

IRAQ

UNESCO Contract 26 00 00 526A

Assessment of Iraqi cultural heritage Libraries and archives

June 27-July 6, 2003

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) General recommendations

1. Architectural reconstruction

Reconstructions have from now on to be contemplated. The file is enormous but it may be an opportunity to reconsider the architectural programmes of libraries in order to make them more functional regarding contemporary necessities.

Therefore, existing buildings which were not meant to receive activities with particular constraints or may have been recently weakened must not be reused.

However, owing to the time needed to build up projects (dealing with the location, the architectural programmes, the signing of contracts and the building itself), it is strongly advised to find as soon as possible temporary buildings likely to receive the collections that have been scattered into unsuitable buildings in order to treat them (cleaning, inventories), and receive the personnels who have to be motivated again and go back to work.

2. Reconstruction of collections

It means a reconstruction rather than a mere reconstitution that would only involve the replacing piece by piece of the destroyed books. Because of over a decade of considerable budgetary restrictions and the embargo that blindly reduced the opportunities of acquisition, Iraqi libraries are doubly wrecked.

As to patrimonial collections (National Library and National Archives) their reconstitution through the reproduction of destroyed documents will imply an international co-operation with a lot of countries, mainly the countries that had historical links with Iraq.

3. "Requalification" of personnels

The reconstruction of libraries implies a necessary requalification of professionals through the setting of a temporary system of training until it is possible to create a basic teaching with diplomas for book, documentation or archive workers and to restructure careers.

All the fields of librarianship and records management have to be taken into account through professional training

- locally thanks to local and regional professionals,
- abroad for the training of trainers.

The following fields have to be privileged : preventive conservation, cataloguing, bibliographic research, computerisation, new technologies of information, public libraries including libraries for children too.

4. Administrative and legislative reorganisation.

It is most important that such services and their personnels should be part of an administrative and financial logic so as to insure their efficient working, their investments and the everlastingness of their objectives towards the population of a democratic country.

(b) Specific recommendations

1. Baghdad, Centre for manuscripts

1. As far as the situation is not secured, the return of the collection to Baghdad is not desirable.

2. It is not desirable to foresee the reinstallation of the collection in the previous premises as far as they have not been restored correctly to give acceptable conditions of conservation.

3. It is highly recommended, in the present phase, to prepare a preventive conservation programme (mainly cleaning and boxing).

4. Restoration and digitisation programmes are not only depending on acquisition of equipment but also on coherent objectives and qualification of technicians. This supposes a reflection on patrimony policy with other collections and libraries, and with the national Museum for common equipment and training of technicians.

5. Training and qualification of technicians is an essential problem, the same as before the war.

2. Baghdad, National Library

1. Make the collections secure in the different locations where they are now.

2. In the mosque, improve conditions of storage : install a ventilation system in the room, supplied with a generator, provide appropriate treatments to avoid insects and rodents in the store, provide efficient extinguishers.

3. The installation of the National Library in existing buildings is acceptable for a short period only, to give time to gather the dispersed collections, start cleaning and inventories, to motivate employees and give them sense of responsibilities.

4. Construction of a new building is an absolute emergency measure in a medium term, but it is necessary to already prepare the architectural programme.

5. The work of inventory of collections is very urgent ; it will determine the programme of acquisitions to reconstitute destroyed collections.

6. The professional "requalification" is an important element in the strategy in a short term. We suggest to organise urgently local training in the different fields of librarianship, including conservation (preventive conservation).

7. In any case, it is totally useless to "sanctuarise" the National Library : the most important now is to save what is remaining in the different rooms and try to clean and keep it cautiously for later identification and reuse.

3. Baghdad, National Archives

1. Make the collections secure in the different locations where they are now.

2. In the mosque, improve conditions of storage as indicated for the National Library collections (Recommendation 2).

3. Identify and attribute urgently a safe and secure new building to gather the dispersed collections.

4. It is urgent to start the inventory of the remaining collections to replace lost inventories and catalogues.

5. Start cleaning and boxing of remaining collections in a first phase of preventive conservation programme.

6. Start a programme for reorganisation of Iraqi archives, to collect and save what can be saved in the ministries and administrations, and try to reconstitute lost collections.

7. Engage work to prepare construction of a new building, distinct of the National Library building.

4. Baghdad, Awqaf Library

1. Find a temporary location to gather the remaining collections, for cleaning and inventory.

2. Prepare a programme of work to reconstitute the collections.

3. Prepare an architectural programme to build new building.

4. Prepare a training programme for employees (in conjunction with the National Library training programme).

5. Baghdad, Mustansiriya University Library

1. Restoration of the buildings

2. Acquisition of furniture and equipment.

3. Acquisition of books and periodicals

6. Basra, Central Public Library

1. Find a temporary location to install the Library.

2. Acquisition of furniture and equipment.

3. Acquisition of a new collection.

4. Prepare an architectural programme to build a new Library.

7. Basra, University Central Library

1. Make the building secure.

2. Restore the building.

3. Acquisition of equipment and furniture.

4. Acquisition of new collections.

8. Mosul, University Central Library

1. Secure the building.

2. Complete equipment and furniture.

3. Acquisition of new collections.

9. Mosul, Library of the Museum

1. Acquire books to replace lost titles.

2. Make building secure (together with the Museum).

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Consultant, acting upon the instruction of the Director-General of UNESCO, shall :

- (i) participate in the second experts' mission to Iraq under the UNESCO co-ordination (Mr Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director General for Culture and team leader of the UNESCO mission) in compliance and procedures set out by UNSECOORD ;
- (ii) carry out an assessment of the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad and other cultural institutions in Baghdad in order to identify the urgent need in term of rehabilitation of the mentioned-sites and accordingly, drafting project proposals in his/her field of expertise ;
- (iii) carry out a preliminary assessment of the condition of the archaeological sites and cultural institutions visited in Iraq in order to indicate the urgent needs and the medium-long term action aiming at their rehabilitation and restoration ;
- (iv) prepare a comprehensive report of the mission mentioning what requested in points 2 and 3. The report should be received by UNESCO within a period of one week following the termination of the mission.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE MISSION

The mission was conducted by Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director general for Culture, from June 27 to July 6, 2003. It included 4 archaeologists, 1 architect, 1 conservationist, 1 representative of Interpol and 1 librarian.

