

***The Library of the Faculty of Letters of Bucharest 150 years
since the institution was established – 1863-2013****

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Abstract

In 2013, 150 years were celebrated since the establishment of the Faculty of Letters of Bucharest, and, in this context, this article presents a brief history of the Library of this prestigious institution in Romania. Its beginnings are at the end of the nineteenth century, when a specialized library was formed in the Department of Slavic Languages within the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. The books donation in 1892 to Slavic seminar, and subsequent efforts of Professor Ioan Bogdan, Dean of the Faculty, led to the opening in 1907 of the Library of the Faculty, and the constant development of the Library recorded over more than a century of existence.

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After the establishment of the Universities of Iași and Bucharest, Al. I. Cuza also decided to create two central libraries to support the educational process conducted in the two higher education institutions. In Bucharest, the Central Library consisted of books from the Academy of Sf Sava. The collection was stored in two rooms in the old building of the University and August Treboniu Laurian, professor in the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, was appointed the person in charge of this general Library of the University of Bucharest, founded in 1867. An inventory of the existing manuscripts fund in 1876 is found in the Romanian Academy. (1)

Dimitrie Gusti and Marin Popescu Spineni recorded in 1931 in the *Guide Book for the student of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of Bucharest* that the manuscripts were transferred from the Central Library to the Museum of Antiquities by Gr. Tocilescu and then to the Academy by a resolution of the Council of Ministers, being included in the funds of the Library of the Academy in September-December 1904. (2) According to other documents, this library was incorporated into the library funds of the Romanian Academy in 1901. (3) Since 1892 the Central Library was moved out of the building of the University, after moving a few boxes of books remaining, together with the documents in the library of Slavic seminar (led by Professor Ioan Bogdan) and in the library of epigraphy seminar (led by Professor Gr. Tocilescu), and they formed the core of the Library of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy. (4)

Until 1895 when the Library of "Carol I" Foundation was inaugurated, in various faculties department and seminar libraries were organized due to the involvement of department tenured professors who donated numerous publications and documents. The libraries of the faculties, later established, were based on these collections organized for laboratories, departments and seminars.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century seminaries were founded in the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy and since 1892 modest libraries were also formed around them "for support in students' study." Diversification of subjects led to the need of creating libraries that provide documentation for common subjects. This issue was raised in the Scientific Councils of the faculties, and some dean's offices took the initiative of setting up libraries by faculties. Regarding the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, discussion on these issues took place in 1907. (5)

Therefore, the current Library of the Faculty of Letters had its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century, when a specialized library was formed in the Department of Slavic Languages within the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. Professor Ioan Bogdan donated in 1892 a series of

books to Slavic seminar. (6) His specialized collection included 3,162 valuable works on Slavic and Romanian history and philology and all of them entered the funds of the library. (7)

The two seminar Slavic and epigraphy libraries were then also added the bookcases of the geography seminar in 1904, of the Latin philology seminar in 1905, of experimental psychology in 1906, and others. (8)

The library of the Faculty opened in 1907 (9) given the efforts of Dean Ioan Bogdan who also ordered in 1909 furniture for the two rooms where it worked and he also allocated various sums of money to seminars for ordering books of the budget he had available. In the academic year 1910-1911 the same dean applied to the Ministry of Education for granting budget to cover the necessity for binding books and for shelves. (10)

According to the 1909 inventory, the Library had 5,681 volumes, but they were locked in a warehouse without being consulted by students who had only seminar libraries available. (11)

In a manner similar to other libraries formed at other faculties and departments of the University of Bucharest, the Library of the Faculty of Letters was established through the efforts and personal donations of professors. A. Sacerdoțeanu showed in this regard that "the entire history of efforts towards developing the Foundation and faculty libraries is intimately linked to the activity of several personalities of culture and higher education, visionary spirits who thought and acted with mature understanding of perspective." (12)

Thus, after only three years, in 1910, the collections of the Library of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy covered all the humanities, and the fund had reached nearly 10,000 volumes. Among Faculty professors and personalities of Romanian culture who made donations helping to increase library funds we mention Titu Maiorescu, Gr. G. Tocilescu (668 volumes), Maria Zenide, Ovid Densușianu, Al. Rosetti, I. Crăciunescu, Gh. Bogdan Duică, Ramiro Ortiz, George Călinescu, Iorgu Iordan and others. Titu Maiorescu submitted his donation to the Dean's Office in November 1910 with the following lines: "As one who I was for 25 years a professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters in Bucharest, I think I owe it to contribute to enhancing the library you have lately established. For this purpose I am honoured to enclose more than one thousand four hundred volumes and booklets, consisting in philosophical and literary works." (13)

Also in 1910 a *Regulation* was developed and included aspects of the tasks, organization, operation and management of the library and based on this document the activity of the library was carried out until the third decade of the twentieth century.

