



# I t a l y

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The 2003 Progress Report is essentially concerned with the actions and events of the Italian Presidency of the European Union in the ambit of which digitisation of cultural heritage has played a fundamental role, but also provides an update on the principle national projects and programmes. Unlike the previous report, this one intends to give an overview of programmes and projects in academic fields too; even if it does not cover the numerous sectors of activity but only that of digital libraries, it sheds a new and significant light on national activities.

### Digitisation policies and emerging initiatives

During 2003 a channel of communication with the Comité des Affaires Culturelles of the European Union (CAC) was opened, with the support of the Italian Presidency of the European Council and the MINERVA network. The CAC was informed about all activities and expressed great interest in the results achieved by the National Representatives Group (NRG) and MINERVA. In the ambit of this cooperation, the Italian Representative contributed in diffusing among the NRG the draft of the *Resolution on the collaboration between cultural institutions in the museum sector* (13069/03 CULT 50) and presented the group's contribution with regard to digitisation to the CAC. The digitisation of cultural heritage and the strategies for its access and exploitation have been at the centre of some events organised in the framework of the Italian Presidency of the European Union, level for which the MINERVA/NRG network has acted as a platform for promoting initiatives and guaranteeing the exchange of experiences that is necessary for their complete success:

Florence, 16-17 October: *The future of Digital Memory and Cultural Heritage* conference organised by the Direzione generale per i beni librari e gli istituti culturali (Directorate general for libraries and cultural institutions)

[http://www.iss.fi.it/memorie\\_digitali](http://www.iss.fi.it/memorie_digitali)

Naples, 23-24 October: *Territorial information systems for the conservation, preservation and management of cultural heritage*, event organised by the Direzione generale per i beni archeologici (Directorate general for archaeological heritage)

[http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/documents/napoli\\_conclusioni\\_031024.pdf](http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/documents/napoli_conclusioni_031024.pdf)

Rome, 29 October: workshop *Digitisation: what to do and how to do it* (in cooperation with AIB)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/bibliocom03/bibliocomprogramme.htm>

Rome, 30 October: meeting of European cultural networks in the ambit of technologies applied to the cultural heritage

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/documents/culturalnet3010.pdf>

Parma, 19 November: formal meeting of the National Representatives Group

Parma, 20-21 November: international conference *Quality for cultural Web sites*, entirely entrusted to MINERVA from the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBAC) with the support of the Cabinet of the Secretariat General of the Ministry

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/parma/parmaconference.htm>



Leonardo da Vinci, *Annunciazione*  
© Soprintendenza speciale per il polo museale fiorentino

The Parma conference constitutes the culmination of actions carried out by MINERVA/NRG in the ambit of the Italian Presidency. The enormous organisational effort has led to the definition of a programme that saw the participation of Italian and international experts from both the public and private sectors. During the event a programme document of absolute importance called the *Charter of Parma* (<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/charterparma.htm>) was presented. This document has as its objective to *consolidate the position of the group and to obtain political recognition at the highest levels, through the adoption of its own publications and recommendations*, a priority that was expressed in the conclusions of the last formal NRG meeting held in Corfu on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003 under the aegis of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The document illustrates the activities carried out up to now and the various preceding stages that provide the foundations for the actions undertaken.

The central nucleus of the *Charter of Parma* synthesises in ten articles the common European programme that the group has set itself and is committed to achieving with the support of the European Union Member States. Following its approval during the NRG meeting in Parma, the document was presented to the Formal Council of Ministers of Culture which took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November.

On the subject of community policies, it is worthwhile noting that the Italian Presidency (which hosted EBNA 2003 (European Bureau of National Archivists) in Syracuse on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September) has the responsibility for the first analysis and proposals regarding the Council resolution of May 6 2003 on Member States' archives (2003/C 113/02), which takes into account also and especially problems connected

with digital archives, bringing up a theme that characterised the Italian Presidency of 1996.

At a local level the Coordination of the Regions shares the national perspective on digitisation, promoting laws on matters under their competence in agreement with the national vision. The Regions have participated actively in the actions and the workgroups of the MINERVA project. In particular, they have held and organised events of a national character like above-mentioned Florence conference, drawn up with the collaboration of the Tuscany Region, and that of Parma, also supported by the Emilia-Romagna Region. Similarly, they continue to take part in the national digitisation programme of the Biblioteca Digitale Italiana (Italian Digital Library, see over).

