

Testing the Physiognomy of the *Arhitectura* Magazine 1952-1989¹

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Keywords

the *Arhitectura* magazine, ideology, political and professional thematic, editorial compass

Publishing an architectural magazine has never been simple in Romania, no matter the political regime. Before World War II, many such publications had meteoric life; enthusiasm and good intentions were ineffective when confronted with reality in terms of money, authors and time. Among the twenty-five professional magazines that came out between 1890 and 1947², most of them ephemeral, the *Arhitectura* magazine had the longest life and an unusual consistency. Founded in 1906 as the periodical of the Society of Architects, it continuously represented the "official" point of view of the sponsoring organisation through thirty-six issues published (although with many disruptions and delays³) until 1944.

From this perspective, the 1952-1989 period might look as much more favourable, since 239 issues of (the "renewed") *Arhitectura* were published with no interruption. Certain delays in its publication are noticeable, especially at the end of the 1980s, but this is irrelevant in a context where the delays in the editorial calendar of other cultural magazines in the same period could be counted in years⁴. Undeniably, governmental funding secured the magazine's "durability". However, we may question how easy it was to ensure this resilience.

Like its antecessor, the new series was also published due to the stubborn determination of its editorial staff (and, probably, their shadow supporters⁵) who had to cope with a new kind

1 This article is based on an older study: A.M. Zahariade, "Privire generală asupra evoluției revistei 'Arhitectura'" [An Overview of the Evolution of "Arhitectura" Magazine], in *Istorie reprimată* [Repressed Histories], A.M. Zahariade (director), Augustin Ioan, Nicolae Lascu, 2001, (CNCSIS research project, not published).

2 Between the first architectural magazine, *Analele arhitecturii și ale artelor cu care se leagă* (1890-1893), and the last issue of *Simetria* (1939-1947).

3 Before WW II, besides the 25 mainly professional magazines, G. Tabacu counted 18 building periodicals, 16 cultural and artistic and 11 commercial, where architecture was present. The life of the overwhelming majority of the 25 architectural publications was very short; most of them had a handful of issues. See Gabriela Tabacu, "Arhitectura în periodicele românești de specialitate până la al Doilea Război Mondial" [Architecture in Romanian Periodicals until the Second World War] (PhD diss., UAUIM, 1999).

4 I.e., the remarkable cultural magazine *Secolul 20*.

5 It is highly plausible that the publication of the review enjoyed certain support in the establishment where some architects occupied important positions.

of political circumstances, less favourable in many respects. Unlike its pre-war predecessor, which had evolved and defined its position in a lively and stimulating editorial milieu, where architecture was present not only in professional publications, but also in many other cultural magazines, the new *Arhitectura* was the only publicly available periodical dedicated to building design during Communism⁶; it recorded almost all the architectural achievements of the period, presented and commented by architects. Taking into consideration that the number of other publications (original books, translations, local in-house titles, foreign magazines, etc.) was quite limited⁷, we may infer that the new magazine occupied the chief area of the written professional culture of the period, a culture that *Arhitectura* spread (and, maybe, stimulated) all over the country. From this perspective, the magazine was not just a passive witness, a precious and unavoidable archive of the post-war Romanian architecture. It played a rather vital function; it may be seen as a “producer of history”, as an actor in the period’s history of the profession. We shall revisit the magazine from this latter viewpoint, trying to learn more on its role in the new professional life.

The difficulties originate in the bivalent character of the magazine after the war, professional and political, when the written word was supposed to educate the “new man” (the “new architect” in our case) and all publications were subjected to censorship and reviewed from a political perspective. How did the magazine cope with this constraint in the context of a tacit “pact” concluded between the new establishment and the cultural institutions⁸, how did it ensure a balance between the new ideology and the strictly professional matters? These are questions that need to be answered. We still lack detailed information regarding the inner life of the editorial board and we are not aware of the particular political pressures that pre-formed the destiny of the magazine or encumbered the publishing of each issue; we do not even know all the editors’ names! As the archives of the Union of Architects are still sealed, the only support we have in this quest is the magazine itself.

This paper will follow the *Arhitectura* magazine up, observing its “surface”, its immediately visible levels - and their transformations, avoiding excursions in the substance of the articles. From formal and quantitative matters (subordination, scientific board and editors, periodicity, number of pages) to the graphic appearance (format and size, cover page, layout, etc.) and to the thematic structure of each issue (as it may be deduced from reading editorials, tables of contents, columns, main themes, authors, etc.), all these aspects form the layers of an “editorial skin” susceptible to suggest meaningful stories (or to conceal others). Far from being a simple covering, the “skin” of the magazine is lively and functions as an interface; it is the place where the external pressures /prohibitions /demands first encounter the inner expectations of the profession. Sometimes the ideological duties are absorbed at this level and do not directly affect the content. Thus, examining this sensitive membrane allows us to infer editorial intentions, orientations or troubles, signs of how the magazine understood its mission and responsibility towards the profession against the backdrop of that period.

6 There were also periodicals in closed circuit, as BIT (*Bulletin of Technical Information*).

7 As concerns the books, a first counting in the National Library shows that a number of about 450 titles concerning architecture, urbanism, history of architecture and restoration (more than a half are books of history and architecture and monographs of towns and historic places) has been published in 45 years (1944-1989), excluding the about 240 books with strictly technical character. Among them the number of translations is very low: 14 titles and two critical anthologies of theoretical texts. In order to have an image of the scale, a search in the electronic catalogue of the Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art shows in the same period a number of 1359 French publications with the word *architecture* in the title and 219 with the word *urbanisme*.

8 After 1944, a kind of entente is gradually concluded between the government and the “scientists” (the members of the Academy), sealed in 1948 with the re-founding of the R.P.R. Academy.

Formal moments in the evolution of the magazine

The Society of Architects' *Arhitectura* ends its existence with the 1943-1944 volume, Years X-XI. Even the Society of Architects' survival is uncertain at the time; its independence comes to an end as it is dissolved in the equivocal group of "technical specialists". In 1952 it is re-founded, under the new name of Union of Architects (UA) and is empowered to publish its own new magazine, the ARHITECTURA R.P.R.⁹.

This does not mean that 1944-1953 is a total editorial hiatus. Various architectural periodicals are brought out by several interim professional associations, proving that part of the architects involved in the publishing of the old magazine were still active and secured a certain editorial continuity. Among these, the most representative are the 1950 five issues of the homonym "*Arhitectura*", (of the R.P.R. Scientific Association of Technicians and of the Ministry of Constructions) and the 1952 twelve numbers (up to 40 pages each) of "*Arhitectură și Urbanism*" (of the R.P.R. Scientific Association of Engineers and Technicians and of the Ministry of Construction and Construction Materials). They may be seen as links in the magazine's history concatenation.¹⁰ Along with other period professional publications, they stay proof of both an urge for having a periodical form of written representation (and professional platform at the same time), and an already settled editorial culture in this field.

On the 13th of November 1952, the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers issue the "Decision regarding the reorganisation of the activity in the field of architecture", which stipulates in article 26/VII that "The present architectural magazine will pass under the authority of the Union of Architects and of the State Committee for Architecture and Construction (CSAC)". On December 21st, the "Plenum of Architects" approves the birth of the new Union with all its accessories (the magazine, the House of Architects, the Architectural Fund). The first issue of ARHITECTURA R.P.R. is published in February 1953; the last one is ARHITECTURA no. 4/1989.

A first run through the magazine's new life records the periodicity and the number of pages of each issue.

1953: 1 issue / 1 volume (50 pages); 1954: 8 issues / 7 volumes (40 pages/issue on average); 1955: 12 issues / 11 volumes (30-50 pages / issue on average); 1956: 12 issues / 11 volumes (35-50 pages/issue on average); 1957: 9 issues / 9 volumes (30 pages, the first issues, 80 pages the last two); 1958: 12 issues / 10 volumes (30 pages/issue on average); 1959: 6 issues / 6 volumes (35 pages/issue on average); 1960: 6 issues / 6 volumes (50-60 pages/issue); 1961: 6 issues / 6 volumes (50-55 pages/issue); 1962: 6 issues / 6 volumes (50-60 pages/issue); 1963: 6 issues / 6 volumes (62 pages each issue); 1964: 6 issues / 6 volumes (ca. 60 pages each issue); 1965: 6 issues / 6 volumes (ca. 60 pages/issue); 1966: 6 issues / 5 volumes (50-60 pages/issue, 90 pages the 2-3); 1967: 6 issues / 6 volumes (ca. 70-75 pages/issue); 1968: 6 issues / 6 volumes (from 90 to 150 pages/issue); 1969: 6 issues / 6 volumes (from 60 to 150 pages/number); 1970: 6 issues / 6 volumes (on average 85-90 pages/issue); 1971: 6 issues / 6 volumes (ca. 80 pages/issue); 1972: 6 issues / 5 volumes (85 pages/issue, 65 pages the last number); 1973: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 70 and 150 pages/issue); 1974: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 70 and 110 pages/issue); 1975: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 70 and 110 pages/issue); 1976: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 70 and 90 pages/issue); 1977: 6 issues / 5 volumes (ca. 100 pages/issue, 130 pages the double volume); 1978: 6 issues / 4 volumes (115 pages the simple issue, 137 and 115 the double volume); 1979: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 65 and 115 pages/issue); 1980: 6 issues / 5 volumes (ca. 90 pages/issue); 1981: 6 issues / 4 volumes (between 65 and 120 pages/issue); 1982: 6 issues / 6 volumes (85 pages/issue, 75 the 5th issue); 1983: 6 issues / 6 volumes (90 pages/issue); 1984: 6 issues / 6 volumes (90 pages/issue); 1985: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 80 and 95 pages/issue); 1986: 6 issues / 6 volumes (85-90 pages/issue); 1987: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 80-90 pages/issue); 1988: 6 issues / 6 volumes (between 80 and 95 pages /issue); 1989: 6 issues / 6 volumes (50-60 pages/issue).

