

The library, Historic Building



ENGLISH





Welcome to the University of Barcelona Library



Main entrance to the library

The University of Barcelona was founded in 1450 under the royal prerogative granted by Alphonse the Magnanimous and was the successor to the Medical School (or *Estudi General*, as the universities were known at that time) founded by Martí'92 the Humane in 1401. The Library is almost as old as the University itself and, as one can imagine, is closely linked to the history of the institution. We know that the Library had been opened as early as the mid-sixteenth century (1539-1559) and that initial collections were already available. In 1725, The Statute of the University of Cervera – set up at the beginning of the eighteenth century by the Nova Planta Decrees that abolished the six Catalan universities that existed at the time, and

conceived as a continuation of the *Estudi General* of Barcelona – makes its first mention of the library, or *llibreria* as it was referred to in Catalan.

The disentailments of 1820 and 1837 and the transfer of the University of Cervera to Barcelona in 1842 at the hands of the Liberal government considerably increased the library collection, since the separate collections of all of the convents in Barcelona became part of the new Provincial (and University) Library. This rich documentary heritage is now preserved and managed by the Reserve Section.

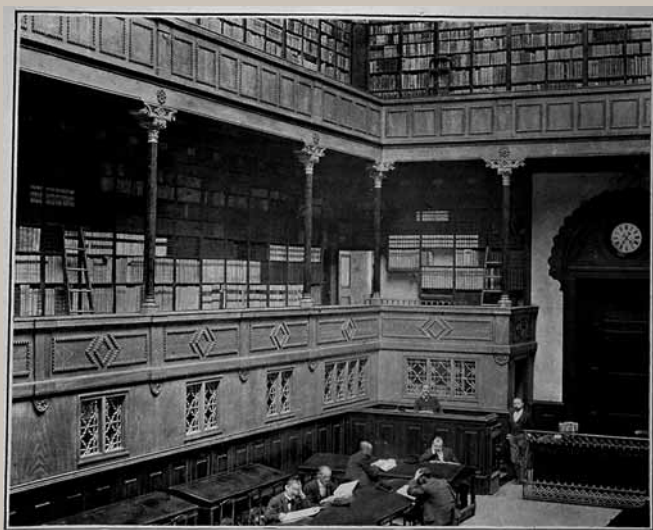
The Library collection was fragmented in 1843 when the College of Medicine and Surgery of Barcelona became the Faculty of Medicine. The collection was further dispersed after 1920, when the University began to create smaller, departmental libraries (Chemistry, History and Philosophy, etc.), which separated the historical collection from the diverse specialized collections that were gradually compiled.

Finally, in 1980 the University embarked on a plan to develop a library system that required the creation of a single catalogue and a series of processes common to all of the libraries.

The Library conserves much of the original architecture of Elies Rogent



The building and facilities



The Library is located in the Historic Building, which was constructed by Elies Rogent during the second half of the nineteenth century. Much of the original structure still remains, although the growth of the University, the rationalism of the early part of the twentieth century – which led to the removal of almost all the decoration in the original reference room – and the renovations carried out at the end of 1990 account for some of

the more significant changes to the original construction.

The main entrance to the Library is found on the first floor of the *Pati de Lletres* (the Arts Court) next to the *Paranimf*. Visitors first enter the reference room, which then leads to the four halls that run along the main façade of the building: the *Sala Aguiló* (which houses the Research Section), the *Sala Pifarrer*, the *Sala Torres Amat* and the *Sala de la*

Torre del Rellotge. Next to these halls are the *Sala de Grec* and *Sala d'Hebreu i Arameu*, which were reformed as part of a series of renovations. Finally, we come to the *Sala de Manuscrits*, which is connected on one side to the *Sala Torres Amat* and still conserves the original furniture designed by Elies Rogent, such as the grand cedar bookcases, which can also be found in other function rooms in the Historic Building.

The library has an outstanding digital collection with more than 10,000 journals and licensed databases



Modern collection

The modern collection specializes in language and literature. It is particularly notable for its Spanish literature and works on literary criticism and theory, classical Latin studies, medieval and Indo-European studies, Humanist studies, linguistics and languages in general. It also contains a valuable range of Catalan, Basque, Galician-Portuguese, Slavic, Provençal and Occitan, Greek, Byzantine and Semitic literature.

