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Teleological History and the Romanian Past: Just Say “No!”

”History is the most dangerous product which the chemistry of the mind has concocted. Its properties are well known... It fills people with false memories, exaggerates the reactions, exacerbates old grievances... and encourages either a delirium of grandeur or a delusion of persecution. It makes whole nations bitter, arrogant, insufferable, and vainglorious”¹.

Paul Valéry

I. Introduction

This paper deals with an all-too common approach to the Romanian past – be it the events of 1859 and 1918 or other pivotal moments in Romanian history – that illustrates some of the dangers that concerned Valéry. This approach is the teleological method, which is grounded in a philosophy that is both erroneous and dangerous, and laden with negative consequences. My purpose here will be to show the deficiencies of the teleological method and some of its historiographical pitfalls and repercussions. Romanian historiography has been blighted for far too long by inappropriate appeals to teleology. The time has come to reject this as a methodology, thereby, one can hope, clearing the way for more coherent and compelling historical accounts of the Romanian past.

The alert reader will notice that the analysis which follows – in general – refrains from naming names and taking intellectual prisoners. There is a place for such accounts, replete with blistering specifics from the Romanian historiographical tradition. However, I more or less agree with Arthur C. Brooks that”... no one has ever been insulted into agreement”². We need to ensure that the

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¹ Quoted in David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, New York, Harper Colophon, 1970, p. 307-308.

² Arthur C. Brooks, *Reflections on a Decade of Leading a Think Tank*, “The Wall Street Journal”, 15 March 2018, p. A 19. Brooks points out that sensible dialogue has been further undermined by the

“Spiritual critic” doesn’t degenerate into mere name-calling and arguing for victory rather than arguing for truth and understanding. At the present juncture, civility is a commodity which needs encouragement just as much as a respect for truth and honest scholarship³.

II. Philosophical and Historiographical Considerations

The teleological strategy is characterized by the depiction of events as the inevitable unfolding of historical development, as part of an “objective process” of some kind, an “historical necessity” of some sort, or as playing out of a foregone conclusion to the story being told. It is the mistaken idea that “history” is going somewhere and that historians can know where it is going. The study of the Romanian past is unhelpfully strewn with such teleological accounts, most notably in the creation of historical myths and in the elaboration of claims that such and such events are the inescapable or inexorable results of historical processes and developments.

Something needs to be said, briefly, at this juncture about myth and myth history, especially since the last three decades have featured extensive and intense encounters involving the demythologizing of heroes in the Romanian National Pantheon and of the Romanian past in general⁴. This has manifested itself in

misuse of social media: “Today, we see a kind of Gresham’s law. Famous academics spend big parts of their days trading insults on Twitter... When half-baked 280-character opinions and tiny hits of click-fueled dopamine displace one’s hard-earned training and vocation, it’s a lousy trade.”

³ See Edward Shils, *The Virtue of Civility. Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society*, edited by Steven Grosby, Indianapolis IN, Liberty Fund, 1997, *passim*, for a discussion.

⁴ On myth and Romanian history and culture, see Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, New York, Harper, 1968, especially p. 1-20; 181-193; Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Myths in Romanian History*, “East European Quarterly”, vol. 15 (1981), p. 327-334; and Paul E. Michelson, *Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development*, “International Journal of Rumanian Studies”, vol. 5 (1987), nr. 2, p. 5-33. For the controversies on myth in Romanian history, see Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian National Consciousness*, Budapest, Central European University, 2001, the rejoinder by Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Istoria, Adevărul, și miturile. Note de lectură*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2002; and my comments in Paul E. Michelson, *Collected Memories, Collective Amnesia, and Post-Communism*, “Interstitio”, vol. 1 (2007), nr. 2, p. 137-158, especially p. 150 ff., which also appeared in a Romanian translation as *Memorii colectate, amnezie colectivă și post-comunism*, in Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu, ed., *Națiune și memorie în (post)socialism: Proiecte de construcție a națiunii și cultura memoriei în sud-estul și estul Europei*, Chișinău, Institutul de Istorie Socială ProMemoria, 2012, p. 1-31. Boia published or edited in the 1990s a number of “demythologizing” volumes: *Mituri istorice românești*, București, Editura Universității București, 1995; *Miturile comunismului românesc*, two volumes, București, Editura Universității București, 1995-1997; *Două secole de mitologie națională*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1999; and *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1997, which was translated as *History and Myth*, 2001. Boia’s work, which focused particularly on sensitive and almost taboo topics in Romanian history and culture was especially critical of the way in which history was exploited to promote nationalist ideology, stimulated a lot of response, some of it irrational, some of it more reasoned defenses of alleged national priorities. Ioan-Aurel Pop makes the interesting point that while Boia’s *History and Myth* appears to deal with Romanian historiography its real focus is Romanian culture and consciousness. This would explain

vituperative debates over alternative textbooks and school curricula⁵. Indeed, the authors of one text book⁶ were accused of treason by Romanian Senator (and sometime actor and producer of potboiler historical movies) Sergiu Nicolaescu, who actually called for the manual to be burned in a public square⁷. (At least, as far as I know, he didn't suggest that the authors be subjected to the same fate). It showed up every time a street was re-named, historic buildings were threatened with demolition, or when commemorative statues were put up...or taken down⁸.

William H. McNeill's study of “Mythhistory” has several useful and pertinent things to suggest in this connection:

“Myth lies at the basis of human society,... This is mankind's substitute for instinct. It is the unique and characteristic human way of acting together. A people without a full quiver of relevant agreed-upon statements... soon finds itself in deep trouble, for in the absence of believable myths, coherent public action becomes very difficult to improvise or sustain...⁹. Without such social cement... no group can long preserve itself”¹⁰.

However, McNeill goes on to argue that historians are not only necessary as myth makers; in the interests of truth, they also need to be myth breakers¹¹. This means challenging the teleological method.

The teleological approach, Henri-Irénée Marrou tells us, is a result of confusing “history that historians deal with, history as a science” – history as an academic, empirical discipline – and mankind's eternal quest for the “meaning of

the heated reactions which Boia's work provoked.

⁵ See Boia, *History and Myth*, 2001, p. 19-25; Dan Pavel, *The Textbook Scandal and Rewriting History in Romania: Letter From Bucharest*, “East European Politics and Societies”, vol. 15 (2001), p. 179-189; and Ovidiu Pecican, *Poarta leilor istoriografia tânără din Transilvania (1990-2005)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Grinta, 2005, p. 157-159. For pre-World War I schooling, see Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, *Între “bunul creștin” și “bravul român”: Rolul școlii, primare în construirea identității naționale românești (1831-1878)*, Iași, Editura A 92, 1999; Gheorghe Iuțș, *Din istoria literaturii didactice românești. Manualele de istorie națională (secolul al XIX-lea - prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea)*, Iași, Editura “Universității Al. I. Cuza”, 2013; and Cătălina Mihalache, *Copilărie, familie, școală: politici educaționale și receptări sociale*, Iași, Editura “Universității Al. I. Cuza”, 2016.

⁶ Sorin Mitu, Lucia Copoeru, Ovidiu Pecican, Liviu Țărău, and Virgiliu Țărău, *Istorie pentru clasa a XI-a și XII-a*, București, Editura Sigma, 1999.

⁷ Pecican, *Poarta*, 2005, p. 223.

⁸ See, from among many sources, Andrei Pippidi, *Despre statui și morminte. Pentru o teorie a istoriei simbolice*, Iași, Polirom, 2000, and *Case și oameni din București*, 2nd edition, București, Editura Humanitas, 2012, two volumes; Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, eds., *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, West Lafayette IN, Purdue University Press, 2001; Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims. Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press, 2009; and Andi Mihalache, *Contribuții la istoria ideii de patrimoniu. Surse, evoluții, interpretări*, Iași, Editura “Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2014.

⁹ William H. McNeill, *Mythistory and Other Essays*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 23.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

history,” that is our search for purpose, goals, and significance¹², This latter view gained currency in the 19th century with the illusions created by “a comfortable and ingenuous belief in a linear, continuous progress”¹³, in short, the Whig view of history so vigorously critiqued by Herbert Butterfield nearly a century ago¹⁴.

Marrou's distinction fits in well with the discussion of the same issues by Karl R. Popper. Popper writes: “What may be called the philosophy of history persistently turns round three big questions: (1) What is the plot of history? (2) What is the use of history? (3) How are we to write history, or what is the method of history?”¹⁵. The first deals with the meaning of history; the second relates to the pragmatic value of history; and the third involves historical practice as such, the *métier* of the historian as scholar¹⁶.

Popper continues:

“Answers have been given to these three questions implicitly and explicitly, from Homer and the Bible down to our own day. And the answers have changed astonishingly little. The oldest answer to the first question...is theistic. The plot is only dimly discernible, because it results from the will of God, or of the gods.... there is a secret hidden beneath the surface of events.... [Paradoxically,] in our own time, the...naturalistic revolution against God replaced the name 'God' by the name 'Nature'.... Theological determinism was replaced by a naturalistic determinism.... Hegel and Marx replaced the goddess Nature, in her turn, by the goddess History.... [with] the omniscience and omnipotence of historical determinism¹⁷. Sinners against God are replaced by 'criminals who vainly resist the march of History'; and we learn that not God but History will be our judge”¹⁸.

