

**GEORGE EMIL PALADE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, PHARMACY,
SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY OF TARGU MURES**

Doctoral School of Letters, Humanities And Applied Sciences

Field: Philology

BOOKS, LIBRARY, READING IN MUREȘ COUNTY BETWEEN 1918-2018

Summary

Scientific Advisor: Prof. Univ. Dr. BOLDEA IULIAN

PH.D. Candidate: Helgiu Anamaria

The present doctoral thesis, proposes and aims to analyze and highlight the state of libraries, books and reading and their evolution, the transformations which they passed, along a century. From a chronological point of view, the studied period is 1918-2018.

Starting from the assertion that "every library is a history of the book", as well as from the statement that "every text was first a manuscript", the research in this doctoral thesis outlines relevant aspects of the universe and the life of books, exposes distinct aspects about readers and libraries, about special and rare books, about the librarian - man of the book, but also addresses a modern issue: digitization, digital library, digital collections. The research also aimed to emphasize the role that the written word, the book and libraries had in the evolution of human culture and spirituality, to highlight the most important moments that defined the cultural history of humanity and the new directions towards which modern libraries are heading to.

This analysis is carried out along seven chapters, which contain both general elements related to the situation of books and libraries, as well as particular elements, which will focus on Mureș county.

The research also included a case study: the Library of George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Targu Mures, a library which was created in 2018, following the unification of two important universities in the city: the University of Medicine and Pharmacy and the " Petru Maior" University. For a better understanding of the facts, a brief history of the two institutions was made.

Tangentially, the situation of other libraries in the mentioned territory was also analyzed: "Zaharia Boiu" Municipal Library in Sighisoara and Mureş County Library. In order for the information transmitted to benefit from the necessary accuracy, a visit to "Zaharia Boiu" Municipal Library was done, where information related to this part of the work was taken, consulting internal documents, inventory registers, catalogue sheets, but also a fruitful dialogue with the librarians here took place.

The choice of research topic is closely related to our observation that the territory of books and libraries is extremely promising but insufficiently explored but also the fact that in the contemporary period, the situation of libraries and books is a particularly dynamic one, and their indisputable progress should be important to be followed. Since the book and libraries have reached the highest point of their existence and evolution, we consider it relevant to trace their progress over certain periods of time.

The objectives we proposed are related to the analysis of the universe of these cultural elements, their evolution and the elements that have marked them over the course of a century, by following particular situations and highlighting a representative institution for the studied territory. The discovery in the archives of the Library of G.E. Palade UMPHST of Tg. Mureş of some useful information regarding the evolution and transformation of this institution was of real use and contributed substantially to the creation of a correct image of this educational institution, which today, through all the activities carried out in the last decades, has become a creative institution and a provider of culture.

Along with the volumes used to complete the theoretical section, consisting of monographs and periodicals, other original sources were used: collections and studies, databases, digital libraries and archives, online catalogs, legislation, manuscripts, inventory registers, (eg: IR of the History of Medicine, IR of the Special Collections, IR of the Documentary Fund of the Library of Pedagogical Institute, IR of the Secret Fund of the Library of Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy, the Catalogue of the History of Medicine Museum, internal documents, archives).

The present research goes from the general to the particular, addressing both elements that characterize writing, books and libraries in general, as well as specific elements belonging to the territory under research.

Starting from the idea that writing arose from the human need to communicate in other ways than speech, the first chapter, aims to follow the evolution of writing, of written communication, both in the global as well as in the specific Romanian one.

Although we did not propose a broad history of the book and print, the field enjoying numerous studies in this sense, this chapter is quite a vast one, because the study and research of a millennial history is a complex, long and arduous process, moreover, the discoveries of scientists in this direction have not always coincided, which can be intimidating for people who decide to step into this territory, as they might be confused by the diversity of research results and the multitude of working hypotheses. Although research has managed to unravel countless mysteries of the evolution of writing and the book, others have remained unfathomable.

Throughout this chapter, we referred to the most important moments that marked these cultural elements: the main supports on which the writing was done and the first graphic signs (which represented everyday activities or had magical and religious meanings). Throughout this chapter reference was also made to the first libraries, because once the development of writing and the number of inscriptions has developed, the interest in collecting the most beautiful creations also increased. The great libraries of Antiquity also came into discussion: the Library of Alexandria and the Library of Nineveh, libraries where copyists and illustrators worked and where special, luxurious and precious manuscripts were born.

