

**THE HERITAGE OF A FAMILY FROM BUCȘANI (DÂMBOVIȚA COUNTY):
THE DALLES HALL OF BUCHAREST**

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Abstract: The Dalles family is part of the new Romanian bourgeoisie of the second half of the 19th century. The destiny of this family was to be connected to the creation, under the auspices of the Romanian Academy, of a cultural settlement called the Ioan I. Dalles Foundation. Gradually, the conferences, the concerts and the exhibitions that took place under the aegis of the Ioan I. Dalles Foundation became part of the Golden Book of the Romanian culture, and George Enescu once wrote: "I have the greatest spiritual happiness when I sing at the Dalles Hall, because this hall is so intimate, and the public so musical". The material but also especially cultural heritage that Elena Dalles left to the Romanians is still alive, being the merit of a special woman who knew how to love, to suffer but above all to give, managing to keep the memory of the Dalles family alive in the Romanians' conscience.

Keywords: Bucșani, Elena Dalles, Romanian Academy, Gheorghe Țițeica, George Enescu.

The representative of the name Dalles in Romania is Ioan G. Dalles, born in 1816, member of an important and rich Greek family of the 19th century, married to Elena Anastasescu, daughter of a great merchant of Giurgiu, of Macedonian origin, Hagi Iane Anastasescu, one of the founders of the churches of Hăbeni¹ and Racovița², of Dâmbovița County, who also owned the estates bearing the same name that later on shall become the possession of I. G. Dalles. The latter buys in 1862, for 41,500 guildens from Cleopatra Trubetzkoï³, a descendent of Constantin Ghica and Ruxandra Cantacuzino, the estate of

¹ The Church, with a cross-shaped design, and dedicated to Saint Nicholas, was founded by the Ghica family and was completed in 1822 by Hagi Iane Anastasescu. See: Mihai Oproiu, *Inscripții și însemnări din județul Dâmbovița* (Inscriptions and Notes from Dâmbovița County), Vol. II. Colecția Historica, Editura Transversal, Târgoviște, 2003, p. 43; Ion Băncilă, *Monografia comunei Bucșani. 555 de ani de la atestarea documentară* (The Monograph of Bucșani Commune. 555 Years since Its First Documentary Mention), Editura Bibliotheca, Târgoviște 2008, p. 136.

² The old church of Racovița Village, dedicated to All the Saints, was founded in 1806 by Hagi Ene Anastasescu and, according to the inscription above the naos entrance, was repaired in 1890 by the "inhabitants of the commune through the insistence of the priest Dumitru Popescu and of Dumitru Soare, R. Duță, Gheorghe Oprea, D. Mușat and of Madam **Elena Dalles** and Dimitrie Sambolă. The architects Ion Bălescu, Gheorghe Ionescu-București, București, 10 XP". See: Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale București (The Central National Historical Archives) (from here on, A.N.I.C. București), *fond Ministerul Culturii Naționale. Direcția Învățământ Primar* (collection: The Ministry of National Culture. Primary Education Directorate), file 551/1942, Ion Bălășescu - *Monografia satului Racovița (manuscris)* (The Monograph of Racovița Village, manuscript), f. 447; Mihai Oproiu, *Inscripții și însemnări din județul Dâmbovița...*, p. 57; Mihai Oproiu, Honorius Moțoc, Marian Curculescu, *Dâmbovița. Localități și monumente* (Dâmbovița. Localities and Monuments), Editura Transversal, Târgoviște, 2006, p. 94; Ion Băncilă, *op.cit.*, p. 138; Mihai Oproiu, Eduard Samoilă, Honorius Moțoc, Georgeta Toma, *Înfruntând veacurile. Așezări și monumente dâmbovițene* (Facing the Centuries. Settlements and Monuments of Dâmbovița County), Editura Transversal, Târgoviște, 2009, p. 101.

³ A.N.I.C. București, *fond Ministerul Culturii Naționale. Direcția Învățământ Primar* (collection: The Ministry of National Culture. Primary Education Directorate), file 551/1942, Paraschiva Abramescu - *Monografia Comunei Bucșani (manuscris)* (The Monograph of Bucșani Commune (manuscript)), f. 35-38; Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale-Direcția Județeană Dâmbovița (The Central National Historical Archives –

Bucșani, which included 1400 hectares of arable land, making the Dalles family one of the richest and most respected families in Dâmbovița County.⁴ Rich, cultivated, beautiful and refined, Princess Cleopatra Trubetzkoi was married to Prince Serghei Trubetzkoi, who owned a vast estate in Florești Commune, Prahova County, and had for guests in her salon all the great writers and politicians of those times: Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Cezar Bolliac, Vasile Alecsandri, Ion Ghica, Mihail Kogălniceanu and others.⁵

At the newly bought estate of Bucșani, Dâmbovița County, the Dalles family had a splendid manor, built in a neoclassical style, which will become the family home. The manor was surrounded by a park, stretching out over 22 hectares.⁶ After the Second World War, the park surrounding the manor of the Dalles family was largely destroyed⁷. After buying the Bucșani estate, Ioan G. Dalles encountered great difficulties from the owners of the neighboring estates, Alexandrina Florescu, owner of the Comișani estate⁸, but especially Gheorghe Gr. Cantacuzino nicknamed “Nababul” (The Rich) (1837-1913)⁹, Prime Minister of Romania between 1899-1900 and 1904-1907, but also president of the Conservatory Party (1899-1907).

