

BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS ON HERO TYPOLOGY AND A PORTRAIT: GĂVRILĂ IUGA, HERO OF GREAT ROMANIA AND INSTITUTION-MAN OF MARAMUREȘ²⁰¹

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the theme of the hero and presents a theoretical distinction that we consider relevant: that between the circumstantial hero and the hero in continuous form. Thus, throughout the paper, we define and outline the main attributes that define the two heroic types. Finally, to exemplify the typology of the true hero, we present a case study based on the personal life and professional career of Găvrilă Iuga, a prominent personality of Romania in general and of Maramureș in particular, in the 1911–1940 timeframe.

Keywords: hero in continuous form, circumstantial hero, man-institution, Maramureș, World War I, interwar period, Great Romania.

1. PROLEGOMENA

Herohood or the recording of heroic deeds has often been in the foreground of human writings, whether literary or part of social science studies²⁰³. When we refer to literary creation, we include both folkloric, popular creations (short stories, fairy tales, anecdotes, etc.) as well as more elaborate creations, such as novels, ballads, and even poetry.

The mechanism by which new members of a society often become socialized with the idea of the hero from the earliest years of life is well known through stories, in which the difference between positive and negative characters, good and evil, altruism and selfishness, and so on, is very clearly drawn. Thinking in such couplets, in **founding polarities**, supports one's attempt to unravel and decode the

²⁰¹ The article was presented in a compressed form on October 24, 2024 at the “Brăiloiu Colloquium”, 13th edition, Theme “Traditional culture in contemporary settings”, Panel: “The man-institution in Romanian culture” with the title “Găvrilă Iuga, hero of Great Romania and man-institution of Maramureș”.

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²⁰³ See, for instance, Kristian Frisk, “What Makes a Hero? Theorising the Social Structuring of Heroism. Sociology”, in *British Sociological Association*, Vol. 53(1), 2018, pp. 87–103, and its corresponding bibliography.

social life. Implicit in this collective task of socially enlightening the individual is also the “recipe for success” given by role models, whether positive or negative. This, in turn, brings along a set of consequences (that can even activate the predisposition towards sacrifice in extraordinary conditions) that derive from this particular choice of path/destiny. It is this type of culture, which imparts lessons through stories, that not only preserves a socio-cultural framework over time, but also manages to ensure the evolution of that particular social unit with the help of tradition (something that is often forgotten today in the design and implementation of social and institutional reform processes). This is because one of the most relevant conclusions of sociobiology is that

“man as a being in general has the capacity to monitor his evolutions through tradition. The process of appropriation of accumulated experience is called learning, and only in humans does this go beyond the experiences that can be passed on within the group”²⁰⁴.

What does a man have to do to be considered a hero, what qualities must he possess to be recognized by others in this position, how does he manage to impose himself and gain legitimacy in the public and/or social space? These are some of the questions that, in the social sciences, have formed the basis of recent and classic articles and studies.

Further, we propose a distinction between the circumstantial hero and the hero in continuous form.

2. THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL HERO VERSUS THE HERO IN CONTINUOUS FORM

The circumstantial hero is the one who chooses to do the right thing in extraordinary conditions because he stands to gain from his action within a certain time horizon. This is the individual who is essentially driven by the desire to gain something, be it material, cultural, or societal, and if the pursuit of his goal indirectly results in acquiring a hero status (recognized by those around him), he is all the more interested in participating in this capacity. The hero of circumstance is a character who cannot be relied on to take identical actions at two identical moments, because, although he often invokes rationality, he is a deeply irrational and at the same time rationalizing being (a distinction enshrined in classical sociology by Vilfredo Pareto²⁰⁵) and therefore lacks consistency in his choices.

²⁰⁴ „omul ca ființă, în general, are capacitatea de a-și monitoriza evoluțiile prin tradiție. Procesul de însușire a experiențelor acumulate se numește învățare și doar la om aceasta ajunge să depășească experiențele transmisibile în cadrul grupului”, in Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în sociologie. Spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism. Considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană, weberiană [Introduction to sociology. Spirituality, nation and capitalism. Considerations of Romanian and Weberian sociology]*, Craiova, Beladi Publishing House, 2007, p. 105.

²⁰⁵ See the discussion made by Ilie Bădescu in *Istoria sociologiei: perioada marilor sisteme [The History of Sociology: the period of the great systems]*, Vol. I, Bucharest, Economic Publishing House, 2002.

This is why, when the conditions of the moment are not favourable, the circumstantial hero chooses not to stand out in hero's robes but jumps the moment in an attempt to preserve his "place".

On the other hand, the hero who chooses to remain in this position regardless of changing times or socio-cultural conditions, we call a **hero in continuous form**, because he is **persistent** regardless of the external changes he faces. The source of his constancy is of an **internal nature** rather than external, as in the case of the circumstantial hero. It is therefore possible for him to preserve the youthful quality of giving oneself to others even in adulthood, when the "average man" prioritizes his personal security and comfort.

In other words, the true hero possesses a **heroic conformation**, which is generally triggered by a few key aspects.

3. THE HEROIC CONFORMATION

Firstly, the hero is marked by a **deep morality**, often of **religious** origin²⁰⁶, which acts as a compass when he has to make a choice. This morality is coupled with an **unwavering loyalty to a collective entity** to which the hero feels he belongs (village, country, people, nation, etc.) and which is perceived as being in danger. This loyalty exemplifies the paradigm of reciprocal altruism, of which Ion Ungureanu (1990) reminds us, which states that the finality of one's individual action is the community²⁰⁷. This can be understood only by adopting the

²⁰⁶ „în ea, mișcarea este reciprocă și inițiativa o are Dumnezeu, omul nefăcând decât să răspundă chemării divine”/“in it, the movement is reciprocal, and the initiative is God's, man only responds to the divine call”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *Creștinul în lumea modernă [The Christian in the modern world]*, Bucharest, Orthodox Word Publishing House, 2013, p. 129.

²⁰⁷ See:

1. „Teza altruismului reciproc este una dintre cele mai puternice enunțuri pe care se întemeiază sociologia ca știință: omul intră în relație cu celălalt având ca factor mijlocitor dăruirea necondiționată (altruismul). Scopul «jocului genetic» sunt înrudirea și comunitatea speciei, ceea ce arată că finalitatea insului este comunitatea. Sociobiologia a observat că insul este dispus să se sacrifice pentru o altă persoană necunoscută. Fiind dominată de paradigma darwinistă a selecției naturale, la rândul ei centrată pe succesul celui mai puternic, sociobiologia nu a putut desluși problema decât atunci când a descoperit că în natură, cel puțin în ceea ce privește ființele sociale, scopul nu este individul ci comunitatea”/“The theory of reciprocal altruism is one of the most powerful statements on which sociology as a science is based: man enters into a relationship with the other with unconditional giving (altruism) as the mediating factor. The goals of the 'genetic game' are kinship and the community of the species, which shows that the individual's ultimate goal is the community. Sociobiology has observed that the individual is willing to sacrifice itself for another unknown person. Being dominated by the Darwinian paradigm of natural selection, which in its turn centered on the success of the fittest, sociobiology could not unravel the problem until it discovered that in nature, at least as far as social beings are concerned, the goal is not the individual but the community”, in Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, p. 104.

2. Why is the community the finality of man? Because „insul se realizează pe sine în măsura în care își însușește experiențele acumulate ale comunității și ale umanității, în general”/“one is self-realized to the extent that it appropriates the accumulated experiences of the community and humanity in general”, in *Ibidem*, p. 105.

perspective of noological sociology, brilliantly represented in our country by Ilie Bădescu, member of the Romanian Academy, who states that *homo religiosus* is the true condition of *homo sapiens*. Thus, maximizing one's potential of sociality becomes possible within the Christian teaching, which preaches love thy neighbour as a model of living²⁰⁸.

That is why **the dimension of sacrifice** (up to its highest forms, the supreme sacrifice) is compatible only with the hero in continuous form and not at all with the circumstantial hero.

If we take into account the quality of man as a social being, man can be himself only in the presence of the Other (both in the sense of becoming, and in the sense of self-knowledge). There are entire treatises in the social sciences domain (philosophy, sociology, anthropology, ethnography, etc.) that deal with the notion of otherness, but they all start from the same laws of human sociality and sociability. In our discussion, the real hero is the person who identifies with his social unit more than with himself (from an identitarian perspective). Man was not created to be a singularity, and the **maximization of his potential becomes possible only when he is together with the Other**, whereby *together* we understand all those instances that can take multiple forms: physical, mental, in spirit or identity, etc. We can advance theoretically by the following statement: man can only develop his **capacity for unconditional commitment²⁰⁹, in virtue of serving an idea or a social/spiritual unit**. Why? Because the purpose of life (or of the "genetic game") is not the survival of the individual, but of the community of which he belongs to (biologically, culturally, socially, etc). This is the only way the dimension of sacrifice in man can be understood and how its supreme form (offering one's life in exchange for the attainment of a collective good) is possible: on the Christic model, because it generates "resurrection and light" in its wake.

²⁰⁸ Ilie Bădescu, *Sociologie noologică. Ordinea spirituală a societății* [Noological sociology. *Spiritual order of society*], Bucharest, Little Wallachia Publishing House, 2007.

²⁰⁹ „Omul e capturat de un destin creator, într-un sens cu adevărat minunat; omul e în stare pentru acest destin să renunțe – câteodată chiar până la autonimicire – la avantajele echilibrului și la bucuriile securității. Ceea ce se întâmplă să producă animalul, ca, de exemplu, lăcașuri, organizații, poate să fie judecat în înțeles exclusiv sub unghiul necesităților vitale. Aceste produse corectează sau compensează neajunsurile mediului și asigură animalului existența în acest mediu, care în atâtea privințe răspunde insuficient exigențelor; aceste produse n-au nici caracter metaforic-revelatoriu, nici aspecte stilistice; ele nu sunt creații cu adevărat; ele nu constituie niciodată o lume aparte și nu cer să fie judecate după norme imanente lor; cum e cazul creațiilor de cultură ale omului, fără deosebire.”/“Man is seized by a creative destiny, in a truly marvelous sense; man is able for this destiny to give up – sometimes even to the point of self-implication –, the advantages of equilibrium and the joys of security. What the animal happens to produce, such as, for example, houses, organizations, can be judged in meaning exclusively from the angle of vital necessities. These products correct or compensate for the shortcomings of the environment and ensure the animal's existence in this environment, which in so many respects does not meet its requirements adequately; these products have neither metaphorical-revelatory character nor stylistic aspects; they are not really creations; they never constitute a world apart and do not demand to be judged according to their immanent norms; as is the case with man's creations of culture, without distinction”, in Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii române* [Romanian Culture Trilogy], 1969, pp. 187–188.

