

# FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FEMALE ELITE IN OLTENIA (THE END OF THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY, THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY)

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.23740/TID220224>

## ABSTRACT

Social life and fashion have not been the woman's only concerns at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their contribution to modern society changes, by taking on new duties and liabilities will have a specific means of expression and for a better understanding of the activities they carried out it requires an overview, even a brief one over a few Oltenian women from the above-mentioned period. Seen only as a wife and mother, the woman makes her way into society being concerned with her own education, she takes part in financing arts and not only, and she engages in harnessing traditional clothing and crafts.

Keywords: women, femininity, empowerment, philanthropy

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Cite this article as: Ghionea, G. (2022). From the Activities of the Female Elite in Oltenia (The End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) *Territorial Identity and Development*, 7(2), 75-86. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.23740/TID220224>

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## INTRODUCTION

*"I was brought up by women and amongst women. The best in me is due to women... That is why I don't so easily indulge in some feminist claims today... I believe the woman's place is neither in the voting room, nor in political meetings... Her purpose is to sweeten the harshness of the everyday life and to contribute to the reconciliation of the poor mortals. So judging, all my admiration and respect for the women who sacrifice themselves for the mankind, but very little sympathy for those who industrialise charity, patriotism, faith... The fact is that there are not many of this calibre and, as somebody originating from Oltenia, I am proud to discover that such are rarely found in this region"* (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, p. 284).

Thus began, in 1937, M. Theodorian-Carada the study dedicated to several women from Craiova who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women about whom the author, at that time, said that "it is advisable to remember them more and more often" (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, pp. 284-285). Starting from Carada's idea, we decided, without having the pretence of completeness, to look for some of the activities to which the ladies belonging to the elite of Oltenia were dedicated, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following exactly the notes captured in specialised magazines (*Arhivele Olteniei* [Oltenia Archives], Old Series; *Muzeul Olteniei Craiova. Oltenia. Studii și comunicări. Arheologie-Istorie* [Oltenia Museum of Craiova. Oltenia.

Studies and Communications. Archaeology and History]; *Oltenia. Studii. Documente. Cercetări* [Oltenia. Studies. Documents. Research]; *Mozaicul* [The Mosaic], New Series; *Democratia* [Democracy]; in memoirs as well (Olga Gigurtu, *Amintiri și icoane din trecut* [Memories and Icons from the Past]). From the studied materials, we have captured their efforts to get out of the private sphere and to contribute to the changes of modern society, by assuming new duties and responsibilities, by financing the arts, supporting education, promoting folk costumes and traditional crafts.

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more and more “ladies of the elite” in Craiova, and not only, have assumed extra-family social roles, shaping a positive image of them, at a time when “the preparation for life of the future mothers was a requirement of the entire society”, and their education was more important “even than the education of men”. The woman was considered “almost everything in the family” (Romanescu, 1902, p. 138), and if she wanted to “... become involved in this aspect, she is to do so in the loss of her duties of mother and housewife” (P.C., 1908, pp. 6-7).

Whether she is perceived superficially, concerned only with herself and with the latest trends in fashion or as a hardworking person, who bears the brunt of work, for most of the studied period, the woman carries out her activity around the family as daughter, wife and mother, and the presence in the public space was the result of activities carried out within the circle of the socialising activities (balls, festivities, inaugurations) and works of charity, because they have shown a lot of sensitivity.

Not once does the local press mention the donations made by women, but also their joint effort, regardless of their social position. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Craiova, the economic centre of Oltenia, with a population of over 30,000 inhabitants, was positioning between the cities with a significant craft-industrial production and with a large volume of commercial business (Avram et al., 1999, p. 227). Although a statistic record from 1904 registered the existence of 25 factories and large workshops, the detachment of the inhabitants from agriculture was not complete, large areas in the city being used for vegetables, grains, fruit growing and viticulture.

In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the architectural heritage of the locality included 25 Orthodox churches, one Catholic, one Protestant, three Israelite temples, public institutions, hotels, barracks, shops, small industrial units and over 7,000 private dwellings (Deaconu & Gherghe, 2011, p. 171). In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the foundations of the famous central architectural area of Craiova were laid, an area where they built, among others: Carol I High School, built between 1893-1895; Jean Mihail Palace, built between 1900-1907; Romanescu House, modernised construction in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to the plans of the architect I. D. Berindei; Gogu Vorvoreanu Palace, built between 1900-1910; The Palace of Justice, built between 1894-1912; The Prefecture Palace; The Bank of Commerce (1912-1916); Minerva Hotel, made in oriental style; The Post Office Palace; C. D. Popovici Girls Boarding-school (1906); the headquarters of the National Bank of Moldova’s branch (1881), etc. (Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Dolj).

