

Beyond Public Engagement

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*New Ways of Studying,
Managing and Using
University Collections*

Edited by

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and Sofia Talas

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INTRODUCTION

PEDRO RUIZ-CASTELL

Collections may serve different purposes and agendas. Shaped by local and global factors, collections embrace cultural values and represent beliefs and aspirations about the natural order and the place humans should occupy in such characterisations. In fact, any attempt to understand the institutionalisation of culture in modern societies must pay attention to how social and political history relates the history of the status and value of cultural objects. Collections are called on to play a crucial role as research objects for cultural history and as valuable resources for understanding the construction of traditions and identities. The historical specificities of the construction of collections—what was preserved, what objects were used to enlarge them, or how were they interpreted and displayed—are essential aspects that help us better appreciate the complex way in which communities perceive the nature of heritage and how it relates to the production of knowledge.¹

For centuries, academic collections played a central role in the production of knowledge, even constituting research lines by themselves. Such collections reflect the history of research and education. They have also been very useful tools for scholars in the development and establishment of new disciplines. Furthermore, universities that claim autonomy from political power turn academic collections into valuable sources for alternative accounts of the official narratives. Collections are particularly interesting for understanding how universities have shaped societies, and help us reflect on the complex relationships between heritage, knowledge, scholars, and the public.

In recent decades, European universities have become increasingly aware of the importance of their heritage. Despite the problems and vulnerability of universities, the growing interest in material culture and the history of collections has led these institutions to recognise the historical, artistic, and scientific significance of their collections, museums, archives, libraries, botanical gardens, astronomical observatories, and university buildings—together with other forms of tangible and intangible

heritage.² This has led to the rediscovery of many collections that have been studied, catalogued, reorganised and even opened to the public.

Public engagement activities have lately become a major concern for universities. Such initiatives include the many ways in which universities connect to the general public, bringing research into the public realm and sharing the work of academics with the public. Academic collections—often articulated around exhibitions and other cultural projects—have been mobilised as cultural mediators to legitimise such institutions and bring the results of their activities into the public sphere. Engaging with the public has become a permanent preoccupation for those working with academic collections. This is partly due to the fact that most universities would scarcely fund or invest in such collections if they were no longer used for research and teaching and did not attract visitors. Defining new users and new ways of increasing access to these collections is decisive. But in order to achieve such goals, attention must also be paid to other aspects, including the rediscovery and reorganisation of academic collections, and the improvement of available resources.

This volume, titled *Beyond Public Engagement: New Ways of Studying, Managing and Using University Collections*, discusses some of the problems, challenges, and opportunities of academic heritage, beyond the mere concern for engaging with the public. It is a peer-reviewed selection of articles based on the papers presented at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the European Academic Heritage Network Universeum. This European network, established in the late 1990s, is concerned with academic heritage in its broad sense, aiming at the preservation, study, access and promotion of university collections and heritage.

The meeting was held in Valencia (Spain) on 6–8 June 2013, at the López Piñero Institute for the History of Science and Medicine, a research centre for historical and social studies of science, technology and medicine, that is managed by the Spanish National Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) and the University of Valencia. This institution has been involved for decades in the preservation and study of the material culture of science. In fact, it holds an important collection of scientific and medical instruments that has been used mainly for teaching, but also for research.³ Furthermore, the recent move of the Institute to a new building in the city centre meant an opportunity to establish in 2012 a permanent exhibition open to the general public that promotes and popularises both scientific heritage and the history of science.⁴

This book is structured in three parts. Each is introduced by a text in which the different contributions are presented and contextualised. The

first part is dedicated to the rediscovery of academic collections. Universities have recently shown an increasing interest in opening and securing public access to their heritage. This has led to revisiting and reorganising several academic collections and museums. No doubt, this stage is crucial for universities aiming at guaranteeing long-term sustainability and social visibility, as well as for developing successful strategies in terms of public engagement.

The second part focuses on how could such strategies can be redefined and how to maximise existing resources. Contributors suggest that innovative synergies should be established or strengthened between academic policy makers and administrators, researchers, students, and external partners. The different ways in which these actors may be involved could lead to new exciting and helpful strategies. If heritage is expected to play an important role for universities not only in terms of teaching and research, but also of public engagement, then new policies must be developed regarding the management and use of collections for research and education.

