

Student Life in Medieval Times in France and Marius Mircu's Student Experience in Romania

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Abstract: The progress of a society is partially conditioned by education, a condition valid both in the past and in the present, the education systems having particularities specific to times and people. Marius Mircu, the Romanian journalist of Jewish origin, born at the beginning of the 20th century, in Bacău, grew up and was educated in the middle of one of the communities that paid special attention to the learning process. Our paper will explore some of his works concerning higher education institutions. The love for the study was passed on through his press articles and volumes dedicated to this topic. For the purpose of this paper we want to bring up to date Mircu's works concerning two moments in the history of European higher education, namely the Middle Ages in France (with a focus on Paris) and the University of Bucharest – Faculty of Law (mid-20th century).

Keywords: education, Marius Mircu, media, universities, Romania, France

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Introduction

The year 1909, the beginning of a new century, received with hope by the inhabitants of Bacău, marks also the beginning of the life of one of the most famous keepers of the memory of the Jewish community in Romania, who constantly valued education throughout life. We are referring to Marius Mircu, born Israel Marcus, symbolically called “the dean of Romanian writers from Israel”, who was included in the elite gallery of the Romanian reportage together with Geo Bogza and F. Brunea-Fox. He diligently followed the school curriculum, becoming a passionate book lover after reading *Five Weeks in a Balloon* by Jules Verne (Mircu, 1981: 37-41). He attended the primary school and the high school in his hometown (Boys' Primary School No. 2, Primary School No. 3 and “Ferdinand I” High School), being, when time allowed him, also an apprentice in his father's tailoring workshop. Some of his high school teachers were Grigore Tabacaru, Ion Alecu, Gheorghe Ionescu and, for a short time, George Bacovia (Budău, 2004, 251). He did not share the call of his parents; education and reading determined him to dream for more: these broadened his horizons, making him believe that he could attend college in France. He chose medicine and, without telling his parents, he went to Rouen, where he followed the preparatory year of medicine, after which he moved to Paris where he attended the courses of the first year of college. He soon realizes that it is difficult to support himself and to rise to the standards required by the French higher education system. During his studies, he secured the necessary money on his own, writing articles for the *Ziarul științelor și al călătoriilor – The Travel and Science Journal –*, working in the harbor (it was also an experience of gaining knowledge), practicing tailoring (sawing small bushels for his fellow students). Even if he had to return to Romania, the desire to build a successful career remained just as strong, which is why he became interested in another field, which would have ensured a comfortable social and financial position, namely the field of law. He enrolled in the College of Law at the University of Bucharest, where he completed three years of study. At the end, he decided not to defend his thesis. These were already the years of anti-Jewish persecution during the interwar period, when Mircu launched

his career as a journalist, collaborated in a series of periodicals, including those dedicated to children (*Universul copiilor – Children's Universe*, *Dimineața copiilor – Children's Morning*, *Copilul evreu – The Jewish Child*, etc.). He published his articles both in the Romanian newspapers and in those published by the Jewish community.

He practiced journalism and learned the art of writing by reading a lot, interacting with personalities of the Romanian and Jewish cultural life. His first job, in the true sense of the word, was at the Ancora Publishing House, of S. Benvenisti, where he learned the profession of editor. It was a beautiful period in the journalist's life, as he had his first contacts with well-known writers, such as Liviu Rebreanu, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and Victor Eftimiu, just to mention a few names. A special place in his memory is related to the moments shared with Eugen Lovinescu, due to which he would become more attentive to the quality of expression, to the content of the articles. Moreover, an important role during his development as a journalist and writer was played by his friend, Ury Benador, who taught him what it meant to write a book, Marius Mircu considering it “an event in my life, from him I learned that the first writing of a page is not the last. I learned the craft of writing from him, although... I've been writing for a long time. And I learned that a writer is not a reporter, that a page of literature is not the result of an observation made on a certain day and time, in a certain place, but is the experience of a lifetime.” (Mircu, 1981: 361).

