

# NATIONAL LIBRARY OF GREECE

## CENL-Annual report 2000-2001

Dr Eugenia Kefallineou  
Deputy Director  
32, Panepistimiou St.  
106 79 Athens  
Tel : + 33 82 600  
FAX: + 36 08 495  
Internet site: [www.nlg.gr](http://www.nlg.gr).

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### **Management**

A library strategy for the years 2001-2003 and 2001-2006 has been planned and was approved by the Library Board. It would be sponsored by the EU.

A proposal has been made to the Ministry of Education concerning a new library organization chart, taking into consideration the requirements of the national libraries.

The census of book material of the NLG has been continued. Furthermore, measures concerning not only the improvement of working conditions but also that of the users environment have been already taken.

### **Finance-Funding**

The budget of the Library did not cover the operating costs. For this reason, the administration faced financial problems. A big part of them has been encountered by the “Modernization of the Library” project that was sponsored by the EU, such as the collections enrichment, the library digitalization, the hiring of personnel etc.

### **Building**

After the disastrous earthquake of the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1999 in Athens, which caused extensive damages to the NLG building, the lack of space, which is the major problem of the Library, has become worse. For this reason, a serious program regarding the immediate, medium-term and long-term facing of the problem mentioned above has been planned. The preparatory works that have taken place until now are the following:

The preparatory works relative to the construction of the new national library building have started right after the Library had acquired the necessary for this purpose plot of land of 51.000m<sup>2</sup> donated to the National Library of Greece by Athens University. For this reason, a working team has been set up in order to consider and propose the NLG

new functions taking into consideration the requirements of national libraries as well as the standards in force for this kind of libraries. Afterwards, the working team will be widened by architects and technicians, who will deal with the drawing up of specifications regarding the international architectural competition concerning the new building of the NLG.

A temporary accommodation concerning the housing of the NLG books material has been provided until the new building of the Library is constructed. That is the construction of prefabricated buildings on a part of its plot of land. In this way, this temporary accommodation will house not only the books material, which is stored in buildings rented by the Library, but also a part of books that are arranged on the bookstacks selves of the neoclassic building. Thus the procedure mentioned above will start immediately in order to offer a solution to the NLG major space problems.

Moreover, another working team has made suggestions regarding the restoration of the NLG central neoclassic building and the development of its collections in combination with the prefabricated buildings on its new plot of land.

In this way, a technical project concerning the restoration of the extensive damages caused to the Library building by the earthquake of the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1999 has been planned till now and the restoration works regarding the historical building will start very soon.

At the same time a preliminary project with reference to the tidying up of the interior spaces of the building has been planned. Through this project will be shown off the architectural elements of the building that have to be in combination with the functional use and the complete exploitation of all the Library spaces.

### **The Staff**

There is shortage of staff at all levels. The problem of lack of space together with those of lack of personnel and funding are the most serious reasons of the reduction of the NLG activities in the core functions of a National Library. The number of the permanent employees is small (74 employees) and the seasonal staff (not more than 10% of the employees' total), whose the employment takes place under difficult public sector procedures, are half measures. Furthermore, a small number of employees is hired through various programmes. Continual pressures regarding the increase of the staff have been exerted on the hierarchy of the Ministry of Education.

### **Legal Status**

According to the Library law, which has been in force since 1997 and regards the acquisitions, all the electronic publications have to be deposited in the NLG. For this reason, a working group was set up in order to examine all the procedures concerned with accessions, cataloguing, storage and accessibility taking into consideration matters of copyright.

A bill has been proposed to pass through the Parliament for the establishment of the Department of Preservation and Microfilming as well as for that of the Account Department, as long as these services function informally.

## Acquisitions

During the year 2000 the acquisitions of the NLG were considerably increased. This fact is due to the accession of new books according to the legal deposit which together with the donations and the purchases have contributed to the increase of the acquisition indicator by 26% compared with the one of the previous year. It is noteworthy that during the last five-year period the accession of printed books has been doubled.

It is worth mentioned the fact that the funding of purchases was high because of the above-mentioned project of the modernization of the Library.

The most important donations is a valuable collection of 4.500 books in Greek and European literature (some of them rare editions), linguistics and foreign languages (dictionaries and teaching books) donated by the late scholar D. Tornazakis.

