work entitled *A Bibliography of Hungarian Social Sciences Literature in Romania. Articles, studies.* was not eligible for their funding. But how can all these historical, literary, minority researches be conducted without an accurate retrieval and processing of all the information and data available about the matter? How can we understand exactly what we are speaking about if we are deprived of data? How can we see clearly, without any kinds of ideological veils, what happened and what is happening today in Transylvania? How can we understand our (Transylvanian) selves?

Borrowing again the author's words, "among other things, it depends on this work if orientation will become easier in the increasing flood of information".[1]

Trends and Senses
Marginals on a "technical history" of the
methods of information retrieval[2]

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A history is "technical" when it does not propose to think expressively about the interiority of the meaning-connexions of the processes. Moreover, it proposes the reflection on the skeleton of methods through which something is internally organized – in time – into *trends*. However, such a "history" is and remains essential – thus with preparatory *utility* – for the problematizations, that will be capable of pointing at the horizon of *senses*…

Detailed analyses are needless in order to ascertain: the autochthon librarianship literature – especially maybe the one referring to questions regarding matters of "information and documentation" – remains pre-eminently restricted to problematizations and analyses with a

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[1] Introduction, p. 8.

[2] Curta Olimpia: *Metode tradiţionale şi modernne de regăsire a informaţiei în biblioteci (Traditional and Modern Methods of Information Retrieval in Libraries)*. Presa Universitară Clujeană – Colecţia "Philobiblon" a Bibliotecii Centrale Universitare "Lucian Blaga", Cluj-Napoca 2004, 117 (155) p. The electronic version of the volume can be found at the address: **http://www.bcucluj.ro/re/oc/met_bib/**

prevalently *technical* character. That is: of *techniques* and *methods*! And in the same way, as methods have **rules,** so do the techniques have **means**. Hence, the familiarity with rules and the accurate usage of means shall focalize the efforts here – as the efforts of the applied researches as the ones of testing their "theoretical" possibility/validity area. With special attention towards – "evidently" – all kind of "novelty". Novelties remained, naturally, incomprehensible right within the field of their undelayed "implementation".

Such a narrowing seems to be from the beginning surmounted by any kind of intention that proposes a *comparative* and *temporal* analysis of the methods and techniques of information retrieval. The recently published volume of Olimpia Curta constitutes, in the first place exactly such a reckoning and analysis.

O. Curta is by tuition a mathematician, who then turned towards informatics, especially towards its applications in libraries. For several years she has been the Director of the Informatics Department of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library in Cluj, adequately called: *The Laboratory of Informatics*. In this role she participated – as a decisive factor – at all the phases of the sinuous process represented by the informatization task of the library, earning also the respect of her colleagues in the whole country. This volume utterly certifies the experience, the competence, as well as her vision, simultaneously constituting a phase in her research studies for obtaining the scientific title of Doctor! Therefore we are talking here about a competence and a vision capable to confront and assimilate both, the challenges of the new techniques of informatization and their rapid and multidirectional evolution, as well as the "schematism" of the traditional means of information from libraries.

That is why her text does not simply analyze the introduction and implementation of the "new" in the field, but it also analyses the *shift* from traditional to modern, that is – basically – exactly the dialectic of the *accomplishment* of the traditional *in* the modern. However, without denying that we are dealing here also with a revolutionary act, a revolution of vast proportions, which is not and cannot be fully realized.

The traditional means and methods of information, of information retrieval have been formed and developed during a long period of time. They have been not without problems harmonized in the same rhythm with the processes, needs, evolutions of the social, cultural, scientific and artistic etc. contexts as well as with the exigencies and the interior and peculiar challenges of documentation itself.

The book gives a brief analyse – in the **first chapter** – exactly of these methods, beside their means of usage in the effective information processes, including the diverse guidance types of users/beneficiaries. Therefore, starting from the direct information and passing through the guidance methods in the consultation of a system of different catalogues until the usage of the bibliographic works and generally the use of the sources of reference and literature. All these are, obviously looked at from the perspective of their temporal evolution.

