

**SIMION BĂRNUȚIU – A PROFESSOR
AT THE UNIVERSITY IN IAȘI**

CĂTĂLIN BOTOȘINEANU*

Abstract

The article explores the educational legacy of Simion Bărnuțiu in Iași during the mid-19th century, focusing on his contributions to the development of public education and the founding of the University of Iași. Arriving in 1855, Bărnuțiu taught law, philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics, becoming a central figure in Moldavian academic life. He was instrumental in shaping the university's early structure and was proposed twice as rector, though he declined due to citizenship and health issues.

Despite administrative challenges and political tensions, Bărnuțiu's influence endured through his teaching, writings, and symbolic role in the university's foundation. His death in 1864 was marked by a large public ceremony, and his legacy was honored with a marble bust and posthumous publication of his courses. The article also highlights the provisional nature of the university's early years and the complex dynamics between professors, government officials, and institutional legitimacy.

Keywords: Simion Bărnuțiu, University of Iași, Professor.

By the mid-19th century, Iași hosted nearly all types and levels of educational establishments. The beginnings of the national school,¹ the “various educational institutions” – as scholar Gheorghe Asachi aptly called them in his *Regulament al instrucțiunii publice în Moldova* [*Regulations for Public Instruction in Moldavia*] from 1832 – were rooted in the city's founding experience. At the same time, the pioneering work of the teachers and educators in Iași, many of whom became reformers of education in the Principalities, compensated for the lack of legislative consistency in the education field.² With the Organic Statute, the school was meant

* **Cătălin Botoșineanu**, PhD, National Archives of Romania, Iași County Service, Romania, e-mail: catalin_botosineanu@yahoo.com.

¹ The schools of Iași (i.e., four) were established only between 1844 and 1845 as a result of decisions announced by *Epitropia Școalelor* [The School Board] through a report dated December 29, 1843: “In addition to the Academy and the elementary school at the Three Hierarchs, four other elementary schools, a girls' school, and an Armenian school were founded. In the 1843–1844 school year, Iași had 899 students – approximately three-fifths of all Moldavian students – 201 of whom were in secondary and academic classes” Vasile Alexandrescu-Urechia, *Istoria școalelor de la 1800 la 1864 cu o scurtă introducere cuprinzând note din istoria culturii naționale anterioare secolului al XIX-lea și cu numeroase facsimile de documente semnături*, vol. 2 (București: Imprimeria Statului, 1892), 265.

² To outline the context of the era, in the period 1832–1848, thirty-nine national elementary schools were operational, twenty of which were in Wallachia (one in each county centre and three in Bucharest) and 19 in Moldavia (15 in various districts and four in Iași).

to become “a permanent state institution, whereas before it had been merely a charitable act and princely show of mercy.”³ Subsequently, the 1864 Education Law laid the foundation for a national network of primary and middle schools. Until the time of the law passed during Al. I. Cuza’s reign, school reform was more often the responsibility of various notable individuals who were successively summoned by the ruler or the school inspector to replicate, usually, a professional experience and to provide a structure for the first forms of schooling in Moldavia.⁴ The school policies of the era before Al. I. Cuza bear the mark of the particular and sometimes conflicting views of 19th-century cultural figures. Besides the names of Gheorghe Asachi, Mihail Kogălniceanu, or A.T. Laurian, the pioneers of education in Moldavia also included Simion Bărnuțiu, whose memory in Iași is related to the field of “higher education.”

