

CONFERENCES



EVA/MINERVA 2010, Jerusalem The 7th Jerusalem Conference on the Digitisation of Cultural Heritage, Jerusalem (Israel), 15-17 November 2010

For seven years EVA/MINERVA has brought the cultural heritage community together in Jerusalem, and in doing so has traced the MINERVA network throughout its different phases; bringing together like-minded people in the EVA tradition for more than two days of intensive presentations, panels and discussions to discuss the latest trends in the field where culture and technology meet. For the seventh year, the conference illustrated how this professional group had grown from strength to strength over the years. At a time when digital culture is becoming more and more critical to how we work, what we expect from our online networks, and how we learn, EVA/MINER-

VA 2010 showcased the numerous ways in which cultural heritage resources are now opening up exciting new opportunities for social networking, online education and scholarly interaction in the culture sector.

In 2010 the conference welcomed guests to Jerusalem to celebrate concerted efforts towards the growth and success of Europeana and the visualisation of our common culture heritage. We were delighted to be able to hold this, our seventh annual conference, for the second year at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and would like to thank Prof. Gabriel Motzkin, Director of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, for hosting our conference this year. We send our special thanks to Shulamit Laron, Director of Public Events, whose personal support and assistance by her professional staff have made this conference so successful, yet again.

This year we were delighted to host - for the first time at our annual conferences - a special



museum track, supported by the Ministry of Culture Directorate for Culture, Department for Museums and Visual Arts, which highlighted projects from the museum community. We would like to thank Tzach Granit, Chairman of the Culture Administration; Prof. Ruth Ben-Israel, Chair of the Museum Council, Israel; Idit Amichai, Director of the Department of Museums and Visual Arts; and Shlomit Nemlich and Ram Shimoni, who were instrumental in making the museum track possible. We would also like to acknowledge the support of The National Library of Israel, under the leadership of Oren Weinberg, for their enthusiasm in making this conference possible and for their engaging exhibit on the Pashkevalim, the display of public wall posters in Haredi society in the exhibition hall.

A similar track was the two-day series on Judaica Europeana, www.judaica-europeana.eu/ that featured panels devoted to education, technology, and content of Judaica resources. The sessions, which described the two-year project, were of particular interest to the Israeli community when the international spea-

kers covered the many topics that Judaica Europeana is currently dealing with. Michal Henkin, Director of the Haifa City Archives again this year brought together members of the archive community in their own Archive Track. (These sessions were held in Hebrew; otherwise the entire proceedings, events and publications are in English.)

Although we all know how engaging conferences can be, we also know how tiring it can be to sit in sessions for an entire day. This year conference participants were invited to an evening reception hosted by the Israel Museum Computer and Information Systems Department, where the conference came to the Israel Museum to visit the recently renewed galleries. This was the perfect opportunity to enjoy the spectacular collections and beautiful campus. Our thanks go to Doron Eisenhamer, Head of Computer and Information Systems, and all the museum staff who made this possible. Galia Richler-Garber of the National Library of Israel yet again led a walking tour from the conference location to the museum, describing the difference picturesque neigh-



Opening Plenary: Chair, Dott. Rossella Caffo, MINERVA/ATHENA, Prof. Gabriel Motzkin, Director, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, James Snyder, Anne and Jerome Fisher Director, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Dr. Yehoshua Freundlich, the Israel State Archivist and Harry Verwayen, Director Business Development, Europeana

bourhoods of Jerusalem they walked through, just as the sun was setting.

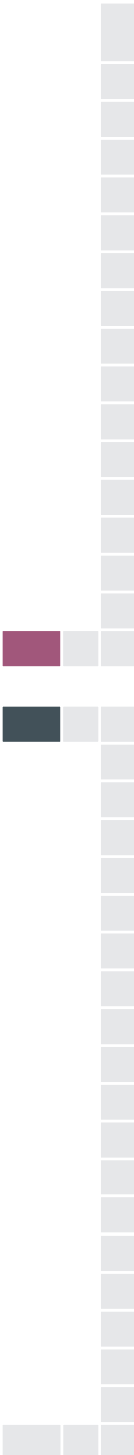
The Jerusalem conference has been held under the auspices of the Minerva Network since 2004 as part of the MINERVA Project. Over the years the Network evolved into MINERVA EC, Ministerial NEtwoRk for Valorising Activities in digitisation, eContentplus. Since 2009, ATHENA has taken the lead in the European cultural heritage community, and the current challenge it faces involves its critical role in supporting museums and other cultural institutions as they harvest their collections into Europeana (Europe's Digital Library and the European Commission's flagship project). At the time the conference was held, the digital library, museum and archive granted access to over 13.5 million digital objects, including film material, photos, paintings, sounds, maps, manuscripts, books, newspapers and archival papers. Both the Israel Museum and the National Library of Israel have made significant contributions to Europeana and the conference set the stage for the unveiling of the Israel Museum's first

collections live in Europeana.

Europeana was represented this year by its Director for Business Development, Harry Verwayen, who was also our Keynote Speaker in the Tuesday morning plenary; and by the project with principal responsibility for its services, Europeana Connect, with the participation of its Director, Max Kaiser. We also held a special Europeana workshop ("Learning from Europeana's Business Plans 2011-2015"), run by Harry Verwayen and focusing on the concepts and tools required for Cultural Institutions to develop their Business Models in the new environment established by the massive use of the Internet and the online environment.

