

GRIGORE H. GRANDEA: POLITICS, JOURNALISM AND WAR

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ABSTRACT: Grigore H. Granda was one of the most important and influential Romanian journalists and publishers. He outlined in his biography that he was Lord Byron's grandson, but this is false. Granda worked for several important publications such as *Dâmbovița*, *Albina Pindului*, *Timpul* and *Războiul*. He was appreciated by Mihai Eminescu and mocked by Titu Maiorescu. At *Timpul*, Granda worked with Ioan Slavici, another prominent journalist and publisher, and this happened just before Eminescu joined the editorial staff. Granda's most important realisation was the daily gazette *Războiul*, the most powerful newspaper of its days. *Războiul* had at a certain point a circulation of 15 000 to 18 000 copies per day, compared to *Timpul*, which had a circulation between 3 000 and 6 000 copies per day. Granda polemized with the representatives of the Liberal Party, at the time being in power, and especially with C. A. Rosetti, political leader and publisher at the daily newspaper *Românul*.

Key-word: Granda, *Războiul*, Eminescu, *Timpul*, newspapers

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“Grandfather” Lord Byron

According to his memoirs, Grigore H. Granda was born on the 26th of October 1843, in Țândărei, Ialomița, and died on the 8th of October 1897, in Bacău, where he lived at that time. The publisher and journalist lived a rough, bitter and very adventurous life. His biography included fictional chapters that show an exuberant and surprising phantasy. His genealogy is fantastic, Granda claiming firmly that he was Lord Byron’s grandson, the wellknown English poet! His talent to narrate shows from crayoning this contrafactual story, in which Lord Byron has met Granda’s grandmother on a trip to Greece. He fell in love with her. The amorous adventure with Ianta, the wife of a merchant, is followed by the birth of Haralambie Georgiu, the father of the publicist.³ The father died in Grigore’s early childhood. Grigore remained with his step-mother with whom he didn’t get well along, as he had a suspicious and stubborn character. Later he possessed a consistent part of his father’s fortune, but most of it will be spent on his journalistic adventures. Grigore Haralambie Granda attended approximative schools, including the one for health care agents, founded by Carol Davila. It was a soldierly regime, not easy to endure. In 1859 the young man come accross Dimitrie Bolintineanu who offers him support. In the same year Bolintineanu will publish Granda’s lyrics in *Dâmbovița*.

Trying to figure out his political affiliations, we observe a small variation, allowing us to believe that Granda was – like Eminescu – mostly a convinced antiliberal. He also crossed a small period when he attacked the conservators, because Titu Maiorescu provoked him to leave the office of *Timpul*⁴, calling him, as Călinescu mentions, “H.

³ Pavel Țugui, *Prefață*, in Grigore H. Granda, *Scrieri*, Editura Minerva, București, 1974, p. VI.

⁴ Lucian-Vasile Szabo, *Un alt Slavici. O geografie publicistică după gratii*, Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara, 2012, pp. 158-164.

Grande, this total cipher"⁵, a subjective and inaccurate assessment, of course. For a long period the journalist manifests himself as a republican, taking part in the campaign against King Carol I. As an admirer of Cuza, he militates in 1866 in favour of a ruler from inside the United Principalities, signing with I. C. Lerescu the paper *Dorințele a doi români și mediile de a le vedea realitate* [*The Wishes of two Romanians and the Means to See Them Come True*]⁶. He also signs articles at *Strechea*, a gazette edited by the above mentioned I. C. Lerescu, his targets being C. A. Rosetti⁷ and I. C. Brătianu⁸.

Accused in the Assassination Attempt against Brătianu

Later, in 1880, he will be arrested and imprisoned, because he was considered to have been part of the group that attempted to assassinate I. C. Brătianu, an involvement which has not been proved, the accusation being somehow delirious. The attack was organised by the "Secret Romanian Committee of 50", which had only three active people. They "sentenced" prime-minister Brătianu to death, the sentence was going to be executed by Ion G. Pietraru. On the 2nd (14th) of December 1880, he attacked Brătianu with a knife at the entrance to the Lower Chamber. He didn't have the strength to stab the prime-minister, who defended himself and suffered small injuries. A member of the Parliament intervened and knocked down Pietraru with his cane⁹. The attacker and his companions were arrested, judged

⁵ George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, Editura Minerva, București, 1986, p. 367.

