

Facts, Approaches, and Reflections  
on Classification  
in the History of Argentine Librarianship

Hechos, Enfoques y Reflexiones  
Sobre la Clasificación en la Historia  
de la Bibliotecología Argentina

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**SUMMARY.** Argentine library science literature reflects a diverse interest in the subject organization of library collections. Early writings looked at the need to organize one library in particular (the National Library methodical catalog of 1893); and, therefore, the central issue was the adoption of a practical model of library organization. However, the twentieth century inaugurated the era of library studies in the

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The editor wishes to express his gratitude and appreciation for Mechaél Charbonneau, Head, Cataloging Division, Indiana University Libraries, for her assistance with the English translation of this article.

[Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "Facts, Approaches, and Reflections on Classification in the History of Argentine Librarianship." Barber, Elsa E., Nicolás M. Tripaldi, and Silvia L. Pisano. Co-published simultaneously in *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* (The Haworth Information Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 35, No. 1/2, 2002, pp. 79-105; and: *Historical Aspects of Cataloging and Classification* (ed: Martin D. Joachim) The Haworth Information Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc., 2003, pp. 79-105. Single or multiple copies of this article are available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service [1-800-HAWORTH, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST). E-mail address: getinfo@haworthpressinc.com].

strictest sense. It began an exchange of ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of decimal classification, and it resulted in the work of Carlos V. Penna by the middle of the century. This article is based on the analysis and interpretation of the primary sources, with the purpose of identifying the influences of European and American library thought on the development of the history of classification in Argentina in a period during which a national library identity began to develop. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2002 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

**KEYWORDS.** Classification history, classification systems, Argentina

**RESUMEN.** La literatura bibliotecológica argentina refleja un interés diverso por la organización temática de las colecciones bibliotecarias. Los primeros escritos enfocan la necesidad de organizar una biblioteca en particular (Vg. el catálogo metódico de la Biblioteca Nacional de 1893) y, por ende, el punto central es la adopción de un modelo práctico de organización bibliotecaria. En cambio, el siglo XX inaugura la era de los estudios bibliotecológicos propiamente dichos. Se inicia con un intercambio de ideas sobre las ventajas y desventajas de la clasificación decimal y desemboca, a mediados de esa centuria, en la obra de Carlos V. Penna. El presente artículo se basa en el análisis e interpretación de las principales fuentes primarias con el fin de identificar las influencias del pensamiento bibliotecario europeo y norteamericano en el desarrollo de la historia de la clasificación en Argentina en un período en el que comienza a gestarse una identidad bibliotecológica nacional.

**PALABRAS CLAVES.** Historia de la clasificación, sistemas de clasificación, Argentina

## INTRODUCTION

The history of Argentine library science has been a narrowly explored area of research. Without a doubt, it presents conflicting and controversial subjects

as well as different approaches and methodologies. Even though most authors seem to agree that writings that deal with the historical qualify as "library literature," no one has yet investigated the theoretical foundations that would group a given work as falling under the rubric of "library science."

Some authors believe that works conceived independently to deal with a specific library and/or book industry problem represent library literature (Parada 2001, 110). In contrast, other researchers maintain that the only relative contributions to the library organization are works of library science and, therefore, by definition, works about Argentine library literature are scarce (Finó y Hourcade 1952, 269).

This critical issue is centered on an ontological plane: what is the essence of library literature (i.e., that which makes a work a library text) and, hence, when does its history start? For example, is a writer's scholarly discourse on the role of libraries in popular education of a library nature despite its doubtful scientific value? And if it is so, should we differentiate scientific library literature from other works deemed "pre-scientific" or "rhetoric?" On the other hand, in what category should a product of library activity—for example, a printed catalog—be included?

If we stand on a rigorous epistemological position, library literature is strictly represented by documents whose primary intent is the treatment of historical, theoretical, logical, and methodological library science problems. Unfortunately, this approach excessively limits the scope of Argentine library literature. The multiple questions and their possible answers to this issue are beyond the scope of this article. Despite the complexities, the viewpoints of existing analysis have been equally valid and have contributed to the development of Argentine library historiography.

The periodization of Argentine library history is generally divided into two broad categories: territoriality and nationality. According to the first category, the beginning of library phenomena took place during its colonial origins (Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata). Within this category, two large periods existed: the era of the Hispanic domination and the era of independence (Sabor Riera 1974). This line of investigation sets the 1757 *Index Librorum Bibliothecae Collegiae Maximi Cordubensis Societati Iesus* as the first antecedent of library literature (Finó y Hourcade 1952). On the other hand, from the nationality perspective, library literature began during the 1810 independence movement. Thus, the first Argentine library documents are related to the foundation and inauguration of the Biblioteca Pública de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires Public Library).

At present, studies on the history of Argentine librarianship are not exhaustive, and they are limited to a certain era or to a specific subject. This article



does not limit itself to the arguments presented so far. Certain facts or phenomena related to classification (e.g., catalog filing, subject organization of a particular library, reflections on a particular classification system, theoretical studies about bibliographic classification, etc.) and their influence on Argentine librarianship are distinguished from the independent era to the mid-twentieth century. The importance of this period lies in the introduction of the main classification systems and the revelation of major trends of contemporary library thought related to the physical and subject organization of collections. A discussion on the historical evolution of the contemporary library thought from the second half of the twentieth century to the present in Argentina will have to be left for another opportunity.

### NINETEENTH CENTURY BEGINNINGS

Libraries occupied a distinguished place in the Argentine independence process, and they have accompanied the political and cultural evolution of the country from its beginnings. One of the measures adopted by the first patriotic government was the creation of the Biblioteca Pública de Buenos Aires (announced in the periodical *Gazeta de Buenos Ayres*, no. 15, on September 13, 1810). The library was inaugurated almost two years later on March 16, 1812. Although there are no precise details about the technical organization of its collections, there are references to the creation of its catalog. One of its first librarians, Luis José Chorroarín, asked the government, in January 1812, for successive extensions for the library's grand opening; in one of them, he argued that there was the need to create the library's catalog (Sabor Riera 1974, 28).

