

THE EVOCATION OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN FINE ARTS AND MONUMENTS

Cezar AVRAM*, Anca CEAUȘESCU**

Abstract: The Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area, in which the territory of today's Romania is also found, has been, since Antiquity, a centre of interference and clash of the interests of the great powers, an object of the tendencies of their annexation, because it was located in a key position, at the crossroads of the strategic roads that connect the Balkan Peninsula, not only with areas of Europe, but also of Asia. Together with the entire population of Romania, the representatives of the spiritual life engaged in a common front to support the war of 1877-1878. The direct participants in the war, the artists, some reknown, others less known, drew inspiration from this new experience, creating and leaving to posterity a valuable documentary and artistic work, reminiscent of the deeds of the soldiers and contributing to the completion of the artistic forms of the end of the century.

In an eloquent manner, the fine arts have fully contributed to the memorization of the “war of liberation”, the inspiration of the moment managing to bring professional satisfactions for the artists and admiration of the whole country, whereas, to the contemporaries and descendants, they offered the artistic image of the dream fulfilled.

Keywords: fine arts, monuments, state independence, heroism, sacrifice.

The monument is a symbolic creation dedicated to the heroes of the nation for remembering and honouring the sacrifice of every important moment of our history. The erection of commemorative monuments is not an invention of the modern era, it is an initiative taken from the ancients. The oldest monuments are the funerary ones erected by relatives, friends or the community to which the missing one belongs. These are found throughout our history, from the funerary stele to the mausoleum of antiquity, to the medieval cross, and to the triumphal arch and the modern mausoleum. The dignity of committing the work, and consciousness of the national eternity is exquisitely recorded by a gloss in an old book (“...for the hand will rot, but the glory will be remembered...”), as well as by the crosses, the stone

* 1st Degree Scientific Researcher, PhD., “C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor” Institute for Research in Social Studies and Humanities from Craiova, of the Romanian Academy; E-mail: avramcezar@yahoo.com

** 3rd Degree Scientific Researcher, PhD., “C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor” Institute for Research in Social Studies and Humanities from Craiova, of the Romanian Academy; E-mail: ancaceausescu@yahoo.com

crosses made in the remembrance of those who erected fountains, bridges, churches or other objectives for the benefit of the society¹.

For the glorification of the brave deeds of the Romanian army and the sacrifice of the almost 10,000 soldiers heroically fallen in the independence campaign of 1877–1878, in the Oltenia area, as everywhere in the country, numerous monuments have been erected over the years. Made of stone or bronze, monuments, as well as other artistic creations within the history of fine arts, all these eulogies remind of the bright example of the forefathers².

The 19th century was part of the history of the Romanian fine art as a century of great qualitative mutations, carried out within a rapid evolution. In its first decades, the fine arts were generally put in the service of the cult and were almost reduced to church painting³. However, there can also be found painters who manage, justifiably to some extent only, to free themselves from the influence of religious art and to make secular paintings – usually portraits. But these painters – “painters of littleness” – are far from executing more than just effigy portraits⁴. The road from the effigy portrait to the compositional or psychological one was long and arduous. This beginning of the road is stimulated by the fourth quarter of the 19th century, which coincides with an era of economic and social spur, and, even more important, with the fulfillment of the dearest aspiration of the Romanian people: the obtaining of independence. The era of “the national revival” was attended by the intellectuals of the time, be them politicians or plastic artists.

Among the entire population of Romania, the representatives of the spiritual life engaged in a common endeavour to support the war of 1877–1878. The direct participants in the war, the plastic artists, some famous and already acknowledged, others less known, were inspired by this new experience, creating and leaving to posterity a valuable documentary and artistic work, reminiscent of the deeds of the soldiers and contributing to the completion of the artistic forms of the end of the century. Here is what an article published in “Familia” magazine read, on August 1st, 1878, reproduced in a Bucharest daily newspaper: “On the occasion of the last war

¹ Lizica Papoiu, Alexandru Ligor, *Arhiva Societății “Clubul eroilor”*, in “Studii și materiale de muzeografie și istorie militară”, no. 4–5, 1971–1972, p. 265.

