

Romanian University Historians in the 1930s and 1940s – the Case of Dimitrie Todoranu, Professor at the University of Cluj

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Abstract: This study focuses on the complex topics of university history and academic strategy as they were seen in the late 1930s and early 1940s by a Romanian scholar, Dimitrie Todoranu. At the time a young psychologist and university member of staff, Todoranu held influential administrative positions, being appointed head of the *University Office* at the Romanian University of Cluj in 1934. Starting from that year, and throughout the Second World War, he reflected and published rather extensively on the characteristics, the “role and the essence” of a university in Europe and in particular in Central and Eastern Europe. Using the evolution of the Romanian University of Cluj as a case study, Todoranu tried to define what a modern university should look like, what were the best relationships between students and professors, what the public significance of a university should be in the life of a (nation)state. Todoranu’s works and ideas testify not only to a significant phase in the field of European higher education, but also represent an important and a less known episode / contribution to the history of universities in the 20th century Romania.

Keywords: history of universities, Romanian University of Cluj, Dimitrie Todoranu, academic institutional development, 1930s and the Second World War.

In a well-known work of comparative history, the French historian Christophe Charle analysed how European academics acquired an increasingly prominent role on the public scene starting with the late 19th century (Charle, 2002), a tendency that has been continuing with varied intensity until today. As the importance of the university professors within society gradually increased, the research and debates regarding the functions, responsibilities and the future progress of the universities equally multiplied. Today, university history has the full status of a separate historical discipline, dealing with a wide range of subjects (Dhondt, 2015).

Although institutions of academic training can be traced in the Romanian historical provinces as early as the 16th century, universities proper were founded only after the creation of the Romanian national state – the University of Iași was set up in 1860 and the University of Bucharest in 1864 (Iacob and Platon, 2010), (Iacob, 2007), (Bozgan and Murgescu, 2014). Several decades later, at the end of the Great War, Romania not only doubled its territory and population by incorporating provinces formerly belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also doubled the number of its universities, as in the autumn of 1919, two new Romanian universities opened their gates in the cities of Cluj/Kolozsvár (in Transylvania) and Cernăuți/Czernowitz (in Bukovina, the present-day western part of Ukraine).¹

After 1945 and the instauration of communism the number of Romanian universities, academies and superior schools registered a significant exponential growth, as the new political regime aimed to train contingents of specialists eager to implement its economic and socio-cultural ideas (Pașca, 2013), (Cazan and Pașca, 2013), (Vasile, 2014). It is obvious that this rather short national academic tradition directly influenced the amount of theoretical and practical texts that

¹ In this respect see: *Serbările pentru inaugurarea Universității din Cluj, 31 ianuarie-2 februarie 1920 [The Festivities for the Inauguration of the University of Cluj, 31 January – 2 February 1920]* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1920), 16-17; *Serbarea inaugurării Universității din Cernăuți [The Inauguration Festivity of the University of Cernăuți]* (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1920), 1-48.

discussed the destiny of Romanian universities. Only a minority of authors dared to reflect on how these institutions should define their position within the Romanian society. The present study investigates an episode of Romanian historiography dedicated to the national and international academic life in the 1930s. It is part of a larger research project focusing on the identification and examination of all the Romanian authors who wrote on the evolution of universities in the interwar period, a time of vibrant as well as contrasting developments.

The Romanian Universities in the Interwar Years – a Long Transition Towards a Unitary and Modern Academic System

As the 20th century unfolded after the troubled years of the First World War, the Romanian academic landscape was dominated by inequalities. The universities of the “Old Kingdom” (namely those of Bucharest and Iași) functioned on the basis of a French model, while the new institutions from Cluj/Kolozsvár and Cernăuți/Czernowitz continued to follow mostly the German traditions that had dominated the educational, cultural and scientific system of Austria-Hungary.² The differences consisted mostly in the way the teaching staff was selected and organized, as well as in the administrative principles that ruled the academic life.³

Creating a common set of rules for all the Romanian universities, while taking into account every one of their local specificities, would

² In fact, until 1919 Cluj and Cernăuți had been two important academic centers of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. The University of Cluj/Kolozsvár was founded in 1872 and its teaching language was Hungarian. The University of Cernăuți/Czernowitz was established in 1875 and its teaching language was German. For details about their evolution up to the end of the First World War see (Ghitta, 2012); <http://www.chnu.edu.ua/index.php?page=en/history> (consulted on February 15, 2017).

