

SERIAL PUBLICATIONS EDITED BY ROMANIAN LIBRARIES – A PARTICULAR PERSPECTIVE ON NATIONAL LIBRARY SCIENCE

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Abstract

We intend to point out in this article, the essential aspects regarding the serial publications in the field of Library and Information Sciences (LIS) in the Romanian space published for a period of more than a century; to make a series of interpretations, starting from quantitative data, regarding the duration of publication, periodicity, territorial distribution, publication medium as well as other characteristics that would allow a general vision on the evolution of the library science field in Romania from an editorial perspective. Relevant examples, such as the Library Journal, the Romanian Journal of Library and Information Science (RRBSI), journals edited by university and public libraries, reflect the important role of serial publications in strengthening professional identity and disseminating knowledge.

Keywords: *Romanian library science, Serial publications - theoretical presentation and examples.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the activity of the Romanian library field in the last century, we observe a constant concern of libraries and librarians to have and support an editorial activity that allows them to promote their activities, to be informed about the professional and scientific news regarding the field, to contribute to the promotion and capitalization of the documentary heritage held, to ensure continuous professional training through documentary support, to advocate for their role and place in the communities served and, in general, at the level of society as a whole. By *serial publications* in library science we mean journals, yearbooks, newsletters and other ongoing resources that appear periodically (in print or online) and that support the professional community (practices, methodologies, standards) and/or research (evaluated articles, results, debates). A professional community, implicitly also the library science community, is validated

by the importance that society attaches to its activities (the place and social status of a profession) and by the way in which it manages to promote and capitalize on its specificity. Serial publications have a decisive role in supporting a profession and specific professional institutions and communities. We note the interest of large libraries, professional associations, the academic scientific community to publish journals, with a high-quality level of the studies and articles included and to ensure their rhythmicity in appearance as well as a wide possible dissemination both in print and digital format. Even smaller libraries such as county libraries publish newsletters that are afterwards distributed to interested professional communities.

2. GENERAL ASPECTS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The National ISSN Centre within the National Library of Romania manages the identification infrastructure (ISSN/ISSNL) by assigning ISSN codes, those standard identifiers for identifying a printed or digital serial. Along with the editorial policies, the processes of reviewing, indexing, access, ensuring continuity and impact in the community, the ISSN contributes to the visibility and credibility of a journal.

The objectives of this study are the following:

- Identification of serial publications in the field of BSI in Romania (edited by libraries or institutions that manage libraries or other information and documentation structures) and highlighting their evolution;
- Identification of serial publications in the field of BSI in digital format, present in databases;

- Examples of representative and recognized publications in the field of BSI in Romania.

The working methodology was based on the body of work carried out starting from the data provided by the National Library of Romania (National ISSN Centre, Legal Deposit, Catalog of the National Library of Romania). The initial data were completed and verified by consulting the websites of the county libraries, the libraries of some universities with publishing activity, library catalogs, consultations, where possible, of the publications reported in the initial documentary corpus, consulting the databases in order to identify serial publications in digital format (Tîrziman & Micle, 2018).

3. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

353 BSI serial publications have been identified, the oldest having the year 1879 registered as a year of publication (*Vasile Adamachi Fund Publications*), this being the only publication in the BSI field from the end of the 19th century. Also, at the end of the 19th century, the magazine *The Literator* (ISSN retrospective: 1220 – 5583) appeared, edited between 1880 and 1919 and republished between 1991 and 1999 with the support of the Ministry of Culture and currently being edited by the Metropolitan Library of Bucharest. It is a cultural journal and the connection with the BSI field is given by the fact that it is edited by a library and implicitly, it also includes library science topics. In chronological order, the next serial publication of the field, and the first of the 20th century, appears in 1905 (*Increases in Collections*), followed two decades later (1925) by another series edited by a technical library (*the Library of the Technical Circle of Romania*). In the first half of the 20th century, the number of periodicals in this field is relatively small (8 publications for which the year of publication is clearly identified and another 8 publications for which only the period – the first decades of the century is identified). If we take into account that we are talking about a very turbulent period in the life of the Romanian people, marked by territorial separation, the Balkan War, the First World War followed by the Great Union of 1918, the interwar period with all the efforts of integration, emancipation and homogenization of the people,

then the Second World War, we can appreciate that 16 specialized publications that promote and capitalize on the national documentary heritage, are to be appreciated. In the interwar period, there were not many specialized series, perhaps because there were not many libraries that benefited from collections, specialized personnel, financial funds that would allow them to support editorial activities (Regneală, 2023).