Arriving in Iași in 1855 to teach Law Science at the Faculty of Law, Simion Bărnuțiu’s destiny would become irreversibly connected to the Moldavian capital. His death nine years later added a unique note to his activity in Iași, still marked by several inaccuracies related to his biography as a professor at various institutions in the city. Revolving around the figure of “Bărnuțiu the man” – a characterisation that became iconic in describing his Ardeal biography – his public involvement was also passed down regarding the nine years he spent on the other side of the Carpathians. However, unlike his political and journalistic activity before coming to Iași, Bărnuțiu chose to live a more isolated life in Moldavia, largely devoted to education. With the founding of the University in October 1860, he became one of the most prestigious professors in Iași, and his memory was placed among the founders. “Bărnuțiu’s School” was not merely an invention later created by Titu Maiorescu in his famous polemic article targeting the Ardeal-born professor’s disciples.⁵

He was among the few teachers in Iași who were familiar with the ethos of an academic establishment and understood the stakes of higher education in the new state. He was attached to the model of the German universities, where the Faculty of Philosophy was given pre-eminence among the other faculties – “philosophy [reigns] over all the others.” The University of Ardeal, for which Bărnuțiu had been advocating since 1853, was, in his view, “the home of our national culture,” the place from where “the governors and rulers of peoples emerge.”⁶ Along with other Ardeal-based professors and graduates of European universities, Bărnuțiu

³ Petru Rășcanu, *Istoricul învățământului secundar. Lucrat din însărcinarea Ministeriului Instrucțiunii* (Iași: Tipografia Națională, 1906), V.

⁴ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc*, ed., introd. study, and notes by Ilie Popescu Teiușan (București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1971), 98.

⁵ Titu Maiorescu, *Contra Școalei Bărnuțiu* (Iași: Edițiunea și Imprimeria Societății Junimea, 1868).

⁶ Dragoș Popescu, “Simion Bărnuțiu despre nevoia unei universități românești,” *Revista de filozofie* 61, no. 6 (2014): 593–594. Bărnuțiu’s text of 1853, titled “Cuvântul unui student despre necesitatea Academiei la Români,” was published in the Brașov-based magazine *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură*, supplement to *Gazeta Transilvaniei*.

would instil a genuine academic atmosphere in the institutions in Iași where he was invited to teach – the Faculty of Law starting in January 1856 and, after October 1860, the University of Iași.

In the realm of school activities within the Moldavian capital, Simion Bărnuțiu's public profile was more clearly outlined until the establishment of the University. Recently, a solid study has brought new arguments for reconsidering the extent of the “struggle” between Moldavian and Ardeal-based teachers or between unionists and anti-unionists. Regarding the academic context of the years preceding the Union of the Principalities, historians Maria and Leonidas Rados provided great insight into the school environment and the factions present in “public education” conducted in Iași, particularly in middle schools.⁷ Bărnuțiu played a central role in the episode of conflict between the teachers in Iași and inspector A. T. Laurian in the autumn of 1857, having previously taken his side in December 1856 alongside Ștefan Micle and Petre Suciu, in a dispute that pitted the Ardeal-based teachers against Gh. Asachi.⁸ Based on the conclusions of the aforementioned study and considering the earlier works of N. Grigoraș on Bărnuțiu's activity in Iași,⁹ one might still view his university phase as a lesser-known aspect of his biography in Iași, or rather one that has been metaphorized by his disciples and the early historians of the era (V. A. Urechia, N. Iorga, or A. D. Xenopol), who sought to study the beginnings of the Iași University.

A philosophy teacher at *Gimnaziul Academic*¹⁰ (also known as the *Gimnazia Vasiliană* or *Școala Vasiliană*) and, for a time, a substitute for August Treboniu Laurian¹¹ in the role of a school inspector, the scholar from Ardeal embraced an apostolic role in Moldavia's school life. Starting in January 1856, Bărnuțiu was invited to teach courses in Public Law and Roman Law at the Faculty of Law, as well as courses in Aesthetics and Ethics at the Faculty of Philosophy, in addition to the History of Philosophy course he was teaching at *Gimnaziul Academic*. This

⁷ Maria Rados and Leonidas Rados, “‘Tulburările scolastice’ de la Iași (septembrie 1857 – februarie 1858). Excurs metodologic și documentar,” *Archiva Moldaviae* 13 (2021): 15–134.

