

## History

# KING OSCAR II OF SWEDEN AND HIS CONNECTIONS WITH THE ROMANIAN FREEMASONRY

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### Abstract

*The present analysis represents a novel approach to the issue of Romanian-Swedish bilateral relations in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This time, the focus is on the dimension of contacts between Romanian and Swedish Freemasonry. This was conducted in the second half of the 19th century by King Oscar II himself. In 1885 he made an official visit to Bucharest with Queen Sofia. On this occasion, he was made an honorary member of the Grand National Lodge of Romania (M.L.N.R.). Far from being merely a protocol award, it held a special significance. This visit underlined the desire of Constantin Moroiu, Grand Master of the Grand National Lodge of Romania, to gain international recognition for this Romanian Masonic power. It was a very turbulent period in the history of Romanian Freemasonry, marked by a series of interventions by the Grand Orient of Italy in its internal affairs. With the award of this distinction, Romanian Freemasons sought to strengthen their internal unity through external recognition from all Masonic powers. To this end, the help of the Grand Lodge of Sweden was essential. The desire to consolidate the unity of Romanian Freemasonry was a natural reality, given the fact that Romania was proclaimed a Kingdom in 1881 and became a base of stability in this part of the continent.*

**Keywords:** King Oscar II of Sweden; Freemasonry; elites; National Grand Lodge of Romania (M.L.N.R.); Swedish Grand Lodge.

A convincing analysis has already been written about the visit of the Swedish King Oscar II (1829-1907) to Romania in 1885 (Cristea, 2007, pp. 189-201). Three years earlier, however, in 1882 there was another very important moment that revealed, firstly, the important links between Sweden and the Kingdom of Romania and, secondly, the Freemasonry of the Sovereign of Northern Europe<sup>1</sup>. Oscar II was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Sweden, and during his time, the connections between Romanian and Swedish Freemasonry were also exceptionally strong.

This analysis is based on an unpublished document from the archives of the Swedish Grand Lodge [Marea Lojă a Suediei]. It sheds light on the frequent contacts between Romanian and Swedish freemasons. It is a letter from the National Grand Lodge of Romania [Marea Lojă Națională din România], respectively from the Supreme Council of Romanian Freemasonry [Consiliul Suprem al Francmasoneriei Române], dated 5 February 1882. The

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<sup>1</sup>Archive of the Grand Lodge of Sweden-Stockholm. *External documents. Correspondence 1875-1900*. In this collection of documents, after research, I was able to find no less than 400 pages of documents. They reflect the direct link between the Romanian freemasons and the Grand Lodge in Northern Europe during this period.

letter was signed by Grand Master [Mare Maestru] Costache Moroiu and Secretary Dr. N. Theodorescu.

This act states that His Majesty Oscar II, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Sweden, has been elected an honorary member of the Romanian Masonic Order, following a vote given by the high dignitaries of the National Grand Lodge of Romania.

Certainly, it is a piece of information that emphasizes something ‘ordinary’: the awarding of an honorary distinction to an important Freemason from the Northern European area, as a sign of appreciation and respect. Especially considering that the two royal houses, the Romanian and the Swedish, were already closely related.

Queen Sofia of Sweden, wife of King Oscar II, was the aunt of Queen Elizabeth of Romania (Cristea, 2007, pp. 193). But this was not the main reason why, in 1882, the Romanian Freemasonry decided to honour King Oscar II with the dignity of a honorary member of the National Grand Lodge of Romania. The reality goes much deeper. This decision was taken one year after a very important event in the modern history of the Romanians: the proclamation of Romania as a Kingdom.

This significant moment in 1881 came after a long process. It illustrates the complicated situation that the Romanians were going through in an external and internal context marked by manifold tensions. Externally, Romania was recognised as an independent state after the War of Independence in 1877-1878. In 1878, Prince Charles I of Hohenzollern was given the title of ‘Royal Highness’. Subsequently, in 1881, to specify, among other things, that the head of state would be the King, and that Romania would be designated as a Kingdom or constitutional monarchy.

On the other hand, the need for internal and external stability and the 15-year reign of Prince Charles argued for a joint effort to proclaim the Kingdom. At that time, the Liberal Party had been in power since 1876, and the government was headed by I.C. Brătianu<sup>2</sup>

He and Prince Charles would have liked a coalition government to bring about the Proclamation of the Kingdom, but disagreements between the Liberals and Conservatives initially prevented this. An agreement was eventually reached, but in an extremely turbulent context. The Liberals were accused by the Conservatives, represented by Titu Maiorescu<sup>3</sup>, of their alleged intention to establish a republic while abroad, Tsar Alexander II of Russia was assassinated on 1 March 1881 (Royal House Fund. Officials, file 18/1881, f. 1).

