Introduction

The day of 10 September 2022 marked the 150th commemoration of the death of Avram Iancu, the hero of the Romanian Revolution of 1848–1849 in Transylvania. In that significant memorial context, the figure of the “Prince of the Motzen” (mountain-dwellers of the Apuseni Mountains) was brought back into attention through the publication of seven volumes dedicated to his life and work, as well as to the way in which the hero’s memory is reflected in Romanian mainstream and folk literature. The books were published by three Transylvanian publishing houses: Școala Ardeleană of Cluj-Napoca, Techno Media of Sibiu, and Theosis of Oradea, the first one having carried

A shorter Romanian version of this paper was published in the volume: *Avram Iancu—150 de ani de la moarte: Studii și comunicări*, edited by Ela Cosma and Varga Attila (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut; Editura Mega, 2023), 57–68.
out the most comprehensive editorial project dedicated to the commemoration of 150 years since Avram Iancu’s passing into eternity. In the present paper, these volumes will be presented in the chronological order of their appearance and not according to their literary category or genre: drama, literature, literary criticism, periodicals, and historiography.

Școala Ardeleană Publishing House of Cluj-Napoca

At the beginning of 2022, Școala Ardeleană publishing house of Cluj-Napoca, led by poet and patriot Vasile George Dâncu, launched a large-scale editorial project intended to bring back to the attention of contemporary Romanian readers the figure of one of the most famous national heroes of the Romanian Pantheon. A number of academic, cultural-patriotic and foundational institutions became associated with the project, such as the Romanian Academy, through its George Barțiu Institute of History and its Center for Transylvanian Studies of Cluj-Napoca, the Transylvanian Leaders Foundation, the Avram Iancu Cultural-Patriotic Society of Romania, and the Association of the Transylvanian School of Book Publishing and Promotion. By bringing together the creative forces and energies of a number of Transylvanian intellectuals—writers, historians, and literary critics—as well as generous sponsors, who share a noble sense of love for the homeland and a desire to honor the heroes of the Romanian nation, Școala Ardeleană publishing house has succeeded in launching four volumes as part of a series titled “150 Years Since Avram Iancu’s Passing into Eternity” on the Romanian book market of 2022. The books were published both in classic printed form and in electronic format (eBook), featuring the same format or typographical configuration, a very similar illustration of the covers, and the ‘Avram Iancu 150’ logo, created by graphic designer Teodor Bogoi, and are easily accessible on the publisher’s website under the entry ‘Avram Iancu 150.’

The publishing project made its debut early in the year with two drama volumes, one by writer Mircea Tomuș (1934–2022): Glonțul de argint sau Adevărata moarte a lui Avram Iancu: Teatru (The silver bullet or The true death of Avram Iancu: Theater), and the other by philosopher and writer Lucian Blaga (1895–1961): Avram Iancu: Dramă (Avram Iancu: Drama), an edition supervised, prefaced and provided with a critical dossier by Mircea Popa, followed in the autumn of the same year by two other volumes, of history and historiographical and literary analyses, namely, Silviu Dragomir’s (1888–1962) Avram Iancu: O viață de erou (Avram Iancu: A hero’s life), edited with an intro-
duction and note on the edition by Ioan Bolovan and Sorin Șipoș, and Mircea Popa’s (born 1939) _Avram Iancu: Făuritor de istorie națională_ (Avram Iancu: National history-maker). In all, there were two new volumes, authored by the late writer, critic and literary historian Mircea Tomuș and by Professor Mircea Popa, and two books initiated in the interwar period by two outstanding representatives of 20th-century Romanian culture and historiography: Lucian Blaga and Silviu Dragomir.

Mircea Tomuș’s last ante-mortem book reveals the Transylvanian writer’s skills as a gifted novelist and dramatist, with a propensity for the crucial moments in the history of the Romanians of Transylvania, as also indicated by his earlier novel _Aripile demonului_ (The demon’s wings). In his analysis of this book dedicated to Avram Iancu, historian and literary critic Mircea Popa observes:

> Mircea Tomuș is not only a modern recorder of historical phenomena, but also an interpreter of multiple causes and effects, as well as a lover of the fascinating personalities of our national history, who brought about sequences of events and changes in political views.

