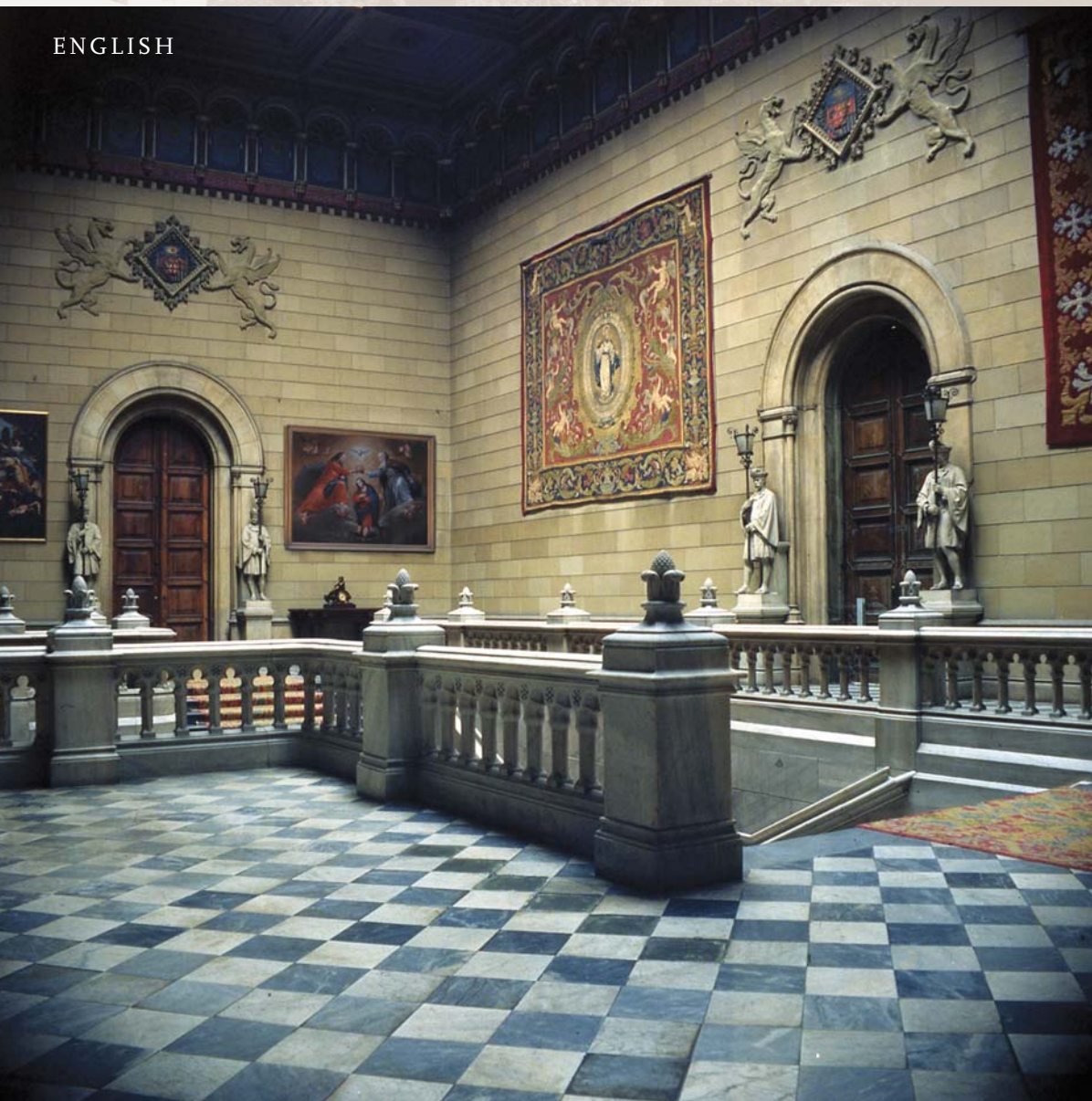


Historic Building



ENGLISH





Welcome to the University of Barcelona

From as early as the twelfth century, the city of Barcelona boasted a cathedral school as well as other private and municipal-owned schools.

In 1398 King Martí the "Humane" founded the first university, known as the Estudi General of Barcelona, but it did not receive the authorisation of the city's council, the Consell de Cent (the Council of One Hundred). Despite this setback, the King created the Estudi General of Medicine in 1401, and added an Arts Faculty in 1402.

The foundation of these Estudis was to culminate in the opening of the Estudi General of Barcelona by King Alphonse the Magnanimous in 1450, which was to unify all these seats of learning.

The University of Barcelona or the Estudi General was first housed in a building at the top end of the Rambla, which to this day is known as the Rambla dels Estudis.

