

EDUCATION OF ROMANIAN ARCHIVISTS BETWEEN CURRENT NECESSITIES AND DYNAMICS OF ARCHIVAL FIELD

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Ana-Felicia Diaconu: Izobraževanje romunskih arhivistov med trenutnimi potrebami in dinamiko arhivskega področja. Tehnični in vsebinski problemi klasičnega in elektronskega arhiviranja. Zbornik referatov z dopolnilnega izobraževanja, Maribor 8/2009, str. 119–126.

Izvirnik v angleščini, izvleček v slovenščini in angleščini, povzetek v slovenščini.

Članek se posveča na izobraževanju romunskih arhivistov danes (tradicija, vsebina, izobraževalne ustanove) in strokovnim potrebam, ki izhajajo iz vseh družbenih sprememb po letu 1989. Avtorica predstavlja vse dejavnosti, ki jih je od takrat izvedla skupnost arhivistov, ponudbo izobraževanja Fakultete za arhivistiko, in dejavnosti, ki še čakajo na realizacijo.

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The paper focuses on the education of Romanian archivists today (tradition, content, educational institutions) and the professional needs deriving from the transformations in our society after 1989. Starting from this point the author presents the steps taken by the community of archivists, the Faculty of Archival Science's educational offer and those actions, which are still waiting to be performed.

Ključne besede: arhivist, izobraževanje, strokovno izobraževanje, urnik, Fakulteta za arhivistiko Bukarešta, Romunija, Narodni arhiv.

1. CHANGES IN ROMANIAN SOCIETY AFFECTING THE ACTIVITY AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION OF ARCHIVISTS

Starting with the necessary constant relation between the mission of archivist, archivist praxis and archival science,¹ something defining in this field, we should begin with some remarks concerning the Romanian general frame, to which we will refer in our paper. The changes in post -1989 Romanian society, visible in all of its segments, also marked the professional activity of archivists, inducing them to adapt to new social, economic and political realities. The archivists have been and still are forced to come up with viable solutions, from the point of view of archival theory and praxis, for many totally new situations, something that needs much more

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¹ *The ratio between these three components, according to Eric Ketelaar, is the most representing for a discussion on the situation of the nowadays archival science. Eric Ketelaar, L'archivistique dans le monde actuel, "Revista Arhivelor, LXXXIV (2007), Nr. 3-4, p. 13-15.*

abilities, knowledge and performance, comparing to the past.

The role of archivists - in an extended acceptance over time² - that of passing further the documentary treasure of ancestors, a treasure speaking to our generation of our past and the role of enriching it with what defines us in the most representative terms, for future generations. This mediation between past and future compels us to a present characterized by consciousness and professionalism.

Pressures from the public determined by changes in many areas of the society made the institution of archives to channel its efforts and energy to activities on a secondary level for the role mentioned above. The double value of some of the documents kept by the National Archives - historical and practical - explains the wave of interest from the public, in need of proofs to certificate property rights. The gradual transfer from state property to private property and from socialist economy to market economy made the National Archives - through its professionals - play a decisive role in reconstitution of property rights for persons and institutions, thanks to the documents kept in the preserved archival fonds. At a later date than elsewhere, the Romanian archival practice tends more and more to move from a descriptive zone³ - which dominated for a long time the practical and theoretical side of this discipline⁴ - towards a functional zone, born in North America, characterized by the fact that archives ensure a global function »one that tends to respect the life/cycle of documents beginning with the moment they are created«.⁵

At the same time, after the 1989 revolution many facts were raised bearing a direct effect on archivists' activity in the National Archives that did not exist in the previous period, needing new knowledge. We consider the institutional diversification, both in the number and activities per se, raising specific problems in archival work (funding an ordering). Another side of the problem, having its own dynamics, belongs to the private sector (commercial societies, organizations, non-governmental organizations, political parties etc.), which according to the local archival tradition⁶ and the actual Law of National Archives⁷ is also a producer of