Mircea Tomuș’s drama showcases Avram Iancu as “a character from an ancient tragedy, inflexible and impenitent, whose path and fate had been preordained.” Like any great character of antiquity, Mircea Popa goes on to point out,

> Iancu pursues his destiny, his eyes burning with illusions and claims humiliating to the emperor, who finds himself reprimanded by the Transylvanian mountain-dweller’s piercing gaze for having lied to a people and disregarded their sacrifice and loss of human life. Iancu’s intangible figure is placed once more in a memorable light by the very fact that he saved an emperor’s throne and by the fact that his appearance before such an individual forces those present to distinguish the true emperor from the puppet, as the latter fades impotently before the immeasurable popularity of that Christ of the mountains.

In conclusion, that same literary critic of Cluj adds,

> the highlighting of such imponderable elements, in greater numbers and more carefully transfigured, makes Mircea Tomuș’s masterpiece an instructive reading on intransigence and betrayal, on oaths of faith and the breaking of promises made.

The equation is thus squared, in the sense that that entire history of Transylvania, centered around “the good emperor,” is nothing but a “secular farce, where betrayal and deceit played an essential role.”
Blaga’s play *Avram Iancu*, originally published in 1934 and re-edited in the summer of 2022 in the form of an edition supervised by Mircea Popa, is one of philosopher Lucian Blaga’s interwar dramatic creations, alongside *Zamolxe* (1921), *Tulburarea apelor* (The disturbance of the waters) (1923), *Daria* (1925), *Ivana* (1925), *Înviere* (Resurrection) (1925), *Meșterul Manole* (Master Manole) (1927), and *Cruciada copiilor* (The children’s crusade) (1930), all of which were acclaimed by critics of their time and were successfully staged in Cluj, Bucharest, Oradea, Timișoara, Brașov, Cernăuți, Lugoj, etc. The edition published under the patronage of the Școala Ardeleană publishing house is dedicated to the memory of Dorli Blaga (1930–2021), the author’s daughter. For Lucian Blaga, Professor Mircea Popa convincingly affirms, the historical character of Avram Iancu “corresponds to his idea of a dramatical revival of some of the legendary figures of folk mythology and history,” such as Zalmolxis, Master Manole or Anton Pann, as

> real-symbolic characters deeply rooted in the national spirituality, whose energetically catalyzing reverberations initiate a dialogue between past and present of the most spectacular kind. The dramatic approach, however, pertains to tragic mythology and mirrors the relationship between hero and history through the lens of contaminated Nietzscheanism, which influenced his views in more than one respect, according to which times of crisis require heroes to match. Hence the intervention of the supernatural in the preparation of the superhuman. Avram Iancu is such a symbolic figure, shaped by history, yet transgressing history due to the scale of his work.

Therefore, the literary critic concludes, Lucian Blaga’s play is not “historical in the strict sense of the word, but mythical,” as the playwright employs just a

> few real characters among a series of mythographic projections related to the damned hero and the fate of an oppressed people destined to keep being deceived by perverted foreign rulers who are indifferent to the natural desire for emancipation.\(^7\)

In fact, the author himself stated at the time that his play

> is not a “historical” drama in the usual sense of the word. “Historical” is only the framework of this drama, in a sense. The events that make up the drama take place in the crucial year of 1848, as well as later. In my drama, I have tried, to the best of my ability, to elevate the subject beyond historical contingencies and to deepen the perspectives, so as to render, in a nearly legendary or mythical setting, the human tragedy of a leader and, if I may be so bold, of a nation. My drama is thus history raised to the level of mythical potency, reality elevated beyond itself:\(^8\)
Specialized critics, represented by the reputed contemporary ethnologist Ioan Taloș (b. 1934), have pertinently noted that

*the mythological dimension of the play is given by the enigmatic and mysterious presence of the Babă (old woman, also known as Muma-Pădurii [Witch of Woods]), the key figure of the play’s prologue, who serves to provide the mythic-magical dimension to the drama’s archetypal substrate.*

In his turn, Mircea Popa contends that

*Blaga needed this character in order to highlight the facets of the mythology of the place, which evokes the deep, archetypal connections between man and his surrounding nature, with cosmological roots supplying the power of the beings that inhabit this part of the world.*

