# BIRDS COLLECTED BY DIONISIE LINȚIA PRESERVED IN THE MUSEUM OF OLTENIA, CRAIOVA (ROMANIA)

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**Abstract.** This study contributes to the completion of the documentary device of the items donated by the naturalist Dionisie Linția to the museum of Craiova, in the first half of the last century. The "rehabilitated" items are in this way enriched with scientific value, passing from the category of museum items that can be used as didactic or exhibition material, to the category of important preparations, with historic and documentary value that can be classified in the national cultural patrimony.

Keywords: collection, birds, museum, Romanian fauna, Dionisie Linția.

Rezumat. Păsări colectate de Dionisie Linția conservate în Muzeul Olteniei, Craiova (România). Studiul de față contribuie la completarea aparatului documentar al pieselor donate de naturalistul Dionisie Linția muzeului din Craiova, în prima jumătate a secolului trecut. Piesele "reabilitate", capătă astfel valoare științifică, trecând de la categoria de piese muzeale care pot fi folosite ca material didactic sau expozițional, la aceea de preparate importante, cu valoare istorică și documentară care pot fi clasate în patrimoniul cultural național.

Cuvinte cheie: colecție, păsări, muzeu, fauna României, Dionisie Linția.

#### INTRODUCTION

The Natural Sciences department was founded in 1926 by the members of the Scientific Society of Craiova, led by Marin Demetrescu, under the name of the Natural History Museum, which became a department of the Oltenia Museum in 1928. The patrimony of the department, proceeded from donations, acquisitions, transfers, exchanges but especially from the collectings made by the experts of the department, during the research activities, includes more than 110,000 items nowadays.

The ornithological collection of the Oltenia Museum includes now more than 1,746 items (stuffed birds, skins, trophies, skeletons, eggs) most of them prepared in the taxidermy - restoration laboratory of the museum; they belong to 222 species, 55 families, and 17 orders. Analysed from the point of view of affiliation of species at the types of habitats, the birds are divided as it follows: 146 species come from terrestrial habitats and 76 species come from aquatic habitats.

The first scientific information, referring to the ornithological collection was introduced in the informational circuit by BAZILESCU et al. (1980) in the paper "The Methodical Catalogue of Vertebrates Collections of the Oltenia Museum". Back then, in 1980, the ornithological collection had 863 items. The ornithological material introduced in the collection until 1998, respectively 592 items (representing 148 species, 38 families, 16 orders) was published in the paper "The Catalogue of Ornithological Collection of the Oltenia Museum", the second part 1978 / 1998 (RIDICHE 1999). In 2003, RIDICHE also published the catalogue of egg collection, including 352 eggs (160 species, 98 types, 45 families, 15 orders, representing 64.46% of the total amount of nesting birds species in our country). Most of them were collected by I. P. Licherdopol, respectively 312 items, the rest of the items being collected by the museum experts, during the field research.

The oldest items in the ornithological patrimony of the Oltenia Museum Craiova, in a good state of preservation, are dated beginning with the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1909: *Pastor roseus*; 1910: *Loxia curvirostra*; 1912: *Alectoris graeca*, *Himantopus himantopus*, *Calandrella brachydactyla*, *Oenanthe hispanica*, *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, *Emberiza cirlus*; 1915: *Burhinus oedicnemus* etc.) and were prepared and donated by the famous naturalist Dionisie Lintia. The bird collection enriched along the decades by various donations and acquisitions of stuffed birds (e.g. Constantina Sorescu collection) or skins (Mircea Popescu collection) but also by field collectings, as a result of scientific research (avifaunistic, ecologic etc.) made by the experts of the museum in different areas of the county. A significant number of birds from the collection are the result of the collaboration with authorised hunters (independent ones, hired by AGVPS).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

As work support we have used the information supplied by the specialized literature (DOMBROWSKI 1946, LINŢIA 1954, 1955; GROSSU 1946, 1963, 1983; BAZILESCU et al., 1981; CĂTUNEANU 1983, GAROVNOKOV 1983; PAPADOPOL 1983; VASILIU 1983; KISS 1983, 1998, 1999, 2002-2005; RIDICHE 1999, 2003) and preserved ornithological material in the patrimony of the Oltenia Museum.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Dionisie Linția was born on August 13, in Cacova village (today Gradinari village) in Caraș Severin county. In 1896 he began to study at the State Teachers School in Timișoara.

