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# Research on Works of Historian Virgil Drăghiceanu Discovered in the Archives of Romania's Historical Monuments Commission

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## Abstract

Mr Virgiliu N. Drăghiceanu (1879–1964) was a Romanian historian, archaeologist, museographer and conservationist who played a major role in protecting and saving Romania's national heritage. In 1907, he started working for the Ministry of Cults (public servant and director), the Historical Monuments Commission (1892–1847). Between 1907 and 1938, he headed the department handling the collections preserved in the museums covered by the Commission. He was secretary of the Editorial Committee of the Bulletin of the Historical Monuments Commission, also a secretary director and an acting member of the Commission over January 1938–June 1940. Further to a proposal by the famous historian Nicolae Iorga, Virgiliu N. Drăghiceanu became a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy (1926–1947). His most important work involved archaeological excavations in Wallachia's old royal courts: Câmpulung, Curtea de Argeș and Târgoviște, but also the inscriptions on the discovered monuments. He is the one who discovered the tomb of Constantin Brâncoveanu on the premises of the church of Sfântul Gheorghe Nou in Bucharest (1914), but also the princely tomb (of Radu Negru-Vodă) in Curtea de Argeș (July 1920).

**Keywords:** historian, historical monuments commission, historical monuments, museum collections, heritage, conservation, exhibition, archaeologist, researcher, museographer

## 1. Introduction

The preoccupation to protect and conserve historical monuments, as vestiges of the past and also as identitarian symbols of the Romanian people, appeared as early on as the nineteenth century in the Old Kingdom and then in Greater Romania, after 1918. The desire to preserve and to restore “in situ” or to open museums urged the authorities to create a commission as early on as 1859 that had the task of studying monuments. On 17 November 1892, by Royal Decree, Romania's very first Law on the Preservation and Restoration of Public Monuments was passed.

The Historical Monuments Commission was created under on that law [1]. The Commission was formed of five members and one secretary, all of whom were personalities well known for their contributions to humanities, exact sciences, legal sciences, and members of the Romanian Academy; the Commission was chaired by a president. The main task of the Commission was to take stock of all old buildings and objects in the country that were historically or artistically interesting and for whose preservation action had to be taken. The inventory had to be updated every 5 years, when a decision was made to qualify and disqualify the monuments. The monuments registered in this inventory could not be demolished or altered in any way without a preliminary clearance from the Historical Monuments Commission, which reported to *Casa Bisericii*, a department of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction.

The laws passed to preserve and restore historical monuments in 1913 and 1919 would enable existing institutions to take up more responsibilities, and new institutions could appear in order to support and widen the concerns of the Commission, to increase its scope of activity and to assign some of its responsibilities to the regional sections. As soon as architecture, engineering, archaeology, history, philology, sciences, and law personalities came on board as members and presidents, the Commission became stronger and more widely recognized; therefore, during Nicolae Iorga's term (1923–1940), the institution was able to handle multiple activities: clearance, protection, restoration, works, and publications. The Commission's task was to recommend Romanian fellows for studies to be pursued in Italy and Greece; they would become trained specialists in the field of conservation and restoration of Byzantine paintings.

Under these circumstances, considering the professionalism of the people who made major contributions to the outstanding efforts made to save, restore, and conserve the vestiges of the past, the case of Virgiliu Drăghiceanu stands out as a remarkable case. His permanent dedication, his passion, his love of old documents, his thorough documentation and fieldwork performance turned him into an outstanding and highly appreciated personality. He paid all the due respects to the past and to historical monuments, and he also participated in the discovery, research, classification, conservation, and restoration of the heritage passed on by the ancestors. As a team player and an all-season traveller of tracks and back roads all across Romania, he always did his best to identify solutions to save all of the monuments he studied. He remained in Bucharest during the war and made every effort to diminish the systematic plundering and destruction of the cultural heritage that had not been evacuated. He considered that only by publishing the outcome of efforts like his own (books, magazines, yearbooks, lectures, museums, roving exhibitions) could he bring the past to the public at large, pass it over to the next generations, and protect it against vandalism and ill intent: “our past, therefore, is no confabulation or a mere random word. Or some anecdote one could recount to the audience of banquets or conventions hunting for acclaim. The past exists, you will see it in the monuments and churches and stones and crosses that are everywhere and that we need to honour, because we'll thusly honour our kind and our nation's forefathers” [2].

This chapter will take you on a journey following the career path which Virgiliu Drăghiceanu took to protect historical monuments; his efforts were very closely connected to the Historical Monuments Commission, as suggested by our research of the Commission's 1907–1940 archives and 1908–1940 Bulletins (the Bulletin was suspended between 1917 and 1922) which are now being stored at the National Heritage Institute in Bucharest. The archive is formed of 3885 folders, which is a huge repository of historic information, history studies, bills of quantities, layout

plans, discussion reports, and decisions, all of which refer to restoration problems, conservation projects, and plans to make the most of the historical monuments. All of these documents are of a remarkable rigour, concision, and reliability.

Out of the total 3885 folders, the name of Virgiliu Drăghiceanu will be found in 255. His contribution to the Bulletin was also outstanding: about 100 headlines over 1909–1934. In the upcoming sections, we will be reviewing his biography and his contributions as archaeologist, historian, secretary-director, Commission member, as well as a museographer, conservationist, and head of the Commission's Collections, who was deeply involved in saving, conserving, restoring, and protecting movable and immovable heritage and in making the most of it in articles, collections, and exhibitions, as suggested by the archived documents.

## 2. Virgiliu Drăghiceanu: the man

He was born in May 1879 in Râmnicu Vâlcea to a family of petty boyards who had come from Oltenia, with some roots in the former county of Romanați; he spent his childhood years in Târgoviște, where the Drăghiceanu family had settled in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His entire childhood but also his later life would be much influenced by his paternal grandfather and uncle. His grandfather, Mihalache Drăghiceanu, a baker, had contributed to the opening of a national school in Romanați and Dâmbovița Counties, and his uncle, Matei Drăghiceanu, had been a scientific personality (a mining engineer and geologist, graduate of the *École des Mines de Paris*, Romania's first mining engineer, the cartographer of Romania's first geological map, member of the Romanian Academy) [3]. Family members from his mother's side were also well known to the locals as petty boyards who had owned the land from the times of Constantin Brâncoveanu and had created and supported a number of religious settlements.

Drăghiceanu took his pre-academic courses in Târgoviște and obtained a degree in letters and philosophy from the University of Bucharest. Drăghiceanu's career path and evolution were strongly influenced by his childhood town, by how close his home was, and by the proximity of the Royal Court of Târgoviște. His first work as a historian (1907–1910) was to take stock of the monuments in Dâmbovița County and to create a county history museum, whose employees would have also been tasked with operations aimed at “stopping the ruin, devastation, and heavy-handed restorations” [4]. Starting from that moment on, he would dedicate the next 40 years of his life to saving, safekeeping, and passing on Romania's national heritage. His years of hard work; his field research; his results; his patience, tenacity, and problem-solving capacities; his team spirit; his skilled rhetoric; his position as a lecturer; his attitude as one of Bucharest's few monument protectors during the occupation; and the trust assigned to him by the Commission were the many reasons that recommended him for the position of corresponding member of the Romanian Academy in 1926, further to the proposal of the Nicolae Iorga, the great historian who chaired the commission over 1923–1940. He returned to Târgoviște in 1940 and continued to work on his research and studies. He died in 1964 and was buried in the Central Cemetery of Târgoviște.

## 3. Virgiliu Drăghiceanu and historical monuments

His nationwide studies and research, performed while working on Commission assignments, and his archaeological excavations, performed on behalf of the



Commission or as a delegate or supervisor, contributed to saving, restoring, and bringing to light numerous mediaeval historical and modern monuments, especially monuments dating back to the times of Constantin Brâncoveanu, but also tombs, inscriptions, tombstone inscriptions, etc. [5].

A total of the 255 folders with about 14,250 sheets feature Drăghiceanu's signatures, resolutions, reports, and minutes which he prepared as secretary, secretary-director of the Commission and which refer to the following: restorations, rehabilitation works, paint works, formal acceptance procedures, bills of quantities, contracts, buildings erected near monuments, the mediation of conflicts between owners and custodians of historical monuments, expropriations, unapproved works, repair works, maintenance works, memoirs, Commission activity reports, correspondence, organizational documents, questionnaires, restoration works performed in workshops of the Commission, qualification and disqualification operations, cultural purposes for structures that are not historical monuments but are still important for documentary purposes, buildings donated to schools, deterioration caused by using historical buildings as military quarters during WWI, rainwater sewage works, works performed on monuments without a clearance from the Commission, stationing troops in historic castles, demolition clearance, proposals to the Academy to buy treasure items, expropriation, reburial of the human remains found during archaeological excavations, infrastructure systematization solutions, etc. I will line up chronologically the most important of them.

To put it in a nutshell, we consider that the most important excavation or salvage works he participated in or supervised under assignment by the Commission are those conducted on the premises of a number of churches in Bucharest (Stavropoleos, Antim, Cotroceni, the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchal Cathedral, Mihai Vodă, Radu Vodă, Curtea Veche) and also churches in Moldova (Golia, Trei Ierarhi, Bârnova, Cetățuia) and in Oltenia (Tismana, Vodița, Hurezi, Arnota, Dintr-un Lemn, Cozia, Cotmeana, Govora, Bistrița, Polovragi) but also the excavations performed in formal royal courts and mediaeval monuments erected during the times of Constantin Brâncoveanu (Doicești, Mogoșoaia, Potlogi, Brâncoveni), as well as the royal tombs of Matei Basarab, Elena Doamna, Mateiaș voievod (the church of St. Dimitrie in Craiova), Mircea cel Bătrân (Cozia monastery) [6–8].

