

# INITIAL TRAINING IN LIBRARIANSHIP. THE COLLEGE IN CLUJ

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## Introduction

The library was a *sinecure* but also a space for regrouping values otherwise doomed for “expulsion”, marginalisation and thus for sinking into a rural self-sufficiency. The interior exile ordered and controlled by the communist regime within the young intellectuals (we do not refer to engineers) made towns and important university centres which were determinant for a cultural career, impregnable fortresses.

Although we do not wish to present the library from this perspective, we considered this statement necessary for revealing the quality of the profession and the image it generates. Besides, it is a premise in the understanding and explanation of the opportunity of promoting a speciality education.

These pages try to analyse the content of the process of librarianship education, discussing the particular case of the “Babeș-Bolyai” University in Cluj. We propose a comparison with similar preoccupations in our geographical or “historical” neighbourhood, and with evolutions in Western education. We will deal with similarities, differences, the divergences in perspective, phase differences and the rhythms of evolution.

## 1. Professional and legislative premises

Speciality literature in the 1990s as well as academic debates in this decade mark a maximum openness towards the discussion and analysis of the content and perspective of initial training in librarianship and information science<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bibliotecarii în Europa Occidentală (Librarians in Western Europe)*, in: *Biblioteconomie. Studii traduse și prelucrate*, XXXII (1996), 3, p. 8-20 (*Biblioteconomie*, in the following); M. Miller, *Pregătirea în biblioteconomie (bibliologie). Învățământul biblioteconomic (Librarianship Training. Librarianship Education)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXVIII (1992), 1, p. 107-119; Jadwiga Kolodziejska, *Învățământul universitar bibliotecar în Polonia (Academic Librarianship Education in Poland)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXIX (1993), 1, p.74-91; Danuta Konieczna, *Pregătirea și perfecționarea bibliotecarilor în Polonia (The Training and Perfecting of Librarians in Poland)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXIX, 4, p.71-80; Barbara Budynska, *Învățământul biblioteconomic postliceal (Post-High School Librarianship Education)* in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXII (1996), 3, p.21-24; Jan Waiasz, *Probleme noi*

Contemporary society structured also as an “informational epoch” presupposes the permanent evaluation of the competences and “professional destiny” of he who collects, organises and disseminates information. This “self-consciousness” of the epoch is only one of the motivations which explain the forementioned preoccupations. The “shortening of distances” and making different institutions compatible are also factors involved in this re-evaluation. The formative paradigms developed in various geographical-cultural spaces with different levels of integrability will have to participate more actively in the “concert” of contemporary science and culture. The general limits of basic training in librarianship schools aim at the identification of the fundamental knowledge, skills and competences of the profession and the interdisciplinary nature of the field as well as further specialisation in the field of information<sup>2</sup>.

Science and culture were always inherited, preserved, studied and surpassed; these processes presupposed that which is called scientific and cultural “equipment” in a modern language: the library. This was the price of a miracle: the conservation of the values of human civilisation during hostile times<sup>3</sup>.

The library which was born in the age of manuscripts, accompanied the appearance of the printing industry and its commercial spread, and today, when printing production trebled in the last 20 years, it is becoming the main instrument of access in the world of books, as a classical support of information. Contemporary society validates three general types of libraries: education and research libraries, national heritage (national and regional) libraries and public libraries.

The information explosion in contemporary society implies the diversification of non-conventional means of information. The processing of

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*ule bibliotecilor poloneze în perioada de tranziție (New Problems of Polish Librarians of the Transition Period)* in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXII (1996), 4, p. 90-96; Ian R. M. Mowat, *Învățământul biblioteconomic și știința informării în Marea Britanie (Librarianship Education and Information Science in Great Britain)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXVIII (1992), 2, p. 111-123; Ornella Foglieni, *Comment les services de bibliothèques vont changer dans le cadre de la multimedialité et du réseau global. Un rôle nouveau pour un bibliothécaire nouveau*, IFLA General Conference, Copenhagen, 1997; Hans-Peter Thun, *Sistemul bibliotecilor în Republica Federală Germană, II, (The System of Libraries in the German Republic)* in: *Biblioteca*, VII (1996), nr.1,2,3, p.82-86; Katherin Feinstein, *Formarea bibliotecarilor pentru tineret și copii în cadrul universitar (The Formation of Librarians for Young People and Children's Libraries)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXI (1995), 4, p. 27-28; Camille Cote, *Formarea bibliotecarilor și alfabetizarea (The Formation of Librarians and Alphabetisation)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXI (1995), 4, p.5-7.

