

## **WORKS OF FINE ART DONATED TO THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY BY FINE ARTISTS WHO ARE/HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY**

**Bogdan-Ştefan Cristea**  
**PhD Student, Romanian Academy**

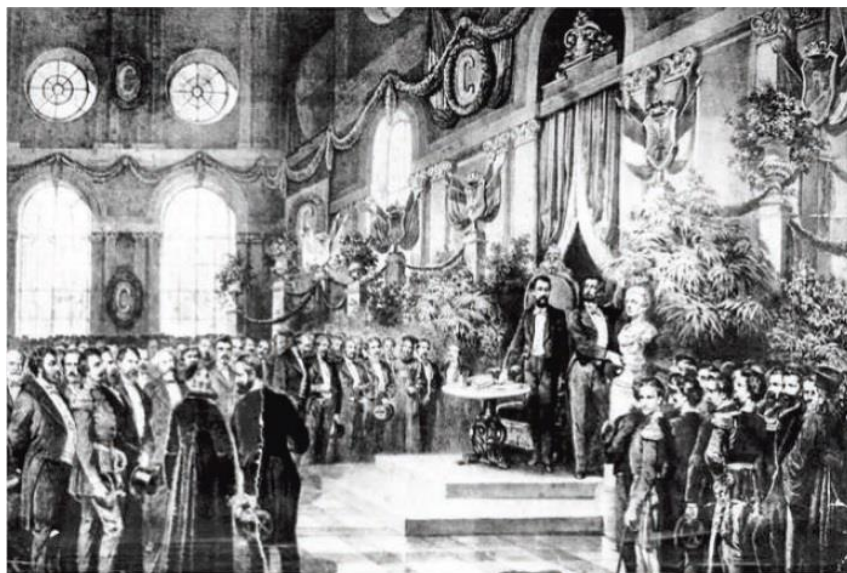
*Abstract: The movable cultural heritage of the Romanian Academy has been enriched over time, starting with 1860, being made up of donations from an impressive number of Romanians. It is particularly valuable both for the artists represented and for the diversity of genres and periods they represent. We mention here works of Romanian graphics, painting, sculpture, ikons. To all this are added the art collections of the Romanian Academy: Acad. George Oprescu, Emanoil Pantazi, Acad. Aurel and Maria Avramescu, Acad. Victor Eftimiu, Eng. Dumitru Furnică-Minovici, Acad. George Călinescu, Mara Bâscă, which also include furniture, jewelry, numismatic pieces, Romanian folk art, books. The works of art in the collection of the Romanian Academy have also a documentary value.*

*Key words: books, furniture, ikons, paintings, sculptures,*

### **I. Names and Events**

The long list of donors includes over 300 prominent personalities of the country, priests, officials, ordinary people, and artists.

At the inaugural meeting of the Romanian Academic Society, on August 1, 1867, the bust of the first donor, Evangelie Zappa, a Greek rich man naturalized Romanian, was unveiled. Made by the sculptor Karl Storck (1826-1887), in marble, the bust was placed in the salon, and speeches



were given in front of it. This bust was in the lobby of the Academy until 1949. Today, only its image is preserved through the period illustration.

The members of the Romanian Academy understood and protected the cultural and scientific heritage of the Romanian Academic Society, then of the Romanian Academy, from the very beginning. Thus, they strove to enrich it through important donations.



Nicolae Grigorescu

In 1899, at the meeting of April 8, the painter **Nicolae Grigorescu** (1838-1907), a representative artist of the late 19th century, founder of modern Romanian painting, a symbol for the young generations of art who wanted to highlight the values of Romanian spirituality at the beginning of the 20th century, was elected an honorary member of the high forum. Out of 26 voters, 24 were for and 2 against. The Academy's art collection includes paintings signed by Nicolae Grigorescu from the Al. Pantazi collection, the Acad. G. Oprescu collection, the Acad. G. Călinescu donated to the Academy (Fruits – melon, apples, grapes; Portrait of Dr. Grecescu; Cherries in a vase; Peasant from Câmpulung; Fair in Câmpina).



