

Universitatea Dunărea de Jos din Galați
Școala Doctorală de Științe Socio-Umane



TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT
REZUMAT
ALEXANDRU BOLDUR – A SYMBOL OF
NATIONAL IDENTITY

Doctorand,
Polina Vicol (Lungu)

Conducător științific,
Prof. univ. dr. George-Eugen Enache

Seria U 3: Istorie nr. 9

GALAȚI
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INTRODUCTION

Alexandru Boldur is a personality of Romanian culture - historian, professor, jurist, who has been remarked by his contemporaries for his devotion to his people through the originality and value of his historiographical work.

In the documents of the Alexandru Boldur's archive, kept in the National Archives in Bucharest, as well as in his memoirs, we encounter (auto)references of the fugitive historian, about his own work, his place and his international status: "It was destined for me to live at the crossroads of two epochs, one dying and the other new, developing", "my preoccupation in life was the research and teaching of human history", "... a modest scholar"¹, "a historian with the predilection for Moldova and especially Bessarabia"², "... the Bessarabian historian who put so much zeal in defending our province, Bessarabia ..."³, "... I am Romanian as both my father and mother."⁴ These words, we believe, exemplify the effigy of the Bessarabian historian, dominated by modesty, love for the full of experience native province; an authentic Romanian patriot, dominated by a critical and rigorous spirit that, far from being a "modest scholar", offered a comprehensive and mature scientific vision on the history of Bessarabia, integrating it into the wider frameworks of Romanian and European history. These short quotations can be integrated as an initial guide in the biography and work of Alexandru Boldur, meant to open our way in the deconstructive and hermeneutical approach that follows. Moreover, many personalities were being eloquent about Alexandru Boldur's life and activity, some of these references being gathered by Professor Gheorghe Cojocaru in an article dedicated to the great historian, at 130 years from birth⁵. In addition, recently, a series of studies dedicated to Alexandru Boldur's life and work has been published.

However, despite the studies devoted to the life and work of the Bessarabian historian that have already appeared, a synthesis work on Alexandru Boldur is required, designed to deepen Alexandru Boldur's biography and multidisciplinary scientific work, in order to better emphasize the symbolic dimension of the national identity which were praised by some contemporaries and which have been mentioned in this research. Communist-era occult years have undoubtedly placed their mark on the reception of Alexandru Boldur, many things remaining incomplete or too little known. In this sense, we agree with C. Tanase, who remarked sadly: "Few know who Alexandru Boldur is... What do we know about him, about his troubled life in which the history of Bessarabia of the 20th century is practically reflected?"⁶

A plethora of syntheses, specialized studies and articles, the press, archive documents, both published and unpublished have been consulted in order to conduct the research.

The main archive sources that helped us outline Alexandru Boldur's biography are represented by the files kept at the County Directorate of the Iași National Archives, Rectorate Fund, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, personal fund Alexandru I. Gonta (1918-1977) and Alexandru Andronic's personal fund, containing precious materials related to Alexandru

¹Alexandru Boldur, *Memorii. Viața mea. Lumini și umbre*, Editura Albatros, București, 2006, p. 5

²Serviciul Arhive Naționale Istorice Centrale București (SANICB), fond Boldur Alexandru, dosar IV/1, f. 73

³SANICB, fond Boldur Alexandru, dosar III/78, f. 20

⁴SANICB, fond Boldur Alexandru, dosar IV/10, f. 95

⁵Gheorghe Cojocaru, *Istoricul Alexandru V. Boldur la 130 de ani de la naștere*, text disponibil online la <http://www.timpul.md/articol/gheorghe-cojocaru-istoricul-alexandru-v--boldur-la-130-de-ani-de-la-nastere---93107.html>

⁶Constantin Tănase, *În zadar batem la ușa Viitorului*, în „Timpul”, 28 februarie 2014

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Boldur's life, didactic and research activity, adding to them the files from the National Archives of Romania, the Central National Historical Archives Service, the personal fund of Boldur Alexandru, and files from the archives of the National Council for the Study of Security Archives in Bucharest.

With reference to the historiographical contributions, we note the participation of Alexandru Boldur's disciple, later his colleague, the Bessarabian, A. Andronic, who, in paying homage to his mentor at the age of 95, offered short biographical references, referring to the students' years, to the themes approached by Alexandru Boldur in his research and professional activity⁷. A. Andronic also wrote in the memory of the scholar, making a brief review of the activity of Alexandru Boldur⁸.

