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In reading the following, please bear in mind that the opinions expressed below are my personal opinions, undoubtedly and necessarily based upon only a partial knowledge of all the facts.

Branch Libraries in the PUL Before 2008

Over the last ten years or so the organizational place of the East Asian Library (EAL) within the overall Princeton University Library (PUL) has changed in various ways, for different reasons: sometimes practical ones, sometimes out of a desire to regularize all branch libraries, and during the 2008 crisis, also responding to organizational requirements put on the PUL as a whole by the university administration.

Princeton has a number of branch libraries, that is, libraries which serve a particular department or subject and which are housed in buildings where that department is located. The word is not used for separate collections housed in the building of the main library, Firestone. The existence of branch libraries of course already had as a goal superior and close "liaison" relationships of librarians with "their" faculty and students long before that term became a buzzword. Serving a specialized audience, most of these branch libraries were small, and were largely in the "sciences" in the broad sense (including engineering, psychology, mathematics etc.; but also governmental studies, art, and a few area studies.) In addition to the development of their own collections (like their colleagues in the main library), branch librarians were also responsible for the library as a physical space, and the concomitant public service issues (circulation etc.), often depending on the rules of the building in which they were located.

Organizationally, at Princeton most librarians in branch libraries reported to the Deputy University Librarian, and met each other in an organization called SpLibs, "Special Libraries" (which thus had nothing to do with Special Collections). Since almost all branch libraries served subjects in the sciences, and since also the opposite was true (most sciences had a branch library), SpLibs was almost equivalent to the "science libraries." But there were some exceptions: e.g., SpLibs also included organizationally the library connected to the Woodrow Wilson School for governmental studies. And, for our purposes, most importantly, the then two largest branch libraries, the East Asian Library and the Marquand Art Library, reported directly to the University Librarian.

The few locations within the main library dedicated to particular subjects were much more restricted in scope, and ranged from a large social science reference desk (with shelves of

relevant reference works), to subject-specific graduate seminar rooms, which might have some reference works and periodicals located in that room. The general collections in those subjects were still intershelved as part of the main collection; exceptions (most notably Classics, and in a later stage Near Eastern) were few. The librarians of such collections all were part of general Collection Development, and none had responsibility for physical issues or services such as Circulation or Security, which all had their own departments.

This was the situation until some fifteen years ago, and the situation I encountered in 1988 when starting as a Chinese "Bibliographer" (as the position was called then; that term has now been discontinued within the library).

The EAL Before 2008

The EAL was even more a self-contained unit than the other branch libraries: not only selection and reference, but everything regarding Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK), including ordering, receiving and physical processing, was done by employees within the physical EAL, which was directly and conveniently located above the East Asian Studies (EAS) Department. In addition, the EAL was one of the few branch libraries with its own ILL services (course reserves were more generally available at all branch libraries.) Only the final payment of invoices went through the general Acquisition department. On the other hand, while at that time, also the Near Eastern Collections were physically located within the EAL (a remnant of these two department originally having formed one Oriental Studies Department), the acquisition and processing of all Near Eastern material took place within the main library, and although the Bibliographer and his assistant physically worked within the EAL, they reported to the Collection Development Associate University Librarian.

Books in CJK in any subject were processed by and held within the EAL (or later, sent to storage through the EAL). And while a few CJK items might be found by exception or mistake in other collections, the only other collection purposely collecting books in CJK languages was the Marquand Art Library (this is still the case, although now also the Cotsen Children's Library might occasionally order new CJK items.) Their ordering was usually done by EAL staff, who also took care of their original cataloging, although over the years workflows have differed on how copy cataloging was handled.

Thus the EAL also was a limited processing center for the library as a whole. On the other hand, the acquisition and processing of Western language material, even if to be located in the EAL, was handled by main library staff. At Princeton, most Western language material was ordered through approval plans or selection by other subject specialists, thus, in principle, history books on East Asia were ordered by the history bibliographer. Only for language and linguistics an EAL librarian was the solitary selector, who had also funds to order any book needed for reserve or reference purposes within the EAL. In practice, the EAL librarians also collected works which did not easily fall in Western predetermined

disciplines, as well as items easily missed through mainstream channels because they were published by entities in East Asia or specialized European publishers. Overall, at that time, if ordered by the EAL, ordering and cataloging of Western language books would be done by employees in the main library, but those books would be shelved in the EAL (upon explicit faculty request, separately from the CJK books: especially undergraduate students were thought to become overwhelmed by the CJK books, and the Western language books would "disappear.") For later changes, see below.