Blaga’s play consists of a prologue and three stages comprising ten scenes, whose expressive theatrical force is given by the mythical-folkloric motif of the transformation of bird into man, expressed in the lines: “În grădina lui Ion/ Toate păsările dorm./ Numai una n-are somn,/ Cată să se facă om” (In Ion’s garden/ All the birds are asleep./ Only one is sleepless./ Seeking to become human), taken by the playwright from a folklore anthology compiled by Ion Pillat. From the very outset, Lucian Blaga shows Avram Iancu as a man driven by his devotion to the liberation of the Romanian people, a hero arising after a long and torturous wait to lead his mountain-dwelling people into battle. That is why he enjoys the esteem and respect of his enemies, the immense love of his own people, and his appearance in the revolution’s hotspots is always an occasion for joy and popular enthusiasm, the Motzen following him faithfully in any situation.

He seeks no personal gain, but is guided only by the interests of the general cause. Iancu is a visionary and a prophet, always able to distinguish between diplomatic trickery and the reality on the ground. The hero is an emissary of intransigence and respectful of the truth, as Blaga has him utter fiery lines such as: “Epistles and petitions, as we have seen, get us nothing but promises! Let us build on blood! Let us build on steel!”

The third book published by Școala Ardeleană publishing house as part of the “Avram Iancu 150” series is the monograph titled *Avram Iancu*, by the eminent Transylvanian historian Silviu Dragomir and republished in Cluj-Napoca in September 2022. The work was first published in 1924, on the centennial of Avram Iancu’s birth, when several Romanian historians, literati, and cul-
tural personalities marked the 100-year anniversary of the hero of the Romanian Revolution in Transylvania by writing an entire series of popularization articles, specialized studies, and monographic volumes of varying length and scientific value. Historian Silviu Dragomir showed an unabated interest in the biography of Avram Iancu and of other tribunes of the Romanian Landsturm, as well as in the history of the Romanian Revolution in Transylvania in general.

Dragomir is the author of numerous historiographical and documentary works dedicated to the 1848–1849 Revolution in Transylvania, having compiled several volumes, of which he managed to publish five between 1944 and 1947, while the sixth remained in manuscript form. A professor at the Andrean Theological-Pedagogical Institute of Sibiu (1911–1919) and at King Ferdinand I University of Cluj (1919–1947), corresponding (1916) and full (1928) member of the Romanian Academy, Dragomir is a nationally and internationally recognized historian with an impressive oeuvre and legacy. His scholarly efforts were focused on the ecclesiastical history of the Romanians of Transylvania in the 17th and 18th centuries, the history of the Revolution of 1848–1849, medieval history, and the history of Eastern Romaniy in the Balkan Peninsula. Excluded from Cluj university life (1947), expelled from the Academy (1948) and incarcerated in the prisons of Caransebeș and Sighet (1949–1955) due to his involvement in interwar Romanian politics, Dragomir was perceived by the ideologists of the Stalinist Marxist-Leninist regime as a “bourgeois historian,” being labelled a “nationalist” incapable of revising his historical views in accordance with the interpretation proposed by the Rollerian historiography of the 50’s.

That is the reason why, during his lifetime, he was denied the publication of his monograph *Avram Iancu*, revised in 1949 and completed in 1955, the work being printed posthumously in a censored form only after the softening of the regime in 1965, and then in 1968 and 1988. The historian’s desire to persuade the regime’s censors to approve the publication of the monograph is, however, easily observed, both in his preface and in certain passages of the work, where he quotes or paraphrases excerpts from Marx and Lenin, as well as some Russian communist historians.

