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THE RISE AND FALL OF A BUCHAREST NEIGHBOURHOOD – *COTROCENI* – AND WILLY PRAGHER'S PHOTOGRAPHS AS AN ANAMNETIC INSTRUMENT

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A neighbourhood is *a space of memory:* its streets and buildings tell the tales of those who have created, inhabited or altered them throughout time. The architectural choices, as displayed by the rows of buildings flanking the streets, evince fashions, tastes, mentalities and influences and tell us of how epochs mingle and overlap within a given area. Space thus becomes a sign of time, as monuments contain the traces of eras no longer directly accessible to us, but which they save from complete extinction and from oblivion.

In the early twentieth century, east of Cotroceni Palace and south of the river Dâmbovița, a new neighbourhood of Bucharest began to take shape. It was named after a former village and a monastery constructed by the logothete Șerban Cantacuzino in the late seventeenth century in a forest bearing the same name, as a token of gratitude and thanksgiving for overcoming a difficult moment in his life. Close to the monastery, he later built the princely residence,[1] and the place retained this role and status until the advent of communism. Today's Palace, whose building was commissioned by King Carol I, according to the plans of French architect Paul Gottereau, was constructed on the same spot as the old edifice, reiterating the practice of raising a new building on the foundations of an older one (as frequently happened with places of worship).

As the Palace was designed and constructed (between 1893 and 1895) and the royal couple Ferdinand and Maria were installed there in the spring of 1896, this stirred public interest in an area that had been seen as peripheral (actually, located outside the city until the mid-nineteenth century). The opening of the major roads, Cotroceni Avenue and Independence Boulevard (today's Bulevardul Eroilor Sanitari [Boulevard of War Heroes Sanitarians]); the establishment of the Botanical Garden;[2] the foundation of Elena Doamna [Lady Elena] orphaned girls' asylum on the Cotroceni hilltop; and, later, the

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[1] For further details on the monastic and residential ensemble of Cotroceni, see: Mihail Ipate, *Istoria Cotrocenilor. De la Șerban Cantacuzino la Barbu Știrbei* [Cotroceni: A History. From Șerban Cantacuzino to Barbu Știrbei] (Bucharest: Cotroceni National Museum, 2009).

[2] For details on the foundation of the Botanical Garden and its subsequent transfer to its current place, see: Alexandru Ofrim, *Străzi vechi din Bucureștiul de azi* [Old Streets of Today's Bucharest], fourth edition revised (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011), 81.

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establishment of the Palace hosting the Faculty of Medicine (built 1899-1903, according to the plans of Swiss architect Louis Pierre Blanc) constituted the essential elements that motivated families of physicians and military officers to settle in the vicinity of Cotroceni Palace. They were following in the steps of the French-born doctor Carol Davila, who had been invited to Bucharest by Prince Barbu Ştirbei, in order to organize the healthcare system in Romania. On an estate purchased by Carol Davila (and later subdivided into plots of land) emerged a great part of the neighbourhood, whose streets received the names of famous physicians from Romania and abroad.

Having taken residence on Notagiilor (that is, Swimmers') Street, some time prior to 1871, Dr Carol Davila is remembered not only due to the majestic statue of him by Karl Storck, placed outside the Palace of the Faculty of Medicine, but also due to the eponymous street, where he used to live and which was named after him as early as 1885[3] (just one year after his death). Similarly, other streets in the Davila plot and, later, those in the Principesa Elena [Princess Elena] plot and the Regina Maria [Queen Maria] plot – within which seven streets received the names of medical personalities from the outset – perpetuate the memory of elite individuals among the autochthonous and foreign pharmacists and medical doctors.[4]

The edifices built in Cotroceni neighbourhood during the early decades of the last century, as residences for the upper-class and middle-class residents (the area was mainly populated with members of the liberal professions),[5] display the architectural styles characteristic of that time. The result was a juxtaposition of two distinct perceptions on *dwelling* the neo-Romanian style (Fig. 9) and the Art Deco style. The presence of trees lining the streets, and of the little parks strewn across the neighbourhood; the medium height of the houses (typically with a ground floor and two upper floors), each with its own little yard, often with relatively low fences; and the crisscross of streets flanked by plane trees, chestnut trees and lime trees all created the atmosphere of a hidden village, encapsulated within the surrounding urban area, or maybe of an immense park through which passers-by could walk and dream, in a solitude favourable to meditation. The memoirs of residents from the 1950s and 1960s describe this feeling, which the neighbourhood still conveys:

> I was born […] in Cotroceni, a neighbourhood dating from the interwar period, with houses not too expensive and not too cheap, with courtyards not too big,

[3] Aurel Ionescu, *Străzi din Bucureşti şi numele lor* [Bucharest Streets and Their Names], vol. III, *Personalităţi ale bisericii, medici şi farmacişti* [Leading Figures of the Church, Medical Doctors and Pharmacists] (Bucharest: Vremea, 2014), 145.

