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HISTORY AND HUMANITIES IN DERMATOLOGY

The Library of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV)[☆]



Biblioteca de la Academia Española de Dermatología y Venereología

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Introduction

The library of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV) played a key role in the association from its founding until the end of the 20th century. With the introduction of computers and new audiovisual media, the physical library gradually lost some of its earlier importance. In fact, digitized bibliographic indexes and online journal distribution systems have nearly completely displaced physical access. At present only some of the library's old volumes or some of the early articles of *Actas Derma-sifiliográficas* (*Actas*) excite dermatologists' curiosity.

When the AEDV moved from Calle Sandoval in Madrid to a new address on Calle Ferraz in December 1993, the library was discovered to have lost many of its books. In addition, materials stored in a basement were found to be in such poor condition from the effects of inappropriate storage and

damp that some were beyond repair. These materials are currently being classified and cataloged.

The AEDV's library (Fig. 1) at present holds over 700 volumes related to dermatology, many of which exclusively deal with venereal diseases. On the occasion of the library's move to the premises of the Olavide Museum this year, the academy's board of directors also approved a new name: the Professor García Pérez Library of the AEDV. Bibliographic details for all the current holdings are being input into a digitized cataloging system at the new location.

The Library, According to *Actas* and the AEDV's Charters

The first dermatological association (called the Sociedad Dermatológica) was created on May 6, 1909, under the leadership of Dr Juan de Azúa Suárez. On its first board of directors were Drs Manuel Sanz Bombín, as honorary president, Azúa himself as the active president, Antonio Pardo Regidor as vice president, José Sánchez Covisa as general secretary, and Miguel Serrano, as the first librarian and also treasurer. The combination of the positions of librarian—or historian, under the title "librarian-historian"—and treasurer would continue throughout the nomination of 18 persons to fill this post (Table 1). Dr A. García Pérez,

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Figure 1 The Professor García Pérez Library of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV), in its current location in the Olavide Museum, Faculty of Medicine, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Table 1 The Librarians of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV).

1. Miguel Serrano, 1909
2. Julio Bravo, 1933–1934
3. Javier Tome Bona, 1935–1947
4. Luis Álvarez Lowel, 1947–1951
5. Julio Rodríguez Puchol, 1951–1959
6. Francisco Martínez Torres, 1960–1965
7. Jesús del Pino Báez, 1966–1967
8. Juan José Apellaniz Fernández, 1968–1974
9. Joaquín Soto Melo, 1975–1976
10. Jaime Toribio, 1977–1979
11. Carlos Gay Martínez Fresneda, 1980–1981
12. Francisco Sánchez de Paz, 1982–1995
13. José María Fortea Baixauli, 1995–1999
14. Pablo Fernández Peña, 1999–2002
15. Francisco Javier Ortiz de Frutos, 2002–2006
16. Pedro Jaén Olasolo, 2006–2010
17. Rosa Díaz Díaz, 2010–2014
18. Gloria Garnacho, 2015–2018

president of the AEDV in 1985, published regulations for using the library, including its journals.¹ His article was the only one about the library ever to appear in *Actas*.

However, in the published 1926 version of the charter and bylaws, at a time when the association was called the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Syphilography, the library and its regulations were mentioned in Chapter VI.² Article 25 stated that “the library shall be located in the College of Physicians, and the necessary purchases of material and furnishings shall be made.” (The College of Physicians was on Calle Esparteros, number 11, at that time.) Later charters we consulted were never published in *Actas*.

Curiously, the library’s copy of the 1926 publication of the charter contains handwritten drafts of a number of amendments to several articles, all dated 1928. Some of them refer to an assistant to the librarian. These amendments suggest that there may exist other charters dated after 1926 and before 1932 in which those changes were recorded even

though for some unknown reason they were not incorporated into the 1932 charter. The annotations also refer to payments made to other assistants employed by the AEDV.

The 1932 charter and bylaws³ state that “the library will be domiciled in the Olavide Dispensary at Calle Sandoval, number 5, and will remain open from 6 to 9 PM on all working days.”