In fact, the entire saga of Silviu Dragomir’s research on Avram Iancu and the 1848–1849 Revolution, as well as on the publication of the monograph on the “Prince of the Mountains” is detailed by the editors of the latest edition in their substantial introduction titled “Silviu Dragomir and the Elaboration of the Biography of Avram Iancu: Stages and Ideological Implications, Historical Significance.” The two distinguished Transylvanian historians, Professors Ioan Bolovan of Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and Sorin Șipoș of the University of Oradea—the author of a historical monograph titled *Silviu Dragomir—istoric* (Silviu Dragomir—historian), published in three editions (2002, 2008,
— introduce the 21st-century reader to the biography of Silviu Dragomir and to the Romanian historiography of the 1848–1849 Revolution, thus enabling the reader to understand the tortuous itinerary of Avram Iancu’s monograph, starting from the historian’s worksite and running through the gauntlet of the communist ideological censorship of the second half of the 20th century. The two historians’ endeavor clearly justifies not only the initiative of reprinting the best monograph on Avram Iancu to date, but, above all, the need to have it printed in its original form, as desired by the author and as identified by the editors in the Silviu Dragomir collection kept at the Hunedoara County Office of the National Archives. This detail is worth highlighting, as none of the editions published in the last three decades (1998, 2012, 2016, and 2018) was based on Silviu Dragomir’s original manuscript, but were republications of previous editions corrupted by the communist censorship. In their note on the edition, Ioan Bolovan and Sorin Șipoș mention all these details, explaining that the novelty of the present edition lies precisely in the publication for the first time of the full text of the manuscript drawn up by the author, starting with the very title: *Avram Iancu: O viață de eroi* (Avram Iancu: A hero’s life), as proposed by Silviu Dragomir, but deemed inappropriate by the censors of the communist era, who struck off that sublime characterization: “a hero’s life.” Last but not least, this restitution is justified not only from a scholarly perspective, but also from an ethical point of view, representing a moral duty towards the memory of Silviu Dragomir, who must be known and remembered “as he really was,” not as the censors of the communist regime wanted to present him.

The monograph is structured into ten chapters, the author focusing in particular on Avram Iancu’s activity between 1848 and 1852, yet not failing to include aspects of his private life (friends, love interests, illnesses), as well as the less favorable or the downright tragic moments and stages of his biography. Thus, chapters II–IX can also be read as a history of the revolution, the (Austrian-Romanian-Hungarian) civil war, and the Romanian national movement in Transylvania in 1848–1852, preceded by an initial chapter depicting the hero’s origins, adolescence and education and followed at last by the tenth chapter, dedicated to his sad end. All in all, the core of Dragomir’s monograph reflects the way in which the figure of the “Prince of the Mountains” has been perceived and preserved in the collective memory of the Romanian nation and in the main historical and literary works dedicated to him, but without any uncritical renditions of various historical pieces of information and narratives, which Dragomir directly and sometimes quite sharply and caustically deconstructs.

Dragomir proceeds in this manner because, unlike other biographers of Avram Iancu, he undertook a critical study based primarily on an immense amount of written sources, collected from Romanian, Hungarian and Austrian
archives, to which he added a critical synthesis of a vast specialized bibliography, based on the works of Romanian, Hungarian, Austrian, and Russian historians, as well as on oral tradition, which endowed this monograph with a manifest capacity to stand the test of time and its author with undeniable scholarly authority in regard to the biography of Avram Iancu and the issue of the 1848–1849 Revolution in Transylvania. In spite of the occasional moments in the text that reveal the historian’s undisguised admiration for the national hero of the Romanians of Transylvania, and in spite of certain adjectives, qualifiers and expressions borrowed from the dialectical materialism of class struggle, which denote a tendentious negative labelling of the Habsburgs and the privileged social classes, in short, of the “old” and “reactionary regime”—instances where the author’s subjective and sentimental Romanian views, on the one hand, and his compromises with the Marxist-Leninist historical ideology, on the other, can be identified—the dominant ideas, the conclusions and the overall vision of the work are not corrupted and therefore cannot really be attacked on various epistemological grounds. Beyond such strictly specialized or critical-historical issues, Dragomir’s historical discourse is a captivating one, his narrative possessing distinct literary beauty, with brilliant turns of phrase and superb characterizations of the main character, such use of language highlighting the historiographer’s ability to address a wide range of readers and even to cross over into the realm of literature.

