Brief History of the Romanian Philology Department of the "Eötvös Loránd" University in Budapest

Levente NAGY, Florin CIOBAN[*]

Key-words: *history, literature, Romanian studies, Hungary, Department of Romanian Philology*

The Founding Father

Usually, a powerful, active personality with good organizational skills is needed to found an institution. In our case, his name was Alexandru Roman (1826–1897), who was not known as a writer or as a scholar amongst his contemporaries. However, his talent was evinced by being a journalist and also by his organizational spirit. Roman graduated from St. Barbara College – Vienna (1845–1848), then he came back to teach at the Romanian gymnasium in Beiuș. For the negotiations at the time of the Revolution (1849), he was requested to do a lot of work in translation (Neamțu 1995: 23–26).

The request of founding a Romanian university in the Hungarian Kingdom was laid down by the 8th item of the Declaration of Blaj. Twenty years after the Blaj Assembly, Roman republished the Declaration in his newspaper, *Federațiunea*, which led to his imprisonment for one year (January 18, 1870 – January 18, 1871). When it comes to the ideology of the newspaper, it is recommended to mention that during its eight-year life, its leader endured eight lawsuits against him. Mihai Eminescu's case is the best known, who, under the penname Varro, published three articles in Roman's newspaper: *Să facem un congres* (April 17, 1870); *În unire e tăria* (April 22, 1870); *Echilibrul* (May 4 and 11, 1870), exactly when its leader was imprisoned. The only consequence we have after these events is that Eminescu was not condemned. For almost a century, the proof of the lawsuit was kept at the Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Országos Levéltár). Nobody thought to explore them and then they were burned at the 1956's revolution (Köpeczi 1995: 136).

After the Blaj Assembly, Romanians from Transylvania and Hungary would not give up the idea of establishing a Romanian university. Moreover, Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894) promised an independent theological school for Romanians as part of the University of Pest. As a reward, at Vasile Erdeli's insistence – a Greek-Catholic bishop –, a Romanian language and literature department was established in 1851 at the Catholic Gymnasium of Oradea. Alexandru Roman was its professor; only for two years, because after that he attended the seminar in Vienna on a scholarship. He

[*]The "Eötvös Loránd" University (ELTE), Budapest, Hungary.

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

met important personalities there, such as I. Micu Moldovean, Ioan Maiorescu or the young Titu Maiorescu. Before he presented the professor's exam at the seminar, he had held the office of a translator at The Council of Imperial-Royal Lieutenants in Pest (Neamțu 1995: 67–69; Kese 1999: 23–24).

After three attempts, Bishop Erdeli managed to found a Romanian Language and Literature Department at the University of Pest by the Council of Lieutenants' approval on December 15, 1861. Alexandru Roman was attested as being a professor one year later, on December 20, 1862. He held his first lecture on April 27, 1863. The general opinion says that the first Romanian language and literature department was founded in Torino (there was no Romanian language and literature department in Iași or Bucharest at that time). We believe that our department appeared at least as early as the one in Torino.

Additionally, Roman was a member of the Hungarian Parliament from 1866 until 1887 and also a member of the Romanian Academy. Despite the numerous cases in which Roman stood in front of the court, he was never removed from his offices of professor and parliamentary deputy. Roman was known as an important politician in Hungary of that time. For instance, when he was imprisoned in Vác, he was visited by Boldizsár Horváth, the minister of justice.

An Era of Decline, or not?

As a professor, he was very appreciated by his students. For example, Ioan Slavici used to attend Roman's classes, although he was a Law student. Students eulogized Roman, whom they considered to be a real master. Many of his disciples became great cultural or political personalities: Vasile Goldiș, Miron Cristea, Iosif Vulcan, Ilarie Chendi, and the list could continue. The sympathy he was surrounded with was proved after his death, when a lawsuit began dealing with the problem of replacing him. His will was to put Valeriu Branişte into his place. Unfortunately –we do not know the reason – he was not put in. The series of applicants' names triggered a real scandal. There were eight applicants: Grigore Moldovan (a university professor in Cluj, a controversial figure, especially for his pan-Hungarian attitude), Gheorghe Alexici (a lecturer at the Romanian Department, but encompassed with antipathy by students who considered themselves followers of their dead professor), Iosif Siegescu, Alexiu Viciu, Nicolae Bodiu, Vincențiu Nicoară, Silvestru Nicoară, Ioan Ciocan and Simion Deseanu (Neamțu 1995: 80–81; Kese 1999: 77–78). Among these names, only the first two already mentioned became cultural personalities. In 1898, Ioan Ciocan was appointed dean of the Romanian Department, although he could not be identified as having great teaching or scholarly skills. However, his nomination had a political background; from 1896 until 1910 he was a member of the Hungarian Parliament, remaining exclusively loyal to the political authority.

