

**THE “LUCIAN BLAGA” CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
FROM CLUJ - NAPOCA
- A Short History -**

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The Cluj Central University Library was established in 1872¹. At first, it operated from the University building (1872 - 1879), then in the present building², although its construction was only finished in 1934.

The names bestowed on the “Central University Library” followed designations defined by political dimensions. So, in the period between 1872 and the Great Union in 1918 it bore the name of the Emperor of the Austrian - Hungarian Empire, Francis Joseph. On 19 May 1920, when the University and the Library was inaugurated in the presence of the Royal Family, the Library was named the “Ferdinand I” Royal Library and remained so until World War II. From then until 1990 the library is mentioned only as the University Library or Central University Library.

The second era is centred round a connotation of cultural character. From May 1990 the library was called the “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library, in memory of the philosopher and man of letters Lucian Blaga. He had been a diplomat, professor of the Philosophy of Culture Department of the “Ferdinand I” Royal University. He became librarian of the Academy Library in 1948, because of the influence and nature of historical and political circumstances, which were apparent in the building of the Central University Library at that time.

On account of the value and number (over 4 million volumes) of its stock of books and other publications, the Central University Library is considered, on a national and Central European cultural level, to be the

¹ *Biblioteca Centrală Universitară Cluj* (The Cluj Central University Library), Cluj, 1965, p. 5.

² Ioan Hentea, *Biblioteca Centrală Universitară “Lucian Blaga” Cluj - Napoca, la a 75-a aniversare* (The “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library at its 75th Anniversary), in *Philobiblon*, nr. 1, 1995, p. 19.

greatest Library in the country and in Eastern - Central Europe³. The library had 18.000 volumes when it was founded, and then was enriched by the stock of the Transylvanian Museum (1855) and, in addition, by diverse donations from other institutions and also from private individuals, the most important being that of the Moldavian boyar Gheorghe Sion.

Beyond its function as a deposit of books the library has the role of providing access for readers. Therefore the activity of some departments have had to be restructured and the computerisation of library activity has had to be accelerated.

In the period between the two world wars, in 1932, when Bibliography became a university subject, there were attempts to restructure this prodigious activity by resuming the work of editing in the library. This had been initiated under the supervision of the Cluj bibliological school by remarkable personalities such as Ioachim Crăciun, I. Muşlea and others. We must also mention the publications of the bibliographic service, the annual *Philobiblon* and the reprinting of the *Bibliotheca Bibliologica* series. The University tradition of organizing courses in librarianship which recently resumed is also another aspect of this activity and the Cluj College of Librarianship has been set up within the History and Philosophy Department of the University. Its role is to train future librarians.

Situated on the verge between tradition and innovation, the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library mirrors regional and national cultural realities and illustrates the diverse ethnic and religious identities in Transylvania.

³ Doru Radosav, *Semnificația sărbătorii unei biblioteci (The Significance of the Anniversary of a Library)*, in *Philobiblon*, nr. 1, 1995, p. 1.