

## A Short History of SAINT SAVA National College

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Saint Sava was actually an old monastery built in Bucharest's historic centre, in the proximity of today's University Square. It was here, in the rooms of the monastery that Romania's first higher education institution was set up.

The founding of this college in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was brought about by a strong European influence, mostly Italian, that encouraged the rise of the national spirit. This assertion of a national awareness had the firm support of many writers and historians of the age.

In Wallachia (Southern Romania) the most remarkable representative of this trend was Constantin Cantacuzino, writer and great patriot, who had been educated in Padua, Italy. He was a widely-travelled aristocrat and adviser to Prince Șerban Cantacuzino.

"As Constantin Cantacuzino was determined to have a college similar to the Italian ones set up in Bucharest, his brother's coming to



power in 1678 made it possible for him to achieve his goal" (Nicolae Iorga, Romanian historian, 1871-1940).

"Saint Sava Princely Academy" was therefore created by Wallachia's reigning Prince Șerban Cantacuzino and it was placed under the aegis of the Prince and of the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Cultural and religious allegiance accounted for the fact that tuition was carried on in Modern Greek, a symbol of Byzantine civilization. The first Principal of the school was Sebastos Kyminitis, who had been educated in Constantinople.

Saint Sava Academy thrived during Constantin Brâncoveanu's reign, who sketched out the curriculum and ensured the funds needed to run the school. A law given in 1707 demanded that "teachers should be understanding and principled; they should also have excellent reputation".

The subjects taught were: Logic, Rhetoric and Physics. Students were also taught "about the Universe, about life and death, about man's soul". Young scholars who had studied in Venice's or Padua's great colleges were traditionally appointed teachers at Saint Sava.

The school was meant to grow into an educational centre, capable of attracting not only young Romanians keen on learning, but also students from neighbouring countries.

Throughout the early years of the Phanariot Princes, Saint Sava School didn't live up to its reputation, which was a result of the new regime's low interest in cultural progress. It was only Constantin Mavrocordat in 1746, Grigore Ghica in 1749 and Alexandru Ypsilanti in 1774 who strove to reform education at Saint Sava. The end of the Phanariot age meant also that the subjects were no longer taught in Greek.

When Gheorghe Lazăr became Principal in 1818, he marked the outset of the second stage in Saint Sava's evolution, that of a national outlook on education.

Its early years 1812-1830 were dominated by the personalities of Gheorghe Lazăr and Ion Eliade Rădulescu. It was a period characterised by a newly-born national spirit, embraced by Romania's intelligentsia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The assertion of the national language

meant that Romanian, rather than Greek, was to be the medium of education in schools. Many upper-class families employed private tutors for their children. Among the former, there was a young man who had come from Transylvania: Gheorghe Lazăr. He definitely shared the ideal of asserting the national language with all those who supported it. In 1823 Ion Eliade Rădulescu took over from Gheorghe Lazăr as Principal of Saint Sava.

Within the subsequent period (1830-1847) of the Organic Statute, General Kiseleff reorganised the national education system. However, the process of introducing the study of French language and literature was under way. Saint Sava's students benefited from the teaching of professors Vaillant, Gros, Lanquillon. Their work supported that of Romanian writers and patriots who passionately promoted national values and ideals. In mid-nineteenth century this trend resolved itself into a national renaissance movement, which was to become a long and difficult process.

The next stage in Saint Sava's long history was closely linked to the 1848 Revolution. One of the Provisional Government's first acts was to abolish the School Rules issued in 1830 and to lay the foundation of a national education system. Ion Măiorescu was appointed Saint Sava's Principal.

When the Revolution was defeated, Russian and Turkish military forces occupied the school and took control of it.

From 1850 to 1858 the school underwent another strong influence, a period known as the Latin one (the idea that the Romanian language developed from Latin was being emphasized).

France's intercession in favour of the two Romanian Principalities at the 1856 Peace Conference in Paris paved the way for the Union of the Principalities (1858-1864). National education gained a new status in society; at the same time, the structure and curricula for secondary school education were established.



In 1864 Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza founded the University of Bucharest; as a result, Saint Sava National School changed its location and moved to its present-day site. Until 1864 Saint Sava had been the only school in Romania that comprised the three levels of public education: primary, secondary and college level.

Furthermore, the school and its teachers were involved in various educational and cultural activities. The school's board was also the permanent committee that ratified the curricula for the two types of education: public and private. The Literary Society created at Saint Sava in 1836 initially focused on shaping and refining the language of literature. This society was to develop and grow into the future Romanian Academy in later years.