The academician Victor Spinei has a special contribution to the study of the life and activity of the historian through the synthesis of *Alexandru Boldur in the Context of the Romanian and Inter-War Historiography*⁹, based on archive documents, which contain a detailed description of the scientific and didactic activity of the Bessarabian historian and, at the same time, undeniably informative facts for those interested in the subject. The author mentions that Alexandru Boldur "has manifested, in all likelihood naturally, a special attraction to his native lands, the studies which he has undertaken with passion and competence over many decades" and "the Alexandru Boldur's activity was anchored in the history of the Romanian regions between the Prut and Nistru, which he had researched from the ancient times up to the contemporary age..."¹⁰.

Based on archive documents, Tamara Grati contributes to the acknowledgement of Alexandru Boldur's activity at the Faculty of Theology in Chisinau (1927-1938), where "his personality is fully asserted, showing his superior qualities of teacher, patriot and man of science"¹¹.

In this scientifically fruitful period, in Paris in 1927, appears the reference work *La Bessarabie et les relations russo-roumaines. La question bessarabienne et le droit international*¹². We underline the author's conclusions that the Bessarabian historian "entered the annals of the nation as a defending supporter of the Romanian rights in Bessarabia", and "the realization of our national unity was for Alexandru Boldur the creed of his entire life"¹³.

Besides, reference material to the subject is proposed by Professor Anatol Petrencu, through the synthesis of Alexandru Boldur – profoundly acquainted with the history of the nation, mentioning that "Alexandru Boldur was not only a researcher of concrete history but also a philosopher of history", and we are "only at the beginning in our work of capitalizing on the scientific heritage of Alexandru Boldur. And this road must go all the way through"¹⁴.

⁷Alexandru Andronic, *Profesorul Alexandru Boldur la 95 de ani*, în „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A. D. Xenopol”, t. XVIII, Iași, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1981, p. 853-855

⁸Idem, *Alexandru Boldur*, în „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A. D. Xenopol”, t. XX, Iași, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1983, p. 635-637

⁹Victor Spinei, *Alexandru Boldur în contextul istoriografiei românești și interbelice*, în „Revista de istorie a Moldovei”, 1992, nr. 3

¹⁰*Ibidem*, pag. 44

¹¹Tamara Grati, *Contribuții la cunoașterea vieții și activității istoricului Alexandru Boldur (anii 1927-1938)*, în „Revista de istorie a Moldovei”, 1995, nr. 3-4, p. 89

¹²Alexandru Boldur, *La Bessarabie et les relations russo-roumaines. La question bessarabienne et le droit international*, Paris, Editura Gamber, 1927

¹³Tamara Grati, *Alexandru Boldur, istoric al unității naționale*, în „Țara”, 1996, nr 19 (323), p. 4

¹⁴Anatol Petrencu, *Alexandru Boldur – profund cunoscător al istoriei neamului*, în „Revista de istorie a Moldovei”, 1992, p. 41-42

Concerned about the study of Alexandru Boldur's life and activity, Maria Isaev made a rich material, which is a tribute to the historian, professor and lawyer of Bessarabia. In her study the author notes that Alexandru Boldur "has been remarkable through a vast and impressive scientific, didactic and social activity". The advanced age did not prevent him from continuing his research with optimism, and this is demonstrated by the following lines written by Boldur himself: "Now, at the age of 90, I have a series of studies and writings that I would want to conclude with good results, to both, my satisfaction and to the benefit of the Romanian nation."¹⁵ Through the biographical data offered and the appreciation of Alexandru Boldur's work, as well as nominating major titles and presenting her own opinion, Maria Isaev confirms the interest of contemporary researchers for those of the intellectual elite of the Romanian people.

Another important contribution to Alexandru Boldur's biography is given by Vasile Malanețchi, describing Alexandru Boldur's family formation period, recalling the very parental home in which the future historian and teacher had "an environment favourable to moral-Christian, spiritual education", which helped him become a good citizen and talented teacher throughout his teaching career. According to Malanețchi, Alexandru Boldur was concerned with the "problem of the formation and development of the Romanian people and, in particular, with the dramatic destiny of Bessarabia", and "the study of history was Alexandru Boldur's real vocation, which he had served faithfully until the end of his life..."¹⁶.