We also followed the printing revolution and the impact it had on the social and cultural life of mankind, the invention of printing attributed to Gutenberg representing one of the fundamental achievements of society throughout its entire cultural evolution, the moment when the transition from manuscript to the printed book was made.

After covering the first century of the printed book and presenting the main elements that revolutionized writing, our research focused on outlining specific aspects of the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space, highlighting the main evidence of writing in this area: the cave paintings discovered in the Cuciulat, Coliboaia, Gaura Chindiei Caves.

This first chapter of the research also conveys information about the first Romanian manuscripts (pomelnices, court chronicles) and prints (Liturghier - 1508, Octoih - 1510, Evengheliar - 1512), and brings into discussion the situation of the first Romanian libraries, respectively private libraries and monastic libraries.

Many of the Romanian private libraries were comparable to the large European private libraries, something that attests "a synchronization of the Romanian book civilization with the European one."

The second chapter of the work, *Writing, books and libraries in the territory of Mureș county*, is divided into three sub-chapters, as follows:

The first sub-chapter refers to the interwar period

The second sub-chapter refers to the communist period

The third sub-chapter refers to the period after 1989

The first sub-chapter, exposes the elements that characterized the first half of the 20th century from a typographical and editorial point of view, a period in which, after the end of the First World War, publishing houses, printing presses, editorial production in general saw a considerable boost, printing both scientific books and books of fiction or general culture.

As a result of this cultural and literary revival, the world of libraries underwent transformations, many libraries being established, both in urban and rural areas.

In Mureș county, along with the demographic evolution of the city, with the development of education and industry, a public library was established in 1913, when the Palace of Culture opened. When the library was opened, its funds, consisting exclusively of publications in the Hungarian language, was made up of donations offered by some institutions or private individuals.

A special role in the evolution of this library was played by the first two directors of the institution, Molnár Gábor and Aurel Filimon, who were involved in the development of the documentary collection, facilitated the access to reading, with the aim of raising the level of culture of the population, to educate and modernize the Mures society.

The second sub-chapter refers to the situation of libraries and printing houses during the communist period, when the changes that occurred with the establishment of the communist authority also penetrated the territory of the written word, because the new regime emphasized communist propaganda.

The new political power imposed its ideological influence on the life of books and libraries, which became a tool for the dissemination of communist ideological ideas, principles and dogmas.

In the territory of the Mures county, the publications from the collections of the Library of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy that did not meet the ideological criteria claimed by the new political regime were subject to censorship, being taken out of circulation and

transferred to a Special Fund (Secret Fund), forbidden to the general public. Distinguishing the books that were part of this fund was done by marking the letter S in red on the book.

The register of the Secret Fund contained the titles of 389 publications, an apparently small number of titles, however, directly proportional to the volume of the entire print collection of the library, the university library was just being formed, so the total book collection at that time was not generous. Reflecting on the structure of the Secret fund, we found that it met the criteria imposed by the authorities of the time, most of the titles being written in foreign languages and were published abroad. Along with foreign publications, the Secret Fund of the Institute was also composed of Romanian books, which were eliminated either because of their content or because of the authors' activity, contrary to the ideology of the era.

The library of the Pedagogical Institute of Targu Mures also had, along with a rich collection of documents specific to the institution's profile, a special fund of documents, called the Documentary Fund or the Documentary Library, a collection that is preserved until today.

For more than forty years, the printing has been affected by a strict control, generating an unforgettable persecution of the written word and an unprecedented damage to Romanian culture, history and literature.

These publishing bans and limitations on knowledge will end with the revolution of December 1989, when the communist regime was removed, in order to establish a democratic, independent regime, aspects that are the object of the third sub-chapter. After a period in which prohibitions of all kinds limited the progress of Romanian society, the new political regime allowed a broadening of the Romanians' cultural horizons. The editorial abundance, not subjected to a critical filter, which characterized the first years after the revolution, allowed the appearance of publishing houses lacking prestige and rigor, which printed mediocre publications lacking literary value. The freedom of expression following the revolution of 1989 was sometimes misunderstood, leading to the appearance of some printing houses or even publishing houses of controversial quality, trying to strike with a sensational title or an erotic series of questionable quality, but attractive through the glossy covers and the "forbidden" effect.

