

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN OLTENIA, BETWEEN OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA AND SHOWING THE ROMANIAN TRADITIONS WITHIN GUARD OF THE MOTHERLAND'S ACTIVITY (1938-1939)

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Abstract: Festive propaganda represented one of the main instruments of the carlist propaganda machinery, putting a monopole on organisation of national, religious and royal celebrations happened from the beginning of the royal dictatorship regime. In this context, we plan to retrace and analyse, using information coming from archive documents, the organisation and deployment of the Holy celebration of Christmas within activity program of The Guard of the Motherland in Oltenia county between years 1938-1939.

Keywords: ancestral traditions, Christmas Holiday, Guard of the Motherland, official propaganda, carlist dictatorship.

The youth represented one of the most important, if not the most important, social category to be included in the carlist project of socio-cultural reformation/restructuration of Romanian society, started in 1938, by the King Carol II. The formation of future citizens of Romanian Kingdom targeted the education using 2 main structures: The School and The Guard of the Motherland, an institution complementary to the school. The carlist's regime protagonists considered that thru the Guard of the Motherland the Romanian youth could be formed using some principles that will take him out and keep him away from the ideologies of the extremist movements, especially the legionnaire one, that, in those times, gained ground within youth's ranks. If we discount the fact that Guard of the Motherland represented an important instrument for official propaganda and an educational mean of the youth according to the ideology of the royal dictatorship, started in February 1938, this institution complementary for the school had the purpose of helping the youth to learn practical thinks, useful in everyday

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life, like discipline, respect for Romanian traditions, for Christian-orthodox religion, to develop patriotic sentiments etc.¹.

Suggestive to highlight how it was perceived, in the era, preoccupation of the King Carol II to offer the youth an education that will help them becoming responsible adults and citizens, is the following fragment from the press of the time: “King Carol II was a prototype of his era. (...) Was driven by an insatiable ambition of reformation. He pursued the identification of people’s progress, realizing that before taking the nation out of poverty – thru culture and discipline – the best intention is achievable. For that reason, he insisted, with real fanaticism, for the education of the children thru scouting², pre-military, sport etc. The English education seem to him to be the most suitable for development of personality, initiative and courage to take responsibility”³.

Considering that one of the main points of the guardian program was the cult for traditions, celebrating the Christmas observance⁴ represented an important moment to show and continue the Romanian traditions, and also the formation of social solidarity spirit within youth ranks. The fact that keeping and perpetuation of the ancestor’s observances was important was highlighted in one of the most important newspapers of the official propaganda: “The Guard of the Motherland realized from the beginning how overwhelming was the role of the ancestor’s traditions and observances had in the present and future life of the Romanian kind. (...) The country’s youth is therefore summoned to revive the cult of ancestor’s observances. Blocs of minstrels and guardians are carrying this way, around holiday, in Christian’s houses and souls, the great news of God’s Birth. In schools, the guardians gather around “the Star” to praise thru songs the One that came into the world to bring “peace and understanding” amongst people. The Guard of the Motherland put to the fore “the Star” that lead the Magi to *Vicleem (sic!)*. By spreading the cult of ancestor’s observances, the Guard of

¹ See, for a detailed analysis regarding the importance and the role of the guardians within the carlist politics of “moral recovery of the nation” and within the official propaganda mechanism, Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *Sărbătoare și propagandă în timpul regelui Carol al II-lea (1938-1940)*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2013, pp. 23-35.

² On January 24, 1937, The Scouting and The Guard were united into The Guardians Phalanx, so that on October 7, 1937 the institution The Guard of the Motherland will be set up (*Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, *Statul*, the direction committee Dimitrie Gusti, Const. Orghidan, Mircea Vulcănescu, Virgiliu Leonte, Bucharest, National Printing House, 1938, p. 486 – following will be quoted *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, *Statul*, ...).

³ Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, *Memorii*, vol. III, preface, elaborated edition, notes and comments by Alexandru Șerban, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing House, 2006, p. 189.