Craiova, “the residence of the richest land owners in the country had the advantage of sheltering in its bosom the rich and the millionaires, much more numerous than in the rest of the country” (Deaconu & Gherghe, 2011, p. 175), and the economic force of this elite group, the education and the desire to equal the West are factors that explain the fast emergence pace of new buildings, true monumental constructions, entered into the national architectural heritage. The same competition could be observed in terms of education and culture, two of the most dynamic segments of Craiova society in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lovers of music, literature,

theatre, Alexandru and Aristia Aman, Elefterie Cornetti, Nicolae Romanescu, Charles Laugier, Ion N. Mihail, Gheorghe Chițu, Petre Chițu, to list only a few who proved generous donors.

Around or within this *elite group*, there were formed authentic ladies, who distinguished themselves by their philanthropic actions, and, on the activity of some of them, we stopped in the pages that follow.

## METHODOLOGY

In the historiography of Oltenia, we have not identified, until now, a local publication intended exclusively for women and from which we can identify the way in which the woman was perceived during the studied period, as well as her efforts to get out of the private sphere and to contribute to the changes of the modern society. An image of the philanthropic actions carried out by the ladies of the Oltenian elite can be drawn from the specialised magazines, listed above.

The starting point for this study and to present some activities whereby ladies from Oltenia dedicated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the late 20<sup>th</sup> was the information itself published by M. Theodorian-Carada,<sup>1</sup> in 1937, in the study *Câteva craiovence din secolul XIX-lea [Few Craiova Women Representatives from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century]*. Consistent with author's urging to recall women as often as we can, whose fate sweetened the harshness of the daily life and played a part in coming to terms with mortals, we have tried without claiming completeness to look for various sources to put together the profile of a few well-known ladies from Oltenia.

In order to draw up the present material, it was necessary to go through some edited sources that tangentially approached aspects of women's activity, for the analysed period. This study is intended to be a new step, meaning continuing and completing the research on this topic, the material representing a new attempt to present the world of the female elite from Oltenia, an attempt that we have repeated on different occasions in recent years, through studies and articles published in different specialised journals.<sup>2</sup>

Using the qualitative approach (the content analysis), we have been looking to select the most important information from edited sources (papers in scientific journals, memoirs, public accounts) and, where possible, we inserted online photos. Within this study there is no hierarchy based on the documentary value of the examined sources; even more in the case of the period in question, the woman and her activities are a crossflow topic.

<sup>1</sup> Nephew of the politician and economist Eugeniu Carada, Mariu(s) Theodorian Carada (1869-1949) stood out in various fields of activity. He was a lawyer, writer, historian, expert in ecclesiastical law, enjoying notoriety and prestige at that time. He also established himself as a prodigious journalist. Throughout his life he collaborated with dozens of newspapers and magazines: „*Arhivele Olteniei*” [Oltenia Archives], Old Series; „*Convorbiri Literare*” [Literary Conversations]; „*La Croix*” [The Cross]; „*L'eclair*” [Lightning]; „*Dreptul*” [The Law].

<sup>2</sup> Ghionea, 2021, 2022a, 2022b.

## THE FEMALE FIGURE BETWEEN TRADITION AND THE LIMELIGHT

We begin our short presentation with Alexandrina Haralamb (Figure 1), born Magheru, about whom M. Theodorian-Carada tells us that “she did not give speeches, did not organise money collecting, did not preside over societies and committees; but, from her purse, and only from her own, she gave prizes to students, helped the reading societies of the Romanian territories, endowed poor girls, clothed orphaned children and helped the poor widows” (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, pp. 285-286). The studied sources inform us that the daughter of General Gheorghe Magheru, during the revolution of 1848, embroidered scarves and tricolour cockades, which she offered to some of the revolutionaries and sewed the tricolour flag that she offered to the provisional government in Craiova (Pălănceanu, 1976, p. 397). She followed her father into exile for eight years and throughout the exile she was seen wearing mourning clothes, worn “for the unhappiness of the country” (Pălănceanu, 1976, p. 401). Returning to the country, in late 1857, she married the great boyar from Craiova Dimitrie Haralamb, dedicating herself to philanthropic acts. She deserved abundantly the appreciation of her contemporaries, who thought of her as being a “wife, mother and model of virtue and devoted citizen” (Pălănceanu, 1976, p. 401).