The litigations for the determination of the estate boundaries will last until 1883, when the Tribunal of Dâmbovița County pronounced its sentence in favor of the Greek Ioan G. Dalles, regarding the boundaries between Rățoaia estate and Băleni estate, and in other boundary matters: “*Considering the contestation made by Dalles regarding the boundary of the Băleni estate, the tribunal rejects as unfounded the oppositions made by Mister Gheorghe Gr. Cantacuzino and Madam Ecaterina Cantacuzino against the civil sentence no. 227/1882... It admits the contestation made by Mister Ioan G. Dalles regarding the boundary of the Băleni estate towards the vicinity with Rățoaia, in the sense that this vicinity shall have for boundary the water of Ialomîța*”.¹⁰

The merchant and now the estate-owner Ioan G. Dalles had, beside the above-mentioned estates, a series of buildings in Bucharest, situated on the streets Lipscani, Gabroveni, Șelari, I. C. Brătianu Blvd., Gloriei, properties situated in the commercial road most desired by merchants.¹¹ As the *Register of Revenues and Expenses of Ioan I. Dalles* (son of Ioan G. Dalles) *and of His Mother Elena Dalles*, existing at the Central National Historical

Departmental Directorate of Dâmbovița County) (henceforth A.N.I.C.-D.J.D.), *Fond Familia Dalles* (collection: The Dalles Family), file 1/1862-1884.

⁴ Cornel Mărculescu, *Familia Dalles - între mit și realitate* (The Dalles Family: Between Myth and Reality), in: “*Curier. Revistă de cultură și bibliologie*” (Messenger. Journal of Culture and Bibliology), An XIX, nr. 1(37), Editura Bibliotheca, Târgoviște, 2013, p. 3.

⁵ Narcis Dorin Ion, *București în căutarea Micului Paris* (Bucharest Looking for the Little Paris), Editura Tritonic, 2003, p. 140.

⁶ Cornel Mărculescu, *Familia Dalles - între mit și realitate...*, p. 4.

⁷ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles, Registrul de venituri și cheltuieli al lui Ioan I. Dalles și al mamei sale Elena Dalles (1892-1914)* (Collection: The Dalles Family, The Register of Revenues and Expenses of Ioan I Dalles and His Mother Elena Dalles (1892-1914)), f. 125v; Ion Băncilă, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

⁸ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles* (Collection: The Dalles Family), file 1/1862-1884, f. 35-36.

⁹ *Ibidem*, file 3/1881-1883.

¹⁰ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles* (Collection: The Dalles Family), file 3/1881-1883, f. 5-6.

¹¹ Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles. File de monografie* (The Dalles Foundation. Pages of a Monograph), Editura Asociația Națională a Universităților Populare din România, București, 1996, p. 124

Archives – Departmental Directorate of Dâmbovița County, for the years 1892-1914, and studied by us, highlights, these buildings from Bucharest were rented partially or totally.¹²

Remaining alone after the death of her husband in the year 1886 and of their three children: George (1871-1873), Dora (1875-1892)¹³ and Ioan (1879-1914)¹⁴ – Elena Dalles (1842-1921) dictates her testament on May 16, 1918, written by the lawyer Teodor Seimeanu in the house from Bucharest, 12 I. C. Brătianu Street.¹⁵ By her will, Elena Dalles appoints “my nephew (sister’s son): Mihail M. Caputineanu, as residuary legatee, to whom I leave all my movables and immovables, of any nature, that shall be found at my death, yet along with the following tasks and obligations that I want him to accomplish and execute by all means”.¹⁶ In the name of her son Ioan (Jan), Elena Dalles bequeathed the Romanian Academy the ownership of her houses from I.C. Brătianu Street, with the declared purpose of edifying a cultural monument dedicated to arts, to be called *Fundatia Ioan I. Dalles* (The Ioan I. Dalles Foundation).¹⁷ Out of love for her beloved ones, Elena Dalles charged the painter George Demetrescu Mirea (1852-1934) with the realization of the portraits of Ioan I. Dalles and Dora Dalles, true masterpieces.¹⁸

¹² A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles*, Registrul de venituri și cheltuieli al lui Ioan I. Dalles și al mamei sale Elena Dalles (1892-1914).

¹³ Dora Dalles dies on November 7, 1892, at the age of 17. She died during the night of 7 to 8 November, 2 a.m.. In the family “*Register of Revenues and Expenses*”, Elena Dalles still had the strength to write: “funeral - 4400 lei; clothes - 400 lei; five weeks doctor - 500 lei, flower garlands - 700 lei; six weeks memorial service - 350 lei, Venice mosaic cross - 250 lei; portrait in oil - 140 lei... total - 22 463 lei”. It was a terrible blow, which the mother Elena and her son Jan turned into a gesture of rare humanity and faith, edifying in Bucșani a school bearing the name of **Dora Dalles**. See: A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles*, file 4/1892-1914, *Registrul de venituri și cheltuieli al lui Ioan I. Dalles și al mamei sale Elena Dalles*, f. 1, 60v.