The charter and bylaws of 1935⁴ continue to put the library at the same location, and there is a new bylaw with a very complete set of “internal regulations for the library of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Syphilography.” That bylaw has a total of 30 articles explaining how the library worked. Among them we highlight the following:

Article 22: “. . .It is considered a moral obligation that all members of the academy will hereafter provide at least one copy of all books or pamphlets they publish about the specialty.”

Article 23: “This obligation shall be extended to include previous publications, as far as is possible.”

Article 25: “A letter shall be sent to all medical publishers in Spain and abroad making known the opening of this section.”

Articles 26 through 29 state that if a publisher sends a single copy of a book to the library, a “note” indicating the author, title, number of pages, publisher, and price will be published in *Actas*. If 2 copies are received and the book is deemed sufficiently important to merit further attention, the aforementioned “note” will be published, as usual, and the first copy will enter the library directly while the second will be sent to a member commissioned by the board of directors to write a review of the book for publication.

In 1966, the board of directors presided over by Dr Álvarez Lovell, with Dr Rodríguez Puchol as general secretary, issued a more succinct charter in which neither the library nor a librarian were mentioned. This board also passed a bylaw describing the functions of the library and its location at the headquarters of the AEDV (then at Calle Sandoval, number 7, where the official [Olavide] dermatology dispensary was also located).

We found no charters later than the one of 1966 until those of 1989 and 1993,^{5,6} where the library is said to have



Figure 2 The library of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV) when it was housed at the Olavide Dispensary, until 1993, at Calle Sandoval, number 7, in Madrid.

been housed at the academy's headquarters. Mention of the regulations governing the library that were published in 1935 had disappeared completely from the charter by this time. However, one instruction was included: "A catalog of the library's book and journal holdings, and acquisitions since the publication of the previous year's catalog, shall be published annually." Author L.C.S. does not recall that any such lists have ever been published during his 45 years as a member of the AEDV.

The 1997 charter⁷ does mention the library, but not where it was located: "The academy shall maintain a library under the direction of the librarian-historian, with assistants and secretaries contracted for the purpose" (Article 39).

The later charters of 2008⁸ (Article 63, 1–2) and 2012⁹ (Article 67, 1–2) stipulate only that "the academy shall have a library to house whatever publications it acquires [...]."

After the removal of the library, along with the headquarters of the AEDV to its current location at Calle Ferraz, number 100, in 1993, few have come forward to use the facility. Consultations have usually been of articles published in *Actas*, which were provided by the AEDV's amiable secretary between 1974 and 2017, Milagros Campos Herranz, who succeeded Francisca Gaban Serrano, secretary from 1927 to 1974.

The board of directors' decision to move the library to the Olavide Museum was based on the availability of sufficient space and necessary services there and also on the opportunity to potentiate both library and museum by placing them in proximity to one other (Fig. 2). The board also took the unanimous decision to name the library in honor of Professor García Pérez, a highly respected former president

of the AEDV who wrote extensively on the history of Spanish dermatology.

Finally, I believe that following along the lines of the regulations for enlarging the library that were included in the 1935 charter (Articles 22–30), it would be helpful for members of the AEDV to implement some of those measures now in order to increase the holdings:

1. Any member who has already published a book could send a copy of it, if possible, so that it can be cataloged and held in the AEDV's library.
2. Any member who publishes a book or treatise related to dermatology in the future should reserve a copy to donate to the library.
3. Any book, treatise, or atlas related to dermatology that is not currently being used could be donated to the library.
4. Write to publishers that have books on dermatology on their lists, asking them to donate a copy to the AEDV's library, mentioning that an announcement of the gift will appear in *Actas* and on the association's web page. If a publisher donates 2 copies a member of the AEDV will write a review of the book for publication in *Actas*, in addition to the announcement. (One copy of the book will remain in the library and the other will be kept by the author of the book review.)
5. Many retiring dermatologists wonder what they should do with their own dermatology libraries. Selling such books is not easy, as there is generally no market for any used books other than highly valuable editions, yet it is dispiriting to simply cast them off. It would therefore be very useful to contact the AEDV so that the library-museum could take charge of them.

6. All such books given to the library will carry a seal with the donor's name.

We believe that these measures could help us achieve our goal of a stronger museum–library venture; build a library that could be of greater service; and provide the library with electronic books and audiovisual material—all of which will be of use to members of the AEDV.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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