

= Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti =

Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti (Romanian pronunciation : [alek?sandru bo??dan pi?te?t?] ; born Alexandru Bogdan , also known as Ion Doican , Ion Duican and Al . Dodan ; June 13 , 1870 ? May 12 , 1922) was a Romanian Symbolist poet , essayist , and art and literary critic , who was also known as a journalist and left @-@ wing political agitator . A wealthy landowner , he invested his fortune in patronage and art collecting , becoming one of the main local promoters of modern art , and a sponsor of the Romanian Symbolist movement . Together with other Post @-@ Impressionist and Symbolist cultural figures , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti established Societatea Ileana , which was one of the first Romanian associations dedicated to promoting the avant @-@ garde and independent art . He was also noted for his friendship with the writers Joris @-@ Karl Huysmans , Alexandru Macedonski , Tudor Arghezi and Mateiu Caragiale , as well as for sponsoring , among others , the painters ?tefan Luchian , Constantin Artachino and Nicolae Vermont . In addition to his literary and political activities , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was himself a painter and graphic artist .

Much of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's controversial political career , inaugurated by his support for anarchism , was dedicated to activism and support for revolution . He also had an interest in the occult , and maintained close contacts with Joséphin " Sâr " Péladan ? sponsoring Péladan 's journey to Bucharest (1898) . He was detained by the authorities at various intervals , including an arrest for sedition during the 1899 election , and was later found guilty of having blackmailed the banker Aristide Blank . Late in his life , he led Seara , a Germanophile daily , as well as a literary and political circle which came to oppose Romania 's entry into World War I on the Entente Powers ' side . He was arrested one final time upon the end of the war , by which time he had become the object of public hatred . The enduring mysteries and contradictions of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's career have since drawn interest from several generations of art and literary historians .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life and anarchism = = =

A native of Pite?ti , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was the son of a landowner from Olt , and , on his father 's side , the descendant of immigrants from the Epirote area of Ioannina , whose ethnicity was either Aromanian or Albanian . His father became a local leader of the Conservative Party . His mother was a boyaress , and , as art collector and memoirist Krikor Zambaccian recounted , may have been a descendant of the Balotescu boyar clan . Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti also had a sister , Elena Constan?a Bogdan ; both she and her mother reportedly survived his death . As one of his eccentricities , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti encouraged the ? unsustainable ? rumor that he was a direct descendant of an ancient Wallachian ruling house , the Basarab Princes .

According to at least one account , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was educated in Geneva , at a local Catholic institution . Raised in the Romanian Orthodox faith , he converted to Catholicism in his twenties , but was no longer a practicing Catholic by the time of his death . He supposedly attended medical school at the University of Montpellier , without ever graduating , and afterwards left to join the bohemian milieu of Paris . He may have enrolled at the University of Paris , studying Law and Letters , but probably withdrew after a short while . Art historian Sanda Miller recounts that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti attended the École des Beaux @-@ Arts in the French capital , but that he was ultimately expelled . Other sources express doubt that the Romanian aristocrat was ever affiliated with any university or college , in either France or Switzerland .

According to literary historian Tudor Vianu , at that stage , the young man began associating with the criminal underworld . He soon established a connection with the French anarchist circles , while also associating with a branch of the growing Symbolist movement . Like others in his generation , he may have been driven by a desire for shocking and morbid experiences . According to art historian Theodor Enescu , these ranged from erotic experimentation to the " boisterous shivers of anarchism " , and from criminal enterprise to decadent poetry . Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was a presence

in the anarchist group of Auguste Vaillant (later guillotined for plotting a terrorist coup) , and was possibly acquainted with some of the more prestigious anarchist intellectuals : Élisée Reclus , Laurent Tailhade and (especially influential on him) Félix Fénéon .

Reports exist that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's politics were already a merger of opposite or hardly compatible doctrines . He respected Catholicism and Judaism as the most elevated religious cultures , rejected Orthodoxy , atheism and communism as ideologies for the mediocre , and depicted himself as a Catholic anarchist . He believed in craniometry , and took scientific racism at face value . At some stage during the late 1880s , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti became a supporter of General Boulanger , who attempted to gain power in France with support from the Orléanist , Bonapartist and socialist camps ; he reputedly befriended the prominent Boulangist and Romantic nationalist thinker Maurice Barrès .

In parallel , he himself became a representative of literary and artistic Symbolism , and supposedly maintained contacts with authors such as Joris @-@ Karl Huysmans , Maurice Maeterlinck , Octave Mirbeau , Jean Moréas , and Paul Verlaine . Another influence on him was the occultist and novelist Joséphin Péladan , whose Rosicrucian salon he attended several times .

Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti debuted as a writer and political essayist . It was later reported , but not confirmed , that he published his pieces in newspapers and magazines of diverse backgrounds ? Le Figaro , Le Gaulois , Gil Blas , L 'Intransigeant and La Libre Parole among them . A lover and protector of actresses in both France and Switzerland , he also claimed to have played a part in staging the first Genevan showing of Richard Wagner 's Die Walküre .

= = = Salonul Independen?ilor = = =

Placed under surveillance due to his involvement in revolutionary politics by 1894 , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was eventually expelled from France , despite Huysmans ' intervention in his favor . Reputedly , the deportation document identified him as a " threat to public order " . One urban legend recounts that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was present at Vaillant 's public execution and leaned over to kiss Vaillant 's mangled body , which both disgusted and alarmed the judicial establishment . Zambaccian suggests that the decision to deport the Romanian provocateur was not politically motivated . He writes that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti had exhausted the patience of French authorities by trafficking in stolen bicycles .

