and cotton rags. Chapter 5 discusses the characteristics of different types of paper and identifying factors. The entire book includes figures that help illustrate the points made in the text, but this chapter in particular has a plethora of black and white photos (showing many of the subjects in transmitted light) that help the reader see details in the different types of paper.

Paper takes the backseat to printing, writing, and drawing after this, as the next few chapters discuss the intricacies of relief printing, intaglio, lithography, and writing and drawing mediums. The relief, intaglio, and lithography discussions are detailed and accompanied by many black and white figures embedded in the text. The book also includes 49 beautiful colored plates, and many of these pertain to the printing chapters. Baker weaves a discussion of paper into these sections by addressing which supports were most appropriate for specific types of mediums.

The final chapter addresses major conservation considerations. Baker touches on concerns relating to the paper and the medium, as well as the different types of considerations that any conservator should take into account. Her main points are for laypersons to avoid performing any types of conservation treatments, and for more experienced conservators to remember that doing nothing can sometimes be better than proceeding with a risky treatment. Appendix F provides a nice supplement to this chapter, including a straightforward list of basic preservation tips.

I would highly recommended this book to anyone interested in the history of papermaking and printing and particularly to curators and conservators who are working with paper materials created in the United States during this time frame. It is a tremendously well-written, well-organized, and well-cited work that will be a standard reference for me for years to come.—Laurel Davis, JD/MLS, Curator of Special Collections and Legal Information Librarian & Lecturer in Law, Boston College Law School.


Writing from the United Kingdom, Freda Matassa prepared her textbook Museum Collections Management: A Handbook as a text for museum professionals and students in British classrooms, yet the clearly laid out information is equally relevant to a range of different types of cultural heritage institutions outside England. In the first part of her book, Matassa covers big-picture issues and defines the scope of collection management, before introducing day-to-day collection management activities in the second part of the text. Her treatment covers the full scope of collection management including registrarial responsibilities as well as physical collection care duties.
As a central theme, Matassa very smartly widens the traditional definition of collection management from behind-the-scenes preservation practices and storage room duties to also include an array of activities that contribute to the care of materials as they are displayed, accessed, and experienced by visitors and outside researchers. Her wider view teaches students that collection management encompasses a varied portfolio of ongoing practices and actions that museums undertake as part of their commitment to perpetual stewardship for all acquisitions.

Covering legal issues and ethics in separate chapters, Matassa introduces legal concepts tailored to a British audience, but her coverage provides foreign readers with an awareness of key legal issues surrounding the care, ownership, and use of cultural heritage materials. In her chapter on ethics, Matassa writes of a compelling need for self-monitored professional standards that ensure cultural institutions acquire and care for collections as public stewards acting in good faith. The chapter walks through the key points and examines overarching institutional policies that guide all aspects of collection management from acquisitions through deaccessioning.

Matassa concludes the first part of her book by covering the essentials of risk management assessments and emergency planning, presenting a lengthy treatment on fine arts insurance and indemnity planning. Again, while providing specific information for her target audience in the United Kingdom, global audiences can extrapolate from the teachings and research local regulations.

Proceeding with practical advice in the second part of the textbook, Matassa enumerates best practices and procedures to ensure accurate and thorough item documentation. The chapter instructs students to catalog materials, document physical condition, label pieces, and conceptualize database information structures. Matassa also discusses protocols for retrospective documentation projects. The textbook does not cover the emerging field of digital preservation as a safeguard for electronic inventory databases nor does it instruct students on how to handle the growing body of born-digital materials familiar to archival and library collections.

Matassa’s chapter on collection movement is perhaps her strongest chapter. She provides a wealth of detailed procedural information on how to plan and execute material moves and object handling. She includes eight inset charts with excellent bulleted lists of tips and equipment necessary for successful collection moves. She provides first-rate risk management coverage and teaches students to raise critical logistical questions with fine arts packing and shipping agents during the planning of both domestic and international moves. Matassa’s extensive experience as a registrar shows through in this chapter; readers benefit from her body of experience.
The chapter on storage is a quick overview of the core behind-the-scenes activities and practices needed for long-term care of cultural heritage materials, with breezy coverage of central collection care topics such as the collection environment, security, storage furniture, inventorying, and pest monitoring. This chapter, while not backed with deep or highly practical information, hits the high points and provides a primer to topics students can learn at more length through practical hands-on experiences or during classroom lectures.

