



«Avvisi» dalla Vaticana

Look for new forms of conversation

"A difficult subject to deal with." This is how the American historian and art critic James Elkins sees the relationship between artistic creation and religion in the contemporary world. His best-known essay on the subject bears a title that says it all: *The Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (2004). Why a "strange place"? There are certainly age-old cultural reasons, connected to the debate that forms the basis of modernity: the emergence of the autonomy of the secular space in the face of the religious one; the pursuit of individual freedom, which reinterprets the normativity of a communitarian ethos; the dismantling of a social vision which had its decisive and defining element in a religious identity, etc. Nevertheless, revisiting the historical reasons at the origin of today's rupture does not exempt us from the duty to think about the present, without preconceptions, since the presuppositions of the relationship between art, science and religion are no longer the same. For example, Elkins recalls that while the university as an institution has rightly become more sensitive and attentive to civil rights, it has not yet extended the same degree of awareness to the religious field. And he insists that "religion is part of life and is intimately intertwined with everything we think and do: it seems absurd that it does not have a place in the debate." Now, this turns to privileging the exercise of dialogue, the narrative exchange, the encounter between agents that are capable of mutual listening. A Role that libraries can fulfill!

In the recent encyclical, *"Fratelli tutti"*, one of the most prevalent themes is precisely that of dialogue, a key cultural concept. Pope Francis affirms: "In a pluralistic society, dialogue is the best way" (n. 211). Let us therefore avoid exclusivist visions. Instead, the Pope proposes to look at life as "a many-faceted polyhedron whose different sides form a variegated unity." (n. 215).

Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça



The art of weaving freedom: Maria Lai meets the Vatican Apostolic Library



What unites Maria Lai (1919-2013) and the Vatican Library? A thin thread that becomes art, an intertwined fiber that becomes a book, and then becomes many books that come together in the Library's exhibition spaces. Showing what they have in common and what differentiates them from one another, they enter into dialogue, while expressing strength, grace, and beauty.



"Libro dei telai", 1996; "Diario n. 9", 1980

On Friday, May 27, in the Kerkorian Room of the Library, the exhibition *The art of weaving freedom: Maria Lai meets the Vatican Apostolic Library* opened in the presence of the Secretary of State, H.E. Card. Pietro Parolin.

The initiative, which "has the objective of establishing a dialogue between the treasures of the Vatican Apostolic Library and an artist who has a place of great importance within the context of national and international contemporary art," was carried out in collaboration with the Maria Lai Archive and Foundation, the Vatican Museums and the Diocese of Lanusei, as well as with contributions from the Department of Tourism and Commerce of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia.



Vat. lat. 14613, Runic calendar

The exhibition, open till July 15, exposes some aspects of Maria Lai's art treating books and writing, an artisanal activity deeply linked to culture, that become the means for expressing new things. «Writing», the artist said, «suggests to me the relationship between ink and thread and the possibility to give shape to an abstract idea».



And so illegible books were born, but we can understand them; they allow us to read them; they are sewn by machine or made of other materials, even bread. «Bread and thread are materials charged with meaning: bread is "life", the thread in the myth of Ariadne helps to escape the labyrinth (language), it is the thread of discourse (communication)».

For the first time the books by the Sardinian artist meet books in a library and are accompanied by handcrafted items coming from various parts of the world. Ethiopian manuscripts dressed in different colors, or Chinese texts on silk decorated with embroidery; Western bindings made with brocade and precious lace, executed in monasteries by means of long and intense manual labor.



"Scialle delle Janas", 1996



"Spazio e telaio", 1972

Maria Lai's books tell of a desire for freedom, for liberation from an ancient heritage that relegated women to the realm of domestic activities, when weaving and sewing filled most of the day. They give voice to the desire to go further, precisely through these same crafts that were made into poetry, into art. Through these figurative texts we can perceive their emotions, we read the stories of many women who are unknown to us and who want to tell of themselves and their experiences. They make us think that even those who cannot read can write wonderful books, in a thousand shapes and colors, making use of imagination, creativity, and all that one has inside. Thus, Maria Lai becomes an interpreter, releasing the energy, creativity, the need for self-expression of the women of her land, joining herself to women of every country by a common destiny, and her own desire to be free is achieved through what she creates. "Art is the image of the life we desire"; we find ourselves, our dreams, and our aspirations.



"Fiaba di Fata cicogna"

The Vatican Library's manuscripts and printed books present other stories that join Maria Lai's books with their own particular elements. The result of this encounter between past and present is an unexpected dialogue that we can observe with wonder and emotion. The means of expression show similarities that belong to different places and eras.

The objects that the Library presents were chosen for their materiality and not for the texts they contain; they present the fabrics with which the books are sometimes made or that which dress them. Thread is the common element, one that is intertwined in a thousand ways and forms beautiful bonds which go beyond space and time. An invisible thread binds us ...



