

Referințe critice
a Bibliography of Romanian Literary Exegesis

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Abstract. This paper tries to identify the position of the *Referințe critice* (Critical references) bibliography among all the other bibliographical works of literary periodicals. It also attempts to present this work with its ups and downs which have been recorded during its uninterrupted appearance for almost fifty years, and to propose a project for further continuation and development of the work.

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Among the other Romanian literary bibliographies, *Referințe critice* (Critical references) is part of the very little represented series in Romanian bibliography of the works currently recording studies and articles of history, criticism, aesthetics and literary theory in literary and cultural periodicals. Since the 1983 volume, the work has also included studies published in volume or editions accompanied by forewords.

Genesis of work and its position within all literary bibliographies

Referințe critice (Critical references) has an exceptional longevity among literary bibliographies. The first issue of the work was elaborated by Teodora Oprescu in the department of documentation and bibliography at the University Library in Cluj and was published in 1967. At that time, the head of the bibliographic department of the CUL in Cluj was Dumitru Stan Petruțiu, a researcher from Lucian Blaga's entourage. In all the 48 years of uninterrupted publication, the work has maintained a modest graphical appearance, being designed for the internal use of researchers and students and edited with limited library resources by multiplying it in the library binding workshop. However, it is regrettable that the work has never benefitted from the collaboration of Cluj academics, as it happened in the case of the *Bibliografia istorică a României* (Bibliography of Romanian History), achieved mostly with the contribution and expertise of the bibliographic department of the CUL in Cluj. We estimate that such a collaboration would have been very beneficial and the work would have gained in terms of scientific value, prestige and impact in the scientific environment for which it was created.

The bibliography of studies and journal articles has drawn the interest of the bibliographers since 1895 when, in the well-known Bibliographic Plan suggested by

Ion Bianu and approved by the Romanian Academy, the creation of the retrospective bibliography of periodical titles and the analytical one of journal articles was envisaged. The project has been postponed for seventy years. Until World War I, the universal bibliographies aimed at the retrospective restitution of cultural written contributions, and afterwards - due to the acceleration of scientific progress - the focus has been mainly on current bibliographies.

Among the factors behind the creation of the work, an important role must have been played by the tradition of literary references in Cluj through the *Revista periodicelor* (Periodicals review) of the prestigious magazine *Dacoromania* led by Sextil Pușcariu and published within the *Muzeul limbii române* (the Romanian Language Museum) of Cluj between 1921–1948. As an analytical and critical bibliography of high intellectual standard, *Revista periodicelor* (Periodicals review) aimed to be as exhaustive as possible, noting and evaluating through annotations all works of letters and literary history. *Revista periodicelor* (Periodicals review) was not actually a bibliography of literary criticism and history because it covered letters altogether, especially language; nevertheless it described in an exquisite manner literary articles and studies both analytically and critically. Retrospectively, we can assert that a great deal of the tools needed for literary research have been achieved in Cluj, the place where most of the dictionaries of Romanian literature have been created, and since 1996 the *Bibliografia literaturii române* (The Bibliography of Romanian literature) has been continued due to the endeavour of the librarians at the library of the Cluj branch of the Romanian Academy, a well known work edited under the auspices of the Romanian Academy and projected by Tudor Vianu as a work of national scientific interest.

We should also mention here another work considered by Barbu Theodorescu in *Istoria bibliografiei române*¹ (History of Romanian bibliography) as “the soul son of the *Dacoromania*”, that is *Bibliografia publicațiilor privitoare la cultura românească veche* (The bibliography of the publications on old Romanian culture), published in 5 volumes between 1934–1943 and referring to 1931–1940. This work was initiated by Nicolae Cartojan and performed by students at the University of Bucharest under the coordination of N. Georgescu Tistu. The bibliographic data covered both books and periodicals.

The sustained activity in the national bibliographical field has been greatly determined by a moment of crucial consequences for Romanian bibliographic activity, that is *Decizia nr. 1542/1951* (Decision no. 1542/1951) which led to the creation of *Camera cărții* (Book chamber) with the precise objective to record all publications printed in Romania, the execution of legal deposit provisions and the publication of national current bibliography.² As a result, in 1952 *Bibliografia RSR. Cărți, albume, hărți, note muzicale*³ (Bibliography of the SRR. Books, albums,

¹ *Istoria bibliografiei române* (History of Romanian bibliography) (Bucharest: Fundația Regele Mihai I, 1945), 132.

² D. Drăgulănescu and V. Moldoveanu, *Istoria documentării în România* (History of documentation in Romania) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române; Agir, 2002), 139.

