

Online Window into the Library



«Avvisi» dalla Vaticana

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

... Beauty is not the fleeting illusion of appearance or ornament; rather, it comes from the root of goodness, truth, and justice which are its synonyms. But we must not forget to think and talk about beauty, because the human heart is not only in need of bread or what guarantees its immediate survival. But the heart also needs culture, it needs that which touches the soul, which brings the human being closer to his profound dignity. For this reason the Church must bear witness to the importance of beauty and culture, and enter into dialogue with the particular thirst for the infinite that defines the human being.

For these reasons as well, today I am pleased to inaugurate the Exhibition Hall of the Vatican Library, and my wish is that its light will shine. It certainly shines through science, but also through beauty. And I thank all those who have worked so hard to create this space, made possible by the generosity of friends and benefactors and by the attention and architectural and scientific care of professionals.

You have wished that the opening exhibition be a reflection on the Encyclical Fratelli tutti. You have formulated it as a dialogue built on works belonging to the Library and on the works of a contemporary artist, whom I greet and thank. I appreciate this challenge to create a dialogue. Life is the art of encounter. Cultures grow ill when they become self-referential, when they lose their curiosity and openness to others. When they exclude rather than integrate. What advantage is there in becoming border guards rather than guardians of our brothers? The question that God repeats to us is this: "Where is your brother?" (cf. Gen 4:9).

Dear friends, the world needs new maps. In this era of change that the pandemic has accelerated, humanity needs new maps to discover the meaning of fraternity, social friendship, and the common good. The logic of closed blocks is sterile and full of misunderstandings. We are in need of a new beauty, which is no longer the usual reflection of the power in the hands of a few, but the courageous mosaic of the diversity of all. May it not be the mirror of a despotic anthropocentrism, but a new canticle of creatures, where an integral ecology is effectively realized.

Since the beginning of my pontificate, I have called the Church to become a "Church which goes forth" (cf. Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 20-24) and protagonist of the culture of encounter. The same is true for the Library. All the better will the Church serve, if in addition to conserving the past, she dares to be a frontier of the present and the future. I know that you are aware of this: our responsibility is to keep the roots alive, the memory, always reaching out towards the flowers and fruits. Let us dream of "new maps" together. I am thinking in particular of the need of going from the analogue to the digital, to achieve an ever more prolific translation of our heritage into new languages. True, it is a historical challenge that we must face wisely and boldly. I count on the Apostolic Library to translate the repository of Christianity and the richness of humanism into the languages of today and tomorrow.

Francis



The Holy Father inaugurated the Kerkorian Exhibition Hall and the exhibition *Tutti, umanità in cammino*



On the afternoon of November 5, Pope Francis went to the Library to inaugurate the Kerkorian Exhibition Hall, which houses the exhibition *Tutti, umanità in cammino* (Everyone, Humanity on the way).

On his arrival, the Holy Father was welcomed by Library authorities, benefactors, the artist Pietro Ruffo, organizers and guests of the Library. Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça, Librarian and Archivist of HRC, welcomed His Holiness on behalf of the Library and of the guests: "Holy Father, it is up to me, on behalf of all, to thank you for visiting this library, your Library, which was born for the service of the ministry of Peter and which has, throughout its five centuries of existence, aimed to accompany the vision of each pontificate in the field of science and culture. We can humbly tell you, Holy Father, that we are trying to keep up with your vision, by grasping and translating the innovative guidelines and prophetic challenges of your teaching into the space of culture, and receiving daily inspiration from your witness. Thank you, Holy Father. Thank you, Holy Father, because your vision obliges us to leave that comfort zone which consists in living only within the boundaries of what is known and repeated, and because your vision pushes us to listen to the risk of the present and the future with intelligence and heart.

We are in an emblematic space of the Apostolic Library, the Barberini Room, which the genius of the artist Pietro Ruffo has temporarily transformed into a forest. This is a plastic and poetic way of reading your encyclical *Laudato si*, which reminds us of the urgency of a new cultural pact between the Human Being and the planet, our common home.

The forest comes to us to tell us that the world needs a new mentality, that new paradigms of development must flourish in societies, based on an ethic of integration and care.

As you affirm in *Laudato si*, despotic anthropocentrism must give way to the awareness of the fundamen-

tal connection that binds us to the destiny of others, thus respecting the mandate of God the Creator.

A library is not a soundproof ivory tower, immune to the dramas, afflictions and hopes of history. Quite to the contrary, its mission is to help listen better, to see with greater depth, to make people understood critically and in a more organized way. Also for this reason, the Apostolic Library will be furnished from now on with an Exhibition Hall that will allow it to combine its vast patrimony with the questions of today and the concerns of tomorrow. At a time of momentous change like the one we are experiencing, libraries and cultural institutions cannot be left out of this endeavor. Indeed, it is their task to promote reflection, disseminate thought, encourage the dialogical and artisanal art of encounter.

We are grateful to the artist Pietro Ruffo who has accepted to dialogue with the Magisterium of your encyclicals, Holy Father, which present our "humanity on the way" with those engines of hope, which are the construction of the common good, of social and ecological justice, and of the edification of fraternity.

A word of profound gratitude to all those directly or indirectly involved in the technical construction of this new space (I have in mind the Technical Services of the Governorate and Architect Pulitani), and to those of our internal staff who made this exhibition possible from an artistic and academic point of view.

A special note directed at our benefactors and friends. In particular, a heartfelt thanks goes to the generosity of the friends of Kirk Kerkorian and the Sanctuary of Culture Foundation, who with this project have found a way to pay him homage and perpetuate his legacy for the future. And thanks to the benefactors of UNIAPAC, the Christian International Union of Business Executives, for their indispensable collaboration in this event.

