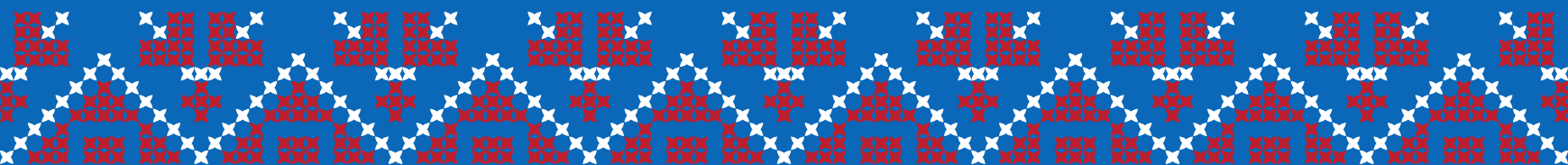




# Romania

## My Cradle



Editura „Alma Mater”  
Bacău, 2024





COORDINATORS

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# Foreword



he cradle is the warm place of mother's and grandmother's embrace, the safe and comfortable space of a house (as well as of the soul, and of the nation) made by the work-tired hands of our folks. It is beautifully decorated inside (with needle crocheted lace) or outside (carved by grandfather with a chisel) and can be swayed slowly in order to carry us to the world of dreams, on the musical notes of a lullaby softly sung by a woman – of our national community – who is wearing a home-made ia (the traditional Romanian blouse), needle worked by herself during the long winter nights, while sitting by the crackling wood fire. In front of the cradle, on the eastern wall, there is an icon of Virgin Mary smiling tenderly at the baby in the cradle. The icon is placed on a beautiful Romanian traditional towel, also sewn and decorated with national motifs by the housewife. Outside the house, from time to time, you can hear the lowing of the cattle making their way home or the crowing of the rooster proudly announcing that it has accomplished its mission for the day. Late in the evening, the bell of the church announces, slowly but firmly, that the evening rites of the church have been fulfilled, that the world is at peace and one can go to rest in peace.

The above description is nothing but an ancestral picture of the Romanian people. Foreign tourists – thirsty for authentic values –, who visit us especially during Christmas or Easter holidays, can still enjoy this picture entirely, nowadays, in the countryside and partially in the cities of Romania. However, how did it get to look like this? Why are we this way and not otherwise? The axiological journey in the present volume, synthesized by us below, can help us find at least a partial answer to these questions.

**Art – artists** (from the Cantacuzino and the Brâncoveanu families up to the great names of Aman, Luchian, Grigorescu, Tonitza or even the unique Brâncuși) open the alphabet and place us in the subjectively valued context of colours and Romanian transfigured forms, with motifs, shapes and colours that talk about our primal, unaltered and pure soul.

**The old one** signifies the reconsideration of wisdom, the timeless settlement in calm and deep contemplation (so far away from the spirit of the contemporary time), which

generated proverbs and sayings, also illustrated alphabetically, which are reminiscent of another witty proverb, namely *Those who do not have elders, should buy them!*

**Drinks** – from the milk we feed the baby in the cradle and the clear spring water found during our peregrinations through the forests, up to the traditional *țuică*, *afinată*, *pălincă* and *rachiu*, as well as to wines such as *Fetească Regală*, *Grasă de Cotnari*, *Basuioacă de Bohotin*, *Murfatlar*, *Riesling de Târnave*, *Drăgășani* or *Sauvignon Blanc*, all constitute a variety of inviting aromas and colours that always bring good cheer.

**Castles** – Even if the opulence of buildings is not a distinctive mark of the Romanians, there is number of representative castles such as *Bran*, *Peleş*, *Corvinilor Castle*, *Banffy Castle*, which are expressions of both a well-knit culture (by merging the influences of the times) and of high architectural standards, materialized with originality and good taste.

**God** is in everything and without Him, the Romanians do not have and did not have a meaning: He is in each of us at the beginning and at the end of the day; He is in the blessed meals, in the small churches that exist in every village and in the painted monasteries in the north of Moldova that have become UNESCO monuments. He is in the sign of the cross made by people when passing by churches and, also, on the sword of Stephen the Great when he left to fight and defend the territory of the country. *Nihil sine Deo!*

**Contemporary cultural events**, festivals and concerts are the living expression of the energy, of the desire to feel alive, to enjoy life and live its beauty to the fullest. *Transylvania International Film Festival*, *George Enescu Festival* (named after the famous Romanian composer), *Sibiu Jazz Festival*, *Untold Festival* are just a few current opportunities to enter the beauty of the Romanian culture and share it interculturally.

**Famous women** amplify our existential meaning; they give us the pride that beyond their being beautiful mothers and good professionals, they can break barriers, they can invent, they can do something that has never been done before or they can be the first in a field of activity. That is exactly what *Smaranda Brăescu*, *Haricleea Dăriclăe*, *Ana Aslan* or *Nadia Comăneci* did: they made the name of Romania shine in the universal concert of the countries worldwide. Aren't they special?



*Men of genius* open horizons, radically change the world and take the universe to another dimension. *Petrache Poenaru, Henri Coandă, Traian Vuia, Ștefan Odobleja* or *Hermann Oberth* are just a few examples in this sense.

*Hora*, an ancestral expression of the joy of being and of the re-living the cycle (circle) of life/world (*Make the wheel turn once more, Lord!*), a symbol of the joining together and the union of those who are dancing (*Let's join hands, those with Romanian hearts!*), makes the moments spent together increase their significance from a(n) (initially) telluric one to another which is (deeply) metaphysical.

The *ia* (the traditional Romanian blouse), the upper part of the popular female costume, is an expression of the re-conquest/re-capturing of a native type of femininity and beauty, as well as of the hard work (in the past, every girl used to sow her own traditional blouse, which she wore daily and on traditional holidays). It remains a sign of belonging to the Romanian culture, of a certain way of perceiving and re-signifying (through specific colours and motifs) the sun and the moon, the flowers and the history, divinity and its connection with human existence, with love, with the good and the evil.

We owe our individual and social existence to the *forefathers/ancestors*. Due to their succession and deeds (in the army or in the diplomatic field) we have deep roots in the soil of this country; practically, we are what we are. That is why they must be known/recognized and valued at their true value!

*The county*, a specific form of administrative-territorial organization, can be considered, at the same time, a sign of the multiple (41 counties and Bucharest city) in unity with the one (Romania).

*Kilometers* are important, on the one hand, because they mark the spatial extent of our journeys. On the other hand, as we know, on one journey, the beauty is in the journey itself, not necessarily in the destination. That is why we propose some routes that will bring you complete joy and genuine emotion by going through *Transfăgărașanul, Transalpina, Transrăuul, Cheile Bicazului* or on a route with *Mocănița*, the steam train.

(Romanian) *Language and literature* express and define us axiologically. If the language is the house of the Human Being then, the Romanian language is the house of the Romanian people's being, a melodious language, difficult for others to learn, with a difficult grammar even for the native speakers,

which flows sweetly but also energetically like Italian and is delicate and refined like French and expressive like Spanish. *Mihai Eminescu and Emil Cioran, Eugene Ionesco and Mircea Eliade* (admired and appreciated all over the world) wrote and expressed their feelings in this language.

*Romanian music* represents an authentic wealth – of types, styles, performers and performances. The passion with which Maria Tănase used to interpret the traditional Romanian music, especially the *doina*, is unmatched and this resembles the achievements of George Enescu, Angela Gheorghiu, Sergiu Celibidache or Aura Urziceanu.

*Naiul* (the pan flute) is one of the divine musical instruments, which opens the way to heavens and to gods. When it is used in the interpretations of *Gheorghe Zamfir*, "The Master of Pan Flute", it also finds its way to the souls of the Romanian mortals or of those from elsewhere (Paris, London, Canada) or "meets" famous films (*Once Upon a Time in America, Kill Bill: Volume 1, Le grand blond avec une chaussure noire* or *Karate Kid*).

*Oina* is the traditional Romanian sport, with its own specificity, appreciated as such; even if it is not widely practised, it is automatically connected with our national identity.

The list of achievements presented in the chapter "*Primii si...cei mai ... – the first...and the most*" aims to strengthen the Romanian openness to the world through the most beautiful and exquisite materializations, not in the sense of an exaggerated self-affirmation, but in the sense of communicating the spiritual and material essence of the Romanian people to the universe.

*The relief* of Romania is rich, diversified and harmonious, from which nothing is missing. The relief forms alternate with one another: plain (*the Bărăgan Plain*) – plateau (*the Moldova Plateau*) – hills (*the Subcarpathians*) – mountains (*the Carpathians*) – sea (*the Black Sea*) – delta (*the Danube Delta*). They allow us to offer national arguments, even from a metaphysical perspective (having in mind the theory of universal undulation belonging to the philosopher Vasile Conta), that the environment has a major impact on our development as a nation. Not by chance, but perhaps even as an expression of this balance and especially of the symbiosis between spirituality and nature, between axiological and ontological, Romania was called more than 500 years ago, the Garden of Virgin Mary.

*Sport* has always meant many things: a message, fair competition, performance, the importance of honest



participation in competitions, contributing to the inter-knowledge of nations.

Through names such as *Ilie Năstase*, *Nadia Comăneci*, *Gabriela Szabo* or *Ivan Patzaichin*, people all over the world learnt many defining aspects of the Romanian culture, whenever these highly successful athletes represented us.

The subchapter titled *Did You Know?* recalls a series of other wonderful achievements of the local culture, correlating famous names and places with specifically Romanian ones with which they are in close connection, thus increasing the representativeness of our culture.

*Traditions* are a significant element in preserving and illustrating the spirit of a nation; they represent the roots without which there can be no wings for the future, because we are what we were and...a little more! The expression of beliefs and their patterns deeply rooted into the collective conscious and unconscious mind, the traditions related to the great religious holidays over the year (Christmas and Easter, for example), to the rhythms of life and death (marriage, birth, baptism, death) universally reflect the Romanian way of being and living.

*The country* is beyond us but lives only through us. Any defining element of it we would refer to (territory, language, coat of arms, anthem, history, religion, traditions) is loaded with meanings long deposited in time, with a role in preserving the national being and in our future development in the long term. In the warm arms of the mother country, we are born and raised, trying, each of us, individually and institutionally, to contribute to its preservation and evolution.

*Humour* is a defining feature of the Romanian people and, up to a level (beyond which limits are lost – the one where everything is laughed at!) can even be therapeutic, becoming an optimistic way to go through life with detachment, even smiling during the hard times (one proof of these is Săpânța cemetery), trying to see the bright side of life, always hoping that you will be able to overcome the trials as they may happens to others, too, or they are not that serious.

*Moral values* are the backbone of an individual's character and the social-community spirit of a people. In the current context of the deep moral crisis of humanity, the moral values specific to each people can represent axiological anchors, pillars of support in the difficult existential effort of navigation through life. The values listed in the dedicated subchapter and supported by names from the Romanian

culture allow us to get a first idea of this universe of values specific to the Romanian people.

*Wallachia* is the historical name of one of the Romanian provinces around which the unitary national state was later formed and the appeal to this name brings with it, every time, the re-resurrection of the historical past, of the acts of bravery of the Romanian rulers as well as of the feeling of unity and continuity as a nation.

*The xylophone* brings with it a divine music and a special formative effect, making the soul vibrate in tune with the mountains and the valleys, the sea and the Delta, the past and the future.

*Yummy* expresses, in a very well-known English word, the satisfaction of a delicious taste (from the category of "to lick your fingers") and, with this, we enter the Romanian gastronomic universe, extremely rich, constituted by the meeting of culinary influences from different but tasty worlds (at least those coming from the east – Russia, west – Hungary and Austria, south – the Balkans and Turkey, north – Poland).

*Zacusca* is the queen of vegetables during the autumn – winter seasons, in particular, because it can be made from all kinds of vegetables (onions, eggplants, fibsters, carrots, beans, etc.) and with various spices; it is one of the dishes that support the fasting time before Christmas and Easter. To these assortments, you can add ghebe (a sort of mushrooms) zacusca but also fish zacusca.

In fact, **Romania – my cradle** constitutes an alphabet of our specific cultural values that generate the substance of Romania's national identity. I am glad to feel, every day, that I am "swinging" in this cradle, that it is part of my being and that it defines me!

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# Artă Art



Traces of artwork were present on the Romanian territory even during Late Palaeolithic and early Mesolithic. Both visual and plastic art, related with the geographical regions of the country, have proved that people living on our territory belonged to various cultures.

Folk art, the reflection of the cultural life of the community, is rich in Romania. Artisans (often trained in workshops in the past) created objects with a double purpose: decorative and practical. Although traditional customs are fading away, there still exist some, which are conveyed from generation to generation; they represent the work of local artisans and peasants. This is the case of pottery, dating back to the Dacians. In Romania, one can talk about a culture of **ceramics**, whose elements (linked to form, colour and motifs) differ according to the geographical areas ceramics belongs to. The internationally recognized areas are Horezu, Corund and Marginea, the last one being listed in the *Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO* (since 2012). Other types of artwork include carpentry – **carved wood** that is to be noticed in wooden household items adorned with traditional motifs, as well as, especially in the countryside architecture (homes with carved wood beams, gates or fences), **painted eggs** (see Letter Ț – Țară), **art glass**, **painted icons**, **wall carpets**, **the making of masks** (especially for winter holidays traditions), **weaving and woven silk**.

Starting with the end of the 14th century, under the influence of the traditional Byzantine art, the Romanian art manifested itself through, especially, religious monumental painting, decorative sculpture and ceramics, as well as icons. The first Romanian cultured art style (*Cantacuzin-Brâncovenesc art style*), to be noticed in architecture, religious monumental painting and decorative art (fabrics, metal, wood) occurred at the end of the 17th century. The 18th century offered the first easel paintings and graphics, the work of the artists who had studied in Vienna and Rome. Art development was given a huge impulse when the first Art Academies (in Bucharest and Iași) were founded and the first large art galleries were opened in the country.



*What gives the work of art life is its effect.*

Ioan Slavici – a Romanian prose writer and journalist

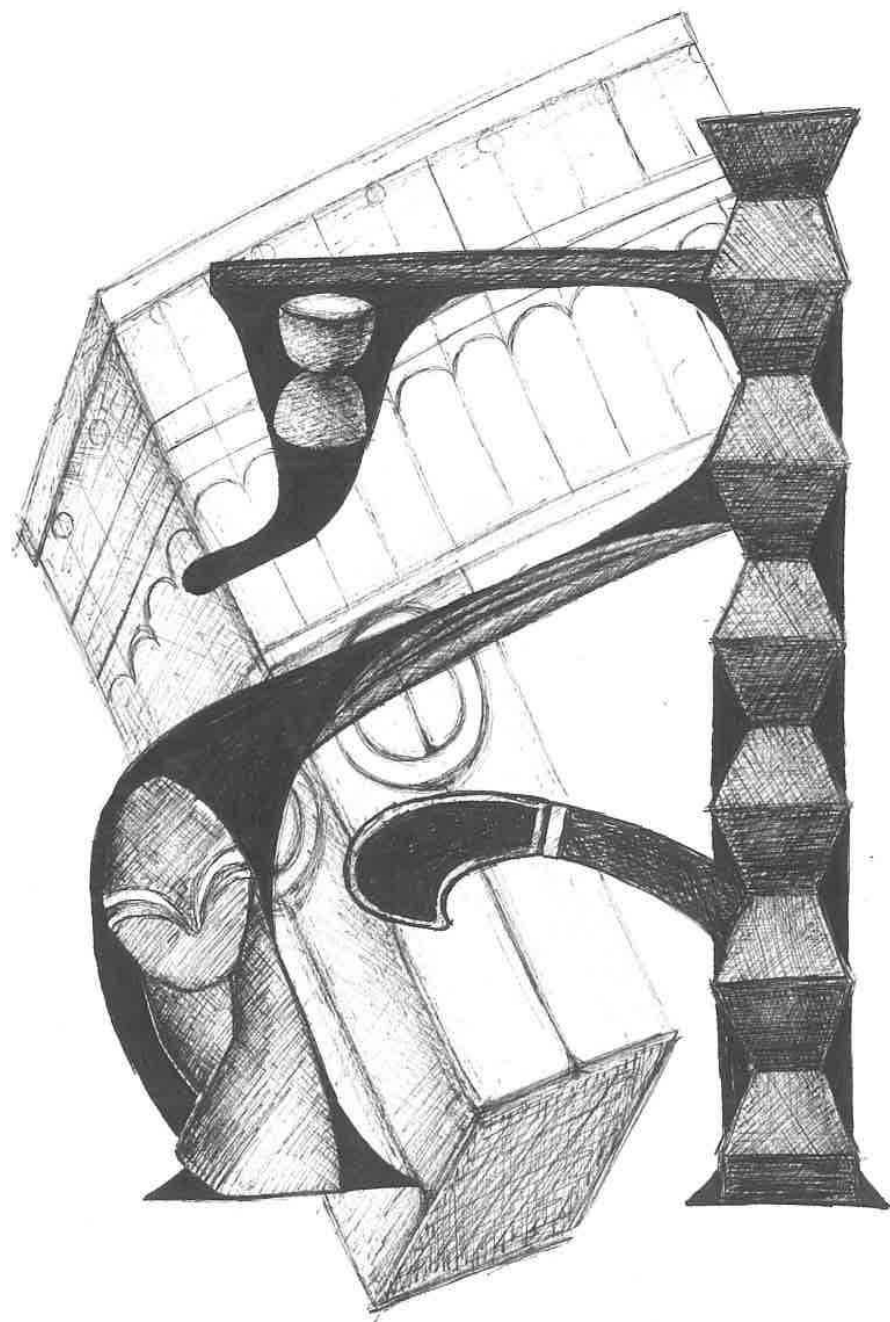
*When you reproduce nature, you are its slave. When you represent it, you dominate it.*

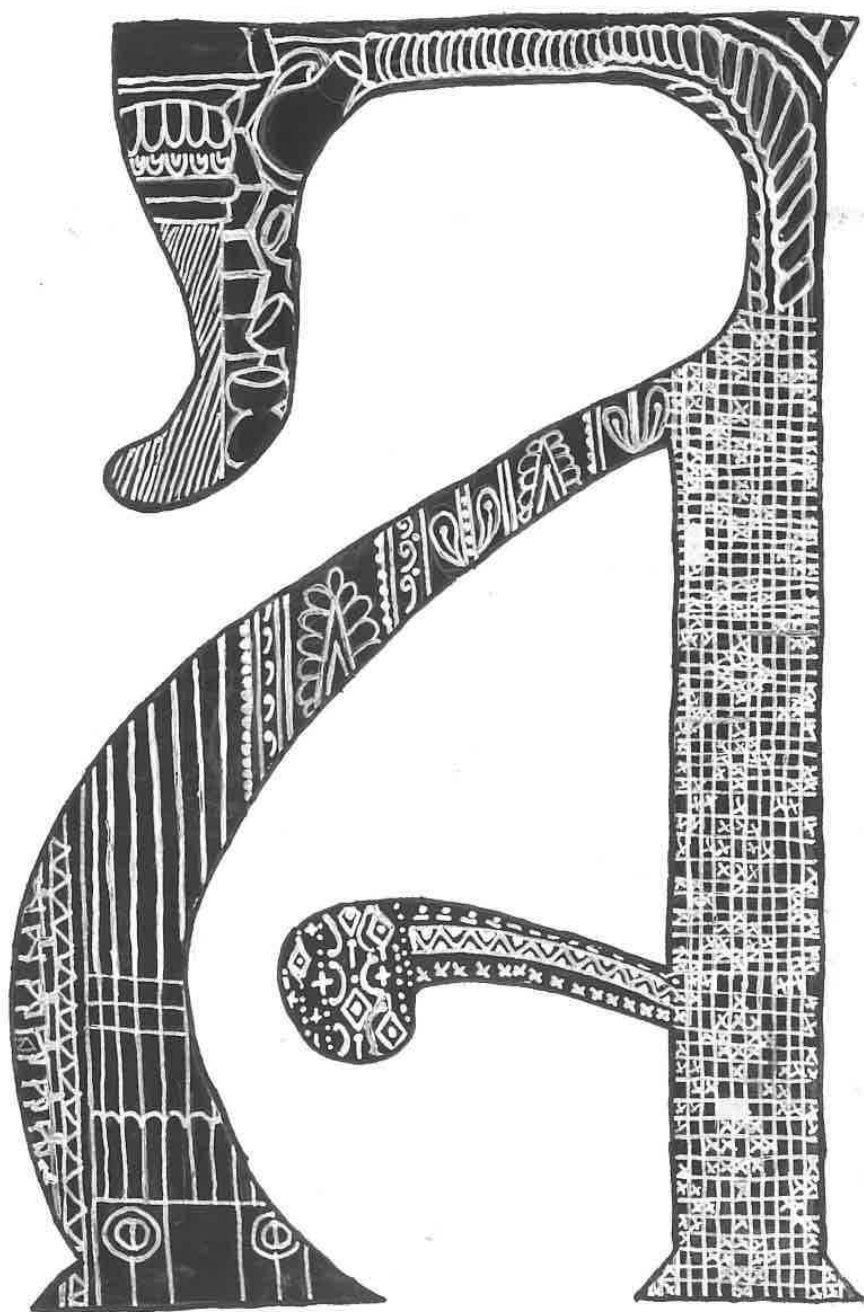
Nicolae Tonitza – a Romanian painter

Historical painting, scenery, genre, Oriental scenes and still nature are to be admired in the works of **Theodor Aman** (1831-1891), a painter, engraver and art professor, mostly known as the first modern Romanian artist and, at the same time, a founder of the Romanian School of Fine Arts. If your interest is in portraits of peasants and images from rural life or from war, then, you can admire the paintings of **Nicolae Grigorescu** (1838-1907), one of the founders of modern painting in Romania. He studied and then spent part of his life in Paris. His works bear the stamp of the *en plain air* painting trend. Grigorescu is also known for the remarkable mural paintings from Agapia Monastery. Remarkable landscapes and still-life works catch our eyes in the paintings of **Ștefan Luchian** (1868-1916) – a painter who studied at the Fine Arts School in Bucharest and also, at Munich Fine Arts Academy and at the Académie Julien in Paris. He took inspiration from Impressionism, Post-impressionism, Modernism and Art Nouveau. If you want to admire “Tonitza’s eyes”, then you need to look for the paintings of **Nicolae Tonitza** (1886-1940), a painter, engraver and art critic, inspired by Post-impressionism and Expressionism, who attended the National School of Fine Arts (Iași), and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.

The most outstanding Romanian artist is **Constantin Brâncuși** (1876 - 1957) – one of the most important expressionist artists of the interwar period; he was a sculptor (the pioneer of modernist sculpture), painter and photographer. After studies in Bucharest, Munich and Paris, he continued his life and activity in France, becoming well-known in Europe and the USA. Among his masterpieces are *The Kiss* and *Bird in Space* series. His works can be admired in famous galleries in the USA, Italy, Australia. The largest works can be admired in Romania (Târgu Jiu, Gorj County); the remarkable pieces of art – *Coloana Infinitului* (*The Endless Column*), *Poarta Sărutului* (*The Gate of the Kiss*) and *Masa Tăcerii* (*The Table of Silence*) are reunited in the *Monumental Ensemble Trilogy*.







# Ăl bătrân

## The old one



In Romania, proverbs and sayings are used both in oral or written communication, as part of our ordinary daily life. For hundreds of years, by using proverbs and sayings, people have conveyed the profound wisdom, life principles, behaviour rules and the values that

Romanians treasure most, from generation to generation. Would you like to learn some? Here they are, in alphabetical order:

**A.** Ai carte ai parte, n-ai carte, n-ai parte. = He who has a trade, has a share everywhere.

[Meaning = If you study and get knowledge, you will be successful in life]

**B.** Bine faci, bine găsești. = Do well and find well. /A good deed is never lost.

**C.** Cine fuge după doi iepuri, nu prinde niciunul. = If you run after two hares you will catch neither. [Meaning = if you try to do two things in the same time, you will not succeed in doing either of them]

**D.** Dumnezeu îți dă, dar nu îți bagă în traistă. = God gives the milk, but not the pail. [Meaning = God gives you opportunities, but it depends on you whether you take them or not.]