Sire. A. 7, Sire. L. 7; Sire. T. 1

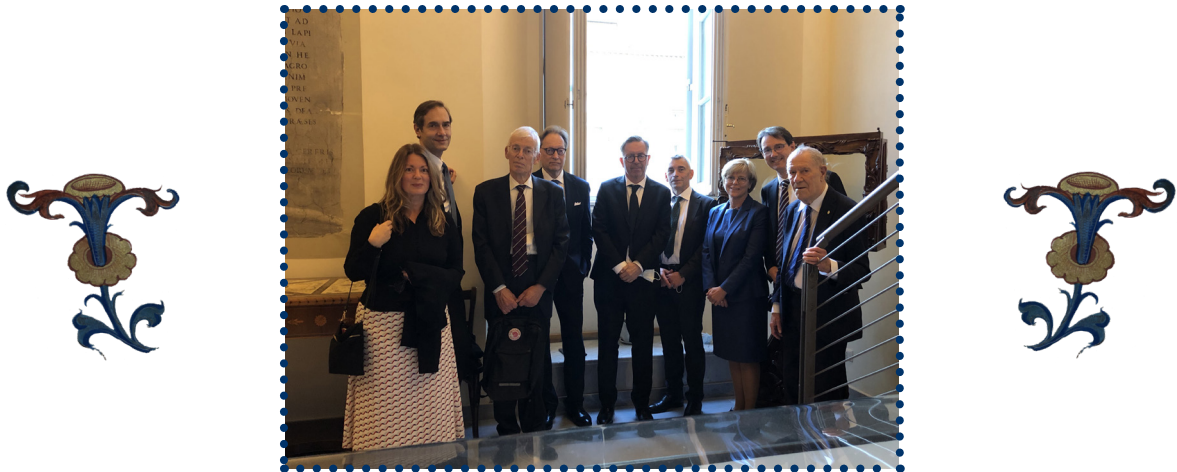


Vat. estr.-or. 60



Cerulli et. 188, 191, 194, 203

The Academy of Sweden and the *Reginensi* collections



Our readers may remember that a few months ago, on November 19, 2021, the members of the Swedish Academy visited the Vatican Library together with the Swedish Ambassador to the Holy See, Andrés Jato, and saw some important documents related to Sweden.

We are pleased to share with you the news of an important contribution from the Academy to complete the work being carried out on the manuscript collections linked to Queen Christina of Sweden (1626-1689).

Thanks to the Wallenberg Foundations, Marcus and Amalia Wallenberg, and Jacob Wallenberg, it was possible not only to digitize most of the manuscripts related to Christina of Sweden, but also to restore them as necessary and describe them.

With the new contribution generously offered by the prestigious Academy, it will be possible to digitize the remaining manuscripts and complete the project dedicated to *Reginensi* codices. This will be the first collection, which is a particularly important one from the historical, cultural, and bibliographic point of view, to be fully digitized and described.

The all collection includes 190 Greek manuscripts, to which group are added 55 manuscripts from the "Greek

Reginensi of Pius II." This collection comes from Chieti and arrived between 1696 and 1705. It was kept with the *Reginensi* proper and assumed its title while remaining separate. The *Latin Reginensi*, which comprise most of the manuscripts of Queen Christina, consists of 2,123 shelfmarks. The highest shelfmarks, ranging from 2,099 to 2,123, represent recent returns and additions. Among these are twelve items (2,108-2,119) belonging to the group of 72 manuscripts, destined for the Vatican Archives (53 of which reached the Library in 1759) at the time of the purchase of the collection (1689) by Card. Pietro Vito Ottoboni (1610-1691), elected Alexander VIII in October that year, which were transferred to the Vatican Library during the twentieth century. Finally, there are also 240 manuscripts that Card. Ottoboni (Alexander VIII) chose for his library after the purchase, which arrived in the Vatican Library together with the *Ottoboniani* collection in 1748.

We are particularly grateful to the Academy of Sweden, to its Permanent Secretary, prof. Mats Malm, and to all the members of the prestigious forum for their generosity, as well as for their thoughtfulness, attention, and interest expressed by their presence and support.



Ott. lat. 1155, f. 1r



Ott. lat. 1340, f. 5r

Hadrian VI, an unexpected pope



Stampe. I. 178 (tav. 3)



R. I. IV. 1517 (int.3)



Md. Pont. HadrianusVI. 7D

A series of events are being organized to remember Pope Hadrian VI on the anniversary of the fifth centenary of his election, which took place on January 9, 1522. They have been proposed especially in order to make known a surprising figure, a pope who was not in Rome when he was elected, who was the last non-Italian pope before John Paul II, and who was the first pope to support the reform of the Church, *in capite ac in membris*.

The conference "*The pope of the Low Countries: Adrian VI*," which took place at the Teutonic College in the Vatican last January 14, was organized in collaboration with the Dutch Embassy to the Holy See. Several conferences retraced the stages of the pope's life, his election, his theological contribution and efforts in achieving a reformation, which he only managed to begin.

The polyglot Hadrian of Utrecht (Adriaan Florenszoon Boeyens, 1459-1523) was one of the most cultured men of the Sacred College. A contemporary of Henry VIII, Charles V and Francis I, Adrian was the tutor of Charles V, and the confessor of Isabella of Castile.

A professor at the University of Leuven, he was also archbishop of Toledo and Tortosa. He condemned the theses of Martin Luther even before Pope Leo X.

Hadrian VI was in Spain when he was elected and received news of the election a month later. He returned to Rome only after another six months, during which communication with the Curia was not easy. The "Flemish, never seen and nameless," as he was defined after the election, was the last pontiff of the Holy Roman Empire. His pontificate lasted only thirteen months.

With Hadrian VI, the world breathed a wind of change, a rapid gust that brought new seeds. He was a firm believer in the papal mission not as an exercise of dominion (*ut praesit*), but as a service (*ut prosit*). The pope, who in his opinion is not infallible, cannot be *solutus* by law; he is its *minister* not the *magister* (*dominus*). He introduced innovations and reduced the privileges of the Curia, at a time in which the popes usually tended to confirm the laws of their predecessors, with very few changes.



The two groups in the Library with Prof. Michiel Verweij

On April 22 another event was held, entitled “*The pontificate of the Unexpected*,” introduced by the *Hymnus Pontificius* (G. Gounod / F. Colusso), performed by the Musical Chapel of Santa Maria dell’Anima, the German national church in Rome (also home to the Dutch and Flemish communities). The gathering took place in the residence of the Belgian ambassador to the Holy See, Patrick Renault, and was organized in collaboration with the ambassador of the Kingdom of Holland, Caroline Weijers. Some musical interludes, also by Flemish composers and performed by the Musical Chapel, marked the different moments of the works on the pope as professor of theology, as an inquisitor, and as “compatible” with Erasmus.