*Turma de vite la râu/pânza. 30x71,5 cm*



In 1936, **Ștefan Popescu** (1872-1948) was admitted to the Romanian Academy as an honorary member and **Gheorghe Petrașcu** (1872-1949) as a full member.

**Ștefan Popescu**, the painter, draftsman, engraver, represents a landmark in the development of easel graphics and engraving in Romania.

Mr. Sextil Pușcariu read the proposal in the public general meeting of May 30, 1936: “**Ștefan Popescu** occupies a leading place in his generation and is one of the few names that have long crossed the border. After studying at home and abroad (Munich and Paris), he returned to the country, where he presents Ștefan Popescu every year, in personal or collective exhibitions, his works, which are distinguished by their sure drawing, nobility and harmony of composition. His career followed continuous progress, the best work being the last.

An expert in the poetry of our land, of Romanian waters and forests, he gave us some of the most characteristic aspects of the unified country. For this numerous, solid, varied and

Romanian work, we propose the election of Mr. Ștefan Popescu as Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy.”

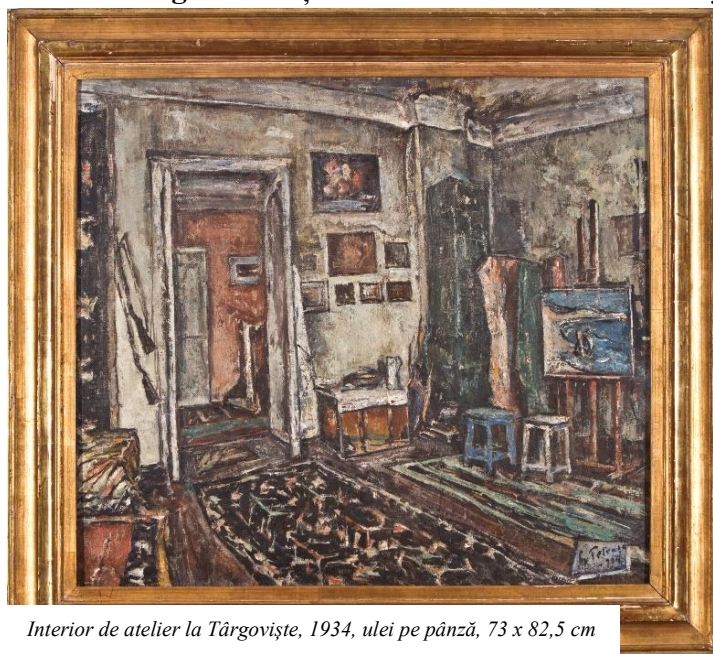
After the vote, Vice President C. Rădulescu-Motru proclaims him Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy.

**Petrașcu** gave the speech on May 22, 1937, with the theme "A Look at Romanian Painting" and donated his work "Interior of a Studio in Târgoviște" to the Romanian Academy.

**Gheorghe Petrașcu** was a Romanian painter, founder of an artistic movement characterized by serious, concentrated color and the power to evoke objects and landscapes, caught in their immediate environment. He painted landscapes in the country and abroad. Venetian landscapes best demonstrate his nonconformism, the artist resisting traditional interpretations where the subject becomes a pretext for analyzing the interference of light vibrations, the play of light on colored walls or the sheen of water.

In his reception speech "A Look at the Evolution of Romanian Painting" he presents his predecessors in the field of painting, **Gheorghe Petrașcu** being the first painter elected as a full member. Thus, he speaks of Constantin Lecca, Gheorghe Tătărescu, Theodor Aman, Nicolae Grigorescu, Ion Andreescu and Ștefan Luchian. The answer was given by C. Rădulescu Motru who made a laudatory parallel between Enescu and Petrașcu, which proved the artistic creative power of the Romanian people.

**Gheorghe Petrașcu** was a member of the Literary Section of the Romanian Academy since 1936.



*Interior de atelier la Târgoviște, 1934, ulei pe pânză, 73 x 82,5 cm*



*Gheorghe Petrașcu*

The work *Interior of a Workshop in Târgoviște*, now in the collection of the Romanian Academy, is representative for the classical theme of the interior. The choice of chromatics and the organization of the compositional space have a special interpretation in **Petrașcu's** work, where the image created is to the limit between real and fantastic.