In the War of the Spanish Succession the city of Barcelona supported the losing side. In reprisal, the new authorities shut down the University and transferred it to Cervera in 1717, together with the other four universities teaching at that time in Catalonia (Lleida, Girona, Tarragona and Solsona). It remained there until 1842.

Under the liberal governments, the University in Cervera was transferred back to Barcelona in 1842, where it was provisionally housed



in the Convent of Carme, empty since the disentanglement.

Work on the Historic Building began in 1863. It was designed by the architect Elies Rogent, and is built in the highly eclectic style characteristic of this period, combining Romanesque, Islamic, Gothic and Mudejar.

It took more than twenty years for work on the University of Barcelona building to be fully completed, although by 1871 the first lectures were being given here. The clock and the iron bell housed in the tower in the Pati de Lletres - the Arts Court - were put in place in 1881. A year later, work on the building was complete and the sculptures and paintings commissioned from the leading artists of the period were installed.

In 1970 the building was declared a national monument of historic and artistic interest.

The coat of arms of the Spanish crown during the reign of the Habsburgs and the medallion bearing the effigy of Alphonse the Magnanimous, on the noble stairway.



The Noble Stairway >



The noble stairway, with its skilful use of natural light, takes you up to the floor on which the University's governing council is housed: to the right are the Rector's offices and the main meeting room, while to the left are the assembly halls (the Aula Magna and the Paranimf) and the library. From this point on the stairs, it is possible to appreciate the splendour of this great room with its three large doorways flanked by university beadles in ceremonial dress.

Over the staircase is the coat of arms of the Spanish monarchy at the time of Charles I, with the blazons of the estates of the Habsburgs, with one addition, the fleur-de-lis in

memory of Isabel II in the centre. Above the arch at the head of the stairway is a stone medallion bearing the effigy of Alphonse the Magnanimous, probably the work of the brothers Vallmitjana, and based on Pisanello's portrait of the monarch in the fifteenth century.

Here two tapestries adorn the walls: one bears the coat of arms of the University of Cervera, presided over by the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the other bears the coat of arms of the University of Barcelona at the time when it was eventually restored to the city in 1842 as the sole seat of learning in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, with the blazons of all the provinces.

Six large paintings from the Prado Museum collection are hung here. Starting from the right they are, first, *Maria Pacheco, the Wife of Juan de Padilla, receiving news of the defeat at Villalar (23 April 1521)*, the work of Vicenç Borràs (1835–1903); second, *The Doubts of Saint Peter*, by José Marcelo Contreras (1827–ca 1876); third, *The Holy Family with the Attributes of the Passion*, by Luca Giordano (1634–1705); fourth, *The Coronation of the Mother of God*, by Mattia Preti (1613–1699); fifth, *Marcus Curtius leaps into the Chasm*, by Luca Giordano, and sixth, *Enrique III of Castile and his Nobles*, by Dionisio Fierros (1827–1894).

The noble stairway seen from the top

Upper Gallery. The coat of arms of King Charles I originally forming part of the building of the Estudi General on the Rambla



Upper Gallery. Portrait Room >

The door to the right leads to the portrait room. Here hang the portraits of all the rectors since the restoration of the University of Barcelona in 1842 to the present day. Today the gallery serves as the anteroom to the main meeting room.

The area to the left of the noble stairway leads out to the Upper Gallery, which links the Pati de Ciències (the Sciences Court) with the Arts Court, and offers one of the most spectacular views in the building. In the centre of this gallery is the doorway to the Paraninfo. The door is the most ornate in the whole building and bears the letters spelling out *PARANINFO* in the mouldings of the archivolt.

The neo-Romanesque doorway is richly decorated in plant motifs and with a figure on either side, depicting a university professor giving a lecture and a student listening and taking notes.



To the right of the doorway to the Paraninfo is the original coat of arms of Charles I, which used to preside over the main entrance to the building of the university that stood at the top of the Rambla.

Gallery - and the anteroom of the main meeting room - in which are hung the portraits of the rectors since the restoration in 1837.

The councillors of Barcelona petition Alphonse the Magnanimous to create an Estudi General in the city in 1450. R. Anckermann



Paranimf (Assembly Hall) >



This is the most important hall in the building and is where the University's main ceremonies are held, including the inauguration of the new academic year, the investitures of honorary degrees, a range of cultural acts and the sessions of the University Faculty. Its interior is decorated in Mudejar style with interlaced geometric designs, plant motifs and inscriptions. Hanging in the main hall is a painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the patron of the University. Over the dignitaries' table hang portraits of Alphonse the Magnanimous, Isabel

Paranimf. As seen from the dignitaries' table and a view of the whole hall



II and Charles I, monarchs with close links to the history of the University. To the right is an allegory of the exact, physical and natural sciences, and to the left an allegory of the moral and social sciences, encircled by the names of leading scientists and men of letters respectively. Under the windows and around the hall are stone medallions bearing the portraits of eminent figures from all fields of Spanish culture.