Without having done any special research, I have heard of a few reasons for why Near Eastern and East Asian Studies were organizationally treated somewhat differently. The fact that the Head of the East Asian Library (then called the Curator) reported directly to the University Librarian was due to the fact that its long-term Curator since the 1950s, James Shih-kang T'ung, had also become an Deputy University Librarian in his long career; and while that was not true for his successors, the structure of reporting directly to the University Librarian remained the same, partly because the EAL (also a later term) was by far the largest branch library, partly because, one assumes, inertia. Also, frequent and direct East Asian Library faculty involvement in the building of the collections, both personally and financially, also assured that the EAL was treated as one of a kind. There was no such financial incentive or faculty involvement coming from the Near Eastern Department (their collection did not have to be built from scratch, but had already become established much earlier). I also have heard that a personnel conflict between the Near Eastern technical services staff and its bibliographer had resulted in the move of the Near Eastern staff to within the main library structure.

Comments on the Pre-2008 Structure: Advantages and Disadvantages

There are both advantages and disadvantages with the structure as outlined above; although I myself would maintain, that the way how actual *individuals* react to *individual issues* can be of much more importance than the organizational structure itself, provided that that structure is flexible. One advantage, and it is a huge one, is the close relationship the EAL and its librarians has with faculty and students, an advantage present, mutatis mutandis, with all branch librarians: as I mentioned above, it was liaising *avant la lettre*. But nothing prevented other librarians from having good relationships with their clientele too; it was just not a given. Another main advantage was that CJK acquisition and correspondence was done by individuals with the required language and cultural expertise, and could when necessary follow business practices in East Asia rather than unilaterally assuming everything would or should be like book acquisition in the US. (I still hear occasionally from time to time, from some staff in the financial department: "they have to follow our rules, if they want to do business with us"—while of course, *we* are the ones who wish to get the material, and individual book dealers in East Asia are perfectly entitled to forego our demand if we don't follow their rules.)

A tightly integrated branch library is also an advantage when undertaking special projects, such as publishing catalogs, or contributing to a department-initiated exhibition. This is much more easily done if all relevant individuals, including curators, bibliographers, catalogers, or other technical services staff, can be easily and quickly mobilized for a particular project, and no special permission from other supervisors needs to be sought.

Often I hear as a possible negative the lack of cooperation or even knowledge of other subject librarians elsewhere. That, I would not see as a structural issue. In Princeton, while there is a general reference department, it mainly services undergraduate students; but providing more specialist reference to students and faculty is part of the job of *any* subject librarian. Librarians in branch libraries have some advantage, since they physically are close to the department, they regularly participate in departmental activities, and faculty and students all know them, and have no difficulty finding them. Subject librarians in the main library have actually a slightly more difficult time to liaison with their departments, and to be found by those needing specific help; but also in practice that is not that much of an issue, and depends on the individual. While most of them rely less on walk-ins than is the case in branch libraries, that is because many of them serve much larger departments than the EAS (Economics, History, English). Cooperation between subject librarians is frequent and widespread: users with questions who might benefit to speak with several librarians (Japanese economics, Chinese politics) are routinely referred to all relevant subject librarians by whoever happens to be the first approached. I personally do not see any reason why there has to be an "international studies" group to benefit users with multidisciplinary questions, as is sometimes argued: yes, there are students who study Iran and China; but there are also students who should be talking to the Chinese and the Financial Data librarians, or the demography and Japanese librarians, are those are at least as frequent. The fact is, that such inter-subject-librarian cooperation should always take place, and should not have to depend on any organized structure: each librarian should be able to reach out to any of his or her colleagues, there should be no higher level through which such outreach is funneled. Yes, as elsewhere, there is a perception on behalf of librarians that students know less than they should, versus the perception of professors, that they are primarily responsible for teaching those skills. Thus there are occasionally discussions on how to improve reference (times, locations, venues, outreach, need), in which case it is general rather than subject reference which is the focus of discussion.

