The visit of the royal family to Transylvania in the context of the year 1919 (II)

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Abstract: The visits made in the interwar period by representatives of the royal family to the United Provinces with the Country in 1918 had a certain significance. The physical presence of the members of the Romanian dynasty was an act of affirmation of legitimacy and suzerainty over the territory acquired in 1918. The Romanian press in Transylvania and memorial oeuvres have extensively reflected and emphasized the importance of the visit of the Royal Family, following its route, which included numerous localities, from the outposts of the Romanian army at Békéscsaba (in Hungary) to Braşov. As far as Transylvania is concerned, this was all the more necessary given that, after World War I, a sudden campaign of unprecedented vehemence and magnitude was launched by Hungarian political circles, asking for the support of the international public opinion and of the governments of Western countries for the revision of the Treaty of Trianon, which had "mutilated" the borders of the Hungarian state, aiming at the restitution of Transylvania, unjustly "wrested" from Hungary's body. The use of symbolic registers with grandiloquent connotations was a fairly common practice at such events at the time. The presence of the royal authority in Transylvania was stated by a symbolic gesture. The emblematic figure of Michael the Brave, who for the first time in history achieved the union of the Romanian territories and the reawakening of his qualities in the person of King Ferdinand I, or of his heir, Prince Carol, were the symbolic leitmotif of all trips.

Keywords: Romanian dynasty, World War I, Ferdinand I, Transylvania, royal family.

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The vicar of Oradea, Roman Ciorogariu, head of a delegation, presented to King Ferdinand the desire of Orthodox Romanians in Oradea and Bihor to reinstate the Orthodox Diocese. The bishop of Arad, Ioan I. Papp, present at the festivities, told the King: "There was once and Orthodox diocese here that was suppressed by the hard times". The Sovereign replied immediately: "The diocese of Oradea Mare shall be reinstated sooner than you think" [1].

Bishop Demetrie Radu raised a toast for the vitality of the Romanian people, which had come out victorious after centuries of enslavement, and in honor of the Sovereigns. The King, visibly moved, declared that in the eyes of those who had taken part in the procession he had read not only the pains of the past, but also the hopes for the future, wishing prosperity to the city of Oradea Mare and to the prosperous area of Bihor. In the afternoon, the Sovereign received delegations of the city's inhabitants,

1. Elisaveta Rosu, „Momentul istoric al reînființării Episcopiei Oradiei: dobândirea unui drept istoric pentru orădeni", *Lumina*, September 18th 2010. In October 1920, Roman Ciorogariu was named bishop of Oradea, marking the reinstatement of a tradition that had been broken for 225 years, succeeding the last bishop of Oradea, Efrem Veniamin (1695).

who expressed their faith and loyalty towards the Royal Family, delegations of the ladies of Maramureș and Crișana, of the university youth, and Queen Mary received the families of those who had been killed by the Hungarian army during the April battles, handing out gifts to them.[2] The next day, on May 24th, the Royal Family went to Bichiș-Ciaba.

At Bichiș-Ciaba they were welcomed by people wishing to see the Sovereigns, Romanians from the remote regions of Cenad, Bihor and Arad. A delegation of 500 Banatians among which also representatives of the women in Banat and the Lira choir arrived on a special train, led by the unified bishop of Lugoj, Dr. Valer Tr. Frențiu, archpriest G. Popovici from Lugoj and the new prefect of Caraș-Severin, G. Dobrin.[3]

The royal train arrived with a 6-hour delay, due to the derailment of the ministerial train.[4] The Sovereigns received a grandiose welcome from the authorities led by Ioan Marcus (delegate, starting on the 5th of May, of the Ruling Council for taking over the power and organizing public services in the county of Bichiș[5]), Romanian troops and the city's inhabitants. The peasants lined up from the train station until the city center, over a 2-kilometer distance, holding flags and signs indicating the names of their communes of origin.

The Sovereigns watched the procession of the troops belonging to the First Rangers Regiment, Fifth Rangers Regiment and Twenty Third Artillery Regiment. The choir of the Lira Society of Lugoj sang beautiful songs. The King conversed with the prefect of Caraș-Severin county, George Dobrin, who presented to him the wishes of the people of the Banat. Prefect Dobrin expressed the homage of the people of the Banat for the glorious deeds which had laid the foundation of the unification of a Romanian nation, assuring him of the Banat's loyalty to the monarchy. The King was asked to spare no effort in order for the decision taken at Alba-Iulia regarding the unification of the entire Banat with Romania to receive international recognition at the Peace Conference. The prefect underlined the fact that geographic, ethnic, cultural and economic interests called for the complete unification of the Banat, its people being willing to sacrifice themselves in order to make it easier for the Sovereign to achieve the quick unification of the nation.[6]

Archpriest Popovici handed the King a memorandum, resulted from the National Assembly held at Caransebeș on May 18th 1919, which had been attended by Romanians from the eastern part of the Banat. The assembly protested against the fact that the issue of the Banat region had become an item of negotiation at the Peace Conference, considering that this region inhabited mostly by Romanians, had pronounced itself during the memorable assembly at Alba-Iulia on December 1st 1918, based on the principle of self-determination, in favor of its complete unification with the Kingdom of Romania. As a consequence, the Romanian government was asked to bring to the attention of the competent authorities at the Peace Conference the unmovable will of the Romanians in Banat for the entire Banat to join Romania, considering that this region, by virtue of its natural borders, formed an insoluble unity, both from a strategic, and from and economic and ethnic point of view. Moreover, they announced the Romanian government about their immovable decision of sacrificing their lives for the liberation of the last piece of Romanian land [7].

His Majesty told the delegation from the Banat the following: "When I pulled my sword I did so not only for Transylvania, but for all the oppressed Romanians. I will do everything in my power to fulfill your

2. „Suveranii în Ardeal", 2; „Regele și regina în Ardeal", 7; „MM. LL. Regele și Regina la Oradea Mare", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 103 from the 25th of May 1919, 1.