The libraries were not bypassed by the "appetite" of the Romanians for this type of literature, so mediocre publications entered their collections as well. This was the period when, along with the medical and pharmaceutical books, the collections of the Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Targu Mures included prints such as: *Gustul tentației*,

Vraja Parisului, Glasul inimii, Lumea e plină de femei divorțate, Lumea e plină de bărbați însurați, Îngerul de catifea, Dimineața de după.

Once the democracy and freedom were established, Romanians had the opportunity to show their curiosity and became extremely interested in the field of the paranormal, mysteries, miracles and dreamology. We identify titles from this category in the Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Targu Mures: *Fenomenul Mudava, Miraculoase însușiri terapeutice, Interpretarea viselor, Cartea paranormalului, Dicționar diabolic, Dialoguri cu entități din invizibil.*

Gradually, however, the publishing world began to coagulate and gain significance, with readers beginning to filter and select the type of literature they approached, by purchasing quality titles, provided by respectable publishing houses, thus bringing an end to this temporary period of editorial euphoria and the transition towards another stage of Romanian written culture was made.

After the year 2000, the printed book began to be duplicated by an electronic correspondent, and the fact that an electronic device was capable of hosting vast libraries conquered the readers. For libraries, this new direction comes as a complement to the existing services, changing their mission, functions and attributions, placing themselves under the sign of new information technologies.

In this section of the paper we analyzed and exposed how the libraries of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy and the „Petru Maior” University assimilated modern technologies in the relationship with readers.

Analyzing the state of libraries and collections from 1918-2018, we note the special dynamics that marked this century, both in terms of the content of the collections and the services provided, as well as the increased importance that these institutions have acquired in the current era.

The third chapter of this doctoral thesis examines the ways in which libraries can present their documentary heritage, and the manner in which they can provide access to the holdings. Throughout the chapter, the four traditional ways of communicating collections and the manner in which they can be applied, depending on the specifics of the library, were described: direct communication, indirect communication, mixed communication, communication by loan.

In the same chapter, we provided information about the way in which the UMFST Library makes possible access to the collections, both the print and digital collections in its four faculty libraries, incorporating digital technologies in the daily activity with readers.

Adapting to the particularities of its readers, the collection communication activities practiced by the UMFST Library are carried out electronically, this service being part of the wider set of automation of library administration processes.

The fourth chapter of this doctoral thesis, exposes how libraries can be involved in the promotion of reading and the ways in which their contribution in the sphere of reading and information transforms them into a way of knowing the world, valuable sources of information and research. Although the practice of reading has undergone remarkable transformations, generated by the book revolution, today libraries are facing a new challenge, that of digital reading, a challenge that they strive to include in the range of services which they offer, complementary to the existing traditional offer. Adapting to these continuous challenges, it is necessary for the library to attract readers including in the virtual space, a space where, in the future, it is possible to carry out more and more activities, from numerous fields of human knowledge.

Libraries have a new role, that of educating and training wider categories of citizens, adapting to the demands of readers, embracing and promoting the concept of "library for all".

The fifth chapter provides information and data about the Mures county libraries which today, alongside the usual documents, keep in their collections special and rare collections, considered as such either because of their age, or because of their valuable content or the way in which they were written. The information provided in this chapter does not appear in the form of a simple series of works, each selected writing has been deepened from the perspective of the subject addressed, offering a study of the situation of the facts at the time or an adequate knowledge of the particularities of the writers, for a clear picture of the context that determined the appearance of these special texts.

As part of our research, we were provided with information about bibliographic documents that are part of the collection of "Zaharia Boiu" Library in Sighisoara, a special, old and rare collection, which includes documents written in the period 1471-1930.

The research continued by examining another bibliophile collection, belonging to the G. E. Palade UMFST of Targu Mures Library, an extremely generous collection of old books and journals, manuscripts, iconographic materials, diplomas, maps, scientific materials, recipes, letters, personal notes, various records, registers or reports.

During the research, we focused our attention on the oldest print from the library, a book written in Basel in 1532, however, we considered it useful to bring to light a few manuscripts as well, trying to understand and expose the state of affairs from the period which were written or the mentality of the age.

A remarkable document in the special collections of this library is a *Birth Register* (*Jegyzőkönyve*). For a correct interpretation of the content of this manuscript, as part of the research, we translated it from Hungarian to Romanian. In this "register", the midwife Bertleff Erzsébet, records details related to the births she attended. The notebook contains data collected over 16 years, and provides information on 124 assisted births.