¹⁴ It seems that Ioan Dalles embraced the military career, joining the Second Artillery Regiment, namely “Cetate”, and received appreciative remarks from General Coandă, as it appears from the grade paper of 1911-1913: “*Ioan Dalles is one of the reserve officers with very much love for the army and an excellent command spirit*”. His military experience earned him the rank of captain, obtained based on the decision Î.D. nr.2087/10.05.1914. See: Arhivele Ministerului Apărării Naționale – Centrul de Păstrare și Studierea Arhivelor Militare Pitești “Radu Rosetti” (Archives of the National Defense Ministry – The Centre for the Preservation and Study of the “Radu Rosetti” Military Archives of Pitești) (henceforth, A.M.Ap.N. – C.P.S.A.M.P.), *fond Memorii. Bătrâni, litera D, cpt., Nr.20*, Dalles Ioan, f. 1-3 (Collection: Memoires. The Old People, letter D, captain, No. 20, Dalles Ioan). On December 22, 1914, on Christmas’ Eve, the last offspring of the Dalles family dies an absurd death, of anthrax (an infection caused by a spot on the lip), in his parents’ house from Bucharest situated on 12 I. C. Brătianu Street, as the death certificate no. 8527/1914 shows.

¹⁵ Arhiva Academiei Române, *fond Elena I. Dalles* (Romanian Academy Archive, collection: Elena I. Dalles), file E-3/1921-1932, f. 2-9; A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles* (collection: Dalles Family), file 12/1918, Copy of the Testament of Elena Dalles, f. 1-3v.

¹⁶ *Testamentul Elenei Dalles* (The Testament of Elena Dalles), in: Gloria Gabriela Radu, *Elena Dalles - “Testament mistic”* (Elena Dalles - *Mystical testament*), in “*Valachica. Studii și cercetări de istorie a culturii*”, Târgoviște, 1994, p. 200; Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *op.cit.*, p. 195; “*Pagini din Istoria Academiei Române (1866-1948). Acte, donații, discursuri, portrete și evocări academice*” (Pages in the History of the Romanian Academy (1866-1948). Acts, Donations, Discourses, Portraits and Academic Recollections), volume appeared under the guidance of Dorina N. Rusu, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2007, p. 148; Ion Băncilă, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

¹⁷ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles* (Collection: the Dalles Family), file 12/1918, f. 2; Ion Bianu, *Cuvântarea rostită la inaugurarea Fundației Ioan I. Dalles la 28 mai 1932* (The Discourse Held on the Inauguration of the Ioan I. Dalles Foundation on May 28, 1932), in *Pagini din Istoria Academiei Române (1866-1948)*..., p. 264.

¹⁸ George Dragomirescu, Ion Frunzetti, *George Demetrescu Mirea*, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, București, 1940, p. 31.

Elena Dalles lives after the writing of her will in 1918, until September 1, 1921, when she dies a discrete death and her death certificate is delivered by the Town Hall of Bucșani Commune, Dâmbovița County, at no. 50/1921.¹⁹ The opening of the testament of Elena Dalles took place at the Tribunal of Ilfov, section four, forming the file no. 3553/1921, in the presence of Mihail M. Caputineanu, her nephew and residuary legatee.²⁰

One of Elena Dalles' legatees is also the Romanian Academy, which receives by the testament a part of the great Dalles fortune, to create a foundation bearing the name of her son, Ioan I. Dalles, in order to keep his memory alive: *"I leave to the Romanian Academy the houses and their whole setting, namely the whole building of Bucharest, 12 I. C. Brătianu Street, and also the houses with their whole setting, namely the whole building of Bucharest, Eugen Stătescu Street (formerly 4 Gloriei Street), having the following destination: out of all that shall come out of their revenues... a fund shall be created meant for maintenance, and with the rest of the capital, within two years... in the middle of the remaining land, a building shall be constructed, according to the plan agreed upon by the Romanian Academy, yet in such a way as to have the necessary rooms for all kinds of artistic exhibitions... finally, for the courses or conferences of the Popular University Association of Bucharest and for other institutions that could be created, meant to shape the characters of the Romanian citizens through their spiritual cultivation and education"*.²¹

This testamentary provision was not put into practice immediately by the legatee Mihail M. Caputineanu, so that a year after the opening of the testament, the Romanian Academy had still not received its inheritance. The leadership of the institution brought charges against Mihail M. Caputineanu, for the court to oblige *"the defendant to hand over the heritage to us and also to pay the sum of 100,000 lei, as revenue of the buildings for a year, namely until September 26, 1922. The above-mentioned sum will be paid to the Romanian Academy before the date when the inheritance is taken over, with its legal interest beginning with September 26, 1921"*.²² The address was signed, on behalf of the Academy, by Dimitrie Onciul (president) and Iacob Negruzzi (general secretary). Later on, Dimitrie Onciul wrote: *"The inheritance being handed over and the sum requested by the Romanian Academy being paid, the charges were dropped"*.

