

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*,

# **War commemorations in inter-war Romania**

By

**Silviu Hariton**

B.A. University of Bucharest, 2002  
M.A. Central European University, 2004

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Supervisor: associate professor Constantin Iordachi

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## **Abstract:**

This dissertation deals with the process of war commemorations in interwar Romania in its four aspects: a process of mourning of those dead in combat during the First World War by their relatives and comrades, a celebration of taking part in the victory over the Central Powers which led to the creation of Greater Romania, a form of symbolic compensation of those who took part directly in war and survived and of those who suffered directly or indirectly its hardship; and an instrument of educating the younger generations in the spirit of (military) heroism that characterized the process of cultural mobilization for war before and after the Great War.

From a methodological point of view, while designed as an interpretative case-study this project is gratefully inspired and shaped by the magnificent Pierre Nora's series of *Lieux de mémoire* but it heavily draws on conceptual history and approaches to iconography. Several major questions guided my research for this dissertation: why the cult of the Unknown Soldier was so important in interwar Europe and why did it become a part of the official ceremonies for every 'national day' in most of the countries ever since? what is the link between the Unknown Soldier and the discourse of nationalism no matter of the latter's definition? how did this combination affect most of the people? how the memory of the First World War and of the war experience was conceptualized and disseminated? by whom? for what purposes? Addressing what cultural and political

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horizons? How the Romanian case is illustrious and in the same time different from the other Western and Eastern European case?

In order to accomplish the goal of approaching and explaining the topic of this dissertation, a structure of six chapters was envisioned. Chapter One circumscribes the topic of this dissertation in a long-term comparative perspective, both historical and geographical, by placing the Romanian case not only in the Eastern European context but also in the global context. Chapter Two analyzes the cultural context and factors that made possible the process of war commemorations in Romania by taking a long term historical perspective. Chapter Three deals with the social context of war commemorations in interwar Romania by focusing on the demographic and social consequences of the First World War and on the most important groups and actors involved in the process of war commemorations.

The following three chapters detail the war commemorations taking place in interwar Romania at three levels, Chapter Four surveying the policy of war commemorations as it was conceived, debated and promoted by the political center, Chapter Five focusing on the construction of war monuments as an intersection of this policy and the individual participation and as the result of the activity of different professional groups directly involved in promoting war commemorations and Chapter Six surveying sources relevant for understanding the variety of perspectives at the individual level. Each of these six chapters sheds light from a different perspective and on a different aspect of the process of war commemorations in inter-war Romania. For each of them extensive introductions and conclusions were written so they could be read independently of each other on the one hand and to explain their part in the structure of this dissertation on the other hand.

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## **Introduction:**

On May 16, 1923 a train carrying the coffin with the remains of the Unknown Soldier arrived in Bucharest. It was selected during a ceremony taken place at Mărășești out of ten unidentified bodies of soldiers who died on ten of the most important battlegrounds the Romanian army fought during the Great War. The Unknown Soldier was brought to Mihai Vodă monastery for public mourning and it was buried on the next day in his specially designed Tomb in the Carol Park. The site was not a random choice. Carol Park was the site of the June 1848 popular gathering and of the 1906 Romanian General Exhibition, both of these events being major moments in the process of articulating and affirming the Romanian nationalism. Singled out from a series of other politically and militarily significant places of Bucharest like the statue of Michael the Brave, the initial Petre Antonescu's Arch of Triumph and the Military Club (*Cercul Militar*), the final site was chosen to be in front of the Military Museum about to be established and to become a place of regularly organized visits for pupils and students during the interwar period. The process of selecting the body, carrying it to Bucharest and especially burying it

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represented a massive state organized ceremony where the most important public authorities, the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Greek-Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, officer corps, local notabilities, teachers and university professors, soldiers, high school pupils and students were convoked according to a detailed plan and had to participate. The tombstone was engraved with the inscription: “Here the unknown soldier happily sleeps *întru Domnul*, fallen as a part of the sacrifice for the unity of the Romanian people; the soil of remade Romania rests on his bones, 1916-1919”. Besides this religiously shaped message, the inscription’s style followed the Brancovan decorative style to be found in the Orthodox churches of 17th and 18th century Danubian Principalities and re-employed in the decades around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century as a part of a so-called Neo-Romanian style.

The tomb of the Unknown Soldier (see Image 1, p. 10) represented the central piece of an archipelago of war monuments which flourished during the interwar period in Romania following a tradition established in the previous several decades. These war monuments were dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 (Romania’s War of Independence) and in the Great War and they became the main sites for the politics of war commemoration during the interwar period.<sup>1</sup>

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“Aici doarme fericit întru Domnul ostaşul necunoscut, săvârşit din viaţă, în jertfa pentru unitatea neamului românesc; pe oasele lui odihneşte pământul României întregite, 1916-1919”; for detailed accounts of the procession see Traian Popa-Lisseanu. *Soldatul necunoscut, istoric și cult*, Publicațiile societății „Frontul Mărășești” nr. 1 [The unknown soldier, its history and cult. The publications of the “Frontul Mărășești” Society] (Bucharest: Tipografia Ovidiu, 1936), pp. 49-82 and Valeria Bălescu. *Eroul Necunoscut. Istorie trecută și recentă* [The Unknown Hero. A past and present history]. With a

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Image 1. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Bucharest, 1930s, postcard.



Source: ANR-DANIC, fond Illustrate, I, 3229.

“No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times” observed Benedict Anderson, thirty years ago, in the beginning of the first chapter of his *Imagined communities* when he pointed to war memorials as embodiments of the symbolic nature

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foreword by Dan Berindei (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2005), pp. 73-75, 82-107, 110-115, 124-125; for the French and British models established in 1919, see Ken Inglis, “Entombing unknown soldiers: from London and Paris to Baghdad” *History & Memory. Studies in the Representations of the Past*, vol. 5, nr. 2, Fall/Winter 1993, pp. 7-31.

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of nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Why the cult of the Unknown Soldier was so important in interwar Europe and why did it become a part of the official ceremonies for every ‘national day’ in most of the countries ever since? What is the link between the Unknown Soldier and the discourse of nationalism no matter of the latter’s definition? How did this combination affect most of the people? Even if Benedict Anderson has pointed to the importance of the military in the symbolism of nationalism, he did not address the above mentioned questions in his work, as most of the literature developed in the last decades around the notions of nation and nationalism rather neglected paying attention to the place of military traditions in the symbolism of the nationalism. In addition, several other relevant questions of this dissertation are: how the memory of the First World War and of the war experience was conceptualized and disseminated? by whom? for what purposes? Addressing what cultural and political horizons?

This dissertation aims at answering these questions by focusing on the Romanian case of interwar war commemorations. In Romania the process of war commemorations was a complex combination of cultural trends articulated during the nineteenth century and social and political factors active during and at the end of the First World War. Honoring those fallen during the First World War through the creation of war graves and war cemeteries was one of the conditions of the peace treaties of 1919-1920. War cemeteries started being created in Romania in 1919 when a society under the patronage of Queen Maria and the presidency of the Primate-Metropolite of the Romanian

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<sup>2</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Second edition. (London, New York, Verso, 1991, c1983), p. 9.

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Orthodox Church was established with the aim of coordination and administration of the process of identification, construction and maintenance of the war graves and war cemeteries. The policy of war commemoration was however articulated mainly through the law of 1920 for “honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” which dealt only with the Romanian fallen. The above mentioned Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was created in 1923 while a Heroes’ Day was established in 1920 to be honored on the Ascension Day and it was celebrated until the creation of the People’s Republic of Romania in 1948. War monuments were already constructed in the country in order to celebrate Romania’s participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and during the 1920s and the 1930s the number of war monuments increased to about 2.000. Another law in 1927 explicitly stated that no discrimination on religious or ethnic criteria was to be made when considering the war graves while the commemoration was dedicated to all those fallen during the war no matter of their ethnic or religious background. The same provisions were maintained by another law adopted in 1940 which integrated the organization and the administration of the war graves, of the war cemeteries and of the policy of war commemoration in the state bureaucracy, as a part of the Minister of Defense.

The account provided above is the short version of the factual history of the process of war commemoration during the interwar Romania. However, the policy and the politics of commemoration developed as a part of the process of war commemoration had four dimensions which need clarification before further developing the argument of

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this dissertation. These four dimensions were emphasized at the local level in various ways and they should be understood as present in unequal proportions, different groups or individuals emphasizing one or several of these dimensions over the other(s). Throughout this dissertation commemorations are approached through the keywords of “process,” “policy” and “politics.” While the first one (process) is used to describe the whole dynamics of war commemorations, the second one (policy) describes only the set of intended practices of commemorations as they were designed and promoted by the political, cultural and military elites and the third one (politics) deals with the actual implementation of this policy by the variety of professional and local political groups at the regional and the local levels.

First of all, war commemorations represented a process of mourning the dead by their relatives. Private initiative preceded the Romanian state in initiating the organization of graves for those fallen in the war. Since most of the population of Romania before the First World War followed the Orthodox confession and due to the previously articulated association of the Romanian national identity and of the Orthodox religious identity the involvement of the Romanian Orthodox Church’s hierarchy and the selection of the Ascension Day as the Heroes’ Day came as relatively uncontested choices as a part of the cultural and political heritage of the Old Kingdom. Public ceremonies associated with these celebrations or the inauguration of new war monuments always had a *sobor* of priests present while, as a part of the process of war remembering, the death of those fallen during the war was compared to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in numerous related

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publications. Still, the policy and the politics of war commemorations were not limited to the Orthodox Romanians of the so called Old Kingdom but they included Transylvanian and Bessarabian Romanians, too. While the public urban spaces were indeed reserved only to honoring the Romanian dead, representatives of the religious and ethnic minorities took part in the official ceremonies honoring all those fallen during the war while the local communities no matter of their ethnic and religious background honored their dead, most of the times around the local churches and cemeteries.

Second of all, the policy of war commemoration was a form of symbolic compensation for those who survived the war. In addition to hundreds of thousands of veterans who made a benefit from the land reforms of the early 1920s, in Romania, at the end of the First World War 70.000 men remained disabled, 335.000 children were orphans and close to 300.000 women were widows. The 1920 law of war commemorations was issued together with other three laws aimed at offering different forms of reparation to all those affected by the Great War. Two such laws granted war pensions of a limited value while another law established the National Office for War Disabled, War Orphans and War Widows. The former combatants were privileged in the application of the necessary land reforms while the cost of financing Romania's participation in the First World War burdened the state budget during the interwar period. Consequently, the politics of war commemorations during the interwar period are approached and understood as being a part of the social politics of appeasing and compensating the social groups affected by a war decided by the state authorities.

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Third of all, the process of war commemoration represented a celebration of taking part in the victory over the Central Powers and a celebration of creating Greater Romania, a political accomplishment integrated as the last major chapter in the narrative of national history of Romania. Those fallen during the battles and celebrated by the policy of war commemorations were placed alongside the other heroes of the national past who supposedly contributed either to the survival of the Romanian nation in the past or in the different stages of the process of national unification and their sacrifice was used to justify the creation of Greater Romania.

Finally, envisioned from the very beginning, the policy of war commemorations was intended most of all as an educational instrument used to a great extent for further political and cultural mobilization of the following generations, the iconography of the war monuments and the associated ceremonies compulsory attended by the pupils and the teaching body praising the values associated with the concept of (military) heroism which shaped to a great extent the Romanian nationalism during the nineteenth century and later. Visible mostly in the dynamics of constructing war monuments, the process of war commemoration during the interwar period represented the peak of a tradition articulated during several decades prior to the First World War and partially visible in the commemoration of the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and in the Second Balkan War of 1913.

In addition to taking into consideration these four dimensions of the process of war commemoration, visible mainly in the construction of war monuments by the social

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and the professional groups active during or affected by the war, this dissertation takes a comparative perspective on the long term historical and geographical dimensions of war commemorations by placing the Romanian case in its larger cultural, political and social contexts. It takes a long term historical perspective by not limiting only to the interwar period but by paying attention to the cultural factors that were developed during the nineteenth century and shaped the politics of war commemorations and to their subsequent consequences and transformations. This dissertation employs a larger geographical perspective by placing the Romanian case in the regional, European and global contexts. An interpretative case study, it is a contribution mainly in the field of nationalism studies but also a contribution in the history of war commemorations. This is why a great part of this introduction is dedicated to surveying the relevant literature developed as a part of these fields of scholarship in addition to surveying the relevant literature on the Romanian case as well as the primary sources and the methodology used as a part of the research. An outline of the dissertation is provided at the end of the present introduction.

### **0.1. Cultural approaches of nationalism:**

The field of nationalism studies is one of the most active areas of interdisciplinary research in the last half of the century where political scientists, sociologists and historians fruitfully discussed the major societal and cultural changes of the last couple of centuries. The lack of consensus over the complex nature of nationalism was and it still is

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one of the reasons for the expansion of studies dedicated to understanding the sources and the influence of the national ideology, of the national identity and of the nature and characteristics of the nation-state in Europe and worldwide at a time when the creation of the modern state bureaucracies, the advancement of technology, public arts and education as well as the democratization of the public sphere contributed to the reconfiguration of local and regional communities, many of them linguistically and religiously mixed, within the cultural and institutional framework constructed on the concept of “nation.”

A great part of these studies of nationalism aim at deconstructing the nation-state perspective employed through social studies and historical research as well as its associated set of symbols and artifacts during the nineteenth and the twentieth century. It does so by focusing at other units of analysis such as empires and regions. The following lines do not seek doing justice to these debates but only to survey the most relevant contributions in the cultural history of nationalism that shaped the topic and the approach of this dissertation.<sup>3</sup>

At a time when nationalism was discussed mainly by sociologists, anthropologists or political scientists, one of the few historians who researched the spread of nationalism in the public sphere was George L. Mosse. He did so in the context of his lifetime interest on the nature of Nazism in interwar Germany. Implicitly comparative from a geographical and chronological perspective, Mosse’s work paid attention to the rise of

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<sup>3</sup> The basic survey for most of the theories approached and used in the field of nationalism studies belongs to Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

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the national ideology in the nineteenth century and its spread through public festivals, public monuments and literary and visual artifacts that shaped the marginal *volkish* culture propelled by the First World War at the center of political stage in interwar Germany. Without following Mosse's main interest, to explain the nature of Fascist and Nazi mass politics following the Great War, his work is still relevant for understanding why mass politics did not always turn Fascist in parliamentary democracies on the one hand and for understanding the uses of symbols and historical myths by a variety of political forces on the other hand.<sup>4</sup> His discussion of the myth of the war experience as a part of the cult of the fallen and their imbedded definitions of masculinity are discussed in the following section surveying the most important contributions dedicated to the cultural history of memorializing the experience of the First World War.

The other major source of inspiration is represented by Pierre Nora led French collection *Lieux de mémoire*, a heterogenous collection of contributions on a series of sites, artifacts and topics that received iconic status among the French cultural elites by the 1980s, sites and topics that act like or are used as (historical) references in order to shape collective and individual memor(ies) and especially to embody or at least to anchor cultural, political and ideological discourses. It is the most comprehensive collection of approaches to this variety of sites, artifacts and topics and therefore it became a model

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<sup>4</sup> George L. Mosse. *The nationalization of the masses. Political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991, c1975).

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*, and a source of inspiration for many cultural historians of nationalism ever since.<sup>5</sup> As a part of this collection, Antoine Prost was among the first researchers who documented public and war monuments in France, his study of war monuments in France being published in the first volume of the collection.<sup>6</sup> The war monuments in France were further documented by Annette Becker and her work is shortly discussed when approaching war commemorations in Western Europe. Following this model set by *Les Lieux des memoire* (1984, 1986 and 1992) in France and by Eric Hobsbawm's co-edited *The invention of tradition* (1983) as well as the methodological discussions on the relationships between history and memory, cultural historians of nationalism increasingly focused during the 1990s on the articulation of the national ideology through different forms of media including literature, arts, monuments and textbooks, a variety of media where historical facts and data were approached as cultural artefacts with their own twists and turns along history.

Turning to the regions of East Central Europe and South Eastern Europe, the most important contribution influencing the conception of this dissertation belongs to Maria Todorova. Similar to the seminal exercise in historicizing the symbolic geography of SEE, *Imagining the Balkans*, and the historiographical approaches of the region, other

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<sup>5</sup> *Lieux de mémoire: La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), *La Nation*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), *Les Frances*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1992). Selections of these contributions were published in English as: *Realms of memory*. Edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998) and *Rethinking France: les Lieux de mémoire*, translated by Mary Trouille, translation directed by David P. Jordan (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Antoine Prost, "Les monuments aux morts" in *Les lieux de mémoire*. Edited by Pierre Nora, edition in quarto (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), pp. 199-223.

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contributions combined the rich and creative theoretical perspective with methodological rigour and erudition. An early essay discussed the cultural diversity of Rumelia before the advent of the nation-state with its politics of cultural and institutional uniformization. Another discussed the importance of the internationalized idioms in connecting the local contexts with the global market of political and cultural discourses, a theoretical perspective which shed lights on the spread of the political discourse of nationalism as well. The collection of contributions on the relationships between history and memory she placed the cultural and political discourses generated by the symbolic competition around a diversity of sites of cultural memory as a part of the larger field of memory studies. Finally, her work on the cult of national heroes was instrumental in conceptualizing a great part of this dissertation, her analysis of Vasil Levski in the context of the modern Bulgarian culture being presented in the section dedicated to the concept of heroism and its associated values.<sup>7</sup>

A series of other contributions on the Romanian case were instrumental for shaping my understanding of the European nationalism through their deconstructive approach in general and their variety of primary sources used and methodologies employed. Critical but balanced approaches to the Romanian nationalism developed especially since the 1970s and 1980s when its reemployment by the Communist regime

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<sup>7</sup> “Language as a cultural unifier in a multilingual setting: the Bulgarian case during the nineteenth century,” *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 4, n. 3, 1990, pp. 439-450; “Does Russian Orientalism have a name? A contribution to the debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalib,” *Kritika. Explorations in Russian and Eurasian history*, vol. 1, nr. 4, 2000, pp. 717-727; “Learning memory, remembering identity” in *Balkan identities. Nation and memory*. Edited by Maria Todorova (New York University Press, 2004), pp. 1-24; “The trap of backwardsness: modernity, temporality, and the study of East European nationalism,” *Slavic Review*, vol. 64, nr. 1, 2005, pp. 140-164.

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and especially its exaggerations were welcomed with skepticism by international and Romanian scholars alike, Vlad Georgescu being probably the most prominent.<sup>8</sup> Irina Livezeanu was the first scholar to articulate a systematic and critical vision of the regional, social, cultural and political diversity of Greater Romania in its historical perspective by pointing to the development of the public educational system since the nineteenth century in order to explain the rise of the right wing political extremism during the 1920s and the 1930s. Conceived during the 1980s as a PhD dissertation published in 1995, Irina Livezeanu's disentangled the regions of the Old Kingdom from the newly added territories of Transylvania (including Partium and the Romanian Banat), Bukowina and Bessarabia, all of them discussed in a comparative perspective which pointed to their specificity. It did so in order to explain the cultural and educational policy of interwar Romanian state which aimed most of all at the articulation and the dissemination of a unitary Romanian perspective which unfortunately had the tendency to be exclusive and not inclusive.<sup>9</sup> A collection of papers presented in 1996 at a conference organized by Irina Livezeanu and Sorin Antohi and sponsored by the *Journal of History of Ideas* approached the case of the Romanian nationalism from a variety of perspectives, gathering older and younger scholars alike, and it has dealt with a diversity of primary

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<sup>8</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români, 1944-1977* [Politics and history: the case of the Romanian communists, 1944-1977] (Munchen: Jon Dumitru Verlag, 1981; Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1991); Andrei Pippidi, "Identitate națională și culturală. Câteva probleme de metodă în legătură cu locul românilor în istorie" [National and cultural identity. A few methodological observations on the Romanians' place in history], *Revista de istorie*, vol. 38, nr. 12, 1985, pp. 1178-1197; Dennis Deletant, "Rewriting the past: trends in contemporary Romanian historiography", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 14, 1991, pp. 64-86.

<sup>9</sup> Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, nation building and ethnic struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

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sources, being the starting point for many students of the Romanian nationalism. Similar exercises were represented by an international conference organized at the New Europe College – Institute of Advanced Studies in Bucharest in April 2001<sup>10</sup> and by a group of doctoral students at CEU.<sup>11</sup>

Professor Andrei Pippidi's erudite research and reflection on the nature of cultural nationalism in the Romanian case, on its specificity in the long term broader context of South Eastern Europe and especially his methodical discussions of a series of historical symbols, political rituals and objects of remembrance fertilized at a practical level my own approach that is visible in this dissertation. Professor Pippidi's work on modern history is definitely larger and it thematically included the problems of cultural and national identity as a part of the historical discourse, the dynamics of the national, cultural and political pantheons, problems of iconography and uses of literary sources, the genealogical imagination, and most of all the importance of rituals and anniversaries/commemorations occasioned by cultural and political pilgrimages at the graves or statues of great men or only at days of national importance. His discussion of the hero cult from the Antiquity to the present as well as his extensive expertise on the dynamics of political and cultural rituals of remembering or commemorating historical

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<sup>10</sup> *Nation and national ideology. Past, present and prospects*. Proceedings of the international symposium held at the New College Europe, Bucharest, April 6-7, 2001. [Bucharest:] The Center for the History of the Imaginary and New Europe College, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> *Nation building and contested identities: Romanian and Hungarian case-studies*. Edited by Constantin Iordachi, Balázs Trencsényi et al (Budapest and Iasi: Regio Books and Polirom, 2001). In the field of historiographical reflection, this led to a series of comparative Hungarian-Romanian studies including Constantin Iordachi and Balázs Trencsényi, "In search of a usable past: the question of national identity in Romanian studies, 1990-2000," *East European Politics & Societies*, vol. 17, nr. 3, pp. 415-453.

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figures is further presented in the section dedicated to the cult of national heroes and the spread of public monuments.<sup>12</sup>

Other contributions that shaped the perspective taken by this dissertation are those of Maria Bucur, Alex Drace-Francis, Andi Mihalache and Ioana Beldiman. The first two are discussed in the following section dedicated to surveying the literature dealing with war commemorations in Western and Eastern Europe while the third is presented in the section dedicated to placing the literature on war monuments along the contributions analyzing the rise and the characteristics of the public monuments in modern times.

To a great extent, the discussion on heroism and the constitution of national pantheons was largely left out from the theoretical discussions or addressed in a fragmented way through the literary procedure of synecdoche, concentration on one case-study being used most of the times to suggest the existence and the use of the entire pantheon. Nationalism studies of the last two decades addressed heroes and monuments as sites of symbolic competition or as anchors of the historical consciousness under construction. Several examples may be found in the already mentioned volume edited by Maria Todorova as well as in many other volumes edited by Katherine Verdery, Maria Bucur, John Lampe and Mark Mazower etc.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *About graves as landmarks of national identity* (Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 1995); *Despre statui și morminte. Pentru o teorie a istoriei simbolice* [On statues and graves. For a theory of historical symbols] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> *National character and national ideology in interwar Eastern Europe*. Edited by Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Center For International and Area Studies, 1995); *Ideologies and*

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The trend of cultural history developed in the last decades paid a great deal of attention to the articulations of the national ideology in arts and literature as well as to the construction of the nation states during the nineteenth century in Europe and during the twentieth century in most of the other parts of the world. A great part of these discussions on the nature of representations in the field of nationalism studies and on the history of the nation-states focused on the construction of the culture of nationalism in France, mostly during the Third Republic, on the experience of the German militarism and of the Nazi regime that led to the Holocaust in the case of Germany and on the social and cultural impact of the Great War in Great Britain where previous liberal political assumptions were partially undermined by the totalitarian character of the total war. Each of the scholarly debates on one of these three countries answered to different sets of questions, they appealed to a diversity of methodologies and their tendency for interdisciplinary approaches went most of the times in quite different directions while their choice for primary sources explicitly privileges the subjective experience. The following lines are surveying some of the characteristics of the international field of research dedicated to the cultural history of remembering and commemorating the experience of the First World War.

## **0.2. War commemorations, West and East:**

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*national identities: the case of twentieth-century Southeastern Europe*. Edited by John Lampe and Mark Mazower (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003).

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The social, political and especially the cultural impact of the First World War in Europe and worldwide represents the subject of a growing field of scholarship in the last half of century as pointed above. The Great War as it was called during the interwar period by the people who took part in it represented a turning moment in the modern history, a cluster of events which affected and radically changed the whole Europe for a long time, its outcome planting the seeds of the Second World War and of the postwar continuous reconfigurations. Some of its political, social, cultural and ideological consequences or trends legitimized by it included the expansion of the voting franchise to all male adults in an equal way, the radical changes of the political map especially in Central and Eastern Europe, the land reforms carried out in the same regions, the appearance and the development of the political extremes with a deep impact on the rest of the twentieth century Europe, the major transformations of the ways of artistic and literary representations. For the French and English contexts, the Great War is one of the most attractive topics of public history, maybe similar to the role of the Civil War in the American context. Exhibitions dedicated to the war in the trenches on the Western Front attract large masses of people while dozens of historical books, novels and movies (e.g. *Joyeux Noël*) are widely disseminated. In the French case it also has to do with the fact that its memory is not questioned as it is the case with the Second World War and the Algerian war while in the British case it also underlines the cultural unity of the Commonwealth; for some of the dominions the experience of the First World War was a

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founding moment for their nations when a local national consciousness became culturally and politically distinct from the metropolis.

The cultural history practiced within this trend of international scholarship represents the third generation of historians and other interpreters who have approached the Great War. The first generation was that of the 1920s to the 1960s, a generation that put emphasis on the political, military and diplomatic history and therefore it privileged the decisions and the actions of the individual actors, many times in order to discuss the responsibility for the beginning and the end of the war. A second generation belonged to the 1960s and the 1970s and explained the Great War through the force of social groups and classes. To quote Jay Winter, “During the interwar period, this conflict was seen as the last war; later on it became for some the first episode of a new Thirty Years War. Now it appears as the very foundation of a short, barbaric twentieth century, and those who survey this war have in mind both the monstrous Nazi genocide against the Jews and the enormity of Stalin’s crimes [since] the war of 1914-1918 was the first experiment in totalitarian war and mass death.”<sup>14</sup> Not to forget the first officially recognized genocide in European history that started a hundred years ago, the Armenian genocide.

Marc Ferro and Paul Fussell may be considered the pioneers of the cultural approach of the First World War during the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The first produced a German-French documentary film which was broadcasted simultaneously in the both countries while Paul Fussell, a literary historian, argued in his *The Great War*

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<sup>14</sup> Jay Winter and Antoine Prost. *The Great War in history. Debates and controversies, 1914 to the present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 29.

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania, and modern memory* (1975) that the war has swept away a set of literary conventions and gave English letters a new and deeply ironic voice. Marc Ferro is usually associated with the *Annales* School and its interest on mentalities, representations and the employment of a societal perspective on history by paying attention to history from below as well while Paul Fussell enjoyed popularity among numerous British historians by teaching them how to look afresh at the forms which mediated the understandings of the war experience. Combining literary works and memoirs published mostly during the interwar period but also unpublished materials he found in the archives of the Imperial War Museum, Paul Fussell observed the employment of irony by English writers-combatants as a way of coping with the absurdities of the total war, a war which became a critical moment in the history of artistic representations in Western Europe.<sup>15</sup>

A major contribution is represented by the work of already mentioned George L. Mosse. Tracing the association of nationalism with an aesthetically idealized form of masculinity praising heroism during the nineteenth century and the subsequent brutalizing consequences these linkages had on the memory of those who fought in the First World War, Mosse states that “we have been concerned with a cultural phenomenon which cannot be subsumed under the traditional canons of political theory. For it was not constructed as a logical or coherent system that could be understood through a rational analysis of philosophical writings. The phenomenon which has been our concern was

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Fussell. *The Great War and modern memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Leonard V. Smith, “Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and modern memory*: twenty-five years later,” *History and Theory*, 40:2, May 2001, pp. 241-260;

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secular religion, the continuation from primitive and Christian times of viewing the world through myth and symbol, acting out one's hopes and fears within ceremonial and liturgical forms" detecting "a basic continuity that extends from the struggle for national liberation against Napoleon to the political liturgy of the Third Reich"<sup>16</sup> which invoked the myth of the war experience and used the cult of those fallen in the First World War as cornerstones of their political legitimacy.<sup>17</sup> Already during the 1970s, Mosse focused on the cult of the fallen, an interest which started from the observation that "the new interest in the history of attitudes to death has not yet considered the cult of the fallen soldier. This is a curious omission, not only because this cult is central to the development of nationalism, but also because it changed men's view of death itself. Indeed, its history is, on the one hand, part and parcel of the secularization of established religion, and on the other, one factor in the brutalization of consciousness which informed the violence between the two world wars."<sup>18</sup>

Antoine Prost has analyzed the dynamics of the veteran groups in inter-war France and contributed with two articles on the monuments to the national heroes and to the fallen soldiers of the Great War in the collection of *Lieux de memoire*, thus being the veteran of the social history of the First World War with its cultural and political

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<sup>16</sup> Mosse, *Nationalisation of the masses*, pp. 214.

<sup>17</sup> George L. Mosse, "Two world wars and the myth of war experience," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, nr. 4, October 1986, 491-513;

<sup>18</sup> George L. Mosse, "National cemeteries and national revival: the cult of the fallen soldiers in Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14, 1, January 1979, p. 1. The article was expanded into the well known book *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the memory of the two world wars* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

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consequences. Finally, Jean-Jacques Becker and Annette Becker, both of them based at the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* of Peronne, northern France, one of the best museums dedicated to the Great War, pursued complex historical investigations on the soldiers' testimonials and personal recollections of the French people. 1998 was a year which saw the publication of close to a thousand books in French dedicated to the Great War. Annette Becker authored an extensive monograph of the French war memorials as well as another book on the role of religion during the war and the following decade in helping people cope with the traumatic experience of the total war.<sup>19</sup>

Important contributions to understanding the social and cultural contexts of the war were authored by John Horne. Two of his articles were used not only to place the Romanian case in a comparative perspective but to also discuss relevant issues, one analytically dealing with the problem of coping with national defeats and the other one with the concept of cultural demobilization following the end of war. The first one takes a global comparative perspective of the importance of wars and defeats over the last two centuries and it discusses the problems of a society's coming to terms with its more or recent defeats that affected people not only at the personal level but it most of the times involved structural societal changes aimed either at avenging the respective defeat or at

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<sup>19</sup> Annette Becker. *Les monuments aux morts: patrimoine et mémoire de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Errance, 1989); Annette Becker. *War and Faith. The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*. Translated from the French by Helen McPhail. Foreword to the English edition by Ken Inglis (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

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trying to look to the future.<sup>20</sup> In the second text, introducing a collection of contributions dealing with the topic, the concept of cultural demobilization was proposed by John Horne in order to explain the social and cultural troubles of the 1920s especially in Weimer Germany. Even if Great War was officially ended in 1918 its social and political consequences continued to affect people's life, people who were culturally shaped in the paradigm of nationalism during the decades prior to the beginning of the war. Coming to terms with the end of the war and its consequences was a difficult process.<sup>21</sup> The concept of cultural demobilization covers this process of adaptation to the post-war realities of the interwar period including the process of settling the psychological effects of the total war, a process following the proper demobilization which took a period of time that varied in each country depending on a series of factors that were mainly cultural. Corollary, it may be useful to use the concept of cultural mobilization for war as a shortcut for the complex processes the (nation-)states passed through the half of century before the outbreak of the First World War. This process of cultural mobilization for war was aimed at a better preparation for an eventual war at a time when the international relationships were dominated by militarism and colonialism. This process included the spread of literacy and education in general and the use of the cult for national heroes in order to foster political and cultural unity.

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<sup>20</sup> John Horne, "Defeat and memory in modern history" in *Defeat and memory. Cultural histories of military defeat in modern era*. Edited by Jenny McLeod (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 11-29.

<sup>21</sup> John Horne, "Introduction", *Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre*, special issue of *14-18. Aujourd'hui. Today. Heute*, nr. 5, 2002, pp. 45-53.

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Probably, the most renowned cultural historian of the First World War experience and memory is Jay Winter. His work is a model of combining cultural and social history in approaching this cluster of entangled histories that suggests a pan European common experience. In his early works he analyzed the social and the demographic impact of the Great War in England, turning later to a cultural perspective and starting with the late 1980s he concentrated on a comparative cultural history of the war experience in Great Britain, France and Germany where he most of the times sought to challenge the dominant perspective where the First World War represented a moment of caesura for the artistic and literary trends of Western Europe and in the same time he recognized the foundational role the Great War played in European history for its best and especially for its worse. Recognizing in his works the overlap of continuities and discontinuities in the languages of truth-telling about the war, he explored the impact of the First World War on the subsequent European cultural history by approaching the form and content of mourning for those dead in the war. As he comments, “my ‘sites of memory’ are other than Nora’s. First, they are international; secondly, they are comparative; thirdly, they are there for their value in answering specific historical questions related to the cultural consequences of the 1914-1918 war. This is why my ‘sites of memory’ are also ‘sites of mourning’” where mourning was visible in form of compassion, grief, spiritualism bereavement mediated by traditional forms such as poetry, art and ritual aimed to address

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motifs and images about sacrifice, death and resurrection, all with the implicit aim of understanding what happened “both to their lives and to those who had died in the war.”<sup>22</sup>

Jay Winter warned against taking the state centered or state initiated or state imposed set of commemorative activities including the construction of war monuments as traces of ‘collective memory’ of the people who suffered the consequences of the war instead pleading for a variety of primary sources that would better understand the attitudes and the feeling of the locally based people united by a ‘fictive kin’ of remembering and for whom November 11 was not their center of activity or of commemorating their war experience of those lost in the war. In the same time he warned against dissociating high culture and popular culture and underlined the pan-European character of the First World War. Further, Jay Winter wrote about the so called Lost Generation, the generation of young educated male Britons who enthusiastically volunteered to fight in the First World War, got killed in action and whose remains many times were only the letters and the belongings sent at home. The concept of many times invoked for illustrating the disastrous nature of the victory in the respective war being extended to all those who died in combat no matter of their social background. In his work as well as in the work of other fellow historians of the cultural history of the Great War, the politics and the practices of war commemoration do not occupy a central position, privileged being individual creations and opinions. However, war monuments

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<sup>22</sup> Jay Winter. *Sites of memory, sites of mourning. The Great War in European cultural history*. Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare nr. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*. Edited by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Quotes at pp. 8 and 10.

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and public ceremonies are artifacts and practices that are recurrent topics and offer a comparative perspective for the Romanian and the other Eastern European cases.

What is characteristic of George Mosse and Jay Winter's scholarship is true for most of this wave of scholarship in cultural history which explores, on the one hand, the perceptions of the participants in the Great War no matter of their social, political, ethnic background and, on the other hand, the way how their experiences have influenced the inter-war and post-war collective memories, political attitudes, artistic trends etc. Thus the subjective perspective is privileged, the experience of the home front being many times placed on an equal foot to the trench and combat experience. How were people affected by the war experience during and after the Great War and how did they contribute in shaping the attitudes of large groups of people of different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds during the interwar period are only some of the questions addressed. The use of primary sources is extended from archival documents to a large palette of written, visual and oral sources: recollections and memories, novels, paintings, sculptures, public monuments and name streets, newsreels and photographs, postcards and personal letters, propaganda posters, graffiti, church plaques, school and university textbooks, even toys etc. Historical enquiry was turned not only to new artefacts such as all types of printed sources but also to domains such as arts, science, literature and medicine with the specific and associated methods. For the case of the Western Europe, the iconography and the social geography of the war memorials dedicated to the Great War are to a great extent well established. This wave of scholarship goes beyond the

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‘national history’ approach, sketching a unique cluster of entangled histories and suggesting, to some extent, a pan European common experience, still hard to be captured in a unitary way for the whole continent.<sup>23</sup>

There are several questions that framed my approach of this field of scholarship as well as the use of comparative method in this dissertation: is it possible a single transnational, shared or entangled history of the series of events labeled as the Great War to cover the entire Europe and thus unify it culturally and politically? What should be the structure of a new master narrative and how these entangled and shared histories should be approached without neglecting the meanings elaborated by all the participating groups? Overall, when dealing with the politics of war commemorations this field of studies tends to present four types of limitations.

First of all, largely informed by the shock represented by the Great War in Western Europe, they are studies of either the direct war experience or studies of the institutional and social politics following the war. Consequently, they focus on the Great War as a major discontinuity in history and to a great extent they tend to ignore the continuities represented by the long term cultural factors that preconditioned the transformations brought by the war and its subsequent developments. These long term cultural factors included the articulation of a publicly visible historical memory which

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<sup>23</sup> This field of scholarship is surveyed in a series of review articles including Jay Winter, “Catastrophe and culture: recent trends in the historiography of the First World War” *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 64, nr. 3, September 1992, pp. 525-532; Catherine Moriarty, “Review article: Material culture of Great War remembrance,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 36, nr. 4, October 1999, pp. 653-662; Belinda J. Davis. “Review article: Experience, identity and memory: the legacy of World War I,” *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 75, nr. 1, March 2003, pp. 111-131.

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was in the same time national and monarchical, the role of religion at the individual level in helping to cope with the war experience, the conceptions of heroism that mediated the war experience, the construction of public and war monuments before and after the war and the role of the policies of public and war commemorations.

Secondly, the focus on collective memory developed mostly under the impact of translating into English Maurice Halbwachs's *On collective memory* and its dissemination among cultural historians.<sup>24</sup> While paying attention to a series of loci and agents of memory it tends not to address the distinction between who and for what purposes created the material and imagined artifacts that shaped group memories, the dynamics and the (co)existence of a multiplicity of competing interpretations, the cultural and political languages that mediated all these experiences according to the diversity of the social, professional political, religious and ethnic groups, the extent to which they are representative for and their dissemination within this variety of social groups.

Thirdly, most of the times, the cultural politics shaping the process of war commemorations were the result of a complex process of negotiation between political actors, intellectuals and different other social groups. While the first two categories were given a rather privileged attention the other groups were addressed rather unevenly. While veterans as a social group received a great deal of attention, the role of religion and of religious institutions in shaping group understanding and the experience of war was not systematically and coherently integrated in the bigger picture since Europe was

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<sup>24</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory*. Edited, translated, and with an introduction by Lewis S. Coser (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992, c1952)

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(considered) largely a secularized society since the nineteenth century. The role of teachers and officers as social groups were rather ignored, too.

### **0.2.1. War commemorations in Eastern Europe:**

These limitations are visible especially when approaching the regions of East Central Europe and especially of South-Eastern Europe, the latter region representing an area largely left out by this field of research until the last decade. The following lines shortly discusses the reasons for this omission, it surveys several features of the region which sets it apart from the cases of Western Europe as well as it presents the array of recent relevant contributions.

There are several reasons why the countries whose territories were affected by the Eastern Fronts and its subsequent political transformations were overlooked by the international scholarship dedicated to the First World War. From a political, military and diplomatic point of view, the area of the Western front concentrated the main causes of the war: the French-German rivalry, the violation of Belgium's neutrality by Germany in the context of the British-German competition, the entrenched areas where the major battles were fought with heavy casualties in a matter of days and sometimes hours (Marne, Somme etc) while the Armistice of November 11 concerned the remaining fighting powers which also started the war. Therefore, for the practitioners of the political, military and diplomatic history of the first and second generation, the fronts of Eastern Europe were considered of a secondary importance and there is not much

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argument against to be made. In addition, the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917 rather shadowed the importance of war experience on the most important Eastern front.

From a scholarly point of view, the importance of France, Germany and Great Britain as belligerents as well as the use of the three international languages, English, French and German, in the international historical scholarship and in accessing the respective national archives reinforced the study of the respective cases. The fall of the Habsburg Empire has also produced an interest in the Viennese archives that are also predominantly in German. Furthermore, even when the language barriers were bypassed, especially following transformations in the international scholarship dedicated to the region after the Second World War, the limited access to the archives, especially during the Communist times as well as the emphasis on the national and state history of the local historians contributed to this lack of attention paid to the war experience of the countries of Eastern Europe. Finally, the lack of regional cooperation that transcends the borders of the former empires well as well the tendency of approaching the national cases only in comparison with the cases of Western countries did not stimulate comparative approaches as well. Therefore, even when somebody would have been interested in the cases of the “small states,” and numerous contributions were already written during the last decades by scholars active in research institutions of Western countries, the cultural and political borders as well as the numerous logistic obstacles contributed to their further omission or downplaying of their experiences’ importance. While the study of

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these small cases requires a degree of skills sometimes higher compared to the study of Western European cases the use of comparative history definitely helps in analyzing these cases in particular and their set of characteristics in relation to the region of Eastern Europe.

However, especially for the practitioners of cultural, social and economic history, the human losses, the social impact of the war and the parallel political transformations in the regions of Eastern Europe that continued to affect several generations of people are no less significant in their magnitude when compared to the experience of the countries of Western Europe. If one would take into consideration the exacerbation of nationalism before and after the Great War, the massive mobilization of human and material resources, the processes of movements and exchanges of populations, and sometimes of ethnic cleansing, as well as the immense material and human losses provoked by the First World War, one may get combined the French, German and English experiences in almost every part of the Eastern Europe.<sup>25</sup> One may observe in the recent years a wave of literature dedicated to the Eastern European experiences, some of its results being introduced in the following lines and especially in the last section of Chapter One.

In order to assess the characteristics of the war experience in this region and the way how it contributed to the cultural and political contexts of war commemorations in the respective countries, one may divide these countries in several groups according to

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<sup>25</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The establishment of the Balkan national states, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986, c1977); Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Second volume (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe. A century of war and transition*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

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their experience of the Great War and its social and cultural consequences. There are the defeated states such as Hungary and Bulgaria; the newly established composite states such as Poland and Czecho-Slovakia and the states such as Greece, Serbia/Yugo-Slavia and Romania where the prewar nationalist and religious traditions were imposed to a great extent upon the newly acquired territories or became the framework where the traditions of the newly added territories were accommodated, many times with major difficulties.

In addition, there are four other characteristics of the region of Eastern Europe that had consequences on the morphology and the substance of the processes of war commemorations. They are going to be detailed in Chapter One as a part of the conclusion of the section dealing with the commemorative practices in this region. Firstly, the diversity of the political events following the First World War took over the importance of ending the war, when it was the case, and this led to a fragmented if not parochial perspective of the experience of the First World War in most of the countries of Eastern Europe. Armistice Day celebrated in the victorious countries of Western Europe was not shared in all the countries considered as Associated by the Allied Powers (*Entante*). Secondly, and one of the main reasons for the previous one, the war experience of the generation who fought on the fronts of Eastern Europe did not limit only to the events of 1914-1918 but it included the immediately previous and subsequent military confrontations such as the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1921, the Romanian-Hungarian war of 1919, the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-

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1922 and the Russian civil war of 1917-1922. In some countries of the region the experience of each of these wars was approached in a unitary perspective which combined them with the experience of the First World War and integrated as a part of the hegemonic discourse disseminated as a part of the process of war commemoration. Thirdly, for most of all of them large sections of the society were divided over the war experience since they fought on opposing sites and this had social and especially political consequences. Finally, the majority of the rural population in many of the countries of Eastern Europe led to the dominant position national churches played in framing the processes of war commemoration in several cases.

These peculiarities of Eastern Europe were partially addressed during the last decade by a series of scholars including Nancy Wingfield and Mark Cornwall on interwar Czechoslovakia, Melissa Bokovoy and John Paul Newman on the Serbian-Croatian case(s), Christoph Mick and Julia Eichenberg on the case of Poland. Among them, Maria Bucur played an important role in encouraging and supporting research on the role played by different sites of memory as places for political and cultural competition.<sup>26</sup> The results of their research is visible in the last section of Chapter One where the specificity of these national cases as well as of the entire region is surveyed in relation with the cases of Western Europe and Romania. A special issue of *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines* was dedicated in 1992 to the countries of the region in addition to several

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<sup>26</sup> *Staging the past: the politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the present*. Edited by Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2001); *Gender and war in twentieth-century Eastern Europe*. Edited by Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006)

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others dedicated to the memorialization of the Great War in Western Europe edited under the aegis of the *Historial de Peronne*, a leading center of research on the social and cultural history of the Great War and its previous and subsequent periods.<sup>27</sup> More recently, in 2007, Mark Cornwall organized two conferences dedicated to the topic, at Central European University and at the University of Southampton which brought together this series of established and younger scholars.<sup>28</sup>

Research on the Romanian case of war commemorations during the twentieth century was carried out by Maria Bucur who introduced the gender perspective within the the Romanian field of historical research and Andi Mihalache of the Research Institute of History “A.D. Xenopol” in Iași.

Focusing on Romania and combining gender studies, memory studies, the study of ethnic and religious minorities with a complex anthropological perspective, Maria Bucur developed a series of studies on the way how the Great War was experienced, interpreted and commemorated by Romanians. She addressed the gendered aspect of heroism as “both policy makers and publicists sought to construct agency as a male prerogative”<sup>29</sup> at the time by focusing on the public images constructed for Queen Marie and Ecaterina Teodoroiu. Acutely observing that women’s “persistence, resourcefulness,

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<sup>27</sup> *Guerres mondiales et conflicts contemporaines*, Vol. 55, nr. 228, October-December. 2007.

<sup>28</sup> A selection of the papers presented at the ‘Sacrifice and regeneration’ conference on September 2007 is going to be published by Mark Cornwall and John Paul Newman (eds.) *The legacy of the Great War in East-Central Europe* (London: Berghahn books).

<sup>29</sup> Maria Bucur, “Between the Mother of the Wounded and the Virgin of Jiu: Romanian women and the gender of heroism during the Great War,” *Journal of Women’s History*, vol. 12, nr. 2, Summer 2000, p. 31.

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and success in surviving [the First World War and providing for their families] were not as spectacular as dying with a weapon in one's hand but, arguably, just as remarkable,"<sup>30</sup>

Maria Bucur underlined that representations of the Queen and her actions "affected not only the public perception of the Royal Family but also ideas concerning what were suitable roles for women in the war effort," the representations of Ecaterina Teodoroiu being separated from what was understood authentic womanhood in a patriarchal and conservative society Romania was at the time.<sup>31</sup> Further contributions were made on the history of December 1 as a national holiday, on the major characteristics of the war monuments in interwar and postwar Romania as well as on the differences in interpreting and designing war monuments existing among the local communities and the state authorities.<sup>32</sup> Using extensively the archive of the Society for the Cult of the Heroes as well as the archive of the Commission for Public Monuments, Maria Bucur analyzed the contest over war commemorations and representations of heroism between the vernacular voices and local practices, especially those of Orthodox women, and the discourse and practices disseminated by central state institutions. This perspective was employed in her book dedicated to the topic, *Heroes and victims*. In her own words, "my analysis

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<sup>30</sup> Maria Bucur, "Between the Mother of the Wounded and the Virgin of Jiu...", p. 39.

<sup>31</sup> Maria Bucur, "Between the Mother of the Wounded and the Virgin of Jiu...", pp. 42 and 46.

<sup>32</sup> Maria Bucur, "Birth of a nation: commemorations of December 1, 1918, and national identity in twentieth-century Romania" in *Staging the past. The politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the present*. Edited by Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 286-326; Maria Bucur, "Edifices of the past: war memorials and heroes in twentieth-century Romania," in Maria Todorova (editor). *Balkan identities. Nation and memory* (New York University Press, 2004) pp. 158-179; Maria Bucur, "Of crosses, winged victories, and eagles: commemorative contests between official and vernacular voices in interwar Romania," *East Central Europe*, vol. 37, nr. 1, February 2010, pp. 31-58.

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*, ultimately seeks to privilege the seldom heard voice of average people at the local level, even while acknowledging that the state and other powerful institutions, such as religious establishments, have had greater resources and a continuous will to control the commemorations linked to the two world wars.” For what is relevant to the topic of this dissertation, Maria Bucur’s research surveyed the commemorative practices before and after the Great War, focusing most of all on women’s organizations as forms of civil society involved in creating and establishing commemorative practices at the local levels or in constructing major war monuments such as the Mausoleum of Mărășești. An entire chapter of *Heroes and victims* deals with the memorialization of the war experience during the interwar period, Bucur underlining again that the contribution of the home front, of women especially, even if they were active as nurses, was largely ignored by the official policy of commemorating the First World War.<sup>33</sup> Focusing mostly on the twentieth century in order to understand why and how Romanian nationalism took extreme forms especially during the Second World War, Maria Bucur left room enough for approaching the nineteenth century roots of the Romanian nationalism and its heritage in the inter-war period, a cultural and political heritage which is visible especially as a part of the process of war commemorations and the focus of this dissertation.

Andi Mihalache pursued a complex endeavor of approaching the idea of historical patrimony in Romania starting with the second half of the nineteenth century. He focused on the growing attention given to historical preservation of medieval patrimony and to

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<sup>33</sup> Maria Bucur. *Heroes and victims. Remembering war in twentieth-century Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p. 2.

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the creation of public museums and touched upon the case of war monuments in inter-war period in his broader approach of commemorative practices as forms of political legitimacy in Romania. In a creative, personal and rather philosophical style, he surveyed in numerous nineteenth century Romanian literary sources and archival materials the attitudes towards the ideas of hero(ism), (historical) patrimony and youthfulness/recent versus seniority/antiquity, taken as being rather perennial and not conceptual or at least belonging to the Western culture.<sup>34</sup> Relevant for this dissertation, Andi Mihalache systematically surveyed the archives of the Commission of Public Monument and discussed the process of war commemoration in interwar Romania as a part of his larger attention paid to representations of death and its associated rituals and museification in modern Romania.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, my own research on the topic went in parallel to the above, even if it was nurtured and heightened by them. It took a more modest stance being rather chronological and analytical. It started with comparing the urban heritage of Brăila to the

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<sup>34</sup> Andi Mihalache, “Pentru o istorie culturală a patrimoniului” [Towards a cultural history of the historical patrimony] in *Xenopoliana*, Iasi, vol. XI, 3-4, 2003, pp. 158-179; Andi Mihalache, “Eroi, morminte și statui: poetica evanescenței în secolul XIX” [Heroes, graves and statues: the history of fading historical memory in nineteenth century Romania] in *In medias res. Studii de istorie culturală*. [In the midst of culture. Studies of cultural history] Edited by Andi Mihalache and Adrian Cioflâncă (Iași: Editura Universității „Al.I.Cuza”, 2007), pp. 236-256; Andi Mihalache, “Despre bătrânețea zilei de astăzi : statui, monumente istorice și discursuri patrimoniale în România modernă” [The old age of today: statues, historical monuments and patrimonial discourses in modern Romania] in Dumitru Ivănescu and Cătălina Mihalache (eds) *Patrimoniul național și modernizare în societatea românească: instituții, actori, strategii* [National patrimony and modernization in the Romanian society: institutions, actors, strategies] (Iași: Editura Junimea, 2009), pp. 157-189.

<sup>35</sup> Andi Mihalache, “Eroul colectiv. Semnificații civice și funerare în comemorările primului război mondial” [The collective hero. Civic and funerary aspects in commemorating the First World War] in *Mănuși albe, mănuși negre. Cultul eroilor în vremea Dinastiei Hohenzollern* [The cult of the heroes in Romania during the Hohenzollern dynasty] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Limes, 2007), pp. 233-261.

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one of Bucharest and with the analysis of street renaming in Brăila in a seminar paper of 2001, it was explicitly formulated in the prospectus prepared for the comprehensive exam of 2006 and it most of all took shape in the paper presented at the above mentioned conference organized at the University of Southampton in September 2007.

### **0.2.2. *The Romanian case of war commemorations:***

The Romanian case of commemorating the First World War during the interwar period is illustrious for and in the same time different from the other Western and especially Eastern European cases. The following lines discuss several of the similarities with the other Western and Eastern European cases and it makes explicit the distinct features of this dissertation.

The Romanian case had several features which are similar with some of the other cases or regions. They can be researched as independent variables and their different dosages may point to the peculiarities of each country and/or region. Furthermore, their combination at the local level makes one case or another distinct when compared with the cases of Eastern Europe and Western Europe. This combination of factors and variables and their regional variation makes the Romanian case unique although any of its features may be identified as similar and researched in the other cases especially those of South-Eastern Europe.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The best surveys of Romanian history in the modern times are Vlad Georgescu. *Istoria românilor. De la origini și până în zilele noastre* [History of Romanians. From origins until the present days] (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1992, c1984) and Hitchins, Keith. *Rumania, 1866-1947* (Oxford:

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First of all, similar with the Kingdom of the Serbians, Croats and Slovenes in Eastern Europe and especially United Kingdom, France and Italy in Western Europe, from where the policy of commemorations in Romania heavily drew inspiration, Romania was a victorious state since it took part as an associated power in the peace treaties following the Great War and benefited from the partition of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. War commemorations were not only a form of national mourning but also a form of a celebration of taking part in the victory that led to or at least contributed in a major way to the establishment of Greater Romania.

Secondly, radical changes in the political borders similar to most of the cases of Eastern Europe affected the newly shaped (Greater) Romania. The most important characteristic brought by this process of reconfiguration was bringing together large sections of population which belonged to countries that fought on different sides during the First World War. Most of all, in addition to a divided memory of the war experience, these large sections of populations were educated as a part of different cultural and political heritages and they carried a plurality of cultural and political traditions. While similar and sometimes identical in the choice for military symbols used in the iconography of their war monuments, this divided cultural and political heritage impacted

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Clarendon Press, 1994, Romanian edition: Editura Humanitas, 1996); Durandin, Catherine. *Istoria românilor* [History of the Romanians] (Iași: Institutul European, 1995).

See as well Ioan Scurtu. *Istoria României în anii 1918-1940. Evoluția regimului politic de la democrație la dictatură* [History of Romania during the years 1918-1940. The evolution of the political regime from democracy to dictatorship] (Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1996); Florin Constantiniu. *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* [An honest history of the Romanian people] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997); Ioan Scurtu and Gheorghe Buzatu. *Istoria românilor în secolul XX* [History of Romania during the twentieth century] (Bucharest : Editura, 1999); *Tratatul de Istoria României*. Vol. 8: *România întregită (1918-1940)* [History of Romania. Vol. 8: Greater Romania]. Edited by Ioan Scurtu and Petre Otu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003).

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the political languages used as a part of the processes of war commemorations and shaped the differences in the perception of the war experience.

Thirdly, probably the most important feature of the Romanian case, similar not only to most of the other Eastern European cases but also to the Western countries which contributed the most in the politics of the First World War, all regions were affected by the social impact of the war including an uncertain number of casualties from direct combat and foreign occupation, restrictions and requisitions, spread of diseases such as the 'Spanish' influenza, regional and international migration during and after the war followed by voting and land reforms at the end of the war which shaped the political landscape. Some of the data were presented in the beginning of this introduction and they are further explored in Chapter Three when dealing with the social context of the process of war commemoration. To some extent the emphasis in the Romanian public sphere on the importance of creating Greater Romania contributed to the minimization of the social impact of the war, presented ever since as a necessary tribute.

Fourthly, similar to the cases of other countries of Eastern Europe such as Serbia, Hungary and Poland, Romania's greatest part of the population was living in the countryside and especially due to low level of literacy it was only thinly touched by the process of secularization. For these sections of the population, politics and nationalism were framed by religious lenses and the dissemination of political discourses made extensive use of religious references or they were selected and integrated in a religious paradigm. During the war religious institutions became instrumental in justifying the war

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effort, in infusing moral support against the chronic conditions brought by the war and in maintaining social cohesion especially where state institutions collapsed at the end of the war. In the case of Romania, the Romanian Orthodox Church emerged as an important political factor at the end of the war visible also in the privileged place assumed by the Orthodox churches and largely acknowledged by the political and cultural elites, this privileged place being visible in the process of war commemorations. The Metropolitan of Moldavia Pimen Georgescu vigorously supported the war effort and the Romanian authorities taking refuge at Iași, after the war being the one who proposed the creation of *Biserica Neamului* (The church of the nation, later called a mausoleum) at Mărășești as a war monument and as a site of commemoration. The importance of this moral support, grounded in a narrative of national historical which already put emphasis on the congruency between the Romanian national identity and the Orthodox confessional identity during the decades following Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reforms of the 1860s, was reinforced in 1917 due to the outbreak of the Russian revolution in March and due to the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917. In addition, the Orthodox Church represented in Transylvania one of the agencies of cultural unity of the speakers of Romanian language before the First World War next to the Greek-Catholic Church. The election of the former bishop of Caransebeș, Miron Cristea, as the Metropolitan-Primate of Romania was meant to represent a symbolic unification of the country, the other churches being less represented in the regions of Muntenia and Moldavia while all religious communities, no matter of their denomination, represented forms of civil society that

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took an active role in the process of honoring those who died during the war when they belonged to them.

Finally, one of the distinct features of the Romanian case is represented by the prominent role of the French cultural, political and cultural influence among the cultural and political elites of the Old Kingdom, a source of acculturation which expanded during the nineteenth century over the other Greek, Italian, German or Russian sources of inspiration. This French influence became a part of the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom and it was visible not only at the political and military levels where preference for the *Entante* and the French military mission led by General Henri Berthelot shaped Romania's participation in the First World War. This influence was exerted especially in the artistic and cultural fields with a say in the previous process of commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 but also through some of the most visible elements of the policy of war commemorations during the interwar period (the concept of the Unknown Soldier; the shape of the final Arch of Triumph etc.)

Against this background, my dissertation approaches the politics of war commemorations in inter-war Romania by placing them as a part of the cultural and political heritage of the Old Kingdom in Greater Romania, a cultural heritage that privileged the association of Orthodox Christian confession with the Romanian national identity, by paying attention to the dynamics of the social groups involved, mainly officers, priests and teachers, and by focusing on the politics of spreading the cult of military heroism and building war monuments before and after the First World War. In

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in addition to the literature on the Romanian case already mentioned when discussing cultural approaches in the studies of nationalism and the above surveyed previous contributions on the Romanian case of war commemorations, there are several other Romanian contributions and bodies of literature that informed the approach taken in this dissertation; they are quoted below after introducing the respective feature that makes this dissertation distinct in comparison with them and with the contributions discussed above.

This dissertation makes explicit use of the comparative method being designed as an interpretative case-study where the Romanian case was placed in its larger geographical and historical contexts in addition to aiming at a throughout analysis of the case. Instead of considering the interwar period as only the beginning or a prehistory of the contemporary world, depending on which world war is taken into consideration as the zero moment of the postwar period, the interwar period was considered in this dissertation a result of an intersection of long and medium term social, economic and cultural trends with the social, economic, cultural and especially political reconfigurations taken place due to the conditions of total war during and at the end of the First World War. In other words, against the tendency of presenting the Great War as a major break on the basis of the ideological and political reconfigurations, social impact and especially the affirmation of a diversity of clusters of creativity that shaped the trends of twentieth century art, this dissertation was conceived on the assumption that a great part of the population confronted all these changes by appealing to cultural configurations articulated in the decades before the War; thus this dissertation stresses cultural

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continuities as basins of reception for the newly created cultural and political ideas and rituals and it subsequently places the politics of war commemorations within the cultural contexts articulated most of all during the long nineteenth century, the second chapter being devoted exclusively to it. That meant paying attention especially to the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom in Greater Romania which is many times overlooked when approaching and analyzing interwar Romania in spite of its visibility in the shape given to the administrative and military structures as well as in the artistic education of the cultural and political elites, all of these factors shaping the politics of war commemorations before and after the First World War. This overlook may be partly explained by the divisions used not only in analyzing the history of the country and of the region but also in orienting further research. Researchers of the region usually inscribe their research in the chrono-types ‘modern history’ versus ‘contemporary history’ while many of the westerner researchers are either accustomed to take the Bolshevik seizure of power as the major point of reference in Eastern European history or they just start from *Enciclopedia României* which offers the image of a unitary and prosperous interwar Romania. However, the heritage of the Old Kingdom in Greater Romania was highly visible in using the model of commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 (Romania’s Independence War) for commemorating those fallen in the Great War, a process of commemoration that combined all previous wars in a unitary and coherent historical narrative.

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A second feature of this dissertation is represented by the attention given in its conceptualization to the professionalized groups involved in the process of war commemorations, military officers, teachers and priests. The state was many times approached as a monolithic entity able to impose its agenda in a systematic and coherent way. On the contrary, an alternative perspective, probably much more closer to the reality, would consider the nation-state in South-Eastern Europe a weak state, a loose network of people and institutions controlled by a diversity of political and cultural actors who adopted and adapted the discourse of nationalism in order to use it for their own purposes, mainly in legitimizing themselves in relation to the other actors with any forms of power. The Parliament during the nineteenth century Romania usually elected local lords and notabilities and thus it was in a certain way representative for the existing balance of power even if the process does not meet our present criteria of political representation. In the same time the political actors used this form of legitimacy in order to consolidate their own local hegemony, discouraging or blocking local competitors who in return gradually started employing as well the language of nationalism in order to created their own connections with the political center and with the other local centers of power. Centralization following a French model was rather an aspiration and it did not represent the daily reality even if it framed the institutional and political organization of the country.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> For two important contributions spelling the French model of institutional and political organization see Alexandru Zub, *Modelul francez și avaturile centralismului statal* și Cătălin Turliuc, *Modelul național francez și receptarea lui în mediul românesc*, ambele în Alexandru Zub și Dumitru Ivănescu (eds.) *Franța, model cultural și politic*, Iași: Junimea, 2003, pp. 9-18 și respectiv 19-28; *Modèle*

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What came with the modern state and its growing institutionalization of its bureaucracy and populations were the diverse bodies of professionalized actors who made the case for a certain agenda of public policies. These bodies of professionalized actors included the military who promoted national defense, the hygienists promoting public hygiene, the teachers and the writers promoting public education in general, the groups of artists promoting artistic education and sometimes challenging preconceived ways of thinking and social practices, the churchmen who promoted cultural, political and religious traditions etc.<sup>38</sup> Acting between political deciders in need for solutions for more or less pressing issues that would confirm, reconfirm or extend their legitimacy and the larger group of receptors, active in their interest for alternative solutions but rather passive, not able or not allowed to conceive these solutions, these bodies of professionalized people negotiated the cultural, political and social ideas that made possible the connection and the communication of all these groups and the creation of a more or less fragmented imagined community. Since the common political language that was promoted and used by these professional and social groups was the language of nationalism, other being easily sidelined, the imagined community of the nation was used as a paradigm for all the social groups that were able to exercise any form of power.

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*français et expériences de la modernization. Roumanie, 19<sup>e</sup>-20<sup>e</sup> siècles.* [French model and experiences of modernization: Romania, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries]. Edited by Florin Țurcanu (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> This perspective was very much influenced by the work of Sorin Antohi, “Cuvintele și lumea. Constituirea limbajului social-politic modern în cultura română” [The world through words. The articulation of the social-political modern language in the Romanian culture] in his *Civitas imaginallis. Istorie și utopie în cultura română* [The imagined society. History and utopia in Romanian culture] (Iași: Polirom, 1999), pp. 153-196 and by Elena Siupiur’s research on the history of Romanian intellectuals and professionalized groups of the nineteenth century.

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Usually the writers were approached as the group able to express themselves and eventually conceive and promote these political ideas.

In the case of this dissertation, it was about professionalized actors active in shaping politics and cultural issues at the middle level of the social pyramid: priests, teachers, officers. It was not them those who conceived the concept of military heroism and the artifacts associated with it but they were those who used it and promoted it. They represented the greatest part of the members of the initiative committees set up for constructing war monuments in their towns or villages, who supervised the ceremonies related to the Heroes' Day as well as to the other ceremonies organized to honor the memory of those fallen during the war, who raised the necessary financial contributions, sometimes over a long period of time, who selected the artists and their projects and sometimes intervened in changing the iconography of the war monuments and who were active in getting involved their local communities. Other social actors were the local notabilities officially in charge with the policy of war commemorations and, finally, the third category of social actors were those who took part in a passive way in the social gatherings organized for raising the necessary funds, who took part in the inauguration of the respective public monument, who took part at the following public ceremonies honoring the theme or the individual and to which or whom they were related through the cultural and historical memory disseminated one way or another in the public sphere during and after the First World War.

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The state understood as a non-monolithic network of local notabilities was already one of the major benefactors of public art in Romania during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth one. Its direct support, either financial or legislative, is visible in a series of activities that had an impact in the articulation of a visual and literary culture such as: a) the creation and the support given to the activity of the Commission of Public (later Historical) Monuments which, since the 1890s, under the initial leadership of Grigore Tocilescu, started searching, researching and protecting mainly Roman ruins while later under the influence of Nicolae Iorga it paid a growing attention to the medieval churches of the Danubian Principalities; b) the reconstruction and the repainting of numerous old Orthodox churches after 1863 when most of the patrimony of the Orthodox churches and monasteries in Romania was secularized; c) the creation and the continuous support given to public museums such as the state collection of paintings (*Pinacoteca Statului*) and the Museum of Antiquities hosted for decades together with the Romanian Academy and the University of Bucharest in the same building; and d) the orders given for artifacts illustrating the historical consciousness under construction and dealing with more or less recent historical events and figures that adorned the halls of numerous state institutions. Local officials represented a factor in deciding the local mayoralties' policy in the acquisition of art objects, numerous important artifacts depicting topics of national and military history being ordered or bought by the mayoralty of Bucharest.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Introduction into the general trends of the history of sculpture in Romania are offered in George

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A third aspect of this dissertation is the attention paid to the spread of the cult of heroes and the creation of public and war monuments during the nineteenth and twentieth century Romania as part of a process of cultural mobilization for war in the decades prior and after the First World War. The following section of this introduction was dedicated entirely to discussing this aspect at length. There are several factors and stages which are visible in this process of cultural mobilization for war and they are all analyzed for the Romanian case in the second chapter of this dissertation: 1) the articulation of a historical memory in parallel with a dominant narrative of national history; 2) this unitary perspective of national history was thematized in a series of written and visual artifacts and it therefore spread through literature, arts and public monuments; 3) it employed various hypostases of the concept of heroism and it thus contributed to the spread of the military heroism disseminated through the state sponsored educational institutions; and 4) all of these factors and elements were employed at the political level in the politics and the policy of public commemorations and anniversaries. Heroism was limited to all those who explicitly risked their lives either by fighting on the frontline and eventually died or by volunteering supplementary effort during the war at a time that war effort and the economic and social consequences of the war were supported by the entire country. An entire cultural tradition built during the nineteenth century limited heroism to men.

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Oprescu, *Sculptura statuară românească* [The history of the Romanian statues] (Bucharest: ESPLA, 1954); Vasile Florea, *Arta românească. Modernă și contemporană* [The Romanian art. Modern and contemporary] (Bucharest : Meridiane, 1982), pp. 224-259 for the period of nineteenth century; Mircea Deac, *50 de ani de sculptură. Dicționarul sculptorilor din România, 1890-1940* [Fifty years of sculpture. The dictionary of the Romanian sculptors, 1890-1940] (Bucharest: Oficiul pentru informare documentară pentru industria construcțiilor de mașini, 2000).

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Extensive attention was paid to the cultural, social and economic factors that favored the rise of the public monument in Romania and of the war monuments as a distinct category as embodiments of the concept of heroism.<sup>40</sup>

The description of all war monuments built before and after the First World War was not envisioned as a part of this dissertation. This is a major endeavor and their detailed classification may be the topic of an entire different dissertation. Instead, I described some of the war monuments built before the First World War in Chapter Two while the dynamics of the interwar war monuments are analyzed in Chapter Five. Based on these descriptions as well as on the observation of many more other war monuments, many of them illustrating this dissertation, I attempted at analytically grouping the sets of cultural references that were used as a part of the iconography of these war monuments. These sets of references were used by different groups for their own purposes in different ways in different times, these groups suffering many times a complex dynamic

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<sup>40</sup> Dan Grigorescu, “Muzeul de artă RSR. Galeria națională” [The art museum of Bucharest. The national gallery] and “Muzeul Aman” [The Theodor Aman Museum] in Mircea Popescu and Paul Petrescu, *Muzeele capitalei. Artele plastice și etnografice* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1966), pp. 15-95 (especially 20-38) and 252-256; Vasile Florea, “Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea” [The Romanian painting of the nineteenth century] in Vasile Drăguț, Vasile Florea, Dan Grigorescu, Marin Mihalache. *Pictura românească în imagini* [The Romanian painting in images/pictures] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1970, second revised edition 1976), pp. 127-213; George Opreșcu. *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea* [The Romanian painting in the nineteenth century] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1984); Vasile Florea, *Arta românească. Modernă și contemporană* [The Romanian art. Modern and contemporary] (Bucharest : Meridiane, 1982), pp. 38-224; Gheorghe Cosma, *Pictura istorică românească* [The Romanian historical painting] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1986); Cătălina Ionescu, “Reflectarea istoriei în plastica cu caracter național în spațiul românesc (secolul al XIX-lea)” [Representing history in the national art of the nineteenth century Romania], *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, vol. 8, nr. 1/14, 2009, pp. 201-209 is an interesting discussion without much supporting data being offered; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Penel și sabie. Artiști documentariști și corespondenți de front în Războiul de Independență (1877-1878)* [Brush and sword. Documentary artists and front correspondens in the independence war, 1877-1878] (Bucharest: Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2002); Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială în România secolului al XIX-lea* [The official arts movement in nineteenth century Romania] (Bucharest: Noi Media Print, 2008).

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themselves. I distinguished four sets of cultural vocabularies that may be further used for interpreting the iconology of these public monuments: the military/monarchic references; the references to the Roman heritage; the religious/Orthodox references; and the references belonging to the artistic language of modernism. One question left unanswered to a great extent in this dissertation is to whom were these public monuments visible, relevant and useful besides the mass of the involved people?

Finally, this dissertation does not address the complex process of delimitating the war graves and of constructing war cemeteries. The war cemeteries represented during the interwar period one of the most important forms of mourning and commemorating those fallen in the war no matter of their ethnic and religious background, many times grouping a diversity of such groups. It also represented one of the most important areas of activity for the Society for the Cult of the Heroes. In doing so, this dissertation distinguishes the formation and the expansion of war graves as mainly a form of mourning from the construction of war monuments as a more complex form of commemoration. The first one was practiced by all the communities and it sometimes represented the area where the ethnic and religious minorities were not limited in their effort to commemorate their dead and the context of their death. The second represented a cultural and political articulation in the public sphere, and thus under the scrutiny of the Romanian authorities, even if a part of them were placed within or nearby churches, cemeteries and war cemeteries. Focusing on the nineteenth century roots of Romanian nationalism for understanding the forms war commemorations took in inter-war

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Romania, what was the place given to minorities and what was their perspective on the process are questions that were not systematically explored and further research is definitely necessary on this regard.

### **0.3. The cult of national heroes and the spread of public and war monuments:**

The most visible indicator of the articulation and the impact of the cultural politics of war commemorations, war monuments were defined in this paper as intentional monuments designed especially for commemorating wars and for recognizing the contribution of those fallen during these wars. One of the most visible indicators of the impact of nationalism in modern times, they were not only the result of the affirmation of the national ideology during the nineteenth century but also the result of a series of interlinked processes taking place in Europe during the same century including those of urbanization and the growth of middle class groups, the articulation of coherent historical/national memories and the spread of literacy, the expansion of the public sphere and of the political participation, the spread of arts and of middle and higher education. As a part of this complex processes of disseminating a body of culture systematized to educate not only the elites but all the citizens of their societies, the cult of the heroes impacted societies and their culture and helped spread a specific form of heroism, the military heroism, which put emphasis especially on the idea of self sacrificing for the nation.

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As underlined above, the study of the cultural politics of war commemorations cannot be fully understood without paying attention to the concept of heroism and to the politics of constructing war monuments that were used as the sites for the commemorative rituals. They were part of a cultural heritage shaped by the em-/deployment of the language of nationalism in the processes of state-building during the nineteenth century, a cultural heritage which shaped as well the cultural horizons of those who fought during the war and coped with the experience of the trenches, loss of comrades, killing the enemy or taking refuge. The following lines discusses the uses of the concept of heroism in order to understand the pantheon of heroes where those fallen in the First World War were included as a part of the process of war commemorations as well as the development of public monuments during the nineteenth century in order to contextualize the group of war monuments.

### **0.3.1. *The cult of national heroes:***

Heroism explains the appearance and the spread of public monuments during the nineteenth century and especially of war monuments in the last decades of the same century and, most of all, during the interwar period. They all framed the processes of war commemorations worldwide. The following lines surveys the most important contributions on the relationship between nationalism and heroism, it discusses the functions and the variety of values associated with the concept of heroism as well as the

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role of the pantheons in the spread of the cult of heroes as a part of national history and national identity.

The concept of heroism is many times taken for granted as having the same meaning over time for all social groups and the same functions, Thomas Carlyle's essay *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) being given as an illustration of this perennial perspective and in the same time as an introduction to the study of the cult of heroes. To use the terminology of comparative studies, the concept of heroism was used, for most of the times, as a constant and not as a variable. On the contrary, like any other concept, over a long period of time the concept of heroism had different meanings for different people that lived in different contexts and it served a diversity of uses for as many people and groups. Why and how a certain type of heroism became so widespread during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth one? What were the factors and agents of this dissemination? What were the cultural trends it intersected? And what types of audience were they designed for and for what purposes? These are only several of the questions I had in mind when approaching this aspect of the cultural politics of war commemorations.

Historical approaches to the concept of (national) heroism are of a recent date. Andrei Pippidi discussed the hero cult from the Antiquity to the present days observing that "this civic cult might reveal both contemporary ideologies and a long filiation of ideas or beliefs at work [...] one the one hand, in a society deeply divided by old and new conflicts, there was either the hope of coalescing national unity around a popular figure

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or the intention of boldly asserting a popular tendency which should have produced unanimity.”<sup>41</sup> Approaching the making of Vasil Levski as a central hero of the Bulgarian nationalism, Maria Todorova observed that “National heroes are a recognized cornerstone of the symbolic repertoire of nationalism” and “there are typological differences between the place of heroes in different historic formations.”<sup>42</sup> Linas Eriksonas has comparatively approached traditions of heroism constructed in three countries, Scotland, Norway and Lithuania, observing they are deeply interlinked with the local traditions of nationalism: “Heroic traditions served as glue which helped to sustain national identity in the times when a nation was stateless or partially subjugated.”<sup>43</sup> Coming from a tradition of political history, broadened in the last decades by closer attention given to demographic, social and cultural trends, Robert Gerwarth questioned and analyzed the instrumentalization of a political figure like Otto von Bismarck after his death by both supporters and critics for their own political and cultural purposes. While paying attention mostly to Great Men, a special issue of *European History Quarterly* draws three important conclusions for nineteenth and early twentieth century conceptualizations of heroism: it confirms Ernst Cassirer’s hypothesis that “hero cults tend to be particularly potent and prolific during times of political and cultural crises”; they represented the result of a constant negotiation of different political actors,

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<sup>41</sup> Andrei Pippidi, *About graves as landmarks of national identity* (Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Maria Todorova, “National Heroes as Secular Saints: The Case of Vasil Levski,” IWM Working Paper No.1/2002 (Vienna: Institute for Human Sciences, 2002), p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Linas Eriksonas, *National heroes and national identities. Scotland, Norway and Lithuania* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 306.

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intellectuals and social groups; and the role of gender visible in the tendency of depicting the nation as females and the heroes as males while qualities ascribed to heroism were also those ascribed to masculinity such as virility and strength.<sup>44</sup>

From this diversity of approaches one may draw the observation that structurally there are three functions of the hero. First of all, the hero was used to describe a series of actions and facts belonging to a rite of initiation where at the end a youngster becomes a mature person, usually no model of behavior as a mature person being explicitly indicated or prescribed except of overcoming the hardships assumed by the rite of initiation. The narrative concentrated mostly on the beginnings of one's life, if the hero survived his later life being either ignored or shortly described. This was the role of the Greek-Roman mythology with its numerous heroes during the early modern period and later. This was also the role of the many characters of the modern novels during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in articulating one's self. And to some extent, this was the way the war experience was preached during the nineteenth century, most famous example being Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma* (1839).

Secondly, the hero was used to postulate and disseminate a model of behavior that was supposed to be copied most of the times in its entirety, the rite of initiation not receiving any attention. This is visible in the teaching of the military deeds of the medieval kings, the life of the Christian saints as well as of the actions and life of those

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Gerwarth, "Introduction", *Heroes cults and the politics of the past: comparative European perspectives*. Edited by Robert Gerwarth, special issue of *European History Quarterly*, vol. 39, nr. 3, July 2009, pp. 381-387; Ernst Cassirer, *The myth of the state* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 280.

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chosen as national heroes during the nineteenth and twentieth century and integrated in the narrative of national history. Biography as a genre flourished as a consequence of this second function of heroism in the same period. Cultural and especially political personalities or heroes of a lower magnitude were and are the favorite topic of these biographies. The periods of the childhood and youth were rather ignored unless the individual proved prodigious early in his/her life, the narrative dealing mostly with the period of their maturity, their deeds being disseminated or taught as an example or model to be followed.

Finally, in the last half of the century a hero is sometimes used in order to construct a coherent narrative, no matter how analytical it is in the same time, where attention is focused mostly on the pieces of the puzzle describing the context(s) crossed by the hero's actions rather on the person of the hero. This is visible in the renovations given to the study of biography by the new cultural history of the last decades, the most illustrious examples being Carlo Ginzburg's *The cheese and the worms* (1976) and Natalie Zemon Davies's *The return of Martin Guerre* (1983).

My focus in this dissertation is on the second function of heroism where it was used to postulate an exemplary way of living or a model of behavior during extraordinary moments. The hypostases of this function of heroism depended on the cultural context it served. In religious contexts, the cult of heroes took the form of the cult of saints. In the contexts of constructing legitimacy for the monarchs, it took the form of the cult of medieval kings and sometimes knights. The revival of the Greek and Roman mythology

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during the early modern period brought back the cult of gods and (founding) heroes. Finally, the advent of secularism since the eighteenth century established the cult of the Great Men may they be military generals, men of letters, diplomatic and especially political leaders embodying different but sometimes overlapping cultural, political and ideological trends. While the pantheons grouping the last groups are rather inventions of the last two centuries they were structurally grounded in the (Christian) religious calendars as well as in the medieval lists of monarchs. The role of the pantheon(s) and the competitions around it/them are highly visible in France where during the Third Republic republicans included men of letters such as Victor Hugo while Catholics gathered around royal and religious figures such as Joan of Arc. Their role in the promotion of heroism is discussed at the end of this section.

When not used as an anchor and connection at the personal level to a group of readers or to give coherence to an otherwise disorganized, hazardous set of multiple layers of intended or unintended meanings, constructed or projected significances or a more or less unified narrative, historical or fictional, or a more or less technical solution used in novels or recent biographical approaches in historical studies, the hero was instrumentalized by different cultural backgrounds in different intended ways. The utilization of the hero allowed and reveals multiple conceptualizations and different sets of cultural references and vocabularies that are structurally compatible. They sometimes overlap and different forms of hybridization appear but they actually coexist allowing competing and overlapping notions of heroism. An artifact allows multiple readings

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according to the reader's, viewer's, user's background, interests, experience and intentions. So are the concepts of hero and heroism. Romanticism disseminated the pantheon of national heroes once the concept of people/nation started to spread through literature and arts and later through the universities. A military heroism was designed for the benefit of the military training and it was disseminated through the public system of secondary and primary education, the army as well as the ceremonies staged by the nation-state. The religious framework absorbed and presented these national heroes as martyrs and saints. In the Romanian case, Michael the Brave was presented as a martyr for the nation, Stephen the Great and Constantin Brâncoveanu were revered and were even sanctified in the recent years, the military saints of the Byzantine Empire were preached as models as a part of the military training while many of them were adopted as patrons of regiments after 1870s, a practice that was reintroduced in Romania during the 1990s, this time for purely functional purposes and not explicitly intentional for celebrating the historical continuity of the Romanians. Subsequently, those fallen in the Great War were also integrated as martyrs of the nation.

In each of these cultural, social and sometimes political contexts, a hero was conceptualized in a different way and benefited from a set of different qualities that were emphasized in order to maximize his circulation. For example, a national hero like Stephen the Great was able during nineteenth century Romania to achieve a multiple identity with a set of qualities that were popular in different ways in each of these contexts allowing every group to emphasize those qualities that were considered relevant

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in-group. The military tended to put emphasis on his victories, the churchmen tended to put emphasis in his policy of constructing churches while the others tended to put emphasis on his diplomatic skills or on the apparent prosperity his reign represented for the principality of Moldavia in the second half of the fifteenth century. It did not matter if he actually embodied all these qualities in an equal way or to the extent they were emphasized. What was important was to instrumentalize him and his deeds for cultural and political aims that were popular during the late nineteenth century and later.

If contested, contestation for this type of hybrid heroism did not come from a different interpretation of its meaning but the competition was with those who have seen no meaning at all in it. One question left unanswered to a great extent in this dissertation is to whom were these public monuments visible, relevant and useful besides the mass of the people involved in their construction? At the individual level, multiple identities allowed putting emphasis on only one of these aspects while in the same time being in the possession of all of them. For example, a person with a literary education who also passed the military training, who was professionally active in an economic field and who was also religious in nature would identify himself/herself with only one of the hypostases described above while being able to connect with all of them.

The creation of cultural (national) pantheons or the cult of the great men at the end of the eighteenth century and during the early part of the nineteenth century was

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discussed by several authors whose contributions I did not have access to.<sup>45</sup> Referring initially only to circular buildings similar to the one in Rome where illustrious artists of the Renaissance were buried since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the pantheon came during the nineteenth century to define the selection of exemplary men of a nation and sometimes of a part of the political spectrum whose tombs or sculptures were many times gathered in one building.<sup>46</sup> Culturally and politically canonized and raised at the level of (national) heroes in order to being commemorated, their persona was subsequently used for furthering a cultural and political agenda relevant at the level of the nation or only for a part of the political spectrum. My own understanding of the concept was mediated by the contributions of Mona Ozouf and Eveline Bouwers. Mona Ozouf discussed the creation of the Panthéon of Paris and its subsequent cultural history.<sup>47</sup> Eveline Bouwers documented “how a pantheonic ideal type – roughly defined as a temple in which tribute it paid to the nation’s greatest men for the sake of stimulating emulation of their actions – was adjusted to match different societies [ultimately failing] to engage the nation whose existence they semantically and aesthetically trumpeted... [Still] pantheons not only

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<sup>45</sup> Contributions on the topic unavailable in Bucharest’s libraries (BCU and NEC) include Christian Amalvi, *De l’art et la manière d’accommoder les héros de l’histoire de France. Essais de mythologie nationale* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988); Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: essai sur le culte des grandes hommes* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Georges Minois, *Le culte des grandes homes: des héros homériques au star system*, Paris : Louis Audibert, 2005; *Le culte de grands hommes 1750-1850*. Edited by Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Gregor Wedeking (Paris: Editions de la Maison de Sciences de L’Homme, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Matthew Craske and Richard Wrigley, “Introduction” in *Pantheons. Transformations of a monumental idea*. Edited by Richard Wrigley and Matthew Craske (London: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 1-10.