³ For details regarding the functioning of the Romanian University of Cluj after 1919 in comparison with the universities of Bucharest and Iași see (Ana-Maria Stan, 2011: 83-93).

prove a long and intricate process. Only in April 1932 was a new Law of Higher Education issued by the government of Bucharest, imposing for the first time a unitary functioning frame for all the Romanian universities (Antologia legilor învățământului din România, 2004). This law and its subsequent implementing regulation, adopted in 1933, also established new principles for the relationship between the students' community and the university professors. One of the amendments introduced by the 1932 law required that each university set up a *University Office* (Stan, 2011). This original structure, directly subordinated to the Rector, was aimed at:

“informing and guiding male and female students within the university; organizing the medical, psychological and social assistance for the university students and providing professional academic guidance” (*Regulamentul de organizare, 1936*).

More specifically, through its function of information and counselling, this *Office* took over the role previously, and almost exclusively, played by the guidebooks for students that had been printed by the Romanian universities in different formats and at various time intervals (Stan, 2013). Furthermore, through its medical and social tasks, the *Office* assumed additional and formerly underdeveloped responsibilities towards the young people coming to study at the university. If we take into account its national character, namely its generalized presence in the Romanian universities, it is easily to understand that the foundation of the *University Office* represented an important chapter in the process of professionalization and standardization of the Romanian academic life.

At the University of Cluj, the *University Office* was established in October 1934, and two years later, in June 1936, the University Senate finally approved its operating rules.⁴ The *Office* was organized in a complex and interdisciplinary way in order to respond efficiently both to the requirements of the law and to a growing number of students. Four distinct sections were created in the *Office*, each with a well-

⁴*Regulamentul*, (chapter I, articles 1-3), 3; *Regulamentul*, (chapter VII, article 25), 8.

defined mission. Two of these departments played a key role in reflecting upon the landscape of the national and international academic environment and, subsequently, in shaping the future organization of the Romanian university system. *The Information and Documentation Department* focused on:

“providing information and giving advice about university life in Romania and abroad, as well as economic and social information to the male and female university students. [...] To ensure the proper functioning of the Information and Documentation Department, the *University Office* will have its own specialized library, which will include relevant studies and research on the organization of university and student life at home and abroad”.⁵

Even more relevant and interesting was the *Department for studying the academic and student life*, whose mission was to:

“collect data on the organization of academic and student life. [This Department] will study in particular the organization and the evolution of higher education in Romania and abroad, the cultural relations between universities, the unemployment in the highly qualified professions, etc. Student life will also be studied in its various aspects and from a historical perspective. For an objective knowledge of student life, the *University Office* will establish direct relationships with all the student associations of the University (namely the ones recognized by the University Senate). These associations are required to give any information that will be asked of them by the *University Office*”.⁶

The other two sections of the *University Office* were the *Department of Medical, Social and Psychological Assistance* and the *Department of Academic Career Guidance*.

Thus, we notice the diversification and multiplication of the resources and of the ways in which students familiarized themselves with the rules they had to respect while being members of the academic community. Moreover, the introduction of a regular (and real) dialogue between the student organizations and the university administration aimed to offer efficient solutions for every prospective problem of the

⁵ *Regulamentul*, (chapter II, articles 5 and 6), 3-4.

⁶ *Regulamentul*, (chapter V, articles 17 and 18), 7.

students and, in the long run, to encourage a more responsible attitude of the young generations towards their student status.

Ensuring a successful activity of the *University Office* would not be an easy task and it required a talented person to supervise the smooth working of its various departments. In fact, the *Office* regulations stipulated in detail what qualities were needed for the entire staff, including its manager. The suitable candidate had to possess a doctoral title either in Medicine or Psychology and be well-trained in Psychology and psychological procedures. Furthermore, his appointment, which was to be done directly by the Ministry of Education, equally required the approval of the Cluj University Senate, as well as favourable recommendations from his professors.⁷ After careful consideration, the person chosen to be the manager of the *University Office* was a young scholar, Dimitrie Todoranu, who was put in charge of a small but efficient four-person team.

Dimitrie Todoranu's Activity as a University Historian – an Atypical Example

Born in 1908 in the very heart of Transylvania (the village of Ibănești/Libánfalva, the present-day Mureș county), Dimitrie Todoranu enrolled at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the Cluj University in 1926. He chose to specialize in psychology and pedagogy, obtaining his license in 1929 and his Ph.D. in 1932, with a thesis entitled *The Psychology of Temperament*. Immediately afterwards, he made his debut in the academic life as a researcher and teaching assistant and by 1934 he was already lecturer.⁸

⁷*Regulamentul*, (chapter VI, articles 19 and 20), 7-8.