Further convincing evidence of library technical operations appear in a document entitled "*Reglamento provisional para el régimen económico de la Biblioteca Pública de la Capital de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata* (*Provisional Regulations for the Economic Regime of the Biblioteca Pública de la Capital de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata*).\" Its fourth article stipulates, among other issues, that \"if anyone wishes to know about the books available upon any subject, he will be given the index so that he can examine it to his entire satisfaction.\"<sup>1</sup> This assertion is evidence of the probability of subject access to the collection and, therefore, the application of some classification criteria. Parada confirms this fact: \"From a strictly library point of view, it is possible to point out the existence of certain professional practices. Firstly, the creation of author and subject indexes, recorded under the format of notebooks or books . . .\"<sup>2</sup> What these sources do not reveal is the classification sys-

tem being used. However, it is possible to conjecture that the arrangement responded to a series of subject categories created by the librarian. This follows from the report about the state of the library carried out by an ad hoc commission in 1833, which recommended the creation of a catalog "on the basis of an exact classification of the sciences."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it is known that books were shelved according to an established order even though it is not known what criteria were adopted. The goal of the Biblioteca Pública de Buenos Aires was to serve the cultural and educational policies of the revolution, with a "pragmatic employment of bibliographic resources."<sup>4</sup> Thus it is clear that technical organization was of secondary importance.

A significant library movement was propitiated by the promulgation of the *Ley de Protección de Bibliotecas Populares* (*Popular Libraries Protection Act*). In effect, the *Ley Nacional no. 410* of 1870 constituted a milestone in the history of Argentine libraries. Its main purpose was to encourage the creation of new popular libraries and maintain the existing ones. It was inspired by similar legislation in the United States and Canada. The bill was sent to the Congress and endorsed by the President of the Republic, Domingo F. Sarmiento, and by his Minister of Culture, Justice, and Public Instruction, Nicolás Avellaneda, who asserted:

Thus, the accompanying bill that the Executive Branch proposes to incite the creation of popular libraries is copied on the basis that, recommended by Horace Mann, they were adopted in most of the States of the Union, and it repeats almost literally the dispositions of a statute of High Canada . . .<sup>5</sup>

The project aroused harsh arguments in both Houses of the Legislative Branch (Tripaldi 1997, 27). Nevertheless, the Congress passed the law, which was promulgated on September 23 and regulated on October 29, 1870. Its second, third, and fifth articles highlighted the most important aspects of the new legislation. The second article established the creation of the Comisión Protectora de Bibliotecas Populares (Popular Libraries Protective Commission), comprised of five members and a secretary. The third article determined the specific functions of organizations responsible for inspection of libraries as well as the investment of funds to which the fifth article referred. The latter assigned a subvention equivalent to the amount that each library would remit to the Protective Commission. The total amount was then to be used for the acquisition of books.

The Protective Commission began publishing the *Boletín de Bibliotecas Populares* (*Popular Libraries Bulletin*) in 1872. This publication provided

accounts of the accomplishments of the organization, reproduced the invoices of books sent to the provinces, and lists of libraries receiving funds. Furthermore, the *Bulletin* included articles of interest about educational issues concerning libraries and provided lists of recommended works for selection and acquisition.

Even though the Comisión Protectora de Bibliotecas Populares acted as a centralized agency for library acquisitions, it did not function in the same way regarding technical operations. Different issues of the *Boletín de Bibliotecas Populares* would publish, as models, statutes of libraries already established and regulations introduced by various Argentine political or cultural individuals. These documents contained suggestions about classification or arrangement of the collections, but they were not inclined to favor any particular system. In fact, proposals were notably disparate in their recommendations. The Commission (*Boletín* 1872a) proposed a bibliography or suggested works for acquisition by libraries in which bibliographic records were grouped in broad subject areas: philosophy, sciences and their application to the arts and industries; law, political science, social economy, and politics; history; geography, travel; literature; education; religion. Later the Commission compiled a new and more extensive list of bibliographic suggestions (*Boletín* 1874) but this time in strict alphabetical order by author. It is worth noting that the creation and printing of price lists of "useful books" was one of the duties that the Commission refused to delegate.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, model statutes or regulations were published to help guide new libraries or associations. Some of them had library implications. Dr. Joaquín Quiroga, for instance, who was a well-known public official from the province of Catamarca, introduced in 1872 a model statute for newly formed libraries. Chapter VI, article 25, subsection 3, referring to the duties of the librarian, states: "To maintain the good order of books and other publications or realia that the library shelves hold, be careful not to change its location, based numerical or alphabetical order, with which they are indicated in the respective catalogs."<sup>6</sup> The reference to the different types of materials, bibliographic and non-bibliographic, that a collection could contain is particularly interesting for this time period. The classification of the collection, however, remains ambiguous since the "numerical or alphabetical order" does not allude to any category in particular. Likewise, the phrase "respective catalogs" does not enlighten us as to their specific contents. Fortunately, other records were more descriptive regarding library practices. A singular case is the *Reglamento de la Biblioteca Popular de Baradero* (*Baradero Popular Library*



*Regulation*, Province of Buenos Aires). In its third article, it prescribes technical procedures:

A catalog of all books numbered from 1 to 100, etc., of all volumes included in each section in which the library is divided; putting the same numeration in small stamps on the back of each volume. Sections will be designated in the catalog and on the shelves with the corresponding title and Roman numbers. These numbers will be placed in the stamp of each book, repeating them in all volumes that comprise the section designated by each one of those numbers.<sup>7</sup>

Undoubtedly, the "sections" reveal subject categories or semantic fields determined according to the content of the bibliographic items, given that such sections were designated in the catalog and on the shelves with the "corresponding title." The word "title" is, in this context, a clear reference to the subject matter.

Thus it is clear that the emphasis of Sarmiento's library administration policy, through *Law 419*, 1870, and its implementation through the Comisión Protectora de Bibliotecas Populares, was on the propagation of libraries throughout the Argentine territory and that there was a goal to increase the number of available volumes and their circulation. A population otherwise excluded from formal education would have the benefits gained from the civilizing effects of reading. It is understandable, then, that the technical aspects of the organization of library collections were not the primary consideration for popular libraries protected by the government.

The case chosen to conclude this section is the opposite of what was stated before. In effect, classification was seen as a scientific discipline, both in its theoretical and in its practical phases. By the end of the nineteenth century (1893), the Biblioteca Nacional Argentina (Argentine National Library) was prepared to publish its *Catálogo Metódico de la Biblioteca Nacional* (*Methodical Catalog of the National Library*). The library's director, Paul Groussac, had developed a classification system, a milestone in the history of Argentine librarianship. Groussac wrote the preface to volume 1 (Sciences and Arts). The text had two quite distinctive sections. First, there is a brief history of the Biblioteca Nacional Argentina from its origins as the Biblioteca Pública de Buenos Aires through its nationalization in the 1880s to Groussac's administration. The most remarkable topic of this article, however, is the section about the outline of the classification adopted.