It was initially organised in 2 groups (Group A for museum conservation, historic buildings, libraries and archives, and Group B for archaeological sites), but for security reasons, it worked mainly in one group except on Sunday June 29 and on Thursday morning July 3.

The mission started in Baghdad by a meeting with Ambassador Cordone in charge of culture in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), assisted by British experts (from Ministry of culture and from British Museum) and by a US liaison officer. Iraqi authorities were represented all along the mission by Muyad S. Damereji for archaeology and by Wishyar Muhammad for libraries (and early archives).

A last meeting together with a press conference was organised the last day before departure from Baghdad to Amman.

The mission was prepared and conducted in Iraq by UNESCO representatives.

Programme of visits

A formal and ideal programme was established in conjunction with UNESCO representatives in Baghdad and UNESCO in Paris, according to the results of the first mission, the literature and reports by travellers in Iraq since the end of the conflict, and the possibilities opened each day in function of the security measures to be respected by the mission members.

This programme had to be adapted to the daily life conditions. Finally, to assess a coherent vision of libraries and archives in Iraq, and to avoid too great a dispersion of visits of interesting but not really representative libraries and archives, it was decided that mainly libraries and institutions placed under the authority of official administrations (ministries of education, of culture and of religious affairs) should be visited : public libraries, public archives, university libraries, religious libraries. This model is certainly not completely representative of the diversity of Iraqi libraries but it gives the possibility to enhance the major questions about libraries in the actual context and to propose answers.

Baghdad

National Library

National Archives

Iraqi Centre for manuscripts

Awqaf Library

Mustansiriya University Library

Basra

Central Public Library

Central University Library

Islamic Library

Mosul

Public Central Library

Central University Library

Library of the Museum

3. ASSESSMENT OF VISITS

BAGHDAD

3.1. Baghdad, Iraqi Centre for manuscripts

The Centre for manuscripts which has gathered a main part of Iraqi patrimony, is safe : the building is in a good state and has not been looted. During the latest years, the collection has been increased with a great number of small collections coming from different parts of the country ; nowadays it has about 47 000 volumes. During the months before the conflict, the collection was transferred into a safe place in a secret shelter. I was not allowed to visit this site but I think that it is true and I have no reason to refute assertions by Iraqi authorities (the director of the Centre, representatives of the CPA and of the City of Baghdad). Answering the question on the actual conditions of conservation, it was said that everything was correct (humidity, temperature) inside the shelter.

The return and reinstallation of the collection in the previous premises is foreseen when the security is restored in Baghdad.

During the discussion with the director of the Centre and the CPA Counsellor, it was agreed that the collection might still remain in the shelter for a certain time, preventing users and researchers from having access to the manuscripts. This aspect does not seem to be a real preoccupation to Iraqi authorities who think that microfilms (kept in a secret place in Baghdad) will be used for consultation when necessary and for massive digitisation.

The laboratory and restoration unit (situated in a small house close to the Centre), and for which I came for a specific mission in November 1999, have been completely looted : there are only empty rooms left. Binding material and equipment, small pieces of paper and leather, traces of 5 to 6 technicians at work, have disappeared. It looks like a removal. Except for a room used as a depot for trashes in which we found broken objects, bindings and parts of books piled up : it was presented as a result of vandalism.

Globally, my visit to the Centre and to the Restoration unit left me unsatisfied in spite of the certitude that the most important Iraqi patrimony collection was safe.

Recommendations

The Director of the Centre goes on managing the situation with the same authority as before the war. Nothing disturbs him. He has already prepared files and application for new equipment and materials to reconstitute the Centre as it was before the war. Nevertheless, we suggest the following points :

1. As far as the situation is not secured, the return of the collection to Baghdad is not desirable.

2. It is not desirable to foresee the reinstallation of the collection in the previous premises as far as they have not been restored correctly to give acceptable conditions of conservation.

3. It is highly recommended, in the actual phase, to prepare a preventive conservation programme (mainly cleaning and boxing).

4. Restoration and digitisation programmes are not only depending on acquisition of equipment but also on coherent objectives and qualification of technicians. This supposes a reflection on patrimony policy with other collections and libraries, and with the national Museum for common equipment and training of technicians.

5. Training and qualification of technicians is an essential problem, the same as before the war.

3.2. Baghdad, National Library

The National Library has been severely damaged : the building (built in 1977) was burnt and looted twice, on April 14 and one week later. The ground floor with the main reading room has been sacked : catalogue cards pushed down on the floor, starts of fire of open access books in several places. The binding unit no longer exists. The first and visual acknowledgement is that the fire was well organised : books were gathered in some places and burnt with combustive agent so that they entirely burnt together with metallic shelves ; it means that temperatures were high enough to destroy books and the structure of the building itself. The concrete is deeply damaged as indicated in a specific study conducted by a civil engineer in charge of the buildings at the City of Baghdad Council which concludes that the building cannot be restored.

I made two visits of the building to complete my documentation : each time, I was impressed by the vision.