In 1899, he visited for the first time the Museum of Natural Sciences Society, in Timişoara. In 1902 he was visited in Moldova Noua, where he was working as a teacher, by the engineer Lodovic Forster, the governor of Banat Domains, who recommended Dionisie Lintia to the Hungarian specialists in Budapest. In 1903, he was elected as an ordinary member of the Natural Sciences Society in Timisoara. Starting with that moment, his life became inseparable from the museology activities of Banat. In 1904, he was invited to Budapest for a few weeks long specialisation class in order to improve his taxidermy and birds methodology knowledge: here he worked with PhD. Gyula Madarasz in Ornithological Collection and Dermoplastic Laboratory.

In 1926, he supplied the Scientific Museum in Craiova with 54 stuffed birds (Table 1). By examining the collection, we have discovered that 8 items from this list are missing, but, on the other hand, there are other items prepared by Linția and donated probably on a different occasion (Table 2).

The list of the items donated by Dionisie Linţia on January 3, 1926 was published by Andrei Kiss in a volume dedicated to Dionisie Linţia, that includes the ornithological observations or his field work notes (Kiss 2005). This list includes both the scientific name of the preparations and the dates of their collecting. We have compared this list with the catalogue published in 1980 and with the preserved ornithological material and we have noticed that almost all items prepared and offered by Linţia still exist in the collection, but, of these, only two have complete information and are known as originated from Dionisie Linţia, 36 have incomplete information, respectively the origin from Linţia is not certain or they only have partial collecting information and a number of eight items has absolutely no information (*Gavia stellata* 1313/135, *Phalacrocorax carbo*1307/129; *Platalea leucorodia* 1272/103 şi 1358/168; *Falco peregrinus* 1254/91; *Porzana parva* 1339/155; *Limosa limosa* 9343/1018; *Calandrella brachydactyla* 1209/54).

In this way, the "rehabilitated" items gained scientific value, passing from the museum items category that can be used as didactic or exhibition material, to the category of important preparations, with historical and documentary value that can be classified in the national cultural patrimony.

Thus, two species of rare birds (the Rock Partridge - *Alectoris graeca* and the little bustard - *Otis tetrax*), collected, prepared and published by the ornithologist Dionisie Linția, are in present classified in the category of thesaurus items of the national cultural patrimony, being considered avifaunistic rarities in our country. In the category of the exquisite items in Linția Collection we can also quote a specimen of rose-coloured starling - *Pastor roseus*, captured at Padina Matei (Banat) on June 8 (rare species in the Romanian fauna, usually preferring steppe habitats and a sample of jackdaw - *Corvus monedula*, captured in Tirol (Austria) on June 24, having completely white feathers (leucistic specimen of jackdaw).

In the ornithological collection of the Oltenia Museum there are also other two birds collected in the research area of the naturalist Dionisie Linția, in the first half of the last century: *Plegadis falcinellus* collected at Satchinez (Banat) on August 25, 1924, inventory no. 1274/104 and *Anser f. fabalis* collected at Becicherecul Mic (Banat), on October 2, 1920, inventory no. 1287/113), for which we assume that they were also offered to the museum by the famous ornithologist, although this detail missed from the documents.