In addition, groups of Russians, accused of nihilism, entered Romania, and the government handled their presence leniently. Although Vasile Boerescu had informed King Charles that the government intended to proclaim the Kingdom on 8/20 April, the monarch’s

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<sup>2</sup>I.C. Brătianu (1821 - 1891) was a Romanian politician and statesman, minister with various portfolios in different governments, the fourteenth Prime Minister of Romania, brother of politicians Dumitru C. Brătianu and father of Ion I.C. Brătianu. He was an honorary member of the Romanian Academy (since 1888). He was initiated into Freemasonry, like his brother Dumitru Brătianu, in 1846 in Paris, in the Lodge of the Athenaeum of Foreigners, and then he joined the Lodge of the Rose of Perfect Tranquillity, in which he received the rank of Master on 14 July 1847. In 1848 he joined the Bucharest Lodge of the Brotherhood, then returned to Paris, where a few years later he was arrested for participating in the plot against Napoleon III. He returned to Bucharest and founded the Danube Star Lodge in 1857 with other brothers who had also returned from exile. During the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866), Brătianu was a prominent liberal leader. In 1866 he witnessed the dismissal of Cuza as one of the leaders of the Monstrous Coalition and the election of Prince Charles I of Romania, under whose reign he held several ministerial posts for the next four years. He was arrested for complicity in the 1870 revolution of the so-called „Republic of Ploiești”, but released shortly afterwards. In 1876, with the help of Constantin A. Rosetti, he formed a Liberal cabinet that remained in power until 1888, serving as minister during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. After 1883, Brătianu was the sole leader of the Liberals, with the help of C.A. Rosetti, his friend and political ally for almost forty years.

<sup>3</sup>Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917) was an academician, lawyer, literary critic, essayist, aesthete, philosopher, teacher, politician and Romanian writer, Freemason, 23<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister of Romania between 1912 and 1914, Minister of the Interior, founding member of the Romanian Academy, outstanding personality of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Romania. Maiorescu is the author of the famous sociological theory of Bottomless Forms, forming the basis of political Junimism (around the revue of *Junimea* and the “foundation stone” on which the works of Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă, Ion Luca Caragiale and Ioan Slavici were built.

birthday, this was done much earlier, on 14/26 March 1881. General Lecca<sup>4</sup> then proposed the following motion to the Chamber of Deputies: ‘In order to fulfil an old wish of the nation, to strengthen stability and order in the country, and to guarantee that the dynasty in Romania will live under the same conditions as in the other European states, and that it will inspire the same confidence, the Chamber of Deputies, by the power of the sovereign right of the nation, proclaims as King of Romania His Royal Highness Prince Carol I. He receives the title of King of Romania for himself and his descendants’<sup>5</sup>. (Proclamation of Romania as a Kingdom, 1881, our translation)

The proclamation of the Romanian Kingdom set off a flurry of diplomatic activity in the capitals of the great powers. According to the ‘Protocol on the Titles of Sovereigns’ [Protocolul referitor la titlurile suveranilor], signed by Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) on 11 October 1818, none of these powers could recognise a change of title without prior agreement.

Thus, on 23 March and 4 April 1881, Count Tomielli, Minister for Italy, then Minister for Great Britain, White and Ducros Albert, Extraordinary Ambassador of France, sent their congratulations to King Charles I. Two days later, Count Hoyos, Minister for Austria-Hungary, Prince Urusov, Minister for Russia and Count Wesdehlen, Minister for Germany, did the same (Crețu, 2016, pp. 78-80).

The proclamation of the Kingdom was widely discussed not only in diplomatic circles but also in the European press. Commenting on the event, the Austrian newspaper ‘Die Deutsche Zeitung’ welcomed the fact that the Romanians had regained their place in the family of European states and that the Romanian ruler was ‘rightly on an equal footing with the rulers of the other Central European states’<sup>6</sup> (Crețu, 2016, pp. 78-80, our translation).

Another daily newspaper, the ‘Neue Freie Presse’ in Vienna, also stressed the strategic importance of the new Romanian state against Russian expansion in the Balkans. It saw this strengthening of Romania as a contribution to maintaining peace in the East (Crețu, 2016, pp. 78-80).

