

Academician Ion of Gheorghe Sbiera in the Century of the Revival of the National Conscience of Romanians from Bukovina

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Abstract

The study highlights the fundamental contribution of the cultural activity of the academician Ioan of Gheorghe Sbiera , to the establishment of the cultural and national unity of the Romanians in Bukovina in the second half of the 19th century. The Bucovinean scholar was a brilliant philologist, literary historian, editor, memorialist, folklorist and, last but not least, historian. He is awarded the title of the first professor of the Romanian Language and Literature Department at the University of Cern u i, from which he taught the first course in Romanian, although he was forbidden by the foreign authorities. As a founding member of the Romanian Academy, it is worthwhile to be considered the first philologist to present the first full and homogeneous version of the Latin alphabet of the Romanian language. His entire activity brings a valuable contribution to the history of the Romanians in Bukovina, definitively putting his mark on the evolution of the stages preceding the Union in 1918.

Keywords: *I. G. Sbiera, Bucovina, academician, alphabet, literature, unity, awakening, teacher, language, culture, national, society, struggle, librarian.*

In a Bukovina¹ under an austere regime, with schools in which German language was mainly used, a golden generation was required that would built a common goal, and would fulfill with astonishing consistency the deploying role of the Romanian national culture. The brothers Hurmuzachi, Eusebie Mandicevschi, Ciprian Porumbescu, Constantin Morariu, Silvestru Morariu Andrievici, Eusebi Popovici, Vladimir Repta, Tudor Flondor and many others are all of the generous Romanian intellectuals who played a decisive role in the revival of national consciousness in Bukovina.

¹ Mihai Iacobescu, *Din Istoria Bucovinei: vol. I (1774-1862) – De la administra ia militar la autonomia provincial* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1993), 550.

An important personality that has made its mark in the second half of the 19th century is the academician Ion of Gheorghe Sbiera, scholar, university professor, literary historian, memorialist, folklorist, philologist, and last but not least an advocate of Romanian language education in a foreign-controlled province.

Ion G. Sbiera was born in Horodnicul de Jos of Bucovina, on November 1, 1836, in a family of ten children. He was the eighth child of George and Ana. Like any child of his age, he teaches prayers in the house, with rigor and piety, in the evening and in the morning. Because in his village there was no school, he received the first notions of writing and calculating, for one year (1843-1844), together with his brother Nicolae, from Vasile Ruz, an ambulant teacher,² as were many teachers in that time. Because they were fond of learning and learned easily, Gheorghe Sbiera decides to send their children further to the trivial school in R d u i (1845-1848), where they will learn to write and speak in German, at first, from memory without understanding. Teachers did not know Romanian,⁴ which made it difficult for young students to develop naturally. Later, the Bucovinean scholar would make a speech, as a professor at the Cernauti University, in which he strongly expressed his opposition to the use of a foreign language in the schools with Romanian pupils and moreover, stating the academician, that represents “an energetic and serious attack on their nationality”.⁵

He finishes the last class of primary education at the four-grade Gymnasium in Cern u i (1849), where he will also attend the eight-grade Gymnasium, Ober-Gymnasium (1849-1857), as a scholar⁶ of the Orthodox Religious Fund, receiving every year 80 florins per year. Here he will meet Aron Pumnul, a native scholar from Transylvania, the teacher who will make his mark on the formation and ascension of the future academician, as he himself writes in his memoirs, “His

² I. G. Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera dup tradi iune i istorie i Amintiri din via a autorului* (Cern u i: Tipografia universitar î.r.a. lui R. Eckhardt, 1899), 91.

³ Ion Nistor, *Un capitol din viea a cultural a Românilor din Bucovina (1774-1857). Discurs rostit la 21 maiu (3 iunie) 1916 în edin solemn* (Bucharest: Libr riile Socec & Comp. C Sfetea i Pavel Suru, 1916), 23.

⁴ Alis Niculic , “Ion G. Sbiera i mi carea na ional a românilor din Bucovina,” *Analele Bucovinei* XXIV, 2(49) (Editura Academiei Române, 2017): 361-368.

