

PROBLEMS OF STORAGE AND PRESERVATION OF CARTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN STATE LIBRARY

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Abstract:

1. The map Department is one of the young structural sections of the Russian State Library. It was organised in 1990, by which time the system of Library Departments had already been formed. The reading room and storage room, given to the Department, were unsuitable for the handling of the cartographic items and for working with them.
2. The problem of the organisation of the cartographic stocks were not comprehended theoretically, namely the form of the publication (sheets, reels, books and so on), its size, the peculiarities of its external design and so on, were not registered, the practice of the management of the cartographic stocks in foreign libraries was not got through. As the horizontal storage of the maps and atlases was assumed as the basis of the shelving, errors in organising the stock sprang up. While putting the maps into binders (in two sizes), the publishing form got broken as their cases were destroyed. While ciphering the atlases, their size in the horizontal position was left out of account and plenty of room went for naught in cabinets and it eventuated in inconvenience in handling the stock while serving the readers.
3. The management of new editions has found itself in an impasse as the storage is overfilled now and there is no space for further housing the stock.
4. The temperature and moisture conditions and the presence of metallic dust originated by the conveyer situated in the storage room have a harmful effect on the preservation of publications. The conditions of the sanitary air cleaning; of the stock have been violated.
5. Any way out of this situation is possible for the preservation of the unique cartographic stock solely on condition that new premises are given to the Department, which will be fitted out with special equipment corresponding to the demands of the scientific organisation of the cartographic stock.

The Department of Cartographic Publications of the Russian State Library possesses one of the largest cartographic collections in the country. Today, the

collection numbers 245 788 units, including 221 000 maps, which are kept on 138 double shelves, and 23 771 atlases, which take up 64 double shelves. The domestic cartographic collection makes up more than half of the total volume of the Library's stock.

The history of the establishment of a separate collection and of the separate Department of Cartographic Publications is a long and difficult one. The Department of Cartographic Publications originated in the Rumyantsev Museum since N. P. Rumyantsev's collection boasted of about 500 units.

From the reports of the Moscow Public Museum, it follows that, from the day of its establishment, the Museum constantly acquired maps and schemes, and they also came in as deposit copies. A substantial source of increasing the cartographic collection were the donations of Russian geographers, travellers, scientists and cultural workers.

A substantial contribution into the building-up of the Library's collection of maps and atlases in the first decades of its existence were the duplicates received from the Imperial Public Library. (The latter began to receive deposit copies in 1810). The formation of the cartographic stock as of a separate collection progressed in stages.

In the first years of the Library's existence, cartographic materials were either included into the thematic collections of the Museum, or else they were placed among books and graphic publications. The principle of their distribution among the different collections of the Library was based on their outward appearance and the format of the publication. For many years, the maps and atlases laid in disorder, and it was only in the 20s of the 20th century that their systemisation was begun, and then these materials began to flow into the operating collection. The construction of a new depository prior to the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) made it possible to establish collections based upon the type of publications. The problem of the creation of a specialised Department was solved in the end of the 1950s.

In 1960, the Department of Cartographic Publications became an organisationally separate and specialised subdivision of the National Library.

However, by that time, there was no longer space enough in the new depository, which would have allowed the arrangement on its shelves of the large-format cartographic collection. The Department was allotted approximately 400 square metres of space, which was disposed on four tiers, which immediately created difficulties in the arrangement of the collection.

The problem of organisation of the cartographic collection had not been theoretically developed in advance. In other words, the form of the publications (leaf materials, rolls, books, etc.), their format and specific features of their superficial lay-out had not been taken into account and the practice of organisation of cartographic collections in foreign libraries had not been investigated. Because the horizontal storage of maps and atlases was accepted as the basic principle of arrangement, many mistakes were made in the organisation of the collections. The maps were packed into folders and cases of the formats, and, in this way, their initial form was distorted since the cases in which they were kept had been thrown away. In those instances, when atlases were coded, regardless of their format in the horizontal position, much place in the book-cases was wasted. Such an arrangement of materials also created many inconveniences for the librarians, when they took out the books the users asked for.

The depository was equipped with double shelves, which were intended for the holding of books and which were unsuitable for maps and atlases. The collection is internally divided into domestic and foreign publications and they are given different codes. The domestic publications receive the code « Ko », and the foreign ones « K ». This code is followed by the number of the book-case and shelf, and, finally, by the number of the publication.

The publications that are rarely demanded were arranged on the lower tier whereas those, which were in high demand, were kept on the middle tiers. As the depository was already equipped with stationary book-shelves, there was no place where sectional book-shelves could be put up, and so it was decided to pack the maps into cardboard folders.

In the first years of the creation of the collection, the organisation of the materials was the major problem the Department aimed to solve. The collection was not large and it could be easily packed into folders of which one or two were kept on one shelf.

However, in the 30 years of the Department's existence, the collection increased two times, and now, we do not have the necessary space for its ordered arrangement. Each book-case now holds from 12 to 14 shelves (instead of the initial 10 shelves), and each shelf holds 3 or 4 folders, which are tightly packed with the sheets of maps.

