

THE RISE OF THE NATIONAL PRINCIPLE: VASILE ALECSANDRI AND MIHAI EMINESCU, FORERUNNERS OF THE NATIONAL IDEAL OF UNION AND FOUNDERS OF ROMANIA

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Abstract. *Vasile Alecsandri and Mihai Eminescu are founders of Romania and Romanian spirituality. They have sustained through their actions and works the national and humanitarian values, ideals, activities and projects. These two great Romanian poets are illustrative in this respect, contributing essentially to the rise of the national principle. We honor and emphasize here their important works as well as their cultural and political activity as an affirmation of their axiological, idealist, national and paideutic creed.*

Keywords: *Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Eminescu, founding fathers, national principle, Union.*

Introduction

It is quite natural that great men of culture and letters come to sustain through their actions and works the national and humanitarian values, ideals, activities and projects. Two great Romanian poets are illustrative in this respect: Vasile Alecsandri and Mihai Eminescu. Their works as well as their cultural and political activity are an affirmation of their axiological, idealist, national and paideutic creed.

Vasile Alecsandri – elements of a unionist political thought

Vasile Alecsandri was not only a great Romanian poet; he was founding member of the Romanian Academic Society, a revolutionary and a patriot. In 1848, in *Protestație în numele Moldovei, Prințipiile noastre pentru reformarea patriei* [*Vindication in the Name of Moldavia. Our Principles for the Reforming of the Country*], he expresses a revolutionary, liberal, modern and patriotic creed. He was called an “optimistic revolutionary.”

Poet and politician, he was part in the tentative of revolution in Jassy, as well as in the revolutionary activities in Blaj. As a political herald of the new times

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he understood the role of publications, freedom of expression and the power of the press: under the Moldavian ruler Grigore Ghica, he found at Jassy starting with the years 1852-1855, the longest running literary journal: “România literară.”

As a statesman, Vasile Alecsandri contributed to the election of Al. I. Cuza, a colleague of study in France, someone who he admired and he supported the ideal of the Union, living to see the “Little Union” of the Romanian Principalities and acting as foreign minister in the teams of ministers of this great leader. He became a critic of the liberal politicianism present in Romanian politics and he withdrew from the fore of political life.

As a citizen, he considered that he is always in Romania’s service: “No, I am going to die, I am certain of it, exactly as I have lived, working for her glory and prosperity [of the country], but this does not mean that I should condemn myself to live or to die in the atmosphere of the petty Cabinet intrigues nor to take part in the paltry fights in the Chamber where I am going to lose for I have a heart bigger than my reason.”¹

Vasile Alecsandri had important functions in the young state: Deputy (in 1869, at the insistence of Mihail Kogălniceanu) and Senator in the Romanian Parliament, in 1858 he was interim State Secretary, during the period March 1859 – May 1860 Foreign Minister in several governments, and after 1878 he was Romania’s ambassador in France.

His entire political, diplomatic and literary activity is one of a patriot, who did not understand to lose his freedom as a critic due to loyalty and patriotism. He was extremely active and present in the political affairs of his country and had a clear view of its developments a view which combined elements of democratise, republicanism and liberalism – as a consequence, he is a first rank exponent of political modernism in Romania. While he was a Minister of Foreign Affairs in the various governments such as those of Ion Ghica (March-April 1859, Jassy), Manolache Costache Epureanu (April-November 1859, Jassy), Nicolae Crețulescu (September-October, 1859 Bucharest) and Ion Ghica (October 1859-May 1860, Bucharest) and run for office as a Head of State of Moldavia, but withdrew his candidature, first, in favour of Costache Negri, and then, to the benefit of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, since he was a supporter of the double election of this candidate in both Moldavia and Wallachia having in view the reunion of these Romanian countries. From this perspective it is no surprise that we find Vasile Alecsandri in 1859, as a diplomat who insists on the recognition of the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza as ruler in Moldavia and Wallachia, in Turin and in Paris (where he met also Lamartine and Mérimée). In 1861 again he visits, on a diplomatic mission, Paris, Turin and Milan to obtain the recognition of the union of the Romanian Principalities by the great European powers of the times. All these efforts are illustrated one year later in his work *The History of My Political Missions*.