Marius Mircu was one of those enlightened spirits who understood, valued and promoted the importance of education throughout his life. Among the many initiatives he had throughout his life, we will introduce some of those related to the theme of our study. He set up two libraries: his private book collection (as a child and then as an adult) and one for the children, within the Jewish Community in Bucharest (during the years of the Second War World). A means of information, sometimes having an educational component, was represented by the media, Marius Mircu setting up his own newspaper during the school, symbolically called Glob. It was a handwritten newspaper, in a single copy, which the owner used to lend to his colleagues in exchange for books that he would read. Here is how the journalist characterizes this experience: “It was the first journalism school I attended, in fact, I was self-taught. The idea remained, and in about two decades I will publish a real newspaper, it had the same

format and four pages (*Jurnalul copiilor - Children's Journal*).” (Mircu, 1981: 53). He liked the idea so much that when he matured he published some of his volumes at the Glob Publishing House. In his youth he shared his beliefs through the press articles, and later he relied on his talent as a writer (developed also through the experience accumulated working in the media), and in his later years he held, in front of the Jewish communities in the Capital and in Bacău (his birth city), many scientific conferences.

His over eight decades of professional activity materialized in thousands of articles, texts, reports published in approximately 100 periodicals, in Romania and abroad (Canada, Germany, Israel). A selection of them reveals the diversity of topics addressed: *Adevărul literar și artistic - The Literary and Artistic Truth*, *Bacăul, Bună dimineața, Israel! - Good morning Israel!*, *Calendarul - The Calendar*, *Curentul pentru copii și tineret - The Children and Youth Stream*, *Dimineața - The Morning*, *Filatelia - Philately*, *Gazeta - The Gazette*, *Jurnalul copiilor - The Children's Journal*, *Jurnalul literar - The Literary Journal*, *Minimum, Ordinea - The Order*, *Pionierul - The Pioneer*, *Răspântia - The CrossRoads*, *Realitatea evreiască - The Jewish Reality*, *Reporter - The Reporter*, *Tempo, Timpul familiei - Family's Time*, *Tribuna poporului - The People's Tribune*, *Unirea - The Union*, *Viața evreiască - The Jewish Life*, etc. Most of the articles on educational topics were published in the interwar period, both in the children's press and in daily newspapers.

His literary work includes 60 titles, half of the books being published in Romania, and the other half in Israel, addressing various genres and topics: *Dosar Ana Pauker - Ana Pauker's File*, *Un cimitir plin de viață - Filantropia - Filantropia, a Merry Cemetery*, *Oameni de omenie în vremuri de neomenie - Men of Honour in Times of Unkindness*, *Ce s-a întâmplat cu evreii în și din România (vol. I și III) - What Happened with the Jews in and from Romania*, *Povestea minunată a lui Shirley Temple - Shirley Temple's Wonderful Story*, *N-am descoperit America! - I Didn't Discover America!*, *Pogromul de la Iași - Yassy Holocaust*, *Extraordinara odisee a reporterilor - The Extraordinary Journey of the Reporters*, *Croitorul din Back - The Taylor from Back*, *Peste cincizeci de ani - 50 Years Later*, etc.

For his contribution to preserving the memory of the Jewish community in Romania, but also for his cultural dissemination efforts,

Marius Mircu was awarded several prizes: *Second Prize of the Youth Publishing House* (1951), *The Cultural Fund Haim Ianculovici Prize* (1970 and 1990), the *The Organization of Origin of Dorohoi Prize* (1987), the *Arcadia Prize* (1992), the *The Most Controversial Man of the Year Award*, the *Nicu Palty Prize* (1996), the *Clara and Gaston Cornescu Prize* (1997), *50th Jubilee Award* (1998), *Zion Award* (2001) and *Jacob Groper Award* (2002) (Prelipcean, 2003:18-19).

The educational component of Marius Mircu's writings includes texts published in the written press, most of them in the interwar period, which includes disparate elements of general culture, but also articles aimed at familiarizing readers with higher education in Middle Ages France or Romania.

