

THE POLEMIC BETWEEN PAMFIL POLONIC AND GRIGORE G. TOCILESCU

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Abstract: The archaeological activity of Grigore G. Tocilescu and his assistant, surveyor Pamfil Polonic, has been analysed by many historians. Their contributions to the Romanian archaeology and museology are known. However, one of the issues that had remained unclear is the reason for the ceasing of the collaboration between the two and why, until now, nothing clear had been written on the matter. Recent research on this subject has revealed a possible explanation and the solution for the partial resolution of this issue. The present text is based on documents from the funds of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction, which refer to certain misunderstandings that had appeared between Grigore G. Tocilescu and Pamfil Polonic. Because of loans that were left unreturned by Pamfil Polonic, for which Grigore G. Tocilescu always warranted, the situation escalated to the former's destitution from the position of draftsman, which he had at the National Museum of Antiquities. The misunderstandings between the two on this subject had started soon after the beginning of their collaboration. Several documents from 1894 prove that Pamfil Polonic was in debt to Grigore G. Tocilescu. Their petitions to the Ministry date from 1902-1903. In this case Pamfil Polonic didn't simply renouncing his position at the National Museum of Antiquities and the triumph of his position as debtor, which Grigore G. Tocilescu tried to highlight. There also existed several court orders which bound Pamfil Polonic to return those sums, that, in a last attempt, he again redirects to Grigore G. Tocilescu, which caused the latter great upset.

Rezumat: Activitatea arheologică a lui Grigore G. Tocilescu și a colaboratorului său, inginerul topograf Pamfil Polonic a fost analizată de mai mulți istorici. Știm care au fost contribuțiile lor aduse arheologiei și muzeologiei românești. Rămâne însă neelucidat motivul încetării colaborării dintre cei doi și de ce nu s-a scris, până acum, nimic clar despre acest lucru. Cercetările recente asupra acestui subiect evidențiază o posibilă explicație și soluția pentru rezolvarea parțială a acestei chestiuni. Studiul se bazează în principal pe documente din fondul Ministerului Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, care se referă la câteva neînțelegeri apărute între Grigore G. Tocilescu și Pamfil Polonic. Pe baza unor împrumuturi nerestituite de Pamfil Polonic, pentru care Grigore G. Tocilescu gira întotdeauna, s-a ajuns la destituirea din funcția de desenator, pe care o deținea cel dintâi la Muzeul Național de Antichități. Neînțelegerile dintre cei doi pe acest subiect au început curând după începerea colaborării. Câteva documente din 1894 arată că Pamfil Polonic îi era dator lui Grigore G. Tocilescu. Petițiile celor doi către Minister datează din perioada 1902-1903. În acest caz Pamfil Polonic nu a renunțat pur și simplu la funcția deținută la Muzeul Național de Antichități și la triumful ipostazei de datornic, pe care Grigore G. Tocilescu încerca să o scoată în evidență. Au existat și câteva hotărâri judecătorești prin care Pamfil Polonic era obligat să restituie acele sume, pe care, într-o ultimă încercare, le direcționează tot către Grigore G. Tocilescu, lucrul acesta stârnind supărarea celui din urmă.

Two representative names from the inceptive phase of the Romanian archaeology are Grigore G. Tocilescu and Pamfil Polonic. Grigore G. Tocilescu begins to make his mark on the Romanian archaeology when he returns from his studies in Prague and Vienna, where he presents a doctoral thesis named *Dacia înainte de romani*. As a disciple of Alexandru Odobescu and B. P. Hașdeu, he always benefits from the support of his mentors. He is granted support scholarships and is given the warrant, and the necessary resources to conduct research in the archives and museums of Russia, France, Bulgaria, Italy etc.¹ As early as 1878, the year in which Romania becomes an independent state, Grigore G. Tocilescu is named director of the National Museum of Antiquities. For a short time however, since he is immediately charged with a four-month mission of "gathering" documents from the Russian archives. His place at the helm of the National Museum of Antiquities is temporary occupied by Eugen Costinescu, the sub-manager of the Central Library in Bucharest.²

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¹ This task of researching the archives and museums abroad crystallised in the assembly of the Manuscript catalogues, which have been part of the Library of the National Museum of Antiquities. The catalogues can nowadays be consulted in manuscripts 5190, 5191 and 5192 in the Romanian Academy Library.

² In 1878 he signs documents as the Director of the National Museum of Antiquities. A clearer document, however, is an address of the Ministry from October 4, 1878, in which they communicate to Tocilescu: "By charging with the direction of the Museum, which you are bound to leave in order to pursue your studies abroad, Mr. Eugeniu Costinescu, sub-manager of the Central Library, I have the honour of inviting you to supply him according to the Museum's inventory with all the collections, deposits, all in all, all that which the Museum owns." (Barbu, Schuster 2005 p. 22).