



International Federation of Library
Associations and Institutions

Section on Preservation and
Conservation

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NEWSLETTER

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The following report was prepared by Jean Whiffin, a member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Preservation and Conservation, and formerly Preservation Officer at the University of Victoria Library, Canada.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECTION IN BANGKOK, AUGUST 1999 STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

John McIlwaine (U.K.) was elected Chair, and **Maria Skepastianu** (Greece) was re-elected Secretary/Treasurer, both by acclamation, for the term 1999-2001. **Sonja Jordan** (U.S.A.) will act as Information Coordinator, with the assistance of **Jean Whiffin** (Canada) and **Olga Perminova** (Russian Federation).

The Standing Committee reviewed its accomplishments to date in respect of its Action Plan 1998-1999, and developed a revised version for 2000-2001. The latter includes promoting the preservation by each country of its oral heritage, publication of a multilingual dictionary of terms used in paper conservation, and preparing and maintaining, with the collaboration of the IFLA PAC Core Programme, an electronic directory of

preservation standards, codes of practice, etc., and translations since 1990.

COMMENTS, QUERIES, SUGGESTIONS?

Section on Preservation and Conservation

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Professional Resolutions

At the Council II Session on August 27, 1999, **Ralph Manning** (Canada), Chair of the Planning Committee for the Satellite Meeting in Khon Kaen, reported on the very successful sessions. The following resolution was submitted to the Professional Board for further action:

RESOLUTION 1: Section on Preservation and Conservation Title: Collecting and Safeguarding Oral Traditions

Background: A Satellite Meeting sponsored by the IFLA Professional Board, the IFLA Section on Preservation and Conservation and the IFLA PAC and ALP Core Programmes with financial support from UNESCO and DANIDA, was held August 16-19 in Khon Kaen, Northeastern Thailand. The 68 participants from 32 countries strongly supported the need for continued vigilance in support of the collecting and safeguarding of the oral traditions of the peoples and cultures of the world.

Text: *Whereas oral tradition is a fundamental element in preserving the self-identity, traditional community knowledge and culture of the world's peoples, it is resolved that IFLA strongly supports and encourages the collection and safeguarding of the world's oral tradition and will take measures to ensure increased awareness of the importance of oral tradition as an integral component of the world's intellectual and cultural heritage.*

Submitted by John H.St-J.McIlwaine and Ralph W. Manning, August 25, 1999

JERUSALEM

THE 66TH IFLA COUNCIL
AND GENERAL CONFERENCE
13-28 AUGUST 2000

Plans for the 2000 IFLA conference are well under way. The Israeli National Organizing Committee is looking forward to welcoming delegates to Jerusalem.

The theme of this year's conference is:
"Information for Copoeration: Creating the Global
Library of the Future"

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SECTION ON PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

The Standing Committee of the Section on Preservation and Conservation will hold two business meetings during the Jerusalem Conference. Observers are welcome!!

Meeting I: Saturday, August 12, 2000
Meeting II: Friday, August 18, 2000

Information about the IFLA Conference in Jerusalem can be found on the IFLANET WWW server at:

<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/66intro.htm>

or

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OPEN SESSION

Eighty-four delegates, from 29 countries, including Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Srinthorn of Thailand, attended the Section's Open Session on the theme **Collection Preservation Management: An Approach to Complement Item-by-Item Treatment.** Royalty have often graced IFLA gatherings, and Her Royal Highness had already officially opened the 65th Council and General Conference and attended the gala reception and dinner, but this royal presence at professional meetings was a first.

Sonja K. Jordan (University of Notre Dame, U.S.A.) chaired the program, stating its purpose was to speak somewhat theoretically about the importance and the place of collections preservation management in the larger preservation objectives of a library or an archive. An overview of how some U.S. academic libraries manage their collections preservation needs was provided, but also the architecture of a collections management programme might be useful as national and foreign libraries consider their preservation needs. This framework must include assessment (condition surveys, action surveys, needs), selection for preservation, and prioritizing. The latter must be based on recognizing and expressing the nature of preservation needs, capabilities of the preservation department, institutional objectives, and the resources available. The U.S. benefits from a number of external funding agencies enabling and supporting large-scale collections preservation activities, and leaving local institutional funds to address other treatment options not supported by such agencies. Finally, the speaker mentioned operational models capable of implementation, emphasizing that, regardless of the one chosen, the best

managed program needs a framework and a plan which targets the collections meaningfully. Three speakers then addressed some of the issues, restraints, strategies and difficulties from various regional points of view.