[4] Ibid., 146.

[5] A beautiful description of the neighborhood and the notable people who have lived there is provided by Dan Petrescu, "O plimbare prin Cotroceni" [A Stroll Through Cotroceni], included in the volume *Bucureştiul meu* [My Bucharest], ed. Gabriela Tabacu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2016), 107-119.

> and not too small, and with a special allure to those who lived there. […] It felt like a village to me. It was a very cosy, nice place to live in, for a child of the '50s-'60s. Beside streets and alleys, there were the gardens – and we had our own way of wandering through the neighbourhood: jumping over the fences, from one garden into the next, in search for our friends who lived on other streets, or looking for fruits to pick. It was, and still is, a place full of cherry, apricot, cherry-plum trees and grapevines, which was so attractive to us. [...] It was a close-knit community, a very well-functioning neighbourhood.[6]

The above account, by architect Șerban Sturdza, is highly visual, like a painting whose details catch the eye and keep it riveted to the canvas. Further details can be added, inviting the other senses to discover the neighbourhood and reconstruct it by means of words. Sanda Golopenția, for instance, metaphorically evokes Dr Lister – her childhood street, turning into "a giant, bubbling teapot every spring."[7] Let us be reminded by the anthropology of the senses, as it is deployed against the background of the urban environment in the volume dedicated to the "subtle city" by Nicolae Panea, that "scents and smells act, above all, as a boundary delineator, that is, as an identifier and identity marker."[8] We can thus map the smells and fragrances in a city, with every area having its own olfactory footprint, changing with the seasons and the small businesses set up in that area. Just as the houses' scents or smells depend on the age and occupation of their dwellers, on their education and degree of civility, on their eating habits, their daily routines and rituals, similarly the olfactory atmosphere of a neighbourhood is shaped by its vegetation, the proximity of industrial parks, the heavy traffic fumes or, on the contrary, the clean air of traffic-free side-streets. From this standpoint, Cotroceni used to be (and to a great extent, still is) a garden-like part of our capital city.

The same memoir by Sanda Golopenția resorts not only to the olfactory sense, but to auditory impressions too, in recalling the sounds that announced the arrival of the local yoghurt seller:

> A yoghurt vendor walked along our street every morning. He called out, and I ran down the stairs of our three-storey apartment building at the back of the yard, from where every night I dreamed that I could jump out and land safely right on the ground, then I raced across the narrow courtyard and reached the building "in front". The yoghurt was sold in little blue porcelain jars, with aluminium lids. I would grab some from the brimming tray, and returned with

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[6] Miruna Bărdulete, *Bucureștiul arhitectului Șerban Sturdza: "E un oraș improvizat"* [Bucharest's Architect Şerban Sturdza: 'It's an Improvised City'", interview with Șerban Sturdza, http://www.b365.ro/bucure-tiul-arhitectului-erban-sturdza-e-un-ora-facut-la-repezeala_189616.html, accessed 10 December 2018, cf. *Amintiri din Cotroceni ale unui fiu de „burghezo-moșier"* [The Son of "an Estate Owner" Remembers Cotroceni], ed. Sorin M. Rădulescu (Bucharest: Vremea, 2017), 26.

[7] Sanda Golopenția, *Viața noastră cea de toate zilele* [Our Daily Life] (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009).

[8] Nicolae Panea, *Orașul subtil* [The Subtle City] (Bucharest: Editura Etnologică, 2013), 95.

> my refreshing capture, while the merchant continued his solemn chanting: 'yoghuuuuurt… fresh yo-ghurt' stressing each syllable emphatically, as he walked away towards Dr Clunet Street.[9]

One could quote many such reminiscences offered by memoirs, all of them attempting to retrieve the past by means of literary imagery. Less volatile than words, the monuments still standing tell their tales, preserved in stone and reinforced concrete, in the wrought iron fences, in windows and gates, in the wooden pillars of porticos, or in the decorative panels adorning the facades and the entranceway staircases. Here and there, commemorative plaques are attached to buildings to keep alive the memory of the architects (for example, I. Sillion, Petre Boico (Fig. 10), Jean Burcus) and builders (many name I. Moscovici, one of the favourites of Bucharest elites during the 1920s-30s) who fashioned this enclave in the western part of Bucharest. The planters, shaped like massive flower pots, decorating the houses in neo-Romanian style and perched on the balustrades flanking the main entrance of villas, or on the fence pillars, or again on either side of the balconies, enhance the feeling of intimacy which this neighbourhood conveys and its resemblance to an immense garden, especially while in bloom.