This led “to the secularized religions of existentialism, positivism, and behaviourism”¹⁹, all forms of what Popper calls “historicism”. Popper labeled this “theoretical history,” that is “the view that the story of mankind has a plot,” based on the mistaken idea there can be “a historical social science” which could “predict

¹² Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Time and Timeliness*, translated by Violet Nevile, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 7. Marrou does not reject the “deeply felt need, all around us, to understand more about this mysterious process that bears us along so irresistibly.” (p. 9). He just wants us to be clear that such a quest is not history as a science.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹⁴ Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, London, G. Bell, 1931. For Butterfield, the “subject is treated not as a problem in the philosophy of history, but rather as an aspect of the psychology of historians”, p. vi.

¹⁵ K. R. Popper, *A Pluralist Approach to the Philosophy of History*, 1967, in Erich Streissler, ed., *Roads to Freedom. Essays in Honour of Friedrich A. von Hayek*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 181 ff.

¹⁶ Compare Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, with an introduction by Joseph R. Strayer, translated by Peter Putnam, New York, Random House Vintage Books, 1953.

¹⁷ One, of course, has to wonder why an argument has to be made for something that is supposedly inevitable.

¹⁸ Popper, *Philosophy of History*, 1967, p. 181-182.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 182.

the future course of history”²⁰. Apart from the fact that secular teleology (i.e. goal-driven metahistory which is really just another form of providential history without God) and secular theories of inevitability lack historiographical validity, Popper has shown that “for strictly logical reasons, it is impossible for us to predict the future course of history”²¹.

C. S. Lewis has tellingly warned that “We must guard against the emotional overtones of a phrase like ‘the judgement of history’. It might lure us into the vulgarest of all vulgar errors, that of idolizing as the goddess History what manlier ages belaboured as the strumpet Fortune. That would sink us below the Christian, or even the best Pagan, level”²². These are words well worth heeding.

In the end, historicism is a theology of history, a metaphysical approach not history as historians practice it, or at least should practice it. Lewis the Christian theist and Popper the atheist arrive at the same conclusions. For Lewis, “historicism” was “the belief that men can, by the use of their natural powers, discover an inner meaning in the historical process...The mark of the Historicist...is that he tried to get from historical premises conclusions which are more than historical”. In short, “Historicism is an illusion and...Historicists are, at the very best, wasting their time”²³.

Lewis, of course, does not deny that for the Christian, “history is a story with a well-defined plot, pivoted on Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Judgement” and he does “not dispute that History is a story written by the finger of God. But,” he asks, “have we the text” of such a story?²⁴. This is seconded by Butterfield, who writes: “If in life a man has accepted the Christian view of things, he will run these values throughout the whole story of the past, and taking the very basis of narrative which historical scholarship has provided, he may see every event with an added

²⁰ Idem, *The Poverty of Historicism*, second edition with corrections, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, p. v-vii; and idem, *Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences*, in K. R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, New York, Basic Books, 1962, p. 336. It should be stressed that what Popper calls “historicism” differs from what historians usually mean by the word, which has to do with the method of the 19th century German school of history. See Aviezer Tucker, *Historicism*, in D. R. Woolf, ed., *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, New York, Garland Publishing, 1998, vol. I, p. 414-416. See below for more on German-style historicism. For a discussion of historicism as a form of hubris, see Michael Oakshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, edited by T. Fuller, Indianapolis IN, Liberty Fund, 1991, p. 488-491.

²¹ Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1966. p. v-vi. Compare Lucian Boia, *Un joc fără regului. Despre imprevizibilitatea istoriei*, București, Editura Humanitas, 2016.

²² C. S. Lewis, *Historicism*, 1950, in C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper, Grand Rapids MI, William B. Eerdmans, 1967, p. 102.

²³ Idem, *Historicism*, 1967, p. 100-101.

²⁴ See *ibidem*, p. 103-105. On the Christian philosophy of history, see Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, London, Collins Fontana, 1957; Henri-Irénée Marrou, *The Meaning of History*, translation of the 4th revised French edition by Robert J. Olsen, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1966; and two surveys with abundant bibliographical resources: C. T. McIntyre, ed., *God, History, and Historians. Modern Christian Views of History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1977; and Jay D. Green, *Christian Historiography. Five Rival Versions*, Waco TX, Baylor University Press, 2017.

dimension.” However, “He will not claim that historical science has demonstrated the truth of the interpretation which as a Christian he puts upon human events”²⁵.

Ironically, though the Enlightenment ridiculed Christian interpretations of history, in typically dishonest modernist slight of hand, teleology was re-established with the modern idea of progress. And, like other parts of the Enlightenment Project, as Alasdair McIntyre has decisively demonstrated, this has been a resounding failure²⁶. Furthermore, as Marrou writes, such “dogmatic philosophies, so certain of possessing the secrets of history...liquidate adversaries, antagonists, and deviationists with implacable severity. No tyrant has ever been more absolute, nor executioner more cruel than in those countries where men have believed themselves to be authorized interpreters and agents of destiny”²⁷. Romanians need little reminding of that.

In the final analysis, the only thing that appears to be inevitable in history is people pressing the claim that things are inevitable, usually to the detriment of human agency. Such interpretations are objectionable precisely because they denigrate the actions of those who contributed to the making of modern Romania, transforming them into secondary pawns of mysterious influences and ineluctable, anonymous historical forces. However, if history was deterministic in such a fashion, there would be no one to credit... or to blame for what people have done or didn't do. If there are no choices, there are no responsibilities. Clearly, that is a view that most of us cannot and do not accept in our everyday lives, and presumably ought not to accept in history either.

On the other hand, though this paper rejects deterministic approaches to the past, I do not believe we are compelled to see things as the mere product of accidental and random events as A. J. P. Taylor did, at least on a personal level. Taylor believed that

“history enables us to understand the past better, nor more and no less. This is a matter of detached curiosity, and there can be no nobler exercise of the human mind. I have never supposed, as many earlier historians did, that men can learn any useful lessons from history, political or otherwise. Of course you can learn certain obvious commonplaces, such as that all men die or that one day the deterrent, whatever it may be, will fail to deter. Apart from this,” Taylor wrote, “history is an art just like painting or architecture and is designed like them to give intellectual and artistic pleasure”²⁸.

²⁵ Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations*, New York, Macmillan, 1952, p. 147-148.

²⁶ Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, third edition, Notre Dame IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, chs. 4, 5, 6.

²⁷ Marrou, *Time and Timeliness*, 1969, p. 9.

²⁸ A. J. P. Taylor, *Accident Prone, or What Happened Next*, 1977, in A. J. P. Taylor, *From Napoleon to the Second International. Essays on Nineteenth-Century Europe*, edited with an Introduction by Chris Wrigley, London, Penguin Books, 1995, p. 21-22. Compare A. J. P. Taylor, *A Personal History*, New York, Atheneum, 1983, p. 97, 222, 245.

Popper's second question – “What is the use of history?” – need not detain us here since responses to this issue while of interest philosophically or pragmatically are not related to history per se. They have ranged from the Exemplar Theory of History (history is of educational value as a source of lessons for statesmen, politicians, or civil society as a whole) to History as Entertainment to Historical Understanding as re-enactment or 'situational analysis', to History as Useful in and of itself²⁹.

Popper's third question, “How do we write history?” deals with historical practice as such, that is with historiography in the traditional, disciplinary sense. Here Popper comes down solidly and explicitly on the side of Lord Acton, who argued at the end of the 19th century that we should “study problems in preference to periods”³⁰. Acton asserted that “the main thing to learn is not the art of accumulating material, but the sublimer art of investigating it, of discerning truth from falsehood and certainty from doubt. It is by solidity of criticism more than by the plenitude of erudition, that the study of history strengthens, and straightens, and extends the mind”³¹. Popper adds:

“The questions the historian is asking are decisive. But 'the questions the historian is asking' is merely a synonym for the term 'historical problem'. And so we are some seventy-five years back, at Lord Acton's emphasis on problems. In fact, it is only from problems that our work can possibly start; and this holds not only for what Professor Elton calls 'analysis' but just as much for what he calls 'narrative’”³².

However, it appears, the teleological method is not really concerned with historical investigation, only with what history “means,” which it turns out is outside of the professional historian's mandate.

Why did teleological interpretations flourish in the last two centuries, not only in Romanian historical study, but in European historiography generally?³³ Let us turn to the historical context of the 19th and 20th centuries when modern, scholarly historiography was born. This situation owed in part to schizophrenic developments in 19th and 20th century cultural discourse³⁴. The Enlightenment and

²⁹ David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies* (1970), has a whole section devoted to “Fallacies of Factual Significance,” p. 64-100, which deals with most of these.

