

THE LIFE STORY OF ELIE CARAFOLI, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AROMANIAN ELITE. A SUBJECTIVE TESTIMONY

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ABSTRACT

The document presented below in extenso belongs to the academician Elie Carafoli and was presented by him at the solemn meeting of the Romanian Academy dedicated to his 70th birthday. The text is, as we will see, an impressive testimony dedicated to his Aromanian ancestry, recording in a subjective linear course, many of the challenges that the Romanians from the South of the Danube had to go through, especially from the middle of the 19th century.

Keywords: Elie Carafoli, Romanian Academy, Aromanian, Balkans, Bitolia.

INTRODUCTION

The document presented below in extenso belongs to the academician Elie Carafoli¹⁵⁷ and was presented by him at the solemn meeting of the Romanian Academy dedicated to his 70th birthday. The text is, as we will see, an impressive testimony dedicated to his Aromanian ancestry, recording in a subjective linear course, many of the challenges that the Romanians from the South of the Danube had to go through, especially from the middle of the 19th century. The involvement of the Romanian state in the Balkans, in order to preserve the identity of the Aromanians, has been severely affected by the nationalisms of the emerging states in the area. By far, the actor with whom Bucharest had the greatest difficulty in finding some formulas for preserving the Aromanian ethnic specificity was Greece. Virulent assimilation campaigns orchestrated by the school and the Church, but also numerous para-military actions organized at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and aimed at everything that was considered non-Hellenic otherness (Aromanians, Albanians, Bulgarians) created a setting in which the cultural, but also the physical survival of the Aromanians was highly vulnerable. The intervention of the Romanian state in the area, in support of the “brothers from the south of the Danube”, as they were called at the time, went through several corridors of intervention: educational, by setting up schools for Aromanian children, diplomatic, by organizing a consular

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¹⁵⁷ Elie Carafoli in his laboratory. Picture from http://www.aviatori.ro/dict_pers.php?sel=C.

network in areas in which this element had a significant demographic weight, ecclesiastical, through the establishment of parishes and the unsuccessful attempt to establish an episcopate, cultural, through the supported foundations and societies.

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Returning to the author of the document accompanying this presentation, it is appropriate to highlight some aspects that capture his biographical profile.

Elie Carafoli was born on September 15th, 1901, in Veria, an important Aromanian cultural centre, from which many Aromanian personalities originated. In the same city, Elie Carafoli attended primary and secondary school. He attended high school at the Romanian Business School in Thessaloniki and, for a few months, at the high school in Bitolia.

About the educational experience in a school financed by the Romanian state in the Balkans, Elie Carafoli notes:

“In both primary and secondary school, the education I received was purely Romanian. We had integrated into the aspirations of the Romanian people everywhere: the history and geography of the Romanians, free and oppressed, were also ours. There was a clear vision of the transformations that would come later, bringing them all together in a proud and beautiful country that would play a special role in the world”¹⁵⁸.

Despite all the romantic-nationalist nostalgia that transpires from these lines, the role of these schooling institutions in coupling the Aromanian identity with the Romanian one, in recovering the Romanianness of the Aromanian group subjected, as we mentioned, to a formidable assimilation campaign, should not be minimized.

After only a few months at Bitolia High School, this would close following the Serbian occupation of the area:

“Here I was without school and separated from my family. Suddenly the image of Wallachia appeared to me insistently, but how to get there, passing through dangerous areas in the middle of a war? I convinced two more students of the same age as me and set out from Bitolia for Bucharest, on those dangerous roads, due to the deployment of troops and the transport of war material, with all the deprivations that arose precisely from this state of war, without means of transportation, with very few supplies, but with high hopes and a lot of courage. Sometimes on foot, sometimes on trucks loaded with heavy cannons, which had to be transported from one front to another, having to endure dangerous shocks on those miserable and clogged roads, in

¹⁵⁸ „Atât în școala primară, cât și în cea secundară, educația pe care o primeam era pur românească. Ne integrasem în aspirațiile poporului român de pretutindeni: istoria și geografia românilor, liberi și asupriți, erau și ale noastre. Aveam viziunea clară a transformărilor care aveau să vie mai târziu, înmănunchindu-i pe toți laolaltă, într-o țară mândră și frumoasă, care avea să joace un rol deosebit în lume.”, in ***, *Sărbătorirea Academicianului Elie Carafoli la 70 de ani (23 decembrie 1971) [Celebration of Academician Elie Carafoli's 70th birthday (December 23, 1971)]*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, 1972, p. 31.

such conditions we were heading steadily towards our target. We went through many hardships, were stopped by the military, who were intrigued by our trip, and were often detained in barracks until instructed to continue on our way to the country. I am still impressed by the perseverance and courage with which I rushed to the goal I dreamed of; in those moments nothing would have stopped me from achieving this goal: Romania”¹⁵⁹.

