

ABSTRACT

This abstract represents a synthesis of my research activity and professional career since 2006, when I publicly defended my PhD thesis, titled “British Economic and Political Interests at the Lower Danube (1856–1918)” and coordinated by Dr Paul Cernovodeanu, at the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History in Bucharest. This academic accomplishment allowed my promotion to the position of lecturer (February 2007) and then associate professor (September 2012) at the History Department of the “Lower Danube” University of Galați. During these years, I have taught courses, for BA and MA students, on Romanian and European history between the 18th and 20th centuries, all of them related to my three major fields of scientific interest: the role of the Danube and of the Black Sea in connecting the Romanian Principalities to the global economy; the evolution of British economic and political interests at the Lower Danube; the image of the Romanian area in foreign travelogues.

In 2007–2008, I received funding (about 20,000 €) from the National University Research Council (CNCSIS) for the completion of a research grant for young scholars – “The Maritime Danube in the Routes of the Great European Trade (1829–1948). Qualitative and Quantitative Aspects Regarding the Trade and Shipping through the Mouths of the Danube”, which allowed me to extend my study to foreign archives and libraries (the National Archives in London) and offered me the chance to participate at a major scientific event, the “5th IMEHA Congress of Maritime History” (Greenwich, 2008). Following my collaboration with fellow colleagues from the “International Maritime Economic History Association”, I have served since 2010 as a member in the editorial board of the “International Journal of Maritime History”, a prestigious academic journal (ERIH INT1), and I have started working in several international projects. One of them is the project “Black Sea and Its Port–Cities, 1774–1914. Development, Convergence and Linkages with the Global Economy”, coordinated by Professor Gelina Harlaftis, Ionian University, Greece, where my contribution refers to the development of the Romanian ports of Brăila, Galați and Constanța, significant outlets for Romania’s grain harvests during the modern age. Since 2013 I am involved in the initiative “In the Same Boat. A Global Labour History Project”, coordinated by Raquel Varela and Marcel van der Linden at the “International Institute for Social History” in Amsterdam, and in 2014 I am a member in the Advisory Board for the ERC Consolidator Grant “Securing Europe, Fighting Its Enemies 1815–1914”, coordinated by Professor Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University). This project will also analyse the activity of the European Commission of the Danube, the first international body to bear the adjective “European” in its official title.

During the past years, I was a post–doctoral fellow at the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History in Bucharest, my research topic – “The Rivalry between the Danubian Ports and Odessa. A Controversial Episode in the Competition for Controlling the Grain Market in the North–Western Black Sea Area (1829–1856)” – being coordinated by Dr Șerban Papacostea. Thus, I had the possibility to continue my study in foreign archives (Paris, Nantes, London), where I identified and brought to the scientific circuit new primary sources regarding the history of the Romanians in the 19th century. During the academic year 2012–2013 I was a “Ștefan Odobleja” fellow at New Europe College in Bucharest, where I completed a research topic entitled “The Western World’s Discovery of the Black Sea and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1774–1856)”.

Most of my latest studies and articles have been published in prestigious Romanian and international journals. I published papers in Romanian academic reviews such as “Revista istorică”, “Revue des études sud–est européennes”, “Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol”, “Transylvanian Review”, etc. At an international level, my papers were published in visible and influential peer–reviewed journals: “Slavonic and East European Review”, “The International Journal of Maritime History” or “Journal of Mediterranean Studies” – all ISI & ERIH INT1 journals, with world–wide distribution. Different papers were also published in collective volumes printed in Italy, England or Greece.

I was also involved in the organisation of important scientific events, such as the international symposium called “By–Passing Periphery: South–Eastern European Economy and Its Convergences to the Core; Routes and Goods, Actors and Factors (16th–19th Centuries)”, for which I received, in 2012, funding from the National research Council. At the same time, my PhD thesis (“Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la gurile Dunării 1829–1914”) received in 2010 the “A. D. Xenopol” Prize of the Romanian Academy. In the same year I also received an award from the National Archives of Romania and the title of “best young Romanian historian of 2010”.

The research gathered in this thesis, under the title of “International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube (1829–1853), tells the classical story of a territory, the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, attracted into the vortex of world trade. Commerce and its huge opportunities stood at the basis of a veritable economic revolution that shook the medieval production and sale mechanisms and rearranged them for suiting a capitalist environment. Three factors converged towards this end: the introduction of steam navigation on the Danube and its encouragement by Austrian investors, the new commercial liberty of the provinces after the Peace of Adrianople (1829) and the Westerners’ interest for the agro–pastoral resources of the area.