

COST Action D42, WG 1: "Preservation"

Workshop on "State of the Art and Progress in the Assessment of Museum and Archive Atmospheres"

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State of art in ASTRA Museum, Sibiu, RO

ASTRA Museum is the largest and the most significant ethnographic museum of Romania and has one of the largest open air collections in Europe. The museum is responsible of over 60.000 artifacts and over 300 ethnographic monuments. The objects are stored partly in 7 different indoor heated locations, partly in two indoor unheated depots, partly exhibited in the monuments of the open air collections and in the central heated exhibition rooms. The only climate control measure in these locations is heating; in two of the storages and in the open air monuments even heating is missing. Microclimate parameters, mainly temperature and relative humidity are measured, sometimes recorded in different ways in these collections. The monitoring situation is not good, but it is probably a very characteristic one for most of the museums in the Eastern European region. Mainly "good, old" and rarely calibrated thermo-hygrographs are used. The values recorded by these devices are usually not the real ones, but the diagrams offer an overview of the T, RH changes in the observed areas. In some areas the climate parameters are measured with less accurate thermo-hygrometers, and recorded manually on a once/ twice a day reading basis. In the last years a few digital thermo-hygrographs (T, RH data loggers equipped with imported sensors, mounted and calibrated in Romania) were acquired by the museum. They have temperature ranges from 0 to 70°C with an accuracy of $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$, non-condensing humidity sensor with ranges from 0 to 100% and an accuracy of $\pm 1\%$, a response time of 20 sec for temperature and 4 sec for RH, a data capacity of 30.000 measuring points, and similar ambient operating conditions as the T, RH ranges. These are more accurate measuring and recording devices. They are rotated in the different storages and exhibitions of the museum in order to have correct recordings for some periods in each location. No measurements for pollutant levels are performed; light levels are measured rarely, on request, with a digital light meter. Slowly, the habit of correlating the measured data with the situation in the storages and exhibiting areas, and taking action in order to improve the microclimate parameters and reduce possible damage in objects due these parameters is developing. So even more, an extended, accurate, permanently observed monitoring system, together with the recommended actions is necessary.

A good start in this direction was made on the occasion of the ICCROM course Preventive Conservation: Reducing risks to collections, held in ASTRA museum in 18 June – 6 July 2007

(http://www.iccrom.org/eng/news_en/2007_en/events_en/07_12courseRisk_sROM_en.shtml). For the five open air locations assigned for the field study of the course a set of sensors were installed and a monitoring was carried out in collaboration with INOE - Institute for Optoelectronics in Bucharest (the group lead by Roxana Radvan). The T, RH monitoring in these five locations did not stopped after the course, but is still going on. The parameters of the used sensors and the measurement network and graphs are in the connected Power-point presentation. INOE, having also ASTRA Museum as partner, applied for a national research project in order to raise funds to continue and extend the monitoring for the next 3 years, and to correlate the results with the situation in the monitored sites in order to improve the present situation storages and exhibitions.

Due to renewal works on the museum buildings more collections were moved in the last two years. Some of them got in better conditions. For the collection of Saxon ethnography new show storage was established that enables not only the proper storage of the objects, but also the limited visit of the stored collection. Other collections were moved in a hurry to provisory locations, without a very precocious planning. These collections, as well as thee ones stored in improper conditions on the Open Air Museum area need a new common storage area, carefully designed for this purpose, which can meet the PC expectation for heritage collections. I hope the institution will be able to take advantage in this purpose of the different funds available after Romania joined the European Union.

I would use the opportunity to briefly present to the WG another PC event ASTRA Museum organized in 2007, the year when Sibiu was the Cultural Capital of Europe. The international conference "Directions in preventive conservation" was held in 25-29.09.2007

(<http://www.cepcor.ro/util/util.htm>). It gathered about 120 participants, mainly form Romania, but also from 12 other European countries. They had the opportunity to listen to keynote speeches of world known specialists, like Gäel de Guichen, Jonathan Ashley Smith, Jean Tétréault, they benefited of an excellent conference that created the possibility to share experience and build professional contacts. It was the first conference in Romania in this field, the first time when most of the presentations focused on the situation in the collections, on evaluation and improvement measures, on collections and object in transit and other aspects of PC. I hope this is going to be the starting point of a more careful, throughout approach heritage collection in Romania, extended application of preventive conservation measures, taking benefit of the results of recent researches in the field.