Also the excavation works on non-religious monuments should not be forgotten: Bibescu's palace in Băneasa, the walls surrounding *Casa Băniei* in Craiova, the house of Cantacuzino in Măgureni, the fortified houses (*cula*) in Oltenia (Măldărești, Pojogeni, Moscuesti, Crăsnaru, Groșerea, Bujoreni, Furnicași), and Antina fortress [9]. The most remarkable are the excavation works done on the premises of the Royal Court (*Curtea Domnească*) of Târgoviște, the Roman church in Câmpulung Muscel (the tombstone of Nicolae Alexandru Basarab), and also the royal church (*Biserica Domnească*) in Curtea de Argeș (1920 excavation log) where he discovered the princely tombs of Radu Negru Vodă and his princely family [10–12]. At the peak of his career, he discovered the tomb of King Constantin Brâncoveanu in the church of St. Gheorghe Nou of Bucharest, after deciphering an inscription on an icon rushlight that Constantin Brâncoveanu's wife had donated to this church founded by Brâncoveanu [13]. But these achievements were not always accompanied by happy moments. A host of problems occurred, and the archaeologist, secretary-director, member, and conservationist had to find solutions and options; sometimes Drăghiceanu the professional entered into conflicts with state institutions (the Garrison in Târgoviște, etc.) but also with individuals (merchants, traders, shopkeepers, heirs of political and military personalities, representatives of the church, landlords, leaseholders, industrialists, etc.) [14, 15].

You will find a number of examples below to illustrate these circumstances.

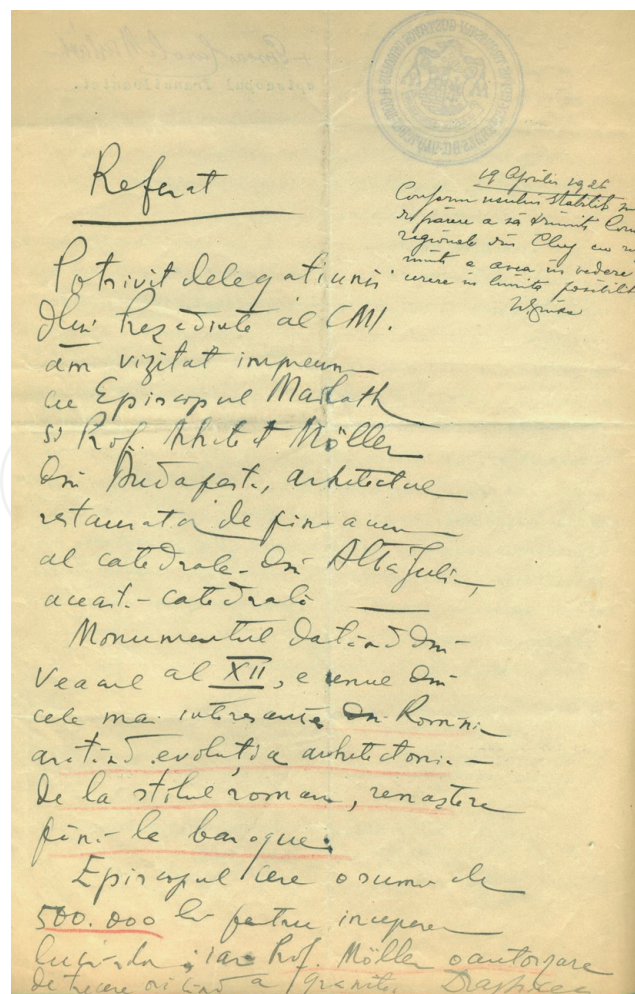
A response to the request to restore Bishop Mailath's Roman Cathedral in Alba Iulia.

An essay on Virgiliu Drăghiceanu: “As per the assignment of the Commission’s president, I, Bishop Mailath and prof. Müller, an architect from Budapest who has so far worked to restore the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Alba Iulia, visited together the monument that had been dated to the twelfth-century. It is one of the most interesting in Romania, because it illustrates the architectural evolution, from Roman, through Renaissance to the Baroque. The Bishop asked for 500,000 lei to start the works and prof. Müller requested clearance to cross the border anytime” (Figure 1).

A note from the Ministry of Cults and Arts in Romania about the high royal decree that King Ferdinand gave to assign the members of the regional section of the Commission in Bukovina. For the information of Mr Drăghiceanu: The section will report to the central Commission about the conservation and restoration works or about the excavations done in connection to a certain monument, as well as the crimes that could be committed according to a certain law. The Commission appropriated the necessary excavation costs in the budget of the next year (Figure 2).

A request for permission to contact Prof. Iosef Bala, also a painter, in order to continue the restoration works done on the paintings of the church of Vatra Moldoviței. Drăghiceanu’s decision: It is approved to propose Mr Iosef Bala to continue the restoration works in Bukovina, under the obligation to also use graduates of the Beaux Arts school as apprentices (Figure 3).

A letter from the Historical Monuments Commission to the Minister of Cults and Arts requesting permission to intervene on the monastery of Negru Vodă where rainwater accumulates and infiltrates into the foundation of the church.



**Figure 1.**  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 25: Sheet 9.



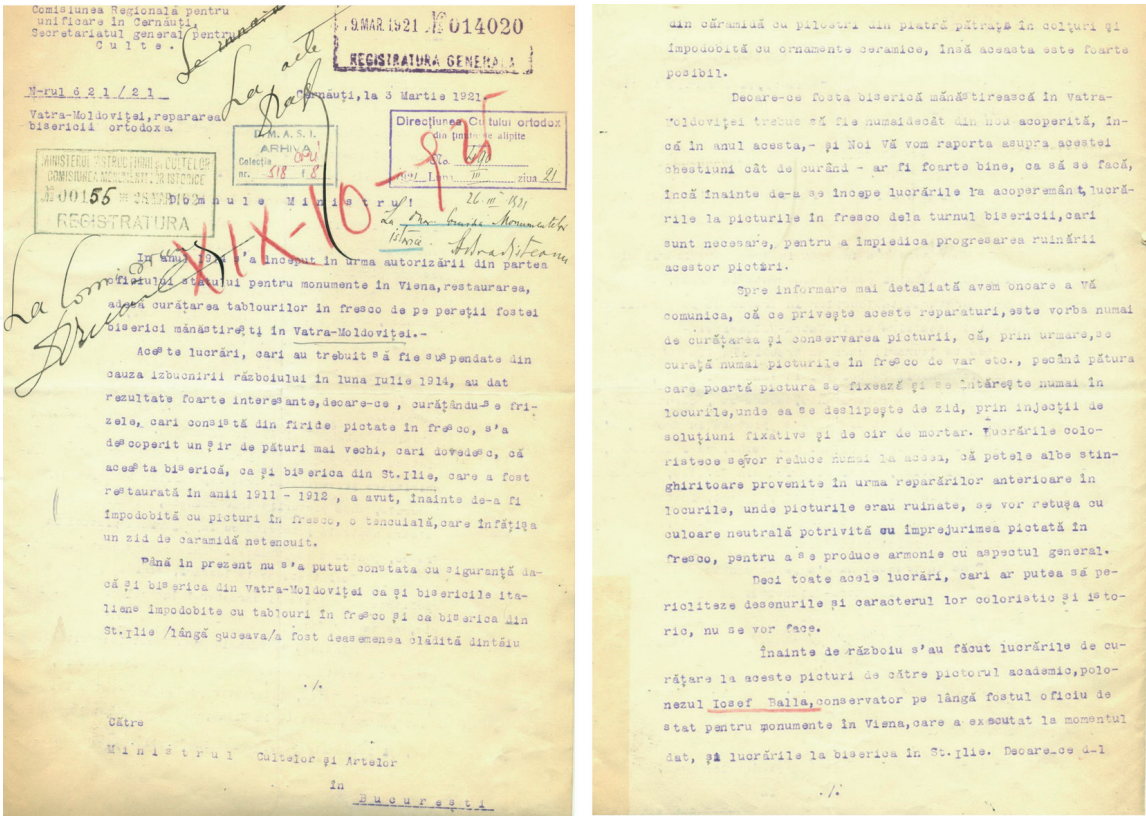


Figure 2.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 518: Sheet 8.

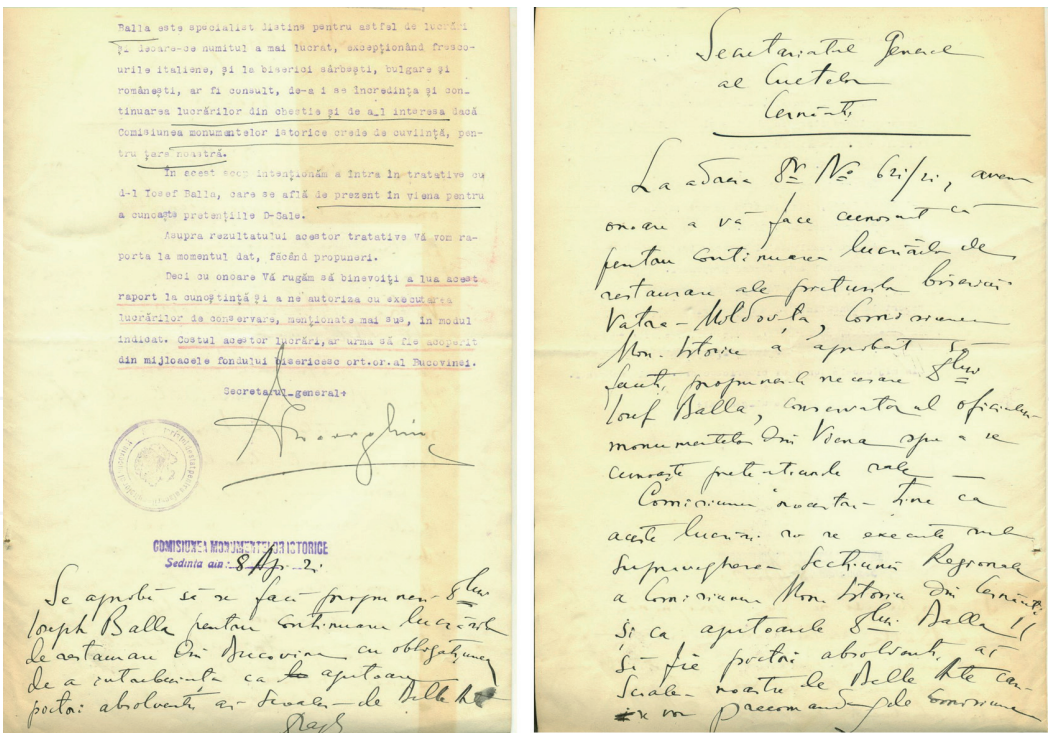


Figure 3.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 518: Sheet 12.