Since 1885, Vasile Alecsandri was appointed plenipotentiary minister of Romania in Paris, office owned until his death. Also, he was Deputy of Bacău in the ad-hoc

¹ Marta Anineanu, *Documente literare inedite, V. Alecsandri, Corespondență*, preface G. C. Nicolescu, Bucharest, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1960.

Assembly of Moldavia, member in the Committee of the Emigration in Moldavia and Wallachia and in the Central Committee of the Union from Jassy and member in the Elective Assembly of Moldavia (1885). This liberal and republican devotion of his time for institutions and political participation and not only for political ideals reflected in his literary work is notable.

The devotion for the Romanian ideals transpires as well in his political activity (the 1848 revolution, the union of the Romanian Principalities and the War of Independence), as in his patriotic poetry, which was truly a revolutionary proclamation (see, for instance, the powerful feelings and rhetoric in poems such as *Deșteptarea României/Romania's Awakening*, *Hora Unirii/The Union's Reel Dance* or *Ostașii noștri/Our soldiers*).

The Europeanism of his playwriting inherits specific traits from French literature, but it is characterized also by a thematic national coherence. Praised in his own time for his works, he was awarded for the historical drama “Despot-Vodă” and for the poems included in the column *Complete Works* by the Romanian Academy in 1881, the Great Prize “Năsturel-Herascu.” He criticises the underdevelopment and the false pretence in the behaviour of the Romanian bourgeois middle class and in the Romanian civilization, in general, as illustrated in *Introducere la opera lui C. Negruzzi [Introduction to the Work of C. Negruzzi]* and *Introducere la Scrisorile lui I. Ghica [Introduction to the Letters of I. Ghica]*.

He was a critic of the ones who have wrongly benefitted from the sacrifice of the fighters for the reformation of the Romanian Principalities, declaring themselves victims of the exile following the 1848 Revolution, as we see in *Pâinea amară a exilului [The Bitter Bread of the Exile]*. The author states in this letter to Ion Ghica: “When I am thinking though about the exile of which we were part, I recall the so-called bread of that exile and I cannot help smiling ironically. Were have we exiled ourselves, the self-named heroes of the epoch? Some in Paris, others in Vienna, that is, in the cities that are more attractive to us, Romanians; others in Constantinople, on the shores of the feeric Bosphorous, were you were content to give hospitality with the bitter bread of the exile and other delicacies (kanafehs) to many of our compatriots, victims of the revolution of 1848; others at Brusa in Asia Minor, so beautiful, where the Turkish government treated them as guests of the Sultan, granting them pensions. Who of us famished, died of cold or misery while we delighted with the goods of the Western civilizations? Only one died longing for the country and for his children, the unfortunate Ioan Voinescu. [...] Have we eaten the bitter bread of the exile? Nevertheless! We have eaten with enough joy and at the good restaurants, and in good company and upon our return in the country we thought often to go dancing, confessing among each other that it was a pretty white bread and not at all bitter. Some of us went to the point of blessing it as a wafer in communion for Moldavians and Wallachians, in order to arrive at the union of the sister countries. To come thus today and pose for public as a martyr with a bad stomach from the bitter bread of the exile is either an act of naivety or one of madness, or one of quackery and it is amazing

how there are still people having the indignity to pull out their hand for the public mercy, calling out like a cadger: Give something for the wretch who ate the bitter bread of the exile.”²

As academician Ioan Aurel Pop emphasized in a recent article³, around the key historical years of the revolution of 1848 and of 1859, the intellectuality and the people “hand in hand” exactly as Vasile Alecsandri wrote, creating history and their own historical fate, while creating their nation.

