

**A Man, a Book, a Library**  
**Traian Brad – a Servant of Books**

*Raluca SOARE<sup>1</sup>*  
*“Lucian Blaga” Central University Library,*  
*Cluj-Napoca*

Writing reminds you of books and books lead you not only to the territory of imagination but also to libraries as both independent architectural entities and institutions, together with the symbolic content the word library has. But the world of libraries cannot be imagined without librarians, without those persons who offer you their knowledge, their rich culture in order to help you as a reader to find the information you need or, on other occasions, who help you to find among the large bookshelves the book suitable for an afternoon relaxation. And this librarians' world is not confined only to doing good with the reader who enters the library. These people often succeed, through their continuous efforts, in producing positive modifications, in making things for the benefit of a whole community, or even in changing the view of the city they live in, their aim being to spread knowledge.

Such a librarian, such a “servant of books” who dedicated himself to culture, to books and to the library was undoubtedly Traian Brad whose name is connected with the new building of the Public City Library in Cluj at the foot of the Feleac Hill. He was also one of the founders of the National Association of Librarians and Public Libraries in Romania (NALPLR):

Though he is no longer physically present in the everyday life of the Public City Library's personnel, but his spiritual heritage, his memory is ever present in the institution and in those colleagues' memory whom he instructed both professionally and through his personal example. The volume entitled suggestively *Traian Brad – un slujitor al cărții* (Traian Brad – a Servant of Books), published at the Casa Cărții de Știință (Scientific Book House) in Cluj-Napoca (2005, 296 pp.) is proof to this.

The book came out on the occasion of Traian Brad's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the form of an anthology meant to present the entire activity as a writer of the much missed director of the “Octavian Goga” Public City Library. It also collects the thoughts of the persons who knew him, loved him and appreciated him, as well as interviews and letters.

---

<sup>1</sup> E-mail: ralusoare@yahoo.com

The book thus becomes a true memorial volume; its pages outline for the reader the personality of this guide in the world of books who left his mark on the cultural life and the library activities of Cluj and Transylvania, his influence being maybe felt on a wider scale too.

The volume contains three distinct parts and a chronologically arranged "photographical" appendix at the end which presents Traian Brad in different moments of his life: in his study, at professional meetings, symposia, conferences, "soul meetings".<sup>1</sup>

The book starts with a presentation of the late Traian Brad's biographic data – he graduated the Faculty of Letters in Cluj in 1972, he was the director of the "Octavian Goga" Public City Library and initiated and coordinated several European programs for Romania in the domain of public libraries. This is followed by the presentation of his activity as a writer. He published studies of literary history in *Tribuna* and *Lectura* such as: studies on Iosif Pervain; *Ideea națională la Octavian Goga* (The National Idea in Octavian Goga's Work) whom he presented as an ardent champion of the unification of the Romanian territory from between the boundaries of the former Dacia through Romania's participation in the war; *Hașdeu și istoria critică a românilor* (Hașdeu and the Romanian Critical History) in which he presented Hașdeu's study on the Romanian critical thought in detail following its table of contents and through the notes made by the author in a copy of his work owned in the present by the "Octavian Goga" Library.

After the articles of literary criticism his rich research activity in the domain of librarianship is emphasized by the enumeration of the studies in librarianship and information science written by Traian Brad. Some titles and themes of this activity are: *Programul Phare la Cluj* (The PHARE Programme in Cluj) which describes the steps of the programme and its material implications, as well as its importance in the development of information sources; *Modele de organizare a bibliotecilor* (The Organization Model of Libraries) in which libraries from Belgium, Holland and Greece are compared with their particularities and common elements, their interest in the users' needs, the centralization of some services and the continuous striving for funds; *Managementul pentru bibliotecă: o abordare personală a stării bibliotecii publice românești și clujene* (Library Management: A Personal View on the State of Public Libraries in Romania and Cluj) which outlines the problems of public libraries, the lack of responsible organizations, the importance of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Spiritual holiday in Pănade, August 1999.

public library for the local cultural medium and the impossibility of elaborating long term development strategies; *Noi suntem cei care vom extinde centrul oraşului* (We Are the Ones to Extend the Town Centre) – an essay emphasizing the role the opening of a new public library building was going to have, being a new cultural and not geographic centre of the city. In this part of the book are also presented: the activity of the National Association of Librarians and Public Libraries from Romania (NALPLR) through its relationships established or presented by Traian Brad as the president of the association; the interviews realized by Dan Damaschin, Constantin Mustață etc. and published in *Biblioteca, Adevărul de Cluj* and *Piața de Cluj*; as well as Traian Brad's correspondence with Hermina Anghelescu.

The last part of the book contains reviews on Traian Brad's works, *Pânăde 700 de ani* (Pânăde 700 Years), *Lectura și biblioteca publică la Cluj* (Reading and the Public Libraries in Cluj) written by Ion Buzăși, Mircea Popa, Dimitrie Poptâmaș, Ionuț Țene, Săluc Horvat etc., and the honorary and commemorative articles formulated by his colleagues from the library, his family and those who esteemed him. An immense admiration, appreciation and the regret that he is no longer present among them is revealed on these pages.

Traian Brad was a man who “knew to administrate culture, to valorize it, being an extraordinary library director”, a man “inspired by the importance of books and of the institutions preserving it and putting it at the readers' disposal” according to the characterization of an article published in the *Apostrof*, a characterization quoted on the last page of the book too.

Probably, whenever we are thinking of libraries, the information centres of the community in Cluj, whenever we pass near the building of the “Octavian Goga” Public City Library, we shall give a thought to Traian Brad. The memorial volume realized by those who were his friends, subalterns and close acquaintances will help us to discover his personality.