In the morning of the same day, a representation of the participants in the conference, in two different groups, had been able to take part in a presentation of a selection of documents related to Pope Hadrian VI. preserved in the papal institution, made by Prof. Michiel Verweij, curator of the Belgian Royal Library. The documents were exhibited in the Exhibition Hall of the Library.



The works included a medal (*Md. Pont. Hadrianus VI* 7) and a print (*Stampe. I. 178, 3*) depicting Hadrian VI; the manuscript *Vat. lat. 12528*, with a report on the conclave that elected Pope Hadrian; a printed book containing an exhortation to the newly elected pontiff, *Ad sanctiss. D. Hadrianum in summu. Electum Pontificem epistle exhortatoria ut Romam veniat* (R. I. IV. 1517 (int. 3)); the *Bulla sanctissimi d. Adriani pape VI. Recuperatoria bonorum ablatorum et impignatorum* (R. G. Miscell. G. 133, int. 5).

The three initiatives were very interesting and offered excellent examples of collaboration between institutions and wonderful opportunities for the participants to meet, study, and exchange.

Msgr. Spiteri Rotal Auditor



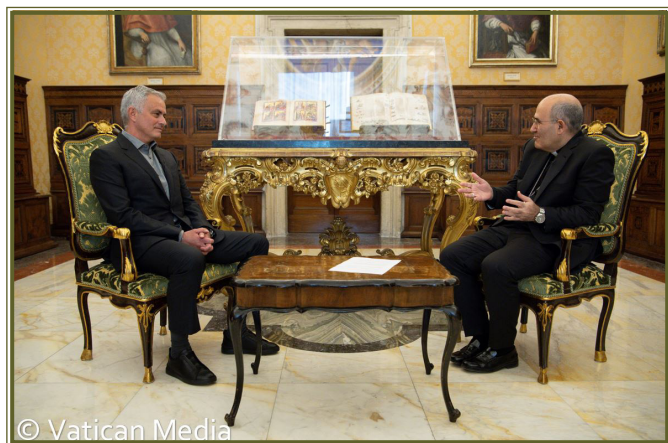
On Monday, on April 25, it was announced that the Holy Father had appointed Msgr. Laurence John Spiteri, Official at the Vatican Library and CEO of the Sanctuary of Culture Foundation, “Prelate Auditor of the Tribunal of the Sacred Rota.” This constitutes a high recognition for the profound legal expertise of Msgr. Spiteri and for his longstanding and faithful service to the Holy See. On Friday, May 6, at 12.30 in the Sala Riaria, or Aula Magna, of the Palazzo della Cancelleria, the seat of the Court, the oath ceremony and formal taking possession of the office were held.

The name “Rota” probably derives from the circular enclosure in which the Auditors gathered or sat to judge the cases. The bull *Ratio iuris* of John XXII established the office to the Tribunal on December 16, 1331, and in 1747, the Constitution *Iustitiae et pacis* of Benedict XIV definitively established its duties. From the time of Gregory XVI (1834), the Rota has also acted as the court of appeals for the Papal State, while cases pertaining to the ecclesiastical forum were instead decided by the Congregations.

John Paul II approved and promulgated the current legislation on February 7, 1994, which has been in force since October 1 of the same year. The tribunal of the Rota “is a court of higher instance at the Apostolic See, usually at the appellate stage, with the purpose of safeguarding rights within the Church; it fosters unity of jurisprudence, and, by virtue of its own decisions, provides assistance to lower tribunals” (*Pastor Bonus*, Art. 126).

The Vatican Library extends its congratulations and best wishes to Msgr. Spiteri for this new and demanding assignment.

A dialogue between culture and sports: the Librarian of H.R.C. meets José Mourinho



In the morning of March 29, the Librarian of the Holy Roman Church, Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça, received a well-known compatriot, José Mourinho, current coach of AS Roma soccer, for a friendly dialogue promoted by the *Osservatore Romano*, which took place in the Vestibule of the Library. Besides their nationality, the two José's have in common their bond with the philosopher Manuel Sérgio, also Portuguese, who has focused his research on motor skills, "the property in the nervous system that causes the contraction of muscles," which is linked to sports and to all human life. Prof. Sérgio considers sports an "essential experience, in which the human being rediscovers the meaning of his existence and his own relationality."

While studying at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, Mourinho was able to come to know the "philosophy of bodily activities" with Prof. Sérgio, and the learning process that began at that time has continued ever since. As the teacher had taught him, "whoever understands just football does not understand anything about football"; that is, to achieve the desired results, it is necessary to take into account the diversity of each athlete and necessarily to establish an empathic and human relationship with each of them. Failure in the game is part of the path, and it is part of individual and group growth; it helps to arouse empathy through identification and understanding.

For Mourinho, technical difficulties encountered during athletic activity inevitably recur over time, and are always the same, while the human element makes it so that each time we are faced with something new, because each person is new, unique, and the coach also has to deal with each player differently.

Experience, the teacher of life, has compelled the guest to state: "I perceive my evolution as a person by observing the fact that for many years I wanted to win for myself, whereas now, I am in a moment in which I continue to want to win with the same intensity as before, or even more so, but it is no longer for me, but rather, for the players who have never won. I want to help them."

The Librarian stressed that "the game is a human experience, organized around certain rules. These rules are technical and playful; they have to do with sporting methods, but they are also ethical. For this reason, sports are also a paradigm of human relations; ethics is in fact fundamental for the great game that is the life of the world, first and foremost as a basis for the recognition of the other."

