

An example of intercultural and interreligious dialogue

On July 19-21 in the Vatican Library, in collaboration with the Marshall T. Mayer Latin American Rabbinical Seminary, the first training program on Hebrew manuscripts was held. Attendees came from different places and religious backgrounds.

The Librarian, H.E. Msgr. Angelo Vincenzo Zani, formally presided over the ceremony that inaugurated the course. Also in attendance were the Prefect Don Mauro Mantovani, Vice-Prefect Timothy Janz, Rabbi Ariel Stofenmacher, rector of the Seminary, which is based in Buenos Aires, and authorities from the governments of Israel and Argentina.

As the Librarian recalled in his opening speech, the initiative came about after a meeting with the Holy Father by a group of Latin American rabbis, during which important and topical issues had been addressed. The meeting was followed by a visit to the Papal Library. On that occasion, the guests were shown documents of special interest to Jewish culture, which in turn inspired the project.





The meeting engages and deepens the topic of dialogue that is so dear to the pontiff, a dialogue that is achieved by looking at each other, listening to each other, getting to know each other, trying to understand each other, and seeking points of contact.

Rabbi Stofenmacher emphasized, "This is the pope of fraternal dialogue, the one who generates surprising things like this program of study."

The Vatican Library's collection of Jewish documents consists of nearly 1,000 manuscripts, valuable testimonies to the cultural and religious heritage of the Jewish people.

There are Torah scrolls, biblical and exegesis texts, rabbinic literature, Jewish philosophy, liturgical books, poetry, scientific and kabbalistic texts. These are manuscripts made mainly between the 12th and 15th centuries, but there are also older ones produced between the 9th and 11th centuries, periods that include the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the expulsion of Jews from Spain.

"This collection is one of the most important in the world, especially for the originality of the copies and texts that have shed light on the search for fundamental works of Judaism."



The proceedings began with an introduction by Claudia Montuschi, Director of the Manuscripts Department, which was followed by talks on the history of the Library and the Jewish manuscript collection.

The topics of Judeo-Xenian writings (Hebrew alphabet, but different languages) and the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the study of Judaism and Christianity were also explored.

of Jewish or Semitic academic programs were developed around the world in the 20th century. Between the wars, several European-trained scholars and rabbis reached Latin America to revive local Jewish communities through an organization called CENTRA, which connected Central European emigrants.

These rabbis, together with the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, under the leadership of Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, founded the Buenos Aires Seminary in 1962. Today the Seminary is the leading Jewish academic institution in Latin America. Its mission is to help transform the world through education, the training of scholars, lay and religious leaders, educators and the promotion of human rights and interfaith dialogue.

The Library showed its support in joining the effort toward such a noble goal, by mission and with deep conviction.

Rabbi Stofenmacher wished to state, "We are extremely grateful to our brethren at the Vatican Library for their magnanimity in opening their doors and hearts to us to pursue what for us began as a mere dream a year ago."







The second day dealt with the Talmud and Talmudic commentaries found in Vatican manuscripts. Also discussed was the exegetical investigation, or Midrash, of sacred texts, as well as biblical interpretation found in ancient manuscripts.

The last day, which opened on the subject of Talmud censorship, was devoted to studying some original Hebrew manuscripts and visiting the Photographic and Restoration Laboratories.

Lectures were given by prominent scholars such as Rabbis Adolfo Roitman, David Golinkin and Ariel Stofenmacher; Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, Craig Morrison, Leonardo Pessoa, Sarit Shalev-Eyni, Marco Morselli, Stephen Metzger and Delio Vania Proverbio.

The Rabbinical Seminary traces its origins to the founding of the group "Organization for Jewish Culture and Science," which took place in Berlin in 1819; the group consisted of seven intellectuals including Eduard Gans, Heinrich Heine and Leopold Zunz.

In time, several Jewish academic programs were stared between Berlin, Budapest and London, while hundreds

The Librarian, for his part, was keen to affirm, "We gratefully welcome this relevant program of study, and we are strongly convinced that fruitful and significant research paths will flow for the disciplines they influence. We thus wish to confirm our adherence to the original project desired by the pontiffs, who have always affirmed that culture and knowledge play a decisive role within the mission of the Church."

