

## DYNASTIC PROJECTS OF THE ROMANIAN MONARCHY DURING THE INTER WAR PERIOD

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Our paper work relays on studying some projects of dynastic marriage, during 1921 and 1932 regarding the Royal House of Romania and that of Bulgaria and Marshal Józef Piłsudski in Poland, more precisely the Princesses Marioara and Ileana with Tsar Boris III respectively Jadwiga Aleksandra Piłsudski and Prince Nicolae. Our analysis' paradigm consists in observing the evolution of the Romanians bilateral relationships from an original perspective, unexplored till the present in the Romanian historiography, and especially the implications of the matrimonial relations in the foreign policy of the each the three countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Poland).

### THE OFFENSIVE OF THE ROMANIAN ROYAL HOUSE IN THE EUROPEAN POLICIES IN THE FIRST INTER WAR YEARS

Romania represented, after 1918, the most important vector in the South-East, given the territorial and international by right situation extremely circles favourable, as well as the extraordinary view, in the political, diplomatic and media of the Royal family, induced especially by the actions and charisma of Queen Maria<sup>1</sup>. For any Bulgarian main decision factor, the net disadvantaged situation of the dynasty in Sofia was obvious. Also the placing in two different political European arenas of the two members of the royalty, contributed to this, because, if King Ferdinand of Romania chose, in 1916, to join the war against Germany and the implicit exclusion from the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen family, Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria decided to stay, till the end, beside Kaiser Wilhelm II<sup>2</sup>.

In the first years after the peace settlements established in 1919–1920, due to the direct political involvement of Queen Maria, Romania dynastic relationships

<sup>1</sup> See, Hannah Pakula, *Ultima romantică – Viața reginei Maria a României*, București, 2003; Guy Gauthier, *Missy. Regina României*, București, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> For more details regarding Bulgaria's situation after the First World War see Léon Lamouche, *La Bulgarie*, Paris, 1923; George Clenton Logio, *Bulgaria – Past and Present*, Manchester, 1936; P. Pavlov, I. Danev, D. Cain, *Istoria Bulgariei*, București, 2002.

with the Royal Families of Greece<sup>3</sup> and the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom. Under these circumstances, a *marriage* or even a *dynastic alliance* with Bulgaria, in case the Bulgarian Royal House had been expelled, would have solved the territorial disagreements as well as those of strategic nature<sup>4</sup>.

In Romania's case, the dynastic alliance was a subject discussed in the political circles, taking into consideration the proposals which came on behalf of Hungary's leaders, who were thinking of a solution, having Ferdinand as King<sup>5</sup>, but also on behalf of Poland that regarded Prince Nicolae as an opportunity after the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski<sup>6</sup>. Although from Sofia, the intentions were aimed at a *dynastic marriage* – by means of which Tsar Boris would have remained on the throne, without implying in a political sense the Royal House of Romania, while the dynastic alliance meant the abdication of the young Tsar Boris III and, implicitly, it meant giving up the Saxa-Coburg-Gotha dynasty. Under the given political situation, the aim of the leaders from the South of Danube was an obvious one: to find a way out of the international isolation for Bulgaria by means of a *dynastic marriage* with one of the Romanian Princesses.

**BORIS AND MARIOARA: A MARRIAGE GAINED BY ALEKSANDAR  
KARAGEORGEVIĆ. ROMANIAN DYNASTIC PLANS OF CONSOLIDATING  
THE LITTLE ENTENTE (1921–1922)**

Immediately after consolidating his power on an internal level, Aleksandar Stamboliiski set out an ample diplomatic campaign intending to find a way out from isolation for the country. In his attempt, he obtained the approval and

<sup>3</sup> Radu Tudorancea, *Le double mariage dynastique helléno-roumain (février–mars 1921)*, “Historical Yearbook”, Bucharest, IV, 2007, p. 145–152.

<sup>4</sup> A generous perspective in analysis: Daniel Citirigă, *Tronuri între strategii diplomatice și interese politice. Proiecte româno-bulgare de căsătorii dinastice*, in Florin Anghel, Mariana Cojoc, Magdalena Tiță (coord.), „Români și bulgari. Provocările unei vecinătăți”, București, 2007, p. 201–222.

<sup>5</sup> Information regarding the dynastic alliance projects is also to be found in the diplomatic Romanian archives which are very little known. For example, see Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, București (Archive of the Foreign Affairs Ministry – still A.M.A.E.), fond 71/1914 E2 partea a II-a, vol. 26, p. 80–90. Also see Ioan Chiper, 1928: *Proiectul unirii coroanei României și a Ungariei*, in „Expres Magazin”, no. 6 (80), February 12–19, 1992; as a basic source about the Romanian-Hungarian alliance also see Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen, *Campania românească din 1919 din Ungaria. Amintiri și documente inedite* in „Revista Istorică”, no. 5–6, 1992.; Idem, *O primă experiență comunistă în Ungaria*, edited by Nicolae Petrescu și Gheorghe Zamfir, București, 2005; Constantin Buchet, *Proiecte de uniune dinastică româno-maghiară*, in „Magazin istoric”, no. 11 (392), November 1999, p. 29–31.

