

**A STUDY OF THE STATE OF THE PROFESSION OF LIBRARIANS
WITH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE IN THE
“LUCIAN BLAGA” CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

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Motto:

“Taking the risk of being accused of nihilism, we think that in our country... there is no librarianship profession yet, although there are thousands of public libraries, school libraries, trade union libraries, technical libraries and military libraries... In a paradoxical way we do not dare recognise this situation, although we confess it to ourselves, although with confusion and a feeling of regret.

It is enough to think of ourselves how we became librarians, in order to convince ourselves that almost all of us are products of hazard and of situations not quite favourable for us.”

Corneliu Dima-Drăgan

“... Librarians are usually trained for other careers than that of librarians and come here [in libraries] at random, without any initial training.”

Ioachim Crăciun

I. Motivation of the subject

This study was initiated with the wish to remind librarians of something known but not broadly discussed: the fact that librarianship training requires a university level education system, post-graduate and doctorate degrees included, and that the forms of librarianship education should be planned starting from the *actual state* of the profession in Romania.

We wrote this study about the present state of the profession in order to trace future changes within the University Library in Cluj, changes in mentality and attitude towards the librarianship profession.

By "state of the profession" we mean the certified general and special training of professionals, who articulate their own way of thinking and mentality regarding certain tasks on which the elements of their self-conscience are built and the way they face the present and future challenges of the profession.

We observed that the change of attitude towards this profession depends to a great extent on changes within the library, professional competence of the staff and the way in which the institution functions.

The librarianship profession is not viewed with too much sympathy and consideration, because many people think that it lacks dynamism and is highly bureaucratic; librarianship education is not in a very good position either, from the perspective of its level and its importance in scientific research. Therefore it is not surprising that the profession is underestimated and librarians are dissatisfied because they are convinced of the value of their work and, on the other hand, they are conscious of the social medium which minimizes the value of their activity.

The paper also intends to identify the main problems of the functioning of the institution, its general management, the ascending and descending flow of information within the institution, the training and information of the staff, etc.

Issues of mentality and the elements which determine professional mentality are treated in length.

The history of the *last 30 years* of the profession, more precisely, the institutionalised professional training of librarians shows the following:

* For a long time, there was no special training for librarians in our country, although during seventy years of education, various forms of high-school, post-high school and university level education sprung up.

The 3-year Pedagogic Institute within the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest had a Librarianship Section between 1963 and 1970, led by Professor Dan Simionescu. The institute trained library technicians, teaching them bibliography and theoretical notions of librarianship.

The optional course of Bibliology, taught by Professor Simionescu at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest was continued in 1972 by Corneliu Dima-Drăgan (until 1980) and Eugen Marinescu (until 1990).

Between 1969-1975 there was a Librarianship School near the "Dimitrie Marinescu" Polygraphic College in Bucharest which trained librarians for the network of public libraries.

* However, the professional training of librarians in the last decades was marked by the lack of a university level and postgraduate librarianship education. Most librarians working in University Libraries graduated from the Faculty of Letters.

Professional training was carried on mainly in the libraries, because of the lack of a library legislation which would stipulate for the training of professionals within a multi-level and methodical system of education.

* The most acute problem has been, and still is, the basic training of librarians. As there was no organised and permanent form of librarianship education, the qualification of the staff has been done (and is still done) at the work place.

However, there have been regular programs of professional training in the library.

Essentially, the program of professional training contained courses and practical activity for beginners, more precisely, the newly employed, and for librarians with a certain length of service. These offered a general view of the library and taught the basic practical elements of librarianship, bibliography and documentation.

* In the 1980s, the training of the staff was reduced to occasional individual studying and the sustaining of reports on librarianship problems, within the ad-hoc Circle of Papers in the Central University Library, or participation in local and national symposiums, but also on the basis of an official, central and formal 5-year program.

* After 1990, Romanian librarianship education underwent a new stage in organisation and functioning by founding colleges of librarianship in many towns.

Beginning with the university year 1991-1992, a Librarianship College and a section of bibliography functioned in Bucharest, beside the Faculty of Letters. In other university centres (Braşov, Sibiu, Târgoviste) librarianship colleges also appeared. The Librarianship College in Cluj was founded in 1995-1996 linked with the Faculty of History and Philosophy.

The activity of professional training of librarians in university libraries, in the Cluj University library too, has been done traditionally, by organising librarianship courses for all the newly employed librarians. Besides these general courses of introduction to librarianship there were also courses in library automation.

Many librarians participated in training courses in the country and abroad. Nevertheless, professional training still remains an individual activity, mostly, depending on the understanding that professional competence is indispensable today and in the future.

The library which is directly involved in the information process as a medium of communication, is subject to permanent change. There are changes on the level of mentality and professional behaviour too. The automation of libraries requires their reorganisation, the changing of their functions and the re-thinking of the profession. Romanian librarians have had to face new situations which imply the profound change of the profession. This presupposes the combination of

certain tasks with more complex ones, increasing the scale of individual responsibilities.