In Princeton, the same logic applies to acquisition of books with in-between or multiple topics: in my experience, since there is no particular fighting needed for funds (hurrah!), selectors feel free to forward suggestions to another selector, and I can't recall many cases, if any, where such a selector then said no. There are occasional meetings on such interdisciplinary subjects as archaeology, or environmental studies, to make sure all subject librarians are in sync; of course attendance is irrespective of any reporting structure.

Another non-issue is statistics. The library as a whole gathers and reports statistics with more or less accuracy. Because of CEAL, the EAL is the only one who gathers and reports its own statistics; and while there have been occasional problems to be worked out (such as ILL statistics; or circulation statistics by language, for the Korean Foundation), by now those parameters have been set, and queries have been written. Such statistics are rarely used internally, however. Changes in requests for statistics (as has happened for CEAL statistics) might occasionally be difficult to accommodate immediately. However, difficult or easy, I don't see any particular disadvantage or advantage to a particular structure, except for the fact that all such statistics occasionally involve comparing apples to oranges, since libraries are just different. But that is true of all ARL statistics too.

That said, different structures may make certain things easier than others. Having a separate unit, such as the EAL before 2008, makes internal workflows easier and more functional; but at the same time, to have a separate and rather independent structure, also results in the possibility of disconnections in both directions: if rather independent, are people at an EAL sufficiently enabled (or interested) to know what the university library as a whole is doing, and its leaders are thinking? And conversely, is there enough input returning into the main library and mainstream library functions to enable them to surmount an America-centric perspective? Also, even if there exists interconnections and (mutual) representations, do all staff members at both sides have equal access to the mutual beneficial exchange of knowledge?

In my experience, not all of these questions could be answered with a resounding yes (without asserting that another structure would be necessarily better—all structures carry their own risks.) I myself was encouraged from the very beginning to meet often and rather intensively with colleagues in the main library; the more so, since I was also responsible for reference regarding East Asia in Western languages. It helped that I am somewhat gregarious by nature. I also was soon appointed as the (branch library) "Head of Public Services," meaning in this case responsibility for the physical issues of the EAL, thus having to deal with yet another group of colleagues. However, since accordingly I was usually the one appointed as the "East Asian Library representative", my Japanese and Korean colleagues had many fewer opportunities, and one "representative" was normally deemed enough. This may be unavoidable; but I can only say that as the current Director of the library, I try to make sure that such representation is more equal, and that all EAL librarians need to be able to develop such connections.

Thus, individualities matter; but so also does flexibility of the rules. At some points in my 30-year career, things have been less flexible when situations were temporary, and this had a negative impact. At one time there were some tensions between supervisors and subject specialists within the main library, and reorganization took place. As a result, what had been more or less open meetings in which also branch librarians participated became more rigidly

structured around reporting structures; and those not reporting to a particular head of a department, were no longer allowed to be part of those hitherto monthly meetings. The restructuring involved the temporary appointment of the Head of the Art Library as the head also of the main library's Collection Development group, thus leaving the EAL, as the other large branch library not under SpLibs, even more isolated. Even after all issues were solved, those meetings were long to be reinstated: not many people like meetings; and since the majority of the librarians in the main library saw each other every day anyway in passing, why reinstate the meetings, and give reports to a group when everybody already knew about what was happening? Except, of course, that branch librarians did *not* know about many of them, and now lost an important communication channel.

Mutual connections are important in both ways. At Princeton, the EAL fortunately was regularly invited at usually an early stage, and on a high level, in all issues dealing with Integrated Library Systems and non-Roman scripts. In those issues, I sometimes was asked to represent Princeton also on the national level, which undoubtedly was beneficial for those systems too. Still, while the importance of non-Roman script issues was recognized at a high level, that was not necessarily true at lower levels: as most of us will have experienced, even giving detailed input, even writing report after report, does not necessarily mean that others actually understand, or even make the effort, to understand the technical issues. Many tend to see non-Roman script issues as an extra nice add-on, rather than something which needs to be dealt with from the very beginning if one ever is to get it right. (As an aside, for me personally, ILL programs have always been woefully inadequate to deal with anything non-English, forget about non-Roman scripts. I can only say that this is true despite the support I received locally and nationally to report the issues involved; always somewhere down the line someone did not pay attention or did not understand the issues, even after Unicode already decades ago made it relatively easy. But some willingness to understand the issues is needed…)

