

The second section is much more extensive, but less well preserved. The Archives of Local Governmental Authorities of Transylvania consist of eleven parts: the archives of the capitular canons in Gyulafehérvár, former residence of the princes of Transylvania (1505–1868), the archives of the Convent of Kolozsmonostor (1438–1868), archives of the Gubernium Transylvanicum (1435–1870), the treasury archives (1527–1870), the comptroller's archives (1692–1872), and several other governmental collections.

It should be mentioned that the collection under review does not include private (family) archives or personal collections. Many of these are shelved outside of the Transylvanian collection or with general Hungarian historical material closely connected with Transylvanian history (for example, documents of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution). Most of these are also housed in the Hungarian National Archives, although some of them are still in Vienna, in Marosvásárhely, or even in Bucharest.

Owing to fire, vandalism, and other misfortunes, these collections are not without serious gaps. Still they include an overwhelming number of important documents concerning the history of Transylvania. One hopes that the microfilming of historical material, which started around 1950 under the supervision of Bálint Ila, came to a successful conclusion and that the tremendously rich material of the Hungarian National Archives in general and the Transylvanian material in particular will be protected in the future against further losses or destruction. Both Dr. Trócsányi and the professional staff of the Hungarian National Archives should be congratulated for this volume, free from politics and propaganda and published in a format worthy of the time-proven cultural reputation of Hungary.

ANDRÁS H. POGÁNY
Seton Hall University

VASILE ALECSANDRI. By *Alexandre Cioranescu*. Translated by *Maria Golescu* and revised by *E. D. Tappe*. Twayne's World Authors Series, no. 204. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973. 179 pp. \$5.95.

Son of a Moldavian boyar, educated in France, genial in disposition, with a remarkable propensity for foreign travel, Vasile Alecsandri (1821–90) served the cause of Rumanian nationalism with great distinction, especially in his self-appointed role of cultural propagandist. As the first major national poet and the first collector and interpreter of Rumanian folk poetry, Alecsandri prepared the way for Mihail Eminescu; as a writer of comedies satirizing a corrupt society and of historical dramas (in the manner of Victor Hugo) evoking the glories of Rumania's past, he laid foundations on which Caragiale and Delavrancea respectively were able to build; as a storyteller and memorialist of verve and delicacy, he was—with his friend Costache Negruzzi—"the true creator of Rumanian literary prose." The immense influence he exercised in his own time and on succeeding generations is thus undeniable; what is still open to question, however, is the intrinsic as opposed to the extrinsic merit of his work.

Alexandre Cioranescu tackles this problem head on in the preface to his study of Alecsandri's writings (the first to appear in English) by denouncing the harsh assessment which G. Călinescu included in his monumental *Istoria literaturii române*. This is unwise, because Călinescu fully recognized Alecsandri's place in

Rumanian literary criticism. As an aesthetician, on the other hand, he did not feel it his task to evaluate literary works in terms of their popular appeal or political expediency. This slur on the name of an outstanding critic is nothing more than gratuitous, since there is little actual disagreement between the two as to the respective merits of individual works.

Cioranescu divides his "moral and literary portrait of a writer" into eight chapters and a brief conclusion. The first three chapters are devoted almost exclusively to a biography of Alecsandri as writer and politician. The account of the historical circumstances which determined Alecsandri's activities is authoritative and full of insights which will be helpful—as Cioranescu himself claims—to the literary specialist unfamiliar with Rumanian history during this period. Separate chapters are in turn devoted to Alecsandri's works: his collections of popular poetry, the eight cycles of poetry, the comic plays, the drama, and the prose. The study is scholarly, coherent, and well written (the two translators deserve high marks in this respect), but a curious imbalance is evident in the space Cioranescu allots to individual works. Good and bad are treated alike, frequently summed up in a few adroit phrases, and what little depth-analysis that appears is often mis-directed. For example, Cioranescu devotes more than half of page 84 to "Banul Mărăcine," a poem of interest merely for the false tradition of Ronsard's Rumanian birth it enacts, whereas only one poem (the admirable "Serile la Mircești") from Alecsandri's best cycle *Pasteluri* is presented in any detail. A fuller and more sympathetic discussion of this cycle would have gone a long way to restore the balance.

