

## Archive Documents

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*From the Activity of 'Prince Carol'  
Royal Cultural Foundation 1922-1948  
Archive Documents (II)*

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to emphasize the activity of the 'Prince Carol' Royal Cultural Foundation created in 1921 in order to lead to the emancipation of villages in particular and of the Romanian culture in a more general perspective. Overall, we may say that the period between the two world wars was marked, also due to the help of the Royal Cultural Foundation, by substantial progress in various fields of education, science and culture in general, and thus contributed to changing Romania into a state with a high level of culture and to creating an image and a prestige of the country that commanded worldwide respect. The research was done on the basis of the documents studied at the Service of the Central National Historical Archives (SANIC), the Stock of the 'Prince Carol' Royal Cultural Foundation and at the Library of the Romanian Academy.

**Keywords:** 'Prince Carol' Royal Cultural Foundation, documents, cultural centres, social service, philharmonic orchestra, museums, cinemas

### **Cultural institutions**

#### **Cultural centres, cinemas, Philharmonic orchestra, museums**

Due to the alarming condition of our villages in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Royal Cultural Foundation started a strong action to improve the life of the Romanian peasant. Consequently, more than 4,600 Cultural Centres were established all over the country. In order to support these centres, the Royal Foundation decided to set up Rural Schools and to appoint Managers of the Cultural Centres. Starting with 1<sup>st</sup> November 1934, it published guiding works such as the Cultural Centre Magazine with 2,500 copies per month; this magazine also served as the Foundation's newsletter presenting studies, guidelines, achievements, news, chronicles, reviews and announcements of the Foundation. (1)

On 19 May 1934, on the occasion of the Fourth Congress of the Cultural Centres, King Carol II defined the concept of the Romanian state reform: *'In 1920 when I thought for the first time and with a young ardour to establish this Foundation, I was animated by the idea that after the great reforms, the peasant allotment and the universal suffrage, another big step needed to be made to bring and maintain the country at the level it should be. I was convinced that political rights and land reforms alone are not sufficient to reach such objectives and this is why, by setting up the Foundation, I wanted to go closer in the middle of the people and started a true guiding work, day by day and hour by hour, so that the country could be proud of its achievements, as other countries are, of its villages that are not only picturesque but also beautiful and healthy. It's true that my thought was seldom understood. It was a tough battle, but I am sure that my soul and my youth that I put into the service of this work will be the best security of its success.'* (2)

In early 1934, there were 419 Cultural Centres and four years later, in 1938, they totalled 2,034 (601 in Bessarabia, 464 in Walachia, 398 in Moldavia, 214 in Oltenia, 118 in Transylvania, 102 in Banat and Crişana, 99 in Dobrogea, 38 in Bucovina). The number of such centres constantly increased until every village could have its own cultural centre.

Between 1934 and 1938, the 'Prince Carol' Royal Cultural Foundation established 160 student teams. The total number of students who worked in these teams was 1,144 supported by 557 specialists and technicians and 258 volunteers. (3)

The social action of the 'Prince Carol' Royal Cultural Foundation was based on the concept and method developed by Dimitrie Gusti. In a series of articles gathered under the title 'Basic Thoughts for the Student Teams' (volume The Book of Teams, 1937, page 25), he said: 'True patriotism is not a verbal or legislative patriotism, but that serious and deep patriotism when you are involved in the Romanian science based on which you suggest Romanian reforms [...]. In addition to the obligation to study the Romanian nation, I went again and with audacity towards another formula, another obligation of an ethic and social-political nature: a mandatory social service in the countryside for the people who want to work in the Romanian Principality - for doctors before practicing medicine; for priests before obtaining a parish, for teachers before obtaining a teaching job, for every faculty graduate, for everybody.'

The Cultural Centre was the enforcement body of the Social Service. Its building included three separate sections: (i) the *sanitary section* with a health centre, chemist's shop, communal bathroom, maternity room; (ii) the *economic section* with cooperatives,

bakery, butcher's shop, farm tools; and (iii) *the cultural section* with a festival and conference room, radio station, library, museum, weaving workshops and craft workshops. (4)

From the reports on the activity carried out in 1925, I selected some examples which thoroughly clarify what exactly this village *cultural activity* of the Royal Foundation meant:

In the county of Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Athenaeums and Cultural Centres enjoyed a fruitful activity. Four new Cultural Centres and two reading houses were established – 59 centres in total. In July 1925, radio sets could be found in 31 centres; there were 6 projectors: 4 of them for generators and two for alternating current. An addressed issue was the lack of the means of transport which hindered field trips and art exchanges. (5)