The evolution and diversification of the traditional systems and methods of information retrieval crosses an organic trajectory of progressive accumulation, which in turn is closely connected to technical evolution and a certain level of librarian ingeniousness, as well as to the change of information requirement and production, ahead of the scientific ones. Thus, we refer on the one hand to the example of the introduction of all kinds of photocopies, and on the other hand to the example of the "perforated cards". The information recovery systems passed from the use of the *discreet information carriers* (catalog card, uniterm card, perforated cards, punched cards, magnetic and videomagnetic cards, microfiche) to the usage of continuous *information carriers* (microfilms, paper tape, magnetic and videomagnetic tape, magnetic disc, magnetic drum, magnetic cores, magnetic films, optical discs, videodisc)."[1]

Nevertheless, all these do not alter in any way the fact that the "electronic era", the "information society" obviously represents a method of revolution in this field too. A revolution, that also roused the birth of the term "information" which then led to the birth of *information science,* of course along with the opening of new horizons, of the apparition and development of computing techniques.[2] The **second chapter** of the work is dedicated to this progress, above all having regard for: "the most early and successful usage of computers was [exactly] created by librarians."[3] Generally speaking, everything that means "informational revolution" basically fits to libraries like a "glove"!

During this period appeared the need and possibility of creating automatized systems for libraries, which substantially modified the methods of retrieval, as well as the methods of general management of information. All these culminating – for now – in the apparition and development of Internet. The automatic systems of library – especially the integrated ones – as well as the library networks, together with the

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[1] See: idem p. 42

[2] idem p. 39

[3] idem p. 43

totality of the connecting and interconnecting possibilities, have done nothing else but to gather and redefine mainly the traditional functions and possibilities of the libraries.

Thus, one and the same automated catalogue of a library can simultaneously function as an alphabetical, systematic and thematic, respectively as service and public catalogue, etc. The same portal can assure in the same time access to the rest of the database and information, to the different services etc. that are held and/or produced by a library, or even by other libraries from a network; the system being able to offer extremely useful statistic information and data about the grade and mode of their usage, etc.

Secondly, all these obviously represent major changes. Not only the activities within the library, but also the entire institution is being restructured and redefined. Thus, from some quite "slow" and insular traditional institutions with certain sociological-cultural functions, which are rather seen as "invariant", libraries tend to become open organisms with permanent and spectacular changes. The modern systems of information retrieval permanently "modernize" themselves as well. That is why the daily operation and evolution depends more than ever on the management of the librarian institutions and the vast sociological-economical context in which the libraries carry on their activities. However, the book of Olimpia Curta doesn't make reference to any of these…

Instead, the work emanates and represents certain *major mutation* respecting what we may call the modernization of the librarian mentality. **The third chapter** includes a "comparative" study, made up by the author's autonomous research, dedicated to the usage of the traditional catalogue in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, compared with the usage of the on-line catalogue, the CD-ROM-s and of the Internet.

This research of great sociological inspiration has been carried out with the aid of a questionnaire distributed to different categories of users, and the collected data was processed with valid statistical methods. The survey has been a four-year's process – in the interval 1998-2001 – attempting to "form an *objective image* through which then a *feedback* on the freshly introduced instruments into B.C.U."[1]

We all know: the studied interval represents exactly the "critical" period, on the one hand the implementation of modern information methods, their sinuous establishment and propagation in the

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[1] idem p. 80

general structuring of librarian institutions. On the other hand, in this period certain "dizziness" was also observed towards the new technical possibilities, which often lead to neglecting the organicity of their implementation in the naturalness of the already existing traditional informational structures.[1]

Olimpia Curta's survey brings out – as expected – the growth of the on-line catalogue usage and the decrease of the traditional ones, while the usage of the information available on CD-ROM remains low for the whole period. The same happens with the usage of the Internet: while the usage is proportionately growing with the enlargement and recruitment of stations and of the possibilities of access – highlights the author – the Internet is used in unjustified proportions in a library for e-mail communication and at a very low percent for the actual consultation with the subscribed database.[2]

As there is a lack of space even for a schematic presentation of the analysis and conclusions of this study,[3] we would still like to underline their importance as an indicator for certain new, and in our

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[1] In B.C.U. Cluj for example, a "hall" a special and separated "department" – called the Multimedia Hall – was also created, which carries on with modern activities also the traditional activities of "reference". The traditional means of "reference" and the concerning activities operate in another hall – called for decades: Reference Hall, situated above, on another floor of the institution… Or the separation – even physical – of these activities from the traditional sources and activities, has in fact no other professional justification, than that of our erroneous temptation to separate the traditional from the modern. Referring to this aspect, also see: Carmen Crişan: *Strategii de dezvoltare a serviciilor de acces la informaţia electronică în Sala Multimedia* (Partea a II-a) [Development strategies of the services of access at the electronic information in the Multimedia Hall, 2nd part] In: *Biblioteca*, nr. 1, 2004

