

**In memoriam
VLADIMIR HANGA
(1920-2013)**

*Mihnea-Dan RADU**

Vladimir Hanga was one of the most appreciated professors of law, in Romania as well as worldwide. His passing left behind a huge gap that can only be filled with great effort, since the professor was among the few specialists who reached such a level of prestige as to gain the respect of the worldwide academic community. Having led a long life, he knew how to curb time and make the best out of every single moment. "Use every quarter hour," he would advise me when, under his close supervision, I was finalizing my PhD thesis. A wise advice, indeed, as time can be friend or foe, depending on everyone's ability to keep up.

I had the privilege of having been one of the few disciples of the great master. Alongside the professor, I assisted dozens of classes, trying to catch even a small part of his talent of capturing the attention of the students. A modern partisan of Stoicism, the professor would always insist on the humanist values that should inspire every legal practitioner. He would appeal to Hermogenian's words, "*hominum causa ius constitutum est*" (D., 1, 5, 2), as a pretext to emphasize that Roman law was devoted to man and therefore the concept of "human rights" was not an invention of the modern times. But, at the same time, he would draw the attention of the students to the fact that, along with the rights, we must consider the obligations of man, without which society is bound for decay. Man is therefore the supreme value, but he must exist as part of a social system whose proper functioning is ensured by law. The famous adage that gives the title of our journal, *Fiat iustitia pereat mundus*, was interpreted by professor Hanga as "let there be justice, lest the world should perish," thus interpreting law as a necessary means, not an end in itself.

During his long life, the professor excelled in everything he did. He graduated from "Ferdinand I" Highschool of Bacău (1939) and subsequently took his law degree from the Faculty of Law, Bucharest (1943) as valedictorian. He successfully defended two doctoral theses, one in law (1947) and the other in political and economic sciences (1949), obtaining honours for both.

In 1962, he was awarded the degree of Doctor in Science, and, towards the end of his career, he received the degree of honoris causa, awarded by Universitatea de Vest from Timișoara (1997), Universitatea "Aurel Vlaicu" from Arad (2004), and Universitatea de Vest "Vasile Goldiș" from Arad (2010).

Due to his professional authority and his prestige in teaching, he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Law of Cluj-Napoca and, subsequently, vice-chancellor of the University.

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Fluent in several foreign languages and highly appreciated by leading law schools in Europe, he was proposed and elected, by secret ballot, in two sessions (1977-1980 and 1980-1984), UNO expert in Civil and Political Rights.

Professor Hanga was a very active and appreciated member of Pugwash scientists society (an organization which has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize), and, from 1984 to 1988, he was appointed Member of the Court of Arbitration at The Hague.

Professor Hanga was also a valued contributor to important specialized foreign publications, such as *Southeastern Europe* of the University of Arizona (USA) and *Grotiana* in Amsterdam.

As a specialist in Roman law and the history of law, he was elected member of international professional societies of the highest rank: Société „Fernand de Visscher” pour l’histoire des droits de l’antiquité (Bruxelles), Société d’histoire du droit (Paris), Société Jean Bodin pour l’histoire comparative des institutions (Bruxelles). He was an active member of these societies, by participating in the conferences and symposia organized periodically and by publishing valuable scientific papers in the journals and volumes edited on an international level.

Evidence of Professor Vladimir Hanga value results from the mission entrusted to him by the famous Free University of Brussels, to publish the scientific achievements of Romanian legal history, a collection of 15 volumes, edited by the prestigious university mentioned above.

Along the years, he published many volumes, relating not only to the history of the state and Roman law, but also to world history, and especially to ancient history. As a historian of Romanian law, Professor Vl. Hanga published in his 3 volumes *Chrestomathy*, basic texts of the respective institutions, most of which being translated for the first time in Romanian from Latin, Greek, and Old Slavonic. His treatise on the history of Romanian law has been republished in several editions and, for overseas, the Romanian Academy has published his work "Les institutions du droit coutumier roumain", well received and highly appreciated in professional circles.

He published numerous editions of his course of Roman law, and a valuable treaty which remains a landmark in Romance studies. His other well-known volumes, such as *The City of Seven Hills*, *Great Legislators of the World* (2 editions), *Caius Julius Caesar*, *Etudes d’histoire du droit*, the monumental edition of the work of H. Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, and his *Law and Legal Technique*, bring important contributions to the field. The corpus of his published work is enriched by more than 170 articles and reviews on the history of law and universal history, published in scientific journals in the country and abroad.

Due to his thorough knowledge of Latin, Professor Hanga was part of the Romanian Academy team of researchers who translated and edited the Transylvanian medieval documents (published in 10 volumes, by the Academy). In 2002, he translated from Latin *The Institutes of Justinian*, a translation accompanied by notes and annotations. In support of *cupidae legum iuventutis*, he published his work *Latin for Legal Practitioners*, as well as a Latin-Romanian legal dictionary.

He compiled a valuable English-Romanian and Romanian-English legal dictionary, the first of its kind in our field, a small Romanian legal dictionary, highlighting the etymological origin of legal terms, and a volume of legal Latin adages, translated and annotated. He also collaborated to the elaboration of the *Romanian Diplomatic Dictionary* and he contributed to the *Encyclopedia of the Romanian Civilization* with the article on the Romanian legal institutions.

In sign of appreciation for Professor Vladimir Hanga's activity, he was awarded, in 1981, the "Simion Bărnuțiu" award.

He was invited to teach or lecture at many universities abroad, on which occasions he presented various aspects regarding the history of Romanian law, the reception of Roman-Byzantine law, international law, Geto-Dacian law, great Romanian legal practitioners, the work of Hugo Grotius, the actuality of Roman law, the history of national economy etc. The institutions where he taught or lectured: Collège d'Europe, Bruges (1971), Faculty of Law, Paris (1969); Faculty of Law, Strasbourg (1969); U.N.E.S.C.O. Conference, Varna (1968); Faculty of Law, Amsterdam (1971) and Leiden (1971); Cambridge University (1967); Legal Congress in Düsseldorf (1972); University of Heidelberg (1974); Kiel (1975); Max-Planck Institute (1976); University of Sassari (1976); The Romance Colloquium of Leipzig (1977); Faculty of Law, Geneva (1978); The Historians Congress of Vienna (1965) and Bucharest (1980); The Congress of Twin Cities, Ljubljana (1967) etc.

Professor Hanga taught at the Faculties of Law in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, and Arad and at the Faculty of Economics in Cluj-Napoca. As a university professor, he lectured mainly in Roman law, but he held classes in the history of law, the history of economics and political thought, civil law, theory of state and law, international private law, legal technique, legal informatics, and international economic organizations. He advised PhD students in the field of Roman law and the history of law.

He was awarded several times for his teaching activity; he appears in the Romanian Encyclopaedia and in two international encyclopaedias (Cambridge and Marquis Who's Who in the World / USA).

Although he passed away on 16 June 2013, Professor Vladimir Hanga will never leave us. His personality will continue to inspire us and his work will forever remain a prominent landmark for any legal practitioner.