<sup>6</sup> Florin Anghel, *Guvernul N. Iorga și un proiect româno-polon de uniune dinastică, 1931–1932*, in vol. „Nicolae Iorga. 1871–1940. Studii și documente” (coord. Constantin Bușe), vol. II, București, 2006, p. 19–32; Mihai Fotin Enescu, *Principele Nicolae. Încercare de portret veridic*, în Prințul Nicolae de Hohenzollern, *În umbra coroanei României*, edited by Gheorghe Buzatu, Iași, 1991, p. 152.

officially visited Romania, during January 9–13, 1921. In Bucharest he managed to meet important political factors, such as the Peasant Party's leaders, the President of the Council of Ministers, General Alexandru Averescu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Take Ionescu and last but not least King Ferdinand and Queen Maria.<sup>7</sup>

The visit at Pelișor (Sinaia), on January 11, 1921, was not at all an accidental one, but, moreover, it proposed extremely ambitious objectives. The arguments are put at hand by Constantin Argetoianu who, in his memoirs, describes the meeting and reports how, at a certain moment, “while he was chewing, the tall bulky man (Stamboliiski) squeaked the chair and turned towards Queen Maria and told her something”. After a moment's hesitation, Nicolae Mișu<sup>8</sup>, one of Romania's oldest experienced officials, Minister in London, collaborator of Liberal Prime Minister I.I.C. Brătianu and member of the Romania's delegation at the Peace Conference in Paris, being present as translator at this meeting, said in French: „His Excellence admires Princess Mignon (Marioara) very much and congratulates Your Majesty on having a child like this”<sup>9</sup>. The Queen answered this remark simply by saying: „he is very polite, very polite”<sup>10</sup>. If we are to believe the Minister of Internal Affairs of Averescu's government, the words that the Bulgarian high official used were, in fact, out of any pattern: he, “grunting” to Mișu, continued “you!, ask the harridan (this was the Queen) if she wants to give away in marriage the fat girl (this was Mignon) to our King... I like her, there is plenty to catch with your hands”<sup>11</sup>. The original marriage proposal, as presented above had a similar answer on behalf of the Queen. At least from the interpretation made by Nicolae Mișu we bear in mind: “the harridan considers that the fat girl is not for you”<sup>12</sup>.

The episode in Pelișor, in January 1921, is also mentioned by Queen Maria. She, on the contrary, considered as necessary to stress the primeval and uncivil qualities of her “bulky, strong and broad-shouldered” interlocutor, “you feel his strength immediately, but it is not a pleasant one, a man of an extraordinary energy, a peasant by birth who has the exact manners required in order to be accepted in a saloon”<sup>13</sup>. By reading her diary it concludes that the sovereign and the Princess answered the Bulgarian Prime Minister's “sharp look” only with smiles and not with favourable signs<sup>14</sup>. The Queen insists, in the same text, on the details of this

<sup>7</sup> Constantin Iordan, *România și relațiile internaționale din Sud-Estul european: probleme ale păcii, securității și cooperării 1919–1924*, București, 1999, p. 42. See also Idem, *De l'histoire des relations roumano-bulgares: Aleksandăr Stamboliiski à Bucarest*, in «Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie» “A.D. Xenopol”, Iași, XXII, 1, 1985, p. 103–115.

<sup>8</sup> A complete biography at Daniel Cain, *Un trimis al Majestății Sale, Nicolae Mișu*, București, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri*, vol. VI, 1919–1922, București, 1996, p. 193.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Maria, Regina României, *Însemnări zilnice*, vol. III, București, 2006, p. 23

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

unusual visit, mentioning, for example, some of the flattering considerations of her interlocutor, Stamboliiski insisting that she was “one of the most important statespersons in Romania, if not the most important”. Being a skilled politician and irreproachable diplomat, Maria was not impressed by these flattering observations, which were meant to convince her to sustain the Bulgarian territorial demands which aimed at the exit to Aegean Sea, in Thrace.

Relying on these basic sources, taking into consideration also the diplomatic records we can advance the hypothesis that the Bulgarian Prime Minister’s visit aimed, in essence, at convincing the Romanian Royal family to agree with the idea of marrying one of its daughters to Tsar Boris III. With respect to this, in January 1921, media in Belgrade published some allegations that was to cause “a deep dissatisfaction” within the political circles in Belgrade, according to which Princess Marioara was bound to marry the Tsar Boris of Bulgaria<sup>15</sup>. Stamboliiski’s proposal is argued enough, also by the analysis of the Romanian diplomatic correspondence, which is a new one concerning this subject, several months later.

