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ABSTRACT

The International Project of the Commission on Preservation and Access was begun in June 1988 to explore the feasibility of creating an international database of preserved materials. Its main goals are to: (1) determine the extent to which preservation records exist in other countries; (2) identify the difficulties in converting records to machine-readable format and entering those records into a common database; (3) facilitate agreement on the level of bibliographic detail needed to exchange records; and (4) determine how to proceed to create a shared database capacity. This interim report on the International Project includes narrative reports on visits to five libraries and other organizations identified for the pilot project in Germany and France: the Deutsche Bibliothek (Frankfort), the Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut (Berlin), Stadt und Universitätsbibliothek (Frankfort), the Council of Europe (Strasbourg), and the Bibliotheque Nationale (Paris). Information provided for each site visited includes a brief history of that institution; the names, backgrounds, and interests of people with whom the International Project representative met; synopses of their conversations (i.e., about the particular institution, about other matters relating to international resource sharing, preservation techniques and advances in library technology, and about the International Project); and the representative's general impressions of the visit. (SD)

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# COMMISSION ON PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

## PROGRESS REPORT

AUGUST 1989

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### THE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

by Hans Rütimann

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
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The International Project was begun in June 1988 to explore the feasibility of creating an international database of bibliographic records for preserved materials. Its main goals are to determine the extent to which preservation records exist in other countries; identify the difficulties in converting records to machine-readable format and entering those records into a common database; facilitate agreement on the level of bibliographic detail needed to exchange records; and determine how to proceed to create a shared database capacity.

During the course of this project, Hans Rütimann is visiting libraries and other organizations identified for the pilot project. Following is an abridged report of one such visit, in June 1989.

At the beginning of meetings in Germany, I usually refer to an opinion piece in the March/April 1986 issue of *Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliography*: "It is therefore recommended that early on some thought be given to the organization and the continued maintenance of a register of microform masters. Obviously, libraries abroad, confronted with similar problems, would be interested in such a register and would want to work toward international collaboration." I then add that this works both ways and that the Commission on Preservation and Access believes that German libraries are interested in relevant efforts abroad.

Quoting the figure of 75-80 million brittle books in the U.S. and citing our goal to increase filming from 45,000 to 175,000 volumes per year, I ask if they are interested in what is being filmed so as not to have to duplicate this vast effort funded by the U.S. Government. The answer is always an emphatic "yes."

#### 1) DEUTSCHE BIBLIOTHEK, FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN

I had visited the German National Library twice before (in August and October 1988). On those occasions I met with Ms. Valentin, Administrative Assistant, and Mr. Nowak, deputy director of the library. It was Valentin and Nowak who told me about the "Fabian-Plan," referred to in my reports as the German Microform Project (GMP), and introduced me to Monika Richter and Dr. Kossmann at the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, where the GMP is coordinated.

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During these initial visits, the general director of the German National Library, Prof. Lehmann, was out of town, but during my latest trip, en route to Berlin, I was able to arrange a meeting with him.

Lehmann had visited Washington, D.C. and the Commission on Preservation and Access a few months earlier, and he left with the Commission a copy of the second draft of the "Plan of Action for Libraries in the European Community." He also promised to send a copy of the so-called Battelle report, a study by an independent consultant of present methods of deacidification.

The report, made available to the Commission in manuscript form, will be available in October 1989 under the title "Massenkonservierung für Bibliotheken und Archive" as a special issue of the journal *Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie (ZfBB)*, published by Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, Frauenlobstr. 22, D-6000 Frankfurt a.M. 90. A summary by Peter Schwerdt, co-author of the Battelle report, was published in *ZfBB* 36 (1989), and a translation is available from the Commission on Preservation and Access

Lehmann is in the process of establishing a "Gesellschaft für das Buch" at the German National Library (similar to the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress). When he learned that I had served on the Advisory Committee for the Center for the Book during the first few years of its existence, he asked if I would give a talk on international aspects of preservation at the first symposium organized by the "Gesellschaft für das Buch." I agreed, schedule allowing.

During a lunch at the Museum of Natural History, next to the National Library, I mentioned the forthcoming television documentary on preservation produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. All attending the luncheon (Lehmann, Nowak, Fabian, and Valentin) expressed interest in seeing the program and asked to be notified of the release date.

