

Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Roma

Annual report 1997- 1998 to CENL – CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL LIBRARIES

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Collections (dec. 31. 1997)

Printed books.....	5,400,000
Serials.....	550,000
Manuscripts.....	84,000
Incunabula.....	2,000
16 th century books.....	26,000
Prints and engravings.....	8,500
Microfilms.....	175,000
Doctor's degree theses.....	22,000
Audio-visuals.....	10,000

Services to readers (1997)

Readers	550,000
Items consulted.....	750,000
Local lending.....	22,000
Interlibrary lending.....	2,200
Document supply.....	1,900,000

Resources (1997)

Staff.....	403
Budget.....	Lit. 14,500,000,000 (excluding staff expenditure)

THE LIBRARY IN POLITICS

The Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma (BNCR) was founded in 1875, in order to provide the new-born Italian Kingdom with a national archive; books and manuscripts of the ancient Jesuit *Bibliotheca Major* and other monastic libraries formed the first nucleus of collections, enriched year after year by acquisitions and private or institutional gifts.

In compliance with the provisions on the two Italian National Central Libraries (Rome and Florence), the BNCR has the main mission to preserve the National cultural heritage, to develop the own cultural role and to provide a strategic planning for services.

Besides the legal deposit of all Italian publications, the Library holds and acquires the most important collections of foreign books, in order to document the main aspects of culture and the studies about Italy in the world.

The BNCR has also the task to edit the BOMS, *Bollettino delle opere moderne straniere acquisite dalle biblioteche pubbliche statali*, the union catalogue of modern foreign books owned by Italian state libraries and to manage the *Centro nazionale per lo studio del manoscritto*, that collects more than 100,000 microfilmed manuscripts owned by governmental, religious and public libraries.

FINANCE AND FUNDING

Due to a special law issued in 1975, the BNCR can autonomously administer yearly funds, recently increased by extraordinary provisions from Beni Culturali Ministry to manage new technology and quality tools. Other resources come by the proceeds of the 'Ronchey Law' which allows state libraries to sell goods and services.

However, the Library's budgetary settlement in 1997 has required substantial reductions in planned expenditure. These budget cuts have caused a relevant decrease in foreign materials acquisition policy.

THE LIBRARY BUILDING

In 1975 the Biblioteca Nazionale moved from the 16th century palace of Jesuitic Collegio Romano, its first seal, to a new building, situated on the area of the *Castrum Praetorium*, the ancient Roman imperial Guards barracks.

The Library consists of three separated blocks: the readers area, the staff offices, and the book storehouse, covering a wide area of more than 40,000 m².

A radical change in the readers area will be carried out by an architectural project to be completed within the year 2000, to improve and razionalize user reception and services.

The project will involve a new arrangement of gardens too, which could be used for lectures and cultural events.

ACQUISITIONS

Foreign literary works and ancient and rare editions are prevalently purchased.

The most important collections acquired in 1997 were:

- The Gentilini Collection of Gabriele D'Annunzio's manuscripts and autographs, regarding the poet's entire life and artistic activities and consisting of about 30,000 papers and 2,500 documents.
- The Biblioteca Siciliani, the great conductor's private library that collects more than 12,000 volumes and 6,000 music records.
- The Susmel Collection, a most interesting archive containing a vaste documentation on the history of fascism, assembled by the journalist Duilio Susmel.

CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Microfilming is in the Library's priorities: manuscripts owned and new acquisitions are regularly microfilmed.

In the last year the Beni Culturali Ministry funded a programme, that will be completed in 1998, of microfilming collections and purchasing new microfilm reading equipment.

The newspaper microfilming programme is carried on from december 1996 and includes newspaper local reports pages and whole rare newspapers.

A project for monographs and magazines binding, amounting of Lit. 6,450,000,000, will be completed in the next three years.

'Project Pulvis', a special programme of dust removing in manuscripts and rare books has been planned for 1998.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION

The most relevant efforts in IT field were produced in SBN (the Italian Libraries Network) participation and in the development of the LAN inside the library. The principal goals, articulated in a four years plan (1997-2000), are: to increase the electronic catalogue through the retroconversion of card catalogues concerning publications from 1958 to 1990; to grow the local area network increasing nodes tools and service; to develop a new OPAC for information retrieval both on local and national databases; to prepare a web site and an on-line remote access to Library's databases and services.

BNCR databases hold more than 400.000 records on modern current catalogue and about 20.000 records on 16th century editions. This last archive is the most relevant Italian collection in this field.

An other project on tools for users facilities on information and retrieval services was prepared and will be completed in 1998.

SERVICES TO READERS

Admission is free and reserved to users over eighteen.

The Library is planning a new set of technological infrastructures, ranging from automated access, circulation and loan system to a multimedial information desk.

Services include networked access to the Library's catalogue, to the national union catalogue (SBN) and to databases on CD Rom. Upcoming selected access to Internet databases is planned.

The SBN e-mail enables a faster national document delivery and interlibrary loan service.

Charging services: document delivery, interlibrary loan.

EXHIBITIONS

An ongoing program of improvement works limited last year's exhibition schedule to one major show entitled *La carta, il colore, la parola. Libri d'artista fatti a mano/ Paper, Color, Words. Handmade Art Books.*

The BNCR is otherwise known to organize and host a variety of cultural events ranging from exhibitions to international conferences and meetings.

The Library will resume its full schedule of exhibitions by the year 2000 in upgraded quarters such as the new exhibition Gallery and state of the art Conference Hall.

Planned upcoming exhibitions include *Seneca noster*, a celebration of the ancient Latin author's 2000th birth anniversary, and *Rooms of enchantment. Photography and Literature from Lulù Primoli to Woody Allen*, focusing on the complex interrelation between the two art forms. Organized in conjunction with the French Academy in Rome, this exhibition stresses the Library's commitment to international cooperation.

PUBLISHING

Besides BOMS, BNCR edits the *Studi, guide, cataloghi*, a collection of bibliographic studies (started in 1990 and reached eight issues) and the *Quaderni della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma*, a collection of studies, essays and conference proceedings, which, born in 1993, consists of seven issues.

In 1997 it has been edited the 11th *Bollettino bibliografico dei nuovi acquisti*, the annual bulletin of new acquisitions.

The catalogs of the exhibitions held in the Library are edited too.

A latin classic manuscripts's catalog is going to be published.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Library is involved in several European and International projects. In March were completed two projects funded by EU: EQLIPSE, an IT based system to support quality management and performance measurement in libraries and BAMBI, a project for a better access to manuscripts and browsing of images.

BNCR is a partner in the Consortium of European Research Libraries project (CERL) in which has carried out an important role, downloading into RLG database 20.000 records in UNIMARC format, concerning ancient books description and supplying editing function in test activities of database.

In 1997 a connection with OCLC database was activated for trials on some functions and services, such as interlibrary loan and participate cataloguing.