

The People's and Parish Libraries of Father Claret: An Outline of a Library Network in the Nineteenth Century

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Portrait of Archbishop Antonio Maria Claret by Luis de Madrazo (Museum of Romanticism, Madrid)

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Abstract

In this article, I analyze the 1865 booklet *Las bibliotecas populares y parroquiales* by Father Antonio Maria Claret, published in Barcelona by the Impremta de l'Hereu de Pau Riera. A previous article published in *Catholic Library World* analyzed libraries in Spain at the time, with special attention to Catalonia and Madrid, and the role played by the *Librería Religiosa* (Religious Bookstore) and other religious publishers and printers in the dissemination of so-called “good books.”¹ To expand on that history, an overview of people's and religious libraries in the nineteenth century is provided here.

Claret's booklet describes, in a brief and straightforward way, the organization and functioning recommended for these libraries. Aspects such as personnel, management, physical space, and the collections themselves are included, and Claret's clear Christian pastoral vocation is a core part of the initiative. The above-mentioned aspects represent a primitive outline for a network of libraries with a global vocation, led by the *Librería Religiosa*, to promote reading and literacy among the popular classes, which was undoubtedly a great novelty in the nineteenth century. In spite of the chronological gap, it can be claimed that Claret's initiative was half a century ahead of the early plans for library networks promoted in the civil domain by the *Mancomunitat* (Commonwealth) of Catalonia and other regional governments in Spain.

All quotations from the sources cited are given in English translation, with the original text in Spanish and Catalan, given in footnotes.²

¹ Gil-Solés, Daniel. 2018. “The Printing of Popular Religious Books in Barcelona During the Nineteenth Century.” *Catholic Library World* 89 (2): 104–20.

² I would like to thank Silvia Coll-Vinent for her help in translating and proofreading this article.



The Context of Libraries in Catalonia

The nineteenth-century library scene in Catalonia offered a bleak picture. There was no public library infrastructure, provided either by the regional government of Catalonia or by the municipalities themselves; “despite the existence of some popular libraries, state libraries, and many private ones—athenaeums, economic societies, and reading centers—that served their associates, and the knowledge, as we have seen, of Anglo-Saxon library models and the desire to create on the basis of this model, it was not possible to establish a system of state-wide public libraries” (Baró; Mañà, 2004, Section 2).³ With a lack of governmental support, private library initiatives emerged by 1915, “It was almost three-quarters of a century since the people had shown the indisputable longing to read on their own and had also begun to create by their own means their small popular libraries, as well-intentioned as they were poorly oriented, in their athenaeums and casinos” (Galí, 1984, 9).⁴

In her book, Comas i Güell (2001) illustrates in numbers the popular movement that promoted the creation of libraries for the working class before the *Mancomunitat* of Catalonia of 1914,⁵ and “provides an inventory of more than three hundred libraries in the city of Barcelona and its province belonging to reading offices, people’s athenaeums and other associations that made the books available to the public. Despite this huge number of centers, it should be borne in mind that their funds were, in most centers, scarce, little, or too selective, as most of these libraries were attached to institutions closely identified with politics, and poorly organized, as they lacked trained staff” (Baró; Mañà, 2004).⁶ The study by Gil-Solés, Guzmán-Fernández, and Fàbregas-Rebato (2019, 252) also briefly discusses these drawbacks as follows: “Despite the goodwill of these people’s libraries and the excellent work they did to

spread culture and reading among the working classes— widely illiterate—these spaces did not meet any of the requirements of the minimum standards of quality and of efficient, effective and professional service.”⁷ In this same study (252-254), the authors briefly review the libraries in Barcelona during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There were only four libraries in the city during the nineteenth century: the Episcopal Public Library of Barcelona, in operation since 1776; the Provincial Public Library of Barcelona (1847), which was not established until 1882 in the same spaces it currently uses, in the University of Barcelona’s old building;⁸ the Library of the Ateneo Barcelonés, which became a public library in 1872; and finally the Arús Public Library, established on March 24, 1895. In no case were any of these libraries organized as part of a network; each operated autonomously.

The Diffusion of So-Called “Good Books”

In general terms, the diffusion of the so-called “good books” in religious circles in Spain during the nineteenth century consisted of three basic pillars. First, the publishing of religious books experienced an extraordinary boom in that century, mainly to counteract a parallel boom in the access to culture and reading of an emerging and growing working class. The Church wanted to preserve the privileges it had retained for centuries in this area,⁹ and in fact, criticized the popular libraries that were promoted by the civil government, which, it stated, “can be foci of true impiety, given the principles of the atheistic or free-cultist legislation that governs us. The Catholic people must do everything possible to counteract the dangerous influence of such establishments; it is their duty, therefore, to oppose the free library to the purely and

³ Original text in Catalan: “malgrat l’existència d’algunes biblioteques populars, biblioteques estatals i moltes de privades —ateneus, societats econòmiques i centres de lectura— que donaven servei als seus associats, i del coneixement, com hem vist, dels models de biblioteques anglosaxones i del desig de crear-ne sobre la base d’aquest model, no s’aconsegueix establir un sistema de biblioteques públiques d’àmbit estatal.”

⁴ Original text in Catalan: “Ja feia prop de tres quarts de segle que el poble havia manifestat el deler incontrastable de llegir pel seu compte i havia començat a crear també pels seus mitjans les seves petites i tan ben intencionades com mal orientades biblioteques populars en els seus ateneus i casinos.”

⁵ The Commonwealth of Catalonia (Catalan: Mancomunitat de Catalunya), was a deliberative assembly made up of the councillors of Catalonia’s four provinces. Promoted in its final stages of gestation by the Regionalist League of Catalonia, it was strongly endorsed by a municipal referendum in October 1913. The Commonwealth was created in 1914 and was disbanded and outlawed in 1925 during Miguel Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship. For further political information about it, see: *Towards Autonomy: the Commonwealth of Catalonia, 1914-1925* (<https://web.gencat.cat/en/generalitat/historia/diputacions-espanya-constitucional/#bloc3>) [Access: January 25, 2022]. In 1915, the Mancomunitat of Catalonia (Commonwealth of Catalonia) drew up a project for the creation of a Public Library

Network. In 1918 the first four libraries were inaugurated in the cities of Valls, Sallent, les Borges Blanques, and Olot (Mayol, 2005).

⁶ Original text in Catalan: “recull un inventari de més tres-centes biblioteques a la ciutat de Barcelona i província pertanyents a gabinets de lectura, ateneus populars i altres associacions que posaven els llibres a disposició del públic. Tot i aquesta abundància de centres, cal tenir en compte que els seus fons eren, en la majoria de centres, escassos, poc o massa triats, ja que la majoria d’aquestes biblioteques eren adscrites a institucions molt identificades amb les diferents opcions polítiques, i poc organitzats, ja que mancaven de personal preparat.”

⁷ Original text in Catalan: “Cal dir que, malgrat la bona voluntat d’aquestes biblioteques populars i l’excel·lent feina que van fer per la difusió de la cultura i de la lectura entre les classes treballadores— àmpliament analfabetes— aquests espais no complien amb cap dels estàndards mínims de qualitat i de servei eficient, eficaç i professional.”

⁸ That was the year when it received the official name of Provincial Public Library of Barcelona (Verger-Arce, 2008).

⁹ For further information on this subject, see Daniel Gil-Solés, “The Printing of Popular Religious Books in Barcelona During the Nineteenth Century,” *Catholic Library World*, vol. 89, no. 12, 104-120.



exclusively Catholic library” (Sardà i Salvany, 1891, 289-290).¹⁰ It was also during the 1880s “when the Church seemed to realize the ‘popularization’ of that nefarious taste for novels and recreational literature in general. A social work of parish and people’s Catholic libraries [was] thus set in motion, charged with providing ‘healthy and useful reading’ by means of free home lending” (Sánchez Illán, 2001, 370-371).^{11,12}

The second pillar was the use of the *Boletín Bibliográfico-Católico*, or *Bibliographic-Catholic Bulletin*. Launched in July 1861, the *Bulletin’s* main objective was to “indicate the good books published in Spain, and thus facilitate their acquisition” (*Boletín Bibliográfico-Católico*, no. 1, 1).¹³ In the first article of the first issue of the *Bulletin*, the need to counteract the pernicious effect of reading so-called “bad books” among the popular classes was made very clear. For this purpose, the *Bulletin* encouraged the creation of “parish and people libraries, free or paid reading cabinets, and several religious and charitable societies that facilitate, as far as they can, the reading of good books” (Ibid., 1-2).¹⁴ Later, the same article raised the difficulties in acquiring these books, which focus mainly on the choice and acquisition of the books. Solving these difficulties is also a main objective of the *Bulletin*, “first, by indicating the books that can be acquired, their prices and qualities; second, by indicating the points where they are sold” (Ibid., 2).¹⁵

Finally, the third pillar was the creation “and the configuration, starting in 1864, of a network of parish libraries and repositories of ‘good books’” (Viñao Frago, 2001, 196),¹⁶ promoted by the Academia de San Miguel.¹⁷ These libraries were discussed in the booklet analyzed in this article. Claret wrote what could be called the first technical manual on these libraries.¹⁸

Early Similar Experiences

Three proposals in the field of parish libraries prior to Claret’s serve as examples and provide a historically appropriate context.

