

WHO NEEDS BIBLIOGRAPHIES ?

Readers need bibliographies, but... do they know how to use the information contained by bibliographies? When are they satisfied with this type of information? What actually do they require?

These questions arise every time, and at best they become clear during the reference interview when the reference librarian or the tutor (the professor who directs a thesis) guides the researcher (student).

But what should the reader do if nobody can offer him new information and only the catalogue or a borrowed book is at his disposal? In this case he looks for a bibliography and judges the level of treatment of an issue¹.

A proper bibliography informs us about the works read and used by the author.

Many librarians consider it their task to preempt readers and offer resources (bibliographies) which might be used for their research.

Robert Meister did such a work by launching his series of thematic bibliographies entitled *Társadalomtudományi tanulmányok a romániai magyar sajtóban* (*Social science studies in the Hungarian press in Romania*). He compiled his bibliography for *specialists* in the field of social sciences. Two volumes were published in this series, the third is still to be published.

The first volume deals with the material of the *Korunk* periodical, grouped in five fields (philosophy, sociology, political science, history and methodology). During three years of research he processed studies published in the 1958-1993 period, on cards². He noted every description with at the most three descriptive concepts and he used approximately 40 descriptive concepts³. The database has a thematic structure, because "those who are interested in social sciences will know how to search", the author says. Search is made easier by the use of the expert indexes:

-the index, in Hungarian and Romanian, containing 700 keywords in alphabetic order

-author index

- index⁴

The second volume shows the articles of the *Utunk* (*Helikon*, after 1989), *A Hét*, *Igaz Szó* and *Echinox* periodicals, in the 1946-1993 period, according to the

¹ It is either introductory, popularising, written to a wider public or more specialised, scientific, addressing a smaller audience.

² Every study has a separate bibliographic description.

³ Descriptive concepts mark the related fields.

⁴ The names are included in the index if the whole study deals with the person in question.

criteria used in the first volume. This volume contains 260 keywords (pairs of words).

The third volume deals with articles published in the *Művelődés*, *NYIRK* (*Nyelv és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények*), *TETT*, *Átmenetek*, *Antropológiai Műhely* és *Interdialóg Füzetek* periodicals, between 1945-1993, with different norms of editing. The third volume which will soon be published was edited according to new criteria, avoiding the mistakes and repetitions due to manual processing⁵. The indexes are completed with:

- synthetic, analytic indexes
- the list of titles translated into Romanian
- a list of Romanian-Hungarian placenames
- an index of institutions, press and historic monuments
- index of periodicals

This series is meant to make Hungarian journalism in Romania accessible: it processes articles published in periodicals, endows it with indexes, and thus presents it from several points of view, allowing an evaluation of Hungarian cultural life in Romania after World War II, offering a structured source material for researchers and students.

There were important studies which could not be published in separate volumes or anthologies, but they were published in an abridged form in Hungarian periodicals, therefore the thematic systematization of these articles is useful for researchers⁶.

The subject index shows the most frequent subjects in Hungarian journalism in Romania. In the totalitarian regime, local history and topography were a priority (e.g. Kolozsvár (Cluj), Transylvania, the history of Transylvanian press, Transylvanian theatrical art, issues about the Near-East, folklore.)

As we leaf through the bibliography it becomes clear what were the issues that could be addressed in a period where there was no freedom of speech; one could write about ideology, German ideology, egzistencialism, humanism... even about freedom and nationalism, in a "censured" form. Family sociology, urban sociology, moral and intellectual issues were popular: our public writers were eagerly looking for subjects that could interest readers and awake them from their indifference.

Robert Meister analysed the most important Hungarian periodical in Romania from the communist regime; at present he is working on the fourth volume of this scholarly bibliographic series. "I do not wish to talk about the technical and other difficulties I had to face during my work, nor their effect on the result", says the author. "I must confess that the volume is not perfect. Nevertheless, it can be used, and it is unique in this field. It can be said in my

⁵ The number indexes follow the alphabetical index of the description of articles.

⁶ For example, some key concepts have more descriptions, others have only one or two.

favour, under usual circumstances such a work would have been the task of a team of researchers, not a single researcher-librarian.” However, we must mention - on the request of the author - that the work was supported by the Teleki Foundation in Budapest and the JATE⁷ Documentary and Social Sciences Collection in Szeged, Hungary⁸.

A group of students from the Librarianship College of the “Babeş-Bolyai” University are presently working on thematic bibliographies of the articles published in Hungarian periodicals in Romania⁹, as part of their diploma work, with the guidance of Mária Újvári, librarian and professor. This exhaustive processing of articles is part of the comprehensive thematic coverage of periodicals done by students of the Journalism Faculty and the Librarianship College in order to prepare material for the fourth volume of the *Erdélyi Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon (Transylvanian Hungarian Literary Lexicon)*. Their work is coordinated by Gyula Dávid, with the help of Péter Cseke, Zsolt Szabó and Mária Újvári.

The *Bibliography of Hungarian Book Publication in Romania. 1990-1995*, compiled by our colleague, Rudolf Szigethy, will soon be published. It is an ambitious work which aims at charting publications after 1989: mushrooming publishing houses and printing presses do not always obey deposit law and therefore render orientation and the compiling of a national bibliography difficult in this “jungle of publications”.

The bibliographies edited by our librarian colleagues meet a long-awaited need; their industrious work enables readers and researchers to reach home publications in various fields. We would like to encourage their work by stating our appreciation.

Ilona Gurka-Balla

⁷ “József Attila” University

⁸ Nándor Bárdi, Sándor Laczkó and Gábor Vincze historians helped with their ideas in editing the bibliography.

⁹ Hajnal Szász, Melissa Bándi, Kinga Balogh, Noémi Adorjáni and Erzsébet Török worked up the literary articles of the *Ellenzék (Opposition)* periodical. Erika Székely dealt with articles published between 1990-1999 in the *NYIRK* and the *Korunk*.