Figure 1: Alexandrina Haralamb

Source: MNIR Photo Library, the 19<sup>th</sup> century; artist: Julius Udvardy

In beautifully written words we are presented, also by Carada, with the portray of both Constanța Argetoianu,<sup>3</sup> who, convinced that a woman’s mission is primarily that of becoming a mother, translated from French a useful book for the young mother (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, p. 286), and Elena Cornetti, in whose house there was “a club, a real hotbed of culture” (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, p. 289).

<sup>3</sup> In the manor from Breasta, Dolj, Constanța Argetoianu had a beautiful library. She was reading a lot, and “she made a duty from being concerned with the faith of the villagers living on her estates. She would have liked to be guided by dedicated priests. Who would raise their spirits and civilise them” (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, p. 287).

Originally from the former Romanați County, Elena Cornetti (Figure 2), born Zissu/Zissy, the daughter of the boyar Marcu Zissu Olaru, of Greek origin, is part of the gallery of outstanding female figures of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, being perhaps the most famous promoter of the culture in the south of the country. Mrs. Elena distinguished herself through numerous acts of charity. During the years of the War of Independence, she made donations and watched over the “bed of the wounded”, being awarded the *Elizabeth Commemorative Cross*, for participating “through active service in the relief of sufferings and the search for the wounded and sick Romanian soldiers” (Deaconu & Gherghe, 2000, p. 237, p. 316).

“Francophile to the extreme; she started crying if one spoke anything against the morals, or new theories of theirs (the French)! She had been raised in one of the best boarding schools in Paris...” (Gigurtu, 2015, pp. 171-172), being familiar to everything related to the French literature, theatre, or art.

Every year, Cornetti spouses spent a few months in Paris, and, on their journeys, they met Charles Camille Saint-Saens, “composer, pianist and conductor”, an energetic “fighter to encourage the formation and consolidation of the French musical school” (Radu, 2009, p. 115). From the friendship with Charles Camille Saint-Saens, appeared the idea of a school of vocal and instrumental music in Craiova, so that, together with her husband, Elefterie Cornetti, Mrs. Elena laid the foundations of one of the first music schools in Romania, an institution where numerous artists were discovered and trained over time. The music school was inaugurated on September 1, 1911, in the houses of the family, on 24 Kogălniceanu Street, with six classes and “some hearty teachers”, and over time it expanded its scope of activity, including: “fine arts, theatre, choreography, photography and cinematography” (Radu, 2013, p. 181). The teaching staff of the school brought together well-known and appreciated names in the musical world of the time, such as G. Fotino, Maria Giuriade and I. Bobescu (Radu & Roșianu, 2009, p. 10). The institution still functions in Craiova nowadays.



Figure 2: Elena Cornetti

Source: My Oltenia, 2017

Often, in the company of Mrs. Cornetti, it was seen the *only descendant of Ghiță Opran*,<sup>4</sup> from his son Peter, Miss Eliza Opran (Figure 3), whom M. Theodorian-Carada presents to us as follows: “a beautiful dark-skinned girl, with dishevelled hair, eyes of fire, and ivory teeth. Very intelligent, cultured and full of talent, she was declaiming beautifully, so if she had devoted herself to the dramatic art, she would have become a great tragedian” (Theodorian-Carada, 1937, pp. 286-287).

Although she was born into a wealthy family, Eliza “did not have a happy childhood, because her father was a severe man” (Milcu & Stancu, 2013, p. 243). Her education was the concern of her mother, Fima Opran, who spent her entire fortune to provide her with a fine up-bringing, as well as to finance her travels through France and Italy (Cioarec, 2018, p. 145).

On Eliza we found out that she built fountains and houses for the poor, financially helped many needy families, and gave four acres of land to the school in Ișalnița, building for this also a fountain and designing bathrooms for children, near the institution. In 1899, Mrs. Eliza Opran, who owned a nursery on the estate of Ișalnița, donated to the city of Craiova about 1,000 seedlings to be planted in the streets of Craiova (Deaconu & Gherghe, 2011, p. 291). Around 1900, Nicolae Iorga, passing by the village of Ișalnița, Dolj County, wrote about Eliza the following: “in the boyar’s house, here on the bottom, in the middle of the old dense garden, lives a woman who has become completely alienated from the world, but knows how to live for the poor and left behind on the land that rules” (Iorga, 1972, p. 77).