It can be noticed in the text reproduced below, but also in this relevant quote, this awareness of belonging to the Romanian identity space. In fact, there is a healthy pride in Elie Carafoli’s own roots: the references in the text to the presence of the Aromanians in the Byzantine chronicles of the 10th century and other historical mentions are proof of this. Then, Elie Carafoli feels very emotionally attached to the campaign of “national awakening of Romanians in the south of the Danube”¹⁶⁰ started under the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, its protagonists forming, says the future academician:

“a bloc of resistance against parental speech in the house the Macedonian-Romanian dialect; some, especially women, spoke only this dialect”¹⁶¹.

The idea suggested by the academician is found even in the linguistic usage, the Aromanian being called by the Aromanians themselves “the language of the mother” the mother tongue, the role of women, as a conservative element, that has priority in preserving the dialect, being fully certified.

The issue of linguistic resistance¹⁶² in what concerns the Aromanians was also complicated by the religious factor, given that being an Orthodox Christian was often synonymous with one’s Greekness:

“Under Ottoman despotism, the patriotism and claims of the people of that region were confused with the religious idea, which also had implications for the use of the Greek language, the only one used in this struggle for the conquest of socio-political rights in the Ottoman Empire. This explains why the Aromanians spoke their language

¹⁵⁹ „Iată-mă fără școală și despărțit de familie. Deodată imaginea Țării Românești mi-a apărut cu insistență, dar cum să ajung acolo, trecând prin zone periculoase aflate în plin război? Am convins încă doi elevi de aceeași vîrstă cu mine și am pornit din Bitolia spre București, pe drumurile acelea pline de primejdie, din cauza dislocărilor de trupe și a transporturilor de material de război, cu toate privațiunile care decurgeau tocmai din această stare de război, fără mijloace de transport, cu foarte puține provizii, dar cu mari speranțe și cu mult curaj. Cînd pe jos, cînd pe camioane încărcate cu tunuri grele, care trebuiau transportate de pe un front pe altul, avînd de suportat zdruncinături primejdioase pe șoselele acelea mizerabile și desfundate, în astfel de condiții ne îndreptam neabătut spre ținta noastră. Am trecut prin multe greutăți, am fost opriți de organele militare, care erau intrigate de «drumeția noastră» și am fost adesea reținuți în cazărmi pînă se primeau instrucțiuni, pentru a fi lăsați mai departe să ne continuăm drumul spre țară. Sînt și acum impresionat de dîrzenia și curajul cu care m-am avîntat spre țelul pe care-l visam, în acele momente nimic nu m-ar fi oprit să-mi ating acest țel: România.”, in *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

¹⁶⁰ „redeșteptare națională a românilor din sudul Dunării”, in *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁶¹ „un bloc de rezistență în contra alterării graiului părintese, vorbind permanent în casă dialectul macedoromân; unii, mai ales femeile, nu vorbeau decît acest dialect.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁶² Lascu Stoica, “Cărți tipărite în dialectul aromân”[“Printed books in the Aromanian dialect”], in *Polychronion. Profesorului Nicolae Șerban Tanașoca la 70 de ani [Polychronion. Professor Nicolae Șerban Tanașoca at 70 years old]*, coord. Lia Brad Chisacof, Cătălina Vătășescu, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2012, pp. 299–326.

at home and learned Greek at school; in fact, there were only Greek schools in these lands”¹⁶³.

The initiative of founding schools with Aromanian teaching was a difficult one in the field¹⁶⁴, but their purpose was fully justified, the school being a factor that shaped the identity of Aromanian children:

“All these schools began to be attended by a growing number of ‘Wallachian children’, who were thus enthusiastically following the path of national and social consciousness. But this event was considered by the high Orthodox forums in Constantinople as a challenge and a defiance at the same time because these forums did not conceive under any circumstances the use of the Romanian language in any action, in school or in the Church; a period of savage and bloody persecution of the Romanian element in the Balkan Peninsula followed”¹⁶⁵.