In the county of Putna, 10 Athenaeums and 112 Cultural Centres were in operation in 1925. All of them had libraries. There were 109 choirs, 103 dance groups, 99 theatre groups, 68 sports teams and 14 chess teams. Radio sets were in operation and conferences were broadcasted according to Circular 14534/1925 disseminated to all cultural centres. There were 6 cine projectors and various conferences were organized in order to debunk superstitions and to achieve and exceed the state plan. (6)

In the county of Suceava, five art exchanges took place at the `CiprianPorumbescu` Folk Athenaeum of Suceava in July 1925. Writers from Suceava branch were involved in the activity of the Athenaeums and Cultural Centres where they held speeches and popularized various issues. Peasant volunteers from the village of Moara Nica (Bosanci) have built by themselves the Cultural Centre and their example was made known in the local newspaper `Lupta poporului` (The People's Fight). 70 Sunday gatherings, 30 evening gatherings and 135 conferences were held. The county had 60 Cultural Centres equipped with libraries. Cine projectors were in use except for the one in Solca where the power plant was out of order. (7)

In the same county and in the same month of July, they inaugurated the *Art and Culture Section*. A cultural responsible was named for each subdivision of every county. There were 223 libraries, 453 gatherings and 378 chess players. 44 radio sets and 11 cine projectors were in use with 36 films projected. 112 art exchanges have been done and 65 correspondences were registered with magazines published in Bucharest and other cities. (8)

In the county of Turda, 294 Sunday gatherings and 38 evening gatherings were organized in 1925. There were 124 libraries and 22 Cultural Centres. Radio auditions took place and cine projectors were in operation but documentaries were insufficient. There were 148 active press correspondents and people proposed the establishment of a touring cinema. (9)

In the county of Teleorman, 182 gatherings and 25 evening gatherings were held. Its activity was a bit reduced due to the intensification of the agriculture works. 145 Cultural Centres had libraries, radio sets could be found in 27 centres and there were 8 cinema projectors in the whole county. Press correspondents published their articles in the `Teleormanul Liber` newspaper (The Free Teleorman). (10)

Dimitrie Gusti has established the line of activity for these rural cultural institutions during his speech held on 6 August 1935 and entitled `The guarantee of a successful work: the Cultural Centre` (in the volume `Cartea Echipelor` (The Book of

Teams, 1937, page 40), according to which the rural Cultural Centre had to learn the student teams' methods of work and continue their activity. This is why Cultural Centre occupied the main place in the programme of the Royal Cultural Foundation. First it was the identification of the plot of land in the village for the construction of the centre, then donations were collected and villagers offered themselves to work; if the circumstances were favourable, they even started to build the Centre, because the Foundation supported them.

The medical centre together with the drugstore established and supplied even in the future by the team had to continue their activity after the team left. They organized the village library, a bookstore at the Cultural Centre and a book distribution service; at least one local museum was started. No team member worked alone but always together with the villagers so that when the team leave the village other local people can continue the work. These members of the Cultural Centre co-opted in the team and who worked for three months were divided in four large groups: *a health section* in charge with the management of the medical centre, the drugstore and the hygiene campaigns; *a work section* responsible for the identification of means to improve the economic situation of the state; *a moral and religious section* whose objective was to offer an increased support to the people responsible for morality in the village and *a section for the culture of the mind* which organized gatherings, conferences and managed the village libraries.

In a report published in the magazine `Sociologia Românească` (Romanian Sociology, issue 10-12/1938), entitled `Today's Condition of the Romanian Village`, Dimitrie Gusti took stock of the activity performed by the student teams: `[...] in the summer of 1937, students teams were sent to the countryside to conduct monographic investigations necessary to generalize the Social Service`, service that would be subsequently instituted through a special law. We did so in order to increase the standard of living in the countryside, a quite difficult issue that is not known here. Each Team played the part of a *social observation post* so that to investigate the economic, the sanitary and the cultural situation of a typical village in each region of the country. Investigation of the reality in the countryside was completely necessary. The two investigation tools were the Student Teams and the Institute of Social Research of Romania.

In 1938, 55 student teams have studied the following aspects in the villages they had been sent to:

1. Size of the land owned
2. Division of ownerships over the last 15 years
3. Budget of the poor, middle and rich peasants' households
4. Dead and alive mental space
5. Infant mortality
6. Number of births
7. Food
8. Children' hygiene in the countryside
9. Adults' Reading etc.