The project for a National multilingual Portal of cultural, tourist and productive offerings, an example of inter-ministerial cooperation regarding digitisation and access policies, has had the necessary political backing through the Interdepartmental Committee for the Information Society. The portal has as its objective to promote the awareness and the exploitation of Italian cultural heritage for as many users as possible, and to create a wide range of on-line services and e-commerce for citizens, also supporting cultural tourism. The first nucleus of the portal is the site <http://www.beniculturali.it>, and is available in four languages. The portal project is part of the strategic position of the government which sees cultural tourism as one of the great prospects for economic development of the country. The project aims to integrate, with the substantial political and technical support of the MINERVA/NRG network, the diverse actions already initiated by MIBAC and the National Commission for coordinating digitisation policies - created under the impulse of MINERVA-, and other





actors (especially the Regions and local administrations). MINERVA will offer the European platform of standards, recommendations, guidelines, principles and criteria for the quality of cultural Websites, accessibility, interoperability and multilingualism.

The Regional, Municipal and Provincial Administrations will carry out a fundamental complimentary role based on precise formal agreements and the existing legislation in force.

A specific action will be concentrated on accessibility and will have as its reference point, apart from national and international legislation, the manual for Website quality edited by MINERVA project, and the directives of the Ministero dell'Innovazione (Ministry for Innovation, <http://www.innovazione.gov.it>) that define the use of new technologies in public administration. The most innovative character of this project consists in the integration of resources coming from various sectors for cultural and tourist promotion of the territory.

The Comitato Interministeriale per la Programmazione Economica (CIPE; Inter-Ministerial Committee for Economic Planning) deliberated a co-financing for the 2004-2005 biennial of M €15.2; to which is to be added the M 7 € attributed by the CIPE to the project for the multi-medial Archive of the Mediterranean, which will produce content that can be exploited through the Portal.

MIBAC has, moreover, presented in the ambit of the community programme eTEN, the project MICHAEL (Multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe), which has as its objective to create and experiment on a service to promote access to European cultural heritage before an ever more vast public. The initiative, negotiated with success last November, will begin during 2004 and will last 36 months.

MICHAEL will develop a trans-European inventory of the digital cultural heritage of Italy, France and the United Kingdom which will be made available to the public through Internet, utilising an *open source* platform that will allow extensions to other countries, therefore proposing itself as the point of reference for the sector on a European level.

The project, which integrates with the national initiative of the multi-lingual portal, develops one of the lines of the MINERVA project making avail of the set of metadata for the realisation of a repertory of sources and digital collections regarding all cultural heritage in an ambit of integration of services among archives, libraries, and museums, which had as its starting point the system of the *Catalogue des fonds culturels numérisés* ([http://vernier.gamsau.archi.fr:9000/sdx/FR\\_anum/index.xsp](http://vernier.gamsau.archi.fr:9000/sdx/FR_anum/index.xsp)), used as a platform for the development of a French-Italian prototype ([http://vernier.gamsau.archi.fr:9000/sdx/anum\\_portal/index.xsp](http://vernier.gamsau.archi.fr:9000/sdx/anum_portal/index.xsp)).

In 2003 the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane e per le Informazioni Bibliografiche (ICCU; Central Institute for the Union Catalogue and Bibliographic Information, <http://www.iccu.sbn.it>), as the technical and scientific point of reference for the Direzione Generale per i Beni Librari e gli Istituti Culturali of the Italian Ministry, coordinated the digitisation activities of the historical catalogues and musical heritage begun by the project Biblioteca Digitale Italiana (BDI; Italian Digital Library, <http://www.iccu.sbn.it/bdi.html>). The project achieved the digitisation of 191 *historical catalogues* (by author, by subject, topography, by special sources) present in 35 Italian libraries, for a total of 170,382 pages of catalogue and 6,920,593 cards. A great amount of bibliographic information, much