The infiltration had been found during the excavation works of 1924 that the Commission’s secretary-director, Mr V. Drăghiceanu, did after water appeared in the church. Report of Drăghiceanu: Rainwater is funnelled by the street leading to the railway station and flows into the monastery’s yard because of the elevation difference. Also all of the waters drain off the rooftops, and the garden faucets



of the orphanage stagnate around the church. During the excavation works, we found that it takes several days for the water around the church to drain. Therefore water continued to infiltrate the church flooring. I am kindly asking the Commission to take action in order to have a sewer built (**Figure 4**).

An official letter of the Historical Monuments Commission sent to the minister of the interior—further to the finds discovered in the royal church Curtea de Argeș (the royal tombs contained valuable jewellery)—to request protection of the church from the local police or gendarmerie, during the nights and the days indicated by Commission Secretary Drăghiceanu who is in charge of the excavations. The guards need to be stationed near the church 20 days, up to the time when works are completed (**Figure 5**).

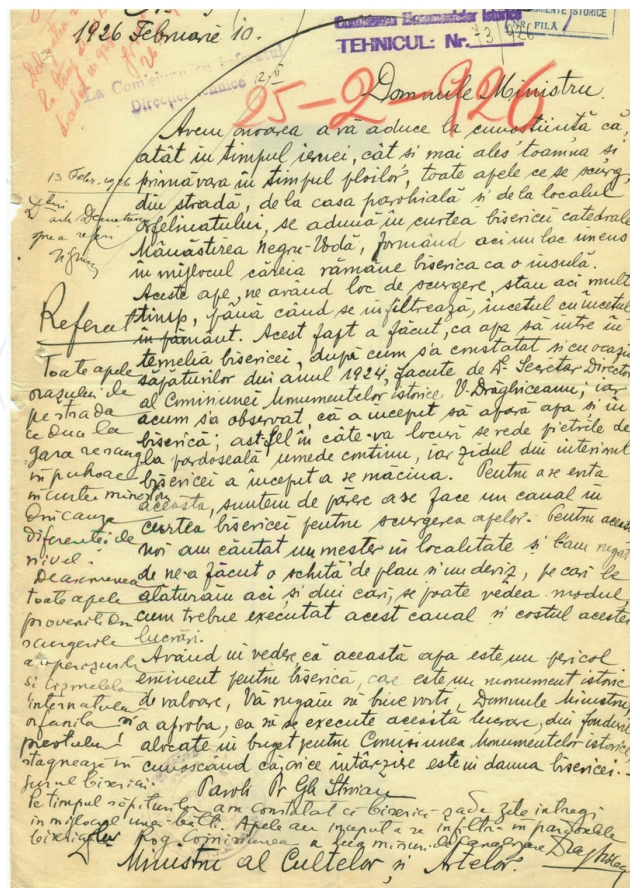
The map of the Royal Court in Argeș (**Figure 6**).

A report of the Secretary-Director Virgiliu Drăghiceanu also features the supporting documents explaining the costs incurred to reinforce the royal residential buildings in Curtea de Argeș (20,000 lei) (**Figure 7**).

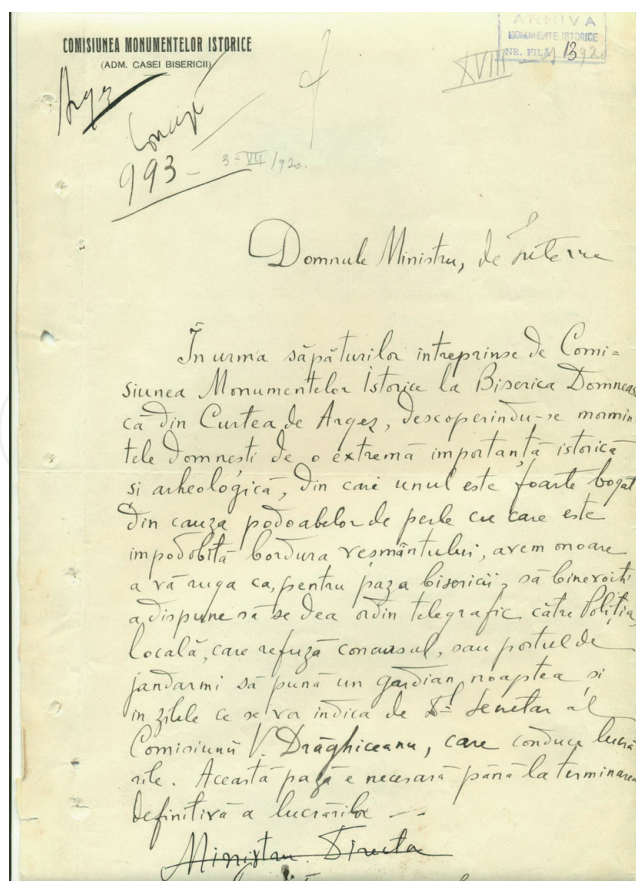
A request submitted by Drăghiceanu to have 5280 lei refunded (costs incurred in Curtea de Argeș to support the excavation works executed from September 1922 to January 1923 (**Figure 8**).

Penalties charged on the mayor's office in Făgăraș, which used funds from the Ministry of National Defence to work on the buildings of the Făgăraș fortress in order to accommodate Border Guards' Battalion No. 3 of the Royal Guard Drăghiceanu's decision: The request is to discontinue these works at once and to send a report on the works that have been executed so far. No other works should be carried out unless approved by the Commission (**Figure 9**).

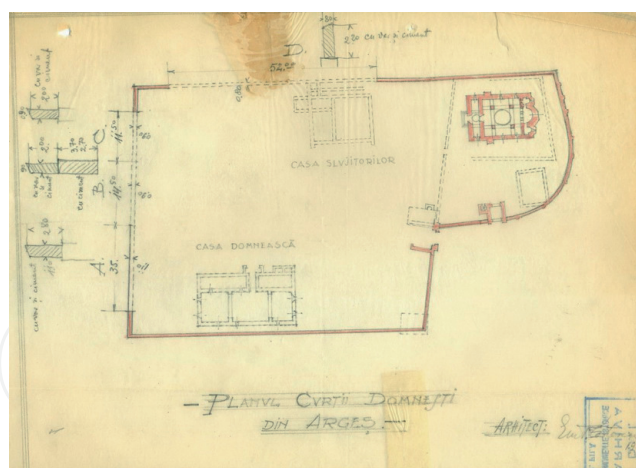
The Commission's Architecture Service announced that the Gothic room restoration works of *Trei Ierarhi* church in Iași had burnt down during WWI because of



**Figure 4.**  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 1091: Sheet 1.



**Figure 5.**  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 1392: Sheet 13.



**Figure 6.**  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 1394: Sheet 25.

an employee of the Ministry of Public Works (a benzine tank had caught fire). Drăghiceanu's decision: Mr Ghica is assigned to assess the damages, in the company of a representative of the minister of public works, in order to obtain the necessary restoration funds from the state (**Figure 10**).

Further to the request of the abbess of Tismana Monastery to apply plaster and repair the church and the chapel, Virgiliu Drăghiceanu visited the monastery on a fact-finding mission. Report of Drăghiceanu: With great difficulty, we found the outside claddings which are irregular because of the missing wall decoration belts that would create the horizontal and vertical unity. Yet even so the church is more



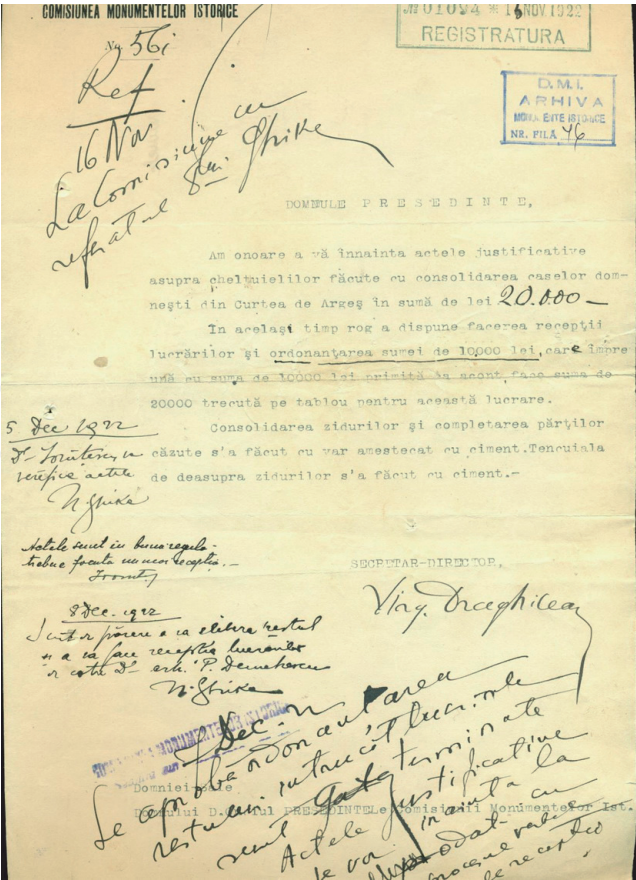


Figure 7.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 1394: Sheet 46.

