



University Libraries in Spain and Portugal

JAVIER LASSO DE LA VEGA

Spain

LIKE THE UNIVERSITIES THEMSELVES, the university libraries of Spain are administratively responsible to the State; their supreme authority is the Minister of National Education. This executive administers the libraries of the State through the Director General of Libraries, Archives and Copyright, to whom the university libraries are responsible for their technical and administrative functions. In turn, the libraries receive from this source their funds for salaries, for the acquisition of books and periodicals, and for other expenses.

The university libraries are responsible to the rectors only for those aspects of their operations which have to do with public services, the hours of opening, vacations, etc. Such differences as may arise between the librarian and the rector are discussed and settled between the university and state authorities. The rector has the right to name the chief librarian from among those qualified professional librarians who present themselves for the open examination when a vacancy occurs. The rector can likewise remove the chief librarian for cause.

Each university library has its own particular code of regulations approved by the Director General of Archives and Libraries. These regulations customarily include the basic principles which govern all libraries of the State. To these are added others which normally regulate certain university services and in particular govern the relations between the general library of each faculty and those of the laboratories, seminars, *cátedras* and other academic entities.

The Spanish university libraries are not adequately regulated by the existing law governing university organization ("La Ley Vigente de Ordenación Universitaria," 4, Agosto, 1944), inasmuch as it in-

Dr. Lasso de la Vega is Professor of Librarianship and Documentation and Director-emeritus, the University Library, Madrid. Paul Miles translated the paper from Spanish into English.

cludes only basic principles. Among these, however, is a most important one which states that all books of the university, wherever located or however purchased, constitute and form part of the university library, and that their service and preservation are the responsibility of the chief officer of the library.

Prior to that law of 1944, the head of the university library properly was a member of the governing junta of the university; but the new law, drafted without consultation or participation of librarians, changed that situation. Moreover it fails to provide for its own amendment.

The majority of the libraries provide in their internal regulations for a committee of the heads of libraries of the several faculties to advise the director, and for monthly meetings of all professional administrative staff members to review work accomplished, resolve problems which have arisen, study the distribution of funds, and the like. The minutes of these meetings are in most cases the best source of information on the history of a library because of the statistical tables, projects, plans, and reports.

The professional personnel in university libraries must by requirement belong to the association of archivists, librarians, and archeologists (*Los Cuerpos Facultativos y Auxiliar de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios, y Arqueólogos*) which serves all the libraries of the State. Vacancies are filled by competition among those who have fulfilled certain requirements and examinations. In order to take these examinations it is necessary to have a university bachelor's degree, a law degree, or the doctorate in philosophy and letters, together with certain complementary courses, and finally to be proficient in two modern languages: French and English, or English and German, or French and German.

The professional and the non-professional or "auxiliary" librarians each form a closed guild in which promotion is rigorously governed by seniority, and each group is divided into various categories within which salaries are determined according to seniority. Practice of the profession is not necessarily tied to a specific library or institution. Thus, librarians, although fixed in their status, may serve in any State institution or in any city, with certain limited exceptions. At age seventy, retirement is compulsory.

Affiliated with the professional association is the association of non-professional archivists, librarians, and archeologists (*El Cuerpo Auxiliar de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios y Arqueólogos*). The require-

European University Libraries: Spain and Portugal

ment for membership in this group is a secondary education, an elementary knowledge of library service, cataloging and classification, and detailed specific knowledge of library routines or administration. It is an excellent organization which completes and rounds out the personnel pattern.

The professional association has developed a set of quite adequate manuals which are distinguished by their high level of erudition and technical perfection. The evolution of these technical manuals in recent times has tended to move somewhat away from the more philosophical and humanistic orientation of the past toward the more practical and realistic norms of the Anglo-Saxon pattern and toward the acceptance as far as possible of various international standards formulated in recent years.