Particularly suggestive in this respect are the following randomly selected excerpts, which make for a remarkable portrayal of Avram Iancu and consolidate his emblematic role in the history of the Romanian nation of Transylvania:

"His entire being is woven out of qualities that make him popular. His curt, yet resolute manner of speaking stems from his mountain dweller’s blood. His language, occasionally sprinkled with jokes and embellished with metaphors, does not in the least set him apart from the peasant spirit. Old men praise him for his reasonable council in measuring the chance of success, while the young admire him for his courage and the boldness of his hopes on behalf of the people. . . Iancu is now determined to give himself to the people, to whom he instinctively brings the most precious means of extorting victory: the will to fight unwaveringly and the energy to pursue, beyond all sacrifice, the liberation and progress of his nation. . . It is clear that the true captain of the Romanian army, gathered from all corners of Transylvania, was Avram Iancu. His popularity had long surpassed the confines of the Apuseni Mountains. The people, who loved him, now regard him as a leader called upon to break the chains of slavery. That is why they have invested him with the romantic title of Prince of the Mountains."
Given the historiographical and literary value of Silviu Dragomir’s monograph on Avram Iancu, the author of the present paper can only hope that as many Romanians as possible, who love their country unconditionally and wish to become acquainted with its history and heroes, will acquire and read this book about the life of a brave hero whose “sole longing” was to see his nation redeemed. In conclusion, this book is part of that category usually referred to as formative readings, expanding the intellectual horizon and increasing the sense of patriotism of a person and of a nation.

The final book published in Cluj-Napoca, in November 2022, as part of the editorial project dedicated to 150 years since the death of Avram Iancu, belongs to the Cluj professor, critic and literary historian Mircea Popa and was launched on 30 January 2023 at Lucian Blaga Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca on the occasion of the author’s birthday. Professor Popa has earned a reputation not only among his fellow historians, writers, literary critics, and philologists, but also in the Transylvanian and Romanian cultural and social milieu in general, thanks to the more than 80 books he has published as author, co-author, editor and coordinator, as well as to the positions—pertinent and firm—he has publicly expressed in the written press and in cultural magazines on literary, historical and cultural topics, but especially on key social-political and national-patriotic issues. His writings are pervaded not only by the voice of the old-school, solidly trained historian and literary critic, with a genuine exegetical talent and profound hermeneutics, but also by that of the ardent patriot, polemical at times, caustic and incisive on occasion—in short, the intellectual profile of a fierce fighter for the truth and justice of his nation, committed “to the glory of his homeland,” as a line from a popular poem called “Iancu’s Song” goes. The volume brings together articles and reviews written by Professor Mircea Popa over time about Avram Iancu, about the cult and the facets of the hero in Romanian literature and historiography.

It is no coincidence that the ample foreword is titled “In Lieu of a Preface: Between Literature and History: The Cult of Avram Iancu” and that, instead of a conclusion, there is an epilogue titled “In the Conscience of Posterity.” After an analytical retrospective of the eulogistic and anniversary volumes, the poetry and the literature, as well as the main commemorative manifestations dedicated to Avram Iancu’s personality from the hero’s death to the present day, the author stresses that “Iancu as a symbol is more relevant than ever” because “all those who love and revere Avram Iancu are still fighting for the preservation of human dignity, of national entities and of the love for one’s country and nation.” In other words, Avram Iancu is more than a mere historical figure who played a key role in the history of the Romanians of Transylvania in 1848–1850; he has become a symbol of the Romanian struggle and national dignity. At the
same time, the self-sacrificing spirit and magnanimity manifested by the Prince of the Mountains in the service of the Romanian nation make him a model of patriotism and a timeless example to be followed, as Iancu is counted among the “Fathers of the Homeland.”

Chapter I, “Avram Iancu—Facets of a Hero,” comprises nine subchapters, which capture the manner in which the great hero’s personality has been portrayed in works of literature and dramas written by Mihai Eminescu, Lucian Blaga, Ioan Pop-Florantin—the author of the first historical novel dedicated to Iancu—, Alexandru Ceușianu, Ovidiu Hulea, Mircea Tomuș, and Teofil Răchițeanu, as well as in the conscience of the Romanian people—where he has been counted among the “saints and founders of the country” —, and, finally, in the film script by Hungarian writer Balázs Domokos-Haraga. With respect to the latter, Professor Mircea Popa states that “he is due special praise,” as he has succeeded in overcoming national bias and the “historical attitudes of his people” and provided a

fair interpretation of the tumultuous events of 1848, thus making this novel a highly faithful mirror of the events it evokes, which constitutes a great step forward in the accurate understanding of Romanian-Hungarian relations in time and over time.

