The Middle Ages in Constant Motion
Some "Useful" Meanings and Interpretations in the '80s of the Last Century

GABRIEL MOISA

H ISTORY, AS a field of study, represents a fundamental direction of what it means to chart human features. In general, although this is not recognized, all socio-human disciplines revolve around history. According to Bogdan Murgescu, they *"would be virtually deprived of the raw material necessary to produce and verify their theories. As they want their theoretical constructs to have something to do with reality and not be mere ideal models suspended in the sky, economists, sociologists, political scientists and all other representatives of the socio-human disciplines must start from the past experience of mankind"*[1]. That is why our discipline sometimes feels some discomfort in relation to the fields mentioned above, as long as they do not take account of an expert opinion in history. The lack of historical perspective, not knowing the context or worse, deliberate manipulation, may frequently lead to statements that are disturbing for the historian. However, this would not be a disaster since the specialist disposes of the necessary antidote to set things straight. What is even worse is the major impact on society and on how society is informed, with direct negative consequences on the perception of the reality and of the world around.

Manipulation has always been present in the field of history, but the phenomenon has taken a terribly interesting and particularly acute turn during the last century[2]. One of the most aggressive forms of manipulation is the falsification of history.

The last century has reached the peak from this perspective. Depending on their nature, all political regimes, whether totalitarian or democratic, undermined, some coarsely (the totalitarian ones), others more delicately and insinuating (the democratic ones), the modesty of history, in the interests of the time. We should also mention from the start that, with few exceptions, the historians are not the ones who manipulate. Each time, those who do this belong to related fields such as politics, political sciences, communication sciences, journalism etc. The honest historian does not give up on his working tools which prevent him from deliberately distorting the findings of his research. If he gives up on these tools, he gives up on his profession and, therefore, he is no longer a historian, but an essayist, communication specialist, journalist, or something else.

It is understandable why totalitarian regimes have paid particular attention to research and to the writing of history, and later sought to bring the official version to the knowledge of the general public. Coming out of nowhere, the totalitarian regime, be it of com-

munist or of Nazi origin, needed legitimacy and acceptance from the citizens who were forced to permanently live in the future and, for this, they had to bear the hardships of the present caused by a past that had been mostly inappropriate. The positive aspects of the past were highly selectively analyzed, so as to serve the present and not cause any harm to a future well-defined ideologically but still quite uncertain. Under this kind of regime, there is only one single stable point: the future. And the future had to be drafted as a perfect one. The future had to be the starting point in describing the present and most of all in rewriting the past, so that this past would be worthy of the bright future towards which the society was heading.

In the last years of the Romanian totalitarian regime, the historiographical priorities were reassessed (for how many times during communism?) not as a consequence of the freedom of speech, but as a consequence of the new commandments of the powers that be. New tones became increasingly more evident and scholarly papers received the pigmentation that had been absent until the mid-1960s. Important moments of national history were reassessed while others were left out. Michael the Brave was re-rediscovered, as well as his actions, the events of 1848, the Union of the Romanian Principalities in 1859 and the Great Union of 1918, the latter being abandoned by the Romanian historiography for 20 years until 1968. The Slavs were also forgotten, instead the Dacians and the Romans were reviewed. Very importantly, the critical valences of Romanian historiography were rediscovered during this period in an increasingly strident dialogue with the Hungarian and Soviet historiographies. All these highlights corresponded to the tone of the Romanian foreign policy regarding Hungary and the USSR. Statements that were impossible in the 1950s were possible in the 1980s, so nobody was particularly surprised when, in 1988, Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu stated in a volume relevant even today that the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was actually the Romanian Bessarabia that had been stolen to Romania following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact[3]. But none of these was the result of the freedom of expression. All were the result of using history in an acute phase as a political and propagandistic means.