This is closely related to the third part of the book, devoted to exploring new approaches and uses for academic collections. Here it is shown how, despite the difficulties of some academics in dealing with collections, university heritage may play a central role in building and legitimating new collective identities. Such constructions may be of great interest to new users due the potential impact from a social, cultural, and economic point of view.

In summary, the creation, promotion, and dissemination of knowledge in the arts, sciences, and humanities are the ultimate goals of universities. University heritage—in all its forms—exists to be accessible to diverse audiences both at local level and to the broader scientific community and general public. However, the complexity of university heritage encompasses a diversity of issues that rest beyond the public sphere. Twenty years ago, when the university heritage movement began, there was a sense of crisis, as many collections were abandoned and at risk. What are the main concerns today? Does that sense of crisis still persist? What are the issues that should be addressed in a Europe that is experiencing major social, political, and cultural debates and in a university that is also changing? This book helps to identify more precisely the nature and specificity of these issues and concerns.

Notes

¹ Soraya Boudia, Anne Rasmussen, and Sébastien Soubiran (dirs.), *Patrimoine et communautés savants* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

² Sofia Talas and Marta C. Lourenço (eds.) *Arranging and Rearranging: Planning University Heritage for the Future* (Padova: Padova University Press, 2012).

³ See: Rosa Ballester, Francesc Bujosa and Guillermo Olagüe, *Colección historicomédica de la Facultat de Medicina de Valencia* (Valencia: Cátedra e Instituto de Historia de la Medicina, 1976); José María López Piñero, Francesc Bujosa Homar and Joan Micó Navarro, *Guía de la exposición historicomédica* (Valencia: Cultura Universitaria Popular, 1980); José Ramón Bertomeu Sánchez and Antonio García Belmar, *Abriendo las cajas negras. La colección de instrumentos científicos de la Universidad de Valencia* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2002); María José Báguena and José Luis Fresquet (dirs.), *La agenda social de la historia de la medicina. El patrimonio histórico médico* (Valencia: Instituto de Historia de la Medicina y de la Ciencia López Piñero, 2011).

⁴ Pedro Ruiz-Castell, “La collection scientifico-médicale de l’Université de Valence: réflexions sur la construction de la connaissance scientifique”, *THEMA. La revue du Musée de la civilisation* 1 (2014): 165-174.

PART I

REDISCOVERING COLLECTIONS

REDISCOVERING COLLECTIONS

MARTA C. LOURENÇO

The diversity of collections, museums, and heritage in European universities is overwhelming. The university is a “natural generator” of collections and objects like no other institution in contemporary society. Universities have done so for centuries and continue to do so. Mirroring research and teaching in almost every area of knowledge, university heritage comes in many shapes. It may include museums, scientific collections (natural history collections, herbaria, botanical gardens, DNA and tissue collections, collections of scientific and medical equipment), or art collections, buildings (monuments, but also laboratories and observatories), or archives and libraries, as well as memorabilia and intangible examples of heritage (academic and student rituals, traditions, and songs).

This heritage has been shaped by global developments in research and teaching, which partly explains the “homogeneous universality” of university collections and museums across Europe. Often, European university collections in a given field—say herbaria or plaster casts—give the impression of being a “single” distributed collection from Dublin to Tartu and Jyväskylä to Palermo. At the same time, and perhaps most importantly, local factors—such as national and institutional policies, individual research and teaching interests, geography, social and development aspects, and contingencies—determine collection and museum development in each university, rendering it unique among equals.

Rafael Gil Salinas’ “Collecting Knowledge: The Heritage of the University of Valencia”, in this volume, presents an example of this articulation between global and local. Created in 1499, the University of Valencia is one of the oldest universities in Spain. Its scientific and artistic heritage includes monuments of national significance, scientific collections, art collections, and magnificent books, engravings and documents. Salinas explains how these buildings and collections mirror regional and national political contexts throughout Spanish history, as well as the interests, relations, and practices of individual researchers and

professors. The example he uses as a point of departure—the two Goya paintings donated in 1924 to the university by professor of cosmography Ignacio Tarazona Blanch—demonstrates the complex and transversal nature of these interests and relations.