Theoreticians seek principles, generalities, and regularities—in a word, the foundations on which all reality is based. Groussac, a rigorous and systematic

thinker, started from two closely related premises that he deemed substantial to any bibliographic enterprise: (1) the antinomy between the philosophical classification of human knowledge and bibliographic classification and (2) accessibility and maneuverability through the catalog (today we would speak of user friendliness, a term that would be an anachronism for that time).

Groussac criticized most bibliographers for confusing the plan of a subject catalog with a philosophical classification of the sciences or the systematic arrangement of a particular science, such as the taxonomic classification of Linnaeus. The author illustrates this confusion starting with positivistic philosophy. He demonstrates with the acuteness of a scholar how Bacon's, Comte's, and Spencer's classification of science, among others, used for a bibliography could become a true cryptography, even for the most learned user who was not lettered in positivistic philosophy. But where does the problematic core of this dichotomy narrow? Groussac solved it ontologically: "... there is another reason even more solid, from our special viewpoint; and it is the consideration of the very same structure of books, which are in the end our units, our scientific entities."<sup>8</sup> The topics that keep documents joined together cannot be separated, not even under philosophical justification.

The author's second premise has a pragmatic approach. The catalog is a work of the people—that is, a tool of fast and easy operation. In other words, the catalog should be self-explanatory. Groussac exposes this premise with lucidity:

It is not his catalog, he that is responsible for instructing the readers, but his books; and the most he can aim for [referring to the bibliographer] is the simple and clear method that makes superfluous his personal intervention. His classifications must be the most usual and the ones that respond to natural and evident analogies.<sup>9</sup>

Now, how can these two principles meet in the coalescence of an adequate classification scheme for the subject catalog? In principle, according to Groussac, the system had to respond to a classification of partial analogy and be somewhat vague so that it could be complemented with notes and references to another one associated to it or similar. Secondly, the guideline to take into account in the organization of the plan's sections and sub-sections was the "criteria of generalization." The author forces this idea to its paroxysm: "For the bibliographer, if I am allowed to strain the thought a little bit more precisely, all animals that fly are birds, all that swim, fishes—as in Genesis"<sup>10</sup> Having set these basic principles that supported his conclusion, Groussac proposed



not to part from the representation of the old faculties of knowledge and traditional organization when defining the main classes, no matter the order in which they are enumerated (herein lies an implicit criticism to ordinal systems). First-level subdivisions in his scheme responded to five categories: sciences and the arts, historical sciences, literature, and theology. The problem with subdivisions of main classes was solved in the same way: the criteria of generality, only that, in this case, because of being applied to the designation of subdivisions, Groussac called it "criteria of decreasing generality."

The influence of French bibliography and French bibliophilism on Paul Groussac was undeniable—namely due to Jacques-Charles Brunet's handbook (Brunet 1810). Brunet's influence was demonstrated in the preface of Groussac's *Methodical Catalog*, for example, when it was stated that sections were "almost the same" as Brunet's table. The figure of the French bookseller was also an object of criticism by Groussac: "Brunet's classic handbook is riddled with doubtful attributions, because of not having used the method of repetitions. It's true that he uses the one of notes and references in headings; but it is not enough, since the title is missing in another section."<sup>11</sup>

The resulting classification system was the object of countless objections; however, if it had detractors, it also had supporters (Simons 1934; Selva 1939). Moreover, it was adopted by different Argentine libraries: The Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación (Library of the National Congress) and the Biblioteca del Jockey Club (Jockey Club Library) (Selva 1939, 243).

To conclude, it is not the purpose of this article to reproduce Groussac's classification system or to fall into descriptive redundancies of its different classes, yet we prefer to highlight the depth of his reflections about the foundations of a classification system for his time. His theoretical speculations opened a new phase in the history of Argentine librarianship in general and of classification in particular.

### **CLASSIFICATION IN THE CENTER OF THE DEBATE**

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, two individuals, Federico Birabén and Juan Túmburus, through each of their works related to library organization, opened up the discussion about which classification systems were more convenient to adopt, both for library organization and for bibliographic work. They both were prominent figures in the professional field and organized academic and special libraries; both kept close links with politicians and educators of that time, and they collaborated in the development of educational projects for the instruction of librarians, especially Federico Birabén. Each of

them embraced different stances on the issue, and they became well-known experts of their time. It is significant, then, to introduce the ideas that these authors shaped in their works to illustrate this period.

As early as 1904, a few years after the creation of the International Institute of Bibliography (1895), Federico Birabén explained his opinions on how an academic library in the city of Buenos Aires could be organized and made known the criteria that would need to be followed in order to realize this goal. He deemed classification a central activity; and even though he admitted that history recognized the existence of numerous "bibliographic systems" for the classification of documents, the initiative promoted by the Institute was for him "... the most worthy of receiving the attention of scholars, and even of captivating it . . ." <sup>12</sup> He recognized that the Dewey Decimal Classification System adopted by Brussels had three essential peculiarities that made it highly valuable:

. . . (1) a truly scientific principle of bibliographic classification, from which a notable bibliographic nomenclature and notation is derived; (2) an actually practical system of bibliographic notation or writing; and (3) a wide and fruitful work method founded on international cooperation and even universal . . . <sup>13</sup>

Birabén maintained that this system was solid and comprehensive enough to extend its use outside the boundaries of bibliography in the strict sense, for example, to the field of library management. Likewise, he recommended taking it into account for the physical arrangement of works. Thus, he suggested the adoption of the bibliographic system, of its methodology and form of cooperation in order to resolve the problems related to library science. By supporting the Decimal System and the creation of the Oficina Bibliográfica Nacional (National Bibliographic Office), Birabén became the main advocate of the use of tools recognized at the international level and contributed to strengthening the concepts of normalization and universality that characterize modern librarianship.

In an opposite stance, it is worth analyzing the approach of Juan Túmburus, who through his writings achieved the most original contribution to the history of classification in Argentine librarianship. In his work *Apuntes de Bibliotecografía . . .* (*Notes on Bibliotecografía . . .* 1913, 747-48)—*bibliotecografía* is a branch of librarianship pertaining to the study of classification principles and systems—he made a review of classification systems and systematized them into the following typology:





Utilitarian:	Commercial:	Pure:	Editors Booksellers
		Applied:	Brunet
	Numerical:	Rigid:	Dewey Schwartz
		Expansive:	Cutter Brown
	Onomastic:	By author By subject (dictionary systematic)	
Specialized:	Scientific:	Pure sciences Applied sciences	
	Legislative Pedagogic Industrial Sports, etc.		

Similarly, Túmburus created a periodization of classifications from ancient times to the nineteenth century:

- **1st era or ancient era:** from the VI Egyptian dynasty (3200 B.C.) to the destruction of the library of Alexandria (641 Christian era)
- **2nd era or cloistral era:** from the destruction of the library of Alexandria (641 Christian era) to the invention of the press by Gutenberg (1438 according to Lambinet)
- **3rd era or philosophical and commercial era:** from Gutenberg (1438) to J.-Ch. Brunet (1810)
- **4th era or utilitarian, contemporary era:** from J. Ch. Brunet (1810) to Dewey (1876) (Túmburus 1913, 749).

In this context he pointed out the reaction against the “philosophical systems” of *clasificación bibliotecográfica* initiated with the “utilitarian systems,” among which he cited the one created by Jacques-Charles Brunet. He noted that these had had their time of popularity and Brunet’s in particular had been adopted by some libraries in Latin America. He emphasized that, in spite of library congresses that were taking place, in order to define the aspects of uniformity or universality of classification unsuccessfully, Melville Dewey (1876) introduced his utilitarian Decimal Classification System, and “. . . it raised a true wasps’ nest among the most renowned librarians from countries all over the world . . .”<sup>14</sup> He pointed out that Dewey’s contribution was portrayed by Marcel Baudouin as “une géniale invention,” which propitiated the

Belgian government acceptance, which ordered the creation of the International Institute of Bibliography (1895).

Túmburus evaluated the Institute's *Manuel du Répertoire bibliographique universel* and claimed that the Decimal Classification System could be useful for a bibliographic institute but not for a library since an institute works with cards and impersonal users while a library works with physical volumes and readers. As he indicated: "In bibliographic institutes the *reader* does not exist; there exist employees who serve remote clients and correspondents, while in libraries the *reader* is everything. The difference is enormous!"<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, he commented on the "expansion or dilution" and on the forced "contraction or condensation" to which subjects included were exposed.

Furthermore, he called attention to the inconvenience of applying the same criteria of universality to classification:

Some time ago, it was discussed in some country of this world to legislate on '*clasificación bibliotecográfica*,' making mandatory the adoption of the Decimal Classification—*Creo quia absurdum est*.—Only to Nero, the most autocratic of emperors, could such an imposition have occurred. Classification goes together with science, and the latter does not admit limits determined *a priori*.<sup>16</sup>

Túmburus considered classification as a central issue in the library process and expressed that other areas of library activities could be normalized, but ". . . never classification. The latter, in countries all over the world, shouts: Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!"<sup>17</sup>

He stressed that the Germans had labeled the Decimal System with the term *Starre-system* meaning *rigid system* or *without flexibility*. According to Túmburus, the Germans also classified this system as cryptic:

Another epithet not less expressive is *Rätselsystem* (puzzle) to demonstrate that if a reader is placed in front of the figure: 617.558.1.0897 (*acertotilis Bartolillo*) he is completely in the dark, and if he does not have the help of that little handbook of 2000 pages called *compendium*, he will never be able to puzzle out that number of eleven figures, which in decimal language means just *nephrectomy*.<sup>18</sup>

He also emphasized that other classifications, like Brunet's for instance, became popular by themselves, while the Decimal System needed international publicity to promote its application. This, according to Túmburus, had a counterproductive effect anyway because it led Europe to say that it was used in America and in America that it was used in Europe.

Based on the criticisms enumerated above, this author proposed what he named "reasoned specialized classification" (Túmburus 1913, 750). In fact, he didn't suggest adopting a certain classification scheme; when referring to a general library he recommended taking both a utilitarian classification as well as a philosophical one as guidelines. In a special library, on the other hand, he advised using a treatise on the subject of works to be organized as a starting point (Túmburus 1915, 51).

Túmburus introduced his classification system as a methodology to be followed, and he developed a series of general principles and procedures that explained the rules necessary for its implementation. Firstly, the librarian had to identify a "provisional classification key." To this effect two factors had to be taken into account: a principal or main one, the reader, and an accessory or secondary one, the kind of books that comprised the library—that is, the subjects contained in the collection. To allow for the main factor, it was necessary to meet two premises:

- acquired book—classified book
- detailed classification

By respecting the equation reader-subject, the librarian was ready to formulate the "classification key." The number of existent volumes guided the degree of expansion that was more suitable for the "provisional key." This was for Túmburus an open, flexible system that allowed for the intercalation of new sections and sub-sections. Thus, problems caused by the relationship of decimal classification systems to the proximity and hierarchy of subjects were balanced. The artificial "dilation-contraction" that he observed, as well as the impact on the shelving and physical management of the collection, was avoided. The system's economy was preserved due to the fact that "... except for the cases of relationship between two or more different subjects [...] only one methodical card should be enough."<sup>19</sup>

On the issue of procedures, in a later work, *El Bibliotecario Práctico (The Practical Librarian)* (1915), Túmburus asserted that:

1. When constructing the *clave de previsión* (reference to a provisional or tentative classification scheme), notes had to be taken on the main parts that comprised the subject to classify, placing them in columns to the left of the sheet, somewhat distanced from one another. The first degree of classification was obtained this way.
2. These parts were subdivided into main sections, which were registered leaving an indentation below the ones from the first degree. Thus, the second degree of classification was achieved.



3. This process continued until the more convenient subdivision for the library whose collection was being classified was found.
4. Each chosen term was given a correlative number ("number level"), which was put in a column to the right of the paper.
5. An alphabetical index of all terms with their classification number was constructed.
6. Cards that would make the "methodical catalog" started to be classified. The most significant word of the work's title was looked up in the index, and the corresponding number was written down on the card. In case of doubt, the book was consulted. If a specific section wasn't found, it was classified in the one that could enclose it, or a new sub-section was created and assigned a provisional *subcota* (a correlative number representing each of the subclasses of the classification scheme) that had to be taken into consideration for the final revision of the system.
7. Cards from the same *cota numérica* (a correlative number representing each of the classification scheme's classes, subclasses, and sections) were gathered and grouped under a "sectional card" placed higher than the rest of the cards. In the space that extended beyond the "sectional card," the "cota numérica" and the section title were written down.
8. The "methodical catalog" or subject catalog was formed, following the sectional cards' numeric and the cards' alphabetical order under each section (Túmburus 1915, 51-69).