The same reasons served Iosif Siegescu, who became dean after Ciocan's death, to have the same attitude. Starting with 1910 to 1918 he showed the same loyalty for the political leaders as Ciocan. Siegescu published three essential, worthwhile works. The first one is a collection of prayers which appeared simultaneously with the outburst of the First World War. It encouraged Romanian

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

soldiers to bravely defend their motherland (*Rugăciuni pentru soldați*, adunate de dr. Iosif Siegescu preot [*Prayers for Soldiers*, collected by Rev. Iosif Siegescu], Budapest, 1914). The second one (*Count István Tisza's Discourses...*, Budapest, 1915) contains the parliamentary discourses of "the greatest enemy of Romanians", count István Tisza. Lastly, the third work is a discourse performed in the Hungarian Parliament at a conference on February 28, 1917. In that discourse, which appeared at the height of the war, Siegescu asked the Romanian politicians to display their activity within Hungarian parties, instead of forming parties concerning ethnic criteria (about Siegescu's activity see: Câmpeanu 2003: 133–140).

It is not surprising that, after this kind of antecedents, both Ciocan and Siegescu were permanently under the attacks of Romanian intellectuals. Ciocan was satirized by one of his former students, Ilarie Chendi, in the *Tribuna* newspaper, while Siegescu was laughed at by the butt of Goga who said about him that Siegescu's preparedness is the equivalent of a slave "who washes the bottles in such a pharmacy from Salonta Mare" in the "Anatomy Department within the Faculty of Medicine". Liviu Rebreanu also ridiculed Siegescu (notably his political activity) in his novel *Ion* (Goga 1911: 234; Câmpeanu 2003: 133).

As a scholar, Siegescu was not as untalented as Goga had presented him. He wrote more scientific articles than Al. Roman. The difference was made by the language they used: Hungarian. Siegescu's goals were to bring up Romanian culture and literature among Hungarian intellectuals. He wrote about early monuments of the Romanian language as *Dictionarium Valachico-Latinum*, written around the year 1650 but published entirely only in 2008 (Egyetemes Philológiai Közlöny, XXVIII, 1905, 71–84); about the sources of the *Molitevnic* or about the Latin-Romanian dictionary of Kalocsa. He was the first and the only one to have written in a foreign language about Metropolitan Dosoftei (*Dosoftei metropolita, mint költő. Tanulmány a román irodalom köréből* [*Metropolitan Dosoftei as a Poet. Study from Romanian Literature*], Budapest, 1897).

"The Great Classics' Era"

Siegescu remained in Budapest after the war ended. During his lifetime, several professors came at the department: Oszkár Asbóth (1852–1920), Sándor Mika (1859–1912) and Gheorghe Alexici (1864–1936) – the most important personality among them. The last one applied for that position twice. After Ciocan's (the department's dean at that time) death, Siegescu won the elections – by virtue of his politics – against Alexici. In 1920, after the right wing politics had returned to power, Alexici was suspended from teaching and, after two years, he retired definitely.

He was a highly skilled philologist. He graduated from the Faculty of Letters at the University of Budapest, majoring in Hungarian, Latin and Romanian. He benefited by scholarships in Germany, Italy and France. Alexici had the initiative and created a Romanian-Hungarian/Hungarian-Romanian dictionary and wrote about Hungarian elements in the Romanian language (*Magyar elemek az oláh nyelvben*, Budapest, 1888). Alexici and Hiador Sztripszky discovered and published the first Romanian book of Calvinist songs using the Latin alphabet and Hungarian spelling. We could also mention *Geschichte der rumänischen Literatur* (Leipzig,

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

1906), a monography written by Alexici on the history of Romanian literature in German language. However, his most important contribution in Romanian culture was that of being a folklorist. His collaboration with the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók and the Romanian folklorist Constantin Brăiloiu cannot be ignored. His impressive book of folklore collection (*Texte din literatura poporană* [*Texts from Folk Literature*], Budapesta, I, 1899, II, 1913 part two, remained as a manuscript: Bucharest, 1966) had a very positive echo among folklorists (Fr. László, *Béla Bartók şi lumea noastră* [*Béla Bartók and Our World*], Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1995).

Carlo Tagliavini (1903–1982) was Siegescu's successor at the leadership of the department. He published a few studies and a Romanian language handbook. His appointment into office served cultural and diplomatic interests between Italy and Hungary, and it scientifically consolidated the Romanian department (renamed: The Department of General Romance Philology and of Romanian Language and Literature).