² Constantin Brâncuși, the father of the modern sculpture, made – in 1898 – at the suggestion of the sculptor Milița Pătrașcu and Arita G. Tătărăscu, the president of the “National League of Women from Gorj”, among others, a drawing in which he sketched the face of Sergeant Ion Bleda – originally, like Brâncuși, from Hobița, Gorj – one of the heroes of the War of Independence. Unfortunately, this portrait was not preserved. Constantin Brâncoveanu also made two portraits of the division general, Carol ...Davilla, MD, the founder of the School of Medicine in Bucharest, the head of the sanitary operations on the battlefield from 1877–1878. Constantin Brâncuși modeled a bas-relief and a life-size bust of General Davilla. The bust, originally made of gypsum, was cast in bronze in 1912. The monument is located in the courtyard of the Military Hospital in Bucharest.

³ See Duicu Sebastian, *Monumente craiovene mai puțin cunoscute dedicate participanților la războiul de independență*, in *Contribuția maselor populare din Oltenia la cucerirea independenței de stat a României*, Craiova, 1977.

⁴ Paul Rezeanu, *Artele plastice în Oltenia*, Craiova, Scrisul Românesc Press, 1980, pp. 9–10.

when the Bravery of the Romanian awakened again, the public opinion applauded again all those who, either by pen or by brush, undertook to eternalize the glorious deeds of our army”⁵.

Izidor Selageanu (1836-1887)⁶ is one of the painters who left to fight on the battlefield. From the mentioned article, there is found out that:

“the painter Selageanu only with the modest means, gathered from his savings, went on the battlefield and witnessed the taking of Nicopolis, then went to Plevn and stayed in the camp of the headquarters in Grivița and even witnessed the taking of Grivița. Dissatisfied with this experience, on September 6, he advanced into the outposts and while he was being positioned in a plain to draw the Plevn position, bombs and bullets started to pour from the Ottoman redoubt, that a soldier who, out of curiosity was watching how painter Selageanu was drawing, was not injured. Returning to Craiova, he went to Calafat for several times and saw with his own eyes the bombing of Vidin, by the Romanian batteries. At that moment, painter Selageanu was working on a series of paintings that would depict the bravery of the Romanian soldier on the battlefield. A finished and well-received painting is the first attack on the taking Grivița”⁷.

Thus, during the summer holidays of 1877, teacher I. Selageanu – aged 41 – left, on his own, to see the bravery of the Romanian army, to be inspired on this subject. He went to Nicopolis, Plevn, Grivița, several times to Calafat, witnessing the bombing of Vidin⁸.

The sketches made on the spot were useful in the future execution of historical compositions, two of which are still preserved. The first of these was a reproductions of the painting “The first attack for the taking of Grivița”, which is preserved at the Museum of Calafat; it presents us with an ample panorama of the theatre of operations, with troop movements, assaults, explosions, among which we distinguish, on one side, the Romanian ruler with his General Staff, and, amidst the battlefield, General Davila, with his sanitary corps.

The other work that is still preserved is a composition entitled “Battle scene from our War of Independence” and is an oil painting on canvas, located in the patrimony of the History Museum of Oltenia. It is a large battle scene, in which people, horses and harnesses are in fully engaged.

⁵ Idem, *Pictorul Selageanu și războiul nostru de independență*, in „Oltenia”, Craiova, year XI, 1997, p. 173.

⁶ Among the teachers from Craiova, the Transylvanian Izidor Selageanu is the one who left us – and they represent the evidence of his presence, in the summer of 1877, in Calafat and on the battlefields of Bulgaria – two appreciable paintings: *The first attack on the taking of Grivița* and *the Battle Scene of our war of independence* (it could be added, to these two paintings, *the Portrait of Mihai Kogălniceanu* as well, one of the «artisans» of the state independence of Romania, in 1877).

⁷ Paul Rezeanu, *Pictorul Selageanu și războiul...*, p. 173.

⁸ Idem, *Artele plastice ...*, p. 27.

The critics of the time claimed that the works of the painter Selageanu are valuable through the art of drawing and colouring.