³⁰ Lord Acton, *A Lecture on the Study of History delivered at Cambridge, June 11, 1895*, London, Macmillan, 1895, reprinted as “The Study of History,” in Lord Acton, *Selected Writings of Lord Acton: vol. II: Essays in the Study and Writing of History*, edited by J. Rufus Fears, Indianapolis, Liberty Classics, 1985, p. 545.

³¹ Acton, *Study of History*, 1985, p. 528.

³² Popper, *Pluralist Approach*, 1969, p. 195.

³³ For the Romanian historiographical background and for a distinction between “historicism” and “historism” see Paul E. Michelson, *The Origins of the Romanian Historiographical Tradition and the Development of Romanian Historism*, in Gheorghe Cliveti, ed, *Clio în Oglindiri de sine: Academicianului Alexandru Zub: omagiu*, Iași, Editura “Universității Al. I. Cuza”, 2014, p. 161-178.

³⁴ For a magisterial overview of the history of history since the French Revolution, see Donald R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga*, New Haven CT, Yale

the French Revolution produced revolts against history and for history; a turning away from history and a turning to history³⁵.

Lord Acton described the situation concisely:

“The triumph of the Revolutionist annuls the historian. By its authentic exponents, Jefferson and Sieyès, the Revolution of the last century repudiates history. Their followers renounced acquaintance with it [history], and were ready to destroy its records and to abolish its inoffensive professors. But the unexpected truth, stranger than fiction, is that this was not the ruin but the renovation of history. Directly and indirectly, by process of development and by process of reaction, an impulse was given which made it [history] infinitely more effectual as a factor of civilization than ever before, and a movement began in the world of minds which was deeper and more serious than the revival of ancient learning. . . . The Conservative line of writers, under the name of the Romantic or Historical School, had its seat in Germany, looked upon the Revolution as an alien episode, the error of an age, a disease to be treated by the investigation of its origin, and strove to unite the broken threads and to restore the normal conditions of organic evolution. The Liberal School, whose home was France, explained and justified the Revolution as a true development, and the ripened fruit of all history”³⁶.

This constituted the remarkable 19th century “Historical Movement” which saw the birth of history as a modern discipline, a revolutionary event in itself described by Lord Acton's seminal Cambridge University Inaugural Lecture in 1895³⁷. According to Herbert Butterfield, “In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a great historical movement produced a rage for the study of the past, as well as a notion of history different from anything one can find in classical

University Press, 2003, and *Frontiers of History: Historical Inquiry in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 2006. For a good general history of historiography, see Ernst Breisach, *Historiography. Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, third edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007.

³⁵ For the French Revolution and the Romanian lands, see Al. Zub, *Reflections on the Impact of the French Revolution: 1789, deTocqueville, and Romanian Culture*, with an introduction by Paul E. Michelson, Iași, Center for Romanian Studies, 2000; and Al. Zub, ed., *La Révolution française et les Roumains*, Iași, “Universitatea Al. I. Cuza”, 1989.

³⁶ Acton, *The Study of History*, 1985, p. 526-527. On Acton's life and work, see my *Prefața*, to Lord Acton, *Despre libertate*, translated by Ligia Constantinescu and Mihai-Eugen Avădanie, Iași, Institutul European, 2000, p. 5-43, as well as Paul E. Michelson, *Reshaping Romanian Historiography: Some Actonian Perspectives*, in “Romanian Civilization”, vol. 3 (1994), nr. 1, p. 3-23. For Acton's views on the development of German historiography, see Lord Acton, *German Schools of History*, in Lord Acton, *Selected Writings*, vol. II, 1985, p. 325-364.

³⁷ Acton, *Study of History*, 1985, p. 527 ff. For an elaboration, see Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past. The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship*, with a new preface, Boston, Beacon Press, 1960. Butterfield's work is based, in part, on a thorough examination of the Acton archives at Cambridge, which contain many important unpublished statements of Acton's position and ideas.

antiquity or in any other of the world’s civilisations. Here the history of historical scholarship presents the spectacle of something like an intellectual revolution”³⁸.

Lord Acton, Butterfield argued, was the first to understand “the new place which history had come to hold in the realm of the intellect and the change it had produced in the structure of human thought”. He showed that there were “now two ways in which every branch of science was to be studied: first by its own forms of technical procedure, and secondly, by an examination of its [own] history”³⁹.

In Acton's own fragmentary words from the mountain of notes he left behind, the Historical Movement was this:

"Each science has to be learned by a method of its own. But also by one and the same method, applicable to all, which is the historical method.... History is not only a particular branch of knowledge, but a particular mode and method of knowledge in other branches. Determines their influence on society. It embraces other sciences, records their progress and the tests by which truths have been ascertained. Historic thinking is more than historical knowledge”⁴⁰.

Further, Acton wrote, the “accession of the critic in the place of the indefatigable compiler, of the artist in coloured narrative, the skilled limner of character, the persuasive advocate of good, or other, causes” amounted to “a transfer of government, to a change of dynasty, in the historic realm”⁴¹. This directed the historian's attention, Acton argued, from the lower to “the higher objects of history – the difference between knowledge of facts and the energetic understanding of their significance”⁴². The result was that history became “infinitely more effectual as a factor of civilisation than ever before, and a movement began in the world of minds which was deeper and more serious than the revival of ancient learning”⁴³. In the end, history was no longer merely as a branch of literature (the *Belles Lettres*) or a simple chronicling of facts. Instead, it was transformed into the systematic, critical, study of the past.

This was a key part of what historian Robert Anchor labelled “the Triple Revolution”⁴⁴. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Western development experienced a

³⁸ Butterfield, p. x-xi: Cf. my *The Historical Movement of the 19th Century and Some Considerations on the Development of Romanian Historiography*, in *RESEE*, vol. 45 (2007), p. 307-314.

³⁹ Butterfield, *Man on His Past*, 1960, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Notes in the Acton Archives at Cambridge, cited in Butterfield, *Man on His Past*, 1960, p. 1, 97. Compare Thomas Carlyle: “What is all knowledge but recorded experience, and a product of history; of which, therefore, reasoning and belief, no less than action and passion, are essential materials?”, *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd edition, London, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 125.

⁴¹ Acton, *Study of History*, 1985, p. 528-529.

⁴² Notes in the Acton Archives at Cambridge, cited in Butterfield, *Man on His Past*, 1960, p. 96.

⁴³ Acton, *Study of History*, 1985, p. 526.

⁴⁴ Robert Anchor, *A Triple Revolution*, in Robert Anchor, *The Modern Western Experience*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1978, p. 1. See my *The Triple Revolution and the Birth of Modern Times*, in Sorin Mitu, et al, eds., *Biserică, societate, identitate: In honorem Nicolae Bocușan*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007, p. 639-648.

series of dramatic changes began with the Industrial Revolution in England in the 1760s, was followed by the political upheaval of the French Revolution of the 1790s championing “*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*”; and culminated with an intellectual and cultural revolution that took wing in the German lands in the early 19th century. The continued unfolding of the Triple Revolution led to Napoléon's failed attempt to dominate Europe and its Metternichian aftermath; then to the Revolutions of 1848, which unleashed the struggle between liberalism and reaction, a contest between dynastic and multi-national states and emerging linguistic and political nationalism⁴⁵. At the same time, the inherent contradictions of the French Revolution began to surface as it turned out that liberty (liberalism), equality (socialism), and fraternity (nationalism) were simply and hopelessly incompatible.

In the Romanian lands, the West European sequence was reversed, with the cultural revolution occurring first, followed by political change, and, finally, showing movement in the economic sphere⁴⁶. This “rationalization process” moved Romanian culture relatively late into the European mainstream⁴⁷. As Tudor Vianu observed:

“Our culture found itself in an interesting process of rational adaptation....Centuries old traditional forces weakened, at a certain moment...It was then that this preoccupation appeared in our literature with questions about who we are, about Romanian culture, and about what its purposes were”⁴⁸.

These differences between Western and Eastern Europe significantly affected Romanian modernization (another topic for another time)⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ See Lewis B. Namier, *Basic Factors in Nineteenth-Century European History*, in Lewis B. Namier, *Vanished Supremacies. Essays on European History, 1812-1918*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1963, p. 165-175.

⁴⁶ Cf. Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul roman*, București, Editura Univers, 1998, p. 31 ff. See also D. Popovici, *La littérature roumaine à l'Époque des Lumières*, Sibiu, Centrul de Studii și Cercetări Privitoare la Transilvania, 1945; Alexandru Duțu, *European Intellectual Movements and Modernization of Romanian Culture*, București, Editura Academiei, 1981; Pompiliu Teodor, *Interferențe iluministe europene*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1984, and Pompiliu Teodor, ed., *Enlightenment and Romanian Society*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1980.

⁴⁷ On the Western connection, see Paul E. Michelson, *Romanians and the West*, in Kurt W. Treptow, ed., *Romania and Western Civilization*, Iași, The Center for Romanian Studies, 1997, p. 11-24.

