



WIE WOLLEN WIR
WISSEN TEILEN?

Swiss National Library 107th Annual Report 2020



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Swiss National Library NL

Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek
Bibliothèque nationale suisse
Biblioteca nazionale svizzera
Biblioteca nazionale svizra

125 Jahre
125 ans
125 anni
125 onns

Anniversary publication
125 Years of the Swiss National Library

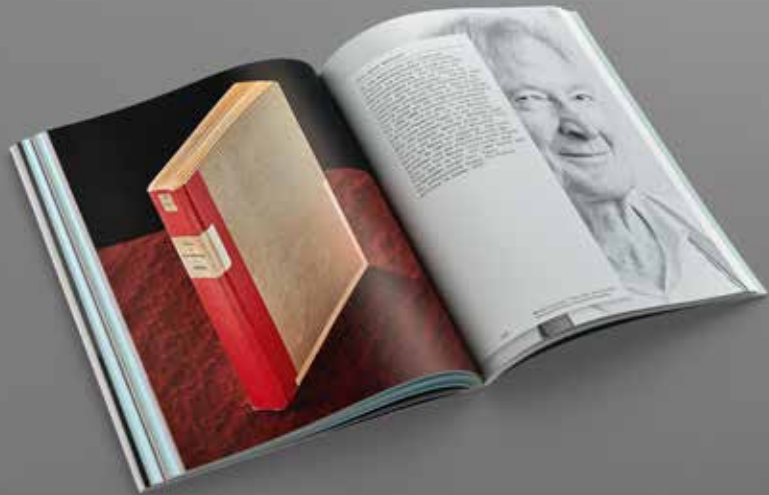


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www.nb.admin.ch/annual-report

Key Figures

	2019	2020
Swiss literary output		
Books published in Switzerland ¹	15 656	12 791
Non-commercial publications	5 914	2 717

Collection

Collections holdings: publications (in million units)	4.82	4.88
Collections holdings – Prints and Drawings Department, Federal Archives of Historic Monuments (in million units, estimates)	1.2	1.2
Collections holdings – Prints and Drawings Department (excluding Federal Archives of Historic Monuments), individual collections	85	87
Swiss Literary Archives, archives and literary estates	400	405
Swiss National Sound Archives, number of audio carriers (incl. audio media in historical holdings and collections) ²	ca. 500 000	ca. 500 000

Catalogues

Helveticat, total bibliographic records	1 832 595	1 888 151
HelveticArchives, total records	680 212	726 262
Swiss Poster Catalogue, total bibliographic records	91 607	92 741
Swiss Literary Archives, online inventories	247	263
Swiss National Sound Archives, total records (catalogued audio documents)	303 098	308 783

User services

Active users	6 119	4 552
Individual loans (loaned documents)	76 972	65 006
Information retrievals	19 629	19 875
Number of visits to www.nb.admin.ch	158 845	157 408
Number of visits to www.fonoteca.ch	2 010 474	2 199 835
Number of visitors at exhibitions, guided tours, events, training sessions	20 589	8 430

Resources

Employees (full time equivalents, annual average)	145.7	146.1
Operating expenses (in millions of CHF) ³	36.5	35.6
Operating income (in millions of CHF)	0.8	0.65

1 Of these, over 6000 are published by Springer Verlag.

2 Estimate.

3 The decrease in expenses is due to project delays and the coronavirus-related restrictions.

125 Years of the Swiss National Library

2020 was a unique year: one in which the Swiss National Library (NL) celebrated its 125th birthday, while the coronavirus pandemic dominated everything. It was a year, then, in which little went entirely according to plan. Despite closures, cancellations and postponements, the NL still managed to celebrate its anniversary with an exhibition, an audio walk, a publication and a number of events, while making further enhancements to its digital offering.

In May 1895, two librarians began working on what was to become the *Swiss National Library* in an apartment in the centre of Bern. In 2020, the Swiss National Library (NL) celebrated 125 years since its creation. Today, it is an institution employing 180 people that looks after collections encompassing some 7 million documents. It runs the Swiss Literary Archives and holds a comprehensive collection in its Prints and Drawings Department. With the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel and the Swiss National Sound Archives, it also has bases in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland. For more than 125 years, it has been providing access to Swiss texts, images and audio documents, and is thus one of the leading custodians of Switzerland's cultural heritage.



Marie-Christine Doffey,
Director

Anniversary Exhibition *Sharing. On Libraries and Beyond*

To mark the anniversary, the NL presented *Sharing. On Libraries and Beyond*. The premise of this exhibition was that libraries have always been involved in sharing. Taking its cue from new ways of doing so, the NL offered a glimpse behind the scenes at its own operations and revealed how it makes knowledge about Switzerland available to all. It asked what people like sharing – and what they do not – and highlighted the ways in which the growing “sharing economy” is transforming social interactions.

Leises Rumoren – an Audio Tour

Everyone assumes that library reading rooms are silent places. In 2020, though, the peace was broken as visitors equipped with headphones took an audio walk through the library's rooms to discover unfamiliar aspects of the NL. The audio tour complemented the anniversary exhibition by revealing other facets of the National Library.

Anniversary Publication *125 Years of the Swiss National Library*

For those wishing to learn more about the history of the NL, its many and varied holdings and its wide-ranging tasks, an anniversary publication in four languages offered not just facts and milestones but also insights into the library's inner workings – in the form of texts, photographs and the cartoon strip *Im Palast der Schachteln*, drawn by Fanny Vaucher.

Anniversary Events Hit by the Coronavirus Pandemic

A range of anniversary activities were also planned for 2020, but the first year of the pandemic offered little scope for celebrations and encounters, with many events having to be postponed or even cancelled. Planned as a series about sharing food and ideas to accompany the anniversary exhibition, *A Shared Meal* ultimately took place just once. Instead, the NL developed the digital *Library Live* format, comprising live talks on Instagram in which the exhibition curator discussed sharing with experts such as Nick Schwery from the ETH Zurich, Lorenz König of wemakeit and Debora Lopomo from Wikimedia Switzerland, building on the topics covered by the exhibition.

Looking with Confidence to a New Year of Culture

The cultural sector has been thinking for some time about how cultural offerings can be mediated digitally. The coronavirus crisis of 2020 significantly accelerated the search for answers, as many events have been unable to take place at their intended location. The NL has therefore turned increasingly to digital channels for its cultural offerings, and not just as part of the anniversary. Although the pandemic remains undefeated for now, the NL is looking to the future with confidence thanks to the protective measures put in place around the world. In 2021, it will be offering its library services both on site and digitally, and organising a diverse cultural programme for both specialists and the general public, in the hope that digital exchange will go hand in hand with a greater number of inspiring, shared cultural experiences.

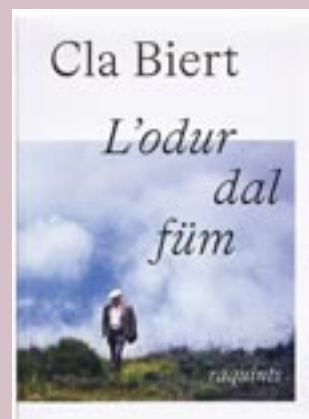
Marie-Christine Doffey
Director

Main Events – a Selection

Nach der Transkription: Das Analoge im Digitalen, das Digitale im Analogen

6./7.2.2020

Literature scholars and cultural scientists from Switzerland and Germany came together for a conference at the University of Giessen to discuss theoretical and practical issues related to digitisation. The talks focused on the challenges of transcription and interaction between analogue and digital objects, with particular reference to specific research, publication and mediation projects. Held at the University's Centre for Media and Interactivity, the event formed part of the *Zukünfte der Philologie im Medienumbruch* series organised by Prof. Uwe Wirth (Justus Liebig University Giessen) and Irmgard Wirtz (SLA).



