

Vatican Library 2001 Report to CENL

1. Management of the library

The quality assessment has yet to be actualized. For now, while waiting for qualified personnel and, little by little, an increased budget, work is in progress for specific sections.

The relinquishment of the Library's Department of the Museums to the Vatican Museums (October 1, 1999) is slowly serving as a means to define more clearly the primary goals of the Library according to the actual norms of the Vatican Library.

2. Electronic publications

A general plan is being specified for electronic publications, to support the printed publications referred to in no. 123. There are two separate large collections of printed books typical to the Vatican Library that could be digitized and made available to the general public of scholars and researchers.

In the meantime, the realization of individual projects continues, for example:

1. the digitization of a selection of 32 Syriac manuscripts, with transcription and text editing; multispectral reproductions of a number of palimpsests (in collaboration with the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, Brigham Young University, Provo Utah, USA);
2. the digitization of the *Canzoniere del Petrarca*, accompanied by the facsimile edition of the Codex Vat. lat. 3195 (in collaboration with the Editore Antenore di Roma);
3. the digitization and edition of the base text of the *Divina Commedia* di Dante Alighieri (Codice Urb. Lat. 366), with transcription, research motor, etc. (in collaboration with the Australian Dante Manuscript Team).

3. Legislation

On September 1, 2001, the new Law on the guardianship of the cultural goods of Vatican City was instituted. With the decree of July 26, 2001, responsibility was delegated to the Vatican Library for the control, inspection, and protection of all goods related to books and archives of Vatican City and extraterritorial property of the Holy See.

In the same Law, all entities within extraterritorial zones of the Holy See were mandated to prepare a summary inventory of all books and archive related goods and museum items within two years. The Vatican Library is itself obligated to complete the manuscript and archive inventories, as well as for the artworks which are part of the furnishings of the Library; additionally, as stated above, it presides over the work of the inventorying of book and archive related goods of other entities both within Vatican City and in the extraterritorial buildings pertinent to it.

4. Buildings

The project of renovating the buildings of the Library involves three phases: 1) the restructuring and bringing up to standard a number of areas: the electrical system of the stacks for the printed books and periodicals, the building for offices and cataloguing section, the restructuring of the School and the entrance of the Library, and air conditioning for most areas of the Library; 2) finding new space within close proximity to the main building of the Library; 3) updating and computerizing the access and security systems of the Library (location of people and book materials, and protection against fire, water, theft, etc.). The project for the access and security systems is in the process of being approved.

The new site for the School of Library Science is now being prepared, and courses will be held there beginning October, 2002.

5. Staffing matters

Among other activities beneficial to the personnel of the Library, the course on computer orientation should be noted, which focused specifically on navigation on Internet, the use of email, and data security.

6. Information technology and networks

Computer updates were made, among which includes the installation of the 15 AMD of 1 GHZ. The fiber optic wiring with Cisco Layer 3 being done between the servers in the Data Control Center, is near completion. Additionally, the transformation of the Net Finity IBM system into a cluster system which offers maximum reliability in controlling the passageways, the viewing of the comings and goings of personnel, and of administrative activities. The service of simultaneous use of CD-Roms by scholars was improved with the addition of more memory space on the NT server.

7. The digital library

Work has continued toward realizing the project of cataloguing and scanning prints, and, with hypertext links (Bookline-Geac program) and data entry into the main server, to use these images on the internal network, and soon in the Internet. A similar project is already moving toward completion in the Numismatic cabinet.

The transfer of 60,000 digital images of miniatures of various manuscripts from tape to accessible digital support has been completed. The computer cataloguing of the images will begin, and will be accessible via Internet, as soon as possible.

8. Copyright and property rights

Copyright and property rights items create a serious problem yet to be resolved. The difficulty of our situation is primarily due to the following points:

- a) the most frequent users, which are generally the scholars, don't always understand or don't accept the property rights of the images (miniatures of the manuscripts, prints, etc.) and they don't abide by copyright laws; nor are they always able to distinguish between the two;
- b) the major difficulties come from institutions, that is, publishers, international organizations/institutions, including governments, universities, libraries, etc;
- c) for the Internet sites, it seems obvious that every institution would use the images for which they have the copyright, instead, images are used, even by large institutions, which are owned by others (in this case, by the Vatican Library) without asking for authorization;
- d) legislation varies from one State/Continent to another; but this is not where the problem lies, as much as it does in the fact that the legislation of some States interferes with that of other States and contravenes international accords.
- e) despite international accords, to take precautions against piracy is very expensive and no matter what recourse is taken to the national and international legal courts, it seems entirely ineffective;
- f) the practice of not indicating the credits and copyright at the bottom of each image in publications, for the sake of not bothering the reader, does not help the observance of rights of propriety and copyright;
- g) the distinction between commercial publications and non-profit publications is often a pretext, forgetting that not only the Publishers are part of the cost but, rightly so, all those have to pay that were involved in the production of the publications which, in spite of everything, are sold; one cannot forget additional printings and numerous reprints of many scholastic books, presumed to be non-profit; it's incomprehensible why the only ones not to

be paid would be the proprietors of the images, in this case, the Libraries.