Romania’s Minister in Paris, Dimitrie I. Ghika, sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on October 24, 1921, suppositions according to which the French press published a telegram from Belgrade, which insisted on the marriage of Princess Marioara of Romania with the Bulgaria’s sovereign, event that would have been planned by the Bulgarian Prime Minister during his visit at Peleşor<sup>16</sup>. The text also insists on the fact that the mentioned marriage would have helped Bulgaria’s integration in the international community, at the beginning in the Little Entente, an action supported by the Czechoslovak government<sup>17</sup>.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Take Ionescu, demanded the Romanian Legation in London to deny any news referring to this project after the British press had initiated a similar campaign. The diplomacy’s leader in Bucharest drew Dimitrie I. Ghika’s attention to the fact that a Parisian “Journal”, in November 1, 1921, included

<sup>15</sup> Constantin Jordan, *România și relațiile internaționale...*, p. 38. It is interesting to underline the fact that Belgrade, during 1919–1921, represented an important centre of creating and publishing information, more or less real, referring to the Romanian Royal family and mainly related to the marriage of King Aleksandar with Princess Marioara, on one hand, and the pressures that the issue of Banat represented. In this way, the first information referring to the dynastic alliance between Romania and Hungary appeared in Belgrade, within the political and diplomatic circles, they were republished in the officious “Politika” (on September 22, 1919) – A.M.A.E., fond 71/1914 E2 partea a II-a, vol. 26, p. 90, telegram 456/23.09.1919 from Constantin Langa-Rășcanu, extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary Minister in Belgrade, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and “Demokracja”, on September 18, 1919; Ibid, p. 90; telegram 431/19.09.1919. Also in Belgrade, in June 1919, news was spread by the Greek press according to which Heir Prince Carol had committed suicide (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1900–1919 RS, vol. 110, p. 67, telegram 350 dated 12.06.1919 from N.N. Filodor, extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary Minister in Athens, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>16</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944 Dosare speciale, vol. 57, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

allegations about the foreseen marriage and for a better argumentation; there appeared a picture of Princess Marioara beside the Tsar of Bulgaria. Take Ionescu, being faced with this challenging situation for the diplomatic position of Romania, demanded the denial of all similar news, defining them as “*l’invention ridicule*”<sup>18</sup>. Serbian newspapers informed, based on official statements that King Aleksandar was bound to leave on January 6 1922 to Sinaia where, together with the Romanian Royal family, he would celebrate Christmas and New Year’s Eve in the Old Orthodox manner and he would also celebrate his engagement with Marioara. According to Belgrade’s “*Pravda*”, starting with January 5, 1922, “this meeting of the two rulers would eliminate all misunderstandings which came up between Yugoslavia and Romania regarding the Peace Treaty in Paris”<sup>19</sup>. The type of disagreement that press in Belgrade made reference to was related to the well known Wilsonian dogma, at the Peace Conference, of Take Ionescu – this claimed the taking over of the entire Banat, appealing to the national self-determination principle, while I.I.C. Brătianu, being more moderate, agreeing with the ideas of the French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, was rather trying to reach a compromise in order to come to an agreement. It would be very interesting to notice the fact that, in what concerns the dynastic relationships, both with the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom and with Greece, Take Ionescu’s political plans were respected – *The Little Entente in five*<sup>20</sup> – and the project of Eleftherios Venizelos which had the same components.

Under the given conditions, on February 20, 1922, at Royal Cotroceni Palace the engagement was celebrated, and on June 8 in Belgrade, the wedding between Princess Marioara and King Aleksandar Karageorgević took place. This action was one of the so called “marital conquest of the Balkans”. With respect to this, the marriages of Carol and Elena of Greece<sup>21</sup>, in 1921, and the marriage of Elisabeta (daughter of Ferdinand and Maria) with George II of Greece<sup>22</sup>, in the same year, as well as the discussions upon the reestablishment of the Albanian monarchy where

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3. It is interesting that, also in the Autumn of 1921, news, according to which the Hungarian Prime Minister, Béthlen István, gave a presentation of a two variants project – a tripartite confederation between Romania, Transylvania and Hungary or a personal alliance (under King Ferdinand or one of his sons) – ideas that Take Ionescu considered to be unreal and ephemeral, were spread within the Romanian political circles. In this respect, supposing that the new rumors which had their origin in Budapest, aimed at the recently settled Little Entente, as in the case of the rumors concerning Marioara’s marriage with Boris, Bucharest adopted an unusually firm position, considering the statements as being “an absolute forgery”. “*Universul*”, December 4, 1921, apud Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen, *O primă experiență comunistă...* p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Dosare speciale, vol. 57, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> Take Ionescu, *Mica Înțelegere*, București, 1921.

<sup>21</sup> Arthur Gould Lee, *Regina-mamă Elena a României*, București, 2005, p. 77–87.

<sup>22</sup> Guy Gauthier, *Acvile și lei. O istorie a monarhiilor balcanice din 1817 până în 1974*, București, 2004, p. 132; Hannah Pakula, *op. cit.*, p. 385–386.

Wilhelm de Wied, the nephew of Queen Elisabeta of Romania (wife of Carol I), was installed as King in 1913<sup>23</sup>, had been written down previously.

Among the political and diplomatic basic sources about failure of the marriage project between Marioara and Boris we conclude that the reserve of the Royal House which would have been found itself in an extremely delicate situation, considering the dynastic relationship, that had just been established, with the Royal House of Greece, a country towards which Bulgaria had its main territorial demands. Also the role of the officials and Bucharest's diplomacy was an important one, because they were in an unpleasant situation, considering the fact that there would have been regional implications related, finally, to the entrance of Bulgaria in the Little Entente, a mission that was difficult to achieve taking into consideration the territorial disagreement between Bulgaria and the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom.

