

# THE WOMAN BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FROM CRAIOVA IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD\*

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**Abstract:** In the present material, there was intended the presentation of some of the Romanian women entrepreneurs who developed sole partnership businesses in Craiova, in the interwar period, as they were recorded in the archival documents and in different edited sources.

We notice that most entrepreneurs were housewives, they set up companies whose activities are handled by their husbands and, sometimes, their fathers, or a qualified person (he had a certificate) designated by proxy, but also people who had worked as commercial officials, gained experience working in commercial units, and who opened their own businesses. Analyzing the files of the companies registered with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Craiova, and registered in the Trade Register, we identified several profiles of the woman trader in Craiova: having her own business; as guardian of the minor heirs; after her husband's bankruptcy; as a result of the death of the spouse; as heiress.

**Keywords:** Craiova, the interwar period, women entrepreneurs, individual firms, social firms.

From the long list of commercial activities registered by women in the interwar period, there have been selected some areas, discovered in archival documents, which provide us with information on the trades and concerns of the time. Analyzing these documents, we find out the variety of services in which the women from Craiova were involved. We find them managing companies whose fields of activity were specific to men (wood warehouses, tinsmith workshops, pubs, automobiles, etc.), but also in specific sectors like (tailoring, fashion, wreaths). If until 1932, when

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the law on civil incapacity of the married women was abolished, the woman was authorized by her husband to open a business, except for the unmarried adult woman<sup>1</sup>, after the establishment of trade schools attached to secondary schools for girls, the Higher Commercial School for Girls (1919–1920) and, subsequently, the Academy of High Commercial Studies, more and more women became company owners. The provisions of the Commercial Code established the obligation of the trader to register a company with the Commercial Court of the county<sup>2</sup>, provided that no other emblem and identical company for the same trade was registered with the relevant Court and to prove that they had not been convicted of bankruptcy. To be a good merchant, it was necessary, among other things, to possess capital commensurate with business; to be thrifty; punctually, to know their industry (supply centers, sales centers, tastes and needs of customers, goods, means of transport, provisions of law)<sup>3</sup>.

There is also an increasing emphasis on studies, qualification, behavior. Those interested in registering companies were required to submit documents showing: studies, previous activity of traders or associates, certificates of good behavior and nationality issued by the City Hall, certificates of commercial practice, the existence of a patent.

The headquarters where most of the companies operated were rented and were located on the most important commercial arteries. When an entrepreneur ended their

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<sup>1</sup> Sevastian Cercel, *The Incapacity of the Married Woman in Interwar Romania: from the Issue of Legislative Unification to the Possibility of Practising Advocacy*, in “Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane «C.S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor»”, no. XXIII/2022, pp. 9–28; Idem, *The natural person’s anticipated full capacity of exercise as provided by the Civil Code*, in “Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane «C.S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor»”, no. XXII, 2021, pp. 105–128. For a deeper insight into this matter, Ștefania Mihăilescu, *Din istoria feminismului românesc. Antologie de texte (1838–1929)*, Iași, Polirom Publishing, 2002; Idem, *Din istoria feminismului românesc. Studii și antologie de texte (1928–1948)*, Iași, Polirom Publishing, 2006; Ghizela Cosma, *Femeile și politica în România: Evoluția dreptului de vot în perioada interbelică*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing, 2002; Doina Bordeianu, *Evoluția constituțională a drepturilor electorale ale femeilor în România*, in “Sfera Politicii”, no. 149/2010, pp. 53–57; Mihaela Bărbieru, *Aspects Regarding the Political and Social Organization of Women in Romania in the Intewar Period*, in Claudiu Marian Bunăiașu, Elena Rodica Opran, Dan Valeriu Voinea (eds.), *Creativity in Social Sciences*, Craiova, Sitech Publishing House, 2015, pp. 130–140; Idem, *Women in Romanian politics: representation and a better governance*, in I. Boldea, C. Sigmirean, D.M. Buda (eds.), *Reading Multiculturalism. Human and Social Perspectives*, Section: Social Sciences, vol. 9, Târgu-Mureș, Arhipelag XXI Press, 2021, pp. 255–263.

