

DA CIA 50

Autoturismul

Albert Vrăbiuță

Prin albumul „DACIA 50 Autoturismul” ne propunem să explorăm și să vizualizăm relația dintre mașina staționată pe domeniul public, oameni, spațiul urban și natură. Autoturismele Dacia prezentate în album au fost fotografiate de Albert Vrăbiuță în orașul București, în perioada 2016-2017.

Mulțumiri speciale

Albert Vrăbiuță: Această carte nu ar fi fost posibilă fără ajutorul mai multor oameni dedicați. Mulțumiri Cristinei Irian și lui Valentin Maier pentru viziune și pentru documentarea și scrierea textului. Mulțumiri lui Cristian Bassa, senior project editor, pentru îndrumarea sa și pentru atenția deosebită acordată detaliilor. Mulțumiri lui Vlad Andrei Dorobanțu, Ovidiu Măgureanu și Iustin Stafie pentru oferirea de informații esențiale privind specificațiile tehnice ale autoturismelor fotografiate.

Mulțumiri tuturor proprietarilor de Dacia, familiilor acestora, vecinilor, pentru sprijinul acordat pe teren.

Mulțumiri speciale Mirela Petre. Special thanks Ken Taranto.

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României

Dacia 50: autoturismul / foto.: Albert Adrian Vrăbiuță;
autor text, documentare: Ana-Cristina Irian, Valentin Maier;
trad.: www.traduce.re; graf.: Paul Adrian Farcaș;
ed.: Cristian Bassa. - Craiova:
Omnia Photo, 2018
Conține bibliografie
ISBN 978-606-94598-0-5

I. Vrăbiuță, Albert (foto.)
II. Irian, Ana-Cristina (text)
III. Maier, Valentin (text)
IV. www.traduce.re (București) (trad.)
V. Farcaș, Paul Adrian (graf.)
VI. Bassa, Cristian (ed.)

77
629

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Editura OMNIA PHOTO
Adresa poștală: General Eremia Grigorescu nr. 16
Municipiul Craiova, Județ Dolj
Website: <http://omnia.photo/>

DACIA 50 Autoturismul
Editura OMNIA PHOTO, București, 2018

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PREFACE

Milestones. Content of the collection. We would like to make one thing clear from the very beginning: this is not a preface, as well as Dacia is not a mere “thing” either. Dacia is a car that people have been interacting with in different ways. In short, our discussions with the people in the “Dacia - autoturismul copilăriei” community, as well as with the owners of Dacia vehicles photographed in the field have revealed that some refer to the car in the past tense, while others in the present, that to some she is an almost animate figure, while to others she is a relic of the past on the verge of extinction. Mia, the owner of a collectible Dacia, calls her “Dacia, my dear old thing”, Dan Liviu melancholically reminisces “the old automobile, a red one I used to have”, while Remus’ wife “was as fond of her as of a dog or cat”. Dacia is dotingly referred to as “nouveau French” by Dan, “the red arrow” by Romeo, she is Adrian’s “little sour cherry and precious jewel”, Ionuț’s “yellow darling”, while to another Ionuț she is “lonely and sad”. Mircea sees her as “extinct”, Radu as “nibbled by rust”, and she reminds Liliana of a separation that “literally brought tears” to her eyes.

Dacia, the city car, is a “She” with many stories to tell, ways of life which we are going to introduce to you, as they came into being and are breathing, in this visual project, DACIA 50, and which we are going to present throughout several chapters.

The car Dacia started its four-wheel existence in Romania in 1968, on the 20th of August, when the first Dacia car, model 1100, was manufactured and was ready for the road. In 2018, we can say we have already crossed 50 years of roads and intersections, trips and adventures together. Therefore, before the visual project commences, we wish to present Dacia’s existence in the context of the Romanian automobile scene, where Dacia 1100 was considered to be “the newborn of the Romanian automotive industry”, and then Dacia 1300 - “the youngest industry offspring”, and as part of the dynamics of the fascinating changes she has undergone during the fifty years that have passed.

Furthermore, with the DACIA 50 project, we would like to make a visual exploration of the car’s existence in terms of when it was born and how it intermingled with people’s lives and the environment. Another at least equally interesting story is that of Dacia evolving on the symbolic ground of various human perceptions, subject to ongoing codification and setting. The project includes the various avatars of Dacia - the public domain car, Dacia - the reconditioned car and the car being reflected in the memorabilia objects, those being characteristics of Dacia car culture. Albert, the man behind the camera, is the person who followed Dacia on the streets and on the sidewalks of Bucharest, the reconditioned Dacia at automobile parades, and discovered the automobile in collectors’ garages and searched for the collectibles, mock-ups and toys. In this album, which we consider to be only the first chapter of DACIA 50, we shall see a car that is connected to the urban environment and its traces on the map of the city where we placed each car we explored. The photographer recommends that we explore and see the relation between the stationed car, the people, the urban space and nature.

On the inside, the car almost looks like it has been holding its breath. The inside of Dacia of the past century’s decades feels like a museum of mechanics and of personal items marking the relationship between the owner and the driven car. We might even say that it is some sort of a memorial museum on four wheels, each car fashioned in its owner’s image.

The description of each project photograph includes the geographical coordinates of the place where it was taken. Thus, we can follow the dynamics of these urban cars by comparing the Google Street View images from 2014, where such images exist, with the ones Albert came across in 2016 and 2017 and, why not, by direct observation, while walking these Bucharest streets again, with the DACIA 50 photo album as a tour guide.

In 2018, we went back in the field we explored two years ago, to see what happened in the meantime to the photographed cars. At the end of the visual chapter we added the notes we took in the field, including details about these cars, their evolution in time and, especially their stories as collected from owners, inheritors, former owners or neighbours.

Regardless of how we might find the historic Dacia - as an operational car travelling the country roads or in its position as a car withdrawn from circulation, parked in the urban or rural environment - today it feels like an “animate object” interacting with its environment.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Romanian automotive scene of the 20th century. A summary. On black and white film, several cars on two lanes, zigzagging the road coming straight out of the screen and into the viewer's eyes. A metallic sound in the background, in the sound of trumpets, someone's voice announces: "Start the intelligence and creativity test! Triumphantly, one year earlier than predicted, the country's roads are now run by the first Romanian automobile!"

Images from inside the Pitești Car Plant (UAP - Uzina de Autoturisme Pitești) shown on the screen where, as the voice says, "on the montage tapes, at a one to 12 minutes' pace, the Romanian automobile is running [...] with an annual production of 40,000 pieces". The scene goes back to 1968, when the manufacturing line of the first Dacia automobile, Dacia model 1100, "the industry's newborn child" which the presenter of the documentary welcomed with "a warm and heartfelt bon voyage!"; started [1].

1968. Freeze frame. Break. Reverse.

From one horsepower to several. Historical benchmarks. Which cars circulated in Romania and which cars were manufactured before the Dacia automobile?

In order to answer this question, we need to make a short historical incursion into the very intersection of the 19th and the 20th centuries. Dumitru (Dimitrie) Vădescu was the first Romanian who manufactured a car in 1875-1880, and he was believed to be "a pioneer of automobile manufacturers", with his steam car travelling the streets of Paris and Bucharest alike [2]. Starting from 1895, two steam cars driven in Bucharest were manufactured by the Gardner Serpollet French firm. In 1898, one of the first Oldsmobile American automobiles emerged on the streets of the Capital City (with a handle instead of a steering wheel), manufactured in E. R. Olds' workshop. The automobile represented a technological first, and access to this asset was considered a luxury reserved solely for the wealthy [3].

The horsepower fever engulfed the Romanian scene from the very beginning of the 1900s. Romania was among the first ten countries in Europe which introduced the automobile, and the sixth country where car races were organised [4]. The first trip by car made by a Romanian on a European route occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. The initiator was George Valentin Bibescu [5] who, accompanied by Nicolae Cantacuzino, his cousin, drove a Mercedes Model 1900 from Geneva to Bucharest. The precarious state of the roads in Austria-Hungary largely influenced the trip, which was described by Bibescu in a log book published in 1901 [6]. The trip lasted 73 hours and 45 minutes behind the wheel, the driven distance being 1,827 km on the Geneva-[...] -Vienna-Pesta-Arad-Deva-Sibiu-Făgăraș-Brașov-Predeal-Sinaia-Posada-Câmpina-Ploiești-Bucharest itinerary. An accident occurred on their way to Bucharest which, as depicted by Bibescu in his log book, gives a few indications of the way in which these cars were perceived in the country [*a.n.*: The Kingdom of Romania at the time]: "A woman in an oxen-drawn wagon was coming our way and, upon hearing us, got down to halt the oxen and make way for us; but the poor woman fell on her head. One of the wagon wheels ran over her feet and she fainted. We immediately stopped, and my brother-in-law and the mechanic rushed to lift up the poor woman, who then came to her senses." [7].

In the *Nemaipomenitele aventuri ale prințului Bibescu (The formidable adventures of Prince Bibescu)* article, Emanuel Bădescu, historian, makes a side note of this event: "We suspect the reason [...] it was the fright - who in the Dickens had ever seen a carriage without horses, whirring and discharging smoke?! - and that, upon coming to herself again [*a.n.*: the woman] made the sign of the cross" [8].

The same George Valentin Bibescu established The Romanian Automobile Club on 5th April 1904, when the number of cars was rising (51 registered cars, one of which had the roof welded to the bodywork). Several months later, the first car race in the country took place, on the Bucharest-Giurgiu route [9], when no traffic rules were even in place, as the first were made up in 1905. The rules were very restrictive as far as speed was concerned, allowing 15 km/hour, the equivalent of horses trotting, as well as in terms of elicited noise, which was not allowed to scare the "harnessed or ridden horses" [10].

The first official driving licence exam was on 10th January 1908, by order of the Prefect of the Capital City Police. The practical test consisted in the checking of the car driver's ability to pull the brakes when a cushion (bag of hay) was thrown in front of the car. The first driving classes were organised starting 1910 [11], particularly since the number of automobiles had risen in the previous years.

However, while the Romanian car fleet exceeded 1,000 in number, at the beginning of World War I, more than two thirds were destroyed during the war [12].

After the Paris Peace Conference [13], the car fleet grew particularly as a result of the initiatives of foreign car traders in Romania, such as: Ford, Chevrolet, Renault, Fiat and General Motors, granting attractive incentives like "payment in instalments, technical assistance, spare parts, etc." to potential clients [14].

Starting in 1922, for five consecutive years, the import of cars grew to a great extent, and, thus, in 1926, there were 11,308 automobiles in Romania [15], close to 26,000 in 1939, i.e. over 73.5% of them originating from the USA (GM/Ford), followed by Germany (11%) and France (7.23%) [16].