In an ideal world, European university heritage would be interpreted and accessible (both online and physically) to the scientific community and the public. Public visitors would harmoniously co-exist with students, researchers and professors, making the museums, collections, and heritage useful tools for research and teaching, as well as meaningful instruments for public understanding of science, nature, and knowledge, and powerful vehicles for projecting the university into contemporary society. In an ideal world, there would be dedicated funding and resources for museums, collections, and heritage, as well as highly trained professionals. University museums would be highly experimental, avant-garde, and a reference for other museums. In an ideal world, heritage would be key to the university strategy and the university would be key to the heritage strategy.

In Europe, we are far from this ideal world and many challenges lay ahead for university museums, collections, and heritage. The stability (read sustainability) necessary to maximise relevance for the three missions—research, teaching and public access—is probably the most difficult objective. Stability is achieved with political will and informed management.

This is a new challenge. In the past, university museums and collections followed the natural flow of research and teaching. The term “management”, presently ubiquitous in European universities, was not applied and made no sense. Today, many collections are outside “their” natural flow of teaching and research. Other collections have found new research and teaching purposes, often outside their departments. Open and public access is a crucial value in contemporary universities, even for collections that raise ethical issues (e.g. human remains and pathology collections) and conservation issues (e.g. herbaria and drawings). Consequently, universities are asking questions that have not been previously asked: Is it better to concentrate departmental collections in a single museum or leave them in their departments? Should dispersed museums and collections be managed under a single unit or network? Should this unit also include libraries and archives? And who should be responsible for management—the rector, the dean, or the head of department? Should it be managed by an external organisation—for example a foundation or association?

An integrated network or system of museums, collections, and heritage has multiple mutual benefits, but reorganising collections and museums involves time, resources, and risks. Decisions should not be top-down, made in haste, or based on limited and contingent information. Many universities across Europe are surveying their museums, collections, and heritage before contemplating, let alone planning, future strategy and organisational options—although there are no clear-cut answers and each university configures a different case.

Malin Liedberg and Ola Lundin, from the University of Uppsala, Sweden, provide a survey example in their chapter “Through the Ocular: Rediscovering a Collection of Historical Instruments at Uppsala University’s Department of Physics and Astronomy”. The University of Uppsala has been conducting a systematic and transversal survey of its collections and heritage for some years. It has been coordinated by the Gustavianum Museum and covers variables such as location, staff, conservation state, relevance, and use. Students often do the survey’s fieldwork and initiate object documentation, including photography. Apart from the description of methods and results and the examination of institutional and individual obstacles, Liedberg and Lundin highlight the unexpected results surveys may have, in their case the “rediscovery” of a collection of scientific instruments at the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Surveys involving multiple universities or even all the universities of a given country have also been made in Europe over the past decade. Naturally, more time-consuming (the UK university museums and collections survey took 14 years), national surveys are equally important as they reveal dimensions that are capable of enacting strategic change at broader and more significant political and social levels. For example, the survey of German university museums and collections, coordinated by Cornelia Weber (University of Humboldt Berlin) played a role in their subsequent recognition as research infrastructures by the German Research Council in 2011. National surveys may also result in new levels of organisation for university museums and collections, for example national and regional networks and systems. In recent years, national networks have been created in Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, and Poland.

In the chapter “University museums and collections in Spain: Current situation and future challenges”, María Teresa Marín Torres uses a national study conducted in 2004 by researchers from the University of Murcia as a starting point to examine the current situation of university museums in Spain—particularly art museums. In the past 10 years, awareness of the importance of university museums and collections has

been increasing in Spain. New high profile museums have been created, particularly university art museums. Perhaps the most important recent example of increased awareness is the *Salamanca Declaration on the Historical-Cultural Heritage of Spanish Universities* (2008), which brought ten universities together around their heritage. In addition, Torres explains the role played by recent Spanish legislative initiatives in providing stability to many university museums through the creation of internal policies and regulations.

In each university, country, and also across Europe, the promotion of university museums, collections, and heritage has scientific, institutional, cultural, and political dimensions. Increasing their long-term sustainability and social visibility beyond the university requires the involvement of multiple partners in the higher education and cultural sectors, as well as a motivated commitment from local and national governments.