⁶ The leaflet appeared in March 1866 exactly in Belgium, where Grande was a student.

⁷ Liberal politician, editor of the daily newspaper *Românul*.

⁸ Future liberal prime minister of Romania, from 1876 to 1888.

⁹ Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată (1878-1884)*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1993, p. 77.

and condemned after a few months. Grigore H. Grandea himself was arrested and spent four weeks in the Văcărești prison, being released on the 30th of December 1880 (the 11th of January 1881). Grandea was accused to be part of the conspiracy, who he supported by publishing propaganda material of the “Secret Romanian Committee of 50” in *Războiul*. Afterwards it was proved to have been an abuse of the government and judicial servility; no proof of his guilt was found. Related to this subject, in a polemical article in 1883¹⁰, Mihai Eminescu will discuss important elements in order to understand the events. The journalist from *Timpul* will advance the opinion that the assassination attempt was orchestrated by prime-minister I. C. Brătianu personally, in an effort to victimize himself and to reobtain his lost popularity after a 12 year non-stop governance. Eminescu will refer to the pardon given by King Carol I on the 10th of May (the national day of the Kingdom of Romania, the coronation day of King Carol I) and will suggest that it was an orchestrated event: “This is the reason why his police agent Cârlova, his school inspector from Ilfov, Pătescu, his public official Pietraru, appointed at the Ministry of Finances have done him this pleasure with a kitchen knife rasped in advanced at a point where it was prepared to break in two”¹¹. Eminescu’s claims seem exaggerated, so it is no wonder that they will be vehemently disputed by the liberal newspaper *Telegraful*, where we can identify the pen of his powerful journalistic and political opponent Nicu Xenopol¹². Nevertheless, we see Eminescu preoccupied by the techniques of manipulation of the public opinion, recognizing them at governmental level but also capable of using them in his writing.

¹⁰ Simply entitled *București, 14 mai 1883* and attributed to Eminescu by N. Georgescu (‘Eminescu despre dreptul de grație’, *Pro Saeculum*, XIII, no. 3-4 (95-96), Aprilie 15th – June, 1st 2014).

¹¹ *Timpul*, VIII, no. 108, 15 (27) May 1883.

¹² N. Georgescu, ‘Eminescu, ultima zi la Timpul (9)’, *Cultura*, XII, no. 249, November, 10th 2011.

Should we make a comparison between Eminescu and Grindea, it is evident that the style of the author of the *Luceafărul* was far better. But, as a universal journalist, Grindea has a direct style and a nose for news, especially on miscellaneous events and less for politics. Eminescu will treat them on a serious tone, with arguments and amplifications, whereas his predecessor at the direction of *Timpul* will have shorter articles, without going into depth, but with an opening to a sensationalist approach. He will prefer diversity, sometimes the facile notes, but will surpass Eminescu in newspaper management, *Războiul* being more dynamic than *Timpul*. The two won't be in conflict, moreover Eminescu will write in an appreciative tone about Grindea, which doesn't happen too often. Remembering the police backlashes started after the attempt of assassination of prime minister I. C. Brătianu, Eminescu will opine that the moral authors, the conspiracy can be found in the middle of the governing party: "Instead, the police is using the pretext of the assassination attempt in order to arrest the people who it dislikes: Mr. Grindea for the rigorousness of his writing, Mr. Gălășescu for being a police inspector in the conservatory government"¹³.

It would be wrong to see Grindea as apolitical or above the precise political questions, neither a liberal nor a conservative; because he attacked the first ones and he spared the others. His tone was one of the most balanced at the time, which made him a great journalist. He was passionate about his writing, but didn't make much money out of journalism, not even when his gazettes had sold a lot, had a large circulation. The daily life expenses he will cover with his income as a teacher, same thing that happened to Ioan Slavici. He will cope with Maiorescu, even with some of the liberals, but C. A. Rosetti, the famous republican and eminent publisher of the daily newspaper

¹³ *Timpul*, VI, no. 4, January 6th (18th) 1881.