of which is not yet present in the catalogue of the Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale (SBN; National Library Service), has been made available in Internet, at the address <http://193.206.221.22/code>, in a brief period and at contained costs. The digitisation of musical heritage conserved in the state and municipal libraries, conservatories and historical archives began simultaneously with the digitisation of catalogues. The Italian musical memory is made up of documents that contain hand written and printed scores, opera librettos, treatises of musical theory, audiovisual and sound documents, documents coming from theatrical and historical archives, and in fact forms a documentary source of primary importance in the world (<http://www.iccu.sbn.it/digitmus.htm>). Other sectors in which ICCU is carrying out coordination activities are those related to the digitisation of periodical publications, of photographs and cartographical material, for which special workgroups have been set up. They have elaborated a guiding document for the scanning and memorisation of the metadata. As a reference model for the metadata collection and transfer phases the MAG schema (Metadati Amministrativi Gestionali - *administrative management metadata*) has been indicated, see <http://www.iccu.sbn.it/schemag.htm>, in XML format, Open Archive Information System (OAIS) e METS (Metadata Encoding & Transmission Standard). Moreover, the ICCU is carrying out the project: Biblioteca Digitale Italiana & Network turistico culturale (BDI&NTC) approved in 2003 by the technical secretariat of the Ministerial Committee for Information Society, with financing equal to M € 5.6. The project plans to join together on a single platform catalogues, digital libraries, the Websites of cultural institutions and knowledge management centres.

The Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale - SBN (<http://www.sbn.it/>) has registered new adhesions and reached a total of more than 2,000 state libraries participating in the network.

The Mediateca 2000 project for the Centre-North of Italy (<http://www.mediateca2000.it/>), promoted by MiBAC with other institutional entities, is the continuation of Mediateca 2000, financed in 1998 with national and European funds and concluded in 2003. This initiative planned for the creation of a network of multimedia centres throughout the country paying particular attention to the less favoured zones of southern Italy. 55 multimedia centres, 518 work stations, 32 Websites have been activated; each multimedia centre guarantees an average opening time to the public of 35 hours a week.

There are presently 20 cooperatives actively operating in the multimedia sector.

The new action plan is dedicated to the centre-north zone of Italy and has been financed by the resources deriving from the UMTS licences for a total of € 3,615,198.00 and is intended to sustain projects already underway, to implement them and extend the action also to central and northern Italy. The conclusion of this last phase is planned for the end of 2004.

The ABSIDE project (Apprendere in Biblioteca: la Società dell'Informazione contro la Discriminazione e l'Emarginazione "Learning in libraries: the Information Society against Discrimination and Marginalisation" - <http://www.abside.net>) activated distance learning centres in the main state public libraries (Genoa, Florence, Trieste, Rome, etc.) during 2003, as well as some offices in Piacenza and Naples. Experimentation has begun in prison libraries (Ravenna prison library), while from January 2004 activities will begin in the regional libraries of Abruzzo,





Emilia-Romagna, Toscana, Piemonte, Campania, Veneto, Puglia, Umbria and the municipality of Rome. The final objective is to create a new service available for users, that of providing distance learning courses in subjects related to technologies applied to cultural services, which are to be added to those realised with the previous project CREMISI (<http://www.cremisi.org>). In effect, didactic packages for distance learning have been created in order to provide competences in relation to new technologies and multi-media environments and their specific applications in the field of services for the access to information, knowledge, and cultural heritage.

The SAN project (Sistema Archivistico Nazionale), developed by the Directorate General for Archives, has as its objective to build an information platform for the national archives heritage, both to respond to user needs as well as to optimise the data management of the 144 State archives throughout the country.

This platform, based on the ISAD and ISAAR international standards for archives and on the OAI metadata on an XML base, will pass from an experimental phase to a practical application during 2003 and will be tested at some national archives.

The IMAGO project (digitisation of complete original documents with scientific descriptions and the implementation of a platform for virtual local and on-line consultation) has involved many of the Italian national State archives: Cagliari, Florence, Lucca, Perugia, Rome, Turin, Venice, and Milan. Each of these manages their own part of the project and publishes the IMAGO results on-line, according to their budgets (for example, Turin <http://www.mul.ti.x.it/asto/asp/carte.asp>, Rome <http://www.asrm.archivi.beniculturali.it>, Cagliari [http://www.archivi.odistato.cagliari.it/archivi\\_o\\_mago.html](http://www.archivi.odistato.cagliari.it/archivi_o_mago.html)). The particularity of the

project is the notable technological commitment and the very high image resolution, the quality of which is such as to enable a use not only for reading the content but also for analysing the support.

The Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato italiani - The general guide of Italian State Archives

([http://www.maas.ccr.it/cgi-bin/h3.exe/aguida/index\\_gui\\_da](http://www.maas.ccr.it/cgi-bin/h3.exe/aguida/index_gui_da)) published in four volumes between 1981 and 1994, presents a synthetic but highly scientific description of the documentary patrimony conserved in the State Archives Institutes. The project of digitising the information that the work contains was made up of two phases: the first (1998-2000) involved the digitisation operations of the printed volumes with the adoption of a *mark-up language* (SGML) for the description of the original data model and the subsequent transposition of the computerised data in a system of updating and of *information retrieval* via the Web; a second phase was initiated in 2002, to carry out migration in an innovative XML object databank, managed by a native XML search engine and structured using the EAD standard.

The XML format and EAD coding ensure complete and shared accessibility to the data, and together guarantee its long-term conservation. The Istituto Centrale del Restauro - Central Institute for restoration (ICR) is managing the third and final phase of the European project Labs Tech, the network of scientific and technological research laboratories dealing with cultural heritage activities with the objective of sharing experiences, competences, human resources and materials. The ICR has set up a system sharing databanks that are pertinent to the various institutes, even if they are organised on different platforms. The system, available on Internet at the URL



<http://www.beniculturali.it/abstech3/>;  
<http://www.chm.unipg.it/chimgen/LabS-TECH.html>), enable users to see the identifying data of conventional archives and the databases owned by the European organisations that responded to the original questionnaire, but moreover, it allows each of these to complete the information regarding their archives and databases.

The Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione - Central Institute for the Catalogue and Documentation (ICCD; <http://www.iccd.beniculturali.it/progetti/index.html>) has set up a Service of e-learning on the Informative System of its own General Catalogue (SIGEC). The realisation of the Sistema Informativo del Catalogo Generale, (SIGEC) represents a reference model in terms of the organisation of procedures necessary for the census and cataloguing of cultural heritage. Presently, efforts are being made to enable a further increase in functions for a better use and guarantee of quality of the system's data and to enhance the possibilities of diffusing the system, in particular within the National University System. The same institute has produced the cd-rom Terminus in the ambit of the Italy-USA Memorandum of intent for the restriction regarding the importation of archaeological finds coming from Italy. The cd-rom was made with the objective of providing a tool for the use of the United States Customs department. The CD, prepared for Customs offices, with appropriate variants could be an efficient didactic tool. Finally, again from ICCD, the Sistema Collaborativo Fotografi (Photographers Cooperation System), (<http://www.idtech.it/collaborativo.html>), a system of knowledge management realised by ID Technology for the Fototeca Nazionale (National Photo

Library), completely based on the Web and conceived with the objective of developing, through cooperation among researchers and experts, a databank related to photographers.

The Directorate General for Archaeological Heritage of MiBAC presented its updated site during 2003. The site has been completely renovated in terms of both form and content (<http://www.archeologia.beniculturali.it>). The site contains two on-line magazines and allows the consultation of thematic databanks as well as virtual visits to the main archaeological sites under the jurisdiction of MiBAC.

MiBAC has recently inaugurated Culturalweb (<http://www.culturalweb.it>), a on line magazine about the Italian cultural events, focused in particular on communication and exploitation of the cultural heritage and the tourist spin-off that they provide. The Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale (the army corps responsible for protection of cultural heritage) has as its objective the prevention of crimes against cultural heritage, the prosecution of those crimes as specialised judicial police, and the recovery of heritage items and objects of art. It was created in 1969, or one year before Unesco recommended (art. 5 Unesco Convention of Paris, 14 November 1970) that all Member States equip themselves with a specific service specialised in the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage. The Comando utilizes, to carry out investigations, the databank of stolen heritage items, a large database which is updated daily with the insertion of information regarding items removed in Italy, and of items taken abroad through communications diffused by Interpol.

A direct line allows the Comando to consult the French database of stolen cultural works.