<sup>2</sup> *Codul civil adnotat de C. Hamangiu, N. Georgean cu textul art. corespunzător francez, italian și belgian cu doctrina franceză și română și jurisprudența de la 1868–1927*, vol. IX *Doctrina franceză și română (Art. 1391–1914)*, Bucharest, 1934, f. 688; Andrei Rădulescu, *Codul nostru civil în anii 1925–1945*, in “Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice”, series III, volume XXVIII, 1945–1946, Bucharest, Imprimeria Națională Publishing House, 1947, ff. 279–280; Calypso Corneliu Botez, *Problema feminismului – o sistematizare a elementelor ei*, in „Arhiva pentru Știință și Reformă Socială: Organ al Asociației pentru Studiul și Reforma Socială”, year II, no. 01–03, Bucharest, 1920, f. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Buletinul Camerei de Comerț și Industrie din București. Școala practică de comerț*, Bucharest, 1914, ff. 11–12.

commercial activity and deregistered the company, they had to prove that the population of that area was not affected and that there were other shopping centers to ensure their supply.

Most of the companies registered in the interwar period were family businesses, where only family members worked. Some of them had an ephemeral life, from a few months to 1-3 years, others lasted until the nationalization, in 1950, others were transmitted from generation to generation.

As in present days, a sole proprietorship cannot choose any name. The firm of an owner of an individual enterprise consists of his name written in full or of his name and the initial of his first name.

The dramatic artist, *Păcuraru Margott*, owned “Argeș” timber and construction materials warehouse, located in Calea Dunării, at no. 58. The activity started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1933 was cancelled four years later, on the 23<sup>th</sup> of September, 1937. Her husband, Constantin Păcuraru, was in charge of the business<sup>4</sup>. Opened ten months earlier, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1932, “Oltul” timber warehouse belonged to *Eliza Piciulescu* (no. 58, Calea Unirii). As in the previous case, authorized to deal with commercial activity (supplying the warehouse, fixing the sale price) was her husband, Jean C. Piciulescu<sup>5</sup>. A wider range of items was sold by entrepreneurs: *Nicolescu Tereza* – colonial, haberdashery and wood, salt and coal depot, in Jitianu Street, at no. 5 (the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1932 – the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, 1938)<sup>6</sup>; *Stelea I. Maria* – grocery, cereals, haberdashery and firewood, in Bucovăț St., at no. 56, activity started on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 1932<sup>7</sup>, and *Popescu Gh. Maria* whose commercial space in Ștefan cel Mare Street, no. 62, identified himself with the emblem “Snopul de grâu” (at the sheaf of wheat), (the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 1933 – the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 1938). Gheorghe Pascu was authorized to trade the latter<sup>8</sup>.

*Lang I. Marioara* had a woodworking and blacksmith workshop, located on Calea Severinului, at no. 142, whose activity began on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1931. It was authorized by his father, Ion Lang, to make and sell all kinds of vehicles such as: carriages, chariots, peasant carts, cabriolets. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 1938, by marriage, the company becomes *Marioara I. Munteanu*<sup>9</sup>. Also, *Anna Drobiuning* (later Radler) sold, for five years (the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, 1930 – the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, 1939), scrap metal (Mircea Vodă Street, at no. 4, and from November 1938 in Sf. Ion Hera Street, at no. 7)<sup>10</sup> and

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<sup>4</sup> The County Department of the National Archives of Dolj, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Craiova Fund, Individual Firms, file no. 2293/1933, ff. 1, 3 (further quoted as S.J.A.N., Dolj).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2032/1932, unnumbered.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2208/1932, unnumbered.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2224/1932, f. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2341/1933, unnumbered. The object of activity registered was: grocery, cereals, hosiery and wood storage.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 1098/1931, ff. 1, 5, 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2256/1933, unnumbered. Radler Ana was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 1890 in Althofeni, Austria. She was an Austrian citizen until the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1932, under the name Anna Drobiuning. She obtained Romanian citizenship through her marriage to Hugo I. Radler.

**Vasile I. Florica** was the owner of the “Mâna de Fier-Iron-hand” Store, on Tache Ionescu Street, no. 39 (the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 1932 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1935). His trade was rough and worked blacksmithing<sup>11</sup>.