By transforming the Romanian Principalities into a Kingdom, Romanians, as the French daily ‘La Republique Française’ noted, the Romanians reaffirmed their intention to resist any attempt at enslavement, just as the Italian press emphasised the civilising role played by their Latin brothers in the East (Crețu, 2016, pp. 78-80).

The Kingdom of Sweden showed its support and sympathy for the proclamation of Romania as a Kingdom, especially after Charles I sent a special message to Oscar II. He informed him that the Romanian nation, through its elected representatives, had decided that sovereign power could be best expressed in the frame of the royal dignity, in accordance with the interests and needs of the country (Cristea, 2007, pp. 189-190). Also on this occasion, King Charles I assured King Oscar II that he would strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Kingdoms of Sweden, Norway and Romania, and that he would also promote the esteem and attachment between the Romanian and Swedish sides (Cristea, 2007, pp. 189-190).

King Oscar II’s reply was significant:

‘I have received the letters in which Your Majesty has kindly informed me that, in response to the appeal of the representatives of the Romanian nation, you have taken for yourself and your successors the title of King of Romania. Your Majesty was right not to doubt

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<sup>4</sup> General Dimitrie Lecca (1832-1888) was a Romanian politician, minister and general, one of the main conspirators who overthrew the government of Alexandru Ioan Cuza on the night of 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1866.

<sup>5</sup> Original text: „Pentru a împlini o veche dorință a națiunii, pentru a întări stabilitatea și ordinea în țară și pentru a garanta că dinastia din România va trăi în aceleași condiții ca și în celelalte state europene și că va inspira aceeași încredere, Camera Deputaților, prin puterea dreptului suveran al națiunii, proclamă ca Rege al României pe Alteța Sa Regală Principele Carol I. Acesta primește titlul de Rege al României pentru sine și pentru urmașii săi.”

<sup>6</sup> Original text: „pe bună dreptate pe picior de egalitate cu conducătorii celorlalte state din Europa Centrală”.

the lively and sincere satisfaction that this happy event inspires in me, the importance of which is increased in my eyes by the close ties of kinship that unite our families. I am pleased to take this opportunity to renew the assurances of my high esteem and unfailing friendship<sup>7</sup>. (Cristea, 2007, pp. 190 our translation).

In April 1881, all the major European powers officially recognised the Kingdom of Romania. This strengthened the dynasty in the country, gave stability to the constitutional monarchical institutions of the state and increased the cohesion of the population around the throne.

Externally, the accession of Charles I and the securing of the dynastic succession at the expense of the House of Hohenzollern guaranteed German dominance in Romania for a long time. From this point of view, the years 1877-1881 meant for the Romanian people the exit from the area of influence and rivalry of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, but also the firm placement on the path of “integration” in the area of Central and Western European political life (Crețu, 2016, pp. 78-80).

Despite this important political achievement, which strengthened the internal unity of the country, Romania remained divided. Its elites continued to fight for supremacy and international recognition.

The correspondence between a section of the Romanian Freemasonry and the Grand Lodge of Sweden illustrates this this point quite effectively. The appointment of King Oscar II as an honorary member of the Grand National Lodge of Romania was intended not only as a rapprochement, but also to strengthen the unity of this Romanian obedience.

The Grand National Lodge of Romania was founded on 8 September 1880 by uniting several lodges under different obediences and functioned under the Grand Orient of Italy. Subsequently, on December 5, 1881, the Supreme Romanian Council for High Ranks (from 4 to 33) was established (Ștefănescu, 2009, pp. 123). It was Constantin Moroiu (1837-1916), with the help of Reserve Colonel Ioan T. Ulic (1856-1925) and Prince George Valentin Bibescu (1880-1941), who managed to achieve such a union. Constantin Moroiu is considered one of the fathers of modern Romanian Freemasonry. His life story is truly fascinating.

He was the grandson of Professor Costache Moroiu, who taught at ‘Sfântul Sava’ National College in Bucharest, then a pioneer of national education, an officer of the Royal Army with the rank of captain. He took part in the Russo-Turkish War against the Ottoman Empire, after which he distinguished himself as one of the most important and influential Freemasons in Romania, with a great passion for the art of philately (Florin & Moroiu, 2022).

But beyond his personal interests, Constantin Moroiu left a lasting impact on the modern history of Romania and national Freemasonry. He is remembered as the father and founder of the first Grand Lodge in Romania. His brother, George Moroiu, was also a well-known Freemason. Maria and Elena Moroiu, his daughters, were initiated into the Southern Star Lodge in Mangalia in 1883, becoming the first women in Romania to be initiated into Freemasonry. (Florin & Moroiu, 2022).

