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Strategic interests and economic cooperation. The beginning of trade relations between Romania and Poland (1920-1921)

Introduction

A summary report on Romanian-Polish relations drafted in the interwar period by diplomat Mircea Babeș contains the following note: “In the age preceding the signing of our Alliance treaty not only were no steps taken towards the forging of economic relations between the two countries, but railway, postal, telegraphic etc. connections had not returned to normal, either”¹. Based on the observations made by Babeș, a diplomat who served for almost a decade at the Romanian legation in Warsaw during the interwar period, we propose in this study to answer the following questions: Does Babeș’ notes present the truthful outline of the Romanian-Polish economic relations in the period 1919-1921? What part did the sketching the parameters of economic cooperation between Romania and Poland play in the consolidation of their political and military alliance? What was the meaning of appointing a Romanian commercial agent in Warsaw in 1920 and what was this core of his activity? How did the negotiations for the signing of the trade agreement between Romania and Poland evolve and what importance did this document play in the development of bilateral economic relations?

Our research is based on the contributions of Nicolae Dascălu² and Florin Anghel³, who, in their works, have also analyzed the economic side of the relations between Romania and Poland in the interwar period. However, we will also use archival sources that are less integrated into the scientific circuit: the reports sent to the Romanian Ministry of Industry and Commerce by the Romanian commercial agent in Poland, the documents regarding Romania’s network of attachés and

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¹ AMAE, Fond Polonia, vol. 64, f. 4.

² Nicolae Dascălu, *Relații româno-polone în perioada interbelică (1919-1939)*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1991.

³ Florin Anghel, *Construirea sistemului „cordon sanitaire”. Relații româno-polone 1919-1926*, Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2008.

commercial agents and Romanian diplomatic documents relating to the negotiation of the 1921 trade convention.

It should be noted that the development of Romanian-Polish trade relations in the early post-war years was thwarted by several major factors: the consequences of the world war on transport networks, insufficient car trains and locomotives, as well war between Poland and Bolshevik Russia. To the above we could add the recession that both countries were going through, as well as the somewhat similar profile of the Polish and Romanian economies. Moreover, the orientation of commercial flows from Romania and Polish territories towards in other directions in the pre-war period led to Romania's reactivation of its economic relations network with Danubian Europe and Germany, without showing particular interest in developing economic cooperation with Poland. On the other hand, the Warsaw leaders were looking to revitalize the old commercial route connecting the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and in this strategic project Romania was an important piece of the puzzle⁴.

A step towards normalizing economic relations: appointing a commercial agent in Warsaw

After the recognition by the Romanian state of the new Polish Republic, in the summer of 1919 the legations of the two states were established in Bucharest and Warsaw⁵. At the end of July 1919, the diplomatic mission of Romania in Poland opened, led by diplomat Alexandru G. Florescu, joined by a "military mission" headed by "connecting officer" Alexandru Bădulescu⁶. The list of representatives of Romanian interests in Poland did not include a representative with attributions in the field of economics. The absence of a commercial agent/attaché in the legation in Poland was not, however, an isolated case, if we analyze Romania's foreign diplomatic service in the period immediately after the First World War.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, consuls had attributions in the area of the development of Romania's economic (commercial) relations. It was only in 1909 that the Romanian state appointed the first commercial attachés in a few cities that were important for Romania's international trade. These were representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, but they also collaborated with the diplomatic missions of Romania, although they were not part of the diplomatic corps⁷. In 1919, Romania had a network comprising tens of commercial attachés and agents working in nine countries: England,

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 167-169; Gheron Netta, *Relațiile economice polono-române*, București, 1924, p. 15-20.

⁵ *România-Polonia. Relații diplomatice*, I, 1918-1939, editori Florin Anghel, Dumitru Preda, Nicolae Mareș, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2003, p. 12-14.

⁶ Dumitru Preda, Mihai Retegan, *Lista atașajilor militari români (1877-1944)*, in *RA*, 4 (1981), p. 511.

⁷ AMAE, Fond Problema 77, vol. 20, telegram no. 24.033 from 30 November 1909, unpaged.

Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, France (Paris and Marseille) and Türkiye⁸.

In the first months following the opening of the legation in Poland, Alexandru G. Florescu requested that a commercial attaché should be sent to Warsaw. He returned to the topic several times⁹, supporting his endeavour thusly: "Two neighbouring countries, one is more industrial and the other more agricultural, have goods to exchange. It may be that various blocks during export and import hamper these exchanges for the time being. This is not a reason, however, to prevent the study of both countries' mutual needs. When trade is free, what will our country's situation be, ignorant as she is of Poland's needs and resources?"¹⁰. The Romanian diplomat wrote that after the re-emergence of Poland various states such as France, USA, England, Italy and the Scandinavian countries sent "commercial commissions" in Poland and, besides their diplomatic missions, employed commercial attachés¹¹. Florescu noted that in the first cases where the Romanian tradesmen ventured to Poland, he had to play the part of commercial attaché, accompanying them to banks and Ministries to get information and facilitate transactions.