In addition to those 55 student teams, four other teams from the Romanian Social Institute have been sent to perform the investigation necessary to draft detailed

monographs of one village from each region: Moldavia, Transylvania, Banat and Bessarabia.

The work of these student teams and technical specialists was and continues to be one of the most important researches undertaken in our country. The information collected by the teams was processed and published in the magazine `Sociologie Românească` (Romanian Sociology) founded in 1936 and edited by the Romanian Social Institute, Sociologic Section and by `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation.

The situation of the investigated villages was as follows:

- I. The economic condition of the investigated villages was a little better than the average in the region. 40% of the households were poor and had only the strict minimum necessary for the family living.
- II. The cultural situation of the 55 villages was also better than the situation at the country level. In Bucovina, parish of Bușoia, 85% of the villagers know to read and write. Between 1920 and 1938, only 78% enlisted to attend the primary school courses and 60% of them passed the tests. As regards secondary and high schools only children from the middle class and rich families could attend their courses while poor children very rarely.
- III. Sanitation was alarming in the countryside. Food was totally insufficient for children and old people. To redress it, an integral emancipation of the common people was needed. This could be ensured by the Royal Cultural Foundation, the Cultural Centres and the Social Service.

Every year, the Foundation organized special courses to prepare the team members to work in the countryside during the summer time. The courses observed the Regulation and the Work Programme set up by the Foundation.

The duration of the course was 15 days; it was structured in two series: the first series from 15 March to 1<sup>st</sup> April followed by a second series from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 18 April. During the works, students were not permitted to leave the village and had to strictly observe the course rules. Former team members and students who wanted to become members of the investigation teams were allowed to enlist. For registration, they needed a reference letter from a Professor with whom they worked in order to certify his/her specialized training. Registration could be done either directly at the Foundation or at its branches in Iași or Chișinău. Students from Cluj and Cernăuți could enlist through people especially delegated by the `Prince Carol` Foundation. Expenses on travel, meal and accommodation were borne by the Foundation.

Issue 700 of `Gazeta Basarabiei`, year IV, published on 12 March 1938 talked about the role of the royal student teams in educating the Romanian village community: [...] in the summer of 1934 Professor Dimitrie Gusti helped by two young men, H.H. Stahl and Octavian Neamțu, started the activity with 12 royal student teams in 12 villages all over the country. On the occasion of the Paris International Exhibition in 1937, foreigners showed a great interest and admiration for this movement.

The `Timpul` newspaper (The Time) of 18 May 1938 mentioned the opening in Bucharest, on 6 June 1938, of the Annual Exhibition organized by the royal student teams who worked under the direction of the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation. That event was of a special importance because it presented the entire activity of the

Foundation which celebrated its fifth year of work to improve the cultural level in the countryside.

The number of teams went up from 12 in 1934 to 25 in 1935, 49 in 1936 (plus 10 volunteer teams) and 77 in 1937, who worked in over 90 villages. The following publications were issued in order to keep them informed: `Îndrumătorul muncii culturale la sate` (The Guide of Cultural Works in the Countryside), edition 1936 with 4,000 copies, edition 1937 with the same number of copies (4,000); `Curierul Echipelor Regale Studentești` (the Courier of the Royal Student Teams), which from 1934 to 1938 was published in approximately 182,000 copies; `Cartea Echipelor` (The Book of Teams) with a print run of 4,000 copies in 1937. (11)

Additionally there was a series of publications including small format books for the villager's library: `Cartea Satului` (The Village Book), the `Albina` magazine (The Bee) and `Biblioteca Revistei Albina` (the Library of the Albina Magazine). For the cultural centres' managers they published the monthly magazine `Căminul Cultural` (The Cultural Centre) and the collection `Cartea Căminului Cultural` (The Book of the Cultural Centre). (12)

The statistics presented by Dimitrie Gusti at the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Cultural Centres held on 7 June 1938 at Arenele Romane shows the students' activity between 1934 and 1938: for Health education, the medical sections made 102,276 tests and injections while the physical education section held 3,129 training sessions with sentinels and 1,329 with pre-military trainees. For the Work Culture, the teams set up 36 cooperatives. Vets and agronomists offered 56,053 consultations and held 188,629 lectures on agriculture, ploughed 6,205 ha, built 936 waste platforms, organized 119 nurseries, and took care of 235,063 trees and 4,659 beehives. As regards forestry, they improved 436 ha of forest land, forested 51 ha and took care of 1,364 ha of pastures. The team management section held 31,228 practical lessons with the villages' girls and women. They built 437,115 m of ditches, 207,447 m of roads, 5,194 bridges and footbridges, 822 wells and sewerage on a total length of 1,801 m. They repaired and erected 386 buildings, baths, medical centres and Cultural Centres. For the Culture of the Mind, they provided the village libraries with 8,367 books and brought 2,318 exhibits into the Cultural Centre's museums. 1,822 gatherings and festivities were organized, 4,052 conferences were held and 287 evening courses were organized for the villagers. For the Culture of the Soul, 401 roadside crucifixes and crosses were built, 5,171 icons and 13,015 spiritual books were offered. The teams' theologians held 2,224 preaches, organized 45 meetings for villagers' reconciliation, participated in 238 Divine services and organized 4,572 choir events. (13)

## ***Cinemas***

This activity of the Foundation has been registered since 1922 in the archive documents at the Service of the Central National Historical Archives, the Stock of the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation. The Foundation had a close relationship with

the most famous film production companies throughout the world. The correspondence between the Foundation and the French Gaumont film production company shows the sales to the Foundation and their other collaborations. On 30 January 1922, a MATIPO film projector of F 15,000 was bought from Paris. (14)

On 26 May 1922 Léon Gaumont suggested to part the film *Around the World* in five series (each having six parts) in order to rent it in the whole Romania. The Foundation agreed and the Gaumont film production company received 30% of the profit. (15)

‘The Wedding Ceremony in Belgrade’ of Princess Mărioara and King Alexander of Yugoslavia was bought by the Foundation from the same French production company for Lei 33,000. (16)

Even from 1922 the reports on the activity of various theatres and cinemas mentioned the existence of certain applications for renting locations to set up cinemas belonging to the Royal Cultural Foundation. (17) On 13 December 1922, the Foundation took over the Theatre Hall of Brașov managed by Alexandru Motzoi. (18) In 1922, the Timișoara Film Office sent a proposal to the Royal Cultural Foundation for the establishment of a theatre and a cinema. (19)

In Transylvania, on 15 December 1922, they organized an exhibition on how the Romanian cinemas were set up. On this occasion, six cinemas were established and brought the Foundation an approximate income of Lei 600,000. (20) 1935 marked the beginning of the project for the establishment of the Romanian Film Industry entitled ‘România Film’. (21)

On 15 June 1935 the National Industry received the application for the creation of a Film Department within the Royal Cultural Foundation whose objectives were to:

- a) create a modern film studio;
- b) produce Romanian or foreign films in different versions of a commercial or educative nature;
- c) set up automated labs to process and copy the films;
- d) serve the civil and military aviation in time of peace and war;
- e) become a means of national propaganda in the country and abroad. (22)

### ***Filarmonica (the Philharmonic Orchestra)***

In 1922, the public company ‘Filarmonica’ was in a financial deadlock. The orchestra had been dissolved on 15 August 1922 as mentioned in the company’s note dated 18 October 1922 addressed to the Ministry of Finance.

From that day, the Foundation set up a new orchestra named ‘Filarmonica’, but independently from the Philharmonic Company. It brought to Romania the most famous foreign composers, soloists and conductors such as Vincent D’Indy, Piere and Strauss. (23)

With conductor George Georgescu, festivals such as Wagner, Beethoven or Smetana were real galas and artistic triumphs.

The concerts in the season 1922/1923 were performed by the following:

Conductors: George Georgescu- 18 symphonies, H.Reichenberger- one symphony, Bruno Walter - two symphonies followed by I. Nona Ottesen, Alfonso

Castaldi, Oskar Nedhal, Felix Wengartner, Henry Morin, Richard Strauss with three symphonies and Marcel Botez conducting one symphony.

Soloists: Drăgulinescu Stinghe(voice); A.Cionca Pipoș(piano); Muza Ghermaui Ciomac (piano); Amelie de Bartfeld (violin); Constanța Dobrescu (voice); Elodie Coandă (harp); Madeleine Cocorăscu (piano); Youra Gouller (piano); Fernande Capelle (violin); Viorica Teișanu (voice); N. Ochi-Albi (cello); Al.Teodorescu (violin); Remy Principe (violin); C.Solomonescu (flute); Teo Demetrescu (piano); V. Rabega (voice); Gr. Teodorescu (voice); G.Folescu (voice); A. Lupescu (voice); G. Maglari (voice).

They played works signed by Beethoven (Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9), Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, Mozart, Schuman, Schubert, Fr.Haydn, Fr.Liszt, Gustav Mahler, I.Brahms, Bach, Max Bruch, Arnold Schönberg, Mendelson etc. (24)

The Regulation of the Philharmonic Orchestra was set up on 16 September 1922 and stipulated among others the following:

`Art.9 - Orchestral companies or organizations which want to affiliate to the Foundation should obtain the approval of the Philharmonic Orchestra's Manager. They benefit from the rights granted by law to the `Prince Carol` Royal Foundation.

Art. 10 - Affiliation of the orchestral organizations shall be made based on a document signed by the Manager or the Committee of the Organization and the General Manager of the Foundation.`

On the same day they voted the Regulation of `Cântarea României`, which stipulated the following:

`Art.1 - The Choir Society`Cântarea României` becomes a member of the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation together with all the subsidiaries established by the company.

Art.4 - `Cântarea României` benefits from the rights granted by law to the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation`. (25)

`Cântarea României` of Bucharest was established in 1919 as an initiative of Marcel Botez, Alfred Alexandrescu and Ghe. D. Mugur. The choir had between 200 and 250 members and in 1924 it enjoyed 2,490 active supporters. (26)

Among other choir and instrumental organizations we can mention the following:

The `Ciprian Porumbescu` choir in Suceava was founded in 1903 and for 20 years it has operated as a musical section of the Suceava Romanian Club. It became affiliated to the Foundation in December 1923 and in January 1924 already had 3 honorific members, 15 founding members, 84 supporting members and 110 active members who organized concerts and theatrical performances. (27)

The Philharmonic Orchestra of Brașov was an old musical society set up in 1878 by the Transylvanian Saxons. It also played the role of a municipal orchestra with conductors such as Weingartner, George Enescu or Alfred Novak and soloists who were famous in the entire world such as Alma Moodie, Selma Honigberger and Ana Voileanu from Cluj. Chief conductor was composer Paul Richter and President was Fr. Biemel. (28)

Philharmonic Company` Răsunetul Carpaților` of Câmpulungul Bucovinei was set up in 1922 and became affiliated to the Foundation in December 1923. It consisted of

older music groups such as the Choir of the Romanian Club and the Choir of the Romanian Ladies' Society. This choir had 50 members. (29)

Romanian music band `Doina` from Coțmari, Bucovina, joined the Foundation in January 1924. Its President was Reus Teofil. It promoted folk music, church music and dramatic arts. (30)

Music society `Armonia` from Cernăuți, an old music organization in Bucovina that kept the Romanian song and soul alive in the region became a member of the Foundation in September 1922. Its art conductor was Amuliu Liteanu. (31)

The documents existing at *SANIC* in the Stock of the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation / Art Department / Public Company `Filarmonica` mention the establishment of the Quartet of the Royal Cultural Foundation at the Conservatoire of Iași on 23 October 1922. (32)

In the same year, the Romanian Lyric Society `Leonard` joined the Royal Cultural Foundation, having a total capital of Lei 1,500,000. (33)

`Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation supported the cultural events by facilitating the trip and the accommodation of several foreign music groups. For instance the *Male Student Choir of Krakow*, founded in 1886 and which was the oldest Polish choir society, performed in the cities of Cernăuți, Iași, Brăila, Constanța, București, Brașov, Arad, Timișoara and Craiova in 1922. (34)

Moreover, in 1922, in our country there were concerts performed by the Choir of the Association of the Prague School Masters. Their itinerary included Oradea, Copșa-Mică, Sibiu, București, Ploiești, Constanța, and Bucharest. (35)

### ***Cultural exchange***

The legation of the Czechoslovak Republic at Bucharest in its note no. 5580 of 4 August 1925 addressed to Mr. Gheorghe Mugur, Manager of the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation, informed of the following:

`Dear Sir ,

Following your plan sent to our Ministry of Education in Prague for cultural exchanges between Romania and Czechoslovakia, please be informed that the budget of the current financial year does not permit us to make the financial effort for such a complex plan. However, during the current financial year we could offer a part of the available publications to the library of the `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation and to the university libraries in the country.` (36)

Over the next years, they would have completed the collections within the limit of the budgetary provisions. Alternatively, the Foundation or the Ministry of Education of Romania had to send Romanian publications to the Czechoslovak universities and particularly to the Romanic seminaries of these universities. The Ministry of Education recommended that as regards other topics of the programme the Foundation should start relationships with the Cultural Czech-Romanian Society and the Association of the Friends of Romania in Prague. With reference to the trips to Czechoslovakia, it was sufficient to contact the Study Abroad Office in Praha III, Strakova Akademie. For organizing exhibitions and artistic and tourist tours, similar associations from

Czechoslovakia were recommended while for the publication of texts translated from Romanian into Czech, the Orbis Publishing House, Praha XII, Fochva, tř.62 should have been contacted.

At Bucharest, based on Note no. 7646 of 30 September 1925, they transmitted the list with books that the Prague Ministry of Education was able to offer to the libraries of the Foundation and to the libraries of the Romanian universities in exchange for the publications to be sent to the adequate Czechoslovak libraries. Pages 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 of the file studied at SANIC / The Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation, list the titles of the Czech books sent to Romania; pages 34,35,36 and 37 list the titles of the Romanian books to be sent to Prague. It is interesting to mention some of them: `Venea o moară pe Siret` by Mihail Sadoveanu, the Catalogue of the Geneva Exhibitions, `Istoria civilizație iromânești moderne` by Eugen Lovinescu,`Filozofia stilului` by Lucian Blaga, `Scrisoarea unui Răzeș` and `Drumul cu plopi` by CezarPetrescu, `Ulița copilăriei` by Ionel Teodoreanu etc. (37)

On 19 February 1924, `Prince Carol` Royal Cultural Foundation sent an informative note to the Minister of Foreign Affairs: `Through the relentless effort of the President of the society România Jună, the `Romänischen Pressbureau`was set up in Vienna, Hofburg, with the following objectives: to publish articles about Romania in the Viennese newspapers under the patronage of the Foundation; to accurately inform the Romanian State and our cultural institutions of the cultural movements; to publish in the German language a series of anthologies by our classical writers; to organize cycles of conferences regarding Romania; to arrange Romanian concerts; to projects Romanian films in the cinemas of Vienna.

The programme of the first concert performed by Grozăvescu, Nectara Fodor and Ursuleac was scheduled for March. In May a second concert took place at Volks Oper, with Jean Atanasiuand Folam, while Weingastner conducted their Philharmonic Orchestra free of charge. (38)

### ***Museums***

Museums occupied an important place among the cultural institutions created by or affiliated to the Foundation.

Even since 1922 the activity aimed to support and maintain the museums. On 27 February 1922 the Foundation delegated Professors P.P.Panaitescu and Romulus Vuiato buy the `Orosz`collection for the Ethnographic Museum of Cluj. Professor Sextil Pușcariu from the University of Cluj took part in this action too as a member of the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania set up in Cluj by the Royal Cultural Foundation.

On 27 July 1922, the Foundation appointed ethnographer Romulus Vuia to collect specific items in Țara Hațegului for the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania. (39)

On 1 January 1923, Romulus Vuia was appointed Manager of the above mentioned museum. (40)

Documents from SANIC / The Stock of the Cultural Foundation reveal a rich correspondence of the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania regarding the collecting of items in Țara Hațegului and Banat. (41)

Because the Foundation was concerned about the precarious condition of the Museum, in 1927 there was a discussion between Ion Cârlova, delegated by the Royal Foundation, Sextil Pușcariu, President of the Museum's Commission and Romulus Vuia, Manager of the Museum; the minutes of the meeting mentioned that the Museum would belong to the Foundation and starting from 1 January 1928 the newsagents' income would be used to cover the Museum's needs. (42)

On 8 May 1928, the Foundation announced the Minister of Religious Affairs and Arts that on 17 June 1928 the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania would be inaugurated at Cluj and on this occasion they asked for a contribution of Lei 100,000 to support the museum stock. (43)

However, the greatest achievement of the Royal Cultural Foundation in the cultural institution field can be considered the establishment of the Romanian Village Museum in Bucharest. On 4 March 1936 the Foundation submitted an application form to the General Mayor of Bucharest to grant Lei 2,000,000, an amount necessary to start the works at the Romanian Village Museum as part of the event entitled 'The Month of Bucharest'. (44)

'Dimitrie Gusti' National Village Museum (name granted through Art. 18 of Government Resolution No. 742/2003) is a production of sociologist and folklorist Dimitrie Gusti. It was inaugurated on 10 May 1936 in the presence of Carol II of Romania and opened to the public on 17 May 1936. The site plan was coordinated by Victor Ion Popa (a writer, stage director and stage designer) and the financial funds were provided by the Royal Cultural Foundation. Dimitrie Gusti's researches showed the necessity to set up a museum dedicated to the Romanian village. The Exhibitions produced by the Royal Student Teams in 1934 and 1935 re-constituted rural houses from the villages where they had worked. Based on this experience, the Romanian Village Museum could be built in only two months – April and May 1936. Site supervisors and team managers gave birth with the help of Dimitrie Gusti's sociological principles to a true dowry of genuine Romanian civilization on a 42,000 sqm land situated in a superb scenery on the banks of the Herăstrău lake.

Households have been transported and rebuilt in Bucharest – they offered the visitors a trip to all the regions of the country as a 'permanently dynamic and intuitive lesson intended to attract the public opinion and to circulate a series of thoughts, issues and clarifications on our social life.' (Dimitrie Gusti, in 'Sociologia Românească' (Romanian Sociology), year I, Issue No. 6, June/1936)

Next to other cultural achievements, the Romanian Village Museum remained in time a real witness of the Foundation's social and cultural involvement in the life of the Romanian people.

In witness of its importance and value, the Royal Cultural Foundation enriched its cultural heritage with the donation of the 'Al. Saint – Georges' Museum. This museum founded by Al. Saint – Georges was opened to the public in Bârlad in 1908 and moved to Târgoviște in 1915.

Destroyed during the war between 1916 and 1918, it was reconstructed in Bucharest and offered to the Royal House in 1932 for the Union of the Royal Cultural Foundations. In 1940, its donation was legally performed at the Tribunal of Ilfov based on its authenticated deed no. 20932 of 21 June. Then the Museum was included in the budget of the Royal Cultural Foundation with specialized staff. (45)

The deed of donation shows the heritage of this museum: 13,933 numismatic items; 4,378 items regarding the history of the Romanian Post; 4,754 art works (oil paintings, pastel drawings, aquarelles, drawings, printed works, painted icons, frescos, old church objects, decorative art, sculptures); 1,082 files with plastic arts papers; 1,027 flags, costumes, weapons, furniture items; 151 freemasonry items (flags, paintings, badges, pictures); 150,000 papers and manuscripts from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; 400 maps from Romania and neighbouring countries; 6,536 pictures, the specialty library of the Museum with several thousands of volumes under in-process inventory. It is important to mention that all these collections were already in the possession of the Royal Cultural Foundation in 1932, being offered upon the celebration of 30 years since the graduation of Al. Saint-Georges. (46)

### **Conclusions**

'Prince Carol' Royal Cultural Foundation was established in 1921 by the Law published in Official Gazette No. 79/1921 in order to improve the cultural level particularly in the countryside and generally at the national level.

To achieve its objectives, the Foundation created Cultural Centres in the countryside and equipped them with libraries, bookstores, drugstores, cinema halls etc., which worked with the help of the intellectuals who in most of the cases were urban students.

The rural schools and the schools for cultural centre managers aimed to train rural elites and the elite of the village leaders.

The university and school youth teams established for the work in the villages were managed by specialists in rural fields in order to transform the peasantry's life and also the spiritual and moral life of the intellectuals.

From 12 October 1938, this foundation was entrusted with the enforcement of the Social Service Law which was suspended one year later (12 October 1939).

It goes without saying that the experience gained in over 25 years of activity in the countryside is a real national heritage.

More than 4,600 Cultural Centres have been established and monographic studies on the peasantry's social and cultural level were conducted by scholar Dimitrie Gusti, General Manager of the Foundation between 1933 and 1939.

A chronologic overview of the five Royal Cultural Foundations includes: '*King Carol I Foundation* (Bucharest, 1891), '*Prince Carol Foundation* (Bucharest, 1922), '*King Ferdinand I Foundation* (Iași, 1926), '*King Carol II Institute of Scientific Researches* (Cluj, 1931) with its Observatory in Duboșarii-Vechi (Bessarabia), '*King Carol II Foundation for Literature and Art* (Bucharest, 1933). The Law published in the Official Gazette of 14 April 1933 decided the merger of all these institutes under the

name the *Union of the Royal Cultural Foundations* managed by a General Secretary and an Administrative Manager. The Union subsequently included the *Al.Saint-Georges* Museum, the *Philharmonic Orchestra* and the *Magazine of the Royal Foundations* (1934-1947). Each of the five foundations had its own mission; they morally and materially supported a certain social class as well as the cultural and social life in some regions of the country. The General Secretary used the *Central Office of the Publishing Houses of the Royal Cultural Foundations* as an active tool to distribute the books published by the Foundations and to organize in a grandiose way and year by year the Month of Books Fair where all the publishing houses could show off their activity.

*King Carol I Foundation* has dedicated its activity to the Romanian history and supported the students from all over Romania through its library, scholarships and publishing of their thesis. *Ferdinand I Foundation* took care of the development of the physical and natural sciences, and contributed to the cultural education of the youth in the capital of Moldavia, particularly of the sons and daughters of the military staff. *Prince Carol Foundation* aimed to spread the culture among the common people and helped the peasantry through the methods of an active social science. *King Carol II Institute of Scientific Researches* contributed to the development of the sciences related to the country's natural resources and defence. It supported scholars' inventions, experiments and researches with practical results. *King Carol II Foundation for Literature and Art* had the mission to disseminate the high culture - literature, art, and philosophy - and helped Romanian's writers, artists and literati. *The Union of the Royal Cultural Foundations*, through its coordination of these foundations, brought its contribution to a direct promotion of the Romanian culture and helped bookmen and peasants, namely the two creative classes of our people. By animating through its cultural centres, student teams and publications the three major cities of Romania - Bucharest, Cluj and Iași - and the entire country, the union tried to concentrate the forces for a better and nobler life.

With the exhibitions organized abroad and its participation in international congresses and conferences, the Foundation contributed to the recognition of Romania as a state with a high level of culture and to the creation of its image and fame throughout the world.

Overall, we can consider that the period between the two world wars knew, with the help of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation too, a remarkable progress in various fields such as education, science and culture in general. One could notice unprecedented debates which are characteristic to a democratic society that expressed the complexity of a continuously changing economic, social and political life and also the influences, most of them positive, received from areas outside Romania, where our country and people were always part of.

## Notes and References

(1) Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale (Service of the Central National Historical Archive -SANIC). *Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation*, File 8/1938, f. 1

- (2) *Cartea Echipelor: `Despre munca la sate a Căminelor Culturale și a Echipelor Studentești.*, București, 1940, p. 7.
- (3) *A IV-a Expoziție a Fundației Culturale Regale*, București, 1938, p. XLI.
- (4) *Instrucțiuni pentru aplicarea Statutului și Legii Fundației `Regele Mihai I*, Art.14., București, 1945, p. 12
- (5) SANIC. *Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation*, dosar 19/1925, f. 11
- (6) *Ibidem*, f. 21
- (7) *Ibidem*, f. 24-25
- (8) *Ibidem*, f. 26
- (9) *Ibidem*, f. 30
- (10) *Ibidem*, f. 31
- (11) *A IV-a Expoziție a Fundației Culturale Regale*. București, 1938, p. 14
- (12) *Ibidem*, p. 20.
- (13) *Ibidem*, p. XXXV.
- (14) SANIC. *Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation*, File 17/1922, f. 1
- (15) *Ibidem*, f. 2
- (16) *Ibidem*, f. 3
- (17) *Ibidem*, File 12/1922, f. 1
- (18) *Ibidem*, f. 2
- (19) *Ibidem*, f. 3
- (20) *Ibidem*, f. 4
- (21) *Ibidem*, File 39/1925, f. 1
- (22) *Ibidem*, f. 2
- (23) *Fundația Culturală Regală `Principele Carol` :1922-1925*, București, 1926, p. 80.
- (24) *Ibidem*, p. 98.
- (25) SANIC. *Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation*, File 8/1922, f. 7.
- (26) *Fundația Culturală Regală `Principele Carol` : 1922-1925*. București, 1926, p. 105
- (27) *Ibidem*.
- (28) *Ibidem*.
- (29) *Ibidem*.
- (30) *Ibidem*.
- (31) *Ibidem*.
- (32) SANIC. *Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation*, File 6/1922, f. 7
- (33) *Ibidem*, File 23/1922, f. 3
- (34) *Ibidem*, f. 5
- (35) *Ibidem*, f. 27
- (36) *Ibidem*, f. 29-37
- (37) *Ibidem*, File 7/1924, f. 6
- (38) *Ibidem*, File 5/1922, f. 2
- (39) *Ibidem*, f. 3
- (41) *Ibidem*, File 14/1925, f. 1
- (42) *Ibidem*, File 13/1927, f. 1
- (43) *Fundația Culturală Principele Carol: 1922-1925*. București, 1926, p. 80
- (44) SANIC. *Stock of the Royal Cultural Foundation*, File 7/1936, f. 1
- (45) SANIC. *Stock of the Al.Saint – Georges Museum*, File 15, f. 7
- (46) *Official Gazette* No. 134. Part I, 12 June 1940.