

Annual Report 1996 - 1997

Director

Dr. Antonia Ida Fontana

Piazza Cavalleggeri 1

I - 50122 Firenze

phone 39 55 249191 fax 39 55 2342482

Periodicals Collection at Forte di Belvedere

Via San Leonardo 5

I - 50125 Firenze

phone 39 55 2345877

Preservation & Conservation Dpt.

Piazza Sant' Ambrogio 2

I - 50121 Firenze

phone 39 55 245539

E-Mail: gloriac@bncf.firenze.sbn.it

WWW: bncf.firenze.sbn.it

Background

The Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze celebrates this year two-hundred-fifty years from its establishment. In fact, it finds its historical source in the 30.000 volumes of the private library of Antonio Magliabechi, bequeathed in 1714, according to his will, to the city of Florence. To increase the rising Library in 1737 it was decided by decree to attribute the legal deposit for all the publications printed in Florence and since 1743 for all the publications printed in the whole Grand Duchy of Tuscany. In 1747 it was opened for the first time to the public with the name of Magliabechiana. During the following years the Library was enriched by many legacies and gifts and by the acquisition of the collections of the monastic libraries in consequence of the dissolution of the religious corporations. In 1861 the Magliabechiana was unified with the important Biblioteca Palatina (created by Ferdinand III of Lorena and continued by his successor Leopold II): in this way it assumed the name of National Library and in 1885 of National Central Library of Florence (hereafter referred to as BNCF). Since 1870 the BNCF has the legal deposit for all that is printed in Italy.

In the beginning of its history the Library had its seat in rooms belonging to the Uffizi; in 1935 it moved to the present building, edified since 1911 on design of the architect Cesare Bazzani and afterwards enlarged by the architect V. Mazzei. The building, one of the infrequent models of a library building, is a part of the monumental area of Santa Croce. Since 1886 up to 1957 the BNCF published the "Bollettino delle pubblicazioni italiane ricevute per diritto di stampa", turned since 1958 into "Italian national bibliography" (BNI). BNCF is also the pilot center in the foundation National Library System (SBN), whose main aims are the libraries automation and the constitution of a national index of the collections of the Italian libraries.

The flood of 1966 caused heavy damages to the collections of BNCF, in particular to the periodicals collection, to the precious collection of Miscellanea, to the antiquarian Magliabechiana and Palatina collections, and to many other collections, as well as to all card and paper catalogues, to the bibliographical apparatus of the reading rooms and to the fittings. A considerable part of the damaged collections was saved by the properly instituted Restoration Center, but many collections were lost once and for all.

According to the recent the BNCF is assigned to be, as a primary duty, the National Book Archives.

At the present time the BNCF holds about 5.500.000 printed books (without considering the minor publications), more than 115.000 periodicals of which 12.000 in progress, 3.700 incunables, 25.000 manuscripts, 68.000 engravings and about 1.000.000 autographs. The book-shelves of the library stores fill 92 km, with an annual increase of 1 km and 500 meters. The cultural wealth expressed by these numbers makes the BNCF as the most important Italian library, as well as the only one that can give documentation of the entire development of the cultural life of the Nation.

Catalogues

The Library offers

General catalogues: Authors and anonymous works: alphabetically ordered by authors or, if lacking, by title, describes since 1886 all the books printed in Italy that the BNCF holds for legal deposit, all the non Italian monographic books that the BNCF holds for acquisition, gift or change. In some cases it is possible to find a copy of cards relative to books of the antiquarian collections. It is to be considered closed at the end of 1983, when BNCF provided an electronic cataloging, SBN; Subjects catalogue: alphabetically ordered by subject heading it is chronologically divided in two sections: 1925-1957 and 1958-1983. Since 1984 subjects are described in the online database SBN; Periodicals catalogue: it describes all the periodicals that the Library holds since 1874 to 1990. For periodicals published before 1874 it is necessary to look in the Magliabechiano and Palatino Catalogues too. The periodicals catalogue is alphabetically ordered by title, and in the case of an identical title, by place of printing: the card is always referred to the first number that BNCF holds and in general it is not described the consistency of the collection; Dewey catalogue: it concerns the books printed between 1967 and 1983. It is ordered according to an adjustment of the 18° edition of Dewey decimal classification. The catalogue is opened by special guides in order to define the correspondence between different arguments and their relative classification number.

and

Special catalogues: Magliabechiano catalogue: alphabetically ordered by authors describes the books of the original antiquarian collection of the Library (Magliabechiana collection) and the books entered by acquisition up to 1885; Palatino catalogue: alphabetically ordered by authors describes the books of the Lorena's Palatina Library and others important antiquarian collections (Nencini, Passerini, Targioni Tozzetti, Filippini and Miscellanea Capretta). The Palatino and Magliabechiano catalogues form the core of the antiquarian collections of BNCF; Music catalogue: ordered by authors and titles it describes the printed musical editions since the end of XVIII century. For a complete research of musical printed editions of XVI-XIX century it is advisable to check also the Palatino and Magliabechiano Catalogues; Engravings catalogue: it concerns engravings conserved in the different antiquarian collections of the Library. It presents two orders: a) alphabetical by authors (engravers) supported by cross references to artist names, copper engravers, printers and publishers; b) by subjects; Maps catalogue: it presents two orders: a) by place; b) by authors. It is also available an index of places according to nations, and restricted to Italy, according to regions and provinces. Besides, it is possible to consult a short catalogue of geographical atlas with authors and chronological order. All the maps are given in consultation only inside the specialized reading rooms; XVI century editions catalogue: in a single alphabetical order by authors it describes all the XVI century editions conserved in the different antiquarian collections of the Library or originated by modern acquisitions; Doctoral research thesis catalogue: it concerns doctoral research thesis from 1987, and a special series of the National Bibliography is now available.