**THE POLITICAL-DYNASTIC SCORE OF "THE MOTHER-IN-LAW OF THE BALKANS": THE MARRIAGE PROJECT BETWEEN TSAR BORIS III AND PRINCESS ILEANA (1923)**

Although it was concluded without a positive finalisation, the Romanian-Bulgarian dynastic marriage project was valid, a proof of this being the starting off of a second attempt in 1923, under different international and internal political conditions, but having the same aims.

Compared to the context of 1921, in Sofia, Stamboliiski's government had been replaced by that of Aleksandăr Tzankov, as a result of the coup d'état that took place on June 9 1923 and of the assassination of the Agrarian leader, also in Bucharest as head of the government was no longer General Averescu, but the Liberal Ion I.C. Brătianu. At an international level, Bulgaria did not manage to get through the previous crisis, while Romania succeeded in consolidating both its strategic position in the relationships established with the Great Powers, within the Little Entente and its position within the Balkan dynasties.

Analyzing closely the political changes on the Romanian side, the media in Vienna and Prague, that we consider to be, above all, the best informed in the Central and South-East Europe during the Inter War period, were allocating an important space to the possible marriage between Boris and Ileana. Quoting the information picked from the press, the Minister of Romania in Prague, Constantin Hiott, underlined the insistent circulation of the rumour regarding the future relationship of Princess Ileana and the Tsar of Bulgaria, adding that "King Boris leaves soon for this purpose"<sup>24</sup>. Also this time, as in 1921, the answer of the Romanian representatives in

<sup>23</sup> For more details see Florin Anghel, *Influențe românești în Albania prințului Wilhelm de Wied, 7 martie – 3 septembrie 1914*, in „Revista istorică”, no. 5–6, tom V, 1994, p. 487–494.

<sup>24</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Dosare speciale, vol. 64, p. 1.

Bucharest was prompt, but it was less determined than in the previous situation, only replying that “the news is inexact”<sup>25</sup>. After only one day, on June 22, 1923, a similar note was recorded on behalf of the Minister of Romania in Vienna, Ioan Mitilineu, who noticed, not without being surprised, the special interest for this marriage in the Austrian political circles. Also in this case, the wording “inexact news” was reused, and the information had to be denied only “verbally”<sup>26</sup>.

Everything that happened, as it has been described above, was analyzed attentively at Sturdza Palace, the headquarter of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic actions that followed entitle us to state that the press reports, often denied immediately by Bucharest, were based on first hand information very close to the Royal Palace. Moreover, it can be focus argument a report from Sofia, of the Legation’s holder, Constantin Langa-Rășcanu, from September 8, 1923, according to which the Bulgarian Minister in Bucharest, Ivan Ficev, had a long meeting with the new head of government, Aleksandăr Tzankov, at the end of which the Prime Minister would have demanded negotiations to happen faster regarding the signing of the agreement concerning the ending of the Romanian-Bulgarian litigations (that were left after the First World War) and, alike, the establishment of some tight and trustful relationships between the two states<sup>27</sup>. These political premises, Tzankov agreed, would have been absolutely necessary in order to revive discussions regarding a marriage between Tsar Boris III and Princess Ileana. Langa-Rășcanu insisted, in his report, on the fact that this matrimonial relationship was “warmly wished in the political circles”<sup>28</sup>, for this purpose the government in Sofia organizing an official visit of the Tsar to many European capitals, among which Bucharest, occasion that would have given him the opportunity to meet the influential Romanian Royal Family.

Also this time, the Bulgarian sovereign did not succeed in visiting Bucharest, as Tzankov wanted, this was not accomplished mainly due to the refusal of the Romanian part, whose attitude was not favourable to the collaboration with the new government. We also notice, with respect to this, the existence of some commentaries within the diplomatic circles, at the beginning of 1924, about possible princely Romanian-Italian marriages – Prince Nicolae and Princess Mafalda (daughter of King Victor Emanuel III) or Princess Ileana and the Heir Prince Umberto – which aimed at occupying the vacant throne of Albania<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Constantin Iordan, *op. cit.*, p. 101. Queen Maria aimed at a consortium in order to rival the Habsburg one. With respect to this, during a dialogue with a contemporary biographer– Mabel Potter Daggett, she declared that “she won’t marry Ileana to any king if she does not love him”, adding that “the princes who do not have a throne to offer Ileana, do not have to ask her hand anymore”, cf. Hannah Pakula, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