On the same level we may discuss about the existence of a Middle Ages in "constant motion" in the '80s of the last century, when the tone changed almost every year depending on the current needs of the system in relation to the general public. The easiest methods of contaminating the public with the official discourse were either through cinema—and we have numerous examples of valuing history through cinema—or through the museums, institutions where the public could come into direct contact with history in its official version. Several documents issued by the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party iterated that the party's highest forum was interested and attentive to the smallest detail that was transmitted to the general public. Therefore it can be said that all historical ages were imbued with a great *anxiety* generated by the ideological tone of the '80s. Suddenly, the past became *restless*, just like a living organism facing an imminent danger. After a period of relative calm between the '60s and the late '70s, absolutely all historical periods were again vulnerable to ideological interference. As the socio-political and economic crisis deepened in Romania in the '80s, the recourse to propaganda and ideology became more and more present. In spite of the fact that we were a few months from the fall of the communist regime or perhaps because of this, the attention granted to history in the form of manipulation for the benefit of the

regime was extremely present. How else can one interpret the *"Note on updating history museums"* drawn up by the Department of Propaganda and Media of the Central Committee (C.C.) of the Romanian Communist Party (R.C.P.) no earlier and no later than 20 February 1989. Thus, the note read, *"in light of the theses, ideas and guidelines formulated in the presentation of the General Secretary of the Party, Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, at the Joint Meeting of the Plenary of the C.C. of the R.C.P., of the democratic bodies and of the mass and public organizations on 28-30 November 1988, the basic exhibitions of history museums are to be updated ..."*[4]. Nothing was left to chance, and, so everything would be clear, all museums in Romania were given precise instructions on how to set up the new exhibitions. Thus, the note continued, *"At the opening of the exhibition the following text shall be displayed: On the present territory of our homeland several forms, all social systems—the primitive commune, slavery, feudalism—and then capitalist society succeeded one another, but now we are in the superior stage of the socialist society"*[5].

It is surprising how politics was attentive to the tones of the ages, so that they would not escape the approved patterns. This fact is highlighted by the numerous themes, addresses on completing themes, notes on updating history museums etc. that had to "correspond." Therefore, we may speak of the Middle Ages in constant motion due to the rhythm in which the period suffered in terms of interpretation.

In another document, dated 19 April 1985 and entitled *Thematic framework for county museums of history*[6], the same Department of Propaganda and Media of the C.C. the R.C.P. textually presented the notes on the Middle Ages that had to be made visible to the public.

At the very beginning, within the space dedicated to the Middle Ages, one comes across an idea favored by the regime in those years, that is, *"the unitary development of the Romanian people under feudalism"*[7]. From the start, the demarcation lines on how to convey to the audience the idea of the Romanians' medieval unity were laid. To begin with, the exhibition was to establish beyond any doubt the fact that, in the 4th century, the Romanian people was a well-defined entity from all points of view. To support this idea, artefacts were to be displayed so as to prove a unitary material culture throughout the entire country, a similar spiritual culture—this aspect being demonstrated among others by the presence of Christianity in the 4th century on the entire current territory of Romania—and to demonstrate the existence of a clear continuity, the supreme argument being to exhibit several pieces of evidence that spoke about the existence of *"popular Romanias/romaniilor populare"*[8] in the Romanian national landscape of the 20th century. At the same time, it was deemed necessary to display a map of the Romanian space in the 4th-11th centuries which presented *"the migration of several populations on Romania's territory until the 11th century"*[9]. Leaving aside the fact that the phrase *"Romania's territory until the 11th century"* is unsuitable for the 1st millennium, the insistence on the presence of a map of the route followed by migrators was supported by passages taken from the directives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party showing the fact that the Romanian population had already been in this area by the time the migrators came. Thus, the visitor remained with the clear idea that the Romanians were already here when the migrators arrived in this geographical area. However, we must recognize that the way of solving the issue of continuity in the 1st millennium was quite easy to imprint in the consciousness of those attending the new museum

exhibitions. The major problem that emerges refers to the presented arguments, which derived almost exclusively from party documents that made a historical explanation ridiculous. Thus, a real historical phenomenon, the Romanian presence in this space after the Aurelian withdrawal, became open to challenge as long as the scientific arguments were set aside. This means doing no service but rather a disservice to Romanian historiography, as this type of argument is always challengeable and undermining for the neutral professional reader.

