

**The “Archiva Moldaviae” Debate:
A Balance Sheet of a Decade of Independent Research and
the Launch of the Journal’s Volume XI/2019
(Abstract)**

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On the occasion of the tenth anniversary since the foundation of the journal “Archiva Moldaviae”, the Romanian Society of Historical Studies (SSIR), which provides logistical and academic support to this publication, organized a joint event, hosting both the launch of the most recent volume of the journal and an academic debate. This discussion took place on February 17, 2020, on the premises of the “A. D. Xenopol” Institute of History in Iași. Members of the journal’s editorial board, of the SSIR, joined by researchers who had published their work in the previous issues of the journal, as well as by members of the broader public interested in historical research attended the event. The speakers included, among others, Mihai Amăriuței, Cătălin Botoșineanu, Marius Chelcu, Mihai Chiper, Gheorghe Cliveti, Victor Cojocaru, Dorin Dobrinu, Florea Ioncioaia, Leonidas Rados, Flavius Solomon, and Petronel Zahariuc.

The concept of “independent research” could certainly elicit a reaction of puzzlement or even rejection, particularly from those historians who choose to follow the nationalist, state-centered, holistic, unifying, and centralizing tradition in Romanian historiography. This tradition went through various shapes, adaptations, reinterpretations and adjustments. The gradual distancing of historians from the state’s patronage and control – the state being defined, in this case, both from a philosophical and administrative point of view –, their liberty to openly pursue their investigations as liberal, critically minded, and autonomous intellectuals is essential for the production of independent research works. The emergence of the “Archiva Moldaviae” journal was itself directly linked to the need for the assertion and growth of the freedom of speech, to the rejection of political, intellectual, and administrative control and pressures of any kind, to the refusal to tolerate any ideologically or politically driven instrumental uses and abuses of history. Approaching the past, investigating it freely and critically, without any authoritarian intrusions from outside the profession, has a particular significance for those societies which have experienced totalitarianism. There is only so much autonomy and independence in the field of research as the historians are willing to accept and fight for. As the participants emphasized, scholarly independence is a construct, a work in progress. It can only be built and secured in a certain favorable political and cultural context.

The comments and remarks of the participants, especially those made by the members of the editorial board and by fellow historians closely affiliated with the journal, also highlighted certain “technical” issues. Among these issues were, e.g., the best strategy for constructing the journal’s portfolio, the system of external double-blind peer review, the securing of sufficient funding and financial resources, and the distribution of the journal in its printed version and in an electronic format. Last but not least, the fact that the journal is published as a result of the voluntary involvement and efforts of the editors, authors, and peer reviewers has been particularly emphasized.

The journal has acquired a solid reputation due to the variety of the topics discussed, to the high quality of the contributions, with many articles being based on unpublished and previously unknown sources, as well as to the interpretations and approaches proposed by the authors. The journal also maintains high scholarly standards when publishing book reviews. These reviews strive to flesh out both the strong points and the weaknesses of the books under discussion.

The 12 volumes published up to this point, including 11 yearly issues and a supplement, amount to a total number of 5,866 pages. The published articles, documents, debates, book reviews, and short notes belong to a total of 177 authors, coming from Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Austria, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Bulgaria, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia. Being a product of combined and collective efforts, “Archiva Moldaviae” aims at becoming an enduring and long-term project.