



International Federation of Library  
Associations and Institutions

Section on Preservation and  
Conservation

John H. St.-J McIlwaine  
School of Library, Archive & Information Studies  
University College London  
Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT  
UNITED KINGDOM  
T: 020 7679 7206  
F: 020 7383 0557  
[uczcw06@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:uczcw06@ucl.ac.uk)

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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 JERUSALEM AND PARIS, AUGUST 2000

### STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**John McIlwaine** (U.K.), Chairman of the Section, welcomed members and observers to Jerusalem for the first IFLA annual conference to be held in this city. He announced with great regret that Secretary/Treasurer **Maria Skepastianu** (Greece) had been obliged to resign from the Committee on account of serious illness. In the circumstances he would be handling the Section's finances, while **Sylvie Le Ray** (France) and **Jean Whiffin** (Canada) had kindly agreed to act as Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary respectively, up to and including the Boston 2001 meetings.

The Standing Committee reviewed its accomplishments to date in respect of its Action Plan 1999-2001. In particular, the

Committee has promoted the preservation of oral heritage, and of serial publications, and is emphasizing the significance of digitisation through the Section's programmes at the 2000 and 2001 Conferences, as well as holding a workshop on the preservation of non-paper materials. Fruitful co-operation and collaboration with the IFLA Core Programme on Preservation and Conservation (IFLA PAC) continues, and closer relations with other relevant regional, national and international organizations are being developed. The Committee is strongly supporting the continuation of IFLA PAC, in view of the structural changes taking place within the organization. It is being stressed that this is a vital activity, and that the Committee can do little work in comparison beyond initiating and setting things in motion and thus contributing to a Programme with positions, salaries, etc. The Chairman has also suggested there be observers from Division VIII (Regional Activities) at the Standing Committee meetings or slots on the

Committee for its members, to give them the opportunity for active participation.

Following the success of the 1999 **Khon Kaen Satellite Meeting on Collecting and Safeguarding the Oral Tradition**, the resolution submitted by the Section to Council urging IFLA to take action to increase awareness of this tradition was adopted. Results to date include the publication of the proceedings in the *IFLA Professional Reports* series, and the creation of a new electronic discussion list **ORALTRAD**, which has been set up on IFLANET.

Other publication projects are proceeding satisfactorily. Further translations of the *Library Disaster Planning* brochure are in progress, and this title is now also included in the new IFLA/UNESCO CD-ROM *Safeguarding our Documentary Heritage*. For the time being, the Section's *Newsletter* will continue to appear in both print and electronic versions. The papers presented at the Open Session in Jerusalem have been made available on IFLANET and will be published in IFLA PAC's newsletter *International Preservation News*.

## OPEN SESSION

The central theme chosen for the 66th IFLA Conference was "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 organized 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** (Head of the Division of Information

Technology at the Royal Library of Sweden) was responsible for developing this programme, which attracted an audience of 110 delegates.

**Johan Mannerheim**, in an excellent introductory paper entitled "The WWW and Our Digital Heritage - The New Preservation Tasks of the Library Community", traced the development of text distribution and preservation from manuscripts through printed publications, to the present era in which more and more information is primarily digital, though information technology so far has only had marginal effects on preservation and conservation. Although there is a lot of digital trash in the explosive growth of Web publishing, there is also material of lasting cultural value, and it is now an important task for the library community to collect part or all of this and preserve it to safeguard access into the future. He explained the construction of the World Wide Web and some definitions used to describe it, outlined the two main approaches to Web preservation - *comprehensive* (such as the Swedish Kulturarw3 Project) and *selective* (such as the PANDORA Project of the National Library of Australia) - and three approaches to responsibility for preservation (publishers, national, international), with the pros and cons of each. In his opinion, the most realistic approach is to start co-operation between national Web archives. An automatic means of collecting is the best method of coping with growth. The Royal Library is promoting the use of metadata through meetings and information on the Web and providing a template for Dublin Core creation. The short life of many Web pages inevitably means many will be lost forever without quick collection. Deposit law requires revision, and copyright and privacy legislation might be in conflict with

preservation and reasonable studies in the Web archive.

Web pages cannot be preserved on paper or microfilm, because the hypertext and multimedia techniques embedded will get lost, and links will point into the air. We have to build infrastructures to preserve Web publications in digital form to preserve contents as well as appearance and functionality. Preservation of a digital file is easier than paper conservation, but the problem is software to interpret the saved digits as programmes get outdated and systems shifted. Files have to be converted to readable formats or emulation software applied which functions in the current IT environment. Experts specializing in taking care of digital documents and publications will emerge. Discussion lists and FTP collections, and the problems of preserving digital personal archives (such as an author's manuscripts), need to be addressed.