During the interwar period Tagliavini was very prudent. When he was questioned about Romanian and Hungarian historical or linguistic issues, he tried to satisfy each part. He explained the origins and the evolution of the two nations. Two considerable works on these topics are *Il Lexicon Marsilianum* (Bucharest, 1930) and *Le origini delle lingue neolatine. Introduzione alla filologia romanza* (Bologna, 1972). Thanks to Tagliavini, the Romanian department in Budapest integrated into the international circuit of the linguistic sciences. We could say that he was the founding father of Romance Philology in Budapest.

Lajos Tamás (1904–1984) followed Tagliavini (who returned to Italy). He completed his studies in Vienna, Berlin and Paris, having many articles published in the most important Hungarian newspapers. He had made his entrée on the scene of science by a sarcastic study (*Une illusion linguistique* [*A linguistic illusion*], „Revue des études hongroises", no. 6, 1928, 375–378) which attempted to confront Hasdeu's and Drăganu's theory regarding the Romanian origin of the Hungarian word *mál*. Moreover, Tamás demonstrated about other cases that it is a false conception to diagnose those words as having a Romanian origin, arguing that they form different phonetic structures. The phonetic non-concordance between the Latin used in Pannonia and the old Romanian language represented another field which Tamás was interested in.

Tamás's *Romains, Romans et Roumains dans l'histoire de la Dacie Trajane*, published in the *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis* newspaper (I, 1935, p. 1–96; II, 1936, p. 46–374.), is considered a pioneer work of Hungarians upon confronting the issue of linguistic continuity. Until him, only László Réthy had dealt with this problem. It gave birth to violent reactions.

Up to 1945, Romanian-Hungarian linguistic contacts represented Tamás' exclusive object. He published his immigration theory popularizing brochures in different languages (French, German and Italian).

After the Vienna Award he was responsible for organizing and leading the Transylvanian Scientific Institute (Erdélyi Tudományos Intézet) in Cluj. Then he began to deal with Romanian texts from the 16th–17th centuries written in Latin letters and Hungarian spelling (he published the critical edition of István Fogarasi's catechism, 1648). After 1945 there was a gap in his scientific work. From Cluj he

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

returned to Budapest where he managed to keep his position in the Romanian Language and Literature Department. From 1945 up to 1950 he wrote only five insignificant works, although immediately after the end of the war ambitious and enthusiastic projects were born along the Romanian-Hungarian cultural collaborations. On September 21, 1945, the Romanian-Hungarian Association was set up in Budapest, with the participation of prominent figures from Hungarian politics and culture: Gyula Szekfű, former Dean of the Faculty of Letters at the University of Budapest, and, in 1945, already acting as the Hungarian Ambassador to Moscow; Albert Szentgyörgyi, Nobel Prize winner for discovering vitamin C, the famous writer Aron Tamás, and others. The world famous composer Zoltán Kodály was elected president. The Romanian Department of the University, then still called "Peter Pázmány" University, played an important role in the activity of the Association. The historian Laszlo Makkai, the head of The Art Subsection of the Association, decided to edit a volume coordinated by László Gáldi and Lajos Tamás about the history of Romanian culture and literature and an anthology of Romanian literature in Hungarian. They also planned to initiate a program in Hungarian about Romanian culture and literature (once a week, for one hour) at the Hungarian Radio. In the spring of 1947, the Mocsary Lajos College was founded within the Association. The aim was to subsidize university studies for Hungarian and Romanian students coming from Romania to the universities in Budapest. In the college were housed 20 Hungarian students from Transylvania and 10 Romanian students who had come from all over Romania. Many of them were studying at the Romanian Department. The college was inaugurated in the presence of Petru Groza and Mihail Sadoveanu on May 3, 1947. Unfortunately, with Rákosi government's return to power in 1948 through rigged elections which led to the instauration of the proletariat dictatorship, the work of the Association and the College would be gradually dissolved. The College closed its doors in 1950, and the Romanian Department had to replace college work, of course under more modest conditions (Nagy 1969–1970: 51–58; Csobai 2002: 523–556).