<sup>47</sup> Mona Ozouf, “Le Panthéon. L’école normale des morts” in *Les lieux de memoire*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). Translated in *Realms of memory. The construction of the French past*, vol. III: *Symbols*, Translated by Arthur Goldhammer, pp. 325-346.

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responded to changes in the social world and political order but were actors in this process.”<sup>48</sup> She analyzed the debates around grouping tombs and statues honoring mostly military figures in dedicated buildings in London (Westminster and St. Paul Cathedrals) and Paris (the Panthéon) before and during the Revolutionary Wars and their replication in Regensburg (Walhalla) and for a short while in Rome again during the first decades of the nineteenth century, thus revealing the divided meaning given to the concept in different countries and cultures, the respective building initially failing to gather national support partly due to the competition from other media of commemoration such as “churches, public squares, medals or coins, collective biographies (‘pantheons on paper’) wax statues, panoramas, songs and verses, porcelain figurines and so on.”<sup>49</sup>

The pantheon illustrates the extension of the concept of heroism from monarchic, military and diplomatic figures to men of letters and science of the past or present. The cultural component of the pantheons of nineteenth century Bavaria/Germany and France became even more important than the military one. As a part of each national pantheon of Europe, one may discern three types or groups of heroes who were the object of public celebrations, anniversaries, commemorations and to whom public monuments associated with the cult of these heroes were dedicated during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth one. First of all, they were dedicated to former

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<sup>48</sup> Eveline G. Bouwers, “Introduction: the journey of the European pantheonic imagination” in her *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe. Comparing Cultures of Remembrance, c. 1790-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-15. The combined quotes are from pages 5, 6 and 10.

<sup>49</sup> Eveline G. Bouwers, *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe*, p. 7. Her research on the English case was previously published as “Whose heroes? The House of Commons, its commemorative sculptures and the illusion of British patriotism, 1795-1814,” *European Review of History*, vol. 15, nr. 6, 2008, pp. 675-689.

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rulers or historical figures, most of the times promoted as national (founding) heroes in order to promote political and national unity. During the eighteenth century they were the recent rulers such as Louis XIV or Peter the Great whose reign's political and social decisions were used for further strengthening the central power in France, Russia etc.<sup>50</sup> With the advent of nationalism aimed at overcoming internal political disputes during the social unrest of the nineteenth century preference in choosing national heroes was given to rulers of the period of the Middle Age. This group of figures was the most actively used in the process of cultural mobilization for war before the First World War. In addition to this first group, there were other two groups of heroes that were included in different cultural and political pantheons. One group was represented by the men of culture and science who lived, most of them, during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and contributed to the European or the local expansion of knowledge and infrastructure or to the advancement of literature or arts. They were first included in the pantheons created in the early nineteenth century and later they spread in all major urban areas. Finally, the third type or group was represented by men associated with the major political decisions contemporary to or still directly affecting the moment or the period when their monuments were built. This group spread most of the times in the second half of the nineteenth century and it included most of the time statesmen and later politicians of different traditions, military leaders and sometimes royal figures who recently died.

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<sup>50</sup> Charlotte Chastel-Rousseau, "Introduction" in *Reading the royal monument in eighteen century Europe*. Edited by Charlotte Chastel-Rousseau (London: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1-10.

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The dissemination of the pantheon of heroes was carried out not only through historical writings and public monuments but also through literature and arts. Literature and painting contributed to the articulation of an uncontested unitary perspective on the national history by referencing each other and visually reinforcing the perspective of national unity. Literature and paintings, and later public monuments, contributed some times to the construction of the cult of national heroes in the Romanian public sphere in a more effective way than the professional historical writing did. Subordinating history to the cultivation of language and especially illustrating models or flaws of character, they could not have done differently given their selective nature manifested through sampling and focusing on events that looked minor at the scale of national history but were more accessible to the reading public.<sup>51</sup>

In the Romanian case, similar to the other European cases, clustered around the concept of the political and cultural unity of all speakers of the Romanian language and articulated through literature, arts, historical writings and public monuments, the cult of (national) heroes was further popularized through theaters, schools, barracks, museums and popularizing books and it was used as a set of anchors for teaching a national history of continuous struggle against the never ending invading enemies, thus contributing to the mentioned above process of cultural mobilization for war. This national historical memory served as the basis for political discourses invoking the past as a point of

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<sup>51</sup> The basic survey of the Romanian literature is George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române: de la origini până în prezent* [The history of the Romanian literature: from its origins to the present] Foreword and edition by Alexandru Piru (Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1988, c1941). English edition: *History of Romanian literature*. Translated by Leon Levitchi (Paris: Unesco, 1988).

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reference and (anti)model for their present; it accommodated the growing number of anniversaries celebrating the modern Romanian state as well as the commemoration of the Romania's War of Independence and of the Great War as major chapters of the national history; and it justified and it legitimized the support for the Entente during the First World War and it served as the basis for Romania's proclamation of war to Austro-Hungary in August 1916.

### **0.3.2. War monuments as a distinctive category of public monuments:**

Some of the most important scholars of the cultural history of nationalism such as Benedict Anderson and George Mosse paid attention to war monuments. The first one was quoted in the beginning of this introduction. Before him George Mosse devoted an entire chapter of his *Nationalization of the masses* to them as a part of the spread of the culture of nationalism. "The national monument as a means of self-expression served to anchor the national myths and symbols in the consciousness of the people, and some have retained their effectiveness to the present day."<sup>52</sup> Mosse was less reflective on their iconography but more applicative in integrating the series of German national monuments built during the nineteenth century in his cultural history of the artifacts and rituals that helped building a visual culture that contributed to the *Nationalization of the masses* and to the rise of Nazi ideology in Germany. When dealing with the German

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<sup>52</sup> George L. Mosse. *The nationalization of the masses. Political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991, c1975), p. 8.

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national monuments, Mosse draws on the work of Thomas Nipperdey who already published an extensive article on *Nationaldenkmal*.<sup>53</sup> Later, Mosse focused his attention to the cult of the fallen soldiers as representing the embodiment of not only the ideologies of nationalism and militarism but also of a conception of masculinity which shaped the twentieth century.

It was the body of scholarship devoted to the cultural impact of the First World War that paid a closer and a more systematic look at the spread, the iconography and the uses of the war memorials dedicated during the interwar period to common soldiers fallen in the above mentioned war. Antoine Prost was among the first researchers who documented this type of public monuments in France.<sup>54</sup> Australian historian Ken Inglis opened the way for approaching them in a more analytical way by pointing to the facts that these monuments had the unique feature that “after 1914-1918, both official policy and popular taste leaned towards equality in death” which separated them from previous monuments commemorating battles or military leaders. While ignored for most of the twentieth century by art historians and historians alike because few of them were considered of artistic value the monuments dedicated to the First World War started being given attention once cultural history became more popular among the academia of

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Nipperdey, “Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert,” *Historische Zeitschrift*, nr. 206/3, June 1968.

<sup>54</sup> Antoine Prost, “Monuments to the dead” in *Realms of memory*. Edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, translated by Arthur Goldhammer vol. II: The construction of the French past: Traditions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 307-330; and Antoine Prost, “Verdun”, *Realms of memory*, vol. III: Symbols, pp. 377-401; Antoine Prost, “War memorials of the Great War: monuments to the fallen” in his *Republican identities in war and peace. Representations of France in nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Translated by Jay Winter with Helen McPhail (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002), pp. 11-43.

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English language in the last decades.<sup>55</sup> Jay Winter, the most important scholar of the cultural history of the Great War nowadays, has approached war memorials as the most visible evidence of a quest throughout the villages and the towns of Europe for a meaning of the Great War that was to be accommodated in their process of mourning by the generations who fought the war and survived it.<sup>56</sup>

While attacks on some public monuments makes them the most visible cases and therefore they attracted the greatest share of attention from the scholars of art and cultural history and nationalism, Jay Winter pointed out to the greatest part of the monuments which were attacked by a different kind of aggression, the oblivion of the communities living nearby them.

Their performative action in front of the younger generations was stipulated by Reinhart Koselleck who underlined that “memorials which commemorate violent death provide a means of identification” for both the dead and the surviving people, on the one hand the dead being identified as heroes of the nation while on the other hand the surviving people being more or less directly suggested to follow their model.<sup>57</sup>

Focusing on the war monuments of the Great War because they represent the heaviest part of the constructed and surviving war monuments in general and especially

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<sup>55</sup> Ken Inglis, “War memorials: ten questions for historians,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, nr. 167, July 1992, pp. 5-21. Quote at p. 7

<sup>56</sup> Jay Winter, “War memorials and the mourning process” in Jay Winter. *Sites of memory, sites of mourning. The Great War in European cultural history*. Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare nr. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 78-116.

<sup>57</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, “War memorials: identity formations of the survivors” in *The practice of conceptual history. Timing history, spacing concepts*. Translated by T.S. Presner (Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 285-326, quotation from p. 287.

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because of their egalitarian significance, the scholars of the Great War paid less attention to the role played by previous developments of public monuments and definitions of heroism that greatly shaped the articulation, the iconography and the uses of the war monuments dedicated to those who died during the First World War. Therefore, in the context of this dissertation, war monuments or the monuments to the fallen soldiers were approached as a category of public monuments which became widespread in a period of time of about a century spanning from the 1850s to the 1940s. Either under the form of buildings of more or less public use, gravestones, statues, street names or memorial plaques, public monuments and their spread in the modern era are a telling indicator of the ongoing cultural, social, political and ideological processes. Public monuments embody sets of ideas which are relevant at the regional, national and global levels. They were intentionally coherent and in the same time they unintentionally collected sets of cultural references representative for an entire society or only for parts of it or for only several social groups. In addition, public monuments are not only relevant for a diversity of social and professional groups and their projected images of themselves and of the others (and sometimes for the collective memory of a society). They are also illustrative for the political regimes in power and their policies of legitimization and social cohesion.

Monuments are approached by different trends of cultural and art history as political statements of the modern times. A volume collecting papers presented at a conference dedicated to the concept of public monument summarizes in its introduction

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by editors Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin the importance of public monuments in modern times:

[...] monuments enjoy multiple social roles. As things, they share their status with other objects: the term monumentality suggest qualities of inertness, opacity, permanence, remoteness, distance, preciousity, and grandeur. Yet monuments are prized precisely because they are not merely cold, hard and permanent. They are also living, vital, immediate, and accessible, at least to some parts of society. Because of monument can achieve a powerful symbolic agency, to damage it, much less to obliterate it, constitutes a personal and communal violation with serious consequences. [...] attacking a monument threatens a society's sense of itself and its past.<sup>58</sup>

The word monument derives from the Latin *monumentum* which comes from the Latin verb *monere* meaning to remind. Louis de Jaucourt's definition in the *Encyclopédie's* tenth volume (1765) was "(Arts) any architectural work or sculpture meant to preserve the memory of famous men or great events, such as a mausoleum, a pyramid, a triumphal arch and others...(Architec.) this world means in particular a tomb."<sup>59</sup> According to James E. Young, one of the most important theoreticians in the field of art history, the public monuments built in the decades around 1900 tend to present a unified vision of the past, they can easily be compared to an open space museum of the nation with several layers of memory while their iconography can be described as heroic, self-aggrandizing and figurative celebrating national ideals and triumphs. The author discusses the opposition between the nineteenth century monuments and those built after the Second World War emphasizing the deconstructive intention of the latter, their physical accessibility and lack of intentional monumentality; however, in

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<sup>58</sup> Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, "Introduction" in *Public monuments, made and unmade*. Edited by Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 1-10. Quote at pp. 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> Chastel-Rousseau, p. 1-2.

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spite of the shift from a figurative language to an abstract one, the centrality of these memorials in making visible a (counter-) discourse and promoting a (counter-) memory as well as the support from central and local authorities are elements that rather place them in correlation with the democratic transformations of the twentieth century and in continuity with the first group of monuments, thus making all of them part of a historical series of a public monuments most of the times placed in major urban crossroads.<sup>60</sup> The following lines only sketch some of the most important bibliographical references that shaped my methodological and historical approach of the iconography and of the dynamics of public monuments including the group of war monuments.

The most important contribution in historicizing and analytically approaching the cultural heritage represented by the public monuments was authored by the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl in his famous motivation of a law aimed at protecting the cultural heritage in *fin-de-siècle* Austria. He made the distinction between intentional monuments, commemorative artifacts aimed by their creators to celebrate an event or a person's deeds and the unintentional monuments, artifacts created all over the world in all periods of time and included in the cultural heritage for their historical value. Riegl discusses the differences between the three commemorative values of monuments, the art value privileged by the Renaissance, the historical value privileged since the nineteenth century and the age value about to become the most important in the early twentieth century, the

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<sup>60</sup> James E. Young, "Memory/Monument" in *Critical terms for art history*. Edited by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), consulted through [http://www.credoreference.com/entry/uchicagoah/memory\\_monument](http://www.credoreference.com/entry/uchicagoah/memory_monument); November 18, 2010.

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nineteenth century emphasis on historical value contributing to the valorization of the unintentional monuments or the cultural and historical heritage with its associated legislative and institutional framework.<sup>61</sup>

The historical approach to the rise of the public monument was initiated by Maurice Agulhon who discussed the multiplication of retrospective monuments in France during the early modern period and their massive expansion during the nineteenth century. Starting from the observation of the contemporary decline of building new statues and the decline of the use of figurative classical realism, Agulhon linked this process of multiplication of physical representations of human body or parts of body to the process of secularization, identifying the ideology of humanist liberalism as the paradigm and the moving force which promoted what he called the ‘statuomanie.’ The demolition or the (re-)erection of statues reflects the dynamics of the political regimes. While the Bourbon restoration of 1814-1830 sought a tight control of all statues, the bourgeois regime that followed allowed the private initiative of building statues outside Paris. The Second Empire was characterized by the rise of religious statues, dedicated especially to Virgin Mary, since Catholicism was a cornerstone of the regime, etc.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, Maurice Agulhon wrote two exemplary books on the Republican invention and uses of the image of Marianne during the nineteenth century.

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<sup>61</sup> Alois Riegl, “The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin,” *Oppositions*, nr 25, 1982, pp. 21-51.

<sup>62</sup> Maurice Agulhon, “La ‘statuomanie’ et l’histoire” *Ethnologie française*, 8, 1978, pp. 145-172.

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Art historian Horst W. Janson observed the dissolution of the dynastic principle and the formation of Great Men pantheons at the end of the eighteenth century and especially in the early part of the nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> He dealt with the group of intentional monuments he divides in three other major groups: 1) the funerary monuments, 2) the monuments dedicated to ideas or events and 3) the monuments “to great men – rulers, military or political heroes, or “culture heroes” (who may be religious reformers, poets, musicians etc.)”<sup>64</sup> He analyzed the changes in the iconography of the tomb sculpture during the eighteenth century and then he underlined that the second group of public monuments is “the creation of modern times, beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> century when nationalism and political ideology began to take the place in men’s emotions formerly occupied by religion.”<sup>65</sup> The rise of the third group of monuments, those dedicated to great men, is correlated with the rise of the Roman political model in early modern times and especially during the nineteenth century. Important for understanding the iconography of the public monuments in the period taken into consideration in this dissertation, Jansen observed the gradual replacement of the immobility and timelessness of the eighteenth century monuments by the historicity and the dynamics suggested by the late nineteenth century public monuments.

Françoise Choay authored a rather short but dense survey of the concept of monument over the early modern and the modern periods in France. The concept of

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<sup>63</sup> H.W. Janson, *The rise and fall of the public monument* (New Orleans: The Graduate School of Tulane University, 1976).

<sup>64</sup> Janson, *The rise and fall of the public monument*, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Janson, *The rise and fall of the public monument*, p. 21.

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heritage established during the nineteenth century in order to protect the ancient and the medieval ruins was gradually extended in the later part of the twentieth century to include numerous buildings erected during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, many of them dedicated to dwelling, transport or industrial activity at the time of their conception and erection.<sup>66</sup>

Sergiusz Michalski wrote one of the finest historical surveys on the dynamics of the public monuments in their cultural and political contexts in France and Germany during the last decades of the nineteenth century, in Nazi Germany and Communist countries as well as in several other countries since the 1950s. A comprehensive discussion of the iconology of public monuments it should represents the starting point for any historian of the cultural and historical heritage. Michalski focuses on the construction of the allegories of the French Republic in two major Paris's squares as well as the proliferation of monuments dedicated to thinkers, political martyrs, scientists and educators and the policy of their insertion in an urban tissue under transformation. He discusses at length the tradition of national monuments in Wilhelmine Germany and the projects of Nazi Germany, the abandonment of early experiments and the employment of the figurative style in the Soviet Union and its satellites, the experiments in finding new ways of representation of (counter-) heroism in Western Europe after the Second World War and a short survey of the statuary outside Europe. As for the monuments dedicated

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<sup>66</sup> Françoise Choay. *L'Allégorie du patrimoine* (Paris: Seuil, 1992) In Romanian: *Alegoria patrimoniului* urmată de Șapte propoziții despre conceptual de autenticitate și folosirea acestuia în practica patrimoniului istoric. Traducere de Kázmér Kovács (Bucharest: Simetria, 1998); In English: *The invention of historical monument*. Translated by Lauren M. O'Connell (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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to the First World War, the author observed that they represented “death by metonymy, not death by allegory. Metonymy replaced metaphor and allegory as the chief artistic instrument of progressive war memorials. Without this tendency it would be difficult to comprehend the cult of the Unknown Soldier in its entirety.”<sup>67</sup> Helke Rausch observed the proliferation of public monuments in the major capitals of late nineteenth century Europe and borrowing a great number of theoretical concepts correlated them with the rise of nationalism<sup>68</sup> while Nikolai Voukov used public monuments in order to discuss the representation of death and the reconfiguration of pantheons in Eastern Europe after the Second World War.

Andrei Pippidi pursued an extensive research on numerous loci of the Romanian modern culture, the introduction to his *On statues and graves. For a history of cultural symbols*, mentioned above, summarizing his complex and reflexive perspective, independent of any historiographical trend of the last century. Taking into discussion graves, statues and street names, he observed: “The grave, as a place of pilgrimage or at least of collectedness, concentrates the expression of devotion for a life dedicated to the nation or for a death sealed by sacrifice. The statue is an itinerant grave [while] the name

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<sup>67</sup> Sergiusz Michalski. *Public monuments. Art in political bondage 1870-1997* (London: Reaktion books, 1998). Quote at p. 82.

<sup>68</sup> Helke Rausch, “Staging realms of the past in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Western Europe: comparing monumental strategies of middle-class nationalists,” *East Central Europe*, vol. 36, nr. 1, 2009, pp. 37-62 and “The nation as a community born of war? Symbolic strategies and popular reception of public statues in late nineteenth-century western European capitals”, *European Review of History*, vol. 14, nr. 1, March 2007, pp. 73-101.

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of a street is the cheapest statue” where this itinerant nature of the statue refers to the representation of a cultural or historical figure beyond his place of birth, death or burial.<sup>69</sup>

In this context, Ioana Beldiman’s detailed study of the acculturation of French sculpture in the Old Kingdom of Romania during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth one is a model for placing artifacts in their historical contexts and dealing with them in terms of social command and reception. This work represented the starting point for my own analysis of the rise of the public monument and of the war monuments in Romania. Ioana Beldiman analyzed the major factors that influenced the dissemination of artifacts designed by French artists in the same period in Romania, most of all the role of art collectors, among them the Royal Family setting the trend, and of the local institutional framework of beaux-arts very much influenced by French authors.<sup>70</sup>

Overall, the public monuments constructed between 1850s and 1950s including the war monuments have a series of common features including: they were intentional monuments employing a figurative style and they were used as instruments of legitimization and centralization by the most diverse political regimes and as rally points for political groups seeking a greater share of participation in the public sphere. Subsequently, this dissertation pays attention to five dimensions of the war monuments: a) their iconography which is approached as a set of ideological statements, cultural

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<sup>69</sup> Andrei Pippidi, “Introducere. Pentru o teorie a istoriei simbolice” [Introduction. For a theory of historical symbols] in his *Despre statui și morminte. Pentru o teorie a istoriei simbolice* [On statues and graves. For a theory of historical symbols] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2000), p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Ioana Beldiman. *Sculptura franceză în România (1848-1931). Gust artistic, modă, fapt de societate* [French sculpture in Romania (1848-1931). Artistic preferences, fashion, society] (Bucharest: Editura Simetria, 2005).

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codes and illustrations of cultural pantheons and political discourses; b) their illustrative function for the ideas of historical event and especially of various types of heroism and subsequent pantheons and thus as an indicator of the process of democratization that the concept of heroism passed during the nineteenth century; c) their construction and use as sites for performing political rituals; monuments devoted to groups of men, their spread can be correlated with the dissemination of the idea of “people” with its growing use of national history in arts and in literature; d) they should not be considered only the result of a monolithic program imposed from top to the bottom even if the cultural, the political and the artistic languages they employed were designed by artistic and literary groups writing especially for the upper and sometimes middle classes; instead their creation should be also approached as being the result of the vernacular initiative and local resources, the result of the activity of social groups of a local distribution for whom these war monuments represented an instrument of connecting their contexts to the center(s) of political decision; and e) besides being illustrative of a rhetorical style and content, these war monuments contributed to the visual discourse which reinforced the discourse of nationalism with its embedded military heroism.

#### **0.4. Primary sources and research instruments:**

The primary sources used in this dissertation are legislation, newspapers, brochures, statistics, novels, poetry and other literary pieces, public monuments and especially war monuments as well as documents and images identified in the collections of the National

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Archives of Romania. Information on the history of the Romanian governments, their members and their major policies was taken from a series of instruments<sup>71</sup> while data about the most important personalities were taken from Lucian Predescu's *Enciclopedia Cugetarea* [1940].<sup>72</sup> The statistics used in the third chapter were taken from the three volume collection of Romanian history statistics compiled by Victor Axenciuc of Academia de Studii Economice of Bucharest.<sup>73</sup>

Legislation was identified with the help of the index compiled under the supervision of George Alexianu<sup>74</sup> and it was accessed through the collection edited by Constantin Hamangiu and his collaborators and *Monitorul Oficial* where the open debates in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate were published. National Archives' Fondul Parlament contains not only the projects of law that were not debated but also the discussions taken place in the special commissions created for each of the discussed law

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<sup>71</sup> Ion Mamina, Ioan Scurtu. *Guverne și guvernanți, 1916-1938* [Governments and their members, 1916-1938] (Bucharest: Editura Silex, 1996); Stelian Neagoe, *Istoria guvernelor României de la începuturi – 1859 – până în zilele noastre – 1999* [The history of Romania's governments since the beginnings – 1859 – until present days – 1999]. Second edition revised and added (Bucharest: Editura Machiavelli, 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Lucian Predescu. *Enciclopedia "Cugetarea." Material românesc, oameni și înfăptuiri* [The "Cugetarea" encyclopedia. Romanian facts, people and deeds] (Bucharest: Georgescu Delafras, 1940/1; Ediție anastatică Bucharest: Saeculum&Vestala, 1999).

<sup>73</sup> Victor Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări istorico-statistice 1859-1947* [The economic history of Romania. A historical and statistical research. 1859-1947], *Vol. I: Industria [The industry]*, *Vol. II. Agricultura* [The agriculture], *Monedă-Credit-Comerț-Finanțe publice* [Currency-Credit-Commerce-Public finances] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1992, 1996 and 2000).

<sup>74</sup> *Repertoriul General Alfabetic al tuturor codurilor, legilor, decretelor-legi, convențiuni, decrete, regulamente, etc. 1 ianuarie 1860 – 1 ianuarie 1940. Publicate în Monitorul Oficial, colecția Constantin Hamangiu, Consiliul Legislativ și în alte colecții similare* [The general alphabetic repertoire of all the codes, laws, decret-laws, conventions, recrets, regulations, etc. 1860-1940, published in...] Edited by Professor George Alexianu. Volumes I-II. Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Centrală, 1940-1941.

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projects.<sup>75</sup> When approaching this legislation the focus was on interpreting it rather as a set of debated and adopted administrative solutions to a series of existing problems rather than a coherent and prescriptive set of political and cultural ideas. Nonetheless both of these two approaches do not exclude each other but they are the two sides of the same coin.

Most of the archives used as a part of the research for this dissertation are those belonging to the National Archives of Romania. Within this dissertation the abbreviation ANR-DANIC was used for *Arhivele Naționale ale României - Direcția Arhive Naționale Istorice Centrale*. There, several tens of photos and postcards were identified in the collections dedicated to these types of primary sources (*Colecția Ilustrate* and *Fototeca*) and they were used to illustrate and to deepen the analysis of this dissertation. They were listed in the beginning of this dissertation and each of them has annexed information on its exact source in the body of the text.

The most important archives used in this dissertation is represented by the debates of the Commission of Public Monuments created in 1929 which contain extensive data on the iconography of the war monuments as well as the result of a survey of the public and war monuments ordered by this Commission in 1937. They are contained in the archives of the Department of Arts of the Ministry of Arts. On the other hand, the local archives of the city of Bucharest contain no information on the construction and on the

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<sup>75</sup> *Codul general al României cuprinzând, adnotate și cu numeroase note explicative și colecționate după textele oficiale, toate codurile și legile uzuale cele mai importante și aflate azi în vigoare* [The general code of Romania including all the codes and main and applied laws discussed and collected from the official texts] Edited by Constantin Hamangiu (Bucharest: Leon Alcalay, 1900-)

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inauguration of the war monuments constructed in Bucharest. In addition, several research instruments proved extremely useful in analyzing the spread of war and public monuments in Romania. Art history developed in Romania especially in connection with the activity of the Commission for Historical Monuments, the medieval and the early modern periods receiving an overwhelming great part of attention. The Romanian art of the nineteenth and twentieth century benefitted from a few holistic approaches to cultural artifacts such as those carried out by Ion Fruzetti. Little attention was given to war monuments even to those included so many times in illustrating and promoting the cultural heritage of Bucharest and of other major cities of Romania. I systematically surveyed *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei* [Contributions to the history of the Romanian art] edited by the Romanian Academy's Institute of Art History and *Buletinul monumentelor istorice* [The periodical dedicated to historical monuments] and *Revista muzeelor* [The museums' review], the last two unified during the 1970s and 1980s in *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor*, and I found only a few articles dedicated to war monuments. They are all used quoted in this dissertation. Documentation on war monuments started to appear especially since 1970s in the paradigm of returning to the narrative of national history which led to a resurgence of the interest on the historical patrimony in Romania and especially in the context of preparing the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Romania's independence, a celebration prominent in underlining Nicolae Ceausescu's self proclaimed policy of independence (1977). The Commission for Historical Monuments was reestablished for almost a decade while

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*, especially during the 1970s a series of new monuments dedicated to the medieval rulers considered as the most prominent in Romanian national history were constructed. In this context, the most active in documenting war monuments were Florian Tucă and Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu. The first was a higher officer of the Romanian army who travelled around the country and noted down descriptions of public and war monuments compiled in a series of repertoires, all lacking the standards of a proper historical research.<sup>76</sup> While all these were consulted, one of these repertoires was used in this dissertation to systematically survey the public monuments built during the nineteenth and the twentieth century. An alphabetic dictionary of all public monuments still existing in the 1970s and the early 1980s Romania, it was realized through compiling brief data the author found in a diversity of national and regional tourist guides. However, it includes a series of indexes of names with numerous mistakes of the indicated pages, a useful index of the characters represented by the surveyed public monuments and another index which groups the information by county.<sup>77</sup> The second author, a curator in a local museum, later an archivist and since the 1990s a member of the once again established Commission of Historical Monuments, carried out archival research on a series of public monuments which resulted in a series of articles, some of them quoted as a part of this dissertation,

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<sup>76</sup> Florian Tucă. *In memoriam: itinerar eroic* [Remembering: a heroic itinerary] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1971); Florian Tucă. *Monumentele neatârării: itinerar eroic, 1877-1878* [The monuments of independence: a heroic itinerary, 1877-1878] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1977); Florian Tucă and Cristache Gheorghe. *Altarele eroilor neamului* [Altars to the heroes of the nation] (București: Europa Nova, 1994).

<sup>77</sup> Florian Tucă and M. Cociu, *Monumente ale anilor de luptă și jertfe* [Monuments to the years of fighting and sacrifice] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1983). I thank professor Andrei Pippidi suggesting this author.

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uneven in their documentation and rather tributary to a political language articulated during the Ceaușescu's regime, used to stir interest for these public monuments, many of them ignored by the local Romanian authorities. One particular article was used as an instrument of researching public monuments in Romania.<sup>78</sup>

A survey over the inventories of the National Archives of Romania revealed no folder dealing with or belonging to any interwar association of veterans while the county archives of Bucharest kept the folders of several banks established during the 1920s in order to improve veterans' mutual assistance. In addition to their statutes and some additional information, their files contain no data. Furthermore, the National Archives holds only a thin folder devoted to the problems of the war disabled, the war orphans and the war widows. It contains only several tens of pages (inv. 2655). They are probably the result of an inquiry taking place during the early part of the communist regime in Romania, most of these files dealing with the activity of several individuals who denounced the lack of state involvement in the war veterans' and war widows' problems during the interwar period. A survey of the files of the Ministry of Health and Labor Affairs revealed no folder dealing with the files of either the three societies devoted to assisting the war disabled, war orphans and war widows or to the institution in charge with supervising their assistance (inv. 2523-2525). In 1935 a complete archive of the

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<sup>78</sup> Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, Monumentul de for public, carte de vizită a identității unui popor” [The public monument, a visit card for a people's identity]. In *Globalizare și identitate națională, Simpozion 18 mai 2006* [Globalization and national identity, a symposium of May 18, 2006] (Bucharest, Editura Ministerului Administrației și Internelor, București, 2006), pp. 102-111-151, available online: <http://www.cultura.tubefun4.com/biblioteca%20virtuala/editura%20mai/globalizare%20si%20identitate%20nationala/globalizare%20si%20identitate%20nationala.pdf>; Internet, accessed July 20, 2011.

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Society of War Disabled led by Ion Ghiulamila containing the files of the central and regional committees and their yearly reports was handed to the state authorities as a part of the process of having taken over its patrimony by the state. I could not trace these folders in the archives of the Minister of Health and Labor Affairs which was in charge with the supervision of this Society up to that moment.

Finally, the access to the most important and relevant archive was not available for research. Until the middle of the first decade of this century, the archive of the interwar society for the cult of the heroes could be found at the library of the Military Museum in Bucharest. Taken over by the newly established National Office for the Cult of the Heroes (O.N.C.E.), this archive was moved to the Office's quarters in Carol Park and it became inaccessible for researchers who did not work for this institution, partially due to the logistics of their relocation.

Most of the brochures and books published during the interwar period and used for the documentation of this dissertation were identified at Biblioteca Centrală Universitară (Higher Education Central Library) of Bucharest where the novels and the collections of newspapers quoted in the last chapter were consulted alongside most of the secondary bibliography. Concerning the possible use of oral history, interviews with Romanian survivors of the First World War was not possible due to the fact that if they were at least sixteen during the last year of the war (1919 in the Romanian case) they should have been born before 1903 and therefore be at least a hundred years old at the moment of beginning this research project.

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### **0.5. Methodology:**

To repeat in a systematic manner the theoretical and methodological perspective that shaped this dissertation, consciously designed as comparative and interdisciplinary, the Romanian case was placed in a global, European and regional perspective by paying attention to the long term developments of the cultural factors of war commemorations and by serializing the developments of the public and war monuments.

The relationship between the historical consciousness, the role of national heroes and the construction of public monuments were previously approached by most of the students of history of nationalism in a rather eclectic manner and in a similar way it was carried in this dissertation. According to Paul Veyne, a historical event is not significant in itself but only in relation to the other series of events, it represents the result of a selection, it looks like an event exactly because its historical context looks rather eventless or its significance is given priority over other moments and periods of history.<sup>79</sup> Structurally similar, what an event is for the historical memory and its narrative articulations, a hero stands for the memory of a community and a public monument or public artifact stands for the politics of commemorations. All three of them are a point of reference. While not relevant enough for understanding the historical consciousness and the dynamics of collective memory, this matrix is relevant for understanding how certain

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<sup>79</sup> Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971); Romanian translation by Maria Carpov: *Cum se scrie istoria. Text complet* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1999), p. 12: “un eveniment se desprinde pe un fond de uniformitate.”

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political and cultural discourses associated with the process of public commemoration became a part of group and national historical memories. It is not my intention to discuss at length this congruency, a discussion which goes far beyond my area of intellectual expertise. My sole intention in this paragraph was to make explicit the fundamental premise that holds together the diversity of methodologies and areas of research surveyed in this introduction of the dissertation. The following lines are stating in a coherent and explicit way the methodological and theoretical perspective that shaped this dissertation beyond the chronological ordering of the facts and of the events considered as relevant.

One of the assumptions of this dissertation was that the nation-state perspective is just another local perspective within the global, continental and regional perspectives in conceptualizing the historical research. Therefore, from a methodological point of view, this dissertation was designed as a case-study inscribed in a European comparative perspective with a focus on Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the comparative method explicitly framing my research while paying attention to its complements (transfer, entangled and shared history). Use of an explicit comparative perspective is one of the methods employed in historical researches, analyses and designs during the last decades, numerous debates being dedicated to its examinations and encouraged by the PhD program where this dissertation is presented.<sup>80</sup> The uses of the single case studies

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<sup>80</sup> Jürgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: the Case of the German Sonderweg,” *History and Theory*, vol. 38, no. 1, February 1999, pp. 40-50; Jürgen Kocka, “Comparison and beyond,” *History and Theory*, vol. 42, nr. 1, February 2003, pp. 39-44; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Comparative history – a contested method,” *Historisk Tidskrift*, vol. 127, nr. 4, 2007, pp. 697-716, Internet: [http://virgo.unive.it/eurodoct/documenti/Haupt\\_Comparative\\_history.pdf](http://virgo.unive.it/eurodoct/documenti/Haupt_Comparative_history.pdf) [2009-10-09]; Michael Werner și Bénédicte Zimmerman,, “Beyond comparison: *histoire croisée* and the challenge of reflexivity,” *History and*

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received less attention in these debates and this is the reason I found extremely useful an older article of political scientist Arend Lijphart on comparative politics. Lijphart distinguished six types of designing single case approaches where comparison was present, implicit or explicit. According to Arend Lijphart, there are case studies which are: a) atheoretical (entirely descriptive and at times shifting the implicit methodologies); b) interpretative (they explicitly make use of theoretical and methodological perspectives in order to analyze single case studies); c) hypothesis-generating (first time formulated hypotheses are generated in order to be tested on other case studies); d) theory-confirming, e) theory-infirming (both of them pursued in order to either confirm or infirm theories or generalizations earlier generated, many times by established scholars) and f) the so called deviant (even if explicitly making use of theories and methodologies they fit no previously formulated generalizations).<sup>81</sup> By making use of this distinction, this dissertation was envisioned as an application of the second type which is the interpretative case study. On the one hand, by making explicit use of the comparative method it aims at comprehensively and analytically approaching the Romanian case in its larger geographical and historical contexts and, on the other hand, it discusses the process of war commemorations as a part of the social policies of symbolic compensation granted

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*Theory*, 45: 1 (Feb. 2006): 30-50; Thomas Welskopp, "Comparative history" in Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO), hg. vom Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mainz European History Online (EGO), published by the Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz 2010-12-03. Internet: <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/welskoppt-2010-en> [2011-07-15].

<sup>81</sup> Arend Lijphart, "Comparative politics and the comparative method," *The American Political Science Review*, vol 65, nr. 3, 1971, pp. 682-693, especially pp. 691-693.

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to the surviving generations as well as the long term trends that configured them along the nineteenth century.

Making distinction between perennial and constructed nationalism is long overdue as it was pointed out in the early part of this introduction. In the case of constructivist approaches to nationalism, researchers tended to concentrate on two distinctive approaches. On the one hand, the focus was on how different groups of intellectuals conceived and debated the nation. These researchers rather ignored the social context of the impact of these debates and the horizons of reception that contributed to their dissemination or overlooking. On the other hand, the focus was on how nationalism was disseminated to the rest of the population as a form of cultural hegemony created exclusively by the elites, no room being left in this type of analysis to understanding how individuals or groups selected and used the information. Building on a series of previous contributions on the history of cultural politics of disseminating nationalism in the Romanian case, most of them above discussed in detail, this dissertation attempted at integrating the two above summarized tendencies by trying to understand, analyze and explain how the language of nationalism and its associated artifacts were considered useful, adopted and adapted according to the necessities of the contexts of reception, how these local contexts of reception tended to articulate their own ideas in reaction and as solutions to their social contexts and eventually how did they contribute to the redefinition of the language of nationalism over a long period of time in the Romanian case.

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This project was inspired and shaped by the magnificent Pierre Nora's series of *Lieux de mémoire* but it heavily draws on conceptual history and approaches to iconography. The reception of the project led by Pierre Nora in the English speaking academia contributed to the ongoing expansion of the field of memory studies<sup>82</sup> and to the debates of the eclectic (new) cultural history during the last three decades.<sup>83</sup> In addition to Maurice Agulhon's analysis of the Republican instrumentalization of Marianne in France during the nineteenth century, a model for the analysis of artifacts was represented by Ioana Beldiman's research on the transfer and reception of French sculpture in the Romanian cultural context during the same century. While inspired mostly by English theoretical and methodological models she documented not only how the creation of visual and written artifacts did not and does not depend solely on the intention and the conception of their author but her research is probably closest to the spirit of the *Lieux de mémoire* and of cultural history at its finest. Ordered by an art collector or by a public or a private institution or created for being sold during or following a public exhibition, the creation of cultural artifacts takes time and their theme represents a choice made out of several possible others. The social, cultural, educational

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<sup>82</sup> John R. Gillis. "Memory and identity: the history of a relationship." In *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*. Edited by John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 3-24; Maria Todorova, "Learning memory, remembering identity" in *Balkan Identities. Nation and Memory*. Edited by Maria Todorova (New York University Press, 2004), pp. 1-24.

<sup>83</sup> *The new cultural history*. Edited and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1989); Peter Burke, *History and social theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992); *Beyond the cultural turn: new directions in the study of society and culture*. Edited and with an introduction by Victoria E. Bonnett and Lynn Hunt with an afterword by Hayden White (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1999); Geoff Eley, *A crooked line. From cultural history to the history of society* (Ann Arbor: the University of Michigan Press, 2005).

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and political background of the author are factors in the limiting or enlarging author's palette of cultural references employed in their visual or written interpretation. Therefore a cultural historian may safely use these cultural references in order to understand the larger cultural contexts that at least favored the creation of the respective artifacts when it did not directly contributed to their creation or their removal/demolition. In addition, while most of the times they were conceived for aesthetical needs and purposes, these artifacts were used for shaping the historical consciousness of a community, its cultural contexts and they were used as references and anchors for a variety of political discourses.

For the purpose of this research, I was interested in who produced the artifacts discussed or only mentioned, how were they disseminated and for what reasons, who took part in this process and what were the factors that stimulated or inhibited the process of their creation and dissemination if this can be established; which social and professional groups related to the set of ideas the public and the war monuments illustrated; finally, and most importantly, what were the signified meanings (re)attached (and reinterpreted) to these cultural artefacts, who articulated them, why, in what context, with what means and for what purposes, how were these meanings disseminated if they were so etc. The reception of these meanings was assumed that it happened selectively and randomly according to the local needs, according to the understanding, the ability and especially the aims of the local actors involved in the processes of negotiating and disseminating these artifacts and their meanings. Assuming that reactions from below are

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many times mediated and articulated through the available cultural codes and political languages, and since these languages were designed by the cultural and political elites and disseminated through mass education, an additional question was why the political language of nationalism was adopted and for what purposes was found useful by the local political actors?

The war monuments built during the interwar period in Romania belongs to a historical series already locally rooted in the historical national memory and in the concept of (military) heroism articulated during the nineteenth century as a part of the dialogue between the local realities and the Western cultural and political models. While museums and exhibitions were instruments of gathering the newest information and systematizing the local diversity of competitive identity discourses, monuments and buildings were part of an iconographic program, non-monolithic but flexible and competitive as well at the local level. The performative aspect of these cultural and historical meanings attached to or directly contributing to the creation of artifacts was approached with the help of conceptual history. A dialogue between the history of ideas and social history, conceptual history allows best the recuperation, the analysis and the contextualization of the meanings invested in historical artifacts may they be material or conceptual.<sup>84</sup> Already explored by Reinhart Koselleck, uses of and approaches to

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<sup>84</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte and social history" in *Futures Past. On the semantics of historical time*. Translated by Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1985, c. 1979); Melvin Richter, "Reconstructing the history of political languages: Pocock, Skinner, and the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," *History and Theory*, vol. 29, nr. 1, Feb. 1990, 38-70; Balázs Trencsényi, "Conceptual history and political languages: on the Central-European adaptation of the contextualist methodologies of intellectual history" in *Prague perspectives (I): the history of East Central Europe and Russia*.

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iconography as an application of conceptual history allows a better understanding of the visual culture of the military heroism and nationalism as is was constructed during the nineteenth century and later and how it contributed to their reinforcement.<sup>85</sup> Iconography and the use of visual sources were amply discussed by Peter Burke like so many other aspects of the (new) cultural history.<sup>86</sup> Since this dissertation was not conceived as a monograph of one or several public and war monuments discussed or only mentioned, the representation of the war monuments in the photos and the illustrates included in the body of the text were considered to be rather objective and subsequently they were used as primary sources in order to describe and analyze the iconography of the respective monuments without questioning their editing. Black and white photos turned into postcards that were many times colored by their printers these illustrations were used for raising the necessary funds for constructing war monuments or in promoting the success of this endeavor. Iconoclasm as a concept is not used in this dissertation according to its proper and religious meaning where the representation of any figure comes under attack but in a lay conception where it deals with the systematic or selective destruction of representations of a certain ideological, political and cultural heritage in its entirety or

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Edited by Petr Roubal and Václav Veber (Prague: National Library of Czech Republic, 2004), pp. 142-163. For a summary in Romanian of several problems of conceptual history and of the history of political languages and idioms: Silviu Hariton, "Istorie conceptuală, istoria limbajelor politice și aplicații românești în context central și sud-est European" in Gabriela Pană Dindelegan (coord.). *Limba româna. Dinamica limbii, dinamica interpretării (Actele celui de al 7-lea colocviu al catedrei de limba româna (7-8 decembrie 2007))* (București: Editura Universității din București, 2008), pp. 525-532.

<sup>85</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, "War memorials: identity formations of the survivors" in *The practice of conceptual history. Timing history, spacing concepts*, pp. 285-326; Peter Burke. *Eyewitness. The uses of images as historical evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

<sup>86</sup> Peter Burke. *Eyewitness. The uses of images as historical evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

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only in some of its parts, the removal or the destruction of artifacts being the consequence of a form of iconoclasm which may take the form of extreme revisionism.<sup>87</sup>

#### **0.6. Dissertation outline:**

In order to accomplish the goal of approaching and explaining the topic of this dissertation, a structure of six chapters was envisioned. Chapter One circumscribes the topic of this dissertation in a long-term comparative perspective, both historical and geographical, by placing the Romanian case not only in the Eastern European context but also in the global context. Chapter Two analyzes the cultural context and factors that made possible the process of war commemorations in Romania by taking a long term historical perspective. Chapter Three deals with the social context of war commemorations in interwar Romania by focusing on the demographic and social consequences of the First World War and on the most important groups and actors involved in the process of war commemorations. The following three chapters detail the war commemorations taking place in interwar Romania at three levels, Chapter Four surveying the policy of war commemorations as it was conceived, debated and promoted by the political center, Chapter Five focusing on the construction of war monuments as an intersection of this policy and the individual participation and as the result of the activity of different professional groups directly involved in promoting war

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<sup>87</sup> Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay, "Introduction" in *Iconoclasm. Contested objects, contested terms*. Edited by Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (London: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 2: "iconoclasm, here taken to mean different destructive or transformative behaviors and attitudes toward sculpture, artifacts and other materials." Along many others, these authors use the term of iconoclasm to define a variety of contexts where artifacts are destroyed or suffer unauthorized modifications.

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commemorations and Chapter Six surveying sources relevant for understanding the variety of perspectives at the individual level. Each of these six chapters sheds light from a different perspective and on a different aspect of the process of war commemorations in inter-war Romania. For each of them extensive introductions and conclusions were written so they could be read independently of each other on the one hand and to explain their part in the structure of this dissertation on the other hand.

Chapter One contextualizes the Romanian case of war commemorations in a long term historical perspective and in a larger European and global perspective. Analytically structured and descriptive in its nature, it does so not necessarily by aiming to detail the information related to the processes of war commemorations in Western Europe, United States and the countries of the British Commonwealth. Instead, aiming to indirectly answer the question to what extent is the Romanian case illustrative to and distinct from the processes of war commemorations in Eastern Europe and in Europe and the rest of the world, this chapter focuses on several variables that are partially approached in a comparative way: the cultural continuities that are linked one way or another with the paradigm of nationalism and are relevant for studying the process of war commemoration such as the concept of (military) heroism and the construction of the national historical memory through arts, literature and public monuments; the role of the institutionalized religion and of the popular forms of mourning of the dead; and the social consequences of the First World War and their subsequent administrative, cultural, political and social policies aimed at coping with the problems of cultural demobilization. The three parts of

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this chapter discusses these variables in the decades prior to the war and their presence in interwar Western Europe as well as in interwar Eastern Europe.

Chapter Two surveys and explains the cultural context of war commemorations in Romania. The cultural discourse that framed the interwar process of war commemoration was articulated during the nineteenth century and it continued to frame the public sphere until the middle of the twentieth century and even later. This chapter discusses the articulation of the Romanian historical memory during the nineteenth century through literature and arts and its association with the concept of the (military) heroism. This historical memory justified Romania's entry in the First World War and the concept of (military) heroism was used for cultural mobilization before and after the First World War as well as a part of the policy and the politics of war commemoration. The chapter surveys the factors that favored the extension of the concept of heroism to public monuments in order to make understandable the larger context for building war monuments before and after the war as well as the social actors involved in the process. Not only as an illustration of these dynamics but also in order to underline the cultural continuity of war commemoration before and after the Great War in Romania, it discusses at length the articulation and the forms of memorializing the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878, a participation celebrated ever since in Romania as 'the war of independence.'

Chapter Three discusses the social context of war commemorations in interwar period by focusing on the social and political consequences of the First World War in

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Romania, on their role and participation during the war and on the dynamics of some of the affected social groups, the war disabled, war orphans and war widows, during the interwar period. It surveys the events related to the Romanian participation in the First World War in 1916-1919 and the financial and demographic costs of this participation. It discusses the apparent lack of political activity of war veterans in interwar Romania and the relationships with the land and political reforms of the early 1920s and the granting of war pensions and of a series of other facilities. It also shortly presents the creation and the activity of the National Office for the War Disabled, War Orphans and War Widows that was put in charge of taking care of the groups of people most visibly affected by the war during the 1920s and the 1930s. These groups including military officers, teachers and priests took part in the politics of war commemorations either as a way of justifying their own contribution during the war or as simple observers.

Chapter Four surveys the policy of war commemorations as it was promoted by the political elites and by the administrative bodies in charge of its supervision. It surveys the legislation of 1920, 1927 and 1940 through which this policy was articulated with their most important parliamentary debates. It discusses the activity of the administrative body in charge of taking care of war cemeteries and of supporting the construction of war monuments and other forms of memorialization, The Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War. It analyzes the most important site of war commemorations (The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the newly created Military Museum) and the national day established for remembering those fallen during the war, the Heroes Day

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which coincided with the Ascension Day. It also describes the activity of the Commission for Public Monuments established and active during the 1930s in supervising the numerous war monuments created as local sites of war commemorations as well as the creation of the Arch of Triumph in Bucharest as the second major site of commemorating the First World War and the creation of Greater Romania.

Chapter Five discusses the dynamics of constructing war monuments during the interwar period as the best indicator of the implementation of the policy of war commemoration by the professionalized groups mentioned earlier in this introduction. This chapter analyzes the general characteristics of these war monuments by focusing on their regional and statistical distribution, their iconography, costs and authors, an analysis which rather reveals a similarity of cultural background of the actors involved in this process in spite of their regional, ethnic and religious diversity. Different sections deal with the war monuments constructed in Muntenia, Dobrogea, Moldavia and Transylvania, Banat, Bukowina and Bessarabia as well as the fate of all these war monuments in the subsequent decades when Romania was under a Communist political regime.

Chapter Six discusses the process of memorializing and commemorating the war at the individual level. It attempts a “history from below” by focusing at the most important examples of literature dealing directly or indirectly with the war experience either on the warfront or on the home front. Most of them were written during the 1920s and they seem to have been widely circulated. My chapter does not attempt an aesthetical

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discussion of this literature but it approaches it from the point of view of this circulation, in spite of lack of the data related to the number of sold copies, by focusing on the main themes that are observable. A second section of this chapter discusses the public participation at the inauguration of war monuments during the interwar period as well as at the yearly celebrated Heroes' Day.

The final Conclusions survey the main questions and features of this dissertation and presents the gains of the research brought in. War commemoration was the peak of a tradition articulated mostly as a part of the cultural and political heritage of the Old Kingdom, a tradition greatly reconfigured by the experience of the First World War with its social, cultural, economic and political consequences. The historical memory articulated most of all during the nineteenth century around the purpose of the cultural if not political unity of all the speakers of the Romanian language and through the political idiom of nationalism represented the larger cultural basin against which the policy of war commemoration was articulated before and especially after the First World War. The (military) heroism was the model of behavior privileged through the state sponsored institutions of public education and military training before and after the war, it framed from a cultural point of view the process of war commemorations during the interwar period and it had been absorbed as a part of it too. Public and war monuments are the most visible indicators of the impact of this concept of heroism being however the conjugate result of a series of factors including the cultural and institutional construction of the modern state, the spread of public education, the expansion or the reconfiguration

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of urban areas and the democratization of the public sphere. The policy and the politics of commemorations represented the intersection of these long term cultural trends with the dramatic social consequences of the First World War followed by the voting and the land reforms promised during the war. The set of state-sponsored and state-organized public processions aimed at gaining legitimacy for the organizers and at conferring social cohesion to the rest of the population but it rather followed the dynamics of popular mourning than it set them in motion in spite of the educational aspect intended.

*Chapter 1.*

**War commemorations, West and East**

November 11 is every year the day of commemorating all around the English speaking world and France the Armistice Day, the day when in 1918, at 11.00 AM, fire ceased on the Western Front. Peace started to make its way back to Europe and to the world and ended the first total war in modern history. Celebrated since 1919, Armistice Day served not only as a major reference in the processes of commemorating the First World War in the countries of the above mentioned regions but it also helped building a common memory for the Western European countries that emerged victorious in 1918 as well as for United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. By becoming a common institution in these countries, the celebration of November 11 for almost a century reinforced the symbolic geography of a (Western) Europe separated from the Eastern Europe. This is mostly observable at the level of the historiography dealing with the

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experience and the memory of the First World War as well as at the level of attention paid to the patrimony created as a part of the process of war commemorations.<sup>88</sup>

Only during the recent decades Eastern European cases started being integrated in this framework of analysis as it was pointed out in the introduction. This enlarged comparative history of the experience and the memory of the First World War is helpful in several ways. First of all, it directly addresses the concept of a unitary Europe with its inherent historical and geographical differences and it reinforces it. Secondly, it helps improving the analysis and the understanding the cases of Western and Eastern European countries as well as the regions of the Western and Eastern Fronts. This dissertation deals with the case of Romania as several other contributions dealt with the cases of other countries or comparable variables. Thirdly, it helps at a better analyzing and understanding the (sub-)variables that are discernible or not in any of these cases and regions. These variables included the war monuments, the war veterans etc. Finally, this comparative approach helps answering more complex causal questions that were not previously addressed in any of the cases or the regions under consideration. One aspect which is left out most of the times concerns the cultural transfers from one region to another and from one case to another.

This chapter does not attempt an intellectual history of these cultural transfers which characterized the process of war commemorations in Europe but it merely places

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Jay Winter and Antoine Prost. *The Great War in History. Debates and controversies, 1914 to the present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

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the Romanian case in the broader historical and geographical contexts, may it be regional, European or global. Several questions framed my approach in this First Chapter of my dissertation. The main question is of course how the Romanian case is illustrative and in the same time different from the similar Western and Eastern European cases? Several features were presented in the introduction and they are discussed in the rest of the dissertation. At the global level a second question is how the Eastern European cases are similar and dissimilar with the Western European cases while at the regional level a third question is how the Eastern European cases are similar or different to each other?

These questions may be approached descriptively by presenting the most relevant information of each case under consideration and by drawing some general conclusions at the end of the presentation. However, by making use of the developments of the recent decades in applying the comparative method to the historical research the questions of this chapter became: what are the units of analysis that helps compare the similarities and the dissimilarities between the Western European cases and the Eastern European cases on the one hand and the Romanian case and the rest of the European cases altogether? And how these units of analysis and comparison help shed lights on the Romanian case on the one hand and what the Romanian case may say about the general process of commemorations in general and during the interwar period in particular? Certainly this last question concerns the entire dissertation and not only this first chapter.

Three variables were taken into account in approaching these similarities and dissimilarities between the Western European cases and the Eastern European cases. The

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first is represented by the cultural continuities that are linked one way or another with the paradigm of nationalism and are relevant for studying the process of war commemoration such as the concept of (military) heroism, the construction of historical memory through arts, literature and public monuments; and the process of war commemorations and the construction of war monuments before the First World War in Europe and United States. The second variable is represented by the role of institutionalized religion and popular forms of mourning of the dead knowing that the process of secularization affected rather only a thin part of the society, its largest part continuing to live and see the world through religious lenses even in the societies of Western Europe. Finally, a third variable is represented by the social consequences of the First World War and their subsequent administrative, cultural, political and social policies aimed at coping with the problems of cultural demobilization. Similar to the two above mentioned variables, this variable may be divided in a series of units of analysis which may be studied comparatively such as the role of veterans in the process of commemorations. These series of units of analysis include the US politics of granting war pensions and constructing war monuments honoring those dead in the Civil War, a process of war commemoration which took place way before the Great War and to some extent in parallel to the French and German processes of commemorating their participation in the war of 1870-1871.

In order to attempt answering these (maybe too numerous) questions, this chapter was divided in three parts. A first part deals with the cultural, political and social dynamics that may explain the politics of commemorations before and after the First

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World War. Consequently, it shortly discusses the spread of public and war monuments as a consequence of constructing historical and national memories aimed at conferring political stability and at instilling further political and cultural mobilization for the nation-states and the empires in the decades prior to the First World War. While it would have been preferable being integrated as a part of the second section of this dissertation they were separately grouped in this first section not only because they are rather overlooked by the contemporary historical literature dealing with war commemorations but also in order to emphasize the importance of the first variable mentioned in the previous paragraph, the cultural continuities which shaped the interwar processes of war commemoration in Europe and worldwide. A second part surveys the series of characteristics of the processes of war commemorations in interwar Western Hemisphere and it points to their similarities and dissimilarities with the Romanian case which is analyzed in this dissertation. Finally, a third and final part of this chapter surveys the war commemorations in interwar Eastern Europe with the similar aim of distinguishing similarities and dissimilarities not only with the Romanian case but also with the more researched and more known and visible cases of Western Europe.

### **1.1. The cult of heroes and public monuments in nineteenth century Europe and United States:**

Between May 12 and September 6, 2009, Palais de Versailles has hosted an exhibition entitled *La guerre sans dentelle*. Curated by Laurent Gervereau, it combined the

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collection of historical paintings of the *Galerie des Batailles* with a series of photos taken during several of the wars of the twentieth century, photos which depict the sufferings and the tragic consequences of the war at the individual level. The collection of historical paintings was opened to the public during the 1830s by Louis Philippe I (1830-1848) in order to celebrate the military glory of the French people at a time when Bonapartism was still very strong and national unity through national history was desirable. The collection of historical paintings was created at a time when literature and arts growingly started employing themes related to the national history during the Middle Age. It is representative for the vision on the war experience celebrated during the nineteenth century up to the beginning of the First World War, visible most of all in Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) where the war experience is praised as a liberating and galvanizing experience, a vision which spread throughout Europe, it supported the paradigm of the nation-state and it explains the enthusiasm on the streets of London, Paris and Berlin in early August 1914 when the First World War turned from a regional confrontation as many before into a European generalized conflict.

Only sporadically questioned during the nineteenth century, as Francisco de Goya did in his collection of paintings and sketches *The disasters of war*, 1810-1820 and especially *The Third of May 1808*, 1814, this positive vision of the war experience was going to start changing dramatically in Europe mostly due to the experience of total war during the First World War. While the policy and the politics of war commemorations during the interwar Europe were still grounded in the concept of military heroism

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valorized by this vision the impact of the Civil War in Spain is visible in Picasso's *Guernica* (1936) while things changed completely in Western Europe with the experience of the Second World War. This change of perspective at the popular level is documented by the exhibition *La guerre sans dantelle* through a series of newspaper photos depicting the horrors of the war in general, each such picture being attached to one of the historical paintings. In addition to reflecting this change of perspective on the experience of war during the twentieth century, in addition to proving the power of visual artifacts in documenting and representing the past and the reality, the exhibition was a visual discourse on the role of the cultural artifacts as instruments for cultural mobilization for or against war, ideologies and political programs in general.

While this exhibition was not meant being historical, its concept was consistent with the ideas put forward by James E. Young in the article quoted in the introduction deals with the "metamorphosis of the monument from the heroic, self-aggrandizing figurative icons of the nineteenth century celebrating national ideals and triumphs to the antiheroic, often ironic and self-effacing conceptual installations marking the national ambivalence and uncertainty of late twentieth-century postmodernism."<sup>89</sup> The experience of the First World War was the most important factor in shifting the general perspective on the war experience from a positive, heroic, almost romantic one, always praised in the public and private spheres to a negative, tragic, most of the times obliterated and/or

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<sup>89</sup> James E. Young, "Memory/Monument" in *Critical terms for art history*. Edited by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), consulted through [http://www.credoreference.com/entry/uchicagoah/memory\\_monument](http://www.credoreference.com/entry/uchicagoah/memory_monument); UIUC Library; November 18, 2010.

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considered as a source of social and psychological unrest. In the same time, the policy and politics of war commemorations during the interwar period continued to use the concepts and the iconography developed during the nineteenth century. This is why it is the aim of this first section of Chapter One to shortly discuss the interplay between the iconography of the public monuments and the conceptualization of heroism before the First World War and the uses of (national) history in arts, literature and in the iconography of public and war monuments for the purpose of cultural and political mobilization. The array of historical themes promoting heroism through arts, literature and monuments spread in various ways from Western Europe to the Eastern side of the continent where they were internalized for local purposes, most of the times similar to those from the countries of origin.

Respecting a dynastic principle, funerary monuments had a prospective character during the Middle Age being devoted to the fate of the deceased in the afterlife and only since the Renaissance they regained a retrospective character being devoted to commemorating someone's life and deeds on earth.<sup>90</sup> The multiplication of the retrospective monuments was a historical process that took place in Western Europe during the early modern period. The rise of the public monument during these times period may be correlated not only with the rise of princely and monarchic power as well as the growth of urban areas under centralized control but also with the changing attitudes towards death, cemeteries and death in general being gradually evacuated at the outskirts

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<sup>90</sup> Erwin Panofsky. *Tomb sculpture. Four lectures in on its changing aspects from ancient Egypt to Bernini*. Foreword by Martin Warnke. Edited by H.W. Janson (London: Phaidon, 1992).

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of the urban areas.<sup>91</sup> While Italian monuments to princes were rather sporadic it was France in the eighteenth century where royal monuments to Louis XIV and Louis XV were constructed in Paris and in other major cities as a form of affirming the royal authority and fostering national unity behind it. Apparently following Italian and French models, during the eighteenth century French artists constructed royal monuments in Sankt-Petersburg, London, Lisbon, Copenhagen and Stockholm, the celebrated royal figures receiving both sacral and mythological dimensions.<sup>92</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century, statues of Franz-Joseph in Austro-Hungary, Wilhelm I in Germany and Alexander III in Russia played a similar role. Initially restricted to royal and princely figures, public monuments started being dedicated also to important military and political men towards the end of the eighteenth century public while the series of events associated with and subsequent to the French Revolution led to the formation of pantheons of Great Men which indiscriminately included historical figures, military, religious and political men as well as men of letters and arts, the concept being taken further and used through a series of media.<sup>93</sup> As scholar Eveline G. Bouwers is saying, “Even though these characteristics – the Classical tradition, declining Church authority, political emancipation, scientific progress, and a growing national awareness – had made

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<sup>91</sup> Maurice Agulhon, “La ‘statuomanie’ et l’histoire,” *Ethnologie française*, 8, 1978, pp. 145-172; H.W. Janson, *The rise and fall of the public monument* (New Orleans: The Graduate School of Tulane University, 1976).

<sup>92</sup> Charlotte Chastel-Rousseau, “Introduction” in *Reading the royal monument in eighteenth century Europe*. Edited by Charlotte Chastel-Rousseau (London: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1-10.

<sup>93</sup> Matthew Craske and Richard Wrigley, “Introduction” in *Pantheons. Transformations of a monumental idea*. Edited by Richard Wrigley and Matthew Craske (London: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 1-10.

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the Elysium fashionable prior to the late eighteenth century, the wars of 1792-1815 led to an unparalleled politicization of the *exempla virtutis*.”<sup>94</sup> Symptomatic for this expansion of the pantheons as well as for the definition of Great Men is Thomas Carlyle’s 1841 essay *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* where heroism is analyzed in different fields of human activity and illustrated with the biographies of Dante and Shakespeare as the literary heroes, the biography of Martin Luther as the religious hero, the biography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the intellectual hero, Odin as an example of the divine hero and the biographies of Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte as the military and political heroes.<sup>95</sup>

The ideological, political, social and economic transformation of the nineteenth century contributed to a gradual democratization of the concept of heroism. The concept of heroism was initially confined only to the Great Men and with the expansion of the public sphere it was later extended to include representatives coming from different social groups in order to illustrate the concepts of nation and people. During the first half of the nineteenth century, historical themes were increasingly employed in literature and arts, historical characters and scenes being used as references, symbols, models and counter-models for the contemporary political debates and struggles. The growing use of history in arts and literature led to the invention of the idea of historical patrimony

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<sup>94</sup> Eveline G. Bouwers. *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe. Comparing cultures of remembrance, c. 1790-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Carlyle’s *On heroes, hero-worship and the heroic in history* [1841]. Notes and introduction by Michael K. Goldberg, text established by Michael K. Goldberg, Joel J. Brattin and Mark Engel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

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composed out of historical monuments to be preserved and to be used in the aesthetic education of the public. In parallel with the spread of the historical novels and plays and the making of the public museums such as the Louvre, visual artifacts created in this period, and later, greatly contributed in setting up the imagery supporting the paradigm of national history in Western Europe. The above mentioned *Galerie des Batailles* was set up as a public museum in Versailles at a time when Alexandre Dumas-pere and Victor Hugo conceived and published their historical novels and plays.<sup>96</sup> Since the 1830s, the idea of historical patrimony started to develop as a consequence of this process and unintentional monuments such as historical ruins and medieval constructions including medieval churches, previously treated more like exotic artifacts and as sources of personal inspiration, received a growing attention with consequences on the closer attention given to the role of intentional public monuments in educating the public.<sup>97</sup>

History was subordinated to the construction of the national memory of a common past and culture for most of the European countries during the nineteenth century as it was used elsewhere during the twentieth century. This was the theme of major historiographical endeavors especially during the last decades.<sup>98</sup> However, as

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<sup>96</sup> Francis Haskell, "The manufacture of the past in nineteenth-century painting," *Past&Present*, nr. 53, November 1971, pp. 109-120.

<sup>97</sup> Alois Riegl, "The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin," *Oppositions*, nr. 25, 1982, pp. 21-51; Françoise Choay. *L'Allégorie du patrimoine* (Paris: Seuil, 1992). In English: *The invention of historical monument*. Translated by Lauren M. O'Connell (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>98</sup> One such major project dealing with the intertwining of historical writing and historical research with the national ideology is *Representations of the Past: the Writing of National Histories in Europe*, financed by European Science Foundation (2003-2008) chaired by Stefan Berger, Cristoph Conrad and Guy Marchal. For a presentation of its agenda see the special issue of *Storia della Storiografia*, nr. 50,

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numerous histories of historical writing ever since Herbert Butterfield point out, visions of the (ancient) past were and are inherently imbedded in the various ideological programs that transformed one way or another most of the Western Europe but also Eastern Europe from the eighteenth century to the twentieth one, national history being one form of local history in comparison to the world history and the European history. The history of Athens's struggle with Sparta and the history of Greek cities' struggle with the Persian Empire informed the early processes of democratization and represented a major factor in supporting Greece's War of Independence during the 1820s. The history of Roman Empire was a major reference in establishing Napoleon Bonaparte's regime in France and his further administrative and legislative reforms that swept Europe one way or another. In this context, as it is known, the employment of the Latin origins, based on linguistic arguments, played a major role among the Romanian elites not only in articulating a historical memory and a spirit of self confidence but also in gaining, during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, political legitimacy among the classically trained European political elites. This vision of history was a major factor in framing the Romanian history as a history of struggle for defending Europe and its institutions against "barbarians" like the Hungarians or the Ottomans. In this context, while museums and exhibitions were instruments of gathering the newest information and systematizing the local diversity and competitive identity discourses, monuments and buildings were part of an iconographic program, non-monolithic but flexible and competitive at the local level.

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2006 with the theme "Europe and its national histories" edited by Stefan Berger and Andrew Mycock as well as Stefan Berger, "Representations of the past: The writing of national histories in Europe," *Debatte*, vol. 12, nr. 1, 2004, pp. 73-96.

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While for most of the nineteenth century “heroism” was confined only to describing the deeds of the Great Men, models to be followed mostly by the instructed individuals, the “people” became a growingly visible subject represented mostly in painting and literature and later it included public monuments. After the mid-nineteenth century the Great Men started being represented as surrounded by personifications and typified representatives of social groups. Further, starting with the decades around the turn of the nineteenth century great men were rather integrated among the social groups they were considered representative for or they led or they worked with even if particular features that helped their identification were still preserved. Thus their deeds were no longer considered to be exclusively belonging to them but the result of a collective effort put in motion and sometimes supervised by their genius.

Several factors may be taken into account for understanding this transformation of “heroism” from a model for elites to a model for masses of people during the nineteenth century. Here are three such factors even if several may be revealed by further research: a) the spread of mass literacy enlarged the reading market and demanded accessible heroes which is visible in the spread of popular novels and theater; b) the expansion of the public sphere and of political participation; and c) the generalization of military conscription in Europe after the victories of Prussia during the 1860s and 1870 and spread of militarism.

Militarism represented during the nineteenth century a political doctrine which considered that war was either the only or the ultimate way of solving disputes in the

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arena of international relationships and subsequently societies had to be organized and prepared for war, either by subordinating the civil society entirely to the military establishment (as Otto von Bismarck managed in Prussia) or at least training all men fit for fighting in military techniques and offering significant portions of state budgets to the standing armies during peace time. History since Antiquity used to be invoked to support the argument that war was the natural state of mankind and that visions of permanent peace and international cooperation were forms of socialist utopia or personal naivety.<sup>99</sup> The embodiment of this doctrine was represented by the generalization of military conscription by the end of the nineteenth century. Militarism transformed military conscription from an application of the liberal idea of ‘levée en masse’ associated with the French Revolution to an application of the more conservative ‘nation in arms’, especially under the impact of the Prussian military victories of 1860s. Conscript armies were introduced step-by-step all over Europe and in many instances citizen rights were awarded in exchange for the ‘blood tax’.<sup>100</sup>

Military conscription offered an experience to large masses of men and represented the basis for the development after the 1880s of local and national processes of commemorating the war experience of the nineteenth century. This process of war commemoration celebrated the “heroic” deeds of the common soldiers, a process of

<sup>99</sup> Volker R. Berghahn, *Militarism. The History of an International Debate, 1861-1979* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, c1981), pp. 7-30 and Jakob Vogel, “Military folklore, Eigensinn: Folkloric militarism in Germany and France, 1871-1914,” *Central European History*, vol. 33, 2000, pp. 487-504.

<sup>100</sup> Barry R. Posen, “Nationalism, the mass army, and military power”, *International Security*, vol. 18, nr. 2, 1993, pp. 80-124 and Sabina Loriga, “The military experience” in Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt (eds.) *A History of Young People in the West*, Vol. 2, *Stormy evolution to modern times*. Translated by Carol Volk (Cambridge Mass. 1997 [1994]), pp. 11-36.

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memorialization aimed at culturally mobilizing the male population for the (possible) war(s) to come. The “hero” turned into collective “heroes” while “heroism” and “heroic” deeds tended to refer only to acts of decisive courage, braveness and self-sacrifice during the war, sometimes comradeship and brotherhood into arms, all chanted in patriotic literature, textbooks and public and school ceremonies. All these transformations made possible during the nineteenth century the appearance of war monuments as a distinct group of public monuments grounded in the paradigm of national history, in a military definition of heroism and in the uses of public ceremonies for cultural and political mobilization.

In correlation with the growth of the number of instructed people and the number of citizens active in the public sphere, the number of public monuments, especially of statues, increased exponentially in the decades prior to the First World War as a part of the cultural politics of state-/nation-/empire-building all over Europe, the cultural codes associated with the local centers of power helping in (re)inventing the local and national political traditions or including them in a national or imperial framework.<sup>101</sup> As already discussed in the introduction, in addition to religious statues of a symbolic nature, public monuments were dedicated most of the times to three types of figures or heroes: a) men

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<sup>101</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, “Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870-1914” in *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 263-306.

Helke Rausch, “Staging realms of the past in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Western Europe: comparing monumental strategies of middle-class nationalists,” *East Central Europe*, vol. 36, nr. 1, 2009, pp. 37-62 and “The nation as a community born of war? Symbolic strategies and popular reception of public statues in late nineteenth-century western European capitals,” *European Review of History*, vol. 14, nr. 1, March 2007, pp. 73-101.

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associated with the major political decisions contemporary to or still directly affecting the moment or the period such as royal figures, statesmen and military leaders, a cult around one of them serving most of the times as an instrument of political legitimization; b) men of culture and science especially of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to illustrate the genius or the level of civilization of the respective people; and c) historical figures, usually belonging to the period of the Middle Age, who were those acclaimed as national heroes and used most of the times to promote political and national unity.

In France, building and removing monuments followed the violent political changes started in 1789 and both of these types of action reflected the competing political and ideological discourses. Trajan's Column inspired July Column and Vendome Column in Paris while representations of Marianne signaled the support for secularism in a country divided by the memory and the legacy of the Revolution.<sup>102</sup> It was only the Third Republic that pursued a systematic program of disseminating its set of symbols through visual artifacts decorating public buildings and public squares. While the monument of Défence was built in the last days of the Second Empire (Amédée Doblemaud) and the statue of Jeanne D'Arc (Emmanuel Fremiet) was erected while awaiting Henri V to accept the tricolor, starting the late 1870s numerous busts of Marianne and statues of political figures of the French Revolution or cultural figures of

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<sup>102</sup> For the use of Marianne: Maurice Agulhon. *Marianne into battle. Republican imagery and symbolism in France, 1789-1880*. Translated by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981, c1979).

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the French Enlightenment started to adorn the urban areas and the public buildings.<sup>103</sup>

Some of the most important statues were the static *Monument to the Republic* of Leopold and Charles Morice (Place de la République, Paris, 1879-1883) and the more dynamic *Triumph de la République* of Jules Dalou (Place de la Nation, Paris, 1889-1899). In addition to them, several hundred monuments appeared in Paris and elsewhere in France in the decades prior to 1914. A part of them, directly associated with the French Revolution, were removed during the Nazi occupation and the Vichy regime and many of them were unfortunately destroyed, partially or entirely.<sup>104</sup>

The commemoration of the Sixth Coalition's victory over Napoleon Bonaparte's army at Leipzig in October 1813 played, during the subsequent decades, a major role in celebrating Prussia's strength, the battle being one of the largest fought before the First World War. Already in 1815 Prussia introduced in the Lutheran churches a day of honoring those dead in the Sunday before the Advent (Totensonntag).<sup>105</sup> The so called 1813 War of Liberation became a source of inspiration for the Liberal students from the German speaking space who adopted the black, red and gold colors of the Lützow volunteer corps, its memory was promoted especially by the Turnverein movement founded by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn while the officially promoted discourse used it as an

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<sup>103</sup> Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne au pouvoir. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1880 à 1914* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989)

<sup>104</sup> Sergiusz Michalski. *Public monuments. Art in political bondage 1870-1997* (London: Reaktion books, 1998), pp. 13-55;

<sup>105</sup> Milorad Ekmečić, "The emergence of St. Vitus Day as the principal national holiday of the Serbs" in *Kosovo: Legacy of a medieval battle*. Edited by Wayne Vucinich and Thomas A. Emmert (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs, 1991), p. 332.

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important source of political legitimacy and, after 1860, as an argument for rallying the other German states around Prussia. Almost no public monument or statue was built before the foundation of the *Kaiserreich*, instead festivals, paintings and historical writings were the preferred media.<sup>106</sup> In 1913 the battle of Leipzig was commemorated through the inauguration of the largest *National-denkmäler*, *The Monument to the Battle of Nations in Leipzig*, authored by Bruno Schmitz.

During the nineteenth century, the tradition of *National-denkmäler* consisted in the construction of massive granite monuments placed at the heart of the countryside, symbolically differentiating from if not opposing the bronze and marble statues of France mostly built in urban tissues. Joseph-Ernst von Bandel's Arminius monument situated in the Teutoburg Forest (1839-1875) symbolically identified the German nation with the ancient German tribes and the victory of the latter (9 AD) was celebrated as the victory of their supposedly healthier and uncorrupted way of living over the Roman cosmopolitanism, so much prized in Paris and France where the Roman political traditions represented the model and the foundation of the First Republic and of the First Empire. After the creation of the *Kaiserreich*, Johannes Schilling's monument of Niederwald (inaugurated in 1883) representing a *Germania* very similar to the Statue of Liberty and Bruno Schmitz's monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I at the confluence of Moselle and Rhine (inaugurated 1897) symbolically guarded Germany's border with

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<sup>106</sup> Christopher Clark, "The Wars of Liberation in Prussian memory: reflections on the memorialization of war in early nineteenth century Germany," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 68, nr. 3, September 1996, pp. 550-576.

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France. It was financed mainly by public institutions and the upper and middle classes.<sup>107</sup>

Bruno Schmitz authored other two major monuments situated in Porta Westfalica and on the Kyffhäuser Mountain (both inaugurated in 1896). All these National- *denkmäler* became sites of national pilgrimage and they can be considered war monuments as well since they either celebrate victories in battles or call for closer scrutiny of the Rhine frontier and subsequently preparation for other possible wars. In addition, tens of statues dedicated to Kaiser Wilhelm I and later hundreds of monuments dedicated to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck spread all over Wilhelmine Germany during the decades prior to the First World War, solidifying the visual culture of *volkish* militarism that influenced to a great extent the political affiliations of numerous Germans during the interwar period.<sup>108</sup>

The rest of Europe was affected by a similar process. In Austria, statues of Joseph II were erected by the German communities and they became sometimes contested sites when placed in ethnically divided communities as Nancy Wingfield has documented for the Czech lands.<sup>109</sup> In Hungary, after 1896, local authorities constructed numerous columns celebrating the Millennium, most of the times these monuments being placed in

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<sup>107</sup> Patricia Mazón, “Germania triumphant: the Niederwald national monument and the liberal moment in Imperial Germany,” *German History*, vol. 18, nr. 2, 2000, pp. 162-192. The authoress observed “the tension between the universalistic top part of the monument and the particularistic base: whereas [the statue of] Germania personified the timeless and most inclusive elements of the nation, the bottom half of the monument addressed the specific circumstances of its founding [the victory over France and the proclamation of the empire],” p. 176.

<sup>108</sup> Sergiusz Michalski. *Public monuments*, pp. 56-76; Rudy Koshar, *From monuments to traces. Artifacts of German memory, 1870-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 15-79; George Mosse, *Nationalisation of the masses*, pp. 47-72.

<sup>109</sup> Nancy Wingfield, “Statues of Joseph II as sites of German identity” in Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield (eds.) *Staging the past: the politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the present* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 178-205.

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mountainous regions or on high hills, some of them symbolically guarding Hungary's borders of 1867.<sup>110</sup> Numerous public monuments were built at that time in Hungary to commemorate the medieval battles with the Tatars and the Ottomans, the eighteenth century struggles with the Habsburgs and especially the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848-1849 as well as the reign of Matthias Corvinus. A chronologic and thematic survey of the public monuments built in Budapest was carried out at the end of the second section of Chapter One in order to demonstrate the synchronicity of the Hungarian and the Romanian efforts of building a national historical memory illustrated through a variety of media including monuments, efforts which represented local articulations of the larger European trend discussed in this section.

In the Balkans, monumental statues meant to illustrate and remind founding moments and past wars privileged by the national historical memories of the respective states were erected to Michael the Brave in Bucharest (1874), to Milos Obrenovici in Belgrade (1882), to Stephen the Great in Iași (1883), to Theodoros Kolokotronis in Athens (1904) and to the Russian Tsar Alexander II in front of the Bulgarian Parliament in Sofia (1907).<sup>111</sup> The national historical memory of these countries populated in their greatest parts by communities which adhered to the Orthodox Christian confession was also illustrated by the construction of large metropolitan cathedrals or by the

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<sup>110</sup> Bálint Varga, "Arpad meets the city: the reception of the 1896 Millenium monuments in the Hungarian peripheries", paper presented at the international conference *Le Culte des héros en Europe centrale (1880-1945) – Aspects transnationaux et interdisciplinaires* (Paris, 25-26 November 2011).

<sup>111</sup> Ioana Beldiman. *Sculptura franceză în România (1848-1931). Gust artistic, modă, fapt de societate* [French sculpture in Romania (1848-1931). Artistic preferences, fashion, society] (Bucharest: Editura Simetria, 2005), p. 36.

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reconstruction of important medieval ones. In Istanbul a Monument to Liberty was constructed in 1909-1911 and played the role of a pantheon.

In this context, where the symbolic legacy of the First Republic and Napoleonic wars heavily influenced the political cultures in France and Germany, the commemoration of the French-Prussian war of 1870 became the vehicle for employing collective heroes in parallel with a similar process of commemorating the Civil War in United States so well before the First World War. This process of commemoration was rather uneven and it was integrated mostly in the above mentioned cultural policies of nation-/empire-building.<sup>112</sup> The gradual democratization of heroism and the heyday of this military version of heroism are visible after the Great War in the process of war commemoration that swept (mostly the victorious states of) Europe. The following section surveys the main characteristics of this process during its heyday with its embedded cult of heroes and the spread of war monuments in Europe and worldwide.

After the Second World War, public monuments spread especially in the countries where a process of constructing a historical consciousness supporting and legitimizing local forms of power was undergoing or where major transformations of the local cultural and historical paradigms were undertaken. For the first instance, the most visible cases are those of the Soviet Union and all the other Communist states where a realist

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<sup>112</sup> Annette Becker, "Monuments aux morts après la guerre de Sécession et la guerre de 1870-1871: un legs de la guerre mondiale?" *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, nr. 167, July 1992, pp. 23-40; David G. Troyansky. "Monumental politics: national history and local memory in French Monuments aux Morts in the department of the Aisne since 1870," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 15, nr. 1, Spring 1987, pp. 121-141; Karine Varley, "Contesting concepts of the nation in arms: French memories of 1870-1 in Dijon," *European History Quarterly*, vol. 36, nr. 4, 2006, pp. 548-573;

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figurative style was heavily employed e.g. the tradition of celebrating the Great Patriotic War used a similar pattern of commemorative practices and artifacts as they are discussed in this dissertation for the case of commemorating the Great War. In the second instance, most of the times in Western Europe, non figurative approaches signaled the departure from the heroic and self-aggrandizing tradition built during the nineteenth century where numerous public monuments commemorating the Holocaust were non figurative and sometimes not monumental at all. In this context, the war monuments constructed within the paradigm of the nation-state during the nineteenth century and especially during the first half of the twentieth century were affected most of the times by indifference while the cult of heroes was openly questioned when it did not decay. In the countries where abrupt political changes emerged, such as those of 1945-1948 and of 1989 in Eastern Europe, the most visible monuments associated with the previous political regime were affected by various forms of iconoclasm.<sup>113</sup>

In conclusion, the cult of the (military) heroes embedded in the interwar practices of commemorating the Great War was part of a cultural and political tradition which swept Europe during most of the nineteenth century and especially during the decades prior to the beginning of the First World War. The spread of national and political pantheons was visible in the public sphere in the use of (national) history in arts, literature and in the iconography of public and war monuments for the purpose of cultural

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<sup>113</sup> Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay, "Introduction" in *Iconoclasm. Contested objects, contested terms*. Edited by Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (London: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 1-14; Alina Șerban, "The destiny of public monuments: celebration, abandonment and political iconoclasm, *Bucharest: matter & history*, pp. 251-269.

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and political mobilization. This first section was dedicated to placing this experience in a larger historical and geographical perspective in order to contextualize the interwar policies of war commemorations. There are several observations which may be drawn in the end of this rather short and eclectic survey. There is a cultural continuity before and after the First World War in the tradition of constructing war monuments in a figurative style even if many of the interwar war monuments tend to employ non figurative elements in their iconography. Few of these public monuments employed religious references since the public sphere tend to be secularized in Western Europe. (War) monument building was a strategy of political legitimacy and it was also an instrument of cultural dissemination of the values associated with the cult of (military) heroes and with the paradigm of the nation state which paralleled and followed the ongoing processes of democratization, urbanization and spread of literacy.

### **1.2. War commemorations in inter-war Western Europe:**

This second section chronologically continues the first one while it represents the point of reference for the entire Chapter One. It discusses the policies and the practices of commemorating the war during the interwar period in Western Europe as they were embedded in the already existing cult of (military) heroes and they employed the construction of war monuments as the most visible and significant form of honoring those fallen during the war. These policies and practices of interwar war commemorations were characterized by the other three dimensions discussed in the

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beginning of the introduction. They represented the intersection of the bottom to the top pressure for mourning the dead by their relatives, an official need of celebrating taking part in the victory or of mourning the defeat as well as a form of further cultural mobilization. Subsequently, in addition to surveying the commemorative practices in the most important countries who fought on the Western Front, this section discusses two important aspects of these practices, both of them comparable at the European, global and regional levels, namely the role of religion at the individual level in coping with the atrocities of the war and the losses of the dear on the one hand and the social impact of the Great War on the other hand. The aim is to show that the Romanian and the other Eastern European cases were not exceptional but similar to a more or less great extent to the countries of Western Europe, the specificities being pointed out for each of these cases and for the regions they belonged whenever it was necessary and possible.

