

In memoriam

**Keith Hitchins (1931-2020):
Trailblazer, Ambassador, and
Elder Statesman of Romanian Studies**

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Introduction

In midst of his 90th year, Prof. Keith A. Hitchins (2 April 1931 – 1 November 2020) has passed away. Professor of History at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, where he taught from 1967 to retirement in 2019, Prof. Hitchins was universally-known for his superlative grasp of an exceedingly complex and problematic Romanian past, culture, and civilization. He was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of Romanian bibliography and publications as well as the possessor of a legendary library, both of which he shared generously and without reservation. More than that, he was a much beloved and respected mentor to generations of students and a friend and colleague of numerous American, European, and Romanian scholars.

Keith Hitchins was a pioneer of Romanian studies in the United States. As a member of the first generation of indigenous Romanianists in the US, his path-breaking visits to Romania, writings, contacts, and patient efforts to navigate the ins and outs of Romanian culture and academia built bridges for the generations of scholars who followed.

Prof. Hitchins was not only a trailblazer. His focus from the beginning was to build scholarly bridges between American and Romanian academics. As such, he became an ambassador in several ways. In the first place, by establishing his own scholarly credibility and seriousness, he created legitimacy in Romania for the generations of American scholars who followed in his wake. In the second place, he became an emissary of Romanian civilization and culture to the Western academic world through his writings (including a phenomenal number of book reviews), his lectures, and his mediating of Romanian scholarly and other literature to American libraries and students of Romania. It was owing to Hitchins that “the cultural dialogue” between Westerners and

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Romanians began¹. Romanian culture had no better friend and interpreter than Keith Hitchins².

Lastly, through more than sixty years of professional engagement with Romania, he became the elder statesman of Americans preoccupied with the Romanian lands, and, in fact, of all those everywhere concerned with Romanian studies. One look at his bibliography is all that is needed to establish this fact³. Other evidences might include his election as an honorary member of the Romanian Academy in 1991, and his being awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000 by the premier US academic association for Slavic and East European Studies, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies⁴.

We have suffered a great loss with the passing of Keith Hitchins, but his monument will be these real and lasting achievements⁵.

Background, education, and university career

Prof. Keith Arnold Hitchins was born in Schenectady, New York in 1931⁶. His parents, Henry Arnold Hitchins and Lillian Turrian Hitchins, came from

¹ The phrase is from Corina Teodor, *Laudatio. Pentru conferirea titlului de Profesor Honoris Causa al Universității "Petru Maior" din Târgu Mureș domnului profesor Keith Hitchins (Universitatea Urbana, Illinois)*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu (ed.), *Keith Hitchins și istoria românilor, "Vatra"*, Târgu Mureș, vol. 33 (2006), no. 7, p. 42.

² Which explains why no fewer than eight Romanian universities, including the big three in Cluj, Iași, and București, awarded him honorary doctorates. In general I look askance at honorary degrees for academics, but these were genuine and merited recognitions of what Prof. Hitchins had done for Romanian scholarship and culture.

³ Marcel Popa (ed.), *Keith Hitchins at 85. Biographical and Professional Information*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2016, 111 p. The first version of this bibliography, *Professor Keith Hitchins at Seventy*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2001, was 75 pages; the second, *Professor Keith Hitchins at Seventy-Five*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2006, grew to 86 pages; and the third, *Keith Hitchins at 80*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2011, reached 100 pages. For a good survey, see Vasile Pușcaș, *Keith Hitchins: Honesty and the Writing of History*, in „Transylvanian Review”, vol. 20 (2011), no. 3, p. 88-125 (p. 101-125 is a bibliography).

⁴ For decades, Romanianists were increasingly annoyed that Romania was incomprehensibly included under the rubric of “Slavic Studies”. This was, in fact, a relic of the Cold War, which pitted the West against the Russians (i.e. the Slavic world). Happily, since 2010, the association is known as the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Unhappily, its journal remains “The Slavic Review”.

⁵ I am indebted to Prof. Glenn E. Torrey, who was my first teacher of things Romanian, for sharing with me his reminiscences about Prof. Hitchins and the early days of Americans studying in Romania. Prof. Torrey was in the second group of American Fulbrighters in 1961-1962, along with Gretchen Buehler and Bill Fell. Also useful in this regard are the contributions by Hitchins (p. 63-64) and Torrey (p. 140) in Liliana Ursu, Ioana Jeronim, and Archbishop Chrysostomos (eds.), *Să vezi lumea cum o văd ceilalți* [To see the world as others see it], București, Editura Vremea, 2003; the collections of interviews, memorials, and tributes in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 29-87; by Hitchins (p. 50-52, 139-149) and Kellogg (p. 53-56) in Remus Pricopie, Dorina Guțu, and Mihai Moriou (eds.), *Fulbright Ripple Effect on International Education*, București, Comunicare.ro, 2010; and Lucian Boia, *Tineri americani în România*, in Lucian Boia (ed.), *Dosarele secrete ale agentului Anton. Petru Comarnescu în arhivele Securității*, selected and introduced with commentary by Lucian Boia, București, Editura Humanitas, 2014, p. 231-273.

⁶ For the early years, see especially Corina Teodor, *Keith Hitchins în dialog cu Corina Teodor*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 29-35; and the obituary published by the Bond Funeral Home at

British and Swiss backgrounds, which provided him with a cosmopolitan perspective on life and probably sparked an early interest in foreign languages⁷. His mother passed away while he was young and he was particularly close to his father. It was not accidental that he dedicated his first book to his father and his second to his parents.

Prof. Hitchins was educated at Union College in Schenectady, one of the oldest (1795) and most respected liberal arts colleges in the US, graduating Phi Beta Kappa with a B. A. in 1952. This liberal education provided the essential foundation for his later multi-faceted approach to Romanian studies, and contributed to his belief in the necessity of an inter-disciplinary strategy to both civilizational analysis and area studies. In 1953, he received an M. A. in history from Harvard University. He followed this with the Ph. D. at Harvard.

Hitchins had the good fortune to study at Harvard with Robert Lee Wolff, who was one of the leaders of Balkan area studies in the US⁸. Wolff was an advocate both of the Western Civilization conceptualization of the past⁹ and of the interdisciplinary mode of attack on the past. Prof. Hitchins' encyclopedic curiosity reflected his mentor's methodology. Wolff also sparked his interest in Romania through his course on "The History of Southeastern Europe from the Fall of Constantinople to the Second World War". The youthful Hitchins was interested in Romania as a kind of *Terra Incognita*¹⁰, and Wolff urged him to study Romanian, which he did¹¹. As he discussed with Wolff his dissertation

www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/18868383/Keith-Hitchins/Schenectady/New-York/Bond-Funeral-Home (last accessed 1.12.2020). His grandparents spoke both German and French; in high school and at Union College, he studied Latin, French, Spanish, and Russian. He later affirmed that for the serious scholar, "Knowledge of the language of a country is essential". Corina Teodor, *art. cit.*, p. 35.

⁷ Eventually he knew nearly twenty languages. Though this will not be discussed below, his linguistic skills were such that he was also a respected expert on Georgian, Tadzhik, and Kurdish history, literature, and culture, and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

⁸ Wolff was the author of one of the few scholarly treatments of Southeastern Europe available in English, *The Balkans in Our Time* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1956, revised edition 1974), which included Romania. Wolff had briefly visited Romania in 1944 and had acquired a surprising number of important Romanian books. He was also the co-author of Crane Brinton, John B. Christopher, and Robert Lee Wolff, *A History of Civilization* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1955), which went through five editions by 1976. I used both books as a student and professor.

⁹ In Brinton, Christopher, and Wolff, "Civilization" is used interchangeably with "Western Civilization".

