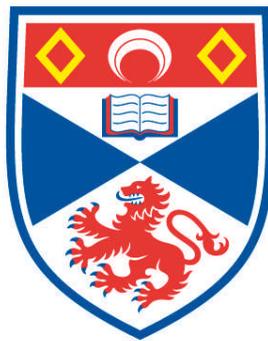


**ECLECTIC AND NEO-NATIONAL ASPECTS OF ROMANIAN
ART AND DESIGN, 1878-1930 : VOL. 1**

Shona Lowe

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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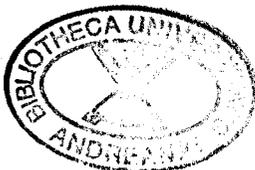
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ROMANIAN ART AND DESIGN, 1878-1930

PhD Thesis

Shona Lowe
University of St. Andrews
2000



ABSTRACT

According to the words chiselled into its foundation stone in 1875, Castle Peleş, the summer residence of King Carol I, was intended to represent the 'cradle' of the newly arrived Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty in Romania. Its construction coincided with the formation of the modern Romanian state and embodied a similar striving towards a convincing visual language of self-justification and definition. Initially employing international vocabularies, this language turned increasingly to possible 'national' sources of expression.

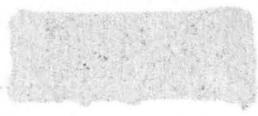
This thesis examines the relationship between international influence and notions of a 'national style' in Romanian art at the turn of the twentieth century. It concentrates on a number of salient, but little studied factors in the search to define the multi-layered cultural identity of the newly formed kingdom. Firstly, it explores the artistic activity of the royal family. King Carol's 'transplanting' of weighty German tradition is contrasted with the British-born Crown Princess Marie's imaginative rejection of eclectic historicism and romantic reinvention of Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and 'primitive' sources. Artistic links with Vienna, Munich, Bohemia, Britain, Paris and Darmstadt, together with the significant contributions of individuals like the British designer Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, the Czech architect Karel Liman and the Viennese Künstlerkompanie of Gustav and Ernst Klimt and Franz Matsch, are highlighted.

Royal projects are examined against the backdrop of the emerging national style debate in the Romanian arts as a whole. Attempts to express Romanian identity in both the fine and applied arts are compared and evaluated. Particular attention is paid to the role of national and international exhibitions, together with the forum for artistic discussion provided by independent societies like Ileana and Artistic Youth.

The thesis concludes with a comparison of public and private royal responses to neo-national ideas: firstly, in the grandiose monuments constructed for the Coronation of Ferdinand and Marie as King and Queen of Greater Romania in 1922 and, secondly, in the series of unusual country retreats created by Marie in the 1920s.

DECLARATIONS

- (i) I, Shona Lowe, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 108,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date 12/12/00..... signature of candidate .. 

- (ii) I was admitted as a research student in September 1996 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in September 1996; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1996-2000.

date 12/12/00..... signature of candidate 

- (iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of PhD in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

date 23. 4. 01..... signature of supervisor 

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This thesis took shape through research carried out in the Romanian State Library, the Romanian Academy Library and the Ion Mincu School of Architecture in Bucharest; the Bibliothèque Nationale and Cinémathèque française in Paris; New York City and University Libraries; the library of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London University; and the National Libraries of Edinburgh and London. It also draws heavily on material from Bucharest State Archives and the holdings of Cotroceni Palace, Castle Peleş, Castle Pelişor, the National Museum of Art in Bucharest and Constanţa Port Museum. I am grateful to the staff of all of these institutions for their help, and should like to extend particular thanks to the following:

First and foremost, to Marian Constantin of Cotroceni National Museum for his insight and provision of a wide range of articles and photographs; also to his colleague, Dr. Diana Fotescu, for sharing her rich knowledge of Queen Marie. For providing me with student status in Bucharest and for arranging access to archives

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the centuries, the Romanian-inhabited lands have provided a meeting point for East and West. Situated at the cross-roads of Europe, between the River Tisza and the Black Sea (fig. 0.1), the Romanians have a complex cultural identity that is at once Byzantine and Latin. On the one hand, they are Orthodox, sharing membership of the Byzantine Commonwealth with the Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks. On the other, they speak a language derived from Latin and claim the Romans as ancestors. Historically, the region has acted as a buffer between the three great Powers of Russia, Austro-Hungary and Turkey. While Transylvania came fully under Habsburg authority in the late seventeenth century, the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia spent most of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries under Ottoman domination. Unlike their neighbours south of the Danube, however, the principalities avoided outright Turkish occupation and consequent Islamization by recognising the sultan as suzerain and paying an annual tribute. As a result of this limited political autonomy and safeguarding of their Orthodox faith, they regarded themselves as Christendom's front line of resistance to Muslim domination.

The Romanians' multi-layered identity is reflected in their language. It has a Latin base, onto which have been grafted words of Greek, Slavic and Turkish origin. Romanian historians trace its Latin roots back to the Roman colonisation of Dacia following Trajan's conquest of 101-106. This lies at the heart of their belief in their national singularity as a 'Latin island in a sea of Slavs'.¹ This somewhat simplistic

¹The Romanians' belief, that they are directly descended from a fusion of the Romans and Geto-Dacians, lies at the root of their claim to Transylvania and has consequently been contested by Hungarian historians. The latter argue that the Romanians are, in fact, descended from a wider group of romanised inhabitants of the Balkans known as Vlachs. They supposedly migrated north in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reinforcing the Hungarian theory that when the Magyars arrived in the Danubian basin at the end of the ninth century, the only inhabitants of Transylvania were Slavonic

view (in light of the fact that the 'sea' also contained Hungarians, Saxons and Turks, among others), grew in currency with the rise of nationalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Hence language was celebrated as a common factor linking the Romanian-speaking peoples of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. Aspirations towards national union were further strengthened by memories of the Wallachian prince Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) who, for one year, united the three principalities in 1600.

The first step towards national independence came with the Treaty of Adrianople that ended the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29. Placing Moldavia and Wallachia under Russian protection, it abolished the Turkish monopoly on trade, opening the principalities to commerce with the rest of Europe. It also coincided with the end of Phanariot control of the region as the 'hospodars', Greek princes from the Phanar quarter of Constantinople appointed by the sultan, were replaced by native princes. Thirty years later, in 1858, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and the curtailment of Russian influence after the Crimean War led to the Convention of Paris, a document giving Moldavia and Wallachia the right to elect their own princes. They promptly chose the same man, the Moldavian moderate liberal, Alexandru Ion Cuza, in 1859. Despite reorganising the army, modernising the legal system and establishing the United Principalities' first universities, Cuza managed to alienate both Liberal and Conservative politicians and was forced to abdicate in 1866. The provisional government set up in his place decided that internal stability and international recognition could best be achieved by inviting a foreign prince to rule the newly formed country.

tribes. For contrasting viewpoints on the continuing Transylvanian question, see Ștefan Pașcu, *A History of Transylvania*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1982 and Sandor Biro, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania, 1867-1940*, East European Monographs Series, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992.

The arrival of Prince Karl of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen in May 1866 marked the beginning of the creation of the modern Romanian state. Carol's well-timed intervention in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 not only won part of the Dobrudjan Black Sea coast for Romania, but also resulted in international recognition of the country's independence. In 1881, the Hohenzollern prince was proclaimed the first King of Romania. During his reign, which lasted until 1914, the country strove for the modernisation of its economy and the Europeanisation of its educational, cultural and intellectual structures. The period saw the building of Romania's first railways and the expansion of trade through the opening up of the Dobrudja and the development of the port of Constanța. Economic and political *rapprochement* with the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy further facilitated the importation of manufactured goods and expanded Romania's agricultural market abroad.

Parallel with the economic and structural regeneration of Romania under King Carol, art and literature experienced a similar drive to 'catch up' with the rest of Europe. The abolition of censorship in the 1866 Constitution gave rise to a new wave of literary and artistic societies and journals. Founded by writers, artists and intellectuals who had studied in the schools of Paris, Munich or Vienna, these, at least initially, believed that the imitation of international art forms and integration into the European mainstream were essential to the birth of a Romanian art scene.

Inevitably, the rapid pace of development, together with Romania's new political independence, engendered an atmosphere of growing enquiry into the nature of Romanian identity itself. This was compounded by the country's geographical ambiguity as a small, independent nation caught between three huge empires. While the subject peoples of the Habsburgs and Romanovs increasingly sought to assert their regional singularity in the face of larger cultural hegemonies, Romania found herself having to justify her newly-won political independence through an insistence on the distinct identity of the Carpathian area. Hence the study and the making of Romanian

national history became closely interwoven. Between 1866 and 1914, the Romanian *ceartă pentru istorie* - the struggle for, with and through history - produced the intellectualising of its civilisation and culture. This gave birth to the notions of the longevity of the Romanian people, of the intrinsic 'brotherhood' between Romanian-speaking groups across the Balkan region and of their deep-rooted links with other 'Latin' civilisations.²

King Carol, who married Princess Elisabeth of Wied (better known by her literary pseudonym Carmen Sylva), was succeeded by his nephew, Ferdinand, the second son of his elder brother, Prince Leopold. In 1893, Ferdinand had wed Princess Marie, the daughter of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, and of Marie Alexandrovna, sister of Tsar Alexander III of Russia. Two years after his accession, in 1916, Ferdinand took Romania into the First World War on the Allied side. Despite German invasion, the exile of the royal family to Iași, and the signing of a humiliating compromise with Germany in 1918, Romania emerged from the Paris Peace Conference with more than double her original land area and population. By the autumn of 1920, the national dream of 'Greater Romania' had become a political reality.

This thesis examines some of the most significant artistic developments which took place during the formation of the modern Romanian state. In particular, it explores the relationship between eclectic and neo-national aspects of artistic production that emerged in the period from independence in 1878 until shortly after King Ferdinand's death in 1927. While not pretending to offer an exhaustive study of the art of the time, it focuses on a number of key issues and events in order to suggest a more complex understanding of a hitherto little researched area of Romanian art history. These include the building and decoration of the royal palaces; the debate

²Such ideas were synthesised by early historians like A. D. Xenopol whose *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiana* was produced between 1888-1910; or Nicolae Iorga who, by 1914, had published more than thirty volumes exploring the documentary evidence of Romania's past.

surrounding the notion of a 'national style' in both the fine and applied arts; the role of artistic societies in fostering a Romanian art scene; and the stimulus to the development of the Neo-Romanian style in architecture provided by Romania's first national exhibition in 1906. Arguing that the notion of a 'national style' had firmly crystallised in public consciousness by the outbreak of the First World War, the thesis goes on to examine how such ideas were taken up in the monuments created for the Coronation of Ferdinand and Marie as King and Queen of Greater Romania in 1922. It concludes by exploring how far this public display of 'national' artistic expression influenced the private environments created by Queen Marie in the 1920s, in particular the unusual series of country retreats which she called her 'dream houses'.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first two examine the international artistic influences brought to Romania by the palace-building and interior design activities of the royal family up to 1914. Chapter One discusses how King Carol's choice of elaborately eclectic foreign styles in the construction of his summer palace, Castle Peleş, in Sinaia reflected his political and dynastic ambitions. It explores the paradox of how a distinctly German palace could become the focus of Romanian national pride. King Carol's exploitation of historicism's propaganda value is discussed in order to show how the palace served as a visual tool, designed to anchor the concept of Hohenzollern monarchy firmly in the public consciousness. The chapter also reveals the development of King Carol and Queen Elisabeth's design tastes towards an understanding of the integrated, functional approach of Art Nouveau. This was indicated, as early as the mid-1880s, in the large body of decorative work executed for the palace by the *Künstlerkompanie* of the young Viennese artists Gustav and Ernst Klimt and their partner Franz Matsch. In particular, Gustav Klimt's hitherto overlooked theatre friezes of 1885, with their concern for linear stylisation and the symbolic potential of juxtaposed naturalistic and decorative forms, represent a pivotal moment in his stylistic transition from collaborative academicism to Secessionist

individualism. The chapter concludes with an examination of the Modern Style extension and alteration work undertaken by Karel Liman between 1893 and 1914.

Chapter Two examines how King Carol's new awareness of Art Nouveau trends was, in part, influenced by the modern tastes and unusual design projects of Crown Princess Marie. Focusing on a series of garden follies and interior decoration schemes commissioned by the British-born princess between 1893 and 1910, it explores her wide-ranging awareness of pan-European artistic developments. In particular, British and German connections will be probed, as revealed, for example, in a Pre-Raphaelite inspired tree-house by the Arts and Crafts architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott or in early interiors in Cotroceni influenced by the design projects of Marie's sister and brother-in-law, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse in Darmstadt. The importance of the periodical *The Studio* as a provider of images and ideas will be highlighted, as will the general atmosphere of inquiry into alternative or 'primitive' sources of artistic inspiration. This interest is examined through the Byzantine, Celtic, Scandinavian and Maori forms and motifs which feature in a number of Marie's decorative projects and furniture designs. Ultimately, the chapter will ask to what extent such design schemes were informed by a true understanding of the synthetic, integrated aims of Art Nouveau, or were rather conditioned by Marie's fascination with 'exoticism' and romantic escapism.

Having explored the artistic tastes of the main royal patrons of the period, the thesis turns to the national/international debate emerging within the fledgling Romanian art scene as a whole. Chapter Three examines the birth of the Neo-Romanian style in architecture. It focuses firstly on the stimuli behind the style's creation. These include opposition to the widespread use of French styles and architects, new interest in Romania's architectural heritage stimulated by the controversial restoration projects of Emile André Lecomte du Noüy, and attempts to set up a forum for architectural education and discussion. The formal characteristics of

the style will be briefly discussed in relation to the works of its initiator, Ion Mincu. Attention will be drawn to official reactions to the style as a vehicle of national expression, in particular through comparison of the Romanian pavilions at the 1900 Paris World Fair and the pavilions of Romania's first national exhibition, held in Bucharest in 1906. The latter, which represented the first major visual celebration of the national ideal of 'Greater Romania', will be studied in terms of the various definitions of 'Romanian' identity which it presented.

Chapter Four, which is divided into two sections, focuses on the visual arts. Part One studies the role of artistic societies in the development of a Romanian art scene. It argues that the earliest societies, such as the Friends of the Fine Arts Society or the Intimate Club, saw themselves as complementary to, rather than in reaction against, the Schools of Fine Art. They sought to extend public awareness of European artistic developments through the organisation of exhibitions of international art. Later societies, including the Artistic Circle, Ileana and even the Independents, also promulgated the belief that a knowledge of European art was necessary in order to create the right atmosphere for nurturing a national style. By examining works shown at exhibitions, together with society statutes and manifestos, the discussion investigates the polarisation of Romanian art at the end of the nineteenth century. This divided between 'academic' styles, on the one hand, and the Symbolist, Impressionist and Art Nouveau tendencies absorbed by younger artists during study in Paris and Munich, on the other. The chapter looks, in particular, at the important role played by two of the most innovative turn-of-the-century groups, Ileana and Artistic Youth. While still preaching stylistic pluralism, these societies also began tentative efforts to create a 'national' pictorial idiom.

The second part of the chapter concentrates more closely on attempts to articulate this idiom in painting, sculpture and the decorative arts. Through analysis of salient examples, it discusses the variety of ways in which artists sought to answer the

achievements of Neo-Romanian architects and create a national language of visual form in the other arts. The role of women's groups and applied arts societies, for example the Princess Marie Craft Society, is explored, as is the new decorative arts section of the Bucharest School of Fine Art, set up in the wake of the 1906 Exhibition. Particular attention is paid to the theoretical writings and artistic production of the Artistic Youth painter, Apcar Baltazar, one of the strongest proponents of the need to break down artistic hierarchies in order to achieve a synthetic, recognisable, 'Romanian' language of art.

Having argued, therefore, that a concern with 'national' forms of expression had begun to permeate Romanian art at almost every level by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the final chapter returns to the royal family. It looks at how Ferdinand and, in particular, Marie reacted to the Neo-Romanian style in architecture. The latter was given added significance by the realisation of the national ideal - the creation of Greater Romania - after the First World War. Attention is focused on the use of the style in the official monuments built to celebrate the Coronation of Ferdinand and Marie in 1922. This is complemented by a discussion of the Queen's own artistic response to the style in her palaces and residences. Beginning with an examination of the new north wing of Cotroceni designed by Grigore Cerchez shortly before the War, the chapter analyses Marie's development away from a faithful incorporation of Neo-Romanian forms towards an aesthetic formula which she christened the *Regina Maria* (Queen Marie) style. Manifested in the series of country residences she constructed or adapted during the 1920s and early 1930s, this responded not only to the multi-ethnic character of the enlarged country, but, in later years, was also influenced by Marie's interest in the Bahá'í faith.

An investigation of this sort inevitably encounters certain difficulties. Prior to the 1989 Romanian Revolution, the politically 'delicate' nature of the idea of shared cultural influences meant that Romanian art historians tended not to probe too far into

the international dimensions of the art of the period. The deliberate obfuscation or simple ignoring of major sources left frustrating lacunae in the basic information provided by secondary texts. As a result of the lack of readily accessible material, most western art historians, on the other hand, have tended to overlook Romania in studies of national styles and national identity construction across Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³ Others have dismissed her output as a simple assimilation, rather than transformation, of western artistic trends.⁴ Yet Romania's situation, as a newly independent country striving to create a distinct national identity, provides interesting contrasts with regions still under the administrative and cultural jurisdiction of larger empires. Unlike Galicia, Hungary, Catalonia or Finland, where national expression frequently involved deliberate recourse to regional mythology or vernacular sources, Romania, at least initially, strove to emphasise its cultural links with the West. Hence, this thesis argues that the ubiquitous nature of international styles in Romanian art during this period need not necessarily be seen as 'anti-national'. Rather, it represented Romania's striving to be judged as a modern nation on an equal footing with the more 'advanced' countries of Europe. This is reinforced by the Romanians' tendency to regard themselves as 'Europeans' living in an eastern environment, inherently different from their Slavic, Magyar or Turkish neighbours. Parallel with the 'purifying' of the Romanian language by replacing the Slavonic alphabet with the Latin, efforts were made throughout the arts to stress Romania's cultural fraternity with western countries, in particular with France.

³See, for example, Jeremy Howard, *Art Nouveau. International and national styles in Europe*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, or Nicola Gordon Bowe (ed.), *Art and the National Dream*, Blackrock, Irish Academic Press, 1993, both of which provide good coverage of western, northern, central and eastern Europe, but largely omit the Balkan area.

⁴See, for example, Steven A. Mansbach, 'The "Foreignness" of Classical Modern Art in Romania', *Art Bulletin*, September 1988, p. 535.

Furthermore, although dealing with a period noted for its efforts to break down the boundaries between the arts, there has been little attempt at a synthetic overview of the Romanian arts as a whole. The development of the decorative arts, in particular, has received scant academic attention. Even Paul Constantin's *Arta 1900 în România* (Bucharest, Meridiane, 1972), the only work purporting to examine the notion of Art Nouveau in Romania, restricts itself to a superficial discussion of mainly fine arts, with an artificial emphasis on Hungarian-influenced developments in Habsburg-controlled Transylvania.

This hierarchical approach to the fine and applied arts is compounded, particularly in discussions of painting and artistic societies, by an unwillingness to relate Romanian developments to broader European currents. For example, Theodor Enescu's 'Simbolismul și pictura' ('Symbolism and painting'),⁵ while providing a selectively detailed analysis of Symbolism in the work of Petrascu, Luchian, Artachino and others, gives little in-depth discussion of the clear influence of the European artistic centres where these painters trained. Likewise, .Petre Oprea's *Societăți artistice bucureștene* (*Bucharest Artistic Societies*, București, Meridiane, 1969), useful for its collation of newspaper articles and society catalogues, makes no attempt to compare groups like Ileana and Artistic Youth with contemporary movements such as *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland), the Prague Mánes Society or St. Petersburg's *Mir iskusstva* (World of Art) group. On a more positive note, two recent international exhibitions have begun to increase awareness of the turn-of-the-century art scene in Romania. *La peinture roumaine 1800-1940*, held in the Hessenhuis, Anvers, in 1995, presented work by painters including Grigorescu, Luchian and Petrașcu. *Art Nouveau - Art Deco dans des collections de Roumanie*, hosted by the Musée Curtius in Liège and Musée Horta in Brussels, also in 1995, exhibited

⁵In *Pagini de artă modernă românească*, București, Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1974.

international Art Nouveau works, mostly from the Romanian royal collections, without, however, addressing more complex issues of Romania's own artistic production during the period.⁶ Unfortunately, further attempts to redress the art historical balance have been hindered by the fact that the rich collections of the National Museum of Art in Bucharest, housed in the former royal palace on Calea Victoriei, have remained closed since the building was damaged by gunfire during the 1989 Revolution.

Research into Romanian architectural history, on the other hand, is increasingly active. This has been stimulated, in part, by the difficult task of dealing with the totalitarian legacy of Ceaușescu's incomplete 'civic centre' at the heart of old Bucharest. A number of recent exhibitions, conferences and publications organised by the Union of Romanian Architects have gone some way towards resituating both the Neo-Romanian style and the country's vibrant modernist movement within a wider European context.⁷ In particular, the international conference *National and Regional Experiences in European Architecture 1880-1940*, held in Bucharest in the spring of 1999 (proceedings to be published in 2001) stimulated comparative discussion of Neo-Romanian architecture and other European 'national style' variants.

Certain post-1989 historiographic studies of Romania, for example Keith Hitchins' *Rumania 1866-1947* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) or Catherine Durandin's *Histoire des Roumains* (Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée, Fayard, 1995), have also attempted to formulate a more international overview of Romanian political, social and intellectual development at the turn of the century. Still lacking, however, is a

⁶This built on the earlier exhibition *Art Nouveau* organised by Cotroceni National Museum in Bucharest in the autumn of 1992.

⁷For example, the exhibitions and accompanying publications *Bucharest in the 1920s-1940s: Between Avant-Garde and Modernism*, Bucharest, 1993, and *Centenar Marcel Iancu 1885-1995*, Bucharest, 1995. Also studies such as Dana Harhoiu's *Bucarest, une ville entre orient et occident* (Bucharest, Simetria, l'Union des Architectes de Roumanie et ARCUB, 1997) or Luminița Machedon and Ernie Scoffham's *Romanian Modernism: The Architecture of Bucharest, 1920-1940*, (Cambridge Massachusetts/London, MIT, 1999).

comprehensive investigation of the role played by the royal family in the creation of the modern Romanian state. In particular, little has been published since 1948 on the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringens' influence on Romania's cultural and artistic development. The tools of this research lie largely in the writings of members of the royal household and its supporters, in the accounts of foreign visitors to Romania and in the archives and surviving collections of the former royal palaces. Among the most useful contemporary sources are the publications of King Carol's librarian, Léo Bachelin, of the director of the Viennese Kunsthistorisches Museum, Jacob von Falke, and the articles of the art critics Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș and Alexandru Busuioceanu.⁸

Within a range of biographical studies of Queen Marie, the most convincingly researched is Hannah Pakula's *The Last Romantic* (London, Phoenix, 1996 [first published 1984]).⁹ Nevertheless, this touches only superficially on her decorative schemes and art patronage. The main sources of information for these are the Queen's own books, articles and unpublished letters and diaries.¹⁰ In addition, a growing number of small, independent studies, for example Diana Fotescu's *Americans and Queen Marie* (Iași, The Centre for Romanian Studies, 1998), or Carmen Tănăsioiu's *Iconografia Regelui Carol I (The Iconography of King Carol I, Timișoara, Armacord, 1999)*, are slowly bringing new material to scholarly attention. Such studies are complemented by the important, but unfortunately still unpublished, annual colloquia

⁸See, for example, Bachelin's *Castel-Pelesch. Le château royal de Sinaia*, Paris, Firmin Didot et Cie, 1893, and *Tableaux anciens de la galerie Charles Ier Roi de Roumanie. Catalogue raisonné*, Paris, MM. Braun, Clément et Cie, 1898; von Falke's *Das rumänische Königsschloß Pelesch*, Wien, Gerold's Sohn, 1893; Tzigara-Samurcaș' *Memorii I*, București, "Grai și suflet - cultura națională", 1991, or Busuioceanu's *La galerie de peintures de Sa Majesté le Roi Carol II de Roumanie*, Paris, Les Beaux-Arts, 1939.

⁹Other, less reliable, sources include Terence Elsberry, *Marie of Roumania. The Intimate Life of a Twentieth-Century Queen*, London, Cassell & Co., 1973, Mabel Potter Daggett, *Marie of Roumania: The Intimate Story of the Radiant Queen*, New York, George H. Doran, 1926. Emil Panaitescu, *Marie de Roumanie*, Bucarest, M.O. Imprimeria națională, 1939, Georges Oudard, *Marie de Roumanie*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1939 and I.P. Țuculescu, *Regina Maria. Mare suverană, eroină și literată*, București, Ed. 'Ateneu', 1940.

¹⁰For example, *The Story of My Life*, 3 vols., London, Cassell & Co. or 'Casele mele de vis', *Boabe de Grâu*, anul I, nr. 9, 1930. A large part of Marie's correspondence, together with her diaries, is kept in the Bucharest State Archives.

organised by Cotroceni and Castle Peleş National Museums. These combine investigation of individual pieces from the palaces' collections with broader analysis of royalty's role in the development of the fledgling Romanian art scene.¹¹

Despite these colloquia, research into the patronage, collecting activity and building projects of the Romanian royal family still faces a number of obstacles. The first concerns the destruction and dispersal of objects following the departure of King Mihai in January 1948. A proportion of the royal furniture and books was burnt in the courtyard of Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest; other items were divided between government offices and the Buftea film studios. Although Castle Peleş was preserved largely intact as a national museum, the royal palace on Calea Victoriei was converted into the National Museum of Art. Smaller country residences, such as Copăceni and Scroviște, became either Communist party farms or government retreats. Perhaps the worst affected was Cotroceni Palace. Shaken by an earthquake in 1940, it was hit by German bombs in 1944, and subsequently converted into the Pioneers' Palace (housing the Romanian Communist youth organisation) between 1946-76. Following further severe damage in the 1977 earthquake, Ceaușescu ordered the restoration of the palace and the building of a new presidential wing. This work, which unfortunately also involved the demolition of the seventeenth-century church at the centre of the palace complex in 1984, lasted until 1986. While recovering some of the royal furniture and recreating much of the original decoration, the architect-in-charge, Nicolae Vlădescu, shied away from an accurate reconstruction of several of the more unusual interiors created by Crown Princess Marie. Nevertheless, the rebuilding of Cotroceni, followed by its conversion into a public museum after the Revolution, spawned a number of written studies concerning the palace and the different stages of its construction.¹²

¹¹Some of the most significant papers given at these colloquia are listed in the bibliography.

¹²For example, Diana Fotescu & Marian Constantin, 'Ansamblul Cotroceni în epoca modernă', *Revista muzeelor*, nr. 4, 1992; Mihai Ipate, 'Ansamblul Cotroceni (Istorie, arhitectură, monumente dispărute)',

Together with the smaller palace of Peleş in Sinaia, Cotroceni was opened to the public in the early 1990s.

Further difficulties are posed by continuing sensitivity surrounding ownership of the royal collections. Consequently, large sections of Castle Peleş, including the Modern Style mansard rooms created by the Czech architect Karel Liman and the Viennese furniture designer Bernhard Ludwig in 1906-7, remain closed to the public. In addition, a substantial part of the royal art collections and architectural and photographic archives have yet to be released from restricted access at Posada restoration centre near Sinaia. Such sensitivity also complicates the possibility of obtaining photographic reproductions of works housed in the palaces, hence the poor quality of illustrations accompanying the discussion of Gustav Klimt and Dora Hitz in Chapter One.

This thesis attempts to address some of the issues left unraised or unanswered by the relatively small body of existing research into the development of the arts in Romania at the turn of the century. It combines primary sources drawn from the royal palace archives, the personal documents of the royal family and contemporary exhibition catalogues with close examination of surviving works and relevant details from the contracts, letters, publications and reports of artists, architects, critics and foreign visitors to Romania. Using this evidence, it examines the role of the royal family within the context of the national/international dichotomy which underpinned not only Romanian artistic debate, but also the rise of Art Nouveau and national revival styles across Europe as a whole.

Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Romanian, French and German are by the present author. Titles of societies and works of art have, where appropriate, been

Muzeul de artă - Arad. Studii - comunicări, 1996; Nicolae Vlădescu, 'Restaurarea Palatului Cotroceni 1976-1985', *Revista monumentelor istorice*, nr. 1-2, anul LXVI, 1997.

translated into English. Titles of journals, newspapers and some architectural and literary expressions specific to Romania have been left in the original, the first entry being followed by an English translation. The Romanian spelling of cities and regions has been retained unless an obvious English equivalent exists; in this case, spelling follows that used in Keith Hitchins' *Rumania 1866-1947*. Due to the difficulties of consistently ascertaining which calendar has been used, dates have been left as they were found in primary sources. The frequency of Queen Marie's misspellings and punctuation mistakes, quoted uncorrected, has necessitated the omission of 'sic' on each occasion. A capital letter is used for Symbolism, Realism, Liberalism etc., when it signifies the specific artistic or political movements; lower-case letters denote practices divorced from the original. 'Art Nouveau' is used as a generic term referring to the entirety of Modern Style movements rather than to the specifically French variant. It can also be employed as a stylistic designation describing a generalised adoption of design approaches broadly characteristic of the movement, for example in the discussion of Liman and Ludwig's mansard rooms for Castle Peleş in Chapter One. Footnote references are given in full the first time they occur in a chapter; on subsequent occasions, an abbreviated form is used. Unless otherwise indicated, all archive references (beginning 'fond') allude to the Bucharest State Archives.

From Historicism to Art Nouveau: Castle Peleş - the 'Cradle' of the New Dynasty

The arrival in Bucharest, in May 1866, of the twenty-seven year old Prince Karl Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (1839-1914) raised hopes for increased social and political stability, as well as for international recognition of the young country of Romania. Karl, or Carol as he became known, was the second son of Prince Karl Anton of the southern, Catholic branch of the Hohenzollern family. He was well-connected, well-educated and had a sound military background, having served as an officer in the Prussian army during its 1864 campaign against Denmark. His invitation to Romania followed the forced abdication of Alexandru Ion Cuza whose joint election as Prince by both Wallachia and Moldavia had brought about the unification of the Principalities in 1859. Cuza's alleged abuses of power and autocratic tendencies had led to his overthrow by a Conservative-Liberal coalition. The provisional government set up following the coup hoped that offering the throne to a foreign prince of a powerful royal house would bring prestige to the new political rule. The move was also intended to counteract the lingering instability caused by Romania's uncertain status as an Ottoman vassal state which had been under the collective protection of the great powers since the end of the Crimean War. Moreover, it was hoped that a wealthy foreign prince would be above the rivalries and intrigues of the local ruling families which threatened to paralyse government and the civil service.¹

Despite Carol's political acumen and influential connections abroad, the first five years of his reign were marked by dispute and internal instability. Between 1866 and 1871, the country saw ten governments and over thirty ministerial reshuffles; as a

¹So strong was this desire to keep any one aristocratic family from power that the Constitution prohibited the heir to the throne from marrying a Romanian.

result, all the Prince's energy was devoted to consolidating his precarious political situation. A crisis point was reached in March 1871, when the pro-French Republican faction, taking advantage of the resentment caused by Prussian humiliation of France in the Franco-Prussian War, led an anti-Prussian, anti-Carol riot in Bucharest. Carol contemplated offering his abdication; however, order was restored by Lascăr Catargiu who formed a Conservative government pledged to reinforce the position of the Prince. The result was the first ever parliament of the united Romania to last its full term in office.

The period of relative stability which followed enabled the Prince to turn his attention to the erection of a grand princely seat designed to lend an air of permanence to the new regime. In 1869, Carol had married Elisabeth of Wied (the writer Carmen Sylva), giving rise to hopes for a strong dynasty which would stabilise the traditionally shaky power bench of Romanian politics and win international recognition for the emerging country.² These hopes were expressed in the words chiselled into the foundation stone of Peleş: 'Let this castle [...] be the cradle of our Dynasty in the homeland'.³ The building of a new palace was intended to anchor the young royal dynasty in the soil of its adopted country and, at the same time, indissolubly link Prince Carol's reign with the creation of a stable, united Romania. The latter issue was given particular potency when, only a few years after work began on Peleş, Romanian participation in the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War contributed to the country being granted full independence from the Turks in the Treaty of Berlin (as a result of which Carol was proclaimed King in 1881). Still, the style the Prince chose for his new palace was utterly foreign to Romania, being an eclectic variant of the German Neo-Renaissance style then enjoying growing popularity in Germany. Furthermore, the site chosen for the palace was not in the capital, but in the as yet

²In fact, King Carol and Queen Elisabeth had only one child, Maria, born in 1870, who died aged three. This was the reason Carol invited his nephew, Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, to come to Romania as heir to the throne in 1889.

³'acest castel [...] să fie leagănul Dinastiei noastre în țară', Al. Ranea, 'Sinaia și împrejurimile', *Literatură și artă română*, nr. 6, iunie 1903, p. 343.

undeveloped mountain resort of Sinaia in the Prahova valley on the main route north from Bucharest to Transylvania.

There are several possible reasons why Carol should have decided to develop his summer palace, rather than the *Palatul Regal* in Bucharest, as the principal architectural embodiment of the new dynasty. The existing palace on Calea Victoriei was a low, unimposing, vaguely Neo-Classical town-house, built from 1812-15 for the *marele dregător* (member of the princely council), Dinicu Golescu. Here Golescu had helped organise the earliest meetings of the *Societatea literară românească* (Romanian Literary Society), founded in 1827. Although the building had been repaired and modified in 1834-37 and again in 1854-55 for the courts of Alexandru D. Ghica and Alexandru Ion Cuza, unstable economic and political conditions had never allowed for lavish reconstruction or embellishment. For Prince Carol, it was essentially a place of government and administration.⁴ The desire to create a new palace, detached from the political intrigues of pre-unification Wallachia, and symbolic of the union of the German dynasty with the newly formed country, dictated a move to a fresh site. The annual retreat to a summer palace was common practice among European rulers; in a similar fashion to royal contemporaries like Ludwig II of Bavaria, King Carol invested much of his personal fortune and creative energies in the construction of his country residence. Furthermore, the building of a summer palace was a practical necessity since, during the oppressively hot Bucharest summers, the Romanian government and upper classes decamped to the mountains for four months. There were also ideological reasons: the Carpathians and, in particular, neighbouring Transylvania were the idealised source of many of the virtues and myths of Romanian folklore. By locating his palace in the Carpathian foothills,

⁴When Carol finally rebuilt the Royal Palace in Bucharest in 1882-85, seven years after work was begun on Peleş, he chose the French architect, Alfred Jules Paul Gottereau (1843-1904?). The latter's restrained combination of Neo-Classical and French Neo-Renaissance elements lent an air of dignified sobriety to the palace, matching that of other public buildings such as his Savings Bank (1900) on Calea Victoriei (now the C.E.C. headquarters) and his Carol Foundation (1891-95), opposite the Royal Palace (now the University library, burnt in the 1989 Revolution but recently restored). Following a fire in 1926 which destroyed the central wing, the Royal Palace was rebuilt, from 1930-37, by Nicolae Nenciulescu (1879-1973) in a severely pared-down, Neo-Classical style. Badly damaged in the 1989 Revolution, it has now been restored and houses the National Museum of Art.

only a few miles from the border with Hungarian-controlled Transylvania at Predeal, Prince Carol was seen to be associating his reign with the burgeoning national aspirations of the Romanian people.

In 1873, the Prince acquired a site on the heavily wooded lower slopes of the craggy Bucegi range near the little monastery of Sinaia, where the princely couple stayed during the construction of the palace.⁵ The work faced major technical difficulties: there was neither rail nor road access, while attempts to build terraces on the steep hillside were undermined by the numerous water sources joining the River Peleş. With the help of a French engineer called Charlier, a vast underground network of pipes was installed to drain the water running off the hill, while over 20,000 cubic metres of earth were brought from the bottom of the mountain to construct the terraces.⁶ The administrative difficulties involved in improving the roads of the area were illustrated in a series of caricatured heads of members of government and court drawn in pencil by Carmen Sylva on the walls of one of the monastery cells (fig. 1.1). Among these figure her aide, Dr. S. Ştefănescu, who is attempting with scissors to poke out the eyes of the local prefect for refusing to see the deplorable state of the region's roads.⁷

No single architect was responsible for the final design of Castle Peleş (fig. 1.2). Instead, the palace was the accumulative result of an organic process of modification, addition and stylistic change largely dictated by Carol himself and executed by a series of mostly non-Romanian architects and craftsmen. Construction took place in two main stages: firstly, from 1875-83, according to the design of the Vienna-based architect, Wilhelm von Doderer, and later, from 1893-1914, under the direction of the little-known Czech, Karel Liman. Carol seems to have taken a keen

⁵Founded in 1692 by Mihai Cantacuzino (brother of Voivode Şerban Cantacuzino) who named it after his pilgrimage to Mount Sinai and the Holy Land. Queen Elisabeth left vivid descriptions of her thirteen summers in the monastery (see, for example, Carmen Sylva, 'Căminul nostru', *Epoca*, 16 noiembrie 1904).

⁶Léo Bachelin, *Castel-Pelesch. Le château royal de Sinaia*, Paris, Firmin Didot et Cie, 1893, p. 28. No further details known concerning Charlier.

⁷Alexandru Tzigara-Sarmurcaş, 'Monumentele noastre III. Mănăstirea Sinaia', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 8, august 1908, p. 202.

interest in each stage of the building: he approved every plan, suggested numerous modifications and watched over the lavish interior decoration of the palace with minute attention to detail.⁸ He continued to improve and embellish Peleş until his death in 1914, leaving a revealing testimony to the private aesthetic tastes of a man who was sternly conservative in his own appearance and frugal in his financial allowances to the rest of the royal family.⁹ The palace also bears vivid witness to the development of his taste, from a preference for elaborate, historicist treatment of public rooms, to a refined understanding of the integrated, functional approach of Art Nouveau as used by Liman in the guest rooms of the second and third floors. Notably, the King and Queen's appreciation of the stylised, decorative trends anticipating the Viennese Secession was demonstrated, as early as 1884, in the little-known theatre friezes they commissioned from the Künstlerkompanie of the young Gustav Klimt. These reveal a concern with linear stylisation and the symbolic potential of juxtaposed naturalistic and two-dimensional images which looks forward to Klimt's gilded paintings and mixed-media experiments of the 1890s and early 1900s. Together with the cycle of paintings for Queen Elisabeth's music room executed by the German artist Dora Hitz between 1883-1890, these friezes represented the royal couple's first move away from the heavy stylistic pastiches of historicism towards a lighter, more decorative treatment of subject matter characteristic of Impressionism and Art Nouveau.

The following discussion will examine, firstly, the reasons behind the choice of the German Neo-Renaissance style for Peleş and discuss why such a distinctively foreign style should have been considered an appropriate expression for Romania's new ruling dynasty. Secondly, it will demonstrate how, towards the end of the first

⁸'His Majesty prescribes even the minute details, facilitating the architect's task by providing him with accurate documents.' ('Cele mai mici amănunte sunt prescrise de Suveran, care înlesneşte chiar sarcina arhitectului prin documentele precise ce-i pune la îndemână'). Al. Tzigara-Samurçaş, 'Carol I şi monumentele străbune', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 4, aprilie 1909, p. 360.

⁹Crown Princess Marie often complained of financial constraints while decorating her own early interiors: 'in those days my purse was very thin and I had to remain strictly within the limits of my slender means.' Arhivele Statului Bucureşti, fond Regina Maria, III/79, 'My Different Homes, Cotroceni I', p. 14.

stage of construction, royal taste began to extend beyond historicism to an appreciation of modern, decorative trends in painting, seen initially in the work of Klimt and Hitz. The final part of the chapter will discuss the King's growing awareness of the functional aspects of Art Nouveau, as represented in the extension and alteration work undertaken by Karel Liman after 1893.

The first phase of construction: 1875-1883

Castle Peleş in its first state, completed in 1883, was overwhelmingly historicist in conception, drawing its ideas and expertise largely from the vibrant architectural scene of Vienna. This was facilitated, in part, by the increasing economic and political *rapprochement* with Austria which followed the removal of the Liberals in 1871.¹⁰ It was logical that Carol should look to Vienna, the nearest major artistic centre, where many young Romanian artists received their training. In the 1870s, the Austrian capital was also the site of a spectacular imperial exercise in public relations, embodied in the grandiose constructions of the Ringstrasse. The use of historicist styles on a massive scale imbued the new public buildings with an effect of instant antiquity and carried a strong propaganda value, disguising the cracks and disjunctions in the Habsburg Empire. Similarly, the choice of a German Neo-Renaissance style for Peleş had propagandist overtones; however, it was not a mask for a failing system, but represented the weight (and implicitly the benefits) of western tradition and civilisation brought to the country by the arrival of the Hohenzollern prince.

In Germany itself, the *regain de vogue* of the style, superseding the Italian Renaissance styles advocated by Gottfried Semper and his followers, had a strongly nationalistic flavour. Through the reinterpretation of elements of older German

¹⁰Austria-Hungary was seen by the Conservatives as the great power most likely to further the consolidation of the Romanian state. The economic treaty signed with Austria in 1875 allowed Austrian manufactures to flood the Romanian market. While strengthening Romania's links with western Europe rather than Turkey, this had the adverse effect of harming local artisan production and retarding the development of a modern industry. Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 33-37.

architecture, the style rooted the new buildings firmly in national tradition. Its propagandist value was clearly exploited in Castle Hohorschwiller in Alsace, rebuilt by Wilhelm II in German Neo-Renaissance style to mark his new property after the region was ceded to Germany as a result of the Franco-Prussian War. In a similar fashion, Carol's choice of the style for Peleş represented the extension of Hohenzollern power to the Danubian principalities. However, the implication was not one of subjugation, but of willing invitation and, as such, the Prince desired his palace to embody the hopes of the new country.

The three main reasons for which the provisional government of 1866 had invited Carol to Romania had been to stop political infighting, to give the recently unified country credibility in the eyes of its neighbours and to encourage the modernisation of society according to western models. Carol, and by extension his palace, represented the arrival of stability and western civilisation after what was by then perceived as centuries of Ottoman mismanagement. Following independence in 1878, Peleş also came to represent the birth of the new Kingdom of Romania, underlined by the symbolic placing of canons used in the Battle of Plevna in front of the guardhouse.¹¹ It may seem paradoxical that something so distinctly German could become the focus of Romanian national pride; however, in the late 1870s, 'nationalism' inferred as much a desire to exist independently of Turkish or Russian interference as a nostalgic or overtly political parading of national heroes and myths. Over the next twenty years, a growing body of writers, politicians and artists would indeed project idealised notions of the mythical unified homeland of all the Romanians, identifying and promoting specifically national traits in the face of western cultural imperialism. Nevertheless, as shall be discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the Romanians' desire to disassociate themselves from their eastern

¹¹The siege of Plevna in northern Bulgaria, in the autumn of 1878, marked the high point of Romanian intervention on the Russian side in the Russo-Turkish War. The deterioration of the Russian position had resulted in Carol being given supreme command of the Russo-Romanian armies before Plevna. Romanian divisions contributed decisively to the defeat of Osman pasha by preventing reinforcements from reaching his army. Although their success was due more to sheer tenacity than to adequate preparation or equipment, in the eyes of the Romanian public the battle became synonymous with national liberation from the Turks.

neighbours by claiming linguistic and cultural fraternity with the West meant that western models were enthusiastically received and imitated. Furthermore, the political atmosphere at the time of the building of Peleş was distinctly pro-western with both the Conservative government of Lascăr Catargiu and, after the War of Independence, the Liberal government of Ion Brătianu favouring closer links with Austro-Hungary. Bessarabia, reoccupied by Russia after the war, lay at the heart of Romanian bitterness towards her larger neighbour; this was compounded by distrust of the latter's overall aims in the Balkans.¹² The careful cultivation of pro-western policies was seen as essential to an independent Romania - Carol himself had been brought to Romania by Brătianu with precisely this aim in mind. In this political climate, it is unsurprising that the Romanian ruling classes, who had as yet no established architectural academy of their own and sent their sons and artists to study abroad, saw no incongruity in the choice of a distinctively 'Hohenzollern' style for Peleş. The King himself regarded the castle as evidence of his deep attachment to his adopted country, as summed up in his toast on the completion of the palace in 1883: 'I have built this castle as lasting proof that the Dynasty freely elected by the nation is deeply rooted in this beautiful country'.¹³ Although 'freely elected' had involved a plebiscite of a mere 686,193 voters, the implications were clear: Carol had come to Romania not by force but by invitation. Hence he intended the castle to embody the ideas of legitimacy and durability he associated with his rule.

Carol's Swiss librarian, Léo Bachelin, who wrote a laudatory description of Peleş in 1893, suggested three reasons for the King's choice of architecture.¹⁴ First,

¹²In addition to Bessarabia, Russia also occupied Bulgaria for nine months after the war, insisting on an open supply channel through Romania. The perception of Bulgaria as Russia's client state, intensified by a continuous dispute over southern Dobrudja, soured relations between Romania and Bulgaria until the outbreak of the Balkan Wars.

¹³'J'ai construit ce château pour attester d'une façon durable que la Dynastie librement élue par la nation est profondément enracinée dans ce beau pays.' *Castel-Pelesch*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁴*Ibid.* Much of Bachelin's account is based on the monograph by Jacob von Falke, the director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, who was reportedly enchanted by the castle (*Das rumänische Königsschloß Pelesch*, Wien, Gerold's Sohn, 1893). A professor of French language and literature at the Neuchatel Academy of Literature from 1883, Bachelin had come to Romania in 1889 as King Carol's librarian and secretary. In addition to translating into French several works by Carmen Sylva, he also produced studies on Romanian folklore and King Carol's painting gallery, as well as being involved in the founding of *Ileana*, the 'Society for the Development of the Arts in Romania' in 1897.

there were clear personal considerations, the style recalling the German castles of Carol's youth, such as Sigmaringen, Krauchenwies, or Hohenzollern (the latter having been rebuilt in an eclectic Neo-Gothic/Neo-Renaissance style by Carol's father and Kaiser Wilhelm I between 1846-67). Bachelin believed Peleş surpassed other royal summer palaces, like Maximilian of Mexico's Miramar on the Adriatic or the Russian royal residence, Livadia, in the Crimea, in picturesque originality and grandiose setting. At the same time, Bachelin claimed, it avoided the eccentric extremes of Ludwig II of Bavaria in whose residences 'the individual caprice of imitating Louis XIV has been carried to the point of madness'.¹⁵ Secondly, the free, asymmetrical plan and airy spires of the castle found their counterpart in the craggy mountain tops and lofty pines of its backdrop:

The Castle, to use the expression of painters, is like the ideal fabric of this wild and poetic scenery. It has been built into the site with such a feeling for the landscape that one could say it had been born of the landscape itself. [...] Such a setting, made up of contrasts and tormented, abrupt lines [...] required a construction whose outline was equally broken and capricious. A villa in Italian taste [...] would have looked out of place in these rugged, uncivilised surroundings.¹⁶

The final factor in the choice of a German Neo-Renaissance style was that 'no other style was infinitely more suitable than that one, in terms of the freedom it allowed the artist to satisfy the multiple demands of modern comfort'.¹⁷ In other words, the irregular outline and asymmetrical grouping of architectural blocks inherent in the style gave the architect considerable freedom to alter plan, form and size according to the changing needs or whims of the royal family. It also allowed for the installation of discreetly hidden modern conveniences. Carol was determined that the palace should combine 'the comfort which science can bring to one's life' with the

¹⁵'le caprice individuel à imiter Louis XIV a été poussé jusqu' à la folie', Léo Bachelin, 'Le château royal de Sinaia', *Revue Helvétique*, 1891, p. 2.

¹⁶'Le Castel est, pour employer l'expression des peintres, comme la fabrique idéale de cette scénerie sauvage et poétique. Il a été architecturé sur le site avec un tel sentiment de paysage qu'on le dirait issu de ce paysage lui-même. [...] Dans ce milieu fait de contrastes, aux lignes tourmentées et heurtées [...] il fallait une construction aux lignes également rompues et capricieuses. Quelque villa dans le goût italien [...] aurait détonné dans cette ambiance accidentée et fruste', *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷'aucun autre style n'était mieux à même que celui-là, par la liberté qu'il laisse à l'artiste de satisfaire aux multiples exigences du confort moderne', *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 91.

'prestige and beauty' created by art.¹⁸ Peleş was the first European royal palace to have electric lighting, inaugurated in 1884 on the occasion of the visit of the Archduke Rudolph and Archduchess Stephanie of Austria. It was driven by two Girard turbines powered by the River Peleş, housed in a carefully concealed generator-shed. The palace also boasted an ingenious heating and ventilation system, designed by the Lemberg engineer, F. R. Richnowski. Through a sophisticated network of ducts and vents hidden behind the wooden panelling of the rooms, warm air was circulated by induction through the castle. In summer, the same system passed the air through a series of cooling water filters to provide air conditioning. It also facilitated the installation of hot and cold running water.¹⁹ For Carol and his architects, there was no contradiction in the installation of all the newest comforts in a building which recalled the atmosphere of a past age. In a way, this stood as a metaphor for the young dynasty which sought, through the building of a historicist palace, to give a veneer of venerability to the new institution of the Romanian monarchy.

The initial plans for the castle were drawn up by the German architect Wilhelm von Doderer, a professor at the Polytechnical University in Vienna, who was then involved in the restructuring projects of the Habsburgs.²⁰ The actual execution was entrusted to the Lemberg architect, Johannes Schultz,²¹ and to the court sculptor,

¹⁸*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 78.

¹⁹Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 372/1881-84, f. 90-91, 'Description du chauffage, ventilation, bains et Water-Closets projetés pour le palais de son Altesse Royale le Prince de Roumanie à Sinaia'.

²⁰Wilhelm von Doderer (1825-1900), trained in Stuttgart and Berlin before moving to Vienna to work with Eduard van der Nüll and Sicard von Siccardsburg on the reconstruction of the city. He was involved in their imposing, castellated Arsenal building (1849-55) with its notable Byzantine details and later built the *Generalkommando* (army headquarters) building in Universitätsstraße. He taught at the Engineering Academy in Klosterbruck and, from 1866, at the Polytechnical University in Vienna.

²¹Little is known about Johannes Schultz (also spelt 'Jan Schulz') before he came to Romania. He was born in 1844 and died in Lemberg (Lviv, Lwów) in 1926. He does not appear to have studied in Lemberg, probably training in Vienna or Germany, but he did receive the licence of construction entrepreneur in the city in 1878. His Lemberg commissions, executed with his brother Karl (1849-1919), a brickworks owner, date from the mid-1880s to c.1910, suggesting that Schultz left Romania soon after the completion of the first stage of Peleş in 1883 (the last bill he signed is dated 1884).

Compared to the lively visual interplay of Peleş' façade, these city buildings (for example, the military officers' casino at 1 Fredro St. of 1885, apartment house and baths at 10 Akademicka St. of 1887-95, or the Mikolasz house at 1 Kopernik St. of 1892) appear almost restrained in their use of Renaissance and Rococo inspired ornamentation. Nevertheless, in the house Johannes and his brother Karol built for themselves at 56-58 Zótkiewski-Straße in 1895-96, the asymmetry, steeply pitched roofs, overhanging eaves, elongated spire and German Renaissance fenestration of the central element are strongly

Martin Stöhr.²² However, the finished building owes little to Doderer's original design. According to Bachelin, after a two year break in construction during the 1877-78 War of Independence, Doderer was no longer in charge. Instead,

The original plans underwent radical modifications, to the extent that all that was left of his [Doderer's] project were the foundations alone. All the upper part of the building - outline and elevation - were subsequently developed, as work progressed, according to the instructions of the King himself who is, in truth, the principal architect of the castle as it stands today.²³

It is unclear why Doderer did not follow the construction through.²⁴ Perhaps he was too busy with projects in Vienna, or maybe he disagreed with the King's continuous modification of his design. In the absence of surviving plans, it is difficult to identify the precise contribution of each architect.²⁵ However, photos and drawings of the castle from before 1893 show that it was both smaller and lower (fig. 1.3²⁶). Its main body consisted of the great tower and south-east wing built round an inner courtyard. The tower, although some metres shorter than in its finished state, was still the dominant focal point of the main façade; it was decorative and graceful despite its massiveness, with large windows in the place of arrow-slits and wooden galleries

reminiscent of Peleş. Schultz is considered to have helped stimulate new trends in Lemberg architecture which culminated in the dynamic building period of the early twentieth-century. *Die Architektur Lembergs im 19. Jahrhundert*, exhibition catalogue, Kraków, 1997, p. 57. I am indebted to Igor Zhuk for much of the above information.

²²Martin Stöhr (1819-1896), came to Romania from Baden as early as 1867 as court sculptor to Carol. He set up an important sculpture workshop in the grounds of Peleş, employing some eight German craftsmen with names like Karl Kramer, Johan Berger, Johan Betingler, Ian Schubert and Karl Fritz. Like Karel Liman, Stöhr demonstrated considerable stylistic versatility, executing furniture in a wide range of period styles to meet the different artistic demands of the palaces. His role appears to have been more that of a skilled craftsman than an autonomous artistic designer, since his work predominantly consisted of carrying out the plans of others. He remained in the King's service for the rest of his life, dying in Braşov in 1896.

²³'Les plans primitifs subirent de radicales modifications de sorte qu'il ne subsiste de son projet à lui que les seules fondations. Toute la partie supérieure de l'édifice - profil et élévation - a été élaborée ensuite, au fur et à mesure que l'œuvre avançait, sur les indications mêmes du Roi, qui est, en vérité, le principal architect du château tel qu'il est aujourd'hui', *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 36.

²⁴Doderer seems neither to have spent much time in Romania, nor to have taken an active part in the construction of the palace. Most of the early bills for building work on Peleş are countersigned either by Schultz or by Stöhr (see fond Castele şi Palate, dos. 372/1881-84 - 382/1885).

²⁵Such plans possibly do still exist. However, the architectural and photographic archives of Peleş, together with a large part of the royal collections now housed at Posada, are still largely closed to researchers.

²⁶See also an 1885 photograph of Peleş in *Schatzhäuser der Photographie. Die Sammlung des Fürsten zu Wied*, Steidl Museum Ludwig/Agfa Photo-Historama, Köln, 1998, kat.158.

instead of defensive machicolations. Decorative iron-work round the mullioned windows, courtly sgraffito decoration, elaborate timber latticing and patterns of coloured tiles on the roofs completed the humanisation of the medieval, seigniorial castle. The skyward thrust of the square tower was repeated in the smaller, octagonal tower of the south-east corner and in the numerous elongated profiles, gabled attics and pointed spires of the mansard rooms. Bachelin writes that the King himself 'rejected, among the projects presented to him, those plans characterised by level lines, in order to promote himself the idea of a castle whose verticality would be more in harmony with the lines of its landscape setting'.²⁷

This verticality was counterbalanced, to some extent, by the dominant horizontal emphasis of the south-east wing, whose first floor boasted a carved wooden loggia surmounted by hipped and pointed eaves which curved upwards to meet the attic windows. This wing adjoined the great tower, on the other side of which was situated the service wing surrounding the second courtyard or *cour d'honneur*. Housing the cellars, kitchens and offices, this was linked to the main building, on the valley side, by the *salle des fêtes* and, on the mountain side, by a gallery whose stained-glass windows were decorated with courtly hunting scenes. Despite the specifically German character of the palace, Carol was determined that as much of the building material as possible should come from Romania's rich natural reserves. Consequently, he set up a committee consisting of Stöhr and his two private secretaries, Georges Coulin and Louis Bassett, to investigate potential sources. Besides obvious considerations of cost, this symbolically represented the building of the new dynasty in the very earth of the country it had come to rule. This point was carefully stressed in the inaugural speech given by Prince Dimitri Ghica at the laying of the foundation stone in 1875: the masonry rubble was to be brought from local Prahova quarries, the building stone from Piatra Arsă and Lunca Mare and the wood

²⁷'le Roi Charles a récusé dans les projets qui lui furent présentés, les dessins aux lignes planes, pour donner lui-même l'idée d'un château aux lignes verticales plus en harmonie avec celles du paysage environnant', *Le château royal*, p. 9.

from local forests. Only iron had to be imported from abroad.²⁸ Yet, while the materials were specifically Romanian, the building-site itself was a hive of international activity, as described by Carmen Sylva:

There were Italians for the stonework, Romanians for the excavations, Gypsies to carry the stone and lime. Albanians and Greeks worked in the quarries, Germans and Hungarians in the carpentry workshops. Turks fired the bricks. There were Polish *contre-mâîtres* and Czech foremen. Frenchmen drew the designs and the English measured and surveyed. As a result, on the building-site one encountered a hundred national costumes and heard fourteen different languages.²⁹

If the exterior of the castle had something of a fairy-tale appearance, the interior was even more *fantaisiste*. Here the King gave free reign to his taste for eclectic extravagance. While many of the principal rooms, such as the entrance hall, the dining and billiard rooms and the King's bedroom and study, were lined with the heavy, carved wooden panelling and plush upholstery of German Renaissance styles (fig. 1.4), other rooms recalled the flamboyant Wagnerian aesthetic Bachelin was so quick to condemn in the castles of Ludwig II. An interesting paradox is created by the two 'oriental' interiors: the Turkish room and the Moorish reception room (figs. 1.5 & 1.6). Designed and executed by western architects and craftsmen according to a romantic, western idea of the East, these were installed in a country whose own art and architecture had largely developed under eastern influence and which could have provided much more authentic and culturally relevant models. For mid-nineteenth-century Orientalists, the Danubian principalities fell into the sphere of the cultural Orient; nevertheless, Carol preferred to import second-hand, freely interpretative, western recreations of eastern styles.

²⁸The parchment containing this speech, together with coins stamped with Prince Carol's head (an open challenge to the Sublime Porte who reserved the right to mint money), were hermetically sealed in a glass tube and placed in the foundation stone. *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 32.

²⁹Il y avait des Italiens pour la maçonnerie, des Roumains pour les terrassements, des Tsiganes pour porter la pierre et la chaux. Des Albanais et des Grecs travaillaient aux carrières, des Allemands et des Hongrois au charpentage. Des Turcs cuisaient la brique. Il y eut des contre-mâîtres polonais et des piqueurs tchèques. Des Français dessinaient; des Anglais mesuraient et arpentaient. De sorte que sur le chantier on rencontrait cent costumes nationaux et on parlait quatorze langues.' Quoted by Bachelin, *ibid.*, p. 36.

This lends an interesting twist to Edward Said's seminal theory regarding western Orientalism as a prefabricated construct, designed to confirm imperial ideology and hegemonic approaches to the East.³⁰ According to Said, Orientalism embodied a European appropriation of the East in terms of sets of self-referents which, by exaggerating the irrational and backwards aspects of the East, reinforced the West's image of itself as rational, superior and therefore justified in bringing 'civilisation' to 'barbaric' lands. Like the European colonisers of North Africa, India and the Near East, King Carol intended his rule to bring western-style civilisation and modernisation to a hitherto undeveloped land. This entailed, in his palace at least, all the trappings of western civilisation, including the fashion for oriental interiors. In view of Romania's recent independence from Ottoman suzerainty, Carol's choice of the Turkish room would also have carried political resonance. Orientalism, however, whether in the form of literature, painting or travel writing, was designed, for the most part, for the consumer living in the West. Yet the Peleş rooms represent the superimposition of western Orientalism on an existing eastern culture. Hence the theatrical, romantic, western view of the Near East was considered more appropriate than the reality of Ottoman influence itself. It is perhaps a reinforcement of Said's theory that, in the decoration of his palace, the King should have viewed Romania, at least initially, through the eyes of western Orientalism rather than conditioned by his growing experience of his new country. As subsequent chapters will show, Carol's understanding of the artistic and architectural character of his country did develop considerably in the early years of the twentieth century, to the extent that, by 1906, he favoured the national forms of neo-Romanian architecture over imported Beaux-Arts styles in the pavilions of his Jubilee Exhibition in Bucharest.

The use of Moorish and Islamic styles for individual rooms such as libraries, billiard rooms or, in particular, smoking rooms, was a common feature of much nineteenth-century British country house architecture. Contemporary to Peleş were interiors such as William Burges' Arab room at Cardiff Castle (restored 1866-85), or

³⁰Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd, 1978.

George Aitchison's Arab Hall at Lord Leighton's house in Holland Park (1877-79). In Bavaria, Ludwig II was carrying the taste to fanciful extremes in his Moorish kiosk at Linderhof (1876) and Turkish interior of the Schachen hunting lodge (c.1870) where, dressed in Turkish costume, he would read while servants in Muslim costumes lay around smoking tobacco and sipping mocha coffee.³¹ There is no evidence that Carol indulged in similar play-acting, although his wife frequently dressed up in Romanian peasant garb and Crown Princess Marie later designed a whole series of romantic outfits for her country residences. Nevertheless, like Ludwig, Carol owed much of his taste for oriental interiors to international exhibitions which, beginning with the celebrated Indian court of the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition, had become important showcases of oriental crafts and production. Indeed, the Turkish room was originally designed for the 1873 Vienna Exhibition. It was recreated for the King by the firm of A. Bembé from Mainz in 1885.³² Ceiling and walls were papered with intricate red, blue and gold patterns whose delicate arabesques were picked up in the rich upholstery of the low divans and chairs lining the walls. Marquetry stools, foot-cushions and gilded tables bearing Turkish vases and hookahs, illuminated in the coloured light of the stained-glass door, completed the heady atmosphere. The association of Orientalism with ease and leisure (due in part to the oriental tobacco kiosks, coffee-rooms and tea-shops of the exhibitions) made it natural that the smoking room of country houses should be decorated in Islamic fashion, although the shuttered atmosphere of withdrawal from the outside heat was perhaps more pertinent to the parched Romanian summers than to British or German climates.

In the early 1890s, the King's French architect, Emile André Lecomte du Nouÿ (1844-1914) designed an even more extravagant Moorish interior for the new *salle des fêtes*, built on the site of the old open terraces of the castle which originally linked the great tower and the north-west wing. Its floor was covered with heavy

³¹Wilfred Blunt, *The Dream King. Ludwig II of Bavaria*, London, Hamilton, 1970, p. 248.

³²The Bembé firm, founded in 1780, was also responsible for the furnishing of the Italian salon (see below), the theatre (in Louis XIV style), billiard room, the Queen's boudoir and the private apartments of King Carol and Prince Ferdinand (all in German Renaissance style).

Persian carpets, the gilded ceiling and walls were richly decorated with stuccoed patterns, while oriental weapons, including some captured at Plevna, hung between the curved Moorish arches of the window embrasures. Raised on a plinth at the far end of the hall, stood a Carrara marble fountain, intricately inlaid with enamelled tiles and copied after an Egyptian original in the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna.³³ Although designed by the French architect, all the decoration of this room was executed by Viennese craftsmen. The firm of M. W. Stöger designed the furniture and arranged the arms trophies; the painted decoration was by Josef Kott, and the sculpted ornamentation by Wilhelm Dietz. The latter seems to have been responsible for much of the sculpted and stucco decoration of Peleş and Pelişor, setting up his own workshop in Bucharest where he remained until at least 1910.³⁴

It is likely that Emile André Lecomte du Noüy and his painter brother, Jean-Jules Antoine (1842-1923), were instrumental in informing the King's taste for Orientalism. Jean Lecomte du Noüy was an accomplished painter of oriental scenes who had travelled widely in Egypt, Greece, Turkey and Asia Minor. His works, such as *Bearers of Bad Tidings* (1871), *Les Orientales* (1885) and *The White Slave* (1888; fig. 1.7), demonstrated a taste for archaeological reconstitution, together with a glossy, Parnassian perfection of finish reminiscent of Ingres. Unlike some Orientalist painters who relied for their sources on second-hand accounts, literary fiction and museum objects, Lecomte made numerous rapid oil sketches during his travels which he later worked up in his final works. In light of his extensive first-hand knowledge, it is probable that he advised his brother's design for the Moorish room (such as the inclusion of the Egyptian fountain). This is made even more likely by the fact that Jean himself was a favourite of Carmen Sylva and often worked at the court in Sinaia. He executed twenty known works for the Romanian royal family, including portraits, marble and bronze stele (commemorating a visit by Emperor Franz Josef in 1897 and Carol's visit to Russia in 1899) and interior frescoes for the churches of Curtea de

³³ *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 52.

³⁴ Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 409/1903 - 416/1910.

Argeş in Muntenia and Sf. Nicolae and Trei Ierarhi in Iaşi, restored by his brother in the 1870s - early 1890s.³⁵ One of his most romantic portraits of the Queen, entitled *Carmen Sylva listening to the voices of the forest* (1897; fig. 1.8), which hangs above the fireplace of the large music hall in Peleş, depicts the Queen seated at her desk, quill poised to write as she listens to the song of the personified forest spirits soaring in the background.

Much Orientalist art was concerned more with the creation of atmosphere or mood than with precise historical or ethnographic detail. As a result, eastern styles and building types were sometimes used in contexts which completely undermined the function of the original. In a similar fashion, the historicist interiors of Peleş often paid greater attention to atmosphere than to strict historical accuracy or stylistic consistency. The formal Italian reception room, for example, was decorated by the Bembé firm in an eclectic mishmash of elements from different centres and periods of Italian art (fig. 1.9). Elaborate Venetian glass chandeliers and mirrors hung above the restrained classical orders of the marble fireplace, whose Florentine aspect was reinforced by miniature copies of Michelangelo's 'Lorenzo', 'Crepuscolo' and 'Aurora' from the tomb of Lorenzo in the Medici Chapel. The ceiling was decorated with a copy of Vasari's *Allegory of Science and Art* by Ernst Klimt, while genuine Old Masters, such as Luini's *St. George*, Bassano's *Calvary* or Vouet's *Young Mother*, hung alongside imitations by Gustav Klimt (see below).

Ultimately, Castle Peleş was an elaborate, fantastic charade. Sacheverell Sitwell, visiting the castle in 1937, described it as 'a sort of tropical Balmoral' composed of 'an incongruous jumble of styles that can find few admirers in the present day'.³⁶ The attempt to give an antique veneer to a new palace through the free reinterpretation of earlier, unrelated styles and periods did, however, hold considerable propaganda value for the King. Historicism provided the perfect vehicle for creating the appearance of an established, deep-rooted attachment to the new

³⁵For a complete list of works executed for the Romanian royal family between 1895 and 1901, see Guy de Montgailhard, *Lecomte du Noüy*, Paris, A. Lahure, Imp. Ed., 1906.

³⁶Sacheverell Sitwell, *Roumanian Journey*, London, B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1938, pp. 23-24.

country, backed up by centuries of Hohenzollern tradition. For Carol's subjects, who had never known a sovereign of this kind, the palace became a visual tool designed to anchor the concept of monarchy firmly in the public consciousness. With its up-to-date modern comforts, it was also intended to symbolise the arrival of civilisation and modernity. To reinforce this point, the laying of its foundation stone coincided with the beginning of work on the railway from Ploiești to Brașov (passing through Sinaia). The line was completed in 1883, forming the last link in the Paris-Constantinople railway whose opening was jointly celebrated with the inauguration of the palace.

Although Peleş was built to represent the arrival of western civilisation and modern innovation, it is interesting to observe the way in which rare references to Romanian national tradition were treated. While other eclectic royal palaces of the period, such as Balmoral, often demonstrated a penchant for romantic reinterpretation of local tradition (seen, for example, in Balmoral's extensive use of tartan carpeting and upholstery), the decoration of Peleş made only scant reference to the country's artistic heritage. The one obvious instance of a specifically Romanian theme appeared in the stained-glass windows of Carmen Sylva's music room. These were designed by the Munich Zettler workshop and depict tales from Romanian folklore collected by the writer Vasile Alecsandri (1821-90; fig. 1.10).³⁷ A favourite protégé of the Queen, Alecsandri was one of the first writers to take a close interest in oral tradition, travelling round the countryside in the 1840s collecting folk ballads which he published in 'corrected' form in Paris. He is most famous for his poetic interpretation of the national classic *Miorița* ('The Lambkin').

³⁷Between 1879-1882, the F. X. Zettler Institute from Munich executed almost all the stained glass of Peleş. Designed to complement the eighty original pieces of antique stained glass collected by the King, the subjects of the new windows were chosen by the royal couple, drawn by the professors F. Widmann, J. Jürs and the painter F. X. Barth, and executed by a team of forty technicians and artists. They depicted scenes from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: the arts of peace and war, courtly knights and ladies, tournaments, feasts, allegories of science, the arts, history, nature, poetry etc. Apart from the music room, the only concession to a Romanian subject was in the stained glass of the staircase of honour which depicted Mihai Viteazul and Ștefan cel Mare, together with the arms of the four Romanian provinces. See *Les Vitraux peints du Château de Pelesch à Sinaia*, Munich, 1887.

The three legends depicted in stained glass greatly appealed to the dramatic, romantic nature of the 'Poet Queen'. *Ciocîrlia* tells the story of a young maiden, seduced by a son of the sun, who was cast down into the sea, but changed into a lark and flew away (fig. 1.11). *Ana Doamna* (Princess Anna), a princess carried off by the Tartar king Mirza, saw her new-born baby thrown to the wolves, but was herself saved by angels as she stabbed her abductor. *Mărgărita* married a prince and gave birth to beautiful twins with the help of fairies, only to see them carried off to the stars. Captivated by the mountain scenery around Sinaia, Carmen Sylva herself wrote several volumes of fairy-tales and made her artistic coterie perform tableaux and musical recitals perched on the craggy peaks which had inspired legends like *Virful cu dor* ('The Peak of Longing'), or *Furnica* ('The Ant').³⁸

The Queen's appreciation of Romanian tradition was tinged with romantic indulgence and a fascination with the picturesque and visually appealing, rather than any concern with ethnographic or regional accuracy. Similarly, the Zettler workshop (working in Munich with little knowledge of Romanian folk dress or customs) made no attempt to depict Alecsandri's tales in any kind of specifically Romanian idiom. The protagonists are dressed in the same courtly flowing robes as the chivalric stained-glass figures in other parts of the castle and there is little concession to distinctly Romanian motifs or settings. The essentially romantic nature of the Zettler windows is heightened by comparison with later stained-glass representations of vernacular tales. Apar Baltazar's naïve, almost child-like treatment of the figures in his design depicting the adventures of the Romanian folk hero *Făt Frumos* (Prince Charming, c.1904-9; fig. 4.62), shows the influence of both peasant art and old Byzantine frescoes.³⁹ Even more precise reference to local motifs and costumes is found in Ede Toroczkai Wigand's stained-glass windows in the Palace of Culture in Tîrgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely, 1912-13) in Transylvania, which depict, in great ethnographic

³⁸Carmen Sylva, *Pelesch-Märchen*, 1882, translated into English as *Legends from River and Mountain*, London, 1896.

³⁹Discussed in Chapter Four.

detail, Székely folk ballads from the surrounding districts (fig. 1.12).⁴⁰ Nevertheless, despite the non-Romanian treatment of style, the Zettler windows remain one of the earliest examples in Romania of the use of folk tales as the subject of a work of art.

While Peleş' exotic interior decoration presented a potpourri of different cultures and styles, King Carol believed it demonstrated his erudite understanding of different periods of art. His own education, enriched by visits to France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Africa, had included a brief period at Bonn University in 1862, where he studied art history under Anton von Springer, a distinguished aesthete and art historian through whose instruction Carol had 'laid the basis of His extensive knowledge in the field of art'.⁴¹ At the same time, the palace was intended to create a fitting context for the display of the King's growing collection of Old Masters.⁴² Not all of Carol's art collection, however, was authentic: imitations of Lucca della Robbia's *Cantoria* or of marble statues by Jacopo Sansovino, were displayed alongside genuine works by Domenico Veneziano, Marco Zoppo and Agnolo Bronzino. It was this desire to create 'instant' masterpieces to complement his collection of original works which first brought Gustav Klimt to the King's attention.

The work of Gustav Klimt and the Viennese Künstlerkompanie in Peleş

In 1883, the young Künstlerkompanie of three newly-graduated Viennese painters, Gustav and Ernst Klimt and Franz Matsch, was commissioned to execute a series of works for Peleş. The palace was nearing its first stage of completion and the King had

⁴⁰See Katalin Keserü, 'The Workshops of Gödöllő: transformations of a Morrisian theme', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1988, pp. 12-13; also Judit Szabadi, 'The Gödöllő Artists' Colony and KÉVE', in *Art Nouveau in Hungary*, Budapest, Corvina, pp. 88-90.

⁴¹'puse astfel baza întinselor Sale cunoştinţe în domeniul artei', 'Carol I şi monumentele străbune', p. 359.

⁴²Carol began to acquire Old Masters systematically from 1879. The kernel of his gallery was formed by the important collection he bought from Felix Bamberg, a scholar and German diplomat in France and Italy, who had purchased the Spanish Gallery of Louis-Philippe, sold in London in 1853. The highlights of Carol's collection included nine El Grecos (of which only three remain in Romania today), as well as notable works from Italian, French and German schools. The entire collection was bequeathed to the Romanian crown, to be kept permanently in Romania. After the departure of King Mihai in 1948, the majority of the works were moved from Peleş to the National Museum of Art in Bucharest. See Léo Bachelin, *Tableaux anciens de la Galerie Charles Ier, roi de Roumanie. Catalogue raisonné*, Paris, MM. Braun, Clément et Cie, 1898; also William Ritter, 'Galeria Tablourilor M. S. Regelui Carol I', *Literatură şi artă română*, vol. VIII, 1906, pp. 545-552.

already begun to install his painting collection in the grand new rooms. To enlarge his developing gallery, he decided to commission a series of copies of Old Masters, together with ten portraits of his Hohenzollern ancestors. The latter were to line the walls of the entrance vestibule and grand stairway as a reminder to the visitor of the King's illustrious lineage.

According to Bachelin, the Klimts and Matsch were working for the Viennese painter-decorator, Josef Kott, who had been in charge of the painted decoration of Peleş since 1881.⁴³ Kott was responsible for a wide variety of decorative work, from the painting of walls, furniture, imitation wood and garden benches, to gilding and intarsia. His most notable contribution was the sgraffito decoration of the great tower and *cour d'honneur*, completed in 1882 (fig. 1.13). Here he depicted medieval pastoral and hunting scenes from German legend, painted in a colourful, courtly style much in keeping with the knights and ladies of the Zettler workshop's stained-glass windows.⁴⁴

While Bachelin may have been mistaken in his claim (he later laments the death of Gustav rather than Ernst in 1892), it is quite probable that Kott's well-established Viennese firm was aware of the work of the talented young Künstlerkompanie and recommended it to the King. Although the Klimts and Matsch had only graduated from the Kunstgewerbeschule earlier in 1883, they had already established a growing reputation through their decorative paintings for the house of the master-builder Johann Sturany on the Schottenring in Vienna and ceiling paintings for the spa hall at Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary, Bohemia), both executed in 1880. Two years later, they collaborated on further decorative paintings (after the design of their teacher, Julius Berger) in the Palais Zierer in Vienna and also began a

⁴³Tout cet ensemble décoratif est l'œuvre de M. Kott de Vienne, un ornementiste émérité, a qui sont dus d'ailleurs, la plupart des plafonds peints et caissonnés du chateau: pour les peintures qui les parent, en guise de tapisserie, elles ont été exécutées par de jeunes artistes viennois MM. Matsch, Gustav et Ernst Klimt, *alors à son service* [my italics]. *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 52, note 2.

⁴⁴Kott's firm worked on Peleş from 1881-89 (see fond Castele și Palate, dos. 372/1881-84, 380/1884 & 405/1889). No further biographical details are known except that, in 1885, Kott signed a five-year contract with the Bucharest company of the painter Fritz Elsner (1859-1927). While this assigned joint responsibility for commissions, it did stipulate that the decoration of Peleş remained with Kott alone. (See Petre Oprea, *Itinerar prin case vechi din București*, București, Editura Sport-Turism, 1986, p. 59) Nevertheless, Elsner appears to have taken over the work in Peleş after Kott left in 1889.

fruitful relationship with the theatre architects, Fellner and Helmer, who invited them to design ceiling paintings and the curtain for the town theatre at Reichenberg (Liberec, Bohemia) in 1882-83. In light of Gustav Klimt's later paintings for the ceiling of the National Theatre in Bucharest (see below), this association with Fellner and Helmer could well have been the key factor in bringing the Künstlerkompanie to Romanian royal attention.⁴⁵ In addition, Kott may have been aware of the festoons with allegorical sgraffito paintings the Künstlerkompanie had executed in 1879 (after the Makart-inspired designs of another teacher, Ferdinand Laufberger) in the courtyards of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (then the Hofmuseum, housing the imperial art collections), only two years before he himself began work on the sgraffito decoration of the great tower and inner courtyard of Peleş.

In a curriculum vitae drawn up in 1893, Gustav Klimt stated that, in 1883, he painted 'ancestral portraits, tapestry designs and Old Master copies for the King of Rumania for his summer residence'.⁴⁶ Ambiguity still surrounds both the tapestry designs and some of the copies after Old Masters. Bachelin stated that the Künstlerkompanie executed paintings *en guise de tapisserie* to adorn Kott's painted and coffered ceilings.⁴⁷ Franz Matsch's signature has recently been discovered on the painted imitation tapestry decoration of the ceiling of the staircase where the Künstlerkompanie's Hohenzollern portraits hang. The only other ceiling paintings so far attributed with any certainty to the group are Ernst Klimt's copy of the *Allegory of Science and Art* from the school of Giorgio Vasari, which decorates the heavily coffered, Venetian style ceiling of the Italian reception room, and Matsch's ceiling

⁴⁵The highly successful partnership of Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer, lasted from 1872-1915. The firm became the foremost theatre designers of its day, building forty-eight theatres all over the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Germany and in south-east Europe. These included the theatres in Oradea (Nagyvárad, 1900) and Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár, 1906), as well as in Iaşi (1894-96). See Hans-Christoph Hoffmann, *Die Theaterbauten von Fellner und Helmer, Studien zur Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ii, Munich, Prestel-Verlag, 1966.

⁴⁶See Christian Nebehay, *Gustav Klimt. From Drawing to Painting*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1994, p. 275.

⁴⁷*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 52, note 2.

roundel in the palace theatre. Neither of these resemble tapestries and further work is necessary to identify the Künstlerkompanie's precise involvement in this matter.⁴⁸

Similarly, in the absence of surviving contracts, it is difficult to establish the identity and number of Old Masters painted by Gustav Klimt for King Carol. The palace contains an extensive collection of paintings after originals and at least three other artists, Gustav Bregenzner, Lätitia Witzleben and Otilia Michail Oteteleşanu are also known to have copied works for the King.⁴⁹ The copies vary in quality; some of the finest reproduce works from the Imperial Gallery in Vienna (now the Kunsthistorisches Museum) and from the Gemäldegalerie in Kassel which were both easily accessible to Klimt. The only work attributed to him with any certainty is the copy of Titian's *Isabella d'Este* (1534-36, Kunsthistorisches Museum).⁵⁰ King Carol was said to have been exacting in his demands for historical authenticity: Matsch's letters describe Klimt's difficulties in finding canvas resembling that of the original, as well as his search for a suitably patterned damask to use as a model.⁵¹ It is possible that Klimt might also have executed some of the other high-quality copies after works in Vienna and Kassel, for example Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Man* (c.1632, Kunsthistorisches Museum), *Portrait of Nicolaes Bruynningh* (1652, Kassel Gemäldegalerie) and *Saskia* (c.1635, Kassel Gemäldegalerie). However, he cannot have painted the copies of works then in Italy, such as Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* (1514, Borghese Gallery, Rome), Tintoretto's *Portrait of Marco Grimani* (1576, Accademia, Venice) and the poorer quality series of Canaletto views of Venice, as he did not visit the country until 1889.