² This topic represented the focus of various research, which outlined the fact that the archivist's mission has been subjected to a continuous process of re-defining along with the evolution of society. Trying to synthesize the archivist's mission re-defining and enlargement process, Carol Couture indicates the transition from the passive stage - related to the »practical archival science« during which the archivist ensures archives custody and preservation (especially those of juridical value) - to a stage within which the archivists are asked to appraise the documents regardless the support, the age or the nature of these documents. Carol Couture, *Today's Students, Tomorrow's Archivists: Present-Day Focus and Development as Determinants of Archival Science in the Twenty-First Century*, in »Archivaria«, 42, p. 97-98.

³ Along this period of descriptive archival sciences, diplomatics dominated the archival science itself, the archival practice needing the knowledge of the nature of collections and principles on which they were constituted.

⁴ Due to the domination of diplomatics, the term of archival science seems to be unsuitable.

⁵ Bruno Delmas, *Archival Science facing the Information Society*, "Archival Science", 1, 2001, p. 28.

⁶ Beginning with 1953 the concept of State Archival Fund »a soviet import, trying to satisfy some of the archival needs in the 50's, a certain merit of that being the salvation from destruction of a significant quantity of archival material« was promulgated and implemented. B.-F. Popovici, *Arhiva totala - experienta romaneasca - O incursiune in istoria conceptului de Fond Arhivistic National*, "Revista arhivelor", LXXXV (2008), Nr. 1, 2008, p. 38.

⁷ Article 1 of the National Archives Law 16/1996 (published in Monitorul Oficial al Romaniei nr. 71 din 9 aprilie 1996) states that: »Are historical sources and belong to National Archival Fund of Romania documents created in time by state institutions, public or private (our underline), economic, social, cultural, military and religious

documents belonging to the National Archival Fund. This situation supposes a precise knowledge of the area and social functions performed by each of these institutions, the context of their creation and the use of their archives. Otherwise it becomes difficult to evaluate from a historical perspective the documents created and the further transmission of those reflecting the role played during the past present and future, due to the fact that not all these documents possess the importance needed for organizing and preserving documents according to the archival legislation. At the same time, the irreversible character of a wrong evaluation cannot be overlooked.

Starting with the above stated premises, the present training of archivists in Romania must complete the traditional professional training with aspects about the evolution of contemporary institutions and that of future ones; respectively the knowledge of their legal framework, their tasks and competences, their organizational structure. Institutional dynamics is an accelerated one, often determined by the economic or administrative dynamics, needing permanent information in this direction. There is a major risk in lacking this information, either incapacity to evaluate correctly the role of the institution and its documents or a wrong appreciation of their historic value. In both cases, the result is the same: to transmit a wrong and distorted image of reality.

The change from state property to private property we mentioned above determined the transformation of some state owned enterprises in private enterprises or judicial liquidation of institutions that proved to be non profitable in the new socio-economic situation. During these changes the fate of documents created before the privatization was not a concern for the new owners. From an archival perspective, these documents retain their public character, even if they are in the custody of private institutions, being a part of the national cultural heritage, due to serve contemporary history - reflecting among other things the way the socialist economy worked, respectively the change to market economy. The financial and human effort to take over/to organize such a huge volume of documents in the National Archives depots overrode to other problems raised by the way the market economy manifested itself, an example being the treatment of the archives belonging to multi-national institutions, those archives are not enjoying a judicial norm included in the present law of national archives.

An additional challenge for Romanian archivists after 1989 was the increase in importance of electronic documents, something natural in the »new age of information«⁸, starting from here the need to identify theoretical and practical solutions in order to preserve the representative information from a historical point of view created on such supports.⁹

organizations, as well as by private persons. The state ensures for these documents special protection, according to the present law«.