However, librarians with some kind of university degree and various abilities perform almost the same tasks as librarians with a high school diploma.

Such situations which do not encourage the idea of value hierarchy and do not give librarians with a university degree any intellectual satisfaction are characteristic to the actual state of the profession. *Not making use* of the abilities of librarians is a waste for society as well as for the library, where the efficiency of librarians is low especially when they perform mechanical activities.

II. Research methodology

The present research has as its main objective the presentation of the state of the profession of librarians with university degrees in the Central University Library, Cluj. Moreover, it reveals certain conclusions and makes suggestions for plans of professional training as well as the practice and conception of library management of the Cluj University Library.

The factors of professional training are considered first of all as *explanations* of the actual state of the profession, and only in the second instance shall we consider them as suggestions for the improvement of librarianship training.

We have established in accordance with our subject of research

* **the method of investigation:** indirect inquiry - on the basis of questionnaires

* **the sample:** 117 subjects (out of a total of 219 employees with a university degree - 53,42% of the employees of the library at the time of the investigation). This group has librarians, editors, IT staff.

* **period of the investigation:** 27 September -25 October 1996

* **the questionnaire** has 29 questions, most of them pre-codified, grouped according to their form (closed questions, open questions, mixed questions) and content (factual questions and questions of opinion); the structure of the questionnaire allowed for the collection of two types of data (quantitative and qualitative). (See the **Appendix**.)

The results of the investigation revealed the frequency of answers given to questions labelled and marked from Q1 to Q28, whereas answers to question 29, "Observations and suggestions", were analysed and presented in the research report (Discussions and Conclusions).

III. The presentation and interpretation of data

We will present the main data obtained from the answers in a synthetic form.

The first set of questions (1-4) aims at identifying the *motivation* of employees to occupy posts in the library.

It is significant that 70% of the respondents did not even think of becoming librarians during their university studies.

Indifferent of thinking about this possibility or not, 28,9% of the employees of the Central University Library occupied posts here because they wanted a working place in Cluj county, and another 22.2% said they had no other choice. Therefore more than 50% of the respondents became librarians because of extra-professional motives, that is, under the pressure of circumstances. However, 30% consider that their employment in the library is in conformity with their training, this being a motivation of their decision. Only 10% say that being employed as librarians means the fulfilment of the dream of their lives, and only 4.4% of the respondents consider that being employed in the library signified a career step.

83.3% of the sample had different jobs before being employed and only 15.6% were employed directly after graduating.

The next set of questions refers to the *professional training* of the respondents. We must emphasize that we did not consider it necessary to separate the initial specialisation (the degree attested by a university diploma) from training in the library. On the contrary, the *relation* between these two types of training and formation seemed important to us. Therefore, the set of questions regarding this issue has three subdivisions focusing on complementary but not identical aspects.

A. The first subdivision (questions 5-9) refers to the link maintained by the respondents with their *initial* speciality. It is heartening that 75.6% declare that they are still in touch with their initial specialisation while working in the library, and only 24.6% assert that they have *lost* contact with their initial specialisation altogether. If we wish to understand the significance of these percentages, we see that only 35.6% of the respondents declare that they are in contact with their initial specialisation because this is determined by their *tasks at the working place*. Most of the subjects try to maintain this contact because of individual needs, confronting a strong tendency of *de-qualification* (41.1%). This great majority warns us of another thing which affects the effective state of the profession. If 41.4% of the subjects employed in the library sense the existence of a de-qualifying "trend" vis-à-vis their initial training, this should be considered a warning for the *administrative frames* of their activity as well as for the research of the future state of the profession. The solitary struggle of these librarians against a de-qualifying trend and the outcome of this struggle cannot be indifferent for a changing profession in a transitional society.

6.7% of the respondents stated they have kept in touch with their initial speciality in order to maintain the chance of finding another job. This is also a result of the forementioned de-qualifying tendencies.

It is similarly disconcerting that only 7.8% of the respondents declare that they maintain this contact in order to be "promoted" in the institution. This means that only 7.8% see a *relation* between maintaining/improving their initial speciality and the possibility of being *promoted*. A percentage of 11 respondents adds to this: their motivation in maintaining a contact with their initial speciality is *financial*.

Indifferent of maintaining a contact with their initial speciality, 52.2% answered that there is a *strong* connection between this and their tasks at the library and 34.4% said that they coincide only *sporadically*, whereas 11.1% declared that there is *no connection* between them.

The majority of the employees with a university degree did not attend librarianship courses at high school (82.2%) or at university (76.7%). However, 42.2% of all the respondents attended courses at university which were connected somehow with the essence of librarianship activities. Courses such as Informatics, the Sociology of Culture, Archive Keeping and Paleology (in the order of the frequency of their mentioning) did not offer a training in bibliology. The majority of the respondents (51.1%) have not attended any such courses.

