

Collection Development Policy Statement Rare Books Collection

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Purpose

The Rare Books Collection in the University of Maryland Libraries preserves physical evidence of the most successful format for recording and disseminating human knowledge: the printed codex. From the invention of printing with movable type in Asia to its widespread adoption and explosive growth in 15th century Europe, the printed book in all its forms has had an inestimable impact on the way information has been organized, spread, and consumed. The invention of printing is one of the critical technological advances that made possible the modern world.

At the University of Maryland, the Rare Books Collection serves multiple purposes:

- As a teaching collection that preserves physical examples of the way the book has evolved over the centuries, from a hand-crafted artifact to a mass-produced consumable.
- As a research collection for targeted concentrations of printed text supporting scholarly investigation (see collection scope below).
- As an historical repository for outstanding examples of human accomplishment as preserved in printed formats, including seminal works in the arts, humanities, social sciences, physical and biological sciences.
- As a research repository for noteworthy examples of the art and craft of the book: typography, bindings, paper making, illustration, etc.
- As a secure storehouse for works that because of their scarcity, fragility, age, ephemerality, provenance, controversial content, or high monetary value are not appropriate for the general circulating collection.

The Rare Books Collection seeks to enable researchers to interact with the physical artifact as much as possible. As such, the collection is not designed to be a “treasure house” where only the most beautiful and expensive exemplars are kept to be admired but not used. Instead, the goal in acquiring and preserving rare books is to encourage use and to introduce today’s digital natives to a better appreciation of the importance of the printed word as an information system.

Summary of Collection Scope and Current Collecting Areas

The Rare Books Collections encompasses the entirety of human knowledge, with examples relevant to virtually any subject area. Its core focus is western civilization over the past six centuries; although it does not exclude non-western titles. In most cases, the intensity of collecting is dependent on the opportunity to acquire via gift. On occasion, gift funds are available to purchase selected titles.

- **French History & Culture.** Concentration of materials from the Savoy region of France; political pamphlets from the civil war of 1649-52 and the French Revolutionary era of 1788 – 1815; 18th & 19th century plays and opera librettos; French philology.
- **German Expressionism.** Avant-garde literature and graphic art from circa 1910-1930.
- **Spanish Theatre.** Plays from the 17th and 18th centuries.
- ***Eikon Basilike.*** Examples of the iconographic political propaganda issued by royalists in the aftermath of the execution of Charles I during the English Civil War, 1649-1660.
- **Iconography and Art Criticism.** Emblem books and early works interpreting art and symbolism.
- **20th Century Authors.** Significant examples of published fiction and poetry by Irish, British and American authors, many associated with the Lost Generation between the world wars: Ernest Hemmingway, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Djuna Barnes, and others. The poetry of Robert Frost, including rare examples of Frost ephemera.
- **Katherine Anne Porter.** The personal library of Porter, preserved in situ in the Katherine Anne Porter Room in Hornbake Library.
- **William Morris.** Significant works by a founder of the arts and craft movement, including a major collection of Kelmscott Press titles and related materials.
- **Children's and Juvenile Literature.** Multiple editions of the works of Louisa May Alcott. Girls' series books, including Nancy Drew.
- **Judaica.** Memorial books (yizkor) chronicling communities lost in the Holocaust, early religious texts, and imprints from Rodelheim.
- **American Political History.** Collections of speeches by Daniel Webster and pamphlets documenting the debate over the slavery issue.
- **Art & Craft of the Book.** Key reference for studying the history of print culture, American type founders catalogs, the work of book designer W.A. Dwiggins, examples of British and American fine press publications, artists' books, 19th century publishers' bindings, illustrated books including the wood engravings of Thomas Bewick, modern hand-printed ephemera.

The 75,000 volumes in the Rare Books Collection are housed in secure, climate-controlled stacks in Hornbake Library.

