







Ionela Carmen BANȚA

Ovidiu Bîrlea

ediție critică din fondurile documentare inedite



Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române



Ionela Carmen BANȚA OVIDIU BÎRLEA EDIȚIE CRITICĂ DIN FONDURILE DOCUMENTARE INEDITE



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Obiectivele proiectului și domeniile de cercetare:

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- 2. Obiectivele specifice: Elaborarea şi implementarea de noi tehnologii-suport pentru derularea proiectului; formarea şi perfecționarea cercetătorilor prin programe postdoctorale Organizarea unor acțiuni de îndrumare a cercetătorilor pe parcursul stagiilor derulate în străinătate Sprijinirea cercetătorilor în participarea la seminarii şi conferințe internaționale Organizarea unor sesiuni pentru promovarea egalității de şanse şi a dezvoltării durabile Sprijinirea colaborării între universități, institute de cercetare şi companii din aria tematică a şcolii postdoctorale Dezvoltarea de activități novatoare în vederea accentuării importanței programelor de cercetare interdisciplinară; crearea de metodologii proprii cu privire la schimbul de experiență internațional în aria cercetării în ştiințele socioumane prin programe postdoctorale.
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ADDENDA

Abstract

Ovidiu Bîrlea – A critical edition of unpublished papers

Ovidiu Bîrlea can be considered to be one of the most experienced specialists who, with his works and the directions in which he steered research, determined folklore studies (in the specialised sense of the term) to become fully autonomous and scientifically acknowledged. Although his reference works were written in the so-called "totalitarian" period, a time when in Romania there was a "proletarian dictatorship" and "the Communist ideology developed, it is a well-known fact that he made no concessions to the political authorities. He was one of those people who accepted no compromise, be it political, scientific or social" ¹⁹⁵.

The present work aims to present Ovidiu Bîrlea's personality, by making use of documents belonging to his personal archive, stored in the library of the Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology in Blaj. For this reason, in order to clear up confusions of any sort, this study had the following objective: to draw up a gradual portrait of Ovidiu Bîrlea the man and researcher, by making use of testimonies of the people who knew him (primary school and university class-mates, researchers of the institutes within and outside the country, professors at prestigious universities, but also family members), and also of excerpts of family letters received by Ovidiu Bîrlea.

The first two chapters of our research were born out of the reason to draw up a bio-bibliographic portrait of the great folklorist, in order to understand him, beyond the strict, scientific writing style and the message of a thorough critical work.

¹⁹⁵ Sabina Ispas, *Cuvânt înainte* to *Istoria folcloristicii românești* by Ovidiu Bîrlea (second edition), edited by Carmen Banța, Craiova, Editura Aius, 2010.

While in the first chapter we have attempted an exhaustive diachronic presentation of Ovidiu Bîrlea's life, using only a few published articles and family letters, the second chapter comprises comments selected from unpublished letters received from Monsignor Octavian Bîrlea, as well as the researcher's own words on some of his volumes published over the years (ethnologic research, but also essays and prose), and included in the letters sent to his friend, George Maniuc. Moreover, in order to highlight these statements, we have also referred to recent observations and comments of various specialists.

We have tried to assemble a "puzzle" out of Ovidiu Bîrlea's letters, testimonies, comments, manuscripts of several studies and books, in order to understand the process of their creation and the depth of their message.

The third chapter focuses on the folklorist's brother: Monsignor Octavian Bârlea, an important figure of the Romanian Diaspora. Octavian Bârlea is considered to have been a militant historian of his ethnicity and confession, who objectively presented facts and pinpointed capital events that marked the evolution of the United Church in Transylvania and Romania. By being in touch with numerous international academic and cultural personalities, he was a thorough researcher of the Italian, German, Austrian and American archives.

The information on his life and work is necessary to the understanding of the over 50-year-long correspondence with his brother Ovidiu.

Over the years, Monsignor Octavian Bârlea held various ecclesiastic positions in Rome, Paris and Munich. Octavian Bârlea's professional and cultural training and the prestige he enjoyed in the Romanian Diaspora determined the leading circles of the Vatican to appoint him an "apostolic visitor" for the 17 Greek-Catholic dioceses in the U.S.A., from 1972 to 1977.

Between 8 and 23 march 1977, Octavian Bârlea visited Romania, for the first time after 40 years of exile. He was to pay dearly for it, since the hostile Greek-Catholic circles in the U.S. advocated for his removal from the position of "apostolic visitor". At the end of 1977, he returned to Europe and between 1978 and 2003 was appointed Rector of the Romanian mission United with Rome in Germany. As bibliography, we have used for this chapter the *Archive of the "Pia Romeno" Pontifical College* in Rome; the Archive of the Romanian Programme of Radio Vatican; the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS), the Documentary stock, file no. 84 (Bârlea Octavian).

The last chapter comprises the Family tree¹⁹⁶; the family correspondence along more than 50 years, from 1933 to 1988. After 1977, as a result of the technical advancements (the use of home telephones), the folklorist Ovidiu Bîrlea received a reduced amount of letters. The only noticeable exception was the correspondence carried on with his brother, Monsignor Octavian Bârlea (1979-1988).

The letters sent by the members of the family to Ovidiu Bîrlea were chronologically ordered. Each date of the letter is accompanied by the sender's name. In the case of the letters sent by his brother, Octavian, we have also mentioned the sender's location.

The letters received from Octavian Bârlea show the fact that the folklorist had very tight connections with his family and that his soul was "nourished" with information received from them; "the voice of blood" turned into magical words that contributed to his emotional survival.

In the same chapter, we have commented upon the letters received from Monsignor Octavian Bârlea (from Rome – Italy, Munich – Germany, Detroit, Los Angeles, Chicago – the U.S.A.), as we have considered them to be extremely significant. The study includes no "mirror-letters" (pairs of letters sent and received in response) of the Bîrlea brothers, since Monsignor Octavian Bârlea's personal archive was "vandalized"¹⁹⁷ after his death, in 2005. Trying to retrace his route in Rome, we found no papers and personal documents of the prelate, neither at the "Pio Romeno" Pontifical College, nor at San Giovani Damasceno, where he lived for a while.

¹⁹⁶ The reconstruction of the family tree was rather challenging, since as source we had only information taken from letters and interviewsgiven by Doina Blaga and by her brother, Nicolae Danciu (nephews).

¹⁹⁷ We thought that personal belongings would be found in Munich, Germany, where he officially resided for 35 years.

At the end, this chapter includes a corpus of family letters. We have not transcribed the entire family correspondence, deciding to select only the documents that we considered the most important in terms of message.

The stocks including the correspondence of influential persons in culture and science are necessary in order to draw up these persons' psychological and intellectual profile. The personal (family) correspondence of important scholars adds to their moral and characterial portrait and becomes an important documenting source.

By this scientific endeavour, we have taken upon ourselves the challenging task of portraying the personality of Ovidiu Bîrlea, as a folklorist, a writer, a professor and a man, he who confessed that "human soul is the greatest enigma, the moment it breaks free from a certain pattern". We hope that this book will light up the beauty and clarity of the image of the man and scholar born in the legendary Apuseni Mountains.

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