

HERITAGE AND MISSION
The first publication of the EMKE Librarian Department

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“Hungarian librarians searching for ways of development, searched for each other too, and they founded their department within the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transylvania (EMKE) in 1992”, says Jenő Kiss, President of the Librarian Department of the Association, in the introduction of their first publication¹.

After the foundation of the Librarian Department librarians held annual meetings to discuss their experiences and present research papers which were included in their first publication too.

The volume begins with a study by *Etelka Ercsey*, presenting the history of the Bethlen Library in Enyed (Aiud). This extensive study is followed by a rich bibliography.

Pálma Tulit, a colleague from Marosvásárhely (Tîrgu-Mureş) guided us into the world of the Franciscan Cloister Library in Mikháza (Călugăreni), which is the second most important cloister library in Transylvania, after the Csíksomlyó (Şumuleu-Ciuc) Library. According to the author the history of this library is strongly connected to the development of the Franciscan order and the activity of the convent. It is noteworthy that there were library registries in the 1600s and books were grouped by subjects. We learnt interesting details about collection development, and the registry of forbidden books.

Judith Demeter wrote two papers, about the history of the library in Régen (Reghin) as well as the functioning of Hungarian libraries and Reading Circles at the turn of the century which played an important role in Hungarian cultural life.

Júlia Csikos has written about books from the Székely Mikó College Library in Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfintu Gheorghe). She identified a rare book, a volume containing five works, brought by János Apáczai Csere to Transylvania in 1650. This was a scientific work, used by the famous Puritan scholar and pedagogue in writing his Magyar Enciklopédia (Hungarian Encyclopaedia) and Philosophia Naturalis. The Székely Mikó College was founded in 1856, its library

¹ *Tanulmányok romániai magyar könyvekről és könyvtárakról (Studies about Hungarian Books and Libraries in Romania)*, Az EMKE Könyvtári Szakosztályának kiadványa, Sepsiszentgyörgy, 1995

founded by donations. The author also presented 11 volumes, donations of Ráday Pál.

Mária Újvári, senior research fellow of the University Library, Cluj, wrote about a 1797 manuscript held in the collections of the library and also a geography book from Udvarhely (Țirgu Secuiesc) containing a detailed description of Transylvania.

András Lajos Róth, researcher, Scientific Library, Țirgu Secuiesc, wrote about the iconographic importance of portraits which can be found in the books of this library; he treats his subject from the perspective of bibliology and the history of art. The 16th and 17th century rare and old books contain portraits of saints, prophets, monarchs, scholars and artists which can be identified in most cases. One can find portraits of Hungarian monarchs in Gáspár Heltai's *Magyar Krónika* (*Hungarian Chronicle*) (1789) and other works.

The Reading Circle in Nagyajta (Aita Mare), founded 120 years ago, was presented by *Isiván Bartha*. His article gave us an insight into the collections and the cultural life of the circle which also had the role of managing the day-to-day affairs of the village.

The history of village libraries in Háromszék (a region of Seklerland) between 1798-1907 was the subject of the paper written by Gabriella Rózsa and Ferenc Salamon. They also dealt with Reading Circles and public libraries as well as their cultural historical importance.

Hilda Hencz wrote about 19th century publications and the Hungarian press in Bucharest. The small number of Hungarian intellectuals who settled in Bucharest after the 1848 Revolution, were grouped in cultural circles round the Catholic and Reformed Church. The flourishing of Hungarian cultural life led to the launching of the Hungarian press. Education in the mother tongue, the mass emigration of Seklers, the identity crisis of the Csangos (Hungarians living in Moldavia) were the main issues addressed by the Hungarian press after 1848.

Katalin Pillich dealt with the changing role of libraries, minority public libraries after 1989 and the Heltai Gáspár Foundation. She offered a rich and accessible bibliography.

The first publication of the EMKE Librarian Department also contains a list of the names of Hungarian librarians in Romania. They are committed people whose task and responsibility is to present and protect our heritage.