Doctor Joseph Lister Street

Cotroceni neighbourhood is a network of streets interspersed with parks and little squares. The two major roads crossing it – Dr Carol Davila Street and Dr Joseph Lister Street – intersect in front of the Arenele BNR [National Bank Arenas] sports compound (the Sycamore Park).

Named after the famous British surgeon, Doctor of Medicine from London University (1853) and Professor of Surgery at the Universities of Glasgow (1854-1869), Edinburgh (1869-1877) and London (1877-1893),[10] Dr Joseph Lister Street goes from the foot of a hill dubbed "Țăcălie" (an archaic term meaning pointed hilltop) to Sfântul Elefterie Nou [St Eleutherius the New] Church (Fig. 4), a religious edifice designed by the Aromanian architect Constantin Iotzu (construction works began in 1935 and were completed only in 1971, as they were interrupted during the Second World War).

Dr Lister Street (Fig. 1) – a long, formerly cobblestoned street flanked by centuries-old lime and plane trees, still has a number of monuments that recall, in their visual design, the combination of modernism (especially Art Deco) and neo-Romanian styles that was common during the 1930s-50s. After the first World War, the architecture of Bucharest gradually renounced the Little Paris style (dominant during the last quarter of the nineteenth century), to adopt the neo-Romanian (which emerged towards the end of the same century) and Art Deco styles, especially in the thriving times of extensive oil exports. The pace of construction activity subsequently slowed down

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ionescu, *Străzi din București*, 190-191.

significantly during the economic depression of 1929-1933.

The characteristic elements of Art Deco architecture (geometric tiered facades, symmetrically arranged windows, staircases imitating the shape of a ship's conning tower – a suggestion further emphasized by the presence of round porthole windows), which define the style of some of the houses in Dr Lister Street, are highlighted by the matching style of the respective fences. Made of wrought iron painted in shades of green, blue (Fig. 8) or brown, the fences display various geometric motifs, grouped into categories of three – a symbolic number very much employed by this art movement. At times, the fences replace geometric motifs with patterns of solar rays or beams of light radiating from a lamp. The wrought iron patterns on the gates frequently match those on the entrance door and on the windows, in a subtle interplay demonstrating the importance attached to details by this art movement.

A defining aspect of the Art Deco architecture in Cotroceni is revealed by a closer look at staircases. Completely insignificant in the structure of the apartment buildings made during the later communist period, the staircase is a trademark Art Deco element – alongside doors, gates, windows and fireplaces – as its role is not merely functional, but also artistic and symbolic. It is frequently shaped like a ship's conning tower (sometimes even equipped with masts). This resemblance to the control structure of an armoured cruiser (very much in vogue and considered very attractive in the early twentieth century) was at times emphasized by the overall hydrodynamic shape of the entire building. A good example of this is the villa at 1 Victor Babeș Street (Fig. 5). Designed by architect Jean Văleanu[11] in 1938, on a relatively small plot of land with a difficult cut (an acute angle towards the street),[12] the house seems to be floating like a ship, opposite a splendid villa in the neo-Romanian style (2 Victor Babeș Street) (Fig. 6).

Both along Dr Lister Street, and across the entire Cotroceni neighbourhood, the mixture of neo-Romanian and Art Deco styles (Fig. 7) lends the architectural rhythm, a patterned alternation in the urban landscape. The Art Deco imitation of the conning towers of transatlantic ships produces a visual effect predicated on height, finding its counterpart in the elevated "fortified towers" of the villas modelled on traditional Romanian architecture. The minimalism and straight geometric lines, characteristic of the modernist style, are complemented by the neo-Romanian trefoil arches and low rope-twist

[11] Jean Văleanu designed several buildings in 1930s-1940s Bucharest: the apartment building and its shops on Tache Ionescu avenue (currently 26, Magheru avenue) destroyed by the earthquake of 4 March, 1977; Domnica building compound at 101, Calea Victoriei [Victory Avenue], made of several units grouped around a courtyard. The buildings designed by Jean Văleanu are examples of modernist architecture.