L'odur dal füm by Cla Biert

Sguardo al sud. Immagini letterarie d'Italia dalla Svizzera tedesca

11./12.2.2020

The published results of a multi-year research project into images of Italy in German-language Swiss literature were presented in Venice via a workshop at the Università Ca' Foscari and a book launch at the Consulate of Switzerland in Venice, during which Prof. Hubert Thüring (University of Basel) and Corinna Jäger-Trees (SLA) explored the specific *view of the south* through literary texts from the 20th and 21st centuries. The book launch was accompanied by a reading by the actor Graziella Rossi.

Cla Biert: *L'odur dal füm*. Raquints – Erzählungen. Discussiun e lectüras – Gespräch und Lektüren

27.8.2020

In July 2020, the 100th birthday of the well-known writer Cla Biert (1920–1981) was celebrated in Scuol, while a selection of Romansh tales entitled *L'odur dal füm. Raquints 1949–1980* was published by Chasa Editura Rumantscha. Jon Duri Vital read texts from the collection, while the writer Rut Plouda engaged in a literary dialogue with some of the stories by the author, who is an important point of reference for her work. Curated and with a commentary by Annetta Ganzoni (SLA) and Rico Valär (Chair of Romansh Literature at the University of Zurich), the book contains stories and essays published by Cla Biert over three decades: a love story and a number of tales of growing up, narratives on technical modernisation, analyses of memories and dreams. The bilingual event at the Cantonal Library in Graubünden formed part of the travelling *SLA unterwegs* series that was launched to mark 125 years of the NL.



Gedichte by Emmy Hennings

Lieb mich von allen Sünden rein. Emmy Hennings in Dialogue with Ariane von Graffenried

1.9.2020

The NL's 125th anniversary *SLA unterwegs* series saw the Swiss Literary Archives travel to locations throughout Switzerland at the invitation of cultural event organisers. One stop was at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, where in 1916 the stage performer and writer Emmy Hennings made an appearance that helped to launch the Dada movement. To accompany the Hennings exhibition, the author Ariane von Graffenried spoke about her relationship to the Dada icon and performed a number of texts, while the renowned stage and screen actor Heidi Maria Glössner read from Emmy Hennings's works. The evening was moderated by Salome Hohl (Cabaret Voltaire) and Lucas Marco Gisi (SLA).



View of the exhibition marking European Heritage Days (photo: Doris Amacher)

European Heritage Days in Switzerland: Building on the Built

12./13.9.2020

Switzerland's contribution to the European Heritage Days in 2020 centred around a debate on the ongoing process of construction, and asked how the supposed contradiction between preservation and development in architectural practice can be overcome. In the accompanying brochure, Federal Councillor Alain Berset recommended "looking back at history.

Archaeological sites, townscapes and monuments provide an acute historical insight into developments in architecture and spatial planning that are valuable to us in the present day".

A wide-ranging exhibition of photographs, architectural plans and other documents from the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments (FAHM) in the National Library offered a chance for visitors to do just that. Using a selection from the holdings, numerous participants discussed how pictorial sources can be exploited to the benefit of present-day construction projects.

Dürrenmatt von A bis Z. A Ringvorlesung Lecture Series in the Swiss Literary Archives

17.9.–17.12.2020

To mark the 100th birthday of Friedrich Dürrenmatt, archivists, philologists, physicists and theologians elucidated the classic author by examining central concepts in his thought and works. The cycle of 14 lectures organised in association with the Walter Benjamin Kolleg of the University of Bern was moderated by Irmgard Wirtz and Ulrich Weber (both from the SLA). It concluded with an advance première of the performance *Das Hirn. Spoken* by Jens Nielsen, which is inspired by Dürrenmatt. For the first time, an SLA Ringvorlesung was streamed online.

#WeMissiPRES

22.–24.9.2020

Each year, the international digital preservation community comes together for the iPRES conference, an opportunity for experts and practitioners to present and discuss the latest developments in digital long-term preservation. With the 2020 event cancelled owing to the pandemic, the participants instead gathered online for a three-day *#WeMissiPRES Festival*, which attracted hundreds of people around the world, all eager to discuss current projects. The festival bridged the gap between the 2019 iPRES conference and its successor, now postponed until 2021, and ensured that discussions could continue in spite of the pandemic.



Dürrenmatt von A bis Z:
a cycle of 14 lectures

Nel mondo di Alice (Ceresa). Scrittura – pensiero – differenza

30.10.2020

The writer and translator Alice Ceresa (1923–2001) lived first in Ticino and later in Rome. She initially came to prominence in 1967 with her experimental novel *La figlia prodiga*. Written in her unique style, her works explore the situation of women in society in various contexts. The online study day was organised by Annetta Ganzoni (SLA) in collaboration with Prof. Giovanna Cordibella from the University of Bern. It examined Alice Ceresa's work and activities as well as her multifaceted literary, ideological and socio-cultural engagement from various perspectives. The event concluded with a conversation with the Italian-Swiss writer Silvia Ricci Lempen on *Alice Ceresa, la scrittura e il punto di vista femminista*.



Virtual exhibition *Jean Starobinski. Relations critiques*
(photo: EPFL+ECAL Lab / Swiss National Library)

Virtual Exhibition Jean Starobinski. Relations critiques

from 26.11.2020

In a joint project launched in 2018, the Swiss Literary Archives (represented by Stéphanie Cudré-Mauroux) and EPFL+ECAL Lab (in the person of its director Nicolas Henchoz) conceived a virtual exhibition that explores the life and work of Jean Starobinski through his archives. The online vernissage was divided into two parts: a presentation of the technical challenges posed by this novel form of literary exhibition by its designers, and contributions from researchers – Pierre Nora, Martin Rueff, Julien Zanetta – on the exhibition's importance for our knowledge of the literary critic and his work.

Alptransit 2020: Cultura in movimento

13.12.2020

The Swiss National Sound Archives were involved in the *Cultura in movimento* project, which was organised by the Canton of Ticino to mark the opening of the Ceneri Base Tunnel. Owing to the pandemic, the planned travelling exhibition in Ticino museums had to be replaced with a virtual format. The National Sound Archives put together a selection of historical audio documents and published them on their website to coincide with the opening of the tunnel on 13 December 2020. With interviews, reports, conversations and songs of the old mail coach that traversed the Gotthard until the late 19th century, right up to the modern, high-speed line of the 21st century, this was a gallery of living memories telling the story of the development of transport routes and the transformations of society in both Ticino and Switzerland during the 20th century.

Notable Acquisitions

Monographs

Pre-1900

Biographie abrégée avec un résumé des institutions du révérend Père Théodose Florentini, grand vicaire de l'Evêché de Coire, mort le 15 février 1865.

Freimüthige Gedanken über die gegenwaertigen politischen Verhältnisse der Schweiz, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die neue Bundesurkunde, Julius 1833.

QUIRSFELD, Johann, *M. Johann Quirsfelds neu-vermehrte himmlische Garten-Gesellschaft*, Zürich, getruckt bey David Geßner, 1753.

Referate über Milch-Wirthschaft, von Hrn. Alfred ROTH, Oberst, und Hrn. J. SOMMER, Negotiant, Bern, 1886.