COLLECTING KNOWLEDGE: THE HERITAGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VALENCIA

RAFAEL GIL SALINAS

Ignacio Tarazona Blanch, Professor of Cosmography and Physics of the Globe at the University of Valencia (Spain), bequeathed to the university on his death in 1924, among other things, two small pictures (31 x 44 cm) by the famous painter Francisco of Goya (1746-1828). Both oil on canvas works are today in the warehouse of the San Pio V Fine Arts Museum of Valencia. They were painted in 1780 and they represent two scenes of children playing: *The Seesaw* and *The Step* or *The Dodging* (Fig. 1-1).¹

This donation is interesting for various reasons. Firstly, because the formula bequeathed has been traditionally very popular in all the collections of the University of Valencia. Secondly, it expresses the deep-rooted civic sense of Professor Tarazona, through the generosity of transforming something private into something public. Simultaneously, it also demonstrates a singular sense of belonging to the university community and his identification with the Valencia institution. Thirdly, because of the current intrinsic value of the pieces; both canvases were appraised in 2007 by Christie's auction house for a sum of €4.5 million each. Consequently, they are undoubtedly among the most valuable assets that the University of Valencia currently possesses.² Louis Hourticq stated: "nothing exalts the thought as a beautiful collection of paintings. It evokes the history of a family, reveals the fortune and the tastes of a man, and recalls the life of a nation".³ The history, fortune, tastes, and the essence of life itself are elements that are reflected in the university's heritage.

Historical buildings with artistic and scientific significance

Naturally, the University of Valencia has more than just two pictures by Goya. Its 514 years of history has produced an important heritage. The University of Valencia has three large campuses: Blasco Ibáñez (humanities

and health sciences); Tarongers (social sciences); and Burjassot (sciences and research institutes); the latter in the suburbs of Valencia. The three campuses are a consequence of higher education growth since the 1960s. Today, the university has more than 50,000 students and is the largest in the region of Valencia as well as one of the oldest in Spain.

Throughout its history, the university, in the same way as other old Spanish universities, has been generating and accumulating an extensive cultural heritage. Its presentation in such a short text is a challenge and should be complemented and clarified by recent publications produced by the university.⁴

In terms of architectural and historical heritage, and leaving aside the early twentieth century buildings from the Blasco Ibáñez campus—e.g. the Faculties of Medicine and Science (the current headquarters of the principal); the 1950s buildings of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, and the Faculty of Law (listed as buildings of cultural interest). At the forefront of importance and significance is the building of La Nau—the headquarters of the university since its foundation in the late fifteenth century. The Botanical Garden, home to collections of living plants, herbaria, seeds and including a specialised library, was established in 1802 and restored in 2000. Two eighteenth-century palaces, restored and refurbished for different purposes in recent years, are also worth mentioning: the Rector Peset Hall of Residence (1997) and the Lopez Piñero Institute of History of Medicine and Science (2007).

The La Nau building was declared Historical and Artistic National Monument in 1981. It is undoubtedly the principal cultural and historical reference of the University of Valencia, both in terms of architecture and content (Fig. 1-2). This exceptional building is located in the centre of Valencia. It represents the essence and bastion of the University and hosts part of its most important collections.

The university has sought to preserve La Nau and turn it into the institution's main cultural reference. This is why the Historic Library coexists with the former Rectoría, the Lecture Theatre, the Assembly Hall, the Matilde Salvador Hall, the Chapel, the five exhibition rooms, lecture rooms, and management offices. Successive restorations—especially following damage due to diverse historical events and misfortunes (such as bombardments in 1812, fires in 1932, floods in 1957, and various unfortunate interventions or economic penuries)—have not prevented the development of La Nau's content and legacy.

Since it recovered its independence in 1985, the university has been increasing its commitment to the management, conservation, and promotion of its cultural heritage, as later stated in Article 12 of the

university regulations (2004). In 1987, the University Academic Theatre was restored; in 1991 the Sapiencia Chapel was also restored. However, it was the commemorations of the fifth centenary of the University, between 1999 and 2002, that established La Nau as the cultural centre and principal axis of the university's heritage.