Amongst the painters who lived the most intensively the historical moment of the conquest of independence was *Nicolae Grigorescu*. It is known that he returned from Paris to be part of the team of war reporters, who were to transpose into images the bravery of the Romanian army. He was called, in a friendly way, the “state photographer”. In mid-July 1877, Nicolae Grigorescu is in Poiana Mare, from where he goes to work in the camp near Calafat. In a few weeks he is seen at Corabia, then at Verbița⁹.

He thus witnessed, with the brush and pencil in his hand, in the famous *chirvan* (approx. hansom-cab) “a kind of light carriage with a canvas roof, pulled by three small horses”¹⁰, almost all stages of the campaign, except for the latter, culminating in the attack on Smârdan, to which he would however dedicate, the great composition bearing the same title, finished in 1885.

A native-talent sketcher, Nicolae Grigorescu realized, from the very beginning, the circumstances in which he would be forced to work, the lack of a certain perfect skill of recording the scenes. And, in order to become a consummate performer, he practices intensely, forcing his hand to synchronize perfectly with the observation and sensation, overshadowing the delicacy and native subtlety of his nature. Thus, prepared and armed with those necessary for “lightning-speed made notes”, the painter becomes a prompt, safe reporter of the scenes he witnesses. Therefore, he bequeathed us from this era hundreds of works: sketches, in notebooks and on isolated sheets of paper, amazingly fierce description of the campaign scenes, some drawings and oil paintings, of large sizes, worked not in front of the scenes, but in moments of respite.

Thus, the repertoire of his themes is enriched with scenes: roaming the battlefield and stopping wherever he sees something interesting, in the midst of the soldiers with whom he feels related by origin and to whom he only now has the rediscovery to know their reactions, in the bivouac (Bivouac), in the middle of the officers (“Officers around the table”, “Portraits of officers”), in the hustle of battles (“Foot-soldiers in the trenches”, “An act of infantry”).

The expression is constantly precise, suggesting movement and volume. He then sketches weapons, makes preparatory studies for the large-scale scenes (“Infantryman attacking”), immortalizes the oxen and carts with provisions, ambulances (“Halting of carts”, “Convoy of carts at Nicopolis”, “Ambulance on the battle-field”), draws horses (“Campaign cart with three horses”, “Circassian on horseback”), all becoming, for him, new subjects, full of naturalness in the way of expressing the essential, with ease and accuracy. Starting from the individual (“Sentinel on the edge of the camp”, “Roșiori (approx. cavalry) officers”, “Dr. Kalinderu at Corabia”) he reaches, by

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

¹⁰ Minuna Mateiaș, *Nicolae Grigorescu – reporter artistic pe frontul de la 1877*, in *Contribuția maselor populare din Oltenia la cucerirea independenței de stat a României*, Craiova, 1977, p. 183.

emphasizing with a gesture or attitude of the physiognomy and temperament of each one, to his great collective portraits (“Fight around a flag”, “Turkish prisoners”, “Convoy of prisoners”). From the evocative power of the atmosphere, of the inner experiences, it emerges the painter's sympathy for those who fight. Deeds of bravery inspire him. When the clenching of the battle is fierce, the artist would like the Turks to be defeated, as in “The Attack of Smârdan” or “In the Valley of Rahova”; instead, when the Turkish soldiers are defeated, they are a human-interest reason, or one of compassion: “Dead Turks” or “Dead near the bridge over Vid”.

Some of his paintings with the theme of independence are preserved by the Art Museum of Craiova, among them a slightly smaller reproduction of the famous painting, “The Attack of Smârdan”. Nicolae Grigorescu's works represent his outstanding contribution to the war of independence, a moment that attests not only to the services brought to the country, but also to the complex range of his skills.

Along with Nicolae Grigorescu, as artistic reporters, there can as well be found the painters: *Carol Popp of Szathmary*, *Sava Henția* and *G. Demetrescu Mirea*. The works executed by them are, however, of little documentary and artistic importance.

However, from the creations made then by Sava Henția, there ought to be particularly remarked, the ample works, which come with a special note¹¹. Sava Henția depicts the campaign life behind the front, where people look rather usual, in natural situations, unlike the others for whom the fight becomes a show in which strong-wills face.