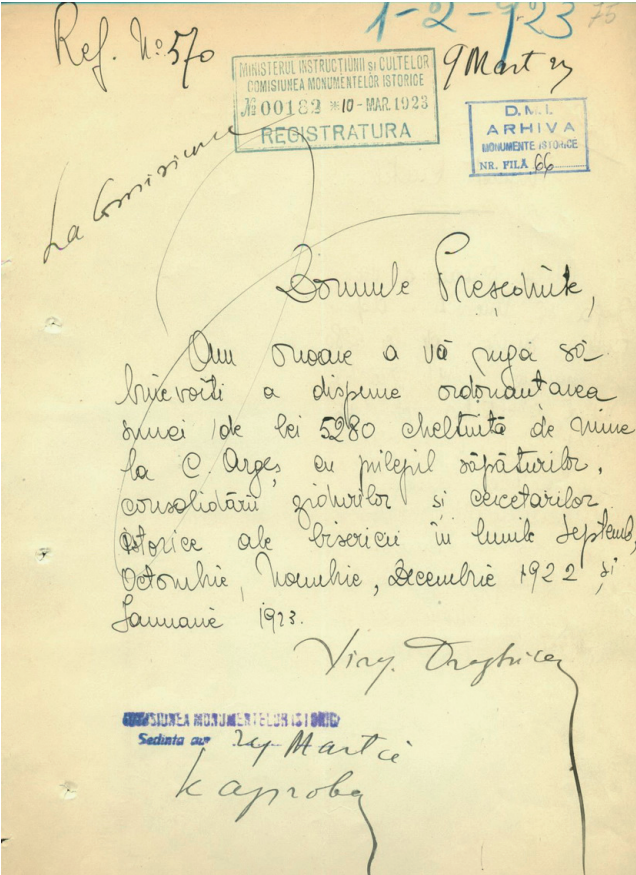


Figure 8.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 1394: Sheet 66.

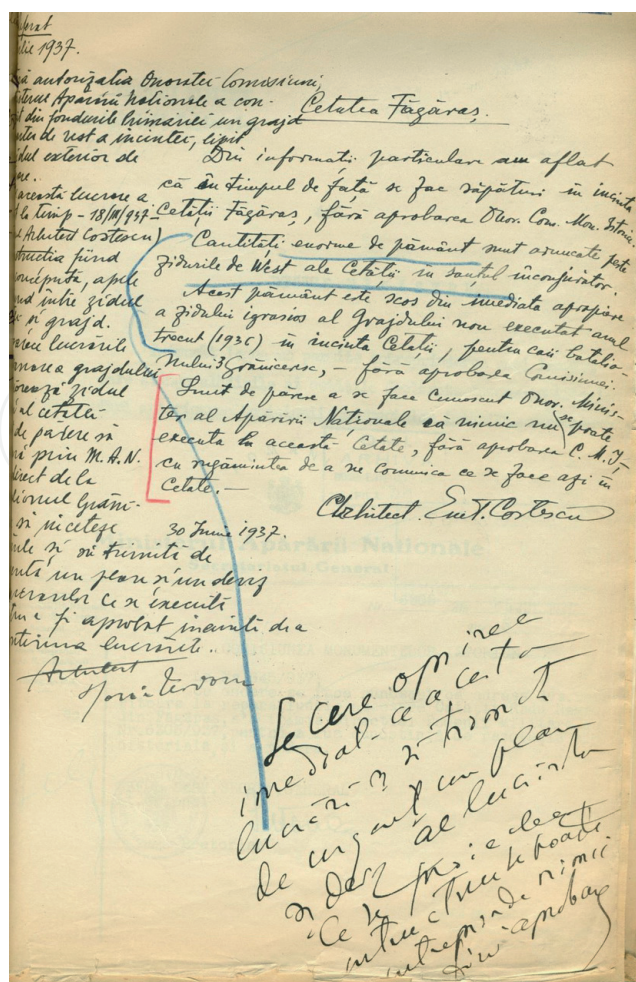


Figure 9.

The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 1580: Sheet 33.

interesting as it is than coated in plaster, and I believe that its current appearance will help solve other problems that will be revealed by research on the inside areas, when the overlapping painting will be removed. Consequently, my opinion is to refrain from plastering (Figure 11).

Commission's report to the Ministry of the Interior on exports of Romanian heritage items. Drăghiceanu's decision: We will request from the Ministry of Interior to stop the exports of antiques, art objects, and Romanian ethnography (Figure 12).

The owner of a land perimeter in Târgoviște which also included the St. Nicolae Chapel requested permission to build a house near the chapel. Report of Drăghiceanu: The chapel of Giartolec or Jiartolec—St. Nicolae—in Târgoviște was built in 1877 as a private property but was sold several times. It has been repaired several times and is of no artistic or architectural value. I believe the landowner should be permitted to build a house on its own land near the chapel, provided that he pledges in writing to maintain and preserve the chapel as he has done so far (Figure 13).

A citizen of Târgoviște on whose land and excavation works were executed, which revealed annexes of the former royal palace requests damages for his land. Report of Drăghiceanu: In order to dig in the royal bath area that was located on your property and the property of colonel Florian, we agreed with him to pay for his share of 95 sq. m. Since the compensation was low (3000 lei) and in order to avoid a court trial, we may pay this amount from the proceeds of the Bulletin sales (Figure 14).



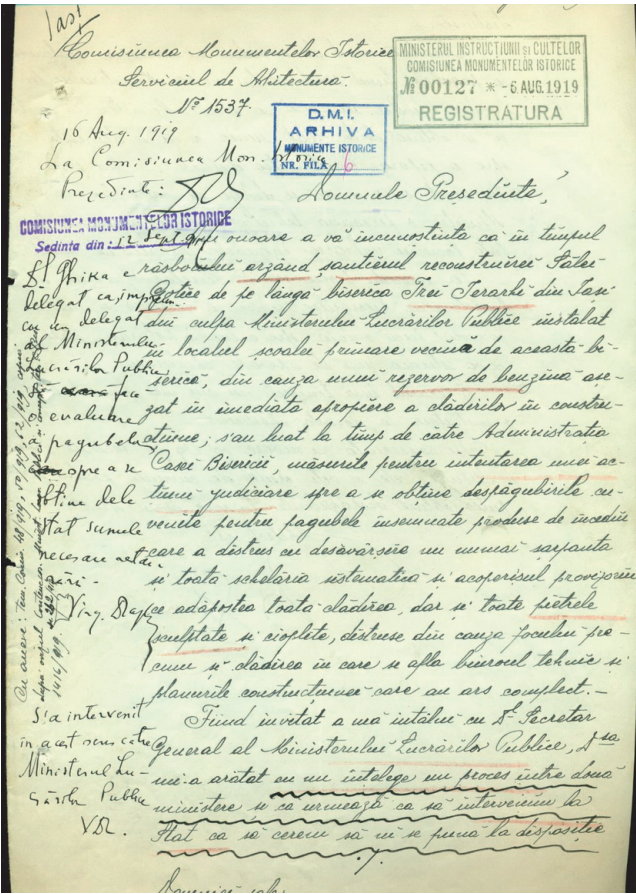


Figure 10.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 2015: Sheet 6.

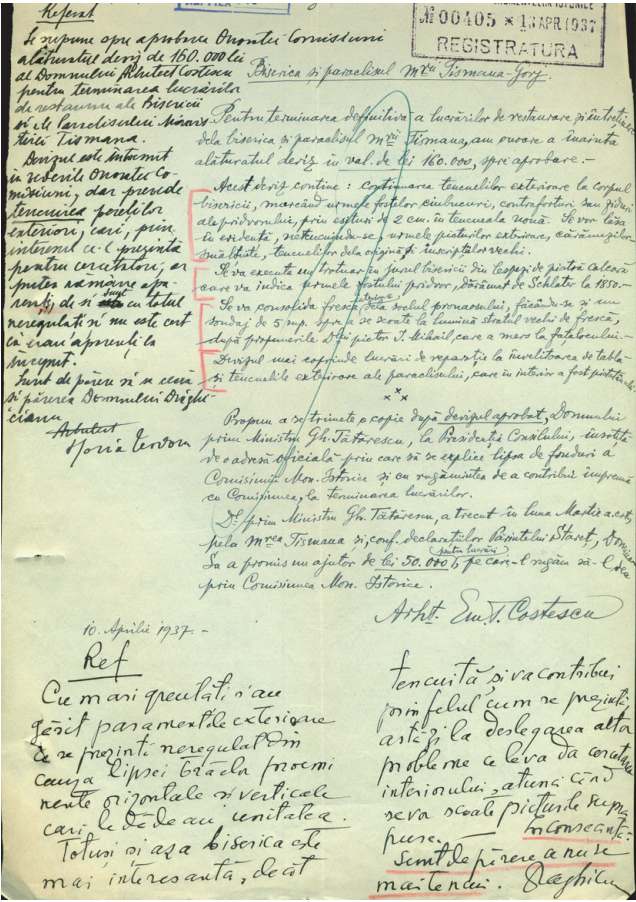


Figure 11.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 3372: Sheet 190.



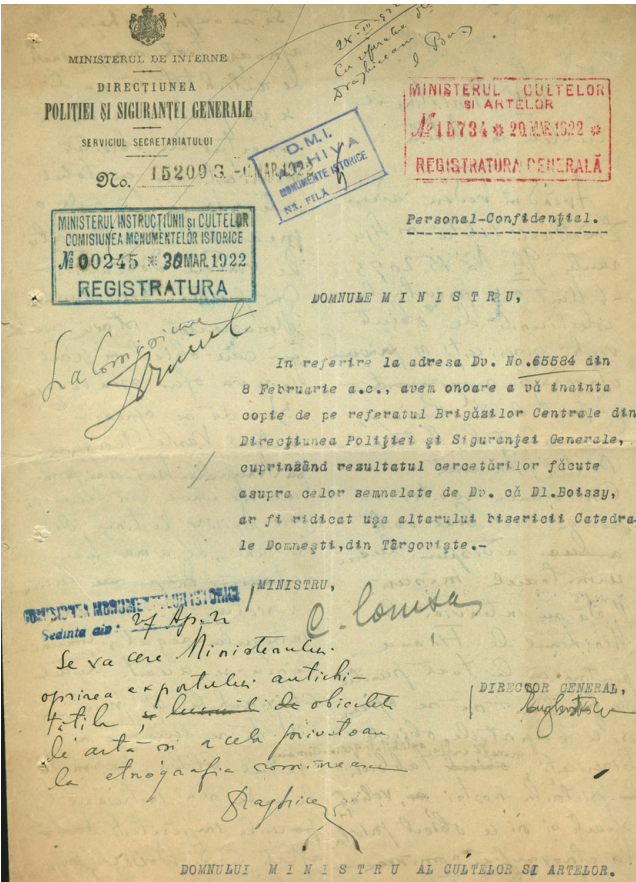


Figure 12.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 3381: Sheet 5.