From France , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti had contemplated the idea of revolutionizing Romanian art , and , upon his arrival to Bucharest , began organizing artists ' reunions at the Kübler and Fialkowski coffeehouses . In 1896 , with Post @-@ Impressionist artists Constantin Artachino , ?tefan Luchian and Nicolae Vermont , he founded Salonul Independen?ilor , the Romanian replica of the French Société des Artistes Indépendants . They were soon joined by painter Nicolae Grant and caricaturist Nicolae Petrescu @-@ G?in? .

The exhibits featured some of Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's own drawings , which he intended to use as illustrations for his book of French @-@ language poems , Sensations internes (" Internal Sensations ") . He planned for his art movement to reach outside Romania , and , also in 1896 , financed an international exhibition of independent and avant @-@ garde artists . Salonul was known for its public protest against academic art : located just outside the Romanian Athenaeum building (a main venue for local Neoclassicism) , it put up Petrescu G?in? 's huge caricature of academic artist C. I. St?ncescu , and flew a red flag next to it . This call to socialist rebellion attracted public attention , and the flag was urgently taken down by agents of the Romanian Police . The subsequent exhibitions were viewed with sympathy by a section of the press , including the leftist newspaper Adev?rul . It republished pieces ridiculing St?ncescu in his role of official curator , and made favorable comments on all of the Salonul Independen?ilor artists . Noting the leader 's own anarchist past , Adev?rul art columnist Gal wrote : " Bogdan has all the qualities and flaws of a sincere French revolutionary , but one who is not entirely clear and scientific . He has an extraordinary love for all things independent and hates to the point of excess all sectarian people , and all schools . " In June 1896 , the group of " secessionists " was commissioned to decorate Bragadiru Garden , where Romania 's press held its annual fair . The show , attended by Bogdan

@-@ Pitești , prominently featured Stăncescu 's caricature at the entrance .

Despite rhetoric , the new art club was not entirely opposed to tradition , and occasionally appealed to it as a basis for cultural reconstruction . Salonul boasted among its honorary members the lionized oil painter Nicolae Grigorescu , who had trained with the Barbizon school . Bogdan @-@ Pitești was especially fond of Luchian 's work , and , in an 1896 article for the cultural magazine *Revista Orientală* , spoke of him as " an admirable colorist " , a " free spirit " , and a purveyor of " revolutionary ideas " . He boosted Luchian 's self @-@ confidence , urging him to apply his talents to illustrating " an idea " , and was entirely adverse to Grigorescu 's traditionalist manner . Luchian still used Grigorescu as a source of inspiration in his own work , prompting scholars to argue that Grigorescu 's Salonul Independenței reception was Bogdan @-@ Pitești 's unwilling concession to his star protégé .

= = = *Literatorul* , *Bronzes* , *Ileana* = = =

Bogdan @-@ Pitești was by then an inspiration for the blooming Romanian Symbolist movement . In effect , he was the first Romanian expert on the work of Symbolist celebrities like Odilon Redon , Gustave Moreau , and (his favorite) Alexandre Séon . He soon became a contributor to *Literatorul* , a Symbolist magazine , and was close friends with its founder , Alexandru Macedonski . In 1897 , he was chosen by the latter to edit and promote his book of French @-@ language poems , *Bronzes* . In the end , Bogdan @-@ Pitești provided the funds needed for *Bronzes* to be published in Paris . It came out with an introductory note , in which Bogdan @-@ Pitești favorably compared Macedonski with arch @-@ rival Mihai Eminescu . In more general terms , the preface showed Bogdan @-@ Pitești as an unyielding Francophile , who reported with alarm that Romania risked being seduced and then engulfed by German culture . Himself a disciple of Macedonski , T. Vianu comments that Bogdan @-@ Pitești was probably unsuited for the task of introducing *Bronzes* , and that , despite expectations , the volume failed to impress the French public . He notes the virtually complete lack of press reviews ? with the notable exception of a May 1898 article in *Mercure de France* , written by the Symbolist @-@ anarchist Pierre Quillard .

Later in 1898 , back in Romania , Bogdan @-@ Pitești and the other Salonul Independenței initiators joined up with author Ioan Bacalbașa and architect Ștefan Ciocâlteu . This diverse group established *Societatea Ileana* , an association dedicated to supporting innovative artists . Its steering committee was later joined by the intellectual and political figures Constantin Rădulescu @-@ Motru , Nicolae Xenopol , and Nicolae Filipescu , as well as by the painter Jean Alexandru Steriadi . The society took up the effort to uproot against academic salons , organizing a large and provocative exhibit in 1898 , and , at the height of its popularity , enlisted in its ranks some 300 people . Despite such consolidation , various *Ileana* affiliates were not entirely committed to the cause , and never severed their links with Stăncescu 's official section .

The new circle held meetings in a Brezoianu Street studio which was also its patron 's home . Its feminine name *Ileana* was probably a borrowing from Romanian folklore , and may reference the fairy tale character *Ileana Cosânzeana* . The group 's press organ , also known as *Ileana* , was edited by Bacalbașa and illustrated by Luchian . Described by Vianu as a " refined art magazine " , it is also considered the first one of its kind in Romania .

