

## CIONEA'S BUILDING FROM RADOMIR, DOLJ COUNTY\*

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**Abstract:** At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> a great number of Macedo-Romanians established to Craiova and its surroundings, playing an important role into the economic and the cultural development of this town. Among these we encounter Stoian Hagi Țolea's family, natives from Macedonia, dealing with livestock trading in particular large cattle in Austria and Ottoman Empire. From those sales Stoian Hagi Țolea raised significant amounts of money that allowed him to buy several estates within Oltenia, predominantly Romanași county. Among the estates bought-in it is also Radomir, purchased by friars from Boanta monastery in 1780. Stoian Hagi Țolea is conneded to a highly important architectural monument from Radomir – a building that unfortunately it is no longer preserved today. It was a square shape (5.50×5.50m) with a height of 6m till the roof and two floors (downstairs and a floor). It served as permanent home. In 1948, after Clemeța Cionea's arrest, the building was nationalized and become into State's property. Not being used the building decayed. This process gradually increased. In 1960, the local authorities with consent of the county have disposed the demolishing.

**Keyword:** Cionea's building, Stoian Hagi Țolea, architectural monument, downstairs, ground floor.

Among the South-Danube merchants who have carried out intensive trade of the North-Danube the Macedo-Romanians particularly stood out.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they got involved in trading activities to varying degrees comparing earlier century, according to historian Constantin C. Giurescu<sup>1</sup>, to link up the Occident with the Orient. Until that time they confined their activity only with Italian states, especially with Venice. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was noted a shift in guiding their trading activities. They have forsaken trading with Venice due to expensive taxes on goods directing their businesses towards other countries from Europe: Hungary, Austria, Germany and Romanian Principalities<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, *De la moartea lui Mihai Viteazul până la sfârșitul epocii fanariote (1601–1821)*, Bucharest, Al Educational Publishing, House, 2003, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Neagu Djuvara (coord.), *Aromânii. Istorie. Limbă. Destin*, Bucharest, Fundatia Culturală Română Publishing House, 1996, pp. 96–97.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> a great number of Macedo-Romanians established to Oltenia and its surroundings, playing an important role into the economic and the cultural development of this area. Among these we encounter Stoian Hagi Țolea's family, natives from Macedonia, dealing with livestock trading in particular large cattle in Austria and Ottoman Empire. From those sales Stoian Hagi Țolea Raised significant amounts of money that allowed him to buy several estates within Oltenia, predominantly Romanați county. Among the estates bought-in it is also Radomir, purchased by friars from Boanta monastery in 1780<sup>3</sup>. For the best use of the estate, the new owner turned to putting in into tithe, those who worked on it had to give the owner 10% from what they attained<sup>4</sup>. After the death of Stoian Hagi Țolea the estates passed to his son Malciu Hagi Țolea, the founder of the church from Radomir. He is mentioned as the owner of the estate and in 1831<sup>5</sup>. In 1835 at Malciu Țolea's request there was marked the frontier of Radomir estate<sup>6</sup>. After Malciu Hagi Țolea's death before 1845<sup>7</sup> the estate passed to his wife Malcioaica and their two sons. It remained into Țolea's property until 1887 when it was sold by Malciu's sons to Anastasie Gh. Cionea<sup>8</sup>. After Anastasie Gh. Cionea's death, the estate returned to his wife Lucreția Cionea (known as Manini), born Mirică. By its exploiting were handling Casnetti and Vasile Mirică, the father in law of the deceased<sup>9</sup>. According to the decree law no. 3097 from 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1918, Radomir estate was expropriated from "reforming the communal establishment"<sup>10</sup>. At 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1925, Lucreția Cionea divided equally the estate to her daughters Constanța (Tancy) and Clementa (Mancy). Mancy Cionea's share got into Vrăbiescu family possessions, once she married George Vrăbiescu. The event took place on 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1925 at Marincu Palace in Calafat<sup>11</sup>.

George Vrăbiescu handled the exploiting of this farm for five years, until 1930 when he divorced Clementa (Mancy) Cionea<sup>12</sup>. From their marriage results Simona Maria, born on March 7, 1927, in Bucharest. After divorce the estate

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<sup>3</sup> Ștefan Ricman, Vasile Enescu, Fr. Iosif, Paul Constant, *Contribuții la monografia județului Romanați*, Craiova, 1928, pp. 461–462.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> Ion Donat, Dinică Ciobotea, Ion Pătroi, *Catagrafia Obștească a Țării Românești din 1831*, Craiova, Helios Publishing House, 1999, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Veselina Urcu, *Câteva însemnări despre satul românățean Radomir*, in "Memoria Oltului și Romanaților", year VII, no. 1(17), 2018, p. 66.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*; Paul Emanoil Barbu, *Revoluția de la 1848 în județul Romanați*, Caracal, Hofman Publishing House, 2016, pp. 294–324.