The year 1948 is a turning point in Tamás's life. Although we do not know whether he sympathized with the left side directions (as was the case of Alexici in the department), in 1941 he received the decoration Corvin-koszorú founded by Miklós Horthy himself and in 1948 he became a member of the Hungarian Communist Party (Magyar Dolgózok Pártja). The reward was obvious: he was not expelled from the Academy, where he had been a corresponding member since 1940, and in October 1948 he was appointed party secretary of the Faculty of Letters at the University of Budapest. A year later, he became a dean and from 1953 until 1955 he was the rector of the university renamed "Eötvös Loránd" in 1950 (until then "Pázmány Péter" University, named after Pázmány Cardinal, the university founder in 1635). It was the hardest period of university life: reorganization, restructuring and discarding the old politically suspect teaching staff. Tamás assumed responsibility for the dirty work. Rewards, communist-style: in 1955 he was suspended as a rector, but also received a prize of 5,000 forints (the average salary then being about 650 forints a month) from the Ministry of Culture (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára [Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences forwards: MTAK] ms 5134/118, 119).

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

After these troubled years, Tamás returned to the Romanian department. In 1964 he became head of the French department. If during the interwar period he was one of the most passionate polemicists on the issue of the Daco-Roman continuity, after 1945 he wrote nothing on the subject. In the name of international communism, a conference was organized in 1955 in Budapest, attended by distinguished Romanian linguists (Al. Rosetti, I. Iordan, E. Petrovici), where the continuity problem was discussed, but ever since then this issue had become taboo among Hungarian linguists, not in the least due to Tamás, who had prevented such research in Hungary even since 1948 (Schütz 2002: 156; György Szépe, *Emlékezés Tamás Lajosra*).

The third classic: László Gáldi

Besides Tagliavini and Tamás, the most important personality in the history of the department was László Gáldi (1910–1974). After the baccalaureate at "Moise Nicoară" Highschool in Arad, he enrolled at the Pázmány University in Budapest, to study French-Romanian-Hungarian specialty. His French teacher was Aurelien Sauvageot and his Romanian teacher was Carlo Tagliavini. At Sauvageot's recommendation he received a scholarship in Paris from 1932 until 1935. Here he studied with Paul Hazard and Mario Roques. Starting with 1940 until 1944, he replaced Tamás in the Department (he was a principal in Cluj). Meanwhile he wrote the most objective and the best documented studies in Hungarian about Eminescu.

In the early '40s, Gáldi was more and more infected by the dangerous side of Geistesgeschite school (history of ideas). This trend was fashionable throughout Europe. If we were to seek Gáldi's Romanian counterpart, parallel from that point of view, we would indicate Lucian Blaga. Just like Blaga, who searched for the essence of the Romanian spirit in *Spațiul mioritic*, Gáldi had the same purpose, trying to prove that every people has a certain spirit, which is expressed through a certain style.

In 1938, being at Rome, Gáldi also visited the Romanian Academy, becoming acquainted with the institute's director Emil Panaitescu. Gáldi had only words of praise about the library and the intellectual and welcoming atmosphere at the academy, learning with satisfaction from a Romanian scholar that in Romania, Iorga was appreciated only as document editor and not as a writer of monographs and serious studies. Again, the duplicity of Romanian-Hungarian cultural and intellectual disputes, even brutal fights, not without personal attacks, in the public and propaganda space of magazines and books, and an almost exemplary collaboration in daily life in personal discussions and the library rooms.

Meanwhile, Gáldi got more and more involved in cultural diplomacy. Let's not forget, this was the same in Romania: the most important members of the Romanian intellectual triumvirate (Eliade, Cioran and Ionesco) also had diplomatic functions. Also, the goals of the two countries were similar: each wanted to persuade foreign intellectuals (especially French, German, Italian and English) of its truth. Of course, the thorny issue was the appurtenance of Transylvania. Thus the problem of continuity and of cultural superiority or inferiority became of first importance. It is interesting that each camp saw its situation as worse than the situation of the opposite camp. Eugene Ionesco, in his reports elaborated as a diplomat, complained that Romanian books and magazines were poorly distributed in France. The

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

Hungarians published a special magazine for the French („Nouvelle revue hongroise"), which was widely disseminated through the Hungarian Press Service (Montety 2011: 127–141).

In a report to Sándor Domanovszky (11 September 1942) but actually addressed to the Minister of Culture, Gáldi evoked similar problems. The Hungarian lectureships in Italian universities (Rome and Padua) did not receive Hungarian books or magazines "whereas Romanians regularly send two important daily newspapers to Padua" – wrote Gáldi. Carlo Tagliavini – the story continued – received boxes of new books from the Romanians, whereas from the Hungarians he could only buy new Hungarian papers with great difficulty, through personal connections. Gáldi wanted to go on a scholarship in Italy and draw up a comparative report about the situation of the Romanian and Hungarian lectureships there, but eventually he failed to obtain this scholarship (MTAK ms. 4524/173–175).