Collections

Before the war, it was already difficult to know precisely the number of volumes, the total fluctuating in function of the method used to describe periodicals (number of titles or number of issues) : 412 000 volumes (World of learning, 2002), 12 millions (director of the Centre for manuscripts). It seems that, due to the potential of linear meters of shelves, the number of volumes ordinarily laying on the floor of the stores, the saturation of the stores and the common carelessness in the library, the figure of 1 200 000 is credible.

Since 1970 (according to a law), the National Library was in charge of the legal deposit of documents printed in Iraq. In 1999, 5 copies of documents printed/edited in Iraq were deposited in the National Library but due to the embargo, only a small number of titles were recorded. No national bibliography was published.

Between the first and the second fire (about one week), a staff containing employees of the Library and volunteers moved a part of the collections to a Shiite mosque in the former Saddam City and into a building of the Board of Tourism. At present, the collections are stored on three different sites :

- About 700 000 volumes (rough estimation ; the number of linear meters is not known) are still in the National Library, in stores situated on the ground floor and on the second floor of the building (mainly small collections and donations). It was not possible to visit the store on the ground floor in spite of my insistent request : for security reasons, the door is strongly closed and may it might be impossible to close it correctly if it were open now. As the building has no guard of the CPA, the director fears looters. Through a window, I looked at the books on their shelves and on the floor : a great number are not properly stored, they seem dusty and covered with soot.

- About 300 000 volumes (i.e. about 300 m³ ?) are stored in a mosque in Tawra, in a room of 12 x 8 x 4 meters, without ventilation, full at about 2 thirds with books piled up from the floor to the ceiling ; the room is giving onto the inner square of the mosque : security versus theft seems correct but the conditions of conservation (temperature, humidity) are horrible. It also seems that rodents are present in the room.

- About 200 000 volumes (?, most of them are said precious) seem to have been stored in a building of the Board of Tourism, in Baghdad, where conditions of conservation are not good. I was not allowed to see this location.

All the inventories are said destroyed by fire or by vandalism. A part of the catalogue cards are still remaining in the drawers (in the main reading room on the ground floor, the catalogues in the technical services and on the first and second floors are destroyed) but an important part of the cards are laying on the floor, with rubble, soot, broken glass, trampled by visitors. I recommend the director to collect these cards together with documents coming probably from National

archives or from the Library which were dispersed in the building, to clean them cautiously and put them in baskets waiting for best times.

When I visited the Library in 1999, I noticed evident carelessness in the management of the Library due to the lack of well-trained people ; I also noticed that the management of the legal deposit was not regularly made, stores were not regularly maintained. The Library gave an impression of worrying sloppiness. Technical services were not maintained ; the photo laboratory was not working (8 cameras were definitely out of work), the binding and restoration unit produced works not good enough for a national library ; not only due to the lack of appropriate materials and equipment but also due to the lack of training. In the store for donations (2nd floor), I found again, quite intact as if they were rooted, my visual statements of 1999 : books on the floor or badly shelved.

Recommendations

The CAP proposed to relocate the National Library (including the National Archives) in two possible existing buildings in Baghdad. This proposal is interesting to give the possibility to gather the dispersed collections in a same place which is also a safe place, where cleaning and first inventories could be started. It was not possible to visit these buildings and I did not receive the promised technical data (surface, architectural organisation of the rooms, ability to receive books, etc.).

1. Make the collections secure in the different locations where they are now.
2. In the mosque, improve conditions of storage : install a ventilation system in the room, supplied with a generator, provide appropriate treatments to avoid insects and rodents in the store, provide efficient extinguishers.
3. The installation of the National Library in existing buildings is acceptable for a short period only, to give time to gather the dispersed collections, start cleaning and inventories, to motivate employees and give them sense of responsibilities.
4. Construction of a new building is an absolute emergency measure in a medium term, but it is necessary to already prepare the architectural programme.
5. The work of inventory of collections is very urgent ; it will determine the programme of acquisitions to reconstitute destroyed collections.
6. The professional "requalification" is an important element in the strategy within a short term. We suggest to organise urgently local training in the different fields of librarianship, including conservation (preventive conservation).
7. In any case, it is totally useless to "sanctuarise" the National Library : the most important now is to save what is remaining in the different rooms and try to clean and keep it cautiously for later identification and reuse.

3.3. Baghdad, National Archives

The National Archives are located in the same building (second floor) as the National Library. The same kind of fire has been used to ravage the service, destroying the collections that were in the room and of which only thick ashes are still visible, furniture and equipment now completely melted down by heat and high temperature.

A part of the collection seems to have been moved, and fortunately saved, in the same locations as the books of the National Library : in the mosque of Revolution City, in big plastic bags, and in a basement of the Board of Tourism in Baghdad. I have seen the bags in the mosque, in very bad conditions, but I was not allowed to see the Board of Tourism.

It is difficult to know precisely which part of the collection has been destroyed and which part is safe. I was not allowed to open bags in the mosque to check the quality of their content, I am obliged to report assertions from Iraqi authorities, mainly the director of the National Library and National Archives ; this information is completed by other sources and other information, some is divergent but some is complementary. I was told that it was mostly archival documents from the Mandate period up to 1958, but without certitudes for the Ottoman period.

Inventories and catalogues available in the reading room and in technical services are said to be destroyed by fire and I was not assured that complete and correct copies were existing in other places.

Recommendations

The National Archives are in a very bad situation, much worse than the National Library : destruction by fire of the site, of the equipment and of a part of the collection ; moreover, I was not really convinced that National Archives and records were a priority in the actual phase of reconstruction. Most of my interlocutors – Iraqi and Occidental – were well aware of the importance of Ottoman archives (compared to early manuscripts) but were less interested in contemporary records and records management.