In February 1913 the Council of the Faculty requested the Secretary of the Faculty "to review the library". Following this request the documents were catalogued, they were arranged in nine systematic cabinets and "cards by departments and authors" were made. Inventory in December 1913 showed that in the Central Library of the Faculty there were 4,161 works bound in 4,978 volumes, 3,127 unbound works in 3,608 volumes, so a total of 7,288 works in 8,586 volumes. (14)

On December 20, 1913, at the request of students, the Faculty Council decided that the Library be open and also through the efforts of dean Ioan Bogdan, a reading room was also set up which students began to use since January 20, 1914. (15)

Psychologist Constantin Georgiadi, who, while he was a student at the Faculty of Philosophy had worked as a custodian librarian said there had been "a true intellectual atmosphere" in this library. (16) Thus, in the period 1919-1920 the reading room had 10-15 seats and there was an estimated 12,000 volumes that made up three main funds: the philosophical fund (the largest), the literary and historical fund and the Romanian and Slavic linguistics fund. Most publications of these funds were in French. (17)

Among the famous names who worked in the Library at that time was George Călinescu who was assisted by Professor Ramiro Ortiz to become librarian assistant at the Library of the Faculty of Letters and it was, according to Constantin Georgiadi "the start of his future intellectual development." (18)

The development of the Faculty Library was influenced to some extent by the space in which it operated. (19) In 1926 the Library moved to the former physics lab room, and between 1927 and 1928 when the construction of the new headquarters of the University was completed the Council of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy decided to set up seminar libraries by subjects (20) and with the Faculty, the Library moved to its new headquarters in Edgar Quinet street following the undertakings of the dean at that time, Ioan Bianu. This was the time when Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu, who was an university assistant at the Museum of the Romanian Language in Cluj, was called in Bucharest and appointed librarian (January 1, 1928) occupying this position for ten years until 1938. Speaking about the role the library played during that time, he evidenced that "the heaviness in this programme of progress in training the promotions of Romanian intellectuals have been shared by faculties with seminar and department libraries and the university Foundation." (21) Boris Cazacu, who was a librarian from 1939 to 1942 at the Department of Romanian Language, also characterized the library as "an auspicious environment of scientific training." (22)

Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu dealt since 1928 with the reorganization of the library according to the directions of Ioan Bianu. The existing documents were re-inventoried and new Catalogues were compiled. In a Report submitted to the Dean's Office on June 8, 1928 on the work done in the library, N. Georgescu-Tistu stated: "In general for the reorganization of the Library we took into account both its tradition in what it had best and the suggestions taken from the admirable Library of the Academy, from that of the Romanian Athenaeum and from the libraries abroad which increasingly take into account the intellectual cooperative movement. Thus there was a trend in establishing a library model, following that, by modifying in details, under special circumstances, it retain the same essential rules for cataloguing and storing, to enable closer cooperation between cultural institutions and help achieving the unification of catalogues." (23)

In 1929 the seminar libraries reorganization was achieved and they were to have a parallel development, but in relation to the Library of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, and a new Regulation of the Library (24) approved on June 11, 1929, following the proposal of January 18, 1929 for amendment on behalf of N. Georgescu-Tistu, entered into force on September 1, 1929. Under the new Regulation, the Library operated under the direction of a committee which included the dean, two professors and the librarian. The *Yearbook of the University of Bucharest 1929-1930* stated that it was possible to achieve "a fairer distribution of funds, books orders (in the Central Library general publications and journals are particularly gathered) and to prepare a *General catalogue of books of the Faculty* which proved very useful, giving immediate indication to researchers, and which is the library where one could find the book looked for." (25)

In 1930, during the dean's office of Professor Dimitrie Gusti, seminar libraries were integrated in the Library of the Faculty, following a proposal in 1929 to the Faculty Council, and thus appeared the Common Catalogue. According to statistics, in 1931 there were 12,698 books in 14.561 volumes in the library's funds corresponding to all departments of the faculty. The library had 8 encyclopaedias, 10 general bibliographies, 30 varia (treatises, introductions to science), 130 dictionaries in different languages, also 355 periodicals, of which 172 Romanian and 173 foreign. General alphabetical catalogue contained 16,270 cards. (26)

