

## TUNISIA NATIONAL LIBRARY ANNUAL CDNL REPORT 2009

### **Enhancement of the library's collections:**

The National Library of Tunisia has enriched its bibliographic materials by receiving a major collection of English publications donated by the Information Resource Center of the USA Embassy in Tunisia. This new collection has effectively increased the library's scientific documentary sources, which are currently being developed to appropriately meet the researchers/readers' requirements. As a matter of fact, since 2005, the National Library has been gearing its acquisition strategy towards the achievement of this goal.

In the course of 2007, the manuscript department promoted the procurement of rare and privately owned manuscripts by encouraging the owners of such precious documents to voluntarily relinquish their families' inherited treasures for the benefit of the National Library. A large manuscript collection estimated at some 600 items belonging to the Naifar Family (one of the most prestigious families in Tunisia who own an outstanding private library) has thus been acquired.

As such, from 2005 – 2009, the bibliographic items of the Tunisian National Library have increased as follows:

- Manuscript collection: 24,232 items
- Periodical collections: 16,500 items
- Book collection: over 1.000.000 items.

### **Digital Library and international partnership**

Since 2005, the National Library of Tunisia has undertaken the digitization of its collections. It has ensured the digitization of some 100,000 pages of the more ancient and rare periodicals. This project aims to preserve these documents as well as provide electronic copies of such documents for researchers. As this task is being carried out in partnership with the National Library of France, some of these documents may be accessed through the web site of the RFBNN (Réseau Francophone des Bibliothèques Nationales Numériques), The French Speaking Network of the Digital National Libraries.

Moreover, the manuscripts department has digitized more than 200,000 sheets (first or last page) in order to promote the conservation strategy of the manuscript collections, facilitate online access and provide the library's readers with an electronic reproduction of these documents.

### **Web Site and Portal**

In 2008, The National Library of Tunisia launched a web site (<http://www.bnt.nat.tn>) with the aim of introducing to the public the history of the Library, its various departments as well as its cultural events. Through its documentary portal, this web site provides researchers with links to major libraries in the world such as the National Library of France (BnF), the British Library and the Library of Congress. It also enables visitors to order documents on line excluding manuscripts. So far, the documentary portal has introduced some 35,000 manuscript notices, 40,000 notices of series and periodicals and 32,500 notices of books.

### **Conservation laboratories**

Since its new headquarters inauguration, the National Library of Tunisia has developed a modern and comprehensive conservation strategy in accordance with international standards. The new laboratory was set up in 2007. Its main mission is to detect problems affecting books, ensure their treatment and provide optimum storage conditions. The laboratory will be equipped with modern and state-of-the art biological conservation systems, i.e., named "anoxia" and "desacidification". The first system is applied to the treatment of manuscripts and books, whilst the second one is intended for ensuring the conservation of periodicals, namely old newspaper and magazines. These documents, commonly affected by ink acidity, are the primary target of the desacidification project.

### **Cultural Events**

Over the last few years, the National Library of Tunisia has launched a series of lectures, exhibitions, symposiums and a wide variety of cultural events organized in cooperation with renowned national and international scientific and cultural institutions. From 2005-2009, the Tunisian National Library has organized 13 symposiums, 21 lectures and 13 exhibitions.

### **Future prospects**

The National Library of Tunisia has been seeking to achieve the aim of upgrading its services and further improving its conservation and restoration techniques in accordance with internationally adopted standards. Moreover, it

has been endeavoring to achieve a global status by vying with the best and more advanced national libraries across the world. It has thus managed to achieve an outstanding performance and cope with many of the problems facing it. It is furthermore planning to pursue cooperative activities with several libraries of international renown in order for it to share and exchange experiences with these global institutions.