole air space between the Danube and the south Carpathian oilfields. That part was translated in Romanian by general Popescu and included in “op.cit”, pp.27-28.

³ “About an approved miting and a canceled one in 1945”, Vasile Tudor, in “Document. Romnian Military Archives Bulletin”, no. 2(60)/2013 (pp.64-66). The author shows that while the Băneasa show in September 1945 was canceled, **another show**, made by the CFR (*Romanian Railways*) workers union, **took place in good conditions on 1 July 1945** at Giulești airfield near Bucharest, after 3 days of preparations (28-30 June).

returned happily to Clinceni, waiting the day of the show to arrive. But, a few days later, we received from the Air Forces Command the unpleasant news the show was canceled. **Was canceled... sine die!**" (general Ion Oişteanu Popescu)¹. «With all subsequent insistences, that show prepared with so much effort wasn't held and neither did a similar one.».

Radion suspects the reason the Soviet (Russian) representatives suspended the show was they considered it to be too nationalist². Greatly upset, Radion threaten that, if the show isn't approved, we will resign from the air forces. The Soviets remained firm in their decision so, proud-spirited, Radion presented his resignation, that his superiors approved. On 22 February 1946, the magazines included in the rubric "Air forces – Retired officers" two people: captain Petre B. Constantinescu (1914-1992)³ and second lieutenant Radion B. Chiaburu. After leaving the air forces, Radion didn't pilot any plane thereafter.

The social and political events after January 1946:

The elections in **November 1946** took place "in an atmosphere of growing terror, abuse and brutality against opposition". *"In many districts, the urns were fileld with fake votes in favor of the government, the opposition delegates were brushed off and the people were intimidated by thugs. While counting the votes, the communists realised that, despite all their mischiefs, they won't win the majority of votes. When, in some districts, forged the results [...]",* receiving this way 70% of the votes. *"The western powers*

Addition to "op.cit" from the original manuscript by Vasile Tudor.

² Or, in the words of Vasile Tudor, «How could the communist regime that was then being built allow the Romanian flag and the letters "M I" from king Mihai I of Romania to appear on our nation's skies?» (art.cit).

³ Petre B. Constantinescu took part, between 1944-1946, of the 3th Galaţi Figher Pilots Squadron, commanded by general Anton "Mache" Mărăşescu.

objected to the way the elections were held, revealing the abuses made. But, as long as Groza and his men followed the instructions received from Moscow, they didn't have a reason to fear any kind of retaliation from the United States or Great Britain." (pp.101-102). Through frames and other means, the communists eliminated the opposition Liberal and Peasant party leaders one by one – from **July to November 1947**. Most statesmen during the Old Regime – including militaries – were illegally arrested and judged in front of “popular courts”, finding their end in prison¹. The last step for the complete establishment of communism was remove the Monarchy: “On 30 December 1947, while the Royal Palace was surrounded by “Tudor Vladimirescu” division units [...]”, king Mihai faced an ultimatum: he was requested to sign the abdication act. His refusal would have grave effects for the supporters of monarchy [...]” (p.100); „With great wrench, to spare the nation of useless sacrifices, the King went in the other room and signed the abdication act” (p.104); after 3 days he went into exile, followed by Ionnițiu, his secretary.

In the wood industry

Although he got his law degree, Radion didn't follow an activity in the court, the future of this profession during communism being quite miserable², but got himself hired as a legal consultant at a private wood industry company (nationalized in 1948). He chose this industry due to Ion Mavrus, who worked at “România forestieră” society (later, in

One of them was **Emil Pălăngeanu**, arrested and sentenced on life to forced labor at the Danube – Black Sea Channel. Even classmates were persecuted by the regime: Dan Cernovodeanu was arrested at Aiud, and Ioan Jurchescu deported in Bărăgan fields for 4 years (in 1951).

² During communism, advocacy disappeared as a classical institution, being politicized and subordinated to the party's policies.