Constantin Moroiu’s first official contact with Freemasonry took place on 1 June 1859 in the ‘Danube Star’ [*Steaua Dunării*] Lodge in Bucharest. In June 1875 he received the degree of Master Mason and on 1 February 1877 he decided to leave the ‘Heliopolis’ Lodge

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<sup>7</sup> Original text: „Am primit scrisorile prin care Majestatea Voastră a binevoit să mă informeze că, răspunzând apelului reprezentanților națiunii române, ați luat pentru dumneavoastră și succesorii dumneavoastră titlul de Rege al României. Majestatea Voastră a avut dreptate să nu se îndoiască de satisfacția vie și sinceră pe care mi-o inspiră acest fericit eveniment, a cărui importanță este sporită în ochii mei de strânselile legături de rudenie care unesc familiile noastre. Am plăcerea de a profita de această ocazie pentru a vă reînnoi asigurările înaltei mele considerații și ale prieteniei mele de nezdrușcinat.”

in Bucharest. On 11 October 1878, after reactivating the *Danube Star* Lodge, he resumed his intense Masonic life. From 1878 to 1880, he was the Worshipful Master [Maestru Venerabil] of the *Danube Star* Lodge (Florian & Moroiu, 2022).

He received the 31st degree in 1880 and was elected Grand Sapiient of the 'Danube Star' Chapter [Mare Sapiient al Capitolului Steaua Dunării] in May of that year. His notable achievement, as previously mentioned, was the consolidation of the numerous Romanian lodges that had previously been affiliated with foreign obediences: French, Italian, German, Portuguese (Florian & Moroiu, 2022).

From 1880 to 1911, he was active in Romanian Freemasonry as Grand Master and Sovereign Grand Commander [Mare Maestru și Suveran Mare Comandor]. On 5 July 1882, he was elected an honorary member of the Lodge of the Universal Brotherhood of Pisa [Loja Frăția Universală din Pisa], Italy. On 22 November 1882, he founded the Grand Chapter Royal Arch [Marele Capitlu Royal Arch].

He traveled to Belgium and France, where he established connections with their Supreme Councils. In 1883 he was appointed Honorary Grand Master of the Supreme Grand General Council of Misraim of the United States of America [Mare Maestru Onorific al Supremului Mare Consiliu General de Misraim din Statele Unite ale Americii]. In 1883 and 1905 he was appointed Guarantor of the Sovereign Sanctuary of Great Britain and Ireland in the Sovereign Sanctuary of Romania [Garant al Sanctuarului Suveran al Marii Britanii și Irlandei în Sanctuarul Suveran al României]. (Florian & Moroiu, 2022).

During the same period, he received the mission to be the Guarantor of Friendship of the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States of America and of the Supreme Council for Mexico in Romania [Garantul de prietenie al Consiliului Suprem al Jurisdicției de Nord a Statelor Unite ale Americii și al Consiliului Suprem pentru Mexic în România]. In 1883, he became a Guarantor of Friendship for the Grand Lodge of France and the Grand Orient of Spain in Romania [Garant al Prieteniei pentru Marea Lojă a Franței și Marele Orient al Spaniei în România]. In the same year, he also received the title of honorary member of 'La Verita' Lodge in Luca, Italy (under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council of Italy). (Florian & Moroiu, 2022).

In 1886 he founded the *Constantin Moroiu* Lodge in Cairo, Egypt. In January 1899 he promulgated the new Masonic Constitution and in 1904 he attended the Masonic Congress in Brussels. In 1905, he became the Guarantor of Friendship of the Supreme Council of Scotland in Romania [Garantul de prietenie al Consiliului Suprem al Scoției din România]. In 1905 and 1914, he was elected Guarantor of Friendship of the Grand Lodges of British Columbia, Canada, Peru and France in Romania [Garant al Prieteniei Marilor Loji din British Columbia, Canada, Peru și Franța în România] (Florian & Moroiu, 2022).

In 1914, Constantin Moroiu received the mission to be the Guarantor of Friendship in Romania for the Grand Lodge of France, the Grand Lodge of Jawa, the Grand Lodge of Venezuela, the Grand Orient of Spain, the Supreme Council of Belgium and the Supreme Council of Cuba [Garantul Prieteniei în România pentru Marea Lojă a Franței, Marea Lojă a Jawa, Marea Lojă a Venezuelei, Marele Orient al Spaniei, Consiliul Suprem al Belgiei și Consiliul Suprem al Cubei]. In recognition of his services, he was made an honorary member of the *Egyptian Lodge* No. 2 (Manchester, UK), *Perseverenza Lodge* (Masso, Italy), *Ciro Mentoli Lodge* (Borgo, Italy) and *Il Leone di Caprera* (Rio dell'Elba, Italy) (Florian & Moroiu, 2022).