⁴ Practicing the Christmas traditions represented an attraction point also for the Hear Principe Mihai (future King Mihai I) and his colleagues from the Palatine Class, the evidence being the fact that in December 1936, these have presented the King Carol II and the Queen Maria the play “*Irozii*” and a carols program, the festive moment being directed by Victor Ion Popa. In the play “*Irozii*”, the Hear Principe Mihai played the role of the shepherd (Tudor Vișan-Miu, *La școală cu regele Mihai. Povestea Clasei Palatine*, Bucharest, Corint Publishing House, 2016, pp. 52-53).

the Motherland lights up in the soul of the young generation, the sacred fire of the love for Country and King”⁵.

To have a unitary organisation and good deployment of the celebrations of Christmas ancestor's observances, at the beginning of December, 1938, the Ministry of National Education sent instruction to the institutions under its command. According to those, the celebration had to be organized in the last Sunday before winter vacation, the purpose of which being “the revival and popularisation of these moving and evocative observances, from the region where the school was”⁶. The schedule of the celebration had to be built around two essential points: a short conference regarding the meaning of the observances and the Christmas observance portrayed through students' teams. To stage the observances two types of observances had to be considered: religious (Christian), respective carol and star songs (*Irozii/Vicleimul*), and profane observances (the small plough, the goat or *bezaia*, the little horse, the bear, the *jieni* or the outlaws, the puppets, the sawing, *sorcova* etc.). All the observances had to be “reproduced as it the custom in the people in terms of number of people, clothing, wording, song”⁷. The teams with exceptional results could register at the contests for prize award of the observances, organized by the Royal Cultural Foundation “Principe Carol”.

Also in 1938, instructions have been given to replace the Christmas tree with the traditional “Star”. Therefore, according to the letter from Schooling Regional Inspectorate Craiova, from December 23, 1938, the Ministry of National Education and the Guard of the Motherland, decided that the custom of Christmas tree to be replaced by performing Romanian customs (star, *irozii*, the small plough, *sorcova* etc.). The decision was based on a double motivation. On one hand, the custom of Christmas tree, “stranger for Romanian soul and tradition, attracts the destruction of numerous firs”, overlapping in the same time with Romanian observances. On the other hand, had to be considered that the custom of Christmas tree, resulting in destruction of numerous firs, contradicted the fact that the Guard of the Motherland had in its activities plantation of trees⁸.

Eloquent for our analysis and to highlight how the propagandistic events were staged, how the propagandistic festivities and the traditional ones were combined, within the audience, of a positive impact over the carlist regime, are the archive information regarding the guardian activities dedicated to Christmas celebration. Therefore, in Oltenia county, December 18, 1938 had a double signification: the festivity for institution of the Flock of professional Classes for apprentice from

⁵ “România. Organ al Frontului Renașterii Naționale” [“România. Organ of the National Renaissance Front”], year II, No. 567 (Christmas number), 25.XII.1939, p. 20.

⁶ National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Liceul Elena Cuza fund, file no. 1/1938-1939, f. 234.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 269.

Craiova⁹, held at the girls primary school “Elena Cuza” (“Elena Cuza the Lady” as it shown in the document), and also the celebration of Christmas observances within the Guard. Combining the two events in the same day presents a special signification because the festivities for the institution of the respective Flock give the opportunity to stage the first guardian manifestation, organized in Craiova after the “reformation” of the Guard of the Motherland from December 15, 1938¹⁰.

This first manifestation, symbolizing the politic of royal dictatorship regarding the youth – “the country’s future”, ties “the new regime” to the compliance and perpetuation of the Romanian observance. Preceding the celebration of the actual Christmas observances, the festivities for institution of the Flock mentioned before, deployed in the presence of the authorities and a large public, given the opportunity to spread the carlist ideology regarding the youth education and, by extension, the Romanian nation.

The ceremony for institution of the Flock of professional classes for apprentices from Craiova was organized in a few stages, specific to the festive propagandistic ritual of the royal dictatorship: the report given by the commander of the newly started Flock, Alice Nicolescu; review the guardians, done by the commander of the guardian legion of Dolj County, Elvira Georgescu; the royal anthem, the prayer “The Creed”, the religious service, ended with the blessing of the guardians given by the priest; the motto of the guardians (“Faith and Work for the Country and King”) recited by a guardian-student, the speech of the Flock commander and the speeches of the authorities (the Labour general inspector, the president of the Labour Chamber and the Dolj County prefect), thinking the song “Three Colours” and the speech of the Legion’s commander¹¹.

