

# ROMANIAN DECORATIONS AWARDED IN 1913 TO SOME GREEK DIGNITARIES

Laurențiu-Ștefan SZEMKOVICS\*

**Abstract:** The article presents, using faleristics, heraldry and sigillography, the “Star of Romania” Order in the ranks of Commander and Grand Cross conferred by Carol I, King of Romania, in 1913, to Rizo-Rangabè Alexandre, first secretary of legation and to Venizelos Elefterios, the president of the Council of Ministers, Minister of War of Greece, as well as the “Crown of Romania” Order in the Grand Cross degree which was awarded, also in 1913, to General Alexandru Soutzo, from the Greek army.

**Keywords:** Romanian decorations, Greek dignitaries, 1913, faleristics, heraldry, sigillography

On the occasion of the arrival in Bucharest of a Greek mission “for the notification of the accession to the throne of King Constantine”,<sup>1</sup> composed of the former minister-president Teotoki, general Soutzo and secretary of legation Rangabè, King Carol I decorated the last two.

Therefore, following the report of T. Maiorescu, president of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, chancellor of Orders, no. 16,168 from June 1913,<sup>2</sup> King Carol I signed in Bucharest, on July 9, 1913, decree no. 4,938, by which he conferred on Rizo-Rangabè Alexandre, first secretary of legation, the Order of the “Star of Romania” in the rank of Commander, with the right to wear the civil insignia.<sup>3</sup> According to the certificate of receipt of the certificate of Commander of the Order of the “Star of Romania”, completed and signed in Athens on July 30, 1913, Alexandre Rizo-Rangabè was born on October 4, 1880, in Athens (Greece) and had his domicile in the same city.<sup>4</sup>

Following the report of T. Maiorescu, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chancellor of Orders, no. 16,170 from June 1913,<sup>5</sup> King Carol I signed in Bucharest, on July 9, 1913, decree no. 4,934, by which he conferred on General Alexandru Soutzo, from the Greek army, the “Crown of Romania” Order in the Grand Cross rank.<sup>6</sup> According to the certificate of receipt of the Grand Cross of the Order of the “Crown of Romania”, completed and signed in Athens on August 22, 1913, Soutzo Alexandru was born on May 11, 1855, in Athens (Greece) and had his domicile in the same city.<sup>7</sup>

Following the report of T. Maiorescu, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chancellor of Orders, no. 17,912 of July 31, 1913,<sup>8</sup> King

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\* Central National Historical Archives Service Of Romania, 49 Blvd. Regina Elisabeta, sector 5, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: laurszem@gmail.com

Carol I signed in Bucharest, on July 31, 1913, decree no. 5,148, by which he conferred on Venizelos Elefterios, the president of the Council of Ministers, Minister of War of Greece, the Order of the “Star of Romania” in the Grand Cross rank, with the right to wear civil insignia.<sup>9</sup> By the same decree, the decoration, also in the rank of Grand Cross, was awarded to Ristitch Mihail, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the King of Serbia in Bucharest, and in the rank of Grand Officer to Politis Nicolas, professor of international law at the University of Paris. According to the certificate of receipt of the Grand Cross of the Order of the “Star of Romania”, completed and signed in Athens on 31 August / 13 September 1913, Venizelos Elefterios was born in La Canée (Crete) and had his domicile in Athens.<sup>10</sup>

We present, using faleristics,<sup>11</sup> heraldry,<sup>12</sup> and sigilography,<sup>13</sup> the description of honorary distinctions, as well as the graphic reproductions of documents and decorations that come from the Central National Historical Archives in Bucharest and from the Arad Museum Complex.<sup>14</sup>

To reward the military and civil services rendered to the Romanian state, Carol I instituted, on May 10, 1877, the “Star of Romania” Order.<sup>15</sup> According to the “Regulation for the implementation of the law relative to the establishment of the ‘Star of Romania’ Order”,<sup>16</sup> the “Star of Romania” Order