1. Make the collections secure in the different locations everywhere they are actually.
2. In the mosque, improve conditions of storage as indicated for the National Library collections (Recommendation 2).
3. Identify and attribute urgently a safe and secure new building to gather the dispersed collections.
4. It is urgent to start the inventory of the remaining collections to replace lost inventories and catalogues.
5. Start cleaning and boxing of remaining collections in a first phase of preventive conservation programme.
6. Start a programme for reorganisation of Iraqi archives, to collect and save what can be saved in the ministries and administrations, and try to reconstitute lost collections.
7. Engage work to prepare construction of a new building, distinct from the National Library building.
8. "Requalification" of employees by local training.

Staff

The National Library and the National Archives staff is supposed to be about 119 persons, under the direction of Mr Khamel Djoad Hachour. They receive their salary.

3.4. Baghdad, Awqaf Library

Awqaf Library was totally destroyed by fire, with the same method used in the National Library building, and probably looted. Only outer walls are still standing.

It was not possible to meet people in charge of the Library nor of the Awqaf administration as they do not come regularly on the site.

According to information collected abroad, the situation of the collection is as follow : about 40 % of the manuscripts must have been destroyed (by fire and by looting), as well as 90 % of the printed books.

According to a visual statement, the building cannot be reused.

Recommendations

1. Find a temporary location to gather the remaining collections, for cleaning and inventory.
2. Prepare a programme of work to reconstitute the collections.
3. Prepare an architectural programme to build a new building.
4. Prepare a training programme for employees (in conjunction with the National Library training programme).

3.5. Baghdad, Mustansiriya University Library

The Central Library has not been damaged by fire but by looting : equipment and furniture were stolen (including doors and windows, air conditioning systems, etc.). A part of the collections was stolen but a part was returned later ; only 2 % of the collection must have been looted.

Manuscripts (168) are said looted by the director of the Centre for manuscripts.

This library was not visited during the mission ; information was transmitted by Mr Wishyar Muhammad, counsellor for libraries at the CPA.

Recommendations

1. Restoration of the buildings
2. Acquisition of furniture and equipment.
3. Acquisition of books and periodicals

BASRA

3.6. Basra, Central Public Library

The Central Public Library has been totally destroyed by fire, and probably looted before. Outer walls are still standing but concrete is deeply damaged by high temperatures. The method used is probably the same as in Baghdad : use of a specific fuel to activate fire and completely burn books and shelves. It seems difficult to restore the building.

The library kept 14 manuscripts.

Recommendations

1. Find a temporary location to install the Library.
2. Acquisition of furniture and equipment
3. Acquisition of a new collection
4. Prepare an architectural programme to build a new Library.

3.7. Basra, University Central Library

The building of the University Central Library has been looted and vandalised : doors and windows were broken and smashed, as well as the equipment in the reading rooms and the technical services. Shelves, as well as tables and chairs, have been looted.

The collections were gathered in some places of the library and burnt ; about 75 % of the collections were destroyed but I have no precise figures.

It was not possible to know if the 600 well-known manuscripts were safe or not.

Recommendations

1. Make the building secured.
2. Restore the building
3. Acquisition of equipment and furniture
4. Acquisition of new collections.

3.8. Basra, Islamic Library

This Library, depending on an association founded in 1950, is located in the old city of Basra. It was looted but not destroyed. The collection has been reconstituted by members of the association. It is now composed of about 400 printed books, on the first floor of an old house, with a modest reading room.

Recommendations

No particular help is proposed to this Library. Nevertheless, it is recommended to take into account the needs of religious libraries in Basra according to their specificity.

MOSUL

3.9. Mosul, Central Public Library

As the Library was closed by the time of the visit, only an outside assessment could be made. Apparently, the building presented some degradations (broken glasses, forced doors). But the inside of the Library, seen through the windows, looked in good condition : books seemed intact on shelves, furniture was still in place. Eventual looting had not disturbed the Library.

401 manuscripts are inventoried.

Recommendations

The visit did not give the opportunity to identify important degradations requiring emergency measures ; we recommend a complete checking of close and covert of the building.

3.10. Mosul, University Central Library

The Central University Library, well located on the campus, was vandalised and looted (furniture, equipment and books), but not burnt. The building did not suffer in its structures as in Baghdad and in Basra.

A strong and energetic reaction of religious authorities of the city (appeals in the mosques condemning theft and requiring restitution of stolen books) gave good results. An assessment made by employees should indicate that there are only 30 % of books lost.

This Library is a good example of the good co-operation between scholars and representatives of coalition forces. With help and funds of US forces, looted tables, chairs and furniture, were acquired in a short time ; broken glasses and forced doors were also repaired. The building was rapidly closed and accessible to the students. In other respects, important and tremendous efforts were made by employees to clean the Library. Professors on their own contacted their foreign colleagues to send books to replace lost collection.

Recommendations

1. Secure the building.
2. Complete equipment and furniture.
3. Acquisition of new collections.

3.11. Mosul, Library of the Museum

Located in the basement of the Museum, the Library has been looted by specialists, as the Museum collections : only important reference books (about 10) have been stolen. A start of fire is noticed in the reading room but without consequences for the Library.

Recommendations

1. Acquire books to replace lost titles.
2. Make building secure (together with the Museum).

4. REORGANISING LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

The libraries that have been described are only a sample whose representative value has to be validated as other visits are made in other places. However these examples make it possible to identify the main problems to be dealt with in order to reorganise documentary institutions in Iraq and must not be burdened by the safekeeping of historical patrimony.

Consequently, the Centre for manuscripts won't be taken into account since it needs appropriate measures that will benefit semi-private or private patrimonial libraries in the long run.