³ The common title of the six series underwent several changes, the better known are: *Buletinul bibliografic al Camerei cărții din RPR* (The Bibliographic Bulletin of the Book

maps, notes) and *Bibliografia RSR. Articole din publicații periodice și seriale* (Bibliography of the SRR. Articles from periodical and serial publications) was issued. On the other hand, the time for *Referințe critice* (Critical references) (1967) has been prepared by an ample activity of recording the articles from the Romanian periodicals and their sorting by the UDC in systematic catalogues. It was the time when Lucian Blaga – at that moment employed by the Cluj branch library of the Romanian Academy as a researcher - was delivering an interesting lecture for his fellow librarians on the UDC.¹

Beside the above mentioned works, another current bibliography in the field of literary criticism and history was published in the *Revista de istorie și teorie literară*² (Review of literary history and theory) during 1966. Initially, this work has been conceived as a permanent column to quarterly signal “all the volumes of literary history, theory and criticism published in our country, all editions of literary works accompanied by forewords and critical annotations, the most relevant specialized works in the collections of the main libraries, together with selective specialized studies in periodicals (Note to the volume for 1966, part 1, p. 201). The bibliography also signals works of foreign authors in the field of interest published abroad in books or periodicals and acquired by Romanian libraries. It appears that this work and *Referințe critice* (Critical references) have been initially conceived as complementary works: the first comprising data from books, while *Referințe critice* (Critical references) recorded data from periodicals. However, as it results from *Lămuriri* (Explanatory note) to the first volume of *Referințe critice* (Critical references) published in 1967, Teodora Oprescu, the editor of this first volume which reflected at that time only data from articles in periodicals, was fully aware of the bibliography in the *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* (Review of literary history and theory), making reference to this work for the studies recorded in the volume and for the editions accompanied by forwards. Only since 1983 this type of description has been included in *Referințe critice* (Critical references). Unfortunately, there was no further collaboration between the editors of these two works for sharing the types of documents to be recorded. Actually the bibliography from *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* (Review of literary history and theory) was sporadically resumed in issues 3 and 4 in 1968, signed by Ion Stoica and Mihail Vatan.

As far as the **retrospective bibliographies of articles** from literary and cultural periodicals are concerned, literary research is being supported by a valuable work, *Bibliografia relațiilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice*³

Chamber in the SRR), then *Bibliografia RSR* (The Bibliography of the SRR) and today *Bibliografia Națională* (The National Bibliography).

¹ Cornelia Vaida, “Aspecte bibliologice ale activității lui Lucian Blaga” (Bibliological aspects of Lucian Blaga’s activity), *Biblioteca și învățământul* VI (1982): 86–103.

² 15, 1 (1966): 201–210; 15, 2 (1966): 403–407; 15, 3 (1966): 589–597; 15, 4 (1966): 689–699.

³ 13 volumes of this work have been published until now, structured in two distinct categories: *Bibliografia relațiilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice : 1859–1916* (Bibliography of the relations of Romanian literature with foreign literatures in periodicals: 1850–1916) coordinated by Ioan Lupu, Cornelia Ștefănescu et. al. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1980–1985, 3 vol.) and Ana Maria Brezuleanu et. al., *Bibliografia relațiilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice : 1919–1944* (Bibliography of

(Bibliography of Romanian literature in relation with foreign literature in periodicals), published during 1980–2009. This bibliographic work is highly prestigious among Romanian bibliographies and represents a valuable information source for those interested in perceiving the values of world literature in Romanian culture. It was achieved by a team of researchers from the Institutul de Istorie și teorie literară “G. Călinescu” (G. Călinescu Institute of literary history and theory) in Bucharest.



Patricia Todoran, *On Obstacles 6*
40 cm x 50 cm, lambda print, 2015

From all accounts, the retrospective recording of books and periodicals in the field of Romanian literature is far from being complete, and this lack is partially supplied by general bibliographies. For the articles in periodicals, the most important works in the category of **general bibliographies** are: *Bibliografia Analitică a Periodicelor Românești* (The Analytical Bibliography of Romanian Periodicals), vol. 1–2 for 1790–1858¹ and *Bibliografia R.S.R. Articole din publicații periodice și seriale* (Bibliography of the SRR. Articles from periodical and serial publications), section *Literatura română* (Romanian literature), for 1953–1989, becoming *Cultura în România. Referințe bibliografice și documentare din periodice românești (1992–1999)* (Culture in Romania. Bibliographical and documentary references from Romanian periodicals) in 1992 and *Bibliografia Națională Română. Articole din publicații seriale. Cultura* (Romanian National Bibliography. Articles from serial publications. Culture) since 2000. These publications edited by the National

the relations of Romanian literature with foreign literatures in periodicals: 1919–1944) (Bucharest: Saeculum, 1997–2009, 10 vol.).

