



“Libraries at the Library”: exhibition of Vatican manuscripts on the occasion of the publication of a volume of the Vatican School of Library Science



Vat.lat.3867, 3v



Vat.lat.1777, 1r



Vat.lat.484, 1r



Vat.lat.3199, 1r

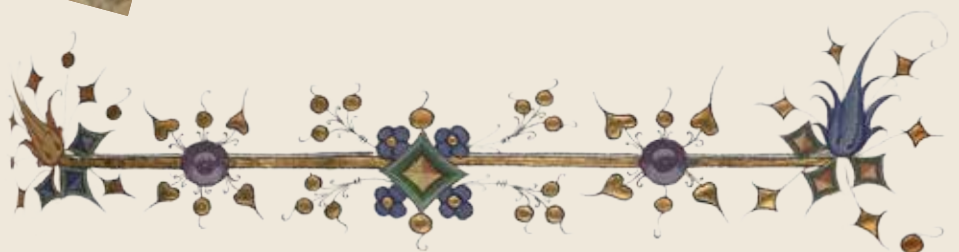


Vat.lat.1801, 1r

Biblioteche in Biblioteca is the title of a small but important exhibition organized in the Sistine Hall of the Vatican Library. It features some precious manuscripts preserved in the venerable Papal Institution on the occasion of the presentation of the volume, *Per una storia delle biblioteche dall'antichità al primo Rinascimento* (“On the history of libraries from antiquity to the first Renaissance”), edited by the vice-director of the School, Antonio Manfredi, with the collaboration of Francesca Curzi and Stefania Laudoni. The publication of this volume marks the reopening of the series, *La casa dei libri: quaderni della Scuola di Biblioteconomia*. More than twenty-five years have passed since the last volume of the series, its second issue, was published in 1993, while the first monograph was published in 1990.

From May 27 to June 28, 2019, it has been possible to visit the exhibition as a reader on site and also as a guest by reservation and admire the famous codices, all of which come from important Italian and European scriptoria or libraries described in the newly published book.

We wish that this beautiful opportunity will not be the only one, and are thus thinking of other initiatives of this kind to propose for our readers as well as for a non-specialized public, so that they too may have contact and appreciate the many treasures that are otherwise available only to scholars.





This exhibition included the *Roman Virgil* (Vat.lat. 3867, 5th-6th cent.) which came to the Vatican Library from Saint-Denis, around 1475. From Nonantola instead came the *Psalterium benedictinum* (Vat.lat.84, 11th cent.); while the beautiful *Liber benedictus* (Vat.lat.1202, 11th cent.), arrived from Montecassino; on f. IIr: Abbot Desiderius donates the book to St. Benedict. The codex containing the work of St. Augustine (Vat.lat.484, 12th cent.), came from Fonte Avellana and arrived to the Vatican Library in the 16th cent. The work of St. Peter Damian (Chig.A.VII.218, beginning of the 12th cent.) came from Pomposa; the codex *Barb.gr.87* (c. 1440) belonged to Niccolò Niccoli and came from the library of San Marco, Florence. To the humanist category belongs the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri (Vat.lat.3199), a copy donated by Giovanni Boccaccio to Francesco Petrarca, thereby representing the three crowns of early Italian literature. The *Epistles* of Pliny represent the Avignon headquarters of the Papal Library: Vat.lat.1777, from the 14th century, a copy dedicated to Benedict XIII de Luna, which arrived to the Library with Julius II. The Apostolic Library was represented by the first translation of *De bello peloponnesiaco* by Thucydides (Vat.lat.1801), a codex made by Lorenzo Valla for Niccolò V, the founder of the Vatican Library.