Discussions on the dynamics of the public monuments and memorabilia during the twentieth century underlined many times the tendency of abandoning individualist representations in the iconography of war and national monuments in correlation with the democratization of the public sphere and the focus on nonfigural representations suggesting collective efforts and sacrifices that transcends a particular or a regional group. At the height of a tradition built upon itself for almost a century, the politics of commemorating the Great War during the interwar period built the greatest number of public monuments ever in history. Continuing the tradition of national monuments surveyed in the first section of this Chapter One, these monuments built by the local

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communities represented national monuments at the local level, embodiments of the national ideology as it worked during the bloodiest war ever seen in history up to that moment. As Szegeus Michalski has observed,

Bloody but inconclusive battles like those of Verdun and the Somme put an end to any pretensions regarding the inherent romanticism of warfare and were difficult to glorify by means of traditional – especially allegorical – representations [...] Metonymy replaced metaphor and allegory as the chief artistic instrument of progressive war memorials. Without this tendency, it would be difficult to comprehend the cult of the Unknown Soldier in its entirety.<sup>114</sup>

The signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, was celebrated the very next year and it became the most important element in the process of war commemoration in United Kingdom and France. Public ceremonies of burying unknown soldiers were at first organized in 1920 in London and Paris and then they spread throughout Europe. However, these ceremonies were associated to the prewar forms of commemorations or in any case with symbols or forms suggesting the continuity with the past. In UK, the Cenotaph was designed to remain empty but it was followed by the selection of the body of an unknown soldier interred in the Westminster Abbey along many other British generals, the title of warrior suggesting association with the Middle Age. In the French case, the ceremony of placing the Unknown Soldier at the Arch of Triumph was doubled by the burial on the same day in the Panthéon of Leon Gambetta, the major personality of insurrection against the Prussians in 1870-1871.<sup>115</sup> In Rome, the Italian Unknown Soldier was buried in front of the monument dedicated to King Vittorio Emanuele II. In United

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<sup>114</sup> Szegeus Michalski, *Public monuments. Art in political bondage 1870-1997*, chapter 3, “Memorials to the Great War”, pp. 77-92, the combined quotes at pp. 77 and 82.

<sup>115</sup> Ken S. Inglis, “Entombing unknown soldiers: from London and Paris to Baghdad,” *History&Memory. Studies in the representation of the past*, 5:2, Fall/Winter 1993, pp. 7-31.

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States, an Unknown Soldier was buried in 1921 at the Arlington National Cemetery, created during the Civil War, and its symbol was supposed to remain above the ties of race, religion, class and region. November 11 was observed but the official commemoration took place on the Memorial Day, observed since 1874.<sup>116</sup> Portugal and Belgium had unknown soldiers buried in 1921 and 1922 respectively followed by Poland in 1925, Hungary in 1929 and Austria in 1933/1934.<sup>117</sup>

Thomas W. Laqueur observed among the first that before the First World War the name of common soldiers died in battles received no place on the commemorative monuments dedicated most of the times to celebrating the victories and its most important generals and officers. In the British case, and its associated Commonwealth cases, the graves of the first and the last soldiers died in battles, Private J. Paul of the Middlesex Regiment, Rifles, of the British Expeditionary Force and Private George L. Price, 29<sup>th</sup> NE Battalion, Second Canadian Brigade, are to be found one next to the other at the military cemetery of Saint Symphorien, Mons, Belgium.<sup>118</sup>

Military cemeteries were the most basic form of war commemoration, initiated during the war and confirmed through the peace treaties of 1919-1920, in Great Britain the Imperial War Graves Commission creating military cemeteries especially in France and Belgium, on the Western Front they died after 1915 transfer to Britain of the dead

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<sup>116</sup> Guenter Kurt Piehler, "The war dead and the Gold Star. American commemoration of the First World War" in *The politics of national identity*. Edited by John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 174-175.

<sup>117</sup> K.S. Inglis, "Entombing unknown soldiers," p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, "Memory and naming in the Great War" in *The politics of national identity*. Edited by John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 150.

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being forbidden. However, by 1921 more than 200.000 dead soldiers were reburied and by 1938 other 38.000 more were reburied as well.<sup>119</sup> As John R. Gillis observed in his pertinent survey of the relationship between memories and identities, the number of unidentified bodies of the dead soldiers actually led to the establishment of Tombs of Unknown Soldiers.<sup>120</sup>

In France, the government supervised and funded the return of a great part of those who died during the war to their places of origin or prewar residence while to the families who agreed to leave their dead in the battlefield cemeteries. War monuments or *monuments aux morts* as they were called in France were constructed in almost every locality in interwar France, possibly over 30.000 such monuments being built before the Second World War. Less than a third of these localities had their war memorials built in the local cemeteries, most of the other being constructed in their centers, close to a school, a church, a town hall or in a park. As a consequence of this process of memorialization, a local industry of war monuments started to develop early after the end of the First World War. The choice for serially produced war monuments made by many towns with limited financial resources became the reason of concern for the committees in charge of approving these monuments. The members of these committees privileged original works of art which contrasted with the serial or mass produced war monuments. The discussion resembles to a great extent those between the Romanian Commission of

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<sup>119</sup> T.W. Laqueur, "Memory and naming in the Great War," p. 156.

<sup>120</sup> John R. Gillis, "Memory and identity. The history of a relationship" in *The politics of national identity*. Edited by John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 11.

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Public Monuments and the communities seeking its approval in the interwar Romania, mentioned in Chapter Five of this dissertation. The local communities argued many times they could not afford to pay a sculptor and/or an architect to create an original war monument and this is why they chose serially produced monuments with minor modifications. In theory all monuments were to receive the authorities' approval but in practice only those seeking subsidies from the state actually did so. Most of these war monuments represented stele and *poilu*.<sup>121</sup> Of great importance was the construction of the four major ossuaries at Douaumont (Meuse) on the Verdun theater, Notre Dame de Lorette (Pas de Calais) in Artois, Dormans on the Marne theater and Hartmannsweilerkopf in Alsace, all constructed by private committees headed by Catholic high clergy, under the patronage of the President of the Republic and of the Marshals of France. For the Catholic Church the war and its commemoration represented the occasion not only to take charge the mourning of the dead but also to (re)affirm its position within the state which officially divorced religion in 1905. Private contributions were limited so that in 1929 national days were established in order to raise the necessary funds though the selling of flags, insignia, pictures or cards as well as through selling the place of the names of those fallen.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Daniel J. Sherman, "Art, commerce, and the production of memory in France after World War I" in *The politics of national identity*. Edited by John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 186-211.

<sup>122</sup> Antoine Prost, "Monuments aux morts" in *Les lieux de mémoire, I. La République*, edited by Pierre Nora (Paris : Gallimard, 1984), pp. 195-225. Translated as Antoine Prost, "Monuments to the Dead" in *Realms of memory. The construction of the French Past. II. Traditions*. Under the direction of Pierre Nora. English-language edition edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 307-330; Annette Becker. *Les monuments aux morts:*

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In Germany, the memory of the First World War played a major role in the politics of the Weimer Republic being capitalized especially by the right wing political groups. According to Szergiusz Michalski, by 1939 Germany had the greatest number of war monuments in the world.<sup>123</sup> No tomb of the Unknown Soldier was constructed but, similar to the concept of Cenotaph in London, the Neue Wache was constructed in Berlin as a national monument dedicated to the war dead without having interred an unknown soldier until the postwar period. Symbolic for the cult of the leader that dominated the politics of war commemoration in interwar Germany, a major memorial complex was constructed at Tannenberg in 1927. Having the aspect of a fortress, the memorial included the tombs of twenty unidentified soldiers. However, the whole complex was actually dedicated to the memory of Paul von Hindenburg whose memory was also used during the 1930s and the 1940s by the Nazi regime. November 11 was adopted as an official holiday in 1925.<sup>124</sup>

In Italy, the memory of the war played an important role in the ascension of the Fascist movement and in the appointment of Benito Mussolini as the prime-minister. Immediately after his appointment, Mussolini and his government kneeled in front of the

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*patrimoine et mémoire de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Errance, 1989); Daniel J. Sherman. "Bodies and names: the emergence of commemoration in interwar France," *The American Historical Review*, April 1998, pp. 443-466.

<sup>123</sup> S. Michalski, *Public monuments*, p. 83.

<sup>124</sup> George L. Mosse. "National cemeteries and national revival: the cult of the fallen soldiers in Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14, 1, January 1979, pp. 1-20; George L. Mosse. *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the Two Worlds*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; For Germany, quoted by Sergiusz Michalski, is relevant the following article which was unavailable to me: Eckhard Gruber, "...death is built into life': war monuments and war memorials in the Weimer Republic," *Daedalus*, XLIX, September 1993, pp. 72-82.

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Tomb of Italian Unknown Soldier which was turned afterwards into the center of Fascist public ceremonies.<sup>125</sup>

For the case of the British Empire and later for the Commonwealth, the memory of the Great War played an important role in underlining its political and cultural unity through the shared experience on the Western Front while in the same time it represent a founding moment, from a cultural and political point of view, for the dominions which started to conceive themselves as distinct nations.<sup>126</sup> The troops of Australia and New Zealand fought under the same commandment (ANZAC) and many of them lost their lives in 1915 at Gallipoli. An ANZAC Day started being regularly observed since 1927 on April 25<sup>th</sup> while war monuments started being created during the 1920s. Only in 1993, on November 11, an Unknown Australian Soldier was buried in Canberra and similar ceremonies were organized in 2000 in Canada and in 2004 in New Zealand.

In Ireland, the memory of the Great War was divided since it was overcome in importance by the revolts, against conscription among other things, which led to the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. For the supporters of total separation from the British Commonwealth, the ceremonies of November 11, observed without problem in Northern Ireland, were a symbol of British imperialism. The government refused to allow the creation of a National War memorial in central Dublin but it provided support for one at Islandbridge. For many others, especially those who fought on the Western Front and

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<sup>125</sup> K.S. Inglis, "Entombing unknown soldiers," p. 19; Patricia Dogliani, "Les monuments aux morts de la Grande Guerre en Italie," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, nr. 167, 1992, pp. 87-94.

<sup>126</sup> Jay Winter. *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: the Great War in European cultural history* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

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the relatives of those who died there, practices of remembering and mourning were organized privately. As a part of these commemorative practices, the commemoration of the turn of the centuries Boer War was integrated into the commemoration of the First World War.<sup>127</sup>

In the case of the United States, the parents of the fallen had the choice to repatriate them and seventy percent of those dead were transported and reburied in their places of origin. Others such as former president Theodore Roosevelt argued that their sons be buried on the battlefields they died and subsequently the US government created several permanent cemeteries in France, Belgium and England for the rest of them. During the 1920s, the commemoration of the US participation in the Great War became a political matter from time to time, support for the mothers who chose their sons remain in Europe to visit them being championed and supported by numerous senators and congressmen. Funded by the governments, pilgrimages were organized between 1931 and 1936. For the members of the American Gold Star Mothers Association special welcoming was organized in the City Hall of New York, they could travel cabin class across the ocean, live at first class hotels, spend a week in Paris or London and they were welcomed by the French or British governments with special reception. The African-American communities received similar treatment in spite of being segregated on

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<sup>127</sup> Keith Jeffery, "The Great War in modern Irish memory" in *Men, women and war*. Edited by T.G. Fraser and Keith Jeffery. Historical studies XVIII. Papers read before the XXth Irish Conference of Historians held at Magee College, University of Ulster, 6-8 June 1991 (The Lilliput Press, 1993), pp. 152-153.

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separated pilgrimages with less funding, for example travelling on commercial steamers.<sup>128</sup>

One of the most overlooked aspects of the politics of war commemoration in Western Europe is represented by the role religion played in mediating not only previous conceptions of the war experience but especially in the process of mourning, taking for granted to some extent the idea that all society was secularized in the modern times. The role of spirituality in mediating the memory of the war experience in the postwar period was discussed by Jay Winter.<sup>129</sup> The role of religion and especially of the so called national churches was revealed by the experience of the First World War. Anglican Church in UK and Lutheran Church in Germany supported the war effort and offered moral support but most importantly it contributed to the demonization of the adversary, in denouncing its barbarity and in justifying the moral superiority of its own countrymen. After the war, the language employed in the public sphere, in the debates related to one aspect of the process of war remembering or another and especially in the politics of war commemoration after the war including in the construction of war monuments. After the war the iconography of the war monuments in England was controlled and imposed to a great extent by the church. It was the Church which had the initiative of entombing the Unknown Warrior in the Westminster Abbey after the ceremonies of the Cenotaph

<sup>128</sup> G.K. Piehler, "The war dead and the Gold Star", pp. 177-179.

<sup>129</sup> Catherine Moriarty, "L'iconographie chrétienne des monuments aux morts de la Première Guerre Mondiale dans le Royaume-Uni," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, nr. 167, 1992, pp. 71-86 ; Annette Becker. *War and Faith. The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*. Translated from the French by Helen McPhail. Foreword to the English edition by Ken Inglis (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Michael Snape. *God and the British soldier. Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (London: Routledge, 2005).

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proved to be predominantly laic in their character. In the southern states of Germany, where Catholicism was dominant, the influence of the Roman-Catholic Church led to a predominance of war monuments depicting warrior-saints especially St. George.<sup>130</sup>

This discussion of the role of religion in dealing with the war experience in some of the countries of Western Europe sheds light on why the Orthodox churches played such an important role in several Eastern European cases of interwar war commemoration. In several such cases, the religious networks represented one of the most important instruments of moral support during the war and in the same time they had the tendency to articulate forms of civil society involved mainly in organizing the commemoration of those fallen during the war but also in taking care those surviving the war. In others, such as Hungary or Russia, they were possibly delegitimized by the association with the autocratic power that decided participation in the lost war and they were not able to represent alternatives for the state authorities about to dissolve at the end of the war.

The third variable taken into account by the comparative analysis of commemorative processes in interwar Western and Eastern Europe is represented by the social consequences of the total war and their subsequent administrative, cultural, political and social policies aimed at coping with the problems of cultural demobilization, most notably the role played by the veterans in interwar Western European politics at a time of extending the voting franchise to all male adult populations. Land reforms and

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<sup>130</sup> S. Michalski, *Public monuments*, p. 84.

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war pensions were most of the times the social and welfare reforms granted by state following the major wars of the twentieth century.

In addition to the unprecedented high number of casualties provoked by the war, used during the war and especially at its end as a criteria in the peace negotiations,<sup>131</sup> there was a high number of former combatants who were wounded and remained disabled or continued to be affected by the traumas provoked by the war, who found difficult in readapting to the civil life or finding a job. Many of them became a matter of concern for their governments while in the same time their greatest part organized in veteran associations which many times became politically active. The policies aimed at coping with the social consequences of the First World War were many times designed as and they are more visible when approached as policies of social assistance. These policies of social welfare have a long history dating since the nineteenth century. While the postwar Western welfare state was many times approached, analyzed and discussed during the economic crises of the 1970s and 2000s, its historical roots in Victorian England, Second Empire and Third Republic France and Wilhelmine Germany were relatively ignored, the diversity of its components being historicized only in the last decades.<sup>132</sup> However, under the aegis of the League of Nations, the Bureau International

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<sup>131</sup> Eduard Benes would have said: “In the French general staff they have told us openly: if you want independence [of Czechs and Slovaks], you will have to pay for it with blood like anyone else” according to Todd Wayne Huebner, *The multinational ‘nation-state’: the origins and the paradox of Czechoslovakia, 1914-1920*, PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1993), p. 55, fn. 145, according to Nancy M. Wingfield, “The Battle of Zborov and the Politics of Commemoration in Czechoslovakia,” *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 17, nr. 4, Fall 2003, p. 657.

<sup>132</sup> For a European comparative perspective see Peter Flora and Jens Alber, “Modernization, democratization and the development of welfare states in Western Europe” in *The development of welfare*

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du Travail (International Labor Office) was created in 1919 and it worked for the systematic dissemination and the implementation of regulations concerning work conditions and social assistance in the member countries, at the end of the First World War the number of war invalids in Europe being estimated at ten million people.

As Theda Skocpol argued, the first system of war pensions was created in the United States at the end of the Civil War, being granted to the veterans' families to the extent that in 1910 there were 500.000 war pensions being paid by the federal government, installments which totaled about a quarter of the federal budget between 1880 and 1910.<sup>133</sup> After the First World War, the number of invalids increased from 182.000 to 684.000 at the end of 1920s. In 1932, 40.000 of them occupied Washington and asked their pensions being paid, a possible cause for the election of FDR and for the implementation of the New Deal.<sup>134</sup>

In Great Britain, 400.000 war disabled were assisted in 1918 and 900.000 war veterans received war pensions in 1926 while the private initiative was encouraged in

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*states in Europe and America*. Edited by Peter Flora and Arnold J. Heidenheimer (New Brunswick: Transaction books, 1981), pp. 37-80 and *The emergence of the welfare state in Britain and Germany, 1850-1950*. Edited by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Wolfgang Mock (London: Croom Helm on behalf of the German Historical Institute, 1981).

<sup>133</sup> Theda Skocpol, "America's first social security system: the expansion of benefits for Civil War veterans," *Political Science Quarterly*, 108:1, Spring 1993, 85-116; Susan-Mary Grant, "Reimagined communities. Union veterans and the reconstruction of American nationalism", *Nations and nationalism*, 14:3, July 2008, 498-519.

<sup>134</sup> Stephen R. Ortiz, "The 'New Deal' for veterans: the Economy Act, the veterans of foreign wars and the origins of the New Deal dissent," *Journal of Military History*, 70:2, April 2006, 415-438; Anna Carden-Coyne, "Ungrateful bodies: rehabilitation, resistance and disabled American veterans of the First World War," *European Review of History*, 14:4, December 2007, 543-565.

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providing social and mutual assistance while a national agency was created in order to help the former combattans to find jobs.<sup>135</sup>

In France, the state created in 1916-1917 institutions especially designed for taking care of the war invalids and the war orphans while a minister for pensions was created in 1920 being led by André Maginot until 1924. The veterans created in 1917 their own associations, *Union nationale des mutilés et réformés* in 1917 and *Union fédérale des mutilés* in 1918, the latter one increasing its membership up to 900.000 in 1930. War pensions were granted in 1919 to about 1.000.000 war disabled while 3.4 million former combattans received war stipends.<sup>136</sup>

In Italy, the biggest veteran association was *Associazione nazionale fra mutilati* with 450.000 members while *Associazione nazionale ambattenti* had a lower number of members. In Germany, the number of war invalids was as large as 1.5 million, after 1917 their social assistance being assured by the state. Deborah Cohen argued that one of the reasons for social unrest in the Weimer Republic throughout the 1920s was that it explicitly assumed the social welfare of all war veterans in order to establish its political legitimacy, a duty which was impossible to fulfill due to the economic crisis. Several war

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<sup>135</sup> Seth Koven, "Remembering and dismemberment: crippled children, wounded soldiers, and the Great War in Great Britain," *The American Historical Review*, 99:4, October 1994, 1167-1202; Meaghan Kowalsky, "'This honorable obligation': the King's national roll scheme for disabled ex-servicemen 1915-1944," *European Review of History*, 14:4, December 2007, 567-584;

<sup>136</sup> Jean-François Montes, "L'Office national des Anciens combattants et victimes de guerre. Création et actions durant l'entre-deux-guerres," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, nr. 205, pp. 71-84; Olivier Faron, "Aux côtés, avec, pour les pupilles de la Nation, les formes de mobilisation en faveur des orphelins de la Première Guerre mondiale," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, nr. 205, 2002, pp. 15-34; Antoine Prost, "Les anciens combattants" in *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre. 1914-1918. Histoire et culture*. Edited by Stéphane Audoin-Rezeau and Jean-Jacques Becker (Paris: Bayard, 2004), pp. 1087-1098.

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veteran organizations appeared, among them *Reichsbund der Kriegbeschädigter Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegerhinterbliebener* being close to SPD and *Deutchnationale Frontsoldatenbund Stahlhelm* being close to the right-wing political organizations.<sup>137</sup>

Overall, the process of war commemorations during the interwar period appears to be mainly a European experience that was expanded worldwide through its global cultural, political and institutional entanglements. It was predominantly European not only due to the fact that most of the casualties belonged to European states where the heaviest battles were fought but also due to the fact that the commemorative practices were embedded in a set of cultural traditions originating in (Western) Europe. However, this perspective may be reinforced by the fact that not only the commemoration of the Great War became an important site of memory in several Western European countries but also due to the fact that the greatest part of historical research devoted to it originates in these countries which is indeed one of the unintended consequences of the interwar policies of commemorating the war.

The politics of commemorating the Great War in Western Europe and United States represented to some extent a continuation with the previous politics of political celebrations. However, it was distinct in three aspects. First of all, the dimensions of human losses and material destructions were unprecedented and only partially similar to the Revolutionary Wars and to the American Civil War. Second of all, the political

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<sup>137</sup> James M. Diehl, "Victors or victims? Disabled veterans in the Third Reich," *The Journal of Modern History*, 59: 4, December 1987, 705-736; Deborah Cohen. *The war come home: disabled veterans in Great Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

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reorganization of certain areas such those of former Ottoman, Tsarist and Habsburg empires were overcome only by the political and social reforms implemented in the same areas at the end of the war. Third of all, it revealed the importance of religion at the individual level in coping with the war experience and it led organized religious institutions take over to a great extent the commemorative process especially in the regions lacking alternative forms of institutional organization.

The place of the Eastern European experience was partially addressed in the introduction and further thought is given in the following section which surveys several Eastern European cases and draws several general conclusions. Compared to the experiences of United States and of the British dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for which historical research developed, the interwar Eastern European experience of commemorating the Great War appear to be similar in the set of cultural references and practices it employed and somewhat different in its diversity of local approaches shaped by a series of factors brought by the war including the changes of borders, the movements of population and the voting and the land reforms, all of them with a social, political and cultural impact which looks similar and sometimes greater when compared to the Western Europe and to other regions of the world.

### **1.3. War commemorations in inter-war Eastern Europe:**

This third and last section of Chapter One surveys most of the Eastern European cases of memorializing and commemorating the experience of the First World War during the

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interwar period. It proceeds by approaching the cases one by one in order to assess the specificity of each case and it concludes by underlining their similarities, similarities that are to some extent specific to the region of Eastern Europe when they are compared to the cases of Western Europe.

The Serbian case of interwar war commemorations is to a great extent one of the most similar ones with the Romanian case. In inter-war Yugoslavia, the experience of the Balkan Wars and of the First World War were commemorated as a single period, 1912-1918, the victories of the years 1912-1915 compensating in the public commemorative discourse the evacuation of 1916-1917. The process of war commemoration was associated to the feast of *Vidovdan*, the feast of Saint Vitus (28<sup>th</sup> of June; 15<sup>th</sup> of June in Julian calendar) when all those dead in these wars were honored. The commemoration tended to privilege the Serbs' experience of the war, the prewar association between Orthodox Christianity and the Serbian nationalism being visible in the predominance of *Vidovdan* in a series of other important political events such as the proclamation of the constitution of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in 1921.<sup>138</sup> *Vidovdan* became during the nineteenth century the most important national holiday in Serbia, commemorating the well known defeat of the Serbs at Kosovo Polje in 1389, in 1889 major processions celebrating its fifth centennial and informing the cultural mobilization for war in Serbia for decades, the revered place of the battle being captured only during

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<sup>138</sup> Melissa Bokovoy, "Scattered graves, ordered cemeteries: commemorating Serbia's wars of national liberation, 1912-1918" in *Staging the past. The politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the present*. Edited by Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 236-254;

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the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.<sup>139</sup> The cultural and military divisions of the war when the Croats fought in the Habsburg army were visible during the war in the divisions between the Serb and Croatian veteran organizations, the Serbs pretending a greater recognition for their sufferings during the war and the Croats gradually disengaging from the common commemorative efforts to the extent of ignoring in 1928 the celebration of ten years since the foundation of the kingdom, possibly a reason for King Alexander's assumption of power in January 1929 and his promotion of Yugo-Slavism as the state's official ideology as a way of overcoming ethnic and political divisions. According to John Paul Newman, in Croatia, the veteran associations dominated by Croats represented one of the most important forms of political organization. The divisions over the participation in the war, similar to some extent to the Hungarian and the Romanian divisions over the participation in the First World War, greatly affected further political cooperation in Yugo-Slavia.<sup>140</sup> King Alexander was the most important promoter of the policy of war commemorations in the interwar period initiating and supporting numerous war monuments the most important being the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on the Mount Avala nearby Belgrade designed in a such a way it would

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<sup>139</sup> Milorad Ekmečić, "The emergence of St. Vitus Day as the principal national holiday of the Serbs" in *Kosovo: Legacy of a medieval battle*. Edited by Wayne Vucinich and Thomas A. Emmert (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs, 1991), pp. 331-342. According to Ekmečić, A.J.P. Taylor considered Franz Ferdinand's visit to Sarajevo in June 1914 on the day of St. Vitus as provocative as the visit of any member of the UK Royal Family in Dublin on the day of St. Patrick.

<sup>140</sup> Melissa Bokovoy, "Whose hero? (Re)defining war dead in the interwar Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" and John Paul Newman, "Second class soldiers? Croatian war veterans and their impact on society in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, 1918-1929," both papers presented at the conference "Sacrifice and regeneration. The legacy of the Great War in interwar Eastern Europe," University of Southampton, September 13-15, 2007.

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represent all regions of Yugoslavia (1934-1938). Significantly, on the same place in 1922 a monument under the form of a pyramid decorated with an Orthodox cross was dedicated to the Serbian Unknown Soldier and his sacrifice for the liberation of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.<sup>141</sup> Overall, to quote Melissa Bokovoy, “in the multinational kingdom, the commemoration of the sacrifices and sufferings of the Serbian people elevated the Serbs to a position of first among equals, a position that they collectively remembered, commemorated, and believed to be rightfully theirs throughout the twentieth century.”<sup>142</sup>

In Hungary, the memory of the war was also taken over by the negative moral impact of the Treaty of Trianon of 1920. In Budapest, on Szabadság tér, four statues called North, South, East and West and representing the territories lost at the end of the Great War were unveiled on January 1921 in the presence of a large mass of people. Memorial plaques were also placed on some of the most important public buildings such as the headquarters of the Hungarian Railway Company and the Budapest academy of economic sciences.<sup>143</sup> In Poland, the divided memory of taking part in different armies

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<sup>141</sup> Vojislav Pavlović, “La mémoire et l’identité nationale: la mémoire de la Grande Guerre en Serbie,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, vol. 55, nr. 228, October-December. 2007, pp. 52-56; Aleksandr Ignjatović, “From constructed memory to imagined national tradition: the Tomb of the Unknown Yugoslav Soldier (1934-1938),” *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 88, nr. 4, October 2010, pp. 624-651.

<sup>142</sup> Melissa Bokovoy, “Scattered graves, ordered cemeteries...”, p. 252.

<sup>143</sup> Paul Gradvohl, “Des lutes fratricides à la gloire de l’injustice subie: Grande Guerre et les petites guerres dans la mémoire hongroise du premier conflit mondial,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, vol. 55, nr. 228, Oct-Dec. 2007, pp. 71-80; Franz Horváth, “The divided war memory of the Transylvanian Hungarians (1918-1944)”, paper presented at the conference “Sacrifice and regeneration. The legacy of the Great War in interwar Eastern Europe,” University of Southampton, September 13-15, 2007.

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during the war led to a preference given to the Polish-Russian war of 1919-1923. Later, the trauma of the Second World War shadowed the memory of the first one.<sup>144</sup>

In interwar Czechoslovakia, the official policy of war commemoration focused on celebrating the Czech part in the battle of Zborov of July 2, 1917, a celebration which only widened the gap of trust between the Czechs and the Germans.<sup>145</sup> In Bulgaria, the memory of the war experience during the interwar period was contested due to the participation of officers and soldiers in the divided political scene. The memory of the First World War was associated to the memory of the Balkan Wars and the war monuments made no distinction in their iconography.<sup>146</sup>

In Russia, the memory of the First World War was present rather indirectly during the interwar period and later. The hardships of the First World War has led to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of March 1917 and the continuation of taking part in the war created the conditions for the Bolshevik seizure of power in October/November 1917. The memory of the war in the inter-war Soviet Russia was silenced by the celebration of the new regime and its founding moment, only the complex experience of

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<sup>144</sup> Tomasz Schramm, "La mémoire polonaise de la Première Guerre mondiale," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, vol. 55, nr. 228, Oct-Dec. 2007, pp. 61-70.

<sup>145</sup> Nancy M. Wingfield, "The Battle of Zborov and the Politics of Commemoration in Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 17, nr. 4, Fall 2003, pp. 654-81; Martin Zückert, "Memory of war and national state integration. Czech and German veterans in Czechoslovakia after 1918," *Central Europe*, vol. 4, nr. 2, November 2006, pp. 111-121.

<sup>146</sup> Bernard Lory, "Une guerre invisible? Mémoire de la Première Guerre mondiale en Bulgarie." In *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, vol. 55, nr. 228, Oct-Dec. 2007, pp. 37-50; Nikolai Voukov, "Bulgarian post-war memory and violence in defeat", paper presented at the conference "Sacrifice and regeneration. The legacy of the Great War in interwar Eastern Europe", University of Southampton, September 13-15, 2007.

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the Second World War being widely celebrated and becoming the source for the dissemination of a vision of Eastern Europe still active even today.<sup>147</sup> In Turkey, similar to the Soviet Union, the memory of the First World War was obliterated by the memory of foundation of the lay Republic in 1923. A Victory monument representing an equestrian statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was built in 1925-1927 in Ankara while a monument to the Republic was built in 1928 in Istanbul's Taksim Square.

Overall, there are several similarities and differences which are observable in the case of the process of war commemorations in Eastern Europe and they enhance the understanding of the specificity of the topic in the region when compared to the regions of Western Europe, North America and the British Dominions as well as for understanding the specificity of each of these cases within the region, Europe and the world and most of all the specificity of the Romanian case.

First of all, there was no victory day or heroes' day celebrated in any two, several or all of these countries and these days associated with the policy of war commemorations certainly did not coincide with the Armistice Day, November 11. Serbia maintained its celebration on Vidovdan while Romania chose the Ascension Day.

While in most of the victorious Western countries the Armistice Day became a common

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<sup>147</sup> Aaron J. Cohen, "Oh, that! Myth, memory, and World War I in the Russian emigration and the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review*, vol. 62, nr.1, Spring 2003, pp. 69-86; Catherine Merridale, "War, death, and remembrance in Soviet Russia" in *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*. Edited by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan. Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare nr. 5 (Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 61-83; Karen Petrone, "The paradoxes of heroic masculinity in Soviet memory of World War I", paper presented at the conference "Sacrifice and regeneration. The legacy of the Great War in interwar Eastern Europe," University of Southampton, September 13-15, 2007. Meanwhile the author published the results of her research in a book I did not have the chance to consult: Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian memory* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011).

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national day of commemorating those fallen during the war in most of the countries of the Eastern Europe the memory of the war was partially absorbed by the memory of the subsequent political events represented by changes of boundaries and sometimes population, by changes of political regime, by subsequent local wars or by social and political reforms. While in Western Europe except Germany and Austria the Armistice Day contributed to the solidification of a common memory of the war, in Eastern Europe this variety of upheavals and structural transformations contributed to a rather diverse palette of interpreting and commemorating the experience of the Great War.

Secondly, the experience of the Great War was considered in many of the countries of the Eastern Europe as the final chapter of a century old struggle for nation-building and regional expansion. In South-Eastern Europe this process took the form of a “Balkan Reconquista” during the nineteenth century. Consequently, the moments of the beginning and of the end of the war in the area varied in the subsequent processes of war commemorations, at least during the interwar period. In the Serbian case, the beginning was considered by many to be the Second Balkan War while in the Romanian case its end was considered to be the 1919 campaign in Hungary. Poles and Russians continued to fight a war that ended in 1921 and in the same year the religiously defined boundary of Greece and Turkey was settled after a war which started during the peace negotiations around Paris. Most of the times the moments of establishing the so called successor states such as Czecho-Slovakia, the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the achievement of Greater Romania, the October revolution in Russia or the Mustafa

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Kemal Atatürk's revolution in Turkey obliterated the memory of ending the war. Land and voting reforms in most of these countries many times radically changed the structure of the elected parliaments and thus fostered the importance of the new political regimes.

Thirdly, as a consequence of the major changes in the political map of the region, the so called successor states of Austria-Hungary were not homogeneous from a political and cultural point of view in spite of their relative homogeneity in linguistic terms. Large sections of their society fought on opposing sides even if not necessarily on the same front and this led to mutual suspicion when it did not led to direct political confrontation. Especially the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was affected by this situation.

Finally, a common trait of the most countries in the region of Eastern Europe is represented by their large rural population that was only superficially affected by the process of secularization that spread in the public sphere during the nineteenth century in Western Europe. To a great extent as a consequence of this social and cultural background, the nationally organized Orthodox Churches played important roles in the decades prior to the war and especially during the war and therefore they greatly contributed in framing their cultural politics of war commemorations during the inter-war period and to some extent contributed to the downplaying of the civic interpretation of the process of war commemoration.

Several other questions related to the specificity of Eastern European cases taken individually or as parts of this region remained unanswered even if different aspects were indirectly tackled and therefore further comparative research is necessary in this regard.

#### 1.4. **Conclusions:**

This chapter inscribed the Romanian case of war commemorations during the interwar period in its larger historical and geographical contexts. In doing so it aimed at underlining the similarities and the dissimilarities between the Western European cases and the Eastern European cases on the one hand and between the Romanian case and the rest of the European cases altogether on the other hand. In addition, it aimed at underlining the specificity of each case and in the same time it focused on three comparable variables: the cultural continuity represented by the cult of (military) heroism which characterized the policies and the politics of war commemorations during the interwar period, visible in the predicated values and in the iconography of the war monuments; the role of religion in coping with the war experience and the role institutionalized religion assumed in the processes of commemorations; and the social impact of the war which led to more or less vigorous associations of former combatants involved in the politics of commemorations and not only. Structured in three parts dealing with commemorations and its cultural elements before the First World War, the war commemorations in interwar Western Europe and United States and the war commemorations in Eastern Europe, this first chapter analytically approached the similarities and the dissimilarities one may observe in the practices of war commemorations, West and East.

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*Chapter 2*

**The cultural context of war commemorations:  
the cult of (national) heroes in Romania**

On August 14/27, 1916, the government of Romania declared war to the governments of Austro-Hungary and became involved in the First World War. Two proclamations were issued, one to the country and to the army and another one only to the army. These two proclamations are quoted below. The first one goes as following:

[The war] has shaken the old order of Europe and showed that for the future only the principle of nationality can assure the peaceful existence of the nations./ For our nation it brought the day long awaited by the national consciousness, the day of its Unity./ After long times of misfortunes and hardships, our ancestors made it to establish the Romanian State [...]/ Today it is our chance to finish their work, to do forever what Michael the Brave made it only for a second: the unity of all Romanians on the both sides of the Carpathians [...]/ In us, in our virtues, in our bravery lies the power to [free all the Romanians and] give them the right to prosper in peace in a reunified and free Romania from Tisa to the Black Sea according to their traditions and aspirations [...] King Ferdinand.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *Monitorul oficial* nr. 108, August 15/28, 1916, pp. 5417-5418; *Codul General al României* edited by Constantin Hamangiu, vol. 7, pp. 1214-1215: “Răsboiul care de doi ani a încins tot mai strâns hotarele noastre, a sdruncinat tot mai adânc vechiul așezământ al Europei și a învederat că pentru viitor numai pe temeiul național se poate asigura viața pașnică a popoarelor./ Pentru neamul nostru el a adus ziua așteptată de veacuri de conștiința națională, ziua Unirii lui./ După vremuri îndelungate de nenorociri și de grele încercări, înaintașii noștri au reușit să întemeieze Statul Român prin Unirea Principatelor, prin războiul Independenței, prin munca lor neobosită pentru renașterea națională./ Astăzi ne este dat nouă să întregim

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The proclamation quoted above reveals some of the most important references articulated as a part of the historical memory articulated and disseminated during the nineteenth century. Clustered around the concept of the political and cultural unity of all speakers of the Romanian language and the concept of military heroism instrumentalized for the purpose of cultural mobilization for times of war these historical references were used for justifying Romania's participation in the First World War, for legitimizing its aspirations of acquiring the regions of Transylvania, Banat and Bukowina as well as for articulating the politics of war commemorations during the interwar period. Disseminated during the nineteenth century through literature, arts and public monuments, the process of war commemoration had in Romania an experience of its own represented by the memorialization of the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878. It was only expanded to the dimensions of Greater Romania and in proportion with the social and cultural consequences of the First World War. The second proclamation, the one addressing only the army, had the following content:

Soldiers/I called you to carry your flags over the borders where our brothers are waiting for you with their hearts full of hope./ The shadows of the great voivods Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great, whose remains lie in the lands you are going to free, are calling you to be victorious as the worthy offspring of the soldiers who won at Răsboieni, Călugăreni and Plevna. You will fight alongside the great nations we allied with./A fierce fight will follow. Bravely we should endure these hardships and with the help of God

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opera lor, închegând pentru totdeauna ceea ce Mihai-Viteazul a înfăptuit numai pentru o clipă: unirea Românilor de pe cele două părți ale Carpaților./ De noi atârnă astăzi să scăpăm de sub stăpânirea străină pe frații noștri de peste munți și din plaiurile Bucovinei, unde Ștefan-cel-Mare doarme somnul lui de veci./ În noi, în virtuțile, în vitejia noastră stă puțința de a le reda dreptul ca într-o Românie întregită și liberă, de la Tisa până la Mare, să propășească în pace potrivit datinelor și aspirațiilor noastre./ Români./ însuflețiți de datoria sfântă ce ni se impune, hotărâți să înfruntăm cu bărbăție toate jertfele legate de un crâncen război, pornim la luptă cu avântul puternic al unui popor care are credința neclintită în menirea lui./ Ne vor răsplăti roadele glorioase ale isbândeii. Cu Dumnezeu înainte! Ferdinand.”

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victory will be ours./ Hence show yourself worthy of our forefathers' glory./ Centuries to come an entire nation will bless you and praise you. King Ferdinand.<sup>149</sup>

Aimed at motivating the soldiers about to enter the war, the second proclamation complements the first one in being illustrative for the historical memory invoked in in order to justify the legitimacy of the Romanian participation in the First World War, a historical memory in which the interwar process of war commemorations was culturally embedded. An organic vision of the nation (“our brothers”) structurally grounds the historical memory articulated and disseminated during the nineteenth century through the schools, through the army and through the public sphere. The Great Heroes of Muntenia and Moldavia, Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great, served as reminders of this historical memory built on the values associated with the concept of military heroism (“be victorious as the worthy offspring of the soldiers who won at...”). In parallel, the battles of Călugăreni, Războieni and Plevna are used as proofs of the effectiveness of these values associated with the idea of military heroism and also they are invoked as a model for the necessary efforts in the war to come (“Bravely we should endure these hardships”). The sacrifice in the name of this concept of national unity of all speakers of the Romanian language was the milestone upon which the policy and the official politics

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<sup>149</sup> Daily order of August 14, 1916 in *Monitorul oficial* nr. 108, August 15/28, 1916, pp. 5417-5418; *Codul General al României* edited by Constantin Hamangiu, vol. 7, pp. 1214-1215: “Ostași,/ v-am chemat ca să purtați steagurile voastre peste hotarele unde frații noștri vă așteaptă cu nerăbdare și cu inima plină de nădejde./ Umbrele marilor Voevozi Mihai-Viteazu și Ștefan-cel-Mare, a căror rămășițe zac în pământurile ce veți desrobi vă îndeamnă la biruință ca vrednici urmași ai ostașilor cari au învins la Războieni, la Călugăreni și la Plevna./ Veți lupta alături de marile națiuni cu cari ne-am unit./ O luptă aprigă vă așteaptă. Cu bărbăție să îi îndurăm însă greutățile și cu ajutorul lui Dumnezeu, izbânda va fi a noastră./ Arătați-vă deci demni de gloria străbună./ De-a lungul veacurilor un neam întreg vă va binecuvânta și vă va slăvi. Ferdinand.”

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of war commemoration during the interwar period were placed in Romania (“Centuries to come an entire nation will bless you and praise you.”)

It is the aim of this Chapter Two to explain the cultural context that framed in Romania the interwar process of war commemorations. The complex processes of articulating and disseminating this set of ideas as well as the institutional and cultural contexts that favored their dissemination is the topic of this second chapter. Some of its European features were pointed out in the Chapter One. How was this historical memory articulated in Romania through historical writings and disseminated through textbooks and through the public system of education are questions that were already answered to a great extent by other researchers as it was explained in the introduction and as it will become visible in following pages. This chapter is a contribution which would have not been developed without these previous contributions. Numerous other questions which are relevant for understanding the cultural dimensions of the process of war commemorations in interwar Romania remained unanswered.

How was this historical memory articulated in the public sphere through literature, arts and public monuments in Romania? How this historical memory was built on the values associated with the concept of military heroism in Romania? What were the factors that favored the articulation of this historical memory and who were the institutional and the professional actors involved? When and how public monuments and war monuments appeared and spread in Romania?

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What were the factors that contributed to this chronological delay in comparison with the Western and Central Europe? Who initiated them, who supported them financially and logistically, who sanctioned and used them and for what purposes?

Who were included and who were excluded in the iconography of these monuments? What were the artistic, cultural and political languages that framed the iconography of war monuments and how did they relate to the context of modern Romanian culture? What other forms of media were used in disseminating the concept of military heroism? What was the experience of war commemorations before the First World War in Romania and how this military heroism and the war monuments were employed in the process?

These are only a few of the questions I had in my mind when I designed this chapter and most probably they were answered only in part. Certainly there are plenty more of them which remain to be answered by other researchers. In order to answer them this Chapter Two was divided in three sections and further subdivided in other six subsections. A first section is dedicated to surveying the articulation and the spread of the cult of national heroes through arts and literature during the nineteenth century. It shortly discusses the importance of literature and arts in the articulation of the historical consciousness and it surveys the rise of Michael the Brave and of Stephen the Great as regional heroes in Muntenia and, respectively, in Moldavia and most of all the creation and the spread of a unified pantheon of national heroes in nineteenth century Romania. The second section analyzes the rise of the public monuments in Romania in order to

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contextualize the appearance and the spread of war monuments before and especially after the First World War, the war monuments being the most telling indicator of the impact of the commemorative practices. A first part of the second section discusses the factors and the actors involved in the process as well as the relative delay in comparison with the countries of Western Europe while a second part surveys the three groups of heroes to whom public monuments were dedicated in Romania before 1916. Once this general context of the cult of heroes through arts, literature and monuments was established, the third section discusses the process of commemorating Romania's participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 through the same media as well as the rise of the collective hero represented by the *dorobanț* (the territorial infantry trooper) as a prewar Romanian model of unknown soldier/hero.

### 2.1. **Heroism and nationalism in arts and literature:**

This section discusses the articulation and the spread of the cult of national heroes during the nineteenth century Romania through the literature and the arts. This articulation followed the general European trend discussed in the first section of the previous chapter, regional pantheons being originally created in the Danubian Principalities of Muntenia and Moldavia while the generation of 1848 promoting a unified pantheon of (national) heroes. This cult of national heroes promoted most of all the military type of heroism while in the same time it spread in the Danubian Principalities, in the second and the third quarters of the nineteenth century, a historical consciousness centered most of all on the

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period of the Middle Age when the local political and cultural traditions were articulated as a part of the Slavonic culture, the Latinism promoted by the Transylvanian Romanians supported by the Habsburgs put emphasis on the importance of the Roman ancestry in spite of a sporadic proof of a common consciousness. Later on, the pantheon diversified to include cultural figures and statesmen and the palette of media representations started to include public monuments as well.

As already discussed in the introduction, heroism explains the appearance and the spread of public monuments during the nineteenth century and especially of war monuments in the last decades of the same century and especially during the interwar period, monuments being the most visible instruments of memorialization and the most important sites of commemoration. Like any other concept, over a long period of time the concept of heroism had different meanings for different people who lived in different contexts and it served a diversity of uses for as many people and groups. Why and how a certain type of heroism became so widespread during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth one? What were the factors and agents of this dissemination? What were the cultural trends it intersected? And what types of audience were they designed for and for what purposes? These are only several of the questions I had in mind when approaching this aspect of the cultural politics of war commemorations.

As pointed out in the introduction of this dissertation, one may observe that there are structurally three functions of the hero. First of all, the hero was used to describe a series of actions and facts belonging to a rite of initiation where at the end a youngster

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becomes a mature person, usually no model of behavior as a mature person being explicitly indicated or prescribed except of overcoming the hardships assumed by the rite of initiation. The narrative concentrated mostly on the beginnings of one's life. To some extent this was the way the war experience was preached through military heroism during the same period. Secondly, the hero was used to postulate and disseminate a model of behavior that was supposed to be copied most of the times in its entirety, the rite of initiation not receiving any attention. Finally, in the last half of the century a hero is sometimes used in order to construct a coherent narrative, no matter how analytical it is in the same time, where attention is focused mostly on the pieces of the puzzle describing the context(s) crossed by the hero's actions rather on the person of the hero and his intentions.

My focus in this chapter of the dissertation is on this second function of heroism where it was used to postulate a model of behavior to be followed as it was prescribed no attention being paid to the rite of initiation. Still, the hypostases of this function of heroism depended on the cultural context it served. In religious contexts, the cult of heroes took the form of the cult of saints. In the contexts of constructing legitimacy for the monarchs, it took the form of the cult of medieval kings and sometimes knights. The revival of the Greek and Roman mythology during the early modern period brought the cult of gods and of (founding) heroes. Finally, the advent of secularism since the eighteenth century established the cult of the Great Men may they be military generals, men of letters, diplomatic and especially political leaders who embodied different

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although sometimes overlapping cultural, political and ideological trends. While the pantheons grouping the last groups are rather inventions of the last two centuries they were structurally grounded in the (Christian) religious calendars and in the medieval lists of monarchs.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, in the case of Romania, Lucian Boia's *History and myth in the Romanian consciousness* has discussed the articulation of a historical consciousness in the Danubian Principalities and Romania during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In connection with the growth of nationalism studies, it also inspired a series of applications at the level of different sets of written and visual artifacts produced in the Romanian context. His approach deconstructed the historical canon of heroes and events as it was (re)codified and used during Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime and theoretically and methodologically approached the deconstruction of the historical canon codified in the first half of the twentieth century when the first major syntheses were written in most of the fields of the Romanian culture. He did so in the context of the cultural debates of the 1990s Romania when supporters or opponents of the cultural heritage of the Communist regime used one of the two canons in order to oppose the other. He underlined in numerous times that instead of using one canon in order to accuse the falsity of the other, both canons should be approached and deconstructed in the same manner. *History and myth* was a path opener which contributed in Romania to the deconstruction of the cultural lenses used for seeing the world through and to select

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and interpret the myriad of artifacts and the information collectively known as the past.

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Shaped by one or the other canon of historical events and biographies, both proposing an almost similar pantheon of national heroes, there is a tendency to take for granted the canon created in the first half of the twentieth century and to overlook the long road taken by its sinuous articulation. Instead, one can say that this pantheon of national heroes, including mostly historical figures, especially of former political rulers of the Danubian Principalities, knew three periods of codification and re-codification when it served purposes of political legitimization and mobilization followed by periods of contestation, renegotiation but also of mass dissemination. A first period was the period from the 1830s to the 1890s when both the national and the regional codifications coexisted. During this period when the two local universities had rather weak faculties of letters and thus Titu Maiorescu afforded stardom while being a prodigious personality, libraries were almost inexistent except the growing Library of Academy fathered by Ion Bianu, young researchers or writers returning from studies abroad were only in the beginning of their careers, most of the new hypotheses or interpretations had a tendency

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<sup>150</sup> Lucian Boia, *History and myth in the Romanian consciousness* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2001, c1997), pp. 191-195 shortly discusses the creation of the national pantheon of Romanian heroes while Mirela-Luminița Murgescu presented their image in the textbooks issued before and after 1878 in the Danubian Principalities and Romania in her “Galeria națională de personaje istorice în manualele de istorie din școala primară (1859-1900)” [The national gallery of historical characters in the history textbooks used in the primary schools, 1859-1900] in *Mituri istorice românești* [Romanian historical myths] Edited by Lucian Boia (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 1995), pp. 31-41 and *Între „bunul creștin” și „bravul român”: rolul școlii primare în construirea identității naționale românești, 1831-1878* [Between the ‘good Christian’ and the ‘brave Romanian’. The role of the primary school in the construction of Romanian national identity, 1831-1878] (Iași: Editura A’92, 1999).

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of being easily accepted in the field of Romanian history and culture.<sup>151</sup> After this period of time when the historical canon started to be codified around the turn of the centuries on grounds of personal competency, scientific objectivity and literary criteria major reinterpretations of the national history were no longer easily accepted, the construction of the historical memory being not a purely subjective projection of an individual or of a group but based on interpretation grounded in primary sources. Most of the dubious contributions were definitely excluded by the professional historians including the myth of Negru Vodă, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu's creation of false "patriotic" documents to support his historical hypotheses and Nicolae Densușianu's *Dacia preistorică*, the latter being published only after the death of his author in the context of the Romanian involvement in the Second Balkan War (1913). In this context, the positions of the historical, cultural and political figures with their associated cultural significance and political importance were stabilized in a unitary pantheon until the end of the 1940s. See Image 2.11 for an illustration of this pantheon of (national) heroes that was revived with a few changes during the 1970s and 1980s, the third period of codifying the Romanian historical canon, and used to consolidate the personal regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu and his supporters.

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<sup>151</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Opinii sincere și pernicioase ale unui rău patriot* [Sincere and critical opinions of a nonconformist patriot]. Translated from the French and edited with an introduction by Andrei Pippidi (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008). This edition combines and translates Iorga's collection of articles *Opinions sincères: la vie intellectuel des roumains en 1899* (Bucharest: L'Indépendance Roumaine, 1899) and *Opinions pernicieuses d'un mauvais patriot: articles de critique et d'histoire, publiés dans 'L'Indépendance Roumaine'* (Bucharest: L'Indépendance Roumaine, 1900).

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Articulated, explained and popularized through more or less competent historical works, the cult of national heroes developed during the nineteenth century and disseminated through a series of public media such as the literature and the arts. Short stories, poems and plays were written since the 1840s for promoting the Romanian language and culture. Famous works of Costache Negruzzi, Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu and later Mihai Eminescu, George Coșbuc, Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea and Mihai Sadoveanu served for more than a century for captivating the minds of young readers and spectators, illustrating different moments of the narrative of national history, becoming basic references in the Romanian modern culture that was challenged during the 1990s and indirectly shaping the political understanding of those who learned to master them or were mastered by them.

In painting, Theodor Aman was the one who contributed the most to the visual heroisation of the Romanian history, following a suggestion of Nicolae Bălcescu. He did so by creating the visual representation of several moments considered for a long time as the most important for the history of the Romanians. Besides numerous historical paintings, some of them mentioned in the following lines, Theodor Aman and several other contemporary painters created a series of artifacts that shaped the understanding of national history of many generations through their replication in books and textbooks or by being used as sources of inspiration for subsequent historical representations e.g. *Hora Unirii la Craiova*, 1857, *Unirea Principatelor*, 1859 and several others quoted in the following paragraphs. Some of these painters including Nicolae Grigorescu and Costin

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Petrescu had early periods in their life when they were active as *zugravi* of large frescos decorating Orthodox churches, many of these churches supporting massive reconstructions and redecorations in the decades before the First World War.<sup>152</sup>

Literature and painting contributed to the articulation of an uncontested unitary perspective on the national history by referencing each other and visually reinforcing the perspective of national unity. Literature and paintings, and later public monuments, contributed some times to the construction of the cult of national heroes in the Romanian public sphere in a more effective way than the professional historical writing did. Subordinating history to the cultivation of language and especially illustrating models and flaws of character, they could not have done differently given their selective nature manifested through sampling and focusing on events that looked minor at the scale of national history but were more accessible to the reading public. Quotations from these plays and poems attributed by their authors to one or another historical figure usually embodying ideal moral features were and still are frequently used in anchoring political discourses in the Romanian public sphere by using the past especially for contrasting it to the realities of the day.<sup>153</sup>

As it is going to be analytically surveyed in the following section for the case of the public monuments, the creation of visual and written artifacts did not and does not

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<sup>152</sup> Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, “Pro memoria: pictorul Costin Petrescu” [In the memory of painter Costin Petrescu] *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, vol. 123, nr. 4-6, 2005, pp. 509-520.

<sup>153</sup> This statement does not represent an endorsement of Ioan-Aurel Pop’s book length review of Lucian Boia’s *History and myth, Istoria, adevărul și miturile* [History, truth and myths] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002) where only literature and visual arts were considered factors that influenced the public perceptions of national history and professional historians were truth seekers that were not influenced at all by the existing representations of the past.

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depend solely on the intention and the conception of their author no matter how uncompromising such an author is. Ordered by an art collector or by a public or a private institution or created for being sold during or following a public exhibition, the creation of these artifacts takes time and their theme represents a choice made out of several others. The social, cultural, educational and political background of the author are factors in the limiting or enlarging author's palette of cultural references employed in their visual or written interpretation. A cultural historian may safely use these cultural references in order to understand the larger cultural contexts that favored the creation of the respective artifacts. In addition, while most of the times they were conceived for aesthetical needs and purposes, these artifacts were used for shaping the historical consciousness, the cultural contexts and they were used as anchors for political discourses.

The following account is limited in range due to the filters operated by an art history interested in Romania in selecting pieces mainly according to their artistic and documentary value, biographic approaches being only in the last decades accompanied by studies of certain periods approached in their whole cultural and historical dimensions when dealing with the artifacts created in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Numerous other artifacts that deal with representations of the past and that would have enriched our knowledge of the way how historical consciousness was constructed through arts did not make it to public collections, biographical accounts or catalogues or did not manage to be preserved for public display. Such omissions happened because

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they were deemed as not sufficiently worthy from an artistic point of view and thus they remained closed in private collections or in the deposits of the public museums.

**2.1.1. Regional heroes: Michael the Brave in Muntenia and Stephen the Great in Moldavia:**

A coherent and unified narrative of national history with a tendency of emphasizing the cultural unity of all Romanians started being developed within the paradigm of Romanticism after the 1830s. In this context, the choice for historical, cultural and political figures reveals a regional identity besides a local and a national one up to the 1900s. Michael the Brave was to some extent favored by the artists living in Muntenia, some of them coming from Transylvania, while Stephen the Great was to some extent favored by writers living in or originating from Moldavia. Few of these writers and artists paid an equal attention to the both historical figures, most of them instead focused on the historical and cultural figures already embedded or at least promoted within the local political traditions. They did so not necessarily because they personally did not share the vision of the cultural and political unity of all speakers of the Romanian language as most of the members of the 1848 generation did. They did so because they tended to address the horizons of reception of the local educated publics. In other words, this is not necessarily a telling indicator of the personal conceptions of the artists and of the writers mentioned in the following lines but it is more an indicator of the articulation of the local reading publics at a time when in the Danubian Principalities

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public schooling was only in its beginnings, printing was a business adventure and public libraries were non-existent as public museums and archives were non-existent too.

In the context of the reception of Romanticism in the Danubian Principalities e.g. the translation of Victor Hugo's plays, the practice of contemplating historical ruins and old buildings such as the Orthodox churches started being visible in the Romanian poetry during the 1830s and it raised to prominence during the 1840s and the 1850s. This was part of a European trend of valorizing the past through what was easily accessible at a time when the historical research was not yet professionalized, public archives were only in the beginning and state funding was minimal if existent. In Romania, the historical chronicles were edited only since the 1840s, state archives were established in the 1830s but it started collecting historical documents only since about the 1850s, the first public museum was established only in the 1860s, written histories of the Danubian Principalities or of the Romanians were almost nonexistent or at least not known to the public and thus the ruins existing on the territories of Muntenia and Moldavia, notably the Orthodox churches with their *pisanie*, were one of the most accessible sources of information on the local history. These ruins of fortresses, fortified churches and monasteries definitely contributed in a major way to framing the visual identity of the Romanian culture in addition to the later explored features of the Roman ancestry (Roman ruins being relatively few in Muntenia and almost non-existent in Moldavia in comparison with Dobrogea, Transylvania and Pannonia) and the folkloric image of the local peasantry. This early stage of the articulation of the Romanian historical memory

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best illustrates its constructed nature no matter the extent how grounded in primary sources it was. In this context, Vasile Cârlova and Grigore Alexandrescu dedicated several of their poems to the historical ruins of Târgoviște, the former capital of Muntenia, and to the monasteries of Cozia, Tismana and Dealu. The Neamțu fortress entered the public sphere through Costache Negruzzi's short story "Jan Sobieski and the Romanians" (*Sobieski și români*) (1857), followed by the "The siege of Neamț fortress" (*Cetatea Neamțului*) play by Vasile Alecsandri. This fortress was instrumentalized during the nineteenth century and later as a symbol of the ascribed perennial presence and resistance of the Romanian people against of the numerous and various foreign invasions.<sup>154</sup>

In the case of Michael the Brave, references to his subdue of Transylvania were present since the 1840s. His public image was rather of a successful general and prince, one of the few such princes one could find in the Danubian Principalities' medieval past, and less of a political unifier of all three principalities, at least this is the image I perceived for the period before 1870s, an observation that may be correlated with the lack of interest in publishing Nicolae Bălcescu's *Romanians led by Michael the Brave* [*Românii supt Mihai Voievod Viteazu*] in its entirety before 1878. The lack of Michael the Brave's presence in relation to the cultural artifacts designed in Moldavia before 1900 and even before the First World War is striking and to some extent illustrative for the

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<sup>154</sup> A now lost 1913 Romanian movie was dedicated to this fictional episode when a small group of Moldavian soldiers defended the fortress against a siege started by the Polish king Jan Sobieski. The movie was produced by Leon Popescu who also produced the first Romanian movie, *Independența României* [Romania's independence] (1912). <http://www.cinemagia.ro/filme/cetatea-neamtului-26801/>; Accessed: March 24, 2012.

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character of a work in progress that the Romanian nationalism had before the creation of Greater Romania and the cultural codification of the interwar period.

While most of the cultural elites shared the vision of the political and cultural unity of all speakers of the Romanian language, and contributed to its articulation in all fields of activity and to its gradual dissemination, the lower levels of the social pyramid was able to interiorize it, and shared it, rather only after the 1890s and especially since about 1900, a major factor in this transformation being Spiru Haret's educational program. Initiated in the 1890s and the 1900s this reform made its inroads during a period lasting from about 1900s to the interwar period. This coherent social and educational program was based on supporting and stabilizing a generation of teachers who took their jobs mainly in the 1900s, who possibly fought during the First World War and who were active during the entire interwar period, their activity being visible in the rise of literacy in only one generation from more than thirty percent in the 1900s to more than fifty percent in 1930. True, this rise includes the newly added territories of Transylvania, Banat and Bukowina where the literacy rates were higher than in Muntenia and Moldavia but also the territory of Bessarabia where the literacy rate was the lowest.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> See discussion on the rise of literacy rated in Chapter Three, footnote 35. The percentage of literacy was generally higher among men than among women and since this higher percentage of literacy was the average rate of literacy among all men one may safely suppose that the percentage of literacy among young and mature men was the highest, this generation born in the first decades of the twentieth century being active and (grand-) parenting many of the generations born during the Communist regime. For the context of 'haretism' see Ion Bulei, *Atunci când veacul se năştea... lumea românească 1900-1908* [When the century was born... The Romanian society at 1900-1908] (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1990), pp. 82-96 while for a biography of Haret see Gh. Adamescu, "Biografia lui Spiru Haret" [The biography of Spiru Haret] in *Operele lui Spiru Haret* editate de Comitetul pentru ridicarea monumentului său [The writings of Spiru Haret edited by the committee for his monument], vol. I (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, s.a.) pp. iii-lxvi.

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When some authors paid attention to both Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great in a rather equal way before the 1900s they did so because they conceived these literary artifacts specially for being included in the curricula promoted by the Ministry of Public Instruction. Vasile Alecsandri did so for the regimental schools promoted by his friend Ioan Emanuel Florescu,<sup>156</sup> George Coșbuc and other authors such as Ioan Nenițescu did it especially for the primary schools.

Michael the Brave (in Romanian *Mihai Bravu* and *Mihai Viteazul*) started being promoted in Muntenia by Ion Heliade Rădulescu who also begun writing the never finished epic poem *Mihaida*. In a time when some social strata were infused with dynamism in Wallachia, challenging the local social *status quo*, Prince Gheorghe Bibescu (1842-1848) started fashioning his public image on Michael the Brave, one of the few victorious anti-Ottoman local generals, probably in a an attempt of gaining more political legitimacy.<sup>157</sup> Nicolae Bălcescu's emphasis in *Româniî supt Mihai Voevod Viteazul* on the people instead of the prince is illustrative for the liberalism of the generation of 1848, many of whom changed their generous vision with a more moderate perspective once having to deal with the complex mechanisms of power after the 1856. Fragments of

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<sup>156</sup> Silviu Hariton, *Conscripție militară și educație primară, 1860-1900* [Military conscription and primary education in Romania, 1860-1900] in *Revista de Istorie Militară*, Nr. 6 (80), pp. 40-42.

<sup>157</sup> Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, "Din trecutul osanalelor la români" [From the history of exaggerated praises to the Romanian rulers], *Magazin Istoric*, vol. 31, nr. 1, 1997, pp.65-68. See also the articles of the same authoress "Trecutul între cunoaștere și cultul eroilor patriei. Figura lui Mihai Viteazul în manualele școlare de istorie (1831-1994)" [The past between knowledge and the cult of national heroes. Michael the Brave in the history textbooks, 1831-1994] in *Mituri istorice românești* [Romanian historical myths]. Edited by Lucian Boia (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 1995), pp. 42-71.

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Nicolae Bălcescu's work were published only in 1876 by Alexandru Odobescu while the entire work started being disseminated only after the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878.

Image 2.1. Constantin Lecca, *Uciderea lui Mihai Bravul* [The killing of Michael the Brave], oil on canvas, 1844-1845.



Source: Vasile Florea, *Arta românească. Modernă și contemporană*, Bucharest, Editura Meridiane, 1982, p. 61.

Michael the Brave was early represented in the paintings of Constantin Lecca (1807-1897) (*The killing of M.V.*, 1840, *M.V. entering Alba Iulia* and *The battle of Călugăreni*) and Mihail Lapaty (1816-1860), the latter representing him in the manner of Louis David's *Napoleon crossing the Alps*.

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Theodor Aman (1831-1891) devoted to Michael the Brave several paintings, *The last night of M.V.* (1852), *The battle of Călugăreni*, *M.V. entering Bucharest after the battle of Călugăreni*, *Izgonirea turcilor la Călugăreni* (1872). Nicolae Grigorescu (1838-1907) started his career by presenting *Mihai scăpând stindardul* to Barbu Știrbey in early 1856.

Image 2.2. Mihail Lapaty, *Mihai Viteazu* [Michael the Brave], oil on canvas,



1852.

Source: Vasile Florea, *Arta românească. Modernă și contemporană*, Bucharest, Editura Meridiane, 1982, p. 65.

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Applying for a scholarship for going to study in Italy, a contest he lost, Nicolae Grigorescu also presented the composition *Mihai Viteazul la Călugăren* during the same year.<sup>158</sup> Later, George Demetrescu Mirea (1852-1934) painted *Țărani secui aducând lui M.V. capul lui Andrei Bathory* and the same theme was depicted by several other artists.

Image 2.3: Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse's monument of Michael the Brave (1874), 3+2.5m, possibly during the 1880s since the two placed cannons were captured during the 1877-1878 war.



Source: Ioana Beldiman, *Sculptura franceză în România...*, p. 157

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<sup>158</sup> Alexandru Cebuc, *Grigorescu* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial, 2007), p. 159.

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In this context, the first public monument in Romania, after the short lived statue of Liberty in 1848, was dedicated to Michael the Brave. The statue authored by Albert Carrier-Belleuse was inaugurated on November 8, 1874. This was not actually carried out by the local authorities who postponed the ceremony but by a group of students. Nonetheless, the date was not an accident, November 8 corresponding in the calendar of the Orthodox Church to the day of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. Placed in a square especially created for it in front of the building of the University of Bucharest which also hosted at the time the Romanian Academy, the statue of Michael the Brave became very rapidly and remained one of the most important places of political gathering and confrontations before the First World War, its square being one of the few and the largest one in Bucharest for a longer while.<sup>159</sup>

Later, Michael the Brave's hat was used as a model for equipping the territorial infantry troops (*dorobanți*). By the end of the century every sculptor seeking affirmation would try his hand on a bust of Michael, recognizable not by any feature of his face but by the hat. During the First World War, Michael the Brave's head was considered a precious relic that needed being evacuated to the region of Moldavia. Furthermore, one of the first major public ceremonies of Greater Romania, anticipating the burial of the

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<sup>159</sup> Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată* [The Bucharest of the past], vol. I (1871-1877). Edited by Aristița and Tiberiu Avramescu (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1987), p. 143-145; Beldiman, pp. 147-159.

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Unknown Soldier, was bringing back Michael's head to the Dealu Monastery nearby Târgoviște.<sup>160</sup>

The other major historical figure of the nineteenth century Romanian nationalism was Stephen the Great who culturally and politically embodied the region of Moldavia. He entered public attention especially after the publication of Grigore Ureche's chronicle of Moldavia (XIVth to XVIth centuries) by Mihail Kogălniceanu in *Dacia literară* in the 1840s. While receiving less attention from painters and sculptors, Stephen benefited from a greater attention from writers, many of them originating from the current region of Moldavia. Costache Negruzzi's poem *Aprodul Purice* was followed by Vasile Alecsandri's poems *Altarul Monasterii Putna* (1843) and *The Bloody Grove (Dumbrava Roșie, 1872)*, the later an epic account of Stephen's victory over King John Albert of Poland in the battle of the Cosmin Forrest (1497). The Putna monastery of Bukovina region where Stephen the Great is buried became a major site of memory for the Romanians studying in Austria-Hungary including Mihai Eminescu and Ioan Slavici who organized in 1871 a commemorative congress. Stephen was also invoked in the famous poem *Doina* of Mihai Eminescu (1883) written on the occasion of inaugurating Stephen the Great's statue in Iași authored by Emanuel Frémiet while commemorating 400 years since his death represented a major occasion for celebration in 1904.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Andi Mihalache, *Mănuși albe, mănuși negre. Cultul eroilor în vremea Dinastiei Hohenzollern* [While gloves, black gloves. The cult of heroes [in Romania] during the Hohenzollern dynasty] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Limes, 2007), p. 213-219.

<sup>161</sup> Liviu Brătescu, "Inaugurarea statuii lui Ștefan cel Mare. Ritualuri, nostalgii, polemici (1883)" [The inauguration of the statues of Stephan the Great. Rituals, nostalgia, debates, 1883], *Xenopoliana*, 2006, nr. 1-4, pp. 119-141. A copy of this article was provided by Andi Mihalache to whom I thank here

Image 2.4: Emanuel Frémiet's monument of Stephen the Great in Iași (1883), the statue has four meters and the pedestal has the same height of four meters.



Source: Ioana Beldiman, *Sculptura franceză în România...*, pp. 161 and 169.

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again for this. The first verse of *Doina* may actually refer to Moldavia's borders and not to those of a Greater Romania, Nistru bordering Bessarabia and Tisa bordering Bukowina, both of these two smaller provinces being lost by Moldavia in 1774 and 1812: "De la Nistru pân' la Tisa/Tot Românul plânsu-mi-s'a [...] /Cine-au îndrăgit străinii/Mânca-i-r inima câinii [...] /Codrul-frate cu Românul [...] /Stefane Măria Ta/ Tu la Putna nu mai sta [...] /Tu te'nalță din mormânt/Să te-aud din corn sunând [...] /Toți dușmanii or să piară/Din hotară în hotară -/Îndrăgi-iar ciorile/Și spânzurătorile."

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While Nicolae Gane's short story *Stejarul din Borzesti* (1882) became a part of the literature for children, Stephen the Great was directly and indirectly the topic of two canonized trilogies of the Romanian literature. An active and eloquent politician in the decades around the turn of the centuries, Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea authored *Sunset* (*Apus de soare*, 1909), a play that shaped the image of Stephen the Great in the same way Mihai Eminescu's *The Third Letter* (*Scrisoarea III*, 1881) shaped the image of Mircea the Elder. Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea's other two plays were devoted to Stephen's offspring and subsequent rulers of Moldavia. Mihail Sadoveanu wrote the trilogy *Jder brothers* (1935-1942) that played a role similar, to some extent, to Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy of Polish early modern history*.

Image 2.5. Regiment nr. 13 in front of the statue of Stephen the Great, Iași, 1902.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 106.

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In painting, Stephen the Great received a more modest place, Theodor Aman dedicating him *Stephen falling from the horse during the battle of Șchei* (*Ștefan căzând de pe cal în bătălia de la Șcheia*), a fragment of the above mentioned poem of Negruzzi, *Aprodul Purice*.

Other local rulers of the past were used for preaching patriotism, internal unity, the fight for independence and for warning against political plots instigated by external enemies. In the case of Moldavia, Alexandru Lăpușeanu was made famous by Costache Negruzzi's short novel published in the first issue of the periodical *Dacia literară* (1840) while one of his competitors was made famous by Vasile Alecsandri's *Despot-vodă* (1878-1879). In the case of Wallachia, Theodor Aman painted Vlad the Empaler (*Boierii surprinși la ospăț de trimișii lui Vlad Țepeș; Vlad Țepeș și solii turci*) while his imagination of Tudor Vladimirescu was many times taken for granted as a real portrait and it became an icon that shaped the understanding of Tudor Vladimirescu's deeds. Mircea the Elder's glory was assured by the famous poem *Scrisoarea III* of Mihai Eminescu (*Convorbiri literare*, May 1881), an attack on the Liberals staging the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania while Alexandru Davila's (1862-1929) *Vlaicu-Vodă* (1902) imagined the fourteenth century confrontations of the principality of Wallachia with the kingdom of Hungary.

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### 2.1.2. *The making of a unitary pantheon of national heroes:*

Against this background of regional diversity which continued to be a statistical majority well into the 1890s even if it did not dominate the public sphere, a unified literary pantheon started being promoted. It seems that the first such instance was represented by the poetry collections of Dimitrie Bolintineanu, a minister of public instruction in Mihail Kogălniceanu's reforming government (1863-1865). All published during the late 1850s and the early 1860s, Bolintineanu's poetry took inspiration from the historical chronicles of Moldavia and Wallachia edited or promoted by Mihail Kogălniceanu at the time (*Legende, sau basne naționale în versuri*, 1858; *Bătăliile românilor*, 1859; *Legende noi*, 1862). Among these, *The last night of Michael the Great* [*Cea de pe urmă noapte a lui Mihai cel Mare*] is less known but illustrative for the popularity of the story of Michael's assassination by general Basta among the Romanian cultural elites. However, *Muma lui Ștefan cel Mare* became one of the most famous cultural references in Romanian literature especially in this trend of war poetry aiming at inspiring patriotism, bravery, unselfishness and especially the spirit of sacrifice for the country and nation ("Ce spui tu streine? Ștefan e departe [...] Du-te la oștire! Pentru țară mori! Și-ți va fi mormântul coronat cu flori."). Its dissemination was possibly ensured also because it was one of the first female figures invoked as a moral model for the promoted military heroism long before Ecaterina Teodoroiu.

Constantin Lecca is probably one of the first painters to depict a topic common for the history of both the Danubian Principalities, *Întâlnirea dintre Bogdan cel Orb și*

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*, *Radu cel Mare*. However, it was rather Theodor Aman who, guided by Nicolae Bălcescu, has made copies of portraits attributed to some of the old Romanian rulers while studying in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, copies which served him as an inspiration and model for his numerous historical paintings.<sup>162</sup> Taking inspiration from the above mentioned historical chronicles or from the Dimitrie Bolintineanu's poetry, Theodor Aman painted both Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great in a way which suggest a unitary and integrated perspective on the national history. Unity was also suggested by Alexandru Odobescu's (1834-1895) choice of main characters for two of his short stories (*Mihnea vodă cel Rău*, 1857; and *Doamna Chiajna*, 1860). Vasile Alecsandri wrote a *Cântecul lui Mihai Viteazul* ("Auzit-ați de-un oltean...Ce nu-i pasă de sultan?"). Several of his other poems dedicated to Stephen the Great (*Ștefan cel Mare și șoimul*, *Cântecul lui Ștefan cel Mare*) were included in the second edition of Eustațiu Pencovici's textbook used in teaching soldiers how to read and write (1863)<sup>163</sup>. George Coșbuc imagined Michael the Brave's battle of Călugăreni in his poem *Pașa Hassan* (1894) which was included in the volume *Cântece de vitejie* (1904) while *Cetatea Neamțului* and *Ștefăniță Vodă of Fire de tort* (1896) referred to moments of the Moldavian history.

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<sup>162</sup> Nicolae Bălcescu also published an article, "Buletin despre portretele principilor Țării Românești și ai Moldovei" [Information on the portraits of the principles of Muntenia and Moldavia], *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia*, 1847, according to Ion Frunzetti, "Nicolae Bălcescu și artele plastice" [Nicolae Bălcescu and the arts] in his *Arta românească în secolul al XIX-lea* [The Romanian arts during the nineteenth century] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1991), pp. 47-58.

<sup>163</sup> Eustațiu Pencovici. *Cartea Scólelor de Întîiul Grad* [The textbook for the primary instruction for soldiers]. Second edition, revised and added by Vasile Alecsandri (Bucharest: Imprimeria Ministeriului de Resbel, 1863); the intention of using these poems for educational purposes is declared in a letter exchange of Vasile Alecsandri and Ioan Emanuel Florescu of August and October 1863, all published in November 1863 in *Monitorul Oastei*, 1863, pp. 925-926.

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The Roman origin was the topic which embodied the most and promoted the idea of the cultural and political unity. However, the number of artifacts created in relation to this important ideological topic is surprisingly low in comparison to the attention given to medieval rulers which rather confirms the idea of strong local cultural identities in Muntenia and Moldova before the years around 1900. Sava Henția created a series of paintings including *Sacrificiul lui Trajan la construirea podului peste Dunăre de la Drobeta*, *Luarea Sarmizegetusei* and *Intrarea triumfală a imperatorului Traian în Sarmizegetusa* but none of them are exhibited in any of the Romanian museums nowadays and it is not clear for whom were they painted if they were ever bought.<sup>164</sup> In the same time, the Dacians were the theme of several poems such as Mihai Eminescu's *Rugăciunea unui dac* (1879) and especially George Coșbuc's *Decebal către popor* (1896) and *Moartea lui Gelu* (1898). Finally, Nicolae Iorga wrote several plays dealing with historical figures: *Mihai Viteazul*; *Învierea lui Ștefan cel Mare*; *Tudor Vladimirescu*; *Constantin Brâncoveanu* and *Doamna lui Ieremia*.<sup>165</sup>

My perspective in approaching this topic of research was shaped by both codifications of national identity shortly discussed in the beginning of this section which placed all these literary and artistic creations in a unitary perspective, George Călinescu's

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<sup>164</sup> *Colecția Sava Henția (1848-1904). 100 de ani de la moartea artistului. Catalog de expoziție. Pictură/grafică – Sebeș - mai 2004* [Sava Henția collection. A hundred years since the artist's death. Catalogue of the exhibition. Paintings and drawings, Sebeș, May 2004] (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip, 2004) only mentions them without offering copies for any of them.

<sup>165</sup> The effectiveness of this pantheon of heroes can be measured in the popularity of given names. All born before the First World War, my paternal grandfather was named Dan-Basarab, two brothers of him were baptized Rareș and Mircea and a sister Oltea.

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role in the case of literature being pivotal and George Oprescu's role on the case of arts being pretty similar. However, approaching these artifacts in their dynamic contexts, in an attempt to ignore their consequences, suggest a complex process of articulation for the Romanian nationalism where a regional perspective was dominant until the 1860s and still a statistical majority until the 1890s and it represented the background against which the unitary perspective was created, debated and disseminated especially with the help of the Transylvanian Romanians seeking jobs in the Romanian administration including Aaron Florian, George Coşbuc, Ioan Bogdan, Ioan and Alexandru Lapedatu and later Octavian Goga.

Overall, the cult of (national) heroes developed and spread as a part of the historical memory articulated during the nineteenth century Romania. First of all its analysis helps make more understandable to what extent this (military) heroism was present in the Romanian society in the decades before, during and after the First World War. Second of all, it sheds light on how the Romanian society at large and its public sphere approached the processes of commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878, in the Second Balkan War of 1913 and especially in the war of 1914-1918/1919, all of them instrumentalized as a form of promoting the idea of national unity.

The utilization of the hero allowed and reveals multiple conceptualizations and different sets of cultural references and vocabularies that are structurally compatible. They sometimes overlap and different forms of hybridization appear but they actually

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coexist allowing competing and overlapping notions of heroism. Romanticism disseminated the pantheon of (national) heroes once the concept of people/nation started to spread through the literature and the arts and later through the universities. A military heroism was designed for the benefit of the military training and it was disseminated through the public system of secondary and primary education, the army as well as the ceremonies staged by the nation-state. The religious framework absorbed and presented these (national) heroes as martyrs and saints especially during the nineteenth century. In the Romanian case, Michael the Brave was presented as a martyr for the nation while the military saints of the Byzantine Empire were preached as models as a part of the military training while many of them were adopted as patrons of regiments after the 1870s. Subsequently, those fallen in the Great War were also integrated as martyrs of the nation.

In each of these cultural, social and sometimes political contexts, a hero was conceptualized in a different way and benefited from a set of different qualities that were emphasized when they were considered relevant in-group. The military tended to put emphasis on the victories of the hero, the churchmen tended to put emphasis on his piety or on his policy of constructing churches if these existed while the others tended to put emphasis on his diplomatic skills or on the prosperity achieved during his reign in the Danubian Principalities. It did not matter if the hero actually embodied all these qualities in an equal way or to the extent they were emphasized. What was important was to instrumentalize him and his deeds for the cultural and the political aims that were popular

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during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth one.<sup>166</sup> If contested, contestation for this type of hybrid heroism did not come from a different interpretation of their meaning but the competition was with those who have seen no meaning at all in it. At the individual level, multiple identities allowed putting emphasis on only one of these aspects while in the same time being in possession of all of them.

Image 2.6: The monument of Michael the Brave, probably in the early 1900s.



Source: Ioana Beldiman, *Sculptura franceză în România...*, p. 148.

<sup>166</sup> Pilgrimages to the graves of the two major heroes, Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great, at the turn of the centuries are shortly discussed by Andi Mihalache, *Mănuși albe, mănuși negre...*, pp. 273-274.

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## **2.2. Heroism and the rise of the public monument in Romania:**

The cult of heroes that were promoted as national heroes by writers and historians active in the public and especially political sphere during the nineteenth century was visible not only in literature and arts but also in the public monuments which started to spread in the decades following gaining Romania's independence (1878). This section analyzes the factors and the actors involved in the creation and the spread of public monuments during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Romania. It illustrates this process with the three groups of public monuments dedicated to individuals considered significant enough in order to be turned into national heroes. In doing so this section accomplishes two aims.

The first aim is to extract a typology of these factors and actors involved in erecting public monuments in general and of war monuments in particular, this group of factors being present in the construction of war monuments in various degrees during the interwar period as well.

The second aim of this section is to date and thus contextualize the appearance of the war monuments as a distinct category of public monuments before the First World War in Romania in order to underline the fact the war monuments built during the interwar period belongs to a historical series already locally rooted in the historical national memory and the concept of (military) heroism articulated during the nineteenth century as a part of the dialogue between the local realities and the Western cultural and political models.

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As everywhere else in Europe, the appearance and the spread of public monuments in nineteenth century Romania was the result of a combination of ideological, political, institutional, social and economic factors rooted in the local context(s). The political and ideological factors included the centralization of power, the rise of nationalism, the growth of the citizen body and the participation in the public sphere. The social and economic factors included the rise of professionalized groups already mentioned in the introduction such as the military, the administrative bureaucracy, the teachers and professors of secondary and higher education on the one hand and the growth of the urban population and the multiplication of resources on the other hand. Especially the acculturation of the French culture by the local elites played a major role in the articulation of the public, artistic and cultural spheres during the nineteenth century Romania.<sup>167</sup>

The first public monuments in Romania to last were those of Michael the Brave in Bucharest (1874) and of Stephen the Great in Iași (1883) followed during the 1880s by the statues dedicated to the illustrious figures of cultural revival such as Gheorghe Lazăr and Ion Heliade Rădulescu in Bucharest and Miron Costin and Gheorghe Asaky in Iași.

Some authors considered that there was no “monumento-mania” in Romania before the First World War in comparison to Western and Central Europe. Definetely, the number of public monuments was far lower in Romania in comparison with the above

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<sup>167</sup> Ioana Beldiman, *Sculptura franceză în România (1848-1931). Gust artistic, modă, fapt de societate* [French sculpture in Romania (1848-1931). Artistic preferences, fashion, society] (Bucharest: Editura Simetria, 2005). A survey on several recent works on the cultural history of French-Romanian transfers was offered in Silviu Hariton, “Francophonie and its Romanian entanglements: a review article”, *Balkanistica*, vol. 24, 2011, pp. 265-284.

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mentioned regions of Europe and they spread almost a generation later even if synchronicity with the Hungarian case is demonstrated at the end of this section. This observation actually correlates the spread of the public monuments with the strengthening of authority as well as the relative prosperity of a state in addition to several other factors discussed in the first subsection below. As shown in the following lines several tens of war monuments were constructed in the decades before 1914 and several other tens closer to a hundred public monuments were dedicated to historical, cultural and political figures. Of course, this number is low and quite far from the several hundreds of public monuments constructed only in Paris during the same period of time. Still, they are illustrative enough for the inroads taken by the “monumento-mania”, a trend limited only by the lack of resources, the lack of sufficient support from the authorities and the lack of a participative public. In this chapter, the real question is not if this paradigm was active before 1914 but why its results became visible only in the first decades of the twentieth century.

### ***2.2.1. Context, factors and actors in the spread of public monuments:***

I consider that there were several factors that made possible and contributed to the rise of the public monument in Romania only in the late nineteenth century and in the early twentieth one: a) the articulation of a stable and coherent historical memory during the second half of the nineteenth century; b) the need for public and state celebrations; c) the intensification of political participation in the public sphere; d) the formation of

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professional groups able to promote public art and the articulation of a growing public able to culturally read, enjoy and use the monuments besides the compulsory state ceremonies; and e) the growing availability of resources. When all these preconditions were met and public monuments became a regular presence in the squares of the two major Romanian cities, Bucharest and Iași, war monuments started to appear and manifest as a distinct category of public monuments.

Understanding this process and the factors and actors that favored it is important for the context of this dissertation because the same factors and the same type of actors were also involved in the construction of war monuments before and after the Great War and therefore the process of constructing war monuments during the interwar period as a part of the politics of war commemorations may be explained and understood in a better way as a historical series appeared during the early modern period and widely disseminated during the second half of the nineteenth century.