Interesting for Vasile Alecsandri’s political views are the works “Protestație în numele Moldovei, al omenirii și al lui Dumnezeu” [“Protestation in the name of Moldavia, Mankind and God”] (a vindication project), “Prințiipiile noastre pentru reformarea patriei” [“Our Principles for the reformation of the country”] (political programme), the poem “Deșteptarea României” [“The Awakening of Romania”] (March 1848) and “Un episod din 1848” [An Episode of 1848] (short prose evoking the events of 1848).

The first one was a rhetorical vehement memoir conceived as a vindication in the name of Moldavia, mankind and God, as the title itself indicates, to express a more substantial underlining political thought, that is, the priority of a series of modern political principles called to sustain the national principle and the formation of a nation. Amongst these principles were the solidarity of the people, the accountability of the government and of the leaders, the legitimacy of the struggle against absolutism and a corrupt government (illustrated, for instance, by the love for silver and, more importantly, by the arbitrariness of the measures taken), the importance of public and social education and others. “Let us come together to protest in front of the entire world against the greedy and corrupted system employed up to date by this Ruler moved by sins to hold Moldavia in chains and darkness! Let us come together to protest in the name of the Homeland, Mankind and God, against the Machiavellian tyranny of this man who has not respected either the Homeland, Mankind or God!”

No ruler is allowed to be above the law and Mihail Sturza infringes upon the laws present in the Organic Ruling Code, in his personal interest (as opposed to the national one, which is the legitimate interest *par excellence*), for more than a decade. No ruler is permitted to sell the State offices or the Clergy ones. Mihail Sturza mingles in the affairs of justice and administration and (does not abide by the legitimate separation of powers in a modern and democratic state). Mihail Sturza is guilty of crimes against his nation (acting against honesty, against the public opinion, against the interests of peasantry, against the national education, against the mass media, against the traditional and the more modern laws).

In *Our Principles for the Reformation of the Country*, Vasile Alecsandri approaches the ideals of 1848 revolution – “liberty, equality, fraternity!” – and

² Vasile Alecsandri, “Pâinea amară a exilului,” letter to Ion Ghica, in Vasile Alecsandri, *Dridri*, Bucharest, Chișinău (Kishinev), Editura Litera Internațional, 1998, pp. 294-299 (especially pp. 296-297).

³ Ioan Aurel Pop, “Cum a contribuit Transilvania la ‘Mica Unire’ și de ce, în Ardeal, existau ‘țări românești’ cu zecile,” *Actual de Cluj*, 25 January 2018.

their role as foundation for the political modernization of Romania as well as for the union of the two Romanian Principalities (the so-called “Little Union”).

Vasile Alecsandri’s discourse against the revision of the Article 7 of the 1866 Romanian Constitution, delivered in the Senate of Romania the Extraordinary Session, from the 10th of October 1879 (mainly, against the rights of land property for Jews and against the perceived threat of constituting a New Israel on Romanian territory) is subject to controversy and it was interpreted as a proof of intolerance and xenophobia. However, this interpretation does not take into consideration the spirit of the epoch. In our view, the spirit of the epoch was one of the formations of nations and the national principle was hegemonic in cultural and political terms. From this perspective, patriotism was nationalism. The historical moment is situated only two years after the War for Romania’s Independence and, in historical perspective, rather recently after the accomplishment of the Little Union, when all the national sensibilities were at their height; not only in Romania, but within the entire Europe. At the same time, an aggravating factor was that in the absence of official and modern statistics both the intellectual and the public opinion was that Romania was the country with the most Jews in comparison with the neighbouring countries, if not the entire Europe, idea speculated later by the Legionaries⁴ to a truly condemnable extent. Similar xeno-cautious rather than xeno-phobic views we encounter also at the philosopher Vasile Conta who was wary of the organicity and perrenity of the Romanian element in front of the adaptable Jewish one. Here, again, these views belong to the spirit of an epoch in which the hegemony of the national principle was inducing a specific conservatism, which was often accompanied by organicism and biological metaphorical thought.⁵

