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# Greek artists in Romania: Constantin Pascali, the “missing” painter Constantinos Paschalopoulos of the “Munich School Group”

by EVANGELIA N. GEORGITSOYANNI

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## *Introduction*

The history of Hellenism in Romania is deep-rooted and dates as far back as Antiquity. It last enjoyed prosperity at the time of the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), signed between the Russians and Turks. As a result of the Treaty, the Danubian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) acquired political and economic independence and hitherto started the process of creating the modern Romanian state (1857) (Stavrianos 2001:290-291,339-363). During this period large numbers of Greeks emigrated to the neighboring country, attracted by the ample financial opportunities that had arisen. Most of them were engaged in commerce, in particular cereals and wood, in the merchant navy and in the leasing of large domains. They created vibrant communities, each with its own communal organization, churches and schools, the most important of them being those at Brăila, Galați, Giurgiu, Constanța, Sulina, Tulcea and Bucharest. The Greek communities in Romania flourished until 1947 when they were dissolved by the communist regime.

The Greeks of Romania on the whole established good relations with the natives and contributed a great deal to the financial and cultural life of the country. They took a profound interest in

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education, arts and letters and were deeply involved in the development of sciences in the country. They also developed a rich editorial activity of books and newspapers. (Papacostea-Danielopolu 1969 VII.2: 311-333; Papacostea-Danielopolu 1969 VII.3: 475-493; Belia 1983:6-62; Deliyannis 1995; Cicanci 1995; Papacostea-Danielopolu 1996; Georgitsoyanni 2000: 42-84.)

In painting, the activities of several Greek painters in Romania are referred to, artists about whom very little is known at present.<sup>1</sup> The present article deals with the life and the activity of a painter of the Greek Diaspora in Romania during the period in question, Constantinos Paschalopoulos. The artist has until today only been known in Greek bibliography as a name, as one of the Greeks who studied in Munich in the nineteenth century (the so-called "Munich School Group"), but since then traces of his activity have been lost and his work remains completely unknown.<sup>2</sup> According to research we conducted, Constantinos Paschalopoulos is identified with the painter Constantin Pascali (or Pascaly) who lived and worked in Romania.<sup>3</sup> His work is known to the Romanians, although nothing that is complete has yet been written about him and his Greek origin is ignored.<sup>4</sup> This article gives a general presentation of the painter and aims firstly, to show aspects of the work of Greek artists in Romania in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and secondly, to fill a gap in the history of modern Greek painting. Old newspapers from Romania (Greek and Romanian), archives, paintings and published works were used as sources.

### *Constantin Pascali (Constantinos Paschalopoulos): Life and activity*

Constantin Pascali (Constantinos Paschalopoulos) was born either in 1858 or in 1860<sup>5</sup> in Turnu-Măgurele, a small commercial town of Wallachia on the banks of the Danube river.<sup>6</sup> A small but flourishing Greek community, whose members were engaged in the commerce of cereals, existed in the area (Belia 1983: 13, 18, 21; Paraskevopoulos 1998: 181). His father, Antonios Paschalopoulos, a merchant from the town of Kessani (Keşan) in Eastern Thrace (in today's Turkey)<sup>7</sup> was one of the founders of Turnu-Măgurele. He was also regarded as the "patriarch" of the Greek community there, because he was the oldest of its mem-

bers. After the early loss of his wife, Antonios Paschalopoulos moved with his three sons—Constantinos was the second—to Athens, where they stayed for more than ten years. When the boys grew up and left for their university studies in Europe, the father returned to Turnu-Măgurele, where he died in 1888 (*Syllogoi* [Associations], no. 3706 (15th/27th March 1888): 3). Constantinos, in particular, went to Munich in order to study painting at the Academy of Fine Arts. His studies were paid for by his father (Lydakis 1972: 105, 259; Lydakis 1976: 238; *Syllogoi* [Associations], no. 2539 (1st/13th Apr. 1884): 4; no. 2688, 6th/18th Oct. 1884): 3).

