

The Memory of the Romanian Elites

Dr. Filip-Lucian Iorga

Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Romanian Academy

The Romanian nobility does not look like Western aristocracies. We call the Romanian nobles “boyars” and they usually have no nobility titles like “dukes”, “counts”, “barons” etc., except for those few families that have received, along history, titles from foreign monarchs (the Holy Emperor, the King of Poland, the Russian Tsar). But, even though there were no titles, the Romanian “boyars” constituted an influent nobility. The greatest and oldest families preceded the formation of the medieval Romanian principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia. They had huge estates and they had a role in electing the ruler, among the descendants of the Basarab (in Wallachia) and Bogdan/Mușat (in Moldavia) dynasties and in choosing the foreign alliances of the principalities. The smaller families served in the armies, at the court and had smaller estates (some of them, the “moșneni” and “răzeși” worked their own lands, much alike the Polish “aristocratic proletariat”). During the centuries, the rulers have imposed a system of boyar ranks and, gradually, only those families which obtained official functions at the court were considered “boyars”. In the XVIIIth century, a great number of Greek families from Constantinople were integrated into the Romanian nobility. At the middle of the XIXth century, the boyars themselves, who controlled the politics of the country (even though Wallachia and Moldavia and then, later, after 1859, Romania, belonged to the Ottoman Empire, until 1877) managed to obtain the abolition of boyar ranks and privileges. But, of course, Romanian nobility didn’t disappear. The descendants of the boyar families kept their strong influence over Romania’s politics, economy and culture until World War II. The old boyar families integrate, gradually, at the end of the XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth century, the newcomers, the “nouveaux riches”, the wealthy bourgeoisie, but also part of the intellectual bourgeoisie (professors, officers, lawyers, writers, artists). Everybody (or almost everybody) follows in Romania, until the communist regime, the social and cultural pattern of the former boyars. They had been, in the history of Romania, the landowners, the richest people in the country, the cultivated people (most of the medieval chronicles and of the first literary works are written by boyars). They built churches and schools, they brought the French culture, the revolutionary ideas, they built Western institutions and they pleaded for Romania’s adjustment to the Western world.

After the forced abdication of King Michael I, on the 30th of December 1947, the communist regime opened its political prisons to the descendants of the former Romanian elites. The last pieces of land were confiscated from the boyars, many of their houses were destroyed, historical and cultural treasures (books, family documents, old furniture) were burned, destroyed or confiscated. One of the main enemies of the communist regime was the “exploiting class” (“clasa exploatatoare”), therefore the bourgeois and the landowners (“burghezo-moșierimea”). Many descendants of the Romanian noble families were jailed, many of them died in prison, such as Constantin I. C. (Dinu) Brătianu (the leader of the National Liberal Party), Gheorghe Brătianu (historian), George Manu

(physicist), Mircea Vulcănescu (philosopher), Mons. Prince Vladimir Ghika (catholic priest), Constantin Argetoianu (conservative politician and writer), Dumitru Burilleanu (former governor of the National Bank), Ion Cămărășescu, Radu Portocală, Henri Cihoski, Ion Gigurtu, Ioan Mihail Racoviță and many others.

Among the nobles who were jailed and survived, we can cite: Prince Alexandru Ghica, Radu Budișteanu, Gheorghe Flondor, Constantin Noica, Alexandru Paleologu, Barbu Brezianu, Gheorghe Boldur-Lățescu, Mihai Dim. Sturdza, Marioana Cantacuzino, Simina Mezincescu, Dumitru Lecca, Radu Negrescu-Suțu etc.

Immediately after World War II and especially after the abdication of King Michael, hundreds of descendants of the old Romanian families went into exile: in France, Germany, Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, even South America or Australia. There was “the first exile”, the personalities, the politicians, the wealthy people, the officers who tried to organize the Romanian political exile. Then, there were the heroes who managed to escape from Romania during the fifties. Later, in the sixties and seventies, the communist regime started to “sell” the relatives of the exiled elites to their families. Finally, during the eighties, there was a final “wave”, this time an exile which also had strong economical motivations.

At this hour, unfortunately, there is no complete inventory of the Romanian boyar (noble) families, or of their true descendants who live nowadays in Romania or abroad. *The Memory of the Romanian Elites* project was born out of my curiosity for the past and from a certain need to save those fragments that are threatened to disappear. It also originates from my older interest for the history of Moldavian and Wallachian boyars, for genealogies and for life stories. Since high-school, I have had a true passion for those stories that can clarify History. I meet people, I listen to their stories and I try to figure out a “bigger picture” out of their individual biographies.