In the collections of the Romanian Academy, **Gheorghe Petrașcu** is represented by his works which were donated by Academician G. Oprescu and Academician Victor Eftimiu.



Ion Jalea

In 1946, the sculptor **Ion Jalea** (1887-1983) became an academician. Author of numerous monuments, busts, reliefs, allegorical compositions and statues, the artist's creation is based on the cult of form as a result of observing reality.

The artist has aimed to glorify significant figures in the history and their deeds.

The sculpture is part of the collection of Acad. Victor Eftimiu  
The sculptor **Ion Jalea** participated in the meeting of March 7, 1951, in which the proposal made by the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși to donate his works from his Paris studio to the Romanian state was debated. However, his offer was refused.

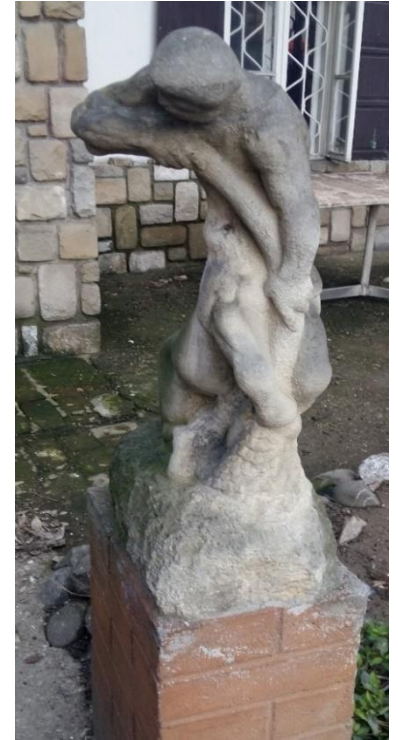


Jean Al. Steriadi

**Jean Al. Steriadi** (1880-1956), the painter of Dobrogean characters and landscapes, became a full member of the Romanian Academy in 1948, in the Language, Literature and Arts Section, chaired by Mihail Sadoveanu.

**Jean Al. Steriadi** is one of the most important representatives of Romanian impressionism and post-impressionism. The artist was an important man of culture, director of the Kalinderu Museum, director of the Aman Museum, president of the Artistic Youth Society. Steriadi is *Steriadi* the initiator of black and white salons in graphics.

His painting style is a tribute to impressionism, characterized by delicate luminosity. In 1948 **Steriadi** obtained the recognition of the Romanian Academy, receiving the C. Hamangiu Grand Prize.





*Lucian Grigorescu*

In 1948, **Lucian Grigorescu** (1894-1965), a Romanian post-impressionist painter, was elected a corresponding member. A painter of nature and man, the artist developed the ideals that have become classics of impressionism, with echoes of Paul Cezanne's work. In his works, **Lucian Grigorescu** respects reality, but applies a strong personal sensitivity.

**Camil Resu** (1880-1962), **Iosif Iser** (1881-1958) and **Corneliu Medrea** (1888-1964) were elected in 1955, along with the sculptors **Constantin Baraschi** (1902-1966) and **Boris Caragea** (1906-1982).

**Camil Resu**, the rector of the Higher School of Arts in Bucharest, became a full member of the Romanian Academy in 1955. He was a prominent figure in Romanian art, leaving behind a work that preserved the values of tradition through his compositions as well as through portraits of great psychological depth. His entire work is represented by drawing and color (from studies of the human body to objects and landscapes). The Academy's collection contains paintings by **Camil Resu** from the collection of Acad. Victor Eftimiu.