⁸The exact Romanian academic title of Dimitrie Todoranu in 1934 was that of *șef de lucrări* (following the French model of university degrees of that time – where a *chef de travaux* enjoyed a higher status than a university teaching assistant and a junior or assistant lecturer, but had a lower position than an associate professor). Biographical information regarding Dimitrie Todoranu taken from: Dumitru Salade, *Portrete de universitari clujeni* [*Portraits of Cluj University Professors*] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa universitară clujeană, 1997), 101-111; Dan Fornade, *Personalități clujene 1800-2007*.

Todoranu was a disciple and close collaborator of the famous Romanian psychologist Florian Ștefănescu-Goangă, who had established and was successfully directing a top level Psychological Institute in Cluj, using many modern theoretical and practical methods, in line with the European trends of the times (Ștefănescu-Goangă, 2002). Since 1930 Goangă had also been Rector of the University of Cluj, a fact which, combined with the norms of the new Higher Education Law of 1932, served only to accentuate the role of psychological principles in the local academic management.

Before he was selected to lead the *University Office*, namely in October 1934⁹, Dimitrie Todoranu had worked predominantly on psychology subjects – it was at that time that he authored the first serious Romanian analysis on the psychology of advertisements, a book which remains much cited even today (Todoranu, 1935). The new appointment added variety and a fresh direction to Todoranu's scientific path, as he became interested in national and international university history and, to a certain extent, even in the theory of academic management. As director of the *University Office* he had to supervise the publication of several guides and counselling handbooks for students, aimed to help them in their activity while attending the university.

The first relevant volume, eloquently titled *Îndrumări universitare* [*Academic Guidelines*], was printed in 1936 and focused on the best methods for studying. Todoranu authored three out of five chapters and chose to stay on familiar territory. Thus, his studies discussed the efficient principles of mental hygiene or the importance of the academic professional orientation, heavily drawing upon his previous

Dicționar Ilustrat [Cluj personalities. 1800-2007. An Illustrated Dictionary] (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2007), 598-599; Eugen Mera, "Personalități din Ibănești. Isidor Todoran" [Personalities from Ibănești. Isidor Todoran], *Cuvântul Liber*, no. 242 (Târgu-Mureș: 22.01.2009), accessed January 31, 2017 at <http://www.cuvantul-liber.ro/news/41464/61/center-b-PERSONALITATI-DIN-IBANESTI-br-ISIDOR-TODORAN-b-center>

⁹ *Anuarul Universității "Regele Ferdinand I", 1933-1934* [The Annual Book of the "King Ferdinand I" University, 1933-1934] (Cluj: Institutul de Arte Grafice Ardealul, 1934), 62.

psychological research work at the Institute of Professor Goangă.¹⁰ However, the most important chapter that Todoranu authored in this educational guide dealt with the techniques of intellectual work, detailing all the steps a student had to go through in order to achieve a successful, solid and efficient theoretical and practical training during his university years. While explaining how a young person progressed from assimilating knowledge and information to creating original scientific content, later certified by its publication, Todoranu did not miss the opportunity to start reflecting on the fundamental social role of the academic institutions:

“a comprehensive, integrative schooling represents one of the main objectives of a **modern university**, which needs to encourage the preparation for a superior life through a life effectively lived within the academia’s citadel.”¹¹

It was a timid beginning for Todoranu, which anticipated his later, more consistent analyses of the role of the universities in the 20th century. Soon after this first attempt, the young director of the Cluj *University Office* joined the public debate with a two-part article focused entirely on academic problems. His thorough study appeared in 1938 in a Transylvanian cultural magazine, entitled *Gând românesc*,¹² under the relevant title *Universitatea contemporană. Reflecții pe marginea ființei și rolului ei* [*The Contemporary University. Reflections regarding its Being and its Role*] and represents one of the very few theoretical studies done in interwar Romania on the subject of higher education. Here, Todoranu

¹⁰ *Îndrumări universitare [Academic Guidelines]* (Cluj: Editura Oficiului Universitar al Universității din Cluj, 1936). In this volume Dimitrie Todoranu wrote the chapters: “Orientarea profesională academică”, “Tehnica Muncii intelectuale” and “Principii de igienă mintală”. In fact, Todoranu elaborated more than two-thirds of the guidebook, namely 132 pages out of 167.