William Tell: an historical play, from the German of Schiller with notes and illustrations by William PETER, Heidelberg, 1839.

Post-1900

Derrière les murs: récits de migrantes au temps du Covid-19, Neuchâtel, Marche mondiale des femmes, 2020.

Filfilfil, 3 vols, conception publication Tali SERRUYA, Sabrina FERNANDEZ CASAS, Genève, MACACO Press, 2019-2020.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt und das Dorf seiner Kindheit, Text- und Bild-Recherche von Werner WEBER, Reinhold BECKER, Kurt BERGER, Willi BLASER, Konolfingen, Verein Alter Bären, 2020.

Le siècle d'Emma: une famille suisse dans les turbulences du XX^e, scénario Éric BURNAND, dessins Fanny VAUCHER, Lausanne, Antipodes, 2019.

Teruko Yokoi: Tokyo-New York-Paris-Bern, herausgegeben von Marta DZIEWAŃSKA, Nina ZIMMER, Kunstmuseum Bern, Berlin, Hatje, 2020.

Der grosse Schriftenreigen, sämtliche Bleisatz- und Plakatschriften im Typorama,

dargestellt in Form von "Wortwechselln", 2 Bände, Typographie Paul WIRTH, Bischofszell, Ottmar Verlag, 2020.

GUILLEVIC, Eugène, *Euclidiennes*, Locarno, Edizioni Il Salice, 2019.

Prints and Drawings Department

Archives and Collections

BACHMANN, Eugen: final additions to the poster collection archive.

DNP Foundation for Cultural Promotion ggg / ddd gallery: World Graphic Design-Books (130 ggg Books), accompanying *What's Karl Gerstner? Thinking in motion*, 28.11.2019–18.1.2020 in the ginza graphic gallery Tokyo.

KUHN, Siegfried: The archive of photographs and archivalia complements the 380 diaries donated by Bernhard Luginbühl and the Daniel Spoerri archive in the Department of Prints and Drawings.

Siegfried Kuhn documented Bernhard Luginbühl's activities from the early 1950s until his death, as his friend and favoured photographer. The photographs, correspondence and other documents that make up this archive thus illustrate content that is present in coded form in Luginbühl's diaries, and decodes the life of this important artist.

LINCK, Ernst: final additions to the archive, including archival materials/documents, photographs, plans and drawings from and about the work of Ernst Linck (1874–1935).

A painter, draughtsman, graphic artist, illustrator and restorer, Linck also turned to mural and glass painting. He set up a school of painting in Bern, taught life drawing at the School of Arts and Crafts, and was an active member of the Swiss Werkbund and GSMBA.



Euclidiennes, 2019



Le siècle d'Emma, 2019



Der grosse Schriftenreigen, 2020

From the 1930s onwards, Linck was one of the federal city's leading artists, receiving prestigious public commissions, including the monumental mural of a standard-bearer at the Brunnerhaus in 1906 and the *Historical Frieze* in the Kleiner Saal of the Kornhauskeller in 1929, and was frequently contracted by the city administration as a restorer, working on the paintings by the Master of the Carnations on the main portal of Bern Cathedral and the painted decorations on Bern's historic fountains.

Editions, Artist's Books, Plates and Drawings

CHIARA, Raffaella: *Kleininformate*, unique artist's book, 2020.

ESPACE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN by (les halles), editions 2016 / 2018–2020.

FREI, Marlene: final additions to the special editions of artist's books and editions from Galerie + Edition Marlene Frei.

GÜNZBURGER, Michael: lithographs. Final additions to the "Animal Series": "Fuchsschwanz", "Ludde", "Luchs", "Fasanenbund", "Biber hoch und quer", "Wildschwein", "Eisbär (4-teilig)".

JAKOB, Bruno: *Delete, escape, reset and multimplants with Hans Witschi 2019–20*. Unique multi-part artist's publication.

KEISER, Daniela: *Dear All In and Out of Translation*; artist's book, 2020, ed. 15/100, signed and numbered.

QUELOZ, Philippe: "Tête" lithograph series from 1988.

ROTHE, Michael: 15 artist's books from Rothe Drucke 2002–2019.

TATSUUMA, Chikako / FUJIMOTO, Yukio / Gruppe phono/graph: *phonographophonographophonograph*; artist's book, Osaka 2013.

Swiss Literary Archives

CAMARTIN, Iso (b. 1944): Camartin's archive comprises materials from his work as a writer and commentator that are of importance to Switzerland's literary and intellectual life. They include documentation on his writings that have been published to date and their reception amongst the literary public, the preserved work-related correspondence with people of public interest in the fields of literature, science, art and politics, and in particular correspondence with Swiss authors.



Siegfried Kuhn, from the archive of photographs and archivalia

FRÄNKEL, Jonas (1879–1965) and papers of Carl SPITTELER (1845–1924): The literary estate of Jonas Fränkel is closely linked to that of the poet, commentator and only Swiss-born winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature Carl Spitteler. Fränkel was Spitteler's faithful proofreader and friend, whom he appointed as his biographer, executor and editor before his death in 1924. To this end, he left him numerous biographically relevant recordings, unpublished works and extensive correspondence. The manuscripts include the début work *Prometheus* in the versions from Russia and Heidelberg, sets of the Nobel Prize-winning *Olympian Spring*, the butterfly poems and some stories as well as unpublished writings.

The philologist Fränkel's work in teaching and the editions on Goethe, Heine and Keller constitute his literary estate, which comprises notes on his lectures, extensive professional correspondence and documentation including the publications in which they appeared abroad and their translations, as well as extensive private correspondence with friends and family.

Archive of the LUDWIG HOHL FOUNDATION: The Foundation was established in 1985 on the initiative of Madeleine de Weiss Hohl. A non-commercial body, its



Michael Günzburger, *Fuchsschwanz*, 2012, lithograph



Philippe Queloz, *Tête*, 1988, lithograph



Jade inkwell belonging to Iso Camartin

principal goals are to publish the works and letters of Ludwig Hohl, collect records that form part of his literary estate, and promote studies into his work. The historical archive of the Ludwig Hohl Foundation (covering the period from 1985 to 2015) contains the foundation deeds, internal correspondence among members and various items of correspondence with culture practitioners related to Ludwig Hohl; also project dossiers, administrative documents as well as specimen copies and documentation of the activities he supported.

SPÄTH, Gerold (b. 1938): As Gerold Späth continues to work without a computer, this is one of the last great paper archives consisting entirely of manuscript and typewritten documents extending back to the early days of his writing (under the pseudonym “Stadtbachel”) in the 1950s, and documents every stage in the development of a text in multiple variants. His correspondence, both professional and with his publishers as well as contacts with writers including Grass, Köpf and Hildesheimer, along with critics such as Arnold, Höllerer and Raddatz, is also still conducted entirely on paper. Some letters are partially present in the form of copies.

Archive of the SOCIETY FOR THE SWISS LITERARY ARCHIVES: The Society’s purpose is to publicise the work and goals of the SLA, to support the SLA’s efforts to collect, preserve and catalogue literary estates with a connection to Switzerland, and to promote lively engagement with literature among the public at large. The archive comprises the Society’s documentation from its foundation in 1992 to the present day, in particular the foundation deeds, minutes of meetings of members and the board, commercial register entries, correspondence and changes, accounts and auditors’ reports.