In parallel , Bogdan @-@ Pitești began frequenting the country 's first socialist pressure group , the Romanian Social Democratic Workers ' Party (PSDMR) , and attending meetings between Bucharest workers . The PSDMR denounced him as an agent provocateur of the Conservative Party , and he stood accused of breaking the party into tolerant and antisemitic halves .

= = = Péladan 's visit = = =

As head of *Ileana* , Bogdan @-@ Pitești organized Joséphin Péladan 's 1898 visit to Bucharest . It was a much @-@ publicized event , which attracted the attention of high society and received ample coverage in the press ; Bogdan @-@ Pitești accompanied Péladan on visits to various Bucharest landmarks , including the Athenaeum , the Chamber of Deputies , the Orthodox

Metropolitan and Domni? a B? la? a churches , as well as the Roman Catholic Saint Joseph Cathedral . Among the politicians who attended the ceremonies were Nicolae Filipescu , Constantin Dissescu , Take Ionescu , Ioan Lahovary , and Constantin C. Arion ; prominent intellectuals (Barbu ? tef? nescu Delavrancea , R? dulescu @-@ Motru etc .) were in the audience .

Péladan agreed to lecture in front of Societatea Ileana at the Atheneum , and his subject of choice was The Genius of the Latin Race . His mystical doctrine was received with much skepticism and amusement by the Romanian literary chroniclers . The visit then turned to scandal : Péladan issued a call for all Romanians to embrace Catholicism , and left the country on pain of being deported .

Various commentators are entirely dismissive of the visit and its importance . Th . Enescu describes its impact as " amazing " , since Péladan was merely an " unusual [funambulesc in the original] representative of French culture " . He also proposes that the reception , with its " noisy " and " exacerbated " fanfare , shows the " complexes of a provincial culture , confronted with the promiscuous exorbitance of a great culture " . This assessment is quoted by literary historian Paul Cernat , who also notes Péladan 's " rather modest value " should not have allowed such reactions . Cernat concedes that the Péladan visit was important for promoting new cultural trends , specifically the notions of art for art 's sake and decadence , even though this was done " through the means of politics [italics in the original] " .

Cultural historian Angelo Mitchievici proposes that , modelling himself on Péladan , Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti was becoming the " spinmeister " of oriental Symbolism . As Ion Doican (or Duican) , he contributed to Ileana essays praising various contemporary painters : Arthur Verona , George Demetrescu Mirea , and , most of all , Luchian . Ileana only published a few issues before closing down in 1901 . Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti 's collaborator Bacalba? a , known by then as a dramatist , also attended , but drifted away from the group in 1900 , giving up his position as editor of Ileana . A similar split occurred between Luchian and his patron , sparked when Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti made some favorable comments on St? ncescu 's work , and probably took several years to mend . Over that decade , Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti had also become one of Literatorul 's main financial backers .

Writing in 1910 , at a time when Romanian art came to be more familiar with new artistic trends (including Cubism and Fauvism , both advocated locally by art critic Theodor Cornel) , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti adapted his discourse to the new trends . The art patron , who probably exercised considerable influence over Cornel , publicly complained that , instead of keeping up with the times , his fellow Romanian intellectuals still regarded Impressionism as the ultimate novelty . On the occasion , he hailed the Post @-@ Impressionist French artists Paul Gauguin and Paul Cézanne as the models to follow . He was actively seeking to mend his split with Luchian , and , although he called the painter " inconsistent " , again stated that he found him to be Romania 's best young artist .

= = = Slatina revolt and Vlaici colony = = =

After his return to Romania , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti was still noted for his political activities , although these shifted to the background during his Ileana years . According to some reports , he spent some of his free time touring the countryside , rallying up peasants , inciting them to rebel , and mapping out a radical land reform . During the general election of 1899 , he ran for a deputy seat in both Olt and Ilfov , without registering success . There was confusion as to Bogdan @-@ Pite? ti 's political affiliation . He was known as " the peasants ' candidate " , but both sides of the Romanian two @-@ party system , the National Liberal Party and the Conservative group , accused the other of secretly supporting his bid .

During such campaigns , he is said to have misled his voters into believing that he was a son of the deposed Domnitor Alexandru Ioan Cuza , and therefore a natural champion of land reform . His activity in Olt is credited with having sparked some violent incidents : in at least one account , he instigated the peasants of Slatina area to riot , and their revolt was only suppressed with use of force . Others however claim that the Romanian Land Forces randomly shot at , then charged upon , the peaceful mass of demonstrators , killing at least 35 of them .

The Slatina crisis reverberated in the capital and posed problems for the Conservative cabinet of

Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino . Reportedly , both the Minister of Agriculture Nicolae Flea and the Minister of Justice Dissescu were ready to hand in their resignations . Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti himself was arrested for sedition , but soon after checked himself into Filantropia Hospital . He averted sentencing when the prosecutors were unable to conclusively prove this involvement .

Overall , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti claimed to have been held in judicial custody for some forty separate incidents , stressing that all these convictions were owed to political crimes ? while reporting this statement , T. Vianu noted that at least some should in fact be considered punishments for various misdemeanors . In time , the anarchist boyar had also come to be known as an inveterate criminal and jailbird , which attracted him the disparaging moniker Bogdan @-@ V?c?re?ti (after V?c?re?ti prison in Bucharest) . Others twisted his birth name into the parodic Bogdan @-@ Ciupe?ti (from a ciupi , " to gyp ") .

Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti consolidated his own estate when he inherited a manor in Vlaici village (part of Colone?ti) . It was , beginning in 1908 , the center of his activities and home to his sizable art collection , as well as one of the first locations in Romania acting as a summer camp for painters and sculptors . The events he planned were attended by the Ileana regulars , and , in time , attracted virtually all other major en plein air painters of the day : Nicolae D?r?scu , ?tefan Dimitrescu , Iosif Iser , M. H. Maxy , Theodor Pallady , Camil Ressu .

In his recollections from that period , writer Victor Eftimiu suggested that the relationship was not entirely harmonious : " Camil Ressu , like other young unknown painters , found a lot of support and encouragement with Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti . Truth be told , the maecenate was rather thrifty , it profited from the needs of the debuting and impoverished artist . But without it things would 've been much worse , since others did not even offer as much " . He also argued that , contrary to speculation about his wealth , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti " maybe paid up so little because that is all he had to spare " . Reputedly , the Ileana boss was losing a fortune on maintaining the Vlaici manor , surrounded as it was by barren land .

= = = ?tirbey @-@ Vod? circle = = =

Circa 1908 , the Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti villa on Bucharest 's ?tirbey @-@ Vod? Street (near the Ci?migi Gardens) began hosting regular gatherings of intellectuals . Among those who attended in successive stages were the writers Macedonski , Eftimiu , Tudor Arghezi , Mateiu Caragiale , Benjamin Fondane , Gala Galaction , George Bacovia , Ion Minulescu , Claudia Millian , N. D. Cocea , Ion Vineanu , F. Brunea @-@ Fox , Eugeniu ?tef?nescu @-@ Est , A. de Herz , Ion C?lug?ru , and Adrian Maniu . It also hosted the artists Luchian , Artachino , Verona , Maxy , Iser , Steriadi , Dimitrescu , Pallady , Ressu , D?r?scu , Nina Arbore , Constantin Br?ncu?i , Constantin Medrea , Dimitrie Paciurea , Maria Ciurdea Steurer , Oscar Han , Nicolae Tonitza , Ion Theodorescu @-@ Sion , Friedrich Storck and Cecilia Cu?escu @-@ Storck , as well as Abgar Baltazar , Alexandru Br?t?anu , Alexandru Poitevin @-@ Skeletti , George Demetrescu Mirea , Rodica Maniu , and Marcel Janco . Also in 1908 , following Iser 's proposal , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti sponsored a Bucharest exhibit showcasing works by the renowned European painters Demetrios Galanis , Jean @-@ Louis Forain and Andr? Derain .

After 1910 , his patronage took on new forms . Literary critic ?erban Cioculescu notes that , at least initially , his relationship with Mateiu Caragiale included a financial aspect , since Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti inviting the destitute poet to dinner and provided him with funds . He was also granting lodging and material to various disadvantaged painters , as reported by his close friend Arghezi , and took a special interest in promoting the poetry of ?tefan Petic? (as well as that of Arghezi himself) . Arghezi claimed that such influence and moral support were also " decisive " in at least one other case , that of Luchian . In his memoir of the period , linguist Alexandru Rosetti mentioned that , on a daily basis , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti invited " over a dozen artists " for supper at his home .

Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's renewed his attacks on the Orthodox Church . Paul Cernat sees them as efforts to fabricate a religious alternative to the Orthodox mainstream , included in the larger phenomenon that was Symbolist cosmopolitanism . However , Galaction , who was to end his life as an Orthodox priest , recorded that the ?tirbey @-@ Vod? circle accommodated people of very

diverse backgrounds . At one time , they included , alongside Galaction himself , the Roman Catholic priest Carol Auner , the Protestant sculptor Storck , and the anarchist activist Panait Muşoiu . According to Cernat , Bogdan @-@ Piteşti 's bohemian society also grouped people believed associated with the illegal activities , and was noted for its " libertine " atmosphere . Galaction backed such interpretations , writing that the salon was also home to " a dozen con artists and prostitutes . " The atmosphere was colloquial and free @-@ spirited , to the point of being demeaning : story goes that the artists and writers were sometimes told licentious jokes , or had to endure grotesque farces .

A dandy , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Piteşti himself led a life of luxury , marked by excess , and had by then become a drug addict . He was a proud homosexual (or bisexual) , which did not prevent him from keeping as his concubine a younger woman , commonly referred to as Domnica (" Little Lady ") or Mica (" Little One ") . Born Alexandra Colanoski , she was born in 1894 to Romanian Poles from Bessarabia , and , according to memoirist Constantin Beldie , had previously been a prostitute at a nightclub .

Herself a libertine , Domnica was described by researchers as an androgynous or cross @-@ dressing presence . To other members of the Țirbey @-@ Vodă circle , painter @-@ designer Alexandru Brătianu was introduced as Bogdan @-@ Piteşti 's male lover . Theirs was a " degenerate " affair , according to Oscar Han ; Han also quotes Bogdan @-@ Piteşti 's admiration for the male body , including male genitalia , as the only physical beauties which could withstand time .

= = = Cantacuzino Conservative and Seara = = =

Around 1912 , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Piteşti 's political influence was on the rise . He had begun associating with an inner faction of the Conservative Party , which had as its leader Grigore Gheorghe Cantacuzino , the Mayor of Bucharest . Afterward , Bogdan @-@ Piteşti became the publisher of Seara , but was reportedly a front for Cantacuzino , who used him to test the impact of his agenda on the Romanian public . Seara 's main negative campaign at the time focused on Take Ionescu and his Conservative @-@ Democrats , who , to Cantacuzino 's displeasure , had been co @-@ opted in government by the other mainstream Conservatives . The paper published gossip columns and lampoons having Ionescu , Alexandru Bădăru and Nicolae Titulescu for their main targets .

