

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF (UN)SOLITUDE: PETRE DIACONU (1924–2007)

Oana DAMIAN\*

Petre Diaconu<sup>1</sup> would have turned 100 years old this year<sup>2</sup>, on October 6, according to the official date, which he rejected, along with the Libra zodiac sign, preferring, of course, his actual birthdate, September 17, and implicitly, the Virgo zodiac sign. However, if we were to be guided by the beautiful “story of the pig” in its autobiographical version<sup>3</sup>, this animal is the “port-bonheur” that would have marked his existence, especially his professional life.

Petre Diaconu was a Dobrujan in the profound sense of the word, first through his birthplace, a Bulgarian village (Suneci/Svineci, Domuşlar commune) near Silistra, an area that briefly became part of the Cadrilater (the former Durostor County) and the Romanian state, as well as through his mother’s Bulgarian origins and his father’s Romanian origins, claimed from the Muntenia region, which perhaps also

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\* Oana DAMIAN: “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania; e-mail: oanadamian63@gmail.com.

<sup>1</sup> Although the current volume is thematic, dedicated to a generous subject, *Fortresses, Cities, and Settlements. Everyday Life at the Edge of Empires (7<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, its editors considered this evocation, through its content and references, to be a comprehensive reference to some of the themes addressed. We are grateful to them for the generosity of their thought.

<sup>2</sup> Petre DIACONU (October 6, 1924 – April 3, 2007), *Curriculum vitae*, in the section *In memoriam Petre Diaconu*, SCIVA 59–60 (2008–2009), p. 263–265. For evocations of Petre Diaconu’s personality, see: Niculae CONOVICI, *Petre Diaconu à 70 ans*, Dacia N.S. 40–42 (1994–1996), p. 473–498; Mihai IRIMIA, *Petre Diaconu la 80 de ani*, Pontica 37–38 (2004–2005), p. 557–574, and *Petre Diaconu (1924–2007)*, Pontica 40 (2007), p. 681–684; Radu HARHOIU, *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, SCIVA 59–60 (2008–2009), p. 267–270; Oana DAMIAN, *Petre Diaconu așa cum l-am văzut eu*, SCIVA 59–60 (2008–2009), p. 271–272; Eugen S. TEODOR, *Vasul ceramic cu inscripție de la Capidava*, in *Capodopere din patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a României*, București, 2021, p. 23–29. Additionally, there is the collection of studies Ionel CÂNDEA, Valeriu SÎRBU, Marian NEAGU (eds.), *Prinos lui Petre Diaconu la 80 de ani*, Brăila, 2004, with a presentation in SCIVA 54–56 (2003–2005), p. 447–450, reflecting the extent to which Petre Diaconu’s concerns found continuation/reflection in historiography. A doctoral thesis dedicated to the life and work of Petre Diaconu was defended in 2012 by Marian Trandafir, under the scientific coordination of Sever Dumitrașcu, at the University of Oradea, part of which is found, in a revised and expanded form, in the series of testimonies gathered in the volume Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu [Memories of Petre Diaconu]*, Brăila, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Autobiografie*, in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 11–15.

explains his connection to the capital, mediated by the Călărași interlude immediately after 1940.

Petre Diaconu was a Dobrujan, especially through his profound professional and spiritual attachment to this special region of Romania, with its openness to the Balkan world. His wife, Aurelia Diaconu, who accompanied him for over half a century, confessed that nothing could replace the magnetism of the Dobrujan territory for him, the privileged space within it being, of course, Păcuil lui Soare<sup>4</sup>.

A quick review of his professional career, in relation to the evolution of Byzantine archaeology, helps us recognize the overwhelming extent to which Petre Diaconu is both a founder and a leading representative of this field. There are chapters of this type of archaeology that Petre Diaconu laid the foundations for, some that he changed or merely completed, and others that he reoriented through his extraordinary professional intuitions, which were demonstrable and later demonstrated by his successors in the profession and field. He was concerned, by his own admission, with archaeology, history, historical geography, paleodemography, toponymy, Christian archaeology, numismatics, and Byzantine sigillography, with specified scientific contributions<sup>5</sup>, a fact amply reflected by his impressive list of works<sup>6</sup>.

His work is permeated by the idea of the permanence of Roman civilization's tradition and the definition of the particularities of Byzantine rule in the Lower Danube region during the 6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>7</sup>, extending to the identification, based on archaeological data and especially numismatic evidence (issues of Ioan Terter), of the existence of a Byzantine-coloured state formation in the southwestern corner of Dobruja at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, known as "Țara Dristrei" ("The country or the land of Dristra"), unknown until his demonstration<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Aurelia DIACONU, *Interviuri și evocări*, in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 46–47.

<sup>5</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Curriculum vitae*, in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 17–20.

<sup>6</sup> See the last version of the list of his works in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 21–39. For his studies, see also the collection Petre DIACONU, *Recenzii și discuții arheologice [Archaeological reviews and discussions]*, I, CCDJ 12 (1994).

<sup>7</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Quelques problèmes de la période comprise entre le VII<sup>e</sup> siècle et le commencement du X<sup>e</sup> (Dobroudja)*, Dacia N.S. 18 (1974), p. 289–293; *La Dobroudja et Byzance à l'époque de la genèse du peuple roumain (VII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Pontica 14 (1981), p. 217–220; *A propos de la culture matérielle byzantine du Bas Danube aux X<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, in: *Actes du XVe Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines*, Athènes, 1980, p. 97–102; *Sur la présence des byzantins au Bas-Danube (IX<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, RESEE 32/3–4 (1994), p. 367–373; *Vasile Apokapes și Nikiphor Botaneiates – katepani la Dunărea de Jos [Basile Apokapēs et Nikephore Botaniates – katepans au Bas-Danube]*, SCIV 20/3 (1969), p. 437–451; *Despre situația politică la Dunărea de Jos în secolul al XII-lea [Sur la situation politique au Bas-Danube au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle]*, SCIVA 27/3 (1976), p. 293–307; *Despre organizarea administrativ-militară a regiunii Dunării de Jos în vremea lui Ioan Tzimiskes (Contribuții pe marginea articolului: Sigiliile lui Leon Sarakinopulos de la Preslavul Mare) [Über die administrativ-militärische Organisation der Gebiete an der Unteren Donau in der Zeit Ioan Tsimiskes (Beiträge zum Aufsatz Iv. Iordanov, Die Siegel des Leon Sarakinopulos vom Grossen Preslav)]*, SCIVA 37/2 (1986), p. 168–178; *Despre organizarea ecleziastică a regiunii Dunării de Jos (ultima treime a secolului X–secolul XII)*, Studii Teologice 1 (1990), p. 103–120 = *Sur l'organisation écclesiastique dans la région du Bas-Danube (derniers tiers du X<sup>e</sup> siècle–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ÉBPB 2 (1991), p. 73–89; *Points de vue sur l'organisation écclesiastique au Bas-Danube (X<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Dacia N.S. 38–39 (1994–1995), p. 449–452.

