 Recent Romanian historians' treatment of the Romanian middle ages have tended to alternate between two widely opposed styles. On the one hand there have been the "official" accounts epitomized by the writings of Andrei Ojetea\textsuperscript{1} who takes a dogmatic position about the evolution of Romanian society. The unspoken but very real rationale for the "official" viewpoint is that it provides a framework from which to explain the Communist seizure of power in 1944-1945, as if it were the natural climax of a long series of steps that followed the classic pattern of Marxist evolution. There was first a slave mode of production (under Roman occupation), followed by the creation of a feudal mode, which flowered at the time of the creation of the first Wallachian and Moldavian states in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and which was followed in turn by the gradual introduction of capitalist modes of production in the eighteenth, and especially in the nineteenth century. There is, of course, the recognition that the introduction of capitalist market forces in the backward feudal structure of Romanian society resulted in a "refeudalization" such as that described by Marx and Engels in their writings on Europe east of the Elbe. Nevertheless, after 1864, capitalist forces are seen as taking the upper hand, so that by the twentieth century it is possible to understand the natural rise of a working class socialist movement.\textsuperscript{2}

There has been another set of historians who, without frontally attacking the "official" position, have concentrated their careful researches on gathering evidence which tends to show that during the middle ages there never was a classical "feudal" society. Their work suggests that instead the early Romanian states were "predatory and trading" structures which probably resembled the Eurasian nomad empires, especially the Empire of the Golden Horde, far more than medieval Western Europe. Their research further suggests that during the sixteenth century, the transformation of Romanian

\textsuperscript{1} The most complete expression of the "official" viewpoint is to be found in the four-volume set \textit{Istoria României} (București: Editura Academiei, 1960-64). An abbreviated version of Ojetea's opinions can be found in his "Le second asservissement des paysans roumains (1746-1821)," \textit{Nouvelles études d'histoire} (Bucarest: Editions de l'Académie, 1960), II 300-312 and in his "La formation des états féodaux roumains," \textit{ibid.} (1965), III, 87-104. (\textit{Nouvelles études d'histoire} presents Romanian papers given at world congresses of historical sciences. There are four volumes—1955, 1960, 1965, and 1970—and they present a good selection of the best recent historical work done by Romanians.)

\textsuperscript{2} See Vasile Livianu et al., \textit{Relații Agrare și Mișcări Tăranesti în România, 1908-1921} (Agrarian Relations and the Peasant Movement in Romania, 1908-1921) (București: Editura Politica, 1967) and Ion Popescu-Puturi et al., \textit{Alianța Clasei Muncitoare cu Țărăneasa Muncitoare în România} (The Alliance of the Working Class with the Peasant Working Class in Romania) (București: Editura Politica, 1969).
villagers into serfs was indeed prompted by the same sorts of market forces which accomplished this in the rest of trans-Elbian Europe according to the Marx-Engels hypothesis, but that the transformation was very incomplete. It was in fact only completed in the nineteenth century by the opening of the Black Sea to Western European commerce and the consequent transformation of the Romanian rural economy from primarily pastoral to heavily cereal producing and exporting. Thus, as late as 1850 the transformation was far from complete, and it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that there developed a “feudal” demesne cultivated by serf labor.

Most of the recent Romanian works on Wallachia and Moldavia from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries (I am leaving out the considerable body of work on Transylvania because of the distinctive evolution of that province under Hungarian rule), therefore, tend to be very empirical while avoiding generalizations and theoretical conclusions in order to avoid brushing against the “official” theory that might suffer in comparison. This is unfortunate for many reasons, but especially because one historian, H. H. Stahl, has shown that it is both possible to incorporate recent findings and to theorize about them without being “anti-Marxist.” Indeed, his work shows that it is possible to be both subtle, to take into account the very distinctive traits of Romanian social and economic evolution, and at the same time to contribute to the furthering of Marxist history. A fact long known in Western historiography but only recently rediscovered in Romania is that Marx and Engels were not rigidly dogmatic, and that their work can be used creatively even while some of the empirical basis of their work is abandoned as outdated.

Among the best recent historical works on Romanian social and economic developments from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century are those of Constantin C. Giurescu, Radu Manolescu, Gheorghe Cronț, Ilie Corfus, Ștefan Olteanu and Constantin Șerban, Valentin Al. Georgescu and Emanuela Popescu, and three works of Henri H. Stahl.

Salted fish were one of the key Wallachian and Moldavian exports during the period being examined as well as an important part of local trade and consumption. It is for this reason that Giurescu’s book is important. In a chapter entitled (following the “official” schema) “Fishing in the period of developed feudalism and in the period of declining...”