Collections and Individual Documents

ALINEA archive: *alinea. Zeitschrift für Literatur* was set up by students of German at the University of Fribourg. Six issues were published between 1981 and 1983. The periodical brought together unpublished texts by authors mainly from Switzerland, some well known, others still less so. It also presented actual examples of various approaches in literary scholarship and published a number of texts from literary estates. A planned seventh issue never came to fruition. The documentation on *alinea* was collected, organised and preserved by Daniel Segmüller and Ruth Seiler, two founder members of its editorial staff.

Archive of the community of heirs of Heiner HESSE: Heiner Hesse (1909–2003) corresponded with his father Hermann Hesse (1877–1962) throughout his life. After Hermann’s death and that of Ninon Hesse in 1967, Heiner took charge of administering the literary estate on his brothers’ behalf, dealing with publishers, archives and institutions. In particular, he worked to ensure that part of the estate was later presented to the SLA. The archive of the community of heirs of Heiner Hesse contains the correspondence between father and son, as well as selected correspondence with family members and others that is of interest to the SLA.

HIGHSMITH, Patricia (Aboudaram Collection):

Patricia Highsmith met Marion Aboudaram (1940–2014) in 1975. The French translator and novelist was twenty years her junior. The two women embarked on a love affair that was expressed through their intimate and passionate correspondence, which also invariably dealt with the writing projects. The relationship ended in May 1978, but Highsmith and Aboudaram remained in regular contact. Acquired in Paris, the ensemble comprises 173 handwritten or typed letters and postcards, some with drawings added. The



Unschlecht typewriter belonging to Gerold Späth

correspondence includes some valuable documents: typescripts with handwritten comments, photographs, drawings and letters from other people.

OPPENHEIM, Meret (collection of Bernadette Petitpierre Widmer): Dieter Widmer, the internationally renowned self-taught art photographer in Basel, was a friend of Meret Oppenheim and was commissioned by her to produce an extensive collection of artistic photographs of her works of art. In addition to those photos, Bernadette Petitpierre Widmer's archive includes individual letters and documents by and about Meret Oppenheim.

SCHWARZ, Martin: The collection of autograph manuscripts on the *Sonntagsmalerei mit Fallgruben* anthology comprises correspondence and the manuscripts and pictorial materials for the publication. In all, the collection comprises 47 smaller dossiers with texts, letters and cards, some handwritten and some typed, as well as an envelope containing unpublished texts, another with rejection letters (from, among others, E.Y. Meyer, Anton Bruhin, Jörg Steiner and Peter Weibel), administrative documents such as address lists and concept sketches as well as an audio cassette of the Fluxus artist Dietrich Albert reading his own poem *In den BÄRGEN sind nicht nur Zwärger*. One item of particular interest is a 15-page interview with H.R. Giger containing handwritten corrections.

Swiss National Sound Archives

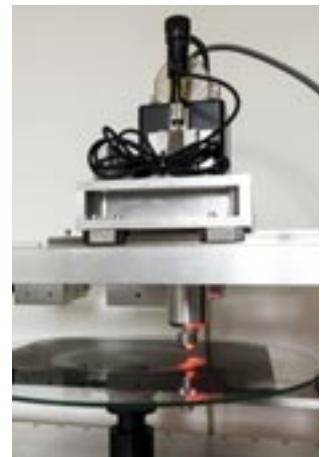
KÖNIG, Jürg: private collection of audio recordings on various media belonging to Jürg König from Pieterlen (BE). This exceptionally extensive collection comprises some 20 000 audio media (valuable rolls, acetates, audio tapes, LPs, cassettes, CDs, DATs etc.).

SONOHR: the holdings of the SonOhr Festival of contemporary audio stories that takes place annually in Bern, consisting of 121 recordings from previous issues (2011–2016) to which recordings from future issues will continually be added.

RADIO KANAL K: holdings of the cultural radio station from Aarau comprising around 1000 audio media (audio cassettes, DATs, MiniDiscs) and some 36 000 sound files.



Playing and digitising a phonograph roll using an Archeophone (photo: Miriam Bolliger Cavaglieri).



The VisualAudio system captures damaged records in images and reproduces them as audio. (photo: Miriam Bolliger Cavaglieri).

General Collection

In 2020, the General Collection expanded both its holdings and its digital offerings, and enhanced the quality of its data.

Digital Long-term Archive

The digital long-term archive has reached the end of its lifecycle and needs to be replaced in order for the NL to continue fulfilling its remit to collect, preserve and provide access in the digital realm. The archive, which has been in operation for more than a decade, now requires 75 TB of storage space, corresponding to some 30 billion A4 pages of text. It contains both digitally born Helvetica (scientific journals, dissertations, e-books, websites etc.) and digitised publications (mainly newspapers and periodicals) from all over Switzerland. The archive is unique because it records Switzerland's digital written cultural heritage, preserves it for the long term, and makes it available for use. Available synergies will be exploited when the system is replaced. The digital music archive of the Swiss National Sound Archives, which have been part of the NL since 2016, containing a further approximately 100 TB of data, along with digital objects from the Federal Art Collection and the museums of the Federal Office of Culture, will be integrated into the new digital long-term archive. This will enable multiple existing IT infrastructures to be decommissioned, while the statutory mandates applying to these collections will continue to be fulfilled in the new central archive. Following extensive preparations in 2020, an initial public tender for the new digital archive is being launched in 2021. This will be followed by a tender for the mediation system. The NL plans to have the new long-term archive up and running by 2024.



Web archive: monitor in the public area

Web Archive

The National Library has been collecting websites from Switzerland for more than a decade, and is continually expanding its representative collection of the information disseminated via this medium. In 2020, a web collage was developed as an entertaining way to access the more than 64 000 snapshots of websites, and is available to users in the public rooms of the NL. It starts with a collage of homepages resembling a pixel raster, from which users can zoom in as they wish for a closer look at websites that are visually appealing or contain interesting content. They can then navigate within the archived websites just as when using the internet in the normal way. A specially developed web application allows the web archive collection to be explored in an intuitive and fun way.



Using a microfade tester to determine how long an object can be exhibited for.

Acquisitions

The NL's General Collection grew by 1.2% in 2020, and comprised 4 882 722 units at the end of the year (2019: 4 826 802). The growth figure was lower than in the previous year (2019: 1.5%). The decline is due to the fact that a number of publishers were obliged to postpone or scale back their programmes in response to the pandemic. The collection as a whole consists of analogue and digitally born publications and comprises 3.13 million monographs (essays, novels, handbooks, biographies and others) and rather more than 1 million periodicals. There are also other types of materials such as music scores, maps, microforms, etc. The collection of digitally born documents once again grew at an above-average rate, expanding by 22% to 182 335 archive packages at the end of 2020 (2019: 149 726). Contributing factors included a delivery from the ETH Library Zurich, which retrospectively submitted all the electronic dissertations published since 2008, and the fact that the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic did not have any impact on this type of publication.

The collections continued to evolve. The cooperation with *SUISA*, the Cooperative Society of Music Authors and Publishers in Switzerland which had submitted its members' music typescripts to the NL since 1958, was officially brought to an end. The closure of the *Swiss Musicians' Association (STV)* in 2018 meant that its members were no longer depositing these works with *SUISA* and consequently with the NL. The *Swiss Shooting Museum Berne* donated a large number of writings from cantonal shooting associations for the *collection of association publications*. The digital *e-Helvetica collection* now includes Swiss blogs that have a certain reach. Numerous websites on COVID-19 that were researched and recorded by the NL and its cooperation partners were added to *Web Archive Switzerland*. The collection will continue to be expanded for as long as the pandemic lasts.