Notice however that here also individuals and their individual strengths and attitudes resulted in non-Roman script issues being taken seriously in Princeton; it was not dependent on an organizational structure: in pre-Unicode days, the Language Lab in Princeton relied upon me for all non-Roman scripts (no longer necessary—there is progress.) For the same reason, the fact that at Princeton the EAL does not have to defend the need for non-Roman scripts in library systems or elsewhere is partly, because our Head of Collection Development has an area studies background (South Asia), and our Head of Cataloging also (Near Eastern). Things might have been different if we did not have those individuals in these positions; or they might not have been different; after all, the past Head of Systems had no such background, yet was fully open to our input.

Some Changes Before 2008

A few relevant changes had taken place in the situation outlined above already before 2008. The pace problem was most urgent with the Western language books within the EAL. Intershelving with CJK books was tried by one Head of the EAL, but strongly opposed by faculty members, and needed to be undone. The next Head of EAL (now called Director) then decided to rationalize the division of Western books between the EAL and the main library; where before the location was basically decided by who had bought the book, after an exchange with the main library the classification decided where (non-reference) Western-language book would be located: only books on East Asian subjects within the P and Z classifications would be in the EAL. This made location more predictable and automatic – until many books were sent to storage, that is: one still would need to look in the catalog to know. These new rules of division mean that the selector for Western language material now orders as least as many books for the main library as for the EAL.

I mentioned before that the EAL reported directly to the University Librarian. This certainly is in general something beneficial: it is a chance to get one's concerns known at the highest level, and conversely, it is a direct way of knowing what the University Librarian thinks and wants people to know. This direct reporting line of the EAL remained in place, even when the "leadership circle" had contracted to some six department heads and no longer included the Head of the EAL (nor the Heads of Cataloging or Acquisitions, both subsumed under the Head of Technical Services.) But it also must be acknowledged that there were practical disadvantages to this structure too: since the University Librarian could not be expected to be a day-to-day practical manager about e.g. when which forms would be due at what departments, yet was organizationally the supervisor of the Head of EAL, often important information on regulations on a lower level, evaluation schedules, or new forms did not reach the EAL. Thus, somewhat paradoxically, the relatively high organizational place of the EAL, outside of any other structure, often resulted in a lack or at least delay of the transmittal of important knowledge to the EAL.

Changes in 2008

The financial crisis of 2008 resulted in a decision made by the University administration, that wherever separate departments with similar functions existed, these should be integrated. The EAL Technical Services staff was the first to be affected: it should be integrated with the main library's Technical Services; didn't recent technical developments make it unnecessary to maintain two separate such organizations? I still think this reasoning was somewhat spurious: moving a group of people from reporting to A to reporting to B while both A and B continue to exist does not decrease organizational complexity. Thus, I believe there certainly was behind the reorganization at the time also a kind of arrogance on the part of the main Technical Services: they certainly did already Turkey or Brazil; surely they could and should

take over China and Japan as well? Moreover, there was a perception that not the East Asian world, but East Asian librarians were lagging behind in new developments in productivity, while the EAL had clearly been struggling with the increasing amount of books: sending books to storage lagged behind, shelves were overcrowded, books were piling up in corners (good for when the library as a whole needed photographs to raise money, but perhaps reflecting an unwillingness to deal squarely with the issue), too much was still done manually, including writing acquisition slips, etc.

At the same time (but at that moment unbeknownst to most people), the University Library was fighting, finally unsuccessfully, a decision that they had to move other library departments into departments elsewhere on campus: the security, and most ominously, the human resources department (with rather disastrous results; the library is still trying to recover from that). Against that background, the requirement to move the EAL Technical Services into the main library's Technical Services was a minor issue, no matter how important it was for the EAL. It is not clear to me whether also a physical move of the EAL TS staff was envisioned at that time; in any case, the EAL received the assurance during a meeting with its staff, the University Librarian, and EAS faculty members, that for now at least, the arguments of the EAL staff, that they still needed for their work direct access to the book collection, was accepted. (Afterwards, when controversially the main library's Technical Services was to move completely off-campus, out of the main library, it was decided that the EAL's technical services staff definitely would not follow.) Thus organizationally EAL's TS started to report to the general Head of TS, while remaining physically within the EAL.

