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Madrid to Malmo, Thames to Tiber and Seine to Spree: being, The Letters of Two West European Studies Bibliographers

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Centre national de la recherche scientifique (France). Recherche coopérative sur programme 206. Répertoire des visites pastorales de la France. Paris, CNRS. 1977- To be completed in six volumes of about U.S. \$40 each.

This is the culmination of a project begun in 1969 under the inspiration of Gabriel Le Bras to catalogue the records of pastoral visitations of French ecclesiastical officials. Six volumes will appear, four for the period before 1790, two for the period thereafter. Of these, four have already been printed, including both of the post-1790 volumes. The work is a scholarly resource of the first rank. The introductory essays are succinct and clear. The material is arranged alphabetically by ecclesiastical province, then chronologically by the tenure of successive bishops, thereupon by the year of the visitation. Each separate entry shows the inclusive dates of coverage, the name of the visitor, the places visited, the nature of the record, the precise designation of the document assigned by the archive where it is found, and, where it exists, a bibliography. Next comes a series of numbers indicative of the subject coverage of the document. These numbers correspond to an elaborate decimal system from 010 to 950 corresponding to nine general subject areas subdivided by tens and digits. The user can recognize at a glance whether a specific record of visitation treats of a particular subject. For example, 462 refers to libraries, 420 to minor clergy, 132 to population growth. A separate subject key accompanies each volume for ease of use. This is an essential research tool for material which has received little use until now. A solid choice for major research collections.
(OCLC 4640652; LC 78-387195)

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MADRID TO MALMO, THAMES TO TIBER AND SEINE TO SPREE: being, THE LETTERS OF TWO WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES BIBLIOGRAPHERS

The WESS Newsletter (WN) recently asked Eva Kronik (EK), European Studies Librarian, Cornell University Libraries, Ithaca, New York, and Richard D. Hacken (RH), European Foreign Language and Area Studies Bibliographer, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah a number of questions about their positions, their work, their education, and their institutions and clientele. Letters flew between California, Utah, and New York State, and what follows, though not (alas) comparable to La Nouvelle Héloïse or Les Liaisons dangereuses, is a slightly abridged and edited transcription of these exchanges which we hope the readers of the Newsletter will find interesting.

WN: To begin with, could you each say something about the type of institution you work in?

* RH: I work at the research library of a large private university (approximately 26,000 students). I am expected to serve both the interdisciplinary program of European Studies on campus as well as individual disciplines, to the extent their teaching and research touch on the languages and areas of Western Europe. Thus, for example, all of the French and Italian language and literature department, but only the European faculty members of the history department fall into my area. I work in the general library collection, which contains approximately 2 million volumes.

EK: I might say at the start that we already differ in the fact that you have a well defined job description, while in my case nothing written existed. When I came up for promotion to Librarian, I was asked by the promotion board to create one! So I dreamed up a paragraph which I will enclose. [WN note: see end of article] I also work at the main research library of a large university. Cornell is unique in that one campus includes both a private, or endowed, division, and a statutory one. The College of Arts & Science, which harbors the departments that I serve, is part of the private sector. Cornell has 16,000 students, of which 13,000 are undergraduates and 3,000 graduates. The university offers the Ph.D. in a large number of fields but does not as a rule like to grant Master's degrees, except in rare cases. There are 17 sizeable branch (or subject) libraries in which the librarians in charge are responsible for selection (examples: the fine arts library, the music library, engineering, physical sciences, the library for the College of Agriculture, etc.). I work in the John M. Olin Library, the main research library, with about 2.5 million books. The library system as a whole has approximately 4.25 million.

WN: Could you talk a little about your job titles and the specific responsibilities that come with them? Have your institutions in essence "carved up the world" for you?

RH: My formal job description calls me a "European Foreign Language and Area Studies Bibliographer" which I usually abbreviate as "European Studies Bibliographer." This differs from a "Humanities Bibliographer" and a "Social Sciences Bibliographer" in that it includes both humanities and social sciences, though limited to the countries of the area I work with. Again, here I think we differ, in that my grand emphasis is on the German-language area (due to local needs), Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France and Italy. The Latin American Studies Bibliographer picks up the responsibility for the Iberian Peninsula. Another bibliographer covers Eastern Europe. Britain is divided up among subject bibliographers (history, language and literature, etc.). I suppose this must vary from institution to institution as needs dictate.