We have to distinguish between four types of files :

1. the architectural reconstruction

2. the reconstruction of collections
3. the "requalification" of personnels
4. the administrative and legislative reorganisation.

1. The architectural reconstruction

- The repairing of vandalism damages

A large part of the visited buildings have been destroyed mainly by fires. However an important number of buildings have been damaged by mere vandalism.

Vandalism and ordinary looting of buildings will only have secondary consequences : mending frames (doors and windows), repairing ceilings, ventilation and air conditioning systems, dividing walls, etc. Those works will certainly be very costly but they can be very quickly carried out whenever the structures of the buildings have not been affected. The Central Library of the University of Mosul is a typical example since it was possible to reopen it to the students within a few weeks. A lot remains to be done but the essential repairs have been made (roofs, doors and locks).

- The reconstruction of buildings

A number of libraries have been burnt down and in the first place, the National Library. As established, the fires have been organised with a will to destroy as much as possible. Therefore, it is no longer a matter of replacing window frames, mending ceilings or laying cables : in every case the structure of the building has been damaged and the whole construction has to be reconsidered. It is the case of the National Library (a technical study has been carried out) and the Central Public Library in Basra : the structures have been destroyed to such an extent that there is no possible mending or restoration.

Reconstructions have henceforth to be contemplated. The file is enormous but it may be an opportunity to reconsider the architectural programmes of libraries in order to make them more functional regarding contemporary necessities.

Therefore, existing buildings which were not meant to receive activities with particular constraints or may have been recently weakened must not be reused.

However, owing to the time needed to build up projects (dealing with the location, the architectural programmes, the signing of contracts and the building itself), it is strongly advised to find as soon as possible temporary buildings likely to receive the collections that have been scattered into unsuitable buildings in order to treat them (cleaning, inventories), and receive the personnels who have to be motivated again and go back to work.

2. The reconstruction of collections

It means a reconstruction rather than a mere reconstitution that would only involve the replacing piece by piece of the destroyed books. Because of over a decade of considerable budgetary restrictions and the embargo that blindly reduced the opportunities of acquisition, Iraqi libraries are doubly wrecked.

In most cases, catalogues and inventories have been either utterly destroyed or enough disturbed to be quite unserviceable in their present state ; that is why it is necessary to check remaining inventories and catalogues before verifying saved collections.

When the verification is over or sufficiently in progress, it will be possible to identify the fields in which acquisitions are absolutely necessary to reconstitute and bring the collections back to

standard either by purchases or gifts. The international community, sensitive to the hardships of Iraqi libraries, is likely to make gifts of books ; it will be advisable to see that they correspond to the actual needs expressed by the Iraqi authorities.

As to patrimonial collections (National Library and National Archives) their reconstitution through the reproduction of destroyed documents will imply an international co-operation with a lot of countries, mainly the countries that had historical links with Iraq.

3. The "requalification" of personnels

The economic and political situation of the country had greatly disturbed librarians and archivists. A few years ago, libraries had already lost a large part of their technicians since they were deprived of technical or scientific tasks justifying their presence in the premises. There were only store-keepers left as well as directors (whose titles were often honorific rather than professional); During the mission it was impossible to check the state of personnels but they can't possibly have evolved within the last two years.

So the reconstruction of libraries and archives has to face a major problem of qualification rather than labour. Indeed, if we consider the case of the National Library and National Archives, 119 people are part of the personnel (they could get a salary but they don't come regularly for lack of work to do). Some of these people have been trained but that was a long time ago (the initial training system was deficient and to be renewed in 2001-2002). Therefore, the reconstruction of libraries implies a necessary requalification of professionals through the setting of a temporary system of training until it is possible to create a basic teaching with diplomas for book, documentation or archive workers and to restructure careers.

All the fields of librarianship and records management have to be taken into account through professional training

- locally thanks to local and regional professionals,
- abroad for the training of trainers.

The following fields have to be privileged : preventive conservation, cataloguing, bibliographic research, computerisation, new technologies of information, public libraries including libraries for children.

4. The administrative and legislative reorganisation

It is obviously one of the most important files for the reconstruction of the whole of Iraq. Libraries and archives are not the only ones to be involved but it is absolutely necessary to deal with them as soon as possible and not to under-estimate their importance in the setting back to work of cultural, patrimonial and academic Iraqi institutions. Before the war those institutions were divided between the ministries of culture, education and religious affairs, and they need a deep reorganisation that must not be overlooked because of the mere rebuilding and reopening of premises.

It is most important that such services and their personnels should be part of an administrative and financial logic so as to insure their efficient working, their investments and the everlastingness of their objectives towards the population of a democratic country.

And last but not least the whole system of libraries and archives : the legal deposit of documents produced in Iraq and the law on archives.

5. CONCLUSION

Since the end of April, more and more news has been going on the Internet from library professionals, university members, amateurs and journalists alarmed by the situation in Iraq. Some pieces of news are original, other have been modified through various transfers. Several travellers have made interesting descriptions that progressively give an idea of the situation.

After the initial horror due to strong pictures (the library of the French Cultural Centre in Baghdad, severely looted, the National Library) often investigated by the media, from different points of view, a feeling of incredulity even some questioning is progressively taking place in front of a less spectacular but more surgical reality.

Most certainly, the great collection of manuscripts for which, during several days, even several weeks, we had so many fears, is safe and sound a part of the patrimony of humanity, infinitesimal in quantity but colossal in quality, is undamaged. Every precaution seems to have been taken for that treasure to fall neither into the looters' hands nor the coalition's. And if this patrimony is safe, it's due to Iraq and more particularly to the director of the Centre for manuscripts, whose emblematic personality must not make anybody forget the ambiguity or the sometimes expeditive methods. The major catastrophe didn't take place. Now this patrimony must be preserved in good conditions. And it seems to be the case.