Reading facilities

Furthermore, the Library has different reading rooms: general Reading room; Periodicals room (free access is given to the the latest three years of about 2000 periodicals, divided by argument. The recent numbers of some periodicals are exposed in showcases. It is possible to ask for xerocopies of these periodicals); Forte Belvedere periodicals collection

(since 1992 BNCF set up a branch section inside Forte Belvedere: for lack of space here were transferred all originals of newspapers with card numbers Ga, Ge, Gi printed until 1984. These originals are given for reading when in the central building do not exist the corresponding microfilms); Specialized Reading rooms (Specialized Reading rooms are devoted to bibliographical information retrieval and to the research of documents held by the Library, using a considerable bibliographical apparatus. These rooms are besides reserved for the reading of the antiquarian collections, the special collections, all restored books and, in general, all books printed before 1886; they hold an important bibliographical apparatus (more than 50.000 volumes) organized by subjects according to a traditional division of knowledge: encyclopedias, biographies, bibliographies, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology, modern literature, italian literature, social sciences, history, fine arts, geography, medicine, mathematical and physical sciences, natural sciences and technology. Furthermore there is a section of collections of texts (italian, greek, latin and ecclesiastical, historical sources) and other sections for dictionaries and local history sources); Manuscript Reading room (Manuscripts, incunables, collections of letters and other special printed collections are described by apposite manuscripted or printed catalogues or topographical inventories at disposal in the Manuscript Reading room); Music Reading room (is dedicated to the study of all musical editions or concerning music held by the BNCF, musical theory texts, scores, etc. and to the information retrieval on musical subjects. Moreover it is possible to have for reading any other book held by the library, with the exception of the materials under Manuscript Reading rooms competence. A piano is at disposal to examine the scores of the library.

The Musical Reading room is endowed with a bibliographical apparatus concerning music and holds the more important musical periodicals of historical interest and the more important new musical periodical headings); Engravings section (is not in general open to the public, but for the user is possible, if requested at the entrance, to meet the librarian to have specialized informations, suggestions and help for research); Minor publications section (since 1870 are defined "minors" not conventional circulation publications, often in shape of booklet, published on occasion of particular events or in the life of associate, commercial or productive activities. Namely regulations, statutes, society institutes or associations budgets; exhibitions programmes, sale catalogues, biographical pamphlets, telephonic directories, turistic guides, postal cards, etc.).

Main services

Services offered to the users are: the Reproductions service: photocopies and microfilms, the Bibliographic informations office, the Loan office

Main changes in the last months (September 1996 - April 1997)

Legislation The new law concerning the legal deposit is still approaching to its final step (covering: different printed materials, photographic items, multimedia, sound- and video-recordings, radio- and tv-broadcasts etc.; involving different subjects obliged to deposit, such as publishers, printers, producers etc.). The new Law ruling all the State's Library is operating. Among its new opportunities, the obligation made to all the libraries to prepare, within one year, an individual, internal regulation.

New building/construction problems The Library is reconverting two of the stacks-towers in the main building, in order to get at the end of the year more 24 kilometers of shelves (facing the next decade increasing of the collections). Furthermore, the new premises in the old monastery of Sant'Ambrogio are now functional and the Department of Preservation and Conservation is installed.

Automation, data processing, retroconversion of already processed data Our on-line catalog, part of SBN (Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale, the union catalog of more than 500 italian libraries) has actually (23.3.97) 650.917 bibliographic records (880.073 titles, 352.821 authors and 79.843 subject headings). At the CD-ROM of the Italian National Bibliography already

published in 1995 and covering the period 1958 - 1994 with 500.000 records in UNIMARC format, the CD-ROM of the BNCF Catalog has been added. Available for the readers are all the local data-bases, more Internet and about fifty CD-ROMs of national bibliographies, libraries catalogs, books-in-print, special and selected bibliographies. A new juke-box, able to store 500 CDs is in use. The wide program of scannerization is on-going and 1.000.000 pages (title-pages and indices) and 2.000 full-textes have been made so far. The cards of Palatino Catalog, which has been the object of Facit project, are now available on Internet.

International Co-operation The National Library of Florence is still involved in the following CEC funded projects: CASA, for the serials available on nets, in co-operation with Greek and Norwegian partners and the University of Bologna. Participation to other three projects, in the frame of the new *Call for proposals* (expired on April 15), is waiting for the evaluation of the European Commission.

The Library is also member of Conference of European National Librarians and of Consortium of European Research Libraries.

April, 16 1997