In view of the situation of bibliological education presented in the introduction, these data show that the majority of the library staff with a university degree are provided with *bibliological education only at the working place*. Consequently, we must formulate critical questions and questions of principle regarding the *effective* bibliological qualification of this majority. After all, training at the working place is a specific type of training of *unqualified* staff! This holds good for the authors of this paper too.

B. Therefore, the second subdivision of this set of questions (10-14) refers to the *introductory courses of bibliology and continuous formation*. 93% of the respondents participated at least in courses of initiation organised by the library. And 74.4% of these respondents participated in courses of further training and continuous professional training, besides the courses of initiation.

Taking into account the fact that after 1990 librarians could organise and/or participate in courses abroad or held by lecturers coming from abroad, we formulated a question (nr.12) concerning the provenance of lecturers. 57.8% of the respondents participated in courses held by lecturers from the country and abroad and only 22.2% participated only in courses held by lecturers from the country.

It is natural that the issue of appreciating the *differences* between courses held by lecturers from the country and those held by lecturers from abroad was raised. We were interested in the nature of the possible differences, fixed by indicators such as "*competence*" and "*mentality*". Only a percentage of 8.9% responded that there is no difference between the courses. It is noteworthy though that a relatively large number of the respondents (28.9%) consider that differences are only on the level of mentality, not on the level of competence. We must also stress the general sensibility of respondents to the problems and differences of

mentality, because the rest of the respondents (22.2%) said that beyond differences of mentality there is a difference in the competence of lecturers. *That is, 51,1% of the respondents explicitly stated a difference in mentality in the treatment of courses by foreign lecturers and lecturers from the country.*

We were interested in librarians' view of the *status* of these forms of professional bibliological training (initial and/or continuous training). In other words, we were interested in the way and the level of making conscious the state of fact of their personality from the point of view of the methods of training.

The distribution of answers to this question is extremely interesting and edifying. We can say that the majority of the respondents have a feeling and a conscience of unfulfilment in their professional bibliological training (formation), although articulated in different ways. 7.8% assert that these forms of training are nothing else than a qualification at the working place, 24.4% say that these courses offer only the necessary knowledge to everyday practice and 27.8% say that they do not offer a superior re-specialisation but only the possibility to find one's way in the tendencies of the profession. *Therefore, 60% of the librarians with a university degree feel the lack of a high-level bibliological training.*

However, an important percentage of 33.3% assert that these methods of training and perfecting satisfy the requirements of obtaining a *new, university level specialisation in bibliology.*

Consequently, there is a significant percentage of employees with university training who consider that these forms of training assure a specialisation "equivalent" with one obtained by a systematic curricula and difficult exams. This means that in the opinion of these respondents university-level bibliologic education can be confined in fact to the passing through certain initial steps followed by continuous formation within the institution.

On account of its structure and the frequency of answers, this question points in two interdependent and complementary directions: main mentalities which are asserted as elements of the state of the profession and factors of experience and *alternative* information which accomplish any authentic professional training and also structure mentalities.

C. Therefore, the third subdivision of this set of questions refers, in a synthetic way, to the modes of professional training by direct contact and visits abroad with various professional motives.

Evidently, the majority of librarians with a university degree (72.2%) did not have access to these forms of professional openings and accomplishments. Only 26.7% of the respondents benefited from them.

Visits abroad included participation in professional courses (13.3%), congresses and scientific programmes (12.2%), exchange of experience and documentation. Only 1.1% of the respondents conducted research or had *concrete tasks* when going abroad. This *indeterminacy* of the aims of visits - characteristic

of transitions - is also reflected in the distribution of financing and "sending" people abroad. The respondents went abroad mainly on the basis of grants offered by various foundations, governments and universities (11.1%) or "in other ways" (10%) and only 7.8% were actually *sent* by the library and /or the ABIR (Association of Romanian Librarians) (5.6%). Anyway, visits abroad were not organised on the basis of *programmes* which would then ensure their future *use* on an institutional and professional-mental level.

These analyses point towards the next set of questions (questions nr.18-20), which try to reveal certain elements of the *mental structure* which articulates the state of profession in case of librarians with a university degree.

Starting from the fact that the main task of the librarianship profession is effective modernisation and synchronisation with the major international tendencies of the profession, we were interested in the way respondents relate to this challenge. A great percentage of the respondents (74.4%) considers that experiences from visits abroad must be used in the Central University Library, Cluj. However, it is significant that 24.4% of the respondents did *not* answer this question which means that they did not ask themselves this question yet, and they are probably undecided in this respect. Only 1.1% of the respondents were clearly *against* the use of foreign experiences (in 1996!)

The following table presents the scale of modifications and effective steps that should be taken, in the view of the respondents, in order that foreign experiences can be applied:

Table nr 1. The statistic results of variables concerning the conditions of the application of foreign experiences in the institution - changing mentality, professional training and the organisation of the institution

Variables	Frequency
changing mentality and the organisation of the institution	35.6
changing mentality and the professional training of librarians	32.2
it is not necessary to change mentality, only professional training must be changed	3.3
no changes are necessary in professional training, mentality must be changed only	12.2
we are prepared to apply foreign experiences directly, without any changes	4.4

TOTAL: 87.7

The table shows clearly that the majority of the respondents considers that the application of international experiences require *major changes in the*

institution. 35.6% of the respondents think that there must be changes on the mental and organisational level too. 32.2% considers that changes must be on the level of mentalities and the professional training of librarians.

The weight of the other types of answers is a possible warning regarding the way in which the respondents judge the relation between professional training and mentality. 15.5% of the respondents think that mental and professional questions do not go hand in hand, but they are parallel, and therefore they consider that in order to use international experiences it is enough to change either mentality or professional training (3.3%).

This warning is underlined by the configuration of answers to question nr.20. As the questionnaire in the appendix shows, respondents were asked to appreciate the differences between the different central services of the library (by notes from 1 to 10); there was also the option of not knowing these services. We did not intend to draw a hierarchy of these services, but we were interested in the configuration of some of the elements of the mental structure of librarians with a university degree when appreciating the departments of the institution in which they work and, on the other hand, the identification of the factors which effectively and decisively influence evaluations.

The next table shows in a synoptic way the distribution of the frequency of answers to this question.

Table nr.2. The frequency of options in the evaluation of compartments in the central library

Dpt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99 *	0
frequency ACQUISITIONS	13	5	7	8	12	7	3	6	4	1	11	13
frequency CATALOGUING-CLASSIFICATION	-	1	-	1	2	2	11	20	11	17	12	13
frequency DOCUMENTATION	3	2	2	2	7	5	6	8	9	6	23	17
frequency INFORMATICS LAB	-	-	2	1	3	1	6	13	15	17	14	18
frequency PUBLIC RELATIONS	2	1	2	3	4	7	8	23	7	9	10	14
frequency BOOK LENDING	1	1	1	6	5	3	15	17	9	4	12	14
frequency DEPOSIT	1	1	2	2	3	3	11	18	8	7	17	17
frequency PERIODICALS	1	2	1	2	2	7	8	14	13	6	20	14
frequency INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE	2	3	5	1	5	5	8	11	10	4	22	14
frequency SPECIAL COLLECTIONS	-	-	2	-	6	3	3	8	11	17	25	15

Respondents also wrote *comments* to this question. From the point of view of the analysis of mentalities we have tried to make, their comments are as relevant and symptomatic as the answers or the *negative* information they bear.

We must say that this was the *first* questionnaire for librarians as employees of the institution. Therefore they do not possess the skill of answering questionnaires which contain concrete questions concerning their institution and its way of organisation and functioning. However, “comments” to this question (many of the librarians reason that they do not know the departments of the library because “they did not actually work there” and invoke the “subjectivity” in the process of evaluation - as though the anonymity of the questionnaire would mean giving up the personality) - may suggest that, besides the lack of the skill of completing questionnaires, the ability of *expressing and sustaining an opinion* is also missing...

Therefore, one of the most significant columns of this table is that in which respondents declare *not knowing* certain departments and services.

Table nr. 3. The frequency of answers regarding the departments declared to be *unknown* by the respondents

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Acquisitions	11	12.2
Cataloguing-Classification	12	13.3
Documentation Dpt.	13	25.6
Informatics Lab	14	15.6
Public relations	10	11.1
Book lending	12	13.3
Deposit	17	18.9
Periodicals	20	22.2
International exchange	22	24.4
Special collections	25	27.8

As the table shows, the least *transparent* or *visualised* and most *unknown* for the librarians is the *Special Collections* (27.8%), *Documentation and Information* (25.6%), *International exchange* (24.4%) and the *Periodicals* department. These percentages do not simply refer to the “more specialised” nature of activities of the departments in question. The *Informatics Laboratory* or the *Cataloguing and Classification Department* where there are also special activities, seem to be more familiar and transparent than those on the first places in the list. This is probably due to deficiencies in the *management* of these *departments* which do not successfully impose their own clear image in the vision of the colleagues and the institution, functioning in opacity determined by their activity not being

known by the colleagues. Which is then the main factor which determines and models the way in which the departments of the institution are known by its employees with a university degree? The following table clearly shows that one of the main factors which influence the knowledge of the different departments is their *length of establishment in the library*.

Table nr. 4. The statistic summary of the percentages registered by correlating the question about the age of departments in the library and their not being known

Oldness ----- Unknown department	Under 5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-25 years	More than 25 years
Acquisitions	41.2	16.0	-	-	-
Cataloguing- Classification	29.4	20.0	10.0	6.3	-
Documentation	52.9	40.0	33.3	6.7	20.0
Informatics lab	23.5	19.2	22.2	14.3	-
Public relations	11.8	20.0	20.0	6.3	-
Book lending	18.8	10.0	10.0	6.3	-
Deposit	17.6	30.0	30.0	13.3	-
Periodicals	35.3	40.0	40.0	6.7	-
International exchange	41.2	40.0	40.0	6.7	14.3
Special collections	50.0	40.0	40.0	14.3	14.3

This table shows that the departments of the library gradually become known as they *grew older in the institution* and their knowledge is *not* due to general or departmental managerial projects which regulate organisational communication between the services and employees of the institution, requiring actions directed towards the creation of an image for the interior public, the employees.

Remaining within the issue of parameters which structure the mentality of appreciation, we considered it necessary to advance and analyse another hypothesis. We presupposed that visits abroad and direct professional contacts would significantly influence the *mental* criteria of appreciation. In order to check this hypothesis, we drew up the following table:

Table nr.5. The distribution of the average values in the evaluation of compartments in the Central University Library in the function of the answers of respondents to question 15 - "Have you been on professional visits abroad after 1989"?

Dpt.	Has been on professional visits abroad				The differences in the average of appreciation compared to those who have been abroad
	YES		NO		
	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	
Acquisitions	4.89	19	4.25	47	+ 0.64
Cataloguing-classification	7.88	18	8.34	47	- 0.46
Documentation	6.06	16	6.94	34	- 0.88
Informatics lab	8.37	16	8.28	42	+ 0.09
Public relations	6.50	18	7.51	47	- 1.01
Book lending	6.94	19	7.04	42	- 0.10
Deposit	6.81	16	7.61	39	- 0.8
Periodicals	7.17	17	7.46	39	- 0.29
International exchange	5.46	15	7.02	39	- 1.56
Special collections	8.06	15	8.20	35	- 0.14

Analysing the average values in the evaluation of compartments in function of professional visits abroad we can see a *weak and not univocal* tendency of the respondents who have been abroad to appreciate the departments *more severely*. The fact that besides not being univocal, this tendency is also *contradictory*, (see *Acquisitions* and the *Informatics Laboratory*) warns us that the field of professional mentalities is a relatively independent sphere. It does not automatically change by the increasing quantity of information or by personal experiences gained in "parallel" zones. It seems that the improvement of technical equipment, the information gained or direct contact with the international tendencies of the profession do not automatically lead to changes in mentality. Therefore we must answer the question: How can mentalities be influenced?

The answer to this question requires, of course, supplementary and special research. Our research reveals, however, the lack of an adequate *public space*, which would bring to surface the existing mental tendencies so that they can be *identified*, approved of or rejected, depending on their real consistence, in function of argumentative dialogic situations.

Answers to the following set of questions (nr.21-24) calls attention to the fact that this is not only about the lack of a public sphere adequate for mental

manifestations and clearing up, but the lack of publicity in general, in the functioning of the institution. We have already mentioned the lack of transparence in the case of certain departments.

However, the answers of respondents to question nr.21 if they are informed or not about the *programs* drawn up by the *management of the institution*, show that 57% do not know these programs and only 34.4% declare themselves to be informed about them. Even more significant is the fact that only 45.2% of those who know the programs of the institution declare to have learnt about them *in an official way* and 59.6% (the majority) learned about it *by chance*. Furthermore, only 32.2% of those who declare to know the programs of the institution were also *asked* to cooperate in these programs. The majority (58%) was not asked to cooperate.

In spite of this, 50% of the respondents maintain that they have put forward suggestions and proposals for the improvement of different library activities. A large percentage (40%) of the employees with a university degree recognize their passivity in this respect. The reasons for this *passivity* should be also investigated, of course.

Until then, however, let us see the distribution of answers to question nr. 24, concerning the *reception* of suggestions put forward (see table nr.6.)

Table nr.6. The frequency of answers concerning the *reception* of suggestions by the management of the library

Q 24 - How was your suggestion received?	Frequency	Percent
Appreciated, but not carried out	20	44.4
Neglected	16	35.5
Carried out	6	13.3
Rejected	1	1.1
No answer	2	2.2
TOTAL	45	96.5

Therefore, 13.3% of the respondents assert that their proposal was carried out, but 44.4% assert that their proposal though appreciated was not carried out. A large percentage (35.5%) says that their suggestions were not acted on.

The last set of questions refers to the *identification* of the respondents.

The majority of the respondents (64.4%) are in the age group between 31-50 years. 18.9% were over 51 at the date of the research whereas 11.1% of librarians with a university degree were under 30.

Approximatively half of the employees (52.2%) with a university degree have worked in the institution for less than 10 years and 33.3% have worked in the

library for 10 to 25 years, whereas 10% of the respondents have an experience of more than 26 years.

Most of the librarians with a university degree graduated from the *Faculty of Letters* (37.8%), which is followed by the *Faculty of History and Philosophy* (16.7%); as an expression of the general situation of the economy, the *Technical University* is in the third place (12.2%), followed by *Natural Sciences* (7.8%), the *Faculty of Economics* (4.4%) and the *Law Faculty* (2.2%).

52.2% of the respondents work at the Central University Library and 27.8% work in branch libraries. The high percentage (20%) of no-answers strengthen our previous considerations concerning the lack of skills in filling questionnaires which is at the same time a self-critical warning for those who formulated the questionnaire and were not circumspect enough in taking into account this fact.