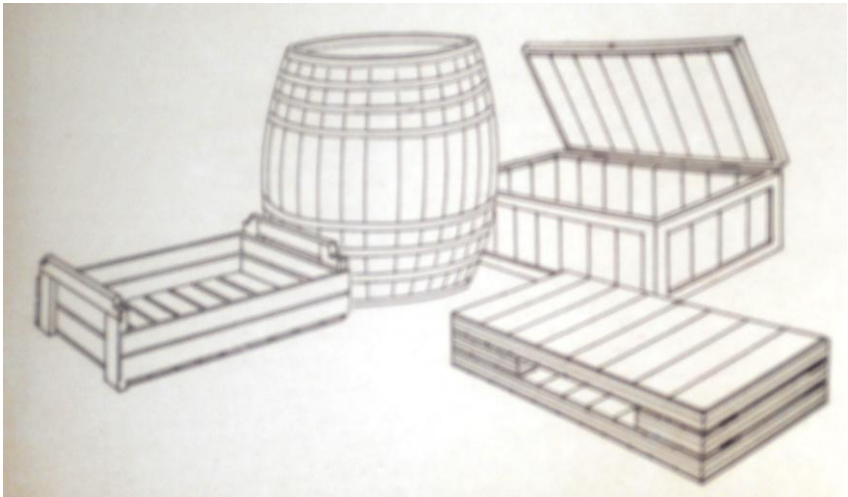
1947, he formed, among other shareholders, the “Lemnex” society)¹, Radion could visit the factory, talk with workers and observe the activity – gaining experience “on field”. So, it shouldn’t surprise us he got hired at „Virgil Cocea” company (with headquarters in Bucharest on Victoriei Avenue no. 118), that exploited wood on Mureș Valley and had factories in Toplița-Mureș and Sânsimion-Ciuc. In 1948, all private companies were nationalized and became state firms. The wood industry societies² (including “Virgil Cocea”) were subordinated to the Industrial Office of Wood, then to the Ministry of Industry.

Radion worked at a office for timber, barrels, crates etc., where, as always, found someone to teach him more than the others: Maksimilian Roznoveski (who he befriended), authorized officer of the former „Dorna Foresta” company³, who learned him the technical art of the job. This way, he became an expert in wood packaging, “*a more niche branch*”. *„I had the chance to work with such old people (like Roznoveski) that taught me everything they knew*”. So, he got to work at the Ministry of Wood Industry first as a legal advisor but then in the technical domain. Every day, he took part at the chain of production, becoming one of the greatest specialist of the domain. He was also sent abroad, for contracts. Joking a little, we could say that, *from the creation of the new wood industry, he saw and knew everything. “This way I resisted the whole period, with all the transformations that took place in the Romanian society of those days”*, tells us Radion, hinting towards the communist regime.

On 19 April 1947, Mavrus and others formed the **Romanian joint stock company "LEMNEX"** in Bucharest (he owning 8% of the firm – 2000 shares), being chosen president of the administration council („Monitorul Oficial”, no.122/31 May 1947 – part II, year CXV).

² The list of the 140 companeis was published in “Monitorul Oficial”, no. 22 / 28 January 1948 (year CXVI) – part I.

³ Before nationalized, „Dorna Foresta” had its headquarters in Bucharest (Occidentului Street no.30), factories at Vatra Dornei-Câmpulung and Telcișor Valley-Năsăud.



Drawing on the “Wood packaging” catalog cover made by the Ministry of Wood Industry (Bucharest, 1956).
“Here you can see my life’s work”, told us Radion.

During communis, objects of historical (especially related to the monarchy) and religious nature were forbidden. Someone finding such things in your house could get you arrested. Knowing this risk, Radion hid his album of photos from the “palatine class” period, keeping it safe for over 50 years. But how? Well, after 1937, his parents kept it in Bessarabia until 1944. After they took refuge, they hid the catalog at Segarcea, in a dry and safe place. Radion showed the content of the album only of person in which he had great faith. He was prudent, a proof to this being that, until 1990, he managed to keep the album (after which escaped from all risks).

In 1955, Radion married Elena Costin, graduate in Law and Letters (where she studied French and Italian). *“A smart, were prepared woman. She worked at the Ministry of Labour, as an advisor of problems of labor and salary”*, Radion describes here to us. She kept her lady name (Costin) because that of the husband (Chiaburu) had a “bourgeois-landlord” meaning that wasn’t on the liking of communist

authorities. Not knowing this detail, some people that knew only his wife's name called Radion "Mr. Costin", although his name was still "Mr. Chiaburu".

