

Ioan-Aurel POP*

TEACHING HUMANITIES IN THE ROMANIAN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF “BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

Abstract: Humanities have been taught in Transylvania for a long time, and the history of Babeș-Bolyai University stands as proof of this fact. With 21 faculties, among which one of Law, one of Letters, one of History and Philosophy and four theological faculties, our university is one of the biggest and most important in Romania. Students can opt for the language of study: there are three main lines of study (Romanian, Hungarian or German) and there are specialisations offered in modern languages, such as English, French, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian a. s. o.

Key words: *Romanian education, humanities, law, letters, theologies, history, philosophy, cultural centres*

INTRODUCTION

Cluj-Napoca is the traditional capital city of Transylvania, a historical province in Romania, representing today almost 40% of the territory and population (around 8 million people) of the entire country. The multicultural character of the province was more pronounced during remote times and it has changed, in various ways, during the last two centuries. In this very moment, ethnic Romanians represent around 78% of the Transylvanian population, Hungarians – around 17%, very few percentages being given by Roma (Gypsy), Slavs, Germans, Armenians, Jews etc. Transylvania was part of the Roman Empire, of the Hungarian Kingdom (between 12th and 16th centuries), then an autonomous principality under the Turkish sovereignty (1541–1688), afterwards a part of the Habsburg Monarchy (1699–1918) and, after 1918, a Romanian territory. Latin was the official language of the province until 1842, when it was replaced by Hungarian. After the union of Transylvania with Romania, in 1918, the official language became Romanian. The histor-

* Center for Transylvanian Studies, Romanian Academy

ical ethnic and denominational groups of Transylvania were Romanians (Orthodox and Greek-Catholic), Hungarians (Roman-Catholic, Calvinist and Unitarian) and German (Lutheran).

HISTORICAL, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

This Transylvania (in Hungarian *Erdély*, in German *Siebenbürgen*) of the 21st century bears the traces of a tormented past and rather different from what has happened in other regions of Europe. At the very first glance, it is striking to see, both in the urban and the rural landscape, the close presence of various religious edifices, from Byzantine and Neo-Byzantine domes of Orthodox churches to Gothic towers that scrape the sky, and from round arches of Romanesque churches to Baroque façades of other places of worship. In some areas, over a surface of several hundred square meters, one may notice Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches, next to Roman-Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran or Unitarian churches, situated in the vicinity of a synagogue. For instance, in the city of Cluj-Napoca (Clus, Kolozsvár, Klausenburg), the traditional capital of the province, presently reside five Christian prelates who have at least the rank of bishop (an Orthodox metropolitan bishop, a Greek-Catholic bishop, a Calvinist, a Lutheran and a Unitarian bishop), alongside an episcopal vicar (Roman-Catholic). In the same way, within Babeş-Bolyai University (with over 40,000 Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree or Ph. D. Students, and professors etc.) there are four theological faculties (university departments), two of which have Romanian as the medium of instruction, while and the other two have Hungarian. The official languages of this university are three: Romanian, Hungarian and German.

BRIEF HISTORY OF BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

Babeş-Bolyai University started as a Jesuit Major College (*Collegium Maius*, corresponding to a university), founded by Prince Stephen Báthory in 1581. The language of education was, at that time, Latin. The modern university, founded in 1872, functioned as a national Hungarian university until the end of the First World War, when the place of the old one was taken by a new Romanian university. In a certain moment, after the Second World War, two universities – a Romanian one and another one Hungarian were unified and so Babeş-Bolyai University was formed. During the communist regime, the multicultural character of this university was seriously restraint, and only after 1989, the multilingual aspect was fully developed. The present university brings together the cultural, scientific and religious heritage of Transylvania, which was admired and described by Voltaire, Racine, Comenius and William Penn. This university – the greatest and the more complex one in Romania – embodies the academic tradition of Transylvania, whose heritage constitutes the basis for today's multicultural and multilingual profile, which is established by the University Charter.

