

150 YEARS OF ROMANIAN PHILOLOGICAL AND LIBRARIANSHIP EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

Elena Tîrziman

National Library of Romania

Resume. The Faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest festively celebrated 150 years of existence in November 2013. This occasioned the assessment and objective analysis of the role played by this institution in the Romanian higher education system in various philological fields and specialisations as well as of its part in the nation's social and cultural life.

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The Decree no. 1047 of October 30, 1863 issued by Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza ¹⁾ which stipulated the founding of a higher education institution in the humanities field (École Supérieure de Lettres) at the Academy in Bucharest was published four years after the Union of the two Romanian principalities, when the official European and international recognition of the Romanian state occurred. The new state began an extensive process of founding, supporting, and strengthening its fundamental institutions that would contribute to its development, to the affirmation of the national identity externally, as well as to the emancipation of the Romanian people. The establishment of higher education institutions particularly in the philological field was a step forward in this approach. The École Supérieure de Lettres trained teachers for the pre-university education system in the areas of classical and modern languages, literature, and philosophy. The newly established faculty was therefore entitled "Faculty of Letters and Philosophy". The interweaving of the two specializations is also encountered in the university curriculum at that time: philosophy, history of philosophy, classical literature history, modern literature history, critical universal history, critical history of the Romanian Principalities, comparative grammar of the classical languages Greek and Latin, the Romanian, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese languages, pedagogy and teaching methods ²⁾.

Over time the Faculty of Letters (entitled until the World War II Faculty of Letters and Philosophy) was consolidated as an institution by having its own headquarters on the University premises, assembling a prestigious library, supporting research

in its specialised institutes, and organizing summer courses, colloquia, and national and international conferences. World War II and the installation of the Communist regime were particularly difficult for the Faculty of Letters. The premises were affected by bombing, and the political purges among academics and students, the Communist persecution, the brutal interventions in the curriculum, and excessive ideology negatively influenced the academic activities. However, the academic environment slowly returned to normality and the teaching and research activities continued. The Romanian philological higher education distinguished itself through the quality of teaching, of the academics and staff, and of the alumni. The curriculum also crystallized and evolved towards the philological field eliminating as much as it was possible the sociological, philosophy, history, and archaeology studies (which became independent specializations), developing disciplines in the fields of the Romanian language and literature and foreign languages and literatures, and also supporting adjacent disciplines such as librarianship.

Important personalities of the national and universal culture taught at the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest. They developed the Romanian philological higher education and gained public recognition both for the teaching and for the cultural and research activities. Thus, early in the history of the faculty, when the historical and philosophical subjects were compulsorily added to the philological courses, the following personalities became widely known in the collective memory: August Treboniu Laurian, renowned philologist, historian, and publicist, the first dean of the faculty; Ioan Bogdan, exceptional linguist, a Slavic language and culture expert who brought to light the Slavic historical sources relating to the history of the Romanian people; Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, an encyclopaedic personality, prominent scholar, philologist, linguist, historian; Titu Maiorescu, historian and literary theorist; Dimitrie Gusti, sociologist, philosopher, founder of Romanian sociology; Constantin Giurescu, renowned historian, founder of the Romanian higher education in the history field, the first in the line of historians of the Giurescu family; Nae Ionescu, philosopher, journalist, founder of the Romanian school of philosophy; Nicolae Iorga, historian and politician of European fame. In the interwar period the following personalities became prominent in the humanities field: Ioan Bianu, philologist and library science specialist, founder of the Romanian school of librarianship; Nicolae Cartoian, philologist, library science specialist, expert in old literature; Ion Aurel Căndrea, linguist; Ovid Densusianu, dialectologist, folklore researcher, Romance studies specialist; Tache Papahagi, folklore specialist; Mihai Dragomirescu, aesthetician, literary critic. The Romanian philological tradition was continued in the post-war period by Iorgu Iordan, a renowned linguist; Alexandru Graur, lexicographer, specialist in etymology and phonetics; George Bulgar, a linguist primarily addressing problems of the literary language as used by the Romanian writers; Boris Cazacu, linguist, dialectologist, researcher in the field of language geography; Matilda Caragiu Marioțeanu, linguist, dialectologist,

specialized in the culture and civilization of the Balkans and in Balkan dialects; Ion Coteanu, renowned for his studies of dialectology and stylistics; Alexandru Rosetti, linguist, philologist, writer. The following professors had a prominent activity in the literary history and criticism field: George Călinescu, distinguished critic and publicist; Șerban Cioculescu, literary historian and essayist; Zoe Dumitrescu Bușulenga, philologist, literary critic, philosopher of culture, essayist; Mihai Ralea, philologist, philosopher, aesthetician, essayist; Mihai Pop, folklore specialist, Alexandru Piru, renowned critic and literary historian.