The course concluded with the intonation of a prayer known as Kol Nidré, from one of the examined manuscripts.



Donations from engraver Gianni Verna





In June of 2023, artist Gianni Verna donated to the Vatican Library his latest work inspired by Frederick II of Swabia's treatise *De Arte venandi cum avibus*, the oldest and most famous copy of which is preserved in the Vatican Library and bears the shelfmark *Pal. lat.* 1071 (which ranks it among the *Palatini latini*) - https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.lat.1071.

Verna's work, consisting of 12 woodcuts made on large (40x200 cm) Indian ink paper, joins other creations of his already present in the Library, such as the series of animals taken from the writings of Aesop and Aristophanes or from the poem *Batracomiomachia*, the majestic *Aiguille de Blaitière*, the *Hedgehogs*, and the *Rose*.

Gianfranco Schialvino, Verna's friend and colleague, describes the artist's new composition as a liber mutus in the text that accompanies the work: "wordless books are based exclusively on the sequence of images: the absence of text eliminates any barrier: rather, it accompanies the work in the formulation of the story, stimulating one to notice the details, to dwell on its particularities, summoning to interpretation." Verna, "an artist by vocation and xylographer by predilection," projects the xylographic images before the reader like a film, connecting the human universe and nature, dream and reality, light and shadow, voids and solids, in a single vision. The artist operates through the heavy strokes that characterize his art, skillfully using large backgrounds as well as the most minute details in a complex play of chiaroscuro, of spaces and volumes, of flashes of light and patches of color.

In September, a new donation from artist Gianni Verna arrived at the Library: two woodcut works - *Pape Satàn*, *pape Satàn aleppe* and *Il Bestiario Infernale* - both published in 2021 on the occasion of the seventh centenary of Dante Alighieri's death. They came accompanied by an explanatory text signed once again by his friend and colleague Gianfranco Schialvino and the Dantean tercets to which the images refer.

Born in Turin in 1942, Verna is one of Italy's most admired engravers. A graduate of the Accademia Albertina in Turin and pupil of Francesco Casorati in painting and Francesco Franco in graphic art, he taught courses in woodcut at the International School of Specialization for Graphic Art, "Il Bisonte", in Florence. For years he devoted himself to woodcut, finally choosing this art form as his preferred medium of expression.

He has showcased his work in numerous collaborative and solo shows in Italy and abroad from the 1960s to the present, and his works are kept in some of Italy's most renowned graphic collections. Together with Gianfranco Schialvino in 1987 he founded the "Nuova Xilografia" association with the intention of promoting this antique form of printing through exhibitions, conferences, seminars, and courses.

For the past few years, "Nuova Xilografia" has participated in the organization of exhibitions and published books with original engravings and folders of graphic art such as *Alxyone*, *Legni incisi per Montale*, and *Vignes et vignobles du Piemont*, already in the Library's collections.

In 1997, on the occasion of the association's tenth anniversary, *SMENS* was founded, the only magazine to be printed with movable type and illustrated by woodcuts specially engraved and submitted by more than fifty artists, both Italian and foreign. At present, it remains a point of reference that periodically joins together the best contemporary engravers.

A meeting to start the new year

In proximity of the reopening of the Library to scholars, on September 12, the feast day of the name of Mary, the Library authorities chose to meet with all employees and collaborators to emphasize the sense of living and working together, to help nurture relations among all, and to make known to all the program of activities for the year that is beginning.

Gathering together in the reading room for Printed Books, we learned about the busy calendar ahead, had a time of reflection, and shared a moment for questions and considerations.

The Librarian, H.E. Msgr. Angelo Vincenzo Zani, informed those present of his August 21 conversation with the Holy Father, one year into his tenure, to share what is being done in the Library and to submit to the Pontiff the work plan that the head of the dicastery intends to carry out. During the meeting with the Librarian, His Holiness reiterated His closeness to this institution and in the following days made it known that He welcomed the proposed work plan.

The events that will take place in the Vatican Library during the year were discussed, as well as collaborations that are taking shape. All such activities represent the institution's growing openness, as indicated by the Pope, who in conferring the task on His Excellency Msgr. Zani had recommended to him, "go and open!" The Library has always been open to study and research, and now it is more and more open to the new needs that the times impose.