The list of researchers who have conducted relevant studies on the professional activity of the historian Alexandru Boldur, especially the steps of the professor, continues with Liudmila Chiciuc, according to whom, "Alexandru V. Boldur, the scholar and the professor completely dedicated to his job, had faced few obstacles to his professional affirmation, both on the scientific and the didactic segment. A series of episodes of the life and activity of the illustrious scholar and university professor, concealed in the archive documents, testify to the correctness, nonconformity and intransigence of the eminent historian, but also to the subjectivity of some people which destiny has brought in to his way, whose role was to contribute to the academic and scientific career rise of the historian"¹⁷.

Lidia Troianovschi was also concerned about Alexandru Boldur's personality. In her opinion, the Bessarabian Alexandru Boldur, demonstrated "spiritual perfection and erudition" during his lifetime and professional activity, being listed among the prominent figures of the Romanian culture of the twentieth century. According to her opinion, Alexandru Boldur's life and creation "were devoted to the deciphering and elucidation of the importance of the union of Bessarabia with the historical Motherland, shaping the international status of reunited Romania"¹⁸. The author reminds the role of the journalistic activity carried out by Alexandru Boldur in order to inform the public opinion about various socio-political problems. She points out that "the talented and hardworking cultural teacher has been and remains a standard of professionalism, patriotism and civic honesty"¹⁹.

¹⁵Maria Ișaeu, *În jurul memoriei istoricului și juristului Alexandru Boldur*, în „Literatura și arta”, nr. 14 (2902) 5 aprilie 2001, p. 6

¹⁶Vasile Malanețchi, *Istoricul Alexandru Boldur în/și destinul Basarabiei*, în „Alfa și Omega”, anul VII, nr. 10 (152), 23 martie 2001, p. 7

¹⁷Liudmila Chiciuc, *Cu privire la ascensiunea profesională academică a istoricului basarabean Alexandru V. Boldur*, în „Revista de Istorie a Moldovei”, nr. 2 (106) aprilie-iunie, Chișinău, 2016, p. 37, text disponibil online la <http://www.history.asm.md/index.php/ro/publicatii/reviste/766-revista-de-istorie-a-moldovei-nr-2-106-2016>

¹⁸Lidia Troianovschi, *Alexandru Boldur absorbit de problema națională*, în „Cugetul”, nr. 1 (17) 2003, p. 39

¹⁹*Ibidem*, p. 42

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Alexandru Roman, in his turn, points out that “our great forerunner, Alexandru Boldur, was concerned his whole fruitful life with the studying of the history of Bessarabia and Transnistria, with the Romanian people as a whole, to the East of the Prut.” In this respect, the work “Romanians and their ancestors in the history of Transnistria”, published in Iași, in 1943, a well-documented work, supported by studying the Russian and Ukrainian sources, was nominated²⁰.

Important, truthful information is provided by Vladimir Chiriac in the dialogue with Nina-Irina Boldur, the daughter of the well-known historian, who writes: “My father was active in the scientific realm and worked with great dedication until the end of his life. When I advised him to take a respite, he usually answered, ‘For me, scientific work is rest’”, and Bessarabia for Alexandru Boldur “was always a powerful spiritual fortress of Romanianism, that is, the preservation, for centuries, of the national culture – the real ethno-psychological Romanian permanence”. The daughter of the historian states that, after his 90 years of life, her father’s vision was weakened, therefore, reading and writing became difficult, but thanks to her help, Alexandru Boldur continued to create his work, managing to keep his spiritual harmony²¹, as proof serving his following assertion: “My daughter is constantly taking care of me, and if now, in my old age, I can still work successfully, then it is due to much of the care that my daughter provides. I have a good daughter from my good wife²²”.

Loads of information is provided by the historian Gheorghe Paladi, who called Alexandru Boldur “our pride, the Bessarabians (...)”²³.

Moreover, Professor Ion O. Cociu writes about the most important moments of Alexandru Boldur’s life and activity which cross his story as a red thread, urging us to appraise his scholarly heritage as a legacy to all Romanians on both sides of the Prut River²⁴.