The problem of arrangement of annual new acquisitions, which number from 1 000 to 1 500 units, is into the foreground. It has become difficult to handle the overloaded folders from the shelves, and under the pressure of the big weight, the leaves in the folders become crushed and deformed. The organisation of storage of

atlases is also inadequate. In one book-case, both huge (100 x 50 cm) and miniature (10 x 5 cm) atlases are stored. Large-format atlases, instead of standing vertically, lie in heaps on the shelves, and being very heavy, they press on the publications that lie beneath them, thus spoiling their bindings, jackets and backs.

We lack adequate library furniture for the storing of cartographic materials held in rolls and tubes. The depository is not equipped with ventilation facilities and this aggravates the physical preservation of the collection. The temperature and humidity regime and the enhanced content of metal dust in the air, which comes from the conveyor, installed in the depository, has a pernicious effect on the preservation of publications. The absence of sockets in the depository makes it difficult to clean the holdings with a vacuum sweeper. The technical equipment of the Department and its further development had not been initially thought out.

The only way out of the existing situation would be the reconstruction of the depository and the construction of the a new building, or the allocation of new accommodation. The staff of the Department has worked out on the conception of the technical re-equipment of the Department including the map depository. This concept has found reflection in the scientific report « Prospects of activity of the Department of Cartographic Publications after the reconstruction ».

The technical re-equipment of the Department should, first of all, be directed toward the creation of comfortable working conditions for staff and good conditions for the domestic of the collection.

This measure should also favour the quick delivery of materials to the users. In order to achieve this goal, the following measures should be taken :

- 1) to efficiently arrange the collection of cartographic materials on one plan according to the diversity of forms and formats, and the specific features of the materials of which these publications are made, call for the installation of a special transport system for the delivery of these publications to the reading hall,
- 2) to allocate separate places for the storing of atlases, leaf materials, cartographic materials on microforms and on unconventional media. Special conditions of storing (regulation of humidity, temperature and light) for each separate file should be worked out,
- 3) an isolated depository for materials of limited use should be allocated,
- 4) for each file of this kind, the following special equipment should be envisaged :

- universal shelves for atlases, would be suitable for the arrangement of large-format materials,
 - large shelves on rollers for the storing of heavy and large-format atlases,
 - sectional book-cases for the storing of leaf materials,
 - special equipment for the storing of maps, packed in rolls and tubes,
 - special map-folders for the keeping of large-format sheets in a suspended position (for rare materials),
 - special computerised card catalogues,
 - special book-cases for the storing of microfilm, microfiches and other unconventional media,
- 5) apart from all this, the depository should have a number of special tables for work with cartographic materials and for the preparation of these materials for restoration and repair of bindings,
- 6) it is also necessary to envisage a special room, which would be situated next to the reading-hall, in which publications would be prepared for issue to users and reservation.

Proceeding from the foregoing statements, we consider it as necessary for the staff of the group for acquisition and organisation of collections to include the following specialists ; one selection officer with a cartographic education, senior librarian ; one senior librarian, responsible for the work with the collection ; one chief editor and three librarians (for the selection of materials and the issue of the materials to users, and for current work, involved with the acquisitions and organisation of the collection).

The staff should be allocated a room, situated near the depository and the external transport system, which would deliver materials to the Department. A group for the processing of materials should be established within the Department. The room (or hall) should be provided with the following facilities :

- 1) a computerised working place for the selection specialist,
- 2) a computerised working place for the librarian, who is responsible for the collection (this worker should have a channel of communication with the electronic catalogue for maintaining the special card catalogues, for computerised coding, the marking of publications and their retrieval in order to register the publications and control the collection, in general etc.),
- 3) a working place for the rest of the member of the group.

- 4) a special table for the arrangement of cartographic materials, which are being processed.

The problem of restoration of cartographic materials is also an urgent one. The establishment of the Research centre for restoration and conservation, attached to the Department of Cartographic Publications, made it possible to extend the range of activities involved with the restoration, not only of book monuments, but also of specialised collections, including the collection of maps and atlases, too.

The restoration of cartographic materials calls for the exploitation of different methods and ways of restoration of publications, and that is why the individual approach to these materials is practised here since this approach helps to preserve the paper, inks, the form of the publications and their bindings.

In order to solve the problems of restoration of the unique cartographic collection, it is necessary to conduct jointly with the Research centre for restoration and conservation, an analysis of the state of preservation of publications and develop a programme of conservation of these materials.

Thanks to the support of the Research centre, the Department has been able to train a specialist in the field of restoration of cartographic materials. The lack of space and the necessary materials does not allow the Department to restore publications on the spot, and we have to send the documents to the Research centre and work on the materials there, and this, of course, makes this procedure more complicated.

In the final part of the report, we must note that the cartographic collection of the Library calls for special attention from the standpoint of its preservation for, with years, the importance of cartographic materials grows since they represent a reflection of natural and social reality.

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