

The beginnings of English studies at the University of Iași

Abstract:

'A Hundred Years of Romania' represents an opportunity to remember, among many other momentous events of the past century, the establishment of English studies at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, the oldest higher education institution in Romania, inaugurated in October of 1860, one year after the establishment of the Romanian state. Before the establishment of the first English chair in 1925 as an outcome of the unprecedented socio-political development in Romania following the First World War, however, the Romanian literary journals in Iași had already been publishing articles and reviews aiming to acquaint Romanian readers with an unfamiliar English culture.

*Research on the study of English in Romania is scarce and there is controversy as to when and where English was first introduced in the Romanian university curriculum – some researchers suggest 1917 or 1918 at the University of Iași. This paper explores the historical context of the inception of institutionalized English studies at the University of Iași and the seminal contribution of Iancu Botez, one of the founders of the journal *Viața Românească*, who taught English at Liceul Național before he became the first tenured university professor. The ups and downs of English studies in Moldavia and Romania in general are a relevant topic not only from a historical viewpoint but also from the present perspective where Romania has a poor public image.*

Keywords: *Anglo-Romanian comparative studies; Cultural studies; English teaching in Romania.*