¹⁰ One wonders how much Hitchins might have been influenced by Prof. Henry L. Roberts who taught at Columbia from 1948 to 1967. Roberts was the author of the still valuable *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951, 414 p.), and travelled in Rumania in 1944 with Wolff as American OSS East European (Balkan) experts. Hitchins's thoughts here mirror several prescient essays by Roberts later collected in his *Eastern Europe: Politics, Revolution, and Diplomacy* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1970); *Eastern Europe and the Balance of Power* (1956); *Politics in a Small State: The Balkan Example* (1960); and *Eastern Europe and the Historian* (1961).

¹¹ He subsequently took Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian at Harvard, and Hungarian and modern Greek at the *École des Langues Orientales* in Paris.

topic, Wolff showed him biographies of Șaguna by Ioan Lupaș¹² and Nicolae Popea¹³, and a volume of documents about Șaguna¹⁴, and suggested “he might do something about Șaguna”. When Hitchins received his Ph. D. from Harvard in 1964, he was informed by Prof. Wolff that his thesis was so good that the traditional dissertation defense had been waived. Hitchins later published an obituary for Wolff¹⁵, in which he wrote:

The wide range of Wolff's interests, his meticulous scholarship, and his high standards of style were constant sources of inspiration for a generation of younger scholars of Byzantine, Russian, and Balkan history. The intellectual stimulation and the friendship he gave will not soon be forgotten nor easily replaced.

Prof. Hitchins was an instructor and an assistant professor of history at Wake Forest University from 1958 to 1965, which he found to be an ideal place for a first appointment with bright students, supportive colleagues, and a pleasant environment. He then moved to an assistant professorship from 1965 to 1967 at Rice University, an up and coming center for American Habsburg studies under R. John Rath. Rath had arrived at Rice in 1963 from a full professorship at the University of Texas and one of his first steps was to found in 1965 the „Austrian History Yearbook”¹⁶. Part of Hitchins's new post included a position as associate editor of the AHY. This put him in on the ground floor of the newly burgeoning field of Habsburg studies in the US and brought him into contact with my mentors, Charles and Barbara Jelavich of Indiana University, who were the preeminent leaders in the field for the last half of the 20th century. Charles Jelavich was on the board of editors of the *Yearbook* from the outset as a longtime member of the US Committee to Promote Studies of the History of the Habsburg Monarchy, and Prof. Hitchins became a close personal friend and collaborator with the Jelaviches. I often heard them refer warmly to Keith with respect and approval.

Hitchins' tenure at Rice was relatively brief¹⁷, but he had become so rapidly prominent in the field (what was often referred to as “a hot commodity”), and

¹² Ioan Lupaș, *Mitropolitul Andreiu Saguna*, Sibiu, Tipografia Arhidiecezane, 1909, 404 p.; 1911₂, 338 p.

¹³ Nicolau Popea, *Archiepiscopul și Metropolitul Andreiu Baron de Șaguna*, Sibiu, Tipografia Arhidiecezane, 1897, 397 p.

¹⁴ Gheorghe Tulbure, *Mitropolitul Șaguna. Opera literară. Scrisori pastorale. Circulaři școlare. Diverse*, Sibiu, Tipografia Arhidiecezane, 1938, 456 p.

¹⁵ Keith Hitchins, *Robert Lee Wolff, 1915-1980*, in “Slavic Review”, vol. 40 (1981), no. 2, p. 336.

¹⁶ On Rath, see *Biographical Sketch of R. John Rath (1910-2001)*, R. John Rath Papers, University of Minnesota Archives, <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/14/resources/1539> (last accessed 9.12.2020).

¹⁷ Prof. Rath's disappointment was somewhat assuaged by the almost immediate hiring at Rice in 1968 of Gale Stokes, a student of the Jelaviches and eventually a luminary of Southeast European studies in the US, serving in 2003 as president of the American Association for the

he could not resist Prof. Ralph T. Fisher, Jr.'s offer in 1967 to become an associate professor at what would became his academic home for the rest of his life, the University of Illinois. Fisher was the founder and guiding spirit behind the Center for Russian and East European Studies at Illinois (which he directed between 1960 and 1987 and made one of the five leading such centers in the US), creator of the Illinois Summer Research Laboratory on Russian and East European Studies which attracted scholars from all over the US and internationally. However, Fisher's major achievement was the focused attention he gave to the Slavic and East European collection at the University of Illinois Library. He saw "building the library's holdings in the field as essential for attracting outstanding faculty and graduate students"¹⁸. Fisher's aim was to build the largest such collection at any university in America. Funding was one measure of Fisher's success: when he arrived at Illinois in 1958, the library acquisitions budget for the area was a minuscule \$5,000 a year. This rose to \$34,000 in 1960-1961, and by 1965-1966 had risen to over \$100,000¹⁹. Fisher's "enthusiasm and perseverance" were doubtless responsible for convincing Prof. Hitchins that Illinois was committed long term to the right goals. Fisher kept his end of the bargain, and was unquestionably a key advocate and encourager of Prof. Hitchins' scholarly and bibliographical work in Romanian Studies at Illinois²⁰. Prof. Hitchins rapidly advanced to a full professorship in 1969 at the University, likely with Fisher's enthusiastic support, when his exceptionally well researched and written first book appeared²¹.

Keith Hitchins, pioneer of Romanian studies

Prof. Hitchins' first became engaged with Romanian studies in 1957-1958 with a Fulbright fellowship at the Institut d'Études Roumaines of the Sorbonne in Paris where he studied with Emil Turdeanu and Jean Bouteière²². During that

Advancement of Slavic Studies, and the holder of Rath's Mary Gibbs Jones Professorship after Rath retired.

¹⁸ See Keith Hitchins's generous obituary, *In Memoriam: Ralph T. Fisher, 1920-2015*, in "Slavic Review", vol. 74 (2015), no. 4, p. 976-977.

¹⁹ On Fisher's career, see Ralph T. Fisher, *Swimming with the Current*, in "Russian History/Histoire Russe", vol. 21 (1994), no. 2, p. 149-170. Prof. Hitchins adds that Prof. Fisher's "success owed, in the first place, to his humanity and integrity" and "always thought of the center, the library, and the laboratory as cooperative ventures. Yet, everyone knew who the chief architect was. Such accomplishments and such modesty are rare things" (p. 977).

²⁰ It was representative that one of Hitchins' earliest articles was a collaborative piece: Lajos Jordáky and Keith Hitchins, *The History of the Habsburg Monarchy (1789-1918) in Romanian Historiography since 1945*, in "Austrian History Yearbook", vol. 4 (1968), p. 303-334.

²¹ This was his *The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1969, xi + 311 p.), which will be discussed below.

²² On this and what follows, Hitchins went into considerable detail at the 2010 Fulbright 50th Anniversary meeting in Bucureşti. See Keith Hitchins, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, in Remus Pricopie et al., *Fulbright Ripple Effect*, p. 139-149. Turdeanu remained a close friend. His course on the nineteenth century Romanian classics probably was the inspiration for Hitchins'

time, he decided to make Romanian history and culture his specialization. When later asked about “why I chose Romanian history as a subject for research”, he replied, “I suppose because it is intrinsically interesting. But it also offers unique opportunities for comparative studies and for illuminating the general processes of historical development”²³. He also travelled to Vienna to see the Habsburg archives and to Sremski Karlovci where he was further inspired to study the life and work of Bishop Andreiu Șaguna through working in the archives of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Habsburg Empire.

In 1960-1962, he became the first Fulbright scholar, along with Frederick Kellogg, in Iron Curtain Romania itself. From 1960-1961, he worked at the Institute of History in București, whose director Andrei Oțetea gave him strong and generous support, sometimes off the record. It was Oțetea who went out on a limb by arguing with Romanian archival and library officialdom that young American scholars – such as Hitchins and Torrey – had to be given open access not only to books but also to archives. If not, they would not make noteworthy contributions to Western knowledge of Romanian culture and the Romanian past, which, in the end, would be to the detriment of Modern Romania and Romanian civilization itself²⁴. He discovered that major academic libraries often had two card catalogues: a public one that had been sanitized for political and ideological reasons, and another with included those works officially prohibited for general audiences. He was pleased that he was allowed to use both.

