

The National Library of Greece: Redefining Its Role and Organization

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1. *National Library and Information Needs*

Most of the recent studies on the concept, "National Library" (hereafter abbreviated as NL), tend to stress the fact that it cannot have one generally accepted definition. This is because of the great variety of institutions that the term embraces as regards to nature, size, role, function, complexity and depth of services. Moreover, as new technology develops new tools for use in library and information work, traditional definitions become out of date. Therefore, it seems more practical and effective to devote efforts toward an identification and analysis primarily of an NL's functions and responsibilities.¹

This identification and analysis, as seen by M. Line,² should be directly linked with the national library and information needs of each individual country. By "national" needs is meant "those library and information needs that cannot obviously be met by local libraries, but have to be dealt with at a national level."³ In general terms, one can identify two categories of countries, the developed and the developing.

Where developing countries are concerned, this approach is particularly useful for those that do not have an information service tradition and already established institutions and information networks. On the other hand, developed countries are already obliged to take such factors into account when planning their library and information services (hereafter abbreviated as LIS) at a national or local level. It is clear, therefore, that an NL should be considered in relation to the current and developing library and information needs of a country and, at the same time, to the overall system of services that will meet those needs, which will be referred to as NATIS (National Documentation, Library and Archives Services).⁴

Another important point is that the NL (or the organization that

¹UNESCO, *National Libraries: Their Problems and Prospects*, Symposium on National Libraries in Europe, Vienna, September 8-27, 1958. Paris: UNESCO, 1960.

²Line, M. B. "The role of National Libraries: A Reassessment," *Libri*, 30(1), March 1980, pp.1-16.

³*Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴*National Library and Information Services: A Handbook for Planners*, edited by C. V. Penna, D. J. Foskett, P. H. Sewell, London: Butterworths, 1977, p. 48.

will carry out its national responsibilities) should be an active organization with dynamic leadership, and not a monumental storehouse of national treasures. If one is to consider the situation concerning the NL of a particular country, one has to examine the national library and information needs of this country and then to suggest the role and functions of its NL. In the case of Greece, even a general consideration of current conditions points out a number of outstanding national library and information needs which a Greek NL should try to fulfill.

It is clear that the rapid economic development that has taken place during the last several decades in Greece has had a considerable effect on every aspect of its national life. However, Greece has not yet reached the standards of developed countries. Nevertheless, it is well in advance of most of the developing countries of the third world. For example, problems such as illiteracy, which is common in developing countries, have become minor considerations. (The illiteracy rate has been reduced from 72 per cent to less than 10 per cent in the last thirty years.)⁵

Unfortunately, the Greek LIS has not followed the general rapid development of the country. The various libraries that exist in Athens, as well as in the rest of the country, are, in general, not of a standard that can provide useful services to any kind of user. A survey conducted by the Union of Greek Librarians in 1982⁶ showed clearly the very low standard of existing libraries in Greece. Some do not have more than 10 books in their collections! Obviously such "libraries" cannot provide any kind of service other than to be counted as libraries in official statistics (national and international). The main reasons for this are a lack of qualified librarians,⁷ lack of necessary library tools, poor financing, and the ignorance and indifference with which a number of the people responsible for the LIS, in the government and public administration, are dealing with the subject.⁸

⁵*The Europa Yearbook 1981*, vol. 1, Europa Publications Ltd., 1981, p. 758.

⁶*A Survey of the Standard of Greek Libraries*, Union of Greek Librarians, 1982 (unpublished).

⁷There is no library school in Greece at a university level, and the recently opened schools, which are part of the national system of technical professional education (TEI), are still of a very low level and their future output will not be enough to cover the needs of the country.

⁸A number of experts have been sent to Greece by UNESCO to make suggestions and help the Greek authorities on the subject of LIS. They have published a number of reports but none has been implemented. The following is a list of such reports, starting from 1962.

1. Carnovsky, Leon, *A Library School for Greece*, UNESCO, 1962 (WS/0763/90).
2. Kirkegaard, P., *Greece, Library Development*, Paris: UNESCO, 1964 (WS/0264/136 BMS).
3. Andrews, K. B., *Greece, National Documentation Centre*, Paris: UNESCO, 1973 Ser. No.: 2972/RMO. RD/DBA.
4. Massil, S. W., *Greece, Establishment of a National Documentation Centre*, Paris: UNESCO, 1977 Ser. No.: FMR/BEP/PGI/77/307 (Massil).

Recently, the problem has gained some interest from a debate in the Greek parliament concerning the introduction of new legislation for the creation of a national documentation center. S. W. Massil, who was sent to Greece by UNESCO to advise the Greek government on the establishment of the National Documentation Center, includes in his report the following detail, which shows the kind of approach of a number of MPs. "The word used in Greek as a translation for 'Documentation' is 'Tekmiriosis' which means 'evidence' or 'documented fact' in a rather narrow sense. Hence, in the debate on the new law in Parliament, a rather limited view is expressed by some speakers, as if statistical reviews or product data were all that qualified for the term. Hence also, perhaps, the evident reluctance of existing information centers in the country to cooperate in information services. To them, information and documented-facts are by definition to be prized carefully and not to be parted with freely."⁹

A program for the National Documentation Center (N.D.C.) has been activated recently with the financial support of UNESCO. This is a positive movement although its future is not clear. For the moment its functions include the provision of international bibliographic services through foreign external databases and the creation of a machine readable union catalogue of periodicals held in a number of specialized libraries in the Athens area. In the same report, "the problem" is described as follows:

It has been reported frequently enough that librarianship and information activities in Greece have a low status and are at a low level of development. There are many institutions in the field, some are long-established. Documentation services have been initiated in some subject areas, but throughout the country, both in organizations and for individuals, information is difficult to come by. Basic tools such as National Bibliography, Union Catalogues, union lists are lacking or not kept up to date; current awareness services need to be improved. Publishing efforts are poorly organized. Awareness of the nature of documentalistic activities is uncertain. There is a dearth of trained and experienced staff, but use of computers has been attempted in some centers. Representation of Greek librarians on international organizations, training courses and conferences has been minimal in recent years.¹⁰

On the other hand, if one considers a survey conducted in 1981 by Diavazo¹¹ in the greater Athens area, one can see that the general public itself makes very little use of the existing libraries. For instance, of the 202 individuals who gave some kind of positive answer

⁹Massil, S. W., *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹Diavazo (Διαβάζω), vol. 49, January 1982, pp. 46-66.

to the question, "How often do you read books," 89.60% never borrowed books from libraries, 8.91% rarely borrowed books, whereas only 1.49% borrowed books often. Also, 92.08% never went to a library to read, 5.94% rarely went, while only 1.98% went often.

Possible reasons for the low use of libraries might be the long-established habits of the average Greek, who normally distrusts sources of information that are not familiar to him and uses personal contacts for the information he requires. Secondly, the existing services, in general terms, are very unlikely to satisfy the needs of anyone who decides to use them, because of their inadequate organization and the emphasis in their role as stores of material rather than active information suppliers. The situation is slightly better in specialized libraries due to strong pressure from the constant demand for updated information by specialized user groups, such as doctors. An exception is the educational sector, where even university libraries are at an unacceptable level, in terms of material held, level of organization, and services provided.

There is a basic need for better dissemination of all kinds of information throughout the country and in particular for the supply of required documents. The need for better information sources is great in education and in practically all fields which support services. The need for national economic and social development, which is one of the fundamental aims of developing countries, requires support by well-organized and highly effective specialized LIS available at a national level. Together with these needs, traditional needs, such as gathering and preserving the national literature, and production of the national bibliography, are also very important. Although all those needs can be covered by several bodies and institutions, the need for coordination of the various services, as well as the organization of their cooperation at a national level, must be carried out by one central body, which should also be responsible for the overall national planning of LIS, as well as representing the country at the international level. Such a body could be the NL.

2. *The National Library of Greece Today*

"The foundation of the NL of Greece dates from the period immediately following the liberation of the country, and the proclamation of its independence in 1828. . . . At its foundation it contained 1844 volumes. . . ."¹² Possibly the two most important factors affecting the development of the Greek NL were its directors and the relevant founding legislation.

The role of the directors, especially in the beginning, clearly influenced the development of the library. People such as Gennadios and

¹²Esdaile, Arundell, *National Libraries of the World: Their History, Administration and Public Services*, Sec. ed., London: The Library Association, 1957, p. 185.

Roides, with their influence and respect among the ruling class of Greece at the time—as well as their capacity for putting into practice their progressive ideas for the better functioning of the library according to the standards of the time—succeeded in advancing considerably the status of the library and making it an important learned institution in the Greece of the time. Concurrently, they influenced the basic legislation concerning the NL, some of which is still in force.