In this atmosphere, the direct confrontation with the otherness strengthens the awareness of the author’s Aromanianness:

“This exacerbated the persecution against the Aromanians, who would go through a lot of suffering from now on, even assassinations and armed attacks against their property, for the simple reason that they wanted to learn Romanian, at the Romanian school. This is the atmosphere I found when I began to sense the events of those difficult days of hardship. When I realized what was going on around me, now thinking back to the memories that are still clear and not faded by time, I found myself in an oppressive atmosphere of terror, but at the same time courage and ardent patriotism. In that struggle and fight for survival, our family suffered a lot from those who challenged our right to speak and think in Romanian and to support the socio-political demands of Romanians in that region. Our situation was further aggravated

¹⁶³ „Sub despotismul otoman, patriotismul și revendicările populației din acea regiune se confundau cu ideea religioasă, care a avut și implicații în ceea ce privește uzul limbii grecești, singura utilizată în această luptă pentru cucerirea de drepturi social-politice în Imperiul otoman. Așa se explică că aromânii acasă vorbeau limba lor, iar la școală învățau grecește; de altfel în aceste ținuturi nu existau decât școli grecești.”, in ***, *Sărbătorirea Academicianului Elie Carafoli la 70 de ani (23 decembrie 1971) [Celebration of Academician Elie Carafoli's 70th birthday (December 23, 1971)]*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, 1972, p. 30.

¹⁶⁴ See:

1. Gheorghe Zbucnea and Stelian Brezianu (coord.), *Românii de la Sud de Dunăre. Documente [Romanians from South of the Danube Documents]*, National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, 1997, passim.

2. Adina Berciu Drăghicescu, *Școli și biserici românești din Peninsula Balcanică [Romanian Schools and Churches in the Balkan Peninsula]*, University of Bucharest Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, passim.

¹⁶⁵ „Toate școlile acestea au început să fie frecventate de un număr din ce în ce mai mare de „copii de valahi”, care pășeau astfel cu tot entuziasmul pe drumul conștiinței naționale și sociale. Dar acest eveniment a fost considerat de către înaltele foruri ortodoxe din Constantinopol ca o provocare și ca o sfidare în același timp, deoarece aceste foruri nu concepeau sub nici un motiv utilizarea limbii române în nici o acțiune, în școală sau în Biserică; a urmat o perioadă de prigoană sălbatică și singeroasă a elementului românesc din Peninsula Balcanică.”, in ***, *Sărbătorirea Academicianului Elie Carafoli la 70 de ani (23 decembrie 1971) [Celebration of Academician Elie Carafoli's 70th birthday (December 23, 1971)]*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, 1972, p. 30.

by the fact that my older brother, Tulliu Carafoli, was a Romanian language teacher and writer in the Macedonian-Romanian dialect [...]”¹⁶⁶.

In fact, all the three boys of the Carafoli family attended Romanian schools in the Balkans, thus representing alleged traitors of the Greek nation. The text mentions the arson of the houses of the Aromanian leaders loyal to the Romanian cause and the assassinations of the same.

For the young high school student at the time, the Romanian Kingdom had become the only option to become a professional, a choice he was willing to follow despite the dangers he was subjected to during his Balkan journey. Arriving in Bucharest, Elie Carafoli continues his studies at the “Gheorghe Lazăr” High School and at the “Nicolae Filipescu” Military High School from Dealu Monastery. Between 1919 and 1924, he attended university at the Polytechnic School of Bucharest, where he obtained a degree in electromechanical engineering.

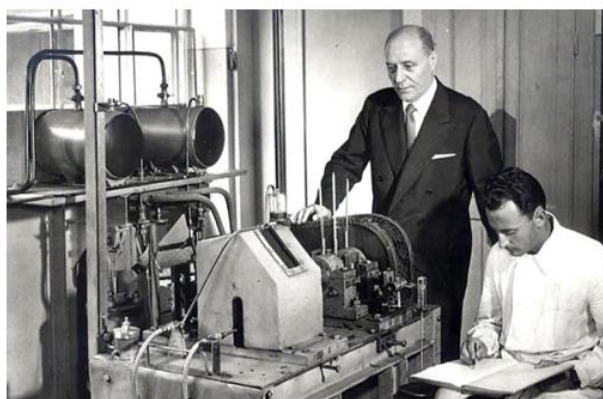


Figure 1. Elie Carafoli in his laboratory.