First, we may mention a late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century initiative by Anglican missionaries in North America. Thomas Bray (1656 or 1658-1730), an English clergyman, helped formally establish the Church of England in Maryland, and “together with the societies he established to carry on his work, laid the foundation for nearly one hundred libraries in America between 1695 and 1785” (Laugher, 1973, ix).

Secondly, in an article published in Volume XXI of the *Semanario erudito, que comprehende varias obras ineditas, criticas morales, instructivas ... de nuestros mejores autores antiguos y modernos* (Valladares, 1789), the Benedictine Father Martín Sarmiento (1695-1772)¹⁹ proposed the creation of

¹⁰ Original text in Spanish: “que pueden ser focos de verdadera impiedad, dados los principios de la legislación atea ó libreculista que nos rige. El pueblo católico debe hacer lo posible para contrarrestar la peligrosa influencia de tales establecimientos; deber suyo es, de consiguiente, oponer á la Biblioteca libre la Biblioteca pura y exclusivamente católica.”

¹¹ Original text in Spanish: “cuando la Iglesia parece darse cuenta de la ‘popularización’ de ese gusto nefando por las novelas y la literatura recreativa en general. Se pone así en marcha una obra social de bibliotecas parroquiales y populares católicas encargadas de proporcionar ‘sanas y útiles lecturas’ mediante el préstamo gratuito a domicilio.”

¹² Sánchez Illán (2001, 371) lists a few religious initiatives, which seem to be aimed at a cultured public, but which “have not been able or cannot contain or channel that growing people’s fondness for reading novels and follies, perhaps exaggerated by apologetics.” Original text in Spanish: “no han podido o no pueden contener ni encauzar esa creciente afición popular por la lectura de novelas y folletines, tal vez exagerada por la apologética.”

¹³ Original text in Spanish: “indicar los buenos libros que se publican en España, y facilitar de esta manera su adquisición.”

¹⁴ Original text in Spanish: “se propician á crear en España bibliotecas parroquiales y populares, gabinetes de lectura gratuita ó retribuida, y varias sociedades religiosas y caritativas facilitan, en lo que pueden, la lectura de buenos libros.”

¹⁵ Original text in Spanish: “lo primero, indicando los libros que se pueden adquirir, sus precios y cualidades; lo segundo, manifestando los puntos donde se venden.”

¹⁶ Original text in Spanish: “y la configuración, a partir de 1864, de una red de bibliotecas parroquiales y depósitos de ‘buenos libros.’”

¹⁷ The Academy of San Miguel was founded by Father Claret in 1859, was approved by His Holiness Pope Pius IX on February 28, 1859, and by Royal Order of March 16 of the same year of the Spanish State. (Comas i Güell, 2001, 249). The Academia aimed “rather than publishing new books, it aims to circulate and promote the reading and propagation of the good ones already published. So far it has published only one book; but its members organize libraries in the places where a choir has been established.” (*Boletín Bibliográfico-Católico*, no. 1, 1861, 4). Original text in Spanish: “más bien que publicar libros nuevos, tiene por objetivo circular y promover la lectura y propagación de los buenos ya publicados. Hasta ahora solamente ha publicado un libro; pero los socios de ella organizan bibliotecas en los puntos donde se ha establecido algún coro.”

¹⁸ Catalan priest Antoni Maria Claret i Clarà (1807-1870) became Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba and confessor to Queen Isabella II of Spain. He was the founder of the Claretian order. He was beatified in 1934 and canonized in 1950. Claret is a key figure for understanding religious publishing in Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1848 he supported (and practically made his own) the recently created Librería Religiosa, founded that same year by Father Josep Caixal i Estradé. Claret’s support was fundamental, and between 1848 and its dissolution in 1866 the Library printed more than 9.5 million documents. In 1859 he founded the Academia de San Miguel, from which he promoted the creation of a network of popular and parish libraries throughout Spain. For further biographical information about Father Claret, see the work of Aguilar (1894) mentioned in the bibliography.

¹⁹ Born as Pedro José García Balboa (March 9, 1695, in Villafranca del Bierzo, El Bierzo—December 7, 1772, in Madrid), Sarmiento was a Spanish scholar, writer, and Benedictine monk, and an illustrious representative of the Enlightenment.



public libraries “in all the places where there are public universities” (142),²⁰ and that “as for the building, a suitable place should be chosen and, if possible, be placed next to the main church” (144).²¹ In fact, Sarmiento is a key figure in the Spanish library field of the eighteenth century. In addition to having one of the most important private libraries in Spain during the first half of the eighteenth century²² and extensive bibliographic knowledge, “Sarmiento stands out for his concern for the promotion of culture, including the promotion of reading and his proposals for the creation and improvement of libraries” (Varela Orol, 2011, 122).²³

Finally, contemporaneously to Claret’s initiative and spearheaded by the then-bishop of the Diocese of Segorbe, Mariano Miguel Gómez (1876-1880),²⁴ “The formation of a small library in each parish was promoted, formed with the Catechism of Trent, other books of dogmatic content, and the work of Father Joseph Mach, *Tesoro del sacerdote*” (Moliner Prada, 2016, 95-96).^{25, 26}

²⁰ Original text in Spanish: “en todos los lugares en que hubiese públicas Universidades.”

²¹ Original text in Spanish: “en quanto al edificio se debe escoger un sitio acomodado y si pudiere ser junto á la Iglesia principal.”

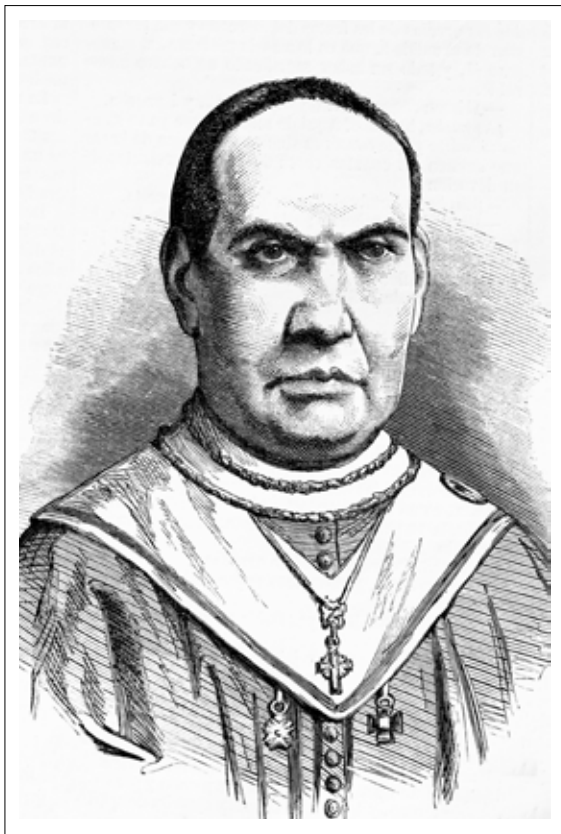
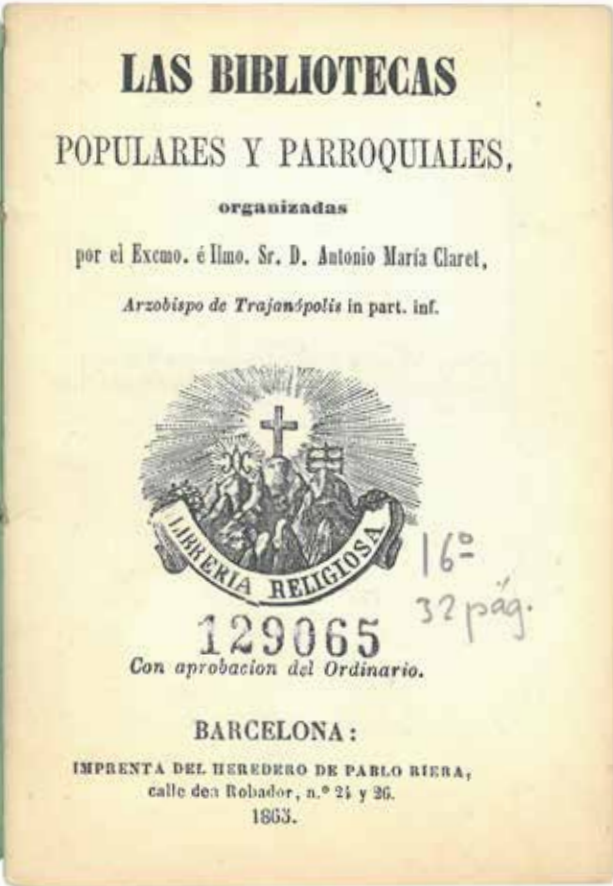
²² For further information, consult the doctoral thesis of Rocío Ameneiros Rodríguez “La Biblioteca de Martín Sarmiento: Reception of the Enlightenment in Spain” (2015) cited in the bibliography.