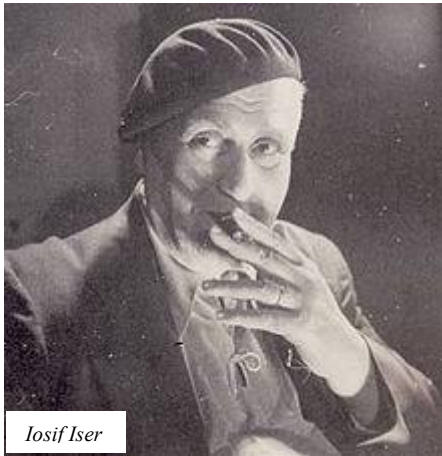


*Camil Resu*



*Turc sezând. ulei pe pânză. 49 x 61 cm*

**Iosif Iser** (full member) is a Romanian painter and graphic artist of Jewish origin, Initially inspired by the expressionist movement (thick lines and sharp angles), he cultivated robust forms, full ones, his art being characterized by the simplicity of reality. The artist approached Dobrogean themes, portraits of Tatars, scenes of life, ballerinas and harlequins. He was also a professor of sculpture, a full member of the Romanian Academy. **Iser** brought French-inspired expressionism to the Romanian artistic space in the first decades of the 20th century.



*Iosif Iser*

He exhibited alongside **Pallady, Ressu, Petruscu, Tonitza, Medrea, Jalea**, and in 1937 he won the Grand Prix at the International Exhibition in Paris. In 1948 he had an exhibition in New York.



*C. Baraschi*

Critic Petru Comarnescu said of Iser that: "he was authentic and human".

The sculptor **Constantin Baraschi**, elected corresponding member of the Romanian Academy in 1955, remains one of the expressive sculptors, characterized by a correct rendering of the human anatomy. He is the only Romanian sculptor to have written a treatise on sculpture, in 1962.

The artist participated in numerous exhibitions in the country and abroad, being awarded the Romanian Academy Prize for sculpture (1938), the Silver Medal for the sculpture Saint George (1940), and the Gold Medal at the International Exhibition in Paris (1937).

The work of **Boris Caragea**, a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, contains three types of approaches: religious subjects, folkloric subjects and portraits.

Many artists were elected posthumously: in 1948, the year of the Romanian Academy's reorganization: **Ion Andreescu** (1850-1882) and **Ștefan Luchian** (1868-1916), **Constantin Brâncuși** (1876-1957)



*Boris Caragea*

in 1990, **Theodor Aman** (1831-1891) in 1991, **Theodor Pallady** (1871-1956) and **Dimitrie Paciurea** (1873-1932) in 2012.

**Ion Andreescu** is the painter about whom the French art critic Jacques Lassaigue stated that "among Romanian painters, there is certainly no personality more attractive than Andreescu and no destiny more meaningful than his. He, in fact, definitively oriented Romanian art."



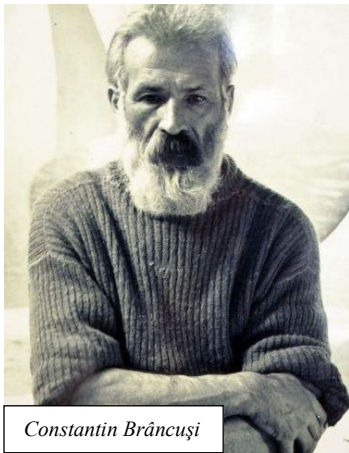
*Ion Andreescu*



Along with **Theodor Aman** he was one of the founders of the Romanian modern school of painting.



**Ștefan Luchian**, known as the flower painter, and as a follower of **Nicolae Grigorescu**, with an original artistic personality, asserting itself through a generous painting, having a chromatic palette full of light, with an original plastic language, manages to convey a unique humanist message to the viewer. The importance of **Ștefan Luchian** lies in the way he transposed the effects of light, present in every stroke of color. He contradicted the academic art of his time, which was reluctant to any innovation and managed to reproduce the reality of the workers and the miserable conditions of the slums. His power to move from one technique to another, to change the pictorial layer, to experiment with graphics, is surprising.



Constantin Brâncuși

Constantin Brâncuși is the Romanian sculptor with outstanding contributions to the renewal of the language and plastic vision in contemporary sculpture. The Constantin Brâncuși elegance of form, the choice of material, the simplicity of Romanian folk art combined with the refinement of the Parisian avant-garde trace the main lines of the characteristics of the sculptor's work. His work has profoundly influenced the modern concept of form in sculpture and in drawing or painting.