The path toward the unity of Freemasonry that he sought was exceedingly challenging. Initially, in 1879, Constantin Moroiu attempted to join the Grand Orient of Romania. Subsequently, he secured approval from the Grand Orient Lusitano Unit of



Portugal to establish the lodge known as ‘*The Star of the Danube*’ [Ștefănescu, 2009, pp. 125).

Due to serious mistakes, Constantin Moroiu was expelled from the United Lusitanian Grand Orient and then decided to establish his own Masonic obedience: the National Grand Lodge of Romania. With the decision to create a Grand Lodge, he envisaged the organisation of the Romanian Order of Freemasons on the national territory, a plan that involved several stages:

1. The Grand National Lodge of Romania, which, according to the Constitution of 5<sup>th</sup> November 1880, should work and form the Masonic power for the administration of degrees 1-3 (Ștefănescu, 2009, pp. 125).
2. The following lodges were to work under him: *Șteaua Dunării, Hiram, Cuza Vodă, Progresul, Aurora, Armonia, Traian, Farul, Șteaua Sudului, Concordia, Carpatina, Unire & Fraternitate, Concordia-Roman* (Ștefănescu, 2009, pp. 125).
3. The Constitution of the Supreme Council of 33 of the Scottish Rite (created on 8 September 1881), was to operate on the basis of the Constitution of 2 September 1884 and the Grand French Constitution of 1 May 1766 (Ștefănescu, 2009, pp. 126).
4. The constitution of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Ancient Primitive Rite of Memphis [Sanctuarul Suveran al Ritului Primitiv Antic din Memphis] (founded on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1881), with the approval of the Sovereign Sanctuary of Italy [Sanctuarul Suveran al Italiei] on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1881 was to operate according to the Constitution promulgated by I.E. Marconiu in 1839. He was to be subordinate to: The Grand Mystical General Council [Marele Consiliu General Mistic], the Grand Tribunal [Marele Tribunal], the Council of Sublime Masters [Consiliul Maeștrilor Sublimi], the Knights of Aquileia [Cavalerii din Aquileia], the Senate [Senatul], the Chapter of the Knights of the Rosa Croce [Capitolul Cavalerilor de la Rosa Croce], the Chapter Lodges [Lojile Capitulare] (Ștefănescu, 2009, pp. 126).
5. The Supreme Chapter of the Royal Rite Arch was to be established.

Constantin Moroiu also began publishing the monthly magazine ‘*Triunghiul*’. On 15 January 1881, the National Grand Lodge promulgated the General Regulations for Lodges, Chapters and Areopagus [Regulamentul general al lojilor, capitolului și areopagurilor]. It replaced the Portuguese Lottery Rules that were still in force at the time. The new regulation was applied from the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1881 and the decree was signed by Constantin Moroiu - Grand Master Commander, N. Theodorescu - Grand Secretary and V.A. Nestor - Grand Orator (Bălcești, 1993, pp. 105).

The issues facing the Grand National Lodge founded by Constantin Moroiu also began to materialize in 1881, when the Grand Orient of Italy recognised the Grand Orient of Moldavia and Wallachia. It was challenged by the Grand National Lodge of Romania as being anti-national because it did not recognise the actual name of the Romanian state (Romania). This newly created Masonic power subordinated several Masonic lodges in Moldavia, which Constantin Moroiu described as ‘a factory of Jewish Freemasons who were not accepted in the lodges of Rome, Piatra and Bacău’<sup>8</sup> (Bălcești, 1993, pp. 104-105, our translation).

Confronted with such external interference, in September 1882, Grand Master Constantin Moroiu dispatched a circular to all Masonic authorities worldwide. In this circular, the Grand National Lodge of Romania (M.L.N.R.) protested against the involvement of the Grand Orient of Italy in the Romanian Freemasonry. This was particularly true in the

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<sup>8</sup> Original text: „o fabrică de francmasoni evrei care nu au fost acceptați în lojile de la Roman, Piatra și Bacău.”

context of new lodges appearing on Romanian territory that did not operate in the M.L.N.R. subline (Bălcești, 1993, pp.111) Such lodges were: *Dochia* (Petro-Dava), *Traian* (Adjud), *Speranța* (Rusciuk), *Alexandru cel Bun* (Bacău), *Lucia* (Roman).

