

First registrations of ROMANIA, by Marius Necula

As a friend of the president of the "Romanian Retromobil Club", I could study their archives. Among them, I found the collection of the first Romanian auto magazine called "Revista automobila" issued from March 1906. The registration system was for the first time mentioned in the magazine no. 26 (February 1908) :

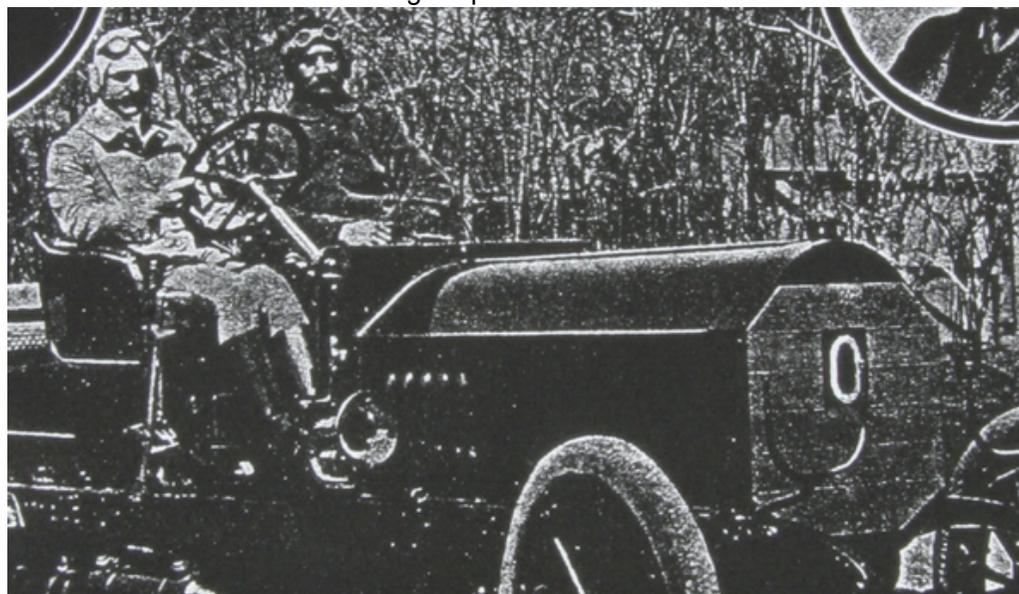


According to it the cars should have a plate (rear or rear and front) with just a serial number, identifying the owner of the car and not the car itself. The number was given to a person or an institute for ever. If the owner changes his car, he would keep his number and the new car receives the same owner's number. Of course, by a special demand, by hand, addressed to the police, one owner could renounce to his driving license and his number(s), this ones being later allocated to another person or institute. The first plates had no standard dimensions, and even could be hand painted.

The list of the owners of automobiles in February 1908 shows there were only 139 cars in Romania (Transylvania was not part of Romania)

Cu alte cuvinte, o trăsură vânzându se unui alt proprietar, numărul ei rămâne proprietatea fostului ei stăpân: No. 0.— Prințul George V. Bibescu, rentier, strada Apolodor, 3.	134.— <i>Doctor Anghelescu</i> , Strada Clementei, 13. 135.— <i>C. Târnoceanu</i> , rentier, Calea Griviței, 5. 136.— <i>G. Mandy</i> , avocat, Calea Victoriei. 137.— <i>Gr. Alexandrescu</i> , rentier, Hotel Continental. 138.— <i>Take Ionescu</i> , avocat, Strada Cătun, 25.
---	--

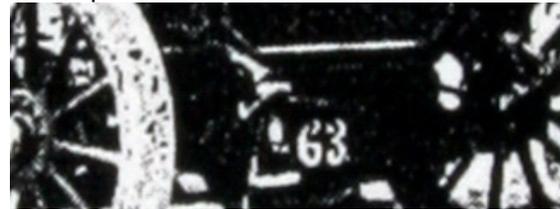
The first number registered was "0" (zero !), for Prince George V. Bibescu, nephew of King George Bibescu, who abdicated in 1848. Here is his Mercedes 75 HP, wearing a front big "0" plate white on black.