By then , like many " Germanophile " Conservatives , Bogdan @-@ Piteşti had come to support the Romanian Kingdom 's alliance with the German Empire and Austria @-@ Hungary . This view was popularized by means of his literary club , and support for the Central Powers was also voiced by Arghezi at Seara . In September 1914 , a German consortium purchased the paper (together with Cantacuzino 's other gazette , Minerva) , and Bogdan @-@ Piteşti was kept on as a simple columnist . Throughout the interval , Bogdan @-@ Piteşti was himself an outspoken Germanophile . His circle , which was already hostile to the National Liberal cabinet of Ion I. C. Brătianu , welcomed the diverse groups who were alarmed by Romania 's probable entry into the war : the pro @-@ German Conservatives , the supporters of proletarian internationalism , and the committed pacifists . The artistic clientele was also represented in the Germanophile group at large , but , Cernat 's writes , did so for sheer dependency rather than actual convictions .

Suspicious soon arose that Bogdan @-@ Piteşti had become a veritable agent of influence . According to Zambaccian , it was Bogdan @-@ Piteşti who actually dropped a hint that his support for Germany was a lucrative employment . Through various notes in scattered diaries , most of which have been lost , Caragiale reputedly accused Bogdan @-@ Piteşti taking Germany 's money to promote her interests in Romania , and to assist her foreign propaganda effort . Such assessments , like Caragiale 's allegation that Bogdan @-@ Piteşti was not knowledgeable in art , reflected conflicts between the two figures , and their overall reliability remains doubtful . It is however possible that Caragiale himself borrowed , and never returned , some 10 @, @ 000 lei , siphoned out of the German propaganda funds by Bogdan @-@ Piteşti .

= = = Libertatea and propaganda wars = = =

Between October 1915 and June 1916 , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti managed another press venue , Libertatea (" Freedom ") . Its political director was retired statesman Nicolae Fleva , later replaced by Arghezi . In February 1916 , Galaction and Arghezi launched Cronica , another review with a pro @-@ German agenda , and which may itself have been published with discreet assistance from Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti . Although Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti , Domnica and Caragiale paid a mysterious visit to Berlin in early 1916 , they were never listed as foreign spies by Siguran?a Statului counter @-@ intelligence . Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's name then surfaced in a February 1916 conversation between German statesman Matthias Erzberger and Raymund Netzhammer , the Catholic Archbishop of Bucharest . Erzberger asked if the Vlaici landowner could ever help advance the Germanophile cause ; the Archbishop , a loyal German subject , replied that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was unreliable . Allegations later surfaced that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was one of the men receiving payoffs from the German spy Albert E. Günther , manager of Steaua Român? company . The dossier attesting this was lost , but secondary sources have it that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti alone received 840 @,@ 000 lei from Günther 's hands .

The contributors to Seara and Libertatea were , in general , outspoken social and cultural critics , with diverse grievances against the establishment . Historian Lucian Boia argues that , even though Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was on the German payroll , his switch from the Francophiles could have been a genuine form of conservatism . Boia thus notes that Seara was supportive of the Central Powers from the 1914 build @-@ up to the war , that is even before Cantacuzino had come to decide which side he liked best . The core group of Seara men included socialists of various hues : Arghezi , who claimed that Serbian nationalism was the spark of the war ; Felix Aderca , who depicted the German Empire as the more progressive belligerent ; and Rodion , who rendered the complains of Germanophile intellectuals from Moldavia . Others were left @-@ wing refugees from the Russian Empire , who wanted Romania to join the Central Powers and help liberate Bessarabia : Alexis Nour , from the Poporanist faction , and the old anarchist Zamfir Arbore . Seara was also a platform for some disgruntled Romanians from Transylvania region , a Romanian irredenta under Austro @-@ Hungarian rule . They included a mainstream Conservative commentator , Ilie B?rbulescu , who advised Romanians to not to focus on Transylvania , and prioritized action against the Russians . Two distinct voices were those of poet Dumitru Karnabatt , who identified the Entente Powers with Pan @-@ Slavism or British imperialism ; and Ion Gorun , the Transylvanian writer and Habsburg loyalist . Beyond politics , Seara came out with news on culture , selected for publishing by Ion Vinea and poet Jacques G. Costin .

The left @-@ wing preoccupations were also an important feature of Libertatea . Its opening manifesto called for a large @-@ scale social reform , which it claimed was more important to Romanians than any National Liberal project to recover Transylvania from its Austro @-@ Hungarian overlord . It enlisted contributions , generally less political than those at Seara , from literary figures such as Vinea , Demostene Botez , I. Dragoslav , Adrian Maniu and I. C. Vissarion .

Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti regularly published his own articles in the two newspapers he directed , signing them with the pseudonym Al . Dodan . The early texts express his Russophobia and commiseration over France 's alliance with Tsarist autocracy , the world 's " most savage , most ignorant and bloodiest oligarchy " . By 1915 , assessing that Romania 's national interest rested with the Habsburgs and the Germans , and arguing that Romanian peasants were worse off than their counterparts in Transylvania , he was urging his countrymen to ponder the benefits of Bessarabia 's annexation to Romania .