Românul will stay his permanent enemy. Granda's anger dated from 1860, when C. A. Rosetti, who became minister of education and cult cut off his 300 lei scholarship, offered by the former minister Ion Ghica, also liberal, for support in school.¹⁴

He will make a mock of Rosetti in his novel *Vlășia sau ciocoi noi* [*Vlășia or Old and New Parvenues*], where he lends him the name of Băboi (one of the chapters is entitled "Băboi's Clique"), his companion in adventures being Sclipici, alias I. C. Brătianu. The novel *Vlășia sau ciocoi noi* appeared in its first version, as a feuilleton in his newspaper *Războiul*, in 1880. The title used in the newspaper was *Berlicoco*, C. A. Rosetti's nickname. The literary historians, except Călinescu, don't persevere upon Granda's writings, he is just mentioned sporadically. E. g. Alexandru Piru will underline his propensity to phantastic and mistery, on a popular aisle or with up to date themes like transmigration¹⁵.

Grigore H. Granda also tried his hand on translations, mainly from classical German literature (Goethe). His translations were published e.g. in *Albina Pindului*¹⁶ and show the preoccupation for accuracy, but Granda fails in the poetic part – one more sign of his quite "journalistic" nature. Granda's admiration for Goethe's writings went so far that he created a "local version of *Werther*, the novel *Fulga sau Ideal și Real* [*Fulga or Ideal and Real*] in 1887"¹⁷.

¹⁴ Pavel Țugui, *op. cit.*, p. XIII.

¹⁵ Alexandru Piru, *Istoria literaturii române de la început până azi*, Editura Univers, București, 1981, pp. 100-101.

¹⁶ Rudolf Windisch, 'Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Faust-Übersetzungen: Dan Mănucă', *Philologica Jassyensia*, IV (1), 2008.

¹⁷ As Alexandru Guțu remarked in an opening speech of a Goethe-symposium on April, 15th 1998 in Romania, when the Goethe-Gesellschaft was founded. See <http://www.ggr.ro/goeanspr.htm> (accessed on 13.07.2015).

Surgeon's assistant, journalist and defendant

After incredible adventures as a surgeon's assistant in a region or a regiment, the young poet (who published the volume *Miosostis* in 1860) became in 1862 a batallion doctor, viceprincipal of the medicine and pharmacy school, as well as a substitute professor of compared anatomy and zoology. The young man, not even 20 by that time, didn't resist for a year in these functions and in spring 1863 he is dismissed. Then we note Granda's first outing as a controverter, because in the publication *Reforma* he will address a very harsh letter to general Davila, who protected him until then, but who, because of the indiscipline of the young man was forced to dismiss him from the functions, but also from the army. As Pavel Țugui remarks: "The polemics in the press and the scandal irritates the authorities who ordered Granda's arrest, his trial by a military commission, demotion in rank to a soldier and, by a high order (in June 1863), signed by Al. I. Cuza, wiping him off the army lists"¹⁸. He then entered the arena of journalism and became the assiduous contributor of the *Reforma* gazette, afterwards, being encouraged by Bolintineanu, he became a publisher of the periodical *Dâmbovița*. His medical adventure started in 1855 will continue in 1865 with a period at the Colțea hospital where the young guy will be a surgeon's assistant, will assist in surgeries and work night shifts.

¹⁸ Pavel Țugui, *op. cit.*, p. XV. Granda will maintain a contradictory attitude towards general Davila, who, as it was quite normal, during the war 1877-1878, had the responsibility to medically assist the soldiers on the field. The generalul will sometimes be criticized for some deficiencies, some information also appeared in *Războiul*. In the issue no. 18, from August 9th (21st), the publisher will defend Davila against an attack coming from the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung*, inspired, as Granda believed, by he editors of *Românul*, and therefore persons from prime minister I. C. Brătianu's entourage. In the issue no. 29 of *Războiului* there was reproduced "below, with pleasure" a telegramm from General Davila being thankful "for defending him".