We "open" ourselves without misrepresenting our mission and history, welcoming the challenges that come our way with a generous, truly altruistic spirit. Much work lies ahead of us, in addition to our ordinary activities, which involve important institutional aspects and environments, work on some facilities, important anniversaries to remember, and participation in major international events. In this sense, the Library for some time now has also begun to "go out" of institutional spaces to meet other realities and make itself known, with collaboration and with educational and scientific proposals; this, too, is "opening up," to broaden the scope of collaboration.

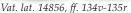


Raffaele Casimiri and his book collection











Casimiro Raffaele Casimiri died eighty years ago, on April 15, 1943. He was born in Gualdo Tadino, in the province of Perugia, on November 3, 1880. He was ordained a priest on June 21, 1903.

Known especially as a musician, composer, and musicologist, the "wizard of polyphony" was maestro of the Chapel of the Basilica of St. John Lateran and professor of sacred music at the Roman Major Seminary and at the Pontifical School of Sacred Music, later the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music; a true "reformer of sacred music," who worked to bring about the "service of musical art to the liturgy, the revival of classical polyphony, and the enhancement and ennoblement of true sacred music."

The Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music reached its current status with the constitution *Deus scientiarum Dominus*, dated May 24, 1931, by which Pius XI equated it with other pontifical universities and faculties, and authorized it to grant baccalaureate, licentiate and doctoral degrees.

"He was not only a great master of art, but a true master in the highest sense of the word," recalled one of his students.

"From the height of his own, elevated level he knew

how to descend as a friend and companion to the plane of our inferiority, which he did with ease and amiability."

He is credited with founding in 1924 the journal *Note di archivio per la storia musicale*, which continuted to be published until 1943 and was one of the first in Italy to offer unedited archival documents. He was a friend of Don Lorenzo Perosi (1872-1956), Maestro of the Sistine Chapel from 1899, a musician and composer whose works are preserved in the Vatican Library.

The prefect of the Library Anselmo Maria Albareda (1892-1966) had sent a report to the Cardinal Secretary of State on July 2, 1943 on his library, which is of particular musicological interest, with contains about 3,400 volumes for the 2,662 shelfmarks, as well as a good number of manuscripts.

The book collection was acquired by Pius XII (1939-1958) and was transported to the Vatican Library from the Lateran during 1945. The works reflect "the activity of Casimiri's researcher, publisher, choir director, aimed at recovering the ancient sacred music heritage and breathing new life into contemporary liturgical music production." Nearly all volumes feature Fr. Casimiri's particular *ex-libris*, a Psalter initial on which the former shelfmark was placed.



The "Ottoboniani" of the Queen

In addition to the *Reginensi* collection, which includes manuscripts mostly belonging to Queen Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), the Vatican Library also preserves another 240 manuscripts that were part of the same collection but which came into the collection of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, when the Cardinal acquired the manuscripts put up for sale after her death of the sovereign. Textually, these manuscripts were considered duplicates of manuscripts already owned by the Library.

Pietro Ottoboni senior (1610-1691) established the family library. He became a cardinal in 1652 and was elected pontiff in 1689, taking the name Alexander (VIII).

Part of the book collection of the Altemps family was joined to the *Ottoboniana* collection in 1690, as a gift from Duke Peter (d. 1691).

Upon the death of Alexander VIII, his library was assigned to Pietro Ottoboni junior (1667-1740), his great-grandson and cardinal from 1689. A scholar and music lover, Pietro greatly enriched the collection; his printed books were later dispersed between 1745 and 1746, while the manuscripts were purchased in 1748 by Benedict XIV for the papal library.

Part of the family archive is preserved in the *Ottoboni Computisteria*, in the Archives Section of the Library; this part arrived at the Vatican Library in 1902 together with the *Barberini Archives*.

The *Ottoboniana Library* includes 473 Greek manuscripts and 3,379 Latin manuscripts.





Ott.lat.1271

Ott.lat.603



Ott.lat.763

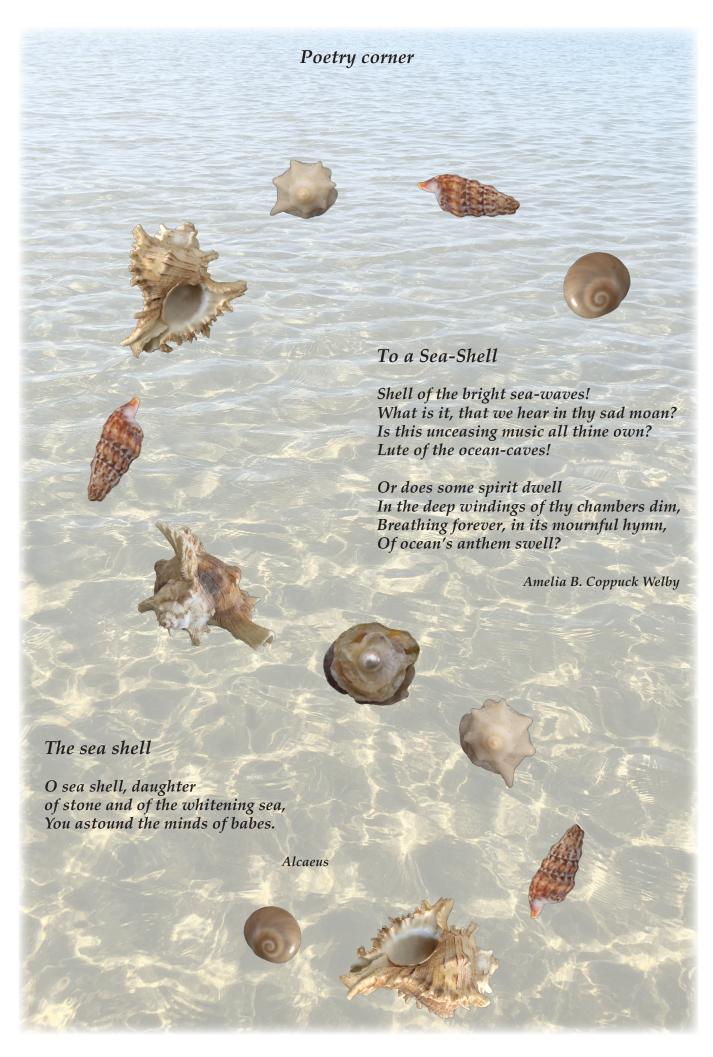


Ott.lat.735, ff. 52v-53r

Thanks to the projects supported by the Wallenberg Foundation and by the Swedish Academy, as we have mentioned on other occasions, it was possible to digitize the *Ottoboniani-Reginensi* manuscripts as well.

As far as digitization is concerned, the project has come to an end (only a few manuscripts could not be digitized because of their conservation conditions), and work is being done on their catalographic description through metadata.

Once again, we would like to express our deep gratitude to these institutions and to all those who have worked so hard to make such an important undertaking possible; in particular, we thank Ambassadors Emeriti of Sweden to the Holy See Fredrik Vahlquist, Cecilia Björner and Andrès Jato for their commitment and friendship.



Greetings to the Librarian Emeritus, Card. Raffaele Farina

Last September 24th, Card. Raffaele Farina, Librarian Emeritus of the Vatican Library, celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

The entire Library community gathered to wish their best to the Cardinal on September 29th, the liturgical feast of the Archangels, in the Sistine Hall.

That same morning Card. Farina received a greeting from the Holy Father, which was read by Prefect Don Mauro Mantovani.

«On your name day, I wish you all the best. In remembering with gratitude your quiet and competent service to the Holy See and to the Church, I invoke the protection of the Archangel Raphael and send you my blessing, which I willingly extend to those who are dear to you, asking you to pray for me. Francis."

The Salesian Card. Farina led the Library as prefect from 1997 until 2007, when he was appointed Archivist and Librarian of the H.R.C. He was made cardinal on November 24, 2007.

The Cardinal wished to commemorate his arrival at

the Library by reading the speech he gave on the day of his inauguration, May 25, 1997, in the old headquarters of the School of Library Science on the ground floor of the Sistine building. For those who were present at the time, it was moving to hear those words again.