3. „MM. LL. Regele și Regina la Ciaba", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 105 from the 28th of May 1919, 1; „Bănățenii la Bichiș-Ciaba", *Drapelul*, year XIX, no. 49 from the 14-27 May 1919, 2. On the same day, May 24th, general Prezan presented G. Dobrin with the telegram of general Franchet d'Esperey, which contained his naming as a prefect; he was sworn in before the bishop of Lugoj Traian Frențiu, having the quality of trustee of the president of the Ruling Council". CF. Gheorghe Iancu, „Contribuția Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului național unitar român (1918-1920)", (Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Press, 1985), 153.

4. *Gazeta Transilvaniei* speaks of the fact that the cause of the derailment of the ministerial train might have been the collision with another train coming from Hungary and carrying, among others, Clara Maniu, the mother of the Ruling Council's president, freed from the Hungarian Bolsheviks. The re-encounter between mother and son was highly emotional. CF. *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 105 from the 28th of May 1919, 1.

5. Iancu, „Contribuția Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului național unitar român (1918-1920), 131.

6. „Cuvântarea d-lui prefect al județului Caraș-Severin, Dr. George Dobrin, la întâmpinarea MM. LL. Regale la Bichiș-Ciaba", *Drapelul*, no. 50 from 18-31 May 1919, 2.

7. „Moțiunea bănățenilor", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 101 from the 23rd of May 1919,1.

wish and to renew the old ties with the Romanian kingdom". [8] In the end he added: "This is all I can tell you now: blood is thicker than water".[9]

On May 25th, the Sovereigns went to Careii Mari, where inhabitants from all parts of Sătmar, Oaș and Maramureș, had gathered in order to give the Royal Couple a warm welcome .[10] "The feeling bringing hundreds of thousands of peasants before the Royal Family today, is the burning desire of seeing and paying their respects to a national Leader [...] In spite of the Bolshevik propaganda undertaken by the Hungarians in the territories now liberated, these territories remained unshaken in their loyalty towards the Romanian dynasty, as well as in their faith in the law and the people. The peasants of Arad, Bihor and Maramureș offered endless acclaim to The One who had brought the Romanian Crown also to these ancient Romanian territories".[11]

The civilian and military authorities were represented by mayor Daraban, the prefect of Satmar county, Alexandru Racoți, the prefect of Maramureș county, Vasile Chiroiu, the Greek Catholic vicar Romulus George Marchis[12], the archpriests Cupșea and Mureșanu, general Traian Moșoiu[13]. Apart from that, delegations of the Jews, but also of the Hungarians from the areas of Hajdu and Heveș were present, led by prefect Mogos and the rector of the local University, Geza Kiss, who thanked the Sovereign for freeing them from bolshevism. The count of Degenfeld, the uncle of the former prime minister Tisza[14] was also in attendance.

His Majesty inspected the troops of the northern Group and awarded several persons. Then followed the procession of the second division of rangers and of fifty thousand peasants from Satmar and Maramureș, dressed in traditional garments.

From Careii Mari, passing through Baia Mare, Jibou and Dej, the Sovereigns headed towards Bistrița on May 26th. In Baia Mare, the Sovereigns were welcomed by general Oltean, archpriest Breban, and prefect Racoți[15]. In Jibou, the Royal Couple was welcomed by the prefect of Sălaj County, dr. George Pop, general Boieriu, the delegation of Romanian ladies led by Elena Pop [16] and educational authorities. He conversed for 30 minutes cordially with the attendees, inquiring about the situation of the region and expressing his admiration towards the work done by all for the consolidation of the Romanian state.[17] In Dej, they were welcome by the prefect of the Solnoc-Dobâca county, dr. T. Mihaly, the unified bishop, Iuliu Hossu, and other representatives of the local authorities. The people of Bistrița had proven, by means of their welcome, that they were worthy successors of the ancient protectors of the borders. The Royal Family was welcomed in Bistrița by the prefect of the Bistrița Năsăud county, Gavril Tripon, by a delegation of the Saxons led by dr. Schuller, and a delegation of the Jewish community[18]. The Sovereigns also met a delegation of veteran border protectors, who handed the King the flag of the former *2nd Border Regiment*, decimated as a result of numerous battles. The Sovereign was asked to gift it to the regiment that was about to be formed with help of the youngsters in Bistrița in order to lead the nation to victory. Visibly moved, tearfully, the Sovereign replied: "To this corner of Transylvania, neighboring on Moldova, the forests covering the mountains have whispered countless times, that beyond the mountains there are brothers, and whispers of the mountains and the waters have brought here the same feeling of love for the country...I am convinced that this feeling shall live on eternally".[19] In the procession of Bistrița there took part 50.000 peasants, students from the schools in Bistrița and students of the Năsăud high school.

On Tuesday, May 27th the royal train reached Gherla. It was welcomed by the local scholarly elite and by a huge crowd. Upon arrival, the Royal Family was welcomed by bishop Iuliu Hossu. He expressed the feelings of: "Immovable faith, unconditional loyalty and love" of the over 600.000 faithful and the

8. „Calea de mărire. Maiestățile lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Ardeal *şi* Părțile ungurene", *Unirea Poporului*, no. 19 from the 5th of June 1919, 2.
9. *Patria,* no. 87 from the 4th of June 1919, 4.
10. „Calea de mărire. Maiestățile lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Ardeal *şi* Părțile ungurene", 2.
11.„*Țărănimea şi vizita Familiei Regale*", *Patria*, no. 82 from the 28th of May 1919, 1.
12. The first vicar of the recently founded Romanian National vicarage of Carei.
13. The commander of the Romanian military forces in Transylvania making up the northern Group.
14. „Suveranii la Careii Mari", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 106 from the 29th of May 1919, 1.
15. „Drumul de triumf al Familiei Regale", *Patria,* no. 83 from the 28th of May, 5.
16. *Ibid.*
17. „Perechea regală în Ardeal. La Jibou, Bistrița și Cluj", *Patria*, no. 81 from the 27th of May 5.
18. „Drumul de triumf al Familiei Regale", 5.
19. „Calea de mărire. Maiestățile lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Ardeal *şi* Părțile ungurene", 2.