Of special interest to our community, EVA/MINERVA 2010 introduced Israel's Cultural Heritage Comprehensive Plan. On February 21, 2010, the government announced a comprehensive plan to empower heritage infrastructure in Israel. This highly ambitious project, supported by 16 government ministries and 400 million shekels, is set to create two paths: a historical path including





archaeological sites from the biblical Second Temple period and other periods in the history of Israel; and an Israel Experiential path, connecting the main sites and numbers that mark the history of the return of the people of the country. The comprehensive plan included a nation-wide database, which will cover Israel's cultural heritage. To affirm this action the conference showed its support of this critical national goal and for the role that Zvi Hauser, the Secretary of the Government, Prime Minister Office will play in taking the lead in the Action Guidelines for the Recovery and Empowerment of the National Heritage Infrastructures. Clearly, such robust European models as MINERVA and Europeana that are already successfully disseminating cultural resources across information networks have become guiding principles for the Israeli model. The conference also acknowledged its support for Reuven Pinsky of the Prime Minister's Office, who has been elected to implement this drive over the next few years.

Since its inception, the European Commission has given significant political and financial support to the project. Europeana v1.0 is currently putting the organisational, technical and business structures for the operational Europeana service in place. The European Commission has also co-funded a number of European projects that support the different heritage sectors in addressing such issues as metadata standardization, aggregating content, and IPR. The goal is to improve online access to cultural and scientific heritage, and to integrate it for delivery through Europeana. An impressive number of these projects came to Jerusalem for the conference as in previous years to showcase their contributions to Europeana.

Continuing our annual tradition, we welcomed the ATHENA project to the conference. Targeting museums and supporting them in contributing content to Europeana became

a beacon for Israel's own digital agenda. The State of Israel now follows the developing and integrated data standards for museums and can now learn how to integrate similar tools to facilitate data mapping for rich metadata to be uploaded into Europeana. The ATHENA Network continues and extends the best practice-driven scenarios developed by the MINERVA network. Both are coordinated by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage under the eContentPlus Programme (www.athenaeurope.org). We were delighted to welcome back to Jerusalem our long time friends Dr. Rossella Caffo, and Giuliana de Francesco (ICCU, MiBAC), and Pier Giacomo Sola (Amitié) who join us every year under the auspices of the Italy-Israel Agreement for Cooperation in Education and Culture.

One of the stated goals of the conference is that invited guests bring in their know-how and expertise to provide excellent opportunities for local participants to hear about best practice in their specific area of interest. The session Current Trends and Strategies in User Studies, chaired by Pierluigi Feliciati of the University of Macerata (IT), highlighted successes and challenges in user studies by three leaders in the field: Milena Dobrova (Strathclyde University Glasgow UK), who presented *User studies: current methods and challenges*; Prof. Pierluigi Feliciati (University of Macerata IT), presenting *User studies applied: some case studies* and Maria Teresa Natale (Athena), who discussed *Online questionnaires and other stories: Culturaitalia strategies to meet remote users*. Feliciati, Dobrova, and Natale then guided a discussion with the session participants on *user studies for digital culture applications: why, how and when*.

Dr Sarah Kenderdine, Associate Professor at the City University of Hong Kong and Director of Research at the Applied Laboratory of Interactive Visualization and

Embodiment in the Hong Kong Science Park, Special Projects, Museum Victoria, gave a breathtaking presentation on *Cultural Data Sculpting: Immersive Architectures for the Embodiment of Culture and Heritage*. Each and every project she described was unique, and clearly the work of the ALiVE Lab in Hong Kong has already taken on a leadership role in the development of visualization and embodiment in the cultural heritage community.

A second museum-orientated project featured in the Museum Track was STERNA (Semantic Web-based Thematic European Reference Network Application), a Best Practice Network project that supports the objectives of the European Digital Library by pioneering the integration of semantically enriched digital resources in the field of natural science, biodiversity and conservation. We welcomed Andrea Mulrenin, Project Manager of STERNA, and Ivan Teage of the Wildscreen/ARKive to our conference and to Jerusalem. We were also delighted to host many other Europeana projects and welcome their leadership to Jerusalem: Ernesto Harder of HOPE; Lena Stanley-Clamp of the European Association for Jewish Culture (EAJC) in London, who in her role as the Judaica Europeana Director brought together her impressive partners in the two-day Judaica Europeana track; Silvia Boi from ASSETS; Dr. Sonja de Leeuw from EUScreen; Dr. Sorin Herman, who presented the work of both CARARE and STACHEM; Rossella Caffo from DC-Net; and Galia Richler-Garber of the National Library of Israel and the Michael Project. We appreciate all of our participants who have taken on leadership roles, and enjoyed listening to their re-

ports and discussing their projects, experiences, and activities throughout the conference sessions.

The Networking Session this year hosted a select group of professional institutions and groups who presented their work in the exhibition Hall: Imina Aliyeva - Baku Academy of Music named after U. Hajibeyli; Gal Kol, DB Studios, The Hebrew University - Wikiproverbs or Folklore, Exlibris and Artlid.

The combined strengths of EVA/MINERVA Jerusalem bring best practice in advanced technologies to its dedicated community of cultural content holders, managers and publishers in Israel and Europe in order to augment the preservation, access and the reuse of Cultural Heritage through advanced education and training in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The conference also endeavours to stimulate cultural diversity in Europe and to increase the technological, educational, cultural, economic relations between the European Union and Israel. The Jerusalem Conference on Digitisation of Science and Cultural Heritage was first convened in 2004 and forged the Jerusalem Declaration. From this first step the Jerusalem Declaration was later presented to the Knesset Internet Committee, a benchmark moment that continues to guide and inform our activities.

(Jerusalem, October 12, 2004: www.digital-heritage.org.il/jerusalemdeclaration.html)

We were gratified to see the creative and prolific conference unfolding and look forward to hosting our guests again next year in Jerusalem. Please note the dates for the next Jerusalem event Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th November 2011.

Dr. Susan Hazan, Israel Museum, Jerusalem



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