

Constantin I. Karadja in the Collections of the Romanian Academy Library

1. Introduction

The title of this talk contains the names of three distinctive entities, namely : a) *Constantin I. Karadja*, b) *the Romanian Academy Library*, and c) *the collections*.

The main emphasis of the talk will be laid upon the documents associated with the name of Constantin I. Karadja in the Library's collections. To set the stage for describing this collection, a few data about his personality and the Library will be given first. Then a sample of several items out of Kardaja funds shall follow. More copies of documents shall be displayed in the exhibition and an almost permanent trace of the material is to be found on the website of the Library (<http://www.biblacad.ro/>).

2. C. I. Karadja

Today we pay homage to an outstanding European inter-war diplomat, a great historian and a passionate bibliophile, an exquisite collector and a generous donor, Prince Constantin Jean Lars Anthony Démétrius Karadja (1889-1950). Honorific Member of the Romanian Academy (AR) since 1946, he embodies the figure of an erudite called to raise the spirit of his time and the standards of diplomacy. Of a Phanariote-Romanian and Swedish origin, after graduating the Law Faculty Inner Temple in London to become a barrister specialized in economics, conversant in 12 languages, he entered diplomacy, but kept alive his enthusiasm for culture all his life.

The impressive fact is that, although hardly naturalized Romanian in 1920, after his marriage to Marcella Karadja, Constantin Karadja felt at home only in Romania. Thus he wrote to Bianu: "life is completely different and although I feel at home in Stockholm, I have to admit that, at the same time, I feel very far from home and from my family!" (Stefanescu Mitu, 1985).

On June 3rd, 1946, at the 80th general session of the Romanian Academy presided by Andrei Rădulescu, Vice-president of the Academy, the well-known Romanian historian of military art, General Radu Rosetti, proposed Constantin I. Karadja for election as Honorary Member of the Academy, characterizing him as follows: "Mr. C. Karadja, Consul General, is not only an emeritus bibliophile, a renowned bibliographer, but also a diligent researcher of facts from our past. As a bibliophile, he has gathered a rich library of incunabula, of rare editions and of studies of the greatest utility for the historical researches. As a bibliographer, we mention that he has published numerous texts regarding our past, as those on the participation of the

Moldavian church to the Council of Constance, the study on Behaim's chronicle in verses and many others. At the same time, we should say that editors of the international catalogue of incunabula have entrusted him the elaboration and publication of the part referring to the incunabula existent in public and private libraries of Romania, an already finished opus. As a researcher, we should mention his studies on matters of details, of the highest interest for our historians. (...), eventually, Mr. C. Karadja has generously endowed our library with innumerable books of the greatest historical and bibliographic value. For these reasons, the undersigned propose the recognition of his merits by calling him in the Academy, as an honorary member". The proposal is signed by academicians R. Rosetti, Ion I. Nistor, G. Spacu, D. Pompeiu, C. I. Parhon, N. Bănescu, D. Voinov, C. Rădulescu-Motru, Em. Racoviță, G. Macovei, Iorgu Iordan, C. Ionescu-Mihăești, Em. C. Teodorescu, Șt. Ciobanu, N. Vasilescu-Carpen, S. Dragomir, Alex. Lapedatu. (AAR,1946, p. 331 apud Stefanescu Mitu, 1985)

Three days later, at the meeting of June 6th, 1946, Andrei Rădulescu, Vice-president of the Academy, salutes the presence of Constantin Karadja at the meeting, as a newly elected honorary member, addressing him the traditional wish "Welcome among us!". His answer to these words of appreciation was "I thank you deeply touched by your considerate words about my modest works of history (...). I receive your call with humility, as I envisage it the dearest to receive in my life, of being an honorary member of this first institution of culture of the country. This feeling of humility is accompanied by one of joy. I will no longer say like Ovid "Nitimur in vetitur semper, cupimusque negata", as You, dear colleagues, have offered me more than I could have the right to crave as a result of my modest works. (AAR, 1946 p. 61 apud Stefanescu Mitu, 1985). As a great book collector, C. I. Karadja gathered more than 100 incunables and his library of Grumăzești, Northern Romania, contained more than 6000 rare volumes (Schatz,2002), some of them being now part of the Romanian Academy Library's patrimony.