As indicated by Túmburus, the handling of the "methodical catalog" was very simple for the user:

Be it a reader or a bibliographic researcher who wants to read a book about *quartering*, whose author he doesn't know or he isn't concerned about. Let's consult the alphabetical index of our classification, and we'll see that next to the word *quartering* is written the *cota numérica* 113. Hence, we deduce that in the catalog there is a sectional card with the number 113 and with the label QUARTERING. Going to the card catalog, we see that one of its drawers has the same label: 101 to 150; there thus must be the bibliographic section 113 we are looking for. If we cannot find it, it must be because either there are no books on that subject in the library, or those books are quite few and hence, they will be in the section immediately below: 100, BILLETING.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the order on the shelves, the appropriate criteria to use according to Túmburus (1915, 20), was the "aesthetics of the line"; thus he recommended following "the rigorous order of height." He explained in detail how to carry out this process, which the Germans called "mechanical location" and what

Túmburus called "leveling" or "location by size" (Túmburus 1915, 22). He described the disadvantages of the systematic location, which he considered un-aesthetic because it didn't comply with size-leveling, inconvenient because it forced a continuous movement of books on the shelves, and costly because it required more room. On this subject, the words that follow are extremely illustrative:

Systematic location does not concern the simple library, or any other; it is a primitive location, of a school boy who wants to form a library out of the fifteen books he managed to gather in his life. Let us imagine all the history books together on a shelf, all novels on another, all geography and travel books on another, and so on. The ignorant (in librarianship, it is understood) would exclaim: This is the way I want my library organized! But the librarian knows the consequences of such an eccentric system: Firstly, the oversize book next to the miniature one will be verified; and, secondly, the library will be in continuous movement, not so much for the inquiries, but for the movements caused by the entry of each new book to the library . . . "21

The concern of this intellectual for the organization of libraries generated a novel line of reflection that transcended even to the beginning of the twentieth century and was, as already pointed out, the most relevant theoretical contribution in the classification field within the field of Argentine librarianship.

### *MASTERS AND DISCIPLES*

Both Federico Birabén and Juan Túmburus were pioneers of differing positions regarding the implementation of library and bibliographic classification systems. Because of their thoughts and actions, they excelled during their time and led current opinion among their contemporaries. Pedro B. Franco and Dr. Bernardo Lavayén were the most outstanding disciples for spreading and putting their ideas into practice.

As a Librarian at the Museo Social Argentino (Argentine Social Museum) and at the Ministerio de Obras Públicas de la Nación (Ministry of Public Works), Birabén taught a course on cataloging and classification issues, according to the standards and tables of the Institute of International Bibliography, between 1909 and 1910. Pedro B. Franco, who since 1913 was in charge of the Biblioteca del Museo (Museum Library) and from 1921 was responsible for the *Boletín del Museo Social Argentino* (Argentine Social Museum Bulletin), took this course. The Library and the *Bulletin* were organized in accor-

dance with his professor's recommendations; Birabén introduced into South America the rules of the Institute in Brussels. Franco recognized the advantages of the decimal bibliographic classification introduced by Birabén and made them known in his work *Tablas Compendiadas de la Clasificación Bibliográfica Decimal* (*Concise Bibliographic Decimal Classification Tables*) (1932):

- **ideological** and **universal**: its symbols represent ideas, and it encompasses the totality of knowledge;
- **international**: its symbols are figures;
- **methodical, uniform**, and **symmetric** due to the rules that govern the creation of subdivisions;
- Indefinitely **extensive**.

To Franco, its elasticity made this classification a practical instrument for the subject organization of books on the shelves, given that "the aesthetics in the location of books in a library that really wants to be useful to the reader must be set aside . . ." <sup>22</sup> He gave an account of the repercussions that the bibliographic decimal classification had had in different fields, and he argued:

The multiple advantages of such a system, which any reader of medium erudition in the field of bibliographic sciences and librarianship observes, arouses the interest of many people and organizations that continuously come to our Institute with the aim of studying the organization of their Library. In order to satisfy the want of all those who ask us, giving them the necessary instrument, this publication, which is unique in Ibero-America, has been created. <sup>23</sup>

One manifestation of the favorable consensus related to the use of the decimal classification in the local environment was published in the bibliographic journal *La Literatura Argentina* (*Argentine Literature*), and transcribed in the "Boletín del Museo Social Argentino," in 1930. Carlos Manacorda, a member of the *Concejo Deliberante* (a parliamentary organization of the city of Buenos Aires), when addressing the granting of land for the Social Museum, supported this initiative in his speech:

More than one of the councilmen sitting at the left in this room—I am certain—have been to the Library of the Argentine Social Museum, the only one . . . with a decimal classification system that allows finding the necessary information promptly. I remember that we went there with men who are active in the Socialist Party, some of which had already disap-



peared, looking for data about the Argentine agrarian problem, and I can say that we obtained the best information in the Argentine Social Museum Library.<sup>24</sup>

These demonstrations make it clear the sympathy that men belonging to the Socialist Party had towards the decimal system. Angel M. Gutiérrez, for instance, a scientist and member of that political party, was inclined towards the decimal model, which was attractive to those who embraced the "socialist library ideology" for being a system with an international orientation, scientific, and modern (Tripaldi 1997, 29). These testimonies are representative of the significance that the bibliographic decimal classification had in the country and emphasizes the will of its followers to subscribe to standards emanating from institutions of worldwide prestige, hence reinforcing the basic concepts on which the new trends in the field were upheld.

From a different perspective, Dr. Bernardo Lavayén, in his article "Estudio Bibliotecográfico, Sistema de Clasificación en General, El Sistema Indefinido" (*Estudio Bibliotecográfico, Classification System in General, The Indefinite System*, 1929), presented with an application for the position of library director at the Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Universidad de Buenos Aires (School of Economic Sciences, University of Buenos Aires), took up again the ideas advocated by his professor Juan Túmburus; these were based both on his published as well as unpublished writings, especially the one entitled *Bases técnicas para un Instituto Bibliográfico Latino Americano* (*Technical Basis for a Latin American Bibliographic Institute*). He developed the methodology created by his mentor with some additions that facilitated its application in the library he aspired to manage. He transcribed judgments made by Túmburus, and he asserted the advantages of the "indefinite system":

- simplicity for classifying, for handling the repertoire by the readers and the library staff, and for placing wanted books either on the shelves or in the inventory;
- "... absence of a *key* ... Here the key appears gradually, without ever being finished; casually, it is governed by rules of its own lack of definition, from where the name given to the system comes: 'Indefinite.'<sup>25</sup>
- interpolation of other classifications, an exclusive advantage of this system, according to Lavayén;
- easiness for creating and publishing catalogs;
- potential for making references;
- capability for making the "launching" or "breaking down" of the different subjects of topics covered in the book, journal, periodical, conference proceeding, etc.;

- economy of the system;
- no need for alphanumeric characters (Lavayén 1929, 1045-46).

