

OF. UNDERGROUND LIBRARY STACKS

Since the Berio Library was established within a pre-existing building, it was not possible to design above-ground library stacks. Therefore, the architects had to rely on technology, using compact shelving and a powerful air conditioning system to maintain suitable conditions for book preservation even underground. This was a significant challenge if we consider that the library stacks house over three hundred thousand volumes, which is more than half of the entire collection.

In the library stacks, books are arranged in four different formats, corresponding) to the various heights of their spine, in order to optimize space and ensure preservation. This way, books of the same size support each other. Pamphlets with just a few pages long, instead, are stored in special boxes ensuring they are adequately preserved.

The B-1 floor is the smallest storage area and the most easily accessible. It houses the Local Collection, fiction books, and art books, which are among the most frequently consulted volumes in storage. The B-2 floor is dedicated to periodicals, including collections of newspapers and magazines. The individual issues are bound by year, while the most recent newspapers are stored in bundles ready to be bound or vacuum-sealed. Larger volumes are placed on larger, specially designed shelves and rested horizontally to prevent deformation. On the B-3 floor, compact shelves are installed, which allows for significant space savings. These shelves are manually opened using wheels that resemble the steering wheel of a car. This floor hosts the library's nineteenth-century collection, donations from distinguished citizens of Genoa, and sections of non-fiction books from the "old Berio" in Piazza De Ferrari.