<sup>8</sup> Veselina Urcu, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Paul Rezeanu, *Craiova – Orașul celor o mie de milionari – Istoria Craiovei între 1800–2000*, Craiova, Info Publishing House, 2017, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Simona M. Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, *Pe urmele mele în două lumi: România-SUA*, vol. 1, Bucharest, Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2013, p. 138.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Rezeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>12</sup> Simona M. Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

returned to Clementa Cionea. For exploiting it, the new owner turned to the young agronomist Johann Schobel, a Saxon from Mediaş<sup>13</sup>. On his advice Clementa introduced new techniques in exploiting the estate and she bought the most modern types of tractors and combines, obtaining better and better crops. In 1939, Clementa Cionea remarried Alexandru Radian, ministry of propaganda. Thus, the new owner became Alexandru Radian. He was in charge only a short period of time, because in the summer of 1944, he died in Vienna following surgery<sup>14</sup>. When he died, Radomir estate returned to Clementa Cionea. She kept it until April 2, 1948 when she was arrested by communist<sup>15</sup>. After her arrest the estate got into the State property.

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Connecting to Stoian Hagi Ţolea is related a highly important architectural monument from Radomir – a building that unfortunately it is no longer preserved today, “situated in the region most hanuted by invaders from the South the Danube”. It was built the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Oltenia becomes land of prey, robbery and arson of the Turksm Stoian Hagi Ţolea's descendants have reinforced it<sup>16</sup>. Following the local tradition, the building was profoundly affected by the bands of robbers. Among the villagers barricaded inside, and the Turks there were fierce battles that lasted two days<sup>17</sup>.

The date of the construction it is not known precisely because there are not enough documents to draw up the family history for Stoian Hagi Ţolea. It is possible that the beginning of the building to be previously mentioned. This results also from comparing the other data that according to authors so far were considered as special accomplishments in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when under the rule of Phanariotes lord were abolished the traditional soldiery structures. They represented means of standoff/defence against Turks set out for robbery in Oltenia. Hagi Ţolea family kept the building until 1887. That year the two sons of Malciu Ţolea sold the building with Anastasie Cionea's estate<sup>18</sup>. After his death in 1906, the building and the estate passed to his wife Lucreția Mirică<sup>19</sup>.

In June 1925 alongside the estate between Lucretia and his two daughters Constanța and Clementa, the building passed to the latter. In July 1925, the

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Rezeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

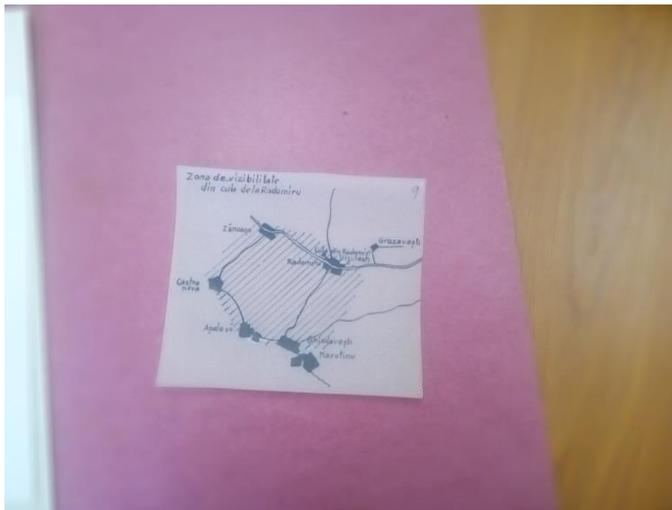
<sup>16</sup> ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Iancu Atanasescu, Valeriu Grama, *Culele din Oltenia*, Craiova, Scrisul Românesc Publishing House, 1974, p. 130; Iancu Atanasescu, Pavel Popescu, *Culele din Oltenia, cu evoluția lor până în anul 2010*, Craiova, National Heritage Craiova Collection, 2012, pp. 215–216.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Rezeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

