



**Satellite Meeting**  
**"Conservation and preservation of library material in a cultural-heritage oriented context"**  
31 August - 1 September 2009  
Rome, Italy

Organized by **IFLA Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation (PAC)**  
and **IFLA Preservation and Conservation Section**

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Conservation and Preservation of Library Materials  
in a Cultural Heritage-oriented Context

Monsignore Cesare Pasini, Prefect of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

*Greeting*

I am particularly pleased to extend the greetings of the Vatican Library to the participants in these days dedicated to the topic of the *Conservation and Protection of Library Materials in a Cultural Heritage-oriented Context* organized by the Istituto centrale per il restauro e la conservazione del patrimonio archivistico e librario (Central Institute for Restoration and Conservation of archivist patrimony and library materials), by the IFLA Preservation and Conservation Section and by the IFLA Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation (PAC).

After the intense and pronounced days in Milan, we are invited to focus on a specific theme, with the direct involvement of the Vatican: I am grateful for the invitation, I hope that our actions may be useful and I thank you for the mutual enrichment that will certainly be born from the collaboration of all.

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*Presentation of work in BAV*

I return to the floor to introduce the activities concerning preservation and conservation at the Vatican Apostolic Library, one on photography and two other on restoration. For my part I would like to touch on some more general aspects, bearing in mind particularly the work of the ongoing restructuring during these three years of closure. And I'd like to mention right away the conference that we will take place on the occasion of the reopening on November 11th to November 13th, 2010. In fact, they, after a first section, entitled *The Library as a Place for Research*, dedicated to carrying out a review of the research conducted over the last few decades in several scientific environments in the Vatican, in a second section, entitled *The Library at the Service of Studies*, attempts to trace the experience

in the various Departments, Sections, and Services of the Vatican Library, and they will obviously touch again on the environments of both *Photography* and *Conservation and Restoration*. You are now invited, also because on that occasion, but already today, doing a review of our activities, we certainly don't intend to put ourselves on display or boast but rather to derive perspectives and goals for the future with the help, comments and criticisms of those who know us and are counting on our service.

The works in progress - it was announced at the time - they concern four areas, to which a fifth and a sixth can now be added. Not all directly affect preservation and conservation, but in an indirect sense they all have something to do with it, because any improvement in libraries is for the benefit of the materials stored in it. I would like to point out, with more or less large, each of these six areas, highlighting the most specific aspects concerning to our argument.

1. The first group of works in progress concerns the numismatic and coin laboratory and the contiguous vault of the so-called *Indirizzi dei Papi*, (gifts of various kinds, particularly albums, and objects presented to the popes from the time of Pope Pius IX to John Paul II.) In the works done in that area, located in the space above the *Lapidaria* gallery, not only are the spaces well-thought-out but provisions are being made for the entire environment to be air-conditioned. A workshop for the maintenance and restoration of ancient coins and medals, has also been created which is small but well-equipped.

2. The second group of works concerns the three floors that will be located respectively as follows: the conservation laboratory, the photography lab (both analog and digital) and the photographic archives. This area required work which was not able to be post-poned to a subsequent consolidation and restructuring. Also in this case, the project made it possible to introduce adequate air-conditioning into this area: in particular, a room with a particularly low temperature for proper storage of microfilms and other materials which require similar conditions.

And certainly not to be neglected, in terms of prevention, are two demanding work projects: first, the new elevator in the courtyard of the Library, which will connect the laboratories with the manuscript consultation room and the manuscript vault, allowing a more linear and protected transfer of the latter ones. Beyond that, the new large entrance on the Galea side, will allow the passage of goods and that will involve an armored space for packing and unpacking and the temporary storage of manuscripts intended for exhibition or leaving the Library in some capacity.

3. The third stage concerns the manuscript vault constructed in the Library courtyard in the years 1982-1983 with ventilation systems, security lighting and the most advanced techniques of preservation of the time. Now this was, in fact, only a complementary work, but nonetheless the manuscripts had to be moved to another site and it was obviously quite important: the construction of an emergency exit, which is scheduled at the time but not accomplished, and the renovation of the floors, walls and ceilings with special materials and paints that are fire-proof and dust-proof, the replacement of the air conditioning system, bringing up to current standards the electrical system and the activation of security systems; finally, the realization of a specific storage area for the papyri that is air-conditioned to the appropriate temperature and humidity for the material.

4. A fourth set of work projects has to do with the periodical vault located on the right side of the Cortile del Belvedere, built in the years 1963 to 1978. It involved four levels of shelves, of which the first three were supported solely by beams and the fourth was on a floor. Although it was a pilot system for the years in which it was made, all this area needed not just to be brought in compliance with the safety regulations for the electrical systems, but an even more complex overall restructuring to ensure the safety of the four floors was required. Therefore, the opportunity was then seized to demolish the interior and re-build it installing more compact shelving. Also in this case not only will there be a better placement of the volumes, but air-conditioning for the entire building will be provided for.

5. The fifth group of work projects concerns the return of the Salone Sistino to the Vatican Library,

main location of the Library for three centuries from the end of the 1500's to the end of the 1800's. It will be used as an additional consultation room. To use it, the existing small elevator normally used by scholars to access the Library will be expanded and completely renovated. But we can't be too specific about the choices regarding the use of the Salone Sistino because it will not be in use until a date after the reopening in 2010. In any case, it is clear that the acquisition of the Salone Sistino allows for greater space for scholars and more open-shelf books at their disposal.

6. The last group of work projects, which was recently determined, will allow the air conditioning to be extended to a wider area, the last one in the Library. This is the Archival Section, the Prints Cabinet and the Printed Books Depository located to the left of the Cortile del Belvedere. In the latter, a system of air and forced circulation was already functioning but could not provide those conditions that an air-conditioning system would certainly be able to obtain.