Improvements have been made to *monograph* searches: a small program developed in-house allows external sources to be consulted quickly and conveniently by automated matching of keywords. Extensive follow-up work was required in the periodicals section following the introduction of the new library management system. A technical problem meant that it was impossible to send out subscription reminders for several months. Considerable efforts were required to fill the resulting gaps. Cooperation with the German agency *Lehmanns Media* to manage some foreign *Helvetica* subscriptions was stepped up after *Karger Libri*, the last periodicals agency of its kind in Switzerland, withdrew from the business. The *Swiss Serials Portal (SZP)* was switched off, as its use and research quality were no longer adequate to requirements and new research tools were able to better meet users' expectations. A collaborative project was also launched with *Wikimedia Switzerland* to build a digital collection on Swiss topics.

Catalogues

On 31 December 2020 *Helveticat*, the NL's library catalogue, comprised 1 888 151 bibliographic records, an increase of 3% year on year (2019: 2.5%). The *Bibliography on Swiss History BSH* grew by 3.6% and comprised 125 926 records at the end of 2020. The union catalogue of the *Swiss Poster Collection*, which has been built up in cooperation with partner institutions, contained 92 741 records, an increase of 1.2% compared with the previous year. The *HelveticArchives* database grew by just under 7% and comprised 726 262 records at the end of the year. The online catalogue of the Swiss National Sound Archives grew by just under 1.9%, to 308 783 records.

The cataloguing backlog in the General Collection resulting from the change of library management system in 2019 was prevented from growing further, but the interruptions to on-site cataloguing due to the pandemic meant that there was no opportunity to reduce it. At the end of 2020, just under 10 000 works were still waiting to be catalogued. However, staff working from home made extensive progress in enhancing data quality, with the primary access points (authority records) in particular being improved and brought into line with the requirements of the international *Integrated Authority File (GND)*. Preparations for displaying electronic publications in the national bibliography *The Swiss Book* were completed, so that this function will be available from issue 2021/01 onwards. Work on automated integration of the old Coris subject catalogue into *Helveticat* continued, in association with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland. The results have been positive, and this work will be further pursued in 2021.



Original binding with visible stitching



Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis vol. 38, 2004



Wir Brückenbauer, 30.7.1942

Preservation and Conservation

In all, 50 161 new acquisitions underwent conservation treatment, a reduction of 5.4% compared with 2019. Some 1986 protective covers were made, 38% fewer than in the previous year. This decrease is due to the lower number of publications arriving for further preparation and processing on the way to binding as a result of the pandemic. By contrast, the number of documents restored and repaired grew more than fivefold, to 2076. Because there were fewer new acquisitions requiring processing, investments could be made in preserving the existing holdings. Changes were made to the processes for integrating very large printed publishing house productions, allowing them to reach the stacks more quickly.

In 2020, 700 documents were also prepared for some 20 external exhibitions. A microfading tester that employs a new technology to analyse light damage to collection objects during exhibitions was acquired. In future, this technology will be used to establish how long an object can be exhibited for.

Circulation

In 2020 there were 3268 active users of the NL's General Collection, 31% fewer than in the previous year (2019: 4716). The number of documents borrowed fell by 13%, to 58471 (2019: 67012). Some 2078 microfilms were consulted, 38% fewer than in the previous year (2019: 3334). This decline was due to the reading room and circulation desk closures necessitated by the pandemic, which meant that fewer members of the public visited the NL.



Der Bund, 2.1.1868

Information Retrieval

The number of information and research requests stood at around 12000, an increase of 10% (2019: 11000). Additionally, 2805 in-depth researches were conducted for users, a rise of 1% (2019: 2785). Overall, requests for information rose as a consequence of the pandemic. To mark the NL's 125th anniversary, the *Flashback 125* series ran throughout the year on the website, looking back at events since the NL's foundation. The broad spectrum of topics covered reflected the diversity of the NL's collections. Articles published included *The first Swiss National Day*, *Bandy – a winter sport in 1895*, and *The riots at the Käfigturm as a mirror of workers' conflicts*.

Outreach

In total, 1 726 492 newspaper pages were digitised (2019: 641 349). The substantial increase is due to projects completed during the year. The results are now available at *e-newspapers.ch*. The canton of Nidwalden is now represented by the digitised *Nidwaldner Volksblatt* (1866–1991). Also added were the newspaper *Der Bund* (in collaboration with the Bern University Library), *Wir Brückenbauer* and *Construire* (Migros newspapers) and *La Gruyère* (in collaboration with the Cantonal and University Library, Fribourg). There were a total of 341 928 visits (2019: 214 538), a rise of 59%. 2020 saw the launch of the *Upgrade Metadata e-npa.ch* project, which aims to improve access to the older pages published on the platform. Some 122 973 pages of periodicals were digitised (2019: 223 001) and are now available on the *e-periodica.ch* platform run by the ETH Library, Zurich. They include titles on the topics of *ageing*, *music* and *women's history*. In all, users of the platform downloaded 1 315 889 PDFs containing NL content (2019: 1 379 828), a fall of over 4%. Digitised documents from the literary estate of *Romain Rolland*, which is held in the SLA, were integrated into the *e-manuscripta.ch* platform operated by Swiss libraries and archives. A further 385 freely available photographs were uploaded to *Wikimedia Commons*.

Wikipedia pages containing images from the NL were consulted more than 9.4 million times in total.

The NL's website *nb.admin.ch* recorded 157 408 visits. In all, the NL's German-language Facebook page has almost 10 500 followers and the French-language page a little over 9000. The NL's German *Twitter* feed has just under 2600 followers and the French-language version just over 1700. With over 1100 subscribers, the multilingual Instagram channel is now reaching twice as many people as a year earlier.

Helveticat, the catalogue of the General Collection, was accessed 413 601 times (2019: 353 762), while the figure for the *Swiss Poster Collections Union Catalogue* was 27 937 (2019: 22 955). The *Bibliography on Swiss History* was consulted 25 830 times (2019: 22 637). *HelveticArchives*, which mainly describes the holdings of the Swiss Literary Archives and the Prints and Drawings Department, was consulted 217 913 times (2019: 199 429). The figure for the *e-Helvetic Access* portal to the digital collections was 25 258.

2020 saw preparations for the change of registration procedure to consult the library system scheduled for 2021. The procedure is now handled via the Federal Administration's Identity and Access Management system. Over the long term, this will ensure that users can use the same login to access all Federal Administration services for which they have been granted authorisation. These also include the NL's library catalogue. In parallel with this, preparations were also made for the future use of the edu-ID offered by Switch.

In addition, more than 40 000 reprographs were produced (2019: 30 000).

In Bern, 5657 people attended cultural events at the NL. The marked decline compared with the 2019 figure of 7632 is due to the coronavirus pandemic, which led to the closure of exhibitions and the cancellation of numerous events.



Construire, 8.12.1944



Nidwaldner Volksblatt, 1.12.1866

Prints and Drawings Department

A number of archival cataloguing projects were successfully completed in 2020. Demand for information and research in the holdings as well as reproduction orders remains high. There was a change in the management of the Prints and Drawings Department.

Change of Management

The end of 2020 saw a change of management in the Prints and Drawings Department. After 25 years at the helm of the Department with responsibility for acquisitions and outreach, Susanne Bieri will be assuming a new role in 2021 as a scientific associate in the Director's office dealing with publications and outreach. Doris Amacher retired after heading the Prints and Drawings Department Digital with responsibility for cataloguing, use and preservation of prints and drawings and for the Federal Archive of Historic Monuments (FAHM) since 2007. The new head of the Prints and Drawings Department is architecture and art historian and scientific librarian Isabelle Kirgus.