The aforementioned volume was presented on Monday May 27 in the Lapidary Gallery. The book contains the lessons held for the annual course of the “History of libraries” at the Vatican School of Library Science offered to all those interested in the subject, even those with less expertise. The lessons were collected and revised by some of the students under the guidance of the teacher. Divided into eight chapters, the book traces the history of libraries from the ancient to the medieval world and to the Renaissance, up until the beginning of the modern age. Not only does its approach include history, which is not limited to an institutional concept, but it also highlights aspects that are proper to the historical path of writing centers and libraries that deal with the *preservation* and *study* of texts (which is also not limited to a strictly institutional level).



It thus takes into account the *vexata quaestio* related to the mission of libraries, that is, *conservation* vs. *fruition*; the need to preserve documents for future generations, but at the same time make them fully available for use. This process also entails the *production* and *transmission* of texts, an issue that a school within an institution such as the Vatican Library may demonstrate well, given its direct understanding of the problem. As indicated by a quotation from Petrarch cited during the presentation: “books speak to us, give us advice, live with us”; we must listen to them, learn from them, and make them live in the best possible way so that our life, thanks to them, may be better as well.

Easter 2019
(April 21st)

The Lamb

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!

He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

William Blake



Vat.ebr.617, 11r-10v

These folios show images of
bitter herbs and unleavened bread

Chig.C.VII.205, 271r

“Easter” is the name of the Jewish holiday that commemorates Israel’s exodus out of Egypt, and the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Christ, the oldest and most important feast of Christianity.

The Jewish holiday (Pesah) is celebrated every year on the 14th day of the month of “Nisan”, that is, on the day of the full moon of the first month of the sacred year, in spring. Its primary focus is the memory of the exodus from Egypt. It concludes with a convivial family celebration.

The Christian Easter (Pascha) is celebrated on Sunday, the day of the resurrection of Jesus, preceded by a preparatory period (a time of Lent and of the Passion), and the celebrations of Holy Week (including the rites on Good Friday).

The term Easter means “Passion”, because in the passion of Christ, we pass from death to life together with him.



June 13, feast of St. Anthony of Padua



S. Bartolini, *Sermon to the fish* (colored xylography)



Born in Lisbon between 1190 and 1195, St. Anthony (Fernando of Buglione) is called Anthony of Padua because the most important events of his apostolic activity took place in that city, where he died on June 13, 1231, and where his tomb is venerated.

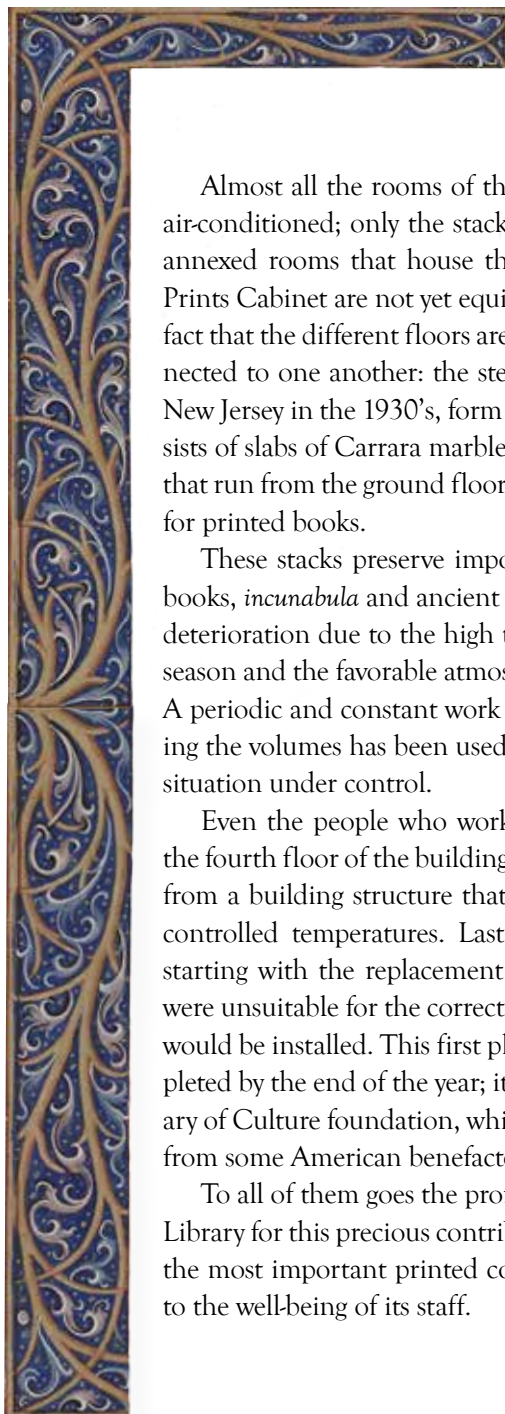
He entered the Order of the Friars Minor and became a distinguished preacher. His considerable work includes the *Sermones*, a *compendium* of his speeches and his theological doctrine. In 1946 Pius XII proclaimed him a doctor of the universal Church.