Despite controversial elements in his personal history, Gáldi managed to survive and revive scientifically after 1945. Of course, he was fired from the university and the academy (resumed only posthumously in 1989), and was forced to teach French language to the members of the musicology institute of the academy. But in 1950 he returned to the university and to the Department of General Romance and Romanian languages and literature, and would become head of section at the language institute of the Hungarian Academy (Szépe 2001: 169–178). Like Lajos Tamás, he would write nothing further about the thorny problems of continuity and Hungarian and Bulgarian influences on Romanian culture. If, in the interwar period, he searched for the characteristic spirit of nations, now he would review the structure of poetry and poetic language. In analyzing structures, he could refer to the Russian formalists (Gáldi's hero is Jirmunschi) until the shadow of Nazism and fascism threatened to overshadow the problems of the spirit.

He dedicated himself to studying areas that were totally politically neutral: versification and lexicography. In addition, in the 50's it was good if you were a Slavist. And Gáldi became one. And what a Slavist: when he was a scholar in Paris, he took a Russian language course with professor Unbegaun Boris, and after 1945 he wrote together with another famous Hungarian Slavist, László Hadrovics, the foremost Hungarian – Russian / Russian – Hungarian dictionary (appeared first in 1951). As a Romanist he also wrote a Spanish-Hungarian/ Hungarian- Spanish dictionary.

He succeeded to take advantage of the Romanian-Hungarian cultural collaborations carried out under the socialist forced politeness. There were concluded treaties between the two fraternal socialist countries to mutually translate and edit some works. Unfortunately, translated writers were chosen more on political grounds than aesthetically, but, nevertheless, the most valuable works of the two literatures were translated during that period. Thus Gáldi also succeeded in publishing several works related to Romanian versification and stylistics: *Stilul poetic al lui Eminescu*, Bucureşti, 1964; *Introducere în istoria versului românesc*, Bucureşti, 1971; *Introducere în stilistica literară a limbii române*, postfaţă de Florica Dimitrescu, Bucureşti, 1976; and a work in French about Lucian Blaga's prosody: *Contributions à l'histoire de la versification roumaine. La prosodie de Lucian Blaga*, Budapest, 1972. These works were gloriously reviewed by Romanians. The most talented linguists and literary critics wrote reviews about them

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

(Ştefan Munteanu, *Între lexicografie, limbă literară şi stilistică*, in "Studii şi cercetări lingvistice", XXI, 1970, no. 1, p. 49–57; Sanda Golopenția-Eretescu, *Gáldi, Stilul poetic al lui Mihai Eminescu*, in "Revista de etnografie şi folclor", 10, 1965, no. 4, p. 435–438; Perpessicius, *Contribuții maghiare la cunoaşterea literaturii române*, in *Alte mențiuni de istoriografie literară şi folclor*, Bucureşti, Editura pentru Literatură, 1961; Cornel Regman, *Gáldi, Stilul poetic al lui Mihai Eminescu*, in "Limba română", XI, 1962, p. 115–117; George Munteanu, *Gáldi, Stilul poetic al lui Mihai Eminescu*, in "Contemporanul", no. 24, 11 iunie 1965, p. 3; Flora Şuteu, *Gáldi, Stilul poetic al lui Mihai Eminescu*, in "Limba română", XV, 1966, p. 194–199). Sorin Alexandrescu praised Gáldi for the fact that the Hungarian teacher, through the comparative analysis of a rhetorical figure, the tricolon (ternary repetition), demonstrated the value of Eminescu's poetry. Alexandrescu could not know that 20 years earlier Gáldi had praised Mussolini's stylistic genius by exactly analyzing the mastery with which the Duke used the tricolon (Alexandrescu's review see: *Gáldi, Stilul poetic al lui Mihai Eminescu*, in „Viața românească", XVIII, 1965, no. 4. p. 163–166).

Nowadays, their power of irradiation has diminished. The versification monography is used only by those dealing with old Romanian literature, while Eminescu's scholars have barely mentioned Gáldi's monograph in the past two or three decades. The latest research on Blaga also took another direction: his prosody is not the most interesting aspect for today's professionals (Even Blaga's Hungarian monographist, the current head of our department, Ambrus Miskolczy, does not mention Gáldi's work: *Lélek és titok*, [Spirit and Mistery] Budapest, Kortárs Kiado, 1994).