is a cross of dark blue enamel, surrounded by rays, bearing the royal crown above. The center of the Cross, in the form of a medallion, is of red enamel, with the eagle on the front and the crown and royal figure on the reverse. Around the red enamel medallion, in front, is a circle of dark blue enamel, as above, on which is written the motto:<sup>17</sup> IN FIDE SALUS (SALVATION IN FAITH). The dark blue enamel circle is also surrounded by a garland of green oak branches, which also surrounds the red enamel medallion on the reverse. The insignia of the Order are silver for the Knights and gold for the other ranks. Knights wear the Cross, with a diameter of 40 mm, suspended from a red milled ribbon with two dark-blue stripes on each edge, – the inner wide stripes, each 3 mm and the outer ones (on the edge of the ribbon) 2 mm; Commanders also wear the Cross suspended from the same mottled red ribbon with dark blue stripes as above, but the Cross is 60 mm in diameter and the ribbon 45 mm wide and of a length equal to the circumference of the neck; Grand Crosses, wears a Cross like the Commander's Cross, but with a diameter of 70 mm and which is suspended, - under a bow in the form of a tie, - from the top of a milled red lens (cord) with dark blue stripes on each border, 100 mm wide band and of a length equal to the periphery of the bust of the body, and broad dark blue stripes, the inner ones 8 mm and the outer ones 5 mm. They also wear a plate like that of the Chief Officer, but with a diameter of 95 mm and on which, in the middle, a Cross is reproduced in relief, exactly like the Commander's. The cross at the top of the lens forms together with the plate and the lens the degree of Grand Cross.<sup>18</sup>

The “Crown of Romania” Order was established by law no. 1,244 of May 10, 1881, with the aim of rewarding the services rendered to the state.<sup>19</sup> According to the “Regulation for the implementation of the law relative to the establishment of the Order of the Crown of Romania”:<sup>20</sup>

The ‘Crown of Romania’ order is a cross with equal arms; each arm is of red enamel, having a stripe of white enamel round it; between the arms the figure of the king. In the center of the cross, front and back, is a red enamel medallion, with a white enamel circle around the medallion. On the red enamel, in front, is the royal crown, made of steel (made from the metal of one of the cannons taken as trophies from the enemy in the battle of Plevna on 28 November 1877), and on the white enamel circle is written, at the top: ‘PRIN NOI ÎNȘINE’ (BY OURSELVES), and at the bottom: ‘14 MARTIE 1881’ (14 MARCH 1881) (the date of the proclamation of the kingdom). The reverse (back) of the medallion bears writing, in the middle, on the red enamel, in a horizontal line: ‘10 MAI’ (10 MAY) (the date of the coronation) and around, on the white enamel circle: ‘1866 – 1877 – 1881’ (the dates of the accession to the throne, the proclamation of Independence and, respectively, the proclamation of the kingdom). The royal figure, between the arms of the cross, as well as the mount of the cross, is silver for the Knights and gold for the other ranks. The Grand Cross plate, also with 8 clusters of rays, is 90 mm in size, with a cross similar to that of the Commander’s reproduced in relief on it. In addition to the plate, the Grand Crosses also wear, under a bow in the form of a tie, from the tip of a ribbon (cord), a specific cross, 70 mm in size, which together with the plate and the ribbon forms the rank of Grand-Cross. The insignia of the Order of the Crown of Romania are hung from a dark blue ribbon, with a steel-colored stripe on each edge – 6 mm wide stripe for Knights and Officers; of 8 mm for Commanders and Grand Officers and of 20 mm for Grand Cross. The ribbon of the Grand Cross is 100 mm wide and of a length equal to the circumference of the bust. For soldiers, the insignia are the same as for civilians, without any distinction.<sup>21</sup>

*Sire,*

*Maiestatea Voastră binevoind.*  
*a conferi Ordinul Steaua României în*  
*gradul de Comandor, Domnului Rizo-*  
*Rangabé (Alexandru), prim-secretar de*  
*legatiune, am onoarea a Oruga respectuos*  
*să binevoiască a semna alăturatul proiect*  
*de Decret.*