According to this theme set by the Department of Propaganda and Media of the C.C. of the R.C.P., another moment that had to be cleared was that of the existence of "*the first Romanian state formations*"[10] and, especially, given the period, "*the fight for the defense of independence*"[11]. This had to be proven with the help of a map that presented "*the first Romanian feudal state formations—10th-13th centuries*"[12] which had to underline "*the conquest of Transylvania and the colonization of Szeklers and Saxons by the Hungarian royalty*"[13]. The necessity of underlining in the exhibition a moment dedicated to "*the independent Romanian feudal state*"[14] was emphasized here. The emphasis was on the setting up of "*the Romanian feudal states of Wallachia, Transylvania, Moldavia and Dobrudja*"[16]. Beside the interesting terminology one has to mention an attempt to prioritize the Romanian principalities in the preferences of the official ideology. We notice that Transylvania is well placed in this ranking, right behind Wallachia and before Moldavia and Dobrudja. This may also indicate that the Romanian historiography in the mid '80s had a very tense dialogue with the Hungarian historiography related to Transylvania. This reality would be presented by a map that had to clearly show, in enlightening colors, the size of the "*free and independent*" Romanian principalities in the 14th-16th centuries, including Transylvania.

We may also notice a specific language, including that of the Romanian political leader of the '80s, a terminology that is transposed to the early Romanian Middle Ages. Terms such as freedom of the country, full national independence etc. were commonly used in the official discourse of the '80s.

Curators had to allot a special space to the 14th-16th centuries. The exhibition had to present here local aspects, although "the thematic framework" was meant to ensure that history museums had a "unitary" character all over Romania. It was the only segment where the local curator was given little room to introduce local medieval data.

However, nothing was left to chance. The room or rooms dedicated to this moment had to follow a certain general pattern impregnated with local marks. Thus, to begin with, it had to display the caption "..... *County in the 14th-16th centuries*"[17], the gap where the name of the county had to be filled in representing the contribution of each county museum. Then, all was circumscribed to underlining the role of the peasantry throughout these centuries, and only secondarily the role of the other social entities. The entire exhibition showed the magnitude of the socio-economic development of the Romanian principalities throughout these centuries insisting, of course, primarily on "*the role of the peasantry in the medieval history of the Romanian people*"[18] and on their occupations, agriculture and animal husbandry, and only thirdly on the crafts. Then, as locally specific, exhibitions had to present "*the first official mention of the county ....*"[19] and "*the first official mentions of the main settlements in the county*"[20], local visitors thus learning about their seniority in their native areas.

These were the only parameters that local curators could operate with, the rest following the centralizing ideational path. Exhibitions across the country were given precise coordinates for a unitary display, so as to textually reflect *"the economic ties among the Romanian principalities"*[21], the situation of the peasantry, and the great social movements. As far as social movements were concerned, all exhibitions had to reflect two such events, *"the Bobîlna uprising of 1437 and the peasant war led by Gheorghe Doja in 1514"*[22]. One should pay attention again to the terminology used in the '80s in Gheorghe Doja's case, as his movement had already turned from peasant uprising into a peasant war according to the ideology of that period of history.

We reach a moment very dear to this period, the election of the rulers "useful" to the regime. The theme, set up by the Department of Propaganda and Media of the C.C. of the R.C.P., clearly established that all exhibitions in Romania had to display only five names of rulers: Mircea the Elder, Alexander the Good, John Hunyadi, Vlad the Impaler and Stephen the Great. From an ideological point of view, there were several aspects that were common to them: rulers who governed over large medieval Romanian states, unifiers like Mircea the Elder and Alexander the Good, and those who strengthened the authority of the ruler over the (usually treacherous) boyars, Stephen the Great, Vlad the Impaler and even John Hunyadi. All these rulers were authoritarian with the boyars and imposed their views to the detriment of the latter. These were two of the ideological paths Nicolae Ceauşescu wanted to base his reign on. These examples from medieval reigns could even suggest possible consequences for "the boyars" of the time who would dare rise against his "reign." We should underline the fact that the same subject had to clearly establish another objective: the allegedly very good relationship between rulers and peasants in order to form a common alliance against the boyars who were considered unreliable, treacherous, etc.

This is proven by the fact that, within the theme, after displaying the rulers, there was a note stating that *"according to county, the personality of the ruler in the area will be underlined and especially the fact that the peasantry represented the core of the army of the great rulers of the 15th century"*[23]. The same rubric contained another note that was to clarify another aspect of the privileged ruler-people relationship (an aspect meant to be transposed into and from the '80s to the 16th century) that iterated *"the national and international importance of the struggle of the Romanian people around its leader for the defense of independence ..."*[24]. The idea of a conscious Romanian unity in the Middle Ages would also be granted a privileged position in the exhibition, since the latter was textually required to show *"the political ties among the Romanian principalities in the struggle for the defense of independence ..."*[25].