Another field specific to men was that of trade with pieces and accessories for cars or motorcycles, bicycles and related parts and accessories. The first category included the store registered by the student **Ionescu C. Ecaterina**, in Cuza Vodă Street, at no. 46, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 1936<sup>12</sup>, and in the second, the “Universal Technical Store” belonging to **Maria D. Cătănescu**, opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 1945. Along with bicycles and motorcycles, radios, spare parts for bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles, tractors and industrial engines, as well as articles for electrical installations, water and sewerage, iron objects, sports and fishing goods were also on sale, while also having the right to import the parts, for which he deposited a capital worth 2,000,000 lei. The headquarters of the store was registered in Marșeu Square, at no. 65. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946, he expanded the range of items on sale by adding: tires for bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles, carriages as well as vulcanization activity. The management of the store was owned, by proxy, by her husband, Gheorghe C. Cătănescu, electro-mechanical master teacher, tenured at the Mechanics Adjustment section of the “King Ferdinand I” Industrial High School for boys in Craiova (the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, 1926 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, 1946). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1948 he moved his headquarters to Ulise Boldescu Street, at no. 1, shop for which he paid a rent of 24,000 lei/year. This year, the invested capital was 450,000 lei. In order to carry out her commercial activity, she was dispensed with the presentation of the certificate of practice provided by law, bringing as an argument her experience of over 20 years as a state official and the possession of knowledge in the accounting field, as well as the experience of her husband as a teacher, who was in charge of the technical management of the store during her free hours and who could guide her. The company was deregistered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1949<sup>13</sup>.

Restaurants, pubs, inns were the meeting place of the inhabitants of the city where political topics or various issues of the day were usually discussed. Customers were from all walks of life. Usually, those in better financial condition chose restaurants. Some of the pubs in Craiova or the shops where the spirits retail trade was practiced were registered by women. Among them we mention: **Paul D. I. Elisabeta**, housewife, who had such an establishment registered in Bucovăț Street, at no. 56 (the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 1935 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1938) and whose commercial activity was exercised by Pârjol Dumitru<sup>14</sup>, and **Ana I. Grecu**, as legal guardian of the heirs of the deceased Ion Grecu, a trade she was to exercise until her child’s majority, having hired seller. For this pub she adopted, in May 1946, the emblem “La încurcă lume” – the master of confusions. Under

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2091/1932, unnumbered.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 3079/1936, f. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5354/1945 unnumbered.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 3060/1935, unnumbered. Although the commercial activity was completed in 1938, the company was removed from the Trade Register on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946.

her management, the bodega ran for three years (the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 1944 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1947). It was deregistered on the 31<sup>th</sup> of March, 1948<sup>15</sup>. We also mention *Nicolița Teodorescu*, who, for four years, was the owner of an inn located on Calea Caracal (the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, 1943 – July 1947)<sup>16</sup>.

Workshops and shoe shops were also registered, the activity of producing footwear and belts or other leather objects belonging to the husbands of the entrepreneurs. We mention, in this regard, the shoe and leather store “at Mihai Vodă” from Alexandru Lahovary Street, from no. 12 (belonging to *Zoe I. Chirițescu*). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1937, she added a shoe-making workshop and authorized her husband to engage in trade. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1941, he renounced the leather trade and, a year later, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, 1942, he deleted the “Mihai Vodă” emblem, which he replaced with “at Grănicerul vesel-to the happy board-guard”, then replaced, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1943 with “at Chirițescu”. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 1946, he had declared a capital worth 6,000,000 lei. The trade started on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1932 was concluded on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, 1946, to be continued by her husband, Ilie Chirițescu<sup>17</sup>. *Clăpan N. Rahila* was, starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1933, the owner of the belt shop “at Jocheu”, on the same street (no. 74)<sup>18</sup>, and *Constantinescu Soare Maria* was the owner of the shoe workshop “at Soare”, taken over from her husband, whose company had been deregistered on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1933. The shoes produced in the workshop were sold through the store with the same emblem, whose headquarters were registered in Unirii Street, at no. 79 (the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1933 – the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 1940). The company’s activity continued to be handled by her husband, Soare Constantinescu. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 1940, Maria Constantinescu’s company was requested to be deregistered on the grounds that it exercised trade through intermediaries, such as Jews: Moise Georgian, Ida Georgian and Iancu Georgian, called Puiu, as she was out of town. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, the company was deregistered, the owner being established in Bucharest, where she was employed<sup>19</sup>.