We must also say that there was a long interval between the application of the questionnaire and the publication of the study.

The last question featured the respondents' observations and suggestions concerning the questionnaire and future research subjects (see the Appendix).

Analysing the observations, our conclusion is that there is an *expectation* of the respondents that the results of the questionnaire should have a *purpose*, that certain steps should be taken on the level of library management.

These steps should be directed to the dynamics of the professional training of librarians and the invention of more rigorous methods of *evaluating* their activity.

With regard to the respondents' suggestions concerning the future research subjects, these are:

- following the path of suggestions put forward by employees
- the analysis of the administrative departments of the library which were not included in this research.

Some respondents also suggest the analysis of the *concrete problems* of their departments.

On the whole, the suggestions of the respondents refer to *decisive* issues in the management of the library.

It must be noted too that respondents suggest the studying of these issues on all hierarchical levels (Heads of Departments, the Departments as such, the annexed administrative services, etc.)

It is also important from a managerial perspective that respondents suggest the informational-communicational *following* of the administrative route of suggestions in the institution.

We can conclude therefore that, closely connected with their doubts regarding the nature and aim of questionnaires, respondents ask in fact for *applied studies of management* on all levels of the formal structure of the institution.

IV. Discussions and Conclusions

The main issues raised by answers to the questions were already discussed at the presentation and analysis of data. We think that they convinced us of the need and importance of *systematic* and *periodical* studies on the state of the profession and on the different levels of its development. Although we have no knowledge about similar studies, our research takes only the first steps in outlining the problems of the subject.

Thus, the analysis revealed *three* important issues which have and will continue to have a decisive role in the present and future configuration of the state of the profession of librarians with a university degree.

The *first* problem is the relationship between the initial specialisation of librarians with a university degree and their new specialisation required by the challenges of their employment in the library. The tensions and oscillations of their conscience points to the existence and the reception of some quite visible *dangers* and *traps*. If the formation in the new field does not offer a new speciality training or a post-graduate degree in librarianship, then for the majority of librarians there remains only one alternative, that of the degrading of their first specialisation and of the second which is not yet a degree in this country. This is accompanied by *ambitious* behaviour. The proliferation of this behaviour in the library is shown by the large percentage (30%) of respondents who assert - without any criticism - that some courses and visits abroad are equivalent with a high level education in librarianship. There can be no greater disapproval of the librarianship profession, in fact.

The *second* focal point is the issue of mentality. Of course, the issue of mentalities, their diversity and mostly their *incoherence* and *anachronism* is a general problem of Romanian society. Regarding this more general aspect, our research pointed out again the relative *autonomy* and *independence* of the mental sphere of the sphere of experience and information (that is, factual knowledge). It is also evident that the need for changes and even mutations in mentalities in the present can be felt more acutely, day by day. The ways of access to mentality must therefore be identified and *used* correctly. Hypothetically, our study pointed out that one of these ways is the creation of the *public* and *civil* society of the profession. However, management is another way.

Management is the *third* burning issue. From the beginning, one of the natural aims of our research was to help to throw light on existing problems, to provide the management with data and images about their nature, content and dimensions. Otherwise, the whole research and the circulation of questionnaires, too, was supported by the management of the institution.

The conclusions of the analyses of the state of the profession of librarians with a university degree in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library can and must be discussed from other perspectives too.

We would like to stress that at the time of the research the majority (53.4%) of the librarians in the institution were librarians with a university degree. And we are convinced that our study shows the *real* state of their bibliological training. If we add the finding of the study that more than 40% of these employees are under 40 and another 35% are under 50, we have a population which has the chance, theoretically, at least, to continue to work for one or more *decades* in the library. This means that the problem of their authentic double specialisation asks for a rapid and also serious solution. For at least a part of this category, *postgraduate studies* are imminent, moreover, they offer a chance of accomplishment and realisation. We think that the orientation towards a uni-specialised and purely bibliological training of the future generation should be re-considered from a conceptual point of view and the perspective of the state of fact of the situation given by the configuration of the functions filled by present and future librarians with a university degree.

Until then, we should not dispense with the spiritual echo of the warning given by Corneliu Dima-Drăgan who obsessively calls our attention that “in our country... there is no librarianship profession yet, although there are thousands of public libraries...”

As any other “exercise of consciousness” this warning is oppressive. However, oppressions always provoke us. If we really understand the “reference” of the provocation then there is the hope - true, a romantic one - that every danger has its *salvation*, too. The librarianship faculties and colleges seem to be the “salvation” for the librarianship profession. This number of the periodical has more articles which debate and/or study the issue of university level librarianship education.

The nature and the results of our study allow and also compel us to consider this issue closely linked to *real* possibilities and requirements. The question arises if professionals trained in these institutions can replace or, as it is today, eliminate those employees whose initial specialisation is other than bibliography.