⁴⁸ Tudor Vianu, *Filosofia culturii*, second edition, București, Editura Publicom, 1945, p. 287.

⁴⁹ Though these are not developed here, mention should be made of the important work done on mentalities issues in Romanian historiography. See the work of Alexandru Duțu, such as his *Livres de sagesse dans la culture roumaine; introduction à l'histoire des mentalités sud-est européennes*, București, Editura Academiei, 1971; of Simona Nicoară and Toader Nicoară, such as *Mentalități colective și imaginar social: istoria și noile paradigme ale cunoașterii*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană/Mesagerul, 1996, and Simona Nicoară, *Mitologiile revoluției pașoptiste române. Istorie și imaginar*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1999; and the varied and provocative writings of Daniel Barbu, including *Șapte teme de politică românească*, București, Editura Antet, 1997, and *Bizanț contra Bizanț. Explorări în cultura politică românească*, București, Editura Nemira, 2001. Also relevant is the rapidly expanding field of studies of the “imaginarul” such as Sorin Mitu, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania*, Budapest, Central European University, 2001; and Lucian Boia, *Pour une Histoire de l'Imaginaire*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1998, and *Jocul cu trecutul. Istoria între adevăr și ficțiune*, second edition, București, Editura Humanitas, 2002.

In the middle of the 19th century, Europe was preoccupied with a number of major “problems”: the Italian Problem⁵⁰, the German Problem⁵¹, and the Eastern Question⁵², which involved the future of the European territories ruled by the “sick man of Europe,” the Ottoman Empire. This later involved the Romanian lands, constituting in the 1850s a Romanian Question for the first time⁵³. Furthermore, East Central Europe was in thrall to three oppressive empires, the Habsburg Monarchy, Tsarist Russia, and Ottoman Turkey⁵⁴. Indeed, the Romanians' situation was rendered problematic by the fact that the Romanian lands were part of or under the domination of all three surrounding empires. Being located at the crossroads of Southeastern Europe – “în calea răutăților”⁵⁵ – and surrounded by expansionistic

⁵⁰ Denis Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971; and Harry Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento 1790-1870*, London, Longman, 1984.

⁵¹ W. E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question, 1848-1871*, New York, Octagon Books, 1969.

⁵² J. A. R. Marriott, *The Eastern Question. A Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1918; M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923. A Study in International Relations*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1966; and Veniamin Ciobanu, *Problema orientală (1856-1923)*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 2009.

⁵³ See *inter alia*, T. W. Riker, *The Making of Roumania: A Study of an International problem, 1856-1866*, London, Oxford University Press, 1931; Paul E. Michelson, *Romanian Politics, 1859-1871: From Prince Cuza to Prince Carol*, Iași, The Center for Romanian Studies, 1998; Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians 1774-1866*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996; and a series of Romanian studies: Leonid Boicu, *Geneza “chestiunii române” ca problemă internațională*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1975; idem, *Diplomația europeană și triumful cauzei române (1856-1859)*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1978; L. Boicu, V. Cristian, and Gh. Platon, eds., *România în relațiile internaționale 1699-1939*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1980; Gheorghe Cliveti, *România și Puterile Garante 1856-1878*, Iași, Editura “Universității Al. I. Cuza”, 1988; Dumitru Suciuc, *From the Union of the Principalities to the Creation of Greater Romania*, Cluj-Napoca, Center for Transylvanian Studies/The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1993; Gheorghe Cliveti, *România și crizele internaționale 1853-1913*, Iași, Editura Fundației Axis, 1997; and Apostol Stan, *Protectoratul Rusiei asupra Principatelor Române. 1774-1856*, București, Editura Saeculum, 1999.

⁵⁴ On the “struggle for mastery,” see A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1954. On the diplomatic aspects, see the writings of Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Rumanian National Cause, 1858-1859*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press, 1959, *The Habsburg Empire in European Affairs, 1814-1918*, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1969, *St. Petersburg and Moscow. Tsarist and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1814-1974*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press, 1973, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers, and the Straits Question 1870-1887*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press, 1973, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State, 1821-1878*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, and *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991. On “the Old Empires,” and on the post-World War I “Interlude of Small States,” see Hugh Seton-Watson's brief, sobering, and unfortunately neglected *The “Sick Heart” of Modern Europe. The Problem of the Danubian Lands*, Seattle WA, University of Washington Press, 1975.

⁵⁵ The phrase, by now a cliché of Romanian culture, is from the 17th century Moldavian chronicler Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul până la Aron Vodă (1359-1595)*. *Întocmit după Gregorie Ureche Vorniciul, Istratie Logofătul și alții de Simion Dascălul*, edited by Constantin Giurescu, București, SOCEC, 1916, p. 8.

empires and peoples was a long term difficulty for Romanian development, though as 1859 and 1918 demonstrated, not an insuperable hindrance⁵⁶.

This situation began to change in the 1850s with the Crimean War and the domination of European diplomacy between 1854 and 1871 by what W. E. Mosse called Napoléon III's "Crimean System"⁵⁷. Bismarck's *realpolitik* solution in 1871 of the problem of German unification and his implementation of a complicated alliance system between 1871 and 1890 once more led to an important alteration of the diplomatic situation in Europe. The relative stability brought about by the Bismarck system, despite frequent clashes brought on by the Eastern Question, was ended after 1890 by the posturing and idiocy of Kaiser Wilhelm's *Weltpolitik* and led eventually to the Great War in 1914⁵⁸. By 1918, all of that changed.

And what was going on in the historiographical sphere? According to Paul Ricoeur, 19th century historical debate "gave rise to a schism within the historical discipline itself, as between its theory which was idealistic and its practice which was positivistic"⁵⁹. This resulted, Ricoeur argued, in "a fragile compromise between... conflicting requirements, assigning to them two distinct phases, in the one case the sifting of documents and in the other the interpretation of facts. An unstable equilibrium between comprehension and explanation seemed the best that historical knowledge could hope to achieve"⁶⁰. Since then, both the aim of history ("the idea of historical truth progressively worked out through mutual rectification of errors")⁶¹ as

⁵⁶ For the difference that this made, see Paul E. Michelson, *Perceptions on Imperial Legacies in the Balkans: The Romanian Lands*, in *RESEE*, vol. 36 (1998), p. 65-77. For the history of the rise of South East European national groups, see Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920*, Seattle WA, University of Washington Press, 1977.

⁵⁷ See W. E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855-71*, New York, MacMillan, 1963. On Napoléon III and Romania, see Gh. I. Brătianu, *Napoléon III et les nationalités*, București, Fundația Pentru Literatură și Artă Regele Carol II, 1934; Paul E. Michelson, *Rumanian Unity*, in William E. Echard, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the French Second Empire, 1852-1870*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1985, p. 582-584; and Lucian Boia, *Napoléon III. Le mal-animé*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2008.

⁵⁸ See Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, 4th edition, translated by Hajo Holborn and James Joll, New York, W. W. Norton, 1968; and George F. Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance. France, Russia, and the Coming of the First World War*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984. For an overview of Romania and the Great War, see Paul E. Michelson, *Romania and World War I, 1914-1918: An Introductory Survey*, in *RRH*, vol. 55 (2016), nr. 1-4, p. 61 ff.

⁵⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Main Trends in Philosophy*, New York, Holmes and Meier, 1979, p. 269. First published in UNESCO, *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences*, Part Two, Chs. 7-8, with a preface by René Maheu, The Hague, Mouton, 1970. For subsequent developments in historiography, see Geoffrey Barraclough, *Main Trends in History*, expanded and updated by Michael Burns, New York, Holmes and Meier, 1991, dealing with "the Crisis of Historicism," and Marxist historiography, among other developments in the 20th century. First published in UNESCO, *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences*, part two, vol. one, *Anthropological and Historical Sciences, Aesthetics and the Sciences of Art*, ch. 3, edited by Jacques Havet with a preface by Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, The Hague, Mouton, 1978.

⁶⁰ Ricoeur, *Main Trends*, 1979, p. 169.

⁶¹ Popper argues that while "science is one of the very few human activities – perhaps the only one – in which errors are systematically criticized and fairly often, in time, corrected.... In most other fields

well as the mission of history (the Rankean “establishment of facts”)⁶² were substantially undermined by doubt, confusion, and relativism. The contributions of the “German School” of history – whose impact is best summarized by the work of Friedrich Meinecke⁶³ – led, ironically, to “the impossibility of... objective interpretation... [and] the impossibility of attaining to the true facts”⁶⁴.