²³ Original text in Spanish: “Sarmiento sobresale por su preocupación por el fomento de la cultura, incluyendo la promoción de la lectura y sus propuestas de creación y mejora de bibliotecas.”

²⁴ Probably the example of the Diocese of Segorbe is due to the fact that “laws were also passed (and are recorded in the *Novísima Recopilación*) so that libraries could be formed with the books plundered by the bishops; but very few were formed by this means” (De la Fuente, 1861, 17). Original text in Spanish: “también se dieron leyes (y constan en la *Novísima Recopilación*) para que se formaran Bibliotecas con los libros y expolios de los señores Obispos; pero fueron muy contadas las que por este medio se formaron.”

²⁵ Original text in Spanish: “impulsó la formación de una pequeña biblioteca en cada parroquia, formada con el *Catecismo de Trento*, otros libros de contenido dogmático y la obra del P. José Mach, *Tesoro del sacerdote*.”

²⁶ Some years before the publication of Father Claret’s book, we already find some isolated initiatives, such as the one promoted by the Bishop of Cadiz in a circular of January 20, 1859, “so that libraries would be erected in the parishes” (Elías de Molins, 1889, 338). Original text in Spanish: “para que se erigieran bibliotecas en las parroquias.”



Catalan Saint Antonio María Claret, bishop and founder of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 1807-1870. Antique illustration. 1865.



Description of the Chapters²⁷

CHAPTER 1

On the Need for People and Parochial Libraries

In the first chapter, Claret provided a justification of his project, which he saw as an extension of existing literacy projects such as the extensive bibliography that, from 1848 onwards, he had published in his *Librería Religiosa* (Religious Bookstore), and the libraries, approved by the Spanish government on May 6, 1859, that already existed in the different branches of the *Academia de San Miguel* (Academy of San Miguel) throughout many Spanish cities, serving books to members (Aragó, 1961, 17).²⁸ To these initiatives, Claret wanted to “add another one that, in our opinion, will be the most suitable for our purpose, and that is to set up and organize people’s and parish libraries in all the towns and parishes of Spain” (6-7),²⁹ with an objective to “satisfy all the demands of the people who ask for books so that they can read and instruct themselves” (7).³⁰ At the same time, the reason for choosing the parish as the site of the library was so that “people could go there easily and borrow books” (Lozano, 1985, 438).³¹ Claret thus sought to overcome the obstacles faced by the popular classes of the time in accessing reading and books, as there were then libraries only in the big cities, or for exclusively private use.

In this way, the parish libraries project became the third pillar of the Claretian initiatives of promotion and diffusion of the press, of reading, and of education among adults in popular and working classes in the nineteenth century. The other two were the *Librería Religiosa* and the *Academia de San Miguel* itself. The aim and the function of the parish libraries would be none other than to “facilitate the reading of works, much more than the sale and gifting of such materials could do. A library in each town or parish, well supplied and accessible to all, could be an effective instrument for the religious education of the people, at various levels” (Lozano, 1985, 438-439).³²

Already in the first chapter, Claret introduced the concept of “good books,” a concept that permeated his work and provided the foundation for his desire to support the literacy of a working class that, by the mid-nineteenth century, was being increasingly influenced by the forces of secularization.³³ Another example demonstrating concern about the moral value of books people were reading at the time is the distribution of the *Syllabus errorum* of Pius IX in 1864, which “created a real state of alert against the dangers of popular education that encouraged reading. The errors of negligence of Catholics in the face of the workers’ movement, which questioned the traditional values defended by the Church, remained on the table and needed to be rectified or else social control would be lost” (Comas i Güell, 2001, 23).^{34,35} For Claret, as it could not be otherwise, the good books were

²⁷ The first edition was published in Madrid with exactly the same text but arranged differently, and was printed in 1864 at the *Imprenta y Librería de D. E. Aguado*. The textual quotations that I will include in this article are from the 1865 edition.

²⁸ The *Academia de San Miguel* was organized by “choirs”. A “choir” is a branch, or local chapter, of the *Academia*, so called because the different chapters of the *Academia* were organized in accordance with the celestial hierarchy of the angelic choirs (see Claret, *Plan de la Academia de San Miguel*, 6-7, 10, 11, 17). The choirs (“*coros*”) in question were small “cells” consisting of five individuals (corresponding the five mysteries of the Holy Rosary), who would be charged with, among other things, running the peoples’ and parish libraries (see *ibid.*, 26, Art. 30).

²⁹ Original text in Spanish: “añadir otro que, según nuestro parecer, será el mas á propósito á nuestro intento, y es poner y organizar las bibliotecas populares y parroquiales en todos los pueblos y parroquias de España.”

³⁰ Original text in Spanish: “satisfará todas las exigencias de las gentes que piden libros para leer é instruirse.”

³¹ Original text in Spanish: “la gente pudiera acudir con facilidad y de donde se pudiera llevar libros prestados.”

³² Original text in Spanish: “facilitar la lectura de obras, mucho más de lo que podía hacer la venta y el regalo de las mismas. Una biblioteca en cada población o parroquia, bien nutrida y accesible a todos, podía ser un instrumento eficaz de educación religiosa de la gente, a varios niveles.”

³³ Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, reading was considered the main means of instruction for the emerging working class throughout Europe after the French Revolution, and every power group (State, Church, etc.) saw it as one of the main ways to spread their ideas. In this sense, “The Church and the most conservative sectors [saw] with desperation that reading is everywhere, and that is why they [had to] produce and promote good books” (Comas i Güell, 2001, 21). Original text in Catalan: “L’Església i els sectors més conservadors veuen amb desesperació que la lectura és a tot arreu i que per això cal produir i fomentar bons llibres.”

³⁴ Original text in Catalan: “va crear un autèntic estat d’alerta davant els perills de l’educació popular que fomentava la lectura. Els errors de negligència dels catòlics davant el moviment obrer, que qüestionava els valors tradicionals defensats per l’Església, quedaven damunt la taula i calia rectificar o altrament es perdria el control social.”

