

VATICAN

VATICAN LIBRARY

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ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2003 – 2004

MANAGEMENT OF THE LIBRARY

In 2003 the Vatican Library concentrated its main efforts on:

- the conservation activities, through the disinfection already started on printed books, and now also on some collections of manuscripts. A new project dealing with the restoration of manuscripts was begun, with the help of external specialists.
- reconstruction of the buildings in order to make the most effective use of spaces which were previously used for other purposes.

LEGISLATION

According to the rules instituted by the “Law on the guardianship of the cultural goods” (25 July 2001), an “Administrative inventory of the manuscripts collections” was provided with the addition of an “Inventory of the catalographic lacunae”. The latter is particularly valuable because, for the first time, it offers information, incomplete, on more than 10.000 manuscript elements belonging to 70 different collections. With regard to the same law, an “Administrative inventory of the artistic objects in the Library” was also provided.

BUILDINGS

Reconstructive works against fire and humidity have been done on the buildings, in accordance with current law. This has allowed us to reutilize spaces no longer used by the School of Library Science, which has been transferred to a location outside of Vatican City. These spaces will be occupied by the Administrative Section and the CED (Centre for Data Elaboration).

The restoration of the frescoed vault of the Vestibule, in collaboration with the Vatican Museums is close to completion. The ancient Sala will be equipped with a new electrical system, and the library's marquetry cabinets, all that remains of the original interior of the old library, the work of a florentine architect, Giovannino de' Dolci, will be restored. A project for the reorganization of the space within the deposit of manuscripts is being evaluated.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND NETWORKS

The development of the software and hardware for the “Security project” is near completion. The first phase deals with the reading rooms; it uses wireless chips with identification technology through radiofrequency which, thanks to a program called Pergamon, allows the checking of the “circulation” of the books inside the Library.

In the Manuscripts Department the transcription into electronic format of the paper cards of the "Index of the authors and works" continued for a number of manuscripts. At the end of the work the data, converted in a different format, will form a core of electronic cataloguing, incomplete, with regard to the transcription, but huge for the number of manuscripts described. For this purpose, a program is being studied in order to convert the data into XML format. A cataloguing program for prints is being realized in the "Gabinetto delle stampe"; it provides a hyper-textual link of images with records, so that they will also be available on the Internet.

In the "Medagliere" (Medal and Coins Dept.), ca. 1000 records have been provided with digital images on the website of the Library.

A new electronic system for the Protocol operations is being studied, which will be more integrated with the other systems in the Library.

COPYRIGHT & PROPERTY RIGHTS

A system of rules is being studied taking into account the international legislation in this matter.

ACQUISITIONS

During the year, 3108 monographic titles have been accessioned and inventoried. Regrading serial publications, 70 new titles have been activated; now there are 1651 current titles registered, 170 of which are collections.

There has also been a meaningful increase in the Incunables collection: 15 editions of XV century acquired in exchange, 4 as gifts, 4, up to now not known, identified in other collections in the Library.

Since July 1st, the Commissione per le accessioni was instituted; it contributes to selecting documents to be included in the collections.

PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION

The Restoration laboratory counted 180 manuscripts repaired, while 8 manuscripts have been repaired in external laboratories, according to a project arranged by the Head of the Restoration laboratory.

In the reading rooms many repairs have been done. The making of special cases for the books in the Sire collections, and for the collection of copper plates in the "Gabinetto delle Stampe", continues. Large size drawings have been removed from their places and put in special cases made for the purpose.

The activity in the preparation of the works destined to the 23 exhibitions that the Library participated, was active and intense.

Extraordinary disinfestation works, planned in the previous years, are in progress (Veloxy system – Very Low OXYgen), so is the dusting of the printed books, at the moment on the Barberini and Mai Collections, and also of some manuscript collections. The dusting of part of the Periodical collections has been finished.

SERVICES TO THE READERS

The Admissions Office granted 1751 annual passes, 1321 temporary, 874 daily, all together 3946 passes have been granted. The Library had 24.724 readers during the year, coming from 60 different countries. The daily average presence was ca.150 readers

In the Printed Books Reading Rooms 19802 readers were registered, 4659 of them in the Periodicals Reading Room; the works requested for consultation were 23753.