His pleas led the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania to inform the Ministry of Industry and Commerce about the opportunity to appoint a commercial attaché in Poland. From April to July 1920, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce did not comply with the request coming from the legation in Warsaw through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That is why, on July 23, 1920, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a new request to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in which it pleaded for the appointment of „an attaché or commercial agent” in the capital of Poland¹². This time, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce responded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs request, announcing, on August 5, 1920, the appointment of Corneliu Bălăcescu as Romania's commercial agent in Warsaw¹³.

We can link the insistence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the evolution of political-military relations between Romania and Poland, marked by the visit of General Tadeusz Rozwadowski to Bucharest, in May 1920, in which the possibility of assuming an alliance between the two states was discussed¹⁴, but we have no evidence to attest a causal relationship between the two events.

It is certain that Romania expanded its network of attachés and commercial agents in the first part of 1920. For example, in October 1920, Romania had attachés and commercial agents who were active or were about to start their

⁸ Ibidem, address no. 21000 from 27 March 1919, unpagged.

⁹ AMAE, Fond Problema 77, vol. 21, address no. 8604 from 27 April 1920, unpagged.

¹⁰ Ibidem, telegram no. 67 from 22 March 1920, unpagged.

¹¹ Ibidem, telegram no. 67 from 22 March 1920, unpagged.

¹² Ibidem, address no. 16734 from 23 July 1920, unpagged.

¹³ Ibidem address no. 27436 from 5 August 1920, unpagged. See, also „Dimineata”, 2 August 1920, p. 7.

¹⁴ „Jeden naród o dwóch szrandarach”. *Przymierze polsko-rumuńskie (1918) 1921-1926. Dokumenty i materiały*./„Un singur popor cu două drapele”. *Alianța polono-română (1918) 1921-1926. Documente și materiale*, ed. Krzysztof Nowak, Henryk Walczak, Warszawa/Varșovia, 2020, p. 204-206.

activity in Athens, Berlin, Bern, Brussels, Buenos-Aires, Constantinople, The Hague, Hamburg, Leipzig, Marseille, Paris, Prague, Rome, Warsaw, Vienna, as well as in the Scandinavian countries. Towards the end of 1920, the network was expanded, Romania appointing commercial representatives in Madrid, Genoa and Budapest. In fact, in 1920 there was also an important expansion of the network of diplomatic missions of Romania, which represented an adaptation of the Romanian state to the new geopolitical realities.

As the Ministry of Industry and Commerce could appoint attachés and commercial agents, the appointment of an agent in Warsaw shows that, at least symbolically, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce attached less importance to trade relations with Poland, given that, while in some countries, two or even three of its commercial representatives were active (Germany, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia). However, Romania did not send agents or commercial attaches to Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, both for economic reasons and for the fact that several Romanian consulates operated in the Balkans.

Explorations, tensions and collaborative projects

On November 18, 1920, the Romanian commercial agent in Poland, Corneliu Bălăcescu, started his work in Warsaw. He arrived in Warsaw shortly after the visit of Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs, Take Ionescu, to the Polish capital.

This was Bălăcescu's first experience of the sort, since he had not worked as commercial agent abroad before¹⁵. After his experience in Poland ended in April 1922, he continued to work at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in the same field as before, international trade. In January of 1928, however, he returned to Warsaw as commercial attaché¹⁶ where he served until 1932¹⁷. Thus, Bălăcescu's connections to Poland did not stop in 1922. Moreover, in 1929, he became the first president of the Polish-Romanian Chamber of Commerce as recognition for his involvement in strengthening economic relations between the two allied states¹⁸.

In Polish capital he was greeted by legation counsellor Al. Iacovaky since Alexandru G. Florescu, the chief of the diplomatic mission, was not in Warsaw at the time. Shortly after his arrival, Bălăcescu was introduced to the Polish authorities, who manifested their interest for the "proper resumption" of economic relations between the two states¹⁹. At the time of Bălăcescu's appointment in Warsaw, Poland did not have a commercial attaché in Romania. The Polish state had created, however, a "special office for commercial transactions" in the

¹⁵ Bălăcescu was a graduate of the Academy of High Commercial and Industrial Studies in Bucharest and had joined the Ministry of Industry and Commerce as a first-class commercial agent in 1919 („Viitorul”, 2 November 1919, p. 2).

¹⁶ AMAE, Fond Problema 77, vol. 23, address 01801 from 10 January 1928, unpagged.

¹⁷ „Argus”, 5 March 1932, p. 5.

¹⁸ Florin Anghel, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

¹⁹ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 1-2.

Romanian capital", as well as a network of consulates in Bucharest, Galați, Chernovitz and Kishinev, which also had an important economic function²⁰. Regardless, appointing a commercial agent of Romania in Poland was a political signal on the part of the Romanian authorities that they wished to cooperate at the economic level with Poland. In reality, however, the Romanian trade flow and its immediate economic interests pointed towards Central Europe and Germany, which is why Poland was not a major economic objective.

Setting up a commercial agency in the capital of the state which had undergone war with Bolshevik Russia in an overpopulated and expensive city was not the easiest of endeavours. Bălăcescu requested the Romanian authorities' approval to rent an office space to in the Warsaw commercial quarter. He also insisted that a permanent secretary who spoke Polish and French be hired to the effect of supporting the Romanian commercial agent's work. Ministry of Industry and Commerce, however, tried to limit expenses bearing in mind the financial problems the Romanian state was facing, rejecting most of the Warsaw commercial agent's requests²¹.