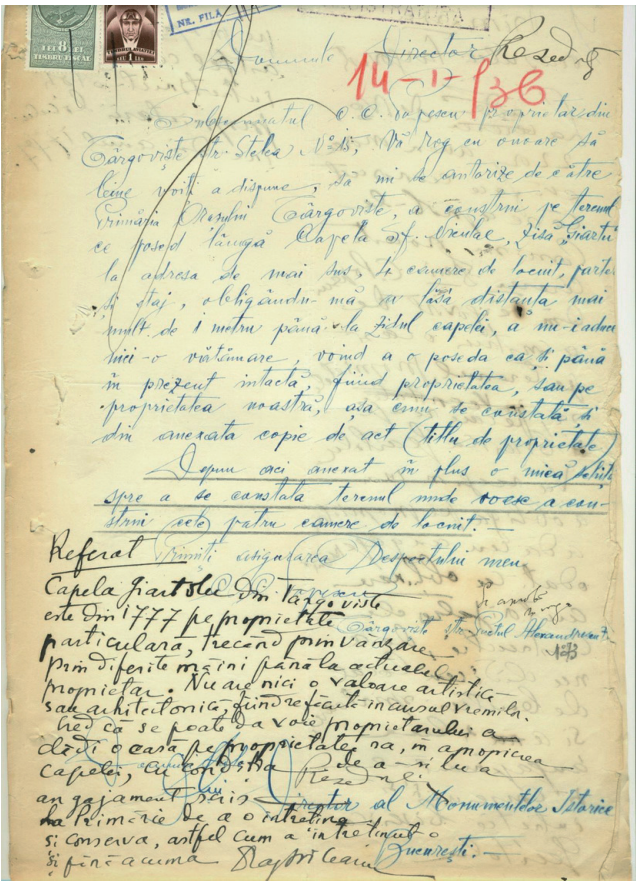


Figure 13.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 3397: Sheet 117.



Figure 14.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 3399; Sheet 1.

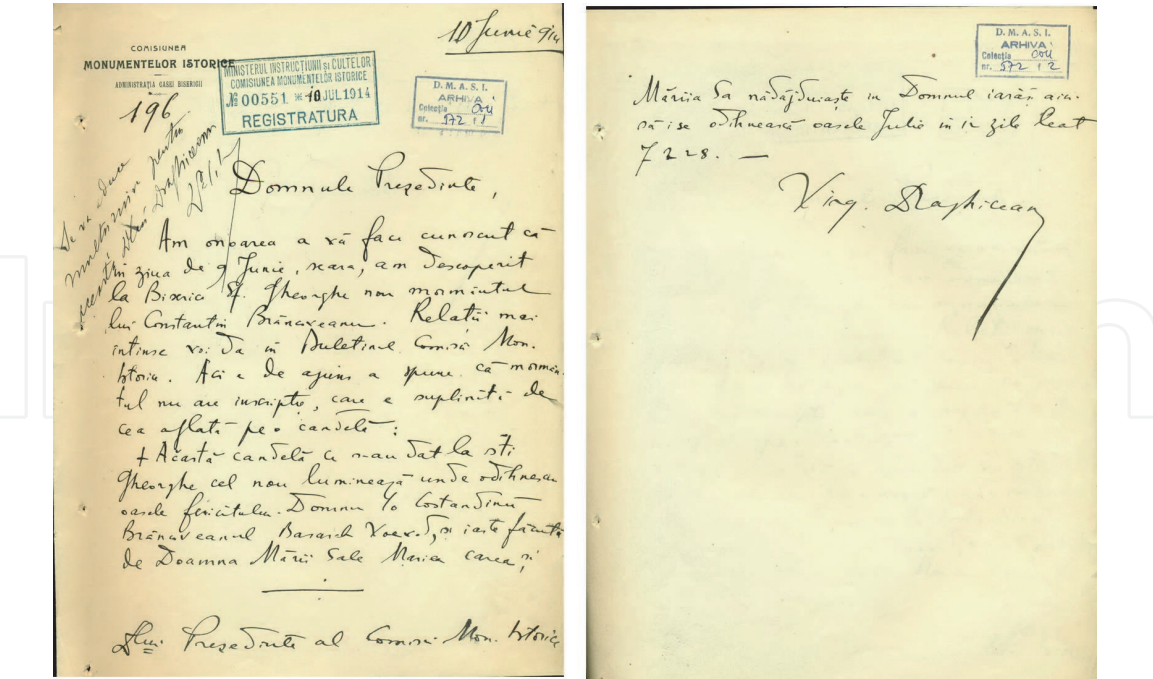


Figure 15.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 572; Sheet 1, sheet 2.

Drăghiceanu wrote to the president of the Commission that on 9 June 1914, he had discovered the tomb of Constantin Brâncoveanu on the premises of St. Gheorghe Nou in Bucharest, founded by Brâncoveanu. He said the tomb had no inscription but that he had found out about its positioning by reading an inscription



on an old icon rushlight that Queen Maria Brâncoveanu had offered to the church. “We have donated this icon rushlight on the day of St. Gheorghe cel nou to bring light upon the resting place of King Constandinu Brâncoveanu Basarab Voevod; it was commissioned by his queen, Maria, who with God’s will find her resting place also in this church. 12 July, year 7228 (1720)” (Figure 15).

On 22 July 1914, Drăghiceanu thanked the president of the Commission who congratulated him for finding Brâncoveanu’s tomb. At the same time, he was quite upset because a person working for the church of St. Gheorghe Nou (the church’s cantor) had appropriated the outcome of his work. Therefore, he filed a complaint with the church authorities (Figure 16).

Report of Drăghiceanu on matters associated to the discovery of Brâncoveanu’s tomb. The cantor of church St. Gheorghe Nou, Ion Ungureanu, appropriated the find of Virgiliu Drăghiceanu and had it published in *Viitorul*, one of the daily newspapers of the time (Figure 17).

Report of Drăghiceanu: Description of the activities preceding the discovery of the tomb. On the occasion of Brâncoveanu’s bicentennial celebration, Drăghiceanu collected a number of items from churches that Brâncoveanu had founded in order to have them showcased in an exhibition. Once he arrived in that particular church, Drăghiceanu started deciphering the inscriptions painted or carved on the religious icons, tombstones, and iconostasis, and he ultimately started studying the rushlights. There were three of them, and the last one he investigated proved to have been donated by Queen Maria, Constantin Brâncoveanu’s wife, in the memory of her husband. The cantor was there and witnessed the discovery of the tomb; so he recounted everything to the reporters of daily *Viitorul* as he would have made the find himself. He considered it necessary to present his point of view in order to preserve his prestige and his authority and credibility. The conservatory of the museums covered by the Historical Monuments Commission (Figure 18).

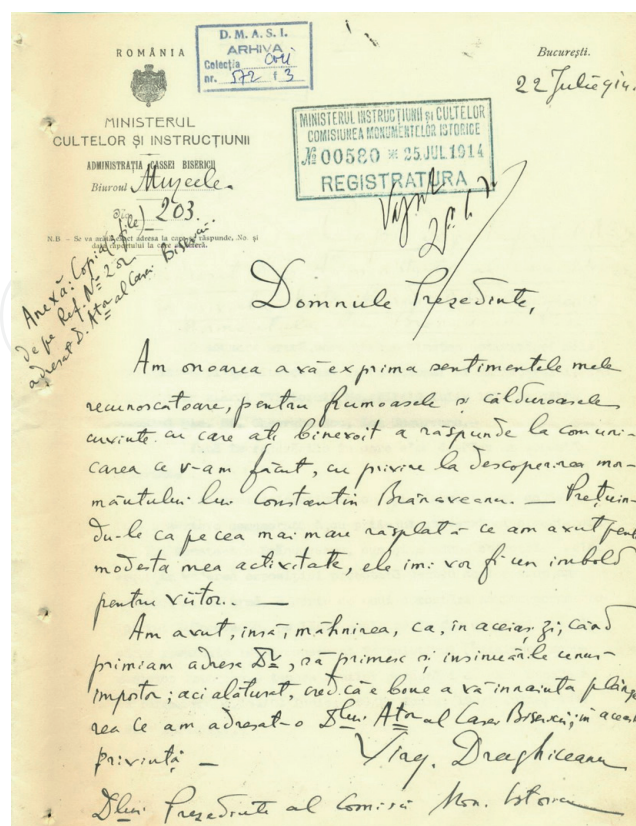


Figure 16.

The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 572: Sheet 3.

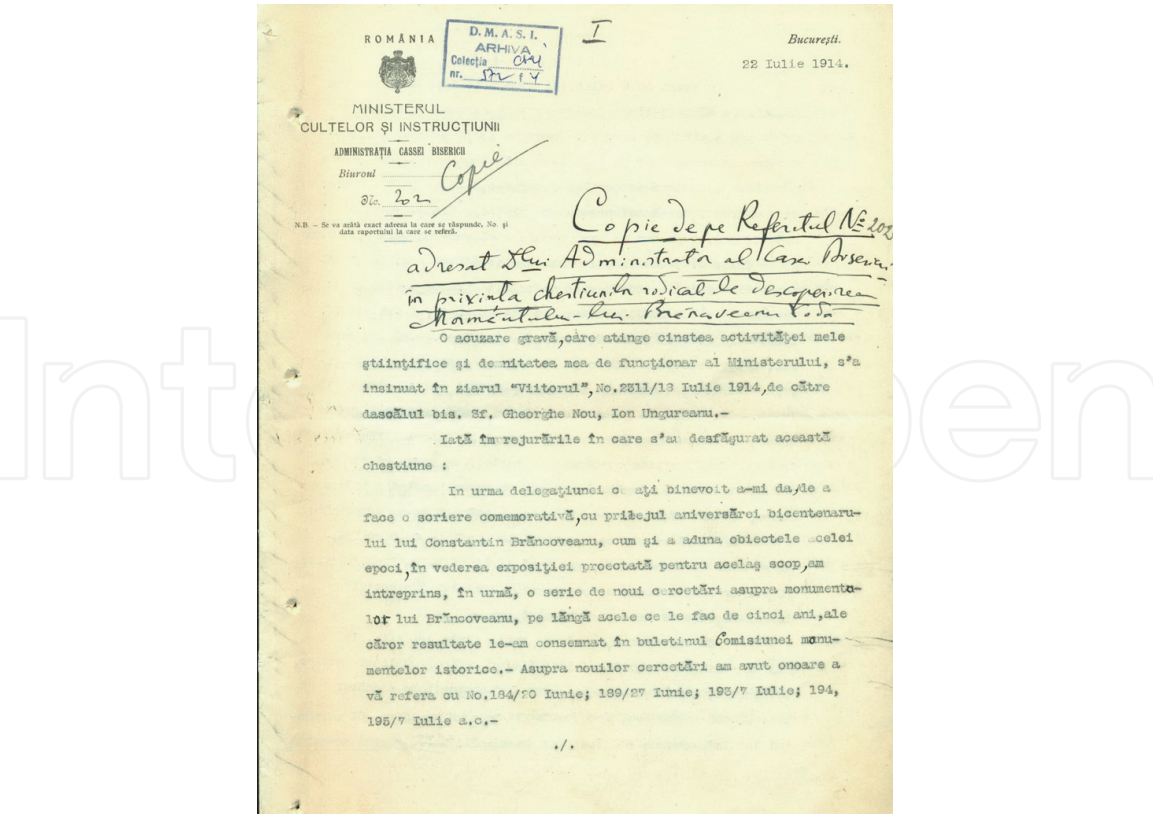


Figure 17.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905-1948; file 572: Sheet 4.