Student Life in Middle Age France

The articles related to the way the educational process was conducted in France were part of a series published in *Calendarul – The Calendar*. Courage, unconsciousness or just the desire to write, to stay in contact with the world, we will never know. Perhaps the ambition of the journalist to prove that a Jewish reporter could publish even in a legionary periodical. According to his memoirs book *M-am născut reporter! – I was born a reporter!* the publication of the first article in *Calendarul* was a surprise, set up by one of the colleagues from *Ziarul științelor și al călătoriilor – The Newspaper of Sciences and Travels*, Tomescu (Muche) – “He said he wanted to surprise me and he indeed surprised me!” –, Tomescu handing over to the editor one of Marius Mircu's materials, not knowing that he was a Jew: “I still didn't know that my friend Tomescu (Muche) was theirs, but he didn't know that I was ours either!” (Mircu, 1998: 443-444). Given the journalist's close collaboration with the editorial staff of the *Ziarul științelor și al călătoriilor* and his thirst to be constantly informed, it seems unlikely that he did not know that Tomescu was a legionnaire. What is certain is that Marius Mircu collaborated, for a short period, with the legionary newspaper *Calendarul*, an independent newspaper with the latest news from the country and abroad, as we can read on the first page of the periodical.

Thus a series of interesting articles were published, which were unique we could say, related to the beginnings of student life in France. A theme, which unfortunately was not reissued or continued by the journalist in any of his future projects. The collaboration with the *Calendarul* was short-lived, between February and March 1932, with the reporter realizing the danger he was exposed due to his ethnic origins: "If I didn't renounce, they would have discovered the truth and it would have been worse. [...] I did not give Tomescu the following notebooks, because I was afraid that the editorial staff could find out who the author really was." (Mircu, 1998: 444) The works he did for *Calendarul* was limited to the appearance of a series of five articles, signed with the pseudonym A. S. Mircu. We consider important to mention that the newspaper *Calendarul* had a special column dedicated to students, which appeared in its Thursday edition. The articles were written based on the documentary materials collected and studied by Marius Mircu during his student years in France. An incursion into the beginnings of the Parisian university world reveals unique details related to the interests and behavior of students, but also to the relationship between the university and students, respectively between Parisian society and students. The attention given to art and culture, the emancipation that education brought to French society, naturally materialized, during Charlemagne, in an institution of higher education separate from the church, transforming France into the university center of Europe:

"All corners of Europe were sending students to Paris. France has always been the most welcoming country and had the most «student» community."

Due to this infusion of youth, Paris had become too small, as the students outnumbered the inhabitants of certain suburbs. Another feature of France, which attracted a large number of students, was the equality promoted between its own citizens and foreigners. But such a large number of students also posed certain challenges that the authorities had not anticipated:

"Students had many special privileges. The King of France himself had granted those privileges. Sometimes consciously abusing these freedoms, the Parisian students did the most fanciful and delicious things. An aristocrat unanimously, the student body began by mocking, perhaps out of mere amusement, the bourgeoisie."

Those rebellious students to whom the king had granted privileges were not simple people, but aristocrats, accustomed to a certain lifestyle. If they hadn't been able to keep their habits and lifestyle, they certainly wouldn't have stayed in Paris. Neither the journalist nor the editorial staff noticed the inclusion in the text of the pleonasm "special privileges". As now, the students wanted to take advantage of life's opportunities, being more interested in them than in studying:

"At that time, students were no different from today. There were some who clung to the book, there were others who clung to anything but the book."

If this heterogeneity of students did not bring an element of novelty, instead the relationship between university and students was a special one:

"At that time students were children of the university, and the university was the spiritual parent of all students. Teachers and students were almost the same, in every way." (*Calendarul - The Calendar*, 1932, no. 21: 3).

Those privileges, on which the reporter insists in his articles, combined with the social status of the students, led to the establishment of a quasi-anarchy. The aggressive acts of the students degenerated, and they even ended up organizing an armed break-in into the houses of the bourgeoisie and temporarily kidnapped the young women of the families. The dissatisfaction of the bourgeoisie, but also the loss of control of the masses of students led the authorities to apply measures to punish the guilty:

"The audacity and the hilarity of the students, who ultimately did nothing out of wickedness but were only eager for adventure, exasperate the authorities in the end when it comes to something."