Many of his letters have a theoretical content. A notable forerunner of Emil Cioran, he wrote many of these letters in a clear and stylistically admirable French language: finding the right word and the most expressive image was not a difficulty for this exquisite writer, especially when the thought and heart turn to his country and its problems and he reminds the reader of Lamartine.⁶ The times were difficult for France, too. The two countries that were so dear to Alecsandri produce similar emotions in the heart of the poet. For illustration, in these letters Gazier, a highly cultivated librarian, holds Alecsandri in a high regard: “Eventually there is not possible to avoid a certain overwhelming emotion when realizing the feelings inspired by France to Alecsandri. From his very arrival in Paris he was conquered by our civilization, seduced by the literature, by the arts, by French tastes, in a word, by the French spirit.”⁷ But his love for Romania was greater: the news about the terrible situation around 1870 were so dramatic for him because he felt

⁴ Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, Volume I, 9th Edition, Bucharest, Editura Scara, 1999, pp. 104-105.

⁵ Vasile Conta, *Opere complete*, Bucharest, Ed. C. Sfetea, 1914, pp. 652, 657.

⁶ Vasile Alecsandri, *Scrisori inedite, corespondența cu Edouard Grenier 1855-1885* [*Novel Letters, the Correspondence with Edouard Grenier 1855-1885*], Editura Librăriei Universal, Alcalay & co., Bucharest, 1911, pp. VIII-XII. See also Radu Moțoc, “Corespondența lui Vasile Alecsandri cu Edouard Grenier (1855-1885)” [“Vasile Alecsandri’s Correspondence with Edouard Grenier”], pp. 71-83, available at http://libruniv.usarb.md/xXx/reviste/confbib/articole/2016_3-4/Conf_3-4_2016_71-83.pdf, accessed at 11.02.2018.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. XI.

the strikes of fate against France as if they were made against Romania, against the noble Latin race. We can compare this attitude to that of Minister, at the beginning of the French-German war that were the flag of France flutters; there are the interests and sympathies of Romania.⁸

Within the Romanian space the French influence was rather a liberal influence and in the case of Vasile Alecsandri we can follow these French influences in several specific directions regarding his anti-monarchist, anti-authoritarian, pro-liberal institutions, pro-constitutionalism, pro-individual and national freedoms political views.

A patriotic poet and politician, the poet of the Union was a blessed optimistic revolutionary who was also fortunate enough to see the union realized the formation of the nation recognized in the eyes of the world.

*Mihai Eminescu. Political Thought,
Unionist Activism and Patriotism*

Mihai Eminescu was even a greater poet, an impressive patriot and unionist activist who thought highly of Vasile Alecsandri and shared his critical spirit: “Merit? There is even a medal ‘Bene-Merenti’, awarded by the conservatives to an author such as Alecsandri, the most important for Romanians; and the next day the liberals offer the same medal to a pamphleteer, so there is no wonder if, as well on the same route another pamphleteer is going to request it. But all these, of course, are not a result of the spirit of our Constitution.”⁹

Mihai Eminescu is a conservative thinker who critically embraces a mythical voyvodal heroic type of view in relation to the Romanian past and Romanian traditions, perceived as a golden age and a golden unattainable standard, in order to ensure a specific and adequate progress of the present times (a “Romanian progress”)¹⁰ and who requires of journalists and journalism patriotism and a patriotic vision for the progress of the country, a progressist consciousness and the communicational competences that are going to infuse these qualities into the social sphere and the public opinion. For him, journalism represents the engaged national philosophy of the present day combining militantism for the national interests and an educational dimension for the wider public. “Bălcescu’s Romanian language is also the summit to which Romanians arrived since 1560 and until nowadays, a language as that written by Alecsandri, Const. Negruzzi, Donici, and which is nowadays being almost forgotten and replaced by the journalistic ‘gibberish’.”¹¹

⁸ Radu Moțoc, “Corespondența lui Vasile Alecsandri cu Edouard Grenier (1855 – 1885)” [“Vasile Alecsandri’s Correspondence with Edouard Grenier”], pp. 71-83, available at http://libruniv.usarb.md/xXx/reviste/confbib/articole/2016_3-4/Conf_3-4_2016_71-83.pdf, accessed at 11.02.2018.