500 priests in his parish, extending from the Mures until the Tisa river. The Sovereigns were assured of the joy shared by the attendees, and were brough a homage of eternal gratitude as the "creators of the lifelong dreams of our parents, the rulers of all Romanians, and endless love to our proud Empress". The King thanked them, voicing his immovable faith in the eternity of the union.[20]

In Cluj, on May 27th people from the areas of Someș, Câmpia Transilvaniei and Gilău had gathered. The Sovereigns were welcomed by prefect Valentin Poruțiu, mayor Iulian Pop, archpriests Elie Dăianu and Iuliu Rosescu, military authorities and by a delegation of the ladies of Cluj. Delegates of the Hungarian population had refused to attend.[21]

From the station the Royal Family went to the King Mathias Square (nowadays Union Square), where the troops of the Cluj garrison were lined up. In front of the Saint Michael Roman Catholic church a pulpit was raised, from where the Sovereigns watched the ethnographic procession, the group of spear men from Gilău, who had arrived with a wooden cannon, and "a group of proud inhabitants of the Tara Moților region with clarions". The procession of the troops followed. The ceremony lasted more than 2 hours. The statue of King Matei Corvin overlooked "the tumultuous manifestation of a free people, that had been oppressed by the Hungarians for centuries"[22]. After having lunch with local authorities, were the King delivered a short speech, expressing his hope that the city would prosper and become a cultural center for Romanians[23], the Royal Family received delegations of the city's inhabitants[24]. Furthermore, the Sovereigns visited the military hospitals where the Queen presented the wounded with cigarettes and books.[25]

From Cluj the Royal Family left the same day to Turda, to bring homage to the one who had achieved the first unification of all Romanians – voivode Mihai Viteazul. Hereto, the Sovereigns were welcomed by the authorities: the prefect of Turda – Arieș county, Zosim Chirtop, and dr. Ioan Boeriu, the mayor [26], the prefect of Mures – Turda county, Ioan Vescan and by members of the Orthodox and Greek Catholic clergy.

During the reception hosted by the prefect, Zosim Chirtop voiced the happiness of Transylvanian Romanians upon seeing the Royal Family in their midst paying homage to the great martyrs Mihai Viteazul, Horea, Cloșca and Crișan. Lucreția Mureșan, president of the Romanian Women's Delegation, presented her homage accompanied by love loyalty and gratitude for the Queen, who threw her care for the soldiers in the trenches and hospitals through her courageous attitude towards the wellbeing of the country and of the unified nation, would forever remain engraved in the memory of future generations. [27]

The Sovereign told the attendees that it was his duty during his first travels to the liberated territories, to visit the place where the great voivod Mihai Viteazul, who had achieved a brief unification of the Great Romania, had found his end. Furthermore, he had to pay homage here, where the great heroes Horea and Avram Iancu had lived, to these important figures of Romanian history, who left behind a holy legacy: love for one's country, which had to be above anything else. It had been their memory that had helped Romanians endure hard times, and had given them the courage to fight until the very end for the accomplishment of the national ideal: the creation of Greater Romania.[28]

The following day, on May 28th on the Turzii Meadow, in the presence of over 12000 people, the Orthodox bishop of Caransebeș, Miron Cristea delivered a service for the remembrance of the great Romanian voivod.[29]

After the service bishop Miron Cristea delivered a speech stating that the land there was twice as holy for Romanians. It harbored the remains of Mihai Viteazul, who showed the brothers from beyond the Carpathians the path towards mighty Transylvania, and received the unifying King, the executor of the great voivods will. The King came to show his gratitude towards Mihai Viteazul, thereby proving that he is a good Romanian and a good Christian. Mihai Viteazul's soul looked down joyfully on the

20. „Suveranii în Ardeal", 2.
21. „Drumul de triumf al Familiei Regale", 5.
22. Maria, regina României, Însemnări zilnice, 191.
23. „Drumul de triumf al Familiei Regale", 5.
24. „Suveranii în Ardeal", 3.
25. Maria, regina României, Însemnări zilnice, 191.
26. And former president of the military Senate of Romanian officers and soldiers in Vienna.
27. „Zile de sărbătoare în Turda", *Telegraful Român*, LIXVII, no. 51 from the 3rd of June 1919, 2.
28. „Vorbirile Regelui în Ardeal", *Patria*, no. 85 from the 1st of June, 1.
29. „Suveranii în Ardeal", 2.

"second Mihai", who nevertheless did not stop at Turda, but victoriously advanced until the Tisa.

The bishop also brough homage on this occasion to the inhabitants of the Tara Moților region, referring to them as the golden children to the Romanian people, who gave us Horea, Cloșca and Crișan and the prince of the mountains, Iancu. On the Turzii Meadow, facing the Apuseni Mountains, the people were bowing to the Sovereigns not only with submission, but also with love and gratitude, because they trusted in the virtue of soldiers, loyal to the natural aspirations of the country and guided by wise counselors, who knew in decisive moments to tread in the footsteps of Mihai Viteazul. Transylvanian Romanians would remain forever grateful to the Royal Romanian Army who led by the King, reinstated the country's borders, freeing the oppressed and writing glorious deeds on the pages of the country's history.[30]

In Turda, at the tomb of Mihai Viteazul, a foundation was laid for a future statue of the great voivod, for which the Sovereigns contributed 20.000 lei.[31] I. G. Duca recounts in his memoirs that among several highlights of the Royal visit, one of the scenes that left its imprint on him as an unforgettable memory, by virtue of its emotional greatness, took place in Turda. On the meadow stretching around the place where Mihai Viteazul had been killed, there were thousands of peasants from the neighboring areas – men, women, children and elderly people, all dressed in celebratory garments. At the end of the religious service at the tomb, the King and the Queen passed on foot among the rows of peasants. Then the people, not expecting this humbleness, or any type of direct contact with the Sovereigns, reacted spontaneously in an unbelievable manner. Not only did the cheering not stop, but the people were bowing and kissing the skirts of the Queen's traditional garments, they were rushing to kiss the King's hand. Most of them were crying with joy and emotion and were chanting: "From now on we can die at peace, because we have seen our country liberated and our King, the King of all Romanians." The people in the royal entourage did not know how to protect them, and were quit moved themselves by this general delirium, by the shinning and emotional manifestation of the joy of Unification.[32]

