

# FROM CARMEN SYLVA AND EMPRESS SISSI TO CAROL II. THE HISTORY OF A ROMANIAN NATIONAL COSTUME

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**Abstract.** In 1932, Baroness Ilona Nopcsa wrote a letter to King Carol II of Romania in which she informed him about a Romanian national costume that was in her possession. This traditional dress, which originally belonged to Carmen Sylva, was a gift from King Carol I and the ladies from the Romanian elite. At Vienna International Exhibition, this dress had been a central exhibit in Romania's gallery. The Romanian traditional costume had become a part of Nopcsa's family patrimony thanks to Ilona's uncle, Ferenc Nopcsa, master of the court to Empress Sissi between 1868 and 1894. She had proffered the Romanian dress to the Baron for his services. In exchange for the Romanian costume, Ilona Nopcsa asked the King of Romania for 300 jugars from her former domain located in Aradul Nou and Zădârlac from Arad County which had been expropriated in the 1920s, or from State reserves. This paper will analyse the journey of this Romanian traditional costume, from the middle 19th century until 1932, emphasising on the contexts in which it was presented. The second part of this paper will focus on the social and economic circumstances in which Ilona Nopcsa proposed to return the dress to Romania's king.

**Keywords:** Romanian national costume, Vienna International Exhibition of 1873, agrarian reform of 1921, Ilona Nopcsa, gift.

## Introduction

In March 1932, baroness Ilona Nopcsa addressed King Carol II in a letter, informing him that she owned “a family relic [...] which, from an artistic point of view and Romanian history, has an unspeakably great value”<sup>1</sup>[trad. n.], namely a national costume that originally belonged to Queen Elisabeta of Romania. The traditional dress had been presented at the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873, from where it came into the possession of Empress Elisabeth of Austria, also known as Sissi, who would then offer it as a reward to Ilona's uncle, Ferenc Nopcsa, for his service. The Baroness preserved the traditional costume, hoping to return it to the Royal House of Romania: “My uncle left me this relic [...] and I have kept it ever since with loyalty in its box decorated with the coat of arms of House of Habsburg. [...] The place of such an object is at the Royal Court or in a museum and I would be your happiest subject

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[...] to respectfully offer it to Your Majesty, as the only person who is worthy to possess such a relic.”<sup>2</sup>[trad. n.]

The Baroness' initiative was determined by the procedures specific to the agrarian reform of 1921 concerning her properties in Arad County. The Law for Agrarian Reform in Transylvania, published in *Monitorul Oficial* on 30 July 1921 stipulated the expropriation of areas exceeding 200, 300 and 500 jugars from all domains cultivated by private landowners and located in plain areas, depending on the grade of fulfillment of ownership requests<sup>3</sup>. Ilona Nopcsa owned a domain in Aradul Nou and Zădărlac. In 1922, 842 jugars of arable land were expropriated and 229 jugars were exempt of expropriation in Zădărlac, of which: 200 jugars of arable land, 24 jugars of plum orchard, garden, vineyard and 5 jugars around the manor<sup>4</sup>.

The Baroness' letter determined us to research the history of the traditional dress, starting with the moment it was given to Princess Elisabeta of Wied, and continuing with its presentation at the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873, with an emphasis on the Romanian gallery. Furthermore, we aim to highlight the context in which the Romanian national costume became an exhibit, then a gift for Empress Sissi, and the reasons which determined Ilona Nopcsa to propose the return of this costume to the Royal Family of Romania.

### **From Carol of Hohenzollern to Elisabeta of Wied**

Carol of Hohenzollern married Princess Elisabeta of Wied in the fall of 1869. When the princely couple came to Romania, at the celebration organised in their honour in Bucharest, Elisabeta received a diadem with pearls and diamonds and “a beautifully and artistically embroidered national costume”<sup>5</sup> from the ladies of the elite. This was the first Romanian national costume received by Princess. It goes without saying that this traditional dress was not created by these ladies, they just presented themselves before Carol's wife with this gift. The traditional dress was the creation of the orphans from the Elena Doamna Asylum, administered until 1874 by Ana Davila, a fact confirmed by one of the former directors of the institution, Emilia Grecu: “The first national costume worn by Princess Elisabeta was made by the students of the Asylum.”<sup>6</sup>[trad.n.]

### **From Gift to Exhibit. Vienna International Exhibition of 1873**

Following the thread of Ilona Nopcsa's story, the traditional costume was once again in the spotlight in 1873, when it was exhibited at the International Exhibition in Vienna. Romania had a separate gallery from that of the Ottoman Empire, following the efforts of the Romanian agent in Vienna, Petre P. Carp, in convincing Baron Wilhelm von Schwarz-Senborn and Count Gyula Andrásy<sup>7</sup>. The Romanian section, located in the Eastern pavilion of the Palace of Industry, occupied a space of 655 square metres in gallery no. 15<sup>8</sup> and 1230 square metres in the exhibition park<sup>9</sup>. According to the official plan of the exhibition, the Romanian pavilion followed the Persian gallery, being adjoined on the right side by the spaces occupied by Japan and China, and to the left to one of Austria's many sections<sup>10</sup>.