During the communist regime, Genealogy was dismissed as a “reactionary” discipline and the boyars were eliminated from the official history. They were the “exploiting class”, the “landowner beasts”.

After 1989, the boyars were “admitted” again into History. It is not complicated to offer strong reasons in favor of a detailed research dedicated to the boyar families, to the Romanian nobility: for centuries, they have been the only political class of the country; they have been landowners and warriors, statesmen and diplomats, they gave us our first cultivated people, our first revolutionaries and our first reactionaries. It is evident why the study of Romanian nobility’s past is essential for the understanding of our historical evolution. In the last years, many memoirs and diaries written by members of the old Romanian elites were published. Some biographies, books of conversations and a few genealogy books were also written. The “Sever Zotta” Institute for Genealogy and Heraldry tries to increase public awareness on genealogy and family history. Prince Mihai Dim. Sturdza started to publish his huge encyclopedia of the boyar families, the first attempt, since the end of the 19th century, to bring together in one work the large majority of the Romanian boyar families (up to this moment, two volumes were released, containing the names beginning with the letters A and B).

But has the Romanian society managed to reintegrate also the contemporary descendants of the boyar families or of the grand bourgeoisie? Besides a handful of gentlemen, well known by the public and labeled as “the last boyars”, we don’t know much about the descendants of old Romanian elites. I remember a book called *Amurgul nobililor (The Twilight of the Nobles)*: it contained interesting interviews with

descendants of boyar families, but it portrayed them as “the last nobles”. This formula irritated a lot Alexandru Paleologu, who had been labeled himself, against his will, as one of the “last boyars”.

More recently, talking and writing about Romanian nobility seems to become more and more fashionable. But, unfortunately, there is still much confusion, lack of information and prejudice, especially when it comes to contemporary descendants.

This is why I wanted to listen to the voices of these silent descendants and I wrote a questionnaire dedicated to them. I had the example of Jacques and Mona Ozouf, who started, in 1961, to use a questionnaire in order to obtain information from a great number of French elementary teachers from public schools, who had started their careers before 1914. They published, in 1992, their synthesis *La République des instituteurs*. And, closer to my own research topic, there was the project of Eric Mension-Rigau, a French historian, professor at Paris IV Sorbonne University, who wrote a questionnaire dedicated to the descendants of French aristocracy and who used the answers in order to write several books about the education, the family memory and the sociability of the French aristocracy. I found, in my turn, the Romanian case very interesting, especially because of its recent experience with a totalitarian regime and I wrote a questionnaire addressed to the descendants of the Romanian families which can be defined as “noble”, “grand-bourgeois” or “intellectual dynasties”, the “nobles et notables”.

This method gives us access to information that was rarely written, to family archives, to those memories considered sometimes irrelevant but which are essential for the history of a given society.

Before starting such a research, a historian needs to admit that he will also need the instruments of the anthropologist and of the sociologist, that he will use history books, genealogical trees, but also oral history, literature, linguistics, even paintings or photos.

There is also a need to eliminate from the start several clichés:

- 1) Even though the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars did not belong, generally, to the Western structure of aristocratic titles, that does not mean that Romanian boyars are “less noble” than the Western aristocrats. The differences are, of course, very significant, but the boyars represent, undoubtedly, the Romanian nobility;
- 2) The boyar privileges were eliminated in 1858, but the boyar families did not disappear. They continued to be very influential in the country’s politics and in the cultural and social life, until World War I and even between the two World Wars;
- 3) Many of the descendants of boyar families died in the communists prisons or went into exile. Most of those who survived in Romania lost their social status and much of their family memory and group identity. Things happened like this, but these families did not vanish completely. Many of them survived and continue to detain elements of noble memory and identity that cannot be ignored just for the sake of an imaginary historical uniformity.

The first variant of my questionnaire was longer (almost 200 questions) and was addressed exclusively to the descendants of boyar families. After two years, using the feed-back I received from my first correspondents, I produced a revised and abridged version of the questionnaire. And I addressed it not only to the descendants of boyar families, but also to the descendants of those categories that have been genealogically tied to the boyars, since the 19th century, and that have followed the social and cultural patterns created by the boyars (the grand bourgeois, the intellectual “dynasties” etc.).