During this organizational change, not all relevant factors were discussed, in my view: the lack in the new structure for the Head of the EAL to quickly mobilize all CJK-related staff members for a particular project was not brought up, for example. The need for the change was explained rather unilaterally: it was to respond to the University's wish for decreasing the number of separate units, while the new structure would give the "backward" EAL TS people the opportunity to learn from their more "advanced" colleagues (the actual words used were slightly different of course—but I will maintain that that was the general idea.) From an organizational perspective, one could argue that the very fact that such attitudes were possible, shows that the needs and circumstances of the EAL, expressed often enough, had not been successfully conveyed to the main TS department, which would start off with some major mistakes. That situation itself could be interpreted as a structural as well as an individual failure.

During this move of TS staff, any change of the status of the EAL itself was not addressed, and in the meeting with the faculty assurances were given that the place of the EAL would not change.

For completeness' sake, I may also mention here, that the overall configuration of branch libraries at Princeton, which used to be two large ones (EAL and Art) with many smaller ones (mainly sciences), was to change: a new Science Library was to be built, which would combine many of the smaller science libraries: no longer would it be able to be said, that the EAL was larger and more complex than any other branch library.

The Move of the EAL Technical Services: Advantages and Disadvantages

In my opinion, the first visible results of the new structure were rather negative; in hindsight, it seems very much as if several years must pass, and various mistakes needed to be made, before an improved mutual knowledge and cooperation would lead to a much more collegial spirit, and successful solutions to some very real issues.

The first mistake was the unilateral decision, against expressed assurances and without any EAL input, that the position of Chinese acquisition specialist would not be replaced when the incumbent retired. This decision is to be placed against the background, that the EAL was in the midst of a large special project to leave manual ordering behind and move towards automatic ordering within the local system, starting with Chinese (for newer colleagues: at the time vendor records were not really available yet.) The EAL had developed a six months plan not only to start ordering within our local ILS, but also—even more difficult—to get the 10,000 outstanding order records into the system as well, with the assistance of a specially hired graduate student and in addition devoting the time of many other people, including myself. (At the same time, less unexpectedly, several other EAL positions were lost to retirement and not to be filled, because of the 2008 crisis. Of course, the new structure also meant that it was more difficult for the Director of the EAL to reallocate the TS staff's time.)

Simple-mindedly, and rather arrogantly, the general Acquisitions Department had decided that of course, their regular staff could take over Chinese ordering. After all, they had some Chinese workers in their department, and in their opinion, any acquisitions work should be able to be done by anyone, no special knowledge needed. No discussion with anyone at the EAL had taken place; after all, the position was now under TS, no? (In my opinion, there is a structural reason why this kind of hierarchical attitude tends to be more common in TS than in most other library departments: they work with more non-professional and unionized staff, and thus are definitely more business-like, rule-based and occasionally authoritarian than, say, a Collection Development department where most members may be library professionals who see each other as equals.)

This decision was a disaster. The (three) Chinese staff members designated (unbeknownst to them too) to take over Chinese ordering reported they did not know simplified characters; did not know pinyin; did not know *putonghua* or standard pronunciation; and their plate was already full, they certainly could not add the large amounts of Chinese ordering envisioned: each individual order would need more manual intervention, and take much longer than a

regular Western order. Training in pinyin was developed for them, but they did not see why they had to spend time they did not have to learn such specialized, university-level knowledge. Moreover, many characters in the titles in very specialist fields were difficult to read for them—they were not scholars. After several months, the Acquisition and TS Heads were graceful enough to apologize to me in particular (as the selector whose selections were not being ordered) for the trouble their decision had caused; they would try to create a new line again for a specialist once available. It took still quite some time, and for two years I, as the bibliographer, had to do my own ordering for every single title (using the special software newly developed at the EAL to the full), before finally a new person came on board.