Among the new accessions significant historical items were included:

1. 1. Aeschinis et Demosthenis, *Orationes duae contrariae/commentariorum Ioannis Sturmii in easden Hecatommeres*. Argentorati: Per V.Rihelium, [1550], 144 p., 8vo  
Bound in vellum and in excellent condition. Full of notes written by a contemporary hand.
2. 2. Kariye Djami, [Constantinople] : Izdanie Russkago Archeologichekago Instituta v' Konstantinopol', [russian], [s.a.], folio.  
A rare russian collection of illustrations depicting the famous Byzantine monastery in Constantinople.
3. 3. Karl Hopf, *Geschichte des Herzogthums, Athens 1205-1460*. Hamn, 1852, 327p  
Manuscript in German, covering a part of the history of Athens.
4. 4. [Voltaire], *Περί των διχονοιών των εν ταις εκκλησίαις της Πολωνίας δοκίμιον ιστορικόν και σχεδιάσμα περί της ανεξιθρησκείας*. Μετφρ. Ευγένιος Βούλγαρις [Λειψία] 1768, σ. 284., 8vo, contemporary binding.  
A translation of an essay by Voltaire. The essay contains Voltaire's ideas on religious freedom. The French philosopher begins his stream of thoughts from some controversies inside the church of Poland at that time. Translated into Greek by the famous Greek scholar Eugene Boulgaris.

## Preservation - Conservation

Since 1999 a big programme of fire safety of the NLG collections has started and finished these days.

The restoration of parchment sigilla from 17th to 19<sup>th</sup> century, which had started the previous year, was continued and completed. They were badly damaged by a flood.

The annual delegation of the NLG preservers to Sinai for the conservation and preservation of the new finds of Sinai's Holy Convent, which the NLG has undertaken, has been completed.

Furthermore, the purchase of a microfilming-digitalization machine has contributed to the beginning of an extensive project on microfilming together with digitalization of newspapers and other documents. The damaged newspapers were withdrawn from the Reading Room use in order to be preserved and transferred into microfilms, that will replace the newspapers. At the same time, they were scanned into CDs in order to be used electronically. We examine the introduction of programmes for the exploitation of its digital material.

## **Information Technology**

### *1. 1. Networking/Internet/World Wide Web*

A large, high-speed internal digital network has been installed in order to facilitate telephone and computer connectivity in various locations of the main library building and the library building annexes.

A permanent collection to Internet, using high-speed circuitry (2Mbps), is implemented in cooperation with the Athens University. The most common Internet services, such as e-mail, ftp and www are implemented locally and used to enhance communications with the outside world.

The NLG's web pages were redesigned and offer information about the library, its history and mission, its activities, its services to the public and its on-line services such as the Web-OPAC online catalogue, the library's internal publications and the restricted access to ISBN's bibliographic database. The computerization of the archives of the ISBN's system, which started in 2000 and regards the publisher's prefixes allocation as well as the ISBN assignment, is still in progress. At this time, we are on the test of its application.

### *2. 2. OPAC*

The Online Public Access Catalogue provides an essay access and searching facility through the big number of books available in the library. It is accessible by local and remote users via a number public access computer terminal located in the main building of the library and the Internet. It is accessible through the [www.nlg.gr/adlib/nlg.htm](http://www.nlg.gr/adlib/nlg.htm)

### *3. 3. Retrospective Cataloguing*

Through the project of the modernization of the NLG we did retrospective cataloguing of the Library General Alphabetic Catalogue cards of the years 1967-1988. As a result, the Database of the NLG includes 160.000 records.

## **Cooperation**

The NLG continues its cooperation that started in 1999 with the Greek Academic Libraries for the creation of a Union Catalogue. Moreover, it has collaborated with the

National Technical University of Athens on the completion of the research project «Koraes» for the digitalization of the 19<sup>th</sup> century journals.

It is a member of CENL, CDNL and IFLA. It is also the headquarters for the National Centers of ISBN, ISSN, and ISMN and cooperates with their corresponding international centers. The Library participated in the European Programme «CASA» for the creation of a European serial meta-catalogue available to the public through the Internet.

The National Library of Greece participated in the Greek and Bulgarian librarians meeting, which took place in Athens on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2001, with reference to the development of the cooperation between the Libraries of the two countries.

### **Exhibitions**

The National Library of Greece organized an exhibition concerning the life and the work of Gregorious Nissis in the context of the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Gregarious Nissis that took place in Athens.

In addition, it participated in the following exhibitions:

- “Exhibition of Manuscripts of Sanctuary Gospels” organized by the Church of Greece (November-December 2000)
- “Exhibition of Mathematical books” organized by the Greek Mathematical Society in the context of festivities for the International year of Mathematics 2000.
- Exhibition “Eleftherios Venizelos” with the opening of the new homonymous airport of Athens (Mars 2001)
- “Mystery great and wonderous” organized by the Church of Greece and the Byzantine Museum to mark the anniversary of 2000 (May-September 2001).
- “Celebration for the 180 years of the Greek Revolution in 1821” that the Philekpaedeftiki Etaireia Arsakeia-Tossicheia Schools has organized.
- “The 2400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Death of Socrates” organized by the European Cultural Centre of Delphi (July 2001).
- “Hours of Byzantium”, organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Byzantine Museum.