

IOAN-AUREL POP **Laudatio**



IOAN-AUREL POP and
His Royal Highness CHARLES, Prince of Wales

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,
There was a time, long before the European Union, when Britannia (nowadays England) and Dacia (nowadays Romania) were part of the same state called the Roman Empire, which spanned three continents, from the cold mists of the North Sea to the hot sands of Africa and from the Tigris and the Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean. Since then, the bonds between the people living on the banks of the River Thames and the people living on the banks of the Danube and near the Carpathian Mountains endured, continued, were interrupted and resumed time and again despite the geographical distance, leading to a better mutual understanding.

The English people have always been seen as a model Western European nation and have provided the other nations with community organization standards, from monarchy and democratic leadership to the structure of universities—the ones in Cambridge and

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The “Focus” section is devoted to His Royal Highness Charles, Prince of Wales, to whom Babeş-Bolyai University granted on 29 May 2017 the title of *doctor honoris causa*.

Oxford are genuine global reference points. The formal structure of medieval universities has endured in certain aspects, despite the rapid modernization. Our university, founded in 1581 by royal decree and then re-established several times, is the oldest and most prestigious in Romania. Throughout time, students were taught in Latin, German, Hungarian and Romanian. Today we have a university with three official languages of study, Romanian, Hungarian and German (the languages of the three main nationalities in Transylvania), and with tens of programs taught in English and French. Many students from the EU and from all over the world study here and each and every one is free to choose the language they are to be taught in. Furthermore, Babeş-Bolyai is the only university in Europe with four faculties of Christian theology, corresponding to the main historical denominations in Transylvania: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Greek Catholic. In other words, the entire multicultural, multiethnic and multi-denominational tradition of the region is being honored.

Among the personalities that preceded You in receiving this honorary title there are famous scholars, Nobel prize winners, monarchs, heads of state and government, such as Mario Vargas Llosa, Chancellor Angela Merkel, King Michael I of Romania, Pope Benedict XVI, Bartholomew I, the ecumenical patriarch, Bronisław Geremek, Jacques Le Goff, Hans-Adam II, Prince of Liechtenstein, and many others.

Distinguished audience,

His Royal Highness Charles, Prince of Wales, belongs to a revered European Royal Family of medieval ancestry. As heir to the throne, the main responsibility of Prince Charles is to support Her Majesty the Queen, as a focalizing element of national pride, of unity and faith, maintaining solidarity within the society, representing stability and continuity, as well as the importance of public service and of honorary office. All these are to be accomplished by permanent encouragement and self-example. The Prince began his academic education in 1967 in Cambridge, at the famous Trinity College, specializing in the fields of archaeology, anthropology and history, a fact that explains His Royal Highness' special taste for monuments, for the preservation of the past, for tradition. Before being officially invested as Prince of Wales in 1969, he studied for a semester at the University College of Wales, learning Welsh. In 1970, the Prince became a member of the House of Lords, then a pilot in the Royal Air Force, a graduate of the Royal Naval College and a Commander in the Royal Navy, a helicopter pilot etc.

During the last 40 years, as heir to the throne, the Prince has visited around 100 countries, fulfilling some 600 royal duties every year. He is often presented as a promoter, a world leader in social corporate work, having proved from an early age the benefits of organic agriculture, finding ways to support the unem-

ployed youth, the young people with no education or other forms of training. His Royal Highness spoke for the first time about the environment in 1968, and he gave warnings long ago of the irreversible effects of climate change. As a leader in environment protection for over four decades, he has worked with the business environment, with charity organizations, with governments, and other entities to promote sustainable ways of life and work.

In 1997, Prince Charles made his first visit to Romania. It was the second time in history when a Prince of Wales was officially stepping on Romanian ground. His predecessor had been Edward, then future king of Great Britain and emperor of India, who, in 1888, had spent one day in Bucharest, and several days in the Royal Castle of Peleş, the summer residence of King Carol I of Romania and of Queen Elisabeth. The future King Edward VII then journeyed through “Wild Carpathia,” by train, to Gheorgheni, in Transylvania, where he met with Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg of Austria-Hungary.