He went to Paris for training; obtaining, in 1924, the bachelor degree and then, in 1928, the doctorate in physical-mathematical sciences, at the Sorbonne (Paris). During this period of study in France he began a laborious scientific research activity at the Aerotechnical Institute of Saint-Cyr. He worked there as a collaborator of the famous Professor Albert Toussaint, the director of the Institute, and with Professor

¹⁶⁶ „Acest lucru a exacerbat prigoana în contra aromânilor, care aveau să îndure de aici încolo multe suferințe, chiar asasinat și atacuri armate în contra avutului lor, pentru simplul motiv că ei doreau să învețe în limba română, la școală română. Iată dar atmosfera pe care am găsit-o atunci când începusem să intuiesc evenimentele acelor zile grele de restriște. Când mi-am putut da seama de ce se petrece în jurul meu, dînd curs acum amintirilor care îmi sînt încă clare și neestompate de vreme, m-am trezit într-o atmosferă apăsătoare de teroare, dar în același timp și de curaj și patriotism înflăcărât. În acea încleștare și luptă pentru supraviețuire, familia noastră a avut multe de suferit din partea acelor ce ne contestau dreptul de a vorbi și a gândi în limba română și de a susține revendicările social-politice ale românilor din acea regiune. Situația noastră era încă mai agravată și prin faptul că fratele meu cel mai mare, Tulliu Carafoli, era profesor de limba română și scriitor în dialectul macedoromân, [...]” in *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Paul Painlevé, who later appointed him assistant at the Department of Fluid Mechanics at the Sorbonne. At the Aerotechnical Institute, he built an aerodynamic tunnel designed to visualize the movement of fluids, much appreciated at the International Congress of Aerodynamics, being awarded, in 1928, with the *Médaille d'honneur argent*. Recognized for his discoveries, he is invited to speak at the French Academy.

In spite of the prestige, he enjoys internationally, Elie Carafoli chooses to return to Romania, being appointed associate professor and teaching, in 1928, the first course of Aeronautics at the Technical School of Bucharest. It was the first step towards the establishment of the Aircraft Faculty in Bucharest. In the years that followed, he was appointed within the Aviation Department of the Technical Institute of Bucharest: probationary teacher, in 1931, and then tenure teacher, in 1933. He created, designed and built, together with Ion Stroescu, in 1931, the wind tunnel of the Technical School of Bucharest (the first one in south-eastern Europe).

During the same period of time (1928–1933), he also worked as a chief engineer of the Study and Construction Service and as manager of the Romanian Aeronautic Industry of Braşov. He designed, in 1930, together with the French engineer Lucien Virmaux, the first Romanian airplane manufactured by the IAR-Braşov factories, namely the IAR-CV11.

In 1949, he established and organized the Romanian Academy's Applied Mechanics Institute, from which, the Fluid Mechanics Institute derived, and which later on became the Fluid Mechanics and Aerospace Construction Institute. He conducted numerous researches, and wrote numerous studies about the airfoils¹⁶⁷ –

¹⁶⁷ See:

1. Elie Carafoli, *Aérodynamique des ailes d'avion [Aerodynamics of aircraft wings]*, Paris, 1928.
2. Elie Carafoli, *Influence des ailerons sur les propriétés aérodynamiques des surfaces sustentatrices [Influence of ailerons on the aerodynamic properties of lifting surfaces]*, The International Aeronautical Documentation Centre of the Aéro-Club de France, Paris, 1929.
3. Elie Carafoli, *Calcul des performances d'un avion [Calculating the performance of an aircraft]*, Bucharest, 1930.
4. Elie Carafoli and Nicolae Tipei, *Probleme de aerodinamica și mecanica avionului [Aerodynamics and aircraft mechanics issues]*, Bucharest, 1942.
5. Elie Carafoli, *Aerodinamica [Aerodynamics]*, Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1951.
6. Elie Carafoli, *Aurel Vlaicu. Inventator, constructor și zburător român [Aurel Vlaicu. Romanian inventor, builder and flyer]*, Bucharest, 1954.
7. Elie Carafoli and Teodor Oroveanu, *Mecanica Fluidelor [Fluid Mechanics]*, Vol. II, Bucharest, 1955.
8. Elie Carafoli, *High-speed Aerodynamics (Compressible Flow)* Bucharest, 1956.
9. Elie Carafoli, *Aerodinamica vitezelor mari. Fluide compresibile [High speed aerodynamics. Compressible fluids]*, Bucharest, 1957.
10. Elie Carafoli, *Wing Theory in Supersonic Flow*, Oxford, 1964.
11. Elie Carafoli, *Hans Barth – Hermann Oberth. Titanul navigației spațiale. (monografie) [Hans Barth - Hermann Oberth. The Titan of Space Navigation (monograph)]*, Bucharest, 1974.
12. Elie Carafoli and V. N. Constantinescu, *Dinamica fluidelor incompresibile [Incompressible fluid dynamics]*, Bucharest, 1981.