¹¹ Dimitrie Todoranu, “Tehnica Muncii intelectuale” [The Technique of Intellectual Work], in *Îndrumări universitare*, 1936: 80.

¹² *Gând românesc [Romanian Thought]* was a monthly magazine issued between 1933 and 1940 by ASTRA (the Transylvanian Association for Romanian literature and the culture of the Romanian people). Judging by its title and its publisher, one can note that this publication focused on literary works (original poetry, prose or theatre) and cultural subjects, but also published essays, chronicles, reviews and sometimes even academic lectures.

proves himself not only as an excellent university historian, but also as a perceptive observer of the challenges that the universities had to face in the late 1930s (Todoranu, 1938A), (Todoranu, 1938B). The structure of his research followed a classical, chronological path, aiming to respond to a fundamental question, namely:

“what is the role and the essence of the university in this world which is caught up in an accelerated change and transformation? Can it remain indifferent to the boiling atmosphere of the contemporary life that is searching for new spiritual fundaments?” (Todoranu, 1938A: 182)

Dimitrie Todoranu equally based his investigation on an assumption that worried the elite in those years, but is valid even today. He judiciously stated that:

“the absence of an intellectuality with an organizing role in the reconstruction of tomorrow’s spiritual world [...] will most likely signify the decline and twilight of Europe’s cultural superiority.” (Todoranu, 1938A: 182)

Given the troubled general context in which the article was elaborated (the spring and summer of 1938 are the time of the *Anschluss* in Central Europe and of the instauration of the authoritarian regime of King Carol II in Romania) one can better understand the sombre tone adopted by Todoranu.

He started by sketching a very detailed and lucid picture of how universities and the academic world had evolved over the centuries in various countries (Greece, then France, Italy, Spain, England, Germany, the Czech lands, the Northern countries, United States of America, etc.) (Todoranu, 1938A: 193-201), (Todoranu, 1938B: 254-262). After a thorough survey, he pointed out the general, long-standing principles of the European university life. According to Todoranu, there were three enduring, core values within the academia: the first and main concept was the impartial research for the truth; the second was the transmission and interpretation of knowledge for a competent professional training and the third one was the organization of a sound student life, in order to provide the young people with a humane,

compassionate education.¹³ Unfortunately, these standards started to be besieged and questioned in the 20th century, leading to a gradual erosion of the universities' position in society.

A significant problem that deeply affected the credibility of the academia was the appearance of intellectual unemployment, namely of a marked discrepancy between the number of graduates and the state's capacity to offer them suitable jobs, stated Todoranu. Another relevant aspect of the crisis was the deterioration of the relationships between students and professors. Todoranu noted that a gradual interference of various ideologies modified and transformed the academic community. Looking at the situation of the totalitarian countries of those years (Germany, Italy, Russia) and also at the situation in Austria, Todoranu exemplified how the state authorities intervened in the student organizations, regulating their functioning. One efficient way of being in command of the students' activities was a direct appointment of their leaders by the Ministry of Education, as was the case in Germany after 1935 (Todoranu, 1938B: 266). Unsurprisingly, Todoranu commented that:

“the social role of the student develops [in those countries] under the explicit control of the state; his entire activity will be oriented towards the fulfilment of the great collective needs. Scientific research and professional training are, to a certain extent, subordinated to the accomplishment of citizens' values and to the work for the benefit of the nation.” (Todoranu, 1938B: 266-267)

In contrast, he also made an accurate, discriminating analysis of the students' situation in Great Britain and France, highlighting the freedom they still enjoyed there and the important role this played in forming their characters.

Predictably, Todoranu's conclusions on the fate of the contemporary universities were nuanced and interesting. Despite the

¹³Regarding the third principle of the academic spirit Todoranu talks about “educația umană a studenților în sensul românescului *omenie*”, namely about a Romanian ethic and moral concept, encompassing various social values such as respect and kindness, which is rather hard to translate. See (Todoranu, 1938B: 258).

warning signs of a sombre future, he considered that these academic institutions still had a crucial role to play in society and could help in preserving freedom, imposing new ethical norms and establishing sound connections between different nations.

“The mission and the social function of a university demand that it should be concomitantly a public institution and an autonomous body. [...] **Differentiation and cooperation** are the notions that express the sense of the present-day equilibrium at university level as well. [...] **A university that represents the intellectual and the moral conscience of a nation: this is the imperative demand of our times**” (Todoranu, 1938B: 268).