Holy Father, *Laudato si* and *Fratelli tutti* are pioneer encyclicals. We all feel the responsibility and the call to conversion that they encompass. Consider this Exhibition Hall and this display as an expression of our desire to walk by your side."



Inspirations from the Library

The theme of travel and the migrations of peoples are at the center of the exhibition that was inaugurated by the Pontiff; an exhibition itinerary designed to alternate between “travel cartography and utopian and allegorical maps.” There are fantastic maps, maps of love, war, suffering, social criticism, but also maps of imaginary journeys, with aspects linked to the moral world, all so detailed as to give the circumstantial idea of the different “places,” as if they were real.

Perfect accuracy does not exist for maps on earth, and not only because of political aspects, but also for geological ones. The constellations, on the other hand, have not changed since ancient times, and are represented in the same way, thus remaining precise points of reference for those who travel, for those who want to stay with what is calculable, but also for whoever wishes to read beyond.

The movements of peoples seem unnatural; they are slow, but inexorable, along paths towards something that is hoped to be better, fleeing from conflicts, hunger, oppression, while in the blue sky the birds soar in seasonal migrations, unaware of what happens on the ground, as is seen in many works by Pietro Ruffo.

The *Nile Map* (*Vat. turc.* 73) was the subject of inspiration for the artist, who offers a particular reading of the pathway. On a facsimile reproduction of the document, the artist inserted figures of the oppressed and of oppressors, at different moments in the history that flows along the river and beyond; the gestures and expressions of the many characters express the events of entire populations.

The map is approximately 591 cm long. It was discovered and purchased by Giuseppe Simonio Assemani in Constantinople in 1736.

It is ascribable to the well-known Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi (c. 1611-c. 1685), who is considered its au-

thor, although there is no certainty that he actually made the work.

Another source of inspiration for the artist was the Barberini Hall, which the artist “populated” with sheets of paper filled with plants, arranged on the shelves like many books; together they form a sort of forest from which the material for making books comes. A world reveals itself through the shelves that become windows and make us reflect on the indissoluble connection between us and nature.

The furniture that housed the book collection belonging to the Barberini family arrived to the Library in 1902, together with the manuscripts and printed books of the noble family, when it was purchased by Leo XIII. The codices of the collection were placed in the manuscript deposit and the books in the Bramante wing that houses the printed collections.

Giovanni Battista Soria (1581-1651) built the wooden furniture between 1633 and 1635. It was previously placed in several places in the Library, but in the 1990s it was reassembled and restored and around it the Hall bearing the name of the Barberini family was built, prepared to accommodate an adequate use of the splendid environment. Perhaps it will be this occasion to inspire, in turn, a definitive destination for the historic shelving.



To Laura and Mike

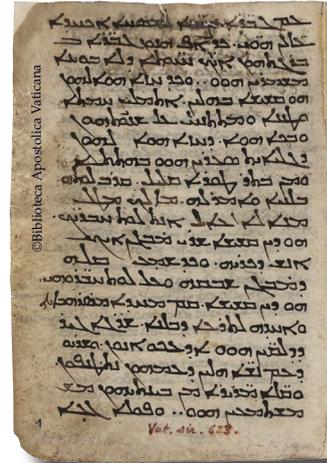
On the occasion of the inauguration of the Kerkorian Room and the exhibition, *Tutti*, with particular pleasure, we had were able to encounter Laura and Michael Hayde once again, to whom we have long been deeply grateful for their great generosity. We extend our sincere sentiments of esteem and affection for the depth and delicacy of their gestures towards us.

Our thanks to Laura and Mike for their presence and their closeness, also in this special moment of encounter and discussion.

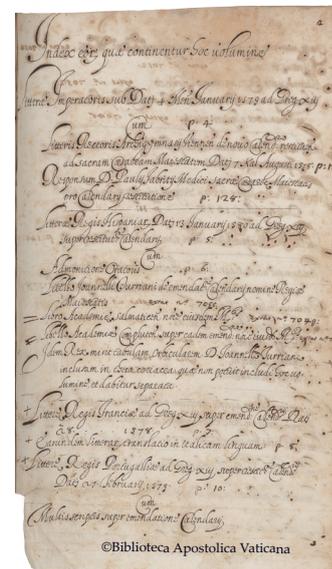
At the Expo of Dubai

Expo 2020 in Dubai opened on October 1, 2021 and can be visited until March 31, 2022. The Vatican Library participates with a presentation in the pavilion reserved for the Holy See, as a gesture of human brotherhood that characterizes its thematic pathway. Since the first universal exhibition of London in 1851, the Holy See has always been present at these important events which highlight technological advances and exchanges between countries and peoples.

It is the first time that such a demonstration has taken place in a Middle Eastern country; the proposed theme is *Connecting minds, creating the future*. Each pavilion built on the theme in its own way, and the Holy See proposed *Deepening the connection*, "to underline the need to build increasingly solid relationships between peoples, cultures and faiths," with, among other things, the reproduction of a fresco by Giotto which represents the meeting of St. Francis with Sultan Malik Al-Kāmil, which took place in Cairo in 1219, and a digitized version of the Tower of the Winds made by the Japanese NTT Data. In 1582 a sundial was built right on the Torre dei Venti, or Gregorian Tower, as an astronomical observatory, which was used in studies to develop the Gregorian Reform of the Calendar.