Cioranescu is certainly right, on the other hand, to stress the significance of Alecsandri's initial rejection of the two obvious poetic models—"that of [the] anacreontic and arcadian lyric . . . and that of French preromanticism" (p. 68)—in favor of the vast store of popular Rumanian poetry, when he came to compose his own poetry. This decision had wide ramifications for the future development of Rumanian poetry in general; not only did it encourage Eminescu to seek his muse in peasant melodies, but later generations (Coșbuc, Goga, Argezei, and even a whole school of contemporary poets) also followed a similarly nationalistic path. Depending on one's point of view, this early rejection of foreign models either maintained the purity and authenticity of the native lyric or bred a stubborn insularity which still makes a large portion of Rumanian poetry difficult to accept for readers accustomed to more cosmopolitan perspectives. Instead of Mme de Staël exhorting Italians to rediscover their cultural identity in the vigor and novelty of transalpine literary forms, Alecsandri and his confreres heard the voice of M. Kogălniceanu advising young writers to learn by imitating national elements of literature rather than let themselves be integrated into foreign literary movements. The fault, if fault there is, may lie in the stress on imitation. Not imitation, but innovation was called for, and this would have to await Eminescu's subtle blend of Schopenhauerian pessimism and a metaphysical vision of nature based on folklore models.

Cioranescu displays far more zeal and acumen in his analysis of Alecsandri's work when he moves away from poetry to the theater. Yet even here his readiness to overlook Alecsandri's vulgar chauvinism, incessant pandering to the mediocrity of popular taste, and continual reliance on French vaudeville for models is surprising. Are we to acclaim literature merely because it is militant, merely because it serves patriotic ends? How different the situation in Italy during the stormy

years of the Risorgimento! Manzoni and the writers who collaborated on *Il Conciliatore* saw it as their duty to elevate, not debase, the minds of their countrymen. Another parallel with Italy is equally revealing: Cioranescu excuses Alecsandri's limited aims and lowered sights on the grounds that the Moldavian writer not only had to fashion a Rumanian theater out of nothing but also had to serve an apprenticeship in Rumanian poetic art. Yet Alecsandri was not the first man to become a student of his own language in order to write the literature his country needed. Vittorio Alfieri single-handedly created a tragic tradition in Italian literature, and Alessandro Manzoni produced his *I promessi sposi* without the aid of native models; both writers were forced to wash their linguistic linen in the waters of the Arno before setting about their great task.

Cioranescu is more persuasive when he allows his critical imagination freer rein, as he does in his discussion of Alecsandri's drama. But this only brings into sharp relief the contrast between the relative paucity of the early chapters, where Alecsandri's poetry and comedies are too often catalogued in the manner of a middle-school textbook, and the amplification and occasional depth of the analyses in the second half of the book. Can it be that at some stage in the editorial process excessive cuts were forced upon the author? A mere hypothesis perhaps, but one which would account at least in part for this peculiar discrepancy. It would also help explain why—in a book of some 170 pages—there is not a single citation from Alecsandri's literary works. Given the fact that no translations of his writings have appeared in English since the antiquated versions of Henry Stanley in 1856, such an omission is utterly inexplicable, and does a serious injustice to the bard of Mircești.

The result is that we experience Alecsandri's works only at a distance; they are arrayed before us in orderly fashion, neatly summarized and categorized according to biographical relevance and literary influence, but never presented for our appreciation and critical judgment. The suspicion must be that Cioranescu feared too close an inspection might confirm Alecsandri's standing as a major influence but minor writer.

Finally, two quibbles of a different nature. Nowhere does Cioranescu mention that—through the good offices of Prosper Mérimée—Alecsandri sent copies of his *Poesiile populare* and *Doine* (his first cycle of poems) to the Spanish *costumbrista* Don Serafín Estébanez Calderón, nor does he give proper credit to the artistic revisions of the *romancero* which Alecsandri published in his *Mărgăritele* and *Pasteluri* cycles. Strange omissions for a scholar of Cioranescu's background! In addition, may we address a fervent appeal to the publisher, editors, and authors of Twayne's World Authors Series to decide once and for all on the spelling of Rumania and Rumanian. In the text these are spelt with a *u*, but on the book jacket and the title page the alternative spelling (Romania, Romanian) is used.

MICHAEL H. IMPEY
University of Kentucky

THEORIE UND REALITÄT VON BÜNDNISSEN: HEINRICH LAMMASCH, KARL RENNER UND DER ZWEIBUND, 1897–1914. By *Stephan Verosta*. Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1971. xxviii, 660 pp.

World War I was not an historical necessity, not an unavoidable consequence of pitiless historical forces. This is the major inference I draw from this thought-