From Turda, the Sovereigns set out to see "the fortress of our bravery, of Transylvania" – the Apuseni Mountains, "the huge bier where the Prince of the Mountains, Avram Iancu rests". The first stop of the Royal Family was in Câmpeni. Here they encountered "an even greater joy [...] simple and warm people who did everything in their power to make us feel good, but we were systematically overfed and we could not turn down even one single dish because all the women in the household had contributed to its preparation". [33] Out of boundless joy, the locals ignited a square dance that the Sovereigns also joined. From here, the Royal Family left in their automobiles, to witness the beauty of the natural surroundings, heading for Vidra. They visited the Avram Iancu memorial house and listened to the "sounds reminiscent of ancient snow storms produced by the clarions of Abrud ", the Sovereigns being presented a glimpse into the times of national awakening in 1848, with the procession of inhabitants of the Tara Moților region on horseback, fires ablaze on hilltops and the rustling of steel spears. The Sovereigns visited the gold mines and the factory in Gura Bârza next to Brad, accompanied by Maniu, Cicio Pop, Goldiș, general C. Prezan, colonel Ion Antonescu and others. On this occasion it was declared that the time had come for the gold to pass into the property and the accounts of the Romanian state, not only into those of foreign states and societies. [34] The Queen was offered a gold nugget extracted from the mine. [35] In Țebea, on May 29th they visited Horea's oak and the tomb of Iancu, where the Queen knelt and laid down a wrath of flowers.[36] Because Horea's oak was quite old, the villagers planted another two oak trees, which they baptized with the names of the King and Queen. [37] The Sovereigns then saw "icons of the lives of the Roșia Abrudului miners, with the noisy mills and the sparkling gold nuggets of the the Apuseni Mountains".[38]

30. „Cuvântul de salutare pentru Maiestățile lor rostit de P.S. Episcopul Dr. Miron Cristea, la Parastasul de pe Câmpia Turzii în 28 mai 1919", *Telegraful Român*, no. 51 from the 3rd of June 1919, 1.
31. „Călătoria suveranilor în Ardeal", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 107 from the 13th of May 1919, 1.
32. I.G. Duca, *Memorii*, vol. IV (*Războiul*), partea a II-a (1917-1919), editor Stelian Neagoe, (Bucharest, Machiavelli Press 1994), 217.
33. Maria, regina României, Însemnări zilnice,193.
34. Radu Cosmin, *Prin Ardeal*, [Alcalay press, 1919], 381-388; CF. Dumitru Suciu, *Monarhia și făurirea României Mari*, 238-239.
35. „Călătoria Suveranilor", *Telegraful Român*, no. 51 from the 3rd of June 1919, 3.
36. „Suveranii în Ardeal", 2.
37. „Regele între Moți", *Patria*, no. 88 from the 5th of June, 1.
38. „Calea de mărire. Maiestățile lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Ardeal *şi* Părțile ungurene", 2.

In Alba Iulia, this citadel "belonging to Mihai", the name of which "echoes in the heart of each Romanian" [39], 100.000 people from the areas of Mures, Hațeg and Hunedoara gathered in order to welcome the Royal Family. "It is difficult to describe the welcome we have been given; people here were absolutely mad with enthusiasm".[40] Regarding the ancient citadel, the King stated: "It comprises all the pain, all the hardships of a people, who did not have any other request under the sun except to express in its own tongue its modest wishes!". He entered the walls of this citadel with profound emotion, whereon December 1st 1918 the Unification with the Mother Land had been unanimously voted. At the citadel's gates, the Sovereigns were offered bread and salt by mayor Camil Velican. The Sovereigns visited the Unification Hall, where they were welcomed by the prefect of Alba County, Ioan Pop. There followed receptions and a procession of the huge crowd, which lasted two hours. [41]

On the evening of May 30th, the Sovereigns reached Blaj. Intense preparations had been made in order to welcome the Royal Couple, preparations which promised to turn this day into a memorable national manifestation, "even huger" than the "memorable days of 3-15 May 1848". Dozens of villages announced their participation in the upcoming manifestations [42].

Three triumphal gates were erected and embellished with exquisite artistic taste – by arts teacher Flaviu C. Domșa. They were painted with national motifs, and in the middle, there was the inscription "Long live the Royal Family !"[43]. The first train to arrive was the one in which the members of the Ruling Council were travelling, the one of the Bucharest government and of the journalists. Iuliu Maniu was received with ovations and the honorary company stationed on the platform saluted him with military honors [44].

Shortly thereafter the royal train arrived. Upon stepping out, the Royal Family was welcomed with cheers of "Long live the King, long live the Queen, long live the Princess, long live the Romanian Dynasty!". The Queen and Princess Ileana were wearing traditional garments. The Queen, "wearing a picturesque garment, adorned like the empresses on the Romanians triumphal arches", was visibly moved by the emotional cheers of the public. "She was standing there in front of us – the Unirea newspaper in Blaj reported – tall, beautiful, majestic, making us feel happy as Romanians for having not only the most beautiful country, but also the most charming Queen and Sovereign in the world." [45]

The Royal Family was welcomed by delegations of several corporations, Iuliu Maniu being the one in charge of introductions. Welcome speeches were delivered by the city's mayor, Stefan Dragos, and by vicar Vasile Suciu[46]. Also in attendance were delegations of public offices, the theological institute, the gymnasium, the girl's school, and the women's reunion of Blaj[47].

From the train station, the guests headed in their automobiles to the Unified Cathedral. All along the streets, on both sides, there was a huge, uninterrupted wall of peasants frantically acclaiming the royal procession. At the cathedral, the Sovereigns were welcomed by the unified bishop of Lugoj, Valer Frențiu, and by the unified bishop of Gherla, Iuliu Hossu. The Royal Family took part in the mass, *the great doxology*[48].