THE LINES OF STUDY: ROMANIAN, HUNGARIAN, GERMAN

The multilingual and multicultural profile of Babeş-Bolyai University, developed in complying with the 1995 Babeş-Bolyai University Charter, has brought considerable advantages to every historical community of Transylvania – Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Jews, and other –, reflecting not only the demographic structure of population, but even the historical heritage. At this main Transylvanian university, around 31,188 Romanians are studying (251 fields of study at undergraduate level and 225 master programmes; 24,414 undergraduate students, and 6,774 graduate students); 21 faculties (of 21) provide training in Romanian at this university. Numerous Hungarians study in their mother tongue (72 fields of study at undergraduate level, and 31 master programmes; 4,780 undergraduate students and 783 graduate students, plus 2,831 Hungarian students who have chosen to study in other languages). 16 faculties provide training in Hungarian as well. Study opportunities in German language are also widely spread (14 fields of study at undergraduate level, and 6 master programmes, more than 539 undergraduate students, and 182 graduate students). 8 faculties provide training in German language. Never before have the history, the culture, and the language of the Hebrew people been studied so systematically and comprehensively (1 field of study at undergraduate level and 1 master programme, with almost 16 undergraduate and 5 graduate students). Even other ethnic communities enjoy similar opportunities to promote their language and cultural identity. The university currently has 1800 doctoral students, while enrolment for graduate studies has reached an annual figure over 4000.

In Cluj, the multicultural profile has proved to be an innovative, flexible and viable solution. At European level, this profile has been much appreciated by objective observers. Babeş-Bolyai University has developed its multilingual and multicultural profile in keeping with current European practices and policies, to which solutions of its own were added. Compared to other European multicultural universities, Babeş-Bolyai University provides full mother tongue studies along three study lines – Romanian, Hungarian, German –, and the study lines are organized at department, faculty and university level, enjoying functional autonomy complying with European practices. The multicultural profile of a university is developed in accordance with the national legislation, with the European higher education policy, and with the decisions taken by each university. There is factual proof that Babeş-Bolyai University has implemented the current European regulations and practices in this field.

THREE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (MOTHER TONGUES OF TRANSYLVANIAN ETHNIC COMMUNITIES)

Babeş-Bolyai University has a very rich offer of complete studies in the three major mother tongues (Romanian, Hungarian, German) and in other languages (English, French, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, Ukrainian), as well as of programmes related to other major cultures (Jewish, Chinese, Japanese, American). These are not merely language programmes, but multicultural ones in the proper sense of the term;

in addition to language courses, they offer knowledge about structure, real life and history of the specific societies, as well as about their representative achievements.

MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Today, Babeş-Bolyai University offers one of the most diverse multilingual and multicultural programmes in Europe. Every level of this programme enjoys full autonomy, according to prevailing European practices. Last but not least, owing to its training system for teachers, economists, engineers, lawyers, artists, sportsmen and theologians, Babeş-Bolyai University establishes the frame for dialogue between the great cultural profiles: religious and secular; scientific and theological; European, American and Asian.

Babeş-Bolyai University has opted for multiculturalism considering that:

- bridging the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference remains a problem in the multi-ethnic societies of Central and Eastern Europe;
- the politics of difference are realistic if conceived as a consequence of the politics of equal dignity;
- the solutions based on force (physical or public) are counter-productive and should be rejected from the very beginning;
- the institutionalization of multiculturalism requires a step by step negotiation of the arrangements between the parties involved;

Table 1. Statistics regarding study programmes in 2012 at Babeş-Bolyai University

Line of study	Tenured teaching staff	Number of specializations			Doctoral fields	Student population		PhD students
		Bachelor studies	University extensions	Master studies		Bachelor studies	Master studies	
Romanian line of study	1201	152	13	166		25,533	6796	
Hungarian line of study	158	72	5	31		4,928	857	
German line of study	27	14	2	6		539	182	
Jewish studies		1		1		16	5	
Other languages: English, French, Russian, Italian		18		32		955	766	
Total	1,386	257	20	236	28	31,971	8606	1800

- the collective cultural identity is to be acknowledged with no dissolution of the legal structure based on individuality.

Additional statistical data for the same year 2012 are eloquent proofs for the intercultural profile of Babeş-Bolyai University. For example, there are over 20 students of German and 2,455 students of Hungarian ethnic origin who have chosen to study in Romanian.