In Romania, the automobile was for a long time a product accessible only to the wealthy social classes, i.e. "bankers, rentiers, industrialists, traders, agriculturalists (landlords), senators and even princes" [17], which might as well explain why most automobiles were registered in Bucharest, which remained the case until the end of the interwar period. In 1938, 37.69% of the cars in Romania were registered in Bucharest, with an average of 66 people per automobile in the Capital City. The small number of automobiles registered in the country (except Bucharest) is, among others, a proof of low living standards and the absence of adequate infrastructure, as "paved roads in good condition" represented then "no more than a quarter of the entire network, the rest of them being in their natural state, made of dirt, gutters on the sides, possibly with a layer of crushed stone covering them" [18]. Several years later, in 1945, only 1,182 km of modern national roads were registered, i.e. approximately 10% of the entire network of national roads [19].

In addition to imports, during the first half of the 20th century, both car prototypes and limited editions were made.

Pioneer Dumitru Vădescu was succeeded by another young Romanian, who studied and built an automobile abroad. The "aerodynamically correct" automobile, shaped like a water drop, was the prototype developed by Engineer Aurel Perșu in 1922-1923 in Berlin, and which was [20] patented in Germany in 1924 [21].

Micro car "M.R.1945" - Engineer Radu Manicatide (1945) [22] was manufactured at the Brașov Romanian Aeronautics Plant (I.A.R. Brașov), as it was a prototype automobile developed by the team run by Engineer Radu Mărdărăscu (1947) [23].

A small series manufacture was also carried out in Arad (1909-1926), by the MARTA company [24], and in Reșița (1946-1947), by Malaxa [25].

The "FORD" SAR Plant in Bucharest [26] manufactured cars during 1936-1948. They manufactured Ford V8 Fordor Sedan in particular at the plant in Calea Floreasca [27].

Following World War II, two thirds of the car fleet disappeared, with 37.95% of the car fleet which existed in 1939 remaining, i.e. less than 10,000 cars [28].

The automotive scene in 1950-1960. In the book *Bucureștiul meu (My Bucharest)*, Adriana Bittel (author and literary critic) makes the following memorial account: "At the beginning of the 1950s, ever since I could remember, there were few automobiles in Bucharest and we could freely play out in the street. Carriages and wagons were still out in the street - I can hear the sound of the horseshoes on the pavement drawing near, and then going away [...]" [29].

To restore the whole Romanian automobile scene, we point out some benchmarks in the big-car segment, intended for transporting people and goods, the lorries, tractors, off-road vehicles, to link the interwar period with the communist one, including the city car one.

In 1939, the lorry fleet reached 8,058 in number [30], and the first lorry manufactured in the country in 1911 was a Berliet for the transport of beer kegs from the Bragadiru factory. In the 1950s, the building of a car fleet intended for the transport of fares and goods began.

The first Romanian truck was SR-101 (1954), manufactured at the "Steagul Roșu" plant in Brașov [31]. Later on, they also manufactured SR-131 Carpați, SR-113 Bucegi and Roman lorries (in collaboration with the M.A.N. firm) [32].

The manufacturing of buses really started in 1955 at the "Vulcan" plant in Bucharest, with the manufacturing of the first "M.T.D." bus [*a.n.*: MTD=Mao Tze Dun], designed on the chassis of the Romanian SR-101 truck. At the Tudor Vladimirescu plants, the buses' manufacture started towards the end of 1956 with the manufacture of the MTD bus, by resuming the manufacture from the Vulcan Plants. In 1958, the Plant started manufacturing "TV"[*a.n.*: TV=Tudor Vladimirescu] cars intended for transporting passengers and low-tonnage goods [33].

Another important name in the national car manufacturing industry is ARO [*a.n.*: ARO=Automobil Românesc - Romanian Automobile], a manufacturer of off-road vehicles from Câmpulung-Muscel where production started in 1957 with the IMS-57 model, and an output of 360,000 vehicles produced, two thirds of which were exported to 110 countries [34].

Turning back now to the personal car, an idea was promoted that in the Eastern Bloc communist countries the car was deemed to be some sort of a "odd animal" which did not fit the "collectivist definition of a socialist society". Starting with the 1950s, however, cars became some sort of an attribute of the new, modern times, when the "working people" could enjoy comfort and flexibility [35]. The communist countries started importing and then manufacturing cars for their own citizens by using licences from the West or based on their own projects (Lada in the USSR with a Fiat licence, Trabant in the German Democratic Republic).

Only some unique or limited edition cars were manually manufactured in Romania in the 1950s, such as the GAL Micro car (Microautomobilul GAL) (1954) developed by Gheorghe Gal [36], the Rodica automobile (1957) created by Engineer Nicolae Lucaci [37] or Microcar (1958) by Oszkár Beke [38].

At the end of the 1950s, imported cars were circulating in Romania. Gabriela Tabacu (architect) described Bucharest with the "urban whirl of the street [...] whooshing from all sides, Pobedas, Warsawas, Moskvich cars, Volga cars and Gaz cars. [...] rarely any trucks passing [...]" [39].

Most imported cars were supposed to meet official needs, and there were 11,880 of them in 1965. Also, in 1965, people had 9,216 cars, a comparable number with that in 1926, all imported (car brands such as Moskvich, Volga, Skoda, Warszawa, Wartburg, Trabant, Fiat and Renault) [40].

Over 5,600 km of national roads [41] were modernised from 1945 until 1965. At the end of 1965, the total length of public roads was 75,898 km, 8,508 km of which were modernised (approximately 60% of the whole network) [42]. In 1967, they also started to build the Bucharest-Pitești Motorway, a total of 96 km, which was commissioned in 1972 [43].

Let us now return to the year 1966, when the creativity test commenced.

Dacia. Chronology. Car models, successful endeavours, exotic attempts. Dacia cars were not the first cars manufactured in Romania and, as seen already, not even the first ones made during communism, but they really are the most representative cars ever manufactured circulating around the country, and the first serial manufactured city cars of the communist period.

To many of us today, perhaps, the first word that comes into our minds when we speak of the automotive industry is Dacia and this is why it is important to understand how Dacia car manufacturing began and the most defining times in its evolution.

Bearing in mind that the communist regime pushed for making industry the most important branch of the economy and for industrialisation through the development of heavy industry (energy, metallurgy, chemical industry) as the main path to the desired level of economic progress, it is easy to understand where most investments were channeled. Among the industrial branches which were subject to development it was the vehicle branch, as part of the automotive industry, regarded as “pivotal” at the time. However, Romania didn’t have a “national car” until the late 1960s - a mere desire that can only be understood in the context of the broader measures for the consolidation of the industrialisation process of a mostly agrarian economy [44], which was under the threat of maintaining its old economic profile within the Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). Everything changed in 1966, when an agreement was reached with the French authorities and the company Renault to develop a Romanian production line for cars at the Pitești Car Plant (UAP - Uzina de Autoturisme Pitești). However, before reaching such decision, other reputed car manufacturers were considered (such as: Peugeot, Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Austin Mini Morris) [45]. The agreement with Renault implied the execution of a ten-year licence contract for the assembly of a Renault model under the Dacia brand. Although at first the assembly of a Renault 12 was considered, the manufacturing began with the Renault 8 model [46].

The manufacturing plant was erected in no time, at Colibași [*a.n.*: Mioveni today], near Pitești, Argeș county, on premises previously intended for a project of the aeronautics industry [47]. By Decision no. 2004 of 16th September 1966 of the Council of Ministers, a decision was made to locate the Colibași car plant next to the “Vasile Tudose” Plant - the long time supplier of parts and sub-assemblies for lorries and tractors [48]. The plant comprised a uniblock assembly shed, a pressing room, a room for finishing and social appartenance, an administrative pavilion and laboratories.

The idea of manufacturing an automobile to meet the needs of the people came to life in 1968, when the first Dacia 1100 car was manufactured, after going through 217 workstations [49]. Here is a description of the first Dacia car at the time, in the “Scînteia” newspaper: “There was nothing remarkable about it to make it stand out among all the others. It had no festive mark on it. We discovered it in the colour range of its siblings, based on one indication alone: its colour. It has the colour of ivory, the so-called «beige-ivoire» according to the slightly French terminology of the plant’s colour technicians. It is a car like any other, type «Renault 8», with a 1,100 cc Sierra engine, located at the back, endowed with a «herd» of 46 HP, able to reach 135 km per hour, with a modest cca 7 litres per one hundred kilometres fuel consumption. This first car delivered on a Saturday, August the 3rd, at 14:01, is meant to represent the maturity certificate of an industry in full and impetuous rise in the eyes of the future generations.” [50].

The purchase of this technological licence from Renault allowed the manufacturing of other cars, as well, but the most important consequence was the infusion of know-how from the French, which led to the building of the Pitești Car Plant (UAP - Uzina de Autoturisme Pitești) and, at the same time, to the creation of the car industry for the benefit of the general public. We can say it was a process of “popular democratisation” of the car (by analogy with a popular democracy regime, as defined by communist propaganda in the 1950s and the 1960s), which gave the people access to an automobile manufactured in the country.

Dacia was not a car made solely of Romanian parts. On the contrary, the first cars which exited the UAP’s gates were entirely of French origin, and only assembled in Romania. Things changed subsequently, as the Romanian industry grew and adapted to the requirements of the automotive branch in industry, either by establishing new enterprises, or by diversifying the range of products of the existing enterprises (over 120 national enterprises contributed to the manufacturing of Dacia) [51].

From the four-door Sedan Dacia 1100, whose manufacturing commenced on 20th August 1968 [52] and the slightly modified Dacia 1100S model, easily recognisable with its four instead of two headlights (only 110 cars manufactured), to Dacia 1300 in 1969 (licence Renault 12) [53]. Only one year following the commencement of the manufacturing of a Dacia 1100, a different voice on yet another black and white film, this time recorded in 1969 [54], with outlaw film-specific music in the background,

announced “the fever of launching the serial manufacturing of a newborn [...] Dacia 1300, the youngest of the UAP plant”. It was the model that consecrated Dacia on the domestic market, the Standard Sedan model, in particular. In fact, Renault 12 was also a success in the French market and beyond, and made for itself an even worthier place in the national scene: it was a solid, modern-looking car, average petrol consumption, good transportation capacity, which proved capable of surviving the national roads. The success of the Dacia 1300 in Romania was due to the fact that it was manufactured and intended for a country based on a command (planned) economy (and for export, in which case Dacia was purchased under such names as Denem in Great Britain, Delta in Greece and even Aro Familia in the Democratic Republic of Germany), which, of course, at the same time, explains also the many failures. Some of them originate in the 1980s, when the grim economic situation impacted the whole of Romanian society, including the Dacia plant, where the quality level of cars made during this period dropped heavily.

The Dacia 1300 was serially manufactured in several versions, from the aforementioned Standard, to L and LS (Lux and Lux Super). To all these, we can add many prototypes, some more famous than others (manufactured even in limited numbers, such as MaxiBreak, an elongated station wagon), some of which are still drawings on the Dacia car designer's board. The Dacia 1300 station wagon was launched in 1973, followed two years later by Dacia 1302 single-cab pick-up and Dacia D6 (after the Renault Estafette van), models through which Dacia tried to meet different kinds of needs, such as the transport of light goods.

