



PHILATELI-GRAPHICS

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The St. Francis Missal -- A Relic of Touch



Editor's Note: Since the publication of *Philately-Graphics* began in 1976, there have been numerous articles focusing on manuscripts and manuscript books. The articles were invariably illustrated with stamps whose imagery featured those manuscripts. This article is an exception.

In the current issue of *The Walters Art Museum* magazine the article "A Relic of Touch" captivated me. It told a story so compelling that I thought it should be retold in *P-G*, even though the relic referred to, *The St. Francis Missal*, has never appeared on a stamp. Its namesake, however, St. Francis has appeared on stamps numerous times, as illustrations accompanying this

article attest.

This article is drawn from *The Walters Art Museum* magazine, and is being used here with the permission of the Museum. The photographs of the Missal and its restoration have been supplied by the museum.

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Graphics Philately Association

The Graphics Philately Association (GPA) is an unincorporated, nonprofit study group interested in printing, books, and the graphic arts as they apply to postage stamps and other philatelic items. The GPA's primary means of communication is the quarterly, *Philately-Graphics*, published in January, April, July, and October. The GPA is an affiliate of the American Philatelic Society and a study unit of the American Topical Association.

Membership is open to all. Annual dues are \$15 (\$25 outside the United States), and Patron Memberships are available at \$25 (U.S.) and \$35 elsewhere. PDF Membership (receive *P-G* by email only): \$10 (\$20 Patron) per year. Samples of *Philately-Graphics* are \$5 each to nonmembers, postpaid, from the Secretary. More information about the GPA is at www.graphics-stamps.org. Moving? Please send your new address to the Secretary.

President/Secretary/ Treasurer

Larry Rosenblum
1030 East El Camino Real
Suite 107
Sunnyvale, CA 94087-3759
larry@graphics-stamps.org

Member of the Board

Bruce L. Johnson
2101 Ronda Granada, Unit B
Laguna Woods, CA 92637-2491
indybruce1@yahoo.com

Vice-President

Amanda Morgenstern
3643 Private Road 18
Pinckneyville IL 62274-3426
a.morgenstern@hotmail.com

Member of the Board/ Editor

Joseph C. Sullivan
312 Stevenson Lane #C8
Towson, MD 21204-1714
joesullivan2@verizon.net

Welcome New Member

Claudio Grande, Pisa, Italy: History of Libraries, Books.

Welcome Back Reinstated Member

Martin Kent Miller, Greer, SC: Books, Engravers, Illuminations/Illustrations, Paper, Printing, Typography.

President's Message for April 2020

Celebrating 10 Years

It has been 10 years since I assumed my first active role as a GPA officer. I had been vice-president for several years previously, but that was limited to the occasional discussion

with other officers. In 2009, Bruce Johnson was handling several roles, including editor, so I volunteered to take on the duties of treasurer. Soon thereafter I became secretary, and then, when Mark Winnegrad retired as president in 2017, I took on that role as well.

It has been a privilege to serve such a vibrant society. I am constantly energized by the enthusiasm that many of our members have for our subject and our group. The other officers are all active and dedicated, a situation which is not the case in many societies. I am also encouraged by the large percentage of members who renew at the patron level and/or make donations.

I was very pleased when one member who worked with several of us on submitting an article for *P-G* wrote to me and said, "This group is stuffed with character, integrity and service."

However, character, integrity and service don't just happen. It takes effort. While all of our officers put forth their share of effort and more, there are still tasks that don't get done for lack of time to do them. If you have some time to devote to the GPA, please let me know. We can find a helpful task or two that suits your interests and schedule.

