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In memoriam Nicolae Felecan (1941–2020)

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In memoriam Nicolae Felecan (1941–2020)

ALINA BUGHEȘIU



Figure 1. Nicolae Felecan at the 23rd International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, in Toronto, 2008. © Oliviu Felecan.

On 26 November 2020, the academic world and the study of names lost a reputable member, when Professor Nicolae Felecan passed away. He had a long and prolific career, in which teaching and scientific pursuits were masterly intertwined. The fruit of his activity make up the legacy that obliges everyone who knew him or his research to honour and carry on his work.

Professor Nicolae Felecan was born in northern Transylvania in the late summer of 1941. He graduated Classical Languages at the University of Bucharest in 1964, and obtained the doctoral degree twelve years later, at the Institute of Linguistics and Literary History of the Romanian Academy (Cluj-Napoca branch), with a thesis on *Sistemul lexico-semantic al termenilor ce denumesc părţile corpului uman în limba română* [The lexical-semantic system of terms designating parts of the human body in Romanian]. The topics touched upon in this seminal contribution were developed by Professor Felecan not only in the academic courses he taught in Romania and during the one-year lectureship in Romanian Language at Aarhus University, Denmark, but also in a part of his scholarly endeavours.

The philological educational milieu in Baia Mare is highly indebted to Professor Felecan. His professional activity is synonymous with the existence of the University of Baia Mare, where he educated the young and mentored proficient teachers and researchers. The Faculty of Letters itself owes its birth and growth to the efforts undertaken by Professor Felecan, who as its Dean successfully applied himself to establish new bachelor programmes, alongside master's and doctoral programmes in the humanities. He was always appreciated as a role model of competence, rigour, and professional probity, as much as he was treasured for his ability to instil in his students the highest working standards and the passion for the study of language under all its facets.

Nicolae Felecan's didactic, academic occupation was interwoven with

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his scientific pursuits. Thus, he is well-known nationally and internationally for his work in the fields of the Romanian language (lexicology, syntax), Latin language, onomastics, dialectology, and Romance philology. He was a member of several scientific associations, such as the Romanian Society of Philological Sciences, the Society of Classical Studies, *Société de linguistique romane* ('Society of Romance linguistics'), the Romanian Society of Dialectology, and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. Moreover, Professor Nicolae Felecan was awarded many prizes and honours in Romania and abroad, which confirmed the scholarly and cultural excellence of his academic and research activities. He participated in numerous national and international scientific events. He published six academic courses on Latin language aspects and Romanian lexicology and syntax, eighteen books (as author and co-author), a translation from Latin into Romanian, hundreds of studies in specialised journals, collective volumes, festschrifts, and proceedings in various countries throughout the world. Of the countless, diverse contributions to scholarship, one can mention the following (related especially to onomastics):

- 2009. Les prénoms et leurs formes flexionnelles dans le dialecte de Maramureș. In Ahrens, Wolfgang & Embleton, Sheila & Lapierre, André (eds., with the assistance of Smith, Grant & Figueredo, Maria), *Names in Multi-Lingual, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Contact. Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Onomastic Sciences August 17–22, 2008, York University, Toronto, Canada*, 391–398. York University. (https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/3972/icos23_391.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2010. (with Daiana Felecan). Structuri antroponimice și toponimice în Țara Oașului [Anthroponymic and toponymic structures in the Land of Oaș]. In *Actes du XXV^e^ Congrès International de Linguistique et de Philologie Romanes, (Innsbruck, 2007)*, *Tome III, Section 8: Onomastique (topoymie et anthroponymia)*, 259–266. [Berlin/New York]: De Gruyter;
- 2011. Dinamica numelor de botez reflectată în antroponimia municipiului Baia Mare [The dynamic of baptismal names in the anthroponymy of Baia Mare]. In Felecan, Oliviu (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming": Multi-Ethnic Connections in Onomastics*, Baia Mare, 19–21 September 2011, 49–56. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega. (https://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn1/proceedings/1_1_05_Felecan_Nicolae_ICONN_2011.pdf) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2012. The dynamics of forenames in the anthroponymy of Baia Mare. In Felecan, Oliviu (ed.), *Name and naming: Synchronic and diachronic perspectives*, 118-128. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing;
- 2013a. Corelația nume oficial/nume neoficial în zona Țara Oașului

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[The correlation official name/unofficial name in the area of the Land of Oaș]. In Casanova Herrero, Emili & Calvo Rigual, Cesáreo (eds.), *Actas de 26é Congreso Internacional de Lingüística y de Filología Románicas, Valencia 2010*, vol. V, *Sección 6: Descripción histórica y/o sincrónica de las lenguas románicas: onomástica (toponimia y antroponimia)*, 111–122. Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter;