Fig. 1 Constantin I. Karadja



Fig. 2 The new building of the Library

3. The Romanian Academy Library

Founded on August the 6th, 1867, one year after the foundation of the Romanian Academic Society, The *Romanian Academy Library* (BAR) was assigned the mission of gathering and preserving the national fund of manuscripts and printed documents illustrating the Romanian and universal history, culture and civilization. It is still considered, after more than a century of existence, the richest national Romanian library, holding the most comprizing funds of Romanian documents, old and recent, acting as a scientific and encyclopaedic library. Its collections are organized, so that they may offer the documentary material necessary to the fundamental scientific research in general and specifically to the research unfolded in the institutes of the Romanian Academy. It shelters over 11 million library units, out of which 10,000 volumes of manuscripts, over 500,000 correspondence and archive records, 138,000 engravings and drawings, about 3000,000 photographs, 53,112 cartographic documents, 190,000 coins, medals, plates, and seals, more than 600 engraved stones and 40,000 stamps, 55, 000 musical scores, 20,775 audio-video items, 5,3 million monographs and almost 7 million serials. At present the collections are sheltered in a new and modern building (Fig. 2).

Beneficiary of the Legal Deposit since 1885, it includes among its attributions the publication of the retrospective bibliography of the Romanian books and serials and of special bibliographies, such as Mihai Eminescu Bibliography or The Independence War Bibliography, providing assistance for documentation and research on the Romanian science and culture. The special collections of its patrimony confer it one of the highest ranks among the institutions of the kind in Romania. Its fund of manuscripts is the most extensive and most valuable in the country and its collections of prints, scores, maps and its numismatic treasures are regarded as real reference points in the field.

The Romanian Academy Library cultivates an ample exchange with other academies, scientific institutions of higher education or prominent libraries abroad and coordinates the activity of exchanging publications of its subsidiaries, being the nucleus of a vast network of branches and pending research institutes. Thus, in order to keep the pace with modernization both in collections and in organization, this institution has centered its acquisition policy of foreign publications first and foremost on international exchange, but also on purchase as well. At the same time, the legacies and donations of illustrious personalities have always been an important source of enriching the library heritage.

We are now in the „Information Society and Internet Era”. Efforts have been made over the last two dacades to modernize the library, so that access would be facilitated for everybody, from any place of the world, at any time. Since 1992 the

website of the Library (www.biblacad.ro) has accommodated and encouraged the virtual access to its rich collections. The following images represent a sample of rare books, letters and drawings respectively, to be found in the collections of the Library. The image of Fig. 4 is taken from the Greek manuscript 1294, a Canon of Penitence from the 12th century, on parchment. It has been identified as the oldest text of a canon known, older than that in the Library of Vatican. The 20 miniatures are of great artistic value representing monks praying to attain perfection on the Ladder of Divine Ascent of Saint John the Sinaite (Strempel, 1971).



Fig. 3 *Canon of Penitence* (12th Century)



Fig. 4 Ortelius Atlas, *Theatrum Orbis. Map of Dacia* (16th century)



Fig. 5. Picasso - *Lola*



Fig. 6 Letter of Napoleon to Maria Walewska

At present, the Library is involved in several national and international works meant to create digital collections. The most recent project is „European Library” (PIC:984300226), which is funded by the European Commission and started in January this year. The consortium of the project includes also the Library of the Uppsala University.