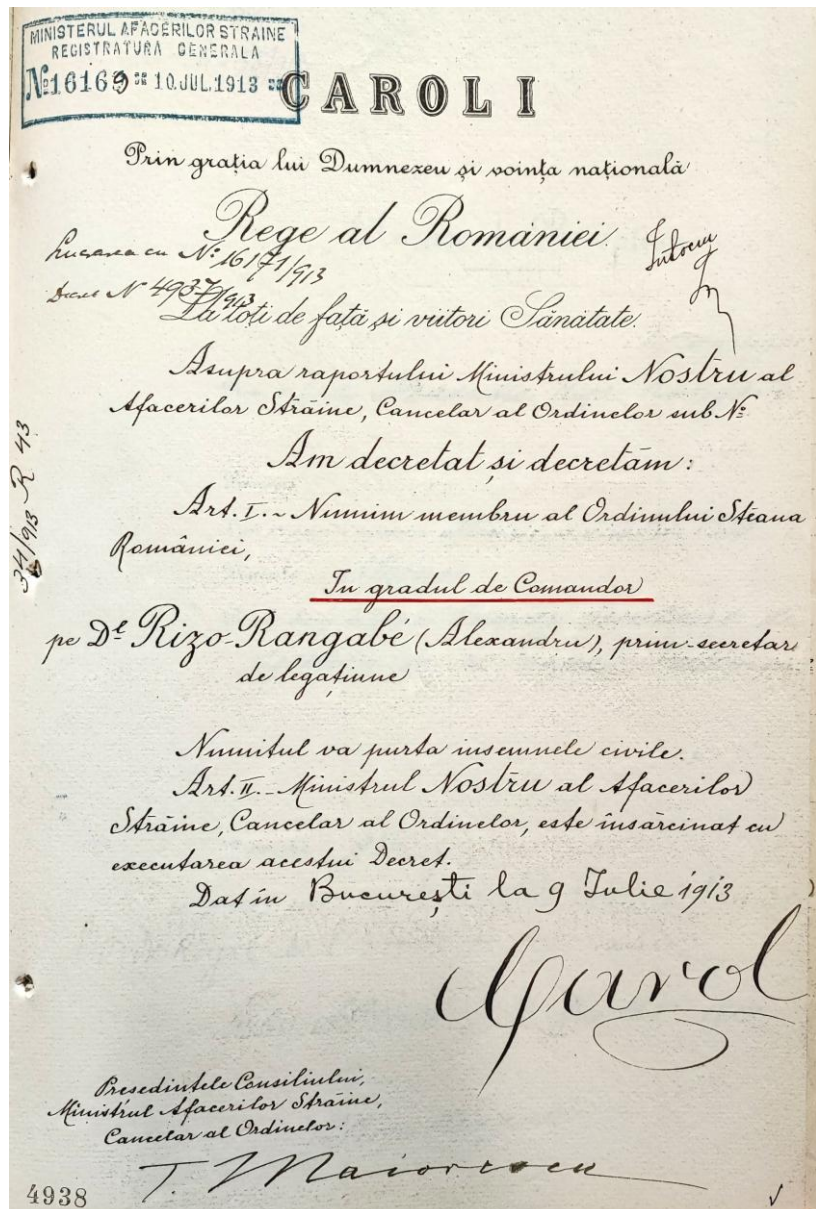
*Sunt cu cel mai adânc respect,*

*Sire,*  
*al Maiestatei Voastre,*  
*prea plecat și prea supus servitor,*  
*Președintele Consiliului*  
*Ministrul Afacerilor Străine*  
*Cancelar al Ordinilor*

*T. Maiorescu*

*București*  
*iunie 1913*  
*Nº 16168*

Report of T. Maiorescu, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chancellor of Orders, no. 16,168 from June 1913.  
 Source: Central National Historical Archives



Royal decree no. 4,938 of July 9, 1913.  
Source: Central National Historical Archives

MINISTERUL AFACERILOR STRĂINE.  
 CANCELARIA ORDINELOR.

Nr. \_\_\_\_\_

Accusé de Réception

Je, soussigné:

Nom de famille *Rizo-Rangabé*

Prénoms *Alexandre*

Lieu et date de naissance *Athènes, 4 Octobre 1880*

Domicile *Athènes*

Rang, charge et fonctions *1<sup>er</sup> Secrétaire de Légation*

Nationalité *grecque*

reconnais avoir reçu les insignes de Commandeur  
 de l'Ordre de l'Étoile de Roumanie.