The agreement is reciprocal. There are presently 94,500 memorised events and the description of approximately 2,200,000 objects, with more than 220,000 images, in the databank ([http://www.carabinieri.it/carabinieri/drvisapi.dll?MIval=tpc\\_search](http://www.carabinieri.it/carabinieri/drvisapi.dll?MIval=tpc_search)). Considering the international relevance of this activity, the Web pages one accesses the database from are being translated into English.

The "Comando" was recently asked to participate in Iraq, in two distinct sectors, in missions currently underway that were organised after the war started March 2003. In particular:

- An officer at the Archaeological Museum of Baghdad collected and transmitted for computerisation in the database, the images and descriptions of more than 3,000 sacked archaeological finds from the museum. They have been made available in Internet on the Carabinieri site and have been transmitted to Interpol and Unesco;
- Two soldiers inserted in the ambit of the multinational force used in operation "Antique Babylonia" have carried out targeted services over a wide scope for the census of archaeological sites at risk and the repression of the uncountable illegal excavations begun immediately after the end of hostilities, training the Iraqi personnel responsible for guarding the archaeological areas. In the context of these activities several people responsible for clandestine excavations have been arrested and entrusted to the local authorities while numerous archaeological finds have been sequestered.

NRG/MINERVA activated a workgroup during 2003 that is dealing with the problems connected to IPR, copyright and data protection  
<http://www.minevaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/ipr.htm>. The group works in the

ambit of WP 4 *Interoperability and service provision* of MINERVA and is analysing the results obtained on the subject of the project EMII-DCF, translating the deliverable 2 *Legal requirements report & Licensing agreement templates*.

During the Parma Conference, in the session dedicated to intellectual property rights, copyright and data protection a document with the Italian workgroup's initial results was presented

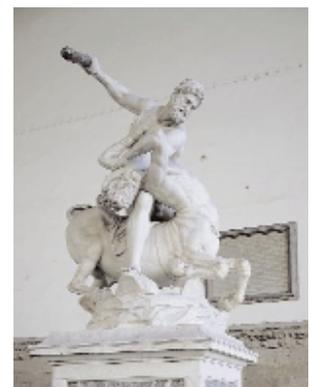
([http://www.minevaeurope.org/events/parma/papers/damiani\\_ppt.ppt](http://www.minevaeurope.org/events/parma/papers/damiani_ppt.ppt)). Along with the document an overview of the situation in the United Kingdom and a study on technological solutions by the Universities of Florence and Patras were given.

Among the experiences at a local level brought to a conclusion during the year, the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio di Bologna

<http://www2.comune.bologna.it/bologna/archigini/> represents a case of the application of new digital technologies to a documentary patrimony mainly characterised by antique library sources and special collections. The exemplary nature of the experience consists in having projected, realised, and made available on its own site, under the item "Digital Library" (<http://badi.gi.t.comune.bologna.it/index.asp>) the result of integration of the potential offered by digitisation with the traditional bibliographic and librarianship activities. There are three sectors of intervention:

- Access to documents increased by making available on the net of the *catalogo storico Frati-Sorbelli* entirely digitised;
- Access to the special collections made up of rare printed sources, indispensable for historical studies, particularly for those concerned with local history, though the availability on the Web of digital

Jean de Boulogne, detto Giambologna,  
*Ercole e il centauro Nesso*  
 scultura del Giambologna collocata sotto la Loggia de' Lanzi a Firenze, 1599  
 Foto: Tatge, George per Alinari, 1991  
 © Archivi Alinari-archivio Alinari, Firenze



reproductions of the public announcements and gazettes of Bologna in the XVII and XVIII centuries, appropriately indexed;

- Valorisation of the iconographic and heraldic patrimony conserved in the Archiginnasio Palace, through the availability on the Web of reproductions in digital format of, frescos, monuments, and coats-of-arms inserted in a database aimed at iconographic and historical-artistic type of search.

#### *Training and education*

During 2003 distance-training modules were formulated in the ambit of the MINERVA network, which, by using existing platforms developed by other projects, will give significant prominence to the results obtained by the network in relation to the Lund Principles. Moreover, experimental specific modules to update MiBAC personnel and for university masters courses have been realised in an experimental mode (see over).