The Romanian Academy owns only one work by Constantin Brâncuși, donated by Acad. G. Oprescu in 1962: *Child's Head*.



**Theodor Aman** is the first modern artist in the history of Romanian art, the founder of the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest (along with **Gheorghe Tătărescu**). Painter, graphic artist and pedagogue, **Theodor Aman** was influenced by the masters of the Italian Renaissance. His studio

in the house built in 1869, in Pompeian style, was a special place about which Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș said “His studio (...) was the only artistic center where the Bucharest elite of the time gathered”.<sup>1</sup>

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu emphasizes in the article „Modernitatea lui Aman” that "Analyzing his work, one notices the presence of three constants, the artist oscillating, in terms of theme and treatment, between romanticism, academicism and impressionism, without however a strict demarcation between them and no chronological or eventual conditioning of their appearance and use."<sup>2</sup>

**Theodor Pallady** remains one of the most prestigious modern artists with a complex training, with the rigor of the German school and the symbolism promoted by Moreau, with the experiments within the Art Nouveau and Fauvism currents. Still life represents the artist's desire to render universal reality.

**Dimitrie Paciurea** is "unquestionably, alongside Constantin Brâncuși, the most prominent representative of national sculpture in the first half of the 20th century."<sup>3</sup>



Portraits and monuments – representatives of new forms created by the artist through drawing and sculpture – **Paciurea's** chimeras have dominated the artist's work since 1920.

"**Dimitrie Paciurea** made his profession a priesthood, sometimes practicing a difficult art, pursuing certain spiritual goals difficult for the vast majority of critics or spectators. His sculptures and drawings prove his taste and inclination for oneirism, mystery, suggestion, his fabulous creatures being the means of expression of an immense loneliness, disillusionment, pain and even death. The image we have today of **Dimitrie Paciurea**, the idea we have about the connection between his work and his personality, was largely influenced by the testimonies left by people who knew him, friends or admirers, who voluntarily emphasized his introverted side."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://merg.in/bucuresti/descopera-sectorul-1/muzeul-theodor-aman-5614.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ionescu, A-S, 2011, p.100

<sup>3</sup> Vlasiu, I. coord), 2012, *Dicționarul sculptorilor din România*, lit. H-Z, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2012 p.188

<sup>4</sup> Vlasiu, I(coord), 2012, *Dicționarul sculptorilor din România*, lit. H-Z, vol. II, Editura ACADEMIEI ROMÂNE București, 2012 p. 188

In 1963, the sculptor **Ion Jalea** (1887 – 1983) was appointed full member (corresponding member since 1946) and **Alexandru Ciucurencu** (1903 – 1977) was elected corresponding member.



*Nud, bronz, 25x12x10 cm*



*Tărănci cu cobilită*

In 1992, the sculptor **Ion Irimescu** (1903 – 2005) – professor in Iași, Cluj and Bucharest, considered to be the most important Romanian sculptor of the last half century, was elected an honorary member of the Romanian Academy. The diversity of his themes and works represents a tribute to his predecessors. From compositions with characters, portraits, nudes to sculptures with historical themes, music or maternity, Ion Irimescu's work is spectacular.

The Romanian Academy's heritage also includes works by contemporary painters and sculptors who, after 1990, were elected as full, corresponding and honorary members for their artistic activity: **Corneliu Baba** (1906-1997) and **Ion Alin Gheorghiu** (1929-2001), **Ion Sălișteanu** (1929-2011) and **Viorel Mărginean** (1933-), **Gheza Vida** (1913-1980), **Ovidiu Maitec** (1925-2007), **Sorin Dumitrescu** (1946-), **Mircia Dumitrescu** (1941-), **Eugen Mihăescu** (1937-).



*Corneliu Baba Autoportret*

The painter **Corneliu Baba** is a representative of realism in painting, a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy (1963) and then a full member of the Romanian Academy (1990). He was a corresponding member of the Berlin Academy of Arts (1964); a member of the Tommas Campanella Academy in Rome (1970) and an honorary member of the USSR Academy of Arts (1968).