In 1980, Andrei Kiss, the curator of the bird collection from the Banat Museum Timsoara, the chief of the Natural Sciences Department of this museum, organised a Scientific Session of homage for the 100 years anniversary of Dionisie Linția's birth. Many famous Romanian ornithologists and biologists that met him in person, shared their memories. CĂTUNEANU (1983) met him in 1930 in the laboratory of professor Andrei Popovici - Bâznoşanu, the chief of the Zoology Department of the Faculty of Biology in Bucharest. In the same place, in 1931, he met George Vasiliu, back then an assistant of professor Bâznoşanu (VASILIU 1983). In 1939, Alexandru Grossu met him at the Zoological Station in Sinaia, where he was invited by his professor, Popovici – Bâznoşanu, the founder of the station, when he was preparing his Phd in malacology. Linția contributed to the endowment of the station with a collection of birds from the Romanian fauna, naturalised by him, which was kept until today. Friend of professor Bâznoşanu, he used to come to the station especially in autumn, in order to observe and to gather birds. A beautiful friendship started between them, which lasted until the end of maestro's life (GROSSU, 1963, 1983). Birds collected by Lintia were also donated to the Zoology Museum in Bucharest and to the museum of Vârşeţ, Serbia. We have found information regarding these collections and their importance in the articles of GAROVNOKOV (1983) and PAPADOPOL (1983).

Andrei Kiss, the present curator of the bird collection from the Banat Museum, the continuer of the masterpiece initiated by Linția, dedicated to the famous researcher numerous articles about his life and especially about his work (KISS, 1983, 1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2003). Besides these articles, he also published three volumes, one with the correspondence of Dionisie Linția (KISS 1999) where he commented upon over 570 letters delivered or received by him from various ornithologists, a volume with observations, field work notes and materials collected by him along his life (KISS 2004) and a third volume about the collection donated by Linția (KISS 2005). From his field work notes and from his correspondence we find out important information about some of the items now found in the collection of the Museum of Craiova. *Callandrella brachydactyla* (1209/54), *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* (1226/68) collected by Dionisie Linția in Moldova Noua on April 24-25, 1912 and *Emberiza cirlus* (1208/52) from Svinița. *Monticola saxatilis* (1231/72) and *Oenanthe hispanica* (1232/73) from Divici, in May 1912, were collected during the study trip with Max Hugo Weigold (1886-1973) (KISS, 2004). Linția met Hugo Weigold in 1907 during a trip by ship on the Danube to Orșova (KISS 1999). Back then, the future manager of the Ornithological Observatory in Helgoland and of the Natural Sciences Museum in Hanovra, was a student in Leipzig. Their friendship lasted all their lives. In 1912 they started together a collecting trip to Serbia and in the area of the Lower Danube which lasted six weeks. (KISS quoted work). All

the collected material was prepared by Linția and a part of it ended up in the bird collection of Craiova museum, according to the offer in 1926.

Porzana porzana (1339/155) from March 1917 was brought to him by a soldier that had caught the bird with his hat, in a hutment. Linția noted that the animal was not scared at all, he was arranging his feathers and was pecking in his aviary together with more Fringillidae. It was very calm and he could take it with him everywhere. Because of a snow storm that suddenly started on March 15, he could not feed it anymore so he had to sacrifice it.

Anthus spinoletta (1210/55) was collected during the ornithological trip in the Retezat Mountains, July 6-22, 1917. In the trip to Stana Radeş and Fata Radeş in July 22, on the plateau from the Cioaca saddle, he observed many Water Pipits. He shot seven birds, among which a flying young bird. At the same time, he believed there were still many nests with nestlings birds and maybe with still unhatched eggs, because he had noticed many adults of Anthus spinoletta that were carrying food in their peaks. (KISS quoted opera).

About *Anser erythropus* (1286/112) collected in March 1918, we have found out from his notes that it was shot by the public notary Köfalusy from Giroc who delivered it to Linția for his collection (KISS quoted opera).