Theon of Alexandria, *Manual Tables*,
Vat. sir. 623, pt.1, f. 1r



Tomás de Orta, *Osservazioni sulla riforma gregoriana del calendario*, Vat. lat. 5645, f. 2r



Leonardo Pisano (Fibonacci), *Liber Abbaci*
Pal. lat. 1343, f. 5r



The Library has sent works of particular value: the incipit of an Arabic translation (c. 800-830) of Theon of Alexandria's *Manual Tables*, a palimpsest fragment from Baghdad's Bayt al-Hikmah, the library and university founded in the 9th century to make known to the Muslim world what is known by other peoples; *Liber Abbaci* by Leonardo Pisano (Fibonacci, c. 1170-c. 1259), who introduced Arabic numerals to the West; *Osservazioni sulla riforma gregoriana del calendario* by Tomás de Orta († 1594), a Portuguese cosmographer and mathematician. For the occasion, the Vatican made a short documentary shown on site. More and more, promoting culture means building bridges that bring together and foster mutual knowledge and understanding.

Fredrik Vahlquist, Knight of the Order of St. Sylvester



Amicitiae sanctum ac venerabile nomen: the name of friendship is holy and venerable, said Ovid, and it is the word that was most often pronounced during the ceremony for the conferral of the Grand Cross of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Sylvester Pope to Fredrik Vahlquist, former ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See.

The ceremony took place in the Sistine Hall of the Library on October 29. The Prefect, Msgr. Cesare Pasini began with these words: “*Pax et bonum.* I am pleased to begin with this greeting of Franciscan inspiration for the conferral of the honor [...] on his Excellency Ambassador Fredrik Vahlquist. These are the words with which he frequently concludes his messages: I have found many of them in the emails exchanged over the years. A welcome and noble sign of the Franciscan spirit, which accompanies us today as well: the honor that will now be awarded [...], is conferred by the Pontiff who has in fact adopted not just the name of St. Francis [...]. Thanks to Ambassador Fredrik Vahlquist, the Vatican Apostolic Library has been able to draw nearer to the Swedish nation in all its fullness: while we are grateful to have preserved Queen Christina’s books for several centuries, and in them, the richness of the cultural tradition of Sweden and of the world that she gathered therein, with equal gratitude we recognize the generous concern of the Swedish people for the Vatican Apostolic Library.”

The Librarian, Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça, presented the award to a sincere friend of the Library, with whom the bond has grown stronger over time. “Culture unites and creates friendship, not only between people but also between states,” Vahlquist said upon receiving the award.

And since his first visit to the Library he had shown a profound interest in the Institution which preserves the manuscripts that belonged to Queen Christina and important documents relating to Saint Bridget of Sweden.

He soon began to do his utmost to help preserve and enhance the precious *Reginensi* documents.

The aid came from the King Gustaf VI Adolf Foundation for Swedish culture, and from the Marcus and Amalia Wallenberg Foundation.

More aid also came later from the foundation of the Swedish sovereign and from the Jacob Wallenberg Foundation, also for projects concerning the cataloging of the incunabula and the Aldine editions of the Library, also supported by the Swedish bishop of Skara, Åke Bonnier.

The Library is currently carrying out the digitization and description of a large part of the *Reginense* collection, thanks to the support of the Marcus and Amalia Wallenberg foundation and to the gracious commitment of the Swedish ambassador, Mrs. Cecilia Björner, who currently represents her country in Norway, and again to Fredrik Vahlquist.

In addition to Fredrik Vahlquist’s wife, Mrs. Elisabeth, present at the ceremony were the Vice-Prefect Timothy Janz, the current ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See, Andrés Jato; Mrs. Anna Della Croce Brigante Colonna, who was the ambassador of Italy to Stockholm; Barbara Jatta, director of the Vatican Museums and formerly Head of the Library’s Prints Cabinet; Paolo Vian, vice prefect of the Archives and former director of the Department of Manuscripts, the Brigidine sisters, M. Hilaria Vieyra Hernandez and M. Elisa Famiglietti; Charlotta Smeds, of the Vatican Radio; and a small representation of the Library staff, including the current director of the Manuscripts Department, Claudia Montuschi.

Only a few weeks earlier, on October 8, the centenary of the Birgitta Foundation was celebrated in Sweden, which aims to protect and cultivate the spiritual and cultural heritage of St. Bridget (1303-1373), to whose figure Fredrik Vahlquist is particularly linked. It was founded on October 7, 1920 by Archbishop Nathan Söderblom and Prince Eugene of Sweden with the aim of preserving the medieval convent buildings of Vadstena, the city of St. Bridget and of Fredrik Vahlquist. A happy coincidence for two happy circumstances.



Franco Bevilacqua on the Appian Way with Carlo Labruzzi



It was October 31, 1798 when the well-known Roman painter and engraver Carlo Labruzzi (1748-1817) embarked on the journey along the *regina viarum*, the Appian Way, together with Sir Richard Colt Hoare. Their intention was to travel up the road until Brindisi, but due to the weather, which was anything but favorable, and the artist's health conditions, the journey came to a stop at Benevento. Labruzzi depicted the archaeological ruins of the buildings found along the road, vestiges of an ancient and glorious past. He made many drawings of that adventurous journey: 67 polychrome watercolors that are now preserved in the British Museum; another 176 drawings, a version produced later and made in watercolor, are kept in the Sarti Library of the Accademia di San Luca; still others are scattered among various public and private collections.

The series of monochrome watercolors preserved in the Library is considered the definitive composition of the drawings made along the Appian Way and were intended for the aristocratic promoter of the journey. They are bound in five volumes that bear the coat of arms of the Hoare family: *Vat. lat.* 14929-14933. The volumes came to the Library in 1933, together with the volume of drawings of the Via Latina made by Richard Colt Hoare (*Vat. lat.* 14934), which, like the rest of his graphic collection, were purchased by the widow of the famous British archaeologist Thomas Ashby.

