

## **PLENUM II. INTERVIEW WITH ANTONELLA AMBROSIO ON “THE ICARUS DIDACTICS WORKGROUP”**

### **The Icarus Didactics workgroup – what’s all about?**

The workgroup intends to promote the use of the new technologies in the teaching of history, diplomatics, palaeography and auxiliary sciences. One of the more prominent technologies in use is MOMCA (with its platform Monasterium.Net), developed under the auspices of Icarus, but there are also platforms for e-learning and social networks.

This promotion materializes in research activities regarding didactics, in academic courses, in papers for conferences, publication and organization of congresses.

The Icarus Didactics group actually is composed of 31 members (teachers and archivists) and 4 tutors from 17 European Countries.

### **How came the Group about?**

It originated from an inspired intuition of Thomas (Aigner) when working on the academic didactic activities within the ENARC project, coordinated by the university of Naples Federico II.

In the following it seemed natural to open the group also to other Icarus members not directly involved in ENARC but interested in the goals of the group and with a passion for teaching. Nowadays the group is open also to interested persons or institutions from outside Icarus, who participate in the activities and often ask to join Icarus afterwards.

### **What are the major achievements of the group?**

The main successes are the academic courses and internships in universities using MOMCA and Monasterium.Net. Several European academic teachers, who joined the Didactics Group, have held this kind of courses in Diplomatics, Palaeography, History since 2009: Georg Vogeler in Munich, Adelheid Krah in Vienna, Antonella Ambrosio in Naples, Dominique Stutzmann in Paris, Tilmann Lohse in Berlin, Ludmila Sulitkova in the Czech Republic.

For example, the students of this year’s masters course in history at the Federico II worked on the charters of a South Italian Benedictine abbey and went first visiting the place of charter productions, the beautiful ruins of the abbey, then in the library to study the originals and last but not least in the computer lab. There they contributed with their work to the enrichment of the data of the digital archive of the abbey in Monasterium.Net. These lessons served to get to know intensely and authentically the medieval documents.

Further courses with MOMCA and other technologies were held this year by prof. Krah in Vienna. The group’s teachers exchange periodically their views and experiences during workshops held so far in Einsiedeln in 2012, in Bratislava and in Dublin in 2013. MomCa and Monasterium serve magnificently for 'Learning by doing' and also to deepen the understanding for the specific problems of documentary sources in digital environments on the web. Besides, they are also more appreciated and more effective than traditional courses.

### **Do you collaborate with other Icarus work groups?**

There is a close collaboration with the Monasterium Technical Development group, coordinated by Georg Vogeler. They often do distant assistance for the academic courses and on the other hand the course frequently generate suggestions which were welcomed by the Technical Group and induced changes in the MOMCA software.

For example last year’s didactic workshop in Madrid was coordinated by A. Ambrosio and G. Vogeler and offered in collaboration with Monasterium Technical Development a sneak preview of the new MOMCA Tools. After a brief presentation of the work of the Cologne developers there was occasion for selected participants to test the new tools and for the technicians to get a first feedback on their use in teaching.

**Is the Didactics Group known outside Icarus?**

Yes, several members held presentations at congresses and published papers (in digital and paper format). For example the members Ambrosio, Falcone and Aiello participated in Ecel 2012, one of the most important congresses on e-learning in Europe .

In 2013 our members represented the group in two sessions dedicated to teaching with new technologies in two important conferences of the sector, in Dublin and in Paris.

A member, Manuel Salamanca, organized in the same year a virtual conference on didactics with new technologies dedicated to Latin American teachers. Antonella Ambrosio held a paper on the didactic activities with MOMCa and Maria do Rosário Morujão from Portugal spoke of *Diplomática, Sigilografia e novas tecnologias*.

**Where can you get more information on the group and how do you join it?**

Contact me or just have a look at our website. There is for example a bibliography of our members which could also serve for researches in the relation of our disciplines and the new technologies in Europe.

**Which are your future plans?**

We would like to encourage teaching activities with students from different countries and in collaboration with different European institutions, distance learning activities as well as learning in presence. The courses held in Naples could serve as a model for summer schools which intend to teach students the work in the archive as well as the work in MOMCA and aim also at making them acquainted with the site of production. They could be organized in a collaboration of archives and universities throughout Europe and could also include archaeologists.

It would be great to realize a major interaction between the Icarus work groups to create teaching activities including other Icarus projects like matricula or cadastral maps.

We also intend to encourage the retrieval of new financial resources. So far, the ENARC project provided funding for the activities, but we should think of the realization of calls dedicated to educational activities within the new European funding programme 2014-2020 (Erasmus mundus, etc.). Our group could dedicate the next workshops to the creation of a task force for this purpose.