



The Library

The first nucleus of the Library dates back to the Querini family's heritage, which subsequently expanded to form a collection of considerable significance. Put together over a period of seven centuries, it includes about 1,400 manuscripts, 42,000 antiquarian printed books, including rare editions of incunabula and sixteenth-century tomes, 3,000 engravings, more than 350 geographical maps and charts, as well as atlases. The oldest part of the collection consists of parchments and manuscripts: items that stand out include the *Capitulare nauticum* (thirteenth - sixteenth century), the autograph manuscript of the *Asolani* by Pietro Bembo (sixteenth century), the beautifully illustrated *Libro del Sarto* (sixteenth century) and various ducal commissions.

The family's private archive consists of 120 folders containing documents, drawings and letters and is a source of considerable interest because it sheds light, including from a private point of view, on the ways politics and business were conducted by the Venetian aristocracy during a very long period of time, extending from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.

Both the archive and the library contain texts and documents that arrived through matrimonial or hereditary ties with other noble families of the city: the Tron, the Mocenigo, the Contarini and the Lippomano; this wealth of sources increases the value of the collection as regards the study of Venetian history.

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The Library entered its modern phase in 1869, when the Fondazione was established by the will of conte Giovanni Querini. In this will, Querini established that the Library should remain open “[...] on those days and times in which the Public Libraries are closed, and in the evening especially for the convenience of scholars”. This precise aim of complementarity and accessibility still holds good today. The modern printed holdings include 400,000 volumes which are constantly increased.

The librarians administering it have always tried to accord with the dictates of the will and the tradition of the Querini family, but also to interpret the mandate according to the evolution of the context and study and training needs of a varied public, comprising scholars and students, foreigners and Venetians. In the first decades of its history, the Library functioned as a reading room intended primarily for scholars. These were the years of the reorganisation of the manuscripts collection undertaken by the librarian, Leonardo Perosa. The latter compiled the *Catalogo dei codici manoscritti della Biblioteca*

Querini Stampalia (1883 - ‘*Catalogue of manuscripts in the Querini Stampalia Library*’), followed by the *Repertorio delle persone, dei luoghi e delle cose più notevoli contenute nei codici mss. della Biblioteca Querini Stampalia* (1884 - ‘*Repertoire of the most remarkable people, places and things contained in the MSS codices of the Querini Stampalia Library*’), which are still fundamental for access to this part of the collections, although today they are integrated by digital cataloguing.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Fondazione’s board took the vital decision to open the Library to students too. Subscriptions were made to many new periodicals and the librarian, Arnaldo Segarizzi, realised one of the first examples in Italy of a dictionary catalogue, with the cards per author and subject merged into a single alphabetical series, according to a conception that was then revolutionary for a library attentive to the needs of all users, not just the most learned. For the new catalogue, Segarizzi commissioned a custom-made piece of furniture for catalogue cards of international format, which is still in use today.

Library: Historical layout ↓



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During the years around the Second World War, the then director, Manlio Torquato Dazzi, paid particular attention to the development of the various bibliographic disciplines, especially the humanities, and made the Fondazione a lively centre of literary, artistic and civil culture. After the issuing of the racial laws of 1938, he kept the texts of Jewish authors in the catalogue and on the shelves, defying the rules requiring them to be purged. Attention to contemporary society was fully implemented with the director Giuseppe Mazzariol, who was convinced that *"in order to be alive, a library must first of all fulfil a function of cultural and civic promotion"*. Nor was the study of the collections neglected: in 1959 Mazzariol published the catalogue of the Querini holdings of maps.

At the end of the 1980s, on the initiative of the director Giorgio Busetto, the Library adopted the current system. In 1987 the open shelves were restored allowing direct access to 20,000 volumes. A few years later, membership of the National Library Service and its collective catalogue made the Library's data accessible to users all over the world.

In the 1990s, with the increase in the number of rooms, the number of seats available for scholars also grew; opening times were extended; the newspaper library now has over 200 current periodicals; new book stores respond to the needs posed by the development of the collections and new information technologies have been made available to a public that can no longer do without access to the internet for its studies.

The Library also fulfils the role of civic library at the heart of Venice, as established since 1979 by agreement with the City of Venice, which formally endows the Querini Stampalia with the role it has been fulfilling since the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 2018 the historical collection of Querini Stampalia expanded and, in many respects, was completed with the arrival of the books collection of the Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia, now owned by Intesa Sanpaolo, entrusted to the Fondazione and placed in a room specially designed for the consultation of rare and valuable volumes. The city is now once again home to some of the volumes that best document

↓ Library: Detail



Library: Detail ↓



the centrality of Venetian publishers, printers and booksellers at an international level during the golden age of the printing press. The *Veduta di Venezia* by Jacopo de' Barbari owned by Intesa Sanpaolo joins the example in the Querini's possession together with the works of the cartographer and cosmographer Vincenzo Coronelli and the engravings of artists such as Giambattista Piazzetta, Giandomenico Tiepolo and many others.

Library: Historical Catalog [↓](#)