### STRATEGIC COMPETITIONS AND POLITICAL INTERESTS IN ORGANIZING THE ROMANIA-BULGARIAN DYNASTIC MARRIAGE (1926)

The obvious failure of the second project required a reevaluation of its objectives and strategies, under totally different political conditions, in 1926. We are sure that, behind this there were – as during 1921–1923 – the same personalities who had also promoted and established the institution of “the Mother in Law of the Balkans” for Queen Maria<sup>30</sup>: the sovereign herself, Ion I.C. Brătianu and I.G. Duca. Although it seemed out of date, after three years in which the Romanian Royal House was confronted with the problems caused by the fact that Carol gave up the throne (the event on January 4, 1926) and King Ferdinand’s agony, in Bucharest the marriage of Princess Ileana was becoming a very popular subject. Under these circumstances, in June 1926, the Bulgarian media announced the possible marriage of Boris with Giovanna di Savoia, the daughter of King Victor Emanuel III of Italy<sup>31</sup>. Certainly, this marriage was seen in Sofia as a victory taking into consideration Italy’s ascendance on the international politics. On the other hand, the Fascist diplomacy was trying to gain a strategic influence in Bulgaria and in the Balkans, while by doing so it would have consolidated the Bulgarian throne, the fears expressed by the anti-Yugoslavian and anti-Romanian circles being put at ease.

A very important event in present work paper is that which happened in November 1926, when the Fascist circles from Rome, possibly for undermining the attempts of a dynastic Romanian-Bulgarian marriage, were making suppositions according to which Princess Ileana was bound to marry Albrecht de Habsburg<sup>32</sup>.

The government in Bucharest, incapable of resisting this *strategic competition*, being in a defensive position after the death of King Ferdinand and the setting up of the Regency (July 1927) things that implicitly led to the diminution of the Queen’s influence, proved to be extremely interested in the Bulgarian Tsar’s marital projects: this is proved by the large amount of confidential information addressed to the

<sup>30</sup> During a private discussion, Queen Maria told I.G. Duca, “I am in a very good mood, maybe it does me good to be called the Mother in Law of the Balkans”, cf. Hannah Pakula, *op. cit.*, p. 398–399.

<sup>31</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Bulgaria, vol. 48, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> In the Autumn of 1919, Queen Maria, unofficially and very discretely, was sent by the Allies, in Switzerland, having the Romanian government’s approval and support, in order to convince the former emperor Carol of Habsburg, more precisely his wife Zitta, to give up the throne once and for all, in return for money and other advantages. It can be supposed that, seven years later, under different internal and international conditions, the Queen was involving again in the destiny of the most important and old European Imperial family. A.M.A.E., fond 71/1914 E2 partea a II-a, vol. 31, p. 511; telegram no. 396/ 25.11.1919 from I. Tresnea Grecianu, Minister of Romania in Copenhagen to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “A precise information in Vienna announces that Her Majesty the Queen met the other day, in Switzerland, the former Emperor of Austria, Carol, whom she convinced to give up the throne and the possible personal alliance once and for all. In return, he may be helped to overcome the financial difficulties”.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Romanian legations in the region, as a result of huge investigations in the diplomatic, political, journalistic worldly circles.

Thus, in a report from September 13 1928, the *ad-interim* Minister of Foreign Affairs, Constantin Argetoianu, sent clear instructions to the Romanian Legation's staff in Rome for gathering information "very confidentially to see if there is a plan of marriage between Bulgaria's King and any Italian princess"<sup>33</sup>. The answer of the *chargé d'affaires*, Dimitrie I. Ghika, did not come late, mentioning that he would try to offer more information after a possible meeting with Sixt de Bourbon, the Bulgarian Tsar's uncle. According to the Romanian diplomat, there was an idea that the Bulgarians had become quite skeptical regarding the marriage, and Mussolini did not seem to be interested in the "dynastic matrimonial combinations in the service of his foreign policy"<sup>34</sup>. Last but not least, the report insisted that "the Italian sovereigns do not insist on their daughters to be Queens, but on having a happy future, without obvious risks"<sup>35</sup>. The struggle for information and the active involvement of the Romanian diplomacy demonstrate the importance of Princess Ileana's marriage in the political speculations in Bucharest, under the given conditions because the matrimonial relationships with the Danish dynasty Schleswig-Holstein of Greece got out of order as King Carol had separated from Elena, and Elisabeta from the King George II. On the other hand, Bulgaria found in the Savoia Royal House a powerful ally which could have helped it decisively in the attempt of coming back on the international political stage. Fascist Italy, in its offensive for conquering the Balkans, although it had established excellent relations with Romania during the period of the last Averescu's government (March 30, 1926 – June 3, 1927), however the basic allies became the main revisionist states in the region: Hungary and Bulgaria.

Synthesizing the analysis of the Romanian-Bulgarian relationships in the first Inter War decade, based on a possible dynastic marriage between Tsar Boris and one of the Princesses in Bucharest, we are entitled to declare that the above mentioned projects, in the three stages – 1921, 1923, 1926 were part of some political processes, minutely prepared by the diplomats of the two countries. If for Bulgaria the objective to follow was clear – the stepping out from the international isolation created by the failure of the First World War, Romania refused systematically to enter this type of combination, which would have damaged its relationships with Greece and the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom. These reasons did not impede Romania to give the impression that it became interested in this immediately after the Romanian dynasty's situation had been damaged by the renounce of throne of Carol, on January 4, 1926 and the death of King Ferdinand on July 20, 1927.