On I.C. Brătianu Street, at no. 20, there was the funeral home called *Sârbulescu M.D. Maria* (the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 1932 – the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 1944) which, on February 22, 1938, also made available to customers a rich assortment of funeral articles (coffins, windling sheets, shrouds, mourning scarfs, and all the other necessary items)<sup>20</sup>.

On addressing the food sector, there were established the majority of commercial food stores, trading several types of food products: vegetable

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5284/1944, unnumbered.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5050/1943, unnumbered. The company was deregistered ex officio on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 1948.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2188/1932, unnumbered.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2320/1933, unnumbered. The commercial activity was carried out by her husband, N. Clăpan, by proxy.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2263/1933, unnumbered.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2029/1932, ff. 1, 2, 5, 14.

agricultural products, animal products, food industry products, various colonial products and haberdashery. We mention, in this regard, the individual company of Calafeteanu Street. Ecaterina, whose trade began in Marșeu Square, at no. 131, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, 1930, with colonials, delicacies and haberdashery. After establishing its headquarters in Calomfirescu Street (no. 67), it focused on the sale of colonial products, sausages and butcher products (the latter was given up on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1941)<sup>21</sup>. **Cumpănașu C. Alexandrina** (cold cuts and delicacies) also practiced, at a more reduced range, this trade in Cuza Vodă Street, at no. 8 (the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 1935 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1937)<sup>22</sup>. On the same street, there were also registered groceries **Berceanu M. C. Elena**, at no. 64, (the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, 1931)<sup>23</sup> and **Handoleanu I. Smaranda**, at no. 123, (the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 1933)<sup>24</sup>. Similar products were sold by **Bondoc Elena**, in Jitianu Street, at no. 2 (the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1945 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946 deleted ex officio)<sup>25</sup>, but also **Martin M. Teodora** in Craiovița Street, at no. 17 (the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, 1946 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1947)<sup>26</sup>.

Another grocery store, where hosier and colonial items were also sold, was located on Unirii Street, at no. 173, and belonged to **Maria D. Berianu** (the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, 1933 – the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946, deleted ex officio)<sup>27</sup>. On the same street, at no. 1, for a short time, just over a year (the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1936 – the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 1937), also functioned the store “Alimentul” where there were: colonial, delicacies and sausages, (**Ionescu Lizica** -owner)<sup>28</sup>.

**Mihăilescu Gh. Maria** had registered, as a field of activity: department store, butcher’s shop, petty trade, corn and fishery. The products were offered to customers through the commercial space he owned on B. P. Hasdeu Street, at no. 41 (head office) (the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1935 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946)<sup>29</sup>. From the same street, from no. 58 (secondary point) customers could purchase wood, coal and lime (the 23<sup>th</sup> of August, 1935 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946)<sup>30</sup>.

Between the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, 1946 and the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, 1949, the grocery store opened by **Florența Ciucă**, a housewife, functioned in the building located at the intersection of Buzești Street and Lipscani, where fruits, vegetables, eggs, butter, cheese, yogurts, braga-millet fizzy drink, and carbonated water were sold, products purchased commercially. For this activity, she invested a capital worth 390,000 lei

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 1107/1931, ff. 1, 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2973/1935, unnumbered. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1937 it ceased to trade.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2039/1932, unnumbered. She opened the business with her husband's authorization.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2342/1933, f. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5327/1945, unnumbered.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5454/1946, unnumbered. She had a capital of 500,000 lei. She was a housekeeper by profession. The company was deregistered ex officio on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, 1948. The registered trade was: groceries and food items.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2354/1933, ff. 1, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 3114/1936, ff. 1, 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2977/1935, unnumbered.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2978/1935, unnumbered.

and used the services of an employee<sup>31</sup>. As for **Titina Păun**, she continued for only eight months (the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 1946 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 1947) the fruit and food trade previously practiced by her husband at the same headquarters in Kogălniceanu Street, no. 4<sup>32</sup>.