For the 16th century, the leitmotif of the exhibition was *"the united struggle of the Romanian principalities for the defense of independence ..."*[26]. The following rulers were chosen to emphasize this aspect: Neagoe Basarab, Radu of Afumaţi, Petru Rareş, John III the Brave (previously known as the Terrible but for some reason he became the Brave), rulers who ideologically belonged to the same mental register of the '80s, just like the rulers of the 15th century. One can notice a certain satisfaction of the theme when reading the lines that were to announce a moment ideologically useful to the regime, namely *"the setting up of the autonomous Principality of Transylvania after the dissolution of Hungarian*

feudal state. 1541"[27]. Amid the heated Romanian-Hungarian historiographical dispute of the mid '80s, the subject could not escape museums in a way comprehensible to the public who had to learn that medieval Hungary disappeared as a state in 1541, amending thus also the idea of Hungarian millenarianism that had a syncope in the middle of the 16th century. Again one has to do with a historical truth almost entirely explained by ideological arguments.

It is worth mentioning, regarding the semantics of words, that terminologically the following words dominated: social struggle, united struggle, peasantry, uprising/war, ruler, freedom, independence.

Another privileged curatorial moment was dedicated to Michael the Brave. The invoked theme was "*The year 1600. Political union of the Romanian Principalities under Michael the Brave*"[28]. What else could have been better emphasized here than "*the united struggle of the Romanian principalities under the leadership of Michael the Brave to regain independence*"[29] and "*the union of Wallachia, Transylvania and the whole country of Moldavia*"[30]. Alongside these suggestions, a map was to be exhibited, "*as big as possible*"[31,] to represent "*the Romanian principalities united by Michael the Brave*"[32]. Surprisingly, a decision of the Department of Propaganda and Media of the C.C. of the R.C.P. ordered the setting up of a map, in the part of the exhibition dedicated to Michael the Brave, that displayed "*localities in Europe that published documents about Michael the Brave in the years 1595-1603*"[33]. Perhaps the intention was to demonstrate the fact that Michael the Brave had solidly entered the European consciousness during his lifetime. One cannot but point out that Michael the Brave is one of our national personalities that was ideologically exploited to the maximum, regardless of the shades of the communist regime, each finding something to profit from his great personality.

For the following centuries, 17th-18th and early 19th, the predominant aspects were the economic and social ones. Thus, exhibitions had to present cultural aspects related to "*the economic and social development*," that is, "*agriculture and animal husbandry, crafts, trade*"[34] but also suggestions regarding the medieval unity of the Romanian space since "*the economic ties among the Romanian principalities*"[35], "*the cultural ties among the Romanian principalities, the circulation of Romanian books within the space inhabited by Romanians*"[36], "*attempts to reunite the Romanian countries within the borders of ancient Dacia*"[37] and "*the Romanian principalities—an agent of culture in southwestern Europe*"[38] were to be highlighted. The princes or rulers Gabriel Bethlen, Matei Basarab, György Rákóczi I and II, Vasile Lupu, Mihnea III, Constantine Brâncoveanu and Dimitrie Cantemir were considered, according to the theme, as pursuing these desiderata.

In addition to the socio-economic aspects, exhibitions had to highlight moments of social rebellion such as "*the great popular uprising of 1653-1655*"[39] or "*the anti-Habsburg uprising led by Francis Rakoczy II (1703-1711)*"[40].

One cannot help but recognize the era in which this document was drawn up, further proof that the past was introduced in the political discourse of the '80s. One can also fully grasp the presence of the Romanian-Soviet tensions. Just one example in this respect: the theme textually stated the need to devote a section of the exhibition to the territorial losses suffered by the Romanian principalities during this period. While it may be surprising to those less familiar with the era, this was a very clear reference to the loss of Bessarabia to Russia in 1812, an obvious hint to a Romanian territory that in the mid '80s belonged

to the Soviet Union. The visual aspect of the matter in question was solved by means of a map that had to reflect this reality and that had to be displayed in a prominent place. Regarding this aspect, another note marked the fact that the map should "*also include Dobrudja, mentioning that it became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1417*"[41].

