



Relocation of a complex and diverse iconographic collection - from an emergency response to a long-term decision and its execution.

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Introduction

There are approx. 500 000 iconographic objects (prints, drawings, photographs, postcards, albums, varia etc.) in collections of the National Library of Poland. In 2010 they were stored in 6 rooms of Krasinski Palace, a historical building from 17th century, heavily damaged during World War II and rebuilt 1948–1961. A water leakage and activity on the walls of the storage room in February 2010 met an immediate emergency response, but because of the structure and nature of both: building and collections no further mandatory repairs were possible with collections remaining in 5 storage rooms on the second floor. After environmental analyses the decision of dislocation of the whole Department of the Iconographic Collections with all of its objects to the main (1977-1990) building of the Library was made. The assumption of preventive ethylene oxide disinfection of as many objects from this collection as possible has brought the whole operation to a level of a real challenge. After over two years from the beginning of the problem the dislocation was done. The National Library of Poland gained in years 2010-2012 an extraordinary and unique experience based on detailed analyses of problems that appeared during this operation and solutions that were applied.

The chronology of the operation:

22th February 2010

Monday (of course!) - the first information on water activity on the two walls in the corner of the room 218; immediate local vision and swab sampling of the walls - about two square meters of already drying wet spots and plaster coming off the wall in room 218; photographic documentation of the damaged spots; microbiological impact sampling of the air.

25th-26th February 2010

Inoculation of the material from swabs.

3rd March 2010

The first work-in-progress note of the Department-Laboratory for Conservation of the Library Collection for the Deputy Directors of the National Library and the heads of the Departments of the Iconographic Collections and Early Prints on the condition in the storage rooms in the Krasinski Palace (the water activity has appeared mostly on the inner wall separating storage room 218 from the Wilanowska hall with Wilanowska Collection of the Early Prints, therefore information is addressed also to the head of the Early Prints Department). The initial evaluation of the dishes suggests that the overall microbiological condition of the storage rooms of the Iconographic Collections Department remained unchanged and is typical for these rooms in winter/spring season.

8th March 2010

Identification of the isolated fungi from sampled places on the walls.

15th March 2010

Microbiological growth observed on spots of water activity in the storage room 218.

22th March 2010

The report on situation addressed as the notice of 3rd March. The decision on moving the Iconographic Collections Department to the main building of the National Library is made (5km distance).

29th March 2010

The head of the Iconographic Collections Department Agata Pietrzak presents the schedule of moving the whole department. For the Department-Laboratory the most important part of this memo are basic numbers of objects for relocation:

- collections - **511.660 units** and approx. **approx. 5300 vol. of the reference collections and 9800 exposition catalogues.**
 - inventories, accession books, frames, packages, documentation of the Department, offers, not catalogued collections
 - the storage rooms infrastructure: 228 bookcases, 48 chests of drawers, 9 cabinets, 10 tables, carts, small ladders and steps
 - the offices infrastructure: 25 bookcases, 16 tables, 12 personal computers with tables, chairs, 12 lockers, steel cabinet, vault.
- Since the storage rooms of the main building have better microbiological conditions than those in Krasinski Palace (known on the basis of long term air control) and they are connected with ventilation system the decision on microbiological evaluation of all the Iconographic Collection based on contact sampling of selected objects is made.

According to this schedule the whole operation should be completed by the end of June 2011.

26th April 2010

First results of microbiological contact impress sampling of 100 of selected objects and their protective enclosures of rooms 218 and 215 (400 Petri dishes).

4th May 2010

First results of microbiological contact impress sampling of 100 of selected objects and their protective enclosures of rooms 214 and 217 (400 Petri dishes).

May & June 2010

Searching for new rooms in the main building for the Iconographic Collections Department.

25th June 2010

Summary of the microbiological control of the air in the Iconographic Collections Department and in the rooms selected in the main building.

9th July 2010

The first schedule of relocation of the iconographic collection to the main building according to their microbiological condition. The decision is made on ethylene oxide (EtO) disinfection of all objects suitable for that treatment (e.g. excluding photographs).

July - August 2010

Preparation of the new rooms in the main building.

2nd September 2010

The first transport of 16 regular Library steel cases with Iconographic objects reaches the Department-Laboratory for preventive disinfection (EtO concentration: 330 mg/dm³). **The last batch of the regular collections leaves the Department-Laboratory in February 2012, the reference library and varia leave the Department-Laboratory in June 2012.**

The detailed description of the operation is going to be published in **Bogdan Filip Zerek: The Preservation and Protection of Library Collections: A practical guide to microbiological controls** - see more at:
<http://www.woodheadpublishing.com/en/book.aspx?bookID=3277&ChandosTitle=1#sthash.TIoUT4Jt.dpuf>
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The view of the north east elevation of the Krasinski Palace. The new public parking under the Krasinski Square causes the permanent water activity on the foundations of the Palace. The Palace has two axes of symmetry, except for the roof - there is a walking terrace on the north-east side. That is where the leak may have started.



A close-up of the window of the room 218. Behind the drain-pipe there is a wall that showed the water activity. So far the exact reason of the leak has not been discovered yet. Even now in 2013 the wall above the window still "takes the water". The building itself is a monument of heritage and no repairs without the approval of the General Conservator of the Monuments of Heritage can be done.