After the mass, the bishop of the United Metropolitanate, V. Suciu, showed the King that the former rulers of Transylvania had travelled all around this region, without ever lowering their gaze towards their Romanian subjects. They passed by the city, without visiting the seminar and the gymnasium where teachers and students endured several hardships in order to save their souls and learn. But the city of Blaj had long awaited the coming of these times and now they had arrived – Suciu declared – "through the ideal King who abandoning his mother land and all that he owned, had come to become one with the people whose parent he was. We had to wait until the coming of our beloved Queen, who with her mother's love, with no regard to social class, embraces everybody". Afterwards, the unified bishop thanked the Sovereigns for suffering alongside the people, sharing their wealth with them,

39. Maria, regina României, Însemnări zilnice, 196.
40. Ibid.
41. „Suveranii în Ardeal", 2; „Calea de mărire. Maiestățile lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Ardeal *şi* Părțile ungurene", 2.
42. „Suveranii în Blaj", *Unirea*, no. 112 from the 3rd of June 1919, 1.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Future bishop, starting 1920, the first unified Romanian bishop appointed by the King of Greater Romania, Ferdinand I.
47. „Suveranii în Blaj", 2.
48. *Ibid.*

offering solace to the weak ones in times of hardship, comforting the sick and suffering and lifting all their subjects to the heights and moral fortitude of the Throne. Finally, bishop Suciu promised the King that Blaj had not ceased and would never cease to fight for the affirmation of national unity of all Romanians[49].

Bishop Valer of Lugoj expressed the homage "of pure love, burning gratitude, devotion and loyalty" of the unified clergy and of the entire Transylvanian people, assuring the King that the entire clergy and the Transylvanian people would pray to God for the Royal Family to enjoy all divine blessings, and for "your majesty's crown, made from our sufferings and tears", to never miss the gratitude and love of the Romanian people[50].

The King delivered a short speech, expressing his joy of being in Blaj, and acknowledging the city's importance for the development of Romanian national culture[51]. By means of the knowledge it had spread, Blaj had contributed to the achievement of the Unification.

Right after the religious service at the Cathedral, Iuliu Maniu introduced his mother, Clara Maniu, who had been recently liberated from the Hungarian Bolsheviks, to the Sovereigns. She and the sister of the president of the Ruling Council, Cornelia, were arrested during the Hungarian Bolshevik offensive in April and taken to Budapest. The Sovereigns listened to her with great attention, and the Queen hugged her and kissed her forehead. The girls who had sprinkled flowers before the Sovereigns upon exiting the Cathedral were presented by the Queen with medals engraved with the faces of the Sovereigns and inscribed on one side with their names, and on the other side with the words: "*THROUGH OURSELVES. 1916*".[52]

Then, from the cathedral's balcony, the Sovereigns watched, for two hours, the procession of 80.000 Romanian and Saxon peasants, dressed in traditional attire, coming from the villages in the county of Alba and from neighboring counties. From the county of Târnava Mica, thousands of peasants attended, representing two cities and 84 communes. The festivities organized in honor of the Sovereigns ended at midnight with a musical recital by the plow men's choir in Săcădate (Sibiu county). The Royal Family had dinner at the United Metropolitanate. The second day, in the morning, the Royal Family left for Sibiu[53].

Awaiting the Royal Family in Sibiu, the Patria newspaper wrote about the feverish preparations of the authorities. The entire city of Sibiu put on festive garments. Upon exiting the train station, an arch was erected surrounded by garlands and lamps. At the crossroads of Gen. Gh. Magheru and Avram Iancu streets, next to the Ursulinelor Abbey, an allegorical pole was erected, representing the situation of the Banat region at that moment: the counties of Caraș Severin, Timiș and Torontal chained to the pole, extending their hands to each other, towards the Royal Couple. For the embellishment works of the city of Sibiu, architects were brought from Bucharest: Renard, the chief of the Architects Bureau in Bucharest, who would practically transpose the plan elaborated by Constantin Nănescu, the architect of the city of Bucharest. The organizers of the ethnographic procession were Dr. Gh. Măcelariu and Victor Păcală. Along the streets there were hung the emblems of the counties and cities in Transylvania. On Bălcescu street two towers with spires were erected, adorned with the coat of arms of the city of Sibiu and the Saxon national colors. The Gala dinner hosted by the Ruling Council was held at the Unicum Grand Hall[54].

On the 31st of May, the Royal Family was welcomed at the Sibiu train station by troops from the 4th Regiment of Rangers, by members of the Ruling Council, general Mărdărescu, the prefect of Sibiu county, Nicolae Comsa, the city prefect, Albert Dör, by the Count of the Saxons, Friedrich Walbaum, representatives of the clergy: orthodox - assessor Nicolae Ivan and attorney Preda, unified – archpriest Nicolae Togan, Lutheran – bishop Friedrich Teutsch, evangelical parish priest of Sibiu, Adolf Schullerus[55], Calvinist – J. Nagy, military authorities, delegations of the women of Sibiu, representatives of Saxon reunions. The county prefect, Dr. Comșa, saluted the Royal Family with enthusiastic words. The King

49. „Vorbirea Păr. Vicar Dr. V. Suciu", *Unirea*, 3; Dumitru Suciu, *Monarhia și făurirea României Mari*, 239-240.
50. „Suveranii în Blaj", 4.
51. „Marea sărbătoare a bucuriei. Maiestățile Lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Blaj", *Unirea Poporului, no. 90 from the 5th of June 1919, 3.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. „Suveranii în Blaj", 2-3.
54. „*În aşteptarea Regelui şi a Reginei*", *Patria*, no. 84 from the 31st of May, 1.
55. He was also president of the Saxon National Council, being appointed to this position on October 29th 1918.

replied warmly, assuring him that the connection between the Sovereigns and the people will be even stronger in the future. To prefect Dör the King declared that the Saxons can be certain that they will live happily in Romania. To Valeriu Branişte, chief of the Ministry of Culture and public instruction in the Ruling Council, the King declared that he was well acquainted with the tremendous work done by the Ruling Council[56].

The Sovereigns headed for the Orthodox Cathedral, where they were welcomed by bishop Miron Cristea, assisted by Archimandrite Eusebiu Roşca, Archpriest Ioan Stroia, Assessors Lazar Triteanu, Dr. George Proca, Dr. Vasile Bologa, Professor Vasile Stan, and others. The Reunion Choir, masterfully led be George Dima, sang the *Resurrection Hymn*. The mass followed, in the end of which bishop Miron Cristea performed a special prayer for this historic moment. He voiced the gratitude of the attendees for the mercy that the Lord had shown the Romanian people, because just as Moses had liberated his people from the slavery in Egypt, so had the King abolished the artificial borders dividing this nation and by freeing it, had allowed it to create "a new and bountiful mother land". The bishop begged the Divinity to shelter the Romanian Dynasty and army, to enlighten the Sovereigns so that they may rule the people with justice, to scatter the enemies who were rising against the Romanian monarch and to unite the entire Romanian people in an inseparable union [57].