At the International Exhibition in Vienna, Romania presented objects and products specific to the mining and metallurgical industries, agricultural and forestry

industries, chemical industry, food industry, textile and leather industries, paper industry, transport industry, national domestic industry, wood carvings, educational and military fields. Equally, the exhibition catalogue mentioned objects made of stone, glass and ceramics, crockery, leather goods, trinkets, graphic art and technical drawings, medical and musical instruments, furniture, products representative of previous eras and works of art.<sup>11</sup>

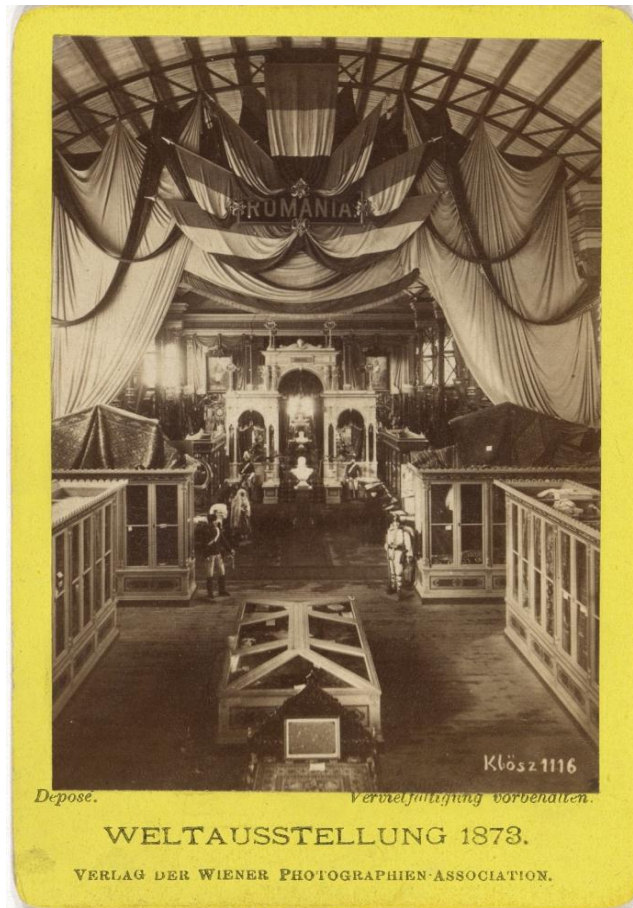


Figure 1. “International Exhibition of 1873: From the Romanian Gallery (No. 1116)” *Wien Museum. Online Sammlung*, <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/342493-weltausstellung-1873-aus-der-rumaenischen-galerie-nr-1116/>, cited 15.02.2022.

The Romanian Gallery at the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873.

The national costumes along with embroideries, tapestries, and other secular or religious clothing were considered products of the national domestic industry and brought together by the XXI Group, at the creation of which 214 individuals and organisations contributed<sup>12</sup>. A collection of traditional costumes was made and sent to

Vienna by the Elena Doamna Asylum, which was under the patronage of Princess Elisabeta of Romania and the administration of the Ephoria of Civil Hospitals<sup>13</sup>.



Figure 2. “International Exhibition of 1873: From the Romanian Gallery (No. 1460)” *Wien Museum. Online Sammlung*, <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/567497-weltausstellung-1873-aus-der-rumaenischen-galerie-nr-1460/>, cited 15.02.2022.

The Elena Doamna Asylum Section, under the patronage of Princess Elisabeth.

The digital archive of the *Wien Museum* has an important collection of period photographs where we can see the pavilions of the states that were invited to participate at the International Exhibition. In some of the photographs showing Romania’s section, a mannequin displaying a Romanian traditional costume can be admired (Figures 2 and 3). It is not known exactly if this costume is the same one described by Ilona Nopcsa, because Elena Doamna Asylum exhibited several traditional dresses. In the letter, the costume is described as follows: “This silk costume, unique in its own way and crafted by hand [...]. The costume [...] was also exhibited at the grandiose World Exhibition in Vienna, in 1873, where it produced colossal success and impression.”<sup>14</sup>[trad. n.]