In the Manuscripts reading room 9966 readers were registered, with 16.910 requests for manuscripts and archival documents.

The Reference Service seems to be very much appreciated, especially by the newcomers. Beyond the daily activities of reference and orientation on site, many requests for information, by mail or e-mail, have been processed.

The "Copyright and Reproduction" office processed more than 2000 requests, a quarter of which related to the rights for publication.

CULTURAL EVENTS, EXHIBITIONS & PUBLISHING

The "Commissione per le mostre" redefined a few fundamental points in the Rules, in order to limit the damage to the works during the moving to and from the exhibition sites, so as to make the organizers be as attentive as possible with such precious documents on loan. Those changes have been fixed in some clauses that will be added in the Regolamento di prestito of the Library, which is a fundamental part (Regolamento, art. 18) of the Accordo di prestito subscribed by the organizers.

During the year the Library promoted directly just one exhibition: "Il patrimonio culturale monastico", 28 September – 8 November 2003, Vatican City, Vatican Museums, Sixtine Hall, organized by the Holy See on the occasion of the "Giornate Europee del Patrimonio", with the collaboration of the "Pontificia Commissione per i Beni Culturali della Chiesa", the Vatican Library and the Vatican Museums: 22 works were loaned from the Library; the Vatican Library participated in 6 exhibitions in Rome, 7 in other Italian cities, 9 in Europe.

PUBLICATIONS

- D. WILLIMAN – K. CORSANO, Early provenances of Latin Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, Studi e testi, 405.
- C. GIANNELLI (†) – S. GRACIOTTI (cur.), Il messale croato-raguseo (Neofiti 55) della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Studi e testi, 411.
- O. RAINERI, Lettere tra i pontefici romani e i principi etiopici (secoli XII-XX), Studi e Testi, 412
- P. VIAN, Carteggi del card. Giovanni Mercati. I (1889-1936), Studi e testi, 413.
- S. MADDALO, Il De balneis Puteolanis di Pietro da Eboli: realtà e simbolo nella tradizione figurata, Studi e testi, 414.
- Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae X, Studi e testi, 416.
- BORROMEO, A. (cur.), L'inquisizione, Atti del Simposio internazionale sull'inquisizione, Studi e testi, 417.
- T. SCHMIDT, Die Originale Papsturkunde in Norddeutschland (Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein), Index Actorum Romanorum Pontificum ab Innocentio III ad Martinum V electum, 7.
- R. GRÉGOIRE (cur.), Il patrimonio culturale monastico dai manoscritti della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (secc. VIII-XV): alle radici cristiane d'Europa. Mostra organizzata in occasione delle "Giornate Europee del Patrimonio", 29 settembre – 8 novembre 2003.
- Beati Petri Apostoli Epistulae ex Papiro Bodmeriana VIII transcriptae (coedizione con Testimonio Compañia Editorial, Madrid): facsimile ed. and comment edited by card. C. Martini.

- Rerum vulgarium fragmenta di Francesco Petrarca (coedition with Antenore editore): facsimile ed. of the manuscript Vat. lat. 3195.
- Dioscorides Latino (coedition with Testimonio Compañia Editorial, Madrid): facsimile ed. of the manuscript Chig. F. VII. 158.
- Il vivo fonte; trattato del secolo XVI sull'arte del vino (coedition with Textus editore): partial trascription and all the images of Vat. lat. 5372.
- Concili provintiaali o cunvendi i arbenit, reproduction of the volume in Albanian containing the Acts of the Albanian Council of 1703, published in Rome in 1706 (not for sale).

OTHER NOTABLE INFORMATION

Portions of comedies by Menander were found in a parchment palimpsest belonging to Vatican Syriac collectio. Together with the partial text of Dyskilos, there is a large fragment (IV century) of a not yet identified comedy. Its edition is being prepared by Francesco D'Aiuto, who found it, and it will be published in the "Studi e testi" collection.

Increases have been registered in the Department of manuscripts: Vat. Ar. (1), Vat. Far-East (1), Vat. eth. (8), Vat. lat. (9), Vat. syr. (4), "Carte Stefani" (1), "Raineri" (15).

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