A description of Alexandru Boldur’s life and activity is found in Valeriu Popovschi, ending with the question: “Why could not be one of the streets in Chisinau, the home town of the distinguished scientist, be gratefully named after him?”²⁵ We ask the same thing, because this is how we can dignify the local history and the personalities of this land.

The list of contributions concerning the discovery and promotion of Alexandru Boldur’s personality and his work can be continued with other names, for example Ion Dron²⁶, Iurie Colesnic²⁷, Ana Gherciu²⁸, Octavian Țăcu²⁹, and others. The final bibliography of this work includes all the titles that have been made available to us.

Apart from studies and various documentary materials, of great help has been the valuable autobiographical work *Memories. My life. Lights and Shadows*, where the author

²⁰Alexandru Roman, *Istoria Transnistriei în opera lui Alexandru Boldur*, în „Revista de istorie a Moldovei”, 1992, nr. 3, p. 52

²¹Vladimir Chiriac, *Basarabia – o puternică fortăreață spirituală a românismului...*, în „Literatura și arta”, nr. 48 (2416) 28 noiembrie, 1991, p. 7

²²Alexandru Boldur, *Memorii. Viața mea. Lumini și umbre*, p. 349

²³Gheorghe Paladi, *Alexandru Boldur – istoric credincios al Basarabiei*, în „Cugetul”, Revista de Istorie și Științe Umaniste, nr. 4, 1991, p. 30

²⁴Ion On. Cociu, *Alexandru V. Boldur, fidel apărător al adevărului istoric*, în „Făclia”, nr. 52 (2283), 27 decembrie, 1991

²⁵Valeriu Popovschi, *Un istoric scos din anonimat*, în „Țara”, nr. 13 (135) din 16 martie 1993, p. 8

²⁶Ion Dron, *Alexandru Boldur*, în „Capitala”, nr. 14 (66), 19 februarie 2000

²⁷Iurie Colesnic, *Alexandru Boldur*, în vol. *Basarabia necunoscută*, Editura Universitas, Chișinău, 1993

²⁸Ana Gherciu, *În căutarea... istoriei Basarabiei : [despre istoricul Alexandru Boldur]*, în „Timpul”, anul XIII, nr. 7 (2042), 24 februarie 2014, p. 31

²⁹Octavian Țăcu, *Ștefan cel Mare: o altă istorie*, în „Timpul”, anul XIV, nr. 40 (2124), 16 octombrie, 2015, p. 13

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declares, “Seeing that my age is advanced, I thought it would be great to leave behind me a document that mirrors how a modest scholar lived and felt in these times of radical political, socially and economical changes, full of understanding of what was happening, and sometimes being an active element, sometimes a spectator who preferred to keep his mind free of thought and feeling”³⁰.

The author relates his experiences from childhood to maturity. Here we find out about his family, about the people who helped him unconditionally to build his future. Alexandru Boldur nostalgically describes his colleagues and teachers, truly talented, who have served him as an example in his teaching career, presenting his entire career in terms of professional activity, starting with the University of St. Petersburg and ending with the Institute of History National “A. D. Xenopol” in Iași, gives plenty of details of deceptions and great successes, as well as his own opinions regarding the multitude of topics addressed. This autobiography, in the way it is conceived and drafted, is thus, a prime source for the way the author himself has seen his life and his scientific destiny. In addition, in the National Archives of Romania, the Central National Historical Archives Service, the personal fund Boldur Alexandru, in the VII / 2 file, the album with photos and postcards that were to be inserted in the *Memories...* was kept. According to Nina Boldur’s notes, these were selected by her father to be included in the autobiographical work. Unfortunately, the Albatros Publishing House did not use them for financial reasons³¹. For this reason, we intend to offer, through this paper, some of these original images.

Therefore, taking into account the mentioned historiographical approaches and based on new documentary sources, we intend to outline an overall portrait of Alexandru Boldur in this research, with priority being given to the concern of the Bessarabian historian for studying and promoting the Romanian identity in Bessarabia, which is why it was considered a symbol of our national identity. We want to give a complete image of Alexandru Boldur’s biography, filling in those gaps left empty by other historians, highlighting his activity abroad, the Iași and Chișinău professorial course, the early years of the communist regime and his being followed by the Security. We will also try to undertake an analysis of the scholar’s scientific work, insisting on the major research topics related to the history of Bessarabia, in order to highlight the type of discourse and the main arguments put forward by the author.