4. Karadja Collections

The Library is the beneficiary of Constantin Karadja's steady donations throughout his lifetime due to his relationship with many academicians and scholars in this prominent cultural forum of the country and the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books is in possession of numerous and diverse documents donated by C. I. Karadja himself or purchased from his family after his death. There are registered more than 400 historical documents from the 15th century onwards, mainly Moldavian, both in the original and in photocopy, documents in the course of returning from the State Archives. Besides, several Romanian, Latin, Italian, French, German manuscripts from the 15th to the 18th century, more than 15 rare books, out of which three incunables in the original, eight incunables in photocopy or in facsimile and some post-incunables complete the inventory. An attractive collection of letters signed Constantin Karadja is part of the archive Nicolae Iorga, the great historian with whom he had a prolific scientific collaboration.

We have selected out of this vast collection a few titles from all these categories of documents: rare books, manuscripts, archive and correspondence.

The following series of images is meant to give the reader an idea of the donations made by the brilliant bibliographer and bibliophile, in themselves a treasure for any important library in the world in rarity, oldness and aging, artistry in miniatures, the typographer's and bookbinder's craftsmanship.

They are printed in various fonts, with historiated initials, decorated with lavish miniatures in colour and gold, with text in full page or in columns, with engravings describing scenes or delineating portraits of high beauty and refinement, elegant frontispieces, most of them presenting themselves in exquisite original leather gilt-impressed bindings or in parchment or velvet, with golden schnitt, some of them with Baroque silver locks. Inked inscriptions and marginalia, ex-libris and supralibros enhance their value by adding information about their temporary ownership or readers.

4. 1. Rare Books

Fig. 7 is an image of a gilt-stamped supralibros belonging to C. I. Karadja on a rare book, **Chalcondile Athenien's** *Histoire des turcs, L'histoire de la décadence de l'empire grec et établissement de Celvy des Turcs*, translation by Blaise De Vigenere Bourbonnois, bearing a series of engravings with portraits of the emperors of Turkey, 907 f., printed in Paris in 1650 (Brunet, 1860). The second image (Fig. 8) is from **Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini's** *In Europam*, printed at Memmingen, published by Albrecht Kunne de Duderstat, a photocopy. Actually, it is Pope Pius II's work *In Europam*, first edition. This pope encouraged Vlad III Dracula, whom he held in high

regard, to start a war against the sultan Mehmet II, even to assassinate him (“The Night Attack”).



Fig. 7

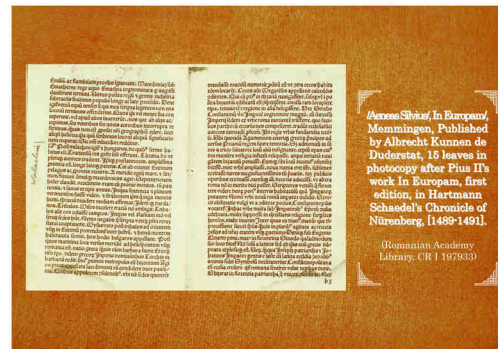


Fig. 8

A third item (Fig. 9) is **Johann Saubert's** *Historia Bibliothecae Reip. Noribergensis...*, published in Nuremberg by Wolfgang Endter, 1643, 214 p. with stylish engraved frontispieces, First edition of a history of the city library of Nuremberg, containing an inventory of over 900 fifteenth-century editions. The author was Nuremberg's city librarian from 1637 until his death. His useful and only somewhat arbitrary decision to study and catalogue 15th-century printed books separately, as a specific field of interest, was soon followed by other bibliographers and will never be abandoned. A fourth rare book (Fig. 10) is **Jeremia II**, Patriarch of Constantinople's *Censur oder Urtheil der Orientalischen Kirchen...*, published at Ingolstadt by David Sartorio, 1583, 268 f.. It has parchment covers with stamped medallion and frame, an inked inscription on the back of the front cover.

