Kecskeméti, Istvan. Papyruksesta megabitteihin. Arkisto- ja valokuvakokoelmien konservoinnin prosessin hallinta. [From papyrus to megabytes: conservation management of archival and photographic collections.]. University of Jyväskylä 2008. Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 49. ISSN 1459-4323 ISBN 951-39-2365-7. 277 pages.

INTRODUCTION

To have an analytical look at the future of the past and to gain innovative ideas for the well-being of the collection are important issues to safeguard our heritage. The dissertation work published and presented by Dr. István Kecskeméti titled *Papyruksesta megabitteihin: Arkisto- ja valokuvakokoelmien konservoinnin prosessin hallinta* (From papyrus to megabytes: conservation management of archival and photographic collections) contributes positively to this view, as the work contains items from analysis to rules about conservation work (Kecskeméti 2008). From the use of knowledge and gaining knowledge, especially regarding the terminology, as will be concluded in the coming paragraphs.

DEDICATION OF THE WORK

A serious part of the work was dedicated to the meaning of conservation. Based on the written discussion on harmonisation, the work can be seen as a serious contribution to the work of the European Standardisation Committee CEN TC346 on conservation of cultural properties (Havermans 2006; Anonymous 2008). Terminology is very important, as all the parties included, from conservation

professionals to scientists, should be able to understand each other clearly. To cite the work itself, "we all should speak the same language, and we should use similar words in the field of conservation and preservation" (Kecskeméti 2008).

Looking into the needs of technical and cultural historic research, models on conservation strategies were presented in the work, dedicated to three main strategies as powerful management tools: documentation, technical and preventive conservation.

DISCUSSION

Storage conditions seriously affect the deterioration of paper and photographic materials. This involves not only temperature and humidity, but also air pollutants generated by the collection itself. The history of the manufacturing process also plays an important role in the stability of the paper and photographic collection. Based on history of the material, it was proved that one single storage condition does not exist, and that by placing the manufacture of the objects in its historical perspective, a serious part of a conservation strategy can be set.

We are not only dealing with paper, because without the drawings and letters paper is just a blank sheet of material. Inks form a very important part as they create the information. The role of inks is seriously discussed, and especially the use of the iron ions contained in inks used over time, and that one of the most important ones in older documents and drawings is the so-called iron gall ink. The method, as discussed, for determining and discriminating this ink from others can be seen as very important. The methods developed are based on known theories in colour science

and in space technology know-how about false colour infrared (Havermans, Abdul Aziz et al. 2003).

The path from a drawing to a photograph may look narrow, but is actually a substantial journey, especially if we take the development of the raw material into account. This has consequences for the deterioration, and the conservation possibilities are different. Based on the discussion presented in the work, it was shown that a view of the future needs for preservation for all collection keepers is needed and that cooperation is needed as well. Deteriorating old negative and photo collections, based on nitrate and acetate films, need special attention and a conservation management view is therefore needed.

Simple tools are needed in conservation, as working in conservation involves practical tasks and one should be able to see the performance of the material in a simple way. There is an important issue underlying this discussion, to the effect that scientists should do the scientific work behind the needs for the object, while a conservator should do the applied work. Simple and accurate solutions are needed in order to conclude the required steps in further conservation actions, because materials are deteriorating. This fits fully into the presented model on endogenous and exogenous factors influencing the deterioration of objects. From the raw materials used, to the role of the environment in which the objects are kept, from storage to transport and from paper to silver images. One simple tool to be mentioned was based on false colour imaging. By means of a simple digital photo, camera lenses and software, the conservator has a really powerful tool, as developed by scientists.

Regarding archival and library collections, a

question about how to manage them can be raised. Here the answer seems to be simple: apply a condition survey. However, there are many methods available. The pros and cons of the current survey methods were discussed in – for example – the Universal Procedure for Archive Assessment as developed by the Nationaal Archief and TNO in The Netherlands (Havermans, Marres et al. 1999). However, it seems that collections often need an even more dedicated tool and therefore a novel method on assessment was announced. Based on a reliable survey, action can be taken regarding policy, science and conservation.

A serious concern in conservation management involves storage conditions. Different collections need separate storage conditions, which is not always possible. The role of the condition survey mentioned above can be seen as important in managing such storage conditions. Here networking plays an important role, as the indoor environment and deterioration of artefacts by the environment is complex. One of the networks important for the collection management is the COST D42 "EnviArt" network, dedicated to the indoor environment and safeguarding cultural objects (Anonymous 2008).

Finally, risk factors and strategies were discussed in combination with safety and health for both the objects and the workers. For example, to safeguard the collection against fire, and what to do if there is a fire. It was shown clearly that collection management goes further than looking at the collection only and that building performance and management also have to be included. Of course, we should not forget that archival collections are not for storing only but that they should be accessed: both as originals and in digital form.

142 CONCLUSION

The thesis entitled "From papyrus to megabytes: conservator management of archival and photographic collections" forms a step beyond the state of the art on current collection management. The work and basics are accessible for even those, without chemistry backgrounds and the work can therefore even be seen as a reference work in the field of conservation and conservation management, and a work that is internationally acknowledged by international networks such as CEN TC 346 and COST D42, which are dedicated to safeguarding our cultural artefacts.

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