We have begun our work with a bio-bibliography that has not existed so far, which we consider to be absolutely necessary to correlate biographical data with scientific work, and for the reader to benefit from a suitable chronotopic framework from the beginning, allowing the reader to more easily understand the facts presented in the research. We have inspired from established historiographical models, such as those proposed by academician Alexandru Zub, in works such as those dedicated to Mihail Kogalniceanu or Vasile Pârvan, or the work of Professor Sorin Șipos, dedicated to Silviu Dragomir, carrying out a work that includes two logical parts, one being the biographical reconstruction part, the second being the analysis of Alexandru Boldur’s historiographical work.

The first chapter, titled *Alexandru Boldur: biographical references until his return to Bessarabia*, refers to the years 1886-1924 and includes both information about his family and childhood, as well as the difficulties he has sustained during this time; the chapter elucidates aspects of his education and training in the Spiritual School and the Theological Seminary in Chisinau, but also the period of his studies and his professional debut at the University of St. Petersburg. It also reports on Professor Alexandru Boldur’s work at the Higher Legal Institute, later called the Crimean Labour Faculty, Sevastopol city, as well as on the time of returning

³⁰SANICB, fond Boldur Alexandru, dosar III/86, vol. III, f. 2

³¹SANICB, fond Boldur Alexandru, dosar VII/2, f. 1

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Alexandru Boldur on October 24, 1924, in Romania, and his departure to Paris in 1925, to undertake research into the history of Bessarabia.

Chapter II, entitled *Professor Alexandru Boldur's career in the Romanian academic environment*, begins with the period 1927-1938, referring more specifically to the historian's work at the Faculty of Theology in Chisinau, highlighting his professional ascension, starting with the title of part-time lecturer and continuing to the rank of titular professor. It analyses the difficult context that conditions Alexander Boldur's advancement from one step to another in his entire professional approach.

Further, there is a reconstruction of the events from 1938-1948, which coincides with his activity as a titular professor at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Iași, but also the period in which he held the position of director of the "A. D. Xenopol National History Institute" from the same city. At the same time, the way of retirement of Professor Alexandru Boldur, an event that proved traumatic through the way it was realized, is being examined. There is also a review of the less pleasant moments experienced by the Bessarabian historian after the live transfer in Bucharest.

Chapter III, entitled *Re(assessing) the past: the interest of the Security for Alexandru Boldur and the significance of his public attitude until 1948*, analyses the information in the files of former Security regarding Professor Boldur, trying to identify the reasons for including the Bessarabian historian as a target person: political and journalistic activity, issues addressed through his work, maintaining correspondence with Romanian emigrants, but also with Russians who condemned the communist governance system. In order to verify the credibility of the informative notes drafted by the securities and to better understand the circumstances in question, we have sought to compare and corroborate the information identified with Alexandru Boldur's testimonies from memories or other sources that evoke his personality.

These three chapters, which are in the biographical part of our thesis, were written according to the classical biographical models, realizing the reconstruction of Alexandru Boldur's life and activity, starting from the documentary information, respecting the chronological criterion, insisting more on his professional career and less on other aspects of personal biography, considering that, first of all, he was received and judged in the public space through his prestige as a historian, capable of conveying a message with profound national implications. Where the information turned out to be incomplete or contradictory, we sought to issue assumptions that seemed more verisimilar to us, while emphasizing the uncertainty of the narrative. We have sought to integrate Alexandru Boldur's biography into a wider context of contemporary phenomena and events, which offers added meaning and meaning to certain gestures of the illustrious history.

The fourth chapter, titled *Alexandru Boldur's historical work: research topics, discursive stakes and public acceptance*, contains an analysis of the work of the Bessarabian scientist as a discourse in the sense that we want to highlight the major themes of research, the key notions used, the main arguments used and the general meaning of his discourse without making a systematic critical analysis of various historiographical constructions. Considering the vastness of his work and the various topics addressed, such criticism implies enormous work that goes beyond the scope of this work.

The presentation of Alexandru Boldur's main historiographical works intertwines with the critical appreciations of contemporaries or those who later became interested in Alexandru Boldur's work to see how the activity of the historical illustrator was received by his contemporaries and other people of culture. In this context, we resume and develop certain biographical aspects related to the writing of certain works, in order to better reveal the connection between the destiny of the author and his work.