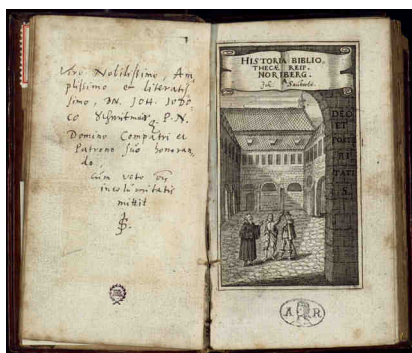


Fig. 9

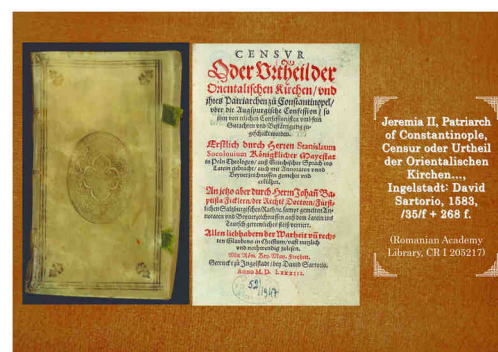


Fig. 10

Fig. 11 contains an image of a rare book by **C. Sallustius Crispus**, *Cum veterum Historicorum fragmentis*, printed in Lugduni Batavorum (Leyden), Ex officina Elzeviriana, 1634, /8/ f. + 310/-344/ p., original leather binding and golden schnitt. It bears an engraved title by Cor. Cl. Duysent and a medallion portrait of Sallust facing p.1 and an ornament of the Medusa on p. 216. The French bibliography considers that

only the first genuine edition which has the Medusa's head. And now a very rare book in Latin, donated by C. Karadja in 1946, having as author **Johann Hartung**, *Bibliotheca sive antiquitates urbis Constantinopolitanae*, printed in Argentorati (Strasbourg), 1578, /48/ p (Fig. 12). He mentions its rarity in his article in *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Europe*, 1935, nr 10-12. It is a well-known fact that he was an adept at identifying old printed books, having permanent and reliable suppliers of catalogues from Germany, France and other countries. Only 2 editions are published in Latin and held by 9 libraries worldwide.



Fig. 11

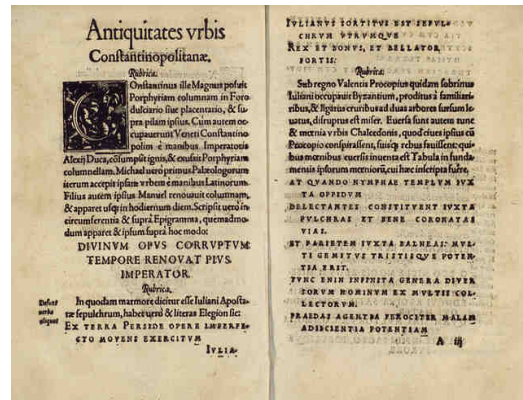


Fig. 12

A spectacular *Livre d'heures* (Fig. 13), a Book of Hours, on parchment, richly adorned with 15 miniatures on engravings of saints and scenes of the Apocalypse, the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, the Nativity, the Flight to Egypt, the Adoration of the Magi etc., issued in Paris in 1520, bound in garnet velvet with magnificent silver locks by Hering, a piece of great beauty. Other 4 marginal miniatures and 10 minute figures of saints complete it. It also displays gilt-stamped leather inside binding with coat of arms in medallion, 77 f., purchased from Marcella Caradja in 1952. In Fig. 14 there is a post-incunabulum by **Justinus**, entitled *In Trogi Pompei historias exordium - Florus Lucius, gestorum Romanorum epithoma*, Venetiis, 1503, 54 leaves, black letters, modern binding.