EK: Although I am known as the European Studies Librarian or European Studies Bibliographer, the curriculum does not have European area studies as such. There is a Slavic Studies program, a Latin American studies program, an East Asian program and several others. So I am really representing an undefined group with no clearly recognizable identity. I am responsible for selection in the languages, literatures, and history of Western Europe (including Greece) but not Great Britain. So I try to keep in touch with the Modern Languages Department, the Europeanists among the historians, and the Romance Studies Department, as well as the German Department. Cornell divided its languages from the literatures shortly after the war, so that the Department of Modern Languages includes the languages I cover (German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages, which are not often taught), but the accompanying literatures are across the quadrangle, in another building, in the shapes of the German Literature Department and the Romance Studies Department. This arrangement has its pros and cons. Our Social Sciences Librarian is responsible for the social sciences and government documents of the United States and Western Europe, but because of marginal funding she does not buy much material either covering Western Europe in English or material in the vernacular. So I often find myself buying social science material in effect. We discuss these gray areas on an ad hoc basis. Government documents are also under the supervision, though mostly their ordering and cataloguing, of the Documents Librarian, who is in Technical Services. Our Humanities Librarian covers English and American language, literature, and history, along with selected subjects such as classics, anthropology, Africa and the Middle East. He acquired

these fields through the years for no clearly defined reason. So the difference between him and me is not easy to define either, except that I have a specific geographic limitation within the humanities.

WN: Have either of you ever worked in a more conventionally structured position, e.g. as "humanities bibliographers"? How do you find your more interdisciplinary titles and responsibilities affect the way you carry out your work?

RH: I have not been in a more traditionally labeled bibliography position before, yet if I were to compare, I would say my present position is much more interdisciplinary. It includes more subjects while at the same time limiting the geographic scope. One very pragmatic reason for this is to have someone who can read the languages involved. As far as public services go, we area studies bibliographers do not serve at the reference desk (as you know, we are even located on the technical services floor, physically removed from the stacks and the public). Yet we are available -- and advertised as such -- for specialized reference and research problems. I believe personally I couldn't do my job right... if I had a heavy reference desk responsibility. As it is, I feel that faculty liaison visits and other contacts are very valuable. I am not an enemy of the library user, however, and I would estimate that 30-40 legitimate research-oriented problems have been referred to me in the past year -- not just where is such-and-such a book, but bibliographic and research-oriented methodology. The majority of these were students. Also, I answer language and script questions on a weekly basis for cataloguers and other librarians. The European Studies Bibliographer is free of the obligation of supervising other employees, except for student employees who help in searching, etc. This is by design. Many library employees feel the need to "rise" to administrative positions in order to make a decent wage. The attempt with our area bibliographers is to make a "non-supervisory" position, which is however highly specialized, a position someone can stay with and give continuity of expertise, through a fair and representative living standard. This is partially the purpose of the just-completed job description questionnaires: to show the language and subject skills necessary in an area studies bibliographer.

EK: I have not been in a more traditionally labeled bibliography position either, and was not even aware of being non-traditional! We do not serve on the reference desk either, at least not as a matter of policy. The Social Sciences and Humanities Librarians spend 5 hours or so on the desk because they began their library careers there and wanted to keep it up. I would have no objection to doing the same, but anything like a half-time reference position would be incompatible, I think, with doing my job. The European Studies Librarian is called upon to help with specific reference, research or bibliographic problems, along with translating or interpreting for public or technical service personnel whenever needed. I supervise our one half-time assistant, who mainly sorts and shelves publishers' catalogues. Compare this with your secretarial help at BYU! We all supervise our student searchers.

WN: What sort of background and academic training do you have that supports your job? What do you see as the importance of a library degree to a person doing the type of work you're doing?

RH: My training is of the subject variety, and of extensive language study. I received the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in German language and literature, and have had experience teaching. But I have also studied French and Italian, and (though not in the classroom) Dutch and Scandinavian. When you put this together with studies in history, government, and economics of Europe, you can see I come dangerously close to being a "jack of all trades, master of none." And yet, for this type

of European Studies Bibliographer position, my particular combination seems to work. I have also had training in librarianship of a practical variety, having been a cataloguer of rare books in economic history (written in German, Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages) for a Title II-C project at the University of Kansas before I came to Brigham Young. I feel a little strange about not having the M.L.S., and yet I think I perform my particular function just fine without it. I would like to get it, but I find further study in subject and language areas of more practical, immediate use.

