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ALPHONSE DUPRONT IN ROMANIA: 1932-1940/41
(Summary)

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The activity carried out by Alphonse Dupront in Romania between 1932 and 1940 represents a significant page of his life and the cultural history through the intellectual relations between France and Romania. Before delving into historical work with all his pen craftsmanship, he had played a role in history-making pursuant to his professional commitment to serve his country's relations and cultural representation. Assuming his mission diligently, he had served more than France's prestige in the world, particularly in Romania, and more than the development of the relations between the two countries: his activity also contributed to the cultivation of the European cultural ideal from the end of the interwar period, when it was more threatened than ever. Pierre Chaunu highlighted the significance of the years spent in Romania, which allowed him to discover a whole new manner of being European and understanding Europe from the perspective of the East ignored by the westerners. Hence, the Romanian experience had long-standing effects on the subsequent career of the historian attracted by his university duties, first in Montpellier between 1940 and 1956, then at Paris IV University (he became its chairman in 1969).

Of course, despite his deep insight into the Romanian world, Dupront never claimed to have been a specialist like Paul Henry – his predecessor as the head of the French Cultural Institute, the author of a fundamental monograph about the Bukovina churches. This is the reason why he declined the invitation addressed by Demostene Botez to write a paper about Eminescu in the journal "Viața Românească" for a homage issue of 1963, "[...] I believe in what I write. The more extensive the topic, the more respect it demands" – having read and known the great poet's work during his stay was not enough for him to comment upon it. Dupront proved to be one of the great historians of his country when he defended his thesis on the "myth of the Crusade" in 1956, and continued to be a friend of Romanians and helped to make their history known.

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