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The Faculty of Archival Sciences in Bucharest: Achievements and Prospects*

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Faculty of Archival Science in Bucharest

The Faculty of Archival Sciences in Bucharest currently celebrates 18 years from its inception, one that has been, from the very beginning, viewed by its initiators as a restoration act, in view of the fact that the new higher education institution had set out, in novel forms, to continue the tradition of archival education, inaugurated in 1924 at the Practical School for Archivists-Paleographers. In 1938, the latter would become The School of Archival Sciences, a generic name under which it would be known, in spite of the frequent changes in name and statute (1931 - *The College of Archival Sciences and Paleography*; 1932 - *The Special School of Archival Sciences and Paleography*; 1938 - *The School of Archival Sciences*; 1948 - *The Institute of Archival Sciences, Bibliology and Museography*). From 1950 onwards, the only training option for archivists-to-be would be a specialised department associated with The Faculty of History Bucharest University; in 1956, the latter would change into a sub-department at the Chair of History of Romanians and function until the 70's. Therefore, The National Archives would offer organised in-service training options to (further) train archivists and record keepers. From March 1980 on, the Centre for ongoing specialised training of State Archives personnel would be set up¹.

* Translated into English by assistant-lecturer Andreea Calugarita.
1. I. BURLACU ... [et. al.], *Dictionary of Special History Sciences*, Bucharest, 1982, pp. 148-149.

Following the hiatus during communist times regarding archival experts instruction, residing in the disbandment of the very department of archivistics at the Faculty of History of Bucharest University, would-be archivists could be recruited among graduates of The Faculty of History, The Faculty of Philology or of other adjacent specialties; they did not sport an apt archival background and oftentimes would not manage to handle records with the amount of enthusiasm and affection of a genuine archives aficionado.

In the 90's, the school was facing an acute lack of experts, so The Faculty of Archival Sciences was called upon to offer would-be archivists a solid training, tailored to the current level of exigencies in the archival system. These requirements pertained to a mastering of archival theory and practice, in order to be able to address the vast issues raised in archival work and, concomitantly, in order to be able to contribute to bringing the National Archives to the level of archival research abroad, i.e. notably in France, Germany, Austria, as the French, Austrian and German Schools of archival sciences had largely determined and influenced the development of Romanian archival sciences. As Robert-Henri Bautier had noted in 1943², an idiosyncrasy of our country resided in the fact that there were more than one source languages in place, making it thus necessary for an archivist to have both knowledge of Cyrillic paleography *and* of a second source language/paleography (Slavic, Latin, Hungarian, German, Greek, Turkish-Osman a.o.). This is why graduates of The Faculty of Archival Sciences are required to have command of minimum one old language/ paleography, in order to further tend to aptly processing records written in various source languages, as well as to mastering as many international languages as possible, in order to efficiently stay informed and updated on the current state of archival research on an international level.

To meet said demands, the teaching personnel at The Faculty of Archival Sciences have constantly been concerned with developing a network of international relations with peer academic counterparts, partaking in international projects where their experience could be fructified, training young teachers and students alike in well-reknown academic centres. Apart from undergraduate scholarships in foreign languages, granted by the German and Greek parts, 2009 witnessed a shift towards student and academic mobilities via Erasmus Programmes. Such programmes are currently in place in conjunction with "Nicolaus Copernicus" University, The Institute of History and Archival Sciences at Torun, Poland and with The University "Jan Evangelista Purkyně", The Faculty of Philosophy at Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic; the programmes are under constant expansion.

At the onset, The Faculty of Archival Sciences had set out with a small corps of teaching staff of their own, that would extend year after year. The scientific and educational efforts of FAS teaching staff are also reflected in the magazine "Hrisovul" ("The Charter") in its new edition. The issue debuted in 1941 as a bulletin of School of Archival Sciences, and, regrettably, ceased its existence at an early enough date (six years later). The initiative of issuing of studies and papers penned by members of the teaching staff and co-workers in a FAS-owned magazine was taken in 1995, when the first issue of the new "Hrisovul" edition appeared. At the moment, the editors' board has the XVI-th issue under way.