Only an exhibit at the forefront and presented in a way as close as possible to the purpose for which it was created can attract the viewer’s attention, and the remarks of a member of Costumes and Embroidery Committee regarding this mannequin are suggestive. Doctor Carol Davila, who was not part of Romania’s commission, but who supported the organisation and arrangement of the pavilion by traveling to Vienna with his own financial resources<sup>15</sup>, noted that the commissioner: “listened and examined quite well. He admits that the first exhibitor is the Princess

herself, the Asylum being under her patronage. [...] He admires the works as an expert and the result will be favourable because he is the rapporteur.”<sup>16</sup>[trad. n.]

The traditional costume presented by the “exhibitor” is emblematic for the region of Muntenia. The cut and way of wearing the skirt is specific for the Ilfov region, where women wore a pleated skirt (fotă) in the back, and an apron with ornamental stitching in the front (catrință cu alesături)<sup>17</sup>. Their sparkle captured in the picture leads us to believe that the ornamental seams were made of sequins and metallic thread. It is difficult to associate the head kerchief with an ethnographic area, because both in Moldavia and Muntenia women wore such an item on their heads. The way it was placed on the head, by twisting one end around the neck so that one hangs in the front and another in the back can be traced to the women from Moldavia, more precisely Vrancea County<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, in the picture we can see that the head kerchief was decorated with geometric motifs at the ends and stylized floral ornaments on the rest of the fabric, an ensemble that corresponds to the description given by Maria Bâtcă for this component of the traditional costume from Moldavia<sup>19</sup>. As we can see in the picture (Figure 3), the shirt (ia) is one with straight sleeves. The geometric ornamental motifs decorates the upper part of the shirt, but we can see them on the edge of the material worn underneath the pleated skirt, and this indicates that the shirt is a long one, representative for the western area of Muntenia (Gorj and Mehedinți Counties)<sup>20</sup>.

The galleries of the various participating states, as well as the visits of sovereigns from Europe and Middle East to Vienna, various unpleasant incidents at the Exhibition Palace and viewings of the galleries by members of the Imperial family caught the attention of Romanian newspapers. These used pieces of information from *Monitorul Oficial* or quoted and translated articles from Viennese newspapers, for example *Kleine freie Presse* and *Die Presse*.

The newspaper *Pressa* presented the visit of Emperor Franz Joseph to the gallery of Romania. In the same issue, the descriptions related to the Emperor’s presence in the Romanian section were selected from *Monitorul Oficial* and *Kleine freie Presse*. In the context of this visit, the traditional costume was offered to Franz Joseph for the Empress. Ilona Nopcsa’s letter from 1932 does not mention when, where and why Empress Elisabeth received such a gift. It is possible that she did not know this information. Equally, we can assume that Baron Ferenc Nopcsa narrated her the episode of gifting the costume, and Ilona was counting on the fact that Carol II also knew this moment and did not include this detail in her letter.

### **Gift for Empress Elisabeth of Austria**

At the beginning of August 1873, the Emperor visited several pavilions of the exhibition in the Palace of Industry, including the gallery of Romania where: “He observed, with great interest, our cereals, woods, wines, salt, wools, silks, our national and military costumes, various industrial products, black amber, paintings, the antiquities of our museum and especially His Majesty greatly admired the Pietroasa Treasure. His Majesty accepted a very beautiful national costume that our commissioner had the Honour to present for Her Majesty the Empress on behalf of

Her Highness Princess, patroness of the Elena Asylum, in which the costume was made.”<sup>21</sup>[trad. n.]

This last part of the article clarifies the way in which the Romanian traditional costume became part of the Imperial family’s heritage and motivates us to analyse the relationship between the Empress Sissi and Carmen Sylva. This friendship between the two sovereigns was based on their passion for literature, especially for the German poet Heinrich Heine. In her book, Brigitte Hamann discusses the fascination that Empress Sissi had for the future Queen of Romania as a poet, but also about sharing similar opinions related to arts, court etiquette, and politics<sup>22</sup>.

The two sovereigns became closer in the 1880s, when they visited each other several times: the visit of the royal couple to Pest in 1884, then the visits to Mehadia and Sinaia in the spring of 1887<sup>23</sup>. Previously, the Empress and the Princess met in November 1869, at the Palace from Buda, when the princely couple was heading to Romania: “9/21 November 1869. [...] At 5 o’clock the princely couple goes to the Palace in Buda, to the Empress Elisabeth, who has just arrived and gives them the most gracious welcome.”<sup>24</sup>[trad. n.] We find a much more detailed and poetic description of the first meeting between Sissi and Carmen Sylva in Elena Văcărescu’s book. The former lady in waiting recalled the Queen’s description of this meeting in Budapest: “I was newly married and very shy. We went to pay a visit to the Emperor at Buda Peth, in the old castle he inhabits when in his Hungarian capital. I was feeling quite miserable at the prospect of meeting the lovely, brilliant Empress, and I dared not lift up my eyes when her husband took me to her. When at last I did look, I discovered that the beautiful lustrous eyes were gazing into mine with an expression of timidity and distress equal to my own, and we smiled on guessing our common plight, and at once fell into easy talk.”<sup>25</sup>