This final version, “The Memory of the Romanian Elites”, contains questions about ancestry, genealogy and family memory transmission, about education, social life and cultural choices, about symbolic objects, country estates and manors, about religious and moral values, political opinions and life during communism (or during exile), about daily life, self-perception and the perceptions about “the others” (see Annex I).

Since 2009, I sent around 300 questionnaires, in Romania and abroad and I received, up to this moment, more than 100 answers. In the archive of the project, I have more than 30 written answers and more than 300 hours of recorded interviews. I also received an important number of unpublished diaries, memoirs, family books, photographs, genealogies etc.

It was not at all easy to identify the right correspondents. Unfortunately, we do not have what French, for example, do: an association of the noble families (like the *Association de la Noblesse Française*) or a periodical publication that contains the addresses of a great number of nobles (like the *Bottin mondain*). I relied on genealogies, on published historical information, but also on personal recommendations. In fact, this last method is the best way to get in touch and to meet people that are, usually, very discreet (some of my correspondents ask me to use their answers, but not to mention their names in my future analysis).

The first outcome of this project is thus creating an archive based on the answers to the questionnaire and on the photocopies or originals received from private family archives. The number of those individuals who were born and educated in noble or grand bourgeois families before communism and who lived for some years a “boyar” life is decreasing rapidly. In few years, there will be no memories left about many of the aspects that interest us. I feel it is a duty to collect these memories, while they are still accessible. Many family archives are also in great danger to disappear: it is urgent to save them or, at least, to save the information through photocopies.

After collecting information, I will concentrate on a broad qualitative analysis, in order to verify the information, and then to identify those elements that are recurrent in the answers to my questionnaire, in order to find what is sociologically relevant in these answers, what are those elements, those values that assure distinction for nobles and grand bourgeois (from family memory to gestures or language). It will also be possible to analyze the evolution of these elements and values (I already have answers from two different generations of a same family). Another point of interest of the research is the fact that this project is dedicated to a social elite that was confronted with a communist dictatorship, with permanent exile and with almost total loss of family fortunes.

ANNEX I

The Memory of the Romanian Elites QUESTIONNAIRE

Author: Filip-Lucian Iorga

Name and surname:

Date and place of birth:

I. Family:

1.1. Information about father's family:

- specify the place of origin of the family.
- are there legends connected to the founding of the family or to distant ancestors for which there is no documentary attestation?
- what is the age of your family for which documentary evidence can be provided?
- what has been the social and political status of your family, throughout various historical periods?
- mention the historic characters that come from your father's family.
- do you own a family tree? If so, has it already been published or is it still unpublished? In case it was published, mention the bibliographical source; if not, enclose a photocopy of it to the current questionnaire.
- if there is no such family tree, try to sketch it yourself, on the basis of the data available, without insisting on informational deficiencies; this family tree should include, as much as possible, the names of the ancestors, their date of birth, the death date, perhaps the social rank and profession as well. In other words, try to use any genealogical information that you can find within your family.
- mention the kinship relations by marriage that exist within your father's family.

1.2. information about mother's family.

- the same questions as for chapter 1.1.

1.3. Paternal grandparents: name and surname, biographical journey.

1.4. Maternal grandparents: name and surname, biographical journey.

1.5. Father: name and surname, biographical journey.

1.6. Mother: name and surname, biographical journey.

1.7. Brothers, sisters: names and surnames, biographical journeys.

1.8. Where did you spend your childhood and youth?

1.9. What qualities or drawbacks (physical, intellectual, temperamental) do you think you have genetically inherited from your ancestors?

II. Family identity and memory transmission:

2.1. What kind of identity was most important to your family: national, religious, ethnic or group identity (belonging to an old and influent family)?

2.2. Have you been brought up in a spirit of reverence for your family's past? If so, what were the methods by which you were familiarized with the history of your own family: elder relatives' accounts, historiographical works, literary works, family documents, photographs, etc.?

2.3. Was there in your family's house (or in the countryside mansion) a collection of family portraits? If so, provide a description of these. Have you seen many photos of your ancestors?

2.4. During family discussions, were references to the ancestors' glorious past, to their dignity and courage frequently recurrent?

2.5. During conversations engaged with people that do not belong to the boyars' social category, have you often referred to your family's past?

2.6. Did your family keep family documents (letters, diplomas, estate documents etc.)? If so, which were the most important and which were valued the most by your family?

