

considered coordinators and this situation be reflected on the printed cover of the book without any ambiguity. I felt very sad when I found out that in the final stage of the work, when they had to choose between two almost identical entries (probably based on the same source), the newcomer's was preferred. I felt ashamed to find out that without being consulted, I was undeservedly included among the personalities of the city, together with other "work-less" contributors. I felt sad again when, on the gorgeous cover of the dictionary, I caught sight of some of the Cluj personalities' mutilated names.

But despite all these, upon coming out of the gate of the publishing house, my Dictionary copies under my arm, I felt enormously relieved: I had nothing else to do but walk in that drizzling November rain; that and nothing else anymore.

(November 2004)

Emil Pinte (16th December 1944 – 6th January 2004)

- The polyvalence of a destiny-

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Around the eighties (of the past century) a honorable Romanian criticist (from Bucharest) visiting the city of Cluj as a guest of the Babeş-Bolyai University's Rector (who was one of the most important professors at the Faculty of Lettres), was asked by the latter, with a fake modesty in his voice (which we, his former students were familiarized with, and knew to interpret it as irony):

- "What do you think of Cluj? Provincial? Isn't it? A poor provincial city...!"

- "Provincial?" – Provincial, he responded using the same interrogative tone. "No! Not in the least! On the contrary! It is not provincial (it is a metropolis)! A city with a university that can afford such adjuncts and lecturers (he named the most outstanding, the most famous ones – they all became university professors after 1990 –, publicists, book authors, not promoted because of different stupid bureaucratic and financial reasons in the closing stages of the communist era, and probably, in the opinion of the man from Bucharest,

even from the fault of his interlocutor), Cluj is by no means a provincial city!”

–“!?”–

(In this way, through these two punctuation marks, often used by Ion Luca Caragiale as well, the surprise was manifested, the perplexity of the illustrious Rector was revealed.)

Paradoxally, I recognize that it is rather hard to write about somebody close, about somebody with whom you have held collegial and professional relations, and who was, without any doubt, your friend, and without the high position (at the workplace) to have interposed between the two of you, which after all, no matter what you do, distorts the balance, the naturalness of a friendship. When you really want to do it, you realize that you can't find the words, the sentences can be knocked together roughly and the phrases are out-of-mesh... The occasionally almost identical common affinities connected to writing, to the common preferences in the professional problems that preoccupied us had brought us together: to his office, full of luxurious plants from the filiation, or to our studentship's *Arizona*.” Starting from the 60's, I knew him “by sight from the sport park (the former Victor Babeș, the present Iuliu Hatieganu), perhaps from the university, perhaps (why not), from the library (the one from the Philology or B.C.U.). At that time, we didn't know each other; he was graduating, when I only began the first year... Now, until yesterday or before we used to meet in front of a coffeehouse: I wonder if anybody remembers his unique way of placing the cup inclined to the saucer...? And how many stories we found to spin irritating the actual assistance: starting from the method of writing a bibliography (then, when we experienced the assertion of a contradictory opinion), about the importance and necessity (questionable) of the new orthography introduced in a great rush at the beginning of 1990 by some political “personalities” who had nothing in common with philology, we used to comment the importance and necessity of some bibliographic works, of some monographs, and used to appreciate the new monumental apparitions (the series about Romanian writers published by the *Romanian Academy* and by the *Univers Enciclopedic* publishing house) each time lamenting our precarious material situation (of librarians) that did not allow us to buy them; we used to narrate about Central Asia ...

Then skipping unreservedly friendly, privately, ceremoniously, unprofessionally to commentaries related to the literary life (hidden), to politics (where we had identical points of view but, I realized that even if we hadn't agreed, he would have been anyway a correct and elegant

conversationist). Emil was a partner full of respect towards his conversationist, he was always ready to augment his own contributions, making additions, completions, – basically transposing into our conversation (or into others’) the main characteristic of our (the teamwork) profession (noble, in his conception) of librarians.

Consequently a discreet, fragile and a very sensitive friendship bounds me to Emil, friendship with a barely sensed “growth” in it – reason that trammels me in my determination to commit to paper memories of him, feelings – in order to recall him to life again for a few moments – unlike the other fellows that I wrote about – even within the lines of this publication – with more spore and advantage as in their case the connection was defined by respect due to their age and long experience (Vasile Turdean)¹, or through the regret of an unfulfilled friendship (started in the university years) due to the premature death, and especially due to the high position – (Traian Brad)². Writing about him seems to be as hard as the reconstruction of an antique vase would be from a couple of pieces. However, we can wisely state, that all this belongs to life, that this is life...