As it becomes visible from this survey of the factors that favored or impeded on the process of the appearance and the spread of public monuments, the social actors who were involved in this process included the members of the initiative committees who articulated the idea and the theme of the respective monument, who financed directly or contributed to organizing the social gatherings that brought the necessary funds, sometimes over a long period of time, who selected the artists and their projects and sometimes intervened in changing the iconography of the monument, who solicited the location of the monument and brought the local public authorities at the ceremonies of

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inauguration or of celebrating the memory of those depicted on the monument. The social actors also included the local notabilities who saw the opportunity to use these monuments for strengthening their political legitimacy through association with the theme or the individual honored by the respective public monument and therefore they many times supported their building on the public domain. Finally, the third category of social actors were those who took part in a passive way in the social gatherings organized for raising the necessary funds, in the inauguration of the respective public monument, at the ulterior public ceremonies honoring the theme or the individual and to which or whom they were related through the cultural and historical memory disseminated one way or another in the public sphere. In the case of constructing war monuments the first category of public actors was represented most of the times by military officers and local notabilities and less by teachers and priests who become more involved during the interwar period. The same factors and the same type of actors were also involved in the construction of war monuments after the Great War.

***2.2.2. Three categories of glorified heroes: Middle Age rulers; former statesmen; and cultural figures:***

In this context of the cult of heroes promoted through professional historical writing as well as literature and arts, among the first public monuments in Romania were those of Michael the Brave in Bucharest (1874) and of Stephen the Great in Iași (1883) followed during the 1880s by statues dedicated to illustrious figures of the cultural revival such as

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Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1879/1881) and Gheorghe Lazăr (1886) in Bucharest and Miron Costin (1888) and Gheorghe Asaky (1890) in Iași.

Probably close to a hundred public monuments were created in Romania before the First World War. Identification, selection, clustering and ordering according to a theme and in chronological order of the public monuments in general and of the war monuments in special was possible due to two main sources of information. One of them is a dictionary compiled during the 1970s by the military documentarist Florian Tucă who wrote several similar books of a lesser documentary value.<sup>168</sup> The other one is a survey of the public monuments ordered in 1937 by the Commission of Public Monuments, a commission established 1929 and not to be confused with the Commission of Historical Monuments created in 1892 which bear the same name during its early period of existence.<sup>169</sup> Both of these surveys are not complete and systematic and a reserve on their accuracy should be preserved at all times. However they are useful in tracing the spread of public monuments in Romania dedicated to the three types of heroes mentioned above, statesmen, cultural figures and national heroes, and especially in identifying the war monuments dedicated to the war of 1877-1878, to the campaign of 1913 and to the campaigns of 1916-1919. All of the following lists of monuments are based on these two main sources of information and the lists of the localities are indicated

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<sup>168</sup> Florian Tucă and M. Cociu, *Monumente ale anilor de luptă și jertfe* [Monuments to the years of fighting and sacrifice] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1983).

<sup>169</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 68-70/1937. Information on Mehedinți County was taken from ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936. See section 3.3.1. of this dissertation for more information on the parameters of this survey.

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according to the administrative organization of Romania existing in the moment of their compilation, the 1930s and the 1970s.

Image 2.7. Regiment nr. 16 in front the statue of Tudor Vladimirescu and of the high school of Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 1902.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 30.

The public monuments built in Romania in the decades prior to the First World War were dedicated in their greatest part to three types or groups of heroes. A first type or group is represented by the historical figures usually categorized as national heroes such as Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great but also Mircea the Elder and Tudor Vladimirescu.

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Image 2.8. Regiment nr. 33 in front of the statue of Mircea the Elder in Tulcea, 1902.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 122.

The distribution of these public monuments is clearly regional before 1914, their presence in regions other than their regions of birth and activity dating mainly from the interwar period. When no birthplace, place of death or period of activity could be linked to the respective personality, the choice for a certain cultural or political figure indicates the regional identity of the group of members of the initiative committees as well as of those who subscribed for the creation and building of the statue in their locality.

According to the dictionary of Florin Tucă, a monument dedicated to Stephen the Great was erected in Bârsești, jud. Vrancea in 1904, Mircea the Elder had a statue built in Tulcea in the early 1910s only to be removed by the Bulgarian military authorities during the First World War while Tudor Vladimirescu received attention mainly in Oltenia (Baia

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de Arama, jud. Mehedinti, 1898; Tg. Jiu, 1898; Cerneti, jud. Mehedinti, 1914) and Bucharest (1934).

A second type or group is represented by the cultural personalities who shaped the Romanian culture during the modern period or who were invoked as forerunners in creating the modern Romanian culture such as Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Carol Davila (1903), August Treboniu Laurian (1905), Vasile Alecsandri (1906) and Dinicu Golescu (1908), Alecsandri's statue being placed in Iași and the rest of these mentioned monuments being built in Bucharest. A few others may be found in the other cities of the Old Kingdom. Their distribution is also regional (Costache Negri had a monument built in Galati in 1912) as it was the case of the public monuments dedicated to the medieval rulers and to the third group described below. Cultural figures such as Vasile Alecsandri were canonized when their heritage was not contested but shared in the public sphere. Thus almost no public monuments to Mihai Eminescu, Ion Luca Caragiale and Ion Creangă were built before the times of the Communist regime.

Finally, the third group or type was represented by the political personalities who had a say in creating the modern Romanian state during the nineteenth century or who were major leaders of the Liberal and Conservative Parties such as Ioan Emanuel Florescu (1895, in front of the Romanian Atheneum), Alexandru Ioan Cuza, assumed as a statesman and not as a ruler, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Constantin A. Rosetti, Ion C. Brătianu or Lascăr Catargiu. Political figures such as Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Mihail Kogălniceanu received attention mainly in Moldavia. Cuza was depicted as a standing

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man and therefore as a statesman, riding a horse being a posture reserved only for the princely and the royal figures.

Image 2.9\_ The monument of Ion C. Brătianu, Bucharest, 1903,



postcard.

Source: <http://www.imagoromaniae.ro/imagini/bucureti-monumentul-lui-i.c.-brtianu.html>;  
February 2013.

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Alexandru Ioan Cuza's statues were erected in Galați (bust in 1888 and, according to Tuca, a statue in 1917), Grivița, jud. Vaslui, 1903; Mărășești, 1908; Iași, 1910/2; Răcăciuni, jud. Bacău, 1912; Alexandria, 1915 (Ion Iordănescu), Cetate, jud. Dolj, 1933, Craiova, 1939. Cuza's statues of Iasi, Galați and Craiova were authored by Raffaello Romanelli. Statues to Kogălniceanu were built at Galati, 1893; Piatra Neamț (Wladimir Hegel); Iasi, 1911; Dorohoi, 1913 and Bucharest, 1936.<sup>170</sup>

All these public monuments including the war monuments used in this dissertation as a telling indicator for the impact of the politics of war commemorations were placed in front of the major public buildings constructed at the time. The relationship between these public buildings and the public monuments was partially surveyed in a previous section of this Chapter Two when dealing with the factors that led to the rise of the public monuments at the turn of the centuries Romania, my suggestion being that public buildings were prioritized. However, since public space was developed especially in relation to the urban transformations carried out in most of the important Romanian cities, placing public statues in these areas came as a natural choice given their greater visibility. In Bucharest, the statue of Michael the Brave and later the statues of

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<sup>170</sup> Tucă and Cociu, *Monumente ale anilor de luptă și jertfe* [Monuments to the years of fighting and sacrifice] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1983). Few of these monuments were discussed in detail and this includes war monuments as well: Remus Niculescu, "Statuia lui Gheorghe Asachi de Ion Georgescu" [The statue of Gheorghe Asachi of Iasi by Ion Georgescu], *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria arte plastice*, vol. 27, 1980, pp. 41-94. Introduction into the general trends of the history of sculpture in Romania are offered in George Oprescu, *Sculptura statuară românească* [The history of the Romanian statues] (Bucharest: ESPLA, 1954); Vasile Florea, *Arta românească. Modernă și contemporană* [The Romanian art. Modern and contemporary] (Bucharest : Meridiane, 1982), pp. 224-259 for the period of nineteenth century; Mircea Deac, *50 de ani de sculptură. Dicționarul sculptorilor din România, 1890-1940* [Fifty years of sculpture. The dictionary of the Romanian sculptors, 1890-1940] (Bucharest: Oficiul pentru informare documentară pentru industria construcțiilor de mașini, 2000).

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Gheorghe Lazar and Ion Heliade Rădulescu were built in front of the University of Bucharest hosting at the time the Romanian Academy and the Botanical Garden. In Iași, the statue of Mihai Kogălniceanu was built 1911 in front of the University of Iași while the statue of Vasile Alecsandri was erected in 1906 in front of the National Theater. Similarly, most of the public monuments surveyed above and discussed below were placed in the close proximity of a building hosting an administrative institution or an institution of education.

All these public monuments were constructed as illustrations of a diversity of cultural and political discourses all included in the paradigm of state nationalism, a discourse of nationalism that was articulated and disseminated in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century. Used as anchors for teaching additional information that was a part of the narrative of national history, all these monuments contributed not only at the artistic education of their viewers but also at the dissemination of the narrative of national history. Thus public monuments had a performative aspect that was theorized by Reinhart Koselleck when dealing with the war monuments of the First World War.

The image below is illustrative for the narrative of national history constructed around the concept of military heroism where the group of former rulers embodied sometimes not only qualities of leadership and strength, manifested through military and political deeds, but they were also envisioned as epitomizing the qualities of the Romanian people in the past. Within this narrative of national history the experience of

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the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, in the Second Balkan War of 1913 and especially the experience of the Great War was integrated. The same type of historical narrative centered on the values of the military heroism was structurally reemployed in Romania during the period of the 1960s to the 1980s.

Image 2.11. The pantheon of national heroes, postcard, 1900s.



Source: Facebook page, *Istorie românească în fotografii*, April 2012.

This process of building public monuments in the major urban areas of Romania is relatively similar to and it parallels the Hungarian construction of public monuments. In the Hungarian metropolis, Budapest, most of the public monuments were also constructed around and after 1900 even if there were more monuments dedicated to political figures that were erected before the turn of the centuries.

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In the case of political figures, Budapest monuments were erected to Eötvös József (1879), Széchenyi Istvan (1880) and Deák Ferenc (1887), all three nearby the Pest side of the Chained Bridge/Lanchid. During the interwar period a memorial flame was dedicated to Batthyány Lajos (1926), another monument to Sissy – Queen Elisabeth (1932) and a monument to Kossuth Lajos (1927) placed nearby the Hungarian Parliament and changed during the early 1950s with a more optimistic version.

Monuments dedicated to cultural figures or having an impact on the development of the infrastructure followed closely. They were dedicated to Archduke Joseph (1869) who supervised the systematization of Pest; to Petőfi Sándor (1882), to architect Ybl Miklos (1896), to Baross Gábor (1898) who supervised the development of the railway system, to Vörösmarty Mihály (1908), Arany János (?), Jókai Mór (1921), Géza Gárdonyi (1933) and to Kölcsey Ferenc, the creator of the national anthem (1939).

Finally, monuments dedicated to the historical figures were probably constructed in parallel with the creation of the Heroes Square panthéon: Eugene de Savoy (1900), Anonymous (1903), Hunyadi Janos, at the bottom of the Fishermen Tower (1903) and on the Heroes Square 1906, St. Gellert (1904), King Matthias on the Buda Hill (1904) and in 1905 on Hősök Ter, King Stephen nearby the Matthias Church (1906) and on the Heroes Square 1911, Pázmány Péter (1914), Prince Imre in Moricz Zsigmond Square (1930) and Rákóczi Ferenc nearby the Parliament (1937).

In this context, in addition to the monuments dedicated to its most important political leaders, the commemoration of the 1848-1849 events produced a monument to

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the Honved units (1892/7) that was preserved today and a monument to the Polish general Bem Jozsef (1934), the latter becoming the place where the events of 1956 have started.<sup>171</sup>

Observing the chronology of constructing monuments to the national heroes in Hungary it is safe to assume that the similar process in Romania was not subsequent to the Hungarian one. Instead, as in the case of the national exhibitions of 1896 and 1906, both of these cultural and political processes of anchoring the historical national memory through public monuments represented local articulations of a larger European trend, the Romanian experience being mostly affected by transfers of models and artists from France while the Hungarian experience being mediated most of all by the Viennese one.

### **2.3. The democratization of heroism: glorifying the *dorobanț* and commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878:**

This third section is dedicated to the memorialization of the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. It has two aims. On the one hand, this section discusses the most visible application of the concepts of military heroism and public monument in the Romanian public sphere prior to the First World War. On the other hand, it analyzes how this application of the concepts of heroism and public monuments before the First World War framed from a cultural point of view the process of war commemorations during the interwar period and it had been absorbed as a part of it too.

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<sup>171</sup> Bob Dent, *Every statue tells a story. Public monuments in Budapest* (Budapest: Europa, 2009)

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This section is further divided in two subsections. One is dedicated to the palette of forms of commemorating the 1877-1878 through arts and literature before the First World War. The same palette of commemorative instruments was used as well during the interwar period and they are partially discussed in the first section of the last chapter of this dissertation. The second subsection discusses the appearance and the dissemination of public monuments dedicated to a collective hero, one such monument being dedicated to the firemen who fought the Ottomans in 1848, and about sixty war monuments were dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 and in the Second Balkan war of 1913.

There are several observations which are discernable and I preferred to place them in the beginning of this section and not at the end of it. The memorialization of Romania's participation in the war of 1877-1878 was possible only in the context of the cult of national heroes spread in Romania as a part of a larger European process of constructing a national historical consciousness through literature, historical writings, arts and monuments. This campaign was a milestone for Carol I's political legitimacy and in the same time one of the most important occasions of national celebrations since it contributed the most to shaping the cultural and political realities contemporary to those organizing and assisting the commemorative practices. This process of memorialization was the first one in Romania where a democratization of the concept of heroism was discernable. It took the form of glorifying the *dorobanț* as the embodiment of the whole nation and of glorifying the war experience through arts, literature, school and military

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publications and numerous war monuments built in their greatest part after 1907 mostly in the region of Muntenia. The commemoration of 1877-1878 followed models of celebrations of historical achievements through a large number of media developed in the countries of Western Europe as a part of the processes of expansion of the public sphere and of state-/nation-/empire-building and it represented in the same time the local model for the interwar process of war commemoration.

### 2.3.1. *Romania's War of Independence in the arts and literature before 1916:*

The Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 was immediately interiorized in the political and historical culture of Romania as the Independence War (*Războiul de Independență*) and it quickly became the cornerstone of King Carol I's reign. While the 1866 moments of his election as a prince and of establishing the Constitution were the creation of the Romanian political elites, only after 1871 his personal influence being firmly established, Carol I's role in the successful Romanian involvement in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 was pivotal and therefore uncontested. Especially since the 1890s his image became increasingly more visible in the public sphere in connection to the symbolic affirmation of the young Romanian kingdom through the development of the public infrastructure on the one hand and through the commemoration of the War of Independence on the other hand. Apparently he showed no personal ambition for being immortalized because he saw himself as an element of equilibrium in the volatile

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Romanian politics, and this attitude earned his legitimacy, and never as an absolute monarch in spite of the tendency of maintaining the army as his personal domain.

However, the commemoration of the 1877-1878 war in Romania was partially based on and in the same time contributed to a growing cult of Carol I's effigy.<sup>172</sup> Still, few busts were dedicated to him in comparison to those dedicated to the historical, political and cultural figures and no public subscription or parliamentary initiative for providing public funds for erecting a statue seems to have been successfully launched before the 1930s. This is unlike the tradition of building monuments of the reigning monarchs as it was visible in the first chapter for the cases of Wilhelm I in Germany and of Franz-Joseph in Austro-Hungary. Based on the 1937 survey of public monuments, I could identify only three monuments dedicated to Carol I before 1914. A first one was authored by C. Bălăcescu and it was built in Turnu Severin. Placed in the courtyard of the local high school Traian it cost 7.000 lei.<sup>173</sup> Other two monuments appeared in Călugăreni (1913) and Gh. Lazăr, Ialomița County (1914).<sup>174</sup> During the interwar period a large number of statues or monuments were dedicated to King Ferdinand as symbols of creating Greater Romania and a similar attention was given to Carol II during the later period of the 1930s as a part of the growing cult of his personality.

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<sup>172</sup> Carmen Tănăsioiu, *Iconografia lui Carol: de la realitate la mit* [The iconography of Carol I: from reality to the myth] (Timișoara: Editura Amarcord, 1999); Andi Mihalache, "Jubileul. Reprezentări ale regalității în portrete și medalii jubiliare: modele europene, replici românești" [The jubilee. Representations of the royalty in portraits and commemorating medals: European models, Romanian adaptations] in his *Mănuși albe, mănuși negre...*, pp. 124-149.

<sup>173</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 88.

<sup>174</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 48 and 64.

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An iconography of the Romanian participation in the war started early to develop, King Carol I being the first to order paintings depicting scenes from the war, including his presence. Thus he ordered five paintings to Johann Nepomuk Schönberg in order to adorn his residences, the Royal Palace in Bucharest and the Peleş Castle in Sinaia, Prahova County.<sup>175</sup> However, during the war a series of artists were conscripted including Nicolae Grigorescu, Sava Henția and George Demetrescu Mirea. They had the opportunity to document and sketch drawings of soldiers in different moments of their daily life during the war.<sup>176</sup> Among them, Nicolae Grigorescu is probably the mostly known to create a large number of paintings, especially during the 1880s, of different dimensions which created the visual representation of the War of Independence until the present day. *Atacul de la Smârdan* (The attack of Smârdan, 1885, 253x390cm) is probably the largest but some other pieces were *Vedeta* (85.5x122.5cm) and *Spionul* (1878-1880, 74x143.5cm). For the first one, Grigorescu received from the city of Bucharest a portion of land of 1823sqm close to the Victoria Square. For other two,

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<sup>175</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Penel și sabie. Artiști documentariști și corespondenți de front în Războiul de Independență (1877-1878)* [Brush and sword. Documentary artists and front correspondents in the independence war, 1877-1878] (Bucharest : Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2002), p. 159-162.

<sup>176</sup> Marin Mihalache, “Epopoea independenței și arta de evocare istorică” [The epopee of independence and the history evoking art] in *Epopoea independenței în arta plastică românească* [The epopee of independence in the Romanian arts]. Introduction and selection of illustrations by Marin Mihalache (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1977), pp. 5-15; Ion Frunzetti. “Plastica independenței” [The Independence War in the contemporary Romanian arts], *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, vol. 24, 1977, pp. 3-52 and Ion Frunzetti, “Contribuția pictorilor la plastica Independenței” [The painters’ contribution to the representation of the Independence War], *Arta și literatură în slujba independenței naționale* [Art and literature serving the national independence] (Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 1977), pp. 157-200, republished in his *Arta românească în secolul XIX* [The Romanian art during the nineteenth century] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1991), pp. 403-451; Cornel Crăciun, “Reprezentări ale războiului în pictura românească” [Representations of war in the Romanian paintings], *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane „Gheorghe Șincai”*, vol. 5-6, 2002-2003, pp. 282-295 is a selective summary list of paintings representing war scenes.

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*Dorobanțul* and *Recunoașterea*, Nicolae Blaremburg paid 12.000 lei. Besides a large number of sketches and paintings, he printed at Paris in 1878-1879 an “Album of the Independence War”. Only ten images out of the intended thirty were printed in the end. A set of such five images were supposed to be sold at twenty lei or six lei a piece but not many of them were actually sold and therefore in 1902 he donated the rest of the issue to the Minister of Public Instruction. The minister donated sets of ten copies to the normal schools for preparing teachers and a copy to every rural school under the condition of having a building maintained in good conditions and only if the teacher agreed to pay for the frame.<sup>177</sup> The difficulty of distributing these images is illustrative for the ways how the cultural politics of war memorialization were implemented as form of competition and for the popular indifference and the scarcity of resources their study should be placed against.

Presenting Nicolae Grigorescu’s work including his paintings dedicated to the war experience of 1877-1878, Vlad Țoca observes they depict rather idealized figures with no particular feature or expression on their faces denoting their conception as part of an impersonal visual program corollary to the national ideology.<sup>178</sup> The same observation

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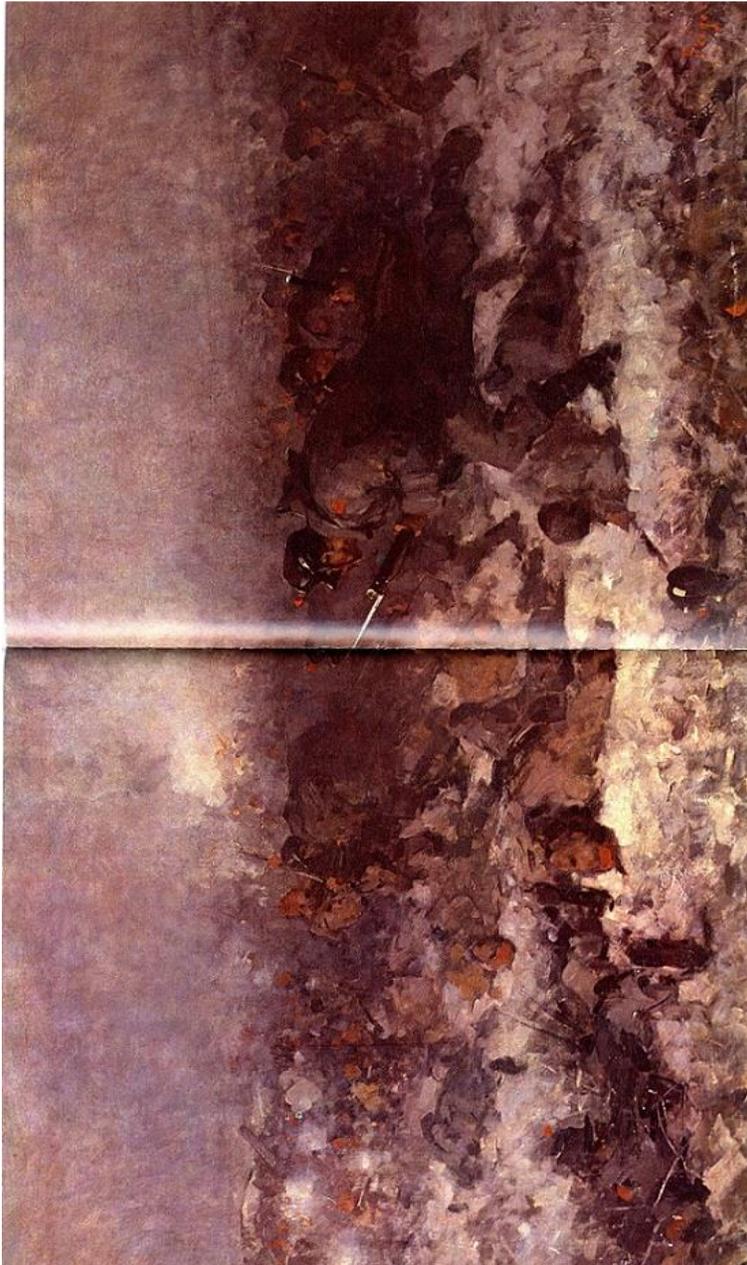
<sup>177</sup> Petre Oprea, “Un act patriotic a lui Nicolae Grigorescu: Albumul Războiului Independenței” [A patriotic deed of Nicolas Grigorescu: the Album of the Independence War] and “Rolul colecționarilor în impunerea unor mari valori artistice” [The role of art collectors in promoting some great artists] in *Repere în arta românească (secolul al XIX-lea și al XX-lea)* [Landmarks in Romanian art. The nineteenth and the twentieth centuries] (Bucharest: Maiko, 1999), pp. 28-30 and 34-41. The first was originally published in *Revista muzeelor and monumentelor*, nr. 1, 1989 while the second appeared in *Contemporanul*, December 7, 1984.

<sup>178</sup> Vlad Țoca, “Visual mythology: the case of Nicolae Grigorescu as the National Painter” in *Researching the nation: the Romanian file. Studies and selected bibliography in Romanian nationalism*. Edited by Sorin Mitu (Cluj-Napoca: International Book Access, 2008), pp. 104-114.

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may be extended to the war monuments created as a part of the politics of war commemoration no matter if they were constructed before and after the First World War.

Image 2.12: Nicolae Grigorescu's *Atacul de la Smârdan* [The attack of Smârdan], 1880s.



Source: *Epopeea independenței în arta plastică românească* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1977), unpaginated, image 84.

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When representing human figures, the focus is on their bodies and their solemn, resigned or broken posture and hardly on the features of their faces that could have denoted personal feelings. Focus on personal feelings of the depicted character(s) represented a major change spread with the end of the nineteenth century and it became a part of the public monuments mostly after the Second World War.

Image 2.13: Nicolae Grigorescu's *Sentinela* [The sentinel],



1880s.

Source: *Epopoea independenței în arta plastică românească* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1977), unpaginated, image 89.

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Image 2.14: Oscar Obedeanu, *Sentinela* [The sentinel], drawing.



Source: *Epopoea independenței în arta plastică românească* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1977), unpaginated, image 105.

The commemoration of the Romania's Independence War took numerous forms and it is visible in numerous forms of media. It was not a systematic policy promoted by

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a monolithic state, as it is visible in the difficulty of disseminating the images created by Nicolae Grigorescu, but the result of a set of initiatives of local and national actors who were active in the public sphere, actors sharing the language of nationalism and many times being active either in the public bureaucracy or in the parliamentary activity. This diversity is visible in the spread of the war poetry, later to be included as a part of the primary schools' curriculum, in the initiatives of changing the names of the streets, in the publication of self glorifying recollections and military textbooks etc.<sup>179</sup>

While a military fashion started to spread among some members of the Romanian upper classes, especially among children and women (illustrated by Ion Luca Caragiale's *Domnul Goe* while Queen Maria's representation as an officer of *roșiori* troops is rather an exception),<sup>180</sup> in many cities including Bucharest and Brăila square names and street names were changed during the early 1880s in order to celebrate the outcome of the war and the names of the victories or bodies of the army: *Piața Independenței*, *Calea Victoriei*, *Calea Rahovei*, *Calea Plevnei*, *Calea Griviței*, *Calea Dorobanților*, *Calea Călărașilor*, *Roșiori Street* etc. Rahova, Plevna, Grivița represented names of battlefields where the Romanian army has fought while the others represented names given to different branches of the Romanian army. Added to these names, streets carrying the

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<sup>179</sup> Sorin Alexandrescu, "Război și semnificație. România în 1877 [War and significance. Romania in 1877]" in A.P. Goudoever (ed.), *Romanian history 1848-1918. Essays from the First Dutch-Romanian Colloquim of Historians 1977* (Historische Studies, xxxvi), Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1979, pp. 61-84, republished in Sorin Alexandrescu, *Privind înapoi, modernitatea* [Looking back, modernity] (Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1999), pp. 19-46; Theodor Vârgolici, *Ecourile literare ale cuceririi independenței naționale* [The literary echos of gaining national independence] (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1976).

<sup>180</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Modă și societate urbană în România epocii moderne* [Fashion and urban society in nineteenth century Romania](Bucharest: Paideia, 2006).

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names of Mihai Bravu and Ștephen the Great were reminders of the glorious past taught by the national history and of the brave behavior attributed to the Romanian people by the historical and literary writings of the time.<sup>181</sup>

Military conscription was introduced as universal and compulsory in the Old Kingdom of Romania in 1860. A system of regional recruitment of the peasants, based on the Russian model, existed in the principalities of Moldavia and Muntenia since 1831-1832. After 1860 all Romanian citizens were theoretically taken into consideration in an equal way for the duty of the military service even if the laws of recruitment of 1864 and 1876 took into consideration three types of exemptions and postponements: those for medical reasons; those based on height; and those based on legal grounds. The French system of *tirage à sorts* was used up to 1908 to incorporate in the permanent army about a quarter of the available youth cohort for six year up to 1868, for four years up to 1885, for three year up to 1908 and for two years thereafter. About 6000 youth were conscripted annually during the 1860s and the 1870s, about 10.000 youth up to 1900 and between 20.000 and 30.000 youth thereafter. They were trained in the barracks for several years, either in the regular infantry (*infanteria de linie*) or in the regular chivalry (*roșiori*) or in the modest fluvial fleet. The people between 21 and 26 who were not recruited for the permanent army were trained once a week and for several weeks in the autumn in the so called territorial troops as part of the infantry (*dorobanți*) or as a part of

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<sup>181</sup> Irina Stănculescu, “Apariția și evoluția denumirilor de străzi din București” [The appearance and the evolution of the street names in Bucharest], *București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie*, vol. XIV, 2000, pp. 137-185.

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the cavalry (*călărași*). After 1908 the territorial regiments were transformed in line regiments and all youth in their early twenties were conscripted for two years. Probably due to financial reasons and lack of proper roads, soldiers were recruited on a regional basis; only after 1918 was the practice of mixing people from different regions introduced in grouping the military units.<sup>182</sup>

Numerous recollections or histories of the war were written after 1878 and especially around the turn of the centuries.<sup>183</sup> The events were always part of the military textbooks<sup>184</sup> while the celebration of the twenty-five years since the war took place triggered an increase of attention given to commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878. A column of forty meters in height, engraved with scenes from the war was proposed to be authored by Karl Storck. A play entitled “Peneș Curcanul” and inspired by Vasile Alecsandri’s poem was written by the actors of the National Theater and it was staged there on May 11 and 19, 1902. The theme was

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<sup>182</sup> *Istoria militară a poporului român* [The military history of the Romanian people], vol. 4 (1784-1878) (București 1987), 420-424, 433-435, 494-499, 513-514 and vol. 5 (1878-1919) (București 1988), pp. 129-132; Silviu Hariton, “Conscripție militară și educație primară, 1860-1900 [Military conscription and primary education in Romania, 1860-1900]” in *Revista de Istorie Militară*, Nr. 6 (80), pp. 36-43.

<sup>183</sup> Mihail Dimitrescu, *Amintiri și episoade din Reșbelul pentru independență*. Cu o privire retrospectivă asupra desvoltării armatei române de la 1859 [Recollections and moments of the independence war. With a retrospective incursion in the development of the Romanian army since 1859] by veteran captain... Foreword by I. Nenișescu (Bucharest: Tip. Gutenberg, Joseph Gobl, 1893), viii+72p.; Octav George Lecca, *În amintirea războiului de independență și a campaniei din 1877-1878. Album comemorativ* [Remembering the Independence War and the 1877-1878 campaign. A commemorative album] (București, [1902]. 64p., several more examples are mentioned in George Muntean, “Proza” [The prose] and Rodica Florea, “Memorialistică, scrieri istorice, corespondență” [Memories, historical writings, correspondence], *Arta și literatură în slujba independenței naționale* [Art and literature serving the national independence], pp. 49-65 and 87-102.

<sup>184</sup> Elefterie Dumitrescu (1855-1938), *Educațiunea și datoriile morale ale soldatului. Precepțiuni și exemple* [The education and moral duties of the soldier. Rules and examples] by Major... of Argeș 4th Regiment (Bucharest: Inst. De Arte Grafice Carol Gobl, 1901) (15.5x10cm), VIII+318p.

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used in several examples of the school theater encouraged at that time.<sup>185</sup> The third volume of his Comanesteanu family saga, Duiliu Zamfirescu's *In war* (In război) was initially published in 1897-1898 in *Convorbiri literare* and significantly in separate volumes in 1902 and 1907. It is hard to believe there was a coincidence they were published exactly when celebrating the twenty-fifth and the thirtieth year since taking part in the Russian-Turkish war.

Nevertheless the image of the Romanian's participation in the war of 1877-1878 entered the public sphere mainly through the works of Vasile Alecsandri and George Coșbuc. Vasile Alecsandri quickly wrote during the war a series of poems such as *Peneș Curcanul*, the *Sergeant*, *Ode to the Romanian soldiers* and *Hora de la Plevna* which were published in 1878 in the volume *Our soldiers (Ostașii noștrii)*. Alecsandri created the character Peneș Curcanul based on the real life Constantin Țurcanu (1854-1932), a sergeant of *dorobants*. The hero necessary for providing a coherent and unitary narrative of the events and in the same time apparently accessible to the regular reader, Peneș Curcanul became the main character of many subsequent romanced histories of the war of 1877-1878, including of the first Romanian movie ever produced, *Independența României* (Romania's Independence, 1912). During the First World War Constantin

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<sup>185</sup> Mihai Florea, "Teatrul românesc în slujba independenței naționale" [The Romanian theater serving the national independence], *Arta și literatură în slujba independenței naționale* [Art and literature serving the national independence], pp. 67-85, p. 84.

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Țurcanu volunteered to fight in the Romanian army and apparently he also enrolled all his sons and grandsons.<sup>186</sup>

A generation younger than Vasile Alecsandri, George Coșbuc dedicated a great part of his writing to the memorialization of the Independence War, his marriage with the daughter of school books editor C. Sfetea in 1895 and his activity as a director in the Ministry of Public Instruction after 1902 probably playing a role in focusing his attention to writing war poetry and school books. While early poems such as *Trei Doamne și toți trei* (1891) and *Recrutul* (1893) were included in his volume *Balade și idile*, the volume *Songs of bravery* (*Cântece de vitejie*, 1904) collected the largest number of poems dedicated to glorifying the Romanian participation in 1877-1878, all of them written between 1898 and 1904. This volume included *Dorobanțul*, 1900; *Scut și armă*, 1902; *Mortul de la Putna*, 1903; *Pe Dealul Plevnei*, 1900; *Cântecul redutei*, 1898; *Povestea căprarului*, 1898; *Coloană de atac*, 1900; *O scrisoare de la Muselin-Selo*, 1901; *Raport (Luarea Griviței)*, 1898. Song [*Cântec*], the opening poem of this volume is illustrative for the cultural agenda it carried: “Raise your head, you worthy people/All of you who speak the same language and carry one name/You all should have a single goal and a single wish/To proudly raise above all in this world/The tricolor!”<sup>187</sup> In addition, in 1899, Coșbuc published two narrative accounts dedicated to the participation of the Romanian

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<sup>186</sup> Archibald [Gheorghe Rădulescu], *Impresii de călătorie. Paris-Reims-Verdun-Mărăști-Mărășești. Note de om năcăjit* [Travel recollections. Paris-Reims-Verdun-Mărăști-Mărășești. Notes of an upset man] (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Cartea Medicală, 1924), p. 126.

<sup>187</sup> “Sus ridică fruntea, vrednice popor!/Câți vorbim o limbă și purtăm un nume/Toți s-avem o țintă și un singur dor - /Mândru să se nalțe peste toate-n lume/Steagul tricolor!”

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army in the war of 1877-1878: *Războiul nostru pentru neatârnare* (Our war for independence) and *Povestea unei coroane de oțel* (The story of a steeled crown). This period at the turn of the centuries correlates with the period of intensification of public celebrations in the Romanian public sphere and the appearance and the spread of war monuments in addition to numerous other public monuments.

All these cultural artifacts contributed to the articulation of a warrior culture that served as an instrument for further cultural mobilization for war where war monuments played a major role as well. Illustrative for this warrior culture is Ioan Nenițescu's *Lion cubs* (Pui de lei), a poem that entered school curriculum and pupils' folklore ever since:

There were heroes and there still are/And there will be among the Romanian people/  
Born out of hard rock/Romanians grow everywhere!//It's our inheritance/  
Created by two men with strong arms/Steeled will/Strong minds and great hearts.//  
And one is Decebal the diligent/And the other one is Traian the rightful/  
For their homeland/They bitterly fought so many enemies.//And out of such parents/  
Always fighters will be born/Who for their motherland/Will stand as the next [fighters]//  
There were heroes and there will be/Who will defeat the evil enemies/  
Out of Dacia's and Rome's ribbon/Forever little lions will be born.<sup>188</sup>

In this context, it comes at no surprise that the first Romanian movie was dedicated to the war of 1877-1878. The two hours movie was authored by Grigore Brezianu and it included a cast composed mostly by the actors of the National Theater of Bucharest. Brezianu obtained the necessary 400.000 lei from Leon Popescu, a rich

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<sup>188</sup> "Eroi au fost, eroi sunt încă/Și-or fi în neamul românesc!/Căci ruți sunt ca din tare stâncă/  
Românii orișunde cresc//E vița noastră făurită/De doi bărbați cu brațe tari/Și cu voința oțelită/  
Cu minți deștepte, inimi mari.//Și unu-i Decebal cel harnic/Iar celălalt Traian cel drept/  
Ei pentru vatra loc amarnic/Au dat cu-atația dușmani piept.//Și din așa părinți de seamă/  
În vechi s-or naște luptători/Ce pentru patria lor mamă/Vor sta ca vrednici următori.//Au fost eroi  
și-or să mai fie/Ce-or frânge dușmanii cei răi/Din coasta Daciei și-a Romei/În veci s-or naște pui de lei."

Ioan S. Nenițescu (1854-1901). *Pui de lei. Poesii eroice și naționale* [Lion cubs. Heroic and national poetry] (Bucharest: Ig. Haimann, Tip. „Gutenberg” Joseph Gobl, 1891), 2 lei, 18,5x12,5cm. 215p.+III+1f.

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senator of Ialomița. Popescu was also helpful in gaining the support of the War Department for the 80.000 troops used as extras as well as for the military equipment used for fostering realism to the movie. The script was supposed to be as historically accurate as possible and the character of Peneș Curcanul became the common hero that viewers were able to connect with and sympathize. With an explicit emphasis on being realist in the depiction of the war scenes and in the same time aiming at stirring the viewer's emotions, the movie had a pedagogical agenda which is visible also in the fact that its premiere on September 1, 1912, was accompanied by a libretto listing the most important scenes of the movie with their accurate historical chronology. Significantly, a competitive project with the same topic authored by Gaumont with a cast of a different Romanian theater was stopped by the Romanian authorities on the grounds of not being historically accurate.<sup>189</sup> Historical objectivity funded by the state became once again the instrument for eliminating alternative interpretations to the officially approved historical perspective.

### 2.3.2. *War monuments dedicated to 1877-1878 and 1913 before the First World War:*

As it was discussed in the second section of this chapter, the public monuments started to appear in the 1870s and especially in the 1880s and they spread especially at the turn of the centuries. In this context, war monuments took either the form of celebrating the

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<sup>189</sup> Manuela Gheorghiu, "Cinematograful, un aliat al istoriei" [The cinema, history's ally] in Ion Frunzetti and George Muntean (eds.) *Arta și literatură în slujba independenței naționale* [Art and literature serving the national independence], pp. 225-238. Grigore Brezianu's movie was the theme for another movie, *The rest is silence* (2007), directed by Nae Caranfil; conceived during the 1980s, it plays on the relationships between arts, funding providers and politics in general; see <http://www.restuletacere.com/>

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historical figures who lead the Romanian people in their fight against the never ending foreign invasions during the Middle Age or they took the form of celebrating the three major events of the nineteenth century that shaped the Danubian Principalities and Romania: the 1821 revolt led by Tudor Vladimirescu, the 1848 revolution in Wallachia and the war of 1877-1878. While dedicated to individual figures they were celebrating the Romanian nation as a collectivity as well as the values of courage and strength sought in the past so they can be disseminated in their present. They represented anchors for the national history taught in the public system of schools as well as in the many historical brochures disseminated in the public sphere and partially surveyed in the previous subsection.

The monuments dedicated to Tudor Vladimirescu were already discussed in the previous section of this chapter. The celebration of fifty years since the Wallachian revolution of 1848 contributed to the appearance of the first highly visible war monument that was dedicated to a collective hero.<sup>190</sup> Firemen's monument represented in the same time one of the first public monuments in Bucharest. Initiated by Eugeniu Carada, the monument authored by Wladimir Hegel (1839-1918) was inaugurated in September 13, 1903, actually on the fifty-fifth anniversary of the struggle of Dealu Spirii of 1848 when Ottoman troops occupied Bucharest and removed the revolutionary government. Dislocated during the 1980s to make room to the present Palace of the Romanian

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<sup>190</sup> V.T. Teodorescu, "Monumentul pompierilor din București" [The monument to the firemen heroes in Bucharest] in *Tradiție și educație (simpozion organizat de Inspectoratul General pentru Situații de Urgență)* [Tradition and education. A symposium organized by the General Inspectorate for the Emergency Situations] (Bucharest, 2005), pp. 17-44.

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Parliament, the monument to the firemen was restored on September 13, 1990. A female figure trumpets the victory of liberalism and nationalism and supports a wounded fireman.<sup>191</sup>

Image 2.15. The monument to the 1848 firemen of Dealu Spiru, Bucharest, 1903.



Source: ANIC, fond Ilustrate, I, 3437.

<sup>191</sup> Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, "Monumentul eroilor pompieri" [The monument to the firemen heroes], *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*, nr. 4, 1991;

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It was only the Romanian participation in the 1877-1878 that best fitted the criteria for a national celebration. It involved a large number of people from all the historical regions of the Old Kingdom of Romania, it was victorious and it greatly shaped the cultural and political realities contemporary to those organizing and assisting the commemorative practices.

Image 2.16. Bucharest's company of firemen in front of the statue of Firemen of 1848, 1902.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 23.

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While a first Arch of Triumph was built in 1878 for the troops returning from Bulgaria,<sup>192</sup> the first monuments dedicated to the 1877-1878 war were erected nearby the most important battlefields in Bulgaria where the Romanian troops took their part. These war monuments were built at Plevna, Rahova and Smârdan. Authored by Fritz Storck, together with a chapel constructed at Grivița, they cost 180-190.000 lei, quite a costly set of constructions at the time, that were paid by the Romania's Department of War. The monument at Smârdan is described in 1898 by a visitor as representing "a bronze woman, looking to Bulgaria's interior, holding a light in her right hand and a sword in her left hand; keeping her right foot on a cannon and her left foot on a broken chain" with the inscription "Giving your life in a manly way, you have given life to your country and liberty to Bulgaria. Grateful Romania will never forget you; what is gained through fiery battles must be piously preserved. Nations that reward those faithfully serving them assure their future." The same traveler was observing that monuments "remind us forever the glorious deeds of a people on the one hand and they steel the future generations and strengthen the sentiment of patriotism on the other hand",<sup>193</sup> an observation that confirms Reinhart Koselleck's theoretical analysis of the role of war monuments. Of course, the model was the symbolic compensation that the early modern monarchs granted to their

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<sup>192</sup> Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată* [Bucharest of the past], vol. I, 1871-1884 (Bucharest: Editura Universul, 1935), pp. 256-258; a picture of the monument was published in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I (Bucharest: Imprimeria națională, 1939), p. 874; Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, "Arcul de Triumf din București. Contribuții documentare" [The Arch of Triumph of Bucharest. Documentary contributions], *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, vol. 16, nr. 2, 1969, p. 338.

<sup>193</sup> P. Rădulescu, "Monumentul român de la Smârdan" [The Romanian monuments of Smârdan], *Albina*, București, vol. I, nr. 28-29, April 11-12, 1898, pp. 897-900.

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faithful in addition to the yearly pensions, thus the ruler being replaced by the concept of the nation.

Over sixty such war monuments were constructed before 1914 on the territory of the Old Kingdom, several of them in the first decades after the war but their greatest part being built after 1907. Most of them were constructed in the county capital cities next to the Danube (Calafat, Turnu-Măgurele, Tulcea etc.), in the cities around Bucharest (Potlogi, Pitesti, Ploiesti) and fewer in the rather mountainous regions of Moldova (Vrancea, Neamt etc). This geographical distribution is not necessarily an indicator of the origin of the sacrificed troops and their proportion in the total number of those who died during the war but it is rather an indicator of the financial strength of the urban communities able to mobilize the resources necessary for erecting these public monuments.

Image 2.17. The Romanian war monuments of Grivița and Opanez in Bulgaria in 1902.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 132.

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Here is a list of the monuments still surviving in the early 1980s Romania, based on the dictionary compiled by Florin Tucă: Vișina, Dâmbovița County, 1878; Calafat, Dolj County, 1886; Câmpulung, Argeș County, 1897 (author Dumitru Demetrescu-Mirea); Ploiești, Prahova County, 1897; Craiova, Dolj County, 1900 (Oscar Spaethe); Tulcea, Tulcea County, 1904; Azuga, Prahova County, 1905; Târgoviște, Dâmbovița County, 1905; Calafat again, 1907; Turnu-Măgurele, Teleorman County, 1907; Pitești, Argeș County, 1907; Jilava, Ilfov County, 1908; Moinești, Bacău County, 1908; Mărășești, Păunești, Suraia and Vîrteșcoiu, all situated in the Vrancea County and all four inaugurated in 1909; Șuțești, Brăila County, 1909; Potlogi, Dâmbovița County, 1910; Sascut, Bacău County, 1910; Cislău, Buzău County, 1911 (Storck); Ciupercenii Noi, Dolj County, 1912; Rucăr, Argeș County, 1912; Dumbrăveni, Suceava County, 1913; Baratca, Neamț County, 1913; Mălini, Suceava County, 1914; Focșani, Vrancea County (author Oscar Spaethe), 1914; Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Vâlcea County, 1915 (author Ion Iordănescu); Râmnicu-Sărat, Buzău County, 1915 (author Alexandru Severin); Ungureni, com. Măneciu, Prahova County, 1915-1916; Bucharest, 1916 (author Oscar Han).

Besides these monuments listed by Florin Tucă, I could identify other thirty-one war monuments with the help of the 1937 survey of public monuments of Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea. Twenty-three of them were built in the Vlașca County and the dynamics of their construction suggests that the area around Bucharest was prioritized by an ambitious or just a dedicated prefect who played a major role in initiating and supporting their process of construction. Eight of them were built before 1901, ten of

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them were inaugurated in 1904 and only five of them then after: Călugăreni, 1878; Frățești, 1881; Grădișteța, 1893; Stoenеști, 1894; Găujani, 1890; Bălănoaia, 1898; Purani, 1899; Gastiu, 1900; Dărăști; Gogoșari; Malu, Căscioarele, Corbii-Ciungi, Crevenia Mică, Fărcășanca, Roata, Tudor Vladimirescu și Scurtu, all ten in 1904; Babele, 1906; Căsnеști, 1908; Comana, 1913; Strâmba, 1913; Stănești, 1914. Other monuments dedicated to the war of 1877-1878 were built in Rucăr, Muscel County, 1902; Vișina, Dâmbovița County, 1904; Tonea, Ialomița County, 1904; Corbul, Constanța County, 1906; Boldu (1909), Dumitrești (1909), Măicănești (1912) and Vârteșcoi (1914), all four in the Râmnicu Sărat County.

Interestingly enough, based on these lists, monuments built in Moldavia seem to appear only after 1907. The greatest part of these monuments were not constructed in relation to the local cemeteries and no special war cemeteries or sections dedicated to war graves were created in the cemeteries existing or being created before the First World War. I explained in a previous section why few public monuments were constructed before 1900 in Romania and even fewer of those were dedicated to collective heroes were the war monuments. Still, why two thirds of the war monuments constructed before 1914 were inaugurated after 1907 may be related not only to a more coherent policy of stressing national unity after the Great Peasant Revolt and to a greater availability of

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resources but also to the activism of the teachers impregnated by the cultural policies of Spiru Haret.<sup>194</sup>

The iconography of these war monuments belongs to a cultural military tradition developed mostly during the nineteenth century. Its closer analysis is developed in the fifth chapter of this dissertation when dealing with the iconography of the war monuments created during the interwar period. This iconography was usually associated with the idea of centralized authority represented by the state or by the monarch. In most of the cases, they represent obelisks having sometimes an eagle on top of them, soldiers of different army corps, female figures representing either Patria or Victory holding flags, laurels or swords. Below them, bas-reliefs depict scenes of battles particularly associated with the group of heroes to whom the monuments were dedicated and many times they list the names of the local fallen officers and soldiers. The same iconography was going to be employed for a great majority of the war memorials dedicated to the First World War when initiated by committees composed mostly by active and retired officers. This is hardly surprising since the military usually represented an agency of secularization in societies living in rural conditions in their greatest part and motivated by religious worldviews as it was Romania at the time but also most of the countries of South-Eastern Europe. For example, the monument of Calafat (1886) was represented by an obelisk with a captured Turkish shell on top of it and an eagle with stretched wings, both removed during the First World War, and guarded by two cannons. The same obelisk

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<sup>194</sup> There is no war monument built before 1907 in the region of Moldavia according to ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 69/1937.

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with an eagle on top of it was also represented at Azuga (1905) and Pitești (1907). A column was built at Târgoviște (1905) to which other two were added after 1918 and another obelisk in Bicz (1909). In the same time the design of all these war monuments constructed before the First World War does not include any religious reference either in the form of dedications, the presence of crosses or the employment of floral elements associated with the old Orthodox monasteries, the old Romanian culture or the newly stylized Neo-Romanian.

Image 2.18. The monument of Ploiești(1897), photo.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 78.

Representations of the *dorobanț*, the soldier of the territorial infantry troops, are illustrative for the gradual shift from representing officers, obelisks or single female figures, even if the names of the local fallen sergeants, corporals or privates were listed

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below, to the representation of the common soldier as embodying the idea of heroism as it was articulated and disseminated through the public system of education and through the military training. While the war monument of Câmpulung (1897) represented the bust of major Dimitrie Giurescu, a war monument of Craiova (1900) represented a *dorobanț*, the one of Turnu-Măgurele (1907) authored by Romano Romanelli also presented a *dorobanț* while the war monument of Potlogi presented a mountain trooper (1910).

Image 2.19. The war monument of Bicz, Neamț County (1909), postcard



Source: [www.Imagoromaniae.ro](http://www.Imagoromaniae.ro), April 2012

Image 2.20. Anghel Saligny's bridge of Cernavodă, built 1890-1895, 1902.



Source: *Albumul armatei române, 10 maiu 1902* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1902), p. 55.

Not included in the above mentioned list is the Cernavodă Bridge (built 1890-1895) which has two massive statues of *dorobants*<sup>195</sup>, symbolically guarding the entrance from the newly acquired territory of Dobrogea and in the same time taking into possession the new province. Later, the monument of Focșani (1914) was composed of an attacking *dorobanț* and a female holding a flag and showing the direction of attack while the war monument built at Râmnicu-Vâlcea (1915) depicted as well a female

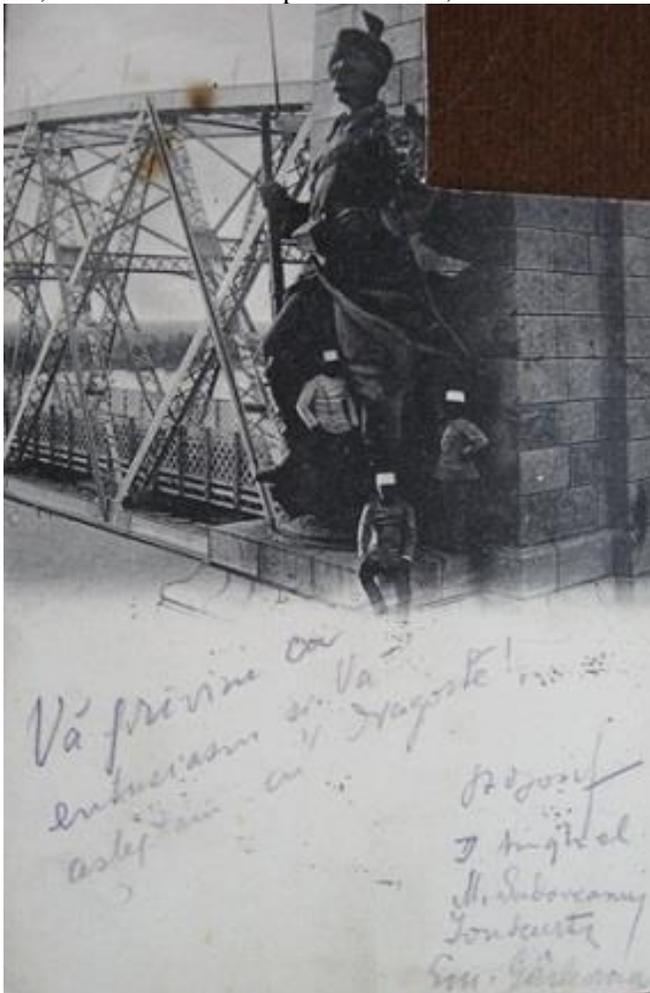
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<sup>195</sup> Bucur, *Heroes and victims...*, p. 29.

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representing Patria holding an open book engraved with the names of the local fallen towards the direction of the viewers' eyes. Representations of the *dorobanț* spread at the beginning of the twentieth century and they continued to be employed during the interwar period in association with the representation of the file and rank who fought during the First World War.

Image 2.21. The Dobrogea end of the Cernavodă bridge, built 1890-1895. Postcard sent to A.C.Cuza with the following dedication: "Vă privim cu drag și vă așteptăm cu dragoste [We look up to you and we wait for you with love]", it was signed by Șt.O. Iosif, D.Anghel, M.Sadoveanu, I. Scurtu, Em.Gârleanu. Stamped March 31,



1906.

Source: ANIC, fond Ilustrate, I, 292

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Most of these monuments were erected through public subscription. However, few data survived as it is the case of those concerning most of the other public monuments in Romania. The monument of Azuga was inaugurated on September 5, 1905, being erected by the local citizens with the help of the Predeal's mayoralty, of the local school and of *Banca Sinaia*.<sup>196</sup>

Image 2.22. The war monument dedicated to 1877-1878 in Potlogi, Dâmbovița County



(1910).

Source: Author's photo, 2006.

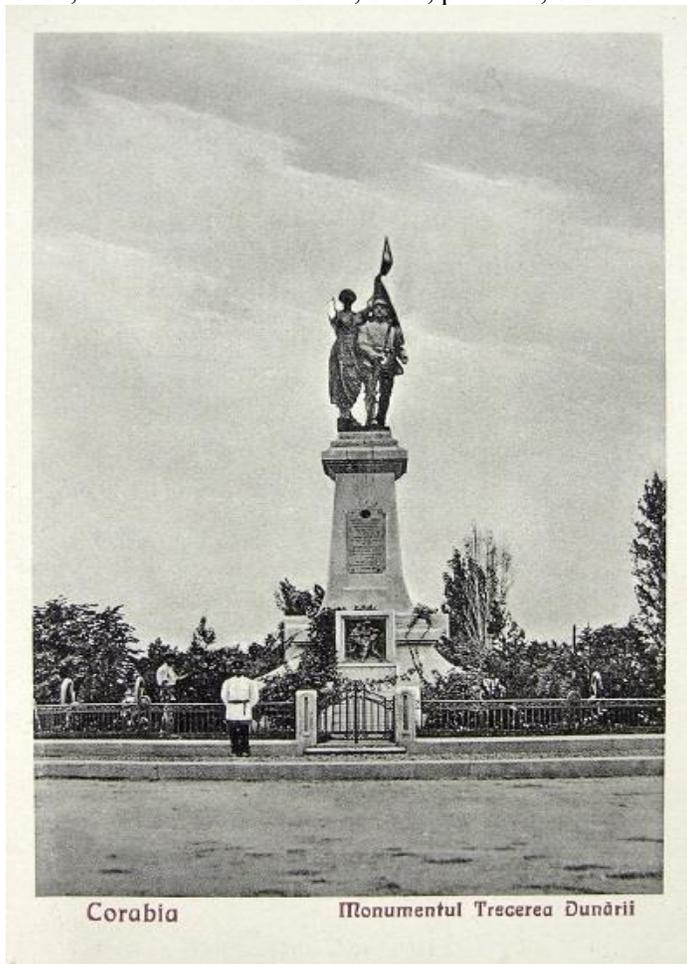
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<sup>196</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 65.

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The monument of Focșani authored by Oscar Spaethe was inaugurated on June 29, 1916 and it had a committee presided by General Gheorghe Marcovici. The costs of these war monuments varied between less than 1000 lei to 20.000 lei. The monuments of Chirnogi (1907) and Jilava (1908), both in the Ilfov County, cost 7000 lei and 2000 lei respectively.<sup>197</sup>

Image 2.23. Corabia, Romanați County, The monument dedicated to crossing the Danube in 1877 and 1913, author Ioan Iordănescu, 1914, postcard, 14m x



4m.

Source: ANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 3 and 8. Cost: 1.150.000 lei (?)

<sup>197</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 40-41.

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The monuments of Boldu and Dumitrești, both erected in 1909 in Râmnicu Sărat County, cost 2500 and 4000 lei respectively. The monuments of Măicănești (1912) and Vârteșcoi (1914) of the same county cost 12.000 lei and 9.000 lei respectively.<sup>198</sup> The monument of Șuțești, Brăila County (1912) cost 4500 lei.<sup>199</sup> The most expensive monuments were built in Azuga (1904) costing 20.000 lei, in Turnu-Măgurele (1906), authored by Romano Romanelli and costing 15.000 lei,<sup>200</sup> and in Potlogi, Dâmbovița County (1910), this last monument being authored by Aristide Iliescu and costing 12.400 lei.<sup>201</sup>

Image 2.24. The monument to the heroes of Putna County fallen in the War of 1877-1878, built



1916.

<sup>198</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 36.

<sup>199</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 84.

<sup>200</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 68/1936, f. 25.

<sup>201</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 65 and 45.

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Source: ANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 69/1937, ff. 101 and 108.

Image 2.25. The war monument of Tulcea dedicated to 1877-1878, 1899/1904, postcard.



Source: Facebook group, *Istorie românească în fotografii*, April 2012.

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Between the moments of initiating the construction of these war monuments and their inauguration there were periods of time that lasted sometimes for more than a decade. For example, the construction of the war monument of Tulcea was initiated already in 1879 but its final realization was due to the efforts of the local prefect, no other than the above mentioned poet Ioan D. Nenițescu. Nenițescu supported the work of the local League for Dobrogea's Prosperity (*Liga pentru propășirea Dobrogei*) founded in 1896. Through public subscription, with support from the Tulcea's mayoralty and by organizing public festivities dedicated to collecting the necessary funds, the twenty-two meters granite obelisk flanked by an eagle and by a five meters *dorobanț* statue was finally inaugurated on May 2, 1904 in a position that dominated the city. Started by sculptor Giorgio Vasilescu (1864-1898) the monument was finalized by sculptor Constantin Bălăcescu (1865-1913) in 1899. During the First World War the monument was completely destroyed but the obelisk was restored in 1932 while the eagle and the *dorobanț* were restored only in 1977.<sup>202</sup>

An interesting case is represented by the statue *Avântul Țării* [The country's impetus/enthusiasm] in Bucharest dedicated to the Romanian soldiers of the Second Balkan War, a medal with the same name being conferred at the time. A subscription list was started immediately after 1913 but due to the beginning of the First World War the statue was inaugurated only in 1924. The jury to decide the winning project was formed out of Dr. Constantin Istrati, painter George Demetrescu Mirea, architect Nicolae

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<sup>202</sup> Florica Cruceru, "Monumentele Dobrogei" [The monuments of Dobrogea], *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de artă*, vol. 50, nr. 1, 1981, pp. 11-19;

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Nenciulescu and Colonel Victor Radovici. Out of the thirty-four projects, sculptor Emil Wilhelm Becker's project grouped a soldier with a gun in his hands about to start to attack, an allegorical figure holding a flag and probably representing Patria bestowing and encouraging him while an eagle watches him from the direction of his feet. A Holy Trinity one may say, Patria representing the Father, the soldier representing the incarnation on Earth and the eagle representing the Holy Ghost. Or it was just Athens Nike usually representing Victory instilling braveness in a soldier guided by the eagle reminding the Roman past and the imperial associations. It cost 40.000 lei, 9.000 lei being provided by the mayoralty of Bucharest and 27.000 lei being collected through public subscription and organization of public gatherings. Initially placed on Calea Griviței, in front of what was then the School of Artillery and Engineering (*Școala de artilerie și geniu*), it changed its place, probably in 1940, to the present emplacement on the Mărăcineanu Square where at that time the Ministry of National Defense had its headquarters.<sup>203</sup>

Few other war monuments were constructed for commemorating the Romanian participation in the Second Balkan War. With the help of the 1937 survey of public monuments I could identify other four monuments besides the one from Bucharest: a monument dedicated to “Alipirea Cadrilaterului la Patria Mumă” in Cuiugiuc (?), Durostor (1913), another “Avântul Țării” in Râmnicu Sărat (1913) and two other war monuments in Drăgănești, Vlașca (1913) and Huși (1914). There were so few of them not

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<sup>203</sup> Ion Neacșu, “Un monument rătăcit în istorie [Avântul Țării]” [A monument wandering in history], *Buletinul Muzeului Militar Național*, nr. 3, 2005, pp. 272-279.

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necessarily because the respective war played a minor role in the public sphere. On the contrary, the role played by Romania in the Second Balkan War of 1913 was a major factor in the competition between the Entente and the Central Powers and especially in building the self confidence that led to Romania's decision to enter the First World War in 1916. It was mostly the gloomy atmosphere after 1914 and the beginning of the war that hampered or interrupted the actions of the committees of initiative.

When these committees were able to restore their activities after 1918 they merged the significance of their monuments with the significance of the war monuments dedicated to those fallen in the First World War. One such monument was the one dedicated to Ecaterina Teodoroiu in Târgu-Jiu. Similarly, monuments initiated before 1914-1916 for commemorating the participation in the Independence War ended after 1918 being devoted to both or all three wars the Romanian army took part before the Second World War.

Overall, the construction of war monuments in the decades prior of the First World War started with several war monuments in Bulgaria and spread in Romania at the turn of the centuries when an appetite for celebrating the accomplishments of the Romanian nation is visible in the public sphere. About sixty such war monuments were constructed in Romania before 1916, most of them in Muntenia after 1907, several of them being dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Second Balkan War of 1913.

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#### 2.4. **Conclusions:**

This second chapter was dedicated to explaining the cultural context of war commemorations in modern Romania by taking a historical view at the roots of the Romanian nationalism and its articulation through arts, literature and public monuments during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth one. Starting from the proclamations to the country and to the army King Ferdinand of Romania signed on August 14. 1916 which presented the historical arguments justifying Romania's entry in the First World War and the national heroes and the values which the population and especially the soldiers were supposed to follow during the war, this chapter focused on the rise of the cult of national heroes and it aimed at explaining the process of democratization of heroism in Romania and the palette of visual and written media through which the concept of heroism was disseminated in the public sphere and contributed to the cultural mobilization of the population affected by it.

All these artifacts, ideas and historical memory shaped the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom of Romania and it represented the cultural foundation for the process of war commemorations during the interwar Romania. A first section was dedicated to the rise of the heroism through literature and arts as a matrix for the language of nationalism, a second section dealt with the rise of the public monument in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Romania as the most visible embodiment of the concept of heroism and the third section dealt with the commemoration of Romania's participation in the

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Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 as the first experience of war commemoration as well as the most visible indicator of the democratization of heroism.

The approach taken in this chapter was neither deterministic nor autarchic. These transformations happened in the larger European context where war commemorations represented a dynamic solution between Western models and Romanian necessities. These factors did not automatically led to the form war commemorations took during the interwar Romania which very much owes to the political, social and cultural consequences of the First World War discussed in Chapter Three. However, they explain the already existing visual, material and human resources that were employed during the 1920s and 1930s in the process of war commemorations. Further, it emphasizes that the process of war commemorations of the interwar period was a consequence of the First World War that mobilized all these resources and rearticulated them to some extent in a new way e.g. the positive image the Romanian Orthodox Church gained in the public sphere due to the leadership of Metropolit Pimen Georgescu who fully supported the Romanian authorities who took refuge at Iași. This chapter did not limit only to a descriptive pre-history of war commemorations, prehistoric in the sense of focusing on the times prior to the period explicitly taken into account for the analysis in this dissertation. It aimed at being interpretative and analytical in approaching the cultural context of war commemorations during the interwar period.

Starting the 1830s the cult of national heroes spread in the Danubian Principalities and later Romania through literature, historical writings, arts and public monuments.

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Heroism was to some extent the matrix for disseminating the idea of the political and cultural unity of all speakers of the Romanian language which contributed to the articulation of the Romanian nationalism and later to the cultural mobilization of Romania's population. The aim of this chapter was only to survey this articulation and not to measure its real impact starting from the observation that the most important ideas and artifacts during the nineteenth century were used in the processes of commemorations and war commemoration in Romania before, during and after the First World War. During the 1830s to the 1860s the pantheons of heroes promoted by the cultural elites, most of them taking part in the Revolution of 1848, reveals most of all a regional identity. Michael the Brave was to some extent favored by the artists living in Muntenia, some of them coming from Transylvania, while Stephen the Great was to some extent favored by writers living in or originating from Moldavia. During this period, few writers and artists paid an equal attention to both these historical figures except Nicolae Bălcescu who wrote his *Românii supt Mihai Voevod Viteazul* as a way of promoting national unity and later influenced Theodor Aman's choice of historical themes. The writers and the artists who showed preference for only one of the two above mentioned historical figures did so not necessarily because they personally did not share the vision of the cultural and political unity of all speakers of the Romanian language, as most of the members of the 1848 generation did, but because they tended to address the horizons of reception of the local educated publics.

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Against this background of regional diversity which continued to be a statistical majority well into the 1890s even if it did not dominate the public sphere, a unified literary pantheon started being promoted first and foremost by Theodor Aman's painting and by Dimitrie Bolintineanu's poetry. Later, Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Mihai Eminescu, George Coșbuc, Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea and Mihai Sadoveanu contributed the most to the spread of a historical literature that valorized the concept of heroism, most of the times of the military heroism. Thus, by referencing each other and contributing to the articulation of an uncontested unitary perspective on the national history, literature and painting contributed during the nineteenth century in a more effective way to the construction of the cult of national heroes than the professional historical writing did. Subordinating history to the cultivation of language and especially illustrating models and flaws of character, they could not have done differently given their selective nature manifested through sampling and focusing on events that looked minor at the scale of national history but more accessible to the reading public. This literature represented to a great extent the cultural context which justified and in the same time promoted the cult of heroes during the interwar period as well as during the Communist regime. Imposed mostly upon men this cult of heroes contributed to a great extent to the way how masculinity was defined in the last century and a half in Romania and many times to the symbolic exclusion of women from the representations employed as a part of the policies of war commemorations.

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The most visible artifacts embodying the concept of heroism and contributing to the spread of the historical memory developed within the paradigm of state nationalism were the public monuments constructed most of all in the first decade of the twentieth century. Except of a short lived monument raised during the Revolution of 1848, the first public monuments in Romania were dedicated to the two Great Heroes mentioned above, Michael the Brave (Bucharest, 1874) and Stephen the Great (Iași, 1883). There were three groups of heroes celebrated through the construction of public monuments before the First World War and their distribution indicates a regional identification in spite of their inclusion in the national pantheon of heroes. Their presence in regions other than their regions of birth and activity dates mainly from the interwar period. A first type or group is represented by the historical figures usually categorized as national heroes such as Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great but also Mircea the Elder who was represented on a statue raised in Dobrogea (Tulcea, 1902) and Tudor Vladimirescu who was represented on several statues constructed in Oltenia. A second group is constituted by the cultural personalities who shaped the Romanian culture during the modern period or who were invoked as forerunners in creating the modern Romanian culture. Public monuments were raised for Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1879/1881), Gheorghe Lazăr (1886) Carol Davila (1903), August Treboniu Laurian (1905) and Dinicu Golescu (1908) in Bucharest; to Miron Costin (1888) Gheorghe Asaky (1890) and Vasile Alecsandri (1906) in Iași; and to Costache Negri (1912) in Galați. The third group is formed by political personalities who contributed to the making of the modern state of Romania or who led

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one of the major political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Mihail Kogălniceanu received attention mainly in Moldavia while the political leaders had monuments built mostly in Bucharest. Only in this context, monuments dedicated to collective heroes such as the firemen of 1848 (Bucharest, 1903) and those fallen during the war of 1877-1878 started to appear illustrating the democratization of the concept of heroism, a process which characterized the war commemorations of the interwar period when few officers and generals were dedicated individual war monuments. This celebration of a collective hero and the low number of individualized war monuments may have to do with the existing strong social hierarchy and with the lack of individualism in an Orthodox dominated country but these hypotheses needs further research in social and cultural history in order to be checked.

Used as anchors for teaching additional information that was a part of the narrative of national history, all these monuments contributed not only to the artistic education of their viewers but also to the dissemination of the narrative of national history. There are several factors that made possible and contributed to the rise of the public monument in Romania only in the late nineteenth century and in the early twentieth one: a) the articulation of a stable and coherent historical memory during the second half of the nineteenth century; b) the need for public/state celebrations; c) the intensification of political participation in the public sphere; d) the formation of professional groups able to promote public art and the articulation of a growing public able to culturally read, enjoy and use the monuments besides the compulsory state

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ceremonies; and e) the growing availability of resources. The same set of factors and actors was going to be present to a greater or lesser extent in the construction of war monuments as well before the First World War and especially during the interwar period.

In this context of the spread of the cult of national heroes, the memorialization of Romania's participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 represented the first national process of commemoration in Romania, a local model and a source of references used as well as a part of the process of war commemoration during the interwar period when the commemoration of the First World War was closely associated with the war of 1877-1878 and the Second Balkan War of 1913. The dynamics of this process of commemoration included the renaming of streets in the major cities of Romania, the creation of paintings depicting scenes of battle or soldiers such as those of Nicolae Grigorescu and of literature praising the war experience mainly by Vasile Alecsandri and George Coşbuc. It was integrated as a part of the school curriculum and it was taught in the barracks. Military literature celebrated the war experience and war monuments started being constructed. 1902 was a turning point in the celebration of the war, the moment of initiating the greatest number of war monuments inaugurated in the following years. About sixty war monuments were created in Romania before the First World War, mostly in the region of Muntenia. The greatest majority of these war monuments were constructed after 1907 illustrating the growing prosperity of the Old Kingdom during the years prior the beginning of the First World War.

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Overall, this cultural context of the cult of national heroes grounded the cult of heroes as it was promoted by the law of 1920 for “honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” and thus articulated the policy of war commemorations during the interwar period. Spread all over the society through different media contributed to the favorable and uncontested reception of the policy of war commemoration and to the dynamics of vernacular initiative which characterized the process of war commemoration.

*Chapter Three*

**The social context of war commemorations in interwar Romania:  
The consequences of the First World War**

Chapter Two surveyed and analyzed the articulation of the Romanian historical memory mainly based on the concept of (military) heroism during the nineteenth century and the experience of war commemoration before the First World War. This cultural and political articulation contributed to and justified Romania's decision to entry the war in 1916 in alliance with the Antante. Furthermore, the process of cultural mobilization articulated in Romania during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth one culturally framed the process of war commemoration that took place during the interwar period. However, as it was discussed in the introduction, this process was not only a form of victory celebration and one of further political and cultural mobilization but also a form of symbolic compensation for the human and material losses many people suffered during the war.

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The construction of war cemeteries and war monuments and the celebration of those fallen during the war cannot be fully understood outside of the larger framework designed to deal with the social consequences of the First World War. Land and political reforms as well as war pensions were designed especially for the war veterans while the state created an institutional framework aimed at providing assistance to the war disabled, the war orphans and the war widows who survived the war. The process of war commemorations in interwar Romania represented the intersection of the long term cultural processes presented in Chapter Two and of the political, social and economic consequences of the First World War which reconfigured them to a great extent. These consequences and developments are presented in the following lines.

It is the aim of this Chapter Three to discuss Romania's experience in the First World War with its many times overlooked social costs. A series of questions framed my approach in this chapter: what were the political, economic and social contexts of the process of war commemorations this dissertation was dedicated to? What were the short term causes of this process and what forms took the memorialization of the war during the war besides those most visible in the public sphere? What were the demographic, social and financial costs of the Romania's participation in the First World War? How did the Romanian state attempt at compensating the losses its population suffered during the war? Who were the actors involved in the process of war commemorations? What factors contributed to their involvement or appeasement? What was the fate of the groups mostly

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affected by the war, namely the war disabled, the war orphans and the war widows during the interwar period?

In order to answer these questions this chapter was divided in three sections. A first one shortly surveys Romania's participation in the First World War in order to make more understandable the political decisions made during the war that continued to affect to some extent the way how the war was seen in the public sphere during the interwar period. The land and political reforms implemented after the war are well known in the Romanian and the international historiography. However, historical research on its financial costs and demographic losses was missing until recently and it is part of the argument of this chapter as well as of the entire dissertation that these financial costs and social consequences were a part of the social, political and cultural background of the process of war commemorations in Romania during the 1920s and the 1930s and that the politics of war commemorations were a form of symbolic compensation, part of a larger set of social compensations granted for taking part and suffering the vicissitudes of the First World War.

A second part of this chapter discusses the lack of visibility of the veteran groups in interwar Romania, it surveys several of the factors that may explain this lack of visibility including the role of the land and electoral reforms and the distribution of war pensions and it discusses the professional groups active in the process of war commemorations during the interwar period including the military officers, the teachers and the priests of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The third section is entirely dedicated

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to the problem of the social groups mostly affected by the First World War and also active in the memorialization of the war experience during the interwar period and to the institutional framework of social assistance created by the state to support them, *Oficiul Național pentru Invalizi, Orfani și Văduve de Război I.O.V.R.* [The National Office for the War Disabled, War Orphans and War Widows].

### 3.1. Romania in the First World War (1916-1919):

The following lines surveys Romania's involvement in the First World War. It first discusses its changing interpretation over the twentieth century in the Romanian historiography, the twists and turns of the war and especially its less known and discussed aspects of the financial costs and demographic losses.

Romania's participation in the First World War had a sinuous interpretation in the Romanian historiography in the century which past since. The dominant interpretation of this participation was that it represented one of the major factors if not the only factor that contributed to the formation of Greater Romania. The loss of population in the Old kingdom as well as in the newly added territories was considered the most important justification besides the "historical rights" invoked until then in redesigning political borders in Europe. The years immediately following the war were dominated mostly by the problem of personal responsibility during the war while the official narrative focused on the realization of Greater Romania as the last chapter of a multi-centennial long

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struggle for national unity quieting the discussions of the shortcomings during and following the war.<sup>204</sup>

An interpretation elaborated in Soviet Russia approached the Romanian participation in the First World War as a form of imperialism since its decisions were made exclusively by the social and political elites and it aimed mainly at acquiring new territories such as Bessarabia considered as a part of the Russian world. This interpretation was dogmatically imposed during the 1950s in Romania and it continued to partially affect historical research during the 1960s as well. It also quieted any balanced and nuanced interpretation of the social and economic consequences of the war as well as most of the voices of those who actually took part in the war, members of the cultural elites or not.<sup>205</sup> The nationalist drive of the Communist regime after the 1960s returned to the emphasis on the realization of the Greater Union (*Marea Unire*) of November 18/December 1, 1918. Fifty years since this event took place were celebrated in 1968 and a giant statue of Michael the Brave authored by Oscar Han was placed in the fortress of Alba Iulia in front of the reorganized local museum dedicated to the history of national unity of all Romanians. In the following decades the war was explored almost exclusively in its tactical aspects by a military historiography aiming at reinterpreting the whole

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Most notable being Constantin Kirițescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României: 1916-1919*. Text selected and edited by Costin Kirițescu, Mircea N. Popa and Lucia Popa (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1989).

<sup>205</sup> Florin Țurcanu, “La mémoire de la Grande Guerre dans la Roumanie communiste” in *La Grande Guerre. Histoire et mémoire collective en France et en Roumanie*. Edited by Christophe Prochasson and Florin Țurcanu (Bucharest: New Europe College, 2010), pp. 59-66.

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Romanian history as “the struggle of all people” for national unity.<sup>206</sup> In the last two decades, the emphasis continued to be placed on the moment of December 1, 1918 while a cultural history connected with the international scholarship dedicated to the First World War and its cultural and social dimensions started being emphasized, the glorious aspect given to the events and the war experience being deconstructed to a great extent.<sup>207</sup> The following lines are part of this later trend of placing the Romanian experience in the regional, European and global contexts.

The negotiations and pressures from both the Central Powers and the Antante brought Romania in the First World War.<sup>208</sup> In mid August 1916 Romania has declared war (only) to Austro-Hungary. The nineteenth century Italian model of *Risorgimento* (and the German model of unification) has exerted a huge influence on the way how the prewar Romanian political elites have previously approached their relationships with the

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<sup>206</sup> *România în primul război mondial* [Romania during the First World War] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1979); *România în anii primului război mondial* [Romania during the years of the First World War], 2 vols. (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1987); *Istoria militară a poporului român, vol. 5: Evoluția organismului militar românesc de la cucerirea independenței de stat până la înfărpuierea Marii Uniri de la 1918* [The military history of the Romanian people, vol. V: The evolution of the Romanian military organism from gaining state independence to the realization of the Great Union of 1918] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1988)

<sup>207</sup> Maria Bucur, “Birth of a nation: commemorations of December 1, 1918, and national identity in twentieth-century Romania” in *Staging the past. The politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the present*. Edited by Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 286-326; by Cătălina Mihalache, “Didactica unui eveniment: 1 decembrie în manualele de istorie a românilor” [The didactics of an event: December 1 in the Romanian history textbooks] in *In medias res. Studii de istorie culturală* [In medias res. Studies of cultural history]. Edited by Andi Mihalache and Adrian Cioflâncă (Iași, Editura Universității „Al.I.Cuza”, 2007), pp. 303-327.

<sup>208</sup> The years before the war were admirably presented by Ion Bulei in *Arcul așteptării, 1914, 1915, 1916* (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1991); Glenn E. Torrey, “Rumania and the belligerents 1914-1916,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 1, nr. 3, July 1966, pp. 171-191; for the foreign policy see Rudolf Dinu, “Romania’s way from neutrality to war. An analysis regarding the evolution of Romanian foreign policy, 1912-1916” in *Histoire et mémoire collective en France et en Roumanie*, pp. 9-17.

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multinational Habsburg Empire. This is visible also in the two proclamations of August 14, 1916, that were discussed in the beginning of the second chapter of this dissertation. Believing they will only repeat the “trip to Sofia” of 1913, the Romanian army entered Transylvania with the aim of gaining the support of the Romanian population. However, in less than two weeks the enthusiasm from the streets of Bucharest has transformed into a deep concern after the disaster of Turtucaia and in desperation during the months of September and October 1916. The slow advancement in Transylvania was followed by the loss of Dobrogea, the retreat from Transylvania and by the break of the German troops in Oltenia through the Jiu Valley. By December 1916 Bucharest was lost as well alongside all of Muntenia and the front was moved nearby the Siret River and the Vrancea Mountains. General Alexandru Averescu affirmed himself as one of the most competent Romanian military leader during this period. Moved several times from one front to another, he gained later a popularity which helped him play a major political role during the late 1910s and the early 1920s.<sup>209</sup>

The winter that followed showed only the lack of preparation for war of the Romanian army. The territory of the Old Kingdom was transformed into a battlefield in a matter of months and only a few have escaped the hardships of the war that followed for more than a year and a half, either fighting on the front or living in the area occupied by

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<sup>209</sup> Dorin Dobrinu, “O catastrofă uitată: campania armatei române din 1916” [A forgotten catastrophe: the campaign of the Romanian army in 1916], *Xenopoliana*, vol. 11, 2003, nr. 3-4, special issue “Memorie și uitare în istorie (ed. Adrian Cioflâncă), pp. 143-157; Glenn E. Torrey, “The Romanian campaign of 1916: its impact on belligerents,” *Slavic Review*, vol. 39, nr. 1, March 1980, pp. 27-43; Glenn E. Torrey, “Indifference and mistrust: Russian-Romanian collaboration in the campaign of 1916,” *Journal of Military History*, vol. 57, nr. 2, April 1993, pp. 279-300

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the Central Powers or at the home front. A French military mission headed by General Henri Berthelot was sent to Romania and started instructing the Romanian troops during the year of 1917, Berthelot becoming a honorary citizen of Romania after the war and a symbol of the French-Romanian diplomatic and military relationships ever since. The Liberal government headed by Ionel Brătianu was reshuffled in December 1916 to include different factions of Conservatives among whose leaders the most notable was Take Ionescu. Seeking stabilization in the Romanian region of Moldavia, especially after the Russian Revolution of March 1917, King Ferdinand has issued proclamations promising land reforms to the peasant-soldiers twice, on March 23/April 5 and April 23/May 6, 1917. The acting Parliament was elected in 1914 exactly in order to alter the Constitution of 1866 by implementing the long time discussed land and voting reforms. The outbreak of the First World War postponed these debates and, as it is explained in the following section, only in July 1917 the Constitution was modified so land expropriation be made possible.<sup>210</sup> War disabled started being taken care as it is discussed in the third section of this chapter and all these may explain the morale of the Romanian troops who fought at Mărăști, Mărășești, and Oituz in July and August 1917 and halted the German led offensive.

The unilateral declaration of peace in November 1917 by Lenin forced the Romanian authorities to take into consideration a separate peace. Negotiated by the government led by Alexandru Marghiloman a preliminary peace treaty was finally signed

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<sup>210</sup> Lege pentru modificarea articolelor 19, 57 și 67 din Constituție, *Codul general al României* edited by Constantin Hamangiu, vol. VIII, pp. 1087-1089.

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in early March 1918 at Buftea, nearby Bucharest. However it was never voted by the Parliament and/or sanctioned by King Ferdinand. Dobrogea and the Carpathian mountains were ceded to Bulgaria and Austro-Hungary alongside several unfavorable economic conditions. In this context, on March 27, 1918 Bessarabia voted for unification and was allowed by the Central Powers to become a part of Romania. During the year 1918 Alexandru Averescu created the League of the People, *Partidul Muncii* was created in Iași and some limited reforms were initiated by the Conservative government.

Following the failure of German offensive in the Summer 1918, Austro-Hungary signed an armistice on November 3, 1918 and Germany on November 11, 1918. These armistices accompanied the moral dissolution of the Habsburg Empire and the spread of discontent and socialist movements in Germany and Hungary due to the economic and social consequences of the total war. In this context of vacuum of effective authority, the Marghiloman government was dismissed, the Romanian army was mobilized again and in parallel with a French advance from Salonic to the Danube, King Ferdinand entered Bucharest on December 1, 1918. Meanwhile the Romanians of Bukowina voted for their unification with Romania in mid November while the Romanians of Transylvania voted at Alba Iulia on November 18/December 1, 1918. This happened in parallel with the creation of local military guards by the Romanians who fought in the Austro-Hungarian army and their integration in the Romanian army who started to advance in the respective regions. Equal vote for all male citizens was introduced in November 1918 and the first

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national elections of Greater Romania were organized, on a regional basis, in November 1919.

The Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia and especially in Hungary became one of the major factors that allowed the Romanian leadership to occupy the best possible position in the diplomatic negotiations taking place in and around Paris and redesign the political map of Central and Eastern Europe in 1919-1920. The creation of the Soviet republic in Hungary in March 1919 was followed by a Romanian-Hungarian war that ended with the occupation of Budapest in August 1919 and the removal of Bela Kun. The treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye with Austria (November 1919) acknowledged Bukowina as a part of Romania while the Treaty of Trianon (June 1920) acknowledged Transylvania and Banat being a part of Romania as well.<sup>211</sup>

These events of the First World War were integrated during the interwar period in the hegemonic narrative of the Romanian national history as the most important events that led to the creation of Greater Romania. This perspective was going to be visible in the description of the Military Museum created in December 1923 by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Subsequently, the importance of creating Greater Romania was emphasized to some extent as a way of justifying the material and human losses, the policy and the politics of commemorations during the interwar Romania being to some

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<sup>211</sup> Probably the most balanced and in the same time detailed account of Romania's participation in the First World War may be found in Keith Hitchins, *Romania, 1866-1947* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) translated into Romanian by George G. Potra and Delia Răzdolescu, Bucharest, Editura Humanitas, 1996, pp. 253-291. A contemporary account describes in a realistic way the strategic and tactical options the Romanian army had in 1916, the Romanian conquest of Transylvania being sought in order to avoid its occupation by the Tsarist army. See Douglas W. Johnson, "The conquest of Romania", *Geographical Review*, vol. 3, nr. 6, iunie 1917, pp. 438-456.

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extent a form of symbolic compensation for those who survived and suffered the most during the war. This was a major characteristic of the process of war commemoration during the interwar period beyond the character of celebrating the victory and attempting to educate further generations in the spirit of self sacrifice for the nation.

While the political consequences and many of its outcomes are emphasized in a positive light, a more detailed and realistic discussion of the financial costs and human losses for Romania's participation in the Great War is of a recent trend.<sup>212</sup> The costs of Romania's participation in the First World War were never approached in a systematic way and their short survey is intended here in order to contextualize the political and cultural context of the early 1920s when war monuments started being initiated or constructed in order to commemorate those fallen during the war and war pensions were granted to those who fought in the war. As mentioned before and it is going to be visible in the following lines, these costs were of a financial and demographic nature. The economic costs of the war and of the period of reconstruction continued to be supported during the whole interwar period. The data and the ideas presented in the following lines of this section as well in the third section of this chapter were collected and developed as a part of an independent paper currently under publication.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)* [Romania and Europe. The expansion of the economic gaps, 1500-2010] (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2010), pp. 221-225.

<sup>213</sup> Silviu Hariton, "Asumarea politicilor sociale de către stat în România. Cazul invalizilor, orfanilor și văduvelor de război (IOVR) după Primul Război Mondial" [The beginnings of the state social policies in Romania? The case of war disabled, war orphans and war widows after World War I] in *Studii de istorie socială. Noi perspective* [Studies of social history. New perspectives]. Edited by Constantin Iordachi and Alin Ciupală, supplement of *Archiva Moldaviae*, Iasi, 2014, pp. 115-140.

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The economic costs may be classified in four groups, the following lines only surveying them and further research being necessary for their deeper evaluation. These four groups of financial costs were represented by: a) the financial obligations contracted by the Romanian state before and during the war in order to support its war effort; b) those deriving from the direct participation in the war and especially of having most of the country occupied by the enemy; c) the inflation appeared at the end of the war and continued to affect the Romanian economy for a couple of years; and d) those deriving from taking charge of the financial obligations associated with the newly added territories and populations formerly a part of Austro-Hungary.

The first category of financial costs of Romania's participation in the First World War was represented by the financial obligations related to the war preparation and war effort assumed before and during the war. This included the costs of modernizing the existing weaponry, further arming and securing provisions and the loans contracted for sustaining the war, loans that remained to be paid during the interwar period. Victor Axenciuc, professor of economic history at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, created a systematic collection of statistics relevant for the history of modern Romania.<sup>214</sup> Several of these statistics offers correlated data on the level of the Romanian state's revenues and spending before<sup>215</sup> and after the First World War,<sup>216</sup> their division

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<sup>214</sup> Victor Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări istorico-statistice 1859-1947. Volumul III. Monedă-Credit-Comerț-Finanțe publice* [The economic history of Romania. A historical and statistical research. 1859-1947. Vol. 3: Currency-Credit-Commerce-Public finances] (Bucharest, Editura Academiei Române, 2000).

<sup>215</sup> Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României*. Vol. III, pp. 618-620.

<sup>216</sup> Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României*. Vol. III, pp. 621-622.

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for each minister<sup>217</sup> and especially data on the loans contracted by the Romanian state since 1859. Data on these loans included the names of the creditor(s) and the duration of payment. According to this statistic, during the years 1914-1916 the Romanian state contracted a number of loans dedicated solely to the modernization of its army, the state still paying installments for six of them in 1929. Two of these loans were granted by *Banca Națională a României* and summed up 200 million lei, two loans were granted by the Bank of England and summed up 300 million lei and one loan was publicly subscribed in Romania.<sup>218</sup> Totalling 900 million lei, only these seven loans that were taken in the two first years of the First World War represented the equivalent of Romania's total spending for two prewar years, a spending calculated as the yearly average of the budgets spent during the years 1908-1914. These budgets were unequal in their size, their dimensions fastly increasing during the prewar years mentioned above.<sup>219</sup>

The second group of financial costs is represented by the hardly calculable costs resulted from transforming Romania's territory in a battlefield during the years 1916 and 1917. This group of costs included the disruption and some times the blocking of the current economic activities, the export of cereals and oil being one of the most important sources of income and taxation before the war; the partial devastation of the territory during the war by the occupying forces; the requisitions ordered by the Romanian military authorities and by the German led military occupation authorities, requisitions which further contributed to the blocking of economic transactions. Finally this group of

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<sup>217</sup> Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României*. Vol. III, pp. 651-655.

<sup>218</sup> Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României*. Vol. III, p. 711.

<sup>219</sup> Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României*. Vol. III, p. 620.

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financial costs included the loss of the public and private treasury evacuated to Russia in 1916-1917 and only partially returned by the Soviet Union in the 1930s and the 1950s.

The third type of financial costs represented a consequence of all these factors and effects and it was represented by the financial instability and by the inflation generated by the monetary mass issued without the proportional gold coverage by both the German and the Romanian authorities as well as by the parallel and hardly controllable circulation of Austro-Hungarian crowns and Russian rubles in the newly added territories after 1918. The monetary stabilization supervised by Nicolae Titulescu was carried out based on securing another loan in 1921.<sup>220</sup>

Finally, the fourth group is represented by the costs assumed through the peace treaties signed in 1919-1920, through the laws granting war pensions and discussed in the following section and by the costs of the special social assistance necessary for the war disabled, war orphans and war widows partially discussed below and most of all in the third section of this chapter. Austria's and Hungary's war indemnities were divided to the successor states according to the size of the transferred territory and to the size of the population living on those territories at the end of the war. Further, an important part of the bureaucracy from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina remained in Romania and the payment of their pensions was assumed by the Romanian state no matter if the pensioners contributed to the Romanian state' pension fund.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României*. Vol. III, pp. 722-734.

<sup>221</sup> In his extensive motivation of the law of 1925 for unifying the pension systems, finance minister Vintilă Brătianu argued that there were 18.554 pensionaries originating from the Old Kingdom and

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Pointing to all these groups of costs was intended solely to underline the fact that the costs of Romania's participation in the First World War continued to saddle the relative prosperity of the interwar period. They represented a major factor in aggravating the social consequences of the war e.g. the requisitions ordered by the military authorities. In the same time, the war created the conditions for the application of the land and voting reforms which would have otherwise been postponed or reduced closer to the limits intended by the Conservative government of 1918.

The human losses during the First World War in all the regions later united as Greater Romania varied in their interpretation due to the fact that the respective regions were affected in various degrees by the events of war with their economic impact on the daily life, regional migrations and the impact of the "Spanish influenza." The lack of specialized personnel and the institutional disorganization also impeded on the realization of systematic surveys and the subsequent political events and transformations postponed a national survey until 1930. Including not only combatants but also civilians no matter of their gender, this number is hard to be determined with precision.

The estimations of the number of human losses varied from 250.000 to 800.000, the later number being used during the peace negotiations of 1919-1920 and by numerous historians and statisticians. Most probably the number was the result of adding the population of 8.53 million of the newly added territories to the population of 7.9 million of the Old Kingdom before the war and comparing the result to the population of 15.54

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24.244 pensionaries from the newly added territories. See *Desbaterile Adunării Naționale Constituante a Deputaților*, nr. 80-81, April 25-26 1925 (meetings of March 23-24, 1925), p. 1986.

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million Greater Romania had in 1920.<sup>222</sup> The difference of 0.9 million was probably pondered down while factors such as the regional migrations and the natural increase of population were not explicitly taken into account. An 1922 estimation published in the Romanian official journal of national statistics estimated the Old Kingdom's population at the end of 1915 at 7.9 million people and the population of Greater Romania at 15.9 millions in 1919 and at 16 millions in 1920, Bessarabia counting for 2.6 millions, Bukovina for 0.8 million, both in 1919, and Transylvania for 5.1 millions în 1920.<sup>223</sup> Other official statistical discussions estimated the human losses of the Old Kingdom at 0.7 millions with the remaining population being estimated at 7.2 million.<sup>224</sup> One year later, the same author increased his estimation for the Old Kingdom to 7.5 million, therefore the human losses for the same region being reduced to 400.000, the total population of Romania being estimated at 16 millions.<sup>225</sup> All these estimations of human losses should be carefully considered given the fact they were used as an argument favoring Romania during the peace negotiations of 1919-1920 and later in justifying Greater Romania. As a part of these estimation, the number of those considered to be members of the ethnic and religious minorities is known only for the Jewish community.

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<sup>222</sup> Sabin Manuilă and D.L. Georgescu, "Populația României" [Romania's population], *Enciclopedia României*. Vol. I (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1938), pp. 133-160; Victor Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări istorico-statistice 1859-1947. Volumul II. Agricultură* [The economic history of Romania. A historical and statistical research. 1859-1947. Vol.] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1996), pp. 20-21.

<sup>223</sup> *Anuarul Statistic al României*, 1922, p. 21.

<sup>224</sup> N.T. Ionescu, "Mișcarea populației în Vechiul Regat și Basarabia (date provizorii)" [The movement of population in the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia (provisional data)], *Buletinul Statistic al României*, 1922, nr. 8, pp. 30-53.

<sup>225</sup> N.T. Ionescu, "Mișcarea populației României în 1920" [The movement of Romania's population in 1920], *Buletinul Statistic al României*, January-June 1923, pp. 126-147.

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At the beginning of the First World War there were 240.000 people belonging to this community. Only close to 5.000 of them had the Romanian citizenship and more than 200.000 had no citizenship at all. However, 23.000 of them joined the Romanian army, 882 dying, 740 being wounded, 449 were prisoners, 3043 disappeared and 825 were decorated by the Romanian state.<sup>226</sup>

A special type of losses is represented by the number of those who were not conceived during the war and thus the labor marker could not use them decades later. According to the 1930 survey the data for the age groups of 5-9, 10-14 and 15-19 years old indicated they represented 8%, 4% and again 8% of the entire population. The second group was represented by those born during the war and their difference of 4% compared to the groups of people born in the years immediately before and after the war indicates a possible potential loss of 720.000 for the entire population of 18 million in 1930 and of about 400.000 if the proportion is reduced to the prewar population of the Old Kingdom.<sup>227</sup> Using the same source of information and the same data it is safe to infer that the same number of about 0.72 million people were actually born during the war years. Added to the 8.53 million people of the newly added territories at the beginning of the war and to the 7.9 million people of the Old Kingdom before the war the result would be 17.15 million people which would lead to a real loss of population during the war of

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<sup>226</sup> Dumitru Hîncu and Lya Benjamin, *Evreii din România în războiul de reîntregire a țării: 1916-1919* [The Jews of Romania in the war for national unity] Foreword by Constantin Antip (Bucharest: Editura Hasefer, 1996), pp. 19-20 and complete lists at pp. 165-329.

<sup>227</sup> Sabin Manuilă and D.L. Georgescu, "Populația României", *Enciclopedia României*. Vol. I (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1938), pp. 133-160 în special pp. 140-141.

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about 1.61 million people without taking into account the emigration to the United States and to Hungary as well as the immigration to Romania given the numerous wars in the regions as it was discussed in the Introduction and Chapter One.

The proportion of the disaster caused by the First World War has multiplied almost a hundred times when compared to the losses of the previous wars fought by the Romanian army and state. During the 1877-1878 the losses of the Romanian army counted for a little more than 2000 dead males, civil losses not being mentioned in the statistics available. Against the size of its population of about 5 million people living in the Old Kingdom at the time, this number means that “only” 0.04% died in 1877-1878. If counting 250.000 dead soldiers against the almost 8 million people of the Old Kingdom, from where the Romanian Army during the First World War was mainly recruited, it results that the same proportion increased to 3.16%. Of course, human suffering cannot be quantified and there are no data about the postwar trauma suffered by the people who experienced the war except the statistics realized by Ion Ghiulamila, the latter being discussed in the last section of this chapter. However, they do not deal with the psychological effects of the war but only with the problem of providing social assistance to the war invalids and their reintegration in the society.

### **3.2. Land reforms, electoral reform and war pensions:**

The second section of this chapter discusses the political and some aspects of the social and economic consequences of the First World War in Romania. The aim is not only to

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explain the political contexts of the policy of war commemorations during the interwar period but also the dynamics of the social groups involved in the politics of war commemorations during the same period. Thus, on the one hand, it focuses on explaining the apparent lack of visibility of the war veterans' movements in the Romanian politics during the 1920s and 1930s. On the other hand, it discusses the most active categories or groups of social actors involved in the politics of war commemorations, the military officers and the teachers.

The political context in the Romania during the years immediately following the war was under the attention of numerous scholars.<sup>228</sup> The interpretations given to the events and processes taking place during these years as well as during the interwar period were circumscribed in the paradigms of interpretation described in the beginning of the previous section and they depended not only on their authors' ability to grasp the historical context under discussion but also on their time period of their conception and on the institutional affiliation or the career paths of their authors. These contributions as well as others devoted to the political life during the years of the rise of Alexandru Averescu's People's Party (1920-1921), the leadership of the Liberal National Party

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<sup>228</sup> Joseph S. Roucek. *Contemporary Romania and her problems: a study in modern nationalism* (Originally appeared in 1932. Reprinted NY: Arno Press, 1970); Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (Archon Books, 1969, c1951); Ioan Scurtu, Ion Bulei. *Democrația la români, 1866-1938* [Democracy in Romania, 1866-1938] (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1990); Gheorghe Buzatu and Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria românilor în secolul XX (1918-1940)* [The history of Romanians in the 20th century (1918-1940)] (Bucharest, Editura Paideia, 1999); Ion Agrigoroaiei. *România interbelică* [Interwar Romania] Vol. I Foreword by Gheorghe Platon (Iași: Editura Universității "Al.I. Cuza", 2001); Ioan Scurtu and Petre Otu (eds.), *Istoria României, vol. VIII, România întregită (1918-1940)* [The history of Romania, vol. VIII, Romania reunified (1918-1940)] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003).

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(1922-1926 and 1933-1937) and of the National Peasantist Party (1928-1932) do not pay any specific attention to war veterans, war disabled, war orphans and war widows.<sup>229</sup>

Unlike most of the countries of the Western Europe, in Romania there was no major political association of the former combatants, at least not active in a similar way and to the level the associations surveyed in the second section of the first chapter were active. This is probably why in Romania they were not approached as a topic of historical research as well. A quick survey over the inventories of the National Archives of Romania revealed no folder dealing with or belonging to any interwar association of veterans while the county archives of Bucharest kept the folders of several banks established during the 1920s in order to improve veterans' mutual assistance. Besides their statutes and some additional information, their files contain no data.

As mentioned above veterans were never approached or addressed as a distinct social group in any political program of the 1920s and later. This was due to the fact that the series of social reforms mentioned in the previous section were aimed at the society at

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229 Mircea Mușat și Ion Ardeleanu, *Viața politică în România. Partidele politice 1918-1921* [The political life in Romania. The political parties 1918-1921] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971), pp. 227-268 is still the only account of the political life in Romania during the years following the war in spite of the fame of the authors; Mihail Rusenescu and Ion Saizu. *Viața politică în România, 1922-1928* [The political life in Romania, 1922-1928] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1979); Marin Nedelea, *Aspecte ale vieții politice din România în anii 1922-1926. Politica guvernului liberal. Regrupări în rândul partidelor burgheze* [Aspects of the political life in Romania during the years 1922-1926. The policy of the Liberal Party. Regroups within the bourgeois parties] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1987); Emilia Sonea and Gavrilă Sonea. *Viața economic și politică a României, 1933-1938* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978). The composition of the government is listed by Stelian Neagoe, *Istoria guvernelor României de la începuturi – 1859 – până în zilele noastre – 1999* [The history of Romania's governments since its beginning -1859 – until the present days - 1999] Second revised and added edition (Bucharest: Editura Machiavelli, 1999) while a presentation of the parliamentary debates during the interwar period is offered by Ion Mamina and Ioan Scurtu. *Guverne și guvernanți, 1916-1938* [Romania's governments and its members, 1916-1938] (Bucharest: Silex, 1996).

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large and subsequently they dealt indirectly with the problems of the veterans. These reforms included the voting and especially the land reforms that are shortly discussed below as a part of this section. They were many times approached as postponed promises made before the war and fulfilled after it. Still, it was the First World War that made them imperative. The July 1917 modification of the Constitution of 1866 shortly preceded the battles of Oituz, Mărăști and Mărășești and they introduced the right of land expropriation “for the cause of national interest” only for the purpose of redistribution to the peasant-soldiers and the equal vote for all male citizens for the Chamber of Deputies, universal franchise being introduced in Romania following the Second World War.<sup>230</sup>

Equal vote for all male citizens was applied since November 1918 while the land reforms were only gradually implemented due to the complex process of establishing the expropriated parcels, the rights of those who were to receive the farming land and the proper process of transferring the possession. Final codifications of these reforms were carried out through two laws adopted in July 1921, one law dealing with the land reform in the Old Kingdom and the other law dealing with the land reform in the newly added territories of Transylvania, Banat and Bukowina.<sup>231</sup> The preference given to the former combatants indicates the persistence of the Roman model of distributing farming land

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<sup>230</sup> Lege pentru modificarea articolelor 19, 57 și 67 din Constituție din 20 iulie 1917, *Codul Hamangiu*, vol. VIII, pp. 1087-1089.

<sup>231</sup> For the most extensive explanation of these reforms see David Mitrany, *The land and the peasant in Rumania: the war and agrarian reform (1917-1921)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) while for the explanation of how the land reforms were applied see Dumitru Șandru, *Reforma agrară din 1921 [The land reform of 1921]* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1976).

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preferably to the surviving veterans, a model which also justified the land reforms carried out during the nineteenth century even if this was not made explicit. According to the article 78 of the law for land reform in the Old Kingdom, preference was given in the following order to: the veterans of the 1916-1919 war; the veterans of the 1913 war; the war widows and their children; peasants with no land at all; peasants with portions of land smaller than five hectares and war orphans. In case of parity of the members of these categories, preference was supposed to be given to the war disabled (art. 79). Officers were supposed to receive five hectares and twenty-five hectares in the regions of colonization (art. 85). Article 92 of the law for land reform in Transylvania had a different order of preference: those having families if they were invalids and the war widows and their families if they were able to work the land; heads of families who were mobilized during the war; heads of families who were not mobilized; unmarried men, the war disabled being given preference; those mobilized by the *Consiliul Dirigent*; and several other groups not related to the experience of the front line.

The relative success of these reforms helped appease the eventual dissatisfaction of the peasants who fought during the war and this may explain the lack of a visible veteran movement in Romania during the interwar period. Furthermore, their particular issues were approached as a part of an already existing hierarchy of the society, on the one hand, and the practice and the spirit of forming more or less independent professional associations was rather weak in the Old Kingdom of Romania, on the other hand. As it is going to be visible in the following section of this chapter as well as in the next chapter

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dealing with the organization of the process of war commemoration, the societies created at the end of the First World War in order to tackle the problems of the social groups were organized from the top to the bottom and their leadership tend to reproduce the social and the political elites. This was the case of the few organizations created by the veterans such as *Uniunea Foștilor Combatanți* (The union of the former combatants) or the friendly societies designed for mutual assistance by the war disabled themselves. Also, the right to create independent associations was extremely limited in the Old Kingdom of Romania during the decades prior to the First World War, being granted only in early 1920s.

Every such an association was supposed to be acknowledged by the Romanian Parliament and only in 1920 the formal registration of an association was delegated to the local administration. Most of the former combatants took part one way or another in the politics of war commemorations which represented a way to attract attention to the problems of those who survived the war as well.

In addition to these land and voting reforms, the former combatants as well as the war disabled, war orphans and war widows were the subject of a set of laws promoted during the summer of 1920 by the government led by Alexandru Averescu. This set of laws adopted in September 1920 consisted of a law “for honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” which is going to be discussed in the following chapter, a law establishing *Oficiul Național IOV* [The National Office for the War Disabled, War Orphans and War Widows] which is going to be presented in the following section, a law granting modest

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war pensions to the soldiers, corporals and sergeants who fought in the war and a law dealing with the extraordinary conditions of those who were already part of the state system of pensions such as the military officers and other categories who were already part of the state bureaucracy.

Image 3.1\_ Group of veterans of the First World War and possibly their relatives organized in *Uniunea Națională a Foștilor Luptători* [The National Union of Former Combattants], 1930s.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fototeca, II, photo nr. 556 (to be checked again).

This set of laws was designed by general Ion Rășcanu in the early part of the year 1920 following the election of the first parliament of Greater Romania in November 1919.

The law for war pensions modified a similar law of 1916. It granted modest monthly pensions of 30 to 100 lei to soldiers and corporals and pensions of 40 to 120 lei to sergeants depending of the existence and the level of their invalidity and their number of children. These war pensions were granted to the war widows no matter if they remarried following the intervention of the mitropolite-primate Miron Cristea who brought attention to the rising number of couples who chose to remain unmarried so the widow could continue receiving the war pension. The total budget indicated in the discussions was close to 700 million lei. Assuming all soldiers or widows of soldiers received a monthly war pension of 70 lei, the surpluses for the corporals and sergeants being leveled by the pensions of a lower value granted to the soldiers, this budget indicates that at least 830.000 people received war pensions in Romania during the interwar period including war widows. However, in 1938 only 320.000 of them were mentioned as still receiving war pensions.<sup>232</sup> The fourth law in the package dealt with the special right of the military officers, 6.000 active officers and 16.000 reserve officers taking part in the war.

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<sup>232</sup> Ion M. Rădulescu, “Regimul general al pensiilor” [The state system of pensions], *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1938), p. 556.

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In the case of the Romanians of the newly added territories, the period of war that was taken into account for calculating the war pensions was considered from the moment their regions formally proclaimed their unification with Romania and thus they officially became a part of the Romanian army. Therefore, as it is going to be explained in the following chapters as well, Transylvanians were not excluded from the process of war commemorations and of compensation for their taking part in the war and in creating Greater Romania.<sup>233</sup>

In total, a number of at least 600.000 people received direct compensations for taking part in the war. For comparison, the number of insured people including workers and private functionaries grew from about 100.000 in the first decade of the twentieth century to 210.000 people in 1921, 500.000 people at the end of the 1920s and 600.000 people at the end of the 1930s.<sup>234</sup>

The most active social groups who took part in the process of war commemoration and who took part sometimes in shaping its policy during the interwar

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<sup>233</sup> All these laws were gathered and distributed as a pocket book: *Recunoștința națiunii către cei cari au făurit „România mare”* [Nation's gratitude to all those made Greater Romania] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1920). The pensions law: pp. 118-132. For the context of the pension system granted by the Romanian state see Mihail Șteanu, "Istoricul dreptului de pensiune în România" [The history of the pension rights and qualification in Romania] în *Legea generală de pensiuni comentată și adnotată. Regulamentul de aplicare, istoricul dreptului de pensiune, formulare și instrucțiuni de procedură* [The general law of pensions, commented and added. The regulation for its application, the history of pension rights and instructions for applications](Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice și Editură „Minerva”, 1912), pp. 1-63 as for a discussion of the main laws and of the debates of their main principles see Silviu Hariton, "Debating state pensions in the Romanian Parliament, 1860s-1930s" in *Parliamentary discourses across cultures. Interdisciplinary approaches*. Edited by Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 282-308.

<sup>234</sup> Victor Axenciuc. *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări istorico-statistice 1859-1947. Volumul I. Industria* [The economic history of Romania. A historical and statistical research. 1859-1947. Vol. The industry] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1992), the chapter „Asigurări sociale și asistență sanitară” [Social insurance and social assistance], pp. 558-567.

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period were the military officers and the teachers. There is no monograph of these social groups dealing with their formation, social origins, formal organization and their group and professional values. The following paragraphs only attempts at sketching the importance of these groups in the dynamics of the modern state in Romania and in the process of war commemorations this dissertation is dedicated to.

The social group of the military officers represented a dynamic group which tended to reproduce to some extent the structure of the Romanian society, at least the one represented by the social groups with access to formal/institutionalized education. Educated in institutions funded by the state, granted the most generous level of payment and benefiting of rather generous pensions and conditions of retirement but not allowed to vote or take part in politics while still on active duty, the military corps was never a cast in Romania. The officer career was one of the best options for upward mobility embraced not only by members of the social and political elites in their early part of life but mostly by people belonging to the middle classes. The officers were obliged to marry only women with a minimal financial endowment and they tend to become a part of the social elites. Many of the interwar and postwar Romanian intellectuals had a father or a grandfather who was an officer, as it was the case of Mircea Eliade. This proximity to the state assured their adoption of the political language disseminated by the nation-state, some of the most important references of this language being surveyed in the second chapter of this dissertation. King Carol maintained the army as his personal field and he sought the expansion of the officer corps. Therefore loyalty to the crown and to the king

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besides the loyalty to the nation was one of most important values promoted as a part of the military education for officers. Officers' political affiliations tended to be rather Conservative and in the same time lay.<sup>235</sup> Getting involved in the politics of commemoration was not only a form of socializing and affirming their personal prestige but also a form of commemorating their own acts of war and in the same time a form of justifying their own agenda and institutional body in the competition with the other bodies of bureaucracy of the Romanian state.

In the second chapter the role of the teachers in spreading the cult of heroes was partially addressed.<sup>236</sup> While school textbooks and school buildings were approached in the last decades as topics of historical research, the teachers as a social group was discussed mostly in connection with the educational program promoted in the decades around the beginning of the twentieth century by Spiru Haret.<sup>237</sup> This coherent social and educational program was based on supporting and stabilizing a generation of teachers that

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<sup>235</sup> While most of the times neutral in the field of politics, this Conservative agenda is visible in the debate on introducing military instruction in schools in 1906-1909. See "Childhood in Romanian context: *les petits dorobants*", *Historical Yearbook* Bucharest, vol. 6, 2009, pp. 57-76.

<sup>236</sup> Petre Matei has drawn my attention to the role of the teachers in actively promoting and supervising the construction of many war monuments during the interwar period.

<sup>237</sup> For the context of 'haretism' see Ion Bulei, *Atunci când veacul se năştea... lumea românească 1900-1908* [When the century was born... The Romanian society at 1900-1908] (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1990), pp. 82-96 while for a biography of Haret see Gh. Adamescu, "Biografia lui Spiru Haret" [The biography of Spiru Haret] in *Operele lui Spiru Haret...*, vol. I, pp. iii-lxvi; several examples of his nationalism are presented in M.-L. Murgescu. "Spiru Haret și educația națională în școala românească" [Spiru Haret and the national education in the Romanian school], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca*, vol. 34, 1995, pp. 237-246 and a very critical perspective is offered by Irina Livezeanu in her *Cultural politics in Greater Romania: regionalism, ethnic building and ethnic struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995); for a case-study that illustrates Haret's instrumentalization of nationalism for gaining support among the Romanian political and social elites for his educational agenda see "Childhood in Romanian context: *les petits dorobants*", quoted above, pp. 66-68 and 71-73.

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took their jobs mainly in the 1900s, possibly fought during the First World War and were active during the entire interwar period, their activity being visible in the rise of literacy in only one generation from more than thirty percent in the 1900s to more than fifty percent in 1930.<sup>238</sup> The percentage of literacy was generally higher among men than among women and since this higher percentage of literacy was the average rate of literacy among all men one may safely suppose that the percentage of literacy among young and mature men was the highest, this generation born in the first decades of the twentieth century being active and (grand-) parenting many of the generations born during the Communist regime. During the interwar period these teachers culturally active before the war and politically active after the war, Ion Mihalache being the most representative, played an important role in the construction of war monuments and in the local commemorations of the First World War.

Finally a few word are necessary about the role of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the decades prior to the First World War and especially during the war given the dominant position offered in supervising the administrative body in charge of the

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<sup>238</sup> The literacy rate increased from 22% in 1899 (among the people older than 7 years) to 39.2% in 1912 (population older than 6 years) and 55.8% in 1930 (above 7 years old). In 1930 the literacy rates for men and women were 74.2% and 41.9% respectively. See *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, pp. 142-143; in 1899, the literacy rates were 32.8% for men and 10.9% for women according to *Analiza rezultatelor recensământului general al populației României de la 1899*. Foreword by Sabin Manuilă (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1944), p. 119; in 1912, the literacy rates were 54.8% for men and 23.2% for women while among the recruited males, the rate of literacy increased from 32.3% in 1899 to 59% in 1912. See Leonida Colescu, *Știutorii de carte din România în 1912* [The census of those able to read and write in Romania in 1912]. Edition by Anton Golopenția with a foreword by Sabin Manuilă (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1947), vol. 2, pp. 57 and 63. See as well Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, nation-building and ethnic struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), Romanian edition, *Cultură și naționalism în România Mare, 1918-1930* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1998), pp. 41-49.

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policy of war commemorations during the interwar period and the association of the Heroes' Day established in 1920 with the Ascension Day.

The Romanian Orthodox Church is usually seen as a major factor in the history of the Romanians and of the Romanian state. This perspective is put forward especially by the religious historiography developed as a part of the Orthodox Church who takes for granted the association of state and church in the Orthodox Commonwealth and in the post-Ottoman areas as well as by historians uncritical towards the constructed nature of nationalism during the modern period. However, the Orthodox Churches of the Danubian Principalities and later the Romanian Orthodox Church passed during the second half of the nineteenth century through a complex process of adaptation to the process of secularization and especially to the paradigm of the nation-state. This process of adaptation was structurally similar to the early modern period adaptations to the advent of Protestantism in the region. This interpretation does not exclude the claim that the speakers of the Romanian language in the Danube Principalities followed the Orthodox confession long time before the modern period.<sup>239</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth one the Romanian state imposed a direct control over the Church which was resented some times by some of its most devoted believers. Lacking resources after Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reforms in the 1860s, the Church was completely reorganized

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<sup>239</sup> Silviu Hariton, "Ortodoxie și naționalism în secolul XIX românesc: contribuții, teme și potențial de cercetare" [Orthodoxy and nationalism in XIXth century Romania: contributions, topics of research and primary sources], *Analele Universității din București - Istorie*, vol. 56, 2007 [2010], pp. 59-77.

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from an institutional point of view during the 1870s-1880s. It also passed through a complex process of adopting the Roman alphabet, vocabulary and integration in the Romanian history, a process that was only parallel to the changes taking place in the Romanian society. The autonomy of the Church was rather limited compared to the interwar and post-communist periods. While faculties of theology were funded by the state, the bishops became rightful members of the Romanian parliament and since 1893 priests received modest salaries the state constantly intervened in Church's matters most visibly at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century when Spiru Haret tried to completely subordinate and reorganize it.<sup>240</sup>

This attitude of the Liberals in particular and of the political and social elites in general towards the Romanian Orthodox Church changed during the First World War. While the primate-mitropolite Coson has remained in the territory occupied by the Central Powers, a reason for his removal at the end of the war, the metropolite of Moldavia Pimen Georgescu vigorously supported the war effort, after the war being the

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<sup>240</sup> For the general context of the Orthodox Church during the nineteenth and twentieth century Romania: Nicolae Iorga. *Istoria bisericii românești și a vieții religioase a românilor* [The history of the Romanian Church and of the Romanians' religious life]. Second edition, revised and added, Vols. I-II (Bucharest, Editura Ministerului Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, 1928-1932, c1908) and Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, volume III: XIXth and XXth centuries (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1994). For a political history see Lucian N. Leuștean's "The Political Control of Orthodoxy in the Construction of the Romanian State, 1859-1918," *European History Quarterly*, vol. 37, nr. 1, 2007, pp. 61-80 and "For the glory of Romanians: Orthodoxy and nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1945," *Nationalities Papers*, 35: 4, September 2007, pp. 717-742; for the cultural transformations see George Ursul, "From political freedom to religious independence: The Romanian Orthodox Church, 1877-1925" in Stephen Fisher-Galati, Radu Florescu and George Ursul (eds), *Romania between East and West. Historical essays in memory of Constantin C. Giurescu*, East European Monographs, Boulder, 1982, pp. 217-244 and Silviu Hariton, "Religion, nationalism and militarism in nineteenth century Romania", *Etudes Balkaniques*, vol. 44, nr. 4, 2008, pp. 9-36.

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one who proposed the creation of *Biserica Neamului* (The church of the nation later the mausoleum) at Mărășești. The importance of this moral support grounded as well in the national historical narrative which already put emphasis on the congruency between the Romanian national identity and the Orthodox confessional identity during the decades following Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reforms was reinforced in 1917 by the outbreak of the Russian revolution and by the Bolshevik seizure of power.<sup>241</sup>

After the war the Holy Synod ordered Constantin Nazarie to write a presentation of his activity as a supervisor of the 250 priests who were mobilized during the war. Besides a survey of these priests, of whom forty-six were demobilized, twenty disappeared and five of them died during the war, a series of problems that were tackled during the same period are discussed, the author recommending the use of the military confessors beyond the religious services for educating the recruits during the winter periods. Remarkably, in February and April 1917 pocket editions of collected prayers were distributed to the soldiers, 15.000 copies in February and an addition of 100.000 copies in April 1917.<sup>242</sup>

This section aimed at surveying the social and economic consequences of the First World War in the Romanian society at large. It discussed the voting and the land reforms of 1914/1917/1921 that helped appease the most part of this society represented by the

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<sup>241</sup> Ilie Manole, "Serviciul religios al oștirii în prima conflagrație mondială" [Army's religious service during the First World War], *Revista de Istorie Militară*, 1998, nr. 5, 36-39; Aurel Pentelescu, and Gavriil Preda, "Mitropolitul Pimen Georgescu și armata română" [Metropolitine Pimen Georgescu and the Romanian army] in *Revista de Istorie Militară*, 2003, nr. 6, 44-51.

<sup>242</sup> Constantin Nazarie, *Activitatea preoților de armată în campania din 1916-1918* [The activity of the military confessors during the campaign of 1916-1918] (Bucharest: Imprimeria Ministerului Cultelor și Artelor, 1920).

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peasantry and it may explain the lack of a politically vigorous association of the former combattants to whom modest war pensions were granted as well since 1916/1920. Among the professional groups most active in the politics of war commemorations the military officers, the teachers and the priests were shortly discussed offering a fragmented perspective over the complexity of the political, demographic, social and economic background of the process of commemorating those fallen in the war during the interwar period.

### 3.3. The war disabled, the war orphans and the war widows:

This third and final section of the third chapter discusses the dynamics of the social groups who were the most affected by the events of the Romanian involvement in the First World War, the war disabled, the war orphans and the war widows, as well as the institutional framework created by the state in order to provide them assistance and a few information on its dynamics during the interwar period.<sup>243</sup>

This institutional framework was represented by a series of specialized societies established in 1917-1918 and grouped in 1920 under the supervision of *Oficiul Național*

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<sup>243</sup> For the context of medical and social assistance in Romania see Ion Pupeză, Dr. Virgiliu Leonte, Dr. C. Gheorghiu and prof. Dr. D. Mezincescu, “Sănătatea publică în România” [Public health in Romania] and C. Stănescu and Elisabeta Constante, “Asistența socială în România” [Social assistance in Romania], both of them in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I (Bucharest: , 1938), pp. 490-519 and 519-533; Mihaela Lambriu, “Asistența socială în România. Două secole de evoluție instituțională” [Social assistance in Romania. Two centuries of institutional histories] in Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi (ed.) *Sărăcie și asistență socială în spațiul românesc* [Poverty and social assistance in Romania] Foreword by Paul H. Stahl (Bucharest: NEC, 2002), pp. 61-81; Dan Setlacec, *Medicina românească – medicină europeană. 1918-1940* [Medicine in Romania – European medicine, 1918-1940] (București: Humanitas, 1998); Roxana Cheșchebec și Silvana Rachieru, “Final report of the Romanian research team for the ‘History of Social Work in Eastern Europe. 1900-1960’ project (2004-2005)”, unpublished report, 44p. I thank Roxana Cheșchebec for providing me in 2011 a copy of this report.

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania, pentru Invalizi, Orfani și Văduve de Război I.O.V.R.* [The National Office for the War Disabled, War Orphans and War Widows N.O.D.O.W.] while maintaining a certain level of autonomy when related to their activity of social assistance.<sup>244</sup> N.O.D.O.W. was subordinated to the Minister of War during the years 1920-1922, 1924-1926, 1927-1928 and to the Minister of Labor during the years 1922-1924, 1926-1927 and after 1928. The latter minister was created in 1919 and it included the Direction of Public Health previously subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1922 this minister became of Health, Labor and Social Protection and it remained so with various changes of name during the rest of the interwar period except 1923-1926 when a Ministry of Health functioned independently.<sup>245</sup>

This short history was necessary in order to explain the lack of archival sources in this section of the third chapter. National Archives holds only a thin folder devoted to these social groups which contains several tens of pages (inv. 2655). They are probably the result of an enquiry taking place during the early part of the communist regime in Romania, most of these files dealing with the activity of several individuals who denounced the lack of state involvement in the war veterans' and war widows' problems.

A survey of the files of the Ministry of Health and Labor Affairs revealed no folder

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<sup>244</sup> N.O.I.O.W. was previously discussed in Gh. Banu, *Sănătatea poporului român* [The health of Romanians] (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă Regele Carol II, 1936), pp. 357-370 and Setlacec, 1998, pp. 42-43.

<sup>245</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 119, Septembrie 2, 1920, pp. 4143-4151, *Codul General al României* inițiat de Constantin Hamangiu, vol. IX-X, pp. 407-419; *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 11, April 14, 1922, pp. 498-499; *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 171, August 8, 1924, pp. 9082; *Monitorul oficial*, March 23, 1926, modified and republished in *Monitorul oficial* nr. 70 și 99 of March 25 and May 5, 1926, Hamangiu, vol. XIV-XVI, pp. 135-138; *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 97, May 5, 1927, pp. 2698-2729, Hamangiu, vol. XV-XVI, pp. 709-724; *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 15, January 20, 1928, pp. 459.

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dealing with the files of either the three societies devoted to assisting the war disabled, war orphans and war widows or N.O.D.O.W. (inv. 2523-2525). In 1935 a complete archive of the Society of War Disabled led by Ion Ghiulamila containing the files of the central and regional committees and their yearly reports was handed to the state authorities as a part of the process of having taken over its patrimony by the state. I could not trace these folders in the archives of the Minister of Health and Labor Affairs.<sup>246</sup> Therefore, most of what it is known and used in this section about war disabled in interwar Romania and the work for their moral, financial and practical support comes from the writings of Ion Ghiulamila. The information presented in his early works doesn't seem questionable. However, the impact on the disabled people's life may be questioned to some extent by the fact that most of them were written to present, support and justify Ion Ghiulamila's personal contribution. The later works were written especially during the 1930s when the privately organized societies dedicated to assisting war disabled, war orphans and war widows were gradually integrated in the state framework of social assistance including their patrimony and personnel.

The series of defeats of autumn 1916 following the short incursion in southern Transylvania led to the retreat of the Romanian army and to a great number of refugees of all social backgrounds to the region of Moldavia. King Ferdinand and the government led by Ionel Brătianu established at Iași. A harsh winter followed when portions of the

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<sup>246</sup> Ion Ghiulamila. *Amintiri, fapte, îndrumări: o carieră medicală, 30 de ani de activitate ortopedică și medico-socială, 1905-1935* [Recollections, deeds, advices: a medical career, thirty years of activity in the service of orthopedy and medical-social assistance] (Bucharest: s.n., 1936), p. 135.

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collections of the National Archives were used for heating. The battles led to a great number of wounded and disabled, 10.000 of them being camped only at Galați at the end of 1916. The military-sanitary system established by Carol Davila decades earlier was devoted either to spreading and implementing hygiene education among the soldiers and to the emergency situations during the times of war. Once passing the surgical procedures the disabled were in an unclear situation in a context where the limited number of available resources tended to be directed to those able to fight. Only two organizations devoted to visually impaired or blind people existed before in Romania to help them, *Vatra Luminoasă* created by Queen Elisabeth of Romania and *Amicii orbilor*.<sup>247</sup>

In this context dr. Ion Ghiulamila who was already active in helping disabled to stabilize their medical condition proposed the creation of an autonomous body devoted to the treatment of disabled soldiers, to the creation of adequate prostheses and their reintegration in the social context through working in workshops providing military equipment. Subsequently, *Societatea "Invalidii din Război"* (the Society of war disabled) was established in January 1917 under the patronage of Queen Maria and the presidency of Prince Carol (future King Carol II), Ion Ghiulamila being responsible for supervising the medical and technical matters. Due to the war the first official meeting of the society took place only in October 1917 in Iași where all headquarters of the Romanian army and

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<sup>247</sup> The dominant perspective in social assistance at the time was one based on philanthropy as a way of helping people not only to recover but also to educate them so they would be able to earn their living. On this matter see Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi, "Filantropie și asistență socială. Influențe franceze în spațiul social românesc" [Philanthropy and social assistance. French influences in the Romanian society] in *Modèle français et expériences de la modernization. Roumanie, 19<sup>e</sup>-20<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Foreword and coordination by Florin Țurcanu (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Cultural Român, 2006), pp. 58-86.

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institutions were moved away from the territories under the control of the Central Powers. The society organized a hospital in Iași, it received a large number of donations as well as a state stipend, it supervised the process of juridical classification as disabled for those who qualified for, it started producing prostheses and other orthopedic apparatuses for the invalids, it carried out courses for educating the disabled in specialized workshops of carpentry, tailoring and shoemaking, it placed the qualified disabled on the available labor market, it created asylums and health centers and it compiled individual files into national statistics of the war disabled. The society incorporated the Romanian Red Cross during the war.<sup>248</sup>

Final statistics compiled during the 1920s indicates that 72.000 people received medical treatment and/or professional re-qualification through this society which provided help to those from the newly added territories as well. Fifty percent of them were from the territory of the Old Kingdom of Romania. Fifty-six percent of them were in their twenties and other thirty-four being in their thirties. Fifty-three percent of them had no land other twenty-seven percent having a parcel smaller than one hectare thus eighty percent of the invalids being quite poor. Or they were living in urban areas and had different other occupations. Forty-six of them had no education at all while thirty-

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<sup>248</sup> Ion Ghiulamila. *Opera de asistență și reeducație a invalizilor din război în România: 1917-1924* [The social assistance and education provided to war disabled in Romania, 1917-1924] (Bucharest: Tipografia "Jockey-Club", Ion C. Văcărescu, 1924); Ion Ghiulamila. *Opera de asistență și reeducație a invalizilor din război ai României realizată de Societatea "Invalizii de Război", 1917-1935* [The social assistance and education provided to the Romanian war disabled by the Society War Invalids, 1917-1935] (s.l., s.a.). Other contributions of Ghiulamila included *Studiu statistic medical și social al invalizilor de război ai României* [A medico-social statistic of the war disabled in Romania] (Bucharest: Socec, 1920), *Statistique médicale des invalides de la guerre de Roumanie* (Bucharest: Imprimeria de Stat, 1923) and *Societatea "Invalizii de război"* [The society of war disabled] (Bucharest: Tipografia I. Văcărescu, 1933).

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nine graduated the primary school thus only fifteen percent of them having a secondary and university education. Eighty-eight percent were peasants or unskilled workers while eight percent were skilled workers and four percent used to have liberal professions.<sup>249</sup> According to Gheorghe Banu, the number of disabled people was 108.710 in 1922 and 70.000 in 1932.<sup>250</sup>

Image 3.2\_ Group of disabled in front of a shelter provided by the American Red Cross in Romania.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fototeca, II, photo nr. 1971/2.

Other associations were created in order to help the disabled soldiers. “Familia Luptătorilor” supported them in various ways until the Minister of Finance was able to

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<sup>249</sup> Ghiulamila, 1936, p. 266.

<sup>250</sup> Banu, 1936, 359.

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provide the necessary funds. Friendly societies of mutual help were created by the war disabled at Galați (*Înfrățirea*), Huși (*Oituz*) and Bucharest (*Cooperativa General Averescu* and in 1920 *Asociația Generală a Invalizilor din Războiul României Mari*). Other such societies were *American Red Cross* and *Permanent Blind Relief War Fund*. In April 1918 the war disabled received the right to wear a specific symbol similar to the medal of Military Virtue granted by the Romanian state to those who distinguished themselves during the war.<sup>251</sup>

In parallel with the creation for the Society for war disabled, princess Olga Sturdza has created *Societatea "Ocrotirea Orfanilor de Război"* (the society for the protection of the war orphans) in December 1917 with the help of Moldavia's Metropolitane Pimen Georgescu and the members of *Societatea Ortodoxă Națională a Femeilor Române SONFR* (The National Orthodox Society of the Romanian Women). The society received juridical recognition in April 1918 and it gradually extended to the national level. It was a major factor in extending the civil rights for women whom until then only if widowed had they the complete liberty to decide on their person and their patrimony. They were allowed to become members of the family councils or tutors of the war orphans.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 19, April 22/May 5, 1918, p. 943.

<sup>252</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 19, April 22/May 5, 1918, p. 937-938. The Society's statutes were published in the same issue, pp. 939-943, and republished a year later when the Society's supervision moved from the Minister of War to the Minister of Internal Affairs, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 19, May 10, 1919, pp. 1046-1049.

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An initial survey of the number of war orphans revealed 40.000 children of whom only 16.000 were provided a form of juridical or social assistance in 1917-1918. An almost complete statistic was created for the Society's national congress of 1920. 190.000 war orphans were registered in the territory of the Old Kingdom and 108.000 war orphans in the newly added territories, the total number being close to 300.000 children. Their regional distribution was the following: 114.785 orphans with a single parent and 12.350 orphans with no living parent in Muntenia and Dobrogea; 28.264 and respectively 8.046 children in Moldavia; 10.009 and respectively 1.396 in Bukowina; 21.568 orphans in Bessarabia, 38.423 war orphans in Oltenia and about 100.000 orphans in Transylvania, thus the total number of war orphans being of close to 335.000 of whom at least 21.000 had no living parent to take care of them. The most affected areas by the war were is also visible in the number of war orphans registered there: Dolj (11.426 orphans), Gorj (8.898), Teleorman (13.860), Prahova (18.950) and Buzău (10.700), the number of war orphans in these five counties represented about twenty percent of the war orphans of the country including the newly added territories.

The society had fifty-seven orphanages with 3.900 war orphans while other 97.000 children were assisted at their living places by being offered legal protection,

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instruction, medical assistance and war pensions.<sup>253</sup> Gheorghe Banu offered a different estimation: 357.260 war orphans in 1922 and 35.000 in 1932.<sup>254</sup>

Against this background, in the political context of the newly created Greater Romania and the election its first Parliament in November 1919, a set of laws dealing not only with the policy of war commemorations but also granting war pensions created *Oficiul Național pentru Invalizi, Orfani și Văduve de Război I.O.V.R.* [The National Office for the War Disabled, War Orphans and War Widows]. The Office took over the juridical aspects of assistance and it was to coordinate the two societies created by Ion Ghiulamila, Olga Sturdza and the society for assisting war widows and to control the activity of all other friendly societies of mutual help. Art. 15 gave the Office the right to ask the dissolution of all associations “whose activities would be developed against the interests of the State, of the government, of the form of state organization and of the political and social organization” while all new friendly societies were allowed only if being granted permission from the Office.<sup>255</sup>

Thus while the private societies continued to exist until the mid 1930s, their work came under the supervision of the state. Probably the social unrest of 1919 all over Central Europe as well as in Romania influenced this take over by the government of the

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<sup>253</sup> *Primul congres al societății “Ocrotirea orfanilor din războiu” ținut la București în sala Teatrului Național în zilele de 27 [și 28] ianuarie 1920* (București: Viața Românească, 1920); Corneliu Radeș, “1916-1944. Orfanii de război și ocrotirea lor” [1916-1919. The war orphan and their assistance], *Magazin istoric*, an 40, nr. 10 (475), October 2006, pp. 47-50.

<sup>254</sup> Banu, 1936, p. 359.

<sup>255</sup> *Monitorul Oficial nr. 119, September 2, 1920, 4143-4151; the was also published in Codul Hamangiu, vol. IX-X, pp. 407-419 and in the pocket volume mentioned above Recunoștința națiunii către cei cari au făurit „România mare”* [National gratitude to those who created Greater Romania] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1920), pp. 30-48.

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social networks involved in helping war disabled, war orphans and war widows besides suspicion towards the organizations of people who did not recognized the peace treaties of 1919-1920.

Image 3.3: Poster promoting the cause of war disabled, war widows and war orphans painted by Sârbu. 1920. The quote of Queen Maria follows “Greater Romania, the one dreamed and desired by our ancestors, was born out of blending our blood with our holly land, out of the sacrifice of those who offered their everything. Can we forget them?”/“România Mare, cea visată și dorită fierbinte de strămoșii noștri, s-a născut din plămădirea sângelui cu pământul nostru sfânt, a celor ce au jertfit totul. Putem oare să-i uităm?”



Source: Ion Ghiulamila. *Opera de asistență și reeducație a invalizilor din războiu în România: 1917-1924* (Bucharest: Tipografia “Jockey-Club”, Ion C. Văcărescu, 1924), p. 185.

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Following the creation of the Office for war disabled, war orphans and war widows, posters such as those depicted in Image 3.3 were printed and distributed in order to secure further support from the Romanian society.

However, the value of personal donations to the Office decreased. According to Ion Ghiulamila, the frequent changes in the Office's subordination to the Minister of War and to the Minister of Labor Affairs during the 1920s represented a negative factor in its activity and efficiency. Most of the budget of 134 million lei granted by the state in 1924 was spent through the Society for protecting the war orphans (97.5 million lei), the Society for war disabled (18 million lei), the Society for war widows (6 million lei), *Asociația generală a invalizilor din România* (1.5 million lei) and through other societies (1 million lei).

Office's administration yearly cost was 10 million lei. In the same time, for comparison, the whole budget of social assistance provided by the Romanian state for the rest of the society amounted to 108 million lei.<sup>256</sup> Similarly, in 1937, 320.000 people received war pensions of 935 million lei while 93.000 former state functionaries received 3.377 million lei.<sup>257</sup>

Overall, it is safe to conclude that only the social, demographic, economic and not the least cultural consequences of the First World War legitimized and created the conditions for implementing state schemes of providing social and medical assistance to

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<sup>256</sup> Ghiulamila, 1924, p. 165.

<sup>257</sup> Ion M. Rădulescu, "Regimul general al pensiilor" [The state system of pensions], *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1938), p. 556.

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most of the citizens in most of the countries of the Eastern Europe. In the case of Romania, the first steps in this direction may be observed through the case of the war disabled, war orphans and war widows. Only during the 1930s the politics of social protection and assistance were systematized and they were heading towards establishing a minimal welfare state. In a similar way, the commemoration of those fallen in the war was also considered a duty of the state and “the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War” (*Societatea ‘Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război’*) was created in September 1919.

### **3.4. Conclusions:**

Chapter Three has dealt with the political and social contexts that shaped the process of war commemorations during the interwar period. It surveyed the financial costs and the demographic losses caused by the First World War in Romania, costs that continued to impede the Romanian society during the interwar period, the dynamics of the social and professional groups involved most of the times in the process of war commemoration and the problem of war disabled, war orphans and war widows and the subsequent assistance provided to them by various private societies and by the Romanian state.

Romania’s participation in the First World War over the years 1916-1919 represented a rather negative experience for most of its population, a great part of the country being occupied by the Central Powers, numerous people taking refuge in the region of Moldavia while the financial costs of participating in the war and the human

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losses it caused continued to affect the Romanian society during the interwar period, representing relevant factors for understanding the way how the policy of war commemoration was conceived and especially the way how the politics of commemoration were implemented. Between 250.000 and 800.000 people died depending whether the newly added territories are taken into account as well as the people who migrated and disappeared. Certainly, Romania represented to some extent a stable country in the region where other people immigrated in the years following the Armistice. In addition, 70-100.000 former soldiers remained disabled for the rest of their life, 335.000 children were orphans including at least 21.000 children orphans of both parents and more than 200.000 women were widowed, all of them in need for juridical and social assistance that was provided in limited forms over the entire interwar period.

The creation of Greater Romania and the application of the voting and land reforms represented important factors in shadowing the importance of the war experience during the interwar Romania as well as in the following decades when the negative aspects of the war were rather overlooked by historical research. The equal vote for all major male citizens changed the political landscape of Romania while the land reforms that contributed to a series of changes in the social structure gave preference to those who fought in the war even if they were designed for the society at large. War pensions were granted to them as well. These reforms and compensations granted to all Romanian citizens no matter if they were from the newly added territories may explain the lack of a consistent and visible veteran movement during the interwar period.

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In this social context, the policy of war commemorations may be understood as a form of symbolic compensation in addition to being a form of official mourning, celebration of creating Greater Romania and an instrument for further cultural mobilization in the spirit articulated during the nineteenth century. Preservation of the political unity of all speakers of the Romanian language replaced the former aim of achieving the political and cultural unity of them all. The process of war commemorations was carried out by a series of social groups most important of them being the military officers, the teachers and the priests of the Romanian Orthodox Church besides the political and cultural elites and the mass of individuals who lived the war. A few words are necessary in the following lines to analytically approach these actors who took part of in the process of war commemorations in interwar Romania.

The state where these actors were active was defined in the introduction of this dissertation as a network of people and institutions controlled by diverse political and cultural actors who adopted and adapted the discourse of nationalism in order to use it for their own purposes, mainly in legitimizing themselves in relation to the other actors with any forms of power. In the case of this dissertation, the articulation, the promotion and the application of the policy of war commemorations should be envisioned in a similar way. Also in the introduction three layers of social actors that were active in this complex network represented by the state were defined. The first layer or group of social actors was the political deciders. In the context of this dissertation these political deciders included the Royal Family (prince Carol who later became Carol II), the most important

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politicians and the most important generals who fought during the First World War or who were in charge of the Department of War and the other institutions who had a say in the application of the policy of the war commemorations including the Society for the Cult of the Heroes. Their ideas and actions are the topic of the following chapter of this dissertation, the fourth one.

The second layer or group of social actors was represented by a diversity of groups of professionals most of them already members in the state bureaucracy one way or another and thus being paid by the Romanian state. This group included the military officers, the teachers and the priests who fought during the war, local notabilities and the group of artists able to convey the set of artifacts that were used in the politics of war commemorations in interwar Romania. They represented most of the members of the initiative committees who gathered the necessary funds, rallied supporters and promoted their activity within the policy of war commemorations by creating the artifacts that embodied most the times this process of commemorations. The most visible indicator of their activity is the creation of about 2.000 war monuments besides a series of other artifacts and commemorative practices, these war monuments being the most visible indicator of the impact of the policy of war commemorations during the period this dissertation is focused. The dynamics and the major characteristics of these war monuments created as a consequence of the activity of their members of the initiative committees are surveyed in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

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Finally, the third layer or group of social actors was represented by the rest of the people who lived and suffered one way or another during the First World War and felt emotionally involved in the process of war commemorations. More precisely they were: the mass of war veterans and their families and needed symbolic and material recognition for their participation in the war; the families of those who died in the war and for whom the process of mourning was the most acute; the groups of war disabled, war orphans and war widows for whom continuing their existence as it was before the war was no longer possible; and the mass of the younger generations who did not take part in the war and for whom the educational purpose of the policy of war commemorations was intended. For them novels such as those of Cezar Petrescu and Camil Petrescu were written. They were those who willingly or unwillingly participated in the public ceremonies staged during the national days and at the Heroes' Day as well as at the inauguration of the war monuments. The sixth and final chapter of this dissertation attempts at surveying some of the sources like novels and newspapers that can offer a clue about this individual involvement in the policy and the politics of war commemorations.

*Chapter Four*

**Coping with the social impact of the Great War and mobilizing further generations: the policy of war commemorations in interwar Romania**

Together with those who contributed to the rising of our Patria, together with those who survived this generation of sacrifice, the fallen have their own rights. They do not ask for our tiers – in exchange, they pretend the recognition of their sublime sacrifice and the transformation of this sacrifice into a symbol, example and stimulant for new heroic deeds which are needed for the complete consolidation and the future of our nation [...]. In front of these graves, in front of these temples, the youth of the future will come during harsh time for the country to receive the gospel and here they will learn, more than in any other place, the path to follow so that our people to deserve, as in the past, the moral leadership of the surrounding people, a role that represents the basic principle of our existence as a Latin people at the gates of Orient.<sup>258</sup>

This excerpt is taken from the motivation introducing the law for “honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” to Romania’s Chamber of Deputies on July 31, 1920. It was part of

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<sup>258</sup> Ministerul de Război, Oficiul Național I.O.V., *Recunoștința națiunii către cei cari au făurit „România mare”* [The national gratitude to those who made Greater Romania] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1920), pp. 10-11: “La fel cu toți cei care au contribuit la ridicarea Patriei, la fel cu cei ce supraviețuiesc generației de jertfă, morții își au drepturile lor. Ei nu cer lacrimile noastre; pretind însă în schimb, în mod imperios, recunoașterea sacrificiului lor sublim și ridicarea la înălțimea unui simbol, care să constituie exemplul și stimulentele a noului eroism de care va avea nevoie completa consolidare și viitorul neamului nostru [...] În fața acestor morminte, în fața acestor temple, veni-va tinerimea viitorului, în orice moment greu pentru țară, spre a primi cuvântul de ordine și aci va învăța, mai mult ca oriunde, drumul de urmat, pentru ca neamul nostru să merite, ca și în trecut, conducerea morală a popoarelor ce ne înconjoară, rol care constituie totuși principiul existenței noastre de popor latin la porțile Orientului.”

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the larger package of laws dealing with the social consequences of the First World War discussed in the previous chapter, all of them apparently authored by General Ion Rășcanu, the head of the Department of War between December 1919 and December 1921. The law of 1920 is going to be discussed at length in the first section of this fourth chapter as a part of surveying the articulation of the policy of war commemoration during the interwar Romania.

Besides the intrinsic reference of national superiority aimed mostly at justifying the subordination of the diverse groups of ethnic and religious minorities of the region, an argument no different from the arguments put forward by other nations at the time, the excerpt illustrates the four aspects of the process of war commemoration as they were put forward in the introduction.

This process represented a form of lay mourning of those who died during the war (“They do not ask for our tiers – in exchange, they pretend the recognition of their sublime sacrifice”), a symbolic compensation for those still living who by commemorating the fallen had their own sacrifice and strength recognized in the public sphere, a celebration of victory and of creating Greater Romania and most of all an educational instrument for further political and cultural mobilization of the following generation and an instrument for the dissemination of the values of the nation-state, mostly the concept of (military) heroism as the second chapter of this dissertation detailed to a great extent. Before and especially after the First World War this policy followed models developed in Western Europe most of all in France.

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This fourth chapter describes the policy of war commemorations carried during the interwar period underlining their use as a form of recognition for those dead during the war but especially as a form of symbolic compensation for those who survived the war on the one hand and as a form of further cultural and political mobilization on the other hand. It focuses on the legislative framework aimed at regulating the commemorative practices during the interwar period. Chapter Two presented the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom in Greater Romania which explains the cult of heroes in Romania and the vision of the policy of war commemorations during the interwar Romania. In addition, Chapter Three presented the demographic, economic, social and political consequences of the First World War. As already pointed out the policy of war commemorations was part of a larger set of measures taken in order to tackle the complex situation Romania emerged at the end of the war. After surveying these long-term factors and immediate causes and factors for the form and content of the war commemorations in interwar Romania, this Chapter Four describes the policy of commemorating the First World War in interwar Romania as it was designed by the central authorities in charge with its main elements of organization as well as several moments in its dynamic during the 1920s and the 1930s.

This policy of war commemorations was articulated by the political elites discussed in the introduction and in the conclusion of the previous, third, chapter. These political deciders included the Royal Family (prince Carol who later became King Carol II), the most important politicians and the most important generals who fought during the

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First World War or who were in charge of the Department of War and the other institutions who had a say in the application of the policy of the war commemorations including the Society for the Cult of the Heroes. A systematic approach of their ideas on their matter was not considered given the observation that the commemoration of the fallen met almost no contestation, its articulation was based on a coherent set of ideas and references developed during the nineteenth century, presented in Chapter Two, and, to some extent, the relative minor position of the topic in the range of issues discussed in the public sphere of Romania at the time. The issues that were contested and in need for explanation received a far greater deal of attention and they are presented in a greater number of sources.

Chapter Four consists of six sections. The first section surveys the legislation adopted during the interwar period for regulating and stimulating the commemorative practices. Section two presents the administrative body established through the law in order to supervise the commemorative practices. Initially entitled The Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război'*) in 1919 when established, the society changed its name into The Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea 'Cultul eroilor'*) in 1927 and, again, into The National Foundation 'Regina Maria' for the Cult of Heroes (*Asezământul național Regina Maria pentru cultul eroilor*) in 1940, its authority and range of activities being gradually limited by the state during the 1930s.

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The following two sections of this fourth chapter presents the establishment and the significance associated with two important items in the policy of war commemorations promoted by the central authorities, a national day similar in importance to the Armistice Day (The Heroes' Day on the Ascension Day) and the most important site of commemorations (The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the Military Museum in Bucharest, both established in 1923).

A fifth section of this chapter describes the activity of the Commission for Public Monuments established and active during the 1930s in supervising the numerous war monuments created as local sites of war commemorations. Finally, a sixth section discusses the creation of the Arch of Triumph in Bucharest as the second major site of commemorating the First World War and it discusses the 1936 inauguration of its final construction where the policy of commemorating the Great War is visibly integrated in the narrative of national history and it get associated with the image of the King.

#### **4.1. The legislation concerning war commemorations during the interwar period:**

This first section surveys the body of legislation through which the policy of war commemorations was articulated during the interwar period. This legislation was identified first of all by surveying the index of Romanian laws, decrees and resolutions compiled and edited under the supervision of George Alexianu. A great part of this legislation was published in the collection of laws initiated by Constantin Hamangiu.

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However, further identification was carried out in *Monitorul Oficial*.<sup>259</sup> This body of legislation included regulations on the identification, the separation and the maintenance of individual war graves and the creation of war cemeteries by the special decrees of 1919 and 1920; the creation of the framework of war commemorations by the laws of 1920, 1927 and 1940; the establishment of the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War by the decree of 1919 and by the law of 1920 and its changes of name in 1927 and 1940 as well as its change of statute in 1928/1930; the establishment of a Heroes' Day by a special law in May 1920; and the creation of the Commission of Public Monuments in 1929/1930. The extensive attention paid to legislation one may observe in the following lines was based on an approach where the adopted regulations are considered administrative solutions, debated and adopted, for a series of existing problems in addition to being ideological, cultural and political prescriptions to be followed by the local authorities and by the citizens who were involved in the process.

The care for the dead soldiers was stipulated in the Peace Treaties with Germany and Hungary. Through the articles 155-156 of the Treaty of Trianon (1920), the Hungarian as well as the Allied and Associated governments took their responsibility to respect and take care of the graves belonging to the soldiers buried on their territories.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Previous contributions signaling the importance of the commemoration process, some of the visible war monuments as well as a part of the legislation discussed in this section were authored by Niculae Niculae: "Unde ne sînt monumentele?" [Where are our monuments?], *Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice*, vol. 42, nr. 2, 1973, pp. 73-76; "Societăți și așezăminte pentru ridicarea operelor comemorative" [Associations and foundations involved in the construction of war monuments], *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de artă*, vol. 46, nr. 2, 1977, pp. 79-82.

<sup>260</sup> *Tractat de pace între puterile aliate și asociate și Ungaria. Protocol și declarațiuni, din 4 iunie 1920 (Trianon)* [Peace treaty between the allied and associated powers and Hungary. Protocol and

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The first initiative of establishing commemorative practices for those fallen during the First World War was taken exactly during the war, in July 1917, during a period of reorganization for the Romanian government established in Iași and of preparation for the battles to come and given at Mărăști and Mărășești in the following month. Almost concomitant to the modification of the Constitution so that voting and land reforms be possible, a decree of July 19/August 1 1917 signed by the ad-interim ministry of war Vintilă Brătianu created a diploma to be granted to the families of those fallen “as a pious homage for their sacrifice and as a sign of deep gratitude on behalf of the nation for their contribution in defending the fatherland and in liberating the nation.” In addition, the names of those fallen was supposed to be listed in the churches where families lived.<sup>261</sup> A March 1919 decree initiated by General Arthur Văitoianu stipulated that, as a part of the land expropriations taken care at the time for being redistributed to the peasants, the portions of land where the Romanian soldiers died during the First War World were also expropriated.<sup>262</sup> This was followed by another decree in April 1920 according to which a surface of four square meters was reserved for each war grave, up to three times more to their surroundings while for further works of infrastructure, maintenance and war monuments additional land was going to be expropriated at the rate of the regional prices. In charge of this process of expropriation, special commissions were formed out by the local county prefects and the heads of the county committee of the society for the graves

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declarations of June 4, 1920 (Trianon]] (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1920) in ANIC, fond Parlament, dos. 1898, f. 114.

<sup>261</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 95, July 22/August 4, 1917, pp. 969-970.

<sup>262</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 260, February 17/March 2, 1919, p. 5460.

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of the fallen soldiers as well as by the county engineers and by the representatives from the departments of war and public domains.<sup>263</sup> As a consequence, war cemeteries started being created many times as separate sections of existing cemeteries which were extended. Following the already existing principle of organizing separate cemeteries for each religious denomination these war cemeteries tend to be rather homogeneous from an ethnic point of view. However numerous exceptions existed. For example, the local authorities from the Odorheiu Secuiesc [Szekelyfehervar] made a cemetery for all the nationalities no matter what side they took during the war and the same case was in Focșani and Iași (including Jews who fought in the Romanian army). Many other cemeteries (Medgidia, Călărași etc) included all the nationalities that fought on the nearby battlefields.<sup>264</sup>

For taking care of these newly established cemeteries and isolated war graves but also in order to facilitate their search and to celebrate the Heroes' Day with a great military and religious pomp (“*cu mare fast religios, școlar, național și militar*”), at the initiative of the same General Arthur Văitoianu a Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea ‘Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război’*) was created in

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<sup>263</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 20, April 29, 1920, pp. 1091-1092, Codul general al României edited by C. Hamangiu, vol. IX-X, p. 322-323.

<sup>264</sup> Military cemeteries destined to higher and lower ranking officers were organized through a special law in 1925, no mentioning being made about those died in the First World War: *Regulamentul cimitirelor militare*, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 187, August 27, 1925, pp. 9651-9653; Hamangiu, vol. XIII-XIV, pp. 1092-1096.

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September 1919.<sup>265</sup> The scope of the society was not only to honor the memory of those fallen but also to educate the younger generations, an idea that was present throughout the interwar period in justifying the commemorative practices. Officially placed under the patronage of Queen Maria, the society was organized at the regional, county and local levels, committees for each of these levels being elected every three years by regional, county and local meetings. The central committee included the Queen, the Mitropolit-Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church who was the honorary president of the Society, the ministers of War, Domestic Affairs, Domains, Public Instruction and Public Works, a university professor elected by his colleagues and the secretary general of the Minister of War and the director of the pioneer troops (*geniul*) of the same minister. Private initiative of teachers, priests, local notabilities and land owners preceded sometimes the work envisioned for the society but they could not be systematic since they did not have legal authority. The statutes and some aspects of the Society's activity are presented in the following section of this chapter.

Ascension Day was decreed as the national holiday for commemorating the fallen in May 1920 under the name of the Heroes' Day. May was the month when vegetation and flowers bloomed ("*când floarea este mai bogată*") and thus the aim of war commemorations was fully empowered not only by the religious meaning of the day but also by the context where the commemorative practices were taking place. The program

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<sup>265</sup> Decret-lege pentru recunoașterea calității de persoană morală a societății 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război', *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 123, September 19, 1919, pp. 7041-7042; Hamangiu, vol. IX-X, p. 222-223; Statutul societății 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război' sub înalta ocrotire a M.S. Regina Maria, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 123, September 19, 1919, pp. 7042-7044.

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of the day was established by the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război'*), it was supposed to include public processions, pilgrimages and cultural events of a national and patriotic character (“*cu un caracter național și patriotic*”) where all state and private institutions were obliged to participate. Its place among the other national days as well as the way it was celebrated all around the country are discussed in the third section of this chapter.<sup>266</sup>

The presence of the Romanian Orthodox Church hierarchs in these committees as well as the choice for the Ascension Day as the Heroes' Day may point to an exclusion of the other confessions and therefore of the Transylvanian and Bessarabian Romanians from this process of commemoration not to mention the ethnic and the religious minorities. The historical association of the Romanian national identity and the Orthodox confessional identity as a part of the political and cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom during the nineteenth century was shortly discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>267</sup> Almost a year passed since the committees of Romanians from Transylvania gathered at Alba-Iulia on December 1, 1918, and voted the unification with Romania. In addition, more than a year passed since Sfatul Țării, the parliament of the Moldavian Democratic Republic (*Republica Democratică Moldovenească*), voted the unification of Bessarabia with Romania. However, creating Greater Romania was seen possible by the political elites of

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<sup>266</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 24, May 4, 1920, pp. 1141-1142.

<sup>267</sup> See as well “Religion, militarism and nationalism during the nineteenth century Romania”, *Etudes balkaniques*, Sofia, vol. 44, nr. 4, pp. 9-36.

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the Old Kingdom only through war and this is mostly why Romania did not remain neutral during the First World War.

It was the financial and human efforts of the Old Kingdom in addition to the personal and the diplomatic relationships to France that made possible having a greater say during the peace negotiations of 1919-1920 and their subsequent recognition of Greater Romania. This vision privileged King Ferdinand's coronation at Alba Iulia in October 15, 1922, over the moment of December 1, 1918, so much prized by many Transylvanian Romanians in order to symbolically ascertain their importance in (Greater) Romania. As it is already known, the people of Bucharest celebrated the day of December 1, 1918 as well. They did not do so because Transylvania joined Romania that day but because King Ferdinand and Queen Maria entered Bucharest on that day, the most recent day possible in doing so. This reentering in Bucharest symbolically restored the dignity of the *Regat* as an independent nation. It is understandable why its significance took precedence over the *Marea Unire* otherwise possible mainly because the Romanian state did not cease to exist during the war and its troops were rapidly advancing in Transylvania after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian empire by its own political elites who started to organize themselves at the end of the First World War on ethnic/language criteria. It is not clear if this coincidence was intentional in any way. During the interwar period, Transylvania was treated as a subordinated region, subordinated to the Romanian State centered in Bucharest even if it was not considered necessarily inferior in importance in comparison to the Old Kingdom. This symbolic

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subordination was visible and it is still visible in the heraldry of interwar and present Romania, the fields of Transylvania and Banat being situated below to those of Muntenia and Moldova. This subordination also explains the undemocratic acceptance of the Second Vienna Award in 1940 besides the policies of administrative and legislative uniformization carried during the interwar period. However, as already pointed out in Chapter Three as all, Transylvanian Romanians were not excluded from the process of war commemoration in spite of the fact that the military, religious, cultural and political elites educated in the old Kingdom had the tendency to privilege and impose their own cultural heritage. The relatively high number of war monuments constructed in the regions of Banat and Transylvania is a proof of their active participation in the process of war commemoration, their dynamic being analyzed in the following chapter.

The law that framed and stimulated most the articulation of the policy of war commemoration during the interwar period was the law for “honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” introduced to Romania’s Chamber of Deputies in July 31, 1920. Voted by the Chamber on the same day and by the Senate on August 12, in unanimity in both cases, the law received royal sanction on August 24 and it was published in *Monitorul Oficial* on September 2, 1920.<sup>268</sup> It had seven articles, the first three of them establishing the public forms of commemoration. The first article stipulated the types of commemorative actions: the construction in Bucharest of a commemorative edifice composed of a cenotaph with a ‘golden book’ on top of it being inscribed with the names

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<sup>268</sup> *Legea pentru cinstirea memoriei eroilor căzuți*, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 119, September 2, 1920, pp. 4163-4164; Hamangiu, vol IX-X, pp. 419-420.

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of all those fallen for the Fatherland; the construction of commemorative monuments in all the localities where the battles took place, the size of the monuments supposedly indicating the importance of the respective battle; the laying out, the maintenance and the improvement of the graveyards for the fallen, both in Romania and abroad. All of these commemorative practices were supposed to be administered by the “Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the war” (*Societatea Mormintele Eroilor căzuți în război*) under the supervision of the Ministry of War. The second article confirmed the establishment of the Ascension Day as a national holiday for commemorating the fallen soldiers, a commemoration taking the form of a traditional Orthodox procession honoring the memory of the dead (*parastas*) in the countryside (*comune*) and through processions and national celebrations according to a schedule established by the Society in charge; all state institutions as well as private persons were supposed to participate. Every locality was supposed to create a “golden book” containing: the names of the fallen, in combat or not, who were born or who lived in the respective locality; those who were killed by the enemy; and the Romanians from the added territories fallen under the enemy’s flag but for the Romanian nation. The “golden book” was supposed to be deposited at the local mayoralty while the list of the fallen was to be made public in every local school “so it can be a source of inspiration (*pilda vie*) for the next generations.” Besides being tax exempted, the Society was to receive an annual budget granted by the state, the ten percent of a social assistance tax (*timbrul de asistență*) established in 1914 to fund the

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association “Familia Luptătorilor”, private donations and two percent of out of a twelve percent tax collected by the National Theater.

The most important ideas of the motivation introducing the law to the Chamber of deputies were presented in the beginning of this chapter. The debates were minimal and the law was adopted unanimously as mentioned above. According to general Ion Rășcanu, the construction of war monuments was supposed to express the energy of the nation (*cea mai justă expresie a energiei naționale*) prepared by two thousands of years of “sufferings, unbending faith and fight for the affirmation of the Latin genius”. Dr. Popa Goga was the author of the longest discourse at the general discussion of the law, occupying almost half of all the debates taking place in the Chamber. The following excerpt illustrates the general discourse centered on the direct relationship between the Romanian nationalism and the concept of (military) heroism:

‘the cult of heroes’, this is the religion I want to spread and reign the souls of all Romanians after this great war, the greatest that humankind witnessed since its birth. This new but still the oldest religion I believe to be the most justified and real since it has its source in the great love for the Fatherland, in the limitless devotion to one’s native country; it has its roots in fulfilling the duties every citizen contracts since the moment of his birth with his Fatherland, with his language, with his people, duties one can consider himself acquitted only when he sacrifices his life for their defense, their dignity, their honor [...] ‘The cult of heroes!’ Born out of fanatic love for the Fatherland, people and language, [it] urges one people to the highest virtues [deeds] that make its timeless glory and the crown of human civilization.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> *Recunoștința națiunii*, pp. 17-18: “‘Cultul eroilor’, iată religia ce-aș dori să cuprindă și să stăpânească sufletele tuturor românilor și tuturor româncelor după acest mare război, cel mai mare chiar pe care l-a văzut omenirea dela nașterea ei. Această nouă, deși cea mai veche religie, o cred ca cea mai întemeiată și justificată, cea mai reală, căci își are origina sa în marea iubire de Patrie, în devotamentul fără limită pentru țara sa natală; își are înfiptă rădăcina în îndeplinirea datoriilor ce fiecare cetățean la contractează din clipa nașterii sale, cu Patria sa, cu limba sa, cu neamul său, datorii de cari nu se poate cineva achita decât atunci când și-a sacrificat viața pentru apărarea lor, pentru demnitatea lor, pentru onoarea lor [...] ‘Cultul eroilor’! Născut din fanatică iubire pentru Patrie, neam și limbă, îndeamnă pe un popor la cele mai mari și înalte virtuți, cari fac gloria lui seculară și coroana civilizațiunii omenești.”

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There is no way to check the level of attention given to this speech but it went uninterrupted and at the end of it voices called for the end of the general discussion and thus proceed to discuss the concrete aspects of the law. This excerpt as well as the entire discourse directly connects the cult of heroes and the concept of military heroism within a larger vision of organic nationalism where the right to opt out is completely missing. The rest of the discussion taken place in the Chamber of Deputies concentrated on making clear that the lists of the fallen should include the Romanians who fought in the Austro-Hungarian and Tsarist armies. As the minister of war Rășcanu explained “these fallen are part of the last act of the millennial tragedy” [of the Romanian people and its fight for unity] because they maintained the Romanian nation by submitting to the enemy’s cause, thus avoiding being “exterminated” (most probably a reference to the Armenians’ genocide) and be able to contribute to the making of Greater Romania in 1918-1919, some units of Transylvanians taking part in the Romanian campaign in Hungary in 1919.

This law framed the policy of war commemoration during the interwar period. War monuments were already under construction and many more were going to be created in order to be used as sites of mourning and commemoration, a special day for these commemorations was established on the Ascension Day, an initial Arch of Triumph was created in 1922 to receive King Ferdinand and Queen Maria returning from the coronation taken place at Alba Iulia on October 15, a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was established in the following year and a museum of military history articulated a coherent explanation for the sacrifice of all those fallen during the war.

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Ecaterina Teodoroiu was early instrumentalized as a symbol and a model of bravery and self sacrifice especially since women were not conscripted in the Romanian army. Before several war monuments being dedicated to her, as it is going to be mentioned in the following chapter, a special law was issued in July 1921 for her commemoration. At Târgu-Jiu a statue was supposed to be created as a part of a larger monument dedicated to “the victory at Jiu” (October 14, 1916) where all the names of the officers who fell in autumn 1916 defending Jiu were listed. The monument was supposed to be built by the Society for the Graves of the Fallen. Teodoroiu’s body was supposed to be moved from Muncelul and buried under the monument. Her name was to receive special mentioning every year during the Heroes’ Day. The house of her family in Vădeni, Jiu County, was to be turned into a memorial house, a religious service in her memory (*parastas*) was to be organized there on October 14 and every school in the country was to organize educational lectures about her. Finally, an institute for educating young peasant girls was to be established at Tg. Jiu where war orphans and soldiers’ daughters were to be considered with priority. The funds to cover all these three initiatives were already collected for constructing a war monument dedicated to those fallen in the Second Balkan War of 1913 and a monument to those fallen in the First World War, donations and a special fund gathered by Ionel Slăvescu at the Romanian National Bank.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Lege pentru ridicarea monumentului Ecaterinei Teodoroiu, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 83, July 19, 1921, p. 3112; Hamangiu, vol. IX-X, pp. 961-962.

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In May-June 1927, a new law systematized the practices of war commemorations established in 1919 and 1920. Three chapters were dedicated to the war graves and the expropriation proceedings and two chapters to the public practices of commemorations and to the Society in charge of them. No discrimination on religious or ethnic criteria was to be made further on when considering war graves. War graves were considered not only those belonging to former soldiers but also those belonging to scouts, nurses and the other people who were mobilized during the war or who volunteered for it. The graves of those fallen fighting for foreign states, former enemies or allies of Romania, were also protected under the condition of reciprocity. All war graves and war cemeteries were going to be considered public monuments and the same treatment was going to be given to all war monuments dedicated to glorifying the Romanian heroism. The Heroes' Day was going to be celebrated with all pomp possible by all the public institutions no matter of their ethnic and religious background. Its program was going to be established by a commission formed out by delegates of the Ministers of War, Internal Affairs, Public Instruction, Arts, gendarmerie and the Society in charge of supervising the policy of commemoration. Penalties of 20-25.000 lei were introduced for those who tried to move the war graves without the prior approval of the Society, for those who stained or destroyed the war graves, for those who took to or allowed their animals to feed from the grass of the war graves or of the war cemeteries. Probably in order to make clearer the agenda envisioned for the practices commemorating those fallen during the First World War, the society suffered a change of name from the Society for the Graves of the Heroes

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(*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor'*) to the Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea 'Cultul eroilor'*) to last until 1940 when a new law changed it again.<sup>271</sup> Following the 1927 law on war graves and war memorials, the members of the Society adopted a new statute on April 8, 1928. In addition to implementing the change of title disposed by the law, it expanded the provisions of society's statute of 1919. Consisting of 163 articles, the new statute detailed to a greater extent the organization of the Society, the election of the members of regional and local committees, the modalities of solving their disputes and taking votes as well as the administration of their funds. Finally approved by the Council of Ministers in March 1930, it came into effect in November 1930.<sup>272</sup>

Given the numerous war monuments constructed during the 1920s all over Romania, a Commission for Public Monuments was created in November 1929 in order to (peer-)review the iconography of the public and war monuments that were going to be constructed or initiated and their relationships with the surrounding they were going to be emplaced. Its attributions were described in a decree of March 1930. During the 1930s this Commission composed out of the director of the Department of Arts, two sculptors, one painter and one architect met periodically and reviewed in its greatest part of the time the projects intended for raising the monuments commemorating those fallen in the First World War. The fifth section of this chapter surveys its activity which produced several

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<sup>271</sup> *Lege asupra regimului mormintelor de război în România*, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 119, June 2, 1927, pp. 7516-7520, modified in *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 131, June 17, 1927, p. 8347; Hamangiu, vol. XV-XVI, pp. 781-786. The parliamentary debates took place during the month of May 1927.

<sup>272</sup> *Statutul Societății „Cultul Eroilor”*, sanctioned by a decree nr. 1130 of April 2, 1930 and published in *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 247, November 1, 1930, pp. 9347-9371.

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tens of folders one may find at the National Archives of Romania with information related to the iconography of the war monuments. Most of them lack information on their costs, the lists of subscriptions and eventually the contests over their iconography and emplacements on the public space. A regulation of 1938 placed the Ministry of Arts and Cults as the direct intermediary between the monument committees supposed to submit their projects for review and the Commission for Public Monuments, a change which rather signals a previous lack of authority of the Commission.<sup>273</sup>

The third law dealing with the supervision of war cemeteries and the construction of war memorials was adopted in July-August 1940. The structure of the law is identical to the one from 1927. However, there were several modifications. Approval of the Council of Ministers was necessary for the war monuments created by foreign states that wished to commemorate their fallen. The name of the administrative body in charge with supervising the application of the policy of war commemoration changed again from Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea 'Cultul eroilor'*) to The National Foundation 'Regina Maria' for the Cult of Heroes (*Asezământul național Regina Maria pentru cultul eroilor*), the new name lasting until 1948 when the Society was dissolved. A great part of the law discusses the new organization of the Society turned Foundation thus the statute of 1930 being annulled. The personnel of the Foundation was assimilated to the personnel of the Minister of National Defense (the name of the Minister of War after

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<sup>273</sup> Decret pentru atribuțiunile comisiunii monumentelor publice, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 52, March 5, 1930, p. 1758-1759; Hamangiu, vol. XVIII, pp. 168-170; Regulament pentru reglementarea monumentelor publice, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 293, December 16, 1938, pp. 5974-5976.