The litigation between the Romanian Academy and the residuary legatee of Elena Dalles was generated by the delay regarding the handing over of the buildings from respectively I. C. Brătianu Street and Eugen Stătescu Street. Mihail M. Caputineanu and his

¹⁹ Cornel Mărculescu, *Familia Dalles - între mit și realitate...*, p. 7. Elena Dalles, daughter of Anastase and Ecaterina, seems to have been born in 1842, in Slăveni Commune, Romanați County, as it appears from the *Registrul stării civile pentru morți (1917-1921)* (Civil Status Register for the Dead (1917-1921)), of Bucșani, and died at her estate from Bucșani, Dâmbovița County, on September 1, 1921, at 5p.m.. The death certificate is at number 50, being delivered by the civil status officer and mayor of Bucșani Commune, Dumitru Venete, in the presence of the witnesses, Alecu Alexandrescu and Gheorghe Flaișeu, both of them living in Bucharest.

²⁰ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *Fond Familia Dalles* (Collection: The Dalles Family), file 12/1918, f. 3v; Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *op.cit.*, p. 204; Ion Băncilă, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

²¹ Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles...*, p. 198-199; Cornel Mărculescu, *Un lăcaș de cultură: Sala Dalles din București* (A Cultural Sanctuary: the Dalles Hall of Bucharest), in "Hristica. Revistă de spiritualitate și educație creștin-ortodoxă" ("Christica. Orthodox Christian Education and Spirituality Review), edited by the militarys of the Târgoviște Garrison with the blessing of His Holiness Dr. Nifon, Archbishop and Metropolitan of Târgoviște, year VI, No. 16 (January-April), Târgoviște, 2014, p. 21.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 132.

mother, Aritina Caputineanu, lived in the building of 12 I. C. Brătianu, long before the death of Elena Dalles, when it actually became the lawful property of the Romanian Academy.²³ In the same situation was the building situated on 4 Eugen Stătescu Street, where initially, according to the contract of 1916, Theodor Seimeanu, the Dalles family advocate, was living, the property being later on ceded in 1919, to the other advocate of the Dalles family, Petre Ioanid, who will hold it, with the approval of the Romanian Academy, until 1930, when he died. In her turn, his wife will have the permission to live here until the building has been demolished.²⁴

After the litigation between the Romanian Academy and the tenants of the two buildings, lease contracts were concluded for several years. Mihail Caputineanu remained in the building until October 1927, when he moved to his own home situated at 8 General Lahovary Street. Until its demolition, the building of I. C. Brătianu Blvd. was rented to Colonel Dr. D. Staicovici for two years, and between 1930-1931 the house will be rented by I. Mânjolan, Ion Duțu and Cezar Petrescu for a sum of 60 000 lei per year.²⁵ In the litigation between the Romanian Academy and Mihail Caputineanu, was presented as evidence “*the legal authorization decree*”, published in the *Official Journal* of March 3, 1922, having the following contents: “*On the report of our Minister Secretary of State of the Instruction Department, No. 22507/1921, we have decreed: Art. 1 The Public Instruction Ministry, The Administration of the House of Schools and the Romanian Academy, the Ministry of Cults and Arts and the Home Office – Civil Hospitals Administration are authorized to receive the inheritance left to them by the deceased Elena D. Dalles.*

Art. 2 Our Minister Secretary of State from the Instruction Department is charge with the implementation of this decree”. The Official Journal published this document with an error, writing the name of the legator Elena D. Dalles. This error was remedied two years later, on the request of the Romanian Academy, in the Official Journal of March 2, 1924, when the correct name appears.²⁶

The desire of Elena Dalles to create a foundation bearing the name of her son Ioan I. Dalles, seems to have been the hardest to accomplish. From the date when the testament was written, on May 16, 1918, until the inauguration of the foundation’s building in 1932, 14 years elapsed. Thus, only in 1930, the Romanian Academy initiated a public project contest for the realization of the building of the *Dalles Foundation*, with the participation of the architects Horia Teodoru, N.Ghica-Budești and E.van Soanen-Algi, and won by the first of them. În the project of The Dalles Foundation building, Horia Teodoru had as collaborators for the domain resilience – armed concrete – the engineers Aurel Beleş and Dumitru Marcu. The construction was executed by the Emil Prager enterprise²⁷ out of bricks and armed

²³ Ibidem, p. 132-133.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 133; Cornel Mărculescu, *Un lăcaș de cultură: Sala Dalles din București...*, p. 22.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ *Monitorul Oficial al României* (The Official Journal of Romania), No. 47, 2.03.1924, Direcția Generală a Monitorului Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, p. 2273.

