



Developments in Austrian University Libraries

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A REPORT ON AUSTRIAN university libraries, their present situation, procedures, and plans for the near future requires a preliminary glance at the organization of Austrian universities and schools of higher learning.

There exist now in Austria three universities:¹ Vienna (founded 1365), Graz (1585), and Innsbruck (1669). The re-establishment of Salzburg (1619), closed in 1810, was decided upon in 1962, but at present only a faculty of theology exists. Universities are divided into the traditional faculties: theology; jurisprudence, political science, and economics; medicine; and philosophy. The faculty of philosophy includes philosophy proper, as well as such variant fields as experimental physics and pharmacy and all branches of learning not comprehended in any other faculty.

Besides the three universities, supplementing them but completely independent, there are technical schools, articulated in three faculties each, in Vienna and Graz; the technical school for agronomy, the school of veterinary science, and a school of international commerce, all three in Vienna; and a mining school in Leoben. Equal to the schools of higher education are the academy for fine arts, the academy for applied art, that for music and the performing arts in Vienna, as well as the academy for music and the performing arts known as the "Mozarteum" in Salzburg; they do not confer doctor's degrees.

All universities and schools of higher learning are responsible to the Austrian ministry of education but enjoy traditionally a considerable degree of autonomy, which was newly regulated and confirmed in 1955 by a law dealing with the organization of institutions of higher learning.

Prerequisite for matriculation at the universities and higher technical schools is the final comprehensive examination of a general nine-

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year high school or a supplementary examination after attending an institution of equal standing.²

These strict conditions of admission provide the universities with a student body of a relatively high general education, but they reduce the supply of persons to a lower number than is desirable for the needs of the country. In the fall semester of 1962/63, the total enrollment at all Austrian universities and schools of higher learning was 48,340; of these there were 28,219 enrolled in universities (Vienna 17,116; Graz 5,464; Innsbruck 5,404; Salzburg 235). The share of the technical schools was 11,304, and that of the rest of the higher schools and academies was 8,817.³ Since the fall semester of 1955/56, the attendance at all the schools of higher education has risen from 24,093 to 48,340, that is by 130 per cent, and it is still rising.

A notable characteristic of Austrian institutions of higher learning—a reason for pride but also a source of problems—is the large percentage of foreign students from countries all over the world. Approximately 25 per cent, 11,276 students, are foreigners, and 25 per cent of these are from non-European countries. In fact at times the foreign students outnumber the native ones, especially in the technical school at Graz, the veterinary school, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and in the university of Innsbruck.

Within this historically conditioned framework, which is not unreservedly accepted but is essentially a sound form of organization, the university libraries are expected to fulfill their objective.⁴ In reality they ought to be called university and state libraries, for they exercise a double function: primarily they are expected to serve the requirements of the university, but besides that they are general public libraries open to any patron without regard to position or education. For this reason the copyright law requires that copies of certain books be deposited with them (depository copies from the entire Federal Republic are required for the Austrian National Library only) in order thus to support research in regional culture. This double function explains why the library of the University of Vienna could, until 1918, be justly characterized as the leading Austrian state library (the Austrian National Library being then a court library and therefore available to only a limited clientele).

The university libraries are responsible to the federal ministry of education and are administratively independent of the universities. In professional matters the ministry of education is served by a coun-

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cil for library affairs whose members are elected for three years from the circle of leading librarians.

The sad historical events in Austria since 1914 are generally known: the First World War, the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, followed by the period of inflation, the economic crisis after 1929, the battle against National Socialism beginning in 1932, the Nazi occupation in 1938, the Second World War and its devastation, the division of the country into Russian, American, English, and French occupation zones, and finally in 1955 the treaty which returned freedom to Austria but which at the same time loaded heavy financial responsibilities on the country. The multiplicity and the priority of unavoidable federal expenditures made it impossible for the ministry of education to allot to the libraries and the universities that degree of support which would have been necessary for maximum development. The five-year plan (the cultural program) which started in 1962 justifies hope that the libraries will, in the near future, be able to make up for the delays of decades.