⁸ *Jose Bernal Rivas Fernandez, L'archivistique, les archives et les archivistes face aux défis du troisième millénaire, in "Comma - International Journal on Archives", nr. 1-2/2001, p. 21.*

⁹ *Beside the urgent need to find a technical solution for archiving and preserving electronic documents, one should not overlook the digitization of documents with heritage value from National Archives. These two problems began to be discussed in order to draft a preliminary strategy of the institution, but it is a process in the beginnings. Alina Pavelescu, Repere pentru o strategie de informatizare a arhivelor, in Revista arhivelor, LXXXV (2008), Nr. 1, p. 110-142.*

Besides their archival regime, which supposes an adaptation of the traditional working instruments to the characteristics of this type of documents or the creation of new working instruments in the spirit of present international standards, one cannot neglect their purely technical side, being permanently improved is something that compels us to assimilation, adaptation and reflection when it comes to their further preservation.

To all of this one may add the aspects stemming from the confrontation of Romanian archival science with the evolution of theory and praxis of the international archival science. Besides the necessity to re-evaluate the legal framework, to update it to the new local realities and harmonize it with the European Union's archival legislation, one must consider also the comparison of concepts and national archival practice with European correspondents, keeping an eye on the standardization rigors and the general evolution of the discipline.

It is obvious that the institution of the National Archives in Romania found itself facing the necessity of adjustments, of "new orientation of professional and institutional directions and development policies";¹⁰ and the area of professional training could not have been bypassed by the period of searches specific for such substantial changes and challenges derived from the archival practice¹¹ and from the answers which the professional community of archivists is compelled to give to the social requirements.

2. ROMANIAN ARCHIVISTS AND THEIR EDUCATION: PAST AND FUTURE

The institutional foundation of Romanian archival training is assimilated with the establishment of Practical School for Archivists-Paleographers in 1924, following the model and spirit of prestigious Ecole des Chartes. With successive changes of name and status,¹² this school existed up to 1950, when by disestablishment of the Institute for archival science, bibliography and museography there has been a breach in professional training for archival science. During the period when it existed, the institute gained national recognition and was well-known at an international level¹³ for its seriousness and extended area of study, aimed, by the nature of its curricula, at an integrated archival science into the spectrum of auxiliary sciences of history -

¹⁰ Bogdan Florin Popovici, *Aspecte tehnice ale digitalizării patrimoniului arhivistic (Technical Aspects of Archival Heritage Digitization)* in "Revista arhivelor", anul LXXXIV, vol. LXXIII, Nr. 2/2007, p. 156.

¹¹ To this process of re-sizing and re-thinking of curricula were subjected almost all institutions of archival training. See Angelika Menne-Haritz, *Archival Training in a Changing World*, "The American Archivist", vol. 63 (fall/winter 2000), p. 341-352.

¹² 1931 - Superior School of Archival Science and Paleography; 1932 - Special School for Archival Science and Paleography; 1938 - School for Archival Science; 1948 - Institute for Archival Science, Bibliology and Museography.

¹³ Naming the researches and working instruments done by the School of Archival Science, Robert Henri Bautier observed in 1943 the following: "Thus, develops itself, with courage and enthusiasm, in spite of the war and difficult realities, the historical and archival movement in Romania. We should be allowed, in the end, to address a friendly welcome the young Romanian science, of which many eminent representatives came to train to us, and as well the more than a century old Ecole de Chartes should be allowed to wish a long life for the recently reorganized School of Archival Science, manifesting already a rare vitality". Robert Henri Bautier, *Activitatea istorică și arhivistică din România după 1939*, "Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes", t. CIV, 1943, p. 286-292, republished by Ioan Dragan, *O privire franceză asupra arhivisticii românești la 1943*, "Hrisovul", *Anuarul Facultății de Arhivistică*, XIII (2007) - Serie nouă, p. 15-22.

hence the powerful accent on this disciplines. This orientation was dictated by the specific fact in our country of existence of historical sources in multiple languages, something that solicited the archivist to have mandatory knowledge of the Cyrillic paleography and of another source language and its paleography¹⁴ as well.

