

## Archives

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### Old and New Archives

**Dr. Ioana Vasiloiu**

National Museum of Romanian Literature

E-mail: con\_ioana@yahoo.com

*Dr. Ioana Vasiloiu is a scientific researcher at National Romanian Literature Museum from Bucharest. Used to give Romanian Language seminars at the Languages Faculty University in Bucharest. Is interested in archive keeping, the Public Romanian Institution history, the Romanian language and literature history.*

#### Abstract

Library and museum archives are real testimony of collective memory. Old or new, their “universe” is fascinating. They are the path to an almost forgotten world with all its cultural and intellectual problems or allow us to reconsider the social, historical, political and cultural present. The inestimable value of their manuscripts, books and periodicals made medieval Romanian library archives to be famous in that age. Its content figured out the Romanian humanist’s vast intellectual activity and their connection to European values. Their remains, which can be found today especially at Romanian Academy Library, depict some aspects of Romanian medieval cultural life.

Particularly, with its huge number of manuscripts, books and periodicals, the National Romanian Literature Museum archives contribute to Romanian history reconstruction from the commencement to present.

**Keywords:** *archives, library, museum, culture, book, manuscript*

The library and museum archives are fascinating because they, in essence, content the deep memory of humanity. You can test such a feeling visiting British Museum, where in a little severe room of the imposing building can see the “remains” of a few slates from Nineveh Library.

Therefore, let’s start for a trip through old and new library and museum archives...

Archives have their own history that we have to tell. Our old archives formed by the side of schools, monasteries, vievode palaces or boyar mansions.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, court marshal Constantin Cantacuzino would found one of the most famous Romanian medieval libraries “*in a separate building of Margineni monastery*”. (1) His son, the next Minister of Foreign Affairs – also named Constantin and called Dinu in his first childhood would enrich old Cantacuzino’s library with a lot of books bought from Padua, Venice or Vienna: *Fables* by Aesop, *Metamorphoses and Letters* by Ovidiu, *Orlando Furioso* by Lodovico Ariosto, the poem *Rinaldo* by Torquato Tasso.

As a matter of fact, the most significant Renaissance literature and ancient classic Greek and Latin works penetrates the Romanian Countries with the aid of Margineni Library.

Fascinated by history – he wrote a tremendous *Romanian Country History* – High Stewart Constantin Cantacuzino would enthusiastically acquire universal and religious works, encyclopedias, dictionaries, lexicons: *Popes History*, printed at Colonia, 1551, by the great Italian historian Bartholomeo Platina, *Del mappamondo istorico*, a six volumes history treaty by Antonio Foresti – a well-known Italian historian from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and *Magnum theatrum vitae humanae* in eight volumes by the famous scholar Laurentio Beyerlink.

N. Iorga who discovered and published in 1901 the books catalogue bought by the High Stewart as a student in Padua adds other “acquisitions” such as medical, astronomy or physics treaties, first edition of *Disputationum de nova Philippi Paracelsi medicina*, 1572, by Thomas Erastus and also philosophy works – *Lancis Peripateticae* by Valerianus Bonvicinus.

Continuous acquisitions and donations from foreign scholars were increasing Margineni Library. The last ones visited the monastery being the High Stewart’s friends. For almost thirty-five years he had been ruling the Foreign Affairs of the Romanian Country.

Open minded and eager to know everything about the West policy and cultural life, our scholar would subscribe for some Italian periodical magazines, being the first Romanian scholar subscribing for the new printing asset of 17<sup>th</sup> century: “*At present, in the Romanian Academy Library you could find bound in a beautiful old yellow and brown leather cover, in five volumes a large amount from a Viennese periodical published in Italian – Il Corriere Ordinario, 1688-1703 at which the High Stewart was subscribed.*” (3)

After the High Stewart’s death at Constantinopol, 1715, the reformer prince Nicolae Mavrocordat would take from Cantacuzinos houses of Margineni the most important manuscripts and printings adding them to his large library archives from Vacaresti Monastery.

As the old High Stewart, the philosopher prince would acquire books from abroad: “*Nicolae Mavrocordat exchanged a lot of letters with LeClerc firstly for getting books. In fact, LeClerc was the person: a real master of Letters Republic owning an antique and modern library in Amsterdam, he was famous for publishing and book spreading. The prince is so eager for books that he attaches gold coins to his orders.*” (4)

At the University Library of Amsterdam there are twenty-eight letters in French sent by Antoine Epis, Nicolae Mavrocordat’s assistant to Jean LeClerc. Thus, we can find out what sort of books were there in Vacaresti Monastery library archive: “*the letters*

*enumerate Greek and Latin, biblical and patristic classic authors in addition with Bible expositors. It's about Les hieroglyphiques by Horappolon. This title gets us to a more interesting section – Orientalia. Nicolae had Mischna in Surenhuys edition, six volumes, 1698-1703, Amsterdam, with Maimonide's addnotations.*“ (5)

From the vast correspondence of LeClerc with Nicolae Mavrocordat's assistant we certainly know that the prince got more treaties about the art of governing, philosophy works (Descartes, Bacon), juridical works, dictionaries, encyclopedias, one of Maimonide's work, mathematics, botany and algebra handbooks.