As Sabor Riera (1975, 122) observed, with the death of Birabén and Túmburus in 1929, a period in the history of Argentine library techniques was closed. However, the debate initiated by them leaves the doors open for future generations.

### **AFFIRMATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN LIBRARIANSHIP**

Ernesto Nelson, Argentine educator and professor, member of the North-American Cultural Institute, of the Association of Teachers of Spanish (U.S.A.), and of the Museo Social Argentino, having lived in the United States for several years, had the opportunity to admire the organization and the role that libraries played in the development of that nation. He communicated his observations in a lengthy work *Las Bibliotecas en los Estados Unidos (Libraries in the United States)*—published in 1927, re-edited and enlarged in 1929—in which he carried out a detailed analysis of library organization in the United States through the description of the public library's mission, its relationship with the state, its historical evolution, administration, education of professionals, sections or departments, extension activities for different kinds of users, etc. The author states the goal of his work:

And, writing for his brothers in race, he has deemed it necessary to insist on the picture of that spirit of cooperation and trust exhibited by libraries in the United States; spirit that, to his judgment is that libraries in the Latin part of this continent are more in need, so that soon Schwill's hard statement stops being true, who referring to libraries in South America, says: "Only one criticism can be made to all of them, and it is the irritating lack of life of their administrations."

Hence, if this book, written with a mixed feeling of admiration for some and faith in the progress of others, could contribute to stimulating even in a small amount to the library progress in countries speaking our language, the motives for this author would be fulfilled.<sup>26</sup>

In the chapter dedicated to classification, he gives a brief account of the Decimal System created by Melvil Dewey, the Expansive System of bibliographer C. A. Cutter, the Library of Congress Classification System, and the Brown System. In regards to the Decimal System, he specifies: "One of the

most complete expositions of the Decimal Classification System has been done in our countries by the Argentine bibliographer and publicist Federico Birabén, ardent propagandist of the Decimal System in South America."<sup>27</sup> To J. Frederic Finó (1952, 10), a researcher of the history of librarianship, this work represented "a true call of attention" for Argentine librarians.

In the next decade, Manuel Selva, who had a high technical position at the National Library, introduced his work *Antecedentes, Sistemas de Clasificación e Índice Metódico de Catálogos* (*Antecedents, Classification Systems and Methodical Catalogs Index*), published in 1931 and cited by Hanny Simons (1934, 29). Selva argued then: "... the classification system adopted by Groussac was in its time and it will still be for many years the best for our country..."<sup>28</sup> In other words, in his professional opinion, he agreed with the classification criteria set by Groussac for the catalogs of the National Library:

Following this doctrine, we have tried to keep the main subject groups—which also allows a certain cohesion between the new catalogs and the old printed catalogs. However, we have taken into account the indexes of the Library of Congress in Washington and those of the so-called "decimal" system.

Without trying to give our opinion about how good it is or its efficacy, we must say that the test made to adopt the Dewey System in our Library did not have a happy result, which was proved both because of the artificial inclusion of some subjects in sections openly unsuspected, as for the inadaptability of our public to a system that requires previous training, which does not take place with the current system, in which the simplest scholarly knowledge is enough to find any science in the corresponding area.<sup>29</sup>

Some years later (1937), Selva was the coordinator and professor of the first course for librarians, organized by the Museo Social Argentino. He published the *Manual de Bibliotecnia* (*Handbook of Library Techniques*) in 1939 in which there was a shift in the original thinking of the author towards the Decimal Classification. In its preface written by Ernesto Nelson, he emphasized the value of this repertoire given that it started the integral study of library techniques in the country. He recommended that this work be consulted as a source of knowledge for managing libraries and fundamentally for the study of issues related to the content of books:

In this field, our libraries will find great benefit in consulting the work of Mr. Selva, who provides a detailed description of the way the Decimal



System works, which is widespread in our country after the persevering efforts made many years ago by Federico Birabén . . . <sup>30</sup>

Congruent with the evolution of his ideas in librarianship, by 1940 Selva introduced a project to reorganize the library of the Asociación Médica Argentina (Argentine Medical Association), where he advised, on that occasion, the usage of the Decimal Classification.

The proliferation of publications on library topics, the increasing interest in the technical organization of libraries, the concern over the need for modernization in library education, and the existence of a group of individuals committed to the development of Argentine librarianship are the factors associated with a renewed library movement in the beginning of the 1940s. The professional environment seemed to be mature enough to welcome the book *Catalogación y clasificación de libros* (*Cataloging and Classification of Books*) (1945a), by Carlos Víctor Penna. Some colleagues, gathered in the Escuela del Museo Social Argentino (Argentine Social Museum School), believed that with this work there would be an end of a history of division among librarians and that it would start a successful era for the profession in Argentina by the "definitive" prevalence of the "new library doctrine" (Finó y Hourcade 1952, 276).

As a matter of fact, the goals stated by Penna were not that ambitious. The value of this work, to our understanding, is that of having answered to the demands of synthesis and systematization at that particular moment in the history of Argentine librarianship. This hypothesis is verified by the words of Penna: "... the idea of the author has been purely and exclusively to present in an organic manner all the general problems that classification and cataloging pose, and it can only be considered a contribution to this aspect of librarianship." <sup>31</sup> The author of the prologue of the book, Ernesto G. Gietz, highlighted the methodical exposition of the different stages of classification and cataloging processes that, according to him, were the fruit of the expertise acquired by the author at Columbia University in New York; the influence of American librarianship was decisive not only for Penna but also for Argentine librarianship.