⁸ Rados and Rados, “‘Tulburările scolastice’ de la Iași,” 15–134. The resignation of Transylvanian professors (S. Bărnuțiu, Șt. Micle, and P. Suciu), along with local professors – a total of 17 – on November 19, 1857, following a conflict with A. T. Laurian, was rescinded in February 1858, with the Ardeal-based professors being reinstated to their positions. Bărnuțiu submitted this request on February 8, 1858, to the Department of Cults and Instructions after having previously received an invitation to return. Laurian made several harsh remarks about Bărnuțiu in this context, labelling him a “fool, infamous, and vile.”

⁹ Nicolae Grigoraș, “Activitatea lui Simion Bărnuțiu la Iași 1855–1864,” *Steaua* 17, no. 8 (1966): 82–89.

¹⁰ It was the best-known component of the educational complex hosted by the old princely foundation, “Gimnaziul Trei Ierarhi,” organised by Asachi in 1828. Under the new *School Regulation* promulgated by Grigore Al. Ghica in 1851, “Gimnaziul” was expanded to include seven grades, with courses operating independently starting from the 1860–1861 school year, under the name of “Gimnaziul Central” in Iași.

¹¹ A. T. Laurian occupied this position from 1852 to 1858, and S. Bărnuțiu replaced him in 1855.

workload took up between 15 and 18 teaching hours per week, in addition to the time required to prepare for them.¹² As he hinted and those who knew him later confirmed, this work pace likely exhausted him.

School reports of the time constantly highlighted the negative elements generated by the deplorable condition of school buildings, the fact that textbooks were expensive and poorly printed and that teachers were not adequately trained and had to work with large groups of students. The only progress identified was related to opening a Law course at the *Gimnazia Vasiliană* taught by Simion Bărnuțiu. His reputation as a scholar would eventually dominate the educational sphere in Iași. The two phases of Bărnuțiu's presence in Iași, which can be distinguished as before and after 1860, were marked by his image in the background of the scandal concerning the public schools under the control of school inspector A. T. Laurian and later, by a sick and exhausted Bărnuțiu during his academic phase.

Throughout this period, his profile was frequently complemented with titles like “man” or “famous Romanian,” along with various laudatory epithets within the intellectual and moral registers. In the series of praises, qualities were highlighted that actually hinted at his fatigue and the onset of illness: “a frail elderly man with a gentle expression and a very modest demeanour” (G. Panu).¹³ This appearance also explains the “religious respect” he received from his pre-university and university students. The Philosophy course he taught at the *Gimnaziu* and the Faculty of Philosophy – with his fee for the latter being returned as scholarships to deserving students – undoubtedly secured Bărnuțiu's reputation.

The funerary ceremony¹⁴ organised by Maiorescu for the “deceased professor” Simion Bărnuțiu on June 13/25, 1864, depicted the profound devotion of the Iași educational community: the attendees included teachers and students from all primary schools, the teachers and students of the Socola Seminary, those of the Iași *Gimnaziu* with mourning flags, and the University students in “mourning with wreaths and five black-draped flags.” All the city's schools participated in the event. Rightly, one of his disciples characterised Bărnuțiu's contributions to the development of primary education: he was “the mentor of primary school teachers.” The funerary procession began at the “Three Hierarchs” Church and moved toward the University headquarters, where ceremonies were held in the University's Palace Hall. A “military band” accompanied the funerary procession. Professor G. Mârzescu would deliver the eulogy on behalf of the Academic Council.¹⁵ His prophetic words established Bărnuțiu's effigy in

¹² Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, *Viața și ideile lui Simion Bărnuțiu* (București: Cultura Națională, 1924), 134–135.

¹³ Grigoraș, “Activitatea lui Simion Bărnuțiu,” 83.

¹⁴ Rectorat [Rectorship], dosar [file] 24/1863, folio 130, fond Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” [“Al. I. Cuza” University Fund], Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Iași, Iași, România.

