

The Library in politics

During 1994 two facts must be pointed out from a political point of view. First, Mr. Carlos Ortega was designated General Director of the Biblioteca Nacional in July.

Second, due to the effort to reduce the Spanish external debt and the State expenses, the annual budget of every Department was cut. The budget of the Biblioteca was cut in 375.000.000 pesetas (aproximately 10% of the budget).

Legislation

Last year a new legal deposit law was proposed. The prevailing legal deposit law is that of 20.02.1973, and since then, new type of documents have emerged and their importance is growing bigger, some have proved to be of very small interest, and politically, Spain has evolved from a centralized country to a decentralized government with regional "Autonomías".

The Biblioteca played a very important role in writing the draft of the legal deposit law, as it is the Library that must collect all that is printed in the country.

The new law implies that the publisher and not the printing house must deposit the bibliographic production, bearing in mind that some publishers print abroad. It also includes new type of documents, like automated files.

Main building/construction problems

The Biblioteca keeps its collections and offers different services in three buildings, being the main building that of Paseo de Recoletos. It was built in 1892 for the commemorations of the discovery of America.

Although several works have been done during the last century, the building needed to be reconditioned to the new demands of space, specially for the collections, and in 1987 a Director plan was approved.

In 1994 the third stage of the works were undertaken. This third stage implies the construction of the Book Museum, with approximately 2.000m², the boardroom of trustees, a new room for periodicals. It is also being remodelled the offices of the General Director and of the Librarian and the assembly room. This means that the stacks will double in size, but the works in the stacks will not start till stage four (January 1996).

The roof has also been isolated and retiled.

Automation, data processing, retroconversion of already processed data

ARIADNA is the name of the database of the Biblioteca Nacional. It has been developed by the Biblioteca Nacional and Software AG, and it is an integrated system.

It is fed by on line cataloguing and by the reconversion of the old index, which is done little by little, depending on the budget.

The 31st December 1994 ARIADNA included 573.373 bibliographic records, 1.413.443 authority records and 757.970 holdings.

This year, 83.216 bibliographic records were reconverted, with 67.853 holdings and 8.990 records of the Spanish Libraries Directory.

Three new modules were made operative: manuscripts, videos and automated files and a new OPAC was also developed under WINDOWS.

In February the remote access to ARIADNA was made possible through INTERNET.

In the Information Unit the development of the gopher and the "WWW" of the Biblioteca Nacional was started.

Conservation and preservation of the collections

In the Biblioteca Nacional, Conservation, Preservation and Reprography are part of the same Department.

The works started in the Biblioteca include the revision of the air conditioning and the installment of constant humidity in the main stacks, which is already finished.

Although the restauration equipment was quite satisfactory, the laboratory was refurbished and new equipment was bought, including new microscopes, a mecanichal reintegrator, etc., which makes this laboratory one of the most advanced in Spain.

The Conservation unit managed to make 1.733 new artistic bindings, 2.033 documents were covered with plastic and 929 items were restaured. They also prepared 1.003 non-acid boxes for pamphlets.

There is a sistematic plan of microfilming the rare books, engravings, manuscripts and periodicals; in general rare items. Three years ago, a national plan was established to microfilm the newspapers of the XVIIIth, XIXth and XXth centuries and each Autonomía is responsible for the newspaper production of the region. The Biblioteca Nacional undertook the microfilming of the Newspapers of Madrid, and last year 720.345 stills were made. The Madrid part of the project is now almost finished.

The demand of photographs or microfilms is followed carefully, to increase the amount of reproduced items, specially for rare items and a total of 1.960.257 fotogrammes were made.

Public Relations

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

In 1994 the following exhibitions were organized: Ukiyo-E engravings in the Biblioteca Nacional, Donations of graphic art (1989-1992), VII International Congress of Directors of Architecture Museums, World Press Photo 1994, Estampas and one on the painter Fortuny. On the whole, 80 conferences, round tables, book presentations, homages and seminars took place in the BN.

The Gabinete de Difusión also arranged the visit for 65 groups of people, mainly students of humanities and librarianship.

The image of the BN is becoming more and more popular and 16 different programmes of TV filmed in the library.

International Cooperation

The Ministry of Culture proposed for the first time a general plan for cultural cooperation with other countries. This plan includes the libraries, archives, museums, theatres, etc.

In the Biblioteca, five librarians from South America spent six months following an internship.

In the development of international projects, the activities of Spain were mainly oriented to cooperation with Latin America and Europe.

In Latin America, great progress was made in the union catalogue of rare books of the Asociación de Bibliotecas Nacionales de Iberoamérica (ABINIA). The Biblioteca Nacional is general coordinator of the project and merged the records of the 23 national libraries.

In European cooperation, work has been concentrated in the development of the projects within the framework of the European Commission.