**E.** Excepția confirmă regula. = The exception proves the rule. [Meaning = the exception subjects the rule to a test.]

**F.** Ferește-mă, Doamne, de prieteni, că de dușmani mă feresc singur. = God defend me from my friends; from my enemies, I can defend myself.

**G.** Gândește întâi, apoi vorbește. = First think and then speak.

**H.** Haina face pe om. = Fine feathers make fine birds.

**I.** Iubirea de argint este rădăcina tuturor relelor. = The love of money is the root of all evil.

**Î.** Încetul cu încetul se face oțetul. = Slow but sure. {word for word translation: Little by little the vinegar is made}. [Meaning = Do things slowly, calmly, if you want to do them well.]



*The drama is not that you are old, but that you were once young.*

A.D. Xenopol – a Romanian philosopher, historian, sociologist and writer

*Whoever does not have an old man, should buy one.*

Romanian proverb

**J.** Jarul potolit te arde. = The stilled ember burns you. {ember = synonym for fire}. [Meaning = Don't let yourself be fooled by appearances.]

**L.** La treabă se vede omul ce poate. = The workman is known by his work. [Meaning = The workman needs to be appreciated by his work, as this matters.]

**M.** Minciuna are picioare scurte. = Lies have short legs. [Meaning: We should not tell lies as, eventually, the truth comes out – no doubt]

**N.** Nu lăsa pe mâine ce poți face azi = Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

**O.** Ochii care nu se văd se uită. = Out of sight, out of mind.

**P.** Pofta vine mâncând. = Appetite comes with eating.

**R.** Rău faci, rău găsești. = He that hurts another, hurts himself.

**S.** Sângele apă nu se face. = Blood is thicker than water. [Meaning = No other relationships are stronger than family ones.]

**Ș.** Și tăcerea este un răspuns. = Even silence is an answer.

**T.** Tot răul spre bine. = Nothing so bad, but it might have been worse.

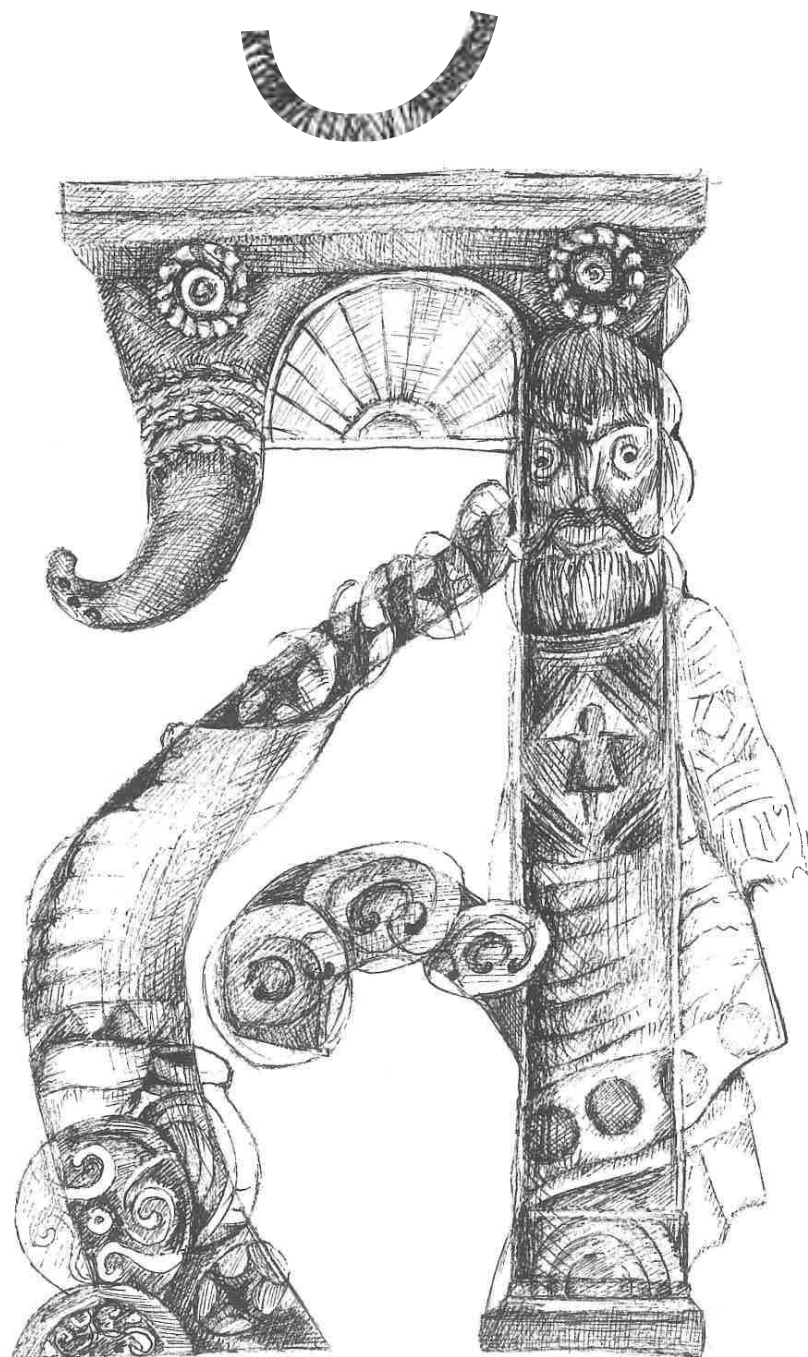
**Ț.** Țandăra nu sare departe de trunchi. = {word for word translation: A chip doesn't fall far from the tree trunk} = An apple never falls far from the tree. [Meaning = children, somehow, resemble their parents]

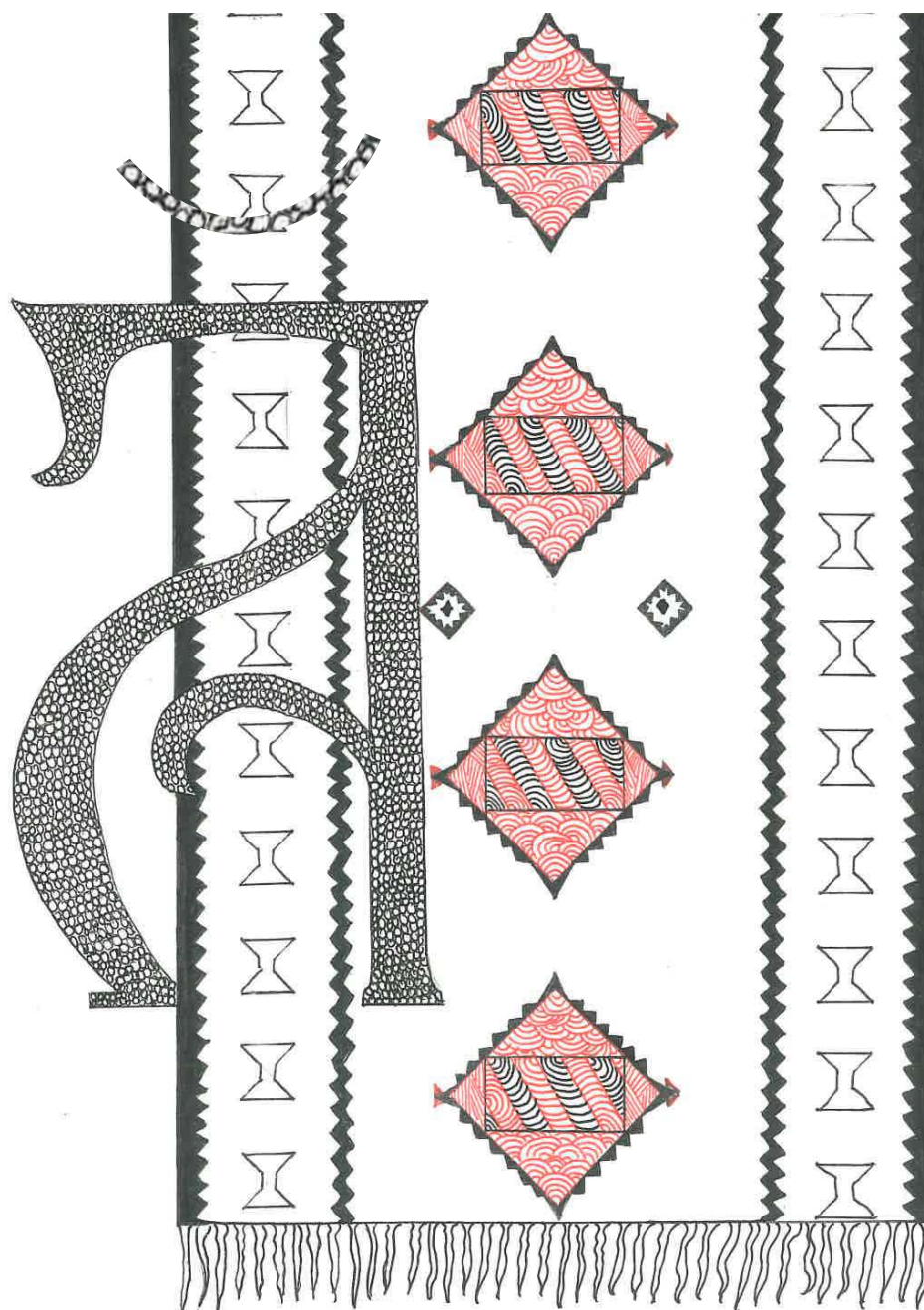
**U.** Ușor de zis, greu de făcut. = Easier said than done.

**V.** Vorba dulce mult aduce = Kind words go a long way. [Meaning = If you use kind words, the others will appreciate you and will co-operate with you]

**Z.** Ziua bună se cunoaște de dimineață. = {word for word translation: The good day is known from its morning} = The morning hour has gold in its mouth. [Meaning = The way in which we start the day can influence our disposition.]









# Băuturi Drinks



*The good wine talks about itself in your ear. The bad one brags loudly.*

Tudor Mușatescu – a Romanian playwright, prose writer, poet and humourist

Romania prides itself on its delicious traditional food and high-quality drinks. The quality of the Romanian traditional drinks is given by the fact that they are 100% natural, as the basic ingredient is represented by fruits or plants – Romania having a long history, in this respect. They include various types of aperitifs (spirits) and wine. Let's have a drink together! Choose the one you think will be on your taste! We beat you will ask for the recipe!

The national traditional drink is **țuică**, a strong drink (this is why it is advisable to be consumed in small amounts), whose recipe differs from one geographical region of the country to another one. It is made of fermented plums and distilled just once. Present at any Romanian party or celebration, it has also got medical advantages. **Afinată** resembles, țuică but it is made of blueberries, while **horincă** is stronger than țuică and it is made of plums, apples or cherries and undergoes a double distillation.

**Pălincă** is made of plums, apples, pears, cherries, sour cherries or blueberries and it is especially found in the northwestern part of Transilvania.

**Rachiu** is a sweet liquor, a kind of țuică, but stronger than the latter and it is made of pears, while **vișinată** is a sour cherry brandy which has a sweet taste and it is mostly prepared by the Romanians at home, by using sour cherries, sugar and alcohol.

Romania has had an ancient tradition in vine cultivation (the artefacts discovered by archeologists testify in this sense) – from the times of the Geto-Dacians, when vineyards represented a symbol of wealth. The hilly regions, as well as the temperate-continental climate made it possible that one can find vineyards all over the country, in all geographical regions. Thus, Moldova prides on varieties of wine such as *Fetească Regală*, *Fetească Albă*, *Grasă de Cotnari* or *Busuioacă de Bohotin*. The most well-known variety in Dobrogea is *Murfatlar*, the one in Transilvania is *Târnavé Riesling* (considered “the king” of the white dry wines) while the region of Oltenia prides on *Drăgășani*, *Fetească Neagră* or *Sauvignon Blanc*. The Romanian wines have got world-wide recognition along time. The first recognition dates since 1887 (Paris) when *Tămăioasa Românească* was awarded the gold medal. At the last global contest (*Mundus Vini*, 2023), for example, Romania has been awarded 33 medals (25 gold medals and 8 silver ones), proving, once again, that it deserves a leading place among the wine-producing countries.

Don't you like alcohol? Then, try the Romanian traditional soft drink that is called **socata/elderberry juice**. A medium-sized shrub, which has the botanical name of *Sambucus nigra* and which blooms from May until June-July, offers the raw material for a delicious, refreshing drink made up of the shrub's flowers which undergo a process of fermentation in water with sugar, lemon, some grains of rice and fresh yeast.









# Castele Castles



*... walls from the past  
old castle in ruins -  
echo in the present*

Corneliu Georgescu – a Romanian writer



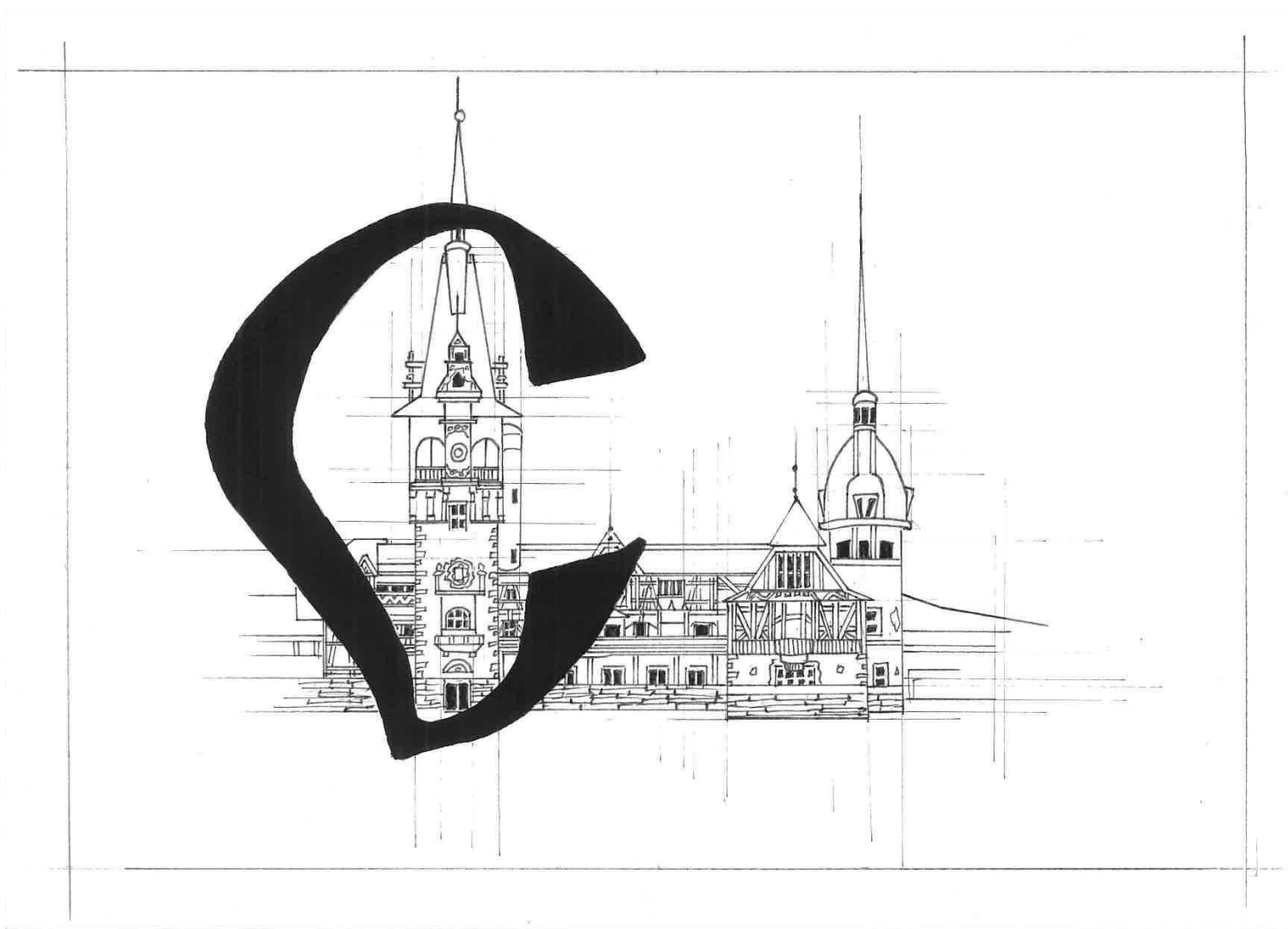
If you are a “castles hunter” during your holidays, then come to Romania! – that is what tourist agents may tell you. It is quite hard to believe that Romania is the land of more than 100 castles, which deserve to be visited. At least four of them represent a real attraction for those interested in history and entertainment, at the same time.

By far, the most inviting to tourists, **Bran Castle**, known as Dracula’s Castle, is a national monument that attracts hundreds of visitors every year. It is located in Bran, 30 km away from the beautiful city of Braşov (Braşov County). The castle, a former residence of Queen Mary of Romania, was built on a rock between 1377-1388 by the Saxons in the area, with their own hands and resources. The goal was that of ensuring a lookout point for the fortress. The castle attracts visitors with its medieval architecture and the surrounding fascinating outside view. It inspired Bran Stoker for his novel

about Dracula. **Peleş Castle**, the symbol of the Romanian royalty, is located in the small town called Sinaia (Prahova County). Displaying the New Renaissance architecture, the castle was built between 1874-1883 and is known as the first castle in Europe to have electricity and central heating through its walls and floors. It impresses with its indoor beauty, valuable exhibited objects and its luxury as well as with its outdoor ornaments in German style. A special attraction is the Armoury, as much as the Music Hall and the Moorish Hall. Displaying a Gothic-Renaissance style, **Corvin Castle** is located in Hunedoara (in the county with the same name). The visitors are impressed by its impenetrable walls, its rectangular and circular towers, its drawbridge, as well as by several legends and stories linked to its existence. Known as *Transylvania’s Versailles*, **Banffy Castle** is situated in Cluj-Napoca County. It also got the name of *Electric Castle*, due to the concert organized there every year, since 2013, thus linking the past and the present in a very eye-catching way.









# Dumnezeu God

**I**t is a fact that Romania is a very religious country – maybe one of the most European religious ones – and its citizens, in their majority (85.3%), are Orthodox Christians, unlike the other Latin people, who are Catholics. According to a Romanian legend, Christianity was introduced in Romania in the 1st century AD by Saint Andrew. This is why the Romanians celebrate Saint Andrew as the patron and protector of the country and its people. Being a secular country (according to its Constitution), Romania has no state religion, but religious cults. Ethnic minorities have preserved their own religions: Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or Judaic. Strong religious devotion is, especially, to be noticed in the countryside, but much public life is also connected with it (as many public events begin with religious services).

In Romania, churches are present in a large number in both villages and cities (as oases of faith, peace and relaxation) and people go to religious services (especially on Sundays or on religious holidays) and use to make a cross when passing by a church. Some of the churches stand out due to their age or beauty. Thus, **Densus Church** (Hunedoara County), made entirely of stone, was built on the ruins of a pagan construction and it is the oldest in our country. Although built in the XIIIth century, it still hosts religious services. **The Church from Viscri** (Braşov County) dates from the same century and it is famous due to its simplicity and the connection with the British royal family (as King Charles III owns some land and a house in Viscri). Artisans from Vienna and Nuremberg brought their contribution to the construction of **Biertan Fortified Church** (Sibiu County), another old and beautiful church. The citizens of Braşov pride on **The Black Church** (1477), as it is the largest in Romania and, at the same time, it houses the largest mechanical organ, the largest bell in the country and important collections of artwork, Oriental carpets and treasures.



*We have to empty ourselves of the too full Ego, so that a little bit of God enters us.*

Petre Ţuţea – a Romanian philosopher, journalist and politician

*We can never reach God, but the courage to journey towards Him remains important.*

Constantin Brâncuşi – a Romanian sculptor

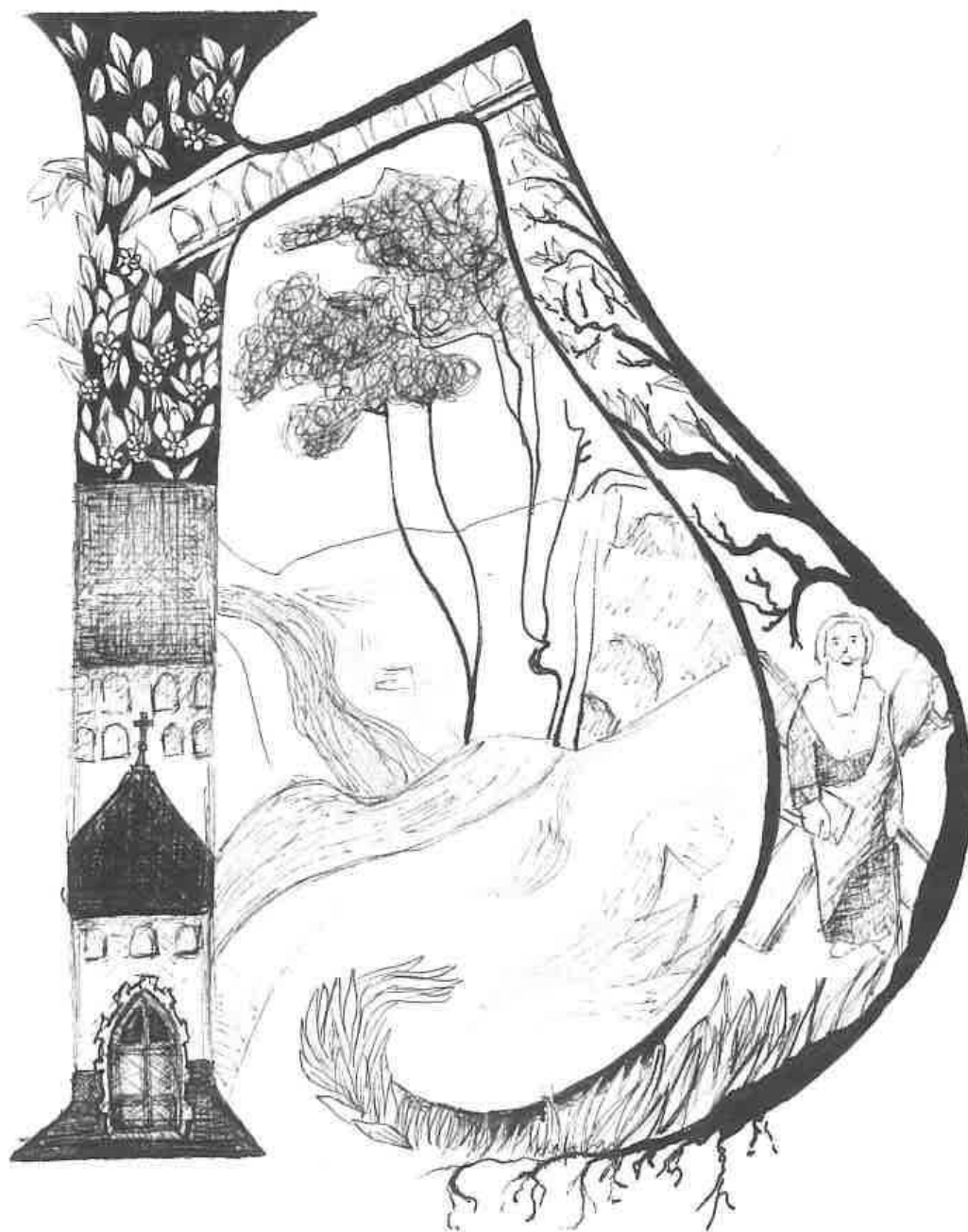
*God gave His creation only one pillar: love.*