The relationship between Sissi and Carmen Sylva was not so close in 1873, so that giving a present to the Empress must be interpreted as a gesture of courtesy, of etiquette. However, it is important to discover who had the initiative to give this costume to the Empress: was it the idea of the Princess, of the Romanian commission in Vienna and Doctor Carol Davila, or of the Asylum administration that belonged to Ana Davila? We certainly know that Emanoil Kretzulescu, the Romanian commissioner, offered the national costume on behalf of the Princess, under whose patronage was the Elena Doamna Asylum. It would have been inappropriate for this gift to be made in the name of the Elena Doamna Asylum or the Romanian commission because the receiver would not have a clear and well-known reference point when it would have referred to the author of this gesture. Sissi was the Empress of the state that hosted the International Exhibition, and giving her a present was an act of respect.

In addition to etiquette and gestures of appreciation, kinship relationships or the support given by the commissions of other states became criteria according to which traditional costumes were offered as gifts, considering that similar presents were offered to other crowned heads of Europe. In the correspondence with his wife, Doctor Carol Davila told her that he offered a national costume to the Queen of Sweden: “Today I am giving the costume for Her Majesty Queen of Sweden, whose

favourite colours are yellow and blue. She is the aunt of our Princess, and the commissioners of Sweden have shown me great support.”<sup>26</sup> [trad. n.]

The correspondence of the two spouses helped us to conclude that the decisions regarding the personality who will receive a gift were made by the administration and representatives of the Asylum, Ana and Carol Davila, considering the interests of the institution or family connections. From a letter sent by Ana Davila to her husband, we note that she did not agree with the idea to give a national costume to Maria Obrenovici, the mistress of the former ruler Cuza, who would have donated 200 francs to the Elena Doamna Asylum: “I do not agree to give the national costume to Princess Obrenovici even with her gift of 200 francs, firstly because the costume costs 300 francs and then when she gave 200 francs to the Asylum, she did not do it with the intention of getting such a beautiful costume in return.”<sup>27</sup> [trad. n.]

We suppose that this national costume that Ana Davila did not want to offer to Maria Obrenovici, who in 1873 was the lady in waiting of Empress Augusta of Germany<sup>28</sup>, was the same one that Carol Davila gave to the Queen of Sweden: “A Swede is on the Public Education Committee. I think I will offer her the costume. My idea is not to sell anything, but to exchange with various other commissions.”<sup>29</sup> [trad. n.] The Swedish delegate in charge of the gallery of her country was named Jenny Rojsander. She wrote to Doctor Davila in October 1873, describing the delight with which the Queen of Sweden received the traditional costume<sup>30</sup>.

### **Appreciation for Baron Ferenc Nopcsa**

From the wardrobe of Empress Sissi, the Romanian national costume came into the possession of the Baroness’ family through her uncle, who was master of the court to Empress Elisabeth since 1868<sup>31</sup>.

Born in 1815 in Fărcădinu de Jos, Hunedoara County, Ferenc Nopcsa was educated in Theresianum. Until the middle of 1840’s, Baron Nopcsa held various military positions, and after that he lived in Italy, where he researched documents related to the history of Hungary in the Venetian archives. In 1861 the Baron returned to Transylvania and became Chief Lord of Hunedoara.<sup>32</sup>

Baron Ferenc Nopcsa accompanied the Empress and her ladies in waiting on visits to other European sovereigns or in their journeys outside of Vienna. We previously mentioned the two meetings between the Queen of Romania and Empress of Austria-Hungary in Mehadia, later in Sinaia in 1887. Carol I described the two visits in detail in his diary, also capturing the actions of Baron Nopcsa. For example, when they arrived at the Franz Joseph Baths in Mehadia, Baron Nopcsa presented the authorities to King Carol I<sup>33</sup>. In the context of the visit to Sinaia in May 1887, Nopcsa and Carol I played billiards in the evening of 2/14 May 1887 and travelled in the same carriage in the afternoon in which the Empress left the city of Sinaia<sup>34</sup>.

Ferenc Nopcsa retired from his service in 1894<sup>35</sup> at the age of 79. We do not know if the Baron received the traditional costume from the Empress on this occasion or previously. What is known for certain is that the costume was offered by Sissi to Ferenc Nopcsa for his service. What exactly motivated Empress Elisabeth to offer him this Romanian traditional costume and not another object? Could it be a connection with the Romanian origin of the Nopcsa family?

