

Barbu Brezianu writes the book of time regained

The memoirs of a Romanian culture senior

■ Octavian Soviany

THE REPRESENTATIVE of an illustrious generation - that of Noica and Cioran, Barbu Brezianu impresses at 91 by a very uncommon spiritual vitality. During his teenage years at Spiru Haret High school he had the privilege of having Ion Barbu as a teacher.

Ion Barbu discovered the lack of enthusiasm of his students for geometry and replaced the arid formulae with hours of poetry, quoting Rimbaud, Mallarme, Valery, Rilke or Poe.

Among his colleagues, there were Constantin Noica and Radu Sighiranu.

Together they had joined the magazine "Vlăstarul" that an elder colleague of theirs, Mircea Eliade, had created.

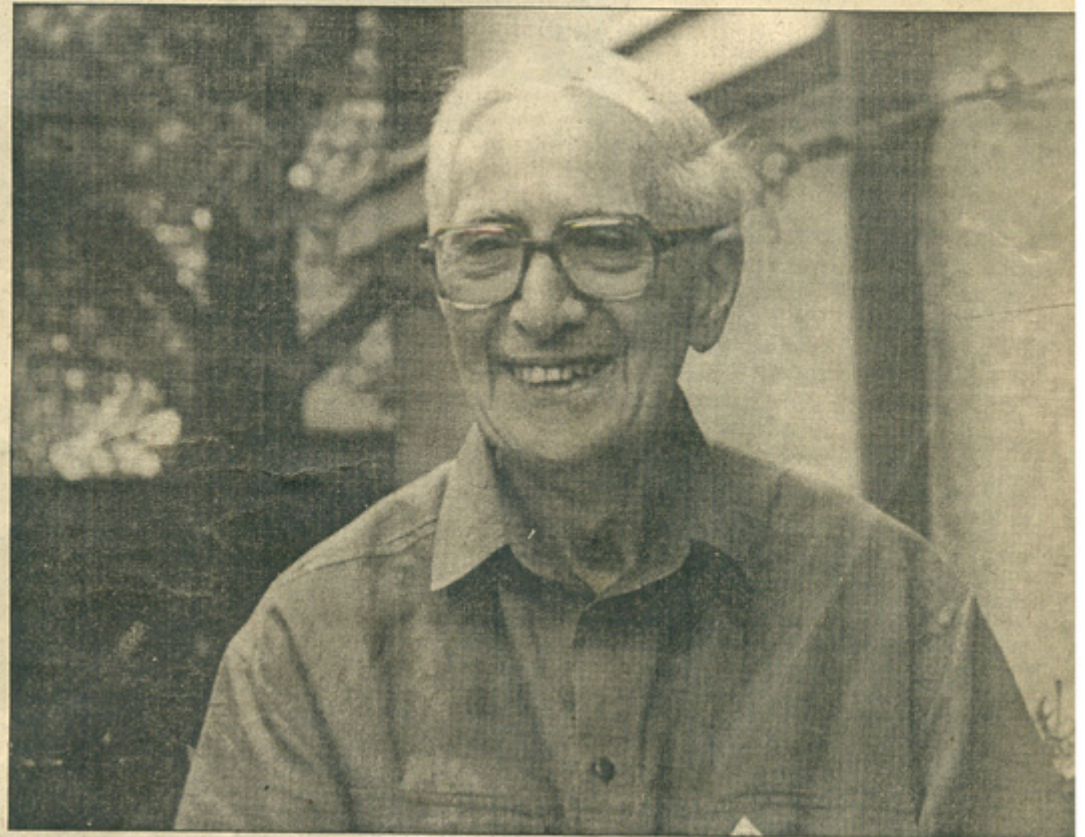
This is the magazine where the author of "Elegii pentru ființe mici," will have his debut - Ionescu Eugen. Barbu Brezianu met about then with Petru Comarnescu who was his mentor.

He hired him and his friends Arșavir Aterian and Constantin Noica as editors at the "Ultima oră" newspaper.

Even more, Comarnescu gave him good reviews on his first poetic attempts. He was trying to write in the style of his mathematics teacher Barbilian who was best known by his other identity: Ion Barbu. Petru Comarnescu started gathering his favourite pupil's literary works without his knowledge.

He put together a volume called "Nod ars" that was launched the very day Barbu Brezianu celebrated his majority.

Well received by the critics of the moment, the volume will impose the young apprentice among the personalities of the generation. The years after the war tragically dis-



Brezianu in 1996, photographed by Friedrich Teja-Bach

torted the destiny of Barbu Brezianu.

He became acquainted with the communist prisons and the forced labour camps at Capul Midia. His name disappeared for a long time from the pages of magazines and books. When he returned however, he did it in style - as an art and history critic.

He dedicated monographs to Karl Storck, Nicolae Grigorescu, Tonitza. He became one of the most pertinent annalists of Brâncuși. The

studies he published ("Brâncuși's work in Romania," "Brâncuși in the Romanian critic works and culture," "Brâncuși in Romania") brought him a well-deserved recognition.

Not so long ago, Mikko Heikinheim, Finland's ambassador in Romania, stated that "Barbu Brezianu made me discover and better understand Brâncuși."

In Finland Barbu Brezianu is Kalevala's best translator. At 90 he manages stay on top of things: he

re-edited his poetry, his stories, translation of the Finnish saga.

He is currently involved in reediting his Tonitza monograph. He is preparing the apparition of his memoirs. Some fragments have already been published in the pages of some magazines.

People who read Barbu Brezianu's prose are speechless. They eagerly expect this new volume that will be more than just a document. It will be an admirable piece of literature.