³⁵ There are more authors who point out the unfortunate nature of the publication of the *Syllabus* in its time and moment. Thus, for Verdoy (2014, 599), “It looked, they claimed, more to a past dominated by censorship, fear and privileges, including those of the Church, than to progress, freedom and the happiness of human beings.” Original text in Spanish: “Miraba, afirmaban, más a un pasado dominado por la censura, el miedo y los privilegios, incluidos los de la Iglesia, que al progreso, a la libertad y a la felicidad de los seres humanos.” On the other hand, Cardenas Ayala (2015) states that in “the claim of ‘universality’ of Catholicism lives a juncture of crisis since the late eighteenth century and at least until the 1870s. This corresponds in part to what the historiography of Catholicism has characterized as the ‘modernist crisis,’ but it goes beyond the terms in which it is usually framed: according to this interpretation, Pius IX would have reacted against modern ideas and political practices from an intransigent position, which far from resolving the crisis would have worsened it.” Original text in Spanish: “que la pretensión de ‘universalidad’ del catolicismo vive una coyuntura de crisis desde finales del siglo XVIII y por lo menos hasta la década de 1870. Esto corresponde en parte a lo



those written from a Christian point of view and conforming to Christian morality, and it was necessary for parish libraries to develop their collections on that line of thought. Thus, “reading [good books] does the same thing; if it is healthy, it preserves, increases, and perfects intelligence and morality, while if it is bad, its consequences are fatal because of the many errors and vices it produces” (8).³⁶

CHAPTER 2

On the Usefulness of Reading Good Books

The notion of “good books” informed the entire pastoral work of Claret, who saw in books a basic, elemental tool to spread the religious message and Christian morality that he wanted to impart, so much so that he developed a whole chapter on the concept of good books.

First of all, Claret discussed the advantages of learning through books, as opposed to learning by oral transmission: “As for a good book, we can have continuously in our hands, we can turn it over whenever we want, we can meditate and ruminate on it carefully, and thus produce very happy effects” (10).³⁷ For Claret, the results of instruction through books have effects that “are slower but more permanent” (10).³⁸ Moreover, in accordance with Claret’s Christian vision of evangelizing through books, “the good writings in which the spirit of Jesus Christ reigns, are undoubtedly the most useful means, the

ones that produce the most seasoned fruits, and the ones that are most needed at a time when everyone knows how to read and wants to read” (10).³⁹

In contrast to the good books, of course, there are bad books and writings, which, according to Claret, are those that “flatter human desires: when they are read, even if they do not convince the reader, they nevertheless leave a perverse impression that moves him to abandon his conscience, and to follow the errors that he has read in them” (11).⁴⁰ At this point, another key concept comes up to illustrate the context in which these parish libraries were established. Throughout the nineteenth century, especially after 1833 (Llanas, 2004, 169), the loss of privileges that the Church had enjoyed until then in regards to the printing of books accelerated.⁴¹ This loss, together with a genuine printing fever, caused the market to flood with hundreds of thousands of books originating in the civil sphere,⁴² books that did not have to go through the filter of Church censorship.^{43, 44} In this way, according to Claret, “Satan and his followers make every possible effort to print books, sheets, newspapers, pamphlets, etc., with such abundance, and make them spread with such acceleration, that they spread everywhere and reach everyone” (11).⁴⁵ He thus justified the need for pastoral care “to exhort by means of writings according to sound doctrine ... since the wicked take such pains to write

que la historiografía del catolicismo ha caracterizado como la ‘crisis modernista,’ pero rebasa los términos en los que suele enmarcarse: de acuerdo con esta interpretación, Pío IX habría reaccionado contra las ideas y prácticas políticas modernas desde una postura intransigente, lo cual lejos de resolver la crisis la habría agudizado.”

³⁶ Original text in Spanish: “*lo propio hace la lectura [de los libros buenos]; si es sana, conserva, aumenta y perfecciona la inteligencia y moralidad, mientras que si es mala son fatales sus consecuencias por los muchísimos errores y vicios que produce.*”

³⁷ Original text in Spanish: “*un libro bueno lo podemos tener continuamente en nuestras manos, lo podemos revolver siempre que nos dé la gana, lo podemos meditar y rumiar detenidamente, y así producir felicísimos efectos.*”

³⁸ Original text in Spanish: “*son más lentos pero más permanentes.*”

³⁹ Original text in Spanish: “*los escritos buenos en que reina el espíritu de Jesucristo, son sin duda alguna el medio más útil, el que produce frutos más sazonados, y el que mas se necesita en el día, que todos saben leer y quieren leer.*”

⁴⁰ Original text in Spanish: “*adulan los deseos humanos: cuando se leen, aunque no convengan al lector, dejan no obstante una perversa impresión que le mueve á abandonar la conciencia, y seguir los desaciertos que en ellos ha leído.*”

⁴¹ In this sense, Father Claret was one of the most fervent promoters of the ecclesiastical cause during the nineteenth century. Thus, “The call, exhumed later, made by Father Claret in 1846 to recruit ecclesiastical adherents to the cause of the Religious Library leaves no room for doubt: it is about disseminating texts as do ‘the impious with their bad and pestilent books, wreaking havoc without account.’” (Llanas, 2004, 170). Original text in Catalan and Spanish: “*La crida que, exhumada més endavant, fa el pare Claret el 1846 per reclutar adherents eclesiàstics a la causa de la Llibreria Religiosa no deixa lloc a dubtes: es tracta de*

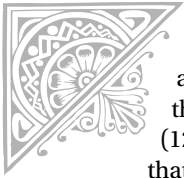
difondre textos com ho fan ‘los impíos con sus malos y pestíferos libros, causando estragos sin cuenta.’”

⁴² This printing fever continued well into the twentieth century. Thus, in 1904, after the nineteenth century and the time of Father Claret, López Peláez (5) speaks that “at present there are, among others, two publishing houses, that of Maucci in Barcelona and that of Sempere in Valencia, which make very abundant printings of impious and immoral books, and sell them at an implausible price because of their cheapness.” Original text in Spanish: “*actualmente hay, entre otras, dos casas editoriales, la de Maucci en Barcelona y la de Sempere en Valencia, que haciendo tiradas abundantísimas de libros impíos e inmorales, los expenden á precio inverosímil por lo barato.*”

⁴³ For example, the *Index librorum prohibitorum* was for many centuries the main book of ecclesiastical censorship. It was first published in 1559 by Pope Pius V, and lasted until 1948, when Pope Pius XII published the last edition. (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, 2007).

⁴⁴ In fact, ecclesiastical censorship against civil publications considered as impious intensified and hardened from 1870 onwards. On a more local level, Sardà i Salvany published in 1872 the *Manual del apostolado de la prensa*, with a series of inquisitorial procedures and persecution of the press that even in 1905 was defended at a congress of Catholic press held in Seville. All this extreme zeal was continued in 1911, with the publication of a *Manual del propagandista* (Llanas, 2004, 34).

⁴⁵ Original text in Spanish: “*Satanás y sus secuaces hacen todos los esfuerzos posibles para imprimir libros, hojas, periódicos, folletos, etc., con tanta abundancia, y lo hacen correr con tanta aceleración, para que se estiendan por todos los lugares y alcancen á todas las personas.*”



and spread their writings, let us do the same so that the Lord will not have cause to complain” (12).⁴⁶ In fact, Claret and his associates did just that. The publishing effort of the *Librería Religiosa*

between 1848 and 1866 was immense and productive, in agreement with the evangelizing, apologetic, and pastoral will of its founder. It was an enormous task, and in only eighteen years of existence, it printed some 2,811,100 books, 2,509,500 booklets, and 4,249,200 single sheets and other prints (Gil Solés, 2018, 112). This brings the total to 9,569,800 documents, an average of some 500,000 documents per year.

To conclude this chapter, Claret presented three examples of the benefits of reading good books. First of all, he wrote about St. Augustine, who, after reading texts by Simplicianus and Ponticianus, but above all the Letters of St. Paul, abandoned his former way of life, far removed from Christian doctrine, and converted to Christianity. Secondly, Claret gave the example of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who, wounded in the siege of Pamplona and convalescing, read the lives of Jesus Christ and the saints and was converted to Christianity. Finally, he briefly discussed how the reading of good books, above all the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, led St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila) to conceive a desire for sanctity and closed with a general reflection on how spiritually wholesome literature of the kind produced by the *Librería Religiosa* and the Academy of San Miguel could lead to the conversion of souls to God.

CHAPTER 3

How to Erect the People's and Parish Libraries

Where They Are to Be Erected

Who is to Approve Them

Duties of the Librarian

From this chapter forward, Father Claret's book takes on the form of a dialogue, consisting of questions and answers. Claret chose this form, similar to that used in catechisms, because he believed that it would lead to a "greater understanding of the material" (17) he was discussing.⁴⁷ He proposed the creation of libraries "in all the towns, and even in all the parishes of each town" (17).⁴⁸ At the same time, he proposed that a layman be responsible for each library, even without specific training in library management, discarding the idea that the priest of each parish should be in charge of the library, because, according to Father Claret, "They are busy in the things of their ministry; nor do they have the opportunity to get among the people of the town like a layman does" (18).⁴⁹ This rudimentary separation of professional tasks is undoubtedly significant, and the necessary attributes to occupy the post are those of a "man of zeal, prudence and activity" (17).⁵⁰ Thus begins a compartmentalization of tasks, and Claret understood (contrary to the prevailing ecclesiastical mentality of his time, in which the ecclesiastics did everything in their parishes) that a priest's tasks "are not precisely those of taking care of the press and organizing a library" (Lozano, 1985, 439).⁵¹ Claret also proposed that there should be people's and parish libraries for women,⁵² but obviously (according to the traditional Catholic mentality of the time and the origin of the proposal),⁵³ these had to be separated from men's libraries.⁵⁴ Finally, Claret proposed that at first there should be only one

⁴⁶ Original text in Spanish: "exhortar por medio de escritos segun la doctrina sana (...) ya que los malos tanto se esfuerzan en escribir y derramar sus escritos, hagamos nosotros otro tanto á fin de que no tenga que quejarse el Señor."

⁴⁷ Original text in Spanish: "Para mayor entendimiento de la materia."

⁴⁸ Original text in Spanish: "en todas las poblaciones, y aun en todas las parroquias de cada población."

⁴⁹ Original text in Spanish: "se hallan ocupados en las cosas de su ministerio; ni tampoco tienen la oportunidad de meterse entre las gentes del pueblo como tiene un seglar."

⁵⁰ Original text in Spanish: "hombre de celo, prudencia y actividad."

⁵¹ Original text in Spanish: "no son precisamente las de cuidar de la prensa y organizar una biblioteca."

⁵² As an example, until 1837 women were forbidden to enter the National Library of Spain, when Antonia Gutiérrez Bueno managed to repeal this prohibition, and the library also accepted female researchers and readers (Constenla, 2013).

⁵³ According to Sarasúa (2002, 292-293) "the definition of handwork as the most suitable occupation for women, and therefore the learning of this work as the central objective of the education of girls, has a long tradition, even prior to the Middle Ages, but it certainly received

a definitive boost with the work of the moralists of the Counter-Reformation, starting with *La perfecta casada* by Fray Luis de León. This tradition made the Catholic Church the most active institution in advocating and establishing, inside and outside, the rigid division of responsibilities, knowledge and activities between women and men." Original text in Spanish: "la definición de las labores de manos como la ocupación más adecuada paralas mujeres, y por tanto el aprendizaje de estas labores como el objetivo central de la enseñanza de las niñas, tiene una larga tradición, anterior incluso a la Edad Media, pero que desde luego recibe un impulso definitivo con la obra de los moralistas de la Contrarreforma, empezando por *La perfecta casada* de fray Luis de León. Esta tradición convirtió a la Iglesia Católica en la institución más activa a la hora de propugnar y establecer, dentro y fuera, la rígida división de competencias, saberes, y actividades entre mujeres y hombres."

⁵⁴ If we briefly review the laws of Spain in the field of education, we will see that all of them specifically emphasize the creation of separate schools for boys and girls, clearly following a Catholic-inspired ideology. It was not until the Liberal Revolution of 1868 that laws began to be enacted in favor of education without distinction of sex. (Mujer y educación en el siglo XIX)



librarian in charge of each of the libraries, although he left the door open to the possibility that if the libraries were to expand, there could be what he called a “vice-librarian” or an assistant librarian (18),⁵⁵ and even a third person, a “secretary” (19).⁵⁶ Claret planned the organization of these libraries in the simple form of a centralized network, and he presented two options: if the town where a library was to be created had a “choir or choirs of the Academia de San Miguel” (19),^{57, 58} the Academy would approve the creation of all the libraries in the town’s parishes. On the other hand, if there were no library of the Academy, a library would have to be approved by the general board of directors of the Academy (19). In both cases, it would be necessary to present an annual economic and activity report to the local branch of the Academy or to the board of directors. In fact, in the *Plan de la Academia de San Miguel*, Claret incorporated the figure of the librarian at a statutory level in each of the Academy’s branches, stating that “the Librarian will give an account of the books acquired and borrowed, or of the changes that have taken place with the books that are in his charge” (Claret, 1859, 28).⁵⁹

Finally, Claret referred to the duties of the librarian, who has to be a “prudent, charitable, and zealous man, because without zeal he will not do anything worthwhile” (20).⁶⁰ Claret further specified that “he must have a well-formed index of the books of the library in his charge; he must see to it that all the books are kept in good condition, without staining or spoiling, and that none are lost, but rather that the number is increased, asking and buying with the money he collects from donations and subscribers. He will have a notebook in which the names of the subscribers will be written” (20).⁶¹ That is to say, Claret pointed out the need for careful book cataloging, for the development of a collection management policy (i.e., conservation and maintenance of the collection, as well as its development and expansion), and for management of library users. Everything is laid out clearly if we take into account the more limited means of those times. However, this vision

that Claret had—and had explained in his own way—seems radically modern. Later on, Claret set forth as fundamental the tasks of fostering literacy and promoting reading (according to his evangelizing and pastoral vision, of course), but he also stated that the librarian “will try to ensure that the subscribers and those who are not subscribers read some book or another from the library, to which end he will insist with holy zeal. On Sundays after the High Mass, or on the day and hour that is considered most convenient, he will tell them that he is ready to give them books to read, and to receive those that they have read” (20-21).⁶²

Reference is also made to the need to prepare an annual report that should indicate the total book-stock of the library at the beginning and end of each year, and the number of loans made. To finish the chapter, Claret briefly described the tasks of the “vice-librarian” or assistant librarian and the secretary.

CHAPTER 4

How Easy It Is To Start a Library

How The Number of Books Can Be Increased

What Has Been Practiced to Keep the Books in Order

In chapter 4, Claret developed the more technical aspects of his vision of librarianship. First, he referred to different ways to acquire new book-stock, and suggested three of them: by donations from the Academy of San Miguel, by individual subscriptions to “a quarter every week or a real vellon⁶³ every two months” (23), or by individual donations of books or funds.⁶⁴ Secondly, he wrote about the location of the books, stating that “being very few, they can easily be placed anywhere” (23), but then went on to explain that “when they form a large number, they will be placed in shelves and drawers, in the style explained in the *Boletín*

⁵⁵ Original text in Spanish: “*vicebibliotecario*.”

⁵⁶ Original text in Spanish: “*secretario*.”

⁵⁷ Original text in Spanish: “*coro ó coros de la Academia de San Miguel*.” See also footnote 26.

⁵⁸ In contrast to the date given in Comas i Güell’s book, Hibbs-Lissorgues (2005, 216), says that “he proposed the creation in 1857 of the Academy of San Miguel as an association of writers, columnists and propagandists that would be on a par with the other literary and scientific academies.” Original text in Spanish: “*propuso la creación en el año 1857 de la Academia de San Miguel como una asociación de literatos, articulistas y propagandistas que estuviese a la altura de las demás academias literarias y científicas*.”

⁵⁹ Original text in Spanish: “*el Bibliotecario dará cuenta de los libros adquiridos y prestados, ó de las variaciones ocurridas con los libros que estén á su cargo*.”

⁶⁰ Original text in Spanish: “*hombre prudente, caritativo y de celo muy fervoroso, porque sin celo no hará nada que valga*.”

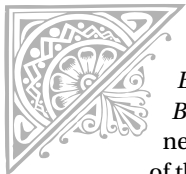
⁶¹ Original text in Spanish: “*ha de tener el índice bien formado de los*

libros de la Biblioteca de su cargo; ha de cuidar que todos los libros se conserven en buen estado, sin mancharse ni estropearse, y que ninguno se le pierda, antes bien hará de modo que se aumente el número, pidiendo y comprando con el dinero que recoja de donativos y de los suscriptores. Tendrá una libreta en que estarán escritos los nombres de los suscriptores.”

⁶² Original text in Spanish: “*procurará que los suscriptores y los que no lo son lean algun libro de la Biblioteca, á que invitará con santo celo. En los domingos despues de la Misa mayor, ó en el día y hora que se tenga por mas conveniente, les dirá que está dispuesto para entregar libros para leer; y para recibir los que hayan leído*.”

⁶³ The real vellon was one of the many currencies that existed in Spain throughout the nineteenth century. To give North American readers an idea, according to the current exchange rate, four reales de vellon was equivalent to one peseta, the smallest currency Spain had. With the arrival of the euro, the exchange rate with the peseta was set at 166.386 pesetas for each euro (Santiago Fernández, 373).

⁶⁴ Original text in Spanish: “*un cuarto cada semana ó un real vellon cada dos meses*.”



Bibliográfico-Católico (Bibliographic-Catholic Bulletin)" (23).^{65, 66} Thirdly, he explained the necessity and importance of having an index of the books, and suggested two different ways

to carry it out: "When the books are few, as now in the beginning, it will be enough to have them written in an index in the form of a catalog. But when they are many, an index will be formed by alphabet" (23-24).^{67, 68} He also explained that to know the number of volumes in the library, it would be necessary to write down in the margins of the catalog the number of volumes and/or copies of each work. In any case, he recognized the importance of having the catalog serve both as a means of inventory control and as a shelflist for keeping books in good order.

CHAPTER 5

The Size of the Books

Precautions to be Taken to Conserve the Books

Orders That the Librarian Should Give to Those Who Lend Books

What the Librarian Should Do so that the Books Are Not Lost

Where to Look to Increase the Number of Books

This chapter is of a miscellaneous nature and deals with a number of aspects of librarianship. Claret discussed the physical features and durability of the books. He began with a recommendation that books in parish libraries be in octavo, duodecimo, or sextodecimo in size, noting as an aside that people tend to read shorter rather than longer books (25).⁶⁹ He insisted that all books should be bound in a durable and cheap binding, such as paste, cloth, parchment, and Dutch bindings (25). He also stated that books that are available for circulation should be covered with a paper cover—i.e., a dust jacket—in order to keep their bindings clean (25).⁷⁰

Secondly, Claret included the readers and users of the libraries as responsible parties in the care and maintenance of the collections and the books on loan, and asked them not to "lose, stain, or dirty them" (25),⁷¹ not to extend the loan period for too long, and to "read them as soon as possible, and return them as soon as they have read them" (25-26).⁷² Thirdly, he spoke of the need to avoid losses of books, and proposed methods such as indicating at the beginning of each book the

name of the library owner, as well as keeping a booklet "in which the register will be kept, and the day, month, and year in which the book was given to N. N., who lives in N. Street, number N. N.; and when he returns it, the day and month will be noted there" (26).⁷³ He thus outlined a simple but, for the time, effective circulation system for parish libraries. To finish this chapter, Claret enumerated different suppliers of "good books" with which to stock the shelves of people's and parish libraries—his own Librería Religiosa, the printing press of the Conferencias de san Vicente de Paul (the St. Vincent de Paul Society), the Compañía de libreros (Company of Booksellers) in Madrid, the publishing house of D. Eusebio Aguado in Madrid, the publishing house of Subirana in Barcelona—as well as referring the reader to the *Boletín Bibliográfico-Católica* for further information about potential sources of books. Recognizing the need for librarians to have tools with which to select items for their library collections, Claret singled out the *Boletín Bibliográfico-Católica* as a capital source of information about good books available in the Spanish marketplace, stating directly that "it is desirable that each librarian have a copy [of this work] (...) because it has quite detailed explanations" (27).⁷⁴

CHAPTER 6

On the Books That Are to Be Used to Begin the Formation of People's and Parish Libraries

In this final chapter, Claret provided a list of titles that, in his opinion, should form the initial core collection for the kinds of people's and parish libraries that he has been describing. However, there were two different proposals, one for men's libraries and another for women's. This initial collection consisted primarily of books on the Catholic religion and Christian morals, because the impulse for these libraries came from a Catholic and religious initiative, and it was the offspring of a specific period and circumstances. Interestingly, some provision was also made for books about general history and practical agriculture, a circumstance that underlined the educational mission of popular libraries. Aragón (1962, 406) proposes that this initial collection would have been made up of fifty, one hundred, or two hundred books. As we will see later, none of the Claretian popular librarians for which we have documentary evidence reached any of these quantities.

⁶⁵ Original text in Spanish: "cuando formen un número crecido, se colocarán en estantes y cajones, por el estilo que se halla explicado en el Boletín bibliográfico-católico."

⁶⁶ Original text in Spanish: "siendo muy pocos, muy fácilmente se pueden colocar en cualquier parte."

⁶⁷ Original text in Spanish: "Cuando los libros son pocos, como ahora en un principio, bastará tenerlos escritos en un índice en forma de catálogo. Pero cuando sean muchos, se formará un índice por abecedario."

⁶⁸ This interpretation of the passage suggests (1) that Fr. Claret was quite aware of the different ways in which a list of books could be organized, (2) that he presupposed that a catalog would normally be

organized by class, and (3) that he saw classified cataloging as optimal for small collections and alphabetical cataloging for larger collections.

⁶⁹ Original text in Spanish: "pasta, tela, pergamino y holandesa."

⁷⁰ Original text in Spanish: "obra cubierta de papel, como una funda de papel ó de tela."

⁷¹ Original text in Spanish: "se le pierda, manche ó ensucie."

⁷² Original text in Spanish: "lo lea lo mas pronto posible, y lo devuelva tan luego como lo haya leído."

⁷³ Original text in Spanish: "en que estará el registro, y se escribirá en día, mes y año en que se entregó tal libro a N. N., que vive calle N., num. N.; y cuando lo vuelva se notará ahí mismo el día y el mes."

⁷⁴ Original text in Spanish: "es de desear que cada bibliotecario tenga un ejemplar (...) pues trae explicaciones bastante detalladas."



Observations

The book ends with some observations by Claret on the book lists that he gave in the sixth chapter of his brochure. Of particular interest here is his fourth observation, in which he noted that most of the books in question were readily available for purchase at the Librería Religiosa and so insinuated that this would be the ideal source for purchasing the bookstocks of popular libraries (32). Thus, the perfect apologetic circle would be completed in regards to the apostolate of literacy that Claret envisioned: an establishment, the *Bookstore*, that would flood the Catalan and Spanish market with literally millions of documents, and a network of people's and parish libraries, at least on paper, located in each and every village (because all, or almost all of them, would have a parish where the library would be installed).

Libraries in Father Claret's Library Network: An Empirical Assessment

Claret's ideas about, and recommendations for, the creation of people's and parish libraries did not remain in the realm of theory, but were implemented in a network of libraries associated with the Academia de San Miguel in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Indeed, before the publication of the first edition of the book, "the Academia de San Miguel had already established some fifty" libraries (Lozano, 1985, 440).⁷⁵ Cristóbal Fernández (1941, vol. 2, 512) also estimates that approximately fifty libraries were created before the publication of Claret's book. On the other hand, Comas i Güell estimates the total number of libraries established by the Academy at around fifty, presumably with their respective libraries, "of which half existed in Madrid, and the rest in Alcalá de Henares, Burgos, Cádiz, Calatayud, Córdoba, Leon, Palma, Rioseca, Segovia, Toledo and Valladolid" (Comas i Güell, 2001, 250).⁷⁶ Subsequently, and until 1868, there were probably more than one hundred libraries founded. Even so, "Given that these were not confederated, and for the same reason there was no record of them, it is very difficult to find out the number of those that were created" (Lozano, 1985, 440).⁷⁷

Nevertheless, if we review Claret's handwritten diaries, we can trace the establishment of different libraries and so obtain a clear idea of the quantitative and geographic scope of the Claretian library project. In volume XII of the *Manuscripts* of Father Claret, which can be consulted freely online at the website of the Center of Claretian Spirituality (cescvic.org),

there is a very detailed list of the people's and parish libraries that were opened (143-82; see Appendix). According to the available data found in the *Manuscripts*, forty-eight libraries⁷⁸ were created in almost three years, between December 8, 1864, and October 20, 1867, which is not an inconsiderable figure considering the times and the difficulties in communications that existed then.

Once we leave out of account the three libraries about which we do not have geographical data, Claret's project was realized in nineteen out of Spain's fifty-two provinces; that is to say it extended to 36.54 percent of the territory. It involved, therefore, a considerable territorial implementation. On the other hand, the demographic reach of the project was limited, since it was implemented mainly in small towns (except Madrid, and some large towns such as Xàtiva or Aranjuez), where access to books was more complicated.

In terms of collection, there is data available for forty of the forty-eight libraries forming part of Claret's library network. These forty libraries are recorded to have owned a total of 1,315 volumes in all. Viewed from a quantitative perspective, the collections of the libraries were quite small, especially when one takes into account the millions of volumes printed by the Librería Religiosa during all its years of existence. However, in qualitative terms, and not losing sight of the context and the physical and social conditions of the time, reaching this figure is a great achievement. It is true that most of the libraries were very small, and there is no data to indicate whether they continued to grow after this initial funding. However, the arrival of these books, however few they were, to villages that were then sparsely inhabited, must surely have been a social and cultural event.

With regards to the public, the data was provided by Claret himself, and data is unavailable for more than half of the libraries inaugurated. In fact, it is very relevant to evaluate in the right measure what sociological impact this initiative had in terms of gender. Taking into account the nineteen libraries for which there is data, we can see that men had access to fourteen libraries, while women had access to nine.

We know that the project of establishing parish libraries was discontinued in 1868 (Vidales, 8), but we do not have knowledge of the daily functioning and management of all these libraries, such as activity reports, number of loans, number of users, etc. We do not know if all of them continued working until that year, or if some of them had closed.

⁷⁵ Original text in Spanish: "la Academia de San Miguel había establecido ya unas cincuenta."

⁷⁶ Original text in Spanish: "de los cuales la mitad existían en Madrid, y los restantes en Alcalá de Henares, Burgos, Cádiz, Calatayud, Córdoba, Leon, Palma, Rioseca, Segovia, Toledo y Valladolid."

⁷⁷ Original text in Spanish: "dado que éstas no estaban confederadas, y por lo mismo no había registro de las mismas, es muy difícil averiguar el número de las que se fueron creando."

⁷⁸ These forty-eight libraries therefore, according to the annotations of Father Claret himself, match those already given by Lozano, Fernández, and Comas; Güell in their respective studies.



Conclusion

After analyzing Claret's book on popular and parochial libraries, one cannot but come away with the impression that it is a pioneering work in library science representing a very early manual on parish library organization and management. In fact, "It reflects the truly professional reflections of Father Claret on book and print policy. With this project are associated all the aspects related to the material questions of the book: the price, size and content, but also the addressee as well as the organization of circulation and the space dedicated to reading, without forgetting considerations about the requirements placed on the job of the librarian" (Hibbs-Lissorgues, 2005, 218).⁷⁹ Claret's truly modern and groundbreaking vision for a network of libraries rather than isolated entities, as had been done until then, preceded by fifty years the first network of contemporary civil libraries in Catalonia: the libraries of the *Mancomunitat* of Catalonia. According to Hibbs-Lissorgues (2005, 219), "All these observations emphasize the importance of this project of people's librarianship: to extend throughout all the territory [of Spain] a network of parochial libraries, accessible to all and with sufficient means so that the operation would be durable."⁸⁰ This popular character is reinforced when one recalls that Claret entrusted to lay people the management and administration of the libraries, as mentioned in our analysis of the third chapter of his book. One could argue, and rightly so, that it was a religious, apologetic, and pastoral initiative, something that has been demonstrated throughout the article. For together with the

idea of a network, the other innovative concept that Claret put forward was to introduce a certain degree of professionalism in his library project, and apart from the obvious content of the good books that he sought to spread, "He raises questions relating to the furniture, the places and the format of the books, their presentation as well as the circulation of the works, the constitution of collections by book categories, catalogs, conditions for the loan, and financial participation of the members and readers" (Hibbs-Lissorgues, 2005, 220).⁸¹ Above all, Claret considered all these professional considerations as indispensable for the proper functioning of the library and, ultimately, for his pastoral and apologetic task. To envision libraries in a professional way as Claret did in his time, and in a radically modern way,⁸² while remaining true to his conservative religious commitments, is a genuine achievement and nicely illustrates how a forward-thinking member of the Catholic clergy could deploy new techniques of organization to further evangelization through the printed word. It is a merit that, in my opinion, should be awarded to him, and its religious dimension (characteristic of his time and without which it is not possible to understand his approach) should not detract from him any kind of importance or relevance in the library history of Spain. Claret was clearly a pioneer in library matters. Moreover, I believe that it is necessary to vindicate, in this strictly professional aspect that concerns us, his figure and his work. I also wonder if Eugeni d'Ors (the ideologist of the *Mancomunitat* of Catalonia's popular libraries plan)⁸³ was aware of Claret's initiative when he designed his project for the libraries of the *Mancomunitat*. I would like to think so. ■

⁷⁹ Original text in Spanish: "refleja las reflexiones verdaderamente profesionales del Padre Claret en materia de política del libro y del impreso. Con este proyecto se asocian todos los aspectos relacionados con las cuestiones materiales del libro: el precio, el tamaño, el contenido, pero también el destinatario así como la organización del préstamo y del espacio dedicado a la lectura, sin olvidar consideraciones sobre los requisitos impuestos al oficio de bibliotecario."

⁸⁰ Original text in Spanish: "todas estas observaciones recalcan la importancia de este proyecto de biblioteconomía popular: extender en todo el territorio una red de bibliotecas parroquiales, asequibles para todos y con medios suficientes para que el funcionamiento sea duradero."

⁸¹ Original text in Spanish: "se evocan cuestiones vinculadas con el mobiliario, los locales y el formato de los libros, su presentación así como la circulación de las obras, constitución de fondos por categorías de libros, catálogos, condiciones para el préstamo, participación financiera de los socios y lectos."

⁸² What may not be so modern is the conception that Father Claret had of the figure of the librarian, who is seen as "the only one responsible

for the classification of the works, he is the one who manages the access to the collections." Original text in Spanish: "único responsable de la clasificación de las obras, es el que administra el acceso a los fondos." (Hibbs-Lissorgues, 2005, 220). The librarian acts as a barrier between books and readers, who still do not have free choice of works, nor, of course, free access to the collection. The librarian is the omnipresent authority and control, the one who decides what is read. In fact, this conception of the figure of the librarian fits very well into the concept of good books and its chain. In the end it is a very nineteenth-century vision.

⁸³ Eugeni d'Ors (Barcelona, 1882—Vilanova i la Geltrú, Catalonia, 1954) studied law, philosophy and arts, and was an important person in the political and intellectual world in Spain and Catalonia in the first third of the twentieth century. She was the one who elaborated the Project of Libraries of the Commonwealth of Catalonia and who directed the popular libraries that were created as well as the School of Librarians during its first years (Mañà-Terré, 2005, 99).



APPENDIX: People's and Parish Libraries, 1864-1867

No.	Date of Creation (day/month/year)	Public	City and Place	Initial Holdings	Librarian
1	08/12/1864	Men	Madrid, Parish of S. Lorenzo	25 books	Unknown
2	08/12/1864	Donations	Madrid, College of S. Juan, Tertiary Sisters of Carmel	25 books	Unknown
3	10/12/1864	Men	Madrid, Parish of S. Salvador	28 books	Policarpo Sevilla y Sevilla ⁸⁴
4	13/12/1864	Men	El Escorial, Madrid, Unknown	21 books	Unknown
5	24/12/1864	Men	[Illegible], Archbishopric of Toledo, Unknown	22 books	Miguel Canosa y Jabonero
6	24/12/1864	Donations	Pastrana (Guadalajara), Unknown	24 books	Saturnina Canosa y Jabonero
7	14/01/1865	Men	Játiva (Valencia), Unknown	44 books	Bonaventura Viñes
8	14/01/1865	Donations	Játiva (Valencia), Parish Church of Sta. Maria	25 books	Josefina Sala
9	12/01/1865	Men	[Illegible], Madrid	24 books	Leandro Abad
10	14/01/1865	Men	El Viso de los Pedroches, Córdoba, Spain	Unknown	Manuel López [Illegible], Manuel [Illegible] del Pozo
11	18/01/1865	Men and women	Congregation of S. Felipe Neri, Alcalá de Henares	Unknown	Unknown
12	24/01/1865	Men and women	Parish of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Torrejoncillo del Rey, Conca	Unknown	Unknown
13	02/02/1865	Men and women	Parish of Perales de Trajuña, Madrid	32 books	Teresa [Illegible].
14	Unknown	Unknown	Chamartin de la Sierra, Àvila	Unknown	Gregorio Navas
15	24/02/1865	Men and women	Fuencarral, Madrid	40 books	Pedro Ramirez
16	24/02/1865	Unknown	Urones de Castroponce, Valladolid	40 books	Ildefonso Fernández
17	04/03/1865	Unknown	Cadrete, Zaragoza	50 books	Lorenzo Campanillas
18	Unknown	Unknown	Segovia	24 books	Tomás de Barrio
19	Unknown	Unknown	Madrid, Parish of Santiago	20 books	Antonio Pla
20	09/03/1865	Unknown	Hontorio de Valdearados, Burgos	28 books	Diego de Nebreda
21	12/03/1865	Unknown	Ribadeo, Lugo	44 books	Gabriel Yaguas and Campo...
22	12/03/1865	Unknown	A Pobra de Trives, Ourense	44 books	Unknown
23	12/03/1865	Unknown	Villalba, Lugo	46 books	Unknown
24	19/03/1865	Unknown	Balconete, Toledo ⁸⁵	22 books	Felix Garcia
25	20/03/1865	Unknown	Villa del Prado, Madrid	30 books	Mariano Tudela y Bada

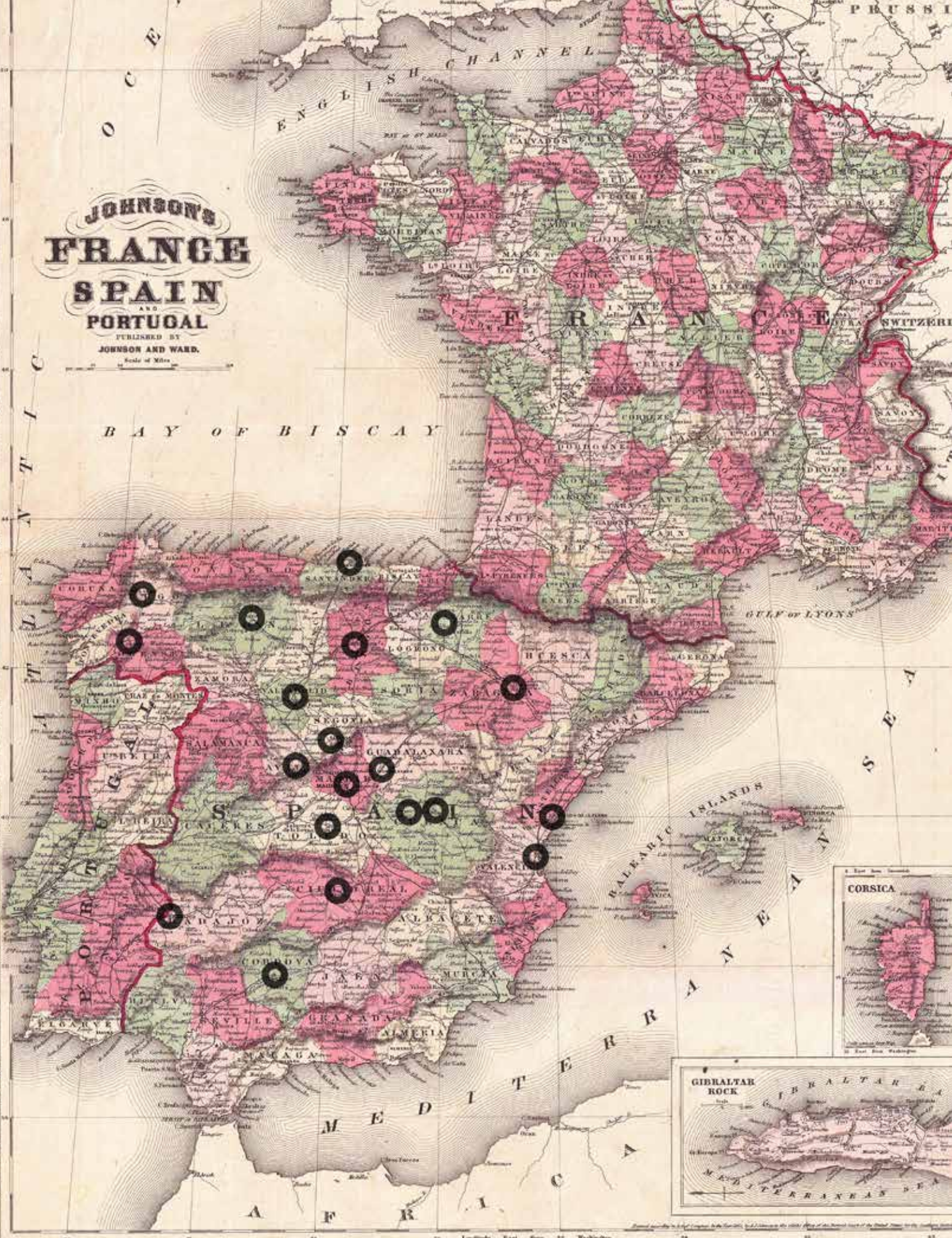
⁸⁴ In February 1859, Sgt. Policarpo Sevilla y Sevilla was awarded a military prize for constancy.

⁸⁵ It has not been possible to verify that there existed, in those years, a town with the name of Balconete in the province of Toledo. Nowadays there is a district with the name of Balconete, which belongs to the municipality of Brihuega, but in the province of Guadalajara.

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APPENDIX: People's and Parish Libraries, 1864-1867 (continued)

No.	Date of Creation (day/month/year)	Public	City and Place	Initial Holdings	Librarian
26	29/03/1865	Unknown	Alcalá de Chivert, Castellón, Parish of San Juan Bautista	42 books	Manuel Peris
27	30/04/1865	Unknown	Hesencia of the Military Orders, Parish of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción [Our Lady of the Conception]	43 books	Gaspar Carrasco
28	02/05/1865	Unknown	Santa Cruz de Pinares, Àvila	36 books	Agustin del Cerro
29	02/05/1865	Unknown	Torrubia del Campo, Conca, Nostra Senyora del Valle Parish Church	38 books	José Rodríguez
30	02/05/1865	Unknown	Morata de Tajuña, Madrid. Parish of Santa María	44 books	Faustino Valdivieso
31	06/05/1865	Unknown	Arenas de San Pedro, Ávila. Parish Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción	40 books	María Cruz de [illegible] y Luján
32	10/06/1865	Unknown	Mota del Cuervo, Cuenca. Parish of San Miguel.	39 books	Valentín Fernández
33	10/06/1865	Unknown	Artajona, Navarra. Parish of San Pedro	34 books	Francisco Fernandez
34	10/06/1865	Donations	Villamañán, León. Parish of San Salvador.	38 books	Maximina Posadilla
35	10/06/1865	Unknown	Unknown	32 books	Luis Adelles
36	10/06/1865	Unknown	Unknown	30 books	Luis Adelles
37	10/06/1865	Men	Villamañán, León. Parish of San Salvador.	33 books	Salvador Merino
38	10/06/1865	Unknown	District of Villacé, municipality de Villamañán, León. Parish church of La Asunción de Nuestra Señora.	33 books	José Fernández de Borja
39	10/06/1865	Unknown	[Illegible], León. Parish of San Juan Bautista.	33 books	Isidro Rodriguez
40	10/06/1865	Men	[Illegible], Ciudad Real. Parish of San Andrés.	33 books	Ignacio Acosta
41	26/06/1865	Unknown	Valdelaguna, Madrid. Parish of La Anunciación.	24 books	Unknown
42	24/06/1865	Unknown	[Illegible], Santander	Unknown	Juan García Pérez
43	24/06/1865	Unknown	[Illegible], Santander	Unknown	Juan García Pérez
44	27/04/1866	Unknown	Pezuela de las Torres, Madrid	25 books	Isidoro Paez
45	19/06/1866	Men	Aranjuez, Madrid. Parish Church of Nuestra Señora de las Angustias.	30 books	Francisco [Illegible].
46	16/06/1866	Donations	Aranjuez, Madrid. Parish Church of Nuestra Señora de las Angustias.	30 books	Francisca Alonso
47	30/10/1866	Unknown	Aranda del Duero, Burgos. Parish of Santa María	Unknown	Evaristo Calderon
48	20/10/1867	Unknown	Bienvenida, Badajoz. Parish Church of Santa María de los Angeles.	Unknown	Guillermo [Illegible] y Cortés



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