The absence of a strong personality in the post of director resulted in a decline of the status of the library. The resulting situation left the library far behind current developments in the field and, therefore, to a great extent, an institution with little current importance. Furthermore, whenever the library has lacked strong leadership, legislation has been the only guide to its functioning.

2.1 *The National Library According to Legislation*

The legislation that currently covers the NL of Greece includes the following laws: (1) Royal Decree, 31 August 1921; (2) Law 814/1943; (3) Law 880/1943; (4) Law 1362/1949. The first two concern only the NL and are the main guides for its functioning, the third concerns legal deposit, and the fourth covers the non-private libraries of Greece.

● *Aims*

According to Article 1, 814/43, the NL of Greece "should aim at gathering and systematically classifying the written monuments of the mind of the whole of humanity, and in particular of the Greek Nation, and at supplying texts for the study of science and letters." The above article replaced Gennadios's 1839 definition of the task of the library, which, according to Esdaile, was "... to form and preserve a collection as complete as possible of the works of Greek writers of all ages."¹⁸ This was combined with the task of compiling the Greek National Bibliography.

No other direct statement of any aim exists. Indirectly, however, one can see that a number of other tasks have been stated. For instance, Article 19, 1362/49, gives responsibility to the NL to organize seminars and similar educational courses on librarianship for the education of the personnel needed by the libraries all over Greece. Article 17, 1362/49, gives to the NL responsibilities for the coordination of exchange and interlibrary loans at a national level. On the other hand, Article 75/1921 restricts the lending services only to the greater Athens area.

In 1866, the NL was combined, by royal decree, with the library of the University of Athens into a single library administered by one director and a joint staff. This change did not affect the condition of

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 189.

the library, especially its policy and the kind of services it provided. Today, nothing except the different stamps on the books indicate the dual function of the library.

● *Organizational Structure*

The organizational structure of the library is defined by Article 7, 814/43, which divides the library into the following sections:

1. Secretariat, which includes accounts and the lending service.
2. Accessions, which is responsible for purchases, gifts, legal deposit, exchange, and the registration of copyright.
3. Catalogues, which covers classification, cataloguing, preparation of catalogues, and binding.
4. Reading Rooms (Main and Periodical-Newspapers).
5. Manuscripts and Facsimiles.

● *Direction and Staff*

The direction and representation of the library is the responsibility of the director (Article 5, RD/21, and Article 3, 814/43). His duties are in fact limited by the activities of the "supervisory council." After law 814/43, the council was developed into the main body for creating the library's policy, as well as for other rather incompatible duties such as regulation of library working-hours, and introduction of measures for improvement of services, and initiation of new legislation if necessary (Article 4, 814/43). Therefore, the role of the director is basically to supervise the application of the council's decisions.

The council is appointed for a period of three years by the minister and, according to a recent ministerial decree (Article B/65191, ΦΕΚ 838, 22/10/1982), is to include one university professor, one able writer, one senior member of the ministry, one representative of the Union of Greek Librarians, one representative of the National Documentation Center, one representative of the Technical Chamber of Greece, and one representative of the NL Employees Association. According to Article 5, RD/21, the NL should be under the supervision of the ministry of education. However, for a long period it was under the supervision of the ministry of culture, as a result of redistribution of competencies following the establishment of this latter ministry. Today it is again under the supervision of the ministry of education after the latest decisions to redistribute competencies once again between several ministries (June 1985).

The number of posts is fixed by law at forty-four (Article 8, 814/43), and is divided into three grades: administrative, auxiliary, and service. The numbers are as follows:

— Administrative Personnel

1 Director-General

1 Director of the Manuscript and Facsimile Section, who is also a professor of the University of Athens

- 4 Librarians (heads of sections)
- 1 Keeper of Manuscripts (not librarian)
- 1 Inspector of Reading Rooms (librarian)
- 9 Librarians
- Auxiliary Personnel
- 11 Assistant Librarians
- 1 Translator of Oriental Languages
- 1 Typist
- 1 Chief Warder
- Service Personnel
- 7 Warders
- 6 Cleaners, etc.

The necessary qualifications and the appointment procedure for each of the different types of posts are clearly stated in Article 9, 814/43. Knowledge and experience in library and information science is required for the assistant librarians, librarians, and director, as well as the command of at least one foreign language. The librarians must also have a university degree, but this should basically be in non-scientific and technological subjects (i.e., theology, philosophy, law, and economics).

● *Collection*

As far as the collection is concerned, the legislation does not describe its scope, nor does it specify the kind of materials that should be included. Articles 20-28, RD/21 and 20, 814/43, concentrate on the ways that the collection can be enriched but refer only to "books." According to these articles, the NL is entitled to two copies of each book published in Greece under the legal deposit law (880/43). The library can also purchase and exchange books, and it is also entitled to receive donations and inheritances.

The director is responsible for acquisitions and exchanges, but his decisions must be approved by the "supervising council" (Article 20, paragraph 2, 814/43). Articles 29-38, RD/21, concern the procedures for the classification and cataloguing of material that comes into the collection. In these articles, periodicals, manuscripts, maps, and images are mentioned separately because of the special cataloguing problems they present. The library should have three catalogues (Article 32, RD/21). Of these, only the general-alphabetical-by-author's-name, and the "systematic" (a subject approach) is available to the public. The third, which lists the holdings of the library alphabetically-by-author's-name in groups of each broad division of knowledge, is only for the use of the staff.

● *Services*

The services that the library provides the public are divided into "internal" and "external" (lending) (Article 48, RD/21). Internal use, which is meant to be the primary use, includes (Articles 49-61,

RD/21) free access to the open collection of the Reading Room (this in fact has the character of a quick reference section) and use of the stock of the closed access collection for consultation and study in the Reading Rooms (Main and Periodical-Newspaper). There are not any restrictions on the use of the library by adults. The lending services (Articles 62-72, RD/21) are provided only to residents of the greater Athens area under a number of conditions that cover any damage or loss of the borrowed items. Article 76, RD/21, provides for the possibility of lending to other libraries (interlibrary loans) in other areas of Greece or abroad, but this is considered to be an exceptional service. Article 70, RD/21, specifies which items are not available for loan, and these include manuscripts, dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, newspapers, and other material used in the library.

● *Financial Resources*

The library's financial resources consist mainly (Article 21, paragraph 2, 814/43) of the amounts it receives annually from the supervising ministry and from donations, income from its services, fines, and other similar secondary sources. The amount that the library receives from the ministry is based on the budget that the director prepares and the "supervising council" approves (Article 22, 814/43).

2.2 *The National Library in Practice*

The previous briefly-described legislation forms the basis on which the NL of Greece operates. However, it is also important to examine in a similar approach its operation in practice. This will allow consideration of the actual situation of the library, both in legislative and practical terms, and an estimation of its role in meeting the national library and information needs of Greece.

● *Aims and Direction*

The aims stated by legislation are clearly unrealistic if one regards not only the financial support and staff of the library but also the aims of the NL of a country like Greece. A direct consequence of this, as well as the lack of a dedicated director with enough power to strive for the development of the library, is the absence of a task that could stimulate the function of the library. The recently-appointed director did not give the author a direct answer concerning the national aims of the library, but instead directed him to the relevant legislation. He did suggest that the "national" role was fulfilled by the fact that anybody can use the library and that it receives two copies of every book published in Greece. In practice, therefore, the NL appears not to have clear aims, and because of its generally passive appearance, some functions that traditionally are considered as belonging to the NL have been

carried out by other organizations (i.e., the compilation of the national bibliography has been, since 1972,¹⁴ the responsibility of the Greek Bibliographic Society, although no positive results have been seen). The "supervising council" which has been appointed recently has not, until now, given any visible guidance to the NL. (The public is not allowed access to the minutes of its meetings.)

● Staff

Although the number of posts is fixed by law at a total of 77, today only 38 people belong permanently to the staff of the library. Another 39 people were appointed for one year each in 1985. (Each year they must be reappointed.) The shortfall in the number of permanent staff and the unpredictable number of temporary staff does not allow for innovative work and, in fact, is not sufficient to cope with the existing work. (Process of materials, user services, etc.)