After 1950 a section and subsequently a sub-section (beginning with 1956 up to 1970 when it was cancelled) for archival science existed, which was subordinated to the Historical Faculty at the Bucharest University, but the reduced number of classes did not allow for an adequate professional training. Under these circumstances, the institution of State Archives¹⁵ supported the necessity to establish a Training centre for its personnel, where the training for the archival science problems lasted for six months; the specialization on diverse paleographies should have been accomplished by intensive trainings for three months.¹⁶

This solution was for a short term, at the beginning of the 90's the institution facing the need for a professional training on solid bases and in a concerted manner. Thus, the idea to continue the archival science education initiated in the inter-war period imposed itself (something that was accomplished by the establishment of the Archival Science Faculty in 1992), in order to fulfil by its educational offer the need for training of future archivists. By promulgation of the Law of National Archives in 1996, this institution became the only one empowered to educate, examine and train specialists for the National Archives; another similar institution, National School for Archival Science Training, having as the main objective the training of personnel for the creators and custodians of archives.¹⁷ Beginning with 2005 this two educational institutions were merged, the School being an integral part of the Archival Science Faculty, in the view of a better management of archival professional training.

In the last years section of archival science appeared in some faculties of history, linguistics or there were established mixed faculties of bibliology, museology and archival science. We would not refer to these due to the fact that they are active only for a short time.

Until the Bologna system was implemented in Romania (2005-2008 being the first promotion of students in this framework) together with the 3 years curricula, the education of archivists in the Archival Science Faculty took 4 years, divided to 8 semesters, summing up 114 weeks of theoretical training and 12 weeks of praxis in archival science and paleographies. The absolvents were - and still are - majors in archival science - history. The change to three-year study did not modify substantially the components of the curricula, having effects especially on the number of classes, which were diminished.

Besides this general statistical data, the components of the curricula in the years following the re-establishment of the institution were oriented - due to the

¹⁴ *Slavic, Latin, Hungarian, German, Greek, Turkish.*

¹⁵ *The Law 16/1996, mentioned above, changed the name of the institution to National Archives.*

¹⁶ *See the memo from 14th of April 1980 from the director of the State Archives on the necessity to establish the Training center for the personnel of the State Archives. Arhivele in fruntand vremurile. Marturii documentare (coord. Corneliu Mihail Lungu, editors: Ana-Felicia Diaconu, Cristina Tineghe), Bucuresti 2006, p. 392-395.*

¹⁷ *Article 23, Law of National Archives.*

inter-war tradition - rather towards the historical component, focused on auxiliary sciences of history, even the graduation diploma was not for an archivist-paleographer, as it was the case with the model that was followed, Ecole Nationale des Chartes. Towards this conclusion we are inclined by the names and weight of disciplines:¹⁸

Fundamental disciplines: world history 12%, Romanian history 14%, world and Romanian historiography 2%, ancient Romanian language 3%, historical and archival sources etc;

Special disciplines: archival science 11%, archival informatics 5%, auxiliary sciences of history 8%, Romanian-Cyrillic paleography 7%, history of modern and contemporary Romanian institutions 3% etc.;

Optional disciplines: theory and praxis of ancient languages (Slavic, Greek, Latin, German, Hungarian and Turkish) 10%, Paleography (Slavic, Greek, Latin, German, Hungarian and Turkish), foreign languages (English, German, French and Russian) 6%.

But if we start from the criteria of basic training - one common and general, offering the possibility of further specialization during professional activity, according to the institutional needs and own wishes - this studies program can be as well categorized in a tradition "privileging the multifunctionality of the archival science".¹⁹ In this framework we should make a distinction between what an archivist must know how to do, as an individual, at a specific point during his professional activity and what his professional community must know or offer in order not to affect its social function. But we have already treated this subject in the first part of this paper.

