Europeana Regia: a collaborative library of royal manuscripts from Medieval and Renaissance Europe

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The Europeana Regia Project

- Collaboration
- Digitization of a corpus of manuscripts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
- Virtual reconstructions of important royal collections
- Integration in Europeana
- Focus on users
Three historical collections

- Biblioteca Carolina
  (8th and 9th Centuries)

- Library of Charles V of France
  (14th Century)

- Library of the Aragonese Kings of Naples
  (15th-16th Centuries)
425 manuscripts from the most relevant workshops of the Carolingian Empire
Library of Charles V of France

- 167 manuscripts belonging to the king’s library known as Bibliothèque du Louvre
Library of the Aragonese Kings of Naples

- 282 manuscripts created for one of the most impressive humanistic libraries
Europeana Regia partners

- Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)
- Bayerische Staatbibliothek (BSB)
- Biblioteca de la Universitat de València
- Herzog August Bibliothek
- Bibliothèque Royal de Belgique

- French libraries
- Other collaborations

- European Commission
  Information and Communication Technology Policy Support Programme
## Some figures

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Main tasks

1. Digitization
2. Description: dealing with metadata
3. Integration in Europeana and other portals
4. The Europeana Regia website
5. User as the ultimate goal
Concerns for the digitization of ancient manuscripts

- Age and value of documents
- Importance of details
- Most common difficulties
- Fidelity to the original and quality control
- Long term preservation policies
Digitization (2)

- Europeana Regia Recommendations
  - Digitization from the original document only
  - Manuscript digitized in its entirety
  - Full page digitization, one image per page
  - Standardized technical parameters (file format, compression, resolution, colour depth...)
  - Inclusion of metric rulers and colour charts
  - Controlled conditions (lighting, special devices...)
  - No changes to the equipment within the same manuscript
Descriptions: dealing with metadata

- Problems with describing Medieval and Early Modern manuscripts
- Different institutional starting points
- Different metadata schemas used: TEI, EAD, MARC
- Defining two metadata levels for ER descriptions:
  - Core metadata
  - Academic metadata
- Establishing metadata mapping and crosswalks to ESE
- Standardizing terminology and vocabulary
Integration

- Europeana portal
- The European Library (TEL) as the aggregator for ER
- Integration in other websites: Gallica, Manuscripta, Medievalia, Belgica
- Local access to ER content
The Europeana Regia website

http://europeanaregia.eu

January 2010 marked the beginning of the Europeana Regia project, which will digitise 674 rare and precious manuscripts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, with the collaboration of five major libraries located in four countries and the support of the European Commission. The project is expected to run for thirty months (January 2010 to June 2012) and will draw together three collections of royal manuscripts that are currently dispersed and which represent European cultural activity at three distinct periods in history: the Biblioteca Carolina (8th and 9th centuries), the Library of Charles V and Family (14th century) and the Library of the Aragonese Kings of Naples (15th and 16th centuries). These manuscripts will be fully accessible on the websites of the partner libraries and will also be included in Europeana.

Project participants:

Europeana Regia is a project funded by the European Commission under the Information and Communication Technology Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP).
Users as the ultimate goal

- **Target audience**
  - Researchers and academics
  - Secondary school teachers
  - Interested general public

- **Different needs and expectation**
  - For specific research
  - For a general understanding these documents in context

- “Cultivate new ways for users to participate in their cultural heritage” (Europeana Strategic Plan 2011-2015)
Some final considerations

- Added benefits of Europeana Regia
  - To overcome the particularity of each manuscript to present them together in their original cultural context
  - To foster trans-institutional and trans-border cooperation
  - Building a new virtual context: difficulties and challenges
  - To compare procedures and work on an international level
  - To identify the possibilities of new technology
Thank you for your attention

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