But it must also be admitted that Iraqi libraries have been deeply disturbed, in their premises, in their collections and in their personnels. This statement is less spectacular in the sight of public opinion but it alone bears testimony to a major catastrophe for the country. Reorganising the daily life of libraries and archives, indispensable tools for a return to serenity, organising their net and their respective administrations are considerable tasks a democratic country can't be deprived of.

ANNEXES

Annexe 1

2nd UNESCO Mission To IRAQ

UNESCO team Leader

- 1- **Mounir Bouchenaki**
Assistant Director General for Culture

Group A:

(Museums, Archives and Libraries)

- 1- **Dr. Shigeo Aoki**
Environmental Scientist, Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property (Japan)
- 2- **J.-M. Arnoult**
Inspecteur général des bibliothèques (France)

(Historique Buildings)

- 1- **Arch. Usam Ghaidan**
Architect, UNESCO Focal point for Culture (Holland/Iraq)

Group B :

(Archaeological sites)

- 2- **Prof. I. Thuesen**
Arhaeologist, Director, Carsten Niebuhr Institute for Near Eastern Studies (Denmark)
- 3- **Dr. M. Van Ess**
Archaeologist, Director, mission to Uruk, German Archaeological Institute (Germany)
- 4- **Prof. Roberta Venco**
Archaeologist, Department of Anthropological, Historical and Archaeological sciences, University of Turin (Italy)
- 5- **Prof. Ken Matsumoto**
Kokushikan University, Archaeological expedition on Kish (Japan)
- 6- **Mr. Karl Heinz Kind**
Representative of Interpol (Germany)

Annexe 2

Revised programme of visits (June 26)

Group A

| Date | Location | Overnight | Remarks |
|---------|---|-----------|--|
| 28/6/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Arrival at BghdadMeeting in the afternoon | Baghdad | |
| 29/6/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Archeological MuseumBash A'yan alAbbasiyya (Archives) | Basra | |
| 30/6/03 | Nasiriyya <ul style="list-style-type: none">Maktabat Al-Jamal Al-Din Diwaniyya <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cleric's Private collection Najaf <ul style="list-style-type: none">Maktabat Amir Al-Mu'minin Kerbala'a <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dar Al- Maktabat in Hussain Shrine | Baghdad | |
| 1/7/03 | Libraries and Archives and Inst. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Iraqi MuseumMusical AcademyFolklore Institute Historic Buildings and Religious sites <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sheikh Abdul Kader Al-Gailani MosqueTomb of Sheikh Omar Al-Sahrawardi | Baghdad | |
| 2/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mousel Museum | Mousel | |
| 3/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dohuk Museum Archives and Libraries <ul style="list-style-type: none">Maktabat KarakoshMadrasat Al- JaliliMaktabat Mahmud Al- Jalili | Mousel | |
| 4/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Erbil* Kirkuk | Baghdad | * Recommendation of Dr. Dony George * Recommendation of Dr. Dony George |
| 5/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting in the morningDeparture to Amman afternoon | | |

Please note that all trips should start not after 7.00 am, and arrivals at the last destination should not be after 5.00- 6.00 pm.

Group B

| Date | Location | Overnight | Remarks |
|-------------|---|------------------|---|
| 28/6/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrival at Bghdad• Meeting in the afternoon | Baghdad | |
| 29/6/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uruk• Ur• Eridu | Basra | 20 Km east of Samawa 300 Km south east Baghdad; 15 Km south Nasiriyah 315 Km south east Baghdad |
| 30/6/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larsa• Isin• Umma and Umm Al- Aqarib | Baghdad | 30 Km east of Samawa, near Uruk |
| 1/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Babylon (sites + 2 museums)• Kish | Baghdad | 90 Km south Baghdad 85 south of Baghdad; 15 Km east of Babylon |
| 2/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell Harmal• Kufa• Al- Ukhaidir | Baghdad | In Baghdad Jadida 120 Km from Baghdad |
| 3/7/03 | Iraqi Museum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nimrud Treasure Exhibition Ashur | Mousel | 112 Km south of Mousel |
| 4/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ninive• Khorsabad / Dur Sharrukin• Nimrud• Hatra | Baghdad | Just across the Tigris from Mousel 20 Km north east Mousel 37 Km south east Mousel 100 Km south west of Mousel |
| 5/7/03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting in the morning• Departure to Amman afternoon | | |

Please note that all trips should start not after 7.00 am, and arrivals at the last destination should not be after 5.00- 6.00 pm.

Annexe 3

Calendar of the mission for libraries and archives

June 27

Paris-Amman

June 28

Amman-Baghdad

Meeting with Ambassador Cordone of the CPA

June 29

Baghdad

National Library

National Archives

Awqaf Library

June 30

Baghdad-Basra

July 1st

Basra

Central Public Library

University Central Library

Basra-Baghdad

July 2

National Library

Mosque

Centre for manuscripts

July 3

Iraqi Archaeological Museum

Baghdad-Arbil

July 4

Arbil-Mosul

Library of the Museum

Central University Library

Mosul-Baghdad

July 5

Meeting with Ambassador Cordone of the CPA

Press conference 1

Baghdad-Amman

Press conference 2

July 6

Amman-Paris

Annexe 4

Documents of interest for the understanding of Iraqi libraries at the present time

Among a number of documents published in the medias and on the Internet, some are important to identify contemporary problems of libraries and archives in Iraq.

