

Library education in Greece: History, current status and future prospects

Citation: Michalis Gerolimos, (2011) "Library education in Greece: history, current status and future prospects", *Library Review*, Vol. 60 Iss: 2, pp.108 – 124.

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to report the history of the Greek Library Science education, to document proposed and current programmes of study and to evaluate the current under-graduate and post-graduate status of Library Studies in Greece.

Design/methodology/approach: The research methodology is based on bibliographic research of papers and articles and the documentation of programmes of study of Greek Schools of Library Science.

Findings: The paper traces the history of library education in Greece with an emphasis on the suggested or implemented curricula over a period of five decades, documents the social conditions that affected the establishment of tertiary library education and proposes some changes to be implemented in Schools of Library Science.

Originality/value: The paper records and evaluates the official library programmes of study over a period of time that covers all the course of formal library education in Greece. These programmes are not always documented in official records. Furthermore, statistical data regarding the library students of all Greek Schools of Library Science are presented.

Article type: Research paper

Keywords: Greece; Library Education; Curriculum; Programme of Study; History

Introduction

Higher Education (tertiary) in Library Science (LS) has a fairly short history in Greece. Currently, Library Studies in Greece consists of three Schools of Library Science: two Departments of Library Science and Information Systems hosted within the Technological and Educational Institutions (TEIs) of Athens [1] and Thessaloniki [2] respectively and the Department of Archives and Library Science of the Ionian University of the city of Corfu [3]. All three Schools offer a 4 year BA. It should be noted that both TEI Schools had the name “Department of Library Science” from the date they were founded until 2003. In that year they changed their names to “Department of Library Science and Information Systems”, under Presidential Decree (PD) 247.

In Greece, universities and TEIs are state institutions and they are the only Higher Education Institutions available. TEIs offer only BA degrees (they can offer a master diploma if the post-graduate programme is organized and run in collaboration with a university), while a student can graduate from a university with a Bachelor, Master or Doctoral degree [4]. There are some State Independent Schools related to religion, the army, the navy, arts, tourism and the civil order (like the National Theatre Drama School, the Advanced School of Tourism Education and Military Academies) that are considered tertiary institutions, as well.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted from June 2009 to March 2010. The methodology of data documentation consists of three different approaches.

First of all, a thorough research of the literature regarding the history of Greek library education has been conducted. This research method posed some restrictions because of the, rather, limited publications about Greek Library Science, in general, and Greek library education, in particular, especially for a period of time until the last quarter of the 20th century. For example, the first Library Science journal in Greek, *Libraries and Information* (Vivliothikes kai Pliroforisi), was published in 1984, while the first peer-reviewed library journal, *Document* (Tekmirion) [5], was published in 1998. Therefore, many articles about Greek library education have been published in journals that have a general, if any, affiliation to Library Science, mostly in Social Science journals.

The bibliographic research followed a documentation of data related to library students and the programmes of study in all School of Library Science in Greece. The secretariat of each Library School provided the data regarding library students and information about the duration of the studies via e-mail and telephone communication. During that communication, the secretariats were asked to present statistical data about students’ enrolments and graduation. The National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG) [6] publishes relative data almost every year, but the research revealed that those were different from the data provided by Library Schools.

The same method, communication with Library School's secretariat, was followed in order to record the programmes of study that were applied in the previous decades in all Schools of Library Science. However, there are no official records about those programs of study, with the exception of the School of Library Science of Corfu, nor those programs are documented in literature. Therefore, a different method to data research was followed; a series of interviews with librarians that have graduated from the TEI Schools of Library Science took place. Through that method several curricula were recorded. The programmes of study of the academic year of 2009-2010 were retrieved from the web sites of Greek Schools of Library Science.

Additionally, several ideas and opinions on this paper build upon the author's personal experience and expertise on the field.

Social aspects of the library environment in Greece

The first conclusion drawn when studying the history of Library Science education in Greece is that its delayed development reflects the fact that the use of libraries, in general, was not considered as important as other social activities. The absence of a strong library culture was seen since the establishment of the Modern Greek state in the middle of the 19th Century, a direct and natural consequence of the fact that many Greeks did not use libraries [7].

In addition, it was believed for many decades that libraries were useful only to educated people, while the use of libraries was considered to be a privilege and not an expected right (StClair, 1982 p. 203). Until the last quarter of the 20th century, it was a rather common phenomenon that mostly students and researchers would visit and use libraries. Library services were often labelled "elitist", and addressed only a small proportion of the people, which, of course, did not help develop an understanding of the need for specialized training in library work. In 1961 there were 5 Library Science graduates working in Greek libraries and they had all graduated from a School of Library Science abroad (Kakouris, 1971 p. 329).