On the occasion of his feast, we would like to present an image that recalls the miracle of his sermon to the fish, which is in turn reminiscent of another particular sermon, that of St. Francis to the birds.

The miracle took place in the city of Rimini, which had fallen into the hands of groups of heretics. Upon his arrival to the city, the Franciscan missionary was rejected by a wall of silence, as the city leaders had ordered everyone to ignore him. Anthony could not find anyone to address; the churches were empty, while in the square no one seemed to care what he was saying. He finally went toward the sea to pray and meditate. Arriving at the sea, he said: "Since you people prove to be unworthy of the word of God, behold, I address the fish, to confound your unbelief more clearly."

The fish came to the surface of the water by the hundreds and by the thousands, to hear the word of hortation and praise of the saint.

Air-conditioning underway for the wing of Julius II



Almost all the rooms of the Apostolic Library are now air-conditioned; only the stacks for printed books and the annexed rooms that house the Archives Section and the Prints Cabinet are not yet equipped. This is also due to the fact that the different floors are not isolated, but rather connected to one another: the steel shelves, that arrived from New Jersey in the 1930's, form the levels, and the floor consists of slabs of Carrara marble resting on special structures that run from the ground floor to the top floor of the stacks for printed books.

These stacks preserve important collections of printed books, *incunabula* and ancient books, which run the risk of deterioration due to the high temperatures in the summer season and the favorable atmosphere for dangerous insects. A periodic and constant work of monitoring and disinfesting the volumes has been used for several years to keep the situation under control.

Even the people who work in the annexed spaces, on the fourth floor of the building, suffer the effects that ensue from a building structure that is not adapted to maintain controlled temperatures. Last April, work finally began, starting with the replacement of the old windows, which were unsuitable for the correct operation of the system that would be installed. This first phase of the work will be completed by the end of the year; it was financed by the Sanctuary of Culture foundation, which received significant funds from some American benefactors.

To all of them goes the profound gratitude of the entire Library for this precious contribution to the preservation of the most important printed collections of the Library and to the well-being of its staff.



The cataloging of Printed books made of parchment

Thanks to the friendly interest of Sweden's ambassador *emeritus* to the Holy See, Fredrik Vahlquist, and to the generous funding of Bishop Åke Bonnier, the cataloging of the collection of *Membranacei* has been completed. The *Membranacei* are the editions printed on parchment between the middle of 15th century until the early 19th century preserved in the Vatican Library. The Library's active Department of Ancient Books carried out the work.

The collection includes 144 book units containing theological, scientific (especially in the medical domain), historical, and literary works. It is a precious collection in which most of the items are characterized by particular elements presented to the popes: elegant miniatures, sumptuous bindings and autograph dedications of illustrious names. It contains, for example, the edition entitled *Assertio septem sacramentorum aduersus Martin Lutherum* from 1521, printed from the London press of Richard Pynson, which bears the famous autograph dedication of King Henry VIII to Leo X, son of Lorenzo de' Medici, at the end of the volume. The Library also includes some volumes printed on parchment from historical collections such as *Barberini*, *Chigi*, *Rossiani* and other rare examples among the *Vaticani latini* and *Ottoboniani latini*.