[12] Mariana Celac et al., *București. Arhitectură. Un ghid adnotat* [Bucharest. Architecture. Annotated Guidebook] (Bucharest: Ordinul Arhitecților din România, 2016), 180.

columns bearing monograms on their capitals. The verandas, supported by wooden pillars decorated with ethnographic patterns, and the ornamental panels displaying motifs such as peacocks (Fig. 11) (or pairs of peacocks facing each other, feeding on a grape), doves whose feathers intertwine with grapevines, or arborescent vegetation and the Tree of Life, reveal the source of inspiration into which the neo-Romanian style taps: the abundance of plant and animal motifs provided by the Brancovenian and neo-Brancovenian paintings of Wallachia. While the peacock generally carries ambivalent connotations, both positive and negative,[13] the birds on this panel symbolize harmony and beauty, "a symbol of fertility and a zoomorphic hypostasis of the Tree of Life."[14] These panels point to the prosperity and wealth of the houses' owners and residents. It is worth noting that sometimes the representations of peacocks – decorative birds – have details reminiscent of eagles – birds of prey with sharp curved beaks, piercing eyes, and a predator's claws to suggest power) – as if to also denote their capacity as protectors of the buildings. In neo-Romanian art, plant and animal symbols (Fig. 12) often carry layered connotations; these examples from Cotroceni represent a case in point.

A stroll along Dr Joseph Lister Street, eight or nine decades into the life of the villas lining it, can occasion an attempt at reconstructing the past by means of the surviving pieces of architecture, which now bear successive layers of materials from subsequent epochs, and demonstrate the residents' various options regarding aesthetics, their financial means, and so on.

The comparative view we provide, by comparing the 1940s photographs of Cotroceni taken by Wilhelm (Willy) Alexander Pragher[15] to those of today's neighbourhood, is subsumed to the same intention of reconstructing the past by means of images that Andi Mihalache expressed in his Contribution to the History of the Notion of Patrimony:

> Reconstructing the past is tantamount to establishing an *image* of the past. And the image is borne by the volume, or the shape – that surface that meets our eye and our perception of it. Here art and history intersect – as they share the goal of *creating or recreating,* in other words providing imagined or known facts with a form, able to endow them with tangible presence and, above all, render them *intelligible*.[16]

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[13] Ivan Evseev, *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească* [Dictionary of Romanian Magic Practices, Demonology and Mythology] (Timișoara: Amarcord, 1998), 358-359.
[14] Ibid., 358.
[15] The name's original spelling was Prager (his mother's maiden name), but he had it changed to Pragher in Berlin, between 1932-1939, in order to avoid being mistaken for a well-known Jewish cabaret singer. The confusion brought him to the attention of Nazi authorities.
[16] Andi Mihalache, *Contribuții la istoria ideii de patrimoniu. Surse, evoluții, interpretări* [Contributions to the History of the Notion of Patrimony. Sources, Evolutions, Interpretations] (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2014), 33.

The Traces of the Past: Willy Pragher's Photographs

Willy Pragher (1908, Berlin – 1992, Freiburg) belonged to a family of German ancestry who had settled in Bucharest. He spent his childhood years in the home of his grandfather – a well-known fur trader named Moritz Sigmund Prager, and so became aware of, and familiar with the contrast between the central area and the outskirts of the Wallachian capital city – which he rendered in a brochure, significantly entitled *Bucureștiul contrastelor* [The Bucharest of Contrasts]. Straddling the border between East and West, urban and rural, wealth and poverty, the interwar Bucharest as we can see it in Willy Pragher's photographs (now in possession of the state archives in Freiburg and Baden Württemberg,[17] and included in electronic version in Germany's immense Digital Library[18]) is a city of dichotomies, of the intertwining of old and new, of the interplay between modest, unassuming and highly refined, modern pieces of architecture. His photos equally captured the poor houses and the majestic buildings, the horse-drawn tramcars and carriages or the ox carts.