⁴⁸Both Eisenberg (*Das geistige Wien*, Wien, 1891) and Boetticher ('Artikel Ernst Klimt', *Malerwerke des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, I, Dresden, 1896, p. 697) state that Klimt was involved in the design of *gobelins*. The curators of Peleş Castle have recently begun a full-scale study of the work of the Künstlerkompanie in their collection which will involve the identification and restoration of paintings.

⁴⁹Gustav Bregenzner worked in Sigmaringen before coming to Peleş where he painted portraits of the Hohenzollern family. Lätitia Witzleben from Miltenberg (b.1849) was one of Carmen Sylva's female protégées. The Romanian Otilia Michail Oteteleşanu, another of the Queen's favourites, worked for the royal family between 1905-16 when she painted several copies of Old Masters, in particular Rubens. Again, in the absence of surviving records, a close examination of the works themselves is necessary in order to establish accurate attribution.

⁵⁰Fritz Novotny and Johannes Dobai, *Gustav Klimt*, Salzburg, Verlag Galerie Weltz, 1967, p. 280.

⁵¹Susanna Partsch, *Klimt. Life and Work*, Munich, I. P. Verlagsgesellschaft, 1993, p. 58.

As well as imitating originals, the Künstlerkompanie also pandered to the fashionable taste for works in the manner of Great Masters. This is most clearly demonstrated in its series of ten ancestral portraits of King Carol's Hohenzollern ancestors. Although six of these portraits remain in their original setting and nine are signed by either Gustav Klimt or Matsch, historians have afforded them barely a passing mention, despite the fact that they constituted one of the largest early commissions of the company.⁵² Four of these full-length portraits hung in the vestibule leading from the main entrance to the grand staircase; the remaining six were set into elaborately-carved wooden niches on either side of the staircase (fig. 1.14). For the visitor entering the palace for the first time, these towering figures, representing the strength and glory of Hohenzollern tradition, appear to be watching over the bronze plaque proclaiming the dual achievement of King Carol's reign in lines composed by Alecsandri for the inauguration of the palace:

I, Carol, and my people,
Sharing the same wish and desire, have built
My kingdom in time of war,
My palace in time of peace.⁵³

The reference to the ideal of the enlightened Renaissance prince, skilled in the arts of war and learned in the arts of peace, was a clear articulation of Carol's wish to be compared to his illustrious ancestors. These began, in the vestibule, with portraits of the first Counts of Zollern: *Wolfgang, 948* (Klimt) and *Burckhardt, 1080* (Matsch; fig. 1.15). At the foot of the staircase hung *Fridrich I, 980* (Klimt; fig. 1.16) and *Fridrich IV, 1195* (Matsch).⁵⁴ These were followed, on either side of the staircase, by a series of princes from the Catholic Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen line from southern

⁵²The portraits are skirted over by Partsch (ibid.) and Whitford (op. cit., p. 27), mentioned but not illustrated by Novotny and Dobai (op. cit., p. 280) and completely ignored by Nebehay (op.cit.), Gerbert Frodl (*Klimt*, London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1992) and Werner Hofmann (*Gustav Klimt*, Salzburg, Werlag Galerie Welz, 1971).

⁵³'Eu Carol și-al meu popor
Zidit-am într'un gând și dor
In timp de lupte-al mea regat,
In timp de pace-al meu palat'

⁵⁴These four paintings are now in the royal collections deposit at Posada.

Germany to which King Carol belonged. Lining the left-hand side were three portraits by Matsch: *Eitel Fridrich II, 1225*; *Eitel Fridrich V, 1512*; and *Eitel Fridrich VI, 1525*. Facing these hung the remaining three ancestors by Klimt: *Eitel Fridrich VII, 1605*; *Johann Georg, 1623*; and *Philipp Fridrich Christoph, 1671* (see appendix 1 for full details).

Although supposedly inspired by old engravings, the oil portraits have the air of late nineteenth-century historical pastiches.⁵⁵ In a similar fashion to their later Burgtheater paintings and spandrels above the staircase of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Klimt and Matsch conform to the scholarly spirit of historicism, suggesting period and atmosphere through a fanciful interpretation of appropriate imagery, style and costume. Matsch's *Burckhard*, for example, wears an Ossian-like, embroidered over-garment, fastened with a heavy, jewelled clasp, while his *Eitel Fridrich V*, with his long beard and powerful stance, is recognised by his massive, two-handed sword and his Rhineland castle in the background. At times the portraits make loose reference to the distinctive style of a period, for example Klimt's *Johann Georg* whose Titian-like pose imbues him with some of the dignity of an early seventeenth-century court portrait. On the whole, however, all the portraits follow the same format with the standing, full-length ancestors pressed right up against the picture plane. The figures are thrown into strong relief by sideways, directional lighting and are set against indistinct, shadowy interiors or background views of castles and landscapes. The painting technique is precise and realistic: garments and adornments are carefully detailed and show an obvious delight in the play of light on armour and jewellery.

In particular, the portraits are notable for their unity of style. Lacking the signatures, it would be extremely difficult to tell the work of Klimt from Matsch. This is because, at this early stage in their careers, the members of the *Künstlerkompanie* still saw themselves as painter-decorators and set no store by establishing different artistic identities. Their attitude was demonstrated in their painting practice: as a rule,

⁵⁵Novotny and Dobai, p. 280. The source of these engravings is unclear.

they had no clear division of work, each submitting a complete set of sketches for the patron to select from and then drawing lots to decide who would execute each part. In Peleş, the division of labour seems to have been more clearly defined with each painter carrying his own paintings to completion. However, it was during the work for Peleş that stylistic differences first began to appear. In the series of decorative friezes Gustav Klimt painted in 1884 for the palace theatre, he rejected the historicist, academic style favoured by his brother and Matsch to reveal, for the first time, a new interest in linear stylisation, a lighter palette and a concentration on the decorative potential of the picture plane which anticipated many of the most significant later developments in his art.

Despite being cited by Bachelin, these friezes are not mentioned in any of the existing modern literature on Klimt, nor, interestingly, in Klimt's own curriculum vitae of 1893.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, several of them are clearly signed and, in view of their relationship to other works by Klimt, for example his *Idyll* (see below), can be assumed to be authentic. There are eight friezes, painted in oil on canvas and positioned just under the cornice which runs round three sides of the small palace theatre (fig. 1.17). This was used by the royal couple for private performances of French and German plays, as well as Carmen Sylva's own sonnets, which she performed herself with 'brilliant eloquence or grandiose pathos'.⁵⁷ The Queen's artistic preferences may have had some bearing on the style Klimt developed for the friezes. The previous year, she had shown a new taste for the decorative through the series of paintings she commissioned from the German painter Dora Hitz to decorate the walls of her music salon. Depicting episodes from the Queen's own stories, these represented the first use of a consciously modern, non-historicist style in the decoration of the palace. Carmen Sylva's awareness of new directions in western art, particularly those forerunning Art Nouveau, was also evidenced in the 'Pre-

⁵⁶*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 72. The friezes have been overlooked in the monographs by Hofman, Partsch, Frodl, Whitford and Nebehay, nor do they figure in Novotny and Dobai's catalogue raisonné of Klimt's work.

⁵⁷'de nombreuses saynètes inédites, improvisées avec une verve étourdissante ou une pathétique grandiose par Carmen Sylva'. *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 72.

Raphaelite' style paintings hanging in her boudoir.⁵⁸ In view of the royal couple's close interest in every aspect of the palace decoration, it seems likely that the Queen was involved in the choice of subject matter and approved the new stylistic approach of the theatre friezes.

In 1884, Klimt also designed his *Idyll* for Martin Gerlach's collection of *Allegorien und Embleme*, considered by many to be the first work to show his new interest in the decorative potential of the picture plane (fig. 1.18).⁵⁹ It is likely that this was painted just before the friezes which seem more advanced stylistically and develop certain innovations appearing in *Idyll*. The latter was Klimt's sixth illustration for Gerlach's three-volume book (1882-84 and 1895-90) which comprised 'original designs by the most outstanding modern artists, and reproductions of ancient guild emblems with modern heraldic figures in renaissance style'.⁶⁰ It was conceived in an historicist spirit, included contributions by Max Klinger and Franz von Stuck, and aimed at a revival of the allegory popular in Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo art. It was also significant in the development of Klimt's early work, showing the influence of his teacher Laufberger and, later, of Hans Makart. *Idyll* is still firmly in an academic style, with its Michelangelesque male nudes seated in strong contrapposto on a marble base in which the title of the picture, the artist's initials and the year are cut. However, in contrast to Klimt's earlier illustrations, there is little sense of depth; the figures appear to be perched on a narrow foreground stage before a flat, decorative background of intertwining branches, leaves and flowers. The background pushes the figures up against the picture plane and into the viewer's space; this flattening effect is enhanced by the uniform, yellowish tone of the flesh and by Klimt's detached, almost lifeless observation of the bodies. Space only really opens up in the roundel between the figures, a picture within a picture, revealing a woodland scene with 'Idyll' kneeling in front of her children to give them a drink.

⁵⁸Bachelin mentions 'une série de tableaux préraphaéliques, accrochés entre les fenêtres' of the corner tower in the Queen's boudoir (*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 76). The whereabouts of these is unknown today.

⁵⁹For example, Partsch, *Klimt*, p. 59.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 55.

However, as if to prove that this is only a visual illusion, attention is drawn to the roundel's flat plasticity by the hand of the nude figure on the left which grasps its decorated stucco frame.

The tendency towards decorative abstraction and stylisation seen in *Idyll* is carried much further in the theatre friezes. In the two largest panels, depicting reclining young women, which are placed either side of the room nearest the stage, Klimt makes no effort to set his langorous figures in deep space, but consciously arranges them as if on a narrow ledge (figs. 1.19 & 1.20). By turning their half-nude bodies towards and into the picture plane, he makes full decorative use of their curvaceous forms, the folds of their diaphanous veils and the contrast between pale skin and dark hair. The effect is enhanced by his use of delicate harmonies of soft, nacreous colours. These are bounded by a lively, vigorous outline which counteracts painterly recession and focuses the eye on the lyrical play of line and colour shapes on the surface of the canvas itself. Most startling, however, is Klimt's use of pure, abstract ornamentation in the same space as the figures and floral background, as if drawing attention to the bi-dimensionality of the picture plane and reinforcing the nature of his figural images as mere combinations of line and colour.

His stylisation of nature is even more pronounced in the four decorative roundels, developed from the tondo of *Idyll*, but now flanked by playful putti and framing the stylised, yet strongly expressive heads of young women (figs. 1.21 & 1.22). The roundels are no longer *trompe l'œil* illusions of a physical picture within a picture, but part of the decorative scheme of the frieze itself and are remarkably reminiscent of the stylised halos with which Alfons Mucha would begin to frame his female heads a decade later. Slightly less artifice is evident in the two smaller friezes at the back of the theatre, described by Bachelin as 'two panels painted with a youthful freshness, where one can see very young girls engaged in gathering, like exquisite thoughts, springtime flowers' (figs. 1.23 & 1.24).⁶¹ Despite their natural

⁶¹'deux panneaux d'une fraîcheur juvénile, où l'on voit de toutes jeunes filles cueillir, comme des pensées exquises, des fleurs printanières'. *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 72.

appearance, the poses of the two girls are still carefully contrived to fill the picture plane and interact visually with the decorative background arrangement of flowers, branches and foliage.

The choice of subject matter for the theatre was less original than its treatment. Perhaps influenced by Klimt's work for Gerlach, Carmen Sylva requested a series of artistic allegories and dramatic emblems. One of the reclining women, resting on scattered sheets of music, is clearly an allegory of music; the other, holding a sheaf of laurel branches and with a grotesque mask at her feet, probably represents *Theatre*. Further allusions to theatre and music can be seen in the two small square panels which hang next to the females. One depicts an antique lyre and the other an actor's mask, surmounted by a crown of foliage and two pipes, representing *Bacchus* (figs. 1.25 & 1.26). Further musical references can be seen in the putti flanking the roundels in the final panel of each wall who play with violins and long horns.

The half-nude figures, classical references and dramatic masks have something of the effect of an antique frieze, presaging Klimt's later Secessionist interest in classical imagery. In particular, one can observe the artist's early delight in the juxtaposition of the sensuous and the grotesque, seen in the hideous, grinning mask peeping out from amongst the flowers behind the leg of *Theatre* (fig. 1.27). The stylistic impact of the whole is heightened by its striking contrast with the ceiling roundel by Matsch, signed and dated 1884. This depicts a rococo-like scene of a poetic troubadour aspiring towards a celestial muse bearing a crown of laurels and accompanied by *Love* in the form of a winged cupid. It is painted in the same academic style as the Künstlerkompanie's earlier works, a style to which Gustav Klimt would return in his later commissions for the Burgtheater and Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

A puzzling complication is introduced by the fact that the panel representing *Music* is signed 'F. Vodak'. Furthermore, this panel is an identical copy of part of a frieze now in one of the mansard bedrooms of Peleş which is signed 'G. Klimt 1884'. Vodák's name also appears on the staircase portrait of Eitel Fridrich VI, on which is

written 'Matsch. Copiert F. Vodak, 1904'. Very little is known about the Czech painter Fritz Vodák except that he came to Bucharest to paint the interiors of houses and somehow, perhaps through the agency of Kott and his partner Fritz Elsner (who also ran a Bucharest interior decoration company while working on Peleş), came into the service of the King. His name also figures in contracts for the decoration of Queen Marie's Neo-Romanian chapel in Pelişor in 1925.⁶² Vodák appears to have been employed, in a similar function to Kott and Elsner, as a kind of glorified painter-decorator, responsible not only for painting walls, woodwork and furniture, but also for executing more refined paintings when need arose. It is unclear, however, why he should have copied Klimt's frieze or, indeed, why Klimt's original should have been moved to an upstairs guest bedroom. The latter, although in a fitting Art Nouveau style, was not designed by Liman until 1906, some twenty-two years after Klimt painted the first frieze.

A possible, though questionable, solution lies in the relative sizes of the panels. Klimt's *Music* is considerably longer than any of the theatre panels due to the two roundels which flank the reclining figure to right and left. As a result, it would have fitted uncomfortably into the generally symmetrical positioning of the friezes either side of the theatre. Vodák's copy, on the other hand, omits the left-hand roundel containing a dark-haired female head, and consequently mirrors the position of *Theatre* on the opposite wall (although the latter is necessarily slightly shorter to allow for the entrance doorway). Perhaps Klimt made a mistake with the original dimensions of the frieze and *Carmen Sylva*, unwilling to cut his panel in two, later commissioned a replacement copy of part of the original.⁶³ That the latter harmonises so successfully with the stylised, white-painted woodwork and curvilinear lines of Liman's 1906 Art Nouveau interior is evidence of the precociousness of this very

⁶²Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 438/1925, f. 33 & f. 36.

⁶³It is interesting to note that in 1904, when Vodák was painting for Peleş, the palace theatre underwent a minor refurbishment. The *Österreichisches Kostum Atelier* from Vienna not only provided knights' armour and artificial horses with real manes, but also installed new stage machinery, lighting, fire curtain, scenery and seating (the latter being made in the King's workshop in Sinaia). It is likely that these alterations bore some relation to the commissioning of the copy by Vodák. Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 410/1904, f. 37-40.

early example of Klimt's decorative technique. Moreover, the friezes are quite unlike any other of the Künstlerkompanie's decorations for Fellner and Helmer's theatres in Reichenberg (1882-83), Fiume (Rijeka, 1885) or Karlsbad (1883-86), all of which employ the early, historicist, academic style favoured by the company. Interestingly, Klimt returned to the academic style in the two paintings he executed for the interior of the Romanian National Theatre in Bucharest in 1885.

Contrary to earlier commissions, only Gustav Klimt was involved in the Bucharest designs. This was also the first time he painted works for a theatre which had not been built by Fellner and Helmer (fig. 3.1).⁶⁴ Furthermore, his modest little pair of allegories, *Love Crowning a Singer with Laurels* and *The Organ Player* were minor works, designed to be integrated into an extant decorative scheme (figs. 1.28 & 1.29). It is likely that Carmen Sylva's interest in the theatre and friendship with Klimt was a decisive factor in the commissioning of the works, at a time when Vienna was beckoning the young painter with offers of far more prestigious and extensive decorative projects.⁶⁵

The Romanians were inordinately proud of their National Theatre. One of the first important public buildings in Bucharest, constructed even before the unification of the principalities, it had become the main focus of culture in the new kingdom of Carol I. After unification, the theatre provided a forum not only for the performance of French, Italian and German plays and operas, but also for the growing body of national literature being produced by writers such as Vasile Alecsandri, Costache Negruzzi or Ion Luca Caragiale. Within the restricted patronage circles of Bucharest, it was inevitable that the monarchy, in particular the literary-minded Carmen Sylva,

⁶⁴The second and only other time was for Hasenauer and Semper's Burgtheater in Vienna (1886-88). The National Theatre in Bucharest was constructed by the Viennese architect, Josef Heft, from 1846-1852. He built it in a Neo-Classical style, modelled, on a reduced scale, on the Scala Theatre in Milan. It had seventy-five richly decorated *loges* on three levels, over four hundred stall seats and room for three hundred in the gallery. The interior decoration was by the German painter Mühlhörfer. In the early twentieth-century, it was further adorned with sculptures and paintings by leading Romanian artists, depicting scenes from both Romanian and foreign plays. It was demolished after being hit by a German bomb in 1944 when Klimt's paintings were lost. See Cezara Mucenic, *București. Un veac de arhitectură civilă. Secolul al XIX-lea*, București, Silex, 1997, p. 14 (note 16) & p. 29; also Grigore Ionescu, *București: Ghid istoric și artistic*, București, 1938, p. 28.

⁶⁵Only the next year, he began work on the decoration of the Burgtheater in Vienna.

should take a keen interest in the material, as well as artistic, development of the theatre. Hence when it was repaired and modernised in 1885, electric lighting was installed by the same Viennese company that was working in Peleş and Cotroceni.⁶⁶ It seems likely that, in order to commemorate the revamping of the theatre, Carmen Sylva encouraged Klimt to design the two small paintings.⁶⁷

Here, of course, there was no question of repeating the innovative, decorative style of the private palace theatre. Klimt's modest works had to integrate into the existing interior decoration which, together with the stage machinery, had been designed and executed in Mannheim by Mühldörfer, a decorative painter from Baden.⁶⁸ Correspondingly, Klimt's two designs were intended to harmonise with the academic formula of the ceiling paintings by the forgotten Romanian decorator, Petru Sela.⁶⁹ The designs' oval format, with decorative cut-away to allow for insertion in a gilded frame, was identical to that of the paintings Klimt executed in the same year for the ceiling of Fellner and Helmer's theatre in Fiume (fig. 1.30); this suggests the Bucharest works were ceiling rather than wall paintings. Likewise, their subject matter and their highly polished, academic finish, were so similar to that of the six Fiume paintings as to make them almost interchangeable.⁷⁰ Klimt's paintings for the Fiume Stadttheater, commissioned in 1884 and executed in 1885, depicted allegories of different types of music: *Serious Opera*, *Light Opera*, *Dance*, *Church Music*, *Oratory* and *Folk Song*. The two Bucharest works, *The Organ Player* and *Love Crowning a Singer with Laurels*, also followed an allegorical musical theme. Similarly, Klimt's academic treatment of semi-nude figures, clothed in heavy,

⁶⁶See fond Castele și Palate, dos. 382/1884-85 which contains correspondence between the Royal Administration and a Viennese electrical company concerning the installation of electric light in the palaces and the theatre. This reveals the close links between the King's personal building plans and his supervision of public projects in the capital.

⁶⁷There is no known surviving documentation concerning Klimt's paintings for the National Theatre other than his two sketches and reproductions of the works themselves. Carmen Sylva's involvement in the commission, although likely, is still conjectural and much work remains to be done regarding her connections with the theatre.

⁶⁸George Potra, *Din București de ieri*, București, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, 1990, vol.1, p. 535.

⁶⁹*Un veac de arhitectură civilă*, p. 32, note 117.

⁷⁰Klimt executed two sketches for his *Allegories of Music* in 1885. One, *The Organ Player*, is in the Österreichisches Museum in Vienna; the other, *Love Crowning a Singer with Laurels*, was stolen from the same gallery in 1946. Novotny and Dobai (p. 282) reproduce photos of the finished works.

flowing drapery, set against a background of classical architecture or flying putti, is remarkably close to the Fiume works. One might be tempted to imagine that Klimt painted all eight works as a set and gave the two extra paintings to Bucharest.

The stylistic contrast between the private palace theatre friezes and the public ceiling paintings, although executed only a year apart, is striking. The latter revert to the impersonal, academic style of Klimt's earlier theatre decorations, discarding even the semi-decorative background of *Idyll* in favour of a classical setting governed by traditional rules of perspective. Only the lyre in *Love Crowning a Singer*, turned squarely into the picture plane, recalls that of the theatre friezes. The Peleş works become even more remarkable in light of the fact that Klimt would not again adopt this stylised, decorative technique until the early 1890s.

The Peleş theatre friezes also serve to heighten the emerging stylistic divisions within the Künstlerkompanie. Until this point, its work had been characterised by a stylistic homogeneity which allowed the three artists to mix their brushes without obvious discord. In 1886, however, two years after Gustav began work on the palace theatre, his brother was still sending works to Peleş painted in the manner of Old Masters, for example his signed and dated *Titian and Lavinia* (now in Posada; fig. 1.31). Furthermore, it appears that Ernst's contribution to Carol's collection may have been overlooked in favour of his brother. A shipment document bearing Ernst's name indicates that a crate containing some sixteen unframed paintings was sent from Vienna via the Danube to Brăila and thence overland to Sinaia on 17 October 1886.⁷¹

From this it seems clear that historians have underestimated both the scale of the Künstlerkompanie's work in Romania and the pivotal role of the theatre friezes in Gustav Klimt's stylistic development. The paintings for the Romanian royal family constituted not only one of the major early commissions of the young company, but also one of the few undertaken outside the Austro-Hungarian empire. It is known that

⁷¹The (unspecified) paintings were shipped by the company of Moriz Socke of Vienna. This may indicate that Ernst was in charge of the dispatch of the Künstlerkompanie's work to Peleş, sent to Romania later than previously assumed, or else that he himself continued to paint works for Carol (evidenced by *Titian and Lavinia*) longer than his colleagues (none of Gustav or Matsch's identified work for Peleş is dated later than 1884). Fond Casa Regală, oficiale, dos. 33/1886, f. 250. I am indebted to Marian Constantin for bringing this document to my attention.

Klimt returned to Romania several times after 1885, probably at Carmen Sylva's invitation; the last occasion was shortly before his death in 1917. However, no evidence of further work for the royal family has emerged.

Dora Hitz's cycle of paintings for Carmen Sylva's music room

The second instance of the developing royal taste for new decorative trends in painting in the mid-1880s was the cycle of paintings Carmen Sylva commissioned for her music salon in Peleş from the little known German artist, Dora Hitz (fig. 1.10). Together with Klimt's theatre friezes, these represent the only consciously modern note in the pseudo-historical decoration of the palace before the arrival of Karel Liman in 1893.

The small music salon was Carmen Sylva's intimate retreat where she withdrew to write the plays and sonnets that were performed in the palace theatre, or, in later years, to set her poems to music with the help of the composer George Enescu (1881-1955). Even by Victorian standards, Carmen Sylva's literary output was prodigious: a poet, novelist, playwright, musician and artist, she wrote over fifty volumes of stories, poetry and plays.⁷² Said to speak seven languages fluently, she composed in German, French and English and her poems were set to music by Bungert, Gounod and Lubiez as well as by Enescu. A large number of her fairy tales drew on German folklore from the region around her home town of Neuwied, near Koblenz, or on Romanian folk stories collected for her by Vasile Alecsandri. *Pelesch-Märchen* (1882), for example, recounts the legendary origins of the names of the mountains surrounding the summer palace. Many of the Queen's stories, especially those which drew on thinly disguised autobiographical experiences, were imbued with the romantic sentiment of the period and its identification with and glorification of nature. This was revealed even in the Queen's choice of pseudonym:

⁷²For a full list of Carmen Sylva's works, see Elizabeth Burgoyne, *Carmen Sylva. Queen and Woman*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoods, 1941; or George Bengescu, *Carmen Sylva. Bibliographie et extraits de ses œuvres*, Bruxelles, 1904.

Carmen, the song, Sylva, the forest wild,
Forth comes the sylvan song, the woodland's child.⁷³

Queen Elisabeth's poetic excesses, combined with the all-embracing enthusiasm with which she would make promising young artists the centre of her literary circle, inevitably gave rise to some criticism. Crown Princess Marie, for example, disliked the melodramatic atmosphere of Carmen Sylva's salons and what she considered to be a frequent lack of objective artistic discernment.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the Queen did encourage the fledgling Romanian art scene, making herself the protectress of leading figures like Enescu and Alecsandri, as well as of non-Romanian writers like Pierre Loti. In particular, she favoured promising female artists, not only encouraging the literary talents of Romanians like H el ene Vacarescu and Marthe Bibescu, but inviting prominent western artists to visit her court. The actresses Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse and Jane Harding, as well as the innovative American dancer Lo ie Fuller, all performed at the Queen's request. They brought with them the associated paraphernalia of fin-de-si cle Paris and left a profound influence on the artistic tastes of the young Crown Princess in particular.

Dora Hitz was one of the first of these female prot g es. Born in Altdorf in 1856, she trained in Munich from 1870-78. During this time, she came to the attention of the Queen, who invited her to teach at the *Ateneul Elisabeta* (Elisabeth Athenaeum) in Bucharest.⁷⁵ This was an institute set up by the Queen not far from Cotroceni to prepare the most gifted pupils of the Elena Doamna Orphanage for an artistic career.⁷⁶ During her stay in Bucharest, Hitz designed water-colour

⁷³From *Mein Ruh*, quoted by Burgoyne, op. cit., p. 19.

⁷⁴Marie writes that Carmen Sylva was 'continually surrounded by an ecstatic circle of ladies hanging on her every word, and these were supplemented by artists, poets, musicians. Many interesting people came to Aunty, but there were also those who were merely insipid echoes, forming a chorus; these were irritating and occasionally gave her salon a touch of the absurd.' *Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 56.

⁷⁵An article on the Prahovean artist, Maria Z ag nescu, mentions that 'between 1880-83(?), the artist [Z ag nescu] was Dora Hitz's student at the Ateneul Elisabeta', N. I. Simache, 'O grafican  prahovean  uitate  Maria Z ag nescu', *Hronic Prahovean*, Ploieşti, 1971, p. 70. I am indebted to Gabriel Badea-P un for pointing out this reference, as well as other documents concerning Hitz.

⁷⁶The *Asilul Elena Doamna* was founded in 1862 by Elena Cuza, wife of Al. Ion Cuza, in one of Bucharest's first public institutions. Unfortunately, the archive of the orphanage was burnt (the first year that remains is 1887), making it difficult to find further information about Hitz's teaching activities.

illustrations for some of Carmen Sylva's poems, before leaving for Paris in 1882.⁷⁷ The following year, the Queen commissioned her to paint a series of decorative scenes for the newly completed music salon in Peleş.

The cycle of eleven works, of which only nine remain in their original setting, were painted in Paris and delivered in successive stages until 1890. They were executed during a period when Hitz was studying under a series of different masters including Luc-Olivier Merson, Gustav Courtois, Eugène Carrière and Benjamin Constant. Carrière's influence can be detected in the symbolist atmosphere of poetic, dreamlike rêverie which imbues several of the earlier canvases for the music salon. Similarly, Constant is likely to have encouraged the bright patches of colour and light, painterly brushwork of the later works.

Ten out of the eleven paintings depicted scenes from Carmen Sylva's own novels and poems. Interestingly, although the Queen had published her collection of *Pelesch-Märchen* in 1882, she selected specifically non-Romanian tales to decorate her salon. Perhaps she felt they would form a suitable counterpoint to the Zettler stained-glass windows illustrating the Romanian folk-tales of Vasile Alecsandri. The first four paintings, on the wall to the right of the windows, were executed in 1883-84 and sent to Peleş in the first two deliveries of work. All four scenes are taken from the Queen's book *Leidens Erdengang* (published in English as *Pilgrim Sorrow*), written in 1882. This collection of twelve allegorical stories describes the effects wrought by Life, Strife, Sorrow, Death, Peace, Patience, Märchen (Fairy-Tale) and others as, in personified form, they wander the earth. Hitz's paintings depict each character as described by Carmen Sylva the moment before their story begins to unfurl. Hence the first panel represents the opening description of *Peace*, a dreamy youth lying by

a deep, silent mountain tarn that was unfathomable, yet reflected, notwithstanding, the sky's eternal blue [...] He was such a glorious youth that all things loved him; they loved

⁷⁷ Although these illustrations are mentioned in Thieme-Becker (*Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. XVII), Hitz's name does not appear in George Bengescu's bibliography (op. cit.) which gives a complete description of the Queen's works and their illustrators.

his blue eyes, fathomless like the lake whence he arose, his ruddy lips, his wondrous voice, his happy laughter.⁷⁸

A moment later, Sorrow enters the scene and shatters the idyllic atmosphere.

Peace is followed by three larger panels in which Hitz's decorative treatment of scantily-clad, graceful young women among flowers recalls Klimt's theatre friezes, albeit painted in a less consciously stylised manner. The first is taken from the opening story of the book, *The Child of the Sun*, and depicts a carefree maiden, with streaming golden hair and diaphanous robe, dancing among flowers and butterflies in a sun-filled landscape:

Life was a radiant maiden, the daughter of the Sun, endowed with all the charm and grace, all the power and happiness which only such a mother could give to her child. Her hairs were sunbeams, her eyes gleaming stars. Flowers dropped from her hands, seeds sprang into life from beneath her footsteps; sweet scents and songs of birds floated around her.⁷⁹

Again, Hitz has represented the moment of unsuspecting innocence before Strife emerges from his volcano and carries off the young maiden to his underground kingdom. *The Child of the Sun* is succeeded by *Märchen*, the happy-go-lucky embodiment of fairy-tales. Hitz depicts her as a young maiden, her hair tied up with a wreath of flowers, perched delicately on a tree-trunk as she dips her toes in the water of a brook:

"Oh, Märchen, Märchen," the brook began to sing, 'will you not bathe to-day? Put by your staff and spindle and dip down to me. I have not kissed you to-day.' [...] So Märchen laid distaff and spindle among the moss of the tree trunk, twisted her hair into a knot, let fall her linen garment, and, seizing hold of two twigs, let herself glide down to the surface of the brook, and then began to swing merrily to and fro, her feet touching the water as she swung.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Carmen Sylva, 'The Realm of Peace', in *Pilgrim Sorrow. A Cycle of Tales*, translated by H. Zimmern, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1884, pp. 51-52.

⁷⁹'The Child of the Sun', *ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁰'Heavenly Gifts', *ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

The next second, Märchen falls 'like a shower of spring blossoms' into the brook, causing a despairing poet wandering further downstream suddenly to find his inspiration. These happy scenes are followed by the main protagonist of the cycle of tales, *Sorrow*,

a lovely slender child, with dark hair that framed her pale face. Her delicate lips were nearly always closed, her black eyes looked deadly weary, so that none could behold her without weeping. The poor child had no home and wandered restlessly from place to place.⁸¹

Although *Sorrow* longs for company, every home she visits is subsequently struck with misfortune. Hitz paints her alone and weeping as, barefoot, she wanders the earth.

These three works, set into the curved framework of the wooden panelling, dominate the central section of the wall. The final, rectangular, painting on this side, which is of similar dimensions to *Peace*, hangs above the second doorway. Its subject is taken from Carmen Sylva's poem about the Greek poetess *Sapho* (1880), a writer of an erotic lyricism who caused scandal by voicing her attraction to her pupils in her verses. Hitz has depicted the moment of anguish when the wretched poetess writhes on the desert sands in despair as she reproaches the Gods for having allowed her to be born. Her prone form creates a visual counterpart to the reclining figure of *Peace* placed symmetrically above the other doorway. *Sapho* was sent in the third installment of paintings and must therefore have been executed around 1885-86.

The final extant painting from the first three deliveries of work is inserted into the wood panelling of the opposite wall and is inspired by Carmen Sylva's 1882 poem *Die Hexe*. Hitz's witch is a nubile young woman with outspread black wings, whose curvaceous form and streaming hair and robes allow the artist to fill the uncomfortable space above the wall mirrors with a graceful, curvilinear composition. All six of these works are painted in a flickering, impressionistic technique; the

⁸¹'Sorrow', *ibid.*, p. 37.

brushwork is light yet precise and the delicate palette lends a subtle luminosity to the semi-nude figures.

The remaining three works, in contrast, although retaining the painterly brushwork, reveal a progression away from the heady atmosphere of the earlier scenes towards a concentration on solid blocks of strong colour and a more powerfully decorative composition of shapes and outlines. The first of these paintings, on the wall opposite the windows, represents the final scene from the Queen's epic poem *Jehova*, published in 1882. It depicts the wandering Jew, Ahasverus, kneeling among flowers as he finally finds the answer to his question: 'God is everywhere and in everything'. This is followed by the only work not inspired by Carmen Sylva's writing, the allegorical *Muse of Music* which originally hung over the Queen's organ. It represents a richly adorned Muse, seated on a golden throne with a lyre and accompanied by two *Loves* in the form of putti, one singing and one listening. *Ahasverus* and the *Muse* were the final two works for the salon, painted and sent from Paris in 1890.⁸² Both show a notable decorative emphasis, in particular the *Muse*, flanked to right and left by broad, flat, golden borders decorated with finely stylised, red line designs, which are strongly reminiscent of the borders Klimt began to use around this time in works like his *Portrait of Josef Pembaur* (1890) or *Love* (1895).

The final extant work, painted in 1887 and hanging next to *The Muse of Music*, is taken from the Queen's story of *Sakri*, a Nubian princess who was carried off by pirates and tied to the mast of the ship while her captors played dice to decide her fate.⁸³ The largest and one of the most expensive of all the works, *Sakri* also most clearly reveals the influence of Hitz's teacher Constant who, in the 1870s and early 1880s, was painting brightly coloured Orientalist works with a preference for lurid scenes of violence, such as *Riffian Women of Morocco* (1873) or *Moorish*

⁸²*Ahasverus* and *The Muse of Music* were sent to Sinaia in June 1890, as described in a letter from Hitz to the royal administration asking how much the King intends to pay for *la Musique*. Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 19/1890, letter dated 23 October 1890.

⁸³*Sakri* does not appear in Burgoyne's list of Carmen Sylva's works. Bachelin describes it as 'une historie encore inédite' (*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 59); it is unclear if it was subsequently published.

Executioners in Tangier (1874). Under the influence of Constant, the gentle palette and delicate brushwork of Hitz's earlier works has now given way to vibrant colours, free, painterly brushwork (compare Constant's undated oil sketch *Odalisque*), and an obvious delight in the opulence of the exotic costumes and dazzling light of eastern scenes. Furthermore, instead of depicting the opening scene of her subject's story, as in the *Pilgrim Sorrow* works, Hitz has chosen the moment of maximum dramatic tension, emphasized by the dynamic diagonal composition, the violent pitching of the boat and the heightened atmosphere of wind and sea.

There is some ambiguity surrounding the two missing works intended for the empty spaces on either side of the windows. One, described by Hitz in her letters to the royal administration as both *A Prayer (Ein Gebet)* and *Raoul*, showed, according to Bachelin, another scene from the poem *Jehova*, this time the moment where Berthalda confesses her fault and crime to Raoul.⁸⁴ Like *Sakri*, this cost 2500 francs and was sent to Sinaia in 1887. Hitz calls the other work *Lying Witch (liegende Hexe)*; it cost only 1000 francs and was executed probably in 1884-85.⁸⁵ Bachelin, however, writing in 1893, mentions only one witch and states that the final composition, soon to be finished, would be taken from the Queen's *Pelesch-Märchen*.⁸⁶ There is no evidence that Hitz sent any further works after 1890 when she painted *Ahasverus* and *The Muse of Music*. It is possible, therefore, that the second witch may have been moved elsewhere in the palace in anticipation of a new painting from *Pelesch-Märchen* which was never executed.

Also missing are two works, mentioned both by Hitz and Bachelin, which hung in the vestibule on either side of the door to the dining room. They were sent in the second delivery and therefore dated around 1884-85. Both were major paintings,

⁸⁴“Ce n'est pas à mon frère, c'est au prêtre que je dois mes aveux”, *Castel-Pelesch*, p. 59.

⁸⁵Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 25/1887, contains two letters from Hitz to the royal administration concerning payment for her paintings. The first, dated 5 November 1887, gives a list of works delivered in four different batches, their prices and approximate shapes. The second, dated 20 November 1887, thanks the administration for money received and encloses a list of works for which Hitz has received payment. The works are the same as those mentioned in the previous letter, except for *Raoul* which Hitz calls *Ein Gebet*. It is interesting that the King himself decided how much she should receive for each painting after she had sent the finished works to Sinaia.

⁸⁶*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 59.

costing 2500 francs each (other works sent in the same batch received only 1000 francs). One was inspired by Carmen Sylva's short story *Blutbushe*, contained in her 1884 collection *Hanszeichnungen*.⁸⁷ This relates the legend of how the leaves of the copper beech of Nothhausen on the river Bach near Neuwied gained their vibrant colour when stained by the blood of a married princess who stabbed herself out of guilt for loving a poet. It is unclear which scene of the story Hitz depicted; this is also the case for the second missing work which was taken from the Queen's 1880 poem *Hammerstein*. It is possible that the paintings were moved when Liman remodelled the vestibule between 1907-11.⁸⁸

In 1891, after sending her final two works for the Peleş cycle, Hitz left France and returned to Germany. She does not seem to have revisited Romania and, except for various trips to Italy in 1911-12, little further is known about her activities.

The second phase of construction, 1893-1914: Karel Liman and the Modern Style

After Peleş' inauguration in 1883, the pace of building work relaxed slightly. However, by 1893, King Carol was no longer satisfied with his palace in its existing state and appointed a little known Czech architect, Karel Liman, to oversee extensive rebuilding and extension work which continued right up until the King's death in 1914.

Liman's achievement lay in his ability to incorporate the functionality and refined elegance of Art Nouveau's integrated approach to fitting and design without essentially changing the pseudo-historical atmosphere of the palace. His success arose from his adaptability: profoundly aware of the newest developments in European interior design, he developed a highly effective formula for integrating modern innovations in a seamless, elegant and unobtrusive way, always ready to clothe his new ideas in historicist garb if that was what the King wanted. This

⁸⁷The story, translated as 'Red Leaves', can also be found in *Shadows on Love's Dial*, translated by H. Wolff, London, Downey & Co, 1895.

⁸⁸For a full list of works, see appendix 2.

stylistic flexibility, together with his ability to create refined, dignified and homogenous interiors which exactly suited the requirements of his patrons, were the factors which allowed him to play an important role in the development of royal taste until his death in 1929. His capacity to understand even the most fanciful artistic projects endeared him, in particular, to Crown Princess Marie and he became her most patient and enthusiastic collaborator in the creation of her unusual series of 'dream houses', discussed in Chapters Two and Five.

It is difficult to put any kind of stamp on Liman's work. His careful craftsmanship, range of innovative ideas and chameleon-like ability to change style according to his patrons' whim made him the discreet arbiter of Romanian royal taste and the creator of some of the most imaginative European royal interiors of the early part of this century. However, it was largely this capacity, in the face of fiercely held royal artistic ideas, to remove any traces of his own artistic personality from his work which has contributed to his obscure status today. As a fully salaried member of the royal household, he does not appear to have undertaken any commissions outside the Romanian court after 1893; as a result, he has been ignored by historians and deliberately undervalued by pre-Revolution Romanian commentators.

Very little is known about Liman before he came to Romania, except that he was born in Mladá Boleslav in Bohemia and trained in nearby Prague and later in Munich.⁸⁹ He was involved in Hippolyte Destailleur's French Neo-Renaissance palace of Baron Albert de Rothschild in Vienna (1876-82) and, shortly after, went to Romania to work for the Commission for Historical Monuments under Emile André Lecomte du Noüy, then involved in the controversial restoration of some of the country's oldest churches. It was probably Lecomte who recommended Liman when the King was looking for a new architect to begin extension work on Peleş in 1893. This is reinforced by the fact that many of Liman's bills for work on Peleş from the

⁸⁹Rodica Rotărescu, 'Karel Liman. Creator al "artei 1900" în România', *Colocviul Româno-American: "Cotroceni în istorie"*, 15-18 June 1992. Although Queen Marie spells Liman's name 'Liemann', the architect himself always signed documents using the simpler version. He does not appear under either name in Thieme-Becker and no further biographical details could be found.

1890s, including his own wage-slips, are countersigned by Lecomte, at that time general overseer of the royal building projects.

By 1893, it appears that King Carol had become dissatisfied both with the size and appearance of his summer palace. For the King, Peleş represented not so much a country retreat from the pressures of government, as the Bucharest court transferred to the mountains. According to Crown Princess Marie, 'Uncle had no idea of the meaning of country life; he brought his town atmosphere with him to Sinaia; he brought his court, his politics, his military preoccupations, his audiences, his weighty discourses'.⁹⁰ This resulted in the elaborate, formal nature of the palace and the need for state rooms in which to receive both ministers and important guests. The serious ruler, said frequently to be at a loss with how to entertain his visitors, preferred to receive them at Peleş since the area offered excellent hunting and other outdoor pursuits. Sinaia itself had, by this stage, grown from an isolated mountain village into the most fashionable Romanian summer resort, boasting the villas of the aristocratic elite, several large hotels, public baths, spacious parks and even electric street lighting. The need to accommodate more members of the court and staff, as well as provide a suitably grand setting for the entertainment of important visitors, lay behind the King's decision substantially to enlarge the palace in the 1890s and early 1900s.

While maintaining Doderer and Schultz's basic plan, Liman altered the exterior appearance of the palace through the addition of architectural elements of Renaissance and Baroque inspiration. Most noticeable was the replacement of the carved wooden loggia with an Italianate stone colonnade running along the first floor of the south-east wing. Similarly refined touches embellished the heightened square tower: an intricately carved stone portal was added to the doorway, while clocks surmounted by elaborate Baroque tabernacles were placed either side of the new, streamlined, wooden, look-out gallery and spire. The deep, projecting eaves of both the great tower and south-east corner tower were now tapered in to meet the

⁹⁰*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 43.

woodwork below and the simple, conical roof of the corner tower was replaced with an octagonal, elongated, bulb-like spire terminating in a long flagpole (fig. 1.32).

These additions enabled Liman to heighten the effect of increasing visual complexity as the eye moves upwards. It progresses from the heavy rubble base, set in concrete foundations and buttressed by powerful masonry against the downward thrust of the mountain, through the intricately carved stone detail of the first floor colonnade, to the elaborate lattice-work of dark timber, inset with mullioned windows, of the attic floors. By playing on the contrast between stone and wood, Liman enhanced the visual interplay of receding and projecting planes, further enlivened by the sgraffito decoration and coloured roof-tiles. At the same time, the contrast between the solid strength of the rubble base and the ethereal, airy effect of the spires created an architectural counterpart for the slender pine trees perched on the rocky peaks high above the castle.

Liman's most innovative contribution, however, lay in his reconstruction of the interior of the palace, in particular the series of small apartments in the upper floors designed as suites for ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting and as guest rooms. In contrast to the elaborate, fussy, over-furnished public rooms, these apartments were characterised by a simple, integrated and harmonious approach to interior design which demonstrated Liman's delicate appreciation of the functional aspects of Art Nouveau.

In the execution of these rooms, Liman worked very closely with the furniture firm of Bernhard Ludwig (1866-1939) from Vienna. Ludwig's father (also Bernhard; 1834-1897) was a successful German furniture maker who set up his own business in Vienna in 1865. In the early 1870s, he worked for the Imperial Court which presumably recommended him to King Carol since, from 1878, he was employed in the decoration of the Romanian palaces. His firm aimed to counter the reduction in quality resulting from industrial methods of production and to create high standards of design for middle class, as well as aristocratic, customers. As a result, it was deeply involved in the interior decoration of many of the apartment blocks, together

with the more monumental buildings being constructed in Vienna during this period. After Ludwig's son took over the running of the firm in 1896, it expanded significantly with branches in Bucharest, Brünn (Brno, Moravia) and Alexandria.⁹¹ It was involved in the decoration of the royal residence in Durazzo (Albania) and, after the First World War, provided furniture for the Yugoslavian royal palace at Dedigné.⁹²

Liman appears to have been responsible for the overall layout and artistic arrangement of the mansard rooms, built mostly between 1906-7.⁹³ Rather than design the furniture and fittings himself, he would invite Ludwig to submit sketches and plans in the style chosen for each interior which then he approved and sent back for execution. Ludwig's detailed bills for the work reveal that he executed not only the furniture, but also much of the wall panelling, pilasters, gilding, leather-work, carpets, doors, curtains and fabrics.⁹⁴

There are around forty of these rooms, hidden behind little doors set into the wooden panelling of the upper two corridors surrounding the Hall of Honour and the courtyard. Most of the rooms are entered down a couple of steps which delineate the boundary between the heavy, wooden decoration of the public zone and the light, delicate arrangement of the private space of the bedroom. Although the rooms are small, Liman maximises space through the use of little alcoves and an ingenious integration of furniture and fittings. A particularly fine example of this is the series of smaller rooms for ladies-in-waiting which face the wide library alcove overlooking Liman's Hall of Honour. In these rooms it is often no longer clear where a piece of furniture ends and the wall fitting begins: the different components of the rooms do

⁹¹It is unclear if this was the Alexandria in Egypt or Romania.

⁹²This last commission was almost certainly a result of Ludwig's Romanian connections: following the marriage of Princess Marie (Mignon), Ferdinand and Marie's second daughter, to King Alexander of Yugoslavia in 1922, a new palace was built near Belgrade on the hill of Dedigné overlooking the Danube. Queen Marie of Romania herself took a lively interest in its decoration, recommending many of the craftsmen who had been involved in the Romanian palaces. At the wish of the Yugoslavian Queen, the hall of the palace was modelled on the hall of the Brâncovean Palace of Mogoșoaia (Princess Marthe Bibesco, *Royal Portraits*, London, 1928, p. 129).

⁹³The new wing of Peleş was begun around 1903 with the Hall of Honour being completed in 1911. Ludwig's bills for the decoration of the mansard rooms are, however, dated mainly between 1906-7.

⁹⁴Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 412/1906, 413/1907 & 415/1909.

not exist independently of each other, but are embedded in a delicate, yet tensile, wooden framework linking the canopy of the bed or sofa with the lines of a cabinet or bureau, before extending into a picture rail, shelf or mirror frame. This framework acts as a structural element in its own right, separating the various functions of each room into sleeping, toilet, dressing and living areas. Sometimes this is further emphasised by the use of split levels or by a curvilinear wooden balustrade framing and enclosing a particular area, as in the so-called *Painter's Apartment*. In the first of the two rooms which comprise the apartment, the 'working' area next to the windows, with desk, writing cabinet and chairs, is raised on a dais and enclosed by a white wooden partition, composed of rectilinear struts, whose edges curve upwards to frame Klimt's frieze positioned above. Liman also displays great freedom in the spatial layout of his rooms: rarely rectangular, they make ingenious use of alcoves and recessed window areas (fig. 1.33). In the suite known today as H  l  ne Vacarescu's apartment,⁹⁵ Liman uses mirrors placed at slight angles to play visual tricks with space. Doors are often hidden behind such mirrors, or disguised as cupboards integrated into the wall fittings.

The light, airy atmosphere of these interiors is heightened by the choice of warm woods, in particular, oak, cherry and walnut. Coherency is achieved through the use of only one type of wood for both furniture and fittings in each room; carved pattern is kept to a minimum and decorative effect is created through the rhythmic play of the wooden supports and fittings against light-coloured, mostly unpatterned walls. The general effect of these interiors is reminiscent of the Biedermeier preoccupation with comfort, formal simplicity and a subtle, picturesque sense of beauty. Decoration is restrained and elegant, avoiding the vigorous, whip-lash forms and, vegetal extremes of French and Belgian Art Nouveau, and recalling instead the combination of simplified, abstract curvilinearity and rectilinear structures favoured by Hoffmann and Olbrich, for example in Hoffmann's Henneberg House on the Hohe

⁹⁵This is an inaccurate appellation as H  l  ne Vacarescu, one of Carmen Sylva's ladies-in-waiting and later a writer and diplomat, left Romania for France in 1891 after the Queen's unfortunate attempts to engage her to Crown Prince Ferdinand (morganatic marriages being forbidden in the Romanian Constitution).

Warte (1900-2), or Olbrich's *Villa Friedmann* at Hinterbrühl (1898). Echoes of the latter's concern with underlying energy and life-force are picked up in the supports of canopies and the contours of bureaux and shelves which suggest the inherent force-lines of growing stems and leaves. More specific natural motifs are sometimes found in the metalwork or stained glass, for example in the lively daisy stems of the heater grill or the stylised floral forms of the windows in Hélène Vacarescu's apartment. In some rooms, the generally calm atmosphere is further enlivened by the choice of vibrant patterns for fabrics and curtains, such as the Hoffman-like upholstery decorated with stylised yellow irises for the furniture of one of the guest rooms. In a dramatic departure from the heavy, dark, formal interiors of the rest of the palace, the furniture of several of the rooms is painted a brilliant white. In the suite which later became young King Mihai's school-room, for example, the bright, modern effect of the white furniture and fittings is enhanced by the light-coloured walls and grey carpet. This room gives a particularly good demonstration of Liman's maximising of space by comprising several functions within one piece of furniture. Hence the wooden supports of chairs and bureaux also double as shelves, cupboards, mirrors and stools, effectively blurring the boundary between furniture, wall decoration and architecture.

Perhaps the most distinctive of all the Art Nouveau interiors of Peleş is the painting studio Liman designed for Carmen Sylva in 1906 (fig. 1.34). Again, Ludwig was responsible for executing the furniture 'according to approved sketches and plans' by Liman.⁹⁶ The high, vaulted ceiling, with its larch-wood rafters, combined with the wavy lines of the wood and plaster decoration of the walls, recalls not only the painting studio Liman designed for Princess Marie in Cotroceni shortly before the First World War, but also the work of the British Arts and Crafts architect, Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott. The latter's association with Princess Marie and influence on Liman will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The most remarkable feature of Carmen Sylva's studio is the carved and gilded 'tree of life' framing the

⁹⁶'nach den genehmigten Skizzen und Plänen', fond Castele și Palate, dos. 412/1906, f. 36.

mirror of the wooden balcony of the end wall. This favoured motif of many Art Nouveau designers had appeared in a similar form six years previously in Princess Marie's 'Golden Room' in Cotroceni, strongly suggesting that Liman was the architect of both interiors. The modern vernacularism of Baillie Scott or Voysey may also have encouraged Liman's use of carved larch-wood and incorporation of a stylised tulip motif chiselled into the lower ends of the rafters.

The mansard rooms are evidence of King Carol's awareness of European artistic developments. His library contained modern reviews like Alexander Koch's *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, he had visited the Paris 1900 Exhibition and the large number of Austrian artists and craftsmen working at his court kept him informed of developments in Vienna in particular. He also grudgingly admired the unusual tastes of the Crown Princess who, as early as 1897, had invited Baillie Scott to design the interior of her tree-house in Sinaia. Liman probably had little difficulty convincing the King of the functional advantages of the new style for the guest rooms of Peleş. An extremely practical man, demonstrated by his insistence on the hidden installation of every modern comfort in the palace, the King would have been quick to appreciate the maximising of space and compressed furniture costs inherent in the style. However, it remained very clear that the new style was only to be used in minor, private rooms; the formal rooms remodelled by Liman after 1893 retained the heavy grandeur of the earlier interiors. A good example of Liman's stylistic flexibility is the Imperial Suite, designed for a visit by the Emperor Franz Josef in 1907, the same year as the construction of the Art Nouveau mansard rooms. Described in Ludwig's bill as in 'Charles VI' style, the suite is filled with heavily carved and gilded woodwork, plush red upholstery, intarsia and two huge, salomonic columns framing the entrance to the bedroom area (fig. 1.35).⁹⁷ Similarly, the grand new Hall of Honour (fig. 1.36), built on the site of the second inner courtyard and completed as late as 1911, was marked by a wealth of wooden carving and architectural elements inspired by historical German models (the hall as a whole was modelled on the

⁹⁷Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 413/1907, f. 45-47.

'Fredenhagen' room in the Chamber of Commerce in Lübeck). Nevertheless, wherever possible, Liman discreetly introduced modern design. The Imperial bathroom is equipped with Zsolnay glazed jugs and washbowls, while the ceiling of the windowless Hall of Honour is spanned by an innovative, electrically-operated, sliding glass roof, which can be drawn back completely to allow light and air to penetrate the heavy decoration.

King Carol continued embellishing Peleş until his death shortly before the First World War. Yet, despite his appreciation of modern comforts, his stylistic tastes never advanced beyond the concessions to Modern Style functionality in the minor guest rooms of the palace. Even the numerous out-buildings of Peleş were designed by Liman in a German Neo-Renaissance style in order to blend in with the castle as a whole. For Liman and Bernhard Ludwig, however, new possibilities for artistic inventiveness presented themselves, from the late 1890s, in the interior design projects of Crown Princess Marie. In the decoration of Pelişor, the smaller palace next to Peleş built by Liman for the princely couple from 1899-1902, Marie rejected the heavy historicism of her larger neighbour in favour of a highly personal interpretation of the decorative possibilities of Art Nouveau. Even before this, the young princess had shown a lively awareness of new artistic tastes emanating from Britain and from the Darmstadt court of her sister and brother-in-law, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse. She explored these new design approaches in the decoration of her garden follies in Sinaia and Bucharest and her early rooms in Cotroceni, discussed in the following chapter.

Arts and Crafts and Exoticism: The Early Projects of Crown Princess Marie

King Carol's failure to produce an heir meant that, in 1889, he invited his nephew Ferdinand (1865-1927), the son of Prince Leopold and Princess Antonia of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, to become the Romanian Crown Prince. Four years later, in 1893, Ferdinand married Princess Marie of Edinburgh (1875-1938) in Sigmaringen Castle in Swabia. The eldest daughter of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, and of Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, the only daughter of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Marie had spent her childhood in England, Malta and Coburg.¹ Such an alliance with a granddaughter of both Queen Victoria and of the Russian Tsar was a shrewd dynastic move designed to further international recognition of King Carol's young royal house.

Marie was to become one of the most glamorous, unconventional and vibrantly charismatic royal consorts of the early twentieth century, playing a much publicised role in the creation of Greater Romania after the First World War and acting as a lively promoter of Romanian art and culture both at home and abroad. Her husband, in contrast, a shy and nervous personality, appears to have been less interested than his predecessor in grandiose architectural schemes, leaving the design and decoration of the princely residences almost entirely to his imaginative wife. During Marie's first few years in the country, the princely couple occupied an apartment in the Royal Palace on Calea Victoriei while their own residence of Cotroceni was being remodelled. Carol had redesigned and enlarged the Bucharest

¹Prince Alfred was named Commander of Her Majesty's Mediterranean Fleet in 1886; in 1889, when he became heir to the duchies of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the family moved to Germany.

palace between 1882-85 according to the eclectic Neo-Classical/ French Neo-Renaissance formula of the French architect Alfred Jules Paul Gottereau.² Its interior, largely the work of the court sculptor Martin Stöhr, had the same elaborate, wood-panelled heaviness as the formal rooms of Peleş. Marie quickly expressed her dislike of King Carol's historicist taste:

it was German *mauvais goût* at its worst, when it sets out to be heavy and cruel; *Altdeutsch* and bad rococo! [...] Rich, dark, pompous, unhomelike, inhospitable rooms, all windows, doors and fixtures and nowhere a cosy corner, nowhere a fireplace, nowhere any flowers, nowhere a comfortable chair!³

In the spring of 1896, Ferdinand and Marie moved into the Palace of Cotroceni, newly rebuilt for them on a hill on the western outskirts of Bucharest (fig. 2.1). This former monastery and princely court, founded between 1679-81 during the reign of Şerban Cantacuzino, had been used by Carol and Elisabeth until the reconstruction of the Royal Palace on Calea Victoriei was completed. Between 1893-95, Gottereau was also responsible for remodelling Cotroceni, demolishing a large part of the old princely buildings and replacing them with an L-shaped, three-storied residence in an eclectic, French Neo-Renaissance style.

The move to Cotroceni marked the awakening of Marie's interest in alternative approaches to interior decoration, stimulated both by her rejection of the style of the existing royal palaces and by new ideas emerging from Britain and Germany. In particular, she was influenced by artistic developments in the Darmstadt court of her sister and brother-in-law, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse. At the same time, she developed a life-long fascination with romantic retreats and unusual garden follies. Beginning with a Pre-Raphaelite-inspired tree-house by the British Arts and Crafts architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, these culminated, in the 1920s

²See Chapter One, note 4.

³Marie, Queen of Roumania, *The Story of My Life*, vol. II, London, Cassell & Co., 1934, p. 15.

and 30s, in an original series of country residences designed in what Marie termed the *Regina Maria* style.

Marie's 'dream houses', as she described them, reflected the development of her artistic tastes from her arrival in Romania until her death in 1938. These evolved from a romanticised appropriation of the decorative potential of British Arts and Crafts ideas, through an original combination of elements of international Art Nouveau and a vivid interest in 'primitive' or 'exotic' cultures, to a personal response to the Neo-Romanian school of architecture. This chapter will examine Marie's earliest artistic projects, executed in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries. These included Baillie Scott's tree-house, early interiors in Cotroceni and Pelişor inspired by Byzantine, Celtic and Scandinavian models, and two 'Maori' tea-huts at Cotroceni and Sinaia. It will discuss how these projects assimilated and imaginatively reinterpreted aspects of Arts and Crafts and Modern Style trends from across the continent, revealing the Crown Princess' close contacts with some of the major European centres of Art Nouveau production.

The influence of Baillie Scott: Darmstadt, *Le Nid* and the 'golden salon' in Cotroceni

In her article 'My Dream Houses', published in the Romanian magazine *Boabe de Grâu* (Grains of Wheat) in 1930, Marie described her fascination with unusual little houses:

Even as a child, in imagination I was always building my home. I saw it in many shapes, for I was always a visionary, beautiful pictures filled my soul, but I also wanted to create. Visions alone did not suffice me, I wanted to build, to realise, to accomplish [...] Princesses and Queens are of course destined to live in palaces, guarded by sentries and policemen, great mansions with many rooms, impersonal because of their size and because of the many servants needed to keep so large a house in right order. Just because of this perhaps, my dreams were all of cottages, bungalows, of absurd tiny dwellings

with thatched roofs surrounded by gardens in which every sort of flower would gaily bloom.⁴

Her earliest building ventures, garden follies in Cotroceni and Sinaia, were constructed in a spirit of reaction against the elaborate German Neo-Renaissance of Carol's palaces and harked back to a romanticised rusticism reminiscent of Marie Antoinette's *petit hameau* at Versailles. The first of these, a 'tiny gypsy "bordei" [hut]' in the garden of Cotroceni, roofed with shaggy maize and copied after a hut Marie had seen in a gipsy village, was constructed soon after the princely couple moved to the palace in March 1896. The folly pandered to the young Crown Princess' love of play-acting: here she would dress up in peasant costume to take tea, paint or play with her children.⁵

Shortly after, in 1898, Marie commissioned the British Arts and Crafts architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott to design the interior of a tree-house she intended to build high in a pine forest above Castle Peleş. Marie was introduced to Baillie Scott's work by her sister, Victoria Melita, the wife of one of the most enlightened aristocratic patrons of the day, the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse.⁶ In 1897, two years before he set up the Mathildenhöhe Jugendstil artists' colony, the Grand Duke had invited Baillie Scott to redesign the drawing and dining rooms of the ducal palace in Darmstadt (fig. 2.2).⁷ These interiors were Scott's first continental commission, carried out in collaboration with C. R. Ashbee's Guild and School of

⁴Regina Maria, 'Casele mele de vis', *Boabe de Grâu*, anul 1, nr. 2, aprilie 1930. The Queen's original draft, written in English, is in the Bucharest State Archives (fond Regina Maria, III/43/1927-30, 'My Dream Houses').

⁵'My Dream Houses', p. 13. The hut (builder unknown) no longer exists. However, the photograph accompanying the *Boabe de Grâu* article shows a *casa indiană* (Indian house) which is, in fact, the Cotroceni Maori hut discussed later in this chapter.

⁶For a thorough survey of Ernst Ludwig's art patronage and activities, see Brigitte Rechberg (ed.), *Ein Dokument Deutscher Kunst, Darmstadt 1901-76*, catalogue of exhibition held at the Kunsthalle, Hessisches Landesmuseum and Matildenhöhe October 1976 - January 1977, 6 vols., Darmstadt, Eduard Roether Verlag, 1976.

⁷Commissioned before July 1897 (when their designs were published in *The Building News*) and supposed to have been finished in time for a visit by the Tsar in October, these two rooms were destroyed, together with a large part of the ducal archives, in the Second World War.

Handicraft which executed virtually all the light fittings, furniture and metalwork. The two rooms bear notable similarities to Scott's later design for the tree-house, and the drawing room, in particular, appears to have served as the model for Marie's golden salon in Cotroceni, designed in 1900-1. Indeed, as shall be discussed, aspects of the Darmstadt designs continued to reappear in Marie's subsequent interiors in Cotroceni and Pelişor, suggesting that Scott's influence permeated the Crown Princess' decorative schemes much more deeply than has previously been recognised.

In the Darmstadt rooms, Scott's subtle integration of space, fittings, furniture and decoration represented one of his most successful early attempts at a synthetic *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The interiors also revealed an innovative approach to the use of colour, combining light or brightly coloured grounds with more subtle notes in decorative details, while the rich, deep tones of the furniture were designed to offset inlaid spots of pink or ivory decoration. In the drawing room, for example, Scott introduced a novel colour-scheme of ivory-white panelling and orange frieze, surmounted by a border of gliding grey and white birds on a gilded ground which lent a sense of linear rhythm to the upper register of the walls. He intended the white panelling to 'outline in relief' the blue-green furniture, giving 'an added value to tone and colour in these darker things, which show much in the same way as some brilliantly clad figure in a snowy landscape'.⁸ The orange-white-blue-green combination was further enlivened by flashes of brilliant pink in the flowers inlaid in the chairs and adorning the frieze, as well as by the ivory-coloured, stylised lily motifs tipped with orange which decorated both the furniture and the Tynecastle tapestry above the copper hood of the fireplace. Pure colour and flat, bold pattern became the new keynotes of the room.

⁸Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, 'Decoration and Furniture for the New Palace, Darmstadt', *The Studio*, vol. 16, 1899, pp. 112-15.

These interiors represented Scott's first opportunity to realise his designs for furniture on a large scale. The relatively sober colour complements of light and dark green backgrounds with ivory and pink decoration gave way to vivid bursts of hidden colour on the inner sides of the doors of the music cabinet, secretaire and needlework cabinet (fig. 2.3). The forms of the individual pieces themselves were effectively simple and restrained, free of mouldings, curves or period detail. The semi-circular barrel chair, for example (fig. 2.4), whose vertical bars were inlaid with leaf patterns of alternating light and dark green wood tipped with a rose-coloured flower head, was inspired by a chair in a Burne-Jones design for a Morris tapestry which appeared in *The Studio* of 1894 (fig. 2.5).⁹ Some of the furniture was built into the framework of the room under a continuous shelf running along the top of the wooden panelling which extended into a canopy-like projection over the doors and day bed. The framework was supported by slender colonnettes topped by basket capitals which reappeared, combined with cabinetwork, under the large false mantel of the fireplace to provide the backs for two ingle seats.

While recognising Scott's new use of colour and decorative motif, the art historian James Kornwolf considered the Darmstadt drawing room to be overly complicated:

From any point of view, too much is going on, and the design remains less than a complete success [...] Perhaps he found it difficult to accustom himself to high-ceilinged rooms or ducal palaces; perhaps the Grand Duke's enthusiasm ultimately hampered the result. Whatever the reason, the failures in the designs were taken by Scott as an object lesson, as his subsequent work confirms.¹⁰

Kornwolf's criticism fails to take account of one important factor. Although acknowledging the Grand Duke's enthusiastic supervision of the decoration and keen

⁹*The Studio*, vol. 3, 1894, p. 98.

¹⁰James D. Kornwolf, *M. H. Baillie Scott and the Arts and Crafts Movement*, Pioneers of Modern Design, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins Press, 1972, p. 168.

interest in the operation of an English collaborative Arts and Crafts association, he overlooks the significant role played by the Grand Duchess, Victoria Melita, for whom, Scott writes, the drawing room was designed.¹¹ Far from being merely a passive observer of her husband's artistic schemes, Victoria was an active collaborator and supporter of many of his ideas until their divorce in 1901. An accomplished water-colour artist herself, she was closely involved in the decoration not only of the ducal palace, but also of the summer residence, Wolfsgarten.¹² Here the Grand Duke and Duchess organised lively parties at which the young royal set, including Tsar Nicholas II, the future George V and Marie and Ferdinand, would experiment with the new fashions of pokerwork wood-burning, decorative painting and furniture carving.¹³ Victoria and Marie developed a shared repertoire of favourite motifs, in particular stylised lilies, irises, swastikas, Celtic and other crosses, which reappear frequently in the painted and applied art work of the sisters (figs. 2.6 & 2.7). At this stage, they also held very similar views on new approaches to interior decoration, Marie closely following the development of the Darmstadt scheme and Victoria travelling to Bucharest to help with the early interiors in Cotroceni.¹⁴ The Grand Duchess' ideas appear to have had considerable bearing on Scott's design for the ducal drawing room. It is likely that she influenced the incorporation of her

¹¹'designs which were made by the writer for the furnishing of a sitting room for Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess of Hesse', Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, 'Some Furniture for the New Palace, Darmstadt', *The Studio*, vol. 14, 1898, p. 91.

¹²She describes the choice of fabrics, wall-papers and furniture for Wolfsgarten in a letter to Marie (fond Regina Maria, V/3469, 30 June, no year).

¹³Much of the pokerwork furniture executed by the Hesses and Marie in this period was used to decorate the golden salon and silver bedroom in Cotroceni. A surviving photo, in an album dated c.1900 in the collection of the National History Museum in Bucharest, shows Grand Duke Ernst displaying one of the pokerwork high-backed lily-chairs, modelled after Baillie Scott, used by Marie in several of her interiors.

¹⁴'Ducky [Victoria Melita] had perfect taste and the same passion as I have for arranging her rooms in a rather unusual and uncommon way', *Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 331.

favourite lily motif and she was certainly involved in the choice of the unusual colour scheme.¹⁵

In criticising the over-fussy nature of the drawing room, Kornwolf has not fully acknowledged the restrictions almost certainly imposed upon Baillie Scott by his patrons' strong personalities. At this early stage of his career, Scott was already promoting his credo of the architect as the designer of the house down to the last detail. While he believed in creating a house to fit the needs of a client, he was still unwilling to have his design ruined by the client's own additions: 'It is a painful thing for an architect to design a mantelpiece for which he dares not hope to choose the ornaments, and which may become a resting place for he knows not what atrocities in china and glass'.¹⁶ Although progressive in their artistic views, Scott's Hesse patrons were, however, too individual to admit complete subordination to the artist in the last details of their living space. Victoria Melita herself was responsible for the final arrangement of the room. While praised by Scott for 'the tasteful way in which her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess has arranged everything in harmony with the general scheme', she retained the Victorian love of cluttered surfaces.¹⁷ This taste was shared by her sister who filled her later Cotroceni and Pelișor interiors to bursting point with her unusual collections of *objets d'art*, photographs, Art Nouveau prints and exotic bibelots. The Grand Duke himself only fully embraced the total integration of architecture and contextual fittings a couple of years later with Olbrich's constructions in the Mathildenhöhe colony.

¹⁵This was acknowledged by Scott himself: 'The cultivated taste of their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse have so much influenced the final result of the decoration of the room that one is a little dubious in accepting the credit which belongs to the designer. The general colour scheme and much of the decoration, as well as the disposition and arrangement of the furniture, were all suggested by their Royal Highnesses', 'Decoration and Furniture for the New Palace, Darmstadt', p. 108.

¹⁶Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, 'The Fireplace of the Suburban House', *The Studio*, vol. 6, 1896, p. 105.

¹⁷'Decoration and Furniture for the New Palace, Darmstadt', p. 110.

If, as Kornwolf suggests, Scott was ultimately dissatisfied with the ducal palace interiors, he certainly gave no indication of this in his next commission, the Sinaia tree-house, in which he re-employed several elements of the Darmstadt design.

Marie visited her sister and brother-in-law in Darmstadt in December 1897 and was so taken with Scott's creation that the next month she commissioned him to design her tree-house.¹⁸ The idea for this aerial nest, known as *Le Nid* or *Juniperus*, seems to have originated with the twenty-two year old Crown Princess herself: 'My imagination was full of romance, I did not grow up all at once and my childish dreams still haunted me, so I planned a house up on the tree tops'.¹⁹ Letters from Victoria Melita suggest that all correspondence with the architect was handled by the Grand Duchess; furthermore, the sisters appear to have stipulated the decorative theme of the house, allowing the designer less creative freedom than has previously been assumed. Victoria writes:

Here I am sending Scott's letter. You will like to see yourself how thoroughly he has grasped your idea. You must write to me what you think and leave all the corresponding with him to me. It is a great occupation and pleasure to me and it will all be done beautifully if you leave it to me. Is it not amusing that he so really understands and likes so exactly what we like?²⁰

According to Marie, the tree-house itself was executed by King Carol's court architect, Emile André Lecomte du Noüy (fig. 2.8).²¹ Bills for the construction of the house, signed both by Lecomte and by Liman, show that it was begun in April 1898 and must have been at least structurally complete by the beginning of July when it

¹⁸The commission was reported in *The Builders' Journal*, 19 January 1898, p. 512. On 22 January, Victoria wrote to Marie 'I have had no further news yet from Scott, but I am sure he is heart and soul in his drawings', fond Regina Maria, V/3299/1898.

¹⁹'My Dream Houses', p. 13.

²⁰Fond Regina Maria, V/3301, letter from Victoria Melita to Marie, 5 December (January?) 1898 (I am inclined to believe that, due to the practice of using both the Gregorian and Julian calendars, Victoria has confused the months).

²¹'Mr. Lecomte, Uncle's private architect [...] designed for me a delightful little house suspended in mid-air between huge fir trees', *Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 260.

was insured.²² These bills, which list payments made to Romanian carpenters and suppliers of wood, cement and coloured glass reveal that, unlike at Darmstadt where Scott's designs were executed by Ashbee's workshop, the Romanian royal administration preferred to employ the craftsmen currently working on the Sinaia palaces.²³

The idea for the tree-house was a fantastic one, inspired, it seems, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1875-78 poem and painting 'The blessed damozel leaned out/ From the golden bar of heaven' (fig. 2.9). The rustic log cabin, supported some eight metres above the ground by a group of five living trees, had a floor and walls of horizontal pine trunks and a thatched roof. It was reached by a drawbridge linking it to a wooden tower, loosely modelled on Romanian vernacular belfries, with a shingled roof and deeply projecting eaves. When this was drawn up, Marie 'was in a fortress and could defy the world below'.²⁴ The cabin was suspended on the edge of a steep incline; from the balcony which partially surrounded it, the Princess could look over the tree-tops to the valley and the palaces beneath. Her aerial retreat was the architectural embodiment of Rossetti's poem:

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
To which is space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

The rough, rustic nature of the exterior of *Le Nid* belied the 'jewelled and brilliant colour' of its interior, each of whose three rooms was decorated with a

²²Fond Castele și Palate, 404, f. 7, 16, 18, 21, 24, 40, 41, 102, 111.

²³The craftsmen and suppliers listed include E. Constantinescu (timber, cement and lime merchant), V. Neguț (timber merchant), B. Gaiser (manufacturer of baths and zinc), and R. Ziegeler (one of the main stained glass manufacturers in Romania who also supplied windows for buildings by Alexandru Săvulescu, Gottereau and Grigore Cerchez).

²⁴*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 260.

different flower motif (fig. 2.10).²⁵ Here Scott followed the same principle of 'hidden beauties' developed in his music cabinet in Darmstadt which 'gives no hint of the brightness of its interior until one opens a door and experiences that shock of pleased surprise which decoration has the power of evoking'.²⁶ The principal space of the tree-house was dedicated to the sun and sunflower. Every aspect of its decoration was charged with these symbols of life and fertility: fireplace tiles, furniture upholstery, rugs and mirror frames bore different representations of the sunflower motif, while the stained-glass windows and the frieze surmounting them showed the blazing rays of the sun emerging from behind a forest of sunflowers. Even the painted ceiling tried to create the illusion of the world beyond the roof by depicting glimpses of sun and sky filtered through the branches of trees.

Leading off this room was the oratory alcove, above the entrance of which were chiselled lines from *The Blessed Damozel*:

We two will stand before that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod.

Here the lily was the symbol flower. The floor was decorated with a mosaic of water-lilies whose lines converged towards the altar; likewise the lilies of the frieze bent their heads towards the shrine where the pictured Madonna was framed by a halo of interwoven branches. The stylised lily motif, identical to that used in Darmstadt, also appeared in the doors of the altarpiece, in the stained-glass window and inlaid in the chair-back. On the other side of the *erker* stood the organ whose doors were decorated on the inner side with winged angels on a gilded background.

Adjoining the main salon was a small bedroom, entered under an inscription from Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*:

To Mary, Queen, the praise be given,

²⁵Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, *Houses and Gardens*, Suffolk, Antique Collectors' Club, 1995, p. 202.

²⁶Some Furniture for the New Palace, Darmstadt', p. 92.

She sent the gentle sleep from Heav'n
Which slid into my soul.

The dominant motif of this room was the sleep-inducing poppy, found embroidered on the bed-hangings, painted on the walls and inlaid in the furniture. Beyond this was a tiny kitchen where food could be prepared for Marie's guests, of whom she seems to have had a fair number:

although my absurd idea had at first been loudly mocked at, everybody wanted to cross my drawbridge and see my "nest" from within. Even Uncle [King Carol], that stern man without imagination, had suddenly succumbed to the charm of my "folly", and, of all unexpected things, would insist upon my giving tea-parties there to guests he found difficult to entertain [...] I kept a "Juniperus" visitors' book, between the leaves of which I had painted the wild flowers of Sinaia, and this book testifies to the number and quality of those I received, from Ferdinand of Bulgaria down to the humblest little lieutenant.²⁷

Baillie Scott was sufficiently satisfied with his design for *Le Nid* to devote a whole section of *Houses and Gardens* to its description. Although a relatively small commission, it embodied a quality of romance which, Scott hoped, might inject the 'somewhat prosaic affair' of the average home with 'some stuff of which dreams may be made'.²⁸ His illustration for the nest remains one of the finest early examples of his integrated, synthetic approach to interior design. Nevertheless, as at Darmstadt, he was working for a patron with strongly defined artistic views of her own who not only took a keen interest in the initial design, but was also willing to alter it during its execution. Victoria Melita's letter, quoted above, indicates that Marie approached Baillie Scott with a clearly developed idea. The sisters also decided on the choice of flower motifs for each room, as well as on the inclusion of the Fylfot cross, the symbol of the House of Hesse in the design.²⁹ This cross (resembling a swastika),

²⁷*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 261

²⁸*Houses and Gardens*, p. 201.

²⁹'The architect had instructions from the Grand Duchess of Hesse (sister of the Crown Princess) to the effect that each room was to have a separate flower as its *motif*; the "Sunflower" saloon, with "Lily" chapel adjoining, the bedroom with Poppies [...] Another point was that the symbol cross of the

which does not feature in Baillie Scott's illustration, can, however, be seen embroidered on a couch cover in a surviving photograph of the interior, taken during the visit of Marie's brother Alfred in 1898 (fig. 2.11).³⁰ Moreover, the photograph does not reveal any of the above-mentioned flower motifs, suggesting that Marie perhaps did not follow Baillie Scott's design exactly. This is reinforced by Marie's own description of *Le Nid*, written some thirty years after it was built, which makes no mention of sunflowers, the lily oratory or even Baillie Scott himself, but states that the *larger* room was 'painted white with a frieze of huge scarlet poppies close under the ceiling', while the *smaller* room was

stained a sober green and here I had accumulated quaint objects, such as old pieces of pottery, copper, brass, hanging a few attractive prints on the walls. A cover of dull orange, heaped up with rust-tinted cushions, was spread over a long deck-chair. The colour scheme was most attractive and of course I kept the place full of flowers.³¹

The tree-house was blown down in a storm soon after the First World War. In the absence of further photographs or eye-witness accounts it is difficult to determine the exact arrangement of its interiors. However, Marie's description and the photograph suggest that, unlike at Darmstadt, Baillie Scott did not travel to Romania to oversee the execution of his design and perhaps remained unaware that it had been changed.³² Even if Marie in her memoirs may have confused the decoration of the two rooms, there is evidence that, like her sister, she rejected Scott's call to exclude objects which did not harmonise with the integrated scheme of the whole, and filled

House of Hesse [...] was to be worked into the decoration', 'Interior: "Le Nid"', *The Builder*, 18 November, 1899, p. 466.

³⁰Fond Regina Maria, III/97/1898, 'Souvenir of Alfred's last stay with us'.

³¹*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 261.

³²Baillie Scott's design, together with descriptions of *Le Nid* were published several times after the completion of the tree-house (for example *Academy Architecture*, I, vol. 15, 1899; *The Architectural Review*, August 1899 [supplement]; *The Builder*, 18 November 1899; *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, 4, 1901; *Houses and Gardens*, 1906). None of these mention that the design was not carried out as planned.

her tree-house with the same eclectic collections of animal skins, paintings and *objets d'art* with which she decorated her other interiors.³³

Marie, therefore, appears to have been less interested than her Hesse cousin in the collaborative principles and integrated approach of English Arts and Crafts practice and was attracted instead by the fanciful and escapist aspects of the tree-house. Nevertheless, if her willingness to depart from Scott's original design suggests that she did not fully appreciate his striving for synthetic unity, it does not necessarily detract from her achievement in recognising the progressive nature of his work. Although a tiny construction, the Sinaia tree-house and its published design offered an unusual alternative in the Romanian search for architectural vocabularies other than that of historicism. It revealed a desire to explore new directions emerging abroad and highlighted the means of their dissemination through an international network of patronage, movement of artists and journals.

For the Crown Princess, however, the tree-house presented above all a romantic hideaway from the tedium of her royal duties and from the dark, gilded atmosphere of King Carol's palaces. In this aerial retreat, seemingly suspended between heaven and earth, she could escape into a Pre-Raphaelite realm of poetic suggestion and mysterious, otherworldly beauty. The symbolism of the wooden 'nest', supported by 'the subtle vital curves of healthy unobstructed growth', was appropriate to a period when much European art was undergoing a pseudo-pagan re-embracing of nature, its symbolic values and underlying forces.³⁴ This nature symbolism continued in the gilded trees of life which decorated Marie's next project, the golden salon in Cotroceni.