¹⁵ Rectorat, file 24/1863, folio 130, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund.

Romanian educational history: “Students and professors alike saw in Bărnuțiu not just an erudite teacher but a solid pillar for all our public educational establishments. [...] Who, other than Bărnuțiu, knew how to attract such a large audience with his sound and clear explanations? [...] Bărnuțiu – and I highlight this again – Bărnuțiu long supported this establishment!”¹⁶ In 1866, a marble bust of the great professor was unveiled in the Aula of the Iași University.¹⁷ The initiative, along with that of publishing his manuscripts, belonged to the Ministry of Education, which, “at the state’s expense,” sought to “eternalise” Simion Bărnuțiu’s name.¹⁸

Simion Bărnuțiu was the first professor to pass away at the University of Iași, and the current rector, Titu Maiorescu, symbolically capitalised on this occasion in memory of the former professor and to reinforce his own authority as the first rector elected by the professors and validated by the ruling prince. Before him, the elected rectors had not been sanctioned by Prince Al. I. Cuza. Additionally, public memory recorded Maiorescu’s talent and “instinct” for attracting energy around festive events, like the famous banquets he periodically organised at the “Junimea” literary circle.

As a professor at the Faculty of Law, Simion Bărnuțiu’s reputation endured even after he left his academic position. Former students and friends of the Ardeal-born professor posthumously published two of his courses: *Public Law of the Romanians* (1867) and *Public Natural Law* (1870).¹⁹ His courses were not necessarily original research in the field of Law but rather annotated translations and compilations of the works penned by two German authors (i.e., Wilhelm T. Krug and Karl von Rotteck).²⁰ However, his adaptation of legal principles to Romanian social realities remains his great achievement.

Numerous legends about Simion Bărnuțiu still persist, many related to his image as rector or as the *spiritus rector* of the University of Iași. He was proposed twice for the position of rector in the Academic Council sessions of November 24, 1860, and February 12, 1863 – not at the first session of October 28, 1860, and certainly not in September 1863, when Titu Maiorescu was elected rector. As for the second image, that of being a “guide” for the professors during the University’s early years, this is accurate, though the scarce documents from that time make it challenging to depict a clear “academic-administrative” profile of Professor Bărnuțiu.

His appointment to the University, specifically the notification of his appointment and that of other professors in a letter from the Ministry to the School

¹⁶ G. Mârzescu, *Scriseri diverse*, vol. 1 (București, 1891), 58–59.

¹⁷ Dan Măță, *Învățământul juridic la Universitatea din Iași. Fragmente de istorie* (București: Editura Hamangiu, 2024), 12.

¹⁸ Rectorat, file 33/1863, folio 26, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund.

¹⁹ Măță, *Învățământul juridic*, 8.

²⁰ Măță, *Învățământul juridic*, 9.

Council, can be documented as occurring in mid-November 1860.²¹ Likely, as he was already teaching at the Faculty of Law in August or October, the ministerial authorities did not deem it necessary to validate his position again. However, once this faculty was incorporated under the new University's umbrella, such validation became necessary. Like other "founding" professors, Bărnuțiu had been involved in its sessions since the University's inauguration (including the one on November 10, which did not take place due to a lack of quorum). He was consistently mentioned second on the list of professors, following the rector, ignoring the alphabetical order. At the first session, on October 28, 1860, Bărnuțiu and Professor P. Suciú emphasised the need for a formal, legal establishment of the University and a meeting of all university teachers to elect the deans and the rector.

The legitimacy deficit of the new institution was enormous. The word *provisional* accompanied descriptions of the founding moments. Concerns were related to the non-operational status of the Faculty of Medicine, thus raising doubts about the validity of the founding *Bylaws*, which mentioned the existence of four faculties (Law, Philosophy, Theology, and Medicine). Professor Simion Bărnuțiu's authority made it possible to overcome this initial setback stipulated by its own *Bylaws*. The "man of laws" from Ardeal did not view the *Bylaws* of the University of Iași as suspensive. For this reason, the "full" functioning of the institution, though incomplete, was guaranteed as legal, even against the text of the founding provisions. The University benefitted from legal status, which meant that elections for academic positions could proceed.