Corneliu Bălăcescu rapidly took on the role of a commercial agent, who was supposed to gather intelligence on the Polish economy and commerce, analyse the possibility of developing bilateral commerce and make connections in the political, but mostly economic milieu of Warsaw. For example, a few days after his mission began, he had a discussion with the Polish minister of supply, who talked to him about Poland's difficult situation. The Polish minister confessed that Poland, surrounded by enemies, was counting on Romania's support, in whom she saw "an honest ally, from whom she could gain something to improve the condition she is currently in"²². Bălăcescu found that the Polish had tried to purchase wheat from Romania (150 train cars) through the Commercial Bank of Romania. As the delivery was delayed, the Polish official blamed the Romanian authorities. In this context, the Polish pressured Bălăcescu to unblock this issue which seemed important for Poland's food security. The commercial agent in Warsaw, however, had no knowledge of the situation, asking the Bucharest authorities for further clarification. Their answer arrived in the first half of December, which put Bălăcescu in a difficult position²³. Moreover, in December 1920, critical articles regarding Romania's attitude towards cereal delivery to Poland appeared in the Polish press. The Romanian authorities were criticized for shipments to Poland. At the same time, the imminence of a Romanian-Bolshevik war was mentioned, which made Romania's position vulnerable as, in the opinion of certain Polish journalists, the country was isolated²⁴.

²⁰ AMAE, Fond Problema 77, vol. 22, telegram no. 1454 from 11 April 1922, unpagued.

²¹ This was, in fact, a general practice. Many attachés and commercial agents of Romania from states that were not among the main commercial partners of Romania, could barely cover their expenses.

²² ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 8.

²³ Ibidem, f. 9.

²⁴ Ibidem, f. 44-45.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce representatives in Bucharest replied that the Commercial Bank of Romania had not issued any wheat export permits. Consequently, the issue seemed to fall outside of the competence of Romanian authorities. Furthermore, the Romanian officials believed the Polish, who failed to supply the necessary train cars to take over the incoming goods from Romania, had caused the blockage at the Romanian-Polish border²⁵.

All these explorations were taking place in economic circumstances dominated by the rising inflation in Poland²⁶, internal political disputes and the Polish state's security problems. This is why the Polish state took massive loans on the home and foreign markets to compensate for the budgetary deficit²⁷.

As early as November 1920, the Romanian commercial agent in Warsaw noted the interest of private tradesmen in commercial relations with Romania²⁸. Thus, starting with December 1920, he forwarded to Bucharest several offers of Polish companies who were either looking for raw materials or were trying to sell their products on the Romanian market. For example, several Polish companies from the leather industry were looking for raw materials in Romania²⁹, while others were offering to sell textiles, glass objects etc. All of these offers, which were sent by Bălăcescu to Bucharest, were shared with potential Romanian partners. This shows that the commercial agent in Warsaw was starting to form a network of contacts, but also shows the limits of a potential economic collaboration between the two states.

In the context of the Polish food crisis of January 1921, an increasing number of Polish tradesmen travelled to Romania to buy cereals. Some managed to purchase small quantities, but encountered obstacles with transportation. Others bought cereals from the Nepolocăuți fair organized at the border³⁰. On the other hand, tradesmen coming from Romania managed to sign various contracts with the Polish producers. In one of his reports, Bălăcescu wrote that: „Very many merchants, most of them Jewish, who come from Bessarabia, could secure various arrangements, but can't say whether anything has been delivered so far; for the cereal they bring glassware, manufactured products and a little crude iron”³¹.

The development of commercial relations was also hampered by the delay with which letters reached their recipients as some merchants avoided using the telegraph due to its high cost³². This is why the members of the Warsaw legation asked that the Romanian authorities find solutions for the ease of postal connection

²⁵ Ibidem, f. 11, 11v.

²⁶ Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 6-7.

²⁹ Ibidem, f. 86. However, the sale of animal leathers for export was prohibited in Romania (ibidem, f. 88).

³⁰ Ibidem, f. 91.

³¹ Ibidem, f. 110.

³² Ibidem, f. 137.

with Poland. Their reply, as in other cases, placed responsibility to the Polish side, where most delays in shipment or mail delivery took place.

Thus, at the end of January 1921, economic relations between Romania and Poland, despite beginning to thaw at the individual level, continued to be contradictory/distant at the official level. For example, the Romanian authorities proposed to the Polish government, through Bălăcescu, that they “deliver cereals for compensation”. The Polish minister of supply offered a negative reply, motivating his decision by saying that the Polish were waiting for a cereal delivery from Romania according to a previously secured contract. The Romanian commercial agent was confused, bearing in mind the Polish need for cereal, and was seeking explanations for the refusal of the Romanian offer. From his point of view, the cause of this attitude was the poor organization of the Polish state, internal political disputes, issues regarding railroad transport, as well as the attitude (corruption) of certain lower-ranking Polish officials, who were rather more interested in orders placed by private persons.

In this context we must also make a note of the initiative that the Romanian commercial agent in Warsaw was involved in. He took part in the creation of a Romanian-Polish public limited commercial society called “Rumpol” which had the purpose of developing commerce between Romania and Poland³³. “As a result of our desire to see, on the one hand, as close and numerous relations between Romania and Poland as possible, and of the other speculating the Polish desire to initiate contact with Romania, forced by the circumstances”³⁴. Bălăcescu was proposing that his superiors support the initiative³⁵. Even though the project did not materialize, it shows an interest for the identification of solutions that enhanced the economic cooperation between the two states.