The speech of Alice Nicolescu, the Flock commander and the director of professional classes for apprentices from Craiova, highlights the contribution of King Carol II to the institution of the Guard of the Motherland and its part in education of youth with the purpose of becoming responsible adults-citizens responsible and useful to society, synthesized role in the guardian motto itself: “Faith and Work for the Country and King”. Faith indeed, but a dynamic faith will be at the base of formation of the Romanian people. Organized work provides the harmonisation of social classes. The country only exists when a people is strong, numerous and healthy. And the dynastic principle is tied to the King’s person, which in his turn is tied to the principle nation development existence. (...) the desire of the Great

⁹ The Flock of the Professional Classes for apprentice from Craiova was, on December 18, 1938, the only Flock of apprentice in Olt County officially (National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt fund, Administrative Service, file no. 22/1939, f. 98).

¹⁰ See, for the stipulations of the decree-law from December 15, 1938, that sanctioned the monopolisation of the youth’s education by the Guard of the Motherland, “Monitorul Oficial”, part I, year CVI, No. 292, December 15, 1938, pp. 5942-5947.

¹¹ National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt fund, Administrative Service, file no. 22/1939, f. 101.

Guardian [King Carol II – our notes] is that all will activate in this movement. Activating in the guard, we work for each of us, therefore for the country”¹².

Addressing, then, directly to the newly regimented guardians in the “The Great White Army of His Majesty”, Alice Nicolescu highlights what the guardian life involves and what final result was desired: “Beloved guardian, (...) we will get used with the good though of good, large and unselfish deeds, we will make a creed out of the work, we will worm our soul in the traditional cult of the family, of Christian teaching, of the heroic sentiment for sacrifice, of the symbolic worship of the flag and , finally, of the cult of dynasty, having wide open the ways towards the supreme commander of the Guard, His Majesty King Carol II, the Great King of culture. In you, the children from schools, treasures of soul virtues unsearched yet, The Great Guardian has seen *the possibility to make another Romania (our underline)*, that will grow every year, to harder itself in the future”¹³.

Fragments from the speech of the commander Alice Nicolescu, quoted above, are significant to highlight the role that festive events had in propagation of the carlist ideology in the ranks of local and national communities. Taking place in the presents of a numerous public (authorities, students, teachers, reporters etc), the messages sent thru occasional speeches reinforced, practically, the official speech regarding the need to adopt the policy of Romanian nation regeneration and, in the same time, validated the royal dictatorship regime.

If the centre of the first festivity is represented by the King Carol II and “the new regime”, in the centre of the second were the Christmas ancestor traditions and the signification of this holy celebration, being though as a reflection of the programme of the Guard of the Motherland. The programme of the Christmas customs has included a speech about the Christmas ancestors traditions from religious point of view and about following them, held by the priest G. Dumitrescu and specific songs and lyrics: “Bună dimineața la Moș Ajun”, Moș Crăciun (Lyrics by Elena Farago), “O ce veste minunată”, “Sorcovă străjerească”, “Domn, Domn să nălțăm”, “Moș Crăciun” (Lyrics by Octavian Goga), “Cetiniță, cetioară”, “Plugușorul străjeresc”¹⁴. After the end of the artistic program, the student-guardians received gifts purchased from the money of the commander director Alice Nicolescu and teachers from the apprentice professional classes from Craiova¹⁵.

In the school year 1939-1940, guardians meeting from December were reserved for preparation of the celebration of Christmas traditions¹⁶. These

¹² *Ibidem*, ff. 103-104.

¹³ *Ibidem*, f. 105.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 102.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 106; “Semnalul”, year 1, no. 271, December 21, 1938; “Universul”, year 55, no. 348, December 21, 1938.

¹⁶ The Guard of the Motherland, The Guidance Direction, *Program și instrucțiuni 1 sept[embrie] – 31 august 1940*, f. 1., [Printing house] Vrenea, 1939, p. 183 (following will be quoted: *Program și instrucțiuni 1 sept[embrie] – 31 august 1940 ...*).

preparations presumed fulfilling some activities during Guardian hours from school, and also during free time of the guardians, because the Guard was seen as a way of life, the Guard behaviour norms and ideology, thought under the surveillance of the teachers had to be learned and showed by the students under any circumstances, either public or private.