9 From now on, we shall use uppercase for the 1952-1989 magazine, in order to avoid confusions.

10 This period is attentively documented in Irina Tulbure, "Arhitectură și urbanism în România anilor 1944-1960: constrângere și experiment" [Architecture and Urban Planning in Romania, 1944-1960: Constraint and Experiment] (PhD diss., UAUIIM, 2011).

Looking at the above data, we may assume that:

- (1) During the first year certain troubles hindered the publication of the magazine (they were, probably, not financial hurdles since the funding was granted from the state budget).
- (2) Until 1958 the magazine seems to be seeking for the right periodicity, eventually becoming bimestrial.
- (3) Starting with 1960, the average number of pages per issue increases gradually from 40 to 100, which could mean a growing editorial vivacity and solidity. The magazine seems to attain a stable level at the end of the 1960s, which lasted until the end with a very slight decrease in the 1980s; with insignificant exceptions, from 1967 to 1986, there were more than 500 pages published each year (a little less in the last three)¹¹.

This periodization broadly follows the Romanian political context changes, thus confirming the temporal landmarks mentioned above: the end of the Stalinist period, the gradual and cautious acknowledgment of Khrushchev's "architectural revolution" by the Romanian leaders (1956–60) and the official acceptance of modernism and of functionalist urbanism (in the 1960s)¹². From this chapter's quantitative perspective, we may assume that from the end of the 1950s on, the magazine enjoyed an uninterrupted period of stability, since nothing seems to threaten this equilibrium. Can we conjecture that, starting with the early 1960s, the magazine has, in some way, become immune to the external pressures?

A second chronological outline is called to verify the previous periodization by looking at the most noticeable changes in the physiognomy of the magazine: name, subordination, editorial board, graphic formulae (covers, titles, front matters, back matters, body text, paper quality), etc. Here are the relevant findings:

1/1953: Entitled ARHITECTURA R.P.R., the magazine comes into being as *organ of the Union of Architects of R.P.R. and of the State Committee for Architecture and Constructions of the Council of Ministers* (CSAC).¹³

Neither the *Editorial Board* nor the graphic designer is mentioned.

The format is a quarto¹⁴ with an overall classicising, symmetrical aspect. On the elegant semi-vellum cardboard cover, the title is written in capitals in a transitional serif typeface (much more elegant and modern than its predecessor's) and a Corinthian capital embossed below the title¹⁵. There is no title page; the front matter on two opening pages, set in one column and headed by the title *To the Readers*¹⁶, which uses the same typeface as the cover.

The body text (also a serif typeface) is flowed into two symmetrical columns, a symmetry respected by the illustrations (photographs and many technical and hand drawings) mixed in the

11 If we take into consideration the annual volume of pages, the increase between the 1950s and the end of the 1960s is more spectacular than the late 1980s decrease: the 1967 raise is from an average of 360 pages (after the ca. 400 pages in the 1955 and 1956) to over 500 on average, with a peak of around 700 in 1968; the 1980s decrease is from a little over 500 to a little under 500.

12 The 7 December 1954 Speech at the Conference of the Unions of builders, architects and workers in the industries of construction materials and machine building, in the design and research organisations.

13 We tried to translate *ad litteram* the language of the time. The word *organ* (as a part of an organism or a machine) was the generic noun used during Communism for all institutions of the regime.

14 The term "quarto" simply refers to the size of approximately 12 inches (30 cm) tall.

15 According to Tulbure, "Arhitectură și urbanism," the cover of the 1936 *Arhitectura CCCR* is the graphic model for the 1953–1956 issues of ARHITECTURA RPR. However, the latter shows some important differences: a very elegant serif font and the embossed capital.

16 Given the high number of cited articles, and in order to facilitate reading, all article titles mentioned in this paper will be *italicised*, and not, as The Chicago Manual of Style recommends, given within quotation marks (" "). For the same reasons, titles of article and rubrics have only been given in their English translation.

text¹⁷. The symmetrical page layout also uses italics for the titles, initials at the beginning of each article and tailpieces at their end.

The *table of contents*, set in two columns (Romanian and Russian translation), is sent to the *back matter*, along with a *summary* in Russian.

Except for the editorials and part of the political texts, the articles are signed.

For the following issues only the important changes will be recorded/noted:

1/1954: The *body matter* changes subtly: the body text is distributed in two or three columns, according to an unobvious rule. We can infer a taxonomy of the articles or of the headings, or a need for graphical variety, but none of those can be proved¹⁸. No matter the reasons, this graphic practice is repeatedly used in the succeeding issues, often to emphasize the distinction between different “categories” of articles: generally, the two column pattern is used for the politically significant articles (and for translations from Russian - thus endowing them with a similar shade), while the professional pieces are generally set in three columns; the latter format also allows for larger illustrations.

The *summaries* are in Romanian and Russian.

11-12/1955: At the end of the last issue of the year is published a bilingual *annual list of contents* (in Romanian and Russian). This annual list becomes a rule and disappears in 1972.

1956: Since the first issue, the front matter includes a fist page with the title and the *table of contents* (only in Romanian), which becomes the rule.

The body text of all issues is flowed only into two columns.

4-5/1956: The embossed capital disappears from the cover, and slight changes in the graphic layout of the first page can be noticed, displaying a hesitant asymmetry: the logotype remains symmetrical, while the table of contents is left aligned. The body text similarly shows timid signs of modernisation: the text is still “old style” (serif typeface), while the headings are written in sans serif typeface.

12/1956: The annual table of contents is translated in Russian and French.

1/1957: The cover and the graphic concept change following a public competition. The new format is also a quarto, with a lighter vellum cardboard cover, displaying a less austere composition (beige with a white outline drawing), obviously more contemporary, abandoning the previous symmetry. The 1st cover continues on the third of the 4th cover, where the address of the publishing house appears for the first time¹⁹. This more imaginative graphic formula is going to last until 1963. The title, in capitals, uses a sans serif typeface, symbol of modern emancipation. Although probably cheaper, the cover is sober and stylish. This elegance fades in time, and the artistic quality is unequal, maybe denoting a search for identity; only the sans serif title (with various fonts) will last.

The body text, though traditional, seems to aim at a freer layout, but not very convincingly. Initials are no longer used, neither the tailpieces. Until 1963 only minor graphic changes will occur.

5/1957: The magazine changes its subordination, becoming exclusively the “*organ*” of the Union of Architects.

7/1957: The issue has a double numbering: year V – nr. 7 (41), which will last. Although it brings to mind the old magazine’s issues (e.g. years IX-X/1943-44), this pattern rather marks a time limit: both the year and the issue number are counted starting with 1952.

¹⁷ This page layout was commonly used by most of the architectural reviews since the 19th century.

¹⁸ At the beginning, the text of the columns *Dictionary* and *Chronicle* is formatted on three columns.

¹⁹ The magazine uses the UA’s headquarters address: 9 Episcopiei St.

8-9/1958: For the first time, the *editorial board* comes out of its anonymity. With the exception of a civil engineer, the eight other members are architects, esteemed personalities, most of them employed in the School of Architecture²⁰.

4/1960: ARHITECTURA R.P.R. is again subordinated to the *State Committee for Constructions, Architecture and Systematisation* (CSCAS, the new name of CSAC).

1/1962: The summary is translated into Russian, French, English and German.

1/1963: the magazine is published in a new form, a square format of 21 cm, a totally new graphic concept, with very colourful vellum cardboard cover. The new logotype uses lowercase sans serif letters (R.P.R. is however in uppercase). The whole body text has a vivid, dynamic, asymmetrical composition, matching the text freely (generally flowed in three columns) with many photographs and architectural drawings of various sizes, sometimes occupying two pages. This is the second major graphic change, and the new format will be observed till the end of the period with minor changes only on the first page.

For the first time an *Editor-in-Chief* is mentioned.²¹

The table of contents is translated into Russian, French, German, English.

The magazine publishes *advertisements* for the first time. Publicity on the last pages becomes common practice and continues till 1989.

1/1965: Minor changes in the graphic concept of the first page.

4/1965: The magazine changes its name from ARHITECTURA R.P.R. to ARHITECTURA, as the pre-war magazine, title that will last till 1989.

2-3/1966: The second cover describes international subscription methods.

1/1968: Starting with this issue, the magazine is published on two different sizes of pages and paper qualities: certain informative permanent columns are printed on narrower newspaper-looking pages, while the professional themes use the regular square pages.

2/1968: *Caricatures* or satirical drawings begin to appear in the magazine.

5/1969: The CSCAC is replaced by the *State Committee for Local Economy and Administration* (CSEAL)²².

2/1971: The magazine is again subordinated exclusively to the Union of Architects of the Socialist Republic of Romania (R.S.R.). At the same time the word *organ* disappears from the first page.

3/1971: The *Editorial Board* grows larger (from 9 to 12 members, all architects), headed by the same editor-in-chief²³. Most of the new members are younger, only two of them having been in the previous board. The names of the *graphic designers* are mentioned for the first time, together with the photographer.

1/1972: Other minor graphic changes. It is obvious that the magazine was looking for a new graphic concept.

20 M. Alifanti, M. Bercovici, M. Caffé, M. Locar, A. Lupescu, M. Melicson, C. Moșinski, Gh. Pavlu, G. Pătrașcu.

21 Marcel Melicson, architect, theorist, author of three books on modern architecture, which was rare at the time, was awarded in 1971 the medal *Ordinul Muncii clasa a II-a* for his activity as editor-in-chief (Decree no. 138/1971, Art. 17.). In 1976 he emigrated to Israel.

22 CSEAL is founded for "resolving coherently the problems of local administration, for guiding and controlling the local administration's executive committees in this field of activity" (Law no. 31/1969).

23 Mircea Alifanti, Zoltan Balasz, Miloș Cristea, Dorian Hardt, Constantin Jugurică, Eusebie Latiș, Mircea Lupu, Marcel Melicson (Editor-in-Chief), Dan Prodescu, Ion Răducanu, Gheorghe Săsărman, Victor Sebestyen.

2 and 3-4/1972: These issues record the replacement of the old editor-in-chief by a younger architect and professor in the School²⁴.

3-4/1972: A cover with hints of pop art. The issue will be awarded an international prize in 1975.

1/1974: From this issue on, the magazine becomes thematic; hence, the title of each issue is clearly announced on the first page, heading the table of contents. The graphic scheme is completely stabilised, expressing a definite editorial idea in terms of artistic concept, column's rationale and page layout.

5/1974: The issue records a new change: the place of the Editorial Board (*Colegiul de redacție*) is taken by an enlarged list of members of the Leading Council (*Consiliul de Conducere*), including the members of the Editorial Board (marked with an asterisk in the alphabetical list)²⁵. In time, there will be other modifications in the list²⁶; we shall mention only the ones we consider important.

3/1975: The issue announces the participation of the review in the competition of architectural magazines on the occasion of the 12th UIA Congress in Madrid (May 1975); the volume 3-4/1972 is awarded the 3rd prize and the bronze medal.

6/1976: The publishing house changes its location; the new address is in the School²⁷.

1-2/1978: The issue records the addition to the board of a well-known painter together with the director of an important design-institute in Bucharest - who will later become president of the *Council*²⁸.

1/1979: A note concerning the foundation of the magazine in 1906 is added to the double numeration, which will last till 1989.

1980: From now on the paper quality decreases gradually: first the vellum paper of the square pages is lighter, followed by the narrow pages whose quality is poorer and poorer.

6/1981: The chief editor is replaced by another member of the board and the former's name disappears²⁹. The new head, simply named *editor*, will remain in this position till the end of the period, ensuring the continuity of the magazine with no structural or graphic changes, except for the continuous impoverishment.

4/1986: Starting with this issue, the 2nd cover credits particular contributors to the illustration of the issue. The mention will be there, with an increasing number of names, till 1989. The benevolent contributors are institutions (generally design institutes), architects, and, later, students.

1/1987: This issue records a reduction of the *Leading Council* members (ten, some of them recently graduated, out of which four in the editorial board) and a new composition³⁰.

24 Melicson emigrates to Israel in 1976. Mircea Lupu, the new editor-in-chief remains in this position till his own emigration to Switzerland.

25 E. Abrudeanu, Z. Balasz, O. Bantu, A. Budișteanu, M. Enescu, A. Florian, R. Găleşanu, D. Gheorghiu, B. Grinberg, M. Lupu (președinte), N. Munteanu, A. Iotzu*, C. Jugurică*, N. Laszlo, E. Latiș, D. Prodescu, T. Ricci, A.M. Sandu*, Gh. Săsărman*, I. Vlădescu. None of them belong to the first board; the majority are about the age of 35-40; except for Laszlo, all are architects, employed in the School (all the members of the Editorial Board) or in design institutes.

26 Most of them (if not all) are due to emigration, which becomes more frequent in that period.

27 The whole Union of Architects had to move from no. 9 Episcopiei St.; it would be hosted in the "Ion Mincu" Institute of Architecture, 18-20 Academiei St. until 1999.

28 Ion Bițan (professor at the Fine Arts School) joins the board along with Constantin Jugurică (director of *Proiect-București*).

29 Mircea Lupu emigrates to Switzerland. The new editor-in-chief is the architect Ștefan Radu Ionescu, a much less visible public person, but a very enduring one.

30 A. Cișmigiu, Șt. Datcu, A. Firuță*, A. Florian, Șt.R. Ionescu (Editor), C. Jugurică (President), E. Latiș*, C. Marinescu, Gh. Moraru, A. Sandu*, I. Tureanu. On the one hand, "safe" names from political point of view; on the other hand, very young members (recently graduated, as Tureanu).

4/1989: The last issue during the communist period, since the publishing of the magazine was much delayed.

5-6/1989: The first issue of ARHITEKTURA that came out after the Revolution.

Certainly, the moments of changes spotlighted above are different in nature and significance, and they could have been motivated by various reasons; yet, their chronology shows more signs of editorial vibrancy than the first outline let us infer. We can notice periods of unrest, when significant changes occur frequently, and times of (apparent) calm, which both point out at certain protruding moments, thus suggesting directions to be investigated through further researches in order to understand the history of the magazine. Some ideas can be explored:

During the whole period, the magazine was uninterruptedly supervised by the Union of Architects and was published by architects. The branch of the central administration, the second overseer, was less stable, with no members in the editorial board, and changed with the political twists: CSAC/CSCAS until 1969, the government's direct arm in the professional field, and CSEAL, less centralised, representing the local administration and supposedly more autonomous³¹. At this research stage it is difficult to evaluate the role of the latter chaperon: to control, to finance, to shield...; probably all of these, but with different magnitudes, depending on political circumstances. However, when looking attentively at the chronology of changes, one could suspect a raise of some spirit of independence inside the UA (together with the editorial board), which triumphs in 1971 when the professional union fully acquires the responsibility of the magazine; getting rid of the *wooden word* "organ" in the title page could be seen as symbolic in this regard. The previous, temporary moment of exclusively professional mastership (1957-1960) remains to be studied. From the perspective of the magazine's subordination, the most important moments seem to be concentrated around 1957 and, again, around 1971, to which we may add the year 1965 (in the wake of the 9th Party Congress, at the beginning of the brief period of semi-liberalisation of the regime) when the name of the magazine lost its "national/ideological" badge.

In parallel, the dynamics of the editorial board highlights the years 1958 (the first time the board is mentioned), 1971 (marking its enlargement and rejuvenation) and 1987 (its contraction). It is difficult to interpret the composition of the board lacking deeper knowledge of the personal history of each member. The anonymity of the board in the early years could also raise many questions. Maybe certain members were not "politically presentable" and, in this case, we have to ask how it was possible to keep them: was the professional will more powerful than the ideological precepts? We do not know. For the moment, it is only obvious that, as soon as the board was disclosed, people involved in the architectural education dominated it. Theoretically, the years 1963 (the first mention of an editor-in-chief), 1972 and 1981 (replacements of the editors-in-chief) should be added to the list. However, these changes are of a different nature. They are not linked to visible mutations in the editorial philosophy, but caused by the emigration of the first two known editors-in-chief; they were both personalities with a large public visibility, while the one who headed the magazine from 1981 on was lesser known, which seems to have been a diplomatic choice.

In what concerns the evolution of the magazine's design, the topic is too rich in itself to be summarised in this paper. The graphic concept changed many times, and it is hard to believe that these visible modifications were arbitrary; they certainly mark moments of deeper transformations in the editorial policy, probably some of them patiently prepared, since the major graphic changes

³¹ After the 9th Congress of the Party and the new territorial reorganisation, the local administration was supposed to acquire larger autonomy and responsibility in the economic development.

are generally announced by earlier minor adaptations. In large, the appearance of the magazine undeniably shows the transition from the (neo) classicist, austere symmetry of the first issues – certainly demanded by the Stalinist affiliation – to a more and more contemporary graphic conception, whose form is definitely settled in 1971-72 and maintained with no significant changes up to the last issue. At a first sight, the most noticeable moments of change are the years 1957 (the new cover and layout resulted from a national competition, yet forerun by previous, more discreet signs starting with 1956³², the double numbering), 1963 (the square format and its free graphic scheme that the magazine observes till the end³³); 1968 (the same form but with two page sizes, the designers' identity³⁴, the professional photography, the appearance of caricatures and advertising, etc.) and 1974 (the final maturation of the form applied to thematic issues). Though the magazine observed till the end the graphic concept inaugurated in 1963, it is not difficult to remark a sort of gloomy mannerism of the 1980s: the artistic exuberance is partially lost, the professional photographs are replaced by many hand drawings, copies from foreign architectural magazines, photographs from personal archives, etc. At any rate, material difficulties are obvious in those years, when the quality of the paper becomes poorer and poorer; from this point of view, the presence of about 40 narrow pages was probably of great help, and their final low quality absorbed the scarcity of funding. But what was once a very elegant concept became rather distressing (this was not an exception during that decade).

The magazine is richly illustrated all through the period: plans, hand drawings (sketches, artistic perspectives) and photographs, though the printing quality of the photography was never exceptional. The proportion of photos (generally taken by the UA's photographer) is larger in the 1970s than in the previous or the following periods³⁵. In the last years, the illustration of the magazine is achieved due to institutional and private contributors, credited on the 2nd cover. Their number increases from 12 in 1986 to 28 in 1989: institutions, architects, and students. Thus, we can add to the list of notable moments the year 1986, when this "participatory" illustrative work is first mentioned.

Compared with the periodization indicated by the first chronological outline, the moments spotlighted by the formal changes indicate a more agitated life of the magazine. These indications have to be confirmed through future researches, but, for the time being, we can affirm that:

(1) Generally, most of the main formal changes are subsequent to important political events and are consistent with their bearings; the orientations are always immediately discussed in a *Plenum* or a *National Conference* of the UA (reported in review). For instance, the magazine's emancipation of the years 1957-58 follows the 2nd PMR Congress (7th PCR Congress), a political turning point, when the "national way of building socialism" was first stated. Architecture was assigned important tasks, discussed in many official instances, especially in the context of the "design institutes decentralisation"; naturally, under those new circumstances, the magazine

32 For instance the disappearance of the embossed capital from the cover, along with the still shy asymmetry of the first page that would be developed from the issue 4-5/1956 on. Coincidence or not, a little later in the same year, the summary is translated in French, too.

33 The choice of the square format is intriguing in many respects. It is difficult to say whether it was more expensive than the previous quarto or not, and moreover, which was its model, as far as most of the contemporary architectural magazines all over the world were rectangular. We can conjecture that this unusual shape was a clear statement of autonomy or of originality that the editorial board sought for and cherished till the end.

34 The designers' anonymity is removed in the issue no. 3/1971. Except for Grosu all are architects: from 1971, Adrian Panaitescu (cover) and Dorian Hardt (layout); from 1973, Al. Sandu (layout), cover and graphic design: Dimitrie Sbierea, Mihai Grosu, Tudor Dumitrașcu (till 1984); in the 1980s, Dan Marin, Bogdan Gheorghiu 6/1984, Răzvan Luscov (a student; 3-4/1988), Codruța Bănulescu 4/1989. Ion Dumitru, the photographer, was a UA employee up to his retreat after 1989.

35 The magazine's photographic documents have been archived and digitalised through the UAR project 5 / 22.06.2009 (A.M. Zahariade - director, Irina Tulbure, Miruna Stroe, Ilinca Păun, Ciprian Buzilă).

was expected to play an important role in the next years. Likewise, we can find such political precedents for the other moments of change, though their reflex is subtler and more oblique.

(2) In spite of this political dependence, since the major formal changes are generally preceded by series of minor variations, they give the impression of representing the outcome of an editorial will, patiently prepared and implemented little by little. This impression is obviously in contradiction with the previous assertion, but we can venture the idea that the editorial body (or the UA) was very attentive to catch any political opportunity and use it to the benefit of the magazine. For instance, the change of title from ARHITECTURA RPR into ARHITECTURA (an aim certainly targeted at and pursued in order to affirm the professional independence) seems to have been occasioned by the July 1965 Congress of the Party, when the Romanian Popular Republic (RPR) became the Socialist Republic of Romania (RSR); there is no other credible explanation of this highly symbolic gesture.

We may expect to find more indications concerning the editorial philosophy by approaching the magazine's substance through the editorial column and the table of contents, the deepest layers of the magazine's surface. The *editorial*, the "mission statement", is not present in all volumes; yet, each issue has a *table of contents* that can be read as the direct result of the editor's intentions. As it was previously mentioned, with the exception of the first (and sole) 1953 issue (where it is placed at the end of the magazine), the table of contents is published on the first page, below the title. Besides the enumeration of the article titles, certainly revealing, the various layouts of the table of contents can also indicate possible editorial intentions. The *annual summaries*, published between 1955 and 1971 in the last issue of the editorial year, are also helpful in this respect, along with the *summaries* (concise descriptions of the contents) published at the end of each number from 1953 to 1/1962. It may be worth noting that the summary is translated into Russian starting with issue 12/1956 and, from 6/1961 on, also in French (and, exceptionally, in English and German as well).

The political content of the magazine

Looking no further than the titles, the presence of political matters is striking for an architectural review. It seems that ARHITECTURA exhibits a double nature, political and professional, which jars us by how atypical it is for a specialised review, although symptomatic for so many publications issued under the communist regime³⁶. This certainly derives from the Stalinism-packed context of its birth in 1952, at the apogee of the party purges and witch-hunts. As specified in the official documents, ARHITECTURA was not – and it could not have been – just a professional vehicle or forum; it was intended to become an effective instrument of political education and propaganda. This was the *sine qua non* condition of its existence as an architectural periodical. Henceforth a sort of dualism (political and professional) is present all through the period, no matter the intensity or the nuances that these intertwining elements acquire in certain moments.

The *editorial* is expected to clarify this particular feature. It is generally meant to express the editors' opinion regarding either the general doctrine of the magazine or the main theme presented in the issue. Or, in the specific case of ARHITECTURA, just this explanatory function is eluded or takes peculiar forms. In a way, one might even say that the magazine has no *editorial*, although, formally, an opening article acknowledged by the board is found in certain issues. As

³⁶ The two dimensions are pervasive in architecture, and we shall not insist on this *topos*. We shall only try to sketch their specific reflexion in ARHITECTURA.

far as the magazine was politically conditioned and controlled, defining its clear orientation was certainly problematic, and it seems that the editors chose to eschew statements in this respect. It is impossible to say whether the board avoided a clear assertion in order to insure the magazine's existence through this equivocal position, or there was no clear statement to be made. Besides, this sort of vagueness was characteristic to many artistic publications during that period. In fact, the title *Editorial* is rarely used as such; it appears in only two volumes of the magazine (1/1962 and 2/1973), but is often used in the *annual summaries*, grouping under this heading certain opening articles assumed by the board.

We can concede that the board's position was frail under the circumstances of the beginnings (we still do not know how fragile it really was), but we have already conjectured an apparently stable period (from the 1960s to 1989) in the course of which the UA gained exclusive control of the magazine (1971) and when the graphic conception shows real freedom. We shall try to see which is the board's position during these periods.

The magazine makes its début with an opening column *To the Readers* (1/1953), an editorial which is only an oath taken to the Stalinist establishment; it is difficult to evaluate how circumstantial this oath was. Henceforward, we find editorials only from time to time, in all probability, in moments of certain political relevance - (some are obvious, as celebrations, beginning and end of State Plans, Party Congress, etc.; but others are more obscure).

In the backwash of Stalinism, editorials (when published) have almost exclusively political titles, such as: *For the 7th Anniversary of the R.P.R.* (1/1955), *Welcoming the 2nd P.M.R. Congress* (11-12/1955), *The 2nd P.M.R. Congress* (1/1956), *The Anniversary of the Great Revolution* (10-11/1958), *90 years since V.I. Lenin's Birth* (2/1960), etc. However, in certain issues, the editorial is more related to architecture, even if it keeps the political message to the fore, as for instance: *One Year of Activity* (1/1954), *A Decade of Important Transformation in the Architecture of the R.P.R.* (6-7/1954), *Working out Type-Projects – the Main Task in the Field of Architecture* (3/1956), *Reducing the Building Costs – Architects' Main Task* (6/1958) *Let's Improve the Architects' Work in All Regions of the Country* (8-9/1958), *The Tasks of Designers and Builders in 1960* (1/1960), etc. More neutral and professionally oriented are the editorials concerning the *Plenums* of the UA and the *Annual Prizes* awarded by the government or the UA, or the intriguing *The Architectural Critique and the Critics-Architects* (6/1959). In the 1960s, the politicised formula gradually thins, making room for the professional statement to open some volumes; certain titles are really challenging, under the motto *Discussing...* This seems consistent with the 1958 disclosure of the board's identity. Though many editorials are signed by esteemed names of the period, as if the board does not want to make its presence too obvious and delegates responsibility, which may be seen as a rather cautious attitude; and this is not consistent with the board's new visibility. The politicised formula still resurfaces on exceptional occasions, as for example in 1970 (the year of a devastating flood), when the editorials are meant to reflect the architects' mobilisation: *Letter Addressed by the Leading Committee of the UA to Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu* (2/1970), *A Working Plan for Implementing the Instructions Regarding Architectural and Urban Activity in the Counties* (2/1970), *Main Objective: the Recovery of Calamity-Stricken Regions* (3/1970). Similarly, others refer to the political leaders' presence at the UA major events. Sometimes, there are two editorials (with redundant titles), one political and the other professional: e.g. Petre Blajovici³⁷, *Certain Momentous Issues of Architecture and Urbanism in Our Country*, Followed By *Architectural and Urban Matters* (1/1971).

³⁷ Petre Blajovici, important member of the Party, was at that time President of CSEAL, the official subordinator of the review till 1971. The moment is interesting: it seems a delegation of responsibility to the UA, since from the number 2/1971 on the UA remains the only institution in charge with the review.

From 1974 on, when the magazine becomes thematic, we could expect an expression of a firmer professional position of the board. Paradoxically, its presence is even more withheld and we cannot find editorials any more. However, in many such issues, the openings rubrics *Bibliography* and *Agenda*, are followed (generally on the 9th page) by an introduction of the main theme through an article with general character or by an interview signed by an architect with certain fame, invited by the board. We may suppose that these more theoretic texts assume the function of a professionally based editorial. This structure without editorial apparently continues till 1989, although from the issue 2/1982 on, a very visible - though short and quite singular - political message (a large photograph and a slogan) is inserted between the first permanent opening columns and the development of the main theme (on the same page 9). Seemingly, this message plays the role of an impersonal editorial, a visual "statement of conformity" with the official political dimension of the magazine.

If the editorial remains cryptic as to the board's intentions, we can gather certain clues from the *annual summaries*. Thus, in the first ones (from 1955 to 1958) the *editorials* are mentioned as such. A first change occurs in 1958, when the *editorial* becomes part of a "cluster" under the ambiguous heading of *Editorials-General Matters-Documents*, renamed in 1960 *Editorials-Documents*. More revealing is, perhaps, the 1962 modification, when the editorial is grouped under a permanent rubric curiously entitled *Editorials, Articles of Theory and General*, which becomes in 1966 *Debates-Critique*, in 1969 *Editorials-General Articles-Discussions Critique* and in 1970 *Editorials-General Articles*. After 1974, the title *Editorial* disappears, as do the annual summaries. Since it is hard to believe that these changes were innocent, we may conjecture the board's subjugent intention to endow the editorial with a professional, theoretical or critical dimension, which they tried to carry on through the *feature article*, a formula adopted in 1974. Maybe the unusual, politicised editorial was only a way to circumvent the problem of expressing an independent professional position. In any case, to suppose that the editorial was used by the board, all through the period, as a sort of buffer zone between the political circumstantial obligations and the professional aspirations is a highly plausible hypothesis.

Yet, the political load of the magazine is not entirely absorbed at this level, as the table of contents shows. The regime's ideology impregnates the full substance of the magazine, and its message is conveyed directly, through political discourses, or indirectly, as reflected in the professional articles. Since we are studying the physiognomy of the magazine, it is impossible to examine at this level the ideological reflex in the architectural discourse; we shall only sketch some features.

Thus, in certain early issues, the political topics of the moment are present *per se*: transcripts of political speeches, some translated from Russian, official comments with directive character, rhetorical or encomiastic, generally connected to special occasions (e.g. ceremonial anniversaries or important political events). Starting with issue no. 2/1955, these articles are gathered under the rubric *Documents*, which seems especially created for Khrushchev's 1954 discourse³⁸. In time, under this heading are also hosted "normative documents" (i.e. CDCAS documents – instrumental, professionally targeted echoes of the political message). The creation of a special rubric for political matters could be particularly meaningful: when it is present, the political discourse no longer occupies the place of the editorial and goes to the end of the issue. Moreover, the special relation between this rubric and the *editorial* (their interchangeability) is proven by their unification under the title *Editorials-Documents* in the annual summaries, mentioned above. The rubric *Documentary*, published in 1-2/1958, is the innocuous follower of *Documents*, as it

38 The 4th November *Decision of the CC of PCUS and the Council of Ministers of the USSR concerning ways to remove excesses in building design and execution* (signed by the Party Secretary N. Khrushchev and the President of the CM, N. Bulganin) followed by the *Message addressed by the CC of PCUS and the Council of Ministers of the USSR to the 2nd Unional Congress of Soviet architects*.

isolates (with no other plausible reason) topics with circumstantial political meanings that could have been placed in other columns (e.g. *Problems Concerning the Dwelling Design in the USSR*, published in 1-2 and 3/1958 under this headline could have been entered under the existing rubric *From Abroad*).

However, the political discourse, when present, never occupies more than a third of the issue. The political dependence is rather conveyed through the long, naïve-populist formulation of many titles, and, particularly, through the selection of the professional themes: compulsory themes imposed by the regime's urgent political objectives or translations from the Soviet literature. The laudatory rhetoric is mainly reserved to the Soviet Union, seen as a model of thinking and radiating nucleus of beneficial influences. During this period, ARHITECTURA seems to be a politically driven review, not a "political architectural magazine"³⁹; the politics dictates, tasks, regulates, or, at least, must be present as, essentially, a model.

Still present *per se* in the 1959 issues, the political discourse is suddenly diluted at the beginning of the 1960s: first, the Soviet model shrinks and disappears, then the commending tone of the titles is muted, gradually making room for professional topics. The 1961 summary shows only architectural themes. Neither the names of the Party leaders, nor the other "organs" of the regime are mentioned in the headlines. If in 1960 (4/1960) we can still find in the titles the *Leader's* name⁴⁰ (or of other members of the Central Committee), from 1961 on they do not appear till the issue 2/1970, when Ceaușescu's name is mentioned (*Letter to Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu on Behalf of the UA Directorial Committee*). Generally, during these ten years, the strictly political theme vanishes. Likewise, in the 1970s and the early 1980s the titles are mainly professional, although Ceaușescu's name is repeated in the titles of the issue 2/1971 (*A Telegram Addressed to the Central Committee of the Party and to Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu*), and the issue 4/1974 is dedicated to the National Day (*The 30th Anniversary of the Homeland Liberation*). This aspect is somehow troubling and raises questions. 1971 to 1974 are the heydays of the magazine, as the previous outlines show; at the same time, Ceaușescu's direct involvement in architectural and urban matters is obvious⁴¹. However, neither the thematic issues nor the titles reflect the new constraint until 1982. Starting with issue no. 6/1982, the political presence gains new visibility: the "great events" in Ceaușescu's life (already almost a synonym for the country) are recorded through celebratory issue (4/1984: *40 Years of Great Architectural and Urban Achievements*), and especially through the already mentioned insertions of text boxes with quotations from the leader's speeches and the routine "messages to the leader", both playing the ambiguous role of "undeclared editorials". Seemingly, the Stalinist reflexes and the *wooden language* surface in new forms; *the Golden Epoch* appears in the titles in almost all the issues from 1985 to 1989, and so does Ceaușescu's name in association with the mandatory epithets or metaphors. This is consistent with the political circumstances and the tough "re-Stalinisation" of the late 1980s. However, the magazine's political revival is mainly visual; the *Leader's* photograph generally occupies more than the half of the usual two pages. Besides, there is one more interesting difference between the early issues and those of the last five-six years: in the first instance, the political content and the

39 There are (or rather there were) political architectural reviews, where the discourse focuses on the relation between architecture and politics, thus criticising politics from the perspective of architecture (e.g. Giancarlo de Carlo's *Spazio e società*). They generally aim at alerting the professional awareness and involving it in social and political matters. This is not ARHITECTURA's case, where the critical point of view on the political matters was not really possible.

40 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej till 1965, when he is replaced by Ceaușescu.

41 The 1971 "July Theses" (full title: *Measures proposed for the improvement of political-ideological activity, for Marxist-Leninist education of Party members and of all working people*), which triggered a sort of "Maoist cultural revolution", the *Directives of the July 1972 National Conference of the Party concerning the systematisation of land, cities and villages, and economic and social development*, and the subsequent *National Programme for Systematisation, the Systematisation Act* (Act no. 58/1974), the *Roads Act* (Act no. 13/1974), the *Systematisation of Industrial Platforms Law* (Law no. 29/1975), the *Investments Act* (Act no. 9/1980) etc. are proofs to it.

whole thematic structure are coherent (and the magazine seems politically driven), while in the last period, both the titles and the “undeclared editorials” look as circumstantial inserts, unpaired with the rest of the magazine. Are these implants only a tribute paid to the politics for certain professional independence? It is the commonly accepted explanation, but the matter looks more complicated, as is the whole pattern of the last period.

The professional thematic

No matter the role and the evolution of the political matter, the editors’ main concern was the professional content, which was chiefly aimed at reflecting the local architectural development (the “building activity” in the words of that time) and its momentous difficulties. Delivered through textual and visual forms, the disparate variety of the professional information (in terms of categories of topics, length of articles, etc.) was a problem that the editors tried to overcome by means of thematic headings and permanent rubrics, already noticeable in the tables of contents. We may assume a continuous endeavour of the board to develop the magazine into something more substantial than a simple “news bulletin”, into a review observing a proper, professional rationale, independently of the demands of the day. The successive changes in the structure (and the layout) of the table of contents seem to testify for such intention. The professional matters are thus differentiated following certain categories (design and building activity, theoretical issues, professional associative life, current information, etc.) under certain headings and rubrics, which is a method to set a typology of professional preoccupations into recognisable patterns, to indicate areas of interest and, to some extent, to invite to contributions in these matters and, therefore, to ensure their permanence.

Permanent rubrics

The columns assigned to current information and associative life are the most durable.

(1) The rubric *Chronicle* appears in the first issue (1/1953) and is the most long-standing; practically it closes every issue from 1953 to 1989. It provides information concerning important events for the professional life; in the early years their selection privileges the political affairs, but the events in the UA’s everyday life are always present. In time, the rubric is completed by a sort of typology of architectural events under various headings. For instance, the heading *Competitions*, first published in 2/1959 (and from 1960 on), announces the architectural competitions, national and also international. At the beginning of 1974, it is complemented by the atypical rubric *Agenda*, which gathers minor events: journeys, exhibitions (generally small or individual displays of photography, watercolours, drawings etc.⁴²), seminars and all sorts of domestic, trivial events. In the last years of the 1950s, showing signs of a new international opening, the *Chronicle* is reinforced with international columns such as *I.U.A. Information* (9/1955)⁴³ and *From Abroad* (11-12/1955). The latter starts with news (sometimes quite detailed) from the USSR, France, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and gradually opens to wider horizons⁴⁴. Its sporadic appearance stops in 1967, when a constant documentary concern progresses under other rubrics.

(2) The editorial staff’s concern to keep the readers connected to the “outside” architectural developments is present from the beginning with remarkable constancy, taking various forms and orientations through time. In this respect, *Reviews* appears in 1/1954, and is, generally, signed. It is published continuously, sometimes associated with *Bibliography*. At the beginning, only Soviet

42 No design exhibition of an architect was organised during that period.

43 In recognition of this forum that UA joins in that year. Since the event is of major significance at the time a special rubric is created, and will remain a sort of an anchor in the free world in the UA’s life.

44 France is, however, the first and the most frequently mentioned country beyond the Iron Curtain.

literature is checked out, then Romanian books are announced; in 1956 we can also find references from the other “satellite” countries. The rubric becomes very substantial in the 1960s, diversifying its content. The position of both rubrics, together or separated, shifts in the economy of the issues. Starting with issue no. 4/1974, *Bibliography* acquires a front place and opens the magazine with a bibliographical list, usually connected to the main theme of the issue; it is generally signed by the Head Librarian of the School. In the late 1960s, the visual documentation from abroad enhances its content and visibility, under new headlines such as *Contemporary Architecture in the World* (first appearing in 1/1969) or, the rather irregular *Correspondence* (in the '70s), always signed by various authors. Progressively, their content is dissolved in other columns, among which *Barometer* (*Cadran*) is the latest and longest running. It appears in the first issue of 1970 and resists in every issue until the last one. It is devoted to contemporary architecture and professional approaches, which are filtered through its author's perspective – and his hand too, since many examples are hand drawn. After the emigration of its first “genitor”, a group of young architects and students continued his work, contributing drawings and own photographs. This personal, subjective character of the documentation material acquires an unusual prominence in the late 1980s. Against the background of a more and more limited access to foreign architectural information, the rubric gradually gets a diffuse character of architectural and intellectual resistance.

The intention to encourage a theoretic, reflective line is visible from the first issue. The tables of contents and the annual summaries show (more or less) regular rubrics and temporary headlines with theoretical orientation, and their high frequency confirms the steadiness of the concern, in spite of recurrent changes of authorship or heading. This direction is explicitly declared in 7/1957 under the title *Theory and History of Architecture*, following the rubric *Critique and Theory* launched in 1/1954. After 1958, the three theoretic fields (theory, critique and history) develop, by and large, separately, (though meeting from time to time) under various designations.

In the 1950s, many theoretical matters are contingent on *realist-socialism's* slogans and the Soviet theory. In the second half of the 1960s, the reflective character of the magazine seems liberated and is sometimes unbelievably manifest: it is openly announced by the first heading in the table of contents, as if commanding the whole content. Certainly, this impression could be specious and the hypothesis is to be confirmed by the content of the articles, but what we can see at this level easily permits such interpretation. For instance, in 1967, the first title in four issues out of six is *Debating*: followed by [...] *Actual Problems of Systematisation, Architectural Aesthetics, Design* etc., and in 1968, the first heading in three is *Discussions, Points of View*, followed by *Chronicle of Ideas*. All that while, the rubric *Theory of Architecture* is very frequent and publishes in fifteen numbers *Reference Outlines for a History of the Contemporary Architectural Thinking*.⁴⁵ Their spirit is continued in the 1980s in the rubric *Movement of Ideas*, where certain concepts of postmodernity are debated (i.e. *ambiguity* in one issue and *contextualism* in seven issues⁴⁶). Nonetheless, the idea of clarifying certain terms appears much quite early in the rubric *Dictionary*, first published in number 3/1954 with the article *Arhitectura* (translated from Russian). Possibly proposed as a tacit memento of G.M. Cantacuzino's *Simetria* magazine⁴⁷, the rubric is occasional; it appears from time to time, more regularly in certain periods. In the 1980s it is more frequent, but the selection of items seems unsystematic. It is difficult to appreciate at this stage the circumstantial meaning of these rubrics and the reasons behind them: A desire to guide theory in another direction or an aspiration to continue a distinguished tradition? An ambition to sate a craving for theory or a manoeuvre to conceal the scarcity of built material to be published.

45 M. Melicson, the editor-in-chief, 15 index cards.

46 Dorin Stefan, a recently graduated architect at that time.

47 *Simetria*, the most reflective architectural magazine in Romania, had a special rubric Dictionary.

In parallel, the architectural critique has a particular dynamics. First placed under the title *Discussions*, published in issue 10/1955 (preceded by *Discussions on USSR Architecture* in the previous number), it debates design problems concerning industrial halls. What makes this case remarkable is an asterisk, a note inviting the readers to express their points of view concerning the ten page article. The rubric has no spectacular evolution, only remarkable episodes from time to time⁴⁸. Yet, the intention to stimulate a professional debate is recurrent and increasingly visible as demonstrated by certain opening articles (most general ones, presumably *feature articles*) brought in under the heading *In Debate*, a feature that was repeated in many issues as if it were a permanent rubric. After 1974, when the magazine becomes thematic, rubrics such as *Subjective Chronicle* or *We Question* play a similar role, though they have sporadic occurrences, along with the dilemmatic rubric *Agora*, uninterrupted from 2/1976 to 4/1989.

History matters are also continuously present since the early issues, grouped in dedicated columns with various names, all of them quite long-lasting. The rubric *Monuments*, is introduced early (2/1957), apparently in a paradoxical relation with the emerging modernist reorientation – and is renamed *Historic monuments* (1/1963)⁴⁹. *Our Forerunners*, starts in 1/1974 and has a remarkable regularity and long life, while other rubrics, like *Folk Architecture* or *History in Dates* (1/1975), are less enduring. Most of them are signed by reputed professors in the School. Historic matters are also developed in various articles concerning restoration, a design practice whose many achievements are presented in thematic issues after 1974. Paradoxically, restoration-themed issues are published in the 1980s too, despite the fact that the demolition of monuments was becoming a common practice.

Another category of regular columns reveals the aim to widen the professional areas of interest beyond the conventional borders of the architectural and urban design *sensu stricto*. Rubrics as *Decoration and Furniture* shows a relative regularity from 1957 (7/1957), sometimes under the title *Furniture* (6/1959); *Plastic Arts* appears early, in 7/1957, but its frequency is unstable until it changes into *Design-Arts* (3/1974) and *Art in the City* (3/1975). The latter two columns will be a real “pressure-relief valve” during the late 1980s, when the architectural achievements are in crisis.

The rubric *Studies and Researches*, which first appears in issue 8/1957 with a study concerning the standardisation of canteens, grows to group articles from many research fields (design, structural engineering and technology from the beginning, history and theory a little later, sociology for a while, etc.). It has neither regular nor very frequent occurrences in the first years, but becomes gradually more important and enhances its coverage. In the 1960s, it is also called *Projects and Studies* (1/1967). In the late 1970s the topic is embraced in thematic issues and is mentioned in the titles of many numbers of the magazine in the 1980s, particularly referring to students’ research. During this last period, the title *Research* examines, alongside officially commissioned researches (not very frequent), a wide range of young architects’ ideas, projects, or studies rather produced “for art’s sake”.

Academic education is another direction permanently present in the magazine under various columns. The rubric *Education* first appears in issue 7/1958, though articles dedicated to this topic are published from the very beginning, which is natural considering that the magazine was meant to become an “educational tool”. But the relationship between the magazine and

48 I.e. Mihail Caffé, *On Some Current Architectural Problems*, 9/1957 or Gh. Sebestyen, *Regarding Certain Aspects of Housing Economy and Industrialisation*, 4/1957, critical articles that the board submits to debates, but with no feedback.

49 Most probably, the appearance of this special rubric is connected to the 1957 UA Committee Plenum, which raises the problem of historic monuments and proposes a National Commission in charge with the architectural heritage. In 1959 a special Division of Historical Monuments (DMI) and its design department are founded.

the School⁵⁰, is quite intimate: they were both (re)founded by the same 1952 Governmental Decision, each was unique in its kind all through the period, many members in the successive boards were involved in the academic education (though less numerous in the last board), as were most contributors to the magazine (maybe the most faithful). In 3/1978, the rubric is transformed into *The School's Page* and regularly hosts diploma projects, students' events and certain debates. From 1974 on, there are also thematic issues dedicated to education.

At the end of the 1960s, the tendency to classify the design matters under stable headings or rubrics is more coherent, though such attempts were noticeable from the beginning. This is especially obvious in the annual summaries, where the projects and buildings published during the year are grouped in simple categories, such as: systematisation matters, building-types, technical matters, etc. This gives the impression that each category has the stability of a rubric, which is specious since their publishing is rather accidental. More credible is the assumption of an editorial drive in this respect, a hypothesis that is supported by the gradual transformation of many such headings into thematic volumes. For instance, in certain early issues, each building type seems to be endowed with a particular rubric, such as *Dwellings*, *Industrial Architecture*, *Social-Cultural Buildings*, *Exhibitions*, etc. In spite of their unsystematic character, almost all of them will become thematic issues. The building-types-themed issues- will absorb the category of rubrics assigned to express in a rhetorical way the magazine's proximity to the design reality, such as *From the Design to Practice* (first published in 4/1954), expanded into *From the Building Sites* (7/1957) and transformed into *From the Activity of the Regional Design Institutes* (1-2/1958), while titles like *Standardised-Design* know a revival in the late 1980s.

Likewise, for urban matters is initially created the permanent rubric *City Construction and Systematisation* (7/1957), which occupies an important place till 1974, when the urban development becomes the focus of many thematic issues and loses its logic as just a rubric.

The technical matters are an exception to this transition from rubrics to thematic issues; they preserve a dedicated rubric all through the period. The topical necessity to extend and update this aspect of the architectural design is expressed in early issues, such as *New Technical Developments* (first in issue 7/1958) or *New Building Technique* (2/1960). The newer *Technical Specifications* (first published in 2/1972) is remarkably lasting, regular and substantial. The specifications are printed on detachable pages, narrower than the standard square format of the magazine, designed to be easily handled and filed.

The evolution of the permanent rubrics towards a clearer geometry suggests an instrumental perspective on the magazine, which might have underlain the board's editorial strategy. The aim to facilitate the readers' searches through the magazine's collection is accomplished in 1974, when ARHITECTURA reaches its most mature, final form, succeeding to geometrise the architectural and urban "achievements" and their design-issues in thematic volumes.

Thematic issues

The magazine's evolution from miscellanea to the coherence of thematic issues is gradual, helped by the rising investment and the acceleration of building pace. As it was already mentioned, the rationale followed by the successive boards is mainly typological. In very broad terms, it can be described as follows:

⁵⁰ "Ion Mincu" Institute of Architecture in Bucharest was the only school of architecture in Romania enabled to grant an academic diploma in architecture. In the 1970s three-years schools of architecture were founded in Timișoara, Iași and Cluj, but the diploma was granted only after three more years of study in Bucharest.

During the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, the numbers have no prevalent theme. The still unimportant building volume and, probably, the political uncertainty did not allow a programmatic structure. Only the issues dedicated to the UA annual awards and to the architectural competitions present a thematic articulation of the articles, such as *Competition for an Industrial City of 50,000-200,000 Inhabitants* (4/1957) or *The Worthy 1960 Prize-Winning Architectural Works* (1/1961), to which we can add certain issues answering current requirements of the political discourse: *Standardised Design* (4-5/1956) or *Industrial Architecture* (7/1956 and 2/1959). The issue 12/1956, *New Buildings on the Black Sea Coast*, deserves special attention; it records a complex architectural and territorial matter, marking a long running operation and a new design approach. Many future issues will be headed by this topic till the end of the 1970s, when no investment is allotted to the seaside. Though the issues of this period are not ample (an average of 50 pages), the building volume does not allow for too much; for instance, two out of six issues in 1959 present a thematic articulation, while issue no. 5/1959 illogically associates two key subjects, *Bucharest 1459-1959* and *Two Holiday Resorts on the Seaside*. Still, the editors' endeavour to produce such coherent volumes is noticeable.

From 1961 to 1974, 17 issues out of 76 are thematic:

2/1961, *Systematisation and Reconstruction of Calea Griviței – Bucharest*; (4-5/1961, *The Seaside* 1961; 1/1962, *Commercial Units*; 3/1962, *Industrial Buildings*; 4/1962, *Social-Cultural Buildings*; 5/1962, *Healthcare Facilities*; 6/1962 *The Brașov County*; 6/1963 *Commercial Units*; 4/1965 *Industrial Buildings*; 5/1965 *Standardised Design*; 6/1965 *Industrial Buildings*; 1/1966, *Debate: Construction and Reconstruction of Cities*; 5/1966 *Hotels*; 6/1966, *Commercial Units*; 3/1967, *Sports Facilities*; 4/1967, *Debate: Present Issues in Architecture and Urbanism*; 3/1969, *Sanatoria*; 1/1971, *Debate: Present Issues in Architecture and Urbanism. Bucharest Urban Sketch*; 6/1971, *Respite and Recreation*⁵¹.

Hand in hand with the increasing built volume, 1974 settles the magazine's idea of thematic issues in a clear pattern. Each number gets an explicit title, as follows:

1974: (1) Theatres; (2) Houses of Culture; (3) Current Issues in Systematisation; (4) The 30th Anniversary of Homeland Liberation; (5) Achievements; (6) Education I;
 1975: (1) Education-Schooling II; (2) Standardised-Design, Industrialisation, Prefabrication; (3) Urban Hotels; (4) Urban Planning; (5) Annual Prizes. Commerce I; (6) Commerce II;
 1976: (1) The Architecture of Industry; (2) Dwellings I; (3) Systematisation of Housing Areas; (4); (5) Environment. Urban Comfort; (6) Mountain Architecture I;
 1977: (1) Mountain Architecture II; (2-3) The Architecture of Hospitals; (4) Materials, Techniques, Technologies, Seismic Engineering; (5) Actualities; (6) Central Zones;
 1978: (1-2) Architecture for Sports; (3) The Architecture and the National Development I; (4) The Architecture and the National Development II; (5-6) Achievements;
 1979: (1) The City of Cluj-Napoca; (2) Permanency-Achievements; (3) Academic Education; (4) Materials-Technologies; (5) Industrialised Dwelling Constructions; (6) Romanian Architectural Presences Abroad;
 1980: (1-2) The City of Bucharest; (3) Small Towns; (4) Bucharest Underground; (5) Romanian Architectural Presence Abroad II; (6) Romanian Presence Abroad III;
 1981: (1) New Achievements-Restoration-Valorisation-Seismic Engineering; (2-3) The City of Iași; (4-5) Anniversary Moments; (6) Dwellings;
 1982: (1) Education-Research, Projects, Studies; (2) Dwelling quality; (3) The City of Craiova; (4) Commerce-Facilities; (5) New achievements; (6) New facilities;

⁵¹ We tried to translate verbatim the titles, as they were formulated in the magazine, in order to highlight their awkwardness or/and vagueness.

1983: (1) Systematisation; (2) Youth-education; (3) Hotels-Tourism; (4) Projects-Studies-Achievements; (5) Balneology; (6) Restorations - Functional Add-ons - Extensions;
 1984: (1) Architectural Heritage; (2) Achievements-Projects-Studies; (3) Romanian Studies and Projects for Abroad; (4) 40 years of Great Architectural and Urban Achievements; (5) The City of Suceava; (6) New Confirmations;
 1985: (1) New and Old Heritage Values; (2) Type Projects-Diversity-Adaptability I; (3) Young Architects I; (4) Young Architects II; (5) Engineering Research in Constructions; (6) Type Projects-Diversity-Adaptability II;
 1986: (1) Searches and Ideas; (2) Timișoara Architects' Projects I; (3) Timișoara Architects' Projects II; (4) Extensions-Developments-Revitalisations; (5) From the Current Events in Standardised-Design and Research; (6) New Achievements;
 1987: (1) New Achievements; (2) Youth-Education; (3) Facilities; (4) Dwellings and Facilities; (5) Facilities and Dwellings; (6) Actuality in Design;
 1988: (1) UA Awards-1986, Solar Architecture; (2) Presences; (3) Young Architects; (4) New Urban Centres and Facilities; (5) Restorations-Revitalisations, Commerce-Tourism; (6) Monuments and Ensembles Dedicated to the National Unification. Research in Architecture;
 1989: (1) Dwellings; (2) Dwellings; (3) Architectural Awards 1987, Achievements; (4) Presentation of Research Works; (5-6) *With the Wind of Freedom/Under the Breath of Liberty* (the first issue after the 1989 revolution).

At a first glance, this thematic chronology accounts for a continuous evolution of the professional content from a collection of various topics to a coherent thematic structure. We may see here a ripening almost achieved at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, clearly formalised in 1974 and devotedly followed till 1989, which is consistent with the periods and moments identified through the previous outlines. Looking more attentively, there are also significant overtones and even contradictions between the thematic concept and the reality of each issue, which are worth spotlighting in order to learn more about the character and the inner life of the magazine:

(1) Not denying the editors' aim to articulate the professional information into a logical, easily identifiable structure, the themes' chronology faithfully mirrors the imperatives and the dynamics of the building process of the period (as specified in the State-Plans). The new coherence is rather the natural consequence of the spectacularly growing investment and the increasing building pace of the 1960s, which simply provides the editors with sufficient material for a clear theme; thus, in the 1970s, they were able to thematically organise all the issues.

(2) In exchange, the volumes published from the mid 1960s to 1974 – the “special issues” as they are named in the annual summaries – denote a drive to thoughtfulness (the motto *debating* is very frequent). Generally, all those issues present an interrogative, critical approach, maybe only *in nuce* but still there, which is lost in the second half of the 1970s, when the themes are phrased in a rather affirmative, confident turn of words; there is no thematic issue of the latter years to suggest reflection or doubt⁵². This hypothesis remains to be confirmed by the study of the texts, but, at this superficial level, it is corroborated by the frequent occurrence of theoretical rubrics till 1974. For the first time along this overview of the magazine, it seems that the change of the editor-in-chief is really significant.

(3) The thematic formula is not as stable as it looks, though continuously affirmed in every issue after 1974. If we read the title-themes attentively, we have to admit that certain volumes do not really have a unique focus; the titles of many issues only mask, and not very ingeniously, a

⁵² In reality, there are more such issues in the early 1970s, but we took into consideration only the themes developed on more than the half of the total pages.

miscellaneous content. This becomes obvious in the 1980s, when many “thematic issues” collect disparate themes. It seems that the editors mainly wanted to yield to an established pattern they could not observe *de facto*. The linguistic awkwardness or the vagueness of certain titles, hardly understandable otherwise, is probably only another way to cover a collection of articles on various themes. Concomitantly, the proportion of pages dedicated to the main theme decreases from an absolute majority (until 1977) to less than a half in the 1980s.

(4) As it was mentioned before, the themes generally reflect the built reality, chronologically organised through building types or urban interventions. The themed-issues do not precede or forerun the investments, they only present the achievements. Looking at what was published, we can easily visualise the architectural development of the time. This correlation with reality is strictly observed until the 1977 earthquake, when issue 4/1977 is dedicated to this tragic cataclysm and to matters of seismic design. Further on, the contact with reality weakens in a strange way. With the exception of the Bucharest underground system construction (4/1980), none of the “great oeuvres” of the “golden epoch” (e.g. the new civic centre with the “House of the People” and the hydro-technical and urban works in Bucharest) are featured in the magazine. The only references are the two photographs with the inaugural moments of the building sites of the Civic Centre (4/1984) and of the “People’s House” (5/1988). This unbelievable “blindness” of the magazine is troubling and certainly deserves special attention. All through the late 1980s, while the huge construction sites in Bucharest were mobilising all the national forces (investments, builders and building materials) and many monuments and old city were destroyed, the magazine records a different reality: many projects (with negligible chances to be built), young architects, numerous studies, students’ projects and researches, etc., and a few restoration works. At the same time, some architectural themes frequent in the early decade of the magazine (type-projects, prefabricated dwellings, etc.) resurface, which is consistent with Ceaușescu’s “re-Stalinisation”. Meanwhile, due to shrinking of the main theme, the permanent rubrics acquire a new importance and, thus, confer the issues of the last period a particular character.

What sort of magazine was ARHITECTURA?

This frugal thumbing through the post-war version of the magazine ARHITECTURA allows some final (and certainly partial) remarks concerning its still hidden inner life and the committed part it played in the professional history. They are rather hypotheses to be verified through further studies.

The main problem that the editorial staff had to cope with all through the period was the political interference, which conferred the magazine particular dimensions. This matter is continuously present on the surface of the magazine, but with variable intensities and in various forms, influenced by the ideological drives of the communist regime. However, it seems that underneath, the editors (whoever they might have been along the period) shared a continuous, subjacent concern to keep the professional line apart from the official ideology, as if the presence of the latter were only an unavoidable “tribute” paid for the magazine’s existence. The editors’ attempt to isolate the political matters from the professional topics, noticeable in its entire evolution, is particularly odd in the late 1980s, when the magazine becomes almost schizophrenic: large photos of the Leader with short quotation supplant the mandatory discourse, allowing for the “freedom” of the content.

In this manner, ARHITECTURA gradually acquires an ambiguous “neutrality”: on the one hand, the direct association of architecture with politics is avoided and the review only informs, on the

other hand, the professional information cannot be non-aligned since it permanently reflects the political decisions (materialised through investments and design-themes). The professional substance of the review also echoes the ambiguity. On the one hand, the debate concerning the rationality of certain investments or decisions concerning architecture is generally left out, thus decoupling the project from its preliminaries and directing the magazine towards the presentation of achieved works, their design and aesthetics; on the other hand, this self-imposed neutrality inhibits a deeper involvement of the magazine in the contemporary architectural disputes and doubts⁵³. However, such ideas transpire in certain caricatures (though with ambiguous meanings) starting from the end of the 1960s, or in certain titles whose occurrence increases in the 1980s – in a paradoxical relation to reality and to the political presence in the magazine that becomes more obvious, though rather formal.

This particular position between the limits imposed by the political commands (hardly avoidable) and the aspiration to independence from the official ideology (hard to achieve) endows the review with a predominantly informative and instrumental character. The “neutral” professional information ceaselessly tried to answer specific design needs while following the evolution of the *Construction Programme*, which the magazine faithfully mirrors. Even just overviews of the magazine (as we did), one can get a glimpse of the building types of each period: the interest for industrial ones in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s and the concern for housing (which is permanent), the intense rhythm and the diversification of building types in the second half of the 1960s and the 1970s, the 1977 earthquake, the decrease of investment and the drastic typological reduction in the 1980s. The only extraordinary – and unbelievable – exception is the absence of Ceaușescu’s “great works”, a peculiarity that rather corroborates the aspiration to neutrality⁵⁴.

Under those circumstances, it is hard to envisage the germination of a reflexive and critical attitude that one should expect from an architectural review. However, within the limits of the “neutrality”, this orientation seems to have existed. Camouflaged in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s under the communist slogan of “promoting a critical and self-critical attitude”, it becomes highly visible in the titles during the more stable and more relaxed period of the late 1960s and early 1970s, as it was mentioned above⁵⁵. In the 1980s, strange metaphorical titles, usually signed by very young architects or students, contrast with the objectiveness and literalness generally used by the magazine; the articles, usually short and sometimes ambiguous, let us infer dreams, doubts and critical approaches to architecture, even to the specific way of practising it in the state-owned design institutes, which is hallucinating⁵⁶.

53 Few of the directions that marked out the itinerary of the architectural reviews in the “free world” were, indeed, reflected in ARHITECTURA. Sometimes, they are indirectly replicated, in an oblique way driven by the political ideology. For instance, although the emergency of reconstruction is extremely present, there is no comment concerning Modern Movement’s continuity after the war until the 1960s, and, even then, the doctrinal point of view is political, not professional; or, in the 1970s, as the rejection of modernism and of the functionalist city is steered by the political will, and promoted a more constraining top-down planning. This was, certainly, demotivating for the professional critical discourse.

54 This confirmation is to be tempered with a flat note, since these „great works” wore an absurd veil of secrecy all through the period, in spite of their obviousness.

55 The most critical articles deal with technical and economic matters, signed by a handful of architects, almost the same from the 1950s to the 1980s, such as Hardt, Sebestyen, Caffè, Alifanti.

56 To give only some examples: Gh. Săsărman, *An Alternative, Unaddressed Questions*; Radu Drăgan, *The Myth of Ruins, The Wall, The Trojans, The Basket with Apples, The 6th Order, The Bridge, The Agora, The Axis and the Sense*; Anca Sandu-Tomașevschi, *Agreeable and Familial, Parallel Slalom, I Buy a House with Yard, The Dream of Useless Architecture and a Supper at Ritz, The Secret Relationship Between a Ionic Capital and the Sprightly Little Clouds, White as the Bubbles of Champagne, Monologue in an Old Street*; Dan Budică, *The Professional’s Real Face, The Prestige and ...the Bicycle, A Chief Has Told Me..., “Z or the Refuse to Be Out-standing, Who Are the Heroes of the Books to Come?, Give Me a Fulcrum, Brief Treatise of Ambiguity, “A Strange Dream”* and many others. This kind of titles appeared uninterruptedly under the rubric *Agora*.

Many signs show the editors' dreams of international visibility: the subscriptions schemes, the translation of the summaries and tables of contents, the documentary rubrics, the participation to the 1965 competition, etc. Still, ARHITECTURA remained mainly confined to the country's frontiers, thus deepening the cultural isolation. Almost exclusively responding to the expectations of Romanian professionals, the review seems to have played a particularly important, yet uncommon role.

Against a background where the professional competition was biased by political criteria and the means of confirmation did not work as in the "free world"⁵⁷, where authorship was suppressed and consumed by the anonymity of "collectiveness", where the designer's name was not carved on the building⁵⁸, to be present in ARHITECTURA (as designer or author) not only equated with a recognition hardly possible in other ways, but also stood for "to sign one's building". Besides the official UA annual awards (that the magazine always presented), this was the only possible way to an informal podium in the local professional arena and out of anonymity. It was also a platform where Romanian architects used to meet and share their experiences.

Naturally, the selection operated by the magazine was highly influential. Most of the works published became, to a certain extent, design-models; they certainly were more at hand than the potential models displayed in the foreign architectural reviews, since they were designed and built in local conditions; in any case, they were the only models available all over the country. Thus, by publishing documentation materials (already sorted through various topics), by recommending bibliography, by showing examples, the magazine was a professional guide, a more and more welcoming, friendly guide in many respects. This unusually friendly character is not discernible at the beginning, when the headings and titles are rather demanding and the magazine seems to be an *instructor*. Something already appears in the issues of the 1960s and 1970s, when the magazine offers, in today's terminology, *guidelines for good / best practices*. This feature acquires a new character during the last period, when the construction pace was slower and, lacking "presentable" achieved buildings, the review publishes projects and studies. In many cases these works have a more "personal" character; they do not answer a governmental commission and they are not chaperoned by a *state-design-institute*. The place of the *design-collective* is taken by individual names presenting their projects (some, we may say, "utopian" if we consider their chances to be accomplished), participations in international competitions, design intentions, personal concerns and studies, frustrations, even personal documentation that the authors were eager to share with their colleagues.

Moreover, it is possible to infer that the review was more than a professional guide; it played the role of a cohesive agent for the professional community. The old *Arhitectura* publicly assumed this task in its first *Editorial*; we can conjecture that ARHITECTURA's successive boards tacitly took on this task and carried it out till the end in a more coherent way than its forerunner. For instance, no matter the political circumstances, the magazine persisted in announcing under certain rubrics all public events organised by the UA and by the local chapters, which is normal; unusual is the increasing tinge of "domesticity" of many reports: visits, trips, insignificant exhibitions, etc. – even personal travel stories. This feature can be seen as a reflex of provincialism (which it probably was to some extent); still, the evolution of the review in the 1980s seems to suggest more than that. While keeping the form and structure of the magazine unchanged, conveying thus a reassuring feeling of continuity, the issues of the latest years show signs of a strange "editorial concept". Behind the smiling full-page photograph of the dictator, we find

57 There were the UA annual awards and architectural contests, but the winning hierarchy was rarely respected.

58 There are extremely rare exceptions, never in Bucharest, always local initiatives, as Mircea Alifanti's name on the county administration building in Baia Mare.

a sort of participative *almanac* (almost a *blog* in today's terms). It is less relevant the fact that this formula was, probably, a survival solution produced by a quasi-informal group (that also included students); what matters is the magazine's conversion from a professional platform to a "secret club" or a "literary and architectural café". It is difficult to assess whether this turn was consciously intended to question the system or it was only the expression of a general, diffuse sorrow or trouble. One might say that, in a way, the magazine became something between an impossible public space and a "nurturing home", a place hosting the questions and frustrations of a profession with a liberal calling but kept within authoritarian constraints. Although the strictly professional information was less dense and instrumental than in the late 1960s and 1970s, the professional fraternity was never so closely gathered around the magazine. Probably, ARHITECTURA's main *raison d'être* and its underlying force all through the period was to be the architects' *Home*. The explosion of enthusiasm in the first issue after the 1989 revolution corroborates this peculiar "editorial concept".

Paradoxically or (maybe) naturally, the new freedom destroyed this dimension. The entry of the Romanian architects in the new world, the anxieties generated by the opening to horizons until forbidden, a new kind of financial worries (till then unfamiliar), the competition with other magazines, all these would drive ARHITECTURA towards new searches of identity⁵⁹.



59 From 1989 to 2000, the magazine's publication was irregular and rather "heroic" (editors-in-chief: Anca Sandu-Tomaşevschi /1990-1996, Augustin Ioan /1996-2000); from 2000 the magazine is again published regularly (Ştefan Ghenciulescu /2000-2010 and Francoise Pamfil, from 2010 on). The successive editors tried hard to preserve the magazine's central position in the local professional milieu; yet, this turned out to be a rather impossible endeavour against the new, competitive editorial background, and "Arhitectura" is still looking for an identity able to answer the expectation (and the nostalgia) of its longstanding patron, the Union of Architects in Romania (UAR).