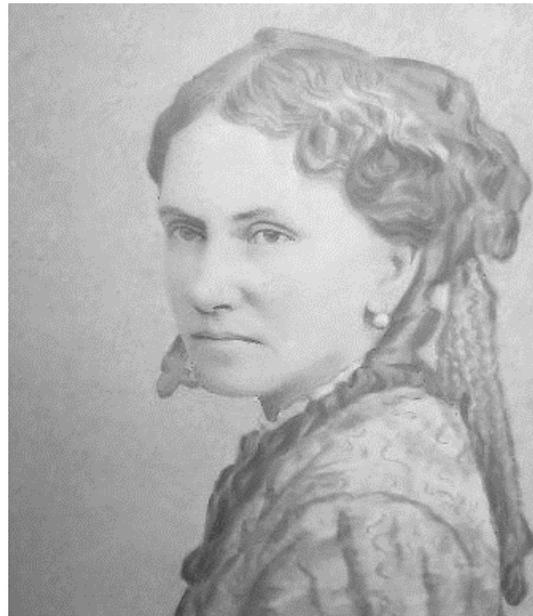


Figure 3: Eliza Opran

Source: Pompiliu, 2021

Being the only heiress of an impressive fortune, and because she did not have any successors, Eliza Opran donated, partially, her estates from Cernele, Solomonești and Ișalnița to the state (Milcu & Stancu, 2013, p. 252).

<sup>4</sup> Ghiță Opran, merchant in Craiova, landlord and banker, he owned several estates in many localities from Wallachia, among which Botoșești-Paia, Ișalnița from Mehedinți County, and Ișalnița Dolj County (Suru, 2004, p. 67).

Individually or through committees, the ladies of the elite of Oltenia were always busy raising funds for building student dormitories, school buildings and their endowment, for the material support of pupils and students, and the establishment of museums. The most important actions in the programme of these committees, however, were the preservation of the national art and the promotion of the domestic industry. In this case, we stopped at *the National League of Romanian Women in Craiova*, which in 1922 was organising, in the new premises of the Bank of Commerce, under the patronage of Mrs. Eugenia Neamțu, a “Romanian Art Exhibition” (Fortunato, 1922, pp. 273-274), with the purpose of promoting the domestic industry. The range of objects that could be seen and purchased was varied and included “carpets, tapestries, Turkish rugs, bed covers, apron-like skirts, Romanian peasant blouses, shirts, skirts, cloths of all kinds, from the fine floss silk to the rough towel-like fabrics (Fortunato, 1922, pp. 273-274).

In the same register, it is included the action of the *National League of Women in Gorj*, a company founded in 1927 and whose activity began with an exhibition of embroidery, seams, fabrics made in its own workshops led by Olimpia Demetrescu, under the direct supervision of Mrs. Arethia G. Tătărescu (Fortunato, 1927, p. 360). Fascinated by the peasant traditional costume, the folklore, as well as by the customs of Gorj area, Mrs. Tătărescu (Figure 4) was involved in the activity of various local organisations, soon becoming the president of *the National League of Romanian Women in Gorj*,<sup>5</sup> of the “Red Cross” National Society, Gorj branch, as well as of the *Society of Orthodox Women*, from the same county (Fortunato, 1927, p. 360; The National Women League, Gorj department, 1929, pp. 3-4; Nichifor, 2010, p. 110).



Figure 4: Arethia Tătărescu

Source: Oanță, 2022

<sup>5</sup> *The National League of Romanian Women in Gorj* gathers women from Târgu-Jiu and the county, “all having the same faith... that no nation in the world has so much wealth in traditions, in songs, in dances and traditional costumes, as our nation has”; in this context, the most important points in the society’s programme referred to “the preservation of the national art and the development of the domestic industry”, the concern for historical monuments and the involvement of women in productive activities (Liga Națională a femeilor, secția Gorj [The National Women League, Gorj department], 1929, pp. 3-4).