EK: My personal background is probably as much responsible for my present position as is my education. I was born in Germany, left it as a small child because of the rise of Hitlerism, went to France and Spain, and came to this country when I was nine. So I learned the languages as a child. In college I majored in Romance languages and received an M.A. in Spanish. I certainly agree with you that subject education is far more important in our respective positions than the M.L.S. I do have the M.L.S., but do not really feel that it helps me in my job as much as the language fluency, the courses I have taken, and my continuing exposure to courses in the areas, which I try to take whenever possible. Before coming to Collection Development, I was a cataloguer in the Serials Department, with special assignments in serials in Western European languages. The only teaching I have done is as a Master's candidate in Spanish at the University of Wisconsin.

WN: Do you have any other areas of responsibility, such as art and music originating from Western Europe?

RH: Again, local practice dictates the way my responsibilities have evolved, and yet I think certain general laws can be seen. For example, art and music are almost by definition "Western" art and music in most cases. Thus, art and music do not fall under my watchful eye, but are controlled by separate bibliographers. I am responsible for the collection of foreign documents from my area. Though I think of myself somewhat as a "general" resource person (within certain countries of Europe), I have subject expertise in language and literature and certain (limited) aspects of the social sciences.

EK: As I mentioned earlier, I am not responsible for selection in Western European art, music, etc., since these are the provinces of the college and department libraries. I might backtrack a bit to our discussion of my job title and responsibilities. My job arose when our Assistant Director for Collection Development received a Mellon grant to study collection use and management. He took that opportunity to divest himself of many of his collection development duties and created the positions of Humanities Librarian, Social Sciences Librarian, and mine. At the same time, a conference room was remodeled to house us. Since the Assistant Director for Collection Development knew my interests and background, he designed the job more or less with me in mind, and if I were to leave, the dimensions of the position might well change again. I guess the words "flexible," "ad hoc," and "arbitrary" characterize a lot of our operations and are ingredients in my job!

(The letters were interrupted at this point by EK's vacation; when both principal correspondents were back at their typewriters, the WN asked them if points raised earlier in the exchange needed more expansion or had led them to further speculation.)

RH: I forgot to mention that, whereas Cornell has strong Ph.D. programs in many of the subjects you work with, BYU has cut back or altogether axed former doctoral programs -- in particular in the foreign languages and literatures -- and this has had an understandable dampening effect on our collecting needs. Another difference

I note here at BYU is an incredibly centralized library system: besides the totally autonomous Law Library, other colleges and departments maintain only minimal reference collections at their various academic sites. In contrast, Cornell has 17 branch libraries. Yet I don't believe that fact makes much of a difference between our duties, since in both our cases the subject areas of Western Europe are fairly well concentrated in the main library.

EK: Because of the strength and variety of our Ph.D. programs at Cornell, I do have to be watchful, especially in this financially more troubled stage, for requests of an overly specialized nature from the faculty. Most of them know that we can't be all things to all people, and resort to inter-library loan for some of their more esoteric requests. Of course, that is not a problem peculiar to my job.

RH: After looking at the job description you made up for yourself, I was amazed at how much it resembled mine in essence. All I would have to do is to delete Spain and Portugal, carve a bit off the budget, and your job description could be used to describe what I do as well. It does appear that you have a heavier accent on gifts and exchanges, while I have an overseer duty over Study Abroad branch libraries. Also of note is that BYU has a European Studies Area Program in the catalogue per se, while Cornell does not. It makes our faculty liaison different, but that's probably a minor consideration.

EK: One difference between our institutions and positions that we may not have commented on...is the librarian-faculty relationship. If I am not mistaken, BYU has a relatively formal library liaison arrangement in which a faculty member in each department is designated as representative to the library. I think that Howard Quackenbush has this function in Latin American area studies and Alan Keele for you. Here at Cornell such a system has been suggested at various times but never implemented due to some faculty resistance. The background for our present informality may be the existence for 25 years or so as combined Collection Development Librarian and Head of Technical Services of Felix Reichmann, the grand old Renaissance man of librarianship. Dr. Reichmann did most of the selection himself and was the person who built up the collection right after the war. Anyway, it is up to me to call, write and intercept the faculty on my own.