9. Acquisitions

In 2001 was introduced the new “acquisition forms”, GEAC Advance, for reducing the amount of work involved in the arrival of materials and rendering possible the optimal control of periodicals and columns.

The insertion of current periodicals with 251 new titles was followed up, arriving at a total of 1,066 active periodicals and of 2,466 records received. 3, 271 historic - scholastic monographs to be acquired as exchanges, or as gifts, by the Library, were inventoried and passed on to Cataloguing. The number of photographs preserved in the *Indirizzi ai Papi e Raccolta fotografica*, passed on to the Library from Vatican Offices, coming from all over the world as gifts to the Pope, continued to increase. On occasion, there was an item given directly to our Holy Father by clergy or laity during an audience.

10. Preservation & Conservation

The project for security and the computerization of the comings and goings of people and of materials from the Library (see no. 4 above) has been approved. The feasibility of the system will now be studied and installation will begin in the course of 2002.

The restoration of more than 4,000 Roman and medieval lead plates was completed. The work took considerable time, given the complexity of the procedure and the delicacy of the material. It allowed, however, for substantial recovery of the original state of most of the plates, and stopped the destructive process that was causing considerable damage. With this restorative intervention, one of the most important collections of lead plates was able to be made available again to specialists of such materials.

About 80 manuscripts and 460 printed books were submitted for partial or total restoration, and about 1,400 monographs and periodicals were rebound.

The Restoration Lab collaborated with other sectors of the Library in the conservation of the printed books and archival collections. New Ph neutral cardboard containers are now being introduced. Sensors for controlling temperature and humidity levels have been placed in many areas of the Library. The areas most exposed to the sun have been protected by filters which minimize damages from infrared and ultraviolet rays. Disinfestation in the stacks, using the Velox (Very Low Oxygen) system, was begun.

11. Services to readers

The initial orientation of the scholars to available services and to the collections was reinforced: a specialized and multilingual Library staff member provides assistance to those who need it in the inventory room, and, if necessary, in the sections from which they are requesting specific material.

The office also requires informative work for purposes of correspondence. In the course of the year, more than 500 requests for bibliographic information via posted mail and email were responded to.

The editing of the *Guida ai fondi manoscritti della biblioteca* was initiated, and should be published in 2002. It will provide a comprehensive picture of the manuscript and archive collections of the Vatican Library through descriptions which are succinct, but which also offer the essential elements of the content of the collections.

The reorganization of the *Index of Christian Art* (Vatican copy of the iconographic card index of Christian art from *Princeton University*) was continued.

Additionally, the procedure for registration of photographic requests was made more effective and functional with the institution of an official office and the introduction of a new computer system.

12. Cultural events, exhibitions and publishing

During the year 2001 the Library's participation in exhibitions, both in Italy and abroad was very intensive. The Vatican Library participated in no less than 10 exhibitions in Italy, and otherwise at locations outside of Italy (Marseille, Dublin, Madrid, London, Berlin, Varnamo, Fontevraud, Trier, Magdeburg, Rotterdam, Paris, Mannheim).

In the planning of the editorial activities of the Vatican Library, the first electronic editions are beginning to appear, while co-editions are increasing. The scientific rigor of its publications and fidelity to an editorial preference for knowledge and the assessment of its own codicological and documentary patrimony, remains unchanged. From this perspective, six new scientific publications have come out, while 20 out of print volumes from the column *Studi e Testi* were electronically reprinted on CD-Rom. Two volumes were published as co-editions, and another four were published as facsimilies.

13. Other notable information: The Vatican School of Library Sciences

The Vatican School of Library Sciences completed the annual course for 2000-2001 as usual. Lessons, which meet throughout the year, were taught by professors and collaborators of the Library, covering the following material: Bibliographic cataloguing, library management, bibliography and documentation, ancient and mediaeval manuscripts, modern manuscripts and archival papers, rare books, and bibliography and the history of libraries. Undergraduate students were allowed admission. The school, located in the Library in an appropriately equipped setting, was attended this year by 51 students from six nationalities. On site practical exercises in the afternoon, study excursions to particularly significant bibliographic centers in Rome and other areas of Italy, and visits to exhibitions and conferences, such as those given by foreign professors, were integrated as part of the lessons.

14. Organisation chart

There are 85 employees of the Library, organized according to the following structure:



Governing Body of the Library

Cardinal Librarian and Archivist
of the Holy Roman Church
Prefect of the Vatican Library

S.E.R. Card. Jorge M. MEJÍA
Don Raffaele FARINA SDR

Manuscripts department

Dir.: L. Duval-Arnould

Sections:

Printed Books department

Dir.: W. Sheehan

Sections:

Acquisitions
Catalogue
Reading Rooms and
storage Ancient Books
Prints Cabinet
Periodicals
New Technology

Numismatic cabinet department

Dir.: G. Alteri

Secretariat

Exhibition services

Restoration Laboratory

Photographic Laboratory

Center for Data Processing

Publishing Service

Finance Office

Dir.: S. Righetti

School of Library Sciences

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