The first one is a reference list of libraries (public and private libraries) keeping manuscripts, established by the director of the Centre for manuscripts in Baghdad :

World survey of islamic manuscripts, vol. 2 : Irak, by Usama Nasir al-Naqshabandi. Wimbledon, Al-Furqan Foundation, 1992 ; Supplement, vol. 4 (1994).

The two following reports were published by advanced students who played an interesting role to alert the international community on the state of the libraries in Iraq after the war :

Edouard Méténier, Aperçu sur l'état des bibliothèques et dépôts d'archives irakiens au terme de la guerre d'avril 2003 (mai 2003).

Nabil Al-Tikriti, Iraq Manuscript Collections, archives and libraries. Situation report, 8 June 2003.

Annexe 5

Emergency measures 07/2003

Libraries

| Libraries | Status | Collections | | Evaluation of the present conditions (07/2003) | | Emergency measures | | Comments |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|---|--|--|--|--|----------|
| | | Location | Number of volumes (estimation) | Collections | Buildings Equipments | Collections | Buildings Equipments | |
| Baghdad | | | | | | | | |
| National library | Public | Stored in 3 different places | Total : 1 500 000 ? Losses : 30 % | Globally bad conditions | - Building severely damaged - Equipment destroyed | - Cleaning and preventive conservation programme - Inventory and cataloguing - Complete the collection | - Find a new location to gather the collections with new equipment, furniture and shelves - Prepare an architectural programme for a new building | 1. |
| | | 1. in the actual building (ground floor and first floor) | 700 000 vol. | Bad conditions | | | | 2. |
| | | 2. in Board of Tourism in Baghdad (temporarily) | 200 000 vol. (mainly rare books) | Bad conditions | Not known | | | 3. |
| | | 3. in a mosque in Tawra (temporarily) | 300 000 vol. ? | Bad conditions | Single room without ventilation | | - Install ventilation with generator - Check fire extinguishers | 4. |
| Awqaf Library | Religious | Not known for the remaining part | - 5147 mss - 30 000 printed books | <u>Mss</u> : Losses : 40 % ? Burnt : 700 vol. ? Looted : 1100 vol. ? <u>Printed books</u> : Losses : 90 % ? | - Building destroyed - Equipment destroyed | To be reconstituted | - Find temporary premises - New equipment, furniture and shelves - Prepare an architectural programme for new building | 5. |

| Libraries | Status | Collections | | Evaluation of the present conditions (07/2003) | | Emergency measures | | Comments |
|--|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----------|
| | | Location | Number of volumes (estimation) | Collections | Buildings Equipments | Collections | Building Equipments | |
| Baghdad (continued) | | | | | | | | |
| Centre for manuscripts | Public | Secured shelter (temporarily) | 47 000 vol. | Probably correct | Actual building is safe but not really proper for good conservation and access to readers | Prepare a preventive conservation programme | Prepare an architectural programme for a new building | 6. |
| Restoration unit | Part of the Centre for manuscripts | On the 1 st floor of a small house close to the Centre on Haifa Street | | | - Building safe - Equipment : completely looted | | - Create a temporary unit close to the manuscripts - New equipment and materials | 7. |
| Mustansiriya University Library | Public | | 153 000 vol. | Looted Losses : 2 % | - Building severely damaged - Furniture and equipment looted | | - Restore and secure the building - Library equipment, furniture and shelves | 8. |

| Libraries | Status | Collections | | Evaluation of the present conditions (07/2003) | | Emergency measures | | Comments |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|--|----------|
| | | Location | Number of volumes (estimation) | Collections | Buildings Equipments | Collections | Buildings Equipments | |
| Basra | | | | | | | | |
| Central Public library | Public | Closed stores and public areas | Not known | Burnt Losses : 100 % | - Building destroyed - Equipment destroyed | To be reconstituted | - Find a temporary location with equipment, furniture and shelves - Prepare an architectural programme for new building | 9. |
| University Central Library | Public | Temporarily : in University premises and in a mosque | Not known | Burnt and looted Losses : 75 % | - Building deeply damaged - Equipment and furniture looted | To be reconstituted | - Building to be restored - New equipment, furniture and shelves | 10. |
| Islamic library | Religious | | 400 printed vol. | Reconstituted | | | | 11. |
| Mosul | | | | | | | | |
| Central Public Library | Public | | Not known | No visible damages Losses : ? | Building partly damaged | | Building to be secured | 12. |
| Central University Library | Public | In closed stores and in reading rooms | 1 000 000 vol. | Damaged and looted Losses : 30 % | - Building damaged ; partly restored (glasses and doors) by CPA - Equipment looted ; partly replaced (tables, chairs) by CPA | Complete the collections | - Equipment and furniture for the staff | 13. |
| Museum Library | Public | In the reading room | | Looted Losses : 10 % | Equipment partly damaged (start of fire) | Complete the collection | Building to be secured | 14. |

Comments

NB. All sites have to be guarded as far as possible, by security forces and/or by employees of the concerned institutions who receive their salary, mainly National Library and National Archives buildings (including the mosque in Revolution City and the Board of Tourism), the Centre for manuscripts buildings and Universities buildings.