The plan of this work was carefully organized. Depending on why it was consulted, it could meet the requirements of a practical handbook or of a textbook. Both aspects sought a pragmatic purpose: to mitigate the distressing reality of Argentine librarianship at that time. Penna also occupied himself in reflecting on additional works that same year (Penna 1945b). In the specific field of classification, the author addressed different issues from the concept of classification to the systematic catalog, passing through subject headings and call numbers. He described the systems of Cutter, the Library of Congress, and the decimal classification systems (Dewey and UDC); to the latter he devoted

a special chapter—Buonocore indicated Penna as one of the supporters of the decimal system in Argentina (Buonocore 1948, 271). At the same time, his preference for Anglo-American authors of his time (Margaret Mann, W. N. Randall, W. S. Merrill, W. C. B. Sayers, among many others) is undeniable. This fact is made clear in the bibliography he cites at the end of each of the chapters. In summary, the book by Penna did not bring new knowledge to classification. This was not his purpose, but it taught in a structured manner its main issues, problems, and possible solutions.

### *CONCLUSIONS*

The history of classification in Argentina is marked by the influence of different bibliographic and library trends, both European and American, throughout the various periods. In the nineteenth century, library policies centered on the creation of libraries, unfortunately to the detriment of their technical organization. This led to the application of diffuse classification systems, originally conceived for the collections of specific libraries. However, by the end of the period, there emerged the figure of Paul Groussac, who proposed a classification scheme for the National Library catalog under the influence of French bibliography, represented in this case, by Jacques-Charles Brunet. Groussac's system had a wide acceptance in Argentine libraries of his time.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, a controversy about classification systems resulted in a dialectical process between the affirmation of the Decimal Classification by Federico Birabén and the antithetical stance led by Juan Túmburus under the influence of the German library tradition, mainly through Julius Petzholdt, who was one of the first critics of the Decimal System in Europe. This argument encompassed, in fact, the issues about the goals of classification: the bibliographic order and/or the library order. For example, Túmburus' ideas gave the particularity of each library as a system preference over the universality of classification.

The overcoming of the duality surrounding the debate took place during the 1930s and 1940s when the ascendancy of American librarianship in the treatment of library materials (particularly with regard to Columbia University) was firmly established. This was especially true since Carlos Víctor Penna set a trend in teaching classification in Argentine library schools.

To conclude, it is worth emphasizing that within this historical sequence the theoretical reflection about the foundations of classification have not been left aside. Paul Groussac (1893) and Juan Túmburus (1913) speculated on the feasibility of a bibliographic classification and on the general principles of the division of classes and subclasses of knowledge.



## NOTES

1. "Si alguno quisiese saber sobre los libros que hay acerca de alguna facultad, se le franqueará el índice para que lo examine a su entera satisfacción" (Parada 2000, 437).

2. "Del punto de vista estrictamente bibliotecario, es posible señalar la existencia de ciertas técnicas profesionales. En primer término, la elaboración de índices de autor y de materia, registrados bajo la forma de cuadernos o libros..." (Parada 2000, 431).

3. "Sobre la base de una exacta clasificación de las ciencias" (Groussac [1893] 1967, lvii).

4. "Empleo pragmático de los recursos bibliográficos" (Parada 2000, 429).

5. "Así, el proyecto adjunto de ley que el Poder Ejecutivo viene a proponer para excitar la formación de las bibliotecas populares, está calcado sobre las bases que, recomendadas por Horacio Mann, fueron adoptadas en la mayor parte de los Estados de la Unión y repite casi literalmente las disposiciones de un estatuto del Alto Canadá..." (Argentina. Congreso. Cámara de Senadores 1870, 453).

6. "Mantener constantemente el buen orden de los libros i demás publicaciones u objetos que contengan los estantes de la biblioteca; cuidando de no cambiar su colocación, según el orden numérico o alfabético, con que estén señalados en los catálogos respectivos" (Boletín... 1872b, lxxxiv).

7. "Un catálogo de todos los libros con la numeración desde el 1 hasta el 100, etc., de los volúmenes que contenga cada sección en que la biblioteca se divida; poniendo la misma numeración en estampillas pequeñas en el dorso de cada volumen. Las secciones serán designadas en el catálogo y en los estantes con el título correspondiente y números romanos. Estos números serán puestos en la estampilla de cada libro, repitiéndolos en todos los volúmenes que comprenda la sección designada por cada uno de aquellos números" (Boletín... 1873, lxxxviii).

8. "Existe otra razón aún más sólida, desde nuestro punto de vista especial; y es la consideración de la estructura misma de los libros, que son, al fin y al cabo, nuestras unidades, nuestras entidades científicas" (Groussac [1893] 1967, lvii).

9. "No es su catálogo, el que está encargado de instruir á los lectores, sinó sus libros; y lo más á que pueda aspirar [se refiere al bibliógrafo], es el método claro y sencillo que torne supérflua su personal intervención. Sus clasificaciones deben ser las más usuales y las que respondan á las analogías más naturales y evidentes" (Groussac [1893] 1967, lviii).

10. "Para el bibliógrafo, si me es permitido esforzar un poco el pensamiento con tal de precisarlo, todos los animales que vuelan son aves, todos los que nadan, peces—como en el Génesis" (Groussac [1893] 1967, lviii).

11. "El clásico manual de Brunet está plagado de atribuciones dudosas, por no haberse empleado el método de las repeticiones. Cierta es que usa el de las llamadas y referencias en los encabezamientos; pero no es suficiente, puesto que el título falta en otra sección" (Groussac [1893] 1967, lxv).

12. "... la más digna de ocupar la atención de los hombres de estudio, y hasta de cautivarla..." (Birabén 1904, 344).

13. "... (1) un principio verdaderamente científico de *clasificación* bibliográfica, del que se deriva un notable sistema de *nomenclatura* y *notación* bibliográficas; (2) un sistema realmente práctico de anotación ó *redacción* bibliográfica; y (3) un amplio y fecundo método de trabajo fundado en la *cooperación* internacional y aun universal" (Birabén 1904, 346).



14. "... levantó un verdadero avispero entre los bibliotecarios más caracterizados de todos los países" (Túmburus 1913, 737).

15. "En los institutos bibliográficos el *lector* no existe; existen empleados que atienden los clientes lejanos y los corresponsales, mientras que en las bibliotecas el *lector* es todo. La diferencia es enorme!" (Túmburus 1913, 739).

16. "Se ha hablado hace algún tiempo, en un país de este mundo, de legislar la clasificación bibliotecográfica, haciendo obligatoria la adopción de la clasificación decimal—*Creo quia absurdum est.*—Solo a Nerón, al más autócrata de los emperadores, podría ocurrírsele semejante imposición. La clasificación marcha con la ciencia y ésta no admite límites determinados *a priori*" (Túmburus 1913, 742).

17. "... nunca la clasificación. Esta, en todos los países del mundo, reclama a voces: Libertad! Libertad! Libertad!" (Túmburus 1913, 742).