The library was open Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 a.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m., the reading room had 120 seats and students could come after submitting their student cards. For those outside the faculty, who wanted to see documents, a special approval by the librarian was required. The documents were in closed cabinets and could be

consulted after submitting an application made on a special form. The readers were made available a Catalogue of all documents by subjects, in alphabetical order of authors. There was also a complete Catalogue by subjects and an alphabetical one for librarians. (27)

In the 1929-1930 collections increased by about 400-500 volumes a year, and in terms of the number of users an average of 300 students per day was recorded. The librarian was Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu and custodians were: C. Dihoiu and G. Mărculescu, the Library was characterized as "a true scientific, well equipped laboratory." (28)

Data from the *Yearbook of the University of Bucharest* described the development of the Library of Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in figures. Thus, at the end of 1935 the library had 16,246 works in 18,403 volumes, all registered and listed in the cards. A Department of Periodicals, organized separately owned 464 journals. The library had 246 reference works (encyclopaedias, dictionaries, bibliographies), and also it should be noted that work was carried out on an analytical catalogue. During 1935 the library was visited by 33.784 students viewing 43.807 works. At that time the librarian was still Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu and custodians were G. Mărculescu, Ec. Popovici, Șt. Zisulescu and Șt. Popescu. (29)

In 1936 the library's funds increased by 479 works. Thus, there were 16,675 works in 19,054 volumes. The number of encyclopaedias, dictionaries, bibliographies also increased to 253, these works being very used by students. The number of users reached in 1936 to 35,328 students, and library staff included besides Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu, occupying the librarian position, G. G. Mărculescu, Șt. Zisulescu (supplied by C. Bărbulescu), M. Harting, Șt. Popescu (substitute) who were custodians. (30)

The collections of the library increased in 1937 by 860 volumes (216 had been purchased, the rest received from the University Rector's Office or donated directly to the library) so, at the end of the year there were 17,452 works in the warehouse in 19,833 volumes and the Department of Periodicals held 530 collections in 2,318 volumes. A total of 29,157 students attended the library in 1937, seeing 33,565 works in 53,199 volumes. (31)

Data from the *Yearbook of the University of Bucharest 1937-1938* noted that during 1938 the daily average was 158 library users, and the month with the highest attendance recorded (5,487) was March. The total number of readers in 1938 was 32,903 students, the most active being the students in the fourth year. Central Library collections reached a number of 18,382 books in 21,236 volumes, 6,446 being Romanian books and 11,936 foreign books. The most consulted works were those of literature and

literary studies (18,617), followed by philosophy works (7,228), history (7,179) and philology (2,548). Of books consulted in 1938, 25,748 were Romanian and 13,498 foreign. Periodicals Department had 316 collections (137 Romanian and 179 foreign) in 2,115 volumes. The librarian was Nicolae Georgescu-Tistu, associate professor at that moment, and the custodians were G. G. Mărculescu, Maria Harting, Șt. Popescu and Adrian Scântee. (32)

At the end of 1941, the library had a total of 22,390 works, during the year the collections rose by 636 works in 822 volumes, most received from the donation of Professor Ovid Densușianu (260 works) and assistant Matei Nicolau (139 works) and 140 works were donated. At the Periodicals Department there were 403 collections (160 Romanian and 243 foreign) in 2,700 volumes. In the academic year 1940-1941 there were 19,369 readers seeing 29,114 books. The librarian position was occupied in November 1941 by Dumitru H. Muster. The Librarian assistants were: Maria Harting, Adrian Scântee, Mircea Tomescu and Vasile V. Radu. (33)

It should be noted that in the years 1940-1941 N. Georgescu-Tistu requested and obtained from the Dean's Office the decision to compel the custodians of the seminar libraries to attend the bibliology course that he himself held at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy which represented for the first time, a way of improving their training. (34)

By Decree no. 136 of July 12, 1948 the Library of the Faculty of Letters has become one of the branch libraries of the Central University Library (BCU) in Bucharest, former Library of "Carol I" University Foundation. (35)

In the period 1958-1959 the libraries were given new instructions on the organization of funds in: "customary", "documentary" and "special" funds. The latter replaced the older term "forbidden library", where all "hostile, fascist, anti-democratic, anti-communist, peace hostile between peoples" works were placed. Since 1964, special funds and documentary funds in the libraries became available (36) to all readers.