Fait à Bucarest le 25 Juin 1913

(Signature)  
*Rizo-Rangabé*

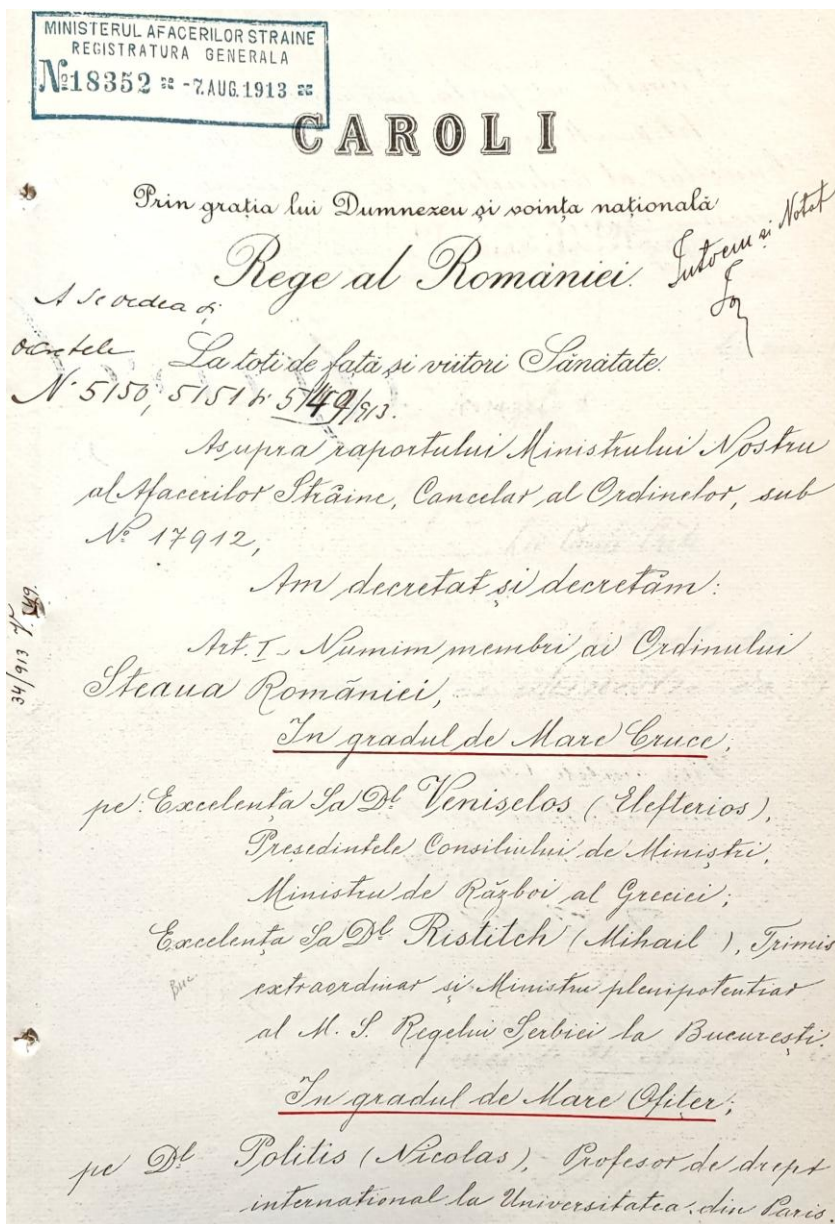
Certificate of Rizo-Rangabé Alexandre receiving the certificate of Commander of the Order of the "Star of Romania".

Source: Central National Historical Archives





Order of the “Star of Romania” in the rank of Commander (without ribbon).  
Source: Arad Museum Complex



Royal decree no. 5,148 of July 31, 1913 (first page).

Source: Central National Historical Archives



MINISTERUL AFACERILOR STRĂINE.

CANCELARIA ORDINELOR.

N<sup>o</sup> 5148/913

Accusé de Réception

*To, soussigné:*

Nom de famille *Venizelos*

Prénoms *Elefterios*

Lieu et date de naissance *La Canie Crète*

Domicile *Athènes*

Rang, charge et fonctions *Président du  
Conseil des Ministres de Grèce*

Nationalité *Hellène*

reconnais avoir reçu le brevet et les insignes de  
Grand-Croix de l'ordre Royal de l'Étoile de Roumanie

Fait à Athènes le 31 Août 1913  
13 Septembre

(Signature)

*E. H. Venizelos*

Certificate of Venizelos Elefterios receiving the Grand Cross of the Order of the "Star of Romania".

Source: Central National Historical Archives.



Order of the "Star of Romania" in the Grand Cross rank.  
Source: Arad Museum Complex



Order of the “Star of Romania”, Grand Cross plate.  
Source: Arad Museum Complex



Sire,

Măiestatea Voastră binevoind  
a conferi Ordinul Coroana României în  
gradul de Mare Cruce, Domnului General  
Soutzo (Alexandru), din armata elenă,  
am onoarea a Oruga respectuos să  
binevoiască a semna alăturatul proiect  
de Decret împreună cu brevetul aferent.