After 1979, another chapter in the Dacia history began, because, although the Renault manufacturing licence contract was not extended that year, Dacia automobile manufacturing continued, nonetheless. At the beginning of the 1980s, the new model 1310 was placed in production, following a period of transition from model 1300. Other versions of the said model were gradually included: Standard, MS, MLS, S, TL and TX. The Sport model Dacia 1310 was also launched in a limited edition, followed by the 1410 Sport, a two-door model manufactured at IATSA Ștefănești, after having been originally manufactured at Dacia Service Brașov under the name “Brașovia”. The Dacia 2000 was also manufactured in limited numbers (a copy of the Renault 20), followed by the Dacia 1320 in 1987, a model later altered and renamed Dacia 1325 Liberta in 1991, thus marking the launch of the first Dacia model after 1989 and the fall of the communist regime. In 1988, also under the name Dacia, but at Timișoara (The Tehnometal Enterprise, later Întreprinderea de autoturisme - the Automobile Enterprise), the manufacturing of the low fuel consumption Dacia 500 Lăstun was launched [55]. Manufacture was suspended shortly afterwards, and only slightly over 6,500 of them were manufactured [56]. All the above are surely the best known Dacia models, but the car also had some other prototypes or very limited editions: Brașovia (a coupé made in Brașov), MD-87 with retractable headlights and a centrally located engine, 1310 Hycomat for disabled people, the cistern model, the convertible model named Convertible (experimented at Oradea), MaxiBreak (an eight-seat station wagon with bench seats), Student 650 (a low fuel consumption prototype), Egreta (similar to Lăstun), the pick-up and the hearse (made in GDR), Compact (hatchback, “cut” at the back), 1310TD with a Diesel engine, the 6-wheel version for forest roads, various versions with minor styling adjustments or special alterations for racing [57].

In 1992, the Dacia 1307 and 1309 were launched, as was the restyled Dacia 1310 in 1994.

A long awaited moment in the history of Dacia was when the first 100% Romanian made automobile was manufactured, which took place in 1995 through the launch of the Nova model (also known by its project name, Dacia R523; the restyled version of Dacia R524 was launched in 1996). Models 1306 and 1309 were also launched in the 1990s, including Dedicatie (Dedication) (to celebrate the anniversary of Dacia 1300 cars), Star and Jumbo. It is also important to recall the Dacia 1310 (CN4) Sedan restyling process in 1998. In 1998, three decades after the first Dacia car was manufactured, already 2 million cars of all types had been manufactured in addition to the Sedan. In 1999, following several courtship actions with various renowned car manufacturers, Automobile Dacia was privatised by Renault, basically resuming an old collaboration. Under the new auspices, Supernova (2000) and Solenza (2003) were manufactured. Finally, the year 2004 marked the launch of the last automobile from the Dacia 1310 series, a white Sedan car, number 1,959,730.

Nowadays, Dacia is the same “flagship” car of Romania, with an important history “which overlaps that of the first Romanian serial car manufacturing school” (Constantin Stroe, romanian engineer, former CEO and board member of Dacia Automobile S.A. company), which we can vest also with the quality of a national cultural asset, defining national identity, as the memories of millions of Romanians are one way or another imbued with this iconic product of national industry.

The social classes of Dacia. Is Dacia the same or different? Between 1970-1980, Dacia developed a whole range of models including several types of private and utility vehicles. Adrian Oțoiu (writer and essayist) emphasises the “ubiquitous” characteristic of the Dacia car given such variants developed based on the basic model [58]. Constantin Stroe, engineer and former CEO of the Dacia company after 1989, admitted that, despite his pride in this extraordinary product which Dacia 1310 represented, “all alterations made to the model pertained more to form, than they were substantive alterations.” [59].

In order to assist in the attempt to develop the Dacia car production line which, during the first operating years included only two models and several of their variants, the Car design centre was established in 1971. The establishment of these units in the research-design area also helped with the testing of some prototypes and the inclusion of new models in the production line. In order for the prototype to be included in the production line, it had to pass several tests and be approved by the Communist Party. While the manufacturing of Dacia continued, a “social class gap” appeared when such models as Super and Lux were launched, followed by the limited series models, including Sport, a two-door model (coupé, long and short doors manufacture variants) and custom orders.

The Dacia 1310 was the model with the most alterations and improvements and the only one to resist the market for more than 20 years (manufactured between 1979 and 2004) [60].

The right to petrol. The July 1971 theses, which were applied after Nicolae Ceaușescu’s return from China and North Korea, changed the regime’s stand on almost all society’s issues, and the two oil crises led to negative effects also on the petrochemical industry, which constantly developed throughout the 1970s. Petrol, like many other products, was restricted in the 1980s, as was the cars’ circulation.

Numerous articles were written in the Post December 1989 newspapers which described the effects of these changes on the personal car circulation and on access to petrol: “The energy crisis had increased in the summer of 1980 and petrol prices rose. It was the first stinging, solid price appreciation [...]. Following the 1985 price rise, petrol consumption was rationed [...]. They sold it by the ration. 40 litres in Bucharest, 17 litres across the counties.” [61]. The price of petrol varied from lei 7.5 at the beginning of the 1980s to lei 9 in 1989. In the context of the crisis “of January 1985, Ceaușescu decided that cars should circulate alternatively on Sundays, based on whether their registration plate was an odd or an even number. On national holidays, we were all allowed to drive our cars. They were saving fuel, Valea Prahovei (Prahova Valley) was less crowded, people no longer hustled around driving their cars. When the energy crisis had begun years before, they even considered the possibility of not allowing you to drive your car for your sole personal benefit.” [62].

Petrol queues became part of the daily ritual, as was keeping petrol in cans. While on the road, the can, the hose and rope were parts of the car’s props [63]. Further measures were also taken to control fuel consumption: “The 75-octane petrol had disappeared, all you could find was 90 or 98-octane petrol. Equally bad as the 75 [...]. To prevent stealing fuel from the state-owned cars, the petrol of enterprises was dyed red” [64]. As a result, petrol on the black market could cost as much as lei 25-30/litre or it could be a “bartered” commodity. In this economic context, Dacia was subject to “improvised” alterations, such as the “suspended trunk”, an additional fuel tank instead of the canister or the gas installation.

Export and myths. The beginning of the 1970s coincided with Romania proving itself internationally by joining the GATT [*a.n.*: GATT=General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] in 1971, by initiating relations with the World Bank in 1972 and the USA granting the “most favoured nation clause”, in the context of international interest in Romania, rising after 1968. Starting in 1971, Dacia cars were in demand for export. During the entire Dacia manufacture time in the communist era, export represented about 30% of the total manufacture, with cars being exported to over 50 countries. Throughout the years, Dacia cars were exported under various names in Hungarian People’s Republic, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Polish People’s Republic, Columbia, Greece, Finland, Canada, People’s Republic of China, Algeria and other European, African, Asian and South American countries [65]. The top variant included electric windows, alloy rims and 5-speed gearbox.

An interesting case was the export of Dacia cars to Canada. Over 4,000 Dacia 1310 cars were sold there between 1983 and 1987, particularly through a network comprising 15 car dealers in the province of Québec. In order to meet the requirements of local regulations, alterations were made for “reinforcement” and for lowering the polluting effect, and the model was identifiable by the placement of the tank between the silencer shafts [66]. A guest at the official launch of Dacia in the summer of 1983 was Nadia Comăneci, a familiar name in the North-American country thanks to the legendary episode at the Montréal Olympic Games in 1976, when the Romanian gymnast was the first ever to receive a “10”.

In a commercial in the “Montreal Gazette” daily, Dacia 1310 was presented as “people’s car”, with unequalled “lowest price”, “ingenious design” and “high quality standards” [67]. To sum everything up, the whole Dacia experience in Canada between 1983 and 1987 was quite unique: România, “a country from the socialist camp”, exporter on one of the most competitive markets in the world. Obviously, there were also reliability issues, but Dacia going away was the result of the adoption of much stricter anti-pollution norms after 1986 [68].

The export experience is related to a project dedicated to the Canadian market which did not grow out of the prototype stage. We mention that in the 1980s, the manufacturing of the Romanian Olcit car began [69], following the establishment of a Romanian-French (CITROËN) joint venture. It is important to remember this Romanian manufacturer of automobiles as well, because of a project to manufacture a hybrid Dacia-Olcit car named OLDA, intended for the Canadian market in the 1980s, based on the OLTCIT-TRS12 bodywork, Dacia-1400 engine and a 5-speed gearbox. It was thanks to Simion Săpunaru, Director of the Pitești Car Plant during 1979-1987, that the concept of making cars to export to Canada emerged, launched by Victor Jigman [70] at the 1985 Toronto Automobile Salon (Salon de l’Auto de Toronto) in a most unusual way: “The launch of OLDA in Canada was spectacular. They brought fiddlers, literally. The guests included Gigi Marga and the Năsturică Fiddlers’ Group (Taraful Năsturică); ambassadors attended, as well as CEOs, etc.. We presented the product; the ribbon was cut...” [71].

In the end, neither the manufacture, nor the export were achieved, because the prototype had not been tested on the domestic market. It is worth saying that in that year of 1985, the Dacia export share was 25% of its production [72]. Another thing we should point out is that the export batches and the original Renault parts were some sort of a fetish to the consumers in the domestic market because they were considered to be of better quality, characteristic of “an imaginary West”, a concept coined by the anthropologist Alexei Yurchak. The “export declined” car batches distributed on the domestic market were also deemed superior to what was manufactured for the Romanian market and they were something very sought after.

The second-hand car trade after the 1990s, with cars from Hungary and Germany, also contributed to a revival of this phenomenon, with the flows of “repatriation” of Dacia cars that were originally exported, particularly in the 1980s.

“With Dacia, we built Romania”. Cars built in the Eastern countries, i.e. Fiat in Poland, Lada in the USSR, Zastava in Yugoslavia and Dacia in Romania, manufactured based on licences from the West, were the “Trojan horse” of socialist economies, by offering people an oasis of the Western consumer culture [73].

The price paid by someone to become the owner of a Dacia amounted to approximately lei 70,000-75,000 (the National Bank of Romania lei/dollar rate of exchange in 1968 - lei 6/dollar, in 1979-1982- lei 4.47/dollar) [74] up to possibly lei 86,000 with “upgrades” (noted from 1986), the equivalent price of an apartment at the time.

From the registration on the list of buyers with the IDMS - The Sporting Goods Retail Enterprise until the actual purchase of the car, Romanians could wait an average of 3-5 years, during which time they were supposed to save the whole amount, usually by making deposits at the Deposit and Consignment Office (CEC) units [75]. However, the demand exceeded the supply, on a national market characterised by a small volume of imports, dominated by Dacia [76]. In fact, it shouldn’t take us by surprise to see, upon checking the statistics of the last years of communism, that when it came to the society’s car index (the number of cars per 1,000 inhabitants), Romania was at the bottom of the European countries’ list [77].

The purchaser could choose from a quite limited range of colours [78], but it might as well happen that they got a car of a different colour, based on availability. Some colours were truly helping you stand out, such as black, aquamarine (Dacia 2000, the legendary madame “Comrade” (“Tovarășa”), a model dedicated to the communist elite and manufactured solely in these two colours) or the rare metallic colours (e.g. metallic black for export).