In Guard of the Motherland's program and instructions for the years 1939-1940, valid for all guardian units in the country, the point about the celebration dedicated to Christmas was called "Practising the customs"¹⁷. According to that, the guardians had to learn Christmas carols, songs about the star, wishes specific to the region they lived in; had to manufacture, at the guardian unit they belong to or at home, grouped in nests¹⁸ or little nests, stars and objects needed to practice the traditions (*buhai, harapnic, capră, plug, sorcovă* etc.). Before Christmas, in a chosen day, "the Celebration of customs" and "The Contest of stars" had to take place, and with that opportunity gifts were given to the needing people (their names were specified in "The Guardian Assistance"). It was specified that the Christmas tree (the fir), being a foreign object, "that hollows in the same time the forests and the soul of what is Romanian, will be in this year kept away from the guardians preferences"¹⁹.

In the same time, it was underlined that: "Celebrating the customs had to be a manifestation of showing and resurrect the traditional spirit"²⁰. In towns, were a high number of stars have been manufactured, guardian detachments could be organized to walk on the main streets of the towns.

During vacation, the guardians grouped in nests and little nests had to practice the Christmas customs: "the Guardians will bring joy and ancestor song under the window of the poor houses. Shall not receive any gifts or money from these families, by contrary they will bring little something from the gifts received from the richer people"²¹.

Although, even from 1938, was pursued the replacement of the Christmas tree practice with The Star, the given dispositions in 1939, by the local and county authorities were contradictory. Therefore, in the address send by the Cultural and Social Protection Service from Olt County, dated December 7, 1939, the mayor of Craiova has been told to organize "the traditional Christmas tree" inside the city hall and give clothing, shoes and food to the poor population from the town. Regardless, on December 15 the same year, the royal resident asked the mayor to take actions that "the Christmas tree to be replaced with the traditional

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 183.

¹⁸ The Nest was formed out of 6 guardians and was subdivided in 2 little nests ("Official Monitor", part 1, no. 292, December 15, 1938, p. 5944.). Although was the smallest unit in the guardian's hierarchy, the nest was, in the carlist regime vision, the most important because, thru the nest's activity, was created the possibility of forming the social solidarity spirit ("the small cell of synchronisation of the individual with the collective interests", *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, *Statul*, ..., p. 488).

¹⁹ *Program și instrucțiuni 1 sept[embrie] – 31 august 1940* ..., p. 183.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

Star” and organize a celebration, on Christmas Eve, where he will give various objects to poor children²².

Comparing with 1938, in 1939 the carlist authorities were more preoccupied by the propagandistic effects of Christmas celebration, because staging in the public space of some pre-established scenarios had to transmit to the local communities the message that the carlist regime is viable and, because he values the ancestor traditions, acts in the sense of perpetuation of them thru cultivation within the youth's rank of the feeling of love towards the country and ancestor's customs.

The instructions regarding the organisation and deployment of the Christmas celebration, developed by the Guard of the Motherland according to the decisions taken during the council had with the Propaganda Direction, were relayed to the royal resident of the Olt County on December 2, 1939. He, in his turn, gave dispositions so that authorities reporting to him (the prefects of the 6 counties, the mayors and scholar inspectorates) will give all the support for the success of the celebrations dedicated to Christmas that will be organized by the guardians²³.

The main objective of the Christmas celebration was “to shoe the Christian traditional spirit of our movement (Guard of the Motherland – *our note*)”, each having the duty to help, within their possibilities, those in need. The preparation for celebrating the Christmas customs had to be performed intensively all thru December, directed on two main themes: “ancestor customs, the help and good deed on Christmas”²⁴.

Celebrations dedicated to Christmas had to be organized on flock, cohort and reunited flocks in the conscript regions. For not being circumvented from their school obligations, the guardians from a flock, guided by the flock commander and by the respective school director, had to practise the program on Saturdays. The guardian program from December had as objective “resurrection, cultivation and spreading our old customs and traditions”²⁵. Therefore, in every flock the accent will be placed on the following matters: learning appropriate songs, poetries and dialogues; manufacturing by the guardians of the symbols associated with Christmas – the star, *buhai*, the goat, *sorcove* and also programs and posters.