In the compositions called “Romanian artillery battery on the Danube bank” and “Romanian artillery at Calafat” (watercolour), he captures preparatory moments of the great confrontation of 1877, which would have a decisive role in the historical evolution of our country. Outside the fierce battle, people regain their old habits, dancing the hora in groups or scattered on the field that is ploughed by shells or ridged with trenches. Sometimes, the gaze encompasses the entire camp with tents and water, supplies, and ammunition carts, as in “Supplying the foot-soldiers on the front”, “Bivouac”, “Soldiers resting” or “In cantonment”.

On the same idea of the document, it is also created the artistic work of the young *G. Demetrescu Mirea* (who, when he left for the front, had just reached the age of 25). His notebooks with sketches from the front are kept at the Central Military Museum in Bucharest and include over 40 drawings¹².

The work of the painter *Carol Popp of Szathmary* on the front must be distinguished withing the works he created on the occasion of this event. There remained sketches in pencil (and some in brush) preliminary to some projected works, and often found in the engravings that he makes, either to publish them in the Romanian and foreign press, or for the leaflets; the engravings, sometimes resume

¹¹ Gh. Crăciunoiu, *Sava Henția și G.D. Mirea – reporteri speciali în război*, in *Contribuția maselor din Oltenia la cucerirea independenței de stat a României*, Craiova, 1977, p. 186.

¹² *Arta și literatura în slujba independenței*, Bucharest, Academy Press, 1977, p. 160.

and finalise, for newspaper illustration and leaflets, the same themes; the watercolours often resumed as well, are later made complete; the chromolithographs were made for army albums, later oils, but they are rare, the least artistic and permeated by the official spirit of an art with decorative, narrative and representative content¹³.

The aspects captured on the battle-field by the painters are inscribed in a “plastic campaign diary”¹⁴, meant to show a vivid picture of the moment of 1877.

Along with painting, the sculpture makes its way to remarkable achievements in the conditions of social, economic and political evolution, so that, in the last decades of the 19th century, and in the first decades of the 20th century, it acquires content and value, being fructified the academic education and abroad studies, usually from Italy.

In the training of the sculptors, an important place is occupied by the “School of Arts and Crafts in Craiova”, founded in 1871, which came to support the wish of the citizens of the country, who, in the years following the independence, had numerous initiatives for the eternalization, in stone or metal, of the events they had lived. Therefore, it should be noted that most of the monuments that glorify the war of independence were made by the sculptors trained at the “School of Arts and Crafts” from Craiova.

The first student who attended and graduated this school is *Gheorghe Vasilescu*, born in Goiești, Dolj, in 1864. He had a small workshop in Craiova, on Calea Unirii, which he held until 1886, when he went to continue his studies in Venice, where he researched the monumental sculpture¹⁵. Among his first sculptures, it is that called “Funerary Monument of Captain Nae I. Proicea”, from Slatina, which is commissioned in 1891. The work is made in the workshop from Venice, and brought to the country. Executed in white marble, the monument is conceived as a canopy, inside which is placed the bust, also made of marble, of the hero of the independence war.

Nonetheless, the first important monument is the Monument of Vasile Adamachi in Iași.

The sculptor Gheorghe Vasilescu established himself in the Romanian sculpture as the author of the “Monument of the Battalion II Hunters” from Pitești, conceived and realized in the spirit of the time. The imposing monument is intended to glorify the deeds of arms of the Romanian troops and, in particular, of the Hunters II Battalion, which was made up of soldiers, most of them from Prahova County, who, on August 30, 1877, succeed, through a heroic assault, the conquest of the Grivița I fort. It also represents the first monument erected in the remembrance of the independence.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 176.

¹⁴ Gh. Crăciunoiu, *op. cit.* p. 187.

¹⁵ Paul Rezeanu, *Artele plastice ...*, p. 40.