German-style historicism took the Historical Movement to an extreme, applying “what is taken to be historical understanding and method to all phenomena” and attempting to assess the value of an historical event “through considering it in terms of the place which it occupied and the role which it played within a process of development”. Such “Development’ is change in a specific direction. Historicist phenomena are unfolding, developing processes”⁶⁵. In the words of Hayden V. White, German historicism tried “to interpret the whole of reality... in historical that is to say, relative terms. The emphasis centered upon the idea of change itself, and everything, including ethics and religion, was subjected to an analysis on the basis of a logic not of being, but of becoming”⁶⁶.

of human endeavor there is change, but rarely progress... for almost every gain is balanced, or more than balanced, by some loss. And in most fields we do not even know how to evaluate change.” K. R. Popper, *Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, in Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 1962, p. 216-217. On the impossibility of a “social” science, see Alasdair McIntyre, *The Character of Generalizations in Social Science and their Lack of Predictive Power*, in McIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2007, p. 108.

⁶² Ranging from Ranke’s “*Wie es eigentlich gewesen*” to Ch. V. Langlois and Ch. Seignobos’ “positivism”, see Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History*, translated by G. G. Berry, New York, Henry Holt, 1907, first published in 1897 to Buckle’s historicism. For an acid critique of Buckle, see Lord Acton and Richard Simpson, *Mr. Buckle’s Thesis and Method*, and *Mr. Buckle’s Philosophy of History*, in Lord Acton, *Historical Essays and Studies*, edited by John Neville Figgis and R. V. Laurence, London, Macmillan, 1908, p. 305-343.

⁶³ See especially Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, translated by Robert B. Kimber, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970, first published in 1908; *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of raison d’État and Its Place in Modern History*, translated by Douglas Scott, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957, first published in 1924; and *Historism: The Rise of a New Historical Outlook*, translated by J. E. Anderson, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), originally published in 1936.

⁶⁴ Ricoeur, *Main Trends*, 1979, p. 169. For a critique of historical relativism, see K. R. Popper, *The Theory of Objective Truth: Correspondence to the Facts*, in Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 1962, p. 223 ff.; K. R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York, Science Editions, 1961, p. 274, on Tarski’s theory of truth; and K. R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge. An Evolutionary Approach* reprinted with revisions, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973, *passim*, a book dedicated to Tarski, especially p. 44 ff.; and 319 ff. For an argument that establishing “a criterion of error” could solve the problem of historical relativism, see Popper, *Pluralist Approach*, 1969, p. 190-193.

⁶⁵ Aviezer Tucker, citing Maurice Mandelbaum, in Tucker, *Historicism*, 1999, p. 414.

⁶⁶ Hayden V. White, *Translator’s Introduction on History and Historicisms*, in Carlo Antoni, *From History to Sociology. The Transition in German Historical Thinking*, translated by Hayden V. White, London, Merlin Press, 1962, p. xvii. Emphasis in the original. See also Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, Middletown CT, Wesleyan University Press, 1983, and *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Post Modern Challenge*, with a new epilogue, Middletown CT, Wesleyan University Press, 2005, as well as Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*,

As such, German-style historicism merges with Popperian historicism, sharing its secularized teleological approach and lapsing into relativism and scientism. F. A. Hayek used the word “scientism” to describe the “slavish imitation of the method and language of Science... an attitude which is decidedly unscientific in the true sense of the word, since it involves a mechanical and uncritical application of habits of thought to fields different from those in which they have been formed. The scientific as distinguished from the scientific view is... a very prejudiced approach which, before it has considered its subject, claims to know what is the most appropriate way of investigating it”⁶⁷.

The consequences relativism and scientism were lamentable at best. According to Ricoeur, “subjectivism and relativism, idolatry of the past as such, fascination with the problem of great individuals and virtually exclusive emphasis on political events”⁶⁸, led to terrible consequences, including the Interwar “Era of Tyrannies”⁶⁹ and Benda’s “Treason of the Intellectuals”⁷⁰. Hegel was only one of many egregious purveyors of such solecisms, glorifying the State as “the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth” and as the source of “all the worth which the human being possesses” while deifying the “World-Historical Individual... whose own particular aims involve those issues which are the will of the World-Spirit... devoted to the One Aim, regardless of all else... [even if he] must trample down many an innocent flower – crush to pieces many an object in its path”⁷¹. Hegel was also to blame, at least in part, for promoting the noxious idea of “World-Historical peoples”⁷². Suffice it to say, the world has had enough of “World-Historical

Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶⁷ F. A. Hayek, *Scientism and the Study of Society*, in F. A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science. Studies on the Abuse of Reason*, New York, The Free Press, 1955. I have used here the revised edition of this work published as F. A. Hayek, *The Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason. Text and Documents*, The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek, volume XIII, edited by Bruce Caldwell, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. 80, hereafter cited as *Counter-Revolution of Science*, 2010.

⁶⁸ Ricoeur, *Main Trends*, 1979, p. 170.

⁶⁹ The phrase is taken from Élie Halévy's classic *The Era of Tyrannies. Essays on Socialism and War*, translated by R. K. Webb. Notes by Fritz Stern, New York, Doubleday, 1967.

⁷⁰ See Julien Benda, *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*, translated by Richard Aldington with an introduction by Herbert Read, Boston, Beacon Press, 1955, first published in 1928. Fortunately, there is a Romanian edition with a penetrating preface by Andrei Pippidi: Julien Benda, *Trădarea cărturarilor*, translated by Gabriela Creția, București, Editura Humanitas, 1993.

⁷¹ Capitals in the original. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, p. 300-32; 39. The work was not published in Hegel's lifetime, appearing only in 1837, based on lectures he had delivered at the University of Berlin in 1822, 1828, and 1830.

⁷² Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 1956, p. 47 ff. On Hegel's success and influence, see K. R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 2: *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*, fifth edition revised, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, p. 30 ff. Compare Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche. The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, translated by David E. Green, New York, Columbia University Press, 1991; and Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949, on the difference between *Weltgeschichte* and *Heilsgeschichte*.

peoples” trampling innocent flowers and crushing objects (AKA human beings) in their paths.

As for relativism, I suggest that we affirm the trenchant injunction of philosopher Roger Scruton: “A writer who says that there are no truths, or that all truth is ‘merely relative,’ is asking you not to believe him. So don’t”⁷³.

The aftermath of World War I saw the advent of yet another historicist approach to the past (and everything else), one described by Ricoeur as the “‘schematism’ and ‘dogmatism’ imposed on historical research by over-simplified interpretations of Marxism-Leninism”. This dogma acceded to power beginning in Soviet Russia and then extended its reach over most of Eastern Europe, including Romania. Curiously, writes Ricoeur, though this method came “at things from an opposite position of Western European historiography” it eventually “found itself equally embarrassed by the doubt raised by the lack of coherence between theory and practice”⁷⁴.

Marxism as a species of teleological historicism – most notably described and refuted by K. R. Popper in two seminal works: *The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. 2: The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*⁷⁵ and *The Poverty of Historicism*⁷⁶ – need not detain us further here, since its pernicious effects are well-known. Marxism's (and Freudianism's) admirers, writes Popper,

“were impressed by their apparent explanatory power. These theories appeared to be able to explain practically everything that happened with the fields to which they referred. The study of any of them seemed to have the effect of an intellectual conversion or revelation, opening your eyes to a new truth hidden from those not yet initiated. Once your eyes were thus opened you saw confirming instances everywhere: the world was full of *verifications* of the theory. Whatever happened always confirmed it”⁷⁷.

Unfortunately, a theory that can “explain” everything, including all conceivable refutations, is a theory that really explains nothing and is, in any case, not scientific as Popper's falsification criteria for what constitutes a science argues:

“A theory which is not refutable by any conceivable event is non-scientific.

Irrefutability is not a virtue of a theory (as people often think) but a vice.

Every genuine *test* of a theory is an attempt to falsify it, or to refute it.

⁷³ Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey*, London, Penguin Books, 1996, p. 6, and *passim* on the question of truth and relativism. In addition to the comments of K. R. Popper cited on historical relativism, see also Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 1970, p. 40 ff; C. S. Lewis, *The Poison of Subjectivism*, 1943, in C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper, Grand Rapids MI, William B. Eerdmans, 1967, p. 72-81; C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, San Francisco, Harper One, 2000, on moral law; and Peter Kreeft, *Are There Any Moral Absolutes?: Finding Black and White in a World of Grays*, in Brad Miner, ed., *Good Order. Right Answers to Contemporary Questions*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1995, p. 78-88.

⁷⁴ Ricoeur, *Main Trends*, 1979, p. 170-171.

⁷⁵ Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1971, vol. 2.

⁷⁶ Idem, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1966.

⁷⁷ Idem, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 1962, p. 34-35.

Testability is falsifiability; but there are degrees of testability: some theories are more testable, more exposed to refutation, than others; they take, as it were, greater risks”⁷⁸.

The startling result for modern historiography, according to Hans Meyerhoff, was that

“a situation...developed which is quite paradoxical in human terms: The barriers of the past have been pushed back as never before; our knowledge of the history of man and the universe has been enlarged on a scale and to a degree not dreamed of by previous generations. At the same time, the sense of identity and continuity with the past, whether our own or history's, has gradually and steadily declined. Previous generations *knew* much less about the past than we do, but perhaps *felt* a much greater sense of identity and continuity with it...”⁷⁹.

This likely also contributed to the appeal of secular teleology AKA historicism.