Between 1868 and 1870, Grădeea will be involved, under Bolintineanu's supervision, in editing the first cycle of *Albina Pindului*, a very important cultural publication. He will succeed in catalysing the effervescent spirits of the literary life in Bucharest, as he did with *Convorbiri literare* in Iași (later on also in Bucharest) with which he tried to rivale. Pavel Țugui will consider that "it was the most important publication edited by Grădeea"¹⁹. This is largely correct, but also *Războiul*, his later gazette will benefit from the same consideration. *Albina Pindului* continued to appear in the following years, but the new series or issues won't come near the value or glory of the initial ones. The first issues appeared between June, 15th 1868 and April, 1st, 1870, the second one, this time in Craiova, between 1875 and 1876²⁰. 1875 marks an important year in Grădeea's career, because, after a long time of collaboration at the conservatory daily *Presa*, the leader of the party, Lascăr Catargiu, gives him the task to edit *Curierul Bucureștilor*. It is the forerunner of the newspaper *Timpul*, which appeared on March, 15th 1876 under Grigore H. Grădeea's coordination. One of the main editors of the daily *Timpul* in this period will be Ioan Slavici, responsible for the literary part and the external column.

Grădeea left *Timpul* in summer 1877, in July, because he considered the publication had no future²¹. The daily started to slide. In a letter, addressed to Iacob Negruzzi, Slavici mentioned: "For 14 days nobody came to *Timpul*, so that only two persons, Pompilian and me are filling the columns"²². Nevertheless, in a note in *Războiul* we found

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. XVII.

²⁰ George Munteanu, 'Familia, Tribuna and other Transilvanian publications from that time', in Șerban Cioculescu (coord.), *Istoria literaturii române*, III, Epoca marilor clasici, Editura Academiei, București, 1973, p. 545.

²¹ Lucian-Vasile Szabo, *Un alt Slavici. O geografie publicistică după gratii* [Another Slavici. A Geography of Journalism behind Bars], Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara, 2012, p. 161.

²² I. E. Toroușiu, *Studii și documente literare* [Studies and Literary Documents], II, Institutul de Arte Grafice Bucovina, București, 1932, p. 280.

out that by the end of August 1877, Grindea appeared before the jury exactly because of his articles from *Timpul*: “A new trial for a journalist: Mr. Grindea, editor of the daily *Timpul*, was sued again. As they didn’t manage to convict him at the court of jury, now the Court in Ilfov will judge him on October, 15th. Just to make sure! Why shouldn’t be justice in Bucharest?”²³ He won’t be condemned here either. The tactics of the authorities should be remarked, after being discharged by the jury, Grindea will appear in front of a criminal court, by this it moved from press misdemeanour to another more serious level. There were even more harassments from the authorities. From the issue 11 (23) noiembrie 1877 of the daily *Războiul* we find out that “two police agents” searched for Grindea at the print office bringing him a citation. Because they didn’t find the editor, who stayed at home, being sick, and because they didn’t want to come again, the agents threw the citation at the feet of the institution’s concierge.

From *Timpul* to *Războiul*

The dismissal from *Timpul* will be announced in *Războiul*, where also the date is pointed out: October, 1st. One of the reasons is that he believed that he will be spared the “thoughts necessarily imposed by a political party”²⁴. Under these circumstances, Dimitrie Vatamaniuc’s consideration isn’t valid, that Grindea would have left *Timpul* during summer: “In July 1877 even Gr. H. Grindea will leave the editorial department, in order to edit *Războiul*, an illustrated daily newspaper, which gained large popularity in the beginning”²⁵.

²³ *Războiul*, I no. 37, August, 28th (September 9th) 1877.

²⁴ *Războiul*, I, no. 72, October 2nd (14th) 1877.