If we look at the final positive outcome of this, I think we can point to several things. The main TS not only realized soon that they had completely misjudged and underestimated the requirements for the position; they also gained new respect for that position. In the two years without a Chinese acquisition specialist I and the then Associate Head of Acquisitions needed to discuss frequently issues, and we got along well, and we gained much beneficial knowledge: we at the EAL learned to understand how we could better fit in with general practices, and they on what special CJK needs had to be responded to. I think our new automated workflows at the time jumped us from being behind the curve to way ahead among our peers, thanks to the software we managed to produce in-house. I already had learned before that even if you have all the intellectual right reasons to do things differently in the EAL than in the main library, there always is a price to pay for doing things differently: the next ILS move, or something similar, will follow the majority, and may not be able to accommodate your differences. It is somewhat true that not many situations, apart from some script issues, were purely unique to East Asia, and that parallels could often be found elsewhere; while on the other hand, the administrative level on which those issues would be dealt with might be different. The newly hired Chinese acquisition specialist (who was responsible for doing other work besides, since the change towards automation had gained us time) therefore I think was seen as having an enhanced standing. Their experience with the EAL might also have increased the awareness at the Acquisitions Department that particular decision issues which for Western language material tend to be assigned to higher level acquisition personnel (vendor choice, approval plans, even shelf-ready ordering), for acquisitions from outside the Anglo-American world, need to be done in cooperation with the relevant subject librarians directly (note: thus also not through the Director of the EAL, or the Head of Collection development: it is not an organizational cooperation, but an individual one.)

The breaking down of barriers was not restricted to ordering. After several workflow changes, artificial divisions among some staff members between what were to be considered "our" books and "their" (i.e., non-EAL) books have broken down. There had been always tensions between the cataloging of books to be shelved in the EAL and those going to the Art

Library, especially when the latter had increased its acquisitions significantly. What were the respective priorities of cataloging, given that there was a large backlog? For a while, and for similar reasons as stated above, acquisition (and copy cataloging) of CJK art books were to take place by the main library; but when we hired a new Chinese acquisition specialist again, the importance of having all orders placed by the new EAL order specialists was again realized, and satisfactory workflows were found. On the other hand, henceforth Western-language gift books with some CJK which might arrive at the EAL can now be checked in, and cataloged there—even if they go elsewhere, minimization the sending back and forth of books. Subjectively the feeling that we are all working for the PUL as a whole has increased also among the EAL staff.

There were other beginning mistakes made by the general TS department. One of the first issues they decided to tackle (again, without asking what EAL's priorities were), was the backlog of binding Chinese serials, not knowing that because of the wide availability of PRC online serials, this was indeed low on EAL's lists of priorities in handling the backlog, also given the lack of shelving space. The result of the TS decision was a sudden overflow of incoming volumes, no place to shelve them, and not enough shelvers to shelve them (the lack of a dedicated shelver having always been a structural problem at the EAL.) There was thus also here some arrogance and a general lack of understanding on the part of the general TS department, that in a branch library there are no other "departments" to dump work on, there are just a few employees who have to do everything, and everything is interrelated. Thus the shelving and space issues (not a secret at all, but always ignored despite frequent requests on behalf of the EAL for assistance, or at least the lifting of unrealistic quota to send books to storage), suddenly became real for them.

Also this beginner's mistake had a positive outcome after a while. It was quickly realized that indeed, the EAL's space problems were large, and that any solution would require extra personnel, changed quota at the receiving storage location, special record-keeping, etc.: it was neither unwillingness nor incapacity on the part of EAL staff which made the problem intractable, which had been assumed without investigation. A new large-scale cooperative project was set up, involving EAL studies librarians (for the selection), general TS, supervisory managers at the main library staff with relevant experience and authority, and four temporary new hires, which then enabled to process within six months the move of 60,000 volumes to storage, and thus the creation of space for years to come. The time and money this project required was able to be found in the resources of the general TS department, once it became responsible for solving the problems; it could never have been found in the EAL itself—branch libraries in Princeton have no budget. Even better, the improved cooperation between the EAL and TS in this project made it possible to incorporate several secondary projects long desired by the EAL: the reclassification of books in several outdated classification schemes within the reference collection, getting atlas stands and

other furniture for oversized books, etc. And such smaller scale projects have continued since: the fact that a department with the financial and personnel configuration enabling it to do deal with issues carries now the responsibility for them, is a plus. Of course, provided that the individuals actually do take their responsibilities seriously; which luckily, for now they mostly do (we did have a recent case whereby the unilateral arrogance of a particular individual made some bad decisions without input regarding Western language serials on East Asia —but I suppose that occasionally happens everywhere. In this case the EAL could rely upon some general TS employees more attuned to the situation to resolve that issue too, it was not alone protesting that ill-conceived plan.)