Hitchins also met Petru Comarnescu, the noted art and literary scholar, who gave both Hitchins and Torrey much helpful advice about Romanian society, culture, and intellectual circles as well as about how to steer their way through the Romanian milieu and academic bureaucracy²⁵. Hitchins credits Comarnescu with doing more “than any other to make Romanians better acquainted with America and Americans”. Comarnescu “served as a mentor to young Americans studying in Bucharest [...]. I have always thought of Petru Comarnescu as someone who embodied the principles of the Fulbright experiment. He was, we might say, a Fulbrighter before the fact”²⁶. He also provided

life long preoccupation with Romanian literature. Boutière who taught him about medieval Romanian texts, wrote his dissertation on Creangă and influenced the young scholar's interest in both Romanian literature and folklore.

²³ Keith Hitchins, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, p. 149.

²⁴ Useful sources are the preface to Hitchins, *Rumanian National Movement*, p. vii-xi, and the acknowledgements in Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality. Andreiu Șaguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1977), p. vi-vii, which when read between the lines along with Prof. Torrey's insights have a lot to convey about the 1960s in Romania.

²⁵ It later transpired that Comarnescu was an agent of the Securitate assigned to keep an eye on these suspect young Americans, which is why, unlike most Romanians, he was not hesitant about contacts with Americans. See Lucian Boia, *Tineri americani, passim*. However, as Torrey notes, these reports were generally positive about his supposed targets and Hitchins comes off as pretty savvy in them.

²⁶ From remarks made at the 50th Anniversary Fulbright Conference in București in 2010. See Remus Pricopie et al., *Fulbright Ripple Effect*, p. 51. Comarnescu held a Ph. D. from the

them with many bibliographical suggestions and hard to get books, and apparently put him in touch with the legendary private Romanian book dealer, Radu Sterescu, who was the builder of libraries for countless subsequent American scholars²⁷. Sterescu was able to carry on with his more or less illegal activities because he was reputed to be protected by Ștefan Andrei, sometime Foreign Minister under Ceaușescu, who was a collector of Romanian first editions. Another source of books was Constantin Stavilă, whom he met at the Academy Library in București. The Stavilăs frequently invited him to dinner and through their contacts with Orthodox clergy, he met many churchmen²⁸. Lastly, in București, Paul Simionescu proved to be on much the same wave length as Hitchins when it came to books and bibliography.

Hitchins very quickly decided that he needed to assemble his own research library because of the paucity of Romanian holdings in American librairies, and since it was unlikely that he would get a teaching position at an institution with much of anything on Romania in their collections. He also decided that his library would not just be books related to his specialty, but would include standard historical works as well as books on all aspects of Romanian culture and civilization²⁹. This collection began in Paris in 1957-1958 and followed by Romania during 1960-1962. He saw these works as “indispensable for my work as well as that of my colleagues and students”³⁰. Hitchins’s amazing personal library, almost like Topsy, grew to such an extent that he eventually wound up converting his garage and most of his house into library space. In the end, he simply got rid of all the furniture in his house except for the kitchen to provide room for books. Need more be said?

Having found that the materials for his dissertation in Romania were much more extensive than he had thought, Hitchins applied for a second fellowship in 1961-1962, part of which was spent in Cluj. Cluj was the natural home for his research interests. Most significantly, it was the start of a lifelong friendship with Pompiliu Teodor, then working at the manuscript section of the Romanian Academy Library, later a stalwart of the Institute of History and the Department

University of Southern California in 1931 and was heavily involved in writing about America and promoting Romanian-American friendship. This naturally put him in a bad light after 1948 with the Communist regime and was one of the blackmail pressure points used to coerce Comarnescu into becoming an informer for the Securitate. A volume of his writings, including a 1946 translation of his dissertation was edited by Dan Grigorescu and Florin Toma, *Kalokagathon. An Anthology* with an introductory study and notes by Dan Grigorescu and a testimony by Valeriu Răpeanu (București, Editura Eminescu, 1985). See also Keith Hitchins, *Petru Comarnescu în anii '60: America revizitată*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 59-66, which includes several letters from Comarnescu to Hitchins in 1966-1969.

²⁷ See Keith Hitchins, *Petru Comarnescu în anii '60*, p. 60 ff.

²⁸ Idem, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, p. 145. Among others that he became close to in București over the years included Cornelia Bodea and Lucian Boia.

²⁹ For some detail, see *ibidem*, p. 146-147.

³⁰ Corina Teodor, *art. cit.*, p. 35.

of History at “Babeș-Bolyai” University³¹. Part of the same generation (Teodor was born in 1930; Hitchins in 1931), they not only shared a deep interest in the cultural and political history of 18th century; they found that they shared concerns on most everything else. Prof. Teodor had a complete command of the works and manuscripts of the scholars of the Transylvanian School, which Hitchins found immensely useful in his own work. Their daily routine usually began with the inevitable cups of strong fresh-brewed coffee, that anyone who subsequently became acquainted with Prof. Teodor knew were *de rigueur*. He was also soon invited to join the staff coffee break which allowed a good deal of informal discussion³². The two men formed a deep academic and personal bond that persisted to Teodor's untimely death in 2001, a connection that had been cemented when Prof. Teodor served as a Fulbright Lecturer in the Department of History at Illinois in 1972-1973.

While in Cluj, Hitchins also became acquainted with Romania's most outstanding specialist on the 18th century, Academician David Prodan, who was often on ill terms with the Communist academic bureaucrats even though he was a longtime advocate of Marxist approaches to the past. Prodan, for all that, was a genuine scholar, and his interdisciplinary methods were admired by Hitchins. Prof. Hitchins later wrote that Teodor and Prodan “aided me perhaps more than they realize in our discussions of the history of the Rumanians of Transylvania”³³.

Hitchins was in Cluj and Sibiu, not only during 1961-1962, but also during 1965-1966 and 1969-1970. He developed a close relationship with Mihail Triteanu, who was the Director of the Library of the Romanian Academy (1961-1969). Triteanu not only provided generous support for Hitchins' work, but also cooked breakfast every morning for the young American scholar at the Academy Library³⁴. Prof. Hitchins made prodigious book acquisitions in Bucureşti and especially in Cluj at the Academy Library, at the Institute of History (which had a whole basement full of pre-1948 books and journals that they were most generous in sharing with serious scholars), from his amazing network of friends and acquaintances³⁵, and at various and sundry anticariats. Triteanu, I was told, facilitated the shipping of most of these books back to the

³¹ See particularly Keith Hitchins, *A Remembrance of Pompiliu Teodor*, in Corina Teodor (ed.), *Pompiliu Teodor și lumea prin care a trecut*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2016, p. 127-131; and Keith Hitchins, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, p. 143.

³² Keith Hitchins, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, p. 144.

³³ Idem, *Rumanian National Movement*, p. xi.

³⁴ Hitchins noted that, although everyone he met was friendly, these “usually ceased when I left the building” (Keith Hitchins, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, p. 144). Among others that he was close to in Cluj were Liviu Maior and Vasile Puşcaş. Eventually, he befriended several generations of students at Cluj.

³⁵ Any scholar who has spent serious time in Romania can testify to the stunning generosity with which his or her Romanian colleagues share copies of their books and bibliographical knowledge.

US by simply ignoring the usual mountain of obligatory red-tape. This was the start of Hitchins' own legendary personal library, but also led later on to the bulk of the University of Illinois's superb Romanian collection acquired by Hitchins. This latter provided a bonanza for American scholars, especially those able to participate in Illinois' amazing summer laboratories on Russia and Eastern Europe.