Announcements for April 2020 *P-G*

Article of the Year 2019

We again asked our members to vote for their favorite article published last year. Unlike the past few years, the voting was fairly close. The winner was Wendy Buckle for "Paper Mills at Fabriano" with nine votes. She has won twice before, in 2015 and 2017. In second place with eight votes was "Graphics Philately Favorites." Each of those eight members chose a different favorite, indicating that the variety of topics was appreciated. Other popular articles were "Bosnia Herzegovina's Landscape Series of 1906" by Roy Gelder and "Mariano Bertuchi, Spanish Stamp Designer" by Bruce L. Johnson. Our congratulations to Wendy Buckle (again!) and thanks to all our authors for their contributions. Without our authors, there would be no GPA.

Without our members there would be no GPA, but only about half of you chose a favorite article. I will assume that the rest of you liked all our articles so much that you couldn't pick a favorite, so I'll ask you to try harder in 2020 and select your favorite for the year.

cont. from pg 13

St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) affected countless lives because of his open-minded, inclusive perspective on religion. Devotion to him is worldwide and encompasses all social classes. Many were attracted to his preaching about the need to care for all living things: plant, animal and human—rich or poor. His legacy continues today primarily through the founding of the Franciscan Orders.



The pages of the missal are composed of ink and paint on parchment.

The St. Francis Missal—a legendary 12th-century manuscript and relic of touch of St. Francis of Assisi—is currently having its first dedicated exhibition at the Walters Art Museum in more than 40 years.

One night in 1208, Francis of Assisi, a wealthy young man seeking a more spiritual direction for his life, found himself uncertain when two friends asked what he felt God's plan for them might be. After discussing it throughout the night, they sought answers the next morning at the nearby church of San Nicolò, where Francis often attended mass. They opened the Missal—a book containing the texts of the Catholic mass—on the altar three times at random hoping for divine guidance. Each time, the text on the page urged renouncing earthly goods and embracing poverty:

Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.

-- MARK 10:21

Take nothing for your journey; neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats.

-- LUKE 9:3

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

-- MATTHEW 16:24

These passages provided the answers they sought. Francis went on to lead a life of service to the church: he established the Franciscan order and in 1228 was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. St. Francis of Assisi is now one of the most beloved religious figures in history, serving as a model of humility, kindness, simple living, and protection of nature.

Remarkably, a book in the Walters' collection of rare books and manuscripts is believed to be the very Missal that Francis consulted over 800 years ago. An inscription in the book documenting its dedication to the Church of San Nicolò places the manuscript in the right place and time. Known today as the St. Francis Missal, the book is considered a hallowed relic of touch by Franciscans around the world.

[The current exhibition tells] the story of St. Francis and the Missal's afterlife in conservation. The St. Francis Missal exhibition features the book itself and 17 other works including manuscripts, paintings, ivories, and ceramics, as well as photos documenting the Missal's recent two-year conservation project.

"For those familiar with the Missal's story, it will be an exciting moment to re-engage



Italy, 1926. One of a set of six stamps marking the 700th anniversary of the death of St. Francis. [Sc181]



Portuguese India, 1946. One of several stamps with this image in different colors and denominations issued in 1946 and 1952. [Sc476]



Austria, 1982. Stamp commemorating the 800th birth anniversary of St. Francis. [Sc1209]

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The St. Francis Missal before treatment, showing the 15th-century wooden cover weakened by wood-boring insects.



During a 19th-century restoration, the old leather cover was replaced with one of poor quality that deteriorated quickly. That cover had to be carefully removed prior to replacement with goatskin leather.



During treatment, it was discovered that the 15th-century binding was reinforced on the inside with parchment waste from an older discarded manuscript.



Removing the parchment waste reinforcement that had been used in the 15th-century binding.

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an important object. For others, the exhibition will shed light on a manuscript that has a unique and fascinating history," said Lynley Anne Herbert, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts. "Even beyond a religious perspective, the Missal played a unique and powerful role throughout history and into the modern day. This exhibition [contextualizes] the book and [gives] visitors insight into the ripple effects St. Francis's encounter with this object had on clergy and everyday people."

The legendary relic frequently inspires Franciscans to make pilgrimages to Baltimore; it was last a part of a dedicated exhibition more than 40 years ago. But due to

its fragile condition, the Missal has been inaccessible to the public for the past few years.