The human element is a dimension of sports that transcends sports itself and competition as well: it connects, makes people share, educates, forms allies; in children's sports, it helps to build the people of tomorrow. Sports are "a kind of mirror of all that is human." In trying to overcome oneself, for Sérgio "transcending oneself," one goes beyond personal limits, perceiving those of others together with the possibility of achieving results, with the confidence of being able to count on one's companions, with team effort, and also perceiving what transcends "us," even when you are not playing at the highest levels but continue to play with the same commitment. And this is true in life in general. It is enough just to be aware of the fact.



Soccer at the Vatican ...



Hercules Biblioteca
1982

Even the Vatican, the smallest State in the world, has a passion for soccer, and organizes as many as four soccer competitions per year: the "Vatican Championship", the "Vatican Cup" and the "Vatican Super Cup," played by the employees and servicemen of the State offices and Dicasteries. The fourth event is called the "Clericus Cup," and is for priests and seminarians from the various Vatican colleges.

Only one "foreigner" per team is allowed, that is, someone who is not a Vatican employee, and his job is to be the goalkeeper in order to avoid excessive scoring. The matches take place outside the Vatican, but within the vicinity, in the field of the Oratory of St. Peter.

We have records from the first Florentine soccer match played on January 7, 1521 in the Cortile del Belvedere, with an exceptional spectator, Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici, 1475 - December 1, 1521). In the eighteenth century, the Belvedere team, which played in the courtyard, competed with Rospigliosi, who played at the Quirinale for the state championship, in a sort of derby.

In the past century, a first quadrangular was played in 1947. Many years later, the ACDV association (*Attività Calcistica dei Dipendenti Vaticani*, or "Football Activities of Vatican Employees") was born, which began organizing matches starting in 1966, when the Hermes Sports Society of the Vatican Museums was founded. Shortly afterwards, more groups of Vatican employee teams were also formed, from other Dicasteries: the Virtus Vigilanza (Vatican Police), the APSA Aries (*Amministrazione Patrimonio Sede Apostolica*, or "the Heritage Administration of the Apostolic See"), the Sampietrini and the Hercules Library (the Vatican Library), which all competed in the Hermes Tournament. Other teams soon joined, playing friendly matches that were organized between teams more informally. The first Vatican championship dates back to 1972-1973, upon the initiative of Sergio Valci (1939-2012, much appreciated official and director of FAS (*Fondo Assistenza Sanitaria*, or "Healthcare Assistance"), the "Friendship



From left: Sergio Valci, Remo Parlani, the Prefect Alfons Stickler (and later Card.); Pino Di Mastromatteo (with the cup), Federico Sardella and Arnaldo Mampieri

Cup," in which seven teams participated: the Governorate, Hermes / Vatican Museums, Astor Osservatore Romano, Vatican Radio, Sanpietrini, the Vatican Press, and Virtus Vigilanza (Gendarmerie). Astor won the match.

The employees of the Library who participated in the championship tell us that their Superiors supported and encouraged their "own" teams; the players were assembled independently from the hierarchy in the workplace, and had a role determined by each person's individual competence. The authorities often attended the games, and distances between roles diminished, thanks to the sharing of the common feeling in view of the goal to be achieved. The main goal was to have a good game with respect and understanding, regardless of the result, while ties are strengthened through mutual knowledge in a context outside the workplace.

The Vatican Library team also had its moment of glory when it won the championship in 1982, the year when Italy won the World Cup, which we gladly here commemorate.

Participating in a sport like soccer promotes good feelings, despite the fatigue, it gathers people together, encourages discussion, it is free, without pursuit of individual interests, with only common goals to achieve.



From left: Guido Zaroni, Msgr. Paolo De Nicolò, Rev. Alfons Stickler, Arnaldo Mampieri and Mauro Mocavini

The Japanese Prime Minister and the Tenshō Embassy



The Prime Minister of Japan, Fumio Kishida, accompanied by a delegation of officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Dicasteries, the Japanese ambassador to the Holy See and officials from the same embassy visited the Vatican Library on Tuesday, May 3, entering the Library by way of the Lapidary Gallery.

Mr. Kishida had expressly asked to be able to see the fresco in the Sistine Hall which represents the procession with the newly elected Sixtus V, en route from St. Peter's to the papal Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, on May 1, 1585. Four young Japanese from the "Tenshō Embassy" (*Tenshō ken-o shisetsu*), the first Japanese to arrive in Europe, were also in the procession.

On that historic trip to Europe were two representatives of the most important Christian families (*daymiō*) in Japan, and two other young nobles, all coming from the military aristocracy (*buke*). Several other companions traveled with them, including the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), who, however, had to make a stop in Goa along the way, since in the meantime he had been appointed Provincial of the Indies; he had learned the language and customs in Japan, when he had carried out his mission of evangelization. The mission in Japan began in 1551 with the Spaniard Francis Xavier (1505-1552).



Valignano organized the trip in order to demonstrate and make known the work of evangelization that had been successful in Japan thanks to the respect and high regard for the local culture of the missionaries, who had learned the local language and customs. By so doing, it would have been possible to obtain new funds from the Curia to continue the mission, and to make European culture known in Japan.

The four young men, Itō Mancio (Sukemasu), Michael Chijiwa (Seizaemon), Julian Nakaura (who died a martyr in 1630) and Martin Hara left Kyūshū on 20 February 1582 to return home only in 1590. After visiting Portugal and Spain, they sailed to Italy and arrived in Livorno on March 1, 1585.