Certainly the most evident weakness of the digitisation projects underway in Italian universities is that the training or re-qualification of personnel is not considered a central problem that needs to be addressed for the success of the projects themselves. In this case it is worth highlighting the internationalisation experience carried out by the University of Northumbria together with the Università di Parma for an on-line masters specifically directed to provide criteria and methods for management in the digital field (<http://www.aldu.suni.pr.it/master/index.htm>). Didactic needs are especially connected to the availability of didactic materials for students. All this material, also generically called *courseware*, is more and more often included in the Websites of professors and departments, and in some cases is organised at an

institutional level (it is worth mentioning the sites of the Università di Roma, [http://littere.uniroma1.it/ELFS/Homepage\\_ELFS.htm](http://littere.uniroma1.it/ELFS/Homepage_ELFS.htm), the Università di Milano regarding publications out of sale, of the Metid of the Politecnico di Milano <http://www.unimi.it/ateneo/filarete/default.htm>, <http://www.metid.polimi.it/>, and from the Università di Bologna <http://amscampus.cib.uni-bo.it/>).

There are numerous digital collections and libraries that provide support for students' in depth study and research, among which we point out: E-Form (<http://www.eform.it>) and ICOLN ([http://www.italicon.it/index\\_biblio.asp?AREA=06&SECTI ON=MNURI SORSE&SECTI ONI D=02](http://www.italicon.it/index_biblio.asp?AREA=06&SECTI ON=MNURI SORSE&SECTI ONI D=02)). The innovative educational experiences are, however, collected from INDIRE in the GOLD project (<http://gold.indire.it/nuovo/>).

The consortia for the acquisitions of digital resources in Italy are three: CILEA (<http://cdl.cilea.it/>), CIBER (Coordinamento interuniversitario banche dati ed editoria in rete –Inter-university coordination of databanks and on line publishing) of CASPUR (<http://www.caspu.r.it>) and INFER -CIPE (Italian National Forum on Electronic Resources, Cooperazione interuniversitaria per i periodici scientifici – Inter-university cooperation for scientific journals, <http://www.infer.it/verbal.html>). They are characterised by a negotiating activity focalised on IPR and have represented the first coordinated and cooperative policy in the field of acquisitions in Italy. In the ambit of cooperation activities among universities the CIBIT consortium distinguishes itself (<http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/>). It brings together 24 Italian universities and has prepared a digital library that contains 253 classics of Italian literature.



Partenone, Acropoli di Atene, 447-438 a.C.  
Foto: Fratelli Alinari, 1920-1930 ca.  
© Archivi Alinari-archivio Alinari, Firenze

Digital Math Library (<http://www.cab.uni.pd.it/progetti/dml.php>), financed in the ambit of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework programme of the European Union, has the ambition to digitise all the scientific literature of interest on the subject. Numerous entities are involved, among which libraries, universities, publishers, projects, and national and international mathematical associations.

Initiatives limited to internal cooperation within individual university institutions for the digitisation of printed works are not lacking. In this case, the most important projects in terms of resources used are those of the Universities of Bologna (<http://www.cib.uni.bo.it/BibliotecaDigitale/dl1/>) and of Padova (<http://biblioteca.cab.uni.pd.it/perl/mhorse?lang=it>), they are projects managed by the universities' libraries systems.

Many Italian research institutions have made an institutional archive available to enable the deposit of scientific publications produced within the institution. They have always used *open source* software. Among the Open archives the ERCIM project (European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics) is worth mentioning for being the first. From the IEI of Pisa, the project gathers a collection of digital documents, searchable in combination with the other archives of the Networked Computer Science Technical Reference Library (NCSTRL) (<http://diest.iei.pi.cnr.it/Diest/UI/2.0/Search?ti=search=&langver=it>).

#### Cooperation developments

During 2003 an intense international collaboration between the MINERVA project and other cultural networks of European relevance started; the project

**BRICKS** for example, financed in the ambit of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, is already planning for a close relationship with MINERVA. Moreover, concrete proposals of synergy are being elaborated concerning networks financed in the ambit of the last *call for proposals* of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and technological Development, namely **CALIMERA, DELOS, EPOCH and PRESTOSPACE**.