CONCLUSIONS

Following the achievement of the expected objectives at the beginning of the research, we are able to draw some conclusions from the chapters that make up the content of this research. Based on the study of the archive documents, both published and unpublished, the analysis of historical sources and specialized literature, we have elaborated a study that would respond to the statement in the title: *Alexandru Boldur - a symbol of national identity*.

Descending from two well-known families in the Bessarabian region, Alexandru Boldur inherited respect for national affiliation and the moral force for social justice. He gradually formed his personality, his family serving as an example and favourable environment to development. He managed to combine the mother's affection and sacrifice, father's courage, Eufrosina's benevolence, the friendly attitude and spirituality of his sisters, so he became a human model worthy of success.

As we have shown, the studies have left a considerable footprint on the formation of the future historian, jurist and scientist - Alexandru Boldur. Eager to acquire knowledge, he agreed to start teaching, even though it was necessary to travel about ten kilometres away from home to get to school in another village. At the age of eight he was enrolled at the Spiritual School in Chisinau, then at the Theological Seminary in the home town. For some reasons, Alexandru Boldur has not embraced the priestly career. Even though the historian from Chişinău chose to study at St. Petersburg University, the Faculty of Law and simultaneously at the Archeology Institute in the same city, those theological knowledge from pre-university education gave him the opportunity to understand the role of religion in the life of the people.

We also recall that Alexandru Boldur conducted his studies in Russian language, but this did not reduce his national feelings. His training in the great cultural center of St. Petersburg later facilitated the research of Slavic, Russian, Ukrainian sources related to the history of the Romanians, insufficiently explained by its predecessors or not included in the scientific circuit.

In his professional choice he was guided by personal vocation and it turned out to be a happy one, Alexandru Boldur being appreciated by his teachers, becoming, for a period, a teacher in the metropolis on the banks of the Neva River. Studying archive documents and literature, we learn that Alexandru Boldur started his teaching career in 1911, being appointed as assistant professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of St. Petersburg, during which he combined didactic work with in-depth scientific research, but also with journalistic attempts in various newspapers of the time. Alexandru Boldur completed his professional training in 1916, and Zinaida Mocşanschi, his wife, a year later. In the context of the Bolshevik Revolution, the new family moved to St. Petersburg in Moscow, then to Sevastopol, Crimea, then again to Moscow.

According to the memoirs and manuscripts signed by the Bessarabian historian, during this time the longing for the native province increased. After a series of events, mentioned in the *Memories ...*, Alexandru Boldur, finally, on the evening of October 24, 1924, succeeds to repatriate, crossing the Nistru River clandestinely. Later, in early 1925, he departed for Paris for the creation of the work dedicated to the history of Bessarabia, this being the partial realization of his ideal to serve Bessarabia, the recovered land.

Returning to Romania in 1927 he resumed his teaching activity, being co-opted as a member of the newly established Theological Faculty of Chisinau, until 1938 and following all the stages of the teaching career. Even though Alexandru Boldur's career stages have been difficult, sometimes with resistance from colleagues, we also notice a major support within the pedagogical team. The period spent in Chisinau includes many moments demonstrating the

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tenacity and professionalism of Alexandru Boldur, when he was writing a series of referential papers and delivering a series of courses that raised a great interest.

The decade spent in Iași as a professor at the Faculty of Letters (1938-1947) and director of the “A. D. Xenopol” (1943-1948) in Iași. During this time, he showed pedagogical talent and professional ethics, as proof serving the testimonies of his colleagues or former students. Occupying the position of director of the Institute, he capitalized competently with his colleagues and collaborated with other similar educational institutions in the country as well as abroad. He dedicated himself totally to the education and training of the young generation in the spirit of responsibility and devotion to what constitutes the trunk of the essential values of humanity: beauty, good, truth, freedom, justice, the sacred; values that are constantly mentioned in the academic environment and every good citizen respects them. Simultaneously with the pedagogical activity, he produced valuable materials, presenting the history of the Romanian people and Bessarabia from the beginnings. As proof of his activity in the given period serve the three volumes in the journal *Historical Studies and Research* (vol. XVIII-1943, vol. XIX-1946, vol. XX-1947), which he published. Regardless of the circumstances, he did not give up for a moment his action to promote the history of the Romanians, to which he adds a new direction: the research of the history of the Romanians beyond the Nistru River.