The sections of the library are almost as specified by law, and the number of staff in each section is as follows:

	Total	Permanent	Not Permanent
Director	1		
1. Secretariat	14	10	4
2. Accessions	8	4	4
3. Catalogues	24	13	11
4. Reading Rooms	15	5	10
5. Manuscripts, etc.	10	2	8
— Cleaners	3		

Total: 75

The qualifications of the staff are not up to the standards of either the legislation or the needs of an NL. The main reason for this is the non-existence of library schools, as was mentioned before. At the same time, there are no enticements to attract personnel qualified abroad to join the staff of the library. One cannot see any interesting future in the job and the salaries are not good. The highest grade is that of Director, which is equivalent to the Director First Class of the civil service (i.e., a middle grade).

● Collection

The collection of the library, apart from an important number of historical documents and rarities of archival value, is rather poor, and it is far from being even an acceptable representation of Greek produc-

¹⁴Beaudiquez, M., *Bibliographic Services Throughout the World*, UNESCO, 1977, p. 192.

tion. It consists mainly of books, periodicals, and newspapers which form a stock of more than a million volumes.

The accessions section simply receives the documents that are given to the library by publishers or authors. There is no effective way of tracing new publications, especially those that are published outside Athens. As a result, a number of publishers do not even know that they are obliged by law to deposit two copies of each book they publish with the NL.

In recent years, the library has received the following number of books:

Books received	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Legal deposit	3,284	4,272	3,617	3,718	4,371	5,489
Donations	1,832	1,328	figures not available			
Total:	5,116	5,600				

(Source: accession section, official documents)

The figures do not specify how many of these books have been published each year and, in fact, the number for each year includes editions of previous years that come to the library in that year. A figure for total annual Greek production does not exist, according to the Publishers' Association (Athens), and consequently it is impossible to estimate the rate of annual deposit. Estimates of library personnel and of the Union of Greek Librarians give a maximum possible rate of fifty percent of total production. The figures that appear in the United Nations and UNESCO Yearbooks as annual Greek book production seem very unlikely to be accurate (1975: 2,613 books; 1976: 3,935 books; 1977: 4,981 books; 1979: 4,664 books).¹⁵

Acquisitions are very low and are not based on any systematic policy. Usually, large Athenian bookshops, which also stock foreign publications, annually supply the library with a number of foreign publications. The figures for recent years are:

1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
160	161	65	36	66	900

(Source: accessions section, official document)

The classification scheme in use is one that was adopted in 1903 and is that of the Library of Halle University, as published in *Beihefte zum*

¹⁵United Nations Yearbook, *op. cit.*, Table 212; and *Statistical Yearbook '81*, UNESCO, 1981, Table 8.2.

Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen (Bd. I. Hft. 1-4. Leipzig, 1888, 89). Since then, there has been no systematic alteration to the system in order to update it. Therefore, it is inadequate for covering new subjects, especially in fields such as the pure and applied sciences, and, in general, it has all the disadvantages of an out-of-date classification scheme.

Until 1978, when the AACR were adopted, cataloguing was based on in-house rules which were transmitted orally from the older staff to the newer staff members. The most important catalogue for access to the holdings of the library is the general alphabetical (author) catalogue, but the subject approach is not helpful because of the old system followed.

Today, new personnel have been requested to implement the subject approach based on the eighth edition of the Library of Congress Subject Headings—1975 (L.C.S.H.).¹⁶ Additionally, a new project has been started for cataloguing older material.

The work that is currently taking place on this subject is illustrated by the following table, which shows additions to the stock and processed items in number of volumes.

Process	1979	1980	1981	1982 est.
Total additions of books etc. (Vol.)	5,500	7,167	7,000	7,500
Additions to catalogue (Vol.)	4,000	5,524	7,124	8,600

(Source: Nikolopoulos, P., administrative report)¹⁷

● *Provided Services*

The library is open to all members of the public, but there are no statistics that indicate the use of the library by different types of users. There are figures, however, showing the use of the different services provided. These services are restricted to the most traditional ones: supplying the requested documents from the collection and providing photocopies of items held. Even these passive services are not adequately carried out because of staff shortages and bad organization of the collection, and the poor access tools to its holdings. However, because of the rarity of some holdings, and because there is no other alternative for the needs of the general public, the use of the library is rather high, especially in relation to its staff, which consists of a total of seventy-

¹⁶Panousis, B., *The Role of Our National Library in Our Nation Today: Paper at the Third Congress of Greek Librarians*, Athens, November 1979 (in Greek).

¹⁷Nicolopoulos, P., *Administrative Report*, 15/7/1981.

seven persons. The numbers of users and the services provided by the NL of Greece can be seen in the following table.

	1979	1980	1981 Jan.-Feb.	1982 est.
Services to users (no. of users)	65,000	72,000	13,000	80,000
Use of books and periodicals (in volumes)	180,000	230,000	40,000	300,000
Use of historical archives (in volumes)	235,000	362,000	66,000	400,000
Use of manuscripts, etc. (in volumes)	1,043	2,390	797	2,500
Lending (in volumes)	1,900	1,500	424	1,500
Photocopying (in pages)	168,000	157,000	39,000	165,000

(Source: Nikolopoulos, P., administrative report)

The next table shows the number of staff, the registered borrowers, and the loans of a number of NLs. (The NL of Greece was not among the libraries listed.)

NL		Staff	Registered Borrowers	Loans (vol.)
Bulgaria	(1977)	235	24,855	...
Italy (8 adm. units)	(1977)	863	42,574	98,490
Spain (2 adm. units)	(1977)	213	6,377	50,658
Switzerland	(1977)	69	11,000	90,417
Turkey	(1978)	118	2,764	23,978

(Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1980, Table: 7.2)

The figures of the two tables above cannot be compared accurately because they only represent roughly the same kind of services. However, in general terms, the comparison indicates the great difference that exists in the number of staff in relation to the number of users or borrowers and additionally the different kind of services provided, which

in the case of all the listed NL's above is oriented toward lending, which in the case of the NL of Greece is a minor function. Considering also that the services of the library are provided in fact mainly to Athenians, one should think that it is in practice the public library of Athens rather than the NL of Greece, as its title implies.

● *Financial Resources*

Financially, the library depends primarily on the amount it receives from the government, either through the ministry of education for its normal functioning or through the ministries of national economy and finance for additional requirements. The amount it receives is not fixed. For the year 1979 it was 2,444,365 drachmas, for 1980 it was 4,500,245 drachmas, and for 1981 it was 3,291,692 drachmas. Expenditure for the same period was as follows (in drachmas):

Year	Purchases of Documents	Purchases of Working Material (paper, etc.)	Running Cost (Maint., etc.)	Extra Salaries	Not Spent
1979	667,903	810,011	956,451	—	775,635
1980	658,126	780,367	2,581,752	480,000	1,259,755
1981	568,000	1,075,000	1,648,692	—	

(Source: secretariat section, official documents)

It should be noted that salaries of the permanent staff do not come out of the library budget, and therefore are not included in the amounts above.

● *Buildings*

The library is housed in a building especially erected in 1903, in the center of Athens. Today it is not sufficient for the needs of the library. Plans for an extension of the old building and for the construction of a new one on another site have never been implemented. Consequently, the problem of space is one of the most pressing ones for the library. This was stressed once more in 1981 by the director in his administrative report to the ministry of culture.

2.3 *Conclusion*

A comparison of the actual functions of the NL of Greece with those suggested theoretically by M. Line for any NL will clearly demonstrate

how limited the former are and, in general terms, how low the standard of the library is. (The degree of fulfilment by the NL of Greece of each function suggested is stated below in the form of a short answer.)

● *Fundamental Functions*

- A1 The central collection of a nation's information media.
Inadequate.
- A2 Central loan/photocopy collection of foreign literature.
Very limited.
- A3 Planning and coordination of interlibrary lending.
Not carried out.
- A4 Publication of the National Bibliography.
Not carried out.
- A5 National Bibliographic Center.
Not provided.
- A6 National Repository.
Not provided.
- A7 Exchange Center.
Not provided.

● *"By-product" Functions*

- B1 Publication of catalogues.
Not carried out.
- B2 Exhibitions.
Very rarely.
- B3 Research on library techniques.
Not carried out.
- B4 Professional training.
Not carried out.
- B5 Expertise in library techniques.
Not provided.

● *Other Possible Functions*

- B6 Collection of information media relating to the country.
Not carried out systematically.
- B7 Books for the blind.
Not provided.
- B8 Collection of manuscripts other than those of national relevance and importance.
Not carried out.