In discussing acquisitions, Matassa reiterates the necessity of well-developed formal acquisition policies and their efficacy to prevent legal dilemmas. While explaining that institutions need to tailor policies to best guide their particular collection practices, these should clearly outline de-accessioning, transferring legal ownership, and the legal issues inherent with fractional gifts and co-ownership. As food for thought, Matassa invites students to consider a preacquisition exercise to reveal hidden costs of ownership such as shipping fees, conservation expenses, and ongoing care needs before finalizing acquisition agreements.

Matassa scrupulously covers the responsibilities and prime considerations involved in reviewing loan requests, preparing legal agreements, and coordinating loan details. To best plan for a safe and successful loan, Matassa teaches students how to evaluate requests, minimize legal exposure, determine appropriate insurance coverage, document physical conditions, and coordinate needed fine arts and courier services.

In closing her book, Matassa leaves the storage room and addresses collection management needs in public spaces. In her exhibition chapter, Matassa accurately points out the range of preservation, registration, and overall collection management issues that are in play during exhibitions. She covers planning aspects and policy issues, physical care during installations and deinstallations, fine arts handling and movement, documentation, as well as an introduction to the considerations of managing traveling exhibitions. Later, Matassa discusses the policy needs and physical spaces required to support the independent researcher requesting access to materials. Increasing the latitude of a museum’s outreach potential, the author shows how institutions can safely accommodate researcher visits by developing access policies and establishing suitable research spaces. Her recommendations emulate services that special collections libraries traditionally offer and help highlight the deepening overlap in missions and services offered by different types of cultural heritage organizations.

Throughout her book, Matassa highlights large-picture policy considerations alongside practical hands-on knowledge needed to effectively care for cultural heritage materials. With a stated focus on collection management in British museums, Matassa’s
teachings prove relevant to a range of cultural heritage organizations even beyond the United Kingdom. Her textbook provides a thorough and broad overview of collection management and would be a valuable classroom resource to guide and complement lesson plans.—*Patti Gibbons, Preservation Manager, University of Chicago Library.*


This book consists of the proceedings from a preconference organized by the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), held in Munich 19–21 August 2009 as a satellite meeting to IFLA’s annual congress in Milan, Italy. In the Introduction, Wagner sets the stage for the work included in this collection of presented papers. Although multiple copies of early printed editions may survive to the present day, Wagner emphasizes the importance of early printed books as individual objects, each with unique characteristics that distinguish it from all other copies printed in the same edition. According to Wagner, as more early printed books are available online, the materials become accessible to a greater international audience and the originals are better preserved because they require less handling. However, she emphasizes that it also becomes increasingly important to have copy-specific descriptions of these books, which can capture important details about the physical object that do not exist in every copy. This emphasis on the importance of individualized descriptions was the focus of the IFLA preconference.

A particular strength of the preconference, and thus of this compilation of the presented papers, is the participation of a variety of individuals from a wide range of disciplines. In addition to librarians and academics, there are papers from conservators and independent scholars, which offer new perspectives and provide a more comprehensive treatment of the issue. In an effort to stimulate discussion on the importance of copy-specific descriptions of early printed books, rather than relying on a single digitized exemplar of a particular edition, the contributors present compelling arguments for the evidence that can be revealed by a given book’s unique characteristics. Although all of the papers provide excellent support for the topic at hand, one exceptionally striking example is Eric White’s discussion of the use of fragments from the Gutenberg Bible as binder’s waste, and the data they provide about the original press run of the Bible (p. 27). Including the Gutenberg Bible in the discussion may perk up the ears of those funders and administrators who might not otherwise be familiar with the intricacies of bibliography.

The book is organized into seven sections, both chronologically and thematically. The first four groups of papers progress from the earliest stages of printing through other phases of book production, including illustration, annotation, and