Fig. 13

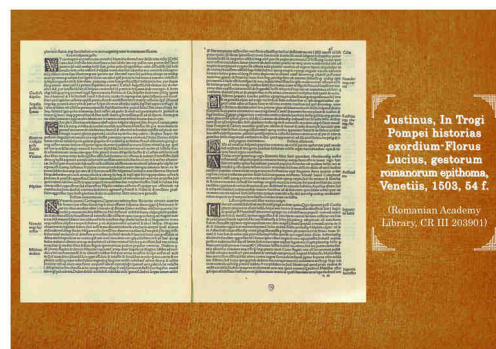


Fig. 14

Padre **Giacomo Fiorelli's** *La monarchia d'Oriente, Comincia da Constantino'L grande. Nell'Anno CCCXXX (330). E termina in Constantino Paleologo. Nell'Anno MCCCCLIII (1453)* in Venice by Domenico Milocco, an in-folio issued in 1679, /3/f. + 448 p. + 1 f. with an engraved portrait of the author on the back of the front leaf (Bacaru,1970) is shown in Fig. 15. The image in Fig. 16 is taken from an incunable. The author is **Franciscus Philephus**, his work is *Epistolae familiares*, printed in Venice by Ioannem de Cereto alias Tacuinum de Tridino in 1498, on paper. It contains black historiated initials and a typographer's mark in the end.



Fig. 15

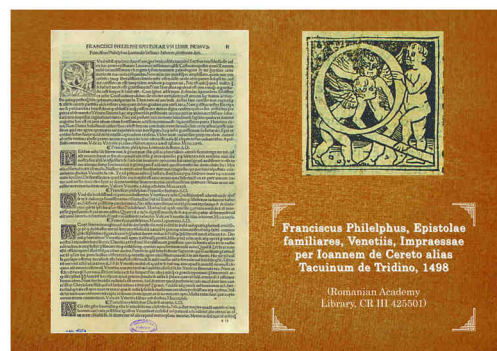


Fig. 16

Fig. 17 shows an image from *Biblia latina* printed by **Johannes Petri** and **Johannes Froben**, an incunable of 1498, an in-folio with coloured and gold lettrines, text on two columns, with explanatory windows. The binding is on wood covers with beautifully embossed leather.

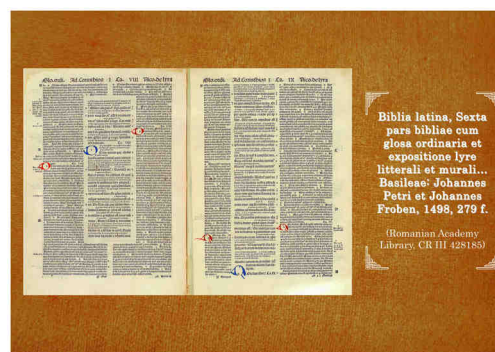


Fig. 17

4. 2. Manuscripts

But Constantin I. Karadja donated also several manuscripts. For example, Fig. 18 shows the Latin manuscript 130, **Letter of the Bishop Leonardus Chiensis of Mitilène** (Lesbos), the topic being the siege and fall of Constantinople, circa 1500, actually a manuscript of French origin. It gives the complete letter, in 16 leaves, written by the Bishop of Mitilene (Lesbos), Leonardus Chiensis, dated August 16th, 1453, containing an account of the siege of Constantinople. Its author was killed by

the Turks in 1462. The golden unvan of an Oriental manuscript, nr. 23 of Fig. 19 is a Turkish **Chronicle of Ahmed Asam**, from the 18th century, bought by Karadja from Franz Babinger in Berlin in 1936, the only manuscript known by this author at the State Library in Vienna, an unpublished version, the beautiful Oriental binding was torn and stolen when the manor of Grumăzești was spoliated in the fall 1945, he explains in a note on the guard leaf. It was donated in 1946 to the Romanian Academy Library.