The Independence Monument in Pitești consists of:

“of a 16-meter-high Baveno granite obelisk, placed on a pedestal made of the same material, preceded by three steps. On this pedestal – square-shaped, with a side of 6 meters –, there are placed the bronze statues of the four hunting soldiers. They depict a soldier presenting the arm, another in the attacking position, a waiting trumpeter and a sentinel. A large bronze eagle with its wings open, holding an unfolded Romanian flag in its claws, is at the top of the obelisk. Conceived and realized in this way, it seems to lead an invisible army to the assault. At the bottom of the obelisk, there are laid bas-reliefs. The first of these is, in fact, an allegory of «Victor», the second bas-relief shows a battle scene representing the conquest of the Grivița redoubt”¹⁶.

Gheorghe Vasilescu worked on this monument between 1893–1896.

In the last years of his life, the sculptor works at the “Independence Monument” in Tulcea, commissioned by the city hall. After concluding the contract, he went to Tulcea to see the place affected by the location of the monument; it had been decided to be located on the Horea hill. The sculptor was given all the freedom of conception. After seeing the place, the sculptor thought of the monument in the form of an obelisk, at the base of which there was a foot-soldier, ready to blow the trumpet, and an eagle with its wings unfolded.

The work is started in the autumn of 1897, in Venice. The obelisk is made of granite, with ornamental motifs on it, with a height of 22 meters, consisting of three floors. On the obelisk, there is the coat of arms of Romania, surrounded by laurels, two bronze plates reminiscent of the event in whose honour the monument was erected. On both sides of the obelisk, on some semi-circular pedestals, there was, the statue of the foot-soldier on the right, and that of the eagle, on the left.

Due to the sculptor's death, on November 11, 1898, the work would be continued by *Constantin Bălăcescu*.

Constantin Bălăcescu (1865-1913) is another student of the “School of Arts and Crafts” from Craiova, he was from Oltenia, born in Balboși commune, Gorj County. He studied in Venice and Milan, where he was attracted to monumental sculpture. The sculptor Bălăcescu created many important works that contributed to the evolution of the artistic manifestations and enriched the national heritage with historical faces, very loved by the Romanians. He made, in Târgu Jiu, the “Monument of Tudor Vladimirescu” and, in Tulcea, the “Monument of Mircea the Old”, a monument that today no longer exists.

The spirit of the time captured sculptor Constantin Bălăcescu completely, directing his attention to the event that the author personally experienced. Thus, in 1903, he made the bronze bust of Gheorghe Chițu, which depicts the man of action, less the thinker who was; in 1905 he made, in bronze, the bust of Cristodor Mihail Cerchez.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

Constantin Bălăcescu is the one who continues the Independence Monument in Tulcea. He added the trumpeter foot-soldier and the eagle, according to Vasilescu's vision. The monument was finished in 1900, but its inauguration took place, after numerous postponements, in 1904. The sculptor had orders for several funeral works.

The sculptor *Eraclie Hagiescu* (1873-1961) belongs to the direction shown by Gheorghe Vasilescu. He was a remarkable figure of artist and teacher from Craiova, also attending the "School of Arts and Crafts" from Craiova. He is known as a participant in the making of ornaments for a series of buildings that were built in Craiova. He studied in Italy with a scholarship received with the help of Spiru Haret, where he was to understand the mysteries of the monumental sculpture with funerary character, due to the lack of local specialists¹⁷. In this regard, he realizes the project monument of General Cerchez, whose statue, with a height of 3.60 meters, was cast in bronze at Roșcana, melted by the occupying armies in December 1916, and the equestrian monument project, exhibited at the Mihail Palace, in 1914.

The sculptor who received the most praises at the time, and who the Romanian and foreign press praised for his talent, was *D. Pavelescu-Dimo* (1870-1944). He was born in Calafat, studied at the "School of Fine Arts" in Bucharest, then went to Italy, where he made many of his works. He executed public monuments, busts of a real gallery of politicians and people of culture, along with numerous funerary monuments¹⁸.

The sculptor Pavelescu-Dimo is asked for the construction of important monuments of independence. One such moment is the erection of the "Independence Monument in Pitești", in 1900, in collaboration with Ion D. Traionescu. The monument is made of stone, 6 meters high, having a simple shape, in which the main sculptural element is a bronze eagle with the wings unfolded. Among the sculptor's works, there is the "Monument of Trajan", from Brăila, as well as the desire to create a monument of Michael the Brave, a desire that did not materialize, although there were attempts, in 1905 and 1913, when he presented models for a monument of the ruler.