Department stores were also registered in the name of merchants **Amărăscu D. Maria** in Marșeu Square, plaza 84 (the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1935 – the 23<sup>th</sup> of September, 1937), and in Frati Golești Street, at no. 147 (the 23<sup>th</sup> of September, 1937 – no year)<sup>33</sup>; **Șandru M. Ana** (127 Frații Golești Street), where there were also departments for CAM and butchery products (the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1933 – the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, 1934)<sup>34</sup> and **Levy P. E. Matilda** (33 Lipscani Street). The latter used, as an identification term, the emblem “at Ochiul – the eye” – Elias P. Levy – department store (the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1933 – the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, 1936) being the heiress of the deceased Elias P. Levy, shareholder of the social company **Elias P. Levy** with the emblem “at Ochiul” **SRI Elias P. Levy**, along with Fani Elias P. Levy, Matilda E. P. Levy, Leca Gherson – manufacturing store, haberdashery, blacksmith, grocery and hosiery, founded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, 1926<sup>35</sup>.

Companies whose main field of activity was textile products (sale of yarns, fabrics, linens, haberdashery), garments (hosiery, knitwear, hats), trimmings were also identified. **Ghizdăvescu St. Elena** had textiles (knitwear, hosiery, trinkets) and tailoring supplies registered. The headquarters of the store was located in Madona Dudu Street, at no. 6 (the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, 1935 – the 22<sup>th</sup> of March, 1948). On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, 1946 it had a capital of 1,000,000 lei<sup>36</sup>.

In Marșeu Square, there were identified the shops “at Jean” belonging to **Ana C. Rădulescu** (at no. 15)<sup>37</sup>; “at Anișoara” by **Rafira N. Hristescu** (the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 1932)<sup>38</sup>. On Unirii Street, there functioned: “Margo” fashion workshop of the fashionista **Mihăileanu Marioara Margo** (no. 114), inaugurated on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, 1932<sup>39</sup>; the shop “at Leon bazaar” (no. 84) belonging to the Jewish woman

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5419/1945, unnumbered.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5456/1946, unnumbered. Petre Paun carried out his commercial activity between the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, 1944, and the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 1946. He was a farmer by profession but also a war invalid (see *Ibidem*, file no. 5225/1944, unnumbered).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2937/1935, unnumbered. The year when the company was cancelled, was not found.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2242/1933, ff. 1, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2271/1933, ff. 1-33. Matilda Levy was born on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1910, in Turnu-Severin, Mehedinți County.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2986/1935, unnumbered. Ghizdăvescu St. Elena was born on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 1881, in St. Imier Canton Berne, Switzerland. He obtained the nationality of Romanian.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 3200/1936, ff. 1, 3. The commercial activity started on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, 1936.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2240/1932, f. 1. Hristescu N. Rafira was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1898, in Craiova and she started her commercial activity on the 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1932. The field of activity registered was: grocery, manufacturing and hosiery products.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2234/1932, f. 1.

**Leon M. I. Sara** (hosiery products and haberdashery)<sup>40</sup>; the “Femina” store of **Ilena Pascariu**, whose products were intended only for women: women’s clothing, silks and fabrics for women’s clothing (no. 82). It functioned only six months (the 26<sup>th</sup> of April – the 31<sup>th</sup> of October, 1941), the owner moving the business to Arad<sup>41</sup>. On Lips cani Street, **Lungulescu M. Elena** (at no. 12) continued her husband’s commercial activity in the store “at Lungulescu” (the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 1932 – the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 1936). In 1936 he became an associate of the social firm **Elena M. Lungulescu & Victor Grecu**, known to the city for the logo „Lips cãnia Lungulescu” (the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 1935 – the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 1938)<sup>42</sup>. On the same street (at no. 72), there were the shop: “Arab” (of manufacture and hosiery) of **Voicu I. Zoe** (the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 1932 – the 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 1943)<sup>43</sup>; “Miorița”, of **Teodora I. Stoica**, craftswoman, working in the branch, (at no. 1), where there were wool items, knitwear and embroidery. Starting with the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, 1945, she opened a workshop for the production of the above products and expanded her product range, adding the trade in haberdashery and small goods. The company, whose debut was registered on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 1941, ceased operations eight years later (the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 1949)<sup>44</sup>. Close to it, at no. 60, **Margareta Constantinescu** owned the commercial space “Grety”, selling handicrafts, haberdashery, cottons, small goods, and also children’s items. She carried out the commercial activity for seven years (the 21<sup>th</sup> of January 1942 – the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 1949). On the occasion of the revising the companies, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 1946, the owner of the company declared a capital worth 1,000,000 lei, on which occasion she deleted the trade in manufacturing objects<sup>45</sup>.