Gottreau's remodelled palace combined a French eclectic exterior with rooms in a wide range of historicist styles including Garnier Neo-Baroque, German

³³A contemporary description of the tree-house states that 'the interior contains works of art, faience, bear and lion skins' ('Interiorul cuprinde lucrări de artă, faianță piei de urs și de leu'), Al. Ranea, 'Sinaia și împrejurimile', *Literatură și artă română*, vol. VI, 25 iunie 1903, p. 344.

³⁴*Houses and Gardens*, p. 202.

Renaissance and Henri II. In late October 1900, Marie decided to embark on her first major interior design project and completely remodel her Louis XIV *grand salon* which she described as '*de très mauvais goût* [...] by degrees I want to arrange it after my own taste, and to make something lovely'.³⁵ She wrote: 'since several years I had been dreaming of a golden room'.³⁶ In November, she was still toying with the idea and wrote to her mother:

I am very busy with the idea of arranging my big room downstairs and mean to make great economies on my clothes, so as to be able to do it. I want a really beautifully arranged room to collect all my prettiest things into, because my upper-rooms become too small, and after all these years one has collected many things.³⁷

The golden salon was conceived with the help of Victoria Melita and probably executed by Liman, although no firm evidence of the architect involved has come to light (figs. 2.12 & 2.13). Although the room no longer exists, it was described by an English visitor to Cotroceni, Mrs Winifred Gordon, shortly before the first War:

The room is long and spacious, and with its rich carved walls of dull burnished gold and the wealth of beautiful coloured embroideries and pictures, gives a jewelled Byzantine effect. Towards the windows, arched pillars form delightful alcoves, in one of which stands a very original altar-shaped piece of furniture of gilded wood, the carving in high relief and with deep festoons of roses looping the corners. It has a distinctly old Italian effect, and was executed from a design by the Queen. Near the door hangs a portrait of her when Crown Princess in Roumanian dress, a sheaf of wild cherry blossom in her arm.³⁸

³⁵Fond Regina Maria, V/2438, 31 October 1900, letter from Marie to the Duchess of Coburg.

³⁶My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', p. 14.

³⁷Fond Regina Maria, V/2439, 10 November 1900, letter from Marie to the Duchess of Coburg.

³⁸Mrs Winifred Gordon, *A Woman in the Balkans*, London, Thomas Nelson, 1918, pp. 183-184. The room was badly damaged during earthquakes in 1940 and 1977. When the architect Nicolae Vlădescu was commissioned by Ceaușescu to restore the palace in the late seventies, he was so intimidated by photographs of the golden room's 'rather strange Secession-inspired decoration', that he 'did not have the courage to reconstruct it only on the basis of photographs', choosing instead a vague Louis XIV/Louis XVI mélange loosely recalling Gottereau's original decoration. Nicolae Vlădescu, 'Restaurarea Palatului Cotroceni 1976-1985', *Revista monumentelor istorice*, nr. 1-2, anul LXVI, 1997, p. 62.

Shiny peacock-blue floor tiles reflected the glittering walls, decorated with a gilded gypsum pattern on a green ground which, according to Marie, created an effect 'rather like old Cordoba leather'.³⁹ The serpentine, twisting forms of the relief decoration, echoing a treatment of nature popular with Jugendstil designers such as Obrist, suggested the intertwining thorns of rose bushes and complemented the profusion of carved and gilded hedge-roses climbing over certain pieces of furniture such as the canopied desk designed by Marie and mentioned by Gordon (fig. 2.14). The sensation of the growing forces of nature was even more vigorously embodied in the thickly entwined branches and leaves which supported the canopies above the fitted furniture, surrounded the circular opening of the fireplace and created a nest-like effect around the chandelier. These knotted, sinuous forms reappeared as framing elements around the doorways and arches of the arcade in an elaborate stucco decoration strongly reminiscent of Liman's later tree of life for Carmen Sylva's painting studio in Peleş. They also recalled Baillie Scott's description of the entrance to *Le Nid*, 'bowered in an interlacing framework of carved branches and leafage, in the midst of which birds flutter and cling, and over which gleams a gilded nest'.⁴⁰

The vibrant combination of gilded walls and peacock-blue tiles was Marie's own innovation: 'in those days I was still in the phase of violent contrasts of colours'.⁴¹ Despite the flamboyant colour scheme, the basic division of the walls, together with the organisation of the room as a whole, looked back to the Darmstadt drawing room. The dynamic relief pattern of rose thorns was surmounted, in the upper register of the walls, by a frieze of stylised lilies strongly reminiscent of the motif used by Baillie Scott in Darmstadt. Scott's influence was also felt in the blazing sun-rays radiating outwards from an icon hung on the fireplace hood, which gave a literal embodiment of his analogy of the fireplace as 'practically a substitute for the

³⁹My Different Homes. Cotroceni I, p. 14.

⁴⁰*Houses and Gardens*, p. 202.

⁴¹My Different Homes. Cotroceni I, p. 14.

sun'.⁴² This sun-like effect was reinforced by the yellow tiled lining of the fireplace, designed to enhance the radiating light and warmth. The clearest echoes of Darmstadt, however, lay in the furniture. The built-in day bed of the drawing room reappeared in a much elaborated form, its slender colonnettes and simple basket capitals replaced by the twisted, leafy forms of gilded foliage. On the other side of the fireplace was a corner couch, lying under a similar canopy and secluded from the draught of the doorway by an upholstered partition enclosing the inglenook area. Even the high and low-backed barrel chairs (which can also be seen at the edge of the design for *Le Nid*) were inspired by those in Darmstadt, as were the lily motifs on the armchairs and the rectangular, high-backed chair first seen in the oratory of the tree-house. However, as surviving examples of Marie's lily-chairs reveal, the furniture was not stained green but was richly gilded and decorated with carved or pokerwork motifs executed by the Crown Princess and her entourage (fig. 2.15).

As well as creating her own variations of Baillie Scott's models, Marie designed some of the pieces of furniture herself. In addition to the cabinet described by Gordon, she also created the fantastic gilded and canopied throne, decorated with large Celtic crosses, which stood under one of the arches near the window (fig. 2.16). The throne, which also appeared in Tini Ruprecht's 1901 pastel drawing of Marie in Romanian peasant dress hanging on the wall of the salon, is one of the earliest examples of Marie's use of Celtic motifs (fig. 2.17).⁴³ These will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. A 1930 inventory of the room lists a wide range of other carved, gilded and pokerwork furniture, including a gilded Ottoman couch in the form of a boat draped with a Japanese cover, a carved and gilded corner cupboard

⁴²Diane Haigh, *Baillie Scott. The Artistic House*, London, Academy Editions, 1995, p. 40.

⁴³The present whereabouts of the throne is unknown. The pastel drawing is now in the collection of Cotroceni National Museum. The Munich painter, Tini Ruprecht (1868-?), was a favourite of the Crown Princess around 1900. A pupil of Franz Doubek, she executed a number of drawings for Marie, including the large portrait of the Crown Princess and her children (c.1900) which hangs in the stairway at Pelişor and a smaller portrait of Marie (c.1900) now in the entrance alcove of her bedroom in Cotroceni.

decorated with stylised lilies, a golden cross inlaid with a clock, and a variety of different shaped chairs adorned with pokerwork and carved motifs (see appendix 3). The inventory also provides an idea of the *objets d'art* with which Marie filled her new room. These included several Daum vases, a number of valuable eastern rugs and a rich collection of over sixty Royal Copenhagen porcelain figures and animals.⁴⁴

The whole creation represented a romantic and flamboyant first attempt on the part of the Crown Princess to design her own 'fairy tale' interior, taking as her starting point her sister's drawing room in Darmstadt. Baillie Scott never mentioned any further commissions for Marie and was perhaps unaware that she had re-employed his ideas in such an unusual way. Although the golden salon drew on Scott's theories of wall division, the importance of the hearth, fitted furniture and individual chair designs, it completely lacked his sense of restraint, honesty to materials and, above all, his discreet integration of space and each element within it. Scott's interiors, even his early decorative *Gesamtkunstwerke* such as the Darmstadt rooms and *Le Nid*, were designed to function as harmonious spaces moulded around the needs of the patron, devoid of fussy conceits and non-distracting to the senses. The golden salon, on the other hand, launched a bewildering attack on the eye of the visitor, overwhelming in its glittering display of shiny surfaces, intricate detail and strongly contrasting colours and textures. In her later years, Marie recognised it as a 'daringly unconventional' reaction against the 'rather stuffy German traditions' of King Carol and Queen Elisabeth and recalled with amusement their reaction on first entering it:

⁴⁴Around fifty of the Copenhagen pieces remain in the National Museum of Art in Bucharest. These bear the signatures of such notable sculptors as Erik Nielsen and Christian Thomsen, as well as the marks of the Royal Copenhagen, Bing and Grøndahl, and Dahl Jensen firms. See Eugenia Antonescu, 'Porțelanul danez - noi determinări', *Colocviul național de istoria artei decorative*, Muzeul Național Cotroceni, 7-8 octombrie 1996, București, 1997.

The faces of the dear old Majesties when I for the first time triumphantly led them into my golden room, was a study. They did not approve, it was too daring, too altogether different from anything they had ever seen or conceived of, but they could not help admitting it was beautiful in an almost barbaric unconventional way.⁴⁵

Byzantine, Celtic and Scandinavian sources

Marie's 'passion for gorgeous decoration' continued, a few years later, in her next decorative venture, her silver bedroom in Cotroceni, executed in the late autumn of 1905 (fig. 2.18).⁴⁶ According to a bill from the painter-decorator Fritz Elsner (the former partner of Josef Kott, who also worked on Peleş), the idea for the room appears to have emerged in the late spring of 1904.⁴⁷ Work, however, did not begin until the following year; on the first of December, Marie wrote to her mother that the room was to be ready by Christmas and that it was being decorated 'in a way which I know would make you smile, to say the least'.⁴⁸

One of the most extraordinary of all Marie's interiors, the bedroom combined some of the forms and conventions of Art Nouveau with a romantic interpretation of Neo-Romanian and Celtic motifs. The walls and ceilings, overlaid with Elsner's dull, burnished silver paintwork, were richly carved with intricate patterns inspired by the decorative stone-carving of seventeenth-century Brâncovean monuments. These churches and palaces, built during the reign of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, provided one of the major sources for the Neo-Romanian style of architecture developed by Ion Mincu and his followers from 1886 onwards (discussed in the

⁴⁵My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', p. 15.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁷The bill, dated 18/31 January 1906, but charged 'according to the estimate of 1/14 May 1904', costs the painting of 'imitation stonework (*Steinartig*) and rich antique imitation silver and bronze' of ceiling, walls and six columns, as well four wooden doors painted in imitation bronze and surmounted by four semi-circular tympana with figural motifs. The total cost of the paintwork was 3768.70 lei. Fond Casa Regală, dos. 46/1905. I am indebted to Marian Constantin for bringing this document to my attention.

⁴⁸Fond Regina Maria, V/2580/1905, letter from Marie to the Duchess of Coburg, 1 December 1905. On 17 September, she wrote 'I went yesterday to Bucharest [...] to inspect the new room they are making for me', V/2573/1905.

following chapter). Princess Anne-Marie Callimachi wrote that Marie 'had just then discovered Byzantine glories'.⁴⁹ More precisely, her bedroom, with its vaulted ceiling and round-arched arcades enclosing the raised sleeping area, represented a subjective and flamboyant early response to Romania's Byzantine church tradition. The theme was not restricted to the walls, but continued in the carved decoration of the fireplace (fig. 2.19) and in the stone fonts made by the sculptor Emil Becker whose interlaced birds and creepers were inspired by motifs common to Brâncovenean carved decoration.⁵⁰ Although Marie would only fully recognise the value of the Neo-Romanian style in the new north wing built for her in Cotroceni by Grigore Cerchez shortly before World War I, the silver bedroom represented her first artistic acknowledgement of the design potential embodied in eastern as well as western models. It is likely, however, that this was influenced as much by the broader fin-de-siècle taste for Byzantium, popularized by Sarah Bernhardt, Klimt, Mucha and the writer Gabriel d'Annunzio among others, as by any real understanding of the growing national debate in architecture.

Despite its ecclesiastical references, the silver room had none of the sombre atmosphere of an Orthodox sanctuary. Its floor of unglazed peacock-blue tiles, decorated with a 'Byzantine design'⁵¹ and strewn with tiger and polar-bear skins, caused the unromantic Callimachi to describe the room as 'reminiscent of both a

⁴⁹Princess Anne-Marie Callimachi, *Yesterday Was Mine*, London, Falcon Press, 1932, p. 124.

⁵⁰The silver room marked the beginning of the collaboration between the Bucharest-born German sculptor Emil Becker (1881-1952) and Marie. This extremely early commission must have been awarded very soon after Becker's return to Bucharest from studies in Paris and Munich in 1906. He later designed a hearth for Cerchez's 'Salon Alb' (1925-26; unused), worked on the restoration of Cotroceni church (1929), created a bell for Victor Ștefănescu's Coronation Cathedral in Alba Iulia (1921-22), did extensive stone carvings for the park of Marie's residence in Balciuc in the late 1920s and was also responsible for Marie's death mask. His ability to incorporate Brâncovenean decorative detail into his designs attracted the attention of leading Neo-Romanian architects and he contributed to the decoration of Antonescu's *Ministry of Constructions* (1906-10) and *Marmorosch-Blank Bank* (1913), and Cristofi Cerchez's *Vila Minovici* (c.1910), among others. See Ana-Maria Velter & Rodica Filip von Becker, 'Începutul colaborării sculptorului Emil Becker cu Casa Regală', in *Colocviul de istorie și istoria artei decorative*, Muzeul Național Cotroceni, 15-16 octombrie 1998.

⁵¹My Different Homes. Cotroceni I, p. 17.

church and a Turkish bath'.⁵² In striking contrast to the wealth of eastern detail, were the Celtic *entrelacs* which decorated the furniture, in particular, the large, gilded, Celtic cross which formed the headboard of the bed (fig. 2.20). This was executed in King Carol's workshops,⁵³ while other pieces of furniture were 'carved and made by Her Majesty's clever hands'.⁵⁴ Many of Marie's entourage were involved in the furniture-making: 'My new room is a great interest and amusement, we all work for it'.⁵⁵ One of the carved and silvered cabinets was presented to her 'by some of the servants on the estate whom she has taught',⁵⁶ while even Prince Ferdinand was known to be 'an ardent "burner"'.⁵⁷ Celtic-Viking forms reappeared in the wheel-head crosses which adorned the high back and sides of some of the chairs, in the intricate knotwork of the low, gilded chest beside the bed, and in the interlaced, winged, griffin-like animals which alternated with Neo-Romanian motifs in the panels of the mantelpiece above the fireplace. Other pieces of furniture were decorated with the same stylised lily motifs used in the golden salon and Darmstadt drawing room: these included a high-backed lily chair which also featured tiny swastikas, a carved and silvered *prie-dieu*, and a solid, burnished casket covered on all sides with a pattern of lily heads. The lily motif also figured on the arms of the large throne, whose high back was decorated with a flaming sun designed to frame the head of the Princess like an aureole. Every available surface was crammed with flower-filled Art Nouveau vases, statuettes and portraits of Marie's children in boldly stylised, painted and pokerwork frames she designed herself (fig. 2.21).

⁵²*Yesterday Was Mine*, p. 124.

⁵³'The bed has been beautifully carved in Uncle's atelier', fond Regina Maria, V/2582/1905, letter from Marie to her mother, 10 December 1905. In this letter she also thanks her mother for 'a very beautiful Russian stuff, neither silver nor gold, nor grey nor blue, but like all those colours woven together into a sort of opaque colour', which she has made into a counterpane for the bed.

⁵⁴*A Woman in the Balkans*, p. 185.

⁵⁵V/2582/1905.

⁵⁶*A Woman in the Balkans*, p. 185.

⁵⁷Fond Regina Maria, V/2548/1904, letter from Marie to her mother, 25 November 1904.

The architect of this room, like that of the golden salon, is unknown, although it is likely that Liman, who was then designing Art Nouveau rooms in Pelişor, might well have been involved. This anonymity probably owes much to the fact that the idea for the room seems to have originated with Marie; as in her earlier interior, the architect's role was merely to find a practical solution to her artistic whims.⁵⁸ Unlike Baillie Scott, who preferred to design his rooms down to the smallest detail, Marie's architect was constrained to work within closely defined boundaries set by the Princess who chose, designed and executed much of the furniture to fill the space the architect created. Only one eye-witness account of the rooms makes any mention of an architect other than the Princess, and then only in the vaguest possible terms, guessing 'the creator of this sumptuous ensemble [...] to be a British disciple of Majorelle [who] has interpreted the charming art of Romania with a truly excessive degree of fanciful extravagance'.⁵⁹ The eccentricities of the gold and silver rooms were acknowledged by the Princess herself:

I jumbled styles, I was still taking inspiration from the fairies! and thought that every licence was allowed as long as the general effect was harmonious and pleasing and that it should quite confuse the ideas of those accustomed to heavy dark carving, to plush curtains and complicated stained-glass windows.⁶⁰

With Liman's help, a calmer, less fantastic style of interior decoration, adhering more closely to the integrated ideals of Art Nouveau, was created in the rooms of Ferdinand and Marie's summer palace in the grounds of Castle Peleş (fig. 2.22). Known as Pelişor, it was built for the princely couple from 1899-1902 by Liman, then still working under Lecomte du Nouÿ whom Marie names as the

⁵⁸'The whole room was designed under her personal direction', 'Diary of George Huntington's Visit with Queen Marie' in Diana Fotescu (ed.), *Americans and Queen Marie of Romania*, Iaşi, The Centre for Romanian Studies, 1998, p. 30.

⁵⁹'Le créateur de ce somptueux ensemble qu'on devine être un disciple britannique de Majorelle, a interprété avec une vraiment trop exubérante fantaisie, le délicieux art roumain', Georges Oudard, *Marie de Roumanie*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1939, p. 53.

⁶⁰*My Different Homes*. Cotroceni I', pp. 17-18.

architect of the palace in a 1900 letter to her mother. She also relates that King Carol began work on the palace without informing the Crown Prince and Princess that it was intended for them.⁶¹ Nevertheless, despite her inability to influence the initial stages, Marie expressed pleasure at Liman's taste, describing Peleş as 'a real model of a house with every possible comfort and charm [...] the rooms in it will be delicious, just the kind of thing I will delight in arranging'.⁶² Liman had clearly understood the Crown Princess' artistic preferences and set out to build a house as light and airy as Peleş was dark and oppressive.

The exterior of the palace was designed to harmonise with the other German Neo-Renaissance buildings of the Sinaia complex. Hence its rubble base, heavily timbered walls, steeply pitched roofs and asymmetrical massing loosely complemented the architecture of its larger neighbour. At the same time, it managed to avoid the pointed spires and elaborate Renaissance and Baroque embellishments which gave Peleş its pretension of grandeur. As well as being considerably smaller, Peleş is more compact and visually coherent, its dominant focal point provided by the bright orange and green roof-tile patterns of the large square tower with open wooden balcony. The latter was perhaps intended as a loose reference to the coloured roof patterns of much Transylvanian and Bucovinian church architecture, reused to great effect in secular buildings by Hungarian Secession Style architects, such as Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab's 1907-9 town-hall in Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely).⁶³ Liman also introduced an early reference to the forms of Neo-Romanian architecture in the semi-circular arches of the stone arcade surmounting the balcony outside the room which later became Marie's golden boudoir.

⁶¹ 'Mr Lecomte is building it, but Uncle has not yet told us that it is to be for us though every body else knows it. It makes it rather uncomfortable as it is a thing that one then does not dare to talk about', fond Regina Maria, V/2446/1900, letter from Marie to her mother, undated on letter.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ See Paul Constantin, *Arta 1900 în România*, Bucureşti, Meridiane, 1972, pp. 56-60.

Liman's most important innovation, and principal debt to English Arts and Crafts ideas, lay in his arrangement of the interior space. Following Baillie Scott's advocacy of the main hall as the organising element around which the rest of the home is articulated, Liman's huge, top-lit hall formed the central core of the house with the family's rooms ranged around it on the first two floors (fig. 2.23). Illuminated by a large glass roof with a curvilinear border pattern of stained-glass yellow flowers, the hall had a warm, airy effect, enhanced by the use of oak panelling and pale colours for ceiling and walls. It was divided into two main areas: the stairwell, with doors opening off into Ferdinand's apartment and service rooms, and the spacious, rectangular vestibule running crosswise between the stairwell and the entrance. To the right, this connected to the servants' area of the house and to the left led into the dining room, lined with similar warm wood, whose wide windows faced out over the lawn. Much of the interior decoration of the house was by Bernhard Ludwig who, in a similar fashion to the slightly later mansard rooms in Peleş, made extensive use of elegant, restrained woodwork, integrating wall-panelling and fitted furniture and articulating the space of the smaller guest apartments in particular through the use of balusters and partitions. The effect of the whole was that of a house rather than a palace; Liman's careful wedding of practical utility and aestheticism made it very much a place to be lived in and not merely for show. Its decoration also revealed Liman's observance of the male-female division of space favoured both by Baillie Scott and by Mackintosh. While the 'masculine' spaces of the hall, study and dining room were wood-panelled and relatively sober, the 'female' areas of bedrooms and boudoirs were light and delicate, showing a subtle sensitivity in the use of pale, complementary colours and the graceful, curvilinear lines of white-painted furniture.

The most distinctive of these 'female' interiors was Marie's bedroom, designed in 1903, the year the princely couple moved into the palace (fig. 2.24).⁶⁴ Its white wall-panelling merges into the subtle solid-void interplay of the fitted cabinets and display shelves which support the arcade above the windows. Their tapered lines and slender slats are picked up in the forms of Ludwig's ivory-painted furniture, decorated with tiny flower and leaf motifs which adorn the inner corners of the headboard and bedside cabinet doors and run up the narrow corner-posts of the bed. Evidence of Marie's direct involvement in this room is provided by her favourite, long-stemmed, Baillie Scott lily motif which decorates the central panel of the little table with two drawers standing under the window. Counterbalancing the rectilinear lines of the furniture and fittings are the fine, interwoven stems of dancing harebells which push upwards from a border of bulbous, seed-like forms to fill the window-panes with a delicate tracery of pale flowers and leaves. In somewhat discordant contrast to these Art Nouveau stylisations, however, is the series of four painted panels lining the walls just under the cornice. Depicting landscapes with horses in each of the four seasons, they were painted, in 1903-4, by the Polish artist, Tadeusz Ajdukiewicz who, since 1897, had been producing military scenes for King Carol. Ajdukiewicz was probably recommended to the Romanian court either by Emperor Franz Josef who set him up in Hans Makart's former studio in Vienna during the 1880s, or by Marie's uncle, the Prince of Wales, whose portrait he painted in 1893.⁶⁵

⁶⁴On 11 June 1903, Marie wrote to her mother: 'Our new house is a real perfection - such a lot of room, so light and cheery and each room just as I wanted - for instance my bedroom is a real perfection', fond Regina Maria, V/2509/1903.

⁶⁵Born in Cracow, Ajdukiewicz (1852-1915) followed up studies at the Cracow School of Fine Art with a period in Vienna under Kossak before joining the Polish circle around Józef Brandt in Munich. He became popular firstly for his 'Scenes of the Polish Revolution of 1863' (published 1874), and later for his Orientalist paintings and portraits. Having won recognition at the courts of Vienna, London and Constantinople, he came to Bucharest to paint military scenes including *Carol I on Horseback* (1898, Hermitage, St. Petersburg), *The Battle of Plevna* and *King Carol, Prince Ferdinand and Prince Carol on Horseback Reviewing their Troops* (1902; both in Cotroceni). Around 1903, he was commissioned by the Romanian Ministry of War to create an album of watercolour images of the Romanian army. As a measure of Carol's regard for his work, he was given a studio in the Royal Palace on Calea Victoriei. See Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, *Słownik Artystów Polskich I Obcych W Polsce*

In addition to the Pole's reputation as a court portraitist, Carol was probably also attracted by his Orientalism - he had travelled widely in Egypt, Russia and Asia Minor, even painting in Constantinople in 1894 at the invitation of Sultan Abd ül Hamida. The scenes in Marie's bedroom give an attractive demonstration of Ajdukiewicz's intense preoccupation with naturalistic detail, whether under the blazing sun of a North African desert or in the blue-tinged snow of a winter's evening.⁶⁶

Next to Marie's bedroom was her 'marble room', begun in 1903 and completed in the summer of 1904 (fig. 2.25).⁶⁷ This room, which she redecorated in 1925 in a Neo-Romanian style, consisted of a spacious antechamber hung with watercolours by the Grand Duchess of Hesse which led, under a gilded Byzantine arch, into a small chapel area lined with Rușchița marble. The principle of the recessed *erker* was similar to the lily oratory of the tree-house; however Rossetti's inscription was now replaced with the words 'Leave behind thee all thy weariness and all that grieves thee', engraved into the gilded underside of the entrance archway. The exterior of the arch was decorated with the scrolled acanthus leaves, common to seventeenth-century Brâncovean church architecture, which also appeared in the silver bedroom in Cotroceni. Its inner side, on the other hand, boasted a vigorous zig-zag motif more reminiscent of the simple, geometric forms of folk art than of Romanian church tradition. The walls and ceiling of the chapel, whitewashed in 1925, were originally adorned with a flight of winged angels on a gilded ground similar to the angels of the tympana above the doors of the silver bedroom in

Działających, tom 1, 1971, p.12; also Carmen Tănăsioiu, *Iconografia Regelui Carol I. De la realitate la mit*, Timișoara, Amarcord, 1999, p. 43.

⁶⁶In its restored state, the bedroom gives only a limited idea of Marie's original arrangement. An inventory of the room from 1927 (by which time it had become Marie's toilette) lists a range of both gilded and maplewood furniture as well as a large number of pot-stands, paintings, statuettes and other *objets d'art* (fond Castele și Palate, 442/1927, 'Inventarul Castelului Peleşor 1927'). A photograph of the room in its later state can be found in C. Dragu, 'Regina Maria', *Cele trei Crișuri*, sep.-oct. 1938, p. 179.

⁶⁷Fond Regina Maria, V/2531/1904, letter from Marie to the Duchess of Coburg, 28 March 1904.

Cotroceni. These two interiors, conceived around the same time, represented Marie's first acknowledgement of the ecclesiastical tradition which formed the basis of the Neo-Romanian architectural formula and which was soon to receive King Carol's public seal of approval in the pavilions of the 1906 Jubilee Exhibition in Bucharest.

At this stage, however, Marie's interest in Byzantine and Neo-Romanian forms appears to have been informed more by her love of exoticism than by any identification with the aims of the Neo-Romanian school. She was still deep in her 'fairy story' phase with a passion for gilded luxury and a desire to add a touch of romance to everything she did. Shortly after the silver bedroom, and certainly before 1910 when her phase of gilded decoration ended, she created her curious golden boudoir in Pelişor (fig. 2.26; architect unknown). The walls and ceiling of this small, vaulted room are completely covered with the writhing forms of gilded stucco thistles which detach themselves from the walls to creep round the sides of the blue Romanian hearth. This dense mass of intertwining vegetal stems gives the Princess' boudoir the air of an enclosed, enchanted space, creating a nest-like effect reminiscent of the brilliant interior of *Le Nid*. Suggestions of natural growth and organic force lines, together with the thistle motif itself, were a popular concern of Art Nouveau designers, particularly from Nancy. The thistles may also have been referring to Marie's roots as daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, a Scottish resonance reinforced by the large, back-lit, Celtic wheel-head cross dominating the centre of the ceiling. The boudoir's charmed atmosphere was further enhanced by Pre-Raphaelite flower symbolism (Marie's favourite long-stemmed lily appearing against a sky-blue ground on the door into the room and on the exit to the balcony) and by the pagan motifs of the blazing sun and tree of life in the stained glass of the balcony windows. There is even a possible reference to Romanian peasant tradition: the stylised, triangular forms of the central window of the outside wall suggest Carpathian

shepherds wearing the traditional sheepskin cloak or *cojoc*, while the little black dot at the top of each triangle represents the cocked hat or *căciulă*.⁶⁸

When, later in life, Marie began to write her own fairy tales, many of them drew on eastern settings and Romanian folklore. Her early projects and furniture designs, however, often revealed an imaginative fusion of Celtic and Norse motifs. She described her fascination with the misty legends of northern Europe:

Fairy-tales! There was magic in the word. I had always loved fairy-tales, legends and old ballads, the queerer, the more uncanny, the better. I loved the Scotch and Scandinavian Sagas and all the heroic romantic tales of the past.⁶⁹

The first decade of the twentieth century, when Marie was designing her gilded interiors, also marked the high-point of the Celtic revival style in Britain and Ireland. Closely related to the Arts and Crafts ideal of social and artistic reform, the revival style even found its echo in Baillie Scott of whose work Hermann Muthesius wrote: 'We seem [...] to have stepped into the world of fantasy and romance of the ancient bardic poetry [...] With Baillie Scott we are among the purely northern poets among British architects.'⁷⁰ Marie would also probably have been aware of the Celtic revival spearheaded by Liberty & Co., in particular their range of silver and pewterware objects and jewellery designed by Baillie Scott's colleague from the Isle of Man, Archibald Knox. The vogue for Celtic jewellery had begun as early as the 1850s when G. & S. Waterhouse of Dublin made two copies of the Tara Brooch for Queen Victoria. Irish motifs subsequently became popular in metalwork, embroidery, wall decoration and textiles as well as jewellery. In view of the fact that Marie used Celtic motifs mainly in her carved chairs, tables and beds, it is interesting that the Celtic revival, as a whole, did not favour furniture. It must be noted, however, that Marie's

⁶⁸Unfortunately, the designer of the stained-glass windows has yet to be identified. However, their production may be linked to the section of the Bucharest Arts and Crafts workshops which moved to Sinaia in 1909 and was involved in the execution of some of the Princess' furniture designs.

⁶⁹*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 333.

⁷⁰Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, London, Crosby Lockwood Staples, 1979, p. 47.

wheel-headed crosses and intricate knotwork are often combined with decoration of Viking or Scandinavian inspiration. The two double, throne-like chairs in the corner of the golden boudoir, for example, are clearly based on examples of Norwegian ecclesiastical carved wooden chairs from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (fig. 2.27). Although gilded and freely interpreted, Marie's chairs reproduce the cross-shaped back with central roundel and the fretwork of flat, carved balusters in the lower section which can be seen in Norwegian models such as the Tyldalens Church chair illustrated in *The Studio* of 1897 (fig. 2.28).⁷¹

At the turn of the century, the Norwegian decorative arts were enjoying a revival of interest in national identity and local craft skills, inspired by styles and motifs from stave churches, Viking ship burials and folk tradition. Following the foundation of the Museum of Applied Arts in Oslo in 1876, books of patterns and prototypes were published and wood-carving schools, in particular, were established throughout the country. The so-called 'dragon style', pioneered by designers like Gerhard Munthe, Henrik Bull and Lars Kinsarvik, attracted much attention abroad.⁷² Carved chairs decorated with intertwined acanthus foliage, geometric folk designs and fantastic hybrid dragon forms were acquired by several European museums, including the Victoria and Albert in London. The Christiania Society of Arts and Crafts held annual furniture competitions and many of the finest pieces were exhibited at international exhibitions, for example Munthe's dragon-style furniture displayed at the 1907 Venice exhibition. Even in Romania itself there were attempts to draw parallels between Scandinavian and Romanian vernacular art, illustrated by

⁷¹J. Romilly Allen, 'Early Scandinavian Wood-Carvings', *The Studio*, vol. 10, February 1897.

⁷²See *The Art of Norway 1750-1914*, exhibition catalogue, Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1978; Patricia Bergman, 'Norwegian craft theory and national revival in the 1890s', in Nicola Gordon Bowe (ed.), *Art and the National Dream*, Blackrock, Irish Academic Press, 1993; Paul Greenhalgh, 'Alternative Histories', in *Art Nouveau 1890-1914*, London, V&A Publications, 2000, pp. 50-52.

examples of Norwegian applied art bought at the 1908 Berlin exhibition and displayed in the Șoseaua Museum in Bucharest.⁷³

Marie was clearly aware of new trends in Norwegian furniture design; although she never visited Norway, she drew her ideas from publications such as Paul B. du Chaillu's *The Viking Age*, as well as from articles in *The Studio*, to which she subscribed.⁷⁴ The carved Norwegian chair, probably originally intended for Liman's 1910 Norwegian boudoir in Cotroceni but now standing in the Sinaia Maori hut, is an almost identical copy of the medieval wooden chair from Lom featured from all four sides in the 1897 *Studio* article mentioned above, as well as in du Chaillu (figs. 2.29 & 2.30).⁷⁵ Its high, carved back terminating in dragon heads, its elliptically arched arms, footrest and the zoomorphic figures surmounting the scrolls of the front legs echo the forms of the Norwegian original. Although the Sinaia chair confuses the position of the carved side and back panels, their three scenes - featuring a battle between three soldiers, a man slaying a dragon, and two warriors on horseback with long swords - are copied in exact detail from those illustrated in *The Studio* and *The Viking Age*.

The Crown Princess was also aware of the close links between Celtic and Nordic art which, since the Viking invasions of Britain and Ireland began, had cross-fertilised and been reabsorbed in different ways throughout the centuries. This would perhaps explain her fondness for combining Celtic wheel-head crosses with fantastic anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures, seen, for example, in the gilded throne she designed for the golden salon in Cotroceni. It is unlikely, however, that the Princess had any real academic interest in the authenticity of such combinations and was attracted more by the exotic novelty of her gilded furniture than by any

⁷³Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Arta scandinavă și a noastră. Impresii de călătorie', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 7, iulie 1909.

⁷⁴A receipt for du Chaillu's book (*The Viking Age*, 2 vols., London, John Murray, 1889) is found in the Peleşor archive for 1910 (fond Castele și Palate, 416/1910, f. 69).

⁷⁵*The Viking Age*, vol. II, chap. XV, pp. 259-261, figs. 1108-1110.

archaeological or ethnological desire to understand its sources. At times, she also introduced elements of Byzantine-inspired decoration into her Celtic-Nordic furniture, seen particularly in the suite now adorning the so-called 'golden bedroom' in Pelişor (fig. 2.31). The low table with broad flat legs similar to the round table in the golden salon in Cotroceni, for example, has a circular top in the form of a fat, stylised, wheel-head cross. Its carved decoration, however, combines the plaited geometric motif reminiscent of Viking art with the curving leafy tendrils and twisted rope stylisations common to Brâncovean stone-carving.

Marie created a more faithful rendering of Norwegian models in her next interior, the carved wooden boudoir adjoining her bedroom in Cotroceni (fig. 2.32). This was designed by Liman in 1910⁷⁶ and, according to Marie, marked the end of her phase of flamboyant decoration:

After that I sobered down and my next creation was a quaint carved room in dull brown wood the colour of a good cigar. The ceiling was low with heavy beams, the doors heavily decorated with rough iron designs. This room was inspired by pictures I had seen of Norwegian farm-houses.⁷⁷

In fact, Liman combined motifs from a number of sources. The horizontally timbered walls and low beamed ceiling may well have derived from Norwegian farm-houses. However, the latter commonly had open beams under a pitched roof area used for storing hay. The ceiling of Marie's boudoir was divided into two shallow barrel vaults, separated by a central cross-beam and lined with sturdy horizontal beams decorated with vernacular zig-zag and s-shaped patterns. Under these, on opposite sides of the room, ran a carved frieze of intricate scrollwork which concealed cleverly hidden light sources (fig. 2.33), necessary since the room contained only one window, deeply recessed in an alcove. The intimate, enclosed effect of the pinewood-

⁷⁶In Cotroceni, Liemann (Uncle's architect) has carved me a new most adorable Norwegian room, which is my greatest delight and for which I collected all the things at Munich this year', fond Regina Maria, V/2668/1910, letter from Marie to her mother, 14 October 1910.

⁷⁷My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', pp. 18-19.

lined boudoir recalled the interior of medieval Norwegian wooden churches which, in the absence of windows, were illuminated only by the light from the doorway and from airholes next to the roof.⁷⁸ A further reference to these twelfth and thirteenth-century wooden churches lay in the fantastically carved door frames whose complicated scrollwork of foliage or dragon tails was filled with a menagerie of strange birds, winged beasts and other fabulous, hybrid creatures (fig. 2.34). The door frames drew quite clearly on existing models. The squat, lion-like creatures with scrolled tails, which perched on top of the inner capitals of the frames surrounding the window alcove and door on the opposite wall, for example, appeared on two original carved doorways illustrated in another *Studio* article of 1897 (fig. 2.35).⁷⁹ These doorways also reveal a similar treatment of scrollwork. Perhaps, too, Marie or Liman was aware of electrotype and plaster copies of such door frames in museums like the Victoria and Albert whose casts of twelfth-century wooden doorways from the churches of Ål and Flaa bear comparison with the Cotroceni interior. The most likely source, however, once again appears to have been du Chaillu's *Viking Age*, purchased by the Princess in the same year as the construction of the room, which features a wide range of carved doors, door frames and furniture similar to those used by Liman. The door leading to the corridor, for example, decorated with three iron, star-shaped forms, closely recalls du Chaillu's illustration of Faaberg Church door, while the scrollwork and curved arches decorating the upper register of the walls repeats the carved woodwork of Thorpe Church in Hallingdal.⁸⁰

Despite direct borrowing in the actual motifs of the door frames, Liman altered both their structure and function by placing them in the low-ceilinged boudoir. His frames are shorter and squatter than their prototypes which were high

⁷⁸In his restoration of the boudoir, Nicolae Vlădescu preferred to replace the soft shadows of the original light sources with a more conventional chandelier and wall light-brackets. These, however, destroy the atmospheric effect of the top-lit wooden church.

⁷⁹J. Romilly Allen, 'Early Scandinavian Wood-Carvings. Part II', *The Studio*, vol. 12, October 1897.

⁸⁰Paul B. du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, London, John Murray, 1889, vol. II, chap. XV, p. 249, fig. 1093 & p. 263, fig. 1111.

and narrow due to the fact that the church doorway was constructed simply by leaving out one of the vertical boards which made up the exterior walls. In Marie's boudoir, on the other hand, the vertical doorways had to be inserted into the horizontal wall timbers, hence they are shorter and also considerably wider than the originals, in particular the severely extended frame of the window alcove. By placing the carvings in a context other than the entrance door frame of a church, Liman divorced them from their original meaning and gave them the status of decorative curiosities.

Liman further demonstrated his willingness to combine features from different sources in the inclusion of a typically Romanian whitewashed hearth in one corner of the boudoir. Marie herself saw no inconsistency in filling her new interior with her eclectic collections of antique furniture, jade, icons and Venetian glass, which she arranged herself 'with utmost *Gemütlichkeit*'.⁸¹ The effect of the whole was warm and intimate, 'a real little snugger' into which the Princess could retreat to paint or write her fairy stories.⁸²

The Norwegian boudoir's enthusiastic appropriation of 'exotic' vernacular motifs in a context entirely divorced from the spiritual or ritual function of the original was even more clearly demonstrated in the two 'Maori' tea-huts Marie constructed in the gardens of Cotroceni and Pelişor.

The 'Maori' Huts

Of the two 'Maori' houses built by Marie, only one survives, nestled against the trees on the edge of the Pelişor lawn facing towards the windows of the dining room and golden boudoir (fig. 2.36). The second, larger hut, which originally stood in the park at Cotroceni, is known from photographs and plans in the Cotroceni Palace archive

⁸¹Fond Regina Maria, V/2670/1910, letter from Marie to her mother, 20 November 1910.

⁸²Fond Regina Maria, V/5365/1925, letter from Marie to Roxo Weingartner, 26 January 1925.

(fig. 2.37). The precise date of the huts is uncertain; however it seems likely that they were constructed some time in the first decade of the twentieth century when Marie was exploring different types of 'exotic' artistic inspiration. In their uncritical appropriation of motifs from a number of Maori sources, combined with fanciful inventions of their own, they fit in with the romantic vision of the Byzantine, Celtic and Norwegian rooms of the same period. This was also a time when Maori art was generating considerable intellectual and artistic curiosity: in Paris, Sarah Bernhardt decorated her theatre dressing room with Maori carvings, while in Britain, where Marie probably found the idea for her huts, growing collections of Maori artefacts were supplemented by articles in *The Studio* and widely-read studies like John White's 1886-90 history of the Maori.⁸³

Marie would probably have been aware of the important collection of Maori objects presented to her cousin, the Duke of Cornwall and York (the future George V), during his visit to New Zealand in 1901 which he lent to the British Museum in 1902. In addition, she might have known Hinemihi, the Maori meeting house transported to Clandon Park near Guildford by Lord Onslow, the former Governor of New Zealand, in 1892 (fig. 2.38). In a similar fashion to Onslow who used Hinemihi as a boat-house, Marie was less interested in the symbolic function and complex cosmological implications of the Maori model than in the picturesque potential it offered as an exotic garden folly.

While Lord Onslow reduced a genuine Maori meeting house to the status of an unusual garden collectable, Marie commissioned her palace architects to create their own, fanciful, pseudo-Maori structures.⁸⁴ Both huts loosely follow the form of

⁸³See C. J. Praetorius' articles 'Maori Wood Carving' and 'Maori Houses' in *The Studio*, vol. 21, October 1900 and vol. 22, February 1901; also John White, *The Ancient History of the Maori*, 6 vols, Wellington, 1886-90.

⁸⁴It is unknown who designed the tea-houses, although it is likely that either Lecomte or Liman may have been involved. The plans for the Cotroceni hut, undated and annotated in German and Romanian are unsigned, except for one barely legible signature, G. Sc[hnell?]. This may be the same Georg Schnell who, along with Johann Schnell, was involved in the construction of the tree-house, although it is unclear in what capacity.

the Maori *whare*, a low, thatched building whose gable projects at one end to form a porch. (fig. 2.39). The most important kind was the *whare hui*, used for councils, welcoming guests and holding funerals. It, quite literally, figures the body of the common tribal ancestor in its structure: its ridge-pole (*tahu*) is the backbone, culminating, at the apex of the bargeboards in the carved *koruru* or *tekoteko* (face or figure) of the ancestor. The front of the house is the face with an eye (the window) and mouth (the door). The bargeboards are arms terminating in fingers, with two large posts on either side as legs, while the rafters (*heke*) represent ribs, supported on side-panels (*poupou*) which also depict carved ancestors. In essence, the house becomes a genealogical plan of the ancestry of the tribe, linked together by the rafters painted with *kōwhaiwhai* scroll patterns symbolising the eternal life spirit flowing along the descent lines. It also serves as a model of the Maori cosmos since the front of the house, facing the ancestral homeland of Hawaiki across the sea, is associated with the mythological world of the past, while the rear is connected to the present and future world of the land.

Marie's huts pay romantic lip service to this symbolic structure. They have a ridge pole, bargeboards terminating in fingers with a cartouche of carved faces at the centre, and a wealth of carved *tiki* figures and *kōwhaiwhai* scroll patterns on the outside posts and inner side-panels. Yet, as open summer tea-houses, they omit the dividing wall with single door and window which separates the porch of the *whare* from the interior space. Interestingly, this was also a feature of the wrongly reassembled Hinemihi which may have served as a model.⁸⁵ In a traditional *whare hui*, the porch is an important mediating area between the functions associated with the interior and exterior of the house and is regulated by strict rules of *tapu* and *noa*

⁸⁵A 1976 study of Hinemihi before its restoration showed that the house had been foreshortened, that the doorway, window, front wall and their associated carvings were missing, and that it had been incorrectly assembled (Eileen Hooper-Greenhil, 'Perspectives on Hinemihi. A Maori meeting house', in *Colonialism and the Object. Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds.), London and New York, Routledge, 1998, p. 131).

('under restriction' and 'ordinary'). The removal of the door (whose lintel, or *pare*, bears the most *tapu* carvings of the house), denies the most important element in the transition from outside to inside (entering the body of the ancestor).

The Princess' tea-huts also disregarded the layout of traditional *whare* which are relatively deep and contain only one room. The plans of the Cotroceni hut reveal that, while it had the dimensions of a large meeting house (it was some seven and a half metres wide by six metres long), it also contained a small rectangular room tacked onto the rear right-hand corner and reached by a couple of steps (fig. 2.40). This may have served as a little kitchen (as in the tree-house) or bedroom. The Sinaia hut, on the other hand, is much shallower, offering little more depth than the porch area of a traditional *whare*.

A closer examination of the carvings themselves indicates a number of possible sources for the tea-houses. Dr. Arapata Hakiwai of the Museum of New Zealand has suggested⁸⁶ that the central post of the Cotroceni hut (fig. 2.41) was inspired by the Te Rauparaha meeting house of the Ngati Toa tribe from near Wellington, one of a number of huts illustrated by the artist George French Angus. Marie may have seen these drawings in the collection of her cousin, the Duke of Cornwall and York. She may also have known some of the many photographs taken of the Duke in front of another meeting house, called Rauru, which was subsequently brought by the collector-dealer Umlauff to Germany where it was acquired by Hamburg Museum in 1904. Hakiwai believes this might have served as the model for the cartouche of carved faces (fig. 2.42) and central post of the Sinaia hut (fig. 2.43), while the blocked and squared *tiki* of the uprights supporting the bargeboards of both huts have loose affiliations with Hinemihi (fig. 2.44). Some of the carved panels in the side walls of the Sinaia hut present a fairly accurate attempt at *marakihau* (a fabulous, semi-human sea-monster with a curled fish tail and long tubular tongue;

⁸⁶In conversation with the author.

fig. 2.45). This does not figure in Hinemihi, but was popular in the meeting houses of the eastern Bay of Plenty, further evidence that Marie's craftsmen had access to reproductions of a range of Maori sources. Another interesting feature of the interior of this hut is the low relief carving rendering of *kōwhaiwhai* painting which copies the *puhoro* pattern of interlocking chevrons characteristic of the Arawa tribes from around Rotorua in the central Bay of Plenty (fig. 2.46).⁸⁷ Although clearly based on original prototypes, these carvings were obviously executed by craftsmen who were not Maori and who had a variable understanding of the formal features of Maori art. Their somewhat fanciful reinvention of Maori forms can be seen, for example, in the squat, stylised, rounded, human figures, with schematic patterns on head and limbs and claw-like fingers and toes, which decorated the front posts and steps balustrade of the Cotroceni hut (figs. 2.47 & 2.48). Similar artistic licence characterises the grinning faces at the ends of the front rail of the Sinaia hut (fig. 2.49).

Just as Marie saw no inconsistency in combining Celtic, Byzantine and Nordic decorative elements in her palace interiors, so she was happy to integrate non-Maori forms into her tea-huts. This is seen most clearly in the use of animal imagery, such as the stylised head of a deer or calf hanging from the joint of the main cross-bar and rafters and the skull of an animal resembling a *zâmburu*, or Romanian bison, attached to the central post of the Cotroceni hut underneath a carving of a bird with a long beak (fig. 2.50 & 2.51). These also appear in the preparatory drawings, showing that they were conceived as part of the original scheme (fig. 2.52). Animals rarely figured in Maori art and, if so, they only ever consisted of whales, lizards, fish, birds or dogs. Furthermore, although the interior side-panels of the Cotroceni hut appear to have been arranged (like those of Sinaia) in an alternating sequence of ancestors and abstract patterns typical of the *whare* interior, the structure also contained the anomalous feature of an inwards-pointing branch (fig. 2.53). This fusion of

⁸⁷I am also indebted to Dr Roger Neich, Curator of Ethnology at Auckland Museum, for his comments concerning these carvings.

architecture and nature fitted in with the Princess' overall artistic vision, recalling the bowered forms of the tree-house and the writhing wall decoration of the golden salon.

The romantic appropriation of motifs continued in the interior of the huts, furnished with wooden tables and chairs where traditional *whare* had only sleeping mats laid on top of a plaited, geometrically-patterned floor covering. The sketch of a table for the Cotroceni hut, decorated with pseudo-Maori spirals, shows that there were even efforts to design furniture with a distinctly 'Maori' flavour (fig. 2.54). Surviving benches in the Sinaia hut, carved into comical cat and bear faces, carry the Maori pretence into the realm of pure artistic fantasy (fig. 2.55).

Marie was not the first non-Maori to build her own 'Maori' house, although she indulged in extremes of artistic licence unknown elsewhere. At the 1906 International Exhibition in Christchurch, Maori structures were fabricated by *pakeha* (European) experts from borrowed and newly commissioned carvings. Both of these examples underline the European way of conceiving of the house as an inanimate object, a curiosity or work of art. The Maori, on the other hand, revere the house as though it were a living person, the ever-present ancestor figure, imbued with emotional and spiritual potency. In current discussions of Maori houses transported outside New Zealand as colonial curiosities or trophies (such as Hinemihi, Rauru or Mataatua which was brought to the South Kensington Museum in 1882), much emphasis is laid on the reduction of the house's *mana* (prestige) as a result of being uprooted from the land where it was constructed.⁸⁸ The *mana* of the house was measured not only by the named ancestors associated with it, but also by its connection to the *whenua* (land), and its orientation facing the *marae*, the sacred courtyard in front of the meeting house. It is interesting that both Marie's huts were set, in the manner of a real *whare hui*, against a background of bushes facing out towards an open space. The Cotroceni house opened onto an enclosure, on the other

⁸⁸For example, Ngapine Allen, 'Maori vision and the imperialist gaze', *Colonialism and the Object*, pp. 144-152.

side of which stood a Romanian *troiță* (elaborately carved wooden cross). Perhaps this was intended to replace the *rahui* (a single figure on a high post set up to mark the approach to an area restricted by *tapu*), another indication of Marie's synthetic approach to elements of different vernacular cultures. The Sinaia hut looks across a wide lawn to the side of Peleşor (fig. 2.56). Like Hinemihi, which is overshadowed by the huge Baroque structure of Clandon, the hut is dwarfed by Liman's palace. Yet, while the bulk of Clandon reduces the complex world of myth and history embodied in Hinemihi to the status of an exotic garden collectable, the Sinaia hut never pretended to be anything more than an architectural curiosity. Built by non-Maori craftsmen for a 'British' patron as a romantic piece of garden furniture for her Carpathian palace, it is an extreme example of what the cultural critic Homi K. Bhabha terms 'the ambivalence and hybridity of colonial culture'.⁸⁹ This corrupted appropriation of a symbol of the Maori cosmos can also be read as a microcosm of Marie's artistic cosmos, embodying the elements of romance, escapism and pagan mysticism with which she infused her living environment during her years as Crown Princess.

Ultimately, Marie's early interiors and garden follies were too fantastic to encourage imitation and were regarded with a degree of amused indulgence by Romanian society. Still, her willingness to embrace new artistic ideas and reject the historicist hegemonies that had dominated art in nineteenth-century Romania played a significant role in the reinvention of Romanian royal image. As will be discussed later, Marie also provided much-needed support for the country's fledgling art scene during this period, promoting the applied arts and helping to allay King Carol's suspicion of independent artistic societies such as *Tinerimea Artistică* (Artistic Youth). Nevertheless, with the exception of the pseudo-Romanian church forms of the silver bedroom and Peleşor 'marble room', her own design schemes before 1913

⁸⁹*Colonialism and the Object*, p. 2.

avoided any serious investigation of the artistic traditions of her adopted country. The question of a 'national' style, however, had been posed in architecture as early as the late 1880s in the work of Ion Mincu. By 1906, it was also being debated in painting, sculpture and the applied arts. The following two chapters aim to chart the emergence and development of the Neo-Romanian movement in the three decades before the First World War. Dealing firstly with the birth of the Neo-Romanian school in architecture, the discussion will then examine the more problematic situation in the other arts, highlighting the particular characteristics of the movement within the context of *fin-de-siècle* national revivalism.

The Birth of a 'National Style' in Architecture

Expansion and restoration: western models in the building of a new nation state

During the nineteenth century, the decline of Ottoman cultural influence, reinforced by growing notions of Romania's 'Latinity', gave rise to an increasingly cosmopolitan, European orientation among the country's ruling classes. Further encouraged by Carol's arrival in 1866 and by Romanian successes in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, the young country looked enthusiastically westwards for its new institutions and for the buildings which would house them. Carol himself promoted a two-fold policy for architectural growth and revival. On the one hand, he encouraged the widespread adoption of Beaux-Arts styles in the new public buildings of the capital, inviting a series of mainly French architects to design them. On the other, concerned for the decaying architectural monuments of Romania's past, he instigated a full-scale project, under the French architect Emile André Lecomte du Noüy, for the restoration of some of the nation's most important churches. However, this official favouring of foreign architects, combined with the vigorous debate triggered by du Noüy's controversial restoration methods, were vital factors in the growing national self-consciousness of an expanding group of young Romanian architects in the final years of the century.

Even before Carol's arrival, Romania's developing urban centres had already begun to embrace current European tastes for eclecticism and historicism. The monumental historicist vocabularies, popular for public buildings across the continent in the second half of the nineteenth century, found fertile ground in the expanding architectural arena of the newly unified country. Political change spurred

urban growth: between 1859 and 1916, the population of Bucharest, Romania's leading industrial centre, grew from 122,000 to 381,000 inhabitants. The period also saw increasing migration from the countryside to the two great Danube ports of Galați and Brăila; to the centre of the new oil industry at Ploiești; and to Craiova, the principle economic and financial centre of Oltenia.

The moneyed, foreign-educated, urban class which emerged alongside this expansion boasted its European aspirations through the styles and architects it chose for its private homes and public buildings. Initially, a restrained, Neo-Classical vocabulary was favoured, for example in the National Theatre by the Viennese architect, Josef Heft, of 1846-52 (fig. 3.1), or in Bucharest University built by the first formally qualified Romanian architect, Alexandru Orăscu, from 1857-69.¹ Following independence in 1878, increasing cultural *rapprochement* with France contributed to the rising popularity of eclectic French styles. French architects, including Cassien Bernard, Albert Galleron, Alfred Paul Gottereau and Albert Ballu, were invited to Bucharest to design major public buildings. Gottereau, for example, brought to Romania by King Carol to revamp the royal palace on Calea Victoriei and Cotroceni, also built the Carol I Foundation (1891-95; now the University Library) and the Savings Bank (1896-1900; fig. 3.2). In a similar fashion to Bernard and Galleron's National Bank (1883-85), Galleron's Romanian Athenaeum (1886-88; fig. 3.3) and Ballu's Palace of Justice (1890-95), these monumental structures combined highly plastic, Neo-Classical façades with lush Baroque ornamentation, steeply pitched mansard roofs and grandiose cupolae reminiscent of Parisian Second Empire architecture. Such buildings, together with a Haussmannian systematisation project

¹Alexandru Orăscu (1817-1894) graduated from the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts in 1847. He was appointed chief architect of Bucharest in 1848, then taught at the School of Engineering (1851) and Faculty of Science (1864), before becoming rector of Bucharest University from 1885-94. He was also the first president of the Society of Romanian Architects (1891-94).

which laid out Bucharest's great north-south and east-west axes, earned the Romanian capital the nickname 'the little Paris of the East'.²

This deliberate grafting of French references onto the architectural fabric of the developing country carried implicit political and ideological resonances. While Castle Peleş called upon the Hohenzollern tradition embodied in the German Neo-Renaissance style to give weight and legitimacy to the young Romanian dynasty, the use of French eclecticism in Bucharest's public buildings echoed the nation's cultural sympathies and political-economic aspirations. Concurrently with this pro-western approach, the King also initiated a programme for the preservation of Romania's neglected indigenous architectural heritage.

In the early 1860s, prior to Carol's arrival, several crumbling monuments, including the monasteries of Bistrița and Tismana in Oltenia and the bell-towers of the Bucharest monasteries Antim, Văcărești and Plumbuita, had been pulled down and rebuilt in modern styles by foreign architects.³ Carol had a personal interest in current debates concerning approaches to restoration. According to the art critic Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș, the Prince had met the prominent theoretician of French restoration policy, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, in Compiègne in 1863.⁴ In October 1866, soon after his arrival in Romania, Carol visited the damaged sixteenth-century episcopal church of Curtea de Argeș (fig. 3.4). His diary entry for the visit describes in detail the poor state of the church's fabric.⁵ Carol's interest gave a new direction to

²This systematisation, begun in the 1860s, included the regularisation of the main commercial streets Lipscani and Calea Moșilor and of the existing principal north-south axis Podul Mogoșoaiei (after 1877 known as Calea Victoriei). A new east-west artery, running from the University to Cotroceni along the boulevards Academiei, Elisabeta and Independenței, was completed in 1895, while a second north-south axis, Bulevardul Colței, was planned in 1883. In 1894, work began to extend this into Bucharest's main north-south artery, the Ionescu-Brătianu (now Bălcescu-Magheru) boulevards, which, in the late 1920s and 30s, became the site of some of the capital's finest modernist architecture.

³Grigore Ionescu, 'Începutul lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România și activitatea în acest domeniu a arhitectului francez André Lecomte du Nouy', extras din *Monumente istorice și de artă*, 1, 1978; 2, 1978; 1, 1979.

⁴Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Carol I și monumentele străbune', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 4, anul XLIII, aprilie 1909, p. 362.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

the Ministry of Culture's half-hearted restoration programme. In 1874, dissatisfied with the slow progress of Felix Muntureanu, the Paris-trained Romanian architect in charge of the restoration of Curtea de Argeş,⁶ the Minister of Culture, Titu Maiorescu, appealed to Viollet-le-Duc for advice. The latter sent his protégé and collaborator, Anatole de Baudot, to Romania to study the church and draw up a proposal for its restoration. His report was submitted to the Ministry of Culture in December 1874; in the spring of the following year, a contract for the church's restoration was concluded with another of Viollet-le-Duc's disciples, Emile André Lecomte du Noüy. The latter, like his brother, the painter Jean-Jules Antoine, had spent some years in Asia Minor studying monuments and conducting archaeological investigations. He was, therefore, considered to be 'better acquainted than anyone with the mysteries of Oriental architecture'.⁷ Nevertheless, although described by his former teacher as 'a person used to adopting our methods',⁸ Lecomte's free interpretation of Viollet-le-Duc's theories was to incite fierce criticism from Romanian artists and architects in the closing years of the century.

The initial two-year contract with Lecomte was extended after work on the badly damaged exterior alone of Curtea de Argeş lasted five years. The fact that Neagoe Basarab's foundation, considered 'the last truly Byzantine church edifice',⁹ had remained largely unmodified since it was constructed in 1512-17, made it a

⁶It is likely that this is the same F. Montureanu or Montureau (1841-?) who features in the list of founding members of the Society of Romanian Architects (see note 32). Architectural biographies (for example, Paul Constantin, *Dicţionarul universal al arhitecţilor*, Bucureşti, Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, 1986) usually cite his first name as Filip.

⁷'era mai bine ca oricare familiarizat cu tainele arhitecturii din Orient', 'Carol I şi monumentele străbune', p. 362. At the time he was recommended to the Romanian government, Lecomte was in Palestine with a French commission conducting archaeological investigations (Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaş, 'T. Maiorescu şi arta în România', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 1, 15 februarie 1910, p. 154).

⁸'o persoană obişnuită să adopte metodele noastre', *Restaurarea monumentelor istorice, 1865-1890, acte şi rapoarte oficiale*, Bucureşti, 1890, pp. 53-54, (quoted by Ionescu, 'Începutul lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România').

⁹'ultimul edificiu bisericesc adevărat bizantin', 'T. Maiorescu şi arta în România', p. 153. It was widely believed that Curtea de Argeş, with its distinctive twisted domes and decorative stonework vocabulary of *brâu* (dividing stringcourse), circular disks and piped arches, was built by the last surviving Byzantine craftsmen who fled to Wallachia after the fall of Constantinople.

straightforward task for Lecomte to respect Viollet-le-Duc's 'unity of style' doctrine. Despite minor criticism in an 1878 report by the painter Theodor Aman, the sculptor Karl Storck and the architects Theodor Ștefănescu and Alexandru Săvulescu, the Frenchman's work was on the whole well received.¹⁰ He was soon invited not only to restore other churches, but also to become a salaried member of the royal court.

Nevertheless, in the late 1880s, as Lecomte's restoration of the churches of Trei Ierarhi (c.1639; fig. 3.5) and Sf. Niculae (1491-92; fig. 3.6) in Iași, the Metropolitan Church of Târgoviște (early sixteenth century) and the church of Sf. Dumitru Băneasa in Craiova (mid-seventeenth century) progressed, accusations began to be levelled that he was violating Viollet-le-Duc's principles. The latter believed that a restorer should not repair or rebuild, but should, as far as possible, re-establish a building in its initial state without later modifications, thereby recreating its original stylistic coherence. When, in 1887, Lecomte wrote to the Ministry of Culture declaring that Trei Ierarhi was badly damaged and stressing the need 'completely to rebuild the monument from its foundations to its rooftop', he perhaps believed he was following his teacher's precepts.¹¹ Certainly, Viollet-le-Duc, who died in 1879 before Lecomte began work on the church, felt that a thorough understanding of the guiding principles of a building might enable a restorer to recreate damaged parts in the spirit of the original. Rarely, however, did he advocate the complete demolition of an existing edifice. Between 1875-86, Lecomte had travelled widely throughout Romania studying and sketching its monuments and developing a broad knowledge of their structural and decorative vocabularies.

¹⁰Criticism was levelled mainly at small details of artistic licence in the exterior stonework. Later complaints also targeted the flamboyant painted decoration of the interior, executed after 1885 by the French painters F. Nicolle and Ch. Renouard and the Romanian Nicolae Constantinescu. *Restaurarea monumentelor istorice, 1865-1890*, p. 95 (as cited by Ionescu, 'Începutul lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România').

¹¹'a refaça complet monumentul de la temelie pînă în vîrf', *Restaurarea monumentelor istorice, 1865-1890*, p. 188 (quoted by Ionescu, 'Începutul lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România', p. 9). Lecomte was commissioned to study Trei Ierarhi in 1881, receiving the contract to restore its exterior in 1882.

Nevertheless, when he dismantled and rebuilt Trei Ierarhi, he did not fully respect the form of the original church, raising the towers on carved stone bases, altering the height of the narthex and nave and replacing even undamaged sections of the intricate stonework patterns of the exterior with carved copies (fig. 3.7). Likewise, the surviving fragments of interior decoration were replaced with brightly coloured frescos by Lecomte's brother Jean-Jules in 1896.¹²

Lecomte's treatment of the churches of Sf. Nicolae in Iași, Sf. Dumitru Băneasa in Craiova and the Metropolitan Church of Târgoviște was even more drastic. Between 1888-89, all three were razed to their foundations, although in his preparatory surveys Lecomte had written 'it is important to conserve that which time has not managed to destroy'.¹³ Concern at the arbitrary nature of his methods finally surfaced, in April 1890, in the form of a written protest to the government signed by some of the country's foremost painters, sculptors and architects.¹⁴ It condemned the fashion in which,

without any control, a large part of our historical monuments have suffered transformations regrettable from the viewpoint of art history. Thus: Ștefan cel Mare's church, Sf. Nicolae, in Iași and Sf. Dumitru in Craiova have been razed to their foundations. Of the beautiful Metropolitan Church in Târgoviște, built under Matei Basarab, nothing is left except a small part of the walls, while the churches of Neagoe (Curtea de Argeș) and Vasile Lupu (Iași) have been transformed in the same manner so that they no longer represent the old monuments. In addition, the old wall paintings have also been removed and replaced with new paintings - of no value. The same thing with part of the sculptures.¹⁵

¹²Jean-Jules also painted the interior of Sf. Nicolae in 1899.

¹³'e important să conserve ceea ce timpul n-a putut distruge', 'Începutul lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România', p. 25.

¹⁴These included, among others, the painters Theodor Aman, Juan Alpar, George Demetrescu Mirea, Gheorghe Tattarescu and Constantin Stăncescu, the sculptors Ion Georgescu, Karl Storck and Ștefan Ionescu-Valbudea, and the architects Carol Beniș, Ștefan Ciocârlan, Ion Mincu, George Mandrea, Dumitru Maimarolu, Alexandru Orăscu, Alexandru Săvulescu and George Sterian. I. D. Enescu, 'După o jumătate de veac', *Arhitectura 1891-1941. Semicentenerul societății arhitecților români*, București, 1941, p. 5.

¹⁵fără nici un control, o mare parte din monumentele noastre istorice, au suferit transformări regretabile, din punct de vedere al istoriei artelor, astfel: Biserica lui Ștefan cel Mare, Sf. Nicolae din

As a result of this protest memorandum, Maiorescu invited a French expert H[enri?] Révoil to review the situation. Although Révoil was careful to disclaim any suggestion of bias towards his fellow countryman, his report was unreserved in its praise of Lecomte's work.¹⁶ While Lecomte's disgruntled critics condemned the choice of a French inspector, Révoil's assessment of the restoration enabled the voting of the credit necessary to complete the work, thereby saving Lecomte's reputation.¹⁷

Reaction and research: the question of a 'Romanian style'

The heated debate generated by Lecomte's restorations brought Romania's architectural heritage fully into the public arena for the first time.¹⁸ Artists, as well as architects, began their own studies of religious and secular monuments, seeking to trace the origins of Romanian architecture in Byzantine, Armenian or Georgian art. They adopted the notion of 'rediscovery' set forth some years earlier by Alexandru Odobescu (1834-1895), a former Minister of Culture under Cuza and professor at Bucharest University, who pioneered the study of archaeology in Romania. He believed the past could serve as a quarry of ideas for a modern Romanian art, writing, in 1872:

Iași, Sf. Dumitru din Craiova au fost rase din temelii. Din frumoasa Mitropolie din Târgoviște, datorită lui Matei Basarab, n'a mai rămas decât o mică parte din ziduri, iar bisericile lui Neagoe (Curtea de Argeș) și Vasile Lupu (Iași) au fost transformate în așa chip că nu mai reprezintă vechile monumente. Picturile vechi au fost și ele ridicate și înlocuite cu zugrăveli noi, - fără valoare. Tot așa și cu parte din sculpturi', *ibid.*

¹⁶ 'Începutul lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România', p. 43.

¹⁷ The joint consecration of Trei Ierarhi and Sf. Niculae, in October 1904, is described in a letter from Crown Princess Marie to her mother, the Duchess of Coburg (Arhivele Statului București, fond Regina Maria, V/2545, 25 October 1904).

¹⁸ The 1890 protest memorandum was also instrumental in the passing of the first Romanian legislation for the conservation of historical monuments in 1892. For further evidence of the restoration debate, see George Sterian's study *Despre restaurarea monumentelor istorice în străinătate și în România*, Iași, 1889.

Study the remains - trifling as they may seem - of works of art from the past and make these the source of a magnificent art [...] do not miss any opportunity to use artistic elements presented to you by Romanian monuments surviving from former times; but transform them, change them, develop them.¹⁹

The main organ for the articulation of new ideas in architecture, as well as for criticism of Lecomte's restorations, was the review *Analele arhitecturii* (The Annals of Architecture),²⁰ founded in 1890 by the forward-thinking architects Ion Soculescu (1856-1924) and George Sterian (1860-1936).²¹ This called for a re-examination of current architectural trends within the context of national tradition in order to develop a 'Neo-Romanian' architecture relevant to the needs of modern society. It enthusiastically recognised the seeds of this new style in two small, yet highly innovative, buildings by Ion Mincu: the Lahovary House (*Casa Lahovary*; 1886) and the Buffet Restaurant (*Bufetul*; 1889-92).

Born in Focșani in 1851 or 1852, Mincu graduated from the School of Roads and Bridges (*Școala de poduri și șosele*) in Bucharest in 1875. After two years as an engineer in Putna county, he left for France to study at the *École des Beaux-Arts*

¹⁹ 'Studiați rămășițele - oricât ar fi de mărunte ale producțiunii artistice din trecut și faceți dintr-însele sorgintea unei arte mărețe [...] nu pierdeți nici o ocaziune de-a vă folosi de elementele artistice ce vă prezintă monumentele românești rămase din vechime; dar prefăceți-le, schimbați-le, dezvoltați-le', Alexandru Odobescu, conferința 'Artele Frumoase în România', 1872, *Opere*, vol. II, București, E.S.P.L.A., 1955, p. 83 (quoted by Mircea Lupu, *Scoli naționale în arhitectură*, București, Editura tehnică, 1977, p. 135).

²⁰ It was published between 1890-95 and contained energetic, pro-Romanian articles by Soculescu and Sterian as well as by other architects including Alexandru Orăscu, Ion D. Berindei, Nicolae Gabrielescu, George Mandrea, Ștefan Ciocârlan and Alexandru Săvulescu.

²¹ Soculescu and Sterian, both of whom studied in Paris, were deeply concerned with the preservation of Romania's architectural heritage and open critics of Lecomte's restoration methods. Soculescu's own buildings of this period, for example his Neo-Classical Palace of Justice in Craiova (1890; now the university), still employ the historicist vocabularies of his Paris training. Nevertheless, he was increasingly involved in attempts to find a 'national' style, exploring orientalisng forms in buildings like Constanța town hall (now the Museum of Folk Art, date uncertain) and helping to set up the Society of Romanian Architects in 1891. Sterian, a publicist and energetic researcher of Romanian monuments, restored several important monuments at the turn of the century, including the Bucharest Church *Cuțitul de argint* from 1894-1906 and the National Theatre in 1895. He was also extremely active in the debate surrounding the creation of a 'national' style in art, at the same time campaigning for reform in the teaching of art and for the recognition of the professional rights of architects. From 1904-11 and 1912-15 he taught at the Bucharest School of Fine Art. In 1906, the same year that he founded the magazine *Arhitectura*, he was appointed director of the newly created section for national and decorative arts at the School.

under Julien Gaudet in 1877. He graduated five years later and travelled extensively through Spain, Italy, Greece and Constantinople, before returning to Bucharest in 1884. The following year, he received a commission from Colonel (later General) Iacob Lahovary, a professor of calculus at Bucharest University, to build him a house in a 'Romanian style'.

The motivations behind Lahovary's request are unclear. Perhaps he merely wished to introduce a novel architectural note into the prevailing taste for ever grander, Beaux-Arts style, town residences. More likely, he too was caught up in the revival of academic interest in the country's architectural past stimulated by Lecomte's restorations. Mincu himself wrote that Lahovary, a descendant of Phanariot hospodars, felt a deep link to his family's adopted country: 'how strongly this man of foreign roots identified with the Romanian people'.²² Mincu, however, claimed initially to have been uncertain how to approach such a commission: 'When General Lahovary came to me and asked me to build him a residence in Romanian style [...] I had only a vague idea of possible source material, since I had only just arrived back in the country'.²³ In fact, soon after his return to Romania, Mincu had begun a detailed study of the country's churches, monasteries and regional vernacular architecture. From this, he now began to select his own vocabulary of structural and decorative elements which could be recombined in a new aesthetic formula suitable for the needs of a modern, urban residence.

Although a relatively small commission, the Lahovary House (now a maternity hospital; fig. 3.8) on Str. Ion Movilă, completed in 1886, stood as a manifesto for Mincu's new style. The quarter in which it was built, soon to become a fashionable suburb of Bucharest, was at that time a fairly undeveloped area some

²²'ce mult s'a identificat cu neamul românesc acest om cu origină străină', Nicolae Petrașcu, *Ion Mincu*, București, 1929 (quoted by Spiridon Cegăneanu, 'Ion Mincu (1851-1912)', *Arhitectura 1891-1941*, p. 31).

²³'Când a venit la mine generalul Lahovary și mi-a cerut să-i fac o locuință în stil românesc [...] în mintea mea era ceva vag în ce privea materialul deoarece de abia sosisem în țară', *ibid.*

distance east of the main artery of Calea Victoriei. Completely rejecting the heavy, ornate forms of historicism, Mincu's house combined the compact volumes and simple plan of autochthonous vernacular architecture with elegant details and refined decoration inspired by historical Romanian Orthodox churches. Consisting of a single rectangular block, it has one principal living storey, arranged around a central, top-lit room with subsidiary rooms on either side, and a basement. The plain walls and simple volume of the main façade provide an effective backdrop to its central focus, an elaborate, ogee-arched porch supported on delicate, carved posts and enlivened with a carefully placed, coloured, ceramic frieze and projecting 'buttons'. This porch, while recalling the covered entrance *tindă* of traditional Romanian vernacular houses, with its hand-carved wooden posts or *stâlpi*, nevertheless is imbued with the grandeur and refinement necessary for a wealthy town-house. Raised on steps and approached by the sweeping curve of the driveway, the porch borrows the graceful elegance of the repeated ogee arch characteristic of eighteenth-century Bucharest churches like Stavropoleos (founded 1724; fig. 3.9). Mincu, who from 1904-10 was to restore Stavropoleos and design its adjoining parish house, considered that the church represented the apogée of the evolution of Romanian Orthodox architecture from a "pure Byzantine" style' to 'the "heterogeneous style" [...] which we call "Romanian style". Stavropoleos Church is [...] the last stage in the evolution of our national art [...] the guide and inspirational source for future generations of our artists'.²⁴

In the development of a new 'Romanian' architectural formula for the Lahovary House, Mincu, like Odobescu, did not advocate the direct copying of elements, preferring instead a creative readaption of a variety of sources. Hence, while the elaborate foliate capitals of the porch and fine horizontal lathes which link

²⁴'începînd de la stilul "byzantin pur" a ajuns la "stilul eterogen" [...] pe care noi îl numim "stilul românesc". Biserica Stavropoleos este [...] ultima manifestare a evoluţiunii artei pămîntene [...] conducător şi sursă de inspiraţiune a viitoarelor noastre generaţii de artişti', Ion Mincu, 'Cronica artistică. Stavropoleos. Răspuns d-lui Tzigara-Samurcaş', *Epoca*, 25 martie 1904.

them clearly look to Stavropoleos, the projecting ceramic 'buttons' above loosely refer to the carved stone disks decorating the exterior of Curtea de Argeş. Moreover, the deeply projecting eaves, bristling with feather-like snow supports which enliven the plain, horizontal lines of the building, are an exaggerated play on the overhanging eaves of traditional Romanian houses.

Mincu's harmonious integration of diverse structural and decorative elements, inspired by a range of secular and religious national models, provided the combination of imposing solidity and refined decoration required of a modern urban residence. In the absence of an existing local prototype for this new class of building, he had created a neo-national alternative to the elaborate, imported formulae of historicism. The lively, pictorial quality of his new style was also to lend itself to the design of other types of buildings. Mincu's next creation, a Romanian café for the 1889 Paris Exhibition, is generally considered to embody most successfully the early aims of the Neo-Romanian style. Although ultimately rejected as too expensive by the exhibition committee which commissioned it in 1887,²⁵ it was constructed three years after the exhibition as a permanent restaurant named 'the Buffet', (now 'Doina Restaurant'; fig. 3.10)²⁶. This was situated on Şoseaua Kiseleff, the grand avenue and fashionable promenade entering Bucharest from the north.

The building's original intended function as a temporary exhibition pavilion allowed Mincu to experiment with a much freer spatial organisation and to maximise picturesque effect through exaggerated volumes, variations in height and roof pitch and elaborate, coloured decoration. He created a strongly asymmetrical arrangement, unified by a sense of continuous, fluid space between exterior and interior. The dominant focal point of the building is its prominent, arcaded balcony-terrace, reached by a covered staircase. This harks back to an architectural element known as

²⁵Mihai Caffé, *Arhitectul Ion Mincu*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1960, p. 116. I have been unable to find evidence of the successful design for the Romanian pavilion at the 1889 Exhibition. Caffé (pp. 116-117) confuses it with Camille Formigé's pavilion for the 1900 Paris Exhibition.

²⁶It is unclear who paid for the building of the restaurant.

a *foișor* (belvedere or loggia), characteristic of buildings constructed during the reign of the great Wallachian prince, Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714). The political and cultural flowering of Wallachia under 'the Romanian "Sun King"' gave rise to a new architectural synthesis of existing Oriental tradition and elements of the Italian Renaissance.²⁷ Manifested in the palaces and religious foundations built by the Prince, the Brâncovean style (*stilul brâncovenesc*) was to become the most important quarry of architectural forms and decorative motifs for the Neo-Romanian school of architecture. Certainly, the Buffet's delicate balcony-terrace, raised on a solid buttress of heavy masonry, owes its basic idea to the so-called *Dionisie Bălăcescu's foișor* in the inner courtyard of Hurez Convent (1690-97; fig. 3.11) or to the projecting belvedere allowing access to the upper floor of Mogoșoaia Palace (1702; fig. 3.12) just outside Bucharest. Mincu, however, enlarged the structure to monumental effect. Functioning almost as an open-air extension of the interior eating space of the restaurant, the balcony-terrace is given added weight by its heavy, whitewashed base, unadorned except for a cavern-like cellar entrance, and by the steeply-pitched roof projecting sharply outwards to provide added shade for the terrace below. Furthermore, instead of using the sculpted stone columns of Brâncovean models, Mincu employed slender, carved, wooden posts recalling the veranda *stîlpi* of vernacular houses. He also replaced the Brâncovean, rounded, trilobate arches with the ogee arches of the Lahovary House.

Sandwiched between the rough volumes of the protective base and overhanging roof, the terrace appears jewel-like, its eight slender columns acting as fragile supports for the large superstructure above. The effect is enhanced by the delicate play of blue and cream ceramic decoration between the arches, its intertwining patterns recalling the painted foliage designs of Stavropoleos' façade. In keeping with the eye-catching function of an exhibition pavilion, the projecting

²⁷Princess Marthe Bibesco, 'A Roumanian Louis XIV: Brancovan', *Art and Archaeology*, vol. 21, nr. 1, January 1926, p. 29.

'buttons' of the Lahovary House have been replaced by lights, while below the deep eaves runs a ceramic frieze bearing the names of Romanian wine-producing regions like Cotnari, Nicorești and Panciu.

In 1890, Mincu began work on a far larger commission, the Central School for Girls (*Școala centrală de fete*; fig. 3.13) situated next to Icoanei Park in a developing residential suburb to the east of the town centre. Commissioned by the Ministry of Public Education, the school, partly residential, was designed to educate the daughters of well-to-do families.²⁸ It represented Mincu's first opportunity to apply the Neo-Romanian style on a large scale. Faced with the difficulties of a building type with no obvious precedents in old Romanian architecture, Mincu adapted the format of a monastic cloister, arranging the classrooms around a central courtyard garden. From the exterior, the strong horizontal lines and regularly spaced windows of the two-storey building, with classrooms on the ground floor and dormitories above, give it the controlled air of the solid outer walls of a monastery enclosure. To mark the division between the two floors, Mincu borrowed a distinctive decorative motif of Romanian church architecture, the twisted stringcourse known as a *brâu* (literally: 'belt'). First seen dividing the different decorative registers on the exterior of Curtea de Argeș and believed to have passed into Romanian architectural vocabulary from Armenian church architecture, the *brâu* was also a distinctive feature of many Brâncovean monuments.²⁹ The only other decoration on Mincu's façade is a repeated quatrefoil monogram containing the school's interlinked initials, placed above the names of Romanian princesses and founders of charities or

²⁸During the Communist period, it was renamed the Zoia Kosmodemyanskaya School.