Romanian historiography in the last two centuries was impacted in both directions: through education and cultural preferences by the influence of French and German idealism, positivism, and historicism prior to 1945, and after 1945 by the imposition of dogmatic Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism. In many respects, this resulted in the worst of both worlds, especially under the regime of “National Marxism-Leninism” promoted by Nicolae Ceaușescu, as historians pursued a teleological vision of history amalgamated with Marxist-Leninist schematism and dogmatism⁸⁰.

However, this is not the occasion to further elucidate the baneful impact of all of this on the study and understanding of the Romanian past. Our objective here is to call for a rejection of the teleological approach and historicism of all varieties. The point is to repudiate a hermeneutic of the impersonal, in favor of a hermeneutic of the personal, what is usually called methodological individualism.

This is an approach which I believe helps us tell historical stories most effectively, though such story-telling does not ignore, neglect, or minimize the perspectives that other kinds of historical research might furnish⁸¹. Human actions are, in the final analysis, the actions of individual humans, and collective entities are

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 36-37.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, with a New Preface and Postscript, New York, Schocken Books, 1989, p. 79.

⁸⁰ See Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991. Cf. Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români 1944-1977*, München, Jon Dumitru-Verlag, 1981; A. M. Petrencu, *Învățămintul istoriei în România (1948-1989)*, Chișinău, Știința, 1991; Al. Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub comunism*, Iași, Institutul European, 2000; and Andi Mihalache, *Pe urmele lui Marx. Studii despre comunism și consecințele sale*, Iași, Editura Alpha, 2005.

⁸¹ For an excellent survey of the subject, see Joseph Heath, *Methodological Individualism*, in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2015 Edition, located at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/methodological-individualism>, last accessed 12.03.2018. See also F. A. Hayek, *Counter-Revolution of Science*, 2010, chs. 3-8.

only metaphors, not historical actualities, something that Max Weber made clear nearly a hundred years ago⁸². We make a significant error, Weber argued, when we speak of “social collectivities, such as states, associations, business corporations, foundations, as if they were individual persons”. Instead, “these collectivities must be treated as solely the resultants and modes of organization of the particular acts of individual persons, since these alone can be treated as agents in a course of subjectively understandable action”⁸³. Sound advice, too little heeded.

In the end, advocating methodological individualism “means simply that we shall not be satisfied with any type of explanation of social phenomena which does not lead us ultimately to a human plan”⁸⁴. The purpose is to argue for avoiding the disparagement of the contributions of individuals to the making of history or having human actions and human responsibility swept away by a wave of impersonal forces⁸⁵.

This paper's emphasis on human actions also means turning away from the hypostatization of history which attempts to transform concepts, ideas, and so forth into historical “realities”⁸⁶. The personalization of the “forces of history,” a fixation on the dialectic of events, the idea that history is headed somewhere, and so forth are really no more than attempts to turn history and historiography into metaphysics, and should be treated accordingly.

III. Conclusions

Having seen how and why teleological historicism appeared, let us conclude with a short list of some of the consequences and dangers of such

⁸² Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968, volume I, ch. 1, first published in 1922. Heath, *Methodological Individualism*, 2005, points out that this is not the same thing as the atomism found, variously, in Hobbes or Ludwig von Mises. Nor need it go as far as J. W. N. Watkins' demand for rock-bottom explanations or the rational choice theorists (such as Mancur Olson) or the critics of functionalism (such as Jon Elster). I agree with Heath that actions can and often do function at the subintentional level, something that a Weberian action-theoretic explanation's focus on intentional actions tends to neglect.

⁸³ Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1968, volume I, p. 13.

⁸⁴ Ludwig M. Lachmann, *Methodological Individualism and the Market Economy*, in Streissler, *Roads to Freedom*, 1969, p. 92, 94. Hayek also very effectively contrasts “the essential humility” of methodological individualism which tries to understand how “the efforts of individual men have in fact been combined to produce” history to the arrogance of scientism. Hayek, *Counter-Revolution of Science*, 2010, p. 153-154. Hayek further argues that in dealing with “relations between men and things or the relations between man and man,” the social sciences should primarily concern themselves “with man's actions” and “to explain the unintended or undesigned results of the actions of many men” (p. 88).

⁸⁵ This is not to deny that accidents, circumstances, and sometimes seemingly impersonal forces might play a role in history, but in the final analysis, events such 1859 and 1918 were the product of human actors and humans action.

⁸⁶ See Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 1970, p. 55-56.

historicism, apart from having hampered rational consideration of key moments in Romanian history⁸⁷.

A. First of all, teleological historicism has been a great creator of historical myths. Habits of the heart are a subset of the mores of a people. In the words of de Tocqueville, these apply “not only to 'moeurs' in the strict sense, which might be called the habits of the heart, but also to the different notions possessed by men, the various opinions current among them, and the sum of ideas that shape mental habits”⁸⁸.

Reference has already been made to William H. McNeil's cogent comments on “Mythistory”. McNeil also writes that a “nation or any other human group that knows how to behave in crisis situations because it has inherited a heroic historiographical tradition that tells how ancestors resisted their enemies successfully is more likely to act together effectively than a group lacking such a tradition”⁸⁹.

McNeil additionally argues that “pattern-recognition” is a significant attribute and function of language and humanity. It is our ability to not lose sight of the forest for the trees or the sight of the trees for the forest. This leads to pattern-recognition in history and thence to what may be called collected memories⁹⁰. “Men are and always have been myth makers, seizing upon the significant by leaving out the trivial, so as to make the world intelligible.... For human minds imperiously demand historical experience to have shape and meaning...”⁹¹.

But if these myths are anchored in falsehood, the people perish. Leszek Kolakowski warned: “The muse of history is gentle, learned, and unassuming, but when neglected and deserted she takes her revenge, and blinds those who scorn her”⁹². Nationalism is one of the chief motivators in modern history... and one of its chief deficits. The problem, as Paul Ricoeur put it, is that “Historians work with documents, while documents are already a break with memory...”⁹³. History can instruct memory and memory can instruct history, but they are not the same thing⁹⁴. In the end, “Man is capable of making memories and of making history”⁹⁵.

⁸⁷ For additional discussion of some of this in relationship to 1859 and 1918, see Paul E. Michelson, *Romanian Unity, 1859, 1918, 1989: Beginnings, Opportunities... And Illusions* in Kurt Treptow, ed., *Tradition and Modernity in Romanian Culture and Civilization, 1600-2000*, Iași, Center for Romanian Studies, 2001, p. 47-64.

⁸⁸ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by J. P. Mayer, Garden City NY, Anchor Books, 1969, p. 287.

⁸⁹ McNeill, *Mythistory*, 1986, p. 13-14.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 82-95.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 91.

⁹² In his 1986 Jefferson Lecture, *The Idolatry of Politics*, in “The New Republic”, 16 June 1986, p. 29-36.

⁹³ Paul Ricoeur in dialogue with Sorin Antohi, *Istorie, Memorie, Errata*, “Xenopoliana”, vol. 11 (2003), nr. 3-4, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Ricoeur, *Istorie*, 2003, p. 9.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 10. There is obvious word play here. For a Romanian take on Ricoeur, see Florin Cântec,

That is why Iosef Hayim Yerushalmi writes the “moral imperative [of history] seems to me now more urgent than ever. For in the world in which we live it is no longer merely a question of the decay of collective memory and the declining consciousness of the past, but of the aggressive rape of whatever memory remains, the deliberate distortion of the historical record, the invention of mythological pasts in the service of the powers of darkness. Against the agents of oblivion, the shredders of documents, the assassins of memory, the revisers of encyclopedias, the conspirators of silence, against those who, in Kundera's wonderful image, can airbrush a man out of a photograph so that nothing is left of him but his hat – only the historian, with the austere passion for fact, proof, evidence, which are central to his vocation, can effectively stand guard⁹⁶. And so, given that we cannot draw the lines between too much and too little historical research... I will take my stand on the side of 'too much' rather than 'too little,' for my terror of forgetting is greater than my terror of having too much to remember. Let the accumulated facts about the past continue to multiply. Let the flood of books and monographs grow, even if they are only read by specialists. Let unread copies lie on the shelves of many libraries, so that if some be destroyed or removed others will remain. So that those who need can find that this person did live, those events really took place, this interpretation is not the only one”⁹⁷.

One gets the impression that Yerushalmi would have been fond of Borges' character, Funes the Memorious, a man who remembered everything⁹⁸.

Jörn Rüsen agrees that history's method undermines memory and memory undermines history's method. Some have tried to resolve this, he writes, by trying to evacuate history from academic study, particularly those who want to take the so-called linguistic turn, but this would be fatal to history as a discipline and would turn it into just another ideology⁹⁹. One more reason to be on our guard against teleological history and historicism.