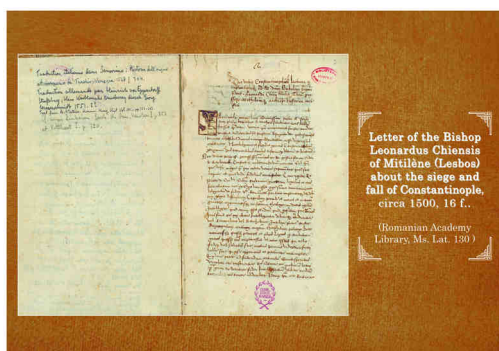


Fig. 18



Fig. 19

The image in Fig. 20 displays the image of a Romanian manuscript, nr. 5545, a translation of a French manuscript from his own library, entitled *History of Altidalis and Zelida* by **Vincent Voiture** dating back the 18th century, 94 leaves, which he bought from Father Filaret Buliga from the Neamt Monastery in 1926 and donated it in 1946. Vincent Voiture was a man of letters and a poet, a founder member of the Academie Francaise, a leading figure of the circles of the Hotel de Rambouillet. Around 1630, he wrote a *nouvelle mauresque*, the *Histoire d'Alcidalis et Zélide*, very popular in *gallant* circles, never published in his life-time; its imaginative force reveals another side of a writer with diverse skills.

Most of the pieces of information we detain are taken from the marginal notes and the inner covers. It had been translated from French, in Iasi in 1783, during Voivode Alexandru Constantin Mavrocordat's time, by **Vasile Deacon**, at the order of biv vel ban Gheorghie Beldiman. More information about various events of the time arouses interest by some details about the Turks' invasion in Moldavia, in 1821; the locusts' swarming in 1823; the burning of the Moldavian forests and of the Neamt Monastery in 1826; the earthquake in 1828, the lapidation of the boyar Calimach by the people. Another image (Fig. 21), this time of a Romanian manuscript, nr. 5887, **Costache Conachi's Political View of the Whole Europe**, dated 1825, an olograph text of 39 leaves in black ink, in Romanian language with Cyrillic alphabet, containing rich footnotes, donated by C. I. Karadja in 1947. It had been received as a gift from professor A. B. Brandea in 1919, who stated its origin in logothete Vasile Malinescu's

private archive until 1866. It relates Conachi's personal point of view about the continent and its political actors.



Fig. 20

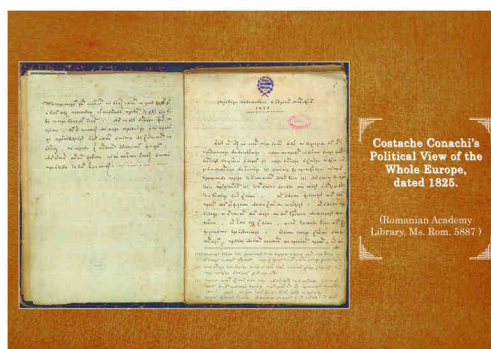


Fig. 21

The image of Fig. 22 is taken from a French manuscript, nr. 212, **Canow's** *Memoirs and Negotiations from My Campaigns in Hungary in 1692*, with original leather binding, text in black ink, in 78 leaves. It contains numerous important pieces of information on the unfolding actions and refers to many historic names of the time in charge with taking decisions on top among whom King Leopold I, marshal of Stahremberg, the great defender of Vienna, Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, who gathered, on this occasion, documentation for his large and consistent geographical works in 150 volumes, now in manuscript at the Academy of Sciences and in the library of the palace Marsili in Bologna.

Fig. 23 contains a 17th century German manuscript, nr. 114, *Eineß traürig Anfangs...*, of provenance from the Monastery of Minorites in Kaltern, Upper Tirol, 86 f., with parchment binding, a caligraphed text in black ink, page with impressed frame. It is another account about the siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1683, in 16 chapters.

In spite of the fact that the ruler of the Romanian Country, Prince Serban Cantacuzino, had to act as an ally of the Turks in the battle, being a vassal, he secretly supported the actions of the defenders, developed an ingenious system of communications with them, that is why he eventually was awarded the title of Count of the Holy Roman Empire from Leopold I. The manuscript evokes the fact that he erected a cross of 5 meters tall in front of his tent as a token of his actions as a Christian.