For the classification of book collections and documents, the government decreed application of the Universal Decimal Classification by ministerial order of July 29, 1939. Because of the great effort involved, the heavy personnel requirement, and the multifarious details involved in the reorganization and reclassification of so many large and complex library collections, not all institutions have yet been able to apply the decimal classification system to the arrangement of books. However, many, such as the University of Madrid, the Conséjo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, and the Instituto Nacional de Previsión, have applied it with great success. Others, such as the National Library, apply the decimal classification only to cards in the catalog, but not to the arrangement of books, which are kept according to the old system of accession numbers and shelved by size, without concern for the inconsistency of locating a cook book next to *Las Moradas* of Saint Theresa or the *Divine Comedy* of Dante.

At the present time there is no building in Spain constructed specifically and functionally for the purposes of a university library. Nevertheless, there are formal projects for the construction of such buildings in the majority of the universities. The building for the University of Madrid Library is in the planning stage, and a scale model has been completed.

Because of the lack of a building designed for central library purposes, the libraries of the several faculties have been established in their own locations with more or less adequate quarters. This is true, for example, at the University of Madrid where the libraries of the faculties of philosophy and letters, law, pharmacy, sciences, medicine and veterinary science, and economics and political science are housed

in the separate buildings of the faculties. Most of these are located in the new University City in buildings which are modern, well-lighted, clean and comfortable, though not elegant. Here, in contrast to elsewhere in the country, library equipment is up-to-date and buildings are air-conditioned.

In the other universities, the libraries are housed in ancient buildings of historical design and appearance. At the University of Salamanca, one of the four oldest centers of general studies in the world, the library is notable for the beauty of its main reading room as well as its other public rooms, all finished in the fine Renaissance *leitmotiv* so typical of the architecture of Salamanca. The counters and furniture have been adapted to the architectural style and combine with it to make an atmosphere so fully appropriate that it invites the reader to meditation and to the enjoyment of the accumulated wisdom there available.

A few libraries are operated on the highly desirable "open access" principle when the building layout permits it: examples are the Medical Sciences, the Political Science and Economics, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, and Law Libraries of the University of Madrid. Unfortunately most reading rooms are too small for the number of readers; in many cases users must stand because of the lack of seats.

Normal library hours extend from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. At examination periods the hours are extended until midnight. In certain libraries, service is available without interruption from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. On Saturdays, libraries are not open in the afternoon. This is also true every day during the months of July and August, and in the latter month some libraries reduce the service day to a bare minimum and others close entirely.

The university libraries loan books for home use with the normal exceptions common in most countries such as incunabula, rare and valuable books, manuscripts, unique copies, and so on. The loan period normally is for two weeks, renewable for another two weeks and thus successively, always provided that no other reader requests the book. Among the circulation systems which prevail, the one most utilized is the "triple entry" system because of the ease with which information can be obtained from the files. Up to the present time, no mechanical or electronic circulation system has been established in any of the libraries. Inter-library loan, including international loan, is also available.

Some libraries, such as that of Madrid for example, have available

European University Libraries: Spain and Portugal

block collections of approximately 100 books representative of the classics as well as of contemporary literature. These blocks circulate among the student residence halls for periods of from one to two months so that the resident students may broaden their cultural background by voluntary reading and, with guidance and assistance from the directors of the residence halls, organize colloquia and discussions based on their readings.

There also circulate to the residence halls, upon the recommendation of the director, collections of books for the preparation of doctoral theses and term papers. The nature of thesis topics permits these residence hall loans to be made without detriment to the general teaching function which the regular library collection serves.

In addition to serving students, the university libraries will also loan books to the general public, without fee, and special loans are made to hospital patients.

As is the case in all university libraries, the most difficult problem is that of the regulation and practice of relations among the divisional libraries. Although the majority of the statutes which regulate Spanish university libraries commonly subject all divisional units to the same general law of 1944 that was previously mentioned, the particulars vary from university to university because of local option in matters of detail and administration of the statute.

However, there is one important legal doctrine common to all the university statutes: that is the principle which declares that all books in the university, regardless of location or of funds with which purchased, form part of the university library. In accordance with this declaration, all libraries of the institutes, laboratories, *cátedras*, seminars, etc., fall under the direction of the university librarian.