One of the university's original buildings (known as the "Estudi General") was completely rehabilitated between 1997 and 1999. It was a bold and sometimes excessive project that aimed at effectiveness and versatility, and the building now hosts several cultural functions, as well as support offices and services. When the noble spaces of the building were liberated, several new spaces were endowed: including areas for temporary exhibitions; a theatre area; the Chapel; dependences of the principal's office and Historical Library; improvements in the Assembly Hall and the Lecture Theatre; and a large new reading room that guarantees the presence of students and so reinforces the purpose of the building. A shop and a cafeteria were also added. A cultural point of reference was therefore established in the centre of Valencia, combined with a focal point for the university's identity. La Nau is a building entirely managed by the Vice-Rector for Culture and includes special facilities for storing and conserving collections.

The eighteenth century Cerveró Palace was acquired by the University and restored. It opened in December 2007 to shelter the Lopez Piñero Institute of History of Science and Documentation. The study, cataloguing, conservation, and diffusion of the heritage and history of science and medicine are among the aims of the institute. A collection of scientific instruments and a collection of medical artefacts are at the core of the Museum of History of Medicine and Science, which forms part of the institute.

Study, access, promotion and preservation

One of the principal cultural concerns of the University of Valencia is the study, cataloguing, and dissemination of its collections. For these purposes, the Thesaurus Project was created in 1997 to further previous studies of the university's heritage collections. The project paved the way for research that resulted in multiple publications, exhibitions, and catalogues, produced by the university and in partnership with external organisations. These resources can be accessed online.⁵ Another important aim of the university is to promote donations. An outstanding example of the University of Valencia's commitment to culture is its permanent programme of travelling exhibitions, developed and produced by the

university and displayed at the university and other locations.

Simultaneously, the university is strongly committed to the conservation of its cultural heritage. Following an agreement with the Valencia Institute of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, various elements were restored, especially those buildings most needing attention. At the same time, conservation projects were carried out to preserve and consolidate university collections. In addition, a workshop for paper conservation and restoration was created in La Nau by prestigious specialists. Its aim is to monitor book collections from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in terms of environmental conditions (humidity and temperature) and pests, as well as to restore front pages, inside front pages and the bindings of these books, which have extraordinary historical and literary value.

University collections

Systematic collecting is a recent phenomenon. It was in the eighteenth century that collections began to be used as a laboratory and instrument of knowledge. Various pieces of differing sizes and values were collected as products of experience for future study or use. In numerous cases, the collection is a corpus of great documentary and aesthetic value.⁶

Collecting has been identified as the act of assembling objects that excite us, that is to say, as a love for certain objects. This normally results from the role objects play in our daily life and the emotions and pleasures we derive from their possession, as with other human passions. Objects can be used or possessed. But in a collection, no objects are equivalent. Nevertheless, for the collector, a single object is never enough and a succession of objects is sought; the process is simultaneously satisfactory and frustrating, as passion decreases from the moment objects are obtained.

To collect means to select, possess, and have different objects, material things, ideas, or experiences that contribute to form an identity—a collection. The concept of collection assumes that integrity and totality are more important than the sum of all the different parts.⁷ In collecting, as in other areas of life, some fanatical attitudes have also been appreciated. Objects are adored for their singularity, beauty, or differences—and the possession of objects often causes pleasure. Collections speak about their collectors—their impulses, interests and feelings. Objects in a collection mirror the thoughts and personality of the person behind it.⁸

The heritage collections at the University of Valencia are diverse in typology and content. Archaeological artefacts, numismatics, carved

stones, codices with miniatures, *incunabula*, maps, engravings, posters, craftsmanship in precious metals, historical furniture, sculptures, portraits, scientific and medical instruments, geological specimens, paleontological and botanical collections, historical photography, and contemporary art are all included in the University of Valencia's collections.⁹

Apart from a few exceptions, these collections have their origin in teaching and research activities and have come to the university from donations. These collections are on display at the historical building of La Nau or in other areas of the university. Some collections can be visited while others are in restricted areas.