The social status of library employees also affected the progress of library education and, in particular, the belief that library work was, essentially, the transfer of books to and from the shelves, which, of course, does not require any specialized professional knowledge. Library work was, therefore, considered to be a common desk job that any (literate) person can, successfully, accomplish (Krikelas, 1982 p. 236), while it was a common practice for civil servants to ask to be transferred to a library service, since it was regarded as a relaxing working environment without a heavy workload.

Even today, there are a large number of employees working in Greek libraries that do not hold a degree in Library Science [8]. In 2006 [9], only 41% of the employees working in Greek libraries held a degree in Library Science (Fig. 1). This percentage has been increasing each decade since the establishment of the first School of Library

Science (in 1977), but, at the same time, the number of library employees without a degree in Library Science has also increased. It should be noted that according to the NSSG in 2006 there were 591 libraries in Greece but this statistical record does not include private and school libraries.



Figure 1: Employment in Greek Libraries.
Source: General Secretariat of NSSG

For a long time Greeks did not understand the meaning of the word librarian (in Greek *vivliothikonomos* or *vivliothikarios*). There was confusion in the public's mind and in those who held government positions as to what exactly a librarian is and what type of education he or she needs. It was a widespread belief that anyone with a university degree could not only work as a librarian, but also teach specialized courses in Schools of Library Science (Cacouri, 1993 p. 40).

Greek education system and libraries

The failure to acknowledge the contribution of libraries to leisure, education and research was a heritage, for many Greeks, of the way that primary and secondary education was (and in some aspects still is) structured in Greece. This structure relies upon one textbook for each "area of knowledge" which is selected by the Ministry of Education, a process that dampens any initiative for independent study by the students or innovations to adopt a more personalized and focused instructional style by the teachers. The use of only one school textbook diminished the importance of school libraries within the Greek educational framework, as many students could not understand the value of reading beyond the textbooks (Krikelas, 1982 p. 233).

The centralized educational system around one textbook and the lectures given by the professor (or school teacher) continued for many decades in Greek Higher Education Institutions as well. Primary, secondary and tertiary education in Greece had, throughout the 20th century, a common element; educational tradition did not favour library use (Krikelas, 1993 p. 14). It is, also, important to report that, essentially, during the 20th century there were no libraries in Greek public schools – with few exceptions – although there was provision to establish school libraries as far back as the 1835 (Peppas, 1958) and in the 20th century with the Royal Decree of 1901 (State Gazette 260), Law 5045 of 1931 and Law 1566 of 1985.

Admission to Schools of Library Science

Admission to tertiary education in Greece is determined by national examinations during which secondary education graduates compete with each other. At the end of this process, students are admitted to various university and TEI schools in relation to the number of available positions and the overall grading that the other students have achieved. This method of admission ensures that there will be equal opportunities to all, but at the same time, the majority of students enrol in schools that they did not originally choose in order not to miss the opportunity for higher education studies.

This process determines who will be admitted into the Schools of Library Science as well. The low demand, however, from prospective library students has resulted that, almost exclusively, those that have achieved a low score in the general examinations are eligible for enrolment. Few of them have the desire or intention to become librarians (*Library Education*, 1986 p.12). This could have been avoided if Kirkegaard's suggestion of establishing an independent Library School in Athens had been adopted (1964 p.4). Moreover, there was a trend to abandon library studies, especially in the early years of the Athens School of Library Science (*Library Education*, 1986 p. 11), which was amplified by some organizational problems. There was a lack of available classrooms, laboratories for practice and library textbooks (Vasileiou, 1984, p. 19) while the faculty had a limited knowledge, if any, of Library Science.

Towards a formal library education program of studies

In Greece, as stated above, higher education programmes of study (under-graduate and post-graduate) are provided only by state institutions – universities and TEIs. Therefore, a tertiary education in Library Science available to all could only be accomplished through a Library School funded by the Greek State.

Formal (state) library education was under consideration as early as in the 1930s with the establishment of the General Libraries Council (L. 5138/1931) and in the 1940s, with Law 1362 of 1949, which included the provision that the National Library of Greece would be responsible for the education of library employees, a provision that was never implemented. During the 1950s there was another attempt to establish a state Library School as part of an existing educational institution (Committee for Letters and Fine Arts, 1958 pp. 21-22) but, as with the previous suggestions, there was no progress.