B. Secondly, the teleological method and historicism are important problems for Romania because far too many of its modern political leaders came from its none too substantial intellectual strata. Though naturally there were exceptions, Romanian intellectuals were, unhappily, no more effective in politics

Memorie și uitare în istorie. Repere din istoriografia franceză, in “Xenopoliana”, vol. 11 (2003), nr. 3-4, p. 34-40. For a fuller account of Ricouer's position, see his *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 281-411, including sections on *the Dialectic of Memory and History: Memory, Just a Province of History?*, p. 384 ff., *Memory, in Charge of History?*, p. 389 ff.

⁹⁶ One should not forget that the task of Orwell's Winston Smith was to alter past newspaper accounts to make them consonant with the current party line (AKA politically correct consensus). See George Orwell, *1984*, New York, Signet Classics/New American Library, 1961, p. 34 ff.

⁹⁷ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 1989, p. 116-117.

⁹⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, *Funes, His Memory*, in Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley, New York, Penguin Books, 1999, p. 131-137.

⁹⁹ Jörn Rüsen, *Desfacerea ordinii istoriei – modernitate, postmodernitate, memorie*, in “Xenopoliana”, vol. 11 (2003), nr. 3-4, p. 16-28.

than their peers in other countries. They displayed the same talent of intellectuals everywhere for well-intentioned, but overly-theorized and technocratic approaches to public life whose consequences for the development of civil and free societies have been, as Edward Shils and others have amply demonstrated, less than satisfactory¹⁰⁰.

Is it going too far to suggest, with Frank Chodorov, that the *métier* of intellectuals ought to be to refuse the temptations of politics entirely and unequivocally? This is because

“In practice, the art of ruling settles down to the granting of economic privileges to a few, to the disadvantage of the many; the beneficiaries of these privileges are either the politicians themselves or the supporting patrons. Nothing can be done... until ‘you and I’ learn what privilege is and are willing to get along without it”¹⁰¹.

Or, as Lord Acton wrote in two unpublished notes, “Among all the causes which degrade and demoralize men, power is the most constant and most active.... Long before we reach our generation we see that the same issues are always present, that the same fundamental qualities of thought and character are permanently dividing men, that the struggle for the concentration of power and for the limitation and division of power is the mainspring of history”¹⁰².

There is some truth to the cynical maxim that if one is not at the table, one might wind up on the menu. However, on balance, this pragmatic consideration is far outweighed by the fatal consequences of Lord Acton's celebrated dictum: “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”¹⁰³.

In addition, prior to World War I, Romanian intellectuals had developed something of a fortress mentality that contributed to a chronic militant and defensive posture. The Romanian intellectual, in the words of Alexandru Zub, was “always the man of the fortress, whose work was bound up in the citadel's destiny. His own destiny... could not be freed from the vicissitudes of the moment. This destiny nourished the *ceartă pentru istorie*” that characterized modern Romanian

¹⁰⁰ On the fecklessness of intellectuals in politics, see Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972, *passim*. For a useful recent exploration of this subject in an East European context, see Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Țăranu, and Adrian-Alexandru Herța, eds., *Intellectualii Politicii și Politica Intellectualilor*, Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016.

¹⁰¹ Frank Chodorov, *One is a Crowd*, New York, Devin-Adair, 1952 p. 64.

¹⁰² Lord Acton, *Selections from the Acton Legacy*, in *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. III, *Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality*, edited by J. Rufus Fears, Indianapolis, Liberty Classics, 1985, p. 519-520.

¹⁰³ Lord Acton to Mandell Creighton, Cannes, April 5, 1887, *Acton-Creighton Correspondence*, in Lord Acton, *Selected Writings*, 1985, vol. II, p. 383. Acton goes on to assert “Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority.” Elsewhere, he hauls his friend and colleague across the coals for his “spirit of retrospective indulgence and reverence for the operation of authority.... only serves to debase the moral standard.” See Lord Acton, *Review of Creighton's History of the Papacy*, in Lord Acton, *Selected Writings*, 1985, vol. II, p. 373-374.

development and promoted the preponderance of “militantism” among historians and others¹⁰⁴.

Between 1848 and 1914 what may be called the historicizing of Romanian civilization and “spiritual public” crystallized. This created a culture which tended to over-intellectualize its concerns. And too many Romanian intellectuals were what Alexandru Duțu has labeled “philosopher-patriots,” scholars for whom the desiderata of nationalism too often outweighed the obligations of scholarship¹⁰⁵.

C. Lastly, K. R. Popper argues in his classic *The Open Society and Its Enemies* that historicism is fatal for the development and maintenance of freedom. This was clearly the case in modern Europe, where nationalism went from a somewhat benign linguistic and cultural phenomenon to ruthless political *realpolitik* nationalism to murderous integral and racial nationalism to the horrors of the Holocaust, as Lord Acton and Lewis Namier, among many others, have pointed out¹⁰⁶. One problem with nationalism is that, as William H. McNeill writes, groups with believable myths may find themselves in trouble because some myths are positive and some are treacherous:

“...myths may mislead disastrously. A portrait of the past that denigrates others and praises the ideals and practices of a given group...can distort a people’s image of outsiders so that foreign relations begin to consist of nothing but nasty surprises....it is obvious that mythical, self-flattering

¹⁰⁴ Al. Zub, *Adevăr și militantism*, in Al. Zub, *Biruit-au gîndul (note despre istorismul românesc)*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1983, p. 33. I have labelled this “Costin’s Quandry,” see Paul E. Michelson, *Origins of the Romanian Historiographical Tradition*, 2014, p. 173 ff. On “militant history,” see also my *Silviu Dragomir, The Historian-Militant, and The Revue de Transilvanie*, in Ioan-Aurel Pop and Ioan Bolovan, eds., *Călător prin istorie. Omagiu Profesorului Liviu Maior la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Academia Română/Centru de Studii Transilvane, 2010, p. 261-276.

¹⁰⁵ Duțu, *European Intellectual Movements*, 1981, p. 47 ff. Of course, Romanian scholars were probably no more susceptible to these temptations than scholars elsewhere. See also R. W. Seton-Watson’s *The Historian as a Political Force in Central Europe*, London, The School of Slavonic Studies, 1922; my analysis of the issue, which appeared as, *The Historian as a Political Force in Central Europe: R. W. Seton-Watson’s 1922 Inaugural Address*, in Mihai Iacobescu, Gheorghe Cliveti, and Dinu Balan, eds., *Slujind-o pe Clio. In Honorem Dumitru Vițcu*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 2010, p. 321-334; Andrei Pippidi’s pessimistic assessment in his preface to Benda, *Trădarea cărturarilor*, 1993, p. 23 ff.; and Horia-Roman Patapievič’s pungent essays collected as *Politice*, 2nd expanded edition, București, Editura Humanitas, 1997.

¹⁰⁶ See Lord Acton, *Nationality*, in Lord Acton, *Essays in the History of Liberty*, edited by J. Rufus Fears, Indianapolis IN, Liberty Classics, 1985, p. 409-434, published in 1862, which foresaw with uncanny accuracy what the modern theory of nationalism would lead to in the 20th century; and Lewis B. Namier, *Nationality and Liberty*, in Namier, *Vanished Supremacies*, 1963, p. 31-53, which points out the irony of Romanians adopting the German conception of nationality (p. 35). The Acton volume of essays has a number of other selections related to “Liberty and the Modern State,” p. 434 ff., including an essay on Cavour, while another collection of Namier essays includes two suggestive pieces on “Anti-Semitism,” and “The Jewish Question.” See Lewis B. Namier, *Facing East. Essays on Germany, the Balkans, and Russia in the Twentieth Century*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1966, p. 113-125 and 126-134. For an introduction to Romanian nationalism, see Sorin Mitu, ed., *Re-Searching the Nation: The Romanian File. Studies and Selected Bibliography on Romanian Nationalism*, Cluj-Napoca, International Book Access, 2008, with a 261 item bibliography.

versions of rival groups' pasts simply serve to intensify their capacity for conflict"¹⁰⁷.

Popper provides a fitting conclusion to all of this exposition with a further plea for just saying "No!" when it comes to the teleological method. He cites what "Schopenhauer, the anti-nationalist...said of Hegel a hundred years ago: 'He exerted, not on philosophy alone but on all forms of German literature, a devastating, or more strictly speaking, a stupefying, one could also say, a pestiferous influence. To combat this influence forcefully and on every occasion is the duty of everybody who is able to judge independently. *For if we are silent, who will speak?*'"¹⁰⁸.

Teleological History and the Romanian Past: Just Say "No!"

Abstract

Many writers have taken a teleological approach to the unification of the Romanian lands (Transylvania, Moldova, Muntenia, Basarabia, and Bucovina) in 1918, describing it as an inevitable working out of historical development or as a kind of "historical necessity." Apart from the fact that teleology and inevitability lack validity in historiographical discourse, such an interpretation of the events of 1918 also denigrates the actions of those who contributed to the union of 1918. Rejecting these non-historical approaches to the Romanian unions of 1859 and 1918, this paper presents a comparative analysis of the historical, political, cultural, and geographical circumstances of the Romanians in 1859 and 1918, the key players, and the critical events that resulted in partial unification of the Romanian lands in 1859 and the creation of Greater Romania in 1918.