Among others in Cluj and Sibiu that Prof. Hitchins singled out for notice were István Semlyén, Deputy Director at the Academy Library, who facilitated his “work in a variety of ways”; Ștefan Pascu, who made possible access to valuable materials³⁶; Sofron Vlad, Director of the Romanian Orthodox Theological Institute in Sibiu, who gave Keith “his support when it was badly needed”; and Protopop Ioan N. Beju, Director of the same Institute's Library to whom Prof. Hitchins had “Above all [...] a special debt [...] for his never-failing professional and moral support”³⁷. It was at Sibiu that he was given permission to study the Șaguna archive, which would be key for his second book. On his way home in 1966, he began research in the Hungarian National Archives and at the Széchényi National Library, both in Budapest.

In 1966, the Jelaviches, in cooperation with Rice's Rath, organized the pathbreaking international Indiana University Conference on the Nationality Problem in the Habsburg Monarchy: A Critical Reappraisal, April 1-6³⁸. This conference was considered a significant mile post in the study of Habsburg history. It was also an important step forward in Romanian-American scholarly relations as a large official Romanian delegation participated for the first time in an American academic conference. This was expedited by Hitchins' contacts so carefully nurtured in the early 1960s. Among the leaders of the delegation were the directors of the history institutes in București and Cluj, Andrei Oțetea and Ștefan Pascu, both of whom had first become acquainted with American scholarship through Hitchins.

The proceedings of the seminal Indiana conference were published in three hefty volumes of „The Austrian History Yearbook”³⁹. Keith Hitchins was an associate editor for all three volumes of this enormous undertaking. The first volume dealt with integrating and disintegrating forces in the Habsburg Empire and the dominant nationalities in the Monarchy. The second was devoted to the Slavic, Italian, and Romanian nationalities. And the third volume carried articles on religion, foreign policy, economic issues, the collapse of the empire, and the

³⁶ And kept the Securitate informed on Hitchins' activities as the CNSAS files show.

³⁷ On Triteanu and the others, see Keith Hitchins, *Rumanian National Movement*, p. xi; and idem, *Orthodoxy and Nationality. Andrei Șaguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1977, p. vii-viii. At Sibiu he befriended Aurel Jivi and, especially, Mircea Păcurariu, who became the dean of Romanian church historians.

³⁸ See Charles Jelavich and R. John Rath, *The Conference*, in “Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. III (1967), Pt.1, p. 1-7.

³⁹ “Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. III (1967), Pt. 1, ix + 308 p.; Pt. 2, iv + 531 p.; and Pt. 3, iv + 418 p.

state of Habsburg Studies in the US and Europe as well as an extensive index. The session on the Habsburg Minorities was chaired by Ștefan Pascu, with papers being presented by Stephen Fischer-Galati⁴⁰ and Andrei Oțetea⁴¹. John Campbell and Raymond Grew were the discussants⁴². In his concluding remarks, Rath noted with pleasure that

[...] the frequency with which both groups [the Americans and the Europeans] clearly understood and even sympathized with each other's approaches was remarkable. Equally refreshing was the amount of agreement between East European and Western scholars on many basic issues and the total absence, with one single exception, of the heated nationalistic polemics which have all too frequently marred discussions of the nationality questions of the old monarchy. The atmosphere at Bloomington, Indiana, was entirely different from that of the International Congresses of Historical Sciences at Stockholm in 1960 or even Vienna in 1965 [...]. It became obvious at Bloomington [...] a few American historians at times seemed [...] to voice stronger antipathy to the Habsburg government than scholars from areas which once belonged to the old monarchy [...]. There was a general feeling that West and East European and American historians need to continue to study the problem on a comparative basis and in close cooperation with each other⁴³.

It was not an accident that for years after, the “1966 Indiana Habsburg Conference” served as a familiar reference point in East European area studies.

Another important contribution of Prof. Hitchins to the early years of Romanian Studies were the five volumes of the journal „Rumanian Studies”, which he edited from 1970 to 1986 with the support of the University of Illinois. The idea for the journal had been born out of discussions with Petru Comarnescu and Glenn Torrey. While Hitchins and Torrey rounded up American contributors, Comarnescu circulated a journal prospectus to Romanian cultural authorities and recruited contributors from his large circle of friends⁴⁴. It was agreed that the scope of the journal would be “to present the fundamental problems of Romanian historical and cultural development from both Romanian and American perspectives.” When Comarnescu came to the US in 1968 on a lecture tour (which included stops at Illinois with Hitchins, Emporia State with Torrey, and Wichita State with Richard Todd), he further pressed the Romanian Ambassador, Corneliu Bogdan, and the cultural attaché to do all they could to support the journal. When he returned to Romania he continued his campaign, directly

⁴⁰ Stephen Fischer-Galati, *The Rumanians and the Habsburg Monarchy*, in “Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. III (1967), Pt. 2, p. 430-449.

⁴¹ Andrei Oțetea, *The Rumanians and the Disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy*, in “Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. III (1967), Pt. 2, p. 450-476.

⁴² John C. Campbell and Raymond Grew, *Comments*, in “Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. III (1967), Pt. 2, p. 477-490.

⁴³ R. John Rath, *A Few Random Remarks*, in “Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. III (1967), Pt. 3, p. 315-318.

⁴⁴ See Keith Hitchins, *Petru Comarnescu în anii '60*, p. 60 ff. on this and what follows.

with the authorities in Bucureşti and indirectly with his comments about American scholars and Romanian studies on a lecture tour he took to many cities, including Bucureşti, Braşov, Cluj, Oradea, Arad, and Timişoara.

Prof. Hitchins wrote in his introductory *From the Editor*, that the impetus for the journal came from the success of US-Romanian exchanges between 1960 and 1970: "It seemed to some of us who participated in these exchanges that the time had come to extend the scope of collaboration to include new work being done on both sides of the Atlantic". His hope was that "study in the United States of all aspects of Rumanian history and culture" would be furthered as well as offering a forum for Rumanian scholars "to inform a wider audience [...] about the new directions in research and the changes in interpretation that are taking place in their country." He was ably assisted by four associate editors, Gretchen Buehler, Philip Eidelberg, Richard Todd, and Glenn E. Torrey, all people he had met as fellow American grantees in Romania; and by the cooperative attitudes of Romanian scholars, whom he had also met while in Romania, who agreed to contribute to the new venture.

Volume I (1970), vii + 221 p., carried out Hitchins' promise of an international journal, with contributions from Barbara Jelavich, David Prodan, Dan Berindei, Philip Eidelberg, Richard Todd, Mircea Zaciu, Petru Comarnescu, Ştefan Pascu, and Paul Simionescu. In later years, Simionescu, a noted bibliographer, became a Corresponding Editor. The contributors to Vol. II (1971-1972), 215 p., were Glenn E. Torrey, Ludovic Demény, Barbara Jelavich, Paul Cernovodeanu, Alexandru Duțu, Radu R. Constantinescu, Sergiu Columbeanu, Emil Turdeanu, Michel Impey, Robert Hall, Romulus Vulcănescu and Paul Simionescu; Vol. III (1973-1975), 220 p., carried articles by Paul W. Schroeder, Ştefan Ștefănescu, Barbara Jelavich, Lucian Boia, Philip Eidelberg, Paul Cernovodeanu, Keith Hitchins, Costin Feneşan, Sever Dumitraşcu, Paul Simionescu, Erica F. McClure, and Malcolm M. McClure; Vol. IV (1976-1979), 221 p., had pieces by Richard Todd, Barbara Jelavich, Keith Hitchins, Anthony Di Iorio, Glenn E. Torrey, Michael Impey, Erica F. McClure, and Malcolm M. McClure, with Impey joining the Associate Editors⁴⁵; and the final installment, Vol. V (1980-1986), 179 p., had contributions by Émile Turdeanu, Barbara Jelavich, Katherine Verdery, Catherine Durandin, Joseph L. Love, Dinu C. Giurescu, Ioana Em. Petrescu, and Michael H. Impey⁴⁶. Alas, this was the final issue of the review, probably caused by the relatively high price charged by Brill and circulation difficulties resulting from

⁴⁵ As I observed when reviewing volume 4, "Rumanian Studies" had "established itself as the most substantial journal currently dealing with the history and culture of Romania. This new volume enhances that reputation." *Review of "Rumanian Studies"*, vol. 4, in "Slavic Review", vol. 40 (1981), no. 3, p. 495-496.