With **Erpanet** the exchange of competences occurred in relation to the theme of preservation: in the ambit of the training activities that characterise the project, MINERVA presented within the module *Preservation of Web material* (Corfu 22-24 May) its own aspirations on the theme of Web conservation ([http://www.erpanet.org/www/products/kerkira/Kerkira\\_Programme.pdf](http://www.erpanet.org/www/products/kerkira/Kerkira_Programme.pdf)), while in preparation for the international conference of Florence (see above), a joint workgroup on the theme of the *preservation of digital memory* was set up.

In this optic a **meeting with the representatives of European cultural networks** was organised on October 30 with the objective of evaluating and defining common proposals and building a common European area for the research, management and exploitation of cultural heritage.

The meeting generated the so called *Rome Agenda*, a document in which the actions programmed for the coming months are delineated. The entrance of the candidate countries in the European Union has led the Italian Ministry, as coordinator of the MINERVA network, to put forward a proposal (which has been approved) to open the network to the new members with the addition of Russia and Israel given bilateral collaboration agreements between these countries and the European Union. The initiative, called **MINERVAPIus**, is operative from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February



Jean de Boulogne, detto Giambologna, Gruppo di figure decorative per il Coro della Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore a Firenze; bassorilievo realizzato dal Giambologna e da Baccio Bandinelli, 1508-1560 ca. Foto: Tatge, George per Alinari, 2003  
© Archivi Alinari-archivio Alinari, Firenze



2004 (<http://www.minervaeurope.org/whatis/minervaplus.htm>).

Moreover, the Italian Presidency officially asked the members of the Comité des Affaires Culturelles of candidate countries, through its permanent representative in Brussels, to nominate their own delegates to the NRG. The action was successful; the present National Representatives Group is made up of representatives of the 25 countries of the Union and registers the presence of Russia and Israel as observers. On the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of December MiBAC and MINERVA project representatives participated in the Italy-Israel bilateral seminar on digital access to scientific and cultural patrimony (<http://www.ejewish.info/reka/bi/default.html>) held in Jerusalem. This meeting was promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by the Italian Embassy in Israel, by MiBAC, and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Israel and the eJewish Agency. It was precious occasion of exchanges among the delegations of the two countries on the subject of e-government and digitisation of archival, library, and museum heritage, which contributed to the strengthening of relationships already initiated by national agreements and activities in the ambit of the MINERVA project.

A synergy with **Russian cultural institutions** has been activated through the NRG. Thanks to this cooperation, a group of delegates from all the major Russian libraries came in October 2003 to Italy and had the opportunity to get in touch with Italian colleagues. The national campaign for adhesion to the MINERVA network by cultural institutions and companies that apply new technologies to cultural heritage has been intensified; the new adhesions have been more than 25 (<http://www.minervaeurope.org/en/argument/listcoopagr.htm>).

Universities, research centres, small and medium sized cultural institutions are, therefore, ever more aware of the central role played by the NRG and MINERVA in the field of digitisation. Some of them actively collaborate with the network, like the LUISS University of Roma through the **CERSI** laboratory (Centro di Ricerca sui Sistemi Informativi; <http://cersi.lui.ss.it/>).

The collaboration with **AIB**, l'Associazione Italiana Biblioteche (<http://www.aib.it>), is carried out on the basis of an agreement with MINERVA directed at the capillary diffusion of the project results through libraries spread throughout the country (publications and courses) and the collection of good practices. The **Regions** have made their contribution by regularly updating the information about digitisation activities underway in local libraries and museums in the ambit of the Italian workgroup on benchmarking that operates within MINERVA.

#### Emerging issues

As already mentioned at the beginning of this document, one of the questions that greatly characterises the Italian cultural panorama is the direction promoted by the government that aims to sustain the diffusion of culture and cultural tourism through the creation of a national multilingual portal of cultural, tourist and productive offerings. The need for the national portal to integrate a European vision is also highlighted by the MINERVA in the elaboration of the questionnaire on **National Policy Profile** that every Member State of the Union, through its NRG, must compile; a specific section is in fact dedicated to the acquisition of portals already in existence or in the process of being created.



Such a request was underlined at a political level by article 10 of the Charter of Parma, *Building the future together: at the forefront of the knowledge society*, and will be repeated during the Irish and Dutch Presidencies (2004) that will organise meetings at a European level dedicated to the subject of portals.