- 2.7. Did your family keep family objects that had symbolic value and which were passed down from one generation to another (jewels, furniture, cutlery, dishes)? If so, provide a description of the latter.
- 2.8. Has the name of your family ever been passed down intergenerationally via women as well?
- 2.9. To what extent did you feel, during your childhood and your teenage years, that you belonged to a specific social group? Illustrate this feeling of membership.
- 2.10. Did your family have a family tree? If so, was it “alive” (were recent dates, births, deaths, marriages, periodically added to it)?
- 2.11. Does your family have a coat of arms? If so, how old is it, when did it appear for the first time, when was it clearly configured in terms of heraldry and how was it used (did it appear on objects or on documents etc.)? If possible, provide a description of the emblem and enclose, should it be the case, a photocopy of it.
- 2.12. Did the communists confiscate or destroy a significant part of your family’s documents and objects? If so, when and under what circumstances?
- 2.13. To what extent do you side with members of other European aristocratic elites? What do you consider to be the similarities and the differences between you and them?

III. Early childhood:

- 3.1. Were you born at home or in a medical institution (public or private)?
- 3.2. Did you have a nanny? What was her name; how about her background?

IV. Home education:

- 4.1. The role of your grandparents in your education.
- 4.2. The role of your mother in your education.
- 4.3. The role of your father in your education.
- 4.4. The role of women (aunts, cousins) in your education.
- 4.5. Did you have a *fräulein* or a *miss* (governess)? What was her name, how old was she, what country did she come from, what about her social background and her studies, how did she reach your parents’ entourage, what was her role in your education and what was the relationship between you and her (mention signs of affection, of respect or submission etc.)?
- 4.6. Did you have a private tutor? Did you study at home during your primary school years with him/her? What was his/her name, how old was he/she, what was his/her social background, what about his/her studies, how did he/she reach your parents’ entourage, what was his/her role in your education and what was the relationship between you and him/her (mention signs of affection, of respect or submission etc.)?
- 4.7. How important do you consider the early childhood years to be? How important were politeness rules and etiquette to your parents? Can you remember some particular circumstances?
- 4.8. Did your family provide you with a personalized vision of history, by stories about the role played by your ancestors? If so, what was the nature of these accounts? Mention which of the following events or historical periods were most recurrent in family conversations and which particular ancestors were invoked:
- the age of the creation of Romanian principalities Wallachia and Moldavia.
 - the heroic resistance of Moldavian and Wallachian princes against invaders (Mircea the Old, Alexander the Good, Stephen the Great, Vlad the Impaler, Michael the Brave).
 - the age of scholarly and constructing voivodes (Matei Basarab, Vasile Lupu, Dimitrie Cantemir, Constantin Brâncoveanu).
 - the Phanariote epoch.
 - the 1848 Revolution.
 - the Unification of the Principalities in 1859.
 - Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen accessing the throne in 1866.
 - the War of Independence, 1877-1878.
 - First World War.
 - others (mention them).

4.9. As a child, did you feel that your family duties blended with the duties towards your country; likewise, by your name and by your membership to an old family, did you feel that you had a greater duty towards the community than other children?

V. Institutionalized education:

5.1. Did you attend nursery school? If so, describe the atmosphere, the staff and the colleagues.

5.2. Did you attend primary school?

5.3. What were the institutions where you attended secondary school and high school? Evoke the atmosphere (name of the institution, location), the teaching staff, your colleagues.

5.4. Did the family get involved in the choice of your school/college?

5.5. Did the family get involved in the choice of your subsequent career?

5.6. What are your academic studies? What university did you attend and what was your field of study?

5.7. Did you decide to follow a family tradition (attending the same college or the same faculty as your father, your mother or any other ancestor)?

5.8. Did your ancestors study abroad (where and when)? Did you do the same or did you plan to do it?

5.9. Did family or school play a higher role in your education?

VI. Daily life

6.1. Was there a meal protocol which was observed (courses served in a particular order, guests served in a particular order as well)?

6.2. What did you usually eat for:

- breakfast

- lunch

- five o'clock tea

- dinner

- any other snack.

6.3. Did you play often with children of your age? What social milieux did the children you played with come from?

VII. Cultural conventions

7.1. Did your family own a library? How many volumes did it contain roughly speaking? What were the authors, the fields, the epochs and the languages that were mainly represented?