Handicrafts and trinkets were also sold in the shops of entrepreneurs **Crãciun Iuliana**, Buzești Street, no. 11 (the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, 1933 – the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, 1934)<sup>46</sup>; “at doi copii (at the two children)” from no. 14 Alexandru Lahovary Street, belonging to **Elena V. Capezeanu** (the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1933 – the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 1937)<sup>47</sup>; “at doi

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2182/1932, unnumbered. Leon M. I. Sara carried out the commercial activity between the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 1932 – the 23<sup>th</sup> of January, 1941, the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 1945 – the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1946. She was married with the Jew Iosif M. Leon who, from 1946 he continued his wife’s trade, while she was suffering. At the time of the husband’s takeover, the company was operating in Lips cani Street, at no. 10, upstairs.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 4821/1941, unnumbered.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2031/1932, nenumerotat; Idem, Social Firms, dosar nr. 575/1936, ff. 1–2.

<sup>43</sup> Idem, Individual Firms, file no. 2016/1932, ff. 1, 3, 4, 8. From the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 1939 it adopted the ARO emblem.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 4889/1941, unnumbered.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 4902/1942, unnumbered. Margareta Constantinescu was born Margareta Reghina Fr. Poyer, of Czech ethnic origin but was under the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. He was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, 1915.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2245/1933, ff. 1, 3. For the exercise of trade, she used the services of prosecutor Constantin Preduț.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2326/1933, unnumbered. The commercial activity was carried out by her husband, Vasile Capezeanu, by proxy.



păuni – at the two peacocks” (Ulise Boldescu Street, at no. 47) of **Virginia G. Vasilescu** (the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1933 – the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, 1946). In 1946, the entire commercial activity was passed on to the husband, who had registered his company at the same address. A skilled worker was employed at the firm<sup>48</sup>. In the shop “at cărăbuș-at the beetle” (5 Emil Gârleanu Street), the owner **Feldstein N. Bertha** offered her customers, in addition, hosier items, knitwear, hats and clothes (the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, 1933 – the 12<sup>th</sup> of June, 1941; the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 1945 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1934, she added shoes<sup>49</sup>.

**Dumitrescu Angela Wilhelmina** was the owner of fashion stores and crowns and supplies “at Regina”, which operated in Horezu Street, at no. 5 (the 23<sup>th</sup> of February, 1933 – the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1934) and Copertari, at no. 1 (the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1934 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946)<sup>50</sup>. Teacher **Stănescu Maria**, graduate of the Professional School of Weaving in Milan (1909), owned, for a short time, the workshop of domestic industry, “St. Nicholas” weaving mill from Cuza Vodă Street, no. 69, (the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 1932 – the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 1933)<sup>51</sup>, and **Virginia I. Ionescu** was the manager of the “Timik” workshop, for repairing and manufacturing mother-of-pearl and galalith buttons. The workshop functioned in two of the rooms of the building, privately owned, on Severin Street, at no. 58 (the 23<sup>th</sup> of June, 1947 – the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 1948)<sup>52</sup>.

In the interwar period, the trade of newspapers and bookstore articles, stationery, tobacco and CAM products was also practiced. Such trade exercised **Bragaru I. Kumbia** (articles of bookstore, newspapers, magazines and tobacco), in Blvd. Carol, no. 47, with effect from the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 1932<sup>53</sup>. **Bogoe Elena** had “Creionul-the pencil bookstore” on 14 Severinului Street (the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 1932 – the 20<sup>th</sup> of November, 1934). Along with bookstore items, it also sold RMS products<sup>54</sup>. The “Hardeca” store (owner **Oanță T. Zoe**) specialized in paper products, although it also registered rubber products as a field of activity. The trade, in which she invested a capital worth 1,000,000 lei, was exercised wholesale and retail on Calea București, at no. 20. The activity started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1945 and, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, 1948, the individual company was transformed into Societatea Anonimă “Hardeca” S.A. Warehouse of paper and paper items of any kind, wholesale and by retail, establishing its headquarters at no. 2 Gl. Argetoianu St<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2321/1933, unnumbered. The commercial activity was carried out by her husband, Gheorghe Vasilescu, by proxy.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2246/1933, ff. 1, 3, 6, 8.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2291/1933, ff. 1, 5, 6. The owner of the company was a leader in the branche.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2021/1932, ff. 1, 3. The company was removed from the Trade Register on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, 1934.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5496/1946, unnumbered.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2035/1932, unnumbered.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 1934/1932, ff. 1, 4.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5319/1945, unnumbered.