The lack of formal education in the library sector was partially overcome with seminars and workshops. In 1955 short-term workshops were organized under the supervision of the American Library of Athens in various Greek cities (Cacouris, 1973 p. 191). The content of those seminars reflected the urgent need for education on everyday library tasks and their level was almost elementary. Such seminars continued to take place under the supervision of several organizations throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

In September 1961 the first major development in library education in Greece took place with the establishment of the Library School in the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Athens. This annual programme of study (Appendix 1) was the first organized form of vocational Library Science education in Greece. In 1964 this private school received state accreditation (State Gazette 409/B´) and continued to operate until 1977. The YWCA Library School was never a tertiary institution, but rather a post-secondary education professional school. The criteria for admission, were, naturally, general in scope and included a secondary school certificate, an interview and knowledge of English language. Librarians from the Athens metropolitan area were responsible for the programme of studies and the lectures and, in total, 288 students graduated, almost exclusively from the Athens metropolitan area (Tsafou *et al.*, 1993 p. 173).

The importance of the endeavours to organize the Library School in the YWCA and to hold seminars and workshops in various Greek cities is not limited to the education of library employees, but, mainly, due to the fact that library staff from various regions of Greece had the opportunity to meet and create a social network that did not exist before. This initiated a collectivism that led, ultimately, to the foundation of the Greek Library Association in 1969 and, finally, to the establishment of the first Higher Education School of Library Science.

Greek library education and UNESCO

During the 1960s the scientific and vocational status of Library Science in Greece was influenced by the presence of two UNESCO experts. Their mission was to study contemporary conditions in Greece, in relation to the existing library network, and to propose and advance the establishment of a Library School. These two experts, Carnovsky and Kirkegaard, visited Greece at the invitation of the Greek government in the early 1960s.

Leon Carnovsky's report in 1961 suggested that the Greek library education programme should evolve around three areas: organization of library collections, use of library collections, and history of books and libraries. Students that wanted to enrol in the Library School would have to attend a 2-year programme within the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Thessaloniki, while education in Library Science would take place during the third and fourth years of study.

Carnovsky took into consideration the issues that the Greek libraries of that time had to face – mainly the primitive conditions of collection organization – and the fact that there was almost no library culture nor a strong body of professional librarians that would be able to take the role of instructors and help develop a programme of study. He understood that such an innovative plan needed to be under the protection of a well respected Academic Institution. His proposed curriculum (Appendix 2) had a focus on humanities and included some courses on specialized library work.

A few years later, another representative of UNESCO, Preben Kirkegaard, came to Greece in order to supplement and complete Carnovsky's work. In his report, Kirkegaard proposed the establishment of an independent Library School in the capital city of Athens in view of the fact that a significant percentage of the Greek population, libraries and library employees were based in the city of Athens. Instead of the three areas of development that Carnovsky proposed, he suggested that there should be three objectives for the education of library students, based on three groups of library workers: professional librarians who would work in special and large public libraries, library assistants and librarians in charge of small public libraries.

The first group would be placed in Sector 1 of the programme of studies, while the other two in Sector 2. For Sector 1 a university diploma would be a prerequisite while a secondary education diploma would be required for Sector 2 (Appendix 3). The curriculum that he proposed had a stronger focus on Library Science as a discipline than Carnovsky's. The Library School would be an under-graduate and a post-graduate institution at the same time, in an effort to meet the great demand that Greece had for library managers, librarians, library assistants and library workers. Kirkegaard also reported that UNESCO would fund the establishment of such an independent Library School for 4 academic years (1962-1966) to the total amount of 44,500 dollars.

Nevertheless, none of Carnovsky's or Kirkegaard's recommendations were implemented. Greece lost not only a significant amount of funding that would have helped to establish a Library School, but also a unique opportunity to develop a library education programme that would have played an important role in the development of an organized and well connected network of libraries across the country.

Formal library education in Greece

Formal library education began in Greece in 1977 with the establishment of the first Department of Library Science in Athens KATEE [10] followed by the Department of Library Science in Thessaloniki KATEE in 1981. In 1993, the Department of Archives and Library Science of the Ionian University on the island of Corfu was founded. These Schools continue to operate and offer a BA degree in Library Science.

Programs of study in Athens and Thessaloniki Schools of Library Science

The fact that most Greek libraries were, since the establishment of the modern Greek State in the 19th century, unorganized had a major impact on the way the programmes of study were structured in both TEI Schools. They were heavily oriented to the technical nature of everyday library work, focusing on courses like classification, cataloguing and organization of collections, while, at the same time, management and administration of libraries were background courses. This necessity for technically-oriented library education was, also, magnified by the absence of a national

bibliographic centre that could process library materials in the form of card catalogues or MARC records.

During its first years of operation the School of Athens was widely criticised for the lack of available facilities and poor selection of faculty staff. Although Law 576 (1977) stated that a university graduate could lecture in TEI Schools, there was no legal provision for professional librarians to teach at the newly founded School of Library Science. This was an untenable position, as there were hardly any graduate librarians in the country. Those who had graduated abroad already had permanent employment, in many cases in large special libraries. Therefore, only graduates holding a degree in Law, Economy or Philosophy could lecture in the School of Library Science in Athens when it first began to operate (Krikelas, 1982 p. 232).