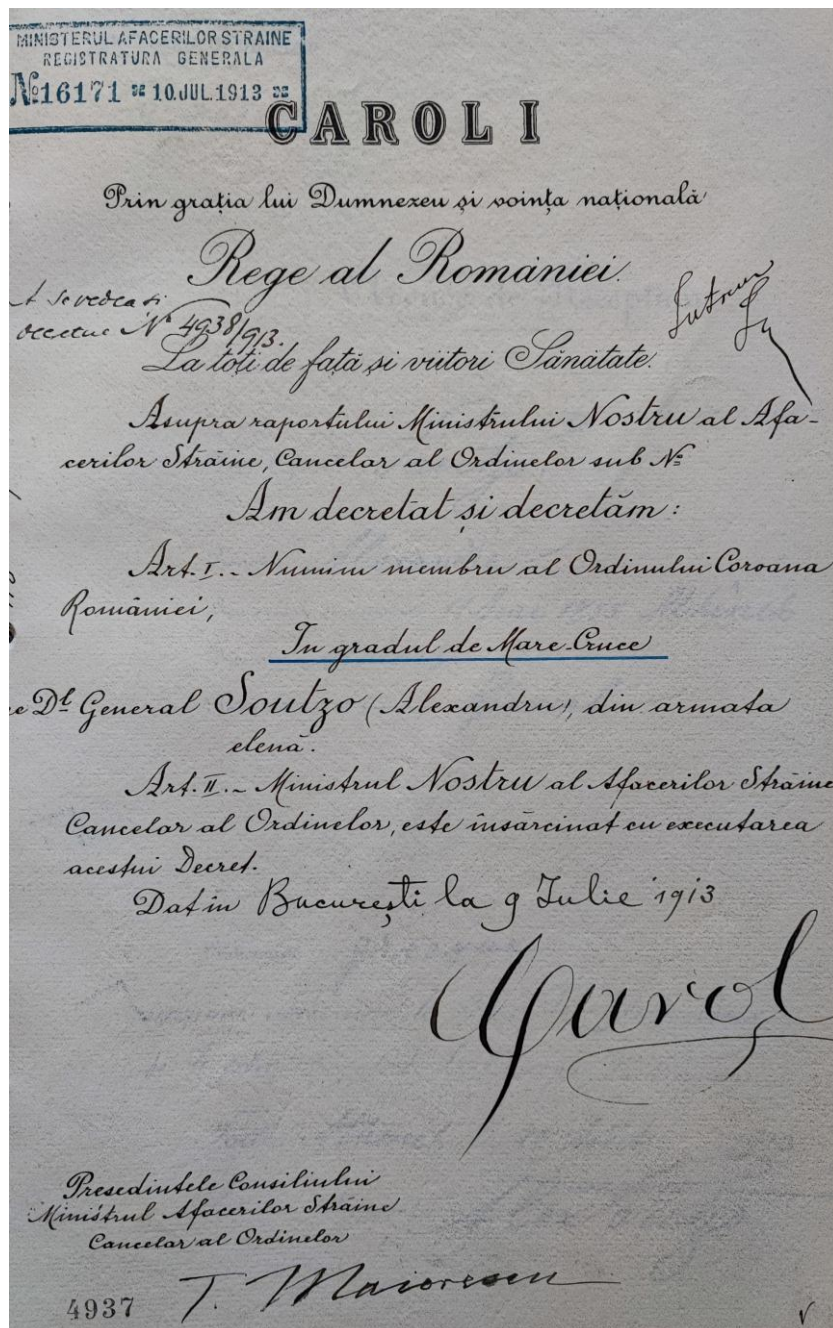
Sunt cu cel mai adânc respect,

Sire  
al Măiestății Voastre  
prea plecat și prea supus servitor,  
Președintele Consiliului  
Ministrul Afacerilor Străine  
Cancelar al Ordinilor

T. Măiorescu

București  
iunie 1913  
№ 16170

Report of T. Măiorescu, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chancellor of Orders, no. 16,170 from June 1913.  
Source: Central National Historical Archives.



Royal decree no. 4,937 of July 9, 1913.  
Source: Central National Historical Archives



MINISTERUL AFACERILOR STRĂINE.  
 CANCELARIA ORDINELOR.