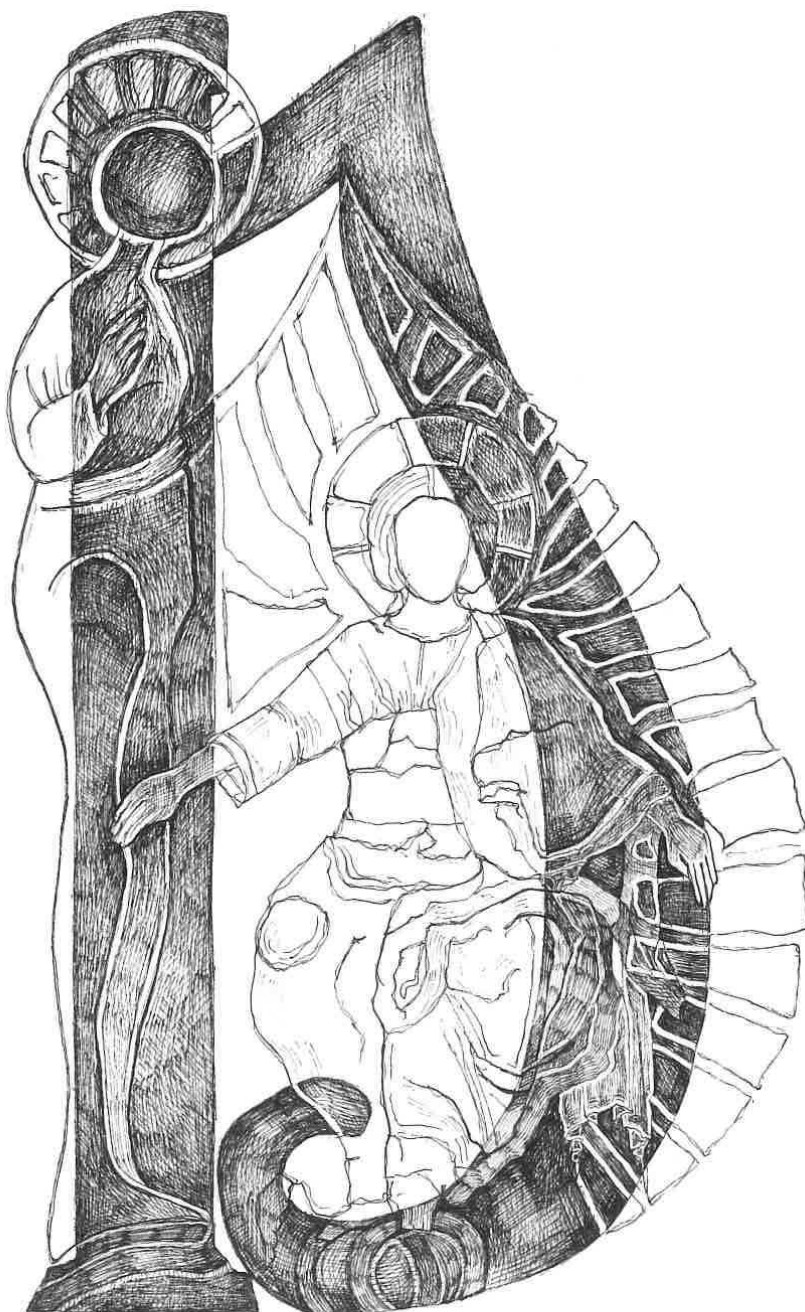
Carmen Sylva – the literary penname of Elisabeth of Romania – the Queen and wife of King Charles I of Romania

Romania is also the country with many monasteries as places of worship and attractions for tourists due to their age, history, unseen beauty and, sometimes, due to their uniqueness. The northern part of the country, Bucovina, a land of legends and history, is famous for its monasteries with special religious paintings. Eight of these monasteries (**Voroneţ, Humor, Moldoviţa, Suceviţa, Arbore, Pătrăuţi, “Saint John the New” Suceava and Probota**) have been included in the UNESCO list. The monasteries and churches in this area have a specific Moldavian style, combining Gothic elements with Byzantine and regional ones. They house large collections of old manuscripts or paintings and are amazing true works of art unique in the world especially due to the exterior paintings whose painting pigments have been kept a secret (still unknown to specialists). We are talking about the famous blue (“the blue of Voroneţ”), green (from Suceviţa), red (from Humor) and yellow (from Moldoviţa).

The most impressive one is **Voroneţ**, built in 1488 and the most important foundation of Stephen the Great (The Prince of Moldavia between 1457-1504). It is also named “The Sistine Chapel of the East” for the famous fresco Doomsday. The blue pigment used in the exterior frescos has a special resistance; time and meteorological conditions had very little effect upon them.

Among wooded hills and wild landscapes, one can discover another beautiful monastery, famous for its historical heritage, **Putna Monastery**, with its brightly colored paintings depicting faces of saints and biblical scenes. It also houses Stephen the Great’s tomb nearby others belonging to members of his family. These tombs, together with the icon veil, are good examples of the Moldavian art during the Prince’s time.







# Evenimente Events



Let's see what events are there in the city! More exactly, where could we go? Shall we go to the cinema, to the theatre, to a museum, to a show or to a festival? That might be a question but the answer is quite hard to give, as it is always hard to decide. Will a festival be a good choice? The answer is, definitely, YES!

Romania's festivals are fascinating for their diversity and atmosphere. They disclose not only the country's cultural heritage, but also its traditions and artistic expression.

Many of the Romanian cities have already become the favourite destinations for fans of film, theatre (professional theatre, student theatre, amateur theatre), music of diverse genres and for diverse audience (classical music, choral music, music for children, jazz music folk music, rock music), visual arts, dance, literature, gastronomy (with delicious food). Some of them are held in big cities, which have already created a tradition in their organization.

Filmgoers may choose between **Transylvania International Film Festival (TIFF)** and **Râșnov Citadel Film Festival**. The first one is the most famous in Eastern Europe for projections of films from both Romania and other countries in the world, as well as for the fact that it offers you the delight of visiting and admiring Cluj- Napoca, one of the most beautiful cities in Romania.



*The idea of an art festival, be it theatre, film, music, fine art, always makes me happy. I think people need more art in their lives, it's good for us. It reminds us to be human, not robots desperate for work and wages.*

Vlad Logigan – a Romanian actor

The latter offers you the unique experience of watching films in the courtyard of the historic citadel.

Theatre-goers, if choosing **Sibiu International Festival (FITS)**, can enjoy the theatre performances in the amazing old medieval city of Sibiu and spend time in a pleasant way, as the streets of the city will abound in music, dance and street shows.

Music lovers will, for sure, be happy to find tickets for **George Enescu Festival** (named after the famous Romanian composer) that allows them to listen to classical music performed by excellent orchestras, soloists and conductors from all over the world. Before or after the festival, you may have an unforgettable opportunity to visit the capital of the country, as the festival takes place in Bucharest. Classical music is not your option? Then, you may go to **Sibiu Jazz Festival**. Annually, musicians from all over the world perform on the stage of the festival and people from all over Europe will be in the audience. Other two festivals, of electronic music, gather thousands of enthusiasts from Romania and from abroad; they are really must-see ones – **Untold Festival**, one of the biggest in Europe that gathers the top international artists and the best music in the town of Cluj-Napoca and **Neversea Festival** in Constanța, where the beauty of music competes with the vibration of the waves, unforgettable sunsets and people dancing in the sand, on the beach.







# Femei celebre Famous Women

**T**he last national Census indicated that Romanian women represented 51,1% of the country's population. They are not only beautiful and hardworking, but also very smart. Some of them have become famous (nationally and internationally) for their skills and talent in diverse areas of activity. Allow us to introduce some of them to you!

Romania prides itself on the names of some women who are "the first in Europe or in the world" in their domains: **Eliza Leonida Zamfirescu** (1887-1973) the first woman engineer in Europe; **Aurora Gruescu** (1914-2005) the first woman forestry engineer in the world, **Sofia Ionescu - Ogrezeanu**, (1920-2008), the first female neurosurgeon in the world and **Smaranda Brăescu** (1897-1948) the first woman aviator and the one who, in 1931, broke the world record for women parachuting by jumping from 6,000 meters. The name of **Ana Aslan** (1897-1988) is connected with her results in gerontology; she invented Gerovital (H3) – which was patented in 30 countries – with remarkable results in the anti-ageing treatment.

Music is another domain in which Romanian women were and still are well-known and appreciated, especially in the lyrical world. It is the case of **Hariclea Darclee** (1860-1939), one of the world's most celebrated sopranos of the beginning of the 20th century, who performed on the largest world stages (Berlin, Paris, Milano Moscow, Rome or Monte Carlo); she is especially known for her being the first performer of Floria, in Puccini's *Tosca* (1900). **Mariana Nicolesco** (1948-2022) made the debut at the *Metropolitan Opera* in New York and then she sang on stages of the most important opera houses in the world (among which,



*The expression of your femininity has its roots in your creative passion.*

Cristina Miculete – a personal and spiritual evolution trainer

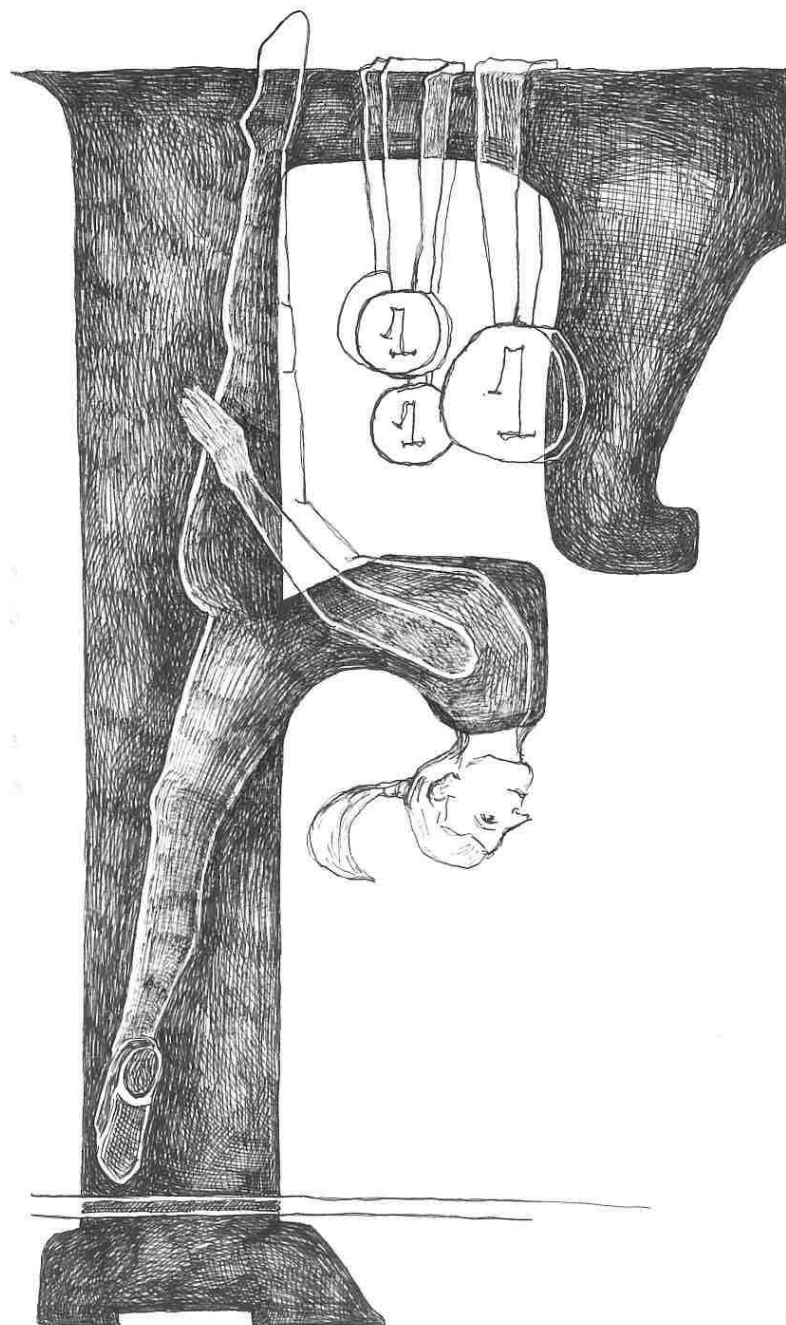
*Carnegie Hall in New York, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Royal Festival Hall in London) and was a constant performer at La Scala in Milan.*

Fine arts are represented by some women, quite unknown even to the Romanian public, whose talent, intelligence and courage are impressive. One of them was **Olga Greceanu** (1890-1978) who was a lady-in-waiting to Queen Mary, studied fine arts in Belgium and displayed her paintings in New York (attracting the attention of the USA President Roosevelt's wife, and her invitation to the White House). During the interwar period, she made herself remarkable by being the first and only woman in Romania to preach in some churches in Bucharest. She also dedicated herself to the painting of frescoes, icons and church restoration. Another one was **Cecilia Cuțescu-Stork** (1879- 1969), the first female university professor in an arts faculty in Europe and the first woman in Romania to create mural art.

In the theatre and film world, **Maia Morgenstern** (1962-) delights the audience with her notable roles. Her portrayal of Blessed Virgin Mary in Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* has brought her world-wide recognition.

The fame of Romania in the entire world was also brought by two women with amazing results in sports. The first one is **Nadia Comăneci** (1961), the first gymnast who was awarded a perfect score of 10.0 at the Olympic Games (Montreal, 1976). The second, in tennis, **Simona Halep** (1991-) has had remarkable results: twice on the first place in WTA, 24 WTA, and winner of Grand Slam competitions of Roland Garros (2018) and Wimbledon (2019). Aren't they special?











# Genii

## Men of genius



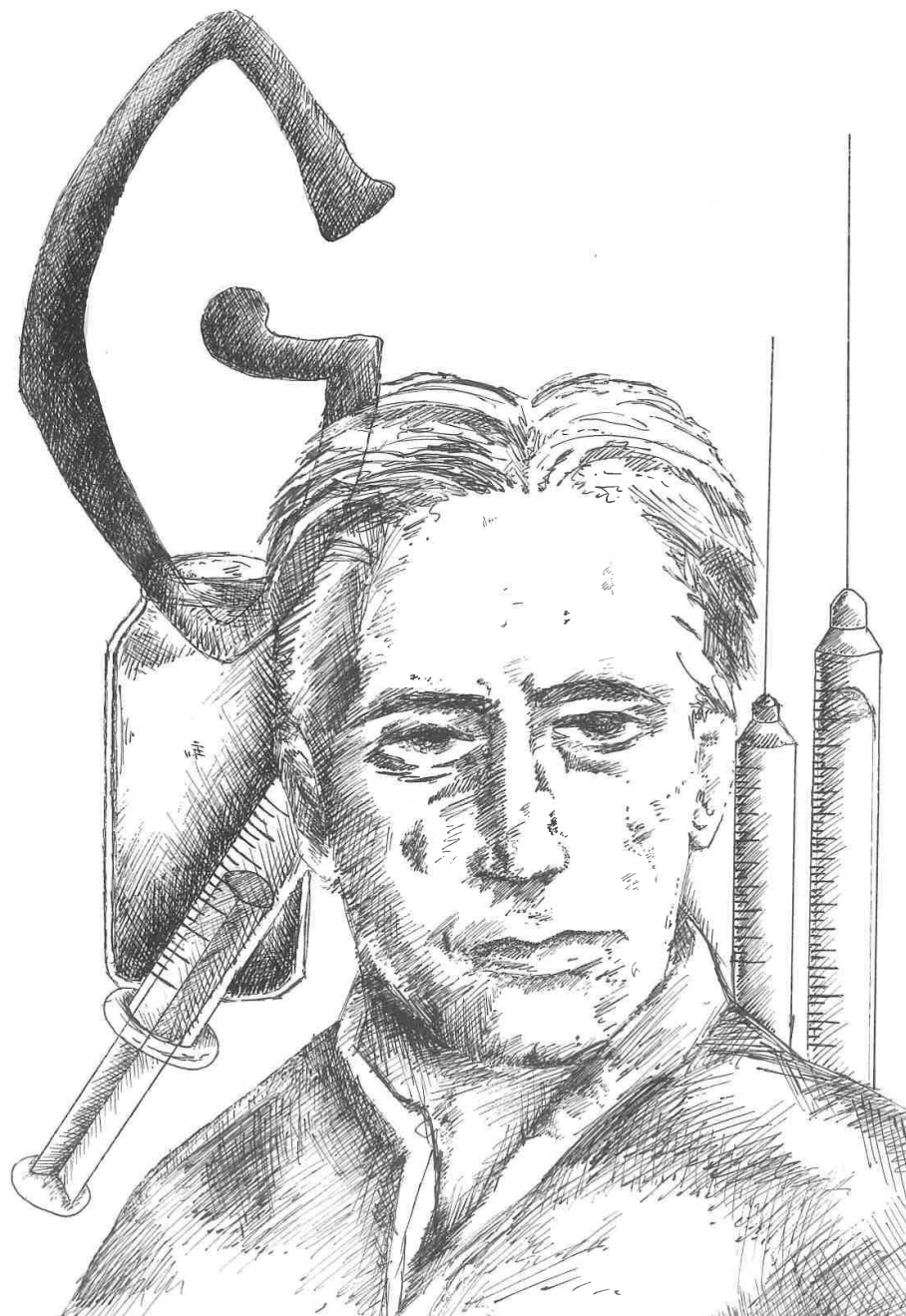
*Men of genius are the bright torches that light the path of humanity: without them, we would be lost in darkness.*

Alexandru Ioan Cuza – the first ruler of the Romanian Principalities  
*The most important thing is not the number of ideas gathered in your mind, but the connection that unites them.*

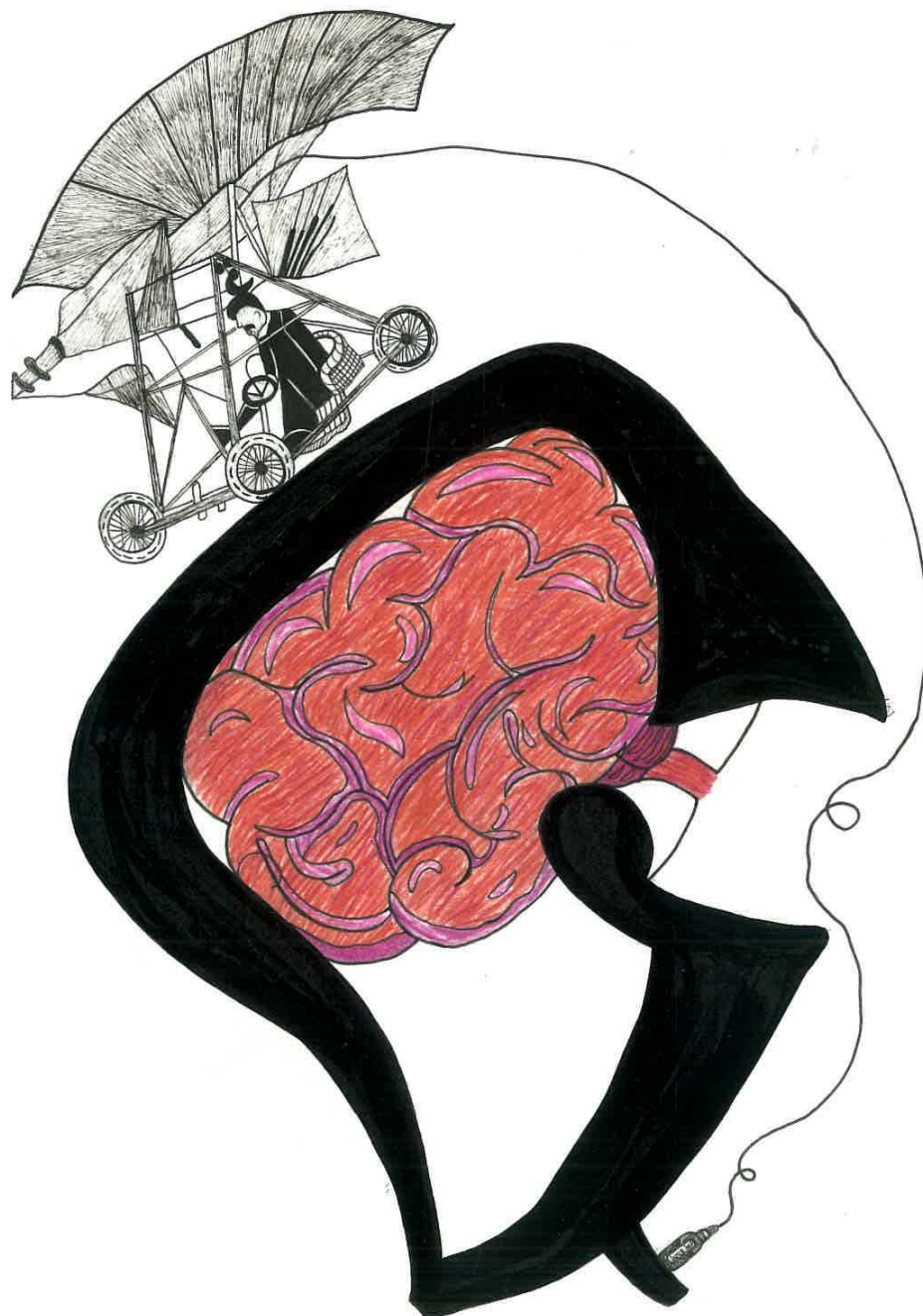
Titu Maiorescu – a Romanian literary critic and politician

When it comes about what Romania gave to the world in the scientific domain, one thing is certain: Romania is famous for many great minds that contributed to its recognition. Among these, **Petrache Poenaru** (1799–1875), the inventor of the modern fountain pen – “The portable pen which does not end” – (1827); **Henri Coandă** (1886–1972), known for the Coandă effect of fluid dynamics (1910); **Gogu Constantinescu** (1881–1965), the founder of a theory of sonics; **Nicolae Păulescu** (1869–1931), the first to discover insulin; **Emil Racoviță** (1868–1947), the pioneer in biospeology; **Traian Vuia** (1872–1950), the pioneer of

international aviation; **Ștefan Odobleja** (1902–1978), the founder of psychocybernetics and the world precursor of generalized cybernetics; his research stands at the basis of all that is cybernetics and computing. **Ion Cantacuzino** (1863–1934) is known for the method of cholera vaccination, which bears his name. It is also helpful to find out that Romania has given the world one of the founding fathers of spaceflight and rocketry – **Hermann Oberth** (1894–1989), the inventor of the concept of staged combustion of fuel. For his contribution to astronautics, he was awarded Prix REP-Hirsch, by French Astronomical Society.









# Hora

## Hora dance

### Round dance

### Circle dance



*I know an even more beautiful hora, the hora where all earthlings, Orthodox, Catholics, and Armenians, hold hands, and without looking at the difference of religions, which only God can judge, all bound by the same rights and duties, the same interest, the same love for the country, to play the hora of united and autonomous Romania.*

Mihail Kogălniceanu – a Romanian statesman, historian, publicist and lawyer

**W**e invite you to our traditional dance! You will enjoy it, for sure! *Hora* is one of the Romanian traditional representative dances and the most preferred one, as, although it is a peasant dance, there is no popular celebration or big party (especially weddings) without it. It was first mentioned in a Romanian chronicle, in 1716, but its sources are considered the people living on our territory in the distant past: the Thracians and the Geto-Dacians.

As it is a collective dance, *hora* gathers the party people/the dancers in a large circle; they hold hands and follow a sequence of three steps forward, followed by one step back, while the circle spins according to the rhythm dictated by the music played by different instruments, such as violins, tambourines, saxophones counter bass, pan flute and trumpets.

The dance may have particular traits, linked to the various regions of the country and transmitted from one generation to another.