Just like Adrian Oțoiu noted, the car for the domestic market was in a limited range of colours, and in order to “escape this monotony”, Dacia car owners would add items to their cars which would help them stand out of the crowd, such as spoilers, wheel covers, petrol caps, sun shields, windscreen protections, and items to customise the inside of the car, such as fur covers for the upholstery, stickers, a gearbox stick knob, covers for the steering wheels, the nodding doggy-toy [79]. According to the researcher Luminița Gătejel, this type of western customisation, “the invisible Other”, was a way of imbuing reality with the brand of the “imaginary West”, an affirmation of capitalism in its embryonic stage, by creating oases of private property [80]. Getting your driving licence and purchasing your automobile were milestones in your life as a Romanian, and, despite what people might think today, they did not coincide with you turning 18, as there were numerous delays of even more than 10 years between the time when you filed a request to purchase the car and when you actually became its owner. Which is why having a car was some sort of a sign of distinction for a Romanian during communism.

On 31st December 1978, Film director Alexandru Tatos wrote in his *Pagini de jurnal (Diary Pages)*, while making a personal review of the year: “I bought a car [*a.n.*: when he was 41 years old], which, given our standards, is not a poor achievement. All I need to do now is solve the driving licence issue next year.” [81].

Dacia was omnipresent on the roads of the country, particularly of the Capital City, a “common noun” which writer Ioana Nicolaie recalls from her visit in the 1980s, when she failed to visit the Atheneum, despite it being exactly what she wanted to do then: “Bucharest revealed itself all of a sudden, with its big roads engulfed in the blue exhaust of Dacias [...]” [82]. In 1985, 78% of the national car fleet consisted of Romanian Dacia cars [83]. In 1990, immediately after the Revolution, 2,500,000 cars were registered in Romania, out of which 200,000 were in Bucharest, most of them Dacia cars [84].

In the ads of the time, Dacia was depicted as a “safe, enduring, smart and steady” family car (represented by a drawing of two parents and one child) intended for holidays “at the mountain and the seaside”, to which one could even attach a trailer. In red-tape terms, it could be described as a “durable asset one could use to carry the usual activities of modern man and to spend one’s spare time” [85]. In fact, it was a car one would share with their family and friends, used for vacationing, for which the necessary petrol was saved beforehand, as well as used for transporting goods, carrying furniture, transporting foods and even the Christmas tree and sacrificial pig. Dacia gave its owner a privileged position in the neighbourhood, among his/her friends: “One of the best memories I have about my childhood is the arrival in our garage of a brand new red Dacia 1300 [...]! I can still smell it [...], and if I tell you the year when it was delivered, i.e. 1978, you will be able to understand the kind of event buying a car was, not only to the child, but also to the entire family and your acquaintances who could benefit from the car if needed” [86].

“The youngest offspring of the car industry”, as presented in the news bulletin, the Dacia car had its own dowery, protected by the ever-present tarpaulin cover, and was part of family life, becoming also a playground for children. During those years, it became part of the childhood imaginarium in the form of toys of various shapes, from Dacia the personal car to Dacia the utility car.

For adults, the playground was different. During the 1970s-1980s, neighbourhoods became true outdoor repair shops [87]. Dacia owners learned how to fix their cars and their neighbours’ cars. There were extreme situations when women’s stockings were used to replace the broken alternator/ventilator belt. Adrian Oțoiu [88] deems this practice to be a form of do-it-yourself know-how applied to cars, the given example definitely not being the only one. In an interview from 2000, a driver filmed while working on the engine was saying that with Dacia “it is basically impossible not to solve the problems by yourself and move on” [89].

Dacia revival - between a car for scrapping and a car for the soul. Where did Dacia go after the twenty-two years of manufacturing in the 20th century when communism fell?

Dacia of those years was still a part of the Romanian automobile scene. In a presentation at the “Dacia - Car of My Childhood” community in Bucharest in February 2018, Ovidiu Măgureanu, President of “Dacia Clasic”, said that this car endured because it was difficult to purchase one before 1990, and thus the owner ended up “spoiling” it and taking good care of it. In the 1990s, the car became more of a commodity used for benefits. Many of the cars were destroyed as a result of the Rabla (Scrapping) programme, but, according to Ovidiu Măgureanu, people are starting to think of making them run again, of recovering, preserving and reinstating the national flagship car, the car that marked the childhood and teenage years of many people.

Many Romanians drove Dacias in the 1990s abroad for leisure and to build the bases of their first family businesses by trading imported goods. Dacia owner Costin makes an account of the tour of Europe he made in the 1990s in the form of a letter to his son: “It was a fabulous trip where we discovered that the world existed beyond the communist borders. [...] we slept in the car, in our good old Dacia [...]. We slept on the soft and uncomfortable Dacia seats, but the world was ours. And, in case you were wondering, it was in the Dacia that we conceived you in '82. Love, Dad (Costin)” [90].

Starting in the 1990s, the REMAT (Recycling of Materials) was the final destination of many Dacia cars from the 1968-1980 generations. The scrapping procedure was for the owner of the car to get money for the car’s scrap metal value, subject to the bureaucratic process of Dacia deregistration. A Dacia car weighs approximately 900 kilograms, but what remains after subtracting the weight of plastic, textiles and glass is around 700 kilograms, and the amount one would get was less than lei 500. At the same time, the Program for the renewal of the car fleet, financed from public funds and known as “Rabla” (Government Decision no. 2406/2004) encourages any “private or legal owner/inheritor of a used-up car registered in Romania which is older than 10 years” to give it up in exchange for a scrapping premium, a voucher they can use to buy a new car within a certain timeline. This measure was very effective in terms of reducing the number of Dacia cars in Romania.

Since the year 2000, we have been witnessing a Dacia comeback in the form of a “retro revival”, as shown before. Cars are brought back by people from Romania and abroad, restored and put back into circulation. Bruno’s story is one of them: “About two years ago [*a.n.*: 2015] I was on the lookout for our Dacia [...]. I bought a Dacia which some senior citizens had bought brand new and taken great care of, by keeping it mostly inside the garage, with only 35,000 kilometers [...]. It became our car as newlyweds. It is my beloved car” [91]. This “Dacia phenomenon” moves on, Ovidiu Măgureanu pointed out at the same presentation event, given that “generations who did not have it as they grew up tend to gather [around the historic car], and the young children have started to take to it”.

Some Dacia cars older than 30 years have a special fate, which is that of having become a collectable car, certified as “historic vehicles”. During the last decade, interest in Dacia as a historic car has grown, it is now considered a collectable item and is included in exhibits in museums.

The national association of historic vehicles’ owners and restorers, Retromobil Club Romania (R.C.R.), was established in 1998. The Club brings together historic cars manufactured in the period 1899-1988, and domestically and internationally promotes Romanian and international historic cars made by Aro, Dacia, TV, Mobra, Carpați, Olcit and SR. Thanks to the events and parades it organises, it can be considered a true “museum on wheels”. Supported by Retromobil Club Romania, The Museum of Romanian Automobiles [92] was inaugurated by Alexandru and Emil Hagi at Câmpulung, in 2014, a private initiative of presenting four-wheel models manufactured in Romania throughout time. At Satu Mare, Benjamin Kira established a museum dedicated to the Dacia car, The Museum of Romanian Dacia [93]. Established in 2016, the museum includes ten 1100, 1300 and 1310 models of Dacia cars, as well as a 2015 Logan, limited edition. Dacia Group also advertised opening a museum dedicated to the Dacia car in Mioveni where, according to press releases, 58 Dacia models of all times are going to be exhibited.

One chapter in the history of Dacia is complete, another one is in progress.

Notes.

- [1] Documentary movie British Pathe ID: 3001.10/ 25.09.1968, available at <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/new-rumanian-car-dacia-1100-aka-new-rumanian-car/query/Dacia>, accessed on 10.05.2018.
- [2] “When he came back to the country [1906], after successfully concluding his studies abroad, Dumitru Vădescu brought back with him the steam car and drove it in Bucharest. The inhabitants of the capital city had many opportunities to admire his car passing through the streets, while few generations of students who attended the School of Bridges and Roads from Bucharest courses proudly studied his steam car as a flagship accomplishment of a pioneer automobile builder” (A. Brebenel, D. Vochin, *Din istoria automobilului*, ed. a II-a, București, 1976, p. 45, “Magazin Almanah”, 1981, p. 173).
- [3] A. Brebenel, D. Vochin, *op. cit.*, p. 111, 141.
- [4] <https://retromobil.ro/istoric>, accessed on 10.05.2018.
- [5] George III - Valentin Bibescu (1880-1941, Bucharest), prince, was a Romanian aviation pioneer, one of the best Romanian pilots of all times. He was co-founder of the Romanian Automobile Club, initially named Romanian Royal Automobile Club.
- [6] G. V. Bibescu, *De Genève à Bucarest en automobile, 1827 km. 200 m. en 73 heures 45 minutes avec Mercedes Voiture de 16-20 chevaux, conduite par son propriétaire, le Prince Georges-Valentin Bibesco*. Geneva, 1901.
- [7] Emanuel Bădescu, *Nemaipomenitele aventuri ale prințului Bibescu*, 2010, available at <http://www.zf.ro/ziarul-de-duminica/documentar-nemaipomenitele-aventuri-ale-printului-bibescu-5385451/>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [8] *Ibidem*.
- [9] The first motorcar race took place on 22nd September 1904. George Valentin Bibescu won the contest driving a Mercedes (16 HP, average speed of 66 km/h). Nine teams signed up for this exceptional motorcar race, but only six of them managed to start the race (George Valentin Bibescu - MERCEDES, Leon Leonida - MERCEDES, N. Niculescu Iarca - CUDELL) (<https://editiadedimineata.ro/istoria-necunoscuta-a-motorsportului-in-romania-prima-cursa-a-avut-loc-acum-113-ani/>, accessed on 07.05.2018).
- [10] Chiriac Vasiliu, *Automobilul în România. Istorie și tehnică*, București, 1994, p. 38.
- [11] Iulian Budușan, *Istoria industriei auto din România*, 2011, available at <http://www.manager.ro/articole/analize-92/istoria-industriei-auto-din-romania-14383.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [12] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
- [13] It took six months of Allied negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference to conclude the Peace Treaty of Versailles (*Traité de Versailles*) from 1919 that brought World War I to an end.
- [14] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
- [15] *Ibidem*.
- [16] *Ibidem*, p. 62.
- [17] *Ibidem*, p. 38.
- [18] Marius Florin Drașovean, *Istoria auto interbelică, Istoria unei crize sau debutul unei modernizări*, “Sfera Politicii”, no. 133/2009, available at <http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/133/art10-drasovean.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [19] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

[20] Based on his research work, Eng. Aurel Perșu built in 1923 the first automobile with an adequate aerodynamic shape and wheels inside the coachwork. The car designed by Perșu, patented in Germany, had its coachwork shaped as a half of a falling water drop. Later on, he came back to Romania and donated the car to „Dimitrie Leonida” Technical Museum from Bucharest. The automobile is made of aluminium with a wooden chassis and it has an aerodynamic coefficient of 0.22. He drove over 120,000 km in Europe in order to prove its technical capabilities (Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 59; <http://www.mnt-leonida.ro/08Domenii/Auto/Auto-Persu.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018; “Almanah auto”, 1979, p. 31; “Autoturism”, 4/1971, p. 7).