Membr.II.5

Membr.IV.16, 1r



Membr.II.4

800 years after unification: Mongolia wants to celebrate them with the Holy See

On May 14, the ambassador of Mongolia to the Holy See, Dr. Lundeg Purevsuren, accompanied by the Third Secretary, Dr. Munkhbayar Batsuuri, met with the Librarian of the Holy Roman Church, Msgr. José Tolentino de Mendonça, to invite him to participate in the celebrations for the eighth centenary of the unification of the country by Genghis Khan.



As part of this project, Dr. Purevsuren has proposed a conference to be held in Rome in 2020, with an exhibition of documents concerning Mongolia held by the institutions of the Holy See. Another larger initiative will also be organized that will require a more demanding and complex preparation in the upcoming years, a scholarly conference and a great exhibition in Mongolia.

The Eastern country has already collaborated with the Holy See to recover and study the documents which pertain to the history of the Mongolian Empire and are preserved in the Vatican.

Mr. Purevsuren has asked that two Mongolian scholars come to the Library and to the Archives next autumn to conduct new research on the historical documents, along with the hope of finding more documents. We look forward to the subsequent developments and wish for the complete success of all these initiatives.

People and Services in the Library. I



Reception



Reference Librarian



Admission Office

Reception



Manuscripts Reading Room



Printed Books Reading Room

“If the safekeeping and preservation of the precious literary treasure that was entrusted by Providence to the Holy See require continuous vigilance and the keenest sort of prudence to guard against the perils of men, animals, elements, which threaten its existence, the obligation to make this treasure productive for the progress of knowledge and thereby for the dignity and benefit of the Holy See, demands the diligent and wide-ranging efforts of competent and devoted collaborators ...” (from the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Congress, January 28, 1914).

The main objectives of the Papal Library have always been to acquire documents, preserve them correctly, and make them usable. Over time, the objectives have remained the same, although they have been carried out by different methods and undertakings as the years pass.

In order for these objectives to acquire their fullest import and accomplish the best service to the Holy See and the truth, the readers (who are the direct beneficiaries) must be at the heart of them, those who frequent the Library, and now, also those who use it remotely.

With this in mind, we would like to introduce briefly the services that the Library offers, beginning with the Reception of readers. To use the words of Giorgia Cerulli, who is assigned to the Printed Books room and represents the youngest employee of the Apostolic Library, “our job is to welcome the reader with a smile and to help create an experience that they can look back upon with a good memory.” The “welcome” represents not only the act but also the way that individuals and institutions receive.

Of the over one hundred people who work there, a considerable number are involved in carrying out the task of meeting those who come to the Library of the Popes.



The Reception is the first encounter that researchers have with the Library, and it is important that they feel welcome; the first impact is crucial and remains in the memory. The readers are registered in the Admissions Office, where they receive the reader pass to access the various rooms. The reader pass allows them to move to and from the various areas of the Library freely, while the turnstiles register the passages that grant their access. In the following days, the pass allows them to be recognized by the Security guards at the entrance of the State as “readers of the Library.”

At the Admissions Office they receive the Library Regulations and the instructions necessary to reach the different areas; in addition, also the right encouragement in case they might feel bewildered by the place on the first visit.

Before going up to the main areas, the readers deposit their objects in a locker activated by the personalized reader pass received in the Admissions Office; they are then able to access the consultation and study rooms. The readers register their presence at the counter with the assistance of employees, who are available to provide all the necessary information. The staff of the Rooms provide for the collection of manuscripts, books, and other requested documents that are found in the stacks and in other reserved storage areas. One may also request the printed books that one wishes to consult before arriving to the Library: (https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/home.php?pag=studio_e_consultazione&ling=eng&BC=11).