Moreover, books in the several agencies of the university are recorded in a central accessions register and are cataloged by professional librarians. There also exists a statutory provision by virtue of which the accounting authorities of the university will not approve the payment of invoices that do not bear the library registry number and the signature of the director of the library authorizing payment. Once the books have been stamped and accessioned, the directors of institutes, seminars, and laboratories may withdraw them by signing a duplicate of the invoice to certify receipt.

However, faculty members, inasmuch as they are always highly individualistic, and this to the maximum extent when they are Spaniards, are strongly disposed to demand and locate books according

to their own whims. Thus the frictions and struggles between the librarians and the professors become at times extremely serious.

A case in point is the faculty library of philosophy and letters of the University of Madrid which at the present time is located in the new Law building in the University City. It occupies two floors in the building and contains some 200,000 volumes distributed between the central collection, which occupies two large rooms, and 80 seminar libraries. Some of these collections are restricted exclusively to closed stacks. For public service there is available a universal decimal catalog and a dictionary catalog, each divided into one part corresponding to the general collection and another which lists the holdings of the seminars. Public service in the seminar libraries and relationships with the general library of the university are a paragon of imperfection and serve as an irrefutable argument for the final and complete excision of the festering sore that erupts when university library service is operated exclusively on the basis of the nineteenth-century individualism which particularly characterizes the Spanish academician.

As a result of this situation, it is not possible to pursue a serious research project utilizing the existing book resources without turning oneself into a kind of a tireless wanderer, particularly since the hours of service of these seminars are not always known, are not uniform, and since many of them, moreover, do not even have any stipulated hours. The same situation occurs in the other faculties of Madrid and also in the other Spanish universities, unfortunately.

The university libraries are supported through the budget of the State, and the salaries of the professional and auxiliary personnel are paid by the State. Funds for the acquisition of books are granted by the Dirección General de Archivos y Bibliotecas which in the 1961 budget year assigned over 500,000 pesetas distributed in the following manner: Madrid, 100,000 pesetas; Sevilla, 40,000 pesetas; Santiago, 40,000 pesetas; Murcia, 25,000 pesetas; Salamanca, 46,000 pesetas; Valencia, 40,000 pesetas; Cádiz, 20,000 pesetas; Valladolid, 35,000 pesetas; Saragossa, 35,000 pesetas; Barcelona, 75,000 pesetas; Granada, 40,000 pesetas; Oviedo, 40,000 pesetas; and La Laguna, 20,000 pesetas.

The Dirección General de Universidades also makes available directly an annual sum of money (100,000 pesetas to the University of Madrid), and the University, in turn, also assigns certain small additional sums. The University supports from its budget the acquisition

European University Libraries: Spain and Portugal

of books intended for the seminars with sums of money much larger than those which the State assigns for this purpose. While cash donations by private individuals for the support and enrichment of the university libraries are extremely rare in Spain, the private library of each faculty member is customarily sent to the general library of his faculty upon his decease.

Since the university libraries in Spain in the majority of cases were the residuary legatees of the libraries of the disentailed convents, churches, and monasteries, they are extremely rich in older works, as a general rule. Moreover, Salamanca, Sevilla, and Saragossa were primary centers for printing in the fifteenth century. It goes without saying, however, that these resources are of relatively slight value for teaching purposes, since we are speaking of ancient and superseded books from which no scholar of modern science has much to learn.

Modern works are acquired chiefly by the professors for their research and teaching with funds which the university puts at their disposal in accordance with recommendations of faculty committees.

There is lacking any rule or regulation for the withdrawal of those books which because of age and lack of use are not consulted by anyone. Owing to this statutory deficiency, in some university libraries 60 per cent or more of the collections have not been consulted for many years and it is doubtful if they will ever again be used. For some years a reform to correct this situation has been under study.

The holdings of scientific periodicals are numerous, exceeding 2,000 current titles in each of the universities. Because of the large sums of money required for periodical subscriptions, increasing preference is being given currently to the abstracting journals; funds are usually sufficient to permit subscription to only the basic journals in each field of study.

There are some faculty libraries and institutes which possess bibliographic resources sufficient both to support advanced research by faculty members as well as for the development of term papers and doctoral theses. In this matter, the governing factor has been and continues to be the interest and initiative of the individual professor.