Beginning with 1998, Prince Charles has visited Romania on countless occasions, during either private or public visits, always informing the world about this country between the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube that is “blessed by God Almighty above all things on earth” (Nicolae Bălcescu). By means of properties, foundations and associations, by encouraging investments and competition, through the interest shown in monument restoration and environmental protection, but especially leading by example, the Prince of Wales became a true protector of Transylvania and of Romania. From Viscri, in the center of historical Transylvania, up to Săpânța, in the heart of the historical land of Maramureș, with the help of his foundation, of other organizations, foundations and associations, but mostly thanks to the kind people surrounding him and caring for him, His Royal Highness contributes immensely to the preservation of historical traditions and of an untainted nature. These traditions come from the past and look towards the future. With his sensibility for history and architecture, which was noticeable in his early years as a student, Prince Charles understood from the very beginning the role of Romania as synthesis of civilizations, bringing together the Catholic and Protestant West and the Byzantine and Orthodox East. That is why, in Transylvania, next to the jutting spires of Gothic churches, which pierce the sky, we find the rounded domes of Byzantine churches; then, a few hundred meters away from a Baroque building there is a Renaissance chapel, next to an austere Unitarian (Anti-Trinitarian) place of worship there is a synagogue, while a few steps away stands a wooden church... All these are symbols of the evolution of European civilization, perhaps better preserved here than anywhere else; maybe for this reason His Royal highness considers it a precious treasure, which must be kept. Prince Charles is a true founder, reconciling nature with history, faith with architecture, modernity with the monuments of

the past. Orthodox Romanians, Catholic, Calvinist and Unitarian Hungarians, Catholic and Lutheran Germans, Jews and others have all worked towards the same purpose, creating thus a model of European coexistence, despite the inherent disputes and misunderstandings.

Your Royal Highness,

You are today in Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár/Klausenburg—Romania’s second largest city, provincial capital during the Roman Empire (just like London/Londinium), and declared a city some 1900 years ago. The city of today has around 400,000 inhabitants, among whom almost 100,000 are students. Every fourth inhabitant is a student, and the university is the city’s defining element. In time, we have learned to live together, to survive, and also to coexist. At the university, we work together in the service of education, research, communication and dialogue. We sincerely believe that through culture we may achieve freedom.

Your Royal Highness,

Here, in Romania, You find Yourself at home and we hope You will always do so. The reasons are both objective and subjective. Countless ties connect You to this country, including distant relatives (the Basarab dynasty in Wallachia, more precisely Prince Vlad Dracula’s heirs) or closer ones (descending from Queen Maria—granddaughter of Queen Victoria of Great Britain—whose bust keeps vigil on the hallway of this university); but there are also affective ties, the love for the places and the people, the rolling hills and valleys of this country, the meadows covered with flowers, the forests and the rivers that are still inhabited by wild animals and fish; but mostly the hospitable people, as You Yourself have often mentioned.

The Senate of our university has fulfilled an honorable duty to celebrate You and bring You closer to us. We rest assured that You share the motto of this institution, *Traditio nostra unacum Europae virtutibus splendet* (“Our tradition is resplendent with the virtues of Europe”). We consider You the successor of our founders from a century ago, when King Ferdinand of Romania and Queen Maria of Romania (the great-aunt of Your Royal Highness) reestablished this venerable institution in the Kingdom of Romania. By accepting our joint invitation, made by *Senatus Academicus et Rector Magnificus*, You have honored and dignified us, offering us trust in the strength of a tradition that looks towards the future. *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium Almae Mater Napocensis* wish You good health and the strength to serve the British nation and the world and, as in times past, *Vivat, crescat, floreat!*

