

ECCLESIA LIBRARY AND THEOLOGY BRANCH OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY OF CAROL I UNIVERSITY WITHIN THE BUCHAREST FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to briefly present the activity of the two existing university libraries at the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology. This article presents the librarians who currently work in this higher education institution and highlights the contribution of the clergy and other people to the development of the libraries. On top of that, it is also captured the changes that have taken place recently at the Library of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and at the Branch of Orthodox Theology of the Central University Library in the capital.

Keywords: Bucharest, library, faculty, theology, traditions, books, Church.

University libraries at the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology

This study highlights the existence of two university libraries within the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology, which provides access to a wide variety of resources, information and documentation from various fields. Thus, both the *Ecclesia* Library¹ of the Faculty of Theology and the Theology Branch of *Carol I* Central University Library operate within the *Patriarch Justinian* of the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology. This is the result of the ancestral Church, which wanted to have a broad research base for the transmission of the religious, historical and cultural values of the Romanian people to future generations.

¹ Through the special care of His Beatitude Father DANIEL, Patriarch of Romania, in 2020, the Library receives the title of *Ecclesia*, which gives more respect and appreciation to this prestigious institution.

We will start off with the Library of the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology², which has gone through many difficult times, especially during the communist regime, but so far it has remained an authentic place for the theological formation of future priests. With over "120,000 volumes"³, to which is also added the fund of periodicals, approximately 150,000 publications are comprised in total, since the library has started its reorganization process in 2019⁴. It is important to mention that the valorization of the cultural traditions means, on the one hand, having various research programs within the library, and on the other hand, acquiring innovative technologies for the library. In this regard, it was procured a software, called *Qulto*, to digitalize existing publications. This software was an important step for the development and adaptation of the Library to the high standards of 21st century.

Thus, in the middle of the year 2020, the existing book collection in the *Ecclesia Library*⁵ was inventoried, cataloged and digitized. The evidence, management and inventory of documents are part of the methodological norms, specific to any library, while the digitization process was implemented because of the current global challenge we face right now. This change would offer users an easier access to information. The digitalisation of the books has led to a regrouping of all technical resources and the implementation of modern online ones. There is a continuous adaptation to the requirements of modern times by rethinking the system as a whole, and developing adjacent tasks. This activity was supported by the team of librarians, as stated by the vice dean of the Faculty of Letters, associate Professor Cristina Popescu⁶, who also coordinated volunteers-students and graduates of the Library and Information Science section of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest⁷ who helped the library make the transition towards digitalisation. As a result of all the effort in the *Teodor M. Popescu Reading Room*, nine

² We mention the fact that the Library of the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology was founded in 1887, at the proposal of the priest professor Alexandru Mironescu, who approached the authorities of the time, showing the need to establish a library within the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Bucharest, founded in 1881.

³ Rev. Adrian GABOR ; Rev. Daniel BENGA ; Rev. Mihai SĂSĂUJAN ; Ionuț-Alexandru TUDORIE, *History of the Patriarch Justinian Faculty of Orthodox Theology (1881-2017) University of Bucharest*. Bucharest: Publishing House, *BASILICA* of Roman Patriarchate, 2017, p. 132.

⁴ Marius-George COȘARCĂ, „Biblioteca Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă din București (1887-2019)”, în: *Anuarul Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă „Justinian Patriarhul” a Universității din București*, XIX (2019), p. 579.

⁵ George-Adrian ȘERBAN, „Cronica Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă Justinian Patriarhul din București pe anul 2020”, în: *Anuarul Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă „Justinian Patriarhul” a Universității din București*, XX (2020), p. 606.

⁶ <https://www.trinitas.tv/distinctii-pentru-voluntarii-care-au-lucrat-la-digitalizarea-bibliotecii-facultatii-de-teologie-ortodoxa-din-bucuresti/>.

⁷ George-Adrian ȘERBAN, „Cronica Facultății...”, pp. 606-607.

volunteers received recognition for their contribution, from His Beatitude Father DANIEL, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. They received a Diploma and the Medal of the Year 2020⁸. It is not the first time that we encounter an interdisciplinary relationship in the theological field, where different profiles that correspond to a common ground, shows openness to solve together challenges of the country's culture and spirituality.