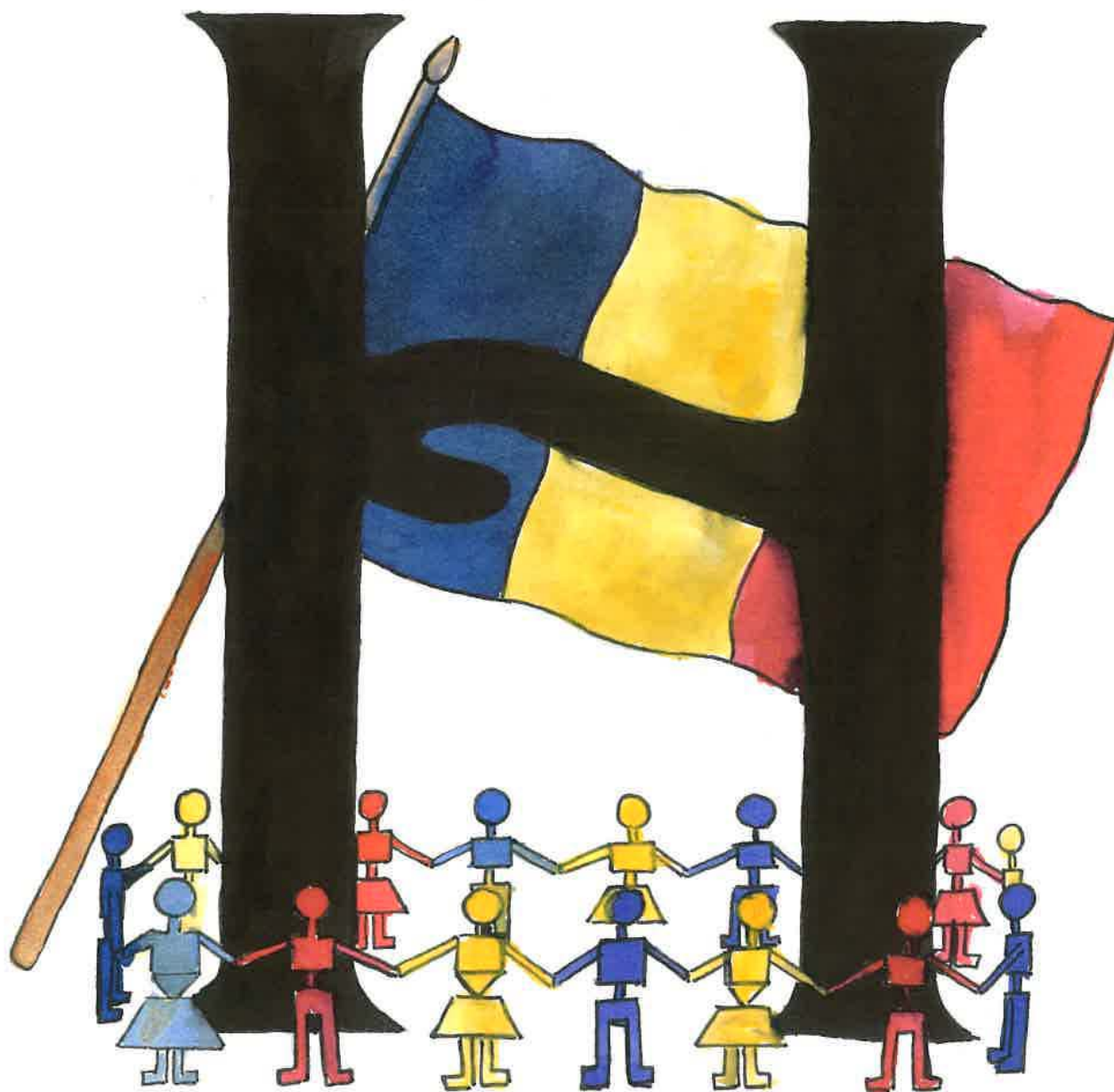
Two of the Romanian sayings have in view the word *hora*  
*Nu te prinde-n horă, dacă n-o știi / Don't hold hands with the others and enter the round dance if you don't know it.*

*Ai intrat în horă, trebuie să joci / You entered the round dance, you need to dance.*

The sayings may be interpreted in two ways; the first makes reference to the round dance as such: once caught in the dance, you have to keep the pace with the others' rhythm imposed by the musical instruments as, otherwise, you have to step back, out of the circle, as the dance needs to go on. An extended reference may sound as a piece of advice: once you enter any type of activity, you need to have particular knowledge and competences; otherwise, you may either hinder the others or be yourself affected.

The round dance is invested with two types of significances – an ethno-folkloric and a social-historical one. The latter is linked to an important moment in Romania's history: the union of two of the country's provinces (1859). The song called the "Round Dance of the Union" (on lyrics written by one of our famous poets, Vasile Alecsandri) became the symbol of the Romanians' union. Every year, on 24th of January, when the Romanians celebrate The Union Day, the song and the round dance enliven the celebration. Romanians are very proud whenever singing *The Round Dance of the Union*, as they feel connected with their past, their history and predecessors.









# Ia The Romanian Blouse



*[Our] dearest Romanian ie,  
The work of our ancestors,  
Your flowery stitches  
Scurry across the old plains*  
Valeria Mahok – a Romanian poetess

We proudly introduce to you our **ia**, one of the most beautiful components of the traditional Romanian folk costume. You may have heard and even admired Henri Matisse's painting "La blouse roumaine" (1940). The beauty, simplicity and the elegance of the Romanian blouse, impressed Matisse so much, that through his painting, he was the first to introduce the Romanian *ia* on the "world's stage". The same traits of the blouse inspired many foreign designers for their fashion collections.

The first was Yves Saint Laurent (1981); he was then followed by Oscar de la Renta (2000), Jean Paul Gaultier (2006), Emilio Pucci (2011), Tom Ford (2012), Dolce & Gabbana (2013) and Carolina Herrera (2013).

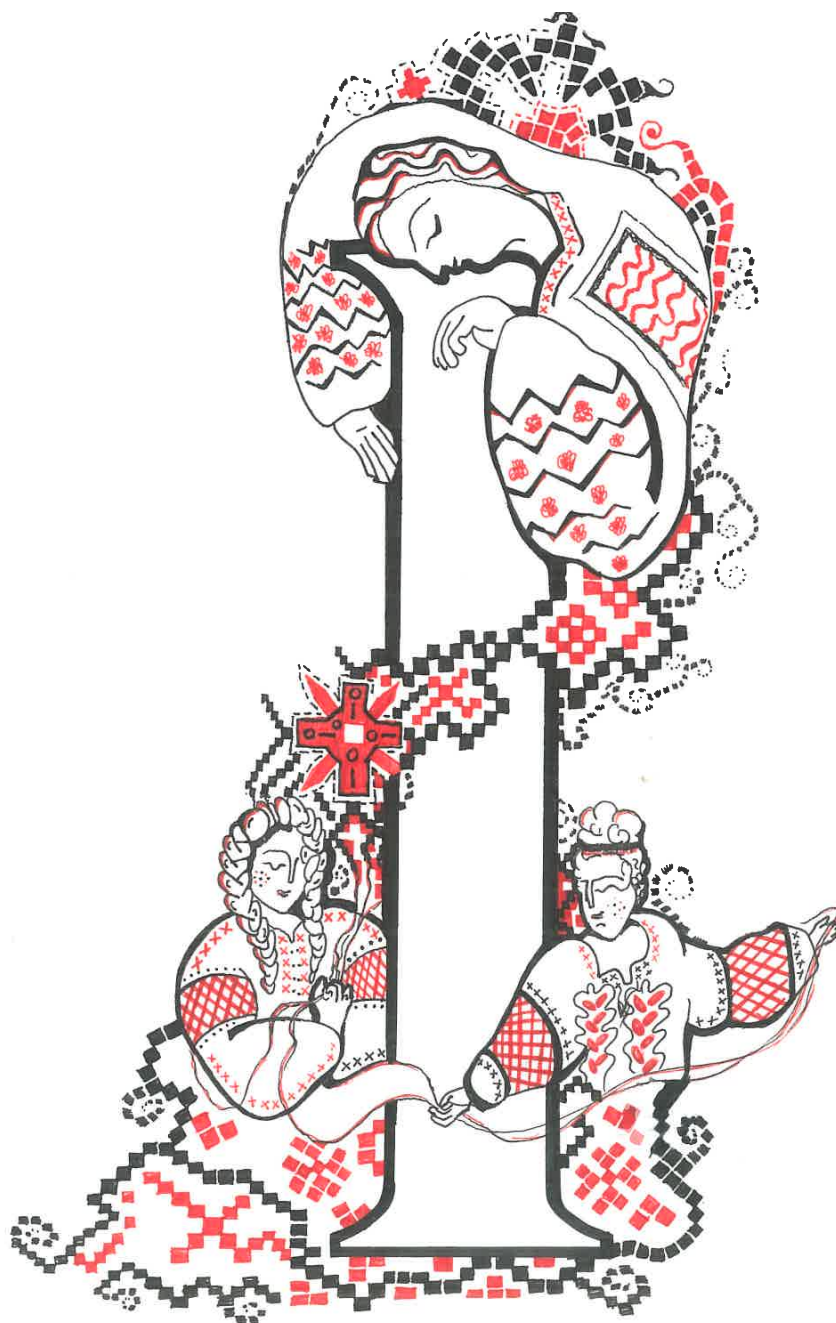
*Ia* is believed to have existed since 5500–2750 BC. and it is made of white cotton, linen or borage cloth. Its special beauty comes from its embroidered sleeves, chest or neck. The popular Romanian motifs (stylized, geometric or inspired by nature, floral or religious ones); in fact they "talk" about the sun and the stars, about flowers, the history of the country, divinity and its connection with the human being, about love, the good and the evil in one's life) and are

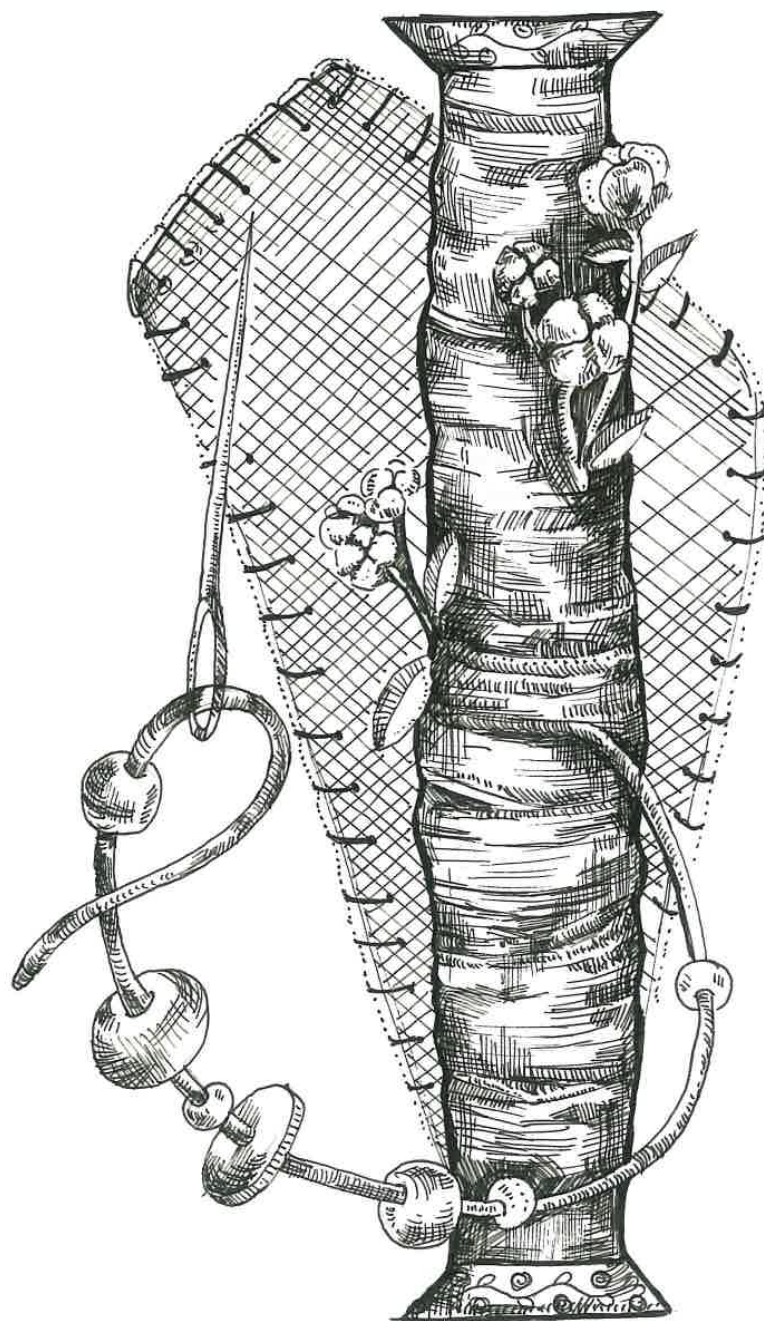
embroidered in various colours (predominantly red, black or blue). The chromatic harmony of each *ia* ensures the uniqueness of this national symbol, as an evidence of the Romanian people's existence and continuity. Some of the blouses are decorated with beads and sequins; the decoration technique is transmitted from one generation to another, just like some of the blouses themselves. Embroidery, as well as colours can differ from one geographical region to another. It is interesting to notice the fact that *ia* is made of a single piece of cloth, tailored in the shape of a cross and having an opening at the top.

*Ia* is proudly worn by women of all ages on different occasions; if in the past it was more common in the countryside, now it has become a must in the wardrobe of the women from the city, ensuring their delicacy and feminine grace.

The Romanians' pride of having and wearing *ia*, as well as the respect for it, stands at the basis of "**The Universal Ia's Day**", celebrated on June 24th, when Romanian women all over the world are urged to wear this piece of clothing, in a profound sense of unity of the Romanians, no matter the place they are or live in.









# Înaintași Forefathers



*A people that does not know its history is like a child who does not know his parents*

Nicolae Iorga – a Romanian scholar and politician

**R**omania's today land seems to have been inhabited since prehistoric times. This is the conclusion of archeologists who, in 2002, analysed the human traces discovered in *The Cave with Bones* (Anina, Caraș –Severin County) and considered them as the oldest European modern human remains (37,000-40, 000 years old). Besides these, some artefacts, such as Cucuteni painted pottery, “talking” about the art of clay modelling, as well as *The Thinker* from Hamangia clay statuette, attest the same thing.

Historians consider that the bronze culture was the creation of the tribes belonging to the Indo-European group of the Thracians.

The ancient Geto-Dacians were the first to leave solid traces of their existence on our land. They founded the powerful kingdom of Dacia. *Sarmisegetusa Regia* (whose vestiges can be visited) in the Orăștiei Mountains, was their capital and their military, political and religious centre. It is now included in the UNESCO heritage.

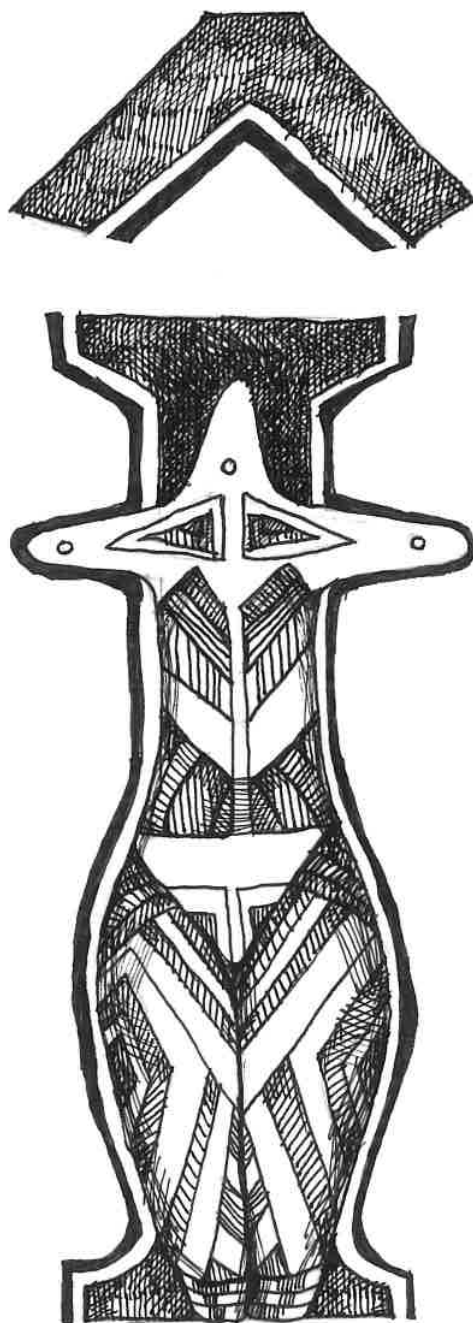
When the Roman Empire conquered the region, (106AD), the Latin language become the official one and it, then, stood at

the roots of the Romanian language. The Romans also contributed, with elements of culture and civilization, to the Romanian culture.

Between the 3rd and the 13th centuries, waves of migratory tribes invaded the land: the Goths, the Huns, the Gepids, the Avars, the Slavs, the Hungarians, the Pechenegs and the Tatars – to mention just the most important ones.

During the Middle Ages, the territory was divided into three provinces: Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. The first two ones fell under the rule, and, consequently, under the influence of the Ottomans, while the last one was influenced by some different settlers of German, Hungarian and Saxon origin. These influences left important imprints – reflected in language, architecture, traditions and folklore – that is, on the whole culture of the country.

The modern Romanian state was created in 1859 when Moldova and Muntenia (Wallachia) elected simultaneously the same ruler, Alexandru Ioan Cuza. It was only in 1918 when the unification of the state was acknowledged, once Transylvania joined the already unified regions, and Romania became a kingdom.







# Judet, County



*Moldova, Transilvania and Muntenia do not exist on the face of the earth. There is only one Romania: there is only one body and one soul, in which all the nerves and all the sighs vibrate towards each other.*

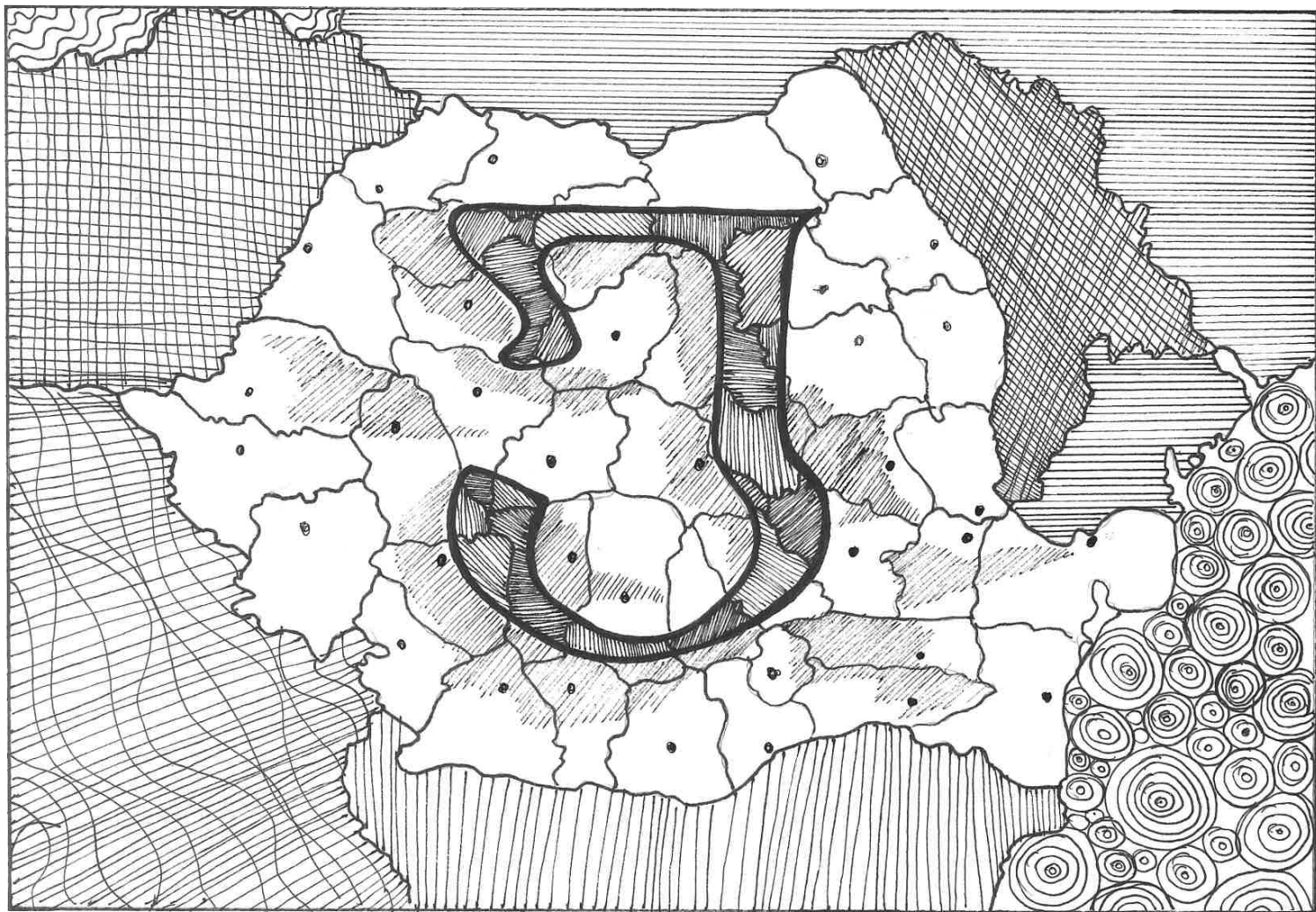
Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu (1838- 1907) – a Romanian writer, historian and politician



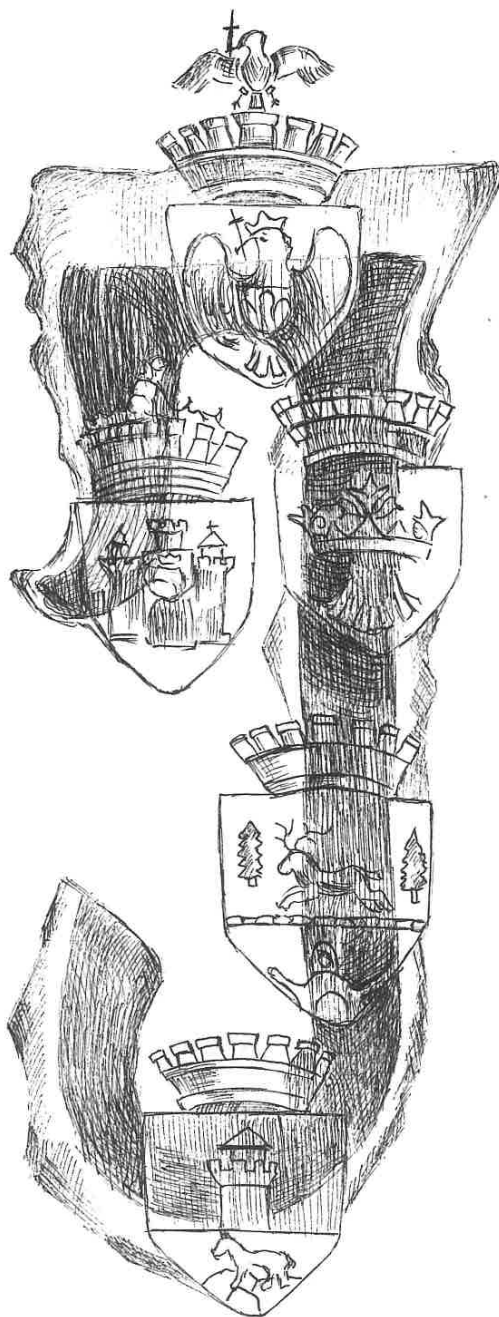
From a historical point of view, there are three traditional provinces that make up Romania: Muntenia, Moldova and Transylvania.

From an administrative point of view, according to the Constitution, the territory of Romania is organized into Communes (2859) – made up of one or more villages –, cities (319) and counties (41 counties + the city of Bucharest).













# Kilometri Kilometres



*Every journey begins with the first step.*  
Ursula Sandner – a Romanian psychologist



et us travel through Romania! On some roads, you may be jolted and feel uncomfortable because of the bad road conditions, but this does not mean you will not enjoy the journey, as the landscapes are unforgettable.