²⁷ Emil Prager (19 August 1889 – 5 February 1985). Engineer, specialist in civil and industrial buildings, who had studied Polytechnics, married to actress Elvira Godeanu, distinguished by the manner of collaboration with the architects and the strict respect of the deadlines. Out of the constructions built by the Emil Prager enterprise, there are: the Royal Palace, the Palace of the Higher School of War, The Home Office Palace, The Pavilions of the Ellias Hospital, The Mica Block, The Carpați Block, The Palace of the Cultural Foundation King Ferdinand I

concrete. The roofs of the big halls are made of metallic forms foreseen with large glass areas, allowing the natural lighting of the exhibition rooms through the ceiling.²⁸ The building of the *Dalles Foundation* comprises large exhibition rooms and a concert hall with annexes and services. This constitutes a model of functional construction dimensioned in a just and balanced way in point of its architecture, to meet the multifold goals of a large public circulation. The concert and conference hall built on a trapezoidal plan with a curved ceiling has a balcony with good visibility and high-level acoustics.²⁹

Even since April 14, 1932, the Romanian Academy informed the Ministry of Instruction, Culture and Arts (M.I.C.A.) that the building of the *Ion Dalles Foundation*, through its areas, was ready to receive its guests at the end of the month of May, by a painting and drawing exhibition featuring the artists Ion Andreescu, Nicolae Grigorescu and Ștefan Luchian.³⁰ The Romanian Academy was requesting as a loan from M.I.C.A., 3 oil paintings by Ioan Andreescu and 3 big drawings by Nicolae Grigorescu, from the custody of the State Art Gallery (Pinacoteca Statului) of the Athenaeum Palace. These works were to be received by Jean Al.Steriadi, the delegate of the high State institution.³¹

On May 15, 1932, Gheorghe Țițeica, the secretary general of the Romanian Academy, presented a report at the 66th general session, mentioning, regarding the *Dalles Foundation*: “*The building is made up of three specially designed rooms for painting, sculpture, architecture exhibitions and a conference hall, each endowed with the necessary furniture for the destination of each of them. In the inauguration program was also included an exhibition... including almost the entire work of the painter Andreescu, and the drawings and watercolor paintings of the painters Grigorescu and Luchian that different museums and individuals from the country gracefully lent to us*”.³² After several trial and postponements, on May 29, 1932, the official opening of the cultural *Foundation Ioan I. Dalles* takes place. The inauguration of this memorable cultural act was attended by a series of personalities of the time, of whom we shall remind: His Holiness The Romanian Patriarch, Dr. Miron Cristea, the general mayor of the capital Dem Dobrescu, members of the Romanian Academy with their families, government representatives, a numerous invited public.³³

The opening was also attended, among others, by Rudolf Brandsch, Nicolae Ottescu, Sabina Cantacuzino, Elena Petricari, Miss Odobescu, Engineer Balș, Al. Tzigara-Samurçaș, Prof. Dr. Șt. Minovici, Frederick Storck, Eugen Filotti, A.Verona, Adrian Maniu, Rodica Maniu, Jean Bart, Prof. Popescu Spineni, Prof. Rădulescu Pogoneanu, Prof. Al. Mironescu, Prof. Al. Marcu, M. Lungeanu, Oscar Han, Georgescu Tistu, painter Brăescu, and on behalf

of Iași and the Orthodox Cathedral of Hunedoara. See: *Gazeta municipală* (The Municipal Gazette), year X, no. 552, București, 20.12.1942, p. 4.

²⁸ Emil Prager, *Betonul armat în România* (The Armed Concrete in Romania), vol. I, Editura Tehnică, București, 1979, p. 256-257.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ A.N.I.C. București, fond *Ministerul Culturii și Artelor* (Collection: The Ministry of Culture and Arts), inv. 818, file 78/1932, Folder 4, vol. I. Expoziții (Exhibitions), f. 28.

³¹ Ibidem, f. 29.

³² Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles...*, p. 140-141; Cornel Mărculescu, *Un lăcaș de cultură: Sala Dalles din București...*, p. 23.

³³ Ibidem, p. 143.

of the Dalles family, Maria Gh. Teohari, niece (sister's daughter) of Elena Dalles, and her daughter Miuța Teohari.³⁴

On this occasion, the president of the Romanian Academy, Univ. Prof. Ion Bianu in his opening discourse, mentioned that: “*in her relentless desire of serving the high culture of the nation, [the Romanian Academy] took upon it to accomplish (...) the pious will of the hurting mother to edify, under the name of her lost son, this artistic and cultural monument, meant to be an adornment and a source of light in the middle of our country's capital (...) with the faith that the “Ioan I. Dalles” Foundation is meant to bring to light and to make known the Romanian art and the lights of the foreign art of all the times and from all the peoples ...*”³⁵

The inauguration of the *Ioan Dalles Foundation* also represented an opportunity to make known the Romanian art, an exhibition being organized in this sense by a commission made up of Dr. Ion Cantacuzino, Anastase Simu, Jean Al.Steriade, George Oprescu, Gheorghe Petrașcu, Ștefan Popescu and Gheorghe Titeica. This exhibition included paintings and drawings by Ioan Andreescu³⁶ and Ștefan Luchian, and drawings by Nicolae Grigorescu.³⁷