They didn't had children.



Nicolae Chiaburu, Radion's father, at old age, in Segarcea, working as a beekeeper

In 1970, Radion moved in Drumul Taberei district in Bucharest, where he lives today.

Radion retired at 65 years, in 1985. Still, he continued to work at the packaging firm until 86 in 2006, as a "special consultant" and reduced program (not having to do any birocratical formalities).

After 1990

„Chiabi better remembers certain events. In my head things are quite medley. This is a very disagreeable criteria of comparison, he always corrects me.” - Lascăr Zamfirescu

After the fall of dictatorship and transition to a democratical system following the events in December 1989, the freedom of speech was gained, with the possibility to speak about the past without censorship. This way, actions to recover the past were made possible. King Mihai could come back into the country during Pesach 1992, when His Majesty also met his old classmate Radion Chiaburu, to the delight of both.

The interest for the „palatine class” arose in relation to the interest towards His Majesty¹. This way, Radion Chiaburu gave multiple interviews for the press, in 2007, 2010 and 2011². He best collaborated with Florentina Stoian (married Țone) from “Adevărul” magazine – the first journalist to write about the “palatine class”, in a 2007 series close to the Day of Royalty (7-10 May). Radion also had numerous public appearances: :

- On 26 June 2007, Radion and Lascăr Zamfirescu participated, as guests of king Mihai, at the launch of the first volume of king Carol I’s diary, published by Polirom, at Elisabeta palace.
- On 22 October 2008, Radion and Zamfirescu spoke about the “palatine class” at an event organised by the

The first information regarding the “palatine class” after 1990 were given, besides the mentions made by king Mihai in his dialogs with Mircea Ciobanu (published at Humanitas in two books, in 1991-1992) and Mircea Ionnițiu’s memoirs (1993), in Dan Cernovodeanu’s text, “I was classmate with king Mihai”, in the “History files” magazine (no.11/1997).

² See „Bibliography”: *in press*: „Adevărul” (May 2007, Florentina Stoian), *Historia* magazine (no. of January 2010, Florentina Țone), „Adevărul” (October 2011, Laurențiu Ungureanu; *at television* - “Antena 3” (October 2011, Ionela Năstase).

National Institute for the Memory of the Romanian Exile (INMER), at Cantacuzino Palace, to celebrate the king.

- On 12 May 2011, both again spoke about the royal class at an event organised by “Saint Sava” collage, in partnership with Historia magazine.

Both classmates, Radion and Zamfirescu, kept touch with the King, remaining good friends. *“Both visit His Majesty whenever called. I saw them at Elisabeta Palace, at a book launch: they both greatly admired him”*, recalls Mrs. Ţone.

It is interesting the fact that a villager from Pecişte was classmate with the King is still remembered in today’s Pecişte village in the Moldavian Republic:

- In a 2011 interview given to Ion Cernei from “Cuvântul”, brothers Alexei and Tudor Bivol – head of the Teleneşti Hospital and, respectively, mayor of Pecişte village – spoke about *“Radion Chiaburu of Pecişte, ages 91, who lives in Bucharest and studied together with the future king in the palatine class, created by king Carol II in 1932 for the throne’s heir, with students selected from every region of the country”*¹.
- In a interview given to the same journalist for “Cuvântul”, Ion Bălteanu of Pecişte (b.14 August 1958), president of the Popular Craftsmen Union of Moldavia, includes Radion Chiaburu in the list of personalities of Pecişte village whose “names cannot be forgotten”, having great significance for the history of the village².

Of the 14 classmates Prince Mihai had during school, three graduated, three died (**Dan Mavrus, Ştefan Popescu,**

“The Pecişte villagers and His Majesty” (27 October 2011), Ion Cernei: <http://www.cuvintul.md/article/1288/>. The Bivol brothers also spoke about their father, Petre Bivol, that together with neighbor Pantelei Palii served military duty in the Royal Guard at Cotroceni Palace, seeing there every day the future king, Prince Mihai.

²“In this short life you must do more than make shadow over earth” (25 August 2011), Ion Cernei: <http://www.cuvintul.md/article/1066/>.

Gheorghe Grămadă), the other eight continuing their studies at different schools.