= = = Wartime , disgrace and death = = =

The neutrality years also rekindled controversy over Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's daily affairs . A scandal erupted in 1913 , after banker Aristide Blank brought Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti to court on charges of blackmail . The plaintiff enlisted the services of lawyer Take Ionescu , and the defendant , represented by Fleva , was ultimately sentenced to a jail term . Throughout the scandal , Seara hosted articles by Arghezi , professing Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's innocence . In 1916 , just before

Romania entered the war as an Entente country , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was again involved in a legal dispute with the Francophiles Take Ionescu and Barbu ?tef?nescu @-@ Delavrancea , with Constantin Dissescu as his lawyer .

The Ententist bid resulted in major initial defeats , and a Romanian theater of war was opened . The country suffered heavily , and Bucharest was taken by the Central Powers . Reputedly , the occupation forces picked up Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti from his cell at V?c?re?ti , where he was still serving time . Like Arghezi , Macedonski , Galaction and Mateiu Caragiale , he remained in German @-@ occupied territory . Despite his apparent triumph over the Ententist lobby , he kept a low profile : according to popular but unverifiable rumors , he was even arrested once the occupation authorities angrily discovered his uselessness for the cause . He was however a free man as of April 12 , 1917 , the date of his marriage to Domnica Colanoski . One account has it that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti proceeded to denounce his Ileana colleague , Petrescu G?in? , who had published a set of anti @-@ German cartoons . As a result , the Romanian draftsman spent the war years in German captivity .

Once Romania recovered possession over its southern areas , Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was reportedly prosecuted for treason and was again sent to V?c?re?ti . Others however note that this last sentence , passed in 1919 , was not in fact related to his wartime dealings , but merely to his fraudulent activities , and that only by coincidence did Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti share a prison with the convicted collaborationist journalists (Arghezi , Karnabatt , Ioan Slavici) .

T. Vianu notes that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti spent his last years " in ignominy " , while Cernat describes his definitive fall to the status of " a pariah " . The art promoter died four years after the war ended , at his house in Bucharest , having suffered a myocardial infarction . According to Cernat , his " grotesque " death was sudden , catching him in the middle of a telephone conversation . Reportedly , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's last wish had been for his collection to pass into state property and be kept as a museum .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Role and influence = = =

Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was the subject of fascination in the literary and artistic community . Lucian Boia writes about his seductive " legend " , which fused an " imaginative and generous intellectual " with a " con artist " who " lived life as he saw fit " . Art historian Corina Teac? notes that , like Félix Fénéon , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was in fact fabricating his own myth : " every part of his public image was a removable mask . " The art institutions he helped establish were , nevertheless , reputable . According to Paul Cernat , his influential circle was " an excellent medium of transmission for the modern spirit , an informal institution and one of the first coagulant factors for [Romania 's] first post @-@ symbolist modernism . " Writing earlier , Theodor Enescu proposed that , like own group , the ?tirbey @-@ Vod? Street salon and Macedonski 's circle were the only trend @-@ setters active between the decline of Junimea society (ca . 1900) and the establishment of the modernist literature magazine Sbur?torul (1919) . Cernat additionally notes that , while the writer Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was " neglectful and improvident " when it came to preserving his own works , those essays and prose poems that survived have a genuine value . Such judgments were also passed on his topical art essays . Art historian Petru Comarnescu writes that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's " critical intuitions " were superior to those of fellow collectors Zambaccian and Ioan Kalinderu ; critic Nicolae Oprescu also assesses that , without Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti , ?tefan Luchian would be lost to Romanian art .

The Romanian art environment cherished , then despised , its anarchist patron . In his moments of glory , he received homages from many of his writer friends , as notebooks and albums compiled especially for him . At a later date , all sides of the dispute were united in expressing criticism for at least some of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's deeds . According to Galaction , he was a " hajduk " , who " robbed away and gave away . " Zambaccian portrayed him as one " created from a mold in which

the evil and the good genius were present in equal measure . [...] Cynical and suave , generous on one side , a con artist on the other , Al . Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti relished the abjection that he served with cynicism " . As Teac? notes , both Zambaccian and sculptor Oscar Han were among those forever " seduced " by Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's duplicity . In 1970 , Han wrote : " we cannot judge [him] under common law . He remains an absurdity . " While nationalist journalist Pamfil ?eicaru dismissed him as " a scoundrel " , Macedonski argued that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was " a wonderful prose writer and an admirable poet " . Benjamin Fondane , the modernist poet @-@ philosopher , praised Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti as a man of exquisite taste , concluding that : " He was made of the greatest of joys , in the most purulent of bodies . How many generations of ancient boyars had come to pass , like unworthy dung , for this singular earth to be generated ? "

Writer and critic Eugen Lovinescu , also a modernist , was bitterly opposed to the views of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti and most other intellectuals who sided with Germany : in 1922 , he published the article *Revizuire morale* (" Moral Revisions ") , which reminded the public about the controversy surrounding the art collector and his associates (Arghezi , N. D. Cocea) . A socialist acquaintance and an oral historian , Constantin Bacalba?a was convinced that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was the prototype " inferior degenerate " and , in his political life , a manipulator of " the uncultured minds . " Retrospective criticism of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was also voiced by Comarnescu and co @-@ author Ionel Jianu . Although they pay homage to Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's artistic qualities , the two speak of his " reproachable faults " and " con artist coups " , finding in him " an exhibitionist determined to trick and scandalize " , or an " enfant terrible " .