Chapter II, “Avram Iancu in the Historical Arena,” comprises ten subchapters presenting five fundamental monographs dedicated to the Prince of the Apuseni Mountains by a number of renowned Transylvanian historians—Iosif Sterca Şuluțiu, Alexandru Ciura, Gelu Neamțu, Florian Dudaș, and Silviu Dragomir—, while another five subchapters are focused on the main stages of the hero’s life, such as the challenges of his youth as a student, his relations with Cluj and Blaj, the spiritual, social, national and ideological filiation between Horia and Iancu, the family of the tribune Vasile Fodor. The chapter ends with an overview of the great festivities organized at local, regional and national level in 1924, on the occasion of the centennial of Avram Iancu’s birth, when the entire country paid tribute to him for his memorable deeds.

Mircea Popa’s book about Avram Iancu shows us today that the life and activity of the Prince (Crăișor) of the Apuseni Mountains has been a constant object of historical and literary investigation, from Amos Frâncu and Iosif Sterca Şuluțiu at the turn of the 20th century, to Ioan Lupaș, Silviu Dragomir, and Lucian Blaga in the interwar period, and from Ștefan Pascu, Liviu Maior, Pompiliu Teodor, and Horia Ursu in the socialist era to Gelu Neamțu, Ioachim Lazăr, Ovidiu Bârlea, and Mircea Tomuș in the last three decades, to mention only the representative names of Romanian historiography and literature. The
author also reveals that a “much sought-after field has been that of traditions, memoirs, and folklore, yielding most remarkable anthologies and testifying to a strong and persistent interest of the collective mind in the preservation of the memory” of Avram Iancu. With this volume, Professor Mircea Popa joins the ranks of the outstanding personalities of modern and contemporary Romanian culture that have turned an admiring gaze towards the effigy of the national hero Avram Iancu and rendered his biography with talent and skill, thus cultivating and increasing among their fellow countrymen the fame and the cult of the Prince, whose only desire was to see his nation redeemed.

Techno Media Publishing House of Sibiu

The historical and literary endeavor to recover and revive the memory of the great hero would not be complete without the intelligentsia of the city of Sibiu, where the astra Association was founded in 1861, a true academy for Transylvanian Romanians, which brought together the energies of Romanian scholars, contributing decisively to the affirmation and progress of Romanian culture and literature in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș between 1861 and 1948. Thus, in the autumn of 2022, with the aid of the Techno Media publishing and printing house of Sibiu, the following two volumes were published: Avram Iancu, Eroul națiunii (Avram Iancu: The hero of the nation) and Avram Iancu: Mărturii istorico-literare (Avram Iancu: Historical and literary testimonies).

The first volume, edited by Emilian M. Dobrescu and Maria Grancea, appeared under the patronage of the Town Library of Avrig and is, in effect, a compilation of the papers presented at the 6th edition of the Gheorghe Lazăr Academic School, organized by the Municipality of Avrig and the Town Library of Avrig on 9 September 2022. The collective volume comprises nine articles and studies written by historians, literati, history teachers, and a well-known archivist, and tackles the following topics pertaining to military history, imageology, literary and oral history, literature, sourceology, and art: “The Artillery of Avram Iancu’s Army and the Masters of Cannon Casting” (Gheorghe Bichigean); “Brothers Octavian and Eugen Goga on Avram Iancu” (Cosmin-Crăciun Cruciat); “Avram Iancu—A Martyr and Hero of the Romanian Nation” (Aurel V. David); “Avram Iancu and the Revolution of 1848–1849 in Transylvania: Attitudes, Representations and Mentalities” (Petre Din); “Avram Iancu: A Novelized Biography” (Emilian M. Dobrescu and Edith Mihaela Dobrescu); “The Image and Spirit of Avram Iancu As Perceived by the Inhabitants of Rogojel (Vlădeasa) Village in the 1950s” (Mihaï D. Drecin); “Avram
Iancu in Romanian Literature” (Anca Sirghie); “The Most Beautiful Avram Iancu in Romanian Sculpture (Interview)” (Anca Sirghie); “Avram Iancu—Archival Documents” (Alexiu Tatu), accompanied by an Addendum containing a series of letters written by the organizers and participants in the 6th edition of the Gheorghe Lazăr Academic School of Avrig, intended as a homage to the national hero Avram Iancu. With their diverse scientific, literary and historiographical scope and significance, the papers gathered in this volume auspiciously complete the bibliography dedicated to Avram Iancu, who remains a landmark of our national history and a research subject still open to Romanian historians and literati of the past, present, and future.