In 2013 the Library published an in-depth study of the watercolors kept in the Vatican Library in the volume *La via Appia nei disegni di Carlo Labruzzi alla Biblioteca Vaticana*, edited by Pier Andrea De Rosa and Barbara Jatta, with the collaboration of Lorenzo Quilici.

In 1902 Thomas Ashby also traveled by bicycle along the same route as Labruzzi, taking many photographs. He continued to recognize more images over the following years, with various traveling companions, who helped to identify the monuments illustrated by Labruzzi. The investigation conducted in 1913 with compatriot Robert Gardner gave rise to two articles published between 1916 and 1917.

Between 2018 and 2019, a new journey along the Appian Way was undertaken by Franco Bevilacqua, journalist and illustrator, who intended to retrace the same path in his own way. Bevilacqua continued to look for and present through his drawings the same monuments illustrated by Labruzzi, when possible, strictly from the same point of observation, as they are now.

The 163 polychrome watercolors made by Bevilacqua are going to be published by the Library, together with those produced by Carlo Labruzzi well over two centuries earlier in the volume *Disegnare la via Appia oggi. Un viaggio moderno sulle orme di Carlo Labruzzi*. In short, they are remnants of remnants, but still remain visible and eloquent.



In many cases it was not easy to find the monuments, because they have since become hidden by vegetation, crowded over by subsequent constructions, or incorporated into private properties.

Bevilacqua's journey was full of pitfalls. It involved very painstaking research in order to bring forgotten pieces of history to light, also with the help of local historians and archaeologists. The undertaking goes far beyond presenting beautiful designs with an antique flavor; it is a work that aims to arouse feelings, including conflicting ones, in the viewer. It seeks to arouse interest, questions, and the desire to recover and protect what history has given us. It also seems to aim at attracting the attention and interest of those who are in a better condition to provide for the conservation and enhancement of the monuments of our past. It was a tiring journey, even from

an emotional point of view. "Leafing through Bevilacqua's book is like stepping into a time machine to retrace an ancient path and at the same time to look at it with new eyes. Carlo Labruzzi's watercolor, snapshots of the past, are flanked by images of extreme modernity that hide behind the vivacity of the colors a certain bitterness for the current state of various areas and some monuments, a condition that is documented with stark objectivity."

But the beauty and historical value of degraded, defaced, slighted, yet still present monuments emerge in the brightly colored representations of Bevilacqua, whose optimism, against all odds, makes its own way, a journey that invites you to travel, and even to adopt the necessary measures, in order to recover and make known, protect and love a past that belongs to all and therefore to each of us.

Fall, leaves, fall

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.



Emily Brontë



Visits from Sweden

The members of the Royal Academy



The guests in the Sala Barberini

On November 19, a representation of the members of the Swedish Academy accompanied by the Swedish ambassador to the Holy See, Andrés Jato, and some other guests, visited the Vatican Library.

A small exhibition was prepared for them, which included the medal issued on the occasion of the arrival of the *Reginense* library to the Vatican; the so-called *Catalog of Antwerp* (*Vat. lat.* 8171), compiled in the homonymous city during the journey to Rome of the famous collection, and signed by the librarian Isaac Voss on October 11, 1655. In addition, there was the document of the Queen's abdication (June 1654), on paper, with the signatures and seals of representatives from the clergy, the bourgeoisie and farmers (*Reg. lat.* 2121), and the *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis*, by Jean Bodin (*Reg. lat.* 1313), a conversation between seven people of different faiths, from which emerges a strong criticism of institutionalized religion and an appeal to religious tolerance. Christina had wanted a copy, and Voss bought her the manuscript. It has been speculated that it may have been the autograph of the work or that it was copied from the autograph. An example of the *Roman de la Rose* of the fifteenth century (*Reg. lat.* 1492), richly illuminated; the codex containing the *Vita et miracula s. Eriici* (*Reg. lat.* 525), certainly belonging to the original collection of the Vasa royal family, and the *Revelationes* of St. Bridget (*Urb. lat.* 104), a significant example of the famous work of the patroness of Sweden and co-patroness of Europe. Thank you, professors Steve Sem-Sandberg, Eric M. Runesson, Tomas Riad, Jesper Svenbro, Horace Engdahl, Mats Malm, Ingrid Nuder Carlberg, Per Wästberg and Anne Swärd, for the visit and especially for your noble service to culture.



Reg. lat. 525, f. 2v-3r



Reg. lat. 1313, f. 1r



Md. Pont. Alexander VIII. 46_D-R

Prof. Lindqvist and spouse

Prof. Svante Lindqvist and the kind Mrs. Catharina returned to the Library on November 18, two years after their first visit.

A particular sensitivity and a deep love for culture and history led the Lindqvist couple again to the places where the manuscripts that belonged to the famous and cultured Queen Christina are kept. The gracious guests listened with interest and particular attention to the projects in progress, and saw how they are proceeding by observing the reproductions in the digital library, of some particularly significant codices of Christina's collection that are also found in other manuscript collections of the Library.

Through a series of photographs taken in the manuscript stacks, Professor Lindqvist was able to realize the extent of the *Reginense* collection and the care with which the codices are preserved and made available to scholars.

We thank Catharina and Svante Lindqvist for their kind visit and the curious spirit that guided them to the Vatican Library, and hope to see them again soon.



Catharina and Svante Lindqvist; in the background, the Tower of the Winds (Apostolic Archive) which hosted Queen Christina

... And from Norway

On November 26, the Norwegian ambassador Johan Christopher Vibe visited our Institution.

Mr. Vibe had visited some time before, in Venice, the photographic exhibition Skrei, "travel" in Norwegian, with which Valentina Tamborra retraced part of the trade route of Pietro Querini (c. 1402-1448).

