

**Maintenance And Preservation Of Book Collections
In “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library, Cluj-Napoca**

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The paper intends to present and analyze the situation of general collections in our library (special collections will not be included), and some of the problems connected to their condition.

The article is structured accordingly:

- A. Short history
- B. Deposit and reading rooms
- C. Sanitation methodology for space and collections
- D. Preservation problems in the case of branch libraries
- E. Guidelines for a preservation plan on an institutional level

A. The Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca is the largest library of Transylvania. The profile of its collections is encyclopedic, scientific, and didactic. In addition, due to its special collections and the maintenance of the legal deposit, it has a museum character as well.

1906-1909 – The building of the present university library was built on the model of the university library in Basel. Because of lack of funds, the work was continued only in 1931, and was finalized in 1934.

1919 – the building and the book stock passed into the patrimony of the Romanian state.

1920 – the official inauguration of the library

1923 – starting with this year the University Library received Legal Deposit Rights (it received two copies of almost all publications printed in the country: books, brochures, periodicals, newspapers, maps, printed musical notes).

1949 – the former libraries of faculties, seminars, and institutions were organized as branches of the University Library.

1960-1962 – the new book deposits, microfilm, photography multiplication and binding workshops were built, as well as the laboratory for book hygiene and pathology.

1965 – the first free shelf access collections are organized.

B. The library holds at present over three million volumes in its deposits and free shelf access lecture rooms. Book space covers a utility area of 11,700 m².

According to the last official statistics, the number of its volumes places this library on the top of university libraries in the country.

As for the registered users, in the academic year 2001-2002 their number reached 66,000, the frequency of consulted volumes was over 1,400,000 volumes, and the frequency of readers around 900,000.

The publications can be consulted in 55 lecture rooms with a full capacity of 2100 seats, distributed between the central building, and the 38 branch libraries.

The Central University Library Cluj-Napoca employs 224 persons, 169 of these are librarians, 6 of them are computing specialists, one book conservator, and 48 persons other specialized staff.

There are 12 lecture rooms in the central building, arranged as follows:

Second floor

- **Social sciences room** – open access – over 20,000 volumes (books and serial publications), systematically and alphabetically numbered, and thematically organized in two reading rooms with a capacity of 110 seats. The rooms used to be deposits, now reorganized in accordance with readers' needs. The shelves that hold the books should be lacquered, for protection against insects. Metallic shelves are recommended for these types of rooms.
- **Science room** – open access – over 10,000 volumes (books) and over 50,000 standards (STAS) and patents. The first room houses the catalogues and the furniture (wooden tables and chairs), not lacquered wooden shelves, and the publications, etc. The two rooms must be rearranged, so that the catalogues are brought out from the reading room, because in the catalogue card boxes there is a danger of microorganism infections.

First floor

- Periodicals room – direct access
- Special collections room – direct and indirect access (deposit service)
- Multimedia room
- Researcher's room – indirect access

Groundfloor

- Reference room – direct access
- Professor's room – indirect access
- Lecture room I – III – indirect access

Basement

- Department of loans – open access to over 30,000 volumes thematically organized, and closed access to over 100,000 volumes arranged by size (in the deposit).

The closed access stock is organized and kept in a **closed deposit**, made up of two blocks of buildings, each having 8 levels, each level 44 m long, 10 m wide, 2.5 m high, and divided into 3 rooms with metallic doors in between. The main pieces of furniture in the deposit are: wooden shelves on metallic support, tables for books, ladders, etc. For circulation of books, periodicals, and newspapers elevators, platforms, or small trolleys are used. A closed gangway connects the two deposits to the lecture rooms.

The first building block houses the stock organized on **levels**, as follows:

- I – II (basement) – newspapers
 - arranged by size
- III – IV – current books
 - arranged by size
- V – VI – periodicals
 - arranged by column and size
- VII – VIII – books and periodicals
 - arranged by column.

In the second building block the publications are organized as follows:

- I – low circulation stock
- II – Legal Deposit – arranged by column

- III – loan department publication stock
- IV – annuals, musical notes, rare books, groups, etc.
- V – periodicals and the Art Albums Stock
 - arranged by size
- VI – patrimony stock
- VII – VIII – low circulation stock

The number of volumes in the central deposit is around two million.
Notable collections are:

- The G. Sion Collection
- The Al. Lepădatu Collection
- The D.D. Roșca Collection
- The Adrian Marino Collection
- The Gáll Gábor Collection
- The I.C. Crețu Collection
- The “Sibiu” Collection

C. The main task of collection preservation is to halt the problems that can cause damage, to cure and repair the damage made, and, last but not least, to use the methods for collection preservation.

Besides the permanent control of the microclimatic parameter conditions in deposits and lecture rooms, the conservator also has the task of supervising the cleaning and sanitation of the building, and the handling of publications.

Daily, the furniture in the lecture rooms is dusted, the floor is wiped, while the hygiene of the whole building is done on a trimestrial basis, according to a plan, on levels and following a general cleaning: the lighting elements are dusted, as are the walls and ledges, and the furniture in the room.

The doors and window frames, painted in oil, are wiped with warm water and disinfectant.

After dusting, the furniture is disinfected.

As the floor of the lecture-rooms is made of concrete or entirely covered in vinyl, it is wiped with a soft cloth, soaked in water with disinfectant added. The GOLDEN DEZINFECTANT product is used for this purpose, a germicide-detergent especially used against viruses, bacteria, and fungi. The product is applied for commonly used spaces, which are in danger of de-sanitation:

- the laboratory of hygiene
- book deposits
- lecture rooms
- toilets, etc.