some of these airfoils being actually named after him, namely “the Carafoli airfoils”. He developed the airplane wing theory; he has major contributions to the supersonic aerodynamics and to the Delta wing theory. Since 1937 he was a member of the Academy of Sciences of Romania. In 1948, he became a member of the RPR Academy (the Academy of the Romanian Popular Republic, *n.tr.*) and, in the following year, a member of the New York Academy of Sciences. He was an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Canada. He received a great number of international diplomas and awards. Furthermore, Elie Carafoli was a member of the International Academy of Astronautics, a member of the Academy of Sciences in Toulouse, as well as the president of the International Astronautical Federation, the president of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (1968–1970), the president of the Romanian Academy’s Aeronautics Commission. For his extensive research activity within the aerodynamics field, Carafoli was awarded multiple national awards, but mainly international: the “Louis Breguet” Prize (Paris, 1927) and the “Silver Medal” (1928) awarded in Sorbonne by the National Society for Progress Encouragement, by E. Herriot, the former prime-minister of France; the Paul Tissandier Diploma, awarded by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale at the Los Angeles Congress (1956); the “Carl Friedrich Gauss” Great Medal, a prize awarded by Braunschweigischen Wissenschaftlichen Gessellschaft, for his outstanding work in aerodynamics (1970); the “Apollo 11” Medal (1970) awarded by NASA; the “Tiolkovski” Diploma and Medal, on March 27, 1981.

Elie Carafoli died on October 24, 1983, in Bucharest.

FINAL REMARKS

It is worth mentioning that the confession of scientist Carafoli about his origins, which he integrates in an actual micro historical excursus on the Aromanians, was made public within the highest national academic forum. Given that after 1946–1947, along with the full establishment of the communist regime in Romania, the support for the schools and churches of the Aromanians in the Balkan states was completely suspended and the Aromanians were left much more exposed to the assimilation processes in the absence of these identity protection vectors that were supported, until then, by Romania, the 1971 confession of academician Carafoli bears the value of a brave public confession, which was not impregnated with the imperative ideological ballast of that specific context.

His professional emerging, briefly presented here, is somehow iconic for the Aromanians’ spirit, these self-made men, for whom, any vulnerability related to their destiny is perceived as a great opportunity. The name of Elie Carafoli, the young Aromanian trained within an education system financed by the Romanian state in

13. Elie Carafoli and V. N. Constantinescu, *Dinamica fluidelor compresibile [Compressible fluid dynamics]*, Bucharest, 1984.

the Balkans, falls within the prestige, elite segment of the Aromanians for whom the access to education in Romanian language and in their dialect was never a loser bet of Bucharest, but rather their opportunity to break down certain status barriers.

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FESTIVE REUNION AT THE ACADEMY OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA FROM 23.XII.1971

Honourable Presidium,

Dear comrades,

I am deeply moved by the warm and very praiseworthy words spoken by my comrades Vice President Remus Răduleț, Rector George Bărănescu, Major General Eng. Ștefan Ispas, Director Dan Pantazopol, Aviator General Gheorghe Negrescu, as a tribute to my work. President Constantin Dinculescu. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I thank the Academy and my colleagues who organized this celebration. Thank you all, present in the hall of the Academy for honouring me, for participating in this show of sympathy. I am deeply troubled: on the one hand, the sadness that surrounds me now that so many years have passed and the summary of my activity is not what I would have liked it to be, on the other hand, the praises that have been brought to me magnanimously, as if they had come to make up for this regret. I am overwhelmed by a deep emotion in trying to unravel the film of my memories imbued with a constant turmoil and enthusiasm, acting for knowledge, promotion, and progress, as well as in the desire to contribute, as far as possible, to cultural and economic development. of the country.

I would like to tell you first, taking a slightly longer path, how I came to be behind this lectern today. For this, I must return to decades ago, to the city where I was born, to Veria, near Thessaloniki, where until now there has been an important Romanian cultural centre. Here my parents were in the first line in the action of defending the Romanian language and the socio-political demands of the Romanians from the Balkan Peninsula. They supervised my early childhood education and guided me on the right path. I hold a pious gratitude to them. However, in order to paint an accurate picture of the atmosphere in which I spent the first years of my childhood, I will make a small foray into the history of Romanians in the south of the Danube, in order to establish historical landmarks related to their evolution. In doing so, I have the feeling that I am fulfilling a sacred duty, evoking, as a sign of deep homage, the socio-cultural contribution brought by this fragment of the Romanian people. I will begin by pointing out a historical moment, when the Byzantine and Western chroniclers (those who narrated the last crusade, the Fourth), mention in their chronicles, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, the Great Wallachia (Megali Vlahia, comprising the lands between the mountains of Gramos

and Pind, Thessalia, Epirus, etc.) and Small Valahie (Micra Vlahia, comprising Aetolia, Acarnania, etc.).