Nonetheless, the period in which Tamás and Gáldi were decisive in the Romanian Department was also the golden age of the department. They were widely appreciated not only in Hungary but also throughout Europe. Without them there would be no Romance studies in Hungary today. Although unfortunately today there is no serious bibliography of their works, an evidence of their recognition is the fact that they were invited to almost all Congresses or international linguistics conferences in the 60's and 70's. They had outstanding talent and linguistic erudition: both knew German, French, Italian, Romanian and Hungarian perfectly. Tamás also learned Albanian in Paris and in 1952 went on a larger study tour in Albania. In 1955 he published, together with István Schütz, the first and only Albanian-Hungarian dictionary. Gáldi was not only a specialist in Slavonic studies, but knew Greek very well, with a one year scholarship in Greece, after which he wrote a fundamental work for Romanian linguistics: *Les mots d'origine néo-grecque en roumain à l'époque des Phanariotes*, Budapest, 1939. In addition, Gáldi was also a poet (published by "Nyugat", the most prestigious interwar Hungarian literary magazine) and a musicologist, which can be said only about few literary critics and historians who have dealt with versification or prosody.

It was not easy for those who came after Tamás and Gáldi in the department to walk in the masters' footsteps. But the fact that they tried underlines their value.

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

During the communist period and soon after that

After Tamás' retirement, Sámuel Domokos (1913–1995) was appointed head of department. Domokos was a scholar of the ancient positivist style. He wrote works that required a huge effort and endeavour; they were less spectacular, but also useful, nonetheless. In literary science such areas are: bibliography and text editing. In each domain Domokos was able to put seminal reference works on the table. Following the example of Endre Veress he continued editing the Romanian-Hungarian bibliography (*A román irodalom magyar bibliográfiája*, vol. I (1830–1960), vol. II (1961–1970), Bukarest, Kriterion, 1978). As text editor, it is worth mentioning the editing of stories belonging to a bilingual (Romanian-Hungarian) storyteller of Micherechi, Vasile Gurzău (*Vasile Gurzău magyar és román nyelvű meséi*, Budapest, 1968). The material was recorded in the late 50's to mid 60's. These texts are a true curiosity not only for literary historians, but also for folklorists. It is important to consider that some of the stories were not edited and remained on magnetophone tapes. It would be better if these records were also published in audio form, not only transcribed, as Domokos did (the tapes are in our department library). Within the same context, he edited a valuable material, in fact gathered by Andrei Veress, but which remained in manuscript, about the printing press in Buda and on the editing of Romanian text in 18th–19th centuries: *A Budai Egyetemi Nyomda román kiadványainak dokumentumai 1780–1848*, Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 1982.

Domokos's most important monograph was undoubtedly the one written about Octavian Goga (*Goga, a költő és műfordító*, Bukarest, Kriterion, 1971) published in 1978 in Romanian translation. The value of the monograph is that Domokos processed a very rich archive material and manuscripts in the archives of Hungarian libraries. The problem is actually the choice of topic: Goga's literary value fell considerably (see editorial by Manolescu in "România literară", no. 14, 2011) in the Romanian literary discourse. The Hungarian reader, who also deals with Hungarian literature, would be interested in Goga's relations with Hungarian literature (especially the poet Endre Ady), but even these thorny issues are totally ignored in Domokos's book.

As a conclusion of this brief presentation we should mention that the department was never just a simple educational institution. In the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, especially during Alexandru Roman, it was one of the forums which supported the political aspirations of Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary. Beginning with the interwar period it became increasingly the focus of all research aimed at the history and culture of Southern Europe. Therefore, in addition to their appointed professors, there teach, from time to time, all those who deal with Romanian culture in Hungary (especially historians, literary critics and writers). From the interwar period, special mention should be given to Szilárd Sulica (1884–1945), for example. He was born in Braşov and was educated at the University of Budapest majoring in history and Latin. He is known more as an archivist and a librarian, being the director of the archive department of the Hungarian National Museum. He taught in the Romanian department as a deputy professor starting with

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

1927. He didn't publish anything in Romanian, his main aim being to spread Romanian culture in the Hungarian environment. He is among the first who wrote about the Romanian theater in Hungarian: *Román színjátszás*, Budapest, 1931. His monograph written about the influence of Hungarian literature and culture on Romanian culture is also remarkable: *A magyar irodalom és művelődés hatása a román irodalom és művelődés hatására*, Szeged, 1937.

Since the 50's, the number of staff within the department has increased. Besides Tamás Gáldi and Domokos, it is worth mentioning Béla Nagy and Pálffy Endre, although the value of their scholarly work is quite questionable. The fact that Romania sent lecturers with mediocre skills (eg. Goția Anton Patriciu, or Gavril Scridon) also contributed to the lowering of the scientific level of education and research. Lecturers up to 1990 had other assignments than teaching and scientific ones (Năstasă 1995). That secret history of the department has not yet been written.