Signing of the trade convention between Romania and Poland

The normalization of economic relations between Romania and Poland could be achieved by signing a treaty or an economic/trade convention, which would include the parameters of collaboration between the two neighboring states. Both Romania and Poland had signed several such documents in the first two post-war years. For example, Poland had concluded trade conventions with France and England and was negotiating, at the end of 1920, a trade convention with Austria. For its part, Romania signed such documents in the first years after the Great War³⁶.

The topic of negotiating a trade convention between Romania and Poland was addressed, at the end of November 1920, during a meeting between the commercial agent of Romania and the head of the commercial section of the

³³ Ibidem, f. 95-96.

³⁴ Ibidem, f. 96.

³⁵ Ibidem, f. 95.

³⁶ The Romanian state mainly signed provisional agreements, as a result of the protectionist customs tariff assumed after the war. Florin Anghel, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Poland. The Polish official supported the need to conclude a trade agreement, which would include several issues that interested Poland: a. the transit of Polish goods through Romania, with southern countries, and for Romania with northern countries (via Danzig), but also with Germany on railway line (Chernovitz, Lwów, Kraków, Breslau/Wrocław); b. the establishment of a Polish traffic center in Romania (a “warehouse” under *porto franco* regime; the Polish side had in mind the city of Galați); c. the issue of postal parcels and foreign mandates, as well as the direct river connection between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea by means of a Vistula-Dniester canal. However, the most important objective of the Polish government seemed to be the creation of a “warehouse” in Romania, in Galați³⁷.

Following this meeting, Bălăcescu concluded that Poland was interested in “starting exchange relations with us as soon as possible”, given that the Polish government was looking to develop economic relations with the states of Central and Southern Europe³⁸. In addition, Poland needed cereals, and Romania could be an important partner. On the other hand, the commercial agent informed the authorities in Bucharest that the Poles could export to Romania, according to the data received from Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Poland: a. Articles of wool, cotton, hemp and linen; b. agricultural machines; c. items from the metallurgical industry; d. items from the glass industry; e. articles produced by the musical instrument industry, plus soaps, varnishes and paints³⁹. Thus, at the end of November and beginning of December 1920, the Poles presented to the commercial agent of Romania a genuine project of economic cooperation, focused, above all, on building a strategic direction of trade towards the south of Europe, having a nodal point in Romania.

The answer from Bucharest came rather late, probably because of the poor functioning of the communication links between Bucharest and Warsaw. Thus, in December 1920, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce from Bucharest sent to Bălăcescu: “our country is very willing to maintain the most intense economic ties with the Polish Republic, something that I ask you to bring to the attention of interested parties there”⁴⁰. At the same time, the representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Romania would have liked to obtain “written proposals” from the Poles, but they recommended that Bălăcescu act with caution “sparing all susceptibilities”.⁴¹ At the same time, the Romanian authorities asked the commercial agent to contact the Polish authorities and obtain concrete proposals for commercial partnerships.

³⁷ Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 106. ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 16-21.

³⁸ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 21-22.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 38-39.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 237. See, also, Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁴¹ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 23.

We have no data to confirm that the Polish government sent a written proposal, but we know that at the beginning of December 1920, in the instructions sent by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Eustachy Sapieha, to the head of the Polish legation in Bucharest, Al. Skrzyński, regarding the outline of a political treaty between Romania and Poland, it was specified that the signing of a trade convention was part of the agreement. But as the agreement required “longer thorough preparation, its signing could take place later than the political and military alliance”⁴². Therefore, the resizing of Romanian-Polish relations was to be based on three important documents: a political convention, a military one and an economic one.

The economic cooperation proposals of the Poles were nuanced in the negotiations for the conclusion of the alliance and integrated into Protocol C of the Alliance Convention of March 3, 1921. This document stated that “in order to strengthen the friendship between the two countries, a special commission will negotiate the establishment a trade treaty between the two countries, as soon as possible”. The treaties were to lay the foundations for a regime similar to that of the most favored nation clause, to offer Poland the opportunity to use Brăila port “as a maritime and commercial base”, to lead to the conclusion of an agreement regarding the widening of the Kolomeea-Chernovitz railway and to regulate the navigation conditions on common rivers⁴³.

A few weeks after the signing of the political and military conventions, the first signals were given regarding the implementation of Protocol C of the political convention. Towards the end of March 1921, Bălăcescu came to Bucharest, trying to obtain an increase in his remuneration, but also to test the reaction of the Romanian authorities to the request of the Polish side to form a commission to negotiate a trade convention. The same information had also reached Bucharest through the Romanian legation in Warsaw.

Mandated by the general secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Bălăcescu talked with representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who informed him that, in accordance with the provisions of the alliance convention signed on March 3, the negotiations for signing an economic agreement were to begin after the ratification by the Polish Diet of the Treaty of Riga. Moreover, the ratification of the alliance between the two states could only be achieved after the signing and ratification of the peace treaty between Poland and Soviet Russia⁴⁴. Discussions on a trade convention also took place between Alexandru G. Florescu and Polish officials⁴⁵. However, the Romanian Foreign

⁴² „Jeden naród o dwóch szrandarach”, p. 259.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 293-294; Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 106. Florin Anghel, *op. cit.*, p. 125-126.