[21] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[22] In 1945, Eng. Radu Manicatide made a mini-car named “MR 1945 type” at the IAR plant (Romanian Aeronautical Enterprise). The maximum speed was 105 km/h. The car was made in a limited edition of two units and it was named after the initials of the engineer who built it (Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 134).

[23] In 1947, at the I.A.R. plant of Brasov, a team led by Eng. Radu Mărdărăscu made a prototype car in a limited edition of three (two limousines and a station wagon) with a 4-cylinder 45 HP engine that could reach 124 km/h. Those cars functioned for 12 years in normal usage conditions (Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 135).

[24] MARTA (Magyar Automobil Reszveny Tarsasag Arad) was the first automobile plant built on Romanian territory [*a.n.*: after 1918], founded in Arad, in 1909, as a subsidiary of the American company Westinghouse through its French subsidiary from Le Havre. The company started to manufacture different models of cars, among them a local model named Marta. The company manufactured around 150 Marta cars until its bankruptcy. Afterwards, the company was taken over by Daimler, which reorganized its production

(<http://www.cimec.ro/Muzee/Auto/AUTO.HTM>, accessed on 10.05.2018).

[25] Malaxa was a Romanian car manufactured in 1945/1946 in Reșița, inside the premises of the famous Romanian industrialist Nicolae Malaxa’s plants. The project belonged to a group of engineers and technicians from A.S.A.M. plants and Malaxa from Bucharest, in collaboration with I.A.R. Brasov, led by Eng. Petre Carp. The car’s maximum speed was 120 km/h. About 800 cars per year were produced, most of them being shipped abroad. The production stopped in 1947, when the Soviets decided to move the assembly line to the U.S.S.R. (A. Brebenel, D. Vochin, *op. cit.*, p. 190, 191; Chiriac Vasile, *op. cit.*, p. 134-136; Julian Chitta, *Dosarele Istoriei*, 2010, available at <http://www.ziare.com/auto/masini/dosarele-istoriei-automobilele-lui-brejnev-malaxa-1060068>, accessed on 10.05.2018).

[26] The Ford plant from Bucharest was called “Ford România SAR” and had 100 specialised employees involved in the assembly of around 2500 cars and commercial vehicles per year. The company operated from May 4, 1936 until June 11, 1948, when it was closed down due to Nationalization Law no. 119/11.06.1948.

[27] A. Brebenel, D. Vochin, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[28] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[29] Gabriela Tabacu (coord.), *Bucureștiul meu*, București, 2016, p. 245.

[30] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 99; <http://autoturism.rdslink.ro/ist.htm>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[31] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 139. Autocamioane Brașov trucks enterprise was established in 1921, under the name of ROMLOC and later on, in 1936, merged with Uzina Astra plant, initially manufacturing rolling stock and, later on, engines and automobiles. After 1948, after the communist regime came to power, the enterprise was named “Steagul Roșu”, meaning “The Red Flag”.

[32] ***, *Roman. Autocamioane Brașov. Istoric*, p. 2, 3, available at <http://www.roman.ro/files/istoric/istoric-pe-larg.pdf>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[33] ***, *RATT. Apariția și dezvoltarea industriei constructoare de mijloace de transport în comun. Autobuzul M.T.D. - primul autobuz românesc fabricat în serie mare*, 2016, available at <http://www.ratt.ro/forum/index.php?showtopic=2566>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[34] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 162-171, 295. In September, 2003, the Romanian State sold 68,7% of the ARO shares to the American company, Cross Lander, owned by John Perez. Two million dollars in investments in the ARO company were stipulated in the privatization contract clauses, none being actually invested; furthermore the ARO

plant equipment was sold (http://www.romania-actualitati.ro/avutia_de_la_stat_la_privat-44565, accessed on 07.05.2018).

[35] Lewis H. Siegelbaum (coord.), *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, New York, 2011, p. 145.

[36] A handmade three-wheel car produced in a limited edition of few units. The car was manufactured in a small workshop owned by Gheorghe Gal, an amateur motorist, motorcycling champion and record holder from the 1930s (<http://politici.weebly.com/industrie/masinile-inventate-de-romani>, accessed on 07.05.2018).

[37] During the 1950s, Eng. Nicolae Lucaci manufactured a unique microcar in Braşov and named it after his daughter (<http://politici.weebly.com/industrie/masinile-inventate-de-romani>, accessed on 07.05.2018).

[38] The Microcar is a homemade automobile manufactured by Oszkár Beke. He was inspired by Iso Isetta microcar, launched in 1953. The Oszkár Beke Microcar (1958) still exists and is located somewhere in Oradea (<http://politici.weebly.com/industrie/masinile-inventate-de-romani>, accessed on 07.05.2018).

[39] Gabriela Tabacu (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[40] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

[41] *Ibidem*, p. 203.

[42] *Ibidem*, p. 204.

[43] ***, *Autostrada Bucureşti Piteşti*, partea a doua: “Drumuri”, available at http://www.iptana.ro/romania/download/PARTEA%20II_Drumuri.pdf, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[44] Lewis H. Siegelbaum (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[45] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

[46] Due to technical and economic reasons, the Renault 12 model was withdrawn from Renault’s market offering. The model was in the testing phase, while the production phase was planned to begin in France during the second half of 1969. Meanwhile, Renault Company authorized the Romanian counterpart to start assembling an intermediary early car model until Renault 12 would have been ready to enter the production stage. Initially, the agreement was to produce the Renault 16 model, but, later on, they opted for the Renault 8 model.

[47] Denis Grigorescu, *Detaliul puţin ştiut din istoria uzinei Dacia. Cum a ajuns să poarte timp de un deceniu numele unui membru UTC*, 2018, available at http://adevarul.ro/locale/pitesti/detaliul-putinstiut-istoria-uzinei-dacia-ajuns-poarte-timp-deceniunui-membru-utc-1_5ab8ce1adf52022f75091ccf/index.html, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[48] Ştefănescu, Constantin, Moroşan, Constantin, Soare, Ion, *Monografia Uzinei de Autoturisme, Piteşti*, 1972; Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

[49] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

[50] “Scînteia”, no. 7808 from August 28, 1968, p. 1, 3.

[51] “Almanah auto”, 1977, p. 24-26.

[52] The plant was opened at the same date, in the presence of the communist leaders of that time, who had the chance to be the first test drivers of the Dacia automobile manufactured by UAP. The following quote captures the mood of that day: “Wholeheartedly acclaimed by the audience, comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu gets behind the wheel of the first car, starts up the engine, accelerates, drives to the testing track, trying the capabilities of the car by himself. A second car follows, with comrade Ion Gheorghe Maurer behind the wheel, another one driven by comrade Ilie Verdeţ, followed by a veritable queue of the new Romanian automobiles” (“Scînteia”, no. 7801 from August 21, 1968, p. 2). For more information see also <http://industrializarearomaniei.blogspot.ro/2018/05/50-de-ani-de-la-producerea-primului.html>, accessed on 15.05.2018.

[53] Dacia 1100 was manufactured until 1972 (http://www.automobile-catalog.com/model/dacia/1100_8.html, accessed on 07.05.2018), alongside Model 1300, “the youngest from UAP plant” which despite the name, generated a great deal of interest in the market (British Pathe ID: 3328.12 from 23/12/1969, available at <https://www>.

britishpathe.com/video/rumanian-car-factory, accessed on 07.05.2018).

[54] Documentary British Pathe ID: 3328.12 from 23/12/1969, available at <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/rumanian-car-factory>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[55] <http://www.promotor.ro/masini-noi/dosar-analize/aceasta-dacia-este-ultimul-cadou-al-lui-ceausescu-pentru-romani-12453047>; http://adevarul.ro/life-style/auto/foto-povestea-lastunului-autoturism-interzis-protectia-consumatorului-1_5156acad00f5182b8566f660/index.html, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[56] <http://www.autogreen.ro/auto/dacia-lastun-smartul-romaniei/>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[57] <https://www.4tuning.ro/concept-car/absolut-toate-prototipurile-si-editiile-limitate-dacia-din-istorie-17415.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[58] Peter Wollen (coord.), Joe Kerr (coord.), *Autopia: Cars and Culture*, Londra, 2002, p. 203.

[59] *Epoca Dacia*, “Evenimentul Zilei” newspaper archive, 2004.

[60] Cătălin Dinu, *Dacia 40. Simbolul mărcii: Dacia 1310*, 2008, available at <http://www.automarket.ro/stiri/dacia-40-simbolul-maricii-dacia-1310-14171.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[61] Răzvan Bărbulescu, *Cozile la benzină și circulația alternativă*, “Jurnalul Național”, 2009, available at <http://jurnalul.ro/scinteia/special/cozile-la-benzina-si-circulatia-alternativa-318557.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[62] *Ibidem*.

[63] The abnormal situation regarding populations’ access to fuel during the communist regime was the subject of cartoons depicting, for example, a block of flats with each of its balconies storing many fuel canisters (Mihai Stănescu, *Acum nu e momentul*, București, 1989).

[64] Răzvan Bărbulescu, *Cozile la benzină și circulația alternativă*, “Jurnalul Național”, 2009, available at <http://jurnalul.ro/scinteia/special/cozile-la-benzina-si-circulatia-alternativa-318557.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[65] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

[66] *Ibidem*, p. 180.

[67] Vlad Barza, *Aventurile Daciei în Canada anilor ’80. Războiul mașinilor low-cost era interesant și acum un sfert de secol*, 2010, available at <https://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-auto-7468320-aventurile-daciei-canada-anilor-80-39-razboiul-masinilor-low-cost-era-interesant-acum-sfert-secol.htm>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[68] *Ibidem*.

[69] Oltcit Craiova was established upon a partnership between the Romanian authorities and the French car manufacturer, Citroën. The construction of the plant started in 1977 while the car’s production started in 1981. In 1991, as a result of the withdrawal of Citroën from the joint venture, the name of the company was changed to S.C. Automobile Craiova S.A.. In November 1994, Daewoo, a South-Korean company, launched a new production line in Romania, thus becoming the most important foreign investor after setting up the joint venture company, Automobile Craiova S.A. - Daewoo. In 2008, Ford Europe Company took over the plant based in Craiova from the previous owner, further preserving its tradition as a car manufacturer.

[70] Victor Jigman, former director of the Foreign Commerce Enterprise Auto-Dacia, Pitești Automobile Headquarters (1978-1982) and of Pitești Automobile Enterprise/Automobile Dacia for international affairs division, the manager of Terra Power Tractor Company Ltd. Saskatoon, Canada (1983-1988), a company established by Canadian law, operating in line with Canadian jurisprudence, endowed with a Romanian capital of \$100.000, from Universal Tractor and Dacia.