### The Reason for Ilona Nopcsa's proposition

The traditional costume was preserved in the Nopcsa family until the fourth decade of the 20th century. Ferenc Nopcsa offered it to his only niece, who kept it and from which she would separate "with a lot of pain"<sup>36</sup>[trad. n.]. Although, in 1932 Baroness Ilona Nopcsa seemed to be ready to return this traditional costume to the Royal House of Romania, only if King Carol II would have taken the necessary measures for returning 300 jugars from her domain expropriated by the agrarian law of 1921 or for donation of an equal area from the State reserves. Otherwise, Ilona Nopcsa affirmed that she was strained to sell the costume<sup>37</sup>.

Ilona was the daughter of Baron Elek Nopcsa and Mathilda Zselénski, inheriting the entire family fortune<sup>38</sup>. In 1908, she married Count Alfred Pallavicini and later they had three sons: Alfred, Charles and Hubert<sup>39</sup>. The Nopcsa-Pallavicini family owned properties in Arad, Hunedoara and Timiș-Torontal Counties.

Baroness Ilona Nopcsa's letter, dated on 4 March 1932, was initially sent to the Agricultural Council in Arad, which forwarded it to the Ministry of Agriculture and Domains in June 1932<sup>40</sup>. Before presenting the journey of the Romanian national costume until the moment it came into her possession, the Baroness insisted on the situation that preceded and followed the procedures of the agrarian reform. Ilona Nopcsa sold those 200 jugars reserved in Zădârlac in order to pay off her debts<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, she claimed that the 300 jugars were hers by law, which stipulated that a maximum of 500 jugars should be exempted from expropriation: "But I did not benefit from this favour, because I only have 200 jugars left. So, appealing at the goodwill of Your Majesty, I am not begging for anything other than what the law admits and what most of the expropriated landowners received."<sup>42</sup>[trad. n.]

According to article 22 of the agrarian law, a landowner could reserve 500 jugars of his domain only with the approval of Agrarian Committee and following an expertise of the property, but this provision was only applied in regions where the requests of appropriation were medium or satisfied<sup>43</sup>, and in the area where Ilona Nopcsa's property was located the demands for land appropriation were numerous<sup>44</sup>.

The Baroness justified the gesture by the lack of income of her and her three sons, who at the time of expropriation "were minors, but today they are mature people and without any revenue."<sup>45</sup>[trad. n.] It is interesting that Baroness Ilona Nopcsa did not specify in her letter initially sent to the Agricultural Council in Arad that other areas were reserved for her and for one of her sons when Nopcsa's family domain was expropriated.

Baron Elek Nopcsa senior died in June 1918, and the expropriation was implemented recognizing his three children as heirs: Ferenc, Elek junior and Ilona. In the first stage, by the decision of December 1922, 492 jugars were expropriated from Nopcsa domain located in the localities of Rea, Săcel, Sânpetru, and Nălațvăd in Hunedoara County and 30 jugars of urban land were reserved for the successors. Furthermore, the expropriation commission reserved 108 jugars of forest in Săcel in favour of Ilona Nopcsa<sup>46</sup>, considering her "as being satisfied with the reserved area of arable land from the estate owned by her in Zădârlac and Aradul Nou."<sup>47</sup> [trad. n.]

The decision of December 1922 was contested both by the Nopcsa-Pallavicini family and by the delegates of the entitled localities, and by the decision of



June 1923 it returned upon the expropriation of Nopcsa's domain. The document is extensive and provides important details regarding the property of Nopcsa's family and the descendants of Elek Nopcsa senior.

One of the sons of Ilona and Alfred Pallavicini, Charles, was the testamentary heir of the Nopcsa estate in Săcel, Nălațvad, Rea and Sânpetru, Hunedoara County, with an area of 614 jugars<sup>48</sup>. This will was the cause of a lawsuit between Mathilda Nopcsa, the Pallavicini couple and the widow of Elek Nopcsa junior, Catherine Coudekerque-Lambrecht, who did not recognize the validity of the document drawn up in 1918 and wanted the family fortune to be divided between the legal heirs of Baron Elek Nopcsa senior<sup>49</sup>. However, the expropriation was implemented in the name of Charles Pallavicini, and the following areas were left to him by the decision from June 1923: 67 jugars of arable land in Săcel and Rea, 24 jugars of hay in Săcel and Rea, 37 jugars of pasture, 320 jugars of forest and 30 jugars of urban land in Săcel<sup>50</sup>. The total area reserved in favour of Charles Pallavicini by this decision was 478 jugars. We remind that the decision from December 1922 reserved a forest area in Săcel in favour of Ilona Nopcsa, but in June 1923, the commission expropriated 11 jugars of this forest<sup>51</sup>.