Special attention was paid to the transition from the medieval period to modernity. The ideology left serious imprints in terms of the materialist-dialectical conception allegedly embraced at the time, so the theme set out to highlight specific aspects such as the phenomenon, which had to be "*contradictory*"[42], of the "*primitive accumulation of capital in the Romanian principalities*"[43] or the precise determination "*of the social structure of Romanian society*"[44]. The exhibition would then turn to a hobbyhorse of the official historiography of the Communist era, especially in its last period, namely, the fact that the gap between the Western and the Romanian space was due to the foreign domination. Two ideas were to be developed in the exhibition, the "*ill-fated character of the foreign domination*"[45] presented as "*the obstacle in the development of the Romanian principalities,*"[46] and "*the looting of the country's wealth*"[47].

It is not without interest, from the point of view of the ideological impact of the mid-'80s, that the theme led to a debate around the idea of Romanian nation and its assertion in relation to other nations in the area. Without saying it directly, the suggestions offered were clearly in relation to the individualization with regard to the Hungarian nation, since a sort of case study on the affirmation of the Romanian nation would be debated by means of well-defined panels, exclusively by focusing on the role of "*the Transylvanian School—the theoretical founder of the Dacian-Romanian ideology*"[48], of the *Supplex* Movement, of Sofronie's uprising, and mainly of the special "moment" from this perspective, "*the great peasant uprising of 1784 led by Horea, Cloșca and Crișan*"[49]. One should notice here that the word uprising was used instead of the word revolution for the moment of 1784, proving that the version supported with great professionalism by Cluj historian David Prodan prevailed in the dispute around the word with the Department of Propaganda and Media of the C.C. of the R.C.P.

A few years later, in 1989, the Middle Ages again "moved" following political orders. At their origin was Nicolae Ceaușescu's speech in the "*Plenary of the C.C. of the R.C.P. of the democratic bodies and of the mass and public organizations on 28-30 November 1988*"[50]. On this occasion, the Secretary General of the R.C.P. delivered a discourse dedicated to "*the updating of history museums*"[51] according to the latest political demands and to the latest trends in the regime. The Middle Ages, as well as other historical ages, were set much stricter in a bed of Procrustes, so the amendments to history departments according to the latest ideological imperatives were very strictly clarified.

Unlike the previous "*Thematic framework…*" of 1985, on 28 February 1989, without leaving anything to chance, county museums received all changes to be made with great precision. Thus, the document stated that, "*the main moments from the basic exhibition in history museums must include the following,*"[52] specifying what that "following" meant, from Antiquity until the '80s of the last century.

The Middle Ages were the most prone for reviewing, to the point where terminology and semantics could only be understood according to the interpretation of the time, reflecting the ideological notes of the regime and the changes that had occurred within the four years since the previous suggestions.

The vulnerable moments were precisely those moments that were "useful" to the regime in terms of the dialogue with the Romanian society, which had to be grouped around its leader at a time when the cult of personality became evident, individualized and based on shaping the past so as to become useful to the present.

The first issue taken into consideration was that of the territory where the Romanian people was formed, at a time when in both Bucharest and Budapest this issue was widely debated upon and subjected to ideological interferences in the context of fighting or supporting Roesler's immigrationist theories regarding the Romanian people. Thus, for a more precise clarification for the public in this regard, it was specified that, from the exhibitions restored according to the *Theme* of 1985, the term "*Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space had to be replaced by the Romanian people's habitation and ethnogenesis space*,"[53] perhaps in an attempt to reinforce the idea that the current living space of the Romanians was identical to that of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people during the 1st millennium.

After geographically clarifying the ethnogenesis, the exhibition space would suffer adjustments in terms of the components of the Romanian people. In this respect, the space dedicated to the formation of the Romanian people had to contain the following text: "*After long battles with the Roman Empire and after the latter's victory under Trajan, a long cohabitation between the Dacians and Romans followed, the formation of a new nation— the Romanian people, began ...*"[54] So, ideologically, only two components, the Dacians and the Romans, were accepted in the process of ethnogenesis. Nothing about the Slavs or other possible contributors to the formation of the Romanian people. Just like in the '50s when, due to the same ideological reasons, a new hierarchy in the process of ethnogenesis had been established, Slavs, Dacians and only then the Romans, in 1989 things changed fundamentally, the Slavs disappeared completely, while the Dacians and the Romans commonly shared the segments constituting the Romanian people in agreement with the course of the Romanian foreign policy that showed very tense relations between Bucharest and Moscow. As a punishment, the Slavs were eliminated from the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people.