<sup>8</sup> Petre DIACONU, *O formațiune statală la Dunărea de Jos: Țara Dristrei [A state formation in the*

Trained as a field archaeologist in the school of the great Roman-Byzantine fortifications of Capidava and *Dinogetia*–Garvăn<sup>9</sup>, under the guidance of Professors Grigore Florescu and Gheorghe Ștefan, to whom he bore a pious memory, he initially had the opportunity, under the patronage of scholar Ion Nestor, to develop his own research in the southwestern corner of Dobruja as an employee of the National Museum of Antiquities, which became the Institute of Archaeology in 1956, his life-long workplace. This was complemented by wonderful collaborations with dear and nearby museum institutions: the Museum of National History and Archaeology in Constanța, the Museum of the Lower Danube in Călărași, and the Brăila Museum.

The idea of Byzantine military creations *a fundamentis* at the Lower Danube, at the border between the first and second millennia, in which the star was the insular fortress Păcuiul lui Soare<sup>10</sup>, despite the efforts of many representatives of the scientific community to define it as either a Romano-Byzantine or Bulgarian creation, was argued and re-argued over time, following in the footsteps of Petre Diaconu<sup>11</sup>, including with data provided by the interdisciplinarity of the third millennium<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, the idea of constructing Byzantine fortifications during the reconquest of the Lower Danube area by the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty was extended

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*Lower Danube: the Land of Dristria*], in: *Documente noi descoperite și informații arheologice*, București, 1977, p. 37–40; *O formațiune statală la Dunărea de Jos la sfârșitul secolului al XIV-lea necunoscută până în prezent* [Une formation étatique du Bas-Danube à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle ignorée jusqu'à présent], *SCIVA* 29/2 (1978), p. 185–201; *Contribuție la cunoașterea monedelor lui Ioan Terter, despotul Țării Dristrei* [Contribution to the knowledge of the coins of Ioan Terter, despot of the Land of Dristra], *CN* 3 (1980), p. 73–76.

<sup>9</sup> See in this sense also the series of archaeological reports to which he was a part, in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amințiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 30–32; as well as the contribution to the first monographic volume about the Capidava site (Grigore FLORESCU, Radu FLORESCU, Petre DIACONU, *Capidava, I*, București, 1958).

<sup>10</sup> Petre DIACONU, Dumitru VÎLCEANU, *Păcuiul lui Soare, I, Așezarea bizantină*, București, 1972; Petre DIACONU, *Păcuiul lui Soare–Vicina*, *Byzantina* 8 (1976), p. 409–447, fig. 47–58; Petre DIACONU, Silvia BARASCHI, *Păcuiul lui Soare, II, Așezarea medievală (secolele XIII–XV)*, București, 1977, with all previous bibliography. See also a sentimental characterization regarding research in this archaeological site: Oana DAMIAN, Gheorghe Alexandru NICULESCU, Andrei MĂGUREANU, *50 de ani de cercetări arheologice în siturile de la Târgșoru Vechi și Păcuiul lui Soare* [50 années de recherches archéologiques dans les sites de Târgșoru Vechi et Păcuiul lui Soare], *SCIVA* 58/1–2 (2007), p. 177–181.

<sup>11</sup> See Oana DAMIAN, *Din nou despre cetatea de la Păcuiul lui Soare* [De nouveau sur la fortification de Păcuiul lui Soare], *SCIVA* 71/3–4 (2020), p. 271–296, with all previous bibliography, mainly focused on the contributions of Petre Diaconu, but also those of his closest collaborators in the study of the site, Radu Popa, Dumitru Vilceanu and Silvia Baraschi.

<sup>12</sup> See Corina Anca SIMION, Elena Alexandra ISPAS, Maria Loredana MARIN, Alexandru Răzvan PETRE (“Horia Hulubei” National Institute for Research and Development in Physics and Nuclear Engineering), Adrian IONIȚĂ, Oana DAMIAN (“Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology), Cătălin ROIBU (Faculty of History and Geography, “Ștefan cel Mare” University, Suceava), Ruxandra NEMȚEANU (Individual architecture office “Ruxandra Nemțeanu”, București), *Multidisciplinaritate în determinarea vechimii materialelor arheologice din lemn* [Multidisciplinarity in determining the age of archaeological wooden materials], in: L. Oța, *Sesiunea de comunicări științifice a Institutului de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”* [Annual Scientific Communications Session, “Metodă, teorie și practică în arheologia contemporană”, of “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, organized in collaboration with the Romanian Academy Library – Numismatic Cabinet and the Bucharest Municipal Museum, 5–7 april 2023], *SCIVA* 73–74 (2022–2023), p. 289.

through the research of another similar site discovered at the mouth of the Danube in the late 1970s, whose investigation continues<sup>13</sup>.

Aspects of the Roman origin of the material culture of the Proto-Romanians, as well as of the populations living in Dobruja<sup>14</sup>, an area of special interest to all empires (Roman, Byzantine, Golden Horde, Ottoman), have often involved cultural and chronological reattributions of certain objectives<sup>15</sup>. This concern with deciphering origins was demonstrated in special contexts, from the antiquated character of the architecture of the fortress at Păcuilui lui Soare to that of the unique Byzantine inscription discovered on the territory of Romanian Dobruja, originating from the walls of the same insular fortress<sup>16</sup>.

