

Raluca Prelipceanu, *Vința. Radiografia unei comunități care dispare / [Vința. Radiography of a disappearing community]* (Alba Iulia: Cognitiv, 2019), 223 p.

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The book *Vința. Radiografia unei comunități care dispare* (*Vința. Radiography of a disappearing community*) came out at Cognitiv Publishing House in Alba Iulia in 2019, written by Raluca Prelipceanu. Born in Bucharest, the author is a graduate of the Academy of Economic Sciences (specialized in International Economic Relations), who did an MA and PhD in Sorbonne on Romanian migration and its impact on family and society. As a researcher, she has been dealing with this subject and acquired a certain experience that facilitated and developed her perception of how to approach human relations and their impact on community life.

Raluca Prelipceanu published, in 2018, a photo album *Liturgisiri în adâncuri. Biserica Sfântul Mihail Vința* (*Liturgising in the deeps. St Michael's Church of Vința*) at Gutenberg Publishing House and at Lumea Credenței Publishing House, the volume *Dă-mi tinere inima ta* (*Give me your heart, young man*). In 2019 she published the book *Întâlnirea mea cu Hristos. Interviuri cu occidentali convertiți la ortodoxie* (*My encounter with Christ. Interviews with Western converts to Orthodoxy*) at Doxologia, while in the volume *Istorie, Cultură și Cercetare. III* (*History, Culture and Research III*),

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which came out at Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, she published an article entitled *Arta eclectică a lui Simion Silaghi Sălăgeanu, un artist transilvănean la confluența de veacuri, sec. XVIII-XIX* (*The eclectic art of Simion Silaghi Sălăgeanu, an artist from Transylvania at the turn of centuries, 18th-19th*), pages 110-132.

In 2010 the church of village Geamăna (Lupșa, County of Alba) was flooded by spillages from the copper mine of Roșia Poieni, which, having build up, covered a large part of the village of Vința. Following a visit made in 2014 in the Arieș Valley, the author discovered the hostile environment around the sterile lake of Geamăna and Vința, which she found again on a visit made there two years later. In 2015 the locals sought a remedy of the situation without a concrete result.

Thus, in the year 2018, Raluca Prelipceanu started a series of projects reporting the problems that this community was faced with, involving numerous personalities such as icon painter Grigore Popescu Muncel, architect Șerban Sturza, restorer Dan Mohanu, restorer and university professor Maria Dumbrăvicean, PhD, restorer and university professor Doina Mihăilescu, PhD, architect Maria Palade, architect Decebal Becea, university professor Ioan Aurel Pop, PhD (Academy member), who signed and submitted a petition to the Archbishopric of Alba Iulia, NGOs like ProPatrimonio, ROST, Centre for World Patrimony within UNESCO, Astra Museum of Sibiu, volunteers and the CupruMin enterprise in order to collect money and obtain a new place for the relocation of the church.

Also, more photo exhibitions were organized, drawing attention to the negative impact generated by lack of responsibility, involvement, and bureaucracy in major risk situations. The first exhibition was entitled

Biserici în lacrimi (Churches in tears), whose vernissage took place in Bucharest, followed by the second exhibition, *Liturghisiri în adâncuri (Liturgising in the deeps)*, dedicated to St Michael's Church from Vința, where approximately 70 photos were exhibited, opened by Academy member Marius Porumb. The third one was the exhibition *Lacrimile Vinței (The tears of Vința)*, hosted by the Orthodox Pedagogic High School "Anastasia Popescu" of Alba Iulia.

The numerous photos were published in the album *Liturghisiri în adâncuri (Liturgising in the deeps)*, launched at Romanian Peasant's Club from Bucharest on 4th July 2018 and relaunched at the event that took place at "Anastasia Popescu" High School, along with the monography *Vința. Radiografia unei comunități care dispare (Vința. Radiography of a disappearing community)*. The subject of the two volumes was dealt with extensively on the over 22 websites (Annexe 1) that speak of the total involvement of the author in the conservation of this precious historical, artistic and religious monument.

CupruMin enterprise, as well as Romanian Orthodox Archbishopric of Alba Iulia have shown their interest in collaborating with Astra Museum and proPatrimonio Foundation for the preservation of the church in Vința.

The measures of preservation of this church building, which make up the contents of the present volume are the fortunate crowning of those acquired experiences. Raluca Prelipceanu has become an instrument towards the immortality of a community that cannot speak for itself anymore, as she herself has stated: "The old people are passing away one by one, keeping the memory of the village as it once had been with grand houses, get-togethers, mills and the church building in particular [...]"

Another year has passed, in which the lake has grown mercilessly, nothing is ever as it had been, everything slowly disappearing, swollen by time and the lake. Maria Hebean too departed at the age of 80, her old house and mill abandoned. Her cousin, Liviu Hebean, fell in his house and, with one leg cut off, couldn't get up again. You may still shout, but people are no more to hear you [...]."

The paper *Vința. Radiografia unei comunități care dispare (Vința. Radiography of a disappearing community)* has 223 pages, 255 bibliographic references, 40 quotes from the schemantisms of the time, demographic statistics, conscriptions of lay and ecclesiastical authorities between 1731 and 1947 and 75 photo annexes comprising the plan of the church building, an image from the writings of Sebastian Ciapa, images of the church location, and the inhabitants, along with photographic reproduction of indoor details (icons, frescos, murals) and of interventions made for the preservation of the paint.

The book is prefaced by restorer and university professor Doina Mihăilescu, PhD, from the Faculty of Art and Design of the Western University of Timișoara and by Reader Geanina Ionescu, PhD, director of the Astra Centre for Patrimony of the Astra Museum, Sibiu.

The content unfolds gradually in different subjects which have in view the placement in the historical atmosphere of the village and its development in chapters: *The village of Vința in history, Central construction of the village, St Michael's Church*; case studies can be found in chapters: *Simion Silaghi, a successful career, Iconographic program of the church of Vința, Chromatics of the church of Vința*, The last part of the book seeks to clear up some aspects relating to the uniqueness and artistic value of the monument of Vința: *Characteristics and particularities of the church of Vința*,

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Statute of icon painters, Simion Silaghi, painter or icon painter?, Relocation of the church to the Astra Museum, Conclusions doubled by an Epilogue. The entire content of the book highlights a terrifying reality, coupled with the carelessness of the authorities, inertia, bureaucratic hindrances etc.

It is difficult to assess the initiative and effort of this action of preservation of an object of patrimony of particular importance like the church of Vința, initiated and carried out through the dedication of Raluca Prelipceanu. The present volume is a radiography of such an exceptional endeavour, which we both signal and propose to the public through *Journal of Church History*.