⁴⁴ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Industriei și Comerțului, Direcția Generală a Comerțului, Secretariat, file 28/1920, f. 140.

⁴⁵ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, telegram of 3 April 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpagel.

Minister agreed that trade negotiations should start before the ratification of the alliance treaty between the two countries⁴⁶.

In this context, in April 1921, the Romanian authorities began preparations for negotiations with Poland. After several, sometimes contradictory, discussions, it was decided to set up a single negotiating committee for each state, which would be divided into three subcommittees. It was also agreed, at the suggestion of the Poles, that the negotiations would first take place in Warsaw and then be concluded in Bucharest⁴⁷.

After the Poles notified the creation of a commission to negotiate the trade convention⁴⁸, the Romanian authorities set up an inter-ministerial commission, made up of nine members, which was to be led by the Minister Plenipotentiary of Romania in Warsaw⁴⁹.

The negotiations began in the capital of Poland on May 21, 1921, focusing on several themes, subsumed by the three subcommittees created by the two parties: territorial issues (Romanian-Polish border); ways of communication (railway links; river transport; postal and telegraph issues); commercial matters (at stake was the regulation of the exchange of goods; the regime of the Brăila or Galati ports)⁵⁰. To these was added, among other things, at the insistence of the Polish side, the issue of compensation for the Polish owners in Bessarabia expropriated in the context of the implementation of the agrarian reform⁵¹.

The negotiations also attracted the attention of Romanian traders interested in trade with Poland. For example, the Union of Bukovina Industrialists drew the attention of the Romanian authorities to the danger posed to the Romanian timber industry by the import of cheap wood from Poland⁵², while the Union of Vine-

⁴⁶ Ibidem, telegram of 7 April 1921, Take Ionescu to Al. G. Florescu, unpag. Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 106-107.

⁴⁷ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, telegram of 19 April 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpag.; telegram of 25 April 1921, Take Ionescu to Al. G. Florescu, unpag.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, Aide Memoire of the Polish legation in Bucharest, 21 April 1921, unpag.

⁴⁹ Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 108-109. The Romanian commission was composed by: Al. G. Florescu (Romanian Plenipotentiary Minister in Warsaw), G. Christodorescu (director in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce), Al. Buescu (director of Customs in the Ministry of Finance), V. Tănăsioiu (deputy director of the Commercial Service of the Railways), Paul Demetriad (engineer, Administrator of the docks and warehouses in the port of Braila), Lieutenant Colonel H. Dimitriu (General Staff of the Romanian Army), I. Manea (Inspector of the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Service), Joseph Mulhdorf (chief engineer at the Ministry of Public Works), M. Boldur (inspector general, Forestry Fund). Romania's commercial agent in the Polish capital also took part in the negotiations in Warsaw (for details AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, Minutes of the negotiating committees of 1 July 1921, unpag.).

⁵⁰ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, Verbal note, Polish legation in Bucharest, 5 May 1921, unpag.

⁵¹ Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁵² AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, The Memorandum of the Union of Industrialists of Bukovina, 16 May 1921, unpag.

growers and Fruit-growers of Bessarabia suggested that the trade agreement should include the right to import wine and fruit from Bessarabia into Poland⁵³.

The negotiations were complicated precisely as a result of the multiple stages analyzed. At certain points during the Warsaw negotiations, Florescu complained to the Romanian Foreign Ministry about the “exaggerated trade demands of the Poles”⁵⁴. It can be seen that the Polish delegation was on the offensive, having a strategy and documents prepared to support their demands. They handed the Romanian side documents such as: “Draft prescriptions regarding passports” and “Draft agreement regarding the port of Galați or Brăila”⁵⁵. The Romanian delegation and the head of diplomacy from Bucharest, Take Ionescu, who was permanently consulted during the negotiations in Warsaw, proposed postponing for the Bucharest round the negotiation of some components that were not actually related to the conclusion of a trade agreement: the issue of the Brăila and Galați ports, as well as the compensation Polish owners from Bessarabia. Also, Alexander G. Florescu drew the attention of the Foreign Ministry in Bucharest to the fact that the Poles were more interested than the Romanians in concluding a trade agreement, as well as in the issue of the port of Braila, which is why the Romanians should insist more on territorial rectification, which they were more interested in than the Poles⁵⁶. In this context, on June 12, 1921, the round of negotiations in the capital of Poland ended with the signing of the draft trade convention by referendum⁵⁷.

Even if there were tense moments and disagreements on certain issues, the Romanian delegation was very well welcomed in Poland. That is why Florescu suggested to the authorities in Bucharest “that our guests be received and treated with the same attention”⁵⁸. The negotiations in Bucharest took place between June 22 and July 1 and were completed by the adoption of the draft trade convention, as well as the navigation regulations on the rivers passing through the territory of both states. Therefore, the trade convention between Romania and Poland was concluded on 1 July after two rounds of negotiations in the capitals of the two countries⁵⁹. The two delegations, at the suggestion of the Romanian foreign

⁵³ Ibidem, telegram of 26 May 1921, Romanian Ministry of Industry and Commerce to the legation in Warsaw, unpagued.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, telegram of 26 May 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpagued.