[2] See: idem p. 94

[3] As well the methods, as the instruments (e.g. T*he Questionnaire*) but also the results of the research (tables, graphics etc.) are exposed in the detailed *Annexes* attached at the end of the volume. The data offered here also allows the reader to effectuate analyses from more detailed points of view, than that permitted to the author by the volume-economy. A critical remark in this sense is, that some considerations could be made regarding the lack of a more rigorous sample-procedure in the application of the questionnaire. However: we believe that we cannot discuss the validity of the obtained data, neither of the tendencies identified in the time of the analysis. Nevertheless, we are sure, that a future resumption of the research – by the author or by somebody else – shall impose the refinement of the questions, as well as the practical randomized sampling of the questionnaire.

opinion exhilarating tendencies, that must be appreciated in their actual "weight" and encouraged in the future. It is about the beginning or maybe even the first steps in the propagation of a strictness in recording and analysis throughout the elaboration, ensuing and evaluation of the informational, professional, institutional processes in a library.

"Of course", we cannot talk here either about some one-sided process. On the contrary: the last part of the volume – Conclusions – from this perspective might even represent a "back-fall" and a loss of level regarding the consistence of the research in the previous chapters. The conclusions are not merely schematic and punctiform – concerning the methods, means and techniques of information recovery – but seem to actually reiterate the indifferent and so very accustomed automatism of the postulates formulated through the incessant and uncommitted "MUST"! It is clear that the extension of the thoughts and analyses until the horizon of the senses is and will in time remain a difficult and uncommon exercise… and in many concerns even contra-productive, that is, creating "troubles" and inconveniences.

In fact the option of the introduction of the modern methods of information processing and recovery etc. leads to blatant and fundamental modifications in the librarian profession and institutions that cannot unfold and accomplish themselves unless being put out to permanent analysis and critical evaluations aimed at management, but also the actual politics. (It is quite difficult to explain how it happens that e.g. the libraries from Cluj are dealing for a good while with the introduction of these methods without having any institutional communication between each other. Particularly how and why is then again possible, after all these years of speeches and professional trips that nothing materialized regarding shared cataloguing? Still one of Olimpia Curta's conclusions states – otherwise well-foundedly– that the implementation of these new methods offers "possibilities of cooperative acquisition and shared cataloguing".[1]   Yet it does not mention the **realities** of these "conditions"! This elucidates the fact, according to which one can not "solve" and overstep these questions by simply multiplying the performant calculators, neither only by the acquisition of the latest variant of the different resort programs, and neither by the competences regarding the methods of "correct buttoning", but by something totally different and more ample… something that surely remains inseparable from these methods and techniques.)

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[1] idem p. 108

However, this volume deals – we hope – with the outlining of the beginnings of a major mental shift, which is being conditioned by the spreading of the means of informatization, but what – in its essence – must take place beyond them, on the background of new professional, structural, mental, and even cultural challenges and competences.

Nothing but such a modification can engender the implementation of the "novelties" to turn into an undeniably organic process, which does not pervert into cheap intentions of being by all means "abreast with the times". That is: in order to become a process indeed, a decision, an effort and a competence that "sees" not just the trends, but the – and perhaps: especially – the *senses*. Because this way some *chances* might articulate for the regainment and rebuilding of a new *culture* of the librarian profession and of the institutions of library, a culture seriously affected, here, especially by the occurrences in the sixth and seventh decades of the past century and through the "generation shift" that took place at that time…

We repeat that the book by Olimpia Curta represents a well-structured attempt that hints – at least to us – exactly in this direction! Hence, beyond the "techniques" and "methods", it guides towards the problematization and reproblematization of the *senses*! We moreover are confident, that the work shall be continued, and the future doctoral dissertation by the author shall allow for chapters in these particular directions.

Approaches to the History of Hungarian Philosophy

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Nomen est omen. The name Áron (Aaron) must have originally referred to inspiration or (at least) perspicacity. Either way, the Áron Publishing House from Budapest usually presents its readers with excellent books, and what is more – considering their appearance and content – at a reasonable price. A brilliant example thereof is the book entitled *Közelítések a magyar filozófia történetéhez* (Approaches to the history of Hungarian philosophy), published in 2004, edited by Béla Mester and László Perecz, part of the *Recepció és kreativitás* (Reception and creativity) series, and *Nyitott magyar kultúra* (Open Hungarian