<sup>33</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/ 1920–1944, Bulgaria, vol. 48, p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

The fact that the two Royal Houses did not reach a consensus whose result to be a dynastic marriage, proves that, although being geographically close, Romania and Bulgaria were two countries whose major political interests did not converge: Bulgaria was expressing continuously its revisionist claims towards Romania, Greece and the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom, while Romania was organizing its foreign policy depending on the affiliation to the regional organizations, especially the Little Entente. Last but not least, among the failure's sources we can establish Bulgaria's orientation towards the revisionist camp, phenomenon confirmed also by the marriage of Tsar Boris with Princess Giovanna di Savoia, on October 25, 1930.

### THE MARSHAL PIŁSUDSKI AND THE RESTORATION PLANS

After coup d'état in Warsaw (May 1926) and instauration of *Sanacja* regime, on October 25, 1926, in Nięswiez, at only 10 kilometers from the Soviet border, in the palace of the Radziwiłł's, architectural monument from the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the entire Polish nobility met the new head of state<sup>36</sup>. The Marshal Józef Piłsudski was welcomed, besides others, by the Princes Janusz and Karol Radziwiłł (the first having an important political place in the structure of the new regime), Olgierd Czartoryski, Zdzisław Lubomirski, Eustachy Sapieha (the Minister of Foreign Affairs during 1920–1921, the one who signed the Alliance Convention with Romania on the March 3 1921), the Counts Józef Potocki and Jan Tyszkiewicz<sup>37</sup>. The aristocrats in Kresy took advantage of this original monarchist celebration in order to announce the unconditioned support given to Józef Piłsudski (he was born in the small Polish nobility from Lithuania). For the first time, the Polish Conservatives raised for discussion a political formula quite appreciated by the Marshal and with tradition i.e. the chief of Poland to regain his title as *Rex Poloniae et Magnus Dux Lithuaniae*. The official Conservative "Słowo" from Wilno (Vilnius) took the liberty of, even before the meeting in Nięswiez, publishing on the first page a suggestive photographic collage: on one side Stanisław August Poniatowski, the last King of Poland (on XVIII<sup>th</sup> century), and on the other Józef Piłsudski<sup>38</sup>.

Prince Sapieha, opening the political meeting, talked to the Marshal as to a sovereign: "After the elimination of all the obstacles (n.n. – the parliamentary constitutional regime inspired by the March 1921 Constitution), you took on you a responsibility in front of History and Poland's future. You started this war with envy, selfishness and dishonesty, not on behalf of any party or of any doctrine, but for the Republic's wellbeing, which you see as part of creating a powerful state

<sup>36</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 16, p. 318.

<sup>37</sup> Kazimierz Smagorzewski, *La Pologne restaurée*, Paris, 1927, p. 327.

<sup>38</sup> "Słowo", Wilno (Vilnius), 23. X.1926.

authority, based on national rights”<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, the Prince Janusz Radziwiłł reminded the audience that the hypothetic person chosen, Józef Piłsudski, held “the qualities of an old and noble family devoted to the country, linked to the past by the uninterrupted line of a splendid tradition”<sup>40</sup>. According to the records made in Nieświcz – probably, after some allusions or even direct statements – discussions that were shared to the Romanian Minister in Warsaw<sup>41</sup>, Piłsudski would have wanted to choose as King of Poland a young prince from a foreign dynasty, to whom the Marshal would have served as mentor and whom he would have trained for his future mission.

Another piece of information that we present in attempt regarding the eventual establishment of monarchy in Warsaw comes from one of the most influential leaders of the Sanatist regime: we are making reference to the colonel Walery Slawek, who was several times Prime Minister and President of the so-called Independent Block of Collaboration with the Government (B.B.W.R., the political basis of Sanacja). Slawek disclosed, in March 1928, to a senator friend, reporting an intimate discussion with the Marshal: “An indispensable symbol, that joins around him the disparate elements our country was formed from. This symbol cannot be another than the Monarchy and for this reason; the internal Polish politics is based in present on establishing the monarchy, crashing any opposition and taking over completely the administration and the social organizations in the country. **We are making progress in this direction step by step**”<sup>42</sup>.

Our research in finding out the decisive elements of the analysis which we have proposes, aims more precisely at the Summer and Autumn of 1931, at least immediately after the installment of N. Iorga as Prime Minister of Romania, maybe the most important friend that Poland had ever had in Bucharest. At the end of Spring 1931, through the intercession of the Prime Minister Iorga, confidential discussions took place between Belvedere (Piłsudski’s palace) and Cotroceni Royal Palace in Bucharest regarding the opportunity of an official visit of Prince Nicolae, King Carol’s brother and a former member of Regency, in Poland. The extremely difficult temperament of Piłsudski, as well as the custom of working illegally (successfully applied until the autumn of 1918) determined probably, the inexistence of documentation about this issue. The monographs dedicated to Piłsudski, some of them written even by his friends, as well as his memoirs published during his life, made no reference to these preoccupations. Alike, the Polish archives haven’t revealed us yet the documentary records which we have been looking for. On the Romanian side, the main characters of the action (Prince Nicolae, King Carol II, Queen Maria, N. Iorga) did not leave any track in this

<sup>39</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 16, p. 320.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 18, p. 22.

sense. What we have used are, however, the official documents issued within the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and so, known at the level of governmental leadership and within the Royal House.