Some chronicles also mention Upper Wallachia (Ano Vlahia, in the southern and eastern part of Epirus). All these lands, as their name suggests, were inhabited by a Wallachian population, speaking a Romanian idiom, the Macedonian-Romanian dialect, derived from the Latin language. This population played a special role in the Balkan Peninsula and had its implications for the founding of the Romanian-Bulgarian Empire by the brothers Peter and Asan (1186–1285). Miron Costin (1633–1691) would later write about these Romanians, quoting: "... they are also a Roman colony, of the same language as us and much closer to Italian than our language...". They called each other "Aromanians"¹⁶⁸; they had the feeling that they were a separate nation, compared to the other cohabiting nationalities, but not all of them had learned that they were very closely related and had the same origin as the Romanians in the north of the Danube, that they were therefore brothers with them. In those parts and in special historical circumstances, a Romanian economic and cultural centre was later formed, Moscopole, which became one of the most important and flourishing cities in the Balkan Peninsula, especially in the first half of the 18th century.

Here the high cultural establishment called "The New Academy" was built. Here lived the scholar Teodor Cavaliotti, a great man of culture. Under the tyranny of the famous Ali-Pasha of Tepelin (1744–1822), the satrap from the city of Ianina in Epirus, who declared his independence on a large province around this city, a bloody persecution against the Aromanians was unleashed, who constituted in those regions a larger, more cultured, and more progressive population of that era, and which was strongly opposed to the bloody despotism of this tyrant. This was followed by the burning and destruction of Moscopolis twice in 1769 and 1788, after which the prosperity of the Aromanians and their influence on the economy, art, and culture began to wane. Now the exodus of the Aromanians to other lands takes place: Italy, Serbia, Greece, Austria-Hungary, but especially to the Romanian Countries. In Italy, these refugees strengthened their old companies or trade representations or formed other new companies, which continued the trade ties between the Balkan Peninsula and Italy through Venice.

Serbian professor Popovici, from the University of Belgrade, points out in his book the very special role that Aromanian descendants played in the economy and cultural life of Serbs. He writes, I quote: "The Aromanians stand the basis of the Serbian commercial and cultural revival of the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century". There was a bigger spill in Greece. Reputable statesmen, generous euergetes – who endowed Athens with socio-cultural settlements – but especially a plethora of revolutionaries and poets, who made a considerable contribution to the Greek revolution of 1821, against the despotic rule

¹⁶⁸ It is placed before the words that begin with "r" in Romanian: rău = arău, rid=arid, roșu =aroșu etc.

of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the development of modern Greek culture. However, a completely extraordinary contribution for the Romanian cause was made by those who went to Austria-Hungary and the Romanian Countries.

Significant, influential personalities have risen in Vienna, among whom we will mention Dumba (a family originally from the Aromanian city of Blatza), who gave the name of a street in Vienna, “Dumba Strasse”; then Sina (originally from Moscopole), who played an important role at the Congress of Vienna (1815), after the defeat of Napoleon. Through Miskolt and Budapest, through Banat and other regions of Transylvania, overwhelming personalities entered the socio-cultural development of the Romanians in Austria-Hungary. Great figures, such as A. Şaguna, who, with a high patriotism, organized the school and the Church of Transylvania and played a considerable role in the cultural development of Transylvania, Em. Gojdu, who left all his immense wealth for cultural and social settlements and for sending young Transylvanians to school, the Mocioni family, who gave ardent patriots, the Moga family, who gave prominent cultural personalities, then G. Roja, Boiagi, with the first Aromanian grammar published in 1813 in Vienna, and many others.