Leaving Venice in April of 1431, Querini was shipwrecked trying to reach Ireland; a storm raged in the British waters where he was travelling after having left Spain and Portugal. He ended up on the island of Sandøya, in the Lofoten group of islands in southern Norway, where he and what remained of his crew were helped by the local population. It was the beginning of January, 1432.

The account of that experience of Querini is found in the Vatican, and the ambassador asked to be able to see it. Accompanied by the minister adviser Knut-Are Sprauten Okstad, the cultural employee Linda K. Gaarder and Valentina Tamborra, he was able closely to

observe Querini's codex, *Vat. lat.* 5256, and some documents kept in the Prints Cabinet, including photographs taken in 1911 during the expedition to the North Pole by the Norwegian explorer Roald Amudsen.



The Esrailian family



The Holy Father with Eric, Melina, Vardkes e Hilda

The inauguration of the Kerkorian Room and the exhibition *Tutti* gave us the opportunity to meet or see again supporters and friends of the Apostolic Library, such as Eric Esrailian who returned to visit us together with his family. On the morning of November 5, Eric, Mrs. Melina, their children, Derek and Andrew, Eric's parents, Hilda and Vardkes, visited the historic locales of our Institution, which Mr. Vardkes and Mrs. Hilda had not yet seen. With great pleasure they were shown some manuscripts particularly significant for the family.

As we greet all the members of the Esrailian family, we express particular gratitude to Eric, as well as to Anthony Mandekic, and Lindy Schumacher, who were unable to be with us on the occasion of the inauguration of the Hall.

UNIAPAC representatives



A representation of UNIAPAC wished to visit the Apostolic Library, over the course of its annual meeting in Rome on the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition *Tutti*. In the afternoon of November 4, the group, made up of people from different countries, was able to see the Sistine Library and ask questions about the history and mission of the papal Institution.

We greet and thank Bruno Bobone (president of UNIAPAC) and Mrs. Madalena, his wife, Rodrigo Whitelaw (secretary), and all the members of the group: Peter Freissle, Lauren, Tom and Laurie Burny, Chris and Kim Patton, Bob and Marybeth Sutkowski, Pablo Elizondo, Armando and Illya Del Bosque, Gladys Bolivar, Ana Lucila Camacho, Etienne and Sylvie Wibaux, Philippe Mine, Romain Buquet.

"Altissimo Signor del sommo canto"

O mio Poeta, o altissimo, (Oh my poet, oh most high
 Signor del sommo canto, Master of the supreme canto,
 Che con sublime cetera Who with sublime harp
 Per la casa del pianto Through the house of weeping wandered,
 Girasti, e fra la gente, And among people,
 Che o gioisce, o si pente, Who rejoice or repent,
 Tu vivi eterno. You live eternal)

We quote the words of Ugo Foscolo from the poem dedicated to "father Dante" at the end of the year which celebrated the 700th anniversary of the poet's death, which took place in Ravenna on September 14, 1321, and which has seen countless events in Italy and beyond. In the last issue of OWL for this year, we offer our readers the images of a celebratory medal dedicated to Alighieri, which was not included in the forum of the very popular online exhibition *Viaggiare con Dante*, set up on the Institutional website, <https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/en/travel-with-dante.html>.

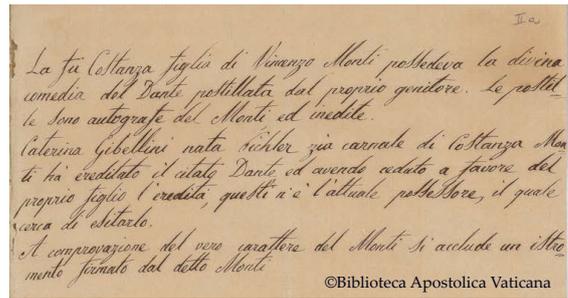
The medal is part of a group of 45 medals on the theme of Dante that are preserved in the Vatican Library's medal collection.



Dante Alighieri's celebratory medal
 by an anonymous Florentine author, 15th cent.
 Md. Uom. Illus. XX. 36

We also offer images of an eighteenth-century printed edition of the *Divine Comedy* that has just been digitized. The volume, available in our Digital Library, https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.9255, is the third of the first complete Roman edition of the work edited by Fr. Baldassarre (Antonio Maria) Lombardi, O.F.M. Conv. (1718-1802), and illustrated with engravings by Sante Pacini, Florentine (*Lombardina*). The second volume, *Vat. lat. 9254*, is also available on the website; the first one, *Vat. lat. 9253* is being digitized.

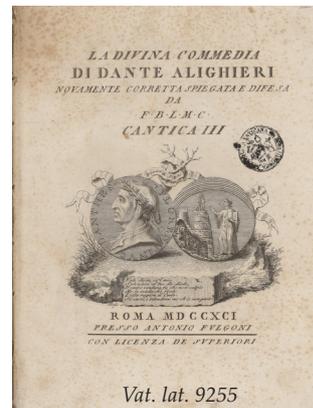
It took Fr. Lombardi twenty years to create the work, using fifteenth-century editions, such as the one done by Martino Paolo Nibia (pseud. Nidebeato, *Nidobeatina*), published by Ludovico and Alberto Piemontesi in 1478, and other sources.



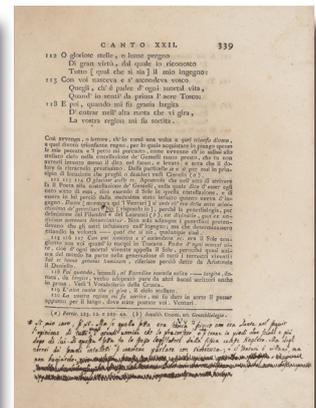
Vat. lat. 9253, f. IIa

"Despite its limitations, Lombardi's edition is often considered the first modern historical-philological commentary, in intention if not in results."