Commentators have been tempted to compare Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti with some controversial characters in world history , most often the prototype of self @-@ seekers , Alcibiades . Others likened Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti to the Renaissance writer and notorious blackmailer Pietro Aretino (Zambaccian stresses that , unlike Aretino , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti never duped his artists) . Comarnescu proposed that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti and the equally controversial Arghezi were better understood through the logic of Hinduism (" the ancient Indian ethics ") : " good and evil are not opposed , but collocated , combined , in a state of confusion " . Taking in view Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's preference for orality , his shady political connections , and his mostly informal channels of influence , Cernat concluded that , " the necessary changes having been made " , one could compare Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti with Nae Ionescu , a philosopher and far right activist whose career spanned the interwar period , and who had also debuted as a Symbolist .

= = = Anecdotes = = =

Several anecdotes concerning Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's morals and extravagant lifestyle were in circulation from his lifetime . In 1912 , Macedonski published an autobiographical Christmas story . It tells how , inspired by Macedonski 's desire to feed his family a traditional turkey feast , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti sent him the bird stuffed with 50 gold lei . As T. Vianu writes , such " attitudes of a grand feudal lord " made Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti into an " indisputably picturesque " person . The account was partly confirmed by Constantin Beldie , who also noted that , during those years , Alexandru Macedonski was " starving " and had to provide for " a house full of children " . Zambaccian however cites a contrasting story once told by actor Ion Iancovescu . It suggests that , during the wartime famine , Macedonski asked Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti to pay him 1 million lei for one of the few surviving copies of *Bronzes* ; Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti bluntly offered him 5 lei ? Macedonski gave in , commenting that " he is capable of changing his mind , that con artist ! " Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's mood swings were also discussed by memoirist Radu Rosetti . He writes that the boyar scarcely minded when his fortune was being siphoned away by some members of his retinue , but that he publicly humiliated Galaction , and even Domnica , over random expenses .

The relationship between Mateiu Caragiale and his one @-@ time patron has attracted special interest from period historians . Early on , the aspiring poet wrote a special piece in honor of his senior friend ? called *Dreg?torul* (" The Mandarin ") , it is included in one of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's albums . That accord degenerated during the late 1910s , to the point where Caragiale , whose diary spoke of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's homosexuality in dismissive terms (calling him " a blusterer of the

anti @-@ natural vice ") , laid out a plan to loot the ?tirbey @-@ Vod? Street villa . According to the same author , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti turned to passive homosexuality because he was impotent . Caragiale 's diary also sketched a portrait of Domnica Bogdan , questioning her morality in harsh terms .

Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's other relationships with his other protégés could also fluctuate between extremes . According to an anecdote of the time , he advanced Luchian a large sum of money , which the painter used for a trip to Sinaia . Luchian then upset Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti by not inviting him over , and was punished with a telegram addressed " To the ugliest tourist in Sinaia " (a pun on Luchian 's proverbial bad looks) . In the mid @-@ 1910s , Luchian had been incapacitated by multiple sclerosis . Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was one of the last to visit him before his death in June 1916 , recording for posterity Luchian 's resigned remark : " I 'm going away " .

The main first @-@ hand account of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's 1919 imprisonment comes from Ioan Slavici 's Închisorile mele (" My Prisons ") . According to Slavici , the art patron had a luxury cell with a view over Bucharest . Alexandru Rosetti , citing Arghezi , records one of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's witticisms on the issue of prison life . When a Gendarme wrongly attempted to push him into Arghezi 's line of suspected traitors , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti snapped : Pardon , eu sunt escroc ! (" Pardon me , [but] I 'm a con artist ! ") . Zambaccian writes that , during the first of his legal battles with Take Ionescu , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti commented on Ionescu 's deposition : " He sure is talented , that crook ! " The pro @-@ Entente nationalist Octavian Goga was especially upset by Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's stances , and , in his record of 1916 events (including the Ionescu trial) , wrote him off as a " bandit " fed with " German money " .

= = = Fictional character = = =

After the World War , according to Beldie , actor Iancovescu introduced impressions of Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti to his cabaret routine . It showed the convicted Germanophile and an unnamed German official , who looked into the mislanding of propaganda funds on supporting petty " henchmen " . To this charge , the fictional Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti replies : " I have consumed your money , this much is true , but I did not pull one on you ! For how is it that you could imagine me , a traitor of my country , not also being a con artist ? " According to Beldie , the account has a grain of truth : instead of using money to revive the Germanophile cause , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti directed them into his art collection . A somewhat similar version of this urban legend is included in the memoirs of a National Liberal adversary , I. G. Duca , who sees Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's retort as a paradoxical sign of injured patriotism : " Did you perhaps think that you might buy off some of Romania 's honest people ? You would be dead wrong , in this land one can only buy off the con artists , only con artists such as myself . " Duca concludes : " this reply , with its admirable and atavistic national dignity , tempts me to forget , though not to forgive , the utter turpitude that we call Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's life . "

Despite their relationship having declined from friendship to hatred , Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti 's style and his mundane interests are occasionally seen as sources of inspiration for Caragiale 's only novel , Craii de Curtea @-@ Veche (completed in 1928) . Some have noted that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti has a lot in common with at least one of the three protagonists . He and his wife were both characters in Ion Vinea 's novels Venin de mai (" May Venom ") and Lunatecii (" The Lunatics ") ? Alexandru as Adam Gun? , Domnica as wife Iada Gun? . Both novels portray the Bogdans ' cultural circle , allude to their influence in making young people reject all conventionalism , and show them promoting vice as virtue . This lifestyle has taken its toll on Adam Gun? , who is a physical ruin and slowly loses his hold on reality . Vinea 's books repeat claims that Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti was abusing drugs , and that Domnica was originally a prostitute .