²⁹See Gheorghe Balș, *Influences arméniennes et géorgiennes sur l'architecture roumaine*, Bucarest, Commission des monuments historiques de Roumanie, 1931, pp. 8-9. Other early appearances of the *brâu* can be found on Galata Monastery (Iași, 1583), the church of Sf. Nicolae Aroneanu (near Iași, 1594), Dragomirna Monastery (Suceava district, 1607) and Trei Ierarhi (Iași, c.1639). Notable examples of monasteries and churches built during the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu which employ the motif include Hurez Convent (Vâlcea district, 1690-97), Fundenii Doamnei Church (near Bucharest, 1699), Antim Monastery (Bucharest, 1715) and Văcărești Monastery (Bucharest, 1716-22, destroyed under Ceaușescu in 1986).

institutions, for example Carmen Sylva or Elena Cuza (wife of Al. Ion Cuza and founder of the Elena Doamna Orphanage). Mincu's green ceramic lettering is adapted from the old Slavonic alphabet used in Romania until the Latin alphabet was adopted in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. As discussed in the following chapter, these stylised characters soon became synonymous with the 'Neo-Romanian style' and were used extensively in graphic art, posters and book design.

Juxtaposed with the solid, restrained exterior of the school, the inner courtyard has all the refined elegance and jewel-like delicacy of a monastic cloister (fig. 3.14). It is lined with a glass-filled arcade of trilobate ogee arches which allows light to enter the corridor linking the classrooms behind. The arches form a curvilinear white frame for the delicate blue and cream ceramic patterns of the spandrels and are surmounted by a frieze in old Slavonic letters bearing the names of Romanian princes and boyars, a counterpart to the princesses of the outer façade. Set back above the arcade, the simple, regularly-spaced windows of the unadorned dormitory floor have the air of monastic cells, forming a second level to shut out the world beyond. With the administrative offices situated on the austere decorated main street façade, the teaching part of the school looks inwards, creating a protective, harmonious environment for the daughters of bourgeois families sent to study there.

Following the completion of the school, Mincu began concerted efforts to create a forum for the dissemination of his architectural ideas. The main problem he faced was the lack of an institution for the training of architects: Mincu, like almost all Romanian architects, had studied abroad.³⁰ In May 1888, he had been part of a group of concerned architects and artists which submitted a protest memorandum to

³⁰An architectural section was included in the Bucharest School of Fine Art when it was set up in 1863-4. It was closed again in a reorganisation of 1866-67, by which time it had managed to produce a few graduates including Tomá Socolescu, the brother of Ion. A second attempt in 1872, this time to found an architecture section attached to the Faculty of Science, was also unsuccessful. Early architects like Mincu could receive a basic architectural training in the School of Roads and Bridges, founded in 1864.

the Ministry of Public Education highlighting the need for an architecture department within the Schools of Fine Art.³¹ The memorandum received little attention and the architects' frustration was compounded by the continued preference given to foreign architects in official commissions. In February 1891, the group, by now part of an expanded circle associated with *Analele arhitecturii*, undertook to found a professional body which would defend the interests of Romanian architects. It called itself the Society of Romanian Architects (*Societatea Arhitecților Români*) and chose Alexandru Orăscu as its first president.³² In the autumn of 1892, the society opened its own school of architecture, under the directorship of Ion Socolescu, in a few rented rooms on Bulevardul Elisabeta.³³ Mincu played a dynamic role in its organisation, helping to lay down rules for the running of the school and leading a team of teachers drawn from the ranks of the society. They taught largely for free and the school, whose premises and material were financed by society subscriptions, lasted for five years.

In December 1897, this initiative finally stimulated the Minister of Public Education, Spiru Haret, to set up an architecture department within the Bucharest School of Fine Art. Here Mincu was joined by, among others, the architect-engineer Grigore Cerchez (1850/1-1927). A former professor of construction at the School of Roads and Bridges, Cerchez had worked as chief engineer for the city of Bucharest, responsible for street planning projects and for the regulation of the Dâmbovița river

³¹The memorandum, drawn up in protest at the non-fulfilment of an 1883 decision to create an architectural section in the Schools of Fine Art, was signed by the architects Ion Mincu, Ion N. Socolescu, Dumitru Maimarolu, Constantin Băicoianu, Alexandru Săvulescu, George Sterian, George Mandrea, Ștefan Ciocârlan, the sculptors Ion Georgescu and Ștefan Ionescu-Valbudea and the painter George Demetrescu Mirea (see Grigore Ionescu, *75 de ani de învățămînt superior de arhitectură*, București, 1973, pp. 43-44).

³²Other founding members of the society included the architects Carol Beniș, Gr. Călinescu, M. Capuțineanu, Grigore Cerchez, Nicolae Cerchez, Ștefan Ciocârlan, I. Constantinescu, Gheorghe Duca, Nicolae Gabrielescu, Dumitru Maimarolu, George Mandrea, Ion Mincu, Filip Montaureanu, Radu Nedelescu, P. Petricu, Alexandru Săvulescu, Ion Socolescu, Toma Socolescu, George Sterian, C. Stravolca, N. Stravolca, F. Thyrs and Filip Xenopol. See Enescu, 'După o jumătate de veac', p. 7.

³³Now Piața Kogălniceanu. Due to growing numbers, the school changed locations several times. See I. D. Traianescu, 'Fresca înaintașilor noștri', *Arhitectura 1891-1941*, p. 108.

(1880-83). He was also a passionate researcher of Romanian architectural history and fully shared Mincu's enthusiasm for the development of a national architectural vocabulary suitable for the needs of modern buildings.³⁴ The third important figure in the new department was Ermil Pangrati (1864-1931) who taught mathematical sciences. In the words of a former pupil: 'Cerchez represented "the Body" of our learning, Pangrati "the Mind", while Mincu could rightly be called "the Spirit" which gave life to our works'.³⁵ The emphasis of the teaching was firmly Neo-Romanian:

during long hours in the studio, we listened to Mincu's prophetic predictions about a 'Romanian Style' in architecture [...] ever more light was cast upon the treasures of our past art, preserved in abundance through the centuries by villages and monasteries throughout the country [...] We, who were lucky enough to be his pupils, felt, hour by hour, day by day, how his great teaching enriched our souls and prepared us little by little for the great age of the 'Renaissance of Romanian architecture'.³⁶

The Romanian pavilions at the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition

By 1900, although his ideas were growing in influence, Mincu's architectural 'Renaissance' had not fully convinced the organisers of the Romanian section at the Paris Universal Exhibition. In light of the fact that the first generation of Mincu-trained architects did not graduate before 1902/3³⁷ and that the majority of Mincu's

³⁴Cerchez himself only began to produce specifically 'Neo-Romanian' buildings at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, for example the *Casa Dissescu* on Calea Victoriei from c.1910 (together with Alexandru Clavel; now the Institute of Art History), or the *Castelul Cantacuzino* in Bușteni near Sinaia, built in 1911 (now belonging to the Ministry of the Interior). These reveal a broad awareness of both Brâncovean monuments and boyar houses, seen, for example, in the intricately carved, arcaded stone balconies of the Dissescu House or the dominant square *foișor* of the Cantacuzino Castle.

³⁵'Cerchez reprezenta „Trupul” învățământului nostru, Pangrati „Mintea”, apoi, lui Mincu îi revenea cu drept cuvânt „Sufletul”, care dă viață lucrărilor noastre', 'Fresca înaintașilor noștri', p. 110.

³⁶'să auzim prevestirile profetice ale lui Mincu, în lungile ore de atelier, despre un „Stil românesc” în arhitectură [...] tot mai mult se face lumină asupra comorilor de artă străbună, păstrată de veacuri, din belșug, în tot cuprinsul țării, prin sate și mănăstiri [...] Noi, cari am avut norocul să-i fim elevi, simțiam oră de oră, zi de zi, cum marea lui învățătură ne întărea sufletește, și ne pregătea pe nesimțite, pentru epoca cea mare a „Renașterii arhitecturii românești”', *ibid.*

³⁷'Fresca înaintașilor noștri', p. 109.

relatively small number of pre-1900 Neo-Romanian buildings were private residential commissions, this is understandable.³⁸ Nevertheless, the choice of a French architect, Jean-Camille Formigé, as the principal designer of the Romanian pavilions aroused fierce criticism.

Even before the exhibition began, the Conservative newspaper *Adevărul* (Truth) voiced its dissatisfaction with the Liberal government's preparations, considering them to be half-hearted and lacking in initiative.³⁹ The main complaint was levelled at the important appointments of three Frenchmen: of Formigé as the architect of three of the four Romanian pavilions, of Lecomte du Nouÿ as organiser of the whole section and of the writer Jules Brun as publicity officer. *Adevărul* considered this preference for foreigners to be 'an insult to the country'.⁴⁰ The paper was particularly scathing in its criticism of Lecomte, 'the well-known architect who has not yet completed his destruction of our historical monuments and who, together with many other advantages, has managed to get himself a permanent income from the State of 60,000 lei a year'.⁴¹

Like Lecomte, Formigé worked primarily as a restorer of historical monuments.⁴² In a bid to give a 'national' air to the main Romanian pavilion on the

³⁸In addition to the Lahovary House, Buffet and Central Girls' School, Mincu's pre-1900 Neo-Romanian buildings included a series of three villas for the Robescu family in Bucharest (1892), Galați (1896) and Sinaia (1897). These represented further experiments with weighty volumes, dramatic exterior staircases and heavily projecting eaves, offset by delicate polychrome ceramic and carved wooden decoration.

³⁹[The preparations] present supreme evidence of the senility, of the lack of ability to comprehend the importance of the event, of the lack of patriotism and total lack of enthusiasm on the part of those who, unfortunately, head this country' ('constitue supremă dovadă de senilitate, lipsă de pricepere pentru însemnătatea acestui fapt, lipsă de patriotizm și lipsă totală de entuziasm din partea acelor pe cari, din nenorocire, țara îi are în fruntea ei'), Silex, 'Participăm la expoziție?', *Adevărul*, 4 aprilie 1898.

⁴⁰'o insultă adusă țarei', 'România la Expoziția din Paris', *Adevărul*, 8 aprilie 1898.

⁴¹'cunoscutul arhitect care nu mai sfișește cu distrugerea monumentelor noastre istorice și pe lângă alte multe avantagii, și-a creiat un venit permanent de la Stat de 60,000 lei anual', *ibid.* The objections to Lecomte's appointment appear to have been successful as his name does not feature among the organisers in the catalogue of the Romanian section.

⁴²Jean-Camille Formigé (1845-1926) studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris before working for the *Service des Édifices Diocésains* and for the *Commission des Monuments Historiques* where he probably met Lecomte. For the Paris 1889 Exhibition, he designed the *Palais des Beaux-Arts et des Arts Libéraux*; his other significant new building was the crematorium of Père-Lachaise (completed

Quai d'Orsay (fig. 3.15), he created an interesting, albeit somewhat incongruous, amalgam of distinctive elements copied from notable Wallachian and Moldavian churches, in particular those restored by Lecomte. Although contradicting Mincu's theories, which decried direct borrowing in favour of a modern reinterpretation of old models, Formigé's design fitted in with the eclectic approach of many of the exhibition pavilions as a whole. However, unlike some of the most successful national sections, for example the Finnish Pavilion which employed an innovative formula of medieval, vernacular, natural and pagan elements, Formigé limited his architectural sources solely to historical Romanian churches.

The central hall of the Romanian Pavilion, surmounted by a thirty-metre high cupola, was modelled on the *pronaos* (porch) of the Brâncovean Hurez convent (fig. 3.16).⁴³ This was flanked, to right and left, by two wings crowned with clusters of five elongated domes. The sinuous, twisting stonework of the smaller corner domes was clearly inspired by the distinctive cupolae of Lecomte's restored episcopal church in Curtea de Argeş. The pavilion's main entrance, situated on the long side façade rather than in the normal Orthodox position at the narrow end, reproduced, on a large scale, the carved, stone frieze of interwoven acanthus foliage and stylised carnations which surrounds the entrance to the *pronaos* of Hurez church. As a national statement, Formigé replaced Hurez's two roundels, containing the cross-bearing eagle of Wallachia and the double-headed eagle of Brâncoveanu, with the crowned Hohenzollern eagle of the United Principalities and the curving dolphins of Romania's new Dobrudja region. Further coats of arms, including the Moldavian bison, decorated the polychrome frieze of the architrave on the narrow ends of the

1889; enlarged 1903-5). At the time of the 1900 Exhibition, he was architect to the Service des Promenades et des Jardins de Paris and involved in the designs for the overground metro.

⁴³*Catalogue. La Roumanie à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900. Paris*, p. LX. It is unclear whether Formigé borrowed merely the architectural form of the *pronaos* or if he also reproduced the interior frescoes. The over-large cupola, with its rhythmic, interlaced pattern and gilded studs, owed more to the decorated domes of Curtea de Argeş than to Hurez.

pavilion, while the three arches of the end entrance bore the names of Romania's principle towns: Bucharest, Iași and Craiova (fig. 3.17).

The pavilion's main entrance was surmounted, in the upper register, by a grand, semi-circular tympanum borrowed from the fourteenth-century Princely Church of Sf. Nicolae in Curtea de Argeș. The smaller side windows of the pavilion looked to the richly carved stone frames of the windows of Stavropoleos, while the twisting stone *brâu* which separated the two floors of the pavilion was inspired by Trei Ierarhi. Formigé further complicated this *mélange* of elements poached from different centuries and architectural traditions by combining the horizontal wall striations (composed of interspaced areas of red brick and roughcast) of mid-sixteenth-century Wallachian churches (such as Curtea Veche in Bucharest) with registers of intricately patterned stone tracery taken from the exterior decoration of Trei Ierarhi.

In light of the degree of borrowing from monuments on which Lecomte had worked, it seems probable that Formigé was either advised by the court architect or had access to his drawings.⁴⁴ Unlike Mincu, his approach was essentially historicist and eclectic; the pavilion represented a straightforward *assemblage* of ecclesiastical architectural pastiches, from different periods and regions, which made little attempt to reinterpret the old in the spirit of the new.⁴⁵ The pavilion's superficiality was strongly criticised even before its construction by the writer and friend of Mincu, Nicolae Petrașcu, who compared it to the restored Curtea de Argeș:

a cold imitation of a few of the lines and ornaments of our architecture, some bizarre linking of leaves and of curvilinear and rhombic motifs on the decorative mouldings

⁴⁴Although Formigé made only one brief visit to Romania before the exhibition, the exact copying of certain motifs, such as the stone tracery patterns from Trei Ierarhi, indicates a thorough knowledge of details.

⁴⁵Formigé's eclectic approach was criticised by Tzigara-Samurcaș who wrote that he could detect 'neither the "magnificent delicacy" nor the "symbol" of Romanian art which this mixed-up architectural composition pretended to represent' ('nici „gingașia măreață” și nici „simbolul” artei române ce avea pretenția să redea acest mixtum compositum arhitectural'), 'La Expoziția din Paris', *Memorii I*, București, Ed. „Grai și suflet - cultura națională", 1991, p. 140.

(*ciubucele*) of the walls, and a few windows and doors copied from our churches - elements which, for passing indifferent eyes, will probably present something pleasing, beautiful even, in the widest sense of the word, but not beautiful for eyes which understand the matter. For them, the soul which binds and harmonises these ornaments in old Romanian monuments will be absent, just as, for example, the soul of the Parthenon is absent from the copy that is the Madeleine in Paris.⁴⁶

While such synthetic eclecticism was characteristic of many of the pavilions of the exhibition as a whole, Formigé's range of prototypes appeared rather limited when compared to some of the more original national constructions. Saarinen, Gesellius and Lindgren's Finnish Pavilion, for example, embodied a novel combination of national romanticism and modern innovation, drawing its inspiration from local flora and fauna, from vernacular forms and motifs as well as from medieval Finnish churches (fig. 3.18). These were synthesised with effective use of modern materials, such as the glass roof lighting the Kalevala frescoes and Iris applied arts room within.⁴⁷ The decorative potential of motifs borrowed from folk art was also successfully demonstrated in the interior of Zoltán Balint and Lajos Jámbor's Hungarian pavilion whose walls were adorned with brightly coloured patterns inspired by peasant embroidery.⁴⁸ Further vernacular overtones characterised the use of wood and shingle in the Swedish and Norwegian pavilions, as well as Alfons Mucha's scenes of folk tradition in the Bosnia Herzegovina pavilion.⁴⁹ Other countries preferred to emphasise their national specificity and

⁴⁶o imitare rece a unor linii și ornamente din arhitectura noastră, niscaiva înlânțuiri bizare de frunze, de meandre și romburi pe ciubucele pereților, și niște ferestre și uși copiate după bisericile noastre, - elemente care vor alcătui, probabil, pentru ochii trecătorilor indiferenți, ceva plăcut, frumos, poate, chiar în accepția largă a cuvântului, dar nu frumos pentru ochii care își dau seamă de lucru. Pentru ei, sufletul acelor ornamente, care le leagă și le armonizează în monumentele vechi românești va fi absent, cum, spre pildă, este absent sufletul Partenonului în copia Madelenei din Paris', Nicolae Petrașcu, extras din *Literatura și arta romîna*, 1897, pp. 660-662 (quoted by Mihai Caffé, *Arhitectul Ion Mincu*, p. 294).

⁴⁷See Jeremy Howard, *Art Nouveau. International and national styles in Europe*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, pp. 170-173.

⁴⁸See Gyöngyi Éri & Zsuzsa Jobbágyi (eds.), *A Golden Age: Art and Society in Hungary 1896-1914*, Budapest/London, Corvina/Barbican Art Gallery, 1990, pp. 61-64.

⁴⁹See Philippe Julian, *The Triumph of Art Nouveau: Paris Exhibition 1900*, London, Phaidon, 1974.

modernity through progressive design, seen for example in the Secession interiors by Hoffmann and Olbrich in the Austrian pavilion. Nevertheless, the use of an architectural repertoire confined solely to religious forms was not unique to the Romanian pavilion, but also characterised the Orthodox, church-like pavilions of the other Balkan countries of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. These four structures were compared by a Bulgarian commentator at the exhibition who noted that 'the Romanian pavilion is the largest and most luxurious'.⁵⁰

Formigé employed slightly more source variety in his other two pavilions. The first, a Romanian restaurant situated next to the Press Pavilion on the other side of the Pont de l'Alma (fig. 3.19), combined elements of historic church architecture with a structure inspired by 'the old country residences of rich landowners'.⁵¹ While the triple-arched open balcony of the first floor recalled the *pridvor* (veranda) of boyar country houses, its twisting stone columns were copied from the Brâncovean Antim Monastery (1713-15) in Bucharest (fig. 3.20). The horizontal wall striations borrowed from Wallachian churches were further enlivened by enamelled *ciubuce* (a form of decorative piping seen on the exterior of churches) and flowers inspired by the decoration of the church of Sf. Gheorghe in Hîrlău (1492) and by Lecomte's restored Sf. Nicolae in Iași.⁵² Formigé's final construction, the Romanian Petrol Pavilion in Vincennes (fig. 3.21), was intended to promote Romania's rich oil resources through its very structure. This curious little building consisted of a high wooden tower, capped with an arcaded look-out balcony, which echoed the traditional *foișor* (watchtower) of Romanian rural architecture. The main body of the pavilion took the form of a cylindrical storage drum and was entered through an adjoining structure with deeply overhanging eaves which again recalled vernacular

⁵⁰It is interesting that the Bulgarians, whose pavilion had also been designed by a French architect, likewise complained that the specific nature of their architecture had not been fully understood and that their pavilion was too 'Turkish'. A. Turniov, 'Vsesvetskata izložbha v kraia na 19-to stoletie', *BIAD*, Sophia, 12, 1900, pp. 225-235. (I am indebted to Ljubinka Stoilova for this reference.)

⁵¹*Catalogue. La Roumanie à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900. Paris*, p. LX.

⁵²'Pavilioanele Expoziției Române din Paris'. *Literatură și artă română*, anul 6, vol. I, 1902, pp. 69-70.

tradition. In a similar fashion to the 'Oil' Pavilion at the 1894 Lemberg Exhibition, the effect of the whole ensemble was that of an oil-plant, complete with drilling tower, storage drum and administrative buildings. Nevertheless, despite Formigé's attempt to combine modern and traditional, industrial and vernacular elements, the pavilion received little praise in the pro-national Romanian press, which declared that it represented 'no form of art in the proper sense of the word'.⁵³

Formigé's detractors were quick to point out that the three buildings by the Frenchman had cost the Romanian State nearly half a million lei, while the fourth pavilion, a small, Neo-Romanian tobacco kiosk by the young Romanian architect Petre Antonescu (fig. 3.22), had required only seven thousand.⁵⁴ Although he had graduated from the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris just the previous year, Antonescu was clearly aware of the new ideas of the Neo-Romanian school.⁵⁵ His compact, eye-catching construction, situated next to the Romanian restaurant, successfully combined a Neo-Romanian approach with some of the exaggerated Art Nouveau flamboyance which characterised the exhibition as a whole. It took its basic cubic shape, with an arched entrance on each side, from the Turkish-influenced forms of old Romanian fountains, expanding upwards and outwards on a large scale and surmounted by massive, projecting eaves.⁵⁶ Antonescu used brightly coloured, enamelled decoration to enliven the wall surface, notably the twisted ceramic *brâu* which exaggerated the form of the arches.⁵⁷ Under the *brâu*, he placed a row of projecting buttons, recalling the circular studs between the arches of Mincu's

⁵³'nimic ca artă propriu zisă', *ibid.*

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵The long career of Petre Antonescu (1873-1965), one of the most prolific Romanian architects, is representative of the development of Romanian architecture as a whole from 1900 until the Second World War, evolving from eclecticism, through the Neo-Romanian style, to modernist rationalism. His early precocity is evidenced by the fact that in 1900, less than a year after graduating, he was offered a teaching position alongside Mincu in the architecture department of the Bucharest School of Fine Art.

⁵⁶*Pavilioanele Expoziției Române din Paris*, p. 70.

⁵⁷The bricks and the enamelled decoration for the kiosk were made by the *Société de basalte artificiel et céramique de Bucarest-Cotroceni* (*Catalogue. La Roumanie à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900. Paris*, p. LXII).

Lahovary House. These also appeared around the entrance arches, where they were framed by a lively, curvilinear pattern reminiscent of Romanian vernacular wood-carving.

While this picturesque, small-scale exercise in Neo-Romanian forms won the approval of Formigé's Romanian critics, it is interesting that Mincu's installations for the three main pavilions do not appear to have attracted much comment. Although Mincu is listed as the 'Architecte des Installations' in the exhibition catalogue, little is known concerning either these installations or the interior decoration of the pavilions as a whole. The main royal pavilion, devoted to the Crown estates, education, agriculture, industry, scientific inventions, photography, books and printing, also contained the work of the Arts and Crafts Schools from Bucharest, Iași and Craiova.⁵⁸ The lists of functional basket-work, iron and wooden objects displayed, however, give scant indication that the schools aspired to the progressive fusion of modern and vernacular that distinguished the contributions of the Prague School of Applied Arts or the Finnish Iris Workshop. Tzigara-Samurcaș, one of the Romanian delegates at the exhibition, wrote scathingly of 'the so-called art' of the Bucharest Craft School, describing its main contribution, a 'monumental gilded gate', as 'little, but nevertheless too much!'.⁵⁹ He also criticised the photographs of national costume taken by the painter and member of the art group *Ileana*, Alexandru Paraschivescu (known by his pseudonym Juan Alpar), claiming that, instead of documenting the richly varied local dress of the countryside, Paraschivescu had photographed only the wealthy women of the towns.

⁵⁸Little work has as yet been published on the Arts and Crafts Schools. They appear to have been set up by King Carol, in a similar vein to the *Fachschulen* network of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as a means of promoting and preserving vernacular craft traditions in an urban context. After 1908, the Bucharest Arts and Crafts School was charged with executing the designs of the decorative arts department in Bucharest School of Fine Art, set up two years previously under George Sterian (see Chapter Four).

⁵⁹'așa-zisă artă'; 'Puțin, dar totuși prea mult!', Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'La Expoziția din Paris', p. 140.

The principle objections to the Romanian section, therefore, voiced mainly by champions of the Neo-Romanian movement, appear to have focused on what was perceived to be the narrow representative scope of the pavilions and a lack of modern inventiveness in the depiction of 'national' character. Only six years later, however, these criticisms found their response in the Neo-Romanian pavilions of the 1906 Jubilee Exhibition in Bucharest, designed by the Romanian architects Victor Ştefănescu and Ştefan Burcuş. The clear change in official attitudes towards the issue of 'national' expression that these pavilions represented owed as much to developments in intellectual thought, influenced by the growth of social currents in Romania, as to lobbying by supporters of the Neo-Romanian style. Hence a brief consideration of the intellectual atmosphere of turn-of-the-century Romania is a necessary prelude to a discussion of the aims and character of the 1906 Exhibition itself.

The *fin-de-siècle* questioning surrounding the nature of Romanian identity and problems of self-definition owed much to the legacy of the *Junimea* (Youth) Society, founded in Iaşi in 1863. *Junimea* began when a group of young, western-educated intellectuals formed a society to stimulate scholarly debate through public lectures and literary gatherings. Under the leadership of theorists like the Conservative politician and rector of Iaşi University, Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917), it soon became a potent force in the intellectual, cultural and political life of the entire country. Deeply influenced by German philosophical and social thought, Junimist ideology followed evolutionist theories, perceiving in recent Romanian history a 'paralysing antimony' between form and substance.⁶⁰ It claimed that, after the 1848 Revolution, Romania had hastily imported cultural and political forms suited to the rising bourgeoisie in western countries such as France. These forms were, it believed, totally incompatible with the prevailing social conditions in Romania which had not

⁶⁰Keith Hitchens, *Rumania 1866-1947*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 61.

yet developed a bourgeois class. In cultural terms, this fundamental incongruity between the institutions and social structures of contemporary Romania meant that although the country possessed the outward appearances of western civilisation, in reality these were nothing more than 'phantoms without bodies'.⁶¹ Although Junimism's influence had largely come to an end by the turn of the century, such ideas had a lasting influence on the way that Romanians thought about themselves. They filtered even into the burgeoning agrarian currents emerging in parallel with social movements across Europe. The most dynamic of these was Sămănătorism.

Deriving its name from *sămănător* or 'sower', the movement was founded with the weekly review *Sămănătorul*, which began publication in Bucharest in December 1901. The Sămănătorists shared the Junimist idea that Romania had been diverted onto a false path of western imitation which was wholly unsuited to her historical and cultural background. The sămănătorist remedy suggested a kind of 'moral purging' of society, to be achieved through the sowing of culture permeated by 'true national values' among all levels of the population.⁶² The main proponent of the movement was the historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), who became director of its review in 1904. In a collection of studies, entitled *La Vie intellectuelle des Roumains en 1899*, Iorga expanded Titu Maiorescu's celebrated theory of 'form without substance' into a vehement critique of Romania's existing institutions. Calling for a return to national tradition and a rejection of the imitation of foreign models, Iorga praised the virtues of the political system that had prevailed in medieval Wallachia and Moldavia, stressing the superiority of the village over the city as the preserver of the national spirit. Rural values, and the idea of the peasant as the true embodiment of collective memory in the face of foreign decadence and urban misery, were also the main themes of sămănătorist writers such as Alexandru

⁶¹Ibid., p. 63.

⁶²Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947*, pp. 67-68.

Vlahuță, George Coșbuc (both founding editors of *Sămănătorul*) and Mihai Sadoveanu.

Some of the basic ideas of the Sămănătorists were shared by a contemporary movement called Poporanism (Populism; from *popor* meaning people). Led by the Bessarabian-born Constantin Stere (1865-1936), and expressing their ideals through the monthly journal *Viața românească* (Romanian Life; founded 1906), the Poporanists defined their movement as 'sincere love for the people, the defence of their interests, and honest work to raise them to the level of a conscious and independent social and cultural force'.⁶³ Unlike the Junimists and Sămănătorists, however, they thought of development in economic rather than cultural, moral or spiritual terms. They avoided idealisations of the past and sought to confront the harsh realities of peasant life through campaigning for agrarian reform, universal suffrage and education for the poorer classes.

In the early years of the new century, the ideas promoted by these movements contributed to a growing wave of hostility towards the pseudo-European, urban mores of the French-speaking Romanian upper class. The class dislocation this language use fostered was noted by a contemporary biographer of Queen Marie who wrote that 'the affectation of never speaking Romanian in good society, and of only expressing oneself in French' revealed 'a deep divorce between the elite and the people'.⁶⁴ Nicolae Iorga led the campaign to span this cultural divide: he promoted the ideal of national literature with social and moral aims in *Sămănătorul*, championed Romania's vernacular and religious heritage and even organised noisy public demonstrations against the western orientation of institutions like the National Theatre in Bucharest. In an article in *Epoca* (Epoch) of 12 March 1906, he strongly criticised the theatre for staging too many plays in French, 'a foreign language which

⁶³Ibid., p. 72.

⁶⁴'l'affectation de ne jamais parler roumain entre soi dans la bonne société et de ne s'exprimer qu'en français [...] ils voyaient dans cette habitude un divorce profond entre l'élite et le peuple', Georges Oudard, *Marie de Roumanie*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1939, pp. 65-66.

crushes, subjugates and humiliates us, which cuts a people in two, leaving to one side those who speak our despised language and, to the other, the great and the rich who speak another language, who live, love and die in this other language'.⁶⁵ Shortly after the article's publication, Iorga led a sensationalist protest against a charity performance to be delivered partly in French at the theatre. As a rowdy crowd of students and Sămănătorists tried to prevent theatre-goers from entering the building, tempers flared, stones were thrown, barricades erected and the demonstration escalated into full-scale street riots. Crown Princess Marie, who as patron of the charity organising the performance had come in for indirect criticism from the demonstrators, complained bitterly to her mother:

God knows we are painfully enough Roumanian! Nous ne faisons, ne respirons, ne vivons que pour cela! but God knows French has always been admitted till now as a language which is nearly international. I will say this: a part of the society does rather pose for not caring for anything Roumanian. They bring their children up abroad, they talk French amongst one another, they have French habits and tastes. But it cant be taken amiss as after all civilisation is a pleasant thing and one naturally looks for abroad what one does not find at home.⁶⁶

Despite the Princess' complaints concerning the country's lack of home-grown 'civilised' culture, it was clear that both the royal family and the Conservative government which took power in January 1905 were coming under increasing pressure to respond to 'nationalist' demands. Following Iorga's demonstration, the government officially reaffirmed Romania's Orthodox identity in the face of the country's relatively small number of Catholic institutions and missions.⁶⁷ Then, only

⁶⁵'une langue étrangère qui nous écrase, nous subjugue, nous humilie, qui coupe un peuple en deux, laissant d'un côté ceux qui parlent notre langue méprisée et de l'autre les grands et les riches qui parlent une autre langue, vivent, aiment et meurent dans cette autre langue', translated and quoted by Catherine Durandin in *Histoire des Roumains*, Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée, Fayard, 1995, p. 206.

⁶⁶Fond Regina Maria, V/2599/1906, letter from Marie to the Duchess of Coburg, 1 April 1906.

⁶⁷Romania was over ninety per cent Orthodox, yet King Carol's Catholic faith was a source of concern to many. According to Durandin, in 1902 the government and King were accused of 'weakness' and 'complacency' for doing little to stop the spread of the Catholic Church in the country. *Histoire des Roumains*, pp. 206-7.

a few months after the riot, in June 1906, King Carol and Queen Elisabeth officially opened the Cantacuzino government's most important public exercise in the promotion of Romanian national achievements: the country's first major exhibition (fig. 3.23). Held on a re-landscaped, 360,000 square metre site under Filaret Hill in south-west Bucharest,⁶⁸ the exhibition also provided the Neo-Romanian school of architecture with its first large-scale opportunity to showcase the new style.

The 1906 Bucharest Jubilee Exhibition

The Jubilee Exhibition marked a turning point for the school in terms of public recognition. Although Mincu's first Neo-Romanian building, the Lahovary House, had been designed twenty years previously, the state had been slow to realise the movement's national potential. During these two decades, the most intense period of Carol's reign for the construction of major public buildings, Bucharest, like many other European capitals, continued to favour grandiose, eclectic, supranational vocabularies.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the two years prior to the exhibition did witness a growing awareness of the Neo-Romanian school. In 1904, efforts by Mincu, Pangrati and Cerchez to win autonomy for the architecture section in the School of Fine Art finally paid off when the new Minister of Public Education, Delavreancea, founded the *Școala Superioară de arhitectură* (Advanced School of Architecture).⁷⁰ In the same year, Mincu was also asked to build an Administrative Palace for the Danube port of Galați (inaugurated in the autumn of 1906; fig. 3.24).

⁶⁸The area, known as Parcul Carol I, was renamed Parcul Libertății by the Communists.

⁶⁹These included Galleron's Romanian Athenaeum, Ballu's Palace of Justice and Gottereau's Carol I Foundation and Savings Bank (discussed above). Other important institutions of the period were the Swiss architect Louis Blanc's French Renaissance Ministry of Agriculture (1896) and Neo-Classical Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy (1900-2) and Alexandru Săvulescu's imposingly eclectic Post Office Palace (1899-1900). The latter represented one of the rare public commissions awarded to a Romanian architect in this period.

⁷⁰With Pangrati as director, Cerchez as Professor of Construction and Mincu as Professor of Architecture. It was later named the *Academia de arhitectură*; in autumn 1939 it became the *Facultatea de arhitectură*.

Only his second realised public commission (after the Central Girls School), this gave him the opportunity to experiment with his Neo-Romanian vocabulary of form on a large scale. Acknowledging the difficulties of adapting old Romanian architectural types to the needs of a modern public building,⁷¹ Mincu steered away from the picturesque arrangement of the Buffet and the cloistered privacy of the Girls' School. Instead, he chose a simple, symmetrical layout, consisting of a main central body flanked by two slightly lower wings enclosing a courtyard. This straightforward ground plan, while not particularly innovative nor making reference to any specific Romanian prototype, nevertheless answered the needs of a civic building on a prominent site on Calea (now Str.) Domnească, the main artery of Galați. The building's Neo-Romanian character came rather from its carved stone decoration. In addition to his usual repertoire of stone buttons, discs, foliate motifs and *brâie*, Mincu also included elongated, ogee-arched windows which gave the building an eastern, almost Venetian air, perhaps a reference to Galați's important role as a strategic port on the Danube trading route from the Black Sea. It is an interesting feature of Mincu's public buildings that, unlike other 'national style' architects of the period, such as Lechner in Hungary or Saarinen, Lindgren and Gesellius in Finland, he eschewed almost all vernacular or nature-based references.⁷²

⁷¹The one-and-a-half metre thick wall of old houses or churches would take up too much space and would be costly. Likewise, the limited number of windows used in the past would no longer be suitable: there is a need for more light [...] Furthermore, old buildings had smaller dimensions; they did not have the monumentality of a modern construction, such as a palace, a university, or a town hall, conceived according to modern-day needs' (zidul gros - de un metru și jumătate - de la casele vechi sau biserici ar ocupa prea mult loc și ar fi costisitor. Tot așa numărul restrâns al ferestrelor de altădată. Astăzi nu mai merge; trebuie mai multă lumină [...] Pe lângă aceasta, clădirile vechi aveau dimensiuni mici, n-aveau nimic monumental, cum ar fi o construcție modernă, un palat, o universitate, o primărie, întocmite după nevoile actuale'), Nicolae Petrașcu, *Ion Mincu*, București, 1929 (quoted by Mihai Caffé, *Arhitectul Ion Mincu*, p. 131).

⁷²For a discussion of vernacular influence in Hungarian and design see David Crowley, 'The Uses of Peasant Design in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, vol. 2, no. 2, spring 1995, pp. 2-28; also Katalin Keserű, 'Vernacularism and its Special Characteristics in Hungarian Art', in Nicola Gordon Bowe (ed.), *Art and the National Dream*, Blackrock, Irish Academic Press, 1993. Good Finnish surveys include Marika Hausen et al., *Eliel Saarinen. Projects 1896-1923*, Cambridge, MA, 1990 and Ritva Ware, 'How Nationalism was Expressed in Finnish Architecture at the Turn of the Last Century', in *Art and the National Dream*.

Instead, he drew on the implicit grandeur and perceived national specificity of motifs from old churches and Brâncovean monuments. The essential difference between his creations and Formigé's Paris pavilions, however, lies in the fact that Mincu did not merely reassemble elements copied directly from distinctive monuments, but reinterpreted and reinvented carefully chosen motifs into a new architectural idiom that combined national reference with appropriateness to modern building needs.

It was, however, the Jubilee Exhibition which marked the most significant stage in the public recognition of the Neo-Romanian style.⁷³ For it was here that the style was deliberately and self-consciously wedded to the national ideal of 'România Mare' (Greater Romania), the union of all Romanians from both within and outside the United Principalities. Ostensibly, the exhibition was organised to celebrate forty years since King Carol's arrival in Romania. The date also conveniently marked eighteen centuries since the successful end of Emperor Trajan's campaign against the Dacian ruler Decebal in 106 and the beginning of the Roman colonisation of the region. This parallel was consciously exploited in the imagery of the exhibition: one unsigned commemorative medal, for example, depicts the heads of both Carol and Trajan above the dates '1866', '106', '1906' (fig. 3.25). The surrounding legend reads: 'Trajan the great emperor. Carol I the first King of Romania'.⁷⁴ This was a deliberate attempt to assimilate the Hohenzollern ruler to the Emperor perceived by Romanian historians as the 'father-figure' of their people and language. The implication was clear: both were foreigners, yet both had given the Romanians a new identity, Trajan through colonisation and Carol by leading the newly independent nation into the modern age. According to the exhibition's supporters, 'the development of the country without social turbulence under the leadership of King Carol I' had given rise

⁷³The important role of the exhibition in the development of the style has only recently begun to be recognised, as demonstrated, for example, at the 1999 Bucharest Conference *National and Regional Experiences in European Architecture 1880-1940*, organised by the Union of Romanian Architects, or in Carmen Popescu's study of the exhibition in the Union's forthcoming publication on the Neo-Romanian movement in architecture.

⁷⁴'TRAJAN MARELE IMPERATOR. CAROL I PRIMUL REGE AL ROMANIEI'.

to a 'state of flourishing'.⁷⁵ This agricultural, economic, military and cultural progress is reflected in the imagery of the medal's reverse which depicts a huntsman with his bow, a soldier shouldering his gun and a blacksmith with his hammer and anvil. Behind them a seated peasant woman is busy spinning, while over her shoulder can be seen a number of church domes, perhaps a reference to Carol's much publicised restoration projects. The motto beneath propagates the notion of the longevity of the Romanian people: 'I was, I am and I shall be'.⁷⁶

There was, indeed, considerable truth behind these claims of progress. In the forty years of Carol's rule, the country had advanced from an isolated, Byzantine, rural backwater to a recognised, independent nation with a developing capital city and growing industrial and agricultural potential. According to one British commentator, the budget of 1906 was 'the highest figure ever recorded in Roumanian finance'.⁷⁷ Once empty, the country's treasury now earned sufficient credit to borrow from European financiers at four per cent.⁷⁸ Much of this was due to the opening up of the country to trade through nearly two thousand miles of new railways. The blasting of the rapids at the Iron Gates where the Danube enters Romania had made the great river navigable as far as the Black Sea, while Angel Saligny's railway bridge over the Danube at Cernavodă (1887-95) linked the new port of Constanța with the rest of the country and released the remote lands of the Dobrudja for exploitation. Intimations of the forthcoming exhibition in Swiss newspapers made much of Romania's rich natural resources ('this overflowing granary of Europe'), describing the highly profitable export of wheat, oil and salt from Constanța, and praising the country's rapid new rail and sea links with Vienna, Berlin, Paris and

⁷⁵ 'Desvoltarea, fără sguđuiri sociale, a țarei sub conducerea Regelui Carol I [...] produsese această stare de înflorire', Spiridon Cegăneanu, 'Prima manifestare de arhitectură românească', *Arhitectura 1891-1941*, p.100.

⁷⁶ 'AM FOST, SUNT ȘI VOI FI'. The surrounding legend reads: 'EXPOZITIUNEA GENERALA ROMANA DIN BUCURESTI 1906.

⁷⁷ Mrs Winifred Gordon, *A Woman in the Balkans*, London, Thomas Nelson, 1918, p. 171.

⁷⁸ Hannah Pakula, *The Last Romantic*, p. 144.

Constantinople.⁷⁹ In contrast to Romanian contributions to earlier international exhibitions, however, efforts to show the country's ability to stand on an equal footing with other developed nations were paralleled by an equally strong focus on the celebration of 'indigenous' tradition. In fact, the pronounced nationalist sentiment surrounding the organisation of the event even led to accusations of xenophobia and maltreatment from some of the few western companies hired to provide services and entertainment.⁸⁰ This heightened atmosphere, following in the wake of Iorga's theatre demonstration, was noted by Crown Princess Marie even before the exhibition opened: 'Uncle's jubilee will be arduous work, goodness how red blue and yellow one will have to be. I am having an ultra Romanian cloke made, to wear at the festivities, to show the colour of my heart'.⁸¹

The man charged with organising the exhibition was the University chemistry professor and government commissar Dr. Constantin I. Istrati (1850-1918). Although working under Ion Lahovary, the Minister of Agriculture, Industry, Commerce and Estates in the Gheorghe Gr. Cantacuzino government, Istrati appears to have been responsible for the day-to-day setting up and running of the event. A stone statue of him carved for the park by the Artistic Youth sculptor Oscar Spaethe (originally in front of the Palace of Industry; now found to the rear of the Roman Arena), has a bas-relief showing the professor at work in his laboratory. The site chosen for the exhibition was one earmarked by the Bucharest commune for improvement: a marshy

⁷⁹"ce grenier d'abondance de l'Europe", Annonce pour des journaux suisses'. Special Collections of the Romanian National Library, fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*.

⁸⁰Employees of the English Company of Morgan and Singer, responsible for the lake installations, were allegedly attacked by 'a fanatical crowd' ('une populace fanatique') jealous of the preference shown to foreigners. The affair (reported in *The Times* and in the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*) was only resolved with the intervention of the Foreign Office in London and the payment of damages by the Romanian government. This is one of an angry list of complaints concerning unfair treatment and dishonest behaviour towards foreign companies levelled at the exhibition organiser, Dr. Istrati, in a letter from the Berlin engineer R. Fiedler dated 27 July 1907. The latter provided an evening spectacle known as the 'burning lake'. (Fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*).

⁸¹V/2599/1906.

sloping area to the east of Filaret Hill.⁸² As early as 1903,⁸³ the French landscape architect E. Redon(t), then involved in the design of several of the country's town parks,⁸⁴ had been invited to submit a plan for converting the area. By draining the boggy land, he created a 30,000 square metre artificial lake fed by Filaret springs at the centre of the lozenge-shaped park. This acted as the articulation point around which the pavilions and attractions were arranged.

The visitor entering the exhibition through the monumental, Neo-Romanian, arched gate on Str. 11 iunie to the north of the park (fig. 3.26) found himself at the foot of a grand central axis. This led the eye up a wide central lawn with flower-edged alleys, flanked by two lines of pavilions, across the great lake with Ovid's island, to the main focus point of the exhibition, the monumental Palace of the Arts (fig. 3.27). Raised on the hill behind the lake to the south of the park, this, together with the majority of the pavilions and the general plan of the exhibition, was designed by the Neo-Romanian architects Ștefan Burcuș (1870-1928) and Victor G. Ștefănescu (also appears as 'Ștephănescu'; 1876-?).⁸⁵ The General Inspector of the pavilions was the architect Ion D. Berindei (1871-1928), a favourite of Prime Minister Cantacuzino for whom he had designed an ornately eclectic, French-style mansion on Calea Victoriei between 1898-1900 (now the George Enescu Museum).⁸⁶

⁸²A part of the financial costs for the exhibition was born by the Bucharest commune. At the close of the exhibition, the State took full possession of the park, as well as responsibility for its upkeep, while the commune received in return a number of sites in Bucharest and Ilfov district. 'Adunarea Deputaților. Sesiunea ordinară (prelungită) 1905-6. Expunere de Motive', fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*.

⁸³According to the not entirely reliable Grigore Ionescu who, in the previous sentence, dates the exhibition to 1907. *București. Ghid istoric și artistic*, București, 1938, p. 263.

⁸⁴Prima manifestare de arhitectură românească', p. 101. Redon apparently also designed an unused plan for the urban systematisation of Bucharest.

⁸⁵According to the curriculum vitae of the two architects, contained in fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*, they were jointly responsible for 'the general plan and all the plans of the Palaces and the official pavilions, together with their execution' ('Planul general și toate planurile Palatelor și pavilioanelor oficiale precum și execuția lor').

⁸⁶Berindei, who graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1897, was chief architect to the Ministry of the Interior from 1898-1901. A versatile and prolific architect, his most important works include the Neo-Romanian St. Catherine's Cradle (children's home) in Bucharest (1900), the Neo-Gothic Administrative Palace in Iași (1907-26) and a number of urban systematisation projects

Like Berindei, who taught in the architecture department of the Bucharest School of Fine Arts in 1900, Burcuş and Ştefănescu both had strong links with Mincu. Burcuş had studied at the school of the Society of Romanian Architects, moving to Paris when the school closed in 1897 to finish his studies at the *École des Beaux-Arts*. From 1900-28 he taught in the department (later school) of architecture in Bucharest. The slightly younger Ştefănescu had been one of the first generation of architects to graduate from this department, receiving his diploma in 1901.⁸⁷ Relatively little is known about Burcuş and Ştefănescu's work prior to the exhibition.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, as described by Spiridon Cegăneanu, Ştefănescu's fellow student at the School of Fine Arts, the work of all three exhibition architects and their assistants was influenced by Mincu's teaching: 'architects and draughtsmen were the fruit of our school, spiritual sons of Mincu'.⁸⁹

The crowning piece of the exhibition was the Neo-Romanian Palace of the Arts. In both its scale and dramatic positioning it surpassed Mincu's public commissions to date. Its purpose, as an eye-catching focal point for the park, dictated the need for a striking use of architectural elements and dynamic plastic interplay of solid and void. Hence, rather than following Mincu's preference for a discreet play of decorative façade detail, the palace boldly exploited the visual contrasts of light and shade provided by two stories of galleries, long arcades of Brâncovean arches and sturdy corner towers reminiscent of fortified manor houses or *cule*. An example of one such *cula boerească*, with imposing walls punctuated only by an arched entrance

including Şos. Jianu (B-dul Aviatorilor), National (later Herăstrău) park and the residential area between B-dul Aviatorilor and Cal. Dorobanţi, all in Bucharest.

⁸⁷He also studied at the Polytechnic in Dresden and at the 'Special School of Architecture' in Paris. See curriculum vitae in fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*.

⁸⁸In the same year as the exhibition, Burcuş began work on another major public commission, Galați Cathedral, designed in monumental Neo-Romanian style in collaboration with Petre Antonescu and Toma Dobrescu (completed 1917). Ştefănescu went on to build several major Neo-Romanian public buildings, including Constanța Town Hall (1914-21), the Geological Institute on Şos Kiseleff in Bucharest (completed in 1924) and the Coronation Cathedral in Alba Iulia (1922).

⁸⁹'arhitecții și desenatorii erau fructul școalei noastre, fii spirituali ai lui Mincu', 'Prima manifestare de arhitectură românească', p. 103.

and defensive slits and crowned by a look-out arcade of trilobate arches, was reconstructed on the hill next to the east wing of the Palace of the Arts (fig. 3.28).⁹⁰ The palace represented the first time that the Neo-Romanian style had been used for a building on this scale, explaining its fine compromise between national detail and Beaux-Arts monumentality. It also marked a significant step away from Formigé's conglomerate creation at the 1900 Paris Exhibition. Rather than merely pasting together pastiches of sections of well-known Romanian monuments, the palace borrowed without copying, reinventing Neo-Romanian forms into an integrated, cohesive structure designed to maximise the visual impact of its dramatic setting.

The Palace of the Arts owed much of its monumentality to the fact that it was designed as a permanent structure, to remain after the rest of the exhibition had been dismantled.⁹¹ In contrast to the surface plainness of the exterior, the interior hall was richly adorned with carved stone and imitation wood decorative patterns derived from Brâncovean motifs. One admiring journalist described it as follows:

the interior is extraordinarily beautiful. The aula rivals the most renowned artistic *salles* of the capital - in fact, I can compare it only with the Athenaeum. Large, with perfect acoustics, elegant [...] The galleries which surround the aula are in the form of open arcades so that from any one point one can see every part of the hall, both above and below [...] a true architectural masterpiece which makes an appeal to the Romanian style.⁹²

The palace contained a fairly wide selection of Romanian painting, sculpture, engravings and medals lent by artists and collectors for the duration of the

⁹⁰Intended as a permanent building, to house a religious museum, the cula no longer exists.

⁹¹In 1919, the Palace became a Military Museum housing the collections of the military section of the National Museum, founded in 1914. In 1963 the building was torn down to make way for the forty-eight metre high 'Monument to the heroes of the fight for the freedom of the people and of the homeland, for socialism' (architects H. Maico and N. Cucu), still in place today and housing the tombs of early Communist leaders.

⁹²'este extra-ordinar de frumos interiorul. Aula rivalizează cu cele mai renumite săli artistice din Capitală, - ceva mai mult, n'o pot compara de cât cu Ateneul. Mare, cu acustică perfectă, elegantă [...] Galeria, de jur împrejurul aulei, sînt cu stîlpi, sînt deschise, așa că dintr'un punct se vede în toate părțile, sus și jos [...] un adevărat capo d'operă de arhitectură în care s'a făcut apel la stilul românesc', Mih., 'Splendoarea Expoziției Naționale III', *Acțiunea*, 27 aprilie 1906.

exhibition.⁹³ These included works by nineteenth-century masters like Theodor Aman and by artists involved in the earliest independent societies such as George Demetrescu Mirea (paintings of oriental women, as well as his most famous work, *Vîrful cu dor* - The Peak of Longing, 1883; fig. 3.29⁹⁴) and the maritime painter Eugen Voinescu. A large part of the exhibition space was devoted to a retrospective of the work of the Barbizon-trained artist Nicolae Grigorescu, described by the admiring Munich critic/painter, William Ritter, as 'the greatest poet of Romania'.⁹⁵ The exhibition also figured a large number of works by members of the *Tinerimea artistică* (Artistic Youth) group and by their patron, Crown Princess Marie. The dominant presence of Artistic Youth, set up in December 1901, was a measure of the extent to which it had come to represent the official art scene in Romania by 1906.⁹⁶ Artistic Youth artists mentioned by Ritter included the painters Gheorghe Petrașcu, Ștefan Popescu (described as 'a satisfactory and delicate landscape artist', although perhaps better known for his studies of old Romanian church paintings), Alexandru Steriadi, Constantin Artachino ('an elegant draughtsman'), Arthur Garguromin-Verona, Samuel Mützner, Kimon Loghi, Ștefan Luchian, Ipolit Strâmbulescu and the sculptor Oscar Spaethe.⁹⁷ The latter contributed a bust of St. John the Baptist and an Art Nouveau bronze figure, holding a luminous cross in her outstretched arms, lent by Crown Princess Marie from her 'golden salon' in Cotroceni.

Works by Artistic Youth sculptors were also used to decorate the park itself.

Between the Palace of the Arts and the lake were an artificial waterfall and a grotto

⁹³The entry for the fine arts section of the exhibition catalogue, while not mentioning individual works or artists, states that it contained painting, drawing, sculpture, engraving, lithography, photography and architecture. 'Clasificația generală a obiectelor de expus. Sec. IX: Artele frumoase', fond St. Georges, dos. 569, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*.

⁹⁴See next chapter.

⁹⁵'cel mai mare poet al României', William Ritter, 'Pictura și sculptura la expoziția jubilară din București', *Literatură și artă română*, 1906, vol. VII, p. 467. A friend of Grigorescu, the Swiss-born Ritter was also an important collector of his paintings.

⁹⁶Since there was no official art salon organised in Romania in the years 1902-9, its role was largely taken over by the annual exhibitions of Artistic Youth.

⁹⁷'un peisagist convenabil și delicat'; 'un desemnator elegant', 'Pictura și sculptura la expoziția jubilară din București', pp. 471-472. See appendix four for biographies.

containing a reclining maiden watched over by two stone giants (fig. 3.30). These represented a scene from a Romanian folk tale, *Urlătoarea* (literally 'the Roaring'), popularised by Carmen Sylva in her 1882 collection *Pelesch-Märchen*, which told of the origin of the waterfall near the two Jepi mountains in the Bucegi massif above Sinaia. These hills were formed when twin brothers, falling in love with the same girl, were transformed into stone; the girl herself became the waterfall. Dumitru Demetrescu Mirea, the younger brother of the painter George Demetrescu Mirea, carved the maiden, while his fellow founding member of Artistic Youth, Frederic Storck, created one of the giants. The other was by Dimitrie Paciurea (1873-1932), then a lesser-known sculptor trying to make his mark after returning from military service and studies in Paris (fig. 3.31). He won the commission for the giant with the help of his former professor, Vladimir Hegel. Of the three figures, it was Paciurea's which attracted most comment.⁹⁸ Straining, in dramatic contrapposto, to escape from the stone into which it was metamorphosing, the struggling figure, with its tactile handling of surface and inner psychological tension, strongly recalled the work of Rodin which Paciurea had admired during his time in Paris. It also offered a fitting metaphor for the artistic aims of the exhibition as a whole, striving to break free from the fetters of foreign artistic forms into a realm of national expression.⁹⁹

From the first floor balcony of the Palace of the Arts and the 150 metre-long terrace in front, the visitor had a prime view over the whole exhibition and a

⁹⁸One 1906 critic described it as a 'revelation', as something which 'until now none of our sculptors had ever before produced' ('une révélation'; 'comme jamais un sculpteur de chez nous n'en avait produite jusqu'ici'). Quoted by Ion Frunzetti, *Paciurea*, București, 1971, p. 54. Storck's giant is in the Storck Museum in Bucharest, while Paciurea's is in the National Museum of Art.

⁹⁹Paciurea's *Giant* launched his career in Romania. Together with Constantin Brâncuși, he went on to reinvent the nature of Romanian sculpture in the first two decades of the century. Although he had studied in Paris, at the *École des Arts Décoratifs* and at the *École des Beaux-Arts* (1896-1900), Paciurea elected, unlike Brâncuși, to settle in Romania where he exhibited regularly with Artistic Youth (from 1907) and at the official salons. As professor of sculpture at Bucharest School of Fine Art from 1909, he influenced a whole generation of young sculptors including Oscar Han, Ion Irimescu, Gheorghe Angel and Constantin Baraschi. His *Giant* hints at the mysterious, sometimes disturbing, expressive symbolism embodied in his later work, for example *Sphinx* (exhibited 1912), *God of War* (exhibited 1915) and cycle of *Chimerae* from the 1920s.

scenographic angle on the elaborate lake entertainments. Against a backdrop of a huge, curved and painted screen, maritime battles were re-enacted on the part of the lake facing the palace. In view of Romania's rather modest naval experience (having only acquired a Black Sea Coast in 1878), such battles probably referred to hoped-for naval glories, symbolised by the two great, classically-named warships, 'Emperor Trajan' and 'Dacia', commissioned in the year of the exhibition. The most popular of the choreographed skirmishes was the topically relevant Battle of Port Arthur, complete with explosions provided by the English company of Morgan and Singer. The choice of the Russian disaster was perhaps a veiled gibe at Romania's larger neighbour who had prevented the Bessarabians from joining their 'brother Romanians' at the exhibition. This section of the lake also accommodated a large water slide, sports such as cycling on water and diving and the evening spectacle of the 'burning lake'.¹⁰⁰ The other half, used for boating, also contained Ovid's island, with its minaret and tiny mosque (*geamie*) recalling the Turkish architecture of Romania's Black Sea coast, and a small theatre.¹⁰¹ Next to the Roman Arena, on the other side of the lake, the Pavilion of the Cinema made reference to the fact that the Lumière brothers staged a screening in Bucharest in 1896, less than a year after their first cinematic showing in Paris.

In addition to the fine arts, the exhibition was divided into twelve further sections: agriculture, forestry and hunting, horticulture and wine-growing, animal breeding, mines and quarries, industry, transport and communications, army, education and learning, health, religion, and the past.¹⁰² These were housed in a series of grand Neo-Romanian pavilions designed mostly by Burcuş and Ștefănescu.

¹⁰⁰The company of Lieutenant Engineer Morgan and his partner Singer were responsible for most of the lake installations, including the water slide. The burning lake was the invention of the German R. Fiedler from Berlin, while cinematic and light effects were provided by another Berlin firm, the International Company of Cinematographs.

¹⁰¹The minaret still stands, although now moved to a back street between the park and Eroii Revoluției metro station.

¹⁰²'Clasificația generală a obiectelor de expus'.

On ascending the main avenue of the exhibition from the entrance gate, the visitor passed, on his left, the pavilion belonging to Bucharest Town Hall (fig. 3.32). Its play of steeply pitched roofs and deep eaves made loose reference to vernacular tradition while its semi-circular side apses recalled the rounded transept forms of many Romanian monasteries. Opposite this stood the Pavilion of the Administration of State Monopolies which combined the sturdy central volume of a *culă*, with a serpentine line of ogee arches under strongly projecting eaves, and two low, arcaded side-wings again vaguely suggesting ecclesiastical forms such as the *pronaos* of the seventeenth-century Oltenian monastery of Strehaia. Next to the Town Hall Pavilion stood the Pavilion of the Chamber of Commerce by Toma Dobrescu (who the same year also collaborated with Burcuş and Antonescu in Galaţi cathedral); this was followed by the monumental, domed, Industry Pavilion (fig. 3.33) with its complex interplay of church and monastery forms, straight and wavy lines, massive arched entrance, elongated tripartite windows and carefully applied areas of intricately carved Brâncovean stone decoration. This faced the somewhat fanciful Agriculture Pavilion (fig. 3.34). Here the standard Neo-Romanian repertoire of dominant projecting central block, round-ended wings with unbroken lower façade and clustered groups of three windows on the upper register, pitched roof and overhanging eaves was dramatically punctured by two central pylons. In contrast to the heavy horizontal mass of the low-lying building, these were crowned by two delicate conical spires that gave the appearance of floating over the open galleries beneath.

The final building before the lake on the east side was the Royal Pavilion by Ştefănescu (fig. 3.35).¹⁰³ Its U-shaped structure employed a much more cohesive Neo-Romanian vocabulary, suggesting three sides of a monastic enceinte. Based on a plan of simple repetition, it had an arcade of semi-circular arches at ground level and

¹⁰³This probably contained a celebration of Carol's palaces and civic projects, as well as the production of the royal estates and domains.

a more elaborate gallery of trilobate ones at the first floor, in a structure similar to the arcaded enclosure of Văcărești Monastery in Bucharest (1716-22). The horizontal line of the back wall of the pavilion was punctuated by an elaborate *foișor*, reached via a grand, two-armed staircase. With its trilobate arches and carved capitals, the *foișor* clearly recalled the Brâncovean palace of Mogoșoaia; nevertheless, the use of whitewash rather than exposed brick, together with the heavily decorated cornice and dividing *brâu*, also showed a debt to Mincu's Buffet.

Other Neo-Romanian pavilions by Burcuș and Ștefănescu included the Royal Restaurant (fig. 3.36), situated just to the right of the Palace of the Arts, the Exhibition Restaurant near to the *cula boerească*, and the Pavilion of the Administration of Prisons, found among a cluster of smaller pavilions behind the palace.¹⁰⁴ The Royal Restaurant, whose Neo-Romanian character reminded one journalist of 'the Buffet on the Șoseaua, although somewhat smaller',¹⁰⁵ was reached by a stone staircase from the terrace below. Its main room was constructed in the shape of a Latin cross. The 'nave' was surrounded by a covered porch supported on wooden *stâlpi*; this terminated beyond the 'crossing' in a *geamlîc* (from a Turkish word meaning 'pane', this was a glazed gallery which had passed into Romanian architectural tradition from Turkish models), giving a view over the neighbouring Roman Arena. The dining room, waited on by men in national costume, was painted with 'designs from Romanian rugs'.¹⁰⁶ Above this was a *foișor* containing a second, smaller dining terrace. The Exhibition Restaurant followed a similarly picturesque format with two arcaded stories enlivened by a projecting wooden balcony and a sturdy corner tower with delicately arched terrace. Inside, it had a single, vast dining room seating a hundred; above this was a smaller, open-air terrace boasting a

¹⁰⁴These included the Pavilion of Handicrafts, the C.F.R. Pavilion (railways) and the Eforie Pavilion of civilian hospitals. There was also seemingly an 'International Pavilion' (no further details found), which appears to have been largely overlooked in the pro-Romanian focus of newspaper reports.

¹⁰⁵'seamănă cu bufetul de la șosea fiind ceva mai mic', 'Splendoarea Expoziției Naționale III'.

¹⁰⁶'Interiorul ospătăriei e decorat românesc; pictură reprezentând desenuri de covoare românești', 'Expoziția Generală a României. Ospătăria Regală', *Cronica*, 20 aprilie 1906.

panoramic view over the exhibition. These porched and terraced structures in whitewashed brick or in wood owed as much to defensive boyar *cule* as to the carved forms of traditional Romanian peasant houses. The Pavilion of the Administration of Prisons, on the other hand, with its nave-like interior hung with Romanian rugs, took its inspiration from Văcărești Monastery (fig. 3.37).¹⁰⁷

To the west of the lake were situated the pavilions of the only two foreign countries invited to join the exhibition: Austria and Hungary (figs. 3.38 & 3.39). Their participation was opposed by nationalist Romanian newspapers such as *L'Indépendance Roumaine*. It wrote, 'The so-called 'national' exhibition had already ceased to be such on the day that pavilions were conceded to other States distinctly more advanced industrially than Romania'.¹⁰⁸ Although Austria-Hungary's commercial convention with Romania had expired in 1886, its presence probably owed much to the continuing atmosphere of cultural competition and imitation, given the success of the Budapest millenium festivities in 1896 and the general prestige of Austrian models. It is also likely that King Carol's strong links with Austrian manufacturers, currently employed in Liman's expansion of Castle Peleş, gave added weight to Austrian participation. The country's pavilion, for example, contained a large section devoted to the furniture manufacturer Bernhard Ludwig, then involved in the decoration of Liman's mansard rooms in Peleş.¹⁰⁹

These two non-Romanian pavilions stood in stark stylistic contrast to each other and to the exhibition as a whole. While the Austrian pavilion juxtaposed a rectilinear Secessionist latticework with a monumental arched entrance and carefully placed gilded decoration, the Hungarian pavilion employed the *magyaros* or folk Art Nouveau vocabulary that proved so successful in the country's pavilion in Milan in

¹⁰⁷'pavilion asemănator cu Văcărești', 'Vederea Generală a Expoziției Naționale Române', *Cronica*, 14 aprilie 1906.

¹⁰⁸'L'Exposition dite "nationale" avait déjà cessé de l'être le jour où des pavillons furent concédés à d'autres États, sensiblement plus avancés dans l'industrie que la Roumanie', 'L'Exposition', *L'Indépendance Roumaine*, samedi 15/28 avril 1906.

¹⁰⁹'Dela expoziția din București', *Prezentul*, 16 iunie 1906.

the same year, as well as in Paris in 1900 and St. Louis in 1904. Situated immediately behind the Austrian pavilion and matching it in length, the Hungarian pavilion rose up above the Austrian entrance, peeking over its dominant neighbour's shoulder to allow it to be seen from the lake. Its design, by Géza Aladár Kármán and Gyula Ullmann, represented a pastiche of earlier Neo-Magyar exhibition pavilions by the better-known Pál Horti, Ede Toroczkai Wigand or Géza Maróti.¹¹⁰ Its central section, for example, had a solid masonry ground floor decorated with Lechnerian vernacularising stucco-work. Above, the triangular pediments at the base of the wooden spires boasted the popular stylised tulip motif of traditional embroideries which also recalled Zoltán Bálint and Lajos Jámbor's interior decoration of the Paris 1900 pavilion. Further vernacular references were made by the kissing doves, the carved spires and gable ends and the play of steeply pitched roofs culminating in a rising sun motif at the apex.

The juxtaposition of the Hungarian pavilion and the Neo-Romanian creations of Burcuş and Ştefănescu brings out some interesting comparisons between the national revival styles of the two countries by 1906. The most obvious difference lay in the sources of inspiration. While Neo-Magyar architects often combined reference to 'oriental' forms with an exploration of national vernacular architectural traditions and crafts, Neo-Romanian architects looked almost exclusively to old Orthodox churches and Brâncovean residences. Although they did also employ vernacular reference in the carved wooden *stîlpi* of buildings like the Buffet, or the painted interior of the Royal Restaurant, they did not actively promote any one rural region of Romania as the 'guardian' of national identity and source of a 'genuine' national art. This contrasted with neighbouring regions like partitioned Poland whose intelligentsia promoted the myth that 'true' Polish identity had been preserved by the isolated Górale Highlanders of Podhale, or Hungary where national revivalists

¹¹⁰A *Golden Age: Art and Society in Hungary 1896-1914*, pp. 61-64.

posited the origins of Magyar identity in the ethnically 'pure' Székely people of Kalotaszeg.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Neo-Romanian buildings show little evidence of the Arts and Crafts ideals that were so important to the Gödöllő colony and later to Kós' *Fiatalok* group in Hungary, as well as to the national revival styles of Zakopane in Galicia, Dušan Jurkovič in the Slovácko region of Moravia, or Saarinen, Gesellius and Lindgren in Finland.¹¹² Mincu and his school demonstrated little interest in Ruskinian or Morrisian notions of community, patterns of life or the symbiotic relationship between the artist, craftsman and the environment. Nor was there much discussion before 1906 concerning the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the synthetic integration of all the arts according to one overriding design aesthetic.¹¹³

One may argue that Romania's fully independent status by the turn of the century gave a different momentum to the growth of nationalism, compared to regions still under the cultural hegemony of larger empires. We have seen how one level of Romanian self-definition implied a disassociation from both Ottoman past and Slavic and Magyar neighbours through an emphasis on linguistic and cultural links with the Latin West. Hence, at a time when some regions of central and eastern Europe subscribed to notions of pan-Slavism, while others, like Hungary or Finland, promoted their own, unique, eastern origins, the Romanians made much of their 'Roman' roots. Just as Hungarian popular mythology celebrated Attila, so the Romanians remembered Trajan as the great forerunner of their race and language.

¹¹¹ See Malgorzata Omilanowska, 'Searching for a National Style in Polish Architecture at the End of the 19th and Beginning of the 20th Century', in *Art and the National Dream*, pp. 103-104 and David Crowley, *National Style and Nation State. Design in Poland*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992; also Ildikó Nagy, 'The Character of Hungarian Art Nouveau as Reflected in Hungarian Research (1959-1981)', *Acta. Hist. Art. Hung.*, tomus 28, 1982, p. 390.

¹¹² For a discussion of Kós, see Anthony Gall, 'The House and the Castle' (Parts 1 & 2), in *M. É.*, 94/1, pp. 39-45 & 94/2, pp. 50-53. For Jurkovič's links with Baillie Scott and, more particularly, with Mackintosh, see Danuše Kšicová, 'Secese and Art Nouveau. Dušan Jurkovič and C. R. Mackintosh', in Peter Henry et al. (eds.), *Scotland and the Slavs*, Nottingham, Astra Press, 1993.

¹¹³ This, no doubt, owed much to Romania's hierarchical fine arts system which steadfastly maintained the boundaries between the fine and applied arts. As will be discussed in part two of Chapter Four, it was not until after the 1906 Exhibition, with the founding of the decorative arts section in the Bucharest School of Fine Arts, that any concerted effort was made to reinvestigate traditional techniques and motifs in the production of modern applied art objects.

This was given visual form at the exhibition. As well as using Trajan's head on commemorative medals, a large Roman Arena was constructed to the west of the park (fig. 3.40) and an island commemorating Ovid's Black Sea exile was placed in the middle of the lake.¹¹⁴ The Arena, which seated five thousand, was in mock-Doric Roman style and functioned as an open-air theatre.¹¹⁵ Here scenes from Romanian history were re-enacted for the crowd, including great costumed pageants from the lives of Romania's voivodes and episodes from the 1877-78 War of Independence, as well as sword fights, folk music competitions and open-air games.¹¹⁶ The Arena was also the setting for the grand opening of the exhibition on 4 June 1906, as described by Princess Anne-Marie Callimachi, the step-granddaughter of the Minister of Agriculture, Ion Lahovary:

The official ceremony took place in a sham Roman arena, built for the occasion, at 11 o'clock in the morning under a scorching sun. The men were pitifully sweating in their frock coats or tight-fitting uniforms; the women, more in keeping with the season, wore elaborate pastel summer gowns and large straw hats trimmed to resemble garden paths, aviaries, stuffed birds, or forests of rigid ospreys. Correct and stiff, the pale, bearded King read his inaugural speech in perfectly worded Roumanian rendered practically unintelligible by his strong German accent. A wealth of florid harangues followed. The people cheered, yelled, and occasionally fainted, until a final pageant of Roman soldiers in full armor, with helmets and flowing cloaks, paraded through the arena, offering the royal pair the Roman salute.¹¹⁷

The romanticised references to the country's past made in the Arena spectacles continued in other pavilions of the exhibition, most notably the citadel of

¹¹⁴Popular tradition sited the original 'Ovid's island' in Lake Siutghiol at Mamaia, near the Roman Black Sea settlement of Tomis from where the exiled Ovid supposedly composed his mournful poems.

¹¹⁵There is some disagreement over the architect of the Arena, which still stands today. *La Roumanie en images*, Paris, Impr. G. G. L'Hoir, 1919, p. 48 states that it was by Victor Ștefănescu, while Ionescu (*București. Ghid istoric și artistic*, p. 264) attributes it to 'the architect Negrescu', presumably the Paris-trained Leonida Negrescu (b. 1860) who also designed the rear wing of the Romanian Athenaeum and the eclectic Corso Café and Jockey Club on Calea Victoriei.

¹¹⁶'Arenele romane. Defileuri istorice', *Literatură și artă română*, vol. VI, 1906.

¹¹⁷Princess Anne-Marie Callimachi, *Yesterday Was Mine*, London, Falcon Press, p.123. For the full opening programme. see 'Programa serbarii pentru deschiderea expozițiunii generală română din 1906', Fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*.

the fifteenth-century Wallachian ruler Vlad Țepeș next to the *cula boerească* (fig. 3.41) This fanciful reconstruction in stone and brick of the ruined castle guarding the mountain pass at Poenari in the Făgăraș foothills housed an exhibition of historical weapons and documents.¹¹⁸ At the foot of the citadel, the reconstructed Calafat earthworks drew a deliberate parallel between Vlad's military success against the Turks and the achievements of King Carol. It was from here, in Carol's presence, that the first canon shot was fired in the 1877-78 War of Independence. A small-scale reconstruction of Plevna itself, complete with Turkish defensive forts and the house at Parodmi from which Carol directed the siege, was laid out between the Royal Pavilion and the citadel.

In addition to celebrating Carol's military achievements, the exhibition also referred to his programme of church restoration in the rebuilt *Biserica Cuțitul de Argint* (Church of the Silver Knife; fig. 3.42) on Filaret hill next to the Roman Arena. Somewhat ironically, this also recalled the controversy over Lecomte's methods, since the original church was razed and reconstructed by George Sterian as a copy of Lecomte's Sf. Nicolae in Iași.¹¹⁹

The desire to show the world the progress Romania had made under King Carol was only one of the driving forces behind the exhibition. The second drew on the growing interest in Romanian communities living outside the country's borders, in order to promote the exhibition as the focal point for the national ideal of *România Mare* (Greater Romania), the proposed union of all Romanian peoples. Emerging in force in the nineteenth century, this ideal fed off the loss of Bessarabia to Russia after the Russo-Turkish War and Hungarian-Romanian ethnic tensions in Transylvania,

¹¹⁸According to Ionescu (*București. Ghid istoric și artistic*, p. 264), the citadel was designed by Scarlat Petculescu (better known for his modernist housing and factory buildings of the 1920s and 30s). Although a national hero in Romania, Vlad Țepeș was already gaining a certain notoriety abroad as the source of inspiration for Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*.

¹¹⁹The choice of Sterian (cited in *Arhitectura 1891-1941*, p. 56) to restore the church in such a way is curious considering his vigorous campaign against Lecomte's methods in the pages of *Analele Arhitecturii*. According to the above source, his restoration began in 1894.

contributing to the historical bickering that has characterised national claims to these regions ever since. Infused with such pan-Romanian aspirations, the Cantacuzino administration invited Latin 'brothers' from all the Romanian-inhabited regions 'over the mountains' to the exhibition: from Transylvania, the Banat, Bucovina and Macedonia.¹²⁰ Only the Bessarabians were absent, 'Tsarism not permitting them to participate en masse'.¹²¹ Such invitations, it was declared, would lead to 'the strengthening of the national idea and a more powerful coagulation of the intellectual unity and of the spirit (*simțimânt*) of the Romanian people'.¹²² The notion soon drew support from foreign-based Romanian-language newspapers. According to the *Gazeta Bucovinei* (Bucovinian Gazette) from Habsburg-controlled Cernăuți, the aim of the exhibition was to 'embody the ethnic unity of all Romanians and the cultural state in which they find themselves throughout different countries, by means of all kinds of objects and goods produced by our people'.¹²³ Thanks to the publicity provided by such articles,¹²⁴ together with financial subsidies for ethnic Romanians travelling from regions outwith the Principalities, a fair number of such visitors appear to have made the journey to Bucharest. According to the exhibition's supporter, Cegăneanu:

For the first time in the life of our people, Romanians of different regions, many under foreign rule, came into direct contact in great masses. They came into contact with each

¹²⁰ 'frații noștri de peste munți', 'Splendoarea Expoziției Naționale II', *Acțiunea*, 26 aprilie 1906.

¹²¹ 'țarismul nepermițând o participare în masă', 'Prima manifestare de arhitectură românească', p. 104.

¹²² 'întărirea ideii naționale și închegarea mai puternică a unității intelectuale și de simțimânt a neamului românesc', A. D. Xenopol, 'Expoziția și ideea unității naționale', *Literatură și artă română*, 1906, vol. VIII, p. 521.

¹²³ 'întrupă unitatea etnică a tuturor Românilor și starea culturală în care se află ei prin diferitele țări, prin tot felul de obiecte și produse de ale poporului nostru', 'Expoziția generală română. Apel către poporul român din Bucovina', *Gazeta Bucovinei*, Cernăuți, 2/15 aprilie 1906. Some indignation was expressed in Romanian newspapers when the Bucovinians, 'due to Austrian pretensions' (*după pretențiunile Austriei*), were obliged to site their pavilion alongside those of Austria and Hungary, rather than next to the pavilions of Transylvania and Macedonia. Uhrynovski, 'Ce vom vedea la Expoziție', *Dimineața*, 19 aprilie 1906.

¹²⁴ See too the Arad (Hungary) paper *Tribuna* (2/15 septembrie 1906) in which an article entitled 'Serbătorea serbătorilor' praises King Carol and Queen Elisabeth and expresses a desire for Romanian blood brothers to join together.

other and with the strength and the magnificence of the mother country which left them delighted. This meant that afterwards the desire to unite became more vibrant and the rhythm of the movement for emancipation accelerated.¹²⁵

Such loaded rhetoric aside, those who made the journey to the exhibition were nonetheless able to admire examples of vernacular architecture from their own area placed alongside traditional houses from every region inhabited by Romanians (except Bessarabia). Hence, in addition to houses from different parts of Muntenia, Oltenia and Moldavia, this *hora românească*, or circular village, also contained a *Casa Transilvaniei* (Transylvanian house; fig. 3.43) and a *Casa Macedoniei* (Macedonian house).¹²⁶ The *hora* followed a similar principle to the circular village at the 1895 Prague Ethnographic Exhibition where architects like Dušan Jurkovič used examples of vernacular buildings to indicate the stylistic similarities and variations within the material culture of the Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian and Slovakian peoples. Most of the Bucharest houses, however, appear to have been constructed by local craftsmen rather than architects. The Macedonian house, for example, is attributed to 'a Romanian master stonemason from Pind'.¹²⁷ The *hora* was intended to provide an idealised scene of happy, wholesome, peasant life. According to one eye witness, on entering the *hora*,

we enter into the life of the people, of our peasant. Here is the hut of the poor man, over there the rustic household of the rich peasant; a Macedonian house, another from Bucovina. These show the multi-faceted originality of our people, healthy, simple, capable of guaranteeing contentment to man [...] In one corner a place for preparing

¹²⁵ 'Pentru prima dată în viața poporului nostru, luau contact direct în mase mari, românii diverselor provincii, multe din ele subjugate, între ei și cu forța și măreția țării mame de care au rămas încântați. Aceasta a făcut ca după aceea dorința de unire să fie mai vie și ritmul mișcării de desrobire mai accelerat', 'Prima manifestare de arhitectură românească', pp. 103-104.

¹²⁶ A 'hora' is a traditional Romanian dance performed by linking arms in a large circle. The choice of the word 'hora', danced on festive occasions, ties in with the notion of the exhibition as a 'serbătoare' or 'celebration' of Romanian fraternity.

¹²⁷ 'unui maestru zidar, român de la Pind', 'Ce vom vedea la Expoziție'.

cheese (*cășăria*), alongside it a dairy, a modest, pretty village bazaar, a little higher up a village post office; even the leisure pastimes of the village are not lacking. ¹²⁸

These vernacular structures, together with the Ethnographic Pavilion situated behind the Palace of the Arts, presented the visitor with a wide range of traditional craftwork gathered from across Romanian-inhabited regions. This was the first time that an exhibition of peasant crafts on this scale had been brought to Romanian public attention. As discussed in the following chapter, it provided an important stimulus in the setting up of Romania's first Museum of National Art and in the founding of a decorative arts section in the Bucharest School of Fine Art.

The three-stranded expression of Romanian identity evident in the exhibition pavilions - classical past, Orthodox heritage and vernacular tradition - also infused the printed material produced for the occasion. Prior to the opening, there were a number of competitions to design exhibition posters and commemorative Jubilee stamps. The winning entry in the poster competition, by a certain Emil Damian,¹²⁹ personified 'Romania' in a vernacular sense:

The Romanian nation is represented by a peasant man and woman at work in the fields; they look up, surprised, to wave at the produce of national labour embodied in the Exhibition whose silhouette can be seen in the background of the poster'.¹³⁰

A similar format was also used in one of the rejected entries for the competition by Apcar Baltazar (fig. 3.44).¹³¹ This depicts an old peasant man and two children travelling though fertile countryside towards the exhibition which they perceive on

¹²⁸ 'intrăm în viața poporului, țaranului nostru. Aci bordeiul săracului, colea gospodăria rustică a țaranului bogat, o casă macedoneană, alta bucovineană printre cari mulțimea originalităților poporului nostru, sănătoase, simple, capabile să garanteze mulțumirea omului [...] Cășăria într'un colț, alături lăptăria, un modest și frumușel bazar sătesc, mai în sus un han de poștă și plăcerile sătești nici ele nu lipsesc', 'Vederea Generală a Expoziției Naționale Române'.

¹²⁹ No biographical details known.