Msgr. Pasini offers the Prime Minister an image of the fresco with the four Japanese young men

They were able to meet Pope Gregory XIII a few days before his death, which took place on the following April 10. The pontiff gave them a gift of the church of Santa Maria dell'Orto, in Trastevere, the church of the Japanese. They also met Sixtus V (Felice Peretti, 1521-1590), who was elected on April 24. The Pope requested their presence as he went to the Lateran for the traditional "taking possession" of the keys to the city. The four young men then continued their trip to Italy by visiting different cities before leaving in August. The travel diaries of the men have been lost, but *De missione* remains, the work of Valignano, drafted on the basis of the notes of the young Japanese men.

The fresco was shown to Mr. Kishida by the Prefect, Msgr. Cesare Pasini. The welcome guest then walked through the Sistine Hall observing the frescoes that tell of the historical and cultural events of humanity from ancient times to the end of the 16th century, and the exaltation of the pontificate of Felice Peretti, the last Pope Sixtus.

With Bosch in Budapest



Among the exhibitions in which the Library has recently participated, we note the exhibition *Between Hell and Paradise: the curious World of Hieronymus Bosch* (c. 1450-1516), held at the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, from April 7 to July 17. As an initiative dedicated to a painter, it is a truly special opportunity for participation.

Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450-1516) was a singular and mysterious artist, who worked in a unique spiritual and visionary context, and who still offers much food for thought and discussion on the possible interpretations of his works. The Museum endeavored to offer a general view of his work and the sources that inspired the artist's intricate paintings, such as the grotesque and monstrous representation of Heaven and Hell.

The Library participated in the event by lending the "Choir Book", Chig. C. VIII. 234 for the occasion. The manuscript dates from the end of the 15th century and is one of the earliest and most precious sources of music. It has a great value since it is not only a repertoire of several ancient musical texts, but constitutes a substantial and visual testimony of the cultural and social environment that produced it.

It contains the rare texts of twenty-one masses, thirteen of which are by Johannes Ockeghem (among these is the first polyphonic *Requiem* that has been passed down to us). Twelve motets of these works are unique, and half are by Johannes Regis. The manuscript was made in the Burgundian Netherlands between 1496 and 1515, in the workshop of Pietro Alamire (Pietro van den Hove / Imhoff, ca. 1470-1536), active in Flanders at the end of the 15th century, whose work contributed greatly to the diffusion of the polyphonic music of the Low Countries in Europe. The Alamire Foundation, International Center for the Study of Music in the Netherlands (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium) is named after him.

After arriving in the hands of Spanish families, the manuscript was then purchased in the sixties of the seventeenth century by Fabio Chigi (1599-1667), Pope Alexander VII (1655), a bibliophile with a passion for music.

It came to the Library in 1923, with the rest of the *Chigi Library*. The codex features calligraphic initials and is embellished with miniatures made by Flemish artists. It was made for the nobleman Philippe Bouton (1418-1515), lord of Corberon, (coat of arms on f. 249v), cousin of Olivier de la Marche, who was in the service of the Dukes of Burgundy.

The miniatures make this manuscript, which contains sacred compositions, unique in terms of quantity, quality, and beauty. Some are devotional illustrations, but in most cases, they are not pious subjects, but rather earthly or fantastic, grotesque, and satirical figures. Such are the folios displayed in the exhibition (153v-154r), within the text that contains the *Missa In Myne Zyn* for four voices, by the Flemish composer Alessandro Agricola (Ackermann, c. 1457-1506), a pupil of Ockeghem.

And it is precisely for the miniatures that our codex was included in the exhibition, which presented about half of the works produced by the Dutch artist.

The arrangement of the exhibition was aptly done: the Vatican codex was placed next to the painting known as the *Concert in the egg* (post 1549), which is not attributable to Bosch, but to an artist close to his style. This painting involves a strange representation of figures who play and sing, seated in a large shell of an egg – philosopher's egg, used as a container by alchemists –; they follow incredulously the musical text in the book that one of the figures holds open.

The fact that music was produced and played was a matter of fact at that time, but that it could be written and read was a wonder.

The text features the notes and lyrics of a love song, written over thirty years after Bosch's death by the Flemish composer Tomas Krekillon.

Listening to the music from the work, which is in the book, playing in the background, while observing the painting and the musical manuscript of the Vatican Museum, makes for a poignant experience.

Fifty years after the death of Card. Tisserant

It was February 21, 1972 when “le prince Eugène” passed away, Card. Eugène Tisserant, “the Frenchman,” Librarian and Archivist of the Holy Roman Church and since 1951 Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals. He was born in Nancy on March 24, 1884.

A day of study at the Teutonic College on 21 February commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Card. Tisserant’s death, which was also attended by the current Librarian, Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça.

As an Orientalist, but also biblical scholar – a pupil of Marie-Joseph Lagrange –, he was called to Rome in 1908 to teach the Syriac language and to deal with oriental manuscripts in the Vatican Library, first as an assistant, then as *scriptor orientalis*.

In 1913 he gave up the Chair of Eastern Studies to devote himself completely to the Library. “Nothing to ask, nothing to refuse” was his motto. He obeyed, but not without expressing his views.

He served his country during World War I and was always a “good soldier of the Church.”

In April 1923, together with another colleague, the compatriot priest, Cyril (Charon) Korolewsky (1878-1959), left for a mission that proved fruitful, going to various Balkan countries, then to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Athens, in search of manuscripts to buy for the Library. He made numerous purchases.

From 1930 to 1936 he was pro-prefect “on hand” of the Prefect, Msgr. Giovanni Mercati (1866-1957), a period during which he did not feel valued and suffered greatly.

His presence and commitment were decisive for carrying out the twenty-year project for the cataloging of manuscripts and printed matter, including incunabula, undertaken in 1927 with the financial support of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which earned him another nickname, “the American.” He was a modern librarian, very active, a polyglot who knew thirteen languages (modern and ancient), endowed with management and vision skills. He had a spirit open to the innovations and advantages that cooperation on every level could provide.