- 2013b. (with Oliviu Felecan). Cultural and linguistic layers embedded in Romanian oikonyms derived from hagionyms. *Onoma* 48, 89–107;
- 2013c. (with several co-authors). *Fericitul Ieronim. Epistole, volumul I* [Blessed Jerome. Letters, volume I]. Translation from Latin. Bucharest: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române;
- 2013d. (with Oliviu Felecan). Names of Romanian places of worship. In Felecan, Oliviu & Bugheşiu, Alina (eds.), *Onomastics in contemporary public space*, 186–206. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing;
- 2013e. Sacru și profan în denumirea mănăstirilor din România [Sacred and profane in names of Romanian monasteries]. In Felecan, Oliviu (ed.), *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming": Onomastics in Contemporary Public Space*, Baia Mare, 9–11 May 2013, 431–439. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut. (https://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn2/proceedings/4_02_Felecan_Nicolae_ICONN_2.pdf) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2014. Nicknames or collective bynames? In Felecan, Oliviu & Felecan, Daiana (eds.), *Unconventional anthroponyms: Formation patterns and discursive function*, 122–132. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing;
- 2015a. Oiconime „decretate". Aspecte sociolingvistice ["Decreed" oikonyms. Sociolinguistic aspects]. In Felecan, Oliviu (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming": Conventional/Unconventional in Onomastics*, Baia Mare, 1–3 September 2015, 478–487. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut. (https://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn3/proceedings/3_7_Felecan_Nicolae_ICONN_3.pdf) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2015b. (with Oliviu Felecan). Straturi etimologice reflectate în hidronimia românească [Etymological layers in Romanian hydronymy]. *Toponímia Románica, Quaderns de filologia. Estudis Lingüístics* XX, 251–270. (https://ojs.uv.es/index.php/qfilologia/article/view/7521/7092) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2017. Sacru și profan în oiconimie. Aspecte etimologice [Sacred and profane in oikonymy. Etymological aspects]. In Felecan, Oliviu (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming": Sacred and Profane in Onomastics*, Baia Mare, 5–7

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September 2017, 601–610. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut. (https://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn4/proceedings/3_9_Felecan_Nicolae_ICONN_4.pdf) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2019a. (with Oliviu Felecan). Toponymic homonymies and metonymies: Names of rivers vs names of settlements. *Onomàstica. Anuari of the Societat d'Onomàstica* 5, 91–114. (https://www.onomastica.cat/wp-content/uploads/Onomastica-5-2019.pdf) (Accessed 2020-12-15.);
- 2019b. Transylvanian oikonyms between sacred and profane. Etymological hypotheses and onomasiological framework. In Felecan, Oliviu (ed.), *Onomastics between sacred and profane*, 157–165. Wilmington, USA/Malaga, Spain: Vernon Press. (Preface by Grant W. Smith.);
- 2020. *Lingvistică şi filologie română* [Romanian linguistics and philology]. Cluj-Napoca: Mega;
- 2021. (with Daiana Felecan). The contribution of the Greek Catholic Church to the multicultural diversification of Transylvanian anthroponymy. In Felecan, Oliviu & Bugheşiu, Alina (eds.), *Names and naming: Multicultural aspects*, 387–403. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan;
- 2021 (in press). (with Oliviu Felecan). Feminine names in the current Romanian hodonymy. *Onomastica* 65/2021 (https://onomastica.ijp.pan.pl/index.php/ONOM) (Accessed 2020-12-30.);
- 2021 (in press). Antroponimia, indice al multiculturalismului. Studiu de caz: Gimnaziul latino-catolic din Bistrița (1729–1779) [Anthroponymy, an index of multiculturalism. Case study: The Latin Catholic Gymnasium in Bistrița (1729–1779)]. In Felecan, Oliviu & Bugheşiu, Alina (eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming". Multiculturalism in Onomastics*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega (https://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn5/) (Accessed 2020-12-30.).

Professor Nicolae Felecan's academic recognition is quantified not only by the hundreds of citations of his works, but also by two festschrifts edited on the occasion of his 70th and 75th birthdays, respectively:

- Felecan, Oliviu & Felecan, Daiana (eds.). 2011. *Confluenţe lingvistice şi filologice* [Linguistic and philological confluences]. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega;
- Felecan Oliviu & Felecan, Daiana (eds.). 2016. *Magistri et alumni, amore scribendi. Studia. In Honorem Professoris Nicolae Felecan*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut.

On 24 August 2021, Professor Nicolae Felecan would have turned 80 years old. It is difficult, if not impossible to talk about him in the past tense. His energy, commitment, and integrity will never cease to be paragons of personal and professional development. Similarly, his academic and scientific achievements will forever inspire scholars and stand as landmarks that they should aspire to reach.

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