Similarly, Saint Sava's rich library was the foundation stone of the Library of Romania's Academy, just as the school's museum of natural history was offered to Bucharest's Museum of Natural History.



Saint Sava School, the former "Princely Academy", later turned into a National college by Gheorghe Lazăr and his disciples stands out as symbols of the Romanians' permanent thirst for improved education and culture.

### Well-known Romanians scholars who taught at Saint Sava National College

<b>Sebastos Kyminitis</b>	the first teacher and Principal of Saint Sava School
<b>Gheorghe Lazăr</b> (1779-1823)	founder of Romania's higher education system
<b>Emanoil Bacalogu</b> (1830-1892)	teacher of Mathematics and Physics, member of the Romanian Academy, founder of the Science Society
<b>Titu Măiorescu</b> (1840-1907)	Philosophy teacher, politician, member of the Romanian Academy
<b>Bogdan P. Hasdeu</b> (1838-1907)	historian, writer; the first linguist to use the comparative historical method
<b>Grigore Tocilescu</b> (1850-1919)	archaeologist, member of the Romanian Academy, one of the first historians who studied the ancient civilisation that had existed on the territory of Romania
<b>Simion Mehedinți</b> (1869-1962)	studied at Saint Sava School; founder of the Romanian Geographic Society, member of the Romanian Academy
<b>Thoma Ionescu</b> (1860-1926)	studied at Saint Sava School; founder of Romanian modern surgery, member of the Romanian Academy
<b>Theodor Pallady</b> (1871-1956)	painter

### Well-known Romanians who studied at Saint Sava National College

<b>Dinicu Golescu</b> (1777-1830)	founder of the Literary Society in 1827; contributed to the founding of the first Romanian newspaper in 1829
<b>Cristian Tell</b> (1807-1864)	general of the 1848 Revolutionary army
<b>C. A. Rosetti</b> (1816-1885)	journalist, politician, one of the leaders of the 1848 Revolution and of the Union of Wallachia and Moldavia
<b>Dimitrie C. Brătianu</b> (1818-1892)	diplomat of the 1848 Revolution and of the Union of 1859
<b>Nicolae Bălcescu</b> (1819-1852)	historian, leader of the 1848 Revolution
<b>Gheorghe Tătărescu</b> (1820-1894)	painter, founder alongside Teodor Aman of Bucharest's Art School in 1864
<b>Ion C. Brătianu</b> (1821-1891)	Prime Minister, fought for the Union of 1859 and for the Independence War in 1877
<b>Barbu Delavrancea</b> (1858-1918)	writer, playwright, politician, member of the Romanian Academy
<b>Constantin I. Nottara</b> (1853-1935)	actor, professor at the Drama School of Bucharest, theatre director
<b>Spiru Haret</b> (1851-1912)	the first Romanian doctor in Mathematics, politician, Minister of Education
<b>Ion Cantacuzino</b> (1863-1934)	doctor, bacteriologist, member of the Romanian Academy, founder of the modern microbiology and experimental medical school
<b>Ștefan Luchian</b> (1869-1916)	painter
<b>Iulia Hasdeu</b> (1869-1888)	Romanian writer, author of poetry written in French
<b>Tudor Arghezi</b> (1880-1967)	poet and prose writer, member of the Romanian Academy
<b>Henri Coandă</b> (1886-1972)	engineer, aeronautics expert, he discovered in 1934 what came to be known as the "Coandă" effect
<b>Camil Petrescu</b> (1894-1957)	writer, journalist and essayist, director of the National Theatre, member of the Romanian Academy
<b>Eugen Ionescu</b> (1912-1994)	world famous playwright, representative of the "theatre of the absurd"

## Present day Saint Sava

Elevated to the level of college, it comprises 34 forms, out of which the majority are sciences classes: mathematics–informatics, informatics, physics–chemistry (26). There are also classes of humanistic studies (4) and of natural science (4).

Some of the mathematics–informatics forms are bilingual classes having a larger number of English and French classes per week as these students have very good knowledge of both, sciences and foreign languages. This is a great asset for them.



Our high–school has a total of 19 classrooms and specialised laboratories for computer science, chemistry, biology, physics, geography, French, English.

The library is quite large, providing students with all the books and sources of information they need.



Our high–school’s tradition sets a high standard for the students, who strive to improve themselves. This is the reason why every year our students win first prizes in every school competition, up to the highest stages.

Saint Sava teachers are amongst the best in Bucharest; their commitment contributes actively to the promotion of educational projects.

*Bucharest 2007*



***SAINT SAVA  
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COLLEGE  
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