The most difficult problem will be to ameliorate the strangling lack of space, which in the library of the University of Vienna is really catastrophic. During the last decades of the monarchy, university libraries had been planned generously and, considering the times, with some thought to the future, but this very fact made it incumbent upon them at a later date to make do with what was at hand, and their desires lagged behind the immediate pressing requirements of the state. Because they were apparently able to fulfill their tasks, they were limited to the amount of reader space provided many years before. Storage additions were made at the libraries of Vienna and Graz and are imminent at Innsbruck. Much relief has been given by means of dividing and adding floors. In general, unfortunately, the situation is such that reader space is available for only three per cent of the students.

The main reading room of the university library at Vienna measures 823 square meters [8,859 sq. feet], those in Graz and Innsbruck each 320 square meters [3,444 sq. feet]. This provides at the maximum, with the addition of periodical rooms and professors' offices, space for 420 readers at Vienna and for 170 at Graz and Innsbruck.

In spite of this lack of space, the libraries enjoy a steadily rising use. "Enjoy" is employed euphemistically, as witness when in Vienna, at midday, a reader has to wait for an hour or longer to find a place

to sit. The emphasis in Austria is traditionally on study halls or reading rooms, partially because textbooks are acquired in many editions, but only in exceptional cases in multiple copies (this being the business of the institutes), and partially, and this is confirmed by many people, because a great many of our students do not consider studying in larger rooms a disadvantage, but rather an incentive and an advantage.

Use of reading areas has developed from 1955 to 1962 in this manner: at the university library of Vienna in 1955, 175,000 readers and in 1962, 287,000; at Graz in 1955, 67,000 and in 1962, 106,000; and at Innsbruck in 1955, 49,000 and in 1962, 107,000. This is an annual average of 1,110 readers per day in Vienna or 400 in Graz and Innsbruck, but during peak periods this figure may double. In final analysis, the number of readers actually using seats is dependent only on how frequently a place is vacated by one reader and taken by another. The University of Vienna library, therefore, introduced in 1960 a ticket by which a seat, after having been vacant for 30 minutes, is turned over to the next person waiting in line for his chance.

Reading rooms are open during semesters from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. with some local deviations; during vacations the hours are fewer. An attempt to keep them open after 8 p.m. has surprisingly enough not been successful.

Books in the reading rooms are shelved systematically, and in every institution special catalogs serve as keys to them. In Graz and Innsbruck there are no restrictions whatsoever on using the collection, but in Vienna there are some limitations because of the very unfavorable space conditions.

Outside loan is much less frequently resorted to than use in the reading areas, although, with some exceptions, books with imprint dates after 1800 are eligible for home use. In 1962 the university library of Vienna circulated for home use 69,000 volumes, Graz 34,000, and Innsbruck 28,000 volumes; by mail the number was respectively, 3,200, 700, and 1,200 volumes.

The loan period is normally one month, for professors up to a year; this is also the case with the institute libraries. Fines are levied when a book is not returned on time. Libraries have not found it feasible to depart from the use of a four-part call slip (signature, borrower, loan period, call number). Because of the generally accepted method of signing for a book in person, it is not possible to determine precisely the number of books which were requested but not located. Inter-

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library loan, for which practically nothing is charged for loans inside the Austrian borders and for which only one-fourth the actual cost is charged in the case of foreign loans, is resorted to relatively infrequently. Graz obtained 2,300 in 1962, Innsbruck 1,900, and Vienna only 115 volumes by inter-library loan; this permits one, conditionally, to conclude that by and large locally available resources satisfy the most pressing needs and that collections are being developed expertly.

The university libraries are venerable institutions which reach back, in the case of Vienna, to 1384; Graz was founded in 1581.⁵ In their present organizational form they are rooted in the eighteenth century: Innsbruck 1745, Vienna 1775, Graz 1781. Their basic resources were derived essentially from the secularization edict issued by Emperor Josef II.

Although the early resources of the university libraries do not compare favorably with those of the Austrian National Library, nevertheless the former possess treasures, dating back to the days of their founding, which arouse the envy of much larger libraries abroad. As to manuscripts from before 1600, the university library of Vienna owns 1,076, Graz 1,241, and Innsbruck 1,660. The book resources of early vintage are characterized in Vienna by an immense wealth in literature of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries; those of Graz are inherited from the former Jesuit library and include possessions from monasteries in Styria; while the most precious portions of the collections at Innsbruck derive chiefly from the former ruling dynasty of the province whose property they were.

