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Praise From Vatican City

10.03.2011 | Catholic, Research, Faculty  The newspaper of the Vatican has heaped high praise on a book by a University of Dayton librarian and faculty member about the history of the legendary Vatican Library.

Nicoletta Hary's book stands out as a "the most painstaking, important and detailed reconstruction of one of the most crucial turning points in the modern history of the Vatican Library," according to Paolo Vian, writing in the Aug. 25 Italian daily edition and the Sept. 7 English-language edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* (url: http://www.osservatoreromano.va/portal/dt?JSPTabContainer.setSelected=JSPTabContainer%2FDetail&last=false=&path=/news/cultura/2011/194q11-q.html&title= When the Vatican Library learned to speak 'American' &locale=en#), where it appears in a double-page spread. The article can be viewed online in both languages; the English version can be viewed at the *L'Osservatore Romano* website (url: http://wwww.osservatoreromano.va/portal/dt?JSPTabContainer.setSelected=JSPTabContainer%2FDetail&last=false=&path=/news/cultura/2011/194q11-q.html&title= When the Vatican Library learned to speak 'American' &locale=en#).

Vian's article "When the Vatican Library Learned to Speak 'American'" covers Hary's *The Vatican Library and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: The History, Impact, and Influence of Their Collaboration (1927-1947)*, (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2009), which traces the path of modernization initiated in the 1920s by Pope Pius XI and supported by the Carnegie Endowment.

Through the pope's leadership and the efforts of the Carnegie Endowment, American librarians went to Rome to help develop and establish a modern indexing system as well as specialized, integrated cataloging for special collections, such as prints. In turn, librarians from the Vatican trained at some of the best library schools in the United States.

"It is certain that the ancient library of the popes emerged radically transformed from its challenging and demanding encounter with American libraries," Vian writes.

For her detailed and meticulous research, Vian says Hary's work "...will live on in time as one of the most important contributions to the history of the Vatican Apostolic Library."

A 1952 graduate of the Vatican Library School, Hary said she was asked by the Vatican Library authorities in 1985 to do the project.

"It was for me a great honor to be asked by the Vatican Library authorities to write about the modernization of the Papal Library in the 1930s," Hary said. "Years later, when I was finished with the project, it was a revelation for me that, because of the support of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and of the American library community, what happened in Rome in those years had an unexpected impact and influence on international librarianship."

As rare book curator, Hary manages and services eight special collections as well as the Roesch Library's religion collection, including the U.S. Catholic Special Collection.

Hary joined the University of Dayton in 1964 and has served the University Libraries in various administrative positions.

"Nicoletta Hary's work is a wonderful study of the cooperation between two diverse agencies — the Vatican Library and the secular American philanthropic and library science community," said the Rev. Thomas A. Thompson, S.M., director of the Marian Library. "This is an uplifting story of people from vastly different backgrounds who recognized the value of the Vatican Library collection and who worked together to bring the 'library of the popes' into the modern age."

For interviews, contact Nicoletta Hary at 937-229-4262 or Nicoletta.Hary@notes.udayton.edu.