However, things did not end there. The Romanian people, following the ideology of the era, was to find out from the first room of the exhibition that it was living "*in the superior stage of socialist society*"[55] and had no choice but to comply with and live up to the ideological expectations of 1989. Ideologically, the chances to advance were very high, as proved by the note of the Department of Propaganda and Media of the C.C. of the R.C. P. on updating history museums, as long as the new people formed from the two structural components "*exclusively inherited and developed the finest features of the two peoples, the Dacians and the Romans*"[56]. For everything to be very clear, the finest features were listed, namely, "*love of work, truth, freedom, justice and independence*."[57] Using ideological and propagandistic arguments, Romanians were ascribed only positive features, evidently worthy just of those living in the "*superior stage of the socialist society*." It was clearly suggested that the Romanian people was shaped and prepared by the communist regime in this respect, by outlining only these positive features. The so-called negative features were left behind by the communist context the Romanian society had been living in for the last 45 years.

The next part of the exhibition showed special attention to "*the origin and character of the Romanian language and some aspects pertaining to the migrant populations*"[58]. Obviously,

it resorted to ideological arguments stemming directly from Nicolae Ceauşescu's speeches. Anyway, all the texts that had to be introduced were fragments taken from his speeches.

Thus, the space dedicated to the panels about the origin and the character of the Romanian language had to display the following text: "*The preservation and development of the Dacian-Roman culture had an important role in the Romanian culture and language, based on the symbiosis of the multilateral Latin civilization, which transmitted the very way of being, the customs, the way of thinking and living of the Romanian people*"[59]. The text confirmed once again what was mentioned above on the origins of the Romanian people, again eliminating any other components. Here it was clearly underlined that the Romanian language had an exclusively Dacian-Roman substrate, eliminating the Slavs and others like them, such as the Hungarians.

In fact, things were in place even from this perspective since another text which was to be placed within the same exhibition, paraphrasing Nicolae Ceauşescu, asserted the superiority of the Romanians over the other populations or peoples around, all migrators. Thus, it was emphasized that "*the superior civilization of the Dacian-Romans, and later that of the Romanian people, left its mark on the existence of migratory populations which settled in these territories*"[60]. But that was not all, since these populations, besides being inferior in terms of civilization, also hindered the evolution of the Romanian people. To highlight this "reality" a text had to be included in order to point out that "*the migration of different tribes and populations, foreign invasions, held back for hundreds of years the development of the Romanian people*"[61]. Visitors were to be edified on this aspect as well and, thus, also benefit from an explanation on the Romanians' living standards in the years of the Communist regime. The precariousness of the Romanians' life was therefore exclusively due to the foreigners, in an ideological subterfuge specific to totalitarian regimes, since the latter had held back "for hundreds of years" the development of the Romanian people.

In the note of 28 February 1989 on the updating of history museums, the Middle Ages moved also at the level of the constitution of the medieval state. State founders were attributed tasks that we do not know if they really had or could have assumed in the 14th century. Quoting Nicolae Ceauşescu, the document stated that "*at the formation of the independent feudal states*"[62] a text had to be included so as to highlight, in keeping with the ideology, that rulers such as Basarab of Wallachia and Bogdan I of Moldavia initiated several attempts at unification driven by the idea of establishing "*a unified people,*" based on which their followers set up "*the Romanian nation*"[63]. At a superficial analysis one may notice the same ideology-driven language that lacks all credibility. Nicolae Ceauşescu's idea of independence was supported here, since the Romanian states had to be "independent" from their very founding, as was the idea of "a unified people," closely united around the party and its leader. Since the antecedents were found, it was suggested to mark this occasion museologically as well. How else to strongly urge the people to gather around its leader to allegedly maintain the independence of the country in a complicated international context such as the one from 1989, if not by iterating the fact that, since the setting up of the Romanian medieval states, the idea of independence and unity around the political leader were firmly entrenched in the Romanian mentality.

It is worth mentioning two other points of the present note that demonstrate the mobility of the Romanian Middle ages in relation to the ideological overtones of the '80s.