Due to the Bavarian origins of the first king of Greece, Otto, Munich, was during the nineteenth century a favorite study destination for Greek painters. The Academy had acquired then international repute and attracted students from the world over. More specifically, the Greek artists that studied in the Bavarian capital created the so-called “Munich School Group” and played an important role in founding modern Greek painting, which came into existence after the War of Independence (1821). Greek nineteenth-century painting is characterized by a renunciation of the post-Byzantine tradition and the adoption of European artistic values.

The most important masters were: Nicolas Gyzis (1842-1901), who later became professor at the Munich Academy, Nicephoros Lytras (1832-1904) and Constantinos Volanakis (1837-1907), later professors at the Academy of Fine Arts in Athens. They were students of the famous Karl Theodor von Piloty, professor and director of the Munich Academy, who painted in a “romantic neo-baroque” style. These artists belong to the first generation of Greek painters who studied in the Bavarian capital. They were followed by younger artists, among them George Iakovidis (1852-1932), later professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Athens. Munich’s importance as an artistic center for Greeks gradually declined in the decades that followed and eventually disappeared completely at the end of the nineteenth century. All Greeks—besides Gyzis, Lytras and Volanakis—who studied in Munich had as professors painters that followed Piloty’s style (Lydakis 1972: 27-130; Lydakis 1976: 105-312; Christou 1981: 25-34, 40-48; Kotidis 1995).

Constantin Pascali (Constantinos Paschalopoulos) started his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich in 1879 (Lydakis

1972: 105, 259; Lydakis 1976: 238). His professor was Ludwig Löfftz (*Ateneul Roman, Expoziția Retrospectiva*, 26.12.1927: 19), who later became director of the Academy. Löfftz' painting, which is characterized by a remarkable delicacy, had earned him considerable fame which attracted many students. Among them were other Greek contemporaries of Pascali (Paschalopoulos), such as—the formerly mentioned—George Iakovidis, Symeon Savidis (1859-1927) and Nicolas Vokos (1859-1962), to mention only the better known ones. In subsequent years Löfftz also taught many younger Greeks, mainly after the death of Gyzis, with whom he had developed a friendship (Lydakis 1972: 52-5; Lydakis 1976: 112, 184, 204, 211, 224-238, 240, 255, 273, 275, 278, 280, 304, 305).

During his stay in Munich, Pascali (Paschalopoulos) participated in three exhibitions of paintings. His works, which were mainly portraits, received praise from the German newspapers and Greek newspapers of Bucharest.<sup>8</sup> The young artist also belonged to the circle of Greek students in the Academy, but it is not known with whom he cultivated relationships. After the end of his studies, he left for Romania in the autumn of 1886 (*Syllogoi* [Associations] no. 2688 (6th/18th Oct. 1884): 3, no. 3267 (7th/19th Sept. 1886): 3, no. 3322 (12th/24th Nov. 1886): 3).

Pascali (Paschalopoulos) at first settled in Turnu-Măgurele. In 1887, though, he moved to Bucharest, where he founded his own atelier. During this period he painted mostly portraits, a theme in which he was to specialize.<sup>9</sup> He also participated in exhibitions (*Românul* [Romanian], no. XXXIII (29th Jan. 1889): 1]. In July 1893 he was appointed professor of painting<sup>10</sup> at the School of Fine Arts in Jassy in Moldavia, founded in 1860<sup>11</sup> (Archives of the Romanian State, Jassy, School of Fine Arts, dossier 2/1893: 109, 120, 146, 148, 161, 190, dossier 4/1893: 172). It should be mentioned here that Romanian painting followed a parallel evolution to the Greek painting. Also founded in the nineteenth century, it had likewise disengaged itself rapidly from the post-Byzantine artistic tradition and devoted itself to absorbing and using the European style. Many and diverse artistic centers in Europe, including Munich, simultaneously had an impact on Romanian nineteenth-century painting (Oprescu 1935: 43. Drăgut et al. 1971: 126, 161).