Johan Mannerheim concluded with his vision - a net of national libraries all archiving their own countries' Web publications so that one can follow a link on a page in one archive to a page in another just as in the living World Wide Web.

The second paper contributed by **Allan Arvidson** and **Krister Persson** (Project Kulturarw3) and **Johan Mannerheim**, presented by the first-named, provided an overview of "The Kulturarw3 Project - The Royal Swedish Web Archiw3e - An Example of the 'Complete' Collection of Web Pages." The aim of the Project, inaugurated in 1996, is to test methods of collecting, preserving and providing access to Swedish electronic documents, which are accessible on line in such a way that they can be regarded as published. The speaker outlined how snapshots are taken a couple of times a year with a collecting robot

"grabbing and storing" every page of the Swedish Web, problems encountered (such as pages requiring some form of interaction from the visitor), the access priorities of surfing and free-text search, and future development (such as methods for automatic generation of metadata and automatic cataloguing). Technical aspects of the archive, such as organizing the material in one single file, physical storage, etc., and legal issues, were also briefly covered.

The third paper by **Cliff Law** (National Library of Australia) was devoted to "PANDORA - Towards a National Collection of Selected Australian Online Publications", comprehensively describing a Project (also started in 1996) to build an archive of selected Australiana. He stated it is not sufficient merely to point to an on-line publication somewhere else. In order to ensure long-term access to it, the responsible library must have custody of it. Details presented included selection guidelines, the core set of tasks, the business principles to help to define what the new Electronic Unit was trying to achieve, action to assist in building pathways from current archiving to future preservation, legal deposit and copyright issues, relationships with other institutions and publishers, and technical data.

The speaker concluded: "... the Australian approach is an attempt to respond to the need for National Libraries to actively collect and preserve new digital publications created in the Internet environment. Our approach is not perfect and is based on learning by doing. We do not see ourselves in conflict with the Swedish approach. In fact both libraries are in close contact and share information on development on a regular basis. The real issue for us all, especially libraries with legal deposit responsibilities, is to start to see the Internet

as a "space" where valuable cultural and documentary heritage "information objects" are being created. We all need to start implementing the values and strategies for preservation we have developed for the print-based world, using the opportunities provided by technologies. It is our responsibility."

### WORKSHOP

Thirty delegates, including most of the Standing Committee and colleagues from the joint sponsor - the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section - visited the Laboratory for Restoration and Preservation at the Jewish National and University Library. This Laboratory applies many methods of prevention and restoration, but the Workshop focussed on **Preservation of Parchment and Medieval Manuscripts**. The Head of the Restoration Department, **Tova Szeintuch**, presided over a lively session in which she presented fascinating history about her department and Jewish manuscripts, and the problems of treating manuscripts the preparation of which (in family enterprises and ateliers) is still a secret. Knowledge of Jewish bindings is likewise scant. Earlier treatments have complicated restoration, and there is reluctance to handle heavily stained material evidencing "illness". The philosophy now is to do as little as possible to manuscripts. All medieval ones are microfilmed, and some have now been digitized for access and information. Requests for exhibitions are increasing, but standards are lacking and facsimiles are often used in spite of objections.

A larger group met in a second session, co-chaired by **John McIlwaine** (U.K.) from the Preservation and Conservation Section, and **Alice Prochaska** (U.K.) from the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, for

discussion on techniques and the sharing of experience. The Agenda items – Exhibitions and Loans; Use of Surrogates; Fragments; and Managing Priorities - provided a basis for informative dialogue, and resulted in recommendations from both Sections to exchange standards for exhibitions and loans, and to create a new database for fragments to describe what has been found where and include images.