<sup>1</sup> Ian Mowat, *Pregătirea pentru activitatea de biblioteconomie (Training for the Activity of Librarianship)*, lecture held at the *New Tendencies in Librarianship and Information Science* Conference on 27 February 1996, Cluj

<sup>2</sup> Winston Roberts observes that librarianship not changing its “cultural mission” in the future is a recurrent issue in Western periodicals, apud. Sultana Craia, *Meseria de bibliotecar din perspectiva specialiștilor (The Librarianship Profession from the Perspective of Specialists)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXI (1995), 3, p.101.

information and the process of its dissemination presupposes a special training and perfecting. At present the library alone validates 34 professions<sup>4</sup>. These changes led to the modification of the science of bibliography: formerly it was the science of books; it has become now the science of writing and communication<sup>5</sup>. Like the library which is subject to changes on account of the rapid evolution of technology and the widening of the horizon of expectation of users, the librarian is compelled to assume new responsibilities. The skills and competences acquired at the beginning of their career, during initial formation, are not sufficient ten or twenty years later. Modifications in the landscape of contemporary society require a permanent re-evaluation of the profession and professionals. Continuous formation becomes one of the essential components of the contemporary personality<sup>6</sup>.

This context of general hyperspecialisation in the field of bibliography and information science is in connection with certain particularities of the Romanian society. The library, the space of formation of the intellectual and moral profile marked by the dominant ideology, developed within the limits of proletcultist and nationalist communism and it served the cultural policy of the regime. "Cleaned" and strictly controlled on the level of its collections and staff, the library must now recuperate some professional dimensions promoted and validated by library systems in particular, and information systems, in general, in Western society.

In Transylvania the forementioned particularities are varied by certain sensibilities originating in the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society. Responding to this reality the proposed process of education has in view the consolidation of national minority cultures by intellectual assistance in their language. By this initiative the Librarianship Department is in line with the general policy supported by the "Babeş-Bolyai" University<sup>7</sup>.

We must underline that bibliological education within the university is based on older preoccupations dating back to the interwar period and is linked to the name of Professor Ioachim Crăciun<sup>8</sup>.

Between these coordinates the mission of the librarianship section is the training and perfecting, in the system of the communicating vessels of

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<sup>4</sup> See the study written by Florina Iliş in this volume, cf. Christine Gerard, *Competența profesională (Professional Competence)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXI (1995), 4, p.29-31.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Meyriat, *Problematica actuală a bibliologiei (The Actual Problems of Bibliology)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXX (1994), 4, p.58-66.

<sup>6</sup> "As the project of buildings or the recipients must be re-thought when the scale of measure changes, lives must be projected again. Many of our basic concepts used for the definition of the sense of being or the scheme of life must change its meaning. Work, place of living, love, commitment... continuity and discontinuity are the core features of the reality in which we live.", Mary Catherine Bateson, *Learning and Transition in the Careers of Librarians*, Paper presentation for Section on Education and Training, IFLA 63rd General Conference, Copenhagen, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Andrei Marga, *Academic Reform. A Case Study*, Cluj University Press, 1997, p.80-93.

<sup>8</sup> Cornelia Gălătescu, *Contribuții bibliologice și cercetări de arhivă (Contributions to Bibliology and Archive Research)*, Cluj, 1995

contemporary Romanian and universal science and culture, of specialists with a professional, intellectual and moral profile comparable with that of specialists trained in the great academic centres of the world.

The primary objective of the Librarianship College is the formation of specialists in the field of collection administration, the improvement of access to information and the dissemination of information in a modern society.

The specialist is trained first of all to have methodologic skills in three fields (collection administration, access to information and dissemination of information). Secondly, the stress is on library automation and library-integrated systems.

The optimization of access to information and integrated information (central catalogues or on-line catalogues) restructure the relation between the librarian and user (reader) for the advantage of the latter.

According to the planned curricula the librarian and the specialist in information science gains skills in more restrained fields such as collection development, cataloguing-classification and public relations, besides the general profile of speciality.

Similarly, the librarian and the specialist in information science can also pursue an activity of training or qualifying the reader within the space of modern libraries.