An open matter remains the nature of the relationship between the University's professors and Mihail Kogălniceanu's vision of the University's "full establishment," as the two interpretations were in disagreement during those inaugural moments.

In the context where the official history of the University has not agreed on the dilemmas of its early days, it is not surprising that there are numerous opinions about who first held the rector position: I. Strat or S. Bărnuțiu according to V. A. Urechia,²²

²¹ Rectorat, file 6/1860, folio 120, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund. The address is dated November 13, 1860, with the Council's resolution being decisive in clarifying the case. Therefore, the Council did not take the document into consideration because the appointment had already "been fulfilled," in which case the document would be "attached to the file."

²² Vasile Alexandrescu-Urechia, *Istoria școalelor de la 1800 la 1864 cu o scurtă introducere cuprinzând note din istoria culturii naționale anterioare secolului al XIX-lea și cu mai multe facsimile de documente, semnături, autografe, etc.*, vol. 3 (București: Imprimeria Statului, 1894), 229. He mentioned that I. Strat, as the first rector of the University, was elected "on December 6, 1860," but added that "nonetheless, on October 26, 1860, Bărnuțiu was the first provisional rector." He assigned F. Scriban the role of prorector. His information becomes all the more intriguing, considering that V. A. Urechia was a professor at the University in October 1860 and a director in the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction in Moldavia. In this capacity, he signed official documents on behalf of M. Kogălniceanu, also the interim minister of Instruction (Prime Minister V. Alexandrescu). He was the one who strived to make the "reality" of the University of Iași operational during its first two months of existence. His volume was published three years before

S. Bărnuțiu according to Nicolae Iorga,²³ I. Strat for A. D. Xenopol and the University's historiography, and Titu Maiorescu as the "new and first rector" according to the University professors during his election as rector during the session of September 1863. The portrayal of Bărnuțiu as being asked to preside over the Academic Council for the first time on October 28, 1860, due to his role as the "senior professor" should be nuanced. This information is inaccurate, as the Ardeal-born professor received the proposal only at the ninth meeting (November 24, 1860) and not at the first meeting.

At the first meeting of the Academic Council on October 28, 1860, the University teachers discussed the need to elect a rector, seen as the "definitive establishment of academic authority."²⁴ To reify the founding act concerning University leadership, it was nevertheless decided at this first meeting to elect by "acclaiming" a professor to preside over the Academic Council's proceedings.²⁵ Professor Filaret Scriban from the Faculty of Theology was elected as the provisional rector at the start of the session. For nine sessions, Filaret Scriban performed the duties of rector of the Iași University, signing official documents and convening Council meetings.²⁶ It was typical for high-ranking hierarchs to preside over meetings they attended, so, at first glance, F. Scriban's appointment appeared natural. However, voices like Professor G. Mârzescu advocated for a delay in the election because the Faculty of Medicine did not yet have representatives, as its establishment was still pending. There were also doubts about the Faculty of Theology, especially regarding finalising its positions, with F. Scriban being asked to propose university teachers.

The University's beginnings were marked by a provisional state, lacking a regulatory framework to define its relationship with the Ministry of Education. It started under the shadow of many disagreements with the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction. For instance, concerning October and November 1860, there are various interpretations regarding the number of teachers at the University of Iași, all of which, in my opinion, are incorrect. It was only during the sixth meeting of the Academic Council, in the preamble to the minutes, that the presence and absence of university teachers were specified. Nine professors spoke in the first

Xenopol's text in the first *Anuar* ("Yearbook"), which complicates the legacy of the one who attributed the prorector status to Scriban. The title of president of the Academic Council conferred upon F. Scriban was later abandoned by all who revisited the inaugural moment.