Beyond approaching certain historical realities from an archaeological perspective, such as the relationships of ancient Turkic populations (Pechenegs, Oghuz, Cumans) with Byzantium<sup>17</sup>, and tangentially, the impact of the Golden Horde on

<sup>13</sup> Silvia BARASCHI, *Sur la topographie ponto-danubienne au Moyen Age. I. Proslavița*, RRH 28, 1–2 (1989), p. 52–68 = *Unele probleme despre Proslavița*, Peuce 10 (1991), p. 399–409; Oana DAMIAN, *Considerații asupra cercetării arheologice într-un sit suprapus de o așezare modernă. Studiu de caz: Nufăru, jud. Tulcea* [Some remarks about the archaeological research in a site overlapped by a modern village. Case study: Nufăru, Tulcea County], SCIVA 68/1–4 (2017), p. 161–190.

<sup>14</sup> See assessments of the origins of some early medieval practices: Petre DIACONU, *Din nou despre originea practicii mărcilor de olar* [De nouveau sur l'origine de la pratique des estampilles de potier], Pontica 25 (1992), p. 355–358, found in remote areas, such as France; or considerations regarding the ceramics of the area Petre DIACONU, *Quelques considérations sur la céramique peinte du Bas Danube*, in: *Les Slaves et le monde méditerranéen aux VI<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Sofia, 1973, p. 209–213.

<sup>15</sup> See Petre Diaconu's references to a series of archaeological complexes that he dealt with tangentially, but in an inspired and clarifying manner: Murfatlar [Cîteva observații în legătură cu complexul arheologic de la Murfatlar (Basarabi)], Mitropolia Olteniei 11–12 (1968), p. 937–946 (in collaboration with Petre Șt. NĂSTUREL) = *Quelques observations sur le complexe archéologique de Murfatlar (Basarabi)*, Dacia N.S. 13 (1969), p. 443–456; *De nouveau au sujet du monument rupestre de Murfatlar*, RRH 27/1–2 (1988), p. 123–126; *Tradiții daco-romane în monumentul rupestre de la Basarabi (jud. Constanța)* [Des traditions daco-romaines dans le monument rupestre de Basarabi, dép. de Constanța], Symposia Thracologica 7 (1989), p. 430–431; Cernavodă [Cariera de piatră din secolul al X-lea de la Cernavodă [A Cernavodă: une carrière de pierre du X<sup>e</sup> siècle], Pontica 13 (1980), p.185–195 = *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, CCDJ 12 (1994), p. 43–52]; *Dinogetia-Garvăn* [Despre datarea nivelului „locuințelor incendiate” de la Dinogetia–Garvăn (jud. Tulcea) [Sur la datation de l'horizon des «habitations incendiées» de Dinogetia–Garvăn (dép. de Tulcea)], SCIVA 26/3 (1975), p. 387–394, chronological reclassification later confirmed by archaeological research conducted at the Byzantine site within the locality of Nufăru, Tulcea County]; *Despre data pătimirii lui Zoticos, Attalos, Kamasis și Philippos* [Sur la datation du martirage de Zoticos, Attalos, Kamasis et Philippos], SCIVA 24/4 (1973), p. 633–642; *Despre datarea „circumvalației” și a „bisericii treplate” de la Niculițel* [A propos de la datation du «vallum circulaire» et de «l'église triflée» de Niculițel], SCIV 23/2 (1972), p. 307–319; *Din nou despre încadrarea cronologică a valului și mănăstirii de la Niculițel* [De nouveau sur la datation du vallum et de la monastère de Niculițel], SCIVA 26/1 (1975), p. 101–106].

<sup>16</sup> Petre DIACONU, *O inscripție de la Păcuilui lui Soare* [Une inscription de Păcuilui lui Soare], SCIVA 58/2 (2007), p. 161–163.

<sup>17</sup> See Petre DIACONU, *Les Petchénègues au Bas-Danube*, Bucarest, 1970; *The Petchenegs on the Lower Danube*, in: Miron CONSTANTINESCU, Ștefan PASCU, Petre DIACONU (eds.), *Relations between autochthonous population and the migratory populations on the territory of Romania*, București, 1975, p. 235–240; *Les Coumans au Bas-Danube aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Bucarest, 1978; *A propos de l'invasion coumane de 1148*, ÉBPB 1 (1979), p. 19–27; *Realități politice la Dunărea de Jos: români, bizantini, bulgari, pecenegi* [Des réalités politiques au Bas-Danube: Roumains, Byzantins, Bulgars, Petchénègues], Revista de Istorie 34/6 (1981), p. 1111–1133; *Cumanii și originea familiei lui Dobrotiță* [Les Coumans et l'origine de

the area<sup>18</sup>, Petre Diaconu was concerned with the genesis and unity of old Romanian material culture in the Carpatho-Balkan space, a fact asserted and demonstrated since the 1960s–1970s: the Dridu-type material culture reflects, in its fully constituted forms, not the ethnic character of a human community, but its degree of socio-economic development<sup>19</sup>, a thesis to which subsequent archaeological research has brought solid arguments.

The issue of the trans-Dobrujan linear fortifications<sup>20</sup>, with all the implications related to the geopolitical and cultural significance of the identity of the commissioning power and the authors of the project's implementation, fixed in chronological frameworks articulated through small-scale but correctly interpreted interventions in the soil, could be clarified through extensive archaeological research, many

*la famille de Dobrotița*], *Revista istorică* 5/3–4 (1994), p. 283–288; *Despre unele antroponime de origine cumană [Sur quelques anthroponymes d'origine coumane]*, *Analele Brăilei S.N.* 2 (1996), p. 569–571. See also leaning towards the archaeological record: *Cu privire la problema căldărilor de lut în epoca feudală timpurie (sec. X–XIII) [Sur les chaudrons en argile de la haute époque féodale (X<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)]*, *SCIV* 7/3–4 (1956), p. 421–439; *K voprossu o glinianih kotlah na territorii RNR, Dacia N.S.* 8 (1964), p. 249–264; *Din nou despre căldările de lut [De nouveau sur les chaudrons en argile]*, *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 155–168; *Un mormânt de călăreț nomad din secolele XI–XII descoperit la Movilița (r. Urziceni, reg. București) [Tombe d'un cavalier nomade des XI<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles découverte à Movilița (district d'Urziceni, région de Bucarest)]*, *SCIV* 18/1 (1967), p. 135–140 (in collaboration with Gheorghe DIACONU).

