

REVIEW

Ritratto di Nicolae Iorga. Storico, uomo di cultura, patriota A ottant'anni dalla sua tragica scomparsa/Portretul lui Nicolae Iorga. Istoric, om de cultură, patriot. La optzeci de ani de la tragica sa dispariție, a cura di/coordonatori Giuseppe Motta, Roxana Mihaly, Atti del Webinar Internazionale/Actele Webinarului Internațional, 27 noiembrie 2020, Roma: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2022, 275 p.

The present work brings together in an edited volume the presentations given by the participants of a November 2020 online webinar dedicated to marking the 80th anniversary of Nicolae Iorga's death. The meeting was organized at the initiative of Grigore Arbore, director of the Romanian Institute of Research and Humanistic Culture of Venice and was virtually hosted by Unitelma Sapienza din Roma. The editors of this entirely bilingual book (in Italian and Romanian) are Roxana Mihaly from the Romanian Institute of Research and Humanistic Culture of Venice and Giuseppe Motta of Sapienza University of Rome.

The volume is structured in two parts: a shorter introductory one, with four papers, and a second larger part, made of ten chapters directing attention to Iorga's views on different specific subjects.

The first part opens with interventions by the two key organizers of the conference, Grigore Arbore-Popescu, director of the Romanian Institute of Culture and Humanistic Research in Venice, and Antonello Biagini, Rector of Unitelma Sapienza. Arbore-Popescu's paper outlines Iorga's complex personality and public career against the backdrop of Romania's political developments of the time. Biagini looks after examples of similarities in the history of the two countries in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Two other contributions placed in the same introductory section are a word by the Romanian Ambassador to Italy, George Bologan, and a very brief overview by historian Andrei Pippidi, member of the Romanian Academy and one of Iorga's grandsons, of the memory politics regarding the historian after his death in 1940.

The second part of the book gathers ten authors with different backgrounds and research interests: scholars of medieval studies (Ioan Aurel Pop, Ovidiu Cristea, Andrei Timotin), of nationalism and national minorities (Stefano Bianchini, Cornel Sigmirean, Ioan Bolovan, Giuseppe Motta, Andrea Carteny), scholars focused on international relations (Alessandro Vagnini) or cultural diplomacy (Roxana Mihaly) in the interwar period. The first two contributors who open this part are Ioan Aurel Pop and Ovidiu Cristea. Pop investigates Iorga's perspective on one of the most salient issues in Romanian history, the birth of the medieval Romanian state, pointing to how many of the historian's

insights were confirmed by further research. Cristea adds to the same issue but moves the focus on another of Iorga's favourite topics, the later Crusades, and their impact on the formation of the medieval states. He also explores how Iorga understood the birth of the first medieval states in the Eastern Mediterranean and South-Eastern Europe, and Romanian states respectively, as a consequence of the crusades and the ensuing complex and viable interaction between Catholics and Orthodox. Another closely interrelated subject, the place of Byzantine studies in the work of Iorga, is scrutinized in a chapter by Andrei Timotin. He covers both the main research directions approached by the twentieth century historian as well as the institutional framework put in place to offer Romanian scholars the possibility to further develop the field and find new medieval connections between East and West.

Cornel Sigmirean's paper examines how Iorga's image functioned as a key unifying figure (or national myth, in the author's words) for the Transylvanian nationalist intellectuals living under Austro-Hungarian rule at the beginning of the twentieth century. The author focused on how his public lectures provided fertile ground and a source of inspiration for the birth of *Luceafărul*, a Romanian nationalist magazine published in Budapest. A closely connected essay is Ioan Bolovan's, which practically looks at the same topic from another perspective, i.e., Iorga's involvement with ASTRA and with other institutions such as, after the Union of 1918, the Romanian University of Cluj.

Andrea Carteny presents Iorga's treatment of the history of the Balkan peoples as part not only of a larger interconnected South-East European area which inherited the legacy of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, but especially as a form of synthesis of European culture on a smaller scale. His perspective was also an invitation to solidarity among these smaller nations as many of Iorga's lectures and writings on the subject originated in the context of the Balkan Wars. The next chapter by Alessandro Vagnini continues the historical timeline to consider Iorga's unique role in supporting the pro-Entente camp before and during the First World War.

Giuseppe Motta deals with Iorga's most important system of beliefs, nationalism. The chapter assesses the context, core ideas and particularities of the historian's nationalist thinking. The author emphasizes how Iorga's antisemitism and conservative views were both inspirational for, congruent with and yet divergent in so many respects from those of the post-war radical nationalists of the fascist Iron Guard. In a similar manner, Stefano Bianchini's chapter also critically draws on Iorga's conservatism, but the attention shifts to how he grounded his social and political views on an ethno-cultural interpretation of Romanian identity based on his readings of the past. Roxana Mihaly closes the book with an essay describing Iorga's undertakings to buy and organize Romania's pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale.

This collection of studies traces and recalls some of the most important directions to be found in Iorga's historical research, as well as in his nationalist

thinking and political engagement. The volume provides new access to the Italian-speaking audiences to the literature on an important Romanian nationalist figure. In view of a second edition, the book would benefit from rigorous editing and proofreading by a Romanian native speaker whenever translation from Italian was performed.

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