²³ Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc*, 159. The historian also mentioned F. Scriban as a prorector; he must have reprised the information from V. A. Urechia, cited rather frequently in the book.

²⁴ Rectorat, file 3/1860, folios 1–3, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund. Based on the appointment decrees and session minutes, the professors at the University in Iași during the inauguration (actually, from the Faculties of Law and Philosophy, as well as hierarch F. Scriban) were as follows: F. Scriban, S. Bărnuțiu, I. Popa, V. Alecsandrescu, I. Strat, O. Teodori, I. Lupescu, G. Mârzescu, Șt. Emilian, Șt. Micle, P. Suci, A. Călinescu (Rectorat, file 8/1860, folios 10–11).

²⁵ Rectorat, file 3/1860, folio 1.

²⁶ Rectorat, file 5/1860, folio 2, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund.

Council meeting on October 28, 1860. Among them, three had not yet been confirmed by appointment decrees.²⁷ The case of F. Scriban was particularly intriguing, as he was leading the University without being a professor in the sense defined by the *Bylaws*. However, from November 1860, the Academic Council started paying more attention to the legal framework in which professors were appointed. From mid-month, they accepted professors recommended to various departments only after publishing their appointment decrees. Professors such as N. Ionescu, proposed by the Council on November 20, or Hierarch V. Suhopan, whose decree was issued on November 10 but whose appointment was subsequently postponed, did not participate in meetings until their appointment decrees were issued. At the meeting to elect rector Strat on November 24, they were neither present nor mentioned among the teaching staff.

This situation stemmed primarily from different interpretations of the documents and a lack of understanding regarding the legal circuit based on which a professor recommended by the School Council – and, after October 26, 1860, by the Academic Council – would ultimately be proposed by the Ministry for approval by the ruler. This aspect paralysed the young institution's activity and entailed challenges questioning the very right of the first university in the Principalities to exist. Due to the uncertainty, the University functioned with significant interruptions, which affected the university's authority, particularly that of the rector. The phrase “the University without a body” was penned by historian Florea Ioncioaia to describe its early years. Effectively, from 1860 to 1863, the University of Iași did not have a legally appointed rector – one chosen by the Council and subsequently recommended by the Ministry for the ruler's approval, as required by Article 3 of the University's *Bylaws*.

During the ninth session of the Academic Council on November 24, 1860, a decision was made to elect the rector.²⁸ This was the session in which Bărnuțiu participated most actively, dominating the discussions more than in any other session he attended. He was compelled to respond to Professor Mârzescu, who proposed him as rector on behalf of his colleagues and former students. He expressed his “deference and gratitude” to the person he regarded as a guide, being the “first professor of the Faculty of Law.” Mârzescu's proposal was unanimously embraced by the other members of the teaching staff, who were disappointed that the Ardeal-born professor

²⁷ The princely decrees confirming the appointments of professors F. Scriban, Șt. Micle, and Șt. Emilian were issued on November 5, 1860; therefore, legally, they did not have to attend the sessions of the Academic Council up to that date (File 129/1860, folio 68, 70, MCIP Moldova fund, Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Iași, Iași, România; file 128/1860, folio 68). Scriban, whose appointment was received by the University on November 12, actually signed the University's official documents as the provisional president and/or the prorector. He even solved the matter of his own appointment (Rectorat, file 1/1860, folio 18, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund). Curiously, all these princely decrees were initially reregistered on October 5, 1860, for their issuance. However, the month was later altered by crossing out October and replacing it with November.