<sup>18</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Despre căderea Vecinei sub tătari [About the conquer of Vecina by the Tartars]*, in: *Pe drumul credinței*, Rives Eaton Road – USA, 1995, p. 67–76 = *Almanah bisericesc*, Episcopia Sloboziei și Călărașilor, 1996, p. 108–111.

<sup>19</sup> See in this regard, Petre DIACONU, *Problema originii ceramicii Dridu [Le problème de l'origine de la céramique Dridu]*, in: Petre DIACONU, Dumitru VÎLCEANU, Păciul lui Soare, I, București, 1972, p. 121–129. Also, see *Réalités archéologiques et considérations historiques*, *RRH* 5/3 (1966), p. 485–493 = *Realități arheologice și considerații istorice (O lucrare despre culturile materiale de la Dunărea de Jos în sec. VII–X)*, *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 9–17; *Extension du premier état bulgare au nord du Danube (VIII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles). La culture matérielle*, *Etudes Balkaniques* 1 (1985), p. 107–113; *Notes sur la culture matérielle de Dobroudja (VII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, *Istros* 5 (1987), p. 213–215; *Sur l'histoire de la Dobroudja au Moyen Age (Dobruđza. Etudes éthno-culturelles)*, Sofia, 1987, 238 p.), *Dacia N.S.* 32/1–2 (1988), p. 175–193 = *Despre istoria Dobrogei în Evul mediu timpuriu (Dobruđja. Etudes éthno-culturelles)*, Sofia, 1987, 238 p.), *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 81–106. In relation to this perspective, see also the invocation of the unified nature of the funerary phenomenon identified both north and south of the Danube in the latter part of the first millennium (Petre DIACONU, *Sur les nécropoles danubiennes (VI<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, *Dacia N.S.* 37 (1993), p. 291–300 = *Problemele necropolelor de la Dunărea de Jos din sec. VI–IX în viziunea lui Uwe Fiedler* (reviewal at Uwe Fiedler, *Studien zu Gräberfeldern des 6. bis. 9 Jahrhunderts an der unteren Donau*, Bonn, 1992), *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 121–135.

<sup>20</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Despre datarea valului de piatră din Dobrogea și localizarea evenimentelor din Nota toparhului grec [De la datation du mur en pierre de la Dobroudja et de la localisation des événements dont il s'agit dans la Note du Toparque grec]*, *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 15/5 (1962), p. 1215–1235; *Zur Frage der Datierung des Steinwalles in der Dobruđscha und die Lokalisierung der im Berichte des griechischen Toparchen geschilderten Ereignisse*, *Dacia N.S.* 6 (1962), p. 317–335; *Din nou despre valul de piatră din Dobrogea și Nota toparhului grec (Partea I) [De nouveau sur le vallum en pierre de la Dobroudja et la Note du Toparque grec]*, *SCIV* 16/1 (1965), p. 189–199; *Din nou despre datarea „valului de piatră” din Dobrogea și Nota toparhului grec (Partea a II-a) [De nouveau sur la datation du vallum en pierre de la Dobroudja et la Note du Toparque grec]*, *SCIV* 16/2 (1965), p. 383–394; „Alte precizări în legătură cu valul de piatră din Dobrogea și însemnările toparhului bizantin”. *Cronică*, *SCIV* 19/2 (1968), p. 357–369; *Cîteva considerații în legătură cu valurile din Dobrogea [Quelques considérations sur les vallums de la Dobroudja]*, *Pontica* 5 (1972), p. 373–378; *Date noi privind „Valul mare de pământ” din Dobrogea [Des nouvelles données sur le Grand vallum en terre de la Dobroudja]*, *Peuce* 4 (1973–1975), p. 199–209.

carried out in the first decades of the third millennium, in the context of large infrastructure projects<sup>21</sup>.

Petre Diaconu was passionate about literary sources and everything he could extract more convincingly from the combination of written<sup>22</sup> and unwritten (archaeological) arguments<sup>23</sup>. Under these conditions, he directed his attention to artefacts (such as ceramics, jewellery, and clothing items), regardless of how spectacular<sup>24</sup> or minor/banal they might have seemed, as evident from his numerous notes and studies<sup>25</sup>, as