Under the direct supervision of Mrs. Tătărescu or “The Great Lady of Gorj”, as Dorina Nichifor calls her, the National League of Romanian Women in Gorj took several valuable initiatives, among which we mention the following: setting up a workshop, which, by perfecting the work models, with the increase in revenues, it turned into *a real institute of art, whose products were appreciated and admired in the whole country* (The National Women League, Gorj department, 1929, pp. 3-4); supporting the construction of a new place for *the Museum of Ethnography and History in Gorj* (Nichifor, 2010, pp. 113-114); supporting the conservation and care of historical monuments in Gorj County; In Vladimir commune, Tudor Vladimirescu’s birthplace, the house was completely renovated, organising a museum and a library, which contained books, documents, stamps, engravings, photographs and contemporary objects belonging either to Tudor, or his soldiers (Nichifor, 2010, p. 118); she built the “House of the Women from Gorj”, with the aim of contributing to the empowerment of women in the county, and not only (The National Women League, Gorj department, 1929, p. 7).

The National League of the Romanian Women from Gorj had other initiatives, many of them oriented towards the preservation and care of the historical monuments in the county. An example is the enclosure of the Roman castrum from Bumbesti-Jiu, which was, in the interwar period, in an advanced state of degradation. The acquisition of the land, on which the camp was located, from the citizens of the area and the start of the archaeological excavations were praised by Prof. Em. Mihăileanu, on September 13, 1936, on the occasion of awarding the title of “Honorary Citizen of the City”, to Mrs. Arethia Tătărescu (Cârlugea & Deju, 2007, p. 117). Together with the distinguished archaeologist C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, Mrs. Tătărescu supported the archaeological campaigns in Baia de Fier, Polovragi, Sohodol, Vaideeni, Vârț, and Stănești (Cârlugea & Deju, 2007, p. 109).

The name of the League and of Arethia Tătărescu is also linked to the monument of Ecaterina Teodoroiu, erected in 1935, as well as to the donation made to the city of Târgu Jiu of the “Gratitude Column” and the “Stone Portal”, in 1937, monuments erected for the glorification of the memory of the Heroes of Gorj (Păunoiu, 2020, p. 1060).

In the neighbouring county, Mehedinți, resided “Dame”, Constanța D. Sârbulescu, from Baia de Aramă, who founded, besides *Baia de Aramă Primary School for Girls*, a canteen, a school pharmacy, and a library. Constructed in 1892, with its own building erected at the expense of I. A. Protopopescu, from Strehaia, *Baia de Aramă Primary School for Girls* registered, in its debut year, 67 students. At the end of the interwar period, it merged with *the Primary School for Boys*, from the locality, turning into a mixed primary school (Roman & Rățoi, 2021, p. 486).

Constanța D. Sârbulescu gave importance to the handiwork in the training of girls; she founded a society called “Domestic Industry” and the Red Cross branch, also contributing to the erection of a weaving school in the locality (Boteanu, 2011, pp. 122-125; Rățoi, 2014, p. 19).

Orienting our research towards another notable activity of the ladies from Oltenia, we find interesting information about *The University Assistance of Dolj*, founded by a “number of ladies from Craiova”, in order to enable for the students from Dolj County “a more bearable material life in Bucharest”. The Committee – whose composition included Mrs. El. Antonescu (president), together with Gabrielle Laugier, Silvia G. Pencioiu (cashier), Eugenia Neamțu, as well as Mrs. Rusănescu and Constanța Niculescu – organised celebrations and festivities “for the establishment of a student hostel in Bucharest” (Fortunato, 1924, p. 263, 1926, p. 65), dormitory inaugurated in 1924.

The writers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proved to be talented, intelligent and *stereotypes-breakers*. A complex personality of the Romanian literature and philosophy, Lucilla Chițu was born on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1873, in Craiova. Her father, lawyer Petre Chițu, was the brother of Gheorghe Chițu, a former minister and mayor of Craiova. As a teenager, Lucilla played the piano, made literary compositions, and wrote lyrics. In the autumn of 1891, she enrolled at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in Bucharest, specialising in philosophy, and graduated her Bachelor's studies with the distinction "Magna cum laude", at the age of 21. Her undergraduate speech thesis entitled *The Problem of the Relations between Philosophy and Science. The Critical Analysis of the Solutions Given by Kant, Comte and Spencer*, was delivered before a commission that included the following: Titu Maiorescu – president and members: C. Dimitrescu-Iași, I. Crăciunescu, Gr. Tocilescu and N. Quintescu (Michiduță, 2013, p. 20). Lucilla Chițu's name is present in the prestigious publications of the time: "L'anée poétique" [The Poetic Year], "Albina" [The Bee], "La petite Roumanie" [Little Romania], "Renaissance latine" [The Latin Renaissance]. She publishes a small history of the Romanian literature in French and an introduction to *La Veillée* (approx., *The Wake*), a collection of 12 Romanian fairy tales signed by Jules Brun, her husband (Michiduță, 2013, p. 20). Her literary activity earned her awards and distinctions. Thus, she was awarded at the *Jeux floréal* poetry contest, in southern France, and was appointed *officier d'Académie* by the French government (1903).