²⁸ Rectorat, file 8/1860, folios 10–11, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund.

could not serve as “our rector.” Bărnăuțiu thanked the Academic Council for their “noble sentiments” and “trust” in him; however, being from Ardeal and lacking Moldavian citizenship, he was not able to “exercise the same rights” as other Council members.²⁹ Ten of the University’s twelve professors were present; Ștefan Micle and P. Suciuc were absent. The other Ardeal-born professors (i.e., Șt. Emilian and I. Popa) were present alongside Bărnăuțiu to show respect to the Council. The decision to elect a rector, as announced in the meeting opening by the rector of the Academic Council, F. Scriban, had already been made by a majority vote during the eighth session, as information circulating suggested that the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine would “drag on for some time.”³⁰ Most likely, as can be inferred between the lines of the two sessions, Bărnăuțiu had been previously consulted on whether he would accept the rector’s mandate. Professor Mârzescu justified the academic body’s decision to proceed with this solution, arguing that “the exercise of rights granted by the bylaws is paralysed.”³¹ In his view, the rector was “the custodian of our rights,” and the University could not function indefinitely in a provisional state.

Seven professors out of the ten in attendance participated in the final vote. As Austrian subjects, Professors Bărnăuțiu, Popa, and Emilian³² refused to be counted among the electors. An essential point in the discussion was the opinion uttered by Professor G. Mârzescu, who, although disappointed by Bărnăuțiu’s reaction, asked the Ardeal-based professors to support the decision of the Academic Council. Mârzescu’s concern was related to the professors from the Law Faculty not participating in the vote, which was a possible vulnerability because they had started electing the Rector when, according to the *Bylaws*, the University was not officially constituted. The final vote resulted in the unanimous election of “Ion Strat, the Law Faculty’s candidate, as the Rector.”³³

From December 1860 until July 16, 1862, the Academic Council did not convene again, with only four meetings held in 1862, producing brief minutes (i.e., two sentences long at most). In 1863, the University was revitalised following the reintegration of the professors who had resigned. Due to conflicts between the University and the officials in charge of Education, Dr. G. Cuciureanu in 1861 and Al. Cantacuzino in 1862, Strat’s election was not submitted for validation by the Minister or subsequently promulgated by a royal decree.³⁴ For two years,

²⁹ Rectorat, file 8/1860, folio 11, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund.

³⁰ The information was accurate. At the Ministry, the recommendations made by the professors within the Faculty of Medicine came into effect in the 1861 school year once the new budget was voted.

³¹ Rectorat, file 8/1860, folio 10, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund.

³² For an overview of the Ardeal-born University professors in the field of exact sciences (Șt. Emilian, I. Pop, Șt. Micle, and P. Suciuc), see Stela Mărieș, “Profesorii ardeleni la Universitatea din Iași în sec. al XIX-lea,” in *Universitatea din Iași 1860–1985. Pagini din istoria învățământului românesc* (Iași, 1987), 61–70.

³³ Rectorat, file 8/1860, folio 11, Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza” fund.

³⁴ Rector I. Strat refused to receive tasks to accomplish from the Ministry, pretexting he was not confirmed. D. Berlescu, “Universitatea din Iași de la 1860 la 1918,” in *Contribuții la istoria dezvoltării Universității din Iași*, vol. 1 (București, 1960), 118–119.

the University functioned briefly, with the disputes centred on filling the vacant chairs. Consequently, considering themselves insulted by the dismissal of Professors G. Mârzescu and G. Petrescu, a part of the teaching staff (Șt. Emilian, V. Alexandrescu, A. Călinescu, I. Lupașcu, and O. Teodori) resigned, among them Rector Ioan Strat, in January 1862,³⁵ and Filaret Scriban, in April 1863. At this stage of the research, I cannot provide an explanation for how Bărnuțiu reacted to this scandal or why he was not among those who resigned.

The revival of the University was also highlighted in the pace of its meetings and elections for the position of rector: from November 1860 (when I. Strat was elected rector) to February 1863 (when N. Ionescu was elected rector), no elections were held.³⁶ It is worth mentioning that during F. Scriban's tenure as provisional rector, from October to November 1860, more meetings of the Academic Council were held than in the entire period from November 1860 to September 1863.

In the February 12, 1863, meeting, N. Ionescu was elected rector "for the current academic year."³⁷ Due to the difficulties the University faced, only six professors attended the reunion, and the professors from Ardeal did not vote. As a result, N. Ionescu was elected rector with five votes, while O. Teodori received one vote. The latter was also assigned the role of University chancellor; according to the *Bylaws*, he was the primary official responsible for handling the University's documents and ensuring its management and correspondence.³⁸ To legitimise the election (as no elections had been held at the University since November 1860) and give the professors from Ardeal the opportunity to help the University overcome its "academic authority" crisis, Professor Mârzescu again proposed that Bărnuțiu be elected rector "by acclamation" as he was the oldest of them.³⁹ As in the case of the first request, Bărnuțiu refused, citing his advanced age, his status as a foreign subject, and the administrative nature of the position.

The lack of information about these years,⁴⁰ the provisional functioning of the University, and the expectation in some circles of the imminent dissolution of the

³⁵ D. Berlescu justly noted that, due to the failure to be confirmed as a rector, I. Strat could only resign from his position as a professor (Berlescu, "Universitatea din Iași," 119).

³⁶ When drafting the first University *Anuar* [Yearbook], copies of several diplomas of the persons who graduated in the early years are included. The signatures in the rector's position are revealing for the official chronology, *which is incorrect*, regarding the succession of the first rectors for each academic year. Therefore, despite the proposed chronology, December 4, 1862, during N. Ionescu's alleged mandate, a student's diploma was signed by "Filaret Scriban, President of the Academic Council." *Anuarul Universității din Iași pe anul școlar 1895–1896* (Iași: Tipografia națională, 1896), 118–121.

³⁷ Rectorat, file 8/1860, folio 22, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund.

³⁸ See also Fl. Ioncioaia, "Titu Maiorescu și primul său rectorat la Universitatea din Iași (1863–1864)," in *Universitatea din Iași de la modelul francez la sistemul Bologna*, ed. Gheorghe Iacob (Iași: Editura Universității "Al. I. Cuza," 2007), 403, note 57.

³⁹ Rectorat, file 8/1860, folio 21, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund.

⁴⁰ In the first University *Anuar* [Yearbook], the authors complained about the lack of information, as in its early years and "until around 1864," the rector managed the University of Iași

Iași-based institution, especially after Kogălniceanu resigned from the government in January 1861, contribute to certain uncertainties regarding the early years of the existence of the Iași University. The question of Bărnuțiu's whereabouts during these years remains a high stake for research. His name was featured in the minutes of the examination committees of the Faculty of Law, he evaluated students at the Faculty of Philosophy and Law,⁴¹ and he was invited to end-of-the-year celebrations. However, his illness began to become increasingly apparent, so much so that in the autumn of 1863, he requested the Rector's approval for medical leave. Maiorescu asked the Ministry to approve a five-month leave for Bărnuțiu as he was "gravely ill."⁴² These were the last traces the scholar from Ardeal left in the official records.

I believe the topic of "samples" featuring traces of Simion Bărnuțiu's presence at the University of Iași has not yet been fully explored. The profile of Professor Bărnuțiu, his courses, the disciples who honoured his memory, his aura as a "founder" of the Iași legal school, and his administrative contributions in solving some of the dilemmas marking the institution's early years could provide the foundation for extensive analysis.

chancellery due to the absence of a budget for "clerical work services. As a result, many documents were lost (*Anuarul Universității din Iași*, 106). From my perspective, this information is inaccurate. The documents do not exist because the University was not functional for many months, so they were not drafted. Furthermore, the registration numbers of the papers issued by the institution are consecutive, and during periods of inactivity, the Academic Council did not convene.

⁴¹ Rectorat, file 13/1860–1867, folios 5, 7, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund.

⁴² Rectorat, file 24/1863, folio 116, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" fund.