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As a pupil and as a student, Emil Pinteia practiced performance sport and achieved several records. He wrote and published poetry.

He also painted, exhibiting in personal and collective expositions.

He was a passionate traveller (not “as part of his job” as a professional task, not by “delegations”, “study bursaries”, “exchanges”, not for free, but on his own, to the degree which a common, a state salaried man could afford), but his travels, his guidelines were thoroughly studied and (anytime) geographically, culturally etc. explained for those interested. And these experiences were conceived and perceived by Emil as something complementary for his qualification. (some of these made up the subject of notes or published notes).

We can say about Emil Pinteia that he was a (real) professional of the librarian profession, willing to continuously (and multilaterally)

¹See our article *Vasile Turdean (14th November 1926 – 21st February 2003)*, in *Hermeneutica Bibliothecaria (II.) – Philobiblon Anthology*, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 494-500.

²See also our article *Traian Brad (31st August 1946 – 8th June 2002)*, in *Philobiblon, vol. IV-V-VI-VII, 1999-2002*, Cluj, 2002, pp. 481-483.

perfectionate himself, which turned out to be useful and profitable to his profession. All these activities, all these attractions were conceived as complementary to his qualification, they interweave and become part of the vocation of the man who Emil was. His CV-s were composed respecting this “amalgam” – in his conception multilaterality is a feature that a man (of books) must have, that a researcher (of books) must have. I had the occasion to read them and I confess, that I initially intended to dissociate these sketches on domains: librarian, (profession conscientiously practiced), writer (*violon d’Ingres*), painter (*hobby*), sportsman and spectator of sport competitions (approved)... This turned to be impossible, as Emil was (a bit of) everything – he was perfect in everything. On top of all, the labels that I’ve given between brackets could be changed and mixed like cards, and still, nothing would change... A bibliographer, a librarian must have vast knowledge, as large and as overall as possible, regardless of the domain in which he activates. Emil Pintea responded positively to all these demands.

The librarians and evidently the biographers (who arise from them) most of the time are considered only some servants (I shall not further comment on this, look up the expression in the dictionary) of the institutions above them. The University, the Academy, (today) the County Councils, (on earlier times the unique Party). What’s more, there is the tendency of subqualifying the concrete result of their work in comparison with the university “product”. Between two biographical works, most of the time the “impartial” observer prefers the work of the university, of the professor... The “risks” of the profession. However, at least us librarians, know well how these things stand... Making an abstraction and looking objectively, disregarding the quality of the mentioned work, disregarding the fact that it was a collateral enterprise, among other more important works, or even disregarding the fact that the author (our author’s favorite) was often helped (of one’s own accord, from professional duty, or simply by an altruistic disposition) by librarians (biographers). Still, many studies of dilettantes in bibliographies (in librarianship) enter between the skilled works (see the dictionary in the book of T. B.), at least equally, beside studies that are very seriously and professionally written, not mentioning the situations when the latter gets omitted, these works being considered incredible...

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At the beginning of the 60’s, the high schools of Cluj had a well-established hierarchy (the first three: Emil Racoviță, Gheorghe Barițiu and George Coșbuc) measurable in the quality of the graduating students.

All these high schools were of general education (with real and human sections), there didn't exist any special or supraspecial classes, as they appeared in a decade. The only exception regarding the main instruction, were the high schools of music, sport, choreography, and plastic arts. After finishing high school, Pinteă practiced performance sport at the Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj, graduating in 1986 he sustained his thesis entitled the *Rondelurile lui Alexandru Macedonski* (The Roundels of Alexandru Macedonski). After graduation he became a librarian at the *Subsidiary of the Romanian Academy*. Such a work, such a specialization, requires beside all the special qualities and a serious culture – which was accumulated in a long period of time – a good knowledge of the cultural life. Once he finished the university, he came to the library, and he fulfilled the expectations. It was a habit of the university libraries to hire – within the limits of the possibilities and the not very tolerant laws – valuable graduates, either to create good professionals, either as stopovers (profitable for each party) for the upcoming university professors. “Politics”, which can be very useful in both cases: especially when the “professors” who made their probation in the library become residents, library people, turn to be “open” (if it's the case) towards the problems of this institution. Not to mention the importance of “castigating” research work in the library, of the “skill“ of search etc. of the future research professor.¹