The West German Government has committed DM 210 million for a new building to house the National Library. The governing board of the Deutsche Bibliothek asked for an additional DM 50 million over a ten-year period to finance a mass-deacidification facility. The argument that a new building would be unnecessary if the books were not saved shocked the Ministry of Finance—it had not been aware of the problem. In return, the Ministry demanded a guarantee that deacidification really works: the National Library was asked for a firm declaration that treatment will indeed prolong the lives of books for several hundred years. I don't know if the declaration was given, but I was told that the DM 50 million was allocated.

During the discussions, it became apparent that the Battelle report, which recommends a "modified Wei To method," is not the end of West Germany's search for the perfect method of mass deacidification. The search remains wide open and the national library is entertaining bids and proposals from Texas Alkyls' Akzo Chemical Division and the Lithium Corporation (Lithco), represented in Germany by A. Söhlke company.

Two meetings with representatives of chemical concerns took place at the National Library the day after I left. In a follow-up phone conversation, I learned the following: Akzo (DEZ) has offered to build a plant in Germany if the National Library guarantees the annual treatment of 500,000 volumes. The firm is certain that an additional 500,000 volumes per year would come from other West German libraries to make up the one million volumes needed for operating the plant at a profit.

At this time, the Germans seem to regard Wei To as an in-house solution (for smaller quantities and operated by individual libraries) and DEZ as a large-scale, national method of treating Germany's 50 million brittle books (this figure comes from a study conducted by the German Library Institute in Berlin).

A couple of interesting figures from proposals to build a DEZ plant in West Germany were mentioned: \$5 per book treated if delivered; \$7.50 if pick-up and delivery have to be provided (for an average book weighing 3 ½ pounds).

Lehmann suggested that I investigate the "Corvey project," a model filming project of 18th- and 19th-century literature at the Gesamthochschule Paderborn, Nordrhein-Westfalen in collaboration with the publisher Verlag Belsen. Apparently, both entire collections are being filmed there and a model microform register is being generated. I've written to Dr. Berckow, the project director, asking for more information.

Lehmann also urged to me to ask Ms. Richter, coordinator of the German Microform Project at the University Library in Frankfurt, which would be the most appropriate libraries to participate in an international register of microform masters. I met with Richter after my return from Berlin (see "Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek," below).

I had arranged to meet with Professor Fabian of the Westfälische Universitätsbibliothek in Münster. By coincidence, he attended a meeting in Frankfurt and we met at the National Library.

Fabian is generally credited with the initiative leading to the German Microform Project and has written extensively about the German library scene. He identified three organizations in Germany that he believes are important to our project: The National Library, the German Library Institute, and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. We have established good relationships with the National Library and the Library Institute and I'm working on the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. Our contact there is Dr. Braun, Leiter des Bibliotheksinstituts, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Kennedyallee 40, Bonn (Bad Godesberg).

This organization provides funds for the humanities, arts, and sciences (in a sense, a combination of our national endowments for the arts and the humanities and the National Science Foundation; its yearly budget approaches 1 billion DM, or approximately \$500 million). About 25 million DM are available for "library projects." According to Fabian, this is the only agency providing funding at the federal level.

Fabian is the author of *Handbuch der Historischen Buchbestände*, i.e., a list of national printed archives. He indicated that funds might become available to produce such "Hänhbücher" for Austria and Switzerland as well. In his writings, Fabian urges the West German libraries to make increasing use of microforms in interlibrary loan. As more libraries follow his suggestion, he thinks that it will lead to large-scale filming and, eventually, to a coordinated register of microform masters.

Professor Fabian was intrigued by the Commission's proposal to establish a national collection of microform masters (I had sent him a copy of the planning document prior to our meeting). Time did not allow us to discuss it in detail and we agreed to meet again in Paris, at IFLA.

## 2) DEUTSCHES BIBLIOTHEK SINSTITUT, BERLIN

I met with Professor Beyersdorff, Director of the Institute, and Dr. Usemann-Keller, who conducted the recent survey of library holdings in West Germany.