Developing the Rare Books Collection

1. Language(s): All. Major concentrations in the collection include Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, French, Spanish, German, and English.
2. Geographical Areas: The collection is universal in coverage, but concentrated on Europe and North America.
3. Chronological periods/imprint dates: 15th - 21st centuries.
4. Materials selected
 - a. Included.
 - i. Accessions to areas of collection strength (see above), and any examples that enhance the teaching and repository functions of the collection as outlined in the purpose statements (see above).
 - ii. Duplicates (see below).
 - iii. New collecting concentrations may be added by the Rare Books curatorial staff after analyzing relevance to the missions of the Libraries and University and in consideration of costs.
 - b. Excluded.
 - i. Wet and/or moldy books that pose a risk to the collection.
 - ii. Ex libris or badly mutilated copies that have lost their integrity as artifacts.
 - iii. Art works, unless those closely aligned with the graphic arts of relief and intaglio, lithography, collotype, off-set, xerography and related printing technologies.
 - iv. Works, which in the judgment of the curatorial and preservation staff, would be impossible to maintain as a permanent part of the collection.
 - v. Collections whose size would severely impact the ability to provide access; works in obscure formats and languages that would inhibit the ability to provide access.

Additional Collection Information

1. Duplication. In the hand-press era, duplication is a meaningless concept: no two copies of a printed text from the same edition are exact duplicates. Even after the advent industrial book production, subtle and more obvious differences (such as binding variants) are significant evidence of the status of books as cultural objects. Therefore, the Rare Books curatorial staff will consider adding items that appear to be bibliographical duplicates, if they have significant copy-specific attributes that are deemed worthy of preserving in multiple copies.

2. Deselection & Withdrawal. The curatorial staff of Rare Books will conduct an ongoing appraisal of the collection. Opportunities to upgrade the collection with a superior exemplar may lead to the decision to withdraw a superseded copy. Out-of-scope copies may also be deselected. In such cases, the staff will endeavor to find an appropriate home for the withdrawn materials, often in collaboration with a trusted member of the antiquarian book trade.
3. Cataloging. Rare books as cultural artifacts have both physical and textual elements. Therefore, bibliographical descriptions of rare books often include unique, physical characteristics rather than attempting to create a universal, generic description. The Rare Books curatorial staff will work with staff in Metadata Services to describe its holdings at an appropriate level in line with accepted national and international standards.
4. Completeness. The Rare Book Collection endeavors to preserve the entire book; therefore, integral elements (for example dust jackets, slip cases, inserts) will be retained and protected.
5. Gifts. The curatorial staff will solicit gifts that enhance the purposes and collection foci of the Rare Books Collections. All gifts are governed by the University of Maryland Libraries Gifts-in-Kind Policy.
6. Purchases. Due to the high monetary value of many rare books, the curatorial staff of the Rare Books Collection will endeavor to be prudent in spending funds for purchases. Establishing good working relationships with qualified members of the antiquarian book trade is important to insure that the University's funds are used effectively and economically. Purchases from private individuals will be considered, following the same guidelines for prudent expenditure.
7. Preservation. The curatorial staff will work in tandem with staff from Preservation to insure an ongoing program of review of condition and selection of appropriate housing or treatment for items in the Rare Books Collection.

Diversity

Recognizing that rare book topics incorporates individuals of all ages who represent a multiplicity of racial and ethnic backgrounds, economic and educational levels and physical and mental abilities, the subject specialists build collections that mirror and support this diversity. The rare books collections include materials and resources that reflect a variety of political, economic, religious, social, minority and sexual issues and support intellectual freedom by providing free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. For more information, see Collection Development Diversity Statement - <https://www.lib.umd.edu/collections/policies/collection-development-diversity-statement>.

Implementation and Review Schedule: This policy has been reviewed by the Collection Development Council (kub0cdc@umd.edu) and is considered effective on the date indicated below. It will be reexamined regularly by the curatorial staff of the Rare Books Collection and revised as needed to reflect changes in the status and goals for the collection.

Date: January 23, 2015. Created by Douglas P. McElrath; Rev. 8/3/18 AMK

CDC 9/25/18