ABSTRACTS

STUDIES

A reformer of public librarianship, Géza Sebestyén

TÓTH Gyula

Géza Sebestyén (1912–1976) was a prominent figure of Hungarian librarianship in the post-1945 era. He acted as deputy director-general of the national library, was a reformer of the national bibliography system and a promoter of computerisation. The library profession tends to recall him based on his merits related to the national library, although he dealt with developing and modernising public libraries too from the very beginning of his career.

The essay presents his role in building out a network of public libraries and in organising their regional system. He elaborated a plan to create regional libraries as early as 1942, and his plan became part of the democratic cultural programme in 1946. His concept of library services to rural and urban population respectively was similar: smaller units should be united by bigger ones; regional libraries should serve as the centres of these „clusters of libraries", while smaller libraries should operate as their branches. This system would ensure a continuous exchange of the holdings of smaller units, and readers could use regional centres as well where they could get assistance from well-trained librarians.

Sebestyén took part in elaborating the draft of the (unrealised) act on the public library system, which envisaged to set up a library system based on the number of

population in communities. Regional libraries started to be organised in 1949 to 1951 but the initial swing ceased rapidly.

Sebestyén's attention was later oriented at developing city and county libraries, reflecting on Anglo-Saxon traditions. The essay includes some details from Sebestyén's less known publications which prove his commitment towards developing Hungarian public libraries according to Western patterns.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Re-cataloguing the Munich Collection of the National Széchényi Library

DANCS Szabolcs

The so-called Munich Collection of the National Széchényi Library includes materials having been acquired before 1926, stored according to an adapted classification system of the Hof- und Staatsbibliothek, Munich. Most of the materials come from the library of the founder, Ferenc Széchényi and other private collections (of Miklós Jankovich, Ferenc Kölcsey, and István Horvát etc.); mostly monographs, and also small prints and journals. It is the aim of the project having started in spring 2010 to re-catalogue these holdings and include them in the online catalogue. Additionally, materials from the World War I period, de luxe editions and some specially treated bequests (called reverence collections) are re-catalogued, making up a total of 180 thousand pieces. The essay deals with issues of managing and phasing related works. The main principle was to enable rapid identification, to develop access points and a rich system of references at the start. As first a typology of concepts, then the rules for a unified description were elaborated which will be used in all units in charge of cataloguing old prints. Cataloguing itself started after these preparations and subsequent testing. The essay presents the related workflow chart. Beside preliminary aims – unified cataloguing and multifaceted retrieval – the project envisages a virtual reconstruction of the private collections in question, as well as for filling in the gaps of the national bibliography.

Identifying the materials of Ferenc Széchényi's collection

SZŐTS Zoltán Oszkár

In April 2010 works started on organising the cataloguing of materials – in the online catalogue, based on autopsy – having been acquired by the National Széchényi Library's core collection prior to 1926 (see Szabolcs Dancs' article in the same issue). Cataloguers consider the reconstruction of earlier major private collections, especially that of the founder, Ferenc Széchényi (1754–1820) as a task of outstanding importance.

The Munich Classification System used in the period 1867 to 1875 arranged materials according to special classes, thus scattering private collections which had represented earlier organic units. Keeping them together and arranging them according to provenance was, however, at that time considered as obsolete. Currently, during the computerised processing of the Munich Collection with autopsy, the data on provenance are included in records. The essay lists the sources used for identification, and describes the process of identifying books having belonged to Ferenc Széchényi's collection.

Ferenc Kölcsey's books in the National Széchényi Library. An attempt to reconstruct the poet's library

FUCSIK Rita

During re-cataloguing of the Munich Collection in the National Széchényi Library the works originating from the bequest of the poet, politician and language reformer, Ferenc Kölcsey (1790–1838) are identified. A list of these books was first compiled in 1867. Later Zoltán Szabó G., author of the work entitled The library and readings of Ferenc Kölcsey (2009), relied on the list mentioned. Szabó's work is now used by the cataloguers as a starting point for identification. The article presents the workflow of matching and cataloguing, and illustrates the arising issues through examples (such as cases of identifying possessors, filtering misprints, ways of correcting data).