⁹ Mihai Eminescu, *Scrieri politice*, p. 107, available at http://www.vistieria.ro/carti/istoria_romanilor/scrieri_politice.pdf, accessed at March 18, 2017.

¹⁰ See the poem *The Epigones*.

¹¹ Mihai Eminescu, *Scrieri politice*, p. 52, available at http://www.vistieria.ro/carti/istoria_romanilor/scrieri_politice.pdf, accessed at March 18, 2017.

His critical position is founded on the aspiration for a greater Romanian culture. Yet he considers that if culture is to be judged after writers, “then we are going to have to observe that sadly, Eliad and Asachi knew ten times more than gentlemen such as C. A. Rosetti, Costinescu, Carada and Fundescu, that Anton Pann was a writer with more talent and more spirit than a hundred of the envious characters who are taking a shot at “esprit” nowadays in newspapers that the sole comedy “Good apprehension” by C. Bălăcescu is more original than all the writings of Mr V. A. Ureche, taken together; then let us not forget that generation of the despondent boyars of which relates the pleiad of our best writers: Alecsandri, C. Negruzzi, Bolintineanu, Donici, Bălcescu etc. and that people knew a beautiful, worthy and understandable language as well for the ruler as for the last rank and file peasant.”¹²

We may discern in the following lines about democracy the lack of elitism as a characteristic of the democratic times, but also the frivolity and frivolous verbosity of democracy, all so common democratic disadvantages which may impede upon the creation of a monumental national work, perspective described in the following satirical poem.

Democracy¹³
by Mihai Eminescu

Δημοκρατία – talkative monster, you,
With thousands of tongues moved about by envy,
Just foolish one to these attentive stay
And the smart aleck puppeteers wear you.

For the louder cajolery with forced words get spoken
The worse and the more envious they are.
And whoever gets important also gets a token
Just any merchant of verbosity becomes a star.

But it is normal – it’s enough and then some – for you
To have things written and repeated on a thousand papers
By which the wicked mold the fates of many amongst you.

And you just love to mix up all with yours,
Kings being judged by paupers, barefoot
And the good ones just talk to empty vessels.

[1876]

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 60.

¹³ Mihai Eminescu “Democrația,” *Constelația Luceafărului. Sonetele. Scrisorile*, 2nd edition, edition and comments by Petru Creția, Bucharest, Ed. Humanitas, 2012, p. 186, our translation, Henrieta Șerban.

Mihai Eminescu is not alone in this standpoint that denies democracy and liberal democracy the role of a panacea guaranteeing social success regardless of time and place. The entire conservative political current considers that liberalism, hence liberal democracy, too, leads to the scarcity of the elites and to a catastrophic rising of the masses (Jose Ortega y Gasset). Similarly to the conservatism of E. Burke and other classics of the doctrine, Mihai Eminescu's conservatism typically rejects innovations, the forced pace of developments, and implies in his arguments the organicist metaphors and images,

Reminding us of Nietzsche, Mihai Eminescu accuses the liberals that they sustain the formation of a mechanical, cold and dead State, exactly the image created by Fr. Nietzsche in his criticism of the State, which represented for him a Leviathan and a lie. In a genuine conservative spirit, he advocated an organic State, formed gradually and "naturally," neither premeditated nor constructed after foreign laws, or imported. As a conservative, he sustained a gradual slow rhythm of development for the country adapted to the nature of the people and to the route of development already adopted. Also, in his perspective, work should be the foundation of society and the solution for national prosperity. Also, work and merit should be the criteria for social stratification. The supreme political law should be the preservation of the nation and the strengthening of the national state. For him, politics itself should take into account the psychology of the people, the qualities and defects, the predispositions of the nation. As a democrat, he envisioned a contribution of other nationalities and recognized their interests as natural, within a framework where national interests were dominant, but not exclusive. "A State so poor and multi-lingual as ours, where the existence of nationalities is guaranteed by law, and, as guaranteed nationality, naturally, would follow that the State aid that nationality in developing its culture; such a state, I say, should rejoice that the confessions [used as synonym for nationality – our note] take a huge task up of its shoulders and through their own means take care of the culture of their believers, should with all powers both help and encourage these confessions in their patriotic tendency. With us though the opposite happens and not only that they are denied the official intervention in the troubles with the confessional schools, but they are imposed also unbearable conditions of subsistence..."¹⁴