The bibliologic direction within the structure of the department is represented by the curricula which aim at the instruction in the science of books and of specialised institutions of books where there is a balanced relation between the erudite field (The History of Romanian Culture, the History of Book and Printing, The History of Libraries, Classical Languages) and the strictly specialised subjects (General Librarianship, Cataloguing and Classification, Collection Development, etc.) Information science which is the second direction of studies, presupposes automated databases, indexing, automated languages and programs specific for libraries and information management.

Initial formation which is defined by such general coordinates has various options with distinct reference points not only on a national but a regional level as well. Outlined as a form of education in the interwar period, it is subject to continuous innovation, urged by a permanent pursuit originating in the accelerated rhythm of technological changes in the society and a permanent adaptation to university structures. The main reference points of the debate are grouped around the questions: How should the impact of technology be mirrored in the bibliologic education? How important is the cultural orientation in the initial formation of specialists in this field? What is the optimal relation between the basic component of the curricula and the directions of specialisation? These questions are extremely important in the context of Romanian education, all the more so as dialogue and debate in the Romanian librarianship literature had in view such issues only

sporadically<sup>9</sup>. Familiarisation with such issues can be seen only in the attempts to present certain models (Polish, English, French, American), but the issue of the resources of our bibliological education was not yet addressed, although several “schools” were founded in Romania. We do not wish to suggest the idea of a “concentration” or “monopolisation” of librarianship education; on the contrary, we think that each and every university assumes responsibility “on its own” and makes its option which is otherwise part of the “genetic code” of its identity. Nevertheless, a public debate upon the principles, content and organisation of the bibliologic education and the legislative context in which it functions would be useful.

Undoubtedly, one of the characteristics of bibliological education in Romania is inconsequence on the level of organisation. The actual legislative norms allow the functioning of a librarianship school of three years, not an autonomous one, but enframed in the traditional, philological or historical, lines of education. Similarly, librarianship education has been introduced as a specialisation at the Faculty of Letters, but this librarianship and information science training was finally not acknowledged. These “disguises” then lead to a “dilution” of the objectives and projected missions.

The setting of standards which would regulate the rights and obligations of the graduates of librarianship colleges, the elucidation of their professional status, in other words, is therefore necessary<sup>10</sup>. At present they are regarded as high school graduates. It is mainly the task of professional associations to define their conception of the status of the profession and thus present not only the Ministry of National Education, Culture and Research but also the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection a frame of professional and social “employment” for the graduates of such a university structure named at present “short term higher education”, college. The lack of this coherent option in the community of librarians, the lack of a framework instead of the general confusion is the main reason for the uncertainty and instability of the profession.

The distribution of special subjects by the Faculty of History and the Faculty of Letters hides in fact this legislative inconsistency and, of course, an “alleged predisposition” of students towards such options. Simultaneously, the fact generates an evaluative judgement imposing a traditional treatment of the subject. Such a structure is also illustrated by the model of the librarianship schools from neighbouring countries (Hungary, Poland). Consequently, the reception of the

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<sup>9</sup> *Argumente, realități și perspective privind învățământul universitar de biblioteconomie și știința informării în România (Arguments, Reality and Perspectives in Romanian Librarianship and Information Science Education)*, in: *Biblioteca*, 1995, 9; Gh. Buluță, *Învățământul bibliologic și realitatea bibliotecară (Bibliologic Education and the Case of Libraries)*, in: *Biblioteca*, 1997, 6, p.152-154; Larisa Lungu, *Învățământul biblioteconomic. A fi sau a nu fi (Librarianship Education. To Be or Not To Be)*, in: *Biblioteca*, 1997, 6, p.154-155.

<sup>10</sup> See also Larisa Lungu, *op. cit.*

forementioned difficulties comes from a “common past”, specific to the Central and Eastern European region. In Hungary, the modernisation of the profession is placed outside the bibliological education: university professors are still influenced by the traditional perspective, librarianship being in relation with philology (see the example of the University in Szeged and the Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest)<sup>11</sup>. The Polish “landscape” shows specific dynamics: the bibliologic line underwent a segmentation in the 1970s. On the one hand, a humanist modulus encompassing philology and history has been created and a mathematical one, related to the sciences. This distinction led to the flexibility of the system of higher education in the 1990s, allowing for complete courses even without attendance, for specialisation for years 3 and 4 from all university departments and a masters course for all university graduates<sup>12</sup>.