Prince Nicolae arrived in Warsaw in the evening of August 20 1931, after a few hours stopover in Lwów. On the Polish capital's airport he was welcomed by important authorities, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, August Zaleski, or the chief of the Great General Staff, General Pyskor. The established schedule was extremely full for the next day, August 21: a visit to the aeronautics plants in Okecie, to some military aviation schools, an audience with the Republic's President, Ignacy Mościcki. In the same evening, at Belvedere palace, Prince Nicolae was received, for some hours, by Piłsudski<sup>43</sup>. We have not discovered yet what was discussed then, only in the presence of one translator, and the information sources are as chary of words as possible. However, Prince Nicolae disclosed to a Romanian diplomat in Warsaw that "political issues weren't approached"<sup>44</sup> and we have no reasons to contradict him. We suppose, knowing the temperaments of the two characters that Piłsudski preferred a friendly and unofficial talk in order to analyze and observe the prince better. After the audience in Belvedere, the two arrived together, demonstratively, at the reception given at the Royal Palace by president Mościcki<sup>45</sup>. In the other two days of his visit in Poland, the Marshal took care personally of Prince Nicolae's visits in important historical Polish places: Wawel Castle and Saint Mary's Cathedral in Cracow, the salt mines in Wieliczka, and the historic centre of Lwów<sup>46</sup>.

Two months later, in the first part of October 1931, determined by the worsening of his lung disease, Piłsudski arrived on an unofficial visit in Romania. He preferred, according to the prescriptions but also far from the eyes of the media, the sanatoriums in Techirghiol and Carmen Sylva (on the Black Sea Coast). His arrival, vaguely reflected by the Romanian press (rather preoccupied by the economic crisis) was warmly saluted by the official governmental "Neamul Românesc" ("Romanian People") of his friend, Nicolae Iorga. "Warrior and political man – declared, without holding its admiration, the editorial dated October 15 – , revolutionary and creator, nationalist and profoundly understanding of what passes also above the sacred cult of their own national individuality, this splendid sample of his noble race wrote one of the brighter pages in the Poland's and Polish people's history"<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 17, p. 157–158; report nr. 2578, August 24 1931, from G. Davidescu, chargé d'affaires in Warsaw, for D. Ghika, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 54, p. 157–158.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154; report nr. 1240 August 20 1931 from Dan Cârștiuc, the endorser of Romanian Consulate in Lwów, for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, D. Ghika.

<sup>47</sup> *Un creator: Mareșalul Piłsudski*, in "Neamul românesc", XXVI, no. 231, 15 X. 1931.

The unusual cold weather for that time of the year, the heavy rains, his body's weakness, a result of the abuses that Piłsudski had never given up (smoking, few hours of sleep, an irregular diet) led to a serious pneumonia on October 11, which needed his urgent sending to Constanța and from here to Bucharest<sup>48</sup>. During this journey, the Marshal was accompanied by only two people: his adjutant, Adam Sokolowski and the doctor Lucjan Skupiewski, from Târgoviște, a close friend in whose house he lived several times.

In Bucharest he established his residence in the Polish Legation's building and, sick as he was, insisted to have a meeting, privately, and if possible confidentially with three people. The first meeting took place on October 13, in one of the well heated rooms of the Legation: a long talk with Prince Nicolae. It is very probable that the Prince disclosed the Marshal his marriage plan with Ioana Dumitrescu-Tohani (Doletti)<sup>49</sup>, contracted during the same month, as well as the worsening relations with his brother, King Carol II. The following day, at Peleş Royal Castle in Sinaia, Piłsudski was met by the sovereign, meeting that we do not have details about. It is likely that, this time, the Marshal raised for discussion his matrimonial plan (accepted by Queen Maria). Finally, on October 15, after coming back to Bucharest, Piłsudski was invited to his friend's house, the house of the Prime Minister N. Iorga, on this occasion the Polish leader received a badge and was honoured as Marshal of Romania<sup>50</sup>.

Why did Piłsudski want, in spite of his illness, to meet Prince Nicolae, a member of the Royal House without special attributions?

A possible answer may be given, a month and a half later, by the editorial column about a possible establishment of monarchy in Poland published in the conservative newspaper in Krakow, "Czas", on December 5, 1931. It gave information and assured that Prince Nicolae was to pay another visit in Warsaw in order to meet one of Piłsudski's daughters, Jadwiga; "Czas" also knew that King Carol II was upset about the recent marriage of Nicolae with Ioana Doletti. The news in the Polish media was also sent to the French audience by the historian Jacques Bainville, in "Action Française"<sup>51</sup>. Nicolae recognized that his brother had withdrawn, in the Autumn of 1931, all the material stipends he had the right to according to the civil list of the Royal House<sup>52</sup>.