The observations made upon the items collected in 1921: Gavia stellata (1312/134 şi 1313/135), Gavia actica (1311/133) and Otis tetrax (1336/153) are also interesting. These were noted in Linția's correspondence with The Hungarian Ornithological Head Office in Budapest in 1922 (KISS 1999). About Otis tetrax, Linția wrote that they appeared in 2-3 places in 1921 and they were shot. In this way, the sample from Comloşul Mare (a female) was shot by a frontier guard. KISS (quoted work) noted that he could not find it in the catalogue of the collection in Bucharest, and now we know that it is in the collection in Craiova. Linția also noted in this correspondence about an invasion of Colymbus arcticus and Colymbus septentrionalis (today synonyms with Gavia actica and Gavia stellata) on November 12-14, 1921, which appeared in large groups around Timișoara, on the running waters, on lakes and moors. During those days he received for preparation 12-14 samples from more places (Timișoara, Remetea Mare, Şag Timișeni, Giroc, Utvin). KISS (quoted opera) noted that from all the 6 samples that got in Linția's hands, only one was a Gavia stellata, which he could not find in the catalogue of the collection. It seems like it was not lost, because we have now found it in the patrimony of the Oltenia Museum Craiova.

Platalea leucorodia (1272/103 and 1358/16 was collected by Linția during his expedition to Dobrogea in May 14-25, 1923. In this period he had many trips on Şerban Lake, Filipoiu Moor, Măcin Mountains and Greci. He collected the spoonbills at Cernofca Moor, in the last day of the trip when he also collected 2 nests of spoonbills, three of *Ardea purpurea* and a nest of *Podiceps nigricollis*. The nests were all sat on the reeds broken at the height of 90 cm at the surface of the water (KISS 2004).

All these observations are taken from the already published works and we hope they complete the missing information of these preparations and enrich their scientific and documentary value, especially in the field of history of sciences.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The collection of the captured and prepared birds donated by Dionisie Linția to the museum of Craiova in the first half of the last century has an exquisite historic, documentary, scientific and also memorial value, being the proof of the meticulosity and the passion with which the great naturalist approached the field of the ornithological research.

This study contributes to the completion of the documentary device of the above mentioned items, making in this way possible, the passing from the category of museal items to the category of national cultural patrimony.

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Table 1. List of stuffed birds offered by Dionisie Linția to the Scientific Museum of Craiova, the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1926. Tabel 1. Lista speciilor de păsări naturalizat-montate oferite Muzeului Științific din Craiova de Dionisie Linția, la 3. I. 1926.