From the previous list of fifteen functions the NL of Greece inadequately performs only four, and at the same time there is no other institution that performs any of the rest. S. W. Massil's opinion of the library (as well as of the Library of Parliament) is as follows:

"...both long-established organizations in the nineteenth-century tradition and far short of modernization; inadequately housed, staffed and equipped, although close to direct government observation."¹⁸ Unfortunately, there is no way one can disagree with him, in spite of recent efforts to improve the standard. The efforts of the NL staff itself to improve the library's conditions are worthy of note however. Most of the recent improvements are the results of decisions taken by the staff and not by any person or body responsible for library policy. Among other things, they have presented a report outlining possible reasons for the bad stock of the NL, with suggestions for improvements.

From the previous discussion it becomes clear that the present state of the NL of Greece is totally inadequate to meet the various national library and information needs of Greece, some of which are urgent. It is necessary to end this situation. Therefore, the role and functions of the NL should be reassessed under the influence of both international theory and practice, and the actual national library and information needs of Greece and the existing library tradition in Greece. The author believes that it is important that the existing NL should carry on the new national role. Of course, this means fundamental changes both in the actual structure of the library, as well as in the attitude of the staff and users.

However, the creation of the new NL does not necessarily mean that it has to take place all at the same time or under the same body. To begin with, the development of the National Documentation Center (N.D.C.) based on the proposals of S. W. Massil, and experience gained up to now, could continue on a more firm ground. The N.D.C. could eventually become part of an overall body which would be the new NL of Greece. Otherwise, the usefulness of such a center will remain restricted by the lack, for instance, of adequate collections that can be used for the provision of the actual information and documents.

Another library that could possibly develop into one of the components of the new NL is the already existing library of the National Research Foundation, which has an extensive collection of current foreign journals and periodicals. A centralized NL with extensive coordinating power at a national level is also necessary in order to play the necessary leading role in the entire field of librarianship (including documentation). At later stages, when a fundamental and nationwide library and information network has been constructed and standards established, the process of decentralizing and creating local, partially independent, LIS units can start. And indeed the process of decentralization is very important for allowing much better and more efficient satisfaction of various local needs, obviously requiring their own local remedies, which cannot be given by a nationally oriented central body.

¹⁸Massil, S. W., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

3. *A Plan for Development*

3.1. *Introduction*

It is evident from the previous discussion that a reassessment and redefinition of the Greek NL's role and policies, a reexamination of its services, and an investigation of its organization and mode of operation is necessary. At this point, therefore, a possible new role and structure of the NL has to be examined. For this reason, a number of existing or planned NLs have been examined as possible models. These can be divided into two categories: those of the developed countries (for example, Britain, France, Canada) and those of the developing countries (for example, Ecuador and Ceylon, as they emerge mainly from relevant UNESCO reports).

It has already been mentioned that each NL has its own aims, which should correspond to the particular needs of the respective country. For this reason, as well as the fact that in a way Greece stands in the middle between developed and developing countries, these NLs cannot be taken as models. A model such as the British Library requires a long tradition and experience, as well as a similar environment; on the other hand, UNESCO's models for Ceylon are created to deal with a number of problems, such as illiteracy, that are not important in Greece, and therefore their middle- and short-term aims at least are not appropriate for a Greek model. However, both examples are valuable because they can serve as guides and sources of ideas for a Greek model.

Freda Waldon wrote on this matter during the time the new NL of Canada was being developed: "... While a number of us who have worked on the Brief for the NL of Canada know the British Museum well and admire it enormously, we were careful not to hold it up as a model. It is a wonderful institution but it has grown up in a particular set of circumstances. While we can learn much from it, we want our library to be tailored to our own needs. . . ." ¹⁹

An additional problem is the setting of standards (space, staff, etc.) for the NL. A consideration of what might be the most appropriate work on the subject, that of F. N. Withers, *Standards for Library Service: An International Survey*, ²⁰ indicates that there are no quantitative standards for NLs. F. N. Withers put it this way: "In view of the great variety of institutions which the term 'national library' embraces and the different conditions prevailing in the individual countries affecting the working of these libraries, it is unlikely that the setting

¹⁹Donnelly, Dolores F., *The National Library of Canada: A Historical Analysis of the Forces Which Contributed to its Establishment and to the Identification of its Role and Responsibilities*, Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1973, p. 81.

²⁰Withers, F. N., *Standards for Library Services: An International Survey*, Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1974.

of quantitative standards, save in the respect of certain aspects of national library buildings, will be attempted."²¹ A possible solution is to use the standards of other NLs or those of the academic libraries as general guides which should be adapted to the actual conditions and needs of the NL of Greece.

The use of academic standards for the NL is appropriate because of the kind and level of services, as well as the nature and level of organization of the collection of academic libraries, which are similar in some respects to those of a NL. The first important question concerning a new NL in Greece is its nature; that is, whether it should exist as a separate organization or not.

Today, according to legislation, the NL is also the library of the University of Athens, but in practice it is not used as such and therefore the reconsideration of the matter should not pose any serious problem. Problems might occur from the fact that in practice the library acts as the main public library of Athens and, thus, if the access of the general public is restricted without giving it any alternatives, the public might become seriously dissatisfied.

As far as the dual function national/university is concerned, although this has proved successful in the case of some other countries (Israel), it is not appropriate in the case of Greece. A separate NL is regarded as necessary in order to play the greatly needed and important role of leader of the national LIS system, which will be much more difficult if the library has to solve the additional problems that the university function will pose. Besides, a correct organization of the NL will indirectly serve the university, which in the meanwhile will be able to expand the system of the departmental libraries that it uses today, or start a new central library to serve its aims and special needs.

The problem of satisfying the needs of the Athens general public—which, in the first place, should not be the responsibility of the NL—can be solved either with the expansion and reorganization of the already existing city library of Athens or with the continuation of the provision of services by the NL to the general public until the latter can be served by other public libraries. The reorganization of the NL in a way that will serve the dual purpose of main Athens public library and NL of Greece might also be considered. The first solution is regarded as the most desirable, however.

Another important question is the method to be followed for the reorganization of the NL. It seems more realistic in regard to the current situation of the library and information field in Greece to accomplish these changes in several steps and by many different units. These units could be coordinated by a small group of experts in the appropriate ministry (national economy or education), and would at later stages take the form of one body, the new NL of Greece, which would assume the responsibilities of these several individual bodies, as well as

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 21.

those of the group of experts, in coordinating the LIS all over the country. (The idea of a similar group was introduced long ago by law 5138/1931.) Thus, the synthesis of the group of experts and the definition of its aims and responsibilities must take place first. It must be followed by the planning of the way that the new NL will be created. That involves an analysis of the needs, the definition of the several parts, and their short- and long-term aims, etc. The necessary legislation must then be approved by parliament, which will allow the beginning of the implementation. Close supervision will ensure the correct development of the plan and the rapid provision of solutions to the possible problems that will occur during its implementation.

This method is appropriate because it allows the creation or development of initially small units which can easily be defined; furthermore, it makes it possible for their personnel to understand the units' aims better. As these units grow larger, there will be more experience, and the operation and functions of more complicated organizations will become easier to control. Besides, advances in training and in provision of library tools will aid development.

It is only after the NL is itself sufficiently established that it will be able to start acting as a coordinator of the NATIS, and thus play a leading role at the national level. Until that time, the same, or a similar, group of experts that had the responsibility of the development of the NL should consider the development of LIS nationwide, but always with the future role of the NL in mind.

In relation to the above, the need for the use of computerized systems is absolutely necessary in order to achieve efficient services. The design of such systems, with the NL as the center, should first take into consideration the internal organization and needs of the NL, and secondly the future role of the NL at the national level as the center for the cooperation of the various LIS. Obviously, the development of the various LIS all over the country should be directed in such a way that they will be able to cooperate with the NL as well as with each other.

Another need that should be stressed is that of more space. As has already been mentioned, the library has been housed in a specially erected building in the center of Athens since 1903, but today the available space cannot even properly house the existing collection and operations. The problem is not recent. As early as 1962, it was mentioned in a UNESCO report that "The Greek NL... is housed in a handsome building, now unfortunately far too small; its original and supplementary shelves are filled, and hundreds of volumes more recently acquired must be stacked on the floor."²² (This is another example, by the way, of the inactivity of the government on problems concerning the NL.)

The physical conditions are still the same. New accommodations are

²²Carnovsky, Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

necessary in order to allow even a minimum expansion of services and operations. A suitable solution could be the transfer of a part of the collection and operations far from the center of Athens, either to a new building or, as a quicker solution, to an older one especially renovated for the needs of the library.