The Pallavicini couple was discontent with the exempt areas and contested the decision of June 1923. The action was partially approved, and by the decision of October 1930 the Agrarian Committee recognized Charles Pallavicini as the sole heir of Elek Nopcsa senior. The Agrarian Committee reserved 50 jugars of arable land, 50 jugars of pasture, 72 jugars of forest in Sânpetru and 100 jugars of forest in Săcel in favour of Charles Pallavicini and expropriated the rest of arable land and forest that exceed the mentioned areas<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, by this decision of the Agrarian Committee, 272 jugars of land located in Săcel were reserved, a much smaller area compared to the one exempted by the decision of June 1923.

For Ilona Nopcsa and her sons, or at least for one of them, were reserved 272 jugars of arable land and forest in Săcel and Sânpetru, Hunedoara County, along with 229 jugars of the propriety located in Zădărlac, Arad County. We do not know yet how Pallavicini family managed the reserved areas after the agrarian reform. However, the documents attest the fact that Charles Pallavicini filed an appeal against the new division of land applied to his property from Săcel, Nălațvad and Sânpetru, procedure repeated in 1931<sup>53</sup>. The trial between Charles Pallavicini and the Romanian state lasted for two years, with several postponements of the final sentence, which was finally issued in 1935, when the Court of Appeal from Cluj rejected his action<sup>54</sup>.



Figure 3. “International Exhibition of 1873: From the Romanian Gallery (No. 1460)” *Wien Museum. Online Sammlung*, <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/567497-weltausstellung-1873-aus-der-rumaenischen-galerie-nr-1460/>, cited 15.02.2022, detail. The Romanian national costume that we believe is the same as the one described by Ilona Nopcsa.

Ilona Nopcsa’s letter received a response, but not from King Carol II. In an address from September 1932, the Director of the Agricultural Service from Arad informed the General Director of Agrarian Reform from Ministry of Agriculture and

Domains that Ilona Nopcsa's request cannot be satisfied, because the expropriation decision was final and the land was distributed to the entitled villagers, consequently the restitution of the 300 jugars was impossible. Equally, the demand to be given another piece of land from State reserves could not be resolved, because the reserved area has been established in accordance with the law and, therefore, there were no more possibilities to extend it.<sup>55</sup>

The documents no longer presented information related to the following actions of Ilona Nopcsa regarding the traditional costume that originally belonged to Carmen Sylva. It is possible that the Baroness sold it, as stated in the letter, or packed it up and transported it to Italy, where she left with her sons in the 1940s<sup>56</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The Romanian costume passed from one owner to another, serving various functions: gift, exhibit and object of transaction. The gifting, later its exhibition, helps us understand the system of relations that Romania achieved with the Western European states in the second half of the 19th century and the manner in which the leaders of the country chose to present it to the West, by participating at Vienna International Exhibition of 1873.

The offering of this heritage object in the exchange for the recovery or obtaining of 300 jugars highlights the manner in which Nopcsa's family related to land and to expropriation started by the agrarian reform in 1921, one of the consequences of the First World War. In the arguments he used in the hope of regaining a part of the expropriated land, Ilona Nopcsa presented the expropriation as a disruptive element of a millennial tradition, in which the ownership and the exploitation of land meant wealth, prestige and privileges: "All my ancestors were landowners. In my family it is a tradition to respect and love the land. My sons and I would maintain this tradition, inherited from my ancestors, if Your Majesty's generous goodwill would allow us to reach again the situation of being able to do this."<sup>57</sup>[trad. n.]

Ilona Nopcsa relied on the history of the national costume and its significance for King Carol II. That is why the Baroness insisted on the origin of the costume and the first owner, mentioning only once the name of the Empress of Austria-Hungary. It is obvious that, compared to Elisabeta of Romania, Sissi was much closer to Ilona's relational field and the fact that this traditional costume was given to her uncle by the Empress was more significant, more impressive for the Baroness than the fact that the dress belonged to Carmen Sylva.

The Baroness confessed her attachment to this Romanian traditional costume, but it did not become a defining element of her identity and her family, in comparison with land possession. Land ownership had both an economic role and an identity significance, on which the agrarian reform of 1921 had consequences. The traditional dress was rather an element of the identity of the Royal House of Romania, and Ilona Nopcsa requested an exchange between the two defining marks of identity.

The history of the folk costume that was in the possession of the Queen, the Empress and the Baroness could be researched further starting with its last known owner. It would be interesting to follow if and when Ilona Nopcsa sold the national costume and who the buyer was. It is also important to identify where this traditional

costume is in the present day. We also must consider the version in which the baroness did not sell the costume, and actually chose to keep it. This aspect would be significant to analyse how the Baroness related to the traditional dress, to the two sovereigns who owned it before, to King Carol II and the institutions of the agrarian reform that were not favourable to her proposition.