The duration of studies in both TEI Schools was seven semesters; six semesters for course lectures followed by a six month practicum during the seventh semester. Of the 49 courses of the first curriculum (1977-1981) in Athens School of Library Science, 47% can be categorized as general courses related to Library Science (history of libraries, book production, user psychology, etc.), 39% as technical courses (cataloguing, classification, etc.) and 14% as administrative courses (library administration, etc.). Similarly, of the 54 courses of the first curriculum (1981-1984) in the Thessaloniki School, 52% can be categorized as technical courses, 37% as general courses and 11% as administrative courses. The School of Library Science in Thessaloniki had a stronger orientation towards core Library Science courses, probably because of the experience gained by understanding the inefficiencies that the curriculum of Athens School had.

The faculty of both TEI Schools tried to address the problems they faced in a spirit of collaboration. Thus, since the establishment of the TEIs in 1983, the two Schools of Library Science had virtually a common curriculum (Starre, 1990 p. 142]. Furthermore, the proposal to reform the curriculum in 1992, which was implemented a few years later, was the result of a joint effort by the faculty of both Library Schools (Tsafou *et al.*, 1993, p. 178].

In the 1990s, the two TEI Schools of Library Science maintained their strong orientation towards the technical aspects of library work, as 46% of their courses were technical, 43% had a generic affinity to Library Science and only an 11% were administrative courses. At that point, however, their programme of study had gained some prestige as there were workshops and laboratories to increase its effectiveness, the body of professors and lecturers had a stronger background in Library Studies and professional library work and, most importantly, library graduates were employed in libraries across the country, as a result of PD 385 in 1989. However, few members of the faculty in both Schools of Library Science had tenure. Another important development was PD 212 of 1994, which increased the duration of studies to seven

semesters for course lectures and an eighth, and final, semester was introduced during which there would be a six month practicum.

In the 2000s, TEI Schools of Library Science focused on keeping up with the new changing information environment which had been in place since the previous decade. They introduced courses related to New Technologies into their curriculum; they tried to maintain their “traditional” approach to library education and, at the same time, to follow market demands. Their curricula continued to be similar, but they now have greater independence.

In Athens School of Library Science, during the last academic year (2009-2010), there is an introduction of courses related to information process and management that are not, however, core Library Science courses. In addition, there is a reduction of technical library courses, which, from a total of 44 courses, consist 36% of the programme of study, while 59% have a more generic approach. Only 5% of the courses are related to the management of libraries per se. In Thessaloniki School 46% of the courses are oriented towards the technical nature of the library profession, 46% maintain a more generic approach and only few of the courses (8%) provide education in the management of libraries.

Both TEI Schools remain oriented to the technical aspects of the library profession and this has been their choice since their establishment, although they have increased the percentage of courses that have a more general approach to librarianship. This development is in the right direction, but a further decrease in the number of “technical” courses and the prospect of implementing lectures and courses that would help students acquire a more “holistic” approach to information management would, probably, increase the effectiveness of their programmes of study. It appears, however, that the School of Athens has shifted its orientation towards a more interdisciplinary approach to information handling. One should, also, note the limited attention given to the managerial aspect of library work during library studies.

Programme of study in Corfu School of Library Science

In 1993 the third Greek School of Library Science was established on the island of Corfu. Its name, the Department of Archives and Library Science, indicates the simultaneous and equal treatment of two related but not identical disciplines.

As was the case with both TEI Schools during their first years of operation, there were various issues regarding the availability of classrooms, textbooks, laboratories and an adequate number of faculty teachers. Naturally, the first graduates did not possess the skills and qualities necessary for everyday library work. However, since 2000 the problems in organization of Corfu School of Library Science and the structure of the curriculum have been reduced, and a rather efficient education was available to its students, with an emphasis on the use and understanding of new technologies.

It is expected that soon the name of the Corfu Library School will change and the term 'Museology' will be added. This change will reflect the number of courses in museology already included in the curriculum. The coexistence of the three disciplines of Archive, Library and Museum (ALM) has been useful, as it has established successful communication links among these fields of knowledge. However, it is also clear that this inter-disciplinary approach has its origins in a (Greek) traditional 'cultural approach' and is not based on information management (Kyriaki, 2003 p. 23).

There are, however, problems arising from the convergence of these three disciplines, which have an impact on the curriculum, which is shaped by a continuous attempt to 'reconcile' three different approaches to information handling in a common framework of education. During the 1990s there was a large number of courses relevant to the Humanities – such as Greek history, Papyrology and Paleography – at the expense of technical courses like Collection Management and Construction of Thesaurus and Catalogues. Of the 83 available courses in the curriculum in 1998, 21% had a more generic affinity to Library Science (bibliology, publishing, society and information, etc.) and only 25% were core Library Science courses.