⁵⁵ Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁵⁶ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, report of 28 May 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpagued.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, telegram of 12 June 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpagued. Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁵⁸ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, telegram of 2 June 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpagued.

⁵⁹ Romanian historiography mentions July 2 as the date of the signing of the trade convention (Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 112-113; Florin Anghel, *op. cit.*, p. 154), although the “Official Journal” in which the international act was published mention July 1 (*MOF*, No. 182, 19 November 1922; Gheorghe Gheorghe (ed.), *Tratatele internaționale ale României*, vol. II, 1921-1939, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1980, p. 13-14).

minister, postponed the discussion of the issues that could block the rapid signing of the trade convention: the rectification of the border between the two states; the issue of Brăila port, as well as the granting of compensation to the Polish owners of Bessarabia.

A difficult process of ratification

The signing of the trade convention was a success for the economic diplomacy of the two states and had the role of strengthening the sealed alliance between Romania and Poland. Ratification of the trade agreement has been delayed due to political and economic calculations. On the one hand, the Romanian authorities initially intended to delay ratification in order to force the Polish authorities to accept the delimitation of the common border, which also involved an exchange of territory and population⁶⁰. On the other hand, the modification of the trade treaty between France and Poland, which no longer contained any data on the introduction of quotas, but became a "tariff convention", meant that part of the final protocol accompanying the Romanian-Polish trade convention became obsolete⁶¹.

Therefore, the solution identified was that through an exchange of notes between the foreign ministries of Poland and Romania, which took place in February 1922, the passage that had become obsolete should be removed from the convention (the first part of Article 5 of the Final protocol)⁶². This explains why the trade convention was promulgated by King Ferdinand on 13 April 1922, almost nine and a half months after signing.

Trade convention between Romania and Poland entered into force on 1 December 1922⁶³. The document represented a step towards the realization of the Polish projects of commercial expansion towards the Balkans and towards Turkey. For the Romanian state, the convention was also important because it did not contain any discriminatory measures regarding German goods transiting Poland to Romania⁶⁴.

The dynamics of commercial relations show a progressive increase in exchanges between Romania and Poland. However, if in 1919-1922, according to certain statistics, Romania had an active trade balance, which was reversed after 1923.

⁶⁰ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, telegram of 16 September, Al. G. Florescu to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, unpagued.

⁶¹ AMAE, Fond 2 Convenții, P 3, vol. 1, telegram of 4 November 1921, Al. G. Florescu to Take Ionescu, unpagued.

⁶² Ibidem, Note of 22 February 1922, Polish Legation in Bucharest to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, unpagued.

⁶³ Nicolae Dascălu, *op. cit.*, p. 113-114.

⁶⁴ AMAE, Fond Polonia, vol. 64, f. 23.

Strategic interests and economic cooperation.**The beginning of trade relations between Romania and Poland (1920-1921)***Abstract*

The study analyses the process of negotiation and ratification of the trade convention between Romania and Poland, signed in Bucharest on 1 July 1921. As Romania and Poland strengthened their political and military relations by signing the treaty of alliance on 3 March 1921, a natural consequence was the strengthening of ties in the economic field. This is why, shortly after the alliance was initialed, negotiations began between the representatives of the two countries. Although the signing of the convention represented an achievement in terms of the economic diplomacy of the two states, the document was only ratified in April 1922 and entered into force in December 1922.

Keywords: trade convention; alliance; Romania; Poland; interwar; commercial agent.

ABREVIERI

<i>AARMSI</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice
<i>AARMSL</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare
<i>AARPAD</i>	= „Analele Academiei Române”, seria II, București, 1879-1916
<i>AA.SS.</i>	= <i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , ed. Bollandisti, III ^a ediție, Parigi 1863-1870
<i>AB</i>	= Arhivele Basarabiei
<i>ACNSAS</i>	= Arhivele Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității
<i>AE</i>	= L'Année Epigraphique, Paris
<i>AIR</i>	= Arhiva Istorică a României
<i>AIAC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj
<i>AIIAI</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj
<i>AIINC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, Cluj
<i>AIIX</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>ALIL</i>	= Anuarul de Lingvistică și Istorie Literară, Iași
<i>ALMA</i>	= <i>Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi</i> . Genève.
<i>AM</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei, Iași
<i>AMAE</i>	= Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe
<i>AmAnthr</i>	= American Anthropologist, New Series, Published by Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association
<i>AMM</i>	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui
<i>AMMB</i>	= Arhiva Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași
<i>AMN</i>	= Acta Musei Napocensis
<i>AMR</i>	= Arhivele Militare Române
<i>AMS</i>	= Anuarul Muzeului din Suceava
<i>ANB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, București
<i>ANC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Cluj
<i>ANDMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Direcția Municipiului București
<i>ANG</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Galați
<i>ANI</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Iași
<i>ANIC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>ANR-Cluj</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Cluj-Napoca
<i>ANR-Sibiu</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Sibiu
<i>ANRM</i>	= Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova, Chișinău
<i>ANRW</i>	= Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin-New York
<i>ANSMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București
<i>ANV</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Vaslui
<i>AO</i>	= Arhivele Olteniei
<i>AP</i>	= Analele Putnei
<i>APH</i>	= Acta Poloniae Historica, Varșovia
<i>AqLeg</i>	= <i>Aquila Legionis. Cuadernos de Estudios sobre el Ejército Romano</i> , Salamanca
<i>AR</i>	= Arhiva Românească
<i>ArchM</i>	= Archiva Moldaviae, Iași
<i>ArhGen</i>	= Arhiva Genealogică
<i>„Arhiva”</i>	= „Arhiva”. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare, Iași
<i>ArhMold</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei

ASRR	= Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune
AȘUI	= Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași
ATS	= Ancient Textile Series, Oxbow Books, Oxford și Oakville
AUAIC	= Arhiva Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași
AUB	= Analele Universității „București”
BA	= <i>Biblioteca Ambrosiana</i> , Roma, Città Nuova Editrice
BAR	= Biblioteca Academiei Române
BArchB	= Bundesarchiv Berlin
BAR int. ser.	= British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BBRF	= Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg
BCIR	= Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României
BCMI	= Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice
BCU-Iași	= Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, Iași
BE	= Bulletin Epigraphique
BF	= Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam
BJ	= Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn
BMI	= Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice
BMIM	= București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie
BNB	= Biblioteca Națională București
BNJ	= Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher
BOR	= Biserica Ortodoxă Română
BS	= Balkan Studies
BSNR	= Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române
ByzSlav	= Byzantinoslavica
CA	= Cercetări arheologice
CAI	= Caiete de Antropologie Istorică
CartNova	= <i>La ciudad de Carthago Nova 3: La documentación epigráfica</i> , Murcia
CB	= Cahiers balkaniques
CBI	= <i>Der römische Weihebezirk von Osterburken. Corpus des griechischen und lateinischer Beneficiärer – Inschriften des Römischen Reiches</i> , Stuttgart
CC	= Codrul Cosminului, Suceava (ambele serii)
CCAR	= Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, CIMEC, București
CCh	= <i>Corpus Christianorum</i> , Turnhout
CChSG	= <i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca</i>
CCSL	= <i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> , Turnhout, Brepols
CDM	= <i>Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhivele Centrale de Stat</i> , București, vol. I-V; supl. I.
CDȚR	= <i>Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului</i> , București, vol. II-VIII, 1974-2006
Chiron	= Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 1971
CI	= Cercetări istorice (ambele serii)
CIL	= <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin
CL	= Cercetări literare
CLRE	= <i>Consuls of the Later Roman Empire</i> , eds. R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz, K. A. Worp, Atlanta, 1987
CN	= Cercetări Numismatice
CNA	= Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică, București
CSCO	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> , Louvain
CSEA	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiae Aquileiensis</i> , Roma, Città Nuova Editrice
CSEL	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Wien, De Gruyter
CSPAMI	= Centrul de Studii și Păstrare a Arhivelor Militare Centrale, Pitești
CT	= Columna lui Traian, București

<i>CTh</i>	= <i>Codex Theodosianus</i> . Theodosiani, Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis, I, edidit adsumpto apparatu P. Kruegeri, Th. Mommsen, Hildesheim, 1970-1971
<i>Cv.L</i>	= Convorbiri literare (ambele serii)
„ <i>Dacia</i> ”, <i>N.S.</i>	= Dacia. Nouvelle Série, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București
DANIC	= Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale
DGAS	= Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului
<i>DI</i>	= Diplomatarium Italicum
<i>DIR</i>	= <i>Documente privind istoria României</i>
<i>DIRRI</i>	= <i>Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru Independență</i>
<i>DOP</i>	= Dumbarton Oaks Papers
<i>DTN</i>	= <i>Din trecutul nostru</i> , Chișinău
<i>DRH</i>	= <i>Documenta Romaniae Historica</i>
<i>EB</i>	= Études Balkaniques
<i>EBPB</i>	= Études byzantines et post-byzantines
<i>EDCS</i>	= <i>Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby</i> (http://www.manfredclauss.de/)
<i>EDR</i>	= <i>Epigraphic Database Roma</i> (http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php)
<i>EpigrAnat</i>	= <i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i> , Münster
<i>ERAsturias</i>	= F. Diego Santos, <i>Epigrafia Romana de Asturias</i> , Oviedo, 1959.
<i>EuGeSta</i>	= <i>Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity</i>
Gerión	= Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua, Madrid
<i>GB</i>	= Glasul Bisericii
<i>GCS</i>	= <i>Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller</i> , Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1897-1969
<i>GLK</i>	= <i>Grammatici Latini Keil</i>
<i>HEp</i>	= <i>Hispania Epigraphica</i> , Madrid
„ <i>Hierasus</i> ”	= <i>Hierasus</i> . Anuarul Muzeului Județean Botoșani, Botoșani
<i>HM</i>	= <i>Heraldica Moldaviae</i> , Chișinău
<i>HU</i>	= <i>Historia Urbana</i> , Sibiu
<i>HUI</i>	= <i>Historia Universitatis Iassiensis</i> , Iași
<i>IDR</i>	= <i>Inscripțiile din Dacia romană</i> , București-Paris
<i>IDRE</i>	= <i>Inscriptions de la Dacie romaine. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire de la Dacie</i> , I-II, Bucarest, 1996, 2000
<i>IGLN</i>	= <i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae</i> , Bordeaux
<i>IGLR</i>	= <i>Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România</i> , București, 1976
<i>ILLPecs</i>	= <i>Instrumenta Inscripta Latina. Das römische Leben im Spiegel der Kleininschriften</i> , Pecs, 1991
<i>ILAlg</i>	= <i>Inscriptions latines d'Algérie</i> , Paris
<i>ILB</i>	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae. Inscriptiones inter Oescum et Iatrum repertae</i> , Sofia, 1989
<i>ILD</i>	= <i>Inscripții latine din Dacia</i> , București
<i>ILN</i>	= <i>Inscriptions latines de Novae</i> , Poznań
<i>ILLPRON</i>	= <i>Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices</i> , Berlin, 1986
<i>ILS</i>	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , 1892
<i>IMS</i>	= <i>Inscriptiones Moesiae Superioris</i> , Belgrad
<i>IN</i>	= „Ioan Neculce”. Buletinul Muzeului Municipal Iași
<i>ISM</i>	= <i>Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine</i> , București, vol. I-III, 1983-1999
<i>JGO</i>	= <i>Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas</i>
<i>JL</i>	= <i>Junimea literară</i>
<i>JRS</i>	= <i>The Journal of Roman studies</i> , London
<i>LR</i>	= <i>Limba română</i>
<i>Lupa</i>	= <i>Ubi Erat Lupa</i> (http://lupa.at/)