⁴⁶ In my review of this volume, I underlined that "The fifth volume of *Rumanian Studies* continues a number of excellent traditions established by its predecessors: a wide variety of contributors, a combination of studies based on primary sources and more general syntheses, and an interdisciplinary selection of articles". *Review of "Rumanian Studies"*, vol. 5, in "Slavic Review", vol. 48 (1989), no. 2, p. 329-330.

price and from publishing and editorial office separation in the days before eMail. It was also the fact that by 1986, the climate in Ceaușescu's Romania was no longer hospitable to foreign scholarly cooperation and the free exchange of ideas was becoming increasingly dangerous particularly for those on the Romanian side.

Following the demise of „Rumanian Studies”, Prof. Hitchins moved on to his larger book projects, which will be discussed below. The stress here on the pioneering first decades of Prof. Hitchins' career is because it was in these years that he both set the tone for those who were to follow, opened the way for future generations of American scholars, and set the pace for everyone else in Romanian Studies. He continued over the decades to widen these shared contacts and insights into Romanian culture, civilization, and culture. To cite just one example, when asked about his memories of Keith Hitchins, Glenn Torrey warmly recalled him first of all as a mentor who was unreservedly generous with his contacts, knowledge, and books. Secondly, Prof. Torrey stressed his experiences with Prof. Hitchins as a lifelong friend and collaborator. As another close acquaintance of Prof. Hitchins emphasized, Prof. Hitchins' loyalty to friends was constant and legendary: once formed, he was never known to break a friendship with anyone⁴⁷.

Some memories of Keith Hitchins

My own contacts with Keith Hitchins mirror what others have said. When I became a member of the Board of the Society for Romanian Studies in 1976 and subsequently Secretary in 1977, he was active as a founding member (1973-1978) of the board. This was in spite of his well-known reluctance to dissipate his academic and scholarly energies on conference travel and interruption of work schedules. I once asked him about this and he replied candidly that going to a conference involved losing at least five days on route and with the meeting itself, all for very slight returns. On the other hand, if he stayed at home, he could get much more work done on his numerous projects. These were wise words indeed. However, this highlights the fact that this participation in and efforts toward the work of the Society for Romanian Studies came at considerable personal sacrifice. Keith Hitchins' role in the founding of the SRS and in development of Romanian Studies in the US as well as internationally is sometimes overlooked in the midst of his exceptional scholarly production. Because the members of the early generations of Romanianists grow fewer and fewer in number, it is important that a significant portion of this memorial be devoted to underlining his oft neglected pioneering contributions.

I also benefited from and appreciated Keith Hitchins' continual willingness to respond to bibliographical queries, even though my own work did not

⁴⁷ [Pompilia Burcică], *Eulogy in Loving Memory of Keith Hitchins*, delivered on November 17, 2020 at Bond Funeral Home in Schenectady, NY (www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/18868383/Keith-Hitchins/Schenectady/New-York/Bond-Funeral-Home (last accessed 1.12.2020).

coincide much with his. Further, I profited from his contributions to the building of the best American university library Romanian collection at Illinois. I knew that materials which could not be found elsewhere were often to be found there. One of the main attractions of the University of Illinois Summer Laboratories was the unlimited access that this gave to the University Library.

I also collaborated with Prof. Hitchins on Prof. James G. Chastain's ambitious but doomed *Encyclopedia of Revolutions of 1848* project. I was invited by Cornelia Bodea to become a co-editor of the Romanian articles to be written for the project. The first obstacle we had to face was the fact that the Hungarian editors had proposed more than twice as many articles as any other country group. In addition, they proposed as Hungarian entries a considerable number of people and events that we judged as properly belonging on the Romanian list. Chastain came to Bucureşti in early 1990 to meet with Prof. Bodea and myself⁴⁸ to talk over and restart the project. We managed to assert Romanian priority on several entries and suggested that on some entries it might be appropriate to have both Romanian and Hungarian perspectives presented. This proved successful, and we proceeded to solicit contributors and entries. By the mid-1990s, we had edited and completed 34 entries. Among these were the usual expert pieces by Prof. Hitchins on George Bariț, Simeon Bărnuțiu, Timotei Cipariu, Avram Iancu, and Andrei Șaguna⁴⁹.

Sadly, this project was never completed. Unfortunately, the Hungarians were soon up to their necks in national politics and contributed nothing, which rather undermined the project. There were also some difficulties with the general article on the Romanian 1848 which was to be written jointly by Acad. Bodea and myself, as she wanted to see the equally delayed treatment of this period in the Romanian Academy's *tratat, Istoria Românilor*, a volume largely written by her nemesis Dan Berindei⁵⁰. However, by that time Chastain's original project was dead. Eventually, Prof. Chastain created an online site with the entries he had for his *Encyclopedia of 1848 Revolutions*. Though incomplete, it is still a useful work. The Romanian side was well-represented⁵¹.

⁴⁸ From 1989 to 1990, I was in Romania on a Fulbright grant researching the development of modern Romanian historiography, and, secondly, 1848 in the Romanian Lands.

⁴⁹ Among other contributors were Barbara Jelavich, Apostol Stan, Marin Bucur, Gh. Platon, Gerald Bobango, Gelu Neamtu, Anastasie Iordache, Simeon Mândruț, Ladislau Gyemánt, Teodor Pavel, Jean T. Michelson, and myself.

⁵⁰ Dan Berindei (ed.), *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VII, Part 1, Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 2003. Incidentally, Acad. Bodea expressed to me several times her irritation at what she felt were unattributed borrowings from her published and manuscript works by Berindei, especially in his *Revoluția Română din 1848-1849. Însemnatatea și programele ei* (Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), which also appeared in several foreign language versions.

⁵¹ Located at www.ohio.edu/chastain/index.htm (last accessed 4.12.2020). It was originally published in 1999 and slightly updated in 2005. For links to Prof. Hitchins's contributions, see www.ohio.edu/chastain/authors/hitchen.htm (last accessed 4.12.2020). A later project based on the solid groundwork laid by the 34 Romanian entries, an *Encyclopedia of the Revolutions of 1848 in the Romanian Lands*, founded when the publisher went out of business.

Keith Hitchins, scholar and author

We turn now to the work of Hitchins the scholar⁵². We begin with two bibliographical articles that illustrate his bookish interests: a bibliographical piece jointly written with Lajos Jordáky and Keith Hitchins, *The History of the Habsburg Monarchy (1789-1918) in Romanian Historiography since 1945*, published in the „Austrian History Yearbook”, vol. 4 (1968), p. 303-334. Early on, this showed his collaborative approach to Romanian scholars and his matchless knowledge of Romanian books and bibliography. The second, published nearly 25 years later was a comprehensive bibliographical piece, *Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Romania*, published in the premier American historical journal, „The American Historical Review”, vol. 97 (1992), no. 4, p. 1064-1083. Intended to be a guide for both specialists and the broader historical profession, Hitchins' work gave wider exposure to the profession of the progress of Romanian studies⁵³.