The user services should not be affected by this if the existing building is used to house the most demanded services, such as the "current collection" department. The available space should accommodate the needs of users: the collection; the staff, equipment, and other needs; and, finally, circulation space and services. An indication of the necessary space for each of these categories can be derived from the use of college library standards.²³

For the first category—study accommodation—an area between 2.3 m² and 3.3 m² is estimated to be necessary for one-eighth to one-third of the total student population. These figures should probably be reduced in the case of the NL because the main use of the library will not be for study, as in university libraries. For the second category—book accommodation—the need of an average space of 7.5 m² per 1,000 volumes is quoted. This should allow for about one-third of the shelf stock to be accommodated in limited access stacks, the rest on open shelves. It also includes space for growth. For the third category—staff accommodation—five per cent of the above two categories should be added. This five per cent should be increased in cases of special material and equipment. For the fourth category—circulation space and services—another twenty-five per cent of the first two categories should be added to the total. If the above figures are used, given the number of volumes of the library and the estimated number of users, a calculation of the approximate space required is possible.

3.2. *General Goals of the National Library of Greece*

The fully developed NL of Greece should operate as a separate organizational unit under the supervision of the ministry of national economy or education.

Its main goals should be:

1. The collection and preservation of the national literature, in conventional (books, etc.) and unconventional (tapes, films, etc.) forms, on any subject.
2. The support, in an active way, of the national effort for development by organizing and disseminating information relevant to the national library and information needs of Greece, particularly providing bibliographic references and documents themselves in any form or language that is considered appropriate.
3. In relation to the previous goal, the support of developments

²³National Library and Information Services, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

in the field of librarianship (research, training, planning, etc.), especially from the point of view of Greek needs.

4. To represent Greece and support Greek interests abroad within the area of its responsibilities.

The ministry of national economy is considered as more appropriate than the ministries of education or even culture as the body to supervise the NL because of the supporting role that the NL should play in the national development of the country, which is one of the main aims of this ministry. This ministry is also by its nature one of the most experienced in planning.

The NL should be accessible to everybody. However, as far as the general needs of the public are concerned, it should be able to direct the public to appropriate alternative sources of information. The NL should aim more to satisfy the specialist needs of particular groups of users according to its policies. It should also aim to satisfy general user demand that cannot be met elsewhere. That means that in fact its services will be used by a limited number of people. However, this restriction does not diminish the benefits to the entire population because the efficient servicing of particular needs should result in improving the general conditions of the country. (For example, if a doctor gets better information on his subject, he will be able to provide better treatment to his patients.)

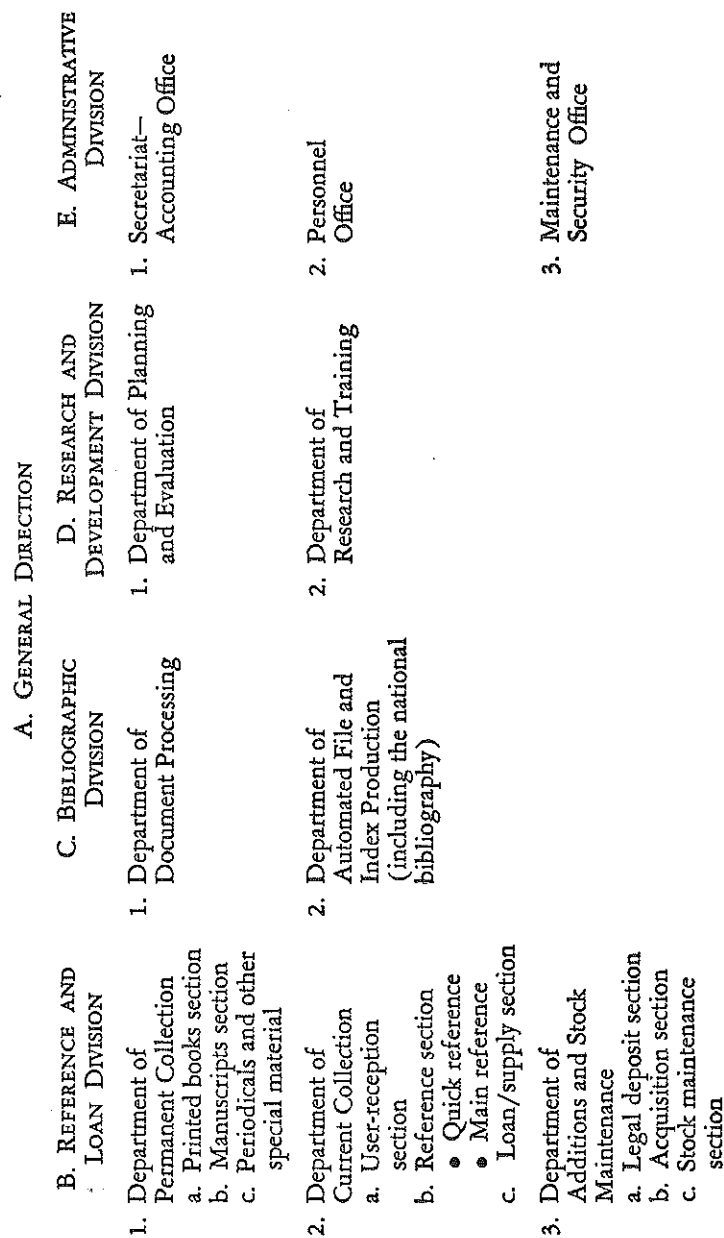
3.3. *Direction and Divisions*

In order to fulfill its goals, the NL should be organized into the following divisions:

- A. *General Direction*, responsible for the overall management of the NL.
- B. *Reference and Loan Division*, responsible for the collections of the NL, the provision of services to users, and the additions to and maintenance of the stock.
- C. *Bibliographic Division*, responsible for processing the material of the library in order to facilitate the provision of services. (This includes the production of the national bibliography and the provision of services to other library and information institutions.)
- D. *Research and Development Division*, responsible for providing the means that will make the NL, as well as LIS in general, more effective on a national basis.
- E. *Administrative Division*, responsible for the administrative needs of the NL.

The following chart describes the general structure of the NL and outlines the organization of each division.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF GREECE



A. *General Direction*

The general direction should be responsible for the overall management of the NL, and for coordination with the government and representatives of the public (advisory bodies, etc.). A person with wide acceptance and advanced professional skills should be appointed to the post of general director of the NL (or national librarian of Greece). To a considerable extent, the successful development of the NL will depend on the personality of the director. He or she should normally be a professionally qualified librarian, a successful and experienced administrator and scholar, and skilled in human relations.²⁴

As far as policymaking is concerned, this should be considered together with the research and development division and should be related to the general development plans of the government, which, through the supervising ministry, should approve this policy.

Decisionmaking should lie in the hands of individual managers at all levels, but major responsibilities should be assumed by the managers of the four divisions. The manager of the research and development division should also act as assistant national librarian, as he will be aware of the overall conditions of the NL, as well as of LIS all over the country, and he will be deeply involved in planning, research, etc.

Analysis of the Responsibilities of the Four Divisions

B. *Reference and Loan Division*

1. Department of Permanent Collection

The Department of Permanent Collection should be responsible for the preservation and use of the national literature and foreign material relevant to Greece and Greek interests. (Manuscripts, rare books, and other material in non-conventional forms should also be included.) This department should aim at satisfying those national needs that can be characterized as more permanent. These needs, together with the policy of the library, should dictate the shape of a collection (i.e., the permanent collection as opposed to the current collection) that will distinguish itself in the long run for its emphasis on those needs. Such needs are the preservation of a collection of the national literary production which is as exhaustive as possible; the best coverage of the subject "Greece" from many different points of view; good coverage, at least at a basic level, of all areas of knowledge. The depth of coverage in the last case should depend on the existence and availability of other resources, including foreign resources.

²⁴Donnelly, D. F., *op. cit.*, p. 209.

The concept of cooperation on sharing resources at national and international levels should be seriously considered; consequently, the development of the collection should not compete against other available resources. Instead, efforts should be made to cooperate better and more effectively. The permanent collection should receive at least two copies of each item published in Greece, based on legal deposit, and should always keep one in its stock. This copy should be used only as a last resort, and always within the library. In addition, the permanent collection should receive foreign material that has been purchased for its own purposes (see above) or initially for the purposes of the current collection. When considering the transfer of material from the current collection to the permanent collection, attention should be paid to see if the material coincides with the interests of the permanent collection. If it does not, then it should be made available to other libraries or for other uses.

The permanent collection should function on closed access in order to secure its stock and consequently its capability to ensure the satisfaction of its users and their long-run needs. Any second copy of this collection should be available for loan.