⁵ I. G. Sbiera, “Condi iunile necesarie pentru esistina, conservarea i prosperarea graiului national,” *Almanachulu Societ ei Academice Socialu-Literare “România Jun ”* vol. I (1883), 137-158.

⁶ Alis Niculic , *Ion G. Sbiera. Via a i opera* (Suceava: Biblioteca Bucovinei “I.G. Sbiera”, 2005), 36.

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cultural influence on me was determinant and decisive”⁷ because “he made me take the path and the direction in which I have moved all my life.”⁸

He studied Law in Vienna (abs 1857), also attending the courses of the Faculty of Philosophy (1857-1861). In the spring of 1861, in the Austrian Empire parliamentary⁹ elections took place, so Bucovina was also in the run-up to the elections, the first from gaining the provincial autonomy of the Duchy. I. G. Sbiera does not remain indifferent, so he initiates, together with Leon Popescu and Artemie Berariu, the drafting of an appeal, on 2nd of March 1861, to mobilize the Romanians to choose the appropriate representatives to support their cause. In this respect, there were presented seven criteria¹⁰ for the selection of potential future leaders: to be authentic Romanians and Christians; to love their country, religion and family; to be brave, strong with moral integrity; to be free men with no preconceived ideas; to be good orators and wise men; to be educated, to know the history of Romanians and, last but not least, to have the experience of the accomplished things. Although it did not have the expected results, the passionate student attracted the sympathy of the young Romanian intellectuals from Bukovina.

After completing his higher education (July 1861), I. G. Sbiera returns to his native village. Dressed in the traditional garments that he made in Vienna according to the traditional model from Bukovina, I. G. Sbiera, a graduate lawyer, introduced himself to the governor of the country to embrace the political activity [*Ibidem*]. The request seemed to be welcomed. However, it did not materialize by assuming any public position in the government, since the Hurmuzachi brothers, Alecu and Gheorghe, Romanians who had put their soul in the national movement back then, convinced I.G. Sbiera to take up the post as a substitute teacher at the Romanian language and literature Department of the Cern u i gymnasium, which had been entrusted to Aron Pumnul,¹¹ now seriously ill. The young jurist gave up his political career in favor of the didactic one, being a professor at the Cernauti Gymnasium for 10 years (1861-1871). Pioneer and advocate of replacing the German language entirely with his beloved language, Ion Sbiera manages to turn

⁷ Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera dup tradi iune*, 106.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Nicolae Tcaciuc Albu, *Via a i opera lui Ion Sbiera* (Cern u i: Editura Liceului „Aron Pumnul”, 1936), 8.

¹⁰ Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera dup tradi iune*, 137-138.

¹¹ Constantin Loghin, *Istoria literaturii române din Bucovina, 1775-1918 (în leg tur cu evolu ia cultural i politic)* (Cern u i: Alexandru cel Bun, 1996), 87. Ilie Rad, *Aron Pumnul (1818-1866)* (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2002), 113.

the Romanian language¹² from a teaching object into the teaching language for students studying in the Cern u i Gymnasium. He used German language „only to explain the grammar rules for the non-Romanians”¹³ and for the classroom inspections. Ion G. Sbiera writes in the memorial work, *The Sbiera Family...*, the reaction of the present students at the first course in Romanian:

*They all were staring at me... Many of them had groaned their heads in their hands, they had their elbows on the bar, and listened with amazing attention and sacramental silence.*¹⁴

Ion Sbiera teaches the students of the graduating high school classes, the first elements of knowledge of Romanian history and culture, lectures that materialized and later published under the title *Historical Literary Studies*.¹⁵ The young substitute teacher is named¹⁶ member (6/19 March 1867) in the commission¹⁷ for real Romanian scholastic books, a position that broadens his sphere of involvement in the constant action of forming a generation of Romanians in Romanian language, and supports the introduction of books translated into the mother tongue language, in real schools with teaching in Romanian.