Starting with 1218, students were barred from carrying weapons, foreign nationals caught with weapons were expelled, and the French citizens were arrested. However, it would prove to be a useless solution, the population of Paris and the bourgeoisie being outraged by the students' behaviour. The accumulated tension would break out in 1223, when an "unusual quarrel between students and bourgeoisie" resulted in the death of 302 students. The incident by itself is not shocking, but the reaction of the population is surprising, revealing the hatred they felt against the students. Demonstrating a total disrespect for the dead, their bodies were dumped in the Seine "in the mad shouting of the people." Not even the fear of God could quench the tensions that had

accumulated over time. Shocked by the reaction of the people, by that cruelty, “unmatched in history”, the professors put their hopes in the church, the institution that until the creation of the university had fulfilled its role. But the secular education would receive a new lesson, this time from the Pope, who ignored the cry for help from the professors. This decision triggered an avalanche of actions from the faculty members. Part of the academic core and some of the students left Paris in protest, but the rest of the students attacked the Cardinal's home, with the stated purpose of killing the Pope's representative. The salvation came from the King, but the Cardinal would excommunicate “the whole student body as a whole”, for which this gesture meant nothing:

“And on the matter of religion the students never made a bad heart!...”
 (*Calendarul - The Calendar*, 1932, no. 27: 3).

The relationship between students and teachers was a special one, as they supported each other. In 1229, the students and their professors left Paris again, taking refuge in cities such as Reims, Toulouse, Orleans, Montpellier and Angers where they asked the authorities to set up new universities. This is how the famous university centre of Montpellier was born, the city where most Parisian students found refuge. After two years, classes resumed in Paris, but the incidents were not long in coming, although all parties “had sworn to live in peace.” The incidents continued, the image of the students in the collective mind leading to new aggressions. Thus, in 1252 a group of four students was stopped in the street by the archers of the abbot, undressed, beaten and then imprisoned. The incident resulted in the death of one of the students, which triggered a wave of anger from the university “which suspended its courses” until the death sentence was obtained, by hanging, for two of the archers. Cardinal Jacques de Vitry “preached a serious crusade against students.” The situation staid the same for centuries, each side keeping its habits. The students' place of refuge was the famous Latin Quarter, where no one dared pursue students even when they were perpetrators.

The students were also attacked in 1404 by “the guards and servants of the Lord of Savoy.” Once again, the university took a stand to defend its students, the senior being forced to pay a fine. Moreover, the authorities ordered the demolition of his palace. The drastic measures

adopted by the authorities against the population determined the reporter to attribute to the university a privileged position:

“That was the authority of the University at that time and the relations between students and professors!”

What the journalist did not specify was the income that those students brought to Paris, the visibility and prestige that France enjoyed in the world. Information on student habits, supported and encouraged by the university itself, demonstrated the rivalry that existed between it and the church.

The students celebrated St. Nicholas on December 5th, “it was the so-called feast of the insane”, when they chose representatives who were dressed in priestly clothes, all presenting themselves to the Rector of the university. Two more holidays were organized, one in spring and one in winter,

“two days of tumultuous walks and naughty entertainment, an occasion for countless and huge scandals. [...] These were the holidays most respected by the University because in those days students paid their teachers.” (*Calendarul - The Calendar*, 1932, no. 34: 3).

The freedom they enjoyed, but also the emancipation led to the establishment of student organizations, the young people being aware that only by uniting their forces they could obtain certain privileges:

“The isolated student has neither the courage nor the ability to do what the community does. Does not matter!”

It is a simple mention, unaccompanied by details. The faithful reader will have the opportunity to discover them in future editions of the newspaper. Marius Mircu decided to present the student life of the Middle Ages because it has never “been so rich, picturesque and varied.” In the Middle Ages there were three university centers: Paris, Bologna and Prague. In Paris,

“the authorities, in agreement with the King, granted the students whatever they asked for, even if they asked for something impossible or unjust.”