¹³⁰ 'Naținea română, reprezentată printr'un țaran și o țarancă la munca câmpului, surprinși, salută cu entuziasm, produsul muncii naționale, înfățișată prin Expoziție, a cărei siluetă se vede pe planul din fund al afișului', 'Concursuri', *Arhitectura*, anul 1, nr. 1, ian-feb 1906, p. 54.

¹³¹ Baltazar is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

the horizon. Probably intended as a reference to the hoped-for visits by Romanians from outwith the Principalities, the national character of the poster is further emphasised by motifs from traditional weavings and by the Neo-Romanian lettering adapted from Mincu's stylised alphabet. In contrast to these two, another poster, which appeared in a shop window in Bucharest (possibly the second-placed entry by Francisc Şirato¹³²), preferred to combine Orthodox tradition with references to Romania's classical origins. Painted in the 'colour of old gold', the poster was conceived in 'pure Byzantine style'. Its full-length format, exotic gilded decoration and interest in classical mythology suggest an acquaintance with Alfons Mucha's orientalisng posters of Sarah Bernhardt:

It represents Romania, shown as a woman whose head is ringed with a diadem. This figure fills the full length of the poster; she stands on a pedestal whose bas-relief depicts a wolf feeding her babies. This symbol, recalling the origin of the Romanian people who, it is known, are descended from a Roman colony founded in ancient Dacia during the reign of Emperor Trajan, is accompanied by a smaller figure representing the Emperor who holds in his hand the Roman insignia. Facing him on the other side is King Carol of Romania [...] this poster constitutes a true specimen of oriental art.¹³³

A similar concern with the classical, religious and vernacular characterised the entries submitted to the Post Office's competition to design a Jubilee stamp. One entry by the architect Alexandru Clavel, for example, depicted King Carol in front of the restored Curtea de Argeş; another by the painter Costin Petrescu, described as 'in German Byzantine-Secession style', bore two portraits of Carol as he appeared in

¹³²Şirato (1877-1953), although graduating from the Bucharest School of Fine Art only the previous year, had begun his career as a designer of lithographic posters.

¹³³'Conçue en style byzantin pur'; 'la couleur vieil or'; 'elle [l'affiche] représente la Roumanie, sous les traits d'une femme dont la tête est ceinte d'un diadème. Cette figure prend toute la hauteur de l'affiche et repose sur un socle ayant comme bas-relief une louve allaitant ses petits. Ce symbole, relatif à l'origine du peuple roumain qui descend, on le sait, d'une colonie de Roumains établie dans l'ancienne Dacie à l'époque de l'empereur Trajan, est complété par une figure de moindre grandeur représentant cet empereur tenant en main l'enseigne romaine; de l'autre côté, lui faisant face, le roi Charles de Roumanie [...] cette affiche constitue un véritable spécimen d'art oriental', 'Une belle affiche', *Le Matin*, nr. 114, 28 avril 1906.

1866 and 1906 (fig. 3.45).¹³⁴ These were interlinked by a decorative encircling *brâu* and framed by the protective wings of the crowned Romanian eagle with a cross in its beak. The whole was set within a decorative framework recalling the carved patterns on the exterior of Trei Ierarhi. Three further designs, this time for stamps to be sold for the benefit of Carmen Sylva's charitable society *Țesătoarea* (Weaving), drew on vernacular motifs (figs. 3.46-3.48). One, by the Artistic Youth member Nicolae Grant,¹³⁵ featured a Grigorescu-like peasant women surrounded by a border of traditional woven patterns. A second design by Grant, together with one by the little-known artist V(?) Mantu, gave the peasant woman the features of Carmen Sylva. Mantu's stamp, however, combined a national subject with international pictorial conventions: its seated figure, haloed by a semi-abstract, two-dimensional, floral background, showed a clear debt to Mucha's graphic language.

Despite its national intentions, Romanian public response to the exhibition varied. Newspapers were fairly evenly split in their support. The Liberal and Junimist press, for example *Voința Națională* (National Will), *Epoca* (Epoch), *Independența* (Independence) and *L'Indépendance Roumaine* (Romanian Independence), criticised the cost of the exhibition (seven million lei according to one source¹³⁶). They declared that precious public funds had been wasted in a useless and badly managed political exercise which, rather than being a national celebration, had become 'a vulgar fair for the amusement of idle onlookers [...] the dumping place for the cohorts of government hangers-on whom ministers hadn't been able to tuck away into public services when they seized power'.¹³⁷ Supporters of the exhibition, such as the Conservative newspaper *Adevărul*, accused the event's detractors of a lack of patriotism and of leading 'a persistent, slanderous campaign against the exhibition,

¹³⁴ 'Intr'un stil germano bizantin-sessessionist', 'Concursi', p. 53.

¹³⁵ See appendix 4.

¹³⁶ 'Cum se face polemica la noi', *Adevărul*, 26 aprilie 1906.

¹³⁷ 'une foire vulgaire pour l'amusement des badauds [...] le réceptacle de la cohorte des partisans du régime que les gouvernants n'avaient pu caser dans les services publics dès leur mainmise sur le pouvoir', 'L'Exposition', *L'Indépendance Roumaine*, 15/28 avril 1906.

sparing no efforts to compromise its outcome, forgetting that it is not the exhibition of the Conservative party, but of the Romanian country, of the Romanian people'.¹³⁸ *Adevărul* was rewarded for its support by being allowed its own Ștefănescu-designed pavilion, from whence it published a daily exhibition newspaper.

One of the most frequent complaints levelled at Istrati was the lack of publicity abroad and the correspondingly low numbers of foreign visitors to the exhibition.¹³⁹ This might explain why there was no mention of it in *The Studio*, normally an enthusiastic commentator on foreign exhibitions. In Romania itself, on the other hand, despite the criticisms and financial problems, the event appears to have generated considerable public enthusiasm: Princess Anne-Marie Callimachi, for example, remembered 1906 as 'a summer of heat and Exhibition craze'.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, the novelty of Romania's first national fair, with its self-conscious celebration of indigenous tradition and modern achievements, did much to focus attention on the question of what exactly constituted 'Romanian' identity. In addition to fostering a sense of national pride, the exhibition raised the profile of vernacular crafts and of peasant tradition as a whole. Subsequent efforts to explore autochthonous sources of inspiration in painting and the applied arts will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Significantly, the exhibition also placed the Neo-Romanian style firmly on the architectural map. From this point on, the number of both public and private

¹³⁸o campanie înverșunată, calomnioasă contra expoziție și nu se cruța nimic pentru a'i se compromite rezultatul, uitându-se că ea nu este a partidului conservator, ci a țării românești, a poporului român', 'Opoziția și expoziția', *Adevărul*, 19 aprilie 1906.

¹³⁹nobody abroad [...] knew that an exhibition was taking place in Bucharest because you [Istrati] completely disdained making any kind of publicity [...] One need only compare the number of daily entries to exhibitions [...] the same year in Nuremberg, Reichenbach and Berlin - Agricultural Exhibition, a figure which reached 95,000, with the miserable total achieved by your national exhibition, even though yours was organised with a budget several million higher' ('à l'étranger personne [...] n'a appris qu'une exposition a eu lieu à Bucarest, puisque vous avez complètement dédaigné de faire de la réclame [...] Il suffit de comparer le chiffre des entrées journalières aux expositions [...] la même année à Nuremberg, Reichenbach, Berlin - exposition agricole, chiffre qui atteint 95.000, avec le misérable chiffre atteint par votre exposition nationale, bien que celle-ci ait été mise en scène avec des frais plus élevés de plusieurs millions', letter from R. Fiedler to Istrati, fond St. Georges, *Expoziția Generală Română. București 1906*.

¹⁴⁰*Yesterday Was Mine*, p. 130.

commissions awarded to Neo-Romanian architects began to rise sharply. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these in any detail, it is worth mentioning a couple of important examples as an indication of the speed with which the style became the dominant force in Romanian architecture after 1906.

The first major example of the style's new popularity for public buildings was the monumental Ministry of Constructions in Bucharest, begun in the year of the exhibition and finished in 1910 (fig. 3.49).¹⁴¹ Its architect was the versatile Petre Antonescu, the designer of the little tobacco kiosk at the Paris Exhibition. According to the architect's own rather wordy account, the Ministry represented his

first attempt on a monumental scale to create a work with a modern purpose and character whose inspiration came both from the varied resources of constructional science and from the rich means of architectural expression offered by the traditions of indigenous art.¹⁴²

One notable feature of this building, aside from its imposing façade vocabulary of weighty Brâncovean elements, was the architect's stated aim of creating an integrated whole, designing each element of furniture and decoration to harmonise with the Neo-Romanian setting.¹⁴³ This synthesis of monumental and detailed, modern and traditional, fine and applied arts not only showed Antonescu's awareness of Modern

¹⁴¹In 1948, following its bombing and subsequent restoration by Antonescu, the building became the Town Hall of Bucharest, a function which it still holds today.

¹⁴²'prima sa încercare de a rezolva, la scară monumentală, o temă de conținut și caracter modern, inspirată din variatele resurse de știință constructivă și bogatele mijloace de expresie arhitecturale, pe care i le ofereau tradițiile artei pămîntene', Petre Antonescu, *Clădire, construcții, proiecte și studii*, București, Ed. Tehnică, 1963, p. 42.

¹⁴³'The furniture of the main rooms was executed according to the designs of the building's author and conceived in the same style, inspired by the tradition of Romanian architecture [...] This furniture, today completely destroyed, represented the author's first attempt to realise a decorative interior ensemble, creating modern decor and furniture which would harmonise with the architecture in traditional Romanian style' ('Mobilierul pieselor principale a fost executat după desenele autorului edificiului și conceput în același stil, inspirat de tradiția arhitecturii românești [...] Acest mobilier, azi completamente distrus, a constituit o primă încercare a autorului de a realiza un ansamblu ornamental de interior, avînd drept temă crearea unui decor și mobilier modern, armonizat cu arhitectura de stil tradițional românesc'), *ibid*, pp. 43-44.

Style advances across Europe, but also represented one of the earliest attempts at a Neo-Romanian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Private commissions, on the other hand, increasingly combined Brâncovean elements with forms borrowed from vernacular architecture, as seen, for example, in Cristofi Cerchez's (1872-1955) Minovici Villa in Bucharest (c.1910; fig. 3.50¹⁴⁴), designed for Prof. Nicolae Minovici (1868-1941) to house his collection of Romanian folk art. Although trained in Milan, Cerchez was an adherent of Mincu and enthusiastically studied and photographed the popular art of Muntenia and Oltenia. He applied his research to his patron's request for a house imbued with national reference. The residence combined the sturdy, buttressed forms of a *culă*-like tower, capped with an overhanging roof or *căciulă* (referring to the form of the Romanian cocked sheepskin hat), with an elegant, Brâncovean *foișor* on one side and a vernacular *cerdac* (porch) supported by carved wooden posts on the other. In a similar fashion to traditional Romanian houses, these porches provided a gradual transition from the interior to exterior of the residence. The vernacular feel was further enhanced by the asymmetrical play of projecting tiled roofs, and by the richly carved wooden gate and fence surrounding the property.

The Minovici Villa was only one example of the new enthusiasm for the Neo-Romanian style in the years following the Jubilee Exhibition. As demonstrated here, the style's growing popularity was closely linked to the rise of national self-awareness. In 1900, as illustrated by the Romanian section at the Paris Universal Exhibition, official taste still favoured foreign architects and a fairly eclectic, superficial approach to the expression of national identity. By 1906, however, with increasingly vociferous agrarian movements and intellectual-led campaigns to reject

¹⁴⁴Dated according to Constantin (*Dicționarul universal al arhitecților*). Ionescu dates it earlier, to 1905, while both Mircea Lupu (*Scoli naționale în arhitectură*, București, Editura Tehnică, 1977) and Gheorghe Curinschi-Verona (*Istoria arhitecturii în România*, București, Editura Tehnică, 1981) put it as late as 1914. In 1936, Minovici left his house and collection to the city of Bucharest as a museum of folk art.

foreign modes of behaviour, both government and public were far more receptive to the idea of a 'national' style. The importance of the Jubilee Exhibition lay not so much in an innovative reinvention of Mincu's style by Burcuş and Ştefănescu - indeed, the majority of their pavilions were no more than picturesque, large-scale reformulations of his basic vocabulary - as in its wide-scale propagation, under the approving eyes of government.

Ultimately, the events which followed the 1906 Jubilee Exhibition laid bare the deep divorce between intellectual society's perception of 'national' and the harsh day-to-day realities of peasant life. In the spring of 1907, the country was rocked by its most serious civil unrest for decades when peasants across Moldavia and Wallachia launched a violent revolt against the exploitative system of land rents and distribution. Unable to cope, the Conservatives were replaced, at the end of March, by the Liberals under Dimitrie Sturdza who organised a successful but brutal repression of the uprising, resulting in the deaths of some eleven thousand peasants. In the aftermath of the revolt, the government was forced to introduce new legislation governing land taxes, the leasing of public land, agricultural contracts and the setting up of a rural credit bank.

The idealised image of rural contentment propagated by the *hora românească* at the exhibition had been shattered. Henceforth, there would be a tendency to regard the 1906 Exhibition as the frivolous play-acting of a ruling elite out of touch with the needs of the majority of the population. Despite this, however, the uprising did not dent the growing success of the Neo-Romanian architectural style among wealthy individual patrons as well as town councils eager to imbue new public buildings with 'national' character. Contrary to the recent claims of some historians, this style did not end with the First World War, but continued on a monumental scale throughout the 1920s.¹⁴⁵ After the creation of Greater Romania in 1920, it acted as a powerful tool

¹⁴⁵For example, Luminița Machedon and Ernie Scoffham, *Romanian Modernism. The Architecture of Bucharest, 1920-1940*, Cambridge Massachusetts/London, MIT Press, 1999, p. 26. In the 1920s, the

for visually imprinting Romanian identity on the new territories. Nor was its suggestive power lost on the royal family, in particular Crown Princess Marie. Shortly before the outbreak of war, she began the first in a series of architectural projects which would help nurture a powerful and compelling public image of the first Queen of Greater Romania. Prior to this, however, she also played a significant role in helping to raise the profile of young Romanian artists fighting to win public recognition for home-grown talent in the other visual arts. The main forum for their work, as well as for the developing national/international stylistic debate, was the series of independent artistic societies which sprung up in Bucharest in the final years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries, discussed in the next chapter.

Neo-Romanian style did not so much 'yield' to the extremely vibrant variant of the Modern Movement in Romania, as Machedon and Scoffham claim, as continue to co-exist alongside it, developing a final, monumental phase which lasted through to the 1930s. For the best visual overview of Neo-Romanian works, see the illustrations in *Arhitectura 1891-1941*.

Artistic Societies and the 'National Style' Debate

Part I: The Need for an Artistic Forum: the growth of independent societies and questions of aesthetic identity

Background: the early societies

Following the unification of the principalities, Schools of Fine Art (*Școale de arte frumoase*) were set up in Iași in 1860-61 and in Bucharest in 1863-64. The Iași School, founded and directed by the Munich-trained portrait specialist, Gheorghe Panaiteanu-Bardasare (1816-1900), taught only painting. The Bucharest School, on the other hand, directed by Theodor Aman (1831-1891) with the help of the academic painter and theorist Gheorghe Tattarescu (1818-1894) and the sculptor Karl Storck (1826-1887), trained painters, engravers, sculptors and architects (although the architecture and engraving sections were closed in the reorganisation of 1866-67). Supervised by a fine arts academic committee presided over by Aman, the schools provided a basic training intended to prepare gifted students for further study in European academies through a system of state scholarships. Concomitantly with the setting up of the Bucharest School, Aman also played an important role in the founding of the State Picture Gallery in 1864 and the organisation of an official salon from 1865.

Nevertheless, the end of the nineteenth century witnessed increasing dissatisfaction among professors, progressive intellectuals and former students of the schools with the state of the arts in Romania. The professors criticised what they saw as governmental indifference to the importance of building up strong national art

Maximilian, 1996, vol. 20, p. 733.
 veritatis et iustitiae [...] cum ipso nomine imperatoris ante se videret, rursus prout
 proclat oratione. In: Miron, "Școala nouă de arte frumoase", *Arta Nouă*, 1998
 (reprinted in *Cele trei Cruci*, sep.-oct. 1978, pp. 173-175).

schools. This was exemplified by the government's 1894 recommendation that the study of composition be suspended since the schools 'should have long given up any pretence of educating students capable of producing classical paintings'.¹ In addition, the professors complained of inadequate funding and protested against official preference for foreign artists in the awarding of prominent state commissions. Towards the end of the century, the schools themselves came under increasing criticism from their former students. Freshly returned from the academies of Paris or Munich, these young artists objected to codified teaching methods and to the restrictive selection criteria of the sporadic official salons. In 1897, in a strongly worded article, the architect Ion Mincu articulated some of these frustrations:

up to now, our Schools of Fine Art in Bucharest and Iași have dazzled only by their hopeless sterility [...] if today we can count a few artists of value, risen among us like rare plants, they owe nothing to our schools except their faults, since their talents are the product of foreign schools.²

As well as the need to improve teaching methods and recruitment procedures in the Schools of Fine Art, many artists and intellectuals considered that the biggest obstacle to the development of art in Romania was the indifference shown by Romanian society towards its own artistic heritage. George Sterian, the vigorous campaigner for the recognition and restoration of national monuments and editor of the pro-Romanian architectural review *Arhitectura*, wrote:

It is certain that foreigners would be very surprised [...] to learn that there still exists a country whose people doubt that they possess an art of their own; and they would be

¹ Codruța Cruceanu, 'Romania, §X: Art education', *Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, London, Macmillan, 1996, vol. 26, p. 725.

² 'școalele noastre de arte frumoase din București și Iași, nu au strălucit până acum decât prin sterilitatea lor desnădăjduitoare [...] dacă putem număra astăzi câțiva artiști de valoare, răsăriți printre noi ca niște plante rare, ei nu datoresc nimic școalelor noastre, decât, relele, cele bune fiind produsele școalelor străine', Ion Mincu, 'Școalele noastre de arte frumoase', *Literatură și artă română*, 1896 (reprinted in *Cele trei Crișuri*, sep.-oct. 1938, pp. 173-175).

right to be surprised since they believe that even the most backward, primitive peoples have their own art, however rudimentary it may be'.³

According to the progressives, the hegemony of foreign art forms could only be overcome by educational schemes designed to raise the level of general cultural awareness and create the right atmosphere for nurturing a national style of art. Consequently, the proposed aims of many turn-of-the-century artistic societies included the organisation of public lectures and critical publications devoted to matters of good taste, to Romania's monuments and vernacular traditions and to the debate surrounding the creation of a 'national' style. While rejecting imported foreign academicism as inadequate for the expression of Romania's needs, these societies, nevertheless, promoted the discussion and exhibition of western art. This was intended both to inform those who had not travelled abroad and to stimulate new directions among Romania's artists.

The growth of artistic societies in the last three decades of the nineteenth century was stimulated, in part, by the example of literary groups such as the previously mentioned Iași *Junimea* Society. The Junimists, who attacked the cultural artificiality of using foreign models in a Romanian context, disseminated their ideas through the monthly *Convorbiri literare* (Literary Conversations), founded by Iacob Negruzzi (1842-1932; son of the Moldavian writer, Costache Negruzzi) and modelled on the Parisian *Revue des deux mondes*. This non-political publication, devoted to literature, history, philosophy and philology, was intended to reflect the broad interests and the striving for synthesis of its founders. It also served as a model for later periodicals such as *Literatură și arta română* (Romanian Art and Literature,

³ 'De sigur că mult s'ar miră străinii [...] când ar descoperi că a mai rămas o țara a cărei popor se îndoește încă că posedă o artă proprie; și ar avea dreptate să se mire, ei cari cred că popoarele sălbatece cele mai înapoiate își au arta lor, - fie ea cât de rudimentară', George Sterian, 'Arta românească. România are sau nu o artă națională?', *Arhitectura*, nr. 1, ian.-feb. 1906, p. 17. *Arhitectura*, which followed *Analele arhitecturii* as the main mouthpiece for Romanian architectural debate, was published in 1906, 1916, and then sporadically from 1919 until the present day.

1896-1910) and *Ileana* (1900-1). Through a combination of examples taken from both Romanian and European art, literature and historical-cultural debate, these sought to explore the multi-layered character of Romanian culture. *Junimea*, which increasingly became synonymous with enlightened conservatism, was opposed by liberal groups like the *Societatea literară* (Literary Society, later the Romanian Academic Society), founded in Bucharest in 1866, which held that tradition must not be an obstacle to progress and promoted rapid modernisation according to western models.

A common feature of the dynamic new artistic societies emerging at the turn of the century, in particular *Ileana* and *Tinerimea artistică* (Artistic Youth), is the partial reconciliation of these two opposing viewpoints. These societies were founded by young artists and intellectuals returning from abroad, in particular from Paris and Munich, where they had been inspired by the example of similar independent groups. While criticising superficial imitation of western styles, they believed that an appreciation and dissemination of foreign artistic developments was necessary to stimulate the birth of a new art movement in Romania. To this end, they included works by non-Romanians in their exhibitions and drew up ambitious plans for the invitation of foreign speakers to their conferences and for the discussion of international artistic developments in their publications.

The earliest Romanian artistic organisations, however, such as *Societatea Amicilor bellelor arte* (Friends of the Fine Arts Society), founded in Bucharest in 1872, were not set up in conscious opposition to the Schools of Fine Art, but were concerned primarily with raising public awareness of art in Romania. Consisting of a group of nine artists and collectors which included both Aman and Tattarescu,⁴ the society hoped 'to spread artistic taste in Romania, to encourage artistic production

⁴Grigore Cantacuzino (president), Theodor Aman and Constantin Esarcu (vice-presidents), Constantin I. Stăncescu (administrative director), Gheorghe M. Tattarescu, Cezar Bolliac, Alexandru Odobescu, Dumitru Berindei, Nicolae Grigorescu (members). Petre Oprea, *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, București, Meridiane, 1969, p. 10.

and to popularise works throughout the whole country'.⁵ This was to be achieved through exhibitions of both past and recent work, publications discussing exhibits and prizes for contemporary works by Romanian artists. As well as helping young artists sell their work within Romania, the society planned to publicise their work abroad through good quality lithographic or engraved reproductions and through a periodical news sheet.

The first exhibition of the group, held from 1 January until 22 February 1873 in ten rooms of Alexandru Orăscu's Grand Hotel du Boulevard (also known as Hotel Herdan) on the intersection of Calea Victoriei and Bucharest's new east-west axis Boulevard Elisabeta, somewhat ambitiously pretended to encompass 'as many works of art as can be found in the country'.⁶ Containing over a thousand exhibits, gathered following an appeal to art lovers, artists and even Prince Carol himself, the exhibition included old masters from private collections as well as contemporary Romanian works.⁷ By providing a general survey of Romania's artistic holdings, the organisers hoped to stimulate public taste and give a new impulse to Romanian painting. Hence contemporary works by Aman and Tattarescu were hung alongside paintings attributed to Breughel, Titian, Velázquez, Dürer and Van Dyck.⁸ Despite its heterogeneous nature, the exhibition generated a considerable amount of attention. This was due not only to the number and range of works, but also to the fact that the exhibition constituted the first real attempt at an overview of the state of art in Romania since the unification of the principalities. Furthermore, it introduced the public to the Barbizon *plein air* treatment of Romanian subject matter in the work of

⁵ 'de a răspîndi gustul artelor în România, a încuraja producțiunile artistice și a le populariza în toată țara', *Romînul*, 3 iunie 1872. Quoted by Oprea, *Socetăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 10.

⁶ 'a tuturor producțiunilor artistice cîte se vor afla în țara', *ibid.*

⁷ *Societatea amicilor bellelor-arte. Catalog de obiecte ce figurează în Expozițiunea publică din București la 1873*, II-a edițiune completată, București, 1873.

⁸ Some of these Old Masters were not original, but were copies made by Romanian artists during their studies abroad. See, for example, in the exhibition catalogue, the list of works lent by Constantin Esarcu which included copies of Van Dyck, of Pompeii wall-paintings and of Romanelli's *Sibyl* from Naples museum.

Nicolae Grigorescu who showed one hundred and forty-six canvases.⁹ Grigorescu's luminous palette, lively touch and quivering brushwork signalled a new departure from the classical or romantic approaches favoured by the Schools of Fine Art. His ability to flood his pictures with sunlight, capturing the particular intensity of vibrating light and atmosphere so typical of Romanian landscapes, embodied a powerful new quality of national expression which delighted the public.¹⁰ As well as integrating elements of folk art into his painting, for example in the embroidered blouse and headscarf of the *Peasant Woman from Muscel* (1867; fig. 4.1), he imbued his characters with well-defined individuality, seen in the young woman's ruddy complexion and shy, slightly distrustful expression. Through his depictions of Romanian landscape, peasants, gypsies or Jews, he encouraged younger artists to abandon the theoretical and idealistic constraints of studio painting for *plein air* studies direct from nature, choosing as their subject matter typical scenes from the daily life of Romania's rural landscape. His influence showed itself most strongly in the work of Ion Andreescu who left for the Barbizon after seeing Grigorescu's section at the 1873 exhibition.¹¹

The society's second exhibition, opened only ten months later in December 1873, was less successful. Although works from French, Italian, Flemish and Spanish schools were loaned from the collections of the historian and politician Mihai Kogălniceanu (1821-91), the diplomat and vice-president of the society Constantin Esarcu (1836-98) and the German gallery of Baron Tintzendorff, contemporary

⁹Grigorescu (1838-1907) had already exhibited twenty-six paintings at the third Exhibition of Contemporary Artists in 1870 at which he received a gold medal for his *Portrait of Herescu Năsturel*. The 1873 exhibition, however, represented the Romanian public's first real opportunity to appreciate the full extent of his spontaneous, lively approach to Romanian subject matter.

¹⁰The Minister of Public Education bought two canvases: *Old Veteran* and *Still Life* (Arhivele Statului București, fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, dos. 2306/873). Shortly after the Society's exhibition, Grigorescu held his own personal exhibition at which nearly a half of the three hundred works were sold, allowing him to finance a study trip to Italy.

¹¹Like Grigorescu, Ion Andreescu (1850-1882) was deeply influenced by the Barbizon school of Corot and Millet, applying his taste for *plein air* painting to images of Romanian rural life. His concern with reality and meaning over the picturesque and idyllic attracted sympathetic comment from the Romanian press which saw him as a leading representative of the Realist school in Romania.

artists had had insufficient time to prepare new canvases.¹² The third and final exhibition, held in January 1876, was by far the smallest, containing only forty-eight paintings (thirty-one of which were by Grigorescu). Its press coverage was largely overshadowed by events in the Balkans.¹³ With the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War and the departure of several prominent members abroad, the society dissolved. Despite its short life, the group had managed to draw public attention to the state of the arts in Romania, increasing awareness not only of the country's holdings of foreign art, but also of the contemporary work being produced by its own artists. It did not favour any specific stylistic agenda, publicising both the academic tradition promoted by the Schools of Fine Art and the new Realist-Impressionist approach of Grigorescu. Essentially, its role was to extend the artistic arena created by the founding of the Schools of Fine Art; nevertheless, it demonstrated the potential for semi-independent artistic organisations and provided a model for the creation of future societies.

Following the crowning of King Carol in 1881, a fresh group of young intellectuals, recently returned from studies in France and Germany, recognised the need for a forum for artistic debate within the newly independent country. In 1885, under the presidency of the poet Vasile Alecsandri (who was in the same year appointed Romanian minister to France), and the doctor Nicolae Kalinderu (1835-1902), the *Cercul artistic literar Intim Club* (Artistic-literary circle, the Intimate Club) was set up in the *Casa Strat* (Strat House) on Calea Victoriei.¹⁴ As the name suggests (*intim*: 'private' or 'intimate'), the club constituted an exclusive circle of upper-class *amateurs d'art*; however, it also contained sections devoted to music,

¹²For more on the collections of Kogălniceanu and Esarcu, see Petre Oprea, *Colecționări de artă bucureșteni*, București, Meridiane, 1976.

¹³Oprea, *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 13

¹⁴Formerly the home of Ion Strat (1836-79) a professor of economics at the University of Bucharest and Minister of Finance in 1865 and 1876.

literature and the fine arts.¹⁵ The club's broad artistic interests were demonstrated by the fact that organisers of the latter section included not only the painter George Demetrescu Mirea (1853/4-1934) and the sculptor Ion Georgescu, but also the architect Ion Mincu. All three were to play important roles in the creation of later societies and in the debate surrounding 'national' art. In a similar fashion to the Friends of the Fine Arts Society, the Intimate Club did not produce a specific artistic manifesto. Instead, it aimed to foster links between artists and art lovers and to make the public more aware of the work of young Romanian artists through exhibitions, concerts, recitals, conferences and balls.

The first exhibition, organised by Mirea, Georgescu and Mincu, opened on 1 June 1885 in the Strat House. It contained an important retrospective of the paintings of Ion Andreescu who had died three years before. The exhibition also presented the work of established academic artists such as Constantin Stăncescu (1837-1909) and the Transylvanian painter Sava Henția (1848-1904), together with that of a number of lesser-known amateur female artists.¹⁶ Press attention, however, concentrated largely on Andreescu and on the group of forty-seven canvases, including scenes from the War of Independence, exhibited by Grigorescu.¹⁷ The exhibition clearly demonstrated the growing polarization of art in Romania: on one hand, the academic styles favoured by Aman, Panaiteanu-Bardasare and the Schools of Fine Art and, on the other, the free brushwork and rejection of genre hierarchy embodied in the work

¹⁵The committee consisted of: Vasile Alecsandri (honorary president); Nicolae Kalinderu (president); Nicolae Cerchez and Ioan Brăescu (vice-presidents); George Olănescu (treasurer); Constantin Băicoianu, Alexandru Davila and Alexandru Cerchez (secretaries); Ion Mincu, George Demetrescu Mirea and Ion Georgescu (members of fine arts section); Stefan Vlădoianu, Constantin Dumitrescu and Ioan Paraschivescu (members of music section); D. Olănescu, Ștefan Mihăilescu and Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea (members of literary-dramatic section); N. Văcărescu, Theodor Ghica and Mărgăritărescu (events organisers). Oprea, *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 16.

¹⁶Although women were only permitted to attend the School of Fine Arts from 1894, many daughters of aristocratic families took lessons either abroad or at a number of private ateliers which sprang up in Bucharest following the reorganisation of the Schools of Fine Art in 1869 (see Petre Oprea, 'Note asupra învățămîntului artistic particular la București în ultimul pătrar al secolului al XIX-lea', *S.C.I.A.*, nr. 1, 1969, pp. 135-137).

¹⁷Claymoor, 'Din lume', *Romînul*, 28 mai 1885; 'Expozițiunea de tabele de la Intim Club', *Romînul*, 14 iulie 1885.

of Grigorescu and Andreescu. At the same time, the exhibition also revealed an increasing interest in Romanian subject matter, seen not only in the impressionistic peasant subjects of Grigorescu and Andreescu, but also in the academic painter George Demetrescu Mirea's interpretation of the traditional folk tale *Vîrful cu dor* (The Peak of Longing, 1883; fig. 3.29), now in the National Museum of Art. Describing the story of a young shepherd on a mountain peak near Sinaia who died from sorrow after being separated from his sheep, the tale was popularised by Carmen Sylva who included it in her collection *Pelesch Märchen* in 1882. Mirea's romantic treatment of the sorrowful shepherd languishing on the mountain top, wreathed by swirling clouds and winged nymphs whose outstretched arms embody his inner torment, won the praise of the critics.¹⁸ It also represented one of the earliest attempts to depict a Romanian folk tale in painting.

Following a second exhibition a year later, at which Andreescu and Grigorescu again held the place of honour, the activities of the Intimate Club seem to have petered out.¹⁹ Although less ambitious and more elitist than the Friends of the Fine Arts, the Intimate Club was important because it organised the only major exhibitions between 1881-1890.²⁰ As well as introducing Grigorescu and Andreescu

¹⁸The enduring popularity of this work was demonstrated in an 1896 article by Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești which declared it the only work of any value produced by a modern Romanian artist.

'Impressions d'art. M. Vermont', *Revista orientală*, mai 1896, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹Oprea claims this was due to a series of unsuccessful recitals and literary events, as well as to the fact that membership of the club was restricted to a close circle of upper-class patrons (*Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 18).

²⁰The official salon, *Expoziția artiștilor în viață* (Exhibition of Contemporary Artists), instituted in 1865, did not take place in the years 1873-1880 and 1882-1893. The reasons for this are unclear. Oprea blames official apathy and the preference for non-Romanian artists (*Societăți artistice bucureștene*, pp. 5-6). It is interesting, however, that the longest period of non-activity, which followed the crowning of King Carol in 1881, coincided with the pause in work on Castle Peleş (1883-1893). With official patronage so closely tied to royal artistic activities, it is possible that the King's concern with consolidating his new kingdom, in particular the recently acquired port area of Constanța, focused attention away from the organisation of artistic events.

to the public, these provided a rare forum for younger artists, such as the twenty year-old Nicolae Vermont, to show their work and exchange ideas.²¹

Artistic Circle, the Exhibition of Independent Artists and Ileana

Four years after the collapse of the Intimate Club, Georgescu proposed the creation of another society better suited to defending the professional interest of artists. The motivation for this arose partly out of dissatisfaction with the selection and display of works in Romania's section at the 1889 Paris Exhibition.²² The aim of the *Societatea Cercul artistic* (Artistic Circle Society), founded in April 1890, echoed those of its two predecessors: 'the development of artistic taste within the country, the organisation of exhibitions and the launching of a review'.²³ This was to be achieved through a number of concrete measures, including loans to society members, the setting up of a studio for teaching and working, the organisation of group outings to places of artistic interest and the creation of a specialised library.²⁴

The first exhibitions of the group, held in December 1890, February 1892 and March 1893 in Galleron's recently completed Romanian Athenaeum, were received with enthusiasm by the press and public. Importantly, they included a large number

²¹Vermont (1866-1932), who became a prominent member of both Ileana and Artistic Youth, is mentioned as a contributor to the second exhibition of the Intimate Club (Lyonel, 'Expozițiunea de la Intim Club', *Romînul*, 1 iunie 1886).

²²Oprea, *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 20. The section was considered unrepresentative, even by medal winners such as Ion Georgescu and Ștefan Ionescu-Valbudea, because it exhibited the work of only nine painters, three sculptors and four architects (of whom two were French). Dominated by the paintings of Grigorescu (nineteen canvases) and George Demetrescu Mirea (seven canvases), the painting and drawing section also contained works by such minor artists as George Popovici, Zéphirine Stancescu and Eugen Ghica. The final four painters were Oscar Obedeaneu, Constantin Pascali, Gheorghe Tattarescu and Eugen Voinescu ('Catalogue général officiel', *World's Fair of 1889*, in series *Modern Art in Paris 1855-1900*, Garland, London, 1981, vol. 5, pp. 261-263).

²³'Dezvoltarea gustului artelor frumoase în țară, organizarea de expoziții și înființarea unei reviste', *Statutele și regulamentul Cercului artistic fondat la 1 aprilie 1890*, București, 1890.

²⁴*Ibid.* The founding committee was composed of: Ion Georgescu (president); Ștefan Ionescu-Valbudea, Ion Bărbulescu and Ion Voinescu (vice-presidents); Alexandru Paraschivescu (known by the pseudonym Juan Alpar), V[?] Niculescu, G[?] Gr. Gorovei, Constantin Artachino (secretaries); Dumitru Marinescu (treasurer); Petre Ionescu (librarian); Ștefan Nestorescu, Athanase Constantinescu, Anton Constantinescu, Andrei Marian and Isidor Vermont (members).

of works by up-and-coming young Romanian artists then studying in Paris and Munich, including Ștefan Luchian and Nicolae Vermont. Georgescu, the society's president, had also taken the forward-thinking initiative of inviting pupils in the final years at the Bucharest School of Fine Art to belong to the society.²⁵ This gave exhibition experience to figures like Constantin Artachino and Kimon Loghi, even before they left for the Académie Julian in Paris or the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich.²⁶ Although at an early stage in his development, Luchian's works sent from Paris for the 1893 exhibition, including *By the Sea (Frenchwoman working, 1892, National Museum of Art)* and *Near to Maison Lafitte* (date and whereabouts unknown), revealed an awareness of French Impressionism and a taste for *plein air* subjects.²⁷ Other young artists studying abroad contributed specifically Romanian genre scenes, such as Munich-based Nicolae Vermont's *Bragagiul* (Peddler; formerly in Simu Museum, now in Museum of Art Collections), exhibited in 1892. The fresh, brilliant tones of the subject's Turkish costume and the brightly coloured wares in his basket set against a sun-bleached wall evoke the picturesque, oriental atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Bucharest street-life.²⁸

Financial difficulties in the autumn of 1893 led to a reorganisation of the society and the abandonment of almost all group activities outside exhibitions.²⁹ Furthermore, the society's earlier successes had motivated the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (*Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice*) to reinstate the Exhibition of Contemporary Artists (*Expoziția artiștilor în viață*) after a gap of thirteen years. The opening of the latter, on 1 May 1894, was intended to deflect public attention from the fourth exhibition of the Artistic Circle in November.

²⁵Petre Oprea, 'Constantin Artachino. Cîteva date generale asupra vieții și operei artistului', *S.C.I.A.*, nr. 3-4, 1957, p. 343.

²⁶See appendix 4.

²⁷Mentioned by Ionel Jianu and Petru Comarnescu, *Ștefan Luchian*, București, E.S.P.L.A., 1956, p. 177.

²⁸Radu Ionescu and Amelia Pavel, 'Cîteva date cu privire la activitatea lui Vermont în timpul studiilor la München (1887-1893)', *S.C.I.A.*, nr. 1-2, 1956, p. 339.

²⁹*Statutele Cercului artistic din București votate în ședința de la 29 octombrie 1893*, București, 1893.

Nevertheless, the contrast between official preference for academic portrait and mythological painting, and the Artistic Circle's promotion of *plein air* landscape and Realist genre scenes in the work of young artists like Luchian again won the society public approval. Encouraged by this success, in April 1895, under the auspices of the Bucharest School of Fine Arts, the group set up an evening school for drawing, sculpture and engraving, taught by society members including Georgescu and Luchian.

Up until this point, the artistic societies which had developed in Bucharest had seen themselves as complementary to, rather than in reaction against, the School of Fine Art. Many of their members were either teachers or even students at the School and it is clear that they viewed some of their activities, for example the Artistic Circle's evening classes, as an extension of the School's sphere of influence. Nevertheless, the reinstatement of the official salon, the Exhibition of Contemporary Artists, challenged one of the prime functions of the societies (although many artists exhibited simultaneously at both official and society exhibitions). In addition, the societies' willingness to support the new talent of young artists returning from abroad was the cause of a growing stylistic disjunction between their art and that promoted by the Schools and official exhibitions.

Towards the end of 1895, conflict erupted with the director of the Bucharest School of Fine Arts, the painter Constantin Stăncescu, over the selection of works for the Exhibition of Contemporary Artists. As president of the selection committee (and also, incidentally, honorary president of the Artistic Circle), Stăncescu was accused of favouritism. The dispute split the Artistic Circle; Luchian and Artachino, two of Stăncescu's most fervent opponents, even complained to the Minister of Education and Culture, Take Ionescu, who tried to placate them by buying some of their paintings. Their dissatisfaction was further compounded when they were prevented from withdrawing their works from the official salon. The following year, the group

of disgruntled members, led by the dynamic young art critic Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești (1871-1922), refused to participate in the Exhibition of Contemporary Artists, organising instead the Exhibition of Independent Artists (*Expoziția Independenților*).

Its opening, on 2 May 1896, only two days after the vernissage of the official salon, was accompanied by a flurry of sensational publicity stirred up by Bogdan-Pitești. A fervent admirer of French Symbolism, and particularly sympathetic to its social awareness and suspicion of scientific progress, Bogdan-Pitești had been expelled from France for alleged anarchist activities in August 1894.³⁰ On his return to Romania, he became closely involved with the group surrounding the Symbolist writer Alexandru Macedonski,³¹ before taking up the cause of the young artists. His inflammatory tactics were designed to attract maximum attention. The exhibition space, chosen for its confrontational site in the upper floor of 12 Str. Franklin directly across the street from the Athenaeum where the official salon was being held, was hung with tricolour flags. The presence of a red flag, flown provocatively above the entrance, caused the prefect of the police, General Manu, to attempt to shut down the exhibition; he was dissuaded by the last-minute intervention of Bogdan-Pitești. Inevitably, the uproar attracted the public: according to one source, the exhibition received several hundred visitors on its first day alone.³²

³⁰Theodor Enescu, 'Simbolismul și pictura', *Pagini de artă modernă românească*, București, Ed. Academiei R.S.R., 1974, p. 22. During his time in Paris, Bogdan-Pitești moved in the Symbolist and anarchist circles of Verlaine, Barrès, Tailhade, Mirbeau, Moréas, De Vogüé and Péladan. He was particularly friendly with Félix Fénéon, the editor, from 1894, of *La Revue Blanche* (the mouthpiece of the avant-garde, anarchists and supporters of Dreyfus); and of Joris-Karl Huysmans, who intervened in his favour following his arrest. He became one of the most important and charismatic promoters of new trends in Romanian art at the turn of the century and built up one of the first extensive collections of paintings by Romanian artists. In the years before the First World War, he founded the satirical paper *Seara* (Evening) and established an artists' colony at his estate in Vlaici. His extensive art collection, auctioned in 1924, included works by Luchian, Vermont, Artachino, Baltazar, Cuțescu-Storck, Ressu, Pallady, Dărăscu, Iser, Dimitrescu, Tonitza, Paciurea and Brâncuși.

³¹Symbolism in Romanian literature, as in painting, appeared largely under French influence. Macedonski (1854-1920), its most prominent representative and founder of the magazine *Literatorul*, was a flamboyant artist who believed strongly in aesthetic perfection. His poetry is filled with images of precious stones, fabulous mirages and morbid obsessions.

³²Nic., 'De la expoziția artiștilor independenți', *Românul*, 4/16 mai, 1896, p. 2. According to another journalist, while the artists at the official salon 'spent a month climbing the stairs of the Ministry' to

The four organisers of the exhibition - Bogdan-Pitești, Artachino, Luchian and Vermont - styled themselves 'Secessionists' in a clear reference to the first exhibition of the Munich Secession in 1892.³³ Their intention to break with tradition was embodied in Munich-trained Vermont's exhibition poster which depicted the allegorical figure of Artistic Truth striding over the flotsam of past art (fig. 4.2). With a palm branch in one hand and a crowning wreath of laurel in her hair, she holds aloft the blazing torch of innovation as she treads on the broken antique statues and columns, the easels and canvases of academic art. This image of artistic freedom recalls the palm-bearing allegorical female representing political freedom in the 1849 oil painting *Romania Casting off her Handcuffs on the Field of Liberty* (fig. 4.3). Painted by another Jewish artist, the Budapest-born Constantin Daniel Rosenthal, this embodied the aspirations of the unsuccessful 1848 uprisings. Vermont repeated the theme on the front cover of the exhibition's catalogue (fig. 4.4). Here Artistic Truth stands at the edge of the sea against sunrise-tinted clouds, her unbound hair flowing behind her as she brandishes aloft her broken fetters. Recalling Franz von Stuck's love of full-frontality, her pose also foreshadows the naked youth with raised arms and sun-like hair designed by the paganist, back-to-nature *Jugend* illustrator Fidus (Hugo Höppener) for the cover of the Russian poet, Konstantin Balmont's *We'll be like the Sun* (*Budem kak solnstem*) of 1903.

The final page of the catalogue carried an even more direct jibe at officialdom in the form of a cheeky caricature of Stăncescu by Nicolae Petrescu (also known by his pseudonym *Găină* or 'Hen'; fig. 4.5). With satyr's ears and characteristic, over-large top hat, the Fine Arts director's objections have been stifled by the handkerchief

persuade an unsympathetic Minister to buy their paintings, the Independents sold works to the public 'every single day' (Dan., 'Societatea pentru dezvoltarea artelor', *Adevărul*, 7 iulie 1897).

³³Petre Oprea and Barbu Brezianu, 'Cu privire la salonul "artiștilor independenți"', *S.C.I.A.*, nr. 1-2, 1964, p. 136. The art critic and professor of art history at Bucharest School of Fine Art, Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș, was asked to help the Independents organise their group along the lines of similar foreign societies, in particular the Munich Secession whose first exhibition both he and other members of the group, including Vermont, had attended (Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'La încheierea veacului al XIX-lea', *Memorii I*, București, Ed. „Grai și Suflet”, 1991, p. 132).

stuffed in his mouth. The catalogue was accompanied by a manifesto, written in French and signed by the four organisers. It explained that the exhibition was intended less as a rupture with the official salon than as an effort to free art of all official constrictions: 'Persuaded that all regulation is a hindrance to the development of art and artists, we wish art to be free and independent and want artists to answer only to their conscience and to their works'. It was hoped that this attempt at 'free art' would give 'new impetus to art in Romania'. To emphasize this freedom, the committee declared it would accept any work for exhibition on the sole (and rather vague) condition that it was 'a work of art'.³⁴

Behind these bold declarations, however, the works of art themselves revealed a scanty absorption of modern artistic developments. Even Bogdan-Pitești felt compelled to express his frustration with the group's lack of innovation in an article published soon after the exhibition opened:

Truly, too little attention is devoted to matters of art in Romania.

And, since this complaint has often been formulated, we have adopted the harmful custom of according an equal interest to all works. The first creator of lumps of paint to come along is accepted as a painter [...] Even if Rembrandt were to come to Bucharest, he would be considered on the same level as any old Stăncescu.

The result is complete stagnation in art. No movement, no passion, apathy and general indifference on the part of the public.

Romanian artists themselves possess neither the faith nor the radiating imagination which gives beauty to works of art.

Some of them do have talent, but they limit themselves to painting in minute detail - all that they see around them - a portrait, a still life, a genre work, a study, a landscape - without feeling anything, without thinking anything [...]

³⁴Persuadés que toute réglementation est une entrave au développement de l'art et des artistes, nous voulons que l'art soit libre, indépendant et que les artistes ne relèvent que de leur conscience et de leurs œuvres [...] nous nous séparons pour faire une tentative d'art libre, tentative qui donnera, nous l'espérons, un nouvel essor à l'art en Roumanie [...] Toute œuvre d'art sera accueillie, à la seule condition qu'elle soit une œuvre d'art', 'Manifeste de la première exposition des artistes indépendents', as quoted in the introduction of *„Ileana”*. *Societate pentru dezvoltarea artelor în România. Statute*, București, Carol Göbl, 1897.

Today's Romanian artists who do possess talent have almost all studied abroad. And there they [...] took no part in the respective artistic movements; they did not bring us back any new note, any echo of the current artistic trends of the West. Their masters were Bouguereau, Bonnat, Carolus Duran and the worst of a banal and lowly bunch. As docile pupils, they only copied and absorbed the influence of these less than brilliant masters [...]

And yet, in the studio, in that great city of Paris, everywhere around them, other trends revealed themselves, a flurry of schools, of seekers, of people thirsting after an ideal - yet they ignored them.³⁵

Bogdan-Pitești outlined the movements which should serve as a model for aspiring Romanian artists: the Pre-Raphaelites (Burne-Jones and Rossetti), the Impressionists (Manet and Pissarro) and, in particular, the Symbolists, including Puvis de Chavannes, Gustav Moreau and Ferdinand Hodler. Declaring art's ultimate aim to be the exploration of 'the incomparable domain of the pure Idea', he felt the only artist worthy of discussion at the exhibition was Vermont because 'his idea alone interests him, he wants to paint his impression, his personal sensation, and not things, vile materialities, which exist only through our impression'.³⁶ In works such as *Christ*

³⁵Vraiment l'on accorde trop peu d'attention aux choses artistiques en Roumanie.

Et comme ce reproche a été souvent formulé, on a pris la funeste habitude d'accorder une attention égale à toutes les œuvres. Le premier fabricant de croûtes venu est accepté comme peintre [...] Mais aussi Rembrandt lui-même viendrait-il à Bucarest qu'on le mettrait sur le même plan qu'un Stancesco quelconque.

Il en résulte une stagnation complète en art: Pas de mouvement, pas de passion, une apathie et une indifférence générale du public.

Les artistes roumains eux-mêmes ne possèdent ni la foi, ni l'imagination rayonnante qui donne la beauté aux œuvres d'art.

Il y en a qui ont du talent, mais ils se bornent à peindre minutieusement ce qu'ils voient autour d'eux, - un portrait, une nature morte, un tableau de genre, une étude, un paysage, - sans rien sentir, sans rien penser [...]

Les artistes roumains qui sont aujourd'hui en possession de leur talent, ont presque tous étudié l'art à l'étranger. Et là, ils [...] n'ont pris aucune part aux mouvements respectifs artistiques; ils ne sont venus nous apporter aucune note nouvelle, aucun écho des tendances artistiques actuelles de l'Occident. Leurs maîtres furent Bouguereau, Bonnat, Carolus Duran et les plus mauvais d'une pléiade banale et sans élévation. En dociles élèves, ils ne font que copier et rester sous l'influence de ces maîtres peu brillants [...]

Mais là, dans l'atelier, dans ce grand Paris, partout à côté d'eux, d'autres tendances se manifestaient, une foule d'écoles, de chercheurs, d'assoifés d'idéal: ils les ont ignorés', Bogdan-Pitești, 'Impressions d'art. M. Vermont', pp. 8-9.

³⁶'le domaine incomparable de l'Idée pure'; 'son idée seule l'intéresse, il veut peindre son impression, sa sensation personnelle et non les choses, matérialités viles, qui ne sont que par notre impression', *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

Falling under the Weight of the Cross, A Dream of Ovid in Tomis and *The Temptation of St. Antony*, Vermont demonstrated his interest in the potential for subjective feeling and evocative suggestion embodied in the Symbolist themes of dreams, meditation and mystical religious thought.³⁷ These three canvases mark the beginning of a vogue for Symbolist ideas, particularly among artists trained in the studios of Moreau in Paris or von Stuck in Munich, which continued to permeate works produced by Bucharest artistic societies until the First World War.

Despite Bogdan-Pitești's complaints of insufficient artistic innovation, the Independents' Exhibition represented the most determined attempt so far to break away from official control of art. It provided an opportunity for lesser-known, younger artists, including Ion Angelescu, Lucian Dolinsky, Nicolae Grant, Ion Țincu, Alexandru Satmari, Stela Șerbănescu and Sonia Rogouska, to exhibit their works. Moreover, its aims were recognised as necessary and justified through the support of established artists such as George Demetrescu Mirea, Georgescu and Grigorescu (who became the exhibition's honorary president although simultaneously exhibiting at the official salon). It received a favourable reception in the press and even the new Minister of Education, Petre Poni, declared that he would buy works from both exhibitions in an equal measure.³⁸ Nevertheless, despite the tendency of some modern historians to see the exhibition as unique and epochal in the development of modern art in Romania,³⁹ its aims were not radically different from those of earlier groups such as the Artistic Circle. As the Independents themselves conceded in their manifesto, they did not intend to promote a new style of art: 'We are not the champions of an *art nouveau*, of a new school; we want only to present ourselves to

³⁷Shortly after the exhibition, Bogdan-Pitești commissioned Vermont, together with Luchian and the French Neo-Impressionist, Maximilien Luce (who also participated in the exhibition), to illustrate his book of Symbolist poems, *Sensations intimes*.

³⁸Nic., 'De la expoziția artiștilor independenți', *Românul*, 4/16 mai, 1896.

³⁹See, for example, Steven A. Mansbach, 'The "Foreignness" of Classical Modern Art in Romania', *Art Bulletin*, September 1988, p. 535.

the public through the sincerity of our work'.⁴⁰ The primary aims of the group echoed those of earlier societies: to win a measure of freedom from official control, to create an open forum for the exhibition of works by young artists and to make the public aware of the need for artistic reform. That the Independents themselves saw little incompatibility between their work and that of the Artistic Circle was demonstrated by their unsuccessful attempt (now under the name 'Ileana'), in November 1897, to merge with the Circle.⁴¹ Their notoriety derived less from the art they exhibited than from the colourful character of Bogdan-Pitești and their noisy methods of attracting public attention. A favourite publicity strategy was pointing ridicule at official figures. This was seen, for example, in the satirical posters and caricatures of prominent politicians and artists which plastered the walls of the Independents' café-stand at the open-air fête organised in Bragadiru Park by the Cultural League from 8-9 June 1896.⁴²

When attempts to organise a second exhibition the following year were thwarted by financial problems and venue difficulties, the four leaders of the Independents decided to give the group a firmer basis by founding a new society in November 1897. They were joined by another Independent, Constantin Jiquidi; two former colleagues from the Académie Julian, Constantin Aricescu and Constantin Pascali;⁴³ the publicist Ion C. Balcabașa and the architect Ștefan Ciocârlan.⁴⁴ The

⁴⁰Nous ne sommes pas les champions d'un art nouveau, d'une nouvelle école, nous voulons seulement nous présenter devant le public avec la sincérité de notre œuvre', introduction of „Ileana”. *Societate pentru desvoltarea artelor în România. Statute.*

⁴¹This proposal, made in light of the fact that several members of Ileana (including Titus Alexandrescu, Juan Alpar and Arthur Georgescu) were also members of the Artistic Circle, was refused by the latter, anxious to maintain the individuality of the Circle. Made ambitious by this refusal, Ileana then turned down the Circle's invitation to join its December exhibition, opening its own international exhibition two months later.

⁴²These were drawn by Luchian, Eugen Voinescu and Constantin Jiquidi (Claymoor, 'Carnet du high-life', *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 11/23 juin 1896, p. 2; *Timpul*, 11 iunie 1896, p. 3).

⁴³For a list of Romanian painters who studied at the Académie Julian, see Catherine Fehrer et al., *The Julian Academy. Paris 1868-1939*, New York, Shepherd Gallery, 1989.

⁴⁴The caricaturist Constantin Jiquidi (1865-99) did satirical drawings for the Independents, as well as for the reviews *Revista nouă* and *Bobîrnacul*. Constantin Aricescu (b. 1861), trained at the Académie Julian under Bouguereau from 1885-89. Constantin Pascali (1860-1929) exhibited at the Paris 1889 Exhibition while in his first year at the Académie Julian where he stayed until 1894. Ștefan Ciocârlan

group named themselves „*Ileana*”, *Societate pentru dezvoltarea artelor în România* (“*Ileana*”, Society for the Development of the Arts in Romania). *Ileana Cosânzeana* is the legendary heroine of Romanian folklore; betrothed to *Făt-Frumos* (Prince Charming), the Sun God, she is the bearer of light and beauty, embodying the sunrise, the spring of life and, implicitly, a promising new dawn for Romanian art.

Despite the choice of an emblematic national folk figurehead, *Ileana*’s statutes revealed decidedly European aspirations.⁴⁵ Announcing that the principal aim of the group was to ‘create an artistic movement in Romania’, the society declared that this could only be achieved by following the example of more established artistic nations.⁴⁶ To this end, it planned to organise at least one international exhibition a year in Bucharest, as well as sending its own work for exhibition abroad. The society’s First International Exhibition was held from 22 February until 1 April 1898 in the large marble room of the Hotel Union on Str. Regală (now Str. Ion Câmpineanu), just off Calea Victoriei.⁴⁷ For the first time, non-Romanian works of art were sent from abroad to Bucharest, rather than being borrowed from the holdings of Romanian collections. In fact, out of sixty-four exhibitors, almost one half were French, German, Dutch, Swiss, Greek or Italian.⁴⁸ They included artists already associated with the Romanian court, such as Jean-Jules Lecomte du Noüy, who

(1856-1937) trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris under J. Gaudet. His activities as a publicist were as important as those as an architect in the dissemination of his ideas concerning the importance of Romania’s architectural past in the creation of a ‘national’ style. As well as helping found the reviews *Analele arhitecturii* and *Arhitectura*, he was closely involved in the setting up of the Society of Romanian Architects in 1891. At the time of his involvement with *Ileana*, he was a chief architect with Bucharest city council.

⁴⁵The statutes were drawn up by the intellectuals and theorists of the group: Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, Ion Balcaș, Ștefan Ciocârlan, A[?] Sturdza (writer and former cabinet chairman in the Ministry of Education), Léo Bachelin (King Carol’s librarian) and the critic Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș (*Statute*, p. 9).

⁴⁶Créer un mouvement artistique en Roumanie, voilà, aux termes de nos statuts, le but principal que nous poursuivons’, *‘Iliane’ Société pour l’avancement des arts en Roumanie. Règlement pour la première exposition d’art*, Bucarest, Carol Göbl, 1898.

⁴⁷I. C. B[alcaș], ‘Expozițiile de pictură’, *Adevărul*, 15 februarie 1898.

⁴⁸31 foreign exhibitors, representing a total of 35 works out of 173. ‘Nomenclatura operilor expuse’, *‘Iliane’ Société pour l’avancement des arts en Roumanie. Règlement pour la première exposition d’art*, pp. 22-26.

exhibited a *Study of a Head*, or Romanian-born French artists like the Orientalist Pierre Bellet (born in Galați) who contributed Algerian scenes. Notably, there were also a number of painters, including the Greek Georg Jakobides and the Germans Otto Seitz and Max Schneidt, who had either studied or taught at the Munich Akademie der Bildenden Künste where many of the members of Ileana trained. Few of the foreign participants, however, contributed works which could enlighten the Bucharest public of recent developments in western art. Even the Paris-based Alsatian artist Jean-Jacques Henner exhibited one of his pre-1880 *Nymph* studies, rather than an example of the Symbolist works with political overtones for which he became better known in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Many of the contributors, for example the Swiss painter Théophil Preiswerk, or the Italian Arturo Rietti, exhibited a competent but uninspiring range of landscapes, genre pieces and portraits similar to the work of foreign-trained Romanian artists such as Menelas Simonidy or Oscar Obedeanu. Romanian critics were quick to notice the resemblance, declaring that, compared to the foreign exhibitors, 'Romanian art has nothing to be ashamed of'.⁴⁹ The critics were also pleased with the preference for national subject-matter (landscapes, portraits, peasant scenes) in the work of Romanian artists. Furthermore, they delighted in the fact that the clearest echoes of French Impressionism were seen in the work of Académie Julian-trained Romanian artists such as Aricescu and Luchian. The titles of Aricescu's works, for example *Moonlight Effect*, *Sunlight Effect* or *Morning Effect*, suggest an Impressionist preoccupation with capturing precise combinations of colour, form and light.⁵⁰ Luchian's free brushwork and sketchy treatment of outline and volume in paintings

⁴⁹'Arta românească n'are de ce roși', B. Brănișteanu, 'Expoziția „Ileanei”', *Adevărul*, 5 martie 1898.

⁵⁰B. Brănișteanu, 'Expoziția „Ileanei. Prima expozițiune internațională de pictura din România”', *Adevărul*, 3 martie 1898.

like *View from Mahalaua Dracului* (Devil's Suburb) or *Haycart* were seen as further evidence of Romanian awareness of Impressionist techniques.⁵¹

Luchian's work also demonstrated the growing influence of the Symbolist theories promoted by Bogdan-Pitești who, at the beginning of 1898, had encouraged him to become involved in the literary circles around Macedonski, Alexandru Obedenaru, Mircea Demetriad and fellow Ileana member Ion C. Balcabașa. The Symbolist overtones of Luchian's pastel drawing *In Memory of a Beautiful Dream*, shown at the exhibition (National Museum of Art; fig. 4.6), were noted by Bachelin:

a delicate female head, pale and calm as death, lying in the funereal wreath of her black hair, evokes the idea of some Ophelia plucked away by love in the bloom of her youth. The pinkish and pale-green notes of the background intone a discreet, tender litany around this sweet, slender profile, making this canvas a chef-d'œuvre of sentiment and melancholy. ⁵²

Luchian returned to the popular Symbolist theme of 'Ophelia' in his drawing of the same for Bogdan-Pitești from around the same period (fig. 4.7). It follows a similar format to the pastel, depicting a pallid Ophelia, her eyes closed in death and her flower-adorned hair floating around her like a wreath. Luchian used a similar female in his design for a poster for Ileana (fig. 4.8); this time, however, the attitude of the figure, her head cradled in her arm, suggests she is only sleeping, a metaphor for the slumbering art of Romania waiting to be awoken by the young artists.

Bogdan-Pitești was not the only Romanian intellectual disseminating Symbolist ideas in Bucharest. As early as 1896, Nicolae Vaschide, a Romanian psychologist based in Paris, wrote a column in *Constituționalul* (Constitutional)

⁵¹Expoziția „Ileanei”, *Adevărul*, 5 martie 1898. Both works are now in the National Museum of Art.

⁵²une délicate tête de femme, blême et calme comme la mort, couchée dans le deuil de ses cheveux noirs, évoque l'idée de quelque Ophélie cueillie par l'amour dans la fleur de l'âge. Les notes rosées et vert-pâle du fond chantent autour de ce doux et fin profil une litanie discrète et tendre qui fait de cette toile un chef d'œuvre de sentiment et de mélancolie', Léo Bachelin, 'Exposition "Ileana"', *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 4/16 mars 1898.

informing the Romanian public about literary symbolism in France and Belgium.⁵³ Similarly, French-language Romanian reviews, such as the *Revue Franco-Roumaine* (founded 1901), edited by Theodor Cornel, informed the public of turn-of-the-century developments in French art and literature. The Ileana society's growing preoccupation with the avant-garde and Symbolist circles of Paris, Brussels and Munich was revealed in the pronounced internationalism of its own review *Ileana*, produced under the direction of Balcabaşa between 1900-1. Its opening editions ambitiously announced that the magazine had ensured the co-operation of the French artists Paul Renouard, Louise Abbéma and Georges Rochegrosse, of the British artists Frank Brangwyn⁵⁴ and Walter Crane, as well as of former members of the Belgian society *Les XX*, including Théo Van Rysselberghe and Fernand Khnopff. Most of the above, it was declared, had agreed to send works specially designed for inclusion in the publication. Although these never appeared due to the review's early collapse in 1901, the four published editions did feature a design for a fan by Mucha, as well as drawings by the French artists Etiènne Azambre and Alexandre Séon.⁵⁵ The latter, an assistant of Puvis de Chavannes and co-founder, with Joséphin Péladan, of the Salon de la Rose + Croix, was given particular attention, with an article devoted to his work in the third edition and unrealised plans to use one of his designs for the cover of a future issue.⁵⁶

Stylistically, the review drew heavily on the Munich periodical *Jugend*, published by a co-founder of the Monist League, Georg Hirth, sharing its celebration of the organic union of healthy youth and nature, pagan sun worship and symbolic

⁵³Lorellino (N. Vaschide), 'Din Paris - Simbolismul', *Constituționalul*, 28-31 martie (9-12 aprilie) & 2 (14) aprilie 1896 (mentioned in Enescu, 'Simbolismul și pictura', p. 20).

⁵⁴Although Brangwyn's work never featured in *Ileana*, he did contribute twenty-five views of London, Spain, Bruges and Messina to the 1912 Artistic Youth Exhibition.

⁵⁵Mucha's 1899 fan design, entitled *Le Vent qui passe emporte la jeunesse*, was published in the second edition (1900, p. 21). The latter's editor, Ion Duican, announced that the Czech artist had sent the review 'a stock of works and studies' ('ne-a trimes un stok de lucrări și studii', p. 23). None of the other designs were ever published.

⁵⁶Ion C. Balcabaşa, 'Către abonați', *Ileana*, nr. 3&4, p. 33.

artistic rebirth. With the exception of Constantin Artachino who studied in Paris, *Ileana*'s main illustrators - Vermont, Luchian, Loghi and Ludovic Bassarab - had all trained in Munich in the late 1880s and 1890s.⁵⁷ In both their subject matter and its treatment, their work carries echoes of *Jugend* illustrations by artists such as Fritz Erle, Hanns Fechner or Angelo Jank. This was seen particularly in cover and frontispiece depictions of Ileana herself, often set in a dreamy, Symbolist atmosphere, amongst flowers or against the sun. In Luchian's cover for the first edition, for example, in a similar fashion to Erle's 12 November 1898 *Jugend* title page, she is shown as a young maiden staring challengingly out at the viewer (figs. 4.9 & 4.10). Her full profile, raised chin and parted lips, together with the rich contrast of luxuriant dark hair and white highlights on nose, flowers and headband, imbue her with a life-giving, sexual promise, heavy with the symbolism of artistic rebirth. In Vermont's frontispiece for the same edition, she reclines dreamily amongst irises (fig. 4.11). The combination of heavily outlined figure-drawing set against the flat, decorative plane of evenly-spaced irises, recalls the unsigned *Jugend* cover of 15 April 1899 (fig. 4.12) and demonstrates a clear awareness of the conventions of Art Nouveau graphic design. This is further enhanced by the bold, hand-written text overlaying the flowers and by the cartouche containing the date '1900' in the upper corner.

In a similar vein, Constantin Artachino's frontispiece for the second edition of the review, published in September 1900, shows the head of a mature Ileana, again in full profile, set against a background of huge sunflowers, pagan symbols of life and fertility (fig. 4.13). Although less stylised than Vermont's drawing, it still makes use of distinct outlines and off-centering on an elongated, frieze-like format, reminiscent of Hanns Fechner's cropped arrangement of a young woman with a tambourine

⁵⁷See appendix 4. Few biographical details are known about Bassarab, although he also exhibited with Artistic Youth through the first decade of the new century and held an individual exhibition of his oil paintings in Bucharest in 1913.

against a backdrop of large, hanging leaves (*Jugend*, 12 November 1898; fig. 4.14). Kimon Loghi's frontispiece for the third edition shows a more youthful Ileana, with flowers in her untied hair, poised like the sun between the upper branches of two trees (fig. 4.15). While the frieze of hearts along the base recalls the simplicity of vernacular motifs, the combination of a youthful, flower-adorned female and the strong upwards growth of the healthy forms of nature recalls Richard Riemerschmid's design for the 19 June 1897 title page of *Jugend*. Similarly, Vermont's pastel drawing of a smiling bourgeois woman with tossed back head, for the cover of the second edition of *Ileana* (fig. 4.16) closely echoes Jank's 19 September 1896 *Jugend* cover (fig. 4.17). Bassarab's illustration for *Ileana*'s next edition depicts the profiled, slightly frowning head of an older woman, circumscribed by the folk heroine's symbolic golden sun and surrounded by classical paraphernalia, including a palm branch, lyre, serpent, vines and grotesque masks, popular with *Jugend* contributors like von Stuck (fig. 4.18).

Symbolist overtones also infused illustrations by Vermont and Arthur Garguromin-Verona for poems by Mircea Demetriad and Bogdan-Pitești featured in the review. Vermont surrounded Demetriad's symbolism-laden *Unicei* (To the Only One) with a writhing border of dancing, Bacchanalian nymphs and youths (fig. 4.19). For Bogdan-Pitești's *Berceuse d'amour*, describing the lasting pain of a man lied to by his lover, he depicted an embracing couple overlooked by the sinuous, draped form of a bespectacled skeleton whose bony arm points towards a clock in the opposite corner, as if to indicate the transience of earthly love (fig. 4.20). Even more dramatic is Verona's illustration for *Ave Lux* by Elaine d'Am, a poem exploring the myriad manifestations of light (fig. 4.21). A luminous female figure, swathed in a translucent veil and with arms aloft, rises moon-like into the night sky, followed by a swarm of bats fluttering upwards towards her aureole of light. Verona's radiant 'moon woman' recalls the pagan 'sun people' reappearing in the work of Secessionist

artists across Europe, from Fidus' *We'll be like the Sun*, to Janis Rozentāls' youthful figures worshipping the sunrise of the god Potrimps in one of his friezes for the façade of the Riga Latvian Society building of 1910.⁵⁸

Ileana's universally recognised symbolism and self-proclaimed international orientation caused some critics to accuse the group of being anti-patriotic.⁵⁹ In its defence, the society stated that it believed the only way to create a powerful artistic movement in Romania was by filling its museums and schools with good artworks and teachers, regardless of nationality. Furthermore, its review firmly announced its intention to imbue its readers not only with good artistic taste, but also with a 'love of the people, love of the country and the proud sentiment of being Romanian'. To this end, it intended to contain discussions of Romania's past, folklore, scenery, traditions and crafts.⁶⁰ In particular, the society demonstrated a concern for research into, and conservation of, Romania's historical monuments, making provision in its statutes for a special committee to oversee this issue. Little is known about the activities of this committee which seems soon to have been abandoned in order to concentrate on exhibitions and the review.⁶¹

Echoes of the growing national debate were observed, as early as 1898, in Luchian's *Christ* shown at Ileana's international exhibition. According to one critic: 'It seems [...] that Luchian has created the first Romanian Christ on canvas, since his CHRISTOS does not have a single element of the German or Italian Christ'.⁶² It is likely that this unidentified work, in a similar fashion to Vermont's cover for the

⁵⁸See Jeremy Howard, *Art Nouveau. International and national styles in Europe*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 13 & p. 194.

⁵⁹Rap., 'Conferințele societății „Ileana”', *Adevărul*, 16 ianuarie 1898.

⁶⁰'dragostea de neam, dragostea de țară, și sentimentul mândriei de a fi român', Ion Duican, 'Pictorii streini', *Ileana* nr. 1, iunie 1900, pp. 5-6.

⁶¹The committee's function, which reflected general concern with the restoration methods of Lecomte du Noty, may have become redundant in light of the studies of historical buildings undertaken by members of the Society of Romanian Architects, mentioned in the previous chapter.

⁶²'se pare [...] că Lukian a creat pe pînză pe primul Christ românesc, căci CRISTOSUL lui n'are nici unul din elementele Christului german sau italian', 'Expoziția „Ilenei”', *Adevărul*, 5 martie 1898. This work is listed as unidentified in Jianu and Comarnescu, *Ștefan Luchian*, p. 179.

final edition of *Ileana*, employed motifs and stylisations inspired by Romania's Orthodox church tradition. Vermont's pencil and crayon design, depicting the enthroned Virgin and Child, follows an iconic format (fig. 4.22). Both figures are shown in full profile against gold-painted haloes. The heavy outlines surrounding the head and shoulders of the Virgin and the edges of the haloes serve to flatten the picture plane and separate the different pictorial elements, thereby suggesting the superimposed silver mountings of Orthodox icons. Another possible model for Vermont's drawing is an 1888 oil painting of the *Virgin and Child* by William Bouguereau, the former teacher of his colleagues Artachino, Luchian and Petraşcu (fig. 4.23). Although borrowing the frontal viewpoint, the form of the throne and the rigid features of the Madonna and Child, Vermont reformulated this Catholic image according to Orthodox conventions. This is seen particularly in the outwards gaze of the Virgin and in the figure of Christ, positioned on the same rigid central axis as his mother. In contrast to Bouguereau's naturalistic, chubby infant, Vermont's stylised, draped Christ has the scaled-down proportions of an adult.

A slightly different 'national' approach was taken by Bassarab in his frontispiece for the same edition which attempted to depict Ileana in a recognisably Romanian setting (fig. 4.24). Heavily bejewelled and dressed in a loose approximation of the garb of a Byzantine princess, Ileana stands on an open stone terrace, reminiscent of the traditional *pridvor* (veranda) of Romanian houses. Behind her the sun, her attribute, emerges from the clouds; over her other shoulder is the romantic silhouette of a *cetate* (citadel) recalling the craggy forms of Carpathian fortresses such as Vlad Ţepeş' castle at Poienari. The eastern effect of the whole is enhanced by the delicate tracery framing the scene, while the stocky columns loosely recall the forms of Brâncovenesc architecture. Their zig-zag decoration and fantastic animal forms, in particular the grinning lizards of the capitals, owe more to vernacular embroidery and Dacian artefacts than to the predominantly vegetal motifs

of Brâncovean monuments. In the lettering of the title, Bassarab has adapted the old Slavonic alphabet first used by Mincu in his Central Girls School, instead of the curvilinear, French-style, Art Nouveau alphabet favoured by his colleagues.

The issue of national expression was addressed by Bachelin, an enthusiastic member and promoter of Ileana, in an article written to accompany the opening of the society's international exhibition. He suggested that the logical source of inspiration for the creation of a distinctive 'Romanian' style was the country's rich heritage of Byzantine ecclesiastical art:

On the walls of churches, the old Schools of wall-painters left frescoes of an admirable style and originality where Byzantinism appears, tempered by a charming naïvety and rusticity. Our painters need only to take up this tradition again in order to produce grand and impressive works of art. Within this tradition lies an urgent revival for them to attempt: the creation of 'Neo-Byzantinism', a decorative style of mural painting which would recall all at once the master mosaicists, the Italian Pre-Raphaelites, Flandrin, Moreau and Puvis de Chavannes in France, and Ruskin and Burne-Jones in England.⁶³

Bachelin also recommended the investigation of folklore, 'a source of inexhaustible inspiration of which art has only to drink its fill'. This, he felt, was a particularly important resource for sculptors who lacked the model of religious carved images, excluded from the Orthodox Church since the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth century. Musicians too should absorb 'the treasure of popular melodies still preserved almost intact' and reveal them to the world 'just as Liszt and Brahms have done for Hungarian musical folklore'. In architecture alone did he feel steps were being taken towards successful national expression, praising the efforts of Mincu and

⁶³Les vieilles Ecoles des zougraves ont laissé aux murs des bissériques des frèsques d'un style et d'une originalité admirables, où le byzantinisme apparaît tempéré d'une naïveté et d'une rusticité charmantes. Il suffirait à nos peintres de reprendre cette tradition pour faire une belle et grande œuvre. Il y aurait là pour eux une urgente rénovation à tenter: le neo-byzantinisme à créer, une peinture murale et décorative qui tiendrait à la fois des maîtres mosaïstes, des préraphaélites italiens, de Flandrin, de Moreau, Puvis de Chavannes en France, de Ruskin et de Burne-Jones en Angleterre', Léo Bachelin, 'Chronique artistique. La nationalité dans l'art', *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 21 février/5 mars 1898.

his pupils to create 'an absolutely original style of architecture which, while recalling Byzantine, Russian and Armenian forms, retains a highly indigenous character'.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, Bachelin, like *Ileana*, considered that, in painting at least, Romanian artists were not yet ready to create a national style. He criticised as unrealistic those who cried "We need a national art!" as if it were a question of building a railway'.⁶⁵ In addition to the need to build up good national art schools, the Romanian public must also be educated in artistic developments abroad. For this reason, he praised *Ileana*'s decision to include foreign artists in its exhibitions and to invite international speakers to its conference series. Recruited largely through Bogdan-Pitești's lingering contacts with Paris, these speakers included the French deputies Maurice Barrès and Melchior de Vogüé, the director of *Revue des deux mondes* Ferdinand Brunetière, the politician Georges Clémenceau and the occultist art critic Joséphin Péladan.⁶⁶ The series began energetically in January 1898 with a well publicised opening lecture by Ciocârlan on 'The Arts in Romania'.⁶⁷ He emphasised the importance of art for the State, discussed the value of Romania's historical monuments and criticised the present state of artistic affairs which, he felt, excluded younger artists and undervalued national art schools. This was followed, on the 26 January, by the arrival of the self-styled high priest of the *Ordre de la Rose + Croix*, 'Sâr' Péladan, to deliver a talk on 'The Genius of the Latin Races'. His presence in Bucharest caused a sensation in the Romanian press: *Moș Teacă* (Old Man Sheath, 8 February), for example, depicted him dressed in a starry robe with a pointed mitre on his head, followed by Bogdan-Pitești in dress-coat and top hat bearing on his shoulders a board advertising *Ileana*'s conference series. Despite the

⁶⁴'une source d'inspiration inépuisable où l'art n'a qu'à s'abreuver'; 'trésor de mélodies populaires encore presque intact'; 'comme Liszt et Brahms l'ont fait pour le folklore musical hongrois'; 'une architecture absolument originale qui, tout en rappelant le byzantine, le russe, l'arménien, garderait un cachet bien indigène', *ibid.*

⁶⁵'ce n'est pas le tout que de réclamer: "Il nous faut un art national!" comme s'il agissait d'un chemin de fer', *ibid.*

⁶⁶'Conferințele societății „Ileana”', *Adevărul*, 6 ianuarie 1898.

⁶⁷Rap., 'Conferințele societății „Ileana”', *Adevărul*, 16 ianuarie 1898.

success of Péladan's visit, none of the other proposed foreign speakers appear to have given their lectures. The society's literary and musical programmes had a similarly enthusiastic beginning: in March 1898 the dramatist and Junimea member, Ion Luca Caragiale, read four of his keenly observed, humorous sketches of contemporary life in Bucharest and the provinces at a literary evening,⁶⁸ while, in May, Ileana organised a musical concert with the baritone Aurel Eliade.⁶⁹ Again, these activities had lost impetus by the summer of 1898.

In the end, Ileana's elaborate aims appear to have proved too ambitious both for its means and for the society it was trying to convince. Of the four committees set up at its foundation (responsible for exhibitions, publicity, historical monuments and artistic events), only the exhibition organisers were still active by the autumn of 1898. Perhaps if Ileana had succeeded in its attempts to merge with the Artistic Circle in November 1897 it might have won a wider support base. At any rate, by the autumn the society had even abandoned hopes of a group exhibition, although it did manage to organise a small showing of the works of the sculptor Filip Marin.⁷⁰ The resignation of one of the founder committee members of Ileana, the philosophy professor Constantin Rădulescu-Motru,⁷¹ in January 1899, further weakened the society. The editor of *Adevărul* and member of Ileana, B[arbu?] Brănișteanu, wrote that this resignation had been influenced by the King who wished to smother 'any ideal sentiment and to reduce everything to a mercantile level'.⁷² Romanian art

⁶⁸These were *25 minute în gară*, *Cănuța om sucit*, *La Hanul lui Mînjola* and *Două bilete*. Capriccio, 'Caragiale cititor', *Adevărul*, 4 martie, 1898.

⁶⁹Claymoor, 'Carnet du high-life', *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 1, 3, 9 & 10 mai 1898.

⁷⁰Oprea, *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 38. Marin, both painter and sculptor, studied in Romania, Italy and France. His statue *Thinking* was bought by the King in 1898.

⁷¹Rădulescu-Motru (1868-1957), was one of a handful of professors (which included his teacher, Titu Maiorescu) responsible for the flourishing of philosophy and psychology in Romania between the 1870s and early 1940s. Deeply influenced by German philosophy and sociology and following in the Junimist tradition, he developed Maiorescu's concept of 'form without substance' in reference to Romania's hasty adoption of western political and cultural forms which, he believed, were utterly foreign to the nation's spirit. In art, this implied a search for traditional means of representation rather than the imitation of western styles.

⁷²'orice sentiment ideal, să mercantilizeze totul', Un independent, 'Regele și arta', *Adevărul*, 20 ianuarie 1899 (as quoted by Oprea, *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 38).

historians, for example Petre Oprea, have understood the King's hostility to be the single most important reason for the collapse of Ileana. Oprea states that Carol 'did not admit the smallest form of competition with the official institutions, considering any private initiative as dangerous'.⁷³ While it is true that Carol reacted to the growing agrarian unrest of the turn of the century with a tightening of state control, Oprea's argument disregards the fact that Ileana already operated within a framework of indirect royal supervision through the presence of many of the King's closest advisors as figurehead 'patrons' of the society. Bachelin, the King's librarian, was the society's spokesman; other committee members included Alexandru Steriade (Director of the royal residences) and Nicolae Filipescu (former Mayor of Bucharest). In the list of associate members featured the names of Louis Basset (King Carol's secretary), D'All'Orso (Carmen Sylva's secretary), General Vlădescu (chief of the royal guard), Colonel Briboianu and Colonel Manu (both adjutants of the King), while honorary members included Constantin Esarcu (former Foreign Minister), Ion Kalinderu (administrator of the Crown domains) and even the former Minister of Education and Culture, Take Ionescu.⁷⁴ Furthermore, it appears surprising that the King should have been so determined to close down Ileana when the government had tolerated, and even bought works from the more overtly reactionary Independents' Exhibition less than three years before.