The desks of the directors of manuscripts and printed books Departments are found in the main rooms, where they work and are available to provide research assistance to those who request it. Many directives and useful advice can also be provided by the reference librarian, who is available to guide scholars through inventories and catalogs, and to help find documents that are not always easy to find. He responds to the numerous requests that arrive from outside the Library with all the grace and professionalism that such a delicate task requires.

Welcome to the Library and all the best for your work!
(To be continued)



Order of the Rising Sun to the Librarian emeritus

Card. Raffaele Farina, a Salesian priest, prefect (1997-2007), then Librarian and Archivist of the Holy Roman Church (2007-2010), was recently awarded the Golden and Silver Star in the Order of the Rising Sun, conferred by the Emperor of Japan. He was given the tribute for having “contributed to strengthening friendly relations between Japan and the Holy See,” established 75 years ago. The cardinal worked on this task for many years, and was especially noted for his precious contribution to the “reorganization of the historical documents of the Edo period collected by the Salesian missionary Father Mario Marega,” concerning the period in which Christianity was forbidden (1603-1868).

This period was marked by a policy of isolation which involved the persecution of Christians, especially in the area of Nagasaki. For nearly two centuries, Christians who survived persecution continued to profess their faith underground.

The *Marega* documents kept at the Apostolic Library constitute one of the most important collections of Japanese archives outside of Japan. They have been restored by the Conservation Laboratory. The volume of the proceedings of the conference of 2016 dedicated to the recovery of this very important collection, that includes about ten thousand texts, will be published shortly.



The ceremony took place at the Japanese Embassy in the presence of the H.E. Ambassador Yoshio Matthew Nakamura and Lady, as well as other persons representing the Holy See and the Salesian family.

The words spoken by Card. Farina as he received the high honor revealed his deep affection for the Japanese country, which he considers his second home.

Congratulations to our Librarian *emeritus* and heartfelt thanks for the efforts made for the benefit of the Institution.

The president of Philip Morris Italia is a bibliophile



Dr. Eugenio Sidoli, President of Philip Morris Italia, accompanied by his kind wife, Mrs. Sandra Varisco, and by some guests, came to visit the Library.

Dr. Sidoli, who is a keen bibliophile, showed particular interest in our Institution and its collections. In addition to the Sistine Hall, the kind guests were able to view some graphic works at the Prints Cabinet, and on the way there, were able to pass by some stacks of the oldest collections of printed books of the Library. Along the way, Dr. Sidoli paused in front of the areas of the Reserved spaces, turning on the light of his phone to see better the printed volumes protected by metal gratings, and expressed his intention to return to consult some old printed volumes.

The guests were also able to observe the digitization work that the Library is carrying out for its own manuscript collections by going to the locales of the Photographic Laboratory. There they were shown some procedures and some results obtained by reading damaged documents, thanks to the most modern technologies.



Avita Novare Foundation and Greek manuscripts

The Avita Novare foundation, under the aegis of the Fondation de Luxembourg, has decided to participate in the digitization of Greek manuscripts of the Vatican Library. They have agreed to provide an annual contribution (by a contract that includes four years of collaboration) to digitize certain manuscripts of particular interest. The foundation had already contributed to the digitization of manuscripts such as *Vat. gr.504*, a Byzantine codex copied in 1105 which contains many works, in particular, by Maximus the Confessor and other Patristic authors (Basil of Ancira, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom).



This manuscript is particularly interesting from the paleographic point of view, since it dates from the period in which calligraphic writing begins to lose its sway and to tend toward a more cursive aspect. The scribe's hand shows an example of cursive characterized by the lengthening of the strokes.

This year, thanks to the generous contribution offered, it will be possible to digitize and publish online the codices: *Vat. gr.1667*, *Vat. gr.1809* and *Vat. gr. 2210*.

Our gratitude to Avita Novare for this help and many good wishes to the Fondation de Luxembourg that celebrates the first ten years of its philanthropic activity.