7.2. Was there a scholarly tradition in your family?

7.3. When did you start reading and what was your first book? Did you start reading of your own initiative or did somebody else hand the book over to you?

7.4. Was your family's library confiscated or destroyed during the communist regime? If so, under what circumstances?

7.5. What are the foreign languages that you learned during your childhood and your adolescence?

7.6. Did members of your family speak a foreign language when communicating among themselves?

7.7. Was French considered in your family as the main language of communication or was it used only on special occasions?

7.8. Did your parents often speak a foreign language when addressing you?

7.9. Was your childhood marked by the French culture?

7.10. Was your childhood marked by the language, the culture and the traditions of another country (for example, Germany, England, Italy etc.)? If so, what country and who was the person by whom this influence was exerted?

7.11. Was there a musical instrument in your house (a piano, a violin etc.)? Did you learn how to play a musical instrument as a child?

7.12. Did your family own an arts collection? If so, what did it include (paintings, sculptures, graphics etc.)?

7.13. Did you take dancing classes as a young man/woman? If so, who was your tutor and what type of dance did you mostly learn?

VIII. The home

- 8.1. What was the town where your family lived? What about the neighbourhood?
- 8.2. What type of home did you have (a villa, a family house with a garden, a flat in a villa, a flat in a block of flats)?
- 8.3. What kind of furniture was there in your house? Was it designed in the same style everywhere?
- 8.4. Did you have old furniture in your house, passed down from one generation to another? If so, can you tell us some stories about these items of furniture?
- 8.5. Was your family home nationalized by the communists? If so, where were you forced to move?

IX. The mansion and the estate

- 9.1. Did your family own one or more estates?
- 9.2. Were the mansion and the house a family inheritance or had they been recently bought?
- 9.3. Be so kind as to present historical events or legends connected to your family's mansion/estate.
- 9.4. How many floors and rooms did your mansion have? What was its architectural style? What was its furniture like?
- 9.5. What was the regular agenda during the holidays spent on the countryside estate?
- 9.6. What was your relation with the peasants in the village where your mansion and estate were located? Did you often meet them or talk to them? Did you sometimes join their feasts?
- 9.7. Did your family contribute to the increase in the living and educational standards in the village where your estate was located, by the building of a school, a health centre or by other charity works?
- 9.8. Did your family administer the estate by themselves or did they resort to a hired administrator (bailiff)? In the latter case, what was the relation with the bailiff, on the one hand, and what was the relation between the administrator and the peasants, on the other hand?
- 9.9. Did the men in your family have any knowledge about agriculture?
- 9.10. Were the mansion and the estate confiscated/vandalized during the communist regime?
- 9.11. Did you try to renovate the mansion, after 1989, and to revive life on the estate?

X. The serving personnel

- 10.1. Did you have serving personnel in your house, as a child and a teenager? If so, how many were they in all?
- 10.2. How did members of the serving personnel address you?
- 10.3. Did your family provide financial support for staff members, on certain occasions (marriage, birth or death in the family)? Give examples, where the case may be.

XI. The parlour

- 11.1. Did your family often organize special dinners with numerous guests, balls, dancing parties, musical evenings? If so, provide some examples of such events you attended.
- 11.2. Did you meet in your parents' house personalities of the political, public and cultural life? Who were they, what were the relations between them and members of your family and how did you interact with them?

XII. The financial situation

- 12.1. What was your parents' attitude towards money?
- 12.2. Was wealth a fundamental value in the world where you were brought up or was it rather a useful instrument?
- 12.3. What was the attitude of ancient boyar families towards the newly rich elite? Was there a real antagonism between the boyars and the bourgeoisie or did the boyars rapidly integrate those bourgeois who adopted the conventions, the values and the life style which were typical of the boyars' social class?
- 12.4. What was the general view on impoverished boyar families, who were forced by poverty to lead a modest life, in spite of their belonging, at a certain moment, to the social elite?

XIII. Friendship and sociability

- 13.1. Were your first playmates and comrades part of the larger family (cousins etc.)? Did your first playmates and comrades belong to the same social category as you did?

13.2. Did the family get involved in the choice of your circle of friends?

XIV. Family life

14.1. Was marriage considered more of a personal option or rather as an option of the whole family?

14.2. Did your family try to get involved in the choice of your partner?

14.3. How did your family regard the absence of inheritors?

XV. Holidays and free time

15.1. Where did you spend your holidays?

15.2. What sports did you practice? Did you have your own horses?

15.3. Have you ever taken part in a hunting party? If so, describe one such session. Was there any hunting tradition in your family? What was the game that was most preferred? Can you remember any cherished hunting rifle or any favourite chasing dog?