Instead, D. Pavelescu-Dimo, had the chance to make the "Monument of Independence" in Craiova. The idea and decision to erect this monument belonged to a group of veterans and was taken in August 1908. General P. Giurgurtu and the mayor of the city, Guran, entrusted the command to Pavelescu-Dimo. The monument was intended to eternalize "the moment when, on May 15, 1877, cannon shots were fired from Calafat against the Turks"¹⁹ in the presence of the ruler. For constructing of the monument, the sculptor worked for four years in Florence; the casting of bronze pieces, weighing a total of 12 tons, was the work of Lippi of Pistoia. In September 1912, he was displayed in Florence, where he attracted the attention of the Italian press. The inauguration, in Craiova, took place in May 1913.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 115.

¹⁹ *Actul de fundație, Cartea de Aur a Independenței*, a work found in the National Archives of Craiova.

At that time, it was considered the largest public monument in the country. Unfortunately, the monument was demolished in 1948.

Pavelescu-Dimo was also entrusted with the creation of the “Monument of Independence”, from Calafat. The funds for its realization were made available to him by the committee that had erected the monument in Craiova²⁰. Much simpler, the monument from Calafat consists of an obelisk, at the top of which there is an eagle with its wings unfolded. The obelisk is guarded by two cannons captured from the Turks.

In this relevant manner, the fine arts have fully contributed to the preservation of the memory of the “war of liberation”, the inspiration of the moment managing to bring professional satisfactions to the artists, and the admiration of the whole country, and, to contemporaries and descendants, they offered the artistic image of the fulfilled dream.

The gaining of the state independence of Romania, in the years 1877-1878, is, conceivably, the historical moment most loved by the people, because its efforts to support the war were significant. In the years following this event, the entire nation celebrated the generation that had accomplished it. In 1878, in the memory of the victorious return of the Romanian army from the battles in the south of the Danube, to Bucharest, a symbolic triumphal arch of victory and gratitude was erected. On the occasion of this historical event commemoration, in time, medals were coined and monuments were dedicated to perpetually evoke the sacrifice and glory of the entire Romanian people²¹.

The sculptors of those times used the column and the triumphal arch as forms of consecration of collective glory. It was the new spirit of the victorious generation in the battles of 1877–1878. “A monument, a contemporary wrote, is ... the unalterable crystallization of an idea, of a great national feeling”²². From these very beginnings, the conception of the public opinion was that the monuments should be “the ark of alliance between the past and the future of Romania”²³. This purpose will give the monument durability and will be found perpetually in the national and the spiritual aspirations of the Romanian people²⁴.

²⁰ Paul Rezeanu, *Artele plastice ...*, p. 145.

²¹ On the occasion of the inauguration of some of these monuments celebrating the liberation, there were made, as a sign of honoring the memory of those who fell on the battlefields – some appreciated medals, among which: The handle medal of the monument in Craiova (*In memory of the war of 1877*, Craiova, 1912); the Medal of the monument in Ploiești (*For the glory of the Romanian army, to remember the battalion 2 hunters... The people from Ploiești and the grateful country. Action Committee*), the medal of the monument from Turnu Măgurele (*In memory of the heroes fallen on the plains of Bulgaria*). They are joined by numerous medals that evoke the year of glory of 1877.

²² M. Davidescu, *Monumente istorice din Oltenia*, Bucharest, Meridiane Press, 1964.

²³ C. Esarcu, *Rolul monumentelor în istoria unui popor*, Bucharest, 1883, p. 12.

²⁴ See Mătăsar S., *Veterani și monumentul independenței la Craiova*, in “Revista culturală”, Craiova, 1909; Tucă Florian, *Monumentele neatârării*, Bucharest, 1977.