<sup>21</sup> See the review of the issue at Oana DAMIAN, *Bizanțul la Dunărea de Jos (secolele VII–X) [Byzantium at the Lower Danube (7<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries)]*, Brăila, 2015, p. 47–91. For the big earth vallum and stone vallum, see, especially, the research from the campaigns 2011–2012 (Oana DAMIAN, Mihai VASILE, Eugen PARASCHIV-GRIGORE, Andra SAMSON, Ioana PARASCHIV-GRIGORE, Daniel ENE, Florentin MUNTEANU, Constantin HAITĂ, *Valul mare de pământ. Cercetare arheologică preventivă pe Autostrada 2 București – Constanța, tronsonul Cernavodă – Medgidia, km 150+000–159+150, zona localității Făclia, com. Saligny, jud. Constanța*, CA 21 (2014), p. 291–326; Traian CLIANTE, Cristina TALMAȚCHI, Gabriel TALMAȚCHI, Tiberiu POTĂRNICHE, Liviu LUNGU, Vitalie BODOLICĂ, Constantin ȘOVA, Andrei HEROIU, Sebastian DOBROTĂ, Octavian MITROI, Dan VASILESCU, Marius LĂSCU, Ștefan GEORGESCU, Răzvan PETCU, Radu PETCU, *Valu lui Traian, com. Valu lui Traian, jud. Constanța (Autostrada Medgidia – Constanța), km 197+700–198+700*, CCA. Campania 2011, București, 2012, p. 294–295, no. 175; Cristina PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, *About an Early Medieval Settlement in the South of Ancient Tomis*, Konstantinove listy 11/1 (2018), p. 3–15; Cristina PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, *Again about an Early Medieval linear fortification in Dobruđa. The stone vallum*, Preslav 8 (2019), p. 381–402; and, more recent, Cristina TALMAȚCHI, Constantin ȘOVA, Bogdan Andrei CHIRILOAIE, Laura GHEORGHIU, Ioana DONCU, Claudiu LĂZĂRICĂ, *Medgidia, jud. Constanța. Punct: Valul de piatră – în extravilanul mun. Medgidia și UAT Poarta Albă, jud. Constanța (la nord de cariera ROMCIM)*, CCA. Campania 2023, București – Târgu Mureș, 2024, p. 579–580; Constantin BĂJENARU, Cătălin NOPCEA, Ingrid PETCU-LEVEL, Marius LĂSCU, Ștefan GEORGESCU, Oana GRIGORUȚĂ, Ioana RUSU, Laura GHEORGHIU, Manuela MĂIȚĂ, Adrian IRIMIA, Ștefan PALAMIUC, Alin GHEORGHE, Venera Georgiana DONE, Daniel BARBU, Andreea PREDA, Adina BRATOSIN, Ana GEORGESCU-HAMAT, Daniel VASILESCU, *Constanța, jud. Constanța, Castrul XXV (Tocilescu) al valului de piatră. Punct: str. Caraiman, nr. 32*, CCA. Campania 2023, București – Târgu Mureș, 2024, p. 540–554.

<sup>22</sup> See his volumes on Pechenegs and Cumans, as well as other contributions, including: *Une information de Skylitzès-Cédrenos à la lumière de l'archéologie*, RESEE 7/1 (1969), p. 43–49; *Les rives du Danube à la lumière de quelques passages de la chronique de Skylitzès*, RESEE 14/2 (1976), p. 311–316; *Kili și expediția lui Umur-beg*, Peuce 9 (1984), p. 389–394 = *Kili et l'expédition d'Umur-beg*, RESEE 21/1 (1983), p. 23–29; *Originea numelui Dobrogea [L'origine du nom Dobroudja]*, Buletinul Bibliotecii Române. Studii și documente românești S.N. 17 (21), Freiburg, 1992/1993, p. 233–240; *Numele Dobrogei într-o nouă sursă literară [Le nom de la Dobroudja dans une nouvelle source littéraire]*, Istros 7 (1994), p. 357–358.

<sup>23</sup> See, in this regard, the contributions concerning the Ciurel culture and the Slavic world: Petre DIACONU, *Cui aparține cultura Ciurel [Who does the Ciurel Culture belong to?]*, Ialomița 3 (2000), p. 58–60; Petre DIACONU, *Din nou despre slavi la Dunărea de Jos [De nouveau sur les Slaves au Bas-Danube]*, Istros 11 (2004), p. 353–356.

<sup>24</sup> For example, Petre DIACONU, *Boucle d'oreille en croissant découverte à Păciul lui Soare*, RESEE 12/3 (1974), p. 395–396.

<sup>25</sup> In SCIV 9/2 (1958), p. 445–449; SCIV 10/2 (1959), p. 487–490; SCIV 10/2 (1959), p. 491–497; SCIV 11/1 (1960), p. 177–178; SCIV 13/2 (1962), p. 447–449; Biserica Ortodoxă Română 81/5–6 (1963), p. 546–557; SCN 4 (1968), p. 277–278; RM 5 (1968), p. 348–351; SCIV 23/3 (1972), p. 459–462; SCIVA 25/2 (1974), p. 289–294; Pontica 7 (1974), p. 387–394; Muzeul Național 1 (1974), p. 207–208; Ialomița 1 (1977), p. 80–82; Pontica 15 (1982), p. 263–267; SCIVA 34/3 (1983), p. 290–293; Pontica 17 (1984), p. 157–167; CCDJ 1 (1985), p. 87–92; CCDJ 3–4 (1987), p. 113–114; CCDJ 3–4 (1987), p. 115–121; SCIVA 42/1–2 (1991), p. 81–84; Istros 6 (1992), p. 271–272; Istros 7 (1994), p. 349–351.

well as from the monographic chapters dedicated to them<sup>26</sup>, following a special interest in ethnography. Supporting him in this endeavour was an assumed and declared passion for detective work, reflected in his attraction to detective novels, which he considered very useful intellectual training for an archaeologist concerned with reconstructing the past. His attention to archaeological objects also extended to monetary<sup>27</sup> and sigillographic<sup>28</sup> aspects of the Lower Danube region, with his contributions adding prestige to those of specialized numismatics and sigillographers.

Historical geography was one of Petre Diaconu's particular concerns<sup>29</sup>. Even though it did not enjoy majority acceptance within the intellectual community, the identity he proposed between the famous locality of Vicina and the site at Păcuiul lui Soare remains one of the most coherent, well-argued, and at the same time, most alluring theories in the field<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> *Capidava*, I, p. 211–226, 233–236, 245–247; *Păcuiul lui Soare*, I, p. 131–162; *Păcuiul lui Soare*, II, p. 33–48, 116–133.