Lucilla Chițu's presentation gives us the opportunity to bring back to the reader's attention some information about *our great poet*, Elena Farago (Figure 5). In September 1921, Mrs. Elena Farago became director of the "Aman Museum and Library" in Craiova, a foundation that she would lead for 30 years. Elena Farago was from Bârlad. She was born on March 29, 1878, the second of the seven children of Francis and Anastasia Paximade, née Thomaide, of Greek descent. She attended the first six primary grades at the Drouhet and Varlaam Board-schools, then at the State School in Bârlad, ceasing her studies after the death of her mother. At the age of only 17, she was orphaned and moved to Brăila, together with her younger brother, Gheorghe, to an uncle on her mother's side.



Figure 5: Elena Farago

Source: Dolj County Library "Alexandru și Aristia Aman", 2023

She made her debut in 1898 with a reportage, which she signed Fatma, and she published her first poem in 1902, in “România Muncitoare” [Working Romania] newspaper (Sorescu & Stuparu, 2010, p. 11). Married to Francisc Farago, the poetess settles, in the autumn of 1906, in Craiova, where she would remain until the end of her life.

Elena Farago’s name is present in the most important publications of the time: “Convorbiri literare” [Literary Conversations], “Semănătorul” [The Sower], “Ramuri” [Branches], “Viața românească” [Romanian Life], “Cosânzeana” [Cosânzeana], etc. In the medallion dedicated to the poet by C. D. Fortunescu, and published in issue 37-38/1928, of the magazine *Arhivele Olteniei* [Oltenia Archives], there are also mentioned its most important volumes: *Șoapte din umbră* [Whispers in the Shadow] (1908), *Traduceri libere* [Free Translations] (1908), *Din taina vechilor răspântii* [The Secret of the Ancient Crossroads] (1913), *Șoaptele amurgului* [The Whispers of the Dusk] (1920), *Poezii alese* [Finest Poems] (1924), *Nu mi-am plecat genunchii* [I Did Not Bend My Knees] (1926), *Poezii* [Poems] (1937) (Fortunato, 1928, p. 328), etc. Elena Farago dedicated many poems to her children, Mihnea and Ana (Coca), which made the literature for children to be enriched with valuable volumes: *Pentru copii* [For Children] (1912), *Copiii* [To Children] (1913), *Să fim buni* [Let’s be Kind] (1922), *Să nu minți, să nu furi* [Thou Shalt Not Lie, Thou Shalt Not Steal] (1944), *4 găze năzdrăvane* [4 Naughty Bugs] (1944), as well as with the magazine published in 1943, *Prietenul copiilor* [Children’s Friends] (Elena Farago, *Ramuri* [Branches], 1972, p. 17).

Laureate of the Romanian Academy with the “Adamachi” Prize for the volumes *Whispers from the Shadows*, *Free Translations*, *The Whispers of the Twilight* and *From the Purse of Santa Claus*, Mrs. Farago was also awarded the following awards: in 1925, she received the International Prize “Femina” (Fortunato, 1928, p. 328), in 1927 earned her the “Neuschotz” Prize for *The Newspaper of a Cat* (Fortunato, 1927, p. 356), and in 1938 she received the National Prize for Literature” (Fortunato, 1937, p. 173).

On April 21, 1947, The City Hall of Craiova fully recognised her merits in the literary and cultural fields, conferring her the title of honorary citizen of Craiova (Nedelcea, 1995, p. 259). “The children’s friend – said Geo Bogza – dies on January 4, 1954, leaving behind the memory of a noble shadow” (The Chronicle, 1978, p. 8).

## CONCLUSIONS

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, individually or through committees, determined by economic interests or from the desire to get out of anonymity, the women from Oltenia with progressive views, regardless of their origin, all proved to be *good Romanian women who worked for Romanianism* because *the environment and education create mentality and give feelings to people*. Enterprising, ambitious, talented, courageous, breaking stereotypes, the women mentioned in this material had an important social, philanthropic, cultural, and economic mission.

On a still underexploited ground, the history of the women from Oltenia has lately turned to more and more diverse concerns. The main direction of research is the status of the women in the contemporary period, whereas their relations with the family and with the community remained in the background.

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