



Fig.1 Paul Gottereau (Source: “Louis Blanc” Album, Romanian Academy Library).

PAUL GOTTEREAU (1843-1924) -
100 YEARS OF LEGACY

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Abstract: Paul Gottereau is one of the most famous French architects that have activated in Romania in the second half of the 19th century, his work serving as, in the wider context of the development of European architecture in the period, a representative case study for the movement and the influence of the French school of architecture on the territory of Romania. Although the architect created some of the most representative public buildings in Romania, the life and especially the extensive design activity of Paul Gottereau, which totals over 70 architectural projects in this country alone, has remained largely unknown to the general public, but also to specialists.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Paul Gottereau's death in 2024, the paper aims to bring to light lesser-known aspects of the architect's life and professional background, starting from those that marked his formation in his early years, and continuing with the ones that have contributed decisively to his establishment and thriving activity in Romania.

Rezumat: Paul Gottereau este unul dintre cei mai cunoscuți arhitecți francezi care au lucrat în România în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea, opera sa constituind, în contextul mai larg al dezvoltării arhitecturii europene în perioadă, un studiu de caz reprezentativ pentru mișcarea și influența școlii franceze de arhitectură pe teritoriul României. Deși arhitectul a realizat unele dintre cele mai reprezentative clădiri publice din România, viața și mai ales practica acestuia, care însumează peste 70 de proiecte de arhitectură numai în această țară, au rămas în mare parte necunoscute publicului larg, dar și specialiștilor.

Cu ocazia împlinirii, în 2024, a 100 de ani de la moartea lui Paul Gottereau, lucrarea de față își propune să scoate la lumină aspecte mai puțin cunoscute ale vieții și evoluției profesionale a arhitectului, pornind de la cele care i-au marcat formarea în anii de început și continuând cu cele care au contribuit în mod decisiv la definitivarea activității și practicii în România.

Biographical data

Son of Jean Alfred Gottereau (1810-1894) and Marie Pauline Antonia Gottereau born Perrin (1812-1861), Paul Gottereau, by his full name Alfred Jules Paul Gottereau, was born in Perpignan, France, on March 29, 1843.¹ In addition to Paul, the Gottereau family had two more sons. The first boy, Jean Emile Léon, was born in September 1836, but died two months later. The other son, Georges, by his full name Jean Gaston Marie Saint Georges, was born in 1840, being three years older than Paul (Fig. 2).

Even since his childhood, the future architect had ties to the vast artistic field, especially through his uncle, his mother's brother, Émile César Victor Perrin (Fig. 3, Fig. 4, Fig. 5), who was a painter and an art critic, responsible for the Paris Opera for several years, as general director, a position for which he was decorated with the rank of Commander of the French Legion of Honour.² In addition, both his father and his older brother Georges were engineers, with diverse and successful careers. In this regard, references to his father's activity as an engineer are found starting with 1843, the year of Paul Gottereau's birth. Although he was also author or collaborator of some architectural projects, his main profession was that of civil engineer.³ His field of activity created the circumstances to undertake numerous trips and have frequent changes of residence, both in France and in other countries, especially in Spain, Italy, and Romania. It is known that in 1843, at the time of Paul Gottereau's birth at the residence of the Gottereau family in Perpignan, France, Alfred was in Girona, Spain,⁴ most likely for professional purposes. He spent the next 20 years in various European cities, making a significant contribution to their development

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¹ ANF LH/1172/15.

² ANF LH/2109/36.

³ At the time, it was not unusual for an engineer to create and sign architectural projects, on the contrary, especially in Romania, there are numerous examples of engineers, graduates of technical construction schools, who also used to practice architecture. This was possible, especially by the end of the 19th century, mainly because the practice of architecture was not yet institutionalized or legislated.

⁴ ANF LH/1172/15.