2. Ioan DRĂGAN, *A French Perspective on Romanian Archival Sciences*, "Hrisovul" 13(2007), p. 17.



Conference at the FAS

In its 18 years of existence, The Faculty of Archival Sciences has trained 16 series of future archivists, whereof a vast majority of the graduates are carrying out their activity in the archival system with considerable success. It is one of the FAS teaching staff's concerns to follow the professional evolution of its graduates; to our gratification, we were able to notice the assimilation of most of them into the system of National Archives, as well as their strife to optimise their professional activity. Although extremely young, many of them are currently heading National Archives county bureaus, while others have been entrusted with high accountability positions at the forefront of the Archives. One of their ambitions has been lifelong and in-service training via in-depth or master studies pursued at various universities and, starting 2003, at our faculty even.



Practical course in National Archives of Romania

Thus, The Faculty of Archival Sciences has set up master courses focussed around "Sources and Information in History", "Contemporary Archival Sciences", "Mediaeval Archival Sciences". In the batch of students of 2008-2010, MA courses have offered, along with the issues of contemporary archival sciences, an in-depth study of "Old Languages and Paleographies", the only master cycle with this particular additional focus. Moreover, we can state that, given the relatively small number of students - cca 20 - 25 per year - a considerable number of FAS graduates have already enrolled in doctoral studies (cca 20 doctoral students) or have already been bestowed their doctoral title (cca 10 PhD-s in History).

From the academic year 2005/2006 on, our faculty has seen adjustment of its curricula to accomodate the Bologna system, thus a transition to 3-year BA studies, followed by 2-year MA studies, has been made. A further desideratum of our teaching staff resides in setting up a doctoral school of archival sciences at our faculty.

These are only some of the achievements The Faculty of Archival Sciences may boast, in addition to a substantial expansion of logistics and library resources; all have been, first and foremost, guided by a unique academic staff and spirit, that would allow The Romanian Archivistic School to evolve to the benefit of our archival patrimony.

The International Scientific Session

Archives in the XXI-st century. Archival Theory and practice, professional training and recent trends in archival sciences

A useful way of be up-to-date with both new trends and research in the vast subject matter of archival sciences and in the auxiliary sciences of history, would be, as far as members of the teaching staff and students at The Faculty of Archival Sciences are concerned, taking part in national and international scientific meetings of archivists, thus succeeding to make their voice heard amongst their peers.

Precisely in order to promote the image of our school, from 2007, when we celebrated 15 years from the onset of The Faculty of Archival Sciences, our teaching staff have set out to organise a series of international events that would provide a generous setting for discussing the options of developing regional archival education. This year has seen the fourth edition of a session that has now become a tradition.

On May 13-14 of this year, the session dedicated to archival theory and practice, professional training and recent trends in the field was in place. The first section focussed on the issues of archival education at the crossing point between tradition, modernity and the demands of contemporary society; our colleagues from Turkey (at The University of Istanbul and at The University of Hacettepe), as well as the Dean of The Faculty of Archival Sciences, Prof. Melentina Bâzgan PhD, delivered contributions, thereby uncovering common traits in the evolution and concerns of archival education in Romania and Turkey. The archival theory and practice section, moderated by Peter Pavel Klasinc and Bogdan-Florin Popovici with high competency, generated the majority of discussions around prospects of the archival profession; Peter Pavel Klasinc (The International Insti-

tute for Archival Science at Trieste/Maribor), Yehoshua Freundlich (Israel State Archives), Waldemar Chorazyczewski ("Nicolaus Copernicus" University, The Institute of History and Archival Sciences - Torun, Poland), delivered speeches.

On the second day of the scientific meeting, there were two simultaneous sections. The first section brought together presentations on the role of archives in history research, with most of the members of the Chair for Archival Sciences and History attending, also a guest from The Republic of Moldova, Teodor Candu (The Moldovan Academy of Sciences, The Institute of History, State and Law, Chisinau) and a representative of the Archives, head of office at The National Archives in Prahova, Raluca Andreescu were present. The second section, dedicated, yet again, to archival theory and practice, consisted in contributions on applied archival sciences, made by our counterparts from The Republic of Moldova (Petre Vicol - Director of The State Archive in Chisinau, Aurelia Hanganu - The Moldovan Academy of Sciences, The Scientific Library, Chisinau, Larisa Ion Feiger - The Moldovan Ministry of Justice), Russia (Elena Romanova and Natalia Tasits - The Institute for Archival Research and Records Management, Moscow), Bulgaria (Kalinka Anchova - State Archives Agency, Sofia).

The international participation and, notably, the fruitful discussions generated by speeches have contributed to the success of this FAS-organised event, that will hopefully see a new edition in the year of 2011.



Graduation 2010