<sup>27</sup> See Petre Diaconu's studies on Byzantine numismatic finds in general: *S-au emis monede în Dobrogea bizantină (secolele X–XII)? [Were coins cast in the Byzantine Dobroudja of the 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries?]*, SCIVA 32/3 (1981), p. 407–412; *Cîteva probleme privitoare la monedele de aramă din sudul Dobrogei în ultima treime a sec. XIV [Einige Fragen zu den Bronzenen Münzen aus der Süddobruudscha aus dem Letzten Drittel des XIV. Jhs.]*, SCIVA 38/2 (1987), p. 142–158; the chapter regarding the Byzantine coins discovered in the Capidava site (Grigore FLORESCU, Radu FLORESCU, Petre DIACONU, *Capidava*, I, Bucureşti, 1958, p. 238–244); or the studies regarding the numismatic discoveries from Păcuiul lui Soare, Romano-Byzantine glass weights for the solidi [*Un pond din epoca romano-bizantină, descoperit la Păcuiul lui Soare*, SCIV 12/2 (1961), p. 403–405; *Un dénéral monétiforme trouvé à Păcuiul lui Soare*, RESEE 19/3 (1981), p. 485–488]; coins, isolated and hoarded [in: *Arheologija-Sofia* 5/1 (1963), p. 41–42; *Izvestija-Sofia* 26 (1963), p. 249–256; *SCIV* 15/1 (1964), p. 143–147; *SCN* 6 (1975), p. 247; *Muzeul Național* 3 (1976), p. 235–239; *CN* 3 (1980), p. 73–76; *BSNR* 77–79/131–133 (1983–1985), p. 433–436]; tools in the category weighting [*Cîntare pentru verificat greutatea perperilor de Vicina*, *SCN* 6 (1975), p. 243–245], up to the numismatic argument used in its highest form, to demonstrate the existence of a political formation (see *supra*, note 8).

<sup>28</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Un sigiliu de plumb al lui Alexie I Comnenul descoperit la Păcuiul lui Soare [Un sceau en plomb d'Alexios I Comnène découvert à Păcuiul lui Soare]*, *SCN* 4 (1968), p. 249–251; *Un alt sigiliu al lui Constantin VII și Zoe [Une autre sigile du Constantin VII et Zoé découvert à Durostorum]*, *CCDJ* 5–7 (1988–1989), p. 175–177; *Contribution à la connaissance de l'histoire de la Dobroudja en base de quelques sceaux*, *Dacia N.S.* 36 (1992), p. 179–185; *Un alt sigiliu al lui Constantin Theodorokanos [Un autre sceau de Constantin Theodorokanos]*, *Pontica* 25 (1992), p. 359–361; *Cîteva considerații privind sigiliile lui Ioan Malesis [Quelques considérations sur les sceaux du stratège Ioan Malesis]*, *Istros* 7 (1994), p. 355–356.

<sup>29</sup> Petre DIACONU: *La géographie historique du territoire roumain dans la région du Bas Danube aux VIII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles telle qu'elle se dégage des sources byzantines*, *Bulletin d'Information et de coordination (Athènes – Paris)* 8 (1975/1976), p. 100–103; *Autour de la localisation de la Petite Preslav*, *RESEE* 3/1–2 (1965), p. 37–56; *Le problème de la localisation de l'Onglos*, *Dacia N.S.* 14 (1970), p. 325–334 = *Despre localizarea Onglos-ului?*, *Peuce* 2 (1971), p. 191–203; *Unde trebuie căutat Onglos? [Où faut-il chercher Onglos?]*, *Istros* 7 (1994), p. 359–361; *În căutarea Dafnei*, *Pontica* 4 (1971), p. 311–318; *Sur l'emplacement de l'ancienne Daphne*, *Studia Balcanica* 10 (1975), p. 87–93; *Note de lector (II). Unul sau două Tomis-uri în bazinul Mării Negre [Un ou deux Tomi dans le bassin de la Mer Noir]*, *Istros* 7 (1994), p. 353–355; *Unde se afla orașul Theodoropol?*, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* 24/1 (1987), p. 142–158; *De nouveau à propos de Presthlavitzza*, *Südost Forschungen* 46 (1987), p. 279–293; *Kilia et Licostomo ou Kilia = Licostomo?*, *RRH* 25/4 (1986), p. 301–317; *Un faux problème de géographie historique – Kilia et Licostomo*, *Il Mar Nero* 2 (1995–1996), p. 235–266; *Carbona, Cavarna, la Contrée de Carvouna*, *Dacia N.S.* 37 (1993), p. 301–305.

<sup>30</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Despre localizarea Vicinei [Autour de la localisation de Vicina]*, *Pontica* 3

He was also interested in etymology and the relationship with ancient populations<sup>31</sup>. A formidable polemicist<sup>32</sup>, not always justified<sup>33</sup>, but demonstrating a remarkable and insightful finesse in argumentation, sometimes imbued with a playful spirit, Petre Diaconu was concerned with everything related to archaeology, including aspects of prehistory and protohistory, with a focus on the Roman and post-Roman epochs. He also expressed himself in the field of popular literature through contributions that appeared in the 1990s in the pages of the magazine "Tomis"<sup>34</sup>, concentrated capsules of information and historical interpretation, written with absolute rigor but also with real accessibility.

(1970), p. 275–295; *Păciuil lui Soare–Vicina*, *Byzantina* 8 (1976), p. 409–447, fig. 47–58; *Iarăși despre localizarea Vicinei [De nouveau sur la localisation de Vicina]*, *Revista de Istorie* 34/12 (1981), p. 2311–2316; *Puncte de vedere privind cetatea de la Păciuil lui Soare*, *CCDJ* 1 (1985), p. 107–112; *Unde a fost Vicina?*, in *Contribuții istorice și etimologice*, Aalborg, 2001, p. 172–176.

<sup>31</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Cîteva considerații pe marginea unor toponimice din dreapta Dunării de Jos (zona Ostrov – Cochirleni)* [*Quelques considerations en marge de certains toponymes sur la droite du Bas-Danube (zone de Ostrov – Cochirleni)*], *Pontica* 10 (1977), p. 59–63; *Tempus, templum, tâmplă*, *CCDJ* 18 (2001), p. 38–40.