On January 14, 1932, in the Constitutional Commission of Sejm, the monarchic Polish project was raised for discussion (officially, promoted by the magistrates from the eastern part of the country). Prince Janusz Radziwiłł, the

<sup>48</sup> In order to realize his visit's chronology we used the written monograph of a very close friend of his, Waclaw Jędrzejewicz, *Kronika życia Józefa Piłsudskiego, 1867–1935*, 2 vol., London, 1977.

<sup>49</sup> Prințul Nicolae, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>50</sup> "Neamul românesc", XXVI, no. 273, December 3, 1931.

<sup>51</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 18, p. 132–134.

<sup>52</sup> Prințul Nicolae, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

president of the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Commission, admitted, in front of the audience that “the number of partisans of the monarchic principle in Poland is much bigger than it has been believed. But, the monarchy’s settlement depends on the circumstances which often are independent of our wish”<sup>53</sup>.

Being present, Prince Zdzisław Lubomirski informed the political environments that his sincere belief was that “prince Radziwiłł couldn’t have made this statement unless as a result of upper directives”<sup>54</sup>.

Some time later, on March 1 1932, the Prime Minister N. Iorga received from Warsaw a very confidential and precise report, from the experienced diplomat Grigore Bilciurescu. Being able to move in the fashionable circles in the Polish capital, Bilciurescu was reported in great detail the content of the discussions held at the end of February 1932, in Tarnowski Palace, in Piękna Street in Warsaw. **The assembly of the conservative (governmental) political groups passed a resolution in which a project of personal alliance between Romania and Poland was promoted, to start with, the idea of establishing common regency was accepted, and this was compounded of Piłsudski and Carol II. Prince Zdzisław Lubomirski, the author of the report that was presented to the assembly, assured the audience that the Marshal was informed and that he was sustaining the process**<sup>55</sup>. Unfortunately, we have not discovered this document yet, in case it still exists, and we do not have an answer, even a formal one, from N. Iorga. We notice, however, an at least interesting thing: the reports from Warsaw which contained information about this dynastic project were avoiding fiercely the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dimitrie Ghika, being addressed as personal and confidential only to the Prime Minister Iorga.

The Polish public opinion knew very little, in 1930, about Romania and its Royal family. King Ferdinand and Queen Maria visited Poland in the Summer of 1923<sup>56</sup>, but Carol II was not very well known. Furthermore, the political Romanian class had proved its deficiencies during the Regency and the marriages contracted by Cotroceni Royal Palace with Balkan sovereigns (Greece, Yugoslavia) did not change in a decisive way the problems. Prince Nicolae, beyond his qualities, was far from the image that a future monarch should have, in a public opinion (a Polish one) nourished for decades with the Romantic creations of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century.

The monarchic idea was not a popular one – at least in the visible stratum – in the Polish public opinion. At the 1928 elections, the declared monarchists got only 54000 votes (0.5% out of the total number) without getting any mandate in

<sup>53</sup> A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920–1944, Polonia, vol. 18, p. 135; report nr. 229, January 21, 1932 from Gr. Bilciurescu, chargé d’affaires in Warsaw, for the Prime Minister N. Iorga.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137; report nr. 777 on March 1 1932 from Gr. Bilciurescu, Warsaw, for N. Iorga.

<sup>56</sup> Florin Anghel, *Construirea sistemului “Cordon sanitaire”. Relații româno-polone 1919–1926*, second edition Târgoviște, 2008, p. 194–195.

Sejm. The closest political group to the monarchic ideas, the National Catholic Party, got 926000 votes (8.3% out of the total number) and 38 mandates of deputies (out of a total number of 444)<sup>57</sup>. Two years later, at the 1930 elections, the Monarchists got only 2000 votes while the National (Catholic) Party got almost 1443000 votes (12.7% out of the total) and 62 mandates in Sejm<sup>58</sup>.

Dynastic projects of Romanian Inter War Monarchy repeatedly emphasised strategic alliances between Romania and its neighbouring countries such are Yugoslavia, Poland or Greece. After reviewing each diplomatic progress towards regional allies, Queen Maria strongly focused her efforts to an *establishment* of principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity as it were reiterated in 1919–1920 Peace Treaties.

Regional dynastic strategies as viewed from Bucharest included more interests for Tsar Boris III and daughters of Marshal Piłsudski: for the part of Bulgaria, Romania strictly proved just a matrimonial objective at first; for Poland, it was a clearly obsession to force the anti Soviet “cordon sanitaire” from Baltic to Black Sea. Sofia governments isolation (especially the Stamboliiski’s one) before and immediately after Neuilly Peace Treaty (November 1919) and reccuration of Fascist Italian interests in the Balkans both convinced Romanian élites and Monarchy to reiterate the offer to have *statu quo*, meaning calm and correct bilateral relationships.

Dynastic projects of the Romanian Monarchy during the first decade of Inter War were also, last but not least, and interesting challenge in rebuilding and reforming regional official foreign policy, strongly pushed political ambitions to gain the leadership in Central-South Eastern Europe.

<sup>57</sup> Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921–1939. The Crisis of Constitutional Government*, Oxford, 1972, p. 248–249.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324–325.