Collection

The archive of *Ernst Linck* (1874–1935), an important Bernese painter close to Ferdinand Hodler, Cuno Amiet, Carl Albert Loosli and others, was completed thanks to a donation of further archival materials. An extremely valuable block of 38 diaries by the Bernese sculptor *Bernhard Luginbühl* (1929–2011) entered the Prints and Drawings Department, along with his poster production. A further gift meant that the holdings of posters by the graphic artist *Eugen Bachmann* (b. 1942) from Lucerne are now complete and can be researched via the Swiss Poster Collections Union Catalogue.

A number of milestones were achieved in ongoing archival processing work. Supported by the *Stiftung Graphica Helvetica*, work on cataloguing the several thousand sheets that make up the *Swiss Graphic Views* is now almost at an end, with processing of the “Z” cantons (Zurich and Zug) complete. Cataloguing and digitisation of the archives of *Gabriel Lory* “*fls*” (1784–1856) and *Henriette-Louise de Meuron* (1789–1867) is now finished. A “vitrine” on the life and work of Gabriel Lory was published on the website *kleinmeister.ch*. Further sub-fonds from the extensive archive of the artist *Daniel Spoerri* (b. 1931) were published; they include the artist's books and the event documentation. The audio documents have been digitised by the Swiss National Sound Archives and are available on their website, while the film documents have also been digitised. Cataloguing of the much-requested archive of *Doris Stauffer* (1934–2017), the artist and founder of the F+F school of experimental design in Zurich, was finalised with the help of external funding. The Institute for Contemporary Art Research at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) was heavily involved in this project.

User Services

Information and research requests have been rising steadily since 2016; over 1000 were processed in 2020, a sign that ongoing cataloguing and digitisation is increasing the visibility of the holdings. The collection areas most in demand were the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments (2020: 231; 2019: 344), photography (2020: 319; 2019: 388) and prints and drawings (2020: 236; 2019: 234). By contrast, the number of visitors on site declined, as the Prints and Drawings Department reading room was closed for 21 weeks owing to the pandemic. The Prints and Drawings Department handled a large number of enquiries regarding exhibitions, as curators were unable to select potential loans on site themselves. Preparations for two exhibitions marking the 90th birthday of Daniel Spoerri in Vienna and Nice during 2021 created more work for the Department than all past loans to external institutions.



Hans Jakob Häslü: *Ansicht von Winterthur*, around 1820, coloured outline etching



Eugen Bachmann: *Beethoven @ Bern, Konzert Theater Bern, 2015*, poster



Daniel Spoerri presents: *Karl Gerstner über Farbe, 1978*, poster

Swiss Literary Archives

The year 2020 was dominated by the centenaries of three major authors and scholars: Cla Biert, Jean Starobinski and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The events were celebrated with a publication, a virtual exhibition and the Ringvorlesung lecture series *Dürrenmatt von A-Z*. The SLA's research cooperations and projects continued successfully.

Collection

In 2020, the SLA successfully completed negotiations with the third generation of the Fränkel family to acquire the literary estate of the scholar Jonas Fränkel (1879–1965) who, as well as working on the letters of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and the writings of Gottfried Keller, devoted his life to the roles of companion, editor and biographer to the Swiss Nobel Prize winner Carl Spitteler. The gift was accompanied by thirteen suitcases of Carl Spitteler's papers. This is an outstanding acquisition for the history of German studies in Switzerland, edition philology and Spitteler research that now requires extensive cataloguing and research work. The holdings include a correspondence network of Jewish scholars, publishers and authors all over Europe and also on the road to exile in the US and to Israel. Fränkel's literary estate was preserved in its entirety by the family for over 50 years in his study as a kind of time capsule.

Other key new acquisitions in the year included the archives of the writer Gerold Späth from Rapperswil and the scholar, commentator and author Iso Camartin from Graubünden. The SLA received six archives and literary estates, half as acquisitions and half as gifts, as well as a number of collections. There were important new additions to the literary estates of Patricia Highsmith and Meret Oppenheim, as well as the archive of the Society for the SLA, the Ludwig Hohl Foundation and the archive belonging to the family of Silver Hesse.

Outreach

The virtual exhibition *Jean Starobinski. Relations critiques* was produced with the EPFL+ECAL Lab to mark his 100th birthday, and was awarded the *Le Meilleur du Web* prize in the user experience category. The *Dürrenmatt von A-Z* lecture series was organised to mark 100 years since the Swiss writer's birth.

The following were also published in 2020: in the Emmy Hennings study edition, all the poems in one volume, including those from her literary estate and the partially unpublished prose of Cla Biert in the volume *L'odur dal füm*. The *Quarto* magazine issue on Meret Oppenheim, the *Bulletin Jean Starobinski* and the *Passim* bulletins on *Literatur und Recht* and *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* also appeared during the year.

The *SLA unterwegs* series was to see the SLA travel to locations throughout Switzerland at the invitation of cultural event organisers, as part of the NL's 125th anniversary celebrations. In the end, the pandemic meant that only two of these events could take place: an evening on Emmy Hennings and another on the novelist Cla Biert.

The SLA also organised various workshops and study days: on Alice Ceresa, on Carl Spitteler, marking the conclusion of the *Blick nach Süden* project, as part of the SNSF research project *Lectures Bollack* with the University of Fribourg, and with the University of Giessen on *Zukünfte der Philologien*.

User Services

The number of active users declined by 12%, from 943 (2019) to 829 (2020), owing to the reading room closures resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, while information retrievals declined by 17% from 3949 (2019) to 3257 (2020).



Fränkel's library and suitcases containing Spitteler's papers



Quarto on Meret Oppenheim



Passim on Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Swiss National Sound Archives

2020 saw a large number of virtual initiatives. The National Sound Archives were involved in projects including the *International Year of Sound 2020*, the *World Day for Audiovisual Heritage* and *Cultura in movimento 2020*, presented them extensively on their website, and opened up access to a wide selection of audio documents from their own collection.

Collection

In all, 800 new recordings were acquired in 2020 (2019: 976) and 5746 new bibliographic records were added to the catalogue (2019: 5937). The number of visits to the website *fonoteca.ch* also remained very high, at over 2 million.

Outreach

In 2020 the Swiss National Sound Archives opened up access to their collections via a range of collaborations: for exhibitions at the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel (*Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Caricatures*), the Bourbaki Panorama Lucerne, the Swiss National Library in Bern (*Sharing. On Libraries and Beyond*), the Museo delle Culture Lugano (*Kakemono. Five Centuries of Japanese Paintings. The Perino Collection*) and the Lucerne History Museum (*50 Jahre Frauenstimmrecht Luzern*), for radio productions by RTS (*Catastrophe aérienne du Malabar*) and RSI (*250 anni Beethoven* and *Giornata della musica svizzera*) as well as for teaching projects with the Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI) in Locarno and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

User Services

Public interest in the National Sound Archives' collections grew markedly in 2020, as the figures confirm. The database was accessed over 18 million times (2019: 15 million). In total, 56 institutions in Switzerland have one or more audiovisual workstations that can be used to access the National Sound Archives database. A new one was added in the Ethnographic Museum Neuchâtel in 2020. They were used to listen to 199 172 audio documents during the year (2019: 44 477).