The university has a large gallery of portraits of rectors and Valencian dignitaries, whose origins date back to the seventeenth century and continue to present day. The university also has an important contemporary art collection. Its creation goes back to 1985 and resulted from exhibitions, donations, and acquisitions. The most important donation occurred in 1999 when businessman and collector Jesus Martínez Guerricabeitia and his wife Carmen García Merchante donated their private collection to the university. The donation instantly made the university the owner of "one of the most important contemporary art collections in any public university in Spain".¹⁰ It included more than 100 paintings and drawings from almost 60 artists, as well as 275 graphic works (silk-screen printings, engravings, and lithographs) made by 140 artists. Imagination and realism are the main stylistic features of the donated works, with a strong theme of critical art with a clear ideology that condemns the surrounding reality. The donation by Martínez Guerricabeitia has a sole conductive thread: a chronicle of social commitment. We are speaking about a monographic collection of unique characteristics that stands out from other Spanish private collections.

The university accepted a donation of the collection of artist José Manaut in 2002, formed of 70 drawings and 17 oils, many made during his time in prison. The historical photography collection contains hundreds of lantern plates, portraits, and portrayed events, as well as academic photographs. In terms of staff, the care of cultural heritage and exhibition development at the University of Valencia is managed by a heritage curator,¹¹ a project technician, a heritage manager, a senior heritage technician, and a technician for the assembly of exhibitions. As well as an extensive team of volunteers, various support units also help the department.

The museum

Curiously, both of the university collections that could be exhibited in museums are not in La Nau building itself.

The Geology Museum was created in 1996 in the Department of Geology of the Faculty of Biological Sciences. Its oldest collections survived the 1932 fire in the former Museum of Natural History, which was then located in La Nau. Only birds and botanical specimens could be saved from the fire and subsequent destruction. Donations were received from individuals and museums in Paris, London, Geneva and Madrid, but the museum was not reconstructed. Its specimens were distributed to the Museum of Geology and Paleontology, the Zoology Department of the same faculty, and the Valencia Museum of Natural Sciences, which belongs to the municipality. The Geology Museum has a teaching and research role, mainly targeting school groups. It has an academic director and a curator, as well as collaborators and volunteers.

Another case is astronomy; a science studied by the university with notable teachers such as Jerónimo Muñoz (in the sixteenth century), Vicente Blasco (who also governed the university at the end of the eighteenth century), and the already mentioned Ignacio Tarazona at the beginning of the twentieth century. The construction of the Astronomical Observatory at La Nau dates back to 1790. Its history was darkened by events such as the French bombardment of the city by General Suchet in 1812, and the above mentioned 1932 fire. In 1946 the Observatory was installed in the building of the Faculty of Sciences (currently the building of the university presidency). In 2000 it was attached to the new university science campus and consolidated in 2007 as a museum collection.

The Astronomical Observatory collection includes about 30 historical instruments (including a 1909 Grubb telescope) and is located at its former premises in research institutes at the Burjassot-Paterna campus, in the office of its former director Ignacio Tarazona, and in the above mentioned Valencia Museum of Natural Sciences. The majority of the instruments are from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Although now obsolete for teaching and research, they retain considerable historical value and are in good condition. The collection can be accessed online and a documentary about its history was recently produced.¹² The Astronomical Observatory has a director and a considerable group of lecturers, researchers, and technical personnel; it does not have any curatorial and conservation staff.

Libraries

The Historical Library has the most important collections of *manuscripts* of the University of Valencia.¹³ The library contains almost 1000 volumes, mostly from discontinued convents and individual legacies, particularly those of Vicente Hernández Máñez, Francisco Borrull, Giner de Perellós, and Mariano Liñán. Outstanding are the volumes from the Hieronymus Monastery of San Miguel de los Reyes, founded in 1546 by Fernando de Aragón, Duke of Calabria, and his wife Germana de Foix; this monastery housed part of the very rich Neapolitan library initiated by Alfonso V of Aragón in the Neapolitan Court. The Duke's original library consisted of about 2500 volumes, 1000 of which he brought to Valencia and donated 250 to the university. This collection demonstrates the humanist dimension of the Neapolitan kings: and included works by classical authors, humanists bound to the court, religious books, Holy Bibles, and works in various romance languages. Most of the books are clear examples of the Renaissance codex: luxuriously bound vellum; humanistic writing; richly decorated with gold and Renaissance motifs (including *putti*, exotic animals, bianchi girari, medallions, and emblems of the Real Court of Naples). The majority still preserve their original bindings, mainly those in the Spanish Muslim style (Fig. 1-3). Another important group of manuscripts (from the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries) came from the Preacher's Convent. This group encompasses theology-teaching notes from Dominican convents in the Valencia province, autographic works by Dominicans residing in Valencia, reports of events with relation to the order, as well as sermons. The library also includes a small collection of Arab manuscripts from the legacy donated by Vicente Hernández Máñez. The manuscripts have a manual catalogue (organised by author and subject) and a printed catalogue by Marcelino Gutierrez del Caño (facsimile edition).