A series of photographs taken in the spring of 1941 show Cotroceni neighbourhood under a sudden flurry of snow. Dr Lister – the street where Pragher lived for a while, occurs most often in these pictures that render the unexpected snow of a capricious spring day (13 March 1941) (Fig. 2-3). The street becomes a true character, the protagonist of these visual moments, especially because – unlike other pictures taken by the same artist which focus on people in their dynamic dimension: stance, gestures, gait – these images are generally static and human life is missing. Instead, they show the houses and the trees covered in snow. Not coincidentally, this cityscape is centred on his own street, for "the street is both a matrix of urban identity and personal identity at the same time."[19] The street is a succession of neighbouring buildings which the photographer's eye examines carefully, from various angles, sometimes from above and from a distance, in order to capture the entire row, other times selecting certain ones which are seen closely or even brought to the foreground. The alternation of these views, which one could metaphorically term "telescopic" and "microscopic" perspectives, stimulates the intuition of a relationship that can be established between viewer and the object under scrutiny. The difference between "optical vision" and "haptic vision", in the terms of the anthropology of the senses put forth by David Le Breton,[20] is visible

[17] Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, https://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/web/, accessed 14 December 2018.
[18] Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/, accessed 14 December 2018.
[19] Panea, *Orașul subtil*, 191.
[20] David Le Breton, *La Saveur du Monde. Une anthropologie des sens* (Paris: Métailié, 2006); *Antropologia corpului și modernitatea* [The Anthropology of the Body and the Modernity], trans.

in the photographs by Willy Pragher, who configures his discourse by placing in dialogue the general view of the street and the details of particular buildings, vehicles or persons.

A closer look at Willy Pragher's photographs of Dr Lister Street and his own home sheds better light on the words of Michel Agier, who commented on urban anthropology:

> … the city exists not as a given, univocal reality, but as a whole to be deconstructed and reconstructed by each one of us, as a hologram which every one reconstructs according to one's own ways of representing it, employing it, according to one's own desires, relationships and circuits.[21]

Willy Pragher *chooses* to photograph, many times over, what is to him "an anthropological place", as Marc Augé puts it,[22] that is, the space that serves as a reference for identity, relational and historical realities.

The bond between photographer and place is essential, while imagination, the personal point of view and the memories (some of them autobiographical) are factors that influence the image to be rendered. The act in itself, the gesture proper – the triggering mechanism, in the case of picture-taking – is pressing the shutter button in order to capture a moment of reality. This act produces a new representation – the *photograph*, which is paradoxical by definition, since a scene is preserved although it might actually cease to exist, or be altered subsequently. Such is the case of human figures, which the film perpetuates as they were at the moment when their photograph was taken (some of the pictures of Dr Lister Street show people walking or dogs running in the snow – entities no longer accessible to us). The same can be said of the buildings, which only appear to be unchanging: by comparing W. Pragher's photos to those taken for the present study, we note that some of the houses have been either demolished or significantly altered.

The contents of a photograph belong to the past, from the very moment it is taken, as Roland Barthes explains in his *Camera Lucida*: "What the photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once: the photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially."[23] Its association with death is explicit, as the birth of a representation paradoxically coincides with its extinction: "What I see is that I have become

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Liliana Rusu (Chişinău: Cartier, 2009), 209-230.

[21] Michel Agier, *Anthropologie de la ville* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2015), 25: « (...) la ville existe non pas comme une « réalité » donnée d'avance et unique, mais comme une totalité decomposée et reconstruite par chacun, un hologramme que chaque personne reconstitue en fonction de ses représentations, de ses usages, de ses désirs, relations et circuits ».

[22] Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

[23] Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie* [Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography], trans. Virgil Mlești (Bucharest: Idea Design & Print), 2009, 11-12.

All-Image (Tout-Image), that is, Death itself."[24]

To W. Pragher, in his twofold capacity as a resident and a photographer, this street, which crosses an important part of the Cotroceni neighbourhood, running from the hill known as Țăcălie (today's Romniceanu) down to Sf. Elefterie Nou Church, is a place of biography-in-the-making. It is a familiar space, whose contents he feels the urge to convey to the future, never knowing how it will be regarded by the viewers of later times. Musing on the medium carrying a particular image, Régis Debray aptly notes that the addressee never receives the exact same letter as dispatched by the sender. Ineffable alterations occur between the moments of sending and receiving it, for "just as inheriting is not receiving (but sorting out, reactivating, reconstructing), similarly transmitting is not transferring (something from here to there). To transmit is to reinvent, that is, to alter."[25]