RH: I think we would both agree that the non-traditional type of position we hold involves cooperation and close work with the Social Science and Humanities Bibliographers in order to avoid overlap and gaps in collecting activities. It also involves a peer cooperation with other Area Studies bibliographers. The European Studies Librarian is unique in that so many languages are involved. Perhaps this is one reason (among others) that our position is so rare. A Latin American Studies librarian generally uses two or maybe three languages, an Asian Studies librarian three or four, but a European Studies librarian, in order to cover the ground (and the waters) from Madrid to Malmö, from the Thames to the Tiber, the Seine to the Spree, would need master of ten to fifteen languages. Obviously, this is not something either of us claims, but it is an interesting and compelling challenge that makes the job worthwhile, in my opinion.

EK: Yes, I agree that we are both involved in a good deal of discussion with our colleagues in Humanities and Social Sciences. An example is publications from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Are they African, or does the fact that they are in Portuguese determine who buys them? The same problem arises with political works from Western Europe. Are they the Social Science Librarian's or mine? We sometimes decide this by historical period.

RH: As a final note, isn't it interesting that both of our positions came about as a result of a collection management study? This was a Mellon grant project in

your case, an ARL Collection Analysis Project in ours. Thank heavens for studies that make legitimate recommendations and for those with enough pluck to carry out those recommendations. In my particular case, I may have come in on the coat tails of the Asian and Latin American Studies bibliographers, and on the strength of an unusual need for Germanic language expertise. Certainly, I wouldn't suggest to every library that they march out and hire a European Studies librarian. In many cases, the use of (more traditional) subject bibliographers may more than adequately fill the needs for collection development. This may as much depend on the language and subject training of the librarian involved as on the title of the position. And yet I can't help thinking that there may be other libraries where such a position, concentrating more on broad than on deep training, might be the answer to collecting gaps. An in-depth collection management study, such as both of our institutions have undergone, may be the only way to know for sure.

WN: Many thanks to both of you for you exchange of information and ideas. See you in Los Angeles in June -- or perhaps somewhere between Madrid and Malmö, the Thames and the Tiber...

PPS - EK's job description:

Selects material for purchase in the fields of Western European languages and history, in English as well as in the vernacular. Countries covered are Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Scandinavia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and modern Greece. Consults bibliographies, publishers' catalogues, professional journals, and other sources, and also maintains contacts with faculty members and graduate students in the relevant subject areas. Administers a budget of (.....), which includes appropriated funds and endowments and must be allocated among unit orders, serials, series and blanket orders. Is responsible for the hiring, training and supervision of the Department's support staff. Selects Western European material from gifts and exchanges received in the library and serves as liaison between Gifts & Exchange and Collection Development. Provides assistance with reference questions whenever needed and also helps with translations and correspondence whenever required anywhere in the library system.

RH's job description (excerpts):

(position purpose) ...includes 4 major areas of responsibility: collection development, public services, faculty liaison, and national professional activity. Collection development responsibilities include collection evaluation, materials selection, supervision of several blanket order programs, supervision of exchange programs, and development of collection priorities. Public service activities involve providing specialized reference service to students and faculty, consultation with library personnel, bibliography and library guide preparation, and lectures on library science. (people served) ...functions with library patrons and staff, plus acquisitions and information liaison with approximately 50 faculty members in the departments of Business Management, Comparative Literature, Economics, French, Geography, German (Dutch, Scandinavian), History, Humanities, International Relations, Italian, Linguistics, Political Science, Sociology, and Theatre and Cinematic Arts. (environment) The ARL Collection Analysis Project completed by the library in 1976 recommended the library adopt the use of area studies bibliographers. This agreed with a perceived need that could not be met by faculty help alone, as the various subject librarians throughout the library lacked the necessary language and/or subject area expertise. [...] Due to the traditional European orientation of many disciplines within the University, it is felt there will be a continuing long-term need for such an in-house consultant and collection specialist. (level of education, skill, or experience) The position requires above all language abilities with humanities and social sciences training for the

following countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, West Germany, East Germany, Austria, Italy, and modern Greece (not to mention several postage-stamp-size monarchies). [...] Because in many ways the bibliographer is supplanting or at least significantly supplementing the primary role of developing the collection previously fulfilled by the faculty, the bibliographer must be a true colleague of the teaching faculty to be effective. This includes having similar levels of training, abilities, and publication record. The incumbent has been both a University faculty member and a librarian. Bibliographic and research skills are also requisite.

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Copies of back issues of this Newsletter (Volumes I-VI:1; this includes the publication issued by the Western European Language Specialists discussion group under the title Western European Language Specialists Newsletter) may be obtained by writing to Mr. J. M. Lee, Headquarters Librarian, American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

The deadline for the submission of items to appear in the January 1984 issue of the Newsletter will be 1st November 1983.