The painters of Jassy enjoyed particularly close links with the Bavarian capital, since the founder and first director of the

School of Fine Arts, the eminent Romanian painter Gheorghe Panaiteanu-Bardasare (1816-1900), had been a student of Piloty. Besides, the later directors of the School Constantin Stahi (1844-1920) and Gheorghe Popovici (1859-1933) had also studied in Munich (Drăgut et al. 1971: 126-127, 161-162, 170, 173, 178, 191, 204; Ateneul Roman, Expoziția Retrospectiva, 26.12.1927: 19). Thus Pascali (Paschalopoulos) must have found himself in a familiar artistic climate.

Besides his professional activity, he participated actively in the artistic movements that took place in Romania in the late nineteenth century. More specifically, after 1891 he took part in many exhibitions held by the "Artistic Circle" Society, which was founded in Bucharest in 1890 and aimed at developing art in the country.<sup>12</sup> In 1893 he also became a member of the Administrative Board of the above Society, but left the post in 1897 when he founded with other artists and personalities the "Society for the diffusion of artistic taste in Romania, *Ileana*." It was created chiefly by some of the so-called "Independent Artists," who in 1896 had inaugurated in Bucharest their first Exposition, as a reaction against the academism of the official Salon. The founders of *Ileana* wished to revive art in Romania. The society numbered 300 members, the most important of them being, besides Pascali (Paschalopoulos), the painters Stefan Luchian (1868-1916), Nicolae Vermont (1866-1932) and Constantin Artachino (1871-1954). *Ileana* was created in the context of similar movements taking place in Europe at the time, such as the "Secession" in Munich.<sup>13</sup> Although *Ileana* was only in operation until 1899, it is considered to be an important step in the evolution of Romanian art towards modernism (*Adevărul* [Truth], no. 2878 (7th July 1897): 1; Predescu 1940: 638; Oprescu 1943: 218; Oprea 1969: 20-40; Drăgut et al. 1971: 167-168).

Yet, despite his participation in the society, Pascali (Paschalopoulos) never neglected academism.<sup>14</sup> He always remained a moderate conservative in his paintings, while other artists, such as Stefan Luchian, followed the impressionistic style. Pascali (Paschalopoulos) is regarded as essentially a perpetuator of academic art in Romania, although not as one of its major figures, namely the painters Theodor Aman (1831-1891) and Gheorghe Tatarescu (1820-1894).<sup>15</sup> He was though a highly capable painter. It is evident that his studies in Munich provided him with a sound

technical basis. As can be concluded from an examination of his works, such as *The Potrait of Mrs. M. Simpom* (1905), his design pays attention to detail, his lines are precise and firm and he is a good colorist preferring somber colors. He also demonstrates a very good knowledge of the human anatomy, as is apparent in the nudes that he painted, such as the *Study of Nude* (1889).

As regards subject-matter, he was interested mainly in portraits. In these paintings the individuality of the figures is often surprising, but the rendering of their psychology is unbalanced. During his life he was a favorite portraitist of the Romanian upper classes, as can be concluded from the figures represented in the portraits that he painted, showing the elite Romanian society around 1900. Some of his models were: King Carol I (fig. 5) and the Queen; eminent personalities as C. Nacu, senator and professor at the University of Bucharest, Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, art critic and art collector, Constantin Aricescu and Mihail Simonidi, painters, Parthenius, metropolitan bishop of Moldavia, George Manu, general, Ion C. Brătianu and his son I.I.C. Brătianu, prime-ministers; ladies and little girls of the aristocracy (*Patris* [Fatherland] (24th/6th July 1893): 3; 21st Nov./4th Dec. 1904: 3; Pascali 1912: 7-11; Predescu, L. 1940: 638; National Museum of Art-Bucharest (portrait of Simonidi).