This question is neither simple nor factual. It has at least *two* hypostases. In the first case it must be treated *independently* of the *actual* level of these faculties or colleges because it also refers to the genuine evaluation of some “activities” performed in a traditional way in the library but also to others which are articulated by present-day openings. There is a widespread opinion in Romanian “special” literature according to which the librarian needs a “wide general culture” in classification-cataloguing and in compiling bibliographies, besides the compulsory “mawkish” love of books.

The question arises therefore if the foundation and conception of these bibliologic schools will not in fact be in service of the spread of conceptions which were in fact erroneous but which nevertheless dominate the territorial segment of our bibliologic literature. Because, any professional who works (seriously) in an

encyclopaedic library, a special library or a centre of documentation should recognize that a broad general culture is not enough for the classification, indexing and/or processing of a doctorate thesis in nuclear physics, for example, but this document and then the user will require *specialist* knowledge. Only someone who has specialist knowledge will be able to use the indexing tables, vocabularies and thesauruses. The same holds good for *special bibliographies*, although their case is more complicated, not to mention authentic *databases* which presuppose not only multiple indexing but also the writing of summaries, etc.

Will librarianship and information science or, even, information college graduates be able to face such special requirements, which belong nevertheless to the traditional range of activities in scientific libraries? Taking into consideration the curricula of these colleges, the answer is no, although nobody asks this question and nobody bothers to think about it.

In the second hypostasis of the question regarding the possibility of the replacement or elimination of the present staff with degrees in specialities other than bibliography, the *level of these colleges cannot be avoided*. The results of this research corroborated with those of another investigation regarding the scientific level and mentality of our bibliographic literature: it marks in fact the actual paradigms of the horizon of speciality of this system of education.

Beyond the fact that education cannot substantially go beyond the level of its speciality literature, we must say that the majority of the lecturers from the Cluj Librarianship College *do not have* their own scientific and research activity which would result in studies or articles published in speciality periodicals or volumes. There is one exception, Ioana Robu, who has a masters degree in librarianship and the case of Sally Wood-Lamont who is a fully qualified librarian from Edinburgh and Fellow of the Library Association, the highest degree in librarianship. This situation is understandable. Ionuț Costea's article dedicated to the Cluj Librarianship College (also published in this number) throws light on this issue. However, this aspect belongs to the subject of our research, the state of the librarianship profession, which cannot be studied in its hermeneutic truth if we do not take into account the actual configuration of its *real*, future horizons. The problem which cannot be avoided any more, is: how can future specialists be educated and guided to do research and scientific work if they are "taught" by lecturers the majority of which do not have experience in this respect, essential otherwise for every higher education institution? This is an increasing danger, and "anulvation" which hopefully accompanies it, can only come from those whose speciality is *other* than "bibliology". Again, we are in a *circle* which, left to the mercy of circumstances, does not increase hermeneutically but in a *vicious* way.

All the more so as the *Internet* puts libraries in a completely new situation. Its novelty is not confined to "navigation", "information retrieval" or "contacts", but it means first of all the elimination of many of the traditional activities of "reference" and, on the other hand, users being provided with

information for which they applied to the library before. Therefore the Internet issues a challenge for librarians: they must become *producers as well as creators of information*. This means much more than disseminating information by giving access to the library's catalogues or creating databases of the collections. Although there is much confusion around this issue for the benefit of mediocrity and those who fish in troubled waters, this is all about "*capitalising*" library collections by *research* and by *creations* which are born in a horizon the focal point of which is, and remains, the *library*.

When so many empty words are said about the *Library of the Future*, we must say emphatically, after all, that *research and creation within the library* was never so important, in any hypostasis or epoch, as it is now and never had it such a decisive and essential role as it has in the actual period and in that to come. This is in fact the *essence* of the message transmitted, against the background of fashionable sparkling screens of effective technical instruments.

Therefore it is natural that our research, as any other authentic hermeneutic investigation should end with incomplete *questions*. That is, knowing and identifying the *shortcomings* of the state of our profession, how could we *turn* the positive articulations, aspects and possibilities of the actual situation of librarians with a university degree *to good account*? How many of the activities and future activities could *actually* be covered by *future* librarians "subjected" to the actual types of bibliological training?

What "salvation" is there now, in this state of *emergency*, for the danger which was forced to have an unjustly long time to grow by history?

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

to librarians with a university degree in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library

Dear Colleague,

The office of sociological research in our library is conducting a survey on the situation and the professional information of the staff.

The data collected by circulating this questionnaire will be useful for the management of the library and it will also be the basis of a study published in in-house library journal.

At the same time, our aim is to identify the main problems confronted by our institution and its staff, so that these can be covered by future research.

Please be attentive and honest in answering the following questions, marking each answer with x.

The questionnaire is completely anonymous!

Thank you for your collaboration.