The Department board always wanted to have good relations with the Romanian intellectual world. To this extent, whenever possible, we invited historians, the most important linguists and literary critics. For instance, since Tamás's time, the Department has received such guest personalities as Iorgu Iordan, Al. Rosetti, Emil Petrovici. In the 70's–80's, collaboration became more difficult due to the estrangement of political relations between the two countries. But, after 1990, this collaboration resumes, the department being visited by Damian Hurezeanu, Mircea Dinescu, Andrei Pippidi, Lucian Năstasă, Laurențiu Ulici.

A talented new generation sprang up in the department in the late 80's and early 90's. Katalin Kese, Béla Borsi-Kálmán, Gelu Păteanu, Tiberiu Herdean, Levente Nagy, and especially the current head of department Ambrus Miskolcy. Meanwhile, well-prepared and committed lecturers came from Romania, too: the writer and the Secretary General of Romania to UNESCO Victor Iancu, the critic Cornel Munteanu and the current lecturer Florin Cioban. Assessing and judging their work (ours) belongs to posterity.

The present days

Today, five academic staff are currently working within the department, titular or associated of ELTE Budapest, together with the lector sent by the Romanian Language Institute in Bucharest, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Ambrus Miskolczy. Integrated within the Institute of Romance Studies of Budapest University, the Department prepares students enrolled in the new Bologna system, for a license in Romanian philology. Students who want to major in Romanian language and obtain a license from the most famous and justifiedly prestigious university in Hungary, may have a very interesting reason. Among the students enrolled in Romanian language courses some come from the Romanian community in Hungary, others have a liaison with the Romanian language due to their families who, a few years ago, lived somewhere in Romania, usually in Transylvania. There are also students who, apparently, would not justify any previous connection with the Romanian language or culture but who want to study this language, even if they are not students in philology. Through a sustained effort of all its members, we managed to accredit in the department two Master programs in language studies,

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

culture and teaching Romanian language and literature, programs that have been taught since the academic year 2009–2010. Gathering around the department about 50 students, Romanian language – as BA and/ or MA domain – maintains its freshness and we hope to improve these studies in the near future when the entire European and global context will define the need to develop language and communication along new directions.

Although faced with the current general difficulties in restructuring the Hungarian university system, the department is constantly striving to maintain its identity and to obtain the best results both in research and in teaching its students.

First, in teaching, the students' attention is directed toward the assimilation of the basic concepts of language. In this context, practical language courses aim to familiarize students with the basic notions in Romanian language and promote Romanian language, culture and civilization among interested foreigners.

The teaching staff provides the linguistic training necessary for the issuance of certificates of language proficiency by the accredited institutions in this respect in Hungary. Language training courses (language development and practical conversation) are carried out on the basis of the students' proficiency levels, thus having 4-5 level groups, on the average, at this time. These courses are conducted in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (level A1–C2). Besides the strict language training program, the students of these language development groups benefit from some information about the Romanian language and culture in Europe, watching Romanian films, video presentations, etc. Romanian language study is done from the beginner to intermediate and advanced levels. We work with Romanian language manuals as a foreign language, making the materials available to students: handouts, audio cassettes and CDs for the correct acquisition of Romanian pronunciation and spelling. Among these books we mention: Ada Iliescu, *Manual de limba română ca limbă străină*; Olga Bălăneascu, *Limba română pentru străini*; Constantin Mârza, *Salut, România!*; Liana Pop, *Româna cu sau fără profesor*; Liana Pop, Victoria Moldovan, Lucia Uricaru, *Scurtă gramatică*; Liana Pop, Victoria Moldovan, *Grammaire du roumain. Romanian Grammar. Gramatica limbii române*.

Another distinct line of training, especially for those who major in Romanian philology, is the study of literature, Romanian history and culture in general. In that sense we study the history of Romanian literature, the history of epic and lyric poetry in Romanian literature, special history courses and numerous courses of comparative approach of Romanian and Hungarian cultures. Most students are interested in canonical authors of Romanian literature, in the various movements and ideological trends that Romanian culture has known, especially in the twentieth century and, last but not least, in the possible comparisons that can be drawn between the two literatures. A distinct direction in these cultural and literary studies is the preoccupation for researching the literature of Romanians in Hungary.