The Vatican copy of the work is kept in the *Vaticani latini* because the volumes have been annotated by Vincenzo Monti, as a note says in the first volume, *Vat. lat. 9253*.



Vat. lat. 9255



Vat. lat. 3769, f. 171r

«It is Christmas every time
 we let love be born in our hearts»

Dante in a new work of art



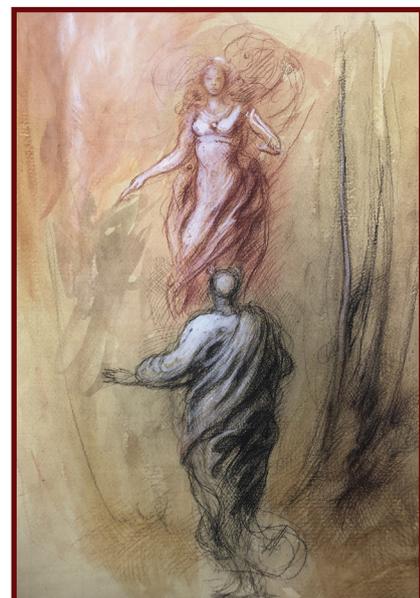
The year dedicated to the *Sommo Poeta* comes to a close for our Library with the arrival of a gift inspired by Dante's masterpiece. Indeed, on November 29, we were gifted with a work of art in the form of a book, *The Divine Comedy. Cento tavole*, by Giovanni Tommasi Ferroni, conceived and created by Opera - Società Italiana di Arte e Cultura -, in collaboration with the Società Dante Alighieri, and published on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the death of Alighieri.

It is a rare feat of visual interpretation of all the cantos of the Comedy. The preface is written by Andrea Riccardi, President of the Dante Alighieri Society, while the general introduction is by Alessandro Masi, Secretary General of the same Society.

The work, kept in an elegant case, was printed in a limited edition of 160 copies. Each panel bears the handwritten signature of the author.

In addition to maestro Giovanni Tommasi Ferroni, the publisher Fabio Lazzari was present at the donation.

A heartfelt thanks for the pleasing gift of the work, a special occasion also to have maestro Tommasi Ferroni, son of Riccardo, creator of the well-known *Forma Urbis Romae*, printed on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, back at the Library.

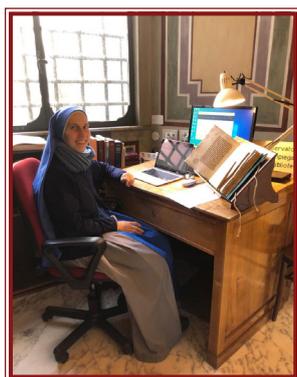


Virgil meets Beatrice



The work consists of two hundred and eight pages and one hundred illustrations. It contains the text of the Comedy in the national edition edited by Giorgio Petrocchi and one hundred plates that reproduce the drawings made from charcoal, sanguine, tempera and pen, that the master Giovanni Tommasi Ferroni, a leading exponent of contemporary Italian figurative inspired by the cantos of Dante's masterpiece.

People and services in the Library. IV: Cataloging



Manuscripts



Printed books

A representation of the people involved in cataloging



Prints Cabinet



One of the main tasks of a library is to make the material it holds usable through the correct description of the material in its catalogs.

Since the beginning of its modern history, from the mid-fifteenth century, the Library has been concerned with producing inventories of its heritage. A first real *catalogos* was produced by Bartolomeo Platina, who became Librarian in 1475 (d. 1481). There are various lists, generally more inventories than actual catalogs, which have been created over time in large volumes, both for manuscripts and for the printed books. Then, from the 18th century, lists were also compiled for other materials, of the two Museums (Sacred and Profane), of the Medagliere and of the Prints. It is in the 19th century, and in particular from the end of that century, that the Library, as part of a process of modernization, began to publish the first printed catalogs of the manuscript collections. These more modern catalogs followed *Leges* (1897, published in 1902) for the manuscripts, and developed the first *Regole per la compilazione del catalogo alfabetico della Biblioteca Vaticana* (1883), for the printed books.

At the end of the twenties of the 20th century, a collaboration was activated for the cataloging with the American institution Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. A strategy with new principles had to be found to accommodate the large collections that had been added in recent decades, the revision of the collections of the Consultation Room, and re-cataloging of printed matter in general and of incunabula, as well as that of manuscript collections for which a synthetic descriptive method was provided for quick consultation. The catalog descriptions were recorded on movable cards that followed an international format and were inserted in special files. For the manuscripts, in addition to the registration in the “Bishop files”, after William Warner Bishop (1871-1955), an American librarian at the head of the project (later renamed IAM, Alphabetical Index of Manuscripts), analyt-

ical printed catalogs continued to be published.