The German Library Institute (Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut—DBI) occupies a modern office building a short distance from famed Kurfürstendamm. Its functions and the activities of its 100 employees are best explained by drawing a comparison to RLG and OCLC. Even though library automation, networks, and data-sharing are nowhere near the level of the U.S. institutions, the DBI collects, organizes, and disseminates whatever data there are in machine-readable form. The Institute also fulfills a leadership role similar to that of the Council on Library Resources by initiating and funding projects that address pressing library issues.

Cataloguing data generated in machine-readable form by the libraries in German states (Länder) are collected here. The DBI will also be the collection point for data generated by the German Microform Project. In matters of retrospective conversion, the DBI is assisted by OCLC.

- Professor Beyersdorff does not anticipate any problems in sharing data with us.
- The DBI would be interested in an exchange arrangement (microform master registers from the U.S. to be added to the database of the DBI).
- Since the libraries in German states are co-owners of the database, there will have to be consultation and negotiation.
- The DBI system will be in a position to generate such data (from all participants in the GMP) beginning in June 1990.
- We agreed that test data could be made available earlier (see more on this under Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt-am-Main).

One of the most important and comprehensive databases operated by the DBI is the Zeitschriften Datenbank: a bibliographic database for periodicals. Please note that in Germany, "Zeitschriften" (periodicals) do not include newspapers (Zeitungen). The database includes information about 500,000 periodical titles (1.8 million items) in West German libraries. Information for the database is provided by the participating libraries either online, via magnetic tape, or on printed forms. Retrieval is via search software which, in addition to string searches, allows for free-text searching.

The entire database is periodically issued on microfiche; I received a set as a present and now appreciate how heavy microfiche in quantity can be.

I asked Beyersdorff about the state of the collections at the Berliner Staatsbibliothek. Beyersdorff and Usemann-Keller indicated that this library's collections are probably in worse shape than any other German library's. During WW II, the entire collection had to be moved several times and was exposed repeatedly in open fields or under tents.

Beyersdorff is planning to attend IFLA, where we can continue our discussion. The DBI is a valuable contact, since it plays an important role in the German libraries' efforts to coordinate their information.

### 3) STADT- UND UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK, FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN

Upon returning from Berlin, I picked up the Battelle report at the National Library in Frankfurt and took advantage of the University library's proximity (across the street) to meet Monika Richter, Coordinator of the German Microform Project.

At two previous meetings, Richter has made available to us sample printouts of microform registers, and she continues to send me the minutes of all meetings relating to the German Microform Project.

Richter was able to give more information about an important German microfilming center, the microfilm archive for German-language newspapers in Dortmund (Mikrofilm-Archiv der Deutschsprachigen Zeitungen.) She showed me a copy of the printed register of the archive and I've written to its director, Dr. Hans Bohrmann, for more information.

Richter confirmed Beyersdorff's estimate that data from the GMP will be available through the DBI (mid-June 1990).

After several months of trying to interpret the German scene, locate the key people, and get a sense of present and planned activities in preservation, specifically in microfilming and in the maintenance of a register, I presented Richter with a straightforward request: Could we get a machine-readable version of the register of items filmed by Frankfurt as part of the German Microform Project?

Richter agreed in principle. She will discuss the proposal and seemed fairly optimistic that an arrangement can be worked out. Even though the number of items filmed by Frankfurt under the GMP is still small (a few hundred titles), it will be interesting to see the format of the register.

Among the participants in the GMP, Frankfurt seems to be the most technically advanced. Since the GMP is just in the beginning stages, initial data can be used to examine the structure and plan for the logistics of an exchange. Data from other participants in the GMP can be added later (probably with the help of the German Library Institute in Berlin, or the University Library in Frankfurt).

I asked if microform data could be retrieved either online or in batches from the main catalogue. Answer: In Frankfurt, yes, because a "signature" is now added to the microform data. This is a recent improvement, one followed increasingly by other libraries (the signature is mandatory for all participants in the GMP).

After my return to New York, Monika Richter wrote to say that there seem to be no objections to making GMP data available to us and that the library's computer center will prepare a tape (more details to follow).

#### 4) THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, STRASBOURG

I met with Michael Vorbeck on Monday, 19 June, in the building of the European Council (Europarat), a sweeping modern structure on the outskirts of Strasbourg, France.