This multicultural and multilingual reality is consolidated by an increasing number of joint degrees at master and doctoral level with universities from Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro, Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Israel, Norway and the United States. Cultural studies are also provided: American, Scandinavian, Japanese, Jewish and Korean.

THE UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY

Babeş-Bolyai University is an academic community which includes students, teaching staff, researchers, auxiliary teaching staff, and technical and administrative personnel. It operates on the basis of university autonomy – understood as a specific manner of self-management – according to the legal framework of the Romanian Constitution and the new Law of Education, as well as its own regulations.

University autonomy includes the adoption of a *Charter* regulating the University's organization and activity, the freedom of research, artistic activity and transfer of knowledge; the granting of academic, scientific and honorary titles; the implementation and the improvement of the university's structures; the development and implementation of research programmes; the introduction of norms for student housing and for student scholarships; the working out of study and examination regulations for students; the publication policies of the University and the functioning of the University Press; the freedom to appoint and change the university leadership according to the legal procedures; the organization of national and international scholarly events, the freedom to establish the forms of cooperation with other institutions; the management of the University's financial resources and assets, in keeping with their destination.

Babeş-Bolyai University endorses The Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education (1988), The Magna Charta of European Universities (Bologna, 1988), the Bologna Declaration (1999), and it has joined the European University Association, the International Association of Universities.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Babeş-Bolyai University includes faculties, departments, branch campus colleges, libraries, laboratories, research units, museums, student houses. It also includes the technical and administrative services, the publishing house, the printing press and other experimental units, such as training and leisure grounds.



Picture 1. The Faculty of Letters – front view

Out of the 21 faculties of our universities, four are dedicated to the major religions of the Transylvanian region: the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, the Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology, the Faculty of Roman-Catholic Theology, and the Faculty of Protestant Theology, offering courses in Romanian (Faculties of Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Theology) and Hungarian (Faculties of Roman-Catholic and Protestant Theology).

Humanities are taught at all academic levels. The Faculty of Letters, the Faculty of History and Philosophy, the Faculty of Theatre and Television and the Faculties of Theology offer instruction at Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral level.

The Faculty of Letters, through its nine departments, offers formation for students in Romanian language, literature, culture and civilisation, in Hungarian language, literature, ethnology and anthropology, in German language and literature, in Romanic languages and literatures, in Slavic languages and literatures, in Scan-

dinavian, Asian and classical languages and literatures, as in modern languages teaching students how to become translators and conference interpreters.

The Faculty of History and Philosophy carries out its activity in the central building of our university and offers instruction to its students through its eight departments, covering fields such as: ancient history and archaeology, medieval, pre-modern history and the history of arts, modern history, archives and ethnology, international studies and contemporary history, philosophy, pre-modern and Romanian philosophy.

Through its three departments, the Faculty of Theatre and Television within Babeş-Bolyai University offers instruction in theatre, television and media.

The regulations adopted by Babeş-Bolyai University have been drawn up taking into account the best interests of Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, as well as of Jews, according to the present legislation of the Romanian state.

The publishing houses of the Babeş-Bolyai University publish books and journals in Romanian, Hungarian and German. They also encourage the publication in widely spoken languages.

CULTURAL CENTRES AND INSTITUTES WITHIN BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

Having the role of mediator at local level between Romania and various world countries, the foreign cultural centres contribute to achieving a mutual awareness of different cultural traditions through their activities made available to the general public.

There are several cultural centres carrying out their activities within our university in order to reveal the mysteries and specificities of the cultures they are promoting to students and not only. As such, we have contributed to the inauguration of:

- the Brazilian Cultural Centre (2011)
- the Russian Cultural Centre (2011)
- the Confucius Institute (2009)
- the Korean Cultural Centre (2007)
- the Polish Cultural Centre (2003).

Furthermore, there are other cultural centres carrying out their activity in the premises of our university and with our support: the Italian Cultural Centre, the French Cultural Centre, the German Cultural Centre and the British Council.

