

**Leonida Boga:
the Archivist, “the Macedonian”, the “Voshopoleanlu”
(Abstract)**

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The only director of the State Archives in Chişinău, journalist, professor, and man of letters T. Boga (1886-1974) still does not have a complete biography. My paper examines, under a retrospective lens, the life, deeds, and experiences of the prolific Aromanian writer, summing up the evidence gathered from the investigation of archive documents, many of them inedited, and assuming the objective of reconstructing this biography for the general public, but particularly to serve exegetes interested in his works in Aromanian.

Aiming to go beyond a mere account of everyday events experienced by the individual and convinced that defining features reveal themselves only in exceptional circumstances, I have placed Leon Boga at the core of concrete contexts, observing how he manifested or how he influenced them, and then I have observed the sequence of limit moments and the consequences borne by the chosen protagonist. The impediments caused by archival silences have become surmountable by placing the character in the historical, geopolitical, and socio-cultural circumstances of his time. Through the filter of primary sources, the five sections of the study (the first three having an introductory role) outline the mark left by Leon Boga on his age, covering all the facets mentioned in the title: archivist-researcher, victim of the political persecution of the “popular democracy” regime, and militant writer for the identity specificity of Aromanians.

The destiny of the “Macedonian” bears the sign of his inclusion into the ethnos of the South-Danubian Romanity, which was generally common to the Aromanians in the Ottoman Empire who had retained their sense of belonging to their people and had refused ethnic alienation: attending primary school taught in Greek, then graduating from the Romanian high school in Bitolia, travelling to Romania, an idealising venture, completing his studies at the Faculty of Letters, enlisting as a volunteer in the Romanian Army in the 1913 war for the “liberation” of

his Balkan homeland, then taking part in the global conflagration, the enthusiastic crossing over to Bessarabia to help, as a cultural propagandist, his brothers across the Prut river, who were just awakening to national life. The problematics are governed by the concerted efforts of the Romanian governments of the years 1917-1918 to accomplish the conditions for incorporating Bessarabia, to legitimately realize the unification by the vote of the Country Council and to materialize the measures for integrating the province into the Romanian state.

The extending of the Romanian forms of organization into Bessarabia also comprised the establishing of the State Archives regional branch. Leon Boga was among the practitioners of the educational model focused on the fundamental values of national culture. His entrepreneurial acumen helped him skilfully manage the State Archives for a quarter of a century, but he would have to account for these activities after 1944: his public, cultural and publishing activity, as well as the stigma of his ethnic origin resulted in dramatic consequences under the communist regime. As a “Bessarabian nationalist” or “a nationalist who was a fugitive from the Soviet regime” or “a hostile White Guard sympathizer”, he had to face the harassment, threats, and blackmail of the “Securitate”. The authorities seized his Aromanian books and manuscripts, restrained his freedom of writing, and eventually denied his request to visit his sister, one last time, in faraway Macedonia. Exploiting his advanced age, his medical issues and his fear of imprisonment, they forced him to be a “witness for the prosecution” in trials of other people, a fact that, after all, has no bearing on his image. Virtually, “the Macedonian” was not defeated, as his personality remained as emblematic as ever, and his writings – particularly his masterpiece, *Voshopolea*, complementary to his tumultuous life – have survived the passage of time.