Portugal

The universities of Portugal are those of Coímbra, Pôrto, and Lisbon. The Inspección General de Archivos y Bibliotecas, upon which to a certain extent the Portuguese libraries are dependent, has no real

administrative authority. The libraries are in effect autonomous from the point of view of the State and are responsible instead to their respective university authorities.

The professional personnel have recognized academic status and must complete, in order to enter the profession, a two-year curriculum in library science and archives management at the University of Coimbra as well as six months of apprenticeship afterward in one of the State libraries.

The salary scale of librarians is so deficient that it provides no stimulus for entry into the profession. In order to recruit the staff required for the basic day-to-day operation of the libraries, it is necessary to resort to hiring personnel with no technical preparation. The result is that the efficiency of the libraries is reduced sharply and this may even result in activity detrimental to cultural advancement. The salary pattern recruits and determines the quality of the professional person. As Lasky says: "if janitors' salaries are offered, then one will obtain professionals with the talents of janitors," a statement which should be brought repeatedly to the attention of the many academicians still extant in some universities who, never having set foot in a library and speaking from their own limited experience with a handful of books and a few journals which they have mailed to them at home, solemnly proclaim that efficient library service can be provided by a typist or alert secretary.

The Portuguese librarians are competent, dedicated professional people who have not wavered in their loyalty to library service despite the fact that librarianship in Portugal, by reason of its low salary level, must be classified, together with the entire State system of public education, as being in the realm of charitable work, demanding for its exercise a monastic vow of poverty for life.

The organization of the library is different in each university because there are no laws or decrees issued by any central authority regulating their administration. Each university has established its own rules of service in accordance with the wishes of the faculty and the academic authorities.

Use is made of the rules for cataloging edited by Paul Proença, rules extremely detailed and erudite in character and reflecting the broad philosophic and humanistic background of that model librarian of international repute. These rules are utilized with some variations and modifications. At the present time there are under study certain agreements and recommendations approved in the Conference on

European University Libraries: Spain and Portugal

Cataloging Principles organized by UNESCO whose application has been generally accepted and agreed upon. In general the libraries have alphabetic catalogs and a shelf list.

No systems of classification generally recognized and commonly used in other libraries is employed in the Portuguese universities. Instead, they use locally developed classification systems based upon broad subject groups.

It is probable that the failure to adapt the Universal Decimal Classification in the university libraries in Portugal can be attributed to the fact that the Inspección General de Bibliotecas, which controls the public libraries of Portugal and its overseas possessions, does not consider this classification useful or effective.

The collections are shelved by order of accession and size. This is an old system common to a great many European libraries; its reorganization and reclassification are made difficult because of a lack of experience. The application of the Universal Decimal System, for example, to the reorganization of a collection demands, in addition to the tables and the other auxiliary tools, experienced professional librarians. Analogously, in order to remove the human appendix it is not sufficient to read the best book on surgery, but one must have the services of a practiced surgeon to demonstrate exactly how the operation must be performed.

To the lack of proper classification can be attributed the slow pace of public services and the impossibility of establishing an open-access system so necessary in the modern university.

Only the library of the University of Coimbra possesses a general library in addition to those of the faculties and institutes. The Universities of Pôrto and Lisbon, up to this time, have only faculty libraries.

The University of Coimbra Library is one of the most beautiful in the world, artistically constructed in the baroque style which achieved such widespread and brilliant development in Portugal. As with the National Library of Vienna, it is one of the important national monuments which every tourist and lover of books should visit. At the present time it serves also as the National Library of Portugal, and holds collections totalling approximately one million volumes. It possesses extremely rare books from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and more than 2,000 manuscripts. Needless to say, there are to be found here the majority of works printed in Portugal, many of them unique copies. It is also one of the important

centers for the study of Portuguese miniature codices, fine bindings, and the several arts which have flourished in the manuscript and the printed book.