²⁵ Eminescu at *Timpul* (1877 – 1883), *România liberă* (1888) and *Fântâna Blanduziei* (1888 – 1889), an introduction to M. Eminescu, *Opere*, X, *Publicistică, 1 noiembrie 1877 – 15 februarie 1880* [*Works*, X, *Journalism, November 1st 1877, February 15th 1880*], Editura Academiei, București, 1989, pp. V-XXI.

Regarding *Timpul*, after a month, Maiorescu, because of Slavici's insistent, will bring Mihai Eminescu at the newspaper. Slavici was left almost alone at the paper and was preparing it with two or three collaborators, all of them being underpaid.

One of the reasons of this disastrous state of facts, besides the disinterest of the grand conservatories, is, doubtless, the vivid competition by Grindeanu's *Războiul*, although he continued his good relations with Slavici and Eminescu and it is possible that he even helped them for a while. Despite Eminescu's amazing articles, *Timpul* won't recover; moreover it will continue to pass moments of downfall. The edition will drop, while the edition of *Războiul* will rise at an amazing rate. In his correspondence, Slavici will note: "During Maiorescu's directorship at *Timpul*, the newspaper was printed in 6.000 copies. Now it turned down to 2 000. Hopefully it will soon rise again, because the real reason was the war and *Războiul*²⁶ that prints 12 - 18.000 copies, an extraordinary thing in Romania"²⁷. On another occasion I showed that Slavici underestimated war as a topic in journalism, especially because during the War of Independence the United Principalities of Romania didn't implement measures of censoring the press²⁸. Grindeanu will once publish a *Note*, where we can read that: "Until today over 1.715.440 papers were printed out of the issues of this newspaper. We have the right to be proud of that and meanwhile the duty to thank the public for supporting us in accomplishing this difficult and delicate mission we imposed on us under these serious circumstances"²⁹. These numbers show an average of 11.600 copies per issues, which is quite impressive, the newspaper being on the market only for five months.

²⁶ It's a pun: "războiul" means "the war".

²⁷ Letter addressed to Iacob Negruzzi, in I. E. Torouțiu, *Studii și documente literare* [Studies and Literary Documents], II, Institutul de Arte Grafice Bucovina, București, 1932, p. 267.

²⁸ Lucian-Vasile Szabo, 'Obiectivare, reguli și polemici' [Objectification, Rules and Polemics], in Ilie Rad (ed.), *Obiectivitatea în jurnalism* [Objectivity in Journalism], Editura Tritonic, București, București, 2012, pp. 199-217.

²⁹ *Războiul*, I, no. 146, December 15th (27th) 1877.

The glory days of the daily *Războiul* were between July 1877 and June 1879, when between the newspaper and the printers Thiel and Weiss existed a good communication. The sponsoring printers will start to believe that they can make profit without sharing it anymore with Granda. It will be a mistake, of course, because the journalist was the soul of the gazette, meaning a skilled journalist, energetic, full of passion. Thiel and Weiss won't care for and will chase him away, forcing him to edit another paper. It will enter the market on March 25th (Aprilie, 6th) 1880 and it will be named... *Războiul*³⁰! It will be another piece in the process with the printers. Granda will fight on two fronts, at two publications, in this period, as he did in 1877, until Eminescu's arrival at *Timpul*.

The journalistic impetus fades out

Constantin Bacalbașa remembers in his memoirs that Prince Grigore Sturdza (also known as beizadea Mitică or beizadea Vitello, because he trained himself by lifting a calf!) financed the printing of a big format daily named *Democrația națională*³¹. The newspaper survived until September 1880. Gr. H. Granda will be placed as the editor of this publication with Russian friendly accents, surprisingly because his position of denouncing the abuses of the Tzarist Empire was well known. Moreover, his journalistic qualities will be questioned: "The newspaper, low-pitched and flat, will have as an editor-in-chief the poet and publicist Gr. H. Granda"³². Tiberiu Avramescu considers

³⁰ Pavel Țugui, *op. cit.*, p. XXI.