Special lesson on Christian Arabic manuscripts



On last April 2nd, the Dominican father Adrien de Fouchier, who is part of the scholarly staff of the Apostolic Library, held a seminar on Christian Arabic manuscripts, with which he has long been occupied, for a group of students in the second year of the License at PISAI (Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies), in order to deepen their knowledge of the codicological and material aspects of these documents.

The occasion arose from the request of the principal of PISAI, Prof. Diego Sarrió Cucarella, who wished that the students meet Fr. Adrien and participate in an introductory workshop to study Arabic manuscripts, in conjunction with a specialized course led by Prof. Dennis Half, OP, entitled “Introduction to the Study of Arabic Manuscripts.”

The meeting with Fr. Adrien took place in the Barberini Hall; Fr. Adrien discussed his codicological research with the PISAI students by showcasing the manuscripts and by highlighting some peculiarities that can be found in the Coptic and Syriac traditions; in particular, the uniqueness that characterize these artifacts compared to the manuscripts of the Muslim tradition.

A special lesson, based on the original sources: a beautiful opportunity for the students that we hope in the future may deepen the study of these manuscripts preserved in the Papal Library, whose most ancient testimony dates back to 1481. In the Library there are about three thousand Arabic manuscripts and more or less a thousand are Christian.

A representation of Mecca among recent online publications

A beautiful Turkish document consisting of a single sheet was recently digitized and published online on the website of the Apostolic Library (digi.vatlib.it). It is *Vat. turc.373*, a paper folio from 1738-39 with 23 lines of text. The writing is lithographed *nashī* and has floral ornaments.

The color representation of Ka'ba (Mecca) is also presented, along with the surrounding areas. The drawing is accompanied by an explanatory text in Turkish, which is the introduction to a treatise (*risāle*) entitled *Qible numā al-āfāqī*. The author (the Armenian, Petros Baronian, from Caesarea) is called “Baron the inventor” (*muḥ'tari*) and recalls having in 1146 / 1733-34 composed another treatise entitled *Ġemnumā fī fann al-ğogrāfiyā* and of having invented a special solar dial. The printing of *Qible numā al-āfāqī* was completed in Istanbul in 1151 (1738-39), and this sheet must have been a part of it.



Vat.turc.373

Brigham Young University visits the Apostolic Library

A delegation from Brigham Young University (founded in 1875 in Provo, Utah) recently visited the Library. The thirteen guests had come from afar, but had great enthusiasm; they were introduced by Christian Heal, professor at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, in the same University.

They were able to visit the Lapidary Gallery, the Vestibule and the Sistine Hall. They listened with keen attention to the history of the venerable Institution and the stories transmitted through the frescoes of the late 16th century. A beautiful moment of sharing thanks to culture, which always gathers and often unites different nations and peoples, improving mutual understanding.

In hopes that this relationship will continue to grow ever stronger, we extend our best wishes to the guests by saying *Arrivederci!*

Students of Library Science from Catholic University and beyond



The Catholic University of America is a private institution founded in 1887 and based in Washington. It includes twelve faculties and over 120 courses. More than 6,000 students from all of the states of North America attend the University.

The Department of Library and Information Sciences is one of the seventeen that comprise the School of Arts and Sciences. It offers the education and the technical preparation of future professionals of the corresponding fields.

Every summer the school organizes educational trips for students, not only from Catholic University, but also from other American institutions that offer similar courses.

On June 6th, eleven students from Catholic University, the University of North Carolina Central, St. John's University and Simmons University visited the Vatican Library, accompanied by Dr. Renate Chancellor. All the guests showed great curiosity and promising interest.

We hope for future collaborations between the Vatican Library and Catholic University and the respective schools.

“Vita civile”, a pedagogical work of the humanistic era

One of the Vatican manuscripts recently published in the digital library (digi.vatlib.it), the Ross.420, contains a well known work by Matteo Palmieri (1406-1475), entitled *Vita civile* (*Civil life*).