No.	Species	Sex	Locality	Sampling data
1.	Gavia stellata	Imm.	Giroc (Banat)	November 13, 1921
2.	Gavia arctica	3	Utvin (Banat)	November 13, 1921
3.	*Phalacrocorax carbo	3	Lake Şerban (Brăila)	May 17, 1925
4.	*Phalacrocorax carbo	\$	Lake Şerban (Brăila)	May 17, 1925
5.	Platalea leucorodia	\$	Chilia Veche (Dobrogea)	May 25, 1923
6.	Cygnus olor	Pull.	Ciamurlia (Dobrogea)	May 22, 1925
7.	Anser erythropus	3	Giroc (Banat)	March 10, 1918
8.	Anser erythropus	3	Becicherecu Mic (Banat)	November 21, 1924
9.	Anas penelope	9	Satchinez (Banat)	October 25, 1918
10.	Anas acuta	3	Giroc (Banat)	April 1, 1918
11.	Anas clypeata	♂	Becicherecu Mic (Banat)	March 17, 1918
12.	Anas querquedula	♂	Ghiroda (Banat)	March 29,1925
13.	Anas querquedula	2	Ghiroda (Banat)	March 30, 1925
14.	Mergus albellus	∂juv.	Vinga (Banat)	February 26, 1922
15.	Mergus serrator	₫	Giroc (Banat)	November 9, 1924
16.	Mergus merganser	9	Timişoara (Banat)	December 23, 1924
17.	Falco peregrinus	9	Timişoara (Banat)	December 29, 1924
18.	Coturnix coturnix	₫	Timişoara (Banat)	June 20, 1924
19.	Alectoris graeca saxatilis	ð	Bosnia	November 11, 1912
20.	Porzana parva	₫	Timişoara (Banat)	March 13, 1917
21.	Otis tetrax	9	Comloşu Mare (Banat)	December 7, 1921
22.	Calidris testacea	3	Novi Bečej	May 22, 1908
23.	Philomachus pugnax	\$	Săcălaz (Banat)	March 9, 1924
24.	Tringa erythropus	3	Satchinez (Banat)	May 20, 1918
25.	Limosa limosa	3	Satchinez (Banat)	May 17, 1918
26.	Lymnocriptes minimus	\$	Satchinez (Banat)	September 8, 1912
27.	Himantopus himantopus	3	Biled (Banat)	June 23, 1912
28.	Burhinus oedicnemus	3	(Banat)	November 10, 1915
29.	Larus argentatus	3	Jurilovca (Dobrogea)	May 26, 1925
30.	Columba livia	3	Doberdo (Carst)	January 26, 1925
31.	Merops apiaster	3	Deliblata (Serbia)	June 12, 1914
32.	Calandrella brachydactyla	9	Moldova Nouă (Banat)	April 24, 1912
33.	Nucifraga caryocatactes	-	Weldes (Kraina)	January 1, 1912
34.	Corvus monedula	3	Tirol (Austria)	June 24, 1918
35.	°Corvus frugilegus	\$	Timişoara (Banat)	March 15, 1914
36.	*Panurus biarmicus	3	Biled (Banat)	April 6, 1924
37.	*Panurus biarmicus	3	Biled (Banat)	April 6, 1924
38.	Parus lugubris	3	Grădinari (Banat)	February 1, 1917
39.	Oenanthe hispanica	3	Divici (Banat)	May 28, 1912
40.	Monticola saxatilis	3	Divici (Banat)	May 21, 1912
41.	Sylvia atricapilla	3	Timișoara (Banat)	April 11, 1917
42.	Phylloscopus sibilatrix	ð	Moldova Nouă (Banat)	April 25, 1912
43.	Prunella collaris	ð	Mts. Retezat (Peak Zănoaga)	December 29,1924
44.	Anthus spinoletta	ð	Mts. Retezat (Fata Radeş)	July 11, 1917
45.	Motacilla flava	3	Covaci (Banat)	June 5, 1924
46.	Motacilla cinerea	3	Moldova Nouă (Banat)	April 24, 1912
47.	Lanius excubitor	\$	Giroc (Banat)	December 14, 1924
48.	Pastor roseus	\$	Padina Matei (Banat)	June 8, 1909
49.	Carduelis flammea	3	Giroc (Banat)	February 2, 1924
50.	*Loxia curvirostra	ð	Marila (Banat)	September 5, 1910
51.	*Loxia curvirostra	φ	Marila (Banat)	September 5, 1910
52	Coccothraustes coccothraustes	3	Fibiş (Banat)	December 29, 1924
52.				
53.	Emberiza cirlus	♂	Şviniţa (Banat)	May 7, 1912

<sup>\*</sup> Biogroup; o with deformed beak, squinting

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Table 2. List of stuffed bird species in the ornithological collection of the Oltenia Museum (Craiova), preparations by Dionisie Linția. Tabel 2. Lista speciilor de păsări naturalizat-montate din colecția ornitologică a Muzeului Olteniei (Craiova) preparate de Dionisie Linția.