[71] Cristina Stancu, *Povestea OLDA, mixul românesc între Dacia și Oltcit, realizat în secret la ICSITA*, 2016, available at http://adevarul.ro/locale/pitesti/povestea-olda-mixul-romanesec-dacia-oltcit-realizat-secret-icsita-dupa-6-luni-aveam-cereri-masina-produsa-canada-1_57f9e3325ab6550cb86374fc/index.html, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[72] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

- [73] Lewis H. Siegelbaum (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 147.
- [74] NBR exchange rate (<http://www.bnr.ro/apage.aspx?pid=404&actId=22706>, accessed on 07.05.2018).
- [75] Since 1964 it was possible to take your chance, test your luck and win an automobile from the CEC Bank lottery if you had a savings account at the bank. The winners were selected by drawing lots (for example) during the second semester of 1968, were announced by „Scântea” newspaper and able to win one of the following cars: Fiat 1800, Fiat 125, Fiat 124, Renault 10, Renault 16, Renault Dauphine Gordini, Skoda 1000 MB, Moskvich 408, Trabant 601, the last brand listed in high numbers, a very interesting prize, promoted together with a sunshade.
- [76] Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa: acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)*, București, 2010, p. 383.
- [77] Constantin Grigorescu (coord.), *Nivelul dezvoltării economico-sociale a României în context european*, București, 1993, p. 187.
- [78] Peter Wollen (coord.), Joe Kerr (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- [79] *Ibidem*, p. 203.
- [80] Lewis H. Siegelbaum (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 151, 152.
- [81] Alexandru Tatos, *Pagini de jurnal*, București, 2010, p. 276.
- [82] Gabriela Tabacu (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 150.
- [83] Chiriac Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
- [84] Liviu Anghene, *D'Artagnan de la RAR*, 2015, available at <http://www.autotestmagazin.ro/rar-liviu-anghene-dartagnan-de-la-rar/>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [85] A. Brebenel, D. Vochin, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
- [86] Florentin Deac, *Dacia, mașina care te făcea cineva*, 2013, available at <http://www.dacicool.ro/romania-mea/povesti-de-viata/6288-dacia-masina-care-te-facea-cineva>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [87] During communist times and even after 1989, a vast array of technical literature circulated among those interested in acquiring knowledge about Dacia automobiles, like the articles published in “Autoturism” magazine or Corneliu Mondiru, *Autoturisme Dacia. Diagnosticare, întreținere, reparare*, București, 1990.
- [88] Peter Wollen (coord.), Joe Kerr (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- [89] Video Archive AP, *End of an era for Romania's iconic yet oft-derided Dacia car*, July 2015, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hn_a757ZgX8, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [90] *Zece amintiri cu Dacia*, available at <https://www.4tuning.ro/istorie-auto/editorial-zece-amintiri-pline-de-zambete-lacrimi-si-nostalgie-petrecute-la-bordul-batranei-dacii-30847.html>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [91] Digital post about Bruno, published on “Dacia - autoturismul copilăriei”, a Facebook community gathered around Dacia, the car <https://www.facebook.com/DaciaAutoturismulCopilariei/photos/a.253291451787003.1073741828.252917951824353/390562854726528/?type=3&theater>, accessed on 07.05.2018.
- [92] <https://ro-ro.facebook.com/MuzeulAutomobiluluiRomanesc/>.
- [93] <https://ro-ro.facebook.com/MuzeulDacieiRomanesti/>.
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GPS: 44.449368, 26.059205



GPS: 44.446597, 26.053938



GPS: 44.422627, 26.093448



GPS: 44.445154, 26.071037



GPS: 44.424474, 26.073179



GPS: 44.429319, 26.071796



GPS: 44.428048, 26.100566



GPS: 44.421846, 26.097908



GPS: 44.428048, 26.100566



GPS: 44.446414, 26.054268



GPS: 44.434803, 26.130099



GPS: 44.427755, 26.096225



GPS: 44.439686, 26.130083



GPS: 44.435016, 26.068166



GPS: 44.433716, 26.134185



GPS: 44.422552, 26.094832



GPS: 44.420046, 26.096888



GPS: 44.444250, 26.070075



GPS: 44.439800, 26.142592



GPS: 44.416257, 26.122509



GPS: 44.425391, 26.132949



GPS: 44.419303, 26.132191



GPS: 44.447688, 26.067935



GPS: 44.439943, 26.132477



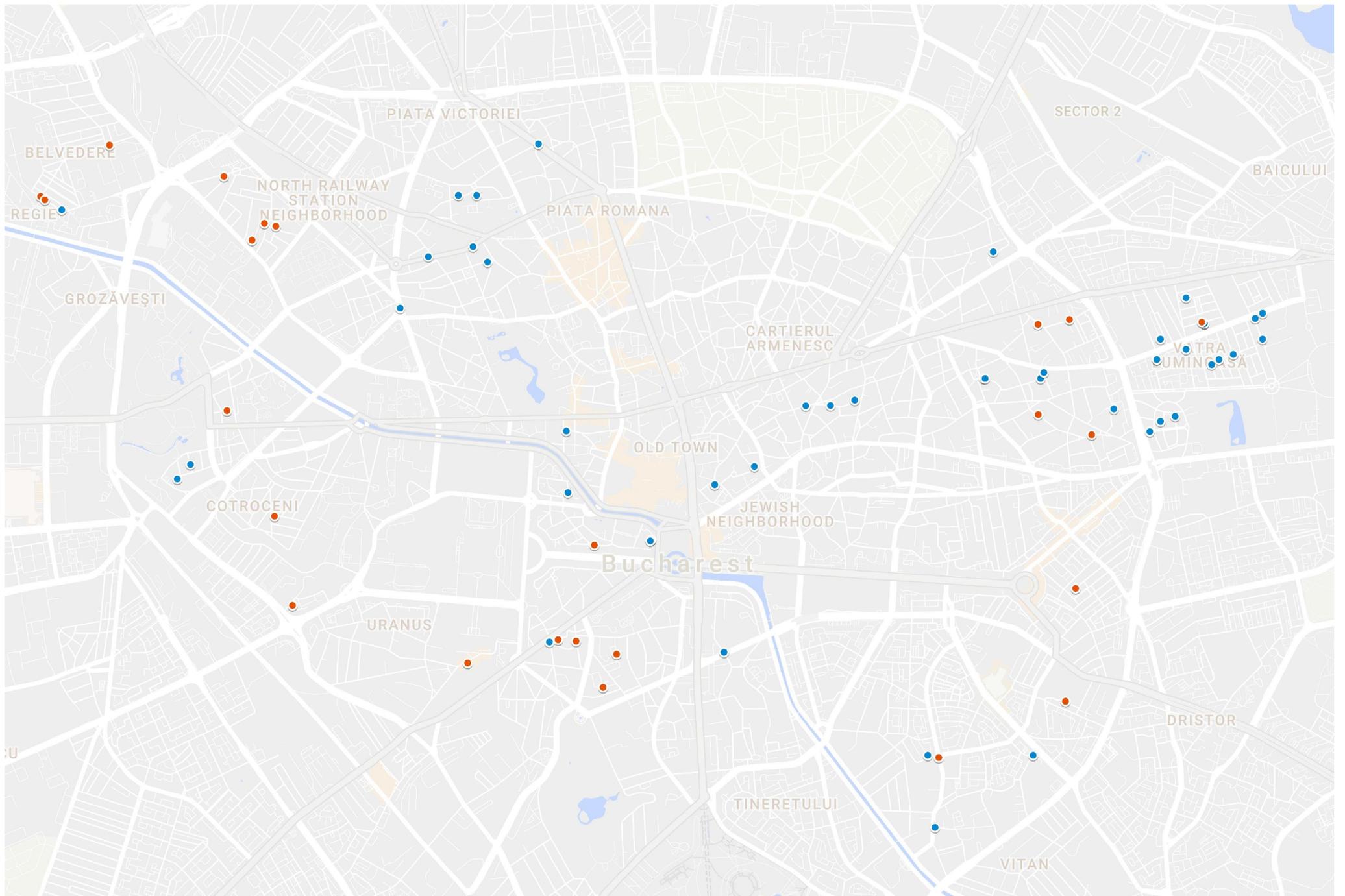
GPS: 44.421375, 26.086533



GPS: 44.444998, 26.071914

Legendă: Miniaturi și indicatori roșii: mașini din carte. Indicatori albaștri: alte mașini documentate.

Legend: Thumbnails and red markers: cars from the book. Blue markers: other documented cars.



FIELD NOTES

In Bucharest, searching for our Dacia cars. During 2016-2017, photographer Albert Vrabiuță developed an archive comprising over 150 comprehensive and detailed images of Dacia cars long-term parked on various streets throughout Bucharest. From this archive, editor Cristian Bassa made a selection of photographs of 26 Dacia cars to include in this photo album.

The photographs from this volume showcase cars belonging to various generations, in a wide range of colours, closer to or further from the Dacia colour palettes [1]. The cars' colours and shades result from the passing of time, their being parked outdoors for a long time, as well as from hand painted layers of dye, most of the time applied by the owners themselves.

At the beginning of 2018, we went back in the field with Albert to discover the stories behind the 26 Dacia cars selected and to observe their evolution in the public space. We identified different sub-categories of cars, such as cars intended for export and "hybridized" cars, either during factory production, as explained by Andrei Dorobanțu, a Dacia collector and member of Retromobil Club Romania, or subsequently, after becoming private property. Based on the discussions with their owners and neighbours, we discovered the following: 1) various ways to purchase/sell/preserve a Dacia car, as well as 2) connections between the car, the house and the generations of owners, 3) interactions between the car body and the physical and social space where the car is located, visible with the help of traces left behind by people and nature alike, as well as due to the bureaucratic removal efforts or private salvaging endeavours, 4) the dynamic of the automobile in the physical space and the online virtual world. We considered and discussed the following: 1) the car evolution, as well as its trace in time and its relation with the owners, 2) the dynamics of the car body in the public space, and its seizure/revalorisation by the people writing in graffiti or doing acts of vandalism, by occupation, by theft, acts of preservation, by institutions calling for car seizure, by nature - snails, leaves and moss overtaking the bodywork. Dacia the car has a disputed body and soul, with the street, just like Google Maps, keeping it captive between two worlds, like in a purgatory.

Before moving on to the street story of the Dacia people, we would like to highlight that in 2018, only two years after the photographs had been taken, only ten cars remained in public spaces, i.e. less than 39% of the cars included in the album. Most of these cars were scrapped, but we do know that three of them were relocated to private property, one of them being already reconditioned. We traced, directly or indirectly, over 65% of the presented cars. We can say that about one third of all cars included in the photo album were manufactured before 1980, namely the Dacia 1100 and 1300 models. The Dacia 1310 model, manufactured during the 1980s and later, dominates the selection. The album also includes one Dacia 1304 Pick-up model, four Dacia cars manufactured for export, two of which are Dacia 1310 export models for Canada, one Dacia 1310 known as "ARO Familia", made for the German Democratic Republic, and one Dacia 1210, named Delta, an export model for Greece.