Librarianship has always been a permanent subject in the philological studies even if not always under the form of a defined specialization. Some prominent professors were interested in libraries and the training of librarians to ensure the access to information and culture and to support the educational and research activities. The establishment of the Romanian school of librarianship is the result of the endeavours of Ioan Bianu, founder of a “library and information science school” at the Romanian Academy Library. While it was not an institutional structure *sensu stricto*, as it is known today, the librarianship school of the Romanian Academy Library in the early twentieth century and of the Faculty of Letters managed to impose an academic approach to the field and outline a national development direction in accordance with the European norms, rules, and practices.

Ioan Bianu thus attempted to create the first national library of the Romanians at the Romanian Academy Library which would function in accordance with regulations to define its organizational framework, to enable it to constitute, structure, and valorise its collections, and to develop bibliographic tools on the basis of the existing collections of documents. Together with Nerva Hodoș, Bianu founded the Romanian bibliography using scientific methods. He undoubtedly passed his interest in books, their conservation and valorisation on to his students of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Bucharest.

Alexandru Sadi-Ionescu introduced the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) system for structuring, organizing, and representing the document collections. He developed the first Romanian cataloguing code. Sadi-Ionescu disseminated his librarianship concept at the School of Archives and Palaeography in Bucharest and naturally at the Romanian Academy Library, authoring a librarianship course.

The first holder of a PhD degree in librarianship was Nicolae Georgescu Tistu, who is considered the successor of Ioan Bianu and Nerva Hodoș. Due to his good knowledge of European library practices and especially of the activity of the International Institute of Bibliography in Brussels founded by Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine, N. Georgescu Tistu attempted, in the interwar period, to establish a Romanian librarianship school which would disseminate the theories and practices regarding books, libraries, and readers and contribute to the specialized training of librarians. He was a professor at the Superior School of Archives and Palaeography of Bucharest and also at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy where he taught the Library Science course.

The University of Bucharest had a Library Science department within the Faculty of Letters during 1953 and 1958.

The library science lectures initiated by N. Georgescu Tistu at the University of Bucharest were continued by Mircea Tomescu (1960-1969) and Dan Simonescu (1970-1972). Between 1963 and 1970, Professor Dan Simonescu coordinated a Library Science department that offered a three-year specialisation. In 1968, under the coordination of the same professor the doctorate postgraduate level was founded.

The first PhD candidate to hold the PhD degree under Dan Simonescu's coordination was Corneliu Dima Drăgan, who continued teaching at the university following the direction defined by Professor Simonescu.

In 1990 librarianship was reinstated as a specialisation on the higher education academic level in the Library and Information Science department at the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest.

The Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest is nowadays an academic and higher educational model based on an interdisciplinary approach, outstanding professional skills, high academic standards, its research activity being acknowledged nationally and internationally. The faculty has the following departments: Department of Linguistics, Department of Literary Studies (Romanian Literature, Comparative Literature, and Theory of Literature compartments), Department of Communication Sciences (Communication and Public Relations and Information and Documentation Science compartments), Department of Cultural Studies, and Department of Administrative Sciences. The graduate specializations provided by these departments are as follows: Romanian Language and Literature-a Foreign Language and Literature, Universal and Comparative Literature, Communication and Public Relations, Information and Documentation Sciences, Cultural Studies, Managerial and Assistance and Secretarial Work. The graduate studies can be continued by the postgraduate level: the faculty conducts 12 master's degree programs in various philological, communication or information science fields. The Information and Documentation Science Department also offers postgraduate programs in the fields of Librarianship and Documentalist Teacher Training. The curriculum is organized following the Bologna model (Bachelor degree, Master degree, PhD), and therefore, the faculty organises, on the postgraduate level, doctoral studies in the philology field. The research activity is conducted by the faculty's nine research centres that develop numerous national and European research projects thus ensuring and maintaining the reputation of the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest in the Romanian academic, cultural and research fields.

NOTE

1. The Princely Decree no. 1047 of October 30, 1863 published in the Official Gazette no. 219 of November 2nd, 1863, p. 912. Apud. Berciu-Drăghicescu, Adina. *Facultatea de Litere a Universității din București. 150 de ani de învățământ filologic românesc. 1863 – 2013. Tradiție și Valoare*. București: Editura Universității din București, 2013, p. 17.
2. Ibidem.

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✉ **Prof. Dr. Elena Tîrziman**
National Library of Romania
Faculty of Letters
University of Bucharest
Bucharest, Romania
E-mail: elena.tirziman@bibnat.ro