<sup>32</sup> To mention just one of the written testimonies of this propensity, see the series *Istoria Dobrogei în unele lucrări străine recente*, I–VI, appeared in: *Revista de Istorie* 29/6 (1976), p. 935–941; *Revista de Istorie* 30/10 (1977), p. 1893–1900; *Revista de Istorie* 33/2 (1980), p. 353–361; *Revista de Istorie* 33/4 (1980), p. 767–771; *Revista de Istorie* 34/9 (1981), p. 1747–1753; *Revista de Istorie* 36/7 (1983), p. 723–728). As well as the well over 100 reviews and bibliographic notes (see the list in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 32–39), some of these with real study value: *Artă creștină sau mărturii creștine* (Ion BARNEA, *Artă creștină în România, Vol. I (secolele III–VI)*, București, 1979, 280 p., 118 pl. and *Vol. II (secolele VII–XIII)*, București, 1981, 238 p., 102 pl.), in *Pontica* 14 (1981), p. 371–378 = in *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, I, *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 71–80; *Despre unele probleme arheologice ale cetății de la Adamclisi* (Alexandru BARNEA, Ion BARNEA, Ioana BOGDAN CĂTĂNICIU, Monica MĂRGINEANU-CĂRSTOIU, Gheorghe PAPUC, *Tropaeum Traiani, I, Cetatea*, București, 1979, 258 p., in *Dacia N.S.* 24 (1980), p. 386–391 = in *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, I, *CCDJ* 12 (1994), 61–70; *Despre Sacidava și „stratigrafia” ei [A propos de Sacidava et de sa «stratigraphie»]*, *SCIVA* 31 (1980), p. 123–130 = in *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, I, *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 53–59; Maria COMȘA, *Cultura materială veche românească (Așezările din secolele VIII–X de la Bucov-Ploiești)*, București, 1978, 182 p., in *SCIVA* 30/3 (1979), p. 469–475 = *Două așezări românești de la răscrucea dintre sec. XII și sec. XIII la Bucov (jud. Prahova)?* (Maria COMȘA, *Cultura materială veche românească (Așezările din secolele VIII–X de la Bucov-Ploiești)*, București, 1978, 182 p., in *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, I, *CCDJ* 12 (1994), p. 33–43.

<sup>33</sup> Aurelia DIACONU, *Interviuri și evocări*, in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 48. See also Petre Diaconu's conviction, often expressed in discussions and in the preface of the volume *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, I, *CCDJ* 12 (1994): "...I have never claimed that all my solutions should be taken as absolute truths. Nor could I proceed as such, as long as I am convinced that we, archaeologists, err ten times more than other researchers. Why? For the simple reason that in our endeavour, we necessarily operate with subjective criteria for assessing archaeological facts. For instance, in the field of stratigraphy and typology..."

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Petre DIACONU, *Fapte arheologice, interpretări istorice*, Tomis 27 (1992), no. 1, p. 13; no. 2, p. 13; no. 4, p. 12; no. 7, p. 14; Tomis 28 (1993), no. 4, p. 13; Tomis 30 (1995), no. 5, p. 13; *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului la Dunărea de Jos*, Tomis 27 (1992), no. 3, p. 13 and 15; *Veteranus, Vetrinon, Vetrina (Vetren)*, Tomis 29 (1994), no. 4, p. 13; *Schiță a istoriei grecilor din Dobrogea veacurilor de mijloc*, Tomis 32 (1997), no. 8, p. 13 and 15; no. 9, p. 13; *Despoteia lui Sviatoslav*, Tomis 28 (1993), no. 7, p. 13–14; *Date noi despre biserica Dobrogei în sec. X–XI*, Tomis 28 (1993), no. 8–9, p. 13; *Unele date despre așezămintele monahale din Dobrogea, la începutul evului mediu*, Tomis 31 (1996) no. 7–8, p. 13; *Sigiliile, sursă istorică de primă mână*, Tomis 32 (1997), no. 3, p. 13; *Originea numelui*

Always in the service of preserving and enhancing the Byzantine heritage, to which he was a senior figure<sup>35</sup> in his insular fortress, Păcuiul lui Soare<sup>36</sup>, Petre Diaconu remains among us, “with thoughts for those of tomorrow”, through his written work and the testimonies about his personality from those who knew him<sup>37</sup>. And he certainly has the right to a final statement: “As for me, I would be entirely satisfied if, at the last hour of my life, I were convinced that two-thirds of what I have crafted would remain useful to those in the future”<sup>38</sup>.

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*Dobrogea*, Tomis 27 (1992), no. 11, p. 1, 13; *Despre numele Mării Negre*, Tomis 31 (1996), no. 1, p. 1 and 13; *Nu toate schimbările de toponimie sunt binevenite*, Tomis 33 (1998), no. 4, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> See the contribution of the late Marian Neagu, an archaeologist of the Neolithic period from the Lower Danube, and a passionate lover of the Danubian island with Byzantine influences (Marian NEAGU, *Petre Diaconu – patronul spiritual al Dunării de Jos*, in: Ionel CÂNDEA, Valeriu SÎRBU, Marian NEAGU (eds.), *Prinos lui Petre Diaconu la 80 de ani*, Brăila, 2004, p. XXXIII–XXXIV).

<sup>36</sup> An inspiring and shaping space for other destinies as well, as testified by another great archaeologist of Dobruja, educated in the school of Păcuiul lui Soare, but renowned in the field of Latène archaeology and amphora stamps, the late Nicolae Conovici (see *Păcuiul lui Soare, Petre Diaconu și viața mea*, in: Ionel CÂNDEA, Valeriu SÎRBU, Marian NEAGU (eds.), *Prinos lui Petre Diaconu la 80 de ani*, Brăila, 2004, p. XXXV–XXXVII).

<sup>37</sup> I cannot help by mentioning here the interview conducted by Silvia ILIESCU, *Secolul XX văzut de un arheolog: Petre Diaconu*, <https://www.rador.ro>>ROMANIA, *Istorie orală* or the pages dedicated to the character, inspired by the same Petre Diaconu, from a novel by Ana Blandiana, *Sertarul cu aplauze*, emblematic for the communist era. Referring to this “...bizarre archaeologist, tightly wrapped as if in a protective garment in his profession...” (Ana BLANDIANA, *Sertarul cu aplauze*, București, 1992, p. 48), the writer precisely sensed the extent to which archaeology could be, in those times, a superb form of escapism, into the past and... even into the fantastic... See also Ana BLANDIANA (in: Marian TRANDAFIR, Oana DAMIAN (eds.), *Amintiri despre Petre Diaconu*, Brăila, 2018, p. 175–177), where she quotes “...a page from the book in which [he, ed.] continues to exist...”. But, returning to the real person, Petre, and his wife, Aurelia, equally a novel character, Ana Blandiana noted in her journal: “Saint Peter and Paul, the day when the Diaconu family visits us (at Comana, ed.) every year... We are not exactly friends, but there is something between us that I like and find moving, perhaps my book in which they are heroes. In any case, they are strange people who cultivate their eccentricities. And we, the ‘normal’ ones, we also cultivate them. We are fascinated and touched by their honesty, unusual, abnormal. They belong to a disappearing category that never had many representatives, and that is why each of their characteristics is precious and worthy of study and respect” (Ana BLANDIANA, *Mai-mult-ca-trecutul. Jurnal. 31 august 1988 – 12 decembrie 1989*, București, 2023, p. 412).