building and the estate passed to George Vrăbiescu. After five years, in 1930, the building passed to Clemeņa Cionea. In 1939, Clemeņa remarried to Alexandru Radian. In 1940, Clemeņa Cionea and Alexandru Radian noticing the decay of the building and the unfit circumstances to live in, they appealed to the architect G. M. Cantacuzino to restore it. He had the task “to improve the existing housing with the convenience of a civilized world, meaning to make plans to include electric light, running water, modernizing bathroom, phone lines”<sup>20</sup>. Removing Alexandru (Alec) Radian as prime minister and his sudden death in 1944 have led not to finalise the restoring process. In 1947, Clemeņa Cionea requested from the Committee of Historical Monuments that this girdle building to be started as historic landmark under the legislation for preserving historical monuments from 27 June 1919. As a result the building was certified as historical monument by Royal Decree no 410 from March 10, 1947, signed by king Mihai and published in the Official Monitor, nr. 71/March 26, 1947<sup>21</sup>. At 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1948, up about with Clemeņa Cionea’s arrest, the building was nationalized and passed into the State’s property. In 1960 the city council of Dioști, in accordance with Dolj County Council instead of restoring has disposed the demolition, seriously damaging historical national heritage. There by Oltenia lost according to historic Radu Crețeanu “an original valuable monument, that also was the most southern from Oltenia”<sup>22</sup>.



The vision area of Radomir building  
(ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 7).

<sup>20</sup> Simona M. Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>21</sup> Official Monitor, nr. 71 from March 26, 1947, p. 2271.

<sup>22</sup> Radu Crețeanu, Sarmiza Crețeanu, *Culele din România*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1969, p. 40.

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The former monument “Cionea’s Building” fits into a category of edifices met only within the area that spans Oltenia and Easdtern Olt in Argeş, Teleorman and Olt counties. It set up a particular means from the standoff/defence of Stoian Hagi Țolea family against the Turks who often attacked Oltenia<sup>23</sup>.

As the other building from Oltenia, the “Cionea’s Building” from Radomir had a shaped adequated for defence, having two pinnacles through they could shoot with a rifle or a gun against besiegers, located downstairs<sup>24</sup>.

It was a square shape (5.50×5.50m) with a height of 6m till the roof and two floors (downstairs and a floor). The building was made of brick, external walls of 1 m thick, surrounded by two rows of walls of enclosure, with ramps on them. At first it was covered with Turkish roofing tiles. Later in the XX<sup>th</sup> century, Alexandru Radian, one the last owners, replaced the roof, placing leaded tin<sup>25</sup>. Reffering to the roof, Simona Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, the daughter of George Vrăbiescu and Clementa Vrăbiescu, born Cionea, claim that “it was pointy, provided for a tall chimney, covered with shingle”<sup>26</sup>.



Radomir building (restoration)  
(Ilie Constantinescu, *Monografia județului Romanați*, Craiova, 1943).

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<sup>23</sup> ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f.; Anca Ceașescu, *An arhitectural variety specific to Oltenia. The kula*, in “Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane “C.S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor”, XII/2011, Craiova, Aius Publishing, p. 63.

<sup>24</sup> ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 1; Simona M. Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*; Iancu Atanasescu, Valeriu Grama, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Iancu Atanasescu, Pavel Popescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–216.

<sup>26</sup> Simona M. Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, *op. cit.*, p. 140.



The design of Radomir building (front elevation) (ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 8).

Entering was through the floor, on sliding scale, that immediately repositioned to coping, by some pulleys maneuvered from inside. In 1940, Alexandru Radian broke the western wall and opened an access door from outside, turning on of the rooms from downstairs into an entree<sup>27</sup>.

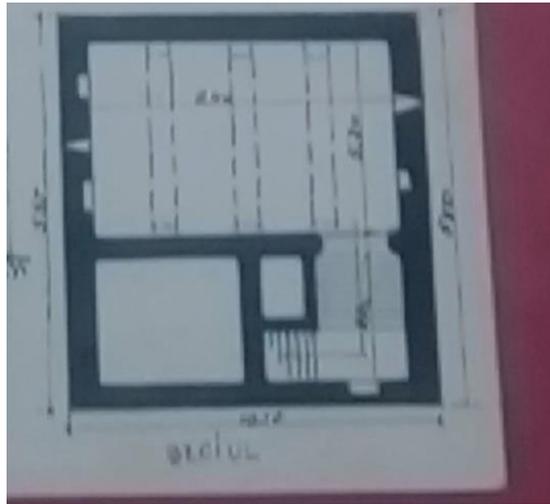
The basement was roomy, rectangular, arched with a semi-cylinder, supported on three bows double scull walling worked on patterns. It set on the ground three meters under and it was completely unlit<sup>28</sup>.