I. G. Sbiera initiates events that eventually proved to be of a national character, by which the young teacher from gymnasium was aiming for the awakening of noble feelings in the soul of his young pupils: the love for their country, for their fellow men, for the ancient traditions and at the same time to help them build a personal but also a common ideal. They support the completion of the knowledge of the Gimnazian students, and they have the role of strengthening and preserving the Romanian tradition, received as an invaluable inheritance from our forefathers. Thus, on May 1st, he organizes trips and outdoor

¹² Pavel ugui, “Prefa ,” in *Pove ti i poezii populare române ti*, I. G. Sbiera (Bucharest: Minerva, 1971), XI.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 168.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 169.

¹⁵ “Studii istorice literare. Încrestinarea Romînilor,” in *Foaia So iet ii pentru literatura i cultura romîn în Bucovina* (Cern u i, Cu tiparul lui Rudolf Ehardt, year III, no. 1 (January 1867), 10-15; “Studii istorice literare. R stîmpul I. Dela încoloniarea Daciei cu Roman i pîn la retragerea legiunilor romane dintr-însa, adec dela 106-274 d. Cr.,” in *Foaia So iet ii pentru literatura i cultura romîn în Bucovina*, year III, no. 2 (1st February 1867), 25-31; “Studii istorice literare. Ræstîmpul al II (Dela retragerea legiunilor romane din Dacia tr ian i fundarea Daciei aureliane pîna la a ezarea Bulgarilor de-a dreapta Dun rii, adec dela 274-680 d. Cr.,” in *Foaia So iet ii pentru literatura i cultura romîn în Bucovina*, year III, no. 5 and 6 (1st June 1867), 105-114; “Studii istorice literare. R stîmpul al II (274-680 d. Cr.). Partea literar ,” in *Foaia So iet ii pentru literatura i cultura romîn în Bucovina*, year II, no. 7 and 8 (July and August 1867), 153-161.

¹⁶ *Foaia So iet ii pentru literatura i cultura romîn în Bucovina* (1867): 91-94.

¹⁷ *Albina* (1866), 3.

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celebrations. They're called Maiale. The young people hold speeches, sing and recite patriotic poems, organize hora, even the Union Hora, thus consolidating their belonging to the same country, to the same ideal, namely, the national unity.

Enterprising spirit with complex concerns, the erudite scholar I. G. Sbiera, along with other Bukovina people, builds a mission and fulfills it successfully, which is to unite and strengthen intelligentsia from Cern u i, which was in formation, as a cultural and national entity. Thus, in 1862, when the Romanian intellectuals in Bukovina decided to organize a cultural society, Sbiera elaborated, in Romanian, a draft statute in order to establish the much desired *Romanian Reunion of Reading* in Cern u i.¹⁸ In the first governing committee of the Reunion, the medical officer Mihai Zotta will be present and will be the president; Alexandru Hurmuzachi, vice president, and Professor I. G. Sbiera, the "soul"¹⁹ of the Society, will be the secretary.

With the establishment of the *Reunion*, under the direction of Alecu Hurmuzachi and I. G. Sbiera, a reading room and a library are organized, naturally, with Romanian books and publications. An oasis of animation and perpetuation of the Romanian language. In just three years, that is, in 1865, the *Reunion* became *the Society for Romanian Literature and Culture in Bukovina*, grouping around it the intellectuals of Bucovina,²⁰ which will open a significant number of branches in all the towns and bigger villages of the province. The Society supports the development of national culture, grants prizes and scholarships, supports the research and promotion of different branches of science and art, increases the knowledge of national history through the free courses²¹ held within it. Gheorghe Hurmuzachi, elected president of the Society, said:

*It has not yet been three years, and now you have already witnessed the beginning of the linguistic progress in Bukovina, the magical power of the awakening of the national sense through the cultivation and embracement of our dear language.*²²

¹⁸ Constantin Loghin, *Societatea pentru cultur i literatur rom n din Bucovina. 1862-1932. Schi istoric cu prilejul jubileului de 70 de ani* (Cern u i: Tipografia Mitropolitului Silvestru, 1932), 1.