A more realistic hypothesis for the collapse of Ileana is the combination of internal tensions with the lack of a sufficiently receptive public to support its ambitious programmes. The critic and theorist Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș attributed its decline to Bogdan-Pitești's dictatorial attitude towards the other members.⁷⁵ In the third edition of *Ileana*, set up in an attempt to revive the flagging

⁷³'nu admitea nici un fel de concurență față de instituțiile oficiale, socotind orice inițiativă privată ca periculoasă', *Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 38.

⁷⁴'Membrii societății "Ileana"', *Iliane*. *Règlement pour la première exposition d'art*.

⁷⁵Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'La încheierea veacului al XIX-lea', *Memorii I*, pp. 132-133.

society, its director, Balcabaşa, complained that since the launch of the review, not a single new subscriber had voluntarily added their name to the initial list. Although the wealthy set would happily 'spend twenty or forty lei on a carriage ride on the şosea [Kiseleff - Bucharest's fashionable avenue]', they were unwilling to pay the meagre price of the review.⁷⁶ Balcabaşa firmly attributed *Ileana's* difficulties to what he regarded as Romanian society's general disinterest in artistic matters: 'faced with a society so indifferent to works of art, we really need a will of iron to continue with the publication of the review'.⁷⁷ *Ileana* quickly began to run at a loss and, in 1901, collapsed after only four editions of the promised ten in a year had been produced.

Ultimately, *Ileana* overstretched itself. Its initial aims - the organisation of independent exhibitions, conferences, literary and musical events, together with research projects for the conservation of historical monuments - embodied the major concerns of forward-thinking Romanian artists in the last years of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, in the absence of a truly dynamic and inventive patron, a strong official support base, sufficient funds and the enlightened public opinion necessary for lasting success, it seems to have run out of steam. Its collapse, however, coincided with the birth, in 1901, of the most important artistic society of pre-First World War Romania, *Tinerimea artistică* (Artistic Youth).

Romanian Art at the 1900 Paris Exhibition and Artistic Youth

The dynamic group of artists which made up Artistic Youth developed largely out of the Romanian fine arts section in the Grand Palais at the Paris 1900 Exhibition. In addition to Artachino, Luchian and Vermont, the section included the work of young

⁷⁶ 'mai nimeni nu a venit să se aboneze din propria sa inițiativă [...] Și ce e mai interesant și mai instructiv, au refuzat abonamentul la o asemenea revistă mulți dintre bogătașii acestei țări, oameni cari pentru un chef svîrlă sute de lei, și plătesc o plimbare la șosea cu două-zeci sau patru-zeci de lei', Ion C. Balcabaşa, 'Către abonați', *Ileana*, nr. 3&4, 1901, p. 33.

⁷⁷ 'ne trebuie o hotărîre într'adevăr de fier, ca în mijlocul unei societăți atît de indiferentă pentru lucrările de artă, [...] să continuăm cu publicarea revistei', *ibid.*

Romanian artists who were either studying or had recently completed their training in Paris or Munich. Among these figured Nicolae Grant, a pupil of Jean-Léon Gérôme at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, who lived in Eaubonne; Kimon Loghi, listed in the exhibition catalogue as resident in Munich although in the process of renting a studio in Paris; Ipolit Strâmbulescu, based in Munich; the sculptors Oscar Spaethe and Frederic (Fritz) Storck, listed as Munich although both returned to Bucharest around this time; and the younger brother of George Demetrescu Mirea, the sculptor Dumitru Demetrescu Mirea, who had studied at the *Académie Julian* before returning to Bucharest in 1891.⁷⁸ Although the section was criticised by the editor of the second edition of *Ileana*, Ion Duican, who felt that some members of his society, such as Vermont, Artachino and Luchian, were insufficiently represented, while others, including Bassarab, were excluded altogether,⁷⁹ it represented a significant move forward from Romania's contribution to the 1889 Exhibition. Retaining only two of the artists who had participated in the earlier exhibition (Grigorescu and Eugène Voinescu), the section was dominated by the work of young and relatively inexperienced artists, some of whom were little known in Romania because they were based abroad. Perhaps this was due to the fact that Grigorescu, who was sympathetic to new talent and had allied himself with both the Independents and *Ileana*, was Romania's *Beaux-Arts* delegate at the exhibition. Moreover, it was probably hoped that by exhibiting works which clearly demonstrated the influence of foreign schools, Romanian art might aspire to be judged on the same level as western art. This attitude was also shared by some of Romania's east European neighbours. The genre scenes, landscapes, portraits, interiors and mythical subjects which made up the Romanian section revealed the same mixture of Romanticism, Realism, *plein*

⁷⁸*Catalogue. La Roumanie à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900*. Paris, 1900.

⁷⁹Ion Duican, 'Note de arta', *Ileana*, nr. 2, 1900, p. 22.

air-ism and Symbolism seen in the Russian, Serbian and Bulgarian sections and, indeed, in the Grand Palais exhibition as a whole.⁸⁰

In view of the fact that Romania's Schools of Fine Art, as well as her education system in general, had been set up according to French models, it is hardly surprising that the section organisers should have demonstrated a reverential attitude towards French culture. This respect was clearly expressed in Menelas Simonidy's design for the cover of the catalogue of the Romanian section (fig. 4.25). It depicts a young peasant woman, dressed in the embroidered blouse, apron and headscarf of national dress, gazing adoringly up at the stern classical bust, crowned with laurels, representing the French Republic. The sophistication of the elaborate bust and carved stone pedestal creates a deliberate contrast with the rough framework of vernacular wooden carving and stylised sunflower motifs. The implication is clear: that of the charming, rural cousin aspiring to the weighty cultural tradition of Mother France.

Nevertheless, the actual works exhibited revealed as much the influence of Munich as of Paris, a point quickly noted by Balcabaşa:

The Munich school, where most of our young artists are studying, is beginning to exert a powerful influence. At the last Athenaeum Exhibition [1898 Exhibition of Contemporary Artists?], from which were also selected works for the Paris Exhibition, Secessionism appeared as the dominant note. Anyone up to date with the different schools of painting competing with each other today would have noticed at first glance that many of our artists belong to the Munich school.⁸¹

⁸⁰ 'Catalogue général officiel', *World's Fair of 1900*, in series *Modern Art in Paris 1855-1900*, Garland, London, 1981, vol. 6. Although the 1900 Exhibition has been declared 'the Triumph of Art Nouveau' (Philippe Julian, *The Triumph of Art Nouveau: Paris Exhibition 1900*, London, Phaidon, 1974), the new art manifested itself far more vigorously in individual national pavilions and their fittings, in Loie Fuller's theatre and in the electrical illumination of the exhibition as a whole, than in the fine arts displayed in the Grand Palais.

⁸¹ 'Școala de la Mûnich, la care învață cei mai mulți dintre tinerii noștri, începe să influențeze puternic. În ultima expoziție de la Ateneu, din care s-au ales și lucrările pentru expoziția de la Paris, secesionismul apărea ca notă preponderantă. Orice om în curent cu diferitele școli de pictură ce sînt azi în luptă, ar fi observat de la prima aruncătură de ochi că școalei de la Mûnich aparțin mulți dintre artiștii noștri', Ion C. Balcabaşa, 'Expoziția Grigorescu', *Adevărul*, 2 februarie 1900.

Strong echoes of Munich Symbolism were seen, for example, in Kimon Loghi's *Orientală* (Oriental Girl; fig. 4.26). This was painted during his period in the studio of von Stuck (1895-98) and had been shown two years previously at the 1898 Munich Secession Exhibition. Von Stuck's influence, through works like his 1893 *Sin*, manifested itself in the heavy, laden atmosphere, in the white flesh of the shoulders and neck emerging from the darkened background and in the sexual invitation of the parted lips, half-closed eyes and tilted chin. The painting's heady atmosphere is heightened by the rich contrast between the deep red fabric and vibrant gold embroidery of the costume. The Secessionist overtones of this work deeply appealed to Crown Princess Marie who bought the painting after the Paris Exhibition.⁸²

Other artists, such as Theodor Pallady who was related by marriage to Puvis de Chavannes and had enrolled in the studio of Gustav Moreau in 1896, were clearly influenced by French Symbolism.⁸³ His *Juana*, for example, depicting a young woman in a veiled, mysterious landscape dotted with swans and flowers and flecked with encrusted spots of painted light, vividly recalled the technique of his teacher (fig. 4.27). Similarly, the titles of the works exhibited by the minor artist Olga Kornea, such as *The Death of Sigurd*, *Cleopatra* and *Thais*, suggest the influence of her teacher Puvis de Chavannes.

Following the exhibition, almost all of the young artists from the Romanian section returned to Bucharest. The publicity afforded the arts in Romania by press coverage of the exhibition encouraged a group of these returning artists to revive efforts to create a strong, independent artistic society. On the 3 December 1901, they founded *Tinerimea artistică* (Artistic Youth), a group whose name recalled the

⁸²It still hangs in Marie's suite in Peleşor.

⁸³Puvis de Chavannes married Pallady's great aunt, Princess Maria Cantacuzino. It was in Moreau's studio that Pallady (1871-1956) became a close friend of Matisse, by whom he was strongly influenced later in his career. As Pallady spent much of his life in Paris and did not begin to exhibit regularly in Romania until 1910, he was not closely involved in the early development of Artistic Youth.

overtones of fresh growth and a dynamic new artistic beginning embodied in similar movements like *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland), *Nuori Suomi* (Young Finland) and the slightly later *Soyuz Molodëzhi* (Union of Youth) in St Petersburg. Together with the former Ileana members Artachino, Luchian and Vermont, the group consisted of Grant, Garguromin-Verona, Loghi, Strâmbulescu, D. D. Mirea, Spaethe and Storck. The remaining two founder members, who had not participated in the 1900 Exhibition, were Gheorghe Petrașcu, who studied in Paris, and the Munich-trained Ștefan Popescu. From the opening of its first exhibition, on 1 March 1902, the society swiftly won the approval not only of the public, but also of the King. The following year, it was chosen to represent Romania at the Athens International Exhibition.

Less than a year after Ileana collapsed due to internal tensions and lack of public support, there are several reasons why a society comprising some of the same artists and boasting similar aims should enjoy such rapid success. The first was heightened public awareness, as a result of press coverage of the 1900 Exhibition, of the work of young Romanian artists returning from abroad. Secondly, unlike Ileana, Artistic Youth limited its activities to the organisation of an annual exhibition. Outwith this event, members were required only to attend the twice yearly general meetings of the society. By avoiding the confrontational tactics of the Independents, as well as the over-ambitious programmes of Ileana, the society appeared less of a threat to official control of art, even offering a convenient solution to the Ministry of Culture's reluctance to organise regular salons.⁸⁴ The final, possibly most significant factor in Artistic Youth's initial public success lay in Crown Princess Marie's decision to become the group's supporter and to contribute her own work to its

⁸⁴The Exhibition of Contemporary Artists was not organised in the years 1900 & 1901. In 1902, it was a half-hearted affair containing many works already shown at exhibition. Attempts to organise another salon the following year were abandoned and the Ministry not only bought works from the second Artistic Youth Exhibition, but also agreed the society should organise the Romanian section at the Royal International Athens Exhibition. Unfortunately, little is known about the arrangement of this section. The official salon did not resume until 1909.

shows. She exhibited regularly with the society until after the First World War and remained its patron until her death.

Marie was encouraged to become the group's protector by one of its founding members, the sculptor Oscar Spaethe, who gave drawing lessons to the young princesses.⁸⁵ By 1901, she had clearly articulated her dislike of official royal artistic taste and shown her enthusiasm for new trends, in particular Arts and Crafts and Jugendstil ideas. Her willingness to front the group coincided with a pan-European vogue for aristocratic patronage of new art societies, from Ernst of Hesse's Jugendstil projects in Darmstadt to Princess Maria Tenisheva's Talashkino artists' colony. Marie's decision, however, met with some initial hostility. The director of the Bucharest School of Fine Arts and president of the Exhibition of Contemporary Artists, George Demetrescu Mirea, petitioned the King to suppress Artistic Youth, describing Marie's preference for the independent society as an insult to official art and those 'who support the throne'.⁸⁶ Mirea's action, however, backfired: he was criticised in the more progressive newspapers, while King Carol, probably relieved that Marie was channelling her energy into something controllable, did not carry the matter further.

The presence of the Crown Princess ensured continuing press interest in the exhibitions. *Epoca* compared her to a 'good guardian angel', under whose care 'Artistic Youth has grown as fast as Făt-Frumos in the fairy-tale: as much in one year as other children grow in ten'.⁸⁷ Marie shared not only the group's youth, but also its desire to drive art forwards:

⁸⁵Marian Constantin, 'Regina Maria și Societatea „Tinerimea artistică”', *Muzeul Arad: Studii și comunicări*, VI, 1997, p. 59.

⁸⁶'a celor ce sprijină tronul', see Ary G. Murnu's preface to *Catalogul celei de a XXIV-a expoziție de pictură și sculptură a societății Tinerimea artistică*.

⁸⁷'Priveghetă ca de un bun înger păzitor, „Tinerimea artistică” a crescut cum creștea făt-frumos din basme: într'un an cît alți copii în zece', G. Ranetti, 'Expoziția „Tinerimei artistice”', *Epoca*, 15 martie 1904.

We were the new generation going ahead, emancipating ourselves from the older schools, but we were not eccentrics [...] the annual opening of our exhibition was a festive and social event when fine speeches were made and when we muttered mutual encouragement. I was even intrepid enough to exhibit some of my water-colours, which were sold for the benefit of the society. This created a strong link between us.⁸⁸

Each year Marie exhibited examples of her decorative water-colours of flowers and crosses, as well as pieces of applied art, such as the heavy gilded throne, decorated with a radiating design of pokerwork sunrays and lilies, which she showed at the sixth exhibition in 1907 (fig. 4.28). As a sign of support for the young society, Grigorescu became an honorary member and contributed two paintings to its second exhibition in 1903. The high point of the group's exhibitions came the following year when it received the implicit approval of King Carol through the participation of Carmen Sylva. She exhibited a chalice made of turquoise and precious stones which she had designed for the little church of Roznov near Piatra Neamț, as well as part of the illuminated Gospel she was painting for the church of Trei Ierarhi in Iași. In addition, Victoria Melita (now divorced from Ernst of Hesse) contributed two works, including a painting entitled *Tomb*, which were to be sold, alongside Marie's exhibits, to raise money for a permanent exhibition hall for Artistic Youth.⁸⁹ Marie took an active role even in the arrangement of each exhibition: Bachelin's article on the young society, published in *The Studio* of 1904, described how she lent her own furniture and hangings for the decoration of the exhibition hall in the Romanian Athenaeum.⁹⁰ In the same year, *Epoca* announced that the Princess had arranged for Artistic Youth to have its own room at an exhibition in Dresden.⁹¹

⁸⁸*Story of My Life*, vol.II, pp. 121-122.

⁸⁹'Litere-Arte-Științe', *Epoca*, 26 martie 1904. This was opened in 1910 in a building provided by Bucharest City Council. The walls of the hall were decorated with large panels depicting Romanian themes (Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Expoziția Tinerimii artistice', *Convorbiri literare*, XLIV, aprilie 1910, p. 249).

⁹⁰Léo Bachelin, 'Studio-Talk', *The Studio*, vol. 31, March 1904, pp. 169-173.

⁹¹*Epoca*, 26 martie 1904. It is unclear which exhibition this was.

Ostensibly, the young society embodied similar aspirations to Ileana: artistic rebirth, a rejection of the established hierarchies of the academies and freedom to experiment. As a symbol of the desire for unrestricted expression, Ary Murnu placed the winged figure of Nike (the goddess of victory) in the outstretched hand of the androgynous young artist presenting the list of works in the catalogue of the 1912 exhibition (fig. 4.29) (recalling Franz von Stuck's poster for the seventh Munich Secession exhibition in 1897, as well as Gustav Klimt's 1898 painting of Pallas Athene).⁹² Similarly, Murnu's Mucha-like vignette for the cover of the catalogue, depicting the stylised head of a young woman crowned with a leafy laurel wreath, reiterated the call for artistic freedom embodied in Vermont's poster for the 1896 Independents Exhibition as well as in depictions of 'Ileana' (fig. 4.30).

Just as Artistic Youth shared many of Ileana's aims, so did it also echo the aspirations of similar groups appearing across Europe at the turn of the century. From Young Poland to the Prague Mánes Society, to the St Petersburg *Mir iskusstva* (World of Art) group, these were often characterised by an apparently conflicting duality of national romanticist and internationalist tendencies. Like Young Poland, Artistic Youth was largely stimulated, in its early years, by international Symbolism, believing that the promotion of modern, universal themes would mark Romania's integration on an equal footing with the rest of European society.⁹³ Furthermore, the mixture of Symbolism, Realism, Impressionism and loose attempts at a pseudo-national style revealed in *Ileana*, at the 1900 Exhibition and in the early exhibitions of Artistic Youth, echoed the integrated doctrine of artistic pluralism promoted by the Mánes Society and the review *Volné směry* (Free Trends) in the 1890s and early

⁹²The painter, draughtsman and political satirist Ary G. Murnu (1881-1971) trained in Bucharest and Munich before joining Artistic Youth as an associate member around 1907. He became very active in their later shows, for example writing the preface to the catalogue of the 24th exhibition.

⁹³For more on Young Poland's Symbolist tendencies, see Jan Cavanaugh, 'Stanisław Przybyszewski and the Young Poland Movement', *Out Looking In. Early Modern Polish Art, 1890-1918*, Berkeley, / Los Angeles / London, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 27-38.

1900s.⁹⁴ At the same time, the World of Art movement was seeking to demonstrate that its seemingly opposing pro-international and national romanticist elements in fact shared a common goal. This was the reassessment of artistic values in view of the changes brought by the machine age and the creation of a harmonious, integrated material environment which would imbue modern life with a new sense of beauty.⁹⁵ It has been said that Artistic Youth's uncritical imitation of a wide range of painting styles from abroad prevented the group from developing a distinctive 'Romanian school, movement or national idiom', and that the value of its art, therefore, lay in its 'assimilation' rather than 'transformation' of western innovations.⁹⁶ In light of the above pan-European similarities, such a judgement represents a superficial dismissal of a highly complex situation. It also completely fails to take account of concerted efforts by some members of Artistic Youth to develop a Neo-Romanian pictorial style which would parallel the architectural language developed by Mincu and his school.

In his 1904 article in *The Studio*, Bachelin divided the painters of Artistic Youth into two stylistic orientations: 'the followers of the old naturalistic, realistic school', as he characterised Artachino, Grant, Luchian, Vermont and Garguromin-Verona, and 'the "Secessionists"', including Loghi, Petrascu, Popescu and, to a lesser extent, Strâmbulescu.⁹⁷ As the works executed for *Ileana* and for the early exhibitions of Artistic Youth revealed, this was an artificial division, with Artachino, Luchian, Vermont and Garguromin-Verona all producing art with strong Symbolist/Secessionist overtones, while the second group were also capable of executing *plein air* landscapes and figure studies in the tradition of Grigorescu. Their willingness to work in a variety of styles was, perhaps, partly due to the fact that

⁹⁴See Petr Wittlich, *Prague. Fin de siècle*, Köln, Benedikt Taschen, 1999; also *Art Nouveau. International and national styles in Europe*, pp. 91-93.

⁹⁵See John E. Bowlt, *The Silver Age: Russian art of the early twentieth century and the 'World of Art' group*, ORP Studies in Russian Art History, Newtonville, Oriental Research Partners, 1979.

⁹⁶'The "Foreignness" of Classical Modern Art in Romania', p. 535.

⁹⁷'Studio-Talk', pp. 171-172.

many members of the group had studied or worked in both Munich and Paris. Generally they followed their training at the Bucharest School of Fine Art with a period at the Munich Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Garguromin-Verona, Loghi, Luchian, Popescu, Storck, Spaethe, Strâmbulescu and Vermont), or at the Académie Julian in Paris (Artachino, Grant, Luchian, Mirea, Petrascu, and Strâmbulescu).⁹⁸ On their return to Romania, under the loose umbrella of Artistic Youth, they continued to practise in a broad range of styles. For most of the group, the widespread use of styles learnt abroad was not incompatible with the society's aim of promoting a healthy young art movement in Romania. Like other turn-of-the-century societies, they saw international art as a means of moving their art forward in the eyes of the rest of Europe. Furthermore, by demonstrating their mastery of current trends, they hoped to counteract the home market's preference for imported foreign art in favour of Romanian artists. Inevitably, the open atmosphere fostered at Artistic Youth's exhibitions further encouraged the production of a broad gamut of styles. At one extreme were commissions which pandered to the pro-western tastes of many patrons, even to the extent of imitating works by western artists. At the other, was a small, but increasingly determined movement aimed at creating a neo-national pictorial style based on autochthonous sources of inspiration.

A good illustration of the direct copying of 'fashionable' styles is the series of four decorative wall panels, supposedly representing the seasons, painted by Luchian in 1901 for the Bucharest residence of the francophile lawyer and university professor Victor Antonescu (1871-1947). Trained in law and *sciences politiques* in Paris, Antonescu was also a Liberal politician who became Minister of Justice in 1914, then headed the Romanian delegations in Paris and Geneva, before being

⁹⁸In addition, Garguromin-Verona, Loghi, Popescu, Strâmbulescu and Vermont had also spent time in Paris (see appendix 4). Significantly, few art historians have paid close attention to the impact of the artistic centres where individual members of the society studied. Both Oprea (*Societăți artistice bucureștene*, p. 42) and Constantin ('Regina Maria și Societatea "Tinerimea artistică"', p. 55) erroneously cite certain members as having studied in Paris rather than Munich.

appointed foreign minister in 1936.⁹⁹ Although the panels for his residence have been cited by some Romanian art historians as the most representative example of Luchian's Art Nouveau tendencies at the beginning of the century,¹⁰⁰ their preparatory studies were, in fact, directly copied from a series of four illustrations by Georges de Feure, published in *Le Figaro illustré* in February 1900.¹⁰¹ Three of these 1899 *féminiflores* compositions, *Innocence ou vertu*, *Contemplation* and *Femme en profil*, provided the model for Luchian's three surviving watercolour studies for the panels, while his fourth panel, entitled *Spring*, is clearly derived from *Expérience ou vice* (figs. 4.31-4.38)

Perhaps at the request of his patron, however, Luchian concentrated more on the decorative aspects of de Feure's paintings than on their mysterious, sometimes disturbing Symbolist content. De Feure's four works embodied his fascination with the malefic nature of the *femme fatale*. Each composition depicts the head and shoulders of a single female figure, richly adorned with opulent jewels and fabrics and set against, and within, a decorative background of heavy, velvety flowers. This integration of feminine mystique and sensual flower motifs is further imbued with a decadent perception of woman as a Machiavellian figure plotting man's downfall. Although her baneful nature is disguised by the mask of her superficial beauty, the background of the paintings acts as a screen for the projection of her perverse thoughts and misdeeds. In *Expérience ou vice*, for example, the canal scene of the background suggests the setting of Rodenbach's novel *Bruges la morte*, the

⁹⁹There is some uncertainty concerning the decoration of Antonescu's house on Str. Colței. Both Jacques Lassaingne (*Ștefan Luchian*, Bucarest, Meridiane, 1994, p. 51) and Enescu ('Simbolismul și pictura', p. 56, note 155) call the panels 'The Four Seasons' and state that they were executed for Antonescu in the summer of 1901. Petru Comarnescu (*Luchian*, București, Tineretului, 1965, pp. 172-173), on the other hand, states that Luchian painted eight elongated, vertical panels depicting magnificent marquesses in rococo dresses against a background of columns and leafy trees, in a Versailles atmosphere intended to harmonise with the Louis XV furniture of the room. The semi-circular panels may have been either for Antonescu or 'for another person'.

¹⁰⁰For example, Paul Constantin, *Arta 1900 în România*, București, Meridiane, 1972, pp. 137-38; Enescu, 'Simbolismul și pictura', p. 41.

¹⁰¹These were published as colour inset plates in a special edition devoted to 'La Femme par de Feure'.

inspiration for several of de Feure's works. The canal-side brawl parallels the havoc brought by Jane Scott to Hugues Viane in the novel. In Luchian's version of the scene, however, the background is purified of any disquieting elements: it is emptied of human figures, the glimpse of Bruges in the distance is replaced by an innocuous looking gate and the façades of the buildings are made ambiguous. The figure of the woman herself, dominating the compositional space of de Feure's work, merges with Luchian's extended background of flowers; her impact is further diminished by the subdued tones shared by figure and flowers. In a similar fashion, Luchian omits the shadowy riverscape background of de Feure's *Contemplation*, while the mysterious horsemen seen crossing the bridge behind *Femme en profil* are absent from Luchian's *Autumn*. Devoid of deeper significance, Luchian's *femmes-fleur* become decorative exercises in bold outline and flattened form.

Although Luchian's sanitised reinvention of de Feure may have been a result of his patron's tastes, his other proto-Art Nouveau works from the same period reveal a similar concentration on surface pattern and harmonious visual effect. This is seen, for example, in a surviving sketch for a 1901 mural painting on the exterior of the now destroyed Civil Servant Societies building (*Palatul Societății Funcționarilor Publici*) on Piața Victoriei (fig. 4.39). Designed in 1900 by Nicolae Mihaescu (1863-1934), in collaboration with Alexandru Clavel (1877-1916), this long, low building's projecting central façade area and bulbous roofs crowning corner and middle sections combined a restrained mixture of Art Nouveau curvilinearity with vaguely neo-Romanian forms in the deep eaves and rows of arched windows (fig. 4.40). Luchian's semi-circular panel, 4.6 metres in diameter, was designed for the arched space under the roof of the central section. Exploiting the semi-circular format, he filled it with the gently turning heads of five young females set against a foliage background. Indistinguishable from each other in terms of clothing or expression, they create an undulating, linear rhythm reinforced by Luchian's bold outline and

simplification of features. In a similar fashion to the Antonescu panels, this design utilises the distillation and abstraction of form to maximum decorative effect.

While Luchian exploited some of the formal techniques of French Art Nouveau in his decorative commissions, other members of Artistic Youth strongly revealed the influence of the Munich Secession. Vermont's *St John the Baptist*, for example, featured in *Ileana* (nr. 5-6) in 1901 and purchased by Crown Princess Marie around the same time as Loghi's *Orientală*, prefigured von Stuck's 1906 *Salome* in its daring juxtaposition of human sensuality and spiritual radiance (fig. 4.41). Vermont's laughing Salome proudly and provocatively brandishes the platter bearing the head of John the Baptist before Herod who gasps and throws his hand to his head in horror. The blinding radiance of the Baptist's halo strikes Salome's chest and neck as if delivering a physical blow, forcing her to turn her head away and throwing ethereal underlights on Herod's grimacing, shadowy face. Vermont reduced the scene to the tense interplay between the three players, exploiting chiaroscuro effects for maximum dramatic impact. He further emphasised the mystic spirituality of the scene by naming the work after the Baptist rather than Salome. Even more significantly, he gave his painting the format of an altarpiece, adding an elongated predella to the main square panel. This depicts the terrifying, back-lit form of the Baptist who, with raised arms, staring eyes and gaping mouth, bears down on the viewer as if delivering final judgement. In this way, Vermont dealt with the impossibility of uniting body and spirit several years before both von Stuck's *Salome* and Richard Strauss' 1905 opera based on Oscar Wilde's text took this as their central theme.

Vermont painted another version of the same scene, this time entitled *Salome*, which he showed at the 1913 exhibition of Artistic Youth (fig. 4.42). Here, however, he sacrificed dramatic effect to a concentration on the decorative curvilinearity of Salome's dancing outline and elaborate headdress. The Baptist's halo is reduced to a

fine gold circlet, while the predella becomes merely the title of the work. Salome appears like a magician's assistant on a stage, presenting the head of the Baptist on a draped table. Vermont also introduced a consciously Romanian note in the decorative border of the backdrop curtain, which recalls traditional weaving motifs, and in the carved forms of the wooden frame.

From around 1903 until the First World War, other Munich-trained members of Artistic Youth, like Loghi and Ștefan Popescu, became increasingly preoccupied with the subject matter of fairy tales. Loghi, in particular, infused his scenes with a romantic, often mystical lyricism; his taste for dreamy, misty landscapes and figures in medieval garb owed more to the British Pre-Raphaelites or to German Romanticism than to Romanian tradition. His early tales, such as *Goddess of the Lake* (1907 Artistic Youth Exhibition; fig. 4.43), still recall the influence of von Stuck (as well as of Luchian's cover for the first edition of *Ileana*) in the raised chin, bare shoulder and seductive gaze of the young woman rising from the lake of swans. In later works like *A Fairy Tale* (fig. 4.44), *Fragment* (fig. 4.45; both shown at the 1911 Exhibition and probably segments of the same work) and *From the World of Fairy Tales* (1913 Exhibition), Loghi depicts the courtly world of chivalric knights and princesses of universal fairy tales, rather than choosing the uniquely Romanian, region-specific, vernacular legends promoted by Alecsandri and Carmen Sylva. Even in his *Twelve Daughters of the White Emperor* (fig. 4.46; 1913 Exhibition), a Romanian variant of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, his figures, in particular the page boy to the left of the composition, are still clothed in the flowing robes and tunics of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Popescu, on the other hand, tried to infuse his version of the same subject (1903 Exhibition; now in the National Museum of Art) with a distinctly Romanian atmosphere (fig. 4.47). The twelve princesses wear the heavy Byzantine crowns with jewelled pendants over each ear seen in fresco representations of Romania's early

rulers on the walls of princely churches such as Hurez and Curtea de Argeș. Moreover, the enchanted palace in the middle of the lake recalls the forms of Neo-Romanian architecture in its *foișor* (watchtower) and arcade. The same year, Popescu also exhibited two illustrations for postcards depicting Ileana Cosânzeana, inspired 'by the old style of miniatures' and with borders decorated with designs 'from old Romanian motifs and icons'.¹⁰² These were possibly linked to his involvement in a project to design a nationally inspired decorative fresco for the Romanian Athenaeum. In preparation, he made a rigorous series of detailed studies of decorative motifs from ecclesiastical monuments, such as Hurez and Cozia, as well as from vernacular wooden architecture, carved gates and graveposts.¹⁰³ He intended his frieze to depict two processions lead by trumpeting angels, filing past twelve great Romanian rulers. One procession consisted of heroes from popular folklore; the other contained historical figures, writers, poets and artists. Unfortunately, the project was abandoned and the studies were never developed further.

Popescu's studies, however, were representative of a growing number of tentative efforts to create a 'national' pictorial idiom. These were encouraged by several factors. Firstly, the success of the Neo-Romanian school of architecture raised questions as to whether a similar 'national' formula could be created in painting and the applied arts. Secondly, the Bucharest Jubilee Exhibition of 1906, which marked official recognition of the Neo-Romanian architectural style, also raised public awareness of Romania's rich vernacular craft traditions. These were further promoted by a developing network of philanthropic women's societies which aimed to revitalise national craft industries in the face of industrial development and imported foreign goods. Finally, artists and theorists began to draw unfavourable

¹⁰²'inspirate de vechiul stil al miniaturilor; frumoasele chenare sînt tot din motive și icoane vechi românești', Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, *Scieri despre arta românească*, București, Meridiane, 1987, p. 128.

¹⁰³A number of these studies are preserved in the prints and drawings collection of the National Museum of Art in Bucharest.

comparisons between Romania's strictly segregated, hierarchical approach to the arts and the pan-European striving towards integration of the decorative and fine arts.

Part II: The Search for a National Style

Although founded with the aim of creating a strong artistic movement in Romania, Artistic Youth, in its early years at least, saw little incongruity in promoting this through an internationalist pictorial language. In 1906, however, the patriotic fervour stirred up by Romania's first national exhibition stimulated new interest in the country's vernacular craft traditions. For the first time, examples of peasant craftwork from all over the principalities were brought together in a major display highlighting the variety and richness of regional folk art. Following the exhibition, the country's first Museum of National Art was set up under the direction of Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaş.¹⁰⁴ Based in a wing of the former State Mint at 3 Şoseaua Kiseleff, as well as in three rooms of the School of Fine Art, the museum contained some of the craftwork shown at the exhibition, together with a growing number of objects collected by Tzigara-Samurcaş from the Romanian countryside.¹⁰⁵ These included an entire carved wooden peasant house belonging to a certain Antonie Mogoş from Gorj region in the foothills of the Carpathians who was himself brought to Bucharest to reconstruct it. According to Tzigara-Samurcaş, King Carol was greatly taken with the vernacular structure when he officially opened the museum in May 1907.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Initially called the 'Museum of Ethnography, National Art, Decorative and Industrial Art' ('Muzeul de etnografie, de artă națională, artă decorativă și artă industrială'), this was founded in 1906 with the aim of encompassing 'all the different kinds of artistic production of the Romanian people' ('toate manifestările artistice ale poporului român'), thereby forming the centre of 'a national artistic movement' ('a unei mișcări naționale și artistice'). Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, 'Rostul noului muzeu', *Memorii I*, pp. 225-226.

¹⁰⁵Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, 'Localul Muzeului Național', *ibid.*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁶Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, 'Regele consfințește Muzeul', *ibid.*, p. 247. A permanent museum building, designed by the Neo-Romanian architect Nicolae Ghika-Budești, was begun on Şoseaua Kiseleff in

Concurrently with the founding of the museum, a decorative arts section was set up in the Bucharest School of Fine Arts under the direction of the pro-Romanian architect and publicist George Sterian.¹⁰⁷ It attracted the support of the versatile French Art Nouveau designer Eugène Grasset, himself a former professor of decorative arts at the *École Normale d'Enseignement* in Paris and a founder member of the *Société des Artistes-Décorateurs*. In an article dedicated to the section in *Art et Décoration* Grasset, who was interested in Oriental and folk art, praised Sterian's initiative, drawing parallels with the revival of vernacular crafts in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Zakopane in Galicia and Switzerland.¹⁰⁸ He described how, for the first three years of their training, pupils from the section followed the same general courses as the fine arts students, before specialising in rugs, embroidery, lace or ceramics. The works they produced consciously re-employed vernacular techniques and motifs, seen for example in the decorative piercing of the wooden dresser illustrated in Grasset's article (fig. 4.48). This method of puncturing patterns was taken from the woodwork lining of the *pridvoare* of traditional Carpathian houses, while the stylised motif on each door of the dresser was inspired by the form of the circular wooden gourd or *plosca*. Other objects illustrated in the article include a decorative lace border featuring an Orthodox priest blessing two kneeling men, flanked on either side by the stylised forms of two large wooden *troițe* (crosses) and framed by the pointed trilobate arch form of Romanian churches; ceramic plates and pitchers decorated with abstract motifs suggesting the stars, flowers and leaves of the peasant cosmos; and a large decorative panel designed by Sterian himself and inspired by 'a scene taken from a Romanian legend'. Depicting a princess looking

1911. Partially opened in 1939 and completed with modern architectural additions in the 1960s, it became the Museum of the History of the Romanian Communist Party before being reopened as the Museum of the Romanian Peasant in 1993.

¹⁰⁷This section was first proposed by the director of the Bucharest School of Fine Art, George Demetrescu Mirea, in 1903. It was approved in 1904 when Sterian was nominated director and opened in 1906. (I am indebted to Dr. Ioana Vasliu for this information.)

¹⁰⁸Eugène Grasset, 'L'École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs de Bucarest Domnita Maria', *Art et Décoration*, tome XXIII, janvier-juin 1908, p. 131.

out over the ramparts of a castle to a romantic, rugged landscape beyond, this is surrounded by an intricately decorated border whose stylised pattern of eagles, winged griffin, stag and lion was inspired by 'traditional ceramic and silversmith motifs'.¹⁰⁹

According to Grasset, the decorative arts section was founded under the special protection of Crown Princess Marie. She was also patron of the *Domnița Maria* (Princess Marie) Society which aimed to promote and improve traditional crafts. This society followed in the tradition of earlier philanthropic women's groups, such as the *Furnica* (Ant) Society, with Carmen Sylva as its figurehead, which organised bazaars and exhibitions of vernacular craftwork and encouraged town women to wear national costume for feast days and celebrations.¹¹⁰ Unlike Sterian's section, in which young artists designed pieces of applied art inspired by autochthonous tradition for execution in Bucharest's Arts and Crafts and professional girls schools (*școale superioare de arte și meserii și școale profesionale de fete*),¹¹¹ these societies wanted to encourage vernacular art at a rural level. To this end, the *Domnița Maria* Society organised a number of competitions in which peasant craftsmen and women were encouraged to send examples of their work to Bucharest to be awarded prizes and certificates signed by the Princess. The manifesto for one such weaving competition in 1908 voiced the society's concern that, in the face of growing foreign imports, local crafts were suffering both in quality and number:

The plight in which Romanian woven goods [...] find themselves is truly to be lamented.

They have completely lost their former charm and hard-wearing quality. Instead of the

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 130.

¹¹⁰This was set up in 1853 by a group of society ladies, led by Elena C. Cornescu, with the aim of raising localised peasant crafts to the level of a national industry and counteracting the threat of cheap new materials from abroad. In 1882, it became the *Furnica* society under the protection of Carmen Sylva who chose its emblematic name. See C. Ionescu, *Arta broderiilor și cusăturilor românești și rolul Societății "Furnica", în reînvierea, păstrarea și dezvoltarea lor*, București, 1932.

¹¹¹This segregation of design and execution was announced in the 1908 reorganisation of the Schools of Fine Art. See Ermil A. Pangrati, 'Învățământul artelor frumoase și noua lui organizare', *Convorbiri literare*, mai 1908, p. 556.

old cloth, today weavings are produced which are light and very ugly. Cured wool, formerly spun at home, is now mixed with cotton; instead of the ancient dyes made at home with weed or bark, aniline paint from the towns is used today [...] instead of buying Romanian rugs, people now buy foreign covers.¹¹²

The society's concerns were well founded. The production of traditional crafts had declined sharply since the commercial convention of 1875 had allowed cheap manufactured goods from Austria-Hungary to flood the mass market. Even a 1902 law enacted by the Liberals regulating the organisation of artisans and promising government aid achieved little since, by this stage, the expanding domestic manufacturing industry had encroached upon traditional artisan markets. Master craftsmen were losing their independence, while journeymen were increasingly forced to join the ranks of wage labourers.¹¹³

As well as hoping to counteract the decline in the quality of traditional crafts, the *Domnița Maria* Society also aimed to stimulate artists themselves to experiment in the applied arts and to readapt old motifs and styles to objects designed for modern usage. In 1908, it organised a second competition, inviting both craftsmen and artists to submit designs for a suite of 'Romanian' furniture for a 'modest household of limited means'. The furniture, comprising a wardrobe, table, six chairs, shelf and mirror frame, must be 'solid and simple', imbued with 'the particular character of Romanian art', and should distinguish itself from contemporary foreign works by 'employing only national motifs'.¹¹⁴ The competition strongly appealed to architects

¹¹² 'E într'adevăr de plâns halul în care au ajuns țesăturile românești [...] Și-au pierdut cu totul farmecul și trăinicia de odinioară. În locul țoalelor vechi se producea zi niște țesături ușoare și mai ales tare urâte. Lâna curată, toarsă altădata în casă, se amestecă acum cu bumbac; în locul boielilor strămoșești făcute de gospodine cu buruieni, sau coajă de copac, se întrebuintează azi vopseli de anilină de prin târguri [...] în locul scoarțelor românești, lumea cumpără azi covoare de prin străinătate', Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Țesăturile românești cu prilejul concursului societății „Domnița Maria”', *Convorbiri literare*, noiembrie 1908, pp. 533-534.

¹¹³ Keith Hitchens, *Romania 1866-1947*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 162.

¹¹⁴ 'Acest prim concurs a avut de obiect crearea unui mobilier practic pentru o gospodărie modestă, cu mijloace restrânse. Se cerea ca mobilele să fie mai presus de toate solide și simple, având însă o înfățișare potrivită caracterului particular artei românești. În toată a lor simplitate aceste mobile trebuiau să se diferențieze de produsele străine de azi, folosindu-se numai de motive naționale', Al.

like Gheorghe Lupu (1882-1916; first prize) and Hugo Storck (third prize). Already working within a clearly defined Neo-Romanian building style (Lupu, a former pupil of Mincu, had been involved in some of the pavilions of the 1906 exhibition), they obviously welcomed the opportunity to create furniture embodying similar design principles. Interestingly, none of the prizewinners employed the Neo-Romanian architectural vocabulary of Brâncovean decorative motifs. Lupu articulated the structural components of his furniture through a strictly abstract pattern of geometric lines, zig-zags and circles derived from vernacular wood-carving (fig. 4.49), while the knotwork entrelacs of Storck's mirror frame seem to assimilate 'Neo-Romanian' with the so-called Old Russian style popular in late nineteenth-century Russian society through publications like Viktor Butovski's 1870-73 *Histoire de l'ornement russe* (fig. 4.50).

The idea for such a competition was perhaps inspired by an illustrated article published by the Neo-Romanian architect Nicolae Ghika-Budești (1869-1943) in the first edition of *Arhitectura* in 1906. This discussed how folk art could be reinterpreted to meet the needs of a modern interior. Decrying the repetitive formulae of historicism, Ghika-Budești proposed that a thorough study of Romania's vernacular heritage could stimulate the creation of new forms which, while 'preserving the traditional spirit and respecting the character of past works', would not be 'servile copies' but would respond to the 'demands of our modern life'.¹¹⁵ He provided a theoretical demonstration of his ideas in a project for the decoration of a dining room. One of the realised chairs for this room appears in the photograph at the start of Tzigara-Samurcaș' article on the 1908 competition (figs. 4.51-4.53). Ghika-Budești stated that the furniture of this room, in polished reddish-yellow alder, should

Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Mobile românești cu prilejul concursului societății „Domnița Maria”', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 9, septembrie 1908, p. 314.

¹¹⁵ 'studiul principiilor pe care este bazată arta noastră[...] apoi crearea de elemente și motive noi cari păstrând spiritul tradițiunii și respectând caracterul lucrărilor din trecut, să nu fie nici odată copii servile și totodată să fie și bine potrivite cu cerințele vieții noastre moderne', Nicolae Ghika-Budești, 'Incerări de artă decorativă românească', *Arhitectura*, ianuarie-februarie 1906, p. 39.

have simple, bold outlines which would effectively frame each piece's intricate, perforated decoration inspired by carved wooden distaffs as well as by the *pridvoare* of mountain houses. These punctured flower and leaf motifs, through which could be seen the light green of the wallpaper, should be executed using a vernacular pokerwork technique which would create a naïve, rustic effect. Furthermore, Ghika-Budești conceived each piece of furniture as part of the harmonious integration of the room as a whole. The rug, executed in the traditional manner of Romanian floor coverings, should have a white central rectangle surrounded by a border of orange and violet flowers which would echo the pattern decorating the wallpaper and the rough woollen fabric of the chair seats, table-top and curtains. This unified colour scheme of light green, white and orange, combined with vernacularised furniture and fittings enlivened with delicate spots of colour provided by recurring nature motifs, strongly recalls British Arts and Crafts ideas and, in particular, Baillie Scott's tree-house for Crown Princess Marie. Indeed, Ghika-Budești appears to have conceived his project as a Romanian variation of

the so-called "Modern Style" which seems to have begun to emerge in England and in the countries of Northern Europe in general, spreading thereafter to other countries. Always based on the same principles of producing rational, practical and original works, this style, however, differs from one country to the next, according to the characteristic nature of each people.¹¹⁶

Despite the enthusiasm generated among intellectuals such as Tzigara-Samurcaș by the *Domnița Maria* Society competition and by Ghika-Budești's published project, there appears, as yet, to be little evidence that such integrated

¹¹⁶ 'așă-zisul „Modern-Styl” [sic] care, după cât se pare, a început a se manifesta în Anglia și în țările din Nordul Europei în genere, și s'a întins apoi la celelalte țări. Bazându-se totdeauna pe aceleași principii de a produce opere raționale, practice și originale, acest stil se deosebete totuși dela o țară la alta, după geniul caracteristic al fiecărui popor', *ibid.*

schemes were ever incorporated into the design of actual houses.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, urban society's interest in the vernacular arts was growing. Following King Carol and Queen Elisabeth's enthusiastic opening visit to the new Museum of National Art, it became so popular that the *Domnița Maria* Society was able to open a workshop in which weavings from the museum were copied for sale to the public.¹¹⁸ The high point of the craft revival came in 1909 when Romania participated in the Berlin International Exhibition of Folk Art. Since Carmen Sylva was patron of the Berlin Lyceum Club which organised the exhibition, Romania was given the principle room opposite the main exhibition entrance. In addition to a case of the Queen's own applied artworks, the section contained objects from the National Museum and from the growing number of craft societies like *Furnica*, *Domnița Maria*, *Albina* (Bee), *Munca* (Work) and *Țesătoarea* (Weaving), together with other examples gathered from home industries. Representing the first major exhibition of Romanian craft objects abroad, and shown alongside vernacular work from countries as diverse as Egypt, Brazil, Cameroon and Java, the Romanian section won both financial and critical success and was subsequently invited to exhibit in Amsterdam Museum.¹¹⁹

Although this essentially urban-based craft revival never developed the ambitious artistic and social programmes of the Russian *kustar* workshops at Abramtsevo or Talashkino or of the Gödöllő colony in Hungary, nor aspired to the high-quality, technically innovative, internationalist reinvention of the applied arts undertaken by the Finnish Iris Craft Workshops or Hungarian Zsolnay ceramics factory,¹²⁰ it did provoke artists to reconsider the boundaries between the fine and

¹¹⁷To date, there has been very little research into the early development of the decorative arts in Romania nor the role of societies such as *Furnica* and *Domnița Maria* and of the decorative arts section of the Bucharest School of Fine Art.

¹¹⁸Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Arta în 1908 și Societatea „Domnița Maria”', *Memorii I*, p. 264.

¹¹⁹See Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Expoziția de artă românească la Berlin', *Convorbiri literare*, martie 1909; 'Arta română la Berlin', *ibid.*, octombrie 1908; 'O nouă manifestare artistică la Berlin', *ibid.*, februarie 1912.

¹²⁰For a discussion of the aims of these groups see Wendy Salmond, *Arts and Crafts in Late Imperial Russia: reviving the kustar art industries, 1870-1917*, Cambridge/ New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996; Katalin Keserű, 'The Workshops of Gödöllő', *Design History*, I, 1998, pp. 1.23; E.

applied arts. It also provided a potential source of artistic inspiration for artists seeking to develop a 'Neo-Romanian' style in painting and the graphic arts.

Even before the Jubilee Exhibition, in an article published early in 1906 entitled 'Does Romania have a national art or not?', Sterian articulated the growing debate on whether Romanian possessed a valid artistic past and, if so, which elements of it might usefully be re-interpreted in the creation of a 'national' style.¹²¹ Like Bachelin and Balcabăşa before him, Sterian criticised those who believed

that mountains are found only in Switzerland, that light and colour are only in Italy, that landscapes, figure types and national artistic traditions exist everywhere except in Romania [...] where nothing beautiful has ever existed, nor could ever exist unless it came from abroad.¹²²

Sterian argued that the fact that Romania lacked clear symbols of western civilisation, such as great cathedrals and established art galleries and academies, did not necessarily indicate an impoverished artistic tradition. He declared that the naïve, vernacular art of the peasant was equally valid since its artistic value did not lie in criteria of size or grandeur, but in its sincere conception and delicate expression of the 'feelings of a people'. Illustrated with drawings of richly carved wooden spindles, crosses and walking-stick handles, the article advocated that such examples of vernacular craft could serve as an inspiration for the development of a new 'Romanian' style in the fine arts.

According to Sterian, the second aspect of Romania's artistic heritage which should be carefully distilled by modern artists was its rich Byzantine wall-painting and icon tradition. In the pavilions of the Jubilee Exhibition, Neo-Romanian architects had already demonstrated that traditional ecclesiastical and secular

Csenkey, *Zsolnay szecessziós kerámiák*, Budapest, 1992; and M. Valkonen, *The Golden Age: Finnish Art 1850-1907*, Helsinki, WSOY, 1992.

¹²¹ Sterian, 'Arta românească. România are sau nu o artă națională?'

¹²² 'că munți sunt numai în Țițera, că lumină și culoare se află numai în Italia, că peisagii, tipuri, tradițiuni naționale de artă sunt pretutindeni, numai în România nu sunt, [...] că nimic frumos n'a fost și nu poate fi decât venit din afară', *ibid.*, p. 18.

building types could be successfully re-invented in combination with modern materials and methods. Now Sterian urged artists to adopt a similar approach in both painting and applied art, declaring that the potential wealth of inspiration offered by Romania's artistic heritage represented 'an endless [...] and as yet unfarmed field'.¹²³

Sterian put these ideas into practice in the cover of the first edition of *Arhitectura* which depicts a standing female figure, robed and crowned in the manner of historical Romanian princesses (fig. 4.54). Recalling votive frescoes of princely donors on the walls of old Romanian churches (fig. 5.14), she bears the model of an Orthodox church in one hand and a cross-tipped sceptre in the other. She stands within a stylised, architectural frame whose semi-circular arch, twisted *brâu* decoration and emblem-filled roundels reinterpret forms favoured by Neo-Romanian architects. The title of the review, written in Neo-Romanian lettering, becomes at once the altar, presented to the reader by the raised arms of the figure behind, and part of the decoration of the figure's robe itself.

The first Romanian review to employ a specifically national pictorial language in its front cover was *Literatură și artă română* (Romanian Art and Literature), founded in 1896 by the writer Nicolae Petrașcu. The review's aims - to promote nationally inspired art and to support promising Romanian artists - were reflected in its cover, designed by Petrașcu's close friend Ion Mincu (fig. 4.55). Unlike Sterian, who was inspired by a figure-type from church frescoes, Mincu's design presents a pictorial translation of decorative elements used in his buildings. From a highly ornate Byzantine urn, abstract, flattened smoke patterns wind upwards, suggesting the smouldering flame of Romanian culture. Behind the urn, powerful, diagonal rays radiate outwards from an unseen source seemingly hidden behind the magazine cover; this encourages the reader to open the review and reveal the radiance of Romanian literature and art contained within. The architectonic

¹²³ 'un câmp nemărginit [...] încă neexploatat', George Sterian, 'Arta românească II', *Arhitectura*, nr. 2, martie-aprilie 1906, p. 67.

framework ledge on which the urn rests makes use of the egg and dart, acanthus leaf, twisted stringcourse and ceramic button decorative motifs which appear on Mincu's early buildings such as his Buffet, Central Girls School and Cantacuzino and Gheorghieff tombs in Bellu Cemetery (1901). In the lettering of the title and of the review's credo 'Ideas - Feeling - Form' on the ledge beneath (not seen in fig. 4.55), Mincu has reused the stylised characters inspired by the old Slavonic alphabet which he first developed on the façade and inner courtyard of the Central School for Girls. Used here for the first time in graphic art, this lettering style soon became synonymous with instantly recognisable national expression and was employed extensively in the façades of public buildings, poster design, printing, book covers and advertising.

The call by theorists like Sterian exhorting artists to develop a distinctively Romanian pictorial idiom for the expression of national themes initially found little response among the members of Artistic Youth, who preferred to retain the *plein air* or Symbolist styles learned abroad. Unlike Bachelin and Bogdan-Pitești, who believed that a measure of foreign influence was necessary in order to stimulate the birth of a 'national' art, Sterian encouraged artists to throw off completely the shackles of their foreign training and to approach Romania's artistic past with a naïve and humble eye:

if we want to be Romanian artists, we must not always stubbornly insist on painting landscapes from Brittany or Fontainebleau, and on taking our inspiration from foreign artists like Böcklin and others, because then we become German or French and cannot be uniquely Romanian.¹²⁴

Sterian's theories found concrete expression in the work of one of the younger members of Artistic Youth, the painter and critic Apcar Baltazar (1880-

¹²⁴ 'dacă vrem să fim artiști români, trebuie să nu ne încapățânăm a face mereu peisaje din Bretania sau de la Fontainebleau, și a ne inspira dela artiști străini ca Böcklin și alții, căci devenim Nemți sau Francezi și numai Români nu putem fi', *ibid.*

1909). Significantly, Baltazar was one of the rare members of the group who had not studied abroad and who, consequently, had not been directly exposed to the art of Paris or Munich. His artistic training was entirely at the Bucharest School of Fine Art where, from 1896-1901, he attended the class of George Demetrescu Mirea. In 1903, he began exhibiting with Artistic Youth; around this time he also frequented the Café Kübler, a favourite haunt of other young artists associated with the group including Petrașcu, Jean Al. Steriadi (1880-1956) and Ion Teodorescu-Sion (1882-1939). In 1904, Baltazar published the first of many articles devoted to exhibitions, individual artists, Romania's historical monuments and, in particular, the debate surrounding the creation of a 'national' style. In seven years of intense activity, before his premature death at the age of twenty-nine, Baltazar not only established a theoretical framework for the foundation of this style, but also vigorously promoted the integral role of Romanian applied arts in its development.

Although Baltazar had not studied abroad, his writings demonstrate a keen awareness of Art Nouveau developments across Europe. He referred to reviews such as *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and *Art et Décoration* and recognised the importance of new approaches to applied art in the work of Lalique, Obrist, Ranson or Rippl-Rónai.¹²⁵ He concluded that Romania lagged far behind other European countries, firstly in her inability to develop a satisfactory national style and, secondly, in her failure to recognise the importance of the applied arts in its creation. In a similar fashion to Sterian, Baltazar believed that the key to reviving Romanian art lay in a close investigation of both Byzantine ecclesiastical decoration and vernacular craft traditions. He greatly admired Ștefan Popescu's early attempts to develop a decorative pictorial vocabulary derived from studies of old Romanian monuments¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Apcar Baltazar, 'Note asupra industriei de artă', *Viața românească*, octombrie 1907, reproduced in *Apcar Baltazar. Convorbiri artistice*, ed. Radu Ionescu, București, Meridiane, 1974, pp. 152-161.

¹²⁶ Apcar Baltazar, 'Expoziția Ștefan Popescu', *Voința Națională*, ianuarie 1905, reproduced in *Convorbiri artistice*, pp. 47-50.

and conducted his own detailed examinations of the decoration of Romanian churches. His sketches and comments dealing with Hurez, Colțea and the Metropolitan Church in Bucharest were published in the Bulletin of the Commission for Historical Monuments in 1908 and 1909. Annotated sketches also survive (in the drawings collection of the National Museum of Art) for the church of Filipeștii de Pădure; these reveal a sensitive investigation in pencil of architectural details, together with water-colour attempts to capture the delicate tones of the interior wall paintings. Baltazar approached his investigation of old churches in the manner of a cultural historian, trying to trace the stylistic sources of Romanian ecclesiastical architecture in Armenian, Georgian or Persian art.¹²⁷ In this he anticipated by some years the more widely disseminated research of the historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) and the architect Gheorghe Balș (1868-1934).¹²⁸

Baltazar adopted a similar historical-ethnographical approach to his studies of Romanian folk art, seeking to identify similarities with the vernacular art of Russia, Finland, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania. In so doing, he aimed to show the danger of believing that a Romanian style could be created simply through indiscriminate borrowing of vernacular and religious motifs. In his most important article, 'Towards a Romanian Style', published in 1908, he stressed the importance of appropriateness to context and function. He argued that a truly national work of art should not be merely a pastiche of different decorative and compositional elements, but should reinterpret the 'spirit' of Romanian tradition according to the principles of modern decoration. It should represent 'a transformation and reinterpretation of old motifs, according to modern artistic taste, without altering their essential character'.¹²⁹

¹²⁷Baltazar was himself partly of Armenian descent.

¹²⁸For example, Nicolae Iorga *Armenii și Români: o paralelă istorică*, București, 1913 (extras din *Analele Academiei Române*, seria II, tom. XXXVI); or Gheorghe Balș, *Influences arméniennes et géorgiennes sur l'architecture roumaine*, Bucarest, Commission des monuments historiques de Roumanie, 1931.

¹²⁹'O transformare a motivelor vechi, fără a altera caracterul esențial, o prefacere a acestora prin gustul artistic de azi', Apcar Baltazar, 'Spre un stil românesc', *Viața românească*, noiembrie 1908, p. 232.

In his own painting, Baltazar tried to combine the stylised forms of Byzantine wall paintings with the rough, almost primitive handling of vernacular craft motifs. This is seen particularly in his *Byzantine Princesses* (fig. 4.56) and *Princess Ruxandra* (fig. 4.57).¹³⁰ The first of these, possibly a study for a larger work, depicts the flattened, stylised profiles of two princesses whose static poise and heavy crowns with hanging gold pendants recall the schematic, Byzantine forms of Romanian rulers in old church wall paintings. Nevertheless, the rough, rapid brush-strokes of costume and hair and, in particular, the almost child-like dabs of paint forming the crowns give the painting a primitive, naïve feel. This contrasts with the mysterious atmosphere of the background; its spatial ambiguity, created by strong, diagonal brush strokes and barely discernible architectural forms, is heightened by the presence of a bowed, robed figure. Although the precise subject of the scene is still unclear, the treatment of the princesses is closely related to Baltazar's painting of Princess Ruxandra. This unhappy daughter of the sixteenth-century Moldavian hospodar, Petru Rareș, and wife of one of his successors, Alexandru Lăpușneanu, was described in Costache Negruzzi's mid-nineteenth-century historical novel *Alexandru Lăpușneanu*. Baltazar's three-quarter profile and stylised treatment of robe and crown suggest an acquaintance with surviving depictions of Ruxandra in the wall paintings of Rădăuți church or the monastery of Docheiariou on Mount Athos (both patronised by Lăpușneanu), or in an embroidered curtain in Slatina monastery. Once again, the flattening of form, crude handling of paint, clumsily drawn crown and schematic rendering of hair curls represent Baltazar's attempt to suggest the spirit of vernacular art without directly borrowing motifs. Baltazar even designed a Neo-Romanian frame for his painting, employing the twisted columns and intertwining patterns of tendrils, flowers and birds derived from Brâncovean motifs that also appeared in the decoration of Crown Princess Marie's silver bedroom.

¹³⁰The exact dates of these paintings, like those of the majority of Baltazar's works, have not yet been established, although most were painted between 1902-09.

Negruzzi's novel also provided the inspiration for one of Baltazar's best-known paintings, *We want Moțoc's head!* (fig. 4.58). This unfinished work depicts the dramatic moment when Lăpușneanu's crooked chamberlain, Moțoc, is lead out through the palace gate to face the crowd shouting for his death. Baltazar maximises the dramatic tension of the scene through a dynamic composition of two opposing diagonals: on the left, the seething mass of peasants brandishing pitchforks and scythes, while, raised on steps to the right, a second diagonal is formed by the straining figure of Moțoc and the pointing arm of Lăpușneanu. The two directional forces pull away from each other to create the effect of a vacuum into which, ultimately, Moțoc will be sucked.

In his efforts to distil a form of artistic expression which would best encapsulate the Romanian 'spirit', Baltazar explored a range of different national subjects. In addition to literary-historical scenes and compositions depicting heroic Romanian princes, such as *Ștefan cel Mare* (Stephen the Great) and *Mihai Viteazul* (Michael the Brave), he also dealt with the daily life of the Bucharest suburb or *mahala* in which he lived. In works such as *Madame Ionescu with her Little Dog*, *Going to Madame Popescu* (fig. 4.59) or *The Muse of the Mahala*, he took a gently satirical look, reminiscent of the ironic observations of the dramatist Ion Luca Caragiale, at the distinctive atmosphere of this semi-urban, semi-rural area. 'Madame' Ionescu and 'Madame' Popescu, who reappear in several of the works, represent a comical stereotype of the socially aspiring female resident of this area who, although only one generation removed from the countryside, self-importantly adopts urban airs and graces. In *Going to Madame Popescu*, for example, Baltazar depicts a typical *mahala* street, unpaved and lined with squat, one-storey houses with pots of geraniums on their window-ledges. In the background, an Oltenian, weighed down by the buckets suspended over his shoulders, still wears the waistcoat, cotton

trousers and pointed hat of the countryside.¹³¹ 'Madame' Ionescu, on the other hand, has dressed in a fashionable urban bustle and dark shawl to cross the street and pay a visit to her neighbour 'Madame' Popescu. In a similarly satirical tone, *The Muse of the Mahala* is in fact a local busybody who stands at the gate of her yard and comments on her neighbours' comings and goings. There is an interesting parallel between these works and Mikhail Larionov's satires of the affectations of provincial Russian 'types', such as his *Walk in a Provincial Town* or *Provincial Coquette*, both executed in the year of Baltazar's death. Like Larionov, who rejected academic convention in favour of the schematic postures and bold brushstrokes of the *lubki*, Baltazar again explores a flattening of form and free handling of paint that perhaps owes something to the 'primitive' approach of Romanian painted glass icons.

Baltazar's most important contribution to the way Romanian artists thought about art in the early years of the century was his campaign to raise the standard and the status of the applied arts. He was vividly aware that in other parts of Europe the applied arts had ceased to be considered secondary to the fine arts and were being reinvented by designers, in combination with painting, architecture and sculpture, to create homogeneous, integrated *Gesamtkunstwerke*. Although it is generally accepted that Baltazar never visited Paris, he wrote a detailed appreciation of Lalique's ability to infuse even the smallest object in a room with artistic significance, concluding bitterly that in Romania, by comparison, 'this raising of everyday life to the status of art still belongs to the realm of dreams'.¹³² He criticised Romania's young artists for their indifference towards art forms which fell outside the scope of the Schools of Fine Art.¹³³ To reinforce his argument, he published a vigorous article outlining the vast financial disparity between Romania's import of applied art objects and her

¹³¹Petru Comarnescu, *A. Baltazar*, București, E.S.P.L.A. 1956, p. 14.

¹³²'această apropiere a artei de viața de toate zilele este încă de domeniul visului', 'Note asupra industriei de artă', p. 153.

¹³³Apcar Baltazar, 'Arta și industria II', *Voința națională*, 17/30 martie 1905, reproduced in *Convorbiri artistice*, p. 148.

almost negligible export of the same. With wry humour he noted that Romania even imported more from Bulgaria and Turkey, ironic in light of the fact that many young Bulgarian applied artists had trained at the Bucharest School of Fine Art.¹³⁴ In view of his countrymen's admiration for foreign developments in the applied arts, he asked why they were so reluctant to support a similar movement in their own country:

Paul Ranson and Rippl-Ronav [sic], who design those large decorative panels [...] Herman Obrist and Modersohn, dedicated to wall hangings, the Germans who so beautifully apply silk decoration to a satin or velvet background, pierced with golden thread, in a Japonist manner - these are personalities who do not envy easel painters anything. Indeed, on the contrary, the latter can be somewhat jealous of the universal fame deservedly enjoyed by the designers. As for our leading artists, let us just say that they can no longer turn from the path on which they originally set out.¹³⁵

According to Baltazar, however, Romanian applied arts boasted untapped potential:

If, endowed as we are with rich decorative material, we had managed in time to create an applied art industry, we could have presented ourselves today in foreign markets if not with a superior industry, then at least with an original one. From a simple vase whose rim is edged with motifs like shepherds staffs, frogs' eyes, little snakes etc, to a vase enamelled with motifs from old fairy tales like 'Făt-Frumos', 'Păcală' or 'Fata din Dafin' [Girl of Laurel], people would have paid just as much for our ceramics as for Austrian or German vases.¹³⁶

¹³⁴'Note asupra industriei de artă', p. 156.

¹³⁵'Paul Ranson și Rippl-Ronav, care întocmesc acele largi panouri decorative [...] Herman Obrist și Modersohn, devotați broderiei murale, germani, care atât de frumos, aplică decorul de mătase pe fonduri de satin sau de velur, străbătute de fir de aur, în maniera japoneză, sînt iarăși personalități care n-au ce invidia pictorilor de șevalet ba, din contră, aceștia din urmă pot fi oarecum geloși de universalitatea pe drept cucerită a celor dintîi. Artiștii noștri de seamă, să zicem că nu se mai pot înturna din drumul apucat odată', *ibid.*, p. 160.

¹³⁶'Dacă stăpîni cum sîntem pe un frumos material decorativ, am fi procedat din vreme la crearea unei industrii de artă, astăzi ne-am fi prezentat pe piețele străine, dacă nu cu o industrie superioară, dar sigur cu o industrie originală. De la un vas simplu, cu buzele tivite de motive ca: toiege, ochii broaștei, șerpiori etc., pînă la un vas smălțuit cu motive din poveștile bătrîne ca: „Făt Frumos”, „Păcală”, „Fata din dafin”, ceramica noastră ar fi tot atât de bine plătită ca și vasele austriece sau germane', *ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

Baltazar believed that the main source of inspiration for modern Romanian applied arts could be found in popular legends and folklore. He incorporated these into his own explorations of a wide range of different decorative arts including projects for ceramics, stained glass, theatre curtains, costume design, book illustration, stamps, posters and wall panels. In his designs for ceramic pots and jugs, he maintained the simplified, sturdy forms of vernacular earthenware vessels, decorating them with painted scenes from fairy tales and craft motifs. One such example is surrounded, in the upper section, by a ring of peasant women dancing a *hora* (fig. 4.60). Baltazar pays careful attention to their costumes, distinguishing each dancer by the embroidered details of her skirts, apron and blouse. They are separated by a band of geometric weaving motifs from the galloping horses of the main scene depicting the *Rape of Ileana Cosânzeana*. A second, more slender vase is decorated with two scenes, divided by a spiralling band, from the *Twelve Daughters of the White Emperor* (fig. 4.61). In the upper half, the hero kneels before the king, asking for a chance to discover why the princesses' dancing slippers are worn through each morning, while the lower section depicts the princesses in the golden forest on the edge of the enchanted lake. Baltazar's simplification of figures and setting into bold, flowing outline and blocks of colour emphasises the decorative function of the design. According to one approving contemporary critic, these vases decorated 'with subjects from our folk-tales, represent a beginning which nobody has thought of before and which is a real mine for all those who wish to imbue our domestic art with a Romanian character'.¹³⁷

Baltazar re-used these two scenes in his *Project for a stained-glass window for a museum* which depicts the adventures of Făt-Frumos in fairyland (fig. 4.62). In one of his articles he highlighted the fact that Orthodox Romania had never

¹³⁷'cu subiecte din basmele noastre; e aci un început la care nimeni nu s'a gândit și care e o adevărat mină pentru toți aceia cari ar voi să imprime un caracter românesc, în arta noastră domestică', Pand. 'Decorațiunile lui Baltazar', *Convorbiri literare*, noiembrie 1908, pp. 536-537.

developed a strong stained-glass tradition; nonetheless, he felt that it was a medium particularly suited to a modern expression of national themes.¹³⁸ It is unclear if this design were made with a view to execution or if, like much of Baltazar's applied art, it was merely an artistic exercise in the development of a 'Romanian' style. The design contains four roundels depicting, in addition to the daughters of the White Emperor, Făt-Frumos and his horse by a river and Făt-Frumos slaying a dragon. The space between the roundels is equally crammed with fantastic, strangely contorted, natural forms, monsters and tentacles, as well as an enthroned king, a diving angel and a fighting warrior. Baltazar's design is the first known attempt to represent national folk-tales in stained glass since the Zettler workshop's windows for Carmen Sylva's music room in Peleş in the early 1880s. However, in comparison to the Munich workshop's courtly, refined treatment of Alecsandri's tales, Baltazar's figures convey a naïve simplification of line and form. The fantastic shapes of the landscape and the comical monster head seem to derive from a child's imaginary land, while the princesses by the swan lake, with their long robes and heavy crowns, recall the figure-type of the Byzantine donor frescoes favoured by Popescu and Sterian. This combination of decorative surface pattern with Byzantine stylisation can be observed even more clearly in a fragment of a design for a stained-glass triptych depicting the legend of the *Golden Stag* (published in *Covorbiri literare* in November 1908; fig. 4.63). Here the princely figures' elongated forms and stylised features recall the static formulae of church frescoes, while the radiating suns, spirals and simple geometric forms decorating their robes hark back to vernacular tradition. Baltazar's interest in the Transylvanian legend of the *Golden Stag* recalls the Gödöllő artists' fascination with the Magic Deer, a symbol of the mythical origins of the

¹³⁸ 'Arta și industria II', p. 151.

Hungarian people.¹³⁹ It appears frequently in their work of the same period, for example in Sandor Nagy's sgraffito frieze on the exterior of Veszprém Theatre (1907-9), or Körösfői Kriesch's Scherebeck *Deer Tapestry* of c.1910.

Another, unfinished, design for stained glass, now in the drawings collection of the National Museum of Art, again depicts the mounted Făt-Frumos, this time on a winged horse, slaying a dragon (fig. 4.64). Baltazar maximises the decorative, dynamic effect of his vigorous composition of rearing horse and brandished sword by setting the heads of horse and hero at the centre of a radiating pattern of geometric shapes. The almost 'comic book' effect of these force-lines is heightened by his rapid hatching of form and his sketchy treatment of Făt-Frumos' features. However, another sketch in the same collection treats Făt-Frumos, this time bearing a blazing torch, in the stiff, stylised manner of an Orthodox saint (fig. 4.65). His rigid stance and formalised features and, in particular, the use of gold paint in the background and details of his green cloak, recall characteristics of Orthodox icon and wall painting. In a similar fashion to Kandinsky who, a few years later, began to explore images of St. George in the manner of Bavarian *Hinterglasmalerei*, Baltazar appears to have been fascinated with the interpenetration of Christian tradition and pagan superstition in Romanian folklore. The pagan legend of Făt-Frumos and the dragon parallels the religious story of St George and the dragon. In his design for one of the panels of a triptych depicting scenes from the life of St George (published in *Viața românească* in November 1908), Baltazar re-uses the figure-type of Fat-Frumos with a blazing torch (fig. 4.66). St George's upright stance, hairstyle, serious expression and disposition of clothing are all derived from the sketch of the folk hero. By massing the figures up against the picture plane, disregarding proper rules of scale or perspective and delighting in the rich, colourful fabrics of the figures' robes which melt into a gilded

¹³⁹See Katalin Gellér, 'Romantic Elements in Hungarian Art Nouveau', in Nicola Gordon Bowe (ed.), *Art and the National Dream*, Blackrock, Irish Academic Press, 1993, pp. 121-122; also *Art Nouveau. International and national styles in Europe*, pp. 113-115.

background, Baltazar appears to be harking back to the pictorial principles of International Gothic. The presence of the luminous, crowned, Byzantine figure with upraised arms behind St George, however, roots the image firmly in an eastern setting. By re-combining and re-inventing past traditions, Baltazar is visually exploring his own theories concerning the creation of a modern pictorial idiom which encapsulates the 'spirit' of the old, rather than relying on exact copying of motifs.

In 'Towards a Romanian Style', Baltazar attributes great importance to what he describes as the innate 'artistic sense' or 'feeling' (*simț artistic*) guiding the production of vernacular craftwork. Uninfluenced by any formal artistic training, this 'sense' is the truest revelation of the 'spirit' of a people. Although a country might absorb the influence of many successive styles, with time these are adapted to the character of the people, 'thereby forming a completely new art'.¹⁴⁰ Baltazar urged Romanian artists to imitate this evolutionary process and reinvent elements borrowed from the country's past to fulfil the demands of modern design. He believed that a new Romanian style should reveal itself not only in individual objects, but throughout the interior decoration of a house. He insisted that, by means of selective reinterpretation, vernacular motifs could be rendered appropriate to an urban context: 'folk art can be used as a source of inspiration, onto which should be grafted new motifs representative of new forms, new ideas, brought together and cemented through the rules of modern decorative art'.¹⁴¹ In the closing section of his article, he gave several illustrated examples of this process. One of these, for the decoration of the wall of a living room (*sufragerie*), is inspired by a popular motif found on the carved handles of traditional wooden spoons (fig. 4.67):

¹⁴⁰ 'Așa se întâmplă, ca într'o țară, la un popor, noile stiluri create să ajungă a înălțura cu vremea tot ceia ce putea fi considerat ca împrumut, formînd astfel o artă cu totul nouă', 'Spre un stil românesc', p. 229.

¹⁴¹ 'artă populară se va putea folosi ca fond de inspirație, pe care însă să se altoiască noi motive reprezentative ale unor noi forme, noi idei, reunite laolaltă, cimentate prin regulile artei decorative moderne', *ibid.*, p. 233.

In peasant family households, among so many interesting decorated objects, one often finds spoons whose handles represent the heads of cockerels. By means of a stylisation not too far removed from the character of the peasant style, one could transform the design of these cockerels, then add colour to them and use them as decoration in any dining room. Behold how a national motif can become part of a decoration with pretensions to modern art, at the same time allowing the creation of decoration which is also in a Romanian style.¹⁴²

This design also follows the traditional wall division of peasant houses, with the lower third painted a darker colour to protect it from dirt. Baltazar makes a more daringly abstract use of vernacular motifs in a second design for the walls of a dining room (*sală de mîncare*; fig. 4.68): the bulbous forms of its lower section are inspired by the traditional round wooden gourd or *plosca*. These are superimposed with claw-like, perpendicular lines reaching down from a decorative border whose central crosses are made up of two overlaid, carved, wooden pegs. The upper section, according to Baltazar, should employ stylised vegetal motifs, such as his hovering spirals (snail shells or garlic) pierced with sprigs of parsley.

Baltazar proposed a similar approach for the decoration of a theatre curtain. The background of the first layer of curtain should depict faint cockerel motifs, an allusion to the late hour at which performances finish. On top of this, a second curtain should be painted, on the upper half, with various national motifs, while the lower section has an applied band of Byzantine mosaic decoration and theatre characters. Baltazar suggested that the same decorative approach could be used for a screen, stained-glass window, carpet or piece of furniture. The only setting where he felt vernacular-inspired decoration to be inappropriate was in a religious context:

¹⁴² 'În gospodăria casnică populară se înfîlesc, printre atîtea interesante obiecte decorate, și unele linguri, ale căror cozi reprezintă capete de cocoși. Printr'o stilizare, care să nu se depărteze prea mult de caracterul stilului țărănesc, s'ar putea preface desenul acestor cocoși, pe care, colorîndu-i, să-i întrebuițăm ca decor la oricare altă sală de mîncare. Iată cum un motiv național poate trăi într'o decorațiune cu pretenția de artă modernă, înlesnind astfel alcătuirea unei decorațiuni, care poate fi în același timp și într'un stil românesc', *ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

I do not believe that there exists a single serious artist, or a single man of taste, who would not smile when he saw national embroidery on the walls of a church, or who would not be saddened to hear of the triumph of this irrational and absurd direction in national art [...] Peasant decorations - when they present a harmonious whole - are appropriate only for compositions of a rustic character. When they can be employed in civilised urban architecture then, as I have shown, they must be reinvented through a methodical stylisation appropriate to the surrounding decoration [...] Due to its linear, schematic composition, popular decorative art denies the grave, severe character demanded by decorative religious compositions.¹⁴³

According to Baltazar, the only possible source of artistic inspiration for modern religious compositions lay in the decoration of old Romanian churches. In this he differed from national revival artists of certain other east European nations, for example the pre-eminent Lemberg artist Kazimierz Sichulski. His 1914 sketches for a mosaic triptych of the *Huzul Madonna* employed typical Ruthenian ornamentation and geometric motifs in the dress of the Virgin and two angels.¹⁴⁴ The rigid, schematic, artistic rules of the Romanian Orthodox church, however, appear to have dissuaded Baltazar from this type of experimentation, although, as discussed above, he willingly looked to Orthodox aesthetic traditions as a source of inspiration for secular decorative designs.

Baltazar's early death of a heart attack in 1909 abruptly ended his national style experiments before they reached full maturity. In less than a decade of intense activity, he produced nearly three hundred works; many of these, however, remained

¹⁴³ 'Nu cred să se găsească un singur artist serios, un singur om de gust, care să nu zîmbească văzînd cusăturile naționale pe pereții bisericilor, sau care să nu se întristeze, auzînd de triumful acestei iraționale și absurde îndrumări în arta națională [...] Decorațiunile țărănești sînt - cînd prezintă un tot armonic - potrivite numai pentru compozițiuni cu caracter rustic, iar cînd pot trece în arhitectura civilă orășenească, atunci, după cum am arătat, se prefac printr-o stilizare metodică adaptată decorului înconjurător [...] Arta decorativă populară este prin compoziția liniară și schematică o artă care exclude caracterul de gravitate, de severitate, cerut în compozițiunile decorative religioase', Apar Baltazar, 'Arta populară în decorația bisericească', *Viața romînească*, iunie 1909, reproduced in *Convorbiri artistice*, p. 140.

¹⁴⁴ *Art Nouveau. International and national styles in Europe*, p. 127.

unfinished.¹⁴⁵ In particular, very few of his applied art designs progressed beyond preparatory sketches. During his lifetime, his work appears to have won only limited favour with the public. In 1907, for example, in an attempt to fund a visit to Paris, Baltazar held a sale of 126 of his works in the Romanian Athenaeum. It was received with tepid enthusiasm; even favourable criticisms, for example an article by the sculptor Frederick Storck (under the pseudonym 'St. Sterescu') in *Viața literară și artistică* (Literary and Artistic Life; 4 February 1907), praised his use of colour rather than his concern with national expression. Other public rebuffs included two unsuccessful applications, in 1901 and 1902, for state scholarships to continue his studies abroad; the rejection of his poster for the 1906 Bucharest Exhibition; and his failure, in September 1908, to win a post in the decorative arts section of Bucharest School of Fine Art following the theft of his work the night before the competition. In the absence of a teaching position, Baltazar's main vehicle for the dissemination of his ideas was his articles. In this he was helped by I. Ibrăileanu, his friend and the director of *Viața românească*, who made him editor of a section of the review entitled 'Artistic Chronicle' which he wrote under the pseudonym 'Spiridon Antonescu'. He also won the approval of *Convorbiri literare*, a review which vigorously participated in the debate surrounding the restoration of Romania's monuments and which, therefore, welcomed Baltazar's detailed studies of old churches. Shortly after his failure to win a post at the School of Fine Art, *Convorbiri literare* published a brief, anonymous article praising his attempts to develop a 'national' form of interior decoration:

It is astonishing that Mr Baltazar has managed to extract decorative motifs from such banal objects as are found in our peasant households - a real treasure trove for a house

¹⁴⁵Victor Bilciurescu, 'Compoziția în pictura lui A. Baltazar', *A. Baltazar 1880-1909, Expoziția retrospectivă*, Pinacoteca Municipiului București, 1936.

which, as well as being in a Romanian architectural style, also aspires to an interior decoration with a specifically Romanian character.¹⁴⁶

Significantly, the article states that Baltazar planned to produce a concrete example of the harmonious integration of his designs for interior decoration and Neo-Romanian architecture: 'we shall soon have the opportunity to discuss this subject in more detail when we see the work of Mr Baltazar in one of the most original new houses built in Bucharest'.¹⁴⁷ Although the realisation of this unidentified project seems to have been prevented by Baltazar's death, his desire to integrate Neo-Romanian architecture with the other arts had by then already begun to express itself in the work of some of his contemporaries.