World Day for Audiovisual Heritage in the National Sound Archives (Helvetia audiovisualis. Illustration by Ralph Kaiser)

Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel

5 January 2021 marks 100 years since the birth of Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The CDN took advantage of this anniversary to explore some less-known facets of the writer and painter, focusing in particular on the dialogue between his pictorial and literary works.

In preparation for the Friedrich Dürrenmatt centenary, the CDN's permanent exhibition was reorganised during the closure from August 2020 onwards, with the aim of making the full breadth of his work even more accessible through a newly designed display and interactive stations. Visitors can now appreciate the reach of his work in Switzerland and around the world on a globe. A lavishly illustrated introductory film traces the biography of an author who was born in Bern and wrote in German but spent more than half of his life in Neuchâtel. A further innovation is a visible storage area in which visitors can open some of the drawers to gain a more in-depth insight and view additional images. The other section is reserved to accommodate parts of the collection under the best conditions for the objects concerned.

Dürrenmatt's 100th birthday was also chosen as the occasion to open up some previously private rooms to the public and use them for events. Dürrenmatt's study in Villa 2 can now be viewed on a guided tour. The items on display include his telescope, on loan from Mario Botta, and the desk at which he drew and wrote. After an absence of 30 years *Die Heilsarmee*, painted by Dürrenmatt's artist friend Varlin, hangs on the wall once again, on long-term loan from the Kunsthaus Zürich to mark the anniversary.

Workshops for schools now take place in Dürrenmatt's painting studio, also in Villa 2. The new educational programme is aimed at all ages and is offered in German, French or both. The swimming pool in the garden has been converted and will now be used as a venue for artistic and musical performances. The City of Neuchâtel has laid out a new, idyllic walking trail leading through the Botanical Garden to the CDN.

Scientific work in 2020 focused on preparations for the three-volume, bilingual publication *Wege und Umwege mit Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Das bildnerische und literarische Werk im Dialog*, to be released by the CDN in association with the publishers Steidl and Diogenes and with the involvement of 16 prominent Dürrenmatt specialists.

A number of exhibitions in close collaboration with the CDN also took place outside its walls in 2020. The Spiez Castle Museum presented *Dürrenmatt als Zeichner und Maler. Ein Bildwerk zwischen Mythos und Wissenschaft* (4.7.–25.10.2020). It was accompanied by a two-day conference concluding with a publication. The anniversary was also celebrated through humour in exhibitions outside Switzerland. The Tomi Ungerer Museum – International Centre for Illustration in Strasbourg staged *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. La satire dessinée* (3.7.–31.10.2020). In Heidelberg, the Kurpfälzisches Museum presented *Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Karikaturen*, unfortunately only for two weeks owing to the pandemic (the planned dates were 18.10.2020–7.2.2021).

As a result of the closures necessitated by renovation work and the pandemic, the number of visitors fell sharply year-on-year: 3106 people attended exhibitions or events at the CDN in 2020 (2019: 12 282).



The visible storage area is an integral part of the permanent exhibition.



Friedrich Dürrenmatt's office and the objects that were important to him



Interactive stations provide information about the pictures on display.

Budget and Expenditures

in millions of CHF	Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Actual 2020	Difference Bud20–Act20	Diff. Act20/ Bud20 in %
Staff expenses	21.9	22.3	22.3	0.0	0.0%
Material expenses	14.6	14.2	13.3	-0.9	-6.3%
Operating expenses	36.5	36.5	35.6	-0.9	-2.5%
Operating income	0.8	0.8	0.7	-0.1	-12.5%
Funding requirement (federal funds)	35.7	35.7	34.9	-0.8	-2.2%
Self-financing level	2%	2%	2%		

Operating expenses declined by CHF 0.9 million compared with 2019 and were the same amount below budget. Staff expenses were in line with the budget, material expenses CHF 0.9 million below it. The decrease in expenses is due to project delays and the corona-related restrictions. Operating income was CHF 0.1 million down on 2019 and the same amount below budget.

Commission (1895–2020)

The *Library Commission* was established in 1895 and met 23 times in its inaugural year. Its first task was to fill the positions in the newly created Swiss National Library, then known as the Landesbibliothek. The *NL Commission* ceased its activities in 2020, and its tasks are now the responsibility of the national library association *Bibliosuisse*. We look back at the Commission's 125-year history.

Stormy Beginnings (1895–1908)

In its initial years, the Commission was concerned with establishing and developing the new National Library. It was superordinate to the Library's management and had operational powers. Once staff had been recruited, attention turned to the location (new premises to replace the Library's provisional home in an apartment in Bern), budget and accounts. There was also the issue of demarcating the Library's collection from that of the Bürgerbibliothek in Lucerne. *Helvetica from 1848* were allocated to the National Library.

A conflict between the Commission and the Library's Director is documented. The argument culminated in surveillance of the "librarian" by the Commission's Chairman, who regularly checked that the Director kept good time and reported any transgressions. Exasperated, the latter resigned in 1908.

Constructive Collaboration, Consolidating the Library (1909–1945)

1909 signalled the start of a long phase of stability, marked by constructive collaboration with the Director's office of the Library. The law of 1911 transferred operational management entirely to the Director, while the institution itself was placed under the direct control of the Department of Home Affairs.

Plans for a new building played a prominent role in the Commission's meetings after 1918. Conferences on the building issue were held in 1919, the construction plans were approved in 1925, the projects submitted were reviewed in 1927, and the plans were approved in 1928. The new building at Hallwylstrasse 15 in Bern was inaugurated in 1931.

Advising the Director's Office, Lobbying the Department (1946–1965)

Once the new building was up and running, these issues initially declined in importance and urgency. The Commission devoted itself primarily to gathering information rather than taking decisions. Soon, the issue of space reared its head once again, and the Commission made repeated and successful approaches to the Department. In 1959 it was able to secure the release of further space for the Library. The Commission continued to conduct interviews with candidates for the position of Director and proposed one to the Federal Council. Other issues included the modernisation of *The Swiss Book*, international collaboration on bibliographies, and the cooperation between the National Library and the Eastern European Library.

Dealing with Space and Staff Shortages, Promoting Automation and Reorganisation (1966–1989)

The meagre budget for acquisitions, and space constraints rapidly emerged as perennial issues of concern. With recruitment on hold and efforts being made to save money, they were far from easy to resolve. A list of non-essential functions was drawn up as a damage limitation exercise, these being the first that the Library would relinquish if need be. At the same time, the Commission negotiated with the Department in an effort to avert the worst, with the result that a review of the Library's tasks was ordered. This report, and the subsequent analysis by a parliamentary working group, laid

Twelve Chairmen,
three Chairwomen:

1895 1918
Johann Heinrich Graf

1918 1937
Hermann Escher

1938 1940
Eduard Fischer

1940 1950
Karl Schwarber

1950 1953
Felix Burckhardt

1954 1961
Auguste Bouvier

1962 1962
Leo Altermatt

1962 1967
François Esseiva

1967 1976
Heinz Helbling

1977 1982
Fridolin Stucki

1983 1989
Mousse Boulanger

1990 1998
Egon Wilhelm

1999 2007
Rosemarie Simmen

2008 2015
Christiane Langenberger

2016 2020
Peter Bieri

Swiss National Library Commission

As of 31 December 2020

Chair:

Peter Bieri

Former member of the Council of States, chair of the public transport information service LITRA

Diego Hättenschwiler

Wikipedian and scientific librarian

Christian Koller

Director of the Swiss Social Archives, Titular Professor of Modern History at the University of Zurich

Isabelle Kratz

Former Director of the ETHL library

Eliane Kurmann

Research assistant at infoclio.ch, doctoral student in the History Department of the University of Zurich

Jacques Scherrer

Former General Secretary of the Association Suisse des Diffuseurs, Editeurs et Libraires ASDEL

Gabi Schneider

Head of the "Academic information: access, processing and storage" programme project

Marie-Jeanne Urech

Writer

Stefano Vassere

Director of the cantonal libraries and the Sistema bibliotecario ticinese

the foundations for the reorganisation and automation of the Library beginning in the 1990s. The Commission encouraged this process and paved the way for it.