In 1936, Tisserant, also known as “*barbadirame*” (“copper-beard”) obtained the cardinalate and the post of secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church; he then became, “the Oriental.” He kept this demanding position until 1959.

Tisserant was involved with every aspect related to



Eugène Card. Tisserant

the life and management of the Library during all the years he spent there, most recently as Cardinal Librarian, succeeding Mercati in 1957. Among other things, he actively participated in the arrival of the book collections of some Roman libraries and others as well, including that of Montecassino. This feat included transporting the collections to the Vatican Library, and sheltering them from the bombings of 1943-1944. They remained at the Library until the end of the war. While transporting materials from Grottaferrata, he dislocated his shoulder.

As a very active personality in every way, he did not neglect his studies (as, in fact, he himself sometimes would say), since he managed to publish no less than 210 publications.

He was described as a man of not easy character, but generous and very committed to social issues. He always confronted problems with a diligent impulse to resolve them. He was magnanimous with the French and Italian Jews, and also acted in favor of the German Jews. For example, Giorgio Levi della Vida (1886-1967), who was a collaborator of the Library from 1931 onward after having lost his professorship at the Royal Oriental Institute (where he taught Arabic language and literature, for refusing to swear allegiance to the king and the regime), remembered Card. Tisserant’s ability to value people for their worth which was all the greater when it was less pretentious.

On August 9, 2021, Tisserant was recognized “just among the nations” by Yad Vashem for having helped several people who were persecuted during fascism, and for having saved Cesare Verona, his wife, and his children by hiding them, along with another Jewish family, in his private residence.

As Nello Vian had written with a Thomistic spirit in one of his articles on the Cardinal: with respect to Tisserant, “*Obligatio gratitudinis interminabilis est.*”



Gustave de Molinari's library

The Belgian scholar of political economy, Gustave de Molinari, son of Count Molinari, a member of the Institut de France, died ninety years ago. He was born in Liège on March 3, 1819. A strong advocate of free trade (a system based on the natural principles of the organization of the market) he was editor of the *Journal des économistes* from 1881 to 1909 and author of several books on economics and finance.



His book collection, increased by his heir Tito Molinari, director of the Italian Discount Bank in Rome, was donated to the Vatican Library in 1919 by Elisa Molinari Bronner (†1922). Prefect Giovanni Mercati (1866-1957) recorded its arrival: "September 16 and 17. Transported to the Library and placed in the Congress room, according to what H.E. Mons. Ratti had established with the donor in 1917, are the books and artistic bookshelves donated by Mrs. Elisa, Molinari's widow who lives in Palazzo Fiano, via Lucina 17."



The beautiful furniture of Molinari's studio has adorned and still adorns the Cardinal Librarian's room over time and in various locations.

The Molinari collection, which comprises 1,041 titles, contains works on history, economics, finance, literature, philosophy, etc., from the 19th and 20th centuries, in Italian and French. The volumes have distributed in various collections of the Library, and the inventory compiled on site has been preserved.

The books and furniture of the Molinari's library remind us of the generosity of the Belgian family, which remains among us with their beautiful and most appreciated gesture.

*"Just as war is the natural consequence of monopoly,
peace is the natural consequence of liberty."*

Gustave de Molinari



A book about the history of the automation of the Vatican Library



On Tuesday, May 24, the American Studies Center hosted the presentation of the book by our retired colleague Luciano Ammenti, *Per litteras ad astra. Storia dell'automazione della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana dalla carta al digitale*, published by Aracne.

In a room full of people, including friends and colleagues, Luciano traced the first, ground-breaking steps of a journey that the Papal Library took toward the use of modern technology. The Library was the first of the Vatican dicasteries to begin the process, which was initiated precisely by Ammenti, hired at the Library in 1983.

The potential of the automation of library services was then beginning to be evaluated. Such an automation was strongly desired by Fr. Leonard E. Boyle, OP, prefect of the Vatican Library from 1984, who had arrived in September with the first funds to be used for the purpose. The process began in 1985 with the use of the GEAC 8000 system. Beginning from the cataloging records of the printed publications, all the services were gradually computerized. The digital world that we know today was still unimaginable, but the potential of the systems that automated many operations and services became immediately clear, and the process has moved forward unceasingly ever since.

"Computerizing the Vatican Library was not a job that a technician could do. Not even the best team of technicians in the world would have succeeded," states Ammenti. "Without a deep familiarity with the entity, without respect for the professions of librarians, cataloguers, paleographers, archivists, restorers, photographers, and every human resource available within it, we were destined to fail. To be frank, for the project to succeed, it was necessary for people who were part of the Library to undertake the project."

From the computerized catalog, which called for the inclusion of information in MARC (MACHINE READABLE CATALOGUING) format, developed by the Library of Congress, an internal network was drafted and then created with the digital management of the data of new acquisitions, photographic requests, and administrative data.

The time also came to create a catalog to be shared with va-

rious scientific institutions based in Rome, the URBS network (*Unione Romana Biblioteche Scientifiche*), with connections in CDN (CIRCUITO DIRETTO NUMERICO), in collaboration with Telecom, one of the first CDN connections in Italy made for data transmission. The project, which began in 1992, has been carried out for about a decade, with great participation not only on an institutional level; it has proved to be an important, and at times difficult, but always stimulating experience, even on a human level.

New technologies, the first set of contacts with the internet, the "telematic highways" in national territory, have accelerated the passage of information. A graphic interface has developed, allowing access to addresses in a hypertextual modality, that is, the World Wide Web, going from the mainframe, where the activities of the single workstations converged, to the personal computer, with local resources that made it possible to streamline the amount of information coming from the main computer.