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1930) with the similar rights and obligations, an important newly introduced right for those working for the Foundation being the right to state pensions.<sup>274</sup>

To sum up, this section of the dissertation was dedicated to surveying the legislation concerning the commemoration of the war experience in the First World War and especially of those who died during the war. The numerous war graves and the newly created cemeteries required state support and thus the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War took charge in identifying, constructing tombs and maintaining them. However, the commemoration of the First World War was going to take many forms during the interwar Romania, many of them stipulated by the law of 1920. In addition to the construction of war monuments in almost every village soldiers originated from, the policy of war commemoration included the change of the streets' nomenclature by using the names of the local soldiers and corporals or by placing memorials inside the building of the administrative and educational institutions. The most visible form of war commemorations was however the construction of war monuments. As shown in the second chapter, the process of war commemoration was not new but only in the interwar period it became so widespread. The concepts used in the two proclamations of August 1916 to the country and to the army were also used in defining the policy of war commemorations during the 1920s and the 1930s, placing this process in continuity with the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom of Romania where (military) heroism represented the matrix that defined the Romanian nationalism. Changes related to the

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<sup>274</sup> Legea asupra mormintelor și operelor comemorative de război din 27 iulie 1940, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 176, August 1, 1940, pp. 3928-3934.

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addition of the new regions were visible mostly at the regional and especially at the local levels only.

#### 4.2. **The society for the cult of the heroes:**

This second section surveys the activity of the organization in charge with the application of the policy of commemorating those fallen during the wars Romania took part, the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război'*). As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, until the middle of the first decade of this century, the archive of the interwar society for the cult of the heroes could be found at the library of Military Museum in Bucharest, during the 1990s its custodian being Valeria Bălescu. Taken over by the newly established National Office for the Cult of the Heroes (O.N.C.E.), this archive was moved to the Office's quarters in Carol Park and therefore it was closed for public access due to the problems of institutional and space reorganization, a request made in 2007 to consult its archive being denied.

The Society changed its name in 1927 in The Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea „Cultul eroilor”*) and again in 1940 in The National Foundation Regina Maria for the Cult of the Heroes (*Asezământul național Regina Maria pentru cultul eroilor*) while after the proclamation of the Romanian Peoples Republic (1948) it became the Association “The Cult of the Heroes” to be dissolved during the same year. The change of name reflects the relative expansion of the range of activities envisioned for it

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as well as the change of its statute from an autonomous organization supported by the state into a section of the state bureaucracy. This change of statute is to some extent corollary to the process of extending the state administration of all forms of social assistance in Romania.

During the later years of the war numerous private initiatives were taken rather on an individual basis to mourn and commemorate those fallen during the war. Attempts to expropriate the lands aimed to be transformed into cemeteries were randomly resisted on the areas where battles were carried out. Consequently, in order to confer a systematic application of the aim of taking care of the war graves and of commemorating their sacrifice during the war as well as in order to comply with the peace treaties signed at the end of the war which required the creation of war graves for all those who fought and died during the war no matter of their side, the state created the above mentioned Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War, officially placed under the patronage of Queen Maria in a similar way the societies for taking care of the war disabled, war orphans and war widows were placed and were active under the patronage of the Queen.

The Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War was organized at regional, county and local levels, every three years these regional, county and local meetings having to elect their committees for each of these levels. The central committee included the Queen, the Mitropolit-Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the ministers of War, Domestic Affairs, Public Domains, Public Instruction and Public Works, a university professor elected by his colleagues and the secretary general of the

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Minister of War and the director of pioneers (*geniul*) of the same minister. According to the statute, in addition to the founding members and donors, members of the society were supposed to be all those who lost a family member during the war. Every committee included the highest ranking members of the officer and teaching bodies, the highest ranking hierarch of the Orthodox Romanian Church for the respective level, the local elected and appointed notabilities and the head of the local gendarmerie units. The formal heads of these committees were supposed to be the Mitropolit-Primate at the national level, the head of the military units (*general de corp de armată*) at the regional level, the local prefect at the level of the counties and a military priest or a former combatant teacher or a priest at the local level. The annual fee was set at 24 lei but the relatives of those fallen during the war were exempted. Any modification proposed to the society's statute was supposed to be confirmed by the Romanian government. While no member of the respective committees was to be paid, the society's mail was tax exempted and its personnel in charge with searching and taking care of war graves and war monuments were offered free ride on the trains of *Căile Ferate Române* (the Romanian Railroad Company). Another decree ordered the application of the statutes of the Society for graves of those fallen during the war, all the metropolitans, the bishops, the heads of armies, divisions and brigades, the county prefects and the heads of the recruitment areas, elected and appointed members of state administration, the engineers in charge with the

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state forests and all the members of the teaching body were notified about the contents of the statutes.<sup>275</sup>

A general Ion Manolescu was the director of the Society for most of the interwar period. While the Diploma “Patria Recunoscătoare” was awarded through the law of 1920, a “Semn al aducerii aminte” (*Sign of Remembrance*) was established in 1928. The first best illustrates the discourse of cultural unification carried out at that time: the heralds of the all provinces are present in the upper corners and bottom part of the diploma, a painting representing all social categories surrounding the Romanian tricolor and fighting together in the battle while the pictures of Michael the Brave and King Ferdinand represented the beginning and the end of the “war for the unity of all Romanians,” Michael the Brave being represented after the First World War as the icon of the nineteenth century Romanian nationalism. The second was supposed to be put at the entrance of the houses where the fallen heroes have lived. It cost 150lei and 130lei if more than five pieces were ordered. So, this was also a way of fund raising for the Society. The Society’s revenues were established by the law of 1920... Thus the Society received annually about 3.000.000 lei as a percent of *timbrul de asistență*...until 1927 when the revenue was fixed at 6.000.000 lei granted by the state.<sup>276</sup> Later, an Association for the Cult of the Fatherland (Asociația „Cultul Patriei”) was established in October 14, 1926, with the aim of spreading at all levels of the society and “to maintain as powerful and well understood the flame of patriotism.” Its initial 121 members included forty-one

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<sup>275</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 123, September 19, 1919, pp. 7044.

<sup>276</sup> *Monitorul Oficial. Desbaterile Adunării Deputaților*, July 16, 1927, pp. 3429-3430.

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generals and other higher officers, eighteen professors of secondary and higher education including Dimitrie Gusti, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru and dr. Gheorghe Marinescu, eighteen state functionaries, fourteen lawyers, nine doctors, seven journalists including Constantin Bacalbașa, four engineers, two judges, two sculptors and one architect.

Following the change of name brought by the law of 1927, a new statute to expand the provisions of 1919 was adopted in April 1928 by the members of the society, discussed by the Council of Ministers in March 1930 and published in the *Monitorul Oficial* in November 1930. Consisting of a four times higher number of articles in comparison with the statute of 1919, the new statute detailed to a greater extent the organization of the Society, the election of the members of regional and local committees, the modalities of solving their disputes and taking votes as well as the administration of their funds.<sup>277</sup> Article 5 detailed the aims of the society making explicit the aim “to propagate the cult of the Romanian heroism, from all times and under any form, through publications, paintings, insignia, conferences etc. in order to strengthen and develop the national feelings.”<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Sanctioned by a decree nr. 1130 of April 2, 1930, the new statute was published in *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 247, November 1, 1930, pp. 9347-9371.

<sup>278</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 247, November 1, 1930, p. 9349: “propagarea cultului eroismului românesc, din toate timpurile și sub orice formă, în masele poporului prin diferite publicațiuni, tablouri, insigne, conferințe etc. pentru întărirea și dezvoltarea simțămintelor naționale”

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Image 4.1 \_ A group of veterans of the 1877-1878 war during the 1927 celebrations of fifty years since the Romania's proclamation of independence



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fototeca, II, photo nr. 86.

The Society has published a monthly review, *Revista "Cultul Eroilor"*, directed by Mircea Dem Rădulescu, and its editorial office was at the Palace of the Patriarch. The review changed its name in January 1926 to "*România Eroică*", considering the former name as defining a much too limited palette of possible activities. It aimed at a patriotic activity where literature was to play an educative 'patriotic' role.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> "[...] literatură în legătură cu sufletul românesc cu aspirațiile acestui suflet smuls din suferințele trecutului și năzuind spre orizonturile înseninate ale viitorului" *România eroică, organul societății "Mormintele Eroilor"*, vol vii, nr. 1, January 1926, p. 15.

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Image 4.2. A *troita* – war monument in Turtucaia, Durostor County, Piața Pacii, 1923, sponsored by Societatea Mormintele Eroilor, Comitetul Central, author arh. Fl. Stănculescu, 1923, 8m. To the north: “Ne închinăm luptătorilor pentru întregirea Neamului. Sfanta lor jertfă o cinstim și o slăvim” and to the south: “În amintirea eroilor căzuți pentru întregirea Neamului”



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 28. Cost: 50.000 lei.

The issues were published monthly during the 1920s while after a peak in 1930 (a special almanac and a supplement), most of the issues tend to be grouped in double but also sometimes triple, and even quadruple numbers. This review was one of the main sources of information on the process of war commemoration. It published models of monuments, *troite*, and especially patriotic literature. In addition, other pieces of literature were published including Liviu Rebreanu’s *Ispita morții* [The temptation of death] (fragment)<sup>280</sup> and poems such as *Visul lor* [Their dream] by Camil Petrescu.<sup>281</sup>

<sup>280</sup> *România eroică, organul societății “Mormintele Eroilor”*, vol vii, nr. 1, January 1926, p. 3.

<sup>281</sup> *România eroică*,.. an 7, nr. 3-5, pp. 25

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Image 4.3. *Troița* as war monument in Făgăraș, Făgăraș County, 28 oct. 1934, 5m cu totul.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 204 and 209verso. Cost: 10.000 lei.

Numerous war monuments under the form of *troiță* were constructed during the interwar period following models promoted by the Society. In the same time, during the 1920s the Society helped the construction of several war monuments such as the one

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from Turtucaia (Image 4.2) until this was limited by the law of 1927. Only a few of these war monuments were built entirely by the Society for the cult of the heroes which represents an indicator that the process of commemorating the events and those fallen during the First World War was not a process imposed from above but it rather fulfilled expectations at the local levels. The policy of war commemorations rather followed and framed the general trend than it actually set it.

The conceptual language promoted and shared by the military involved is probably best visible in the following quotation of Queen Maria periodically republished in *România eroică*: “Do not shed tears on the heroes’ graves but rather praise them through songs so that their fame should remain like an echo through the century old legends (Queen Mary)”<sup>282</sup>

To sum up, this section was dedicated to surveying the activity of the organization in charge during the interwar period with the implementation and the supervision of the policy of war commemorations. The Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea ‘Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război’*) had its name changed in 1927 into The Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea „Cultul eroilor”*) and again in 1940 into The National Foundation Regina Maria for the Cult of Heroes (*Asezământul național Regina Maria pentru cultul eroilor*). It was mainly in charge with the identification, the delimitation, the construction and the maintenance of the war graves, individually or part

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<sup>282</sup> *România Eroică*, an. 8, nr. 11-12, nov-dec 1927. “Nu vărsați lacrimi mormintele eroilor, ci mai curând slăviți-i în cântece așa ca faima numelui lor să rămână un ecou prin legenda veacurilor”. The quote was repeated almost every time the Queen’s portrait was published in the review and this was quite frequent.

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of the war cemeteries. It also supervised a range of commemorative practices following the law “for honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” including the organization of the Heroes’ Day, the publication of a special review where models of war monuments including *troițe* were promoted, it supported sometimes the construction of such war monuments and it encouraged a literature devoted to praising the war experience.

#### 4.3. No November 11: the Ascension Day as the Heroes’ Day:

The application of the policy of war commemorations during the interwar period was clustered around a national day when special ceremonies were staged at the special sites represented by the war monuments constructed most of the times nearby public institutions such as the schools or nearby the local churches and the war cemeteries.

The Romanian equivalent to November 11, this national day celebrated during the interwar period was entitled the Heroes’ Day and it was established in May 1920 on the Ascension Day (*Ispas*), forty days after the Easter as celebrated by the Romanian Orthodox Church. It was this way celebrated until 1948.<sup>283</sup> A reason for this was that the honorary president of the organization in charge with honoring the fallen, the Society for the Cult of the Heroes, was *ex officio* the Metropolitane-Primate and after 1925 the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Confirmed by the 1920 law of war commemorations the day was supposed to be celebrated as all the other national days were. All the public institutions including the mayor, the military authorities, the teachers

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<sup>283</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 24, May 4, 1920, pp. 1141-1142.

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and their pupils were supposed to take part. It was a ritual of mourning, of communion and also of initialization in the public secrets of the nationhood. As previously mentioned, the program of the day was to be established by the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război'*). It included public processions and cultural events of a national and patriotic character.

The creation of Greater Romania brought together the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholics of Transylvania who used the Gregorian calendar in their religious practices and the Orthodox of the Old Kingdom who still used the Julian ('old style') calendar in their religious practices. There were numerous attempts after the 1860s to get the Gregorian calendar introduced in the Old Kingdom but the periodically renewed legislation was never applied before the First World War. In practice, laymen used both styles in the same time and this is visible in dating newspapers while religious people tend to use only the Julian style. This brought a difference of thirteen days in celebrating the Easter and the Ascension Day. Therefore a similar difference existed immediately after the Great War also in celebrating the newly established Heroes' Day.

Before the Great War the framework of holidays was mainly religious in the Old Kingdom of Romania. A group of national/lay holidays commemorating the process of political unification of the nineteenth century was employed in the public sphere concentrating after around 1900 on the days of May 10 and January 24. The day of May 10, the moment of Carol's arrival in 1866 cumulated the significances of the day of the royal sanction given to the proclamation of independence in 1877 and the day of Carol's

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coronation as king in 1881. The day of January 24 represented the moment of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's election in January 1859 as a prince of both the Danubian Principalities, this second national day being more of an unofficial holiday supported mainly in Moldavia as it was visible in the spread of Cuza's statues before the First World War. The meaning of the events of 1877-1878 was associated with the day of May 10 and no other day emerged distinctively.

After the Great War, a series of holidays were added to the more or less official lay holidays celebrated by the state authorities including the Heroes' Day, January 24 and May 10. The set of dates of Romanian army's entering in the newly added territories: August 15, 1916 (the first entering in Transylvania); November 10, 1918 (the second entering in Transylvania); January 8, 1918 (the entering in Bessarabia); and October 24, 1918 (the entering in Bukowina) were emphasized on the Arch of Triumph and they were considered important for the chronology of the Romanian participation in the First World War. The Romanian state privileged to some extent these dates in order to emphasize its own war and diplomatic efforts in achieving Greater Romania while the dates of local proclamations of unification were not silenced. Among these holidays and dates invested with national significance, the date of December 1 played a rather minor role and its doses of significance differed from what it became known and used after 1989. While December 1, 1918, was promoted by the Romanian Transylvanians as a way of connecting local history to the national one, the day of unification privileged by the political center was October 15, 1922, King Ferdinand's coronation day at Alba

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Iulia/Gyulafehérvári.<sup>284</sup> During the 1930s, June 8 became an official holiday celebrated as the Restoration Day, the day when Carol II was enthroned in 1930 while August 6, celebrating the battle of Mărășești, occasioned a ceremony that started at the place of the battle from where a torch was lighted, brought to Sinaia and then used to light the candle of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.<sup>285</sup>

The association of the Romanian national identity and the Orthodox confessional identity during the decades prior to the First World War explains the choice for the Ascension Day as the Heroes Day and after 1934 the choice for the 6<sup>th</sup> of August to celebrate the Victory Day. In the case of the Heroes Day, as Jesus Christ did, the fallen soldiers have previously accepted their mission (“to save the world”) and faith (possible death), they were sacrificed by their enemies but they had reserved a place in Heaven next to the Father (the moment of Ascension). The 6<sup>th</sup> of August was also not chosen arbitrarily. In addition to celebrating the victories of 1917 it celebrated “Schimbarea la fata a Mantuitorului” which according to the Christian Orthodox calendar is the moment when Jesus Christ has shown his godly nature to his favorite apostles, Peter, Jacob and John, on the mount Tabor. This association between Orthodoxy and nationalism is also

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<sup>284</sup> This point is emphasized by Cătălina Mihalache, “Didactica unui eveniment: 1 decembrie în manualele de istorie a românilor” [The didactics of an event: December 1 in the Romanian history textbooks] in *In medias res. Studii de istorie culturală* [In medias res. Studies of cultural history]. Edited by Andi Mihalache and Adrian Cioflâncă (Iași, Editura Universității „A.I.Cuza”, 2007), pp. 303-327. For a history of the way December 1<sup>st</sup> was signified see as well Maria Bucur, “Birth of a nation: commemorations of December 1, 1918, and national identity in twentieth-century Romania” in *Staging the past. The politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the present*. Edited by Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 286-326.

<sup>285</sup> Corneliu Moldovanu, *La zece ani de domnie: portrete și imagini din viața M.S. Regelui Carol II* [Ten years of reign: portraits and images from the life of HM King Carol II] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1940), pp. 51-52.

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visible in the Serbian case where *Vidovdan*, the feast of Saint Vitus (28<sup>th</sup> of June) became a national holy day well before the Balkan Wars and the Great War, commemorating the well known defeat of Kosovo Polje in 1389. After 1918, not only that the constitution of the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was proclaimed on this day in 1921 but *Vidovdan* was proclaimed the day to honor all war dead during the interwar period.<sup>286</sup>

This religious framework for defining heroism as accepted martyrdom for the home country is, I think, visible in the cult of the Queen Mary during the war. The German King who opted for his adoptive country remained permanently in the shadow of the “Mother of the wounded.” Maria Bucur has shown the transformation of Queen Mary from a joyful animator of the Royal Court into the “Mother of the wounded” dressed like a nurse during the war.<sup>287</sup> The model of Mary’s behavior was most probably Queen Elisabeth, wife of Carol I, who was the first “mother of the wounded” during the war of 1877-1878. The difference of impact consists not only in the scale of the propaganda effort of the Romanian war newspapers from Iasi but also in the religious lenses through which this propaganda was received: Virgin Mary (*Maica Domnului*) is not so present in the religious rituals of the Orthodox Church as it is in the Catholic Church but it was (and it still is) extremely popular, many of the Romanian women were called Maria. While the soldiers were Christs who were self sacrificing for the community, the Romanian nation,

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<sup>286</sup> Milorad Ekmečić, “The emergence of St. Vitus Day as the Principal National Holiday,” in *Kosovo: the legacy of a medieval battle*. Edited by Wayne Vucinich and Thomas Emmert (Minneapolis, 1990). According to Bokovoy, p. 253, notes 13 and 15.

<sup>287</sup> M. Bucur, *Heroes and victims*, 2000, pp. 41-45.

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the image of Queen Mary was disseminated as an encompassing Virgin Mary who takes care of the sufferings of the self-sacrificed soldiers.

#### **4.4. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Military Museum in Bucharest:**

This section discusses in greater detail the main site of the war commemorations during the interwar Romania which was represented by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Bucharest. A short analysis was carried out in the beginning of the introduction to this dissertation in order to better illustrate its theme. The following lines carry further this analysis which is divided in two subsections which are complementary to each other. The first one presents in greater detail the ceremony of selecting in May 1923 the soldier who was buried inside the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as well as the cultural and political meaning of this procession. A second subsection described the Military Museum established by the Tomb in December 1923. The military museum not only described the events of the Romanian participation in the First World War in great detail, a half of the entire museum being reserved to it, but it placed these events within the narrative of national history articulated during the nineteenth century and described in the second chapter. The Tomb and the Museum are inseparable, the museum explaining the meaning of the tomb as epitomizing the sacrifice of the soldiers fallen while fighting in the Romanian army between 1916 and 1919.

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#### 4.4.1. *The selection, the burial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*:<sup>288</sup>

The law of 1920 for “honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” decided the creation of a cenotaph containing a golden book with the names of all of the soldiers fallen during the First World War. However, following the creation of tombs of unknown soldiers in Paris and London on November 11, 1920, in Italy and United States in 1921 and in Bruxelles in 1922, this decision was changed to the creation of Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Bucharest to symbolize the sacrifice of all soldiers whose graves were and most of all were not identified. Therefore, on the Heroes’ Day of 1923 a group of national ceremonies were organized for selecting the Romanian Unknown Soldier. Bodies of unknown soldiers were going to be solemnly selected from all major battlefields fought by the Romanian army during the First World War and brought to Mărășești. There one of them was going to be designed as the Unknown Soldier and brought to Bucharest to be buried on May 17, the Ascension Day, on the especially designed Tomb created in the Carol Park at the time bordering the southern areas of the city.

The Unknown Soldier was supposed to be initially selected from eight unknown soldiers who died on eight battlefields from the Old Kingdom most of them close to the Carpathian Mountains: the Jiu Valley, the battle for defending Dobrodja, the Prahova Valley, the battle for defending Bucharest, Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz, and Tg. Ocna. Later, they realized the omissions and added first an unknown soldier from Ciucea

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<sup>288</sup> Traian Popa-Lisseanu. *Soldatul necunoscut, istoric și cult*, Publicațiile societății „Frontul Mărășești” nr. 1 [The unknown soldier, its history and cult. The publications of the “Frontul Mărășești” Society] (Bucharest: Tipografia Ovidiu, 1936), pp. 49-96 served as the main point of reference to Valeria Bălescu, *Eroul Necunoscut. Istorie trecută și recentă* [The Unknown Hero. A past and present history]. Foreword by Dan Berindei (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2005), pp. 73-75, 82-107, 110-115, 124-125.

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(Transylvania) and only later an unknown soldier from Chişinău, as a symbol for Bessarabia.<sup>289</sup>

Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of May, the selection of the local unknown soldiers was carried out in the war cemeteries created on and around the above mentioned battlefields. Religious processions were followed by several days of public mourning. Then they were sent to Mărăşeşti on May 13 where they were posited in the Church “The Dormition of the Virgin”. Each of them carried a small bag of soil from the battleground they represented. In 1927 when the Legion of the Archangel Michael was established a similar ritual was performed. Armin Heinem pointed to the religious vocabulary of the Legion.<sup>290</sup>

There, at Mărăşeşti, on May 14, a ceremony presided by the Metropolitane of Moldavia, Pimen Georgescu, and the minister of war, general Gheorghe Mărdărescu, carried the selection of the Unknown Soldier. A war orphan, the best pupil of the Romanian military high schools at the time, Amilcar Săndulescu, was charged with the selection by pointing to one of the coffins and saying “This is my father.” After this ceremony of selection, the other nine coffins were buried in the local war cemetery. The coffin of the Unknown Soldier was brought to the railway station of Mărăşeşti where it

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<sup>289</sup> Bălescu, 2005, p. 82.

<sup>290</sup> Armin Heinem. *Legiunea “Arhanghelului Mihail.” Mişcare socială şi organizaţie politică. O contribuţie la problema fascismului internaţional*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Translation from the German by Cornelia and Delia Eşianu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006, c1999, c1986); Valentin Săndulescu, “Sacralized politics in action: the February 1937 burial of the Romanian Legionary leaders Ion Moţa and Vasile Marin”, *Totalitarian movements and political religions*, vol. 8, nr. 2, 2007, pp. 259-269; Constantin Iordachi, *Charisma, politics and violence: the Legion of “Archangel Michael” in inter-war Romania* (Trondheim: Program on East European Cultures and Societies, 2004).

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remained for the night. The next day a special train carried the coffin to Bucharest and on its way according the schedule it stopped in the most important railway stations where the public composed out of the local notabilities, the military and the teaching bodies as well as the pupils of state and privates institutions took part of local ceremonies for honoring the Unknown Soldier.

In Bucharest the population was invited by the mayoralty to take place in the ceremonies established for May 15 and 17. The coffin of the Unknown Soldier was carried in a public procession from Gara de Nord to the “Mihai Vodă” Church through Calea Griviței, Calea Victoriei and the Regina Elisabeta Boulevard. The coffin remained there guarded by all the officers of the newly established military order of Michael the Brave until May 17 when it was taken to the Carol Park, where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was prepared, by a procession going through Str. Mihai Vodă, Calea Victoriei, Str. Carol, Piața Unirii, Regina Maria Boulevard and June 11 street.

The choice for the Carol Park in order to establish the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was made in the previous days after considering several other symbolic locations in Bucharest. One of them was the square around the statue of Michael the Brave in front of the University of Bucharest, a place of frequent political meetings as mentioned in the second chapter of this dissertation.

Another one, preferred by most of the military establishment, was situated in front of the Military Club (Cercul Militar) on Calea Victoriei, very close to the first one. A third one was the Arch of Triumph created in 1922 in the north of Bucharest in a rather

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isolated area at the time, the nowadays Herăstrău Park being created only in the late 1930s.

However, in the end, the choice was made for Carol Park most of all because it was considered that a monument dedicated to all the fallen should not be placed in crowded places such as the first two mentioned places or remote at the third one but in a quiet place where it fit the attitude of mourning it required.

The place had its own political and cultural significance and later that year it started hosting the military museum, the largest museum of national history at the time in Romania. In 1848 crowds gathered there to support the Provisional Government and the name of the place has remained *Câmpia Libertății* (the field of liberty). Then, the area was transformed into a park in 1906 with the occasion of the National Exhibition mentioned in the previous chapter and organized to celebrate 1800 years since the Romans conquered Dacia (106 AD), forty years since Carol I became the prince of Romania (1866) and twenty-five years since the proclamation of the Kingdom after the recognition of its independence (1881). Definitely, besides the quietness considered important for a grave, the choice was symbolic for defining the Romanian nationalism. A first generation of the Romanian nationalism manifested at 1848 their program of liberal reforms, a second generation yet Conservative proclaimed its success in 1906 and almost the same generation gave the victims of the First World War to complete the social reforms envisioned in 1840s. A new generation was to follow with a different aim, to mourn the heroes and be educated to defend Greater Romania.

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Images 4.4-5.9: The selection and the burial of the Unknown Soldier at Mărășești, May 1923:

Image 4.4: Bringing one of the ten unknown soldiers to Mărășești



Image 4.5: Religious procession for the ten unknown soldiers brought to Mărășești.



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Image 4.6: The selection of the Unknown Soldier and the burial of the other nine unknown Soldiers.



Image 4.7: The departure of the Unknown Soldier from Mărășești railway station.



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Image 4.8: King Ferdinand and Prince Carol in front of the coffin of the Unknown Soldier, Bucharest, May 1923.



Image 4.9: The British delegation saluting the Unknown Soldier, Bucharest, May



1923.

Source for 4.4-4.9: [www.once.ro](http://www.once.ro); March 2007.

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Among those who participated in all these public processions were King Ferdinand and all the royal family; all the metropolitans and bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church as well as of the Greco-Catholic and the Romano-Catholic churches, all the military authorities from Bucharest, the whole government and all the still living former members of the Romanian government, all the school pupils from Bucharest. The department of War even made a movie which was disseminated as a news journal in the cinemas but unfortunately it does not exist any more. King Ferdinand offered the following discourse:

With laurels were welcomed in the past the victorious under an arch of triumph and also with laurels were honored the martyrs of the faith that saves us. This wreath of laurels brought to you by the first King of Greater Romania, to you nameless soldier, who embody from now on the sacrifice of the hundreds of thousands of lives dedicated to the altar of Patria, for the national greatness and unity, is the wreath of the martyr and the wreath of the victorious.

All the Romanians in this moment are directing their patriotic thoughts towards you, a symbol of sacrifice and bravery, all the eyes are shedding tears, all the hearts are beating in this moment for all those who they love, who alone, under the sky of God or in the brave moments of fighting, closed their eyes far away from any consolation. In front of your place of rest the entire Country bows in deep gratitude because being nameless you belong to the entire Kin.

God bless the feeling of this great/elevating moments which is embracing all of us in front of you, in an equal way those small and those big, and may it be a holy and convincing model for the unity of all the Romanian souls into self sacrifice and love and may the thought at the Country's greatness and strength raise them into a productive and fraternal effort. And the future generations, by blessing our sacrifices, to have you forever as a model of virtue and abnegation in relation to the common good and the complete sacrifice for the greatness and the raising of the Kin.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Traian Popa Lisseanu, s.a., pp. 69-70: "Cu cununi de lauri erau întâmpinați în vechime biruitorii sub arcul de triumf și tot cu cununi de lauri se cinsteau mucenicii credinței mântuitoare. Cununa de lauri ce-ți aduce întâiul Rege al României Mari, ție ostașului fără nume, care întrupezi de acum până în veci jertfa sutelor de mii de vieți închinată pe altarul Patriei pentru mărirea și unitatea națională este și cununa miceniciei și cununa biruitorului.

Toată suflarea românească, în clipa aceasta își îndreaptă gândurile patriotice spre tine, simbolul jertfei și al vitejiei, toți ochii lacrămează, toate inimile bat acum pentru cei iubiți ai lor, cari singuri, sub

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At the end of this discourse the king decorated the Unknown Soldier with the Order of Michael the Brave. A similar discourse was offered by the prime-minister Ion I.C. Brătianu who also pointed to the sufferings and the periods of vigilance and misery (*suferințele și veghele de restriște*).

The tomb of the Unknown Soldier soon became one of the most important places of civic pilgrimage. Children and parents were visiting the Military Museum and learned about the battles of the Great War while the tomb offered them the possibility to contemplate the embodiment all dead soldiers. A votive light was put at the head of the Unknown Soldier by the pupils of the “St. Mary” Seminar for Girls in 1924 and it was re-lighted again in 1927, in the presence of General Constantin Presan, the oldest military officer at the time. In June 1930, immediately after swearing the oath of allegiance to the nation, in the Parliament, as the new king of Romania, Carol II went immediately to the monument of the Unknown Soldier to pay his respect to what may have been considered the second symbol and embodiment of the nation, the Parliament being the first one<sup>292</sup>

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cerul lui Dumnezeu sau vitejia luptelor, au închis ochii departe de orice mângâiere. Înainte locașului tău de veci se închină azi, cu adâncă recunoștință, Țara întreagă, căci fără nume fiind ești al Neamului întreg.

Dea Domnul ca fiorul acestor momente înălțătoare, care în fața ta ne cuprinde de-o potrivă pe cei mici și pe cei mari, să fie un sfânt și poruncitor îndemn la unirea tuturor sufletelor românești în jertfe și iubire și ca gândul măririi și tăriei Țării, să le înalțe spre o muncă rodnică și frățescă. Iar generațiile viitoare binecuvântând jertfele noastre să te aibă de-apurarea drept pildă virtuților, a uitării de sine, în fața binelui obștesc și a jertfei depline, pentru mărirea și înălțarea Neamului.”

<sup>292</sup> Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, *Carol II, regele românilor: cinci ani de domnie, 8 iunie 1930 – 8 iunie 1935* [Carol II, King of Romanians; five years of reign, June 8, 1930 – June 8, 1935] (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Eminescu, 1935), p. : “După solemnitatea din Dealul Mitropoliei, MS Regele Carol al II-lea a plecat direct la mormântul eroului necunoscut. În fața mormântului, a luat poziție de zmerenie a marilor Regi și a salutat acest simbol al jertfelor și suferințelor unui popor, cu cari Suveranul s’a identificat din fragedă copilărie atât de mult, rămânând astfel câteva clipe în adâncă și pioasă reculegere. După aceea, personal a așezat pe mormânt un buchet de crini albi, legați într-o panglică a

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while visits of foreign heads of state to Bucharest most of the times included paying their respect to the Unknown Soldier. Political groups also tried to capitalize on the symbolism of the Unknown Soldiers, the right wing attempting to modify the civic meaning of the tomb by adding Orthodox symbols. In January 1933, students led by Mihai Stelescu tried to place a Byzantine cross, they were stopped by the police and this caused outrage throughout the sympathizers of the Iron Guard, including Mircea Vulcănescu who wrote an article of protest in ‘Dreapta.’<sup>293</sup>

Image 4.10: The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the Military Museum in Bucharest, postcard, 1920s.



Source: Facebook page, *Istorie romaneasca in fotografii*, February 2013;

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tricolorului național.” Colonel Gabriel Marinescu was the prefect of the Bucharest’s Police and the honorary president of the “Vitejii Neamului” Association, Ion Modreanu, active president, and Constantin Buruiană.

<sup>293</sup> I thank Valentin Sandulescu for confirming me this was the most important such an initiative, 2007.

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The public behavior in front of the Tomb was regulated in 1936.<sup>294</sup> The existence of the Tomb as the central site of commemoration of those fallen during the war possibly contributed to the delay which is observable in the construction of the other war monuments erected in Bucharest, initiated during the 1920s and finished during the 1930s.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier became an important symbolic site where the heads of states or government visiting Romania were placing wreaths of flowers as well as at the war monuments that were relevant for the previous cooperation between their countries and Romania such as the war cemetery of Medgidia (image 4.12).

Image 4.11 \_ Tsar Boris II of Bulgaria paying respect to the Romanian Unknown Soldier.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fototeca, II, photo nr. 292.

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<sup>294</sup> Regulament relativ la mormântul soldatului necunoscut, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 123, March 30, 1936, p. 4724.

Image 4.12 \_ King Alexander, Maria of Yugoslavia and King Carol II at the war monument of Medgidia.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fototeca, II, photo nr. 282/2.

A fire has damaged the Military Museum in 1938 and the building was destroyed by the 1940 earthquake. The Tomb was rebuilt in 1946 but it was moved to Mărășești in 1959 in order to leave the space for the Monument of the Heroes of Socialism. In 1991 the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was brought back to the Carol Park on October 25, the Army's official day since 1945, initially established because it was King Michael's birthday while later kept because it largely coincided with the moment when the last locality on the nowadays Romanian territory (Carei) was officially liberated by the Romanian and Soviet forces.<sup>295</sup> The 1991 placement was changed again in 2006 to the

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<sup>295</sup> In the autumn of 2006, the Unknown Soldier was moved at its initial location which is placed next to the Monument to the Heroes of Socialism built in the early 1960s to host the graves of the most

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initial pre-war position which is exactly in front of the Monument of the Heroes of Socialism after several years of discussions whether to built or not the latest and the largest building of the Romanian Orthodox Church (*Catedrala Mântuirii Neamului*) on the respective site.

#### 4.4.2. *The Military Museum during the interwar period:*

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was placed in front of the Military Museum and both of them were inseparable in interpreting the First World War and the sacrifice of the soldiers fighting in the Romanian Army between 1916 and 1919. After the burial of the Unknown Soldier, and in direct connection with the pedagogical role envisaged for it, in December 1923 a museum for military history was finally established in the building of the former Arts Palace that was constructed for the 1906 National Exhibition. A military section of this National Exhibition already has dealt with the military history of the Romanians since the Middle Age and a military section of the National Museum that was under construction on the Kisseleff Avenue was formally established in April 1914. In 1919, the Department of War organized a permanent exhibition with the war material captured during and at the end of the war. The military museum was under the directorship of general Constantin Ștefănescu-Amza in its early days while during most of the interwar period it was led by a council presided by General Radu R. Rosetti, the

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important members of the Romanian Workers' Party (as the Romanian Communist Party was entitled 1948-1965) including the grave of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. To this latter monument few pay any attention, those dominated by nostalgia for communism being much more interested in identifying Nicolae Ceaușescu's grave in the Ghencea cemetery.

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most important Romanian military historian before the Second World War and a member of the Romanian Academy. The museum benefited of support not only from the local and national authorities but also from various banking institutions and private donors.<sup>296</sup>

The museum had two levels and it displayed mostly military artifacts such as swords, pistols, flags, uniforms, guns but also photos, paintings and drawings. It aimed at presenting the military history of the region since the Antiquity. The first level was dedicated to the history up to the First World War, the exhibition being presented clockwise. After entering the building, the first corner on the left was dedicated to the prehistory and the ancient history of the region including information mostly on the Roman conquest of Dacia. The left wall was dedicated to the Middle Age and it included armors belonging to different armies that tried to conquer the region. The second left corner presented the decades around 1800 and it included information on and artifacts belonging to the Romanian regiments of the Austrian Military Border. The third corner was entirely dedicated to the War of Independence of 1877-1878 and it included uniforms, guns and many of Nicolae Grigorescu's sketches, the right wall presented the development of the Romanian army in the decades prior to the First World War while the fourth corner was dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Second Balkan War.

The second floor was entirely dedicated to the First World War considered as the moment that made possible the creation of Greater Romania. The stair hall listed all the

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<sup>296</sup> Radu R. Rosetti, "Muzeul militar național" [The national military museum], *Boabe de grâu*, vol. 1, nr. 5, 1930, pp. 282-290. An inventory of the objects used in the museum in 1934 may be found in ANR-ANIC, Fond Ministerul Artelor, Dos. 84/1934.

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names of the fallen officers while two inscriptions were dedicated to all the Romanians and Allied soldiers who fought or contributed in the war. The one dedicated to the Romanians soldiers was saying: “Eternal recognition to all the Romanians whose wisdom, hard work, bravery and sacrifice contributed to the survival of the national being along the centuries.”<sup>297</sup> The exhibition was also presented clockwise. The first corner was dedicated to the failed offensive of August 1916 in Transylvania and to its subsequent events; it included a painting of Ecaterina Teodoroiu, the volunteer turned honorary lieutenant for contributing to the defense of the Jiu Valley and a symbol after her death. The right wall documented the hardships of the winter of 1916-1917, a second corner was dedicated to the victories of Mărăști and Mărășești of August 1917 and it included a statue of Corporal Constantin Mușat. Preceded by a wall dedicated to historical paintings most of them presenting the figure and the deeds of Michael the Brave, the third corner presented the events of the winter of 1917-1918. The left corner documented the 1918 events that led to the creation of Greater Romania and it included the 1919 campaign in Hungary while the fourth corner presented information on the Allied forces. By the stairs, on the right side, information on the negotiations leading to Romania’s entering the war were displayed at the beginning of the exhibition while on the left side, at the end of the exhibition, the Coronation of 1922 represented the apotheosis of the Romanian participation in the First World War, no attention to the moment of December 1 being visible according to the 1930 description authored by General Radu R. Rosetti.

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<sup>297</sup> “Veșnică pomenire tuturor Românilor prin a căror înțelepciune, muncă, vitejie și jertfă ne-a fost păstrată ființa neamului în cursul veacurilor.”

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Surrounding the building an open exhibition included the metopes of the Adam-Klissi mausoleum (the inspiration for the later Mausoleum of Mărășești) and the cannons used during the war by both the Antente and the Central Powers on the Romanian front. Radu R. Rosetti's article indicates a large number of visitors for the years 1927-1930: over 65.000 in the last eight months of 1927; 93.500 in 1928, 84.500 in 1929; and almost 29.000 visitors in the first five months of 1930, for all of these years the first three months receiving a similar low numbers of visitor.

Besides the National Museum built on Kisseleff Avenue which was intended as an ethnographic exhibition and the Museum of Antiquities hosted in the building of the University of Bucharest, the Military Museum of Carol Park was effectively the largest museum of national history in Bucharest during the interwar period, by history understanding a narrative focused on events and biographies, a content and an approach its visitors were already familiarized through the history and textbooks and most of the books of popular history of that time. Thus attention given to the military museum is justifiable not only on the account it was one of the most important instruments in disseminating an official interpretation of the war but it also represented the largest museum of national history in Romania. It contextualized and in the same time it explained the meaning given to the sacrifice of the fallen soldiers during the First World War and it thus represented one of the most important instruments of war commemoration during the interwar Romania. In Rosetti's words, "the Museum is the icon of our past". However, these words were used not only for concluding his

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presentation but also for asking additional funds for repairing the building which was ultimately severely deteriorated during the earthquake of 1940 when the museum was closed for almost two decades.

In conclusion, the events of the First World War were integrated in the hegemonic narrative of the Romanian national history as the most important set of events that led to the creation of Greater Romania, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier being created to mourn and glorify in the same time those fallen during the war while the Military Museum detailed the events and the context for which the Tomb was only a symbol. Regular visits to the Tomb and to the Museum were organized during the interwar period for pupils and the meaning of both of them cannot be read separately since both of them contributed in a different yet complementary way to the dissemination of the ideas associated with the policy of war commemoration.

#### **4.5. The Commission for Public Monuments during the 1930s:**

This fifth section of the fourth chapter analyzes the activity of the Commission for Public Monument. It should not be confused with the Commission for Historical Monuments established in 1892 and discussed in the second chapter when dealing with the factors and actors that contributed to the spread of public and war monuments at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Within the framework created by the 1920 law of war commemorations a very large number of war monuments were initiated and some of them were created by the end of the 1920s. Their dynamics and major characteristics are

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discussed in the following sixth chapter. Their number increased so much due to vernacular initiative that this Commission for Public Monuments was considered to be necessary in November 1929 in order to (peer-) review the aesthetics of these monuments as well as their emplacement in the local public spaces. Ioan Opreș affirms that the commission was established as early as 1922 by a Ministry of Cults and Arts's decision and its director during the 1920s was Z. Pîclișanu; however, the source of this information is a 1933 file which may suggest that probably due to a low level of activity the commission was officially (re)established in 1929 under the directorship of Ion Minulescu.<sup>298</sup>

The already mentioned decree of March 1930 establishing the attributions of the Commission for Public Monuments had eighteen articles. The decree invested the commission with the power to supervise, from an aesthetical point of view, not only the war monuments but also all forms of public monuments built in Romania at the time, to intervene where it considered necessary and to formulate recommendations related to its object of activity. The local public administration was no longer allowed to approve the construction of new public and war monuments without the Commission's prior approval. The committees of initiative were to send not only descriptions and images of

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<sup>298</sup> Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, "Informații referitoare la activitatea desfășurată de către Comisia Superioară a Monumentelor Publice" [Information concerning the activity of the Commission for Public Monuments], *Revista Arhivelor*, vol. 12, nr. 1, 1969, pp. 129-134 surveys some of the files from the commission's archive concerning a variety of monuments; Ioan Opreș, "Comisia Monumentelor Publice și activitatea ei" [The Commission for Public Monuments and its activity], *Revista Arhivelor*, vol. 50, nr. 3, 1988, pp. 267-276. Both of them are rather selective surveys of projected monuments as they were discussed by the Commission, little information being given on the history of the Commission in itself. Corollary to the lack of attention most of the war monuments benefited during the communist regime in Romania few of them are discussed in these two articles, attention being paid to the monuments created in the honor of major cultural and historical figures.

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the planned monument but also data and plans of the areas where the monument was intended for being placed, the Commission offering alternative solutions sometimes. The authors of the monuments were supposed to be only graduates of the schools of beaux arts and architecture, from Romania or from foreign countries, or artists of an established reputation. There were five members in the Commission, the director of the Department of Arts, two sculptors, one painter and one architect.<sup>299</sup> The first members of this commission were Frederick Stock and Ion Jalea, Ion Minulescu as the director of the Department of Arts for most of the 1930s, Ion Paşa as its secretary for the same period, and later Cornel Medrea. Mihai Onofrei, Jean Al. Steriade, Camil Ressu, Horia Teodoru, Horia Creangă and Grigore Ionescu were also members of this commission at various times.

A new regulation concerning public monuments was adopted in December 1938. The committees were no longer supposed to directly address the Commission but they were to address the Minister of Arts and Culture which was responsible to ask for the Commission's recommendation, a sign of commission's lack of systematic efficiency until then. The chief architect of the technical direction in the Ministry of Arts was included as a rightful member of the Commission. Public contests became compulsory for the monuments ordered by state institutions or funded by the state if the estimated

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<sup>299</sup> Decret pentru atribuțiunile comisiunii monumentelor publice, *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 52, March 5, 1930, p. 1758-1759; Hamangiu, vol. XVIII, pp. 168-170.

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cost was over 500.000 lei and the Commission was entitled to ask for public contests for any other monument if the monument under scrutiny was considered important.<sup>300</sup>

For every plan of a monument the Commission held folders with its debates and final resolutions as well as copies of the plans under discussion. In 1937 a survey of all public monuments existing in the country was ordered and it represents the main source of information for the fifth chapter of this dissertation. The survey was focused mainly on the countryside, the public monuments existing in the major cities not being reported for all these cities most probably because they were already known to the artistic establishment.

Sometimes the authority of the Commission was not respected and this is probably one factor in the 1937 decision of ordering county surveys of the existing public monuments thus verifying whether the Commission's recent decisions were respected. For example, the community of Ungra of the Târnava Mare Country erected a war monument on December 1936, sculpted by Tampa Iosif of Târgu-Mureș, and it was included in the list sent by the county's prefecture to the Department of Art in January 1937. The Department asked the prefecture for a local investigation signaling that the project for the Ungra village was rejected by the Commission for Public Monuments („nu îndeplinește condițiile de frumusețe, de unitate și de scop care trebuiesc unui asemenea

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<sup>300</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* nr. 293, December 16, 1938, pp. 5974-5976.

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scop” (sic!). “The decree of 1930 was made in order to stop the creation of monuments lacking respect for aesthetic rules that spread all over the country.”<sup>301</sup>

An address of February 1937 reminded the prefects the decree of March 1930 for the organization and the jurisdiction of the Commission. However, it seems it was not respected much since it had to be repeated the following year. An address issued on August 26, 1938 by the Department of Arts reminded the prefects of the counties that sometimes war monuments were built before their designs were approved by the Commission for Public Monuments which indicates that most of the times they were constructed after obtaining the official approval. It reminds the prefects that the aim of the Commission was to polish the projects and have them improved before being approved.<sup>302</sup> They were to send forward reminders to all the local and public authorities of their county about the jurisdiction of the Commission:

For any kind of public monument, *troiță*, monumental cross, heroes’ monument etc. procedures were to be followed according to the quoted decree [MO 52, March 5, 1930] and to send us the projects before starting the work on the war monuments [...] and of course such works should not be granted to simple stone carvers or cemetery carvers but only to degreed artists such as sculptors and architects who solely have the competency to create monuments of artistic value.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, f. 34 verso: “Regulamentul a fost întocmit pentru a se pune o stavilă monumentelor lipsite de frumusețe ce năpădesc țara.”

<sup>302</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 127/1938, f. 9: “[...] Ori, rostul Ministerului Artelor nu este de a lua cunoștință în mod statistic de monumentele ce se ridică, ci de a controla în prealabil valoarea artistică a proiectelor acestor monumente și a aproba executarea numai când proiectele respective întrunesc condițiile estetice trebuitoare; iar în caz contrariu, de a le respinge ori de a le aduce modificări și îmbunătățiri [...]”.

<sup>303</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 127/1938, f. 9: “pentru ori ce fel de monument public, troiță, cruce monumentală, monument de Eroi etc. să se urmeze potrivit regulamentului citat și să ni se trimită proiectele înainte de a se începe lucrările [...] și bine înțeles, asemenea lucrări nu trebuie încredințate unor simpli pietrari sau cioplitori de cimitire, ci numai artiștilor sculptori sau arhitecți diplomați, cari singuri au competența să realizeze monumente de valoare artistică”.

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It is hard to say whether the aim of the stipulated aesthetic criteria was to serve rejecting those projects belonging to the ethnic and religious authorities but they probably became sometimes, maybe in a majority of times, an instrument at hand for the Romanian authorities. The projected monuments were asked to respect coherency in the set of symbols associated with the theme of the monument as well as a harmonious aspect not only in its iconography but also in relation with the context the respective public or war monument was to be placed (*condiții de frumusețe, de unitate și de scop*). Rejections considered also plans originating from areas that it is safe to assume they were dominated by the Romanian speaking population and by the adherents to the Orthodox confession. Possibly the rejection on esthetical criteria of plans for war monuments designed by local artists or stone carvers were considered to be a form of discrimination by some of local communities dominated by the ethnic and religious minorities. However there is no proof to the assertion that some public monuments were openly rejected solely because they were constructed by ethnic or religious minority groups.

A possible reason for the cases where the iconography of the planned monument and the aesthetic criteria postulated by the Commission for Public Monuments conflicted is that the iconography included military symbols belonging to the armies of Central Powers. As it is going to be discussed in the following chapter most of the military symbols inscribed in the iconography of the war monuments belonged to a common European background. However, while not necessarily explicitly aiming to be conflictual, some symbols may have been directly linked to different military traditions which fought

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each other during the war and their own celebration was indirectly a contestation of the others' merit. Since these traditions were designed before 1920 they may also have been perceived by the Romanian authorities as directly contesting the 1920s realities or at least being disloyal in a passive way even if no intention of such king existed.

A report of July 1938 commented on the realization of the war monument of Săcel, Sibiu County, constructed in 1937 „în plină impetuozitate politicianistă” [during a period of political enthusiasm] at the initiative of the local school director, the expenses of 10.000 lei being covered through public subscription. However, the commission was not consulted and the sculptor was a local “meșter cioplitor”. The general inspector signing this report sent to the minister argued that the artistic value was low, the monument being similar to the “ordinary funerary” monuments, having also two collections of photos on it. Invoking the dissatisfaction of those who subscribed, the inspector ordered the monument being sold to its author and the creation of a new war monument which would not resemble funerary art so it could be displayed on a public square.<sup>304</sup>

Overall, the Commission for Public Monuments became one of the most important instruments of supervising the policy of war commemoration during the 1930s and to some extent during the 1940s. It is hard to say to what extent it served as an instrument of excluding the projects promoted by the local communities usually known as ethnic and religious minorities. It certainly had to fight a social and cultural context

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<sup>304</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 125/1938, ff. 10-11.

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where procedures were not widely known and respected and the concept of public monument had a rather different meaning, closer the idea of a funerary monument, irrespective of the ethnic and religious background.

#### 4.6. The Arch of Triumph of Bucharest:

The final section of this chapter is dedicated to the creation of the second important war monument in Bucharest, the Arch of Triumph, for a better illustration of the application and the meaning given to the policy of war commemorations during the 1930s.<sup>305</sup>

While the 1920s were dominated by vernacular initiative on the one hand and the articulation of a clearer vision on the other hand, during the 1930s the memory of the war became more official as a part of Carol II's strategy of projecting himself as the savior of the nation and the cultural unifier of the morally divided country. Larger categories of people affected by the war received war pensions and land as it was mentioned in the previous chapter. The style of the uniforms for the officer body resembling the French army suffered a dramatic change for the first time in decades and in the same time Carol II pursued a policy of gaining the support of the army. The projection of a unitary and prosperous Romania different from the Old Kingdom is visible in the multivolume Romanian Encyclopedia (*Enciclopedia României*) edited by Dimitrie Gusti, a perspective

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<sup>305</sup> Constantin Kirițescu, *Arcul de Triumf și epopeea română. 1916-1918-1922-1936* [The Arc of Triumph and the Romanian epos, 1916-1918-1922-1936] (Bucharest: Editura Casei Școalelor, 1936); Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, "Arcul de Triumf – contribuții documentare" [The Arch of Triumph – a documented contribution], *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria artă plastică*, vol. 16, nr. 1, 1969, pp. 338-340; Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu. *Arcul de Triumf* [The Arch of Triumph] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1995).

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that shaped the interpretation of many researchers of the interwar period ever since who tend to ignore the persistence of the cultural-political heritage of the Old Kingdom and of the cultural-political heritage of Transylvania within Greater Romania. During the 1930s the memory of the First World War in the public discourse became more official and restraint, the sufferings provoked by the war were rather silenced while most of the major war monuments received official support for being finished. Illustrative for this transformation is George Topârceanu's story of captivity in Bulgaria (*Pirin Planina. Episoduri tragice și comice din captivitate*, 1936) where the author feels the need to justify himself why he can't keep the account funny in all moments. The Commission for Public Monuments already started to function and to amend the proposed projects of war monuments.

Arch of triumphs were designed in 1878 for the Romanian army returning from Bulgaria as well as in 1918 when the royal family returned to Bucharest. A more permanent Arch of Triumph was designed by architect Petre Antonescu and it was built in 1922 with the occasion of the coronation of King Ferdinand at Alba Iulia. 5.5 meters in height, it presented four pairs of soldiers illustrating the already discussed narrative of national history that was officially disseminated in the decades before the First World War and served as a model of inspiration and source of mobilization during the war. Two of the eight statues were supposed to represent the Roman and the Dacian soldiers and they were designed by Karl Storck and Oscar Spaethe. A second pair of statues was supposed to represent a soldier of Mircea the Elder and an archer of Stephen the Great

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and the two statues were designed by Cornel Medrea and Dumitru Paciurea respectively. Other two statues were supposed to represent the soldiers of Michael the Brave and of Tudor Vladimirescu and they were created by Alexandru Severin and Ion Jalea. Finally, a pair of statues was supposed to illustrate the Romanian soldiers who took part in the wars of 1877-1878 and 1916-1919. This last pair of statues was designed by Ioan Iordănescu and Dumitru Mățăoanu. Most of these sculptors were later involved in creating a great number of war monuments depicting soldiers. Above these four groups of soldiers inscriptions written by Vasile Pârvan, Nicolae Iorga and Dimitrie Onciul connected heroism to the national history. Similar to the Arch of Triumph in Paris, inside the Arch's arcade the most important battles fought by these soldiers ever since the Middle Age were listed in the following order: Mărășești, Plevna, Gurăslău, Șelimbăr, Călugăreni, Rovine, Baia, Valea Albă, Cosmin, Mărăști. Thus Michael the Brave's battles of Călugăreni, Șelimbăr and Gurăslău and Stephen the Great's battles of Baia, Valea Albă and Codrii Cosminului were placed on the top of the arcade. All these were victories over the Kingdoms of Hungary and Poland as well as over the Ottomans. The battles of the Great War were placed closest to the viewer's eye.

The Arch of Triumph inaugurated in 1922 gradually decayed and its remaking from durable materials was postponed due to the lack of financial resources while being from time to time a matter of public debate.

Only after 1930 the government approved the necessary funds for architect Petre Antonescu and the monument was inaugurated on December 1, 1936, eighteen years after King Ferdinand's and Queen Maria's reentering Bucharest.

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Image 4.13. The initial Arch of Triumph, architect Petre Antonescu, photo, 1920s



Source: Facebook page, *Istorie românească în fotografii*, April 2012.

Image 4.14. The initial Arch of Triumph, postcard, 1920s.



Source: <http://www.imagoromaniae.ro/imagini/bucureti-arcul-de-triumf-en-2.html>; February 2013.

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Image 4.15: Postcard promoting the reconstruction of the Arch of Triumph, 1930s.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Ilustrate, nr. 6547.

Image 4.15 represents a postcard which probably depicts the Arch's form as it was redesigned by Antonescu, closer in form to the Constantine's arch, while image 4.16 presents the final form of the Arch as it was constructed and it looks today. Thirty meters in height and with the arcade having seventeen meters in height and ten meters in width, the Arch was made out of marble, granite and chalk. The monument's inscriptions focus on King Ferdinand and Queen Maria, both receiving two meters effigies, as creators of Greater Romania with the support of the entire nation. Thus the monument's iconography indirectly suggested the rally of the entire nation around Carol II. Two large inscriptions were written by Nicolae Iorga, one facing the city outskirts being dedicated to King Ferdinand's entering Bucharest on October 16, 1922, the second day after the coronation at Alba-Iulia while the second facing the downtown. In the same order mentioned above they were saying:

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Freer of the nation and creator of national unity, through the virtue of his soldiers, worthy descendents of the heroes of Christianity, Ferdinand I, ruler and king of the Romanians, made his entrance at October 16, 1922, in Bucharest the city of throne after the coronation of Alba Iulia.

After centuries of religiously endured sufferings and heavy battles given for preserving the national being, after a defense of the human civilization full of sacrifices, justice was finally accomplished for the Romanian people through the sword of King Ferdinand with the help of the entire nation and the moral support of Queen Maria.<sup>306</sup>

Image 4.16. The second and final form of the Arch of Triumph, architect Petre Antonescu, 1930s.



Source: <http://www.imagoromania.ro/imagini/bucureti-arcul-de-triumf.html>; February 2013.

Laterally, two other inscriptions were glorifying those who “through the light of their mind and the power of the soul have prepared the national unity” and those who

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<sup>306</sup> Kirişescu, *Arcul de Triumf...*, p. 24: “Liberator de neam și întregitor de hotare, prin virtutea ostaşilor săi, vrednici urmaşi eroilor creştinătăţii, Ferdinand I, domn și rege al Românilor, și-a făcut intrarea la 16 octombrie 1922 în cetatea sa de scaun a Bucureştilor, după încoronarea de la Alba Iulia”; “După secole de suferinţe creştineşti îndurate și lupte grele pentru păstrarea fiinţei naţionale, după apărarea plină de sacrificii a civilizaţiei umane, se îndeplini dreptatea și pentru poporul român prin sabia Regelui Ferdinand cu ajutorul întregii naţiuni și gândul Reginei Maria.”

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“through their braveness and sacrifice realized the national unity.”<sup>307</sup> Above them, two inscriptions were placing Carol II’s reign in immediate sequence to Ferdinand’s reign and thus erasing the first reign of King Michael (1927-1930): “MCMXXXVI Regnante Carolo Secundo” and “Anno nono regni ejus” (the ninth year of our reign). Below, King Ferdinand’s proclamations to the country at the moment of declaring war to Austria-Hungary in August 1916 (see chapter two) and at the coronation of October 15, 1922 were engraved. These two dates were inscribed on the façade facing the city while other four dates were engraved on the façade facing the outskirts: August 15, 1916 (the first entering in Transylvania); November 10, 1918 (the second entering in Transylvania); January 8, 1918 (the entering in Bessarabia); and October 24, 1918 (the entering in Bukowina). The arcade carried inside only names of battles fought by the Romanian army in the First World War until 1919: Cerna, Jiu-Olt, Dragoslavele, Neajlov, Oituz, Mărăști, Mărășești, Răzoare, Vrancea, Muncelul, Coșna, Budapesta.

At the inauguration, Carol II gave a long speech praising the spirit of sacrifice of those fallen in the First World War and underlining the pragmatic character of the monument:

The one passing by this Arch of Triumph should think that if it represents the commemoration of the Romanian glory it is built on the bones of those who believed and sacrificed themselves; and if these stones would have a voice, they would shout: ‘You passerby, think about the sacrifice of the fallen! What do you do for strengthening and consolidating your Fatherland?’ [...] O! Precious stones, memorials of moments of

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<sup>307</sup> “Glorie celor ce prin lumina minței și puterea sufletului au pregătit unirea națională”; “Glorie celor ce prin vitejia și prin jertfa lor de sânge au înfăptuit unitatea națională.”

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bravery, memorials of the nation's belief and hope, watch for ever and tell everyone that only through faith and sacrifice for the common good things can be built on this earth.<sup>308</sup>

Image 4.17: Carol II reviewing troops at the inauguration of the Arch of Triumph, Bucharest, December 1936.



Source: ANR-DANIC, fond Fototeca, II, photo nr. 322/1.

This quote illustrates best the performative aspect added to the process of war commemorations and the central role given to war monuments as conceived by Reinhart Koselleck. The Arch was built not only to commemorate those fallen in the First World War, those who contributed to the cultural mobilization for war in the previous periods and to the figures of King Ferdinand and Queen Mary as symbols of Greater Romania but it also postulates

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<sup>308</sup> Kirișescu, *Arcul de Triumf...*, p. 32: “Acela ce va trece pe lângă acest Arc de Triumf să se gândească că, dacă reprezintă comemorarea gloriei românești, el are la temelie oasele aceluia care au crezut și s-au jertfit și că, dacă aceste pietre ar avea glas, ar striga: ‘Trecătorule, gândește-te la jertfa celor căzuți! Ce faci tu pentru întărirea și consolidarea Patriei tale?’ [...] O! Pietre scumpe, amintitoare de ceasuri de vitejie, amintire a crezului și a speranței neamului, stați vecinic de veghe și spuneți tuturor că numai cu credință și jertfe, pentru interesul obștesc, se poate înfăptui ceva pe acest pământ.”

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their behavior of self sacrifice and faith in their leaders as a model for the contemporary and subsequent generations.

Image 4.18. Carol II and Queen Maria at the inauguration of the Arch of Triumph, Bucharest. December 1936.



Source: ANR-DANIC, fond Fototeca, II, photo nr. 322/3.

In this discourse, the First World War was presented as the last major chapter of a multi-secular national history of continuous struggle for political unity to be followed by renewed efforts for the cultural unification of the country. This vision is also visible in the Romanian Atheneum's impressive historical painting authored by Costin Petrescu between 1933 and 1938 (75x3m), the same painter who decorated the Orthodox Cathedral of Alba Iulia (*Catedrala Reîntregirii Neamului*). This association of the policy of commemorating the memory of the First World War during the 1930s to the cult of the

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personality of Carol II may explain its decay during the 1940s besides the lack of resources and the changes that affected the political regime.

The history of creating the Arch of Triumph in Bucharest is illustrative for the dynamics of the policy of war commemorations during the interwar period. A provisional arch of triumph was created at a time when the needs of celebrating the victory in the war, the creation of Greater Romania and the coronation of King Ferdinand were immediate. At that time the Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War was created and started to function, the 1920 law of war commemorations stipulated the construction of war monuments, a Heroes' Day was recently established and the Unknown Soldier was going to be buried in his Tomb. Later, other urgencies dominated the public sphere at a time when the administrative unification and the agrarian reforms required attention. The economic crisis of the late 1920s brought a moral crisis which allowed Carol II to return to Romania as a factor of stability and unity. Shortly afterwards, most of the important commemorative projects received a greater support which allowed them to be finished by the end of the 1930s. In this context, older initiatives to reconstruct the Arch of Triumph turned successful. The set of cultural references present on the arch and in the discourses associated with its inauguration illustrate the policy of war commemorations promoted during the 1930s when the aim of further cultural mobilization and education of the younger generation became the most important aspect of the process of war commemoration.

#### 4.7. **Conclusions:**

This fourth chapter aimed at surveying the most important elements of the policy of war commemorations during the interwar Romania. War commemoration was a complex process which flourished during the interwar period with a four folded set of aims. As they were surveyed in the introduction, these aims were: a) proper mourning of the dead which represented a rather religious process, many aspects of it being densely analyzed by Maria Bucur; b) a symbolic compensation to all those who survived, an aspect linked to a great extent with the first aspect; c) a celebration of victory after a strenuous effort discussed to a some extent in the previous chapter; and d) an educational instrument for further political and cultural mobilization of the following generations and an instrument for the dissemination of the values of the nation-state, the cult of heroes to be taken as a model being the most obvious element. Certainly to some people the process of war commemorations represented only one of these aspects while for some others it represented if not all of them at least most of them. Subsequently, in order to support this analytical approach with proper arguments based on facts, this Chapter Four was organized in six sections dealing rather chronologically with the most important elements of this policy.

The massive demographic losses, the high number of people physically affected by the war as well as the presence of the veterans contributed to a process of mourning that was converted through the law of September 1920 for “honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” into a policy of war commemorations which was further codified by the

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laws of June 1927 and of August 1940. A first section of the chapter discussed the articulation of this policy of war commemorations through the adopted and sometimes debated legislation. When approaching this body of legislation the focus was on interpreting it rather as a set of debated and adopted administrative solutions to a series of existing problems rather than a coherent and prescriptive set of political and cultural ideas while nonetheless both of these approaches do not exclude each other but they are rather the two sides of the same coin.

The high number of dead soldiers during the First World War led during the war to private initiatives of priests, teachers, local notabilities and landowners at creating war graves. However, sometimes the organization of war cemeteries on the places where battles took place was resisted by the owners who wanted to work their land. Consequently, in March 1919 a decree of General Arthur Văitoianu ordered the systematic expropriation of the land about to be transformed into war cemeteries. A later decree of 1920 disposed that four square meters was going to be researched for each war grave while additional land was going to be used for the surroundings, the roads of access and the administrative utilities. A supervising body in charge of this process of identification and expropriation of the relevant portions of land as well as organization and administration of the newly created war cemeteries was created in September 1919 under the patronage of Queen Maria. Entitled The Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război'*) in 1919, a title changed into The Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea 'Cultul eroilor'*) in 1927

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and into The National Foundation 'Regina Maria' for the Cult of Heroes (*Asezământul național Regina Maria pentru cultul eroilor*) in 1940, the society was organized at several levels, national, regional, county and local, where the members of the society representing most of those who had a relative dead during the war elected their committees for periods of three years. Presided by the Metropolitane-Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the society was in charge of organizing every year the festivities dedicated to the Heroes' Day established for the Ascension Day until 1927 when the proposed program was to be approved by a number of relevant members of the Romanian government, it edited a periodical where models of war monuments and war literature were published and it contributed in its early years to the construction of several war monuments in the country. Its activity was partially addressed in the second section of this chapter.

The law of 1920 established the main elements of the interwar policy of war commemoration. Without excluding the Romanians of Transylvania who joined the Romanian army in 1918 this policy included the construction of war monuments all over the country and the celebration of the Heroes' Day on the Ascension Day. The law of 1927 explicitly rejected further discrimination on religious or ethnic criteria when dealing with the war cemeteries as it was already established by the Treaty of Trianon while the state organized Heroes' Day was supposed to be celebrated all over the country by all the public and private institutions. In 1923 the most important site of commemoration was created in Bucharest, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in May and the Military museum

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in December. The two were inseparable in explaining the meaning given to the sacrifice of all who died during the First World War and they illustrate the policy of constructing war monuments nearby public or religious institutions.

Due to the growing number of war monuments constructed during the 1920s mostly by the local communities a Commission for Public Monuments was established in 1929. It became one of the most important instruments of supervising the policy of war commemoration during the 1930s and to some extent during the 1940s. It is hard to say to what extent it served as an instrument of excluding the projects promoted by the local communities usually known as ethnic and religious minorities. It certainly had to deal with a social and cultural context where procedures were not widely known and respected and the concept of the public monument had a rather different meaning, closer the idea of a funerary monument. This indicates that the process of commemorating the events and those fallen during the First World War was not a process imposed from above but it rather fulfilled expectations at the local levels. The policy of war commemoration rather followed and framed the general trend of commemorative practices than it actually set it.

The 1920s were dominated mostly by vernacular initiative while during the 1930s the memory of the war became more official as a part of Carol II's strategy of projecting himself as the savior of the nation and the cultural unifier of the morally divided country. This is visible in the fate of the Bucharest's Arch of Triumph established in 1922 for welcoming King Ferdinand and Queen Maria following their coronation at Alba Iulia and remade during the mid 1930s. The inauguration of the Arch of Triumph in December

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1936 is illustrative for the perspective on the meaning of the First World War in creating Greater Romania. The commemoration of the fallen soldiers in the Great War was a continuation of the commemoration of the soldiers fallen in 1877-1878, Greater Romania being seen by its Romanian officials as a continuation of the Old Kingdom, enlarged by adding Transylvania, Banat, Bukovina and Bessarabia as a result of a *Risorgimento* style process. This is why the nationalist culture of the Old Kingdom continued to dominate the paradigm of Greater Romania, Orthodoxy being officially linked to the Romanian identity and taught so in schools and in the army.

While in Western Europe the commemoration of the First World War during the twentieth century was a rather continuous process, for different reasons, in the case of Romania the process was discontinued during the 1950s when the initial meaning given to the process was considered an instrument of the previous political regime. During the late 1950s a new process of war commemoration was initiated, the war monuments being used for the civic education promoted by the Communist regime. The neglected Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was reconditioned and moved in front of the Mausoleum of Mărășești in 1957 while numerous other war monuments were constructed and together with many of the old ones they were used for public ceremonies. Still, the intentional character of these war monuments was neglected until the 1990s when the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was moved back to the Carol Park in Bucharest and later a Society for the Cult of the Heroes was reestablished.

*Chapter Five*

**Sites of memory and teaching: the construction of war monuments as  
an intersection of national policy and individual participation**

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Bucharest's Carol Park represented the center of an archipelago of war monuments that flourished during the interwar Romania. These war monuments are the most visible and palpable indicator of the impact of the policy of war commemoration during the same period, a policy that was discussed in the previous chapter. The vast majority of the Romanian war monuments are to be found in the urban areas of the Old Kingdom, in the areas where battles were carried during the First World War which is nearby the Carpathians and on the valleys of Jiu, Prahova and Siret rivers as well as scattered in numerous localities of the countryside. As it was discussed in the Chapter Two to some extent, the construction of war monuments during the interwar period followed a tradition established in the decades prior to the First World War in the

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context of commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 (Romania's War of Independence) and in the Second Balkan War of 1913. The laws of war commemorations of 1920 and 1927 stimulated the construction of this type of public monuments to such an extent that a Commission for Public Monuments aimed at peer-reviewing the iconography and the emplacement of these monuments was considered necessary at the end of the 1920s and it functioned throughout the 1930s and the 1940s.

As already mentioned in the introduction, this chapter does not address the complex process of delimitating the war graves and of constructing war cemeteries. The war cemeteries represented one of the most important forms of mourning and commemorating those fallen, during the interwar period, no matter of the ethnic and religious boundaries. It also represented one of the most important areas of activity for the Society for the Cult of the Heroes as it was shown in the previous chapter. This chapter distinguishes between the formation and the expansion of war graves as mainly a form of mourning and the construction of war monuments as a more complex form of commemoration. The first was practiced by all communities and it sometimes represented the area where the ethnic and religious minorities had no limit in their process of commemoration. The second represented a cultural and political articulation in the public sphere, and thus under the scrutiny of the Romanian authorities, even if a great part of the war monuments were placed within or nearby churches, cemeteries and war cemeteries.

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This Fifth Chapter focuses on the dynamics of constructing war monuments during the interwar period. There are several questions that guided my approach in this chapter: what was their number by region and by county? Who initiated them, who supported them financially and logistically, who sanctioned and used them and for what purposes? What were their costs? Who were included and who were excluded in the iconography of these monuments? What were the artistic, the cultural and the political languages that framed the iconography of these war monuments and what it can tell about the regional and local cultural and political contexts? What were the most important such war monuments besides the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Arch of Triumph in Bucharest discussed in the previous chapter? What was the regional dynamics of these war monuments? What was the situation of the war monuments built by the ethnic and religious minorities for their fallen, members of the local communities? What was the fate of all these war monuments since the 1940s? And, probably the most important question in the context of this dissertation, to what extent were these war monuments the result of the policy of war commemorations initiated and regulated by the authorities and to what extent were these war monuments the result of the vernacular initiative?

A first and more consistent part of the chapter reviews the general characteristics of these war monuments focusing on their numerical and regional distribution, their iconography, costs and the activity of several of the sculptors who created most of them. Three sections of the chapter discuss these war monuments from a regional perspective. The second section surveys the war monuments built in Bucharest as the most illustrious

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case study of their diversity of cultural references as well as their integration in the urban tissue. The third section discusses the construction of war monuments in the regions of Muntenia, Dobrogea and Moldavia and the fourth section of this chapter analyses their construction in the newly added territories of Transylvania, Banat, Bukowina and Bessarabia. A final section presents the situation of these war monuments since the 1940s, their short fall into oblivion and their partial recuperation during the last decades of the Communist regime.

#### **5.1. The dynamics and the characteristics of war monuments in interwar Romania:**

The construction of war monuments during the interwar period represents the most visible and palpable indicator of the impact of the policy of war commemorations during the same period. This first section analyses their dynamics and their most important characteristics. They are approached as the result of intersecting the regulation prescribed in the body of legislation discussed in the previous chapter and the vernacular initiative belonging to the individuals and the social groups who took part in the First World War.

Before proceeding to this analysis, a few words are necessary about the context of constructing public monuments in general during the interwar Romania. The rise of the public monument during the prewar period was discussed in Chapter Two. The dynamics of this process continued after the war and represented of course the context of constructing war monuments during the interwar period. During the 1920s and the 1930s the number of public monuments dedicated to the three types or groups of individual

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heroes discussed in the introduction as well as in the second chapter was far lower when compared to the number of war monuments. This may be considered a telling indicator of the predominantly vernacular character of the war monuments.

Public monuments dedicated to former politicians were built mostly when their role in the Romanian national history was no longer disputed or considered marginal or regional. For example, such monuments were built in Bucharest for Tudor Vladimirescu (Theodor Burcă, 1934), Mihail Kogălniceanu (Oscar Han, 1936) and Ionel Brătianu (Ivan Mestrovic, 1938). Horea, Cloșca and Crișan, the leaders of the 1784 revolt in Transylvania, received a monument at Alba-Iulia (Josif Fekete, 1937). Avram Iancu was offered an equestrian statue in Târgu-Mureș (Ion Dimitriu-Bârlad, 1927/1930) to be moved to Campeni, Alba County, in 1940 and a bust at his native area of Țebea, Baia de Criș (1935). In the same time the number of public monuments dedicated to cultural figures increased. This group includes the statue of former Liberal minister of public instruction Spiru Haret in Bucharest (Ion Jalea, 1935). Only the monuments dedicated to medieval rulers were a few. For example, Stephen the Great's statue in Chișinău was inaugurated in 1928 to be evacuated in 1940 and restored for a short while during the following years.<sup>309</sup> A group of statues were dedicated to former rulers of the Danubian Principalities in Iași (1934). Statues to the kings Carol I and Ferdinand I were built in Bucharest in the late 1930s to be demolished when the Communist regime was installed

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<sup>309</sup> Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu. "Contribuții documentare referitoare la monumentele de for public ridicate pe teritoriul dintre Prut și Nistru în perioada anilor 1918-1940" [Documentary contributions on the Romanian public monuments built between the rivers Prut and Dniester during the years 1918-1940], *Revista Arhivelor*, vol 55, nr. 1, 1993, pp. 27-30.

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in Romania in the late 1940s. The same fate had the numerous statues of king Ferdinand built in mostly urban areas during the interwar period, many times as a symbol of the creation of Greater Romania. The many statues of Carol II built during the late 1930s were probably removed during the autumn of 1940.

Image 5.1: The statue of King Ferdinand, Orăștie, Hunedoara County, 1928, author Ionescu-Varo, 8m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 2 and 10. Built at the initiative of a committee presided by a colonel Ariton Aritonovici, it cost 800.000 lei.

The war monuments built during the interwar period in Romania were most of the times erected in the home towns and home villages of the soldiers for the identified soldiers as it were the case of the monuments from the War of Independence. War monuments and especially mausoleums and ossuaries were built on the former battlefields for the soldiers who could not be individually identified. This is why the

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interwar monuments dedicated to the Great War are concentrated mostly on the counties nearby the Carpathians, on the villages from the valleys of Jiu, Olt and Prahova rivers and around the Carpathian passes from the region of Moldavia. In addition to them, *troitas* and memorial plaques were placed in the halls of major public buildings such as town halls and educational institutions of all levels.

Another observation is that the war monument was the almost only form of public monument in the smaller cities and especially in the countryside. Since no other local individual proved significant in some way to those local communities and the First World War was definitely a major event for the lives of the respective local communities, the war monument was most of the times the first such public monument. For most of these communities it has remained so ever since.

The following three subsections deals with three important aspects of their construction as they could be observed through the study of the available primary sources: the number of war monuments and their regional dynamics; the role of vernacular initiative in initiating the monuments, in funding them and in selecting their authors; the iconography of the war monuments under study as an indicator of the broader cultural and political agenda these war monuments were circumscribed as a part of the process of war commemorations in interwar Romania. Partial conclusions are to be found at the end of each of these subsections as well as at the end of each section of this dissertation.

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5.1.1. *The number of war monuments and their regional dynamics:*

The number of the war monuments built before the Second World War is rather unknown. Their total number could only be estimated based on two major sources of information already mentioned in the second chapter, the dictionary compiled by Florin Tucă and the 1937 survey ordered by the Commission for Public Monuments. An initial research based on the dictionary of Florin Tucă resulted in the identification of more than 200 monuments dedicated to the memory of those fallen in the First World War. However traveling in the countryside one could observe a much higher number of monuments, almost every village having placed nearby its church, cemetery, school or town hall a monument of a various shape. This is why the second source represented by the survey of 1937 is so relevant and a correlation of both of them helps in estimating the total number and especially the dynamics of war monuments erected during the interwar period in Romania.

The current Society for the Cult of Heroes reports around 6.000 items included in their list of sites that memorializes the Romanian participation in the wars of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. However, this index includes not only the war monuments already discussed in the third chapter and under discussion in this chapter. It also includes the war cemeteries created since the First World War, individual war graves scattered around the country as well as the war memorials dedicated to those who died in the Second World War. Memorials include not only war monuments but also inscriptions and other signs of remembrance.

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The statistic ordered in 1937 by the Commission of Public Monuments indicates that more than 2000 war monuments were constructed during the interwar Romania especially in the rural areas.<sup>310</sup> The statistic was ordered mainly due to the vernacular character of the process of constructing such war monuments during the interwar period, a process which was thus rather escaping the control of the central authorities. The survey is not complete and systematic and a reserve on its accuracy should be preserved at all times. Probably because most of the war monuments already built in the downtowns of the major Romania's cities were rather known, these statistics sent by the local administration to the above mentioned Commission dealt with the war monuments built in the rural areas as well as in the smaller urban localities.

The information officially requested by the Commission of Public Monuments concerned all public monuments and it did not refer directly to war monuments. The information was sent by the county prefectures for the rural localities and by the mayoralities for the few urban localities that answered the call for information and contributed to the survey. The information was organized under the form of tables which included the name of the locality, the name of the monument and its author, the size and the costs if they were known, the sponsor and eventually some additional comments. To them numerous photos or postcards issued by the initiative committees were annexed. While this structure of information for the reported monuments is pretty clear what was considered relevant for being taken into consideration had some variations, some reports

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<sup>310</sup> ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 68-70/1937. Information on Mehedinți County was taken from ANR-ANIC, Fondul Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936.

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including historical monuments and churches as well. Austrian and Hungarian monuments in northern Transylvania and Tsarist monuments in Bessarabia were reported without discrimination even if not systematic. The only systematic information concerns only with war monuments. Still, it does not look like an information taken from the mayoralty's or the prefecture's archive but more like oral history and information that was taken from the monuments, either keeping records seemingly being a selective custom for these public institutions during the interwar Romania or the construction and the inauguration of war and public monuments being considered of a minor importance in comparison with the daily administrative affairs.

The information on the public and war monuments of some of the important cities including Bucharest are missing which confirms one of the conclusions of this texts that interwar war monuments were in their heaviest part the result of vernacular initiative. Stimulated by the framework created by the state legislation, they were a popular form of commemorating those fallen in the First World War. Further, these statistics are partial also in the sense that they refer to fifty-two counties only out of the seventy-one counties Romania had in the interwar period, data missing for nineteen counties. In the case of the regions of Muntenia and Dobrogea, data refer only to the counties of Mehedinți, Gorj, Romanați, Olt, Argeș, Muscel, Dâmbovița, Vlașca, Ilfov, Prahova, Buzău, Râmnicu-Sărat, Brăila, Ialomița, Constanța and Durostor, missing counties being those of Tulcea, Caliacra, Teleorman, Vâlcea and Dolj. In the case of the regions of Moldavia, Bukowina and Bessarabia, data were collected for the counties of Bacău, Vaslui, Iași, Roman, Baia,

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Botoșani, Câmpulung, Rădăuți, Cernăuți, Hotin, Bălți, Soroca, Lăpușna, Tighina, Cahul, Cetatea Albă and Ismail, missing counties being those of Putna, Tecuci, Covurlui, Tutova, Fălciu, Neamț, Dorohoi, Suceava, Storojneț and Orhei. In the case of the regions of Transylvania and Banat the counties, data were collected for the counties of Someș, Năsăud, Bihor, Arad, Cluj, Turda, Alba, Hunedoara, Ciuc, Odorhei, Trei Scaune, Târnava Mare, Târnava Mică, Sibiu, Fărăraș, Brașov, Timiș-Torontal, Caraș and Severin, missing counties being those of Satu Mare, Maramureș, Sălaj and Mureș.

An analysis of these unsorted statistics indicates a number of 789 public monuments only in the rural regions of Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea, a total of 263 public monuments in the regions of Moldavia, Bukowina and Bessarabia and 636 public monuments that were reported as existing at the time in the regions of Transylvania and Banat. Among them there were 697 war monuments in the regions of Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea, 198 war monuments in the regions of Moldavia, Bukowina and Bessarabia and 478 war monuments existing in the regions of Transylvania and Banat. This leads to a partial total of 1373 war monuments reported in 1937 as existing in the rural areas of the fifty-two counties that reported data on the existing war monuments. Further, this indicates that at least 2.000 war monuments were built to commemorate fallen soldiers before the Second World War.

In case of the regions of Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea, out of the 735 public monuments listed in this survey and 54 others included in a previous 1936 survey listing monuments of Mehedinți county, totaling 789 monuments, 38 monuments were dedicated

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to the war of 1877-1878, three monuments were dedicated to the campaign of 1913, three monuments to Carol I and 48 were public monuments with a different dedication, most of them busts of different local personalities and several historical monuments. Therefore, 697 were dedicated to those fallen in the First World War. Comparatively, for the same regions, the dictionary compiled by Florin Tucă identified about one hundred similar monuments including those from all urban areas left out in their greatest part by this survey of 1937, almost six hundred war monuments being therefore left aside.

For an illustration of the density of war monuments in the countryside in most of the regions of Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea here is a list of their number by county: Mehedinți (50), Gorj (43), Romanați (44), Olt (41), Argeș (68), Muscel (55), Dâmbovița (66), Vlașca (50), Ilfov (67), Prahova (70), Buzău (48), Râmnicu-Sărat (10), Brăila (11), Ialomița (38), Constanța (26) and Durostor (10). This density suggests that in almost every locality a war monument was built.

With the mention that the war monuments were not exclusively dedicated to the Romanians, the number of war monuments in the regions of Moldavia, Bukowina and Bessarabia was distributed as following: Bacău (22), Vaslui (9), Iași (22), Roman (45), Baia (19), Botoșani (12), Câmpulung (3), Rădăuți (8), Cernăuți (10), Hotin (2), Bălți (6), Soroca (7), Lăpușna (2), Tighina (3), Cahul (4), Cetatea Albă (17) and Ismail (7).

Similarly, the number of war monuments in the regions of Transylvania and Banat was distributed as following: Someș (25), Sălaj (10), Satu Mare (1), Năsăud (15), Bihor (19), Arad (30), Cluj (25), Turda (11), Alba (25), Hunedoara (4), Ciuc (6), Odorhei

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(55), Trei Scaune (12), Târnava Mare (6), Târnava Mică (16), Sibiu (25), Fărăraș (11), Brașov (11), Timiș-Torontal (105), Caraș (41) and Severin (25). Among them, probably that more than a hundred monuments were dedicated to Hungarians and a similar number of were monuments was dedicated to Germans.

Overall, the regional distribution of the war monuments was the following: 137 in Oltenia, the counties of Dolj and Vâlcea missing to report; 524 in Muntenia, the county of Teleorman missing to report; 36 in Dobrogea, the counties of Tulcea and Caliacra missing to report; 129 in Moldavia, some of the most relevant counties, Putna, Tecuci, Covurlui and Tutova missing to report alongside Fălciu, Neamț, Dorohoi; 21 in Bukowina, the counties of Suceava and Storojneț missing to report; 48 in Bessarabia, only the county of Orhei missing to report; 171 in Banat; 158 in Southern Transylvania; and 149 in Northern Transylvania the counties of Maramureș, Sălaj and Mureș missing to report.