The “discovery” of these congruences behind the “iron curtain” shows a similar level of addressing the issue of initial formation in bibliology, the outline of a cultural and social universe with similar if not exactly identical propensities, transferring the consolidation of the two competing political systems, the “proletariate society” and the Western world to the level of different identities of intellectual behaviour.

A *sine qua non* condition of the promotion of an optimal and competitive bibliological education in our country asks first of all for the delineation of a legislation on the basis of which this direction of study can gain an autonomous frame with different levels of training (“long term and short term” university studies, a masters course with an opening towards all specialisations, doctorate studies) and possibilities for multiple specialisation.

The institutional reform which means the consecration of a “levelled” education with different levels of training, strictly delimited professionally and from the point of view of the social engagement, can find its completion only in legislative norms. First of all the high school or university degree must not be the sole criterion for employment in libraries. The library generates a wider professional spectrum with necessities of training which require the creation of the formative institutional context. “Training at the working place”, an “inherited” mental formula hides in fact the lack of qualification and professionalism,

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<sup>11</sup> Csapó Edit, *Középtávú képzési koncepció (The Concept of Medium-Term Training)*, in: *Könyv, Könyvtár, Könyvtáros*, május 1994, p.19-26; Csoma Éva, *Könyvtárosképzés Magyarországon (Librarian Training in Hungary)*, in: *Könyv, Könyvtár, Könyvtáros*, május, 1994, p.26-32; Suppné Tarnay Györgyi, *Ami a képből kimaradt. Könyvtárosképzés a Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetemen (What Has Not Been Told: Librarian Training at Kossuth Lajos University)*, in: *Könyv, Könyvtár, Könyvtáros*, október, 1994, p.59-63; *A debreceni könyvtárosképzési konferencia ajánlásai (The Librarian Training Conference in Debrecen)*, in: *Könyvtári Figyelő*, 1995, 1, p.63-65.

<sup>12</sup> Jadwiga Kolodziejska, *op.cit.*, p.74-92; for Hungary see Szalontai Zita, *Az ötéves debreceni informatikus-könyvtáros képzés egy volt hallgatójával szemével (The Five-Year Informatician-Librarian Training in Debrecen)*, in: *Könyvtári Figyelő*, 1995, 1, p.58-62.

producing an emptying of content, as is the case with other formulas used by the former communist regime in Romania. Continuous formation is developed from the dynamics of the profession, but it presupposes a knowledge on a certain level of performance.

The consolidation of a structure of bibliologic education in Romania presupposes the projection of certain distinct cycles of training (college, university licence, masters for all specialisations), correlated with the requirements of the professions needed by the library of the end of the millenium.

## **2. The social impact**

From the perspective of the echo in Romanian society of such a specialisation we will present the reception of the offer from the Cluj University in the discussion of the results of those who were receptive for it. We will try to present the junction between the horizon of expectation and the actual situation of the process of education.

At the beginning entering the librarianship college was a sort of "refuge" for those who could not pass the oral part of the entrance exam at the Faculty of Letters. A survey conducted with third year students shows that this was the case with 70% of them (some failed for several times). The entrance exam at the the librarianship college preceded the one at the Faculty of Letters in September 1997, but candidates could then register at more faculties. Consequently, four successful candidates continued their studies at other faculties (Journalism, Faculty of Letters). We can assert therefore that the choice for librarianship depends in most cases on the fact that the entrance exam has the same subjects (Romanian/Hungarian Language, Foreign Language) as in the case of Journalism or the Faculty of Letters, and it does not depend on a deliberately cultivated interest in this field. We must not exclude certain cases when interest for this particular field was decisive, when librarianship was chosen as a second faculty. However, circumstances (the wish to prolong university education or the decision against teaching, etc.) have their importance in these cases, too.

The question which arises after these observations refers to the identification of the segment of population which would accept that the entrance exam for the librarianship college be based on different criteria. This question has no meaning in the actual context of Romanian society, because the latter does not have the economic capacity necessary for absorbing immediately the generation issued by high schools. Romanian university education will preserve for a while its aspect of "social assistance" for young people. Similarly, the elimination of legislative confusion will lead to the option for the social validation of professions developed in the library.