The Prince Bibescu was at the beginning of XX century, the heart and soul of the automotive movement in Romania. He was the president of the Romanian Automobile Club and he participated at many races at that time in Romania and abroad. Being good friend with the famous French aviator Louis Blériot he join his piloting school and obtain the flying license no. 20. Hero of the first W.W. when he was the leader of a squadron, he became after the war, the president of the International Aeronautics Federation.

On the February 1908 list, no. 63 appears Ion Maican a well known automobile pilot at his time. His Tourand 60HP shows a n° 63 front plate

62. — *Nicolae Zane*, inginer, Strada Negustorilor.
63. — *Ion Maican* rentier, Str. Popa Tatu, 72.
64. — *Inspectoratul Jandarmeriei Rurale*



This list shows that the numbers were issued chronologically, no matter if to persons or institutes, from Bucharest or another cities. For instance no. 38 belongs to the Second Army Corp, no. 53, 57 and 69 to the Mayoralty of Bucharest, no.64 to the Gendarmerie, no.71 to the newspaper Universul, no.84 to a person from Craiova, no. 107 and 108 to a person from Câmpina (judet Prahova), no. 130 to a Baron from Roman (judet Bacau), etc..

A letter of the Romanian Automobile Club addressed to the chief commissioner of the police on 15th of August, 1908 mentions for the first time the need of a new system for plates. All plates should be uniformly, same sizes and writing and most important, the name of the city where the car was registered should be mentioned on the plate.

They proposed the following abbreviations: Bc for Bucharest , Br for Braila , Bz for Buzau , etc..

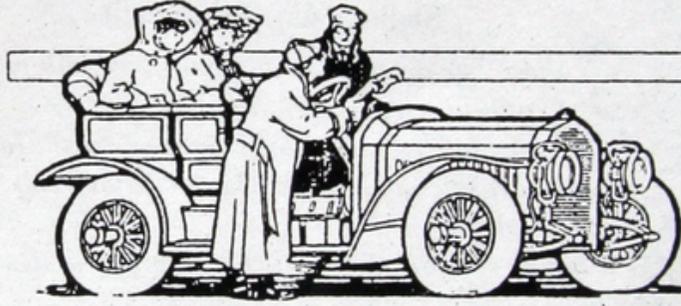
inscris la politie și anume: Bc pentru București, Br pentru Brăila, Bz pentru Buzău și așa mai departe.

This new system was approved by the police on September or beginning of October 1908. A car participating to a race on 26TH of October, 1908 wears a rear plate 9.BC white on black.



The no.39 of the magazine "Revista automobila" (March 1909) published the list of the 140 owners of cars using the new plates system. On July 1909 another list was published with 169 numbers.

132. d-na Elena Barbu Catargi ; 133. Mihail Gr. Holban ; 134. Dir. generală a Inchiisorilor ; 135. Inginer Racovitz ; 136. D. M. Burileanu ; 137 și 138. Sermon Waller ; 139. a na Constanța Târnoveanu ; 140. Societatea „Româno-Americană“.



N. Mancaș ; 157. Radu Brătianu ; 158. Dem. N. Crissoveloni ; 159. Hercule D. Fulga ; 160. Victor Ionescu ; 161. Aurel Tulcan ; 162. Mihail Gr. Holban ; 163. I. G. Cantacuzino ; 164. Ștefan Trandafirescu ; 165. Mihail Hristodorescu ; 166. I. Hennevoegel ; 167. Martha S. Gheorghiu ; 168. D. I. Crețu ; 169. N. Titulescu.

From 1910, Prince Bibescu was more and more interested in aviation and then the “Revista automobila” magazine included more and more articles about aviation. (cover of November 1910 issue). In 1912 the magazine stopped to be published.

After the first W.War another magazine about automobiles was published, “Automobil & Sport”, but I found only few numbers of this magazine.

On June 29, 1929 two cars from Chisinău participating to a race in Basarabia (former Republic of Moldova). Numbers are “Chs 239” and “Chs 252, letters as prefix, as for plates from the Transylvanian judet of Turda (Trd).