Todoranu believed that intellectual cooperation was a possible solution for integrating national differences on a higher level and consequently for guaranteeing social progress. He condemned the use of culture exclusively for utilitarian purposes as it had started to happen in many European countries. Instead, Todoranu strongly supported the return to a more classical conception of the academic life, where students would be educated in the spirit of impartial, unbiased intellectual values. He stated that

“the university autonomy must mean that the academic family is organized according to the demands of the truth, [a truth] which is discovered and propagated through its own effort” (Todoranu, 1938B: 269).

Consequently, he opted for accuracy and genuine research instead of teaching and learning activities influenced by various political ideologies or practical reasons. Todoranu did not hesitate to criticize the interference of the state in the academic environment, underlining that governments had the exclusive duty to maintain a rightful balance between the need for intellectual values and the social demands and that universities could not “*compensate for the rulers' incapacity [of doing their job]*” (Todoranu, 1938B: 269).

But what solution did Todoranu propose in the difficult atmosphere of the late 1930s for preserving the integrity of the academic environment? Unsurprisingly, his ideas represented a *pro*

domo appeal, as he argued in favour of using experts (namely psychologists and pedagogues) for an efficient university management. He introduced the concept of “guided/directed culture [in Romanian - *cultură dirijată*]”, defined as a method of bringing a “new order into the students’ life”. More precisely, this meant a careful, professional selection of the future students, as well as a protection of their biological and ethical capacities (Todoranu, 1938B: 269-270). Although Dimitrie Todoranu never mentions in his text the newly created *University Office*, which he was leading at the time at the University of Cluj, it is obvious that these ambitious objectives could only be accomplished with the help of such specific structures. Let us recall the fact that the purposes of the *Office* were to inform, guide and assist the young people eager to enrol and study at the university. In other words, the activity of the *University Office* was understood and subsequently seen by Todoranu as an efficient way of training and preparing new, capable generations for the society. At the same time, the *Office* could limit various forms of abuse and manipulation of the students, including political ones, if it was made to function in a judicious form (namely using good faith, care and discernment). Last but not least, Todoranu also highly encouraged the idea of international academic exchanges, in fact an opportunity for both professors and students to understand the complexity of the world and of life itself.

Todoranu ended his analysis of the contemporary universities with an appeal to reason, invoking Descartes and Bergson as models for avoiding the upcoming crisis:

“the slogan that I would propose [...] even for the ordinary people, is the simplest as well as the most Cartesian one - a person must act as a man of reason and think as a man of action.” (Todoranu, 1938B: 272).

Unfortunately, the subsequent European socio-political and military events severely challenged the wish for balance and the dialogue solutions that Todoranu promoted in his 1938 text.

Instead, the Second World War affected deeply and in a most direct way the fate of the European universities. The Romanian University of

Cluj represents a typical example, as it was forced to leave its residence city and take refuge in two small Romanian towns – namely in Sibiu (where the Faculties of Letters, Law and Medicine were relocated starting with the autumn of 1940) and Timișoara (where the Faculty of Science found shelter). In these new locations, with numerous administrative, structural or economic difficulties caused by the war, the University of Cluj continued to function until 1945, striving and often succeeding to carry out relevant teaching and research activities.

In his capacity as director of the *University Office*, Dimitrie Todoranu remained closely involved in the life of this institution. He maintained his role of attentive observer and even intensified the work he did as a university advisor. During the academic year 1941-1942 the *University Office* managed to publish a detailed and useful new guidebook for students (Todoranu, 1941-1942). In fact, this volume not only addressed the needs and problems of the students, but also tried to cultivate a more intense patriotic feeling among them. It was also a volume that underlined the rich academic history and the traditions of the University of Cluj and the hope for a better and brighter institutional evolution at the end of the war. Consequently, we discover Todoranu as the author of a short and dense university history and he proves to be a rather skilful specialist in this field.

In fact, in the guidebook's introductory text, Dimitrie Todoranu interestingly combined his qualities of university historian and psychologist (Todoranu, 1941-1942: 7-22). He went as far back as the times of King Matthias Corvinus, Prince John Sigismund and King Stephen Báthory and described in detail the organization of the academic institutions of Cluj throughout the centuries. He then focused on the episodes that led to the establishment of the Romanian University of Cluj. Although he claimed that "*the day of May 12th, 1919 is the real date of the irrevocable foundation of the Romanian University of Superior Dacia*" (Todoranu, 1941-1942: 13-14) (a debatable statement from the perspective of historians specialized in the history of the

University of Cluj¹⁴) he did not forget to mention all the other legal steps that were taken during the years 1919 and 1920 for the new university.