Apart from manuscripts, the Historical Library of the University of Valencia also has a collection of *incunabula* of great historical and material value. It results from the 1836 privatisation of monastic properties by Mendizábal, which discontinued religious orders. The Incunabula Collection includes about 350 volumes printed mainly in Italy, although there is also a smaller representation from France and Germany. Fifty-five volumes are from nine Spanish cities, including 31 volumes from Valencia; almost all of which are written in Valencian. These are unique or very rare books because very small editions were printed. They include *Obres e trobes en lahors de la Verge Maria* (1474), unique in the world and printed in one the first printing houses in Valencia, Lambert Palmart.

Other single-copy *incunabula* in the library collections include: *Homelia sobre lo psalm "De profundis"* (1490); by Fuster, also printed by Lambert Palmart; *Vida de la Verge Maria* (1494), by Pérez, printed in Valencia by Nicolau Spindeler (also printed for himself in 1499); *Omelia sobre lo psalm "Miserere mei Deus"*, by Vinyoles; as well as *Ethica ad Nicomachum*, printed in 1479 in Barcelona. A very rare copy and emblematic work, saved from the bonfire by Don Quixote is *Tirant lo Blanch* (1490), by Joanot Martorell from Nicolau Spindeler, of which only three copies are known in the world.

The promotion of the book and manuscript collection of the Historical Library has consisted in cataloguing, followed by a broad dissemination, and enabling easy access for researchers and general audiences. For this purpose, project *Somni* was created. *Somni* includes 35 mm microfilm of documents for preservation and access.¹⁴ The Historical Library also includes other collections of historical significance, such as 10,676 coins; 350 medals; engraved jewels; 93 cameos from Rome donated in 1844, as well as signatory rings, engravings and prints, archaeological artefacts, and cartographic materials. It also hosts a unique collection of 261 posters of the Republic and the Civil War from artists such as Josep Renau and Arturo Ballester.

Botanical garden

The Botanical Garden of the University of Valencia is similar to other sixteenth-century gardens created in Renaissance Europe. A botanical museum shows visitors the diversity of plants, their relationship with animals, their usefulness for people, and methods of cultivation.¹⁵

The garden has more than 4500 species arranged in 20 collections. The Botanical School, part of the Botanical Garden, occupies the largest area. The rest is descriptive and answers to three fundamental criteria: plants used by the human being; plants considered endangered; and plants from the same ecological environment. Most of the specimens are in the open air, although some are in greenhouses or shelters.

Conclusions

Due to the size of its legacy, the university can be said to have acquired Goldsmith's taste for antiquities: "I love everything that's old; old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine".¹⁶

The real essence lays between the old and antique; the university's heritage is by no means old, it is made up of a set of antiquities that speak

for themselves, their history, and their value acquired over the years. This cultural heritage is material evidence of the multiple dimensions of the past, as well as the history and social weight of the University of Valencia.

Another factor to bear in mind is the value of these objects. These values constantly change because of a number of cultural and social factors. The value of the objects is always difficult to estimate. Superficially, it may seem to us that an object has a relative value.¹⁷

Most of the university's collections are given the necessary resources for conservation, study, and diffusion. The university aims to enhance the value of its collections as a public service.

As universities are in a continuous change and higher education is largely regulated by European directives, the university's cultural heritage cannot remain separate from the European dimension. The concept of Europe goes beyond a common currency. To be European means sharing a common past and experiences and this is expressed in our habits, thoughts, and ideas.

From the perspective of university heritage, building Europe means putting the collections in perspective for the whole university community, and making the collections the cornerstone of university culture and its principal sign of identity.