**Popescu Angela**, a commercial clerk by profession, opened in Unirii Street, at no. 52, a document copying office, with a capital of 150,000 lei. Inaugurated on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 1945, it was closed two weeks later (May 1<sup>st</sup>), the owner of the company being appointed clerk at Casa Oștirea in Bucharest<sup>56</sup>.



**Fig. 1.** The portret of Popescu Angela.

**Source:** S.J.A.N. Dolj, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Craiova Fund, Individual Firms, file no. 5305/1945, unnumbered.



**Fig. 2.** Graduation certificate from the Girls' Commercial High School in Craiova.

**Source:** S.J.A.N. Dolj, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Craiova Fund, Individual Firms, file no. 5305/1945, unnumbered.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5305/1945, unnumbered. The company was removed from the Trade Register on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 1945.

**Cristofaro Gheorghîța** opened, on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1944, an antiquarian shop (old book trade) in Lipscani Street, at no. 15. About two years later, she expanded her trade by adding a new field of activity, a retail bookstore (school supplies and other articles of this branch). The emblem that defined the business was “the Elite”. Four years after its debut, the business is passed on to her husband, Umberto<sup>57</sup>.

In the field of beauty, we review the beauty salons, where various services were provided: hairdresser/barber, coiffeur, manicure, perfumery, opened by **Pandeleșcu T. Maria** (71, Unirii Street), a space where she also sold perfumes (the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 1933 – the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1946)<sup>58</sup>; **Cleopatra Ionescu** (21 Mihail Kogălniceanu Street) who also did manicure services. The room in which she worked was subleased from Maria Opran for a period of only 6 months, with the amount of 60,000 lei, and used only the space on the west side of the building, consisting of a room with cellar windows. The building belonged to the owner Ion I. Pleșa<sup>59</sup>. Instead, hairdresser **Marinescu I. Maria** owned the hairdressing and barbershop salon on Unirii Street, no. 135 (the 16<sup>th</sup> of November, 1943 – the 22<sup>th</sup> of March, 1946)<sup>60</sup>.



**Fig. 3.** The frontage of the hairdressing and barbershop salon belonging to Marinescu Maria  
**Source:** S.J.A.N. Dolj, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Craiova Fund, Individual Firms, file no. 5131/1943, unnumbered.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5263/1944, unnumbered. She acquired Italian nationality by marriage in 1915. Although by marrying a person of another nationality, the woman lost her Romanian citizenship, Gheorghîța Cristofaro was allowed to open the company. The initial capital of 300,000 lei was increased, in 1946, to 1,000,000 lei. The company was deregistered on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 1948.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 2280/1933, unnumbered. He obtained the craftsman's book in 1920, issued by Princess Maria Corporation. Barbers' Guild of Craiova.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5450/1946, unnumbered. She was a craftsman in the industries and she had owned the craftsman's book since the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, 1946. By marrying Ilie Stanescu in June 1946, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, she changed her maiden name to Cleopatra Stanescu. The sublease period ran from the 26<sup>th</sup> of October, 1946 to the 23<sup>th</sup> of April, 1947.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 5131/1943, unnumbered.

From the cases presented in this paper, we notice that most entrepreneurs were housewives, they set up companies whose activities are handled by their husbands and, sometimes, their fathers, or a qualified person (he had a certificate) designated by proxy, but also people who had worked as commercial officials, gained experience working in commercial units, and who opened their own businesses. Analyzing the files of the companies registered with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Craiova, and registered in the Trade Register, we identified several profiles of the woman trader in Craiova: having her own business; as guardian of the minor heirs; after her husband's bankruptcy; as a result of the death of the spouse; as heiress.

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