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STANDARDISATION OF UNIVERSITY TRAINING

Catalan archivists have witnessed how in the last fifteen years the Association has striven continuously and constantly for training in archive work in order to put and end to a sad anomaly in recordkeeping in Catalonia and Spain: the lack of a specific university qualification. For a long time, teaching in recordkeeping has been on a supplementary basis, which has meant that over three hundred professionals in our country have been trained in recordkeeping in third-cycle studies. Luckily, it seems that this provisional period is coming to an end and, for the first time, the University has started to put an end to the paradox that this age-old profession is totally excluded from training plans in Catalan universities. Thus, in February this year, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, in conjunction with the Association of Archivists of Catalonia, established the Graduate School of Archival and Records Management (ESAGED) and the parallel second-cycle Degree in Archival and Records Management qualification.

Thus, the new school (attached to the Autonomous University of Barcelona Foundation) was founded to become a training, research and consultancy centre designed for students who wish to acquire knowledge of recordkeeping, for sector professionals who require ongoing training to deal with constant developments in IT, and also for companies and organisations that require greater efficiency in managing corporate information.

The School's first initiative has been to promote a two-year Degree course that will start in September this year (2002). This qualification provides 120 credits for a combination of theoretical and practical subjects, in addition to end-of-course, hands-on experience. Students are guaranteed experience in public and private archives. There will be sixty places on the first course, which may be taken by students who have any first-cycle qualification or any university diploma or degree, but preferably in history, humanities, librarianship, documentation, public administration and management, law, computer studies, systems engineering, journalism and audio-visual communication. The School is based on the UAB Campus, in the Blanc building in the university grounds.

This UAB qualification is intended both to provide plural, interdisciplinary training that befits the current challenges of the profession, and also to respond to the postulates of the latest recordkeeping theory and the proposal for a degree in recordkeeping presented by the Co-ordinator of Professional Associations of Spain. This is an innovative initiative in Spain that has the support and the collaboration of the companies Baratz S.A., Tecnodoc S.A. and *El Periódico de Catalunya*. Negotiations to win the support of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage of the Government of Catalonia, Barcelona Provincial Council, the Public Administration School of Catalonia and the Subdirector General of State Archives have also reached an advanced stage. Those people who would like further information on the school's objectives and the content of the new qualification may visit the website www.escolaarxivistica.com or send an e-mail to: esaged@uab.es.

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EL BORN: LET THE STONES GROW

On 13 April 2002, the president of the AAC published an article in the newspaper *La Vanguardia* (*Vivir en Barcelona* - Living in Barcelona) that was entitled *El Born: no dividir la cultura* (El Born: not dividing culture). In the article, he expressed the Governing Board's position on the controversial matter of accommodating the future provincial library in the former market of the El Born district.

In short, the article gave full backing to the construction of the library on the provision that the archaeological site is fully conserved. It did not seem logical that strict economic hardship should mean having to sacrifice one or the other or to have them both but in devalued form.

On 30 April, eight professional associations involved in the management of cultural heritage, including the AAC (twenty organisations subsequently subscribed), signed and issued a manifesto entitled *Volem els llibres i volem les pedres: Barcelona es mereix dos grans equipaments culturals* (We want books and we want stones: Barcelona deserves two large cultural facilities), which demanded "a modern, cutting edge museum project", the comprehensive conservation of structures and respect for the building designed by the architect Fontseré. Meanwhile, it proposed building a library in another building in the city.

On 12 May, the associations that had signed the manifesto, together with the Official Association of Librarians–Documentalists of Catalonia, issued a new communication in which they requested Barcelona City Council and the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia to examine the new preliminary plan to assess compatibility between the library and the archaeological site. The Barcelona City Council has recently received a committee from the different associations and bodies and has detailed the preliminary plan to them. The Department of Culture has still not responded (as of the first week in June) to the request.

It does not seem that the new proposal will reconcile what all the associations connected with the management of cultural heritage have been asking for from the start: for both the library and the conservation of the archaeological site, in conjunction with a project that turns them into a museum and breathes fresh life into them.

It would not be very reasonable to destroy an important part of our archaeological heritage (particularly when practically everyone agrees on its great scientific and symbolic importance) to prevent the short-term loss of a library for which there has been so much demand for so long.

How is it that cities such as Valencia, Vitoria, Salamanca, Alicante, San Sebastián, not to mention Bilbao and Madrid, can perform large-scale cultural projects with extremely high budgets, while Barcelona, the capital of powerful Catalonia, cannot even tackle and take on board two projects that will undoubtedly decisively contribute to the cultural and social transformation of Barcelona and Catalonia.

Politicians from the different authorities ought to listen to what is being demanded by most of the country's associations and organisations and, before it is too late, find a new site for a library that is needed urgently.