

Tudor Vișan-Miu, *La școală cu Regele Mihai. Povestea Clasei Palatine*, foreword by Filip-Lucian Iorga, The Collection “Istorie cu blazon”, Bucharest, Corint Publishing House, 2016, ISBN: 978-606-793-055-9, 188 p.

The book written by Tudor Vișan-Miu, *La școală cu Regele Mihai. Povestea Clasei Palatine*, [In school with Michael of Roumania, The story of Palatine Class], represents an important scientific elaborate for the specialty literature, dedicated to the Romanian Monarchy. It brings entre information and meanings, revealing for the reader aspects of the life and reign of both from the period when he formed as a man, and as an inheriting prince, but also from the period of the proper ruling and the exile. Mister Vișan-Miu exceeds the strict limits by the title of the book precisely to follow/highlight to what extent helped the king, the innovating educational method of *Palatine Class* (1932–1940), including the cooperation with some of the class colleagues 1940–1947.

After a short, but relevant introduction in which the author speaks “Despre pregătirea principilor moștenitori în Familia Regală a României” [“About the training of inheriting prince’s in the Royal Family of Romania”], highlighting the fact that, up to the inheriting prince Michael, the education of the royal offspring’s was done, traditionally, in a private environment, the first chapter reconstructs “Studiile primare ale Regelui, apoi ale Principelui Moștenitor Mihai I (1928–1932)” [“The primary studies of the King, then of the Inheriting Prince Michael I (1928–1932)”]. This stage from King Michael’s life was marked by the return of his father in the country and reinvesting of Carol II as King of Romania.

The end of this first period of forming the young Mihai marked the beginning of a new stage in the education of the inheriting prince, characterized, amongst others, by the absence of the maternal figure and the prominence of the father figure in the life of price Mihai (as a result of the separation of the royal couple and the exile of the *Mother Queen* Elena). From educational point of view began, still, a very important stage, as the author states: “His thorough theoretical training will be received, although, in the royal school where the most original pedagogical ideas of the XXth century will be applied, inaugurated on October 24, 1932 in Sinaia” (p. 22). The Palatine Class represented an initiative of King Carol II.

This issue is analysed in detail by Mister Vișan-Miu in the 3rd chapter of the book, representing, practically, the main part of the volume. The chapter “O școală națională românească pentru liceul Principelui Moștenitor” [“A national Romanian school for the high school of the Inheriting Prince”] is split in nine subchapters suggestively entitled: “Cum a apărut ideea Clasei Palatine” [“How the idea of Palatine Class appeared”], “Profesorii Școlii de la Palatul Regal” [“The teachers of the school of the Royal Palace”], “Un trimestru la Sinaia, două trimestre la București” [“One trimester in Sinaia, two trimesters in Bucharest”], “Lecțiile de sinteză” [“Synthesis lessons”], “Sport, agrement și serbări școlare” [“Sport, recreations and school celebrations”], “Cercetășia: «Gata oricând!»” [“Scouting: «Ready anytime!»”]; “1936–1937. Un anturaj restrâns, o nouă metodă” [“1936–1937. A narrow entourage, a new method”], “Pregătirea militară” [“Military training”], “1938–1940. Între anturaj și școală” [“1938–1940. Between

entourage and school”], “Examenul de bacalaureat de la Palatul Regal” [“The bacalaureate exam at the Royal Palace”].

This chapter reveals to the reader a series of important details for the subject of the book regarding: the birth of the idea and the establishment of the Palatine Class, the students that form it (Radion Chiaburu, Dan Cernovodeanu, Ion Dinulescu, Mircea Ionnițiu, Lascăr Zamfirescu etc.), the teachers (Ion V. Gruia, Vasile Băncilă, Ion Conea, Nicolae Georgescu Tistu, Mircea Tomescu, Ion Zamfirescu, Florica Musicescu, Dimitrie Știubei etc.) that taught the specific program, that comply in general with the program of other high schools in the country, the innovation being, though, the combination of the theoretical lessons with practical activities, conducted in the field during: “synthesis lessons”; education thru sport and Scouting, included, from 1937, in the organisation for youth called Guard of the Country; school celebrations, military education etc., all contributing to the formation of Prince Michael as a man, but especially as a future king of the country.

An important subject analysed in the book of mister Tudor Vișan-Miu over which we intend to focus a bit are the 7 synthesis lessons, that took place between 1933 and 1940, in various regions of the country, “a premiere for Romanian educational system (and not only)” (p. 44). During these trips they visit museums, monasteries, *dacic* and Roman cities (*cetăți*), students learned in the field history, geography, about the great personalities of the Romanian culture, and the inheriting prince had the opportunity to know the country and regional particularities get in touch with the local people. The last synthesis lesson took place on June 3, 1940, in the County of Bucegi (Argeș), where the students of the Palatine Class were explained, by the teacher Ion Gruia and royal resident Gheorghe Alexianu, the administrative law from August 14, 1938, that divided the Romanian country territory into 10 administrative-territorial units, called Counties (*jinuturi*).

Prince Michael finalized the classes of Palatine Class by successfully graduating and obtaining his Bachelor Degree on June 27, 1940, his success being shadowed, though, by the acceptance by the Crown Council of the sovietic ultimatum and the concession of Basarabia and North Bucovina. The happiness of those was shadowed, for Prince Michael, also by the separation from his colleagues from the Palatine Class, launching, though, in the speech given with the occasion of studies finalization, the call to continue the friendships started during the years of school: “(...) Dear colleagues, I have to confess that, besides the joy of finishing in this day the first period of our education, I also have the grief that, from now, our roads separating, we will no longer be together day by day, as up to now, to share little joys and troubles of the day. I insist in thanking you too with all my love for the friendship you have showed me in these years and for all this work made easier by you. I count on your friendship as up to now. *Sănătate!*” (Annex 2, pp. 168–169).

Beyond the knowledge gain during the years of study, important were, for Prince Michael, the future King of Romania, the friendships, some for a life time, bonded amongst the colleagues of the Palatine Class, coming from different cultural and social backgrounds. A special merit of the book is also the following of the destines of the former students and teachers of the Palatine Class, during the war, during the communist repressions and, were possible, until the publication of the book. The last part of the book treats these problems and is grouped in 4 chapters named suggestive, as follows: “Sub tutela generalului: Regele ca simbol” [Under the protection of the general: King as symbol]; “În jurul monarhului: Regele ca factor de coeziune națională” [Around the monarch: King as factor of national

cohesion], “Exilul Regelui” [The exile of the King] and “Destinul unor palatini” [The destiny of some palatines].

An important part of the book of Mister Tudor Vișan-Miu is represented also by the 7 annexes, that reinforce the analysis and the content of the book, bring additional information and complete the *Story of the Palatine class ...*, including occasional speeches of King Carol II and the inheriting prince Michael; students, directors and teachers of the Palatine Class, ministers of education in the period of 1932–1940. Also, equally important are the illustrations of the book, pictures being part of the personal archive of Radion Chiaburu, former colleague of the King Michael I in Palatine Class.

Overall, the book is well written and well structured, the author reaches the objectives he propose and gives the reader a genuine incursion in the life and education of the inheriting prince and, later, of the activity of King Michael, enriching and completing the speciality literature with an important work of the Romanian Monarchy and national history.

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