The transport network in Romania includes road transport, railway transport, air routes and underground ones. There is a permanent national dissatisfaction regarding the small number of highways and the quality of many roads in the country. Yet, things have begun to change to a more satisfactory situation in the last decades. Nevertheless, Romania has some of the most beautiful roads to drive on, due to the picturesque scenery in the areas they are crossing. Wooden mountains or bare ridges, steep cliffs, rivers, fortresses, castles, monasteries, green fields, orchards, vineyards and villages aligned along the road make the journey a unique experience.

Even though many roads deserve being listed here, at least three of them need special mention. The first is the road considered as “the most spectacular driving road in the world” (as ranked by Top Gear). Its name is **Transfăgărașan**, it is 93 kilometres long and it takes you 4 hours to drive, while

crossing the Făgăraș Mountains, from Muntenia to Transylvania. The road includes tunnels and viaducts, as well as plenty of tourist attractions, among which Bâlea Lake (at an altitude of 2.024), Bâlea Waterfall, Bâlea Tunnel (not artificially lit) and the Ice Hotel. The second road is **Transalpina**, also known as “the road among clouds”, which is 148 km long (to be run in almost 3-5 hours, depending on the traffic), at an altitude that can reach 2,145m. The winding road bordered by deep ravines, the beautiful landscape, the caves that can be visited if you decide to stop for a while, all are part of the journey that you take. The third fascinating road is that which crosses **Bicaz Gorges** and is built among high cliffs; it also offers a spectacular view of the limestone walls of the roadside rocks.

What is fascinating in terms of travelling in Romania is the journey you can take with *Mocănița*, the steam train, which circulates on a narrow gauge of 760 millimetres, with no more than 30 kilometres per hour. It is the last forestry narrow gauge steam railway in Europe and has a double purpose: to bring down, from the forest, logs loaded waggons and to carry tourists to the route, so that they could enjoy a breath-taking adventure (of about 60 km) through some of the most beautiful forests in the country.







# Limbă și Literatură

## Language and Literature

**T**he above quotes prove the beauty of the Romanian language, as well as the pride and happiness of the Romanian writers to express their ideas and feelings by using their mother tongue. Romanian literature is rich and varied, with outstanding names in all literary genres. The following ones are the most representative (from a long list), who have received both national and international recognition and appreciation.

**Mihai Eminescu** (1850-1889) is considered the most famous Romanian poet; he took his inspiration from nature, folklore, mythology, love and social life. In fact, he addressed the traditional themes of European Romanticism and let himself influenced by ancient philosophy. Among the poems (translated into more than 60 languages), one stands out; it is his masterpiece, the narrative poem *Luceafărul* (*The Morning Star/The Vesper*). Eminescu also wrote prose, phantasy short stories, stories and sketches. Another Romantic poet, **Vasile Alecsandri** (1821- 1890) was also a dramatist, prose writer and politician and a founding member of the Romanian Academy. He is a representative of lyric poetry, of folk poems and ballads. The University in Bacău proudly bears his name ("Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău). **Emil Cioran** (1911-1955) is a Romanian philosopher and writer whose works, known for their philosophical pessimism (based on his personal reflections) and



*The more I write in French, the more the Romanian language fascinates me. Every time I start writing in Romanian again, I rediscover the musicality of the mother tongue.*

Matei Vișniec – a Romanian poet and dramatist

*Literature, just like flowers and the sown fields, is a divine interference between the gifts of heaven and the conditions of the land.*

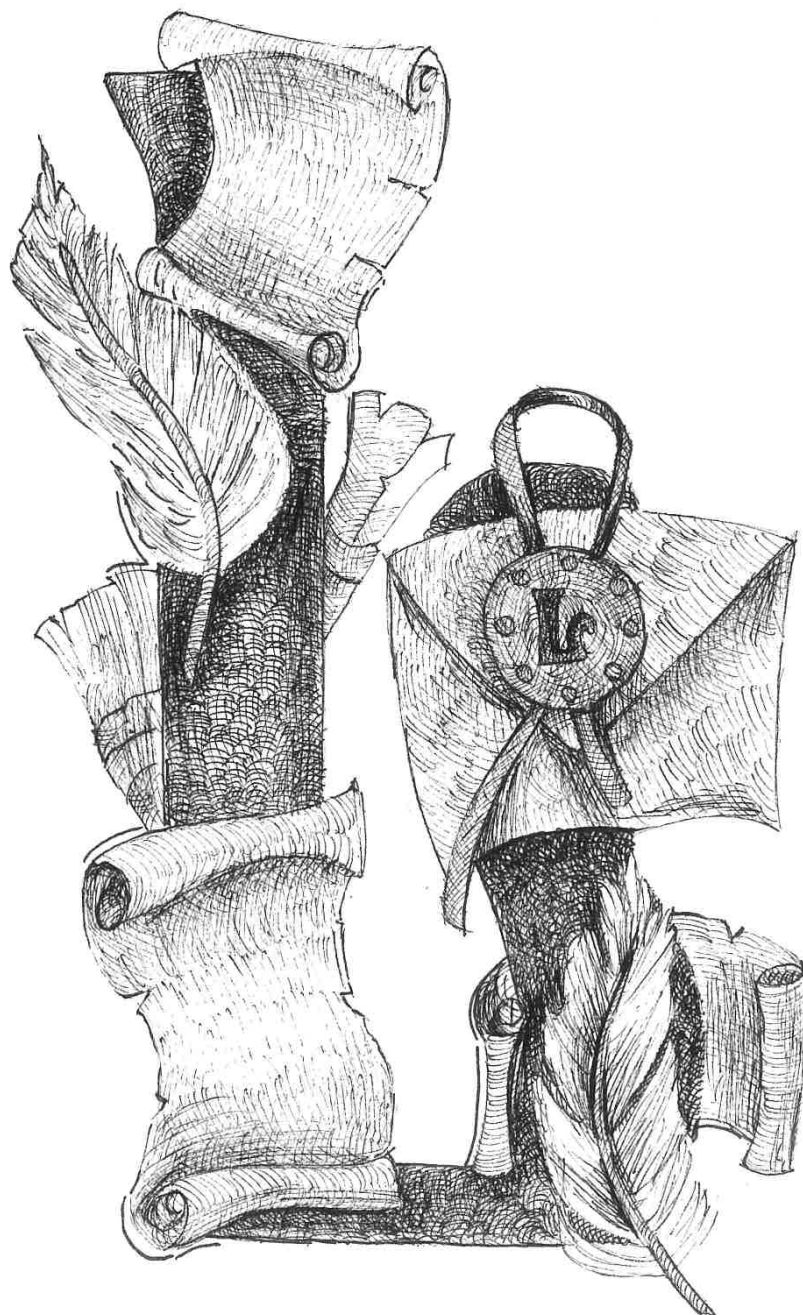
Gala Galaction – a Romanian Orthodox clergyman and writer

aphorisms, are published in Romanian and French. He lived in France for the most part of his life. Among his most known works, we can mention *History and Utopia*, *The Book of Delusions*, *On the Heights of Despair* and *A Short History of Decay*. Another philosopher and writer, **Mircea Eliade** (1907-1986), also contributed to religious studies, as he was also a historian of religion. His main work in the field is *The History of Religions*. His literary work, which enjoys translations into 18 languages, belongs to the fantastic and autobiographical genres (among the most well-known works are *Bengal Nights*, *The Forbidden Forest* and *The Novel of the Nearsighted Adolescent*).

Another famous Romanian-French writer and playwright, with influence on the European culture, is **Eugene Ionesco** (Eugen Ionescu) (1909 – 1994), an important representative of the 20th century French avant-garde theatre. He also contributed to the theatre with his theoretical writings. Besides plays, his early work includes poetry and criticism, which were written in Romanian and published in Romanian journals. Ionescu's dramaturgy debut (*La Cantatrice Chauve*) represents his debut in the absurd theatre. It was followed by a remarkable work whose main topics were the tragic and absurd meaning of existence, the splendour and nothingness of the human condition, as well as the fatality of death. Ionescu was nominated for Nobel Prize in literature.









# Muzică Music



*If we hadn't had a soul, music would have created it for us.*

Emil Cioran – a Romanian philosopher and writer

Romania has a long, rich and diverse tradition in music, being a country of talent and quality music. Outstanding composers and voices have made it well-known beyond its borders. It offers a large variety of styles and genres, too.

One of the most representative styles is that of the (traditional and mainstream) folk music, the one that preserves the authenticity of traditions and the cultural authenticity. The icon of folk style is **Maria Tănase** (1913-1963), the one who was called “Edith Piaf of Romania” and “The Nightingale of the Romanian folk music”; due to her amazing and unparalleled voice. One of her favourite type of songs was *doina* (a lyrical, vocal or instrumental creation, which is specific to the Romanian people, as an expression of the Romanian soul in space and time, voicing feelings of longing, mourning, love, sadness or revolt).

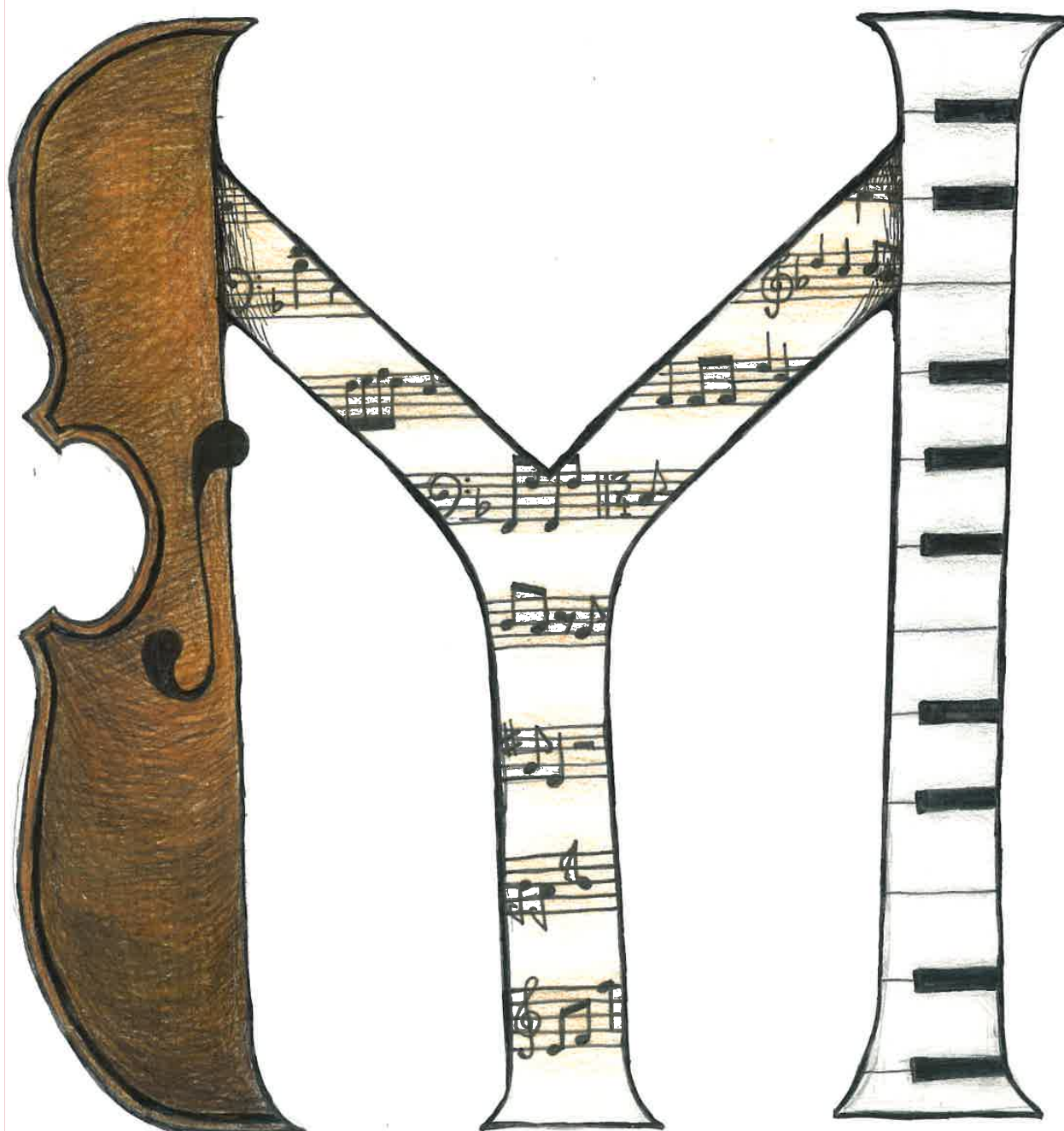
Classical music has also a solid tradition in Romania, which prides on, at least, two names. The first one is that of **Haricleea Darclee** (1860-1939), a Romanian soprano with Greek origin, with musical studies in Paris, who performed successfully on the largest opera stages in the world, participating in many world premieres, among which Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*. After her success on Scala's stage, she was engaged by all Italian theatres and was highly appreciated in Spain, South America, Moscow, Madrid, Lisbon. The latter is that of **Angela Gheorghiu** (1965 - ), a Romanian soprano, named by New York Sun “the most glamorous and gifted opera singer of our time”. She was and still is performing on the most famous stages of the world –

Covent Garden, Royal Opera House in London, Metropolitan Opera in New York and many others.

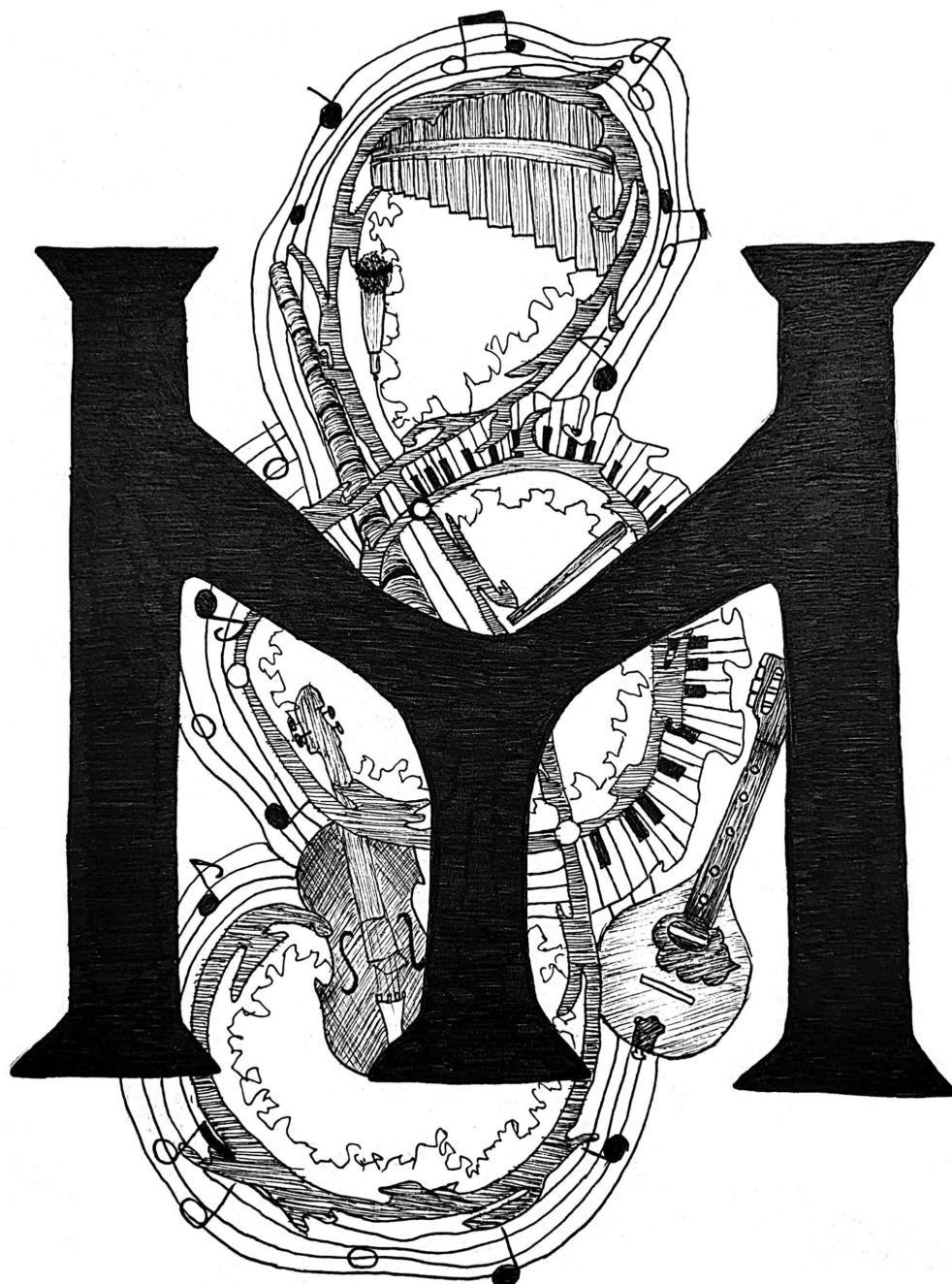
Among the composers who brought fame to Romania was **George Enescu** (known as Georges Enesco in France) (1881-1955), the most important musician of Romania. He was an appreciated composer (his first composition was at the age of five) and a virtuous violinist (started to play the violin at the age of four). Besides this, he was a pianist and orchestra conductor. Enescu completed his studies in Vienna (graduating the Conservatory at the age of thirteen) and Paris. His music, much influenced by Romanian folk music, includes symphonies, opera and chamber music. Enescu is well known for his *Romanian Rhapsodies*. The symphony Orchestra of Bucharest, as well as the airport in Bacău are named in his honour. **Iosif Ivanovici** (1845-1902), a military band conductor and composer, is especially appreciated in the entire world for his waltz *The Danube Waves*.

Jazz music made Romania famous due to the contribution of **Aura Urziceanu** (1946 - ), a talented Romanian jazz singer and composer, who made her debut at Carnegie Hall, New York and performed with other important jazz names, such as Ella Fitzgerald, Bill Evans, Joe Pass, Thad Jones. The contribution of **Johnny Răducanu** (1931 – 2011), a pianist, composer and the founder of the Romanian jazz school, is also remarkable just like that of **Sergiu Celibidache** (1912-1996), a conductor and composer, who performed with Scala Orchestra in Milan, Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, Paris National Orchestra or London Philharmonic Orchestra.











# Nai Pan Flute



**Naiul** - the instrument of divinity and the creative soul.  
*In order for the pan flute to have a sweet sound, honey is poured into it.*

Gheorghe Zamfir – a Romanian pan flute musician



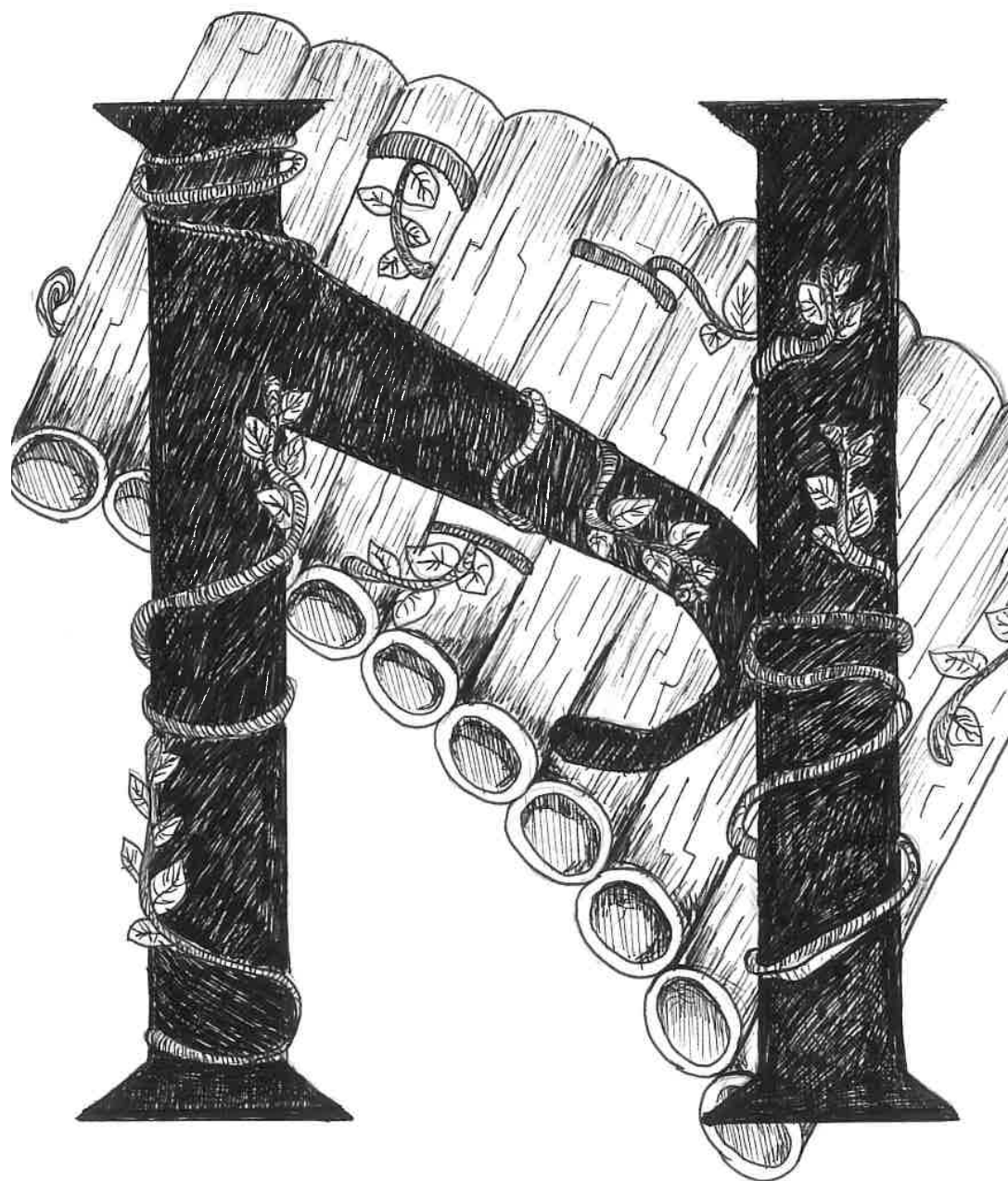
The pan flute, one of the oldest musical instruments, is still present in many countries in all Europe, Asia and America. In Romania, it has become a symbol of its cultural identity. The only thing that has been preserved and which mentions its origin is the Greek legend of Pan (the son of Hermes and Dyrope), the protector of flocks and shepherds who made the instrument from the cane into which the nymph he was chasing turned into, while running away from him and his ugliness.

The instrument was called after the nymph (Syrinx) and its name was preserved like that by the Greeks. It consists of five or more sound tubes, which are increasing, gradually, in length and even thickness.