As early as 1902, Ion Mincu had approached the sculptor Frederick Storck to design statues of the Evangelists for a tomb he was building for the Gheorghieff family in Bellu Cemetery. Mincu was entering his monumental Neo-Romanian phase and the tomb, one of three grandiose funerary commissions for the cemetery between 1900-2, skilfully combined an impression of massiveness and weighty grandeur with intricately carved Neo-Romanian detail (fig. 4.69). He intended to place the statues of the Evangelists in specially designed niches at each of the four corners of the tomb. Their silhouettes would have to harmonise with the gently outward-sloping lines of the monument, while the use of bronze would complement the star-studded dome and niches and the blazing sun behind the entrance doorway. Storck's problem, as Bachelin had pointed out in his discussion of potential sources of national inspiration, lay in the fact that Orthodox art had no tradition of figure sculpture. Storck's wife, the artist Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, who equated 'Neo-Romanian' with 'Neo-Byzantine', later wrote that her husband's Evangelists represented 'the first sculptural

¹⁴⁶'e de mirare din ce obiecte banale ale gospodării noastre a reușit d-l Baltazar să tragă motive de decorațiune, - un adevărat tezaur pentru o casă, căreia, pe lângă stilul românesc în arhitectură, i s'ar da și o decorațiune internă cu caracter specific românesc', 'Decorațiunile lui Baltazar', p. 537.

¹⁴⁷'în curând vom avea prilej de a vorbi mai pe larg despre aceasta, când vom vedea lucrările d-lui Baltazar într'una din cele mai originale case nouă clădite din București', *ibid.*

works in Neo-Byzantine style in our country'.¹⁴⁸ She described how Storck had sought inspiration for his statues in old church paintings, as well as in books on Byzantine art, seeking to infuse a three-dimensional medium with the austere, hieratic, formal stylisations observed in Orthodox painting.

Under the linear, flowing folds of their drapery, however, Storck's ponderous, larger-than-life statues are solid, anatomically constructed figures. In 1912, Storck's collaborator for the pair of *Giants* at the Jubilee Exhibition, Dimitrie Paciurea, adopted a different approach in his bronze *Death of the Mother of Christ* for the Stojolan tomb in Bellu Cemetery by the architect Alexandru Clavel (fig. 4.70). Here Byzantine stylisations are carried to an expressive extreme. The Madonna's severely elongated form, her ovoid face twisted towards the viewer and the reduction of the flattened, piled-up folds of her robe to a mass of linear decoration effectively translate the pictorial language of Byzantine figure painting into bronze sculpture. The graceful, fluid effect of the whole, resting on a narrow ledge above the vault entrance, is heightened by its contrast with the rigid lines and starkly hewn blocks of stone making up Clavel's tomb.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, therefore, a concern with artistic forms of national expression had begun to permeate Romanian art at almost every level. Encouraged by the example of Neo-Romanian architects, by renewed interest in vernacular tradition following the 1906 Exhibition, by the national revival movements of other countries and by the example of a few internationally aware theorists and designers such as Sterian and Baltazar, the movement found an increasingly receptive home market. The decade's main artistic society, Artistic Youth, however, also continued to practise in a variety of international styles reflecting the simultaneous national/supra-national dynamic

¹⁴⁸'primele opere de sculptură în stil neobizantin de la noi din țară', Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, *O viață dăruită artei*, București, Meridiane, 1966, p. 102.

characteristic of many turn-of-the-century groups across Europe. Like Romania's earlier artistic societies, Artistic Youth, although pertaining to be an independent group, was hampered by the country's lack of a well-developed industrial bourgeoisie. Hence it operated largely within tightly confined, royal-led, patronage circles. Just as the Friends of the Fine Arts Society, the Intimate Club and the Artistic Circle were set up essentially to combat the perceived inadequacies of the Schools of Fine Art and official salons, so Artistic Youth for a while took over the role of annual exhibition organiser. In a sense, therefore, it could be said to have embodied dominant Romanian artistic trends in the first decade of this century. It also influenced the highly individual tastes of its honorary president, Crown Princess Marie. At the end of the decade, she began to turn from her earlier, flamboyant, internationally inspired projects for interior decoration towards a new appreciation of neo-national trends. These manifested themselves initially in the Neo-Romanian wing of Cotroceni Palace which she commissioned from Grigore Cerchez shortly before the First World War.

The First Queen of Greater Romania: Marie's Response to the National Style

I can truthfully say that I was the instigator of quite a new epoche of architecture and style in my adopted country.

Queen Marie of Romania¹

In view of the growing popularity of the Neo-Romanian architectural style after the 1906 Exhibition, together with efforts to create a 'national' idiom in painting and the applied arts, it is perhaps surprising that Marie did not commission a Neo-Romanian interior until the eve of the First World War. Despite her support of Sterian's decorative arts section and intimations of Brâncovean details in her Cotroceni silver bedroom, she continued to take her design inspiration from abroad, commissioning the Celtic boudoir in Pelișor and Norwegian room in Cotroceni in the years following the Exhibition. In her memoirs, however, Marie placed herself firmly at the head of the national revival in Romanian art, claiming to have been 'the chief promoter of a movement tending towards resuscitating a national style instead of imitating all that came from the West'.² This image was also fostered by her biographers, for example Georges Oudard:

She was to lead a movement which wanted to bring the national style back to life instead of imitating everything western, as had been done too often since the beginning of Uncle's reign. In this way, she participated in the resurrection of Romanian nationalism

¹ Arhivele Statului București, fond Regina Maria, III/79, 'My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', undated, p. 23.

² Marie, Queen of Roumania, *The Story of My Life*, vol. II, London, Cassell & Co., 1934, p. 300.

which, in these final years of world peace, brought together so many people belonging to all different fractions of opinion.³

These statements, written in the 1930s, are illustrative of Marie's efforts to reinvent the image of the Romanian royal family following the war. In 1916 Ferdinand had led Romania into the conflict on the Allied side. This breaking of the family's traditional links with the Central Powers, together with Romania's vast territorial gains after the Paris Peace Conference, allowed Ferdinand and Marie to cast off their Hohenzollern legacy and promote themselves as the keystone of new-born Greater Romania. It is, therefore, unsurprising that when writing about her life in retrospect, Marie should have been keen to stress her links with the national revival in architecture. In reality, however, she only once requested a strictly Neo-Romanian commission: Grigore Cerchez's north wing of Cotroceni, designed in two stages from 1913-15 and 1925-26. Her other projects of the 1920s and early 1930s represented a more personal, less schematic response to both the architectural models and landscape settings of the country. These included a white farm, modelled on boyar manor houses, at Copăceni near Bucharest; a tiny 'fisher palace' by the lake of King Ferdinand's hunting lodge at Scroviște; a renovated medieval fortress at Bran in Transylvania; a rambling, villa-like palace on the beach at Mamaia; and a little Turkish 'artist's nest' overlooking the Black Sea at Balcic. Rejecting a straightforward application of Neo-Romanian ideas, these were designed and decorated in what Marie termed the *Regina Maria* (Queen Marie) style, an original mélange of Neo-Romanian, Turkish and modernist architectural elements, filled with eclectic collections of antique furniture, religious objects and vernacular craft-work.

³Elle va prendre la tête d'un mouvement qui veut faire revivre le style national au lieu d'imiter en tout l'Occident comme on ne le faisait que trop depuis le début du règne de l'Oncle. Et, de cette façon, elle participe à la résurrection du nationalisme roumain qui rallie, en ces dernières années de la paix du monde, tant d'hommes appartenant à toutes les fractions de l'opinion', Georges Oudard, *Marie de Roumanie*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1939, pp. 67-68.

This chapter examines Marie's evolving design tastes from shortly before the war until just after King Ferdinand's death in 1927. Beginning with Cerchez's first phase of alterations to Cotroceni, followed by the official monuments of the 1922 Alba Iulia Coronation and the decoration of Marie's private country retreats in the 1920s, it discusses how the Queen's self-perception as one of the founders of Greater Romania influenced her projects. At the same time, it analyses how she first adopted and then moved away from the 'national style' as understood by the Neo-Romanian school of architects, to develop her own response to the multi-ethnic character of the country. This was a response which, in her later years, was also strongly conditioned by the influence of the Bahá'í faith.

First experiments: Cerchez's new wing in Cotroceni

Marie's first Neo-Romanian commission, Cerchez's north wing of Cotroceni Palace, was begun as late as 1913, some seven years after the Neo-Romanian pavilions of the Jubilee Exhibition and twenty-seven years after the Lahovary House (fig. 5.1). She tried to attribute this delay to the restrictions King Carol imposed on her early years in the country:

This love of all things Roumanian had only very gradually ripened in me; the continual repression of our lives, the constant demand upon our acquiescent obedience had not been conducive to a free development of our sympathies [...] Instead of promoting a love for the country, it had for many years only stirred up a feeling of revolt for all things aggressively national.⁴

It was not until 1913 that she felt she had

learned all about the architecture of the country. I had unravelled the different styles and had been perfectly able to make up my mind what I liked or did not like, from then onwards began my desire to adapt the old Roumanian style to our modern uses, to

⁴*The Story of My Life*, vol. II, pp. 300-301.

redevelop a national art that was being forgotten and buried beneath innovations come from Occidental countries [...] It needed the eye of the princess come from far to bring before their eyes the beauty of their national art.⁵

Although it is more likely that it was one of the supporters of the Neo-Romanian school who finally brought the movement to the attention of the Princess, she was quick to grasp its potential. Critical of Gottereau's earlier alterations to Cotroceni ('alas, when the house was rebuilt [...] no-one had thought of reconstructing it after the beautiful models of old convents in other parts of the country'⁶), she invited Grigore Cerchez, the newly appointed President of the Society of Romanian Architects, to design the palace extension. In the absence of Mincu who had died in 1912, Cerchez, his teaching colleague in the architecture department of the School of Fine Art, had become one of the foremost architects of the Neo-Romanian school. Marie would probably have been aware of the early stages of one of his most successful commissions, the Advanced School of Architecture, then taking shape on Str. Biserica Enei in Bucharest (fig. 5.2). Its powerful walls, punctured by layers of different sized, intricately carved, Brâncovean arcades, combined monumentality with tactile surface plasticity in an effective visual statement of the ideals of the school.

The precise dates of Cerchez's two-stage intervention in Cotroceni have been the cause of some confusion. Surviving documents, however, indicate that the first stage was begun some time in 1913 and was complete by the end of October 1915 when it was insured.⁷ During this period Cerchez extended the north wing to include

⁵My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', pp. 22-23.

⁶Marie, Queen of Roumania, *The Country That I Love, an Exile's Memories*, London, Duckworth, 1925, p. 22.

⁷Nicolae Vlădescu, the architect who restored the palace for Ceaușescu between 1976-85 following bomb and earthquake damage, writes that the dining room and *foișor* were built during the second stage in 1925 ('Restaurarea Palatului Cotroceni 1976-1985', *Revista monumentelor istorice*, nr. 1-2, 1997, p. 60). He then contradicts himself by citing an inventory of the new wing of the palace, made in December 1915, which mentions the dining room and exterior balcony (p. 79, note 3). The art historian Mihai Ipate also erroneously dates the *foișor* and upper terrace to 'the third decade of the twentieth century' ('Ansamblul Cotroceni [Istorie, arhitectură, monumente dispărute], *Muzeul de artă* -

family and guest apartments, the King's office, kitchens and servant rooms. The focal point of the whole was a two-storey, Neo-Romanian extension which jutted out perpendicular to the junction between the old and new parts of the wing. From outside, this was entered via a stone staircase leading to a *foișor* whose open arcade was supported by a variety of delicately carved stone columns. Rather than being a Neo-Romanian reinvention of older models, this was an almost exact copy of the *foișor* named after the abbot Dionisie Bălăcescu in the inner courtyard of the Brâncovean Hurez Convent (1690-97; fig. 3.11). Built later than the monastery itself, from 1752-53, then rebuilt in 1872, the *foișor* was considered a jewel of national ecclesiastical architecture. Cerchez altered it only slightly in small details of stone-carving and in the addition of a landing half-way down the steps. In none of his other Neo-Romanian works did he follow so literally the form of an original prototype; this would suggest that the *foișor* was Marie's idea.⁸

The *foișor* led into Cerchez's Neo-Romanian dining room and antechamber (fig. 5.3), which also appear to have been inspired by an interior in Hurez, possibly the domed and vaulted rooms of the original princely residence within the convent. According to Marie:

These two rooms were an adapted copy of a fine old convent refectory we had discovered in a far corner of the country. Stone pillars and domed ceilings in which the light can be hidden so that no lamps, only a sun-like glow, can be seen, were the principle features.⁹

Arad. Studii - comunicări, 1996, p. 176). From the evidence in the Cotroceni museum guidebook (*The Cotroceni National Museum*, București, n.p., 1994, pp. 40 & 167), together with the inventory cited by Vlădescu and an insurance document dated 29 October 1915 which mentions 'dining room with anti-room and, above, terrace in Romanian style (after Hurez monastery)' (fond Castele și Palate, 173/1916, 'Specificarea obiectelor asigurate'), it seems clear that work on the north wing was begun in 1913 and completed in 1915.

⁸the stone stairs leading down to the water garden was built under my auspices, a copy of a stairs at Hurez, the convent I best love', fond Regina Maria, III/43, 'My Dream Houses', 1930, p. 23-24.

⁹My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', p. 24.

The sober effect of the whitewashed walls and ceilings, the gracious Brâncovean arches and semi-spherical domes separated by twisted *brâie* contrasted strongly with the flamboyant decoration of the earlier gold and silver rooms and provided a restrained setting for Marie's collection of 'genuine old Byzantine objects'. The American professor George Huntington, visiting the Queen in 1925, described the rooms as follows:

across the north end of the dining room is a genuine old iconostasis [...] The interior walls are color-washed a cream white over rough plaster just as in a primitive church, so that the old crosses, icons, carved screens etc., stand out in beautiful simplicity.¹⁰

A touch of the fantastic still remained, however, in the heavy, gilded, 'King Arthur's round table' and twenty-four chairs, decorated with what Marie described as 'Byzantine designs'.¹¹ With backs carved into stylised eagles or trees of life and side stretchers decorated with mermaids and hybrid animal forms, the chairs echoed the motifs on the wall heating grills, as well as recalling the fantastic creatures adorning the gilded throne in the golden salon and the gilded furniture of Peleşor.¹²

Above the dining room Cerchez constructed an open terrace whose stone balustrade repeated the carved Brâncovean motifs of the staircase below. At the outside edge was another arcaded *foişor*, supported on twisting fluted columns, loosely recalling the exterior corner tower of the Hurez complex. Behind this was Marie's studio (fig. 5.4). Although designed around the same time as Cerchez's

¹⁰Diana Fotescu (ed.), *Americans and Queen Marie*, Iaşi, Oxford, Portland, The Centre for Romanian Studies, 1998, pp. 16-17. Marie wrote that the iconostasis (present whereabouts unknown) came 'from a destroyed Greek church, it makes a beautiful back ground, the niches which used in former times to contain the pictures of saints have now been adapted for the holding of golden plate'. 'My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', p. 26.

¹¹'My Different Homes. Cotroceni I', p. 26.

¹²A 1930 inventory of the room mentions that there were also two arm-chairs and a stool carved and gilded in the same fashion (fond Castele şi Palate, 190/1930; 'Inventarul mobilierul statului'). Neither the date nor the designer of the furniture has been established, although the Cotroceni guide book suggests that they may have been manufactured in a Viennese workshop in the first quarter of the century after designs by Marie herself (*The Cotroceni National Museum*, pp. 125-6). Perhaps this was the workshop of Bernhard Ludwig who had been supplying most of the furniture for Cotroceni since c.1900.

extension, this was in a style strongly reminiscent of both Baillie Scott and Edwin Lutyens' early work and was probably the creation of Karel Liman.¹³

It was indicative of Marie's life-long stylistic eclecticism that she should have seen fit to insert a pseudo-Arts and Crafts room into a Neo-Romanian ensemble. Both were imbued with an element of romance and medieval spirit that appealed to the Princess. Surviving photos of the original studio (also known as the music room) show strong similarities with early interiors by Scott such as the hall of Blackwell on Lake Windermere (1898-99; fig. 5.5). Liman borrowed Scott's innovation of the two-storey hall with half-timbering, exposed rafters, and great angle fireplace with open hearth and seats, creating rich, rustic contrasts of light and dark. Above the hearth, the box-like, timbered wall space made subtle reference to the gallery room over the fireplace at Blackwell, while an open gallery running around the upper level of the far side of the studio recalled Scott's use of open and screen-walled balconies and upper corridors to extend the vertical space of his halls. Even the wooden joists connecting the gallery balustrade panels and the roof beam followed the form of those used by Scott, for example in his design for the double-height hall of the White House in Helensburgh of 1899. Liman enlivened this Arts and Crafts simplicity of means with touches of medieval romantic imagination, seen in the carved, dragon-like creatures perched on the ends of the slatted half-partition dividing the room space. These recalled Scott's use of medieval quotations in early works like his own Red House on the Isle of Man of 1892-3 with its carved grotesques and friezes.

¹³Liman is named as the architect of the studio by the not always consistent Vlădescu ('Restaurarea Palatului Cotroceni', p. 60) who, on p. 82, then attributes it to Ion Ernest. However, the latter appears to have been involved only in the second stage of Cerchez's alterations, from 1925-6, as well as designing the second version of Marie's bedroom in 1929. It is more reasonable to assume that Liman, who had shown his mastery of *Studio* disseminated sources in the recently finished Norwegian boudoir, was called to design the interior. The exact date of the studio has yet to be established, but, as it forms part of the new wing of the palace and opens out onto Cerchez's terrace, it is probable that it was also created during 1913-15. It was remodelled as the 'Oriental room' during Vlădescu's renovation.

Another possible source for the studio is the hall Edwin Lutyens designed for Deanery Garden (1899-1902; fig. 5.6), the Berkshire residence of the publisher Edward Hudson whose magazine, *Country Life*, championed Lutyens' work and may well have brought it to the attention of Marie and her architect. The curvilinear wall-timbering patterns of the Cotroceni studio repeat those of Lutyens' double-height hall, while the large bay window projecting onto Cerchez's terrace recalls, to a lesser extent, Lutyens' dramatic fenestration. Once again this room reveals Liman's stylistic versatility, awareness of developments elsewhere in Europe and imaginative ability to create integrated interiors in the manner of a wide variety of prototypes. His informed references to Baillie Scott and Lutyens suggest that he had direct access to their designs, these being disseminated through Scott's book *Houses and Gardens*, published in 1906 (copies of which reached as far as the library of Hvitträsk in Finland), Hermann Muthesius' *Das Englische Haus* of 1904, and articles in *Country Life* and *The Studio*.¹⁴

In 1914 King Carol died; two years later, Ferdinand led Romania into the war on the Allied side. In only three months, the royal family had been forced to evacuate to Iași, abandoning Cotroceni to the advancing German troops. Although they systematically stripped the rest of the capital, the soldiers were ordered to spare the royal palaces out of respect for King Carol who had been a staunch supporter of the Central Powers. King Ferdinand, on the other hand, was struck from the House of Hohenzollern. Romania emerged from the war with an arguably unwarranted share of the spoils.¹⁵ Her final gains included Transylvania, nearly all of Bucovina,

¹⁴Marie's interest in *The Studio* continued throughout her most productive building period of the 1920s. In 1929 she even wrote the forward to a special *Studio* edition devoted to Romanian vernacular art (George Oprescu, *Peasant Art in Roumania*, special autumn number of *The Studio*, London, 1929).

¹⁵Her territorial gains more than exceeded the boundaries promised in the 1916 Treaty with the Allies by which Romania entered the war and which subsequently became a point of contention between Romania and the Supreme Council at the Paris peace negotiations. Romania finally took matters into her own hands after the Romanians of Bucovina, Transylvania and Bessarabia declared for union with the 'motherland' in the winter of 1918 and spring of 1919. Romanian troops occupied Budapest in August 1919, only fully withdrawing from Hungary after being awarded Transylvania and part of eastern Hungary in the Treaty of Trianon of 4 June 1920.

Bessarabia and the southern Dobrudja and two thirds of the Banat. Her population, likewise, more than doubled, from 7,750,000 to 16,250,000. She became the fifth largest country in Europe after France, Spain, Germany and Poland. These gains brought with them substantial minority groups: in 1920, roughly 30 per cent of the population was non-Romanian, compared to only 8 per cent before the war. The largest minorities were Magyars (9.3 per cent), Jews (5.3 per cent), Ukrainians (4.7 per cent) and Germans (4.3 per cent).

The role played by Marie during the war and Paris Peace Conference not only captured the imagination of the world's press, but had a significant influence on the way she later presented her royal image. She made herself famous by refusing to wear rubber gloves in the typhus wards of Iași's overcrowded hospitals, wrote encouraging articles for the troops' newspaper, published a travelogue of Romania, *My Country*, to raise money for the relief effort and was a forceful behind-the-scenes advisor. Her success in manipulating public support was such that, in March 1919, she was sent by the King to Paris to plead Romania's cause with Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George.¹⁶ During her subsequent trip to London, the *Illustrated London News* (15 March 1919) published a full-page cover picture of Marie in her Red Cross uniform reading to a dying soldier. Even *Punch* (19 March 1919; fig. 5.7) took up the Romanian cause in a cartoon depicting the country as a noble, starving peasant woman languishing by the tracks as wagon-loads of Allied food-relief roll past on their way to Germany.

Public monuments: the 1922 Coronation

In November 1919, the Queen of Romania for the first time opened Parliament alongside the King. This, Marie wrote in her diary, was 'my fair right [...] for

¹⁶President Poincaré allegedly told the Queen that 'Clemenceau has much changed towards Romania since Your Majesty has given a face to Her Country' (quoted by Hannah Pakula, *The Last Romantic*, London, Phoenix, 1996, p. 278).

certainly I am one of the builders of greater Romania, of that I am proudly conscious'.¹⁷ Three years later, on 15 October 1922, Ferdinand and Marie were crowned King and Queen of Greater Romania in an elaborate coronation church built by Victor Ștefănescu for the occasion in Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár; fig. 5.8). The Transylvanian town was deliberately chosen for its historic and symbolic significance. Once capital of the Roman province of Dacia (when it was known as Apulum), it was also the site where Mihai Viteazul was proclaimed Prince of Transylvania in 1599. For one brief year, Viteazul united the three provinces; with the growth of nationalism in the nineteenth century, he became venerated as the father of the ideal of national union. Following his short-lived reign, Alba Iulia continued to be a symbol of Romanian resistance to Habsburg and Hungarian rule of Transylvania. In 1784, it witnessed the Romanian peasant rising, led by Horea, Cloșca and Crișan, against Hungarian landlords. Then, on 1 December 1918, it hosted the Grand National Assembly which declared the unification of Transylvania with Romania. Alba Iulia's significance for Ferdinand and Marie was underlined by their daughter, Princess Ileana, who wrote that their 'coronation at this shrine of Roumanian independence was symbolic of their position as the embodiment, the inspirers and the executors of an age-old dream'.¹⁸

In 1921, the Conservative government of Prime Minister Alexandru Averescu appointed a committee to oversee the organisation of the Coronation celebrations.¹⁹ Its members, including the historian Nicolae Iorga, the engineer Anghel Saligny, the painters Arthur Garguromin-Verona and Costin Petrescu and the architects Victor Ștefănescu and Petre Antonescu, were charged with the erection of two monuments commemorating the birth of Greater Romania: a Coronation Church in Alba Iulia and

¹⁷Fond Regina Maria, III/118, 20 November 1919.

¹⁸Ileana, Princess of Roumania, Archduchess of Austria, *I Live Again*, New York, Rinehart & Co., 1952, p. 24.

¹⁹The Coronation itself did not take place until a Liberal government, under Ion I. C. Brătianu, returned to power in 1922.

a triumphal arch on Șoseaua Kiseleff in Bucharest. Ștefănescu's church, begun in May 1921, was intended to draw a clear link between the new rulers of Greater Romania and Mihai Viteazul (fig. 5.9). The site chosen for the complex was next to that once occupied by Viteazul's coronation church. Furthermore, Ștefănescu took his inspiration from churches dating roughly from Viteazul's period, such as 'the princely churches of Târgoviște, Curtea de Argeș and Sf. Dumitru in Craiova'.²⁰ Hence his ground plan borrowed the triple nave and inscribed Greek cross, preceded by an open arcaded *pridvor*, used in Târgoviște and Sf. Dumitru. In a similar fashion, the church was surmounted by three cupolae, the largest of which was forty-five metres high, while its exterior employed a variety of ornamental *brâie*, carved capitals and moulded arcades loosely adapted from the decorative vocabulary of its sixteenth and seventeenth-century predecessors. In the construction of the church, Ștefănescu followed Neo-Romanian precepts, combining modern reinforced concrete with specifically Romanian materials: red marble from Arad for the octagonal columns supporting the main cupola, marble from Mateiaș for the lower part of the interior walls and Câmpulung stone for the flagstones.

Further reference to Romanian tradition was made in the rich fresco paintings of the interior by Costin Petrescu and his school. Fresco was trumpeted as the traditional medium of Romanian religious decoration; efforts were made to stress its superiority following Lecomte du Noüy's controversial use of oil in his restoration of Curtea de Argeș.²¹ The removal of Communist-period overpainting has revealed that Petrescu's frescoes of Mihai Viteazul and his wife Stanca in the narthex were mirrored by realistically painted portraits of Ferdinand and Marie, in coronation dress on a gilded ground, on either side of the door on the west wall (fig. 5.10). These

²⁰'bisericile Domnească din Târgoviște, Domnească din Curtea de Argeș și Sfântul Dumitru din Craiova', Victor Ștefănescu, 'Biserica încoronării suveranilor din Alba-Iulia', *Artele frumoase. Revista artelor plastice*, nr. 1, ianuarie 1922, p. 147.

²¹See, for example, Paul din Alep, 'Zugraveala „al fresco”', *ibid.*, p. 152.

made explicit the association between the two rulers of united Romania already suggested by the building's site and design.

Ștefănescu's church was the centrepiece of the 150 x 80 metre coronation complex. From the exterior, the ensemble was dominated by a fifty-eight metre high Neo-Romanian bell-tower surmounting the entrance. It was linked by open arcades to fortified towers marking the corners of the rectangular enceinte. Buttressed, in its lower section, by two halves of a *culă*, the bell-tower combined religious and secular Romanian architectural elements in a formula reminiscent of Ștefănescu's pavilions for the 1906 Exhibition. The bell itself, decorated with 'Byzantine motifs from old [Romanian] religious ornamentation' and a dedicatory inscription by Nicolae Iorga, was designed by another artist with a long history of collaboration with the royal family, the sculptor Emil Becker.²² Behind the church was the guest wing (*arhondarac*), containing the royal quarters with 'vaulted Byzantine interiors' (fig. 5.11).²³ Here Ștefănescu made reference to Cerchez's Neo-Romanian wing at Cotroceni, providing access to the rooms via 'two exterior stone staircases in the manner of those at Hurez'.²⁴

Ștefănescu's Neo-Romanian church became the symbol of the Coronation, featuring on medals struck for the occasion. In one example, an allegorical figure of Romania, in peasant dress and carrying a laurel wreath, leads the mounted King and his escort before the monumental edifice (fig. 5.12). The medal's designer, C. Kristescu, attempts to translate Ștefănescu's Neo-Romanian architectural language into two-dimensional design: the medal is edged on both sides with a torsioned *brâu*, while the lettering is in the old Slavonic characters favoured by Mincu. The Queen herself wore a pseudo-Byzantine crown and coronation robes intended to harmonise

²²'motive bizantine din vechea noastră ornațională', A. R., 'Clopotul catedralei din Alba-Iulia', *ibid.*, p. 148. Becker was first mentioned in connection with Marie's 'silver bedroom' in Cotroceni.

²³'cu interioare bizantine boltite', 'Biserica încoronării suveranilor din Alba-Iulia', p. 147.

²⁴'două scări exterioare de piatră, în felul celor de la Horezu', *ibid.*

with the Neo-Romanian setting and suggest the atmosphere of the coronation of Mihai Viteazul (fig. 5.13).²⁵ The crown, of yellow Transylvanian gold with large jewelled pendants terminating in inscribed swastikas hanging over each ear, was inspired by one worn by Princess Despina, wife of Neagoe Basarab, in a votive painting from the restored Episcopal Church of Curtea de Argeş (fig. 5.14). Marie wore it Byzantine-fashion over a veil, together with an elaborate gold mantle embroidered with the crests of the three provinces and edged with sheaves of wheat, a symbol of Romania's agricultural riches. The official Coronation photograph, in which Marie's profile pose displayed to maximum effect the eastern decorative richness of her adornments, had strong overtones of Mucha's *Têtes byzantines* of c.1897 (fig. 5.15).²⁶ Against the Neo-Romanian backdrop of Ştefănescu's church, she was also a living embodiment of Sterian's 1906 cover design for the first edition of *Arhitectura*.

While both Marie's romanticised costume and the Coronation Church itself were intended to recall 'the age of Voivode Mihai', the triumphal arch in Bucharest drew a deliberate link with the country's Roman past (fig. 5.16).²⁷ In the imagery of post-war Romania, Ferdinand, like Carol before him, was openly compared to Trajan. Fig. 5.17 illustrates a commemorative medal, struck the year before the Coronation, which has the head of 'Ferdinand I King of the Romanians' on one side and 'Emperor Trajan of the Romans, Province of Dacia Felix' on the other. Ferdinand's triumphal arch, inspired by that of Napoleon in Paris,²⁸ was situated on the main intersection of Şoseaua Kiseleff, the principle processional avenue entering Bucharest from the

²⁵The new crown was a necessity since the Romanian crown jewels, sent to Moscow for safekeeping during the evacuation of Bucharest, had been appropriated by the Bolsheviks in January 1918.

²⁶Marie owned a number of works by Mucha, including his 1899 lithographs *Eveil du matin* and *Eclat du jour*, an 1899 series of *Quatre saisons* lithographs and his 1894 *Gismonda* poster for Sarah Bernhardt. Mucha's *Têtes byzantines* were widely disseminated, both as colour lithographs and colour postcards, and it is highly possible that Marie may have possessed a copy.

²⁷'amintind epoca voevodului Mihai', 'Lucrările de artă pentru serbările încoronării', *Artele frumoase*, nr. 1, ianuarie 1922, p. 139.

²⁸Petre Antonescu, *Arcul de Triumf (contra lui Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş)*, Bucureşti, Tip „Slova” A. Feller, 1929, p. 5.

Transylvanian route to the north. It was designed by Petre Antonescu, in collaboration with the leading Artistic Youth sculptors Dimitrie Paciurea, Cornel Medrea, Carol Storck, Oscar Spaethe and Ion Jalea and the lesser-known Ion Jordănescu, D(?). Mățăuanu, Dumitru Bârlad and Demetriu Severin.²⁹ Although attacked by the ever-critical Tzigara-Samurcaș for not being sufficiently 'classical', the arch's very nature as a triumphal entranceway to the capital drew a parallel between Ferdinand's new 'empire' and that of Trajan.³⁰

In addition to its Roman resonances, Antonescu's arch, like Ștefănescu's church, was trumpeted as 'an expression of modern Romanian art, with motifs inspired by [the country's] historic and artistic past'.³¹ Antonescu imbued Neo-Romanian elements with a sense of classical grandeur. A top-heavy central section, buttressed by sturdy masonry pylons, was given added emphasis by a deep cornice and elaborate decorative vocabulary of shields above a twisted *brâu*. Accompanied by a framing latticework of interlocking straight and curving lines inspired by the window surrounds of churches like Hurez, this central block counterbalanced the four pairs of monumental soldiers surrounding the side pylons. These statues celebrated Ferdinand as the culmination of a long line of valiant warrior rulers of the area. They began, to the left of the northern façade, with a Roman and Dacian soldier by Storck and Spaethe respectively, progressing through the soldiers of Mircea cel Bătrîn (Medrea), Ștefan cel Mare (Paciurea), Mihai Viteazul (Severin) and Tudor Vladimirescu (Jalea) and culminating in Carol's soldier of Independence (Iordanescu) and, finally, Ferdinand's soldier of Union (Mățăuanu). In this way, the arch attempted to synthesise the three-strand imagery surrounding the King. It simultaneously portrayed him as a new Trajan, as the fulfilment of the national dream of unification

²⁹Virgiliu Teodorescu, 'Arcul de Triumf din București. Contribuții documentare', *S.C.I.A.*, nr. 2, 1969, p. 339.

³⁰*Arcul de Triumf*, p. 3.

³¹'o expresiune a artei moderne românești, cu motive inspirate din trecutul nostru istoric și artistic', 'Lucrările de artă pentru serbările încoronării', p. 139.

and as a modern king able to relaunch Romania to meet post-war challenges, just as the Neo-Romanian style had reinvented older tradition to answer the demands of modern architecture. Nevertheless, despite its monumental character, the stability of the arch, like ultimately that of the enlarged country, was illusory. Built quickly out of temporary materials in order to be ready for Ferdinand and Marie's entry into Bucharest after the Coronation, it soon began to fall into disrepair. It was rebuilt by Antonescu in a slightly different, but more permanent form between 1935-36.³²

While Antonescu's arch was perhaps too 'classical' to be considered fully Neo-Romanian, the style's role as the official language of the Coronation contributed to its subsequent popularity for public buildings across Greater Romania. Following unification, a second generation of Mincu's followers, including Ion D. Trajanescu, Toma T. Socolescu, Constantin Iotzu, Paul Smărăndescu, Stătie Ciortan and Gheorghe Simotta, developed a monumental Neo-Romanian idiom which they applied to government buildings, churches, private tenements and villas.³³ The contrast with the existing architecture of the new territories was particularly acute in the prosperous towns of Transylvania. In Cluj (Kolozsvár), for example, the Neo-Romanian Orthodox Cathedral by Constantin Pomponiu and George Cristinel of 1921-34 (fig. 5.18) inserted an almost incongruous Romanian note among the Magyar Secessionist buildings of Ödön Lechner, Ede Toroczkai Wigand and Károly Kós. Similarly in Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely), the Orthodox Cathedral (1925-34³⁴), with its Neo-Byzantine decorative flourishes, created a striking counterpoint to the Habsburg-period architectural fabric of the town, in particular Marcell Komor and

³²For further details see above article by Antonescu, also his book *Clădiri, construcții, proiecte și studii*, București, Ed. Tehnică, 1963, p. 41.

³³For a good selection of photographs of both Neo-Romanian and modernist buildings constructed after unification in the 'lost territories', see *Arhitectura 1891-1941. Semicentenarul societății arhitecților români*, București, 1941, pp. 125-153.

³⁴I have been unable to identify the architect of the cathedral.

Dezső Jakab's Town Hall and Palace of Culture situated at the other end of Piața Trandafirilor.

For Marie, however, the Neo-Romanian style offered a fitting backdrop as she launched into her new role as Queen of Greater Romania. In 1925, she invited Cerchez to extend his Neo-Romanian interiors in Cotroceni. During the autumn and winter of that year,³⁵ he converted Gottereau's great reception room ('Garnier style') and dining room ('Henri II style'³⁶), which adjoined his earlier Neo-Romanian interiors, into *Marele Salon Alb* (the Great White Room; fig. 5.19). He retained an echo of the original wall between Gottereau's rooms by dividing his continuous interior into two differently vaulted areas. The barrel-vault of the eastern half, with its equi-distant cutaways for doors and windows, recalled barrel-vaulted Wallachian churches such as Cozia Monastery (1386; restored by Brâncoveanu). The three semi-spherical domes of the western half, on the other hand, edged with torsioned *brâie* and separated by double arches, echoed the domed Moldavian churches of the seventeenth century, such as Trei Ierarhi or Dragomirna Monastery near Suceava (1607).³⁷ Throughout the two halves, Cerchez applied a liberal sprinkling of Brâncovean stonework motifs in the intricate capitals of the squat columns, in the radiator mouldings and fretwork squares of the arches, as well as in the four carved doors. Three of these were copied directly from church entrances in Hurez, while the final door at the east end, with its double-headed Cantacuzino eagle, was inspired by

³⁵According to the Queen's diaries, work seems to have been begun in the late summer of 1925. On 16 September she wrote: 'Cotroceni is in a fearful mess. We are having the big room made and when one began taking down the old ceiling one discovered that all the beams beneath were rotten so it was even lucky that we began this new work or one day the whole thing might have come down' (fond Regina Maria, III/153). On 6 January 1926 her entry reads, 'Our one interest is the beautiful new room. I have arranged it perfectly' (fond Regina Maria III/155). Cerchez's plans for the room, comprising pencil drawings of walls, vaulting, doors, radiator grills and carved stone details, in the archive of Cotroceni palace, are dated 1925 and 1926.

³⁶Fond Castele și Palate, 165/1895, 2/14 ianuarie 1895; furniture bill from Parisian firm of A. Damon & Colin.

³⁷This distinction was observed by Diana Fotescu and Marian Constantin, 'Ansamblul Cotroceni în epoca modernă', *Revista muzeelor*, nr. 4, 1992, p. 17.

the entrance of another church of the Brâncovean period, Biserica Colțea in Bucharest (1701-2).

Private retreats: Copăceni, Scroviște, Bran, Cara Dalga and Tenha-Yuvah

Of all Marie's houses, the new wing of Cotroceni most closely demonstrated the principles of the Neo-Romanian style as understood by Mincu and his school. The solemn beauty of Brâncovean architectural elements lent a formal grandeur to the Queen's official town residence. In her informal country retreats, however, she adhered less rigidly to a strict Neo-Romanian formula, working closely with a number of different artists in the creation of what she termed the *Regina Maria* style. Many of these residences, identified through numerous photographs in the Queen's largely unread diaries, still survive. Nevertheless, for various reasons, both political and practical, they have been accorded little interest by researchers. Five retreats, constructed or redesigned between 1913 and the late 1920s, will be examined in an effort to analyse the Queen's personal response to the national style. In characteristic fashion, Marie quickly turned away from straightforward Neo-Romanian interventions as provided by Cerchez, preferring to dictate her own interpretations of national building types. These, in turn, appear to have been determined by the setting of each residence. Copăceni, a decaying, eclectic country house, was remodelled according to the prototype of the Romanian *conac* (boyar manor house); the 'Fisher Palace' at Scroviște was a glorified adaptation of an existing fisherman's cottage; Castle Bran involved the restoration of a romantic medieval fortress; while Cara Dalga and Tenha-Yuvah drew both on their maritime setting and on the Turkish culture of the Dobrudja region. Most appear to have evolved from a definite idea formulated by the Queen, before being translated into realisable form by lesser-known architects (or, in the case of Tenha-Yuvah, by a painter) and teams of soldiers working under Marie's military aides. Only in Castle Bran, restored by Liman, does

she appear fully to have trusted the imagination of her architect. Her diary entries for other residences, in particular Tenha-Yuvah and the guest house at Scroviște, are peppered with complaints that her military aides have not understood the true 'spirit' of her ideas, while surviving plans for Cara Dalga and its annex are covered in the Queen's hand-written annotations.

All this seems to suggest that Marie was the driving artistic force behind these residences. This would go some way to explaining the difficulties met in classifying them. They were not Neo-Romanian, yet they frequently referred to national tradition, even to the extent of containing vernacular-style houses in the gardens. At the same time, they also carried many international references, not least in the eclectic collections of objects with which they were furnished. In their design and inspiration, they provide a revealing insight into the way in which the Queen perceived herself. Just as King Carol invested his dynastic hopes in the building of Peleş, so Marie gave tangible form to her new role, wrapping herself in a visual (and literary) mythology designed to leave a powerful memory of the first Queen of Greater Romania.³⁸ The subsequent alteration of the residences and obfuscation of sources has concealed the extent to which this drew on national tradition, as well as on international vocabularies.

The first of Marie's country retreats was Copăceni, her 'white farm',³⁹ situated some seventeen kilometres south of Bucharest in the Argeş valley on the road to Giurgiu (fig. 5.20).⁴⁰ It had belonged to the former Conservative deputy George Em. Filipescu who left it to Marie on his death in 1913. She was excited by the artistic

³⁸Between 1916 and her death, Marie published more than fifteen books, including fairy tales, allegorical romances and travelogues, culminating in her three-volume autobiography of 1934. She also produced a much larger number of articles on a wide range of subjects for Romanian, European and American magazines.

³⁹Fond Regina Maria, V/5365; 26 January 1925, letter from Marie to Roxo Weingartner.

⁴⁰On the western edge of the village 1 decembrie (formerly 30 decembrie) on Șoseaua Giurgiu, just before Adunații Copăceni. On her death, Marie left the estate to her daughter Queen Elisabetha of Greece. After King Mihai's abdication, it became a Communist Party farm and is now run by the COMAICO farm and dairy produce company. The exterior of the house still remains intact; however, its interiors and gardens have been completely altered.

freedom offered by the first piece of land 'over which I had undisputed rights' and was also, perhaps, captured by the romantic English associations of the estate.⁴¹ The original eclectic manor house had been designed, together with the park, in the 1870s by a former English major, Stephen Lakeman, who had served in the Ottoman army in the Crimea under the name Mazar pasha and who had married into the Filipescu family.⁴² Nevertheless, when Marie rebuilt the house shortly after the war, she avoided any of her earlier references to English forms.⁴³ With her new appreciation of national architecture, she declared that the existing structure was 'too ornate, too much of a villa, my ideal was to turn it into a real old Roumanian "conac" [manor house] with large "șindrilla" [shingle] roof and squat columns in front of a roomy pridvor [veranda]'.⁴⁴ She wished to harmonise 'its lines, removing all efforts at false decoration, turning it into a dwelling, simple, white and dignified, such as in earlier centuries this country used to build'.⁴⁵ The most eye-catching feature of the new house was its *pridvor*,

what the Americans would call a "living-porch" a columned-in sort of terrace where one can settle down like in an open-air room, this is a characteristic of the Roumanian house, I have adapted it on a large scale. There when the weather is fine all meals are taken.⁴⁶

With its simple, curving arches supported on unadorned columns, the *pridvor* dominated the courtyard view of the house, extending dramatically outwards either side of the central living block to give a strong, horizontal emphasis to the whole. Reinforced by deep eaves, it presented an exaggerated play on the integral function

⁴¹*Story of My Life*, vol. III, p. 46.

⁴²'Colțuri de umbra. Parcul Copăceni. O figură din trecut ... Mazar Pașa ... Legatul defunctului George Em. Filipescu către A. S. R. Principesa Maria', *Minerva*, 6 martie 1913. Lakeman was associated with leading Liberals, including Ion C. Brătianu, Constantin A. Rosetti and Mihai Kogălniceanu, who met at his house in the 1870s and whose new, united Liberal party of 1875 was initially known as the 'coalition of Mazar pasha'. No further details found concerning the appearance of the original building.

⁴³The interior arrangement of the house was finished by 1924. Fond Regina Maria, III/148, 22 June 1924.

⁴⁴'My Dream Houses', p. 15.

⁴⁵*The Country That I Love*, p. 38.

⁴⁶V/5365.

of the vernacular porch as a gradual transition from exterior to interior. In its serene, whitewashed simplicity, it also recalled the arched cloisters of monasteries such as Hurez (fig. 5.21).⁴⁷

This restrained use of whitewash and undecorated volumes continued in the house's interior (figs. 5.22), Marie having

vaulted the very ordinary-shaped rooms and having thrown one into the other making quaint unexpected shapes of them (Regina Maria style). Have a good collection of old brass plates and blue and white china, Chinese, Japanese, Delft etc. stood up in the right places. The big living-room has a quaint yellow-Chineesy-looking chintz big chairs, old table, quaint stove, fireplaces in old tyles - a "cute" dining-room and modern comforts.⁴⁸

An inventory of Copăceni made in the 1930s lists the eclectic collection of objects with which it was furnished.⁴⁹ The overriding mood was one of refined rusticism: chunky antique furniture inherited from Marie's parents' house in Coburg, tiled Romanian stoves, quantities of earthenware pots, brass plates and vases, Romanian, Turkish and Serbian rugs covering the furniture and floors, and icons in glass and painted wood adorning the white walls.

It is still unclear who redesigned Copăceni for the Queen, although it is possible that Liman, who remodelled Castle Bran in approximately the same period, may have been involved. Marie herself takes full credit for the design: 'Copăceni is entirely a growth of my own taste. My ideas were closely followed and carried out by my military men'.⁵⁰ It must be noted, however, that while several of her other residences were also constructed by soldiers under her military aides General Paul Angelescu, General Gabriel Zion and General Ernest Ballif, they all involved either

⁴⁷For a full description of the various parts of the Copăceni estate, together with a list of the building materials used for each structure, see fond Castele și Palate, 24/1938, 'Acte de evaluare ale proprietatilor ce fac parte din succesiunea M. S. Regina Maria'.

⁴⁸V/5365.

⁴⁹Fond Regina Maria, I/2, 'Inventarul Palatului Regal Copăceni'.

⁵⁰Fond Regina Maria, III/148, 22 June 1924.

an architect or, in the case of Tenha-Yuvah, a painter, in the initial design at least. Copaceni's unusual combination of a small central section and a vastly elongated *pridvor*, without the application of any of the standard motifs of the Neo-Romanian vocabulary, suggests that whoever drew the plans was working according to the Queen's ideas. Although apparently inspired by the national prototype of the *conac*, it is not a Neo-Romanian building in the sense of Mincu's principles. It lacks the carefully integrated reformulation of architectural elements borrowed from religious monuments and the Brâncovean decorative details which are the hallmark of almost all Neo-Romanian architects. Its debt to the style lies rather in Marie's acknowledgement of the potential of national architectural tradition over her earlier, exotic, international sources.

In a similar vein, the outbuildings of the park (date unknown), continuing the Queen's penchant for picturesque garden constructions, drew no longer on Pre-Raphaelite or Maori models but on the vernacular architecture of Romania's new territories. The first of these, the so-called 'Moți hut', with its high, pointed roof of heavy thatch, reproduced the distinctive building type of the Moți people from the Arieș Valley in the Turda region of the Apuseni foothills (fig. 5.23). Marie completed the rustic effect with a jumbled collection of carved stone crosses and elaborate wooden *troițe* on high posts. The second, a long, low building housing Marie's gendarmes, was known as the 'Serbian house' (fig. 5.24). It was probably inspired either by the large Serbian population of the newly acquired Banat region, or was a tribute to Marie's son-in-law, King Alexander I of Yugoslavia, who married Princess Marioara in 1922. Running perpendicular to the main residence, it had the open porch, raised off the ground by a few steps, and arcade of vaulted columns typical of rural Vlach housetypes in eastern Serbia. Yet it lacked the latter's shallow, hipped roof of ceramic tiles, preferring the more Romanian use of shingle and a serrated ridge-pole. This free combination of sources was further emphasised by the

elaborate wooden gateway marking the approach to the house (fig. 5.25). Carved with traditional motifs of a snake and curving tendrils,⁵¹ this had been brought from the Queen's favourite spa resort of Sovata (Szováta) in the Székely region of Transylvania.

These outbuildings adhere more closely to Marie's earlier tradition of folly building than to Neo-Romanian precepts. As discussed previously, Neo-Romanian architects made only loose references to vernacular architecture in the inclusion of pitched roofs, broad eaves or carved wooden veranda posts within an elevated formula that did not seek to recreate the rustic but merely suggest some of its more generalised forms. The garden buildings allowed Marie to play-act at being a peasant. Here, as at Scroviște and Bran, she was photographed wearing embroidered peasant costume in rustic poses that were disseminated as postcards designed to show the Queen's identification with the Romanian peasant's way of life.

Marie intensified this rustic vein in her 'fisher palace' by the lake of King Ferdinand's hunting lodge at Scroviște, to the north of Bucharest (fig. 5.26).⁵² She delighted in the primitive simplicity of her 'glorified peasant house',⁵³ heated only by 'a big white hearth [...] copied from a Greek monastery I visited once, when Greece was still in the family'.⁵⁴ The two-storey house, constructed out of an existing fisherman's cottage on the edge of the lake, had an open balcony supported on posts carved with the chevroned cross motifs appearing on Transylvanian grave posts (fig. 5.27). Once again it was built by soldiers under General Ballif and General Zion. The Queen's quarters had only two rooms: a small dining room and Marie's 'single artistic

⁵¹For the Transylvanian peasant, the snake was a symbol of perseverance and a protector of the home (*Peasant Art in Roumania*, p. 16).

⁵²Fond Regina Maria, III/151, 27 February 1925. The Scroviște houses appear to have been demolished and rebuilt in a different form when the estate became a Communist Party retreat. It remains private government property.

⁵³III/155, 8 April 1926.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 14 January 1926. Marie's daughter and son-in-law, Queen Elisabetha and King George of Greece had lived in Romania since their forced abdication in 1923.

room' which doubled as sitting room and bedroom (figs. 5.28 & 5.29).⁵⁵ These were also designed in a pseudo-rustic vein. The dining room was filled with sturdy, painted, wooden furniture, set against whitewashed walls and adorned with traditional ceramic pots and round *ploști* (gourds). Some of the furniture seems to have been readapted from earlier interiors, for example the Baillie Scott-like barrel chairs or the chest carved with what appear to be Maori *tiki* faces. The bedroom repeated the Copăceni formula of traditional woven rugs, old icons, and Greek stone windows set into flower-filled alcoves. The cottage was finished by 1924; in 1926 Marie decided to redesign King Ferdinand's hunting lodge itself, adding a large, covered *pridvor* from which the now ailing King could admire the new terraces she laid out below. She continued the rustic theme in the tiny thatched guest-house she built in the orchard, after a water-colour design by her daughter Elisabetha, which she called *Thrummy* (a name with homely connotations of unfinished warp thread ends; fig. 5.30), as well as in the second fisher cottage she built next to her own for her youngest daughter Ileana. She considered this reed-thatched structure 'the most perfect of all. It has a blue floor and blue curtains, all the vases are blue and even the bath is blue'.⁵⁶

It is probable that Marie's move towards romanticised rusticism was inspired not just by her growing appreciation of vernacular Romanian architecture, but also by her awareness of general trends in British country house building. Magazines like *Country Life* embraced the romantic veneration of old buildings, together with the Arts and Crafts ideal of the medieval craftsman and his identification with the land. It became quite smart to live in a cottage, especially if it had been converted out of an existing building. Some, like *Country Life's* founder Edward Hudson, carried this veneration to the romantic extreme of restoring ruined castles, such as Lindisfarne on

⁵⁵Ibid., 8 April 1926.

⁵⁶'My Dream Houses', pp. 17-18.

Holy Island off the Northumberland coast, rebuilt by Lutyens in 1903. There are parallels between this commission and Marie and Liman's next architectural venture: the restoration of thirteenth-century Castle Bran in south-eastern Transylvania (fig. 5.31).⁵⁷

Perched high on a forested rocky outcrop overlooking the entrance to the Bran pass, this fortified castle had been built by Teutonic knights in 1221-30 to control the main trade route between Transylvania and Wallachia. Reconstructed in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was used as Hungarian barracks in 1877, but was uninhabited by the time it caught Marie's attention shortly after the war. In 1920, the new Romanian authorities of the Transylvanian town of Braşov, aware of the Queen's interest in the castle, presented it to her in recognition of her role in the creation of Greater Romania.⁵⁸ When the telegraphed offer was received on 1 December, the Queen wrote gleefully in her diary, 'Now Liemann and I will have something to amuse ourselves with'.⁵⁹ For the next nine years until his death, Liman devoted himself to the castle's restoration. Like Lutyens at Lindisfarne, he realised the importance of preserving its medieval character. His additions, growing almost organically from the rock, maintained the picturesque contrasts of rugged, defensive walls and pointed, red-tiled roofs. The castle is reached via a narrow road that winds its way around the rock to the foot of a steep flight of stairs leading to the entrance. Liman maximised the picturesque effect of the approach by employing a variety of different textures for the surrounding walls: whitewashed plaster, deep rustication and alternating rough and smooth rubble stonework (fig. 5.32). On climbing the stairs, the visitor passed through the former guard-room, furnished with a large,

⁵⁷The link between Castle Bran and *Country Life* is reinforced by a 1925 letter to the Queen from Stephen Gaselee of the British Foreign Office. He arranged the publication of her books in Britain and writes concerning a possible article about Castle Bran for the magazine (fond Regina Maria, III/270, letter from Stephen Gaselee to Marie, 17 December 1925). This article, which was to have been written by the Queen, does not appear to have been published.

⁵⁸Diana Fotescu, 'Bran - Reşedinţa Particulară a Reginei Maria', *Muzeul de Artă - Arad: Studii și Comunicări*, III, 1996, p. 193.

⁵⁹Fond Regina Maria, III/125, 1 December 1920.

white, open, Romanian fireplace and scattered pieces of Italian Renaissance style furniture, into the inner courtyard of the castle, which Marie called the 'Burggarten' (fig. 5.33). From here the visitor could admire the way in which Liman had preserved the medieval jumble of irregularly shaped rooms and stairways, enhancing the play of exterior and interior space through half-timbered galleries, roofed terraces with semi-circular openings, carefully placed little windows, chimneys, alcoves and stair-towers. Marie was delighted with these efforts to preserve the romantic character of the castle:

I did nothing to marr its feudal aspect, did not modify the steepness of its stairs, not heighten the roof of its galleries, nor straighten its crooked rooms. The doors have remained so low that on entering you have to bow your head, the walls are several yards thick, heavy beams span those ceilings that are not vaulted, and there are so many levels to the castle that it is difficult to know on which floor one is.⁶⁰

As in all his buildings, Liman equipped the fortified citadel with carefully concealed modern conveniences. In 1924, he built a new outside tower to accommodate kitchens and bring in running water for the modern bathrooms. He also installed electricity and transformed an old well into a hidden lift connecting the castle with the gardens below. Marie called him 'a genius for practical imagination'.⁶¹ His versatility extended even to the design of the castle furniture. From surviving pieces and an inventory of Bran made in the 1930s, he appears to have favoured a mixture of heavy, pseudo-Italian Renaissance and pseudo-rustic furniture.⁶² In January 1925, the Queen wrote that Liman

brought me designs of the most amusing furniture for Ileana's rooms at Bran, he invents and combines them all himself. He is now setting about to make me a quaint set for my dressing room in the new little tower built for that purpose. I am sure he'll make

⁶⁰'My Dream Houses', p. 19.

⁶¹Fond Regina Maria, III/149, 7 July 1924.

⁶²Fond Castele și Palate, 15/1930 & 35/f.d., 'Castel Bran - Inventarul Mobilierului'.

something amusing in his own special style where there are never two pieces of furniture alike. He is grand at inventing chairs for instance, and quaint tables and cupboards.⁶³

Not all the castle furniture and fittings were made by the Queen's architect, however. Some came from Marie's trips to Parisian antique shops⁶⁴; other pieces, like hinges, door-handles and locks, were ordered from Liberty in London.⁶⁵ An indication of the overall effect, described by Sacheverell Sitwell as 'that adapted Byzantinism associated with its royal owner', can be gained from contemporary photographs of the library-music room and Marie's 'yellow bedroom' (figs. 5.34 & 5.35).⁶⁶ Liman combined vernacular references - in woodwork details (fig. 5.36) and an inventive variety of inglenook fireplaces crossed with Romanian *vetre* (stoves, often with integrated seating or sleeping benches⁶⁷) - with a sense of the ecclesiastical in his cell-like, whitewashed, vaulted rooms filled with crosses, icons and incense-burners. The English photographer, Emil Otto Hoppé, who visited Bran in the early twenties, described its decoration as a mixture of 'mediaeval thoroughness and modern, fragile beauty'.⁶⁸ Marie was less poetic:

It's a freak but a good freak [...] All I put in it is out of the way, not to be classed, like the place itself. There are few real works of art but all is quaint, in the right place, seems to belong there utterly as though it could not be otherwise. The furniture, the pictures, the pots, jars and vases, the carpets, the absurd little window-curtains, the brass and copper pots, the shabby icons of the archaic-est saints, the nooks and niches, it's all just Bran - Bran the beloved.⁶⁹

⁶³Fond Regina Maria, III/150, 23 January 1925.

⁶⁴III/152, 30 June - 1 July 1925.

⁶⁵'They make astonishingly good iron-work there and just the style I need', *ibid.*, 10 July 1925.

⁶⁶Sacheverell Sitwell, *Roumanian Journey*, London, B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1938, p. 25.

⁶⁷Describing the Bran *vetre*, Marie wrote, 'My old architect has a special talent for building the most delightful fireplaces [...] they are mostly quite plain peasant-hearths, whitewashed, built of bricks with all sorts of odd corners and shelves jutting out from them', *The Country That I Love*, p. 169.

⁶⁸Emil Otto Hoppé, *In Gipsy Camp and Royal Palace*, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1924, p. 67.

⁶⁹III/149, 19 July 1924.

The castle also provided an opportunity for Marie to further her association with Artistic Youth. In 1926, she commissioned Arthur Garguromin-Verona to paint the interior of the new castle chapel, converted out of the 'so-called breakfast room' in a tower on the west side.⁷⁰ The idea for this had been suggested the previous year by one of the Triumphal Arch sculptors, Severin, whom the Queen had invited to make sketches of the castle.⁷¹ In July 1926, Verona showed Marie his preparatory drawings;⁷² by September, he was hard at work⁷³ and the chapel was dedicated early the following year. In a similar fashion to the slightly later chapel of Stella Maris at Balcic (see below), the wall paintings celebrated Marie in the manner of old Romanian votive frescoes. She is depicted, surrounded by symbols of the Evangelists and accompanied by Romanian notables and her children Prince Nicolae and Princess Ileana, apparently receiving Castle Bran from the town of Braşov.⁷⁴

Bran's picturesque setting provided ample scope for Marie's love of play-acting. At Copăceni and Scrovişte she dressed in the embroidered peasant clothes of the region; at Bran she played the medieval queen, designing flowing 'Bran' dresses for herself, Ileana and any guest who cared to join in the charade (fig. 5.37). Liman once again pandered to her sense of the romantic through a series of garden follies, including a 'witch's hut', built against the steep wooded hill of the castle in the early

⁷⁰This year we would like to have the chapel painted by Verona, but it would cost us 200,000 lei. But I feel tempted to do it, it would be worth while and it belongs to a Queen's duties to use their artists, so that their names should remain', fond Regina Maria, III/156, 20 June 1926.

⁷¹III/153, 5 September 1925.

⁷²Verona came with the sketches for my little Bran chapel [...] Luckily Lieman is great friends with Verona so there will be peace and good understanding', fond Regina Maria, III/157, 12 July 1926.

⁷³Verona is painting hard at the chapel which promises to become a real little jewel', fond Regina Maria, III/158, 30 September 1926.

⁷⁴This interpretation of the paintings was put forward by Patricia Minnigerode, an American journalist who had interviewed the Queen personally ('Queen Marie Transforms a Tiny Domain', *The New York Times Magazine*, 11 August 1929). According to Ioan Prahoveanu, however, the chapel paintings (to which I have been unable to gain access) depict Marie gifting the castle to Ileana ('Amintiri Brănele despre Familia Regală', *Colocviul Româno-American 'Cotroceni în istorie'*, Cotroceni, 15-18 iulie, 1992). This reading is unlikely in view of the fact that the paintings were executed in 1926-27, while the castle did not pass to Ileana until after the Queen's death in 1938. Ten years later, it was taken by the Romanian State when it fell into disrepair. In 1956 it became a museum of history and feudal art and was restored once again between 1987-93. While the fabric is intact, the castle, promoted during Ceauşescu's era for its tenuous links with Vlad Ţepeş, contains few of Marie's original furnishings.

autumn of 1925 (fig. 5.38).⁷⁵ He furnished its interior with, in the Queen's words, 'absurd little old cupboards, three-legged stools, real old peasant tables',⁷⁶ even employing a costumed peasant to complete the effect:

He led us to the little witch's hut, let us open the door and there was the little house completely arranged, the fire burning and beside it, winding wool on a killing peasant wool-winder, an old little witch-woman, some old peasant crony he had enticed into the hut to make his living picture complete.⁷⁷

Other follies included a turf-roofed *bordei* (hut; fig. 5.39),⁷⁸ a barn converted into a tea-house, a small guest house made out of a ruined cottage near the rose garden, a little hut in the 'Maleurchen Garten' (Painter's Garden) and an original wooden Transylvanian church which Marie bought from 'a village beyond Regen [Reghin near Târgu Mureş]' which was building a new one.⁷⁹ These were set within a park laid out by Liman 'with the help of pictures of English gardens' at the foot of the rock.⁸⁰ It included a 'peasant garden' filled with hollyhocks and lavender leading up to the tea-barn, a dahlia walk of some two hundred varieties where Marie experimented with colour massing and chromatic sequencing, and a box-hedged, 'English-style' garden between the tea-barn and the witch's hut.⁸¹

Around the same time as Liman was putting the finishing touches to Bran, Marie began work on two further houses, this time on the Black Sea coast. In her writing, she romanticised her love of the sea, the result of childhood years spent following her father who was Commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet.⁸² The

⁷⁵Marie first mentions the hut on 23 September 1925 (III/153). On 28 October, she wrote 'Liman had built the "cunningest" little Hänsel and Grätel cottage against some far-trees [...] and is amusing himself like an old magician to make it deliciously fairy-story-like' (III/154).

⁷⁶III/154, 4 November 1925.

⁷⁷Ibid., 9 November 1925.

⁷⁸'I am making a little "bordei" between two large wall-nut trees. I am going to put earth on its roof and I shall grow irises upon it like in my fairy-stories', III/149, 2 August 1924.

⁷⁹Fond Regina Maria, III/162, 28 August 1927.

⁸⁰III/151, 4 May 1925.

⁸¹III/153, 25 September 1925.

⁸²See, for example, Marie's article 'Ce inseamnă marea pentru mine' ('What the Sea Means for Me'), *Cele trei Crişuri*, septembrie - octombrie 1928.

new residences of Cara Dalga at Mamaia and Tenha-Yuvah at Balcic gave her an opportunity to move away from the glorified rusticism and quixotic medievalism of Copăceni, Scroviște and Bran and explore the architectural possibilities offered by a maritime setting.

Romania's Black Sea coastline had been acquired under King Carol following the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. By 1920 it stretched all the way from the Dniester estuary to just north of Varna in present-day Bulgaria. Realising the trading potential of the area, the Romanian government connected it to Bucharest by means of Anghel Saligny's iron bridge over the Danube at Cernavodă, finished in 1895 (then the longest bridge in Europe) and, between 1889 -1909, invested heavily in developing the port area of Constanța.⁸³ The colourful and cosmopolitan character of this swiftly expanding town was reflected in the new buildings which sprang up. These ranged from flamboyant, French-style Art Nouveau, as seen in the waterfront casino by the Paris-trained, Swiss-Romanian architect Daniel Renard (1907-10; fig. 5.40), to full-blown Neo-Romanian in Victor Ștefănescu's monumental Town Hall on Piața Ovidiu (now the History and Archaeology Museum, 1914-21; fig. 5.41). These were interspersed with reminders of the sizeable Turkish population, for example Ștefănescu's reinforced concrete mosque inaugurated by Carol in 1910.

Perhaps Marie's decision to adopt the sea as the theme of her next two houses was influenced by Carmen Sylva's tiny, ship-like pavilion perched at the end of the long pier aligning the Constanța docks (fig. 5.42). This had been constructed for her in 1909 by Anghel Saligny; from here the eccentric Queen liked to call messages through a megaphone to passing boats. With its cantilevered terrace 'floating' over a slender stone extension of the pier below, 'rooms resembling the cabins of a ship',⁸⁴

⁸³The engineer Anghel Saligny (1854-1925) studied in Berlin and Charlottenburg before returning to Romania to pioneer new techniques of reinforced concrete and metal construction. In addition to an innovative use of the former in the Constanța docks, he was also responsible for many of the bridges of Romania's growing railway network.

⁸⁴*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 292.

an upper 'deck' and a flag flying from a high mast at one end, the pavilion provided a poetic little counterpoint to Saligny's massive, reinforced concrete grain silos at the other side of the docks. Its maritime aspect was considered sufficiently picturesque to make it the setting for a 'family lunch' on the occasion of the arrival by imperial yacht of the Tsar and his family at Constanța on 14 June 1914.⁸⁵ After Carmen Sylva's death and the looting of the pavilion during the war, Marie had it 'put in order again' by General Angelescu as her temporary residence during the building of Cara Dalga. She wrote, 'It is incredibly delightful living in this little house, like on a ship only more comfortable'.⁸⁶

In 1927, the pavilion burned down. The following year, Marie commissioned Victor Ștefănescu to rebuild it. Between 1928-29, he enlarged and elaborated what was left of Saligny's structure, creating a lower level of rooms in the stone base underneath the main 'deck', with its own balcony running along the landward side (fig. 5.43). Further exaggeration of the cantilevering allowed him to expand the main floor above, giving its 'prow' an asymmetrical aspect with a tiny loggia on the seaward side and steps to the upper terrace on the other (fig. 5.44). The 'stern' of the pavilion housed the largest interior space, the reception room. This was followed by the 'Queen's room', 'King's room' (for the young Mihai), three rooms for the royal suite and finally, next to the entrance, a 'modern studio' (fig. 5.45). As a counterbalance to the somewhat incongruous loggia and distinctly un-ship-like windows, Ștefănescu tried to enhance the naval aspect of the pavilion by adding another flag-mast and two striped chimneys to the open terrace above.⁸⁷

⁸⁵Fond Regina Maria, V/2711, letter from Marie to her mother, 18 June 1914. According to Marie, 'a snow-white hall in Roumanian style' was specially built to host the gala dinner held on the evening of the visit (*Story of My Life*, vol. II, p. 338).

⁸⁶III/150, 5 October 1924.

⁸⁷Plans to add another level to the pavilion and insert porthole windows in 1963 were never carried out and two years later the 'stern' end of the structure was cut off to make room for a new dock. The pavilion was rebuilt on a much altered and reduced scale after the 1989 Revolution and now houses a museum dedicated to the development of the port, to which I am indebted for permission to reproduce the above illustrations.

Situated at the end of a pier some quarter of a mile from dry land, Carmen Sylva's boat-pavilion was an appropriate mascot for Romania's infant Black Sea fleet based at Constanța. It also presaged modernist experiments with marine-inspired architecture in the expanding Black Sea resorts, for example George Matei Cantacuzino's Hotel Bellona at Eforie (1933), built in the manner of a ship about to be launched. Marie preferred a less literal response to the sea. Her first Black Sea palace, built by the long beach at Mamaia just north of Constanța, combined Neo-Romanian elements with the warm stone, terracotta roof tiles and rambling air of a Mediterranean villa (fig. 5.46).⁸⁸ It also made reference to the sizeable Turkish population of the area, with Marie giving the house the Turkish name of *Cara Dalga* or 'Black Wave'.⁸⁹ Begun in 1924, the structure of the house was finished by September 1925 and Marie started furnishing it in the spring of the following year. Its plan was by the little-known Mario Stoppa⁹⁰ (whose Italian name may explain the Mediterranean influence) and it was executed by the Romanian architect Constantin D. Dobrescu, together with General Angelescu and his team.⁹¹ Once again, Marie appears to have had considerable influence over its design:

They brought me plan after plan which I courageously cast aside, managing to make them understand that if they built me a house according to their taste instead of mine, I would never go near it. Believe me, I said to them, if there is one thing I am, it is arbiter of taste and things artistic. One day you will thank me for being firm and giving you the right ideas about a country house [...] Result: I obtained that Stoppa should make the plans according to my indications and the house in consequence is a beauty [...] splendidly built, with the right roof, the right tyles and hardly any spoiling details.⁹²

⁸⁸The palace, now the restaurant and swimming pool complex 'Castelul', still stands (between the Casino and Hotels Albatros and Unirea).

⁸⁹III/153, 14 September 1925.

⁹⁰No biographical details found for Stoppa prior to his work on *Cara Dalga*. He was later involved in the general restoration of Cotroceni Palace between 1940-41, and of Cotroceni Church in 1944.

⁹¹Dobrescu, who later became a technical advisor to the government as well as secretary of the Society of Romanian Architects from 1933, was also involved in the reconstruction of the Royal Palace on Calea Victoriei between 1930-37 (together with Nicolae Nenciulescu and Niculaie Lupu), after it burned down in 1926.

⁹²III/153, 14 September 1925.

With its sprawling volumes capped by a Neo-Romanian look-out tower, the house made the most of its flat site and great open vistas over beach and sea to one side and Lake Siutghiol with Ovid's Island to the other. After the rusticism of Scroviște and the medievalism of Bran, it marked a return to the formal grandeur of Neo-Romanian elements, such as the weighty, asymmetrical arrangement of the *foișor* and a triple arcade of semi-circular arches on the front terrace. As at Copăceni, however, these avoided any overlay of carved Brâncovean detail, preferring to create variety through the play of volumes, contrasting building textures (rough stone, tiles, wood and harling) and the interpenetration of interior and exterior space. The 'royal formalness', as Marie described it, was deliberate: the house was built as a semi-official seaside residence for both the King and Queen.⁹³ Unable to resist architectural caprice, however, Marie also constructed a small annex nearby which she planned to give to her grandson, Prince Mihai, the heir to the throne (fig. 5.47). Its plans, signed by Dobrescu, are covered with annotations in the Queen's hand concerning the placement of windows, stoves, arcades and doors, once more demonstrating the thoroughness with which she supervised the construction of her houses right from the early stages (fig. 5.48).⁹⁴ Consisting of one raised living storey partially surrounded by a covered veranda, the house's most prominent feature was a stocky minaret at one corner. This echoed the minarets of Constanța's skyline and reinforced the Turkish overtones contained in the name of the annex's larger neighbour. To the exterior, it opened into a circular, glazed gallery, while on the other side it lead directly into the main room of the house, forming a picturesque, child's look-out tower for the young heir. Following King Ferdinand's death in 1927, Marie gave Cara Dalga to Princess Elena, Mihai's mother, reserving the annex for herself.⁹⁵

⁹³Fond Regina Maria, III/161, 6 May 1927.

⁹⁴For inventory and plans of Cara Dalga and its annex, see fond Castele și Palate, 339/f.d. & 340/f.d.

⁹⁵The annex still exists, although in a poor state of repair with a broken minaret. It is now a nightclub.

The Turkish theme hinted at in Cara Dalga was fully embraced by the Queen's other Black Sea residence, her 'artist's nest' at Balcic in southern Dobrudja (now part of Bulgaria; fig. 5.49).⁹⁶ Following its annexation by Romania in 1913, the area had become popular with Romanian painters attracted by the light and atmospheric effects of the Silver Coast, as well as by its colourful Turkish population. Led by the Artistic Youth member Alexandru Satmari (1871-1933), a growing colony of painters worked frequently at Balcic. These included Satmari's sister-in-law Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, the Jewish painter Iosef Iser and fellow Artistic Youth exhibitors Jean Al. Steriadi, Gheorghe Petrașcu, Nicolae Dărăscu and Ștefan Popescu.⁹⁷ A Black Sea cross between Cassis and Tangier, Balcic combined the colouristic appeal of sun-drenched limestone cliffs, marine vistas and picturesque port with the oriental atmosphere of slender minarets, Turkish baths and the earth-coloured habitations of the Tartar *mahalale* clinging to the slopes on the edge of the town. Once a major supply port for the Turks before the Crimean War, then a distribution centre for grain under the Bulgarians, Balcic's importance had dwindled by the time it became part of Romania. It was its air of 'a forgotten corner of the romantic Orient' which drew the early painters and which also appealed to Marie when Satmari first invited her to visit the little group of artists in October 1924.⁹⁸ On the wooded slopes overlooking the sea to the west of the town where Satmari and Cuțescu-Storck had built houses, Marie came upon 'a place [...] I must have [...] All my life I have dreamed of a place like that imagining it could only be found in Italy and here it is at Balcic'.⁹⁹ In addition to the picturesque aspect of the site, Marie was also attracted by the idea of

⁹⁶III/156, 15 April 1926.

⁹⁷Other notable artists who painted at Balcic in the 1920s and 30s included Dărăscu's fellow members of the group *Arta Română* (Romanian Art, founded in 1918): Marius Bunescu, Ion Theodorescu-Sion and Ștefan Dimitrescu. Others included Francisc Șirato, Nicolae Tonitza, Lucian Grigorescu, Dumitru Ghițaș, Petru Iorgulescu-Yor, Hrandt Avachian, Leon Viorescu, Samuel Mütznér and his wife Rodica Maniu.

⁹⁸Alexandru Busuioceanu, 'De la Grigorescu la pictorii Balcicului (1938)', *Scrieri despre artă*, București, Meridiane, 1980, p. 90.

⁹⁹III/150, 9 October 1924.

renewing her links with Artistic Youth, of once again being seen as an artist-member rather than merely a patron of the group. In this she succeeded: in 1931, the writer Emanoil Bucuța wrote, 'Like pioneers [...] three painters, Satmary, Cutzescu Storck and Queen Marie, built the first three houses in the new part of Balcic'.¹⁰⁰ The satisfied Queen herself noted in her diary that 'the painters are quite mad to have me among them'.¹⁰¹

She bought the corner of coastline from its owner, the Bucharest banker Jean Chrissoveloni, in December and planned to build there her 'artist's caprice',¹⁰² designed to capture 'the essence of [her] own particular style and taste'.¹⁰³ In keeping with the oriental atmosphere of the town, the house was to be modelled on a Turkish type Marie had photographed in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) during a visit to her daughter the Queen of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁴ She asked Satmari to draw up a number of sketches for the house; on 3 February 1925, she wrote:

Satmari [...] is quite mad about my idea of having that little corner at Balcic, he has made a quite charming little plan for my Turkish house there [...] developping it into quite a habitable little place all in keeping with the charm of the model with the narrow basis and the upper part much broader which gives that irresistable look to the whole.¹⁰⁵

Satmari's earlier plans appear to have conceived of a series of small houses rising up the slope behind the main house (fig. 5.50). This had a Turkish-style, cantilevered first floor, a broad swathe of windows and an arched entranceway. Abutting from one corner, he proposed a curious watchtower, seemingly a cross between the lower part of a stone minaret and the wooden upper section of a vernacular Romanian *foișor*. According to Marie, this design did not fit satisfactorily into the narrow site at the

¹⁰⁰ 'Comme des pionniers [...] trois peintres, Satmary, Cutzescu Storck et la Reine Marie, ont bâti les trois premières maisons dans le quartier neuf de Balcic', Emanoil Bucuța, *Balcic*, 'Colecția Apollo. Orașe și locuri de Artă', Craiova, Ed. Ramuri, 1931, p. 26.

¹⁰¹ III/151, 3 February 1925.

¹⁰² III/43, 'My Dream Houses', p. 21.

¹⁰³ III/156, 15 April 1926.

¹⁰⁴ III/150, 9 October 1924.

¹⁰⁵ III/151, 3 February 1925.

sea's edge. Satmari's next plan (fig. 5.51) is much closer to the finished structure. It reduced the somewhat clumsy cluster of houses to a single, asymmetrical building with a sturdy, rusticated stone base and high, cantilevered, upper floor projecting outwards towards the sea on one side and nestling into the steep bank on the other. It also resolved the rather awkward juxtapositioning of Turkish and Romanian elements in the truncated minaret-tower, enlivening the smooth, whitewashed upper floor of the house with a carved wooden balcony which recalled the forms of traditional Romanian *cerdace*.¹⁰⁶ The arrangement also gave an intimation of the terraced gardens Marie would mould into the different levels of the slope surrounding the house.

Satmari presented the Queen with his final drawings for the house in June 1925. These were translated into workable architectural plans by the army architect Emil Guneş and were carried out by General Zion and his soldiers under the supervision of Marie's private secretary Gaëtan Denize.¹⁰⁷ Work on the house started in July; by November it was already roofed and Marie began furnishing it in the spring of the following year. The finished building is less rusticated than Satmari's designs, its volumes are crisper, the unframed windows lie almost flush with the walls and have only a slight suggestion of the projecting windowsills proposed by the artist (fig. 5.52). Perhaps this owes something to Guneş' growing interest in the volumetric experiments of modernist architects like Horia Creangă and Marcel Iancu. By 1933 he was creating houses, such as the Casa Zissu in Bucharest, which combined a visually inventive, asymmetrical massing of geometric volumes with carefully placed Art Deco decoration in the plaster layering and ironwork (fig. 5.53). Marie, however, appears to have fought this tendency, insisting the army rebuild

¹⁰⁶A *cerdac* is an open wooden balcony with carved posts found in boyar houses and monasteries, usually situated at first floor level, often above the curved stone entrance to the cellar.

¹⁰⁷Emil Guneş (1890-1945) graduated from the Trélat School of Architecture in Paris in 1912. Much of his early work appears to have been for the Romanian army in which he held the rank of gunner (*tunar*), for example summer camps in northern Moldavia (1916-18) and the army house on Str. Cobălcescu in Bucharest (undated). See *Arhitectura 1891-1941*, pp. 126-127.

parts whose proportions 'just spoil the amusing squat effect the painter and I want to arrive at',¹⁰⁸ handling the workmen herself and instituting 'certain rustic improvement which we cannot expect our good General Zion and the learned architect to understand. They still, in spite of all my insisting, want to make everything too monumental, too refined, the thresholds of too tidy stone, the stone little stairs too broad'.¹⁰⁹

Marie was so insistent that the base of the house, of locally-hewn stone, should have a rusticated Italian appearance, that she employed an Italian builder, Agostino Fabro, to oversee the work.¹¹⁰ At the same time, she encouraged local craftsmen to draw out the inherent qualities of the stone walls of the terraces by doing 'the rough work as they would have done it for themselves with uncultured instinctive taste which the too learned have lost'.¹¹¹ The house's interior, however, demonstrated that her concern with the 'artistic' and 'picturesque' was sometimes at the expense of practical needs. The ground floor, entered through an arched wooden door beneath the bedroom balcony, consisted of two small entrance halls and a large living/dining room, while the upper storey was almost entirely taken up by Marie's huge bedroom and Turkish bath, with only a tiny dressing room and bedroom for a maid tucked in behind. There were no bedrooms for guests, nor even a kitchen or utility room; all meals had to be carried initially from the soldiers' rest home on the cliffs above, then, in later years, from the service buildings installed in four stone mills some distance away by the river. The Queen recognised these impracticalities: 'Certainly the house has been built more with a view to beauty than a practical family abode [...] This is

¹⁰⁸III/153, 15 September 1925.

¹⁰⁹III/156, 2 June 1926

¹¹⁰'I had the luck of having an Italian "entrepreneur" and he understood the stonework as I did "à l'italienne" when rustic', III/162, 13 June 1927. See fond Castele și Palate, dos. 36/1925-26 - 37/1926. Fabro's name also appears on bills for building work at Copăceni.