“Smârdan” society of veterans of lower ranks from Oltenia decided, in 1909, that, from the sums contributed by the 9,000 veterans from Oltenia, to erect a monument in the memory of the fighters, heroically fallen in the battles for the conquest of the state independence of Romania²⁵ – the Independence Monument, which, by its size, was considered the largest in the country. “Smârdan” Society also initiated the erection of a monument of General Mihail Cristodulos Cerchez, the brave officer from Plevna, in whose hands Osman Pasha laid the sword, as a sign of surrender of the Ottoman army. The monument (a bust) was made by the sculptor Hagiescu and was to be placed on Cărmizii Street, today in Caracal, in 1914²⁶.

In 1915, at the initiative of professors V. Mihăilescu, Ștefan Ciuceanu, lawyers G. Graur, I. Ființeanu and captain N. Pătrășcoiu, the monument (a bust in bronze, sculptor A. Chiciu) of M. Lăzărescu-Olteanu, lawyer and publicist, supporter of the proclamation of national independence, was erected.

After 1915, the “Friends of Science” Society had valuable initiatives for the erection of commemorative monuments. In 1919, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the society “The tombs of the heroes fallen in the war” was founded. “The law on the regime of war tombs in Romania”, promulgated in 1927, changed the name of this settlement into the “Cult of Heroes” Society. The society would see a new organization after 1940, when a new law on the regime of war tombs and commemorative works appeared.

The work of this Society is surprised in the construction of tombs, mausoleums and the organization of cemeteries for the heroes. The commemorative monuments located in the cemeteries have cultural and artistic value, being erected by important sculptors and architects. The participants in the war for independence enjoyed a special tribute, important funerary monuments being dedicated to them. One of these participants is Eugeniu Carada (November 28, 1836 – February 10, 1910), politician, publicist, economist. The funerary monument has a giant shape, the support is made of stone, it suggests a cross, the main arm constitutes the proper support, and the lateral one, with its sides in two directions, is only symbolic, above it is the sober, classic coffin, which has as an adornment, on one side the obverse, and on the other side the reverse of the “Crossing the Danube” cross. On it, the body is stretched in full size, the right hand is on the chest, and the left is beside the body, the shroud covers it halfway leaving only the bust to be seen. The coffin and the body are made of bronze, constitute a single piece, it is the work of the sculptor I. Mateescu, and being cast in Bucharest in 1912²⁷.

²⁵ *Amintiri de la dezvelirea Monumentului Independenței Craiova*, Craiova, 1913, pp. 7–9.

²⁶ Lizica Papoi, Alexandru Ligor, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

²⁷ Sebastian Duicu, *Monumentele craiovene mai puțin cunoscute dedicate participanților la războiul de independență*, in *Contribuția maselor populare din Oltenia la cucerirea independenței de stat a României*, Craiova, 1977, p. 199.

At the celebration of the centenary of Eugeniu Carada's birth, in 1936, the municipality built, in Craiova, an imposing monument. The front of the stone pedestal has incised the inscription: "Eugeniu Carada, 1836-1910". On the other sides, there is a bronze bas-relief: the left "1858-1870, the Romanian Editorial Office", in the back, under his famous motto "For a free Romania, anytime, anyway, with anything and against anyone" there is the scene "1877 – on the battle field, in Bulgaria" represented, together with I.C. Brătianu, among the foot-soldiers, and, finally, on the left side, there is the scene 1866 – presenting the bill for the constitution²⁸. The statue itself is made of bronze, it represents Eugeniu Carada frontally, standing, in natural size, pointing with his right hand forward, and holding his left one on a table that has the caduceus of Mercury, a symbol for peace and trade, on which there is also "Românul" newspaper. He was captured by sculptor M. Onofrei during a speech when he was vehemently supporting his point of view.

To another important participant in the war for independence, Colonel Ion Logadi (1830-1894), brigadier commander of the Second Infantry Division, his wife raised a black marble obelisk with a height of 1.23 meters, which is placed on two other bases, also made of black marble.

Near the former monument of Colonel Logadi, it is the funerary monument of General S. Stoilov, the holder of an important position during the war for independence. The bronze bust (66 cm high and 57 cm wide) is the creation of the sculptor Fritz Storck, Bucharest, 1902. Behind the bust, there is an inscription "cast in the School of Crafts, Bucharest 1902". The general looks forward, has his head uncovered, being dressed in his exquisite uniform and wearing all the decorations.