The programme of study during the academic year 2009-2010 included 114 courses, of which 66% are elective; students must successfully pass 62 courses in total. Of the available courses, 18% are related to Library Science (in a generic sense, like databases, statistics, information law, book policy, etc.) and 24% are core Library Science courses. The duration of studies is eight semesters, which includes a six month practicum in either libraries or archives. Students complete the practicum training during the summer vacations of the fourth and sixth semester.

The structure of the curriculum, and its treatment of Library Science, limits effective specialization in Library Science, although it incorporates courses related to current developments in the field of new technology and some core Library Science courses. These difficulties might be addressed with the implementation of two streams in the programme of studies, one for Library Science – from which students would graduate as librarians – and one for Archives Science – the graduates from which would become archivists. Under the current arrangements – there are no streams in the programme of study – graduates have the job title of both archivists and librarians.

Post-graduate studies in Library Science

Until the establishment of the School of Library Science in Corfu there was no possibility to attend a post-graduate programme of study in Library Science at master or doctoral level in Greece. This lack of a post-graduate programme in Library Science placed a serious limitation on the research capabilities of the library community in Greece, on the scientific exploration of Library Science faculty and on the creation of an effective body of researchers that could further enhance Library Science on the educational and vocational levels.

The long expected post-graduate programme of study (at master level) in Library Science was, finally, approved in 2003 (State Gazette 1309) and was established inside the Department of Archives and Library Science of the Ionian University, in collaboration with the Department of Library Science of Athens. The post-graduate program (Master in Information Science) was part of the “Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training Funding” which was one of the European Union’s (EU) Community Support Framework (CSF) [11] Operational Programmes (OP) in Greece. The programme was funded with 491,000 Euros and ran from 2003/4 to 2007/8 when it was terminated as a European funded programme. It had two branches, at Corfu and Athens Schools of Library Science respectively. The academic year 2009-2010 will be the final year of operation for this post-graduate programme; course lectures are available only at the Corfu branch and there is no provision for another specialized Master’s Programme in Library Studies to be established in the near future.

Its title is “Post-graduate Programme in Information Science”. The first branch in Corfu has the title “Information Science – Information services in a digital environment” and the second branch in Athens runs under the title “Information Science - Library management and organization with an emphasis on new Information Technologies”. The curriculum (Appendix 4) was structured to maintain a core body of courses available to students in both branches, while a specialization in each branch was given through the choice of elective courses and by supplementing the curriculum with special lectures, workshops and seminars aimed at providing the additional knowledge needed by students to understand the nature of management, at the Athens branch, and the development of information services, at the Corfu branch. There are 2 semesters of course lectures and a third one available for writing a thesis.

A Doctoral Degree (PhD. diploma) in Library Science is also available through the programme of study of the Corfu School, which was available shortly after its establishment in 1993. There are two prerequisites for the enrolment into the second cycle of post-graduate studies: the PhD. Candidate must graduate from the first cycle of post-graduate studies that rewards a master diploma (this prerequisite was introduced only after 2003) and be proficient in one foreign language of the EU or the Russian language. The doctoral thesis must be an original research paper that will advance Library Science and present new scientific and research data. The duration of writing the doctoral thesis must exceed three years (Laws 2083/1992 and 3685/2008).

The graduate (MSc) programme in library studies at the Ionian University offered a specialized training in Library and Information Science without, however, excluding the general trends and developments in the field of information management. Its success relied upon the fact that the students had an inter-disciplinary approach, since graduates from any discipline could enrol, on its orientation towards new library technologies and, finally, on the vocational orientation of most of its graduates.

A new post-graduate programme is already in place at the Corfu School, entitled “Management of cultural heritage documents and New Technologies”, which will reward a master diploma in ALM Studies.

Library science students

It has already been reported that as a result of the centralized structure of the Greek educational system and the lack of any coordinated policy to support the use of school libraries as an integral part of the learning process, school students, generally, do not possess a basic knowledge of library use. There was an effort to incorporate school libraries into the teaching process in 1999 with the foundation of 499 school libraries by the Greek Ministry of Education with funds provided by the EU’s CSF programmes. However, there are still many public schools that do not have a functional school library, since, for example, those 499 schools were established only in secondary education schools and none on elementary schools. Furthermore, the Greek library community criticized the Ministry’s decision to employ only school teachers in the newly founded school libraries and not professional librarians.

Nevertheless, the lack of basic knowledge of library use by the Greek students is, naturally, “transferred” to students of Schools of Library Science – which relates to the fact that library studies in Greece are at the under-graduate level – and affects the structure of the curriculum. In all Schools, during the first semesters, students are taught several introductory courses about the basic principles and concepts of Library and Information Science.

TEI Schools of Library Science have gained some prestige, as mentioned above, in the 1990’s and their graduates successfully organised and worked in many libraries of all types across Greece. Corfu School graduates, on the other hand, had to face, upon graduation, a market already on high demand for technical skills for every day work in libraries, which was in contradiction with School’s mission as an institution that treats two different disciplines, a mission that was, naturally, more generic and academic in scope.

A assessment of the TEI graduates, compared with university graduates, is that the former are better prepared for the everyday tasks in a library, such as the organization of information, resources and services of a library, while the latter have a more adequate understanding of the role of information centres, and their inter-disciplinary approach to information enables them to manage information in its various forms more adequately (Kyriaki, 2008 p. 80).

The statistical data regarding students who enrol in and graduate from the Schools of Library Science in Greece are as follows: Athens School, from 1977 to 2009, 5,412 students have enrolled in the under-graduate programme of study and 2,123 have graduated, with an average of 164 students admitted and 73 graduates per year;

Thessaloniki School, from 1981 to 2009, 4,258 students have enrolled and 1,597 have graduated, an average of 147 students admitted and 64 graduates per year; Corfu School, from 1993 to 2009, 1,353 students have enrolled in the under-graduate programme and 604 have graduated, an average of 80 students admitted and 43 graduates each year. In total, to 2009, 11,023 library students have enrolled in Greek Schools of Library Science under-graduate programmes of study and 4,324 have graduated.

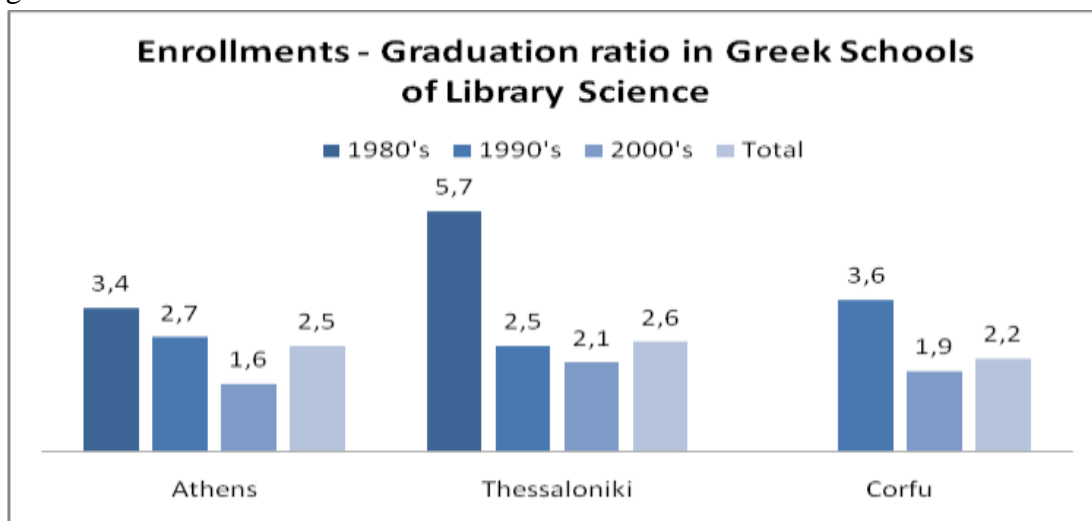


Figure 2: Student enrolments - graduation ratio of Greek Schools of Library Science at bachelor level.

The ratio of enrolments to graduates is conspicuous in all Schools. In Athens, for every 2.5 students enrolled, one graduates. Similarly, in Thessaloniki School the ratio is 2.6:1 and in Corfu 2.2:1. These numbers are relatively disappointing; especially during the first years of operation of all Schools, as shown in Fig. 2, since the ratio is significantly lower each decade away from their foundation day. The lowest ratio was recorded in the School of Athens in the 2000's and the highest in Thessaloniki School in the 1980's.

The low numbers of students completing library studies should be considered as a direct result of the Greek educational system and, mostly, of the decision of many students to study a discipline that, in most cases, did not even know that existed. Therefore, the low percentages of students completing their library studies can be seen as the result of students not gaining entry to their preferable area of study.

Additionally, the social status of librarian's profession in Greece, as described previously, and the lack of substantial funding to help Greek libraries not only employ more graduates from Library Schools, but, also, invest on the development of library network in the country, also played some role on some student's decision to abandon library studies. Moreover, the poor infrastructures and the considerable amount of administrative problems that all School faced upon foundation forced many students to abandon library studies as well. This trend is clearly demonstrated in Fig. 2

On the other hand, although the low percentage of the students completing their studies can be seen as a failure, it has, paradoxically, a positive effect, since it is the main reason that the unemployment levels in the library profession have remained, until recently, quite low. Employment in Greek libraries (mostly in academic libraries) was amplified by the generous funding from the EU, within the CSF, from 1996 to 2007. During that period several hundreds of professional librarians were employed.

During the 5 years of operation of the post-graduate programme at master level, all enrolled students graduated; 101 students graduated from the Corfu branch and 104 from the Athens branch. In January 2009, 30 students were admitted to the Corfu branch and they are expected to graduate soon. Furthermore, as of April 2010, 13 post-graduate students have been awarded a PhD. Degree in the Corfu Library School (in all disciplines), while, there are 66 PhD. candidates.

Recommendations

There is no doubt that the recognition of the significance of library education in Greece has been slow. During the short history of library education, however, faculty members of Schools of Library Science managed to evolve and develop adequate programmes of study. There is, of course, room for improvement but, nevertheless, it seems that all Schools of Library Science in Greece focused their attention on the provision of library education for their students based on two pillars: ensuring that the graduates possess the necessary skills and qualities to work in an information centre – a rather successful accomplishment – and ensuring that the structure of the programme of study – and the infrastructure to support it – are in accordance with international developments in the field and include the most up to date scientific and vocational developments.

Schools of Library Science must commit to the continuous exchange of views and ideas at an international level and to the development of international collaboration with various Schools of Library Science abroad. The internationalization of Greek Library Science degrees, through the continuous exchange of professionals and students, and collaboration in scientific and research level in the international Library Science community should be a permanent goal. It is also important that the Schools maintain their orientation toward new technologies without losing their focus on traditional Library Science. It appears that in Greece, at least so far, the “rivalry” [12] seen in many Schools of Library (and Information) Science abroad between Library and Information Science has been avoided, and both fields have been the winners. TEI Schools, in particular, choose to maintain both the terms “Library” and “Information” in their title.

The programme of study of the Corfu School should focus even more strongly on an orientation to professional librarianship, without losing its inter-disciplinary approach to information management systems. TEI Schools, on the other hand, should reduce –

the one in Thessaloniki probably more – but not lose, their focus on the technical nature of the library profession, enabling their students to acquire a more inter-disciplinary approach to information management. In addition, the curricula of all Schools should include more courses oriented toward developing generic, rather than technical, skills, such as communication, analyses, critical thinking and leadership. Special attention should be given to courses that stress the economic approach to information handling and the managerial aspects of the librarian’s profession. Such courses have not, to date, been given proper attention by any of the three Schools.

Corfu School, in particular, should develop two streams in the programme of studies, so that students can choose (probably during the fourth or sixth semester) whether they want to graduate as archivists, librarians or, probably in the near future, museologists. Such a development would make it possible to offer an even more specialized treatment of Library Science. A goal should be that library courses – both core and generic – should make up 70% of the curriculum for students in the Library Science stream. At the same time, all graduates of this School should maintain their inter-disciplinary approach to information, while acquiring a more specialized knowledge that will enhance their vocational and research capabilities.

It is also important that a specialized post-graduate programme in Library Studies (at master level) should be available to all tertiary graduates at all times. This programme should be established in collaboration with all Schools of Library Science, at least until the law changes and TEI Schools are able to run their own post-graduate programmes.

Finally, the field of library education should be developed in such a way that will allow the “old” to coexist with the “new”, the traditional with the innovative, the physical with the digital. Library programmes of study in Greece have been effective in dealing with this dual nature of the modern changing (hybrid) environment. They must maintain this two-dimensional approach and place librarians in the centre of contemporary library developments as professionals who will manage information effectively, regardless of the institution they work in or the job title they have.

Notes

[1]. <http://www.teiath.gr/sdo/lis>.

[2]. <http://www.libd.teithe.gr>.

[3]. <http://tab.ionio.gr>.

[4]. This is also the case with library studies. However, if there is no master programme in Library Science (MSc.) available in the country, then a student can become a PhD. candidate and hold a doctoral degree in Library Science.

[5]. <http://tab.ionio.gr/culture/tekmirion.php>.

[6]. <http://www.statistics.gr>.

[7]. According to the study, “Europeans’ participation in cultural activities (2002)”, carried out by the European Commission, Greeks appear to use libraries less than other Europeans (1.19), compared to Europe’s average (1.67) and Finland’s (2.91). Finland has the highest rating on a scale 1-5 (5 being the most times visiting a library the last 12 months). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc967_en.pdf.

[8]. In 1988, although there were 2 Schools of Library Science offering a BA, PD 194 declared that a university graduate can be employed in libraries as there was only the prerequisite of 2 years “library experience”.