In his view, the country should either be genuinely Romanian, or it should not exist at all. The mission of the Romanian people, within a strong national state and once the national state became constituted as a functional entity was to relate the West and the East, through a defensive politics, through diplomacy, through neutrality, all these, always with the national interest in mind.

In the light of Eminescu's aspirations, patriotism is a profession of faith and a way of living. Mihai Eminescu was a complete and perfect citizen of Romanian patriotism: he was a journalist, main editor at *Timpul*, animator of civil society, activist of Romanianism, opinion leader, thinker, writer, playwright, translator and last but not least poet. Mihai Eminescu is a national poet, and we are commemorating him not only as the greatest poet of Romanians, but also as a patriot poet.

¹⁴ M. Eminescu, *Diverse (Critici, vederile sale politice)*, Jassy, Stabilimentul Grafic Miron Costin, Ed. Colecțiunea Șaraga, p. 29, www.dacoromanica.ro, accessed May 6, 2015.

As Mircea Eliade presented him: “There is a [spiritual structure called] Eminescu we always carry in us, a noble symbol of everything that can be magnified in our incessant encounters with ourselves. But there is another Eminescu, the ultimate synthesis of our national essence, the highest possible explanation of our own inner beings. Through this second Eminescu it is possible to find ourselves, and this is possible for all of us, as individuals and as a people. It is in fact a possible encounter with ourselves, of ontological nature, without which, we must confess, at least from the present perspective, it would not have been possible for a great development of all that is Romanian. Eminescu contains all of us, with our ideals, with our dreams, with the authenticity of our Being, with the mysterious ties that unite us, beyond the sensible reality, with the Romanian landscape, with the other generations, with the whole world in which we participate as singularities.”¹⁵

His soul dreamed a Great Dacia and his being acted on all the plans for realizing this dream. As editor at *Timpul* and a member of the Carpathian Society he made the proposal that Romanian Transylvanian students who attend Romanian educational institutions in order to train themselves should be allowed to act during their holiday in their native places in order to direct the public opinion towards a “Great Dacia.”

His conservatism was one associated to genuine national values and patriotism. He was considered a dangerous journalist who succeeded to inspire through his talent a colossal force to the national ideas expressed in his articles. Many have noticed some with delight, others with fury, the fact that the newspaper *Timpul* became due to Eminescu a national organ, an institution for the Romanian spirit. In this publication he took the habit to unveil the corruption of the Romanian politicians and the fat commissions, which they have cashed, in various occasions such as the concession of the railways. However, he criticized corruption in all its aspects: “Bribery is able to enter anywhere in this country and for a bribe the most important heads of the administration are selling the blood and the wealth of a generation. People, who have committed serious crimes stroll up and down the streets, dwell in high positions, instead of passing their lives in jail. Public offices are often in the hands of the corrupt ones, even in those sentenced by Courts. Those forming the great part of this army of political fleebusters (filibusters) are the budget consumers, the sinecure owners and sinecure hunters, who, in exchange for their individual gain, give their leaders a blind submissive allegiance.”¹⁶

Mihai Eminescu was a profound analyst of the Romanian realities of his times from a solid democratic perspective. He wrote: “Justice, subordinated to politics, became a fiction. For example: a man is involved in a business which is a scandal and he denounces himself. This man is maintained in function, and leads himself the investigation conducted against him; the party insists in rehabilitating him, sustaining his election in Senate. Parties, with us, are not parties of principles, but parties of personal interests infringing upon the promises made to the nation

¹⁵ George Uscătescu, *Attualità di Eminescu nella cultura romena*, in “Eminescu. Rassegna semestriale di filologia rumena,” no. 1, 1967, Roma, Lerici, p. 73.