"The conservation challenge was to stabilize the book without giving it a dramatic makeover," said Abigail Quandt, Head of Book and Paper Conservation. "Because it is such a revered and historic object, we felt it was important to preserve as much of the original materials as possible while making sure it could be accessible to the public again."

The Missal's two-year conservation began with Andrew W. Mellon Fellow Cathie Magee researching new techniques that could be adapted for use in conserving the missal.



New techniques were utilized in conserving the missal.



One of the first steps in the current restoration was to remove the beechwood board covers by cutting the leather cover (a later restoration). Cathie Magee, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, uses a scalpel in the process.

“The binding was in terrible condition, and the wooden cover boards were riddled with insect holes,” said Magee. “The entire book had to be taken apart, which is a more extensive treatment than we would normally perform on such a historic object. It really was a once-in-a-lifetime project.”

Borrowing techniques from sculpture conservation, Magee was able to rebuild the wood of the cover boards. Once the cover was stable, she removed the timeworn leather from the spine and cleaned away the old adhesive before laying out the pages individually and repairing extensive tears. Finally, she replaced the supporting straps at the spine and resewed the folios using a linen thread



Missal pages prior to restoration, with cover removed.



The 15th-century sewing had to be taken apart so the damaged parchment could be adequately repaired.



The text of the missal after being repaired and resewn onto new supports.

similar to what was originally used.

Now fully stabilized for a new generation of observers, the missal is being digitized for the Walters' manuscript website, Ex Libris.

The St. Francis Missal [is] on view through May 31. The exhibition draws upon the Walters' world-renowned rare books and manuscripts collection, which spans more than 1000 years and contains over 900 manuscripts, 1300 of the earliest printed books, and 2000 rare later editions from across the globe.

One Library at a Time: The “Malatestian” of Cesena

Claudio Grande - Pisa, Italy

In recent years our post offices have highlighted several Italian cultural institutions. Some of these issues have been dedicated to important historical libraries. This gives me the opportunity to examine philatelically (when possible) in detail these issues. This article examines perhaps the most popular philatelic-thematic stamp, the commemorative stamp issued on 19 September 2008, and also associated cancellations and representative postal documents.

The Malatestian (fig.1) is a monastic library of particular historical importance. Founded in the mid-15th century, it was the first civic library in Italy and



Fig. 1. Italy [Sc2898]. 2008 issue dedicated to the Malatestian library.

Europe. It is the only example of a humanistic monastic library that survives perfectly preserved, including building, furnishings and library equipment.

UNESCO recognized the cultural importance of

the Malatestian library and entered it, first in Italy, in the Memory of the World Register.

About the fourth decade of the 15th century, the local Franciscan friars, having a number of codices greater than the capacity of their small library, asked Domenico Malatesta, Lord of Cesena (fig. 2), for funds for the construction of a new library. [*Domenico Malatesta (1418-1465) is also known as Domenico Malatesta Malatesti and Malatesta Novello.*] In 1450

his first intervention was documented. He made the friars' project his own and erected his 'libreria' in their convent. The great works of Cesena that can be attributed to him include the construction of the Convent of Santa Maria for the friars of the Osservanza (1438), the new



Fig. 2. Cesena cancellation 14 December 2002 features profile of Novello Malatesta on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of Malatestiana.

works for the strengthening of the Rocca Malatestiana (fig.3) and the enlargement of the city walls (1441). In 1452 he donated several possessions to the Municipality around Cesenatico but, above all, he founded the Malatestian Library at the convent of San Francesco, a unique jewel among libraries and a reference point for all the cultural heritage of the city. The library followed the model



Fig. 3. Italy [Sc2815]. Stamp issued 12 May 2007 features the Rocca Malatestiana (fortress).

created by Michelozzo in the library of the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence (1444). Work on the Malatestian library was entrusted to the architect Matteo Nuti da Fano and began in 1447. In 1452 the classroom, established in the eastern wing of the convent of San Francesco and once used as a dormitory, could be said to be completed. It then took two years for the codices to be arranged and the walnut portal by Agostino di Duccio to be built, and on 15 August 1454 the study area was opened to the public.