His work is characterized by the rendering of the vital force of human beings. The artist's style is reminiscent of the rigors of the Renaissance era. Having a rich chromatic palette in which dark areas are in dialogue with light areas, the image is created through compositions in which forms are placed in stable geometric structures, all in an overall balance.

**Ion Alin Gheorghiu** was a painter and sculptor, a representative of the 20th century, a full member (1999) of the Romanian Academy.

Acad. Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, vice-president of the Romanian Academy, said about the painter in 1993 when he was elected corresponding member of the Arts, Architecture and Audiovisual Section of the Romanian Academy: "A student of Camil Ressu at the Academy of Art in Bucharest, the artist debuted very young, exhibiting at national and republican salons since the mid-1950s. His presence, the distinct sound of color and the ease of the architecture of forms were noted from the very beginning. (...) The concern (defining for his art) to proclaim the unity of natural forms led Ion Gheorghiu towards sculpture: the volumes acquire a status of their own, they are not just spatial projections of pictorial forms. As in painting, these structures proclaim the unity of visible forms".<sup>5</sup>

From figurative to non-figurative, the artist cannot be classified in any current, his vast work representing another universe with its own laws. The vegetal motif becomes a convention, a way of representing the visible. His artistic creation has been appreciated, obtaining numerous national and international awards, medals and distinctions.

---

<sup>5</sup> Analele Academiei Române, Anul 127 (1993), Seria a V-a, Volumul IV, Editura Academiei Române, pag. 208



*Ion Alin Gheorghiu. Flori*

After, in 1972, he was awarded the "Ion Andreescu" prize of the Romanian Academy, in 2006, **Ion Sălișteanu** was elected corresponding member of the science and culture forum.

The artist was concerned with the relationship between social space and art, with the order of forms in nature.

The painter **Viorel Mărginean** was elected an honorary member of the Romanian Academy in 2006. He is also a member of the Academies of Rome and Paris. He held important positions within: the Union of Fine Artists (1978 – 1989), director of the National Museum of Art of Romania (1993 – 1995) and minister of culture (1995 – 1996).



*Viorel Mărgineanu. În Deltă*

**Gheza Vida** is a representative of modern sculpture, a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy. His work falls between the telluric and the mythological (with the archaic elements of the Maramureș folklore). The works of **Gheza Vida** - a prominent personality of Romanian art, recognized in Europe - are present in several museums and private collections. Among these, we mention those with legendary characters of the forest ("The Man of the Night", "The Man of the Waters"), those inspired by the folklore of boy workers ("The Mine Boy", "The

Mine Valve", "Varvara") or those in which peasant faces are highlighted, sculptures inspired by folk traditions ("Dans oșenesc").

**Ovidiu Maitec** was a sculptor and university professor, elected a full member of the Romanian Academy (1999), considered by the International Herald Tribune "the most important Romanian sculptor after Brâncuși".<sup>6</sup>

"Like his brilliant predecessor Brâncuși, of whom **Ovidiu Maitec** is the strongest spiritual successor, he rediscovers this double inspiration, terrestrial and aerial, through which the man of the 20th century resumes the archaic symbolism that animates the great cosmogonic myths... **Maitec's** mythical earth soars, broken, in flight, its wings are bones and geometric fractures; it soars, infinitely fragile, in its obstinate density, piled up and wounded, but still beyond touchings."<sup>7</sup>

**Eugen Mihăescu** – painter, graphic artist and politician was elected honorary member of the Romanian Academy in 1993. The recommendation was made by prof. dr. Doc. Mihnea Gheorghiu, vice-president of the Arts, Architecture and Audiovisual Section and by Acad. Zoe Dumitrescu-Bușulenga, vice-president of the Romanian Academy.<sup>8</sup>

"For the recognized value of his talent, as "one of the most prominent heirs of modern plastic sensibility that found an eloquent reflection in the stylistics of contemporary satirical illustration" – as the American art critic Steven Heller characterized him in his book *Two Decades of Satiric Art*, also reprinted by the Romanian edition of the American magazine – Sinteza – we consider that Eugen Mihăescu fits the criteria for candidacies of Romanian artists abroad for the quality of honorary members of the Romanian Academy."<sup>9</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

The art collection of the Romanian Academy includes works of art of great importance for the history of Romanian art, which cannot go unnoticed by researchers, experts in the field, and by those who wish to know the artistic and cultural heritage of the Romanian Academy.