Another unique manuscript is part of the collections of the same library. It is about the oath of another midwife, the widow Prokapek Ferenczné. Through this covenant, the midwife undertook to devote herself to the care of pregnant women, women in labor, and to have no preferences related to the material condition of the future parents. This document was also translated as part of the research, from Hungarian to Romanian.

These writings are proof of the evolution of society, enhancing the image of the library as an institution which provides access to culture.

A handwritten document by Victor Babeş is part of the Special Collections of the same library. It is about a letter addressed by Victor Babeş to his father. Through this letter, the son conveys to his father the difficulties he is experiencing far from the country. Despite his genius and the acclamation from the scientific world he later enjoyed, his path to an illustrious career was not always easy, as this letter itself shows.

In order to facilitate public access to these cultural heritage, for the popularization of the culture of the ancestors and for optimal preservation, the mentioned bibliophile units have been translated into digital format, being accessible online through the institutional digital repository.

Chapter six explores the situation of digital libraries and the transformation of these institutions from the traditional stage to the digital one, emphasizing how daily activities will be streamlined following the digitization of products, services and collections.

The chapter is structured in four sub-chapters, which address both the digital relationship of contemporary libraries with their users and the experience of digitizing the collections, with undeniable positive effects in research practice. As a case study, a relevant library for the studied territory was selected, G. E. Palade UMPHST Library.

In the context of an unprecedented development of science and technology, the digitization activity of collections is integrated more and more frequently into the librarianship practice, giving libraries a greater relevance.

In most cases, the digitized collections will be heritage documents, old or rare books, and the resulting digital collections will contribute to the preservation and protection of these

funds, providing open access to the digitized collection and an uninterrupted access, with no limitations of time and space.

Aligning with the trends of electronic preservation of documents and ensuring access to documents that are part of the cultural heritage of mankind, this library has included in its current activity the digitization of some collections that qualify for this process. Its Digital Repository was established in 2017, the digitization process continuing at a sustained pace, with new resources constantly being added to the collection.

The reason for this new concern of the library started from the fact that it was found that the library's rich treasure of old and rare documents was insufficiently exploited and almost impossible to access by the reading public.

In the framework of the research, the objectives and the way of organizing the collections were described, the selection criteria of the documents, the stages of digitization, the software used to provide the digital content in open access and the structure of the created Digital Repository.

Today, the Library's Digital Repository contains several thousand volumes, totaling over 305,000 digitized pages, and their number is constantly growing.

The resulting digital collection is organized into categories and subcategories (collections and sub-collections) to facilitate search and navigation within the collection.

We believe that by digitizing the special collections fund, G. E. Palade UMPHST Library ensures the immortality of this remarkable fund, contributing to the development and modernization of the activity and services, in order to support the education and research carried out in the university.

The research ends with a chapter dedicated to the Library, as a cultural and educational center, in which it is analyzed the way the contemporary libraries contribute to literacy, education and the progress of society, through the constant effort to support access to information, to promote the progress of science, offering a wide and diverse range of traditional or modern services, alongside other types of educational and cultural activities.

Today, any member of society has unrestricted access to information, the reading rooms of libraries becoming spaces for study, reading, research, information or leisure.

We conclude that the research brought to light original and unique works housed in the collections of G. E. Palade UMPHST Library and conveyed how this local library decided to preserve and popularize its special and rare collections through digital technologies, managing to build a digital repository within just a few years. Today this institutional repository has an extremely beneficial impact on the research activity carried out in the university and beyond.

The writing, books, libraries and reading had traveled millennia until they reached this peak of their development. In the 21st century libraries have reached the highest point of progress in their history, changing their structure, the attributions, the approach to the readers, the way of communicating the information, even their architecture.

Having reached this point in their evolution, today libraries are no longer just a memory space of past generations or document archives, they are institutions that educate, disseminate knowledge and values, through open access systems and services addressed to the general public. They provide flexible access to knowledge, providing wide access to information in virtual space.

Embracing change, aware of the major challenge determined by the emergence of the Internet and electronic technologies, these millennial institutions have the chance to participate in the revolution caused by these transformations, building themselves a new mission, that of the library of the future, to become cultural and knowledge centers, which emphasize the users and their need for information.

Despite all predictions, today they manage to harmoniously combine the status of the traditional library with the electronic or virtual one.