The monument of another general that participated in the war for independence is that of Otton Sachelarie; the monument is made of white Carrara marble, imitating the façade of a Greek temple. Several steps are framed by two pillars, supporting a pediment. The back wall, in which the door is carved, has represented on it, through incision, a cross. In front of it, between the pillars, on a marble pedestal, it is a 60cm height urn, made of bronze, covered on the left side by a drapery, the tympanon of the pediment has a coat of arms with a crown on, framed by floral motifs, on four displays: in the upper left and the lower right, it is marked by three stars each, in the upper right plan, it is the caduceus of Mercury, and, in the lower left field, a dolphin. In the central plan, it is a shield on which lies a raven with the cross in its beak. At the base of the pediment, it was the inscription reading General Otton Sachelarie, but it was erased by the new owner, who put his name instead. The monument is designed and created by Carol Storck²⁹.

The monument of Colonel Romulus Magheru is composed of the statue itself, of white marble, and of the pedestal made of black marble, on which it is the

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 200.

²⁹ Nicolae Andrei, Gheorghe Părnua, *Otenia la 1877*, Craiova, Scrisul Românesc Press, 1997, p. 221.

inscription divided by a bronze plaque, representing flags, cannons, weapons, etc. The bust depicts the colonel seen from the frontside, with his head uncovered, with moustache and a large beard; his gaze is vivid and penetrating.

The monument is made by the Italian sculptor Luigi Buzzi, in 1898. On the pedestal, it can be read: “Colonel Romulus Magheru, A honorary adjutant of His Royal Majesty, the King, Commander of the No. 1 Artillery Regiment, son of the illustrious patriot General G. Magheru, born on June 6, 1847, died on March 7, 1897. For his eternal remembrance”³⁰.

Although it is not signed, the marble bust of Colonel “Pavel Gussi, Commander of the 16th Infantry Brigade, Commander and Officer of several Romanian and Foreign Orders, won in the war of 1877. Born in 1842, died in 1899”, is a remarkable achievement characterized by experience and realism³¹. The statue depicts the colonel towards the end of his life, tired, with dark circles around his eyes, hollow-cheeked, with his gaze lost.

The tomb of Gheorghe Chițu (1828-1897) is marked by a monumental iron cross, 2 meters high, with an arm opening of 1.25 meters. The extremities are tribolted, forming other cross-shapes in their turn, being decorated with laurel branches. In the central field of the cross, it is an iron medallion (with a diameter of 30 cm), on which it is chiselled, Gheorghe Chițu and Ioana C. Chițu”³².

Crâsnaru-Roscovscki-Nicolin Monument has a special value, through the funerary tomb of the brothers Roscovscki Mihail and Nicolae. It has the shape of a Gothic stone canopy, under which there is a coffin, also made of stone, at the bottom having the inscription “In memory of Michael Roscovscki, born in Bucharest, October 21, 1831, passed-away in Craiova on May 8, 1876. He erects this monument to the memory of his beloved brother”. Inside the crypt, on a marble plaque, it is written: “Nicolae Roscovscki, doctor of medicine born on March 25, 1840, died on November 10, 1897 in Craiova”³³. Dr. Roscovscki, during the war of independence, turned his house into a hospital, which he led until his final victory.

These funerary monuments were followed by the erection of public monuments to praise the moments of war. The first public monument was erected in Băilești, in 1885. Along with it, over the years, there were built other as well, at Ciupercenii Noi, Rast, Craiova, Sălcuța. However, the majority of the monuments are present in the city on the Danube bank, where, on April 26, 1877, the Romanians opened fire for the first time on the Turks, in the powerful city of Vidin, and where it was made the first sacrifice in the Romanian army in the war for independence.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 222.

³² V. Manciu, *Cine a fost Roscovschi?*, in “Studii. Revista de istorie”, year IV, no. 6, 1956, p 121.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 123; also see the inscription from the funerary tomb from Sineasca cemetery from Craiova.

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