The reformer prince's library was famous all over the Europe. At his death a lot of very important people intended to acquire it: Pope Clement the 12<sup>th</sup>, George the 2<sup>nd</sup>, king of England or Louis the 15<sup>th</sup>, king of France. The sources mention that there were lots of volumes estimated between several hundred to some thousand being evaluated at 600.000 thalers. (6)

In his turn, Nicolae's son, Constantin Mavrocordat would increase the famous library with manuscripts gathered from East and printings especially from France. He enlarged the prestigious library archives with printings using a modern method, the so named change one. In exchange of the manuscripts from his own collection sent to the Royal Library of France he got precious books existing in double copies in Paris. (7)

Constantin's seven years exile (1749-1756) overwhelmed him with a lot of debts. Forced by situation, the prince had to sell a part of his famous library.

A little piece of library archives was taken by Metropolitan Library and then passed in 1836 to National College St. Sava Library in Bucharest.

In 1864, the College Library was turned into the Central Estate Library existing in this formula until 1901 when was entirely transferred to Romanian Academy Library. (8)

From a former museum-library, famous in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, let's get a lap to present, just to the archives of a unique European Museum.

The Romanian Literature National Museum from Bucharest is a real “palimpsest”.

The idea of establishing an archive to gather in the same place the manuscripts remained from writers, belonged to Dumitru Panaitescu-Perpessicius, Eminescu's publisher and founder of the institution at July, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1957.

From that time, the archives had been enriched in a large amount. There were a lot of writers donations and acquisitions so we can tell that you find more than three hundred thousand pieces structured in three thousand and thirty author collections.

What does this rich archives contain? Final or different manuscripts form, letters and documents, original photos, memorial objects, old Romanian books, precious books, some of them with dedications others with lecture notes and also important value periodicals from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We can enumerate some illustrative documents in the Museum: *Stephen the Great's charter* (1493), V. Alecsandri's handwrote notebook of *Descriptive Poems* with a dedication to Carmen Sylva, the notebook of planned comedy in three acts *Titirca Sotirescu & Co* by I.L. Caragiale, his *Correspondence* from Berlin with Paul Zarifopol, the manuscript of *To a Star* by M. Eminescu and his letters since he studied in Berlin sent to Maiorescu, *Daily Notes* manuscript by Titu Maiorescu and also manuscripts of some novels or poems - *The Axe*, *Golden Twig* and *Marten Brothers* by M. Sadoveanu, *Light*

poems by Lucian Blaga, *Secondary Game* by Ion Barbu, *Adam and Eve* by Liviu Rebreanu, *The Rondel Poem* and *Thalassa* by Al. Macedonski and more others.

An important part of Museum stock consists of Romanian old and exceptional books collection: *Lyrics Psalter* by Dosoftei, *New Testament from Bălgrad*, 1648, by Simion Ștefan, *Romanian Learning Book* (Homiliary) by Varlaam, *Bible from Bucharest*, 1688, *The History of Rising and Decreasing of the Ottoman Empire*, 1745, by Dimitrie Cantemir, *Prince Caragea's Code*, 1818, *Greek Grammar Translated from Russian*, Sankt Petersburg, 1788, *The Bible of Luther*, illustrated by Gustave Dore and so on.

The existence of foreign writers manuscripts in Literature Museum archives is less known. It's about letters sent by important literary personalities to their Romanian friends: Nikos Kazantzakis to Panait Istrati, Saint John Perse to Martha Bibescu, Paul Eluard to Sașa Pană, Benedetto Croce to Elena Bacaloglu, Paul Valery to G. Oprescu, Giuseppe Ungaretti and Giovanni Papini to Dragoș Vrânceanu.

The periodicals collection consists of 40.000 literature publications from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century organized by titles and size. Some of the most important titles in Museum archives are: *Both Sexes Courier* (1844-1847), printed by I. Heliade Rădulescu, *Aghiuță*, (1863-1864) led by B. Petriceicu Hasdeu, *Romanian Bee*, 1844, Iași, *Literary Conversations* from the first number to present, Al. Macedonski's *Literary Man Guide* (1880-1919), *Traian's Column* led by B. P. Hasdeu (1812-1883), *The Contemporary*, (1881-1888), *Parrot Bills* founded by Tudor Arghezi (1927-1946) etc. We cannot pass over the fact that there also exist vanguard magazines: *Alga*, *Contemporary*, *Integral*, *Meridian*, *Dot*, *Radical*, *The Simbol*, *One*, *Urmuz*, *Zodiac*, *75 HP*, *XX Contemporary Literature Magazin*.

This archives enriches every year with new manuscripts, books or periodicals. Together with the remains of famous humanist medieval libraries it is a part of National Cultural Patrimony retelling all the time about us, the yesterday and today ones.

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