A librarian, created from the beginning by “grafting” a brilliant graduate indulged in the research work; with preoccupations (very diverse) towards literature (and not only) has all the perspectives to turn out a good professional. A librarian must be an “open” person, with receptivity (towards anything) a man of gazetteer culture (a good and real one), a man who knows the world, history, geography (naturally I exaggerate a bit here...), a man being capable of connections, incapable of confusions. Let us (librarians) think only about the identical names (homophones) of different authors, where ignorance, the mixture of ignorance can create in the best-case hilarity for the expert. In particular cases (e.g. Steaua) in order to avoid confusions it is good (necessary if not obligatory) to know (properly, that is the place itself) the redaction, the

¹We think that it might be interesting to propose an article, which should deal in the future, with personalities who stepped (initially) through the library (where they were formed), beside the valuable librarians – authors of several important works. Also see the article of *Stelian Măndruț, Virgil Vătășianu and B.C.U. din Cluj*, published in *Hermeneutica Bibliothecaria (II.)*, pp.297-314.

most important collaborators, to withhold relations with all these persons, and why not, to publish next to them? If apparently the bibliographer activity means a static occupation, through the fact that you are obliged to do research work (dry and cold) with the periodicals on your table, with the documents on your table, with the books on your table”, it has also an active, dynamic component. The situation of Emil Pintea is more or less similar to this.

We should add that the moment of his employment was coinciding with the moment of great times of (political) “thawing” after an ultra dogmatic period, when people (Romanians) put great hopes into the future. This was the moment when great names of our culture were “rehabilitated”, were “removed from the index”. This illusion went on for a couple of years marking for good those who lived it through. This condition went on only till the month of July of 1971; the date of the “famous” ceausistic theses, those who graduated after this year had a more temperate attitude. However the initial steps went on, the road was determined, the directions assigned, set out... they continuously attempted to bring onto surface everything that was buried by the dogmatism of the “new” system established after 1944... A highly documented introduction, a study that “highlights” the national and “progresist” character, of the studied one, with a well-chosen quote from a classic (possibly Marxism-Leninism) could save a masterpiece... The books of the “forbearers” with problems couldn’t even appear without introductive studies of “reconsideration”. (There were “born”, there existed a few “masters” of these studies, men whose words had weight in a question, as they were basic members of the “system”).

Emil Pintea specialized in the field of literary bibliography. He claimed to be –and he was– a good researcher, assiduous and serious, an “expert” of the *Gândirea* (The Thought) periodical (Cluj-București, 1921-1944), the way we shall see, his intentions being fulfilled. He was a frequent contributor of the *Steaua* (The Star) periodical from Cluj. He was a member of The Romanian Writers Association. In 1968 he made his publicistical debut in the *Luceafărul* (The Morning Star) publication. He published several poems, studies of literary history, of book history, biblioteconomy, short prose, reviews, expositions, travel notes and impressions in the periodicals of: *Tribuna*, *Echinox*, *Familia*, *Tomis*, *Library and Research*, *Apostrof*, *Napoca Universitara*, *Academica*, *Minerva*, *Noesis*, *Renaissance*, *Excelsior*, *Transylvanian Review*. As a painter he had personal exhibitions in 1986 and 1988 as the brother of the painter Laurențiu Pintea (Lao Pi).

He was the specialty counselor of the Romanian architectural project registered at the Paris world contest, organized in 1989 by the UNO and UNESCO, in order to construct the new Library of Alexandria (Egypt). He was granted with the first award at the national contest of poetry and essay “Octavian Goga” (Cluj-Ciucea 1997) for his essay *O raritate bibliofilă: volumul de debut al lui O. Goga* (A bibliophile rarity: the first volume of O. Goga) (1905).

He conceived the text and the model of the text from the wall of the “Continental” restaurant (the former “New York”) from Cluj, with the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the *Gândirea* publication (placed at the Municipality Council in May the 2nd 2002).

Here are the volumes that he left behind: *Blajul 1934-1936*. The ad noted bibliographical indices (1972), *Steaua 1949-1974*. (The Star 1949-1974) ad noted bibliographical indices (in collaboration), the volumes I-III (1979), *Boabe de grâu*. (Grains of Wheat. 1930-1935) (1986); *Alpha '87*, (collective volume of the national contest of poetry debut, 1987); *Gândirea. Antologie literară* (The Thought. Literary Anthology) (1992), *Bibliografia literaturii române. 1961-1965* (The Bibliography of Romanian Literature. 1961-1965) (in collaboration), the volumes I-V (1996-2002); Radu Dragnea, *Supunerea la tradiție*, (Obedience to Tradition) essays, chronicles, articles, critical edition, 1998; *Gândirea 1921-1944*. (The Thought 1921-1944) ad noted bibliographical indices (1998); *Rare ploi rare. 77 poeme*, (Rare, Rare Rains) (own volume of verses), 2000.