Besides portraits, Pascali (Paschalopoulos) produced also a few nudes (fig. 4), genre scenes and religious paintings (Pascali 1912:7-11). It is known that he created together with the painters Stefan Luchian and Constantin Artachino the wall-paintings and the icons of the iconostasis in the Cathedral of St. Alexander (1898) in the town of Alexandria in Romania (Episcopia Alexandriei și Teleormanului 2000: 22-23). Moreover, he has drawn several designs (Museul A. Simu. 1910: 42; Museul National de Arta al României 1988: 20-22). In the National Museum of Art in Bucharest some of his designs have been preserved representing mostly women in different positions, portraits of—anonymous—men and women and some landscapes (Museul Național de Artă al României 1988: 20-22).

Opinions expressed about him during his time are the comments of the Romanian newspaper *Adevărul* written on the occasion of the exhibition of *Ileana* in 1898, which was the first international exhibition of paintings in Romania:



Mr. Pascaly is distinguished as a portraitist in the exposition. The portrait of Mr. Danieleanu is as successful as it can be, as is also that of Mr. G. Dinicu, though in both the vigorous technique that is observed in the master portraitists of abroad is missing. Although [the painting] *A Blond* appears to me to be a concession made towards common taste, the *Head of Expression* [Tête d'Expression] denotes a great liberty in conception and execution that permits us at ease to appreciate the talent and the agility of the painter. (*Adevărul* [Truth], no. 3103 (3d March 1898): 1)

His most representative works were displayed in March 1912 when a retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Palace of Athenaeum in Bucharest. It comprised sixty-eight paintings dating from 1887 to 1912 (Pascali 1912: 7-11). They are all accomplished productions, remarkable because of their excellent design, the fine modeling of the figures, the refined choice of colour and the technical skill of the artist (figs. 2-8). His works were purchased by several museums and institutions<sup>16</sup> as well as private collectors in Romania.

Constantin Pascali (Paschalopoulos) died in 1924 at Jassy (Museul Național de Artă al României 1988: 20).

### *Conclusion*

In brief, we may say that Constantin Pascali (Constantinos Paschalopoulos) is a distinguished artist of the Greek Diaspora in Romania who was active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Trained as a painter in the Bavarian capital, he was influenced by the academic tendencies and the artistic climate of the Munich School, which he transformed into his own personal artistic idiom. In spite of his academicism, he was actively involved in the artistic movements to regenerate art in Romania. During his career, he produced a multitude of paintings centering on portraits. The painter in question constitutes an interesting case-study of the artistic creation of Greek immigrants in Romania.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>In the Greek newspapers of Romania of the late 19th century the names and some information about some Greek painters who lived there are from time to time referred to such as: George Lefkopoulos, Gerasimos Rossolimos and D. Theodorides at Brăila (*Syllogoi* [Associations] (15th/27th March 1884): 3), (9th/21st Febr. 1893): 3; *I Iris* [Rainbow], no. 1279 (6/12/1897): 3. The painter most frequently referred to is C. Paschalopoulos. In addition, the names of some distinguished Romanian painters, such as Mihail Simonidi, Jean Al. Steriadi, Michaela Eleutheriade, Lucia Dematriade-Bălăcescu, suggest a possible Greek origin (Drăgut et al. 1971: 218-221, 239, 276, 250. Deac 2003: 173).

<sup>2</sup>Lydakis 1972: 105, 259; Lydakis 1976: 238; Christou 1981: 33; *Lexico Ellinon Kallitechon* 1999: 487.