More fiction work dealing with the Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti circle was published from a casual contributor to Seara , Lucrezia Karnabatt . In her 1922 novel , Demoniaca , she portrays her employer as " Basile Dan " , a sinister traitor of his country and a cynical pornographer . Ion C?lug?ru used Alexandru Bogdan @-@ Pite?ti as the inspiration for " Alexandru L?pu?neanu " , the boyar character in his novel Don Juan Coco?atul (" Don Juan the Hunchback ") . Literary historian

George Călinescu notes that this fictional portrait shows : " The dignity in gossip , the boyar carriage , the refinement that the apparent vulgarity cannot bring to ruin , the blasé and cynical lechery [...] . " In one episode in the book , Lăpușneanu simulates agony and receives a Catholic confession that (he insists) must be read in Latin instead of French ; elsewhere , Lăpușneanu 's eccentric and adulterous wife Fetișă (" Little Girl ") shows up on a battlefield , wearing nothing more than a swimsuit .

Tudor Arghezi dedicated Bogdan Ți some of his first poetry writings . As art critics , Arghezi and Theodor Cornel published a comprehensive biographical study on their patron (part of their *Figuri contemporane din România* dictionary , 1909) . However , according to Corina Teacă , the encomium Ți like and conveniently imprecise entry may have been sent in , or at least approved of , by Bogdan Ți . Arghezi also made his sponsor the hero of a small eponymous poem , wherein he is called *Lombard bastard cu ochi de rouă* (" bastard Lombard with the eyes of dew ") .

= = = Collection and estate = = =

By the 1910s , Bogdan Ți 's art interests gave birth to a collection of as few as 967 or as many as 1 Ți 500 individual works , most of them hosted by his estate in Colonești . They comprised objects created by prominent Romanian visual artists , including , alongside his early associates , Nina Arbore , Constantin Brâncuși , Oscar Han , Aurel Jiquidi , Maria Ciurdea Steurer , Constantin Medrea , Ary Murnu , Dimitrie Paciurea , Nicolae Petrescu Ți Găină , Alexandru Satmari , Francisc Țirato , Cecilia Cuțescu Ți Storck , Jean Alexandru Steriadi , Friedrich Storck , Ion Theodorescu Ți Sion , and Nicolae Tonitza . Of the total , around 900 works were of Romanian provenance . Among the foreign artists whose work was featured in the collection were Georges Rochegrosse and Frank Brangwyn . The section dedicated to newer works of art was designed and opened as the first the modern art museum in Romania .

The Bogdan Ți trust included many samples of Luchian 's art . Two of his famous paintings featured there were *Lăutul* (" Washing the Hair ") ? which Bogdan Ți is said to have likened to the luminous oil paintings of Paolo Veronese , and *Safta Florăreasa* (" Safta the Flower Girl ") ? originally part of the Luchian family collection . Also included was the 1907 oil portrait of Luchian 's cousin , Alecu Literatu (" Alecu the Literary Man ") . They were accompanied by the 1906 pastel *Durerea* (" Pain ") , which had been reproduced in a 1914 issue of *Seara* , and by the paintings *De Nămezi* (" Lunchtime ") and *Lica , fetișă cu portocală* (" Lica , the Girl with the Orange ") . Among the works in the series were two portraits of Bogdan Ți : an ink drawing , copies of which were circulated with Bogdan Ți 's election manifesto of 1899 , and a since Ți lost oil painting .

Bogdan Ți was the subject of several anonymous sketches , including two 1896 vignettes , published in *Adevărul* , and a 1917 drawing signed Correggio . He is also depicted in an affectionate cartoon published in 1914 by Petrescu Găină . Domnica Bogdan herself sat as a model for various artists , and was notably depicted in works by Camil Ressu , Pallady and the Bulgarian Ți born painter Pascin . In 1920 , Bogdan Ți commissioned Paciurea to complete a portrait bust of Domnica . The same year , Dimitrescu painted her an oil Ți on Ți cardboard portrait in dominant shades of brown (with touches of red and gray) . Artists who illustrated works by Bogdan Ți include , in addition to himself , George Demetrescu Mirea , Ion Georgescu and Satmari .

The Colonești manor and its art fund fell victim to neglect . According to T. Vianu , the collection was " blown over by the wind of devastation " even during the interwar years . In 1924 , in defiance of its owner 's final request , it was subject to a hasty public auction . This drew protests from literary figures such as Cezar Petrescu , Perpessicius and Victor Eftimiu . As a result of the auction , many works passed into the collections of Zambaccian , Alexandru G. Florescu , Iosif Dona and several others . Of them , Zambaccian attributed the incident to the National Liberal government 's unwillingness to accept donations from " a compromised person " . He and several other commentators place responsibility for the sales on Finance Minister Ion Lapedatu , who is believed

to have either hesitated in assessing the collection or to have plotted with businessmen who wanted it sold cheaply . Zambaccian was to be the eventual owner of L?utul . It became a feature of his own Bucharest museum , and appears with Zambaccian in an oil portrait by Pallady .

Under the communist regime , the Vlaici building was transformed into a branch for the state @-@ owned producer of agricultural machinery , and , in 2004 , belonged to its successor , Agromec (although still largely unused) . Beldie recounts that , under communism , the destitute Domnica Bogdan worked as a hygienist at Bucharest Central Hospital .