Hitchins' first book was *The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849*⁵⁴. This masterful study not only led to his rapid promotion to full professor at Illinois, it also established him as a leader in Romanian studies. While clearly setting forth the story of a key moment in Romanian history, the book opened to Western Romanianists the complex story of an area previously better known as the home of the fictional Count Dracula than anything else. Its comprehensive coverage of the history of Transylvania from the East European Enlightenment through the failed revolution of 1848-1849 made accessible for almost the first time the story of this complex area. It was also significant for highlighting the often overlooked critical role in the Romanian Transylvanian national movement played by priests and the sons of priests. Lastly, the comprehensive concluding *Bibliographical Essay* (p. 283-298) provided Western scholarship with a window into the riches of historical materials available on this rather unknown area. The book and the essay also demonstrated Prof. Hitchins' command of the confusing linguistic skills needed to study this era.

The reviews were somewhat mixed. Stephen Fischer-Galati congratulated the author for delineating

[...] the progress of the national movement with intelligence and good taste. At no time does he allow himself to become involved in the century-long controversies

⁵² See Marcel Popa, *Keith Hitchins at 85*, p. 21-111, for coverage up to 2016. It is to be hoped that an updated edition of this valuable bibliography will be published. Comments below are generally limited to books, including collections of essays. See Popa for a listing of Prof. Hitchins' articles. Recognition should also be given here of the important contribution to Romanian Studies of Prof. Hitchins' dozens of book reviews in all the major journals. See Marcel Popa, *Keith Hitchins at 85*, p. 21-111.

⁵³ It is noteworthy that Hitchins was the only contributor to this bibliographical issue of the AHR that was not of East European immigrant origin. The other contributors were Piotr Wandycz, Jiri Koralka, István Deák, Ivo Banac, and Maria Todorova.

⁵⁴ Keith Hitchins, *op. cit.*

which have embroiled Romanian and Hungarian historians and politicians into virulent disputes of doubtful academic or political merit⁵⁵.

So far, so good. However, Fischer-Galati went on to argue somewhat bizarrely that “This detachment, however, has impaired the value of the book in that it has forced the author into adopting an imperfect methodology. Hitchins's work is essentially descriptive”. One might have thought that being “essentially descriptive” was a virtue, not a deficit⁵⁶. This is followed by another strange (and rather incomprehensible) assertion: “The author's appraisal is accurate, at least in my opinion. Nevertheless, it would have been desirable for the author to have provided more refined explanations for the essential simplicity of the national movement”. Whatever that may mean.

Fischer-Galati then, rightly, observes that:

As the first American scholar able to study a major historical problem in postwar Romania, he had access to sources and men imbued with a curious mixture of Marxism and nationalism. It is to the author's great merit to have been able to distill and refine that mixture, as well as the essence of Romanian and Hungarian nationalism of earlier vintages, into a pure scholarly product.

This leads to the rather Aesopian conclusion: that Hitchins in creating this “pure scholarly product” somehow “sublimated his own critical spirit and has left much, perhaps too much, to his readers' historic knowledge and imagination”. This seems to subtly imply that Prof. Hitchins might somehow or other sold out to the Romanians or the Magyars or the nationalists of current or “earlier vintages”, any of which I think strains credulity⁵⁷.

Much more fairer and useful was Henry L. Roberts' review in „The American Historical Review”⁵⁸. Roberts observes that the story Hitchins tells is

⁵⁵ Stephen Fischer-Galati, *Review of Keith Hitchins, The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849*, in “Journal of Modern History”, vol. 42 (1970), no. 3, p. 406-407.

⁵⁶ Prof. Hitchins later described “the role of the historian” which is “to discover the truth; to find out how things happened and, perhaps, even the causes which determined them; to transmit information to the following generations”. Response in a Roundtable discussion with doctoral students conducted by Iacob Mârza in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 47. In the same discussion, he outlines the history v. theory/social science debate in the US, and points out that historians have a certain training and point of view, “different baggage”, from that of sociologists and other disciplines. In the end, “we need to learn from the social sciences, but without abandoning our tradecraft” (p. 49).

⁵⁷ Prof. Fisher-Galati also did a brief review of the same book for “Slavic Review”, vol. 29 (1970), no. 2, p. 318, which would seem to be a rather questionable procedure. Here he dismisses the book as essentially completed by 1962: “Thus a book which in the early sixties would have been the authoritative study on the Transylvanian national movement has become just another scholarly work on a well-known topic [...]. The book is scholarly, informative, and impartial. However, it is also dated” something which Fischer-Galati “ascribed chiefly to the archaic methodology”. The reader can judge for himself or herself whether this book is “dated”, “archaic”, or obsolete even today, fifty years later.

⁵⁸ Henry L. Roberts, *Review of Keith Hitchins, The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849*, in “American Historical Review”, vol. 75 (1970), no. 5, p. 1490-1491.

of “intrinsic interest in extending our understanding of the emergence of national self-awareness among the nationalities of Eastern Europe. Professor Hitchins’ careful and substantial monograph carries us well beyond the picture thus far available in such works as R. W. Seton-Watson’s general history of the Rumanians”. Roberts’ conclusion? “While this book offers no startling historical revelations or revisions, the story has been well told, and it includes a helpful bibliographical essay”.

A third reviewer was J. Michael Kitch⁵⁹, who begins by calling Hitchins “a leading authority on Rumanian history” with “an already deserved reputation”. His book is a “thorough judicious monograph” that “shows the hand of a genuine scholar” an author who “displays a remarkable breadth of knowledge” which draws “upon an impressive array of biographical and bibliographical knowledge”. On the other hand, Kitch clearly prefers a social science approach to the past and faults Hitchins for not wanting to do likewise (“it is a work conceived and executed in conventional fashion, which is sad, for nationalism is a complex and illusive phenomenon not easily explained by orthodox historical means”. This seems like criticizing the author for not writing the book you would have written [...] if you had written one, which I think is reviewer malpractice.

His summary of Hitchins’ book is accurate: “Professor Hitchins concludes that Rumanian nationalism, led by learned men, was western in orientation, rational in expression and moderate in intention”. But it is then that the crux of Kitch’s disagreement becomes clear: Hitchins “emphasizes the intellectual élite to the virtual exclusion of other social elements”. In other words, he ignored the toiling masses. This seems more a matter of ideological preference and not really a critique of the book at hand⁶⁰.

Between his two Harvard treatises, Prof. Hitchins published several volumes of collected articles on Transylvania between 1970 and 1977. These were published in Romania itself, a first, through the good graces of Editura Dacia in Cluj: *Studii privind istoria modernă a Transilvaniei*⁶¹, and *Cultura și naționalitate în Transilvania*⁶², Dacia also published *Corespondența lui Ioan Rațiu cu George Barițiu, 1861-1892*⁶³. This got his work into the Romanian historiographical circuit and firmly established his credentials in Romania⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ J. Michael Kitch, *Review of Keith Hitchins, The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849*, in “Slavonic and East European Review”, vol. 49 (1971), no. 115, p. 300-302.

⁶⁰ Later, Hitchins explicitly argued that “Intellectuals were the focus of study because they were mainly responsible for formulating the idea of a Romanian nation in the modern sense of the term”. However, “They were also fully engaged in propagating it among the broader layers of the population through their writings on Romanian history and language and the numerous institutions that they founded”. Keith Hitchins, *A Fulbright to Romania, 1960-1962*, p. 140-141; Cp. Lewis Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals*, London, Oxford University Press, 1946.

⁶¹ Cluj, Editura Dacia, 1970, 163 p.

⁶² Cluj, Editura Dacia, 1972, 93 p.

⁶³ Edited with Liviu Maior, Cluj, Editura Dacia, 1970, 254 p.