The general program of the Christmas celebrations had to include the following points: the opening guardian ceremonial, carols, staging an act dedicated to Christmas Eve with respective traditions, *vicleimul*, present the Lord's birth using a picture, little plough, the goat etc. (present the stars of all the flocks), spreading the gifts around the respective flock's star and the closing guardian ceremonial. Also, the guardians from a flock were the ones that had to repair the old clothing gathered for the poor children and manufacture or repair the toys that

²² National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Primăria Municipiului Craiova fund, file no. 127/1939, ff. 455, 476.

²³ Idem, Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt fund, Administrative Service, file no. 7/1939, f. 27.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

had to be given for Christmas. The carols, the star and the little plough had to be performed at the poor houses, at the conscript's families, nursery homes and hospitals, where the guardians had to offer gifts²⁶.

Where the case was the guardians could stage the program of celebrating the Christmas traditions ("area specific celebrations") also in front of the soldier, ended with gifts offerings (cigarettes, soap, gingerbread, Turkish delights). Every town cohort had to organize a celebration in a public hall in that town, of which maximum duration was recommended to be two hours²⁷.

"The sensation" of the winter holidays was the so called "stars procession", the parades and marches in uniform were one of the main elements of the festive propaganda during the royal dictatorship. According to the Guard of the Motherland's instructions: "The flock's delegations from each cohort with their stars, will march in the town, within an imposing procession. One of the most beautiful star will be fixed in the centre of the town and guarded by two guardians under the surveillance of a commander that will change the service every hour"²⁸, the security being performed until 6 pm. In general, the orders were that the guardians can carol and walk with the star only until 9 pm²⁹.

The main purpose of the showing and guarding the star in the centre of the town was gathering the donations for the needed. Every time a passer donates something in "the donation box for the poor", the guardians had to thank them "using a proper salute"³⁰.

The analyse of the instructions given by the Guard of the Motherland for the preparation, organisation and deployment of the Christmas celebration highlights the complexity of the pre-established program that, in general, had to be staged in the entire country. This time, the main actors that had to transmit the official propagandistic message were the guardians, the country's youth. Just like other socio-professional categories, the guardians have been integrated into the socio-political ritual of carlist propaganda, being thought to practice or show into public or private environment the main elements of the official propaganda (the uniform, the carlist salute, parades, patriotic songs etc.)³¹: "*As general measure we attract attention over the demeanour and uniform port during the formation of the procession: over the perfect parade (our underline). (...) Another worry falling over the Counties, Legions and Cohorts commanders is that of a wise propaganda made in time, and also invitation of the authorities, official people. They will address warm thanks to collaborators, authorities, military bands that provided*

²⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 27-28.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 28.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 30.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 29.

³¹ For details, see Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *op. cit.*, 2013, pp. 62-66.

support etc.”³². The guardian's commanders had the obligation to report the activity performed with the occasion of Christmas celebration, because the centralisation of the guardian's results was desired for the entire country and publish them in newspapers and magazines.

On the other hand, the analysis of the same document highlights the accent put on the selfishness development, on the social solidarity sentiment and the love for the country. The youth were thought to practice “the good deed”, meaning the spread as young the habit of giving gifts, to help material or to bring joy to the poor (“Every unit has to fulfil a help either moral or material”³³).

The carlist authorities were preoccupied by the guardian's practice of the activities learned within the Guard of the Motherland or even within their own families: “The commander of the Guard of the Motherland sends the request that the Gentlemen and Ladies Commanders of Legions will urge the guardians to help the mothers around the house, proving they are duteous and householders. Also, they had to carol their own families: within their home they had to establish also small meetings. This way also their parents will share together with their children the joy of these Celebrations”³⁴. The guardians became this way the carriers and the showers of the ideology and the practices of the royal dictatorship regime in the private, the family environment.

The organisation and deployment of the celebrations of Christmas traditions have been performed with the implication of administrative authorities. An evidence in this way is the fact that on December 16, 1939, the royal resident of the Olt county (administrative-territorial unit composed out of 6 counties: Dolj, Gorj, Olt, Mehedinți, Romanați și Vâlcea³⁵) sent the mayor of the Craiova Town an address in which he requested the material support needed to organize the Christmas traditions in the hall of the National College “Carol I” (by making available, free of charge, the lighting and heating of the hall). Was about the party of the guardian's cohorts from Craiova, party followed by a procession towards the Cathedral “Saint Dumitru” and the headquarter of the royal residency. The access to the party presumed the pay of a tax that will be used “in the benefit of poor children and the conscript's families”³⁶.