Regarding the social impact, there is an increasing interest for studying librarianship, from a geographical point of view (students come not only from Cluj

and its environs, but Maramureş, Hunedoara, Harghita and Covasna counties) and the number of candidates is increasing year by year (88 in 1995, 136 in 1996, 156 in 1997). There is a tendency towards a balance of required study groups (Romanian / Hungarian): the proportion of 3/0,8 in 1995 is followed by 4,5/3 in 1996 and 4,5/4,5 in 1997. The majority (95%) of these candidates have graduated from humanities high schools.

Similarly, the fact that 90% of the candidates are feminine, and 94,3% of the students in the three years are feminine shows the actual situation of the staff and a certain way of perceiving the library. Regarding age, most of the candidates are those who have just graduated high school, a tendency which is accompanied by the improvement of performance at the entrance exam (from 6,94 - the lowest mark - in 1995 to 8,40 in 1997.) On the one hand, the "growing younger" of the student population can be explained by an increasing number of places and fields at university and even the growing number of universities. On the other hand the lack of perspective and opportunities in Romanian society "expels" new graduates towards university which is still perceived in terms of the mythology consecrated until 1989, that is, as an opportunity for social validation instead of a period for acquiring professional skills necessary for the outline of intellectual profile.

### **3. Teaching staff**

Subjects in the history package are taught by the teaching staff of the History Department of the History and Philosophy Faculty, while subjects in the linguistic modules are taught by teachers from the Faculty of Letters. Finally, teaching staff from the main university and public libraries in Cluj teach librarianship subjects.

The conversion of our system of education and its synchronisation with the system of librarianship colleges and universities in the world (the introduction of credit units; guaranteeing the formation of a professional behaviour) requires the promotion of a separate teaching staff. At present the librarianship branch has three professors (full members) and next year there will be a competition for another three posts. The teaching staff belongs to the History and Philosophy Faculty and the wider frame of the Babeş- Bolyai University, Cluj. Bibliologic subjects are taught by the specialised staff of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library and the Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy. The policy of the University is to ensure that each subject is taught by the respective Faculty. In due course the section will name its own specialists in the basic subjects. We must bear in mind that every field of knowledge joins different perspectives, paradigms and dimensions depending on the applied professional field in question. Therefore the library, a space for arranging and disseminating information for a variety of scientific purposes or a place for "pastime" which always provides formative activities for the human personality, demands an

emergence of its professional space, as the librarian is different from the historian, the philologist or the geographer. A librarian and a graduate from any university greatly differ in their activities and the ability to intermediate information. To be a librarian does not exclude to be a specialist in a certain field but the rhythm of modernisation in information science (the diversification of the channels and techniques of retrieving and transmitting information) requires skills in information. Librarianship which appeared as an autonomous field in the second half of the last century and information science which has developed in the last two decades, due to the accelerated development of contemporary society, allow us to be witnesses of an increasing diversification of specialisations<sup>13</sup>.

The survey of the professional fields to which members of the teaching staff of the Librarianship College in Cluj belong throws light on the main features of this latter, its empirical nature and the anchoring of initial formation in a primary cultural perspective.

The attempt to bring consultant Professors from the West in order to mentally refresh and scientifically improve the didactic discourse and offer students diverse formative paradigms and reject “cultural closure imposed by the space of ethnogenesis” met insurmountable obstacles on the administrative level. Scientific and didactic arguments have no relevance for office holders who are permanently encouraged by a bureaucratic system.

#### **4. The content of the educational process**

The curricula was redimensioned, synchronised on the level of the general lines of cultural orientation with similar faculties and colleges in Great Britain, Germany and the USA. In spite of this it differs from them considerably; the effects of de-synchronisation consecrate a mentality and an epistemologic value characteristic to Romanian bibliological education. The content of this education, in the case of the Cluj Librarianship College, at least, will undergo modifications in the following years, in order to strengthen the system of transferrable credits. At present the system of transferrable credits determined the introduction of an exam at the end of the first term in case of one-year subjects, which led to a “hemorrhage” of notes: students must pass 8-10 exams in a session. The curricula reform suggested will modify the structure, content and, hopefully, the quality of the plan of education, as soon as next year. The strengthening of university autonomy will produce a personalisation of the educational process conditioned by the working place market and financial resources. Consequently, the “joining up” of the librarianship education at the “Babeş-Bolyai” University with that of other universities in the country and the world, will happen in principle, depending on the offer of a formative module which will gradually be synchronised with Europe

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<sup>13</sup> Jean Miyriat, *op. cit.*, p.58-66.

and the world, and in terms of a profession the horizon of which is outlined in the same way everywhere.