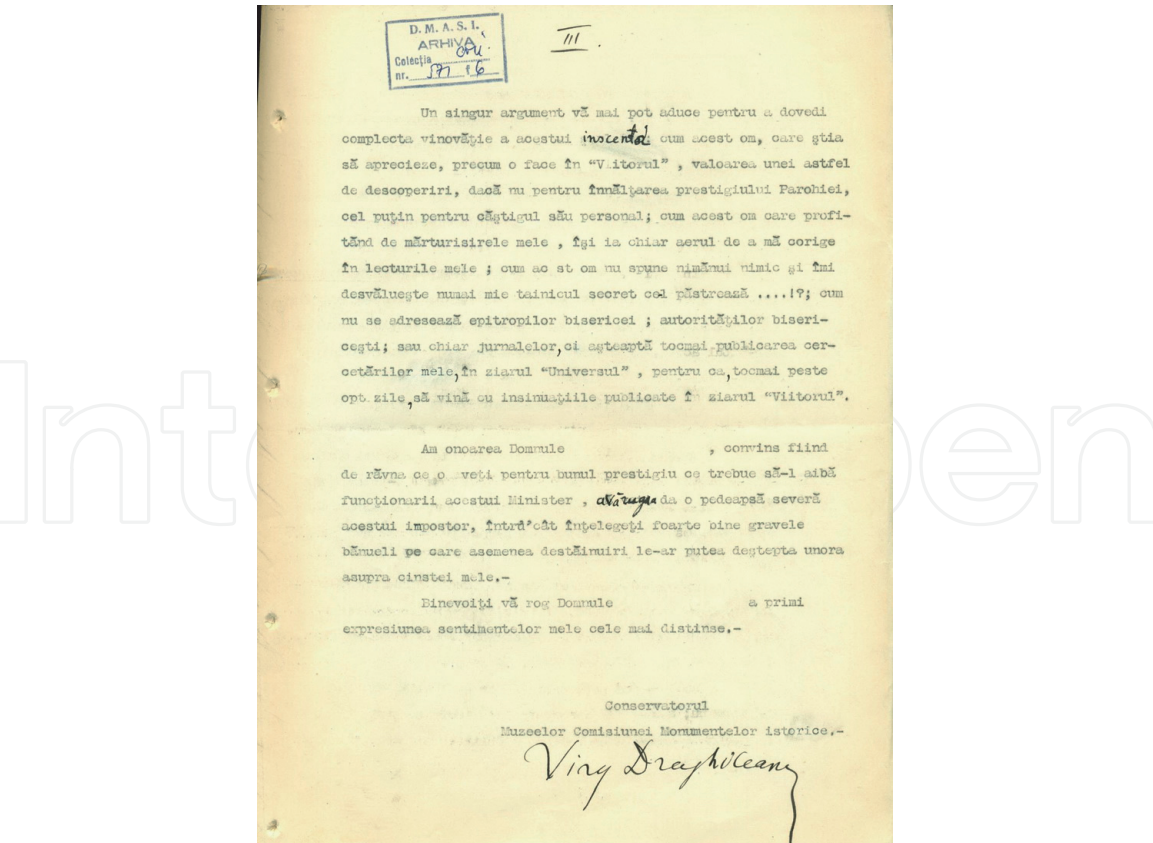


Figure 18.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905-1948; file 572: Sheet 5.

The cantor of church St. Gheorghe continued his attacks. So Drăghiceanu had to submit another explanation to the Commission. He provided a comparison between his interpretation of the inscription and the one published by the cantor. The



difference of interpretation was conspicuous, and Drăghiceanu’s was obviously the accurate one (Figure 19).

After publicly proving that the cantor’s account was a fraud, he wished to close the public debate on the matter. Conservationist of the Commission, Virgiliu Drăghiceanu (Figure 20).

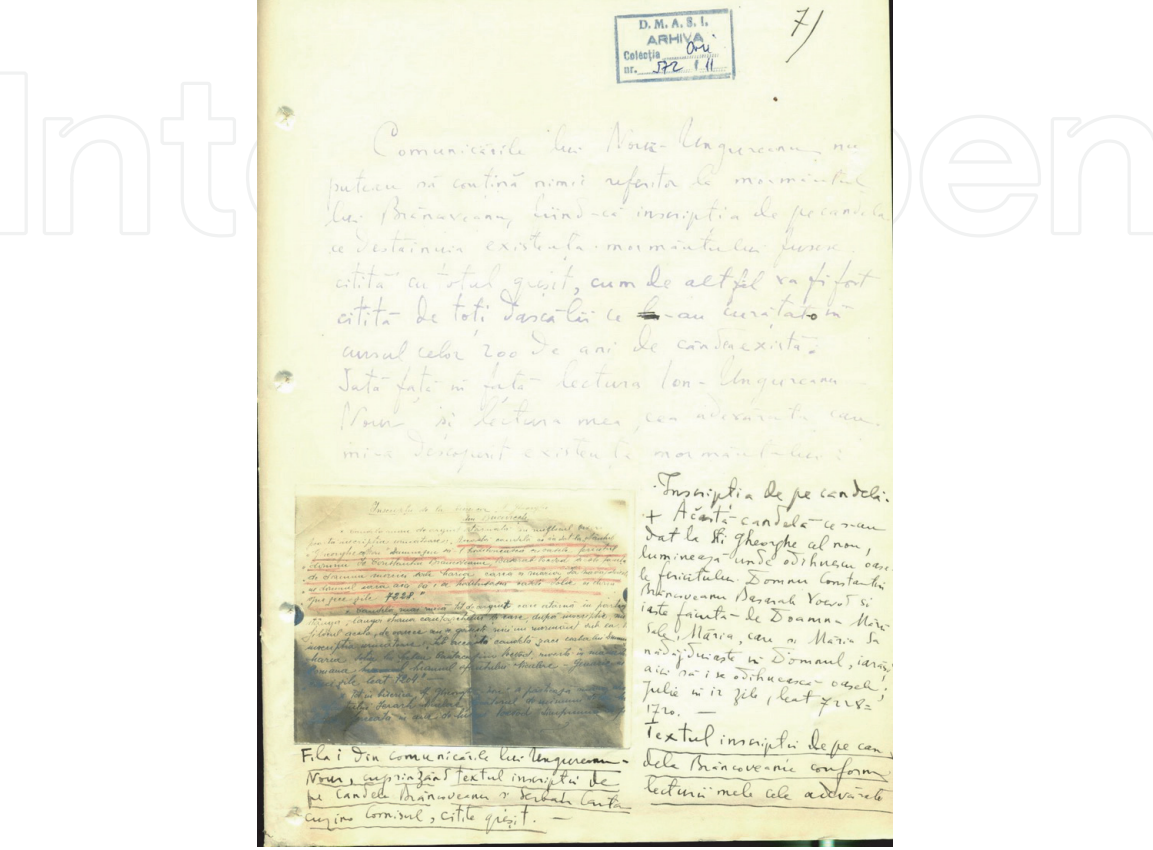


Figure 19.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 572: Sheet 11.

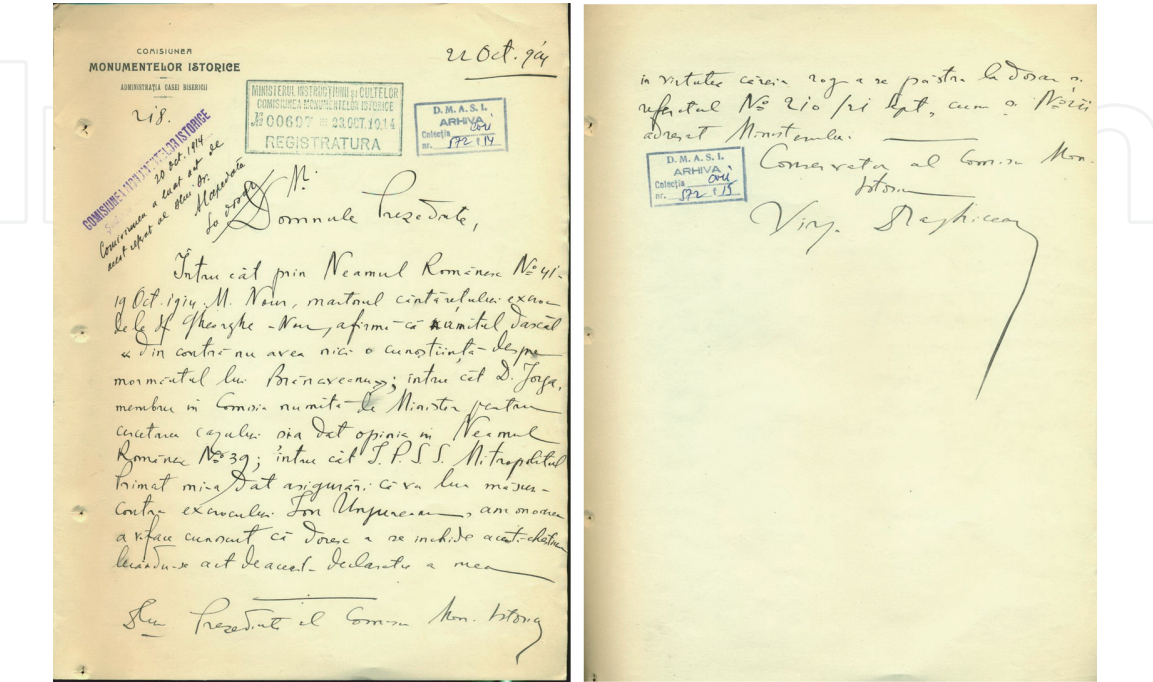


Figure 20.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 572: Sheet 14, sheet 15.