It is therefore the responsibility of universities to establish the necessary links between institutions so that collections can be seen as a visible response to what society has invested in universities.

Notes

¹ Both works were studied by Rafael Gil, *El món de Goya i López en el Museu Sant Pius V* (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 1992), 66-69.

² Most of these ideas come from Rafael Gil, *Informe, estudio y valoración de las obras artísticas: “Juego de niños: El balancín” y “Juego de niños: El paso o El marro” de Francisco de Goya y Lucientes propiedad de la Fundación General de la Universitat de València en depòsit en el Museu de Belles Arts Sant Pius V de València* (Valencia, 2008) (unpublished).

³ Louis Hourticq, *L'amateur de peinture* (Paris: Floury, 1946), p. 87.

⁴ The main bibliographical references relative to the historical-medical collection are gathered in Rosa Ballester, Francesc Bujosa, and Guillermo Olagüe, *Colección histórico-médica de la Facultad de Medicina de Valencia* (Valencia: Cátedra e Instituto de Historia de la Medicina, 1976); José María López Piñero, Francesc Bujosa Homar and Joan Micó Navarro, *Guía de la exposición historicomédica* (Valencia: Cultura Universitaria Popular, 1980); José María López Piñero *et al.*, *Cajal y la medicina valenciana de su tiempo, 1883-1887. Guía de la exposición. 5-21 diciembre 1983* (Valencia: Cultura Universitaria Popular, 1983); José María López Piñero *et al.*, *La “Medicina de laborator” a València en la transició del segles XIX al XX. Guia de l'exposició* (Valencia: Cátedra de Historia de la Medicina, 1985); José María López Piñero *et al.*, *El cólera de 1885 en Valencia y la vacunación Ferrán. Guía de la exposición* (Valencia: Caja de Ahorros de Valencia, 1985); José María López Piero and Manuel Costa, *Las Plantas del mundo en la Historia. Ilustraciones botánicas de cinco siglos* (Valencia: Bancaja Obra Social, 1996); *La Imagen del cuerpo humano en la Medicina moderna (siglos XVI-XX)* (Valencia: Bancaja Obra Social, 1999); *Cinc segles i un dia* (València. Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2000); José L. Fresquet *et al.*, *Palau de Cerveró: Instituto de Historia de la Ciencia y Documentación López Piñero* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2007).

⁵ “Projecte Thesaurus”, <http://vrcultura.uv.es/cultura/multimedia/thesaurus/lanau-thesaurus.swf>. Accessed August 27, 2013.

⁶ Some of these ideas come from the catalogue of the exhibition *Collections d'Artistes. Avignon, Fondation Lambert, du 1er juillet au 30 octobre 2001* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2001), pp. 4-5.

⁷ This definition was made by Susan M. Pearce, “The urge to collect”, in Susan M. Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 157-159.

⁸ Jean Baudrillard, “The System of Collecting”, in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.), *The Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion, 1994), 7-24.

⁹ The heritage of the University of Valencia has been studied by Daniel Benito, *La Universitat de València y su patrimonio cultural* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2008); and *Los Tesoros de la Universitat de València* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 1999).

¹⁰ José Martín Martínez, “La donación Martínez Guerricabeitia”, in *Los Tesoros de la Universitat de València* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 1999), pp. 187-212.

¹¹ The current curator is a Professor in History of Art and has been serving for more than 30 years.

¹² See: “El museo de instrumentos antiguos del Observatorio”, http://observatori.valencia.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=124&Itemid=97&lang=va. Accessed August 27, 2013.

¹³ “Historical Library”, <http://www.uv.es/uvweb/servei-biblioteques-documentacio/en/biblioteca-historica/novetats-1285874781823.html>. Accessed 1 July, 2014.

¹⁴ The digital images were obtained from microfilm. In case of the *incunabulums* and the books between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the resolution of the images is: TIFF compression 4th fax group in black and white. All the images have a water mark (the shield of the University of Valencia) in the low right corner.

¹⁵ “Botanical Garden”, <http://www.jardibotanic.org/colvives.php>. Accessed August 27, 2013.

¹⁶ Mentioned in N. Hudson Moore, *The Collector's Manual* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1907).

¹⁷ The ideas on the notion of the value of the objects have been extracted of Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1992).

