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The Rare Book Collection of Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory Will be on the Web: Ancient Science Available to Everyone

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Abstract. This paper describes a project for the preservation, promotion, and creation of a website for the rare book collection of Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory. The project, promoted by INAF—Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory, was supported by the Campania Region through European funds. The final component of the project was the publication of a bibliographical catalog, *Le Cinquecentine dell'Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte*, which was addressed to specialized users, including historians of science and bibliophiles.

1. Introduction

The astronomer Federigo Zuccari established the library of the Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory in 1812. Currently, 38,000 volumes are conserved and about 5% of this heritage consists of ancient books of great historical and scientific value, which are hard to find in Campania and, generally, in the South of Italy.

As a result of the dedicated project "Recupero, valorizzazione, digitalizzazione e immissione in rete dei beni della Biblioteca dell'INAF—Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte" (Restoration, Conservation, Digitization, and Uploading on the Web of the Books of the INAF—Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory Library), the Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory started a program aimed at preserving this collection and making it accessible to an audience of users in 2010. This project, promoted by INAF—Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory, was supported by the Campania Region through European funds (POR Campania FESR 2007/2013) and labeled "Culture as a Resource."

2. Online Cataloging, Restoration, and Digitization

The project focuses on 120 monographic editions and six serials from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, and began by reordering the rare book collection, and checking, with the "book in hand," authors, bibliographical descriptions, classifications, and inventory numbers. The works, published in many volumes and originally located in different sections, were reassembled. Regarding miscellaneous books, new works were identified inside the volumes and inventoried.

The next step was online cataloging using the software SBNWeb. The library obtained the software via Polo NAP of SBN (National Library Service).[1]



Figure 1. OPAC-SBN: an example of cataloguing record.

The restoration of the books and digitization were part of the final steps of the project. The process of digitization was carried out through a planetary scanner, following the standards procedures of BDI (Italian Digital Library). The metadata that was produced were stored into the ICCU (Central Institute for the Union Catalog of the Italian libraries and bibliographic information) digital showcase and now they have been made available on Internet Culturale,[2] the portal of the MiBACT (Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities). The restoration was made according to the instructions of ICRCPAL (Central Institute for the Restoration and Preservation of the Archival and Books Heritage) and Soprintendenza ai Beni Librari and included 85 volumes.

3. Bibliographical Catalog

The final component of the project was the publication of a bibliographical catalog, *Le Cinquecentine dell'Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte*,[3] addressed to spe-

[1] `http://www.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/free.jsp`

[2] `http://www.internetculturale.it/opencms/opencms/it/`

[3] See Olostro Cirella and Caprio (2014).



Figure 2. The digital collection of the INAF—Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte on Internet Culturale.

cialized users (historians of science and bibliophiles) and specifically dedicated to the books of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The 38 editions described in the catalog include one incunabulum and 38 Cinquecentine (one of which is two copies). The incunabulum is the famous Venetian edition of Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de sphaera* printed in 1488, which, between the works of the sixteenth century, the reader can find many rare editions, such as the first two editions of *De Revolutionibus orbium coelestium* by Niccolò Copernico, printed in 1543 and 1566, the *Tabulae astronomicae* by Georg Joachim Rheticus, the *Calendarium Palaestinorum* by Uri Ben Simeon, and the works of the French mathematician François Viète.

The catalog was presented during a workshop on rare books, "L'eredità dei Giganti" (The Legacy of the Giants), which was organized by the Observatory and the Campania section of the AIB (Italian Library Association) on 30 May, 2014. The project, based on the use of new technologies and innovative contents, met its expected purposes, which were aimed at the national and international promotion of local heritage.

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References

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