Beside teaching courses or seminars, the department has organized in recent years a range of scientific and cultural events designed to attract academic interest for Romanian philology studies or to provide students with the opportunity to meet the Romanian cultural reality. Thus we can enumerate but a few events in that respect: *The Week of Romanian language, culture and civilization*, *The Caravan of*

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

Romanian film, *The Days of Contemporary Romanian literature*, etc. Many thematic conferences were organised for the students inside the department or not only for them: *Mircea Eliade – the most complex personality of Romanian Culture*, *The European Dimension of Contemporary Romanian Literature*, *Debate of Ideas in Romanian Contemporary Culture Magazines*, *Culture and Identity*, *Perspectives on Cultural Anthropology*, *Romanian folk beliefs*, *Viral impact of social media*. During these events and others, or outside them, the department has been visited in recent years by many professors from Romanian universities (eg. Bucharest University, "Babes-Bolyai" University in Cluj Napoca, University of Oradea), by Romanian contemporary writers, by editors of famous scientific and culture journals ("Familia", "Philologica Jassyensia", "România literară", etc.)

Academic exchanges are also periodically materialized within the Erasmus agreements that ELTE Budapest, for the Romanian philology domain, has signed with the University of Bucharest and Oradea. Under these agreements, mobilities of teachers and students from both countries have contributed to maintaining or increasing constant contact with the academic, cultural, literary and Romanian language actuality.

Although in a slight regress, compared to previous years (the period before 2000) the department library is constantly enriched by donations offered mainly by the Romanian Language Institute – an aspect appreciated especially by the department's students. Other collaborations with Romanian representative institutions are those with the Romanian Embassy and the Romanian Cultural Institute in Budapest.

At the turn of times, in a revigorated reform which is not always very easy to assimilate, the Romanian Philology Department of the Eötvös Lórand University in Budapest is situated on a stable position of education and research, assuming its past of almost 150 years and making projects for the near or distant future and, more important, aiming to become a landmark on the map of the Romance studies in Europe, a forum of honest and open debates about the Romanian literary and cultural past or present language and a standard of Romanian language research in Hungary.

Bibliography

Câmpeanu 2003: Remus Câmpeanu, *Biserica română unită între istorie şi istoriografie*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Presa Universitară Clujană.

Csobai 2002: Csobai Lászlóné, *A Román-Magyar Társaságok története 1945-1950-ig* ['History of Romanian-Hungarian Association'], A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei, p. 523–556.

Goga 1911: Octavian Goga, *Însemnările unui trecător*, Arad.

Montety 2011: Henri de Montety, *Dans les archives de la Nouvelle Revue Hongroise*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, no. 1, p. 127–141.

Kese 1999: Kese Katalin, *Kultúra és filológia a Román Tanszék történetének tükrében* ['Culture and Philology in Mirror of the Romanian Department's History'], Budapest.

Köpeczi 1995: Köpeczi Béla, *Nemzetképkutatás és a XIX. századi román irodalom magyarságképe* ['Imagology and the Image of the Hungarians in the 19th Century's Romanian Literature'], Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó.

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)

Nagy 1969–1970: Nagy Béla, *Chaire de roumain*, "Annales Universitatis Scientiarium Budapestinensis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae", Sectio Philologica Moderna, t. I, p. 51–58.

Năstasă 1995: Lucian Năstasă, *De la ignoranță la discreditare*, "Timpul", no. 10, p. 14.

Neamțu 1995: Gelu Neamțu, *Alexandru Roman–marele fiu al Bihorului*, Oradea, Editura Fundației Cele trei Crișuri.

Schütz 2002: Schütz István, *Fehér foltok a Balkánon. Bevezetés az albanológiába és balkanisztikába* ['Blank Spots in the Balkans. Introduction in the Albanology and Balkan Studies'], Budapest, Balassi Kiadó.

Szépe 2001: Szépe György, *Douze stances sur maître Gáldi*, "Revue d'Études Françaises", no. 6, p. 169–178.

Abstract

Assuming a past of almost 150 years, the Romanian Philology Department of "Eötvös Loránd" University in Budapest was never just a simple educational institution. Names like Alexandru Roman, Tagliavini and László Gáldi are worth mentioning because due to their work the Romanian department in Budapest has come to integrate into the international circuit of linguistics studies. They were widely appreciated not only in Hungary but also throughout Europe. Without them, there would be no Romance studies in Hungary today.

Although faced with several difficulties in all those years, the department was constantly striving to maintain its identity and establish the best results both in research and in teaching its students. In this context, practical language courses aim to familiarize students with basic notions in Romanian and promote Romanian language, culture and civilization among interested Hungarian students.

Besides teaching courses or seminars, the department has organized a range of scientific and cultural events in recent years designed to attract academic interest for Romanian philology studies or to provide students with the opportunity to get acquainted with Romanian cultural reality.

BDD-A1095 © 2012 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 02:12:18 UTC)