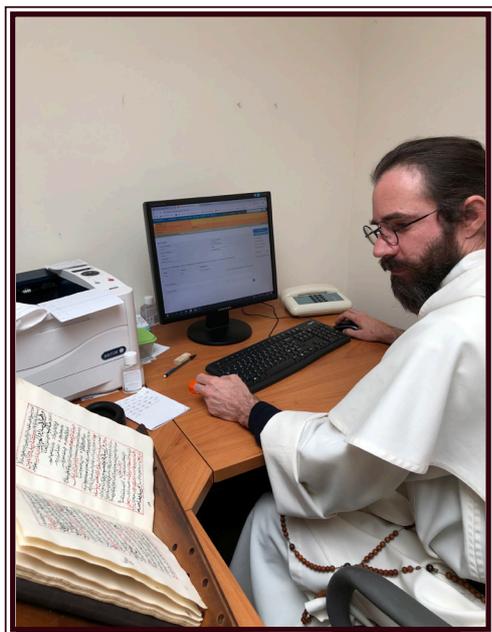
In 1931 the *Norme per il catalogo degli stampati* were printed, inspired by the American model, but with their own peculiarities. These were used up until the second half of the Eighties, when computerized cataloging was undertaken and it was necessary to compare with the Anglo-American rules, which had evolved into an international character. Today, in the age of the immediacy of global information, international principles and standards are used to describe any type of material.

At the end of December, the new cataloging module in the AMLAD system will be activated, which up until now has been used for the management of the DVL (the digital library) and the Opac catalogues. Similarly to the previous tools in use, the new component for cataloging is made with the functional requirements established by the BAV and engineered by NTT Data, a fact which once again demonstrates the sense of cooperation between the two institutions.

The cataloging module presents important innovations because it is completely based on an architectural vision that places the user experience of the cataloger at the center and therefore presents an extremely linear workflow. In addition, it conforms to the structure of the functional requirements issued by the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and therefore allows a representation according to the so-called entities established by the LRM model (Library Reference Model). Thanks to the new software, the Library will publicly offer the data collections (that refer to printed books, prints, and numismatic materials) according to the linked-data model (in application of the Bibframe ontology, proposed by the Library of Congress and internationally adopted as best practice) for the automatic identification of bibliographic data in the context of the semantic web.

The modalities change, but the cataloging work continues to offer a service to scholars in keeping with the times.

Cataloging of Arabic manuscripts



P. Adrien de Foucher at his desk

The Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies in Cairo, the IDEO (= Institut dominicain d'études orientales), hosts a very important library of Islamic texts. Founded in the 1950s, the Institute is particularly active in the field of interreligious dialogue. It is comprised mainly of Dominican researchers and aims "to promote a better understanding between Christians and Muslims, upon the conviction that only mutual understanding can help overcome the misunderstandings of the past." Many specialists take recourse to the library of the Institute, which houses about 200,000 documents, including books of the Arab-Muslim tradition from the early centuries.

The fathers have recently developed an online catalog of their library adapted from the conceptual model LRM (Library Reference Model) developed within IFLA for the analysis of the metadata of bibliographic documents, which are ordered according to the criteria of RDA (Resource Description and Access).

The platform created is called Diamond (<https://opac.diamond-ils.org/>), and has now been entrusted to a non-profit association created for the purpose, to which all rights have been transferred.

The president of the association is Gordon Dunsire, a member of IFLA who participated in the development of LRM. The Dominicans maintain their presence there and the possibility of exercising the right of veto.

Participating Institutions have a three-level catalog: a general level with all the different institutions participating, another level for specific areas (Islamic world, Arab-Christian manuscripts, etc.) and an Opac for each institution. In addition to the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies, the Institutions involved include the Institute of Arabic manuscripts (Cairo), the French Institute of Oriental Archeology (Cairo), the Giorgio La Pira Library (Palermo), and now also the Vatican Library. The Digital Center for Oriental Manuscripts (Erbil, Iraq) will also join shortly.

In July, the Vatican Library signed a cooperation agreement that firmly shares the aims proposed by the Dominican Order with its activity in Cairo. Since last September, a member of the scholarly staff of the Vatican Library, Fr. Adrien de Fouchier, OP, an Arabist who has worked in Cairo for a long time, has been working on entering the data pertaining to the Arabic Islamic manuscripts kept in the Vatican into the general Diamond catalog. In turn, this activity generates metadata for online catalogue of the Vatican Library (Opac) and also for our internal catalog, called InForma. At the moment, Fr. Adrien inserts all the manuscripts of works already present in the system. Those that are not in the system, that is to say, works not possessed by other institutions or have not yet been included, will be a task for the future to be accomplished with scientific revisions at different levels. The cataloging work is thus no longer done alone, but is the result of a team effort.

The catalog organizes the data in four levels: works, expressions, manifestations, and items. Links with other manifestations of the work are provided with the work. The system generates more links, based on the information that is entered after the suitable revisions. Such links may sometimes create unexpected results for scholars.

The system and the methods that are activated for the recording of data seem to promise positive pathways for the future, so that other similar initiatives could be inspired.



Multispectral imaging in the Photographic Laboratory of the Library

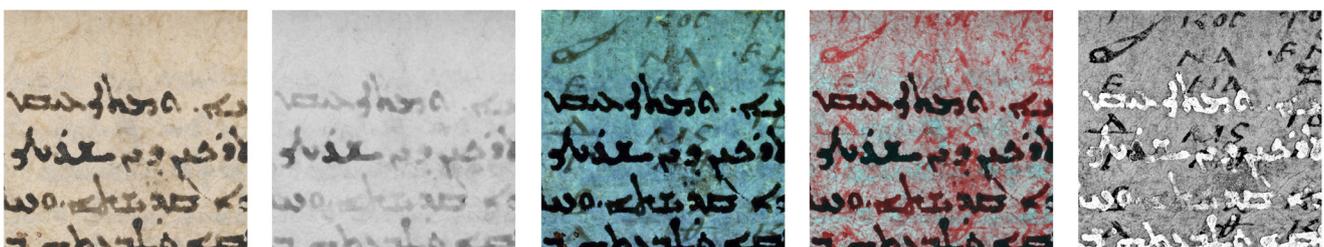


“Since study is immensely facilitated by photography and the dissemination everywhere of what previously could only be observed well and safely on site, and furthermore, since it has become easy to multiply perfect images that replace the originals where these have since perished due to misfortunes, and since the universal utility for all future centuries spurs us on to multiply such copies and to promote studies with such conveniences that are more fruitfully and perfectly accomplished, the opportunity to adapt to new conditions is clear.