The communist period (1948 – 1990 of the 20th century) represents a period of relative evolution of the publishing activity of libraries; in each decade the appearance of new publications was possible. Between 1951 and 1960, 11 periodicals appeared; between 1961 and 1970, 21 periodicals appeared; between 1971 and 1980, 18 periodicals appeared; Between 1981 and 1990, 16 periodicals appeared. All the major libraries of the country have editorial activity and use these publications to signal and promote documentary funds through bibliographic works, for a certain type of continuous training, to support the profession through specialized works (all the more so as there was a lack of basic education at university level).

After 1990, we witnessed an extraordinary dynamic of specialized publications. The National ISSN Centre registers 269 serial publications that appeared from 1990 up to the present-day. Between 1991 and 2000, 73 periodicals appeared; between 2001 and 2010, 95 periodicals appeared; between 2011 and 2020, 83 periodicals appear; Between 2021 and 2024, 18 periodicals appear. The large number of periodicals can be explained by the fact that, besides the large libraries, small libraries also began to have editorial activity (even if their publications are, in most cases, modest in terms of graphic presentation and professional and scientific contribution and rather have a local importance); they publish the works of scientific events, annual activity reports, etc. Many libraries also publish journals with a heritage and cultural role.

According to the reference provided by the National ISSN Centre, we point out the periodicity declared at the time of the appearance of the first no. of the periodical. Therefore, out of the 353 registered publications, 143 have an annual appearance, 64 have a semi-annual appearance, 84 have a quarterly appearance, 35 have a

monthly appearance, 9 have a weekly appearance and 18 periodicals do not have the declared periodicity or it has not been identified yet. Also, according to the same reference, we point out the means of publication declared at the time of the appearance of the first no. of the periodical. Thus, out of 353 periodicals, 302 are in the printed version, 39 are in digital format distributed online (on the website and/or through databases) and 12 periodicals are reported as having CD-ROM support.

Although we talk about a large number of serial publications that have appeared in Romania, in the field of BSI, many of them have ended their activity and some of them had a very short period of life, disappearing from the publishing landscape following a period which varied from one to five years. We can certainly say, according to the data registered at the National Library of Romania, which is the national repository of the written documentary heritage, that out of 353 serial publications in the BSI field, 132 publications have ended their activity. However, we cannot say for certain that of the 221 publications registered as still being edited, that they are all still appearing. From our research, on the institutional websites, from the analysis of the registration of the numbers of publications in the Legal Deposit, the National Bibliography, in the catalog of the national library, in other library catalogs we cannot confirm the continued appearance for all periodicals registered with ISSN.

A general appreciation of the content promoted by these BSI series, allows us to make a classification into three categories: Bibliography publications (national and local bibliographies, thematic bibliographies, bio-bibliographies), library science publications (national or local journals) and cultural publications (other editorial concerns of libraries).

The National Library of Romania and the county libraries, having patrimonial attributions and carrying out the national bibliographic control of publications, as part of the UBC (Universal Bibliographic Control – UNESCO program), are institutions with bibliographic activities, which deal with the editing of these bibliographies. Since its re-establishment (1955), the National Library

of Romania has produced and edited the National Bibliography of Romania with the well-known series (monographs, series, printed music publications, doctoral theses, ABSI, Romanica) which, over time, have undergone adaptations, editorial reorganizations depending on the concrete situation, mainly the transition to online format. Also, the county libraries have bibliographic activity and bibliographies editing because they signal the documentary heritage written locally, but their activity is uneven. Not all county libraries pay due attention to bibliographic activities in relation to signalling and capitalizing on local heritage. The reflection of the documentary heritage written locally by the county libraries is done in digital format, in different forms (Chiriță, 2018).

4. REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES

The landscape of Romanian serial publications in BSI offers, through its diversity, an image of an editorial space in a permanent rearrangement between the patrimonial tradition and the imperatives of digital modernity, between methodological and scientific discourse, between professional communication and the demands of scientific communication and international content indexing.

The Library: a journal of bibliography and information science (National Library of Romania, n.d.a), with a genealogy dating back to 1948, explicitly assumes the role of publication of the entire National Library System and, through the columns dedicated to methodology, library life, heritage and professional debates, it becomes a barometer of activities at national level. The transition to online access and the adjustment of frequency – from the monthly rhythm of recent decades to the semi-annual appearance – can be read as adaptations to contemporary editorial realities, in which sustainability and accessibility prevail, without cancelling the function of professional “tribune.” Originally published under the title *The Guide of the Citizens* (July 1948); ISSN retrospective: 1220 – 3297) the journal aimed to signal to readers and librarians the news of the publishing market. In a short time,

it took shape as a librarian's journal and therefore, in October 1948 the publication changed its name becoming *The Librarian's Guide* (ISSN retrospective: 1220 – 3300), a title that it would keep until December 1964. Between January 1965 and December 1973, the publication appears under the name of *The Libraries' Journal* (ISSN retrospective: 0034 – 7086), with monthly appearance. The reorganizations in the field of culture also influenced this journal; between January 1974 and December 1989, the publication appeared under the name of *Library: quarterly bulletin of library science/bibliology*, with the status of a supplement to the periodicals Cultural Guide (Jan. 1974 – Dec. 1979; Retrospective ISSN: 0257 – 7086) and Song of Romania (Jan. 1980 – Dec. 1989; Retrospective ISSN: 0257 – 7542). The year 1990 is the year of a new beginning for the publication; it appears as a new series under the name: *Library: journal of bibliology and information science* (ISSN: 1220 – 3386), under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, and since 2009 it has been edited by the National Library of Romania. Since 2019, the publication has been edited in digital format and is present on the website of the national library as well as in the EBSCO and PROQUEST databases. For the online version, the journal has the following ISSN: 2668-618X.

It is worth noting the journals of the National Library of Romania which, even if they did not benefit from the necessary support to have an appearance in the announced periodicity, by the fact that they are in open access online and by the fact that they offer studies and articles useful to the professional community, they remain landmark specialized publications of the Romanian library science. Thus, *The Journal of the National Library of Romania* (National Library of Romania, n.d.b) is a periodical with a hybrid profile, in which the library science vocation meets the study of heritage and the humanistic interdisciplinarity. It is a journal in which the practice and analysis of library activities are presented together with relevant studies on the valorisation of the documentary heritage or the promotion of the cultural values held by the institution. From the same logic of valuing heritage derive specialized publications, such as *The Romanian Journal of Book History* (collaborative project NBR-BCU "Carol I"-BAR) and *The*

Romanian Journal of Book Conservation and Restoration (National Library of Romania, n.d.c). Even if both are discontinued today, they remain important as method archives and as models of focus: the former articulated a coherent platform for historical bibliology, and the latter provided a rigorous framework for the preservation of documents, where knowledge is built through case studies, protocols and intervention practices.

The Library of the Romanian Academy configures its own editorial strategy. *The Journal of the Library of the Romanian Academy* (RBAR) (Library of the Romanian Academy, n.d.a) presents itself as a biannual scientific publication, with modern infrastructure (ISSN, DOI), oriented towards the valorisation of academic collections in the key of national and universal heritage. In counterpoint, *Thesaurus. Paper of the Library of the Romanian Academy* (Library of the Romanian Academy, n.d.b) proposes a monthly rhythm, according to a more pragmatic cultural communication: a presentation of the institution from the perspective of the collections, exhibitions and events periodically brought to the attention of the public. The complementarity between the academic journal and the institution sheet creates a balance between scientific validation and public presence.

In the space of university libraries, series often take on the function of interface between the library and the intellectual life of the university. *Biblos* (BCU, n.d.), a publication of "Mihai Eminescu" Central University Library of Iași together with ABR – Iași Branch, combines original works subjected to a process of scientific evaluation, specialized discussions and translations, offering an interesting mix of professional dissemination and connection to the specialized literature. In Cluj, *Philobiblon* (Philobiblon, n.d), an interdisciplinary journal in the area of humanities, published by "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, is located in an intersection area: even if it is not a librarian-economic journal in the strict sense, it thematically supports written culture and the circulation of ideas – territories common to bibliology and information science. In Timișoara, *Lecturn* (Lecturn, n.d), the quarterly magazine of the "Eugen Todoran" Central University Library, shows how a university library can maintain,

through periodicity and archive, a constant intellectual presence in the regional space.

The publications of the professional community are represented by: *RRBSI / Romanian Journal of Library and Information Science* (RRBSI, n.d.), edited by ABR, functions as a scientific pivot of the field: peer-review, open access, indexing in multiple international databases, transparent editorial policies. In the mirror, *BiblioMAGAZIN* (ANBPR, n.d) edited by ANBPR is a series of professional cohesion: a quarterly bulletin that follows the life of public libraries, strategies and projects as well as advocacy activities. Together, the two journals show the necessary duality of the Romanian library field: a channel for research and one for networking, projects and practices.

Finally, we would like to point out the editorial activity of the county libraries that are interested in reflecting the cultural and scientific heritage of the communities served. Almost all county libraries publish journals, but these are unequal in terms of established editorial practices as well as in terms of the content presented. The journals of the county libraries complete the picture of the Romanian BSI journals through their community anchoring. *Bibliotheca Septentrionalis* (Petre Dulfu Library, n.d) (Baia Mare) and *Biblion* (Ioan Roman Library, n.d) (Constanța) show how a journal can represent a reflection of local culture: documents, programs, partnerships, heritage and literary creations, often in a mixed formula – institutional, cultural, sometimes even academic. This category also includes initiatives such as *Lectura* (Octavian Goga Library, n.d) with editorial biography in series and with a recent trend of orientation towards bibliology and local history in online format. In Sibiu, the launch of ASTRA Journal *ACTA Bibliothecae* (Astra Library, n.d) marks the ambition of the county library to assume the role of producer of knowledge, in an interdisciplinary formula, supported by the editorial infrastructure and a digital archiving ecosystem.

Viewed together, these series make up a map of Romanian library science: a map in which libraries with a heritage role ensure the cultural heritage, university libraries maintain dialogue with research, professional associations regulate standards and maintain professional

dialogue, and county libraries promote the concept of the “library – space of community” (Tîrziman, 2025).

5. CONCLUSIONS

353 serial publications in the field of BSI, published in the Romanian space in the last almost 150 years (1887 -2024) are enough arguments to affirm the importance in the social space of books, written documentary heritage, reading, libraries. The BSI field can also be reconstructed, evaluated and re-evaluated from the perspective of serial publications published during this period. Also, the activity of important library institutions such as the Library of the Romanian Academy, the National Library of Romania, university libraries, county libraries, can also be documented through the publications edited by them.

We note, over time, a significant numerical increase, a fairly uniform geographical distribution at national level, a diversification of the typology of series (from mainly bibliographic and signalling publications, to publications with an advanced biblio-economic, scientific and professional content, publications of congresses, conferences and other scientific events, activity reports), the concern for the presence in the digital environment and, last but not least, the involvement of libraries in the publication of journals with a predominantly literary and cultural content, aiming both to capitalize on written culture and to expand the reading public. It is particularly important for libraries that hold valuable heritage documents to capitalize on them in the most diverse form possible and thus to promote local, regional or national heritage on the widest possible scale.

The professional and scientific literature, promoted through specialized publications, plays a significant role in continuing professional training, supporting institutionalized professional training or even being complementary to it, sometimes. The publication of guidelines, procedures, methodological norms, theory and practice of a field or subfield of library science helps information professionals to be permanently up to date with the news of

the field, to be in contact with each other and to solve certain work problems.

Specialized publications are a real vehicle for promoting the cultural and scientific heritage of an institution, region or nation and. Moreover, various norms and good practices in the field of research, conservation, and capitalization of these specific funds are also disseminated with their help.

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