The second volume published in November 2022 in Sibiu is a work by Professor Lucian Giura (born 1950), the former dean (2002–2008) of the Faculty of History and Heritage of Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. Interested in the life and work of Transylvanian cultural personalities, such as the Transylvanian-Saxon priest Stefan Ludwig Roth, the 1848 revolutionary Ștefan Moldovan of Mediaș, Banat scholar Emilian Micu, and historian Ioan Lupaș, the Sibiu academic correctly understood the need to bring Avram Iancu back to the attention of the contemporary Romanian public by compiling a substantial anthology of historical and literary texts selected from folk literature or signed by well-known Romanian historiographers and writers of the 19th and 20th centuries. In the foreword to the volume, signed by the poet, novelist and essayist Silviu Guga (b. 1944), the reader discovers that this anthology is the third of its kind dedicated to Avram Iancu, after the volumes Poezii poporale despre Avram Iancu (Folk poems about Avram Iancu) by Simeon Florea Marian, published in Suceava in 1900, and Avram Iancu: Antologie literară (Avram Iancu: A literary anthology), compiled by Alexandru Andrițoiu in 1972. However, unlike the previous volumes, as that same author of the foreword points out, Professor Giura’s approach “is commendable” because it provides the 21st-century Romanian reader with “the most comprehensive anthology on the subject of Avram Iancu that includes historical texts and documents, evocations in memoirs and speeches, and literary texts,” carefully selected “to highlight the figure of that great patriot who suffered the grim fate of a veritable martyr,” thus arousing the interest of “both history and literature lovers.” The book compiled by Lucian Giura is structured in three parts: “I. Avram Iancu in Folk and Cultured Poetry,” comprising 53 poems; “II. Avram Iancu in Prose and Periodicals,” the most substantial section of the book; and “III. Avram Iancu in Drama,” containing two excerpts from plays by Ion U. Sorciu and Lucian Blaga. Among the authors of the poems and texts rendered in this volume are some of the most resonant names of 19th and 20th-century Romanian culture, including historians such as Enea Hodoș, George Barițiu, Alexandru Papiu-
Ilarian, Nicolae Iorga, George Bogdan Duică, Nicolae Buta, Ioan Lupaș, Silviu Dragomir, Virgil Ștrotopa, and Pompilie Teodor, and Romanian writers, poets, and prosaists such as Vasile Alecsandri, Iosif Vulcan, Andrei Bârseanu, Octavian Goga, Emil Isac, Roman Ciorogariu, Vasile Goldiș, Vasile Stoica, Alexandru Ciura, Cezar Petrescu, Nichifor Crainic, Ioan Alexandru, Ana Blandiana, and Adrian Păunescu. It becomes obvious to the contemporary reader that Avram Iancu, nicknamed “the Prince of the Mountains,” has been preserved in popular consciousness as the central figure of the events of the 1848–1849 Revolution, being woven into songs and idealized in poems, like all famous leaders of social and national struggles. Iancu’s cult has become deeply ingrained in the hearts of the Transylvanian Romanians and he has taken his eternal place in the Romanian pantheon, all of great Romanian historians, poets, writers, and people of culture having written remarkable pages about his life and, above all, about his brave deeds, such representative works being comprised in this book, suggestively titled Avram Iancu: Mărturii istorico-literare (Avram Iancu: Historical and literary testimonies). Finally, it is worth pointing out that another reason why Professor Lucian Giura’s anthology stands out among other works of its genre has to do with the academic paraphernalia (notes, appendices, bibliography) indispensable to such a publishing endeavor of historiographical, literary and patriotic relevance.