The University of Pôrto, as has been mentioned, does not have a general library; there are libraries of the faculties of letters, pharmacy, medicine, sciences, engineering, economic sciences, and law. Among these the science library is outstanding because of the importance of its collection of books and journals. The medical library, founded in 1825 and heir to the collections of the former Escuela Médico Quirúrgica y da Real Escuela de Cirugía, is notable for its collection of medical works written by Portuguese authors, a fact which makes it preeminent among the libraries of Portugal.

The University of Lisbon is planning construction of a library building which has been carefully studied as to its structural and functional aspects as well as its architectural design. At present, its collections are scattered among the faculties, institutes, *catédras*, etc. In general, it is well provided with modern books and journals.

References

- "Las bibliotecas de la Universidad de Madrid, 1940-1958," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, 65:451-463, 1958.
- Fuente, Vicente de la. *Historia de las universidades, colegios y demás establecimientos de enseñanza en España*. Madrid, Impr. de la Viuda é Hija de Fuentenebro, 1884-89.
- Gil y Zárate, Antonio. *De la instrucción pública en España*. Madrid, Impr. del Colegio de Surdomudos, 1855.
- "Historia de las universidades." Spain. Dirección General de Instrucción Pública. *Boletín*, 1895.
- Lasso de la Vega, Javier. *Las bibliotecas de seminarios, laboratorios, etc., en sus relaciones con la Biblioteca Central Universitaria*. Sevilla, Impr. de la Gavidia, 1938. (Extract from *Anales de la Universidad Hispalense*, Vol. I.)
- . "The Central University Library and Faculty Libraries," *UNESCO Bulletions for Libraries*, 15:182-187, July-Aug. 1961.
- . *Cómo se hace una tesis doctoral; o manual de técnica de la documentación científica*. 2d ed. Madrid, Editorial Mayfe, 1958.
- . "La dirección de las bibliotecas y sus problemas," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, 56:37-57, 1950.
- . "Le système de libre accès dans l'organisation de la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Madrid," *Bulletin des bibliothèques de France*, 7:449-460, Sept.-Oct. 1962.
- . *Tratado de biblioteconomía; organización técnica y científica de bibliotecas*. 2d ed. Madrid, Editorial Mayfe, 1956.
- . "Education for Librarianship Abroad: Spain," *Library Trends*, 12:153-157, Oct. 1963.

European University Libraries: Spain and Portugal

- Ruiz Cabriada, Agustín. *Bio-bibliografía del Cuerpo Facultativo de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios y Arqueólogos, 1858-1958*. Madrid, Junta Técnica de Archivos Bibliotecas y Museos, 1958.
- "Universidade de Lisboa. Faculdade de Ciências," In: "Repertório das bibliotecas de Lisboa," *Anais das bibliotecas e arquivos*, 21:181-182, 1949.
- "As bibliotecas universitárias de Lisboa," [signed] R.P. [Raúl Proença?] *Anais das bibliotecas e arquivos*, 1:40-42, Jan.-Mar. 1920.
- Barreto Feio, Florencio Mago. *Memória histórica e descritiva ácerca da Bibliotheca da Universidade de Coimbra, e mais estabelecimentos annexos, contendo varios esclarecimentos officiaes, e reflexões bibliographicas*. Coimbra, Impr. da Universidade, 1857.
- Pires de Lima, Joaquim Alberto. *Catálogo da Bibliotheca da Escola Médico-Cirurgia do Porto*. Porto, Tip. da Encyclopedia Portugueza Illustrada, 1910.
- Ramos Bandeira, José. *Universidade de Coimbra. Edifícios do corpo central e casa dos Melos*. Tomo I. Coimbra, Gráfica de Coimbra, 1943, pp. 139-252.
- Serpa Pimentel, Bernardo de. "Breve história da livreria da Biblioteca de Universidade de Coimbra," In: Júlio Máximo de Oliveira Pimentel, Visconde de Vila Maior, *Exposição sucinta da organização actual da Universidade de Coimbra, precedido duma breve notícia histórica deste estabelecimento*. Coimbra, Impr. da Universidade, 1877.
- Silva, Manuel Duarte Gomes da. *A biblioteca da faculdade de Direito e os seus problemas*. Lisboa, 1960. (Extract from *Revista da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Lisboa*, Vol. XII.)