The acces to the basement was indoors from downstairs on a large scale of solid wood oak closed by a trapdoor. Radu Crețeanu said about the basement that it was the deepest met in such a building in Oltenia<sup>29</sup>. Another basement built underground it is found at Vlădaia, Mehedinți County.

<sup>27</sup> Iancu Atanasescu, Valeriu Grama, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Iancu Atanasescu, Pavel Popescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–216.

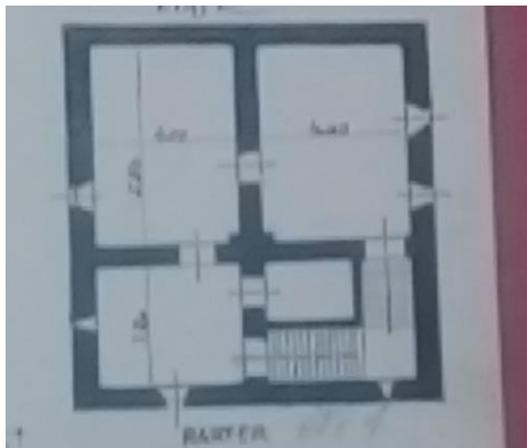
<sup>28</sup> ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 2; Iancu Atanasescu, Valeriu Grama, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>29</sup> Radu Crețeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 40.



The basement plan from Cionea's building (restoration)  
(ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 8).

At the ground floor there were two spacious rooms, enlightened by many small windows. There it was also the staircase.



The ground floor plan from Cionea's building (restoration)  
(ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 8).

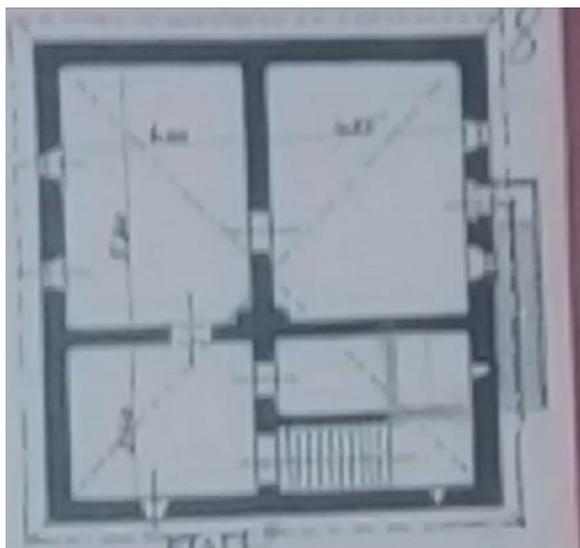
Upstairs there were two large rooms, a hallway and a bathroom. The bathroom was water supplied from nearby wells<sup>30</sup>. The rooms as those from the

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<sup>30</sup> Simona M. Vrăbiescu-Kleckner, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

ground floor there were roofed with massive oak beams, ostensibly crafted with beaded edge nicely decorated. There it was also the staircase into the building<sup>31</sup>.

The floor access was through a massive stair of wooden oak, carved with axe and solid embedded into the masonry mass that lined it. Later the stairs were padded with fir boards. The stair was protected by two large wooden doors horizontally placed at the last step, closed with the help of an iron bar and a big lock<sup>32</sup>. The rooms from upstairs were enlightened by small windows through which in the period of the attacks was supervised the entire area<sup>33</sup>. By contrast with other buildings from Oltenia, Cionea's building from Radomir didn't have porch<sup>34</sup>.



The floor plan of Radomir building (restoration)  
(ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 8).

It served as permanent home. The heating was by stoves disposed downstairs and a latrine equipped with sewer drain flushed beneath the basement stairs<sup>35</sup>.

In 1948, after Clementa Cionea's arrest, the building was nationalized and passed into State's property. Not being used the building decayed. This process gradually increased. In 1960, the local authorities with consent of the county have disposed the demolishing and thus disappeared original, valuable monuments, considered to be the most southern building from Oltenia.

<sup>31</sup> ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Iancu Atanasescu, Valeriu Grama, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>34</sup> ANSJ Dolj, Historical Monuments Committee, file 12, f. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.