¹⁶ M. Eminescu, *Diverse (Critici, vederile sale politice)*, Jassy, Stabilimentul Grafic Miron Costin, Ed. Colecțiunea Șaraga, p. 41, www.dacoromanica.ro, accessed at May 6, 2015.

at election times, but they pass nevertheless as the representatives of the legal and sincere will of the country. The cause of this strict organization is the financial interests, not the community of ideas, organization which is equal to that of the illustrious party Mafia and Camorra, which reeks by far of prison.”¹⁷

In the same newspaper he made public the humiliating conditions, which have been imposed to Romania by the European powers in exchange for the recognition of the independence. Around 1880 he sustained the printed press campaign concerning the “Danube question” sensible for the European powers. At the inauguration of the Statue of Stephen the Great he read the poem “Doina” also very disturbing for the European powers. Mihai Eminescu was constantly a symbol of the freedom of speech out of patriotism and a supporter of this freedom and he stood up to Brătianu government against the repressive measures taken against a fellow journalist.¹⁸

Patriotism and the national principle should remain in the attention of all Romanians: “Precisely because the Austrian influence presents itself as a very complicated fabric of causes and effects, so that each individual in our country lives under its pressure, for this reason, the more we love our country and people, the more we should arm our mind with a cold lack of bias and not excite the thought for we could easily mislead our faithful guidance and fret in the darkness, fighting figments of thought. Very warm heart and very cold mind are required from a patriot, called to straighten up his people, and this country loving fanaticism, the fiercest of all fanaticisms, should not stop the mind from remaining cool and surely guiding the activity.”¹⁹

Conclusions

At the centennial moment we thought that it is most appropriate to honour two Romanian founding fathers of the national ideal, important men of culture and letters, both culturally and politically engaged in the Romanian realities, such as Vasile Alecsandri and Mihai Eminescu.

One may imagine that we were meant to have a personality of the calibre and national significance of Mihai Eminescu and with an equivalent value even without Vasile Alecsandri, whenever we are in a position to appreciate, with gratitude, the qualities of our people. But we had someone like Vasile Alecsandri and he was an important part of our (political) culture and Mihai Eminescu readily recognized his importance. It is the hallmark of genius to recognize value, and from the perspective of value to aspire to contribute to the betterment of his people and to respect the people in which he is born as one of the guiding value throughout the aeons.

The support for the ideal of national unity represents an important part of this value-oriented attitude towards nation, roots, and spirituality. Mircea Eliade noticed

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ See also www.cersipamantromanesc.wordpress.com/tag/eminescu-patriotul, accessed 2015-2016.

¹⁹ M. Eminescu, *Diverse (Critici, vederile sale politice)*, Jassy, Stabilimentul Grafic Miron Costin, Ed. Colecțiunea Șaraga, p. 29, www.dacoromanica.ro, accessed May 6, 2015.

a while ago that the solidarity of Romanian emigration was accomplished around Mihai Eminescu; that is, around Mihai Eminescu seen as cultural entity, which we have been assessing and interpreting in terms of culture, spirituality, ideals and ideas. Now at anniversary centennial times and during times that are in many respects far easier (considering national independence and unity, as well as in terms of strategic relations and security), many of the Romanian men of letters rather attack their people and the Romanian symbols (becoming as those incriminated once by Vasile Lupu – *Whoever wrongs his nations and his people should be scolded more severely than those who have committed patricide*), while others understand as their honouring duty to emphasize their importance. And if there is still national solidarity around national symbols, such as Mihai Eminescu, within Romania and within Romanian diaspora, then *this* is the best offering for the Romanian centennial anniversary.

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