During the last 130 years, holdings of the university libraries have increased as follows:

	1835	1870	1900	1910	1930	1962
Vienna	102,000	208,000	576,000	782,000	1,268,000	1,486,000
Graz	40,000	70,000	164,000	258,000	407,000	593,000
Innsbruck	36,000	59,000	182,000	241,000	390,000	595,000

The re-established university library of Salzburg has presently only 228,000 volumes (82,000 in 1880), but it has a very large and valuable collection of older resources, including 1,100 manuscripts and 1,400 incunabula.

The numbers of currently received periodicals are: 3,759 at Vienna, 2,420 at Graz, and 2,458 at Innsbruck.

As against the total resources of the university libraries of 2,900,000 volumes, there is a comparatively modest number of about 820,000

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volumes in the possession of the libraries of the other schools of higher learning. Of historical importance is the library of the Technische Hochschule in Vienna (268,000 volumes in 1962) which already owned 97,000 volumes in 1900, perhaps Austria's most valuable collection on the history of technology.

The ability of a university library to perform its function, however, does not depend on its store of precious older treasures which it preserves and makes available to a selected group, or which it exhibits occasionally, but rather on its basic stock for everyday use. The two world wars and their sequels have left gaps in resources which can never quite be closed again. In this connection we gratefully remember the gift of books from Switzerland, which after the first as well as after the Second World War presented us with important textbooks, and we especially express our thanks for the help which the Germanistic Society of America (New York) gave to our university libraries. During the years 1921-1938 and again between 1946-1953, through that Society's understanding and well-conceived aid it was possible to close the gap caused by the wars in the most important foreign periodicals. This assistance obligates our Austrian universities to eternal gratitude and it will always remain a shining example of international scholarly cooperation.

But in the long run neither by gifts nor by international assistance can the organic development of book stocks be attained; this can be assured only by dependable allocation of funds. These did not start again in Austria, in sufficient degree, until 1954.

The following table displays the beginning of the five-year plan and lists the amounts available for book purchases pure and simple without resort to other means of acquisition. In 1000 Schillings (one Schilling equals four cents) the university libraries received:

	1959	1960	1961	1962	Total
Vienna	1,395	1,512	1,753	2,141	6,801
Graz	855	783	960	1,464	4,062
Innsbruck	773	914	1,115	1,333	4,135
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	3,023	3,209	3,828	4,938	14,998

That it was possible to achieve substantial additions of high quality, in spite of the relatively low book funds, when measured against international yardsticks, was due to the selective acquisition methods practiced in Austrian university libraries. Although the faculty is granted the privilege of suggesting titles for purchases, it is nevertheless

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a fact that actual purchases are made almost exclusively by the library itself, which in practice means by the subject experts.

It is the duty of the subject expert to keep up with the new publications in his field—at Graz and Innsbruck in large groups of subject areas—listed in the most important bibliographies and journals and to suggest purchases, and, when expensive new publications and new subscriptions to journals are involved, to establish contact with the institute libraries. The subject experts do not have definite funds at their disposal, but their wishes are decisive and are limited only by the means at hand and by the general objectives of the institution.

It is the director's duty to judge these proposals and to divide the funds, not necessarily equally, but to pilot them, taking tradition into consideration, in the desired direction. This is a duty which reflects honor on the librarians but which also carries considerable responsibility.

This system of subject area experts is the result of the independent administration of the university libraries; it guarantees, with modest means at hand, an orderly development of resources in subject fields, because the subject specialist, who in general is in charge of his field for decades on end, is best able to gain perspective and to judge requirements. In the last analysis, it is he who is blamed for the absence of important works.

The subject expert can also influence acquisition through exchange and the selection of gifts, in different degrees in different institutions.

In total the university libraries have grown by 224,000 volumes during the last five years: the university library of Vienna increased by 108,000 volumes, Graz by 57,000, and Innsbruck by 59,000 volumes. The acquisitions figures of the immediate past year are shown in the following table:

	<i>Purchase</i>	<i>Exchange</i>	<i>Gift</i>	<i>Copyright deposit</i>	<i>Total</i>
Vienna	11,303	3,057	3,049	3,724	21,133
Graz	7,557	3,964	1,621	409	13,551
Innsbruck	7,012	4,783	1,680	386	13,861
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	25,872	11,804	6,350	4,519	48,545

The most important and most fruitful type of acquisitions method is, of course, by purchase. Besides this, the university libraries encourage a world-wide network of exchange patterns with academies, universities, and scientific societies, partly directly and partly through

the friendly support of associations. Copyright deposit acquisitions are of pronounced importance only for the university library of Vienna.

