

## The Salvador Cabinet obtains the category of property of cultural interest (*Bé Cultural d'Interès Nacional–BCIN*)

K. BARROS

Botanic Institute of Barcelona (IBB-CSIC-ICUB), pg. del Migdia, s/n, Parc de Montjuïc, ES-08038 Barcelona, Spain

E-mail: kbarros@ibb.csic.es

In late 2014 the Botanic Institute of Barcelona (IBB) received great news regarding the Salvador Collection kept in the center. On December 19, 2014, the *Official Gazette of the Government of Catalonia* published the recognition of the Salvador Cabinet as a “Heritage of Cultural Interest” (*Bé Cultural d'Interès Nacional–BCIN*) (DOGC, 2014), the maximum level protection provided by the Catalan government

to safeguard public heritage. Two months later, on February 5, 2015, this recognition was also published in the *Official Gazette of the Government of Spain* (BOE, 2014).

The declaration of this collection as *BCIN* responds to the need to protect and disseminate a really valuable and outstanding part of the Catalonian heritage. The Cabinet belonged to the Salvadors (Fig. 1A), a



**Figure 1.** (A), engraving of the Salvador Family; (B), one of the rooms of the cabinet placed in the Botanic Institute of Barcelona; (C), some pieces of the collection (Photographs: P. Linés).

well-known family of apothecaries from Barcelona, who developed their work around naturalism between the 16th and 19th centuries. As a result of the intense work of various generations, the Salvadors created their own scientific cabinet formed by a herbarium, a magnificent library of over 1500 volumes, collections of fossils, minerals, insects, artificial fruits, etc. (Fig. 1C). It is also preserved as a part of the cabinet the specifically-designed and decorated furniture (Fig. 1B) used to store the pieces (Ibáñez, 2014; Pardo-Tomás, 2014).

In the 19th century the collection was moved to a villa (*masia*) in the Penedès region where it remained unnoticed until the botanist Pius Font i Quer managed to find it in 1923. Following this discovery, the efforts of the Botanic Institute of Barcelona (IBB) focused on moving the collection to its premises between 1938 and 1945. Nevertheless, several parts of the cabinet remained lost until recently (early 2013); in the summer of 2013 the City Council proceeded to purchase a portion of this collection unknown until then. It was moved to the IBB facilities to be reunited with the rest of the collection (Barros, 2013).

As it is stated in the *BCIN* declaration, a noteworthy characteristic of the Salvador collection is to be one of the few scientific cabinets which remained united, when the pieces usually became part of bigger naturalistic collections, as it happened with most of the European cabinets.

As a first measure of protection, the *BCIN* declaration implies the obligation of including the Salvador Cabinet within an official register (*Registre de Bens Culturals d'Interès Nacional*) managed by the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia. Beyond registration, the *BCIN* declaration places a

number of obligations on the IBB and the Government of Catalonia related to the preservation and dissemination of the cabinet. These include notifying changes in the pieces (such as restorative treatments, inventory, and cataloging) and allowing public visits to the Cabinet at least four days a month with a previously established timetable. Likewise, the Government is committed to promote public awareness of this collection through different actions.

The *BCIN* declaration is a boost to several years of work focused on the Salvador Collection developed by both the IBB and the Natural History Museum of Barcelona. During these years some of the major projects carried out were the documentation and restoration of most of the pieces of the cabinet, all the tasks arising from the 2013 purchase, the mass deacidification of the Salvadors library, and the preparation of the exhibition *Salvadoriana* (see Ibáñez, 2014, for more details), opened in 2014.

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