



Society for the Preservation of Rare Books

C/O Bodleian Library, Clarendon Reception, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG, UK

Venice, 15 December 2018

Dear Friends,

With apologies for the late update, we are glad to announce that great progress has been made in the first year of the SPRB's existence.

The first major step forward is that now the SPRB is a **UK registered charity**. The process was far from seamless, and we had to go through an ordeal of almost nine months to succeed. Our gratitude goes in particular to our Treasurer, Paul Ostwald, who relentlessly pursued the Charity Commission to complete the registration process.

The Society has also appointed two new advisors, both conservators, to aid us with the technical side of the conservation processes: **Flavio Marzo**, Managing Conservator of the Cambridge Colleges' Conservation Consortium, and **Nikolas Sarris**, head conservator at the National Library of Greece, who will also be the SPRB's point of contact for disinfestation and conservation projects in Greece.

The list of advisors thus stands:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nicolas Barker (London)• Scott Clemons (New York)• Andrea De Pasquale (Roma)• Cristina Dondi (Oxford)• Clare Hills-Nova (Oxford)• Flavio Marzo (Cambridge)• Leonora Navari (Athens)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul Needham (Princeton)• Adalbert Roth (Vatican)• Nikolas Sarris (Athens)• E.C. Schroeder (Yale)• William Stoneman (Harvard)• Agamemnon Tselikas (Athens)• Henry Woudhuysen (Oxford)
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2018/19 PROJECTS

1) Disinfestation and Conservation

The SPRB has decided to make a major investment and is now negotiating the purchase of a Veloxo machine for anoxic disinfestation in libraries.

Veloxo is a nitrogen generator, bulky but transportable, thanks to which the SPRB will be able to offer effective protection not just to a few volumes, but, in fact, to entire collections, efficiently removing most kinds of infestations from small local libraries.



After the anoxic treatment, SPRB will also offer long-term storage bags, to protect the treated collections for years to come.



SPRB is organising a **pilot project in the Ionian Islands**, in collaboration with the National Library of Greece. Our gratefulness goes, in particular, to Yannis Kokkonas and Nikolas Sarris.



The first collection to benefit from anoxic treatment will be the State Library of Corfu, housed in the island's old Venetian fortress and heavily damaged by a critical silverfish infestation. This first disinfection will be followed by conservation in a number of other small libraries in the Ionian Islands, traditionally affected by

a very humid environment. After the successful completion of the pilot project in the Ionian Islands, we will then move the Veloxly machine to inland Greece, and work our way through various regions, helping in particular small provincial and monastic libraries.



2) Copy-specific cataloguing

The SPRB has also begun a project to catalogue the incunabula of the Franciscan convent of **San Francesco della Vigna** in Venice. This is part of a broader outlook to encourage copy-specific cataloguing in small collections, particularly among religious houses. Too often, in recent years, there have been reports of thefts of rare books in monastic collections, often removed from the shelves months, if not years, before the theft was eventually discovered.



Even when the books are listed in library catalogues, the lack of copy-specific information makes it virtually impossible, when they occasionally resurface (usually deprived of their stamps), to identify them with any degree of certainty.

With this new project we hope to encourage an increasing number of monastic collections to produce copy-specific catalogues of their collections. Further, in the specific case of San Francesco della Vigna, the cataloguing of this collection is part of a broader collaboration that should also include the digitisation of the convent's most prized possession: the single surviving copy of the earliest edition of the *Quran* ever printed in Arabic, produced between 1537/38 by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini.

We wish to express our particular gratefulness to Mr Brian Knox, for a particularly generous donation, and to Mr Vanni Treves, for his help in obtaining, from the J. Paul Getty Trust, the necessary funds for the purchase of the Veloxo machine.

We thank you once again for your support, and we look forward to reporting back to you soon with new developments.

Best wishes,

Gerì Della Rocca de Candal, President
Sofía Crespí de Valldaura, Secretary
Paul Ostwald, Treasurer