The Malatesta Library was the first civic library in Italy and could be visited by all citizens, but custody was entrusted to the Franciscan friars. This double responsibility for the library, sanctioned by the presence of a double key to access it, is considered by scholars to be one of the aspects that brought the Malatestian to its highest primacy: that of being the only humanistic-conventual library in the world to have maintained intact its structure, furniture and codices since its opening more than five hundred years ago. When Malatesta Novello died and the lordship ended, the library was able to survive thanks to the foresight of its patron who endowed it with an income. During the Napoleonic period, from 1797 to 1814, the entire complex was transformed into a barracks, and the book heritage seriously ran the risk of being dismembered. The initial nucleus of the municipal library and the classrooms of the Liceo Ginnasio were placed in the convent. The long series of building transformations to which the



Fig. 4. Exterior of the library. Postcard and cancellation used on 12 December 1993 on the occasion of the 8th Premio Il Fontanone.

complex was subsequently subjected only strengthened its characterization in a cultural sense that remains very strong even today.

The exterior of the Malatesta Library (fig.4) is somewhat overwhelmed by the 19th century buildings that replaced the rooms of the convent, and only from the Cloister of San Francesco and from the courtyard of Palazzo Ghini can the north side and the ornate terracotta pediment be admired, including the rose window and dedicatory plaque, and the major sides with small arched windows and a delightful terracotta cornice. Inside, up the stairs that lead to the first floor, you enter the vestibule that leads to the Aula del Nuti and the adjacent Piana Library, with the splendid parade ground

that Pope Pius VII gave to his hometown.

On the tympanum of the portal stands the elephant, emblem of the Malatesta (fig. 5), with the motto “*Elephas Indus culices non timet*” (“The Indian elephant is not afraid of mosquitoes”), which could have been meant as a warning to their enemies, the Polenta family of Ravenna—an area infested by mosquitoes. The dark wooden door (fig. 6) is a work of Cristoforo da San Giovanni in Persiceto and bears the date 15 August 1454. After passing through the portal, the impression is that of being in a real “miniature church”: the library has a three

naves floor plan, all three with vaulted roofs, the central one barrel-vaulted, the lateral ones cross-shaped, a little wider and lower. The Gothic carvings repeat rosette motifs and helical symbols, arranged to evoke the Malatesta chessboard.

The Malatesta heraldry is also reproduced inside on the capitals, on columns of the hall and on the 58 plutei, imposing pine wood benches (fig. 7)

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Fig. 5. Special cancel featuring the “Tympanum” with the elephant and the motto “*Elephas Indus culices non timet.*”



Fig. 6. Special cancel of 6 April 2002 showing the entrance door of San Marino



Fig. 7. First Day Cover postmarked 19 September 2008 in Cesena for the commemorative stamp [Sc2898] featuring an interior image of the Malatestiana library.

where the codices are kept. The light, distributed by the windows, two per span, illuminates the side aisles, while the central nave, marked by twenty elegant columns with capitals with shields and pendulous leaves, is illuminated by the large background eye. Along the two large side aisles, the best lit, there are 58 benches, 29 in a row. The central nave, the narrow and raised one, acts as a corridor (fig. 8). It is a rational solution that would also have been found in the monastic libraries of northern Italy.

The success of this form was copied until the moment in which the evolution of the Renaissance canons imposed, in the first decades of the 16th century, a solution that favored the unity of space, with the consequent renunciation of the division into naves, e.g., Michelangelo's Laurentian Library in Florence.