Poets St. O. Iosif and P. Vulcan have Aromanian ancestry; even Octavian Goga confesses that his ancestors descended from the Aromanians, and Lucian Blaga himself says in the Chronicle and the Song of Ages that his mother, born Moga, had an Aromanian ancestry, from which he inherited certain creative qualities. Poets St. O. Iosif, P. Vulcan, D. Anghel also have Aromanian ancestry. Some writers have rightly said that the destruction of Moscopolis could be seen as a sacrifice for the flourishing of Transylvania. Many people came to the Romanian Countries; their descendants identified with the aspirations of those here, giving many scholars and progressive politicians, among whom we will mention: Metropolitan Dosoftei, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, George Asachi, Odobescu after his mother (born Caracas), Theodor Aman, M. Ghermani, Eugen Carada, Al. Djuvara, later on Caragiani, Dalles, Esarcu, Ferechide, Valaori, Coculescu, G. Murnu, Pella, Capidan, Batzaria, Papacostea, Marcu Beza, Papană, Kimon Loghin, D. Caracostea, Papahagi and others, to mention only those who have passed away.

Some of the descendants of the refugees of that time became doctors at the universities of Vienna, Gottingen, Halle, etc.; the beginnings of Romanian medicine in the Romanian Principalities¹⁶⁹ are due to them; among them we will mention doctors Pamperi, Darvari, Caracaş, Paciurea, Dudumi, Goussy, C. Filitti; later, doctors Leonte, Gerota, Danielopolu, Ghiulamila and others. In the above, I limited myself to a few names, not being able to mention so many others that illustrated Romanian art and culture. Naturally, those who came to the Romanian Lands fully integrated into their aspirations, many of them also embraced the cause of the Romanians in the Balkans; they managed to pique the interest of all the responsible factors from the time of Prince Alex. Ioan Cuza, who himself paid special attention

¹⁶⁹ I. Negru, *Munca sanitară [Sanitary work]*, Bucharest, 1969, nr. 8, pp. 486-406.

to the Aromanians. Under his direct influence, several enthusiastic and progressive Romanians warmly embraced the idea of the national revival of Romanians in the south of the Danube.

They formed a bloc of resistance against the alteration of the mother tongue, speaking the Macedonian-Romanian dialect at home; some, especially women, spoke only this dialect. Under Ottoman despotism, the patriotism and claims of the people of that region were confused with the religious idea, which also had implications for the use of the Greek language, the only one used in this struggle for the conquest of socio-political rights in the Ottoman Empire. This explains why the Aromanians spoke their language at home and learned Greek at school; in fact, there were only Greek schools in these lands. In the contact they had with their compatriots from Transylvania or from the Romanian Principalities, especially during the reign of Cuza Vodă, the Aromanians from the Balkan Peninsula realized that all their aspirations could be expressed in Romanian. Two pioneers of national and social demands, Father Averky and Apostol Margarit, were allowed to carry out this bold plan.

Helped by the great mass of progressive Romanians in the country, especially by D. Bolintineanu, who was also the minister of schools, they realized the plan of national-cultural revival, by establishing Romanian schools in the communes inhabited by Romanians. The first school was founded in 1864 in Tîrnova; later, in 1877, the one in Perivole, where the famous artist G. Vraca comes from; later, the one in my hometown Veria, also the place of origin of acad. G. Murnu; then, one by one, many communes were endowed with Romanian schools, covering most of the Balkan Peninsula. Then came the secondary schools: the Romanian High School in Bitolia, in 1880 (where the great artist Ion Manolescu also studied), the Romanian Business School in Thessaloniki, the Romanian Gymnasium in Ianina (Epirus), then the Romanian Gymnasium in Grebena, etc. All these schools began to be attended by a growing number of “Wallachian children”, who were thus enthusiastically following the path of national and social consciousness. But this event was considered by the high Orthodox forums in Constantinople as a challenge and a defiance at the same time because these forums did not conceive under any circumstances the use of the Romanian language in any action, in school or in the Church; a period of savage and bloody persecution of the Romanian element in the Balkan Peninsula followed. In the meantime, the famous “Imperial Irade” of 10/23 May 1905 was obtained, through which the Romanian communes are put on an equal footing with the old communities of other languages.

This exacerbated the persecution against the Aromanians, who would go through a lot of suffering from now on, even assassinations and armed attacks against their property, for the simple reason that they wanted to learn Romanian, at the Romanian school. This is the atmosphere I found when I began to sense the events of those difficult days of hardship. When I realized what was going on around me, now thinking back to the memories that are still clear and not faded by time, I found myself in an oppressive atmosphere of terror, but at the same time courage and ardent patriotism. In that struggle and fight for survival, our family suffered a lot from those

who challenged our right to speak and think in Romanian and to support the socio-political demands of Romanians in that region. Our situation was further aggravated by the fact that my older brother, Tulliu Carafoli, was a Romanian language teacher and writer in the Macedonian-Romanian dialect, being the author of two plays *Pur* (*Haiducii* / *The Outlaws*) and *Pirușana* (a name equivalent to “beautiful girl with blonde hair”), plays that were played in all communes and villages inhabited by Romanians.