No.	Species	Sex	Locality	Sampling data	Collection number
1.	Gavia stellata	1 im	Giroc (Banat)	November 13, 1921	1312/134
2.	Gavia stellata	1 im	Giroc (Banat)	November 13, 1921	1313/135
3.	Gavia arctica	8	Utvin (Banat)	November 13, 1921	1311/133
4.	Phalacrocorax carbo - trofeu	8	Lake Şerban (Brăila)	May 17, 1925	1307/129
5.	Platalea leucorodia	9	Chilia Veche (Dobrogea)	May 25, 1923	1272/103
6.	Platalea leucorodia	9	Chilia Veche (Dobrogea)	May 25, 1923	1358/168
7.	Anser erythropus	8	Giroc (Banat)	March 10, 1918	1286/112
8.	Anser erythropus	3	Becicherecu Mic (Banat)	November 21, 1924	together with no. 1254/91
9.	Anas acuta	8	Giroc (Banat)	April 1, 1918	1299/124
10.	Anas querquedula	3	Ghiroda (Banat)	March 29, 1925	1296/121
11.	Mergus albellus	∂juv	Vinga (Banat)	February 26, 1922	1304/128
12.	Mergus serrator	8	Giroc (Banat)	November 9, 1924	1303/127
13.	Mergus merganser	9	Timişoara (Banat)	December 23, 1924	1307/125
14.	Falco peregrinus (with prey / Lesser White-fronted Goose)	9	Timişoara (Banat)	December 29, 1924	1254/91
15.	Alectoris graeca	8	Koronik (Banat)	November 11, 1912	1346/161
16.	Porzana parva	3	Timişoara (Banat)	March 13, 1917	1339/155
17.	Otis tetrax	2	Comloşu Mare (Banat)	December 7, 1921	1336/153
18.	Philomachus pugnax	3	Săcălaz (Banat)	March 9, 1924	1322/140
19.	Philomachus pugnax	\$	Săcălaz (Banat)	March 9, 1924	1323/141
20.	Tringa erythropus	∂	Satchinez (Banat)	May 20, 1918	1324/142
21.	Limosa limosa	3	Satchinez (Banat)	May 17, 1918	9343/1018
22.	Himantopus himantopus	8	Biled (Banat)	June 23, 1912	1326/144
23.	Burhinus oedicnemus	ð	Uliuc - Banat	November 10, 1915	1317/139
24.	Larus cachinnans	∂	Jurilovca (Dobrogea)	May 26, 1925	1332/149
25.	Calandrella brachydactyla	₽	Moldova Nouă (Banat)	April 24, 1912	1209/54
26.	Nucifraga caryocatactes	-	Retezat (Banat)	January 1, 1912	1193/40
27.	Corvus monedula	∂	Tirol (Austria)	June 24, 1918	1189/39
28.	Corvus frugilegus	₽	Timişoara (Banat)	March 15, 1914	1188/38
29.	Panurus biarmicus	8	Biled (Banat)	April 6, 1924	1219/63
30.	Panurus biarmicus	8	Biled (Banat)	April 6, 1924	1352/164
31.	Parus lugubris	8	Grădinari (Banat)	February 1, 1917	1217/61
32.	Oenanthe hispanica	8	Divici (Banat)	May 28, 1912	1232/73
33.	Monticola saxatilis	8	Divici (Banat)	May 21, 1912	1231/72
34.	Sylvia atricapilla	8	Timişoara (Banat)	April 11, 1917	1229/70
35.	Phylloscopus sibilatrix	8	Moldova Nouă (Banat)	April 25, 1912	1226/68
36.	Prunella collaris	8	Mts. Retezat (Peak Zănoaga)	July 19, 1917	1233/74
37.	Anthus spinoletta	8	Mts. Retezat (Fata Radeş)	July 11, 1917	1210/55
38.	Motacilla flava	3	Covacița (Banat)	June 5, 1924	1211/56
39.	Motacilla alba	0	-	June 1925	1214/58
40.	Lanius excubitor	9	Giroc (Banat)	December 14, 1924	1220/64
41.	Lanius collurio	3	Ilfov (Muntenia)		1222/65
42.	Pastor roseus	₽	Padina Matei (Banat)	June 8, 1909	1196/42
43.	Carduelis flammea	3	Giroc (Banat)	February 2, 1924	1201/46
44.	Loxia curvirostra	3	Marila (Banat)	September 5, 1910	1203/48
45.	Loxia curvirostra	<u></u>	Marila (Banat)	September 5, 1910	1204/49
46.	Coccothraustes coccothraustes	3	Fibiş (Banat)	December 29, 1924	1199/44
47.	Emberiza cirlus	3	Şviniţa (Banat)	May 7, 1912	1208/52
48.	Emberiza cia	3	Moldova Nouă (Banat)	December 29, 1916	1207/53
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