¹⁹ Constantin Loghin, *Societatea Pentru Cultur i Literatur rom n n Bucovina (1862-1942). La 80 de ani. Istoric i realiz ri* (Cern u i: Mitropolitul Silvestru, 1943), 7; Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera dup tradi iune*, 174.

²⁰ Niculic , *Ion G. Sbiera*, 41.

²¹ *Albina*, year II, no. 31, Viena, 17/29 (March 1868), 1-2.

²² *aptezeci de ani dela nfiin area „Societ ii pentru cultura i literatura rom n n Bucovina” (1862-1932). Conferin e inute n cadrul s rb rilor jubiliare* (1932), 17.

Professor Univ. PhD in Historical Sciences Mihai Iacobescu, in a reference paper of Bukovina, notes:

*Society becomes a true major government, an unofficial party that initiates and coordinates the activity and the struggle for the cultural-political and national emancipation of the Bukovinian Romanians.*²³

So *the Society* becomes the core nucleus of the Romanians in Bukovina. An event of particular importance in the life of *the Society* is the printing of *the Paper of Society of Romanian Literature and Culture in Bukovina*²⁴ magazine in Bukovina (March 1, 1865 - December 31, 1869), whose first editor was Ambrosie Dimitrovi .²⁵ Shortly in July 1866, Dimitroviță died, and I. G. Sbiera became editor in charge (1866-1869) of the publication. Its pages have collected signatures from writers from all over Romania, being a means of propagating the values with a nationalist character. Two other publications will be published in the following years by the *the Society*, with a remarkable role in the national revival of the Romanians, were the *Aurora Român* ²⁶ and the *Calendar*.²⁷ The first will appear from 1st August 1881 until 15th December 1882 and in January and February of 1884. *The Calendar* is made by three intellectuals of the time, each of whom occupies, in turn, the function of secretary²⁸ within *the Society*: the priest Professor Mihai Miron C linescu (1874-1881),²⁹ writer Ion I. Bumbac (1882-1883)³⁰ and priest Professor Calistrat Coca (1884-1885).³¹

The members of *the Society* were those who brought the first theater group³² in Romania to the capital of Bukovina, which constituted a re-launch³³ of the Romanians' national movement. This merit was given to the brothers Alecu and Gheorghe Hurmuzachi. Thus, in January 1864, the boyar Alexandru Costin,

²³ Iacobescu, *Din Istoria Bucovinei*, 471.

²⁴ Loghin, *Societatea Pentru Cultur* (1943), 16-18.

²⁵ Ion Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei*, ed. Stelian Neagoe (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991), 158.

²⁶ I. G. Sbiera, *Mi c ri literare la românii din Bucovina. Discurs* (Tip ritur separate din "Familia", Oradea-Mare, cu tiparul lui Otto Hügel, 1890), 19; D. Mur ra u, *Istoria literaturii române*, ed. a III-a (Bucharest: Cartea Româneasc , 1943), 227; Vasile I. Schipor, *Bucovina istoric . Studii i documente* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2007), 230.

²⁷ Sbiera, *Mi c ri literare la românii din Bucovina*, 19-20; Vasile I. Schipor, *Calendare i almanahuri române ti din Bucovina (1811-1918). Contribu ia lor la prop irea cultural-na ional a românilor bucovineni* (Ia i: Editura Univ. "Al. I. Cuza", 2016), 240]

²⁸ Schipor, *Calendare i almanahuri române ti din Bucovina*, 230.

²⁹ Emil Satco, *Enciclopedia Bucovinei*, vol. I. (Ia i, Ed. Princeps Edit., 2004), 196-197.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 167.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 244-245.

³² Alis Niculic , *Din istoria vie ii culturale a Bucovinei. Teatrul i Muzica (1775-1940)* (Bucharest: Casa Editorial Floare Albastr , 2009), 69.

³³ *Foaea So iet ii pentru literatura i cultura român în Bucovina* (1865), 59-70.