Another brother was at the Romanian Business School in Thessaloniki, and I had just started primary school in the city of Veria. Such Romanian affirmation was a great audacity, so the consequences were not delayed: a member of the Carafoli family was brutally murdered near Veria (at Lutro); and then, in 1907, our house was set on fire, along with the Romanian School and two other houses of some Romanian leaders from the same commune. These facts, and many others like them, are recounted in a book published in 1913¹⁷⁰, *Les Roumains de Macedoine*, which recently fell into my hands, and which stirred up those sad memories of my early childhood. I attended primary school in the city of Veria, then entered the Romanian Business School in Thessaloniki, finishing third grade in the school year 1914–1915, after which there was a change in the direction of my learning. In both primary and secondary school, the education I received was purely Romanian.

We had integrated into the aspirations of the Romanian people everywhere: the history and geography of the Romanians, free and oppressed, were also ours. There was a clear vision of the transformations that would come later, bringing them all together in a proud and beautiful country that would play a special role in the world. When I finished third grade, I took an exam of my skills and concluded that I needed to change schools and go to high school, because I realized that high school was better suited to my aspirations. Despite all the opposition I encountered in carrying out this plan, I nevertheless rushed resolutely and with all my enthusiasm. In the autumn of 1915, I went to Bitolia; (Monastir), in Serbia at that time, and I started the 4th grade of high school in this city. But I did not even start school properly, that it was closed due to the occupation of Serbia by the armies of the Central Powers, despite the fierce resistance of the Serbian army. Here I was without school and separated from my family.

Suddenly the image of Wallachia appeared to me insistently, but how to get there, passing through dangerous areas in the middle of a war? I convinced two more students of the same age as me and set out from Bitolia for Bucharest, on those dangerous roads, due to the deployment of troops and the transport of war material, with all the deprivations that arose precisely from this state of war, without means of transportation, with very few supplies, but with high hopes and a lot of courage. Sometimes on foot, sometimes on trucks loaded with heavy cannons, which had to be transported from one front to another, having to endure dangerous shocks on those

¹⁷⁰ Alexandre Rubin, *Les Roumains de Macedoine* [*The Romanians of Macedonia*], p. 193 (al. 20) and p. 221 (al. 28). Imprimărie professionnelle Dem. C. Ionesco, rue Câmpineano 9, Bucharest, 1913.

miserable and clogged roads, in such conditions we were heading steadily towards our target. We went through many hardships, were stopped by the military, who were intrigued by ‘our trip’, and were often detained in barracks until instructed to continue on our way to the country. I am still impressed by the perseverance and courage with which I rushed to the goal I dreamed of; in those moments nothing would have stopped me from achieving this goal: Romania.

Arriving at Giurgiu, the most difficult and dangerous stage had been defeated. I went on to Bucharest. The image unfolding before my eyes seemed enchanting to me, like a fairy tale. Everywhere I heard the Romanian language, like a song full of magic. Thus, the love of my country pushed me to make a crucial decision on the path of my vocation, it gave me the golden key to my later achievements. I continued my schooling at the ‘Gh. Lazăr’ High School and at the ‘Dealu Monastery’ Military High School, and in 1919 I entered the Polytechnic School. After graduating as an electromechanical engineer, I continued to Paris, at the Sorbonne, where I studied for a bachelor’s degree and then for a doctorate in physical and mathematical sciences. During my stay in France, I carried out a scientific activity at the Institut aérotechnique from Saint-Cyr, then part of the Sorbonne.

The director of this Institute was Prof. Albert Toussaint, with whom I collaborated very actively and to whom I owe a great deal of gratitude, for the special appreciation and friendly attention he gave me. During all this time I elaborated several works and more extensive monographs, which were appreciated by the specialists of that time, fundamental works of aerodynamics, especially the theory of aerodynamic profiles – some of which have been referred to in various treatises as ‘Carafoli profiles’. For the theoretical and experimental results obtained, especially for their applications in aircraft construction, I was honoured with several French distinctions: ‘Prix Louis Brâguet’, ‘Prix d’Etudes Guynemer’ (after the name of the World War I hero, ‘the ace of aces’), ‘Medaille d’Honneur Argent’, etc., which gave me so many emotional moments. Later I was attached to the Department of Fluid Mechanics, under the leadership of scholar Professor Paul Painlevé¹⁷¹.

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