

TRAIAN BRAD (31 August 1945 – 8 June 2002)

It is said that the life of a man is complete if he has left children, a house, a garden after him. This view has certainly been voiced a long time ago... What can we say about the life of a man who dedicated himself (literally and figuratively) to the creation of the library of a large town? How can we characterize and measure it? How shall we talk about it? We are silent... It is very difficult to answer.

When the life of a man ends unexpectedly, without any “warning”, without the premonition of the emptiness that appears, this emptiness remains incommensurable. Or, rather, we have the impression that the deceased is somewhere “close by” and is returning immediately. Waiting becomes permanent with time.

Traian Brad, the general manager, initiator and creator (literally and figuratively) of the new county library of Cluj county was born on 31 August 1945 at Pânade, Alba county, a place that he will never forget and to which he dedicated a monograph entitled *Pânade – 700*. He graduated from the Faculty of Letters of “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj. He had a meritorious public life that many people will remember. He contributed to the coalition of library activities in our town but also in the whole country.

Beginning with 1987 when he became leader of the County Library, Traian Brad has been preoccupied with the creation of various facilities and services for the general public. He trained himself as a librarian. The new era after 1990 was more favourable for the creation of these services.

The County Library as seen by its manager as a gate open to knowledge and permanent education seemed to be a utopia in 1987, threatened by the existence of other libraries in our town, university libraries, mostly. Nevertheless, the manager of the library decided that he must reorganize the library according to new priorities in order to secure it an absolutely necessary place in our community. In spite of a protecting legislation Traian Brad set himself the aim of modernising library services, using information technology, creating databases and gradually developing the book collection by purchasing new publications, satisfying user needs

quickly and efficiently, extending cooperation with public and special libraries in the country and abroad. The performance profit can be seen on the level of library sections, services and workgroups today.

The greatest ambition of the manager of the “Octavian Goga” County Library, Cluj was “seeing about” a central building, creating a new place with specific functions. “Seeing about”, I say, as I cannot find another word which would refer to and semantically cover the paradox that Cluj, one of the main cultural centres of Romania did not have a public library with an adequate space for decades. Those who work here today as well as the reading public benefit now from this new building. Traian Brad sacrificed his resources and health for this cause.

As the manager of this institution Traian Brad dealt with devising strategies of cooperation between librarians in the country and abroad. He initiated and coordinated several public library programs, exchanges of specialists and forms of integration of Romanian libraries and librarians into European structures. He founded the *Association of Romanian Public Library Librarians* and was vicepresident of this association in the period between 1990-1998, then elected president in 1998. He contributed to the uniting of the forces of specialists and the integration of the Romanian librarianship movement into the International Librarianship Federation.

He also translated in Romanian and coordinated the edition of works of reference in the field of library management, performance indicators and managerial instruments for libraries. He published studies and articles in the field of cultural history and the history of librarianship in cultural, librarianship and information science periodicals such as *Tribuna*, *Biblioteca*, *Biblioteca Bucureștilor*, *Revista Bibliotecii Naționale*, *Curier* and *Magazin Bibliologic* (Chișinău). He wrote more than 25 studies, articles and papers and is the author of the first monograph about the public library and reading in Cluj (*Reading and Public Library in Cluj*, 2001).

This activity of concentrating the efforts of librarians in serving the needs of the reading public was closely connected to

his activity of promoting culture. He was the founder of the *Lucian Blaga Cultural Society*, the *Mihai Eminescu Foundation* in Cluj, the *Timotei Cipariu Foundation* in Pănade, the *Octavian Goga Foundation* in Rășinari and the *Graphics Foundation* in Cluj, a tireless organizer and coordinator of cultural manifestations where representatives of literature, the arts and culture participated. We cannot forget his contribution and passion in organising the yearly National Festival of Poetry dedicated to the memory of Lucian Blaga. He also considered Lucian Blaga one of the best specialists in general and thematic bibliography, someone whose memory must be preserved.

Romanians from the Republic of Moldova are grateful to him because he ardently supported the joint activities of Romanians in the country and outside it. He was among the founders of the first Romanian library in Chișinău and the first section of Romanian books in Florești. His contribution to the library reform in the Republic of Moldova was based on the conviction that a pan-Romanian cultural unity must be created.

The large number of national prizes and diplomas that he received in the country and the Republic of Moldova proves that his efforts have been recognised.

Let us return to our initial question. How can we describe the life of a man who dedicated his whole being, sacrificing his health and life, to the construction of a library for a large town, not for his own benefit but that of his fellow people, the whole community? Let us repeat his words until they are heard, understood and listened to: *“Parliamentarians, politicians, do not increase the distance that separates us from the aim of the countries to the status of which we long for: the Information Society. Do not deprive Romanians of their chance to be powerful through knowledge and culture! The danger is imminent! You can reduce or avert it. Do this today; tomorrow could be too late.”*

Adrian Grănescu