After the divine mass, the Royal Family headed for the Large Square, where they watched the procession of troops and an ethnographic procession, and admirable manifestation, led by the priests and teachers in the Romanian villages around Sibiu, and which ended with representatives of the Saxons, "who also put on a beautiful performance" [58].

The Sovereigns also visited the edifice of the *Association*. The Royal Family was solemnly welcomed in the Festive Hall by members of the central Committee, part of the members of the scientific departments and by a numerous public. The president of the *Association,* Andrei Bârseanu expressed the joy of the members of this institution, which was the oldest and greatest cultural endeavor of Transylvanian Romanians, of receiving in the edifice of their cultural institution the one to whom Transylvanian Romanians owed their liberation, and the noble Queen. At the same time, Bârseanu expressed the faith of the members of the *Association* that under the monarchs rule and in collaboration with the brothers in the Old Kingdom, the *Association* would rapidly advance towards fulfilling the high mission for which it had been created [59].

After presenting a short history of *Astra's* activity, highlighting the important contribution of this association for the brotherhood of Romanians ever since its creation, Bârseanu ended by underlining the fact that a new horizon was stretching out before it. The *Association* had the potential of becoming "a cultural community of all Romanians, working together with its other sisters for the prosperity of the People in the entire unified Dacia", and the edifice that harbored it would indeed be "the House of the People, the House of the Nation". Finally, the Sovereign was asked to accept the honorary presidency of this cultural institution. The King accepted and promised to protect "the high aspirations" of Astra [60].

At the banquet held at *Unicum*, held in the evening, Iuliu Maniu expressed, in the name of the Ruling Council, his gratitude towards the Sovereigns, towards the Romanian brothers in the Old Kingdom, and towards the victorious Romanian army who, by means of countless sacrifices, risking everything even before the year 1918, had pulled its sword for the liberation of this region.

The unification, Maniu continued was an absolute international necessity, the Romanian nation being "a solitary rock" and the unified Romania the only "barrier" in this corner of the world, against the subversive tendencies [i.e., Bolshevism] that threatened to destroy the social order and everything that human civilization had produced.

Romania was thus helping the entire humanity to fulfill this mission, and was thus entitled to ask for international recognition of its unification, as had been decided at Alba Iulia, as had been decreed by his majesty the King and as had been agreed upon by the treaty with the Entente in 1916.

Saluting the Romanian sovereigns, who were in Transylvania for the first time, Maniu paid homage to

56. „Primirea grandioasă a Familiei Regale în Sibiu", *Patria*, no. 85 from the 1st of June, 1.
57. „Serviciul divin din catedrală. Cu prilejul sosirii suveranilor *în* Sibiu", *Telegraful Român*, number 52 from the 7th of June, 2-3.
58. „Suveranii în Sibiu", *Telegraful Român,* no. 51 from the 3rd of June, 1-2.
59. *Transylvania*, no. 1, May 1920, 7.
60. *Ibid,* 8-15. The general assembly to be held in Sibiu, between 10-11 January 1920 will proclaim the King as honorary president of the Association, *Transilvania*, no.1-12 from December 1st 1919, 33-35.

them, stating that the two immortal figures of Romanian history: Emperor Traian, who showed us the way to greatness by protruding with his victorious legions into Transylvania, and Mihai Viteazul, who showed us in what direction national thought had to evolve, were now joined by King Ferdinand I, who knew how to channel the Romanian people's energies in view of achieving the national ideal.[61]

Pherekyde expressed his joy upon witnessing the enthusiastic welcome the Sovereigns had received in entire Transylvania, considering it a sign of gratitude for the hard times the King and Queen had experienced during the war. He expressed his faith that the Romanian people's desire to form a unity of all brothers will not be hindered by any obstacles and he acknowledged the immense efforts undertaken in this respect by the members of the Ruling Council.[62]

The King replied to the president of the Ruling Council by stating that the destiny and goals of the Roman legions who had come to the Danubian planes and to the Carpathian circle had been fulfilled. The legions wanted to build a Latin fortress as a compact force in midst of foreign peoples and this was achieved through their heirs. By means of its vitality, which divinity had endowed it with, the Romanian people had managed to stand up to the tempests that had challenged it throughout the centuries and to keep its faith and dream unshaken: the creation of Greater Romania. The King thanked the divine providence for being allowed to not only witness, but also to contribute to the achievement of this ideal with the help of Romanian soldiers. During his travels to Transylvania, Transylvanian Romanians had shown their loyalty to him and the most wonderful reward was "the love this nation has shown me, a nation that has suffered for so long". From all parts of the region, Romanians had come to express their loyalty: both from Transylvania and from Banat. The King assured those present that he would do everything in his power for the wishes of the latter to also be fulfilled [63]. Finally, he expressed his belief that the union "achieved through the blood spilled on the battlefields, and through the faith of this people", could only be steadfast.

The king gifted the city of Sibiu 20.000 crowns for the city's poor, with no regard to nationality or religion.[64] On June 1st, the Sovereigns visited the tombs of the heroes slain in the battle of Sibiu in September 1916, travelling through Turnișor and Cristian to Sălișteand Orlat, where the Queen laid down a wrath of flowers. On the occasion of the Royal Family's presence in Sălișteand, Dr. Ioan Lupaș delivered a speech, expressing the immense joy of Romanians for being able to pay homage to them, especially since this fact had been one of the greatest and oldest wishes of the people of this region. "Our people would wish for this holy moment to remain eternally, and if that was possible, for time itself to stop, this is how warmly they have awaited to see the luminous faces of your majesty's and to be able to bask in the raise of parental love that you so generally bestow upon the sons of the Romanian nation". Furthermore, the historian assured them that Transylvanian Romanians will always be his most devoted and loyal subjects.