The educational process quantified in the educational plan put forward, has as its general objective the creation of a professional who is able to modernise the process of administering and disseminating information, of integrating libraries in the actual information circulation system. Therefore the didactic discourse is channelled by ample treatment of general and special fields. The curriculum presupposes the following structure for the four-year education:

	Didactic activities		Exams				Practice		Holidays
	1st term	2nd term	winter	summer	remaining		winter	spring	summer
1st year	14	14	4	4	2	3	2	8	1
2nd year	14	14	4	4	2	3	2	8	1
3rd year	14	14	4	4	2	3	2	8	1

The number of classes per week for each year is:

	1st term	2nd term
1st year	23,5	23,5
2nd year	23,5	23,5
3rd year	24	24

There are three main lines of discourse in the whole educational process, coherently articulated on the level of study years.

The first line is that of courses and seminars which aim at the dissemination of knowledge about Romanian and universal culture and civilisation which grounds the intellectual horizon of the future librarian, a personality who is more than a mere office worker as he must have a view on education, books and the information of the reader. This type of training takes place during the three years of education, mostly in the first two years.

The second line contains special courses and seminars, it derives from the traditional way of organising and conducting special work in libraries, and, at the same time it is subject to the impact of the rhythm of re-composing contemporary intellectual landscape. The didactic discourse of this line has a theoretical component (courses), but there is a practical component, too (seminars and professional practical activity in terms 2, 4 and 6.) Special subjects are mainly part of 2nd and 3rd year curricula.

The third line consists of informatics courses and seminars. This module is the guideline for a modern didactic process focussed on the function of information in contemporary society. Since communication is a highly important feature of a library, the acquisition of the language of automation aims at

structuring certain skills which are indispensable for a librarian. Informatics courses and seminars are held during all three years, but they are only a small part of the curricula, although the importance of such skills at present and in the future is acknowledged. It is not so much the lack of specialists in informatics and information science or the scarce material endowment which determines this default of bibliological education, but traditional mentality and an inertia which is undermined but still generates certain attitudes. The reform of the curriculum which is an objective of Romanian university education as a whole, will have in view in the case of bibliography the importance of teaching computer skills, all the more so as the greatest libraries in Cluj ("Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, the Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy, the "Octavian Goga" County Library) have promoted a management policy open to such preoccupations, for a few years now.

The distribution of these lines of education for years and number of hours per week is shown in the following table:

	History subjects		Librarianship subjects		Informatics subjects	
	1st term	2nd term	1st term	2nd term	1st term	2nd term
1st year	11,5	11,5	6	4	-	2
2nd year	11,5	11,5	5	5	3	3
3rd year	8	8	13	13	3	3

The table of the subjects offered for students shows that we have to do away with the traditional perspective, which is a trap due to the promotion of some practitioners as teachers (trainers). This resembles the case of France in the 1950s when bibliological education "was empirical, done by practitioners, and its main features were linked to traditions and the beginning of standardisation (bibliography, cataloguing)"<sup>14</sup>. The outlining of some parallel discourses, cultural and technological, is a trap generated by a theoretical "modernisation" determined by a practice rooted in lack of progress. This type of two-registered didactic discourse will prove to be optimal if the theoretical perspective which could only be cultural, would be correlated with the methods of its application. We can conclude therefore that the object of study of bibliography and information science is always long-term, while didactic methods (subject to the pressure of the concourse of events from the perspective of the dynamics of the object and the methods of the subject as well as incidental factors in the professor-student relationship) are short-term in the case of initial training. This perspective is based on the cultural

<sup>14</sup> Denis Pallier, *Istoria și evoluția meseriei de bibliotecar (The History and Evolution of the Librarianship Profession)*, in : *Biblioteconomie*, XXXI (1995), 4, p.57.

horizon which must have precedence before a pragmatism in itself situated on the level of administrative sciences or information science developed in the last two decades<sup>15</sup>.