The hermeneutics of the document outlines the terminological mutation occurred in the case of two major events within the Romanian space directly affected by the conceptual disputes among the historians of the time. The two moments are Bobîlna (1437) and Horea, Cloşca and Crişan (1784). Since the word uprising for these moments was no longer in accordance with the ideological norms of "the stage of development of socialism in Romania," thanks to the sustained teleological effort of several historians, the word "uprising" was phased out, being replaced by the word "revolution." Thus, almost overnight, the peasants from Bobîlna received new assignments more than 400 years after the fact, since their action was no longer an uprising, but a revolution. The same phenomenon happened in the case of the famous uprising of 1784, widely debated in the mid-'80s. In 1989, it was decided to convey to the general public, through the museums, the idea of a revolution for what had been the uprising of Horea, Cloşca and Crişan.

To be as clear and unambiguous as possible, history museums in Romania were conveyed the fact that "*panels on the uprising of 1437 and the panel on the uprising of 1784 will bear the titles: Peasants' Revolution of Bobîlna - 1437 and the Revolution led by Horea, Cloşca and Crişan – 1784*"[64].

The second "incriminated" case explained the gap between the Romanian principalities and Western Europe in terms of state aggregation. It was said that "*the delay in the setting up of the Romanian Principalities and of the Romanian national state, of the nation itself, was due to the foreign domination and rule, and later to the exploitation and oppression by the great empires—the Ottoman Empire, the Tsarist Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire*"[65]. In fact, it was a requirement of the note in question that this text be prominently displayed "*on the panels regarding the economic, political and cultural development in the 18*th*-19*th *centuries*"[66].

Worth mentioning here is the incriminating tone of the text on the Tsarist Empire, which allegedly contributed, by "exploitation and oppression," to the delays of the Romanian Principalities in all respects. To present this in the exhibition meant, in the end, to present the tense relationships between Bucharest and Moscow of those years. The connection is even more evident since the text in question was taken from one of Nicolae Ceauşescu's speeches and the general public could learn, by reading these sentences, about the relationship between the two communist states.

This is the proof of how the political interference in the field of history does nothing but divert the historian's mission in some cases. Once in the hands of certain official historians, history was brutally manipulated to the point where, even if there were arguments for professional discussions on these issues, the approaches were baffling and turned ridiculous following disqualifying ideological interventions. The examples presented here are enlightening in this respect. It should be noted, however, that most Romanian historians of the communist regime refused to make any compromise. And if they did, most of these compromises were the result of certain contexts that, eventually, turned out to be beneficial to the field.

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Notes

1. Bogdan Murgescu, *A fi istoric în anul 2000* (Ed. All Educaţional, Bucharest, 2000): 15.
2. Jean Sevilla, *Incorectitudinea istorică* (Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 2012): 11.
3. Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *România şi organizarea postbelică a lumii 1945-1947* (Ed. Academiei, Bucharest, 1988): 268 p.
4. *Nota privind actualizarea muzeelor de istorie,* Colecţia de istorie a Muzeului Ţării Crişurilor din Oradea, inv. 8692, f. 1.
5. Ibid.
6. *Tematica cadru pentru muzeele judeţene de istorie,* Colecţia de istorie a Muzeului Ţării Crişurilor din Oradea, inv. 8692.
7. Ibid., f. 3.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., f. 4.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., f. 5.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., f. 6.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., f. 7.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., f. 8.
48. Ibid.
49. *Nota privind actualizarea muzeelor de istorie,* Colecţia de istorie a Muzeului Ţării Crişurilor din Oradea, inv. 8692.
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54. Ibid., f. 2.
55. Ibid., f. 3.
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61. Ibid., f. 4.
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Abstract
The Middle Ages in Constant Motion. Some "Useful" Meanings and Interpretations in the '80s of the Last Century

Manipulation has always been present in the field of history, but the phenomenon has taken a terribly interesting and particularly acute turn during the last century. One of the most aggressive forms of manipulation is the falsification of history. The political interference in the field of history does nothing but divert the historian's mission in some cases. Once in the hands of certain official historians, history was brutally manipulated to the point where, even if there were arguments for professional discussions on these issues, the approaches were baffling and turned ridiculous following disqualifying ideological interventions. The examples presented here are enlightening in this respect. It should be noted, however, that most Romanian historians of the communist regime refused to make any compromise. And if they did, most of these compromises were the result of certain contexts that, eventually, turned out to be beneficial to the field.

Keywords