The establishment of communism in Romania blocked the natural evolution of the professional career of the scholar. In the absence of a firm political commitment before 1944, Alexandru Boldur escaped from prison, but he was investigated by the Security among other leaders of the refugees from Bessarabia who were from the Prut region. He is perceived as a scientist, whose work is significant for the history of Bessarabia, and the interest of the authorities and of the political police towards the author oscillates, as the attitude of the Bucharest power towards the “older brother” oscillated. Alexandru Boldur is perceived as an agent on the historiographical field of Romanian “imperialism”, or, through his ties in Russian environments, a possible Muscovite agent, so that during the years of national communism there could be much more interest for someone who could write so competent, from a Romanian perspective, the history of the land between the Prut and the Nistru Rivers.

The period of 1947-1960s was very difficult for Alexandru Boldur. Forced to retire from higher education (also related to his work), he had to deal with various jobs, seeking to capitalize on the need for Russian-language specialists. Entering the suspect mixer of an often schizophrenic regime, Alexandru Boldur had to live for six months without pension for ridiculous reasons till 1960. Later, he even allowed himself to go abroad and publish works dedicated to Bessarabia there, with the support of some old and new friends of emigration, while the matter of Bessarabia was taboo in the official discourse and nothing could be published in Romania in this sense. There is some information that helps to rebuild the ambiguous policy of the Romanian communist authorities regarding the Bessarabian issue.

Regarding the study of the scientific work, which constitutes the subject of Chapter 4, we have referred less to the studies elaborated before the return to Romania. We have identified part of these studies, written in Russian, and we intend to deal with them in the near future. Without being related to Bessarabia, they help the scholar to form an idea of the Russian legal and administrative system on his foreign policy, elements that will be of great help to him when discussing the situation of Bessarabia in the nineteenth century, Alexandru Boldur having a vision that a “simple” history that gathers disparate facts does not have.

Therefore, we began our work with the writings published after 1925, following the list of works written by the author, which reveals a certain evolution, not to be neglected. Obviously, in the first decades, the main subject is Bessarabia, firstly as a subject of international law in the Romanian-Soviet dispute (Soviet), so that the interest finally focuses on the history of

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Bessarabia as part of the history of the Romanians and on revealing the way the province worked during the Tsarist rule.

In the years of the Second World War, the interest extends to the study of the Transnistrian Romanians during the communist period, and, although the preoccupation for the modern history of the Prut-Nistru territory is preserved despite the obstacles made by the authorities, Alexandru Boldur plunges into the research of medieval history of Moldova, with substantial contributions to the biography of some important princes (Ștefan cel Mare or Ștefăniță), but also in social and institutional history, through research on various councils and assemblies of the country. Towards the end of his life, Alexandru Boldur would show an interest to the history of the Thracians. These researches cannot be regarded as forms of escape towards more convenient and more agreeable historiographical horizons, since Alexandru Boldur continued to be concerned with the history of modern Bessarabia, even in the years of communism, but with a greater attention for the past, to outline a wider diachronic perspective on the eastern area of the Carpathians. Thus, there are a few big themes, located diachronically but in complex causal connections: the Thracians, the ancestors of the Romanians and their interferences with the Slavs (interesting and provocative, rather little studied issues), the destiny of the medieval Romanian Moldova state, stretched from the Carpathians to the Dniester River, the destiny of the Russian province of Bessarabia, broken and isolated by the Romanian Moldova, the return and the integration of the province into the motherland considered by the natural Alexandru Boldur, that of Romanianism.

As stated in the introduction, we did not seek to conduct a deconstruction of Alexandru Boldur's historiographical discourse, which is impossible within the limits of this work, but we insisted on their meaningful rendering and, very importantly, the way in which they were received by contemporaries not only as examples of rigorous scientific research but also as excellent instruments of demonstrating, in the international policy plan, the Romanian rights to Bessarabia. The multitude of the reported accounts justifies, we fully believe, the appellation stated as a hypothesis in the title of the paper. Alexandru Boldur was genuinely seen as a powerful symbol of national identity, due to his historiographical contribution, extremely solid but full of militant significance.

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