Major Ion Cătuneanu of Craiova, Brâncoveanu’s sixth level sibling, filed a petition with the Commission asking to receive copies of the exhumation reports and announcing that his family opposed the conservation of Brâncoveanu’s otherwise in

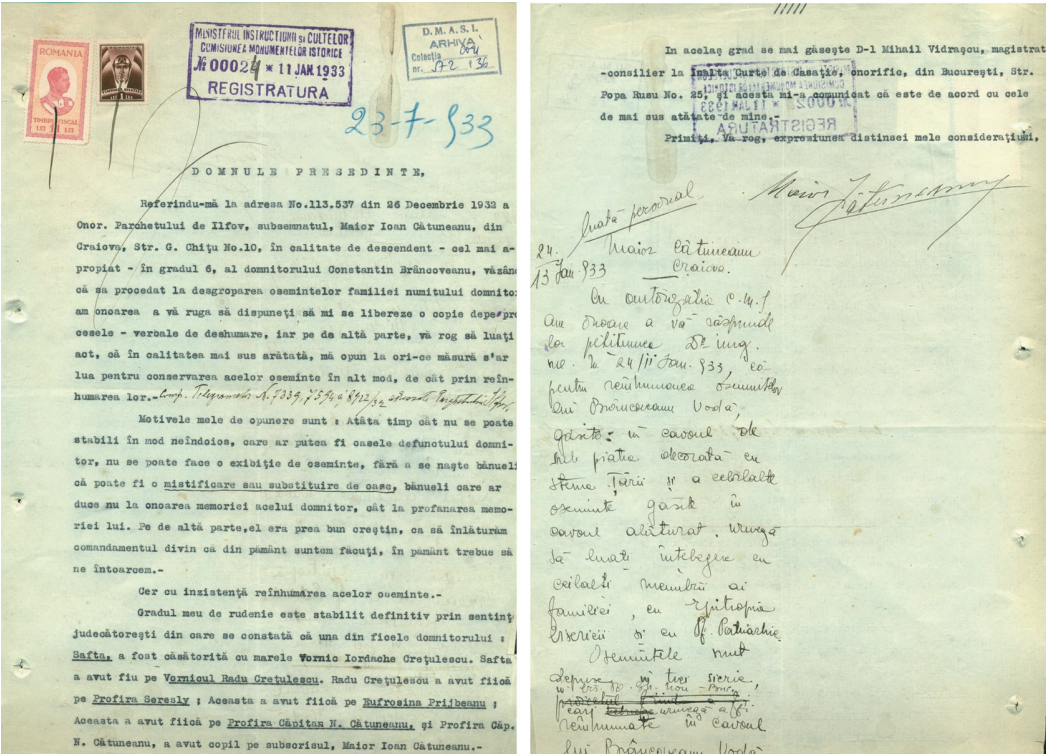


Figure 21.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 572: Sheet 36, sheet 36 a.

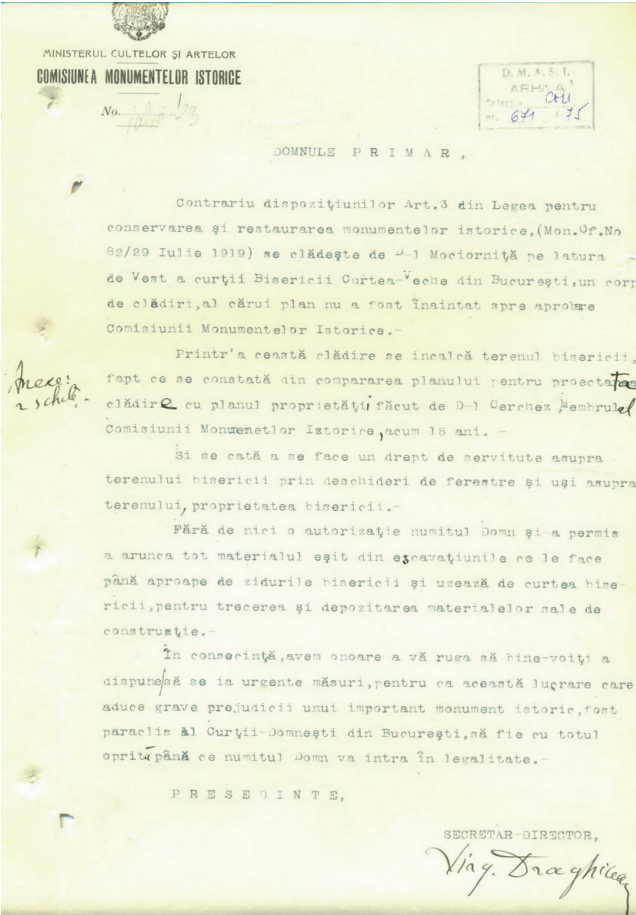
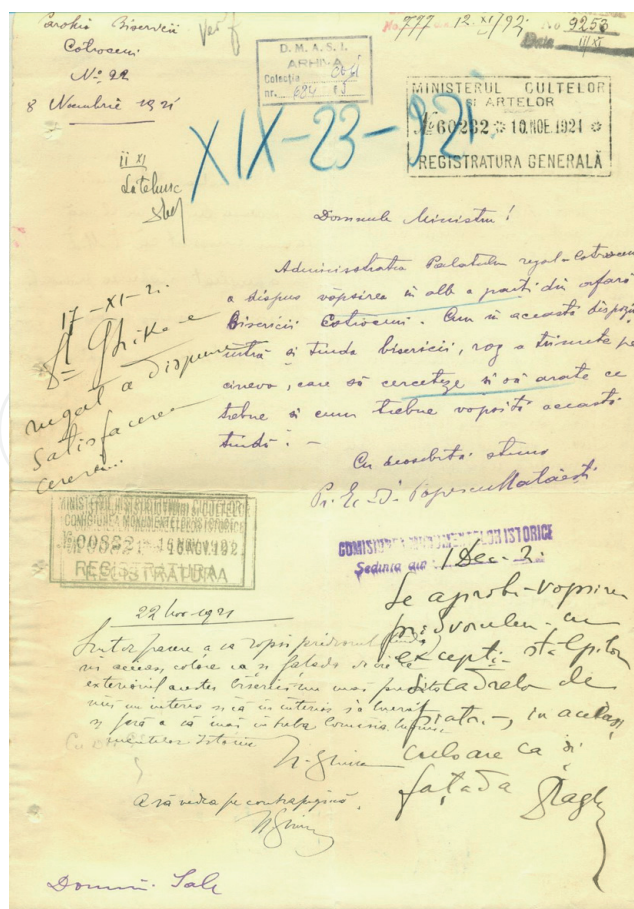


Figure 22.  
The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 671: Sheet 75.





**Figure 23.**

The historical monuments commission archive, 1905–1948; file 684; Sheet 5.

any other manner than burial and any other activity that would affect the memory of this king that was a good Christian. The answer was that Brâncoveanu would be buried in the same church under a tombstone decorated with the country's coat of arms and that family members could participate in the ceremony ((Figure 21).

Secretary-Director Virgiliu Drăghiceanu wrote a petition on behalf of the Commission in order to send it to the mayor of Bucharest, with reference to Mr Mociorniță, the industrialist, who—against the Law on the Preservation and Restoration of Historical Monuments—is building a structure near the church of *Curtea Veche* (Old Royal Palace) in Bucharest, which is a historical monument. The official designs did not match the one actually used in the field. So Drăghiceanu asked the municipality to take the action necessary to save an important historical monument, the former chapel of the Royal Court in Bucharest, and to stop all works (Figure 22).

The Administration of *Cotroceni* Royal Palace submitted a petition to the Minister of Cults and Arts requesting permission to paint the outer walls and the porch of the *Cotroceni* church. Drăghiceanu's decision: We agree to have the porch painted in the colours of the facade, except for the pillars and stone frames (Figure 23).

#### 4. Virgiliu Drăghiceanu: museographer and curator

Since 1885, numerous Romanian intellectuals have drawn attention to the acts of theft committed at numerous archaeological sites. In this context, the Commission had decided, starting with 1907, to create its own collections, which would constitute the core of an intense museum activity. The professional beginnings of Virgiliu



Drăghiceanu in the service of the Commission are linked to this activity as a museographer. He would become custodian, then head of the Historical-Artistic Collections, a division within the Historical Monuments Commission and of the Administration of the Church House, which would open to the public on 2 November 1909. The collections included objects from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, gathered during the study visits throughout the country. The appearance of the Commission's Collections' initiative led to the inventory of all the heritage objects of the places of worship which were classified as historical monuments. In 1910, the general inventory of monuments was resumed, and research was carried out in Oltenia, for the purpose of the general improvement of the collections [16, 17].

Activities connected to the study, preservation, and promotion of heritage items and objectives.

**1912.** The album "The Neamțu and Secu Treasures" was printed under Drăghiceanu's coordination (file 3851).

The Stavropoleos Church in Bucharest administration asked Drăghiceanu for his assistance in the creation of an inventory of religious objects characterised by historical-artistic value and present in the church museum (File 638).

**1913.** Drăghiceanu succeeded in developing a detailed description of the Commission's Collections, published in the form of the Catalogue of the Historical Monuments Commission's Collections. The collection was launched on 23 November 1919 and included the following sections: archaeological (the museum and library segments) and archive (photographs, plans, surveys) (File 3851).