MA	= Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț
MCA	= Materiale și cercetări arheologice
MEF	= <i>Moldova în epoca feudalismului</i> , vol. I-XII, 1961-2012, Chișinău
MEFRA	= <i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité</i> , Roma
MGH	= <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum auspiciis societatis aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi</i> , Berlin 1877-
MI	= Magazin istoric, București
MIM	= Materiale de istorie și muzeografie
MM	= Mitropolia Moldovei
MMS	= Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei
MN	= Muzeul Național, București
MO	= Mitropolia Olteniei
MOF	= Monitorul Oficial al României
Navarro	= M. Navarro Caballero, <i>Perfectissima femina. Femmes de l'élite dans l'Hispanie romaine</i> , Bordeaux, 2017.
NBA	= <i>Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana</i> , Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum
NDPAC	= <i>Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane</i> , I, A-E, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2006; III, P-Z, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2008
NEH	= Nouvelles études d'histoire
OI	= Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași
OPEL	= <i>Onomasticon provinciarum Europae latinarum</i> , vol. I-IV, Budapesta-Viena, 1994-2002
PG	= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1886-1912
PIR	= <i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I.II.III</i> , editio altera, Berlin.
PLRE	= <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vol., eds. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971-1992
RA	= Revista arhivelor
RBAR	= Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române, București
RC	= Revista catolică
RdI	= Revista de istorie
REByz	= Revue des Études Byzantines
RER	= Revue des études roumaines
RESEE	= Revue des études Sud-Est européennes
RHP	= <i>Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. I: Die Inschriften</i> , Viena
RHSEE	= Revue historique de Sud-Est européen
RI	= Revista istorică (ambele serii)
RIAF	= Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie
RIB	= <i>Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , Londra
RIM	= Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, Chișinău
RIR	= Revista istorică română, București
RIS	= Revista de istorie socială, Iași
RITL	= Revista de istorie și teorie literară
RIU	= <i>Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns</i> , Budapesta
RJMH	= The Romanian Journal of Modern History, Iași
RM	= Revista muzeelor
RMD	= <i>Roman Military Diplomas</i> , Londra
RMM	= <i>Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums</i> , Mainz
RMM-MIA	= Revista muzeelor și monumentelor, seria Monumente istorice și de artă
RMR	= Revista Medicală Română
RRH	= Revue roumaine d'histoire

<i>RRHA</i>	= Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art
<i>RRHA-BA</i>	= Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux Arts
<i>RSIAB</i>	= Revista Societății istorice și arheologice bisericești, Chișinău
<i>Rsl</i>	= Romanoslavica
<i>SAHIR</i>	= Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae, București
<i>SAI</i>	= Studii și Articole de Istorie
<i>SCB</i>	= Studii și cercetări de bibliologie
<i>SCh</i>	= <i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> , Paris
<i>SCIA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istoria artei
<i>SCIM</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie medie
<i>SCIV/SCIVA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)
<i>SCN</i>	= Studii și Cercetări Numismatice, București
<i>SCȘI</i>	= Studii și cercetări științifice, Istorie
<i>SEER</i>	= The Slavonic and East European Review
<i>SHA</i>	= <i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>SJAN</i>	= Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale
<i>SMIC</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană, București
<i>SMIM</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie medie, București
<i>SMIMod</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie modernă, București
<i>SOF</i>	= Südost-Forschungen, München
<i>ST</i>	= Studii Teologice, București
<i>StAntArh</i>	= <i>Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica</i> , Iași
<i>T&MBYZ</i>	= <i>Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines</i>
<i>ThD</i>	= Thraco-Dacica, București
<i>TR</i>	= Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca
<i>TV</i>	= Teologie și viața, Iași
<i>ZPE</i>	= Zeitschrift für Papyralogie und Epigraphik
<i>ZSL</i>	= Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde