

Institutul pentru studii politice de apărare și istorie militară, România – UE. Cronologie 1989-2005 (*La Romania – UE, La cronologia 1989-2005*), Editura Militară, Bucuresti, 2006, 630 pg.

Il primo gennaio del 2007 l'Unione Europea ha accolto due nuovi Stati membri e 30 milioni di cittadini. Con l'adesione della Bulgaria e della Romania, si è conclusa la quinta tappa dell'allargamento dell'UE che ha consentito di riunire pacificamente l'Europa dell'est e dell'ovest dopo decenni di divisione.

L'integrazione nella NATO e nell'Unione Europea ha rappresentato due grandi obiettivi, due grandi provocazioni per la politica estera romena, dopo il 1989. Entrambi questi processi si sono finalizzati con tanto successo, il primo nel 2004, e il secondo, come abbiamo detto, il primo gennaio 2007, quindi possiamo dire che l'importanza di questo volume non deve passare inosservato. Questo volume non fa altro che completare la letteratura romena di specialità, non così tanto rappresentata nel campo della costruzione e dell'integrazione europea.

Romania ha presentato la richiesta d'ingresso nell'UE nel 1995 ed ha iniziato i negoziati per l'adesione nel 2000. Le trattative si sono concluse con successo nel dicembre del 2004 e il Trattato di adesione è stato firmato nell'aprile del 2005. Nel suo ultimo rapporto sulla Romania, diffuso il 26 settembre 2006, la Commissione ha stabilito che la Romania è sufficientemente pronta per assumersi gli obblighi derivanti dall'ingresso nell'UE. Per affrontare il limitato numero di aree nelle quali saranno necessari ulteriori sforzi, l'UE ha adottato un pacchetto di misure di salvaguardia. Tali disposizioni, relative all'economia, alla giustizia e agli affari interni, consentiranno di porre rimedio alle difficoltà incontrate in seguito all'adesione.

La complessità del processo d'integrazione nell'Unione Europea è dovuta, da una parte, alla necessità di cambiamento nella società romena e dall'altra parte, L'Unione Europea si trovava, per la prima volta nella sua storia, in una permanente dinamica, le sue estensioni, la profondità del processo dell'integrazione, e l'applicazione delle sue politiche comuni hanno determinato la sua evoluzione in un ritmo affrettato.

Questo volume rappresenta uno strumento di lavoro di grande valore per i ricercatori e per i futuri specialisti del campo, per quanto riguarda un'attenta raccolta d'informazioni, nell'intento di realizzare un'analisi dettagliata della storia d'integrazione della Romania nelle strutture comunitari. Il volume ha presso la forma di una cronologia succinta delle azioni fatte da parte della Romania, puntando su quei elementi che hanno disegnato la politica estera romena verso l'integrazione europea, per il periodo 1989-2005.

Il volume contiene, al suo fine, un'impressionabile materiale bibliografico. I documenti diplomatici presentati in questo volume possono diventare, nello stesso tempo, anche un indispensabile supporto per i corsi ed i seminari universitari di specialità.

È vero che questo volume sorprende soltanto una sezione della storia dell'integrazione europea, cioè il rapporto tra la Romania e le istituzioni comunitari. L'intero campo della costruzione ed dell'integrazione europea è troppo vasto e solo una ricerca settoriale può avere, alla fine, i migliori risultati.

Così come gli autori dichiarano, questo volume ha il merito di portare anche un aspetto di novità, cioè ci sono presentati i principali aspetti politici-militari e di sicurezza del processo dell'integrazione, dell'armonizzazione della sua politica estera con la Politica Estera e di Sicurezza Comune (PESC)

Dobbiamo ricordare anche il fatto che questo Istituto di ricerca ha realizzato, avendo la stessa metodologia, il volume *La Romania – NATO. La cronologia 1989-2004*.

Finalmente, il volume si sta rivolgendo a tutti coloro che vogliono imparare le nozioni fondamentali del processo dell'integrazione della Romania nell'Europa unita, perchè ognuno possa costruire e sostenere la sua propria concezione sull'Europa allargata.

Mihaela Mustătea

On the significance of *The Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth N. Waltz – *The Theory of International Politics* (translation, *Teoria politicii internationale*, Polirom, Iași, 2006)

The Theory of International Politics by Kenneth N. Waltz is one of the basic books for the IR students and represents a cornerstone for the development of the realist tradition in IR studies in the last three decades. Published in 1979, the book re-launched the realist research, which has been referred to as neo-realism or structural realism. It is also a book that fits its historical and literature context: the decade in which the state's power as well as the military power in the international realm were relatively contested and the concept of interdependence was making much sense of the international politics events.¹ Yet, Waltz generated a parsimonious and persuasive paradigm that contradicts the interdependence and the multidimensional approach and shows what is central in the international politics. Waltz systematizes political realism into a rigorous, deductive systemic theory of international politics that can be characterized by the following features: the **international structure** that has two constant elements and one variable; the two constant characteristics that are **the units** (state-actors) and **the anarchy**; the variable that is **the distribution of power** or the distribution of the capabilities. In the end, the distribution of power defines the main feature of the structure, and the structure influences decisively units/states' behavior. The re-launch of the cold war dynamic in the 1980s through arms race between the super-powers confirmed that the distribution of power between competing units in the international anarchical structure is paramount. However, after three decades of tremendous shifts in the international politics and impressive build-ups of perspectives from new theoretical enterprises in IR studies, one can ask *why this book is still valuable* or *why this book is still helpful for our understanding of the international world?*

I center the answer to these questions on three points: first, Waltz's theory of international politics is not only a paradigm but the centerpiece of a research program that has been developed since then; second, the neo-realist research program sparked from the beginning a vivid polemic that has generated scientific progress; and third, it raises important critical questions regarding the actual dynamics of international politics.

Neo-realism: the research program

The principal merit of the *Theory of International Politics* is the initiation of a new research program in IR study (broadly) and realist tradition (particularly).² Waltz's theoretical propositions

¹ The international context in the 1970s has been characterized (among others) by the *détente*, the oil crisis, and the defeat of the United States in the Vietnam War. On *complex inter-dependence* see Keohane, Robert and Joseph Nye (1977, 2001 3rd reprint) *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, New York: Longman.

² It is preferable the term realist tradition because the realist thinking in IR studies comprises more than one theory. For details I suggest: Gilpin, Robert (1986) "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism" in Robert Keohane (Ed.)

have been empirically tested and then developed as the basis for new theories.³ The main cause for this is that the *Theory of International Politics* is mainly a parsimonious endeavor: by combining microeconomic and systemic theories, it limits the abstract construction to a limited number of elements which are considered as the most revealing aspects that define the world politics. Waltz does not deny the existence of other phenomena or processes that impact on world politics, but he selects the most important and relevant factors.⁴ The core assumptions of his theory are made of falsifiable propositions, which are rigorously abstracted but sustained only by examples, not by wide empirical testing.⁵ *Waltzian* neo-realism began to represent a veritable research program because its assumptions have been empirically tested by other researchers and the results have achieved refined theoretical claims. The examples are very vast, so that I select only one interesting example: the refinement of Waltz's theory of structural balance of power by the theory of balance of threat.⁶ One of the propositions that results from the international anarchical structure (or the self-help system) is that units/states tend to balance against each other in order to survive. Waltz's assumption is that states balance against power *per se*, the balance of power being a structural cause of the power distribution. Yet, the theory of the balance of threat -- resulting from empirical testing -- refines this assumption adding that states balance not only against power but also according to the perceived threats.

The paradigm of scientific progress is conceived by the philosopher of science Lakatos.⁷ He conceptualizes the research program and the difference between progressive and degenerative research programs. The distinction rests in making the difference between the research program's core propositions and the protective belt propositions. The example of the refinement from the balance of power to the balance of threat shows that the latter does not refute the core propositions of Waltz's systemic paradigm (it is even based on them), but refutes a supplementary paradigm which is identified as being part of the protective belt. The balance of threat theory indicates the progressive potential of *Waltzian* paradigm.

Yet, Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* is not free from critical and intellectual contestation that targets its core proposition and, more specifically, its explanatory and predictability power.

"Neo-realism and its critics"

Neorealism and Its Critics was published in 1986⁸ and comprised the current (by that time) academic debate generated by Waltz's new successful research program. Like *The Theory of International Politics*, it has been reprinted several times (the last time in 2004!) and includes four chapters of Waltz's book, articles from top American academic journals and Waltz's answer to its

Neorealism and Its Critics, New York: Columbia University Press; Walt, Stephen (2005) "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition" in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (Eds) *Political science: the state of the discipline*, New York, Washington: Norton, American Political Science Association; and Mearsheimer, John J. (2001) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, p.17-23.

³ On the impact of Waltz's structural realism on different branches of neo-realism (offensive and defensive realism) see Walt (2005), *ibid.* and Mearsheimer (2001), *ibid.*

⁴ Waltz, Kenneth (1986) "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: Response to My Critics" in Robert Keohane (Ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press.

⁵ Walt (2005), *idem* p.204

⁶ Walt, Stephen (1988), "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia", *International Organization*, 42 (2): p. 275-316.

⁷ Lakatos, Imre (1974), "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes", in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Eds) *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. See also references regarding the research programs in IR studies in Keohane, Robert (1986) "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond," in Robert Keohane (Ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press.

⁸ Robert Keohane (Ed.) (1986) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press.

critics. *Neorealism and its critics* is far from bringing the fine and inspiring intellectual debate revolving around neo-realism to a conclusion. The sequence of studies, coordinated books and articles consisting of the debate between critics of neo-realism and neo-realist theoreticians continues till nowadays and confirms the real value of developing competing paradigms. It is not the purpose of this review to sum up all the critical perspectives on the neo-realist research program. I would rather point out how the academic debate on neo-realism contributes to scientific enrichment. Two IR research agendas have been conceived and crystallized as competing with neo-realism: neo-liberal institutionalism and social constructivism.⁹

Neo-liberal institutionalist paradigm contradicts primary the structural anarchy outcomes that Waltz conceives. In *Waltzian* terms, the anarchy as a constant feature of the international structure generates competition for security among the state-units (only in a hierarchical structure the units do not compete for security). At their turn neo-liberal researchers contextualize cases in which the security competition is overrun by international institutions that have the ability to assure the member states of absolute gains stemming from institutionalized cooperation.¹⁰ The competition of arguments between the two research programs has been widely known as the *neo-neo debate*.¹¹ While the arguments on both sides have been clarified, we can identify the opposite points of view, the partial disagreements/agreements and the common elements. The latter tends to bring both programs on a common rationalistic framework of thinking in IR studies, which could lead to complementarity as a *neo-neo synthesis*.¹²

Contrary to neo-liberal institutionalism, which shares common ontological ground with neo-realism, social constructivism is different as a meta-theory. Researchers using the constructivist theoretical framework in IR studies conceive the sources of international phenomena as rooted in inter-subjective and collectively constructed meanings among interacting actors.¹³ The application of the constructivist agenda in IR studies is considerable, especially in various empirical studies. Yet, the constructivist theoretical approaches have been stimulated by *Waltzian* neo-realism by employing similar systemic or structural abstraction. The title of the famous Wendt's *Social*

⁹ For the parsimony of the article I chose a limited description of these research agendas. For details I make references to the relevant literature.

¹⁰ On neo-liberal institutionalism see: Keohane, Robert and Lisa Martin (1995) "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security*, 20(1): 39-51; Keohane, Robert (1993) "Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War," in David A. Baldwin (Ed.) *Neorealism and Neoliberalism The Contemporary Debate*, New York: Columbia University Press; and Axelrod, Robert and Robert O. Keohane (1993) "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," in David A. Baldwin (Ed.) *Neorealism and Neoliberalism. The Contemporary Debate*, New York: Columbia University Press. A very interesting critical assessment on neo-liberalism from the neo-realist perspective is Mearsheimer, John J. (1994) "The false promise of international institutions," *International security*, 19(3): 5-45; and (1995) "A Realist Reply," *International Security*, 20(1): "Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin: Realists by Any Other Name..." 85-87.

¹¹ See also Jervis, Robert (1999) "Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate," *International Security*, 24(1): 44-63.

¹² The common rationalistic framework for both neo-realism and neo-liberalism in IR studies is based on the general perspective of international politics in which states are the principal actors operating in an anarchical environment. States are visualized as egoistic actors which behave based on rational calculation and maximizing utility seeking. See Keohane, Robert (1986) "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond," in Robert Keohane (Ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press. and (1988) "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly*, 32(4): 379-396; Waever, Ole (1996) "The Rise and Fall of the Inter-Paradigm Debate," in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (Eds.) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pg.166-67; see also Kahler, Miles (1998) "Rationality in International Relations," *International Organization*, 52(4): 919-941.

¹³ On constructivism in IR studies see Adler, Emanuel (2003) "Constructivism and International Relations," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (Eds.) *Handbook of International Relations*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications; and Hopf, Ted (1998) "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security*, 23(1): 171-200.

*Theory of International Politics*¹⁴ mirrors an alternative perspective to Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*.

The constructivist alternative to neo-realism is mainly based on the concept of identity, which is socially constructed at the structural level and can generate three different types of patterns: the "competitive system" in which states identify negatively with each other's security (that can be called the "Hobbesian system"); the "individualistic" system in which states are still self-regarding to their security, but the collective gains generated by cooperation are their primary target; and the "cooperative" security system in which each other's security is perceived as the collective responsibility. The implication of the identity element changes entirely the constant element of anarchy conceived by Waltz that triggers permanent security competition among the units. Widening the constructivist perspective at the sub-systemic/regional level, the researchers in the field have contributed with two new important perspectives: the security community and the regional security complex theories.¹⁵

It should be added that the constructivist perspective on neo-realism challenges and re-conceptualizes security under two inter-related propositions: security is embedded in meanings and discourse; and security could be classified under a sectorial logic: military, political, economic, social and environmental security.¹⁶

Both constructivism in IR studies and neo-liberalism criticize neo-realism of not being flexible on explaining and predicting shifts in the dynamic of world politics.

Neo-realism at the turning point

While the major shift from the Cold War to the post-Cold War epoch, or in systemic terms from the bipolar to unipolar era, confronted neo-realist research program at the predictive level¹⁷ at the turn of the 21st century, the major challenge emerges at the explanatory level targeting the whole range of features that frame structural realism. The neo-realist agenda is pressed to expand its explanatory panel and includes new perspectives on **units**, **anarchy** and the **distribution of power**.

One of the two constant elements of the structure is the **units**, which are conceived in *Waltzian* terms as states.¹⁸ However, two significant processes at the turn of the 21st century confront seriously this parsimonious view:

First, the terrorist networks, especially Al Qaeda, are on the high security agenda of the sole superpower of the system, United States of America, and of other great powers. Their military capabilities are engaged in brutal battles on fronts such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Regional powers are sustained by the United States to attack and suppress Al Qaeda bases through military power projection in neighboring states.¹⁹ Al Qaeda is a transnational actor who breeds not only in

¹⁴ Wendt, Alexander (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ Adler, Emanuel and Michael Barnett (Eds) (1998) *Security Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde (1998) *Security A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

¹⁷ See examples of prediction failure: Mearsheimer, John J. (1990) "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security*, 15(2): 15-64. and Waltz, Kenneth N. (1993) "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, 18(2): 44-80.

¹⁸ Waltz conceives also other type of units than states in an expanded historical perspective, but for the modern times the actual structure is formed by unit-states.

¹⁹ See the example of Ethiopia which sent its army to Somalia.

failed states but also in functional states, as the Madrid and London attacks show. Thus, Al Qaeda and similar terrorist networks that are engaged in major military conflicts with great powers should be included in the explanatory spectrum of the neo-realist research program. Powerful terrorist networks impact dramatically on the international system, are upgraded on the security agenda of the most powerful states in the system, and perform on military fronts.

Second, the European Union (EU) represents a very sophisticated cluster of states with great economic power and security actorness in progress. The EU is not a state and does not seem to develop in this direction. It is not an international organization in its classical/accepted meaning and it is not a military alliance/alignment. Yet, the EU is present in international economy and the slow but evident progress in developing its diplomatic and security capabilities (which add to the existing impressive economic capabilities) point out that a new kind of actor is active in the international landscape. The more relevance will add to its diplomatic and security presence in world politics the more EU will become an anomaly for the neo-realist research program. Neo-realist researchers would lose an important impetus for expanding the neo-realist explanatory power if they wait till EU will be more alike to a state, because this has high chances not to happen.

The EU links this critical assessment to the second constant element that defines the international structure, which is **anarchy**. The empirical data on the member states that form the EU can determine a new research question for an expanded neo-realist agenda: which are the conditions that trigger the exit from security competition, given the constant element of anarchy? This research question would transcend the inflexible proposition that the security competition exit is possible only in a hierarchical system. It would also make an important bridge with the neo-liberal research, which I already mentioned, that has meta-theoretical affinities with neo-realism. The up till now neo-realist analyses on EU are unpersuasive or they lack an in-depth scrutiny.²⁰

Finally, the variable of the structure, that is the **capabilities distribution**, poses a special problem regarding the current implication of the unipolar moment. After seventeen years of unipolarity, neo-realist thinkers have failed to predict and to explain the survival of the NATO as a collective defence organization without an existing enemy. Moreover, they have conceptualized poorly the latent trend to balance among units in a unipolar systemic environment. The latter refers to a very promising new paradigm in the neo-realist research program, specifically to the soft balance of power theory.²¹ However, the new paradigm proposes an over-stretched empirical base and it seems that almost any diplomatic dispute between the great powers on one hand and the United States on the other hand would imply the soft balance of power behavior. That includes, among other disagreements in the UN Security Council, economic competition and even the formation of the European Union Security and Defence Policy.²² More refinement, focusing on the rigorous selection of what goes in or out in a soft balancing action, would be needed within the new soft balance paradigm.

²⁰ See Art, Robert J. (1996) "Why Western Europe Need the United States and NATO" *Political Science Quarterly* 111(1): 1-39; and Gegou, Catherine (2005) "Causes and Consequences of the EU's Military Intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Realist Explanation," *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 10: 427-433. Art wants to point out that the US forces maintained in Western Europe after the Cold War in order to assure the peace between the Great Powers there. Gegou tries to prove that the European Security and Defence Policy is designed by France as an European alignment against the US supremacy in the world. For the expanded analysis on how the EU is under-theorized in the neo-realist research program see Collard-Wexler, Simon (2006) "Integration Under Anarchy: Neorealism and the European Union" *European Journal of International Relations*, 12(3): 397-432.

²¹ Walt, Stephen (2005) "Taming American Power" *Foreign Affairs* 84(5): 105-124.

²² For the critical assessment of the theory of soft balance I draw on Lieber, Kier A. and Gerard Alexander (2005) "Waiting for Balancing. Why the World Is Not Pushing Back" *International Security* 30(1): 109-139.

Conclusion

The Theory of International Politics by Kenneth N. Waltz is an essential book and stands at the center of research in IR studies. It transcends its literature context from almost three decades ago because it is the cornerstone of the neo-realist research program. It is also valuable for our understanding of international politics because it stimulates critical thought and scientific progress. By understanding structural realism, students of IR studies assess better the alternative research programs that have crystallized by means of academic polemics against neo-realist thinking. *Waltzian* structural realism invites also to make sense of the international world now by including possible refinements that would expand the neo-realist research program.

Diamandi Sava Constantin

Călin Hentea, *Brief Romanian Military History*, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland. Toronto. Plymouth, UK. 2007, 228 pages

I do not think that a perfect and absolute unbiased history is ever possible. Doesn't matter if the author is writing about a topic very close to his place and people or if he is studying the history of foreign nations, he must previously assume a minimum level of subjectivity. We have to pay a tribute to our own perceptions about our past and present lives, our places, our stories, and information. All what we can do is to be as honest as possible. That means that the historian should be permanently aware about the limits of his knowledge, his perceptions, his personal and very human feelings and capabilities, and most of all that means not to lie, not to remove on purpose facts and figures, not to disrupt the reality and the basics of science. For example, if someone would tent to write a history of Balkan countries histories, that person will have to face with quite totally different and sometime opposite national versions for the same historical event.

All the considerations above are designed to frame the most recent book of colonel Călin Hentea, issued by the academic United States publishing house, Scarecrow Press. It is about high courage and responsibility to publish, on your own, abroad, in one of the most competitive editorial market in the world, the military history of your country. Hentea did it proudly and successfully. Just a couple years before, in 2002 he signed the Romanian version of this book on Nemira publishing house, under the title "Armata și luptele românilor", which became, very soon, an editorial bestseller. Only two years after, a full revised and updated edition till the moment of the accession of Romania into NATO in April 2004, was issued. And now, the final edition is available also for the English reader, who benefits of a very clear and detailed dictionary of old Romanian historical terms and a list of military abbreviations and acronyms. Mostly for the English reader and scholar, those two technical sections of the book are very useful, because they are clarifying not only some specific words used in this book and in other articles or papers dealing with the same, not so well known, topic.

Călin Hentea is a very well known journalist and analyst, his work being considered not only by the military public, but also by the civilians, due to his articles and books issued since 2000 about propaganda, media war, psychological and information operations during the modern conflicts. I personally think that colonel Hentea has a special feeling of contemporary history, due to his large personal approach and professional contribution in international military missions as a staff officer in Albania (1997), Kosovo (2003, 2004), Afghanistan (2007), when he put his boots on the ground of various theaters of operations, speaking to the locals, looking at their buildings, monuments and graves, reading their books and newspapers. This very personal understanding of

what is or what was happening around him is one of the landmarks of Hentea's writings. However, *Brief Romanian Military History* is a bright work not because of his special view about the Romanian military history, but because of the book's design.

Hentea's book is an original work based on chronology - written according to the classic rules used by most of historian such as Tucidide, Max Weber or Nicolae Iorga - and the modern perspective generated by cybernetics. Through his ingenious solution, Hentea does not tell, neither comments the fighting past of Romanians, but he simply shows and presents facts and figures. Actually, Călin Hentea makes a choice of those facts and figures from the Romanians history, with the objectivity and apparent lack of personality specific for a documentary. From this perspective it seems that the author is following the French philosopher Paul Veyne's opinion, who said that "*the enrichment of the places repertoire is the only progress possible to be achieved by the historical knowledge; history would never give more lessons learned, but will only increase the number of questions*" (Veyne, *How history could be written*, Meridiane, 1999, pp. 285-286). The author gives to the reader's mind the answer that he can find for any kind of possible questions regarding one or other Romanian fight or commander mentioned in the book. On this regard, one of the first foreign lecturer of this book, Dennis Showalter - past president of the American Society for Military History - who signed the foreword, pointed very sharply: "*These pages present how Romania would like to be seen in military context — and, no less significantly, how it wants to be seen by the West as it moves into the twenty-first century*". This remark matches very well with my considerations at the beginning of these lines and implicitly underlines one of the charms of this book, which shows in a very natural way the evolution of the Romanian armed forces since the Antiques times till the accession into NATO, its main characters (leaders, commanders, voievodes, princes, heroes), as well as battles and guns. That's why, perhaps, professor Florin Constantiniu said about this book that it could be used as "a little encyclopedia of the Romanian military", because Hentea unite the Ancient history with the contemporary events which pointed the historical evolution of the armed forces on the Romanian lands. A special attention is paid to the international and regional context of each significant national event and also to the Romanians who served in foreign armed forces such as in the Hapsburgs border regiments, Russian imperial cavalry or in the United States forces. This larger approach brings the foreign reader much more close to a better understanding of the respective historical period or character.

I would like to underline about this American edition of this Romanian best seller another important value: as Dennis Showalter also noticed, there are very little edited information for the English-language scholars available on American or Western libraries about the Romanian history, which explains the reason for so many wrong perceptions that we used to complain. Till now we used to be very proud about our history, but very few foreigners know something more consistent about it. I really think that it was and it is our own responsibility and duty as Romanian scholars and historians to publish abroad about the national issues and perspectives and join in this way the world cultural exchange, by honestly promoting the Romanian values. Now, Hentea's book is accomplishing this mission, but his achievement should be permanently followed by the others.

Constantin Hlihor