The university also has a number of institutes, such as: the Institute of Ecclesiastical History, which promotes and stimulates the researches in the field of ecclesiastical history under several aspects (organisation, religious life, confessional schools, personalities, relations between the State and the Church etc.) referring to all historical religions in Romania and in Central and Eastern Europe.

There is also the Cultural Institute of Cluj in Europe, which employs the strategy of highlighting, at the European level, the main cultural and multilingual accomplishments – past and present – of the city of Cluj-Napoca.



Picture 2. The Russian Cultural Centre



Picture 3. Activities at the Confucius Institute



Picture 4. Logo of the Korean Cultural Centre

The Institute of Oral History was created in 1997 and has as primary purpose to gather and interpret oral testimonies of eyewitnesses and/or their descendants speaking about their experience in connection to different topics related to Romania's recent past.

The Institute of Romanian Language as a European Language is an institution whose mission is to promote education and research projects, to maintain and further develop theory and practice (in the field of Romanian language as a foreign language, as a mother tongue language or non-mother tongue language) and to strengthen partnerships with other institutions.

The Institute of Turkish and Central Asian Studies (ITCAS) is the first of this kind in Romania and is meant to familiarize the scholars and the public with the values of the Turkish history, culture and civilization, even back to its roots in Orient and Central Asia, but also providing political and economic projections concerning the evolution of these regions. The understanding of the history, culture and civilization of the Turkish, Orient and Central Asian world envisages the identification of the contribution of this area to the progress of humankind.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES

The cooperation agreements concluded by our university go far beyond the European continent, to North America, South America, Asia, Australia and Africa.

In the field of humanities, Babeş-Bolyai University has concluded inter-university agreements with the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa), the Archives and Museum of Literature in Brussels (Belgium), the Cooremans Institute of Brussels (Belgium), the Free University of Brussels (Belgium), the Catholic Institute for High Commercial Studies (Belgium), the University Québec à Montréal (Canada), the University of Montréal (Canada), the University of Ottawa (Canada), the Zhejiang University of Science and Technology (China), Seoul National University and Dongguk University (South Korea), the University of Geneva (Switzerland), the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), the University Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux III (France), the University of Caen Basse-Normandie (France), the University Auvergne Clermont I of Clermont-Ferrand (France), the University Pasquale Paoli of Corsica (France), the University Joseph Fourier – Grenoble I (France), the University Pierre Mendès France Grenoble – Grenoble II (France), the University Stendhal – Grenoble III (France), the University Charles de Gaulle Lille III (France), the University of Limoges (France), the University Claude Bernard Lyon 1 (France), the University Paris XII Val-de-Marne (France), the Catholic Institute of Paris (France), the Pädagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg (Germany), Friedrich-Alexander-Universität of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany), the Carl von Ossietzky Universität of Oldenburg (Germany), the University of Rostock (Germany), the Otto-von-Guericke-Universität of Magdeburg (Germany), the University of Regensburg (Germany), the Università degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza” (Italy), the Università degli Studi di Roma Tre (Italy), the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milano (Italy), the Università degli Studi della Tuscia of Viterbo (Italy), the Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italy), the Università degli Studi di Pisa (Italy), Kobe University (Japan), Staffordshire University (U. K.), Jagiellonian University of Krakow (Poland), the University of Porto (Portugal), Mordovia N. P. Ogarev State University (Russia), N. I. Lobacevski State University of Nijni Novgorod (Russia), the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain), Yeditepe University (Turkey), Çankırı Karatekin University (Turkey), Yuriy Fedkovich National University of Chernovt-