The holdings of university libraries, just like those in all the larger Austrian scholarly libraries, have been shelved, since the beginning of the century, according to the *numerus currens*, which means mechanically in the order of acquisition in arithmetical sequence.⁶ There are several variations of this method of arrangement: in the university libraries of Vienna and Graz, for instance, the numbered series proceeds uninterruptedly as a closed *numerus currens*; sizes are characterized by a prefixed Roman numeral. Or, under another variation, sizes and special collections, especially periodicals, have separate number series; such an open *numerus currens* system is used in the Innsbruck university library. The point is that each book, by means of a simple six digit running number based on the date of acquisition is given a fixed location. Each book not represented in the numerical arrangement, either because it is shelved in a reading room or administrative area, or because it is on loan, is represented by a dummy.

Shelving according to the *numerus currens* is not an Austrian invention, although Ferdinand Grassauer, one of the leading librarians of the nineteenth century and director of the university library of Vienna from 1894 to 1903, gave decisive form to the system and is responsible for its general adoption. *Numerus currens* owes its existence as much to fiscal as to theoretical considerations. It is the least expensive and the most suitable form of shelf arrangement in every situation which denies the reader access to the stacks. Its significance is that for each size group there is only one growth group (in Innsbruck several). This results in a great saving in space, and it makes possible the simplest and briefest inventory and revision. At Vienna a series of 65 volumes with 10,000 entries each, impressively records the entire collection of the institution. The *numerus currens* requires only minimal training of personnel and is an insurance against misplacement, if the spines of the books are properly labelled, or, even better, if the arrangement is strictly according to size. A special advantage inheres in the possibility to separate from the rest of the collection the older, less used literature, simply and mechanically by number, and, if required, to shelve it in other buildings. The utility of the *numerus currens* is, therefore, unquestioned in Austria, and some foreign libraries, where a new shelving system was needed, have accepted this method for their resources.

This type of arrangement has in principle only one, but yet a seri-

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ous defect: it irrevocably separates the user, even the select user and the subject specialist from the collection. But it is also a fact that because there is little stack use of the collection, storage libraries can be constructed with great economy, with an aisle width of between 1.30 and 1.35 meters.

The corollary to this shelf arrangement, admittedly inconsiderate of the user but not hostile to him, is the urgent obligation to provide a key to the collection by intensive cataloging and by reference help.

Our Anglo-Saxon colleagues may be astonished by the strict division between author (name) catalogs and subject catalogs, which is general in Austria. This division is historically conditioned, but is justified by the consideration that by this means the stream of users is sensibly divided into those who are looking for a definite book and who know the author, and those who are looking for literature on a certain subject.

The collections from before 1930 (1932) of Vienna and Graz are listed in author book catalogs. The 72-volume book catalog of the University of Vienna library is an especially admired example of bibliothecal precision. The university library of Innsbruck changed its book catalog into a card catalog during the years 1955 to 1963, because it was unsatisfactory. In 1930 all large scholarly libraries in Austria discarded their quite satisfactory, and in the opinion of older colleagues superior, cataloging rules, closed their author catalogs, and, in order to collaborate in the production of the *Deutsche Gesamtkatalog*, (of which only 14 volumes were finally completed) and its continuation the *Berliner Titeldrucke*, accepted the Prussian instructions for alphabetical catalogs. Since then these instructions, together with the extensive commentaries of Dale Sass and Hermann Fuchs, have been the officially adopted rules for Austrian cataloging, but not without some objection, because there are many reasons for the introduction of mechanical word sequence. Yet there is no doubt that the university libraries find it impossible seriously to plan another change of catalogs for their main collections, and to carry through such a change.

Shelf arrangement according to the *numerus currens* is the reason for making catalog entries (apart from less important books) as complete as possible. They include, therefore, besides the name of the author, references to joint authors, editors, and collaborators, and they include not only the complete title and subtitle, but in addition they also indicate appendices, edition, imprint (place, publisher, date,

printer), paging, size, and in the case of foreign language books even the original title and the translation.

These new author catalogs are maintained both as official and as public catalogs in all university libraries.

The key to the collection by way of subject is provided generally in the form of catchword catalogs which arrange concepts in one single alphabet. The theory and form was promoted during the years between the wars by two Austrian librarians Franz Koch and Hans Schleimer. The result is essentially a subject catalog according to narrow concepts (the concrete subject content of the book in hand) with generous references. A uniform prescription for the structure of Austrian catchword catalogs was decided against after extensive discussion. The university library of Vienna, alone, possesses a catchword catalog covering its complete resources, the university library of Graz only since 1923, and Innsbruck since 1930.

Towards the end of the third decade of the present century the catchword catalog was considered the only correct and sufficient form of subject display. In recent years the conviction has again gained strength, that in the long run an additional systematic key to the collection cannot be dispensed with, such as was common to all university libraries until 1930. The library at Vienna will be able to carry forward its very detailed systematic catalog to the present day. The Innsbruck library is attempting to reach the same goal by means of a systematic index to the catchword catalog.

Catalogs are supplemented by comprehensive bibliographic tools, regular introductory bibliographic courses, an information service at the public catalog, and further by keeping the readers current with the acquisitions program by way of weekly exhibits of the most important new acquisitions (as at Graz and Innsbruck) or through card files or bulletins listing the new acquisitions of the preceding month. Complete documentation in its narrow meaning exceeds, in our opinion, the objectives as well as the possibilities of general libraries. This remains for the special libraries, the largest of which is the library of the Technische Hochschule in Vienna, which is at the same time the center for documentation and the seat of the Austrian society for documentation and bibliography.

Seen from this perspective, and considering the current improvements in the catalogs, it appears to us—at least to the majority of Austrian librarians—that there is no irreparable disadvantage in the separation of the user from the bulk of the collections. Admittedly even

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the best catalog is only a mirror, but it can also function as a catalyst, by means of which a relationship between the book and a serious, not just browsing, reader can be established better than by immediate and direct but imperfect access.

The university library at Graz, eager to effect reforms and subject to less confining space conditions than the other university libraries, established in 1962 a collection of 20,000 volumes in the field of chemistry as a free access group, an innovation which is looked upon with great interest by its sister institutions.

The relation of the university libraries to the universities and their institutes is governed by the law regulating the structure of institutions of higher learning;⁷ this is stated in paragraph 61, which reads:

(1) Each institution has a library, which will be termed university library in the universities. In the other institutions of higher learning it will be designated as the library of that institution.

(2) The person in charge of the library is an official or a civil servant of the library service, who will be appointed after a hearing with the supreme academic office. He is directly responsible to the federal ministry for education.

(3) The chief librarian is responsible for the availability of books necessary for the fulfillment of the needs of research and teaching; he is to be cognizant of the wishes of the academic officers and the members of the faculty. His duty is further to see to it that all scholarly works acquired by any department of the institution are subject to orderly cataloging, and jointly with the personnel in charge of individual colleges and research institutes he decides upon the acquisition of needed books. He will report annually to the chief academic officers on the condition and use of the library.

(4) The rules for use of the library will be promulgated, after consultation with the academic officers in charge, by the federal ministry for education.

The regulations concerning cataloging and acquisition are, however, merely advisory, because it is clearly impossible for the university libraries and the majority of the libraries of the schools of higher learning, to perform those services in the projected manner, unless a drastic increase in personnel occurs.

The size of the problems can be measured by giving a brief survey of the multiplicity of institutions and their aggregate holdings. According to the handbook of Austrian libraries, whose data are only

approximately complete, there exist in the University of Vienna 73 institutes, each with its own separate library, which together own 970,000 volumes and subscribe to 5,200 current periodicals. In the university of Graz there are 60 institutes with 336,000 volumes and 1,400 periodicals. At the university of Innsbruck there are 62, which together with the Library of the Jesuit College own 365,000 volumes and 1,900 periodicals. Among these are institutions such as the libraries of the law faculties in Vienna (104,000 volumes), Graz (85,000 volumes), and Innsbruck (55,000 volumes), which in themselves are composite institute libraries and which have highly trained personnel and can boast of comparatively large funds. In addition there are special institutes with long traditions which have fully organized libraries, such as the institute for research in Austrian history (35,000 volumes), the institute for the history of medicine (60,000 volumes), and the central library of the institute for physics (33,000 volumes, more than 1,000 current periodicals, 45,000 reports, 85,000 reprints and dissertations, etc.) which is decidedly better supported than that of the university library of Vienna serving the same field of study. All university institutes, even the most minute, are independent administrative entities under the sole responsibility of the top official of the institute. These do not easily consent to a curtailment of their independence, especially the largest and those with the richest tradition.

This does not mean that until the law laid down the rules there existed no cooperation whatever between the central university library, or the library of one of the other institutions of higher learning, and the institutes, or that their attitude to each other was unfriendly or even competing. A division of labor has always obtained, though quite differently in kind and intensity, depending on local conditions and the nature of the faculties. The university libraries depend just as much on the institutes, their special collections and space, as the institutes depend on the central library for the organizational structure, the bibliographic apparatus, and the collections which supplement those of the institutes with their narrower reach. The point of contact exists between the subject specialists and the personnel in charge of the institutes. This hitherto voluntary collaboration is now fixed in a binding way by the ministry of education; the speed and magnitude of the development is largely dependent on whether the university libraries will be granted a sizable increase in personnel.

Partial successes have been gained. The periodical collections of the

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university and of the more important scientific institutions in Innsbruck and Graz have been gathered together in the Tyrolian and the Styrian union catalogs of periodicals. In Vienna the ZAZ⁸ fulfills the same objective for holdings since 1945.

A complete union catalog of the institute libraries is neither possible nor desirable. The collections of a number of the most important institutes in Graz and Vienna have already been listed; the university library of Innsbruck includes in its catalog records of the holdings of the libraries of the faculties of law and theology and a number of groups of institutes.

Buildings, collections, and bibliographic apparatus certainly influence the outsider's verdict of the ability of a library to get its work done. In the long run, however, and in reality, library development depends before all on the skill, the hard work, and the number of available personnel. In line with this, the plans of the ministry of education call, therefore, for a 50 per cent increase in personnel of libraries of institutions of higher learning, to be consummated within the next five years.

The university libraries as well as the other scholarly libraries of Austria (the public libraries have been greatly retarded in their development, but it would carry us too far afield to explain the reasons for this fact) have an excellent team of outstanding, well-educated personnel at their disposal, devoted and willing to face the tasks of the future. The personnel of Austrian university libraries consists of the class of professional librarians and that of the library assistants. Professional librarians are either members of the "higher" service (prerequisite: doctor's degree) or of the advanced type (prerequisite: eligibility for university matriculation). The two-year librarianship course is the same for both groups, and only in the last semester does the "higher" service group split off, during which time the members of this group become interns in the Austrian National Library, ending with a rigorous comprehensive examination of four parts, three of them written and the other oral.

Librarians in their official capacity are members of the general federal administration; their possibilities for advancement are modest, and university libraries are faced with difficulties in obtaining suitable candidates for advanced positions who are willing to accept the severe demands made on them. But each library convention provides living proof of the unbroken professional devotion and the impatient *élan*, especially of our younger colleagues.

The professional organization—the association of Austrian librarians—comprises the academic as well as the non-academic groups, and both enjoy the same privileges. The association can point to the fact that it is the fourth oldest in the world. It was founded as early as 1896 and achieved an honorable position through its publications, but unfortunately it was not able to survive the First World War. In 1946 it was revived by Josef Bick, and the Austrian association has again reached the stature of a professional organization, through the publication of *Biblos*, its periodical organ,⁹ now in its twelfth year, as well as the associated *Biblos* publications of which so far 34 volumes have appeared, and through its biennial conventions.

Dr. Josef Stummvoll, since 1949 Director of the Austrian National Library, is the editor of *Biblos* and one of the co-founders of the library association. The Austrian National Library is the hub of all those communal undertakings of the scholarly libraries which go beyond the scope and abilities of the individual institutions; it is responsible for the Austrian national bibliography, the Austrian checklist of publications, the union catalog of periodicals, and the international exchange of publications. It is also the place where biennial courses for interns are given, and it is the seat of the examining commissions for the higher service and for those training for assistantships; the chairmanship is held by the director of the library.

Although all individual libraries enjoy equal standing in their field and are responsible only to the ministry of education, still the Austrian National Library is the central point of the structure of Austrian libraries, as it were the seat of the general staff, while the day to day battles are carried on in the libraries of the universities and other institutions of higher learning.

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