1. According to a technical study (reported by a civil engineer of the City of Baghdad), the architectural structure of the building is destroyed : the building cannot be restored and has to be pushed down. A new building is necessary.
A new location is proposed by the CPA; but by the time of my visit, it was impossible to collect information (surfaces, structure, etc.) concerning the 2 existing buildings identified for a possible location, and without a minimum of technical data, it is difficult to give an advice.
Nevertheless, and after a rapid and outside visit, it seems to me that none of these 2 locations is a convenient building for a national library. I recommend to consider one of them as a **temporary location**, waiting for a new building specially conceived as a national library.
2. Books are on metallic shelves covered with dust and soot. Many books are on the floor.
3. I was said that about 200 000 books (mainly rare books) are stored in a basement in the Board of Tourism in Baghdad ; I was not allowed to visit this site.
4. The mosque in Revolution City (former Saddam City) is said to keep about 300 000 books rescued from the National Library (probably less but it is not easy to estimate), and a number of plastic bags containing archival documents ; conditions of conservation are very bad (high temperature and humidity, dust, insects and rodents) ; the collections are supposed to stay in the mosque as far as a new location is found and adapted to host the National Library and it will take a lot of time. To improve conditions of conservation, it is proposed **to install urgently a generator and a ventilation system** outside the room (which is about 12 x 8 x 4 meters) together with appropriate protection and treatments to prevent insects and rodents. It will be necessary to check fire extinguishers.
5. The building and a part of the collection (mostly printed books) have been completely burnt. As National library building, the Awqaf library building is not reusable. **A new temporary location is urgently necessary** with equipment, furniture and shelves.
6. The Centre, with its entire collection of manuscripts, moves to a shelter (shelter 12 in Hayy Dakhiliyya, with restricted access). The conditions of conservation are said to be correct by Iraqi (the director of the Centre and the engineer in charge of the buildings in the City of Baghdad). We may consider this assert as credible. Waiting for a proposal programme of work by Iraqi. **Nothing urgent to be proposed in the present phase.**
7. The restoration unit of the Centre for manuscripts has been completely looted. It is urgent to prepare a new unit. **In a first phase, I propose to stress on preventive conservation only** which is the most important and accurate task in the actual context ; the temporary unit has to be close to the

collections. The director of the Centre is already preparing a large and ambitious programme of restoration and digitisation of manuscripts ; but it seems more sensible to take time to organise (in conjunction with the Museum) an up to date laboratory with well-trained people, located in the same building as the centre for manuscripts.

8. The library has been looted but only a small part of the collections were stolen. The building has been damaged (doors and windows smashed, etc.) but not burnt. **It is proposed to replace furniture and equipment urgently.** (Information given by Mr Wishyar Muhammed, counsellor of Ambass. Cordone).

9. The library has been totally looted and burnt. Nothing remaining except walls weakened by fire. It is not possible to restore the building. **While waiting for a new building, it is proposed to find urgently an other location to reorganise the library and acquire collections.**

10. The library has been partly burnt but the building seems strong enough to be restored. The collection has been partly burnt (at 50 % ?) ; furniture and library equipment have been completely looted. **It is very urgent to equip the library** ; in a first phase : shelves for new acquisitions and for the remaining part of the collection, tables and chairs for the reading rooms, technical equipment for the staff.

11. This religious library has been reconstituted by itself. **Nothing urgent to be proposed in the present phase.**

12. Outside visit only. The building is damaged (glasses and doors broken) but it does not seem to have been looted nor burnt. As far as I looked inside through the windows, collections are not disturbed. **Nothing urgent to be proposed in this phase, except the replacement of glasses and doors.**

13. The library equipment was looted as well as part of the collections. Due to energetic calls in the mosques of Mosul, an important part of the books came back to the library ; actually, it is supposed that about 30 % of the collection is missing or destroyed. Furniture and library equipment have been partly replaced by the CPA (tables, chairs, as well as glasses). **In this phase, it is urgent to complete the equipment for the staff.**

14. A limited number of important volumes have been looted ; no damaged were noticed by the curator of the Museum except a start of fire in the reading room. **Nothing urgent to be proposed except a technical assessment of doors and windows of the library** (together with the general assessment of the Museum).

Annexe 6

Emergency measures

07/2003

Archives

| Name of institutions | Status | Collections | | Evaluation of the present conditions (07/2003) | | Emergency measures | | Comments |
|----------------------|--------|--|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|----------|
| | | Location | Number of items (estimation) | Collections | Buildings Equipments | Collections | Buildings Equipments | |
| Baghdad | | | | | | | | |
| National Archives | Public | - A part of the collection stored in a mosque in Revolution City (about 50 (?) bags of documents) - An other part stored in the Board of Tourism. | Not known | Partly destroyed Losses : 70 % ? Bad conditions of conservation | - Building destroyed - Equipment destroyed | - Cleaning the collections ; preventive conservation programme - Inventory | - Install generator with a ventilation system in the storage room at the mosque (see "National Library") - Find appropriate and temporary premises with equipment, furniture and shelves - Prepare architectural programme for a specific building for Iraqi National Archives | 1. |

Comments

NB. All sites have to be guarded as far as possible, by security forces and/or by employees of the concerned institutions who receive their salary, mainly National Library and National Archives buildings (including the mosque in Revolution City, and the Board of Tourism).

1. National Archives were located in the same building as the National Library. The area of archives (second floor) has been probably looted before being totally destroyed by fire. It is difficult to know precisely which collections were stored within the building. What I can report is that a number of plastic bags (about 40-50 ?) are stored in a mosque in Revolution City (former Saddam City) with books of the National Library. I was not allowed to open some bags to check the quality of their content, but I was said that this content was mostly archival documents from the Mandate period up to 1958. I was said also that an important (?) part of the collection is stored in a basement of the Board of Tourism with collections of the National Library.

For the National Library collections stored in the mosque, I proposed to install a ventilation system supplied with a generator, together with a protection versus insects and rodents. This proposal is convenient also for archival materials for the time **to find correct temporary premises with equipment, furniture and shelves.**

As it is of highest importance to organise archives in Iraq at local, regional and national levels (collect of records, management, conservation, accessibility), it is urgent to build a specific building.