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National Library of Spain

Annual Report 1995

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The Biblioteca Nacional collects since its foundation in the year 1712 the books published in Spain. Today the collection gathers more than six million items.

The library in politics

During 1995 two political aspects had influence on the Biblioteca Nacional. First, in Spain new elections took place in the Autonomías, that do not affect State ruled institutions like the Biblioteca Nacional.

Despite this, there is a growing interest among the Autonomías to put together in regional institutions the cultural heritage related to their culture, language or feeling. In this respect the Biblioteca Nacional has been requested by small cultural associations to transfer documents that they consider symbols of their identity.

Second, due to the Maastrich agreement, Spain has to restrict its expenses and all main public institutions had cuts in their budgets. The budget of the Biblioteca Nacional was cut from 4.300.000.000 ptas. to 3.400.000.000 ptas. This fact affected every activity of the Biblioteca Nacional, including the staff, as it is impossible to cover vacant positions.

Legislation

In 1994, a new legal deposit law was proposed. The prevailing legal deposit law is that of 20.02.73, and since 1973, publishers have increased their production extraordinarily, certain types of documents that are included in the law have proved to be of a very time consuming process like posters or calendars with practically no demand. At the same time new documents, like electronic documents have started to circulate, and are not included in the legal deposit law.

During 1994 and 1995 the new law was discussed, but with no final agreement between publishers and libraries, so it has not been adopted, and will be discussed in future sessions.

Main building/construction problems

In recent years the Biblioteca Nacional has kept its collections and has offered its services in three buildings: the main building in Paseo de Recoletos; Palacio de Perales, where the Periodicals were kept and the new stacks in Alcalá de Henares.

Palacio de Perales is an XVIIIth century building that needs at least 60 people to be maintained, with small stacks, and would need a large budget to be remodelled.

To reduce expenses and offer better service, Palacio de Perales was closed and most of the collections of periodicals were moved to the stacks in Alcalá and new reading rooms for periodicals were opened in the main building in Recoletos.

This has meant that the Recoletos building had to be remodeled in its South-East angle.

In the bottom floor, 2.000 m² were dedicated to the new Book Museum. A new Conference room was also inaugurated in Christmas, and has a very sophisticated audiovisual equipment.

The North and the South roof were retiled.

Automation, data processing, retroconversion of already processed data

Due to the increasing demand of information by the clients, and the volume of information of the bibliographic database of the Biblioteca Nacional, ARIADNA, new memory had to be added to the database. This meant an investment of 180.000.000 ptas.

ARIADNA permits on-line cataloguing of modern and rare books, periodicals, maps, printed music, recorded sound and manuscripts.

This year 57.392 new bibliographic items were catalogued on-line, which means a total of 120.541 holdings.

In spite of the severe cuts in the general budget, 40.000 bibliographic descriptions were reconverted and another 237.522 items reconverted during previous years were loaded in ARIADNA.

By the end of the year, 636.684 bibliographic records could be consulted in ARIADNA as well as 1.496.078 authority records.

Conservation and preservation of the collections

In the Biblioteca Nacional conservation, preservation and reprography are part of the same department. During the year 1.084 drawings and engravings were restaured, as well as 65 maps, 33 books, 27 periodicals 562 manuscripts, 13 scores and 50 bindings.

Although systematic binding of the collections is contracted with several private enterprises, artistic binding is done in the Biblioteca Nacional, and this year 500 bindings were concluded.

Since 1992 there is a systematic plan of microfilming rare books, manuscripts and periodicals. Last year 1.381 volumes of periodicals were microfilmed, which means 600.000 stills.

The demand of photographs or microfilms by the public that come to the Library implies that another 2.000.000 photogrammes were made.

To preserve the most rare and demanded documents, a project for digitizing was presented and named "Memoria Hispánica".

It will include manuscripts, rare books, engravings, drawings, recorded music, photographs, etc. and will illustrate every aspect of the history of Spain (social sciences, humanities, science and technique).

Public relations

The inauguration of the Book Museum in October has been a very important fact, because it has permitted that students, tourists, and other visitors are able to see the most precious books, engravings, drawings, etc. of the Biblioteca Nacional.

The Book Museum has direct access from the street through the ground floor, opposite to the Exhibition room.

In three months, 35.000 people have visited the Museum, and think it is an excellent idea to have created the first large Book Museum in Spain.

Apart from the visitors of the Book Museum, other 925 people visited the Biblioteca Nacional, arranged in 60 groups.

Public relations are performed mainly by the Gabinete de Difusión through exhibitions, conferences, round tables, book presentations, homages and seminars.

In 1995 two large exhibitions were organized: Fortuny, on the Spanish saga of painters of that name, and Memoria de la Escritura: Manuscritos literarios de la Biblioteca Nacional. Del poema del Mío Cid a Rafael Alberti.

Two other small exhibitions were installed in the entrance of Book Museum on Bergamín Editor and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

This year two new series of conferences started; one on the libraries of Spanish contemporary writers, where they comment their favourite books, and the other to which the most well known writers of the World are invited to come.

International cooperation

International cooperation is oriented mainly to America and Europe.

In North America two agreements of collaboration were signed oriented to the exchange of bibliographic records; one with the Research Libraries Group, and the second with The Library of Congress.

As regards South America, the Biblioteca Nacional is member of the Asociación de Bibliotecas Nacionales de Iberoamérica (ABINIA), and in 1995 the Union catalogue of rare books, "Novum regestrum" containing approximately 150.000 bibliographic records was published on CD-ROM.

This union catalogue will be increased in number of records due to the agreement of collaboration signed with the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.

In Europe, collaboration is focused in the development of projects of the European Commission. The Biblioteca Nacional participates in the organizations/projects: "Consortium of European Research Librarians", "Author", "Chase", "Edilibe", "Ksyserror", "Biblink".

During 1995, seven librarians from ABINIA followed an internship in the Biblioteca Nacional.