Keywords: Romania; historiography; teleological historicism; William H. McNeill.

¹⁰⁷ McNeill, *Mythistory*, 1986, p. 14-15; 23.

¹⁰⁸ Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1971, volume 2, p. 78 -80. Emphasis in the original.

ABREVIERI

<i>AARMSI</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice
<i>AARMSL</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare
<i>AARPAD</i>	= „Analele Academiei Române”, seria II, București, 1879-1916
<i>AB</i>	= Arhivele Basarabiei
<i>ACNSAS</i>	= Arhivele Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității
<i>AE</i>	= L'Année Epigraphique
<i>AIR</i>	= Arhiva Istorică a României
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj
<i>AIIAI</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj
<i>AIINC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, Cluj
<i>AIIX</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>ALIL</i>	= Anuarul de Lingvistică și Istorie Literară, Iași
<i>ALMA</i>	= <i>Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi</i> . Genève.
<i>AMAE</i>	= Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe
<i>AmAnthr</i>	= American Anthropologist, New Series, Published by Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association
<i>AMM</i>	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui
<i>AMMB</i>	= Arhiva Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași
<i>AMN</i>	= Acta Musei Napocensis
<i>AMR</i>	= Arhivele Militare Române
<i>ANB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, București
<i>ANC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Cluj
<i>ANDMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Direcția Municipiului București
<i>ANG</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Galați
<i>ANI</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Iași
<i>ANIC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>ANRM</i>	= Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova, Chișinău
<i>ANRW</i>	= Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin-New York
<i>ANSMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București
<i>ANV</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Vaslui
<i>AO</i>	= Arhivele Olteniei
<i>AP</i>	= Analele Putnei
<i>APH</i>	= Acta Poloniae Historica, Varșovia
<i>AR</i>	= Arhiva Românească
<i>ArhGen</i>	= Arhiva Genealogică
<i>„Arhiva”</i>	= „Arhiva”. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare, Iași
<i>ArhMold</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei
<i>ASRR</i>	= Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune
<i>AȘUI</i>	= Analele Științifice ale Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, Iași
<i>ATS</i>	= Ancient Textile Series, Oxbow Books, Oxford și Oakville
<i>AUB</i>	= Analele Universității „București”
<i>BAR</i>	= Biblioteca Academiei Române
<i>BArchB</i>	= Bundesarchiv Berlin
<i>BAR int. ser.</i>	= British Archaeological Reports, International Series
<i>BBR</i>	= Buletinul Bibliotecii Române
<i>BCIR</i>	= Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României

<i>BCMI</i>	= Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice
<i>BCU-Iași</i>	= Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, Iași
<i>BE</i>	= Bulletin Epigraphique
<i>BF</i>	= Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam
<i>BMI</i>	= Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice
<i>BNB</i>	= Biblioteca Națională București
<i>BNJ</i>	= Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher
<i>BOR</i>	= Biserica Ortodoxă Română
<i>BS</i>	= Balkan Studies
<i>BSNR</i>	= Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române
<i>CA</i>	= Cercetări arheologice
<i>CAI</i>	= Caiete de Antropologie Istorică
<i>CB</i>	= Cahiers balkaniques
<i>CC</i>	= Codrul Cosminului, Suceava (ambele serii)
<i>CCAR</i>	= Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, CIMEC, București
<i>CDM</i>	= <i>Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhivele Centrale de Stat</i> , București, vol. I-V; supl. I.
<i>CDȚR</i>	= <i>Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului</i> , București, vol. II-VIII, 1974-2006
<i>CI</i>	= Cercetări istorice (ambele serii)
<i>CIL</i>	= <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin
<i>CL</i>	= Cercetări literare
<i>CSPAMI</i>	= Centrul de Studii și Păstrare a Arhivelor Militare Centrale, Pitești
<i>CT</i>	= Columna lui Traian, București
<i>Cv.L</i>	= Convorbiri literare (ambele serii)
<i>„Dacia”, N.S.</i>	= Dacia. Nouvelle Série, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București
<i>DANIC</i>	= Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>DGAS</i>	= Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului
<i>DI</i>	= Diplomatarium Italicum
<i>DIR</i>	= <i>Documente privind istoria României</i>
<i>DIRRI</i>	= <i>Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru Independență</i>
<i>DTN</i>	= <i>Din trecutul nostru</i> , Chișinău
<i>DOP</i>	= Dumbarton Oaks Papers
<i>DRH</i>	= <i>Documenta Romaniae Historica</i>
<i>EB</i>	= Études Balkaniques
<i>EBPB</i>	= Études byzantines et post-byzantines
<i>EpigrAnat</i>	= Epigraphica Anatolica, Münster
<i>Gerión</i>	= Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua, Madrid
<i>GB</i>	= Glasul Bisericii
<i>„Hierasus”</i>	= <i>Hierasus</i> . Anuarul Muzeului Județean Botoșani, Botoșani
<i>HU</i>	= Historia Urbana
<i>HUI</i>	= Historia Universitatis Iassiensis, Iași
<i>IDRE</i>	= <i>Inscriptions de la Dacie romaine. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire de la Dacie</i> , I-II, Bucarest, 1996, 2000
<i>IGLN</i>	= Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae, Bordeaux
<i>IGLR</i>	= <i>Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România</i> , București, 1976
<i>IILPecs</i>	= Instrumenta Inscripta Latina. <i>Das römische Leben im Spiegel der Kleininschriften</i> , Pecs, 1991
<i>ILB</i>	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae. Inscriptiones inter Oescum et Iatrum repertae</i> , Sofia, 1989
<i>ILN</i>	= <i>Inscriptiones latines de Novae</i> , Poznan

<i>ILLPRON</i>	= <i>Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices</i> , Berlin, 1986
<i>ILS</i>	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , 1892
<i>IN</i>	= „Ioan Neculce”. Buletinul Muzeului Municipal Iași
<i>ISM</i>	= <i>Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine</i> , București, vol. I-III, 1983-1999
<i>JGO</i>	= Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas
<i>JL</i>	= Junimea literară
<i>JRS</i>	= The Journal of Roman studies, London
<i>LR</i>	= Limba română
<i>MA</i>	= Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț
<i>MCA</i>	= Materiale și cercetări arheologice
<i>MEF</i>	= <i>Moldova în epoca feudalismului</i> , vol. I-XII, 1961-2012, Chișinău
<i>MI</i>	= Magazin istoric
<i>MM</i>	= Mitropolia Moldovei
<i>MMS</i>	= Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei
<i>MO</i>	= Mitropolia Olteniei
<i>MOF</i>	= Monitorul Oficial al României
<i>NEH</i>	= Nouvelles études d'histoire
<i>OI</i>	= Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași
<i>OPEL</i>	= <i>Onomasticon provinciarum Europae latinarum</i> , vol. I-IV, Budapesta-Viena, 1994-2002
<i>RA</i>	= Revista arhivelor
<i>RBAR</i>	= Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române, București
<i>RC</i>	= Revista catolică
<i>RdI</i>	= Revista de istorie
<i>RER</i>	= Revue des études roumaines
<i>RESEE</i>	= Revue des études Sud-Est européennes
<i>RHSEE</i>	= Revue historique de Sud-Est européen
<i>RI</i>	= Revista istorică (ambele serii)
<i>RIAF</i>	= Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie
<i>RIB</i>	= <i>Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , Londra
<i>RIM</i>	= Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, Chișinău
<i>RIR</i>	= Revista istorică română, București
<i>RIS</i>	= Revista de istorie socială
<i>RITL</i>	= Revista de istorie și teorie literară
<i>RJMH</i>	= The Romanian Journal of Modern History, Iași
<i>RM</i>	= Revista muzeelor
<i>RMM-MIA</i>	= Revista muzeelor și monumentelor, seria Monumente istorice și de artă
<i>RRHA</i>	= Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art
<i>RRH</i>	= Revue roumaine d'histoire
<i>RSIAB</i>	= Revista Societății istorice și arheologice bisericești, Chișinău
<i>Rsl</i>	= Romanoslavica
<i>SAI</i>	= Studii și Articole de Istorie
<i>SCB</i>	= Studii și cercetări de bibliologie
<i>SCIA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istoria artei
<i>SCIM</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie medie
<i>SCIV/SCIVA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)
<i>SCȘI</i>	= Studii și cercetări științifice, Istorie
<i>SEER</i>	= The Slavonic and East European Review
<i>SHA</i>	= <i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>SJAN</i>	= Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale
<i>SMIC</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană, București
<i>SMIM</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie medie, București

<i>SOF</i>	= Südost-Forschungen, München
<i>RdI</i>	= Revistă de istorie
<i>ST</i>	= Studii Teologice, București
<i>StAntArh</i>	= Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Iași
<i>TV</i>	= Teologie și viața, Iași
<i>ZPE</i>	= Zeitschrift für Papyralogie und Epigraphik
<i>ZSL</i>	= Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde