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The Romanian Archives and Their Documentary Libraries

Ioan Drăgan

Romania, the only nation founded by a Latin people of Greek religion, has an ancient and very interesting history as well as a unique archival experience. It is situated at the collision of three well-defined and distinguished regions—Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Northeastern Balkans. Here, the civilizations of West and East and of Catholicism and Orthodoxy meet. The history of the Romanian archives mirrors in the best way the specifics of this intersection of cultures and civilizations.

This article offers only a synthetic introduction to the history and the present circumstances of the Romanian archives. It comprises two distinct parts. The first, the larger one, traces the archives through the epochs of Romanian history: antiquity, Middle Ages, modern times, the Greater Romania and the Communist periods. Further, there is information about the documentary libraries of the state archives. The second part is an examination of the condition of the archives in Romania nowadays.

Historical View of Romanian Archives¹

Antiquity. The oldest traces of writing found within the territory of modern Romania are clay boards from Tartaria in Alba County, 150 kilometers south of Cluj. They date from the Neolithic era (ca. 3,000 B.C.) and exhibit a cuneiform writing similar to that of Mesopotamia.

Beginning in the seventh century B.C. and continuing to A.D. 602, important parts of the present territory of Romania fell within the boundaries of the Greco-Roman and Byzantine civilizations. This period left an “archive” of some thousands of epigraphs and some waxed boards in Greek and Latin. Even Dacian ancestors, creators of several barbarian kingdoms that opposed the Roman Empire up to A.D. 106, adopted Greek and then Latin writing for their own communication. When successive waves of migratory peoples of Germanic, Slavonic, and Asian origin destroyed the urban centers of Dacia, Inferior Moesia, and Minor Scythia at the end of the ancient era, the concern for writing did not disappear. The Romanian phrase “to write” (*a scrie, scriere*) derives from Latin (*scribo, scribere*) and expresses a whole civilization.

The Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, two dominant cultural strains in Europe influenced the lands that would become Romania. The Romanian Orthodox Church promoted the Slavonic Byzantine culture. The neighboring Catholic kingdoms of Hungary and Poland and the Habsburg Empire promoted the Latin tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Hungary and Austria exerted a centuries-long domination on the northwestern Romanian provinces and settled a foreign Catholic population there.

¹ The most complete synthesis continues to be Aurelian Sacerdoteanu, “Istoria arhivelor romanesti” (History of the Romanian Archives), chap. V in *Arhivistica* (Bucharest, 1971), 57–91. See also Ioan Drăgan and Ioan Dordea, eds., *Din istoria arhivelor ardelene* (From the History of the Transylvanian Archives) (Cluj-Napoca, 1995).

The first *scriptoria*, chancellery offices, and organized archives appeared between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. They evolved through the formation of the feudal states of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia; the organization of ecclesiastical life in these states through bishoprics, metropolitan bishoprics, and monasteries; and the development of urban life.

Legally invested with the status of public notary (*loca credibilia*), the oldest institutional archives developed near the Catholic chapters and convents and the town magistrates in Transylvania. The basic principles of professional discipline first appeared in these institutions: an archival storehouse (*sacristia, conservatorium*), the archivist (*registrator, requisitor archivi*), systems of putting records in order, the inventory of the archives (*index privilegiorum*), archival regulations, and so forth. Step by step, the great noble families also created their own important archives and, from the eighteenth century, employed specialists for the organization and administration of their documents. Numerous military invasions by neighboring powers, beginning with the Turkish and Tartar plunders, caused irreparable damage to the Romanian medieval archives, especially in Wallachia and Moldavia.

Modern Archives. In the eighteenth century, the Austrian administration, set up in Transylvania (1691), Banat² (1718), and Bucovina³ (1775), introduced the modern system of registration (German: *Registratur*) in all the public institutions. The same era of Enlightenment promoted the use of archives as auxiliary resources for historiography and brought together the first collections of documents

² Today, Banat is a province in southwestern Romania bordered by the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube, Tisa, and Mures rivers. Part of its territory has belonged to Serbia since 1919.

³ Bucovina is the northern portion of the principality of Moldavia. It unified with Romania in 1918. Northern Bucovina, occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 and 1944, currently belongs to the Ukraine.

(*diplomataria*) for scientific purposes. Cultural institutions—like schools, libraries, and scholarly societies as well as individual intellectuals and nonprofessional aristocrats—became creators and possessors of important collections. The national struggle for independence from Russian, Turkish and Austrian control drew on both ideology and the records of the historical past. The cultural interrelations in Transylvania among Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans further stimulated evolution in archives keeping. The main political and administrative state offices (e.g., the Gubernium, the Mining Treasure Office), courts, the military, the religious centers as metropolitan churches and bishoprics, the town halls of the main cities, and the independent communities kept the most important archives from Transylvania until its unification with Romania in 1918. The two secularized confirmation places (*loca credibilia*) from Alba Iulia and the convent Cluj-Manastur preserved the most important medieval archives. The biggest libraries from Blaj, Alba Iulia, Targu Mures, Cluj and Oradea also kept their own important archival fonds. The cultural and academic societies such as the Romanian ASTRA (Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People), the German *Verein für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* (Association for Transylvanian Studies), and the Hungarian *Erdelyi Muzzeum* (Transylvanian Museum) established the maintenance of archives among their main programmatic undertakings. In Sibiu, in both the town archives and the archives of the “Saxon (German) nation,” Franz Zimmermann, who had been trained at the schools in Vienna, inaugurated the first public archives in Transylvania in 1876 where he instituted some European

archival practices.⁴ Unfortunately, the province's loss of its medieval fonds cast a shadow on these developments when they were taken to the Hungarian National Archives in 1875 where they still remain.⁵

In an unexpected way, despite a backwardness imposed by the long Turkish domination, the modern institution of archives (i.e., the state archives following the French model) appeared in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia through the Organic Regulation of 1831. The promulgation of this constitutional act in Wallachia on the first of May 1831 established the birthday of the Romanian State Archives in the Ministry of Home Affairs. The first state archivist, the well-known scholar Gheorghe Asachi, who came from Jassy in Moldavia, designed a program for this institution. In his opinion, the archives became the keeper

⁴ For instance, in 1878 he introduced regulations for the reading room. He also improved the archival operations and developed his collections with acquisitions from different owners. He organized courses of paleography and diplomatics and set up a documentary library. He also initiated publication of a medieval *Diplomatarium* adhering to the highest standards of the day. His initiatives contributed to the development of archival science in Transylvania and then in Romania. See Monica Vlaicu, *120 de ani de arhiva publică în Transilvania* (Public Archives in Transylvania – 120 Years, bilingual Romanian and German) (Sibiu, 1996); Harald Zimmermann, "Aus den Lebenserinnerungen de Hermannstädter Archivars Franz Zimmermann 1850–1935" (From the Memories of the Archivist of Sibiu F. Z.), *Revista Arhivelor*, ser. III, tom. II, 1996, no. 1–2: 67–85; W. Leesch, *Die deutschen Archivare 1500–1945* (German Archivists), Bd. 2, p. 692.

⁵ It is mainly about the two medieval archives already mentioned, those in Alba Iulia and Cluj-Manastur, as well as the archives of the regional administration in Transylvania and Banat during the Austrian occupation (1691–1867). According to the treaty of Trianon (1920), these archives were to belong to Romania, as they had been created in and regarded as the territory of Transylvania. This has never happened.

of the country's most important documents to ensure national rights and to assist historical scholarship.⁶

In 1862, after the union of Wallachia and Moldavia, the archives of the two principalities united under the supervision of a new administration in Bucharest. At the same time, the Ministry of Culture and Public Instruction included the institution in the same department with the universities. For a long time B. P. Hasdeu and D. Onciul, who were members of the Romanian Academy and two of the most outstanding historians of the time, led the institution. This period witnessed many initiatives and achievements in the editing of documentary publications, archival operations, staff training, and the organization of county archives. The archives of state institutions reflected the rapid modernization of Romania in the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth centuries. For example, the Romanian Academy Library created a very important collection.⁷

Romanian Archives between 1918 and 1950. As a result of the national unification in 1918, the Romanian archival system extended to the provinces recently joined with Romania. The system founded new regional archives at Cluj

⁶ In 1832, he initiated a special project of collecting documents of public interest from public institutions, monasteries, and particular persons, as well as from foreign archives. In his opinion, these “would make up an important collection of the old rights and privileges of Moldavia and would enlighten its history.” *Arhivele Statului – 125 ani de activitate 1831–1956* (State Archives – 125 years of activity) (Bucharest, 1957), 162–63.

⁷ *Biblioteca Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania 1867–1967. Cartea centenarului* (The Academy Library of Socialist Republic of Romania, 1867–1967. Centennial Book) (Bucharest, 1968); N. Mironescu, “La bibliotheque de l’Academie de la Republique Socialiste de Roumanie,” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 6, 1 (1967) : 77–89.

in Transylvania, Chisinau in Basarabia⁸ and Cernauti in Bucovina. The principle of regional centralization of the archives continued to 1950 with new regional branches being constituted in important centers such as Timisoara, Craiova, Nasaud, Brasov, and Suceava. In Sibiu, the National Saxon Archives, a historically autonomous archives of the Germans in Transylvania, existed until 1945. The regional branches from Chisinau and Cernauti were lost in 1940 and 1944, after the Russian occupations of Basarabia and northern Bucovina.

The 1925 law for the organization of the State Archives, modified and completed in 1932, took into consideration European and Romanian traditions. It required the specific obligations that all the state agencies and institutions had to deliver all the archival materials older than thirty years to State [National] Archives. They also had to hand in a yearly inventory of the files in the current archives created the previous year. The state agencies and institutions with storehouses and specialized personnel and the institutions belonging to ethnic minorities organized their own archives. State [National] Archives published an official magazine, inventories, and other instruments of information and organized libraries and permanent exhibitions. The State Archives administration was able to organize the archivists' training for its own personnel and for the personnel of other institutions. A scientific council elaborated the trends of the whole activity specific to the institution. The personnel belonged to the category of civil servants.⁹

⁸ Basarabia is the eastern part of the principality of Moldavia that Russia occupied between 1812 and 1918, then the Soviet Union, in 1940–1941 and 1944–1991. Today, it is the independent Republic of Moldova.

⁹ The two laws in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 153, I, 15 July 1925, respectively no. 81, I, 5 April 1932 and in the volume *Arhivele Statului – 125 ani de activitate*, p. 205–13.

During this time, the practice of archival enterprise advanced as well. In 1924 the Practical School of Archivists and Paleographers (since 1931 Superior School of Archival Science and Paleography, since 1936 School of Archival Science) was founded in Bucharest, and *Revista Arhivelor* (*Archives Review*), the first journal in the field, was created. The Museum of Archives was founded two years later. The Romanian State Archives, as the national archives institution also was known, published its first general inventory in 1939. During the war, Professor Aurelian Sacerdoteanu, general director between 1938 and 1953, added an Institute of Archival Research (1941–1942) and *Hrisovul* (*The Charter*), an archival yearbook (1941–1947). These achievements of high standing in Europe gave a considerable impulse to archival practice, establishing the theoretical and methodological fundamentals of the Romanian archives-keeping system, which lasted until the beginning of the Communist regime.

*Archives in the Communist Period from 1951 to 1989.*¹⁰

In 1947 the two specialized archival magazines interrupted their activity. The School of Archival Science was set up in 1948 in an Institute of Archival Science, Bibliography and Museology, which in its turn was abolished two years later. A Department of Archival Science, which continued to function within the Faculty of History of the University in Bucharest, was gradually abolished before 1970. The Communist regime effectively started for the Romanian archives in 1951 when, following the Soviet example, the State Archives administration transferred from the Ministry of Edu-

¹⁰ Ioan Drăgan, "Les Archives de l'Etat de Cluj 1920–1995. 75 années au service de la science historique," *Transylvanian Review* IV, 3 (Autumn 1995): 37–49. See also Martyn Rady, "Transylvanian libraries and archives in contemporary Romania," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 12, 3 (Autumn 1991): 123,126, with some exaggerations due to unilateral documentation.

cation to the Ministry of Home Affairs. This moment marked an important change in its orientation from an administrative-cultural profile toward a clearly administrative one. Home Affairs supervised and carried out the later orientation of the institution to serve the propaganda purposes of the regime.¹¹

Military officials, installed at the head of the General Direction [office of the director] of the State Archives, imposed absurd excesses of secrecy and a military manner of thinking. They restricted public access, destroying the natural relationship of the archives with society. Contact with the international archival community diminished. All these impositions deeply affected the existence of the Romanian archives with their consequences evident even today.¹²

Reflecting the character of this regime, an “archival totalitarianism” extended over society. The State Archives—both the National Archives and the regional branches—obtained full control over all public, community, and private documents with an almost exclusive right to seize and possess them. Modification in legislation during 1971–1974 brought into the State Archives collections of documents of libraries, of research institutes, partially of museums, even if sometimes this brought about the division of some collections of documents, manuscripts, and books. At the same time, however, the archival repositories of the State Ar-

¹¹ For example, archivists were obliged to participate in the actions organized by the propaganda services of the Communist Party.

¹² Although the last military head of the State Archives was replaced in November 1991, the institution has not successfully improved (as of February 2002) its position within the Ministry of Home Affairs. External relationships have been slightly encouraged. Some archivists and heads of archives who had trained in the old regime documented difficulties in adapting to the requirements of an open democratic society. Although during the last decade certain progress has occurred, real reform of the Romanian Archives has not been produced.

chives administration had no control over the archives of the Communist government (the Communist Party, Home Affairs Minister, Secret Services, Ministry of National Defense, Foreign Office). This article will not thoroughly judge the epoch now, although archival scholars should investigate it without delay, but rather emphasize only those positive accomplishments that made this period unique in the history of Romanian archives. These are the development of archival theory and practice, the increased efficiency gained by setting up the State Archives in the administrative structure of the country, the construction and endowment of archival buildings, the development of the document repositories of the archives, and the quantity and quality of archives preserved and processed from the organizations under the direct, efficient check of the State Archives.¹³

The concept of State Archival Fonds—later redefined and developed as the National Archival Fonds—began in 1957. It included all the documents with historical value without taking into consideration the owner. Protected by the state, it was administered by the State Archives. At the same time, the centralized structure of the State Archives introduced and facilitated new instructions for the organization and functioning of the archival establishment in the whole country that were based on the administrative organization of the country. The central administration elaborated technical rules for the processing and administration of the holdings in regional archival repositories, all of which were organized under and responsible to the central admin-

¹³ See the volume by Aurelian Sacerdoteanu, *Arhivistica* (Bucharest, 1971); the new series of *Revista Arhivelor* since 1958; the series of Guiding book in State Archives; tens of volumes of catalogues, editions of documents and other publications in the field. During 1966–1989, twenty-four storerooms of archives were set up in the capitals of counties. Archival legislation, the organization and selection of the archives according to the Nomenclator (i.e., the list of files generated following the organization chart and having mention of the period of time records were to be kept) have been generalized quite successfully.

istration. During this period, the Romanian archives projected the appearance and strength of a functional system in society.

Documentary Libraries of the Archives. The problem of documentary libraries is quite additional to the archives themselves. The library of the archives has been and still is an important auxiliary, but an auxiliary nonetheless. Documentary libraries were not accorded their proper place because of the perpetually poor material condition of the archives. The General Direction of the State Archives in Bucharest hired its first librarian only at the beginning of the twentieth century, although the need for one was clear a half century earlier.¹⁴

A law adopted in 1925 stipulated the existence of a library, including books and magazines in archival administration and its auxiliary areas, both in the General Direction in Bucharest and in the regional directions [archives]. In the interwar period, between 1932 and 1937, the State Archives profited as a legal repository; thereafter, its authority was lost and its status returned to that of a documentary library with the duty of processing and turning the archival material to account. The General Direction provided the necessary book fund for the regional directions when the archives belonged to the same department as the university libraries.

The centralized character of the State Archives before the Communist period permitted the implementation of a system for redistributing books among the regional branches. An important source of enriching the archival library was the seizure of books together with documentary fonds from institutions and especially from private persons. Thus, the library acquired old books and other literature in various subject specialties. Completing the

¹⁴ The first mention of the library was in the Regulation for the organization of the State Archives from 27 September 1862. A conservator, deputy of the general secretary, who also dealt with the public and who also had other duties, was in charge of the library.

collections of documentary-historic and judicial literature was the main purpose of acquisition.

Today, many branches of the State Archives have more than twenty thousand volumes in their documentary libraries while others have important and valuable book funds. Projects to introduce computers in libraries and to integrate with other libraries also exist. For the time being, though, the position of librarian exists only in the central archives, as it did at the beginning of the last century.

General Remarks. At the end of this quick historical journey through the evolution of Romanian archives, some observations are in order:

a) The Romanian archives has a long and rich history similar to that of the other countries in the area. In the modern and contemporary periods the archives of Romania have been influenced by the German-Austrian experience in the provinces of the former Austrian empire, by the French tradition through the administrative model taken over by the modern Romanian state, and more recently by the Soviet system imposed during the years of the postwar occupation. A unique, original experience evolved in Romania, and it should be studied and revealed in its depth and complexity and made known to archivists and scholars all over the world.

b) There is a great discrepancy between the value of Romanian archival practice and the amount of theoretical research on it in specialized studies and books. While the profession has a century-long institutionalized experience, there has been a professional journal for only seventy-five years. It has appeared regularly for forty years. Until very recently, this journal was almost the only specialized periodical. During these years, articles of a strictly historical and ideological character appeared in a disproportionate quantity. During some periods, historical publications such as documentary ones surpassed those of strictly occupational interests, such as inventories, methodological studies, and so on. Only one archival handbook, Aurelian

Sacerdoteanu's text of 1971, has been published, although a rich literature of normative and methodological character exists for internal use.¹⁵

c) Constants of the Romanian archives are the endemic scarcity of resources and a permanent lack of material means. All these privations led one colleague to quip regarding the anniversary of 165 years of austerity in the National Archives. To be sure, the archives cannot surpass the country's general level of resources and must accept the means that society can provide for this societal function; but, seemingly, archivists all over the world share the same feelings toward the administrations which assure their budgets. Anyway, the situation in Romania must be understood further in terms of the general level of culture and the respect accorded to the act of writing.

"The praising of the past, of its vestiges is a problem of a high degree of civilization. Nothing expresses better this degree than the way in which you treat the 'useless things' which helped you: the archives and the retired people," the great Romanian archivist and historian David Prodan said with bitterness.¹⁶

From this perspective one must acknowledge that, since 1862, archives permanently occupied a minor place in the structure of the state scheme. Until 1951 the archives direction belonged to the Department of University Educa-

¹⁵ The Technical Norms regarding the development of the activity in the State Archives, the basic methodological instrument, appeared in several editions: 1974, 1986, 1996. The Bulletin for Archival Documentation, for internal use too, has been published regularly since 1951. It includes articles of methodology, translations from international archival publications on archival methodology, as well as other information in the field.

¹⁶ *Memorii* (Memories) (Bucharest, 1993), 46. Prodan (1902–1992) was an archivist in the State Archives in Cluj, then part of the university library, professor in the history faculty, member of the Romanian Academy (1948), and member of the American Historical Association (1986).

tion in the Ministry of Education. Since then, it is one of more than twenty directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Many troubles derived from this official status.¹⁷

The Romanian Archives Today

Today, the National Archives (formerly known as the State Archives) is the most important institution in the archival field in the country. According to the law renewed in 1996, the National Archives administers, controls, and gives archival direction to all the creators and owners of archives in the country.¹⁸ It stores over 280,000 meters of records, organized in more than 34,000 archival fonds and collections, in about sixty buildings, but according to the law, it practically administers and controls all the archives in the country. The other institutions that keep important archives are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, the Romanian Intelligence Service, the large libraries and museums, the bishoprics, private companies, and so on. After 1989 the National Archives became of considerably greater importance for the Romanian society, by allowing research in documents which had been forbidden

¹⁷ Also the archives represents about 1 percent both of the personnel and of the budget of the Home Affairs Ministry; and in spite of the fact that general director of the State Archives was subordinate to one of the deputy secretaries, the National Archives did not succeed in being a priority for the minister after 1989 except for the Law of National Archives adopted in 1996. The institution does not have budgetary autonomy, and the sums allocated for modern facilities and preserving documents in the last decade have been, in effect, only symbolic.

¹⁸ The National Archives supervises how the law is applied in public and private organizations, according to a plan and the importance of the archives. The National Archives also provides assistance required by any creator or owner of archives. Essentially, each organization has to announce to the National Archives that it is setting up or closing down, and obtain approval of opening a new storehouse, approval of the Nomenclator, approval of any elimination of archives and the delivery of the documents of historical value to the National Archives.

previously and by contributing information for the restitution of the property confiscated by the Communist regime.

The National Archives is comprised of the Direction of the Central Historical Archives [the repository that manages the historical records of the Romanian nation—the equivalent of the National Archives (as distinguished from the National Archives and Records Administration) of the United States] as well as forty-one regional directions, including the one in the capital. Together, with the controlling board, these institutions employ about nine hundred people. The National Archives has a training system for personnel through the National School of Training in Archival Science and supports the Faculty of Archival Science, founded in 1992. The institution conducts permanent editorial activities for journals in the field, documentary editing, inventories, and similar publications. More than twenty years ago, National Archives staff established a microfilm project for the most important fonds and archival collections.

Among the difficulties the National Archives faces, unfortunately, is an already existing gap that grows deeper with every year of economic recession and budget austerity. For more than three years, vacant positions have gone unfilled, and the degree of occupation of jobs on the staff list in the system has decreased approximately at 90 percent. The larger regional archives of the country in Bucharest, Jassy, Cluj, Brasov, Sibiu, and Timisoara have practically ceased any acquisition of archives because of lack of space.¹⁹

¹⁹ These archival centers hold the majority of the historical archives in Romania. That is why they could not store important contemporary archives. Since 1980 the construction of new storehouses has almost ceased. For a discussion of the current situation in the Romanian archives, see the conclusions of the meeting of 25–26 September 1998, organized in Bucharest by the International Council on Archives and the Council of Europe, reported in Gérard Ermissé, ed., *Memoire et histoire: Les États européens face aux droits des citoyens du XXI^e eme siècle* (Bucharest, 1998).

In the last ten years, major investments have been accomplished in only three of the regional headquarters—Bacău, Braila, and Sfântu Gheorghe. During the past years, each regional direction obtained a car and a computer. Although intended, not all the regional directions have book repair workshops. There are only six restoration laboratories and approximately the same number of microfilm cameras to serve all. The quality and efficiency of the equipment is not very high.²⁰ The crisis of the centralized system of financing and provisioning obliges the regional branches of the National Archives more and more to find local solutions.

The circumstances in the Cluj branch, the second largest in the country, illustrates the situation well. In 2002, the Cluj repository has 17,000 meters of documents, the available space being entirely occupied. In the county served by the repository there are an additional 32,000 meters of archives having a permanent character. About 40 percent of the storage space does not meet minimum preservation standards. Based on average annual work, and according to present technical standards, it will take twenty-five to thirty years to process the documents in the storehouses satisfactorily. Thirteen specialized archivists oversee the 17,000 meters of archives. Comparatively, ten archivists managed 2,500 meters in 1951. Regarding the control of the units producing records in Cluj County, there are about 31,000 organizational entities, out of which about 1,500 are of real importance. Ideally, archivists can check each unit once in five to seven years.²¹

Under these conditions, there is the paradoxical situation in which the National Archives—the guarantor of the Archives Law—is also the main institution that does not follow the law. This is the most important and serious con-

²⁰ As an example, the microfilming equipment was made in East Germany more than thirty years ago.

²¹ See note no. 18.

tradition facing Romanian archives today. At the end of his tenure in the National Archives in 1996, the former director, Professor Ioan Scurtu, found four principal problem areas in the field: material problems; the limits of the civil culture of the citizens generally, and of the clerks particularly; the improper behavior of some political personalities; and the internal weakness of the National Archives, especially its inability to modernize (e.g., the failure to acquire computers).²² Five years later the problems are, unfortunately, the same. Another very important problem to add to those difficulties is the necessity of overcoming the managerial crisis. The Romanian archives can be saved only by trained managers ready to confront the two challenges of the moment: the chronic lack of means and the impacts of social reform and modernization.²³

The leaders of the Romanian archives have to find the best solutions for the salvation of the national treasure they have in custody. They must exert themselves to persuade the political establishment of the necessity of an urgent and deep reform of the current archival system. They must convince the Romanian leadership that archives guarantee not only the national identity but also the efficiency of the social management and the democracy. No price is too high to pay for that assurance.

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²² *Revista Arhivelor*, ser. III, tom. II, 1996, no. 1-2: 6.

²³ A new general director was named at the beginning of 2002, and the guiding ministry seems to be involved in solving the difficulties the National Archives faces daily. For example, the Cluj branch of the the National Archives recently obtained an old building, in which to store about ten thousand meters of records.