Organizationally, a potentially more complicated disadvantage may be, as mentioned above, projects involving both subject librarians, catalogers and other technical services staff, just simply because in the new structure more supervisors are involved, who all have to respond and allow their employees to participate. The EAL once had a very short-term opportunity to receive funds for a special cataloging project (traditionally bound Chinese books after 1796, still not yet all cataloged online). Previously the Head of the EAL could make such decisions quickly, with all hands on deck to avail ourselves of such an opportunity. In this case, we could not respond on time (a few days): the TS department needed everything spelled out, and several layers of permissions were necessary since the project would after all divert some staff members from their usual work. Yet in a later but similar case, when I had become the Head of the EAL and needed the participation of catalogers and other TS staff for a project I had inherited from my predecessor (the publication of a new Chinese rare book catalog), I again was asked to submit a written proposal to the Head of TS, not so much to get permission (which I already received verbally), but rather to have the data in writing to permit that Head to apply for temporary replacement staff, the (previous) University Librarian told both of us that no, I should not have to submit a proposal; the Head of the EAL could initiate such projects, and if participation by EAL TS staff was required, that was for the Head of the EAL to decide; it did not require asking for permission (rather than notification). This opinion actually surprised both me and the Head of TS, and I would not be surprised if that would be just a one-time decision, and not become a principle. It does mean that one of the few real organizational disadvantages I perceive turned out not to be one, at least not this time.

Reporting Structures Versus Particular Levels of Responsibility

Thus, although advantages and disadvantages are often ascribed to particular reporting structures, I tend to think that who reports to whom is a secondary matter. (Of course, there could always be complications with individuals reporting to one person, while doing part or even most of their work for another; but that could happen in any situation with staff performing multiple functions, and should be solvable.) More important is, who is responsible for what; who can make what decisions; and has a particular level, department

or individual enough room financially and in staff members to react to the issues occurring, and solve them? That, in my view, is the main issue faced by a small (or large) and independent branch library; and merely changing reporting lines may not be a real solution, nor certainly is it the only one.

Another way of separating organization structure from actual responsibilities is to ask the question, to what extent particular activities or librarians in an EAL need funneling via its Head. Do budget allocations need to go through the Head? Travel budgets? Digitization projects? Acquisition decisions? Data management, library systems? At Princeton, actually most of these activities do not involve the Heads of branch libraries as Heads at all: all subject librarians receive their funding separately, irrespective of reporting structure. Travel requests go through travel committees, without there being, say, an EAL travel budget, even if the Head may be asked for opinions. And while individuals may have to "represent" the EAL in library-wide meetings, ILL or so, it is not that the final decision of who participates can only be made by the Head: before and after the changes in whom the EAL TS staff reports to, its TS head would be on the library-wide integrated library system committee. And certainly all professional staff are expected to initiate projects by themselves; even if they also may be requested to participate in projects initiated by their supervisor. Thus individuals at branch libraries participate in many horizontal relationships with others in the library system; and those relationships do not necessarily go through the reporting lines.

Thus, I would argue above that organizational structures are not always the most important reason why certain things work and others don't; and as a corollary, organizational restructuring is not necessarily a solution for issues that do exist. It is like a book with multiple subjects: it has to be shelved somewhere, and putting it with one subject might disadvantage another; but a good library system will enable to have the book found by all. Thus, individual and horizontal relationships, in many cases, can be more important for a well-functional library. Yes, in large institutions such as academic libraries, with many employees and many tasks, there is *always* a danger of silos forming, and in some sense good cooperation within any group has a danger of, or even may necessarily entail, less cooperation outside it. Thus, the lack of information flow between a Collection Development department, a Technical Services department, and a Systems department may be as prominent as between an EAL and a main library. I have been working long enough in the field to know that some such issues always will exist, and that improvements in one area may result in problems elsewhere, partly because which individuals occupy which positions matters. Good communication flow is always a goal, but never easy to reach; and what works on one scale may not work on another. To give an example: some specific (and rather simple) software developed within the EAL recently was used as a desirable example on how the whole library should work: catalogers and others within the EAL had identified the issue, I charged our systems specialist to find a solution, and then the relevant staff tested it—all