- ❖ On 13 November 1990 died **Mircea Ionnițiu** in the USA.
- ❖ On 1 February 1999 died **Constantin Malaxa** (b.23 April 1922).
- ❖ On 25 November 1999 died **Dan Cernovodeanu** (b.10 October 1921).

In 2007 lived, besides the King, only 4 palatine students: Radion Chiaburu in Bucharest, Lascăr Zamfirescu in Bucharest, Ioan Jurchescu in Timișoara and Walter Heltmann in Tübingen, Germany.

- ❖ In the meantime died **Ioan Jurchescu** (b.7 august 1921); I didn't found his date of death.

In 2011 still lived 3 classmates of the King: Radion Chiaburu and Lascăr Zamfirescu (in Bucharest) and Walter Heltmann (outside borders).

- ❖ On 22 September 2012, died **Walter Heltmann** (b. 3 September 1921), in Germany.

How the King remembers the palatine class:

„I was classmate with a railways mechanic, Dinulescu, with the son of a diplomat (Zamfirescu – my note), an industrialist's son (Malaxa – my note), **Rodion Chiaburu of Bessarabia**, Jurchescu of Banat, who became a lawyer in Timișoara, a Hungarian maybe from Târgu Mureș, don't know that came of him, about the Saxon I found he went to Germany and still lives, with Ioanițiu I quite often change letters – he has his own memories about 23 August... Some of my classmates died. From the others I hadn't yet received any sign. I wish I saw them again.”

- H.S. King Mihai in 1990, in „Dialogs...”, M.Ciobanu, 2008, p.145

“For me, the King was and remained a good friend. And, as everyone, I'm sorry he is old. Also, people start forgetting the use of monarchy in a country that never was a republic. [...] You may think I'm old, but *if we are still Christian, why shouldn't we keep the social ierarchy, what has a head* (the King)? [...]”

- Lascăr Zamfirescu [1*]



(from left to right): Radion Chiaburu, Walter Heltmann, King Mihai and Lascăr Zamfirescu

Photo made in autumn 1936, published in the press with a name that brought luck: **“The Four-leaf clover”**. The 4 students in the picture were, in 2011, the last surviving palatine students.

On memories

Looking behind, we can easily discover the importance of the palatine class in Radion's life and destiny:

Formative – it modeled the character, inspiring him very important values (eg. of friendship) and offering him an exceptional training that developed his intellect.

Influenced his future becoming – sent him to continue his studies at Târgu Mureș Military School, joining the Air Forces; in a difficult moment (surrender of Bessarabia) gave him support (the father of a deceased child) who, thereafter, directed him to his next profession (legal advisor, then expert in packaging production).

But it also supported him a more important way – when Bessarabia was again taken by the Soviets (August 1944), it helped his family take refuge, finding shelter (at Segarcea) and a source of living (the Crown's Domains). This makes Radion confess something deeply touching: *„The fact that I was classmate with the King was for me a salvation. Because, this way, my family took refuge. [...] Something like this cannot be forgotten”*. For this reason, *„I owe the monarchy!”*.

Today, even if the Lord took away his brothers and sisters (besides him, only Andrei lives in Bucharest), gave him nephews and nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces.

Asking him what message, based on his life experience, he would give to his relatives, Mr. Chiaburu answered: The little „learn well”, and all together „have character and live in good relations with each other”. *”So the Lord help!”*.

Portrait

“We often meet by chance on the street, change a few words, I am glad to see him again.

A simple, gentle nature, all the summer we walked with short trousers and at first sight you wouldn't guess his age. He shakes your hand with power and looks at you straight into your eyes, with courage. He has blue, open and clear eyes.

He is a proof the chronological age does not always correspond to biological age.

He lives alone, takes care of the kitchen and daily supplies. He isn't yet worried for anything. He watches the neverending show "The Young and the Restless". He eats fish and mackerel, olives, hasn't trouble with diet and doesn't cook. He reads books, watches TV and follows the political activity.

He came from Bessarabia at 7 (actually, 13 – my note), when a special class with children from all country regions was formed for the king of Romania, Mihai. He knows His Majesty well and they often meet, from time to time, the last remaining classmates who proved to be long lived.

He moves much. There isn't a day he doesn't walk on foot in Drumul Taberei district, where he lives. This is how we often see each other. I am always glad when we meet, even just because he is still between us, alive and imperturbable."