These changes can be felt today, in the way we view the pictures taken by Willy Pragher and perceive the tales they tell of Cotroceni neighbourhood. His photographs journey through time, bringing before us a moment in the history of this place (the years 1939-1941), but also challenging us to note and investigate its architectural evolution, with elements marking either continuity or rupture. Actually, "we see what we search for; *looking* is tantamount to *choosing*."[26] In looking for the neighbourhood's characteristic pieces of interwar architecture in the photo archives, we almost involuntarily superimpose today's realities on yesterday's images. The pictures capture *a fleeting moment* of time, they immortalize a particular aspect of that space, *at a particular moment*. Today's viewer seeks the *trace* of that static past, in the present realities. Successive layers agglutinate, turning the urban fabric into a palimpsest. Neo-Romanian and modernist styles – the latter instantiated at its best by the works of "Horia Creangă (1936, 15 Iatropol Street); Haralambie Georgescu (1934, 16 and 18, Dr. Lister Street); Tiberiu Niga (1935, 44 Dr. Lister Street); Jean Văleanu (1937, 1 Victor Babeș Street)"[27] – were added in the 1950s-60s to the multi-family residences intended for workers (6, Ana Davila Street) and the condominium groups known as *kvartal* residences, such as those at 60-62 Panduri Avenue, designed by the architects I. Novițchi, C. Ionescu, C. Hacker and A. Șerbescu in the 1950s-60s, under Soviet supervision.[28] The physiognomy

[24] Ibid., 19.

[25] Régis Debray, *Transmettre* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997), 49: « Pas plus qu'hériter n'est recevoir (mais trier, réactiver, refondre), transmettre n'est transférer (une chose d'un point à un autre). C'est réinventer, donc altérer ».

[26] Mihalache, *Contribuții*, 332.

[27] Celac et al., *București*, 180.

[28] Ibid., 181: "Known as the *Colonels' block* [...] the building ensemble in Panduri comprises four-storey apartment buildings with faux brick outer walls, placed in a rigorously symmetrical arrangement around rectangular courtyards, entered through monumental-sized portals [...]. Carefully built, with tiered facades reminiscent of Renaissance *palazzo*s, a classical architectural

of the neighbourhood has changed and diversified, even though certain elements – its churches (Sf. Elefterie Vechi [St Eleutherius the Old], dating from 1743-1744, and Sf. Elefterie Nou [St Eleutherius the New], begun in 1935 and completed in 1971), the Botanical Garden, the Palace of the Faculty of Medicine and Cotroceni Palace – create the impression of a stable space, over which the time has passed smoothly leaving a mild, natural patina.

A trip down Dr Lister Street, covered in the snow of early 2019, echoes another in the spring of 1941, to which Willy Pragher's photographs call us wordlessly but eloquently. The cars are different and run at a different speed on the asphalt (which has replaced the old cobblestones); the clothing of passers-by is significantly different, too (the elegance of men's suits seems to have fallen into oblivion), tramcar no. 47 no longer runs along the streets of this neighbourhood and gone is the tram station on the corner of Louis Pasteur Street; however, the general atmosphere of this immense residential park has not changed much. To an attentive gaze animated by ethnographic interest, the houses slowly reveal their trials and tribulations: the wooden window frames have been replaced with PVC ones; the Art Deco wrought iron pieces have been abandoned or destroyed; the colour of the plastering applied on some buildings, or the additions that have been forced onto them, make it difficult to recognise them from the pictures of old times. However, with all these mutilations, renewals and replacements that have been shaping and reshaping it, the neighbourhood tells a coherent story, owing to the felicitous architectural choices made during the third, fourth and fifth decades of the last century.

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Fig. 2. The Pragher house, 67 Dr Lister Street, photographed by W. Pragher on 21 November 1939.

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style and fountains adorned with sculptures inside their large inner courtyards, they are much valued by their residents."

Fig. 5. Villa designed in Art Deco style by the modernist architect Jean Văleanu, 1 Dr Victor Babeș Street. Photo: Cristina Bogdan (February 2019).

Fig. 6. Villa in Neo-Romanian style, 2 Dr Victor Babeș Street. Photo: Cristina Bogdan (January 2019).

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Fig. 12. Doves facing each other, feeding on a grape. Element in the window decoration, at 27 Dr Joseph Lister Street. Photo: Cristina Bogdan (February 2019).



Fig. 1. Dr Joseph Lister Street.



Fig. 2. The Pragher house (1939).



Fig. 3. The Pragher house (2019).



Fig. 4. St Eleutherius the New Church.



Fig. 5. Villa in Art Deco style.



Fig. 6. Villa in Neo-Romanian style.



Fig. 7. Modernist building.



Fig. 8. Art Deco gate.



Fig. 9. Twin villas, designed by architect Petre Boico.



Fig. 10. Plaque identifying the architect
who designed the villa.



Fig. 11. Peacocks facing each other, in a decoration
on the Neo-Romanian style villa.



Fig. 12. Doves facing each other, feeding on a grape.