On the same day, the Sovereigns returned to Bucharest, travelling through Făgăraș and Brașov[65]. On the way back, the royal train stopped at the Veștem station, where it was expected by the entire commune. The Queen received with great pleasure and appreciation the peasant garments that were offered to her and the Sovereign conversed with the commune priest. The King took interest in the battles that were fought in the area in 1916, highlighting details concerning the regiments that had taken part in them (1st Regiment Frontier Guards and 44th Regiment Infantry). He inquired who the fallen heroes were, how their tombs were being maintained, what arrests and hospital admissions there had been. After the Royal Family left, the commune elders declared: "now I may die in peace, because I have seen the faces of the King and Queen, and now we are no longer ruled over by foreigners"[66].

In Brasov, on the day of the Sovereign's arrival, the villagers from the 4 counties: Brașov, Trei Scaune, Odorhei and Ciuc, had gathered represented by the prefects Dr. Băiulescu, V. Neamțu (Odorhei and Ciuc counties) and Dr. Nicolae Vecerdea (Trei Scaune county). Over 10.000 people gathered in order to protest against the division of the Banat and in order to acclaim Romania's Sovereigns.

The crowds, caring national flags chanting patriotic songs, gathered on the noon of June 1st in the

61. „Declarațiile M.S. Regelui. Cuvântarea dlui Maniu", *Patria,* no. 89 from the 6th of June 1919, 1.
62. *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 110 from the 5th of June 1919, 1.
63. „Suveranii *în* Sibiu. Discursul M.S. Regelui", *Unirea*, no. 117 from the 8th of June 1919, 1.
64. *Patria*, no. 88 from the 5th of June, 3.
65. „Calea de mărire. Maiestățile lor Regele *şi* Regina *în* Ardeal *şi* Părțile ungurene", 2.
66. „Domnitori și popor", *Unirea*, no. 120 from the 14th of June 1919, 7.

proximity of Casa Sfatului in Brașov [67], in order to protest against the division of the Banat. At 3 PM, the civilian authorities also gathered. The assembly was presided by Archpriest V. Saftu, who was the first to deliver a speech, stating the goal of the assembly. The next one to speak was prefect Băiulescu, who presented statistical data, as well as the text of the Treaty signed in 1916 with the Entente, as arguments for the Romanians requests regarding the entire Banat. Priest captain Coriolan Buracu, originally from Banat, recalled the memory of those who had sacrificed themselves for the Banat's liberation, especially general Drăgălina. Ion Clopoțel, a journalist at the *Gazeta Transilvaniei***,** also originally from Banat read a motion which declared that the ones who had gathered in Brasov were protesting against the sacrifice of Romanians in Torontal and apart of Timiș, considering that under Serbian rule in Valea Timocului and in Macedonia, there were a million Romanians "who would not enjoy freedom even now". The motion was unanimously passed and signed by the civilian authorities and the representatives of Romanians in the Banat living in the territories of the 4 counties[68].

Once the assembly had been completed, the attendees headed for the train station, in order to welcome the Sovereigns. The royal train only arrived late in the evening, around 10 pm, but the crowds waited patiently. On the platform, the Sovereigns were expected by prefects Băiulescu, Vecerdea and Neamțu, by general Eremia and other representatives of the Officer's Corps, archpriest V. Saftu, P. Păiulescu, the Police prefect, Karl Schnell, the city's mayor, accompanied by his wife, other representatives of the civilian authorities, the Lutheran vicar Herfurth and his wife, G. Chelariu, headmaster of the Romanian Gymnasium, I. Pricu, director of the School of Commerce, representatives of the women's societies of Brașov, and others. After stepping out of the train, the Sovereigns headed for the Reception Hall along a corridor formed by troops of the 41st Artillery Regiment, the 105th Regiment, students of the Romanian Gymnasium in Brasov, delegates of the communes in the aforementioned counties and a troop of youngsters. The Reception Hall had been decorated in much good taste by the high society ladies and the chief of the train station, Mr. Popescu, who had even brought furniture belonging to Al. I. Cuza, that had been offered by the Lupan family. The Sovereigns were handed the protest motion regarding the issue of the Banat, which had been adopted the same day by a delegation of Romanians from the Banat region[69].

The Sovereigns and the Royal Suite were offered ice cream and champagne by the high society ladies of Brasov. The ones who had come from Odorhei county offered the Sovereigns several objects made of marble and paper weights made of gold, peasant's cheese, carpets and garments which were much to the Queen's liking. She herself was dressed in traditional attire [70].

A few days after the Sovereigns return to Bucharest, bishop Miron Cristea described in an article published by the *Telegraful Român* the joy with which the Royal Family had been welcome by Transylvanian Romanians. He considered that ever since Emperor Aurelian's retreat, Transylvanian Romanians could truly receive, officially and wholeheartedly, King Ferdinand and Queen Mary as their first legitimate rulers and Sovereigns. It has only the hearts of Transylvanian Romanians, filled with emotion during the Royal visit, who could profoundly feel the charm carried by the word "ours", because until that point in time they had not belonged to anyone. If Romanians had not been assimilated by their enemies, that was also due to the many modest wooden churches that the Sovereigns had seen in the communes and in the territories of Transylvania. The priests and the faithful ones had kept their ancient creeds, the sweet Romanian language, the treasures of the soul that formed the essence of the Romanians ethnic identity. Miron Cristea wished for King Ferdinand to strengthen the country's borders and make it be respected abroad, as well as calm and peaceful within[71].