The Library of the Faculty of Letters underwent in time a series of changes being gradually modernized and after 1989 was included in the computerization process, becoming the first computerized branch of BCU Bucharest complex. Thus, the decision on the automation of the Lending Centre was made in 1994 and the whole process took place in three stages: the development of the project involving specialists from BCU Bucharest management and specialists of ODIS company in the Netherlands. The automation programme objectives and requirements were established, and in terms of priority, it was agreed that this was the reorganization and

modernization of the Lending Centre as a centre with free access to shelf and automated management of lending operations. The selection and sharing of the fund selected by domains was required, after Dewey Classification the focus was on humanities classes. Also, Cutter method of systematic and alphabetical arrangement for organizing books within each class was used. Then the processing in VUBIS system of book fund in the Lending Centre was implemented, library users were registered in computer and bar code permits were made. Computerized Lending Centre was inaugurated on June 3, 1996. The automation process being thus started in the Library of Letters, the processing in VUBIS system of other funds of the library was implemented and in 1997 started the input of periodicals in this system. (37)

Another important moment in the recent history of the Library of the Faculty of Letters happened in 2009 when the restoration of the reading room was completed, having now a remarkable architecture and is a space included in the National Cultural Heritage. The re-opening of the Reading Room took place on March 10, 2010. (38)

Currently, the total publication fund of the Library of the Faculty of Letters is 120,864 volumes. Of these, 109,380 are Romanian and foreign books and 11,421 are periodical titles. The funds of the Lending Centre are structured by domains and include 27,804 volumes. These are available to students and the teaching staff of the Faculty of Letters and the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures - Department of Latin, Classical and Oriental Languages.

Library's collections cover the following areas: General Linguistics, Ethnography and Folklore, World Literature, Theory of Literature, Aesthetics, Art, Culture and Civilization, Romanian Language and Foreign Languages, Romanian Literature and Foreign Literatures, Pedagogy, Psychology, Education, Library Science, Communication and Public Relations, History and Philosophy.

Library provides its users with two reading rooms (with 86 seats and 7 computers connected to the Internet), one for books and one for periodicals and its three traditional catalogues (to 1996) (alphabetical catalogue – books, periodicals, systematic catalogue, geographical catalogue – periodicals) can be consulted in the reading room for books. The Online Catalogue of the library (since 1996) can be found in the General Catalogue of "Carol I" BCU Bucharest, <http://cacheprod.bcub.ro/webopac/Vubis.csp>.

The Library of the Faculty of Letters has a number of unique titles in Romania, and old books and rare editions as *The Bible of Bucharest* of 1688 or D. Cantemir's *Divan or the Quarrel of the Wise Man with the World*,

appeared in Iași in 1698. The Library's collections contain a valuable fund for research and in terms of periodicals, the library holds a representative fund of specialized Romanian and foreign periodicals including "Columna lui Traian", "Familia", "Ramuri", "Arhiva", "Bilete de papagal", "Convorbiri literare", "Revista Fundațiilor Regale", "Dacia literară", "Euphorion", "Jurnalism și comunicare", "Limba română", "Studii și cercetări lingvistice", "Poetics", "Documentaliste".

The Library of the Faculty of Letters has a valuable collection of doctoral dissertations in the field of philology and culture, and also a number of art books.

A variety of dictionaries, encyclopaedias, bibliographies, bio-bibliographies, journal indexes, etc. make up the collection of reference works of the Library. (39)

Library users now have access to a range of electronic resources of information and documentation provided by "Carol I" BCU i.e. scientific databases of serial publications such as ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Wiley-Blackwell, ProQuest, EBSCO, Thomson ISI, Emerald, RefWorks, etc. and eBooks scientific bases such as Taylor & Francis, ScienceDirect Cambridge Collections Online, Sage Reference Online and other.

The services the Library is currently offering to its users include general information on library collections and services, access to library catalogues, access to documents in the reading rooms, Internet access to online catalogues of "Carol I" Central University Library, to full-text and bibliographic scientific databases and to electronic books, lending of publications (books) at home; specialized assistance in information retrieval, transmission to the teaching staff, by e-mail, of the lists with new books which entered the library. (40)

Statistics for 2011 show that the Library of the Faculty of Letters had 32,934 users and 62,931 volumes were consulted. (41)

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