¹¹¹III/156, 2 June 1926.

simply a little artist's nest for myself and one or another who likes to rough it with me for the rustic charm of the place'.¹¹²

Just as Bucuța called Balcic 'a vision which recalls all at once the Côte d'Azur and the Orient',¹¹³ so Marie described her house as 'half Italian, half Oriental', inspired by its maritime setting as well as by the local Turkish settlements.¹¹⁴ The Italian influence was felt in the 'hanging gardens' - steep terraces carved into the hillside behind the house, separated by rough, low walls of Balcic stone with carefully placed, tall Italian jars and Romanian stone crosses (fig. 5.54).¹¹⁵ Each of these was given the name of a member of Marie's family. On the west side of the house was the 'Sandro terrace', a lily-walk paved with millstones and lined with white marble Dalmatian columns given by King Alexander of Yugoslavia (fig. 5.55). Above this was the vine-covered 'Mignon terrace', named after his wife, Marie's daughter, and the 'Ileana terrace'. In front of the house, a 'C'-shaped pool marked the 'Carol terrace', flanked by the 'Sitta terrace' named after Carol's wife, Princess Helen of Greece (a rather optimistic placing in light of the fact that, by this stage, Carol had given up both his wife and his rights to the throne and was living with his mistress in Paris). Below Marie's bedroom balcony lay the lily-filled 'Mircea garden', in memory of her youngest child who died of typhoid during the war. The largest terrace overlooking the sea, with the Queen's marble throne, was called after Elisabetha (fig. 5.56); it led to a long channel of water running under the pergola of the Nicky garden (after Prince Nicolae). At the highest point of the terraces was the *Izbânda* (Victory) garden, a symbol both of Romanian unification and of Marie's artistic achievement in transforming the uncultivated corner of coastline.

More dominant than any Italian atmosphere, however, were the strong Turkish connotations of the house. As at Mamaia, Marie gave her house a Turkish

¹¹²III/154, 2 November 1925.

¹¹³'une vision qui tient à la fois de la Côte d'Azur et de l'Orient', *Balcic*, p. 25.

¹¹⁴III/161, 3 May 1927.

¹¹⁵Fond Regina Maria, V/5407, 4 June 1926, letter from Marie to Roxo Weingartner.

name, *Tenha-Yuvah*, meaning 'the Solitary Nest'.¹¹⁶ Its oriental borrowings, far more overt than those of Cara Dalga, included, along with the cantilevered upper floor, a minaret rising from the south-west corner and a Turkish bath. The former, echoing the minaret of Balcic's harbour skyline, perhaps grew out of the incongruous watchtower of Satmari's early design, although it does not figure in later versions and was more likely an addition suggested by the Queen. Likewise, the octagonal domed bathroom adjoining Marie's bedroom was 'an exact copy of the old Turkish bath here at Balcic' which, she felt, added 'a charming silhouette to my house' (fig. 5.57).¹¹⁷ The Turkish atmosphere continued in the interior, in the pointed forms of the whitewashed fireplaces and in the 'great divans "à la Turque"' which doubled as beds.¹¹⁸ Marie, or 'the Sultana' as she became known to the local population,¹¹⁹ completed the effect herself by wearing 'an "absurd" sort of Turkish dress' of her own invention, with 'huge loose trousers in lovely-coloured Roumanian silks'.¹²⁰ Her 'orientalism' was in a rather different vein from that of King Carol. The Turkish and Moorish rooms in Peleş were a romanticised, western reinterpretation of oriental exoticism which fitted into the eclectic stylistic repertoire of the palace but ignored the lingering Ottoman heritage of the country in which it was built. *Tenha-Yuvah*, on the other hand, while equally romantic in conception, stood within sight of the Turkish minarets and baths which provided its models. Its Turkish elements were not set in exclusion to the rest of the house, but were intended to be fully integrated parts. In a sense, *Tenha-Yuvah*'s synthetic combination of Turkish and Romanian elements within an architectural whole that hinted at modernism, might be seen as a modern

¹¹⁶III/43, 'How I came to *Tenha-Yuvah*', p. 9; also in Romanian: *Cum am ajuns la Tenha-Yuvah*, Cernăuți, Institutul de Arte grafice și Editură "Glasul Bucovinei", 1928.

¹¹⁷III/154, 2 November 1925.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹III/157, 20 September 1926.

¹²⁰Fond Regina Maria, V/5410, letter from Marie to Roxo Weingartner, 28 June 1926.

Queen's response to the multi-ethnic character of the new country, a visible 'playing out' of her role as 'Queen of all the Romanians'.

Perhaps it was this desire to assimilate all the different peoples of 'her' country which contributed to the eclectic choice of objects filling the interior of Tenha-Yuvah. Decorated, in the Queen's words, according to the *Regina Maria* style, the rooms had whitewashed walls, low ceilings and rough brick floors designed to offset the antique stone jars, Romanian rugs and woodcarvings, Catholic paintings of the Virgin and Child, Orthodox icons and silver church lamps, Jewish menorahs, antique Saxon furniture and Turkish fireplaces (figs. 5.58 & 5.59). Another, possibly more significant, reason for Marie's willingness to juxtapose elements from such diverse sources was her new interest in the Bahá'í faith.

The idea of an all-encompassing global religion was rather appealing to an Anglican Queen, married to a Catholic King, whose children were being brought up in the Orthodox faith of a country which was also home to Hungarian Catholics, Saxon Protestants and Turkish Muslims. Marie was introduced to the faith, whose adherents also numbered the Czech President Thomas Masaryk and Foreign Minister Eduard Beneš, Leo Tolstoy, Helen Keller and Prince Paul and Princess Olga of Yugoslavia, by the travelling Bahá'í evangelist Martha Root at the end of January 1926, a month after Crown Prince Carol abdicated his rights to the throne.¹²¹ By the summer, Marie was writing open letters of support for the movement, published in its journal *The Bahá'í World* as well as in North American newspapers.¹²² While her interest in the movement came too late for it to influence the building of Tenha-

¹²¹ Carol's abdication and flight to France with his mistress Elena Lupescu in December 1925 provoked a dynastic crisis in Romania. A triple Regency, consisting of Prince Nicolae, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Chief Justice, was appointed in the event that the King should die before the majority of four year-old Mihai. Marie, finding herself at the centre of rumours that she had sacrificed her son because he had quarrelled with her favourite, Barbu Stirbei, turned to the Bahá'í faith for comfort. On 25 February 1926 she wrote, 'Thank God that the teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha just came at this moment to uphold me' (III/155).

¹²² For example *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 May 1926 & 28 September 1926; *Philadelphia "Evening Bulletin"*, 27 September 1926; all reproduced in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. II, April 1926-28. See also Marie's facsimiled appreciations to vols. IV, V & VIII of the latter.

Yuvah itself, some of its religious synthesisism certainly infiltrated the tiny church she built in its garden in 1929-30 which she named *Stella Maris*, 'star of the sea' (fig. 5.60).

Through the stream of Bahá'í-related publications sent to the Queen by Martha Root, it is likely that she may have been aware of attempts to create a Bahá'í architecture, for example Patrick Geddes and Frank Mears' scheme for a Bahá'í temple in Allahabad in India of a few years earlier.¹²³ Although *Stella Maris*, 'the smallest church in the land', had none of the architectural pretensions of Geddes and Mears' grandiose domed building with its central, nine-branched, tree-pillar symbolising the unity of the world's major faiths, it did share its desire to break down religious barriers. The Protestant Queen chose to build an Orthodox church, 'because it seemed to me that there was more mystery in them than in any other temple'. She continued, 'There is no disrespect in this, no denial, nor setting aside of Beliefs and Creeds, I revere every religion, all consecrated rites and forms [...] The form I gave *Stella Maris* is Orthodox, but a heathen seeking sanctuary between its walls to me would not mean desecration'.¹²⁴

In addition to the Queen's ecumenical intentions, the church was imbued with another layer of self-reference, embodied in the double connotation of its name, the 'star of the sea'. A literal description of the tiny chapel standing like a jewel on the shoreline, the name is also the Roman Catholic interpretation of 'Miriam', the Jewish word for the Virgin Mary, 'Our Lady of the Seas'. Marie surrounded herself with images of her namesake. Like the Virgin Mother, she wished to be seen as the mother and protector of the Romanians (the Coronation publicity called her *Mama tutorilor Românilor* - Mother of all the Romanians); born on an island, she also associated

¹²³For Root's extensive correspondence, sent to the Queen from evangelising trips all over the world, see fond Regina Maria, V/5081/1926 & V/5082/1926-7; 1935-36. I am indebted to Dr. Graeme Purves for the information concerning Geddes.

¹²⁴III/43, 'Stella Maris. The Smallest Church in the Land', October 1930, pp. 11-14; also in Romanian: 'Stella Maris. Cea mai mică biserică din țară', in *Boabe de Grâu*, anul I, nr. 9, 1930. According to the Queen, the church was 'the exact replica of a wee church discovered in a far-off Cyprus village'.

herself with the sea. The parallel between the Queen and 'Our Lady of the Seas' was made explicit in a drawing by Anastase Demian, one of the painters of the church, to illustrate Marie's 1930 article on Stella Maris in the literary magazine *Boabe de Grâu* (fig. 5.61). At the centre stands Stella Maris, lapped on either side by waves bearing two boats. One carries the Queen, identified by the stylised lily motif on the sail, kneeling in devotion, while the other bears the haloed figure of the Virgin, her arms raised in blessing. The image is a visual reiteration of Marie's statement, in the first sentence of the article, that 'Stella Maris stands as a symbol of my life'.¹²⁵ The theme continues in the interior of the chapel, decorated with frescoed scenes from the life of the Virgin by three Romanian artists, Dumitru Brăescu (1886-1947), Papatriandafil (1901-1951) and the better-known Anastase Demian (1899-1977).¹²⁶ Brăescu seems to have started the cycle; however, Marie became dissatisfied with his slowness and only the upper part of the central dome with the figure of Christ surrounded by two tiers of saints and angels is attributed to him. The Queen then asked Demian (possibly recommended by his former teacher Costin Petrescu) and his colleague Papatriandafil to finish the work.¹²⁷ Demian, who was to further Petrescu's revival of fresco as the traditional medium for Romanian Orthodox decoration through his work in churches in Lugoj, Arad, Cluj, Sibiu, Târgu Mureş and Timișoara, employed a pseudo-Byzantine style in keeping with the character of the church. His elongated, linear figures and stylised attitudes pleased the Queen:

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Not, as Fotescu erroneously states, by Arthur Verona ('Bran - Reședința Particulară a Reginei Maria', p. 193). Bills for Brăescu's work in the chapel are dated 1929, while Demian's are from 1930 (fond Castele și Palate, dos. 43/1929 & 44/1930).

¹²⁷While little is known about either Brăescu or Papatriandafil, Demian was born in the Banat of a Macedonian father. He studied painting firstly in Budapest with Rippl Ronái (1918), then in Bucharest under Petrescu (1919). In 1920-26 he was in Paris studying at the Académie Julien under Maurice Denis, then at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière under Bourdelle. From 1926-30, he taught at School of Fine Arts in Cluj; from 1949-55, at the N. Grigorescu Institute of Fine Arts in Bucharest. He was a founding member of the review *Gândirea* (Thought), also doing book design and theatre costumes.

On the largest wall we see the death of Mary, a fine conception and good rendering of the almost archaic grouping in keeping with the Byzantine style. The figures are long, immaciated, the folds of their garments cling to the gaunt lines of their limbs. The expressions of their faces are both astonished and dolerous, as with stiff but revealing gestures they crowd around the low green-covered couch.¹²⁸

Other frescoes show the *Virgin in the Temple*, the *Meeting with Elisabeth*, the *Annunciation*, the *Journey to Bethlehem*, the *Flight into Egypt*, the *Road to Golgotha*, and, behind the iconostasis, the *Virgin Enthroned*. The dominant use of blue consciously emphasised the connection with the sea. Marie placed herself squarely at the heart of the painted cycle. Her votive portrait, holding a model of Stella Maris, is the largest figure in the whole church (fig. 5.62). It stands to one side of the entrance below the *Betrothal of the Virgin*; on the other is Ileana (also a Bahá'í convert) offering a ship. Ferdinand, who was initially unhappy with his wife's new religious leanings, is conspicuous by his absence. But, apart from Cara Dalga which was designed as a more formal residence for the Romanian monarchs, none of Marie's post-war country retreats catered for the King. He took little part in the imagery she created around herself, not even financially - according to Marie, most of the Tenha-Yuvah complex was funded by the sale of her books in Britain and America.

More than any other residence, Tenha-Yuvah embodied the personality, artistic tastes and spiritual beliefs of the Queen and later Dowager Queen of Greater Romania. The complex can be read as a visual metaphor for how Marie perceived her role. At the centre, the unconventional 'artist's nest' representing the Queen. The culmination of a line of 'nests', from Baillie Scott's tree-house, to the bowered forms of the Cotroceni golden salon, to the enclosed wooden space of the Norwegian boudoir, it not only represented a creative retreat from the realities of daily life, but emphasised Marie's role as home-maker for the future of the royal dynasty. Laid out around the 'nest' are the terraces representing Marie's children and their royal

¹²⁸'Stella Maris. The Smallest Church in the Land', pp. 16-17.

spouses, planted and nurtured by *Mama Românilor* whose match-making efforts had also earned her the nickname 'Mother-in-law of the Balkans'. Beyond these, the symbols of the Queen's all-embracing faith: a pool in the form of a Greek cross before a stone pergola named *Suliman Leïc* (the Waters of Peace; fig. 5.63), from which a lily-lined alley leads the eye to Stella Maris. The church itself is a microcosm of the whole complex, centred around the person of the Queen both during her life and after her death (at her request, her heart was placed there in a jewelled casket).¹²⁹ The spiritual ambience of the whole extends beyond specific religious symbols to the whitewashed forms of the little habitations built in the 1930s for attendants and guests. These are dotted throughout the lush, maritime gardens between terraced paths, fountains and channelled rivulets. The enclosed, arcaded courtyard of the guest house *Sabur Yeri* (Place of Patience), for example, has the effect of a cloister (fig. 5.64), while the Turkish aspect of other houses, such as Prince Nicolae's *Mavi Dalga* (Blue Wave; fig. 5.65),¹³⁰ add to the air of meditative calm, creating a Middle Eastern atmosphere suggestive of the origins of the Bahá'í prophets The Báb and Baha'u'llah.

What emerges from a consideration of all Marie's 'dream houses', from *Le Nid* to *Tenha-Yuvah*, is the strongly individual nature of her vision. Although happy to borrow from the ideas of others, she was rarely willing to submit wholeheartedly to the aesthetic dictates of any one model or architect, involving herself in each stage of design and tailoring it to fit very definite notions of her own. Just as she absorbed, at least superficially, the ideas of Baillie Scott in her tree-house before exploiting them to her own fanciful ends in the Cotroceni golden salon, so she flirted only briefly with the Neo-Romanian style before developing a rather different response to

¹²⁹The rest of her body was buried in Curtea de Argeş. Her heart remained in Stella Maris until the Dobrudja was lost to Bulgaria in 1940 when Ileana moved the casket to Castle Bran. The Communist authorities transferred it to the National Museum in Bucharest. *Tenha-Yuvah* itself passed to Carol at Marie's death. It is now a museum.

¹³⁰*Mavi Dalga*, designed by Guneş, was constructed by local Turkish builders in the summer of 1927.

national tradition in her country residences. During her early years in Romania, this individualism, evidence of her wide-ranging awareness of European artistic tastes, placed her in progressive opposition to Carol's historicism and made her an enthusiastic patron of Artistic Youth. At a time when the establishment still looked first and foremost to the French academies, she encouraged alternative approaches and sources of inspiration, not least through her contacts with Darmstadt and Britain and her enthusiastic collecting of Art Nouveau works from all over the world. Nevertheless, despite her openness to new directions, her support for the decorative arts and her enthusiasm for the home-grown Artistic Youth group, she was slow to respond to the Neo-Romanian school in architecture. Perhaps this was due to a lack of occasion: her design schemes until 1913 had been restricted to the remodelling of existing interiors, most of which were private spaces for her own use. King Carol's granting of permission for the new wing of Cotroceni meant that, for the first time, she had full control over both the exterior and interior design of important public rooms. The formal grandeur of Brâncovean elements lent itself to such spaces; it is significant that among Marie's later homes, 'pure' Neo-Romanian forms only reappear in the *foișor* and arcade of the semi-official Cara Dalga. The school's formulaic tenets were too rigid fully to accommodate the wider flights of fancy behind the Queen's more private 'dream houses'. For these she turned to a looser interpretation of vernacular and historical prototypes, combined with more international references in furnishing and garden design. These prototypes, on the whole, avoided the ecclesiastical monuments which provided much of the inspiration of Mincu's school, drawing instead on the secular manor house, vernacular dwellings and, in the case of Tenha-Yuvah, the local character of the surrounding environment. This sensitivity to context was not a characteristic of the Neo-Romanian style whose monolithic formula was imposed largely unaltered across all the different ethnic regions of Romania's new territories.

Marie's rather ingenuous claim to have been the 'instigator of quite a new epoche of architecture and style' in Romania cannot be entirely dismissed as autobiographical self-indulgence. The *Regina Maria* style, as embodied in Tenha-Yuvah, did spawn a number of cantilevered, volumetric, villa offspring for Romanian society's more privileged members in the Balcic environs. More important, however, was the fact that Marie and Ferdinand's public recognition of national sources decisively severed the Hohenzollern links already torn by war. While King Carol deliberately fostered a sense of German identity in Castle Peleş in order to bring weight and tradition to his fledgling dynasty, his successors used notions of a 'national' style as a visual tool to anchor them in the public consciousness as the 'mother' and 'father' of the unified nation. Marie's belief that she had played a significant part in the creation of Greater Romania gave added fuel to her creative energies and made it publicly acceptable that she, rather than her more retiring husband, should concern herself with the business of royal image-making. This was a job she imbued with characteristic narcissism and theatricality. As well as acting out the role of Byzantine princess at the Coronation, she was, in turn, a peasant at Copăceni and Scrovişte, a medieval castle-dweller at Bran, a sailor in Carmen Sylva's pavilion at Constanţa, a Turkish sultana at Tenha-Yuvah, even assimilating herself to the Virgin Mary in Stella Maris. All of these personae embodied different aspects of her relationship to her adopted country, portraying her simultaneously as the fulfilment of Mihai Viteazul's national dream and as the princess who had sailed over the sea to revive Romanian artistic and vernacular tradition and become a mother to its multi-ethnic population. The architectural settings which she created for these roles were, directly or indirectly, a personal response to artistic notions of a 'national style'. While only rarely borrowing precise forms from the Neo-Romanian school of architecture, they all the same highlighted the seminal importance of national

reference in both the public and private imagery surrounding the non-Romanian monarchs of Greater Romania.

CONCLUSION

Within the new wave of academic interest surrounding the definition of cultural and national identity in the art and design of central and eastern Europe, Romania has, so far, remained one of the lesser studied nations. In this thesis, there has been an attempt to bridge that gap by tracing some of the salient features of the country's turn-of-the-century art scene. Particular emphasis has been laid on the relationship between international influences and notions of a 'national' style. The term 'eclectic' has been taken to encompass not only the historicist variety of Castle Peleş, and the diverse 'exotic' or 'primitive' sources behind the interior designs of Crown Princess Marie, but also the stylistic pluralism characterising the aims and production of many of the period's artistic societies. Similarly, the term 'neo-national' has been shown to be complex in a Romanian context, since Romania's belief in her unique, 'European' status among her eastern neighbours meant that foreign art forms, especially French, were frequently paraded as evidence of the country's Latin identity and cultural fraternity with 'the West'.

This dichotomy has provided the wider framework for the identification and examination of a number of significant factors in the development of art and architecture during the formation of the modern Romanian state. Firstly, the important, but hitherto overlooked, role of the royal family in the determining of public taste, in the bringing of foreign artists and styles to Romania and in the patronage of artistic societies has been highlighted. The building and decoration of the royal residences, in particular, provide revealing visual statements of how royal rulers perceived both their own role and the character of the newly formed country. Castle Peleş, the 'cradle' of the new dynasty, was intended to project the power of King Carol's reign, embodying the weight and stability of imported Hohenzollern

tradition. Following Romanian success at Plevna, it also became symbolic of the independent Romanian nation. Taken in parallel with the grandiose new public buildings of expanding Bucharest, the example of Peleş reinforces the argument that, at this stage, 'Romanian' implied an assertion of the country's cultural independence from Ottoman and Russian influence, perceived as the cause of its 'backwardness'. Hence artistic production was characterised by a desire to 'catch up' with the rest of Europe, to display some of the visual grandeur of cultural and economic achievement contained in painterly academicism and monumental architectural eclecticism.

Furthermore, examination of Peleş' construction and decoration has revealed a wealth of artistic links with some of the major European centres, from Lemberg to Munich, Bohemia to France. Prominently, it has underlined the importance of Vienna as a rich source of ideas and artists, including the architect Wilhelm von Doderer, the furniture manufacturer Bernhard Ludwig and the *Künstlerkompanie* of the young Gustav and Ernst Klimt and Franz Matsch. In a country which, at that time, was regarded by certain outsiders as falling within the cultural sphere of the Orient, Peleş provided a focal point for Europe-wide artistic collaboration. While, ultimately, the palace's extravagant historicism betrayed the same stylistic superficiality as other nineteenth-century royal pastiches, like the castles of Ludwig II in Bavaria, Peleş did make foreign-based artists aware of a potential new market for their talents in Romania. This enlarged artistic arena and international presence in turn stimulated awareness of the undeveloped state of Romania's own artistic establishments and encouraged efforts to produce home-trained artists and architects.

Carol's need to import so-called 'civilised' styles has been contrasted with Crown Princess Marie's lively rejection of historicism and romantic appropriation of Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and 'primitive' sources. In her palace interiors and garden follies, she placed herself at the centre of an artistic cosmos infused with a sense of otherworldly escapism, nature symbolism and pagan mysticism. These

fantastic environments not only complemented her romanticised perception of her situation as a princess in an 'eastern' land, but, more importantly, echoed the exploration of 'alternative' systems and modes in Art Nouveau movements across Europe at the time. Beginning with the idealised rusticism of her Pre-Raphaelite inspired tree-house, Marie's creations reveal a network of artistic links with other European centres, especially in Britain and Germany. The decorative system of Baillie Scott's early work, in particular, has been shown to have exerted a far-reaching influence over the Princess' early interiors. Nevertheless, it has been argued that Scott's credo of carefully regulated design integration did not accommodate the strongly individual tastes of his patron who not only changed the interior of the tree-house, but went on to give a flamboyant twist to his basic ideas in the golden salon of Cotroceni.

A similarly fantastic design conception characterised Marie's fanciful appropriation and combination of Byzantine, Celtic, Scandinavian and Maori sources and motifs. These further demonstrated her wide-ranging awareness of the new interest in exotic or 'primitive' sources and the re-evaluation of the vernacular inherent in certain national revival styles, transmitted to the royal court through publications and periodicals like *The Studio*. Once more, however, Marie's uncritical reinvention of these sources within contexts divorced from the ritual or national function of either the original art or its national revival variant, reduced them to the level of artistic curiosities. Indeed, one might even go so far as to draw a parallel between the 'eclecticism' of Marie's Modern Style interiors and the historicist variety of Castle Peleş. Furthermore, at this stage, Marie's interest in Byzantine and pseudo-Romanian forms answered more to her exotic tastes than to a sense of identification with the aims of the Neo-Romanian school. As has been shown, the Crown Princess only became fully aware of the Neo-Romanian style after the 1906 Bucharest Exhibition, and did not incorporate it into own her design schemes until 1913.

Nevertheless, Marie's design projects, perceived as unique and extraordinary by Romanian society, helped redefine royal image. While King Carol rooted his court firmly in weighty German tradition, Marie's rejection of historicist hegemonies and embracing of alternative sources suggested a new, modern openness to changing ideas across Europe. This was reinforced by her enthusiastic patronage of the first, truly successful, modern, Romanian, artistic society, Artistic Youth, as well as by her much publicised interest in furniture design and the applied arts in general. Moreover, Marie's artistic schemes gave the architect Karel Liman a prime opportunity to display his Modern Style versatility in matters of design integration, practical utility and aesthetic originality. While Liman's suspected involvement in many of Marie's interiors has yet to be proven, the evidence so far examined reveals his widespread familiarity with pan-European artistic developments. Among Marie's early projects, this is best demonstrated in Pelişor whose careful wedding of practical innovation and integrated design, together with a subtle male-female division of space, suggests the influence of both Baillie Scott and the ideas of Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Architectural and design developments outwith the highly individualised world of the royal court appear to have followed a rather different path. Turn-of-the-century Bucharest, like many other expanding European cities, embraced grandiose, eclectic, Beaux-Arts styles in both its public buildings and in the private residences of the francophile urban elite. Interest in supranational Modern Style ideas seems to have been restricted largely to straightforward imitations of the formal vocabularies of French and Belgian Art Nouveau, for example in Renard's Constanţa casino, in Luchian's decorative panels copied from de Feure, or in the consumer fashion for Gallé vases. Far more vibrant architectural developments emerged as a result of the growing national style debate. Its stimuli, as we have seen, included resentment at the awarding of public commissions to non-Romanian architects, controversy over

Lecomte du Noüy's restoration methods which, in turn, encouraged fresh investigations of the country's architectural monuments, and the variety of innovative national style solutions witnessed in the pavilions of the Paris 1900 Universal Exhibition. Further encouragement came from new magazines like *Analele arhitecturii*, the setting up of the Society of Romanian Architects and the founding of an architectural school under Mincu. The turning point in public recognition of the Neo-Romanian style in architecture appears to have occurred in the six years between Romania's heavily debated contribution to the Paris 1900 Exhibition and the opening of the Jubilee Exhibition in 1906. As well as seeing the graduation of the first generation of Mincu's pupils and the setting up of the first autonomous Advanced School of Architecture, the period's growing national self-consciousness was also encouraged by the increasingly vociferous demands of agrarian movements and hostility to the pseudo-European tendencies of the French-speaking ruling class.

Closer examination of Mincu's Neo-Romanian formula has revealed significant differences with the approach taken by the national revival styles of countries such as Hungary and Poland. Most striking is the minimal importance accorded to vernacular sources, with the main architectural vocabulary being drawn from old Romanian Orthodox tradition and, in particular, the monuments constructed under Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu. Although the period did witness fresh interest in the (usually idealised) image of the Romanian peasant, especially as a symbol of Romanian 'brotherhood', there appears to have been little focused engagement on the part of Neo-Romanian architects with the social patterns of peasant life. Perhaps as a consequence of this, the style did not demonstrate the same kind of identification with Arts and Crafts ideas and with Ruskinian and Morrisian critiques of modern, capitalist society as witnessed in, for example, the work of the Gödöllő colony and Károly Kós in Hungary or the Zakopane style in Galicia.

Despite the Romanians' desire to distinguish themselves from their Slavic surroundings, their national style in architecture might best be compared to that of their Balkan neighbours, Bulgaria and Serbia. In a similar fashion to Romania, the national revival architecture of these countries was rooted far more firmly in Orthodox church tradition than in vernacular culture. In both, national revivalism was also preceded by a period of broad stylistic eclecticism, intended to express cultural independence from the Turks and integration into the European mainstream, on the one hand, and to embody the various currents meeting at the Balkan 'cross-roads' of Europe, on the other. Interesting parallels can be drawn, for example, between the historicist eclecticism of foreign-educated, Serbian architects like Aleksandar Bugarski, Konstantin Jovanović or Jovan Ilkić and the Beaux-Arts formulae of Orăscu or Săvulescu. Serbia, like Romania, won its independence from Turkey in 1878; in the period leading up to the First World War, the country saw a similar proliferation of nationalist ideas and a striving for unification (spurred by the loss of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria in the Berlin Treaty). This found its architectural echo in the new interest in regional church building tradition as the source of a modern 'national' style.¹ Architects such as Nikola Nestorović and Branko Tanazević reinvented Orthodox prototypes according to the needs of modern building, in a synthetic formula which has strong parallels with the approach of Mincu and his school.

Likewise, in Bulgaria, which also aspired to greater unification following the loss of territories in 1878, national romanticist architects like Anton Torniov, Petko Momchilov and Naum Torbov combined elements of Bulgarian Orthodox heritage with a modern treatment of construction and space. Comparison of buildings such as Torniov's 'St. Nikolai Sofiiski' Church of 1886-1900 in Sofia and Burcuş and

¹ See Aleksandar Kadijević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX - sredina XX veka)*, Beograd, 1997, or Z. Manević, *Romantična arhitektura*, Beograd, 1990, 5-6.

Antonescu's Galați Cathedral of 1906-17, shows close similarities in their approach to the decorative reworking of traditional Orthodox forms.

It would appear, therefore, that future research into the neo-Romanian architectural style should direct its attention to a consideration of Southern Balkan national revivalism as a whole. As well as clear visual parallels between the work of the Romanians and their Serbian and Bulgarian contemporaries, the area also raises more complex issues within current art historical approaches to national styles in Central and Eastern Europe. The fully independent status of Romania (and Serbia) in the late nineteenth century injects a persistent counterpoint into the flow of arguments relating the construction of national identity to the cultural and administrative impact of centralised empires. Indeed, it highlights the danger of analysing smaller regions in terms of their likeness to or deviation from larger cultural entities, most commonly that of western Europe (for example, discussions of artistic 'backwardness' or of 'catching up' with the 'newest' developments in the West). Exemplified by Mansbach's dismissal of Romanian turn-of-the-century painting as a simple 'imitation' of western trends, this critical 'cultural imperialism' also has implications for Said's understanding of Orientalism as a set of western cultural self-referents designed to reinforce the 'backward' aspects of the East. By raising Romania's international profile through modern reinvention of its own, 'eastern' traditions, the neo-Romanian architectural style asserted that non-western elements could be as equally progressive and valid as the so-called 'civilised' styles of the West.²

²The recent conference *South-Eastern Europe: History, Concepts, Boundaries* whose conclusions were published by London University's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (*Balkanologie*, vol. III, no. 2, Dec. 1999), has outlined the problems of defining the identity/ies of the area according to different disciplinary and culture-specific criteria. It is to be hoped that Cornell University's forthcoming conference (March 2001) examining identity and memory in South Slavic architecture, although focusing mainly on the former Yugoslavia, will address the specific implications of these issues for art history.

In contrast to the situation in architecture, this thesis argues that the creation of a 'national style' in the other arts in Romania proved somewhat more problematic. The majority of artistic societies, whose importance for the dissemination and discussion of both international and Romanian art has been highlighted, promoted stylistic pluralism and the role of international developments in the nurturing of a national art scene. Even the Independents' noisily stated function did not concern the propagation of a distinctly new style of art, but rather the creation of a more open, less codified forum for the display and comparison of international and Romanian work. Indeed, it has been shown that the prime purpose of earlier societies, such as the Friends of the Fine Arts and the Intimate Club, was to extend public awareness of art in Romania. Their exhibitions and discussions were not intended to undermine the official Schools of Fine Art, but rather to complement their activities. A stylistic disjunction between the Schools and the work of young, foreign-based artists supported by the societies only really became evident in the exhibitions of the Artistic Circle. Here the mixture of plein air-ism, Impressionism and Realism they presented marked the first decisive move away from the academic styles still favoured by the Schools.

The choice of an emblematic folk figurehead by the group of artists who founded Ileana represented an attempt to promote these avant-garde European styles within a national context. Although the international orientation of the work produced and exhibited by the group gave rise to accusations of anti-patriotism, it was merely reiterating the belief of earlier societies that a proper understanding of international developments was a necessary precondition for the birth of a national art movement. As well as revealing an up-to-date awareness of French developments, Ileana was also strongly imbued with the influence of Munich symbolism, in particular the paintings of Franz von Stuck and the graphic conventions of *Jugend*.

Examination of the Romanian contribution to the 1900 Paris Exhibition has indicated that, despite a show of appropriate deference to French tradition, the orientation towards Munich continued in the work of the artists who were to found Artistic Youth. The group's aims of artistic rebirth, breaking of hierarchies and freedom to experiment echoed those of other national 'youth' movements such as Young Poland, Young Finland or the World of Art. Similarly, Artistic Youth's exploration of a broad gamut of styles revealed that their simultaneous pro-international and national romanticist aspirations were not mutually exclusive, but in fact shared a common goal, that of driving Romanian art forwards.

In contrast to the Neo-Romanian style in architecture, attempts to create a national formula in painting and the applied arts looked increasingly towards the subject matter, motifs and forms of vernacular tradition. This was in part stimulated by the celebration of peasant craft work at the 1906 exhibition, by the founding of the Museum of National Art and decorative arts section of the School of Fine Art, as well as by efforts by philanthropic women's groups to reverse the decline in traditional crafts. Attempts to create a national style in painting have been shown to encompass not simply the incorporation of national subject matter, but also the creation of a 'Romanian' pictorial idiom. Receiving its fullest theoretical treatment in the work of Baltazar, this involved a naïve handling of material and composition reminiscent of 'primitive' vernacular art types. Baltazar, furthermore, was the strongest proponent of the integral role of the applied arts in the creation of such an idiom, advocating a true understanding of the nation's artistic 'spirit' over a simple copying of motifs and forms.

Unfortunately, this striving towards an integrated national design idiom appears to have halted with Baltazar's early death. After 1909, there is little evidence of attempts to combine neo-national expression in all the arts into the kind of synthetic *Gesamtkunstwerk* achieved by other national revival styles. Perhaps the

closest the Neo-Romanian style came to this were the monuments and imagery created to celebrate the union of Greater Romania at the 1922 Coronation. Here the style was self-consciously exploited by Ferdinand and Marie in order visually to site themselves at the heart of the national ideal. While King Carol had propagated the notion of 'Hohenzollern' for its connotations of stability and longevity, Ferdinand, struck from the German royal house during the war, articulated his assimilation to Trajan and Mihai Viteazul in monumental, Neo-Romanian language. In a similar fashion to Marie's Saxe-Coburg-Gotha cousin, George V, who adopted the name 'Windsor', the Romanian royal family deliberately cloaked its German roots in a mantle of national reference.

In contrast to the official monuments of the Coronation, Marie's private response to the Neo-Romanian style was more subjective and closely tied in with romanticised perceptions of her new role as Queen of the united country. Beginning with a formal incorporation of the style into official spaces in Cotroceni by a recognised expert of the school, Marie then rejected the solemn grandeur of Brâncovean-derived forms in favour of a looser, often vernacular-based approach to national tradition as a whole. This was combined with a range of non-Romanian sources and indicated, in particular, the Queen's continued awareness of British developments. Intimately involved in every detail of planning and construction, Marie demonstrated a clearly formed, albeit intensely narcissistic, artistic vision, creating a tangible visual metaphor for the first Queen of united Romania. The synthesis of sources which this involved reflected not only her Bahá'í interests, but also served as a microcosm of the eclectic multi-culturalism which, in a variety of different ways, had characterised Romanian royal design projects since the creation of Peleş.

Examination of the interaction of international influences and national concerns in the areas covered by this study has highlighted a number of new factors.

Firstly, in addition to the traditional scholarly emphasis on French influence, it is important to acknowledge the considerable impact of German and, in the case of Marie, of British developments on the artistic *milieu* of turn-of-the-century Romania. Secondly, discussion of neo-national aspirations in the Romanian arts as a whole has indicated that the movement was by no means restricted simply to architecture. Indeed, although far less extensive, its appearance in painting and the applied arts demonstrated a wider range of source material, incorporating the motifs and handling of vernacular art, as well as forms inspired by Romanian Orthodox and Brâncovean tradition. Furthermore, the study has suggested that so-called 'international' styles were also used to 'national' ends: firstly, to highlight Romania's cultural links with France and, secondly, as a sign of the independent country's modern ability to stand on an equal footing with the 'advanced' nations of Europe. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, central to any discussion of attempts to represent the multi-layered identity of the new-born Romanian state is a consideration of the imagery created by the royal family. As non-Romanians and yet as the locus of the independent kingdom, Carol and his successors needed to legitimise their presence through powerful visual statements that placed them at the heart of the national ideal. Significantly, the artistic tools of this undertaking looked as often to international eclecticism as they did to national reinvention.

Paintings by the Künstlerkompanie for Castle Peleş

(unless otherwise indicated, these works are still in Peleş)

Portraits of Hohenzollern Ancestors (oil on canvas)

Portraits originally in the vestibule (now in Posada), with their painted inscriptions:

Wolfgang. Grav zu Zollern im Jahr Christi 948 Seine Gemahlin MEZA Grävin von Nasau, signed 'G. Klimt 1884'.

Burckhard. Grav zu Zollern im Jahr Christi 1080. Seine Gemahlin ANASTASIA Grävin zu Zeinfeld, signed 'F. Matsch'.

Portraits originally at the foot of the staircase (now in Posada):

Fridrich I. Grav zu Zollern im Jahr Christi 980. Seine Gemahlin URSULA Grävin zu Hohenburg, signed 'G. Klimt'.

Fridrich IV. Grav zu Zollern im Jahr Christi 1195. Seine Gemahlin Grävin N. zu Swegbrüch, signed 'F. Matsch'.

Portraits lining the staircase (still *in situ*):

Eitel Fridrich II 1225, signed 'F. Matsch'.

Eitel Fridrich V 1512, signed 'F. Matsch'.

Eitel Fridrich VI 1525, signed 'Matsch. Copiert F. Vodak 1904'.

Eitel Fridrich VII 1605, signed 'G. Klimt'.

Johann Georg 1623, no discernable signature. Bachelin (Castel-Pelesch, p. 72, note 1) states that five of the portraits were by Matsch and five by Klimt, therefore it can safely be assumed that this is the remaining portrait by Klimt.

Philipp Fridrich Christoph 1671, signed 'G. Klimt 1883'.

Palace Theatre Friezes (oil on canvas), listed in order, beginning with frieze next to the door:

Reclining woman representing 'Theatre'(?), signed 'G. Klimt'.

Square panel with a lyre, unsigned.

Roundel with smiling woman, flanked by putti, unsigned.

Dark-haired young girl among flowers, signed 'G. Klimt'. This signature slopes strongly to the right, in contrast to the squarely upright signatures on the other friezes.

Blond-haired young girl among flowers, signed 'G. Klimt'.

Roundel with scowling woman, flanked by putti, signed 'G. Klimt'.

Square panel with mask, unsigned.

Reclining woman representing 'Music'(?), signed 'F. Vodak'. This is a shortened copy of the frieze in one of the mansard guest rooms signed 'G. Klimt 1884'. The latter version is flanked on the left by another roundel containing the head of a dark-haired young woman which is not reproduced in the theatre.

Ceiling roundel depicting a troubadour, crowned muse and Love in the form of a winged cupid, signed 'F. Matsch 1884'.

Other works (oil on canvas):

G. Klimt: painting after Titian's *Isabella d'Este* (identified by Novotny and Dobai, p. 280), together with other unidentified copies of Old Masters.

E. Klimt: copy after *Allegory of Science and Art* from the school of Giorgio Vasari, ceiling painting, Italian reception room, unsigned but identified by Bachelin (*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 72, note 1).

E. Klimt: *Titian and Lavinia*, signed 'Ernst Klimt 1886' (now in Posada).

F. Matsch: imitation tapestry decoration on ceiling above staircase of honour, signed 'F. Matsch'.

Paintings by Dora Hitz for Castle Peleş¹

Inventory drawn up from Hitz's letters (fond Castele și Palate, dos. 19/1890 & dos. 25/1887), Bachelin's description (*Castel-Pelesch*, p. 59) and the extant paintings still in Peleş. The titles in brackets are those used by Hitz.

First Delivery, c.1884:

The Child of the Sun (Sonnenkind) , signed bottom right 'D. Hitz, Paris, 1884'. 1000 Fr.

Sorrow (Leiden) signed bottom left 'D. Hitz, Paris, 1883'. 1000 Fr.

Fairy Tale (Märchen), signed on rock 'D. Hitz', no date. 1000 Fr.

All of the above are from Carmen Sylva's collection of twelve allegorical stories *Leidens Erdengang*, published in 1882.

Second Delivery, c.1885:

Red Leaves (Blutbushe). 2500 Fr. For the vestibule. Lost. From Carmen Sylva's collection of twenty-two stories *Hanszeichnungen*, published in 1884.

Hammerstein . 2500 Fr. For the vestibule. Lost. From Carmen Sylva's poem *Hammerstein*, published in 1880.

Witch (Hexe). 1000 Fr. It is unclear whether it is this witch or the one in the third delivery which survives today. The extant work is signed bottom left 'Hitz, Paris, 1885'. From Carmen Sylva's poem *Die Hexe*, published in 1882.

Peace (Frieden), signed bottom right 'D. Hitz, Paris, 1884'. 1000 Fr. From Carmen Sylva's collection of stories *Leidens Erdengang*, published in 1882.

¹I am indebted to Gabriel Badea-Păun for his help with this inventory.

Third Delivery, c.1885-6:

Sapho, unsigned, undated. 1000 Fr. From Carmen Sylva's poem *Sapho*, published in 1880.

Witch (Hexe) (not mentioned by Bachelin). 1000 Fr. Lost. Source unknown.

Fourth Delivery, 1887:

Raoul/ A Prayer (Ein Gebet). 2500 Fr. Lost. From Carmen Sylva's poem *Jehova*, published in 1882.

Sakri, signed bottom left 'D. Hitz', undated. 2500 Fr. Probably from an unpublished poem of the same name by Carmen Sylva.

Fifth Delivery, June 1890:

Ahasverus, signed bottom left 'D. Hitz, Paris, 1890'. Sum unknown. From Carmen Sylva's poem *Jehova*, published in 1882.

The Muse of Music (la Musique) signed bottom left 'D. Hitz, Paris, 1890'. Sum unknown. Allegorical painting.

A further painting by Hitz, representing *The Nymph Selena*, date unknown, hangs in the Episcopal Palace built by Lecomte du Noüy (1896-1900) behind the church of Curtea de Argeş, where the royal family frequently stayed. Its small format suggests it was not intended to belong to the Peleş cycle.

1930 Inventory of the Golden Salon, Cotroceni
(Arhivele Statului București, fond Castele și Palate,
dos.189/1930,'Inventarul mobilierul particular')

SALONUL DE AUR	Lei aur
Pereții de gips, fond verde, relief șerpuit bine aurit	12.000
Plafon de grinzi, formă casete	9.000
1 cămin aurit, înăuntru plăci galbene	4.000
1 baldachin aurit în perete la stânga căminului	4.000
1 baldachin aurit în perete la dreapta căminului	5.000
 <u>Mobila compusă din:</u>	
1 masă mare neagră cu 6 picioare cu placă piatră 200 x 130 cm	500
1 masă mijloc neagră cu 4 picioare cu placă cristal, fond aurit și pene de păun	400
1 masă aurită sculptată și cu 1 etajeră	250
1 masă aurită rotundă 4 picioare late cu 1 etajeră ø 146 cm	600
2 mese mici verzi, 4 picioare cu placă cristal, jos metal aurit	450
1 masă verde cu 1 etajeră	250
1 masă turcească octagonală incrust. sedef ø 60 cm	450
2 mese mai mici cu stofă brodată cu fir lână cămin	200
2 dulapuri aurite îmbrăcăminte calorifer	400
2 etajere pentru cărți, aurite sculptate cu 4 rafturi	2.000
1 otomană aurită formă barcă, cu 4 picioare și 2 perne deasupra o acoperitură japoneză	200 800
1 colțar aurit sculptat, flori de crin, cu 4 perne cu fir	1.400
1 bancă cu colț aurită sculptată, îmbrăc. stofă cu fir	1.200
1 canapea mare în colț îmbrăc. cu pânză	1.200
2 canapele aurite sculptate, îmbrăc cu pânză	1.100
4 canapele îmbrăcate cu pânză vărgată	1.200
1 fotoliu mare aurit, pirogravat, pernă catifea roșie	750
1 fotoliu mare de lemn, spate și pernă îmbrăc. piele	700
1 fotoliu aurit, pirogravat cu crini, îmbrăc. postav verde, la brațe 2 cruci	400
1 fotoliu aurit pirogravat, îmbrăc. postav aurit	400
1 fotoliu aurit sculptat cu spate înalt drept, pictat cu crini	400
1 fotoliu aurit sculptat simplu	300

1 fotoliu antic de teracotă cu patină verde, formă cazan	300
2 fotolii semi-cerc, aurite sculptat, cu perne cu fir	600
1 scaun aurit cu grătare și spate sculptat	400
1 scaun semi-cerc aurit cu 1 placă în față	300
1 scaun tron aurit, sculptat, cu baldachin și lădiță	1.750
4 scaune aurite cu grătare, fără spate	1.100
3 taburete octagonale cu placă cristal, fond postav cu fir	180

Diverse:

1 ceas mic, lac verde, cu argint	70
9 diferite vase: marmoră, teracotă, cristal, pământ, bronz și Daum Nancy	2.110
15 vase Kopenhagen dif. mărimi	4.000
60 figuri, animale etc. Kopenhagen	10.000
4 figuri Kopenhagen: copilaș, epure pe ou, Arab, faun cu urs	120
5 căldări de aramă, în perete	600
1 candelabru mare de bronz, crăci împletite și 4 brați electr. în colțuri	3.100
1 cruce de lemn sculptată aurită cu ceas	300
7 statuete și figuri de marmoră, bronz și aliaj, dif. subiecte	3.250
1 icoană la cămin	150
4 reliefuri: 3 de gips religioase și 1 de bronz: Julia de Caeca	2.600
2 tablouri: M. S. Regina Elisabeta de Raf. Schuster-Voldan și de Szenikowski	2.500
10 tablouri copii și reproducții, dif. subiecte	1.230
1 tablou: M. S. Regina Maria de Tiny Rupprecht	3.000
1 tablou: M. S. Regina v. Rechwitz de Raff Schuster Voldan	1.000
1 covor Tiebris 275 x 210 cm	3.000
1 covor Corassan 260 x 224 cm	1.000
1 covor Bukhara 310 x 210 cm	2.000
1 covor oriental 160 x 280 cm. în perete	3.000
6 perdele cu galon auriu și 10 perdele subțiri	1.200
7 cuverture diferite de: mătase, catifea și stofă, simple și brodate, 1 cu galon de aur și flori albe și 2 perne, idem	2.400
4 cuverture de catifea maron, deschise și închise; alte 2 cuverture galbene și 14 perne de catifea	1.930
ca. 130 diferite cărți, volume de lux și simple, opere rare, etc.	3.500

TOTAL Lei aur 108.840

APPENDIX 3

(English translation)

GOLDEN SALON

Gold lei

Gypsum walls, green background, highly gilded serpentine relief pattern	12.000
Beamed coffered ceiling	9.000
Gilded hearth, inside: yellow tiles	4.000
1 gilded canopy attached to wall to left of hearth	4.000
1 gilded canopy attached to wall to right of hearth	5.000
<u>Furniture comprising:</u>	
1 large black table with 6 legs and stone top	1.500
1 medium black table with 4 legs, crystal top, gilded background and peacock feathers	400
1 carved gilded table with 1 shelf	250
1 round gilded table with 4 wide legs and 1 shelf, diameter 146 cm	600
2 small green tables with 4 legs, crystal top over gilded metal	450
1 green table with 1 shelf	250
1 octagonal Turkish table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, diameter 60 cm	450
2 smaller tables with embroidered braided material near hearth	200
2 gilded cupboards covering radiators	400
2 carved gilded bookcases with 4 shelves	2.000
1 gilded Ottoman in form of a boat with 4 legs and 2 cushions over this a Japanese cover	1.200 800
1 gilded corner cabinet, carved with lilies, with 4 embroidered cushions	1.400
1 gilded carved corner bench covered with braided material	1.200
1 large corner couch covered with thin fabric	1.100
2 carved gilded couches covered with thin fabric	1.800
4 couches covered with striped thin fabric	1.200
1 large gilded armchair, decorated with pokerwork, with red velvet cushion	750
1 large wooden armchair, leather back and cushion	3700
1 gilded armchair, decorated with pokerwork lilies, covered in green	1.200
7 rough woollen cloth, 2 crosses on its arms	400
1 gilded armchair, decorated with pokerwork, covered in gilded rough woollen cloth	2.400
4 covers dark brown velvet, another 2 yellow covers and	400
1 carved gilded armchair with straight high back, painted with lilies	400
1 plain gilded carved armchair	300

1 antique terracotta armchair with green patina, cauldron shape	300
2 semi-circular armchairs, carved and gilded, with braided cushions	600
1 gilded fretwork chair with carved back	400
1 gilded semi-circular chair with 1 panel on the front	300
1 carved gilded throne-chair, with canopy and small box	1.750
4 gilded fretwork chairs without backs	1.100
3 octagonal stools with crystal tops over embroidered woollen cloth	180

Various objects:

1 small clock, green varnish, with silver	70
9 assorted vases: marble, terracotta, crystal, earthenware, bronze and Daum Nancy	2.110
15 Copenhagen vases, different sizes	4.000
60 figures, animals etc. Copenhagen	10.000
4 Copenhagen figures: young child, Easter bunny on egg, Arab, satyr with bear	120
5 brass basins attached to wall	600
1 large bronze candelabra, interwoven branches and 4 electric fixtures in corners	3.100
1 carved gilded wooden cross with clock	300
7 statuettes and figures in marble, bronze and alloy, various subjects	3.250
1 icon on hearth	150
4 reliefs: 3 in gypsum with religious subjects and 1 in bronze: Julia of Caeca	2.600
2 pictures: H. M. Queen Elisabeth by Raf, Schuster-Voldan and by Szenikowski	2.500
10 pictures: copies and reproductions, various subjects	1.230
1 picture: H. M. Queen Marie by Tini Rupprecht	3.000
1 picture: Maria v. Rechwitz by Raff Schuster-Voldan	1.000
1 Tiebris carpet 275 x 210 cm	3.000
1 Corassan carpet 260 x 224 cm	1.000
1 Bukhara carpet 310 x 210 cm	2.000
1 oriental carpet 160 x 280 cm, on wall	3.000
6 curtains with gold braiding and 10 fine curtains	1.200
7 assorted covers in: silk, velvet, plain and embroidered material, 1 with gold embroidered insignia and white flowers and 2 cushions, idem.	2.400
4 covers of light and dark brown velvet, another 2 yellow covers and 14 velvet cushions	1.930

ca. 130 assorted books, luxury and plain volumes, rare works etc. 3.500

TOTAL in gold lei 108.840

Biographical notes for founder members of Artistic Youth

The following short notes, essentially complementing the information in the text, are given for the twelve founder members of Artistic Youth.

ARTACHINO, Constantin (1870-1954)

Born in Giurgiu. Family moved to Bucharest in 1877 during the War of Independence. Initially studied at Bucharest School of Commerce, then, from 1887-1891, at Bucharest School of Fine Art under Theodor Aman. In 1890, while still at School, became secretary of newly formed Artistic Circle. Resigned in 1891 after receiving a scholarship to study at Académie Julian under Alfred Bramtôt, Henri-Lucien Doucet and William Bouguereau. In 1892-93, visited Venice, Milan and London, followed by short period at Fontainebleau and the Barbizon. Returned to Romania in January 1894; in April held exhibition with Eugen Voinescu and Juan Alpar in Romanian Athenaeum. In May, took part for first time in Exhibition of Contemporary Artists where he received a second-class medal for *Biblis transformed into a stream*. The same year, following an unsuccessful application for chair of painting and drawing in Iași School of Fine Art, made short visit to Constantinople. In 1895 and 1896, held joint exhibitions with Luchian; also involved in Exhibition of Independent Artists. In 1897, together with Luchian, commissioned by Ministry of Public Education to paint part of the interior of Tulcea cathedral, as well as scenes from Romanian history to be reproduced for use in schools. In the same year, one of founding members of Ileana. In 1898, together with Luchian and Constantin Pascaly, commissioned to paint Alexandria cathedral (Teleorman district). A year later, again with Luchian, painted Brezoianu Church in Bucharest. In 1901, elected committee member of Artistic Circle; resigned a few months later to help found Artistic Youth to whose exhibitions he contributed regularly. The following year, commissioned, together with Strâmbulescu and Popescu, to study old Romanian church paintings for the Ministry of Education. In 1905-7, painted icons and interior of the Romanian church in Sofia. From 1907-8, director of Theodor Aman museum; also painted Otopeni church. From 1909-20, professor of drawing at Iași School of Fine Art. Appointed to Bucharest School of Fine Art in 1920 where he remained until his retirement in 1935.

DEMETRESCU MIREA, Dumitru (1864-1942)

Born in Câmpulung-Muscel. Younger brother of painter George Demetrescu Mirea (1854-1934). Studied at Bucharest School of Fine Art under Karl Storck and Ion Georgescu from 1887-88. In 1889-90, at Académie Julian in class of Henri Chapu. Returned to Romania autumn 1891 and held own exhibition in Romanian Athenaeum in 1892. Bronze medal at Paris 1900 Exhibition. Founding member of Artistic Youth in 1901, exhibiting with group until 1933. Carved reclining stone maiden for *Urlătoarea* group at 1906 Bucharest Exhibition. In 1918, involved in setting up the Salon of Romanian Sculptors. Drawing teacher, from 1897-1903, at high school in Câmpulung-Muscel. From 1911, taught at School of Fine Art in Iași and, later, in Bucharest.

GARGUROMIN-VERONA, Arthur (1868-1946)

Former dragoon lieutenant in Austrian army, left to dedicate himself to art. Studied in Munich under Fritz von Uhde and Simon Hollósy (who founded the Nagybánya school in 1896), then in Paris. Based in Braïla on his return. Bronze medal at 1900 exhibition for *Speranța* (Hope). Exhibited in Romanian Athenaeum in 1901, Dec. 1902 - Jan. 1903, Dec. 1926 - Jan. 1927.

GRANT, Nicolae (b.1868)

Born in Bucharest. In mid-1880s studied at Bucharest School of Fine Arts under Theodor Aman, followed by spell in class of Jean-Léon Gérôme at École des Beaux Arts in Paris. Spent much of career in France. Initially worked in Eaubonne (Seine-et-Oise). Contributed four paintings to Paris 1900 Exhibition. Later moved to Fontainebleau and largely gave up oil for watercolour. Painted mainly interiors and flowers. Exhibited with Ileana and founder member of Artistic Youth. Individual exhibitions 1898, 1901 and 1904 (with Theodor Pallady) in Romanian Athenaeum. Queen Marie bought many of his works.

LOGHI, Kimon (1871-1952)

Born in Serres in Macedonia. Moved to Padina Mare in Oltenia when his father inherited administration of part of an estate. Following death of his parents, his brother paid for his studies at Bucharest School of Fine Art under Theodor Aman, George Demetrescu Mirea, Constantin Stăncescu and Ion Georgescu. While still at the Academy, involved in early exhibitions of Artistic Circle. Around this time, was

sent by Minister of Public Education, Take Ionescu, to Macedonia to paint landscapes and scenes from the life of the Kutzo-Vlach people. From 1895-98, studied in Munich at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste under Nikolaos Gysis, and in the studio of Franz von Stuck. In 1898, his *Oriental* (Oriental Girl) won a prize at the Munich Secession Exhibition. He subsequently rented a studio in Paris, winning a silver medal for *Oriental* at the 1900 Exhibition, before returning to Romania in 1901. Founder member of Artistic Youth, with whom he exhibited regularly, becoming its president from 1920-47. In 1910, in charge of the jury which tried to exclude Brâncuși's *Wisdom of the Earth* from Artistic Youth's exhibition. In 1905, set up studio in Vienna, where he painted his large canvases of fairy-tales. In years before the First World War, travelled extensively to Florence, Lake Como, Brittany, Spain and Greece. After 1918, settled in Bucharest in a Neo-Romanian residence built for him by a fellow Macedonian, the architect Arghir Culina, at 8 Str. Viișoarei. Spent a large part of each year painting at Balceac and Bran. Individual exhibitions in 1904, 1907 (with Luchian and Spaethe), 1908, 1918, 1925 and yearly from 1922-27, 1931-34, 1937-38; last exhibition in 1942. Went blind in final years of life.

LUCHIAN, Ștefan (1868 -1916).

Born in Ștefănești near Botoșani. From 1885-89, studied at Bucharest School of Fine Art under Theodor Aman. Followed this with a period at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich under Johann Gaspar Herterich and Ludwig Herterich from 1889-90, then at Académie Julian under William Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury from 1891-93. In 1890, took part in first exhibition of Artistic Circle. In 1895, opened a joint exhibition with Artachino and was elected Vice-President of Artistic Circle. A further exhibition with Artachino the following year; also involved in Exhibition of Independent Artists. In 1897, together with Artachino, commissioned by Ministry of Public Education to paint interior of Tulcea Cathedral; joint exhibition with Titus Alexandrescu. The following year, with Artachino and Constantin Pascaly, commissioned to paint Alexandria Orthodox Episcopal cathedral (Teleorman district; built 1835-98); also founding member of Ileana. In 1899, joint exhibition with Nicolae Vermont. A year later, again with Artachino, painted Brezoianu Church in Bucharest. In 1901, left partly paralysed by spinal disease, but still involved in setting up Artistic Youth with whom he exhibited until 1914. From 1902-9, he travelled throughout Romania painting landscapes. Individual exhibitions in 1903, 1907 (with Loghi and Spaethe), 1908, 1910, 1914. In 1905, exhibited two works at International Fine Arts Exhibition in Munich; in 1913, at same exhibition, was awarded second-

class medal. Deteriorating health meant he painted with his brush tied to his fingers. Towards end of his life, became completely immobilised.

PETRAȘCU, Gheorghe (1872-1949)

Born in Tecuci. Spent two years studying natural sciences (1892-94); at same time enrolled at Bucharest School of Fine Art to study painting (1893-98). Followed this with a short trip to Munich, then a four-year scholarship at the Académie Julian under William Bouguereau, Gabriel Ferrier and Benjamin Constant, graduating in 1902. During his study period in Paris, also travelled extensively in Italy, Spain and Egypt. In 1901, founding member of Artistic Youth with whom he exhibited regularly. In 1902, travelled to Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. In 1904, went to Italy where became friends with Emile Bernard and, in 1906, visited Egypt. Held fifteen individual exhibitions between 1900-1940 and took part in numerous Romanian and international exhibitions, including the 1905 International Fine Arts Exhibition in Munich. In 1932, French Government awarded him Légion d'honneur. Member of Romanian Academy from 1936. From 1914-1940, custodian (from 1929 head custodian) in the National Art Gallery in Bucharest.

POPESCU, Ștefan (1872-1948)

Born in Fintăști. Self-taught artist. Trained initially as a school teacher (1886-90); exhibited with Artistic Circle between 1891-93 while working in a Bucharest primary school. In October 1893, a royal scholarship enabled him to leave for Munich where he studied under Ludwig von Löfftz and Nicolaos Gysis at Akademie der Bildenden Künste until 1899. From 1900-1, painted in Paris and Brittany. First of seven individual exhibitions held Nov.-Dec. 1901 in Romanian Athenaeum; also in that year, founder member of Artistic Youth with whom he exhibited regularly until 1922. In June 1902, Minister of Public Education, Spiru Haret, commissioned him, together with Strâmbulescu and Artachino, to study old Romanian church paintings. In 1904, individual exhibition at Bernheim Jeune in Paris; also at Bruno Cassirer in Berlin. Painted studies of architectural details of Cozia and Hurez; individual exhibition in Dec. 1904. In 1905, gold medal at Munich International Exhibition. In 1908, became member of Munich Secession and Künstlergenossenschaft. Spent much of 1909-14 in Paris. From 1922, painted regularly at Balcic. In 1925, awarded Légion d'honneur by French government. Between 1926-29, visited Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Italy. In 1935, elected honorary member of Romanian Academy. Two years later, helped found Arta Society, with whom he exhibited until 1947.

SPAETHE, Oscar (1875-1944)

Born in Bucharest. Studied under Otto Lessing in Berlin and Adolf Eberle in Munich. Returned to Romania in 1898/9, although listed as resident in Munich in catalogue of 1900 Paris Exhibition where he showed three sculptures. Gave drawing lessons to Crown Princess Marie's daughters in 1901. Joint exhibition with Loghi and Luchian in 1907.

STORCK, Frederic (Fritz) (1872-1972)

Born in Bucharest. Son of sculptor Karl Storck (1826-1887) and brother of Carol (1854-1926), also a sculptor. Studied under Ion Georgescu at Bucharest School of Fine Art from 1888-93, then at Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich under Wilhelm von Rümmer from 1893-97. Study visit to Italy in 1897, followed by two further years working in Munich. Returned to Romania in 1899/1900. Exhibited in Munich (Glaspalast and Secession), Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg. Silver medal at 1900 Paris Exhibition for *The Stone Thrower*. In 1901, made another study visit to Italy; in same year, one of founder members of Artistic Youth. Professor at Bucharest School of Fine Art from 1922-37. Married to painter Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck with whom he decorated their house at 16 Str Vasile Alecsandri, built by Alexandru Clavel in 1909-11.

STRÂMBULESCU (STRÂMBU), Ipolit (1871-1934)

Studied at Bucharest School of Fine Art under George Demetrescu Mirea, then in Munich under Karl Mahr, and later in Paris. Bronze medal at 1900 Paris exhibition. In June 1902, commissioned, together with Popescu and Artachino, to conduct a documentary study of old Romanian church paintings. Helped the director of new Museum of National Art, Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș, with setting up of museum in 1907. Individual exhibition in Bucharest in 1908. Professor of painting and drawing at Bucharest School of Fine Art.

VERMONT, Nicolae (1866-1932)

Jewish painter, born in Bacău. Father, Josef Gruenberg, was a foreign languages teacher. Encouraged to take up painting by Nicolae Grigorescu who lodged with the family in the summer of 1874. Grigorescu helped him enter the Bucharest School of Fine Art in 1881 where he studied painting and engraving under Theodor Aman. While a student, contributed drawings to newspaper *Universul*. In 1887, received

scholarship from Grigore Ventura and went to Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich where he studied under Ludwig von Löfftz, G. von Hack, Franz Defregger and Fritz Uhde until 1893. During this time, converted to Christianity. Also involved in iconoclastic circle of review *Simplicissimus*. In 1891, study visit to Tyrol, Venice and Verona. In March 1892, held joint exhibition in Romanian Athenaeum with Menelas Simonidy and Dumitru Serafim. The following year, exhibited with Artistic Circle. From 1893-95, in Paris, working in the studio of the painter and engraver Diogène Maillart. Returned to Romania permanently in 1895 and became deeply involved in independent societies; founder member of Ileana and Artistic Youth. Painted church murals in Cernavoda 1893-1900 and wall murals in Ion D. Berindei's Cantacuzino Palace on Cal. Victoriei (1898-1900). Also did satirical illustrations for Gheorghe Braescu's *Moș Teaca*.

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- 1.1 Carmen Sylva (Queen Elisabeth of Romania). Pencil drawings on cell wall of former royal residence in Sinaia monastery, late 1870s. Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, 'Monumentele noastre III. Mănăstirea Sinaia', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 8, august 1908.

- 1.2 a. Wilhelm von Doderer, Johannes Schultz & Karel Liman, Castle Peleş, Sinaia, 1875-1914. Main façade.

- b. Aerial view.

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- 1.3 Albert Galleron, sketch of Castle Peleş after first stage of construction 1875-83. *L'Illustration*, 31 mai 1884, p. 369.

- 1.4 Martin Stöhr (?), dining room, Castle Peleş, designed during first stage of construction 1875-83.

- 1.5 Firm of A. Bembé (Mainz), Turkish room, Castle Peleş, 1885 (originally shown at 1873 Vienna Exhibition).
 - b. Detail.

- 1.6 Emile André Lecomte du Noüy, Moorish hall, Castle Peleş, early 1890s.

- 1.7 Jean-Jules Antoine Lecomte du Noüy, *The White Slave*, Salon of 1888, oil, 146 x 118 cm, Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

- 1.18 Gustav Klimt, *Lyell*, 1884, oil, for Martin Gerlach's *Allegorien und Embleme*.

- 1.8 Jean-Jules Antoine Lecomte du Noüy, *Carmen Sylva Listening to the Voices of the Forest*, 1897, oil, Castle Peleş.
- 1.9 Firm of A. Bembé (Mainz), Italian reception room, Castle Peleş, designed during first stage of construction 1875-83.
- 1.10 Carmen Sylva's music room, Castle Peleş, designed during first stage of construction 1875-83. Stained-glass windows, illustrating Vasile Alecsandri's Romanian tales, by the F. X. Zettler Institute (Munich), 1879-82. Also four oil canvases by Dora Hitz depicting, from left, *Peace*, *The Child of the Sun*, *Märchen* and *Sorrow*, 1883-84.
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- 1.12 Ede Thoroczkai Wigand, *Csaba's Cradle*, 1912-13, stained glass, Palace of Culture, Târgu Mureş.
- 1.13 Josef Kott, mural decoration, 1882, *cour d'honneur*, Castle Peleş.
- 1.14 Franz Matsch, *Eitel Fridrich V* and *Eitel Fridrich II*, c.1883-84, oil, main staircase, Castle Peleş.
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- 1.17 Firm of A. Bembé (Mainz), theatre, Castle Peleş, designed during first stage of construction 1875-83. Ceiling roundel by Franz Matsch, 1884, oil; friezes by Gustav Klimt and Fritz Vodák, c.1884 & 1904, oil.
- 1.18 Gustav Klimt, *Idyll*, 1884, oil, for Martin Gerlach's *Allegorien und Embleme*.

- 1.19 Fritz Vodák, *Music (?)*, 1904, oil, Castle Peleş theatre; copy of 1884 panel by Gustav Klimt in Peleş mansard room.
- 1.20 Gustav Klimt, *Theatre (?)*, 1884, oil, Castle Peleş theatre.
- 1.21 Gustav Klimt, detail of theatre frieze showing roundel, 1884, oil, Castle Peleş.
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- 2.2 a. Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, drawing room of the ducal palace of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse in Darmstadt, 1897-98 (destroyed). *The Studio*, vol. 16, 1899.
- b. View of same showing fireplace. *The Studio*, vol. 16, 1899.
- 2.3 Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, design for a music cabinet for the drawing room of the ducal palace, Darmstadt, 1897. *The Studio*, vol. 14, 1898.
- 2.4 Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, semi-circular armchair for the drawing room of the ducal palace, Darmstadt, 1897. *The Studio*, vol. 14, 1898.
- 2.5 Edward Burne-Jones, scene from the *Legend of King Arthur*, design for a William Morris tapestry for Stanmore Hall, 1894. *The Studio*, vol. 3, 1894.
- 2.6 a. Crown Princess Marie of Romania, sketch of lilies, pencil on blue paper, drawn at Wolfsgarten, September 1900. Prints and Drawings Collection, National Museum of Art, Bucharest.

- b. Crown Princess Marie of Romania, watercolour sketch of irises, painted at Cotroceni, 1903. Prints and Drawings Collection, National Museum of Art, Bucharest.
- 2.7 Crown Princess Marie of Romania, book painted for her husband, 1906. Opening pages showing miniature of Marie after 1901 pastel by Tini Ruprecht (Cotroceni) and poem by Carmen Sylva superimposed over watercolour painting of flowers. Parchment edged with silver, Pelişor.
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- 2.10 Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, *Le Nid*, sketch for interior, 1898. *Houses and Gardens*, 1906.
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- 4.26 Kimon Loghi, *Oriental Girl*, 1898, oil, Castle Peleşor.
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- 4.28 Crown Princess Marie, throne with lilies, carved and gilded wood, catalogue of 1907 Artistic Youth Exhibition.
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- 4.48 Decorative Arts Section of the Bucharest School of Fine Arts, wooden dresser with punctured motifs, c.1906-8. Eugène Grasset, 'L'École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs de Bucarest Domnita Maria', *Art et Décoration*, XXIII, 1908.

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- 4.51 Nicolae Ghika-Budești, *project for a 'Romanian' dining room*, c.1906. *Arhitectura*, nr. 1, 1906.
- 4.52 Nicolae Ghika-Budești, chair and dresser from a *project for a "Romanian" dining room*, c.1906. *Arhitectura*, nr. 1, 1906.
- 4.53 Untitled photograph from Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș' article 'Mobile românești cu prilejul concursului societății „Domnița Maria”', *Convorbiri literare*, nr. 9, septembrie 1908, showing, on far right, a chair with punctured motifs from Nicolae Ghika-Budești's 'project for a "Romanian" dining room'.
- 4.54 George Sterian, cover of *Arhitectura*, nr. 1, 1906.
- 4.55 Ion Mincu, preparatory sketch for the front cover of *Literatură și artă română*, 1896. *Arhitectura 1891-1941. Semicentenarul societății arhitecților români*.
- 4.56 Apcar Baltazar, *Byzantine Princesses*, undated, oil, 25 x 32 cm, formerly in the collection of Doru Speitzer. Comarnescu, P., A. Baltazar, București, E.S.P.L.A., 1956.
- 4.57 Apcar Baltazar, *Princess Ruxandra*, date uncertain, oil, 23 x 18 cm, formerly in the collection of Vlaicu Bîrna. Comarnescu, P., A. Baltazar, București, E.S.P.L.A., 1956.
- 4.58 Apcar Baltazar, *We want Moțoc's head!*, date uncertain, oil, 205 x 172 cm, National Museum of Art, Bucharest.

- 4.59 Apcar Baltazar, *Going to Madame Popescu*, date uncertain, oil, 44 x 34 cm, formerly in the collection of O. Zambaccian (now part of Museum of Art Collectors, Bucharest).
- 4.60 Apcar Baltazar, design for ceramic pot decorated with 'the Rape of Ileana Cosânzeana', date uncertain, formerly in the collection of M. & A. Paucker. Comarnescu, P., A. *Baltazar*, București, E.S.P.L.A., 1956.
- 4.61 Apcar Baltazar, design for ceramic pot with scenes from 'The Twelve Daughters of the White Emperor', date uncertain. Prints and Drawings Collection of the library of the Romanian Academy Library, Bucharest.
- 4.62 Apcar Baltazar, project for a stained-glass window for a museum, date uncertain, 33 x 43 cm, formerly in Simu Museum (now part of Museum of Art Collectors, Bucharest).
- 4.63 Apcar Baltazar, fragment of design for stained-glass triptych depicting *the Legend of the Golden Stag*, date uncertain, formerly in Simu Museum (now part of Museum of Art Collectors, Bucharest). *Convorbiri literare*, noiembrie 1908.
- 4.64 Apcar Baltazar, *Făt-Frumos slaying a dragon*, date uncertain, design for stained glass. Prints and Drawings Collection, National Museum of Art, Bucharest.
- 4.65 Apcar Baltazar, *Făt-Frumos with blazing torch*, date uncertain. Prints and Drawings Collection, National Museum of Art, Bucharest.
- 4.66 Apcar Baltazar, *design for panel of a triptych depicting St. George and the Dragon*, date uncertain. *Viața românească*, noiembrie 1908.
- 4.67 Apcar Baltazar, *decoration for a living room*, date uncertain, 76 x 146 cm, formerly in the collection of M. & A. Paucker. *Viața românească*, noiembrie 1908.

- 4.68 Apcar Baltazar, *decoration for a dining room*, date uncertain, 62 x 83 cm, formerly in the collection of M. & A. Paucker. *Viața românească*, noiembrie 1908.
- 4.69 a. Ion Mincu, Gheorghieff tomb, 1900-2, with bronze statue of St. John by Frederick Storck, 1902-c.1907, Bellu Cemetery, Bucharest.
- b. Frederick Storck, statue of St. Matthew for Mincu's Gheorghieff tomb, 1902-c.1907, bronze, Bellu Cemetery, Bucharest.
- 4.70 a. Dimitrie Paciurea, *Death of the Mother of Christ*, 1912, bronze, Stojolan tomb, Bellu Cemetery, Bucharest.
- b. Detail.
- 5.1 Grigore Cerchez, north wing of Cotroceni Palace, Bucharest, 1913-15 (restored 1976-85).
- 5.2 Grigore Cerchez, Advanced School of Architecture, Bucharest, 1912-17.
- 5.3 a. Grigore Cerchez, dining room, Cotroceni Palace, Bucharest, 1913-15. Cotroceni Palace Archive.
- b. Dining room following Nicolae Vlădescu's restoration of 1976-85.
- c. Grigore Cerchez, antechamber connecting to dining room, Cotroceni Palace, Bucharest, 1913-15. Cotroceni Palace Archive.
- 5.4 a. Karel Liman (?), Marie's studio, Cotroceni Palace, Bucharest, c.1913-15. Cotroceni Palace Archive.
- b. View of same showing fireplace.
- 5.5 Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, hall of Blackwell, Lake Windermere, 1898-99.
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- 5.7 Cartoon which appeared in *Punch*, 19 March 1919, when Queen Marie visited London to appeal for famine relief for Romania.
- 5.8 Victor Ștefănescu, Coronation Church complex, Alba Iulia, 1922. Period postcard, author's collection.
- 5.9 Victor Ștefănescu, Coronation Church, Alba Iulia, 1922.
- 5.10 Costin Petrescu, *Queen Marie*, wall fresco, Coronation Church, Alba Iulia, 1922.
- 5.11 Victor Ștefănescu, guest wing at east end of Coronation Church enceinte, Alba Iulia, 1922.
- 5.12 C. Kristescu, Coronation medal, brass, 1922, author's collection.
- 5.13 *Queen Marie*, the official Coronation poster, 1922.
- 5.14 *Prince Neagoe Basarab, Princess Despina and their children*, c.1512-17, votive wall fresco, formerly in the Episcopal Church of Curtea de Argeș, Argeș region.
- 5.15 Alfons Mucha, *Tête byzantine-brunette*, c.1897, colour lithograph, also issued as colour postcard.
- 5.16 Petre Antonescu, Triumphal Arch, Bucharest, 1922, period photograph.
- 5.17 Artist unknown, Coronation medal showing heads of Ferdinand and Trajan, brass, 1921, author's collection.
- 5.18 Constantin Pomponiu and George Cristinel, Orthodox Cathedral, Cluj-Napoca, 1921-34.
- 5.19 a. Grigore Cerchez, the 'Great White Room', Cotroceni Palace, Bucharest, 1925-26. Cotroceni Palace archive.

- b. 'Great White Room' following Nicolae Vlădescu's restoration of 1976-85.
- 5.20 a. Architect unknown, Queen Marie's residence at Copăceni, near Bucharest, courtyard side, early 1920s. Fond Regina Maria, III/156/1926.
- b. Present state of house.
- c. Copăceni, terrace side. Fond Regina Maria, III/156/1926.
- 5.21 Architect unknown, Copăceni, side view of *pridvor*, early 1920s.
- 5.22 Architect unknown, Copăceni, view of interior, early 1920s. Fond Regina Maria, III/156/1926.
- 5.23 Architect unknown, 'Moți hut', Copăceni, mid-1920s. Fond Regina Maria, III/152/1925.
- 5.24 Architect unknown, 'Serbian house', Copăceni, mid-1920s. Fond Regina Maria, III/152/1925.
- 5.25 Queen Marie and the 'Sovata door at Copăceni' in 1925. Fond Regina Maria, III/152/1925.
- 5.26 Architect unknown, the 'fisher palace' of Queen Marie at Scroviște, near Bucharest, finished 1924. *Boabe de Grâu*, anul 1, nr. 2, aprilie 1930.
- 5.27 Queen Marie on the balcony of her 'fisher-palace' at Scroviște, near Bucharest, in 1924. Fond Regina Maria, III/149/1924.
- 5.28 Dining room of Queen Marie's 'fisher-palace at Scroviște, 1924. Fond Regina Maria, III/149/1924.
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- 5.30 *Thrummy*, guest-house at Scroviște, after design by Queen Elisabetha of Greece, 1927. Fond Regina Maria, III/161/1927.
- 5.31 a. Castle Bran, Transylvania, founded 1221-30, restored by Karel Liman 1920-29.
- b. Queen Marie in park of Castle Bran in 1925. Fond Regina Maria, III/153/1925
- 5.32 Karel Liman, main entrance of Castle Bran, 1920-29.
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- 5.35 Karel Liman, Queen Marie's 'yellow bedroom', Castle Bran, 1924. Fond Regina Maria, III/149/1924.
- 5.36 Karel Liman, detail of carved wooden column in library-music room, Castle Bran.
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- 5.40 Daniel Renard, Casino, Constanța, 1907-10.
- 5.41 Victor Ștefănescu, Town Hall (now the History and Archaeology Museum), Constanța, 1914-21.
- 5.42 a. Anghel Saligny, Carmen Sylva's 'ship pavilion' on the pier at Constanța docks, 1909. Period postcard, collection of Constanța Port Museum.
- b. Anghel Saligny, Carmen Sylva's 'ship pavilion' on the pier at Constanța docks, 1909, end-view. Period postcard, collection of Constanța Port Museum.
- 5.43 a. Victor Ștefănescu, plan for north façade of second version of the 'ship pavilion' on the pier at Constanța docks, 1928-29. Collection of Constanța Port Museum.
- b. Victor Ștefănescu, plan for east and west façades of second version of the 'ship pavilion' on the pier at Constanța docks, 1928-29. Collection of Constanța Port Museum.
- 5.44 Victor Ștefănescu, west façade of second version of 'ship pavilion' on the pier at Constanța docks, 1928-29. 1965 photograph, collection of Constanța Port Museum.
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- 5.46 a. Mario Stoppa and Constantin Dobrescu, Cara Dalga, Mamaia, under construction, 1924-25. Fond Regina Maria, III/163/1927.
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- 5.48 Constantin Dobrescu, plan for Prince Mihai's annex, Cara Dalga, with annotations by Queen Marie, c.1924-26. Fond Castele și Palate, dos. 340.
- 5.49 Alexandru Satmari and Emil Guneș, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1925-26. Period postcard, author's collection.
- 5.50 Alexandru Satmari, early plan for Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1925. Fond Regina Maria, III/153/1925.
- 5.51 Alexandru Satmari, slightly later plan for Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1925. Fond Regina Maria, III/156/1926.
- 5.52 Alexandru Satmari and Emil Guneș, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1925-26. Present state (now a museum).
- 5.53 Emil Guneș, Casa Zissu, Bucharest, 1933-34.
- 5.54 Terraces and 'Ileana garden' at Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1926. Fond Regina Maria, III/158/1926.
- 5.55 Queen Marie on the 'Sandro terrace' at Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic in 1927. Fond Regina Maria, III/162/1927.
- 5.56 'Elisabetha terrace', Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1927. Fond Regina Maria, III/161/1927.
- 5.57 View of Tenha-Yuvah showing octagonal dome of Queen Marie's 'Turkish bathroom', 1925-26.
- 5.58 Queen Marie in her bedroom, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, in 1927. Fond Regina Maria, III/162/1927.
- 5.59 Queen Marie next to Princess Ileana's bed in the Queen's bedroom, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, in 1927. Fond Regina Maria, III/162/1927.

- 5.60 Emil Guneş (?), Stella Maris, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1929-30.
- 5.61 Anastase Demian, frontispiece to Queen Marie's article, 'Stella Maris. Cea mai mică biserică din țară', *Boabe de Grâu*, anul I, nr. 9, 1930.
- 5.62 Anastase Demian and Papatriandafil, votive portrait of Queen Marie and Princess Ileana below the 'Betrothal of the Virgin', wall painting, 1930, Stella Maris, Balcic. *Boabe de Grâu*, anul I, nr. 9, 1930.
- 5.63 Emil Guneş (?), Suliman Leïc pergola, leading to Stella Maris, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, c.1929-30.
- 5.64 Emil Guneş (?), Sabur Yeri guest house, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, late 1920s.
- 5.65 Emil Guneş, Mavi Dalga guest house, Tenha-Yuvah, Balcic, 1927.