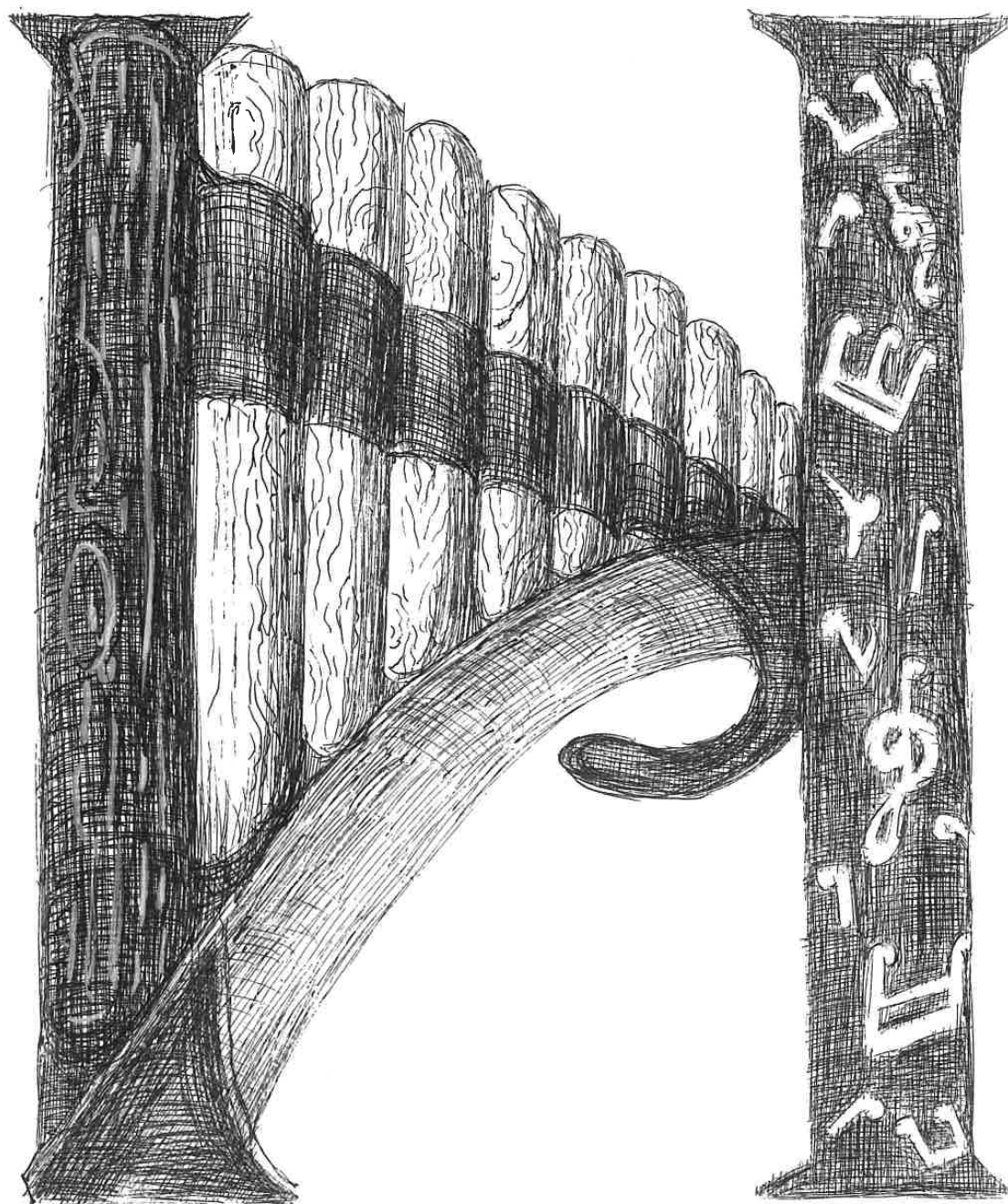
On our lands, the instrument is made of cane, rosewood, oak wood or linden wood. The Romanian groups of musicians (*tarafuri de lăutari*) succeeded to transform pan flute playing into an art; this happened in the second half of the 18th century. The outstanding pan flute Romanian musician is **Gheorghe Zamfir** (1941 - ), also known as “The Master of Pan Flute”, who has an impressive career. He is famous for the fact that he expanded the version of normally 20-pipe pan flute, up to 28-30 pipes, in order to obtain an additional

number of overtones. First a conductor of one of the most appreciated ensembles in Romania, he soon worked with his own small band, with which he registered an outstanding success by playing Romanian folk music during the first long-term contract in Paris. Besides folk music, he also included classical music and pop music in his repertoire. What is Zamfir famous for during the 70's and 80's? Zamfir's traditional funeral song (*Doina de Jale*) became the theme of a program (*The Light of Experience*) hosted by the BBC religious television and his albums got a privileged rank within the Australian top 100 albums charts (1976-1983), while individual tunes ranked number four on the UK Single chart (1976), number nine in South Africa (1976) and number three in Canada (1983). Zamfir also played with the German *James Last Orchestra*, and the *Traffic String* quintet (Canada). The latter collaboration made him famous for the performance in a world premiere in music in 2006: *Vivaldi's Four Seasons* for pan flute and string quintet.

Gheorghe Zamfir's contribution to different movie soundtracks is also remarkable. This includes *Once Upon a Time in America*, *Kill Bill: Volume 1*, *Le grand blond avec une chaussure noire* or *Karate Kid*, among the others.











# Oina Oina



*Sport represents a form of eminently artistic manifestation of the human being.*

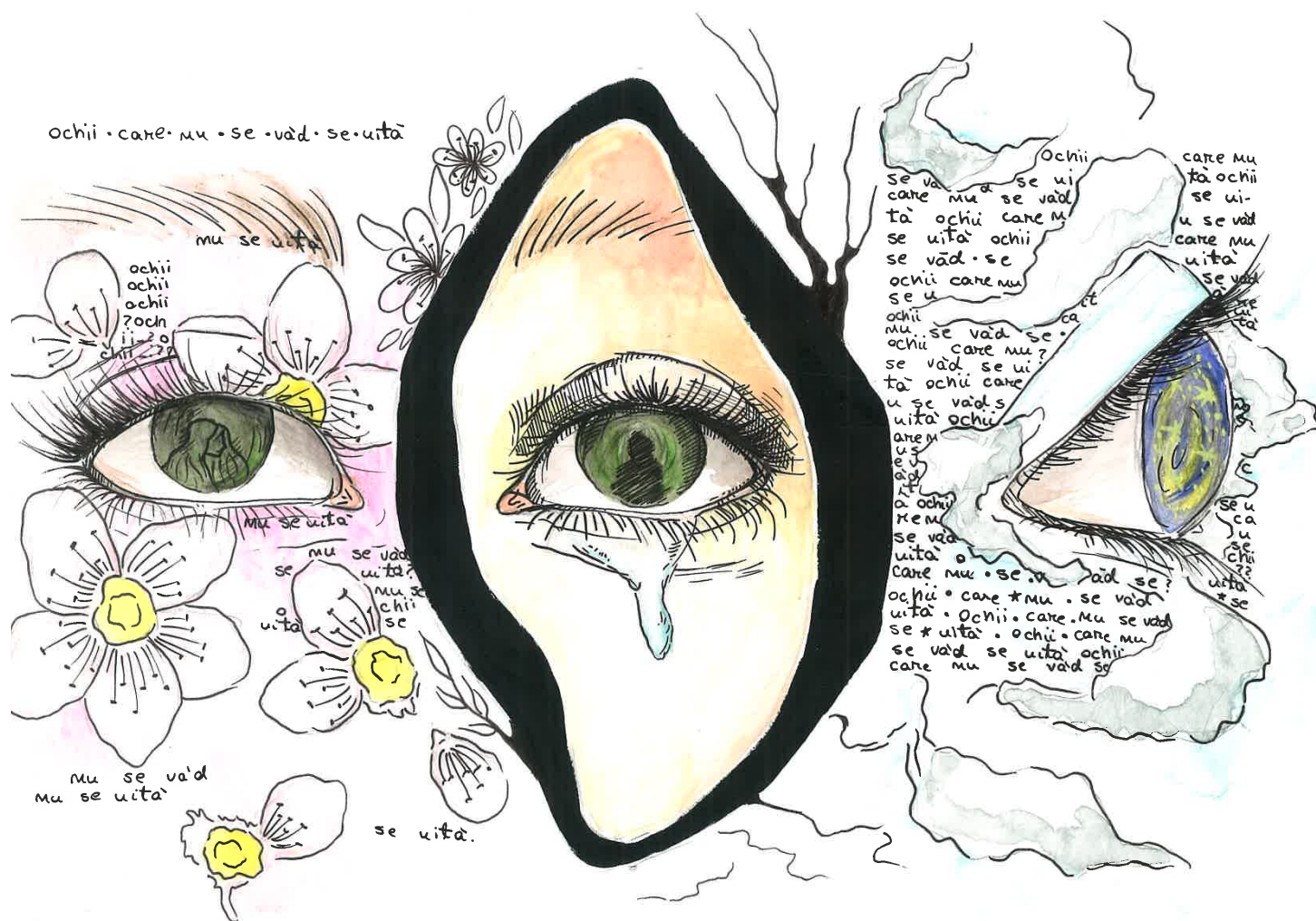
Ionel Teodoreanu – a Romanian novelist

**R**omanians are proud of their national sport – called *oină* – although it is not played on a very large scale in the country. What makes it special is its complexity brought by the combination between thinking and physical activity. The rules of the game were established at the beginning of the XXth century and it was declared a national game in 2014.

Full of dynamism and speed, *oina*, whose name has its origin in the Cuman word *oyn* (meaning “game”), was the “invention” of the shepherds, as a means of entertainment. It was then passed on from generation to generation and

spread to various areas in the country, where it got different names. The game is all about a ball (made of leather, having approximately eight centimeters diameter) that has to be hit with a bat (made of hardwood); the winner team was the one that had more extra points than the other one and at the same time, as many teammates untouched by the ball, as possible.

In this respect, *oina* resembles other well-known sports, such as *Schlagball* or *Pesäpallo*. It also seems similar to the American *baseball*, but they differ in the number of players, rules, court size and equipment.





# Primii... și cei mai... The first... and the most...



## **The first (in Europe and in the world)**

1856 – the first world's refinery of petroleum products with sulphur dioxide  
1857 – the first city in the world – Bucharest – to use oil lamps for its public lighting  
1857 – the first place in the world to have an oil well (Lucăcești, Bacău County)  
1857 – the first country in the world to enter official international statistics for its oil production  
1869 – the first city in Europe (Timișoara city) to introduce trams (drawn by horses)  
1889 – the first city in Europe to introduce electric public lighting (Timișoara city)  
1894 – the first fully electrified castle in Europe (Peleș Castle)  
1900 – the first country in the world to export gasoline  
1904 – the first school in the world of foreman surveyers (Câmpina, Prahova County)  
1906 – the first self-propelled flight in history (Traian Vuia, 1872-1950)  
1918 – the first time in the world when the theory of sonics was made known, through the publication of *A treatise on transmission of power by vibrations* (Gogu Constantinescu, 1881-1965 )v  
1920 – the first Institute of speleology in the world (Emil Racoviță, 1868-1947)  
1921 – the first person to discover insulin (Nicolae Păulescu, 1869-1931)  
1929 – the first ejector/catapult seat for jet planes (Dragomir Anastase, 1896 – 1966 and Tănase Dobrescu)  
1986 – the first communist country to win the European Cup  
2005/2006 – the first ice hotel in Europe (near Bâlea Lake – 2000 meters altitude; everything in the hotel is made of ice, including beds)



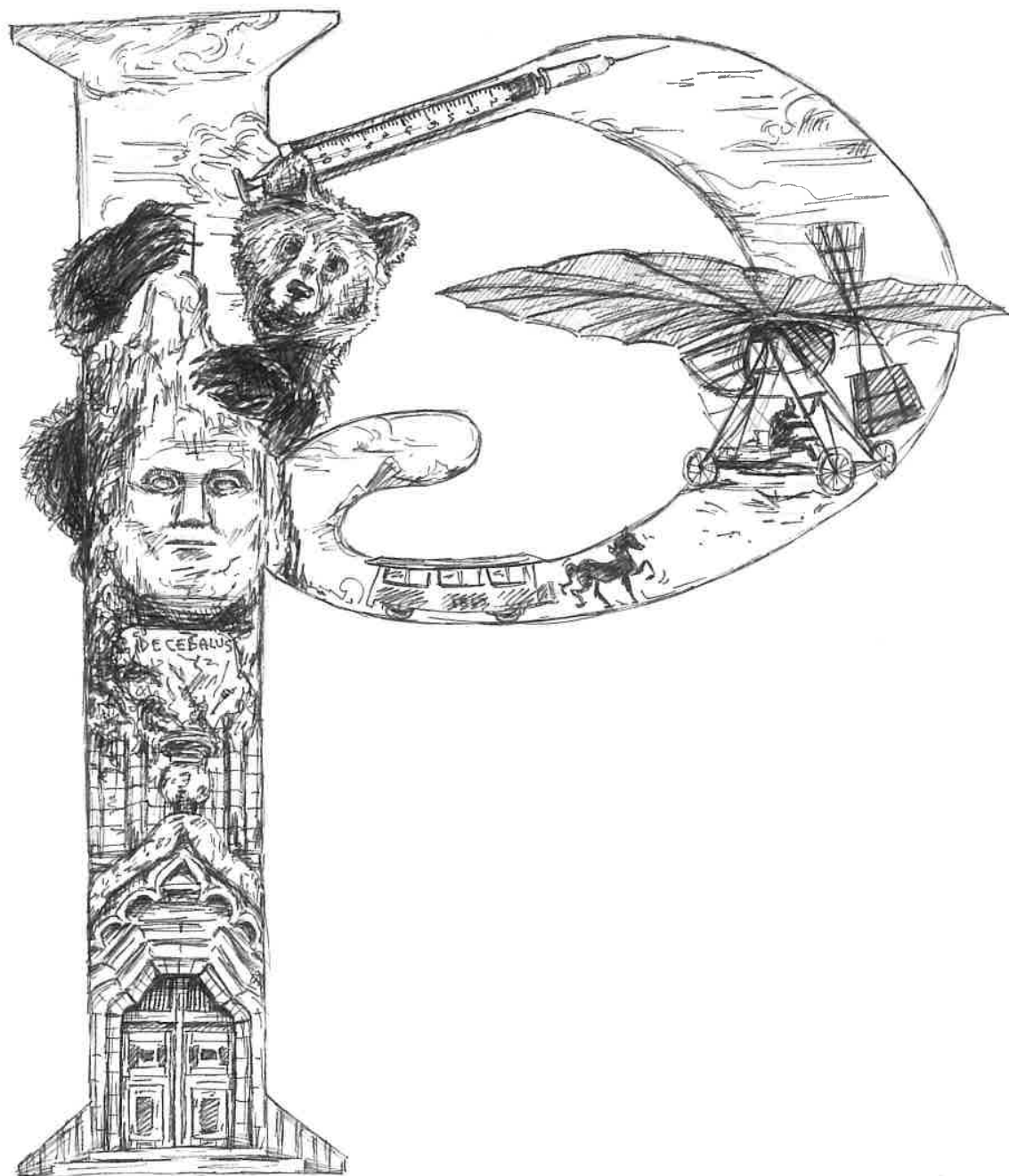
*Yes, yes, it is true! Romania stands out in Europe and in the world due to a number of things (some of them even less known), which deserve being known. They can enter two categories: the first and the most.*

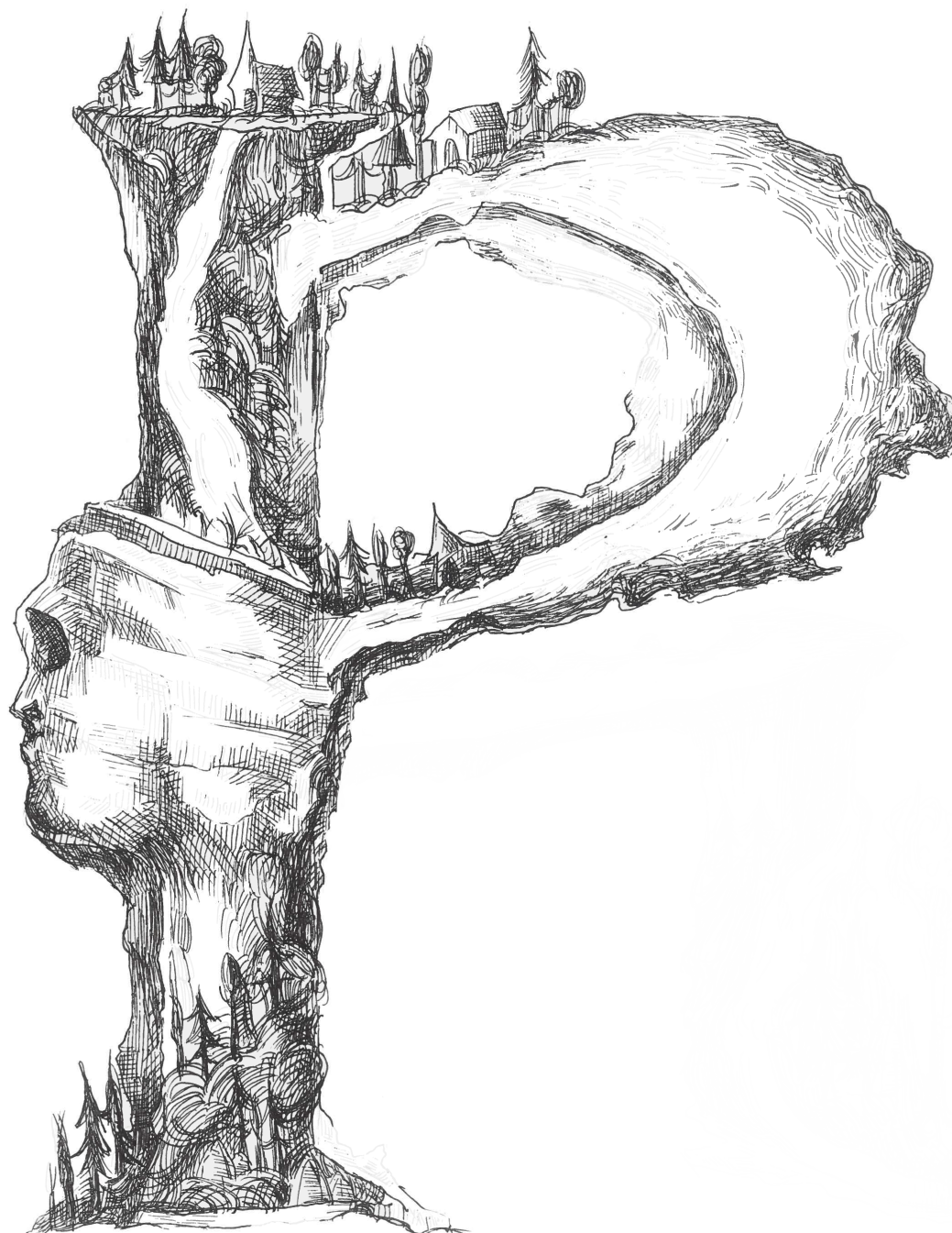


## **The most**

- The largest Gothic worship place in the south-eastern part of Europe (*The Black Church* – Brașov County; 37 meters high, 90 meters long)
- The highest stone sculpture in Europe (the statue of Decebalus, the last king of Dacia (Orșova, Mehedinți County))
- The largest collection of eggs in the world; eggs from Romania and other 82 countries from all around the world can be admired at *The Egg Museum* (Vama – Bucovina)
- The largest salt cave in Europe (3 kilometres of salt and lake) (Mânzălești, Buzău County)
- The largest colony of pelicans that can be found in Europe (The Danube Delta)
- The largest delta in Europe, as well as the most preserved one (The Danube Delta)
- The largest salt mine in Europe (Slănic Prahova – Prahova County)
- The largest population of brown bears in Europe
- The largest glacier in Europe (in Scărișoara Cave – Alba County)
- The narrowest street in Eastern Europe: the width of the street varies between 135 - 111 centimetres (*Sforii Street* – Brașov, Brașov County)
- The oldest complete papyrus in Europe (dating since the IVth century BC)
- The only gold museum in Europe (Mineral Collection from Brad, Hunedoara County)
- The tallest tree in Europe – a 60-meter-high fir tree (in a forest, in Brașov County)
- Traces of the oldest attested civilization in Europe and one of the oldest in the world – 5500 - 3500 BC – Cucuteni Civilization
- The tallest wooden church in the world (*Săpânța* –Peri Monastery, Maramureș County); its tower is 78 meters high and it has a 7 meter-high cross
- One of the earliest modern human remains in Europe (37,800 years old) (*The Cave with Bones*, Caraș-Severin County)









# Relief Relief

**R**omanians use to say that they live in a country that is blessed by God, as it is beautiful, rich and inhabited by diligent people. Much of Romania's beauty lies in its diverse and complex relief; its afforested mountains, hills and plateaus, valleys and plains, the Danube Delta, as well as the Black Sea coastline display a variety of landscapes that are not only eye-catching, but also astonishing and unforgettable.

**The Carpathian Mountains**, displayed as an arch, have altitudes that vary between 800 and 2543m. The mountain ranges surround the greatest plateau of the country (the Transylvanian Plateau) and they are home to diverse wildlife, including animals (among which brown bears, wolves and lynxes), a large variety of bird species and plants. They also offer opportunities for mountaineering, eco-tourism and winter sports.

Gorges, caves, clear running rivers, lakes and waterfalls complete the landscapes and add beauty, representing numerous worth-visiting attractions. Cazanele Dunării/The Danube's Gorge is the place where mountains meet the Danube and a beautiful place where the greatness of the river competes with that of the huge rock sculpture of Decebal, the iconic forerunner of our people. The Bicaz Gorges invite the drivers to an exciting road trip among limestone rocks, abrupt canyons and precipices and facilitates their access to a unique lake – the Red Lake – with a controversial formation history. Some say it was formed after a landslide following a big earthquake, which blocked the course of the river crossing the area; others mention the role of the rich rainfalls. Anyway, the lake is a natural dam at an altitude of 983 m and the most astonishing fact is that fir trees trunks are scattered in the water of the lake, reminding of the forest flooded by the lake.

Among the 8000 caves in the country (the majority of which are not very large ones), some are really nature's wonders –



*I always started from an idea, from nature.*

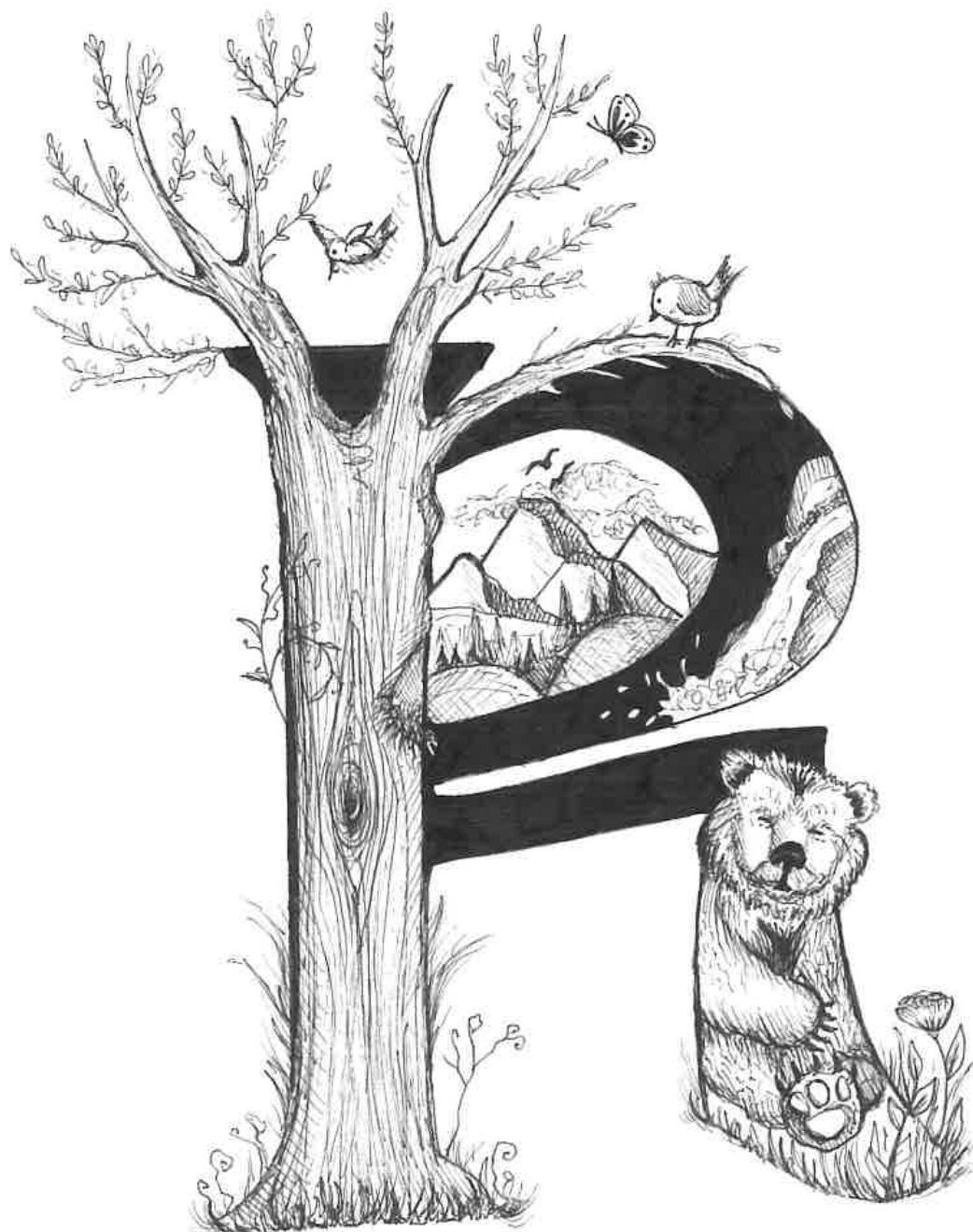
Constantin Brâncuși – a Romanian sculptor

the Bears Cave (in the Apuseni Mountains, at an altitude of 482 m), the Woman's Cave (containing a human skull and bear remains and being displayed on four levels), the Wind's Cave (the longest in Romania – 52 km) and Șura Mare Cave. It is also a good idea to visit Prahova Valley with its fascinating scenery and beautiful, elegant mountain resorts. By far, the Apuseni Mountains, with their wild landscapes that seem to be taken from fairy tales, are the most beautiful ones.