Particular characteristics of the GOLDEN DEZINFECTANT product:

- disinfects and cleans, with a hygienic and degreasing effect
- destroys a wide range of microorganisms
- bio-degrading
- economical
- contains no abrasives
- eliminates unpleasant smells
- not flammable.

Usage: being a highly concentrated product, it has to be diluted. The bacterial field turns negative in 30 seconds!

The maintenance staff under the supervision of the conservator cleans the book deposits weekly, in the same way as the lecture rooms.

For disinfecting the bookshelves formol is also used in a solution of 2%, applied on the surface through brushing, after the shelf has previously been cleaned with a wet cloth.

Formol is also used for disinfecting deposit spaces, when required; it is sprayed in the room in a concentration of 29-32 %, and the rooms are kept closed for at least 48 hours. Afterwards, they are aired.

Also for disinfection, especially in the case of damp and moldy places, ultra-violet irradiation (UV) is used, with the help of special lamps. This method is applied to destroy bacterial spores and fungi, and it contributes to the destruction of pathogen agents dangerous to humans. Irradiation is prevalently done in dark corners, with a high danger of infection; and also on the walls and furniture. Due to the large quantities of ozone produced by the UV lamp, the air in the rooms purifies.

As a consequence of the cases of hepatitis, tuberculosis, or virus infections of the respiratory tract, becoming increasingly frequent among the population, especially collectives, it must be ordered that open spaces were cleaned and disinfected **monthly**. (Publications were frequently returned to the loan department by students who mentioned that they had been in hospital, suffering from hepatitis, acute virosis, or even tuberculosis!)

Besides the hygiene of the library open spaces, the conservator focuses also on a minimal treatment for the librarians who handle documents in the deposit. Therefore, librarians possess a solution antiseptic and anti-mycotic, that they spray onto their hands, as it is active against fungi pathogenous to humans (dermatophytes, *candidae*).

As there have been dermatological problems among librarians (hands, face, eyes – mostly long-lasting and requiring expensive treatment), the conservator proposed that special rooms – lounges should be organized inside the library, where the employees could have their lunch (at present, they have their lunch at their place of work deposits, lecture rooms, offices).

In order to optimize cleaning and hygiene, the institution should be endowed with more vacuum cleaners, cleaning apparatus, and other specific materials.

D. In order to underline the necessity of collaboration between departments and the laboratory for book hygiene, and, accordingly, with the person responsible for book preservation, and the condition of deposits and lecture rooms, we will present three cases of serious problems, where the rules of preservation of cultural patrimony goods were neglected.

Faculty of Mathematics – Periodicals deposit

When the collection was moved, the conservator was not consulted, nor informed about the procedure. The spaces in the ground floor of the building are un-sanitized, the walls moldy, lacking the necessary insulation. The bookshelves are made out of fresh, un-planed wood.

Problems: a state of serious decay was found (in June 1995). There were salt crystallizations, the plaster was shriveled, even crushed in some places, the relative humidity (RH) was 80%, and the temperature (T) 12-13 degrees centigrade.

Solutions: the crust was removed from the wooden shelves, and it was brushed with “Xilamon” (a solution against decay). The deposit was disinfected with formol of 29%, by forced evaporation.

Faculty of Law

The library was moved (from the J. Arany Street to the A. Iancu Street) into a location with an improper microclimatic stability situation.

Problems: the library was arranged in the basement of the newly renovated building, in conditions inadequate for book deposition (moldy basement, humidity (RH over 80%), temperature 21-27 degrees centigrade).

Solutions: according to preservation norms, the space used for deposits must meet the following requirements: to be hygienic; to have a microclimatic stability of RH 50/55%, temperature must not exceed 18°C; not to be situated below water-pipes and drainage level (as it is in the case of this branch library), etc.

Faculty of Letters – English library (located on the uppermost floor of the building (Horea Street))

Problems: There was a fire in the attic of the building. As a consequence of the firemen's actions to stop the fire, two rooms of the library were flooded via the ceiling. Over 300 volumes got wet.

Solutions: The books were brought to the laboratory of book hygiene, dried (opened in fan form), introduced in kilns with formol to disinfect, then pressed and returned for circulation.

E. Preservation is the discipline that deals with the study of causes or symptoms of deterioration, factors that influence deterioration, and the modes to prevent and stop these.

The purpose of collection preservation is to keep the collections in a good condition as long as possible. The preservation activity must be grounded on a **policy of general preservation**, and on preservation programs for each type of collections.

Collections are put through processes of progressive degradation, as a result of the mutual effects of several factors, classified as follows:

- a. natural factors of the environment (physical and chemical)
- b. biological factors (vegetal and animal)
- c. human factors (individual and/or collective)

The preservation program of a library collection must keep in mind two objectives:

1. Preventive preservation:

- optimizing depositing conditions;
- control of environment (temperature, relative humidity, light, biological factors);

- instruction of staff and users;
- plans and preventive measures for catastrophes.

2. Active preservation:

- simple repairs on frequently used books (covering and binding);
- treatments of current maintenance (cleaning of depository spaces and furniture, disinfecting and dusting, fighting against mold and insects, and, when necessary, deratization).

The common effort of librarians, conservators, decisive factors, and the administrative staff (maintenance, binding) should make possible the achieving of the two objectives of the preservation program.

In conclusion, a rigorous preservation activity (observing the rules of preservation) is beneficial both to the users and to the staff of the library, and can be supported by general regulations in the *Rules of Internal Discipline* of any library.