Dacia out in the street. "Where is it? Where did it go?" This is how the first morning "with Dacia" began, in the spring of 2018. We were standing on a street in Bucharest, at number 27, looking at the parking place where Albert had taken a photograph of a Dacia "Ferrari" two years before. Was it here or wasn't it? Let me explain myself.

Red. A gentleman and his pet dog stopped by our side, right where we knew Dacia "Ferrari" used to be parked. He crossed paths with a lady coming from the opposite side of the street. The two neighbours (for neighbours they were) said hello, and the first question the man with the dog addressed was the following: "Where is it? Where did it go? Did you give it away?". The lady, whom the question was addressed to, was the daughter of the Dacia "Ferrari" owner, Mister Octavian D.. Yes, the car had been taken to Remat (the Scrapping Unit), alongside all the bureaucratic issues that come with this action. Three days on the road. More money spent than earned. A Dacia Sandero was now parked where the photographed Dacia used to be.

Can a red Dacia be a Ferrari? Yes or no? Yes, while in Cotroceni, in 2016, a Dacia with a hint of Ferrari was parked at 27 Doctor Tomescu Street, next to a gated entrance.

Beyond that gate lives its owner. Mister Octavian D. worked hard for his Dacia, the car which was baptized “Ferrari”, with graffiti, by the young fellows who used to spend their nights inside it. Even though he wasn’t using his car anymore, given how hard he had worked to afford it, he preferred seeing it there, always parked in front of his house. Nature had invaded the car. Green moss had covered the bodywork joints and doors. The word “Romania” written under the registration plate, had also turned green. When they saw the “Ferrari” word written in big blue letters on the hood of the car, they were all amused and not at all upset, as Mister Octavian’s daughter confesses, though they did understand the car’s stay in front of the gate was near its end.

A red Dacia 1300 with yet another red Dacia 1300 scale model placed on the dashboard used to be parked in the immense parking lot of a building in the Boișoara area. We found no trace of the car in the spring of 2018. The same fate was shared by a red Dacia 1100, on which flowers had grown in a parking lot just one summer before, as well as a Dacia 1310 adorned with luxurious covers and equipped with an antitheft system attached to the steering wheel.

We went to Zăgănescu Street several times and rang the doorbell of the house in front of which another Dacia 1300 was parked. Nobody answered. We did manage to talk to two neighbours who were painting the fence of a nearby house. We found out that the Mehedinți-registered car was allegedly left behind by a former tenant who never returned to the neighbourhood. Bees or wasps built nests next to Dacia’s rear headlights and grass had reached the sidewalk-facing wheel covers. The car is a member of the late 1970s generation of cars, but it is equipped with parts from several other series. “The white reverse lights were added starting 1977-1978, before they started manufacturing the 1310 model with big headlights”, Andrei Dorobanțu explained. The air vent grille is located at the back, with a chromium frame, originated from another car, the black side mirror is from a 1985 model. The car is equipped with a hand-made roof rack, attached to the ceiling; aluminium support systems are attached to the front seats, a teddy-bear is placed next to the boot and a big bag with items required for car maintenance is placed on the backseat. All indications show this car is being used for long voyages and to carry many baggage and probably also a child. It did not look like a deserted car, as we have noticed, that the backseat bag had been moved around.

We met Mister Remus C. and his wife at the Măgirești Alley intersection. A red Dacia 1310 Station wagon, with a newspaper on the dashboard and leaves stuck to the bodywork, had been parked there two years before. In 2018, the car was not there anymore. We were standing right where we knew the car had been and we looked in front of us. The house towards which we were looking was looking back at us through the eyes of its owner. When we introduced each other, Mister Remus C. confessed to having suspected we were City Hall employees intending to have cars removed. They could remember Albert, and when they got the City Hall notification warning them to get rid of the car, they imagined he was at fault, because he had taken photos of it. “You become fond of things. It was difficult for us when they came from City Hall. For sure, someone had filed a complaint.”, the Dacia owner confessed. On a snowy winter morning in 2017, their car was towed away by crane. His wife recorded the event on video and wept. Mister Remus had already bought parts to repair the car, he still has the radiator - which he even showed to us. “Dacia was in no way deserted. It wasn’t.”, the owner emphasised. It was only parked there to keep an eye on it. “We wept when our car was towed away. We were really fond of it.”, his wife told us. They are still its owners according to the books, they still pay taxes for it. They looked for Dacias on the Internet, in search of their own, but they could only identify the car on Google Maps, and they were at least glad to see it there.

Their Dacia was earned with their “sweat”, bought with money they saved from their hard work. There were hardly any cars on their street back in the 1990s. “It was our first car, which we bought not on turning 18, but when we could save enough money to get it.”, Mister Remus told us. Their Dacia was a family car that both spouses used to drive. The Lady of the house was very fond of the car and took great care of it, “like she takes care of the cat now”. When they saw Albert’s photos, they were amused and told us about the scratches on the car fender after the wife was involved in a minor accident, back when the children were small; that accident however, did not generate any arguments in the family. What is left of their Dacia? “The memory of it!”, the spouses told us. When Dacia was no more, they made the necessary arrangements to buy a new car.

Yellow. Dacia “with everything”. Our Dacia expert, Andrei Dorobanțu’s comment was: “Wow, they decorated this one with all kinds of things, all generations contributed! If we look at the bodywork, the ventilation grate at the rear, the door handles, etc., this is clearly a 1300 model from the 1970s. But they “pimped” this particular model with different spoilers at the back and front, spoilers from the future generations of cars from the 80s or even after the Revolution, the side mirror frame is from the mid 80s, and

it has side Lucas lamps also from different generations.” This is the description of a do-it-yourself yellow cab belonging to Mister C., on Titus Street. We heard the story of the car parked on public domain for many years which, as a result of the neighbours’ threats and of the summons received, they moved it next to a grey Dacia in the yard of an uninhabited villa, as the neighbours told us. According to them, the owner did not love his car and thus neglected it; in any case the neighbours did not want it on the street, because it made traffic difficult. However, the car is not gone, and despite nature taking over, it was relocated to a private, uninhabited space shared with other goods, in some sort of a time capsule.

The Dacia with the winding traces of slugs on the hood next to the Sfinții Apostoli Street - to be more exact, on Unirii Boulevard, at the ground floor of the building, belongs to Mister Mircea T.. It was the neighbours that helped us get in touch with the owner. This Dacia was made in 1988, it belonged to his brother-in-law, and it is the same now as it “was when it got out of the plant, I didn’t change a thing about it, it was made for Canada”. Mister Mircea always had two cars, and this one he used only “occasionally, to carry this and that”, particularly on country roads, but he also drove it to the seaside. He drove this Dacia until last year, and now it’s just for keeps, “if my son wants to get a car, I can scrap this one”. He doubts whether he wants to send the car to the scrap yard, “it hurts me to do so”, he confesses. Somebody hit the rear side of the car with a brick only to get it destroyed. After that event, he even installed a video surveillance camera. “I got a summons to give it away, but did not follow up on it, (...) you can see it hasn’t been moved, but this does not mean it is deserted.” He might take it to Cămpina on a private property.

The yellow Dacia from the flower bed is a “transition Dacia, probably from the beginning of the 80s”, Andrei Dorobanțu said. The car on Căpitan Zăgănescu Street is located right in front of the windows of a four-storey building’s ground floor. The car’s owners were the very people who used to live in this apartment. Grandparents P. are deceased and the car was left in front of the building, was covered in layers of soil and surrounded by a small fence. The car is almost camouflaged by vegetation, the wheels are already one with the soil. The inheritors of the yellow Dacia are representatives of the future generations of the family - the son and the nephew - who also own the apartment overlooking the car. We could not find them at home, but the neighbours helped us with some clarifications. The yellow Dacia from the soil layers is one of the few “inhabitants” from the old generation who still live “in the building”, a lady neighbour said.

Green. The green Dacia on Teleajen Street belonged to another grandfather, who bought it brand new in 1988, a car equipped also with a gas installation. Grandson Cristian C. inherited the car: “it is all I have left from my grandfather, he took good care of it, the car was parked in front of an apartment building, kept under the tarpaulin cover”. His grandfather and uncle both used to drive the car across the country and abroad, in Turkey. Cristian prefers not to keep the car under the tarpaulin cover because it makes people curious, and they steal parts from it, like it happened before with the mirrors. Grandpa Gheorghe raised Cristian, and the grandson would like to recondition the Dacia, “not to drive it, necessarily”, but to keep it as a memory. He got this idea when he saw the events organised by the Retromobil Club and already has the necessary parts to have the car up and running.

The two-shaded green Dacia 1310, parked next to the building entrance on Unirii Boulevard, is an Aro Familia, which was the Dacia made for export to the German Democratic Republic. The owner, Mister Doru M. bought the car in 1994 from the Vitan car fair. It had been brought from Germany - a 1986 Dacia for export to the German Democratic Republic. Mister Doru handled all of the car’s mechanical needs, painted it - the traces of the rear spoiler are still visible - “the whole neighbourhood looked like a car shop, we would learn useful things from each other, this car built Romania”. The engine is very simple, he added, “if the car broke down, you could get it fixed; with the modern ones, you are helpless.” He drove that Dacia all over the country, he drove it to work and on vacations. It is, however, difficult to park it on the street, as “all sorts of things can happen”. One guy broke the door open and he found him sleeping inside it. It is now well locked and parked closer to the building, it is no longer where Google Map shows it to be, the owner says.

The green Dacia 1100 on Orzari Street was no longer parked on public land. We know for sure from Mister Alexandru A. that “Sutica”, the Dacia 1100, was saved. The car and another two of her siblings were removed from the public domain because they were thought ill of in the area. From our discussions, we found out that some of the owners who refused to give up their Dacia cars and to remove them from public space were bullied by the neighbours, and their cars were vandalised, the tyres deflated and windows broken, in order to ease the process of reporting them as deserted and having them sent to the Scrapping Unit faster.

Coming back to the Dacia 1100 from our photo album, from Orzari Street, we found that its story began in Comarnic. There was the “Vulturul (Eagle)” plant there. [2]. A German engineer who was sent in with an equipment transport from Germany fell in love with the area and stayed in Romania for good. He bought the Dacia 1100 brand new and kept it his entire life. His wife sold the car after her husband’s death. A lady, the daughter of the new owner, uploaded pictures of the car on the Internet, Alexandru A. contacted her and then made acquaintance with the Dacia car which was parked in an orchard all covered in grass. People make the mistake of labeling any old car on public space as abandoned, “people always mistake one thing for another”, Alexandru believes. “All collectable cars come from the street, they are survivors”, he added.

Blue. The Dacia on Doctor Ion Radovici Street is a hybrid, it has a Dacia 1300 rear and a Dacia 1310 front, and this is all we could find out about it. The blue Dacia on Justiției Street is no longer there, a new building was erected there in the meantime, and, according to the neighbours, it must have belonged to someone from the old house who shares a fence with the new building - where only one surviving inhabitant presumably lives. A similar story is that of the Dacia 1310 on Căpitan Preoteșcu Street. That Dacia car, which might as well be the object of geological studies on the layers of paint, is still parked in front of the owner’s house. In the nearby area there are some new, but also some old residents. There are hardly any bells at the doors, or gates, and some entrances are really hard to find. A young woman helped by telling us that the car was most probably the property of her neighbour, Mister Z., the man living in the house behind the fence, located beside the car, who is, however, a lonely person with whom people very rarely communicated.