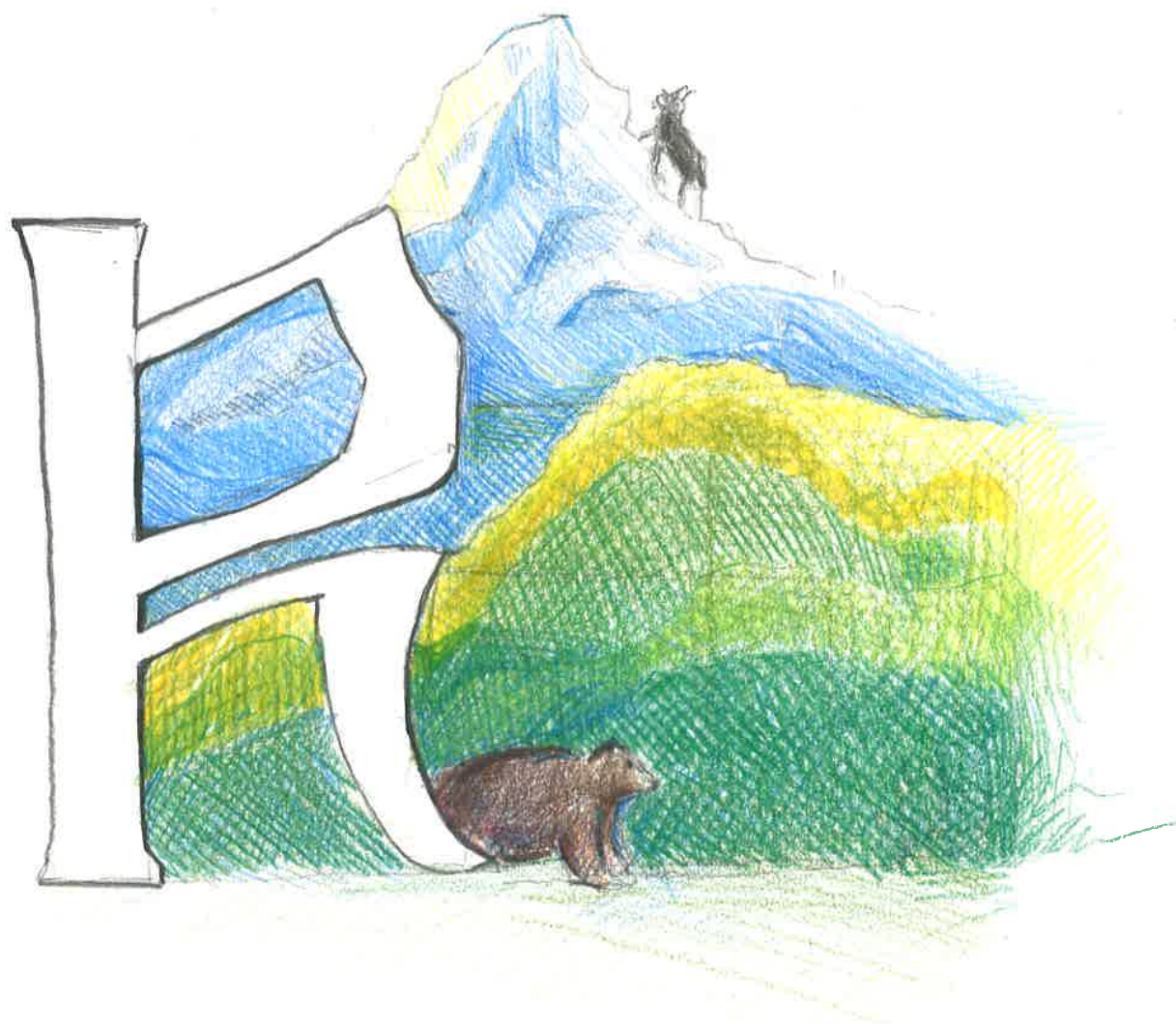
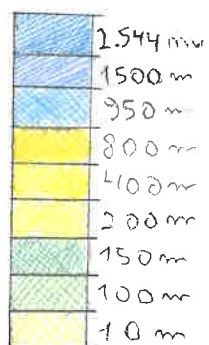
The hills and plateaus are located outside the Carpathian Mountains' arch, ensuring the transition to the plains, among which, the largest one is the Romanian Plain.

Romania's youngest form of relief, **The Danube Delta**, a national reservation, included in UNESCO heritage, is the largest delta in Europe, the largest reed surface in the world, the best preserved delta in Europe and has a biodiversity that ranks it third in the world. It took it more than 10,000 years to look as it looks today. The wildlife and birds-watchers paradise includes land areas (about 10% of the whole delta) and more than 2,200 square miles of rivers, islands of reed, canals and marshes. It prides on the diverse flora (reed, club rushes, water lilies, dwarf willows, trees and shrubs, as well as carnivorous plants), and fauna species, which found their homes in the delta. The Danube Delta is not only a paradise for birds (pelicans, cormorants, swans, red-breasted geese, seagulls); it is also populated by reptiles, fish, amphibians and wild animals (among which foxes, wild cats, beavers, boars or minks).

**The Black Sea coastline** ensures the natural Romanian south-eastern border. It is a welcoming area, known for its beaches, tourist spots and beautiful resorts (the most attractive one is Mamaia) that offer tourists various possibilities of accommodation in hotels, guesthouses or villas, as well as numerous entertainment opportunities.









# Sport Sports



*Sport represents the vital force of humanity.*

George Călinescu – a Romanian literary critic, novelist, historian and academician

**A**lthough not a huge country, Romania is famous in sports, all over the world, due to both individual and team performances. The middle of the XIXth century marked the moment when the first sport legal framework was founded and gave men and women alike, the chance to test their courage, strength and endurance in organized competitions, as until that moment they were used to found entertainment only in traditional games, among which, the most known one was *oina* (see letter O: Oina). The XIXth century came, especially, with Occidental influence in sports like football, athletics, and gymnastics.

Team games were and still are favourite among people of all ages. Of course, football is the first option for most of them. Young boys are dreaming to be like **Gheorghe Hagi**, one day – as he was seen as one of the best attacking midfielders in Europe, playing for Romania, Real Madrid or Barcelona (during the '80s and '90s), or as **Helmut Dukadam**, a footballer playing as a goalkeeper who left the audience in awe (in 1986, at the European Final Cup) when he succeeded to save all four penalties in the penalty shootout, a performance that happened for the first time in the football history. Basketball, handball, rugby are also popular in our

country, but not with outstanding results in the world hierarchy.

Romania has also significant performances in individual sports. The list may include several names such as **Gabriela Szabó** (a former runner and a three-time Olympic champion), **Lia Manoliu** (a former athlete, three-time medallist in Summer Olympics in the discus throw), **Leonard Doroftei** (a former boxer and a WBA world champion, between 2002-2003), **Ivan Patzaichin** (a former canoe racing coach and sprint canoeist, who won 12 titles in both World Championships and Olympic Games) and **Camelia Potec** (a former swimmer who won the gold medal at the 2004 Summer Olympics). In recent years, one name has much been acclaimed and gained popularity – that of the young swimmer **David Popovici** (2004 - ) – the world and European champion in 100 and 200 metres freestyle and one of the youngest men's world champions in swimming history.

Tennis has also made Romania famous due to its top representatives: **Ilie Năstase** (ranked number one in the world in 1973-1974) and **Simona Halep** (see letter F: Femei celebre).









# Știi? Do you know?



bet there are several things/facts about Romania, which foreigners do not know, but which deserve being mentioned; they are connected with places in the country, its history and the Romanian people and their language.

The first one is linked to the quote above, which brings into focus a specific Romanian word *dor*, which incorporates a multitude of feelings (a very strong desire to see (again) someone or something very dear to you; to crave, suffering from love for someone who is far away to aspire to something; physical attraction); it is quite difficult to translate it into other languages, but; a somehow similar word is the English *longing*.

Would you like to find out some other things? Then, read what follows:

- Bucharest, the capital of the country, got the name of “The Little Paris”, due to its beautiful places and architecture; resemblance to Paris was brought by the city’s Arch of Triumph (built in 1935), the large boulevards (reminding of the avenues in Paris) such as Calea Victoriei and Elisabeta Boulevard, the beautiful arcaded passage Macca-Vilacrosse, covered in yellow glass, or the architecture of The Grand Hotel Continental and The Central Library of Bucharest.
- The Palace of Parliament in Bucharest is, after the Pentagon, the second largest building in the world
- Among the Nobel Prize laureates, there are some with Romanian origins: **George Emil Palade** (1974 – medicine); **Elie Wiesel** (1986 – peace); **Herta Müller** (2009 – literature) and **Stefan Hell** (2014 – chemistry)
- Some of the Hollywood actors, who are famous all around

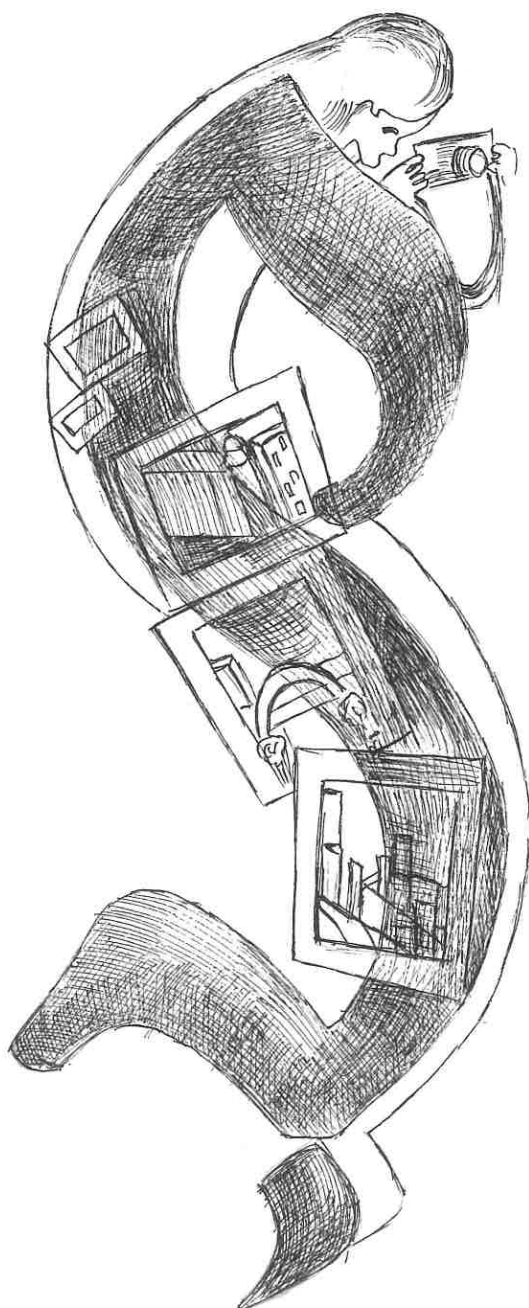


*Longing is the perfect summary of what really matters in your life.*

Mihaela Rădulescu – a Romanian television star, producer and moderator of radio and television shows

the world, have Romanian origins: **Lauren Bacall** (1924–2014), an American actress and model who, who was awarded Oscar (2010) for the entire career; **Fran Drescher** (1957–), well-known for her performance in *The Nanny* serial; **Nadia Gray** (1923–1994), famous for her performance in *La Dolce Vita*; **Rosemary Ann Harris** (1927–), from *Spider-Man* trilogy; **Dustin Hoffman** (1937–), the winner of Oscar for *Kramer vs Kramer* and *Rain man*; **Natalie Portman** (1981–), winner of Oscar for the role in *Black Swan*; **Peter Johann Weissmüller** (Johan Peter) (1904–1984), an Olympic champion (swimming) and actor (12 times the main hero in *Tarzan* series)

- Romania has a “Merry Cemetery”; the name is given by the grave markers, which lack sadness, as usual; they are full of cheerfulness with direct relationship to the deceased person who was buried there (with allusions to his/her name, job or habits)
- In Romania, there exists a unique-in-the-world attraction: a panoramic wheel, placed in an underground place of entertainment – more exactly, in a salt mine (Turda, Cluj County)
- The Romanians have *Dracula*, who became the main hero of Bram Stoker’s book with the same name (1897). The character of the book, was inspired by Vlad the Impaler, a Transylvanian nobleman, considered a centuries-old vampire
- The head of Jesus Christ in Rio de Janeiro (*Cristo Redentor* – one of the most famous statues in the world) was made by the Romanian sculptor **Gheorghe Leonida**
- The Eiffel Tower in Paris was built with Romanian steel and with the help of a revolutionary technology, which belonged to a Romanian engineer (**Gheorghe Pănculescu**)





# Tradiții Traditions



he deeply rooted Romanian traditional customs, ensuring the continuity, stability and the identity of the country and its inhabitants, delight through their diversity, ways of expression (music or choreography) and authenticity. Some of them have been lost in the “mists of time”, but some are still alive in both countryside and urban areas.

Many customs and traditions are connected with either big or small events throughout the year (thus having a cyclic character), which are part of the people's collective life (their work, religion, human relationships, people's relations with nature). Among them, the most beloved ones are those connected with Easter and Christmas. **Easter**, the most important religious holiday in Romania, is celebrated with church services and festive meals, for which people generally prepare lamb dishes, sweet bread and painted eggs. Painted eggs are, beyond ceramics, the most well-known example of Romanian folk art and an element of specifically Romanian spiritual culture through their motifs ornamentations. Before Easter, real hollowed-out eggs are painted by using vegetable colours (leaves, flowers or bark of sweet apple for red; onion peels for yellow, flowers of violet for blue; walnut leaves for green), synthetic or chemical ones. Egg painting, an exclusively women's practice, is, in Romania, usually raised to the level of the art. **Christmas** comes with a mixture of Christian or **Pre-Christian** customs; it is the time of carols, when children, youth or even mature people go from house to house, sing carols and receive, in their turn, *colaci*, which are the typical Romanian example of pastry, Christmas cookies, some money, apples or sweets. They can also dress up as different characters, such as the bear, the goat and perform specific dances. Christmas is also the time of fir-tree decoration (the fir-tree is the most important tree in the Romanian customs, being present in celebrations of birth, marriage or funerals), when the joy of families goes along with their hopes for a bright, lucky new year. Other traditions belonging to the same group include two more ones. **Mărțișor** (March 1st), dedicated to the celebration of the new season and the renewal of nature, together with the hope for good luck and health in life. People exchange trinkets (*mărțișoare*), tied with a braided thread in two colours – red (a symbol of love and friendship) and white (a symbol of the purity of soul, health and divinity). **Dragobete** (February 24th) is dedicated to love; it thus becomes a national celebration and “answer” to Valentine's Day.



*Knowing history, heroes, tradition, we become more sociable, more loving to people and life.*

Nicolae Iorga – a Romanian scholar and politician

*We have a tradition that must not be forgotten.*

Valeriu Râpeanu – a Romanian critic and literary historian

Other customs and traditions (frequent especially in the world of the Romanian villages) are linked to the important, well-determined and unrepeatable moments in human life – the so-called “rites of passage” (birth, marriage and death). As far as someone's birth is concerned, traditions are related to midwifery and the newborn baby. Thus, the midwife's role is very important, not only to help the mother to deliver the child, but also to “attract” the three *Ursitoare/Fairies/Fate Sisters* (who are supposed to come and guide the newborn's fate), to hear their messages and to deliver these to the newborn's parents. Therefore, the midwife has to put either “a light” or a bowl with flour, some salt, a penny and a loaf of bread in the child's room, so that the Fairies could find their way easier and be “feasted”, in order to predestinate the newborn a good and happy fate in life.

The tradition says that, for the child to acquire certain qualities, several things should be added in the child's first bath water: basil (to be beautiful/good-looking and honest), mint (to grow fast and healthy), poppy sticks (to sleep well), honey (to be sweet), money or silver jewelry (to be rich).

Among the traditions linked to wedding, at least two are still existent. The first one is that of the wedding preparation ceremony. After the bride (helped by her mother and close friends) and the groom (helped by the best man) finished their dressing up, the groom, accompanied by his close friends (and even by fiddlers) go and pick his future wife from home and take her to the church. The latter one is “the kidnapping of the bride”. During the wedding party, at midnight, the bride is stolen (usually by one or more close friends). The groom is demanded to offer “something” in order to get her back. This may mean some wine, money or other things; the type of ransom depends on the kidnapper(s)' creativity and sense of humour.

The traditions and customs related to death are mostly based on ancient beliefs and practices, which are prior to Christianity. This ritual of passage to “the other world” is based on the idea of the unity of the living with the dead. This explains particular ancient rituals, among which the vigil (people used to guard the dead so that no animal could come close to the coffin as, otherwise, the dead could become a ghost), almsgiving (food, drinks and the dead's clothes to be given to people), mourning (black clothes to be worn by close relatives for a period of time, even up to one year – in case of parents' and children's death) and commemorations of the dead (after their departure, at forty days, six months, one year, seven years).







# Țară , Country



The name of the country – *Romania* – comes from the word *român* /Romanian, derived from the Latin *Romanus* (“roman”/ “of Rome”). The Romanian language, *româna*, a Romance language, has many similarities with Italian, French, Spanish or Portuguese.

**The elements of the cultural identity** include the Romanian heraldic symbols, the Romanian language, Romanian history, the rich folklore, folk costumes, traditional music and dances, traditions and customs, traditional art and architecture, Orthodox religion, Romanian mythology and natural landscapes.

**The coat of arms** includes the symbols that define the history of the country 1. The golden crusader eagle that clutches the insignia of sovereignty: a sceptre and a sword (the symbol of the founding dynasty of Bessarabians, the nucleus around which Wallachia (one of the three provinces of the Middle Ages) was organized ; 2. The shield on which the eagle stands (the symbol of the azure sky); 3. A coat of arms divided into heraldic fields (symbolizing the Romanian historical provinces: Wallachia, Moldova, Banat and Oltenia, Transylvania, the territories adjacent to the Black Sea). **The flag of Romania** is *tricolor(ul)*, in red, yellow and blue (with blue at the flagpole and red outside). **The National Anthem** is *Deșteaptă-te, române!*

Romania is the country where history is everywhere. Archaeological sites, the great number of fortresses and castles, mausoleums and history museums, “breathe” history and “talk” about the heroism of the Romanian people along centuries, in their fight for their rights, for independence and a better life.

Romania is a country of rich traditions and customs. Folk traditions are preserved with sanctity, especially in villages.



*We don't live in a country, we live in a language.*

Emil Cioran – a Romanian philosopher and writer

*If I were not Romanian, I would live in Romania.*

Grigore Vieru – a Romanian poet, from the Republic of Moldova

Linked to cyclic events in the life of the community or to unrepeatable moments in human life, they are part of the cultural identity. (see letter T – Traditions).

Music and dance is the lively part of Romania's culture. Romania is the country where the traditional music and dances delight the most sophisticated audience. The traditional music, folk music, transmitted from generation to generation, is characterized by variety, reflects the specificities of the Romanian geographical areas and has a vibrant rhythm ensured by a variety of musical instruments. It is an expression of the Romanian's people soul, its feelings, hopes, joys and sufferings. (see Letter M – Music). The Romanian folk costume, whose origin goes back to the Geto-Dacians, describes the history and specificity of the country, in the best way possible. It is characterized by a multitude of colours, cuts and symbols preserving the authentic spirit of the people. It differs very much from one geographical area to another in respect to its components, colours and decorations. Women wear a blouse, called *ia* (see Letter I – Ia), a skirt and an additional piece, which covers the skirt and wraps around the waist (this piece may be missing in some regions of the country). Men wear a shirt (men's *ia*) and trousers, called *izmene* (drawers); they also wear black boots or peasant sandals, called *opinci*. Depending on the weather, they wear a hat, a cloche (*clop*) or a woollen cap.

Orthodox religion is also part of the country's identity. (see Letter D – Dumnezeu)

Romania is the country where legends are part of everyday life, as part of the Romanian mythology, which along with fairy tales, stories, parable stories or anecdotes abound in symbols and characters and in conceptions about life and death, the good or the bad. The mythical representations specific to the Romanian people are diverse (fairies, ogres,



dragons, animals endowed with supernatural powers, water spirits or elves) and give the measure of the Romanians' life philosophy, imagination, creativity and originality.

Romania is the country of rich, diverse, mouth-watering cuisine, which prides on many traditional dishes (see Letter Y – Yummy!) .

Romania is the country where art and architecture display a variety of elements, a result of the numerous foreign influences upon them along history, but which also offer wonderful elements of traditional art (see Letter A – Arts) and architecture. In architecture, besides the two styles that are considered to be original (the Brâncoveanu style, best illustrated by Horezu Monastery, included in UNESCO heritage in 1993, and the Neo-Romanian style), the traditional architecture is closely linked to the people's way of living and their main daily preoccupations. It includes domestic buildings with their dependences (used as storage places for crops or materials, or as shelters for animals). The material houses are made of (stone, brick, adobe), the materials for their roofs (wood, tile reed), as well as their style and decorations vary from one region to another.

Romania is the home of breath-taking nature and a very attractive place for wildlife watching amidst stunning landscapes. (see letter R – Relief)

The capital of the country, Bucharest, is the largest city in Romania, placed on the banks of the Dâmbovița River, in the southeastern Romania. It was first mentioned in documents in 1459 and became capital in 1862. Bucharest is a charming city with impressive buildings, tens of interesting museums, public gardens and parks, memorial houses, monuments, large boulevards, shopping areas and restaurants with delicious food. The old and the new co-exist, giving the city that "air" of a European city, worth visiting and enjoying. The reference places to be seen, visited and admired in Bucharest are The Romanian Athenaeum, a landmark for the city and the most prestigious concert halls in the country. The Palace of the Parliament (The People's Palace), is a famous building, due to its hugeness and, at the same time, reminding of the communist era, as its building process was part of Ceaușescu's plan of reconstructing the capital. The Arch of Triumph is also an iconic construction, reminding of its prototypical model in Paris. One of the most beautiful places to visit is Muzeul Satului/ National Museum of the Village "Dimitrie Gusti" /The Village Museum, an open-air ethnographic museum, which hosts (on an area of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> ), 123 authentic peasant settlements, representative of different ethnographic regions of the country, monuments and artefacts.

Romania is a very rich country. The riches of Romania's land (salt, oil, natural gas, coal, lignite, gold, silver) contributed to the development of rich industry, whose products are for both domestic consumption and export. The main industries include cars, textile, footwear, light machinery, oil refinery, food, construction materials and chemicals ones.