⁶⁴ In 1974, he also published in Western Europe: *The Nationality Problem in Austria-Hungary. Alexander Vaida's Reports to Francis Ferdinand's Chancellery*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1974, 188 p.;

Prof. Hitchins' next book was *Orthodoxy and Nationality. Andreiu Șaguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873*⁶⁵, published by Harvard in 1977. It was the product of research grants to Romania in 1965-1966 and 1969-1970, and in Hungary in 1973. This produced for the first time in a Western language a book on the life and work of the dominant figure in mid-19th century Transylvanian Romanian life and development. As with his first book, Prof. Hitchins brought to bear his command of archival and published sources in a way that gave full credit to his historical actors without falling into the numerous pitfalls of bias that traditionally undermined writing on the subject.

Reviews were uniformly positive with one exception. Peter Sugar, one of the deans of East European Studies in the US, wrote "Carefully researched, well documented, clearly written, and well edited, this volume lives up to Hitchins' reputation as a first-rate scholar"⁶⁶, while Dennis Deletant declared the book to be "An objective reappraisal" of Șaguna, who "has now found a worthy champion". Șaguna's "activity, in all its facets, is admirably described and explained in this study which will no doubt establish itself as the standard work on the major figure of this period in Rumanian political life in Transylvania"⁶⁷.

The historical sociologist Daniel Chirot called Hitchins "the foremost historian of Rumania in the United States. His first book remains the definitive work on the origins of Rumanian nationalism in Transylvania. His many articles, and now this new book, form an exemplary body of sober, carefully researched, thorough work on a little known, important, and difficult topic"⁶⁸. Chirot is somewhat critical of the fact that Hitchins' work is traditional historiography, but refreshingly applauds "the vast labor of unearthing documents in many languages in Vienna, Budapest, Cluj, Sibiu, and Bucharest has been done", and points out that "those of us who engage in this flashy cross-disciplinary work tend to forget that we have neither the patience nor the skills necessary for basic archival work. Without books such as Hitchins' we would not even be able to start"⁶⁹.

and in 1977, edited "Studies in East European Social History", vol. I, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1977, 191 p., vol. II appeared in 1981, 189 p.

⁶⁵ Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality. Andreiu Șaguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1977, ix + 332 p.

⁶⁶ Peter Sugar, *Review of Keith Hitchins, Orthodoxy and Nationality*, in "American Historical Review", vol. 83 (1978), no. 2, p. 482-483.

⁶⁷ Dennis Deletant, *Review of Keith Hitchins, Orthodoxy and Nationality*, in "The Slavonic and East European Review", vol. 57 (1979), no. 4, p. 599-601.

⁶⁸ Daniel Chirot, *Review of Keith Hitchins, Orthodoxy and Nationality*, in "The Journal of Interdisciplinary History", vol. 9 (1978), no. 1, p. 176-177.

⁶⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, the review by the veteran historian of Hungary, C. A. Macartney, was mostly negative: *Review of Keith Hitchins, Orthodoxy and Nationality*, in "Slavic Review", vol. 36 (1977), no. 4, p. 710-711. My own review, *Review of Keith Hitchins, Orthodoxy and Nationality*, in "The Historian", vol. 41 (1978), p. 131-132, not surprisingly, was positive. In connection with the history of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania, Hitchins subsequently published along with Ioan N. Beju, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în secolul XVIII. Conscriptii. Statistici*, Urbana-Sibiu, n.p., 1991, 212 p.; and edited along with Laura Stanciu and Daniel

In retrospect, *Orthodoxy and Nationality* brilliantly unraveled “a complex of religious, ethnic, and imperial issues, dealt with secularism, the relationship between church and state, and the problems related to political and social activism”, Prof. Pompiliu Teodor wrote in 1993⁷⁰. This, Prof. Teodor pointed out, was made possible by Keith Hitchins’ deep knowledge of the Habsburg Empire and the connections between “the Romanian phenomenon and the processes taking place in Central Europe. It is a *summum*” because of Prof. Hitchins’ “knowledge of the spirituality of the region” and his “exemplary objectivity”⁷¹.

The ideas of these two important works were augmented by three subsequent works published in Romania: *The Idea of Nation: The Romanians of Transylvania, 1691-1849*⁷², *A Nation Discovered: Romanian Intellectuals in Transylvania and the Idea of Nation, 1700-1848*⁷³, and *A Nation Affirmed: The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1860-1914*⁷⁴. He also published several collections of articles: *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*⁷⁵; two volumes edited by Pompiliu Teodor of Prof. Hitchins’ articles under the title *Conștiință și acțiune politică la români din Transilvania (1700-1868)*⁷⁶, and *Conștiință și acțiune politică la români din Transilvania (1868-1918)*⁷⁷. Taken together, these volumes provide the most extensive coverage in any language of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania from 1691 to 1914. The publication of most of them in Romania (and eventually in Romanian) meant that they were less accessible to Western audiences (though some were in English and others were translated into Western languages), but, at the same time, meant that the work of Prof. Hitchins on the Transylvanian Romanian national movement could become a fuller part of Romanian historical discourse⁷⁸.

Dumitran, *Despre Biserică românilor din Transilvania. Documente externe (1744-1754)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2009, 491 p. He also contributed to Johann Marte, et al. (eds.), *Unirea românilor transilvăneni cu Biserica Romei*, two volumes with parallel Romanian and German texts (București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2010-2014), vol. 1: *De la începuturi până în anul 1700*, vol. 2: *De la 1701 până în anul 1761*. On Hitchins and religious life in Transylvania, see Daniel Dumitran, *Între tradiție și înnoire. Istoricul Keith Hitchins despre viața religioasă a românilor transilvăneni*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 81-82.

⁷⁰ Pompiliu Teodor, *Laudatio. Pentru conferirea titlului de Doctor Honoris Causa Domnului Keith Hitchins (University of Illinois, SUA)*, Cluj-Napoca, “Babeș-Bolyai” University, 1993, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 39-41.

⁷¹ Corina Teodor has pointed out that Hitchins was able to surprise the essence of Șaguna and his work, despite coming from outside both the Romanian and the Orthodox milieu (Corina Teodor, *Laudatio*, în Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 42).

⁷² București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985, 221 p.

⁷³ București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1999, 229 p.

⁷⁴ București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1999, 407 p.

⁷⁵ Milan-Rome, Nagard, 1983, 259 p.

⁷⁶ Edited with an introduction by Pompiliu Teodor, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1987, 254 p.

⁷⁷ Also edited with an introduction by Pompiliu Teodor, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1992, 243 p. Prof. Teodor’s discussion of these two volumes of selections from Hitchins’ articles provides an expert historiographical overview.

⁷⁸ One salutary aspect of the post-1989 era is that most of Prof. Hitchins’ books have been translated and published in Romanian. See Marcel Popa, *Keith Hitchins at 85*, p. 62 ff.

Prof. Hitchins next demonstrated his mastery of the history of the Romanian lands as a whole with a two volume contribution to the Oxford History of Modern Europe: *The Romanians, 1774-1866* and *Rumania 1866-1947*⁷⁹. Of course the parts dealing with Transylvania summarize his works mentioned above, but the rest was new. The focus was on the integration of the Romanian lands into Europe, the gradual rationalization of government, and is the story of modern nation-building⁸⁰. Their publication by a major university press definitely put modern Romanian history on the map for the Western reading public. As for the quality and scholarship of these works there can be no doubt. They are not a general synthesis slapped together on the basis of a few secondary works, but are the product of a profound reading in a wide variety of materials and a deep grasp of the Romanian intellectual milieu. I can attest to this by noting that as I read the 1866-1947 volume – much of which fell within my own areas of research and study – Prof. Hitchins made a number of affirmations which raised warning flags in my mind. In every instance, following a look at his sources which were usually familiar to me, I had to recognize that his take on the issue in question was correct or at least arguable⁸¹. Andrei Pippidi's comment on the two volumes summarizes well: “It is a synthesis which explores the sinuous history of the Romanians from 1774 to 1947 [...] [It is] clear and balanced, cleansed of all impurities of partisan passions”⁸².

⁷⁹ Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1996 and 1994 respectively, xi + 337 p., and viii + 579 p.