Moreover, the true hero, in obvious contrast to the circumstantial one, cannot be driven by the “fear of failure”²¹⁰ that has plagued generations of intellectuals, nor by any particular selfishness that can shake his will. There are countless examples of heroes in the social history of mankind who also possess a **military constitution/training** that not only develops a sense of duty, but also the discipline that can ensure successful actions. In turn, the developed discipline and sense of justice become the foundation of the hero’s professional competence, which has room to unfold in the sense of the manifestation of vocation (in a Weberian sense). That is why another attribute of the real hero is **his high level of professional training**, which helps him shape a certain societal status, but which he is willing to sacrifice at any moment if it harms *the Idea* he is serving (again, the opposite of the circumstantial hero).

In the case of the true hero, he has a clear **vision of the ideal that needs to be achieved**, even at times when no one around him shares his *vision*. His inner resources are, however, sufficiently strong to provide him with the necessary willingness, will and capacity to work hard, even to exhaustion, at a personal cost consciously assumed, to achieve the pre-established ideal. His strong, clear-cut moral structure is strong enough to hinder his mental flexibility, however developed it may be, which translates into an attitude of rejection, whatever the cost, of compromise when it may jeopardize the *Idea*/attainment of the ideal.

From this perspective, one has the potential to manifest oneself fully as a **cultural being, and therefore as a creative being**. We refer here to a very interesting discussion made by Lucian Blaga in 1937 in his study “The Genesis of Metaphor and the Meaning of Culture”, originally published by the King Carol II Foundation for Literature and Art. In this study, Blaga elevates man from the position of a “social animal” (as we have known him since Aristotle) to that of a cultural being.

Under this creative and giving predisposition, man can stand out among his fellow human beings by **assuming the heroic quality**. The legitimacy with which he is viewed, on the other hand, depends on how others understand and “translate” his social will, his competence, his level of enthusiasm, his energy, his organizational capacity, the height of his ideas, and all the other exceptional qualities they identify in the person of the hero. If sufficiently convincing, the hero

²¹⁰ We refer here to Mircea Vulcănescu’s analysis of the generation of young intellectuals and the temptations to which they are subjected. „Și am înțeles că teama care păște, mai presus de orice, tânără generație de intelectuali este teama de ratare! Ratare care nu-nseamnă deloc insucces social, neascensiune politică sau literară; ci o anumită prăbușire lăuntrică în raport cu o anumită icoană pe care o porți în suflet despre tine. Și nu atât o prăbușire a ta însuși, cât o prăbușire a icoanei care te susține!”/ “And I have realized that the fear which, above all else, haunts the young generation of intellectuals is the fear of failure! A failure that does not mean social failure, political or literary failure, but a certain inner collapse in relation to a certain icon that you carry in your soul about yourself. And not so much a collapse of yourself as a collapse of the icon that sustains you!”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *Opere, vol. I. Dimensiunea românească a existenței [Works, vol I. The Romanian Dimension of Existence]*, edited by Marin Diaconu, Bucharest, National Foundation for Science and Art Publishing House, Encyclopedic Universe, 2005, p. 689.

becomes a “**social locomotive**”, *i.e.*, a person who pulls along other like-minded individuals, creating a functional work cell. If this reality materializes, we can say that the person becomes a **man-institution**, who no longer acts solitarily, but together with others who share his values and ideas. This happens when the hero’s power meets the legitimacy that others attribute to him and generates the notion of **authority** (classic Weberian equation). In this case, of the hero in continuous form, the generated type of authority, again in Weberian terms, is **charismatic**, which is based on the loyalty of others to this person invested with exceptional qualities²¹¹. Further, the presence of authority also generates the idea of order²¹² and hierarchical structure. In this way, the creation of new socio-cultural, economic, or political realities becomes possible. A further categorization can be made, in the sense that we can speak of two possible types of institution-persons: 1) either they are those who literally set up an institution that comes to solve a problem in the social universe in an original way, which they then bequeath to others in the field, 2) or they become an institution themselves (metaphorically speaking), when setting up an institution is not possible.

Finally, a last aspect that significantly influences the process of transforming an ordinary person into a hero is also **his family origin and his conscious belonging to a lineage**²¹³ (either in the sense of kinship or ethnicity/nationality).

²¹¹ Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, California, University of California Press, Vol. I, 1978, p. 215.

²¹² “Only when the conduct is, in general, oriented according to some identifiable ‘maxims’ can we say that a social relation has a content called order”, in *Ibidem*, p. 31.

²¹³ „Ceea ce constituie un neam este ceva mai adânc decât rasa în accepția ei biologică. Ceea ce constituie un neam este o realitate care stă la încheietura metafizice cu istoria, o unitate de soartă, de destin în timp, unitate pentru care pământ, sânge, trecut, lege, limbă, datini, obicei, cuget, credință, virtute, muncă, așezăminte, port, dureri, bucurii și semne de trăire laolaltă, stăpâniri și asuprii constituiesc doar chezașii, semne de recunoaștere, peceti, temeuri. Suportul principal al unui neam variază de la o vreme la alta, cu semnul principal de recunoaștere al celor ce-l alcătuiesc. Neamul românesc e cuprins astfel virtual tot atât în unitatea pământului românesc (extindere a ideii de moșie), drept de stăpânire a pământului legat de conștiința legăturii de sânge cu stăpânitorul primitiv, pe cât e cuprins în unitatea cugetului românesc față de mormintele domnilor noștri, în unitatea de limbă, de port, de obiceiuri care îngăduie oamenilor să înțeleagă și să trăiască laolaltă. Este (...), dar numai virtual (...), în puțință. Actual, neamul nostru nu este decât în ceea ce vom fi noi în stare să facem din el. Dar un neam nu e niciodată o realitate închisă, sfârșită; ci o realitate vie. El nu e numai o realitate naturală, ci și o realitate etică; destinul unui neam nu e dat o dată pentru todeauna, el se actualizează problematic pentru fiecare generație și pentru fiecare om. Istoria e plină de neamuri care s-au stins și sunt și neamuri care și-au trădat destinul. Pentru fiecare din cei care avem temeuri să ne simțim români, neamul se-nfățișează și ca o chemare: «De la Nistru pân’ la Tisa / Tot românul plânsu-mi-sa (...)». Munca și meritele înaintașilor ne pot fi îndemnuri, chezașii și-n oarecare limite pot chiar suplini carența noastră. Dar numai în oarecare limite.”/“What constitutes a nation is something deeper than race in its biological sense. That which constitutes a nation is a reality that stands at the metaphysical interface with history, a unity of fate, of destiny in time, a unity for which land, blood, past, law, language, customs, thought, faith, virtue, work, settlements, bearing, sorrows, joys and signs of living together, rule and oppression constitute only the keys, signs of recognition, seals, foundations. The main support of a nation varies from time to time, with the main sign of recognition of those who make it up. The Romanian nation is thus included virtually as much in the unity of the Romanian land (an extension of the idea of the homestead), the right of ownership of the land linked to the consciousness of the blood bond with the primitive master, as it is included in the unity of the Romanian mind towards the graves of our lords, in the unity of language, of behavior, of customs that allow people to understand and live together. It

These attributes, together with the formative experiences of the formative years, have the power to create a unique blend, that of the hero who possesses the notion of *the whole* (again the religious influence has its mark) and who chooses to do what *he must* (not what he wants) and to assume the sacrificial component that arises from this intransigence, not just at a particular moment, but at every moment of his life. From this perspective, the hero in the continuous form emphasizes *being* rather than *having*²¹⁴ (which becomes relevant only if it can possess utility put at the service of helping the Other).

Next, we make a methodological clarification. In the last part of the paper, we will insert the portrait of Găvrilă Iuga, a fantastic character of Romania before and during the inter-war period, and we will demonstrate that he is indeed a hero who fits perfectly in the posture of the hero in continuous form. The choice of him as a case study was motivated by too little posthumous knowledge of his actions and results, although the reverberations were felt both locally, in the Maramureș Country, and nationally (Greater Romania). The documentation of his deeds was realized first of all through conversations with the Piso couple, huge personalities of the Romanian culture, who dedicated their lives to the research and promotion of the less known historical truths about the Romanian origin of the noble families of Maramureș: Iuga's niece, the plastic artist Livia Flora Piso-Filipașcu, and the tenor Ion Piso, her husband. Secondly, the documentation also involved going through the only volume on "Uncle Găvrilă", edited by historian Cristina Țineghe²¹⁵.

"He was an uncle to me, he was married to my mother's sister, and I inherited the place where his house was, a house that was demolished of course. And they only gave me as much back [in the retrocession] as I made the Centre of Vișeu²¹⁶. But, there alone, we had 2600 meters, of which they didn't give us 700 meters back"²¹⁷.

is (...), but only virtually (...), possible. At present, our nation is only what we can make of it. But a nation is never a closed, finite reality, but a living reality. It is not only a natural reality, but also an ethical reality; the destiny of a nation is not given once and for all, it is actualized problematically for each generation and for each person. History is full of nations that have died out and there are also nations that have betrayed their destiny. For all of us who have reason to feel Romanian, the Romanian nation also appears as a calling: 'From the Dniester to the Tisza/All Romanians wept to me (...)'. The work and merits of our forebears can be our exhortations, our call, and to some extent, they can even make up for our shortcomings. But only within certain limits", in Mircea Vulcănescu, *quoted work*, 2005, pp. 933-934.

²¹⁴ See Erich Fromm, *A fi sau a avea [To be or to have]*, Bucharest, Three Publishing House, 2013.

²¹⁵ *** *Maramureșul istoric prin oamenii săi: dr. Gavrilă Iuga – memorii, note, însemnări (1911–1940) [Historical Maramureș through its people: PhD. Găvrilă Iuga: memoirs, notes, notes (1911–1940)]*, Baia Mare, Ethnological Publishing House, 2013.

²¹⁶ The Piso's have established in Vișeu de Sus, through the foundation that bears their name, the documentary-exhibitional centre for the study and knowledge of the history of the noble families of Maramureș, realized exclusively with their own funds, without any help from state institutions, which have hindered their efforts.

²¹⁷ „El mie mi-a fost unchi, că a fost căsătorit cu sora mamei mele, și am ajuns eu moștenitoarea locului unde i-a fost casa, casă dăruită bine-înțeles. Și mi-au dat doar atâtă înapoi [la retrocedare], cât am făcut Centrul de la Vișeu. Dar, numai acolo, aveam noi 2600 de metri, din care ne-au dat nici 700 de metri înapoi”, in Livia Piso, interview, December 8, 2017.

There, right in the preface of the book, appears the first written confirmation that Găvrilă Iuga was

“a titan of the national cause in general and of the Maramureș cause in particular, whose major role in promoting and defending the political, social and cultural interests of Maramureș has not been reconstructed and recognized by Romanian historiography until now”²¹⁸.

The book is, in fact, a mirror of the daybooks of Iuga’s imprisonment in Russia, found in the Piso family archive, social documents extremely valuable for the social history of Romania.

4. GĂVRILĂ IUGA – AN OUTSTANDING CHARACTER

Găvrilă Iuga, a prominent figure from the Maramureș Country, born on November 23, 1880 in Săliștea de Sus and died in 1940 during the Refuge in Vatra Dornei, had many notable contributions as a lawyer, military officer, prefect, and politician.

Regarding his family, he is of noble origin, documented by the diplomas of the Angevin kings.

“[he is] the son of Lupu Iuga (descendant of Iuga, brother of Bogdan, Voievod of Moldavia) and Măricuța Iuga born Chiș, descendant of Nicolae de Săliște, great-grandson of Voivode Bogdan of Moldavia”²¹⁹.

“he is directly descended from the brother of Bogdan Voda, the founder of Moldova. His brother was Iuga, and my uncle is directly descended from him”²²⁰.

“We had a large estate because my uncle was from the lineage of the brother of Voivode Bogdan. And he inherited directly from Iuga, Bogdan’s brother. Because Bogdan went to Moldova, all the estate remained Iuga’s”²²¹.

As for the name Iuga, it comes from the brother of the voivode who dismounted in Moldavia:

“It’s a first name, in the Hungarian times Gheorghe or I don’t remember which one was called Iuga. I wrote it down somewhere. But now I can’t remember exactly.

²¹⁸ „un titan al cauzei naționale în general și a celei maramureșene în special, căruia istoriografia românească nu i-a reconstituit și recunoscut până în acest moment rolul major pe care l-a avut în promovarea și apărarea intereselor politice, sociale și culturale ale Maramureșului”, in ***, *quoted work*, 2013, p. 5.

²¹⁹ „[este] fiul lui Lupu Iuga (descendent din Iuga, fratele voievodului Bogdan, Voievodul Moldovei) și al Măricuței Iuga n. Chiș, descendentă din Nicolae de Săliște, strănepotul lui Bogdan Vodă al Moldovei”, in *Ibidem*, p. 9.

²²⁰ „el se trage direct din fratele lui Bogdan Vodă, Descălecătorul în Moldova. Fratele lui era Iuga și din asta direct descinde unchiul meu”, in Livia Piso, *conversations*, December 21, 2015.

²²¹ „Noi am avut o moșie mare pentru că unchiul meu era din stirpea fratelui lui Bogdan Descălecătorul. Și a avut moștenire directă de la Iuga, fratele lui Bogdan. Că Bogdan a plecat în Moldova și toată averea a rămas a lui Iuga”, in Livia Piso, *conversations*, June 21, 2018.

Well, Iuga, my uncle, was a direct descendant and a Maramureș nobleman. [And Iuga remained the family name because] before there were no surnames, they had no names, they only had first names, and that's how it was"²²².

"What struck me was the name Vulcu, which is also wolf. (...) Even Lupu, the father of my uncle Găvrilă, was Lupu Iuga. And I wondered why he gave him that name. And then, studying and seeing it, I said yes, it's perfectly normal"²²³.

The historian Alexandru Filipașcu, Livia Piso's father, documents the educational path of Găvrilă Iuga, who starts with attending the primary school in Săliște de Sus, in the class of teacher Dumitru Chiș, after which he moves to Sighet, where he finishes the Pedagogical Normal School in Sighet. He completed his secondary studies at the Romanian high-schools in Năsăud and Beiuș, famous catalysing institutions of the Romanian elite in the Austro-Hungarian Empire²²⁴. He completed his university studies at the Faculty of Law in Budapest, where he defended his doctoral dissertation in legal sciences. After completing his traineeship as a lawyer in Lugoj, in 1910 he settled in Vișeu de Sus, where he practiced law.

"You don't become an intellectual in two weeks. These people immediately get the fumes in their heads and even the chimney sweeper can't get them clean. Those young people who spoil quickly are no good, they have the worm inside. Of course, a nation can't live on heroes alone, but it's a question of a minimum of resistance. The hero doesn't go to the minimum resistance, the hero takes everyone on the chest, as Găvrilă Iuga did, he is a typical hero in every respect"²²⁵.

One of his first outstanding acts is that of March 23rd, 1911, when he took the initiative to set up, on an emergency basis, a credit institute in Vișeu. This idea was defended by Iuga, despite the opposition or distrust in his person, considered "at the beginning of his career"²²⁶ by some well-known people in the Romanian community of those times, such as PhD. Ioan Mihali.

Then, in the same year, on August 20th, together with Octavian C. Tăslăuanu, delegate of the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture

²²² „E numele mic, în vremea ungarilor la Gheorghe sau nu mai știu la care-i zicea Iuga. Am eu scris undeva. Dar acuma nu mai țin minte precis. Ei bine, Iuga, unchiul meu, era descendent direct și nobil maramureșean. [Și a rămas Iuga numele de familie căci] înainte nu erau, n-aveau nume, aveau numai prenume și așa era”, in Livia Piso, conversations, June 21, 2018.

²²³ „Pe mine ce m-a izbit a fost numele de Vulcu, care e tot lup. (...) Chiar Lupu, tatăl unchiului Găvrilă al meu era Lupu Iuga. Și eu m-am mirat cum de i-a dat numele ăsta. Și după, studiind și văzând, am zis da, e foarte normal”, in Livia Piso, conversations, June 21, 2018.

²²⁴ See Alexandru Filipașcu, *Bihorul românesc – Le Bihor roumain [Romanian Bihor]*, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2020.

²²⁵ „Intellectualul nu se face în două săptămâni. Ăstora imediat le intră fumurile în cap și nici coșarul nu-i mai scoate curăț. Domne, tinerii ăia care se strică repede înseamnă că nu sunt buni, au viermele înăuntru. Sigur că o națiune nu poate să trăiască numai din eroi, însă e vorba de o minimă rezistență [care trebuie făcută n.n.]. Eroul nu se duce la minima rezistență, eroul se ia de piept cu toți, cum a făcut Găvrilă Iuga, el e tipic figură de erou din toate punctele de vedere”, in Ion Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²²⁶ ***, *quoted work*, 2013, p. 29.

of the Romanian People (in Romanian: ASTRA), and future minister in the Averescu government, he founded a branch of ASTRA in the Vișeu area, which included “all the good Romanians” from the villages of Vișeu and Iza²²⁷. Its success is remarkable, given the political conditions and the Austro-Hungarian regime’s attitude towards the Romanian community. Professor Filipașcu noted in his writings the similar attempt of the community of Sighet, led by I. Mihalyi, to create such an institution after the model of the one in Vișeu, which was unsuccessful, however:

“Police Captain Gh. Ibrányi, by address no. 8863, January 11, 1913, forbids the holding of the meeting, stating the following: ‘I do not take cognizance of the announcement made and I forbid the holding of the planned meeting’. Motivation: ‘In Hungary only the propagation of Hungarian culture is desired because the propagation of the culture of foreign nations hinders the consolidation of the idea of the ‘Hungarian nation’. It is the duty of every official to use all means within his power to defend the idea of the Hungarian unitary state against any attack in good time’. The rejection of the request being appealed to the vice-chancellor was not debated until 1 year later, so that the constituent meeting of ASTRA could not be held until February 25th, 1914. On May 7th, the Committee was constituted and PhD. V. Chindriș was elected director, and on June 4, the program of activities was debated, which could not be carried out due to the outbreak of war”²²⁸.

Later, during the First World War, Găvrilă Iuga was military mobilized and sent to the officers’ school, where he graduated as a cadet. By ministerial decree of June 1916, Găvrilă Iuga was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant and sent to fight in the Austro-Hungarian Army. After only one month (31st of July 1916), he was taken prisoner on the Eastern Front, where he once again stood out for his activity: he was actively involved in mobilizing ethnic Romanians to form the Romanian Volunteer Corps in Russia, and to achieve this he was willing to travel huge distances by train and on foot throughout Russia, going from door to door, wherever he discovered that there were ethnic Romanians, documenting the entire process in his notebooks.

“They were volunteers, and I must say the most terrible part was that he went to each one to persuade them to volunteer in the army of the King of Romania. They, most of them being sick of war. Which doesn’t surprise me. But they signed up afterwards, realizing that the country had to be saved. (...) I remember when I was following my

²²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

²²⁸ „Căpitanul poliției Gh. Ibrányi, prin adresa nr. 8863/11 ianuarie 1913 interzice ținerea ședinței comunicând textual următoarele: «anunțarea făcută nu o iau la cunoștință iar ținerea adunării proiectată o interzic». Motivare: «în Ungaria nu este dorită decât propagarea culturii maghiare deoarece propagarea culturii națiunilor străine împiedică consolidarea ideii de «națiune maghiară». Este de datoria fiecărui funcționar să întrebuițeze toate mijloacele ce cad în atribuțiile sale pentru a apăra la timp ideea de stat unitar maghiar împotriva oricărui atac». Respingerea cererii fiind apelată la vicecomite n-a fost dezbătută decât peste 1 an încât ședința de constituire a ASTREI nu s-a putut ține decât la 25.02.1914. La 7 mai s-a constituit Comitetul alegându-se director dr. V. Chindriș, iar la 4 iunie s-a dezbătut programul de activitate care din cauza izbucnirii războiului nu s-a putut realiza”, in *Ibidem*, p. 28.

father, and Uncle Găvrilă was telling him about his war campaign in Russia. How he went to Russian courts to talk to future volunteers, to convince them to enlist. And he convinced many of them”²²⁹.

“I found the note in the documents, it is dated February 1917: ‘Doctor Iuga travels all over Russia, visiting prison campuses to recruit Romanian volunteers from all over the country, and the court martial in Kashovsky sentences him to death by absence’”²³⁰.



Fig. 1 – Găvrilă Iuga, during his actions within the Romanian Volunteer Corps.
Photo by historian George Damian Mocanu

Thus, through the gift of persuasion and exemplary dedication, in less than a year since he was taken prisoner, Iuga managed, through the gift of persuasion and exemplary dedication, to gather the first echelon of volunteers consisting of 1200 officers and over 10,000 soldiers, which in June 1917 he led to Iași²³¹.

“(...) knowing that our prisoners were being used by the Russians in various places, he went to the respective addresses to persuade them to volunteer for the Romanian

²²⁹ „Ei au fost voluntari și trebuie să spun partea cea mai cumplită a fost că el s-a dus la fiecare să-l convingă să intre voluntar în armata Regelui României. Ei, majoritatea fiind sătui de război. Lucru care nu mă miră. Dar s-au înscris pe urmă, dându-și seama că țara trebuie salvată. (...) Îmi aduc aminte când mergeam după tata, și unchiul Găvrilă îmi povestea lui tata campania lui de război în Rusia. Cum mergea la curțile rușilor să vorbească cu viitorii voluntari, să-i convingă să se înscrie. Și pe mulți i-a convins”, in Livia Piso, conversations, June 28, 2018.

²³⁰ „Am găsit nota în documente, este vorba de februarie 1917: «Doctorul Iuga cutreieră întreaga Rusie, vizitând campusurile de prizonieri pentru a recruta din toate părțile voluntari români, la aceasta Curtea marțială din Cașovia îl condamnă la moarte prin absență»”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²³¹ *** *quoted work*, 2013, p. 9.

Army. He went all over Russia. And he came with two regiments of Romanians, 1200 officers and over 10,000 soldiers, which he handed over to King Ferdinand in Iași. He received the Star of Romania from Ferdinand”²³².

“My uncle, Găvrilă Iuga, is the one who fought in Siberia and brought volunteers to the King in Iași, who fought at Mărăști and Mărășești. He brought two regiments. He went wherever he heard there were Romanian prisoners in Siberia. He made countless trips; I have his notebooks, and he convinced them to join the Romanian army. And so, he came with these volunteers and handed them over to the King in Iași. The King was there because we were occupied [since October 1916]”²³³.

“He organized the regiments of volunteers in Russia and Siberia who came afterwards to Mărășești, among the prisoners, and was sentenced to death three times by the Hungarians”²³⁴.

“My uncle, still in Russia, wrote to the US Embassy, to the embassies of other countries, he also corresponded with France, for example”²³⁵.

This achievement of Găvrilă Iuga ensured the success of the battles of Mărăști and Mărășești, in a delicate moment, a watershed for the Romanian army and for the Romanian state.

“There would have been no Greater Romania if it hadn’t been for the two regiments that fought at Mărăști and Mărășești. They came armed by the Czechoslovaks and the French. (...) He was able to take them away because the war was over in Russia, due to the communist revolution. At that time the whites were fighting the reds, and he was on the side of the whites, and he was trying to sneak in”²³⁶.

“Can you imagine what it was like [to come with so many men after you] when the army was decimated, and the king was also very grateful. He gave him a decoration; he always took care to have his congratulations answered or something. There’s a telegram in the book about Uncle Găvrilă, which I have published”²³⁷.

²³² „(...) știind că prizonierii noștri erau dați mână de lucru la ruși în diverse părți, s-a dus la adresele respective să-i convingă să intre voluntari în Armata Română. A umblat peste tot în toată Rusia. Și a venit cu două regimente de români, 1200 ofițeri și peste 10.000 ostași, pe care le-a predat Regelui Ferdinand la Iași. A primit Steaua României de la Ferdinand”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²³³ „Unchiul meu, Găvrilă Iuga, este cel care a luptat în Siberia și a adus voluntari Regelui la Iași, de au luptat la Mărăști și la Mărășești. Două regimente a adus el. Că el mergea unde auzea că sunt prizonieri români în Siberia. A făcut nenumărate călătorii, am carnetele lui și îi convingea să intre în armata română. Și așa a venit cu acești voluntari și i-a predat Regelui la Iași. Regele era acolo, că noi eram ocupați [din octombrie 1916]”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 21, 2015.

²³⁴ „el a organizat regimentele de voluntari în Rusia și Siberia care au venit după aia la Mărășești, dintre prizonieri, și a fost condamnat la moarte de trei ori de unguri”, in Ion Piso, conversations, 18 December 2013.

²³⁵ „Unchiul meu încă din Rusia a scris la Ambasada SUA, a altor țări, a făcut și corespondență cu Franța, de exemplu”, in Livia Piso, interview, December 21, 2015.

²³⁶ Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²³⁷ Livia Piso, conversations, June 28, 2018.



Fig. 2 – “A Romanian traditional gathering at Darnitzia in 1917”, photograph printed in the book Elie Bufeana, *Voluntarii români din Siberia*, cu 16 fotografii în text, Tipografia A. Mureșianu: Braniscea & Company, Brașov, 1928 and present online on GetArchive with the description “Soldiers of the Romanian Volunteer Corps at the transit camp of Darnytsia/Darnitsa/Darnița, near Kiev, meeting with friends. This is formerly Austro-Hungarian personnel of Romanian ethnicity, captured by the Russian Empire and subsequently joining the Romanian Army”.

Iuga's action was so successful that he was asked to return to Russia to bring another batch of Romanian volunteers.

“In 1918, when he came, he was told to go and fetch more, and he left again, but in the meantime the Russians had Bolshevized the situation between us and the Eastern part (...) That's why he had to go back through Vladivostok because they couldn't come directly to Romania. He was lucky because he corresponded with all the embassies and some Americans gave him a ticket on an American boat”²³⁸.

“He came with two regiments and took them into the country, then sent him to bring more. He came back, but, in the meantime, the communists had entered our so-called Ukraine, and he couldn't bring the soldiers here, and so they went north, they went to Vladivostok, unfortunately, there they were disarmed because the Hungarians intervened. The Hungarians were in a very good position because they had Béla Kun, who had started the Bolshevik revolution in Budapest and Hungary. Luckily, the Romanians came in and disarmed them, for which they are not grateful to us now”²³⁹.

²³⁸ „În 1918, atunci când a venit, i s-a spus să meargă să mai aducă și a plecat iară, dar între timp rușii au făcut bolșevizarea asta între noi și partea de Răsărit (...) Că de aia a și trebuit să se întoarcă prin Vladivostok, că nu mai puteau veni direct în România. El a avut noroc că el corespundea cu toate ambasadele și lui niște americani i-au dat bilet pe vapor american”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²³⁹ „el a venit cu cele două regimente și le-a dus în țară, pe urmă l-a trimis să mai aducă. S-a reîntors, dar între timp intraseră comuniștii în Ucraina asta a noastră așa zisă și n-a mai putut să vină cu soldații încoace și atunci s-au dus înspre nord, s-au dus la Vladivostok, din păcate, acolo au fost dezarmați pentru că ungurii au intervenit. Ungurii stăteau foarte bine că ei au avut pe Bela Kun care făcuse revoluție bolșevică în Budapesta și-n Ungaria. Noroc că au intrat românii și i-au dezrobit și lucru pentru care acum nu ne sunt recunoscători”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 8, 2018.

At the same time, he was one of those who participated in drafting the famous Darnița Declaration of April 26th 1917, a memorandum translated into Russian and French, that was unanimously adopted and signed by 250 officers and 250 non-commissioned officers and soldiers, on behalf of all Romanian volunteers.

“I found the note in the documents (...) In February 1917, the volunteer officers gathered in Darnița signed a declaration of war against Austro-Hungary on behalf of the subjugated Romanian people, who were not free to demonstrate”²⁴⁰.

“My uncle in Russian imprisonment made the convocation of Darnița where they first declared the Union of Transylvania, Banat and Maramureș with Great Romania. From there, from Russia, the Romanian prisoners. And they declared war on these central forces (...) he, poor guy, was condemned to death three times by the Hungarians because of that. That declaration appeared in all the newspapers, and it was very important, because it was the first time the question of the union of Transylvania was raised and it was voted. It was a plebiscite. He went all the way to Vladivostok, he says in his diary. He also writes how the train hit him, but he didn't die, he was very strong. But the best part is that the Hungarian communists caught him. The Hungarians were one with the communists, their brothers. And they told jokes in Hungarian. He, the Nizhny, claimed he was Russian, that he didn't know Hungarian. He couldn't help laughing, so he got away with it. He was a great guy”²⁴¹.

“In Darnița he signs the declaration of war to the Central Powers demanding the union of Transylvania, Banat and Maramureș with Romania. For this he is sentenced to death twice: by the Court Martial of Sibiu and by the Court Martial of Kashovia. He fights with the volunteer soldiers under his command against the Bolshevik troops who cut off their route to Romania. Together with the Czech troops he retreats to Vladivostok, which he liberates. From Vladivostok he returned to the country by ship”²⁴².

²⁴⁰ „Am găsit nota în documente (...) În februarie 1917, ofițerii voluntari întruniți la Darnița semnează o declarație de război Austro-Ungariei în numele poporului român subjugat, care nu are libertatea de a se manifesta”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²⁴¹ „Unchiul meu în prizonieratul rusesc a făcut convocarea de la Darnița unde au declarat ei prima oară Unirea Ardealului, Banatului și Maramureșului cu România Mare. Tocmai de acolo, din Rusia, prizonierii români. Și au declarat război forțelor ăstora centrale (...) el, săracu', a fost condamnat la moarte de trei ori de unguri din cauza asta. Acea declarație a apărut în toate ziarele și a fost foarte important, pentru că s-a pus prima oară problema unirii Ardealului și s-a votat. A fost un plebiscit. El a fost până la Vladivostok, povestește în jurnalul lui. Scrie și cum l-a lovit trenul, dar n-a fost să moară, era foarte solid. Dar mai frumos e aia că l-au prins comuniștii unguri. Că ungurii erau cu comuniștii una, frații lor. Și spuneau glume în ungurește. El, niznaiul, susținea că e rus, că nu știe ungurește. A putut să nu rădă și așa a scăpat. A fost un tip extraordinar”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁴² „La Darnița semnează declarația de război Puterilor Centrale cerând unirea Ardealului, Banatului și Maramureșului cu România. Pentru acest fapt este condamnat la moarte de două ori: de Curtea Marțială din Sibiu și de cea din Cașovia. Luptă cu ostașii voluntari de sub comanda sa contra trupelor bolșevice care le taie drumul spre România. Alături de trupele cehești se retrage până la Vladivostok, pe care-l eliberează. De la Vladivostok se întoarce în țară cu vaporul”, in ***, *quoted work*, 2013, p. 9.



Fig. 3 – The flag of the Romanian volunteers from Darnița, which belonged to the first detachment of Romanian volunteers formed at Darnița from prisoners from the Transylvanian, Banat, Crișana, Satu Mare, Maramureș and Bucovina. May 1917, Kiev, Ukraine. File by Zoran Markov. Source: <https://mvu.ro/product/drapel-care-a-apartinut-primului-detasament-de-voluntari-romani-constituit-ladarnitadinprizonieriardeleni-banateni/>

The historical relevance of the document is clear: it is the first declaration of union of Romanians, way before the events of Alba Iulia, coming at a time when the fate of the war was unclear, when the volunteers could have suffered serious repercussions on behalf of Austro-Hungarian authorities. However, the signatories, led by Găvrilă Iuga and other great personalities, were willing to risk everything and anything. As testimony, the document stated:

“We, the Romanian officers, ranks and soldiers of the Romanian nation, swear on honor and conscience that we want to fight in the Romanian Army for the liberation of our Romanian lands from Austro-Hungarian domination and for their unification with Romania (...) For this ideal, we put everything we have at stake, our life and our wealth, our women and our children, the life and happiness of our descendants. And we will not stop until we win or perish”²⁴³.

In the delicate social-political context that followed the Great Union of Alba Iulia, Găvrilă Iuga once again played an important role, this time as an expert on the Maramureș issue, being “our representative for the north-western border at the peace conference”²⁴⁴. In this position, as a member of the Romanian delegation at the peace conferences, Iuga advocated for the Romanian national interests, but also for the interests of Maramureș. Thus, on October 18th 1919, he arrived in Prague as a government representative to negotiate the border of the new Romanian state. There

²⁴³ „Noi, ofițerii, gradații și soldații români de neam, jurăm pe onoare și conștiință că vom să luptăm în Armata Română pentru dezrobirea ținuturilor noastre românești de sub dominația Austro-Ungariei și pentru alipirea lor cu România (...) Pentru acest ideal ne punem în cumpănă tot ce avem, viața și averea noastră, femeile și copiii noștri, viața și fericirea urmașilor noștri. Și nu ne vom opri, până ce nu vom învinge ori vom pieri”, in Digi 24 Staff, „Manifestul de la Darnița, primul pas spre Unire” [“The Darnița Manifesto, the first step towards Union Publication date”], in *Digi 24*, December 1, 2014, Available at: www.digi24.ro/regional/digi24-clujnapoca/manifestuldeladarnitaprimulpasspreunire328818, Accessed on January 12, 2025.

²⁴⁴ Ion Piso, conversations, December 18, 2013.

“under the command of Gen. Prezan and in agreement with the Czech commander, he fixed a demarcation line [which included the whole historical Maramureș without the Dolha region] that respected the ethnic reality, the geographical, strategic and economic situation of both countries”²⁴⁵.

“he was sent a specialist to Maramurăș, to the northern border, especially since he had fought with the Czechs, he had a lot of acquaintances. They sent him to Prague, where he came to an agreement with the Czechs, they also did the northern border by good agreement”²⁴⁶.

“He fought on Torok’s side, together with the Czechs, they liberated Vladivostok, he and his men and the Czechs. And that’s why, when he came here there was a question of going to the northern border as an expert; he went to Prague because they knew him. And they drew a very fair demarcation line, and the Romanian side included the whole historical Maramureș without the Dolha region. Everyone agreed that it respected what was in reality, ethnically, geographically, and economically, for both countries”²⁴⁷.

“[The Czechs sided with the Romanians against the Hungarians] back then. Why? Because they fought together, they fought together, they went in parallel along that railroad that led to Novosibirsk, and, of course, when one fights side by side with you, it binds you. Seeing also his intentions and after that when he was appointed in the peace conference delegate in the Maramureș problem, he went to Prague and made an agreement with them. Together with Averescu they also made a map and showed where the northern border of Maramureș should be, something that our people in the kingdom did not take into account because they only knew ‘from the Dniester to Tisa’, they did not realize that it was from where the Tisa has its springs, that is, above the historical Maramureș. So, if it was from the upper Tisa it would be fine, but no, they took the course of the lower Tisa, which is about only a third of the whole area”²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁵ *** *quoted work*, 2013, p. 9.

²⁴⁶ „a fost trimis specialist în Maramurăș, în granița de nord, mai ales că el a luptat alături de cehi, avea o mulțime de cunoștințe. L-au trimis la Praga, unde s-a înțeles cu cehii, au făcut și granița de nord prin bună înțelegere”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 21, 2015.

²⁴⁷ „El a luptat de partea lui Torok, alături de cehi, au eliberat Vladivostocul, el cu ai lui și cehii. Și de-aia când a venit aicea și s-a pus problema să meargă expert în granița de nord s-a dus la Praga că îi cunoștea. Și au făcut acea linie foarte justă de demarcație, și partea română cuprindea întreg Maramureșul istoric fără plasa Dolha. Toată lumea a fost de acord, că respecta ce era în realitate din punct de vedere etnic, geografic și economic pentru ambele țări”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁴⁸ „[Cehii au ținut partea românilor în fața ungurilor] atunci. De ce? Că luptau împreună, luptau împreună, mergeau în paralel de-a lungul căii ferate ălea care a dus la Novosibirsk și, sigur, când unul se luptă alături de tine te leagă. Văzând și intențiile lui și după aia când a fost numit în conferința de pace delegat în problema Maramureșului, el a plecat la Praga și a făcut o înțelegere cu ei. Împreună cu Averescu au făcut și o hartă și au arătat unde trebuie să fie granița de nord a Maramureșului, lucru de care ăștia ai noștri din regat n-au ținut cont pentru că ei știau numai «de la Nistru până la Tisa», ei nu s-au gândit că e vorba de unde are Tisa izvoarele, adică deasupra Maramureșului istoric. Deci dacă era de la Tisa de sus era bine, dar nu, ei au luat cursul Tisei de jos, care este cam la o treime din toată suprafața”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 8, 2018.

“As they say, wrong all the way to the Tisa. But only those who don’t know geography say so, that the Tisza has its springs up in the north of historical Maramureș”²⁴⁹.

His exceptional qualities and his good knowledge of the realities of the Maramureș region recommended him a few months later for the same expert position. This time he was sent by Prime Minister Al. Vaida Voevod to the Peace Conference in Paris, for which he drafted a series of memoirs, documents, and maps to support the Romanian cause. His assiduous work, based on documents and detailed research into the state of affairs in the northwestern part of the country, which pleaded with the powers of the time for the Romanianness of the Maramureș region, had a sufficiently strong echo. However, it was made possible only by an inspired, spur-of-the-moment move:

“Nota bene that Vaida took my expert uncle to the Paris Peace Conference on the Maramureș problem, for which he drew up memoranda, documents, and maps and everything, and they made other maps as they wanted, and gave in to the Czechs. And, at some point, when Vaida left to meet, I don’t remember, the English or the Americans, my uncle opened the papers, saw that he wasn’t carrying his memorial, and he simply inserted his dossier there. It was cool, because that’s how we received Maramureș, as much as we got, otherwise we would have gotten nothing”²⁵⁰.

Thus, on March 15, 1920, Osusky, the head of the Czech delegation, confirmed to Al. Vaida Voevod the already negotiated frontier, the Maramureș region being included almost entirely within the Romanian state. Unfortunately, historical Maramureș was lost through a major political blunder, explained below by the Piso family, following the research done by Professor Alexandru Filipașcu:

“We got played, unfortunately. There were a few moments. In the History of Maramureș, my father writes how we lost Maramureș (...) Slatina was Romanian, the Russians took it then (...) we need my father’s old book, not this new one by Ajder, because it is full of mistakes”²⁵¹.

“When the Romanian delegation presents the documents for signing, the Czech delegation refuses, because the Vaida government resigned, the Romanian delegation no longer had the legal endorsement. The new Romanian government (Averescu) accepts that the historical Maramureș will return to Romania only a third of its territory”²⁵².

²⁴⁹ „Cum se zice, greșit până la Tisa. Dar doar cine nu știe geografie zice așa, că Tisa are izvoarele sus în nordul Maramurășului istoric”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁵⁰ „Nota bene că Vaida l-a luat pe unchiul meu expert la Conferința de Pace de la Paris în problema Maramurășului, pentru care a întocmit memorii, documente și hărți și de toate, și ăștia au făcut alte hărți cum au vrut ei, și-au cedat în fața cehilor. Și, la un moment dat, când a plecat Vaida să se întâlnească, nu mai știu, cu englezii sau americanii, unchiul meu a deschis actele, a văzut că nu duce memoriul său, și și-a pus memoriul lui acolo. A fost tare, că așa am primit noi Maramurășul, atât cât l-am primit, că altfel nu primeam noi nimic”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁵¹ „Noi am fost lucrați, din păcate. Au fost câteva momente. Aia o scrie Tata în Istoria Maramurășului scrie cum am pierdut noi Maramurășul (...) Slatina a fost la români, au luat-o rușii apoi (...) trebuie cartea veche a tatei, nu asta nouă a lui Ajder, că e plină de greșeli”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁵² „Când delegația română prezintă documentele pentru semnare, delegația cehă refuză, pentru că guvernul Vaida demisionând, delegația română nu mai dispunea de girul legal. Noul guvern român (Averescu) acceptă ca Maramureșul istoric să revină României doar a treia parte”, ***, *quoted work*, 2013, p. 9.

“He was sent to the Peace Conference, and there he made memoirs, and he was the only one who presented the real situation of Maramureș, but they didn’t take that into account. The Government changed, and the new Government was more concerned with Banat than with Maramureș. And he didn’t want to upset anyone. He had obtained almost all of Maramureș, without the Dolha net. Which in the meantime, had Ukrainized, he said. And I think that was so, but these are other issues”²⁵³.

“This is the map that Găvrilă Iuga presented, all the phases are very clearly shown here. This is the Romanian region, and this is the borderline they made between Czechoslovakia and Romania. It was like this. That was the border established by the troops. And then the two governments that followed, the one before and the one of Averescu, wanted to get more territory in the Serbian Banat, and they gave up, they didn’t fight for Maramureș. And when they came to the meeting, someone said to the Czechs before, ‘Sir, you don’t recognize this because the government that accepted this no longer has the power to sign, it has been dismissed’. Vices of form, but with tragic effects. We are constantly being told that we have a deep and very distinct identity from all our neighbours. But what we are experiencing now, you should know that this is not Romania and we do not live Romanian. Let me convince you of that. We live like this (...) I don’t even know how. The Romanians are something else, I’m not a nationalist at all, I’m very clear-headed, but what has happened, what is happening, and unfortunately will happen for I don’t know how long with Romania will be a struggle to dissolve us, because we are in their throats. Because we have an identity they don’t like, we are something else, yes. The rest are all Slavic, not us. Well, they’re not so Slavic either, if I think about who founded Kiev. Anyway, we can’t put the country back together tonight. But we must take it seriously and step by step, but we must convince ourselves once and for all that we have to fight, and when we have the chance we don’t leave it to Mr. Vaida. I am very sorry”²⁵⁴.

²⁵³ „a fost trimis la Conferința de Pace și acolo a făcut memorii și a fost singurul care a prezentat situația Maramureșului reală, dar n-au ținut cont de asta. S-a schimbat Guvernul și noul Guvern era mai preocupat de Banat decât de Maramureș. Și el n-a vrut să tulbure pe nimeni. El obținuse aproape tot Maramureșul, fără plasa Dolha. Care între timp se ucrainizase, spunea el. Și cred că așa era, dar astea sunt alte probleme”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 21, 2015.

²⁵⁴ „Asta e harta pe care a prezentat-o Găvrilă Iuga, aicea se spun toate fazele foarte clar. Asta e regiunea românească, și asta e linia de frontieră care au făcut-o între două, Cehoslovacia și România. Atuncea era așa. Aia a fost granița stabilită de trupe. Și după-aia cele două guverne care au urmat, cel dinainte și cel al lui Averescu, vroiau să obțină mai mult teritoriu în Banatul sârbesc și au renunțat, nu au mai luptat pentru Maramureș. Și când au venit la întâlnire, cineva le-a zis înainte cehilor «dom’le, nu recunoașteți asta pentru că guvernul care a acceptat asta nu mai are putere de semnătură, că a fost demis». Vicii de formă, dar cu efecte tragice. Nouă tot timpul ni se dă încontinuu în cap, că avem identitate adâncă și foarte deosebită de toți vecinii. Dar ce trăim noi acum, să știți că asta nu e România și noi nu trăim românește. Să vă convingeți de asta. Noi trăim cumva așa (...) nici nu știu cum. Românii sunt altceva, eu nu’s deloc naționalist, sunt foarte lucid, dar ceea ce s-a întâmplat, ceea ce se întâmplă și din păcate se va întâmpla nu știu cât timp cu România va fi o luptă pentru ca să ne dizolve, pentru că le stăm în gât. Pentru că avem o identitate care nu le convine, suntem altceva, da. Restul sunt toți slavi, noi nu. Bine, nici ei nu sunt așa de slavi, dacă mă gândesc la cine a întemeiat Kievul. Mă rog, nu putem noi astăzi să punem țara la loc. Dar trebuie să o luăm serios și în rate, dar trebuie să ne convingem o dată că trebuie să luptăm și când avem ocazia nu lăsăm așa la domnu Vaida. Îmi pare foarte rău”, in Ion Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

For all his work in the service of the Romanian nation, Găvrilă Iuga was later rewarded by the King in 1930 with the “Star of Romania” in the rank of officer, and in 1931 he was decorated with the Order “King Ferdinand I”, with swords and ribbon²⁵⁵.

In the period following the Great Union, Gavrilă Iuga began his political activity, at the request of Iuliu Maniu, and contributed decisively in the Maramureș area to the popular recognition of the new party that resulted from the merger of the National Party with the Peasant Party.

“And after the Great Romania was made, he was asked by Maniu to do propaganda, because he had done his doctorate in law. He was a colleague of Groza. We have letters and postcards from Petre Groza, what a pig-tail! He also knew the region, and he was well known; he was sent to do electoral propaganda, and that’s how the National Party and the Peasant Party came to be united. However, when Mihalache came to Maramureș, because his car got stuck in the mud, you can imagine what Maramureș looked like then, I’m talking about the roads (...) Mihalache had his mentality, he had his merits, but he couldn’t exceed a certain limit, he couldn’t see if, for example, I went to Sighet and I got tea without sugar, I’ll take Sighet off the map! He was so narrow-minded. How could I, Mihalache, receive tea without sugar? That’s why he cursed my uncle and blamed him for everything. And on and on. But it’s good to know about him, and that’s why I gave him all the material I had from Mrs. Țineghe to publish. I gave her everything I had kept”²⁵⁶.

Iuga returns to his older idea of setting up a banking institution. Thus, he now succeeds in setting up “Banca Vișeu S.A. S.A.” and “buys in 1922 for the shareholders of this bank a fund to be managed in a compositorial system”²⁵⁷.

“It is well enough that this man, when he returned to the country, was appointed prefect of Maramureș. And he realized that our country was left behind, and he formed a common land, he called seven other people with him who bought a large estate of a landowner who had become Magyarized. And they divided it among themselves, they exploited it, so to speak”²⁵⁸.

²⁵⁵ *** *quoted work*, 2013, p. 10.

²⁵⁶ „Și după ce s-a făcut România Mare, el s-a dus rugat de Maniu să facă propagandă, pentru că el își făcuse doctoratul în avocatură, la Lugoj. El a fost coleg cu Groza. Avem scrisori și cărți poștale de la Petre Groza, ce coadă de topor! Și el cunoștea regiunea și era cunoscut, a fost trimis să facă propagandă electorală și așa s-a ajuns la unirea Partidului Național cu Partidul Țărănesc. În schimb, venind Mihalache în Maramureș, din cauză că mașina lui s-a înfundat în noroi, că îți închipui cum arăta Maramureșul atunci, vorbesc de drumuri (...) Mihalache avea mentalitatea lui, avea meritele lui, dar el nu putea să excedă peste o anumită limită, el nu vedea dacă, de exemplu m-am dus la Sighet și am primit ceai fără zahăr, îți scot de pe hartă Sighetul! Așa mentalitate îngustă avea. Cum, mie, Mihalache, să îmi dea ceai fără zahăr? Ei și de-aia l-a înjurat pe unchiul meu și l-a considerat de vină pentru tot. Și câte și mai câte. Dar e bine să se știe despre el, și de-aia i-am dat tot materialul dnei Țineghe pe care îl aveam de la el, să îl publice. I-am dat tot ce aveam păstrat”, in Livia Piso, convorbiri, 8 decembrie 2017.

²⁵⁷ *** *quoted work*, 2013, pp. 9–10.

²⁵⁸ „Destul și bine că acest om, când s-a întors în țară, a fost numit prefect de Maramureș. Și el și-a dat seama că țara noastră e periclitată și a alcătuit un compositorial, a chemat alte șapte persoane alături de el care au cumpărat o mare moșie a unui latifundiar care se maghiarizase. Și au împărțit-o între ei, au exploatat-o ca să zic așa”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 21, 2015.

Subsequently, he was elected deputy of Maramureș county in the first free elections held in Romania²⁵⁹. Since December 1928, he also held the office of prefect of Maramureș County.

“And it was after that, after he made this move that helped them and won them a lot of voters in those parts of Lugoj, then they finally appointed him prefect of Maramurăș, when he returned from the Peace Conference. Where he fought like a god”²⁶⁰.

The post was useful to Gavrilă Iuga because it allowed him to raise the administrative, economic, and social level of the population of Maramureș. He was actively involved in the modernization of the road network, but also in educational matters, benefiting from the support of his wife, whom he married on 15th of July 1923. Flora Iuga born Buzilă was the daughter of the archpriest Ștefan Buzila from Poiana Ilvei, Năsăud county, a graduate of the Normal School of Higher Pedagogy. Since 1929, she taught at the girls’ high school “Domnița Ileana” in Sighet, where she was later appointed headmistress. She also held the position of President of the Romanian Women’s Meeting – Maramureș branch

“a position which gave her the opportunity to show her outstanding oratorical skills on various occasions in Maramureș, but also in Cernăuți/Chernivtsi, Cluj and Bucharest at national congresses”²⁶¹.

To understand Găvrilă Iuga’s character, his moral compass, his incompatibility with the political tendencies that appeared much too quickly among the intellectuals of the new Romanian unitary state, as well as his conviction that he was in a position of power only to serve others and not himself, one can read a relevant excerpt from his diary, included in the volume edited by Cristina Țineghe. The episode, as funny as it is tragic, took place on March 7-8, 1931, when Alexandru Vaida-Voevod proposed a political scenario to Gavrilă Iuga, which he refused (senator for Năsăud county), because it involved the betrayal of one of the most respected men in the local area, the priest Ștefan Buzilă, incidentally his father-in-law, who was to be replaced by Iuga, so that the Maramureș post would become free for Ilie Lazăr, a person who did not enjoy the same importance and legitimacy among the Romanian community as the former. Here is a relevant quote from this account:

“My response: Thank you very much for your kindness but I find myself surprised by this plan and not being prepared for such a thing I cannot accept the candidacy as it would be immoral of me.

Mr. Vaida: Why? Why?

Me: As far as I know, my father-in-law has always aspired to that senatorial seat. He may still run. And if I were to accept this candidacy, it would be like putting a knife in his chest. And I could never forgive myself. The family and the public of the

²⁵⁹ *** “Official Gazette”, No 171 of November 18, 1919, p. 9941.

²⁶⁰ „Și a fost dup-aia, după ce a făcut figura asta de i-a ajutat și le-a câștigat o mulțime de votanți în părțile ălea ale Lugojului, apoi au catadicsit și l-au numit prefect de Maramurăș, întors de la Conferința de Pace acasă. Unde a luptat ca un zmeu”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁶¹ *** *quoted work*, 2013, p. 10.

Năsăud county would consider me as a man of no character who, at the expense of my father-in-law and by kicking him, would obtain a personal benefit.

I have an unfinished arbitration business in Cluj. Electing me for senator would mean I run and hide under parliamentary immunity. Then the opposition would attack me at the validation of my mandate. It would mean that I run away from Maramureș, and in Năsăud they could attack me with that. So, I would be attacked even more vehemently in two counties instead of one!

Vaida: That's nothing, if your father-in-law agrees, then everything else falls.

Me: And in this case, I cannot receive the position because the public opinion in Năsăud, the neighbours, might assume that I am so morally spineless that I have removed my own father-in-law from the candidacy”²⁶².

“Me annoyed and standing up and gesticulating: Enough mistakes have been made so far. They've let all the renegades do their bit. Enough is enough. We will have to gather together those humiliated by the traitors and renegades and over the heads of our great wise men to stop suffering so much humiliation and take revenge at once! We must be a people with dignity or will perish! We cannot do otherwise. We must act like the Serbs and the Czechs! Enough of this mockery that's been going on for 12 years!”²⁶³.

From his position as prefect of Maramureș County, Găvrilă Iuga was also particularly distinguished in his tireless fight against the timber mafia (strongly supported by Hungarian capital), always siding with the wronged Romanian peasants and nobles, precisely because the forests represented one of the greatest economic riches of Maramureș.

However, the political intentions with personal stakes that dominated the political landscape, calculations that Iuga amended at every opportunity, were

²⁶² „Răspunsul meu: Mulțumesc foarte mult de atâta bunăvoință ce îmi arătați dar eu mă aflu surprins de acest plan și nefiind pregătit pentru așa ceva nu pot primi candidatura căci asta ar fi un lucru imoral din partea mea.

DI. Vaida: De ce? De ce?

Eu: Precum știu, socrul meu a aspirat totdeauna la postul acela de senator. Posibil și acum să candideze. Iar dacă eu aș primi candidatura ar însemna a-i înfige un cuțit în piept. Ori asta nu mi s-ar putea ierta niciodată. Familia și publicul din jud. Năsăud m-ar considera ca om fără caracter care pe spinarea socrului meu și lovind în el mă aleg.

Eu am o chestie cu arbitrajul din Cluj neterminată. A mă alege de senator ar însemna că fug și mă ascund sub imunitatea parlamentară. Apoi contrarii chiar cu asta m-ar ataca la validarea mandatului. Ar însemna că fug din Maramureș iar la Năsăud tot cu asta m-ar putea ataca. Așa că aș fi atacat încă și mai vehement în două județe în loc de unul!

Vaida: Asta nu-i nimic, dacă și socrul tău aderează, atunci toate celelalte cad.

Eu: Și în acest caz nu pot primi căci opinia din Năsăud, vecinii, ar putea să presupună că eu sunt atât de fără caracter că am scos pe socrul meu din candidatură”, in ***, *quoted work*, pp. 339–340.

²⁶³ „Eu enervat și sculat în picioare și cu gesticulări: S-au făcut destule greșeli până acum. I-au lăsat să-și facă mendrele toți renegații. E de ajuns. Va trebui să ne adunăm la un loc cei umiliți de către trădători și renegați și peste capul marilor noștri înțelepți să nu mai suferim atâta umilire ci să ne răzbunăm imediat! Noi suntem popor cu demnitate, ori să pierim! Altcum nu se mai poate. Trebuie să procedăm ca sârbii și cehii! E destul cu atâta batjocură de 12 ani!”, in *Ibidem*, p. 343.

oubled by the lack of party support in his fight against the wild exploitation mafia in Maramureș. Thus, Iuga chose to resign as prefect in 1931 in sign of rebellion and continued to devote himself to the cause as a lawyer.

“Iuga resigned as prefect and remained a lawyer and defended the interests of the people of Maramureș. The whole thing was rotten, because he opposed the chopping of Maramureș forests, and the party he belonged to was involved in the logging mafia. And he stood in their way (...) eh, funny things”²⁶⁴.

The cause he took up, that of stopping the mafia that was deforesting the forests of Maramureș, was a victorious one, Iuga obtaining in court the saving of four thousand hectares.

“On this line in 1931 he opposed the wild exploitation of forests (by foreign capital), the most important resource of the people of Maramureș, and as the party to which he belonged was involved in and supported this exploitation, together with the entire Maramureș branch of the party he ran on a separate list. As a result, he resigned as prefect and, together with PhD. V. Filipciuc, initiated a legal action against the deforestation, which he won at the Court of Cassation”²⁶⁵.

“Yes, Uncle Gavrilă Iuga was a top lawyer. If he was able to stop the exploitation of 4,000 hectares by suing at the Romanian Court of Cassation, you can imagine that he didn’t go with just papers”²⁶⁶.

“And Iuga noticed [discrepancies in the paperwork] because he was a good lawyer, and he sued and won. It wasn’t enough. He went further to the Tribunal (...) to the Court of Appeal in Oradea-Mare. And then he went on to Bucharest to the Court of Cassation and Justice, how it was called then. And all three of them said that it was Iuga’s portion, and he had to get it back. And then, the director of the common land wrote a declaration through which he agreed that Iuga’s portion should be removed from their portion and returned to him because it never belonged to the common land, to be removed according to the sketch. I have documents from 1939 to that effect. And I have the blueprint. With the stamp of the engineer who made the sketch, which also says he’s the engineer of the common land. And I have an equally long piece of paper in which Mr. Găvrilă writes to the court that on the basis of this sketch and based on the declaration he should be listed

²⁶⁴ „Iuga și-a dat demisia din postul de prefect și a rămas avocat și a apărut interesele maramureșenilor. Toată treaba a fost putredă, pentru că el s-a împotrivit tăierii pădurilor Maramurășului, și partidul din care făcea parte era implicat în mafia exploatărilor. Și el le stătea în cale (...) eh, nostimade”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁶⁵ „Pe această linie în 1931 se împotrivesc exploatarea sălbatică a pădurilor (de către capitalul străin), cea mai importantă resursă a maramureșenilor, și cum partidul din care făcea parte era implicat și sprijine această exploatare, împreună cu întreaga filială din Maramureș a partidului candidează pe o listă separată. Ca urmare, demisionează din funcția de prefect și împreună cu dr. V. Filipciuc inițiază o acțiune în justiție împotriva defrișării pădurilor, acțiune pe care o câștigă la Curtea de Casație”, ***, *quoted work*, 2013, p. 10.

²⁶⁶ „Da, unchiul Gavrilă Iuga a fost un avocat de prim rang. Dacă a putut el opri exploatarea a 4000 de hectare prin judecată la Curtea de Casație din România, îți închipui. Că nu s-au dus numai cu acte.”, in Livia Piso, interview, February 1, 2018.

in the land register as the owner of that portion, and the rest will remain in the name of the common land as it was”²⁶⁷.

Following the scandals in the political world, Găvrilă Iuga was again asked to get involved in the reorganization of the PNT party, the Maramureș branch²⁶⁸ in 1933. Then, in the following period, until his 1940 refuge, Iuga spent his time exclusively practicing law in Vișeu de Sus to defend the interests of the Maramureș peasantry. In 1936, he published an analysis based on

“the life of the noble common lands, exposing legislative loopholes that allowed the ‘timber mafia’ to despoil the forests”²⁶⁹.

Following the outbreak of World War II, Romania’s geopolitical situation worsened drastically. On August 30th 1940, the Vienna Diktat took place, when Nazi Germany together with Fascist Italy imposed on Romania the cession of North-West Transylvania (almost half of the whole of Transylvania) to Horthy Hungary, a situation which persisted for four years until the Treaty of Trianon. Since then, the Romanian population in the ceded territory, especially its representatives who were considered a danger to the Hungarian state (or sentenced to death, as in the case of Găvrilă Iuga), had no choice but to take refuge in the areas still held by the Romanian state, in order to preserve their lives, being forced to give up all their possessions. This was also the case of the family of Livia Piso (parents and brother, together with the mother’s sister and her husband – the Iuga couple), who took refuge in Vatra Dornei. Găvrilă Iuga’s case was special: he had been sentenced to death three times by the Hungarian state, so he had to leave immediately.

“My father spoke at all the 10th of May events, also my aunt, a history teacher and headmistress of the Sighet High School for Girls, spoke, and others, and others, and PhD. Iuga. They told my aunt that they were going to hang her by her tongue, because that’s what she deserved from a Hungarian point of view, and that they were going to kill my father. But a Hungarian friend wrote to my father: ‘Șoni, that’s how he called him in Hungarian, short from Alexander, you’d better go, or you won’t be alive’. And my father left with a manuscript²⁷⁰ and diplomas that he left at the

²⁶⁷ „Și Iuga a observat [discrepanțe în acte] că era un bun avocat și a făcut proces și a câștigat. Nu a fost destul. A mers mai departe la Tribunal (...) la Curtea de Apel în Oradea-Mare era. Și pe urmă a venit la București la Curtea de Casație și Justiție, se chema atunci. Și toate trei au dat că de fapt e porțiunea lui Iuga și să i-o dea. Și atunci, domnul director al compozesoratului a scris o declarație că este de acord ca porțiunea lui Iuga să fie scoasă din porțiunea lor și să-i fie restituită pentru că nu a fost niciodată a compozesoratului. Să fie scoasă conform schiței. Am acte din ’39 care atestă asta. Și schița o am. Cu ștampila de la domnul inginer care a făcut schița, care și scrie că el este inginerul compozesoratului. Și am o hârtie tot așa lungă în care unghiul Găvrilă scrie la judecătorie că pe baza schiței ăstea și pe baza declarației să fie el trecut în cartea funduară ca proprietar pe porțiunea respectivă, iar restul rămâne mai departe pe numele compozesoratului cum a fost”, in Livia Piso, interviews, June 21, 2018.

²⁶⁸ *** *quoted work*, 2013, p. 10.

²⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁷⁰ History of Maramureș, and another which was first published in 2019, courtesy of Alin Bulumac (ed.), Alexandru Filipașcu, *Manuscrisul protopopului Moga despre revoluția din 1848 din Zarand* [Alexandru Filipașcu, *The Manuscript of the Moga’s protopope about the 1848 revolution in Zarand*], Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2019.

Academy. And then we took refuge with the army, with Uncle Găvrilă and General Leonard Mociulschi – when the Russians arrived here, everyone was looking for him, he was a splendid figure, his wife was Polish. I knew her and his son, Petre. He was living in Brasov, he was also imprisoned in the Kingdom somewhere, he was with Uncle Dorel, an uncle of mine, and when we arrived in Vatra Dornei, Uncle Găvrilă announced in the newspaper *Universul* that we were there. And so, my father read that we were there, and he came, and we saw each other again”²⁷¹.

“In the fall of 1940, as a triple condemned to death by the Hungarian state, he was forced to leave Maramureș, taking refuge in Vatra Dornei. The shock of the surrender of Northern Transylvania hit him particularly hard, causing a diabetic coma, which on October 4, 1940 put an end to his heroic struggle in the service of his nation”²⁷².

The refuge was made by the Filipașcu and Iuga families gradually. First, Găvrilă Iuga was picked up in a military truck by General Leonard Mociulschi and his battalion of mountain huntsmen, then his wife (Flora Iuga) and sister-in-law (Livia Filipașcu, Livia Piso’s mother), then the children (Livia and Alexandru Filipașcu) and they left for Vatra Dornei.

“We took refuge in 1940 without the entire family. We, the children, were at my grandmother’s, at Poiana Ilvei, and Uncle Găvrilă came with the military truck, because he was the first one picked up, the military took him, the mountain huntsmen battalion led by Mociulschi, together with Aunt Flora and my mother. They brought them to Poiana Ilvei, where we, the children, were. They took the two of us, my grandmother gave us three pillows, and we went on across the Rotunda to Vatra Dornei. And in Vatra Dornei, my father had run away on the last train from Maramureș and my uncle Găvrilă put an announcement in the newspaper that we were in Vatra Dornei. And then my father, finding out about us, came to Vatra Dornei and it was a very pleasant meeting. We went to the park near my uncle’s house where we sat. It was a very beautiful park with squirrels and there we were picking mushrooms, we made some food from them, and there was also a very good mineral water from Vatra Dornei, medical water, well, it was a very pleasant region. My father was very happy that he had found us, he was desperate because he didn’t know where we were and what had become of us, you couldn’t communicate with Hungary, they wouldn’t talk to us. In that first week, my uncle Găvrilă was telling my father about his

²⁷¹ „La toate 10 maiurile vorbea tatăl meu, vorbea mătușa mea, profesoară de istorie și directoarea Liceului de fete din Sighet, vorbeau și alții și alții, și dr. Iuga. Lu’ mătușa mea i-au transmis vorbă că o spânzură de limbă, așa merita din punct de vedere maghiar, și pe tata că îl omoară. Dar i-a scris un prieten maghiar tatei «Șoni, că așa îl alinta pe ungurește, de la Alexandru, tu s-o întinzi că nu vei fi în viață». Și tata a plecat cu un manuscris și diplome pe care le-a lăsat la Academie. Și apoi noi ne-am refugiat cu armata, cu unchiul Găvrilă și generalul Leonard Mociulschi – când au ajuns rușii aici toți căutau de el, el a fost o figură splendidă, soția lui era poloneză. Am cunoscut-o și pe ea și pe băiatul lui, Petre. El locuia la Brașov, a fost și închis în Regat undeva, a fost cu unchiul Dorel, un unchi de-al meu, și când am ajuns la Vatra Dornei, unchiul Găvrilă a dat anunț în ziarul *Universul* că suntem acolo. Și așa tata a citit că noi suntem acolo, și a venit și ne-am revăzut”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁷² „În toamna lui 1940 este constrâns, în calitate de triplu condamnat la moarte de către statul maghiar, să părăsească Maramureșul, refugiindu-se la Vatra Dornei. Șocul cedării Ardealului de Nord îl afectează într-un grad deosebit, provocându-i o comă diabetică, ce la 04.10.1940 va pune sfârșit luptei sale eroice dusă în serviciul neamului”, ***, *quoted work*, 2013, p. 10.

whole journey through Siberia and Russia, and my father wrote them down in notebooks that were in a crate in Cluj, but later disappeared”²⁷³.

However, after the two weeks he spent in Vatra Dornei, Gavrilă Iuga’s health deteriorated rapidly, and he died unhappy with his and Romania’s fate, in a complicated socio-political context, knowing that the Maramureș Country, along with part of Transylvania, was once again under Hungarian rule.

“Unfortunately, my uncle got sick, he had diabetes, went into shock and diabetic coma, and died in a very short time”²⁷⁴.

“Uncle, poor thing, he died from all that happened. After how hard he fought to get to be able to be a refugee (...) It wasn’t that his things were taken away, but that Maramureș was taken away, that what he has lost. When you fight for something, your soul is there. Look at this table, you can’t say it’s just a bunch of scratches. Take a good look at it and you’ll see it’s in one piece, that’s why I patched it. What could I have done? It’s Spanish. 16th century. Well, all we have here is old stuff, including us, who are the silliest kind of oldies”²⁷⁵.

“He went into a diabetic coma because he was upset that Transylvania was given away. He worked so hard to make Romania Great. All the time, he had to go through Russia to collect volunteers, you saw what a beautiful result he had (...) Anyway”²⁷⁶.

“And his wife, my aunt, arrived after his death [from Craiova]. She went to the ministry to check the archives that she had the inventory with her (...) She, poor thing, was in despair, not only shocked. They had somehow formed one after the other, she is being a history teacher, he is doing historical fighting”²⁷⁷.

²⁷³ „Noi ne-am refugiat în 40’ fără familie. Noi, copiii, eram la bunica, la Poiana Ilvei, și-a venit unchiul Gavrilă cu camionul militar, că pe el l-au refugiat, l-au luat militarii, batalionul de vânători de munte condus de Mociulski, alături de tanti Flora și mama mea. I-au adus la Poiana Ilvei, unde eram noi, copiii. Ne-a luat și pe noi doi, ne-a dat bunica trei perini și-am plecat mai departe peste Rotundă la Vatra Dornei. Și la Vatra Dornei, tata fugise cu ultimul tren din Maramureș și unchiul Gavrilă a dat la ziar un anunț că noi suntem la Vatra Dornei. Și atunci tata, aflând de noi, a venit la Vatra Dornei și a fost foarte plăcută întâlnirea, noi mergeam în parcul, lângă casa unchiului meu unde noi am tras. Era un parc foarte frumos cu verigi și acolo culegeam ciuperci, mai făceam câte o mâncare din ele, și era și-o apă minerală de Vatra Dornei foarte bună și aia, apă medicală, mă rog, era o regiune foarte plăcută asta. Tatăl meu a venit foarte fericit că a dat de noi, că era disperat că nu știa unde suntem și ce s-a ales de noi, că nu puteai comunica cu Ungaria, nu acceptau să vorbească. În acea primă săptămână, unchiu Gavrilă îi povestea lui tata cum a fost tot drumul lui prin Siberia și Rusia și tata le-a notat în niște carnețele care erau într-o ladă în Cluj, dar care a dispărut”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 8 and 15, 2018.

²⁷⁴ „Din păcate, unchiul meu s-a îmbolnăvit, el având diabet, a făcut șoc și comă diabetică și a murit în foarte scurtă vreme”, in Livia Piso, interview, February 15, 2018.

²⁷⁵ „Unchiul, săracul, de la toate câte s-au întâmplat a murit. După cât a luptat să ajungă în refugiu (...) Nu că i s-au luat lucrurile, ci că i s-a luat Maramureșul, că s-a pierdut. Când lupti pentru ceva, e și sufletul tău acolo. Uite masa asta, nu poți să spui că e o sumă de zgârieturi. Uită-te bine la ea să vezi că e dintr-o singură bucată, d-aia am cârpit-o. Ce era să fi făcut? E spaniolă, din sec. XVI. Păi aici avem numai vechituri, inclusiv noi, care suntem cea mai caraghioasă vechitură”, in Livia Piso, conversations, December 8, 2017.

²⁷⁶ „El a făcut comă diabetică de supărare că s-a dat Ardealul. Păi cât a muncit el ca să se facă România Mare. Cât și-a bătut picioarele prin Rusia să strângă voluntari, ai văzut ce rezultat frumos a avut (...) În fine.”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²⁷⁷ „Și soția lui, mătușa mea, a sosit după moartea lui [de la Craiova]. S-a dus la minister să verifice arhiva că ea avea la ea inventarul (...) Ea, săraca, a fost disperată, nu numai șocată. Ei s-au format cumva unul după altul, ea fiind profesoară de istorie, el făcând luptă istorică”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

On his deathbed, Găvrilă Iuga summoned the judge from Vatra Dornei to make his will in his presence²⁷⁸, and then passed away, not managing to reconcile with the fate of his beloved Maramureș and Romania:

“So, poor uncle got sick. It looked like a stomach illness when it broke out and the doctors didn’t realize how serious it was if they had maybe they could have saved him. I know his mother, poor thing, made him special food and took care of him like her father. [intervenes Ion Piso: ‘How could she not look after him, such a lovely man!’]. **When he died she had such a minute of staring, in the corner, and said with heart-breaking sadness, ‘All the mountains of Popșimonoa²⁷⁹ are on the Russian border²⁸⁰!’ Mom said, ‘Be glad they’re not your mountains!’ And he said: ‘Yes they are, Bârjaba²⁸¹’ and, at present it is, on the Russian border. That’s how he had a (...) premonition or enlightenment before he died that the Russians would get there. He died in fear for Romania²⁸².**”

Leonard Mociulschi is also responsible for the burial of Găvrilă Iuga, performed in Vatra Dornei with well-deserved military honours by the Maramureș Mountain Huntsmen Regiment, under the command of the general²⁸³. Later, the remains of PhD. Găvrilă Iuga were moved to Cluj, where his wife was also laid to rest after she passed.

“He was buried in Vatra Dornei, where he died. Instead, he was brought by my uncle, my mother’s brother Ieronim, to Cluj and put in the grave where his wife was buried. My mother and my brother are also there, it’s a family grave. I paid [to have everything done]. (...) They washed all the bones nicely and put them all in a kind of plastic tray with a zipper because I thought that I would take them from there maybe to Maramureș, but, right now, I don’t know when I will be able to do that”²⁸⁴.

²⁷⁸ Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²⁷⁹ is a regionalism, which refers to the mountains that were the property of Pop Șimon, a great landowner of Maramureș, “a notary who was quite a swindler” in terms of character, and his wife was called Șimonoaie. Găvrilă Iuga bought a lot of land from Mrs. Pop Șimon.

²⁸⁰ the regret that the Romanian mountains, from the more favorable Polish domination, would pass to the Russian, Ukrainian domination, which happened later.

²⁸¹ the name of a part of Găvrilă Iuga’s land, on the border, in the same area as Popșimonoaia, on the road from Vișeu to Cărlibaba, or Iacobenii. There’s a . And from there if you go up that’s Bârjaba/Bârjava that goes along the border.

²⁸² „Deci, săracul unchiul s-a îmbolnăvit. Părea o boală de stomac când a izbucnit și doctorii nu și-au dat seama de gravitate, dacă și-ar fi dat seama poate că puteau să-l salveze. Știu că mama, săraca, îi făcea o mâncare specială și l-a îngrijit ca pe tatăl ei. [intervine Ion Piso: «Cum să nu-l îngrijească, un om așa de adorabil!»]. **Când a murit a avut așa un minut de privire fixă, în colț, și zis cu o tristețe sfâșietoare: «Toți munții Popșimonoaiei²⁸² sunt în graniță rusească²⁸²!» Mama a zis: «Bucurați-vă că nu sunt munții dumneavoastră!» și zice: «Ba da, Bârjaba²⁸²» și, la ora actuală așa e, în graniță rusească. El așa a avut o (...) presimțire sau iluminare înainte de a muri că vor ajunge rușii până acolo. A murit năcăjit pentru România”, in Livia Piso and Ion Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.**

²⁸³ Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²⁸⁴ „A fost înmormântat la Vatra Dornei, unde a murit. În schimb, a fost adus de unchiul meu, fratele mamei, Ieronim, la Cluj și pus în groapa în care era soția lui îngropată. Tot acolo e și mama mea și pe fratele meu, e un mormânt familial. Am plătit [să se facă toate cele necesare]. (...) S-au spălat toate oasele frumos și-au fost puse toate într-un fel de tașcă de plastic cu fermoar pentru că m-am gândit că le voi lua de acolo și le voi duce, poate, în Maramureș, dar, acum când, nu știu când apuc să fac asta”, in Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018, and June 28, 2018.

Then, after the funeral, the remaining relatives got to Alba Iulia, at the beginning of the school year, and then later to Sibiu, during which time they relied on Uncle Găvrilă's money reserve, which proved to be a life-saver for the whole family in such dramatic times²⁸⁵.

Even after his death, Găvrilă Iuga suffered injustices: all sorts of relatives contested his will in their rush for wealth²⁸⁶, then at the advent of the communist regime he was considered a "kulak", therefore "enemy of the people", and the few possessions that had been saved after the refugee period were confiscated.

"My uncle, who had done the work he had, who intervened and had the Romanian army come to liberate Maramureș from the Ukrainians at one point. So, he did so many services. When the communists came, who do you think they called a kulak? My uncle was a nobleman, not a kulak. And he had a huge estate, forests, houses, country houses, etc."²⁸⁷.

"Oh, Lord! And many today pretend to be related to us. (...) Just yesterday there was a nephew of my uncle's blood here. He said: 'I'm from the good Iugans'. He is a nicer boy, and he said to me: 'Madam, I didn't even know that there are so many who are related to us'""²⁸⁸.

This is the tragic fate of the true hero Găvrilă Iuga, and what came out of his struggle in the service of the country. However, through the care of his granddaughter, Livia-Flora Piso-Filipașcu, his memory may live on, and his deeds of bravery, together with his life's work, may be known and become a model by the younger generation. Because Găvrilă Iuga was a true hero in continuous form, who never deviated from his chosen path, which was most of the time was driven by the path of his nation.

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²⁸⁵ Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²⁸⁶ Livia Piso, conversations, February 15, 2018.

²⁸⁷ „unchiu-meu, care a avut activitatea pe care a avut-o, care a intervenit și să vină armata română să elibereze Maramureșul de ucraineni la un moment dat. Deci a făcut atâtea servicii. Când au venit comuniștii, pe cine crezi că l-au numit chiabur? Unchiul meu era nobil, nu era chiabur. Și avea moșie uriașă, păduri, case, acareturi etc.”, in Livia Piso, interview, December 21, 2015.

²⁸⁸ „Oh, Doamne! Și mulți astăzi se dau drept rudă cu noi. Respectiv cu unchiul meu și nu sunt. (...) Chiar ieri a fost aicea un nepot al unchiului meu din sângele lui. Vorba lui: «Eu sunt din Iuganii cei buni». E un băiat mai draguț așa și mi-a spus: «Doamnă, nici n-am știut că sunt atâtea care sunt rude cu noi»”, in Livia Piso, interview, June 21, 2018.

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