



Embassy of Italy
Canberra

Handover of Gutenberg Bible Replica to National Library of Australia by Embassy of Italy in Canberra

October 21, 2024 at 11:00 AM



***Location:** National Library of Australia – Theatre LG 1*

Please note that photo and video material will be collected at this event. By attending, guests give their consent for such material to be published.



Scriptorium Foroiuliense

Italian Amanuensis School - Ancient calligraphic art

The *Scriptorium Foroiuliense*, based in San Daniele del Friuli (Udine), is an Italian Amanuensis School dedicated to reviving the ancient art of calligraphy, medieval script, illumination, and bookbinding.



Founded in 2012, the school has been a beacon of cultural preservation, teaching a wide array of historical scripts, including Gothic Textura, Uncial, Beneventan, and Carolingian, as well as techniques for creating paper and printing as they were done in medieval times.

In 2023, the Scriptorium undertook a remarkable project: the reproduction of several copies of the *Gutenberg Bible*, utilizing digital scans from the Bodleian Library. Some pages were even printed using a mobile printing press, replicating the methods of the 15th century. These replicas were distributed to prestigious Italian and international institutions, including the National Library of Spain, the Museum of Books and Printing in Kiev, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, and a special copy was gifted to Pope Francis.

This project, recognized for its high cultural and civic value, has earned the patronage of the Italian Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A notable achievement of the initiative is the inclusion of a hand-printed page from the Gutenberg Bible replica on the -AX-3 Space Mission- led by Colonel Walter

Villadei, marking the first hand-made paper page printed by press to be launched into space on January 18, 2024.

The Gutenberg Bible, originally printed between 1453 and 1455, is famed as the first major European work produced using movable metal type. Only around 48 copies of the approximately 180 originally printed still exist, and less than half of those are complete. The digital reproductions created by the *Scriptorium Foroiuliense* have been meticulously crafted on paper produced through methods faithful to the originals. This project is also part of a broader program by the Foundation, supporting disadvantaged children through cultural and educational initiatives.

The Scriptorium's *Opificium Librorum*, a living museum within its walls, offers visitors a fully immersive experience into the world of medieval manuscript creation. Here, one can observe every stage of book production as it was done in the Middle Ages, from the making of parchment to the work of miniaturists, illustrators, and bookbinders. The Scriptorium's dedication to this ancient craft elevates the amanuensis art form to new heights, preserving a timeless tradition in a modern world.