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STUDI E TESTI

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COPTIC TREASURES FROM THE VATICAN LIBRARY

A SELECTION OF COPTIC,
COPTO-ARABIC AND ETHIOPIC MANUSCRIPTS

Papers collected on the occasion
of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies
(Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012)

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FOREWORD

On the occasion of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies (Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012), the Apostolic Vatican Library — partner of *Sapienza* University of Rome and the *Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum* in the organization of this event — is pleased to publish a volume dedicated to the history of Coptic heritage preserved in the Vatican Library, aiming at illustrating some of the chief stages in the development of Coptic, Copto-Arabic and Ethiopian manuscript tradition, through the codicological description of some selected, extremely valuable items.

The first part of the volume opens with two contributions which attempt to sketch the early phases and progressive increment of Coptic and Ethiopian manuscript collections nowadays held in the Vatican Library, focusing in particular on the *Vaticani copti* (D.V. Proverbio) and *Borgiani copti* collections (P. Buzi). Two further contributions try to outline the role that Vatican manuscripts have played in scholarly investigation, specifically in the research field of Coptic literature (T. Orlandi) — the advancement of which has been largely due to rigorous reconstruction of ancient codicological units, whose fragments are scattered today in different collections — as well as in the field of Coptic-Egyptian linguistics (W.-P. Funk). An account of the Vatican collections of Ethiopic manuscripts and scrolls, with more than 1,250 items, distributed in eight different funds, is also provided (A. Bausi).

The second part of the volume contains a catalographic description of nine Coptic, Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts, each one representing — for historical, cultural or linguistic reasons — a unique case in the history of Coptic Christianity:

1) *Vat. copt.* 1, most likely written in the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the Wādī 'n-Nāṭrūn, is a Copto(Bohairic)-Arabic Pentateuch acquired by Assemani in 1715-1717, together with fifteen other parchment codices; it was brought to Paris in 1797, and returned to Rome after the Congress of Vienna (A. Boud'hors); 2) *Pap. Vat. copt.* 9 contains the Minor Prophets in the so-called Paleo-Bohairic dialect and is one of the most ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament in Coptic — at the same time one of the last acquisitions within the Vatican Coptic collections, since it was purchased in the late 70's (N. Bosson); 3) *Vat. copt.* 71 consists of a collection of five Coptic