In the *Ecclesia* Library there are currently 3 librarians, who have both theology and librarianship studies, and promote change on all levels, especially in terms of digitizing the existing book collection. To date, more than 5,000 publications⁹ have been registered in the Library's online catalog. Not only the relationship with other fields contributed to the development of the Romanian theological culture, but also the diverse studies of the Romanian librarians, who are open and supportive towards the development and modernization of theological libraries. At the beginning of the year 2021, after renovating the library, a new modern book storage space was inaugurated¹⁰. We add to all this the fruitful collaboration with the Orthodox Theology Branch of the Central University Library, which is necessary for all users. We must mention the fact that, since 2011, a collaboration protocol has been established between the *Carol I* Central University Library and the publishing houses of the Romanian Patriarchate.¹¹

It is well known that the Central University Library was inaugurated in 1895 as a Royal Foundation, at the initiative of King *Carol I*, and was aimed to form an institution for all university students of all faculties in the country, which was always open¹² and had a large collection of books. By Order of the Minister of National Education no. 3039/2014 on the approval of the organization regulation and the organizational chart of the *Carol I* Central University Library, we observe that it is structured in 18 services, 7 offices and 8 specialized compartments, located in the central unit, 16 branch libraries located in 18 locations within the

⁸<https://www.trinitas.tv/distinctii-pentru-voluntarii-care-au-lucrat-la-digitalizarea-bibliotecii-facultatii-de-teologie-ortodoxa-din-bucuresti/>.

⁹<https://opac3.ftoub.qulto.ro/ro/search/-/search/clearform>.

¹⁰<https://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/stiri/ocrotitorii-scolilor-teologice-cinstiti-la-facultatea-justinian-patriarhul-din-bucuresti-160240.html>.

¹¹<https://www.mediafax.ro/social/parteneriat-intre-bcu-si-editurile-patriarhiei-pentru-proiecte-cultural-stiintifice-9716053>.

¹² Corina CIOCÂRLIE ; Andreea RĂSUCEANU, *Dicționar de locuri literare bucureștene*. București: Humanitas, 2019, p. 53.

faculties of the University of Bucharest to which is added the Pedagogical Section¹³. One of the 16 branches mentioned above is the Orthodox Theology, which was inaugurated in 2015¹⁴, being the last one in the library complex. This event took place in the *Hall of Patriarchs*, where His Beatitude Father DANIEL, Patriarch of Romania also attended, together with hierarchs of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, priests, teachers, and students¹⁵. This was also a wish fulfilment of the teachers and students from the Bucharest Faculty of Theology¹⁶. Here, two experienced librarians, who are also clerics, work¹⁷.

The affiliated library branch received access to the digital resources of the Central University Library. Thus, through the modern technology, all users are offered online access to available documents. At the time of the inauguration, the library had 33 scientific databases comprising 86,809 scientific journals and 154,185 books, with access to the full texts.¹⁸ This subsidiary has now 515 volumes on loan and continues to increase its resources.

Through the partnership concluded by the Romanian Patriarchate with the *Carol I* Central University Library, it is certified the interest for promoting Romanian and universal true values and for making this treasure available to all users¹⁹. We must understand that not only the relationship between the theological field and other collateral disciplines is capitalized, but also collaboration at an institutional level, which gives the theological institution an overwhelming importance.

Conclusions

¹³ <https://www.juridice.ro/315085/rof-al-bibliotecii-centrale-universitare-carol-i.html>.

¹⁴ On February 5, the consecration of the Theology Branch of the Central University Library took place within the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Bucharest.

¹⁵ <https://sites.google.com/a/bcub.ro/biblioteca-centrala-universitara-carol-i-8/home/biblioteca-de-teologie-ortodoxa/istoric>.

¹⁶ Maria-Andreea FANEA, „Biblioteca Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă – filială a Bibliotecii Centrale Universitare Carol I București”, în: *Opinia națională*, 22, nr. 696 (2015), p. 6.

¹⁷ http://www.ftoub.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=624:biblioteca-centrala-universitara-filiala-de-teologie-ortodoxa&catid=21&Itemid=136

¹⁸ <https://sites.google.com/a/bcub.ro/biblioteca-centrala-universitara-carol-i-8/home/biblioteca-de-teologie-ortodoxa/istoric>.

¹⁹ http://www.ftoub.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=624:biblioteca-centrala-universitara-filiala-de-teologie-ortodoxa&catid=21&Itemid=136.

The year of 2020 was a challenging one, due to the pandemic situation, and represented, both globally and in Romania, an unprecedented effort to adapt to the new circumstances. This was felt on all levels, including in the library sector. However, both the *Ecclesia* Library and the Theology Branch of the Central University Library, within the Bucharest Faculty of Orthodox Theology, managed to successfully adapt to the new conditions. Through the care of Hierarchs, teachers, and the team of librarians, we tried to promote cultural and religious values, by investing in digital platforms, making all the annexes available to users.

The need to invest in modern communication methods and online technologies in the library space confirm the need to accelerate the digitization process and maintain the cultural and spiritual climate at high academic standards.

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