From this point onwards, Dimitrie Todoranu continued his study in a comparative manner. On the one hand, he synthetically presented the achievements of the first generation of Romanian university professors and their contribution to national and international research, going as far as to state that Cluj was a sort of “*university citadel in the style of Heidelberg*”, where the intellectuals of Transylvania were able to integrate the superior strata of culture (Todoranu, 1941-1942: 17). On the other hand, Todoranu considered that the Romanian University of Cluj represented a perfect example of the three general principles of academic spirit that he had discussed in his 1938 articles. More precisely, he acknowledged that the University of Cluj successfully embodied the impartial search for the truth; the transmission and interpretation of knowledge to ensure a competent professional training and, finally, a healthy student life, together with the cultivation of a compassionate, humane spirit.

Todoranu went even further with his theories on the “being” of a university, as he analysed other characteristics of the Romanian University of Cluj. He argued that the common academic spirit also included psychological and geographical dimensions and that these elements played a key role in individualizing each university. Sometimes, various factors would fracture the intrinsic links between geography and the other core values of the academic spirit, creating tensions and problems. In fact, the situation in which the University of Cluj found itself in 1940-1945 perfectly illustrated such a conflict. Yet, despite the hardships of the refuge years, Todoranu was confident that the university had within itself the power to overcome such moments. If

¹⁴ The Royal Decree that officially founded the Romanian University of Cluj was issued in September 12, 1919 and stated that the Hungarian University of Cluj became a Romanian University starting with October 1, 1919. On the 12th May 1919, the Romanian government of Transylvania (*Consiliul Dirigent*) took over the buildings of the Hungarian University of Cluj/Kolozsvár from the Hungarian authorities of Transylvania, in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the decision made on December 1st, 1918 by the province of Transylvania to unite with the Romanian state.

shared with the same intensity by the students and the professors, the general communion of academic ideas and principles could work its magic in almost every situation, the theoretical and psychological elements prevailing over geography, politics or military factors. Thus, Todoranu's conclusions were rather optimistic, despite the terrible background of the Second World War.

However, the events of the following decades would contradict on many levels the author's enthusiasm and his ideas regarding the academic environment. It should be noted that the student guidebook of 1942 remained a singular initiative. No comparable volume was printed in the following war years. Furthermore, to our knowledge, the *University Office* did not issue any other publication until the end of 1945 and the return of the University of Cluj from its refuge. A couple of years later, the reform of the Romanian educational system, imposed by the instauration of communism would in fact indicate the end of the *University Office*. It was equally an end to the procedures put in place by this specific structure, which at the University of Cluj, had tried, based on serious psychological and pedagogical methodologies and studies, to create national elites. Under Todoranu's leadership, the *Office* aimed to provide the students of Cluj with information and with standards of intellectual work similar to those used in the leading European universities. The experience was short lived but proved to have a great potential.

Dimitrie Todoranu continued his academic career after 1945 with considerable success. In 1947 he became full university professor. However, he would gradually turn from psychology to pedagogy – in our opinion, an implicit choice of professional and personal survival, given the Romanian political context, as communism regarded psychology, sociology and other related disciplines as subversive and dangerous ones. His reconversion started as early as 1942 when he published a work entitled *The Psychology of Education*, shortly followed in 1943 by another volume, entitled *Education and Pedagogy*. Todoranu would even lead the chair of pedagogy at the University of Cluj University between

1947 and 1959. In 1970 he was called to Bucharest, the capital of Romania, and was appointed president of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences. Later on, he would become rector of the Central Institute for the Teaching Staff's Development. Parallel to his teaching activity, he was also a distinguished translator and commentator of world-famous educators such as Rousseau, Binet, Meumann, etc. According to the testimonies of his peers, he was renowned for his serious, sober attitude and especially for his scientific rigor and his extensive documentation on every subject (Salade, 1997: 104-105).

And although the theoretical and practical contributions he made to the history of Romanian universities are limited to his texts of the late 1930s and early 1940s, they maintain their relevance. Todoranu's studies should be investigated and discussed in comparison with other similar national and international writings that debated "*the idea of a university*".¹⁵ We consider that Dimitrie Todoranu has a rightful, significant place in the gallery of Romanian intellectuals who focused on the social role of the academia or other type of superior schools, as his voice attempted to bring some new, original ideas in this field.

¹⁵We refer here to the famous discourses of John Henry, cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University*, published in 1852, which serve as a starting point for many debates on the role of modern and contemporary universities.

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