It must be borne in mind that those who came to Paris to study “were not driven by need, they were all able-bodied, who came to know the pleasures of life.” Students devoted most of their time to extracurricular activities, “partying a lot.” Although the students' main goal was having fun, they were close to their professors. This is demonstrated by the students' reaction to the retirement of their most beloved professor, the theologian and philosopher Abailard, when the

students refused to attend classes. (*Calendarul - The Calendar*, 1932, no. 49: 3) The main preoccupation of the students from the Middle Ages was, according to the details offered by Marius Mircu, having fun, whose main ingredient was drinking:

“Lively people, wandering and having fun all night and all day. Students drank, revelled, destroyed, kidnapped and raped. And then they drank again. Then they started over. No containment.”

This way of life was well organized, with each student organization having its own preferences. And it was very easy to join such an association. In order to be admitted, you had to fulfil one condition: not to come alone, but accompanied by «a female companion, a friend», who in turn had to register. Those who did not have this opportunity received one *ex officio*, “from the rich stock of offers received by the association from the prettiest girls in all the districts of Paris.” Both young men and women appreciated this type of leisure, libertinism being accepted by both women and men. Moreover, the young ladies played an important role in the life of the associations, as they were the ones who voted for the president. Without students, the Latin Quarter would have remained anonymous, one of the many residential areas of Paris. The presence of the students, but especially their habits made it famous:

“With a few red cents in their pockets, the students set off in copious, cheerful and noisy crowds to the famous pubs there and had fun day and night in a row.”

Many times, when the students arrived, the employees and the clients left the place and left it to their discretion: “It is true that under such circumstances the students were grateful to them. And right thankfully they took care of the premises and the furniture.”

The article is full of irony, which comes to mitigate the impact of student behaviour (*Calendarul - The Calendar*, 1932, no. 56: 3).

The history of French university life ends abruptly. The unique details presented in the few articles may have aroused the readers' interest in discovering how university education evolved, the turmoil and reforms it had undergone to get where it was. The topic would not be addressed by Marius Mircu in any of the future collaborations. It is an unusual situation in the journalist's career because he used to capitalize on the materials on which he had previously focused his attention. If this was not possible at a periodical, in the following

collaborations the theme was resumed and detailed. Especially since, as we will see, the journalist published almost identical materials in various periodicals. We only regret that such an interesting topic, on which the reporter had gathered a rich documentary material, was not treated exhaustively:

“As a student, we gathered a rich documentary for a history of studentship. I had a thick notebook.” (Mircu, 1998: 443).

Student Life in “Little Paris”

Encouraged by the desire to share with his readers the personal experiences, maybe a little eager to leave a testimony over time on student life in the “Little Paris” in the interwar period, Marius Mircu helps us get acquainted also with the student life of the mid-20th century. And as each season had its favourite subjects, in the fall there was a tradition of presenting aspects related to education. It was the ideal time for the journalist to talk to us, in a series of nine articles, about the experience of the first year of college. The emotion and the impressions of participating in the first course (although it was not a new experience for the author) represent the “traps” that he prepares for *Gazeta – The Gazette’s* audience. Ordinary and standardized articles, which presented the festivities or the life of the students, were so common in the newspapers that after reading a few lines the readers lost their curiosity. Marius Mircu's creativity in combining the moments included in the articles helped him not to disappoint his readership this time either. Nothing is linear or ordinary, even if the subject is a seemingly trivial one. The heroine of the series of reports seems to take us by the hand and guide our steps in the classroom of the College of Law, to discover together with her the bustle of freshmen, without specifying that it was due to the impatience and, at the same time, the emotions of young students.

Mature enough (the journalist already had the experience of studying in France), with a few years of experience in the press, Marius Mircu successfully introduces us to the Romanian academic environment, as he experienced it. The first detail that catches our

attention is the massive presence of students in classes, which was not an isolated phenomenon as we might assume:

“The effort to sneak in to find a place and the unusual roar for me hurt me. I'm dizzy, my head is shaking, my heart is beating fast, fast.”