Over the years that he spent in the Library, he honored the promise that he made at that time: "I will commit myself completely and totally to the service of this Institution".

During the summer of that year, he dedicated himself to the study of the Vatican Library and its organization and in September he presented his report to the Secretary of State. He highlighted the strengths and the weaknesses found, adding his proposals for improvement, which he implemented in the following years.

A calm man of few words, he governed the Library with sobriety and attention to people, whom he tried to understand in order to entrust them with the tasks that seemed most suitable to each one, so that all of them could give the best of their abilities.

Best wishes from all of us, dear Eminence and ad multos annos, as was written in the Library's greeting card



Visit of Korea's foreign minister and conclusion of Korean project

On August 1, Mr. Jin Park, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, met with members of the Library government, accompanied by H.E. Ms. Hyunjoo OH, the country's ambassador to the Holy See, Embassy Counselor Mr. Dongyool Chang and a delegation from the Ministry.

The distinguished guest was able to visit the historical rooms of the Library and take a close look at some important Korean documents, with which he took a pause to admire for a while.

During the visit, it was also possible to update Mr. Park on the project carried out thanks to the generous contribution of the Korean government, which has reached us through the Korean Bishops' Conference over the course of the past four years. This contribution has enabled the digitization, restoration, and description of numerous Korean documents and those belonging to the geographical areas of the Far East, as well as a good number of manuscripts that are part of the "heritage of humanity."

We are very grateful to the Republic of Korea for the beautiful cooperation, which we hope to be able to and resume and continue in the not-too-distant future.









The visit was planned as on of the activities in celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations established between Korea and the Holy See. Several initiatives took place to mark the festive occasion.

These include the arrival at the Vatican of the marble statue of St. Andrew Kim Taegon (1821-1846), Korea's first priest and martyr, which was installed in an outdoor niche of St. Peter's Basilica.

The initiative, supported and promoted by the Bishops' Conference of Korea, came about at the conclusion of celebrations to commemorate the 200th year of the saint's birth. More than 300 members of the Korean Church arrived in Rome for the occasion and were received by Pope Francis in a private audience on the morning of Sept. 16.

That afternoon, in the Hall of Paul VI, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Holy See organized an anniversary reception and concert with traditional Korean music, with speeches by several authorities representing the two countries.

Collaboration with Avita Novare - Fondation de Luxembourg continues



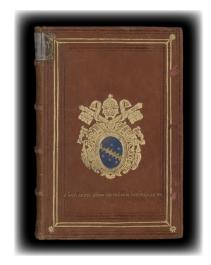
The fruitful collaboration with the Avita Novare Foundation (Fondation de Luxemburg) has been renewed for another four years, 2023-2026. The new agreement includes the digitization of a group of manuscripts selected from the *Vaticani greci* and, where necessary, conservation work is also carried out on the documents before imaging and cataloging description.



Vat. gr. 1161



Vat. gr. 1161, f. 1r



Vat. gr. 1460



Vat. gr. 1460, f. 1r

Three manuscripts were digitized during this period, *Vat. gr.* 1161; *Vat. gr.* 1460 and *Vat. gr.* 1278. They have been published online.

https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1161 https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1460 https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1278

We are grateful to the foundation for its continued support towards the Vatican Library. In particular, we thank Bertrand Meunier for his spirit of cooperation and his commitment to the project.



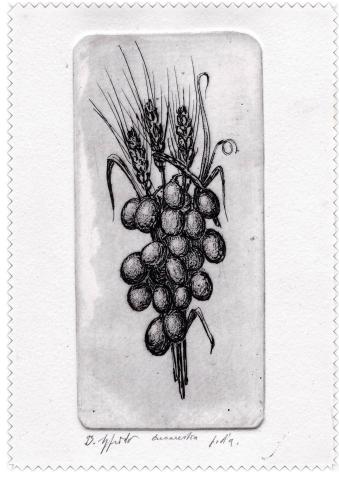
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Vatican Apostolic Library wishes to thank

The Sanctuary of Culture Foundation

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- Gianni Verna



 $S.\ Bartolini,\ "Eucharist"$



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