XVI. Faith and church

16.1. What religion/confession have you embraced? Who took care of your religious education? Was there in your family a model of piety that you followed?

16.2. As a child and a teenager, how did you celebrate the major religious events:

- Easter.

- Christmas.

- St. Nicholas.

- others (mention them).

16.3. Does your family own a tomb vault? How did your family envision and how do you yourself envision the ancestors' tombs?

16.4. Has your family built, throughout history, churches or chapels? If so, when and where?

XVII. Ethics

17.1. Was the education you received based on a rigid ethical system or rather on a liberal one?

17.2. What were the prevailing nuances of the moral system along whose lines you were educated:

- Christian morality;

- Victorian morality;

- the code of honour;

- the sense of duty;

- the patriotism;

- others (mention them).

17.3. Is the concept of "word of honour" important for you?

XVIII. The army

18.1. Do you have in your family models of courage, heroism or a long military tradition?

18.2. Did you fight in WW2? If so, what was the evolution of your military career?

XIX. Historical events that influenced your life

19.1. Which of the following historical events influenced your biographical trajectory most and why?

- First World War.

- the Great Unification, the period of Greater Romania.

- the disappearance of the large estates, following the agrarian reform of king Ferdinand I.

- the start of the Second World War.

- the victory of the Allies upon Nazi Germany.

- the invasion of the country by the Soviet troops.

- the forced abdication of H.M. King Michael I and his banishment; the proclamation of the Popular Republic.

- the nationalization process and the collectivization of agriculture.

- the communist repression of the 50s, the arrestation of members of the Romanian society elites. Were you a political prisoner or were you persecuted during the communist regime? If so, mention places of detention and the pressure methods exerted upon you, etc.
 - the evolution of Ceaușescu's tyrannical regime, the attempt to imitate the North-Korean pattern, the gradual deterioration of the economic and social situation in Romania.
 - the events of December 1989. Did Romania confront with a revolution or a *coup d'état*?
 - Romania joins NATO and the European Union.
- 19.2. What were the doctrines and the politicians (Romanian or foreign) who influenced you most and that you most appreciated?
- 19.3. Are you a monarchist or a republican? Motivate your option. What was your family's attitude towards monarchy and the Romanian royal family?
- Note:** Mention any other historical events that influenced your life.

XX. Job

- 20.1. Have you had a job/ any kind of professional activity throughout your life? If so, what was it?
- 20.2. Did the installation of the communist regime represent a rupture in your career? Were you forced to abandon your vocation and re-orientate professionally?

XXI. Offspring and memory

- 21.1. Do you have children and grandchildren? If so, how many do you have, what are their names, what studies have they made and in what fields do they activate? Whom have they married?
- 21.2. Have you told your offspring about the family history and about the importance of perpetuating its memory? Have you shown them the family tree?
- 21.3. Do you intend to leave your descendants family photos, documents and objects?
- 21.4. Have you kept a diary? Do you intend to write your memories? If so, do you intend to publish them sometime?
- 21.5. Have you written a history of your family? Have you supported the writing or the publication of a work devoted to your family's history? Did you set up a foundation that should deal with the perpetuation of your family name?
- 21.6. What is your descendants' attitude towards the history of their own family? Do they talk about their ancestors? Are they interested in finding out more? Does their past influence their daily decisions in any way?
- 21.7. In your opinion, what differentiates nowadays the boyars' and grand bourgeois' descendants from the offspring of families without a representative past?
- 21.8. Do you think that the spirit of the boyar families can survive in the absence of any material means which could sustain signs of distinction? In other words, does poverty automatically cancel family memory and boyar distinction or are there also other factors that ensure the latter?
- 21.9. Have you ever thought, in case you have just female offspring, that your girls should preserve their historical name even after marriage?
- 21.10. What role do you think the descendants of the old elites still play nowadays? Can they still represent a cultural and moral model?
- 21.11. In the case of descendants of old families gone in exile and who live outside Romania, you are kindly asked to describe the context of your departure from the country, the degree of social integration into the country of adoption, whether you still keep in touch with Romania, if your offspring still speak Romanian and if they are still interested in any way in their national and family origins.

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