Six large oil paintings decorate the Paranimf and represent key points in Spanish culture. Dionís Baixeras (1862–1943) painted the *IV Council of Toledo presided over by Saint Isidore of Seville* (representing Visigothic

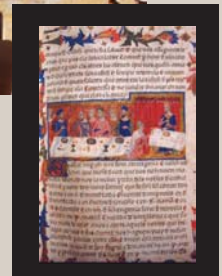
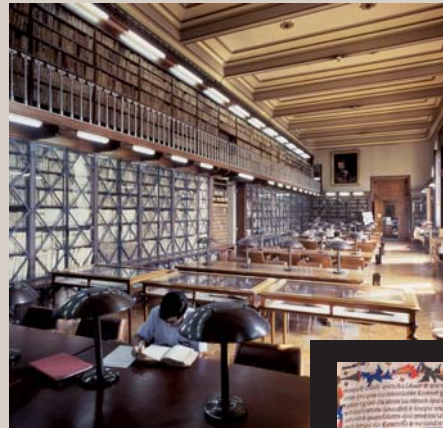
The University Garden, formerly the eighteenth century botanical gardens created by the Marquis of Ciutadilla. The public can access the gardens through the student entrances during the week. On Sundays the gate to the gardens on the streets of Enric Granados/Diputació is also open.



Library

culture), *The civilisation of the Caliphate of Cordoba in the times of Abd al-Rahman III* (representing Arab-Islamic culture) and *Alphonse the Wise with his advisers* (representing the culture of Castile). The artist Ricard Anckermann (1841–1907) painted *The councillors of Barcelona petition Alphonse the Magnanimous to create an Estudi General in the city in 1450* (representing the birth of the University). Joan Bauzà (1844–1915) painted *Cardinal Cisneros receives a copy of the polyglot bible printed in Alcalá de Henares* (representing Renaissance culture). And, finally, Antoni Reynés (1853–1910) undertook *The schools sponsored by the Board of Commerce in Barcelona* (representing cultural life in Barcelona when the University was based in Cervera).

At the end of the Upper Gallery leading into the Pati de Lletres stands the library, housing the second largest collection of works in Spain. Its most notable feature is the Readers' Room, covered by a large glass roof built between 1868 and 1870. The most valuable works in the collection are the manuscript codices, numbering some 2,000 in total and dating back to the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the Catalan chronicles of Jaume I and Bernat Desclot.



A page from the manuscript of the *Libre dels feyts del rey en Jacme* housed in the library

The figures of Averroes,
Joan Lluís Vives and
Ramon Llull



Entrance Hall >

The building was erected in the Eixample district of Barcelona on state-owned lands that were cleared following the demolition of the Tallers fortification, which had formed part of the city walls. Presiding over the central section of the façade, in honour of Charles I, is the Habsburg coat of arms, with a fleur-de-lis added in the centre acknowledging the period when the University was restored to the city. On either side of the coat of arms are stone medallions bearing the busts of Alphonse the Magnanimous, the royal founder of the Estudi General, the city's first university, and Queen Isabel II, during whose reign the University returned to Barcelona. These are the only sculptures decorating the façade, with the exception of the stone capitals and the ornamental corbels of the windows.

The three large doorways in the central section of the façade open into the entrance hall, which houses most of the elements of architectural interest. The hall is divided into three sections by a series of neo-Romanesque pillars that support vaulted roofs and whose capitals are decorated with the coats of arms of the provinces of Spain. Five imposing statues stand as eminent representatives of the diverse groups that made up Spanish culture in the sixteenth century, and which are also depicted in the paintings hung in the assembly hall (the Paraninfo). The figures are



Saint Isidore of Seville (representing the culture of the Visigoths), Averroes (Arab-Islamic culture), Alphonse the Wise (thirteenth-century Castilian culture), Ramon Llull (thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Catalan and Majorcan culture) and Joan Lluís Vives (Valencian, Spanish and European Renaissance culture). The sculptures are the work of the brothers Agapit and Venanci Vallmitjana.

The entrance hall from the main door



The coat of arms of the University of Barcelona following its restoration to the city in 1842 with the blazons of all the Catalan provinces and those of the Balearic Islands.



Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585
08007 Barcelona
Tel. 933 184 236
Fax 933 188 163
www.ub.es