The Department of Permanent Collection can be divided into the following sections:

- (a) Printed books. This section should be responsible for the stock in conventional form and its better use by the readership.
- (b) Manuscripts, rare books, archives. This section should be responsible for the relevant stock. Because of the particularities of this stock, the section should also be responsible for cataloguing, maintenance, preservation and repairs, and assistance to users, unlike the other sections, which concentrate their attention mainly on the services they provide. The specialized personnel of this section should also assist and give advice to personnel of other libraries or to individuals on problems related to its specialization.
- (c) Periodicals (including newspapers) and other material in non-conventional form. The separation of this section, which is again concerned with the better use of its material, is necessary because of the problems that arise from the kind of stock it includes. These problems refer to special storage requirements and to the special equipment necessary for the user wishing to utilize the material. If the catalogue of the library is efficient, users should not have difficulties in making good use of all the needed material held by the different sections and departments. Besides, because the collections of the department of permanent collection are on closed access, the catalogue is in fact the only device that the readership can use for exploiting the stock of this particular department,

apart, of course, from the aid of the responsible staff. In cases of donations, etc., of collections or of single items, the content should be examined and added to the relevant section.

2. Department of Current Collection

The Department of Current Collection should be responsible for the provision of general reference services, including bibliographic information, and for making available at a national level the maximum possible number of requested documents. All areas of knowledge should be covered, but the amount and kind of material held on each subject in the collection of this department (current collection) should be related to those of the national library and to the information needs that can be characterized as current, and that have been given priority by the policy of the NL in order to support specific needs of the country, as these have been defined by the government. Such needs include the economic development of the country, the improvement of the civil services, and the improvement of the services provided by the respective professions.

The current collection, therefore, should be able to cover any subject at a basic level, with material of high current information value and priority subjects at a deeper level. In addition, the bibliographic material of the collection and the other bibliographic services should cover well, in terms of bibliographic references, all subjects of a great variety of sources at national and international levels. This service should exploit the advantages of cooperation on sharing resources for the benefit of users.

The current collection should receive the second copy of those documents that the permanent collection receives by legal deposit, but only when these particular documents serve the aims of this collection. This copy should be used for reference and photocopying needs. If the demand for a particular document is high, more copies should be purchased. These extra copies should also be available for loan. Foreign material can also be purchased as it will help with the provision of up-to-date information of an international standard. If only one copy is held, it should be used only for reference and photocopying and not for loan.

When the demand for a subject or for particular documents decreases, or the policy of the NL changes, the relevant material should be relegated and sent to the permanent collection for further relegation process. In this way, the current collection will always include only up-to-date material of current information value, without expanding considerably in size. Thus, it will be flexible and easy to use. The concept which expresses the kind of collection outlined above is that

of the "self-renewing" library introduced in 1976 by the University Grants Committee Working Party.²⁵

Although referring to university libraries, the following figures can be considered as indicating the desirable size for the current collection. According to the Federal Republic of Germany's Wissenschaftsrat report, 300,000 volumes as basic book stock should satisfy seventy-five per cent of readers' needs and 600,000 volumes will bring the library up to the level of the "90 per cent library."²⁶

Considering Trueswell's research in the U.S., which has shown that up to forty per cent of a university library stock may account for ninety-nine per cent of demand, with the other one per cent of demand coming from scholars who need secondary sources to be found in the other sixty per cent of the stock,²⁷ it is clear that a well-thought-out policy should succeed in responding to the greatest part of demand.

However, it is not easy to establish criteria for the relegation of material. The existence of an automated circulation system that can easily keep statistics on the circulation of stock (if possible, including the use of material for reference as well as for loan, e.g., a controlled entry reading room) can facilitate the employment of "usage criteria," which are generally better than publication or acquisition date records.

The current collection should be on open access in order to make its stock available for easy and fast consultation. However, a system for recording the in-house usage of the stock could possibly be developed by checking each item when the user transfers it from the shelves to the reading room, which, in this case, should be separate. Quick reference material could be excluded and shelved in the reading room.

The Department of Current Collection could be divided into the following sections:

(a) User-reception. This section should be responsible for directing the public to the appropriate institutions (including the NL) according to its needs in terms of subject, kind of requested information, level of interest, specialization, area in which the user lives, etc. Theoretically, this section should probably be under the reference section, but considering the situation in Greece (i.e., lack of any reliable guide to existing institutions, insufficient organization of most LIS, and poor usage of even the few existing ones), its separation can be useful for the whole public and important for the development of the level of LIS that other institutions all over the country provide.

The public should be able to benefit from this section by using it as one of the most credible initial reference points for getting reliable

²⁵*Capital Provisions for University Libraries: Report of a Working Party*, HMSO, 1976.

²⁶Withers, F. N., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁷Harris, K. G. E., *Death and Transfiguration or Conservation and Self-renewal in Academic Libraries*, Library Association, 1977, p. 9.

referral information. The public's information requests may concern finding answers to simple factual questions, governmental responsibilities, coverage of particular subjects, a particular document, etc.

The importance of this particular function of the reception for the development of the provision of LIS by the various existing institutions all over the country relies on the fact that by directing the public to the appropriate institutions, it will activate their services and stimulate the evolution of their operations as a result of their efforts to respond to increasing demand. In this way, a better use of all the existing resources of the country would be achieved. In order to play the above role, a survey of the status of the existing LIS all over the country, and of their real and potential objectives, is necessary. Users should not be directed to institutions totally unable to respond to their demands, although according to the various LIS objectives they should be in a position to do so, because the dissatisfaction of the user, especially of the new one, will result in the loss of faith in the services of the NL and the LIS in general. In addition to the above role, the reception should carry out the typical procedures for the admission to the NL of those who have been advised to use it.

(b) Reference—Quick reference subsection. This subsection should be responsible for providing good quick reference information on every subject to those who cannot satisfy their information needs elsewhere or to the groups of users that the library should be aiming to satisfy, according to its policy.

The collection of the quick reference subsection should include a great variety of quick reference material and should be particularly strong on bibliographic sources (including abstracts, indexes, etc.) at a national and international level on all subjects. The bibliographic services should also include on-line access to bibliographic databases and should also provide current awareness services (SDI) and a retrospective search system.

The aim of these advanced services should be to help the awareness of users grouped according to subject, by giving them the chance to find out what works relevant to their interests already exist or have recently been published. It is clear that foreign material and sources will play the major role because of their large content, importance, and good organization, as well as because, at least for the time being, there are no important Greek sources.

—Main reference subsection. This second subsection should be responsible for stocking and facilitating the use in the library of documents of current interest and of constant demand. The collection of this subsection is in fact the main part of the current collection (i.e., the collection that has been described before under the general heading "Department of Current Collection"), excluding the material that is included in the collection of the quick reference subsection.

(c) Loan/supply. This section should be responsible for supplying requested documents and photocopies, either from the collections

of the NL or from other Greek and foreign institutions, to any authorized user of the NL directly and to any other user (in the country or abroad) through another relevant library. Thus it would respond to the great need for document delivery all over the country, and to IFLA's U.A.P. principle.

The demand should be covered to a great extent by the current collection, which at least theoretically corresponds to the majority of current information needs. The permanent collection should partly cover the demand for documents that are not in the mainstream of current needs. The specialist collections of other institutions should be used for satisfying demand for more specialist documents that the NL cannot afford to buy or keep in its collections. (Some of the older material might be relegated by the NL and given to those specialist collections.) If a demand cannot be satisfied by local resources, then the resources of other countries should be used (i.e., BLLD, etc.).

Usually the supply of material should be accomplished either by the provision of the documents themselves or by photocopies. In respect to the provision of photocopies, copyright problems should be taken into consideration.

The delivery of documents should be carried out within reasonable time and cost. Users should pay at least some part of the cost of some of the delivery services.

Methods that can be employed are: the use of the post for mailing requested material; the use of special services like mobile libraries and ship libraries; and the use of recently developed on-line document delivery services, mainly for ordering from abroad in urgent cases. (ADONIS is one such European service currently under development.)²⁸

The servicing through intermediary libraries of that part of the public that does not have direct access to the NL is considered appropriate in order to prevent unnecessary use of the NL in cases where demand can be satisfied by the user's local resources or other more appropriate libraries, which should be encouraged to develop their own services.

3. Department of Additions and Stock Maintenance

The department of additions and stock maintenance should be responsible for the additions to the collections and for keeping the stock in good condition. This department should be as efficient as possible because much of the importance of the NL will depend on the precision of its stock. Otherwise it will not be possible for the library to fulfill its supporting role in the development of the country,

²⁸White, Brenda, "Factors Affecting Document Delivery Systems: Present and Future," in *Fifth International Online Information Meeting*, London, December 8-10, 1981, Learned Information, Oxford and New Jersey, p. 337.

considering also that financial resources will be necessarily limited and that self-sufficiency is not an aim of the library.

This department could be divided into the following sections:

(a) **Legal deposit.** This section should be responsible for making sure that all documents and copies that should be deposited with the NL according to the relevant legislation will in fact be received by the NL. Both the completeness of the permanent collection and of the national bibliographies depend on the effectiveness of this section. Therefore, fast deposit of the material is as equally important as the deposit of all of it.

(b) **Acquisitions.** This section should be responsible for selecting, ordering and receiving the new documents of the library. The process whereby documents are selected for purchase should aim at covering the needs of both the permanent and current collection. The acquisition policy should be established with the active cooperation of these departments, and collaboration among the staff is necessary in order to specify particular needs.

Normally, the majority of selected material will be foreign, as the Greek material should already have been received by legal deposit. However, Greek items should also be included for needs such as gaps in the permanent collection, replacement of damaged or lost items, and high demand of particular documents.

Ordering should ensure the fast receipt of documents. This is important in order to keep the entire collection as up-to-date as possible, and because the content of some documents becomes out of date quite fast.

Possibilities for using on-line ordering systems should also be considered, particularly if the services provided by suppliers include large files, which can also be used for other purposes such as searching, cataloguing, etc.

This section should also be responsible for the exchange of publications and for making available the publications of the NL. It should also carry out the distribution of the relegated material, of which a file should be kept together with the institution that took it, so that it can be easily located in case it is needed again. This process could be combined with the function of national repository.

(c) **Stock maintenance.** This section should be responsible for keeping the stock of the library (excluding the manuscripts section) in good condition. That is, mainly binding the new stock and repairing the older one.

C. *Bibliographic Division*

1. Department of Document Processing

The department of document processing should be responsible for

processing the documents in order to prepare the elements that will be included in the bibliographic records of the NL. (In the case where computers are used, this should be taken into account during this processing.)

The processing should take into account the needs of the NL as well as those of the entire library and information community in Greece and abroad. The adoption of internationally and widely-used standards, which will facilitate cooperation at the international level and will bring international experience to Greece, is necessary. On the other hand, the incorporation of Greek experiences into the library's practices is also necessary in order to ensure the right treatment of the specific national needs and peculiarities (i.e., history, language, etc.) of Greece. (The research and development division carries the main responsibility in this area.) The practices that will be adopted by the NL should be seen as national standards, and their use by other libraries should be ensured by the advantages these libraries will have if they follow them. The possibility of having different sections for processing different kinds of material (i.e., books, serials, tapes, maps, etc.) should not be taken for granted because it seems that "the general trend is towards specialization according to process rather than publication."²⁹ However, the decision must be taken according to what is considered more appropriate to the actual circumstances.

The relevant processes are those concerning the descriptive approach to the documents and those concerning the subject approach.

In the first case, bibliographic analysis of the documents, and separation of the elements of description (i.e., author, title, imprint, collation, etc.) according to a standard set of rules, is necessary. A cataloguing code that could be used is AACR II (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, sec. ed.) for three main reasons. First, these rules are modern and are currently used with computers. Second, they have been adopted by a number of important libraries at the international level. And third, they have been recently adopted by the NL of Greece.

Foreign material should also be catalogued in cases where it has been received uncatalogued. For this reason, and also for producing records of Greek production in foreign languages, transliteration is necessary. The standardization of transliterating practices needs to be considered, especially in regard to recent developments in Greek spelling.

In the second case—the subject approach to information—the first thing that is necessary is the subject analysis of the documents, according to the predetermined policy of the library. A suitable policy could be that of "summarization,"³⁰ because it is regarded as sufficient

²⁹Coward, Richard E., "The British Library Bibliographic Services Division," in *British Librarianship Today*, edited by W. L. Saunders, London: The Library Association, 1977, p. 121.

³⁰Brown, A. G., *An Introduction to Subject Indexing*, Sec. ed. London: Clive Bingley, 1982.

in general terms for the kind and level of services that the NL should provide.

This subject analysis should then be used for the classification and indexing of documents. Classification should be based on one of the widely-used general classification schemes, possibly the Dewey decimal classification system, because of their advantages (facilitating international cooperation, constant updating, etc.). On the other hand, there is the problem of how a scheme will express the specific needs of Greece. The answer to this question cannot be considered within the context of this article. Similarly, the problems of subject indexing cannot be considered here. However, it should be mentioned that the utilization of documents through their subject content is becoming increasingly important, and therefore the need for a good system of subject entries and references is necessary. The entries should also cover specific Greek subjects and interests, which means that if a foreign general list of subject headings (i.e., LCSH) is going to be used, this should not only be translated into Greek, but it should also be adapted in order to respond to particular Greek needs. Additionally, the kind of indexes that will be produced and the different ways that records will be used should be considered in relation to what indexing systems should be adopted and developed.

Here, it should be noted that none of the widely-used library tools, such as cataloguing codes, classification schemes, and lists of subject headings, currently exist in Greek.

In the case of periodicals or serials, certain titles should be processed additionally, in order to prepare indexes and abstracts as very useful tools for enabling better utilization of these primary sources. This will be particularly helpful for the provision of current awareness services and for other similar uses.

2. Department of Automated File and Index Production

The bibliographic elements and subject entries produced by the previous department should be processed for input into the computer of the library in order to create its machine-readable bibliographic records (i.e., in MARC format) and files. These should be available for various uses, including the production of printed indexes (the national bibliography, the catalogue of the library, etc.).

In general terms, much of any library's work is suitable for the operations of a computer; therefore, the introduction of appropriate computerized systems by the NL should result in improving its efficiency and capabilities. Indeed, without the introduction of automation, it does not seem possible that the NL will succeed in playing a role of any importance at the national level or even be able to cope with its internal problems. (The description of the automated system to be used by the library is outside the scope of this essay.)

The main areas in which automation can be used are housekeeping operations and information retrieval. (Using internal as well as external sources, i.e., foreign databases). Two of the most important uses of records will be the production of the library's catalogue (which can be in microform format) and the production of the national bibliography of current material. Other departments and divisions of the library should be able to have access to the files for their own needs (i.e., provision of current awareness services, acquisitions, loans, etc.). The automated systems should therefore allow for the various operations needed.

The files of the library should also be available—possibly on line—to other institutions in the country or abroad. In this way, the NL could play a central role in the support of a nationwide LIS, acting, for instance, as a central cataloguing body and as the producer of the Greek bibliographic database. Additionally, it should be able to supply conventional bibliographic records (i.e., on cards) to any institution that requests them.

One of the initial benefits from the provision of these services to the entire library and information community will be a saving of valuable qualified (or unqualified) labor that could be better used, for instance, in offering direct services to users rather than processing already processed material.

Another area that should be covered is the production of union catalogues in order to facilitate the location of documents (especially periodicals and the exploitation of the different and possibly unique resources of the participating libraries). Other tools that could be produced are retrospective bibliographies, abstracts, and special catalogues.

D. *Research and Development Division*

1. Department of Planning and Evaluation

Taking into account the overall aims and policy of the library, there should be an examination of user needs (not only of current users, but also of potential users) and an evaluation of the current performance of library operations.

Having established the areas in which and some of the reasons why the library is weak, the establishment of a program of changes and developments should take place. These changes should be within the abilities of the available resources of the library at the time of implementation. The resources that should be considered are funds, staff, equipment, and documents. Planning should cover the short term and the long term.

Once the planning process has finished, the implementation can start. At this stage, solutions must be given quickly to any problem

that might occur in order to ensure the best fulfillment of the objectives that have been set by the plan.

The evaluation should be a continuous process and should cover all library operations, monitoring and assessing their performance, that is, their outputs, defects, costs, efficiency of procedures and equipment, effectiveness of services, etc. The results should be used for the continuous development of the library toward better meeting its users' needs.

The evaluation process should be based on certain criteria and desirable standards, that have been chosen before during the planners' establishment of the systemic requirements of the library. It is important that the appropriate techniques of control and evaluation, such as proper methods of recording and analyzing progress and statistical methods, should be used for producing the relevant data for comparison with the standards. However, standards themselves should also be open to examination and development according to overall changes.

In a way similar to that described above, the planning of NATIS should be carried out by the relevant personnel in close cooperation with the responsible government administrators and other relevant institutions and persons. Although many individual decisions will remain for the heads of individual LIS, there will be important dependence on direction from the national level, since the aim of a national service is to ensure that all units operate with the maximum efficiency.

Beside its role as national coordinator, the NL should also act as the national library and information cooperation center by providing, for instance, centralized bibliographic services to other libraries, as well as other services.

2. Department of Research and Training

This department should be responsible for stimulating and supporting research in fields that are considered to have priority according to the needs of the library, as well as of the entire library and information community of Greece. Additionally, it should promote the application of results.

Research and study should take into account current needs as well as potential future needs. There should be research and studies for immediate application and for possible developments in library and information science.

The activities of this department should cover subjects such as classification, cataloguing, indexing, management of LIS, education and training of librarians and information specialists, application of computers and other technologies in library and information work, user needs, and other related matters.

At least for the first period, most of the work should cover the adaptation of informational library tools and methods to Greek needs

and practices. Much of the effort should be concentrated in bringing the level of the LIS that will be provided in Greece, by a Greek-controlled information system, to an internationally acceptable standard. Additionally, attention should be given to developing a basic self-sufficient Greek library and information core which could support national independence and flexibility. This should not be considered as a rejection of the ideas of close international cooperation and sharing of resources and experiences, but as an effort to support some ability for Greek self-determination.

For the above activities and purposes, a specialized collection covering library and information subjects should be set up and developed by this department. This collection should also disseminate the results of the research and studies carried out by this department.

As far as the education and training of librarians and other information specialists is concerned, as long as there is no relevant university school in Greece, a wide range of educational aims, that normally should be the responsibility of the school, should be covered.

The library should organize seminars, special short courses, in-service training schemes, etc., that could provide the needed theoretical basis and some experience to new and older persons involved in providing LIS. This is necessary in order to allow the implementation of any plan for the improvement of LIS in Greece. As soon as a university library school starts operating, the responsibilities of the library should cover mainly its own needs and additionally support other needs.

A possible solution to the problem of shortage of staff could be the attraction into the library profession of a number of those university graduates who are now considering work in education as teachers.

E. Administrative Division

1. Secretariat—Accounting Office.

Responsible for all the activities and operations related to administrative needs of the library, e.g., correspondence, administrative files, accounting, etc.

2. Personnel Office

Responsible for problems related to the staff of the library.

3. Maintenance, Repairs, Security Office

Responsible for the maintenance and repair of buildings, installations, furniture, equipment, etc., of the library. Also responsible for the overall security of the library and its collections.

3.4 From the Point of View of the User

A crucial point of effectiveness of every organization is the facility

with which its users can use it and get the services they want, without getting involved in its complexity and operating structure. The users of the NL of Greece could be divided into two major categories, as has already been discussed. First, the public with general needs, and second, the public with specific needs. The first category includes those whom the library aims to serve indirectly, either by directing them to other appropriate institutions, or by supplying them with the requested information and documents through a number of cooperating institutions all over the country in cases where they cannot satisfy them.

The second category forms, in fact, the actual readership of the library. Their needs should fall into the category which the library aims to satisfy directly, according to its general aims and policy. The reception is responsible for deciding whether the need of a person justifies his direct use of the library. Permission to use the library should cover shorter or longer periods, depending on the particular demand.

According to its main primary demand, the user should be directed by the reception to the appropriate service point. This will be either within the department of permanent collection or within the department of current collection.

Normally, most of the needs should be satisfied by the department of current collection. This should provide extended bibliographic services, quick reference services, and a substantial current collection (including books, periodicals, etc.) for reference and loan services. Therefore, for example, a user who needs a recent book on a particular subject can first consult the bibliographic service of the quick reference section for advice on new titles, and then proceed to the loan supply section if he wants to borrow a particular title, or to the main reference section if he wants to consult it in the library.

On the other hand, if a user demands older material which has little current use and is stocked in the library, he will be directed to the department of permanent collection if he wants to consult it in the library, or the loan supply section of the department of current collection if he wants to borrow it (provided that the document is available for loan). If a particular document is not stocked by the library, the user should be directed either to the appropriate institution, which should stock it because of its specialization, or to the loan supply section for an interlibrary loan request (including foreign sources).

Problems would occur if the department of permanent collection could not be housed together with the rest of the services. In this case, some delays must inevitably be faced, but because the department of current collection by its nature should respond to the majority of demands, especially urgent ones, the problem is not a major one.

To a great extent, the coordination between the department and sections, based on automation, should diminish unnecessary efforts by users, because, at each service point, the staff should be able to inform the user if, for example, a book that he identified in a bibliography is

available for loan or only for consultation in the department of permanent collection, or if it is not available at all.

4. *Problems of Implementation*

These proposals for a new NL of Greece are to be considered to a large extent as a desirable ideal. The library, according to this plan, is seen as being in a position to meet Greek national library and information needs according to current international ideas.

The plan takes into account the fact that Greece is not a developed country and that it has limited financial resources. This means that Greece cannot envisage the development of its NL into an institution that would provide services similar in scope and depth to those offered, for instance, by the British Library. On the other hand, such services are not considered necessary for the Greek NL because the current efforts for establishment of international cooperation should result in sharing existing resources, which in the case of the countries of Europe are very large and well-developed.

However, even though the plan suggests comparatively limited aims and scope of services, present conditions in Greece do not allow its full implementation in the near future. Some of the most important reasons for this are considered briefly below.

● *Shortage of Qualified Staff*

Qualified librarian and other staff are needed to implement the plan. The present lack of staff needs to be faced in the short term with mainly foreign educated and experienced personnel for senior posts, and, for other posts, by people who should follow specially organized short courses and seminars in Greece. Only if a necessary minimum of qualified personnel is available can effective implementation start. Some of the most experienced among today's Greek librarians can form the first group to begin the effort for implementation, and also education of new personnel.

● *Absence of Adequate Library Tools*

It is clear that with no effective tools available, reorganization of the library and the provision of services are not possible. A minimum of basic tools (cataloguing rules, classification scheme) should be produced in Greek, based mainly on existing foreign ones, but some attention should also be given to Greek needs. Further development of tools and methods will allow an expansion of services, but, for a start, Greek translations will be enough for the provision of minimum effective services.

● *Insufficient Accommodation*

Additional space is necessary in order to allow any kind of improvement of library operations, otherwise any effort and money spent on the library will be wasted. Therefore, until some additional accommodation is available, the implementation cannot start.

● *Lack of Funds*

Without appropriate funds, no plan can be implemented. In the case of the NL of Greece, apart from increased operational financial support, a considerable initial investment will be necessary. This initial investment should cover needs such as new space, training of staff, production of library tools, acquisition of necessary new material for the collections, and new equipment. Considering the generally limited availability of financial resources in Greece, in conjunction with the country's many urgent problems, it becomes clear that a reassessment of priorities on which political decisions are based is necessary in order to ensure that needed funds for implementation of the plan, and the development of the NL, will become available on a continuing basis.

● *Absence of Up-To-Date Legislation*

Legislation is necessary in order to provide the directions, set the aims, and give the means and power to the library to carry out its responsibilities. Additionally, legislation should cover subjects such as library education, grades of staff, copyright, etc.

Until all these problems have been at least partly solved, implementation cannot advance beyond more than the very first stage. But even when these problems have been solved, the implementation of the plan will take place more easily in stages corresponding to different levels of services. Three main stages are outlined below.³¹

First, the basic level of services should consist of making available appropriate material for reference and loan, together with the necessary supporting provision of buildings and staff needed for easy access to this material. At this stage, the basic difficulties mentioned above should be solved.

At a second level, with further development of the necessary tools and techniques, and with more experienced staff, the library should be in a position to allow better utilization of its material and more systematic access to other sources outside the library. Also, at this stage, the library should be able to act at the national level as library coordinator and cooperative center.

The third stage implies that the library would be working at its maximum efficiency by providing advanced services such as abstracting,

³¹National Library and Information Services, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

translating, current awareness and retrospective searching, which will allow the intensive utilization of specialist sources of information.

The two first stages are considered as essential in order to give the library the possibility of achieving, at an acceptable level, its basic aims, which are the support of the development of the country and the collection of the national literary production. The third stage will bring the standard of the services offered by the library closer to those offered by the advanced libraries of the developed countries. It will also enable the library to participate more efficiently in international cooperation for bibliographic control and exchange of resources for the benefit of all library users, especially those with more specialized interests.

In general terms, the new NL of Greece is envisaged as developing into a leading library and information institution, at least at a national level, according to current international theory and practice on the subject. At the same time, although it will aim to offer more advanced services from equivalent institutions in most of the developing countries, it is not seen as developing to the level of similar institutions in the most developed countries of the world. This kind of approach reflects the current position of Greece—in between these two types of countries, something that cannot be disregarded and inevitably determines to a great extent the potential and limitations of Greece today.