The process began with the acquisition and computerization of paper catalogs, starting from that of printed books, which amounted to about five million catalogue cards, and then that of other materials, with the support of IBM, then one of the most advanced companies in IT. IBM provided the hardware and software needed to build a new computer network, and in 1999 the Library's OPAC (*Online Public Access Catalog*) came to light.

We also began to think about the possibility of digitizing manuscripts with cameras that produced image files instead of photographs, which constituted a huge challenge in our case, given that the Library's heritage consists of 80,000 manuscripts. IBM could not provide a solution to the new challenge. It took some time to analyze the case before a project could then take shape, one that involves the digitization of all manuscripts and the long-term preservation of the digital library with the FITS (*Flexible Image Transport System*) format. This ambitious project also started with Ammenti, in 2012, in collaboration with NASA. To date, almost 24,000 manuscripts have been digitized and published online, all accessible for free (<https://digi.vatlib.it/>).

We thank Luciano Ammenti for his precious work.

Other visits

Ayatollah Ali Reza Arafī



On the morning of June 1, Ayatollah Ali Reza Arafī, President of the Islamic Seminaries of the Islamic Republic of Iran, came to visit with a delegation of seven people. The group entered the Sistine Library from the Lapidary Gallery. They were received by the Librarian, the Prefect and the Vice-Prefect of the Library.

The orientalist Fr. Adrien de Fouchier, OP, Vice-assistant, showed the gracious guests some valuable manuscripts that had not yet been digitized: the *Koran* of Vat.

ar. 1050, one of the manuscripts written in Arabic with Persian translation preserved in the Library, dating to 1172; *Barb. or.* 36, ff. 132-181, a text containing algebra of the Persian 'Umar al-Ḥayyām, with geometric designs of the algebraic text in Arabic; *Vat. pers.* 51, with poetic texts in the language of Persia on beautiful paper of Persian production; *Vat. ar.* 533, from the year 1333, in which the name of the Iranian city of Yazd appears (f. 45r), one of the oldest cities in the world, and which is, as was learned during the visit, the city where Ayatollah Ali Reza Arafī was born.



Vat. ar. 533, f. 48v-49r



Vat. ar. 1050, f. 1v-2r



Representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Churches



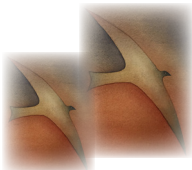
A pan-Orthodox delegation made up of young priests from the autocephalous Eastern Orthodox Churches visited the Vatican Apostolic Library on Thursday, June 2.

The heads of the respective Churches chose a group of eighteen priests and monks to make a study trip to Rome from May 31 to June 6. They were able to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic Church by visiting Vatican dicasteries, academic and cultural institutions.

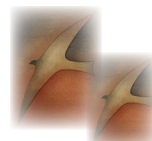
The Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity promoted the initiative, which also offered them a visit to the Vatican Library.

The Delegation, accompanied by Br. Hyacinthe Desivelles, OP, Official of the Eastern Section of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, included the Reverend Fathers Yakobos Abdelmalek, Abraam Nasralla and Bfnotios Soliman from the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Egypt; Tigran Badiryan, Arsen Mirzoyan and Ruben Zargaryan from the Armenian Apostolic Church (See of Etchmiadzin, Armenia); Hovagim Panjarjaian, Nareg Terterian and Oshin Yartan from the Armenian Apostolic Church (See of Antelias, Lebanon); Aashu Mattackal from the Syrian Malankara Orthodox Church; Gebre Egziabher Worku Beyene from the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia; Youhanna Alzukeymi, George Gloire, from the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch; Zeraï Yemane Zereasslassieb and Solomon Mesein from the Orthodox Church of Eritrea.

On June 3, the delegation was able to meet Pope Francis in a private audience, during which the Holy Father, referring to Pentecost, highlighted “four cardinal points of full communion”: *unity is a gift, unity is harmony, unity is a journey, unity is not an end in itself, but is for the mission.*



The Norwegian Ambassador to the United Nations



On the afternoon of June 3, the Library had the pleasure of hosting the Ambassador and permanent representative of Norway to the United Nations, based in Rome, Morten von Hanno Aasland, together with Prof. Ola Mestad, professor of law at the University of Oslo. Rome hosts the three United Nations agencies that deal with food and agriculture: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Program (WFP).

A long-time diplomat, Ambassador Aasland assumed his current post in 2020.

During the informal and friendly meeting, the welcome guests were able to visit the historical rooms of the Papal Library and appreciate some aspects related to the history of the Papal Institution.



H.E. Morten von Hanno Aasland and prof. Ola Mestad

A grateful greeting to Sr. Gabriella

On Friday June 23, before the Library opened to readers, all Vatican employees gathered in the Sistine Hall to say farewell to Sister Gabriella Pettirossi, FSE, who leaves the Library after nine years of service.

Hired in the Library on July 1, 2013, Sister Gabriella immediately took her place here, winning the trust of the Superiors and the respect of the employees as secretary of the Vice-Prefect.

Before Sister Gabriella, two other Franciscan daughters of the Eucharist had carried out the same service in the Library, Sister Catherine Mary Clarke and Sister Jacinta Coscia.

A true and sincere Umbrian, Sister Gabriella has a great sense of humor, which has characterized her daily work in a difficult role. Punctuality, discretion, solicitude, and delicacy are among the qualities that distinguish the work she carried out, which brought her always into contact with the employees of the Library. Sister Gabriella stood out for these and other virtues, and she always gave a smile, a joke, a willingness to listen, a friendly gesture to those in need.