### FORTHCOMING IFLA MEETINGS

The central theme of the 67th IFLA Council and General Conference to be held in Boston, U.S.A., 16-25 August 2001, is "Libraries and Librarians: Making a Difference in the Knowledge Age". The Section's Standing Committee is planning an Open Session on **Managing Digital Collections as Research Collections**. **Nancy Gwinn** (U.S.A) and **Sonja Jordan** (U.S.A.) are responsible for developing this programme. A keynote speaker will provide a state-of-the-art view of what is happening in this area worldwide, to be followed by three panelists who will focus on specific aspects of managing digital collections. It is anticipated that these will cover "Technical Data and Metadata Preservation Needs", "Artifacts and Digital Collections", and "Archiving Digital Collections". The Open Session will be complemented by a Workshop on **Digitization and Preservation: Natural Partners?** This will feature a structured conversation on basic and practical aspects of digitization among practitioners from a variety of institutions that have developed digitization programmes, who will be asked to respond to a series of questions given them in advance with the aim of providing a range of opinions and interaction. An IFLA Guest Lecture on preservation planning will also be delivered by a representative from the Council on Library and Information

Resources during the course of the main conference.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

*A Reader in Preservation and Conservation.* Compiled and edited by Ralph W. Manning and Virginie Kremp under the auspices of the IFLA Section on Preservation and Conservation. München: K.G. Saur, 2000. (IFLA Publications, 91) ISBN 3-598-21817-6 Price: DM 98.00; IFLA members: DM 73.50.

This is a collection of papers presented at various IFLA sessions over recent years.

*Safeguarding our Documentary Heritage. Conservation Préventive du Patrimoine Documentaire.* Paris: UNESCO, 2000. CD-ROM produced by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, with the assistance of the Mission on Research and Technology of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, in the framework of the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Programme.

This new CD-ROM in English and French illustrates the causes of the deterioration of library and archival collections and the measures to be taken to prevent them, in order to serve as an initial or permanent training tool. Hypertext links extend the possibilities of research by indicating other Internet sites dealing with similar information in the preservation field. Copies are available free of charge from the IFLA PAC International Focal Point at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, in Paris.

*Collecting and Safeguarding the Oral Traditions: An International Conference.* Edited by John McIlwaine and Jean Whiffin. The Hague: IFLA Headquarters, 2000.

(*IFLA Professional Reports*, 68) ISBN 90-70916-80-0; ISSN 0168-1931. Now available as IFLA Publication, 95, München, K.G. Saur, 2001 ISBN 3-598-21825-7).

Seventeen papers given at the Conference are reproduced basically as they were originally presented. Following this Conference, the IFLA Professional Board adopted a resolution put forward by the Section on Preservation and Conservation which called on IFLA "To support and encourage the collection and safeguarding of the world's oral tradition and to take measures to ensure increased awareness of oral tradition as an integral part of the world's intellectual heritage."

## IFLA 2000 Conference Proceedings

Johan Mannerheim. "The WWW and Our Digital Heritage - The New Preservation Tasks of the Library Community".  
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/158-157e.htm>

Allan Arvidson, Krister Persson and Johan Mannerheim. "The Kulturarw3 Project - The Royal Swedish Web Archiw3e - An Example of 'Complete' Collection of Web Pages".  
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/154-157e.htm>

Cliff Law. "PANDORA- Towards a National Collection of Selected Australian Online Publications".  
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/174-157e.htm>

## NEW WORKING GROUP

The Standing Committee, building on the success of the **Preserving the Web** Open Session and the plans for the Boston 2001 Conference, has established a Working

Group on Digital Preservation. It is hoped that this group will make suggestions for future activities, formulate policy statements, and consider long-term preservation of digital information such as conversion versus emulation software, copyright deposit problems, etc.

### **NEW DISCUSSION LIST**

The mailing list **ORALTRAD** <[oraltrad@infoserv.nlc-bnc.ca](mailto:oraltrad@infoserv.nlc-bnc.ca)> has been created especially to promote discussion of the objectives outlined above to support and encourage the collection and safeguarding of the world's oral tradition. All those who attended the Khon Kaen Conference, and all members of the Standing Committee on Preservation and Conservation, were made subscribers to the list on its inception. Other interested participants will be welcome.

### **SYMPOSIUM ON MANAGING THE PRESERVATION OF PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS, PARIS, AUGUST 21-24, 2000**

Immediately following the Jerusalem General Conference, an international symposium, hosted by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France with the support of the Ville de Paris, organized jointly by the IFLA PAC Core Programme, the Sections on Preservation and Conservation, and Serial Publications, and the Round Table on Newspapers, took place in Paris. Intended as a follow-up on an IFLA international conference at the Library of Congress in 1989, it assessed changes and prospects since that date, though it was aimed at a broader audience than the previous one. The programme attracted 180 participants from 40 countries. The sessions concentrated mainly on preservation policies, reformatting, financial issues, electronic items, and shared preservation, in three very