¹ Editura Academiei RSR, 1966–1972.

Library of Romania are still being printed, and since 1998 they can also be used online¹ in .pdf format. In this brief attempt to outline the bibliographic context which *Referințe critice* (Critical references) is part of, we need to mention the database achieved by the CUL in Jassy since 1990, *Catalogul articolelor din periodice*² (the Catalog of articles in periodicals), subsequently included in *Baza de date România* (Romania database) project. This database already comprises a large amount of valuable bibliographic information on the main Romanian periodicals. Another online database is *Catalogul România* (Romania Catalogue) achieved by the CUL in Bucharest, offering information on serial academic publications published after 2000 in the fields of philosophy, linguistics, literature, orientalism, psychology, religion, economic sciences and political sciences.³ Lately, many Romanian periodicals have also a digital format and even digital archives, but searching these archives is not possible due to the lack of search engines making information hard to retrieve. Moreover, we must mention the presence of some Romanian periodicals in foreign databases such as the CEEOL⁴ where the full text of the articles is available. This is quite encouraging but does not stand for the lack of digital resources to reflect the national cultural heritage in books and periodicals. This is the national bibliographic framework to relate *Referințe critice* to in very broad lines.

Brief presentation of *Referințe critice* (Critical references)

The work has two series: *Istorie și critică literară* (Literary history and criticism) (1966–2010) and *Estetică și teorie literară* (Literary aesthetics and theory) (1966–1981). Although a third series has been initiated - *Literatură universală și comparată* (World and comparative literature) – it was never printed, and it can be viewed on card files in the bibliographic department of the CUL in Cluj. In the paper *Instrumente bibliografice în sprijinul cercetării literare la Biblioteca Centrală Universitară din Cluj*⁵ (Bibliographic tools supporting literary research at the Central University Library in Cluj), author Cornelia Gălătescu mentioned that the material of the third series was based on the articles and studies processed from the periodicals published in the country beginning with 1950 until then.

The series *Istorie și critică literară* (Literary history and criticism) of the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references) is rather unique in Romanian literary bibliography, being the only current bibliography in printed form that indexes articles about the Romanian writers in literary and cultural journals. Another peculiarity of the work is the digital version along with the printed one, and can be used as database which includes the volumes for 1986–2010. Although conceived as a publication of internal use, the work has been widely spread, responding to specific information needs. This series offers critical references on the Romanian

¹ <http://www.bibnat.ro/Arhiva-s237-ro.htm#6>

² www.bcu-iasi.ro/

³ www.bcub.ro/

⁴ Central and Eastern European Online Library, comprising 1160 journals on humanities and social sciences among which 289 publications from Romania at the address: <http://www.ceeol.com/asp/publicationlist.aspx>

⁵ *Biblioteca și învățământul* (Library and education) IV (1979): 93–97.

writers from studies and articles in the main literary and cultural periodicals published in Romania – and after 1990 also in the Republic of Moldova – in monographic volumes, collection of critical studies, forewords and afterwords of some prose and poetry volumes. Volume I issued in 1967 referred to the “most significant references from the main Romanian periodicals”, as stipulated by the author in *Lămuriri* (Explanatory note). Therefore, the work is a selective bibliography. Along its publication, the criterion of selectivity has been abandoned. In the case of studies and articles only the most important literary periodicals were chosen to be described bibliographically, and in this case the principle of selectivity was kept. During the forty years of publishing, there was a significant disparity in terms of year of publication and year of reference, thus the information became retrospective. This is a serious disadvantage of the work which has been cleared in time. In 1992 the volume for 1985 was published causing an 11 year disparity, while at the present moment this disparity downsized to 4 years, given that only three bibliographers are engaged in this work with other tasks to perform in addition. Another important inconvenient is the precarious accessibility of the *Referințe critice* (Critical references) database at the <http://192.168.1.10/ris/risweb.isa> address due to a rather unfriendly searching interface. In order to overcome this predicament, the latest volumes have been transferred in a .pdf format onto DVDs, while the database has been made accessible for the public in the reference room in its original Procite version with all its searching functions.

The second series, *Estetică și teorie literară* (Literary aesthetics and theory) was issued during 1971–1985. The references here have been sorted alphabetically by subject index. This subject work has been completed with subject terms and article authors indices. In the above mentioned paper *Instrumente bibliografice în sprijinul cercetării literare* (Bibliographic tools supporting literary research at the Central University Library in Cluj), Cornelia Gălătescu made the following remark with regard to the subject term index: “Setting up a vocabulary of terms, on issues of aesthetics and literary theory remains a difficult problem, the terms of the vocabulary are created by the nature of the topics covered in researched articles when there is no established terminology in dictionaries in fixed patterns”. This work amounting to a total of seven volumes covers the period 1966–1981. It is – for this period – the only work that indexes thematically the studies and articles from the Romanian literary periodicals.

