

Bibliotekarien

om yrkets tidiga innehåll och utveckling

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This thesis is about librarians and librarianship. Questions asked in the thesis are how the librarianship developed between 1475 and 1780 and what the core and the main tasks of the profession were. There is also the question whether the profession is built on a common basis to rely on and if it is characterized by unique knowledge.

The history of the librarian is divided in three parallel ongoing parts, the practical, the visionary and finally the personal, the librarians own attitudes.

The practical area is characterized by the practical work, as cataloguing, classification, care of books, shelving and protecting the documents in different ways from several possible threats. The work is dictated by the employer. The visionary part complements and develops the methods of library work being established in the practical area, the librarians themselves formulate their thoughts of libraries and librarianship, defines the roles of libraries in society, in education and research. The librarians think about the content of the work and the future of libraries. These two areas done, another dimension is born. That is the ethics of the librarianship, how to behave and how to act towards library users and this dimension puts the librarian in the centre. There have been signs of this before but the completion is done in 1780 by Cotton des Houssayes. His speech opens the future for the librarians to come.

The time period covers 305 years from 1475 until 1780. Starting point for this research about the librarian is 1475 because in that year pope Sixtus IV appointed Bartolomeus Platina as librarian of the Vatican library. The bull of 1475 is an official document that describes the librarian as a librarian and that he is told what to do, where to do it, how to do it and why. Jean-Baptiste Cotton des Houssayes, appointed in 1780, sets an end to this period with his speech to the General Assembly of the Sorbonne university in Paris. His speech completes the creation of the librarian. It is also the starting point of something new in librarianship.

The common tasks of the librarians investigated, reveal what can be regarded as the essence of librarianship. From the practical area, the employers gave the librarians their tasks, executed at different places in different kinds of libraries.

From the area of visions, the librarians built their visions as a continuum of the experiences from the practical work. New areas like the role of the librarian, the goals for the library itself and the librarians as the executors and pathfinders for the future. More of theory became a natural part of the librarianship.

The last area of the development of the librarian is to adopt ethical aspects of their profession. This dimension is a self-reflecting attitude important to the librarians themselves.

Keywords: library history, librarians, librarianship, renaissance librarianship, library professions, library work.