Picture 5. The library of the Polish Cultural Centre

ca (France), the University Joseph Fourier – Grenoble I (France), the University Pierre Mendès France Grenoble – Grenoble II (France), the University Stendhal – Grenoble III (France), the University Charles de Gaulle Lille III (France), the University of Limoges (France), the University Claude Bernard Lyon 1 (France), the University Paris XII Val-de-Marne (France), the Catholic Institute of Paris (France), the Pädagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg (Germany), Friedrich-Alexander-Universität of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany), the Carl von Ossietzky Universität of Oldenburg (Germany), the University of Rostock (Germany), the Otto-von-Guericke-Universität of Magdeburg (Germany), the University of Regensburg (Germany), the Università degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza” (Italy), the Università degli Studi di Roma Tre (Italy), the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milano (Italy), the Università degli Studi della Tuscia of Viterbo (Italy), the Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italy), the Università degli Studi di Pisa (Italy), Kobe University (Japan), Staffordshire University (U. K.), Jagiellonian University of Krakow (Poland), the University of Porto (Portugal), Mordovia N. P. Ogarev State University (Russia), N. I. Lobacevski State University of Nijni Novgorod (Russia), the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain), Yeditepe University (Turkey), Çankırı Karatekin University (Turkey), Yuriy Fedkovich National University of Chernovt-

si (Ukraine), Uzhhorod National University (Ukraine), Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Hungary), Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (Hungary).

Also, at faculty level, the departments within our university have concluded inter-departmental cooperation agreements in the fields of theology (with the University of Lugano – Switzerland), philosophy (with Jadavpur University – India), theatre (with Victoria University of Wellington – New Zealand) etc.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER MULTICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES

Babeş-Bolyai University is open to multicultural, multilingual and intercultural experiences, being firmly committed to the improvement of its own multicultural model. This multicultural and multilingual model is a contribution to the European values. It is comparable, in terms of activities and regulations with other multicultural and multilingual universities in Europe: Bolzano – Italy; Helsinki and Abo Akademy – Finland; Tartu – Estonia; Fribourg – Switzerland; Tetovo – Macedonia.

In all multilingual and multicultural universities, decisions are made by faculty councils and by the university Senate (or their equivalents) in keeping with the customary democratic procedures. These universities have no specific organizations meant to ensure representation for the various language or ethnic groups. However the University of Tetovo, for example, has an International Board. Babeş-Bolyai University, too, has a similar structure, namely an International Advisory Board.

INTERNATIONAL EVALUATIONS

Babeş-Bolyai University has constantly promoted professionalism and competitiveness in its desire to become part of the European Higher Education Area. The multicultural and multilingual system set up at Babeş-Bolyai University has been evaluated positively by qualified international bodies – the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities 2000, the European University Association 2001, the Salzburg Seminar 2002 –, and has been recommended internationally as a model for such organization. The recommendations made by The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities with a view to improving the multicultural system have been fully included in the University Charter, and have been implemented since 2001.

The multicultural system has also been appreciated positively by prestigious universities in Europe, with which Babeş-Bolyai University has cooperation agreements and with which it organizes regular meetings in order to establish and evaluate key aspects of the bilateral cooperation.

CONCLUSIONS

The multicultural solution embraced by the Babeş-Bolyai University is meant to offer equal opportunities to everyone, and can in no way be seen as an action taken by some in order to administratively restrict the liberties of others.

Since 1993 in the University there have been no ethnic discrimination complaints whatsoever. As a matter of fact, never before have so many Romanians studied at the main university of Transylvania; never before have so many Hungarians studied here; never before have there been more opportunities to study in German; never before have the history and the culture of the Jewish people been so broadly covered in the academic programmes. During 1998–2000, Romanian, Hungarian and German professors successively served as interim Rectors of Babeş-Bolyai University.

Students and teaching staff from all study lines have their representatives in the departments, faculties and university leadership. This is not a merely formal representation of the Romanians, Hungarians and Germans in the academic administration, but much more genuine: a decision making mechanism guaranteeing that the views of each line of study are promoted. The Charter of Babeş-Bolyai University offers all these ground-breaking solutions, sanctioning a significant model in the development of European universities.

REFERENCES

- [1] O. Ghitta (ed.): *Istoria Universităţii Babeş-Bolyai*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, 394 p.
- [2] I. A. Pop, Liana Lăpădatu: “Les débuts de l’Université moderne à Cluj: le Collège jésuite entre 1579–1581”, in *Transylvanian Review*, vol. XVIII, no. 4, Winter 2009, pp. 3–20.
- [3] V. Puşcaş (ed.): *University and society: a history of higher education in Cluj in the 20th century*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, 477 p.
- [4] <http://www.ubbcluj.ro>

