

## **Report for the Conference of European National Librarians**

In 2006, the National Széchényi Library's activity was defined by preparation for survival. Because of insufficient funding, its management was forced to seek new directions. For bridging the budget deficit that threatened to lead to complete closure, a consolidation plan has been elaborated. Calculated for a five-year period, in addition to gradual staff cuts, certain privatisation opportunities have been mapped out for generating more income together with plans for reshuffling the organisational structure to make it more economical.

The National Relic exhibition space, opened in July 2006, is one way of increasing revenues. In addition to other exhibitions, the series of displays of the library's most outstanding national treasures is a highly attractive destination among the cultural highlights of the Buda Castle. The first document introduced was the Philostratos Corvina from King Matthias's library, while the second was the first book printed in Hungary, namely András Hess's „Buda Chronicle”. There is a new display every three months to present the national library's most precious items.

Virtual preservation of the national cultural heritage has also received new impetus during the year. Eight members of the library section of the John von Neumann Digital Library and Multimedia Centre have joined our institution. The staffing of the Hungarian Electronic Library working within the national library has increased in proportion to its growing significance. Thus there are more opportunities for keeping records of, storing and providing digital copies of the growing numbers of electronic documents and original materials.

### *Stock development, processing and the national bibliography*

The national library's acquisition budget for 2006 was zero forint. Thus our inadequate opportunities for purchases in 2005 were further limited in 2006. Acquisitions of standard orders placed directly with publishers stopped, and this was the first time publications issued in the given year were not bought. (As a result, encyclopaedias, reference books and series in the collection stay gappy.) We were also unable to develop the stocks on free shelves in reading rooms and the auxiliary libraries of the various collections. Due to a shortage of items to swap, our exchange arrangements are hardly functioning. As we are unable to buy the local items they need, therefore they do not fulfil our requests.

Despite the impossibility of planned current acquisitions, statistics prove the situation to be better than planned. One reason is that the processing of several major bequests, books and journals received as presents was started within the year (Gyula Borbándi, Carlo Kovács, Miklós Fehér and Kamill Sándorfy). The second significant source of growth is the extra copies offered by libraries directly or coming through the Library Institute.

We have reconstructed the edition of the electronic current *Hungarian National Bibliography*. Developing and testing MNB-WWW to be published in four series was done in the last quarter of the year, while the service is to start in the first quarter of 2007.

According to decree 22/2005 of the Hungarian Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, *the central record keeping of museum-value library documents* is the NSZL's obligation. Its organisational and methodological issues are handled by the 15th-18th century Book History

Department, while the technical realisation is through MOKKA-R. There is also a new online database, to which those who are obliged to supply information can upload their records through the Internet protected by a password. Complete with a search and editing surface, the database has been in operation since December 2006. The last stage of the Professional Literature Database in Social Sciences (a national article bibliography of social sciences) was completed in 2006. The first version of the future database was made on the basis of the data element specification elaborated. We tested the database in the last months of the year, conveying structural and operational problems as well as additional questions to the software developer, who is in turn developing the system further. Online processing may start in the first quarter of 2007.

The popularity of the *Hungarian Electronic Library* increased dramatically in 2006. In mid-February, we started the authentic web auditing of MEK and EPA services with the help of Medián. The service is limited, as it measures only the use of HTML format documents, and not the growing numbers of PDF and other documents. Even so, by the end of 2006 the turnover recorded by Medián reached a daily average of 30-35 thousand people. In Medián's national list, MEK services rank in the 30 to 35th place. In total, MEK visitors numbered over 11 million over the year. Because of a lack of room, in 2006 we had to stop our mirror servers beyond the national borders.

#### *Developing services*

The library's services to readers are mostly provided through the *Readers' Service and Information Supply*. In 2006, there was major restructuring within the department to improve a more transparent and clearer service. Among the high priority tasks for 2006 for quality provision are the *reorganisation of the system of staff on duty*, the establishment of the document request system and computerising readers' turnover.

For the sake of further improving the organisation and content of the LibInfo reference system, jointly with MATARKA, we have made the preparations for the *service of copying and sending out articles*. We have launched the service for the blind and visually impaired, setting up reading machines and an audio corner in the Media reading room, integrating the provision of audio-books into the NSZL system. We have set up a uniform Reprography Service within the Readers' Service and Information Supply. As a result of these changes, the amount of digital copying within the library has multiplied.

In the course of 2006, through the *LibInfo* website there were 3145 questions about various issues. Some queries were addressed in consecutive replies. Thus the number of answers exceeded questions by 31%. The number of incoming queries was about the same as a year earlier.

#### *Special collections*

A high-priority task for 2006 was speeding up AMICUS processing in special collections. There was no large-scale growth last year, but working out regulations made considerable progress. By 2007 the collections were ready for using AMICUS on a regular basis, plans had been completed for cataloguing designated stocks and staff training is done continuously.

In 2006 too special collections grew only through deposit copies, bequests and donations, as there was no budget for new purchases. Among the donations, more specifically among manuscripts presented to the *Music Collection*, Sándor Balassa's manuscript is remarkable. In the *Manuscript Collection*, the bequests of Árpád Mezei and Balázs Vargha stand out, while in the *Theatre History Collection* those of Vera Bródy, István Horvai and Adrienne Jancsó.

In the course of different NSZL projects and for the sake of a uniform handling of digital copies based on readers' requests, coordination has been started within the library's sections about a uniform storing of digitised materials, their records and terms of provision. The processing in the *Collection of Small Prints* of the digitised collection on the occasion of the 1956 commemorations, has been completed both technically and bibliographically (AMICUS). The value-saving digitisation of the "talking" minutes of the UN committee meetings between 18<sup>th</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> April 1957, to be found in the Héderváry bequest of the *Manuscript Collection* has been completed. In the *Map Collection*, some three thousand independent manuscript maps have been added to our stocks, digitised on the basis of a contract with Arcanum Ltd.

### *Developments in Information Technology*

It is seen as a form of international acknowledgement that after long technical preparations, in mid-2006 the Hungarian national library became a full member of The European Library (TEL for short), thus its database records are now searchable through the TEL portal.

The beta version of the NSZL Digital Library is also complete, and we have started to include incoming digital deposit copies. Opening it up to users is to be started in early 2007.

The virtual catalogue of book history literature in NSZL is accessible in the European Book History Collection. In LibriVision the collection is searchable independently as a logical subdatabase or together with other subdatabases.

### *International relations, publications and scientific activity*

In 2006 our international contacts were further extended. Our library obtained an important position in the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL), and the annual general meeting of the Consortium of European Research Libraries was held in Budapest. Thanks to the *Blue blood, black ink* travelling exhibition, we had continuous working contact with our Croatian, Austrian and Slovak partners. We have had negotiations with the Italian Ministry of Culture about our joint events in the Matthias Memorial Year of 2008. Receiving and surveying for stock protection and for scientific purposes the books returned by Russia to Sárospatak was a major scientific and diplomatic task for our library.

The project of publishing joint volumes with professional publishers has been continued. In 2006, twenty volumes came out with the national library's cooperation. The *Picture Book of Hungarian Bibliophilia* stands out, because as the title suggests, masterpieces of Hungarian bookmaking are presented in a highly sophisticated manner.

In 2006, the library had four new staff members with scientific degrees. Thus, at the end of 2006, there were altogether twenty colleagues with scientific degrees (four of them being academic doctors). This fact boosts our presence in Hungarian scholarship.

Owing to the preparatory work of the previous year, the HAS-NSZL Old Hungarian Book-Making Relics (Fragmenta codicum) Research Team has been granted renewed academic funding for the years 2007–2011. Within the academic research team, the personnel requirements for research into 19<sup>th</sup> century book and press history have been established for the new cycle. The name of the new research basis is *HAS-NSZL Res libraria Hungariae Research Team*.

### **Exhibitions 2006:**

*Theatre in the Northern Light* – Estonian and Finnish drama on Hungarian stages  
13 October 2005 – 28 February 2006

*The Undying Book*  
20 March 2006 – 24 June 2006

*Myth and Reality* – Neolatin Culture in Hungary  
06 July 2006 – 30 September 2006

*Blue Blood, Black Ink* – Book collections of aristocratic families from 1500 to 1700  
24 November 2006 – 31 March 2007

### **The Library's staff**

People in the employment of the library on January 1, 2007, by qualification:

Academic doctor (Dsc)	4 people
Candidate (Csc), PhD	17 people
Tertiary librarian	261 people
Tertiary specialised (information science, communication specialist)	25 people
Tertiary, non-librarian (economics, technical, administration)	26 people
Tertiary restorer	6 people
Secondary librarian (assistant, assistant librarian)	41 people
Secondary restorer	15 people
Secondary, other (storage, economic-technical administrative worker, employees in administration, maintenance, operation, skilled worker, etc.)	138 people
other (unskilled labourer, auxiliary worker, etc.)	37 people
Total:	570 people