The atmosphere would become incendiary once the Roman law professor enters the classroom, who, to the student's surprise, “does not try to speak or calm the room”, seems absent in that tumult of student applause. The chaos caused by the students continued undisturbed until the arrival of two employees, the “true owners of the university”, who provided the students with all the necessary information. This was also the reason why the student states: “We respect no one in college more than servants.” (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 804: 3).

The emotions inherent in the beginnings of the journey, combined with the more or less honest advice of older colleagues, raise a series of questions and worries in the soul of the student we met in the first article. The image of the student years, built during high school, did not coincide with reality and only now was he beginning to understand the difference between the two educational institutions:

“I am beginning to understand that the college is not the same as high school. And I'm afraid I won't find Ariadne's thread in this maze!”

Ambition was the best advisor, the student being determined to win, despite the fact that she came from a modest family who could not support her. The decision to include details concerning the financial situation of the students aimed to encourage parents to send their children to college, in areas that may seem inaccessible at first glance (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 805: 3). It is one of the tips that the author gives to future students. Even if the advice of Marius Mircu is not explicitly mentioned, it can be easily decoded from the fragments that present the stages she goes through and the experience of the main protagonist. A famous figure in the halls of the faculty was Mussolini, one of those servants so respected by students, who “behaves in a friendly or severe manner, rules or threatens and, in the exercise of his supreme power, the executive power, expels.” Unlike Mussolini, who, despite his sternness, always helped polite students, the undersecretary's attitude revolted the entire student body. The miserable conditions in which they were forced to wait, but also the humble attitude they had to display before the undersecretary aroused

the anger and hatred of the students, who did not dare to show their true feelings towards the official.

If the soul of the university are the students, the brain are the professors, those who, through their erudition, help to create future professionals. The respect and popularity of students towards their teachers has depended, since the beginning of higher education, on a number of more or less objective factors, among which we mention the communication skills, personality and, last but not least, the subject they teach. Two of the professors of Law, of encyclopaedia and civil law, stood out because of their oratorical talent, but also because of the fact that they did not read from the lithographed courses:

“He gives totally original and never-presented-to-the-public lessons. They don't even have text books, that's why you have to take a lot of notes during the classes. I like that. I learn the course right during the lecture.”

The civil law faculty member was so loved by the students, that they attended his classes even if they were in another year of study: “He is the most adorable and nervous professor of all”, the only one the students listened to, who knew how to make jokes, but also to raise his voice when the situation called for it. An interesting element is related to the differentiated treatment applied to female students, which generated hostile behaviour on the part of colleagues.

Noticing this situation, our protagonist stated: “We want equality! We girls have the right to flunk exams too! Too few girls are failing now!” Pride or desire not to be viewed with hostility by colleagues? Most likely, the journalist became the voice the students' frustration and signalled an unprofessional practice in the faculty (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 806: 3-5). Comparing the attitude towards their children of those who in the 1930s were parents with the current one, we notice a second difference, determined by the change of mentalities and living conditions. As everyone was allowed to listen to the classes, you had the opportunity to meet relatives of the students in the classroom, especially mothers, who came to supervise their children. Returning to the situation of the female students and their interest in studies, we discover, unsurprisingly, that there were two main categories – those interested in learning and those who did not do any work – each presenting its distinctive signs. The group of those who did not work could be studied for a short period of time, instead, the one belonging to

the first category offered the possibility to conduct an extensive study. We note that the article does not present the typology of students, which leads us to the conclusion that the author of the article was a man (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 807: 3).

