

*The opinions, recommendations, and conclusions of the grantee are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IREX or the US Department of State.*

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### **Romanian Studies: An Annotated Guide to Bibliographies, Encyclopedias, and Handbooks**

#### **Topic of Research and Countries Visited**

The main purpose of this research was to complete my working manuscript, which carries the same title as the project proposal, by accessing the some two hundred relevant reference titles held by Bucharest's three main research libraries: the academy, the national library, and the central university library. My nearly completed volume now includes approximately seven hundred records. The volumes that were examined and annotated are not held in the United States and needed to be consulted on-site in Romania. These three institutions are Romania's premier research libraries and collectively have the largest holdings of material relevant to my project. The travel grant allowed me to spend a month in the reading rooms of the three institutions using the relevant titles available in their collections. Both the central university and national libraries have reference material reading rooms, while at the academy, titles needed to be requested from the closed stacks. I also solicited valuable suggestions and recommendations from my colleagues at all three institutions.

#### **Relevance and Contribution to Field**

Romanian publishing and print culture, especially under communism, was as highly politicized as any other aspect of society. Accordingly, a detailed, informative annotation in English will provide researchers with an invaluable tool for determining a work's potential utility in terms of both the reliability of its contents as well as of the book itself as a historical document and object, revealing the politics and prejudices of its time. As but one example, many first editions of Romanian biographical dictionaries offer glowing appraisals of their subjects, only to see them completely disappear from subsequent editions following a defection to the West or otherwise a falling out of political favor. Such indications will allow historians, political scientists, and others to use my completed volume as a tool to measure social, cultural, and political change in virtually all fields over the entire course of Romania's modern history. The earliest volumes included date from the 1870s and the most recent from 2004. I expect that my research in Romania will make *Romanian Studies: An Annotated Guide to Bibliographies, Encyclopedias, and Handbooks* an important addition to the literature in East European bibliography. With its extensive subject coverage and informative annotations, my completed volume will make the substantial body of Romanian-language reference literature much more accessible and will constitute an important resource both for academic researchers and for policy makers. The latter will find the volume especially helpful as Romania accedes to the European Union in 2007 while remaining a critically important nation in Southeastern Europe.

### **Approach and Research Methodology**

Subject searching, either with an institution's physical card catalog or with its online public access catalog (OPAC) enables me to identify appropriate titles. Using the database software ProCite to record the bibliographic information of titles selected, I conduct a thorough textual analysis of each volume with an awareness of the year of publication, author(s) and contents of entries to evaluate a volume's merits, biases and research value. I then craft a succinct, but informative annotation describing the contents, organization, and relative usability of each title. Entries are given a numeric and a letter classification assignment as well as a set of guidewords. Items are grouped under eight disciplinary headings and then divided into various subject categories. The numeral designates to which of the eight general fields a title belongs while the letter designates under which discipline within that field a particular title falls. Library of Congress call numbers are featured in brackets and the institution whose copy I examined is also noted. Subject headings, featured in bold type at the top of each entry, were selected using roughly the same criteria by which the Library of Congress assigns them. Accordingly, a record with the subject heading HISTORY (1975) is a general work concerning all of Romanian history and published in 1975, thus not containing information after that date. The heading HANDBOOK-1877-1878 (1972) designates a volume concerning only the events of 1877-1878 and published in 1972. Complete author and title indexes follow the bibliography.

### **Summary of Research Findings and Preliminary Conclusions**

Unlike most of the aforementioned publications, my bibliography includes only items devoted wholly to some aspect of Romanian studies. Regional area surveys that include material related to other countries in addition to Romania have therefore been excluded. Basic publications that are also monographic, rather than reference, in nature are also not included. The only exceptions are books whose scope and indexing are sufficient to warrant their consultation for reference purposes. Although a very small number of the most important bibliographies featuring only English-language sources have been included, as have a few in German and French, in the interest of thorough coverage, the bibliography otherwise consists only of Romanian-language sources.

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My access to Bucharest's three main research libraries allowed me to examine and annotate a variety of titles that are not generally available in Western collections. Especially noteworthy are some of the materials from the late 19th and early 20th centuries held in the National Library's reference collection. Among these titles are some of the earliest Romanian-language dictionaries and encyclopedias. I also located the supplement to Dimitrie Gusti's Enciclopedia României, published in four volumes in the late 1930s with the fourth and final volume issued in 1940. That same year also witnessed the completion of Enciclopedia României: Cugetarea: material românesc, oameni si înfaptuiri by Lucian Predescu. Mr. Predescu discusses quite frankly the

realities of Romania's increasingly authoritarian political climate in the transition from the Carolist to Antonescu dictatorships. As the work makes plain the role played by the Iron Guard in Romanian politics, it was not published in Romania until 1999. The National Library retains a copy of the original 1940 manuscript, a comparison of which with the 1999 printing is fascinating.

I also found in the course of my research that the subject classification I have devised is adequately broad to capture essentially any title in the reference literature I am likely to encounter in completing this project. The only area in which a perhaps clearer explanation will be required for users of the published bibliography is category "4" "History." The "History-General" category refers to works of a universal, world history nature that offer entries that are imbued with a particularly Romanian worldview, but which are nevertheless very general in scope and cover general world history rather than only that of Romania itself. This category is to be distinguished from "History by Period," which categorizes works covering a much narrower span of time, generally not more than two centuries. A comparison of publications in this genre from the communist period with those published since 1989 is particularly interesting, both for the change in the interpretation and content of entries as well as for the appearance of completely new ones, especially for people such as Romanian émigrés who were excluded from communist era publications. This same exclusion is even more obvious in biographical dictionaries. Those published between the 1950s and 1980s sometimes show remarkable differences whereby certain personalities are celebrated as major men and women of Romanian culture in first editions while being completely excluded from second editions following their emigration to the West. The shift to Russo-phonetic orthography in the 1950s and the reversion back to Romanian Latinity in the 1960s is also clearer after examining the works at my disposal in the three libraries.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The main task remaining with this project, in an effort toward comprehensiveness, is to remain abreast of new reference titles as they are published until, sometime in the next year, my finished manuscript is published.

### **Recommendation for the US Policy Community**

With the veritable revolution information science has undergone over the last decade, electronic resources are clearly critical for researchers. However, the traditional print bibliography remains vitally important because of the systematization of access their compilers bring to the information they contain. Traditional reference books, with their organizational and classificatory conventions, provide an ease of access and consultation as well as a thoroughness of coverage their electronic counterparts simply cannot. They also provide reassurance that an entire corpus of relevant subject knowledge has been edited, subjected to the critical parameters of commercial publishing, and lies at a user's fingertips. This privileges printed reference books with a level of authority of which web-based sources are frequently bereft.