

A French Inventor in Moldavia – François Xavier Progin (1801-1855)
(Abstract)

Constantin ARDELEANU

Keywords: Moldavia, the nineteenth-century, French preceptors, science, history of science and technology, inventions.

This paper is a short biography of a French scholar, François Xavier Progin, who divided his time between his passion for literature and the humanities and his interest for the applied technical sciences. He published several poems, edited a general magazine and served as the private tutor of a Phanariot prince. Starting with the 1830s he also invested his resources in designing all kinds of devices, for which he required patents from the French authorities. His most important discovery is the system which stands at the basis of the modern typewriter, but he also invented other machines with diverse practical applications. By the early 1850s he came to the Romanian Principalities and was employed as a tutor by several influential families in the Moldavian capital city of Jassy. He died in Moldavia in 1855 and his personal papers were preserved in the archive of the French consulate at Jassy.