The regional distribution of the war monuments reported in 1937 is quite even in the regions of Banat, Oltenia, Transylvania and Moldavia. A higher density in Muntenia may be explained through the proximity of Bucharest, the cultural, political and economic center of the country. Lower densities are observable in the eastern regions of Bukowina, Bessarabia and Dobrogea. The regions of the Old Kingdom reported 826 war monuments compared to only 547 in the newly added territories. A closer attention to the regional characteristics of these war monuments is given in the sections three and four of this sixth chapter.

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War monuments built during the interwar period in the regions of Muntenia, Moldavia and Dobrogea seem to be clustered mostly in the mountainous counties. This way they are associable with the places where battles were given during in 1916-1917 such as nearby the Carpathians and on the valleys of Jiu, Prahova and Siret rivers. In addition, this is also an indicator that their construction depended on the availability of local resources. A closer statistical analysis of the construction of these war monuments by year would help verifying whether war monuments were built in the mountainous counties in a faster way than in the rest of the countries.

#### ***5.1.2. The iconography of the war monuments built during the interwar period:***

The iconography of war monuments is the second important aspect analyzed in this section. This subsection focuses on the general forms given to the war monuments, on the inscriptions engraved on them and their form as well as on the decorations annexed to the inscriptions. It attempts at analytically approaching them by focusing on the way these inscriptions and decorations were organized as sets of cultural references.

More or less related, whether these war monuments were dedicated to a group of fallen or they were dedicated to an individual influenced to some extent the iconography of these war monuments. A monument dedicated to an individual may be explained only through the name of the respective person, the significance of having a monument being built in his/her honor being explained further or being not explained at all. If the viewer

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was familiar with the life of the individual or with the significance of the monument no additional explanation was necessary.

However when the public monument was dedicated especially to the idea of self sacrifice for the nation and the name of the fallen were listed closer to the base of the monument the meaning of these war monuments was signaled especially through the iconography that was used. Few war monuments had no additional explanation confirming the fact that they were constructed as an educational instrument as well, the ideas contained in the dedications being rather unfamiliar to or vaguely known by the viewers. Dedicated collectively to the idea of military heroism these monuments were also linked to each other through this iconography of which typology I attempt at describing in this subsection.

This observation place them in a cultural paradigm articulated and disseminated during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth one where personal sacrifice was promoted as a form of (military) heroism. When representing human figures, the focus is on their bodies and their solemn, resigned or broken posture and hardly on the features of their faces denoting personal feelings. This focus is going to change due to the experience of total war during the First World War, the trauma of the Lost (or not so lost but crippled) Generation being visible in paintings such as those of Otto Dix and others.

Since the 1960s personal suffering started being emphasized on the public monuments related to war experiences especially when dealing with the Holocaust. War

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memorials built after the Second World War in the United States, mostly since the 1970s, tend to soberly list only the names of the fallen thus abstaining from glorifying their sacrifice. In the Soviet Union where the memorialization of the Second World War played a role structurally similar to the processes of commemorating the First World War in Europe, preference was given to the first set of cultural references discussed below.

In the cases of war monuments built during the interwar period, as it was the case with the war monuments built before 1916, the most frequent size of these statues is around two meters. Most of the statues were placed on pedestals as tall as them. They took the form of obelisks, sometimes with eagles on top of them. Other war monuments represented soldiers of different army corps but mostly infantrymen, many examples of this type of war monument being sculpted by Spiridon Georgescu, Ioan Iordănescu and Dumitru Mățăoanu who all specialized in creating variations of this theme. Other war monuments combined soldiers with female figures representing either Patria or Victory, or both of them, holding flags, laurels or swords and showing the way to or inspiring the soldiers. Added to these major figures, oak leaves and olive trees were considered to suggest the perennial strength of those who fought and died and the aspirations of those who survived. Many of the war monuments included a cross as a part of their iconography unlike the monuments built during the period prior to the First World War.

While absent on the prewar war monuments, the cross was present in three ways on the war monuments built during the interwar period. It was many times present as a symbol on top of an obelisk of various forms if *troițe* are not taken into account. Very

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few times it took the form of the entire monuments and thus it connoted fully religious meaning to the monument as it was the case of the Cross of Caraiman (1928). However, most the times when visible, the cross was present under the form of the military decoration associated with the participation in the war, “The commemorative cross of the war” (*Crucea comemorativă a Războiului*), a decoration with a special design issued during and after the war following a similar French model.

Closer to the base of the monuments, bas-reliefs depicting scenes of battles were not as frequent as before the war while most of the times lists of the names of the local fallen officers and soldiers accompanied dedications such as “Glory, honor and eternal gratitude to the heroes sacrificed on the altar of patria in the war of 1916-1919 defending their forefathers’ land, patria and their people” (Peșteanca de Jos, Gorj County) or “Tell to the future generations that we made the supreme sacrifice on the battlefields of 1916-1918 for the reunification of all Romanians” (Bradagiru, Ilfov County, 1919) or “We should all follow the example of those who sacrificed their life for the fatherland, having nothing more valuable in the world than their country, more previous than their language and more holy than their fatherland” (Puchenii Moșneni, Prahova County, March 1920) or “To you heroes of Romanați this temple of ancient virtues was erected, to you piously the thoughts of those of today and tomorrow are dedicated, you deserve the thankful tribute of the reunited people forever celebrating the unity of all Romanians” (Caracal,

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1925) or “Nothing is more saintly/And more beautiful in this life/Than to die as a fighter/Wrapped up in Tricolor!” (Zalha village, Ileanda, Sălaj County, 1937).<sup>311</sup>

The description of all war monuments built before and after the First World War would have been a major endeavor which I did not intend in this dissertation. Their classification may be the topic of an entire different dissertation. Instead, I described some of the war monuments built before the First World War in the second chapter of this dissertation. Some of the war monuments which are the topic of this fifth chapter are described in the second, the third and the fourth sections.

#### 5.1.2.1. *Four sets of cultural references: military/Roman; orthodox/christian; modernist:*

Based on the above mentioned descriptions as well as on the observation of many more other war monuments, some of them illustrating this chapter, I attempted in the following lines at analytically grouping the sets of cultural references that were used as a part of the iconography of these war monuments. These sets of references were used by different

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<sup>311</sup> Peșteanca de Jos: “Glorie, onoare și veșnică amintire eroilor jertfiți pe altarul patriei în războiul din 1916-1919, apărându-și vitejește moșia strămoșească și patria și neamul”; Bragadiru: “Spuneți generațiilor viitoare că noi am făcut jertfa supremă pe câmpurile de bătălie din 1916-1918, pentru întregirea neamului”; Puchenii Moșneni, Prahova: “Să luăm pildă de la cei ce și-au jertfit viața pentru patrie, neavând nimic în lume mai scump ca țara, mai prețios ca limba și mai sfânt ca patria” (sculptor Themistocle Vidali); Caracal: “Vouă, eroilor din Romanați, vi s-a ridicat acest templu al virtuților strămoșești, către voi se îndreaptă cu pioșenie gândirea celor de azi și de mâine, vouă vi se cuvine în parte prinosul de recunoștință a unui neam întregit eternizând unirea tuturor românilor”; Poroinica/com. Mătăsaru, Dâmbovița (1935, Vasile Blendea): “Liniștit vă fie somnul/Astăzi bravilor eroi/Glorie, vă strigă țara/Veți fi pildă pentru noi/Neclintiți vom face stâncă/Să pătrăm ce ne-ați lăsat/Tot pământul țării noastre/Ce-i cu sânge amestecat/[...] Glorie vă strigă țara/Pentru sângele vărsat/Glorie, vă strigă satul/Nimenea nu v-a uitat/Voi trăiți în mintea noastră și în inimă de mamă/Voi trăiți în copilașii care încă vă mai cheamă/”; Zalha, com. Ileanda, jud. Sălaj: “Nimică în lume nu-i mai sfânt/Și mai frumos pe acest pământ/Decât să mori ca luptător/Infășurat în tricolor”. The last quote is from a song apparently sung by Transylvanians volunteers in Romanian army.

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groups for their own purposes in different ways in different times, the groups suffering many times a complex dynamic themselves. I distinguished four sets of cultural vocabularies that may be further used for interpreting the iconology of these public monuments: military/monarchic references; references to the Roman heritage; religious/Orthodox references; and references belonging to the artistic language of modernism.

The first set of references belonged to a set of symbols associated with the idea of authority, an idea of authority represented by the state or by the monarch and especially by their instrument of exercising their monopoly of violence that was the army. Most of these symbols were developed during the times of the Roman Empire but they continued to be used one way or another during the Middle Age until the present days. During the nineteenth century, the century of pompous uniforms, they were closely linked to the idea of nation and their distribution was assured especially as a part of the process of monument building shortly described in the first section of the chapter, loyalty for the monarch/leader being transferred to a great extent to the nation, most of the times defined as organic and perennial. This first set of symbols included most of all the eagle as the sign of imperial authority and military supremacy, vigilance over the frontier and personal inspiration in the face of the battle. Added to it, the laurels, the oak leaves, the obelisks, the Latin form of the alphabet, the keywords used in the inscriptions such as “honor”, “glory”, “hero-ism”, “sacrifice”, “patria” and “nation”, the cannons, the flags, the rifles, the swords and sometimes the horse or the lion were part of this symbolic

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vocabulary of military recognition and war commemoration. The (Founding or only Great) Hero was embodied by the monarch or the general who was victorious, by the officer who sacrificed his life leading or supervising the troops and especially by the common soldier when the concept of military heroism was completely democratized. Representing infantrymen most of the times but also soldiers of other branches of the army they were depicted as single, in group or guided by the woman-Victory or by the woman-Motherland who either inspired them or demanded their protection in face of the (most of the times brutal) enemy. As a part of this set of symbols, the Arch of Constantin was replicated during the early modern period throughout Europe, its largest embodiment being represented later by the Arch of Triumph of Paris, troop parades being during the nineteenth century one of the most popular forms of entertainment and display of authority in the same time.

This first set of cultural references is randomly present on the war monuments built during the interwar period no matter if they were Hungarian, German or Romanian, a sign of the common (European-monarchic-military) background for the members of the initiative committees as well as cultural belonging to the cultural paradigm that valorized self sacrifice as a form of heroism. The following three sets of cultural references are present exclusively on war monuments constructed at the initiative of committees composed exclusively or in their greatest majority by Romanians. Statistically, the first set of references gave form to more than eighty percent of the war monuments built on the present territory of Romania.

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The second set of references appealed to or originated from the Roman heritage. This set of references included to some extent most of the references described above such as the eagle, the obelisk and the laurels. However, they were used particularly in Romanian contexts in order to remind the Roman ancestry of the Romanian people. This cultural vocabulary taken more or less directly from the locally prized Roman heritage is best visible in the construction of the Mausoleum of Mărășești and of the Column of Târgu Jiu. The mausoleum of Adam-Klissi's metopes were placed around the building of the Military Museum in Bucharest and it inspired the form and the iconography of the most important mausoleum-ossuary dedicated to the memory of those fallen during the First World War, the mausoleum of Mărășești. The mausoleum is discussed in some detail in the third section of this chapter (see image 5.23), details which are complementary to those discussed by Maria Bucur. It is hard to appreciate to what extent Constantin Brâncuși's Column of Târgu-Jiu constructed as a war monument in 1937-1938 was directly inspired by the column of Trajan in Rome. The latter inspired a series of columns throughout Europe including the Vendome column and the column to be found in the Place de la Revolution in Paris, Nelson's Column's in London and the column of the Millenium monument in Budapest. It was certainly designed to play with the cultural projections of its viewers. In Romania, most probably it was read and approved (also) as a version of Trajan's column by the local authorities at the time of its conception and execution.

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The third set of references was represented by elements reminding of the visual style employed in the decoration of the Orthodox church of the Danubian Principalities. One of the two forms of cultural heritage prized since the 1860s in Romania, the rediscovery of these churches and their reconstruction or repainting contributed to the rise of the so-called neo-Romanian style. This style of decorations was mostly visible in the architecture of Romania before the First World War but it also during the 1920s, the modernism starting being employed mostly during the 1930s. Symbolically associated with the Romanian national identity, it was employed in the construction of the Alba-Iulia Cathedral as the place for the 1922 coronation and in the construction of the huge white Orthodox churches in Transylvania during the interwar period.<sup>312</sup> In the case of war monuments, this set of references is visible in the inscription of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier already presented in the introduction of this dissertation as well as a part of the interior decorations of the Mausoleum of Mărășești (see images 5.21 and 5.22) and especially in the form and in the decorations of the numerous *troița* created around the country as war monuments (see images 5.2, 5.3).

Finally, the fourth set of references may be related to the artistic language of modernism which started being employed during the 1930s in Romania. Possibly there are only two illustrations one may find among war monuments: Lidia Kotzebue's and Josif Fekete's monument to the aviation heroes and Constantin Brâncuși's group of monuments of Târgu-Jiu.

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<sup>312</sup> Carmen-Elena Popescu, *Le style national roumain. Construire un nation à travers l'architecture 1881-1945* (Rennes/Bucharest: Presses universitaires de Rennes/Simetria, 2006), pp. 208-211.

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5.1.2.2. *Significant individuals or selected common heroes?*

While these monuments were dedicated to all the fallen soldiers, seen as a collective hero even if lists of the names of the local dead soldiers were placed on them, several figures were publicly heroized and some of them were already mentioned when describing the exhibition of the military museum in Bucharest: Ecaterina Teodoroiu is probably the most famous; Constantin Mușat; General Ion Dragalina and several others listed below.

Image 5.2. The statue of Ecaterina Teodoroiu, Brăila, 1927, Vasile Ionesco-Varo, 5.4+1.9m.



Source: *Epopoea independenței în arta plastică românească*, p. 131.

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Ecaterina Teodoroiu's instrumentalization in this process of commemoration was not at all subjective. By all accounts she was a remarkable person taking part in nursing the injured soldiers, evading captivity, marching together with the male soldiers and carrying the regular military equipment designed for a man's strength in spite of having seriously injured her feet and voluntarily fighting on the frontline. Statues of her were built at Slatina (1923, Dumitru Mățăoanu) and Brăila (1928, Vasile Ionesco-Varo), a monument at Tg.-Jiu (1935, Milița Pătrașcu) and another one in Azuga, inaugurated on August 23, 1937, authored by Ioan Iordănescu and representing a group composed out of a statue of Patria supporting a wounded soldier, a dying Ecaterina Teodoroiu and a soldier supported by a cannon).<sup>313</sup>

Corporal Constantin Mușat benefited from three statues all authored by the sculptor Ion Dimitriu Bârlad that were placed in Bârlad (1927), Brăila (1927) and Bușteni

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<sup>313</sup> The only female officer of Romanian army until the 1990s, Ecaterina Teodoroiu (January 16, 1894-August 22, 1917) was born in the Gorj County and she volunteered in the local Scouts organization in 1913. Having lost two brothers in August 1916, she volunteered as a nurse and distinguished herself for the first time in helping organizing the defense of Târgu-Jiu in October. Taken prisoner by the Germans, she escaped. Later she was heavily wounded during the battle of Jiu Valley in early November. Decorated with the Romanian Military Virtue for all these acts of bravery, she was granted a honorary rank of sub-lieutenant and she spent three months recovering. In late January she requested to be sent to the frontline only to die during the battle of Mărășești. Buried with military honors, her remains were ceremonially taken in June 4, 1921 to be buried in a special grave placed in front of Târgu-Jiu's town hall. See Lucian Predescu, *Cugetarea*, pp. 841-842. For more information see Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, "Simboluri ale cinstirii dedicate Ecaterinei Teodoroiu" [Artefacts dedicated to honoring Ecaterina Teodoroiu], *Buletinul Muzeului Militar Național*, nr. 3, 2005, pp. 160-185 while for a interpretation of her place in the Romanian pantheon of (war) heroes see Maria Bucur, "Between the Mother of the Wounded and the Virgin of Jiu: Romanian Women and the Gender of Heroism during the Great War," *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 12, nr. 2, Summer 2000, pp. 30-55.

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(September 9, 1928).<sup>314</sup> General Ion Dragalina had busts built in Lugoj (1936, Spiridon Georgescu) and Caransebeș (June 26, 1943, Mihai Onofrei).<sup>315</sup> Other individual monuments included those dedicated to Emil Rebreanu (Palanca, Bacău County, October 2, 1921), Lt. Ioan Petra Oașia (Sibiel/Săliște, Sibiu County, 1921, Th. Burcă), Alexandru Zagoriț, a lieutenant who died in 1916 (Ploiești, 1925, Frederic Storck) and volunteer Mihail Săulescu (Predeal, September 4 1930, Oscar Han, bust). Railway workers benefited from special monuments built in Tecuci (1926), Galați (1931) and Bucharest. Few monuments were constructed to officers and this is illustrative for both the vernacular character of the process of constructing these monuments and the democratization of the concept of heroism.

#### 5.1.2.3. *Similarities and dissimilarities in the iconography of war monuments:*

Overall, the iconography of the war monuments presents a series of similarities and dissimilarities. Similarities included the military vocabulary defining the iconography of war monuments be they built by Romanian, Hungarian or German communities (see images included in the fourth section of this chapter) which also indicates a to a great extent similarity in the military and nationalist background of the members of their

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<sup>314</sup> Constantin Mușat (1890-1917) was born in the Giurgiu County, he fought as a grenadier on the Prahova Valley, he lost his left arm in December 1916 in the Vrancea mountains but he asked to be sent on the frontline again where he died in August 1917 during the battle of Oituz. See Tucă, 1983, p. 77.

<sup>315</sup> Ion Dragalina (1860-1916) was born in Caransebeș. A under-leutenant in 1880 in the Austrian-Hungarian army. He resigned seven years later and moved to Bucharest where in 1888 he became an officer in the Romanian army. A colonel in 1911 and a brigade general in 1915, he died commanding the First Infantry Regiment in October 1916 in the battles around Cerna river. See Tucă, 1983, p. 123.

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initiative committees. In the case of the war monuments constructed by the Romanian communities preference given for authors such as Spiridon Georgescu, Ion Dimitriu-Bârlad, Ioan Iordănescu, Dumitru Mățăoanu and others indicates a similarity of artistic and aesthetical education for the members of the initiative committees, most of the times members of the local garrisons and local notabilities. Dissimilarities were represented mostly by the contents of the inscriptions one may find on the war monuments discussed in this chapter, each of the local communities not only mourning their dead but also praising or glorifying their war effort and symbolically preserving their belonging to their (organically envisioned) nations.

***5.1.3. The funding of war monuments and their authors as indicators of the background of the members of initiative committees:***

In the second section of the second chapter a pattern of the factors and the social actors involved in the construction of public monuments was described. The factors that stimulated the multiplication of public monuments during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth one were the articulation of a unitary and coherent historical narrative where individuals, dates and deeds were integrated, the intensification of participation in the public sphere, the formation and the active participation of artistic groups and the availability of resources. In the context of the interwar period, the events of the First World War were integrated in the hegemonic narrative of the Romanian national history as the most important events that led to the

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creation of Greater Romania; the massive demographic losses, the high number of people physically affected by the war as well as the presence of the veterans contributed to a process of mourning that was converted through the law of 1920 into a policy of war commemorations; many of the initiative committees formed by military, teachers, priests and local notabilities were already formed before the war and they had the experience of constructing the war monuments dedicated to 1877-1878 and 1913; the group of artists able to offer models was active since the turn of the centuries and some of them had the experience of creating war monuments before the war; the funds raised through a diversity of means were available as before and this contributed to the lengthening of the process of constructing the war monument over several years in most of the cases. The same pool of actors described in the second chapter was present in the construction of war monuments during the interwar period as well: officers, teachers, priests, local notabilities and artists especially when they were war veterans as well as war widows, war orphans and war disabled.

The construction of war monuments during the 1920s may be characterized by a multiplication of the vernacular initiative combined with a scarcity of the available resources. The great majority of these monuments were built at the initiative of the local officers, local notabilities, teachers and priests. These committees pursued gathering funds for constructing their monuments through public subscriptions, lotteries, postcards selling while donations from public institutions represented the greatest part of the contributions as it's going to be visible in the following lines.

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Only a few of these war monuments were built entirely by the Society for the cult of the heroes which is an indicative that the process of commemorating the events and those fallen during the First World War was not a process imposed from above but it rather fulfilled expectations at the local level. This suggests that these policies of war commemorations during the interwar period rather followed than set the general trend. This suggestion is confirmed by the establishment of the Commission of Public Monuments during the late 1920s with the aim of amending the numerous proposals for war monuments and its rather rich activity during the 1930s.

Many of the war monuments constructed in Transylvania, Banat, Bukowina and Bessarabia were not dedicated to Romanians but to members of the ethnic and religious minorities living in the respective regions as one can see in section four of this chapter. As one can easily imagine the members of the initiative committees belonged to the respective minority groups and the funding came from the local communities as well.

During the 1920s, public contests were organized for a series of planned public monuments. In Bucharest this included the statues of kings Carol I and Ferdinand, Spiru Haret as well as war monuments like those dedicated to the infantry, aviation, sanitary and railroad workers or the Arch of Triumph. However, in the case of most of these contests, their results were not taken into account by the deciding authorities who ordered them and sometimes provided the necessary funding for their organization.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Petre Oprea, *Critici de artă în presa bucureșteană a anilor 1931-1937* [Art critics in Bucharest journals, 1931-1937] (Editura Tehnică Agricolă, 1997), pp. 14-15.

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5.1.3.1 *The costs for building war monuments* varied. In Dorohoi, a monument created by Spiridon Georgescu in 1924 cost 350.000 lei while the monument of Oltenița cost 850.000 lei. In two villages of Stotojneț County, a war monument was built in 1926 in Bobești by a Mrs. Fany Medvețchi at the cost of 28.000lei while another was built in 1928 in Ciudiu by a committee presided by the local paroch at the cost of 5.500 lei. In the city of Storojneț a monument was built in 1935 and it cost 223.000 lei paid by the prefecture and the mayoralty.<sup>317</sup> The monument of Caracal cost 185.000 lei, 90.000 lei being gathered by the Society for the cult of the heroes, 30.000 lei by the prefecture of the Romanați County and another 30.000 lei by the mayoralty of Caracal, 3.000 lei were given by the local branch of the National Bank (*Banca Națională a României*, BNR) while the rest of them, 32.000 lei, came from public subscription.<sup>318</sup> A local teacher supported by a committee built in 1930 in Jina village of Sibiu County a monument of four meters in its diameter and eight meters in its height at the cost of 149.000 lei.<sup>319</sup> A monument built in 1933 in Aiud with funds raised on different occasions by the officers of the local garrison cost 30.000 lei and it had rather large dimmensions (4x4m and 8m in height).<sup>320</sup> A *troița* offered by the society for the cult of the heroes was erected in 1932 in

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<sup>317</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936, f. 62 and 65.

<sup>318</sup> *Romania Eroica*, March 1929, p. 14. In 1936 the value of the same monument was estimated at 1.500.000 lei, see ANR-ANIC, Fond Ministerul Artelor, Dos. 61/1936, f. 41.

<sup>319</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936, f. 46.

<sup>320</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936, f. 5.

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Silistra at the cost of 169.000 lei.<sup>321</sup> The war monument of Lehliu, Ialomița County, was authored by Spiridon Georgescu who presented the best offer at the auction organized in order to select the best project. Georgescu's monument cost 150.000 lei for all expenses covering the design and the execution of the monument. The cost was covered: 108.000 lei „fond comunal”, 9.200 lei were donated by war widows, 17.000 lei by locals while 3000 lei were gathered through subscription. 4m in height, the monument was topped by a soldier of 2.1m.<sup>322</sup> Spiridon Georgescu authored the war monument of Turnu-Măgurele as well. 6.5m in height placed on a 4m base, the monument represented a bronze eagle that was emplaced on top of a crypt in the local cemetery in 1937. Seventy-six unidentified bodies were placed in the crypt together with other thirty Romanian soldiers and thirty former enemy soldiers were buried. The monument cost 240.000 lei covered by the local prefecture, the mayoralty and the military garrison.<sup>323</sup>

At an average cost of 50.000 lei (an educated guess and not the result of any calculation) for each of the 2.000 war monuments built during the interwar period leads to a total of at least 100 million lei spent on the construction of this patrimony not to mention the value of the land parcels donated by the local authorities or bought by the organizing committees from the funds they gathered or the amount of time spent on raising the necessary funds. At the same time, as already presented in the fourth chapter, the annual budget for the social assistance dedicated to war disabled, war orphans and

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<sup>321</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936, f. 22.

<sup>322</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 125/1938, ff. 8-9.

<sup>323</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 127/1938, f. 5.

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war widows was 134 million in 1924 while the budget for the rest of the social assistance was 108 million in the same year. Besides observing how inexpensive culture is in general, these numbers may confirm the hypothesis that the policy and the politics of war commemorations was a form of symbolic compensation for those who survived and suffered the most during the First World War.

5.1.3.2. *The background of the authors of these war monuments* is an indicator not only of their artistic value, a criterion promoted by the Commission of the Public Monuments, but also of the values and the background of the members of the initiative committees who selected one way or another these authors and made the case for the inclusion of one element or another of the previously discussed cultural vocabularies represented in the iconography of these monuments. Many of the war monuments placed in the major urban areas but also randomly in the rest of the country were created by sculptors who entered the history of arts in Romania and who are considered major figures in the field. They represent the first group shortly described below. However, most of the war monuments created by artists were the work of a series of sculptors who are considered today of a minor importance in the history of Romanian arts, their work being deemed as not significant from an artistic point of view. This is why few of their creations were given attention thus contributing further more to the insignificant attention given to the memory of the First World War in general in the Romanian culture of the last century. Finally, the greatest part of the war monuments created or initiated during the 1920s represented the

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work of local stone carvers and grave carvers. Besides offering insights on the cultural background of the respective initiative committees, this makes more understandable the intentional aspect of these war monuments. For some the war monuments served only for the mourning practices hence their tendency to place the picture of their fallen on the respective war monument. For others these war monuments were meant to transcend these mourning practices, to idealize the sacrifice of the fallen and to artistically, culturally and politically educate their viewers.

The first group of sculptors who authored war monuments during the interwar period included Ion Jalea (1887-1983), Cornel Medrea (1888-1964) and Oscar Han (1891-1976).<sup>324</sup> Their activity was mentioned especially when dealing with the context of public monuments and some of their works are presented in the following section of this dissertation which deals with the war monuments of Bucharest. They were also active during the Communist regime as it is going to be visible in the last section of this chapter. Ion Jalea was the student of Frederick Storck and Dimitrie Paciurea at Bucharest and the student of Antoine Bourdelle at Paris. He lost his left arm during the First World War, he contributed to the creation of the monument of reunification in Cernowitz (1924) as well as of several other major public monuments during the interwar period and the Communist regime. Oscar Han had the same teachers in Bucharest, he taught at the

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<sup>324</sup> George Oprescu, *Sculptura statuară românească* [The Romanian statuary sculpture] (Bucharest: ESPLA, 1954), pp. 134-140; Petru Comarnescu, *Ion Jalea* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1962); Marin Mihalache, *Cornel Medrea* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1972); Marin Mihalache, *Oscar Han* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1985); Mircea Deac, *50 de ani de sculptură. Dicționarul sculptorilor din România, 1890-1940* [50 years of sculpture. The dictionary of Romanian sculptors, 1890-1940]. Bucharest: Oficiul pentru informare documentară pentru industria construcțiilor de mașini, 2000), pp. 38-45.

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Academy of Beaux Arts in Bucharest between 1927 and 1946 and he was active as a Liberal member of the Romanian parliament in 1934-1937. Cornel Medrea was born in Transylvania, he studied at Budapest and between 1939 and 1964 he taught sculpture at the Academy of Beaux Arts in Bucharest as well. These sculptors were able to combine in a creative way all the four sets of cultural references described in the previous subsection.

Some of these sculptors were members of the deciding committees or they were in close relationship with their members. For example, poet Ion Minulescu, a member of the Commission for Public Monuments, was officially the head of the Direction of Arts of the Ministry of Arts until 1944. Effectively, the direction was lead after 1936 by Ion Theodorescu Sion, painters Eugen Ispir and Marius Bunescu and sculptor Ion Jalea.<sup>325</sup> For example, one such contest was organized during the period of November 1937 – April 1938 by the institute of architecture of Bucharest (*Academia de Arhitectură*). The contest was organized for the students in architecture and it was themed on war monuments, Ion Jalea being a member of the selection committee. 20.000 lei were distributed as prizes and the clay models were sent around the country so that the organizing committees for the construction of future war monuments could choose esthetically designed models.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Petre Oprea, *Critici și cronicari în presa bucureșteană a anilor 1938-1944* [Critics and art chroniclers in Bucharest journals, 1938-1944] (Bucharest: Editura Maiko, 1999), p. 12.

<sup>326</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 125/1938, ff. 1-4.

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A large number of war monuments were created by the sculptors Ioan Iordănescu (1881-1950), Spiridon Georgescu (1887-1974), Dumitru Mățăoanu (1888-1929) and Theodor Burcă (1889-1950). Their activity was documented by Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu whose articles contain detailed information for some of the war monuments created by these sculptors.<sup>327</sup> These sculptors created most of the times figures of soldiers, they used aesthetical criteria in defining their work but they tend to use almost exclusively the first set of cultural references described in the previous subsection, those promoted especially by military officers. The following lines pay a closer attention to them given the fact that their activity is less known in comparison with the first group discussed above.

Dumitru Mățăoanu was at Bucharest a student of Dumitru Paciurea and at Paris of Emile-Antoine Bourdelle and Ernest-Henri Dubois. Theodor Burcă was the son of a priest who was also active as a teacher and studied the arts at Bucharest, Vienna (1907-1910) and Paris (1910-1913). He participated in numerous contests organized for public and war monuments and after 1934 he was the custodian of the state's collection of paintings in Bucharest (*Pinacoteca Statului*). He contributed to the creation of the monument of unification of Cernowitz (1924) among other public monuments. Spiridon

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<sup>327</sup> Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu chronologically surveyed a series of monuments created by these sculptors: “Contribuții la cunoașterea activității sculptorului Spiridon Georgescu” [Contribution to documenting the activity of sculptor Spiridon Georgescu], *Muzeul Național*, vol. 11, 1999, pp. 251-273; “Contribuții la cunoașterea activității sculptorului Ioan Iordănescu” [Contribution to documenting the activity of sculptor Ioan Iordănescu], *Muzeul Național*, vol. 12, 2000, pp. 317-355; “Contribuții la cunoașterea activității sculptorului Theodor Burcă” [Contribution to documenting the activity of sculptor Theodor Burca], *București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie*, vol. 22, 2008, pp. 219-254; “Contribuții documentare la definirea participării sculptorului Dumitru Mățăoanu la opera de cinstire a Eroilor Neamului” [Contribution to defining the participation of sculptor Dumitru Mățăoanu in the process of honoring the national heroes], *Arhiva Românească*, vol. 156, part 2, nr. 1, 1996, pp. 229-238.

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Georgescu studied at Bucharest and at Carrara and Rome in Italy. He also contributed to the monument in Cernowitz besides the numerous war monuments including those two in Bucharest which are described in the following section of this dissertation. His works dedicated to Ion Antonescu, Romania's dictator during the years 1940-1944, contributed to his isolation during the Communist regime.

Ioan Iordănescu apparently studied the arts only in Romania and he was the most active among this group. He started specializing in sculpting military themes before the First World War when he created a "Micul dorobanț" for the Ministry of War and thus he secured further orders from officers who were members in the initiative committees for creating war monuments. He created Costachi Negri's statue in Galați (1912), Ioan Maiorescu's statue in Craiova (1913) and numerous other public monuments and war monuments. Public and local institutions were among those who ordered him a great number of creations and Constantin Kirițescu used his works and models to illustrate his history of the Romanian participation in the First World War. In 1931 Ioan Iordănescu became the president of Sindicatul Artelor Frumoase and he created the periodical *Pictura și sculptura* (1935).

However, in their heaviest part the war monuments were constructed by local stone workers, tomb carvers and graves builders. Most of them were built during the 1920s and they cost between 20.000 lei and 100.000 lei, only larger monuments created by sculptors in cities costing more. These carvers and builders had the tendency to create funerary works of a larger dimension, they had no formal training in beaux arts and

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therefore they ignored most of the times the aesthetical criteria and they usually improvised elements of the first set of cultural references discussed in the previous subsection. The creation of the Commission of Public Monuments in 1929 may thus be interpreted not only as establishing an instrument for controlling and excluding alternative political and cultural interpretations belonging to the ethnic and religious minorities but it may be interpreted also as creating an instrument of a professional group interested not only in the creation of artifacts respecting their standards of quality but also in keeping the market under control.

To sum up the ideas presented in this subsection, the series of factors and actors in the construction of war monuments during the interwar period were structurally similar to those presented in the second chapter when explaining the context of the spread of public monuments in general and the appearance of war monuments in particular. Approaching the state as a network of actors sharing, more or less, the same political language of nationalism and taking part in the set of initiatives promoted by the policy of war commemorations helps understanding the implementation of this policy in a variety of forms according to the diversity of regional, ethnic, religious and other forms of social groups. The war monuments were the most visible result of the intersection of public policy (of commemoration and education) and vernacular initiative (of mourning).

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## 5.2. The war monuments of Bucharest:

This second section of the chapter surveys the war monuments built in Bucharest as a case study of the dynamics and major characteristics of this category of public monuments. In addition to the two major war monuments discussed in the fifth chapter, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the Military Museum and the Arch of Triumph, there are ten other war monuments built in the capital of the country. The local archives of the city of Bucharest contain no information on the construction and on the inauguration of these monuments while the archive of the Department of Arts, the major source of information for the first section of this chapter, scarcely has any relevant information too. In spite of their presence in all tourist guides and websites dedicated to the capital of Romania no monograph was dedicated to any of them except the several brochures quoted below when relevant.<sup>328</sup>

Many of these war monuments constructed in Bucharest during the interwar period were dedicated to certain branches of the army, their construction being initiated most of the times by committees of officers active in the respective army branches, infantry, pioneers or aviation. The concept of heroism was applied to groups of people who fought in the respective branches, most of them being common soldiers, and not to individuals that would have been considered illustrious such as generals. In this respect, the case of the war monuments in Bucharest are rather similar to those in London and

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<sup>328</sup> Dan Berindei et al, *Istoria oraşului Bucureşti* [The history of the city of Bucharest] (Bucharest: Muzeul de Istorie al Oraşului Bucureşti, 1965); Narcis Dorin Ion, *Bucharest monuments* (Bucharest: Noi Media Print, 2012) while Victoria Dragu Dimitriu, *Poveşti cu statui şi fântâni din Bucureşti* [Stories with statues and fountains in Bucharest] (Bucharest: Editura Vreamea, 2010) is probably the best account of the history of the public monuments in Bucharest.

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opposite to those in Paris where the monuments dedicated to the memory of the First World War are represented by the statues of Marshals Ferdinand Foch, Joseph Gallieni and Marie Emile Fayolle, the last two placed in front of the Dome of the Invalids.

These war monuments constructed in Bucharest were placed in areas that were peripheral at that time or in the process of being restructured. Thus, the Unknown Soldier was placed in the south, in the Carol Park, the monuments to the aviation heroes, to the teacher heroes and to the infantry as well as the Arch of Triumph were placed around and norther to the area of Victoria Square while the monuments dedicated to the sanitary and the medical corps, to the engineers troops and a small monument dedicated to infantry troops too were placed around the Cotroceni area.

Image 5.3. The monument dedicated to the French Soldiers in Cișmigiu Park, Bucharest, 1920, authored by Ion Jalea.



Source: Personal photo, 2007.

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A monument to the French heroes was created in 1920 in one of the most visited places of Bucharest at that time, Cișmigiu Garden (Image 6.2). It was authored by Ion Jalea who lost his left arm at Mărășești, participated in the *Arta română* group and went after the war to study at Paris with Antoine Bourdelle. He received the Legion of Honor and Marshall Ferdinand Foch was present at the inauguration of the monument which represents a feminine figure that could be a mother, a wife, a daughter or Patria kissing a dying soldier on his forehead. Reminding Michelangelo's *Pieta*, it supports the idea promoted at the time by some articles in *Romania eroica* of considering the fallen soldiers as Christs of the nation.

Image 5.4. The monument dedicated to the railways heroes nearby the main railway station in Bucharest Gara de Nord, 1923/1930, authored by Ion Jalea and Cornel Medrea. The perspective is from behind.



Source: Facebook page, *Istorie românească în fotografii*, April 2012.

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The monument to the railway heroes, authored by Ion Jalea and Cornel Medrea, was apparently built in 1923 but it carries 1930 as the date of its creation (Images 5.4 and 5.5). Three groups of figures include in the middle a Victory about to place a crown of laurels on the head of an engineer, a couple of smiths and a soldier with a woman and a walking child.

It is one of the few war monuments where a diversity of social types considered as representative for the social groups involved in the war effort during the First World War was represented thus the home front being conferred recognition. It certainly is one of the few war monuments where women and people active on the home front were represented.

In the area of Victoria square and north of it, three important war monuments were erected during the 1930s. The monument to the teachers-heroes (*Monumentul eroilor corpului didactic*) was authored by Ion Jalea and Arthur Verona (Image 5.6). Representing three soldiers carrying the body of one comrade on a shield, it was inaugurated in 1930 in one of the most visible places of Victoria Square, chosen for the monument to the Soviet soldier from the late 1940s to the 1970s.

The monument dedicated to teachers-heroes was taken down in 1940 at the suggestion of Ivan Meštrović to make room to the monument of King Ferdinand. While

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the latter was in the end given another location on Kisseleff Avenue, the former was never restored and its track was lost.<sup>329</sup>

Image 5.5. The monument dedicated to the railway heroes, Bucharest.



Source: Author's photo, 2007.

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<sup>329</sup> Anca Benera and Alina Șerban, *Bucharest: matter & history. The public monument and its discontents* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2010), pp. 84-91.

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Image 5.6. *Monumentul eroilor corpului didactic* [The monument dedicated to the fallen teachers] was authored by Ion Jalea and Arthur Verona and placed on Victoria Square, Bucharest, 1930-1940.



Source: Facebook page, *Istorie românească în fotografii*, April 2012.

The monument to the aviation heroes was inaugurated on July 20, 1935 after being initiated in the early 1920s in a similar way to most of the other war monuments (Image 5.7). Prince Carol later king Carol II was since its inception a member of the initiative committee in his capacity as a honorary inspector of aeronautics. The committee included Mihai Oromolu who was the governor of the Romanian National Bank at the time, Ion Cantacuzino, the founder of microbiology in Romania and a member of several other initiative committees for the public and war monuments in Bucharest, Paul Teodorescu, a military associated with Carol II who hold several public

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offices in late 1930s, and Victor C. Anastasiu, the first Romanian physician aviator and the second in the world. A first evaluation of projects took place in 1923 when sculptors Ion Jalea, Cornel Medrea, Alexandru Severin and Ion Dimitriu-Bârlad were invited to present theirs. They were rejected because they did not represent the ideas of sacrifice and victory of the aviation in the same time. A competition of fourteen projects was organized in July 1925. Three projects designed by Lidia Kotzebue, Spiridon Georgescu and Ion Schmidt Faur were prized but none of them was selected in the end. Search among foreign sculptors received no answer and in the end Kotzebue's project was selected in February 1927 under the condition of being modified according to the wishes of the initiative committee.

Lack of funding and of the sought location on Șoseaua Jianu impeded the realization of the monument until the early 1930s when King Carol II became personally involved in the realization of the monument. The funds of 3.383.000 lei were gathered from a diversity of public and private institutions as well as from personal contributions, selling postcards and social gatherings ("serate, baluri, ciaiuri"). The aviators directly contributed with 483,720 lei, social gathering brought 1,454,526 lei, the National Bank of Romania donated 300.000 lei, the General Inspectorate of Aeronautics donated 280.000 lei while other donations from public private institutions varied from 5.000 lei to 100.000 lei. These funds were distributed as prizes of 30.000 lei for the 1923 projects, 40.000 lei for the 1925 projects, 800.000 lei for the winner sculptor, 1,205,000 lei for V.V. Rășcanu who was the smelter of the most the public monuments erected in Bucharest at the time

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and 1,200,000 lei for E. Tomat who created the masonry of the monument. The members of the initiative committee received no funds for their time and work.

Image 5.7. The war monument dedicated to the aviation heroes, Bucharest, Lidia Kotzebue, 1935, 2.5+5+2.5m.



Source: Bogdan Furtună. *Monografia monumentului "Eroilor Aerului"* (Bucharest: s.l., 1939), p. 17.

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Authored by Lidia Kotzebue with the help of sculptor Iosif Fekete, the monument is an obelisk designed as a human stretching his arms who could be Icarus about to start in his daring flight and three figures at the base of the obelisk, probably representing three moments in Icarus's downfall. Seen from afar it may look like a cross.

The Cross of Aviation virtue is also placed on front of the monument which also carries the names of 181 aviators who died during the First World War and until the moment of creating the monument. Next to the Brâncuși's group of monuments of Targu-Jiu, this is one of the few examples of employing modernism in creating war monuments in Romania.<sup>330</sup>

Ion Jalea's monument to the infantry troops was erected in 1936 in the first circus of Kisseleff Avenue from where it was taken down when King Ferdinand's monument was finally placed there (Image 5.8). Its initiative committee was established in 1922. The initial president of the committee was General Gheorghe Mărdărescu, the committee being composed by higher infantry officers working in the Department of War. A long period of time was dedicated to gathering the funds, a contest of projects being considered as possible only in 1931. None of the six initial projects was considered feasible by a commission including sculptor Frederic Storck, painter Jean Steriadi and architect Paul Smărăndescu, all three teaching in institutions of higher education at the time. A second contest was held in the same year with the same results. A third contest

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<sup>330</sup> Bogdan Furtună, *Monografia monumentului „Eroilor Aerului”* [The monography of the monument “To the Heroes of the Sky”] (Bucharest: s.l., 1939).

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had a modified commission including Nicolae Iorga and Constantin D. Fortunescu. The winning project by Ion Jalea was selected among other twenty two in January 1932. Revisions were carried out and the approval of the Commission for Public Monuments was gained in April 1934.

Image 5.8. The war monument dedicated to the infantry troops, Bucharest, Ion Jalea, 1936



Source: *Istoricul înfăptuirii monumentului infanteriei* [The making of the monument dedicated to the infantry troops] (Bucharest: Imprimeria națională, 1938), p.5.

The monument cost in the end 6.5 million lei and it was ready in 1936. It represented several groups of soldiers, one in a position of attack, another one supporting them and depicting different specializations and several officers by a flag placed behind them. All of them were placed on a large stone pedestal which also depicted a series of bas-reliefs and a series of inscriptions including the following: “Through heroism and sacrifice, under the command of King Ferdinand I, you wrote with your blood the most glorious page in the history of the nation: the unification of all Romanians.”<sup>331</sup>

Spiridon Georgescu’s the Lion (June 22, 1929) and the Infantryman (1930) are both placed in the Cotroceni area, close to the Botanical Garden. The first is a monument dedicated to the engineering troops who fought not only in 1916-1919 but also in the Second Balkan War. It represents a lion keeping one of its paws on several war trophies. At each of the four corners, soldiers representing a pioneer, a pontoneer, a railway worker and a phone operator have between them bas-reliefs depicting moments of their activity. The inscription says “Tell to the future generation that we made the supreme sacrifice on the battlefields for the reunification of our people.” It was erected at the initiative of the general Constantin Ștefănescu-Amza, the first director of the military museum described above.<sup>332</sup> The second represented a soldier pretty similar to many other war monuments

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<sup>331</sup> *Istoricul înfăptuirii monumentului infanteriei, 1921-1936* [The history of making the infantry monument, 1921-1936 (Bucharest: Monitorul oficial – imprimeria națională, 1936), picture following p. 14: “Prin eroism și jertfă ați scris cu sângele vostru în istoria neamului sub comanda Regelui Ferdinand I pagina cea mai glorioasă, unirea tuturor românilor”; See as well Anca Benera, pp. 104-113.

<sup>332</sup> “Spuneți generațiilor viitoare că noi am făcut suprema jertfă pe câmpurile de bătaie pentru reîntregirea neamului”.

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to be found in the country. Also, not far away, on the new boulevard opened towards the Cotroceni Palace, not far away from the Faculty of Medicine and the Babeş and Cantacuzino Institutes, a monument to the medical and sanitary personnel who died during the war was authored by Raffaello Romanelli and it was inaugurated in 1932 (Image 5.8). The monument includes a group of three figures, a wounded soldier, a medicine officer and a Victory holding a sword in one hand and a crown of laurels about to be placed on the officer's head who instead points to the fallen soldier. Below them a bas-relief depicts scenes from the war involving the medical and sanitary corps having in the center a female figure usually identified with Queen Maria.

Image 5.9. The war monument dedicated to the sanitary heroes, Bucharest, Raffaello Romanelli, 1932, 7+2m.



Source: Author's photo, 2007.

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Other war monuments built in Bucharest included a monument dedicated “to the heroes fallen in the war for national reunification” and it was authored by Vasile Ionescu-Varo. Placed on the current Silvestru Street it was inaugurated on June 22, 1924. A monument “to the last defender” (*Ultimul străjer al capitalei*) was placed in 1921 at Băneasa, in the north of Bucharest, being authored by architect Ernest Doneaud. It proved to be a real grave for a sergeant Nicolae Păianu when in 2007 the monument was moved to a different location.<sup>333</sup> Finally another monument was built in the Militari area in 1936 at the initiative of the prefect Gheorghe Marinescu and it represented an eagle placed on a small obelisk.

This second section of the fifth chapter was dedicated to surveying the war monuments of Bucharest as a case study destined to illustrate the dynamics and the characteristics of war monuments at the local level and in the same time at the national level. There are several observations that may be drawn at the end of this section.

First of all, in spite of previous initiatives of building a public monument dedicated to the memory of those fallen during the War of Independence of 1877-1878, only during the interwar period war monuments in open public spaces were built in Bucharest. Bucharest had the highest number of war monuments during the interwar Romania, twelve, besides a series of plaques placed inside public institutions.<sup>334</sup> This

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<sup>333</sup> Victoria Dragu Dimitriu, *Povești cu statui și fântâni din București* [Stories with statues and fountains in Bucharest] (Bucharest: Editura Vremea, 2010), p. 85.

<sup>334</sup> Speranța Diaconescu, “Unitatea națională oglindită în plăci memoriale din București” [The national unity as represented in memorial plaques in Bucharest], *București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie*, vol. 12, 1997, pp. 250-255.

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high number indicates they were the result of the policy of war commemorations promoted through the laws of 1920, 1927 and 1940. Initiated during the 1920s most of them were finished and inaugurated during the 1930s.

Second of all, they are more sophisticated from an artistic point of view and all four sets of cultural references discussed in the previous subsection are present and combined sometimes in a creative way. From this point of view, the war monuments of Bucharest are an illustration of the dynamics and of the characteristics of the war monuments in Romania and in the same time an exception when compared to other local cases. This artistic value was emphasized especially during the Communist regime when their intentional scope, the commemoration of those fallen during the First World War, was rather neglected.

Finally, their integration in the urban tissue is probably illustrious for the way how most of the war monuments were created in order to be integrated in urban tissues under reconstruction or suffering major transformations. Sometimes war monuments were created and placed without any correlation with the surrounding areas but most of the times they were placed nearby major public institutions or important squares. Sometimes these urban tissues under reconstruction were in need of a public monument and a war monument was only one of the possible options. Sometimes, once war monuments were placed certain in urban tissues those areas were going to suffer transformations aimed at putting in a larger perspective the meaning given to the war monuments.

### **5.3. War monuments in Muntenia, Moldova and Dobrudja:**

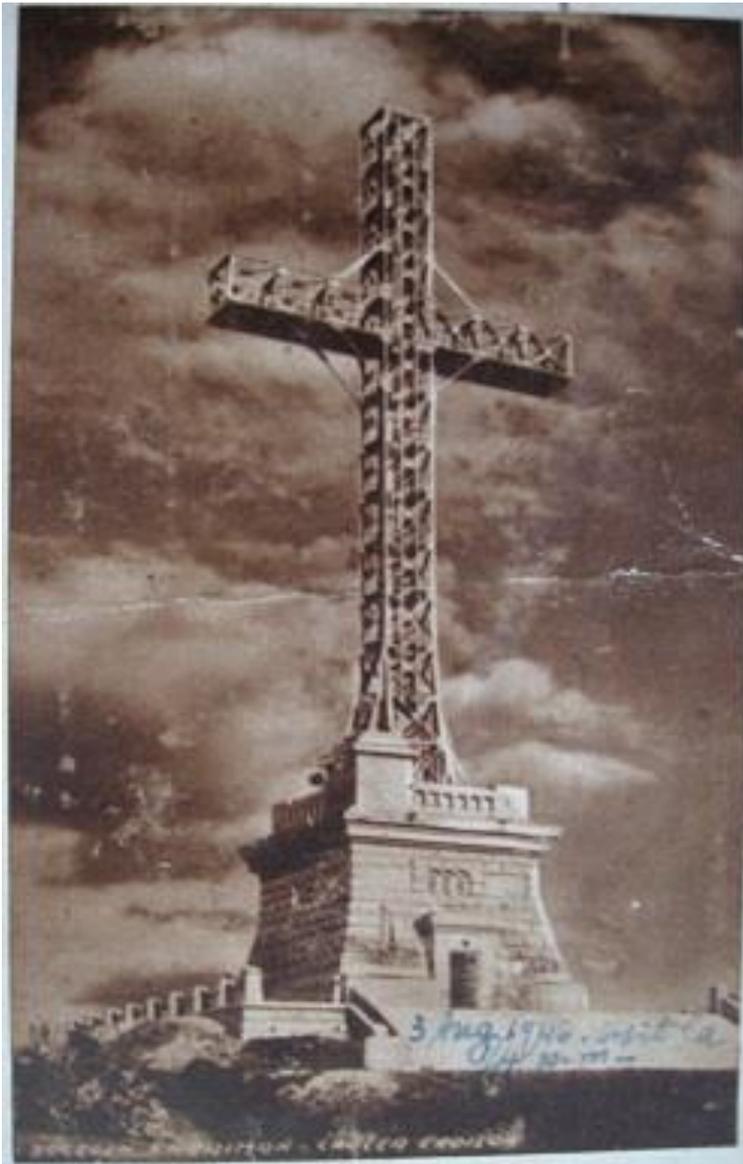
More than 800 war monuments were built in these regions during the interwar period according to the county reports compiled in the 1937 survey ordered by the Commission for Public Monuments. A few others were built in the following years until Romania entered the Second World War and resources started being focused on sustaining the war effort. An illustration of the dynamics and the characteristics of the war monuments not only at the national level but also at the level of the region of Muntenia, the case study of Bucharest surveyed in the previous second section of this dissertation is in the same time an exception to the general trends discernable at the above two levels. Most of the monuments built in Bucharest are more sophisticated from an artistic point of view which is also visible in the diversity of the artistic vocabularies employed as a part of their iconography, a diversity of vocabularies that was presented in the first section of this chapter.

As mentioned in the introduction, the most important source of information for studying the complex process of initiating, collecting the necessary funds, selecting the author and the design of the monument, finding and obtaining a location for the monument, raising the monument and organizing the inauguration ceremony was represented by the archives of the Society for the Cult of the Heroes. Until the early 2000s, it was in the custody of the library of the Museum of Military History in Bucharest, since the early 1990s its custodian being Valeria Bălescu who published a

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book on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and some contributions on the Society “Mărășești”. In the early 2000s, the archive was moved into the custody of the newly established society “The Cult of Heroes” and it become inaccessible for researchers who did not work for this institution.

Image 5.10. The monument cross of Caraiman, Bucegi mountains, 1928, postcard of 1943.



Source: ANR-DANIC, fond Ilustrate, I, 3030.

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Image 5.11. The statue of the cavalry troops, Iași, 192?, authored by Constantin Dimitriu-Bîrlad.



Source: *Epopoea independenței în arta plastică românească*, p. 127.

The most important archive, previously used as well by Maria Bucur and Andi Mihalache, is the archive of the above mentioned Commission for Public Monuments. Part of the Department of Arts and thus included in its archive, it contains information on

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the activity of this commission, an activity which consisted in discussing the aesthetics and the public placement of the war monuments under construction during the 1930s. It did not include information about the members of the initiative committees or the way how the necessary funds were collected which would have given more information about the public participation. Subsequently, this subsection surveys several examples of war monuments constructed in the regions of Muntenia, Dobrogea and Moldavia based especially on this archives. Numerous pictures were provided for a better illustration as well as additional information on their authors and costs. Other pictures where public participation is more visible were included in the following sixth chapter.

Famous war monuments built in the regions of Muntenia and Moldavia during the 1920s included the cross of Caraiman and the statue dedicated to the chivalry troops in Iași. The Cross of Caraiman in the Bucegi Mountains was built between 1926 and 1928 and it included an electric installation that was lighted during the night of August 14 to 15 until the beginning of the Second World War (Image 5.10). Placed at 2291m above the sea level, the thirty meters cross is placed on a fifteen meters pedestal. Its inauguration on September 14, 1928 is related to celebrating the Elevation of the Holly Cross after its finding by Empress Helen on Golgotha in 326 in the Orthodox Church.<sup>335</sup> The statue built in Iași for those fallen among the chivalry troops (*Monumentul Diviziei a II-a Cavalerie*) had a committee presided by Mihail Sadoveanu and it included Sextil Pușcariu (Image 5.11). The committee was established in 1925, the projected statue and its surroundings

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<sup>335</sup> Tucă, 1983, p. 122.

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being considered as part of a possible extension of the Copou Garden, the major green area inside the city. The cost of creating this monument and laying the area around was 1.500.000 lei and it was covered through public subscription and the organization of social gatherings. It presents a chivalry soldier on a horse charging an invisible enemy and having on his left a woman representing the goddess of Victory showing the way with one hand and about to place laurels on his head with the other hand.<sup>336</sup>

The following seven pictures illustrates the war monuments built in Tâncăbești, (Ilfov County, 1925), Provița de Jos (Prahova County, 1926), Techirghiol (Constanța County, 1931), Godinești (Gorj County, 1933), Amărăștii de Jos (Gorj County, 1935), Grăjdana (Buzău County, 1935) and Panciu (1928).

As it is visible in these pictures and many others built in the regions this section deals with, most of these war monuments display an iconography which employs the set of cultural references associated with the idea of authority represented by the state or by the monarch and the instrument of exertion which was the army. Eagles, obelisks, laurels, swords and guns grouped in the most diverse ways or accompanied the more or less collective hero embodied by depictions of simple soldiers. Representing infantrymen most of the times but also soldiers of other branches of the army they were depicted as single, in group or guided by the woman-Victory or by the woman-Motherland.

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<sup>336</sup> Radu Filipescu, “Monumentul Diviziei a II-a Cavalerie din Copou” [The monument to the Second Chivalry Division of Copou Park in Iasi] in *Patrimoniul național și modernizare în societatea românească: instituții, actori, strategii* [National patrimony and the modernization of the Romanian society] Edited by Dumitru Ivănescu and Cătălina Mihalache (Iași: Editura Junimea, 2009), pp. 239-248. A copy of this article was offered by Andi Mihalache to whom I thank here again.

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Image 5.12. The war monument of Tâncăbești, Ilfov County, 1925, author Dumitru Mățăuanu, 5m x 1.5m.

Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 40 and 54. Cost: 180.000 lei



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Image 5.13. The war monument of Provița de Jos, Prahova County, 1926, author Gh. Tudor, 1.5m

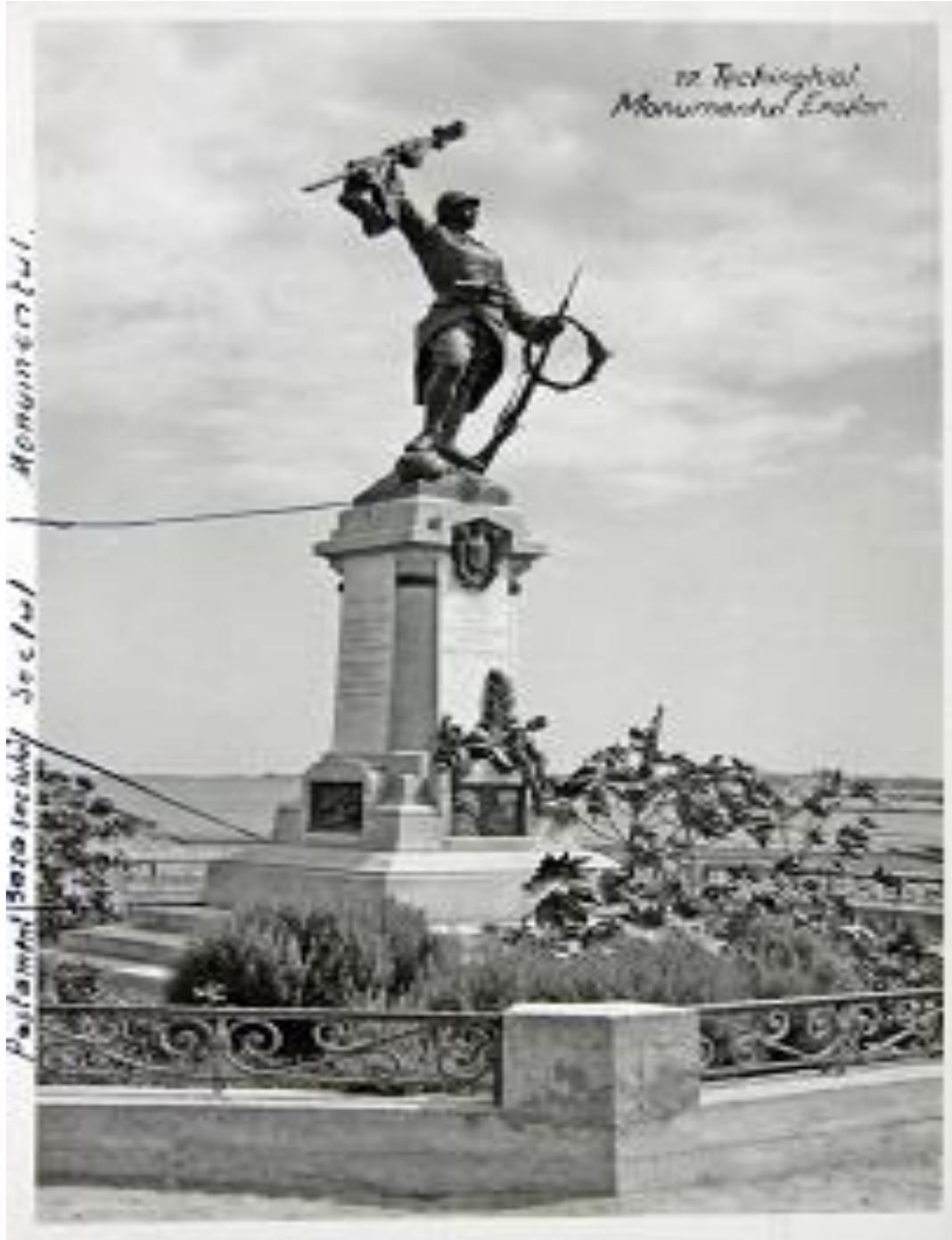


+ 1.6m.

Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 65 verso and 77. Cost: 60.000 lei.

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Image 5.14. The war monument of Techirghiol, Constanța County, 1931, author Dumitru Mățăoanu, 3.2m + 4.8m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, f. 68.

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Image 5.15. The war monument of Godinești, Gorj County, 1933, created at “Fabrica Carol Țimer (sic!) of Timișoara”.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 91 and 95. Built at the initiative of Nicolae Drăghescu and a local committee, it cost 58.000 lei.

Image 5.16. The war monument of Amărăștii de Jos, Gorj County, 1935, author Branchi (Caracal), 7.7m x 3m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 3 and 10. Cost: 80.000 lei.

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Image 5.17. The war monument of Grăjdana, Buzău County, 1935, author I. Pantazi, 2m + 2m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 70/1937, ff. 11verso and 25. Cost: 127.775 lei

The extensive use of this set of military references is an indicator not only of the background of the members of the initiative committees but of the extent to which these mostly military symbols were associated during the nineteenth century with the idea of nation.

This set of symbols started being employed already before the First World War in the construction of war monuments dedicated to the memory of the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 and in the Second Balkan War of 1913.

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Image 5.18. The war monument of Panciu, 1928, authored by Ion Dimitriu-Bîrlad, 2.75+1.74m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, fond Ilustrate, I, 3491.

Their use during the 1920s is one of the visible instances which illustrate the predominance in Greater Romania of the heritage of political culture previously developed in the Old Kingdom of Romania.

As previously mentioned, the war monuments created in urban areas were only selectively taken into account by the survey ordered by the Commission for Public Monuments. Jewish war monuments represent such a striking missing of this survey. Such monuments dedicated to the 882 members of the Jewish community died fighting in the Romanian army during the First World War were built in the Jewish cemeteries of the

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Old Kingdom when they were individually identified or only mentioned in the lists placed on the war ossuaries and the war mausoleums created during the interwar period. Memorials listing such names were placed inside synagogues and cultural institutions belonging to the Jewish communities, one such memorial existing at the Coral Temple in Bucharest. Jewish war monuments were built in the Sefardic cemetery and Filantropia cemetery in Bucharest as well as in the Jewish cemeteries in Turnu Severin, Craiova, Câmpina, Ploiești, Constanța, Focșani, Galați, Iași, Roman, Fălticeni and Sulița (Botoșani).<sup>337</sup>

#### 5.3.1. *Ossuaries and mausoleums:*

Besides this variety of war monuments, a series of mausoleums, ossuaries and collective war cemeteries were initiated in places where a large number of soldiers were known to have died but it was impossible to individualize their bodies.

Monuments of this kind were built in Șcheii Brașovului, Tulcea, Devesel (Mehedinți County), Toplița (Harghita County, 1925), Tg. Ocna (Bacău County, 1925-1928), Soveja (Vrancea County, 1929), and at Valea Mare-Pravăț, this last one being known as the mausoleum of Mateiaș (1928-1935).<sup>338</sup> Probably the most important such monuments were those of Mărăști and Mărășești. They were initiated almost immediately

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<sup>337</sup> Dumitru Hîncu and Lya Benjamin, *Evreii din România în războiul de reîntregire a țării: 1916-1919* [The Jews of Romania in the war for national unity] Foreword by Constantin Antip (Bucharest: Editura Hasefer, 1996), pp. 145-161.

<sup>338</sup> Cristache Gheorghe and Ionel Batali, *Ansamblul monumental de la Valea Mare – Mateiaș* [The monumental group of Valea Mare – Mateiaș] (Bucharest, 1985).

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after the end of the First World War and their process of construction stretched over the whole interwar period. The following lines only sketches the most important information related to their construction and their iconography, further discussions of the their meaning for the participating individuals being partially addressed by Maria Bucur while further attention in this dissertation being paid in Chapter Six.

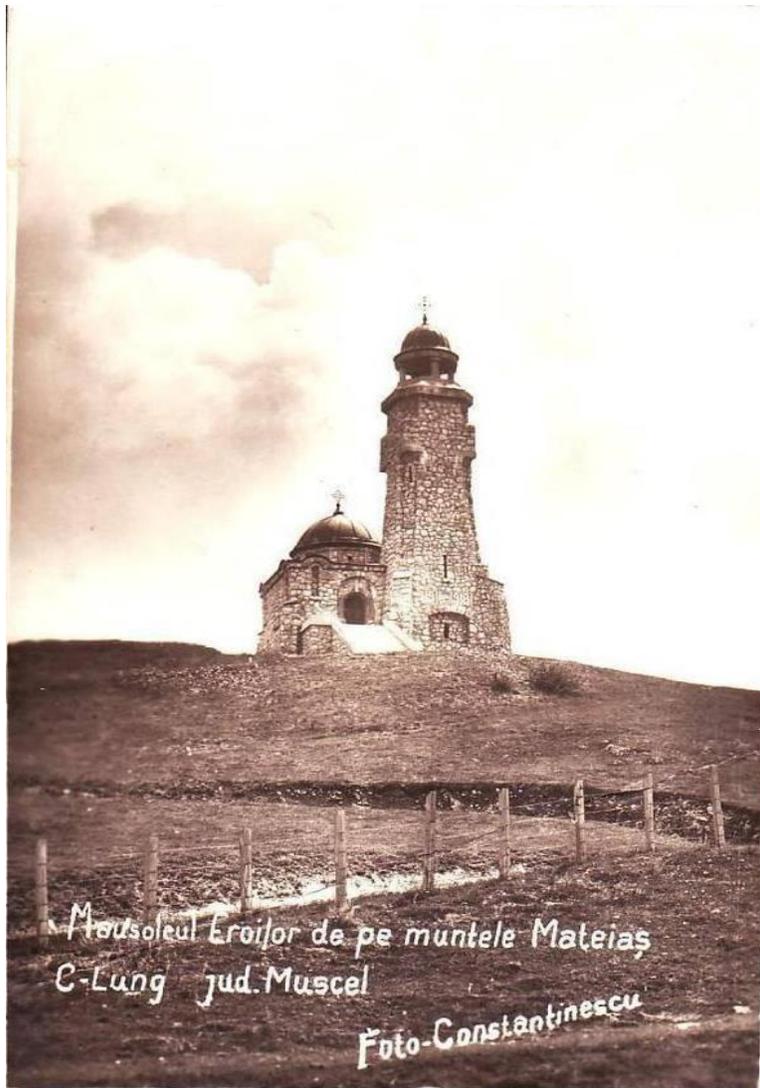
Image 5.19. The mausoleum of Târgu Ocna, 1925-1928, architect Constantin Ciogolea, 15m.



Source: <http://www.imagoromaniae.ro/imagini/carti-postale/targu-ocna-monumentul-eroilor.html>; February 2013.

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Image 5.20. The mausoleum of Mateiaș, 1928-1935, architect Dumitru Ionescu Berechet.



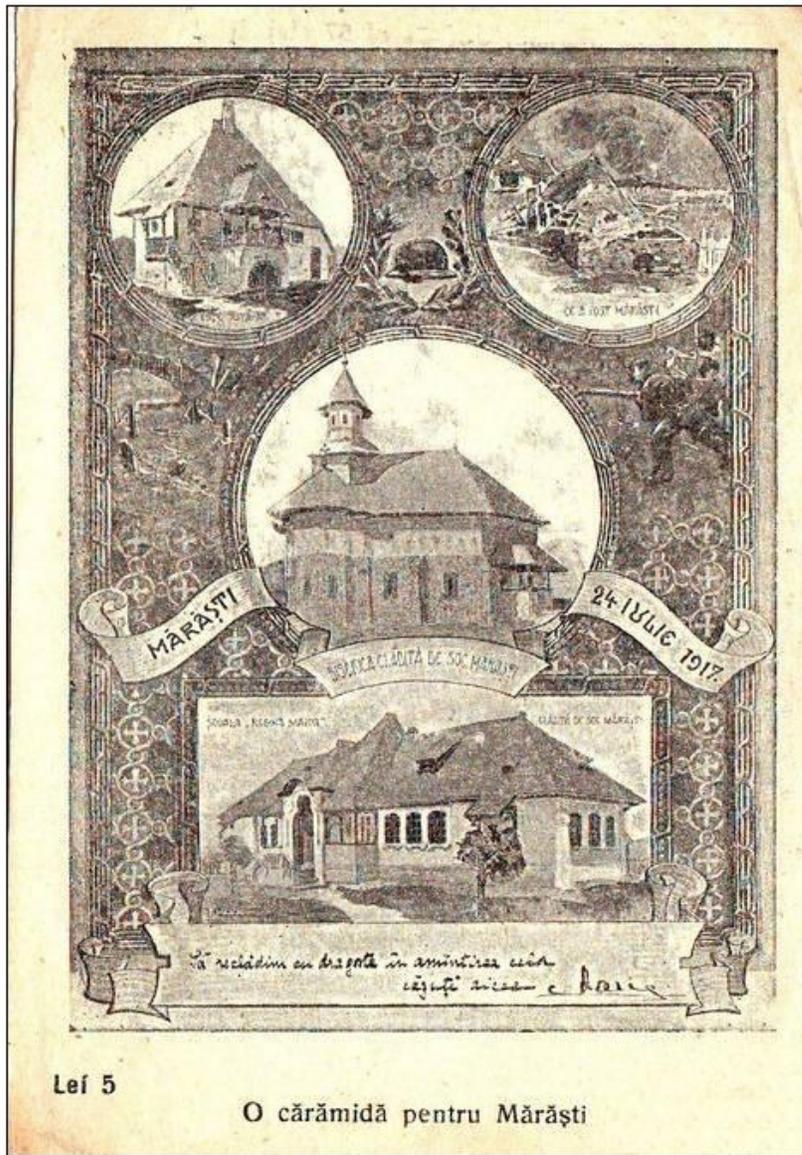
Source : ANR-DANIC, fond Ilustrate, nr. 4709.

The most important war monument is probably the Mausoleum of Mărășești which embodies the idea of “a church of the nation” thus combining nationalism and religion in a concrete way. The idea belonged to Pimen Georgescu, the Metropolitane of

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Moldavia and the head of the Romanian Orthodox Church that supported the Romanian government that took refuge in Iași during the war.<sup>339</sup>

Image 5.21. Postcard promoting raising funds for the Mărăști Mausoleum.



Source: Facebook page, *Istorie românească în fotografii*, April 2012.

<sup>339</sup> Pimen Georgescu, *Mărășești, Locul biruinții cu biserica neamului* [Mărășești, the place of victory with the help of the nation's church] (Tipografia Monastirei Neamțu, 1924).

The construction of the mausoleum was initiated by the National Orthodox Women's Society (*Societatea Ortodoxă Națională a Femeilor Române*, SONFR) at its congress in Bucharest (June 8, 1919).<sup>340</sup> During the 1920s the construction of the mausoleum was hampered by political debates as well as the details of setting the location, selecting the project and the architects and sculptors and gathering the funds which were always insufficient. The implication of Alexandrina Cantacuzino in the construction of this monument, initially supported by the Romanian government at a time when it was headed by General Alexandru Averescu, was met with reluctance by the following Liberal government.<sup>341</sup>

In the end, the construction of the mausoleum took almost fifteen years being officially inaugurated on September 18, 1938. Designed by architects George Cristinel and Constantin Pomponiu, the mausoleum is thirty meters in height and forty meters in diameter being built out of concrete and being plaqued with andesite. An exterior frieze designed by Ion Jalea and Cornel Medrea depicts the battle of 1917 while an interior mural painting was authored by Eduard Săulescu. The sarcophagus of General Eremia Grigorescu was placed inside in the center of the mausoleum while crypts contain the remains of about 6000 soldiers and officers.<sup>342</sup>

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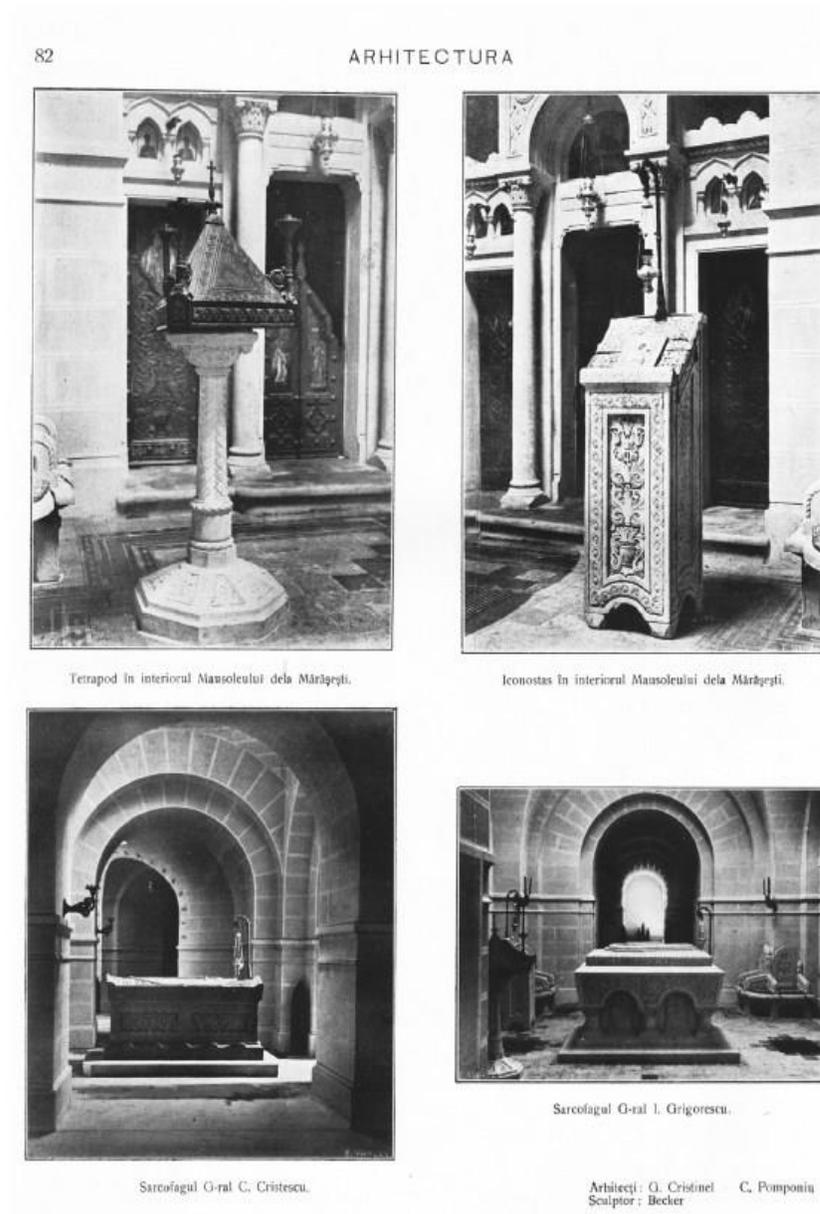
<sup>340</sup> Maria Bucur, *Heroes and victims. Remembering war in twentieth century Romania* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. 114-118.

<sup>341</sup> *Istoricul înființării bisericii neamului de la Mărășești* [The history of making the nation's church of Mărășești] (Bucharest: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1925).

<sup>342</sup> No historical account that was written about the long process of building this Mausoleum as it is the case with the history of the other mausoleums paid attention to the political agenda of the initiators and

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Image 5.22. Interior of the Mărășești Mausoleum



Source: *Arhitectura*, 1925, p. 82.

of the contesters. Zefira Voiculescu, *Întru slava eroilor neamului. Istoricul mausoleului de la Mărășești* [For the glory of our heroes. The history of the mausoleum of Mărășești] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1971) is rather a touristic guiding brochure which presents some general information without much references; Valeria Bălescu. *Mausoleul de la Mărășești* [The mausoleum of Mărășești] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1993) used the archive of the Society for the Cult of the Heroes.

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Image 5.23. Interior of the Mărășești Mausoleum.



Bancă în interiorul Mausoleului de la Mărășești.

Arhitecți: G. Cristinel — C. Pomponiu  
Sculptor: Becker

Source: *Arhitectura*, 1925, p. 80.

The mausoleum of Mărășești was a complex set of various buildings erected during the interwar period on the place of the battle of Mărășești (July 9-17, 1917). A “Mărășești” Society was established in January 1918 by the officers of the Second Romanian Army with the aim of commemorating the battle and its fallen soldiers through various types of actions and with the aim of reconstructing the village bearing the same name that was destroyed during the fighting. The honorary president of the society was General Alexandru Averescu followed after his death in 1938 by General Arthur Văitoianu. It took ten years to collect the necessary financial means through donations, public

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subscription, social gatherings and support from the authorities and to reconstruct the destroyed village including a school and a church.

Image 5.24. The Mausoleum of Mărășești, postcard of the 1970s.



Source: ANR-DANIC, fond Ilustrate, nr. 2969.

The construction of the proper mausoleum designed by architect Pandeale Șerbănescu was started in June 1928 and it was finished only in 1941. Due to the events of the Second World War and later its subsequent political transformations that swept the country, the mausoleum was never officially inaugurated. The building has three levels, two of them being placed underground. The first level was organized as a museum of the battle while the second level hosts twelve ossuaries of 5.342 soldiers belonging not only

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to the Romanian army but also to the German and Russian armies. These ossuaries were covered by glasses with a model showing an angel designed by Queen Maria in a style close to Art Nouveau. At the ground level, four sarcophaguses of generals Alexandru Averescu, Alexandru Mărgineanu, Nicolae Arghirescu and Arthur Văitoianu are placed next to crypts of officers. The external decorations were realized by sculptor Aurel Bordenache. One of them represented a higher officer on a horse, a young woman and a child, the second one grouped a large eagle, a soldier on the horse and a pair of parents with two children. Fifteen marble stones list the names of the known fallen soldiers. Two eagles were sculpted by Spiridon Georgescu while a bust of General Alexandru Averescu that was sculpted by Oscar Spaethe was placed in front of the mausoleum.<sup>343</sup>

### 5.3.2. Constantin Brâncuși's monuments of Târgu-Jiu:

Probably best known worldwide are the group of monuments of Târgu-Jiu authored by Constantin Brâncuși in 1937-1938. Brâncuși already proposed in the early 1920s a war monument in the form of a fountain for his native village Hobița (Gorj County) but his proposal was not accepted due to the disagreements between the two commissions that initiated the project. In 1934 or 1935, Aretia Tăttărescu, wife of prime minister Gheorghe Tăttărescu and president of the League of Gorj's Women (*Liga Femeilor Gorjene*),

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<sup>343</sup> Florian Tucă, *Câmpul istoric de la Mărăști. Istoricul mausoleului de la Mărăști* [The historical field of Mărăști. The history of the mausoleum of Mărăști] (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1973) is also more of a touristic guiding brochure; Florian Tucă, "Societatea Mărăști și principalele ei înfăptuiri" [The Mărăști Society and its main realisations] in *Armata și societatea românească* [Army and the Romanian society] Edited by Al. Gh. Savu (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1980), pp. 345-352; Valeria Bălescu, "Mărăști – o promisiune onorată" [Mărăști – a honored promise] in *Eroi și morminte* [Heroes and graves], vol. 2, 2008, pp. 18-63.

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proposed Militza Petrașcu to create a monument commemorating the heavy battles of Jiu Valley of October 1916, a monument to be placed in Târgu-Jiu. Petrașcu already authored a statue of famous Ecaterina Teodoroiu. However, she proposed Constantin Brâncuși for completing the new project.

A newly built road called the Avenue of Heroes's Souls and later Heroes' Avenue (*Calea Sufletelor Eroilor; Calea Eroilor*) united a table and a gate surrounded by chairs, placed at one of its ends, nearby the Jiu River, and a column, placed at the other end. A Heroes' Church was already under construction in the middle at an equal distance from the two ends. The two-piece table is composed out of a support having a diameter of 2m and being 0.45m thick and a table having a diameter of 2.15m and being 0.43m thick. The gate is 5.13m in height, 6.45m in length and 1.69m thick. The column is 29.33m in height and it was made out of 16-17 rhomboid pieces that were initially goldish. Nowadays known as the Table of Silence, Gate of the Kiss and the Column of the Infinite, they initially had a variety of names: the Round Table, the Heroes Portal and the Monument of Gratitude also randomly named in the local archives as the Peace Monument or the Heroes Monument or the Heroes Tower.<sup>344</sup> When a local official proposed placing an eagle on top of the Column, Brâncuși angrily rejected the idea.

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<sup>344</sup> Ion Mocioi, *Brâncuși, Ansamblul sculptural de la Târgu-Jiu (documentar)* [Brâncuși. The sculptures of Târgu-Jiu] (Târgu-Jiu: Comitetul pentru cultură și artă al județului Gorj, 1971) uses local county archives to reconstruct in great detail the moments of constructing each element of the sculptural ensemble; Marielle Tabart, *Brâncuși. Inventatorul sculpturii moderne* [Brâncuși. The inventor of modern sculpture] (Bucharest: Univers, 2009, c1995), pp. 88-91 includes pictures from the inauguration of October 27, 1938.

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The abstract nature of these monuments allowed them being read, approached and interpreted in the most diverse way by viewers with the most diverse cultural backgrounds who projected their own mindsets. The local and military authorities read them during the 1940s as being war monuments, the local priests invested them with religious meaning while art critics and art historians offered them during the Communist regime a variety of interpretations varying in their esthetical, philosophical or ethnographic emphasis.

In conclusions, the dynamics and the characteristics of war monuments constructed in the regions of Muntenia, Dobrogea and Moldavia presents a series of similarities and dissimilarities with those of the war monuments constructed in the decades prior to the First World War. The similarities are represented by the tendency of being concentrated mostly around the cultural, political and economic center of the country, Bucharest, and by the preference given to the employment of an iconography developed in the previous decades which related them to the cultural and political heritage of the Old Kingdom. This is also visible in the continuity of activity for some of the authors hired to create these war monuments. The dissimilarities are more numerous. The number and the density of these monuments increased exponentially besides the high number of war graves created as a part of the policy of war commemorations. Mausoleums and ossuaries were added on the most important places of battle among them the mausoleums of Mărășești and Mărăști reminding the victories of 1917. Carol II's support for finishing this number of extremely visible war monuments during the late

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1930s may be correlated to some extent with his politics of countering the growing influence of the Legionary Movement.

#### **5.4. War monuments in Transylvania, Banat, Bukovina and Bessarabia:**

This section discusses the dynamics and the characteristics of the war monuments constructed as a form of commemorating the First World War in the newly added territories of interwar Romania, especially in Transylvania. The construction of war monuments in these regions be they Romanian, Hungarian or German should be placed against the larger contexts represented by the symbolic affirmation of Romanians' supremacy and the persistence of the Hungarian heritage of public monuments in Transylvania. A final part of this section shortly discusses the 1940 evacuation of the patrimony created by the Romanian state during the interwar period from Northern Transylvania, Southern Dobrogea and Bessarabia.

The traditional image about the role played by the Transylvanians, Romanians or not, in the process of war commemorations during the interwar period is that they were rather silenced if not completely excluded since they fought in the Austrian-Hungarian army. A similar situation is envisioned for the inhabitants of Bukowina and Bessarabia. But this is not an entirely accurate picture. Indeed, the 1920 law for war commemorations focused on the commemoration of those who contributed to the creation of Greater Romania. In addition, the law for war pensions also put the Romanians across the Carpathians who fought in the Romanian army on equal foot to those from the Old

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Kingdom, the only difference being the period of service; while those from the Old Kingdom fought also between August 1916 and February 1918 those from Transylvania were considered active only for the period following November 1918. However, in line with all the other treaties concluding peace at the end of the First World War, the Treaty of Trianon specified the mourning of all those fallen during the war no matter for which army they fought. The 1927 law for the regulation of war graves stipulated the application of this principle no matter of the nationality of the fallen. This possibly eased the process of constructing war monuments by the ethnic and religious minorities.