The artists whose works are part of the heritage of the Romanian Academy are remarkable personalities who have established themselves as benchmarks of excellence, the value of their contributions to the social and cultural life of the country, being an example. They brought in their works ancient values and were concerned with preserving traditions, presenting the world of the village and the Romanian peasant, providing the new and the original into their creations.

---

<sup>6</sup> Vlasiu, I(coord), 2012, *Dicționarul sculptorilor din România*, lit. H-Z, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2012 p. 106

<sup>7</sup> Eliade, M, 1984, *Maitec sau aripile rănite ale pământului*, Revista „Secolul 20”, nr. 11-12 din 1984, p.7-12

<sup>8</sup> Analele Academiei Române, Anul 127 (1993), Seria a V-a, Volumul IV, Editura Academiei Române, p. 294

<sup>9</sup> Analele Academiei Române, Anul 127 (1993), Seria a V-a, Volumul IV, Editura Academiei Române, p. 256

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. *Academia Română*, Legi, statute, regulamente, 1940. Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională,
2. *Analele Academiei Române*, anul 127, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională,
3. Berindei, D, 1975, „Academia Română în anii 1879-1915”, în *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, 5, 1975, p. 247-276. Ed. Academiei Române
4. Berindei, Dan, 2006, „*Istoria Academiei Române 1866-2006. 140 de ani de existență*”, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2006.
5. Berindei, D, 2016, *Istoria Academiei Române (1866-2016)*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2016.
6. Dobre Al., 1984, „V. A. Urechia și începuturile Academiei Române,” în Memoriile Secției de Științe Istorice, seria IV, tom IX (1984) Ed. Academiei Române
7. Drăguț, V, 1982, *Arta românească*, 1, București, 1982. Ed. Meridiane
8. Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, Z, 1993, *Ștefan Luchian*, București. Ed. Arta grafică
9. Eliade, M, 1984, „Maitec sau aripile rănite ale pământului”, *Revista “Secolul 20”*, nr. 11-12 din 1984, p.7-12
10. Enescu, Th., 2000, *Scrieri despre artă. Ștefan Luchian și spiritual modern în pictura românească*, București, 2000. Ed. Meridiane
11. Grigorescu, D, 1993, *Brâncuși și secolul său*, București, 1993. Ed. Artemis
12. Grigorescu, 2003, *Dicționarul avangardelor*, București, 2003. Editura Enciclopedică,
13. Haiduc, I. & Otiman, Ion Păun, 2012-2014 *Tezaurul Academiei Române*, Editura Academiei Române, vol. I-V, București, 2012-2014.
14. Ionescu, A-S(coord), 1991, *Centenar Theodor Aman 1991*, București, 1991. Ed. Venus
15. Ionescu, A-S, 2011, *Modernitatea lui Aman* în *Studii și Cercet. Ist. Art., Artă Plastică*, serie nouă, tom 1 (45), p. 100, Ed. Academiei Române, București, 2011
16. Macovei, C(coord), 2017, *Academia Română 1866-2016. 150 de ani în serviciul națiunii române*, ed. II, București, 2017.
17. Popescu, M, 1961, *Omagiu lui George Oprescu cu prilejul împlinirii a 80 de ani* (redactor responsabil), Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române,
18. Ștefănescu Șt.(coord), 1978, *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești*, București, 1978. Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică
19. Vlasiu, I(coord), 2012, *Dicționarul sculptorilor din România*, lit. H-Z, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, București,
20. <https://merg.in/bucuresti/descopera-sectorul-1/muzeul-theodor-aman-5614.html.4>
21. [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ion\\_Andrescu](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ion_Andrescu)