Things were, however, different on Locotenent Bazar Romulus Niculescu Street, the street with easily identifiable entrances and functional bells. Here we came across the blue Dacia - a Canada model - belonging to the T. spouses, engineers, which they bought after getting an approval from the Ministry of Commerce. The 1985 manufactured car is perfectly functional. Mrs Rodica T. confessed that, although they have another car, “we would rather drive this one, it is our beloved car”. The blue Dacia still has one original pivot on, “we drove it like crazy”, they drove it around the whole of Europe on vacations, they even went to Turkey and Russia. The car dashboard was replaced 16 years ago, the colour of the car is the original Blue 68. The blue Dacia owners were aware of the fate of the other Dacia cars on their street, one of which was most definitely taken to the Scrapping Unit, and another green one - removed by the owner from the street and parked in a garage.

Black. We rang the doorbell of the house on Levănțița Street where the black Dacia used to be, and someone answered. There, we discussed with Mister Florin M. and his wife. The Dacia is a “Greece export car, Canada type tank, model 1210; the Greek did not pay taxes, the order included 1,000 cars”, the owner explained [3]. He bought the car new in 1986, paid for it “in cash and cheque books”, bought it after more than a one year-wait, a little sooner than expected, so to speak, because it was merely a 1210 engine - they also had problems with its colour - “it was quite uncommon... a black car, one wasn’t really allowed to drive black cars”.

The family did not give up the car, but removed it from public domain and took it to a garage in the countryside because it was deteriorating out there in the street. His wife insisted on keeping the car in the family and she was happy that Albert took a photo of it right after she had washed it, when it was shining. The Missis took care of the car; to her, Dacia was “a meaningful thing with a story - a story about Romania, about how people went to work, about their creativity”.

White. The white Dacia cars have gone missing, probably taken to the Scrapping Unit, except for the last one on Hariclea Darclée Street. We know that the Dacia 1310 Break on Ilarie Chendi Street was the car of an “amateur fisherman”. Its owner was Mister Decebal N. who had bought the car at the end of the ‘80s, and had “the whole house, fishing rod and all” kept inside it. Today, both the owner and the Dacia are gone. Daniel N., the owner’s son, took the car to the Scrapping Unit in 2017, following a notification from City Hall. “Ever since I was a child I drove it, even without a driving licence; he would repair it immediately by himself or with the help of friends and would not abandon it. It was his first car, he would drive to grandma, go fishing in it”, the son told us. The neighbours also drove the car, and they came to tell us about the drives they took with Mister Decebal’s white Dacia. The grass-covered, white Dacia “moon-landed” in front of the Romanian Academy building and also photographed in the album, is also gone.

The slug and green moss detail belongs to the last car in the album, the white Dacia on Hariclea Darclée Street. The Dacia and the house next to which it is parked are one soul; they belonged to a family which is no more; a neighbour told us that the inheritors pass by, from time to time, to pick up the mail. We dropped a letter about DACIA 50. They haven’t answered yet.

A few conclusions. The owners we have talked with are aware of the traces left on their cars, traces that were left either by other people, by nature or even by themselves. They are also aware of the fact that those traces have a strong impact on the car's place in the public realm.

From a distance, passers-by deem many cars to be abandoned goods. Neighbours, however, and even newcomers, can connect such cars to their rightful, current or former owner, can pair cars with people and houses. There are cases of cars getting old out there on the street in front of houses or blocks of flats, outliving their owners and becoming a point of reference, an object telling the story of its owners and becoming a conversation topic between the neighbours. Moreover, the neighbourhood relations play the role of some sort of barometer of whether goods on public land should be protected or removed [4].

The Dacia car has a “social life” [5] in the public realm. In many cases, when parked on public domain for a long time, it often remains there due to an “endowment effect” [6] and “aversion towards loss” [7], an asset “paid in cash”, an ownership thereof being perceived much more strongly than in the case of goods paid in instalments. It is something which is kept “in the family”, even after the purchase of a second automobile. The Dacia car is “a family member”, an animate object, almost, to some owners.

In other cases, it is a traded good, sold on the market, or bartered (the car left behind by tenant), or for the scrapping program, in exchange for a voucher. The car is forced out of public domain either by the people (neighbours, thieves), by nature (deterioration of the body), by lawmakers and the law (summons, car towing) and taken either to the Scrapping Unit, or to a private space in the city or the country, in a garage or at car shops for reconditioning. Also, according to the interlocutors, it may go either to car heaven or to car hell. In the place where remembrance and nostalgia dwell, Dacia, the “beloved” car and family member, makes its way into family and travel photo albums and peoples’ memories. The car, the digital trace of it at a specific point in time, is uploaded to virtual space and resides on the electronic devices of their owners, on Google Maps, and in images on social media.

Notes.

[1] During 1970s, the Dacia 1300 colour palette covered 12 colours and was extended to 30 colour codes in the 1980s. Due to the hand application of multiple layers of paint, the Dacia cars’ colour and body have also been transformed, in many cases becoming a new real “skin”. During the lifespan of a car, changes occur not only at perception and contextualization levels, but also in the way the car is used, as different practices get established over time (ed. Hahn Hans Peter, Weiss Hadas, *Mobility, Meaning and Transformations of Things: shifting contexts of material culture through time and space*, Oxford, 2013, p. 2). This custom car painting method was possible due to the existence of an unmediated relation between man and car and by reducing externalized maintenance services to a bare minimum, as described in the first part of this album. More and more during the last 10 years, we could find cases of cars modified by nature itself, where, in the hand applied layers of paint, a true micro-fauna and micro-flora flourished over the car body, engraving it with other distinctive signs, building together a small-scale “third landscape”. The third landscape (“le tiers paysage”) is a concept developed by Gilles Clément and it refers to urban spaces, in particular, but also to the spaces beyond the urban boundaries, either totally deserted or controlled by man. The common feature of these spaces, different in shape and length, is their autonomous development, independent from man’s activities and actions. “The third landscape is culturally developed in line with the organized territory and in opposition to it. [...] A space without a third landscape would appear as a mind without its subconscious part. This ideal state of art without demons does not exist in any culture known to man” (Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage*, Paris, 2004, p. 23).

[2] “Vulturul” plant, a thermal ceramics production unit, was opened in 1884 by Ulrich Weittman in Comarnic, Prahova county. <https://prahova.webgarden.com/menu/valea-prahovei/comarnic>, accessed on 07.05.2018.

[3] Custom duties varied from country to country based on the engine capacity. This rule also applied to Greece, the Dacia car model manufactured for this country being equipped with an 1185 cc engine, adapted to the import-export constraints. The car exported to the Canadian market, described in the first part of this album, was equipped in line with the anti-pollution policy requirements (Chiriac Vasiliu, *Automobilul în România. Istorie și tehnică*, București, 1994, p. 179-180). Bearing in mind the examples included in the first part and the interviews included in these field notes, historically, Dacia can be considered a “flexible” car, customized by the manufacturer UAP or by the final user, its subsequent owner.

[4] Relations in social practices are not built only between human beings, but also between humans and objects as power receptors and promoters. Alfred Gell defines the concept of social agency of things, considering the example of the relation between a child and his favorite toys, a girl and her doll becoming best friends. “Social agency can be exercised relative to things, and social agency can be exercised by things (and also animals)” (Alfred Gell, *Art and agency, An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford, 1998, p. 17-18). Moreover, while examining the “car culture”, John Urry underlines: “It is important to note that there are multiple variations in how the car has been desired and ‘inhabited’ by different social groups, that there are historical shifts in the ways of inhabiting the car” (John Urry, *Journal: Theory, Culture & Society* 21(4-5), article: *The ‘System’ of Automobility*, 2004, p. 31). The same car is endowed with different characteristics by the various people from neighborhoods, passers-by or by drivers from the area. For some - Dacia enthusiasts, owners or neighbors who rode in it - the car is old and part of the family, and must be protected on the street, while for others is an unwanted object, a “wreck”, junk, blocking the traffic and attracting delinquency and dirt on the street. For some people, as well as for the public administration, the old car on the street is “an object out of use”, a ruin of the past. Following this logic, they consider that the car should be gone from the public realm in order to purify the streets, to install some “order” in the public sphere. The old parked car “pollutes” the space and represents an almost “demonic” presence. As a functional means of locomotion, the car exerts its “right to live on the street”, a concept coined by John Urry, while, as a stationed and immovable inhabitant “occupying the public domain”, it becomes a disputed object among different groups (Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage*, Paris, 2004, Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London, 1966, Urry John, *Journal: Theory, Culture & Society* 21(4-5), article: *The ‘System’ of Automobility*, 2004).

[5] The meaning that people attribute to things derives especially from how those things are used and circulated along their trajectory. “Even if our approach to things is conditioned necessarily by the view that the things have no meanings apart from those that human transactions, attributions and motivations endow them with, the anthropological problem is that this formal truth does not illuminate the concrete, historical circulation of things. For that we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. [...] Thus, even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context” (Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 5). The trajectory of things depends on the cultural context in which they circulate, the path projecting some outside the transacted thing category (Igor Kopytoff, *The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process*, in Arjun Appadurai (ed), *ibidem* p. 64-91).

Since the appearance of Igor Kopytoff’s article first published in the volume “*The social life of things*”, looking at the biography of an object as a means of approaching its social life is a widely adopted strategy. “The passages of an object from its birth to its death or destruction [...] occur through different stations, and each moment in the object’s lifespan seems to have a distinct role. [...] Again, if the car is quite old, and if it has become a rare item, special caution is called for to preserve what is then considered something unique and therefore of specific value” (ed. Hahn Hans Peter, Weiss Hadas, *Mobility, Meaning and Transformations of Things: shifting contexts of material culture through time and space*, Oxford, 2013, p. 2).

[6] Long before the “endowment effect” was defined, Georg Simmel brought to attention the perceived subjective value of a transacted object as being directly proportional with its rarity, time, sacrifice, difficulty, effort spent on obtaining it (Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 2004, New York, p. 62-66). The “endowment effect” is the hypothesis that people assign more value to things merely because they own them, the concept being connected to the ownership effect (researches by Daniel Kahneman, Jack Knetsch, Richard Thaler).

[7] People don’t like spending money. They experience a certain pain when paying, due to the aversion they have towards loss. In other words, it is better to not lose five euros than to gain five euros. The “loss aversion” concept refers to people’s tendency to prefer avoiding losses to acquiring equivalent gains (researches by Amos Tversky, Daniel Kahneman). The pain felt when spending money is more acute when using cash because the payment is tangible, the cost of money, the work employed for obtaining them is real (researches by Rick, Cryder & Loewenstein; Thomas, Desai & Seenivasan). This pain is reduced when paying by card or as a loan, because they are less tangible than cash, and so too is the sense of ownership toward the product acquired.

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