To equip his library with a set of volumes appropriate to the library project, the Lord of Cesena supported a desk which, with organized and planned activities, produced over one hundred and twenty codices over a period of about twenty years. The manuscripts commissioned or purchased by Malatesta Novello (about 150 copies) supplemented the preexisting convent fund. Added to the collection were not only texts on medicine and science, but also literature and philosophy, donated by Giovanni di Marco from Rimini, Malatesta Novello's doctor who was also a passionate collector of codices.

Fourteen Greek codices, most likely purchased by Malatesta Novello in Constantinople, Jewish tracts and others donated to Novello, plus some codices added in the following centuries completed the collection, which amounts to 343 manuscripts. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, 48 printed volumes containing works by Cesena authors were also placed in Malatesta.



Fig. 8. Postcard issued by the Circle of Cesena on the occasion of the 16th Philatelic Exhibition features the interior of the library.

In the hall that opens in front of the Malatestian there is the Piana Library, formerly of Pope Pius VII Chiaramonti (1800-1823) (fig. 9). It was assigned for use to the Benedictines of the monastery of Santa Maria del Monte by express will of the Pope and owned by the Chiaramonti family. In 1941 it was sold by the Chiaramonti heirs to the Italian State. Today the library holds almost 250,000 volumes, including 287 incunabula, about 4,000 from the 16th century, 1,753 manuscripts ranging from the 16th to the 19th century and over 17,000 letters and autographs; while in the modern section of the library there are over one hundred thousand volumes.

Among the most precious codices are an Evangelary dated 1104, a legal manuscript of the 13th century containing the Decretum Gratiani, and a Roman Missal dating from the early 15th century with a splendid illuminated Crucifixion. Among the incunabula can be found a copy of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*, which bears the false date 1462 (actually printed in 1477 or 1482), with colored plates whose designs have been



Fig. 9. Vatican City [Sc246]. 1958 issue showing Pope Pius VII from a set of four featuring the work of sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822).

attributed to Taddeo Crivelli.

Finally, the Italian writer and literary critic Renato Serra (figs. 10 & 11) was appointed Director of the Malatestian Library in 1910. He volunteered for military service early in World War I and was killed in combat on Mount Podgora on July 15, 1915. Earlier in 1915 he wrote one of the masterpieces of Italian literature of the twentieth century: *l'Esame di coscienza di un letterato* (*The Examination of Conscience of a Literary Man*).



Fig. 10. Postcard marking the centenary of the birth of Renato Serra with 1 December 1984 Cesena cancel.

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A. Domeniconi - *The Malatesta Library*, Doretti Udine 1962.

Fig. 11. Special Cesena cancellation of 24 October 2015 featuring Renato Serra on the occasion of "The Great War" Philatelic and Documentary Exhibition.



Custom postal meter imprints honoring the town of Cesena.





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New Issues of Graphic Interest

Joseph Sullivan

1. Algeria, 30 October 2019: Commemorative promotes the 24th International Book Fair, ten days of programs, cultural activities, conferences, round tables and meetings of renowned Algerian and foreign writers and academics. Designer: Zineb Bahri. Multicolor.

2. Argentina, 4 December 2019: The 150th anniversary of *La Nacion* newspaper. Imagery includes the first printed copy through stages of digital media. Multicolor and metallic ink.

3. Australia, 1 November 2019: Five stamps celebrate Christmas 2019. A souvenir sheet with two traditional stamps features images from a French illuminated manuscript of the 15th century housed in the University of Sydney Library. The two scenes from the Christmas story include the Flight into Egypt and the Adoration of the Magi. Designer: Simone Sakinofsky. Printer: RA Printing. Multicolor offset lithography. [Sc5042a]

4. Azerbaijan, 1 October 2019: Mini-sheet of two stamps marks the 650th birth anniversary of the poet Ali ibn Seyid Muhammad (1369-1417), best known by the pen name Nasimi. He is considered one of the greatest poets and philosophers of Azerbaijan. The stamp imagery features a stylized quill feather pen. Designer: Vugar Eyyubov.