Sister Gabriella joined the congregation founded by Mother Rosemae Pender (1921-2016) in 2008, and she spent several years in the United States before returning to Rome to begin a new experience in the service of the Holy See.

During the small ceremony, Prefect Msgr. Cesare Pasini gave Sister Gabriella some gifts on behalf of the entire Library. Among the gifts was a print made in 1949 by Tranquillo Marangoni with the image of *Saint Francis with birds*. The work in 1950 won 1st prize in the category of Sacred Art Incision in Alessandria.

When she greeted everyone for the last time, Sister Gabriella was moved, and in turn, moved us.

We wish our "Sister" all the best; a new challenge awaits her, and she will certainly be able to face it with all the strength and tenacity of which she is capable.

We greet her with the words she wished to send us before leaving, "words that beautifully express our mission as Christians, which is to love (...) I think that at the end of our days, Jesus will not ask us how many vacation schedules we have registered in the program, how many manuscripts we have cataloged or how many volumes we have restored and photographed (...) he will ask us, rather, if and how we have loved the people with whom he has brought us into contact. And I hope, despite my limitations and shortcomings, that I have given my best to love you all! Words of the Gospel: if you love, you are not wrong. If you love, you will not fail life. If you love, your life has already been a success, anyway."



T. Marangoni, "San Francesco e gli uccelli, woodcut, 1949





In our next issue ...



A new manuscript among the "Vaticani latini"

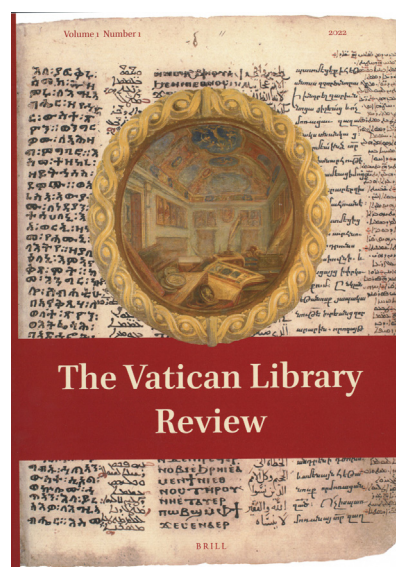
Among the topics for the next issue is the presentation of a "new" manuscript from the Vatican Library. We would like to share a preview of the good news with our readers already in this issue. The codex, which contains the tragedy "Donna Inés de Castro," by António Ferreira (1528-1569), was given

to Pope Francis last June 22 during his Wednesday audience by the representatives of the Irmandade dos Clérigos and of the Santa casa da Misericórdia do Porto. The manuscript arrived a few days later in the Vatican Library, and was placed among the "Vaticani latini."

"The Vatican Library Review"

The first issue of the Library's new periodical, "The Vatican Library Review", has just been released. The Dutch press Brill will publish this international periodical with a six-month frequency. The periodical will offer peer-reviewed articles and research on topics concerning the heritage preserved in the Apostolic Library in English, French, German and Italian.

The issue opens with an editorial by the Librarian Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça, then continues with two articles on ms. Cappon. 227, the first of which is written by François Avril, "Un cycle de Tristan inédit," and the other by Giulia De Simone, "Un esemplio inedito di collezionismo nella Roma del Settecento"; a couple of contributions on two manuscripts from the Archives of the Chapter of St. Peter, "An unpublished illuminated Codex from Catalonia in the Vatican Library," Arch. Cap. S. Pietro. D. 184, by Josefina Planas, and "At the origins of Grimaldi's Album (Arch. Cap. S. Pietro A. 64ter)," by Antonella Ballardini. Lastly, J. H. Chajes and Elzvier Baumgartner present "Visual Kabbalah in the Italian Renaissance," with the critical edition and translation of the text in Vat. ebr. 441, ff. 110r-117v.



<https://brill.com/view/journals/vlrv/vlrv-overview.xml?language=en>

Fonds des Amis de la Bibliothèque Vaticane



Under the auspices of the King Baudouin Foundation, founded in 1976 to support philanthropic projects on an international level, a fund for the Vatican Apostolic Library has recently been allotted.

"The purpose of the fund is: 1. assist the Vatican Library in the conservation, restoration, development, cataloging, digitization, acquisition, promotion and study of its collections consisting mainly of ancient, important and rare manuscripts, incunabula and other books, prints, engravings and drawings, medals and coins, and in the improvement of its structures; 2. maintain and increase the reputation of the Vatican Library in all forms around the globe; 3. encourage the creation of similar associations abroad and promote the establishment and maintenance of collections in various ways; 4. increase access to students and researchers around the world; 5. develop existing relationships with foreign institutions that are interested in the Vatican Library."

This is a wonderful initiative for which we are grateful to the promoters, and we hope for the best possible collaboration to achieve the goals that were established.

*The Vatican Apostolic Library wishes
to thank
The Sanctuary of Culture Foundation
and*

- ADORA ITC s.r.l.
- Catholic Bishop's Conference of Korea
- Diocesi di Lanusei
- Fondation Avita Novare, under the aegis of the Fondation de Luxembourg
- Fondazione e Archivio Maria Lai
- 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
- Musei Vaticani
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- Samuel H. Kress Foundation
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- Stiftelsen Konung Gustav VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur

- The Swedish Academy
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- UNIAPAC Foundation
- Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg



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- Franco Bevilacqua
- Eva Borzoni
- H.E. Åke Bonnier and Kristina Gustafsson Bonnier
- Simona Giampaoli and family
- Frank J. Hanna
- Warren Kirkendale
- Pietro Ruffo
- Anthony Mandekic, Eric Esrailian and Lindy Schumacher
- Bill and Ann Marie Teuber
- Giovanni Tommasi Ferroni
- Scott and Lannette Turicchi



**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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