John F. Dean (Cornell University, U.S.A.), in his presentation "Collections Care in Southeast Asia: Conservation and the Need for the Creation of Micro-Environments" discussed some of the strategies employed by his university's Department of Preservation and Conservation to preserve materials in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam and Thailand, in projects conducted in the past decade. Climatic, historic, and economic reasons have made it exceedingly difficult to ensure the survival of cultural property. Attempts to inflict western standards and practice, unaltered by locale, have been unsuccessful. Western solutions (*e.g.* air-conditioning) can be costly mistakes when power interruptions occur, compounding the problems. The need is for stabilization and security rather than complex, expensive and largely unattainable conservation treatment. Cornell's work has concentrated on attempts to save rapidly deteriorating collections through needs assessment, staff education and training (more recently through 6-month internships), developing and conducting conservation projects, and microfilming threatened collections to safeguard their textual content.

The rate of deterioration can be slowed and, in some cases reversed, through actions that are relatively low-cost and uncomplicated. There is a need for commonsense in dealing with problems, not sophisticated toys. He attaches great importance to the amelioration of problems through a more systematic approach to environmental control and

housing, which can be achieved at modest cost. This strategy involves use of wooden shelving, window screening, higher standards of cleanliness, more responsible handling procedures, protective housing, and stabilization operations. In particular, a large environment such as a large stack space, can be controlled by creating micro-environments: well-made boxes containing mild insect repellent, steel map cabinets with a desiccant and insect repellent in the base, and protective enclosures for valuable books and manuscripts. Librarians in S.E. Asia should concentrate on becoming curators and not get too excited about new technology. They should assess their priorities and needs, undertake a systematic collections survey to provide the basic data from which a long-term preservation strategy can be developed, and clearly articulate their objectives through sensible funding proposals to international agencies, since, without resources, training alone will not achieve speedy results. "Preservation projects should build towards the achievement of some coherent plan, and all projects originating in the West, whether for training or preservation production, should be seen as merely transitional to the time when the nations of Southeast Asia are able to mount and support their own preservation programs to begin to stem the tide of deterioration sweeping over their collections."

Gabriel Alegbeleye (University of Ibadan, Nigeria) contributed a paper on "The Role of the Joint *IFLA/ICA Committee on Preservation* on the Preservation and Conservation of Library and Archival Materials in Africa". It summarized the dismal state of institutional conditions at the time of the 1993 Pan-African Conference, and reviewed the typology of constraints: primarily poverty, neglect of written

documentation on an oral/aural continent, ignorance on the part of many librarians, and economic and political constraints, particularly destruction of collections in armed struggles.

One of the by-products of the Pan-African Conference on Preservation and Conservation was the establishment of the Joint IFLA/ICA Committee on Preservation in Africa (JICPA). This committee's achievements include the introduction of a preservation and conservation curriculum for library and archival schools in Africa. It was set up to create awareness, co-ordinate preservation programmes, and identify training needs, through national committees, and 13 countries now have such committees. Workshops have been held in different parts of the continent, and JICPA has brought positive change. The IFLA Core Programme on Advancement of Librarianship (ALP) has played a key role in the provision of needed funds, while UNESCO and the IFLA PAC Centre in Paris have provided logistical support.

Galina Kislovskaya (IFLA PAC Core Programme, Eastern Europe and the CIS, Russian Federation) dealt with "Matching Preservation Decisions with Collection Development Policy". She outlined the characteristics of any coherent collection development and preservation policies, which are forcing the need for applying large-scale preservation strategies. A substantial sampling of Russian and other CIS countries (Mongolia, Baltic States, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Romania) has been carried out. Data collected for comparison included 1) availability or absence of mission statements and of collection management policies; 2) availability of a formal structure responsible for collection management; and 3)

adherence to large-scale programs versus title-by-title preservation. Proper accommodation of collections in a stable environment and their careful handling was named as the most significant mass preservation strategy.

Boxing was identified as another preventative measure which all libraries favoured, with productivity of boxing a critical issue. Almost every library has a binding department, and a microfilming programme focussing on newspapers, but mass deacidification is hampered by cost constraints. Many techniques have yet to be included in the planning process, and there is a need for greater consultation with staff responsible for developing current collections.