At the celebration of the Christmas traditions performed by the flock of the “Tudor Vladimirescu” High school from Târgu-Jiu, the director of the high school sent invitations to the local authorities and personalities. One of these have been

³² National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt fund, Administrative Service, file no. 7/1939, f. 30.

³³ *Ibidem*, f. 29.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, ff. 29-30.

³⁵ Vezi, Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt (1938-1940)*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2012, p. 77-79.

³⁶ National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Primăria Municipiului Craiova fund, file no. 127/1939, f. 477.

sent to on December 12, 1939, to the head of Police of Târgu-Jiu city that was invited to participate with the police personal. The funds raised were destined to help the guardians of whose parents were conscripted, and also the soldiers from Gorj County concentrated on the border³⁷.

According to the propagandistic poster, the celebration of the Christmas traditions, organized on December 16, 1939, (16:30 hours), by the flock of the “Tudor Vladimirescu” high school from Târgu-Jiu in the hall of “Căldărușe” theatre, had a festival with Christmas traditions and various stages with national character. The first part of the program had 4 points: the opening guardian ceremony; the opening speech held by the high school director; carols sing by the high school choir, directed by the master Gh. Grüllmayer; selections from “Crai Nou” by Ciprian Porumbescu, performed by the high school’s orchestra, under the leadership of the same master. The second part was dedicated to artistic numbers: exercises of rhythmic gymnastics (with music), performed by the high school’s guardians, under the leadership of C. Unverdorben; recitals; Romanian popular music, performed by the high school’s orchestra and pyramids, performed by the guardians of the high school under the leadership of C. Unverdorben. The third part was a scene called “Christmas on the front”, a stage from an act with Christmas traditions. The celebration was closed with the singing of the guardians hymn and the motto: “Faith and Work for the Country and King”³⁸.

The Commander of the Olt Guardian County – organization unit of the Guard of the Motherland that included all the guardian units from Olt county – had send, on December 20, 1939, to Dinu Simian, the royal resident of the Olt county, the invitation to the celebration of the Christmas traditions. The exact celebration, that would last two hours (16:00 – 18:00), was followed the by “the procession of the stars”, “that will walk towards the Cathedral [“Saint Dumitru”]. Part of this procession are all the participating stars and quires. At the Cathedral, the guardians are received by the priest Neamțu, were they will receive thanks for following the traditions. From the Cathedral, we will go towards the resident palace, a square will be made, a ceremony, and after that a few demonstrations of traditions and quires: the prayer “the God is with us” then the guardians retreat. In front of the palace we believe that we will arrive between 7 and 7:30, were we hope we will have the special honour to be seen by Your Excellency”³⁹.

The analysis of the previous documents highlights the fact that celebration of the Christmas traditions, how it was named in that era, was monopolized by the protagonists of the King Carol II’s dictatorship protagonists, being included in the

³⁷ National Archives of Romania, Gorj County Department, Poliția orașului Târgu Jiu fund, file no. 1/1939, f. 568.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 569.

³⁹ National Archives of Romania, Dolj County Department, Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt fund, Administrative Service, file no. 9/1939, f. 538.

festive propagandistic ritual⁴⁰. Had to be specified, though, that unlike national holidays, when the centre of the celebration became King Carol II, celebration of the Christmas traditions kept the real signification: the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the priority activities were focused around Romanian traditions specific to Christmas.

Never the less, the specific elements of the official propaganda were inserted into the pre-established programs of the celebrations. The artistic program was mingled and punctuated with the propagandistic one, because the opening and closing guardian's ceremonies of an activity, the wear of the uniform, singing the anthem, saying the guardian motto, parades in the town, performing the carlist salute, all of these belonged to the festive propagandistic ritual, enforced by the new regime.

⁴⁰ See, for a detailed analysis of the new socio-politic ritual, that includes also the festive ritual, enforced by the carlist propaganda apparatus between 1938-1940, Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *op. cit.*, 2013, pp. 62-73.