It also dealt with topics such as the modernisation of user services, the Library's role as coordinator of the Swiss library system, automation, collaboration with the Schweizerische Volksbibliothek, and national specialist bibliographies.

Reorganisation and Automation, "Memory Policy" (1990–2005)

With the appointment of a new Director, changes were also made to the composition of the Commission. It supported the Director's office in the process of reorganisation and automation, based on various expert reports⁴ and the new legislation passed in 1992. Library policy, fundamental technical problems, management principles and advising the Director's office were all on the Commission's agenda.

Beginning in 1997, the nine members met in plenary session and took part in working groups.⁵ The Commission's aims were to secure information access, push ahead with the standardisation of library systems, and coordinate training. It consciously positioned itself as a player in the information society.

An expert report commissioned in 2000, however, offered a more sober assessment of the Commission's impact, stating that it had failed to define its mandate clearly and had not fulfilled its coordination remit.⁶

Efforts to expand the Commission's remit to include acting as a regulatory authority for the planned national memory policy also came to nothing, as the Department restricted the policy to the federal institutions.

Nationally Coordinated Library Policy, Disillusionment (2005–2020)

In 2008, the Commission embarked on a dialogue with the library community, the Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) and committees of the federal government. The charter drawn up as part of this process reflected the libraries' desire to position themselves jointly in the information society. A group of experts appointed by the EDK in 2011 to examine the specifics of a nationally coordinated library policy existed only for a short time, so widely did opinions diverge on which direction it should pursue. This was followed in 2013 by a proposal submitted to the EDK for the Commission to implement the nationally coordinated library policy, which identified three priority action areas⁷. In 2014 it followed this up with an outline proposal for a *memory institutions portal*. Neither of these proposals was taken up.

In 2017 the Commission took part in the dialogue at the first *Digital Switzerland Conference*. Faced with the obvious inefficacy of its own actions, however, disillusionment set in. It was thought that the Commission was insufficiently known, too heterogeneous in its composition, and too closely involved with the Administration. The idea of affiliating to a library association was raised, initially in the form of a question. During the periodic impact assessment in 2018, the decision was taken to disband the NL Commission and transfer its tasks to an external body. The Commission's members made their last substantive contribution in 2018 to the workshop on the role of the NL in the digital world, in which they formulated their ideas and expectations. The final meetings were devoted to preparations for the handover (2019) or were cancelled because of the pandemic (2020).

⁴ Reports of the Sub-Commission of the Library Commission (1988), Working Group of National Councillor Mühlemann (1989) and Federal Commission for Scientific Information (1988).

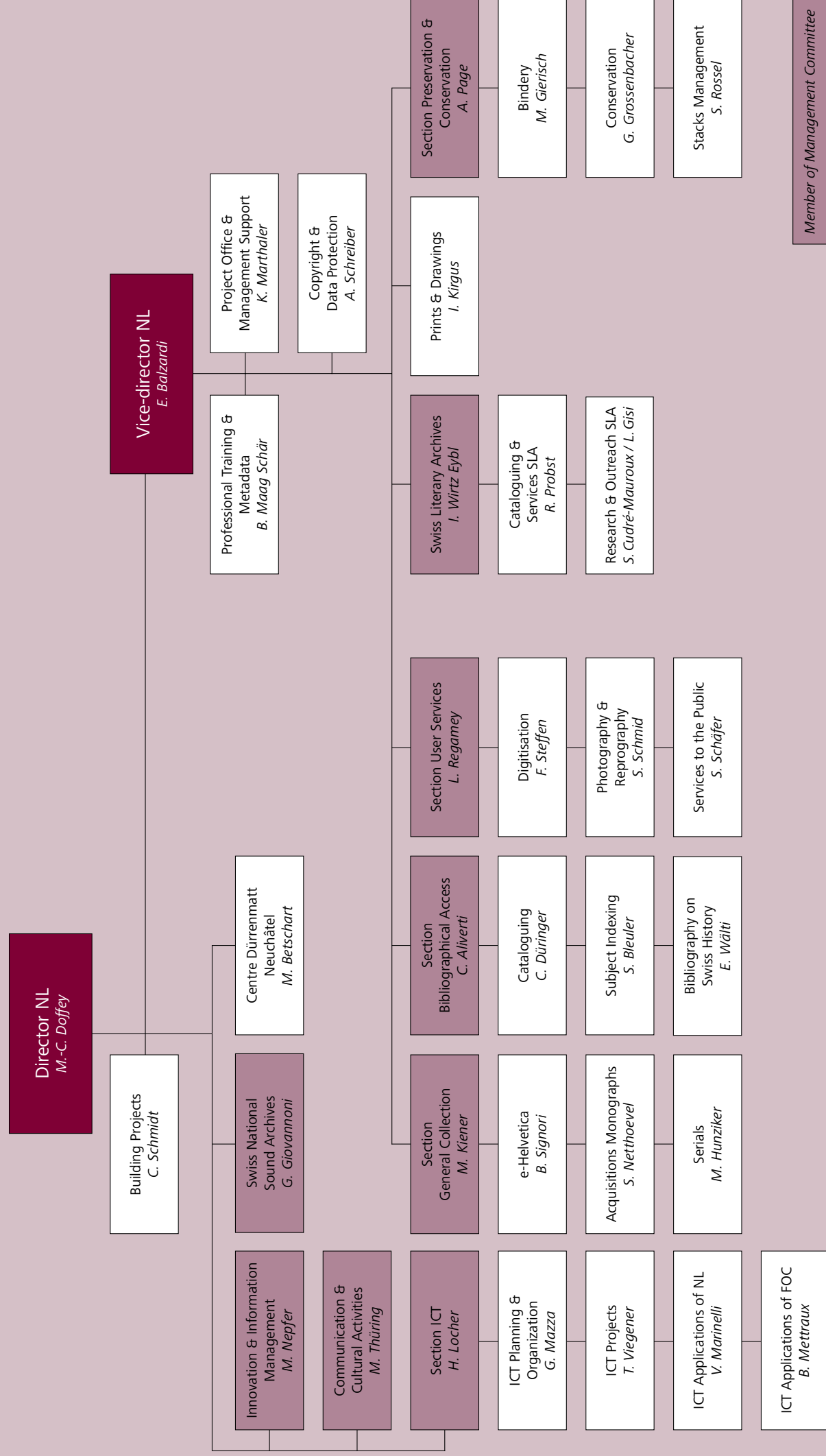
⁵ "Policy and Operations of the National Library", "Swiss Literary Archives", and "National and International Coordination".

⁶ P. Knoepfel: expert report on the mandate of the Commission of the Swiss National Library, 2001, p. 2ff.

⁷ Long-term archiving + accessibility of cultural heritage, equality of opportunity in access to electronic resources and standardisation of library management systems.

Swiss National Library (NL) Organisation Chart

As of 31 December 2020



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Anniversary exhibition
Sharing. On Libraries and Beyond





A Shared Meal:
event marking the NL's anniversary