18. "Otro epíteto no menos expresivo es el de *Rätselsystem* (acertijo) para demostrar que si un lector se halla frente al guarismo: 617.558.I.0897 (*jacertótilis Bartolillo!*) se queda en ayunas, y si no tiene a la mano ese manualito de 2000 páginas llamado *brevariario*, nunca logrará descifrar ese guarismo de once cifras, que en lengua decimal quiere decir simplemente *nefrectomía* ..." (Túmburus 1913, 743).

19. "... salvo los casos de relaciones entre dos o más materias distintas [...] una sola ficha metódica debe bastar" (Túmburus 1913, 755).

20. "Sea un lector ó un investigador bibliográfico que quiere leer un libro sobre *acantonamientos*, cuyo autor no conoce ó le es indiferente. Consultemos el índice alfabético de nuestra clasificación y vemos que al lado de la palabra *acantonamientos* está escrita la cota numérica 113. De ahí deducimos que en el fichero hay una ficha seccional con el número 113 y con la inscripción ACANTONAMIENTOS. Dirigiéndonos al fichero, vemos que en un cajoncito del mismo lleva la chapita: 101 á 150; allí, pues, debe hallarse la sección bibliográfica 113 que buscamos. Si no se encuentra, será porque en la biblioteca no hay libros que traten de ese tema, ó bien esos libros son muy pocos y entonces figurarán en la sección de grado inferior: 110, ALOJAMIENTOS" (Túmburus 1915, 69).

21. "La colocación sistemática no pertenece á la bibliotáctica simple ni á ninguna otra; es una colocación primitiva, de colegial que quiere dar forma de biblioteca á los quince libretes que logró juntar en su vida. Imaginémosnos todos los libros de historia juntos en un estante, todas las novelas en otro, todos los de geografía y viajes en otro, etc. El ignorante (de biblioteconomía, se entiende) exclamaría: ¡Así quiero yo arreglada mi biblioteca! Pero el bibliotecario conoce las consecuencias de este estafalario sistema: en primer lugar se verificará lo del gigante al lado del enano y, secundariamente, la biblioteca se hallará de continuo en movimiento, no tanto por las consultas, como á causa de los desplazamientos ocasionados por cada nueva entrada de libros ..." (Túmburus 1915, 22).

22. "La estética en la colocación de libros en una Biblioteca que quiera en verdad ser útil al lector, ha de hacerse a un lado ..." (Franco 1932, 28).

23. "Las múltiples ventajas de tal sistema, que advierte cualquier lector de mediana ilustración en ciencias bibliográficas y en Biblioteconomía, despiertan el interés de muchas personas y entidades que acuden continuamente a nuestro Instituto a fin de estudiar la organización de su Biblioteca. Para satisfacer el deseo de cuantos nos consultan, dándoles el instrumento necesario, se hace esta publicación que es única en Iberoamérica" (Franco 1932, 5).

24. "Más de uno de los señores concejales que se sientan a la izquierda de este recinto—tengo la seguridad—han concurrido alguna vez a la Biblioteca del Museo Social Argentino, la única . . . con un sistema de clasificación decimal que permite en poco tiempo encontrar los datos que son necesarios. Recuerdo que allí concurríamos con hombres que militan en el Partido socialista, algunos de los cuales ya han desaparecido, buscando datos sobre el problema agrario argentino, y puedo decir que la mejor información la obtuvimos en la Biblioteca del Museo Social Argentino" (*Bulletin* . . . 1930, 453).

25. "... ausencia de *clave* . . . Aquí la clave va surgiendo paulatinamente sin estar nunca en su fin; la rigen casualmente las normas de su propia indefinición, de donde el nombre dado al sistema: 'Indefinido' " (Lavayén 1929, 1045).

26. "Y, escribiendo para sus hermanos de raza, ha creído necesario insistir en la pintura de ese espíritu de cooperación y de confianza que exhiben las bibliotecas de los Estados Unidos; espíritu que a su juicio es el de que más necesitadas se encuentran las bibliotecas en la parte latina de este continente, a fin de que pronto deje de ser verdad el duro juicio de Schwill, quien, refiriéndose a las bibliotecas sudamericanas, dice: 'Una sola crítica puede hacerse a todas, y es la irritante falta de vida de sus administraciones.' "

Si este libro, pues, escrito con un mezclado sentimiento de admiración por los unos y de fe en el progreso de los otros, contribuyese a impulsar, siquiera en pequeñísima medida, el progreso bibliotecario en los países de nuestra habla, los móviles del autor serían colmados" (Nelson 1927, iv-v).

27. Una de las más completas exposiciones del sistema de clasificación decimal ha sido hecha en nuestros países por el bibliógrafo y publicista argentino Federico Birabén, ardoroso propagandista del sistema decimal en la América del Sur" (Nelson 1927, 203).

28. "... la clasificación adoptada por Groussac fué en su tiempo y será todavía por muchos años la mejor para nuestro país . . ." (Simons 1934, 29).

29. "Siguiendo esta doctrina, hemos procurado—lo que además permite cierta cohesión entre los nuevos ficheros y los antiguos catálogos impresos—mantener los grupos principales de materias. Hemos, no obstante, tenido en cuenta los índices de la Biblioteca del Congreso, de Washington y los del sistema llamado 'decimal.'

Sin que con esto pretendamos opinar sobre su bondad o eficacia, debemos decir que el ensayo efectuado para adoptar el sistema Dewey en nuestra Biblioteca, no obtuvo un feliz éxito, lo que se comprobó tanto por la artificial inclusión de algunas materias en secciones abiertamente insospechadas, como por la inadaptabilidad de nuestro público a un sistema que exige preparación previa, cosa que no sucede con el actual, en el que los más simples conocimientos escolares bastan para ubicar cualquier ciencia en la rama que le corresponde" (Selva 1935, 7).

30. "En este terreno nuestros bibliotecarios encontrarán gran provecho en consultar la obra del señor Selva, quien detalla el funcionamiento del sistema decimal, ya bastante difundido en nuestro país después de los perseverantes esfuerzos desplegados desde hace muchos años por el ingeniero don Federico Birabén . . ." (Nelson 1938, 5-6).

31. "... la idea del autor ha sido pura y exclusivamente la de presentar en forma orgánica todos los problemas generales que plantean la clasificación y catalogación, y sólo puede considerársela como una contribución a este aspecto de la biblioteconomía" (Penna 1945a, xix).



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