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- <sup>2</sup>„Unchiul mi-a lăsat mie această relicvie [...] și eu de atunci o păstrez cu sfântă evlavie în cutia ei împodobită cu stema Casei Habsburg. [...] Locul unui astfel de obiect este la Înalta Curte Regală sau la muzeu și aș fi cel mai fericit supus al dumneavoastră [...] să V-o ofer cu reverință Majestății Voastre, ca singurei persoane care este demn de a posedea o asemenea relicvie.”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 97.
- <sup>3</sup>„Legea pentru reforma agrară din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș”, in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 93 from July 30, 1921, 3624.
- <sup>4</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Creditul Ipotecar, județul Arad, dosar 24/1929, f. 9.
- <sup>5</sup>Freiin von Stackelberg, N., *The Life of Carmen Sylva, Queen of Romania. With Four Portraits, View, and Facsimile of Handwriting*, trans. Baroness Deichmann (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & co. Press, 1890), 148-149.
- <sup>6</sup>„Primul costum național purtat de Principesa Elisabeta a fost lucrat de elevele Azilului.”, in Grecu, E., *Azîlul Elena Doamna și ajutorul domnesc dat orfanilor* (București: Editura Casa Școalelor, 1944), 84.
- <sup>7</sup>Ciupală, A., „O operă eminentamente națională, în interesul țării’. Participarea României la Expoziția universală de la Viena-1873”, *Revista Erasmus* 7 (1997), 37.
- <sup>8\*\*\*</sup>, *Catalogue de la Section Roumaine a l'Exposition Universelle de Vienne en 1873*, French edition (Vienna:Imprimerie Otto Maass, 1873), 51.
- <sup>9</sup>Ciupală, A., (1997): 37.
- <sup>10</sup>„Offizieller Plan der Weltausstellung 1873, Wien; Plan der Weltausstellung”, *Harvard Library* (Online) Available via <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/scanned-maps/catalog/44-990105908840203941>, cited 23.01.2022.
- <sup>11\*\*\*</sup>, *Catalogue de la Section Roumaine*, (1873), 53-48.
- <sup>12\*\*\*</sup>, *Catalogue de la Section Roumaine*, (1873), 76-80.
- <sup>13</sup>„Asilul Elena Doamna”, in *Presă*, no. 173 from August 11, 1873, 1.
- <sup>14</sup>„Această haină de mătasă, unică în felul ei și bogată în lucrul de mână [...]. Costumul [...] a fost expus și la grandioasa expoziție mondială de la Viena, în anul 1873, unde a produs succes și efect colosal.”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul

Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 96-97.

<sup>15</sup>Perticari-Davila, E., *Din viața și corespondența lui Carol Davila* (București:Fundația Regele Mihai I, 1945), 333.

<sup>16</sup>„[...] a ascultat și examinat destul de bine. El admite în principiu că prima expozantă e Principesa în persoană, Azilul fiind sub patronajul său. [...] El admiră lucrările ca un cunoscător și rezultatul va fi favorabil, căci el este raportorul.”, in Perticari Davila, E., (1945), 346.

<sup>17</sup>Ișfănoni, D., Popoiu, P., *Costumul românesc de patrimoniu din colecțiile Muzeului Național al Satului „Dimitrie Gusti”*(București:Editura Alcor Edimpex, 2007), 49.

<sup>18</sup>For photographs, see Ișfănoni, D., Popoiu, P., (2007), 39.

<sup>19</sup>Bâtcă, M., *Costumul popular românesc* (București:Centrul Național pentru Conservarea și Promovarea Culturii Tradiționale, 2006), 167.

<sup>20</sup>For photographs, see Ișfănoni, D., Popoiu, P., (2007), 81, 84.

<sup>21</sup>„[...] a observat cu mult interes cerealele noastre, lemnele, vinurile, sarea, lânurile, metăsurile, costumele noastre naționale, militare, diferitele produse industriale, kihlimbarul negru, tablourile, antichitățile museului nostru și mai cu seamă Măria Sa a admirat mult tesaurul de la Pietroasa. Majestatea Sa a binevoit încă a accepta un foarte frumos costum național ce comisarul nostru a avut onoare a-i presenta pentru M. S. Imperatricea din parte Alteței Sele Principesa Domnitore, protectrice a Asilului Elena, în care s-a lucrat acest costum.”, in „Din intru”, in *Pressa*, no. 168 from August 4, 1873, 2.

<sup>22</sup>Hamann, B., *The Reluctant Empress*, trans. R. Hein (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishing, 1986), 290-291.

<sup>23</sup>For more information about these visits, see Carol I al României, *Jurnal*, vol. I: 1881-1887, trans. V. Docea (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2007), 333, 495, 499.