These approaches to the major European Masonic powers did not go unnoticed. Two years after its foundation, the Grand National Lodge of Romania was recognised by the Grand Orient of Argentina, the Grand Orient of Belgium, the Grand Orient of Greece, the Grand Orient of Mexico, the Grand Orient of Spain, the Grand Lodge of England – ‘Mother of the World’, the Grand Lodge of Chile, the Grand Lodge of Cuba, the Grand Lodge of Ireland, the Grand Lodge of Liberia, the Alpine Grand Lodge, the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Seville, the Supreme Council of Belgium, the Supreme Council of Italy (Bălcești, 1993, pp.114)

The Supreme Sanctuary of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ancient Primitive in Romania was recognised by: the Sovereign Sanctuary of America, the Sovereign Sanctuary of Italy, the Sovereign Sanctuary of Great Britain and Ireland, the Supreme General Council of the Misraim Rite of France, the Supreme Council of Greece, the Supreme Council of Italy, the Supreme Council of Mexico, the Supreme Council of Scotland, the Supreme Council of Hungary, the Supreme Council of the USA (Charleston), the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction (New Jersey). (Bălcești, 1993, pp.114)

Among these European Masonic powers that recognised the unity of the Grand National Lodge of Romania (M.L.N.R.), the Swedish Grand Lodge was absent. Given the very close family ties between the Royal House of Romania and the Royal House of Sweden, Grand Master Constantin Moroiu took steps towards the Swedish Freemasonry. He was so confident of success that he decided to bestow the esteemed honor of honorary membership upon King Oscar II

That fact that such an approach was successful in 1882 is proven by a later fact. Three years later, on 29 May 1885, the Brethren of the ‘Hiram Lodge’ of Orient from Botoșani enthusiastically proclaimed His Highness Gustav Adolf an honorary member of their Lodge. (Archive of the Grand Lodge of Sweden. *External Documents* 29 May 1885).

Gustaf Adolf was none other than the future King of Sweden, Gustaf V Adolf, son of King Oscar II and Queen Sofia of Nassau. He ascended the throne of the Kingdom of Sweden in 1907 and demonstrated himself as an active monarch, deeply attuned to the realities and requirements of his era. He was the last king of Sweden to intervene directly in the politics of the kingdom and also the last ruler to be supreme commander of the armed forces.

Grand Master Costache Moroiu’s strategy of paving the way to the Grand Lodge of Sweden through honors has produced long-awaited results. The Grand National Lodge of Romania (M.L.N.R.) also needed the recognition and support of Swedish Freemasonry. This was especially true at a time when internal rivalries, as well as those with the Italian Grand Orient due to the latter’s interference in the M.L.N.R.’s sphere of influence, were frequent.

On 15 January 1883, Constantin Moroiu sent a circular to all Romanian lodges under foreign obedience, in which he reaffirmed his desire to achieve a unified national Freemasonry. He also expressed his willingness to relinquish all honors, as requested by the Moldavian lodges obedient to the Grand Orient of Rome, as soon as the union was established.

To this end, he proposed holding a convention of all the lodges in the country to proclaim the union and to elect new dignitaries (Bălcești, 1993, pp. 118). For a while, his efforts to consolidate the internal unity of the Romanian Freemasonry remained in a state of uncertainty. On 15 September 1883, two years before the visit of King Oscar II to Bucharest, Grand Master Constantin Moroiu summoned all the lodges to the headquarters of the Grand Lodge at Calea Plevnei to determine the destiny of Romanian Freemasonry. Due to a military

inspection in Mangalia, where Constantin Moroiu worked, the meeting was postponed to another day.

Externally, the efforts made have not gone unnoticed. His Highness Gustaf Adolf, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Sweden, was made an honorary member of the Hiram Lodge of Botoșani. This was a strong signal that Romanian Freemasonry could count on the support and sympathy of the Grand Lodge of Sweden.

With these two distinctions, the one awarded to King Oscar II in 1882 and the one awarded to Gustav Adolf in 1885, the Romanian Freemasons sought to consolidate their internal unity through external recognition by all the Masonic powers. To this end, the help of the Grand Lodge of Sweden was essential. The aspiration to strengthen the unity of Romanian Freemasonry became a natural reality when Romania was declared a Kingdom in 1881, emerging as a stabilizing force in this part of the continent.

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