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advised by his brother, Emanuel, who was in Romania and had the opportunity to get acquainted with the activity of the dramatic artists, hired the theater group *Fani Tardini*,³⁴ who held the first performance in the capital of Bukovina, on 1st/13th March 1864, at Hotel Moldova.³⁵ On the stage was played drama with songs in four acts by *Radu Colomfirescu*, then a show by I. Dumitrescu. The room was not large enough. People from all social categories had come: pupils, students, peasants, teachers, writers, poets, priests, politicians, and so on. The first Romanian accents that electrified the room, as Ion G. Sbiera said in his memoirs, were the lyrics: “Today, Romanian brothers, we also see ourselves masters, / on our household, which was mainly deserted”. The impact was unexpected. I. G. Sbiera surprises the auditor’s reaction in his autobiographical work:

*The audience, abducted by an undescribable animation, burst into applause, cries of bravo and long live, that the walls were shaking, and I thought that the room would collapse because of so much noise!*³⁶

It was the first occasion that the Romanians, shoulder to shoulder, this time, forming an enthusiastic public, to actually celebrate Romanian language. In the first season (1/13 March - 15/27 May, 1864) of the theater group in Cernăuți, there were 33 performances, of which twenty-six were Romanian national compositions with Romanian national character, and seven were translations from the French.

On April 1st, 1866, the *Romanian Literary Society* was established in Bucharest, with the purpose of producing a unitary grammar for the Romanians, the dictionary and the glossary of the Romanian language, since in the second half of the 19th century, the fundamental problem of Romanian intellectuals was language³⁷ - a tool of struggle for national unity, a means of continuity of Romanianism, mediating the recognition of the Romanian people. The Bucharest authorities designate Alecu Hurmuzachi and Ambrosie Dimitrovi as members of the intellectuals of Bukovina. The first was recognized as the editor of *Bucovina, a Romanian magazine for politics, religion and literature* (October 1848-September 1850), and A. Dimitrovi, also editor at *The Society Paper...* Last, being ill, is forced to renounce the honor of designation. Instead, I. G. Sbiera is recommended, supported by Alecu Hurmuzachi. Thus, by the Decree of June 11, 1866, issued by Carol I, he becomes a full member. Next year (1867) *The Romanian literary society* transforms into *the Romanian Academic Society*, so I. G. Sbiera, a

³⁴ Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera după tradițiune* Sbiera, 188.

³⁵ *Ibidem*; Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei*, 165.

³⁶ Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera după tradițiune*, 188.

³⁷ *Studii. Revistă de istorie* (1956), 21-22.

professor of Romanian language and literature, known as the ardent successor of Aron Pumnul, becomes a founding member of it. At the meeting on 8/20 August 1867, I. G. Sbiera is elected secretary of the Academic Society. In the first debates on the fundamental problem of the unification of spellings used in cultural centers across the Romanian space, two different concepts were highlighted. Etymological and phonetic principle.³⁸ The latter is supported by I. G. Sbiera with Alexandru Hurmuzachi, joined by Vasile Alecsandri, Titu Maiorescu, Mihail Kogalniceanu. The proposal to set up a commission whose task is to draw up a

*spelling project based on the etymological principle, looking for a conciliation as much as possible the phonetic language with it*³⁹

comes from the Bukovina scholar. Thus, the proposal being accepted, seven members are elected, including the professor. It is approved the design of a spelling based on the etymological principle, and not on the phonetic way proposed by I. G. Sbiera. However, although his proposal is rejected, he exposes his gift as a philologist, elaborating two studies⁴⁰ on the spelling of the Romanian language, according to its evolution and to the phonetic principle, published in the *Society Paper for Romanian Culture and Literature*, whose editor he was.

I. G. Sbiera has been highlighted since the first session dedicated to debates on the unification of Romanian spellings, which gives him a distinct place in Romanian culture. He is the first philologist who, in the first session, strongly opposes to etymology. Also, the first presentation of the first complete and homogeneous version of the Latin alphabet of the Romanian language highlights the teacher's early preoccupations for the research of Romanian language and literature.

The year 1870 was to bring an important event for all Romanians. 400 years since the Sanctification of the Putna Monastery, which was an opportunity for young students in Vienna to organize a real celebration at Putna, a cradle of cultural and national unity. But the outbreak of the Franco-German War, the bank failures, the harsh conditions imposed by the authorities, tightened by the intimidation measures on the part of the austere regime, made the much-desired manifestation by all those with a Romanian soul to take place a year later. Romanian intellectuals, including the Hurmuzachi brothers - leaders of the national movement in Bukovina, are reserved to participate in large-scale events,

³⁸ Pavel ũgui, *Contribu ũii la o istorie a mi c rii cultural- ũtiin ifice din inuturile bucovinene* (Craiova: Tipografia Universit ũii, 1977), 1-2.

³⁹ Niculic , *Ion G. Sbiera*, 43.

⁴⁰ *Foaia So iet ũii pentru literatura ũi cultura romũn ũn Bucovina* (1867): 281-292.

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from the feeling that they can be cataloged at any time by the Austrian regime, genuine Romanian national gatherings (as they became) and the repercussions would be appropriate, as they occupied political positions and their position could be compromised. Academician I. G. Sbiera, a delegate of the Romanian Academic Society, participates on 15/27 August 1871 at the Celebration of Putna Monastery, whose prior was Arkadie Ciupercovici, and gives grateful speech⁴¹ in front of the patriots gathered at the grave of Stephen the Great, united at this time of celebration. I. G. Sbiera was surrounded by the young students of the Viennese University, members of the “Romania Juna” Society, to whom he calls “our hope, our future”,⁴² Romanian intellectuals in the struggle for national unity, leaders of the Romanian literary and cultural movement. Surrounded by so many Romanians and not only, the Bukovinean scholar, finds it appropriate to underline the mission of the Romanian Academic Society, which is the “unity of the Romanian language.”⁴³

I. G. Sbiera occupies the position of *custodian of the Country Library*⁴⁴ in 1871, when he resigned from the position of a substitute professor at the Romanian language and literature department at the Cern u i Gymnasium, as a result of a bitter attack⁴⁵ of D. Petrino against Pumnul’s ideas. The activity of the scholar is under the sign of the introduction and generalization of the national character of the Country Library. At first, he manages to have a dialogue by mail with the official authorities only in the Romanian language, which has highlighted the perpetuation of the dominant feature of the new custodian, that he always allowed the use of the Romanian language. The Session of the Country Committee calls for the use of the German language, but I. G. Sbiera does not give up and, as E. P unel notes in an article,⁴⁶ the scholar makes a compromise: he writes his letters in the vocabulary sheet system, i.e. he uses the left side for the text written in German, and the right side for the written text in the native language.

Romanians from Bukovina, felt the need to establish a center of culture and higher education, which will materialize in the appearance of the university in Cern u i. Dr. Carol de Stremayer, delegate of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and

⁴¹ Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera dup tradi iune*, 258-259.

⁴² *Ibidem*, 259.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ *Boabe de gr au*, year IV, no. 4 (April 1933), 225-239.

⁴⁵ D. Petrino, *Pu ține cuvinte despre coruperea limbei rom n e în Bucovina* (Cern u i: Tiparul lui Bucoviecki i Comp., 1869), 26.

⁴⁶ *Boabe de gr au*, 230.

Education, responsible for the settlement of the University of Cernăuți, arrived in Cernăuți, proposes to the scholar of Bukovina on 11 May 1875 to occupy the post of substitute at the Romanian language and literature department, as he himself I. G. Sbiera, writes

*by virtue of the very great resolution of the Empire of August 8, 1875, and on the basis of my literary work until that time I have been commissioned to fill my teaching.*⁴⁷

However, the surprise was when, from the letter issued by the local government of Bukovina, on September 27, 1875, he learned that he would be paid only with 1,440 fl. per year, in the conditions in which, as custodian of the Library received a salary of 1640 fl. per year.