The collection holds approximately 270,000 volumes (the total for the whole University is more than one and a half million) and 1,700 printed periodicals (of the 37,000

owned by the University). It also has a sizeable digital collection that can be accessed from any of the university libraries and is made up of more than 10,000 journals and licensed databases.

Finally, there are several special collections particularly valued for their content or origin,

such as bequests from Bonner, Llull and Grewe (food and gastronomy), the Cirac, Pau Ginés and Millàs Vallicrosa libraries, and the *Col·lecció Universitària* (works published by the teaching staff). Many of these works were received as



donations from private libraries that have contributed to the expansion and the enrichment of the collection.

The library's neo-gothic courtyard

The collection is one of the largest and most valuable in Spain



Historical collection

The historical collection of the University of Barcelona Library, together with the National Library (Madrid), the Library of Catalonia and the Library of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, is one of the most valuable collections in the whole of Spain. As explained above, its origins lie in the laws governing the disentanglement of ecclesiastical property in 1820 and 1837, through which the collections of the various convents in Barcelona, rich in manuscripts, incunabula and prints from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, were acquired by the University and became part of a great Public Library.

• Manuscripts

The library has 2169 manuscripts, the oldest of which dates from the tenth century. The following are some of the most emblematic manuscripts of the Library collection: *Crònica de Jaume I* (1343), *Llibre dels àngels* by Francesc Eiximenis (1445), *Llibre apellat Consueta* (fifteenth century), *Opera* by Cicero (late fourteenth century), *Jardinet d'Orats* (1486), and various manuscripts by Ramon Llull.



• Incunabula

The collection holds 946 incunabula, a hundred of which cannot be found in any other national library in Spain and some of which are unique copies. Most of the collection was printed in Barcelona and the rest of Spain. The oldest piece in the collection is the first book to be printed in Italy (Cicero. *De oratore*. Subiaco: Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz, 30 September 1465).

General view of the *Sala Torres Amat*

Various pieces from the reserve collection have been exhibited internationally



• Prints (dating from the sixteenth century to 1820)

The Library has 150,000 prints, including a large number of examples of European printing, particularly Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, Flemish, German and Swiss. The collection of sermons (possibly the most extensive collection in Spain), the collection of journals from the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries and the collection of works on medicine and legal sciences are of particular merit.

• Engravings

The library houses more than 8000 engravings on separate plates, 5392 of which are copies donated in 1887 by the National Library of

Madrid, while the rest were obtained from the disentaileed convents. The collection contains xylographs, chalcographs and lithographs that represent the entire history of engraving from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

• Parchments

There are 890 parchments from various monasteries (Alguaire, Sant Benet de Bages and Sant Pere de Casserres) and different areas (principally from the Empordà region, Rousillon and the Vallès and Barcelonès regions).



Llibre d'hores. Fifteenth century. Ms. 1841

Sacra familia. Engraving by Luis Fernández Noseret following the original by Raphael. 1795

Crònica de Jaume I (1343). Ms. 1



The Library aims to meet the requirements of new learning and research environments



The Library as part of the CRAI

www.bib.ub.edu

The University's Central Library, in the Historic Building, contains the Arts and Reserve Collections and, together with the other 17 libraries at the UB, forms part of the Resource Centre for Learning and Research (CRAI). The CRAI was created at the beginning of 2004 to adapt the university libraries to the new European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). The CRAI brings together the work of the libraries and the other university services (technology, improvement and innovation in teaching, student information, etc.) under a single management model.

«M'exalta el nou i m'enamora el vell»*
Sol, i de dol (1997)
J. V. Foix

The Central Library in the Historic Building (and indeed all of the libraries at the University of Barcelona) embodies the sentiments of this great Catalan poet, since it has been able to introduce new technologies (evident



in the high degree of computerization, the extensive digital collection and the numerous web services offered) while maintaining a commitment to conserving its extensive historical collection.

**«I am exalted by the new and enamoured of the old».*

The journal archive viewed from the inner staircase of the *Paranimf*



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.



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8 am - 9 pm.

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