5. Azerbaijan, 1 October 2019: Souvenir sheet marking 100th anniversary of Baku State University includes images of two old notebooks. Multicolor.

6. Columbia, 2 December →

2019: Commemorative marks the 100th anniversary of Bogatá District Printing (1919-2019). Printer: Cartor Security Printing. Multicolor.



7. Cuba, 9 April 2019: Stamp marks the 60th anniversary of *Verde Olivo* magazine. Multicolor Lithography. [Sc6145]

8. Finland, 8 May 2019: Set of six stamps themed "Say it with flowers" includes one stamp showing

a rose atop two books. Designer: Anna-Mari West. Multicolor. [Sc1587f]

9. Hungary, 1 August 2019: "Saints & Blesseds 2019" is a continuation of an ongoing series. The 2019 numbered souvenir sheet honors Saint Mark, Saint Melchior and Saint Stephen. Though the stamp and sheet's artwork appear to be taken from an old manuscript, they are in fact the creation in woodblock style of the designer. Designer: Imre Benedek. Printer: ANY Security Printing Company. Multicolor offset. [Sc4528]

10 India, 6 October 2019: Commemorative marks the centennial of *The Samaja* newspaper founded by Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928). Designer: Sh. Brahm Prakash. Printer: Security Printing Press, Hyderabad. Multicolor offset. [Sc3158]

11. India, 14 November 2019: Children's Day 2019 is celebrated with two stamps that each feature book imagery. A souvenir sheet also features the two stamps. Designer: Smt. Alka Sharma. Printer: Security Printing Press, Hyderabad. Multicolor offset.

12. Indonesia 2019: Four stamps feature old manuscripts. Multicolor.

13. Latvia, 1 November 2019: Commemorative marks the 250th birth anniversary of Garlieb Merkel (Garlībs Merķelis, 1769-1850), a Baltic German writer and one of the most prominent representatives of enlightenment ideas in the Baltics. Stamp features a portrait of Merkel and the title page spread from his book *Die Letten*. Designer: Lilija Dinere. Printer: Baltijas Banknote Latvija. Multicolor.

14. Macedonia, 2019: → UNESCO 2019 -- International Year of Indigenous Languages. Multicolor.

15. Monaco, 6 January 2020: → Stamp reproduces the poster promoting the 44th International Circus Festival which paid tribute



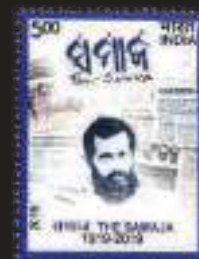
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to the horse. Designer: Alain Andre. Multicolor offset, embossing and screen printing.

16. New Caledonia, 11 June 2019: Commemorative marks the 40th anniversary of the Association Valentin Haüy, which supports the blind and visually impaired. The AVH was founded by Emma Meyer (1910-1987). Meyer was a nurse who became New Caledonia's first social worker. She lost her sight late in life. Designer: Richard Lisiak. Multicolor offset and embossing.

17. Serbia, 26 November 2019: The 75th anniversary of the now weekly newspaper *Jedinstvo* is celebrated with a commemorative. The paper was founded in 1944 during the struggle for the liberation of Yugoslavia. During its 75 years, *Jedinstvo* has been an information and cultural resource. Designer: MA Marija Vlahović. Multicolor.

18. Serbia, 14 November 2019: Set of three stamps features Famous People. One stamp marks the 150th birth anniversary of Slobodan Jovanović (1869-1958), scientist, university professor, jurist, historian and man of letters and includes a stack of books in the foreground. Designer: MA Boban Savić. Multicolor.

19. Uzbekistan, 2019: Two souvenir sheets of eight different stamps and one label on each sheet promote the 2019 International Handicrafts Festival. One sheet is devoted to architecture and the second is devoted to applied arts. One stamp from the applied arts sheet seems to focus on book arts. Multicolor.

20. Uzbekistan, 2019: Souvenir sheet celebrates 100th anniversary of the Archives System. Multicolor offset.