<sup>24</sup>„9/21 noiembrie 1869.[...] La orele 5 perechea princiară merge la palatul din Buda, la împărăteasa Elisabeta, care tocmai a sosit și le face cea mai grațioasă primire.”, in *Memoriile regelui Carol I al României. De un martor ocular*, vol. II: 1869-1875 (București: Editura Scripta, 1993), 57.

<sup>25</sup>Vacaresco, H., *Kings and Queens I Have Known* (London, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1904), 34.

<sup>26</sup>„Dau chiar azi costumul pentru M. S. Regina Suediei, ale cărei culori favorite sunt galbenul și albastrul. Ea este mătușa Princesei noastre și comisarii Suediei mi-au dat cel mai puternic sprijin.”, in Perticari Davila, E., (1945), 339.

<sup>27</sup>„Nu sunt de părere să dai Prințesei Obrenovici costumul țărănesc cu tot darul ei de 200 franci, întâi fiindcă costumul costă 300 franci și apoi ea când a dăruit Azilului 200 franci nu a făcut-o cu intenția dea căpăta în schimb un costum atât de frumos.”, in Perticari Davila, E., (1945), 339.

<sup>28</sup>Ifțimi, S., “Portrete de șevalet ale familiei Catargiu din Moldova secolului al XIX-lea (I)”, *Cercetări Istorice (Seria Nonă)*XXXV (2016): 232.

<sup>29</sup>„O suedeză este în comitetul Instrucțiunii Publice; cred că o să-i dau ei costumul. Principiul meu este să nu vindem nimic, dar să facem schimb cu diferite alte comisuni.”, in Perticari Davila, E., (1945), 348.

<sup>30</sup>Perticari-Davila, E., (1945), 363.

<sup>31</sup>Muntean, D., *Aventurile și călătoriile Baronului Noșca. O monografie* (Deva:Societatea de Educație Nonformală și Socială, 2013), 20.

<sup>32</sup>Szinnyei, J., *Magyar írók élete és munkái IX*(1903) (Online) Available via <http://mek.oszk.hu/03600/03630/html/index.htm>, cited 07.02.2022.

<sup>33</sup>Carol I of Romania, (2007), 495.

<sup>34</sup>Carol I of Romania, (2007), 499.

<sup>35</sup>„Báró Nopcsa Ferencz es Báró Nopcsa Elek”, in *Vasárnapi Újság*, no. 49 from December 9, 1894, 827.

<sup>36</sup>„[...] „cu multă durere”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 96-67.

<sup>37</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 97.

<sup>38</sup>Meszar, R.M., *Reforma agrară din anul 1921. O istorie a agriculturii în județul Arad (1918-1941)* (Arad: Editura Gutenberg Univers, 2014), 100.

<sup>39</sup>Muntean, D., (2013), 24.

<sup>40</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 98.

<sup>41</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 97.

<sup>42</sup>„Eu însă nu am beneficiat de acest favor, deoarece [...] mi s-a[u] lăsat numai 200 iugăre. Așa că, apelând la Înalta bunăvoință a Majestății Voastre, nu implor altceva decât aceia ce și legea admite, și ce a primit majoritatea moșierilor expropriați.”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 96.

<sup>43</sup>„Legea pentru reforma agrară din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș”, in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 93 from July, 30, 1921, 3625.

<sup>44</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Creditul Ipotecar, județul Arad, dosar 23/1929, f. 8.

<sup>45</sup>„[...]Jerau minori, azi, însă sunt oameni întregi și fără nici un venit”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 96.

<sup>46</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/1931, f. 7.

<sup>47</sup>„[...] ca fiind satisfăcută cu cota rezervată din terenul cultivabil din moșiile proprietatea sa din Zădârlac și Aradul Nou”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/1931, f. 6.

<sup>48</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/193., f. 5.

<sup>49</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/1931, f. 6.

<sup>50</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/1931, f. 27.

<sup>51</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/1931, f. 27.

<sup>52</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 289/1931, f. 4.

<sup>53</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 400/1933-1935, f. 2, 11.

<sup>54</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Hunedoara, dosar 400/1933-1935, f. 34.

<sup>55</sup>Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 99.

<sup>56</sup>Muntean, D., (2013), 25.

<sup>57</sup>„Toți strămoșii mei au fost moșieri. În familia mea este tradiție cultul și iubirea pământului. Eu cu băieții mei am menține această tradiție, moștenită dela străbunii mei, dacă mărinimoasa bunăvoință a Maiestății Voastre ar admite să ajungem, din nou, în situația de a putea face aceasta.”, in Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fondul Ministerul Agriculturii și Domeniilor, Reforma agrară din 1921, județul Arad, dosar 118/1931-1932, f. 96.