Although *Referințe critice* (Critical references) have successfully filled in the gap in the bibliographic field with pertinent information, the work has only sporadically been notified. The causes are multiple. One is probably the general lack of support and recognition of the endeavour to create bibliographic tools. Mircea Angheliescu – one of the few literary historians concerned with emphasizing literary research tools – considered the work “a valuable index for reporting annually on the history and literary criticism,” but little known due to its diffusion in a small number of copies.¹ Another quite enthusiastic echo reported the volume for 1984 as follows: “A catalogue made after severe principles, an Index of articles and studies on writers

¹ Mircea Angheliescu, “Instrumentele de lucru” (Working tools), in *Istoriografia literară românească. 1944–1984* (Romanian literary historiography) (Bucharest: Minerva, 1984) 266.

from Romania, published in the country. [...] We are in great need for these tools. Will we ever wonder who are the people who spend much of their lives pursuing literary work step by step? A difficult road through prints with patience and enthusiasm, with great respect for the letter, for the ministers of art; a tribute to our culture. About some of them I have found out recently after going through a volume of *Referințe critice* (Critical reference)”¹

Development perspectives

At a first glance there might be the question whether the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references) need to be continued, or its place may be taken by Romania Database, which partially includes information from *Referințe critice* (Critical references). A few issues related to the very structure of the two works and their addressability should be noted from the beginning. It should be mentioned that the national project Romania database aims to provide the interested public at home and abroad, via the Internet, a national bibliographic database Romania, comprising the articles in specialized periodicals published in Romania and processed first at the central university libraries in Cluj, Iași and Bucharest. The functions of this database were: web access to the catalogue, possibility to search by different entries (e.g. author, title word / original title / title in another language; keywords in Romanian / other languages, journal title, year). Romania database project, conceived as separate activities of the three libraries, would become the sole objective of an independent institution and cover all areas of scientific contribution of Romanian research. Until the achievement of this national desideratum, the three major university libraries have provided professional expertise and periodical collections to create a common bibliographic catalogue. The titles of journals and areas of interest were established, and initially they were socio-humanities: history, art, religion, literature, general culture, politics, minority publications, later on followed by technical disciplines, natural sciences, etc.

We need to say that the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references) finds its individuality primarily in that it is a special bibliography of literature, and then because of the different structuring of information and addressability with a clear target beneficiary, teachers, researchers and students interested in literary research. However it must be mentioned that the effort of continuing and resizing the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references) in the future means a new approach involving additional resources. Continuing should only be the result of correct evaluation of the information needs of literary research in the academic environment.

In our opinion, there are two alternatives to consider:

1. Cessation of the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references) and further continuation of Romania Database, where the information from *Referințe critice* (Critical references) could be included in which case the literary aesthetics and theory series should be updated, and if necessary the full

¹ George Bădăraș, “Referințe critice” (Critical references) in *Cronica* 32 (1991): 8.

retrospective review in digital format of the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references);

2. Continuation of the work, in which case we propose the following strategy:

- Recovery of the delay and reconfiguring the structure of the work by resuming the series *Estetică și teorie literară* (Literary Aesthetics and Theory) and *Literatură universală* (World Literature);
- Retrospective digitization of the volumes of *Referințe critice* (Critical references) in reverse chronological order;
- Completion of the database with the addition of full text articles by working with those who maintain electronic records of online publications and digitizing service of the CUL in Cluj;
- Ensuring an effective online search system of information in this database.

Undoubtedly, a reconfiguration of the work must take into account the new national bibliographic context in addition to the information needs. Hermina G. B. Anghelescu – an eminent specialist in documentary information and with good knowledge of both the US and the Romanian realities in the field – very reasonably assesses the state of information services in Romanian libraries in the paper *Bazele de date pe domenii – un concept tridimensional: colaborare, coordonare și comunicare – C3*¹ (Specialized databases – a three-dimensional concept: collaboration, coordination and communication – C3) and proposes solutions. As regarding the indexing of periodical and serial publications, Hermina G. B. Anghelescu stands for “creating databases on specialized fields”. Such a specialized database in Romanian literary exegesis could be built on the platform of the work *Referințe critice* (Critical references)

¹ *Bazele de date pe domenii – un concept tridimensional: colaborare, coordonare și comunicare – C3* (Specialized databases – a three-dimensional concept: collaboration, coordination and communication – C3) *Biblioteca* 15/ 11–12 (2004), 334–338.