[9]. The data for the year 2006 includes, in addition to the NSSG’s report, employees working in the 499 school libraries established by the Ministry of Education (<http://www.ypepth.gr>) in 1999 under the “Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training Funding” (<http://www.epeaek.gr/epeaek/en/home.html>). The data were retrieved from the list of school libraries published by the Ministry at: http://www.ypepth.gr/docs/lista_sxol_biblioth_b_kps_email_080201.xls. There are no additional data regarding the rest of school libraries.

[10]. KATEE were technical institutions of Higher Education. In 1983, they were replaced by the TEI (State Gazette 173). KATEE and TEI are not equal to university institutions in many aspects (for example they cannot offer post-graduate programmes of study). Their difference lies, mostly, on their mission, since TEIs’ mission is to offer technical education that has a more applied orientation (as opposed to the academic education offered by universities).

[11]. <http://www.hellaskps.gr>.

[12]. This ‘rivalry’ was expressed, in some cases, with Library Schools choosing to drop the “library” word from their titles (Wiegand, 1999). At the same time, new initiatives were introduced, such as the *I-School Movement*, to indicate the shift from a “traditional” library education context to a movement that would, according to King (2006), embrace the new era of information and face the contemporary challenges of ubiquitous information. For more information on I-Schools: <http://www.ischools.org>.

[13]. The transcription of Greek characters into Latin was performed according to ISO 843: 1997 “Information and documentation – Conversion of Greek characters into Latin characters”.

[14]. Cacouris and Kakouris listed in the reference list below is the same author. The difference in spelling resulted from the transcription of the Greek letter “kappa”. Cacouri is a different person.

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Appendix Schools of Library Science Curricula

1. YCWA Library School list of courses 1961-1977

Courses	Hours/week
Library administration	3
User services	2
Cataloguing	3
Classification	4
History of Writing and Book	2
Archives Science	2
History of Literature	2
Practicum	4

2. Carnovsky's proposed curriculum

1st Year courses	2nd Year courses
Ancient Greek literature	Ancient Greek literature
Latin literature	Latin literature
Ancient Greek history	Linguistics
Archaeology	Folklore
Byzantine art	Modern history
Linguistics	Modern Greek literature
Byzantine history	Medieval Greek literature
Modern Greek literature	Modern Greek history
Philosophy	Archaeology
	Philosophy
3rd Year courses	4th Year courses
Comparative literature: European and American	Comparative literature: European and American
History of writing, printing, books and libraries	Subject cataloguing, cataloguing of rare books
Classification systems	Library development in Europe and America
Bibliography: reference tools	Paleography: Latin and Greek archives
Cataloguing principles: European and American	Bibliography: national and trade
Medieval Greek literature	Literature for children
Modern Greek literature	Library services: aid to readers
	Internship in libraries

3. Kirkegaard's proposed curriculum

Section I (University Graduates)	Section II (Secondary Education Graduates)
Obligatory courses	Obligatory courses
Accession and conservation of books and other material	Organization for services to readers, lending methods etc.
Cataloguing technique	Accession technique
Cataloguing theory	General bibliography
Classification rules	General reference works
Classification theories	Greek library organization
General bibliography	History of Greek libraries
Special bibliography (humanities, science or technology)	General history of books and printing
Methods and development of bibliography	History of civilization

<p>General reference works Library service for adults and children Library administration Library buildings, planning and equipment Greek library organization History of Greek libraries General history of libraries History of books and manuscripts International library organization and co-operation Book production Audio-visual materials Archives and documentation centres</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elective courses</p> <p>History of Greek, Byzantine and world literature Cultural sociology Theory of book selection for research libraries Theory of book selection for public libraries Special course for school libraries Special course for archivists</p>	<p>History of Greek literature History of world literature</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elective courses</p> <p>Book selection in public libraries Elementary library administration Special course for school and children librarians Archives and documentation centres</p>
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4. Post-graduate (MSc.) curriculum of Corfu Library School. 2003-2010

Corfu stream - Information services in a digital environment	
1st Semester	2nd Semester
<p>Information Science in a modern environment Information systems Communication systems and networks</p> <p>National and international information policies Evaluation of information systems and services Government information General principles and current trends of management and organization Preservation of digital material</p>	<p>Metadata in a digital environment Information technologies Digital libraries Current trends in management of materials Law and ethics of information Information services and e-business Knowledge management</p>
3rd semester – Thesis	
Athens stream - Library management and organization with emphasis on new information technologies	
1st Semester	2nd Semester
<p>General principles and current trends of management and organization Information Science in modern environment Digital libraries National and international information policies Evaluation of information systems and services Government information Information systems Preservation of digital material</p>	<p>Staff administration and management Current trends in material management Information technologies Metadata in digital environment Law and Ethics of information Information services and e-business Electronic publishing Knowledge management</p>
3rd semester – Thesis	