N<sup>o</sup> 4937/1913

Accusé de Réception

*Je, soussigné,*

Nom de famille *Soutzo.*

Prénoms *Alexandre*

Lieu et date de naissance *11 mai 1855 Athènes*

Domicile *Athènes.*

Rang, charge et fonctions *Général*

Nationalité *grecque*

*reconnais avoir reçu le brevet de Grand-Croix  
 de l'Ordre Royal de la Couronne de Roumanie*

*Fait à Athènes le 22 Août 1913*

(Signature) *Alex Soutzo.*

General Alexandru Soutzo's certificate of receipt of the Grand Cross of the "Crown of Romania" Order.

Source: Central National Historical Archives.



Order of the “Crown of Romania” in the Grand Cross rank.  
Source: Arad Museum Complex



Order of the “Crown of Romania”, Grand Cross plate.  
Source: Arad Museum Complex

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### References

- <sup>1</sup> Maiorescu, T., *România, războaiele balcanice și Cadrilaterul* (București: Machiavelli, 1995), 130-131.
- <sup>2</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>3</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>4</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>5</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>6</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.

- <sup>7</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>8</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>9</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>10</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 201/1913.
- <sup>11</sup> Phaleristics = the auxiliary discipline of History dealing with the study of decorations (orders, crosses, medals and insignia); see Bahrin, D., *Sistemul decorațiilor militare – 2000. Sistemul național de decorații* (București: Editura Economică, 2005), 11-12.
- <sup>12</sup> Heraldry = the auxiliary discipline of History that studies coats of arms, crests etc.; see Marcu, F., *Marele dicționar de neologisme* (București: Saeculum I.O., 2000), 422.
- <sup>13</sup> Sigillography = the subsidiary discipline of history dealing with the study of seals and sealing matrices. French in origin, this discipline did not take long to expand throughout Europe in several places where, since the Middle Ages, the custom of validating documents with a seal was imposed; see Chassel, J.-L., “Les sceaux dans l’Histoire, l’Histoire dans les sceaux”, in *Les sceaux, sources de l’histoire médiévale en Champagne. Actes des tables rondes de la Société française d’héraldique et de sigillographie* (Troyes, 2003-Reims, 2004), sous la direction de J.-L. Chassel, (Paris: Société française d’héraldique et de sigillographie, 2007), 9.
- <sup>14</sup> Arad Museum Complex, MO 636.
- <sup>15</sup> “Law no. 1,108 of May 10, 1877”, *Monitorul Oficial* 107 (1877): 3159-3160.
- <sup>16</sup> “Royal decree no. 3.505 from 11 October 1906”; see the normative act available in copy at Central National Historical Archives, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chancellery of Orders*, f. 642.
- <sup>17</sup> Motto = inscription containing a moral maxim, an exclamation, a formula of faith, a commitment; see Gal, I. (ed.), *Dictionar al științelor speciale ale istoriei. Arhivistică, cronologie, diplomatică, genealogie, heraldică, paleografie, sigilografie* (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1982), 100.
- <sup>18</sup> Martin, T., A., Pârvan, K., Opaschi, C., *Onoarea națiunilor (II). Ordine și decorații românești din patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a României* (București: Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, 2016), 42-52; see also Szemkovics, L.-Ș., “Distincții acordate grănicerilor în perioada 1918-1919”, in *Forum ISOP* 5 (2018): 6; Szemkovics, L.-Ș., *Distincții acordate jandarmilor în perioada 1917-1919* (București: Editura Ministerului Afacerilor Interne, 2018), 5-9 etc.
- <sup>19</sup> Central National Historical Archives, *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe. Cancelaria Ordinilor*, f. 642.
- <sup>20</sup> “Royal decree no. 3.506 from 11 October 1906”; see the normative act available in copy at Central National Historical Archives, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chancellery of Orders*, f. 642.
- <sup>21</sup> See Szemkovics, L.-Ș., “Ordinul ‘Coroana României’ conferit lui Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu (1882, 1886)”, in *Revista Arhivelor*, 1-2/XCV (2018): 7-13; Szemkovics, L.-Ș., “Decorație de la 1922 conferită notarului de la Prefectura județului Sălaj”, in *Caiete Silvane* 199 (2021): 38; Szemkovics, L.-Ș., “Decorație conferită episcopului Aradului în 1926”, in *Studia Theologica et Historica Aradensia* nr. 5/V (2023): 36-43 etc.