



## **DAR AL KUTUB “THE HOUSE OF THE BOOKS” OF BAGHDAD**

### **IRAQ Protection of literary and archivist heritage of the National Library and Archives of Baghdad.**

Since April 2004, the Ngo *Un ponte per..* supports the National Library and Archives of Baghdad (INLA) through the project *La casa dei libri di Baghdad*, which aims at protecting the Iraqi literary and cultural heritage, seriously damaged by the fire and the robberies taken place in April 2003.

In Italy, a public awareness campaign was started in order to increase the awareness about the value of the Iraqi millenary culture, in parallel to the realization of initiatives to help the rebirth of the Baghdad Library: the reconstruction of the catalogue burnt in the fire, the equipment of a reading room, the creation of the first restoration laboratory, the creation and management of the first Library’s website (Arabic and English) and the launch of a digitalization process of texts.

The National Library of Florence is the main technical partner because of the experience acquired in the restoration and digitalization field, after the flood in 1966. Its specialized staff supports the National Library of Baghdad and hosted a course for Iraqi technicians. The National Library of Baghdad’s expert librarians have also been able to extend this knowledge to 111 Iraqi colleagues, during the years.

The participation of UNESCO to the project is a guarantee of quality and high technical standard, and the initiative is developed in collaboration with the British Library of London and the Library of Congress of the US, which are influential partners. Three international workshops (Amman, Erbil, Florence) were realized and some of the most important cultural institutions from the world (Arabic and international) decided to participate. These workshops, focused on technical aspects of the conservation of the literary heritage and consumption of digital data, represented essential place where to exchange good practices and experiences, but also to build new partnerships and collaborations. Thanks to the contribution of the Region of Tuscany, Tavolo Mediterraneo e Medio Oriente, and of the City of Florence, the technical equipment, provided by the National Library and Archives of Baghdad, was purchased. Moreover, the Erbil workshop and the Florence conference were realized, but also other activities that aim at promoting the knowledge of the Iraqi cultural heritage and its link with the Florentine artistic heritage.