During the **International conference of Florence** (see above) the results of the research carried out by promontory entities, the General Directorate for Libraries in the ambit of the MINERVA project and Erpanet through the diffusion, promoted at a European level by the Italian NRG, of the questionnaire elaborated by Erpanet on the long term conservation of digital memory (see cooperation, relations with Erpanet).

The *Firenze Agenda* ([http://www.iccu.sbn.it/PDF/Firenze-agenda-17-Oct\\_I TAL.pdf](http://www.iccu.sbn.it/PDF/Firenze-agenda-17-Oct_I TAL.pdf)) is the result of the work, a short term action plan, (12 -18 months), which individuates concrete and realistic actions in the ambit of digital memory conservation activities carried out by experts from European Union member States. The **Directorate General for Archives** activated during 2003, in the ambit of the portal project ARCHIVI, a policy for the long-term conservation of Web content, together with a strategy of standardisation of metadata for the principle Web pages.

The ICCD, as head of the Italian consortium also including the Centro Città d'Acqua di Venezia with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the **Regional Management Support Unit of the EuropeAid** office of the European Commission (Southern Mediterranean, Middle East Office), of promotion and communication activities and information exchange among the projects initiated by this unit, and among these and interested parties, beneficiary groups and the public at large. ICCD has proposed basing its own activity on the results obtained

by MINERVA: for example, the *Principles for cultural Website quality* have been adopted for the realisation of the EUROMED HERITAGE II – RMSU site (<http://www.euromedheritage.net/>), just as they could be diffused among the programme partners, and so identifying competence centres in the Mediterranean area (<http://www.euromedheritage.net/>). Finally, among the emerging themes of major prominence is the theme linked to the prospects revealed by the semantic Web; in effect, it is MiBAC's intention to begin imposing the organisation of its own contents on this base in order to implement the creation of services for users and the big national projects.

#### Use of NRG/MINERVA results and impact

The first concrete results of MINERVA have been presented on numerous occasions; in particular, the NRG has centred its efforts in supporting and approving project results from public and private entities:

- 8 and 22 September: presentation of the volume *Handbook for quality in public cultural applications* during the Masters in History and multimedia historiography (<http://www.storiamediaele.it>) established by the Roma Tre University; on the 20<sup>th</sup> October a practical exercise on the principles of the manual was held.

- June, updating courses for MiBAC personnel: lessons on the guidelines of the manual, *Handbook for quality in public cultural applications* with practical exercises.
- 9 July: presentation to MiBAC employees of the first version of the manual on quality in public Web applications: criteria, guidelines and recommendations. The Italian workgroup on the quality of cultural Websites (<http://www.minevaeurope.org/structure/worki nggroups/userneeds/>)



*S. Domenico e Storie della sua vita*  
 Museo di Capodimonte, Napoli  
 Foto: Fratelli Alinari, 1940 ca.  
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userneedscomp. htm) will begin in the first months of 2004, together with the translation of the manual *Handbook for quality in public cultural applications*, a training and experimental phase of the criteria contained in it (<http://www.mινωνeruaeuropa.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds/events/semwp5.htm>). The training activity will be mainly directed to those who participate in case studies, to future trainers or peripheral specialists, to companies, to public entities on specific request and in their offices. It is planned to use the e-learning methodology predisposed by the ABSIDE project for the development of didactic modules. Finally a dozen case studies related to the Websites of institutional and private entities have been individuated on which the criteria developed will be tested. The editorial products of MINERVA that have been or will be translated into Italian are to be seen in such a light.

These include: the good practices manual edited by the relative European workgroup (<http://www.mινωνeruaeuropa.org/publications/buonepratiche.htm>), the manual on the quality principles for Websites, the small illustrative volume of the project edited in the ambit of the Italian Presidency of the European Union and presented by the Italian Minister of Culture, the guidelines elaborated in the ambit of the MINERVA working group on interoperability, but also the particularly practical workshops (like that of 30 October at Bibliocom) and training modules for universities and ministerial personnel (see the relative paragraphs). Among the most significant results there is, apart from the launching of the MICHAEL project, the use of the MINERVA guidelines as the base for the afore-mentioned national portal.



Sandro Filippi detto il Botticelli, *Madonna del Magnificat*  
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