Image 5.25. German war monument in Friedenstal, Cetatea Albă County, 1929, 3.78m, author August Frieşter.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamental Artelor, dos. 69/1937, ff. 50 and 55. Cost: 125.000 lei

In this context, more than 500 war monuments were constructed in Transylvania, Banat Bukowina and Bessarabia as it was shown in the first section of this chapter, a number which is relatively high. Among them probably around a hundred were war monuments built by the Hungarian communities in their local war cemeteries or nearby Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist churches. About another hundred such war monuments were constructed by the German communities. Some of them may be found in southern Bessarabia as the one in image 5.25. Overall, the construction of war monuments in these regions is similar in their dynamics to the construction of war monuments in the regions of Oltenia, Moldavia and Dobrogea.

The commemoration of the First World War by the Romanian Transylvanians took many forms during the interwar Romania. Many times viewed as being a part of the politics of cultural, political and administrative centralization promoted by the Romanian government based in Bucharest, it had its cultural and political autonomous dynamic as it is visible mostly in the different attitudes towards the day of December 1 shortly presented in the first and the third sections of the fourth chapter of this dissertation, a chapter which deals with the articulation and the dynamics of the policy of war commemoration in interwar Romania. Numerous war monuments were constructed by the Romanian Transylvanians as it is visible in the first section of this chapter while the commemoration of the First World War emphasized the unification of Transylvania with Romania as a local decision. In the same time, their participation in the Austro-Hungarian army or in the prewar Hungarian politics was either silenced or defined as an action for

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the preservation of the Romanian nation. Thus the commemoration of the First World War should be placed in the larger context of affirming the supremacy of the Romanian people in Transylvania sometimes in forms similar to the policy previously promoted by the Hungarian state in the region. This included the changing of the street names, the construction of Orthodox churches and of public monuments as Romanian sites of ceremonies in urban areas where previously the Romanians were in cultural, economic and political minority. The construction of war monuments took place mostly in smaller urban areas or in the countryside.

One of the first forms of commemorations was the change of the street names, Heroes' Boulevard being a title given to some of the most circulated streets of some Transylvanian cities besides the names of Unification Square or the names of the most important Romanian revolutionaries of 1848 as a part of the symbolical affirmation of the Romanian domination. Resources were invested in monuments of a more utilitarian function and immediate need, as it happened during the 1880s-1890s in the Old Kingdom, different if not contrasting with the local urban contexts. Large white Orthodox churches were built in the major Transylvanian cities and state buildings erected during the 1930s preferred modernist architecture, a preference interpreted by the Hungarian communities also as symbols of the Romanians' taking into possession the respective area. However, this was a rather long process where the local actors who had the

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initiative to build the churches spent a long period for negotiating among the local communities and institutions for raising funds and getting people involved.<sup>345</sup>

In addition to churches, statues were dedicated to political figures such as Avram Iancu (Târgu-Mureș) and Vasile Lucaciu (Satu Mare) or to symbols considered to represent the Latin origins of the Romanian people such as the Capitoline Wolf (Cluj, 1921; Târgu-Mureș, 1924; Timișoara, 1926; Alba Iulia, 1933; Satu Mare, 1936), most of the latter statues being received as a gift of the Italian state or Italian cities.

Modernism in architecture followed to some extent models experimented at the time in Italy, examples of such Romanian experiments being in Bucharest at the end of the 1930s the reconstruction of the Royal Palace, the new building of the University of Bucharest as well as the Military Academy.

Sometimes, the symbolic order of a city's public monuments was completely changed as it happened to the city of Oradea. According to the 1937 survey, Romanian public monuments were erected to the kings Ferdinand and Carol II in squares renamed Unirii and Alba Iulia, to Queen Maria in a square bearing the same name as well as to the fallen of the Fifth Rosiori/Cavalry Division. Further, busts were dedicated to the kings Ferdinand and Carol II both situated on Calea Dorobantilor, to Mihai Eminescu in a park bearing the same name, to Barbu Stefanescu Delavrancea in Traian Square and to Iosif Vulcan in Queen Mary Square. Five Hungarian monuments were still preserved: one

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<sup>345</sup> Augustin Ioan, *Power, play and national identity. Politics of modernization in Central and East-European architecture. The Romanian file* (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1999), pp. 15-24; Carmen Popescu, *Le style national roumain*, pp. 211-213; for the analysis of the case study of Cluj Orthodox Cathedral see Liliana Iuga, *Nationalizing the city: monuments Romanianness and public space in interwar Cluj (1919-1933)*, CEU MA Thesis, Budapest, 2010, pp. 60-94.

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dedicated to Saint Ladislau nearby the Catholic Bishopric residence area, two religious statues situated in Traian Park and on Duca Street, a statue of Szascvay Emeric situated in the Eminescu Park, one of Szigligety Ede in Carmen Sylva Park, the latter two being ordered in 1936 by Serviciul M.O.N.T. to be demolished.<sup>346</sup> Monuments dedicated to the unification with Romania were created including a famous monument in Cernowitz (*Monumentul Unirii*) or a smaller one visible below.

Image 5.26. The monument of Romanian unification [Monumentul Unirii] in Cozmeni, Cernăuți County , 1922, probably a photo of 1937, 3m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 69/1937, ff. 47 and 51. Built on the postament of a bust of Franz Joseph, the cost of 3000 lei for its transformation was sponsored a “Clubul Român Unirea”.

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<sup>346</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, f. 199.

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The following four images illustrate the war monuments created by Romanians in Transylvania and Banat. They were placed in Târgu-Mureș (1923), Comlașul Mare (Timiș Torontal County, 1930), Cernatu-Săcele (Brașov County, 1931) and Chesint (Timiș Torontal County, 1935). The one of Cernatu-Săcele was eight meters in height and it was realized at the initiative of the cultural association Astra by Dumitru Mățăoanu. It cost 430.000 lei which were gathered from the contributions of villagers of Cernatu, Satulung, Turcheș and Baci, all from the Brașov County.

Image 5.27: Romanian war monument of Târgu-Mureș, 1923, F. Schmidt.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, f. 46.

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Image 5.28: Romanian war monument of Cernatu-Săcele, Braşov County, 1930-1931.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 107-110.

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Image 5.29: Romanian war monument in Comlașul mare, Timiș Torontal County, 1930, 2.65m, produced by Marschal (Jimbolia).



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamental Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 136 and 173 verso. Cost: 28.000 lei.

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Image 5.30: Romanian war monument of Chesint, Timiș Torontal County, 1935, Granovsky Timișoara, 3.5m



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 150 and 174. Cost: 45.000lei.

There are numerous monuments created by the German communities. A visitor of the German churches of Southern Transylvania and probably also of Banat will discover lists of the fallen which are placed on the walls inside the respective churches.<sup>347</sup> While no such war monument may be found within major cities, they were realized especially

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<sup>347</sup> Bernhard Böttcher, “German First World War memorials in Transylvania”, *Central Europe*, vol. 4, nr. 2, November 2006, pp. 123-130.

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within war cemeteries or nearby churches. The following images illustrate war monuments raised by the Germans of Banat at Tomnatic (1922), Cărpiniș (1925), Grabați (1926) and Comlașul mic (1931).

Image 5.31: German war monument in Tomnatic, Timiș-Torontal County, 1922, Andrei Șipos, 6m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamental Artelor, dos. 68/1937, 129 and 176. Cost: 75.000lei.



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Image 5.33: German war monument in Comlașul mic, Timiș Torontal County, 1931, 3.2m, produced by Marschal (Jimbolia).



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 135 and 173 verso. Cost: 123.000 lei.

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Image 5.34: German war monument in Cărpiniș, Timiș Torontal County, 1925, 3.7m, produced by Marschal (Jimbolia).



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamental Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 149 and 174. Cost: 181.420 lei.

The construction of war monuments by the Hungarian communities was carried out mostly within war cemeteries established at the local level, as a part of the existing

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cemeteries as well as nearby local churches. As it is visible in the images 5.35 and 5.36, the first set of cultural references described in the second section of this chapter is randomly present on the war monuments built during the interwar period no matter if they were Hungarian, German or Romanian, a sign of the common (European-monarchic-military) background for the members of the initiative committees as well as cultural belonging to the cultural paradigm that valorized sacrifice as a form of heroism.

Image 5.35: Hungarian war monument in Ciuc-Sângeorgiu-Bancu, Ciuc County, 1926, 5m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 19 and 25. Built at the initiative of a Gal Coloman Jigodin, it cost 60.000lei.

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Image 5.36: Hungarian war monument in Berveni, Sălaj County, 1932, eroi maghiari, Makai Carol of Carei, 2.5m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 113 and 171. Cost: 17.000 lei.

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However, war monuments created by the Hungarian communities could have been integrated only in their own national historical narrative where Trianon and its social and political consequences represented a trauma which provoked strong feelings for generations. Further, similarly to the Romanian cases of commemorating the fallen of the First World War at a war monument built before the war and thus dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the memorialization of the fallen may have taken place at the existing Hungarian war monuments dedicated to defending the Christendom against the Tartars or to the Honveds defending the 1848 Revolution in Hungary. A rather limited inquiry on this particular set of Hungarian public monuments constructed in Transylvania especially before the First World War remained unanswered.

Illustrative for the correlation between state-building and the construction of public monuments in the decades before and after the First World War, after taking into possession the newly added territories, some of the Romanian local authorities pursued the dismantlement of public monuments built by the Austrian and Hungarian authorities before 1918. As a gesture of elegance which would have signified the symbolic recognition of the new political situation, the Romanian government invited the governments of the states which formerly controlled these territories to pick up the public monuments about to be dismantled. Troubled by its own social problems, there is no sign the Hungarian government accepted the invitation. Thus, in November 1936, in Dej (Hungarian: Dés) the only existing public monuments were a tower in the public park

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built in 1700 for the semi-millennial commemoration of Hungary and a Honved monument built in 1889.<sup>348</sup> In the area of Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda there were still several Hungarian monuments that were taken care by the local communities. These monuments included a 1906 monument in Lăzarea village commemorating the battles with the Tartars while similar ones were placed in Ciceu and Liceleni villages, a 1900 monument in Dănești village in the memory of Queen Sissy/Elisabeth and a similar one in the railways station park of Miercurea Ciuc, a 1899 monument commemorating the 1764 execution of 200 Szecklers by Austrian imperial authorities, and a 1897 monument for 1849 Honved Szecklers died fighting the Russians.<sup>349</sup>

The change of boundaries during the early 1940s most probably contributed to the transformation of the landscape represented by the mass of public monuments from the regions this section is dedicated to. The German-Soviet pact of August 1939, the Romanian-Bulgarian agreement and the Second Vienna Award both of August 1940 led to the cessation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union, of Southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria and of the Northern Transylvania to Hungary. This was followed during the month of September 1940 by the evacuation of the patrimony sponsored by the Romanian state during the interwar period every department of the public institutions administering parts of this patrimony having to make an inventory of it.<sup>350</sup> Public monuments were part of

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<sup>348</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936, f. 11.

<sup>349</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 61/1936, f. 15.

<sup>350</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 22.

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this patrimony and some of the cities petitioned the Romanian authorities to receive these monuments in order to have them emplaced in the main squares.

Among the public monuments built in Bessarabia several of them were evacuated in early September 1940 at Ungheni in order to be sent to the National Museum in Bucharest: the statues of Ferdinand I and Stephen the Great from Chişinău, the statue of Vasile Lupu from Orhei, the statue of a General Poetaş from Tighina as well as a bust of Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu formerly in front of the high school bearing the same name from Chişină. <sup>351</sup> On September 14, 1940, the statues of Ferdinand I and Vasile Lupu were sent to Iaşi and the statue of Stephen the Great was sent to Vaslui. <sup>352</sup> Three busts of Ion Brătianu, Mihai Eminescu and George Enescu, all from Cernăuţi, were reported being sent to the National Museum in Bucharest. <sup>353</sup>

From Silistra a series of public monuments were evacuated as well. A statue of King Ferdinand authored by Dimitriu-Bârlad was evaluated at 1.5 million lei. A bust of Ionel Brătianu was valued 1 million lei and its marble socle valued other 200.000 lei. The monument of the gendarms was evaluated at 500.000 lei while the monument to the war heroes creat by the Society for the Cult of Heroes was valued 1 million lei. <sup>354</sup> The statue of King Ferdinand was solicited by the mayoralities of Cernavodă, Giurgiu and Călăraşi

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<sup>351</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 1.

<sup>352</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 41.

<sup>353</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 5 and 13.

<sup>354</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 25-27.

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for their cities, offering to cover the cost of transport and replacement. In the end, the statue was granted to the city of Călărași.<sup>355</sup>

The Cluj's Romanian Ethnografic Museum of Transylvania directed by Romulus Vuia was moved to Sibiu where it still does exist. The Romanian National Theater and the Romanian Opera both from Cluj were moved to Timișoara.<sup>356</sup>

The evacuation of the painting collection hosted by the Palace of Culture of Cluj on September 2, 1940 was about to degenerate. The mayor dr. Eugen Curta ordered the collection of Romanian paintings including „Carul cu boi” of Nicolae Grigorescu, being sent to the residence of the region (*ținut*) at Târgu-Mureș. The Hungarian community considered that the Hungarian paintings, including one created by Mukács, were also taken away and therefore the next morning a Hungarian civil guard block the evacuation. It is hard to say they were right or not since the report was written by the Romanian authorities justifying their action. A Hungarian delegation headed by Monsignor Jaross and a professor Szigyárto Gavrilă asked that the collection including Romanian paintings paid from the funds of the commune or donated to it should remain. The director of the local paintings collection Aurel Ciupe accepted and the evacuation proceeded without further incidents.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 66-72.

<sup>356</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 39.

<sup>357</sup> ANR-ANIC, fond Ministerul Artelor, dos. 90/1940, ff. 29.

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### 5.5. War monuments since the 1940s:

In the end of this fifth chapter dedicated to the dynamics and the characteristics of war monuments, a few paragraphs are necessary to make understandable the fate of these public and war monuments in the periods following their creation. During the 1940s few public monuments and war monuments were constructed, the territorial changes of 1940 and 1944 contributing to the relocation and sometimes to the destruction of some of these monuments as it was pointed out in the previous section of this chapter. Most of the resources were divested elsewhere and the official historical discourse used numerous other more volatile instruments of disseminating ideas than the public (and the war) monuments. The Heroes' Day continued being celebrated until 1947 on the Ascension Day being replaced by an Army's Day celebrated on October 25. Initially chosen to coincide with King Michael's birthday it marked the liberation of Carei, the last portion of the Romanian territory under German occupation in 1944.

Three groups of heroes or figures deserving celebrated were surveyed in the second chapter of this dissertation. These groups were represented by the historical figures that lived before the nineteenth century, the cultural figures most of them living in the respective century and the group of statesmen or political figures active most of them in the century following the Revolution of 1848. The later groups was the subject of removal not only from the cultural and the political pantheon that was officially promoted but also had the public monuments dedicated to their memory removed from the public areas. Since they were the most contested they are usually the subject of most of the

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historical and art research. Thus following the establishment of the Communist regime in Romania, numerous monuments dedicated to the Romanian political leaders were dismantled if not destroyed in 1948 or immediately after including Ivan Mestrovic's monuments of Carol I, Ferdinand I and Ionel Brătianu in Bucharest. During the 1950s war monuments enjoyed a curious tolerance if not support from a regime preaching peace. Since their greatest majority was dedicated to the common people not only thematically but also as a target audience these war monuments fit in the paradigm of the socialist realism. Sculptors who designed war monuments during the interwar period such as Cornel Medrea and Ion Jalea continued their activity during this period, the latter one being the author of numerous statues dedicated to historical figures during the 1970s. While bronze was the favorite material during the prewar years and stone during the interwar period, concrete became a very much used material during the period of the 1960s to the 1980s.

The growing emphasis on nationalism during the 1960s led to a revalorization of the cultural heritage of the past. This was visible in the reestablishment of the Commission for Historical Monuments in the mid 1960s, the existing monuments especially those dating from the Middle Age started to receive a growing attention. In this context, as shown in the following paragraphs, numerous public monuments dedicated to medieval rulers were erected during the 1970s, especially around 1977 when a century was celebrated since Romania's proclamation of independence in 1877.

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The regime's need for sites dedicated to political and ideological ceremonies is visible in the construction of monuments dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Second World War against Germany. These monuments were used for commemorating the events of August 23, 1944, events that were considered as the founding moment of the Communist regime in Romania even if their significance changed from celebrating Romania's liberation by the Soviet Union to celebrating a local insurrection and later to invoking it as a revolution. In the following lines, based on the dictionary authored by Florina Tucă, I listed most of these monuments in order to better illustrate their topical, regional and chronological clustering and the regime's change from an exclusive antifascist discourse to an encompassing nationalist discourse.

Ploiești's monument to Independence was destroyed during the Second World War but it was restored in 1954 in order to celebrate ten years since August 23, 1944.<sup>358</sup> Monuments to the Soviet soldiers were erected in Bucharest, Iași and Neamț during the 1950s while monuments to the Romanian soldiers fighting in the Second World War against Fascism started to appear during the late 1950s: Stănișești (Bacău County, 1948), Rucăr (Argeș County, 1957), Moreni (Dâmbovița County, 1958), Păulești (Prahova County, 1959), Bacău (1959), Bucu (Ialomița County, 1960), Urziceni, Constanța (1968) and Giurgiu (1976).

Since few public monuments were previously built in the urban areas of Transylvania, the region became a favorite destination for placing new public

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<sup>358</sup> Tucă, 1983, p. 304-5.

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*, monuments: Baia Mare (1959), Moisei (Maramureş County, 1959), Cehu Silvaniei (1959), Arad (1960), Luduş (Mureş County, 1960), Timişoara (1962), Satu Mare (1963), Carei (1964), Târgu Mureş (1964), Sf. Gheorghe (Covasna County, 1973), Miercurea-Ciuc/Csíkszereda (Harghita County, 1974), Sighetul Marmatiei (Maramureş County, 1974), Dej (Cluj County, 1981), Oradea (1982).<sup>359</sup> Besides the symbolical taking into possession of the area in the name of the Romanian people and being used as outlets for disseminating a unitary vision of Romanian history, these monuments were also used as local sites for the local political, ideological and cultural ceremonies, most famously for granting the status of pioneers for pupils in the primary schools.

Since the 1960s and especially during the 1970s a combination of nationalism and class struggle became the hegemonic historical discourse in the public sphere before becoming the preamble of the Romanian Communist Party's program of 1977.<sup>360</sup> Historical movies exploring local roots brought forward and popularized themes of national history. Street names changed during the late 1940s and early 1950s to celebrate class struggle in the Romanian context and the friendship between the People's Republic of Romania and the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics were changed back to their original names when they did not honor people and events that were not welcomed or antagonized by the official historical discourse. In a time when every child above the age

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<sup>359</sup> Mircea Deac, "9 mai 1945 – 9 mai 1985. Monumentele victoriei" [May 9, 1945 – May 9, 1985. The monuments to victory], *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de artă*, vol. 16, nr. 1, 1985, pp. 3-7.

<sup>360</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie: cazul comuniștilor români: 1944-1977* [Politics and history: the case of the Romanian communists, 1944-1977] (München: Jon Dumitru Verlag, 1981) is still the best analysis on this issue.

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of three received a uniform (*Șoimii Patriei* and *Pionierii*), topics related to national history were disseminated through a series of media and the military type of heroism became a propaganda tool for the regime. During the 1980s pupils were offered Dumitru Almaș' *Povestiri istorice* [Historical stories]<sup>361</sup> while a militarized version of national history became the almost exclusively disseminated discourse epitomized by the publication of *Istoria militară a poporului român* [The military history of the Romanian people].<sup>362</sup> The military museum in Bucharest was reorganized during the 1970s and it was given a large building in front of the Central Military Hospital. After the closing of the most of the sections of the Museum of National History in the early 1990s, the military museum is still the largest museum in Bucharest which is not placed in an open space.

Statues of the major figures of the nationalist pantheon of Ceaușescu's regime were erected in every major city during the 1970s and the 1980s. They are also war monuments since they were created in order to illustrate the official discourse focused on the unity of all people around their leaders and on the history of the continuous struggle against foreign invasions, a theme very much valued after Nicolae Ceaușescu's standing out against the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.<sup>363</sup> Especially

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<sup>361</sup> Dumitru Almaș, *Povestiri istorice: pentru copii și scolari, șoimi ai patriei și pionieri* [Historical stories: for children and pupils, hawks of patria and pioneers] Two volumes (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1987)

<sup>362</sup> *Istoria militară a poporului român* [The military history of the Romanian people], six volumes (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1984-1989).

<sup>363</sup> Decree 117 of October 23, 1975 concerning the war graves and the commemorative works stated: "Cinstirea memoriei celor care și-au jertfit viața în lupta pentru libertatea și independența patriei, precum și

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Transylvania benefited of this attention for historical figures. Michael the Brave was embodied by some of the largest monuments such as the equestrian statues in Alba-Iulia (Oscar Han, 1968); Cluj (Marius Butunoiu, 1976) and Sf. Gheorghe (Covasna County, 1982); while smaller monuments commemorated his victory of Gurăslău (Sălaj County, 1976) and his death nearby Turda (Cluj County, Marius Butunoiu, 1977). Decebal and Avram Iancu were the other two most important historical figures celebrated in Transylvania. The first one received an equestrian statue in Deva (Ion Jalea, 1976) and a bust in Timișoara (1977), Burebista receiving only a monument in the Măgura artistic camp (Buzău County, 1979). Avram Iancu benefited from a monument in his birthplace in Alba County (1972) and a second equestrian statue in Târgu-Mureș (1978), the first one built during the interwar period being moved to Campeni, Alba County, in 1940.

In Muntenia, Mircea the Elder was one of the first instrumentalized and honored historical figures with monuments in Râmnicu-Vâlcea (Ion Irimescu, 1966), Turnu Măgurele (Oscar Han, 1970), Tulcea (Ion Jalea, 1972), Constanța (Marius Butunoiu, 1972). Vlad the Impaler received only one monument in Giurgiu (1977). In Moldavia, Stephen the Great represented the local great hero with statues in Vaslui (1972) and Piatra Neamț (Oscar Han, 1974) and monuments in Băcăoani (Vaslui County, 1975), Suceava (1977) and Iași (Marius Butunoiu, 1979). In many cases, the inauguration of these monuments during the 1970s benefited from the presence of Nicolae Ceaușescu. Besides emphasizing the newly built civic centers, creating a site for the local official

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pentru apărarea cuceririlor revoluționare ale oamenilor muncii, constituie una din tradițiile scumpe ale poporului român și, totodată, un mijloc important pentru educarea patriotică a maselor”; *Buletinul oficial al Republicii Socialiste România*, anul XI, nr. 111, partea I, 30 octombrie 1975, p. 1.

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ceremonies, illustrating the narrative of national unity at the local level, one can only imagine that one of the major factors in constructing these monuments was their strategic utility in the local and county officials' competition for attracting and indulging Ceaușescu's attention, the Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party personally taking part in the inauguration of most of these monuments. Adherence to the narrative of national history, many times used as a wooden language by the cultural and political activists reflecting their lack of sophistication and many times cynicism, was their way to connect to the political center and solidify their legitimacy in controlling the local context.

After 1989, most of these public monuments were not contested and they are still visible in the urban tissues they were originally placed. The few remaining monuments dedicated to the major figures of Marxism-Leninism were removed while numerous other monuments using in their greatest majority the form of the cross in different ways were built in order to commemorate the victims of the Communist regime. In Transylvania, restoring Hungarian monuments dedicated to 1848 stirred ample debates during the 1990s.

Overall, public monuments constructed since the 1940s are not only a reflection of the changing political regimes but also of the changing situation of the idea of the historical heritage created during one period of time or another. The heritage represented by the war monuments created during the first half of the twentieth century in Romania fell into oblivion when related to their initial scope. Some parts of it, considered iconic

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for Bucharest for example, was integrated into an esthetical perspective and this contributed to their preservation in rather good conditions. Other parts of it were integrated into a program of civic education through the Pioneers' Organization, some aspects of its iconological significance being congruent with the discourse of military heroism that was widely disseminated during the 1970s and 1980s in Romania. However, most of this patrimony was rather ignored no efforts for its preservation being made at a time when the entire historical and cultural patrimony was in danger in Romania.

#### 5.6. **Conclusions:**

Chapter Five was dedicated to surveying the dynamics and the characteristics of war monuments constructed during the interwar period which represents the most visible and the most palpable indicator of the impact of the policy of war commemorations during the same period. Therefore, the war monuments were approached as an intersection of the regulations prescribed as the part of the policy of war commemorations and of the (vernacular) initiative belonging to the individuals and social groups who took part in the First World War. While the policy was inscribed in the cultural continuity with the Old Kingdom of Romania where the historical memory based on the concept of military heroism played a major part in the articulation of the Romanian nationalism, the vernacular character of the war monuments reveals a plurality of dissimilarities and similarities that go beyond the regional, ethnical and religious boundaries. As previously pointed out, Romanians from Transylvania were not excluded at all by the policy of war

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commemoration. On the contrary, their inclusion was explicit. Certainly, the public space under the direct authority of the Romanian officials received only monuments dedicated to the pantheon of heroes promoted as a part of the cultural continuity with the Old Kingdom. Nevertheless the communities usually called ethnic and religious minorities in the framework of the nation-state constructed their own war monuments as a part of their old cemeteries where sections of war monuments were also established as well as nearby their churches.

The construction of war monuments was the result of a series of factors that were discussed at a greater length in the second chapter. The process started in Romania in the last decades of the nineteenth century with some tens of war monuments being constructed between 1906 and 1914 being dedicated to the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 and in the Second Balkan War. The years around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century were a period when the occasions for public celebrations multiplied, the political participation in the public sphere intensified, when professional groups able to promote public art became quite active and a public able to read it and enjoy it took form and, not the least, when resources became more readily available for being invested in a variety of public buildings and public monuments. Still, the greatest part of the war monuments under discussion was erected in the interwar period in the context of the social, economic and political consequences of the First World War and of the policy of commemorating those who died during the war. During the 1940s resources for building new war monuments became limited due to the

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Second World War and the subsequent Soviet occupation. Later, war monuments fell into oblivion before being recuperated especially during the Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime and turned again into sites of public rituals and political participation.

In the context of the interwar period, the events of the First World War were integrated in the hegemonic narrative of the Romanian national history as representing the most important events that led to the creation of Greater Romania; the massive demographic losses and the high number of people physically affected by the war as well as the presence of the veterans contributed to a process of mourning that was converted through the law of 1920 into a policy of war commemorations; many of the committees which initiated the construction of war monuments were already formed before the war and they had the experience of constructing the war monuments dedicated to 1877-1878 and 1913; formed out by military officers, teachers, priests and local notabilities, older and newly established committees promoted the idea of public monuments, gathered the necessary funds, selected the authors and sometimes amended the projects; the group of artists able to offer models of projects was active since the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries and some of them had the experience of creating war monuments before the war; the funds raised through a diversity of means were available as before, scarcely, and this contributed to the lengthening of the process of constructing the war monument over several years in most of the cases and to more than a decade in the case of the larger projects.

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The main source for analyzing the dynamics of the war monuments constructed during the interwar period was represented by a survey created in 1937. It was the result of a request addressed to all the county prefects by the Commission for Public Monuments in charge during the 1930s and the 1940s with the artistic quality of all the newly constructed public monuments. This survey provided information for fifty-two counties while information for the other nineteen is missing. Even for the counties where reports were sent by the local prefects, information is neither complete nor systematic and a reserve on its accuracy should be preserved at all times. It was ordered especially due to the vernacular character of the process of constructing war monuments during the 1920s, it details lists of war monuments constructed in the countryside while information on the war monuments constructed or under construction in the cities is missing which it suggest it was ordered especially to cover information that was not known to the members of the Commission for Public Monuments.

On the basis of a statistical analysis of the raw data one may find in this survey, the total number of war monuments reported to the above mentioned commission was 1.373 for fifty-two counties out of the seventy-one counties Romania had during the interwar period. The war monuments one could find the major cities including Romania were not reported. These data combined suggest that the total number of war monuments constructed during the interwar period was more than 2.000. There were 137 in Oltenia, 524 in Muntenia, 36 in Dobrogea, 129 in Moldavia, some of the most relevant counties such as Putna, Tecuci, Covurlui and Tutova missing from the report, 21 in Bukowina, 48

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in Bessarabia, 171 in Banat, 158 in southern Transylvania and 149 in northern Transylvania. Among them close to a hundred were constructed by the Hungarian communities and about another hundred were constructed by the German communities but this is a personal estimation. Overall, there were 826 war monuments built in the Old Kingdom and 547 war monuments built in the newly added territories. The lowest numbers of war monuments are in the most eastern provinces, Bukowina, Bessarabia and Dobrogea while the highest number of war monuments was in the region of Muntenia, the distribution in the other five regions being pretty even. In other words and numbers, there were 697 war monuments in the regions of Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea, 198 war monuments in the regions of Moldavia, Bukowina and Bessarabia and 478 war monuments existing in the regions of Transylvania and Banat.

The source of funding was mentioned for some of the war monuments discussed in this chapter. Few of these monuments were constructed by or with the support of the Society for the cult of the heroes, some monuments were entirely constructed by individual people, other monuments were the result of public contests especially if they were constructed in the major cities of the country. The greatest majority of these war monuments were constructed by the local communities no matter of their religious and ethnic background. The members of the initiative committees were military officers, teachers who fought during the war, local notabilities and local priests. They were those who attracted the support of people, who gathered the necessary funds, who selected the authors, who accepted and eventually amended the projected monuments and who

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organized and participated in the ceremonies of inauguration and annual commemorations. Thus, they implemented the policy of war commemorations discussed in the fourth chapter, intended mostly as a form of honoring those who served it, as a form of celebrating the legitimacy of Greater Romania, of creating social cohesion and educating the younger generations, and in the same time they articulated the voices and the interest of the mass of participants in the complex process of commemoration such as the veterans and the war widows, interested in the mourning of their dead and in the recognition of their effort. The activity of some of these committees was partially discussed when dealing with the monuments of Bucharest.

In spite of their tremendous increase in number during the interwar period, reflecting the impact of the First World War, the iconography of the war monuments was part of a historical series that spread especially during the nineteenth century thus revealing rather continuities with the past. The iconography is also to some extent relevant for understanding the social and the professional background of the members of these committees of initiative. It was not my intention to pursue a systematic description of all war monuments created in the period under discussion. This should be the focus of an entirely different dissertation.

Based on observing and analyzing the monuments presented in this dissertation and several others present in the 1937 survey, I distinguished four sets of cultural references that were employed in the design of the war monuments constructed during the interwar period, these sets of references being used by different groups for their own

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purposes, in different ways at different times, the groups suffering many times a complex dynamic themselves. The first set of references was related to a set of symbols associated with the idea of authority, an idea of authority represented by the state or by the monarch and especially by their instrument of exercising their monopoly of violence that was the army. During the nineteenth century they were closely linked to the idea of nation and their distribution was assured especially as a part of the process of monument building. This first set of symbols included the eagle as the sign of imperial authority and military supremacy, the laurels, the oak leaves, the obelisks, the Latin form of the alphabet, the swords and the keyword used in the inscriptions such as “honor”, “glory”, “hero-ism”, “sacrifice”, “patria” and “nation”. This first set of cultural references is randomly present on the war monuments built during the interwar period no matter if they were Hungarian, German or Romanian, an indicator and a sign of the common (European-monarchic-military) background for the members of the initiative committees as well as cultural belonging to the cultural paradigm that valorized physical self sacrifice as a form of heroism and the rules of obedience and chain of command as the norm of the social conduct. In the Romanian context, they signal the continuity with the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom. In the case of the Hungarian and German communities they belonged to the set of symbols associated with the Hungarian nationalism or with the Habsburg monarchy.

The following three sets of cultural references are present exclusively on war monuments constructed at the initiative of committees composed exclusively or in their

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greatest majority by Romanians. Statistically, the first set of references gave form to more than eighty percent of the war monuments built on the present territory of Romania. The second set of references appealed to or originated from the Roman heritage. This set of references included to some extent most of the references described above such as the eagle, the obelisk and the laurels. However, they were used particularly in Romanian contexts in order to remind the Roman ancestry of the Romanian people. This cultural vocabulary taken more or less directly from the locally prized Roman heritage is best visible in the construction of the Mausoleum of Mărășești. The third set of references was represented by elements reminding of the visual style employed in the decoration of the Orthodox church of the Danubian Principalities. They are visible in the inscription of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier already presented in the introduction of this dissertation as well as a part of the interior decorations of the Mausoleum of Mărășești and especially in the form and in the decorations of the numerous *troița* created around the country as war monuments. Further, the cross was also present in three ways: as a symbol on top of an obelisk of various forms; in the form of the entire monuments as it was the case of the Cross of Caraiman; and, most the times when visible, under the form of the Romanian military decoration associated with the participation in the war, “The commemorative cross of the war” (*Crucea comemorativă a Războiului*), a decoration with a special design issued during and after the war following a similar French model. Finally, the fourth set of references may be related to the artistic language of modernism which started being employed during the 1930s in Romania, war monuments in this

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group being Lidia Kotzebue's and Josif Fekete's monument to the aviation heroes and Constantin Brâncuși's group of monuments of Târgu-Jiu.

Did this iconography reflecting the policy of war commemorations and the cult of the military heroism exclude women? Yes and no. On the one hand, if one privileges the perspective of the context, these monuments were celebrating real fighting on the frontline and sometimes direct war effort. There was no war industry to be filled with women at that time in Romania. Therefore women are represented only when they actually took part in the war as sanitary and railroad personnel while exceptional individuals such as Ecaterina Teodoroiu were turned into public figures. However, men were also excluded since these war monuments were dedicated only to those men who fought and eventually died during the war. On the other hand, if one privileges the perspective of today, women's effort was not recognized or not recognized enough indeed. However, this may tend to extend categories of analysis of the present to contexts where they did not exist (and this is a normal thing to do since they help "translate" realities otherwise un-accessible to our mind) in a similar way the category of nation was projected into the period of the Middle Age and even during the Ancient times. The gender of heroism was basically set in a religious paradigm in which the concept of family was more important than the concepts of men or women as individuals. Thus, sacrifice was not entirely individual, mothers, sisters, fiancées or wives being affected as well by the political and military decisions praised or contested as a part of the politics of war commemoration.

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The differences in the iconography of the interwar war monuments consisted in the regional, ethnic and religious combinations of these cultural references analytically discussed in this chapter in addition to a difference of conceiving the concept of the public monument which also reveals differences in the aesthetic education of the individuals involved. It is rather hard to say to what extent there was any competition between the political center and the local communities. The political center included the professional groups discussed several times in this dissertation as being the historical actors active in promoting and implementing the politics of war commemorations. They were also the most active in disseminating the idiom of nationalism that connected them with the plurality of socially and regionally diverse communities of people who also used this idiom that was at the time the only political idiom made available. As mentioned before if contestation was visible it came mainly from people who did not see any meaning in this historically grounded and culturally embedded political idiom of nationalism or from people who did not share the aesthetical background necessary to read and enjoy this category of public monuments represented by the war monuments.

There are several other similarities and dissimilarities of these war monuments. The case-study of Bucharest was used in this Chapter Five as an illustration of the entire process and in the same time it was pointed that it represented to some extent an exception while attention was given to the regional characteristics. The war monument was the almost only form of public monument in the smaller cities and especially in the countryside. Since no other local individual proved significant in some way to the

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memory of the respective local communities and the First World War was definitely a major event for the lives of the respective local communities, the war monument was most of the times the first such public monument. Constructed in villages, towns or cities, most of the war monuments discussed in this chapter were placed in a square or an open space in the close proximity of a building hosting an administrative institution or an institution of education when they were constructed with the support of the Romanian authorities or nearby local churches or within cemeteries of various confessions, Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist or Jewish. In Bucharest, the twelve war monuments were placed in areas that were peripheral at the time or under restructuring. They are more sophisticated from an artistic point of view and all four sets of cultural references discussed in the previous subsection are present and combined sometimes in a creative way. Mausoleums and ossuaries were added on the most important places of battle among them the mausoleum of Mărășești reminding the victories of 1917. Carol II's support for finishing a number of extremely visible war monuments during the late 1930s may be correlated to some extent with his politics of countering the growing influence of the Legionary Movement.

*Chapter Six.*

**Cultural appropriations of the war experience at the individual level**

Chapter Four analyzed the policy of war commemorations in interwar Romania as it was debated and promoted by the political center while Chapter Five focused on the dynamics of constructing war monuments in interwar Romania as an intersection of the policy aimed at regulating and stimulating the process of commemoration and the practical involvements of various groups of people. This Chapter Six aims at discussing the memorialization of the First World War at the individual level through analyzing how the war experienced was approached in the public sphere and the level of participation in the politics of war commemoration.

This individual level of participation was touched in various ways in the previous chapters. Legislation was the results of different individuals belonging to a variety of

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social groups but the major references of their conceptions were nonetheless inscribed in a cultural basin that was described mostly in the first chapter of this dissertation. Many members of the committees established for initiating and taking care of constructing war monuments contributed mostly in a passive way by offering financial contributing or taking part in the meetings and ceremonies.

This number of individuals who took part rather in a passive way was represented by the mass of war veterans and their families and needed symbolic and material recognition for their participation in the war; the families of those who died in the war and for whom the process of mourning was the most acute; the groups of war disabled, war orphans and war widows; and the mass of younger generations who did not take part in the war and for whom the educational purpose of the policy of war commemorations was intended. For most of them novels such as those of Cezar Petrescu and Camil Petrescu were written. They were those who willingly or unwillingly participated in the public ceremonies staged during the national days and at the Heroes' Day as well as at the inauguration of the war monuments.

This chapter consists of two parts. A first part of discusses the way how the experience of the First World War was echoed in a series of novels and recollections published mostly during the 1920s while a second part shortly analyzes the public participation in the construction and at the inauguration of war monuments as well as at celebrating the Heroes' Day most of the times at the sites of war monuments.

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### 6.1. The war experience in arts and literature:

Romania did not experience a “Lost Generation” as Great Britain did, at least not at the level of the political, cultural and social elites. This had an important impact on the whole process of commemorating the Great War and in constructing war monuments in Greater Romania. Those able to read, to write and to convey ideas were limited in their number. Most of them either benefited from a limited military training as baccalaureats and they were conscripted as reserve officers or they had the connections to get conscripted in the war administration. Few were those fighting in the first line as Ștefan Zeletin, Camil Petrescu, Nicolae Tonitza or George Topârceanu did, the last three being taken prisoners, or lost their arm as Ion Jalea did. Others could take a closer look at the homefront as Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and Nichifor Crainic did while being a nurse and respectively as a sanitary during the war. Most of the intellectuals who were not conscriptable worked as war journalists as it was the case of Nicolae Iorga, Mihail Sadoveanu, Octavian Goga or Gala Galaction. Others had relatives who fought or died during the war as it was the case of Liviu Rebreanu who wrote his *Pădurea spânzuraților* [The forest of the hanged] inspired by the death of his brother Emil Rebreanu or Oscar Han whose brother, Constantin Han, was conscripted as a sergeant in the 50<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment “Putna” and died in the battles around Dragoslavele.

This situation had several consequences. On the one hand, at the level of the political, cultural and social elites, the direct experience of war was rather silenced, a memory boom in the years immediately after the war concentrating mostly on debating

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the erroneous decisions of 1916 and sometimes the behavior during the war, participants in this debate most of the times seeking explanation and justification of their own acts especially if they were publicly perceived as coward or incompetent. On the other hand, especially during the 1920s, with notable exceptions, the construction of war monuments was rather the result of vernacular initiative. The initiators of the public committees aimed at gathering funds for constructing war monuments were in their greatest majority direct participants in the war such as military of all ranks, teachers who were also conscripted and relatives of the fallen. The policy of war commemorations rather followed than set the process of commemoration while in the same time it sought to make it systematic and to involve as many people as possible.

Silencing the experience of the war at the level of the elites had several reasons. Firstly, the most important was above explained and it consisted in a lack of direct experience of the frontline, the experience that would have legitimized at that time in Romania a written opinion on the war experience. While privileged or at least given an equal foot by the cultural historians of the last decades, the experience of the home front was not considered as legit enough for a public statement since the heaviest part of the population experienced it to some extent and it was probably considered too well known for being explained. This is probably why few written recollections about the direct experience of the war were preserved, by these recollections understanding reflections on the experience of the life in the trenches, combat and forms of escapism, recollections so much valued by the cultural historians of the First World War. Secondly, a great part of

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the cultural elites was educated in Germany. Some of them campaigned for the alliance with the Central Powers, several of them remained in the occupied territory and after the war they were judged and convicted as it were the cases of Constantin Stere and Tudor Arghezi among others. While part of an oral tradition, this experience was rather silenced until recently not only at the level of the public memory but also in the Romanian historiography, the positive outcome of the war being the focus for most of the Romanian historians dealing with the period. Thirdly, numerous members of the social elites who took refuge at Iași in 1916-1918 enjoyed a standard of living which many times contrasted with the misery of the troops and the rest of the population who sought refuge in the region of Moldavia as well.<sup>364</sup> Finally, if none of these personal reasons were the case, then bringing up the negative experiences of the war would have been interpreted as questioning the outcome of the string of events debuted in 1916 and ended with the Treaty of Trianon.<sup>365</sup>

There was no Romanian equivalent for Henri Barbusse's *Le feu* (1916), the French novel rapidly distinguished with the Goncourt Prize and translated into Romanian

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<sup>364</sup> A four pages letter of Ștefan [Motăș] Zeletin to Vasile Bogrea, dated January 7, 1917, makes this complain, AMR-DANIC, Fond Colecția de personalități etc., dos. Vasile Bogrea, ff. 2-4.

<sup>365</sup> While all approaches to the history of interwar Romania inevitably include the First World War and its consequences of different sorts as one of the major factors, few accounts deals with the reception of the war experience during the interwar period or its instrumentalization by various cultural and social groups. See Traian Sandu, "Mémoire de la Première Guerre mondiale au sein des jeunes droites roumaines de l'entre-deux-guerres," *Mémoire de la Première Guerre mondiale en Europe médiane*, special issue of *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines*, vol. 55, nr. 228, Oct-Dec. 2007, pp. 7-21; *La Grande Guerre. Histoire et mémoire collective en France et en Roumanie*. Edited by Christophe Prochasson and Florin Țurcanu, New Europe College, Bucharest, 2010 and especially Bucur, *Heroes and victims*, pp. 73-97.

Silviu Hariton, *War commemorations in inter-war Romania*, as well by Felix Aderca.<sup>366</sup> The social-democratic groups were thin in their number, many of them joined the Liberal party at the turn of the centuries and their moderate agenda consisted in pressing for the land and electoral reforms already discussed in Chapter Three. Some of them remained in the area occupied by the Central Powers while others took refuge in Moldavia as well and created *Partidul Muncii* in early 1917 following the Russian Revolution or joined Alexandru Averescu's *Partidul Poporului* a year later.

The experience of the Great War was highly debated in the interwar Romanian public sphere, a flood of memoirs, diaries and historical accounts being issued mostly during the 1920s. Maria Bucur discussed some of them in a chapter of *Heroes and victims*,<sup>367</sup> I would limit my account only to survey some of the topics and titles. The sequence of events which brought Romania on the side of the Antante, the extremely low level of preparation for war of the Romanian troops (mainly the lack of heavy artillery and machine guns), the responsibility of political and military decisions before and especially after August 1916 were debated mostly during the 1920s. They are quite diverse in their focus. There were debates about the strategic decisions during the war or recollections from the centers of political and military decisions authored by general Dumitru Iliescu, Alexandru Averescu, Nicolae Iorga and Constantin Kirişescu. There were recollections from the battles written by former combatants, rank and file soldiers and recollections from the periods of captivity in Bulgaria or Central Europe. There were

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<sup>366</sup> Henri Barbusse. *Prăpădul. Din jurnalul unei căprării*. Translation by Felix Aderca (Bucharest: Editura I. Brănişteanu, 1918).

<sup>367</sup> Maria Bucur, *Heroes and victims*, pp. 73-97

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numerous recollections of the daily life during the war and some of them were discussed by Maria Bucur in her *Heroes and victims*.

Furthermore, a group of artists including Jean Al. Steriadi (1880-1956), Camil Ressu (1880-1962), Nicolae Dărăscu (1883-1959), Cornel Medrea (1888-1964), Ion Jalea (1887-1983), Oscar Han (1891-1976), Ion Teodorescu-Sion (1882-1939) and Ștefan Dimitrescu (1886-1933) were mobilized and attached to the general headquarters of the Romanian army (*Marele Cartier General*). Similar to many Romanian intellectuals active during the interwar period, they were born during the 1880s and the 1890s thus being in their late twenties, thirties or early forties at the time of the First World War, still young enough to be impressionable and mature enough to be able of reflection. They were encouraged to depict the experience of war, General Constantin Prezan intending to establish a national military museum at the end of the war. A first exhibition of this group was organized in Iași in January 1918. After being demobilized they organized themselves in the society “Arta Română” later joined by Nicolae Tonitza (1886-1940) and Dumitru Paciurea (1873-1932).<sup>368</sup> They organized exhibitions in Iași and Bucharest including artifacts inspired by the war experience, mostly known being Dimitrie Paciurea’s *The god of war*. Later, in 1919 and 1920, the theme of war has dominated the Saloon of the Romanian Sculptors, but this time painter Francisc Șirato, one of the most influential art critics during the interwar period, has condemned the sentimental rhetoric

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<sup>368</sup> Barbu Brezianu, “Gruparea ‘Arta Română’ (1918-1926)” [The ‘Arta Română’ group, 1918-1926], *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria artă plastică*, vol. 11, nr. 1, 1964, pp. 144-151.

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of this type of sculpture, considering it non-artistic.<sup>369</sup> Probably as a consequence, the war experience was rarely approached by the most important painters and sculptors. Other paintings or simple sketches were drawn by the rather unknown Albin Stănescu, Emilian Damian, A Mogoș, Dragoș Petrescu, I. Burghard, D. Stoica, Emilian Lăzărescu, Murnu, Manasiu Crețulescu while the known Iosif Iser (1881-1958) painted a “Soldier” and Camil Ressu paid attention to Ecaterina Teodoroiu.

Furthermore, I could trace three interwar movies which seem to be dedicated to the war experience out of eighty-four movies in the period 1912-1947: *Datorie și sacrificiu* (Duty and sacrifice, 1925) by Ion Sahighian, *Vitejii neamului* (The braves of..., 1927) by Ghiță Popescu (photos), and *Ecaterina Teodoroiu* (1930) by Niculescu Brumă (photos). Caricatures were published in the journal edited by the Society for the cult of the heroes (*România Eroică*) and some of them were reproducing ethnic stereotypes that circulated among the Romanian officers, referring to the Jews and especially to the Roma people.

War literature developed especially during the 1920s. Mihail Sadoveanu authored *Bloody files: stories and impressions of the frontline* [File sângerate: povestiri și impresii de pe front] (1917) and later the novel *The Lăpușneanu Street* (1923), Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu shared her experience in *Balaurul* (1923) while Ion Minulescu has written *Red, Yellow and Blue* [Roșu, Galben și Albastru] (1924) which places a love story during the

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<sup>369</sup> Ioana Vlasiu, “Emile Antoine Bourdelle și sculptura interbelică din România” [Emile Antoine Bourdelle and the Romanian sculpture during the interwar period] in *Influențe franceze în arhitectura și arta din România secolelor XIX și XX* [French Influence on Romanian art and architecture of nineteenth and twentieth centuries] Edited by Augustin Ioan (Bucharest: Editura ICR, 2006), pp. 125-127.

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retreat to Iași from the late 1916. War poetry has been written by Octavian Goga, Nichifor Crainic, Camil Petrescu and several others. Still, the most important novels were Liviu Rebreanu's *The forrest of the hanged* [Pădurea spânzuraților] (1922),<sup>370</sup> Cezar Petrescu's *Darkening* [Întunecare] (1927-1928) and *The eyes of the ghost* [Ochii strigoiului] (1942) and Camil Petrescu's *Last night of love, first night of war* [Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război] (1930). The chronology of writing and publishing these novels correlates with an intense interest among the reading public in the early 1920s, an interest in the war experience which later decayed and during the 1930s it became quite thin.

Henri Barbusse's *Le feu* (1916), Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*; Arnol Zweig's *The case of sergeant Grischa* (1927), Erich Maria Remarque's *All quiet on the Western front* (1929) and Hemingway's *Farewell to arms* (1929) were translated into Romanian only during the 1960s. However, even if I did not attempt to trace their direct reception, it is safe to assume they were known from their French translations or from the Hollywood versions of Remarque's and Hemingway's novels (1930 and 1932). Hollywood movies were very popular in interwar Romania and this was visible to some extent in the structure of Cezar Petrescu's, Mihail Sebastian's and others' novels. Only Ernst Jünger's 1920 version of *Storm of steel* seems to have been extremely popular since it already had its fifth Romanian edition in 1924, but this must be interpreted also as an interest for the German point of view visible also in a number of translations of books on

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<sup>370</sup> Liviu Rebreanu. *Forrest of the hanged*. Translated from Romanian by A.V.Wise (London: Peter Owen, 1967);

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the battles from 1916-1918. It is not excluded that Jünger's have been circulated mostly among the former combatants of the K.u.K. army.<sup>371</sup>

In the following lines I shortly describe three novel and three recollections which either are the most famous or best illustrates the large palette of attitudes towards the war experience.<sup>372</sup> The novels are Liviu Rebreanu's (1885-1944) *Pădurea spânzuraților* [Forrest of the hanged] (1922), Cezar Petrescu's (1892-1961) *Întunecare* [Darkening] (1927-1928) and Camil Petrescu's (1894-1957) *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* [Last night of love, first night of war] (1930)<sup>373</sup> while the recollections taken into discussion are Ștefan Zeletin's (1882-1934) *Retragerea* [The Retreat] (1926), Gheorghe Brătianu's *File rupte din cartea războiului* [Pages torn from the book of war] (1934) and George Topârceanu's (1886-1937) *Pirin-Planina, epizoduri tragice și comice din captivitate* (1936).<sup>374</sup> For the background, George Topârceanu was taken prisoner after the lost battle of Turtucaia in September 1916 and he spent two years as a POW in Bulgaria while Camil Petrescu after fighting on the frontline was taken prisoner in 1917 by the Hungarians.

<sup>371</sup> Ernst Jünger, *Prin furtuni de oțel: carnetul unui comandant de detașament de asalt*. Translation from the German by Victor Timcu, Fifth edition (s.l. : s.n., 1924)

<sup>372</sup> Most of the ideas presented in the following lines were developed in a paper "War Commemorations in Inter-War Romania: Cultural Politics and Social Context" presented at the conference "Sacrifice and regeneration. The legacy of the Great War in interwar Eastern Europe", University of Southampton, September 13-15, 2007.

<sup>373</sup> Liviu Rebreanu. *Pădurea spânzuraților* (București: Editura pentru literatură, 1966); Cezar Petrescu. *Întunecare*. Preface by Mihai Gafița. 2vol. (București: Editura pentru Literatură, 1966); Camil Petrescu. *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* [The last night of love, the first night of war] (București: Editura Tineretului, 1962).

<sup>374</sup> Ștefan Zeletin. *Retragerea* (București, 1926); Gheorghe Brătianu. *File rupte din cartea războiului* (București: Cultura Națională, 1934); George Topârceanu. *Pirin-Planina, epizoduri tragice și comice din captivitate* (București, 1936), reedited in *Pagini de proză*. Antologie și postfață de Mihail Iordache (Iași: Editura Junimea, 1985), pp. 148-267.

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While Liviu Rebreanu does not insist on war horrors and Ștefan Zeletin is using his story of war experience to violently denounce the discrepancies between the lacks from the frontline versus the abundance from the back of the front and the incompetence of the Romanian military and political leaders, Cezar Petrescu and Camil Petrescu (no kinship relation) place their main characters in the middle of the war experiences largely depicting fighting moments and from time to time describing atrocities their characters could observe. For the case of the last two, Gheorghe Brătianu and George Topârceanu, the first one is sober in his attitude while the other one is constructing his story as a travel account into an exotic land, sometimes describing the summarily executions of the Romanian POW by some Bulgarians soldiers when they wanted to rob them or when they did not have food or water for the prisoners.

Already famous for his first novel, *Ion* (1920), Liviu Rebreanu developed a sketch he already published in the same year, *Catastrofa* (The catastrophe), in order to depict the drama of his own brother Emil who was an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army and have been hanged for treason on the Romanian front while trying to cross the lines. The main character of *Pădurea spânzuraților*, Apostol Bologa, is a reserve officer on the Galician front doing his duty without questioning too much his own consciousness, as it was visible in the moment of assisting at the hanging of a Czech officer, Svoboda, who tried to cross the lines to the Russians. Only in the moment when he finds out he is going to be moved to the Romanian front, he tries to convince his superiors either to be kept in Galicia or to be sent to the Italian front. After a period of hesitation and several

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attempts to cross the lines, he is arrested and hanged like Svoboda. “Duty” and “nationality” are the main keywords of the novel, the names are symbolically chosen (apostle and svoboda/liberty) but the war scenes are not present while the horrors of the war are not even suggested. Dramatization of the novel won Liviu Ciulei the Cannes Film Festival prize for direction in 1965. Liviu Rebreanu has also written the sketch *Itzic Shtrul, dezertor* (Itzic Shtrul, a deserter, 1919) the drama of a Jewish soldier in the Romanian army who was to be executed due to the anti-Semitism of his commanding officer. Ordered one day to follow his corporal, a person he previously used to lend money, the short story discusses the anguish of the man intuiting he taken to the no man's land for possible death. Once there he is however given the choice to desert to the enemy. Instead he hangs himself. One of the caricatures of *Romania Eroica* is about the supposedly Jewish cowardice.

Maybe under the impact of Rebreanu but also of the abundant literature of war recollections, Cezar Petrescu started to conceive his first novel, *Întunecare* [Darkening], even if he did not participate directly in the war. This is probably one of the best Romanian war novels. Some of its chapters were published in *Gândirea* in 1923-1924, a first volume was issued in 1927 and only after one year the two volumes were published together. Very prolific and widely read in the 1930s, Cezar Petrescu had Honoré de Balzac as his intellectual model and therefore he wanted to depict the human condition in the Romanian speaking contexts. This is why Cezar Petrescu tried to involve in his novels tens of characters from all levels of the society. The author uses Radu Comșa, an

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apparent main character, to present the period of neutrality, the comradeship of the soldiers during the war and the “betrayal of the oaths from the trenches” after the end of the war. Son of a peasant and an ambitious young man who made himself through his competence, engaged to the daughter of a powerful Romanian businessman, Radu Comşa accidentally assisted at the large convoys of refugees to Moldavia during the famous autumn 1916. He got ashamed for his lack of “proper heroism” and volunteered for the front in spite of the disapproval of his fiancée and her family’s opposition. Most of the novel presents war scenes, sometimes funny but most of the times dramatic. It divides humankind (and for him this means rather only men, indeed) between the braves who accepted the duty of self-sacrifice, mostly peasants, and the cowards, son of the riches, who were kept through their families’ interventions in bureaucratic jobs especially created for them. In a very pessimistic tone, which encompasses especially the second volume, Cezar Petrescu insists, on the one hand, on the “betrayal” of the braves by the postwar political leaders in a time when the braves were either forgotten or their sacrifice was not properly recognized, while, on the other hand, the author discusses the “betrayal of the oaths from the trenches” (to create a new and better society) by the former combatants themselves who preferred individualistic opportunities instead of starting the spiritual revolution they were talking in the trenches. Radu Comşa returned disfigured from the war, both physically and spiritually, the author suggesting this as happening for all the former soldiers. Comşa is not able and he does not wish to reintegrate in the context he left to join the army, he tries to go back to his peasant origins but there he fails

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to reintegrate as well being disgusted with the hypocrisy and the petty politics he observes there. Significantly, he takes part in a meeting of the former soldiers brought together to discuss the spiritual revolution they promised themselves in the trenches. The discussion ends in a stalemate because the participants did not agree if the revolution should be international (therefore choose communism) or strictly national (therefore choose fascism).

Similar to Cezar Petrescu but openly critical to all decisions of the Liberals, Ștefan Zeletin has violently denounced the incompetence of the Romanian politically and military leaders. As a reserve officer he retreated with the rest of the army from Transylvania and his recollections may be sometimes funny but they are in fact dramatic: according to Zeletin the Romanians were able to see their road back only with the help of the German flares, the rockets used to illuminate their road to the Carpathians and beyond; the soldiers were retreating continuously under the fire of the German heavy artillery and every time they were arriving at the indicated lines of resistance nothing was prepared as if the Romanian commanding officers were communicating with the German General Staff (a reference to the son of Dimitrie A. Sturdza, Alexandru Sturdza, who unexpectedly defected to the Germans during the war), and when his unit arrives at the fortified line Namoloasa, they found the cannons still oriented towards east, as if the war was fought against the Russians, a sign that no preventive actions were taken and an indicator of the incompetence of the Romanian General Staff most of the war period led by General Dimitrie Iliescu, a close person to prime minister Ion I.C. Bratianu. Zeletin's

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division between the poor soldiers and the incapable leadership is similar to Cezar Petrescu's one and most probably this idea has dominated the hearts and minds of a great majority of the former Romanian soldiers during the 1920s. However, this division between wholehearted soldiers and hypocritical bureaucrats and politicians is not necessarily specific to the Romanian cultural context but it seems to be a common characteristic to a great part of the media dedicated to former combatants in general.

The lack of serious preparation for war and the gap between this reality and the jingoistic rhetoric of the Romanian elites is presented by Camil Petrescu in the first part of his novel which describes the atmosphere of daily life before August 1916 while scenes of war are depicted in the second part of the novel. Considered one of the best Romanian novels of the interwar period, regularly presented by many literary histories as a philosophical novel which reflects on the condition of the intellectual versus the material and spiritual corruption of the regular people, this novel surveys the inner conflict of Ștefan Gheorghidiu. Married out of love with a student colleague, he becomes abruptly rich after the death of an uncle, a fact which results in a transformation of his wife's behavior. Suspecting that she is cheating on him, Gheorghidiu's jealousy makes him think permanently how to find out for sure. The beginning of the war finds him a reserve officer on the Prahova Valley, from where he participates in the invasion of Transylvania. A reflection on the human condition in general and on human characters in particular, Camil Petrescu's ultimate message relates more to the war experience. The atrocities of the war (he describes a beheaded corpse that continues walking) made him

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realize in the end the insignificance of his personal unrest in comparison with the human and material destructions that affected thousands of other combatants and refugees, many of them wounded and dragging out their lives in trenches and hospitals. The novel is also indirectly a critique of the frivolity of those remained behind the lines (represented mainly by his wife), in line with Ștefan Zeletin and Cezar Petrescu.

After the coming back of Carol II to the throne of Romanian in 1930, the literature depicting war experiences is less frequent and no other great novel was written in relation to the war experience maybe except Cezar Petrescu's *Ochii strigoiului* [the eyes of the ghost, 1942]. Here a combatant from the First World War stays in coma for twenty years to wake up in 1937 to find out a totally new world. As in *Darkening*, the novel plays on the former combatants' 'betrayal' of their 'oaths from the trenches.' A literary fiction and a recollection in the same time, *Pirin-Planina* of George Topârceanu is a rather funny piece of literature where the period of captivity in Macedonia is depicted like a trip to an exotic land with strange animals and vegetation and memorable characters. This is a perfect example of how the memory of war has become standardized through the official politics, the growing indifference to the war experiences and a saturation of the public with the background of 1916-1918 in a period of celebration for Greater Romania and of coping with the financial difficulties and the moral crisis brought by the economic crisis of 1929-1933.

This first section was dedicated to tracing the historical reception of the war experience in the inter-war arts and literature. Public monuments were discussed in the

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previous Chapter Five as the intersection of the policy of war commemorations and the popular need for mourning those dead in the war where a series of professionalized groups had the initiative and supervised the construction of these war monuments. How did the other people able to express themselves through artifacts that survived our days relate to the war experience during the war is visible in this series of artistic and literary artifacts. A selection of them was carried out in this first section of Chapter Six. Created and circulated among a limited number of people, indeed, however these literary and artistic creations represented the most visible expressions of the cultural climate as well as of many individual who read, consumed or enjoyed these artifacts. Highly debated during the early 1920s among the political and military deciders the experience of the First World War was articulated during the 1920s through a series of novels, sketches, recollections that reflected not only the personality of their authors but the larger cultural context where they circulated and represented by individuals who took part in the war.

## **6.2. The public participation in the process of war commemorations:**

What could one say about the popular participation in the commemorative practices and how was carried through the myth of the war experience? The first part of this last chapter discussed how the experience of the First World War was echoed in some of the most important Romanian novels and recollections conceived and published during the interwar period. This second part of the chapter shortly discusses the public participation among those who did not leave behind artifacts expressing their opinions or feelings

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concerning the experience of the First World War in Romania. In doing so, I took into account public participation in the construction and at the inauguration of war monuments as well as at celebrating the Heroes' Day, celebration partially discussed in Chapter Four that took place most of the times at the sites of the war monuments already constructed or under construction.

Participation at the individual level was rather mix. Political reforms such as those of universal suffrage for men and especially the land reforms of 1921, promised in 1914 and especially during the fierce battles of 1917, helped appease the eventual dissatisfaction of the peasants. War pensions, the support for war invalids, war widows and war orphans, and several other financial means were designed in the 1920s next to the public ceremonies of mourning where the construction of war monuments represented rather the consequence than the cause or the occasion for the politics of war commemorations. Most of the members of the local notabilities such as the professors and the teachers, the members of the clergy and of the administrative state framework and the military officers either joined the Society for the Cult of the Heroes or took part in the initiative committees established for raising funds and constructing the numerous war monuments discussed in the previous chapters.

Those who were able to read and write left numerous account of their experience during the war, however the greatest part of the population either did not have these abilities or they were involved in bringing back equilibrium in their lives at a time of great political and social turmoil given the new realities of the Greater Romania.

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Images 6.1-6.2: A Romanian war monument built by the teachers of the cultural association of Teiul; prima este cu membrii progandei antirevizioniste, 1934, 134x87mm



Source: ANR-DANIC, Colecția Ilustrate, I 4845/1-2.

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As Maria Bucur has shown women were among the most active part in the religious processions designed as a part of the politics of commemoration (*parastase*).

Image 6.3: Religious service at a Romanian war monument in Carani, Timiș-Torontal County, 1934, Granovski Timișoara, 3.8m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 127 and 176. Cost: 24.000 lei.

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While the public space, especially in the urban areas, was under the supervision of the Romanian authorities, the local communities, no matter of their ethnic or religious background, organized sections of their local cemeteries dedicated to those fallen before building any war monuments nearby them. Several pictures at the end of this section show the participation of Romanian, German and Hungarian speaking communities at religious procession dedicated to the commemoration of their fallen occasioned by or associated with the inauguration of a new monument. This is the case as well with the relocation of the Mangalia cemetery where soldiers from both sides were buried: Romanians, Russians, Germans, Bulgarians and Turks. The same size of crowds seems to gather in June 1929 in Caransebes when the monument to General Dragalina was inaugurated.

Image 6.4: Public gathering at a Romanian war monument in Băsești, Sălaj County, 1934, Soc. Cultul Eroilor, 3.5m.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 192 and 198. Cost: 20.000 lei.

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Image 6.5: Public ceremony at a Romanian war monument in Ghelman, Hunedoara County, 1936, 5.5m,



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamental Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 2 and 11. Built by a group of members of the Legionary Movement led by a teacher Marin Ionescu, it cost 17.864 lei.

Research on how the Transylvanian Hungarians approached the new political realities of the interwar period and to some extent the way how they projected their interpretations on the experience of the First World War was partially addressed by Franz Horvath.<sup>375</sup> However, further research is necessary in this area of Hungarian-Romanian relationships taking into account the objective conditions as well as the inherent subjectivity of the both hegemonic historical master narratives that shaped to a great extent the collective identities in the regions during the twentieth century.

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<sup>375</sup> Franz Horvath, “The divided war memory of the Transylvanian Hungarians (1918-1944)”, paper presented at the conference “Sacrifice and regeneration. The legacy of the Great War in interwar Eastern Europe”, University of Southampton, September 13-15, 2007.

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Image 6.6: Group of people around the Hungarian war monument of Apold (1933)



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, f. 22.

Image 6.7: Public ceremony at the Hungarian war monument of Ocna de Jos, Odorheiu County, authored by Koszonyi Gheza of Praid, 5m, 1932.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 23 and 29. Cost: 12.000 lei

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Finally, here are several pictures taken at the religious ceremonies of mourning their dead by German speaking communities of Banat. Further research is necessary for understanding how these communities coped with the consequences of the Great War in their regions including the political and social redistribution, how did they include their process of mourning in the larger context of religious and cultural rituals, the entanglements with other German and Hungarian communities in Romania and abroad, the values preached on these occasions.

Image 6.8: Religious procession at a German war monument of Aradul nou, Arad County, built in June 1925, photo of 1936.



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamental Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 61 and 64. The monument was built by an antreprenor called Iosif Teichert and sons and it cost 60.000 lei.

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Image 6.9: Religious procession at a German war monument of Nițhidorf, plasa Buziaș, Timiș County (1925) .



Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 125 and 173 verso. Built by Ludovic Fischer of Lugoj, the monument had four meters in height and it cost 40.000 lei.

Image 6.10: Religious procession at a German war monument of Engelsbrunn, Arad County



(1932).

Source: ANR-DANIC, Fond Departamentul Artelor, dos. 68/1937, ff. 65-66. Cost: 40.600 lei.

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### 6.3. Conclusions:

The last chapter of this dissertation was devoted to approaching the participation in the commemorating the First World War in interwar Romania at the individual level. The first part of this last chapter discussed how the experience of the First World War was echoed in some of the most important Romanian novels and recollections published mostly during the 1920s. Beyond expressing the individual visions of their authors on the way how the war was either experienced or it represented the background for other experiences, these novels and recollections were approached as representing embodiments of some of the most important ideas about the war experience circulating in the public sphere during the time of their conceptions and publication. There are no data about their circulation as there is no much data about the circulation of books before the Communist regime anyway.

## Conclusions

This dissertation has dealt with the process of war commemorations in interwar Romania, a process approached mainly in its cultural and institutional aspects placed against their social contexts. This process of war commemorations in interwar Romania had four aspects: it represented a process of mourning by their relatives and comrades of those dead in combat during the First World War, it represented a celebration of taking part in the victory over the Central Powers which led to the creation of Greater Romania, it was a form of symbolic compensation of those who took part directly in war and survived and of those who suffered directly or indirectly its vicissitudes; and it represented an instrument of educating the younger generations in the spirit of (military) heroism that characterized the process of cultural mobilization for war before and after the Great War.

To some people the commemoration of the war experience represented only one of these aspects while for others it represented several if not all of these aspects. In all these aspects, the process of war commemorations in interwar Romania represented the local articulation of a global trend of public and war commemorations and a dynamic

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solution between European models of public celebration and the local needs of mourning those dead in the First World War and of maintaining if not forging national cohesion and areas of political legitimacy. In the same time, this process represented the intersection of prewar cultural and political developments which explain the already existing visual, material and human resources which continued to be employed throughout the 1920s and the 1930s with the economic, social, political, cultural and institutional reconfigurations articulate brought by the events and the consequences of the First World War. Finally, this process represented the result of the top to the bottom policy of honoring the sacrifice of the dead combatants combined with the bottom to the top pressure of mourning these dead where the policy rather fulfilled expectations at the local levels and followed and framed the politics of war commemorations than actually set it in motion, politics observable at all levels of the society no matter of their ethnic or religious background.

The First World War represented a major turning point in modern history of Europe and not only, a cluster of events which affected and radically changed the whole Europe and a great part of the rest of the world for almost a century. Called ‘the Great War’ by its contemporaries for almost two decades, it inaugurated what Eric J. Hobsbawm called ‘the age of extremes.’ Broke out due to the rise of militarism, nationalism and imperialism in the previous decades, it represented a demographic and social catastrophe anticipating the Second World War and its horrors and in the same time it contributed to the creation of the first international institutions dedicated to negotiating and maintaining peace and social welfare all around the globe. It represented

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an abrupt halt and a diversion of the national tendencies of gradual cultural, social and political transformations that are observable at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decade of the twentieth one and in the same time it contributed to the maximum extension of the male voting franchise. It legitimized the growth and the consolidation of the executive power and its excessive interventionism in the society with consequences on the appearance, the development and eventually unleash of the political extremes that affected most of the twentieth century. It contributed to the introduction of major agrarian reforms in Eastern Europe where new designs of the political map were accompanied by the perturbation of the regional economic circuits, the reconfiguration of the political national landscapes as well as the validation of previous trends of artistic experiment and modernism which dominated the past century.

The literature developed around the notions of nations and nationalism did not pay extensive attention to these structural transformations rather paying attention to the long term transformations of the matrix of nationalism heightened to its extremes during periods of political, social and economic crises such as those of the interwar period in Central Europe and of the 1990s in the post-communist countries. Nationalism shaped in a fundamental way the political discourses of the European powers in the decades prior to the First World War and the understanding of those who decided to take part in it, volunteering for or involving their country in combat. Benedict Anderson started his *Imagined communities* from the observation of the position of unquestioned point of reference for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier within the paradigm of political and

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cultural nationalism unlike any other political paradigm. His observation represented a point of departure for this dissertation as well. In the same time, the cultural history of remembering and commemorating the experience of the First World War is the theme of a growing field of scholarship in the last decades which concentrates mostly on this war as a major discontinuity in modern history due to the aspects mentioned above. Symbolically, a rather unitary framework of war commemorations in the Western countries that emerged victorious at the end of the war and brokered the peace treaties in and around Paris was solidified by the common use of November 11, the Armistice Day, as the national day for commemorating those fallen in and around the trenches during the war. A civic perspective shaped the processes of war commemorations in Western Europe, United States and the British Dominions during the interwar period. When turning to Eastern Europe, and especially to the region of South-Eastern Europe, the clusters of events are quite different, the moments of the beginning and the end of the war in the war commemorations varying from the Second Balkan War to the Romanian campaign in Hungary, Greek-Turkish war or the Polish-Soviet war, the memory of the war was partially absorbed when not completely subordinated to the memorialization of the political events subsequent or parallel to the end of the Great War.

Against this background, while recognizing the Great War as a major discontinuity in the social, political, demographic and ideological trends of (Eastern) Europe, this dissertation concentrated on the cultural continuities that mediated the war experience for most of the social groups from the middle and lower levels of the social

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pyramid and shaped the processes of war commemorations before and after the First World War in Romanian context. It approached the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom of Romania in the inter-war Romania a cultural heritage that put emphasis on the cultural unity of all speakers of the Romanian language and privileged during the nineteenth century the association of the Orthodox Christian confession with the Romanian national identity, it focused on the articulation of the cult of national heroes and the concept of heroism, with its embedded gender perspective, as a part of exploring and affirming the Romanian historical consciousness and it paid attention to the plurality of professionalized actors, mostly officers, teachers and priests, who represented the active receptors and disseminators of this cultural heritage and who were active before and after the First World War in the politics of commemorating the Romanian participation in the wars of 1877-1878, 1913 and 1916-1919.

From a methodological point of view, while designed as an interpretative case-study this project is gratefully inspired and shaped by the magnificent Pierre Nora's series of *Lieux de mémoire* but it heavily draws on conceptual history and approaches to iconography. The relationship between historical consciousness, the role of national heroes and construction of (war) monuments were previously approached by most of the students of history of nationalism in a rather eclectic manner and in a similar creative way was carried out in this dissertation as well. One of the assumptions of this dissertation was that the nation-state perspective is just another local perspective within the global, continental and regional perspectives in approaching, researching,

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understanding, discussing and teaching history. This is probably one of the consequences that the state was by far the main sponsor when not the only agent involved in spreading literacy and thus offering a greater possibility of expression and overcoming parochial points of views to the lower levers of the social pyramid. The spread of war commemorations during the interwar period shows how the idiom of nationalism was in Romania the most important political language made available among the different local levels that helped people overcome their parochial perspective and communicate in the public sphere. For the purpose of this research, I was interested in who produced the cultural artifacts designed and used for the benefit of war commemorations, what were the practices associated to these artifacts, how were they disseminated and for what reasons, who took part in this process and what were the factors that stimulated or inhibited the process if this can be established. Finally, most importantly, what were the signified meanings and practices (re)attached (and reinterpreted) to these cultural artefacts, who articulated them, why, in what context, with what means and for what purposes, how were these meanings disseminated if they were so etc. The dissemination and the reception of these meanings and practices was assumed that it happened selectively and randomly according to the local needs, according to the understanding, ability and especially the aims of the local actors involved in the processes of negotiating and disseminating them as a part of a far more complex system of social networks, entanglements and institutionalized practices.

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There are several questions that further shaped the conception of this dissertation: why the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was so important for the paradigm of state nationalism during the interwar period? what was the cultural context that made it conceptually possible? how was the memory of the First World War conceptualized and disseminated in interwar Romania? by whom? for what purposes? addressing what cultural and political horizons? how different groups of social actors used political symbols and historical narratives centered around (national) heroes for purposes of cultural and political mobilization? what is the role of military cultural and political traditions in the matrix of nationalism? what was the role of professionalized social actors in the process of war commemorations? why mass politics did not always turn Fascist in parliamentary democracies? what are the features of Eastern European cases in relation with those of Western Europe? how the Romanian case is illustrative and in the same time different in comparison with the other European cases?

War commemorations in inter-war Romania was a complex process of commemorating those fallen in the Great War but also in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 and in the Second Balkan War of 1913, participation in these wars being presented as major chapters of the national history while the Great War became the last such chapter and the most important of all since it represented the creation of Greater Romania embodying the political unity of all speakers of Romanian language. Grounded in the cult of heroes articulated in the nineteenth century visible in the politics of

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constructing war monuments, it continued the politics of commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878.

Romania did not experience a “Lost Generation”, at least not at the level of political, cultural and social elites, and this had an important impact on the whole process of commemorating the Great War and in constructing war monuments. A great part of the country was occupied by the Central Powers, numerous people took refuge to the region of Moldavia while the financial costs of participating in the war and the human losses it caused continued to affect the Romanian society during the interwar period. Between 250.000 and 800.000 people died depending whether the newly added territories are taken into account as well as the people who migrated and disappeared while 70-100.000 former soldiers remained disabled for the rest of their life, 335.000 children were orphans including at least 21.000 children orphans of both parents and more than 200.000 women were widowed, all of them in need for juridical and social assistance that was provided in limited forms over the entire interwar period. The application of the voting and land reforms represented important factors in shadowing the importance of the war experience during the interwar Romania as well as in the following decades when the negative aspects of the war were rather overlooked by historical research. The equal vote for all major male citizens changed the political landscape of Romania while the land reforms that contributed to a series of changes in the social structure gave preference to those who fought in the war even if they were designed for the society at large. War pensions were granted to them as well. These reforms and compensations granted to all Romanian

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citizens no matter if they were from the newly added territories may explain the lack of a consistent and visible veteran movement during the interwar period. At the level of the political, cultural and social elites, the direct experience of war was rather silenced, a memory boom in the years immediately after the war concentrating on debating the erroneous decisions of 1916, participants in this debate most of the time seeking explanation and justification of their own acts.

The high number of dead soldiers during the First World War led during the war to private initiatives of priests, teachers, local notabilities and landowners at creating war graves. A supervising body in charge of this process of identification and expropriation of the relevant portions of land as well as organization and administration of the newly created war cemeteries was created in September 1919 under the patronage of Queen Maria. Entitled The Society for the Graves of the Heroes Fallen in the War (*Societatea 'Mormintele eroilor căzuți în război'*) in 1919, a title changed into The Society for the Cult of the Heroes (*Societatea 'Cultul eroilor'*) in 1927 and into The National Foundation 'Regina Maria' for the Cult of Heroes (*Asezământul național Regina Maria pentru cultul eroilor*) in 1940, the society was organized at several levels, national, regional, county and local, where the members of the society representing most of those who had a relative dead during the war elected their committees for periods of three years. Presided by the Metropolitane-Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the society was in charge of organizing every year the festivities dedicated to the Heroes' Day established for the Ascension Day until 1927 when the proposed program was to be approved by a number

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of relevant members of the Romanian government, it edited a periodical where models of war monuments and war literature were published and it contributed in its early years to the construction of several war monuments in the country. Its activity was partially addressed in the second section of this chapter. A law of 1920 established the main elements of the interwar policy of war commemoration. Without excluding the Romanians of Transylvania who joined the Romanian army in 1918 this policy included the construction of war monuments all over the country and the celebration of the Heroes' Day on the Ascension Day. The law of 1927 explicitly rejected further discrimination on religious or ethnic criteria when dealing with the war cemeteries as it was already established by the Treaty of Trianon while the state organized Heroes' Day was supposed to be celebrated all over the country by all the public and private institutions. In 1923 the most important site of commemoration was created in Bucharest, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in May and the Military museum in December. The two were inseparable in explaining the meaning given to the sacrifice of all who died during the First World War and they illustrate the policy of constructing war monuments nearby public or religious institutions. The 1920s were dominated mostly by vernacular initiative while during the 1930s the memory of the war became more official as a part of Carol II's strategy of projecting himself as the savior of the nation and the cultural unifier of the morally divided country. This is visible in the fate of the Bucharest's Arch of Triumph established in 1922 for welcoming King Ferdinand and Queen Maria following their coronation at Alba Iulia and remade during the mid 1930s. The inauguration of the

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Arch of Triumph in December 1936 is illustrative for the perspective on the meaning of the First World War in creating Greater Romania as it was disseminated at the level of official discourse.

The most visible indicator of the impact and of the local distribution of this process of war commemorations is the construction of war monuments. Dedicated to great men like monarchs or generals and later to common soldiers, war monuments represents a category of public monuments that spread during a period of around a century, from about 1840s to about 1940s, with a period of exceptional flourishing during the interwar years, especially in Europe and North America. With few exceptions, war monuments were ignored by art history until recent decades when cultural history brought them to attention as indicators of larger social, political and cultural trends of the society. In Romania, war monuments appeared in the context of the growing cult of national heroes in the last decades of the nineteenth century and multiplied as a part of the process of commemorating the Romanian participation in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 (*Războiul de independență*). They started to spread around 1900 and about sixty such monuments were erected especially in Muntenia and especially after 1907, a regional and chronological clustering which is not necessarily only an indicator of the impact of the commemorative practices but also of the prosperity of the urban communities able to afford the construction of a local public monument at that time. Used as anchors for teaching additional information that was a part of the narrative of national history, all these monuments contributed not only at the artistic education of

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their viewers but also at the dissemination of the narrative of national history. All these artifacts, ideas and historical memory shaped the cultural heritage of the Old Kingdom of Romania and it represented the cultural foundation for the process of war commemorations during the interwar Romania.

The spread of public monuments dedicated to military/medieval heroes, cultural figures or important politicians in the last decades of the nineteenth century was the result of a series of interlinked processes including the articulation of a unitary and coherent historical narrative where individuals, dates and deeds were integrated, the spread of literacy, urbanization, the intensification of participation in the public sphere, the formation and the active participation of artistic groups and the availability of resources. In the context of the interwar period, the events of the First World War were integrated in the hegemonic narrative of the Romanian national history as the most important events that led to the creation of Greater Romania; the massive demographic losses, the high number of people physically affected by the war as well as the presence of the veterans contributed to a process of mourning that was converted through the law of 1920 into a policy of war commemorations; many of the initiative committees formed by military, teachers, priests and local notabilities were already formed before the war and they had the experience of constructing the war monuments dedicated to 1877-1878 and 1913; the group of artists able to offer models was active since the turn of the centuries and some of them had the experience of creating war monuments before the war; the funds raised through a diversity of means were available as before and this contributed to the

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lengthening of the process of constructing the war monument over several years in most of the cases. As a part of this process of using artistic artifacts for grounding cultural and political discourses, war monuments best embodied the paradigm of national history, a military definition of heroism that shifted during the same period from celebrating the deeds of Great Men to emphasizing common people and thus they contributed to the reinforcement of a visual discourse of state nationalism through their use as a part of the public ceremonies.

In interwar Romania, the number of war monuments increased dramatically to over a thousand all over the country but mostly in Muntenia and Moldavia. While before the First World War war monuments served mostly celebrations of a victorious participation in the war after 1918 the significance given to commemorating those fallen in the war became prevalent. These significances coexisted from the very beginning since plaques listing those fallen were placed at the base of all war monuments. However, the importance invested in these artifacts seems to have shifted during the inter-war period, the commemoration of those fallen becoming prevalent. While a legislative framework definitely encouraged the construction of war monuments and their use for anchoring the discourse of nationalism, most of those constructed in the inter-war period were the result of a vernacular initiative. Local committees started gathering the necessary funds through public subscriptions and support from local and central authorities. Combined with the scarcity of resources, this contributed to their construction taking place over a long period

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of time, sometimes of the entire interwar period as it was the case of the mausoleums of Mărăști and Mărășești.

The iconography of the war monuments presents a series of similarities and dissimilarities. Similarities included the military vocabulary defining the iconography of war monuments be they built by Romanian, Hungarian or German communities which also indicates a to a great extent similarity in the military and nationalist background of the members of their initiative committees. In the case of the war monuments constructed by the Romanian communities preference given for authors such as Spiridon Georgescu, Ion Dimitriu-Bârlad, Ioan Iordănescu, Dumitru Mățăoanu and others indicates a similarity of artistic and aesthetical education for the members of the initiative committees, most of the times members of the local garrisons and local notabilities. Other similarities are represented by the tendency of being concentrated mostly around the cultural, political and economic center of the country, Bucharest, and by the preference given to the employment of an iconography developed in the previous decades which related them to the cultural and political heritage of the Old Kingdom.

Dissimilarities were represented mostly by the contents of the inscriptions one may find on the war monuments discussed in this chapter, each of the local communities not only mourning their dead but also praising or glorifying their war effort and symbolically preserving their belonging to their (organically envisioned) nations. A possible reason for the cases where the iconography of the planned monument and the aesthetic criteria postulated by the Commission for Public Monuments conflicted is that

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the iconography included military symbols belonging to the armies of Central Powers. As it is discussed most of the military symbols inscribed in the iconography of the war monuments belonged to a common European background. However, while not necessarily explicitly aiming to be provocative, some symbols may have been directly linked to different military traditions which fought each other during the war and their own celebration was indirectly a contestation of the others' merit. Since these traditions were designed before 1920 they may also have been perceived by the Romanian authorities as directly contesting the 1920s realities or at least being disloyal in a passive way even if no intention of such kind existed. Therefore, it is hard to infer that the Commission for Public Monuments established in 1929 served as an instrument of excluding the projects promoted by the local communities. It certainly had to deal with a social and cultural context where procedures were not widely known and respected and the concept of the public monument had a rather different meaning, closer the idea of a funerary monument. This indicates that the process of commemorating the events and those fallen during the First World War was not a process imposed from above but it rather fulfilled expectations at the local levels. The policy of war commemoration rather followed and framed the general trend of commemorative practices than it actually set it.

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