Born in Florence from a family of spice merchants, as a boy Palmieri studied Latin and Greek Classics and was in the same circle with the most promising youth of his time, intellectuals and artists of quality. Both the Classical works and people he was in contact with contributed to forming his soul and character. He also had political roles, representing the Florentine Republic in difficult years of its history.

The drafting of the work for which he is best known, *Civil life*, began when he was still very young. It is a treatise of four parts composed in dialogical form. In the preface, he says that the dialogue took place with Franco Sacchetti the younger, Luigi Guicciardini, and the more knowledgeable Agnolo Pandolfini, the main interlocutor.

Composed in four parts, the work is written in the Florentine tongue, precisely because it was intended as a popular text: it aims to make an ethical-political and pedagogical heritage based on classical culture accessible to those who do not know Greek or Latin.

The author wishes to share his own experience of education and put it at the service of those preparing to face life in its personal and public aspects.

Precisely because he addressed future citizens and rulers destined to emerge even from modest backgrounds, by virtue of the pursuit of the common good, the work became one of the reference texts of the civil humanism of his city.

“The new man who aims to forge pathways, in the intuition of life and of the world that is proper to him, is the qualified man taken in his most select traits. You want the citizen, you want the prince, the one who must express himself in an orderly family, in a harmonious state.”

The author invites the reader to listen to him, precisely because he will be able to benefit from it. “The new man is not only the creator of his moral world, but becomes moral in his social relations”. Citing the words of Palmieri himself: “The true merit of each virtue comes from its being put into action, and their operation does not come without the faculties proper to it.” At the same time, he insists on social life, which he calls, “the universal benevolence of charity present in all people.”

A classical work is perennially relevant!



Ross.420, 1r; 2r



Restoration of Cicognara volumes with the Kress Foundation

The biennial project generously sponsored by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation has just completed its second phase, which is dedicated toward the conservation of the volumes of the collection that belonged to Count Leopoldo Cicognara (1767-1834).

We gave the report for the first phase of the work, which began in July 2018, in *OWL* issue 8 (October-December 2018, p. 15). The work was carried out by the young conservator Valentina Giunta, under the supervision of the Head of the Conservation Laboratory and assisted by the Keeper of the Prints Cabinet. From November to June, various procedures, even very demanding ones, were carried out on fourteen volumes. The volumes recently completed added to those previously done amounts to a total of 22 volumes treated over the year-long activity. Custom-made preservation wrappings to hold the volumes have also been provided for some of the items after the conservation treatment. As the foundation made the work financially possible (through the Sanctuary of Culture Foundation), labels to specify the date of the treatment and the name of the Kress Foundation, *ad futuram rei memoriam*, were attached to all the restored volumes.

Among the volumes that have been restored to their perfect state for complete usability are two important works by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). The first, *Il Mercurio Errante delle Grandezze di Roma*, was published in Rome in 1789 by Pietro Rossini (Cicognara.III.3869). The work includes seven engravings that Piranesi made at the beginning of his career, between 1745 and 1747, at the end of his first stay in Rome. In these years, the artist and some students of the French Academy collaborated with some booksellers by engraving small-sized prints depicting monuments of ancient and modern Rome. The prints were initially used as “travel postcards” and later as illustrations of tour guides for the city.



The other volume contains the *Lettere di giustificazione scritte a milord Charlemont*, published in Rome in 1757 (Cicognara.V.3830). In this work, Piranesi criticizes the Irish nobleman for having neglected his promise to finance the work, *Le antichità Romane*. The artist distributed copies of the booklet to friends, colleagues and figures from the art world, such as Anton Raphael Mengs, Sir Horace Mann and Sir William Hamilton. In the work, Piranesi affirmed how creativity, which allowed him to impart the results of his research to posterity, gave him a dignity worthy of the respect of Lord Charlemont.

Another heartfelt thanks to the Kress Foundation, to our friend Max Marmor and to Valentina Giunta.



We are especially grateful to

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