talking to each other. As it so happens, the software was something apparently on the wish-list of other subject librarians outside the EAL too; but in the main library, different departments may be quite separated from each other, and small seemingly individual requests were difficult to respond to within the way the system office worked. Only during library-wide brainstorming sessions when the new University Librarian arrived did I become aware of that request being on someone's wish-list, and was able to remark that we already had developed that. Thus, this example was an example of how cooperation and nimbleness within a small branch library (EAL) could have great benefit; but at the same time, it showed there was no real mechanism for EAL librarians to learn that others had faced a similar issue, and to communicate that "we" had solved it. It was great to be singled out as a good example of good internal communication; but truth is, that that is not necessarily scalable to the organization as a whole.

In view of the above, while for some outsiders a recent change in the reporting line of the EAL may seem as a great organizational change, and perhaps problematic, I would argue it is not. Recently, and after some transition period, the EAL now officially no longer reports directly to the University Library, but to the Associate University Librarian for Collection Development. For me, this makes practical sense. No longer do we miss general communications about evaluation schedules etc., where previously we were out of the loop (since in practice, the University Librarian hardly could function as our day-to-day manager.) The fact that that librarian is an area studies specialist (and a long-time friend) is a plus. On the other hand, the monthly personal meetings with the University Librarian (jointly with the Head of Collection Development) continue, allowing us to address issues which are perhaps peculiar to the EAL: after all, we tend to have a higher profile nationally and internationally than any other branch library, good as they are. Thus practically, currently we have the best of both worlds.

One Remaining Structural Issue: Branch Libraries as Physical Spaces

I have played down structural issues in the above. However, I do believe there is one big structural, organizational issue at Princeton which I have not yet treated above in detail, one which I have always deplored, and which I therefore listed as my number one issue when we all were solicited to give reports to the incoming University Librarian. That is, until now we have been dealing with people, services, content. The issue may be peculiar to Princeton, but it is not peculiar to the EAL, and involves all branch libraries. It is on how the branch library functions as a physical space (often belonging to buildings with their own specific rules). From how to stay open during snow days, how to get a carpet replaced, chairs cleaned, or tables repaired, to who is responsible for equipment in classrooms within the physical library space, or even, who has keys to those classrooms—at Princeton, all branches might be different, and often it is unclear what is the library's responsibility, and what fell to buildings to solve; while the branch library as such, lacking *any* budget of its own, cannot

decide anything by itself. Thus until very recently (see below) issues were always dealt with on an ad hoc basis, there was no one place to go, there were no rules or procedures to follow, and there was no real venue for such issues to be discussed by all branch libraries. In practice, occasionally the SpLibs organization mentioned above functioned as a forum of interchange for those libraries which were part of that group—which excluded the EAL.

One of my first requests after I became the Director of the EAL was therefore to allow the EAL librarians to attend those meetings, even if we did not report to the official convener of the group. I am happy to say that not only was this allowed, soon, responding to the library-wide discussions held upon the arrival of the new University Librarian, the former group was actually officially restarted as a group not based upon subjects or reporting structure, but as a group meant to discuss issues of all branch libraries qua branch libraries; and all higher supervisors involved attend. At the same time, a person was hired to be responsible for all physical issues regarding branch libraries, and to serve as the one go-to person. Thus, very recently this structural issue was happily solved. The fact that the Head of the EAL now reports to Collection Development, as do the Art and Engineering (!) librarians, while other branch librarians do not, is now for this group irrelevant. One topic which all branch libraries have been discussing, is for instance how to get better user (rather than circulation) statistics for their branch libraries in absence of the access infrastructure available in the main library, since one could foresee a future in which each branch library has to defend its location given that one branch library already had to do so during a recent renovation (it successfully did so, to decisions makers outside the library as a whole.)

The above is offered as a contribution to the overall topic of the organizational relationships of an EAL within and without. Needless to say, it is based upon my personal observations and opinions; others involved in the same events might very well come to different conclusions; we all see only part of the story. It is based upon almost 30 years of experience; and while because of the very purpose of this discussion the occasional problem is foregrounded rather than achievements or successes, one has to keep in mind that set against those 30 years, major problems have been rather few and incidental. They have all been through a general willingness within and without the EAL to overcome them. For now at least; because if experience teaches anything, it is that there is no one solution that will prevent other problems to arise in the future.