This is not so much in order to avoid the shadow of the unintelligent or narrow-minded, as much as for the honor of the Church, for the common good and for the sake of one’s own interest. Since it is unquestionable that by proving to be reasonable and generous, not only does one gain esteem and benevolence as well as precious exchanges, but also one greatly lightens the internal services [...] sparing manuscripts and papers and other materials a great deal, since what previously had to be carried out for weeks and months of wearisome use, photography accomplishes in one or two days, and, as is

as is provident and dutiful, it ensures its perpetual conservation in the best possible way for any event that may threaten”. With such words in 1950 Giovanni Mercati advised the “directors and custodians of libraries, archives and museums of ecclesiastical property regarding the photography of the treasures entrusted to them”.

For decades, the Library has provided photographic reproductions of texts, miniatures, and book bindings to facilitate research and minimize the time spent by scholars and therefore their expenses. After two wars, the need emerged to encourage initiatives aimed at ensuring the conservation through the microfilming of the treasures handed down to us. The Library had long since begun to use new photographic methods based on ultraviolet and infrared light sources. The Laboratory had been experimenting with these techniques since the 1920s in an attempt to bring to light what the action of time or man had eclipsed. The accomplishments, modest but encouraging, were due to the use of experimental instrumentation, borrowed in part from the medical diagnostic field.



VIS

IR 940 nm

UV 365 nm

Pseudo Colore

PCA

Since then, in taking up the challenge of going from the analogue to the digital, the Laboratory has kept itself constantly up to date, both in terms of skills and technological tools. Today, thanks to the generous support of the Sanctuary of Culture Foundation, it has state-of-the-art equipment in the multispectral sector, specially developed for the needs of conservation and study of the cultural heritage of books. The new system synchronizes the shooting phase with the simultaneous processing of images through software, thereby launching the activity of the Laboratory into the most advanced field of multispectral imaging. The images are acquired at very high resolution at different wavelengths, from 365 nm to 940 nm (UV, VIS, NIR), with the use of an automatic wheel of bandpass filters, combined with two sets of lights, both narrowband and broadband. The stack of “master” images thus produced - 16 in narrowband and 8 in multiband - is processed by the corresponding software on the basis of calibrations detected for the purpose. The high resolution files generated in this way, already full of useful information, can be further processed through post-production programs or through the use of the analytical section of the acquisition software.

This sophisticated tool, through an easy and intuitive interface, is able to perform complex mathematical and statistical operations in order to identify and recombine the components of the images (PCA, ICA, Cluster K-Means). This “digital alchemy” intervenes to emphasize, extrapolate, and break down the entire load of documents that the file is able to deliver. The use of this refined system by competent photographers allows the Library to increase qualitatively and quantitatively the work of recovering a whole range of texts: palimpsests, texts degraded from iron gall inks, writings faded from environmental causes or mechanical interventions, preparatory sketches or revisions. Some of these photographs are systematically integrated into the Vatican Digital Library (DVL), which produces an added value of the work, since it goes to the benefit of scholars. The photographs can also be provided, upon request, for specific research.

The objectives intended for the use of the photographic medium are still the same as they were at the beginning, that is, to assist studies and facilitate the conservation of documents. Now, however, the technology employed allows to obtain results that were unimaginable not only for Mercati’s era, but also for our times.

Retirees of 2021



Riccardo Luongo



Antonio Zuccari

Riccardo Luongo was hired at the Library in 1979, and he worked first in the Printed Books Reading Room, and then in the Cataloging Section. During the Nineties he was also the secretary to the School of Library Science; later on he worked in the Reproductions and Copyright Office of the Library.

Hired in 1983, Antonio Zuccari started his work in the Bursar's Office; then he moved to the Sacred and Profane Museums of the Library till 1998, when they passed to the Vatican Museums, and he went to the Manuscripts Dept. In the past seventeen years he has worked in the Bursar's Office.

The Vatican Library affectionately greets the two colleagues who are newly retired, and expresses gratitude to them for all the years spent in the service of the Holy See





The Vatican Apostolic Library wishes to thank

The Sanctuary of Culture Foundation

and

- ADORA ITC s.r.l.
- Catholic Bishop's Conference of Korea
- Fondation Avita Novare, under the aegis of Fondation de Luxembourg
- Fondazione Italcementi Cav. Lav. Pesenti
- Fundação Gaudium Magnum - Maria e João Cortez de Lobão
- INAF-Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica
- Jacob Wallenbergs Stiftelse
- Von Mallinckrodt Foundation
- NTT Data Corporation
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- Metis Systems
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- Stiftelsen Konung Gustav VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur
- Stiftelsen Marcus och Amalia Wallenbergs Minnesfond
- UNIAPAC Foundation
- Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

- Michael I. Allen
- Pina Bartolini
- Franco Bevilacqua
- H.E. Åke Bonnier and Kristina Gustafsson Bonnier
- Simona Giampaoli and family
- Frank J. Hanna
- Warren Kirkendale
- Anthony Mandekic, Eric Esrailian and Lindy Schumacher
- Aldo Marangoni
- Bill and Ann Marie Teuber
- Giovanni Tommasi Ferroni
- Scott and Lannette Turicchi
- Amos Verga



If you would like to make a contribution to the projects of the Library, please contact:

Luigina Orlandi

Office of Institutional Advancement (orlandi@vatlib.it)

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