The Royal visit undertaken in the Transylvanian territories was, as characterized in his *Memoirs* by I. G Duca, "an indescribable dream". He mentioned the fact that during the 10 days he witnessed the most moving scenes of enthusiasm, a sign of the joy of a people that had been freed and that was seeing its Sovereigns and celebrating them in a forever unified homeland. Furthermore, he noted the flawless organization of the visit by the members of the Ruling Council [72]. The same thing was mentioned also by Iuliu Maniu, in an interview for Transylvanian newspapers, where he responded to criticism regarding

67. Today the building of the County Museum of History.
68. „Marele meeting de ieri", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 109 from the 3rd of June 1919, 1.
69. „Primirea MM. LL. Regele și Regina în gara Brașov", *Ibid.*
70. „Perechea regală în Ardeal. Primirea de la Brașov", *Patria,* no. 90 from the 7th of June 1919, 1.
71. „După visita regală", *Telegraful Român*, no. 53 from the 12th of June 1919, 1.
72. I.G. Duca, *Memorii*, vol. IV (*Războiul*), partea a II-a (1917-1919), 215.

the Ruling Council's activity. He highlighted the fact that manner in which this visit had unfolded, and in which the entire administrative apparatus had functioned, the incomparable order and absolute safety offered to the Royal Family and their suite, were proof of "the great changes that had taken place [in Transylvania] through the passing of sovereignty from the Hungarian government to us, a passing that was achieved with the help of a revolution and which had not been able to shake the foundation of public administration". From this point of view to, Romania "was at the forefront of all other states in Central Europe"[73].

Transylvania newspapers described the Royal visit as "a triumphal journey through Transylvania where almost 2 million Romanians saluted them with indescribable enthusiasm". "From the 15 towns and cities they had visited, and from the dozens of train stations" where they had briefly stopped, the Sovereigns carried in their hearts "treasures of lasting impressions and happiness which they would certainly never forget". It was stated that Transylvanian Romanians would themselves keep the memory of this visit alive, a visit by "the first and most glorious Rulers of the United Romania, the liberators of Romanians who had been enslaved for centuries"[74].

The Romanians had grasped the importance of the Sovereigns travels to Transylvania: the Romanian dynasty was the foundation of which the newly formed Romanian state had to ultimately consolidate itself. Transylvanian Romanians, who had been royalists in the roman understanding of the term did not accept the idea of the republic during the times when they had been under Austro Hungarian rule, led by a dynasty which was opposed to the vital interests of the Romanian people. In those times, when Transylvanian Romanians had become part of a monarchy represented by a dynasty that proved to be a national one through their deeds and feelings, the Royal Family could not have received anything else but a triumphal welcome in Transylvania.

The importance of this journey was underlined in the Old Kingdom by N. Iorga, who published an article in *Neamul Românesc* entitled "The basis of Romanian monarchy." The Royal Family's visit declared the Great Romanian historian, did not only carry the aforementioned symbolism. The internal political significance was just as great: it represented an act of consolidation of the Romanian dynasty. For half a century, this monarchy different from the ones instituted by the Organic Statutes with a due date specified, and which should have been viewed different then elective rule "which can be reversed on grounds of any class, party or personal complaint", could not prevent certain acts of treason on part of Romanian politicians. "Romanian politics did not respect what the country itself had solemnly sworn to never abolish."

However, in Transylvania, millions of Romanians had come to meet the Sovereign with an almost religious feeling of devotion and loyalty, to meet the one who was a symbol of the very idea of monarchy, in the imperial form that was engraved in the Transylvanian's consciousness. For the first time, with no regards for politicians, the peasants were acclaiming their Ruler and were legitimizing him.

And the fact that the representatives of the minorities had taken part in the most reverential manner in the festivities organized on the occasion of the Sovereign's travels in Transylvania, was proof of the fact that the minorities could not have been kept within the borders of Greater Romania, unless it would have been under the form of a solid Romanian monarchy.[75] During a speech at the reunion of the liberal party, I.G, Duca made important statements regarding the signification of the Sovereigns visit to Transylvania. He noted that his visit had four important political consequences. First of all, it had highlighted the indestructible nature of Romanian national unity. For the ones who had believed that the Romanian nation did not represent an indivisible whole, the manifestations organized in all of the towns and cities of Transylvania in honor of the Sovereign, sprung out of a profound national consciousness, proved that any separatism tendency was impossible, that we were always a united people who had spent centuries divided by a border traced in the middle of the country.

Secondly, he noted the profound royalism of Transylvanian Romanians. This dynastic attachment was a result of the profound consciousness of Transylvanian Romanians that the monarch was a living symbol of national unity, the gravitational center of the entire Romanian national life and that a regime or a parliamentary monarchy which was well structured was capable of ensuring a normal development and advancement for Romania.

Thirdly, what had to be highlighted was the attitude of the representatives of Hungarians and

73. „*Începutul promite*", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 114 from the 11th of June 1919, 1.
74. „Sosirea Suveranilor din Ardeal", *Unirea*, no. 115 from the 6th of June 1919, 1.
75. „*Însemnătatea călătoriei Familiei Regale la noi*", *Patria*, no. 98 from the 18th of June 1919, 1.

Swabians in the Banat region. At Bichiș-Ciaba, a delegation of Swabian representatives appeared before the King, declaring that they did not wish to live under Servian domination that their true desire was to be subjects of the Romanian Sovereign. The Hungarians in the territories recently occupied by the Romanian army, especially those who had known Bolshevik rule, could not thank the King and the Romanian army enough. Thus, the rector of the university in Debrecen, Kiss, requested that the Romanian army not only evacuated the occupied territories, but that it should cross the Tisa and occupy Budapest. Count Degenfeld, Tisza's uncle, thanked the King for abolishing anarchy and restoring order, requesting in his turn that the Romanian army liberated Budapest and saved Hungary. Representatives of Hungarian women led by countess Almassyi, Tisza's cousin, thanked the Sovereigns for the fact that the Romanian army had saved their honor, lives and belongings. In the course of this journey to Hungary, he realized that there existed a strong favorable opinion regarding a Romanian – Hungarian friendship, the Hungarians considering Romania as the only civilizing factor in the European East threatened by the red plague. It was important for Romanians – Duca noted – to compare the situation in 1918, when the Hungarians had not only requested territories in the Old Kingdom, but had also asked for the Transylvanian Romanians along the Carpathians between Orșova and Vatra-Dornei to be banished and replaced with Hungarians, and the state of affairs in 1919. The fourth effect of the royal visit was the heightened prestige of the Romanian Royal Army and its achievements, the gratitude for the Romanian soldiers who even if they had been poorly equipped and under fed, had evinced incredible moral strength and great discipline [76].

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76. „Declarațiile d-lui ministru I.G. Duca", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, no. 112 from the 7th of June 1919, 1.