Theosis Publishing House of Oradea

In the second half of 2022, the Theosis publishing house of Oradea issued the volume Avram Iancu—150: Oglinda sinceră a vieții noastre naționale (Avram Iancu—150: The candid mirror to our national life), signed by Orthodox Fr. Ion Alexandru Mizgan, Ph.D. in history (2013) and Th.D. (2023), the author of numerous articles, studies and volumes on church history, Romanian history, and particularly on the issue of the Fourth Crusade of 1204 and its protagonists. The author’s profile as a historian and author is reflected in this three-part book as well. From the very onset, the author confesses that the aim of his endeavor was not exclusively scholarly, but also patriotic, as, in the context of a well-rounded commemoration, he sought to contribute to the rekindling of “the love for one’s Country, the love and respect for one’s Ancestral Land,” thus honoring the memory of Avram Iancu, one of the great heroes of the Romanians, who contributed to the survival of the Romanian nation throughout history. The volume consists of three chapters, the first one, “Avram Iancu, Prince of the Apuseni Mountains” providing a brief biography of the hero, while the second part contains the reflections on Avram Iancu of two historians from Ora-
dea and a writer from Maramureș, namely: the late professor Sever Dumitrașcu (1937–2022) of the University of Oradea,40 historian Florian Dudaș (b. 1947), one of the most knowledgeable experts on the biography of Avram Iancu and his presence in the Romanian collective mind, author of three substantial volumes dedicated to the hero and published in several editions,41 and the writer Nicoară Mihali of Maramureș, who was responsible for the reprinting in 2021 of the first monograph dedicated to Avram Iancu, originally published in 1897 under the signature of Iosif Sterca Șuluțiu.42 The final chapter of the volume tells the life story of Avram Jeflea, a descendant of the Iancu family from Vidra, a friend of the author, who passed away too early, which is why this work has been dedicated to his memory.43 Fr. Mizgan’s book can be included in the genre of the popularization literature of a profoundly eulogistic nature, intended to glorify Avram Iancu and keep his memory alive in the Romanian consciousness, thus following in the footsteps of that priest who filled in the “register of the dead” of Vidra de Sus parish in September 1872 by writing under “Occupation of the deceased”: “Avram Iancu, Hero of the Romanians.”

Conclusions

O

n the one hundred and fiftieth commemoration of Avram Iancu’s passing into eternity, Romanian historians and writers of Transylvania, as well as the publishing houses Școala Ardeleană of Cluj-Napoca, Techno Media of Sibiu, and Theosis of Oradea fulfilled their professional and moral duty towards the memory of the “Prince of the Mountains,” whose sole desire was to see his nation redeemed. Although different in their scientific approach and in size, yet well-defined in terms of profile, the volumes in question are addressed to the contemporary Romanian public: from specialized historians and literary critics to writers, priests, history lovers, and Romanian patriots all over Transylvania, who have acquired and wish to pass on the respect for the figure of Avram Iancu, preserved in the Transylvanian Romanian collective mind under the eloquent and candid name of “the Sweet Prince of the Mountains” (in Romanian, “Crăișorul Munților”).

Notes

6. Popa, 123–125.
8. Qtd. in Popa, 89–90.
10. Qtd. in Popa, 64.
11. Qtd. in Popa, 65.
16. Silviu Dragomir, *Avram Iancu* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1968), 368 pp., with illustrations embedded in the text and a print run of 24,160 copies (16,000 paper-back and 8,100 bound), as stated on the final page.
27. Popa, 32.
Abstract
150 Years Since Avram Iancu’s Passing into Eternity:
A Publishing Retrospective of the Year 2022

The present article provides a brief historiographical analysis of the editorial year ‘Avram Iancu 150,’ which saw the publication of seven volumes of history, literature, poetry, critical literature, and drama dedicated to the hero of the Romanian Revolution of 1848–1849 in Transylvania. Four books were published by the Școala Ardeleană publishing house of Cluj-Napoca, the only publishing house in Romania to have undertaken a large-scale publishing project dedicated to restoring the life and memory of Avram Iancu for the 21st-century reader, two volumes were published by the Techno Media publishing house of Sibiu, and another volume by the Theosis publishing house of Oradea. Two of the six volumes are critical re-editions of works written in the first half of the 20th century by two distinguished personalities of Romanian culture: philosopher, writer and playwright Lucian Blaga and historian Silviu Dragomir. The other volumes were authored by writer Mircea Tomuș, critic and literary historian Mircea Popa, historian Lucian Giura, librarian Maria Grancea, and Father Ion Alexandru Mizgan of the Orthodox Church.

Keywords
Transylvania, Avram Iancu, Romanian historiography, literature, editorial year 2022