On Aug. 26, 1875, the law⁴⁸ by which the Library of the Country, under the direction of the Francisco-Josefine University, was given the status of a university library, was passed. I. G. Sbiera was to be the last head⁴⁹ of the Country Library and to become the first teacher of Romanian language and literature at the University of Cernăuți. At the same time, until 1881 when he was appointed university professor, he accepted to be a custodian at the university library to supplement his income. As a matter of particular courage, he violates official decisions on the use of German language for teaching courses, and, in front of the audience, speaks Romanian, to the delight of the Romanians present. Sbiera will give the first course in Romanian, entitled *Old Education and New Education* on October 18, 1875, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Cernăuți University and also the inauguration of the Romanian Language and Literature Department:

*We have gathered aicia not to inaugurate this centre of science and culture that has been created ... but we have gathered [...] to inaugurate the Department for Romanian language and literature.*⁵⁰

After 6 years, in 1881, Sbiera will become a titular teacher, and in 1886 he will also bring his Ph.D. in philosophy. Ever since the first year of university professor activity, he has encouraged and supported Romanian students to undertake the establishment of cultural societies, the centers of Romanianism. This is how the *Arboroasa Society*, abolished following the well-known lawsuit filed by the Austrian authorities, was formed, the members of the society committee being

⁴⁷ Sbiera, *Familia Sbiera după tradițiune*, 298.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 299.

⁴⁹ The first head of the Country Library was Eusebie Popovici, a professor at the Faculty of Theology.

⁵⁰ I. G. Sbiera, *Educațiunea veche și educațiunea nouă. Discurs rostit în 18 Octombrie 1875 la inaugurarea catedrei pentru limba și literatură românească la universitatea Francisco-Iosefin din Cernăuți* (1875), 3.

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accused of high treason. However, I. G. Sbiera insisted on the establishment of a national cultural society, and so appeared the *Junimea* (1878), who had an important role in the orientation and formation of young students, being one of the most well-known and active student societies. With the same enthusiasm, he supports editing of the literary magazine of students, *Încercări literare* (13 February 1892 - 12 January 1893).

On December 14, 1898, the erudite scholar will be distinguished by the King of Romania, Carol I, with the Order of the *Crown of Romania*, as *Commander*, in recognition of the entire activity of the academician and university professor. In 1906, Sbiera retired after 31 years of activity at the University of Cernauti, and the Romanian language and literature department will be taken over by philologist Sextil Puscariu, who will play a decisive role in the Unification of Bucovina and Romania in 1918.

A founder of a generation of intellectuals who inspired his love for the language and the country, I. G. Sbiera dies on October 22, 1916, in Cernăuți, two years before the much-desired Union took place, leaving dowry to Bucovina, valuable works which complete the reference bibliography of the Bukovina space. Ion of Gheorghe Sbiera, a distinguished personality of Bukovina, brings a fundamental contribution both from the cultural point of view and from the point of view of the evolution of the intellectual Romanians from the entire Bukovina area, being permanently involved in the activities preceding the Union of 1918. Being a teacher at the gymnasium in Cernăuți, he materializes the ideal of forming a generation of Romanians in Romanian language, young intellectuals who are constantly participating in the creation of a collective ideal. Moreover, together with other leading intellectuals of Bukovina, he initiates the establishment of Romanian culture centre, such as the Romanian Meeting for Reading in Cernauti, which later became the Romanian Society for Culture and Literature in Bukovina. The press body of this society, the *Romanian Society for Romanian Literature and Culture Paper* in Bukovina becomes a tool of struggle for the revival of national consciousness, I. G. Sbiera being directly involved in its position as editor. The Bukovinean scholar occupies a distinct place in the Romanian culture, being the first philologist to present, for the first time, the first complete version of the Latin alphabet of the Romanian language within the Romanian Academy, whose founding member is. Academician I. G. Sbiera, remains in the history of Bukovina as a great literary historian, philologist, folklorist, memorialist, editor, researcher of Romanian history, titles highlighted throughout his activity.

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