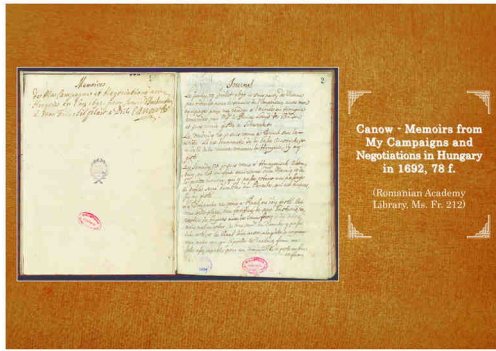


Fig. 22

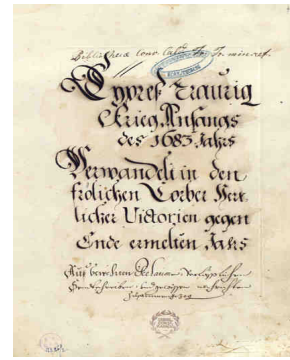


Fig. 23

4.3. Correspondence

The Romanian Academy Library preserves also Karadja's correspondence with Nicolae Iorga, in the latter's fund. Some of them have been scanned and can be seen in the exhibition. In his letters, more than 20, addressed to the well known Romanian historian he usually informed him of his studies and articles published at various publishing houses, or about foreign visitors to his estate of Grumazesti (like the German humanist pastor Mihael Neander), as well as his search for documents and bibliography about the Romanian countries, containing bibliographies issued before 1850, ready to be sent to the historian. He also signalled events which threw a light on the Romanian culture, I refer to the the exhibition of Romanian folk textile artifacts opened on the 21st of May 1929, at the Celleri Modern, Sturegatan 26, which was unanimously praised, fact confirmed by R. Uhrynowski's report and in Svenska Dagbladet and in articles from other Swedish papers.

The personal archive C. I. Karadja contains acts like birth and death certificates of the members of his family or of his ancestors, diplomas of graduation and membership on parchment, manuscripts, maps of estates, varia and printed documents. Figures 24 and 25 contain Karadja's father's, Jean Karadja Pacha's *birth certificate* and *will* with the sealed envelope, respectively.

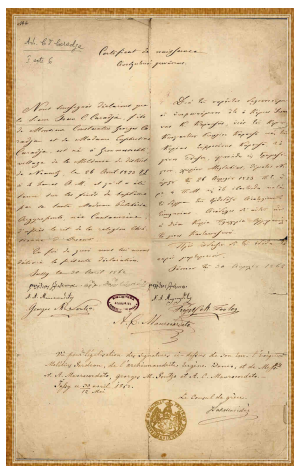


Fig. 24. Birth Certificate of Jean Karadja Pacha

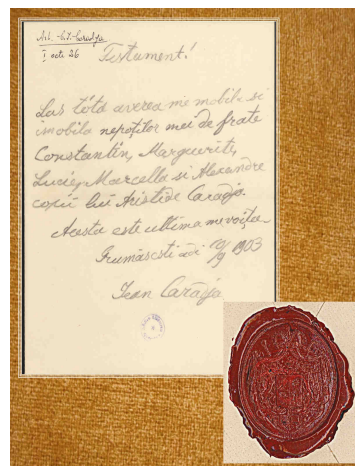


Fig. 25. Jean Karadja Pacha's Will, ollograph ms

Undoubtedly, Karadja's name could be repeatedly heard, if we continued our list of documents held by the Library, but we can eventually express our deepest admiration and gratitude to such a personality and patriot as Constantin I. Karadja, so dedicated to collecting and preserving the highest values of mankind, such as thinking and knowledge transferred to the next generations in documents, sometimes in the form of masterly works of art represented by illuminated old manuscripts and rare books, a noble and gradiose undertaking usually designated to national institutions of culture.

As Dan Simonescu (1971) remarked „Constantin I. Karadja was an example of uninterrupted meritorious work, as a diplomat and a man of science, as a historian and a bibliologist” .

Acknowledgements. The author acknowledges the contributions of his colleagues of the „ Manuscripts and Rare Books” department, Mrs. Gabriela Dumitrescu and Mrs. Lorenta Popescu, to preparing this document.

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Florin Gheorghe Filip

(<http://www.biblacad.ro/FlorinFilip.html>)