³¹ Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată (1878-1884)* [Former Bucharest (1878-1884)], *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 71.

³² Tiberiu Avramescu, note in Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată, (1871-1877)* [Former Bucharest (1871-1877)], Editura Eminescu, București, 1987, p. 79.

even *Războiul* as a shallow newspaper, stating that “the publication coordinated by G. H. Grindea occupies a modest place in our press history”³³, an allegation we cannot subscribe to.

The period after the War for Independence will be one of intense journalistic activity for Grindea, during the long liberal governance, with which Grindea’s *Războiul* was at permanent... war. In 1886, the newspaper had great problems and appeared with intermitencies having on its frontispiece the denomination *Războiul român*. This happened until 1889, when Grigore H. Grindea’s daily journalistic activity comes to an end. It will appear ephemerously, until 1892, sometimes under the name *Războiul vechi*. I. Hangiu states precisely that for a short period, between May, 6th and October, 24th, the publication appeared as *Steaua Dunării*, apparently at M. Kogălniceanu’s recommendation, who had edited a gazette with this name before³⁴. Around 1887, Grindea published for a short time (July, 2nd – August, 3rd), the daily *Sentinelă*.

Slowly his polemics with his old enemy C. A. Rosetti and the team around *Românul* will rise. Rules of journalistic behaviour are established and published in these cases: “We receive articles on contestations on a daily basis, which we refuse because they contain polemics. The newspaper *Resboiul* imposed on itself not to start any polemical with anyone, only in important cases and upon things of interest to the public”³⁵. In the issue no. 5 we register a first reply to the accusations of the liberal newspaper: “By announcing the publishing of our gazette, *Românul* accuses us of fighting a hard war with the liberal party, although we promise to be without passion or

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 147.

³⁴ I. Hangiu, *Dicționar al presei literare românești (1790 – 1982 [Dictionary of the Romanian Literary Press (1790-1981)]*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1987, p. 259.

³⁵ *Războiul*, I, no. 129, November 28th (December 10th) 1877.

interest for one of the parties. We admit that we didn't expect such an unjust accusation"³⁶. Later he wants to make another clarification, starting from a probably intentional confusion made by Rosetti, because swearing at any time doesn't mean the liberty of the press³⁷. Constantin Bacalbaşa, a journalist and memorialist with evident liberal affinities, notes, while making a panorama of the press in that period: "*Războiul*, the most widely spread newspaper at the time, a paper of fearsome opposition, published by the typographer Weiss, but edited by the poet Haralambie Granda" ³⁸. The information about a "fearsome opposition" isn't exactly right...

He made up with Maiorescu, who, at the beginning of 1889, appointed him as substitute teacher at a school in Bacău³⁹. Here he meets the widow Fotinia Băcu, who will become his third wife. He starts hiking, and life seems calmer, but he's constantly threatened with his withdrawal, because he cannot get a permanent teaching job. Grigore H. Granda accomplished University studies at the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy in Bucharest (despite he didn't finish college), and in 1866 he came to Liège. He had good results here again and came close to a Ph.D. He got sick and didn't come to the last exams. This put him into a somehow awkward situation, because he was always at the mercy of the government for the position of a substitute teacher, because his journalistic activity as well as the one as a writer brought him just a small income. At the age of 54, G. H. Granda prepared for degree examination at the University in Bucharest, planned for autumn 1897. He didn't come to give it. In

³⁶ *Idem*, I, no. 5, July 27th (August 8th) 1877.

³⁷ *Idem*, I, no. 11, August 2nd (14th) 1877.

³⁸ Constantin Bacalbaşa, *Bucureştii de altădată, (1871-1877)* [Former Bucharest (1871-1877)], Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1987, pp. 264-265.

³⁹ Titu Maiorescu became minister of education and cults again in the conservatory government that followed the long liberal domination from 1876 to 1888.

summer he fell severely sick, being partially paralysed following a stroke. He suffered dreadfully, so that death was a relief when it occurred on November, 8th. This is how one of the greatest Romanian journalists ended almost completely forgotten.

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