<sup>38</sup> Petre DIACONU, *Prefață*, in *Recenzii și discuții arheologice*, I, CCDJ 12 (1994), p. 7.



Fig. 1. Petre Diaconu, on the Ostrov arm, on the way to Păcuiul lui Soare Island, the 1960s.



Fig. 2. Petre Diaconu, portrayed as god Istros, archaeological base Dervent, 1964 (1); in Dobruja, 1968 (2).



**Fig. 3.** Petre Diaconu, with the actor Toma Caragiu and the base guard at Derwent, Florea Pașalău.



**Fig. 4.** Petre Diaconu, at the Institute of Archaeology (Bucharest), 1977.

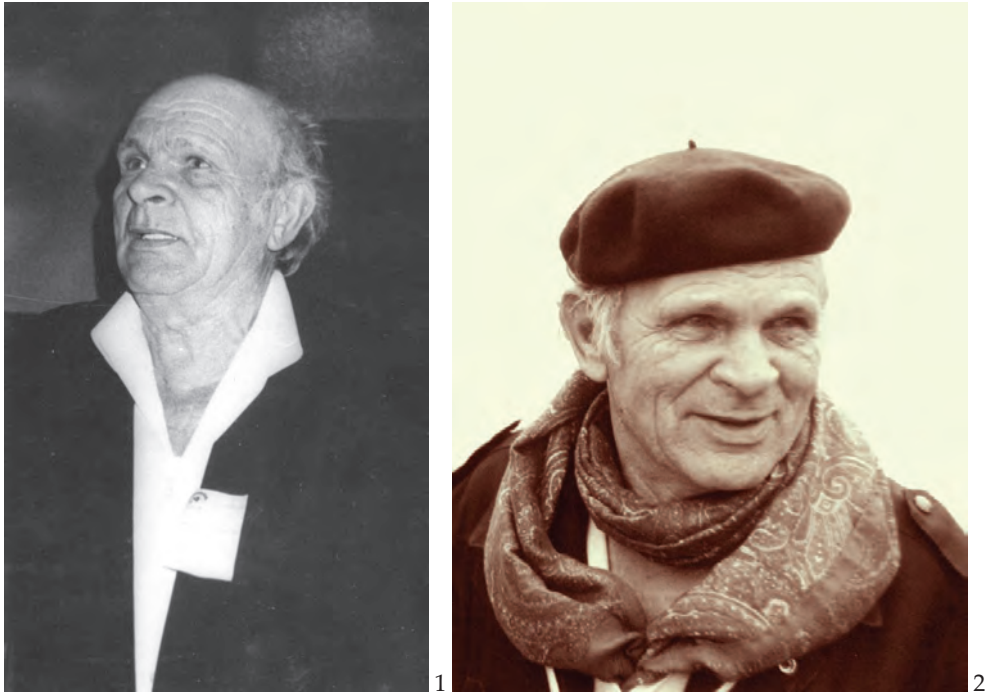


Fig. 5. Petre Diaconu, in years '90 (1) and at Caliacra Cape, 1993 (2).



Fig. 6. Petre Diaconu and Păcuiul lui Soare Island, 1992.



Fig. 7. Petre Diaconu, with Lucian Tomitanul and Adrian Rădulescu, Museum of National History and Archaeology, Constanța, 1994.



Fig. 8. Petre Diaconu, *Pontica* Session of the Museum of National History and Archaeology, Constanța, 1994 (1–2).



Fig. 9. Petre Diaconu, in the fortress of Păcuiul lui Soare, 2000.



Fig. 10. Petre Diaconu, in the exhibition dedicated to him, the Museum of the Lower Danube, Călărași, 2004.



Fig. 11. Petre Diaconu, in the city of his adolescence, Silistra (1) and at Dervent Monastery, together with the abbess Andrei Tudor, 2004 (2).



Fig. 12. Petre Diaconu, with Aurelia Diaconu and the fortress of Păciul lui Soare (in the form of a cake), Călărași, 2004.

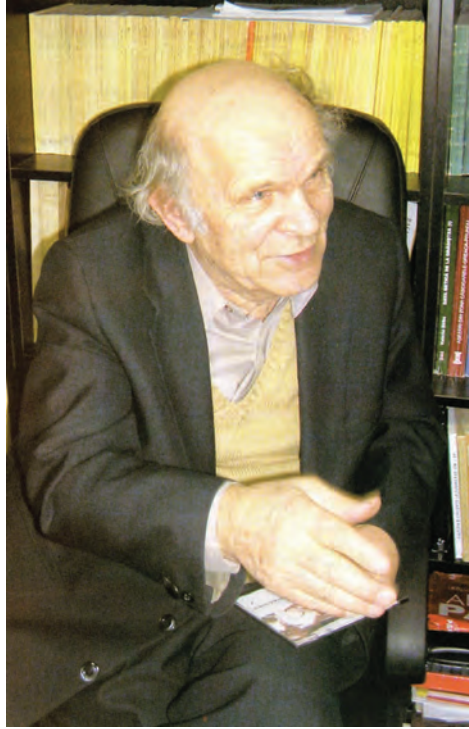


Fig. 13. Petre Diaconu, at Brăila Museum, 2004.



Fig. 14. Aurelia and Petre Diaconu, at the Lower Danube Museum, Călărași, on the way to Derwent, 2006.