full days of intensive work. In addition to some 17 presentations by an illustrious and international slate of speakers, a lively debate took place addressing the following issues: preserving the paper artifact once it has been reformatted in microfilm or electronically; state of confidence in the electronic version as a preservation medium; the responsibility of publishers for preserving their own publications; and the need for traditional union catalogues. The audience voted overwhelmingly for preserving the paper artifact and the continuing requirement for union catalogues, had mixed feelings about the role of publishers, and demonstrated a lack of confidence at the present time in electronic media as a long-term preservation measure. Participants also had the opportunity to visit various preservation sites of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The first outcome of the Symposium is a project to preserve newspapers in Africa. Newspaper collections will be assessed, and an attempt will be made to fill gaps with surrogates from western countries. The sponsors of the Symposium have agreed to cooperate and will meet in Boston in 2001 to present their new programme.

This meeting constituted a milestone in demonstrating what can be achieved when all energies are gathered together. Our colleagues at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, particularly Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff (Chair of the Organizing Committee) and Marie-Lise Tsagouria, are to be congratulated on a very successful and enjoyable international symposium. The proceedings will be published by IFLA PAC by the end of 2001. Meanwhile, papers can be accessed on Internet: <http://www.ifla.org/VI/4/pac.htm#8>

## SECTION ON PRESERATION AND CONSERVATION

The Standing Committee of the Section will hold two business meetings during Boston Conference. Observers are welcome!

Meeting I: Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> 11:30 –14:20

Meeting II: Friday, August 24<sup>th</sup> 8:00-10:00

### BOSTON

THE 67<sup>TH</sup> IFLA COUNCIL  
AND GENERAL CONFERENCE  
16-25 AUGUST 2001

The theme of this year's conference is:

**LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS:  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN  
THE KNOWLEDGE AGE**

### In Memoriam: Maria Skepastianu

It is with deep regret that we note the death in April 2001 of Maria Skepastianu, Secretary of the Section on Preservation and Conservation from 1997 to 2000, who had been struggling with cancer for two years.

Following her first degree at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, she took her MA at the School of Library, Archive and information Studies, University College London 1987/88. Her MA Thesis: *Problems of Conservation in Greek Libraries and the Development of a National Conservation Policy* provided a critical beginning for assessing the preservation and conservation situation in Greece. Maria returned briefly to Greece where she secured a lectureship in library studies at the Technological and Educational Institution in Thessaloniki. There she taught a course in preservation. In

She returned to University College London where she completed her Ph.D. in 1993 and her doctoral dissertation *Promotion of Preservation and Conservation in Greek Libraries with Special Reference to the Education of Greek Librarians*.

Maria was a regular IFLA conference attendee from the early 1990s. In 1994, she was nominated to the Section's Standing Committee, and in 1997 became Secretary of the Standing Committee. She and Jean Whiffin co-authored the Section's pamphlet on library disaster planning (1995), which she later translated into Greek.

Despite deteriorating health she fought on in her post until the Bangkok Conference of 1999. With a quiet but intense passion for her chosen field and a determination to make a difference, Maria has left a legacy of enthusiasm and a corpus of work for which she will be remembered by her friends and her colleagues.

John McIlwaine, Chairman of the Standing Committee, IFLA Section on Preservation & Conservation University College, London

### New Committee Members 2001

- \* Laure Cedelle (FRANCE)
- \* Hans Jansen (NETHERLANDS)
- \* Kjersti Lokken (NORWAY)
- \* Elvira Permanyer (SPAIN)

- \* Mark Roosa (USA)
- \* Sarah Toulouse (FRANCE)
- \* Johanna Wellheiser (CANADA)

**Committee 2001**

**\* Members stepping down after Boston 2001**

- \* Mailis Bremer-Laamanen (FINLAND)
- \* Maria Luisa Cabral (PORTUGAL)
- \* Svetlana Dobrusina (RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION)
  
- \* Jacqueline Dubois (FRANCE)\*
- \* Elisabeth Eide (NORWAY)\*

- \* Nancy Gwinn (USA)
- \* Francisca Hernandez (SPAIN)\*
- \* Sophia K. Jordan (USA)
- \* Toru Koizumi (JAPAN)
- \* Sylvie Le RAY (FRANCE)
- \* John H. McIlwaine (UK)
- \* Johan Mannerheim (SWEDEN)
- \* Ralph W. Manning (CANADA)\*
- \* Olga Perminova (RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION)
- \* Marie-Lise Tsagouria (FRANCE)
- \* Jean I. Whiffin (CANADA)\*
- \* Clemens de Wolf (NETHERLANDS)\*