A massive work remained after him, ready for printing enclosing two volumes, *Gândirea. Antologie. Dicționar. Bibliografie* (The Thought. Anthology. Dictionary. Bibliography), containing around 2000 pages with several illustrations and a preface by Nicolae Balotă. At the same time, he had on his “building site” (in collaboration) *The Bibliography of the Romanian Literature. 1966-1970 – Bibliografia literaturii române. 1966-1970* (scheduled in around 7 volumes).

His name was added to the Personalities of Cluj in the 20th century – Essential Dictionary (Clujeni ai secolului 20 – dicționar esențial); (into) Contributions of Cluj to the development of the bibliological science – Essential Dictionary (Contribuții clujene la dezvoltarea științei bibliologice – Dicționar esențial) (2001) and into International Directory of Distinguished Leadership, 11 ed. (ABI, Raleigh, N.C., 2003).

This was Emil Pinte. This was Emil Pinte, the library man. This was his activity, his earthly life. Thinking about him, about the

friendship that bound us late, I was reminded of the long-ago episode, the dialogue of the university Rector and the honorable criticist from Bucharest. Blissful is the “country” that can flatter itself with such humble and unassuming “servants”... Blissful is the “country” which does not feel the urge to create masters for the new generation, to produce such people. Blissful is the “country” that can allow such luxury to itself... It is only that, you see, the sack that is so full (the immeasurable genius and “inexhaustible well” of our people) can finally reach its “bottom”. This is what usually happens when you always pick out without putting anything in... And then on the back of which disinterested toilers will the country uphold itself? Who will then assist the country?

I miss Emil more than ever. I miss those long conversations, our commentaries (occasionally) of the special editions (e.g. each new edition of the author “made” by the Romanian Academy in collaboration with the *Univers Enciclopedic* publishing house constituted a subject of discussion, of adding it to the publication). I miss the many commentaries regarding the cataloguing of the works, their classification, in order that, finally, this information to be easy to find and operative – that is also the main objective of librarian work. I miss the extended dialogs on the editing of the works... He used to narrate, each time we met, the method of the hand setting (made by him on the computer) in his anthology about the Gândirea (The Thought). I miss having a coffee with Emil at the *Arizona* and commenting upon *Vuelta d’España, Tour de France Il Giro d’Italia*...

I would like to hear Emil once more reciting one of his poems (probably his favourite too) *Suprazbor* (Overflight), *Rare ploii rare* (Rare, Rare Rains); section of *Apocrifa gramatică* (*Apocryphal Grammaticals*) “Numai creația / e sinonimă libertății pure. / Chiar regii martori ei / sînt gîrbovi și umili, săraci– împovărîndu-i demnitatea, / desigur, nu a lor... / Ea, libertatea ultimă e chin, / un spasm / mai metafizic decît ruga, / dar sus, acolo, cui să mă închin, / cînd tuturor stăpîn e sluga?”¹

In a normal country, a man with his instruction, with his interest towards work, towards his job, would have become director, if not even an extremely efficient general director. For this he had too much kindness

¹ “Nothing but creation /is synonymous to pure liberty. /Even the kings, the witnesses of it/ are bent and humble, poor – encumbering its dignity, / of course, not theirs.../ She, freedom is the last torture / a spasm / more metaphysical than the prayer, / but up there to whom shall I devote, / when the master of all is the servant?

and patience. He could have created, could have “grown up” beside himself future specialists. He liked being responsible in anything he wouldn’t have liked to leave his work on other’s back (his subordinates), his many-sidedness was in fact, something absolutely normal. He wasn’t multilateral; he only was a man interested in everything that was complementary, adjacent with librarian work, with the work of an information expert, with the work of a writer, of an author of works “work instrument”...

He was right, our “honorable” criticist: Cluj is by no means provincial!¹

¹ Here we should make another sad observation... What a mischief that (in our country) the majority of the bibliographical works appear in the edition of the libraries that “produce” them. Big, not nice books, some as if made in Braille for the sightless, realized in the precarious polygraphic conditions of the “producing” institutions. When edited by (real) publishing houses in book format (and not in the form of lithographed courses, or similar), they would have totally other chances. Evidently, one could reply that these implementations could be very expensive (short print, high volume, lot and repeated corrections, maximum meticulousity, for not each mistake can be corrected, discovered by the reader like in the case of the words with mistyped letters...). These works are part of our culture, are equal and stand beside other books of reference, beside the original literature (classic, modern or contemporaneous), beside the author-publisher science publishings. And in this direction, towards such books, should the state subventions be allocated.