<sup>3</sup>The painter was initially only referred to as Paschalopoulos in the Greek newspapers of Bucharest, but from 1886 onwards the name Paschalis, a shorter

version of his name, was also used (*Syllogoi* [Associations], no. 2539 (1st/13th Apr. 1884): 4; no. 2688, (6th/18th Oct. 1884): 3; no. 3267 (7th/19th Sept. 1886): 3, no. 3322 (12/24 Nov. 1886): 3), no. 3502 (28/10 July 1887): 2, no. 3459 (6th/18th May 1887): 3, no. 3706 (15th/27th March 1888): 3; *Patris* [Fatherland] (24th/6th July 1893): 3; (21 Nov./4th Dec. 1904): 3. The artist signed his paintings either as C. Pascali or C. Pascaly (Pascali 1912).

<sup>4</sup>Idieru 1898: 329-330. Museul A. Simu 1910: 42. Predescu 1940: 638. Oprescu 1945: 94. Museul Național de Artă al României, 1988: 20. Deac 2003: 159.

<sup>5</sup>1858: according to the School Register of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he was enrolled in 1879 at the age of 21 years (School Register of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich 1841-1884, no. 3707: Lydakis 1972: 105, 259; Lydakis 1976: 238). 1860: according to Romanian sources (Museul A. Simu 1910: 42. Predescu 1940: 638. Museul Național de Artă al României. 1988: 20).

<sup>6</sup>According to many citations of the Greek newspaper of Bucharest *Syllogoi* [Associations], no. 3322 (12th/24th Nov. 1886): 3, no. 3459 (6th/18th May 1887): 3, no. 3706 (15th/27th March 1888): 3, and to Romanian sources (Museul A. Simu 1910: 42). In contrast, in the School Register of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich 1841-1884, Athens is mentioned as his birthplace (Lydakis 1972: 105, 259; Lydakis 1976: 238). We believe though from the above mentioned evidence that he was born in Romania.

<sup>7</sup>About Kessani, see: Papadopoulos 1929; Vakoufaris 1984: 24-51.

<sup>8</sup>In particular, he exhibited his works, according to existing information, in the autumn of 1883, the spring and the autumn of 1884 and in the autumn of 1886. The first two times he participated in exhibitions held in the halls of an artistic society, while the later ones in the Artistic Exhibition of Munich (*Syllogoi* [Associations], no. 2539 (1st/13th Apr. 1884): 4; no. 2688 (6th/18th Oct. 1884): 3; no. 3322 (12/24 Nov. 1886): 3).

<sup>9</sup>It is also mentioned that in 1888 he executed the portrait of the well-known Romanian singer Theodorini (*Syllogoi* [Associations] (22th/4th Oct. 1888): 3).

<sup>10</sup>More specifically, he taught the following courses: Nudes, Heads of Expression, Draperies and Compositions (1st year), Heads according to nature and Static Figures (3d year), Figures painted according to alive models (4th year) (Archives of the Romanian State, Jassy, School of Fine Arts, dossier 4/1893: 172).

<sup>11</sup>There were two Schools of Fine Arts in Romania, one in Jassy and one in Bucharest (Drăgut et al. 1971: 161).

<sup>12</sup>Its first president was Ion Georgescu, the most important Romanian neo-classical sculptor of the 19th century. The Society lasted until 1947 (Oprea 1969: 20-30).

<sup>13</sup>The "Secession" (1892) was the first organized movement against academism (Lydakis 1976: 115)

<sup>14</sup>He also participated in several Official Exhibitions in Bucharest, such as the Official Salon of 1907, where he was also member of the jury and the Official Exhibition of Artists in life, of 1916, where he received one of the second

prizes (Salonul Oficial. 1907: 18-19; Ministerul Instrucțiunii și al Cultelor 1916: 8).

<sup>15</sup>About them, see: Dragut et al. 1971: 129-131, 140-153.

<sup>16</sup>Art Gallery of Bucharest, Art Gallery of Jassy, Museum of Saint Georges, Museum Calinderu, Museum A. Simu, Ministry of Public Education, Central Society of Agriculture, Chamber of Commerce (Museul A. Simu. 1910: 42. Pascali 1912. Museul Național de Artă al României 1988: 20-22).

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