During the period 1932-1938, the reports presented in the General Assemblies of the Romanian Academy regarding the foundation bore the signature Gheorghe Țițeica: “*The Dalles foundation has concentrated an increasingly significant cultural and artistic activity. As they say in trade: it has a fine goodwill. This fine goodwill has two sides: one that I would call purely academic, and another financial side. From an academic perspective, the result of the year that has come to an end at the beginning of this session 1937-1938 is very good. 129 conferences, two congresses, 95 concerts, 28 painting, sculpture, carpet and book exhibitions have been held (...)*”³⁸ Out of the conferences and painting exhibitions organized by the *Dalles Foundation*, we shall recall those held by Nicolae Iorga³⁹, George Călinescu⁴⁰, those of

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 144-145; Cornel Mărculescu, *Un lăcaș de cultură: Sala Dalles din București...*, p. 24.

³⁶ Al. Busuioceanu, *Andreescu*, in “Revista Fundațiilor Regale”, year II, no. 1, January, 1935, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, p. 102-103; Idem, *Andreescu*, Fundația pentru literatură și artă Carol II, București, 1936, p. 8-9.

³⁷ Academia Română, *Catalogul expoziției la inaugurarea Fundației Ioan I. Dalles* (Catalogue of the Exhibition Held at the Inauguration of the Ioan I. Dalles Foundation), with a preface by George Oprescu, București, May 29, 1932. See the complete text of the introduction signed by George Oprescu, in: N.Porsena, *Grajdurile Academiei Române* (The Stables of the Romanian Academy), in “Parlamentul românesc” (The Romanian Parliament), year III, no. 31-32, București, 30.09.1932, p. 14-15; Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles...*, pp. 184-194; George Oprescu, *Anul artistic la noi și la alții. Studii și impresii* (The Artistic Year with Us and with Others. Studies and Impressions), Editura ziarului Universul, București, 1933, p. 5; Ion Bianu, *Cuvântarea rostită la inaugurarea Fundației Ioan I. Dalles la 28 mai 1932* (The Discourse Pronounced at the Inauguration of the Ioan I. Dalles Foundation o May 28, 1932), in *Pagini din Istoria Academiei Române (1866-1948)...*, p. 264;

³⁸ *Analele Academiei Române* (Yearbook of the Romanian Academy), Meetings of 1935-1936, Tome LVI, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, București, 1937, p. 104; Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles...*, p. 148.

³⁹ Nicolae Iorga, *Miniaturile românești* (The Romanian Miniatures), Așezământul românesc Datina românească, Vălenii de Munte, 1933; Idem, *Argintăriile românești* (The Romanian Silver Work), Așezământul românesc Datina românească, Vălenii de Munte, 1933; Idem, *Sensul tradițional al monarhiei* (The Traditional Sense of the Monarchy), Tipografia ziarului Universul, București, 1934.

⁴⁰ George Călinescu, *Caragiale despre alegerile din trecut în țara noastră* (Caragiale on the Elections of the Past in Our Country), Editura de stat pentru Literatură și Artă, București, 1952.

the Central Ecclesiastical Council⁴¹, Ștefan Luchian⁴², Gheorghe Petrașcu⁴³, Șirato, Henri H. Catargi⁴⁴, Tonitza and Han⁴⁵, The Art Association.⁴⁶

At the Dalles Hall, conferences were held by organizations such as: Gândirea Europeană (The European Thinking), Societatea Scriitorilor Militari (The Society of Military Writers), Institutul Francez (The French Institute), Societatea de Endocrinologie (The Society of Endocrinology), Universitatea Liberă (The Free University), Asociația Louis Barthou (The Louis Barthou Association)⁴⁷, and the first Numismatic Congress of Romania was organized on October 19-22, 1933.⁴⁸ During the period 1932-1940, the halls of the *Ioan I. Dalles Foundation* hosted 873 conferences, 303 cultural movie sessions, 616 concerts, 204 painting and sculpture exhibitions.⁴⁹

Beginning with May 1939, one can note a lower number of exhibitions, given the troubled times looming over the horizon, of the World War in which Romania could not have avoided to be drawn, but also of the continual degradation of the Romanian political life.⁵⁰ The earthquake of November 1940 had consequences on the cultural activity undertaken at the Dalles Hall as well. Thus, on May 9, 1941, Alexandru Lepădatu, secretary general of the Academy, presented the situation of the Dalles Foundation after the devastating earthquake: “*The Ioan I. Dalles foundation began its activity this year under unfavorable auspices. Because even since November it had to close its halls... The exhibitioners of that month had to take away their works from the halls and the conferences and concerts announced had to be postponed, because the authorities forbid the access inside the Foundation, and forbid the circulation in front of it*”.⁵¹

Another event that interrupted the activity of the *Ioan I. Dalles Foundation* was the Legionary rebellion of January 1941: “*following the events of January 21-23, the Conference and Concert Hall was closed on the order of the Military Commandment for all the rest of the month of January and February. All these impediments in the activity of the Foundation have*

⁴¹ *Biserica și problemele sociale. Conferințe ținute la Fundația Dalles* (The Church and the Social Problems. Conferences Held at the Dalles Foundation), coord. Miron Cristea, Ioan Lupaș, Aurel Crăciunescu, Tipografia Cărții Bisericești, București, 1933.

⁴² Kricor H. Zambaccian, *Pagini de artă* (Art Pages), Casa Școalelor, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, București, 1943, p. 76.

⁴³ George Oprescu, *Anul artistic la noi și la alții. Studii și impresii...*, pp. 98-101; Kricor H. Zambaccian, *Pagini de artă...*, p. 90.

⁴⁴ A.N.I.C. București, fond *Ministerul Culturii și Artelor* (Collection: The Ministry of Culture and Arts), inv. 818, file 79/1932, Folder 4, vol. I. Afișe, invitații, cataloage de expoziții (Posters, Invitations, Exhibition Catalogues), f. 44.

⁴⁵ Kricor H. Zambaccian, *Pagini de artă...*, p. 139-141.

⁴⁶ George Oprescu, *Doi ani de critică artistică. Note și impresii* (Two Years of Artistic Criticism. Notes and Impressions), București, 1939, pp. 58-64.

⁴⁷ On December 6, 1938, the former minister Virgil Madgearu held a conference at the Dalles Hall under the auspices of the Louis Barthou Society. See: Ioana Ursu, Ioan Lăcustă, *În București acum 50 de ani* (In Bucharest 50 Years Ago), in “Magazin Istoric” (Historical Magazine), year XXII, no. 12 (261), December 1988, p. 46.

⁴⁸ At the first Numismatic Congress organized at the Dalles Hall, prefaced by a jubilee exhibition, the following personalities held communications: I. Minea, V. Canarache, P. P. Panaitescu, C. Moisil, A. Sacerdoțeanu, I. Adrieșescu and I. Nistor. See: “Magazin Istoric” (Historical Magazine), year XXII, no. 11(260), November 1988, p. 62.

⁴⁹ Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles...*, pp. 148-158.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 158.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

caused a certain revenue decrease”, as Alexandru Lepădatu noted in the report regarding the activity of the Dalles Foundation.⁵²

The war diminished, yet it did not interrupt the specific activities of the Foundation. In the report of May 1942 of the Romanian Academy on the evolution of the *Ioan I. Dalles Foundation*, the secretary general Alexandru Lapedatu mentioned that the Hall “*was used every week by the German and Italian military and cultural organizations (...) either for concerts, or for conferences, or especially for film presentations*”.⁵³ Although in April 1944, it suddenly ceases its activity, because of the air strikes, however during the period March 1940 - March 1946, Master George Enescu will hold, along with his guests, 28 concerts at the Dalles Hall.⁵⁴ He wrote in the Honor Book: “*I have the greatest spiritual satisfaction when I sing at Dalles, because the hall is so intimate, and the public so musical*”. Elena Dalles could rest in peace, since the *Dalles Hall* had become the most important education and culture institution in Bucharest. While the destiny had taken away her children and cast a gloom upon her soul, she had managed, by this monument and cultural heritage to defeat oblivion and celebrate life through its most beautiful aspects: education and culture.⁵⁵

On the stage of Dalles sang famous names of the interwar period, from Romania and abroad. On April 5, 1937, the Dalles Hall hosted a great international concert, with the participation of interpreters such as Wilhem Kempf, Maurice Maréchal, Carlo Felice Cillario, Tito Aprea and others. At the *Dalles Hall* concerts were held as well by Ion Voicu, Petre Ștefănescu-Goangă, Mira Hess, Paul Jelescu, Ion Fotino, George Cocea, the tenor Constantin Stroescu, the harpist Luigi Magistratti, the canto Virginia Zeani, Ionel Perlea, the *Filarmonica* orchestra, but also by well-known choirs, such as: *Carmen*, the Choir of Bucharest City (Corală Municipiului București), the Male Choir Association *Crai nou*, the Armenian choir *Komitas*.⁵⁶

On February 19, 1942, the *Dalles Hall* hosted the Mihail Jora Festival celebrating the 50th anniversary, the event being attended, among others, by George Enescu, Dinu Lipatti, Constantin Silvestri, Romeo Alexandrescu, Gheorghe and Ion Dumitrescu, Constantin Bugeanu, Evantia Costinescu, but also by the American pianist Jonsson.⁵⁷

Towards the end of August 1945, the financial situation of the *Dalles Hall* gets worse, the Foundation owing very much money to the Romanian Academy. On September 29, 1945, by means of an address of the Romanian Academy, the Labor Ministry shows that the activities at the *Dalles Hall* shall cease “*because a great part of the lecturers in the program of the Popular Marxist University are not in Bucharest*”.⁵⁸

The activity of the *Ioan I. Dalles Foundation* goes through a new prolific period culturally in 1946-1947, when under its patronage, 40 painting and sculpture exhibitions were held by the Associations: The Art (*Arta*), The Artistic Youth (*Tinerimea Artistică*) and

⁵² Ibidem, p. 159.

⁵³ *Analele Academiei Române* (Yearbook of the Romanian Academy), Dezbaterile (The Debates), Tome LXII, 1941-1942, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, București, 1943, p. 130.

⁵⁴ Nicolae Peneș, Brândușa Negulescu, *Fundația Dalles...*, p. 160-162.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 163; Cornel Mărculescu, *Un lăcaș de cultură: Sala Dalles din București...*, p. 25.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 163-164.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 164-165.

⁵⁸ Nicolae Săcăliș, *Dalles – destin și istorie (II)* (Dalles – Destiny and History), Ziarul Tricolorul, nr. 1259 din 15.05.2008, p. 6.

A.R.L.U.S., along with 115 conferences, 67 concerts, different reunions and social soirées and also film presentations held by the British Mission in Romania.⁵⁹ The Foundation will continue its activity in the same note in 1947 and 1948, among the exhibitions held, some special ones being that of the Russian Book, which lasted for 63 days, the retrospective exhibition of the sculptor Corneliu Medrea and of Gheorghe Petrașcu, and will also host 69 conferences, 42 concerts, 11 social soirées and even political meetings.⁶⁰

In 1948, the Romanian Academy is reorganized and transformed into a socialist institution according to the Soviet model. Consequently, the *Dalles Hall* passes from its subordination to the Romanian Academy to a dependence on the Ministry of Culture and then on the Town Hall of the Capital.⁶¹ In order to erase any relation to the past, the new leaders edify in front of the *Dalles Hall* a hideous block physically removing the Dalles Hall from the landscape of Bucharest.⁶² When all seemed to be lost, a group of intellectuals like Tudor Vianu, M. Ralea, R. Rădulet and R. Voinea create in 1948 The Society for the Vulgarization of Science and Culture (Societatea pentru Răspândirea Științei and Culturii).⁶³

In her testament, Elena Dalles foresaw a sum of money for the maintenance of the family tomb of Bellu Cemetery.⁶⁴ The funeral monument of the Dalles family⁶⁵ is also mentioned in the work *București, ghid istoric and artistic* (Bucharest, a Historical and Artistic Guidebook) of Grigore Ionescu, where we find both the description and the sketch of Bellu Cemetery⁶⁶, from where one can clearly see that the tomb of the Dalles family is situated at figure 9 bis, in the vicinity of the Morning Star of the Romanian poetry (figure 9), being separated only by the width of an alley.⁶⁷

Mihail M. Caputineanu, as legatee of the testament, had received under these circumstances, the task of finding a sculptor able to build a monument on the hill where the house of Constantin the forester is situated, at the entrance of Codina Valley in Bucșani Forest, a monument to state: “*This column was edified by Elena I. Dalles to the memory of her much-beloved son Ioan I. Dalles, who died on April 22, 1914 and to the memory of her husband Ioan G. Dalles, who died on January 4, 1886, both of them owners of this estate of Bucșani. Pray for them!*”⁶⁸

⁵⁹ *Analele Academiei Române, Dezbaterile* (Yearbook of the Romanian Academy. Debates), Tome LXVI, 1946-1947, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2000, p. 234.

⁶⁰ Idem, Tome LXVII, 1947-1948, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2000, p. 253.

⁶¹ Cornel Mărculescu, *Un lăcaș de cultură: Sala Dalles din București...*, p. 26.

⁶² Nicolae Săcăliș, *Dalles – destin și istorie (II)* (Dalles – Destiny and History), Ziarul Tricolorul, nr. 1259 din 15.05.2008.

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *fond Familia Dalles. Testamentul Elenei Dalles* (collection: The Dalles Family. The Testament of Elena Dalles), file 9/1918-1921, f. 5.

⁶⁵ We must mention that the funeral monument of the Dalles family is a real architectural jewel, seeing that the inset portrait of Ioan Dalles is made by Carol Storck (1854-1926), and the bust of the daughter Dora, by Ion Georgescu (1856-1898), one of the most talented pupils of Karl Storck (1826-1887). See: Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Necropola capitalei* (The Necropolis of the Capital), Institutul de Istorie Nicolae Iorga, București, 1972, p. 25-26.

⁶⁶ Grigore Ionescu, *București – ghid istoric și artistic. Cu 157 de ilustrații în text și 5 planuri afară din text* (Bucharest - Historical and Artistic Guide. With 157 Illustrations in the Text and 5 Plans outside the Text), Editura Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă Regele Carol al II-lea, 1938, p. 271-277.

⁶⁷ Idem, p. 272-273; Gheorghe Bezviconi, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁶⁸ A.N.I.C.-D.J.D., *fond Familia Dalles. Testamentul Elenei Dalles* (collection: The Dalles Family. The Testament of Elena Dalles), file 9/1918-1921, f. 3.

The material and especially cultural heritage bequeathed by Elena Dalles to the Romanians lives on to this day. The conferences, the concerts and the exhibitions from Dalles have become part of the Golden Book of the Romanian culture. This is the merit of a special woman who knew how to love, suffer but especially offer, managing to preserve in this way the memory of the Dalles family in the Romanians' conscience.

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