1. While a student, did you think of becoming a librarian?

- 1.1 Yes
- 1.2 No

2. Were you employed elsewhere before being employed by the Library?

- 2.1 Yes
- 2.2 No

3. If Yes, was your former working place also in Cluj?

- 3.1 Yes
- 3.2 No

4. Why did you choose this working place?

- 4.1 Because of my training
- 4.2 It is a palce of work in Cluj
- 4.3 It was a step up in my career
- 4.4 It was the dream of my life
- 4.5 I had no choice

5. Did you maintain a contact with your initial specialisation?

- 5.1 Yes
- 5.2 No

6. If Yes: What is the reason for maintaining this contact?

- 6.1 My daily work schedule requires this
- 6.2 My individual need to counterbalance the tendencies of de-qualification
- 6.3 I did not want to exclude the possibility of finding another job suitable in my specialisation
- 6.4 To get higher qualifications in the library
- 6.5 Other reasons (Which?)

7. What is the relation between your initial speciality and the everyday tasks at the library?

- 7.1 There is a strong connection
- 7.2 They coincide only sporadically
- 7.3 There is no connection altogether

8. Did you participate in librarianship courses in high school or at the university?

- A. In high school: 8.1 YES 8.2 NO
- B. At the university 8.3 YES 8.4 NO

9. Did you have any courses at university which, although not expressly referring to librarianship, were nevertheless linked to the essence and sense of certain library activities (e.g. the philosophy of information, archive keeping, the sociology of culture, computer science, etc.)

- 9.1 YES What courses?
- 9.2 NO

10. After being employed in the library, did you participate in courses of introduction to librarianship organised by the library?

- 10.1 YES
- 10.2 NO

11. If Yes: Did you participate in further courses of professional training after the introductory courses?

- 11.1 YES How many?
- 11.2 NO

12. If Yes: Were the courses organised by lecturers from this country or abroad?

- 12.1 From this country
- 12.2 From abroad
- 12.3 Both from the country and abroad

13. If 12.3: How do you estimate the differences between the courses of lecturers from this country and abroad?

- 13.1 There is a difference in mentality and competence
- 13.2 There is a difference in mentality but not in competence
- 13.3 There is a difference in competence but not in mentality
- 13.4 There is no difference

14. Did the courses of initiation and further training in which you participated give you a new university-level specialisation, besides your initial specialisation?

- 14.1 Yes

14.2 It does not offer a new specialisation, but only knowledge necessary for daily work

14.3 They helped orientate between the trends of the profession, but did not give a new university-level specialisation

14.4 They offered only qualification at my work

14.5 Other views

15. Did you go on professional visits abroad after 1989?

15.1 YES

15.2 NO

16. If YES: the aim of the visit was

16.1 Participation in professional courses

16.2 Documentation and exchange of experience

16.3 Fulfilling concrete tasks

16.4 Research

16.5 Participation in congresses and professional-scientific events

17. If YES:

17.1 Were you sent by the library?

17.2 Were you sent by ABIR (the Association of Romanian Librarians)

17.3 Did you obtain a grant from a foundation, government or university?

What grant?.....

17.4 Did you travel in other ways? How?

18. Do you think that your experience gained abroad should be used in our institution, too?

18.1 YES

18.2 NO

19. If YES: Do you think that the use of this experience requires

19.1 Changes in mentality and in the organisation of the institution?

19.2 Changes in mentality and in the professional training of librarians?

19.3 It is not necessary to change mentality, just professional training

19.4 Changes in professional training are not necessary, only changes in mentality

19.5 We are prepared to apply foreign experiences directly, without any changes

20. Which departments of the Central University Library do you think are best organised and functioning in accordance with high professional standards? Use a scale from 1 (the weakest) to 10 (the best):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I do not know the department
20.1 Acquisitions
20.2 Cataloguing-Classification
20.3 Documentation
20.4 Informatics Laboratory
20.5 Public Relations
20.6 Loan
20.7 Stack
20.8 Periodicals
20.9 International exchange
20.10 Special collections

21. Are you informed about the programmes devised by the management of the library guiding the process of development?

21.1 YES

21.2 NO

22. If YES:

A. 22.1 Did you learn about them in an official way?

22.2 Did you learn about them by chance or in informal ways?

B. Were you asked to participate in carrying out these programs?

22.3 YES

22.4 NO

23. Did you submit any proposal or suggestion for the improvement of activities in the library?

23.1 YES

23.2 NO

24. If YES: your suggestion was

24.1 Appreciated but not carried out

24.2 Avoided

24.3 Carried out

24.5 Rejected

25. Age:

25.1 Under 30

25.2 Between 31-40

25.3 41-50

25.4 Between 51-55

25.5 Between 56-65

26. Being employed in the library:

- 26.1 for less than 5 years
- 26.2 between 6-10 years
- 26.3 between 11-15 years

- 26.4 between 16-25 years
- 26.5 more than 26 years

27. Qualifications

- 27.1 Faculty of Letters
- 27.2 History-Philosophy
- 27.3 Economy
- 27.4 Law
- 27.5 Mathematics

- 27.6 Computer Science
- 27.7 Natural Sciences
- 27.8 Technical University
- 27.9 Other faculties.....

28. Your department

29. Observations and suggestions regarding the questionnaire:

.....
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Thank you for your assistance!