The stiffness of the process of education is another finding. In case of colleges where the graduate obtains a degree in Librarianship and Archives the curricula does not offer a different training for these two professions. These professions got stuck at the level of the 19th century or the interwar period, at best, which is also due to a deficiency in legislation, as we have already mentioned. This stiffness does not only mean the merging of two different professions, that of librarian and archivist, but the lack of flexibility of options within specialisations in this field. The Catholic University in Milan which has a curriculum outlined from the perspective of a traditional discipline, offers three types of qualifications for students: heritage manager, documentarist and archivist. The University of Northumbria is more efficient: it offers two university level specialisations, a degree in information and library management and the other in information and communications management. Similarly, they have four modules for postgraduate studies, with well-defined objectives.

## 5. Scientific Research

In those two years of the functioning of the Librarianship College one of the major objectives of the teaching staff was the definition of the frame of professional manifestation by the achievement of scientific research projects, on the level of workgroups and by conducting individual research. The teaching staff, professors in ordinary and associate professors were collaborators of speciality publications (*Studia Universităţii Babeş-Bolyai*, *Seria Historia*, *Philobiblon*) and similarly, they edited and printed books, independent or written in collaboration.

Research projects cover fields such as the history of book and libraries, cultural personalities or orientation towards documentation and bibliographies. There is a prominent philological or historical perspective which marks the basic profession of professors. The subjects taught and the direction of interest in research are “parallel”, especially in case of the didactic discourse in the field of bibliology. Hence the “low horizon” of bibliologic subjects where the didactic process is based on the everyday, empirical professional experience.

Dealing with special bibliographies, continuous training, library management, taking into account Western experiences and the reform of Romanian libraries, are reference points closer to the profession and the outline of

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<sup>15</sup> Guy Pelachaud, *De la scrisul tipărit la scrisul informatizat. Drumuri prin memorie (From Printed Writing to Automated Writing. Ways in Memory)*, in: *Biblioteconomie*, XXXI, 4, p.85-86: underlines that the stake is not only of technological order “but mostly cultural, social and institutional”. The subject of debate is not the librarian, but the library itself which has to face an explosion of information and an implosion of sense.

a didactic discourse which is problemised, grounded and validated by scientific views springing from individual research.

Simultaneously with these initiatives two international conferences have been organised by members of the teaching staff of our Faculty, in collaboration with similar institutions in the US and Great Britain.

The first of these seminars took place in the fall of 1995, with the topic of *Improving the Didactic Process in Teaching Librarianship and Information Science*. Eight members of the University of Austin (Texas) participated.

The second seminar took place in spring 1996; discussions were centred round *New Tendencies in Librarianship and Information Science*. Professors from the similar faculties of Edinburgh and Newcastle participated.

The future collaboration between our Faculty and that of Newcastle was grounded in view of student exchange and visiting professor programs as well as the structuring of a common masters project in Cluj which will be supported by both Faculties, a project integrated in the SOCRATES program of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University.

The teaching staff of the Faculty and its collaborators were able to participate in numerous national and international conferences (in Tel Aviv, Frankfurt, Montpellier, etc.); they also benefited from scholarships offered by the British Council for training sessions in Great Britain.

The consolidation of didactic structures will enable the promotion of large-scale projects coordinated by professors of our Faculty.

## **6. Material resources**

The Bibliologic and Information Science Section will function in the space offered by the History and Philosophy Faculty (the History and Historiography Department) of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj.

At the same time the Faculty can use the headquarters of the History Department (building, offices, library) and three classrooms. It also has access to the informatics laboratory of the History and Philosophy Faculty which has a network of 10 computers. From the point of view of the logistics of the educational process we must mention the support of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library which offered two classrooms and the possibility of using the space and equipment of the Informatics Laboratory.

There is a speciality library and librarianship students also have access to the libraries of the History and Philosophy Faculty as well as to other related faculties. Finally, they can use the collections of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. A "mini-library" with materials relevant for their courses and seminars was established at the Special Collections Department.

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The legislative vacuum and the lack of understanding librarianship, determines a “masked” development or the transformation of librarianship into a “second-hand” profession, left to the mercy of historians and philologists, as an auxiliary activity.

Recently the significant social impact of librarianship was not based on a real openness of society towards this profession but rather on its functioning as a “social valve” for integrating high school graduates.

The teaching staff, especially those who teach special subjects, stress practical activities excessively, unable to place themselves in a formative, operational theoretic horizon. The “appetite” for unconclusive, non-performant scientific research which is otherwise in connection with the low level of Romanian librarianship periodicals of the last years, is a relevant example in this respect. Underlining the acquiring of certain working methods, education became imitative, depriving students from the possibility of initiatives and professional motivation.