FROM OUR PAST

Issues of culture, reading and librarianship in the journal Magyar Szemle (1927-1944). Part 2

SONNEVEND Péter

The introduction to the themes discussed in the journal Magyar Szemle continues with the press, book culture (publishing, book trade, audience), reading and librarianship. Among the articles there are some significant ones dealing with surveys of the reading performance of students and with the readings of the unemployed. The articles on libraries deal mainly with issues of relevance to Hungary, although there are some examples from abroad (on Warsaw libraries and American practice, for example). Some essays call attention to the oeuvre of authors almost unknown our days (such as József Balogh and Gyula Bisztray), who had reflected on the developments in European librarianship. Other important works include András Benedek's article in 1941 on libraries in Székely land and Géza Sebestyén's first publication related to library policy (about library services to rural readers). His analysis, published in 1942, is at the same time the last mention of this subject in the journal. The summary of the two-part essay states that it was not easy to reconcile reformed conservatism (in the given case, criticism of the existing conditions) with the main directions of extisting government policy.

Collection on the History of the Dominican Order in Vasvár, Hungary

NÉMETH Katalin

In 2001 an exhibition was organised in Vasvár under the title "The Dominican order in Hungary, 1221–2001", based on materials from the Collection on the History of the Dominican Order. The books by authors from the order and the publications about the order were later transferred to a special library, while manuscripts – to an archive. After the exhibition a decision was made to place the collection of 1200 volumes, returned to the order by the national library, to the Vasvár monastery and to furnish a room for the historic library from grant funds. It is the task of a special library on the history of the order to provide assistance to research. It has taken some years now to arrange and catalogue the collection and to make it apt for research purposes. The essay deals with issues of cataloguing and the state of the art of related works.

FROM ABROAD

Re-discovering abstracting?

KOLTAY Tibor

Sooner or later information overload reaches all of us, therefore, professionals who are able to precisely digest and present essential statements from publications continue to be indispensable. Abstracts belong to the major tools of identifying important information. The essence of abstracting is to condense information at a professional standard. Although the Web2.0 includes plenty of amateur content as well as many journals with full text, professionals need in addition precise, essential, condensed information as well. Those who prepare abstracts apply the so-called documentation reading technique which enables them to read large quantities of text, to identify essential statements, read selectively and avoid memorising. Critical thinking and critical reading are important features of abstracting. Critical abstracting, however, might involve controversies.

Swedish libraries – an overview

THOMAS, Barbro (Reviewed by Márton Németh)

As a participant to the IFLA Congress in Göteborg in 2010, the reviewer summarises the overview published in the IFLA Journal and adds subjective comments. The overview about Swedish librarian-

ship and development initiatives discusses the main data on Swedish libraries, library users; the modern library services of various library types (academic, public and school libraries). It also deals with a wide variety of issues, such as the library infrastructure, the national policy to support literature, lending in public libraries, the tasks of the national library as the leading institution of the library system, the mechanism of library legislation as well as civil organisations' culture.

„Born to read" – education to reading in the early childhood. The first ten years of an Italian project

MALGAROLI, Giovanna
(Reviewed by Jenő Mohor)

The project „Born to read" (in Italian: „Nati per leggere") started in 1999 as a joint project of the Italian Library Association and the Centre of Children's Health. The main aim was to get small children and their parents and carers resp. love reading. In 2008 a nationwide survey was carried out to find out what had been achieved. The essay presents the findings and disseminates related experience.

BOOK REVIEWS

Considerations while reading the History of Hungarian library legislation from 1867 to our days SIPOS Anna Magdolna: A magyar könyvtárjog históriája 1867-től napjainkig

Head of a library, editor-in-chief, author and more…
MONOSTORI Imre: Könyvtárosként és egyébként. Munkarajzok. Tatabánya, 2011.

(Reviewed by Attila Nagy)

Complex cultural institutions in Italy and Hungary
Biblioteamus. Il Centro Culturale Polivalente di Cattolica by Annamaria Bernucci, Orlando Piraccini, Andrea Toscani. Bologna, 2010.

(Reviewed by Jenő Mohor)

FROM FOREIGN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE JOURNALS (Abstracts)