The Council of Europe has been in existence for more than 40 years. It represents all of Western Europe as opposed to the Commission of the European Communities' (CEC) group of twelve countries (see my report of 24 March 1989). Also, the CEC is more generously funded than the Council of Europe.

Vorbeck made a passionate plea on behalf of poor countries in Europe, where all the usual problems of libraries—funding, automation, preservation, communication, standards, and more—are compounded by a technical inability to communicate with more sophisticated countries on a meaningful level.

The CPA's interest in the work of the Council of Europe was noted with satisfaction. "We are the lobby for libraries in all of Europe," Vorbeck said, and he urged us to communicate to him information about issues and proposed solutions in the fields of preservation and access. He assured me that such information will be passed on to the member governments of the Council of Europe.

My promise to share with the Council of Europe information about the Commission's activities and about relevant developments in general was greeted with genuine satisfaction. "We'd be truly grateful," Vorbeck said.

## 5) BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS, PROVINS, SABLÉ

All meetings in France were arranged by Else Delaunay, the head of the Periodicals Section of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The meetings proved very productive.

After meeting with Mme. Delaunay at the BN, we travelled to Mame La Vallée, to meet M. Veuve, the manager of the Association of Preservation and Photographic Reproduction of the Press (ACRPP). This not-for-profit microfilming facility does most of the filming of periodicals for the BN. The catalogue is available in print only, and there is some experimentation with a register in machine-readable form.

M. Veuve drove me to Provins, some 100 miles west of Mame La Vallée. In this medieval town, the BN owns a monastery that has been converted into a first-rate preservation facility, primarily for newspapers.

It was Mme. de Lépiney, the head of the facility, who told me that the French have settled on a term for "brittle books": "livres incommunicables" (silent books).

One of the most intriguing aspects of the operation in Provins is the filming of almost identical newspapers from the provinces, which frequently contain minor local variations. A careful page-by-page examination reveals small differences, such as the addition of a local item for one particular province buried in a page. The staff enthusiastically demonstrated these idiosyncrasies of local coverage with the help of wall-sized charts.

The filming is handled by ACRPP, which has set up a facility in the monastery. M. Veuve is in charge of both the Mame La Vallée and Provins installations.

### SABLÉ

This town is the location of the BN's center of conservation, where Jean-Marie Arnoult is in charge. At present he is dividing his time between Paris and Sablé; in the fall, he will move permanently to Paris, where his responsibilities will increase. Among other things, he will be the liaison between the BN and those involved with the concept of the "Bibliothèque de France"—the very large library proposed by President Mitterand.

In addition to traditional conservation activities, practically all filming of the BN's books (about 200,000 filmed so far) takes place in Sablé. The register for these films has been available on microfiche but not as yet in machine-readable form.

Highlights of the meeting with Arnoult:

- The Center in Sablé has begun to compile a machine-readable catalogue of microform masters. As of today, some 15,000 records are available. They have been entered into the BN's main catalogue (BNOPAL) but can be extrapolated with ease, based on identifying tags.
- With the recent addition of three terminals, work on retrospective conversion of the BN's register of microform masters has been speeded up. Arnoult hopes that within one year the records of the 200,000 filmed volumes can be entered into the database.
- The Bibliothèque Nationale has begun discussion with the British Library to share register information.
- Arnoult anticipates no problem with sharing register information with us. He promised to send a copy of the record format.

- Arnout is interested in organizing collaborative filming projects in France and asked for any news of joint enterprises. He is interested specifically in information about quality control when filming is done at various locations.

- The most animated part of the discussion concerned funding for preservation projects, for both deacidification and microfilming. Arnout expressed concern that recent publicity about the concept of a "Bibliothèque de France" might create the erroneous impression that generous funds are available for all of the BN's needs. Like most libraries, the BN steers a narrow course trying to allocate available resources to the most pressing problems.

- We talked about U.S. federal funding for preservation and about the initiatives of private foundations. Arnout would very much like to pursue the possibility of obtaining outside funding for some of the BN's projects in preservation. After some discussion, I asked him to send me a list of projects he'd like to see funded and carried out.

For more information, see the *Commission Newsletters* Number 13, June 1989, pages 2-5; Number 8, January 1989, page 1; and Number 1, June 1988, pages 2-3.