Indifferent from which tradition we start, it still holds grounds the fact that in the Romanian case the archival professional training is built beginning with a large number of complementary knowledge for the archival science.²⁰ If in the last case we have knowledge on the history of archives, laws and regulations on the archival work on documents or referring to their life cycle, the meaning of complementary knowledge is no other than to ensure the specialists with information on the way the society works, for a better understanding of the framework in which the documents were or are created.

The evolution of Romanian society and the impact on the archivist profession has been and is still concerning the professors at the Archival Science Faculty, in the way of drawing up an educational plan that provides the students with theoretical knowledge and practical abilities required to become competitive from a professional point of view. For this, the curriculum has been supplemented with courses like applied informatics and e-management of archives, which were meant to respond the present challenges. This tendency is doubled by the intention to familiarize the

¹⁸ The data were published by Constantin Burac in "Hrisovul", VII, 2002, Serie noua, p. 18-64, published also by Laura Niculescu, *Formarea profesionala a arhivistilor. Sisteme, nivele de formare si programe existente in Europa*, "Revista Arhivelor", an LXXXIV, vol. XXII, No 1/2007, p. 19-20.

¹⁹ Laura Niculescu, *Formarea profesionala a arhivistilor*, p. 33; the same idea in Jules Verhelst, Frank Scheelings, *La formation archivistique "traditionnelle" an Europe*, "Archivum - The Profile of Archivist: Promotion of Awareness", vol. XLV/2000, p. 2.

²⁰ Terry Eastwood, *Reforming the Archival Curriculum to meet contemporary needs*, "Archivaria", 42, p. 83-84.

students with the major themes debated nowadays such as international archival standards. However, in this case the approach is almost entirely theoretical and bookish if we take into consideration that, despite the fact that they "can offer answers to some vulnerabilities of Romanian archival science",²¹ they have not been implemented by Romanian National Archives, not even experimentally. Still, we consider that the initiatives and concerns of Romanian archivists dedicated to the adaptation to Romanian archival science specific features prefigure in near future the drawing up of a native archival doctrine.

The evolution of theoretical and practical archival science generated a complexity of knowledge related to it and imposed a more pronounced specialization. In the educational plan it determined the need to find alternative solutions, provided by a master degree program, which offer the opportunity to specialize in specific fields.

Romanian archival theory and practice, linked to native realities of a society in transition, is making great efforts, on one hand, to respond nowadays solicitations and on the other to become an equal in international professional dialogue. Therefore, subscribed to this, the professional training of the future archivists is based on reevaluation of practice accumulated so far, on theoretisation of present realities and updating with the main things concerning international archival science.

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²¹ Federatia Arhivistilor din Romania, *Standardele arhivistice ale Consiliului International al Arhivelor* (2008) (coord. Bogdan-Florin Popovici), Sfantu Gheorghe 2008, p. 20.

POVZETEK

**IZOBRAŽEVANJE ROMUNSKIH ARHIVISTOV MED TRENUTNIMI POTREBAMI IN
DINAMIKO ARHIVSKEGA PODROČJA**

Romunsko arhivsko usposabljanje se je začelo kot praktična šola za arhiviste-paleografe leta 1926. Danes ga lahko označimo kot naslednika te tradicije, osredotočenega na pridobivanje znanja iz zgodovine, vendar dopolnjenega z disciplinami, ki so namenjene prilagajanju izobrazbe današnjemu času.

Razvoj romunske družbe se odraža tako na arhivskem poklicu kot tudi na izobraževanju zanj. Rezultat teh sprememb so naporji za izboljšanje izobraževanja arhivistov, in sicer tako, da se zmanjša število pomožnih zgodovinskih disciplin in poveča število tehničnih in praktičnih. Razvoj arhivske teorije in prakse zahteva kompleksnejša znanja in bolj poudarjeno specializacijo. V izobraževalnih načrtih se je pojavila potreba po iskanju alternativnih rešitev v obliki programa magistrskega študija, ki daje možnosti specializacije na določenih področjih.