(Mihail Tudorache)

The last royal students

Today, in 2014, only 3 palatine classmates live: His Majesty King Mihai of Romania (92 years), Radion Chiaburu (93 years) and Lascăr Zamfirescu (91 years). May Lord give them a long life, so we can find joy beside them!



At the Royal Palace in 1936

Bibliography

I give here the translated name of the sources I used *without the link on the Internet*. The original bibliography can be seen in the Romanian version of this book:

[1] **“A school for a single student”** (with images), by Florintina Țone-Stoian (January 2010) – interviews with Radion Chiaburu and Lascăr Zamfirescu, via Historia.ro.

* This article was extended in the chapter **“School, memories, images: the class of the Royal Palace”**, Florentina Țone (pp.813-827) – part “Stories to be told” in the collective book “A different recent history. Cultural perspectives” (coord:Andi Mihalache,Adrian Cioflâncă) – Iași: published by the „A.I.Cuza” Iași University, 2013 (1054 pages). The chapter includes aspects from the interviews in 2007 with Radion Chiaburu and Lascăr Zamfirescu.

[2] **“The Class of the Royal Palace”**, Florentina Stoian – in “Adevărul” magazine (monday, 7 May 2007), with a list of all students.

[3] **“Palatine class of King Mihai”**, by Ștefan Ion Ghilimescu (*introduction with the memories of commander Ion Benone Petrescu, student of “Nicolae Filipescu” High School from “Prince Michael’s Generation*).

[4] **“Even kings were students. The royal school”**, Camelia Onciu (10 May 2008).

[5] **“Classmates with the King”** (with Radion Chiaburu and Lascăr Zamfirescu), by Laurențiu Ungureanu, in “Adevărul” (24 October 2011).

[6] **“I owe the monarchy!”** (with Radion Chiaburu), Florentina Stoian – in “Adevărul” magazine (march, 8 May 2007).

[7] **“Ioan Jurchescu was the only student from Banat in the special class of King Mihai I”**, Gerhard Binder (July 2005).

[8] **“I called him «You Highness», he called me Jurchi”** (with Ioan Jurchescu), Florentina Stoian, Dumitru Mihăică – in “Adevărul” magazine (wednesday, 9 May 2007).

[9] **“I am sorry he is old”** (with Lascăr Zamfirescu), Florentina Stoian – in “Adevărul” magazine (thursday, 10 May 2007).

Memoirs:

* Mircea Ionițiu, „**Memories and thoughts**” (unfinished), 1993, 220 pages, ISBN 973-45-0039-2

Unfortunately, the chapters regarding the palatine class (1933-40) weren't written. “*Mircea Ionițiu planend a detailed book regarding his life in Romania and the United States. Unfortunately, **he had time only to write a few chapters**, choosing wisely to write those with the greatest historical value: the events from 1944-1947, with a so important effect on our nation's fate, that the author describes as a witness or direct participant.*” (note – page 27).

* Mircea Ciobanu, “**Dialogs with King Mihai I of Romania**”, Humanitas publishing house, two books (1991, 1992); I used the 3rd edition in 2008.

TV shows:

“**Memories about the King**” – interview with Radion Chiaburu taken by Mrs. Ionela Năstase for Antena 3, “Subiectiv” show (26 October 2011, 21:00-21:10 PM), in his apartment.

The album with photos:

The unique photographs used in this book come from Mr. Radion Chiaburu's album. “*Images made by the official photographer of the Royal House, famous Iosif Berman, by the Prince or even by him. They are a treasure for anyone, historian or not*” [2], that Radion kept safe from the Secret Police for half a century (1945-1990).

Of interest

Besides the quoted sources, there are at least three sources that could provide more information (that we didn't study):

- ❖ The text “**I was classmate with king Mihai**” (in French: “*Le roi Michel I, mon collègue de classe*”), by **Dan Cernovodeanu**, published in Romanian in the “History files” magazine, no.11/1997, pp.40-45.
- ❖ Related documents at the National Archives of Romania – the “Royal House” fund.
- ❖ The book “**From a Prince's life**” written by general Teofil Sidorovici (1937, Cartea Românească, 194 pag.).

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