⁸⁰ This was a note repeated by Prof. Hitchins in his remarks at the 2010 50th Anniversary Fulbright Conference in Bucureşti, where he connected the Romanian-American exchanges with the broad process that brought modern Romania into being, a process beginning in the early decades of the nineteenth century and continuing down to today. „This process has often been called 'Europeanization', a term I would interpret as meaning a drawing nearer to Europe in social and political organization, in culture, and in mentality” (Remus Pricopie et al., *Fulbright Ripple Effect*, p. 80). Hitchins thought Lovinescu's theory of synchronization described the process well. He also thought that part of Romania's uniqueness lay in the fact that it was both Western and Eastern and not Western or Eastern at the same time (Corina Teodor, *Keith Hitchins în dialog cu Corina Teodor*, p. 32-34). This idea can also be found in Lovinescu's *Istoria civilizației române moderne*, Bucureşti, Editura Ancora, 1924, vol. 1, p. 20-23, which describes the influences on Romanian civilization as *ex oriente lux* and *ex occidente lux*. On Hitchins and modernization, see Al. Cistelecan, *Modernizarea României (sub bagheta lui Keith Hitchins)*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 85-86; and Julian Boldea, *România între tradiție și modernitate*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 86-87. Finally, modernization and nation-building are principal themes in Hitchins' *Ion I. C. Brătianu. Romania*, London, Haus Histories, 2011, 219 p., a volume in the Makers of the Modern World. The Peace Conferences of 1919-23 and Their Aftermath series. See my *Review of Keith Hitchins, Ion I. C. Brătianu. Romania*, in RESEE, vol. 50 (2012), p. 400-401.

⁸¹ My review of the book, Paul E. Michelson, *Review of Keith Hitchins, Rumania, 1866-1947*, in “Slavic Review”, vol. 55 (1996), no. 3, p. 671-673, identified Hitchins as “the leading western authority on the last two centuries of the Romanian past [...] the depth and thoroughness of his scholarship are matched by clarity and breadth of presentation.” I questioned his use of the word “party” to describe pre-World War I groupings that were not really parties (probably more people would agree with Hitchins than with me) and I objected to his use of the standard narrative concerning Romanian economic development, arguing that governmental developmental strategies were neither unavoidable nor effective, but, again, the consensus is with Prof. Hitchins.

⁸² Andrei Pippidi, *Un saint-simonian român*, in Nicoleta Sălcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

In 1998, Prof. Hitchins was a co-author of what is arguably the best existing collective synthesis of the Romanian past: Mihai Bărbulescu, Dennis Deletant, Keith Hitchins, Şerban Papacostea, and Pompiliu Teodor, *Istoria României*⁸³. His contribution dealt with the establishment and development of the Romanian state between 1821 and 1947, and was largely based on his two Oxford volumes.

This was followed in 2014 with the publication at Cambridge University Press of *A Concise History of Romania*. Here, in addition to what we know about his views on the 1691-1947 eras, we now have for the first time his perspectives on the totality of Romanian history from the pre-Roman beginnings through the Communist and post-Communist periods. Crediting Lucian Boia and Vasile Puşcaş for providing him with additional perspectives, Prof. Hitchins once more demonstrated his mastery of the sources and his remarkably readable writing skills. The theme once more is modernization and the geographical situation of the Romanian lands.

What especially may define the Romanians over the long term is their place between East and West [...]. They confronted the dilemma of choice between these two poles from the beginning of their statehood in the fourteenth century [...]. Or, if we are willing to stretch reason a bit, we may say that the East-West encounter began for them even earlier...with encounters between the Thracians and Dacians, first with the ancient Greek cities along the Black Sea coast and then with the Romans [...] the Romania that emerged in the twentieth century was a synthesis of East and West⁸⁴.

Two final books that deserve mention are *Mit și realitate în istoriografia românească*⁸⁵ and *The Identity of Romania*⁸⁶. These show his interest in broader, more philosophical aspects of Romanian history. Many of the pieces in the latter flip the question of the image of Romania in Europe (per “imagining the Balkans”) to consider the image of Europe in Romania, which turns out to be a much more interesting, important, and, in fact, a preoccupation of Romanians since the 19th century⁸⁷.

There is no surer guide through the intricacies of Romania's complex and convoluted past. It was not for nothing that Adrian Marino in his posthumously published 2010 autobiography, *Viața unui om singur*⁸⁸, singled out Prof. Hitchins

⁸³ Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 1998. Hitchins' section was p. 351-485. Revised editions were published in Bucureşti by Corint Educational in 2002, 2003, and 2014. In the final edition, his section covered p. 287-406.

⁸⁴ Keith Hitchins, *Concise History*, 2012, p. 1-2.

⁸⁵ Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 1997, 323 p. For a discussion, see Laura Stanciu, *Despre o conduită istoriografică*, in Nicoleta Sâlcudeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 83-84.

⁸⁶ Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 2002, 216 p., enlarged edition, Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 2009, 307 p.

⁸⁷ See my *Romanian Perspectives on Romanian National Development*, in “Balkanistica”, vol. 7 (1981-1982), p. 92-120; and *Myth and Reality in Rumanian National Development*, in “International Journal of Rumanian Studies”, vol. 5 (1987), no. 2, p. 5-33.

⁸⁸ Iaşi, Polirom, 2010, p. 349.

as one of the few (“two or three”) American historians who really understood contemporary Romania as well as its history and culture.

Conclusions

Prof. Keith Hitchins was not only the outstanding American scholar of Romanian history and Romanian studies, he was arguably the world's leading expert on the “Romanian Phenomenon” anywhere. He was the author of robust works that, while they were written in traditional historiographical form, will remain standard for a long time. Finally, he was a tireless mediator of Romanian culture to academic and popular audiences around the world. In 2000, Keith Hitchins was the recipient of the highest honor that the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) bestows, the Lifetime Achievement Award for Distinguished Contributions. The award statement declared that Hitchins’ “scholarship is recognized internationally for its volume and breadth, its cumulative quality and its lasting relevance”⁸⁹.

As a person, Keith Hitchins was of the old school: dignified, upholder of strict standards, and formal, almost unassuming. Yet he possessed an engaging sense of humor (I rarely saw him without a genial smile), and friendship emerged above as one of his gifts. Though he was a demanding professor, numerous of his students have testified that he was a gifted mentor and a great encourager. Prof. Hitchins had praised Ralph T. Fisher, Jr., for “his humanity and integrity”, his cooperative and collegial approach, and his modesty⁹⁰. These could very well be descriptors of Keith Hitchins himself. Another titan has been lost, but what he has left behind will perpetuate his memory for a long time.

Keith Hitchins (1931-2020):
Trailblazer, Ambassador, and Elder Statesman of Romanian Studies
(Abstract)

Keywords: Keith Hitchins, Pompiliu Teodor, Andreiu Șaguna, Romanian Studies, Transylvania, Romanian history, historiography, Romanian national movement, South-eastern Europe, Habsburg Monarchy, Orthodox History, modernization, Fulbright Program, University of Illinois.

The paper is an homage to the life and work of Prof. Keith Hitchins, pioneering American scholar, who was the first American grantee to study in Cold War Romania, 1960-1961. It reviews his illustrious academic career, surveys his outstanding contributions to Romanian studies and the Society for Romanian Studies, and evaluates his large impact on Romanian-American academic relations. Finally, it passes in review Prof. Hitchins' pathbreaking work on the Romanian national movement in Transylvania, on Romanian history as a whole, and on Romanian historiography.

⁸⁹ Prof. Hitchins was also the recipient not only of numerous other awards; he was awarded several honorary doctorates as well. See Marcel Popa, *Keith Hitchins at 85*, p. 7-8.

⁹⁰ Keith Hitchins, *In Memoriam: Ralph T. Fisher, 1920-2015*, p. 977.