Romania is an important producer of cereals in EU. Its agriculture, combining elements of the old and the latest technology, with very rich crops and quality farm and field products, still preserve old ways of working the land, in small, remote, isolated villages (yet, this adds a specific charm in the eyes of the tourists).

Romania's great minds manifested their knowledge, wit and work capacity, bringing their contribution to both Romanian and the world's progress (see Letter G – Genii, as well as letter P – Primii).

Education in Romania tries to focus on quality. Many of our student teams are among the best in Europe and the world, Romanian Olympians excelling in Mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy and astrophysics. Compulsory education co-exists with private one. Compulsory education includes kindergarten, elementary school (preparatory year, primary school and gymnasium), high school and higher education.

Universities are of three types; the first group includes universities that focus on education; the second group includes universities that focus on both education and scientific research and on education and art; the third category, includes universities that focus on advanced research and education. "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău enters the second group mentioned above and it is an important constituent part of the Romanian educational system, whose results are nationally and internationally acknowledged. Its structure includes five faculties (the faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Economic Sciences, the Faculty of Sciences, the Faculty of Letters, and the Faculty of Movement, Sports and Health Sciences), as well as a Pre-and-In service Teacher Training Department. It provides Bachelor, Master and Doctoral programmes. As focus is both on education and research activity, every year, the university hosts local, national and international scientific conferences (for both students and academic staff), symposia, workshops and summer schools. It has also succeeded in developing collaboration agreements with prestigious universities all around Europa, Canada and Africa, materializing in student and teaching staff exchanges and research projects.







# Umor Humour



*Joy is like the smell of flowers; it is not born of withered souls.*

Nicolae Iorga – a Romanian historian, playwright, poet, literary critic

**H**umour is part of the Romanian's people daily life; it is in their nature to make funny remarks, to tell funny stories or jokes meant to provoke laughter. Much of the Romanian humour springs from proverbs, sayings, anecdotes, jokes and humorous expressions in either standard language or slang. One may raise the eyebrows in doubt when hearing some Romanian expressions as, the unexpected combination of words may seem nonsensical.

What should you understand, for example, when you are told *Ai minte creată* [You have a curly mind], *Ai călcat pe bec* [You have stepped on the light bulb] or *la-ți inima în dinți!* [Take your heart in your teeth!]? Very simple; they mean *You have crazy, unusual ideas; You have made a mistake!* and *Decide to do something!*, respectively.

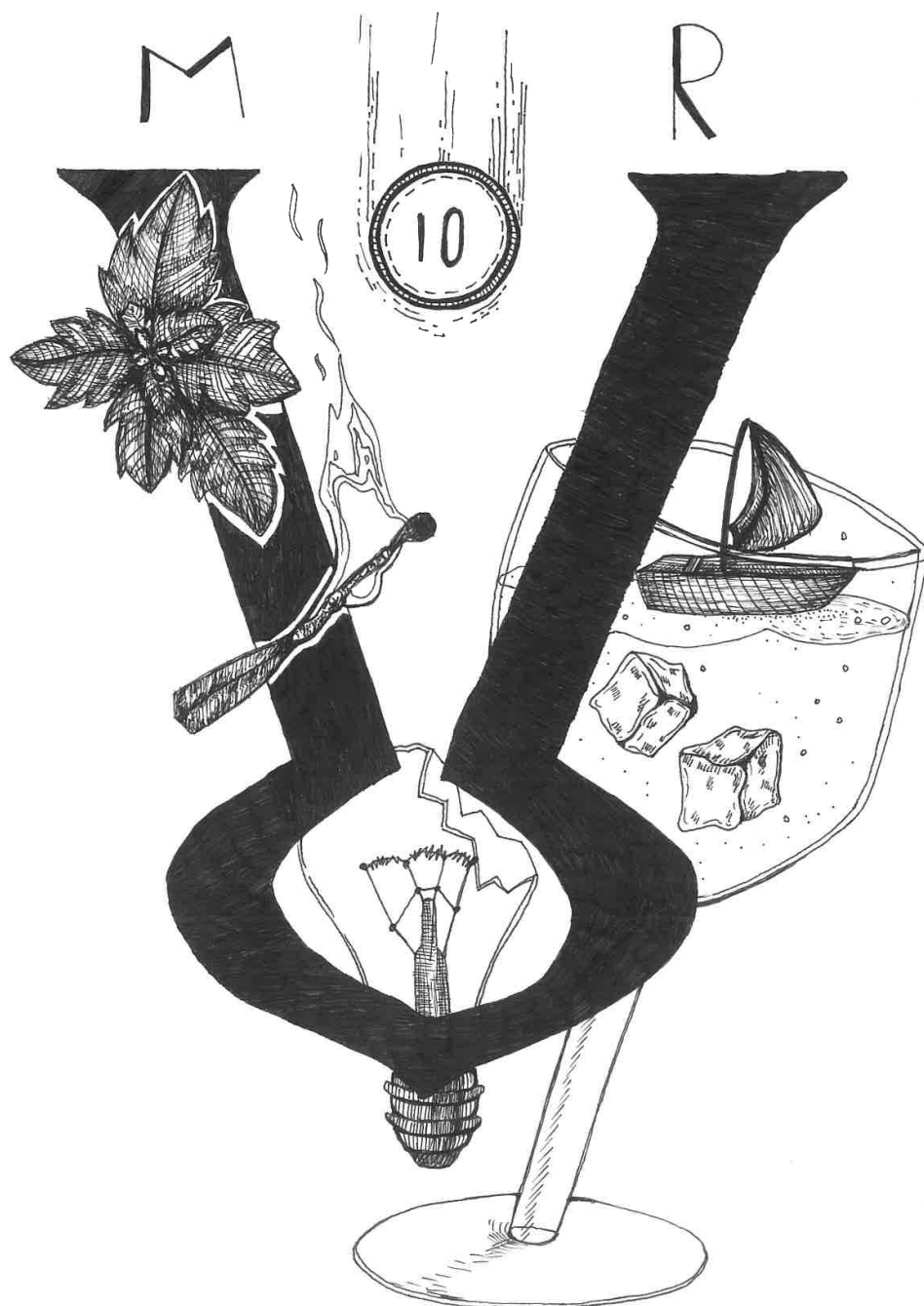
What about *Mi-a sărit muștarul!* [My muster jumped off!], *Mă scoți din pepeni!* [You remove me from melons], or *Sunt pe*

*drojdie*. [I am on yeast]? Not difficult at all; you should understand *You have managed to annoy me; You are getting on my nerves and I have no money.*

What if they say *Încerc să împac capra cu varza*. [I am trying to reconcile the goat with the cabbage], *L-am făcut cu ou și cu oțet*. [I made him with egg and vinegar] and *Mă aburești* [You are steaming me] They want to tell you *I am trying to reconcile two opposite interests; I have scolded him and You are telling lies to me.*

Well, *Ți-a picat fisa?* [Has your coin dropped]? = [Have you understood?] Don't worry; nothing is wrong with them. They are just using humorous expressions belonging to slang, in a very spontaneous, natural way. Hearing them speaking like this, you may either say *O, Doamne, bați câmpii!* [Oh, my God, you are running the fields with grace!], or *O, Doamne, e beton!* [Oh, my God, that's concrete!]. In other words, *You are talking nonsense!* or *That's Cool!*









# Valori

## Moral values

[characteristic to the Romanians]



*May your soul be like thought, thought like word and word like your deed.*

Ion Slavici – a Romanian prose writer

**F**rom generation to generation, family, local communities and education contributed to the people's development of the moral values. In the context of contemporary world, ethical challenges and dilemmas such as human rights, the environment and cultural diversity, moral values have become even more relevant; they help to guide society towards sustainable development and better coexistence. The Romanians' principles and ethical standards have well been captured in famous quotes of Romanian writers, politicians, scientists or artists:

**Acceptance** – *Learn from me that Romanians accept all suffering, but I also tell you that they will never accept injustice.* (Nicolae Titulescu, 1882-1941 – a diplomat, lawyer, politician)

**Altruism** – *I do not work for my personal glory, but for the glory of the human genius* (Traian Vuia, 1872-1950 – an inventor and pioneer of the international aviation)

**Courage** – *Beware of banality. If you are going to drown, at least don't drown in a basin of water; throw yourself in the ocean.* (Octavian Goga, 1881-1938 – a poet and politician)

**Dedication** – *Only the one who offers/gives to others true happiness can own it.* (Alexandru Vlahuță, 1858-1919 – a writer)

**Empathy** – *Nothing lasting can be based on indifference.* (Octavian Paler, 1926-2007 – a writer, journalist and politician)

**Freedom** – *Man's freedom is the divine part of him.* (Petre Țuțea, 1902-1991 – an essayist, philosopher, politician)

**Generosity** – *Only when we do good do we gain something that the evil cannot have: tranquillity and peace.* (Nicolae Steinhardt, 1912-1989 – a writer, literary critic and essayist)

**Honesty** – *The word "honesty" is usually associated with the word "work", each word in the pair saving the other one* (Tudor Arghezi, 1880-1967 – a poet)

**Kindness** – *One of life's great contents is to know yourself a good person.* (Ioan Slavici, 1848-1925 – a novelist and journalist)

**Love** – *He who loves and is loved will never be the same person as before.* (Octavian Paler)

**Respect** – *In order to be respected, you should start by respecting yourself.* (Tudor Arghezi)







# Wallachia Wallachia



*Nothing binds people together more than the consciousness they have of a common past.*

Eugen Lovinescu – a Romanian literary critic, literary historian and novelist



Modern-day Romania had three pre-state historical, geographical and political formations – Moldova, Țara Românească and Transylvania. **Wallachia** (founded in the 14th century) was the

name given by foreigners to Țara Românească. Reference was made to the region situated in the southern part of country, bordered by the Southern Carpathians in the north and by the Danube river in the south.









# Xilofon

## Xylophone



*Music is sonorous time.*

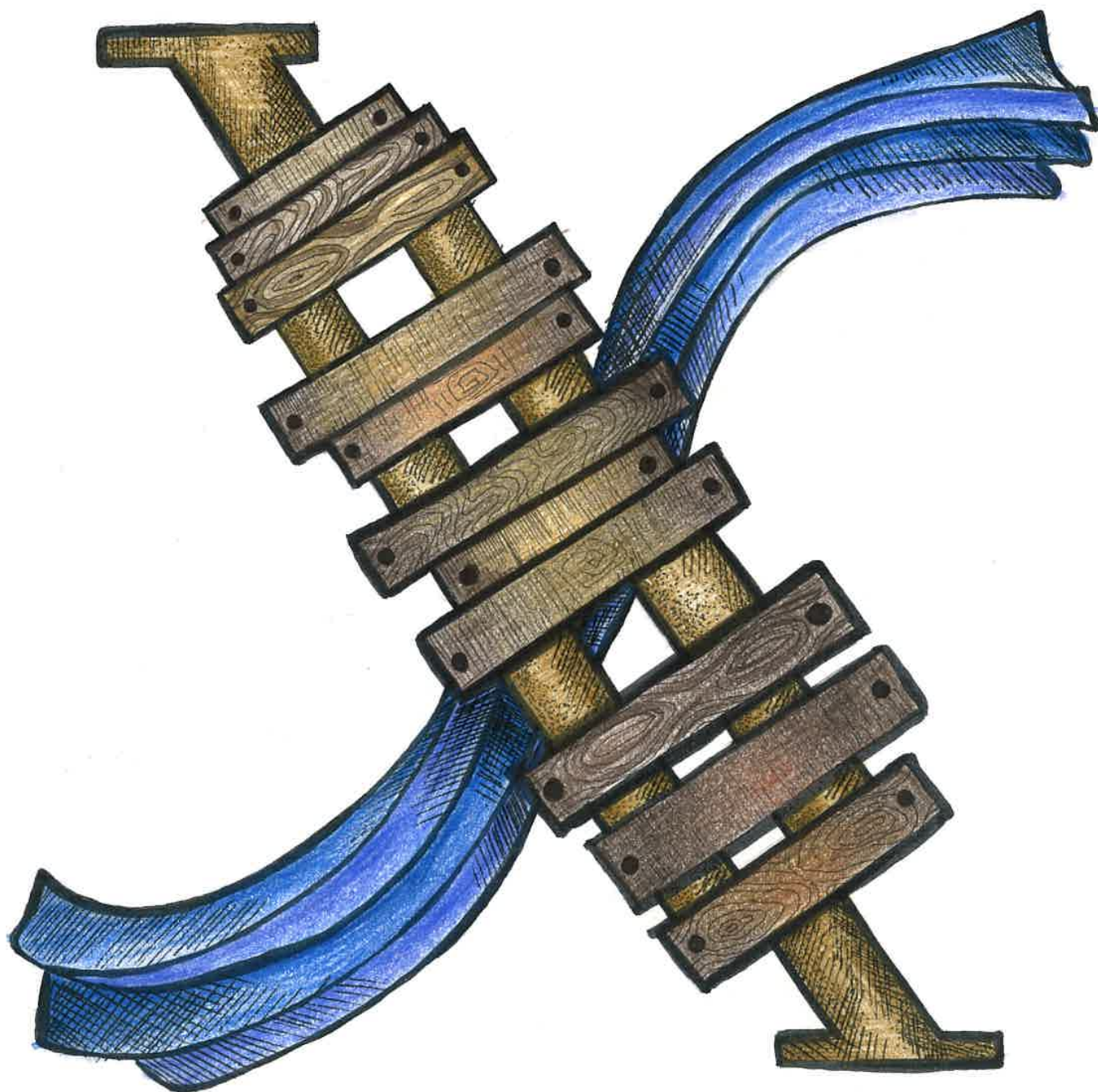
Emil Cioran – a Romanian philosopher and writer

**O**ne instrument in the family of idiophone percussion musical instruments, the xylophone is made of wooden bars, which are struck by mallets. The bar materials may consist of rosewood, padauk, simple fibreglass or fibreglass-reinforced plastic; the wood which is used is of utmost importance, as it needs to provide refined tonal clarity and resonance. In Romania, the oakwood is the main material to be used. The mallets may be made of wood, glass or metal. The instrument, of different colours and shapes, resembles a

bigger pan flute, arranged horizontally and played in the same position.

As in many other countries, it is used in symphonic orchestra or jazz bands. There is also a smaller chromatic variant, which music educators use in classrooms, as a resource to assist the development of children's musical abilities for percussion instruments. Their choice is dictated by the simplicity with which this instrument is handled.









# Yummy

**A**lthough *Yummy!* (something that is very pleasing to senses; something delicious) is not a Romanian word, due to the fact that many English words and expressions have entered Romanian, we can say that *Yummy!* could render, in the best way, the traits of the Romanian food in a series of almost synonymous words, such as delicious, tasty, appetising, savoury, mouth-watering. One important characteristic of the Romanian cuisine is that it is an inspired blend of Western and Eastern European influences. The Romanians prefer to have a frugal breakfast, a hearty lunch and a light dinner. They also prefer food cooked at home, as they consider it being more healthy and cheap, at the same time.

However, what are the Romanian traditional dishes? They can be found and are preferred and appreciated in all the three meals of the day. Thus, in the morning, a slice of bread with *zacuscă* (see letter Z – *Zacuscă*) is a good start for the day.

At noon, Romanian people generally have two courses, a soup or **borș/the sour soup** and the main course. The Romanian *borș/borsch* is different from the Moldavian or Ukrainian one, as it becomes sour (thus, different from a soup) due to a liquid ingredient, which consists of water with wheat or barley bran. The sour borsch is also called **ciorbă**. One traditional variant of *ciorbă*, and the most appreciated one, is the **beef tripe soup** – a delicacy made from the stomach of a cow and vegetables. The flavour is added by garlic.

For the main course, the traditional Romanian cuisine can offer **sarmale/cabbage rolls**, consisting in minced pork or beef meat mixed with rice, onions, spices and tomato juice, as filling. The filling is then rolled up in freshly boiled or sour cabbage leaves and simmered in the oven. When ready, the cabbage rolls can be accompanied by sour cream and by **mămăligă/polenta** (instead of bread), made out of yellow maize flour. The difference from the Italian polenta rests in the fact that the Romanian *mămăliga* is thicker than the Italian one, so that it can be sliced. The dessert may include the traditional delicious doughnut-shaped **papanashi**, which have the dough made with soft cheese and are covered in



*I am a living man. Nothing (of what is) human is foreign to me.*

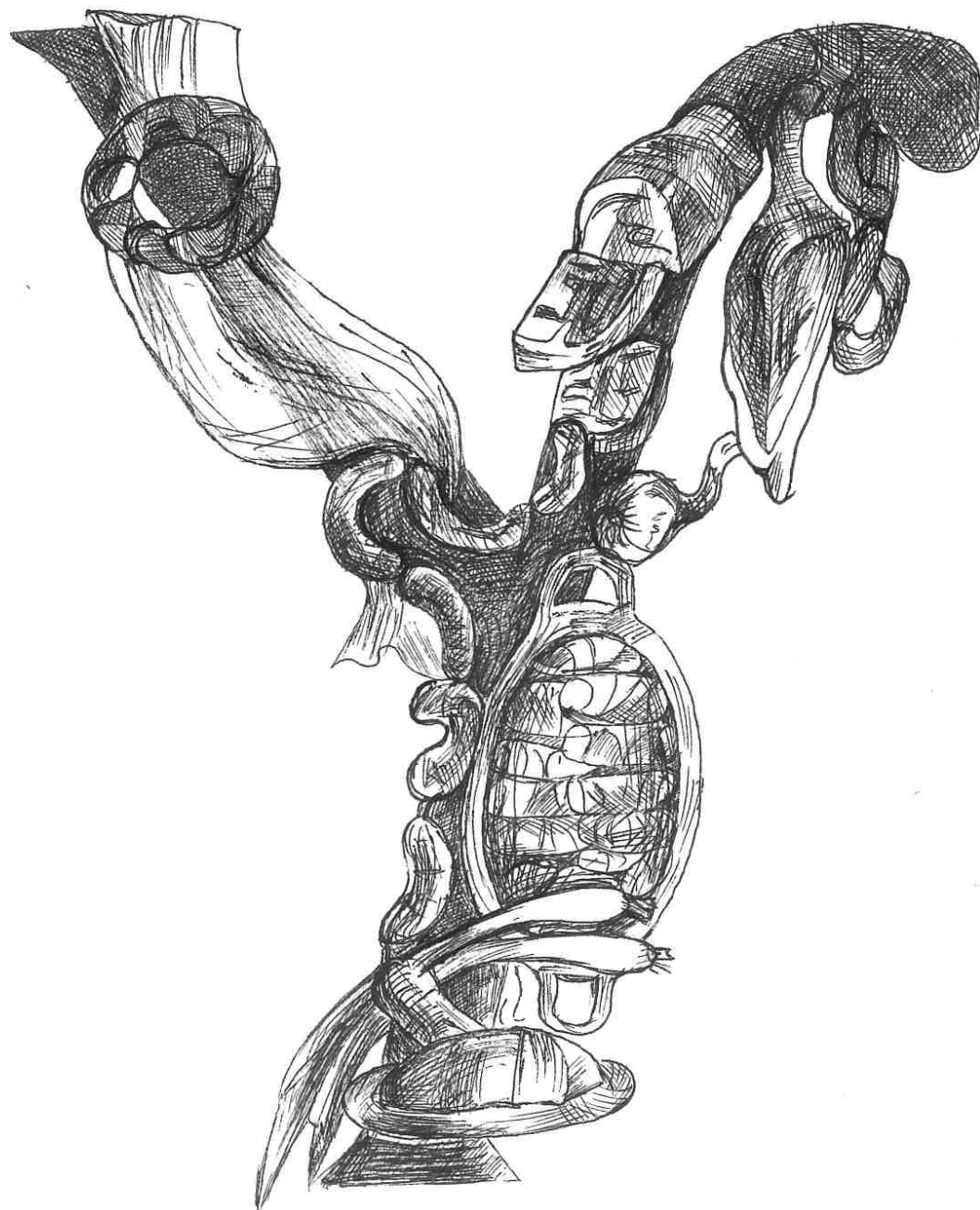
Nechita Stănescu – a Romanian poet

either heavy or sour cream, topped with jam or sour cherries. *Yummy!*

Another traditional dish is that of **mititei** or **mici** (with the meaning of “the small ones”)/**grilled minced meat rolls**. Although also present in the Bulgarian, Serbian or Turkish cuisines, the Romanian **mici** differ from their grilled minced meat dish in terms of shape, size and the ingredients that are used (in Romania, one of the ingredients is the baking soda, which makes them fluffier and mouth-watering). The dish is very popular in Romania and people enjoy it at home, in pubs or restaurants, during outdoor grilling in weekends or various holidays.

Some of the traditional dishes are linked to religious holidays. Thus, in spring, among the Easter holiday dishes, the **drob/lamb haggis** is almost indispensable in every home. Its recipe includes a mixture of lamb offals, green onions, eggs, some bread (that is soaked in either water or milk), as well as vegetables such as parsley, garlic or dill (fresh and finely cut). The mixture represents the filling for the lamb's caul, which will be baked afterwards. When ready, the dish brings a festive touch to the meal. Wintertime comes with specific customs and dishes, too. Thus, before Christmas, householders (especially those from the countryside) use to sacrifice their pigs and obtain meat and pork dishes for Christmas dinner. They fry the fresh meat in its own fat; they also prepare sausages (from fresh pork, chopped and mixed with spices) and the dish is offered to friends and neighbours who helped them to sacrifice the pig. This is why this dish, served with authentic pickles, is called **pomana porcului/pig almsgiving**.

Both Easter and Christmas include a traditional dessert, called **cozonac/sweet bread**, whose preparation is based on demanding work when it is homemade. Dough kneading takes time, as women want to make it as fluffy as possible. The filling includes sweet walnut paste and/or poppy paste, cocoa powder and flavours such as vanilla and rum, Turkish delight and raisins. The recipe difference depends on the geographical region of the country. The final product has a rectangular and tall shape, which makes the difference between the Romanian *cozonac* and the Italian *Pannetone*.












# Zacuscă

## Eggplant appetizer

ne of the Romanians' favourite dishes, to be found in many other Balkan countries, zacusca (a word of Slavic origin) is an appetizer consisting of vegetables. These vegetables may be fresh, baked or fried in oil. This is why a rough translation for this dish is that of vegetable stew. The final product is put into jars, which are then sterilized, so that they could be safely kept for the winter, as the favourite preserved food. The English name eggplant hints at its main ingredient: eggplants. Besides these, some other vegetables transform it into a delicious assortment: baked red peppers or fibsters and finely chopped onions, tomatoes, pumpkins, mushrooms and carrots, spiced with black pepper and bay leaves.

The dominant vegetable determines the variety of zacuscă; thus, there are eggplant appetizer (the most common type); fibster appetizer; mushroom appetizer; beans appetizer; pumpkin appetizer. You can buy them from the grocery shops or you can prepare them at home.

What is specifically Romanian is one variety of zacuscă – fish appetizer – , which was “created” by the Lipovians (a small group of people of Russian origin) who are living (especially) in Romania, in Tulcea County – an area where fish is predominant in the inhabitants' meals.







# Ilustrații

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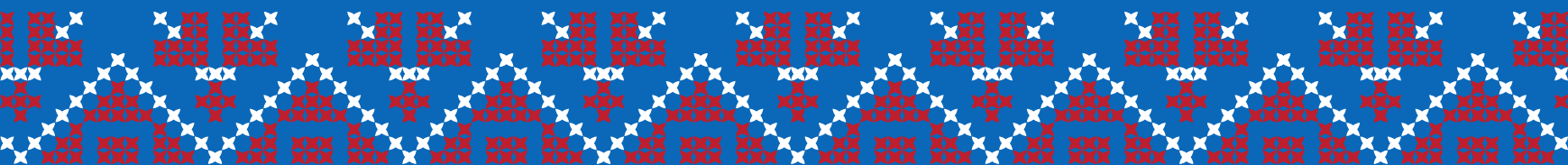






# Romania

My Cradle



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