WORKSHOP

Fifty-one colleagues, from 21 countries, attended the Workshop on the theme **Tactics for Preservation**, chaired by **Olga Perminova** (Russian State Library, Moscow). Closely linked to the Open Session, this Workshop emphasized Binding, Boxing and Storage considerations, and the role these activities play in preserving collections.

Debra McKern (Library of Congress, U.S.A.) gave an illustrated presentation on "Fitness for Purpose: The Role of Stabilization in a Collections Conservation Program" and the necessity to focus on the maintenance or stabilization of endangered research materials. The cost effectiveness of treatment is maximized by batching work, using permanent, durable materials, and employing sound methods. The concept was demonstrated by illustrating treatments used by the Library of Congress and their comparative costs, including library binding,

mass deacidification, in-house repair and binding, box-making using the CMI automated machine, and labelling using the Z39.50 protocol to download bibliographic information, plus some discussion of training and level of staff.

Helen Shenton (British Library, U.K.), in her paper "Macro and Microenvironments at the British Library," described the storage of the 12 million items recently moved into their new building. She explained the specifications for the storage and environmental conditions for different types of library and archive material and described the varying environmental parameters for storage and public areas. The new building has undoubtedly led to great improvements in the macro environment, but the need to measure the impact of that improvement on the rate of deterioration presents a future challenge.

The second part of the paper covered the microenvironments of enclosures used at the British Library with cost comparisons and the amount of practical protection afforded by different types of enclosures, from drop-back boxes to chit-su-type boxes to phase boxes. It also included a description of exemplar boxing projects in preparation for moving large quantities of material to a new facility, projects to test an environmental specification using dataloggers within enclosures, and current work on the possible use of vacuum packing and oxygen-free storage, particularly for newspapers.

Olga Perminova (Russian State Library, Moscow) presented a paper with colleague, **Tatiana Stepanova**, on "Conditions of Storing the Documents as the Chief Means of Preserving the Library Holdings (as shown by the experience of the Russian State Library)". Observation of temperature,

humidity, sanitary, hygienic, and light conditions of storage, in old depositories with unregulated climate, show the stabilization and research carried on by their scientists and restorers is insufficient for rehabilitating documents which are continually deteriorating under the influence of the environment. The French firm Cunin S.A. Contrexeville is in charge of reconstructing the 19-tier main depository.

Svetlana Dobrusina and Tatiana Velikova (National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg) provided a detailed technical paper on "Mass Disinfection of Documents affected by Micro organisms: One Practical Experience." The paper discussed the results of disinfecting 200,000 documents using a preparation Metatin GT made by a Swedish firm ACIMA, meeting three basic requirements: minimum toxicity for people, ability to be kept for a long period of time in paper, and lack of negative influence on paper, with effectiveness of 99.4% for bacteria and 97.7% for micromycetes.

VISIT TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THAILAND

Twenty-three Standing Committee members and other interested colleagues enjoyed the privilege of visiting the National Library to observe preservation and conservation of the national intellectual and cultural heritage, in the form of ancient documents and tools of information. These include stone inscriptions dating back to 6 A.D., manuscripts on indigenous black and white paper in accordion shape, palm leaf texts, and lacquer and gilt bookcases containing the Buddhist sacred scriptures.

FORTHCOMING IFLA MEETINGS

The central theme of the 66th IFLA Conference to be held in Jerusalem, Israel, 13-18 August 2000, is "Information for Co-

operation: Creating the Global Library of the Future". Under the sub-topic "Preservation of the Past for the Future," the Section's Standing Committee is planning an Open Session on **Preserving the Web**, including an overview of the field, presentation of two projects representing different strategies - the complete and the selective collection of web pages - and an assessment of the prospects of long-term preservation of digital collections. Johan Mannerheim (Royal Library of Sweden) is developing this programme. A Workshop on preservation of non-paper materials is being organized jointly with the Section on Rare Books and Manuscripts. It will be hosted by the Jewish National and University Library, and will be combined with visits to the NUL's conservation laboratory.

Immediately following the Jerusalem General Conference, on August 21-24, 2000, a symposium on **Managing Preservation of Periodicals and Newspapers. Gérer la Conservation des Périodiques et de la Presse**, hosted by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, will take place in Paris. This symposium follows-up on a the 1989 IFLA Conference. The symposium will revisit its recommendations and assess changes and prospects. It will be aimed at a broader audience. It is being co-organized by the Sections on Preservation and Conservation, and Serial Publications, the Round Table on Newspapers, and the IFLA PAC Core Programme. Persons interested in attending this programme should send their name and address to:

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