Day by day in the classrooms, the students made friends, socializing outside the school. An escapade in Cișmigiu Park was a reason for joy and merriment, especially since it took place during the week, during classes. The joy of the young people and their lust for life contrast sharply with the strictness of the guard from Cișmigiu who forbade them to listen to music or dance in the park, driving them out of the green paradise. In the apparent chaos of the classrooms, when everyone tried to find a place as comfortable as possible, politeness was never ignored, a place reserved not being disputed by anyone even if the rooms were overcrowded with students. Accepted as equal by the male students, the young lady students enjoyed appreciation and collegiality:

“The atmosphere is now more benevolent, more pleasant [...] the boys grew up side by side with the need to support us. [...] Our colleagues never made advances to us. We work together, seriously and fairly.”

Another indication that the student was in fact Marius Mircu is provided by the information regarding the identity of his classmates, among whom we also meet Dan T., who will later offer him the opportunity to collaborate in *Victoria* and to sign with his name during the anti-Jewish persecution (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 808: 3). Led by Dan T., the classmates organized various escapades, one of which offered the reader the opportunity to draw a parallel between the lives of law students and those in liberal arts. Absent from one of the hours considered boring, the group of colleagues went to explore the Faculty of Letters, where the atmosphere contrasted with that of the halls of the Faculty of Law, which “vibrated with agitation, quarrels, laughter, full of colour and smiles.” However, the seriousness of law students can be noticed from the way they prepared for courses or seminars, but also from the fact that the library, as well as the classrooms, were not big enough (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 809: 3). Returning to the classroom, we discover the opportunities that the faculty members create for their students. What the article emphasizes is the enthusiasm and involvement of students in the activities proposed by professors. Aware that the experience they had gained in those years would be

useful in their careers, students did not hesitate to volunteer whenever given the opportunity.

Among the experiences that the civil law professor proposed to the students was the possibility of giving a lecture. The happy, in fact unhappy in the first instance, winner of this right is our student herself. Overwhelmed by emotions, she manages to convince the teacher due to the speech “without fantasy, without digressions, without elegance, but confident on the argument, with solid documentation. A slender bill, with confidence in me.” (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 810:3).

The beautiful period of courses and seminars passed quickly, followed by the exam session, when intelligence played the most important role because “in most subjects of law, the answers are questions of ingenuity.” In this way, the reader receives information about the qualities that a law student should have. Those who achieved this performance were usually students who did not attend the courses, who relied on adjacent means, on spontaneity, being taught enough to handle any situation. Those for whom college was not “a simple means” by which they could obtain gifts from their parents were concerned about how the exams would unfold. Tired and excited, even friends were about to quarrel. At this stage we were again part of the group of four friends. The tension temporarily subsides after Mussolini announces the students that the first exam is the one from the encyclopaedia: “I will always remember the noise from the day the program was announced. It was like the first fight, the first exam taken!...” (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 811: 3). The friendship between the school colleagues helped them get through the tense moments during the session, at the end we all enjoyed the quiet vacation that followed: “All four of us took the exams!... [...] Have a great vacation my dear friends!...” (*Gazeta - The Gazette*, 1936, no. 812: 3).

The journalist's initial plan was to make a series of reports in each year of college, following the evolution of the characters we met before, but “the author had been bored in the meantime with both law and love, new topics were attacking him, they were stifling him.” There is also an explanation related to the pseudonym used to sign the articles in this series, Marius Mircu aiming to give a note of femininity to the memories, a sensitivity that gave a special charm to the turmoil of the soul, but also to the joys of the first year of college (Mircu, 1998: 404).

The articles were later reunited in the brochure *Amintirile unei studente – The Memories of a Female Student*.

Conclusions

The student experience in France and Romania was the basis for the creation of two series of unique articles in the Romanian interwar journalistic landscape: a presentation of the education system in France in the Middle Ages and a foray into university life in “Little Paris”, from the middle 20th century. The first series of articles details the special relationship that exists between professors and students, the subjects and some of the teaching techniques, the relationship with the state authorities, but also the patterns of student life. Going through a series of articles dedicated to university studies in Romania, we identify similar elements in terms of directions, the journalist facilitating the drawing of an image in terms of changes, progress, concerns of students from both times. The writing is full of verve, sometimes joking, but always well-structured and dense in information.

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