**1913–1919.** Through the "House of Historical Monuments", Romanian art exhibitions were organised abroad; these exhibitions would continue after the war.

**1914.** As a sign of public appreciation of his qualities regarding the salvage, protection, and conservation of movable heritage, Drăghiceanu received the title of "curator" of the Commission's museum system.

**1915.** In Fălticeni, Suceava County, the Regional Museum was established, containing various objects from the excavations carried out at the Baia catholic church, with the aid provided by Drăghiceanu (File 1588).

**1919.** Prahova Prefecture requested Drăghiceanu's assistance for the establishment of a museum. In this context, the Hagi Prodan House in Ploiești was transformed into the Prahova Museum. The first objects belonging to this museum would be religious objects (File 2695).

In Galați, Covurlui County, an eparchial museum is connected to "St. Andrew" Theological Seminary and containing objects found in Bărboși, with the involvement of Drăghiceanu (File 1687).

The collections of the Commission acquired, through Drăghiceanu, 105 photographs representing objects from the Neamțu and Secu monasteries (File 3851).

**1920.** The Parish of the "Nașterea Maicii Domnului" church in Doicești, Dâmbovița County, founded by Constantin Brâncoveanu, asked for the Commission's Collections' assistance in the recovery of the ornate chair donated to the church by Brâncoveanu, an object that had been on display during the National Exhibition of 1906 and that was kept by the Bucharest Ethnographic Museum Bucharest (File 1493).

The "Treierarii" church in Iasi required the help of Drăghiceanu for the purpose of founding a museum of the Metropolitan Church of Moldavia (File 2015).

**1921.** A school museum is set up in Hardali, Caliacra County (today in Bulgaria), with objects discovered in the ruins of the ancient fortress of Abrittus, at the suggestion of Drăghiceanu and Pârvan (File 1909).

As a result of the acts of theft that took place at the Gura Motrului Monastery, Drăghiceanu went to the site to transfer the objects of historical value to the museum of the Commission (File 1878).

Drăghiceanu prepared a detailed report for the recovery of the Romanian heritage objects situated at the Vienna Museum (in accordance with the Treaty of St. Germain). Among the requested items were Ștefan cel Mare's Gospel, Prince Ștefan Bocskay's crown, the Cuciurul Mare treasure (Bucovina), and various military trophies (File 3883).

**1924.** The commission, through Drăghiceanu, received fragments of mural painting extracted from the "Treierarii" church in Iași, before the restoration coordinated by Lecomte du Noüy (File 2018).

Drăghiceanu contributed for the formation of museums in the "St. George" church and in the Gothic hall of the Cetățuia Monastery (File 2046). The Byzantinology Exhibition in Bucharest is organised by Drăghiceanu (File 3844).

**1925.** Drăghiceanu organised the Exhibition of Romanian Church Art in Paris and Geneva, under the patronage of the "Prince Carol" Foundation [18] (File 3846).

**1926.** The Bucovina Museum made a description of its collections with the contribution of Drăghiceanu, at the request of the museum director, Nicolae Grămadă (File 3242).

Drăghiceanu was a delegate at the Sesquicentennial International Exposition in Philadelphia, United States, representing the Romanian section (File 3845).

**1929.** The Romanian Art Exhibition in Carol Park was organised by the League of Romanian Women, on the occasion of the 10-year jubilee of the Great Union, with the assistance of Virgiliu Drăghiceanu (File 3847).

The Historical Monuments Commission participated at the Barcelona International Exposition. The Romanian pavilion connected to religious art section included objects with a historical and artistic relevance, from various Romanian churches and monasteries (e.g. an iconostasis from the Arnota Monastery, dated in 1699). The pavilion was organised by Virgiliu Drăghiceanu and Dimitrie Gusti (File 3848).

**1930.** Drăghiceanu, as a member of the Commission and as a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, proposed the donation of the tombstone of Prince Ipsilanti, located in the "Mărcuța" church in Bucharest, to the National Museum of Athens (File 3884).

**1931.** Byzantine Art Exhibition in Paris was organised by Drăghiceanu (File 3849).

**1936.** The Commission, through Drăghiceanu's activities, took the necessary steps for the recovery of archaeological objects which were illegally taken by private persons from the mediaeval citadel of Cenad and their transfer to the Banat Museum in Timișoara (File 3368).

**1937.** Drăghiceanu helped the administration of the "St. Sava" church to buy a building situated on 20 St. Sava Street for the arrangement of a museum (File 2047).

**1938.** In Târgoviște, Dâmbovița County, a county history museum was inaugurated but put into public in 1944. The museum was formed by royal decree in 1937, at the request and also due to the tenacity, of Drăghiceanu, for the cultural improvement of his native city (File 3401).

The project for the establishment of a European Institute for the Research of Castles is signed by Virgiliu Drăghiceanu and E. Foundoukidis, the secretary general of the International Commission for Historic Monuments (File 3885).

**1939.** The Turnu Măgurele City Hall requested Drăghiceanu's assistance to set up a museum with the function of housing the objects discovered in the Turnu mediaeval fortress (File 3503).

A museum is formed with the help of Drăghiceanu for the purpose of preserving the archaeological items discovered during the excavations that took place at the Fortress of Severin and at the Roman thermae and castrum. Initially, the museum was provisionally arranged in the boarding school building of the "Trajan" High School. An appropriate building was constructed in 1940 (File 3505).

**1940.** Drăghiceanu composed an inventory of the objects that were presented at the Romanian pavilion during the Milan Fair Exhibition (File 3505).

As a curator of the items selected to be preserved by the Commission and by the church house, organiser of permanent and temporary exhibitions, and supporter of the public dissemination of the cultural artefacts connected to Romanian history, Drăghiceanu worked in a methodical and professional manner in all circumstances, succeeding in the process of training a significant number of specialists through his personal example. He managed to complete the available thesaurus of monuments with new items and studies. In his varied activity, the qualities of a museographer were joined by the qualities of a passionate archaeologist, who discovered numerous tombs, inscriptions, and objects that were, until his time, totally or partially ignored. He also facilitated their restoration, preservation, and functional integration among the most valuable elements constitutive of national heritage, which are defining for the relevance of Romanian culture. The exhibition catalogues also demonstrate Drăghiceanu's skills and competence in making such syntheses.

The Paris Exhibition organised by Drăghiceanu in 1925, led, through the value of the exhibited heritage items, to the conferring of distinctions by the French government, including the religious art section presented in the historical room of the Tuileries Palace, once again demonstrating the capabilities of the museographer, but also the recognition enjoyed by the Commission at a European level. The Geneva Exhibition, also organised by Drăghiceanu, was also an excellent opportunity for documentation. In this context, he managed to identify in the history museum and in the Magdalene Temple inscriptions similar to those present on the rings discovered in Curtea de Argeş [19].

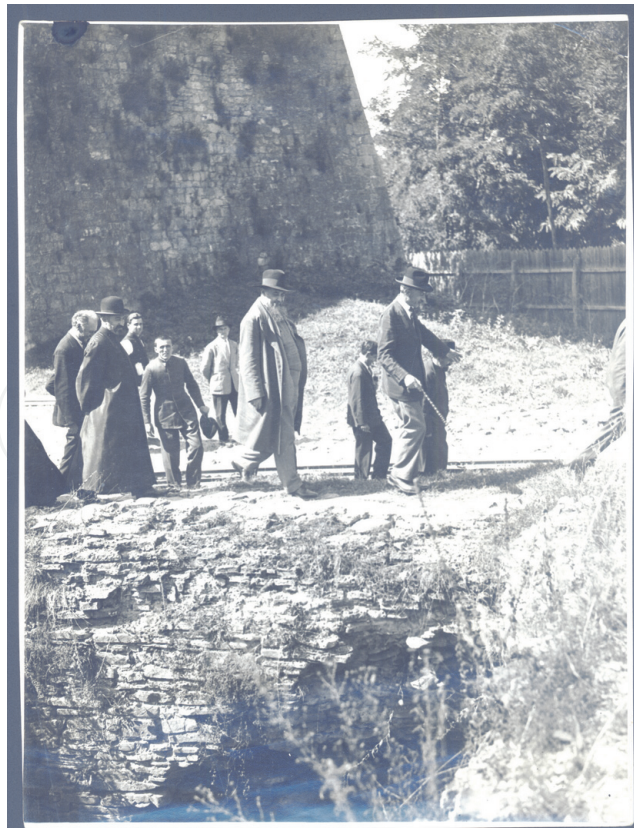
The experience, tenacity, and expertise of Drăghiceanu were manifested and were also recognised internally, through his presence in the boards of management of numerous museums in Bucharest and in the country. Permanent preoccupation with being aware of external events and constantly up to date with the European legislation in the area of culture and heritage and also in connection to the constant achievements of European museums made him the optimal person in charge of formulating a Romanian museum law project, inspired by the Italian and Greek legislations.

## 5. Conclusions

The Historical Monuments Commission has had the essential function of protecting the historical monuments situated on the territory of Romania, demonstrating efficiency, dynamism, and positive authority in the process. The latter attribute was conferred primarily by the work of the prominent personalities that constituted it that were highly specialised and competent in the fields in which they activated. Among them was Virgiliu Drăghiceanu, whose spirit, talent, selflessness, dedication to the preservation of monuments, and last but not least patriotism saved relevant testimonies of the past to be transmitted to future generations [20]. His activities for four decades in the service of monuments, through the fulfilled appointments, were the result of a remarkable will and passion but also of an authentic professionalism and objectivity. The archaeological excavations, the field studies and research, and the published inscriptions demonstrate a constant and sustained study of past documents. The teamwork, the respect for his colleagues and collaborators, and the results he obtained made him noted and appreciated (**Figure 24**).

The present structure of heritage protection and promotion, and the corresponding formulated legislation, is due to the efforts and the work of those who, over a century ago, have composed a large archive that can anytime represent a starting point and an exemplary model for systematic activities directed towards





**Figure 24.**  
*The National Archives, Virgiliu Drăghiceanu and Nicolae Iorga at Târgoviște.*

the preservation, protection, restoration, promotion of cultural heritage, and also the transmission of expertise to future generations. This excellent archive is in the process of digitization, within the operational framework of a large national project.

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